ACCUMULATION ‘FROM BELOW’: Land Grabbing Within and Between the Local Communities of Amuru district.

Presentation outline
• Introduction to the research/paper.
• Objectives
• Methodology.
• Demographics of the study area.
• Contextualization of the land grabs in Amuru district.
• Types of ‘localized small-scale land grabs and dynamics involved.
• Conclusion.
Introduction

- Increased pressure on farmland in developing countries.
- Manipulation of legal system in countries.
- Exploitation of unequal power relations.
- Capitalization on corruption and organized bullying.
- No respect of tenure rights of existing land users.
- Broad literature on large scale land grabs ‘from above’ as opposed to small-scale land grabs ‘from below’.
Objectives

• Interrogate the mechanisms which underpin land grabbing within and between the local communities.
• Explores the ways in which land grabbing ‘from below’ is underway.
• Point out the ensuing ‘land grab’ types and ways in which these processes are obstructing agricultural production
Research design and Methodology

• Qualitative research design and methodology.
• Interviews.
• Focus Group Discussions.
• Review of Secondary data.

Demographics of Amuru district

• Located in Acholi sub-region and comprised of 7 districts.
• Is under a two-tier system of administration; Local government (central government ) and traditional governance system.
• The socio-economic infrastructure and services are lacking.
• Agriculture employs over 98% of the population.
Contextualizing the land grabs in Amuru district

• The land grab processes are intricate, varied and dependent on the context.
• Encompass relatively small parcels of land and ‘local elites’.
• The acreage seized and cumulative impacts could be much more than the large-scale ones.
• The small tracts of land that are seized are central in the lives of returnees.
• Varied causes of land grabbing:
  ➢ The Breakdown in social order due to the LRA conflict.
  ➢ Encampment of people for more than 20 years.
  ➢ The emerging g market prospects for farm produce in South Sudan.
Types of localized small-scale land grabs in Amuru district

Intra and inter-community land grabbing.

• Clan based land grabs over the land in Lakang village.
  “When the Lamogi people staged their claim that the land in Lakang village is theirs, the Toro clan which is meant to be a sub-clan of the broader Lamogi clan claimed that they are not Lamogi. They said that our [their] origin is Toro kingdom [in mid-western Uganda] and that the land in Lakang village is ours [theirs] as Toro people but not for the Lamogi people. So the clans that were previously united and one entity have informally split. The land in Lakang village has divided the people of Amuru district and northern Uganda” (Interview, 26/07/2013).

• What do we see?
  ➢ Emerging economic opportunities have stimulated land grabs ‘from below’.
  ➢ Disintegration of collective solidarities and reinforcement of clan-based ‘cleavages’.
Military personnel vis-à-vis the local communities

1. John (fictitious name), a serving officer in the UPDF versus the local community land in Kal parish of Pabbo sub-county.

2. The Lakang village land grab case (Maj. Gen. Julius Oketta was sued together with the Madhvani Group, Case No. HCT-02-CV-MA-No.126 of 2008).

What do we see in both cases?

- Utilization of the institutions of the state to intimidate the local communities.
- Capitalise on their positionalities and a network of contacts.
- Land-related cases could take years before judgement is passed.
3. Other local elites versus vulnerable individuals (Elderly woman from Pabbo sub-county and Peter’s case).

“People [local elite] who know the procedure of land adjudication in courts of law are using money to acquire land. Because of high levels of corruption and given that the land grabber often has money he will pull me before the court of law. And because I am not able to hire a lawyer, the case will be ruled in his favour. Me who knows for certain that the land is mine will lose. It is the lack money which results in the giving away of my land [to the land grabber]” (FGD, 26/04/2012).

• What do we see in this cases?
  ➢ Exploitation of the weaknesses in the legal system.
  ➢ Manipulation of the instruments of justice in the country.
  ➢ Bribery and corruption.
Inter and intra-family land grabbing

• An intra-family land grab progresses into inter-family when it draws in extended family members.
• The IDP camps shaped these dynamics, for example, food rationing was based household numbers.

Inter-family land grabs

I come from Parabong; I got married in 1985. My husband died in 1997 in Pabbo IDP camp. I have three girls. I rent a room in Pabbo centre at 800 shillings (0.3 USD) per month and an acre of land for cultivation at 25,000 shillings per month (9 USD). I was chased from the land where we lived before the war by my brothers in law. In this land of Acholi, when you have girls they [marital family members] do not like you in that family especially when your husband died and you have girls you are chased off the land because the girls do not have power over land. The girls have no say over [patrilineal] land. Girls have their land in their husbands’ home; when the girl gets married, her value and power is realized. Short of that she is of less value to the family (FGD, 23/05/2012).
What do we see?

• The definition of a ‘family’ seems to be nuclear than extended.
• The IDP camp environment shaped these trends.
• The terms and conditions that govern land tenure are changing and the Redefinition of customary rules has deepened the existing inequalities in communities.
• These land grabs were found to affect women (widows, orphaned girls) more than men.
• Manipulation of customary law to deny women and children access to land.
• Widows with boys were less susceptible to land grabbing as opposed to those with girl children.
• Acceptance of inheritance by widows in rural areas and rejection of inheritance by those in urban areas.
• Inheritance coz of lack of alternative survival options outside land and challenges of raising children singlehandedly, and rejection coz of availability of options outside of land and agriculture.
• Inheritors grad or collude with land grabbers.
• As opposed to reduction, inheritance aggravates the suffering of women and children, the widow becomes a ‘concubine’.
Intra-family land grabs

“The sons and daughters of the land are the ones grabbing and selling the land in the area. There was no market for land before the war. People were not selling land. People used to give land to friends and colleagues for free but not for sale. The perception that land is marketable and of monetary value is a recent issue; it was not like this before the war” (FGD 07/03/2012).

• Land owned communally prior to the LRA conflict.
• Exclusion of intimate family members (girl children) from accessing land.
• Accentuated by the prospects of making quick money by the youth through the sale of land.
• Rejection of ‘official’ customary rules and practices by the youth in preference of the ‘living’ version of socio-cultural norms.

• Living version is informed by ‘commercialisation, commodification and monetisation’ of land.

• Girl children are deprived of access to land by their intimate kin through manipulating the customary law and use of excuses’.
Conclusions

• Amuru district as a new frontiers for investment.
• Adversity of actors with varying objectives and visions of development are involved.
• Some of the localised small-scale land grabs are shaped and informed by large-scale land grabs.
• The centrality of the increase in the demand of agricultural supplies is central.
• Land grabbing is progressively transforming the structure and composition of society.
• It is also restructuring the social relations buttressed around land.
• Acceptance and objection to inheritance as mechanisms to navigate land grabbing.
• created large masses of marginalised and landless proletarians and a few classes of empowered and wealthy local elites.
• These processes have increased food insecurity in the district.