

Return After Flight

Exploring the Decision Making Process of Sudanese War-Displaced People by

Employing an Extended Version of the Theory of Reasoned Action

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In loving memory of our daughter Janine Serei

Serei (*Khmer*) ~ 'Living in Freedom'

Abstract

War-affected displacement and its responses by the international community is one of the most pressing challenges of contemporary times. Whether in dealing with refugees or internally displaced people, the international system has been struggling to prevent forced migration, address its consequences and find durable solutions. Repatriation policy and practice, pursued as the durable solution to war induced displacement, are being critiqued for lacking responsiveness to the needs, initiatives and strategies of the displaced as its prime actors. A better understanding of displaced people's return decisions, and the beliefs, values and motivations underpinning them, is seen as instrumental in developing strategies to deliver effective protection, humanitarian assistance and reintegration support.

This thesis explores the return decision-making process of war-displaced communities by taking an actor oriented approach. The Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1985, 1988 and 2005) was used to analyse the psycho-social antecedents of displaced people's decision to return. A 'Perceived Vulnerability' variable was suggested as an extension of the model, based on the belief that it would make the model more sensitive to potentially hazard prone or risky behavioural contexts. Two major surveys were undertaken in order to explore the decision-making process of a group of Sudanese refugees and a group of internally displaced people.

Both surveys found that the dynamics of return are informed by the changing nature of return beliefs and expectations considered influential by war-displaced people when deciding return. Such issues were found to reflect the social diversity and internal differentiation of war-displaced communities, as well as the diversity of return contexts. The 'Perceived Vulnerability' variable enhanced the descriptive value of the model in hazard prone or risky contexts and was found instrumental to analyse the context specific nature of risk and ability to cope with those risks thus providing an insight in displaced people's perception of vulnerability. The study's findings suggest that the application of a formal model, such as the Theory of Reasoned Action, can be suitable for informing repatriation policy and practice. As an actor oriented approach, the theory may prove helpful in developing flexible and de-centralised approaches that support and build upon displaced people's return strategies, as appropriate to complex and dynamic contexts.

Keywords: Forced Migration, Humanitarian Aid, Resettlement, Repatriation, Migrational Decision Making, Refugees, IDPs, Sudan, Ethiopia, Theory of Reasoned Action (TORA), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Vulnerability, Risk Management

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During my six-years in Ethiopia I felt privileged to work with displaced people groups and disaster victims in various parts of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. During that period I was given the opportunity to familiarise myself with two particular war-displaced Sudanese communities. One group was displaced across Sudan's borders into western Ethiopia, and the other internally displaced and living near Khartoum. I would like to thank its representatives, leaders and members for their time and interest in sharing their concerns and opinions regarding the situation in their country, the peace process and their perspectives on return.

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It is my hope that this research contributes to a better understanding of the way war-displaced communities manage their return home and deal with the many complexities involved in that process. My wish is that the historic opportunity to bring about positive change for the many peoples of the Sudan will take root and bear fruit, and that the causes driving the current conflict in Dar Fur will be addressed.

Personally, I am convinced that by taking account of displaced people's experience of displacement and their perspectives towards return in both repatriation policy and practice will increase the quality of humanitarianism in today's world. In doing so it pays respect to and offers hope for its prime actors, the war-displaced.

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Foreword

In the mid 1990's I was working as a programme co-ordinator for an international organisation with displaced communities in southwestern Cambodia. One of the projects targeted a group of around eight thousand Khmers who were displaced from *Phnom Oral*, the mountain of Oral. This group of people was displaced as a result of fighting between the Khmer Rouge, who were controlling the highlands near the Thai border, and the Phnom Penh government forces, which steadily gained control of the area. By early 1994, the situation of the people, who had hoped to find refuge in a place known as Okoki became desperate. They were surrounded by minefields, and under occasional attack by Khmer Rouge forces, and subsequent counter attack by government forces. They used all means in trying to hang on to what was left of their very basic livelihoods. The few paddy fields belonging to the old Khmer village in the area, to which none of its former villagers had returned after the Khmer Rouge era, were tilled again by the displaced soon after their arrival. The remaining marginal lands within the belt of landmines surrounding Okoki were turned into low-yielding paddy fields. The hardship faced by the people of Oral and their daily struggle to survive has left an enduring impression on me.

Working with the people of Phnom Oral in Okoki proved to be both a challenge as well as a rewarding experience. As trust developed over time, the displaced shared their experiences and stories. Their lives were characterised by at least four major displacements within a period of fifteen years. Each new displacement was initiated by the destruction of their villages, livestock and paddy fields. Obviously *Phnom Oral* was not a good place to return to, due to the many mines and prevailing insecurity. However, not all people had fled their villages on the mountain. A few thousand stayed behind. It appeared that the people in Okoki were well informed about their well-being and the overall situation in their home area.

In early 1996 a major international humanitarian organisation came to work in Okoki. Soon after their arrival they publicly stated that, if the people of Oral wanted to return to their home areas, the organisation was ready to facilitate their move. Following meetings with village chiefs and the regional government, a repatriation programme was swiftly initiated, bringing back the majority of the people. The whole process did not take more than six weeks to complete. On my protesting against the involuntary nature of the return, the agencies' director voiced the opinion to me that, since the people themselves had indicated they wanted to return, their decision was to be respected. In a matter of weeks the displaced who had refused to return started to talk amongst themselves about the high number of people who had been wounded or killed either by mines or fighting in their home area. At about the same time it became publicly known that the Khmer Rouge had sent their chiefs from Oral to negotiate with the aid agencies' field staff about the return of the displaced. Life on *Phnom Oral* proved to be very hard indeed.

Following other assignments in various countries I was struck over and over again by the experience of forcibly displaced people and the rather limited difference aid could make beyond the direct

survival of such people. What do we, as so-called humanitarians, know about the reasons for flight, its impact on individuals and communities at large, the perspectives of the displaced regarding return 'home', or settlement in a new place? It is clear that the impact and experience of flight on a displaced community is profound, and carries deep implications for their future. Current modes of assistance concentrate on short-term physical needs, are fragmented over the various stages of flight, and tend to erode existing capacities of the displaced, thus contributing to dependency on often short-lived aid deliveries. In some cases communities are rendered even more vulnerable than they were before aid agencies moved in. By its seeming inability to take into account both the experience as well as the complexity of forced migration, aid efforts can potentially contradict the medium to long-term fundamental interests of the displaced.

It was questions like these, in combination with a critical self-reflection regarding my own role in the delivery of aid, which motivated me to undertake this study. This with the purpose of contributing to the challenge to improve on the quality of humanitarian aid, and humanitarianism itself, in a changing world.

PART I – The Need for Actor Orientation to Inform Repatriation

Discourse

1. The Aim of the Study

'Whether large-scale or small, forced or voluntary, compelled by war, famine, social disruption, or the hope for a better life, the complex phenomenon of migration has been fundamental to the whole modern epoch'.

(Benmayor and Skotnes, 1994)

The 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century have seen many people on the move for a variety of reasons. Forced migration resulting from armed conflict has been one of the major driving factors displacing millions of people and making forced displacement a global issue. At the turn of the millennium there were (excluding minor skirmishes or serious disputes) more than thirty major wars being waged resulting in close to twelve million refugees, and between twenty to twenty-five million displaced persons in at least forty countries worldwide. Though the global number of armed conflicts declined in the new millennium, with a total number of 29 conflicts in 22 countries in 2003 (Eriksson and Wallenstein, 2004) war related displacement, and its responses by the international community, remains one of the most pressing challenges of contemporary times.

This dissertation undertakes to look at the experience of people directly caught up in the crises of war and conflict-related displacement: both refugees and internally displaced people. In particular, the study looks at repatriation which is seen by the international community as the durable solution to refugee and internally displaced people crises around the globe. Since the origins and nature of complex emergencies can differ considerably, specific responses need to be developed which take into account local circumstances and conditions.

Repatriation policy and practice have been critiqued to lack responsiveness to the needs, initiatives and strategies of the displaced. As these were not prioritised, assistance programmes have resulted in inappropriate aid programming at best and, at worst, endangering the lives and livelihoods of those facing volatile environments following 'voluntary' return. There is thus a need to inform repatriation discourse with the voices and opinions of the displaced.

This study reasons that a better understanding of displaced people's intent to return, and the way it is constructed, is instrumental in developing strategies for providing effective protection, assistance and reintegration support. In order to do this a case is made for actor-oriented approaches to inform repatriation discourse. With this aim, the structured approach of the Theory of Reasoned Action is used, which so far has not been applied in forced migration settings.

This first chapter is organised in three sections. The first one deals with the changing focus of the forced migration research agenda which reflects major changes in the global context of contemporary conflict. The second section sheds light on actor-oriented approaches as a means to challenge the 'assumed certainties' of repatriation policy and practice. The last section introduces the structure of the dissertation.

1.1. Researching Displacement and Repatriation

Since Harrell-Bond's statement in the mid 1980's that the issue of forced migration was one of the most neglected areas of scientific reflection a lot has changed (Harrell-Bond, 1986). A flow of publications and reports have added significantly to our understanding of conflict and its consequences for affected populations, most notably in terms of their physical needs. However, in the evolution of humanitarian aid policies as well as in its practice the voices of the displaced themselves have hardly been heard.

The field of forced migration studies is a relatively new field of enquiry and is still believed to be in its formative stage. As the global context for contemporary forced migration is changing new approaches are needed to meet the new challenges. This change is reflected by a new focus in the emerging research agenda.

From Causes of Displacement to the Experience of Displacement

To be relevant the study of forced migration has to ask itself two questions: namely the question of identity and the question of relevance. These questions are highly relevant for the development of the international humanitarian system and the practice of humanitarian aid.

The question of identity is central to the study of forced migration. This field of enquiry seems to be pre-occupied with 'refugees', showing limited interest in other groups of forced migrants such as people who have been moved for reasons of political control, dam construction, rural development and the like. The term 'refugee' by itself seems to be ambiguous. The main cornerstone in the shaping of refugee policy remains the 1951 convention which tends to narrow down the category 'refugee' in order to give governments a free hand in whom to call a refugee (Marx, 1990; quoting Crawford and Hyndman, 1989: 155). In international law the term applies only to people whose path of flight crossed national boundaries and who have been recognised as 'refugees' by the relevant authorities. It seems that the major dimension of the problem is that states make 'refugees' (Marx, 1990: 190).

More recently the changing international environment and the rise in intra state conflicts has put the plight of the internally displaced people, 'hidden refugees', as an important subject matter within the study of forced migration. One of the elements characterising both refugees and internally displaced persons, as compared with other forced migrants, is their disability or unwillingness to avail themselves of the protection of their country. In that sense both refugees and internally displaced people demonstrate the weakness of the nation-state system as it is the international community that has to provide for their protection. Other forced migrants, often minorities or disadvantaged groups, depend on the nation-state system and are less visible to, and accessible by, the international

community. Therefore, a focus on the experience of forced migration rather than on the factors causing people to move may present a more balanced interest in the different groups constituting forced migrants.

The question of relevance is concerned with how the study of forced migration can lead to the improvement of humanitarianism, i.e. an improvement in the lives of those forced to migrate. Refugee studies have been so concerned to be relevant that it adopted categories and concepts from the world of policy and practice¹. The categories used are not helpful to bridge the gap between refugees and internally displaced people on the one hand and other forced migrants on the other hand. This research divide can be narrowed by focusing on the experience of displacement rather than on the causes of displacement. Elements such as the loss of a homeland, social capital, psychological stress, resentment against governments or agencies may provide important linkages from the experience perspective.

Increased Attention for Organised and Spontaneous Repatriation

The evolution of research into involuntary war-related migration places the 1970s as the decade of the study of the parameters of flight, the 1980s as the period of the study of asylum and resettlement and the 1990s as the time to research repatriation (Preston, 1999). The change in research focus reflects the changing policies and practices emphasising repatriation as the preferred durable solution. Gaps in repatriation research are particularly obvious in the post-return context.

There are strong indications that the conditions under which repatriation takes place has implications for life thereafter (Preston, 1999). Yet repatriation challenges are many. To mention a few: the right to return in safety and dignity is often compromised; the notion of return to one's home area to tap into kinship structures to secure survival is thrown into jeopardy, and; access of humanitarian aid agencies to areas of return is questionable.

The African context demonstrates that aid agencies have had a very limited capacity to mitigate the difficulties faced by populations when they are actually on the move. Where the international community via the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has attempted to control or co-ordinate events, it has usually been unable to do so (Allen and Morsink, 1994: 8). As a matter of fact most of the forcibly displaced return spontaneously instead of being part of repatriation programmes managed and overseen by the United Nations. Yet displaced people are conspicuously missing from consultation on most policy developments, and as a consequence it is frequently the case that their lives and suggestions are not prioritised (Koser and Black, 1999).

The Call for Inter-Disciplinary Research

Pervasive criticism on the study of forced migration has been the predominance of empirical case studies which are rarely placed in a broader context as well as the lack of interdisciplinary research (Koser, 1996). With a research focus changing towards the experience of forced migration and a focus on repatriation there is a need for a multidisciplinary approach in order to embrace the emerging research challenge (Ohta and Gebre, 2002).

The research practice on refugees and other 'oustees' have been critiqued by Voutira and Harrell-Bond, 2000: 75):

'A major obstacle to the transferability of knowledge to practice is disciplinary division within academia and fields of knowledge. In translating research insights from one discipline to another, a major barrier is the conceptual and theoretical baggage of each discipline, which undermines the possibilities of scientists talking to each other across corridors'.

1.2. Actor Oriented Approaches

The two main structural models that have until recently occupied centre stage in the sociology of development, modernisation theory and political economy, show serious analytical weaknesses. Both models have been criticised for being *'tainted by determinist, linear and externalist views of social change'* (Long, 2001: 11).

Therefore, it is argued that an actor oriented approach to the understanding of social change is needed which stresses the interplay and mutual determination of 'internal' and 'external' factors and relationships, and which recognises the central role played by human action and consciousness (Long, 2001: 13). A key concept of an actor oriented approach is the notion of *'agency'* which attributes to the individual actor the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion.

Social scientists acknowledge that there is no single objective reality and one way of knowing it, but only *'multiple realities'* constructed by human beings. Such *'multiple realities'* are actively given shape and meaning by *'social actors'*. They are therefore socially constructed and exist to these actors through different sets of meanings, values, interactions and practices. As a result the purpose of research has shifted to understanding or interpreting reasons for people's social actions, the meaningful relationships which different groups of people conceive and engage in, and the practices and interactions which emerge from that.

Since this study is interested in the experience of forcibly displaced people in relation to repatriation an actor oriented approach to elucidate the antecedents of migrational behaviour seems to be most appropriate. A promising tool, which so far has not been applied in forced migration settings is the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1985, 1988 and 2005). Their theory is concerned with the causal antecedents of behaviour grounded on the concept of *'agency'*:

'As its name implies, the theory of reasoned action is based on the assumption that human beings usually behave in a sensible manner: that they take account of available information and implicitly or explicitly consider the implications of their actions. Barring un-foreseen events, people are expected to act in accordance with their intentions' (Ajzen, 1988: 117).

By focusing research on understanding migrational behaviour of the forcibly displaced, rather than on the causes of displacement lying to a large extent within the international political system, the *'assumed certainties'* of repatriation policy and practice will be called into question. Such questioning, if managed well, will further improve the quality of humanitarianism. Matching the world of policy and practice with the experience of forced migrants and their return intentions expectably challenges

the very assumptions on which the protection and aid programming of refugees and internally displaced persons is based.

1.3. Study Aim, Research Questions and Organisation

Aim

The aim of this study is to gain a greater understanding of migrational decision-making, in particular the factors influencing the decision to return of people displaced by war. This is achieved by employing a ‘behavioural decision’ model as a structured ‘actor-oriented’ approach in exploring displaced people’s decision-making processes. In today’s complex and dynamic return environments there is a need to bridge the gap between the ‘lived-in’ experience of those displaced by war, as the principal actors, and the socially distant policy makers and staff involved in the provision of humanitarian aid. A better understanding of displaced people’s return intentions, and the beliefs, values and motivations underpinning them, is considered fundamental to develop effective strategies that result in appropriate protection, humanitarian assistance and reintegration support for people displaced by conflict.

Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study is expressed by the following research questions:

1. What factors have greatest influence on the decision to return of Sudanese refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)? Are these structurally different?
2. Can a structured actor-oriented model account for, and give insight into, the dynamic nature of return beliefs and expectations of home that inform displaced people’s decision to return?
3. Will the application of an ‘actor-oriented’ approach lead to a greater understanding of prospective return behaviour than currently applied models on which return management and policy are based?
4. Does the inclusion of the notion of vulnerability enhance the sensitivity of an actor-oriented model in volatile or hazard prone environments?
5. Can a formal theoretical model be suitable for general application to inform repatriation policy and practice?

Research Components

Based on the research questions a number of research components have been defined in line of which the chapters of this dissertation have been organised:

1. Review major developments and pertinent discussions in repatriation policy and practice and reflect on the issue of actor orientation (chapter 2, 3 and 4).

2. Utilise the Theory of Reasoned Action as the selected ‘actor-oriented model’ to explore the migrational decision-making, and in particular the intention to return, of people displaced by war (chapter 4).
3. Test the inclusion of ‘Perceived Vulnerability’ as an extension to the Theory of Reasoned Action, so as to achieve greater sensitivity to potentially hazard or risk prone behavioural contexts (chapter 4).
4. Apply the extended Theory of Reasoned Action to study the decision to return by Sudanese refugees living in camps in western Ethiopia (chapter 5 and 6).
5. Highlight the descriptive utility of the Theory of Reasoned Action construct with particular emphasis on the potential role of the Perceived Vulnerability utility (chapter 7).
6. Test the appropriateness of the extended TORA model to study migrational decision-making in different contexts by exploring the return intent of a group of internally displaced people in the Sudan (chapter 8 and 9).
7. Examine the extent to which return intentions of Sudanese refugees and internally displaced people differ (chapter 10).
8. Observe issues regarding the use and limitations of the extended TORA by reflecting on its application in both refugee and IDP contexts (chapter 10).
9. Reflect on the potential of the extended TORA as a formal actor oriented approach that can inform repatriation policy and practice (chapter 10).

Organisation

The research was carried out over the period 2000-2004, whilst the author was acting as the representative of an international non-governmental organisation overseeing the strategic development of its refugee programme along the Ethio-Sudanese border. This position enabled the author to be in regular contact with all stakeholders involved in the refugee programme such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), its main counterpart the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (Ethiopian government), implementing partners, embassies and donors. A considerable part of the author’s time was spent with the refugee communities in the camps and host communities in the direct vicinity of the camps. In early 2004, the United Nations Development Programme provided an opportunity to study spontaneous and assisted return processes of a particular group of internally displaced in Khartoum. This with the aim to forward recommendations on strategies to manage wider return processes anticipated in response to the peace process in the Sudan.

Looking into the issue of repatriation was found to be challenging. Access to ‘refugee producing areas’ across the border in Sudan proved to be difficult to organise, with the exception of a visit to the Pibor area in Jonglei (bordering south-western Ethiopia) in 2001. Visiting the camps in western Ethiopia was at times seriously hampered because of poor security and armed conflict. With the peace talks beginning to look more promising repatriation became an issue, notably so after UNHCR received funding for it as early as 2003. Researching the issue of repatriation became somewhat sensitive as some actors held strong agendas in this respect.

The collection of secondary data was undertaken at various institutions, the main one's being the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and the resource centre of the African Union, both in Addis Ababa, the documentation centre of the National Council of Churches in Kenya, the Refugee Study Programme at Queen Elisabeth House in Oxford, the African Studies Centre in Leiden and Disaster Studies at Wageningen University. This yielded an array of interesting work, reports and notes dating back as far as the second half of the eighteenth century.

Discussions with leading authorities in the field of refugee and development studies, such as Dr. Wendy James (Professor of Anthropology at Oxford University), Dr. Alula Pankhurst (Addis Ababa University) and Dr. David Turton (former director of the Refugee Studies Programme in Oxford) provided valuable input and directions for the development of the research.

1.4. Structure of the Study

The dissertation is organised into four parts. The first part sketches the evolution of humanitarian policy (chapter 2) and practice with particular emphasis on repatriation (chapter 3). These chapters demonstrate that by focusing on general issues and responses the humanitarian system is unlikely to deliver the kind of return programming and assistance required in today's increasingly complex return environments. By failing to recognise and take into account the views and opinions of the principal actors, the displaced themselves, aid programming risks being fundamentally flawed. Yet taking displaced peoples' understanding of the dynamics and complexities involved in return and repatriation into account is essential for the delivery of effective protection, aid and reintegration support. Therefore a case is made for actor-orientation in order to inform the discourse with the voices and opinions of the displaced (chapter 4). To that effect the Theory of Reasoned Action has been selected as a recognised 'behavioural decision' model, which it is suggested, will better inform both repatriation policy and practice.

The second part of the study sets out to demonstrate the viability of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TORA) as an appropriate actor oriented tool to explore displaced people's return intentions. Since the model, although proven in other behavioural domains, has not been applied before to study migrational decision-making, let alone migrational-decision-making of war-affected communities, its outcomes need to be validated by a context analysis. A qualitative context analysis of a particular stretch of the Ethio-Sudanese border area, characterised by displacements and refugee flows, is presented in chapter 5. Following this context analysis the TORA is applied to study the return intentions of Sudanese refugees in western Ethiopia (chapter 6). The descriptive utility of the TORA construct, and in particular the addition of the 'Perceived Vulnerability' component, is demonstrated by exploring the return intentions of two particular tribal groups (chapter 7).

The third part sets out to demonstrate that the TORA utility can be employed across different forced migration situations by exploring the return intentions of a particular group of internally displaced people who reside in Khartoum, the Dinka Ngok. As an introduction to this section a context analysis is presented sketching internal Dinka Ngok displacement and the developments in their home area of

Abyei, Sudan (chapter 7). Subsequently the TORA is employed to review the success of assisted returns and to elucidate recommendations on repatriation policy and practice (chapter 9).

The final part of the dissertation presents the analysis and conclusion which reflects on the research questions and components, pertinent issues in repatriation policy and practice, and the findings of both the refugee and IDP studies (chapter 10).

2. Forced Migration and the Evolution of Humanitarian Policies

‘The history of responses to international refugee movements, and the development of legal and organisational norms to shape them, reveals a continuing concern on the part of the international system to codify, order, and make stable a process which is inherently unstable and presumed to be transitory’.

(Rogers and Copeland, 1993: 39).

This chapter provides a background to the issue of forced migration and the evolution of humanitarian policies as a response. The first section underlines the complexity of migration in today’s world and explains why refugees are regarded as a special case by the international community, and drive the making of humanitarian policies. Section two introduces refugee- and internally displaced people-policy. The role of UNHCR and Non Governmental Organisations, UNHCR’s main implementing partners in the delivery of humanitarian aid, is discussed. Section three highlights some of the major challenges that have confronted the international community in the management of war and conflict induced displacement. The fourth section signals developments and challenges in the Post Cold War era which require new responses in order to address the plight of millions of refugees and internally displaced people. Section five presents a short discussion.

2.1. The Complexity of Migration

The Eminence of Migration as an Issue

The emergence of powerful European states in the 15th century inaugurated a distinctive era in the history of human migrations (Zolberg, 1992). During the 16th to the 18th century the pursuit of religious uniformity as an instrument of state hegemony resulted in mass expulsions and waves of people fleeing their countries. The slave trade resulted in the involuntary migration of millions of people across the continents. With the industrial, democratic and demographic revolutions of the late 18th century settlers and workers left for the New World and the colonies. Following the abolition of the African slave trade plantation owners recruited workers from other parts of the world. Europeans stimulated large inter-African migrations to provide labour for their mines and plantations. The final decades of the 19th century saw a growing gap between a small number of capital rich, technologically

advanced, and militarily powerful countries and the rest of the world. States started to institute more effective border controls and imposed severe limits on entry for potential migrants to discourage permanent settlement. World War I and the Soviet Revolution prompted further reinforcements of controls and restrictions on grounds of national security thus shaping a worldwide international migration regime that is still largely in effect today (Zolberg, 1992). The recent War on Terror has led to further controls and restrictions on the ground of national security concerns.

The population of Africa has always been on the move but it was only recently that migration saw an increase in both volume as well as in new types of migratory forms. The increase in the volume of migrants was triggered off during the colonial period because of the labour related policies of the colonial administrations. In post independent African states even greater rural-urban migration occurred as a result of the unevenness of investments. Deteriorating African economies in the 1970's and 1980's resulted in a substantial brain-drain (Adepoju, 2004).

Since the mid 1980s, there has been a surge in interest in the role of environmental factors in forced migration. The major assumption is that environmental degradation constitutes a major factor of insecurity and thus of population movements. (Kibreab, 1997). A study on the Horn of Africa examined how a shrinking resource base breeds insecurity, which spreads conflict. This by itself was seen as *'the cause of further environmental degradation establishing a pattern, which has resulted in the deaths of millions of people and the displacement of many more'* (UNHCR, 1996). Some researchers warned that the number of environmentally displaced people was estimated to rival, if not to exceed, that of those people fleeing armed conflict and insecurity (Hansch and Jacobsen, 1996; Lee, 1997). However, the issue of the so-called environmental refugees has come under serious attack. Links between environmental degradation and out-migration were found to be complex, uncertain, and difficult to detect (Suhrke 1997). By failing to emphasise the multi-causality of displacement the term 'environmental refugees' was found to be not only poorly defined but also legally meaningless (Kibreab, 1997). More recently the link between war and environmental destruction has been well researched: environmental change and population displacement happening at the same time were found to be the consequences of war and insecurity instead of triggers for it (Kibreab, 1997; Black, 1998).

As a result of civil conflict refugee movements have increasingly taken a larger share of migration in Africa². As an illustration: during 1996 fourteen of the fifty-three countries in Africa were affected by armed conflicts, accounting for over half of all war related deaths worldwide and resulting in more than eight million refugees, returnees and displaced persons. As a consequence conflict has seriously undermined Africa's efforts to ensure long-term stability, prosperity and peace (United Nations, 1998).

Theorising Migration

Traditional migration theory was based on the notion of 'push-pull' factors. Individual and collective decisions to move from one place to another were seen as the proximate cause of migration. These decisions were in turn dependent on an intricate balance between the perceived desirability of the destination, usually based on relative economic opportunity, and the undesirability of the sending country as frequently described in terms of political oppression or severe poverty (Leopold, 1992).

Generally, all migration implies some degree of prior relative deprivation (Oliver-Smith and Hansen, 1982)

Petersen (1958) distinguished two types of migrations, namely innovative and conservative. Innovating migrations relate to persons who migrate as a means to achieve the 'new', conservative migration refers to persons migrating in response to a change in conditions. The second group tend to move geographically in order to remain where they are in all other respects. Petersen then established five broad classes of migration: forced, impelled, primitive, free, and mass. In forced migration, migrants do not retain any power to decide whether or not to leave.

Eichenbaum (1975) theorised migration to be a function of volitation and the migration process to incorporate two decisions about location. One decision concerns the move away from the original place of residence and the other concerning the selection of a new place. Eichenbaum defined four empirical categories, which he labelled migrants, refugees, allocates, and slaves. The latter three groups result from forced movements. Refugees and slaves are forced to move; allocates and slaves are forced to settle in a determined place. Eichenbaum found that forced movements are often closely connected with a controlling social organisation that overpowers individuals and directs their movements in one way or another.

The majority of later studies looking into migration theories take the degree of individual freedom of action as point of departure. For example Richmond, drawing on structuration theory, suggested that the degree of freedom of all migrants is constrained by the social structures in which they exist. Those who can exercise greater autonomy are 'proactive', and those who are more constrained 'reactive' migrants³ (Richmond 1988). Richmond's secondary level of categorisation is concerned with the distance, direction and duration of movements. De Jong and Fawcett (1981) related different motives to long and short distance migrants while Gilbert and Gugler (1992) distinguish circular, short term, long term and permanent migration as different strategies used by migrants.

Looking into the different migration models Bakewell (1999) categorises models of migration according to the degree of individual agency relative to that ascribed to social structures: individualist, structuralist, scientific or systems and structuration models. Individualist models start from the premise that the prime agent in migration is the individual migrant, who makes a rational decision to migrate on the basis of some evaluation of its utility. Structuralist models see the individual as responding to local structures in which they find themselves rather than as prime agents. Migration is seen as a passive response to the economic, social and political environment which are beyond the individual migrant's control. Scientific and systems models draw on parallels with the physical science, they do not consider the role of human actors in shaping the world in which migration occurs. Structuration models form a relative recent group of models which hold the middle ground in the agency debate. They view migration as a negotiated outcome between individuals and the social structures in which they are embedded. Such models can be associated with Giddens's concept of structuration (Giddens, 1984) and suggest that migrants should be viewed as social actors working with some room for manoeuvre while constrained by the wider social context in which they exist.

Outside the specialist migration literature, the 'push-pull' migration theory as well as assimilationist models of migrant integration (stressing the disharmony within a society caused by the presence of

people with different norms and values) still dominate much of the discourse, '*particular at a policy level on refugees and migrants*' (Leopold, 1992). Recent migration theorists have criticised both the 'push-pull' migration theory and assimilationist models of migrant integration as conflicting with the experience of many migrant groups. Its main criticism is that these models are based on extrapolation from the experience of groups of European migrants to the United States in the 19th and 20th century, groups that rose up the socio-economic scale as they adopted the characteristics of the earlier settlers (Leopold, 1992).

It is the reluctance to uproot oneself, and the absence of positive original motivations to settle elsewhere, which characterises all refugee decisions and distinguishes the refugee from the voluntary migrant (Kunz 1973: 130). A structuration approach to the discourse of exploitation and conflict is most likely to reflect the experiences of such people (Giddens and Turner, 1987).

2.2. Refugee and IDP Policy

Since 1917, the two essential features of the 'refugee phenomenon' have been in existence: large scale movements of people and an overarching international structure, which is dedicated, at least in theory, to the maintenance of order and peace among nations (Harrell-Bond, 1998). The protection of refugees came to be regarded as a responsibility of the League of Nations. The underlying purpose of the League of Nations, set up after the conclusion of First World War to safeguard the provisions of the Versailles Treaties, was the maintenance of order.

Refugees - the Conventions

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in 1950 to '*protect, and seek lasting solutions for people who have been uprooted or threatened by persecution, armed conflict and human rights violations*'. The UNHCR was conceived as an ad hoc body of the UN and given a mandate for only three years. UNHCR focused on refugees in Europe since the World War II and its post-war period resulted in well over forty million displaced people in Europe, the largest population displacement in modern history. With the incidence of refugee crises proliferating UNHCR's mandate has been continuously re-affirmed by the United Nations General Assembly.

The 1951 Geneva Convention related to the Status of Refugees thus originated as a result of European experiences of war. The term 'refugee', tightly defined in the Convention, became a legal category:

'(any person who) owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence ... is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it ...'

(Article 1 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee).

One of the key articles of the 1951 Convention is the one on prohibition of expulsion or return (the principle of ‘non-refoulement’):

‘No Contracting State shall expel or return (‘refouler’) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion’.

(Article 33 of the 1951 Convention).

The principle of ‘non-refoulement’ is the cornerstone of refugee protection and forms a crucially important criterion in upholding the right on the voluntary nature of return.

The condition of a person’s relationship to the state is critical in determining if he or she could have refugee status and also to determine when he or she should lose it. The UN Convention set out the conditions under which a person stops being a refugee, in what are often referred to as the ‘cessation clauses’⁴. Refugees lose status when they restore their relationship with the state in their country of origin, or they find an alternative state, which will accept them as nationals (described as ‘voluntary acts by the individual’ by Goodwin-Gill, 1998: 80).

In the aftermath of decolonisation, refugees became a global phenomena. The UN 1967 Protocol extended the provision of the 1951 Convention accordingly⁵. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU, known today as African Union) further extended the provisions of the UN Convention by drawing up its own legal instrument more suited to the context of Africa. While incorporating all of the provisions of the 1951 Convention, the new OAU regional definition of a ‘refugee’ added a clause spelling out the conditions causing people to lose the protection of their state:

‘The term ‘refugee’ shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing the public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality’

(OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa 1969: Article 1-2).

The 1951 UN Refugee Convention, along with its 1967 Protocol, is still the most important, and the only universal, instrument of international refugee law. At the turn of the millennium one hundred and thirty-one states had acceded to both the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and one hundred and thirty-eight states had ratified either one or both of these instruments (UNHCR, 2000a).

Internally Displaced Persons – Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

The global crisis of internal displacement emerged on the international agenda by the late 1980s. Between twenty and twenty-five million persons had been forced from their homes by armed conflicts, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights, and other causes traditionally associated with refuge across international borders. But unlike refugees, the internally displaced remain within the borders of their own countries, dispossessed by their governments and other controlling authorities and forced into a life of destitution and indignity (Cohen and Deng, 1998: 1).

The primary responsibility given to the United Nations by its charter is the ‘maintenance of international peace and security’. Threats to international peace were defined exclusively in terms of aggression between sovereign states. Conflicts within national boundaries, leading to human rights abuses, are thus not covered by this definition. It follows that the United Nations has no right under its charter to intervene in the affairs of a state to protect the human rights of its citizens. This is reiterated in the Secretary General’s document, an Agenda for Peace: ‘...*in situations of internal crisis the United Nations will need to respect the sovereignty of the State; to do otherwise would not be in accordance with the understanding of Member States in accepting the principles of the charter*’. However, in the same document it is noted that ‘*the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passed It is the task of the leaders of States today to understand this and to find a balance between the needs of good internal governance and the requirements of an ever more interdependent world*’. Whatever its interpretation the plight of the internally displaced poses a challenge of humanitarian, political, and strategic dimensions.

The link between refugee problems and displacement can be direct and clear. As far back as 1977 the High Commissioner for Refugees requested its Executive Committee to clarify the distinction between refugees and displaced people. Goodwin-Gill notices that although no formal advice was tendered, there was considerable support for the view that ‘*refugees had crossed an international frontier, whereas displaced persons had not*’ When refugees and displaced persons are generated by the same causes and straddle the border, not only are their humanitarian needs similar, a solution to the refugee problem cannot usually be found without, at the same time, resolving the issue of internal displacement. UNHCR has found itself that ‘*effective reintegration of returnees requires assistance to be extended to the internally displaced in the same locality or community*’ (UNHCR, 2000b: 3-4).

The distinction between refugees and displaced people is important as the former category falls under the legal framework of the 1951 convention attributing certain rights to them. Displaced people do not benefit from such a legal framework and it is probably unlikely they ever will as they are regarded as ‘internal affairs’ by most countries⁶. In a sense the plight of internally displaced persons is therefore more precarious as the international community cannot justify their interventions on legal arrangements.

The focus on internally displaced persons in the 1990s has been accompanied by the search for a jurisdictional base, a competent protecting and assisting agency, and an applicable body of rules and standards (Goodwin-Gill, 1998: 14). In 1991 the post of Emergency Relief Co-ordinator was created to improve overall co-ordination of the UN response for Internally Displaced Persons. In 1992, at the request of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Secretary General appointed a representative to raise awareness of the problem of the internally displaced persons and investigate ways to improve protection and response. In 1993 the representative, Mr. Francis M. Deng, presented his findings to the Commission on Human Rights:

‘... there is at present no single organisation within the UN system responsible for the protection and assistance of the internally displaced. Several organisations, most notably UNHCR, operationally manage programmes that reach internally displaced persons, but only in an ad hoc manner’.

Work started on a normative framework, in particular the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the institutional arrangements at the international as well as regional levels, and the focus on specific country situations (Deng, 1999). In 1998 the principles were presented and endorsed by the United Nations. The Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons underlined the importance of the Principles (OCHA, 1998):

‘The Principles identify the rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of the internally displaced in all phases of displacement. They provide protection against arbitrary displacement, offer a basis for protection and assistance during displacement, and set forth guarantees for safe return, resettlement and reintegration. Although they do not constitute a binding instrument, these Principles reflect and are consistent with international human rights and humanitarian law and analogous refugee law’.

However, with the endorsement of the Principles major concerns remained. The above-mentioned focus on specific countries depends on the willingness and openness of national governments to admit such visits⁷. Another major issue relates to the nature of contemporary conflict with large numbers of internally displaced persons living in areas not under government control. How to address the plight of the displaced in such circumstances since it poses *‘challenges for a state-based international system and, as a product of this system, the mandate of the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs’* (Deng, 1999). As a result large numbers of internally displaced persons remain without humanitarian assistance or protection, underlining the selective, uneven and in many cases, inadequate response of the international community (UNHCR, 2000b). This fundamental flaw in the protection issue led some researchers to remark that UNHCR must strongly emphasise that *‘asylum beyond the borders, for those who manage to reach this haven, is a form of protection that so far has no equivalent inside territories devastated by war or persecution’* (Durieux, 1996).

UNHCR’s Search for Durable Solutions

UNHCR’s strategies revolve around three durable solutions, which are local integration in the country of refuge, repatriation to one’s home country and resettlement in a third country. The changing focus on a particular durable solution pursued by UNHCR reflects major changes in international politics.

Refugee Aid and Development Strategy – Pursuing Local Integration

Starting from the 1970s refugee asylum was perceived as temporary as was the main ‘durable’ solution, local integration. During the 1980’s the ‘refugee aid and development’ strategy came into fashion underlining the need for relief to be development oriented from the outset. Though the idea of linking refugee aid to the wider development agenda was not new it received more attention in the 1980s. The substantial growth in the refugee population, especially in Africa, combined with deteriorating economic conditions in refugee-hosting countries, raised concern that the traditional hospitality shown by Africans to their exiled kin and neighbours was in danger of widespread decline (Gorman, 1999). The second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA II) in 1984 asserted that refugee assistance should not only be development oriented, but that it should take into account host population needs⁸. While relief and development theories managed to draw attention to the situation of host populations, they were based on the fundamental assumption that

refugees present a problem or a burden, rather than an opportunity (Harrell-Bond, 1986; Whitaker, 1999).

A 1991 UNHCR review of its 'refugee aid and development' strategy found that success had been limited due to a '*lack of funds for implementation*'⁹. This, in turn, the report concluded was related to different perspectives by hosting governments and donors as to the purpose of the 'refugee aid and development' strategy. With few exceptions host governments saw repatriation as the permanent solution of the refugee problem and hence regarded the 'refugee aid and development' strategy as a mere amelioration of the situation of refugees and local people pending the repatriation of the refugees. Donor countries on the other hand provided funds having in mind local integration as the durable solution.

The recognition of the failures of local integration as a durable solution, and the fear that refugee influxes constituted a serious threat to international stability led to a series of attempts simply to eliminate the problem. Within the humanitarian world, one of the responses for the failures of integration was to blame the victims, and discussions of the so-called 'dependency syndrome' suffered by refugees began to appear (Clark, 1985; Zetter, 1991; Waldron, 1992). Refugee status itself began to be undermined through promoting the idea that refugees were not victims of human rights abuse, but were simply poor and opportunistic people 'pulled' by the aid offered as a result of gaining refugee status (Harrell-Bond, 1998).

Returnee Aid and Development Strategy – Pursuing Voluntary Repatriation

In the early 1990's, in the face of new opportunities for large-scale repatriations, UNHCR's attention focused on another strategy, namely 'returnee aid and development'. With voluntary repatriation becoming the foremost durable solution UNHCR's mandate was further extended by its Executive Committee to 'promote repatriation'. The returnee aid and development strategy promised to avoid the pitfalls, which had undermined the notion of refugee aid and development. The new approach would amongst others promote and consolidate the solution of voluntary repatriation, bring benefits to countries of origin, and lead to a reduction in the number of refugees requiring international assistance (Crisp, 2001).

Reviewing its impact UNHCR's reintegration efforts seem to have had some positive consequences especially in the immediate post-repatriation period. Looking into the effects of Quick Impact Projects for the settlement of Somali refugees, Kirkby noted that these projects had '*value in that they served the immediate needs of returnees as well as local people thus initiating rehabilitation*' (Kirkby et al., 1997: 198). However UNHCR's reintegration activities encountered a number of persistent operational difficulties. Its Quick Impact Projects have often been implemented on the basis of inadequate project identification and planning, often in isolation of other actors. Furthermore questions have been raised about the longer-term sustainability of UNHCR's reintegration activities and its contribution to processes of development and peace building (Crisp, 2001).

Initially only few academics have dared to question the axiom that repatriation is the most desirable durable solution (Harrell-Bond, 1986; Turton, 1993, Allen and Morsink, 1994; Sepulveda, 1995). Some commentators charged that 'organised' repatriation could well stand for 'coerced' meaning that '*even repatriation back into conflict situations became legitimate*' (Cuny and Reed, 1992).

Preventive Protection Strategy

Facing massive emergencies in the 1990's and in the early years of the third millennium the relationship between relief and development assistance became dominated by the concept of a continuum from relief to rehabilitation to development. In search of durable solutions the focus shifted to mitigating the effects of emergencies (and, consequently, relief aid) on the development process of a country (UNHCR, 1997c). The search for new directions in protection led UNHCR to come up with the concept of 'preventive protection'¹⁰, activities undertaken to attenuate the causes of displacement so that '*choosing to remain home is a human and viable option*'. Following strong criticism that in practice 'preventive protection' could mean being prevented from exercising the right to seek asylum (Frelick, 1992; Mc Gregor et al., 1993), UNHCR underlined that the development of the concept would not compromise the principles of 'non-refoulement' and asylum. However, UNHCR had to admit that activities within the concept of preventive protection are difficult to carry out in countries of origin¹¹. Also such activities confront issues of state sovereignty and perception of them by receiving states may affect the admission of refugees and the grant of asylum (Stafford, 1992). For these reasons UNHCR conditioned its involvement in preventive action thereby strongly reducing its application¹².

Repatriation as the Durable Solution

Though promoted as a viable and durable option for many refugee situations UNHCR has come to the realisation that local integration works in only a limited number of cases. Refugee camps were perceived by the rich donor countries as a strategy for political containment and as an effective mechanism for the delivery of humanitarian relief leading to economic self-sufficiency. As far as economic self-sufficiency of refugees in such camps was concerned, for the most part, they have been systematically impoverished. With the weakest states becoming the hosts of the vast majority of refugees the mechanism designed to control refugees and thus mitigate the potential instability frequently resulted in further instability (Harrell-Bond, 1998). The numbers involved in re-settlement to a third country have been a fraction of the overall refugee numbers. Even the number of refugees from Africa benefiting from resettlement have been few compared to Asian refugees (Mazur, 1987).

With local integration and resettlement failing, repatriation became the focus as the main permanent solution to the refugee crisis. Depending on the situation in the country of origin, or on a formal agreement between UNHCR and the country of asylum and the country of origin, UNHCR decides its repatriation options¹³ (Zieck, 1997; UNHCR 1997a). For UNHCR one of the greatest challenges is its involvement in situations where refugees are returning to their own country because of external pressures or an absence of realistic alternatives. In some instances, return to a less than ideal environment may actually be preferable to remaining in more difficult or dangerous conditions in the country of asylum (UNHCR, 1997a)¹⁴. When confronted with such situations it is commented that the organisations' primary focus must be on the safety and security of refugees in their country of origin (UNHCR, 1997a).

NGOs as Implementing Partners of the UNHCR

International relief and development Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have emerged as organisations of choice in the delivery of humanitarian aid. As a result most refugee assistance

programmes are staffed and administered by NGOs. An important reason for this has been the switch in donor enthusiasm for funding NGOs in preference to inter-governmental bodies. This development started as UNHCR had increasingly been seen as a failure in the delivery of aid and services by its donor governments (Gorman, 1984; Harrell-Bond, 1998). The pre-existing presence on the ground of NGOs in many of the countries concerned, their self-mandating humanitarian missions, their willingness to take on often huge emergency grants from western donors and their readiness to act as sub-contractors to UNHCR, have seen them quickly (and voluntarily) inserted into the frontline of the internal community's response to civil war (Slim, 1997).

NGOs are expected to be more effective because of the assumed congruence of their power with the involvement and participation of the recipients of assistance (Blaser, 1984: 83; Gorman, 1984: 41). More importantly NGOs may act as efficient vehicles for expanded or improved use of existing program approaches or services than as actual innovators of such approaches' (Gorman, 1984: 57). During the last two decades NGOs have begun shifting from relief and welfare modes of assistance to supporting self-help initiatives.

The expectation that NGOs operate in fundamentally different ways from international or national government aid agencies is not well supported by evidence. NGOs can be as guilty as other donors in top-down creation, articulation and implementation of programmes: '*confusion, mismanagement and misguided relief efforts are more common than most would care to admit*' (Gorman, 1994: 88). NGO staff are often young, not fully qualified professionally and relatively inexperienced as, for example, observed among those working with Ugandan refugees in Sudan. Further, few detailed reports of any kind, especially self-critical ones, are published which may be due in part to the system of patronage (i.e. sub-contracting of project components) within the assistance community (Harrell-Bond, 1986: 16). In addition there is little independent research concerning the operations or effectiveness of NGO's.

2.3. A Changing International Environment

UNHCR's objective to uphold the human rights of people who actually or potentially lack national protection, and whose right to remain safely in their homes has therefore been threatened, has remained constant since the organisation was established in 1951 (UNHCR, 1997c). However the international environment confronting UNHCR has changed significantly over the last decades presenting a number of challenges. This section signals the main challenges.

Strong Increase in the Number of Refugees and Others of Concern

Since the establishment of the UNHCR the issue of recent forced displacement has been of an unprecedented and significant scale. In 1951, when the UNHCR was established, there were some 1.5 million refugees by the strict international definition; by 1980 there were 8.4 million; the number of official refugees peaked in 1992 with a total of 17.8 million.

By the end of 2003 the official number of refugees stood at 9.6 million. However at the same time there were around 7.4 million other 'people of concern' to the UNHCR bringing the total number of

‘people of concern’ to UNHCR to an estimated 17.1 million (UNHCR, 2004). The number of refugees represent the lowest number in at least a decade. Hundreds of thousands of refugees returned to post-Taliban Afghanistan, many refugees also headed back to Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

UNHCR has been very reluctant to extent its services beyond refugee groups to other groups of people in need of international protection: returnees, the internally displaced, war-affected populations, the victims of mass expulsions, stateless persons, and in certain cases rejected asylum seekers. Not only that, UNHCR has been criticised for neglect of urban refugees particularly in situations where there are large rural caseloads within the same asylum country. As organisational policy regarding urban refugees is weak and unclear, protection and assistance practice tends to vary substantially between and within regions and sub-regions (UNHCR, 1995). While constituting less than 2% of UNHCR’s caseload (and less than 1% of the total caseload of concern to the High Commissioner), urban refugees demand a disproportionate amount (estimated at between 10-15%) of the organisations’ human and financial resources (UNHCR, 1995).

Underpinning of Asylum Being Eroded

Though ‘refugee’ is a legal category, tightly defined in the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol, it is national asylum law and practice which determines who fits into these categories. Such decisions are affected by many political factors, including internal public opinion regarding ‘foreigners’, and relations between the country of asylum and the sending country. Those who receive refugee status are not necessarily those who accord with the clause ‘owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted ..’. During the Cold War, for example, western states looked considerably more favourable to those escaping Communist dictatorship than those fleeing other kinds of tyranny (Leopold, 1992).

Some authors even suspect that a term like ‘environmental refugee’ was invented at least in part to de-politicise the causes of displacement, so enabling states to derogate their obligation to provide asylum. The rationale behind it is that states have no obligation to provide asylum to those who flee their homes because of environmental deterioration rather than political persecution. In international refugee law, environmental conditions do not constitute a basis for international protection (Kibreab, 1997). This has been an important argument for UNHCR not to accept claims in favour of the term ‘environmental refugees’ stating that the prevailing definition of ‘refugee’ in UN documents is adequate¹⁵.

Problematic Perception of ‘Refugees’

One of the reasons the refugee-migrant discussion is so actual is that the general perception of the public is that the refugee regime is exploited by those who leave their country, not to escape from war and insecurity in the first place, but to improve on their economic prospects or future status.

The modern concepts of ‘refugee’ as articulated in the activities and statements of the international community, many academic studies and the popular presentation in the media, show refugees to represent a chronic problem. To describe a person as a ‘refugee’ has few positive connotations: ‘*at the best it elicits sympathy and assistance and at worst it brings hostility and suspicion*’ (Bakewell, 1999: 7).

Refugee movements have been seen to threaten inter-communal harmony and undermine major societal values by altering the ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic composition of populations. Mass influxes have been described as endangering social and economic stability. Refugees have been criticised for becoming a political force in their host country. Universally, societies fear that uncontrolled migration may swamp their existing cultural identity. Refugees are typically seen to preserve their own cultural heritage and national identity in line with their dream of an eventual return to their homeland, thus complicating their integration into the host societies (Dowty and Loescher, 1996).

Internally Displaced Persons: the Hidden Refugees

When internally displaced persons ('refugees within their own borders') were first counted in 1982 1.2 million were found in eleven countries. By 1997 the number had soared to more than 20 million in at least thirty-five countries worldwide (Cohen and Deng, 1998: 1). Such figures do not include possibly millions more who seek refuge from persecution across the permeable borders of much of the developing world (Zetter, 1999: 47).

Beginning in the mid-1990s, more uprooted people became internally displaced than refugees, even though they could expect more protection and assistance as refugees under the aegis of UNHCR (Cohen and Deng, 1998: 29-30). This trend is attributed to a number of factors. The distance to frontiers or topographical obstacles may prevent flight across borders. Uprooted people might prefer to seek places of relative safety in familiar surroundings in which they can live and work among groups sharing the same culture, language, and religion. Others may decide to flee to an area of their country that is under the control of a group with which they sympathise and from which they might expect protection. Increasingly the absence of alternatives is influencing the decision to remain displaced (Cohen and Deng, 1998: 29). In practice this means that uprooted people are withheld their right to seek and enjoy asylum from prosecution in other countries.

UNHCR's interest in the protection and welfare of internally displaced persons arises from '*the similarity between such persons and refugees, in terms of causes and consequences of their displacement and their humanitarian needs*' (UNHCR, 2000b). The fundamental objective of UNHCR in its involvement with internally displaced persons is '*to promote their protection and pursue solutions through operational activities as well as advocacy based on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*' (UNHCR, 2000b). However, UNHCR's involvement with internally displaced persons is based on a rather strict set of requirements, which are unlikely to be met in a considerable number of cases¹⁶.

Though sometimes displaced populations find a degree of security, more often than not for these people, interior exile leads only to more suffering, insecurity, harassment and persecution. Durieux, therefore, concludes that '*the problem of a displaced person, which is but the reverse side of the refugee problem, is also its dark side*' (Durieux, 1996: 7).

Refugees and Impact on Their Hosts

Since the late 1970's, the international community has been well aware of the severe impact that large-scale refugee populations can have on the social, economic and political life of host developing

countries. In this respect it is interesting to note that in many western countries this discussion has become pertinent when it comes to what is perceived as a large influx of asylum seekers. Since the highest refugee concentrations are in some of the poorest countries in the world the presence of refugees compound the already prevailing economic, environmental, social, and at times, political difficulties in these countries (UNHCR, 1997b).

The general understanding of the economic impact related to the presence of refugees is that refugees compete with local citizens for scarce resources such as land, water, housing, food and medical services. Over time their presence is blamed to lead to more substantial demands on natural resources (with long-term implications on their sustainable regeneration), education and health facilities, energy, transportation, social services and employment (UNHCR, 1997b). A common course of discontent for a local population, especially one that is poor, is to see refugees receiving services or entitlements which are not available to them (UNHCR, 1997b). Administration of refugees by itself can cause a strain on the local administration. The economic impact of refugees on host areas, however is not necessarily negative. An economic stimulus may be generated by the presence of refugees and can lead to the opening and development of the host regions (via local purchase of food and non-food items, the assets brought by refugees themselves, as well as employment and income accrued to local population through assistance projects for refugee areas). The presence of refugees, as a focus of attention, is also known to attract development agencies to the host areas.

When it comes to social impact the common complaints are that refugees have added to security problems in general and for example in an increase in crime rates, theft and murder. Other social problems such as prostitution and alcoholism are also claimed to be on the rise in refugee areas. Enforced idleness and poverty within a refugee camp may cause an escalation of such tendencies, particularly if there are groups of young men who are not meaningfully employed (UNHCR, 1997b).

In an extensive survey of political and security concerns for the host state Dowty and Loescher (1996: 48-50) summarise the issues that may play a role and forms the cause of concern: physical control of a refugee population which may include armed combatants; control of cross-border terrorism or smuggling; raids and guerrilla activity across the border which may drag the host state into an existing conflict; the offer of sanctuary to refugees which may in itself invite military retaliation, and; real or perceived threats of 'refugee warrior communities'.

Until relatively recently it has been recognised that refugee migrations bring both costs as well as benefits to host countries (Kuhlman, 1994; Sorenson 1994; Whitaker, 1999). Recent research of the experience of a refugee influx by host communities indicate that the well-off and well positioned hosts are better poised to exploit the refugee situation, capitalise on it and tend to resolve heightened tensions in their interest. Hosts, who were already disadvantaged in the local socio-economic structure, prior to the arrival of the refugees, struggled to maintain access to basic resources and became further marginalized (Leach, 1991: 55-56; Whitaker, 1999).

Waning Donor Support

Most refugee crises are protracted affairs resulting in the average humanitarian relief operation in the 1990's to last for three to five years (Dowty and Loescher, 1996: 46). Donors are generally willing to

support activities leading to genuine integration or voluntary repatriation. They seem to be increasingly reluctant to support long-term care and maintenance programmes.

Most of the refugees are sheltered in the world's poorest states. Thus costs fall disproportionately on nations least able to afford it. The presence of large impoverished refugee populations further strains resources and perpetuates the poverty of the host nations (Dowty and Loescher, 1996). Host governments expect, at the very least, that the international community will help compensate for the costs incurred in providing asylum for the refugees. No government of a low-income country is prepared to contract loans or reallocate its precious development funds to programmes designed for, or required because of, large numbers of refugees on their land (UNHCR, 1997b).

2.4. The New World Disorder

The End of the Cold War

During the Cold War the ideological confrontation between East and West placed a premium on maintaining order and stability among friendly states and allies. Yet, at the same time a familiar feature of super power competition was to bolster or undermine African governments. Super-Power rivalries fuelled some of Africa's longest and most deadly conflicts as across Africa undemocratic and oppressive regimes were supported and sustained by the competing super-powers (United Nations, 1998). Still there was a certain predictability in the way political and humanitarian mechanisms could be used to respond to crises shaped by competing bi-polar interests. On the humanitarian front, standard approaches were used to help people who sought asylum across borders. Assistance was provided in the relative security of camps or settlements outside the immediate war zone (United Nations, 1998). The end of the Cold War has changed this and, in Africa as elsewhere, the changing nature of conflict requires new responses.

As a result of the changing international environment the nature of UNHCR's work has undergone significant transformation in many parts of the world. UNHCR's programmes were concentrated in the relatively stable environment provided by countries of asylum. Since the late 1980's, however, a growing proportion of UNHCR's activities has taken place within countries of origin, both in zones of active conflict, and in the context of multidimensional peacekeeping, peace building and conflict resolution operations. Operational environments have become increasingly difficult given the number of protracted refugee crises, for which no clear solutions are in sight, as well as the likely increase in the number of intra state conflicts. (UNHCR, 1997c).

The internationalisation of civil wars in the 1990s has moved largely from a war-making to a humanitarian and peace-making paradigm (Slim, 1996) As a symptom of this, Slim remarks that the phenomenon of civil war which was not previously described as 'complex war' has now been described as 'complex emergency'. This reflects the experience of outsiders in the international community who seek to respond to such wars as '*essentially non-combatant, humanitarian and peace-promoting third parties*'.

Within this new interventionism, humanitarian action is no longer adequately understood in its former minimalist form as it no longer may rule out forcible international military intervention in the affairs of a state on humanitarian grounds. A much wider array of international actors (UN agencies, NGOs and new variants of UN forces) are all recognised as conducting humanitarian interventions in contemporary conflict with the use of force as an option in, but not a determinant of, a humanitarian intervention (Slim, 1996).

The end of the Cold War has challenged traditional notions of security and sovereignty, placing refugee and IDP issues much higher on the international agenda and creating new opportunities for international action.

Some argue that the international emphasis is shifting ‘from humanitarian obligations to legal obligations of one state not to harm other states by imposing the burdens of unmanaged refugee flows’ (e.g. Dowty and Loescher, 1996). In that light refugee flows are seen to form a threat to peace under the UN charter and are therefore argued to be increasingly accepted as grounds for international action, including armed intervention, against the state generating the refugee flow.

Concerning IDPs, there is a growing understanding by the international community that when the rights of human beings to survive confront the sovereignty rights of a government of questionable legitimacy, the international community should act on behalf of innocent people (Cohen and Deng, 1998b).

The War on Terror

The discourse evolving around the war on terror, as initiated by the terrorist attacks in the United States of America in September 2001, is being used to sanction international military interventions on security grounds. More than ever this has brought together a wide array of international actors in conflict areas characterised by high levels of insecurity and armed confrontations and incidents. In this new form of interventionism, labelled co-ercive humanitarianism, the use of force co-exists with the delivery of aid and rehabilitation support. One of the consequences in such dynamic environments has been the blurring between military and humanitarian aid deliverers. Addressing the plight of the displaced in such situations is presenting huge challenges for the international humanitarian community.

One of the casualties of the global war on terror is the neutrality and independence of humanitarian organisations. In the words of the British chief of the Red Cross Red Crescent: ‘*We are able to work across the front line for only as long as we are seen as neutral. The moment that sense of impartiality is lost, our mission is lost. We might as well pack up and go home. We’ll be seen as part of the war machine and we’ll be unable to operate*’. He adds that the ‘“with us or against us” rhetoric of the US-led coalition in Iraq and Afghanistan leaves little space for neutral agencies’ (Interview in the Guardian Weekly, December 24th 2004-January 6th 2005).

2.5. Discussion

Refugees are commonly thought of as a unique category of people in society. They are seen as exceptional, outside of normal social experience and disoriented because of their group flight in which they were forced to leave everything behind. Migrants on the other hand, are perceived as rational, calculating, deliberate and transferring their best capabilities in the process of relocating (Mazur, 1987). Mazur blames inappropriate generalisations about differences between migrants and refugees for having '*encouraged ignorance of refugees as conscious, active human beings before, during and after their flight in a manner similar to migrants*'. (Mazur, 1987).

Looking at policy issues Rogers and Copeland state that '*The history of responses to international refugee movements, and the development of legal and organisational norms to shape them, reveals a continuing concern on the part of the international system to codify, order, and make stable a process which is inherently unstable and presumed to be transitory*' (Rogers and Copeland, 1993: 39).

Observers critically reviewing the evolution of refugee policy state that such policies demonstrates how '*the interests and priorities of the most powerful have generally prevailed over more moral obligations concerning international responsibility to assist refugees materially and to uphold their human rights in the world of states*' (Harrell-Bond, 1998, referring to Skran, 1995: 70). They argue that refugees are seen to represent two conflicting dimensions of international politics. On the one hand, there is the question of 'real politik' represented by the tensions which refugees create among and between states and other international actors. On the other, refugees represent a fundamental challenge to sovereignty, by forcing international actors to consider ethical principles and issues of fundamental human rights, which are part of their international obligations, over and above the interest of a tidy system of sovereign states. Or as put by Chimni international refugee policy is '*principally articulated by the developed countries to contain and manage the global refugee problem in the light of their interests*' (Chimni, 1998).

People are on the move for such a mix of reasons that refugee definitions are less and less capable of capturing their experience, which is likely to involve a '*complicated mix of compulsion and choice*'. Out of both valid and invalid concerns for security issues raised by mass movements, receiving states respond with tighter asylum and new immigration policies. They also respond with fear, racism and xenophobia. As a result the international regime of refugee protection, carefully built up over decades, show signs of unravelling (Stafford, 1992).

The nature of violent conflict has fundamentally changed from an era of 'wars' to one that is characterised by complex political emergencies (Goodhand and Hulme, 1997). The brunt of suffering and casualties are inflicted on civilians resulting in forcibly displacement for millions of people. Not set up to deal with this kind of conflict the United Nations Security Council and its specialised agency UNHCR are required to respond to this new challenge. In intra state conflicts the main aim, increasingly, is not the destruction of armies but of civilians and entire ethnic groups: '*Preventing such wars is no longer a matter of defending States or protecting allies. It is a matter of defending humanity itself*' (The Secretary General of the United Nations for the UN Security Council, 1999).

3. Humanitarian Practice & Repatriation Discourse

‘The act of mercy, once believed to be simple and pure is complicated and politically implicated in the conditions of today’s world’

(Anderson, 1996: 4).

‘The UNHCR and other aid donors must learn about the background and dynamic nature of the refugee groups before offering ‘assistance’ and permit refugees’ qualities of resilience, determination, technical sophistication and inventiveness to determine the nature of that assistance’.

(Harrell-Bond, 1986).

The changing nature of conflict and the new ‘World Disorder’ require a new international response. This will have major consequences for the humanitarian aid practice. The first section introduces some of the main critiques on the practice of humanitarian aid. Such critiques have resulted in new approaches in humanitarian assistance, the most important of which are discussed in section two. With intra-state conflict fast becoming the prominent type of conflict, and the pre-dominance of repatriation as the preferred durable solution for refugees, the discourse of repatriation has come under pressure (section three). Section four presents a short discussion.

3.1. Critiques on Humanitarian Practice

The Creation of Dependency

Citing a wide range of authors in the field of aid practice Harrell-Bond criticises assistance policies which have encouraged the confinement of large numbers of refugees in settlements or camps rendering them dependent on relief. Camps deprive refugees of access to networks of social and economic support and there is evidence that over the long term even those camps deemed self-sufficient become destitute. Focusing assistance on refugees in camps ignores the needs of the majority of refugees who are self-settled. The need to access funding not only requires counting refugees for the purposes of assessing need but also involves controlling their movement and representing them as helpless and dependent. Harrell-Bond adds that *‘despite this being an inordinately expensive way of assisting refugees and, in practice, contravening most of their rights*

host governments have acquiesced in order to become eligible for international aid'. The popular media image of the refugee as a 'problem', rather than as 'persons with problems', has obscured the reality that refugees are ready to put their energies into productive work which could also benefit their hosts (Harrell-Bond, 1986).

Life of people in camps has been shown to adversely affect the mental health of already traumatised people (Summerfield, 1991 and 1996; Bracken et al., 1997). Inhabitants frequently exhibit despair and helplessness at their long-term prospects and the combination of confinement and dependency encourages them to abandon social responsibilities (Clark, 1985). This is exacerbated by what has become known as the 'dependency syndrome' created by the way international assistance is provided to refugees in camps. A meta-analysis found that both pre- and post-displacement factors, as related to the socio-political context of the refugee experience, are associated with mental health (Porter and Haslam, 2005).

The long-term goal of most governments, both host as well as donor governments, is that refugees eventually will repatriate. Common sense and experience suggest that people impoverished by an economy based on relief will be unable to return without enormous investment in their economic rehabilitation, while those able to acquire the resources in exile are likely to return voluntarily when conditions are conducive (Sepulveda, 1995).

Labelling

Individuals qualifying for refugee status are first and foremost seen so by the UNHCR based on a set of criteria grounded on a jurisdictional base. The perspective of the international community on refugees or internally displaced persons results from the reductionist process of labelling and categorising refugees. Refugees and displaced people are seen as a '*temporary aberration in the natural order of things*' (Bakewell, 1999). Describing a person as a refugee is not merely a statement concerning their personal history and legal status, but brings with it a package of problems because he or she is a 'refugee'. In such circumstances the label 'refugee' becomes a description of the whole person leaving no room for other identities, such as mother, farmer, headman rather than it being one aspect of their lives (Bakewell, 1999: 10). Labelling can be seen as a process of stereotyping and can be a vehicle for promoting non-participation and control (Zetter, 1991; Opondo, 1996: 25). Refugees are seen as helpless individuals who need the 'good service' and assistance of the international refugee regime.

Labelling is central to all policy formulation and administration. Moreover it possesses its own dynamic characteristics. Those who create and successfully impose labels in effect determine the rules of access to, and allocation of resources in society. Distinctions between people are made on the basis of criteria which may not be central, or self-evident, to them: '*People are thus compelled to adjust their behaviour, to redefine the way they present themselves in order to handle access successfully*' (Wood, 1985: 352-6). In other words behaviour according to one's expected 'role' is sanctioned. One of its consequences is that '*observed behaviour may be less a reflection of an individual's values, beliefs and motivations than a conditional response*' (Harrell-Bond, 1986: 4, 6, 227).

Ultimately labelling induces asymmetrical relationships of power through which the labels of some are imposed on other people. For example, in many refugee situations those over fifty are regarded vulnerable thus eligible for special care and support by the UNHCR. Refugee communities quickly learn that by stressing the needs of their elderly additional resources can be obtained. A more serious example is that international refugee law is pre-occupied with attributing rights to individual persons rather than to a community, thereby omitting traditional rules and regulations as well as reciprocal relationships and social meaning. A nice illustration is the resettlement of an 83-year-old Nuer refugee from one of the Sudanese refugee camps in western Ethiopia. Though his most senior wife was allowed to join him they had no family or kin in Norway, yet they were expected to build a future there.

Some researchers conclude that refugees are ‘framed’ or ‘labelled’ as clients necessitating a service provider: ‘*The lasting impression engendered by refugees around the world is that of a victim, a kind of immigrant and, perhaps most importantly, a client in need of assistance*’ (De Voe, 1981; Zetter, 1985; Mazur 1987: 457; Harrell-Bond et al., 1992).

Exclusion of Participation

Dominant approaches of professions, disciplines and bureaucracies concerned with rural development are questioned and criticised for lacking true participation (Chambers, 1993). No doubt this critique carries over to other fields including humanitarianism. For most of its advocates, participation of communities involves a lengthy process, for which there is perceived to be little time in refugee situations. Lack of participation is known to contribute to the failure of agencies to realise how unaware they are of socio-economic and political processes in refugee communities (Mazur, 1987). By failing to account for such processes aid programming might fall short of expectations or risks being mis-directed.

Participation is a means for people to articulate their needs and it is the motivating process to satisfy those needs through local initiatives and efforts. More specifically, this would involve people playing a part in the definition of their needs, enhancing the generation of resources required to achieve them, improving the distribution and access to essential goods and services, and satisfying the psychological desire of people to influence decisions that affect their lives (Lisk, 1985: 22). Preconditions for promoting and sustaining effective popular participation in the development process have been described as the decentralisation of decision making powers and resources, the two-way flow of information between the local population and the authorities, representation of the people concerned on decision making bodies at all levels, and the creation of institutions for broad based participation in decision making (Lisk, 1985: 10). Such conditions have certainly not been in place in most forced migration situations.

3.2. New Approaches in Humanitarian Assistance

Relief, Development and the Continuum

The linkage between relief and development received prominence due to a variety of factors. Donor concerns about the increasing portion of aid budgets spent on emergencies were addressed by emphasising the linkage between relief and development, with especially the latter one being a thankful cause on which to spend their money. The challenge of rehabilitation itself requires looking at linkages between relief and development. Emergencies have long been seen to obstruct development by diverting funds from local institutions resulting in chains of logistical and management commands which are less responsive to development needs. Linking relief and development, so it was reasoned, would offer positive benefits. The ideal model being relief and development interventions implemented harmoniously to provide poor people with secure livelihoods and efficient safety-nets while mitigating the frequency and impact of shocks and easing rehabilitation (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell, 1994).

However, for poor people, relief and development are inextricably bound together in the complex and day-to-day business of managing risk and securing livelihoods (Roche 1996). Conventional division of programmes into the categories of relief, rehabilitation, or development is not only unhelpful but more seriously does not reflect local reality.

Relief to development models were based on sudden emergencies that required relief aid programming, such as the droughts in parts of Africa. The underlying understanding was of a rather linear sequence of relief to development. In order to design relief interventions that promote development, ways need to be considered in which relief can be planned taking development principles into account. The implementation of the intervention would thus contribute more directly to long-term development (Anderson and Woodrow, 1989).

More room for the linkage between relief and development is created in cases where the scope of relief is broadened (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell, 1994). In many conflict situations relief has been restricted to life-sustaining services in health, nutrition, shelter, protection and water and sanitation. New initiatives deal with social institutions, psychological health, legitimate political formations and demilitarisation. By incorporating new initiatives, more and better opportunities are created for relief and development linkages. Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell (1994) postulate that the key to link relief and development is to apply a developmental approach to relief: the relief operation as such should contribute as far as possible to development. The challenge from the development side is to find ways of reducing the frequency, intensity and the impact of shocks, which in turn will reduce the need for emergency relief.

Experience has shown that in complex political emergencies the relief - development continuum cannot be considered as a simple linear sequence. More dynamic models recognising the complexity and diversity of livelihood strategies are emphasised. In order to achieve lasting and real changes Commins (1996) pleaded for a more inclusive concept of development not depending on the end of

armed hostilities, as they include relations and capacities that require attention even during conflicts. New roles for local NGO's and grassroots organisations emerge during conflicts and stretch them in their operations and skills. When conflict diminishes these roles and tasks must then adapt. Roche (1996) calls for a mix of responses in which capacity building, strengthening of local coping mechanisms and political protection are the main elements¹⁷. In short, the long-term nature of certain emergencies require long-term responses.

Within the context of complex political emergencies it has been argued that in order to move legitimately from relief aid programming to development aid programming a number of fundamental conditions must be met: a minimum level of security, respect for human rights and humanitarian access. Evidence from the field needs to demonstrate that the emergency is over and donor governments need to accept the legitimacy of the national government structures (Macrae et al., 1997). Uncritical pursuit of developmental strategies in situations whereby those criteria are not met may well negatively affect the welfare of the conflict-affected populations.

Other more critical voices note that the transition from emergency crisis to long-term development has often been described as a 'continuum' for the purpose of analysis. It is critiqued that this does not conform to actual situations which follow no set pattern, chronology or order. Emergency relief, rehabilitation work and development assistance all co-exist in times of conflict and crisis, and they interact in innumerable ways (OECD, 2001: 107). The notion of a continuum and other more complex modes of linking essentially face similar problems of a conceptual, political and institutional nature (Frerks, 2004: 177-178). The linkages between relief and development will have to take place in concrete settings defined in time and place and will be characterised by specific economic, social and cultural relationships. However, as Frerks states, the specific position of refugees is seen to imply a whole series of discontinuities. Such situations could be analysed from the perspective of actor-oriented approaches through the related study of development interfaces (focusing on structural discontinuities and cultural and cognitive discrepancies characterising many intervention situations).

Needs, Vulnerabilities and Capacities

Most humanitarian relief efforts have concentrated on meeting immediate needs, rather than on addressing and lessening vulnerabilities. In the context of humanitarian aid it is important to distinguish between needs and vulnerabilities of a community (Anderson and Woodrow, 1989). Needs, as used in a disaster context, refer to the immediate requirements for survival or recovery from a calamity. Vulnerabilities refer to the long-term factors which affect the ability of a community to respond to events or which make it susceptible to calamities. Needs arise out of a crisis itself and are relatively short-term while vulnerabilities '*precede disasters, contribute to their severity, impede effective disaster response and continue afterwards*' (Anderson and Woodrow, 1989).

Acknowledging vulnerabilities as well as capacities of war-affected populations must be regarded as essential for designing and implementing humanitarian responses that have developmental impacts (Anderson and Woodrow, 1989). It is therefore argued that vulnerability and capacity analysis is fundamental for agencies to help with recovery and systematic development beyond recovery. In this light development can be defined as a process by which vulnerabilities are reduced and capacities increased. It is not the question of what the emergency relief needs are, but how they might be met in

ways that contribute to development in the long run. How can food aid, to meet immediate needs, be provided in such a way that it addresses the long-term vulnerabilities (e.g. insufficient food production due to recurrent droughts) of communities? How can communities build capacities that enable sustainable food security and that are accessible to the local communities?

Linking vulnerability with capacity has been increasingly seen as a key element in building a concern for development into the vast and ever expanding disaster-relief community. However, practitioners are often unfamiliar with the process (Davis, 2004: 132).

Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Aid and Development

Provision of aid in conflict settings is no easy task: *'the act of mercy, once believed to be simple and pure is complicated and politically implicated in the conditions of today's world'* (Anderson, 1996: 4). It has been observed that either directly or indirectly relief can fuel the war effort, escalate violence, facilitate the isolation of particular displaced groups and undermine coping strategies (Billon, 2000a). Duffield states that the much proclaimed 'operational neutrality' of humanitarian actors in war zones has in fact allowed *'a widespread incorporation of humanitarian aid into the fabric of political violence'* (Duffield, 1996: 173). It is because of observations and critiques like these that conflict sensitive approaches to development and humanitarian aid became a focus of reflection.

Do No Harm: Supporting Local Capacities for Peace

A conflict sensitive approach, which has become well known is Anderson's idea of 'local capacities for peace'. This approach aims to offer aid in conflict settings in such a way that it helps people to disengage from conflict in order to rebuild their lives. Case studies in violent areas around the world revealed clear patterns of how aid interacts with local tensions in both negative and positive ways. Two general patterns by which aid was found to exacerbate conflict dealt with aid as a transfer of resources and the ethical message carried by aid¹⁸ (Anderson, 1996: 18-19).

Hansen and Minear (1999) describe how cease-fires in the Caucasus have prevented large-scale life-threatening emergencies and have created space for peace negotiations. Yet genuine conflict resolution and normalisation of the situation proved to be elusive, frustrating the return of uprooted populations and constraining reconstruction. In applying the local capacities for peace approach a number of recurrent problematic themes were encountered¹⁹. One critical issue is that the role of relief agencies at the micro level, aimed to lower the intensity and impact of conflicts, is often unrelated to that of international political bodies at the macro-level which aims to bring conflicts to an end (Stubbs, 1997; Anderson, 1999; Hansen and Minear, 1999). This led Stubbs to remark that *'an integrated approach to peace building as social development or as social politics is preferable to a discrete approach close to a micro-sociological emphasis on conflict resolution'*²⁰.

More recently the 'local capacities for peace' approach has been presented as a possibility to meet the challenges posed by the changing nature of armed conflicts (Frerks and Hilhorst, 1999: 14). Local capacities for peace starts from an interest in local actors in conflict situations, an interest in their perceptions and agency.

Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace or War

Though aid is not likely to cause or end wars, the terms on which it is provided can either reinforce, exacerbate or prolong conflict. Development agencies often fail to recognise the many ways they continue to act and think in non-war terms (Anderson, 1999). Based on such concerns Anderson suggested an analytical framework for considering the impact of aid on conflict by identifying and feeding ‘*capacities for war*’ and ‘*capacities for peace*’ (Andersson 1999). In this framework the planning, implementation and monitoring of aid programmes can be critically reviewed, and adapted if needed, in terms of feeding ‘*dividers*’ and ‘*capacities for war*’ as opposed to ‘*connectors*’ and ‘*local capacities for peace*’²¹. Anderson identified a range of types of ‘*dividers*’ and ‘*connectors*’ categorised as systems and institutions, attitudes and actions, values and interests, experiences, and symbols and occasions (Anderson, 1999: 74). Aid affects all these categories by either feeding dividers, thus increasing capacities for war, or connectors building capacities for peace.

Peace Building as Cornerstone of Development Co-operation

In the guidelines of the Development Assistance Committee the role of development aid in complex emergencies is defined as: ‘*Development co-operation efforts should strive for an environment of structural stability as a basis of sustainable development*’ (OECD 2001: 85). Structural stability is defined as an environment ‘*in which there are dynamic and representative social and political structures capable of managing change and resolving disputes without resort of violence*’ (OECD 2001: 85).

Over the long-term development co-operation is seen to contribute to the alleviation of the root causes of conflict and establishment of institutions capable of managing and resolving disputes in a peaceful way (OECD 2001: 9 and 85). While it may sometimes be difficult to articulate and analyse, this ‘*peace-building objective*’ must form the cornerstone of all development co-operations strategies and programmes (OECD, 2001: 85). Conflict prevention, therefore, has become a central development goal.

Reviewing the nexus conflict and development Frerks (2003: 5) highlighted that the relationship between conflict and development is not a simple direct and linear one but a very complex relationship²². The practice of development assistance²³ ‘*approximates generally working around conflict rather than working in or working on conflict*’ (Frerks, 2003: 6).

The growing understanding in recent years of the links between conflict, peace and external assistance has sharpened the focus on the role which development assistance can play in both ameliorating and exacerbating the root causes of violent conflict (Gaigals and Leonhardt, 2001). Tools, such as peace and conflict impact assessment, are being developed in order to incorporate conflict prevention objectives into assistance programmes. Other initiatives are the establishment of early warning units, post-conflict reconstruction programmes and the development of conflict prevention networks.

3.3. The Changing Discourse on Repatriation

Repatriations can take many different forms in terms of their degrees in voluntariness in returning, the levels of assistance provided to those returning, the receptiveness to the returnees as well as their subsequent success in re-establishing themselves on their return (Rogge, 1994: 29). As a consequence definitions of return and repatriation vary considerably. This study adopts the following working definition of repatriation: preparations for return, the process of return, and the reception and arrangements for integration made immediately after the arrival in the country of destination (Quick et al., 1995: 2). As opposed to ‘spontaneous repatriation’ repatriations organised and/or assisted by the international community are referred to as ‘organised repatriation’. In the case of displaced people who have been granted refugee status organised repatriation takes place under UNHCR sponsorship and jurisdiction (granting refugees the right of voluntary repatriation). Yet refugees may repatriate spontaneously and not await organised repatriation. Organised repatriation can involve internally displaced persons though international agencies can only provide assistance or protection during displacement and return unless invited to do so by the national government.

New forms of interventionism emerging out of a new-world order raise major operational challenges for the international community²⁴ (Slim, 1996). Protection is now paramount alongside assistance. The minimalist commodity based humanitarianism, which predominated during the Cold War, is no longer acceptable to most relief agencies. This by itself poses a whole range of other concerns one of which Slim calls the crisis of values which underlies the crisis of theory in NGO practice: *‘usually manifest in the apparent clash between humanitarianism and human rights, this problem of values is essentially that of a feeling forced to choose between responding to the right of life or the right to justice and the broader values of civil and political rights. This tension is essentially the healthy frustration which comes from realising that saving life is not enough when wider human rights abuses endanger that life in the first place and continue unabated with, without or even because of humanitarian relief’*.

It is in the context of new forms of interventionism and major operational challenges that the traditional discourse on repatriation needs to be re-visited.

Voluntary Repatriation as the Preferred Durable Solution

Explanations for the promotion of ‘voluntary repatriation’ as the preferred durable solution to refugee situations, rather than local integration or re-settlement to a third country, can be generalised by the following range of arguments: a change in traditional African hospitality to host displaced towards a more restrictive mode²⁵ (Crisp, 1984); its cost effectiveness by donor states (Harrell-Bond, 1986); its pragmatic response and disinterest in the other two options by the international community²⁶ (Allen and Turton, 1996) and the increasing salience of national identities in the vacuum left by the end of the Cold War (Dolan, 1996). The resurgence of voluntary repatriation has been explained as a function of the failure of the other two classic ‘durable’ solutions, with less than one percent of the world’s refugees in any given year escaping the limbo of refugee status by resettling in third countries or by obtaining citizenship in the country of asylum (Opondo, 1996: 23).

Koser and Black see the lack of attention paid to the experience of refugees as returnees as another reason for the pre-dominance of the repatriation discourse (Koser and Black, 1999: 12). They quote a 1997 Human Rights Watch report which concludes that *'the guarantee of voluntariness, the definition of security, and the promotion of lasting return and reintegration in peoples' homes are all repatriation priorities which UNHCR is increasingly perceived as unable to deliver in the new political environment'*²⁷.

The discourse that repatriation is the optimum and most feasible durable solution is increasingly being criticised. Questions are asked regarding the voluntary nature of repatriation, the assumptions underlying the planning of repatriation, the assumption that repatriation actually means homecoming and the widely held idea that repatriation signifies the end of the refugee cycle. All these issues underline the need to review the current discourse on repatriation.

The Voluntary Nature of Repatriation

Serious questions have been raised about the voluntary nature of repatriation. In essence such questions relate to the violation of the principle of 'non-refoulement' which prohibits the return of refugees when their lives and freedom will be threatened: the corner stone of refugee protection.

Based on the observations of a number of authors Koser and Black (1999) conclude that *'UNHCR in response to financial as well as political pressure from donor states actively promote the repatriation option in the short term, rather than facilitating voluntary repatriation when conditions have become conducive'*. Eastmond and Öjendal, for example, question the voluntary nature of return of Cambodian refugees criticising the incentives used and the information provided about conditions in Cambodia²⁸. Noticing both the importance as well as the lack of mechanisms which would ensure the provision of reliable information about areas of return Quick et al. (1995) observe serious obstacles to the feasibility to identify and apply criteria for return in safety and dignity (a corner stone of the principle of 'non-refoulement').

The in-ability of the international community to find solutions to the refugee crisis have forced refugees to 'voluntary' return to their homelands in the midst of crisis which forced them to become refugees in the first place. Voluntary repatriation thus does not become the resolution of the refugee phenomenon envisaged by the international community but a de facto continuation of 'refugeeism' in that they join other internally displaced people, or internal refugees upon their return (Opondo, 1996: 24).

From the perspective of the international refugee system return is essentially determined by macro level events (e.g. the signing of a peace accord) and leaves little room for the complexities of micro-level decision-making. According to Dolan this undermines the notion that return should be 'voluntarily', or in other words *'involve some elements of individual agency on the part of the refugee'* (Dolan, 1999: 93). Crisp (1984), studying voluntary repatriation programmes of African refugees concludes that such programmes should be organised *'once refugees have independently expressed the desire to return to their country of origin or have started to return spontaneously in substantial numbers'*. He underlines the importance of facilitating voluntary repatriation rather than encouraging it²⁹.

Flawed Assumptions Underlying Repatriation

Planning for the repatriation of refugees may be based on assumptions that may prove inaccurate. Serious flaws underlying the planning for repatriation have been well documented in the case of Afghan refugees from Iran (Marsden, 1999) and the repatriation of Mozambican refugees from South Africa (Dolan, 1999). Widely quoted assumptions such as the extended family system being an important element in ensuring survival of prospective returnees should not be taken for granted³⁰.

The expectations that governments and assistance providers have of what will happen to returnees following their repatriation usually differs vastly from what potential returnees expect will happen to them. According to Hammond this divergence is reflected in the difference between the set of labels imposed by external actors and the testimonies and descriptions given by returnees themselves about their post-repatriation lives. Terms in the discourse of repatriation such as ‘return’ and ‘returned’ are *‘riddled with value judgements that reflect a segmentary, sedentary idea of how people ought to live, what their relation to their ‘homeland’ should be, and ultimately how they should go about constructing their lives once the period of exile ends’* (Hammond, 1999: 230).

Repatriation and Homecoming

The widely held notion that repatriation represents homecoming is increasingly questioned, as a return ‘home’ might not be possible or even desirable. Koser and Black underline the dangers of the concept of a return ‘home’ by remarking that returnees rather than moving to a stable and revitalised ‘home’ might end up in situations characterised by low-level conflict³¹. Refugees particularly in Africa may flee and repatriate across political boundaries which do not coincide with the ethnic or tribal boundaries which are more meaningful to them (Rogge, 1994).

The phrase ‘population displacement’ itself is based on the implicit assumption that a given population has its own proper place, territory or homeland. This assumption is deeply embedded in the European political theory of nationalism, according to which there is a natural identity between people and place, and the world is made up of clearly bounded politico-territorial identities known as sovereign states (UNRISD, 1993). The assumption that it is natural for an ethnic group to be ‘rooted’ in a particular place may lead to the conclusion that voluntary repatriation is the ‘natural’ solution to refugee crises.

Talking about return ‘home’ by planners pre-supposes a link between identity and place. Eastmond and Öjendal (1999) state that the concept of home is more complex and dynamic in war induced migration: *‘while the meaning of ‘home’ is not culturally universal and not always tied to a single place, the disruptions of war may require new and more pragmatic considerations’*. Traditional concepts of ‘reintegration’ may also mask the creative power of returnees to transform a new place into ‘home’. Therefore Malkki asks for more attention to be paid to the social and cultural processes through which a place is invested with particular significance, a process which she refers to as ‘emplacement’ (Malkki, 1995).

Constraints for Aid Agencies

As repatriation is more complex than the transportation of people from one side of an international border to the other, the challenge is to provide assistance to help absorb the returnees or to find an

alternative to repatriation. According to Hammond, actors within the humanitarian system have in many cases deliberately showed no interest in the medium to long term experiences and needs of returnees, as they lack even the resources to perform their current responsibilities. He adds that in the aid world *'to understand is often to recognise, and to recognise is to take responsibility'* (Hammond, 1999: 234).

Negotiations to plan and undertake repatriation presents a challenge within the international refugee system. Examples of these are the 'principled issue' of incorporating national development into the process of repatriation, the 'mandate dilemma' (expectations of UNHCR to be involved in community development as part of its repatriation activities), the high turn over of UN staff affecting relationships with major stakeholders and the separation of funding between repatriation and development aid, while at the same time operating the concept of a continuum between relief and rehabilitation. Practical issues related to aid provision as part of the repatriation process include poor access to areas where refugees have returned to because of poor infrastructure or insecurity, to issues such as an increase of legitimacy of certain leaders by virtue of delivering aid in areas under their control (Marsden, 1999).

Agencies lack information and understanding about the cultural, economic and political aspects relevant for the contexts they work in (Pottier, 1996). According to Pottier this reduces returnees confidence in humanitarian workers and places limitations on their ability to respond to specific needs. Aid agencies are pre-occupied with statistical data, which they need as a tool to demonstrate accountability to their donors, rather than focusing on the context within which the refugees are placed who they are supposed to assist (Harrell-Bond et al., 1992).

3.4. Discussion

People displaced across national borders often come to camps and settlements as a last resort. Many refugees remain self-settled, or prefer to do so if given the freedom, rather than giving up their autonomy and freedom. Already in the 1970s it had been recognised that the vast majority of refugees were not living in camps and thus not the recipients of international assistance. Stein and Clark (1985) estimated that at the most, 40 per cent of Africa's refugees were assisted. Another estimate puts the figure of those who were objects of aid at only 25% (Kibreab, 1987).

The creation of dependency by rendering refugees dependent on aid in camps for prolonged periods of time, the danger of labels and lack of participation reflect the fact that the international community is pre-occupied with providing aid on her terms. Labels do not reveal the history and dynamics of how people act and survive. In creating a new identity on the basis of a person's relationship to an institutional activity or programme, people are transformed into objects – recipients, clients or even 'participants' (Wood, 1985: 355). Not conforming one's behaviour to the label may endanger the social relations and obligations through which survival is managed (Wood, 1985: 368). Even in those cases where there have been attempts to let refugees participate in the shaping of humanitarian activities important assets such as indigenous knowledge have *'gone largely unrecognised as a result*

of the general tendency to regard indigenous systems as incapable of generating within themselves the momentum for change' (Howes, 1979: 18).

Analytical frameworks concerned to explain when repatriation occurs have typically focused on the motivations of the international community (Harrell-Bond, 1986) or the question of conflict resolution (Zolberg et al., 1992). More recently studies have highlighted the importance of refugee decision making in the return process (Bascom, 1994) and the important role of information in deciding return (Walsh et al., 1999). Poor information obtained by the UN and other implementing agencies have resulted in major weaknesses in the planning process because of faulty assumptions about people's motivation to return (Dolan, 1996).

Repatriation policy and assistance to returnees that follow the paradigm from which the old repatriation discourse is derived are unworkable in many situations. This has been demonstrated and documented by a variety of observers (Zetter, 1991; Allen and Morsink, 1994; Allen, 1996; Hammond, 1999). Yet it is clear that many issues and complexities are associated with repatriation, for example (Rogge, 1994: 30-31): under what circumstances can and should refugees be returned to conflict zones?; who determines whether it is safe for refugees to return?; how does one define 'voluntariness' for repatriation?, and what conditions promote large-scale spontaneous repatriations?

Slim emphasises that most of the discourse on forced migration is essentially western and driven by commentators, practitioners and policy makers in Europe and North America³²: *'the interveners and not the intervened'*. Others fear an *'intellectual decolonisation of the south by European interests and perspectives'* in line with the reappearance of substantial refugee populations in Europe and the resulting flow of studies focusing on western and often European societies (Koser, 1996).

The UNHCR and its implementing partners as well as aid donors must learn about the background and dynamic nature of the refugee groups before offering 'assistance' (Karadawi, 1983: 543-6). Studying the experience of Ugandan refugees in Southern Sudan regarding the organisation and delivery of emergency aid Harrell-Bond came to the conclusion that 'the UNHCR and other aid donors must learn about the background and dynamic nature of the refugee groups before offering "assistance" and permit refugees' qualities of resilience, determination, technical sophistication and inventiveness to determine the nature of that assistance' (Harrell-Bond, 1986).

Increasingly commentators underline the importance of incorporating refugees' own meanings of repatriation and their perceptions and expectations of home in facilitating repatriation. Moving people across the border does not constitute in itself the end of the refugee cycle. By recognising the potential of refugees to make return work it is important for repatriation programmes to *'incorporate the challenges faced by returnees and to understand that both social and physical reconstruction are part of the return process'* (Koser and Black, 1999).

The adoption of a new discourse should therefore recognise and create room for new forms of social identity, organisation, practice and meaning, to allow for the emergence of explanatory models that can inform decisions about assistance (Hammond, 1999: 243). This means that the vocabulary of return emphasising 'reintegration', 'reconstruction' and 'rehabilitation' should be translated to focus on 'construction', 'creativity', 'innovation' and 'improvisation' (Hammond, 1999: 243).

4. Methodology

'... forms of assistance should empower returnees as the main actors of repatriation, by promoting their own initiatives and ability to devise strategies that fit their specific history and set of current circumstances ...'

(Eastmond and Öjendal, 1999: 52)

'A challenge to policy makers is to incorporate in repatriation initiatives refugees' own meaning of repatriation, and their perception and expectations of home'

(Koser and Black, 1999: 9,10)

With the global context for repatriation changing, research agendas emphasise the experience of displacement and underscore the need for inter-disciplinary research. This study undertakes to achieve this by looking at various disciplines focusing on key areas relevant to humanitarian concerns: refugee and forced migration studies which emphasise the experience of displacement; development sociology stressing actor orientation and agency, and; disaster studies emphasizing the central concept of vulnerability (section one).

Findings of studies looking at factors which war-displaced people take into account when deciding return are presented in section two. This study suggests the application of an actor-oriented model for exploring the return intent of war-displaced people, and for exploring the underlying antecedents that inform the decision to return. The model of choice, the Theory of Reasoned Action, is introduced in section three. Since the model has not been used to study war-displaced people's migrational decision-making, an extension named Perceived Vulnerability is suggested to enhance the model's sensitivity when applied in risky or hazard prone behavioural contexts. The application of the extended Theory of Reasoned Action to explore the return intent of a group of Sudanese refugees in western Ethiopia, and a group of Sudanese internally displaced people in Khartoum, is discussed in section four. The chapter is concluded by a short discussion presented in section five.

4.1. Inter-Disciplinary research

The study takes into account the call for multi-disciplinary research by combining elements of three major disciplines: forced migrations studies, development sociology and disaster studies.

Refugee and Forced Migration Studies: the Experience of Displacement

The term ‘refugee experience’ has been widely used in the field of refugee studies to denote the human consequences (personal, social, economic, cultural and political) of forced migration (Ager, 1999: 2). In the analysis of the refugee experience, one of the recurrent themes is the tension between modern and post-modern forms of discourse. This issue is not only at the core of the analysis of the refugee experience but also determines the response to such experience.

Modernist frameworks of thought support a ‘*responsibility to act in the world in ways which are justifiable ... with an obligation to acquire reliable knowledge to guide one’s actions*’ (Ager quoting Bracken et al., 1997: 435). Post-modern frameworks, in contrast, support ‘*a responsibility to otherness ... a concern not to impose order on the world but instead to allow the emergence of other voices and visions, even where this involves increasing complexity and ambivalence*’. Ager illustrates the difference between both discourses by stating that a modernist perspective of a ‘discourse of vulnerability’ fosters and reflects the notion of responsibility to act or intervene on the part of the humanitarian agencies. From a post-modern-perspective the focus on the responsibility to otherness leads to an emphasis on refugee voices and visions, reflecting more of what Ager calls, a ‘discourse of resilience’. Such an analysis stresses the importance of valuing the indigenous perspective and resources of refugee communities in the face of the modernist agenda of the international humanitarian regime.

The complexity of forced migration in today’s world has major consequences for contemporary repatriation. At the same time repatriation is regarded as the major durable solution for refugee crises around the world. Therefore, a flexible inclusive approach to forced migration and ‘voluntary’ repatriation needs to be adopted which makes sense in highly complex settings.

People who become forcibly displaced are undermined by war, manipulated by the conflicting parties and often inadequately protected and assisted by the international community. In most cases their immediate survival has more to do with their own tenacity and their social coping structures than to any external factor. In the words of Eastmond and Öjendal (1999: 52): ‘*... forms of assistance should empower returnees as the main actors of repatriation, by promoting their own initiatives and ability to devise strategies that fit their specific history and set of current circumstances ...*’. Hence actor oriented approaches could make an important contribution to inform the new discourse on repatriation.

Development Sociology: Actor Orientation and Agency

Modernisation theory and political economy, the two main structural models that have until relatively recently occupied centre stage in the sociology of development show serious analytical weaknesses (Long, 2001). Both theories see development and social change emanating primarily from external forces of power via intervention by the state or international bodies. Both follow some broadly determined development path, signposted by ‘stages of development’ on the succession of different regimes of capitalism. Long observes that these so called ‘external’ forces ‘*encapsulate the lives of the people, reducing their autonomy and in the end undermining local or endogenous forms of co-operation and solidarity, resulting in increased socio-economic differentiation and greater centralised control by powerful economic and political groups, institutions and enterprises*’ (Long 2001: 11). He

argues that both modernisation theory and political economy models are tainted by determinist, linear and externalist views of social change.

An actor orientation starts from the premise that actors have agency. Social actors *'must not be depicted as simply disembodied social categories or recipients of intervention, but as active participants who process information and strategise in their dealings with various local actors as well as with outside institutions and personnel'*. Actor orientation, though realising the large range of constraints and factors impinging on people, emphasises that such constraints operate through people: they become effective through the interpretation by its actors. Therefore, it is argued that actor oriented approaches to the understanding of social change are needed by stressing the interplay and mutual determination of 'internal' and 'external' factors and relationships, and which recognise the central role played by human action and consciousness (Long, 2001: 13).

Actor orientation is highly appropriate for refugee studies as illustrated by a quote from Allen and Turton: *'Refugees are conceptualised essentially as recipients of action – our action (read the humanitarian worker or aid agency) rather than as actors. They are seen, and may come to see themselves, as populations whose lot it is to be counted, registered, studied, surveyed and, in due course, hopefully “returned” at which point in time they become ordinary people once again'* (Allen and Turton, 1996: 9).

The advantage of an actor oriented approach to explore, in this particular case, the way war-displaced people inform their decision to return and undertake that return is that it aims to grasp the particulars of displaced peoples 'lived in worlds' through a systematic understanding of their backgrounds, history and specific context. Central elements of such an ethnographic endeavour focus on *'the elucidation of internally generated strategies and processes of change, the links between the “small” worlds of local actors and the larger scale “global” phenomena and actors, and the critical role played by diverse and often conflicting forms of human action and social consciousness in the making of development'* (Long, 2001: 14,15).

Agency

A key concept of actor oriented approaches is the notion of 'agency' which attributes to the individual actor the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion. Within the limits of information, uncertainty and other constraints (e.g. physical, normative or politico-economic) that exist, social actors possess 'knowledge-ability' and 'capability'. They attempt to solve problems, learn how to intervene in the flow of social events around them, and to a degree they monitor their own actions, observing how others react to their behaviour and taking note of the various contingent circumstances (Giddens 1984:1-16).

This notion is of particular importance in forced migration studies as war-displaced people have long been seen as being encapsulated by national or international bodies. Labels like refugees and internally displaced left no room for other identities, such people were depicted as hopeless and dependent on 'well intentioned' international aid. Inappropriate generalisations have encouraged ignorance of war-displaced people as conscious and active human beings strategising their lives including their return options.

Repatriation: Actors' Domains of Beliefs, Values and Power

The study of social domains allows the concentration on everyday practice and movements of actors who negotiate and condition the effects of forced migration. The notion of social domains can be regarded as one way of accommodating the effects of human agency and actor's movements across systems of forced migration response. Social domains can be defined as areas of social life that are organised by reference to a central cluster of values, which are recognised as a locus of certain rules, norms and values implying a degree of social commitment (Villarreal, 1994: 58-63; Long, 2001: 59). In social domains of response to return options and repatriation, ideas and practices concerning return and repatriation are exchanged, shared and, to a certain degree, organised.

The domain of return and repatriation responses is constituted by the manifold ways in which displaced people cope with return and repatriation challenges and opportunities, maximising their own capacities, resources and social networks. Domains are not just changing in response to interaction with, or penetration of, other systems. Due to ongoing negotiations over the meanings of, and responses to, everything happening within and around these domains, they are subject to social change from within (Hilhorst, 2004: 57).

Central to the return and repatriation domain are beliefs regarding return and expectations of home, values placed on these beliefs and power structures affecting migrational decision-making. Displaced people's power, value and belief domains have hardly been taken into account in repatriation policy. In the practice of repatriation this has resulted in serious shortcomings, to the extent that the principle of voluntary return is eroded and returnees are exposed to volatile return environments.

Disaster Studies: the Centrality of the Vulnerability Concept

A technocratic and hazard-centred approach to disaster has dominated disaster studies since the mid 1950's. By the 1980's the notion of social or community vulnerability was incorporated in disaster thinking, and disaster came to be understood as the interaction between hazard and vulnerability^{33 34} (Davis, 1993; Hilhorst, 2004: 53). The emergence of the notion of vulnerability is one of the most salient achievements in the field of disaster studies.

The emphasis on vulnerability is associated with a shift from seeing disaster as an event caused by an external agent to a more sociologically oriented interpretation of disaster as a complex socially (as well as a politically, environmentally and economical) constructed process (Frerks and Bender, 2004: 194). The conceptual framework of vulnerability '*was borne out of human experience under situations in which it was very often difficult to differentiate normal day-to-day life from disaster*' (Cardona, 2004: 37). Vulnerability has been described as unresolved development problems, and in some cases development itself has been defined as a reduction in vulnerability. Societal pre-occupation with vulnerability and risk to various forms of impact has become an important indicator of world development.

Understanding Vulnerability

In hazard and disaster management the term 'vulnerability' is used in a number of ways. Its common denominator is the notion of 'potential for disruption or harm' (Wisner, 2005). Vulnerability

represents the physical, economic, political, or social susceptibility or pre-disposition of a community to damage in the case of destabilizing phenomenon of natural or anthropogenic origin (Cardona, 2004: 37). Vulnerability is all about the context of human responses to potential suffering (Webb and Harinarayan, 1999: 301).

People's vulnerability is seen as being generated by social, economic and political processes. From a political economy point of view vulnerability is understood in terms of '*powerlessness, rather than simply as a deficit of the resources required to sustain life*' (Collinson, 2003: 1). Vulnerability, seen as a product of poverty, exclusion, marginalisation and inequalities in material consumption, can be defined as a characteristic of insecurity (Barnett, 2001: 132). Vulnerability is not just concerned with the present or future but is equally, and intimately, a product of the past (Hilhorst and Bankoff, 2004: 3). They note that the appreciation of the construction of vulnerability is often hampered by '*the lack of an adequate historical perspective from which to understand the contexts and roots of disaster causality*'.

An understanding of vulnerability rooted in the multifaceted nature of disaster and its historical roots and political agendas bears important implications for the manner in which disasters are 'managed' (Hilhorst & Bankoff, 2004: 4). Attempts to control the environment need to be replaced by approaches emphasizing ways of dealing with unexpected events stressing flexibility, adaptability, resilience and capacity.

More clarity of terms such as 'vulnerability' and 'insecurity' would benefit those seeking a bridge between humanitarian problems and development. Vulnerability provides a conceptual link in improving our understanding of the relationship between disasters, development and people³⁵ (Hilhorst and Bankoff, 2004: 3). Therefore, vulnerability should not be treated simply in terms of power relations but should take into account people's agency. This would also help bridge the gap between pre- and post-disaster management.

Vulnerability Analysis

The analysis of vulnerability, as a vital element in risk assessment, has concentrated on the physical and economic sectors. Even in a disaster context vulnerability analysis is pre-occupied with the risk faced by critical facilities (such as hospitals, dispensaries, emergency services, key transport and communication systems) which are vital to the functioning of societies in disaster situations (Carter, 1991: 348).

Vulnerability analysis became an area of professional expertise in its own right during the 1990's (Carter, 1991). Starting in the late 1980's detailed community or social vulnerability analysis was tried in humanitarian aid as well as in disaster situations. The experiences gained so far indicate that, in order to advance community vulnerability analysis, a number of key challenges have to be met:

- Models need to be improved. Rather than taking vulnerability as a characteristic of underdevelopment, the relationship between vulnerability and hazards need to be clarified (Hilhorst and Bankoff, 2004: 7).
- Dynamic systems³⁶ are needed that involve different combinations of exploratory variables over time and place (Webb and Harinarayan, 1999: 296). Since vulnerability is embedded in

complex social relations and processes there is a need for context specific and dynamic analyses of what makes certain people vulnerable to risk, and through which processes they become resilient (Hilhorst and Bankoff, 2004).

- Measurement of vulnerability needs to be refined (Davis 1993, 2004). Objective benchmarks, against which to measure a ‘zero state’ of no vulnerability, or resilience rather than vulnerability are absent. Standardised scales have yet to be devised for vulnerability. Multiple scales of analysis lead to aggregation problems³⁷ (Webb and Harinarayan, 1999:296).

If the above mentioned issues are addressed, vulnerability analysis could develop into a potent tool for policy review and management styles. Policies can be effectively informed with tools that can explore the nature of vulnerability and the factors underlying it, based on which a reduction in risk can be realised (Benson, 2004: 172). The need for indicators and clear measurements of vulnerability for policy and planning purposes is therefore underlined. Stringent management styles have been criticised since the 1980s with the advocacy of more participatory forms of management for vulnerability, disaster and development. More attention needs to be paid to the context-specific nature of risks, the capacity of households to manage such risks and the potential for public action to bolster indigenous capacity through targeted development investments, not just relief (Webb and Harinarayan, 1999).

Cultural Construct of Vulnerability

Aid organisations have made mistakes by failing to assess the multiplicity of contributing factors to an emergency, the local culture and concepts of vulnerability and coping. This has resulted in a simplification or generalisation of vulnerability from an external stance (Delica-Willison and Willison, 2004: 151). In order to apply a contextual and pro-active approach to social vulnerability the community itself defines its vulnerabilities and capacities (Wisner, 2004: 189). They also decide what risks are acceptable to them and which are not. In this sense Lavell talks about the subjective dimensioning of risk by social actors and affected populations: ‘*acceptable and un-acceptable risk cease to be technical dimensions and become socially determined variables influenced by different cultural, economic, social, political, institutional and organisational conditioning factors*’ (Lavell, 2004: 68).

4.2. Towards an Understanding of Migrational Attitudes and Behaviour

Studies on Displaced People’s Attitudes towards Repatriation

There are relatively few studies dealing with, or touching upon, displaced people’s attitudes towards repatriation. They are all qualitative studies and do not follow a standardised approach which can be compared across different situations. Looking at the attitudes of Ugandan refugees in Sudan to a return home Harrell-Bond found that only three percent of the respondents, when asked ‘*do you hope to return to Uganda in the near future*’, indicated that they planned ‘*to go to Uganda soon*’ (Harrell-Bond, 1986: 200). This at a time when UNCHR was actively promoting repatriation. Ugandan

refugees at large indicated that return would depend on a change in government, improvement of the security situation and an end to the war. Almost fourteen per cent of those interviewed indicated that they preferred to stay in Sudan regardless of these conditions.

Attitudes towards return may differ across different segments of a refugee population. While studying the attitudes of Ethiopian refugees from various ethnic backgrounds, Bulcha (1992: 33) had various responses to the question '*Under what circumstances would you be prepared to return to your home country*'. E.g. for Eritrean refugees the pre-condition was military and political victory of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front. For the Oromo it was decolonisation and the establishment of a democratic Oromo state.

Makanya drew attention to the role of political parties and liberation movements in co-ordinating refugees' responses to repatriation (Makanya 1992: 114). The level to which such organisations are able to secure control over the administration of refugee camps and distribution of assistance enables them to play an important role in repatriation issues.

In an elaborate study analysing voluntary repatriation in the case of Eritrean refugees in the Sudan, Habte-Selassie observed that repatriation was '*a function of situations prevailing in both the host and home countries, as well as of the international political climate which has a bearing on the quantity and quality of assistance obtainable at any given time*' (Habte-Selassie, 1992: 29). Referring to an Euro-Action/ACORD survey, refugees' decisions as to when and how to return home, were found to be influenced by both endogenous factors (e.g. perceptions and personal experience of refugees, the level of income in the host country, political views and allegiances to political fronts and organisations) and exogenous factors (e.g. the means by which the conflict is terminated; drought and famine situations in the host and/or home country; the international community's provision of assistance). The political allegiance of the refugees, their perceptions of the organisation, policies and practices of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front as well as religion were found to be important factors in deciding repatriation³⁸. However the study concluded that ultimately '*refugees' own perception of the situation in both the home and host country formed the decisive factor*'.

In his study on the repatriation of refugees in Africa Rogge found that the principal sets of variables affecting attitudes regarding repatriation were: length of time in exile, degrees of integration in the area of asylum, the pressures exerted by authorities for the refugees to return, the measure of physical disruption in home areas, and the extent to which political change had occurred in the respective country of origin (Rogge, 1994: 32).

Exploring the repatriation complexity of Milange district in Mozambique Wilson and Nunes (1994: 167) drew attention to the significance of a likely diversity of local social determinants of repatriation in each area of Mozambique. Reviewing formal repatriation plans and programmes they concluded that they were rooted in '*the pressures and conceptions of Geneva and international fora, and not the realities of the Malawi-Mozambique border situation*' (Wilson and Nunes, 1994: 218).

All these studies demonstrate that repatriation, as a special phenomenon of population movement, is influenced by a host of socio-economic, politico-military, institutional and operational factors. A change in circumstances and conflict resolution appears an obvious factor affecting repatriation (Ager,

1999). However others have observed that in some instances returns were involuntary as a response to political upheavals spreading into places of exile, rather than an end of fighting and oppression in the displaced people's homeland (Allen and Turton, 1996). Repatriations which took place when the underlying security or political problems had not been fully resolved have been observed to be not always durable (Coles, 1985).

Most studies note the importance of refugee-decision making in the repatriation process. Opondo quotes studies in Africa, Asia and in Central and Latin America as providing evidence that many repatriation processes were initiated, organised and implemented by the refugees themselves outside of formal assistance, often in the face of official opposition (Opondo, 1996: 29).

Yet formal programmes of refugee repatriation tend to be conceived by governments and agencies with little reference to, and understanding of, the pattern of refugees' own flight and return movements. Repatriation undertaken based on such assumptions may undermine, if not contradict, UNHCR's protection mandate comprising the right of voluntary return. Consequently, as Rogge (1994) observes, there is a need to understand much more about the basis on which refugees make their decisions to return, whether individually or collectively. On which sets of information do refugees primarily base their decisions to return? What are the sources of information they most depend on?

Behavioural Research

Studying return behaviour has to encompass a number of interrelated factors. Amongst these are the experience of flight including the very reasons for it in the first place, the conditions in areas or camps where war-displaced people are hosted, the situation in their homeland and areas of return, the information available but also the feelings, motives and goals of the displaced themselves. Inclusion of influences affecting how displaced people function or behave when it comes to repatriation is crucial since behavioural research, in general, has been criticised in the past for failing to take account of structural, external factors and constraints on action (see for example Morris and Potter, 1995). Further, any approach should account for the social consequences and implications of a decision. This is because refugees' migration-related behaviour cannot be assumed to have wholly personal or selfish reasons.

Social psychological models try to come to an understanding of the way people think and feel about something in order to predict social behaviour. For at least the past three decades social psychologists have developed models to try to understand and predict human behaviour. Many of the models developed in this period followed an *expectancy value* form: that is, the *expectancy* or probability that an action will be followed by a particular consequence indexed by the subjective *value* or utility placed on the consequence (Feather, 1982).

Most reviews of developments in the field of attitude-behaviour research during the past twenty-five years have drawn attention to the predictive power and pre-eminence of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and its extensions, notably the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1985, 1988 and 2005). This is underscored by the rapidly growing supportive empirical evidence drawn from both experimental and natural settings. The theory has been applied to a wide

variety of behavioural domains proving its robust nature, record in predictive power and its ability to perform in different contexts (e.g. the reviews of Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Feather, 1982; Canary and Seibold, 1984; Cooper and Croyle, 1984; Eiser, 1986; Chaiken and Stangor, 1987; Sheppard, Hartwick and Warshaw, 1988; Tesser and Shaffer, 1990; Olson and Zanna, 1993; Armitage and Conner, 2001). McKemey and Rehman (2002) state that it is generally accepted that the Theory of Reasoned Action has become one of the principal theoretical constructs for both the study and prediction of behaviour.

The constructs employed by the TORA are fundamentally motivational. The theory claims that the immediate antecedent of any behaviour is the intent to perform the behaviour in question. The stronger the intention, the more the person is expected to try and therefore the greater the possibility that the behaviour will actually be performed (Ajzen and Madden, 1986). The theory is therefore primarily concerned with identifying the factors underlying the formation and change of behavioural intent (Fishbein and Manfredo, 1992).

4.3. Exploring Behavioural Intent: The Extended Theory of Reasoned Action

Behavioural Intent Informed by Attitudes and Subjective Norms

Central to the TORA's conceptual framework for the prediction of a certain specific action is that people form an '*intention*' to engage in certain behaviour, in the case of this research, the intention to return to one's home country or area. Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that have an impact on behaviour. In other words they are indications of how hard people are willing to try, how much of an effort they are planning to exert, in order to return 'home'. This study is interested in understanding forcibly displaced people's migrational behaviour, not merely in predicting it. Therefore, one must try to identify the determinants of behavioural intentions. Ajzen and Fishbein's Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) is precisely designed to accomplish this goal. Their theory is concerned with the causal antecedents of behaviour:

'As it's name implies, the Theory of Reasoned Action is based on the assumption that human beings usually behave in a sensible manner: that they take account of available information and implicitly or explicitly consider the implications of their actions. Barring un-foreseen events, people are expected to act in accordance with their intentions' (Ajzen, 1988: 117).

According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, intentions are a function of two basic determinants, one personal in nature and the other reflecting social influence or pressure. The personal factor is the individual's '*attitude*' towards the behaviour. This attitude is the individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the particular behaviour of interest. The second determinant of intention is the person's perception of social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour under consideration and his or her motivation to comply. This factor is termed '*subjective norm*' since it deals with perceived normative prescriptions (Ajzen, 1988: 117). The relative contribution of attitudes and subjective norms may vary with the context and the individual.

Antecedents of Attitudes Towards a Behaviour

According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, the attitude towards a behaviour is a function of salient beliefs about that behaviour, termed *behavioural beliefs* (Ajzen, 1988: 120). Attitudes are determined by the beliefs about the expected outcomes of performing the behaviour ('belief strengths') and the evaluation of these outcomes ('outcome evaluations'). By multiplying belief strength and outcome evaluation for each of the salient outcomes of performing the behaviour, and summing the resulting products, one obtains an estimate of the attitude towards the behaviour (an estimate based on the person's salient beliefs about the behaviour). This expectancy-value model is described symbolically in equation 1, where CA_B stands for Calculated Attitude towards behaviour B; b_i is the belief strength (subjective probability) that performing behaviour B will lead to outcome i ; e_i is the evaluation of outcome i ; and the sum is over the n salient beliefs.

$$\text{Equation 1. Attitude towards behaviour: } CA_B \propto \sum_n b_i \cdot e_i$$

Antecedents of Subjective Norms

Subjective norms, the second major determinant of intentions in the Theory of Reasoned Action, are also assumed to be a function of beliefs, but beliefs of a different kind, namely the person's belief that specific individuals or groups approve or disapprove of performing the behaviour. Serving as a point of reference to guide behaviour, these individuals and groups are known as *referents*. The beliefs that underlie subjective norms are termed *normative beliefs*. The subjective norm is dependent on beliefs about how others feel the individual should behave and their motivation to comply with these 'others'. Generally speaking, people who believe most referents with whom they are motivated to comply think they should perform the behaviour will perceive social pressure to do so. The relation between normative beliefs and subjective norm is expressed symbolically in equation 2. Here CSN is the Calculated Subjective Norm; sb_j is the normative belief concerning referent j ; m_j is the person's motivation to comply with referent j ; and n is the number of salient normative beliefs.

$$\text{Equation 2. Subjective norm: } CSN \propto \sum_n sb_j \cdot m_j$$

Subjective norms can be assessed in a relatively direct manner by asking respondents to judge how likely it is that people who are important to them would approve of their performing a given behaviour.

Behaviour and Behavioural Intention

Behaviour, according to the Theory of Reasoned Action, can then be expressed according to the following formula:

Equation 3. Behaviour:
$$B \cong BI = CA w1 + CSN w2$$

Where B is behaviour, BI behavioural intention, CA is Calculated Attitude toward the behaviour, CSN the Calculated Subjective Norm and w1 and w2 empirically determined weights.

The theory suggests that if either or both attitude or normative measures significantly correlate with the stated Intent, then the intent can be taken to be a reliable indicator of future behaviour. The stronger comparative correlation with intent will indicate whether the behavioural decision is primarily under attitudinal or normative influence. I.e. whether it is primarily dependent on the actor's own experience or social pressure.

Perceived Level of Control

Since the TORA has established a large basis of empirical support criticism is not so much directed at the model itself, but rather offers suggestions for enhancing its power within different contexts or with particular types of behaviour (McKemey and Rehman, 2002: 21). As a consequence alternative and expanded versions of the TORA have been put forward to improve the predictive strength, or descriptive utility, of the model under particular conditions and behavioural domains.

The TORA was developed explicitly to deal with purely volitional behaviours, that is having the power of using one's own will. Complications may be encountered when trying to apply the theory to behaviours that are not fully under volitional control. A recent attempt to provide a conceptual framework that addresses the problem of incomplete control is Ajzen's *Theory of Planned Behaviour* (Ajzen, 1985 and 2005; Ajzen and Madden, 1986). This conceptual framework is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action by postulating a third conceptually independent determinant of intention namely the level of *Perceived Behavioural Control*³⁹. This factor refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour and it is assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles (Ajzen, 1988: 132).

The inclusion of a separate consideration of perceived behavioural control has been generally well accepted to deal with behaviours not considered to be volitional. The intention of war-displaced people to return should not be assumed to be under complete control of the displaced. E.g. lack of opportunity, dependence on others, traumatic experiences, fear or other strong emotions to return 'home' may affect people's return intent. It is thus appropriate for this study to take into account the Perceived Level of Control in exploring displaced peoples intention to return.

Perceived Vulnerability

This research presents the first time the TORA has been used to study migrational decision-making by undertaking a systematic identification of return beliefs and issues which are taken into account by war-displaced populations. In order to successfully manage this the model needs to be made sensitive

towards the uncertainties that underscore human behaviour in risky or hazard prone contexts. To be applied in risky behavioural domains the more traditional determinants of behavioural intention (attitude, subjective norm and perceived level of control) should not be assumed to fully account for such uncertainties.

Therefore this study suggests yet a further extension of the TORA construct by including vulnerability as a central concept of disasters studies (section 4.1). This fourth determinant of intention, labelled 'Perceived Vulnerability', is a measure of the potential for harm or disruption associated with return (technically it is a measure of the level of risk expressed in return in relation to the ability to manage that risk). As a fourth determinant of behavioural intent the Perceived Vulnerability determinant captures the potential for disaster in post-return environments⁴⁰. This study applies the model by taking account of the perceived control element as well as the proposed concept of perceived vulnerability.

Informational Base of the Extended TORA

Taken together, the informational base within the extended Theory of Reasoned Action provides a detailed explanation of displaced people's intention to return to their country or home area. At the initial level return behaviour is assumed to be determined by the intention to return. At the second level this intention is explained in terms of attitude (Stated Attitude or SA), subjective norms (Stated Subjective Norm or SSN), perceived behavioural control (PBC) and perceived vulnerability (PV). The third level of analysis accounts for attitudes (Calculated Attitude or CA) and subjective norms (Calculated Subjective Norms or CSN) in terms of beliefs about the consequences of return and about the normative expectations of relevant referents. Each successive level of analysis in this sequence provides a more comprehensive account of the factors influencing displaced people's decision to return.

The application of the extended TORA is thus instrumental to the aim of this research, namely gaining a greater understanding of migrational decision-making, in particular regarding the factors influencing the decision to return of people displaced by war.

As a concept the extended TORA is framed on the original Theory of Reasoned Action and will therefore simply be referred to as the extended TORA, or TORA for the sake of simplicity, in this document. Figure 4.1 presents an overview of the Theory of Reasoned Action including its nomenclature.

4.4. Application of the Extended Theory of Reasoned Action

A Two-Stage Interdependent Data Gathering Process

Applying the extended Theory of Reasoned Action involves a two-stage interdependent data gathering process. Initially the salient outcome beliefs and social referents are identified through focus group discussions, a participative process. The second stage incorporates the identified salient outcome

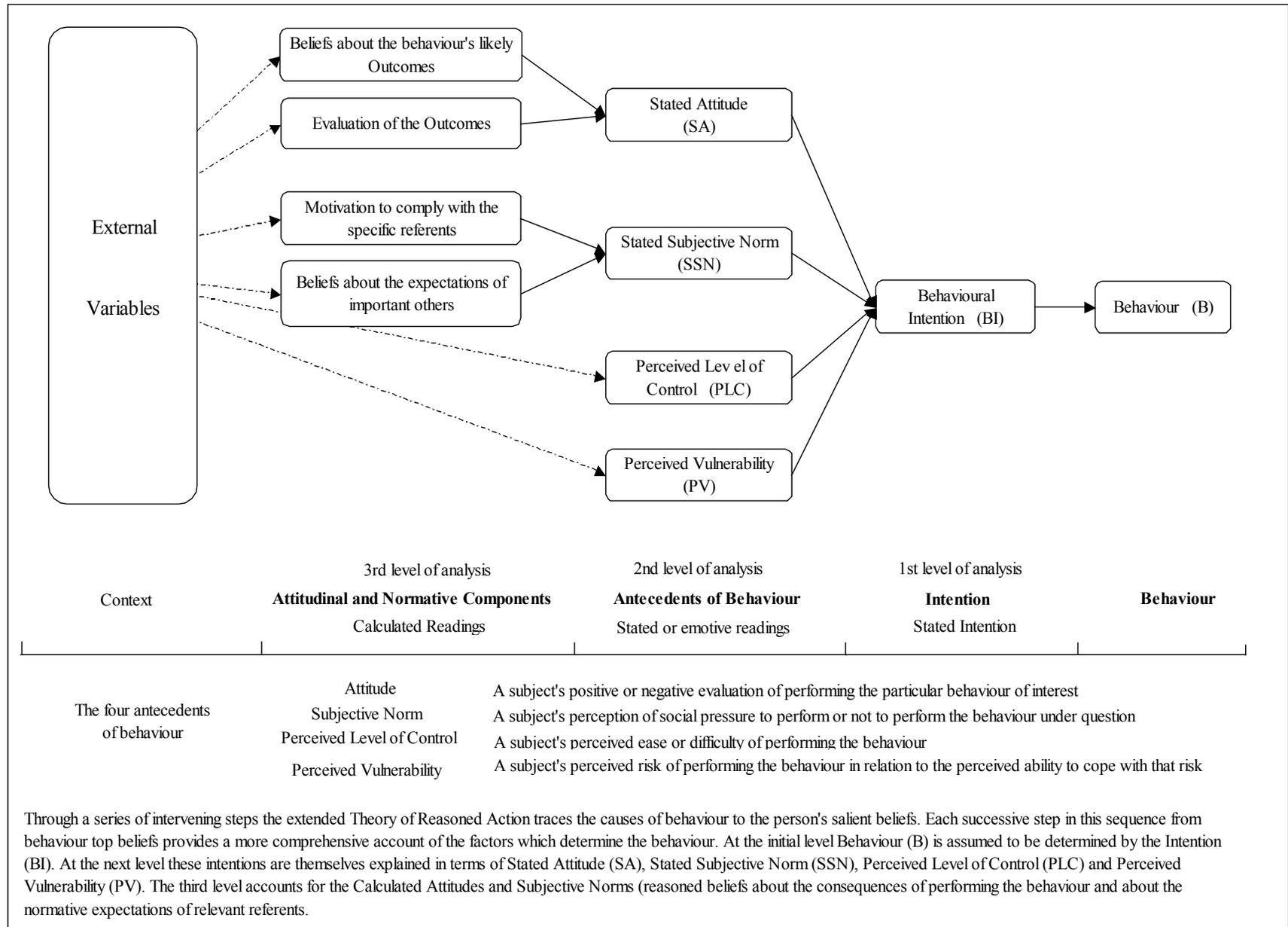
beliefs and pertinent referents in a structured questionnaire, which is administered to the subject category.

First Stage: Identification of Outcome Beliefs & Social Referents

The first stage consisted of a survey of a relatively small sample of subjects who were representative of the objective group of the study. Its purpose was to identify the 'salient modal outcome beliefs' and 'salient modal social referents' regarding the behaviour under study, i.e. return to one's home area. A salient belief is what is usually considered or comes to mind when considering a particular attitude object, i.e. behaviour⁴¹. They are therefore those beliefs that are considered to be at the 'top of one's mind'.

Key informant interviews were undertaken to check if important return beliefs or social referents were left out or omitted for particular reasons. This proved not to be the case. Key informant interviews were also helpful to discuss ambiguities and conflicting opinions regarding return beliefs and social referents or to discuss them within a wider context. No additional return beliefs or referents were included as a result of this.

Figure 4.1 The Extended Theory of Reasoned Action.



Second Stage: Structured Interviews

The second stage involves the application of a structured questionnaire, made up by the descriptive and TORA variables. Its presentation and lay-out closely followed the format recommended by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980: 216-273). The descriptive variables serve to identify different categories of the subject under study and their identification was based on literature research, key informant interviews (both displaced people and other stakeholders involved in the delivery of aid or management of camps or sites) and the understanding of return issues by the researcher. The TORA variables were identified as part of the first stage survey (the focus group discussions). This second stage sought to identify the behavioural intentions: the strength of outcome beliefs and attributed values; the motivation to comply with specific social referents and the normative belief attributed to each of these referents; the perceived level of control, and; the perceived level of vulnerability.

In order to raise the applicability of the TORA and its outcomes, various return options were presented as part of the questionnaire in order to measure changes of return intent over time (for the refugee study: return in the 2002/3 dry season, the period 2003-5 and when there is 'peace'; for the IDP study return in the 2003/4 dry season, following the signing of the peace agreement and return with Abyei presenting a safe and secure home area).

Sampling Method

The extended TORA was applied to explore the return antecedents of war-displaced people in two different contexts: Sudanese refugees residing in camps in western Ethiopia and a group of internally displaced southern Sudanese residing in camps and squatter areas of Khartoum, Sudan.

The unit of study is the displaced household head having the power of migrational decision-making or his or her representative (in the absence of the household head).

For both the refugee and internally displaced people studies, camp populations and ethnic densities within them are not very reliable, and therefore a random stratified cluster sampling process was adopted. A cluster is any recognisable sub-division of the population in question. The minimum recommended size for a randomised cluster sample is around 210 (WHO, 1987: 2, 3). That means around 30 clusters chosen randomly and 7 cases per cluster also randomly selected. The cases within the cluster were selected purely randomly, that is every 4th household on a randomly selected lateral crossing the selected clusters. The lateral lines run from periphery to periphery of those localities in the camp or squatter areas inhabited by particular clans (the majority of the refugees and internally displaced are located based on their tribal, sub-tribal and clan identities) so as to capture new and longer time residents or the more vulnerable assuming that they may live on the verges of the clusters.

Regarding the refugee study the sample was stratified by the location of the three refugee camps. In all a sample of 652 completed and usable questionnaires were obtained. The internally displaced people (IDP) study surveyed displaced households living in the camps in and around Khartoum, a total of 279 household heads or their representatives were interviewed. The total number of clusters and other relevant information regarding the sampling method is presented as an integral part of the respective chapters.

Studying Patterns of Beliefs Influencing Return Intent: Data Presentation and Statistics

The TORA model has been applied in a variety of ways, e.g. the aggregated or disaggregated form. The full aggregated model is normally used to predict behaviour and requires multiple regression analysis to determine the relative contributions of attitudes and norms to the formation of behavioural intentions (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). Many researchers have chosen to apply the model in a disaggregated form to study the patterns of individual beliefs and their influence on both behavioural intention and behaviour (e.g. Tait, 1983; Carr, 1988; Carr and Tait, 1991; and more recently; McKemey, 1996).

This research applies the disaggregated form to explore the level to which war-displaced people plan to return and its underlying antecedents. The nature of return beliefs and issues, and the degree of correspondence with stated return intent, will provide indications regarding the distinctions between the different categories of displaced people. Analysis of the research data of this study will thus indicate those factors that are inhibiting or encouraging the return to areas of origin for various social strata of a displaced population. The research applies bi-variant analysis so as to compare one strata with another.

All the variables are measured on 5-point bi-polar scales⁴². Following Carr's reasoning it was decided to use a 5 as opposed to the usual 7-point scale. It was felt that a 7-point scale would not only complicate the presentation and response process for the subjects and the extra effort would provide little additional advantage (Carr, 1988; McKemey and Rehman, 2002). In common with Carr's (1988: 122) observation, it is not assumed that the five point bi-polar scales used in the interview structures of this research are true interval scales nor that the individual scores represent part of a normal distribution. Both these are requirements if parametric tests are to be applied (Greene and D'Oliveira, 1982: 80). Therefore scores are treated as ordinal data and require the appropriate non-parametric statistical forms of analysis such as the 'Mann Whitney U' test and the 'Spearman' correlation (see glossary). Data were entered into SPSS and analysed by the researcher.

Concerning statistics in social sciences, Ajzen and Fishbein's remark that correlations around 0.30 have been considered satisfactory. They refer to correlations in the range of .30 to .50 as of moderate magnitude and correlations exceeding .50 as relative strong relationships between two variables (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980: 98-99). However, a variety of authors refer to correlations in the 0.20 range as meaningful (Carr, 1988; McKemey and Rehman, 2002). Field (2005) quotes Cohen (1988 and 1992) regarding widely accepted suggestions about effect-size measures in what constitutes a large or small effect. A correlation coefficient of .10 constitutes a small effect, 0.30 a medium and over .50 a large effect (Field, 2005: 32). Regarding the significance of the correlation between two variables, this study refers to significant correlation co-efficients in the range of .20-.30 as weak, .30-.50 as moderate and over .50 as a strong. The probability level at which one will accept an effect as being statistically significant will be at the typical value of p 0.05.

Notes on Implementation

The Power of Migrational Decision Making

This study is interested in the construct of displaced peoples' migrational decision-making. The prime object of the study is therefore the household head who, in principle, has the power of migrational decision making (within a wider set of constraints and power structures). Key informant interviews were found to underwrite this assumption. In general, household heads will implicitly or explicitly take the interest of his or her household members into account, as well as wider community interests, when deciding on return and repatriation. It was mentioned that in isolated cases when a household head's return decision was seen to be 'awkward' it would not go unquestioned by the other household members.

In the absence of the household head his or her representative would be interviewed, in most cases this would be the wife of the household head. The number of female respondents was substantial (14.9% for the refugee study and 51% for the IDP study) and this made it possible to explore gender differences regarding the intention of the displaced to return.

Administering of the Questionnaire

The questionnaires were implemented by enumerators recruited from the displaced community itself. Their selection was based on a set of criteria including prior experience with data enumeration or needs assessments, good command of English or Arabic (for training purposes and discussions) and being well respected and trusted by the community at large (recommended as such by the displaced communities' leadership). Prior to a practical training session the enumerators were introduced to the questionnaire and asked to translate it word by word in their respective language and/or Arabic. During a two-day training session following the completion of the translation work the questionnaire was thoroughly introduced. The precise meaning of questions and certain words were focused upon. The enumerators tested the interview schedule amongst themselves. Ambiguities were discussed. As most enumerators were literate in Arabic, an Arabic translation was provided for a cross check.

The sampling method was explained and practiced to make sure that the enumerators clearly understood the process. Directly following the training session the enumerators, working in pairs of two, performed two interviews amongst people of their own ethnic background. Their experiences were shared during a group meeting and final issues were solved. Prior to its implementation the second stage questionnaire was pre-tested by carrying out 20 test questionnaires for both studies⁴³.

Questionnaires were then administered over a period of around three weeks. Interviews were timed to take into account daily activities in the camps. A supervisor controlled the quality of the interview process on a daily basis.

The researcher's responsibility was the development of the templates for the first and second survey, the training of selected community members to undertake the structured interviews, supervision and overall guidance of both sampling and interview process. Implementation of the structured interviews was done by skilled and experienced community members. The findings and implications were

discussed with the displaced community leaders before wider consultation and dialogue was initiated. Overall, the administration of the questionnaire was implemented in a satisfactory way.

Introducing the Questionnaire

It is important to involve the displaced people's leadership in introducing and discussing the purpose of the assessment right from the beginning, and to ask their permission for undertaking it. Both the refugee and IDP leadership very much welcomed the idea of a researcher looking at issues of return and repatriation from the perspective of the displaced communities themselves. This, it was explained, would help the international community and other actors to take account of displaced people's understanding and perspectives regarding issues of return. Although no promise could be made to that effect regarding the refugee study, a commitment was communicated by the researcher to inform the UNHCR about the findings of the survey and its major implications for the management of return and repatriation programming. The IDP study was undertaken with the prime purpose of informing the international community on the perspectives of the displaced regarding return. The definition of important principles for the overall return strategy of internally displaced people, following the peace agreement between the government of the Sudan and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement/Army, was an important output of the assessment.

Displaced people's leadership provided the necessary co-operation by informing the displaced communities that an assessment was to take place looking at their thinking regarding return. It was made clear that those who would be approached for interviewing would be selected in an at random way, this to avoid feelings of mischief amongst those who might feel neglected or overseen. Furthermore it was clearly stated that the survey was implemented by an independent researcher not linked with the United Nations or Government. It was explicitly stated that the survey as such was not in any way related to a process of registration regarding possible repatriation. Once a household head was selected for the interview, the purpose of the interview was clearly explained, after which he or she was asked his or her willingness to participate. Only in a few cases, around five, was this refused.

The general response to the survey was positive. In both the refugee as well as the IDP study the people were willing and even eager to participate. In that sense the major concern has been to motivate the enumerators, who worked in pairs, to remain sharp and committed, as the interview process was quite demanding.

Operating in Sensitive and Volatile Environments

An important issue is how best to implement the surveys in what can be highly sensitive environments with limited access for outsiders⁴⁴. Security related incidents can both influence and hinder the proper implementation of the TORA. Responses may be biased, for example if the displaced perceive the survey to serve the interests of important 'others' to push for 'voluntary' repatriation. Security and intelligence personnel may have fundamental objections and as a result may not grant permission, or demand to oversee its implementation, thereby strongly reducing the applicability and outcome of the assessment. Above all, the interest and willingness of the displaced community to participate in the process is of fundamental importance to properly implement the survey, analyse and validate its outcomes, and look into its implications. Official access to the displaced communities often required a

lengthy process, however once granted the implementation of the survey was found to be a rather straightforward process.

The survey took place within the framework of an existing community services programme (refugee study)⁴⁵ or as per the request of the international community (IDP study)⁴⁶. In the latter case the government agency responsible for overseeing the IDPs requested a copy of the format of the structured interview. As a consequence some of the modal outcome beliefs had to be re-framed, fortunately without corrupting the meaning of those beliefs⁴⁷.

Time Lapse in Between First and Second Stage Process

Return intentions can change over time and the longer the time interval the greater the likelihood that unforeseen events will produce changes in intentions. The TORA prescribes that the first and second stage assessment should take place within a short interval. For the refugee study, the first stage survey preceded the second stage by over half a year (early 2002 and November 2002). An important factor contributing to this considerable time-lapse was a series of security related incidents in two of the three camps, Fugnido and Sherkolle. It was decided to postpone the second stage survey till the situation had calmed down somewhat. The time-lapse between the two stages for the IDP study was around three months (January and April 2004).

Forced migration situations are often dynamic, and a critical concern is the stability of the intention to return and the beliefs underpinning it. However, dynamics are often inherent to such contexts and it is therefore assumed that the behavioural intention, and the beliefs underpinning it, remains relatively stable. That is, of course, unless exceptional events take place well out of the 'normal order' of things. As this was not found to be the case the relative long time interval was not taken as compromising the outcomes of either study.

4.5. Discussion

With the global context for contemporary forced migration changing innovative approaches are needed to meet the new challenges. This is reflected by a focus in the emerging research agenda which stresses the importance of the experience of displacement and repatriation by its principal actors, the displaced. Its urgency is to a considerable extent informed by the focus of the international community and its donors on the pursuit of repatriation as the durable solution, while at the same time repatriation discourse seems to be fundamentally flawed.

Any approach contributing to the discourse on repatriation should take into account a number of essential elements in order to be relevant. Dealing with highly diverse and complex settings around the world, voluntary repatriation demands a flexible, inclusive approach. For such an approach to contribute to the discourse on repatriation it should account for a number of essential elements. First the potential of returnees themselves to make repatriation work should be underlined and taken into consideration (Stein, 1994). Secondly, there is a need to learn much more about '*the way particular displaced populations are internally differentiated and about how such differences affect preferences for and against, and decisions about home coming and home making*' (Allen and Turton, 1996:17).

Thirdly, there is a need for explanatory models that can inform decisions about assistance (Hammond, 1999; Webb and Harinanayan, 1999). Fourthly, returnees as main actors of repatriation need to be empowered by promoting their own initiatives and ability to devise strategies that fit their specific history and set of current and perceived future circumstances (Eastmond and Öjendal, 1999). These challenges underline the demand for inter-disciplinary research.

The multiplicity of the experiences and differential responses of the displaced must be grasped conceptually. This requires more emphasis on agency, in particular the agency of refugees and of other critical actors, which calls for an actor oriented approach. In the words of Essed, Frerks and Schrijvers (2004: 16): *'It is relevant to perceive experiences of flight and repatriation in terms of individual and groups characteristics, material as well as immaterial, and to identify differential patterns of knowledge and power'*.

This study adopted the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) as the actor-oriented model of choice to explore war-displaced people's return decision-making. This is because most reviews in the field of behavioural research have drawn attention to the TORA as one of the principal theoretical constructs for both the study and prediction of behaviour. The theory has been applied to a wide variety of behavioural domains proving its robust nature, its record in predictive power and its ability to perform in different contexts. The descriptive utility of the model is instrumental in exploring belief-, value- and power-domains of the displaced in deciding and undertaking return.

This research presents the first time this theoretical construct has been applied to study the systematic identification of return beliefs, and issues taken into account, by people when making migrational decisions, yet more specifically war-displaced people's decision-making regarding return. In order to enhance its application in potentially risky and hazard prone contexts an extension of the model was suggested in the form of a Perceived Vulnerability variable.

One of the research components of this thesis is to apply the extended model in exploring the return intent of a group of Sudanese refugees sheltered in three camps in western Ethiopia. Another, and related component, is to test the appropriateness of the extended TORA in different forced migration situations by exploring return intent of a group of internally displaced people in the Sudan.

**PART II – Return of Sudanese Refugees From Camps in Western
Ethiopia to the Sudan**

5. Migration In the Ethio-Sudanese Border Area

The second part of this dissertation looks at return planning and return strategies of Sudanese refugees residing in camps in western Ethiopia. It is organised into three main sections covering chapters 5 to 7. Chapter five presents an overall context analysis of the processes and dynamics at work in the Ethio-Sudanese border area. As we shall see parts of the border are sensitive areas with long experience of cross border interaction both in terms of offering refuge to war-affected communities as well as a base for warring parties to train and mount operations. Against the background of this general context analysis, the Theory of Reasoned Action is applied to study the return intentions of Sudanese refugees in three camps in western Ethiopia (chapter six). Chapter seven undertakes to demonstrate the descriptive utility of the TORA construct by looking into the return antecedents of two particular ethnic groups. Emphasis will be given to the use of the Perceived Vulnerability variable and the nature of vulnerability that informs the decision to return for both ethnic groups.

Chapter five is organised into six sections. The first section introduces the general issue of conflict in the Horn of Africa and the people placed at risk. In order to better understand the complexities in the Ethio-Sudanese border area (section four) a short introduction on the Sudan and Ethiopia is presented (section two and three). Section five deals with UNHCR's refugee programme in western Ethiopia, one of UN's longest running programmes in Africa. The chapter concludes with a discussion highlighting the need to better understand refugees' own feelings, opinions and beliefs regarding return to their home areas in the Sudan.

5.1. The Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa has been plagued by violent conflicts consisting of a complex arrangement of both historical and contemporary factors. Conflicts and disputes are integrated into a wider composite of national contests and regional interests, and have resulted in massive population displacements. The interests of local communities tend to be subordinated to those of a range of actors pursuing their own respective agendas in the area. In that sense some observers talk about the regrouping of communities under the patronage of either guerrilla movements, warlords, government garrisons, national governments, the United Nations or aid agencies (e.g. UNRISD, 1993; Scott-Villiers, 1993: 208; James, 1996). Consequently the 'visibility' of such populations, including those in the Sudan Ethiopian border lands (box 5.1), to local political or military interests, aid agencies and the international community carry profound implications for their situation.

Borders in the Horn are known for their complex interplay of issues which can easily lead to conflict. An almost un-checked flow of people, as well as of small firearms across many such border areas add

dangerously to the potential for armed conflict. One consequence has been that through the dealings of warring parties and militias, traditional community based systems dealing with dispute and conflict have increasingly come under pressure, or have simply lost their ability to deal with the kind of threats faced by communities on the ground.

This general context analysis attempts to analyse the complex interplay of factors contributing to massive population movements in a particular stretch of the Ethio-Sudanese border area, that is the area made up by the Gambella area in southwestern Ethiopia and parts of the Upper Nile and Jonglei States in southeastern Sudan. The name Gambella itself carries deep associations with Sudan's civil conflicts; both the pre-1972 Anya-Nya struggle and the more recent post-1983 Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) period. Understanding such complexities and the un-locking of critical factors leading to conflict and further displacement is necessary in order to contribute to peace and stability in large parts of eastern Sudan and western Ethiopia.

It is necessary therefore to sketch some of the major socio-political developments in both the Sudan and Ethiopia. As is the case in other parts of Africa these events not only lead to arguments and disputes in the epicentres of political and military power, but particularly so to armed conflict in border areas over which central governments seem to have little control. This is clearly demonstrated around international border areas (for example the Sudan-Ugandan border) as well as in so-called contested areas (e.g. the disputed areas in the Sudan: Southern Blue Nile, Nuba Mountains, Abyei and of late Dar Fur).

Firstly a short overview of recent socio-political events in both the Sudan and Ethiopia are presented which impinge on the situation in the Ethio-Sudanese border area. This is particularly so for the Gambella area in southwestern Ethiopia, where recent disputes and conflict have resulted in series of violent confrontations claiming the lives of many innocent people.

5.2. The Sudan, Contested Identities

The root causes of the civil conflict in the area constituting present day Sudan are historical and can be traced back to the oppression and marginalisation by the centre over its periphery, including the north over the south. Sudan's identification as an Arab or African state, and the role of Islam in Sudan, are questions that have been open since its independence in 1956. Elements of religion have been present in the conflict since the imposition of Sharia law in 1983 by the then dictator, president Jaafer Nimeiri. Sudan's war 'in the south' is also explained by opposing political approaches to the reality of diminishing resources.

After Turko-Egyptian forces brought an end to the Funj and other Kingdoms in 1821, the Sudan was governed by the Ottoman government of Egypt. Resentment over its rule transformed the Mahdiyya from a movement of religious protest into a powerful and militant state dominating the Sudan between

Box 5.1 The Visibility of Displaced Communities in the Border Area

The label ‘refugee’ attached to Sudanese people displaced across the border and granted ‘status’ in camps on Ethiopian territory was maintained for many years and reproduced following the discontinuation of UNHCR’s refugee programme in 1990-91 (due to insecurity and fighting in western Ethiopia). At the same time many displaced communities remained invisible to the international community for a variety of reasons. E.g. communities displaced in frontier areas were unable to reach the camps because of hostile territory or because it would mean loss of their cattle wealth (Nuers fleeing Makuei for Itang, Ethiopia – see case I). Others deliberately opted to remain invisible fearing that acquiring refugee status would identify them with the SPLA which could jeopardise future return options to areas likely to be administered by the GoS (Funj communities fleeing Southern Blue Nile to Gizen – see case II).

Case I: Fleeing Makuei (Ethio-Sudanese border) to Itang (Gambella Regional State, Ethiopia)

‘We left Makuei because we were very tired. We used to fight every year. We were tired of the war which continued day after day. It is because we lived far away from where the government is. We experienced nine incursions. Different clans attacked us at different times from different directions. Finally we came to the conclusion that there will be no security. It’s because of the continuous fighting that we came to be near to Gambella town, the place of the Ethiopian government. The incursion by the Lou Nuer killed at least fifty-two of our people. Killing fifty-two ... you will know how many they wounded. They raided 8.746 cattle from our villages and 1.447 sheep and goats. All our houses were burned down. Our property was looted or destroyed. Even the maize was cut down by the Lou Nuer. Since our guns have been taken by the local police nothing was left to resist and stop them. They were attacking us because they knew our guns were taken’.

‘When we arrived here the Ethiopian government instructed us to return, but we told them we will not. Because we are here we face no problem, we are under the protection of the Ethiopian government. In our home area we are hated by the people of the riverbank, the sub-sections of the Nuer Gajaak, and the Lou Nuer ... they hate us. Not unless the authorities employ the Ethiopian army over there and start to rebuild our villages will we return to that area’.

Case II: Fleeing Akoro (Southern Blue Nile, Sudan) to Gizen (Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, Ethiopia)

‘We have been living under the SPLA before, they used to take our goats, money and some other materials. Then the Sudan government came and we all started running even some of our children we left behind. The war between the SPLA and the Sudan government displaced us. The SPLA was pushed out, our villages were destroyed and burned by the Sudan government. We left and stayed in the jungle, lots of elderly people and children died there because of sickness and hunger. We fled our villages and tried to cultivate in other places, Shinkure and Beshune. We were not successful. Now we are here, our children are dying. The local people pay us a small amount to dig gold for them near the stream. It’s not enough to feed our families. We are in a serious problem’.

‘Some of us went back because they were called by the Sudan government. They went back to receive food and other help. But we don’t want to get any kind of assistances from them. We were not treated well, we were beaten, imprisoned, killed ... our villages destroyed. Sometimes those who returned come to visit their kin who are amongst us here. They don’t come straight to this place, they come hiding before they return. They don’t want to be seen’.

‘Most of the displaced, those with the SPLA, are now in Sherkolle camp. We don’t know how their life is over there. The Ethiopians told us to go to the camp in order to get assistance but we are not going to move from this place. Even if they were picking us up from here we will refuse. If the Ethiopian government wants to help us they should bring their support here. We don’t have disagreement with the people here, we are the same people. If we did not have peace here we would return to our country’.

1882 and 1896. By then British imperial interests led to the invasion of the Sudan with the superior Anglo-Egyptian forces defeating the Mahdists. However, British rule was met by a series of uprisings orchestrated by the Mahdist minority and by resistance of the peoples in the southern region of the Sudan. Since former administrations had not exercised effective control over peoples in the south they were accustomed to manage their own affairs. The extreme and indiscriminate violence used against the Dinka uprising of 1919-1920, and the Nuer revolt of 1927-1928 led to widespread death and destruction. As the British colonialists became convinced that violence alone would not work they adopted a more conciliatory and caring policy towards the peoples of the southern Sudan in the early 1930s.

Nationalist political activities in the North during the 1930s and 1940s catalysed by developments associated with the Second World War led to independence in 1956. As independence approached southerners became increasingly concerned that Sudanisation was tantamount to 'Northernisation'. The mutiny at the southern garrison at Torit, as a reaction to its transfer to the North, formed the nucleus of the separatist Anya-Nya movement. Sudan's war first broke out in 1955, a few months before independence on January 1st, 1956. Sudan's first civil war lasted for seventeen years before it was halted by the Addis Ababa peace agreement in 1972 that granted the south regional autonomy. It is estimated that during the first civil war one half to one million southerners were slain, the majority in the cross fire between the Anya-Nya and government forces (Hutchinson, 1996). Local patterns of inter-communal fighting and feuding were exacerbated, and frequently manipulated by both government and Anya-Nya troops (Addison, 1996). The war resumed in 1983 as a result of what was interpreted by the Southern People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) as an unilateral abrogation of the agreement by the Khartoum government (Deng, 1998) and the government's re-imposition of Sharia law.

Because of the fighting, insecurity and subsequent erosion of livelihoods, an estimated thirty percent of the south's population had been uprooted to northern Sudan or Ethiopia by mid-1989 (USCR, 1989). Perhaps one million southern Sudanese reached Khartoum in the four years before mid-1988. The UNHCR estimated the total number of Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia by the end of 1989 to be some 350,000. As the journey by foot to Ethiopia was extremely hazardous, perhaps a quarter of those who set off died before reaching the Ethio-Sudanese border (Keen, 1992).

In 1991, after driving the national army out of most of the South Dr. Rieck Machar, an ethnic Nuer, broke away from the SPLA to form the SPLA-Nasir faction which came in control of much of the countryside in the Upper Nile. Dr. John Garang, an ethnic Dinka from Bor, formed the SPLA-Torit or SPLA-Mainstream faction which controlled most of Equatoria and Bahr-el-Ghazal regions. Several months into the split seventy percent of the Bor Dinka in the Southern Upper Nile region had been displaced, with hundreds of civilians being killed or wounded in what became known as the Bor massacre (Human Rights Watch 1994: 96-99). Nuer communities in central and Western Upper Nile experienced devastating military raids by Garang's forces. In February 1992 the state of insecurity escalated dramatically with the beginning of a large-scale Government of Sudan offensive in parts of the Upper Nile region. The fighting caused the loss of large numbers of livestock and other productive resources and resulted in the displacement of over 200,000 people. By late 1992, the economic fabric

of the extended regions, based on a mixed agro-pastoralism supplemented by seasonal fishing, collapsed.

Several observers have commented that the SPLA leadership split ushered a new phase in an already lengthy civil war in which North-South conflict had previously dominated. It is estimated that by the end of the 1990's, since the re-eruption of full-scale civil war in the Sudan in 1983, the number of Dinka and Nuer who died of factional conflicts and other South-on-South confrontations exceeded those lost to atrocities committed by the Sudanese army (Jok and Hutchinson, 1999).

Having suffered numerous defections to both Garang and the Khartoum government, Machar, by September 1994, attempted to galvanise his remaining supporters by adopting the more politically explicit name of the 'Southern Sudan Independence Movement/Army' (SSIM/A). But still finding himself without access to the international border and thus without means to re-supply his troops in the Upper Nile, Machar eventually turned to the Khartoum government for arms and ammunition to continue his fight against Garang.

During 1997 and 1998, the Sudanese government succeeded in gaining political and military control over strategic oil fields in the Nuer regions of the Western Upper Nile. The government of Sudan did this by encouraging another rebel warlord based in Bul Nuer County to attack Machar's forces further south. These two former rebel government militias raided back and forth for over a year, making it difficult for the local Nuer population to cultivate and protect their herds and homesteads. By the time this Nuer-Nuer confrontation ended, the GoS announced that an international consortium had completed the construction of a 1,110 km pipeline to carry crude oil reserves from Nuer areas of the Western Upper Nile to refineries and export terminals in the North.

At the turn of the millennium the success of the Government of Sudan in gaining access to the oil reserves showed in an upsurge of fighting in parts of the Blue Nile Province in which the GoS employed advanced weaponry, including helicopter gun ships. The fighting displaced thousands of people, with many seeking refuge on Ethiopian territory, necessitating the establishment of Sherkolle refugee camp in 1997 and Yarenga camp in 2002 (box 5.2).

For years the perpetual game of 'divide and rule' roughly balanced the combatants-government forces and southern insurgents. The military stalemate, marked by a seasonal pattern of interethnic violence (months of heavy fighting during the dry season) disastrously prolonged the conflict between Garang's and Machar's forces. This proliferation of southern factions could only be sustained by a steady supply of arms and ammunition. Since the southern factions allied with GoS relied solely on the latter's military supplies, the military deadlock between the SPLA and GoS also meant a stalemate between opposed southern factions themselves (Jok and Hutchinson, 1999).

With the GoS and the SPLM/A engaged in peace talks, increased international pressure led to agreements on a number of fundamentally important clauses to end the war (such as the ones on

Box 5.2 The Flight from Southern Blue Nile

Interview with Fedual Abedule Amar, Sherkolle refugee camp (December 2002)

'When the fighting started between the SPLA and the Sudan government, there was heavy fighting and bombing. When the GoS soldiers came they killed everyone they saw. We were running for our lives, we ran for the mountains to seek protection for our women and children. When the fighting had subdued we went to our villages to get food. Near our village we were seen by the GoS troops, they started to shoot at us. We had to run with some of us going deep into the forest, up till this very day we did not hear of them. Most of us made it back to the mountain and found that some of our children had died because of hunger. We gathered the people and discussed what to do'.

'People were also hiding at the other mountain not far from us. Then we saw the helicopters coming to their place and we heard the sound of heavy machineguns. After that some of our people mentioned that they had heard about a place in Ethiopia where to get peace. The decision was made and we started on our journey'.

'On the way there were many wild animals like lions. Our women and children were in big trouble. A woman, because she was so scared and anxious gave birth to a premature twins on the spot. Now she is here in the camp but her children died there. Most of us became sick because we slept on the mud. Those who died on the way, we just covered their bodies with sticks and leaves. The biggest problem was hunger'.

'It took us nine days to come here. When we came to the camp other refugees gave us clothing. They shared from their rations when we first came to this camp'.

wealth and power sharing signed in early 2004). With the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement in January 2005 a new phase was entered in the political developments of the Sudan, holding a promise for peace.

5.3. Abyssinia and the Ethiopian State

A distinguishing feature of Ethiopia from most other African states is that its various peoples were not tied together within a common frontier by a foreign colonial power from overseas, which then retreated: Ethiopia itself was an empire. Due to its military strength Abyssinia was not only victorious against the Italians in the battle of Adowa in 1896, thereby maintaining its independence, but was also able to extent her frontiers during the 1880s and 1890s. Perhaps three-quarters of its present land area and a substantial majority of its population were brought into the empire by Emperor Menelik II's (1886-1913) conquests.

During Haile Selassie's reign (1930-1974) the Amhara, and to some extent the Tigre and other semitic peoples, retained political and socio-economic predominance over other ethnic communities. The socialist Derg (Lit. 'military committee') Government (1974-1991) deposed Emperor Haile Selassie in a military coup in 1974. They inherited a territory still divided radically between the old 'Abyssinia',

the ancient Christian kingdom which constitutes very roughly the northern third of the modern state of Ethiopia, and the lands conquered and occupied by Menelik.

Armed struggle against the Derg government by liberation movements such as the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) led to displacement of nomadic pastoralists and agri-pastoralists from Eritrea, and to a lesser degree from Tigray, into the Sudan. Refugee influxes into the Sudan started around 1967, involved tens of thousands of people, and only came to an end with the collapse of the Derg regime.

The escalating conflict in the Sudan in the early 1980's generated population movements with many southern Sudanese seeking refuge in Itang refugee camp in the Gambella region of southwestern Ethiopia (box 5.3). Partly because the Ethiopian government ensured that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army was able to run the camps without much international interference, the camps became an important component of the supply and political strategy of the SPLM/A (Scott-Villiers et al., 1993: 202). It was widely accepted that the refugee camps (Itang, as well as Fugnido and Dimma which were established in 1987 as Itang became overcrowded) were closely linked to SPLA military training and supply activities, and as such played a significant role inside Ethiopia and Sudan. The Derg provided active support for the SPLA both in granting access to Ethiopian territory as well as in providing direct military support. SPLA training camps were located deep into Ethiopian territory and often led to resentment amongst the native population.

In 1985 the socialist Ethiopian government announced its intention to move the entire rural population of Ethiopia into new villages over a nine-year period. The government underlined the necessity of the 'villagisation' programme as an essential task to increase agricultural production⁴⁸. In practice the variation in the level of villagisation was often along ethnic lines, with nomadic peoples and groups of shifting cultivators still generally un-villagised by 1988. This with the important exception of those border areas where villagisation was being used as an important element in a counter-insurgency campaign against the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and other rebel groups.

In May 1991, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) overthrew the Derg dictatorial government, ending almost a decade of devastating civil war⁴⁹. In 1990 Tsore refugee camp, near Assosa, came under attack from one of the liberation groups fighting the Derg. Though the attack itself resulted in few casualties, the subsequent chaotic flight in the midst of the dry season into Sudanese territory claimed severe loss of life with many fleeing refugees dying of thirst, hunger and exhaustion, while others were killed by ambushes on the way (see box 5.3).

The unexpected swift collapse of the Derg government forces in the border area provoked the mass exodus of some 350,000 Southern Sudanese refugees from camps on Ethiopian territory into the Sudan. Refugees fleeing the camps in what is now Gambella Regional State were bombed by the Sudanese air force upon entering Sudan at Jikawo. Those without local kinship ties or other social alliances with the surrounding population had no choice but to encamp at Nasir, in Eastern Upper Nile

Box 5.3 Excerpts from an Uduk Diary**Flight from home villages (in Sudan's Southern Blue Nile) to Languaye, Ethiopia**

'On March 3, 1987, we, all the people who lived in the West fled to Ethiopia. In Languaye the UN gave us food according to the family size. They gave us according to the number. We could not eat it as we liked, it had to be eaten according to the number of people in your family. If a person did not have his name on the list, they refused to give him or her. This is a strange thing for us Uduk'.

Flight from Languaye back into the Sudan

'On January 1st 1990 people left the camp because of the war between the Derg government and the rebels. Due to this war, Uduk, Nuer, Dinka, and some other tribes left the camp because the rebels captured it. Assosa was captured too, so we Uduk fled across the mountains into to Sudan. When going through the mountains unknown soldiers ambushed us. They shot us with their machine guns. They shot us during daytime, many people were injured and some died. Others fell in a deep ravine with their children on their back and shoulders because they did not know where to run. Men, women, and children fell in this deep gorge. Some people were shot to death others fell to their death ... The ambush took place on January 6th, 1990. These unknown soldiers shot us when we were fleeing over the mountains'.

'We reached Kubure, which is the land of Sudan, and found that the Arab enemy had gone from there. Then the Uduk people rested in Kubure. We Uduk took food from the abandoned Niuage of Aruu. When we came all Aruu people ran to the mountain thinking that the Uduk come to attack their village. Because of this we took the food from their houses to eat. Yes we did this because the people were very hungry. On the third day the Arabs came and bombed us. The planes bombed us and we ran'.

First arrival in Itang Refugee Camp, Ethiopia

'At the end of March, people heard that the former enemies were coming to attack them in Dangaji. They attacked us in the morning on the 28th of March. Then the people ran from Dangaji to never return to that place, they left for the area in Ethiopia which is called Itang. The Uduk people came in two groups. The first group went directly from Kewaji and Dangaji to Itang. The second group directly from Bugaya to Itang. They ran to Itang but the second group rested at Bugaya, they rested for many days. The first group who left from Kewaji and Dangaji arrived first in Itang. The second group arrived in Itang in the month of May in 1990. They suffered a lot, many of the people died on the way and the rest became sick. Many died of hunger. Some were not able to move their legs while they are going. So other Uduk supported them or carried them on their shoulders. Others were left behind while still being alive. We were eating shwab on the way, a wild food tasting very bitter. It takes several hours for it to be ready to eat. People's faces were swollen like a person who is affected by Kwashiorkor. Here are the names of the villages that we passed through before we reached Itang: Babat, Buldit, Bananga, Thachu, Kormile, Kikile, Mayyut, Fankak, Tharfan and then Itang.'

'People ran from Itang on the 26th of May 1991. People ran because of the Ethiopian civil war, the end of Mengistu's power. In Itang there were many tribes but the majority were Nuer, Dinka, Ethiopians and the Uduk. People ran from Itang in the evening at 6 pm. That was on Sunday. People ran tribe by tribe'.

The Stay in Nasir, Sudan

'In Nasir, white people were bringing food. They brought it by airplane and by ship from Malakal. Life in Nasir was like being an animal in a zoo. We compare it with the treatment by the Arabs our enemy; there was no big difference. The Nuer acted like our former enemy. They also robbed us and threaten to kill us when you refused to give up your things. They used to call us "comrade" and we did not know what comrade meant, we did not understand that language. All the UN rations supplied to us were given through Nuer people. We were the only people for which they used a glass to measure our ration. They used big tins to measure out food for their own people'.

From Nasir the Uduk returned to Itang and via a short stay at Karmi to Bonga, a newly established refugee camp.

not far from the Ethiopian border. Poor and erratic delivery of relief supplies contributed to the development of a chronic state of serious food insecurity, claiming many lives (Scott-Villiers et al., 1993). With the collapse of the Derg government, the SPLM/A lost its main supply lines and military bases in southwestern Ethiopia. This proved to be an important factor contributing to the 1991 leadership split in the SPLM/A, resulting in a strong increase of inter ethnic fighting across large parts of southern Sudan.

The EPRDF established the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1991-1995) which later evolved in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Up to this day the EPRDF dominates Ethiopian politics. The EPRDF is attempting to design a post-imperial state that replaces historical ethnic domination (notably by the Amhara's) with ethnic self-reliance and interethnic equality. By doing so the current Ethiopian government is criticised for having given ethnicity still greater salience (Harbeson, 1998: 113). Though pursued as a strategy of peaceful reconstruction ethnic federalism is known to be full of risk⁵⁰.

5.4. The Ethio-Sudanese Border Area

The western Ethiopian border areas constitute lowlands which continue into Sudan. Of the numerous inhabitants of the area, many peoples are found on both sides of the border. In Gambella Regional State the major ethnic groups are the Nuer and the Anyuak, with the Majangir, Komo and Opo making up small minorities. These people groups are seen by the Ethiopian government as the indigenous people of the area. Their traditional political systems are generally highly decentralised. Though linguistically and culturally related they form distinct ethnic groups. The Anyuak, Opo and Komo are predominantly cultivators (sedentary hoe agriculturalists). The Nuer have a more agro-pastoral and semi-nomadic lifestyle. The Majangir live in the foothills of the Ethiopian highlands and make a living out of shifting cultivation, hunting, gathering forest foods and collection of honey.

Population Movements

Historically, population movements have been an integral part of people's survival strategies. Movements across national borders have been documented for other border regions in Africa (e.g. van Brabant, 1994; Allen, 1996; Getachew, 1996; Turton, 1996; Bakewell, 1999)⁵¹. The international borders in the Horn bear little relation to subsistence activities, migratory movements and trade, exchange and support networks and kinship/clan relations. These not only form the basis of subsistence but, in times of crisis, survival for most peoples of the Horn.

Border areas in the Horn of Africa are seldom under full control of national governments. This has made such areas breeding grounds for armed movements and liberation fronts (or they are suspected and treated so by central governments) with the aim of destabilising or overthrowing national governments. Border areas can therefore be in a state of crisis for periods of time as has been, for example, well documented for the Sudan-Ugandan border area (UNRISD, 1993). The same holds true for the Ethio-Sudanese border region.

Oral literature of people groups in the Ethio-Sudanese border region speak of considerable population movements due to raiding, slave taking, insecurity, flight from invaders or occupying forces, population pressure and for reasons of subsistence (Whitehead, 1934; Triulzi, 1981; Tornay, 1981; Kloos et al., 1990; Turton, 1991).

Management of Population Movements

Wars in both Sudan and Ethiopia have induced massive population movements across the international border resulting in the establishment of refugee camps, centres or 'stations' receiving some form of often limited relief supplies, and large numbers of displaced people rendered dependent on family and kin for their immediate survival. The number of Sudanese seeking refuge in Gambella has been very significant with Gambella, at one point in time during the 1980's, becoming home to the largest refugee camp in Africa, sheltering over two-hundred thousand refugees.

In line with the Derg's developmental and political policies hundreds of thousands of highlanders were settled in various parts of Ethiopia, notably so in the southern, western and eastern border regions. Initially resettlement was of a voluntary nature, but soon turned to forced resettlement with many of the highlanders settled against their will in predominantly lowland areas. Resettlement went hand in hand with 'development' policies which had a drastic impact on communities living in the borderlands. Numerous conflicts between settlers and indigenous people over land use have been reported in various parts of Ethiopia (Colchester and Luling, 1986; Abdulhamid Bedri, 1989; Dessalegn Rahmato, 1989; Kloos, 1990).

During the Derg era the Gambella area was targeted for agricultural development since it has good water resources and was seen to be sparsely populated. Various projects including irrigation and mechanised agriculture had a drastic impact on the livelihoods of the local communities. Security forces oversaw the resettlement of 50,000 to 60,000 people from elsewhere in Ethiopia on Anyuak land, as well as the set-up and maintenance of the new villages (amba's). The presence of these forces was discontinued following the downfall of the Derg, resulted in violent clashes when some Anyuaks, resenting the resettlement policy, attacked and destroyed many of these villages. Hundreds of settlers lost their lives in the disturbances. With the new central government coming into power law and order was restored, and it is estimated that about half of the settlers returned to rebuild their villages. By then the agricultural development schemes had collapsed. Over the years those settlers, who returned after the turbulence, adjusted themselves and became involved in agriculture and cattle rearing. Droughts, food insecurity and overpopulation in their home areas form strong deterrents for them to return to the highlands of northern Ethiopia from where they were taken to be resettled.

Anyuaks strongly suspect the Ethiopian government to have earmarked Gambella for a renewed resettlement programme. Indeed, the Ethiopian government seems to be of the opinion that huge tracts of arable land in the region could be put into productive use. However, the government denies that its most recent resettlement programme is of a cross regional nature⁵².

Apart from these sudden and large-scale population movements into Gambella, other population movements have been going on more gradually but over longer periods of time. These include the eastwards migration of the Jikany Nuer from Sudan's Upper Nile into western Gambella (bringing with them a more agro-pastoralist livelihood orientation) and the migration of Ethiopian highlanders

into the escarpment area to their west. Increasingly, population pressure in the Ethiopian highlands is changing settlement and land-use patterns along the escarpment well into the lowland areas.

The influx of Nuer into western Gambella and the highlanders into eastern Gambella are long term processes. They have not generated much interest or attention by subsequent national governments, even though regional governments and local leaders indicated that such movements have resulted in serious disputes and concerns at local level. On the other hand the settlement of large numbers of highlanders in the area as well as the establishment of the refugee camps has been overseen and dealt with by the Ethiopian state with support by the international community. These major programmes took place with almost total disregard, let alone respect, of the local inhabitants. Even more so, it was overseen by governments with whom the local people at best did only marginally identify.

Frontier Area

Stretches of the border are sensitive areas with long experience of cross border interaction both in terms of offering refuge to war-affected communities as well as a base for warring parties to train and mount operations. A general sense of insecurity and lawlessness renders the local population at the will of armed militias, resistance movements and bandits. The Gambella area holds important economic potential both for the local population and the central government. Rich dry season grazing grounds attract thousands of Nuer from Eastern Upper Nile with their herds, Anyuaks grow sorghum, maize and tend their vegetable gardens on the fertile banks of Gambella's many streams and rivers. The rich gold deposits and of late substantial oil reserves have been attracting the interest of the central government. Since the border demarcation is unclear, parts of Gambella are likely to be contested following a peace agreement in the Sudan.

A number of interrelated factors contribute to a complex interplay in this particular border stretch which will, no doubt, have major consequences for refugee return and integration.

Competition for Entitlements

War and conflict are known to create famine for various reasons (de Waal, 1993). The consequences of conflict and the influx of large numbers of displaced and often destitute people can be devastating for local communities as they face increased competition over essential livelihood resources. Depletion of locally available natural resources may result in competing interests regarding access and control over water resources, cultivation areas and dry season grazing grounds.

Insecurity or restrictions imposed by government troops or militias on mobility may jeopardise access to fishing grounds or wild food sources which form an essential element of people's food basket during the dry season and in times of duress.

Arms Control and Power of a Central Government

There is a clear relationship between the alternating expanding and contracting powers of central governments and the potential for intra- and inter-ethnic fighting. Following the departure of the British in 1955-56 the Nuer regions experienced a serious escalation in the viciousness of intercommunity combat, as many individuals took this as an opportunity to settle old scores by force

of arms. The number of intercommunity conflicts escalated rapidly, especially along the ungovernable Ethiopian border (Hutchingson, 1996:133). The lack of effective governance in the border area has resulted in an un-controlled flow and proliferation of small firearms thus contributing to the militarisation of more radical elements amongst the various ethnic groups in the area such as the Nuer and Anyuak.

Factionalisation & the Use of Militias

Factionalisation and the use of militias have added to a sense of insecurity and erosion of livelihoods. People on the move are at risk of attacks by those militias as has been well documented, e.g. in the case of the Baggara militias in the north and the anti SPLA Anya-Nya II militias which killed large numbers of Dinka on their way to Ethiopia from Bahr-el-Ghazal (Keen, 1992: 4). Activity of armed individuals and groups has also been blamed for a general sense of insecurity in certain areas of the Gambella Regional State. In general, the activities of the militias greatly impeded freedom of movement, constraining people's ability to reach areas where food, cash and/or relatives were more plentiful.

The situation in the border area is further complicated by the fact that various parties are in control of parts of the border area. The southern stretch of the national border in the Gambella is controlled by the SPLA associated with the SPLA Mainstream Faction (identifying themselves with the former SPLA leader John Garang). Much of the northern stretch is controlled by the old SPLA Nasir Faction (identifying with Rieck Machar). In between, a significant part is controlled by independent Nuer factions (e.g. the Ethiopian Patriotic Front) or militias (e.g. the Lou Nuer) not under the control of the SPLA. Besides these military actors Ethiopian opposition forces operate from bases in the border trying to destabilise the Ethiopian government. In the absence of an effective Ethiopian government in the border area, and lack of a firm authority at the Sudanese side, the interests of the border population is repeatedly rendered into the hands of various armed elements.

A Subculture of Ethnicised Violence & Unravelling Codes of War

Since the power struggle within the SPLA split the movement into two warring factions in August 1991, rural Nuer and Dinka communities of the south have been grappling with a deepening regional subculture of ethnicised violence. This has not only prolonged the conflict but also contributed to the post 1991 polarisation and militarisation of Dinka and Nuer ethnic identities (e.g. Jok and Hutchingson, 1999). This '*war of the southern educated elite*' was characterised by a rapid unravelling of regional codes of warfare ethics and the transformation of previous patterns of interethnic competition over scarce economic resources, into politicised programmes of ethnicised violence⁵³. Whereas before the war and up until the SPLM/A split in 1991, Dinka and Nuer fighters would not intentionally kill women, children, or the elderly, these vulnerable segments of the population became the primary victims in the '*war of the educated*' (Jok and Hutchingson, 1999: 131).

Disengagement of Local - Traditional Structures

Traditionally, confrontations between two groups would rarely last longer than a few days at which point community leaders from both sides would step in to resolve the conflict. The Derg government disengaged and replaced local leadership and management structures by a highly bureaucratic, top-down and sectorised government system. By doing so conflict management responsibilities became

the formal responsibility of young and in-experienced local district administrations which, in many cases, were not aware of both the complexity and sensitivity of local settings. Let alone being capacitated and equipped to deal effectively with such challenges.

Ethno Identity and Devolution of Power based on Ethnicity

Issues of ethno identity and government devolution policies based on ethnicity have fuelled dispute in both Sudan and Ethiopia and led to violent conflict in the border region.

Mengistu exploited ethnic divisions by waging unrelenting war against the Eritrean People's Liberation Front. He sharpened ethnic divisions by his forced resettlements and used these as an important element in a counter-insurgency campaign against the Oromo Liberation Front (Harbeson, 1999). The OLF was actively engaged in guerrilla warfare against the Derg government in western Wollega, the Ethio-Sudanese border area. Government counter insurgency measures to keep the local population under control and the cutting of support for rebels in war zones had a heavy impact on the population. According to displaced people interviewed at the time, both the beginning of the re-settlement process as well as the maintenance of the villages were accompanied by violence and gross human rights abuses. These included indiscriminate killing, rape, burning of houses, destruction of crops and property and robbing of livestock (Survival International, 1988: 31).

The current Ethiopian government has pursued ethnic federalism⁵⁴ as a strategy for peaceful reconstruction in Ethiopia. However, devolution is known to be full of risks⁵⁵. Foremost amongst these is that devolution to large regions reinforces the demands of some ethnic groups for regional secession or partition. This has been the case in Benishangul-Gumuz (home to Sherkolle refugee camp) where strong sentiments steered towards secession of the Regional State by early 2000. The risk of secession or partition is compounded by the fact that the federal strategy can generate internal violence when ethnic majorities are intolerant toward minority groups in their jurisdictions, as has been reported by the Southern Peoples' Administrative and Somalia Regions (Abbink, 1993).

The policy of ethnic federalism has contributed to conflict in the Gambella region. The vision of an ethnically decentralised state asks for a fair representation of the different ethnic groups in the region. In Gambella this has proven a problematic scenario with the Anyuak, until recently an ethnic majority, fast becoming a minority due to the influx of large numbers of Nuer from across the international border, and the re-settlement of highlanders in Anyuak heartland.

It is in such a complex environment that UNHCR is implementing its Sudanese refugee programme in the Gambella area. It provides care and maintenance in three different camps to over fifty thousand refugees, all having been displaced by war and insecurity from Sudan's Jonglei, Upper Nile and Blue Nile Provinces.

5.5. UNHCR's Refugee Programme in Gambella, South-Western Ethiopia

UNHCR's refugee programme in western Ethiopia is one of the longest running programmes in Africa. In the early 1970s, many southern Sudanese sought and found refuge in Itang refugee camp, in the Gambella Region. The signing of the 1972 Addis Ababa Peace Agreement led to the return of the refugees to the Sudan. However, with the re-emergence of armed conflict in the Sudan in 1983, Itang became one of the largest camps, sheltering around 220,000 people by the end of 1988 (USCR, 1989). Fugnido camp, to the southeast of Itang, opened in November 1987 to reduce the pressure on Itang which was overcrowded. To the south of Fugnido another camp, Dimma, was established that same year. The majority of the refugees were Nuer and Dinka, with far smaller numbers of Shilluk, Anyuak and Nuba.

Challenges

UNHCR's Sudanese refugee programme has faced a number of challenges. Refugee numbers have been significant when compared with the number of inhabitants of Ethiopia's sparsely populated western regions. Numbers have been overwhelming when compared with the local people living in the vicinity of the camps. Though the refugees were welcomed by the central government, under the auspices of the UNHCR, the location and establishment of the camps came into being without properly consulting authorities in the regional states, much less the local population near prospective camp sitings. With large numbers of people concentrated in small areas, competition for essential livelihood resources such as farm and grazing lands, firewood and water increased. This has resulted in tensions and disputes between refugees and the local population.

During the Mengistu regime (1974-1991) the SPLM/A was the de-facto administrative authority in large parts of Gambella. Operation of the refugee camps was closely associated with SPLM/A interests. Despite considerable resistance from the local population, reflecting earlier divisions between the Anya-Nya and the SPLM/A, the SPLM/A attempted to pressurise local chiefs to the point of recruiting soldiers for the war in the Sudan. Some of the local disputes therefore have their roots in the relationship between the local population and the SPLM/A, leaving a legacy of tension and strife with the communities residing in the border area. E.g. a series of violent incidents in 1989 between the SPLM/A and local Anyuak left hundreds of mostly innocent people dead. The incidents were perceived by the Anyuaks as a well orchestrated conspiracy by Nuer SPLM/A fighters to take over Anyuak land. As a result of such tensions and strife, disputes regarding access to and control over livelihood resources can quickly ignite armed confrontations, as guns are relatively easy to acquire.

As it was not until 1989 that the international community started to respond to the massive humanitarian needs inside southern Sudan itself, Itang refugee camp became a main channel for relief to southern Sudanese in and far beyond the camp. The provision of relief food and free services such as medical care and education attracted many, predominantly Nuer from Sudan to settle in western Gambella. Having lost significant territories in the Sudan to the Nuer the Anyuak of Ethiopia feared

this largely unchecked influx of Nuer which they associated with the threat to take over their land in Ethiopia. Thousands of impoverished Nuer, who lost their cattle in Upper Nile due to war, insecurity and diseases, settled on the banks of the Baro river in Ethiopia, trying to restock by cultivating the fertile lands along the Baro. As the higher grounds along the Baro river make good cultivation areas during the rainy season, and the lower areas good dry season grazing grounds, Nuer pastoralism developed into agri-pastoralism with permanent Nuer settlements appearing on lands vacated by the sedentary Anyuak.

With the collapse of Mengistu regime in 1991 almost all of the southern Sudanese refugees crossed the border back into the Sudan. Most of the Nuer refugees could claim kinship ties with the Nuer communities across the border. Other refugee groups such as the Dinka and particularly the Uduk of Southern Blue Nile, had no choice but to encamp near Nasir, being rendered dependent on the scarce humanitarian resources reaching that area. With the new Ethiopian central government consolidating its power and establishing its security apparatus, many of the former refugees returned to Ethiopia in 1992 and 1993⁵⁶. Though the SPLM/A was welcomed to set up a small base near each of the camps their presence and influence was greatly diminished. Realising the previous conflictual situation experienced at Itang the UNHCR opted not to re-open Itang refugee camp.

The number of refugees in the 1990's and into the new millennium never reached the high numbers seen in the 1980s. By September 2004 the total number of refugees in Fugnido, Bonga and Dimma refugee camps stood close to seventy thousand people. Nuer refugees formed the majority with 45% of the case load (Fugnido and Dimma camps), followed by the Uduk with 27% (Bonga camp), Anyuak 27% (Fugnido camp) and the rest mainly Dinka with few Nuba, Equatorials, Buruns and Shilluk. In general, it can be said that life in the camps is not easy (box 5.4).

A serious incident took place in July 2002 at Itang, where local Nuers clashed with local Anyuak. The Anyuak were defeated and many of their villages plundered and taken over by the expanding Nuer communities. This incident led to increased tension in other areas of Gambella. Later that month some Anyuak dressed in police uniforms stopped a bus near Abobo carrying refugees back to Fugnido camp after visiting friends and relatives living in Gambella town. All Nuer refugees were ordered out of the bus, taken away and killed in the forest, to revenge the Anyuaks killed in Itang. Later that year, on the 27th of November, armed Anyuaks attacked village twelve at the outskirts of Fugnido refugee camp, killing over forty Dinka refugees, mostly women, elderly and some children.

Small incidents can quickly gather momentum and spin out of control, by feeding on deep-rooted mischief and anger between ethnic groups. In the case of the attack by Anyuak gunmen on Fugnido camp most sources confirmed that it started with two Nuers ordering some locally brewed sorghum beer from an Anyuak lady running one of the many teahouses in the camp. Failing to pay up, a Dinka, trying to avoid a quarrel, stepped in to make up for the difference. This angered the Anyuak lady, who demanded to know why a Dinka would want to pay for drinks consumed by Nuer. The lady's husband became involved, a small fight started, soon joined by other Anyuaks and Dinkas. Fearing for things to come that evening most of the Anyuak refugees left their village in the camp to spend the night at local Anyuak villages. The next day a major attack by Anyuak gunmen took place. The attack is thought to have been fuelled by Anyuak discontent regarding a dispute over the position of the SPLM commander in Pochalla Sudan, just across the border. This position, having been filled by a Dinka,

was strongly contested by the Anyuaks, who wanted to see one of their own in command, since the area is inhabited by the Anyuak. A yet stronger sentiment underlying the incident is the fear of the Anyuak about being dominated by the Nuer, and the perceived failure of the Dinka (dominating the SPLA forces in the area) to stand up for the Anyuak cause. The UNHCR and the Ethiopian government strongly condemned the attack and promised to bring the ‘perpetrators’ to justice.

A series of violent clashes in and around the camp resulted in over fifty additional deaths in the months following this major incident. This made the UNHCR and the Ethiopian government decide to relocate the Nuer and Dinka refugees to a new camp. Matching UNHCR’s criteria for the location of refugee camps with the options available, according to the Ethiopian government, led to the selection of a site at Odier, halfway along the road from Gambella town to the border town of Jikawo.

Odier, Way Out of a Tricky Problem?

Construction at Odier began in late 2002, but caused an embarrassment for the UNHCR as the 2003 rains flooded the site. Apart from flooding poor drainage conditions would cause the place to be malaria infested most time of the year. A new site was found nearby. Further problems were then encountered, as the area did not seem to be under full government control, making travel to the area off-limits for UN staff. The Ethiopian government regarded Odier as a safe area inhabited by a welcoming Nuer population not far from the Ethio-Sudanese border. However, militia activity rendered the place unsafe, and fearing intra-tribal clashes at Odier some of the Nuer sub-sections, if given the choice, would rather opt to remain in Fugnido camp. Relocation of the Nuer and Dinka refugees to Odier would probably have resulted in the SPLM/A, which maintained a base near Fugnido camp, to establish a presence at Odier. This could have led to confrontations between SPLA units and GoS backed Nuer militias roaming the area. For the Anyuak, Odier was associated with the constant threat of losing territory, a threat which came true at the former site of Itang refugee camp. A major camp at Odier ‘*will attract a large number of Nuer to push us out from there up to Gambella town*’.

On December 13th 2003 eight people, including three staff members of the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs, were ambushed eighteen kilometres out of Gambella, on the way to Odier. Their mutilated bodies were brought back to Gambella town and shown around town, provoking highlanders and armed elements to attack the Anyuak population in retaliation⁵⁷. That day and over the following two days hundreds of innocent Anyuaks were killed, including many women and children. Following the incident unrest quickly spread across all of Gambella regional state. Hundreds of people were killed, with armed incidents between Anyuak fighters on one hand and highlanders and the federal army on the other. Fugnido town, next to the refugee camp, became the scene of repeated attacks by hundreds of armed Anyuaks. Elsewhere resettlement villages⁵⁸ were attacked and people massacred.

Box 5.4 A Critical Account of Camp Life, Fugnido 2003 (Excerpts of Interviews)

'We ran away from Sudan because of insecurity. And when we came here we appreciated that there was security. There are no airplanes to bomb us and the kind of fighting we experienced in the Sudan is no more. However, when problems arise between the refugees it is being ignored till people have been killed. There is no investigation, criminals are not found ... that is why we start to feel insecure amongst ourselves'.

'Now, we are refugees from Sudan. When something happens between Ethiopian Anyuak and Nuer it touches us. Why should we be the victim? If they have their clashes that is their crisis. We should not be included. We feel that the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) or the government is not securing us here'.

'For our youngsters there is good education here. Education is up to grade eight, for some grade nine and ten. From that moment they stay in the camp without a future. Refugees are considered not to have qualifications. We are just not given the opportunity to employ our experience. Even when you have more experience than the Ethiopian staff your suggestions are not listened to'.

'Here refugees are considered to have no rights. The refugee committee used to be elected by ourselves. When ARRA found the people in the committee not acceptable they instructed us to select another committee. We asked them: "what is this?". "If we elect people and they are not acceptable to you, you instruct us to select other people. What kind of selection is this?". So ARRA selected the people they liked, that means it is now their committee. If the committee makes mistakes or acts unwise we cannot shame them. They cannot be touched as they are in the hands of ARRA. We are not being trusted. When these young boys and youngsters are assigned as refugee leaders they don't understand the refugee problems, they always create a problem. When the camp administration is properly selecting respected elders who have a voice in settling problems conflict will not happen. We can't deny that people go in dispute and conflict, if people fail to reason they resort to conflict. This is done in the absence of the elders'.

'Food has spoiled our system now. Why? It is because when we were as a community in the Sudan there was a lot of food and we were sharing it. If guests or visitors came they will share in the food and it is not known from which house the food is coming because we were all eating together. But here, since the rations are too small every person is confined to his own ration only, so you eat with your wife and children only. If you share your food it will be finished before the next distribution, you and your children will be suffering. This is undermining our culture. Also when new arrivals come it may take up to a year before they get their ration cards, so we all try to support a bit, it is difficult as we all will suffer seriously from doing that. To be a human being means to share. Our culture is about sharing food and other things and its purpose is to build unity, to be united as a group ... a group of common culture and language'.

Following these deadly events UNHCR no longer considered Odier as a valid alternative to resettle refugees from the troubled Fugnido camp. Following the incidents the minority groups were relocated to Bonga refugee camp. The relocation of the Nuer and Dinka refugees was put on hold.

Oil and Development Plans

During the Derg era, Russian technicians proved the existence of oil deposits in the Gambella region (an extension of the oil fields discovered in the Sudan) but it is only recently that the government has granted a Malaysian company a concession to systematically explore for oil and start its exploration⁵⁹. Though downplayed by the GoE, Anyuak leadership directly links Ethiopia's oil interests in Gambella

with the recent backlash of the army against them: *'We are still searching for the reasons why the government of Ethiopia has turned against us. Did they come to kill us for the oil? If so let them dig it out when there is peace!'*

Both Anyuak and Nuer perceive that the development plans of the Ethiopian government will ultimately disregard their rights, and eventually will displace them from their lands in favour of highlanders moving into the area. Though the government is emphasizing that it will not engage in cross regional state resettlement schemes, several respondents indicated that highlanders are being settled in areas vacated by the Anyuak during this latest crisis.

Gambella – a Constrained Operational Environment

The situation in Gambella is characterised by a climate of fear and anger. A near total breakdown of trust and respect between the main ethnic groups, and between the various communities and the government adds to a situation which, if not handled well, will lead to further and yet more devastating conflict.

Long-standing disputes and conflict in the Gambella region seem to be aggravated by a combination of factors. These include devolution of power (in line with the policies of ethnic federalism) to a weak regional government and its lower echelons in an environment characterised by inter-ethnic fear and mistrust. Ethnic federalism and the experience of policies based on ethnicity have fuelled conflict about political representation and influence against a background of deep rooted fear and suspicion amongst the Anyuak, one of the major ethnic groups in the regional state, that they stand to lose their land as well as their identity.

The inability of the government system to anticipate, react and mitigate the effects of violent conflict has been striking. When conflict flares the government is slow in reacting. When it does respond, its forces are criticised for coming in heavy-handed. Not only are its forces implicated in the conflict, but most local leaders in the area suspect the government of having a direct hand in the way conflict is played out. The government has also not been able to exercise effective control over many parts of the border area such as the Akobo and Jikawo districts rendering the communities to the will of armed groups. Subsequent dislocations breed conflict in the Baro valley deep into Ethiopian territory, between the displaced nomadic Nuer and sedentary Anyuak.

Mandatory Questions

The situation in the Gambella region illustrates key issues and concerns regarding UNHCR's mandate. In the first place, as the case above clearly illustrates, it should secure physical protection of refugees from attacks and killings.

By its very nature UNHCR has to work in compliance with national governments which may hold strong agendas of their own when it comes to refugee programming. E.g. with the Mengistu government effectively enabling the SPLM/A to administer the border areas the management of refugee flows and camps became a politicised affair serving far beyond humanitarian goals. Though

the role of the SPLM/A has diminished following the fall of the socialist Derg government it still has access to the camps and has, at times, requested refugee leaders to allot fighters for their cause.

In dealing with large numbers of displaced people in the Horn of Africa, UNHCR has been forced by its mandate to make anomalous and sometimes questionable distinctions between 'refugees' and 'locals'. This certainly has been the case in the Gambella region regarding Anyuak and Nuer refugees. It is very hard to distinguish between genuine refugees and those wanting to exploit the benefits associated with refugee status (the option of resettlement especially has of late attracted many young male 'refugees'). Two characteristics of refugee flows in the Horn are known to account for this: refugee flows take place across international boundaries, which are more or less irrelevant to the cultural and economic relations of local populations, and they are not single events but part of a long-term process, as clearly illustrated by the migration of the Jikany Nuer to the east.

For the international community, refugee camps signify '*enclosed areas, restricted to refugees and those assisting them, where protection and assistance is provided until it is safe for the refugees to return to their homelands or to be resettled elsewhere*' (UNHCR, 2000c: 108). Depending on the developments in the country of origin UNHCR promotes three durable solutions: repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country. With local integration not being an option and a relative few benefiting from resettlement to Canada, America or Australia, the main option left is repatriation.

Firmly rooted in UNHCR's western thinking is the assumption that it is natural for an ethnic group to be rooted in a particular place and that therefore voluntary repatriation is the natural solution to the refugee problem in the Horn. However, going home may not be the natural outcome of population displacement. Making a new home in a new area may be perfectly consistent with the history of particular refugee groups and with their self-view as a distinct group. This is what actually happened at the former site of Itang camp where Nuer communities, former refugees, now live in areas evacuated by the Anyuak. This is also what the Anyuak fear will happen at Fugnido refugee camp: deeply located in the area inhabited by the Anyuak, Fugnido camp with over twenty thousand Nuer refugees signals a potential new and dangerous phase of Nuer expansion directly in the middle of Anyuak heartland.

5.6. Discussion

With the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement between the Khartoum government and the SPLM/A in early 2005 there is a prospect of real peace, bringing to an end years of civil strife, warfare and turmoil. With peace comes the challenge of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced and those displaced across Sudan's borders wanting to return home. However, considering the complexities on the ground (e.g. proliferation of small fire arms, factionalisation, use of militia's, subculture of ethnicised violence and unravelling codes of war), a quick end to the refugee cycle of the refugees in camps in western Ethiopia does not seem to be very likely.

As early as 2004 the UNHCR started to plan for the voluntary repatriation and integration of refugees (figure 5.1 presents the expected refugee repatriation movements to southern Sudan). UNHCR's

foremost concerns regarding voluntary repatriation will be protection and physical security, including from armed groups and militias, during and directly following return. Officially the UNHCR would neither encourage nor promote return to any areas deemed unsafe (IRIN, 2004). However in reality this will be very hard to manage. After all, who defines, and based on what criteria, if an area is safe to return to? The expectation of UNHCR and its partner organisations is that refugees will return home.

Following return, the struggle to integrate returnees into societies ravaged by war and social dislocation is known to pose many challenges. UNHCR's responsibility goes beyond facilitating the journey home, as assisting refugees to return is clearly not enough. UNHCR and its implementing partners will need to support returnees with programmes to facilitate the integration of the returnee families. However the support of returnees as well as its rationale and expectation accompanying it presents '*an inevitable impasse in terms of what they are able to realistically achieve*' (IRIN, 2005). The same report states that what returnees need is '*exactly what the population in that area lacks*'.

With the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement return issues will gain importance. Given the complexity and sensitivities characterising many return areas it will be of crucial importance to take into account refugees own return beliefs and expectations of home. This will help facilitate the development of localised strategies and principles to adhere to, the right of voluntary return, provision of effective protection as well as return assistance and reintegration support.

6. The Return Intention and its Antecedents of Sudanese Refugees in Ethiopia

This chapter seeks to identify issues that are taken into account by Sudanese refugees when deciding on return to areas of origin. The study is interested in finding out how refugees think about return and why. Which are the factors that encourage or prevent them from staying in camps in Ethiopia or returning to their home areas? How are refugee's return decisions being informed? What are their sources and channels of information? To what extent do they use that information when deciding return?

The extended Theory of Reasoned Action (TORA) provides the conceptual framework for addressing questions like these (section 4.3 and 4.4). As has been discussed in chapter four, the TORA, as an actor-oriented approach, may contribute to the emergence of explanatory models of return behaviour.

This chapter is organised into eleven sections. The first section highlights the elements of the TORA construct which are key to understanding the models' application in the refugee study. The introductory section is followed by the presentation of the sample, which forms the basis for the analysis presented in this chapter. Section three presents the general intention of the Sudanese refugees to return to their home areas. This is followed by section four which looks into the relative importance and the influence of the main determinants of intention. Section five presents the cognitive barriers and drivers that influence the general decision to return. Section six explores the cognitive construct of refugees' beliefs and expectations towards repatriation for the various belief domains associated with return. Section seven looks at the beliefs which influence the return intent of particular household categories and return options, as presented as part of the questionnaire. Section eight discusses the role and influence of the various referents that affect refugees' return decision. Section nine sheds light on the perceived level of control over the decision to return and the return process itself. Section ten discusses the nature of vulnerability associated with return options for various refugee household categories. The last section, section eleven, presents a short discussion.

6.1. Applying the Theory of Reasoned Action

This study on Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia applies the extended Theory of Reasoned Action in the dis-aggregated form to explore the patterns of individual beliefs and their influence on the intention to return (section 4.4). This process of analysis indicates those factors which inhibit or encourage return, in other words factors acting as barriers, or drivers towards return. The application of the Theory of Reasoned Action requires a two-staged approach. During the first stage the salient, or most prominent,

outcome beliefs and social referents regarding the intention to return are defined. The second stage deals with the establishment of the interview schedule which is made up by the descriptive and TORA variables.

Stage I: Refugees' Salient Modal Outcome Beliefs and Social Referents

The purpose of the first stage is to identify the salient modal outcome beliefs: refugees' most prominent beliefs associated with return and repatriation. The first stage survey is also used to identify the salient social referents, that is the most prominent referents, persons or social entities which are considered to be influential to most within the refugee population. The identification of the salient outcome beliefs and social referents is needed to develop the attitude and normative scales required for the development of 'the second stage' structured interview schedule following the TORA construct.

The first stage consisted of a number of focus group discussions involving a small sample of refugee household heads, or their representatives, assumed to have the power of migrational decision-making. In total 141 household heads from Fugnido and Bonga refugee camps, of various ethnic backgrounds (Nuba, Dinka, Anyuak, Shilluk, Nuer, Uduk and Burun), took part in the focus groups. Approximately a quarter of those were female household heads or representatives (32 out of the 141 participants). The responses were taken to represent the opinions about return as well as the expectations of home of the refugee community at large. In line with Ajzen and Fishbein's recommendations the salient modal beliefs and social referents represented a minimum of three-quarters of all emitted beliefs and referents (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). In total seventy different return beliefs and expectations, and eleven referents were found to be common amongst the interviewed household heads⁶⁰. These outcome beliefs and social referents are therefore considered 'salient' and 'modal' and are applied in the second stage of the process, the structured questionnaire. For the elucidation of return beliefs and social referents and the selection of the most salient ones reference is made to appendix 6.1.

Stage II: Structured Interview Schedule

The structured interview schedule is made up of two parts. The first part deals with the so-called descriptive variables and the second part with the TORA variables.

Regarding the descriptive variables⁶¹ the survey sought to identify differences in intentions to return by exploring household categories based on a number of descriptor variables (see table 6.1).

The TORA variables sought at a first and general level to identify the intention of Sudanese refugees to return to the Sudan. At a second level direct readings of Stated Attitude, Stated Subjective Norm, the Perceived Level of Control and the Perceived Vulnerability were taken. At a third level more informed readings were taken for attitude (eliciting belief strength and outcome evaluation) and subjective norm (the normative belief attributed to specific social referents and the motivation to comply with each of those referents).

The assessment was undertaken during November to December 2002. In order to give it more salience, and pay respect to the ongoing peace process at the time, three return options were presented as part of the questionnaire. The options were: return in the short term (return 'within a year'

following the assessment, in practice the 2002-3 dry season), medium term (return 'within 3 years', the period 2003-5) and longer term when there is 'peace'. The prospect of a comprehensive peace agreement, bringing an end to Sudan's long-standing war, was thus taken into account thereby increasing the relevance of the study.

The development of the questionnaire closely followed the format recommended by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980: 216-273). Reference is made to appendix 6.1 which further describes the construct of the interview schedule, the specific areas of enquiry and the way in which each of the variables has been elicited and measured. The TORA interview schedule can be found in appendix 6.2.

A total of 652 useable responses were acquired by face-to-face interviews, undertaken by trained and widely trusted and well-respected community members. Household head respondents, or their representative, were identified through an 'at random', stratified cluster sampling process, involving refugees in three camps (Fugnido, Bonga and Sherkolle). With a general mean value of 6.0 persons in a household the sample represents the opinions and feelings regarding return of over 3,900 refugees, or around 5.9% of the total number of refugees in the three camps. Regarding the sampling methodology reference is made to section 4.4 with appendix 6.3 referring to the random cluster sampling process.

The research applied bi-variant analysis so as to compare one group with another. Non-parametric statistical methods, such as the 'Mann Whitney U' test and the 'Spearman' correlation were therefore used (see glossary). Data was analysed by using the statistical software programme SPSS.

6.2. Description of the Sample

The whole sample consisted of 652 usable responses obtained across three different camps and eight major ethnic groups. The ethnic groups covered by the sample are Nuer (40.3% of the total refugee caseload), Uduk (22%), Anyuak (11%), Mabaan (9%), Dinka (5%), Funj (4%), Shilluk and Nuba (less than one percent each). Other tribes such as the Burun and Murle (each represented by over three hundred people) and Equatorians, Ruara (each around one hundred individuals or less) are only marginally represented in the camps. Therefore the sample is thought to be representative for the overall Sudanese refugee community residing in camps in western Ethiopia.

Around forty-five percent of the refugee households were found to be Sudanese who had been granted refugee status in Ethiopia during the Derg era (1974-1991). With all refugees fleeing back into the Sudan in 1991, this indicates that almost half of the 2003 refugee caseload in camps on Ethiopian territory is made up by 'repeated' refugees, most of them re-acquiring status in 1992-3. Almost half of the Sudanese households claiming first time refugee status in the 1990's had been internally displaced prior to seeking refugee status across the border.

Approximately a third of the households fled their home areas in the Sudan to go directly to the refugee camps (36%)⁶². Forty-three percent arrived in a camp within a year of fleeing their home area, forty-four percent between one to ten years. Thirteen percent of the interviewed household heads claimed refugee status after experiencing a displacement history of over ten years.

The majority of the household heads indicated they had relatives living in the Sudan (91%). A quarter of those mentioned that their relatives were living in their home villages and almost half (43%) indicated that their relatives did not live in their respective home village. A third of the household heads (28%) had no idea about the whereabouts of family and kin in the Sudan.

Nearly half of the household heads heard news from their relatives in the Sudan over a two-year period prior to the assessment (49%). During that same period, around eleven percent of household heads visited their home area. Around one-sixth of the households indicated that some of their relatives had left the camp to return to live in their home areas during the same period.

The main benefits associated with being a refugee are access to education (36% of all household heads), good security (24%), food aid (23%), chance for resettlement to the USA, Canada or Australia (6%) and access to medical services (4%). The main challenges include shortage of food (mentioned by 17% of all household heads), tensions with local people living in the direct vicinity of the camp (16%)⁶³, water shortages (13%), restrictions on cultivation (11%), and shortage of fuelwood (11%).

When asked what type of conflict would present the biggest threat to their future in the Sudan the majority of the household heads mentioned the conflict between north and southern Sudan (80% of the households). Conflict between southern tribes was mentioned by one out of seven respondents (15%), and conflict within one's own tribe by one out of twenty respondents (5%).

Table 6.1 provides an overview.

6.3. The Intention to Return

Return or repatriation is not a specific behaviour but rather a behavioural domain consisting of sets of activities. Such activities can be isolated and individually presented to the subject, e.g. preparations for return, the actually return process itself, arrival at one's home area, activities undertaken to gain food security or the process of integration. Studying refugees' actual repatriation behaviour in camps is difficult since those who return are out of reach and are difficult to contact unless one visits areas of return (access to such areas and tracing of relative small numbers of returnees may pose serious challenges). However, considerable research demonstrates that, when properly measured, behavioural intentions are very accurate predictors of most social behaviour (McKemey and Rehman, 2002: 7).

General Return Intention (I)

Refugee household heads, or individuals representing the household head (hereafter referred to as household heads unless stated otherwise), were asked about their intention to return⁶⁴ to settle in their home areas in the Sudan. The words 'to settle' were deliberately added in order to avoid confusion with return 'to visit'⁶⁵.

By asking the intention of the refugees to return 'within one year' as well as 'within three years' it would be possible to observe differences in intention between the two timeframes. Are these significant, and if so, what accounts for this? The question how strongly refugee households intend to

Table 6.1 General Characteristics of the Refugee Sample (n=652)

Descriptor Variable	Categories
Camp location	Fugnido (42%); Bonga (20%); Sherkolle (38%)
Main ethnic groups	Nuer (40%); Uduk (22%); Anyuak (11%); Maban (9%); Dinka (5%); Funj (4%); others (8%)
Age categories	Under 25 (23%); 25-50 (74%); over 50 (3%)
Gender respondent	Male (85%); female (15%)
Marital status	Married (75%); divorced/abandoned/widowed (10%); single (15%)
Household size	Average 6.0 persons; less than 4 persons (21%); 4-8 (60%); over 8 persons (19%)
Background	Rural (91%); urban (9%)
Educational background	No schooling (33%); primary schooling (44%); secondary school (18%); college or higher (2%)
Economic activity in the camp	Cultivation of sorghum/maize (80%); vegetable prod. (66%); livestock (50%); fishing (13%); petty trade (46%)
Critical event initiating flight	War/conflict (69%); insecurity (7%); lack of shelter (7%); starvation (6%); killing of people by GoS (5%)
Type of flight	Direct from home village to the camp (36%); in-direct (64%)
Displacement history prior to refugee status	Less than 1 year (43%); 1-10 yrs (44%); >10yrs (13%)
Displacement experience	Being a refugee before (45%); being internally displaced before (47%)
Knowledge whereabouts family/relatives	Having kin in the Sudan (91%) - of those in home area (41%); not in home area (31%), location unknown (28%)
Information about home areas	Respondents hearing from relatives in the Sudan over last 2 years (49%)
Visited home area in last two years	Household heads (11%)
Returned to settle	17% of household heads indicated having relatives repatriating over 2-year period
Taking household members upon return	None (13%); some (7%); all (80%)
Benefits of Refugee Status	Access to education (36%); good security (24%); receiving food aid (23%); change for resettlement (6%); access medical services (4%)
Challenges of Being a Refugee	Experiencing food shortages (17%); tensions/fights with locals (16%); water shortage (13%); restrictions on cultivation (11%); shortage of fuelwood (11%)
Biggest threat towards future in the Sudan	Conflict between north and south (80%); inter-tribal (15%), intra-tribal (5%)

return when there is ‘peace’ allows exploration of refugees’ perceptions of return and expectations of home at such a time. Of course, there can be a marked difference between the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement and actual peace in areas of return. During the interviews this was not further elaborated upon, with ‘peace’ straightforwardly translated into the relevant local language and Arabic.

Refugees at large expressed a positive though ambivalent general (sum of the three return moments) intention to return (mean overall value of 0.96 on a scale of –6 for ‘very weak’ to +6 ‘very strong’ return intent, appendix 6.4.1). Distinct different return intentions were expressed for the return options. Comparing the intention to return within the one-year and three-year period showed that the level to which people planned to return increased slightly, but in both cases remained negative though ambivalent (with values of –0.35 and –0.17 respectively on a scale of –2 ‘very weak’ to +2 ‘very strong’). Obviously the Sudanese refugee community at large did not expect any major change or critical event affecting their intention to return within the one to three year time frame. In line with expectations the intention to return becomes strong to very strong when there is ‘peace’ (mean value

of 1.47). Peace, and therefore conflict resolution, is seen as a crucial factor informing to a large extent the degree to which people plan their return.

Tendencies Regarding Spontaneous vs. Organised Repatriation

Comparing the different household categories, considerable differences in general return intent are revealed (see appendix 6.4 for Mann-Whitney tests for the various descriptor variables and its household categories). Generally speaking, households in categories that express high intentions to return are more likely to undertake spontaneous repatriation, rather than 'await' an official UN organised repatriation. Households belonging to the categories expressing a low intention are inclined to be part of UN organised repatriation.

The highest general mean intentions to return (sum of the three return moments) were expressed by the following household categories (in brackets values of stated Intent on a scale from -6 'very low' to +6 very high'; percentage of sample represented by particular household category):

- Households regarding inter-tribal conflict as the type of conflict that will present the biggest challenge towards future life in the Sudan (2.65; 14.3%)
- Households in Bonga refugee camp (2.54; 20.2%)
- Households stating starvation to be the prominent reasons for their flight into Ethiopia, rather than the direct experience of war (2.40; 6.1%)
- Households stating lack of shelter as prominent reason for claiming refugee status (2.36; 6.4%)
- Households having experienced a flight history of between one to ten years before claiming refugee status in camps on Ethiopian territory (1.84; 43.7%).

The lowest general mean return intentions were expressed by (in brackets stated return Intent and percentage of sample covered by the particular household category):

- Households who indicated that the whereabouts of their relatives and kin in the Sudan were unknown to them (-0.97; 26.8%)
- Households in Sherkolle camp (-0.14; 37.9%)
- Households who fled their home areas to make directly for camps on Ethiopian territory (-0.04; 35.9%)
- Households whose head regards intra-tribal conflict as the type of conflict presenting the biggest challenge towards future life in the Sudan (0.0; 5.2%)
- Households having experienced a flight history of less than a year (0.20; 42.9%).

The decision to undertake spontaneous repatriation or be part of organised repatriation, is to a considerable extent informed by beliefs regarding the perceived threat of conflict challenging post-return life in the Sudan, refugee camp location and the length of displacement prior to claiming refugee status.

Differences Within Descriptor Variables

Significant differences (Mann-Whitney tests) in the general intention to return show up when comparing household categories for the following descriptive variables (high return intention vs. low intention, see appendix 6.4; in brackets probability values):

- Refugee camps: Bonga vs. Sherkolle (p 0.000)
- Ethnic groups (comparison limited to four tribes: Nuer, Anyuak, Uduk, Funj): Uduk vs. Nuer (p 0.05)
- Gender: male household heads vs. female household heads or representatives (p 0.05)
- Type of critical event initiating flight: starvation vs. war (p 0.000), and; lack of shelter vs. war (p 0.000)
- Type of flight: Indirect vs. direct flight (p 0.000)
- Knowledge regarding whereabouts of family and relatives in the Sudan: whereabouts known vs. whereabouts unknown (p 0.000), and; not having family and kin in home areas vs. unknown about whereabouts (p 0.000)
- The duration of the flight or displacement prior to the arrival in the camps: between 1 to 10 years vs. less than a year (p 0.000), and; between 1 to 10 years vs. over 10 years (p 0.000)
- Prominent challenge faced as a refugee: tensions with local people in the vicinity of the camp vs. food shortage (p 0.05), and; tensions with locals vs. fuelwood shortage (p 0.05)
- Type of conflict which is perceived to pose the biggest threat towards future life in the Sudan: inter-tribal conflict vs. intra (p 0.000), and; inter tribal versus the north-south conflict (p 0.000).

These descriptor variables form diagnostic determinants of refugees' return strategies.

Findings

At this first and general level of analysis significant differences in return intent show up between household categories within and across various descriptor variables. Findings at this general level of analysis are already relevant (box 6.1). However, the model does not explain the differences at this general level of analysis other than that such differences are expected to reflect different return perspectives and expectations of 'home'. This is illustrated by the following examples.

General return intentions vary distinctly between the different refugee camps. This is likely to reflect proximity of particular ethnic groups hosted in such camps to their home areas across the border, the conflict dynamics played out at that particular stretch of the border area, or the level of information coming out of prospective areas of return. Possibly it might also reflect the situation in refugee camps itself, e.g. the level of conflict between refugees and locals or conflict amongst refugees themselves, or the kind and quality of services provided.

It could be that households who regard inter-tribal conflict as affecting their lives in the Sudan demonstrate a relatively high intention to return because their home villages are located in tribal

heartlands. In frontier areas, inhabited by different tribal groups or areas representing competing spheres of interest, intra-tribal or the north-south conflict are likely to be played out in more violent and disruptive forms, thereby affecting the lives and livelihoods of prospective returnees. Another plausible factor might be that although community based peace and reconciliation systems are at a general level under serious pressure, or have broken down completely, they may function reasonably well in tribal heartlands, thus contributing to pockets of relative stability and peace.

Box 6.1 Relevance of Findings at a First and General Level of TORA Analysis

Findings at a first and general level of analysis demonstrate a diversity amongst the Sudanese refugee community in terms of significantly different levels regarding their return intent. This reflects variety in refugees' backgrounds and return contexts which in turn inform the dynamics of return movements.

That findings at this level already may have practical meaning can be illustrated by the following example. The analysis of the data indicates that the decisive event initiating flight from one's home area is an important diagnostic factor informing the decision to return. As such these factors reflect critical experiences that refugees will take into account when considering return and rebuilding their livelihoods. Refugee programming in camps can build on such critical experiences by projects designed to deal with such issues.

E.g. a considerable number of household heads stated starvation, food shortages and famine-like situations as the critical experience inducing flight. Based on this finding, promotional campaigns in the refugee camps were designed by an INGO targeting female members of that particular household category. One of the successful interventions in this regard has been the promotion of *Moringa Olifera* tree species (fast growing trees providing highly nutritious leaves during the dry season – the traditional hunger gap) in the camps by women groups taking part in both educational and practical workshops. As part of the workshops, videos on the use of its leaves to treat child as well as adult malnutrition in West Africa were shown, discussed and subsequently practiced. Practical sessions included germination of seeds, growing and out-planting of saplings followed by cooking sessions with the women groups. Participants also learned how to select seeds from the fast growing trees which were planted out a year in advance of the project at various locations in the camp. This is an example of an enhanced range of activities beyond the traditional 'care and maintenance' approach which is typically offered to refugees hosted in camps.

Households with no knowledge of the whereabouts of family and kin demonstrate relatively low intentions to return, which may indicate the importance of having family and kin as a support mechanism in prospective areas of return. However, it may also reflect the intensity of fighting which scattered the inhabitants of a particular area, leaving it vacated. Home areas may be occupied by hostile forces or militias, making it difficult for any information to come out of the area.

The first and general level of analysis doesn't provide the required level of insight as illustrated above. However, the informational base of the second and third level analysis will provide the required detailed explanation of a household head's intention to return. The following section of analysis allows for an understanding of the relative importance of the main determinants which inform refugees' decision to return.

6.4. Determinants Influencing Return Intent

Mean Values of the Determinants

Stated Attitude (SA) towards Return Intent

The Stated Attitude (SA) is a direct emotive reading and represents a household head's positive or negative evaluation of undertaking the return to settle in the Sudan. Its overall mean value is positive towards return though rather ambivalent (mean value of 1.10 on a scale of -6 'very bad' to +6 'very good', appendix 6.4.1). The attitude towards return within the one- and three-year period is negative to ambivalent (values of -0.28 and -0.15 respectively on a 5 point scale of -2 'very bad' to +2 'very good'). However, the attitude to return when there is 'peace' is good to very good (value of 1.54).

Stated Subjective Norm (SSN)

The Stated Subjective Norm (SSN) is a person's perception of social pressure to return or not to return with the aim of settling in the Sudan. Its overall mean value is neutral to likely (value of 1.46 on a scale of -6 'very unlikely' to +6 'very likely', appendix 6.4.1). The subjective norm towards return within one year or three years is neutral (respective values of -0.10 and 0.05 on a scale of -2 'very unlikely' to +2 'very likely'). Return when there is 'peace' is likely to very likely (value of 1.52).

Perceived Level of Control (PLC)

As an extension of the TORA the Perceived Level of Control makes the model sensitive to behaviour which is to a degree contingent on, for example, the presence of appropriate opportunities, access to adequate resources, controlling organisations which overpower individuals and directs their movements in one way or another. The Perceived Level of Control is a combined reading of the ability to, control over and difficulty involved in the return process (appendix 6.1). Its overall mean value indicates that households regard themselves as neutral to this aspect (mean general value of 0.05 on a scale of -18 'no control' to +18 'full control', appendix 6.4.1). The level of control to return within a one-year or three year period is negative to ambivalent (values of -1.99 and -1.38 on a scale of -6 'very difficult' to +6 'very easy'). When there is 'peace' the level of control becomes 'positive' (value of 3.42).

Perceived Vulnerability (PV)

This study suggests a further extension of TORA by introducing a Perceived Vulnerability determinant to make it sensitive to possible risk involved in repatriation. The Perceived Vulnerability is a measure of the potential for disruption or harm involved in the return process. It is the sum of the emotive measures of perceived risk and ability to cope. Its general mean value (the sum or mean of the three return moment readings) is neutral (mean value of 0.34 on a scale of -12 'highly vulnerable' to +12 'highly resilience', appendix 6.4.1). Regarding the return options the Perceived Vulnerability reading indicates a high to very high vulnerability associated with return within the one year time period. It expresses a high to ambivalent vulnerability with return undertaken within the three-year period (values of -1.51 and -0.70 respectively on a scale of -4 'highly vulnerable' to +4 'highly

resilient'). The Perceived Vulnerability reading expresses a high to very high resilience for return pursued when there is 'peace' (mean value of 2.56).

Relative Importance of Determinants regarding Return Intent

The TORA claims that the intention to undertake a particular behaviour is a reliable indicator of future behaviour if the expressed attitude toward this behaviour, or the perceived social pressure to do so, correlate closely with stated Intent. A comparison of the strength of the correlation of attitude⁶⁶ and subjective norm⁶⁷ with stated Intent indicates which of the components has greater influence on the decision of refugee household heads, or their representatives, to return. The relative strength of both the Perceived Level of Control⁶⁸ and Perceived Vulnerability⁶⁹, in relation to attitude and subjective norm, is measured by correlating them with intent.

Taking the responses of the whole sample into account it appears that the general level to which refugees plan to return (the sum of the three return options) is most influentially informed by their own experience and perception of return (their attitude), followed by the Perceived Vulnerability associated with return, the Perceived Level of Control over the decision and the return process itself, and finally the social influences or pressures of referents and important others (all correlations at p 0.000 level see table 6.2). Both the attitude and subjective norm demonstrate a strong correlation with the intention to return (correlation co-efficient of 0.820) the TORA model predicts that return intent is a reliable indicator of future return behaviour.

Table 6.2 Relative Importance of the Determinants of General Intent (Spearman's rho)

Determinants	Correlation Coefficient	Significance
Stated Attitude towards return (SA)	.820	p 0.000
Stated Subjective Norm (SSN)	.670	p 0.000
Perceived Level of Control (PLC)	.703	p 0.000
Perceived Vulnerability (PV)	.715	p 0.000

The relative importance of the attitudinal, normative, perceived control and vulnerability variables on the decision to return vary across the different return options as well as across different household categories. The relative contribution of the four determinants deserve attention as they form the predictors of the intention to return for different household categories and return options.

Relative Importance of Determinants Across Return Options and Household Categories

Independent of the return option, the attitude towards return is the most influential determinant of intention (table 6.3). It appears that refugees pay greatest attention to their personal evaluation of undertaking return, independent of the return option pursued.

Table 6.3 Relative Importance of the Determinants of Intent for the Different Return Options (Spearman's rho)

Correlations (Spearman's rho)	General	Within 1 year	Within 3 year	When 'peace'
Stated Attitude towards return (SA)	.820	.754	.750	.654
Stated Subjective Norm (SSN)	.703	.592	.590	.615
Perceived Level of Control (PLC)	.670	.639	.596	.599
Perceived Vulnerability (PV)	.715	.625	.591	.556

NB all correlation at p 0.000 level

Variations regarding the level of influence of the determinants on the decision to return are likely to show up for different household categories. To demonstrate this table 6.4 presents the level to which the four variables inform the return decision for some of the tribes covered by the study.

Table 6.4 Relative Importance of the Determinants of General Return Intent for the Different Tribal Groups

Correlations (Spearman's rho)	General	Nuer	Dinka	Anyuak	Uduk	Funj
Stated Attitude (SA)	.820	.767	.510	.790	.859	.724
Stated Subjective Norm (SSN)	.703	.588	.268	.658	.821	-.319
Perceived Level of Control (PLC)	.670	.401	.698	.605	.767	.440
Perceived Vulnerability (PV)	.715	.488	.437	.696	.769	.558

NB all correlation at p 0.000 level

Except for the Dinka the attitude towards return intent is the most influential variable. The Dinka's decision to return is foremost governed by the lack of control they express over the return decision and the return process itself. Return demands travel through hostile Nuer territory and requires crossing major river systems which are dangerous due to strong currents during the rainy season, and pose a risk because of the many crocodiles during the dry season. The social pressure they receive is only marginally influential compared with the other determinants⁷⁰. For the Uduk return is strongly influenced by both their personal evaluation of return and the social pressure they receive. The Funj are likely to react negatively to any social influence or pressure to return.

Findings

Generally speaking, for almost all different household categories refugees' attitudes towards return govern return intent and ultimately return behaviour, independent of the return option being pursued.

However, Perceived Vulnerability associated with return, the Subjective Norm and the Perceived Level of Control over the decision to return are also found influential. This indicates that household

heads take, to a significant degree, the risk associated with return matched by the ability to deal with that risk, and the approval or disapproval of social referents and important ‘others’ into account. It is also clear that repatriation is only partly within refugees’ control, and it is not expected to be pursued easily.

Since refugee household heads pay greater attention to their personal evaluation to undertake return (the Stated Attitude), the return beliefs and expectations of home underpinning the attitude (the Calculated Attitude) will be introduced and discussed in the next section.

6.5. Influential Beliefs Informing General Return Intent

Strength of Expressed Outcome Attitudes (Return Beliefs)

The salient return beliefs and expectations of home were identified through the initial focus groups with household heads or their representatives. In total, a list of seventy salient outcome expectations regarding return was established in line with the procedure described in appendix 6.1. The full and original statements are found in the interview schedule (appendix 6.2). Shorter statements are used in the text, tables and appendices (see appendix 6.5 for an overview of these shorter statements).

The Outcome Attitude (OA) attributed to each return statement is calculated by taking the product of the strength of agreement with the statement (b) and the importance attributed to that outcome (e), see equation 1 in section 4.3. Both are measured on a bi-polar, 5-point scale. Therefore each Outcome Attitude has a possible score range of –4 to +4. The reasoned or Calculated Attitude (CA) is the sum of these outcome attitudes giving a possible calculated attitude score range of –280 to +280. When the reliability of the calculated attitude scale was tested it produced a Cronbach Alpha co-efficient of 0.87 (standardised item alpha), indicating that the scale of the seventy outcome attitudes is reliable. The sum of the general calculated outcome attitudes is 50.4 indicating that the Calculated Attitude reading is slightly positive towards return.

A table presenting the seventy salient return beliefs and expectations of home, in decreasing order of expressed Outcome Attitude strength, in relation to return intent, is presented in appendix 6.5. When it comes to return refugees felt most positive about the following beliefs (first five most positive beliefs listed; Outcome Attitude strength in brackets):

1. Children’s education means a better future (2.42)
2. UNHCR or ARRA control my return (2.35)
3. Keep my birth rights (2.32)
4. Use skills or knowledge gained in the camp (2.26)
5. Have to rebuild our houses and villages (2.19).

These beliefs most strongly contribute to the overall Calculated Attitude.

The five return beliefs refugees felt most negative about were found to be (value of Outcome Attitude in brackets):

1. Without peace there is no future for my household (-2.39)
2. Insecurity makes it difficult to have enough to eat (-1.43)
3. Abundance of firearms complicates achieving lasting peace (-1.32)
4. Risk to be killed (-1.10)
5. Hard to cope with the security situation (-0.95).

These Outcomes Attitudes contribute most negatively to the Calculated Attitude towards return.

Influential Cognitive Barriers and Drivers

According to Ajzen and Driver (1991: 198) the belief strength-outcome evaluation products, that is the Outcome Attitudes, that correlate significantly with Stated Intent give, '*a general picture of the behavioural beliefs that influence*', attitude towards the behaviour. Though some beliefs may be more strongly expressed in terms of their outcome attitude value, they may not be influential regarding the decision-making process.

Taking the whole sample into account the main influential barriers regarding the general return intent (the sum of the three return options) are in order of their respective influence (all at p 0.000 level; see appendix 6.6, column 'Attitude statement - SUM'; in brackets the Spearman correlation coefficients):

1. Will be conscripted into an armed group (.333)
2. Face hardship and difficulties (.284)
3. Our children will be abducted (.282)
4. Will be repeatedly displaced (.280)
5. Will be arrested (.252)
6. No modern health care services provided (.244)
7. No educational services provided (.228)
8. Our children will not have access to schooling (.241)
9. To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation (v70)⁷¹ (-.240)
10. Loss of chance for resettlement in western country (.220)
11. Insecurity makes it difficult to have enough to eat (.211).

The most influential drivers for return are in order of their influence (all at p 0.000 level):

1. Food-secure within a short period of time (within six months) (v12) (.244)
2. Can rely on traditional ways of peacemaking (v13) (.231)
3. Collect and consume wild foods to survive (.222)
4. Large household helps to become food secure (.209).

It is a change in the level to which these influential beliefs are perceived to be true or false, and/or a change in the evaluation of its likely outcome in terms of good or bad, that will directly result in a change of the level to which refugees decide to return.

6.6. Cognitive Construct of Influential Beliefs Affecting the Intention to Return

The Case for Clustering

A salient belief is one which comes to mind when considering a particular attitude object, that is behaviour. Salient modal outcome beliefs are salient with all members of a given population. An important question is how many beliefs are representative of a total set of beliefs (McKemey and Rehman, 2002: 13). In other words, at what point during the first stage TORA do respondents start to mention beliefs that are no longer salient? Simplicity and straight forwardness of the interview schedule, focus during the interview process (no direct prompting or being too persistent) as well as the selection process of the most salient outcome beliefs (out of a list of all emitted beliefs) are thought to have been instrumental in observing that all seventy beliefs are salient and represent the beliefs and opinions of the refugee community at large.

The application of large numbers of belief statements requires the maintenance of the respondents' attention over long periods of time (the structured interview schedule took an average of almost one hour to complete). Long lists of beliefs have been questioned as its application appears to go against the theory of salience by exceeding the information processing capacity of the subjects (McKemey and Rehman, 2002: 13)⁷². However, as this would apply for respondents across the sample its influence would be minimal when comparing groups of households.

Though the structured interview schedule applied the full set of seventy modal belief outcomes, it would be worthwhile to select key modal outcome beliefs which represent other modal outcome beliefs with which they show significant correlation. An additional advantage would be to explore the cognitive construct of return beliefs and expectations that are closely associated with each other. In a practical way key modal outcome beliefs simplify and ease the discussion of influential return beliefs that inform return planning for different household categories.

One way of reducing the number of salient modal outcome beliefs, coming out of the first stage TORA application, is to cluster them. Such clusters indicate different attitudinal dimensions of the behaviour under study, particularly so when the clusters form discrete groups with relative low correlations between the groups. One way of clustering has been Carr's approach in studying conversational behaviour between farmers and conservationists in the United Kingdom (Carr, 1988: chapter 8). Her overall approach has been adopted here.

The clusters in this study have been developed logically by grouping return beliefs and expectations of home along thematic lines. Cronbach's alpha-reliability test was applied to check the internal stability of the clusters. Beliefs whose Outcome Attitude values strongly reduced the internal consistency of a particular cluster were taken out and re-grouped to find a better fit. Outcome Attitudes significantly correlated with stated Intent (and thus influential in affecting the intent to return) were taken as beliefs at a first level of causality. Only when a pair of Outcome Attitude values showed a significantly stronger correlation between each other, rather than directly with stated Intent, were they regrouped at a second level of causality, freezing the attitude best correlated with stated Intent at the first level. The

remaining return beliefs were then positioned at a second or lower level of causality following the same approach. In general, the correlations between each possible pair of attitudes were used to build up the cognitive structure for each of the clusters. If, at a same level of causality, correlations between a pair of attitudes were found to be in the same order of significance, positioning in terms of highest causality was based on an answer to the question by the researcher: ‘what would mean more to people out of the two?’.

The degree of association of the salient Outcome Attitudes (OAs) with stated Intent (I) is a measure of influence on the decision to return. By freezing the influential beliefs at a first level of causality the cognitive construct links-in directly with those beliefs that most influentially inform refugees’ return decision.

Clusters, as such can be regarded as refugees’ belief domains or systems regarding repatriation. Following the procedure as described above the following domains have been identified (not presented in any particular order; in brackets the number of original modal outcome beliefs followed by the number found representative in line with the clustering process):

- Safety and security (14→5)
- Health (6→2)
- Education (4→2)
- Food security (16→4)
- Mode of return (2→1)
- Peace makers (5→2)
- Peace spoilers (3→1)
- Culture and re-integration (9→1)
- Process of change (2→1)
- Support systems (4→2)
- Humanitarian assistance (5→2).

Appendix 6.7 presents the grouping of the seventy return beliefs and expectations in the different domains together with the beliefs that represent the clusters at a central level of causality. When the reliability of the calculated attitude scale was tested it produced a Cronbach Alpha co-efficient of 0.73, indicating that the scale of 23 outcome attitudes is reliable^{73 74}.

Causality of Clusters: Return Domains and Belief Systems

The cognitive structure of each of the clusters as described in this section, and represented by figure 6.1 (all correlations are at p 0.000 value unless mentioned otherwise in the figures). There will be variations to, and probably even competing, cognitive structures within particular sections of the refugee community. This section presents the main and most pronounced cognitive structure of the refugee community at large. It will therefore offer an interesting insight into the cognitive process informing the intention to return, and ultimately return behaviour.

Safety and Security Domain

At the central level of causality five out of the original fourteen salient modal outcome beliefs grouped in this belief domain are key modal outcome beliefs and thus stand representative for refugees' safety and security domain: '*conscription into the army or an armed movement*'; '*facing hardship and difficulties*'; '*abduction of children*'; '*facing repeated displacements upon return*', and; '*fear of arrest*'.

As can be seen from figure 6.1. '*conscription into an armed group*' and '*facing hardship and difficulty*' do not demonstrate prominent causality with other statements. Though several of the remaining nine beliefs correlate significantly with one or both of these two influential beliefs (it is the outcome attitude values that are correlated), they do correlate to a higher degree with one of the three other prominent return beliefs at a central level of causality, and are accordingly positioned at a second level of causality.

The belief '*abduction of children*' is related to '*it is safer to collect firewood in the Sudan than Ethiopia*'. Since it is a negative correlation (correlation of -.154 but at p 0.000 level) it means that an increase in the risk of having children abducted goes together with a decrease in the safety of fuelwood collection. There appears to be a correlation (though weak) between the level to which fuelwood collection is perceived to be safe and the abduction of children. This possibly hints at an insecure environment surrounding the village nuclei, placing children at risk of abduction.

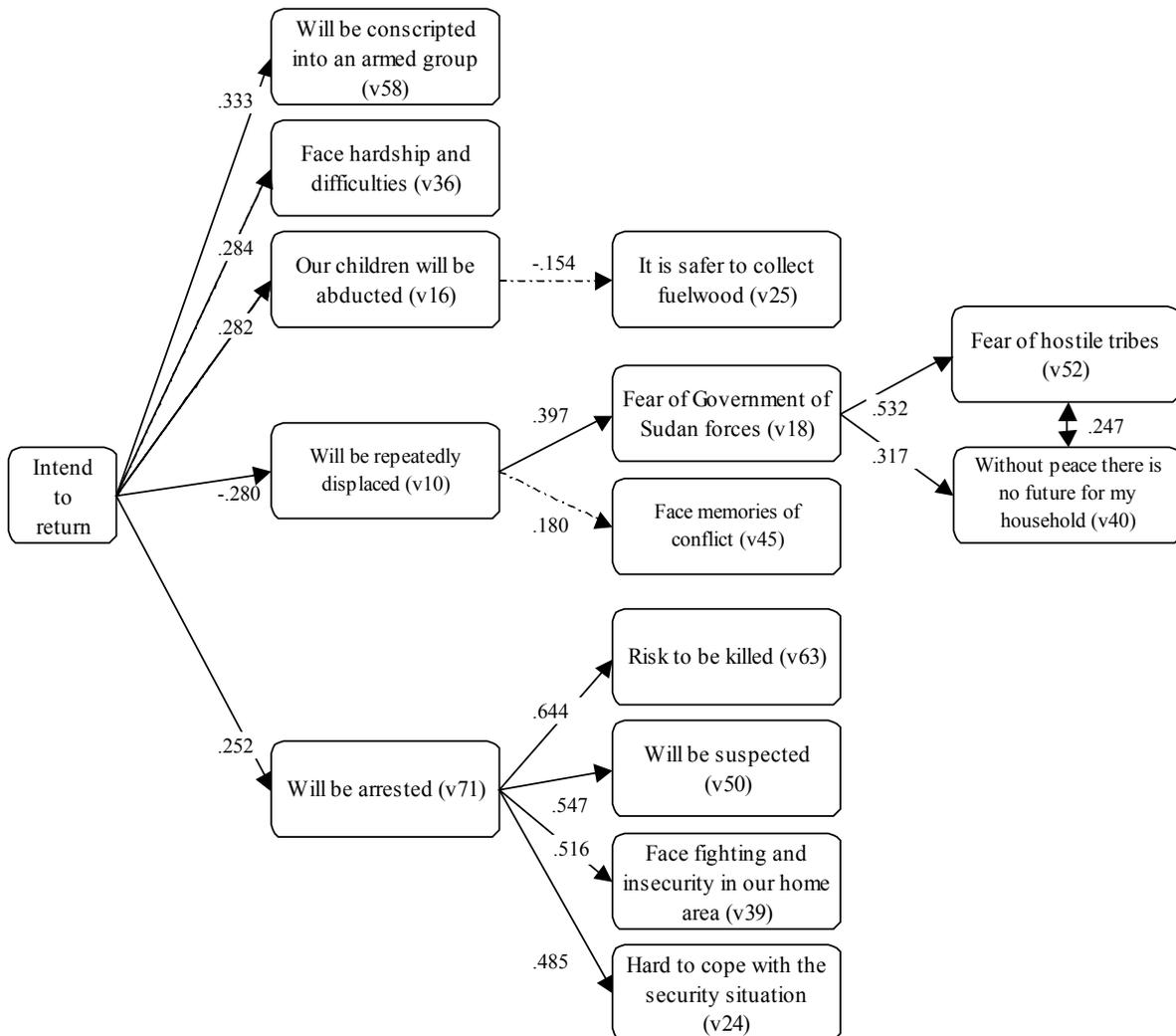
The belief '*will be repeatedly displacement*' is strongly associated with '*fear of the GoS forces*' (correlation of .397) and weakly with '*facing memories of conflict*' (correlation .180, p 0.000 level). '*Fear of the GoS forces*' is in turn associated with '*fear of hostile tribes*' and the belief that '*without peace there will be no future*'. This cognitive construct seems to indicate that peace is instrumental in reducing the level of fear for GoS forces (correlation .317). However, more influential in that respect is a reduction in the level of fear of the actions of hostile tribes (correlation .532). The indication clearly is that though being '*afraid of GoS forces*' and '*the actions of hostile tribes*' are cognitively associated⁷⁵, peace itself reduces the fear of the GoS forces to a greater extent than fear of the actions of hostile tribes (the correlation between the need for peace and fear for the actions of hostile tribes is .247 compared with .317 for fear of GoS forces). However, it is the fear of the GoS that has stronger associations with displacement (correlation of .397) than fear of hostile tribes. A reduction of the level to which one feels afraid of the GoS forces, and to a lesser degree of hostile tribes, will lead to the expectation that displacement is less likely, which in turn leads to higher levels of return planning.

The fear of '*being arrested*' at a central level of causality is linked with a number of attitude outcomes at a second level of causality: '*risk of being killed*', '*being suspected*', '*facing fighting in one's home area*' and '*difficulty in coping with the security situation*'. Fear of arrest itself is obviously seen as potentially endangering ones' life, something one must avoid (correlation between fear of arrest and risk of being killed is .644, both consequences are seen as very serious). The possibility of arrest makes it difficult for the household to cope with the security situation. Likewise it is seen as difficult to cope with the security situation because of potential arrest (two-way direction of influence). Arrest is also associated with an insecure home area and suspicion of the household head or one of its household members. Suspicion, arrest and the risk of being killed are significantly associated with each other, and form a strong deterrent to return.

Figure 6.1 Cognitive Construct of Return Belief Domains

(All Spearman correlations at p 0.000 level unless mentioned otherwise;
dotted lines indicate correlation coefficients < .200)

Figure 6.1.a Safety and Security Domain



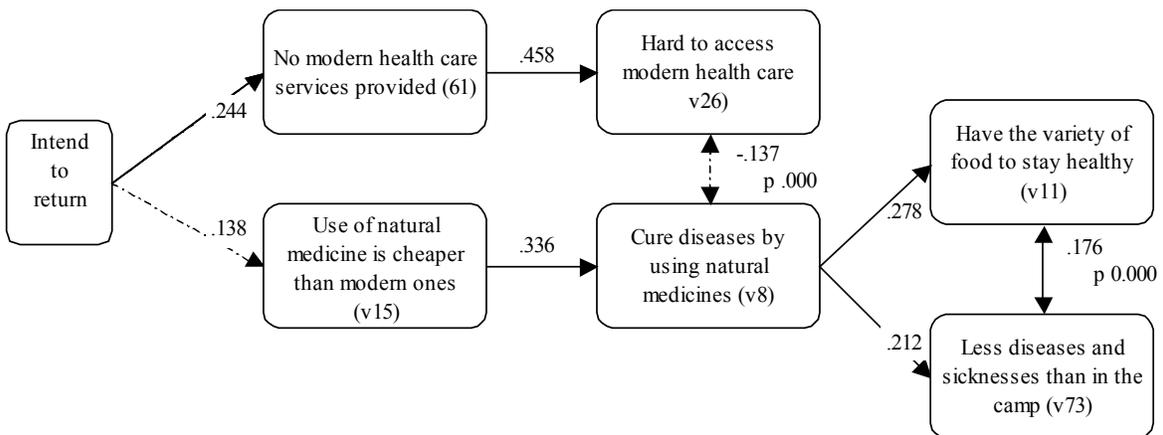
Health Domain

Influential beliefs in the health domain of return behaviour are ‘modern health care services will not be provided’ and ‘use of natural medicine is cheaper than modern ones’ (it is about natural medicine, not witchcraft). Availability of services is strongly associated with accessibility of such services.

Clearly if no such services are available access will be difficult or require great expense. On the other hand the cognitive structure indicates that increased in-accessibility means that modern health care services, even though provided, are in practice not available. Physical accessibility (which is strongly reduced during the rainy season anyway, particularly in remote areas), costs related to travel and payment for services, availability of the right type of drugs, the quality of care provided all play important roles defining accessibility of modern health care services.

The cost aspect of natural medicine is a weakly influential return belief of the health domain (the correlation is just $.138, p 0.000$)⁷⁶. The belief is strongly associated with the ability to ‘*cure diseases with natural medicine*’ which in turn is associated with both ‘*having the variety of food to stay healthy*’ and the expectation that back in the Sudan one faces ‘*less diseases and sicknesses than in the camps*’. Having the variety of food to stay healthy is linked with the ability to cure diseases with natural medicine. This possibly reflects the ability to supplement ones’ food basket with wild foods, indicating access to a wider environment from which to collect herbs. This is clearly lacking in the camp environments. Situations whereby one expects a lower prevalence of diseases (back in the Sudan as compared to the camps) are associated with the ability to cure diseases with natural medicines.

Figure 6.1.b Health Domain



Interestingly, there is a correlation (coefficient of $.176$ at $p 0.000$ level) between ‘*having the variety of food to stay healthy*’ and ‘*having less diseases in the Sudan than in the camps*’. This seems to suggest that refugees cognitively associate camp environments with impeding access to a variety of food required to stay healthy, therefore restricting the ability to cure diseases with natural medicine, thus leading to a higher dependency on modern health care services. Dependency on modern health care services carries the inherent risk that not only knowledge is lost, but that the acceptance of natural medicines is undermined. Potentially this could have serious consequences in post-return situations at times when access to modern health care services is seriously constrained, e.g. because of physical in-accessibility during the rainy season. The use of natural medicines to treat common diseases such as malaria is, in some of the camps, a first choice amongst the refugees. Though this is blamed on the

erratic supply of appropriate medicines in the camp, it is interesting to note that the environments of those camps (Fugnido and Sherkolle) are relatively safe to access.

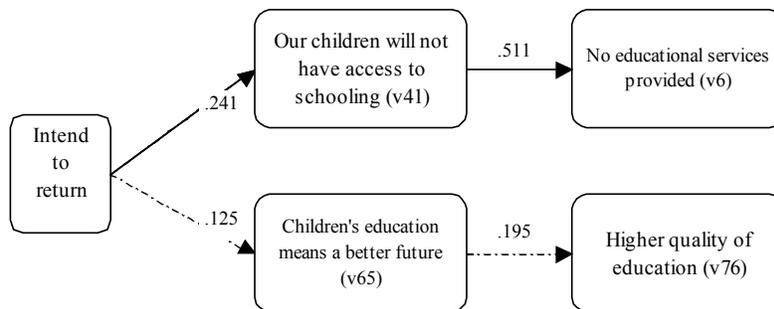
Striking is the disconnection of modern health care provision and its accessibility on the one hand and the validity of natural medicines and being able to access a good variety of food on the other. The belief that ‘*access to modern health care services will be difficult*’ is negatively correlated with the belief that ‘*diseases can be cured by natural medicine*’ (coefficient of $-.137$, $p 0.000$). This suggests a tendency in the absence of modern health care to rely on the use of natural medicines.

The cognitive construct associations can thus pinpoint important issues. In this particular case it supports the call for institutionalised attention for the use of natural medicine in camp environments, as many returnees will be rendered dependent on them to some degree in post return contexts. Either because no modern health care services are available or access will be difficult. Clearly an approach to combine the strengths of both modern health care and natural medicine in camp environments is called for⁷⁷.

Educational Domain

Influential beliefs are ‘*not having access to schooling*’ (correlation with stated Intent $.24$) and the importance of education to improve on one’s future (a very weak correlation of 0.125 albeit at $p 0.000$ level). Lack of access is, to a considerable degree, informed by the absence of educational services itself. The belief that being educated means a better future is correlated with the belief that the quality of education is higher in the Sudan compared with the quality in the refugee camps.

Figure 6.1.c Educational Domain



Food Security Domain

The food security domain of repatriation is an important one, with a wide array of emitted salient modal outcome beliefs. Four of these are significantly correlated with the stated Intent and are thus influential in that a change in its perceived strength or evaluation of its outcome affects the return

intent: being food secure in a relative short period of time (within six months); the dependence on wild foods to survive (box 6.2); the interaction between physical-insecurity and food-insecurity, and; the belief that a large household makes it easier to become food secure.

Box 6.2 The Ability to Depend on Wild Foods for Survival

'Will depend on wild foods for survival' is an influential belief informing the level to which refugee households plan to return to the Sudan. It underlines the utilisation of wild foods ('Indigenous Wild Food Plants') as an important alternative or supplement to grain cultivation (notably sorghum and maize).

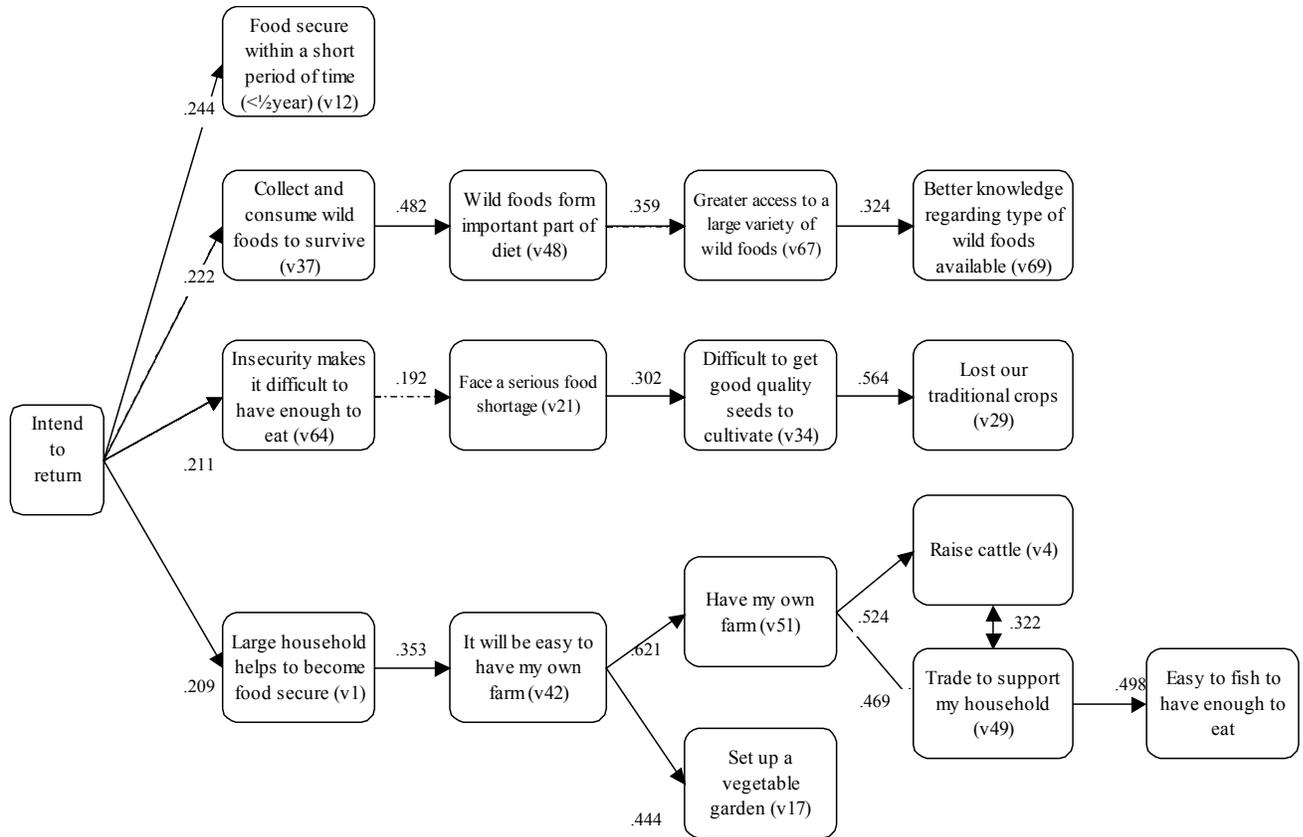
The belief *'will depend on wild foods for survival'* is found to be significantly associated with *'wild foods are part of my food basket'*. This belief in turn is correlated with *'accessibility to a greater variety of wild foods'* and in turn with *'knowledge regarding wild food plants'*. This cognitive construct suggests that in order to improve on the ability to depend on wild foods for survival following return, one has to address: the knowledge aspect regarding wild food plants; ensure its accessibility, and; improve on its acceptance as a valuable and nutritious supplement/complement and strategic food in times of duress (the traditional hunger gap at the end of the dry season, drought or famine).

This causal chain also highlights the conditions placing stress on this important coping mechanism: e.g. limited knowledge about the use of wild foods; situations whereby many people are concentrated in small areas quickly outstripping locally available resources, or situations whereby access is constrained due to insecurity, or, strong stigma's surrounding the consumption of wild foods.

It is interesting that this cognitive construct highlights three important elements which may have made the famine food workshops on *Moringa Olifera* (see box 6.1) so successful. As it happened the project appeared to have addressed all three influential beliefs: the knowledge aspect, accessibility and control over the resource and acceptance as a valuable and nutritious supplement, notably for the well-being of children in times when food stocks run low.

Insecurity is seen to hamper food security and is correlated with the belief that one *'will face serious food shortages'*. Such a food shortage seems to be partly attributed to the difficulty in obtaining good quality seeds which, by itself, is associated with the loss of traditional crops well suited to particular agro-ecological contexts. This suggests that in addressing food security, traditional crops and good quality seed are important issues to address. However, it only partly addresses the issue of food security in insecure areas (correlation of .192, p 0.000 level).

Figure 6.1.d Food Security Domain



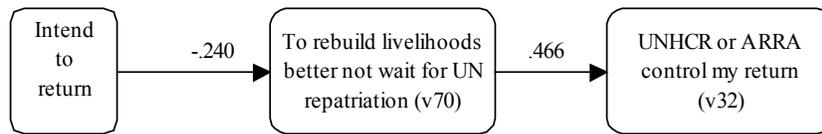
The belief that having a large household will help to become food secure⁷⁸ is connotated with ‘*it will be easy to have a farm*’ which is strongly correlated with ‘*will have a farm*’ (correlation .621) as well as ‘*with having a vegetable garden*’ (correlation .444). At a third level of causality farming is cognitively associated with raising cattle (thus acquiring wealth) and the ability to trade (raising cattle and trading are significantly correlated as well (.323 at p 0.000 level). Somewhat surprisingly, the ability to trade is linked with the ease of fishing ‘*in order to have enough to eat*’. This may indicate a certain level of investment required for fishing (simple hooks or more sophisticated means like nets, utilities to smoke fish or application of salt to make it more durable as an item of trade). It may as well underline the importance of fish itself in trading systems and consumption patterns.

Mode of Return Domain

The belief ‘*to rebuild one’s livelihood it is better not to wait for UN organised repatriation*’ is influentially associated with intent to return. Since the correlation is a negative one it appears that refugees will demonstrate a higher intention to return as part of an UN organised repatriation. This belief is correlated with the belief that the UNHCR and ARRA will control the ability of the refugees

to return to the Sudan (correlation of .466). The indication is that spontaneous repatriation is not a favoured option to rebuild ones' life as, generally, it is perceived to be to a significant level under the control of UNHCR and ARRA.

Figure 6.1.e Mode of Return Domain

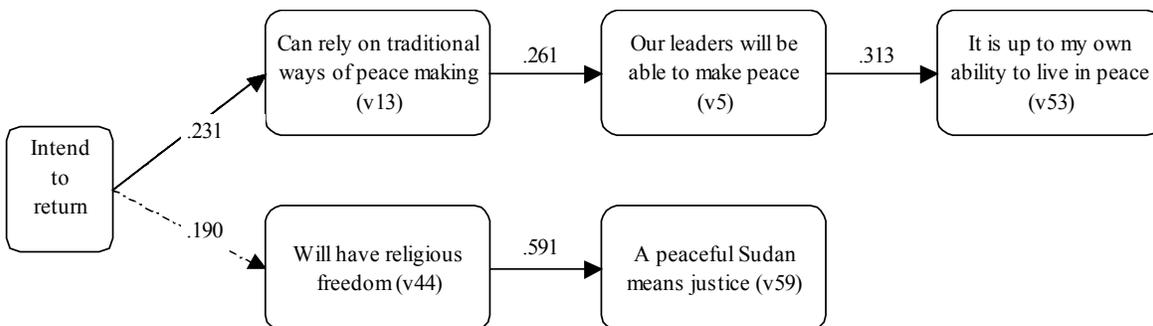


Peace Maker Domain

Two beliefs are significantly correlated with the stated Intent and are thus influential: ‘*can rely on traditional peace systems*’ and ‘*having religious freedom*’. Reliance on traditional systems is cognitively associated with the ability of ones’ leaders to make peace, which in turn is associated with one’s own ability to live in peace. As return intent is positively correlated with traditional peace systems, an increase in people’s own ability to live in peace as well as an increase in the ability of leaders to make peace will result in an increase in return intent. Since the functioning of traditional peace mechanisms is cognitively associated with one’s ability to live in peace, it makes sense to give attention to peace principles and peace education in camp environments, and work out more specific capacity enhancing modalities for refugee leaders.

The belief regarding religious freedom is strongly connotated with the belief that having a peaceful Sudan means justice which in turn is strongly associated with enjoying religious freedom.

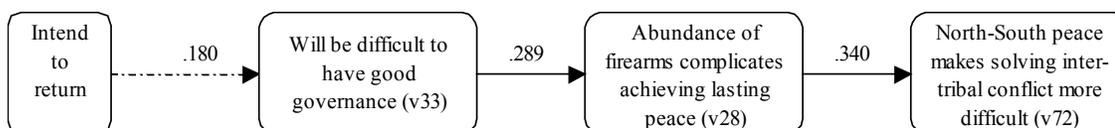
Figure 6.1.f Peace Maker Domain



Peace Spoiler Domain

The difficulty of governance is the prime influential belief when it comes to beliefs which could set back peace. This belief is cognitively associated with ‘*the difficulty in controlling the abundance of small firearms which makes it hard to achieve lasting peace*’. By itself this belief is associated with the belief that ‘*peace between northern and southern Sudan will make it more difficult to solve the south-south conflict*’. The indication being that with the proliferation of small firearms across southern Sudan the control and authority over such weapons, following a north-south peace agreement, is cognitively regarded as one of the critical issues to address in order to have good governance. Failure to do so is associated with breakdown of the peace process.

Figure 6.1.g Peace Spoiler Domain



Culture and Re-Integration Domain

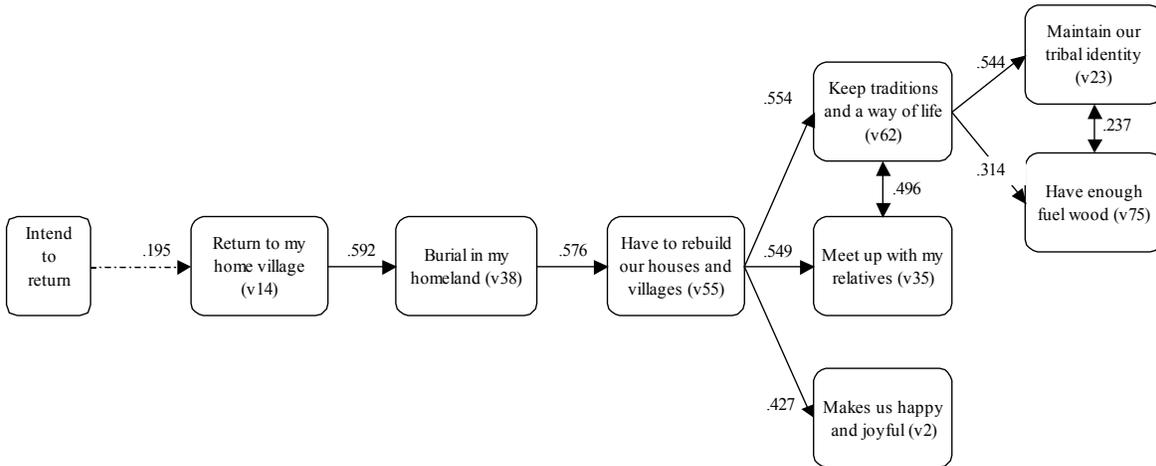
Return beliefs categorised in the culture and repatriation domain start at a first level of causality from the expectation that one will return to one's home village. Cognitively this belief is associated with burial in one's village (correlation of .592 at p 0.000 level) and in turn with the effort to rebuild the village. Re-establishing the village is cognitively associated with the ability keep one's traditions and way of life, meeting up with relatives, as well as with happiness and joy. Keeping the traditions and way of life is associated, at a fifth level of causality, with maintaining the tribal identity and having enough fuelwood. Interestingly, refugees cognitively associate maintenance of tribal identity with the ease of having access to sufficient fuelwood.

The cognitive construct underlines, and places in a broader context, the highly influential return belief to return to one's home village. The more a refugee household head subscribes to the belief that return should be to one's home village, and the more positive that outcome is evaluated, the stronger the return intent. Returning to one's home village is cognitively associated with key cultural underpinnings regarding return and re-integration.

E.g. fuelwood is an interesting issue. It shows that what, at best, is seen as a constrained commodity by UNHCR is in fact cognitively linked with the issue of tribal identity and keeping a way of life, both of which are under serious pressure in the camps. Moreover the issue of access to fuelwood is cognitively linked with re-establishing one's village (co-efficient of .266; p is 0.000), burial in one's home village (.277; p is 0.000), and return to one's home village itself (.212; p is 0.000). Though the ease of having enough fuelwood is not directly associated with the intention to return itself, it is so via

the cognitive construct, touching upon issues such as tribal identity, keeping a way of life and the importance of returning to one's home village.

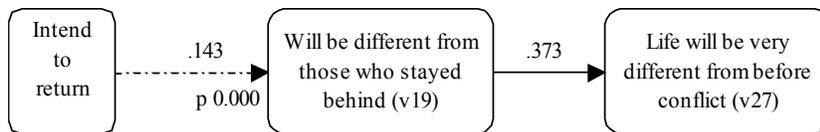
Figure 6.1.h Culture and Re-Integration Domain



Processes of Change Domain

The belief that one has become different compared with those who have stayed behind is weakly influential when it comes to the intention to return (correlation of .143 but at p 0.000 level). This belief is associated with the belief that *‘following return life will be different from life before the conflict’*.

Figure 6.1.i Process of Change Domain

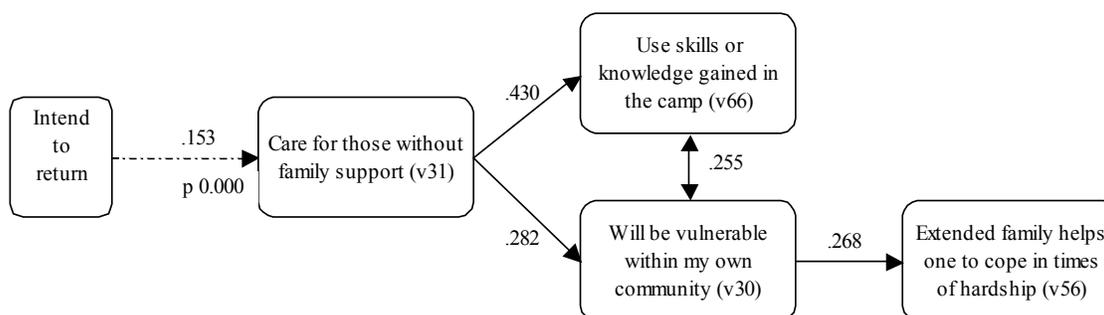


Support System Domain

The two influential beliefs are *‘care for those lacking family support’* and *‘extended family helps in coping with hardship’*. *‘Caring for those without family support’* is cognitively associated with using the skills and knowledge gained in the camp and perceived level of vulnerability in the community. It's interesting to note that using the skills and knowledge gained in the camp is significantly

correlated with the perceived level of vulnerability in the Sudan (correlation .255). The indication is that those who expect themselves to be vulnerable following return are inclined to make use of the skills and knowledge acquired in the camps.

Figure 6.1.j Support System Domain

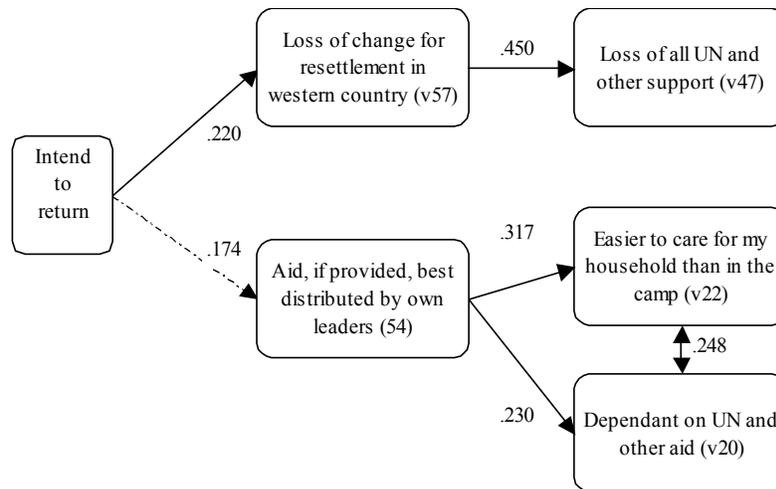


Humanitarian Assistance Domain

'Loss of chance for re-settlement in western country' and *'aid, if provided, is best distributed by one's own leaders'* are the influential beliefs affecting return regarding the emitted beliefs and expectations regarding the humanitarian aid domain.

Loss of the resettlement option will result in a higher return intent, thus underlining the appeal of resettlement to a western country, especially amongst young male adults. Loosing the 'chance' for resettlement is cognitively associated with the loss of UN and other aid support. This possibly indicates that with the loss of the resettlement option, in due time one expects to loose all UN support, that is during the post return situation when assistance programmes are phased out. It may also indicate that *'loss of resettlement option'* is associated with loss of potential benefits and support identified with third country resettlement. Increasingly money transfers by those who have been resettled abroad are becoming an important way of gaining access to instant additional resources for the refugees. Though no data on the volume of remittances is available it is likely to be very substantial, considering the increasing number of refugees receiving cash transfers from kin and relatives re-settled abroad.

'Aid, if provided in post-repatriation settings, is best distributed by ones own leaders'. The provision of aid itself in combination with the mode of distribution is positively associated with the ability to take care of one's household. Likewise provision of aid following return in combination with the mode of distribution is associated with a lessening of dependence on UN and other forms of aid⁷⁹. This association seems to suggest that provision of aid and its mode of distribution by own leaders is seen as important in caring for one's household in the post return environment. However, provision of aid and its mode of distribution are seen to facilitate, in due time, aid independence. The management of aid and the terms on which it is provided (preference for own leaders rather than outsiders) are thus critical issues to be addressed in order to facilitate communities in becoming food secure.

Figure 6.1.k Humanitarian Aid Domain

'Aid, if provided in post-repatriation settings, is best distributed by ones own leaders'. The provision of aid itself in combination with the mode of distribution is positively associated with the ability to take care of one's household. Likewise provision of aid following return in combination with the mode of distribution is associated with a lessening of dependence on UN and other forms of aid⁸⁰. This association seems to suggest that provision of aid and its mode of distribution by own leaders is seen as important in caring for one's household in the post return environment. However, provision of aid and its mode of distribution are seen to facilitate, in due time, aid independence. The management of aid and the terms on which it is provided (preference for own leaders rather than outsiders) are thus critical issues to be addressed in order to facilitate communities in becoming food secure.

Findings

Clustering of a relatively large number of salient modal outcome beliefs (based on correlations of Outcome Attitude values with stated Intent) gives an insight in the general cognitive structure underlying the various belief domains and systems regarding return. The associations of the influential drivers or barriers with less influential return beliefs and expectations provide an insight in the complexity and inter-dynamics of beliefs informing refugees' return decisions.

As mentioned before, the cognitive structure presented in this section represents the main general cognitive construct informing repatriation for the Sudanese refugee community at large. This cognitive construct will vary across the various household categories and the different return options, which may be pursued (section 6.7).

6.7. Cognitive Blockages and Drivers Informing the Return Decision

The TORA model allows the exploration of beliefs that influentially inform the level to which various household categories plan to return. The model also allows for exploring the nature of influential return beliefs over the three return options (within one year, within three years and when there is ‘peace’).

Comparing Household Categories (General Return Intent)

The TORA model’s ability to explore differences regarding the type of beliefs that influentially inform return intent for various household will be demonstrated by the following descriptor variables: gender, tribal background, age of the household head, length of displacement duration and the type of conflict posing the main challenge towards future life in the Sudan. The discussion in this section is based on the general return intent (the sum of the three return options) and focuses on the main differences between the household categories and therefore considers only the twenty-three representative return beliefs (in line with the clustering process). Table 6.5 presents an overview of the data.

Gender

The beliefs that are influentially informing the level to which household heads plan to return differ considerably between male and female respondents. For male household heads safety and security related beliefs are amongst the five most influential ones affecting their level of return planning. They are all of the barrier type. Fear of conscription is considered an influential barrier type of belief by both male and female respondents. The other four most influential return beliefs expressed by female household heads or representatives are acting as drivers: having religious freedom, making use of natural medicine, reliance on traditional peace making mechanisms and being food secure in a short period of time.

In deciding return women are sensitive to the ability of traditional peace mechanisms in furthering peace and stability. Though the attitude outcome strength does not significantly differ between the two groups (appendix 6.4.5, statement v13) men will generally not take this belief, and its outcome, into consideration when deciding return. Women, in contrast to men, appear to be sensitive to beliefs regarding their ability to cope when they return, i.e. return to one’s home village, the importance of having an extended family in coping with times of hardship, providing support for those without family, loss of the resettlement option and the distribution of aid in post return settings. In a way it seems that women are more sensitive towards future oriented beliefs and support mechanisms (drivers) while men focus on security related beliefs (barriers).

For men the belief that rebuilding one’s life is better done based on one’s own initiative over organised repatriation is influential. Women do not express sensitivity to this issue (though the expressed strength to which this belief is held does not differ significantly; see appendix 6.4.5 statement v70). A change in the degree to which this belief is held to be true or false, or a change in the evaluation of its outcome, does affect men’s intention to return. It does not for women.

It appears that refugee men and women demonstrate sensitivity to different sets of beliefs. This raises the question of how the decision to return is managed. Is the male oriented set of influential beliefs decisive? To what degree does a male household head take the views and opinions of his wife, or wives, into consideration? Is it a joint decision to return? Men record a significantly higher intention to return than women (p 0.05 level, Mann-Whitney test: appendix 6.4.5) and somehow this difference needs to be negotiated or given shape in practical forms. This difference is partly reflected in return strategies with men moving first across the border back into the Sudan to look at the situation in the area of prospective return, establish a small farm or engage himself in other activities with the aim of bringing over his wife and children at a later stage. Many variations to such strategies are known, including those with men and women crossing the border together to establish a foothold near their home areas by opening up small farms. Small children are left in custody of relatives in the camp, while their parents seek ways to maintain their refugee status in case they fail in their preparations to resettle.

Tribal background

The Uduk demonstrate a positive general intention to return, while the Funj express a negative one: the return intentions between the two groups differ significantly (p value 0.000, Mann-Whitney test: appendix 6.4.3). With regard to the safety and security domain the Uduk are receptive towards a change in belief strength or outcome evaluation for all five beliefs. The Funj express sensitivity only regarding fear of displacement and its consequences (table 6.5). Most likely this reflects the experience of the Funj who, compared with the Uduk, have been relatively recently displaced following a massive well co-ordinated GoS military operation, which swept through their home area causing massive displacement. The Uduk on the other hand have faced a rather long displacement history characterised by a wide array of safety and security threats.

A change in Outcome Attitude (OA) values of health or educational related beliefs affect the intention to return for the Uduk, not so for the Funj. For the Funj health and educational beliefs seem not influential in informing general return intent, indicating the relative importance of other domains over such issues. The Funj are well known for their knowledge in the field of natural medicines, on which they have relied to a high degree since medical, as well as other services like education, have basically not been in place in their home area. Southeastern Blue Nile has been considered and treated as a marginal area by the Khartoum government. It is likely that over time, with the Funj coming to appreciate education for their children and certain aspects of modern health care as provided in the refugee camp, they will develop sensitivity towards beliefs in both educational- and health-domains.

When it comes to the food security domain the most influential belief for the Uduk is dependence on wild foods, a driver towards return. For the Funj it is the expectation that insecurity will make it difficult to have enough to eat, a barrier towards return.

The Uduk are sensitive towards the ability to rely on traditional peace mechanisms, the Funj are not. Neither an increase in the level to which they feel able to rely on such mechanisms, nor a more positive evaluation of its likely outcomes, influence the level to which they plan to return. The Funj show a significantly lower Outcome Attitude value regarding their ability to depend on traditional

Table 6.5 Relative Influence of Beliefs (Outcome Attitude values) on General Return Intent for Various Household Categories and Return Options (Spearman's rho)

Bold correlation co-efficients (Spearman) indicate five most influential return beliefs on return intent per household category Intention to return - general mean value (a) -->	General	Gender		Tribes		Age Household Head			Lenth of Displacement			Type Conflict Threat Future			Return Options			
	Mean n=651	Male n=553	Female n=97	Uduk n=180	Funj n=70	< 25yrs n=147	25-50 n=469	> 50 yrs n=21	< 1 yr n=279	1-10 yrs n=285	> 10 yrs n=87	Intra n=34	Inter n=93	N-S n=511	<1 yr	<3yrs	Peace	
Cluster Representative Attitudes (b)																		
Safety and Security Domain																		
Face hardship and difficulties (v36)	.284(**)	.271(**)	.314(**)	.398(**)	ns		.324(**)	ns	.223(**)	.315(**)	.289(**)	.564(**)	ns	.247(**)	.276(**)	.241(**)		
Will be arrested (v71)	.252(**)	.283(**)	ns	.444(**)	ns		.290(**)	.242(**)	ns		.358(**)	ns	.686(**)	ns	.252(**)	.250(**)	ns	
Will be repeatedly displaced (v10)	.280(**)	.272(**)	.293(**)	.493(**)	.426(**)		.251(**)	.290(**)	ns	ns	.443(**)	ns	.469(**)	.319(**)	.203(**)	.328(**)	.226(**)	ns
Our children will be abducted (v16)	.282(**)	.281(**)	.266(**)	.487(**)	ns		.269(**)	.300(**)	ns		.348(**)	ns	.540(**)	.331(**)	.246(**)	.317(**)	.230(**)	ns
Will be conscripted into an armed group (v58)	.333(**)	.325(**)	.380(**)	.727(**)	ns		.270(**)	.342(**)	.438(*)		.480(**)	ns	.688(**)	.591(**)		.357(**)	.252(**)	
Health Domain																		
No modern health care services provided (v61)	.244(**)	.223(**)	.320(**)	.401(**)	ns		.311(**)	.218(**)	ns	.206(**)	.319(**)	ns	.345(*)	.493(**)		.239(**)		
Use of natural medicine is cheaper than modern ones (v15)	.138(**)		.441(**)	.248(**)	ns		ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	.241(*)	ns	.343(**)	ns			
Educational Domain																		
Our children will not have access to schooling (v41)	.241(**)	.222(**)	.375(**)	.425(**)	ns		.351(**)	.210(**)	ns		.360(**)	ns	ns	.514(**)		.244(**)		
Children's education means a better future (v65)	.125(**)		.237(*)	.326(**)	ns		ns	ns	ns		ns	ns	ns	.358(**)	ns	ns		
Food Security Domain																		
Insecurity makes it difficult to have enough to eat (v64)	.211(**)	.222(**)	ns	.341(**)	.457(**)		.208(**)	.556(**)			.294(**)	ns	.519(**)	.278(**)		.209(**)	.225(**)	ns
Food-secure within a short period of time (< half a year) (v12)	.244(**)	.206(**)	.382(**)	.346(**)	.263(*)		.312(**)	.235(**)	ns	.270(**)	.256(**)	ns	.497(**)	ns	.239(**)		.243(**)	
Collect and consume wild foods to survive (v37)	.222(**)	.201(**)	.335(**)	.600(**)	ns		.313(**)	ns	ns		.258(**)	ns	.715(**)	.634(**)	ns			.206(**)
Large household helps to become food secure (v1)	.209(**)		.367(**)	.377(**)	ns		.267(**)	.201(**)	ns	.293(**)	.201(**)	ns	.508(**)	.356(**)				.273(**)
Mode of Return Domain																		
To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation (v70)	-.240(**)	-.254(**)	ns	-.342(**)	-.402(**)		ns	-.301(**)	-.522(*)		-.286(**)	ns	-.557(**)	-.308(**)		-.253(**)	-.240(**)	ns
Peace making Domain																		
Can rely on traditional ways of peacemaking (v13)	.231(**)		.466(**)	.488(**)	ns		.231(**)	.236(**)	ns	.284(**)	ns	ns	ns	.453(**)		.224(**)	.220(**)	
Have religious freedom (v44)	.190(**)		.482(**)	.278(**)	.341(**)		.313(**)	ns	ns	.257(**)	ns	ns	ns	.411(**)			.211(**)	
Peace Spoiler Domain																		
Will be difficult to have good governance (v33)	.180(**)		ns	.423(**)	ns		.241(**)	ns	ns		.290(**)	ns	.503(**)	.262(*)		.200(**)	ns	
Cultural Domain																		
Return to my home village (v14)	.195(**)		.326(**)	.210(**)	.385(**)		.220(**)	ns	ns	.447(**)	ns	ns	ns	.405(**)			.304(**)	
Process of Change Domain																		
Will be different from those that stayed behind (v19)	.143(**)		ns	.431(**)	ns		ns	ns	ns	ns	.265(**)	ns	.742(**)	.236(*)	ns		ns	
Support System Domain																		
Extended family helps one to cope in times of hardship (v56)	.146(**)		.333(**)	.255(**)	.283(*)		.210(*)	ns	ns	.265(**)	ns	ns	.478(**)	.229(*)	ns			
Care for those without family support(v31)	.153(**)		.245(*)	ns	ns		.269(**)	ns	ns	.347(**)	ns	ns	-.494(**)	.329(**)		ns	.316(**)	
Aid Domain																		
Loss of chance for resettlement in western country (v57)	.220(**)		.311(**)	.246(**)	.408(**)		.282(**)	.205(**)	ns	.232(**)	ns	ns	ns	.297(**)				
Aid, if provided, best distributed by own leaders (v54)	.174(**)		.344(**)	.381(**)	ns		.329(**)	ns	ns	.301(**)	ns	.242(*)	ns	.315(**)			.286(**)	

Shaded attitudes act as barriers towards return

(a) Scale 'general mean' -6 'very weak' to +6 'very strong'; for return options and household categories -2 to +2

(b) For mean value outcome attitudes and significance in difference (Mann-Whitney) reference is made to appendix 6. 4.

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed); * at the .05 level (2-tailed); blank field indicates correlation <.200; ns = non significant correlation

peace mechanisms when compared with the Uduk⁸¹ (see appendix 6.4.3; statement v13), a clear sign that they feel significantly less positive about the level to which they can depend on such systems.

In short, Uduk and Funj express sensitivity to fundamentally different sets of return beliefs and expectations of home. These reflect different backgrounds and return contexts and inform significantly different levels of return planning.

Age of the Household Head

Comparing households whose head is under 25 years of age with those headed by someone aged between 25 to 50 years (the differences in intentions are not significant from a statistical point of view) it appears that the most influential beliefs are of the driver type for those under 25 and of the barrier type for those aged between 25-50 (table 6.5, 'age household head'). This reflects a different perspective on return and possibly the critical challenges anticipated in the post return environment. Household heads in the age group 25-50 express sensitivity to beliefs in the safety and security belief domain, which is likely to reflect repeated first hand experience of the conflict and its consequences. For households headed by someone under the age of 25 security related return beliefs do not influence their intention to return.

Younger household heads do not register sensitivity towards the belief that it is better to undertake spontaneous repatriation over organised repatriation in order to rebuild one's life. Households represented by an older head do. Since all three household categories feel the same regarding the belief itself (the Outcome Attitude values do not differ significantly; see appendix 6.4.4 statement v70), this seems to indicate a tendency amongst younger household heads to time their return independent of the occasion of an official organised repatriation programme. Older household heads express a tendency to take into account an organised repatriation programme when deciding return.

The differences in general return intent are statistically not significant (Mann Whitney tests, see appendix 6.4.4). The lowest intention is recorded for household heads over the age of fifty. This group is sensitive towards relatively few beliefs: conscription into the army of one of their household members (likely to involve young male household members), food shortages induced by insecurity and the mode of return (table 6.5). Household heads over fifty do not demonstrate sensitivity towards the loss of the resettlement option. The re-settlement option appeals to younger household heads, loss of that option leads directly to a higher intent to return to the Sudan.

It is striking that household heads over fifty do not register sensitivity towards the role of traditional peace mechanisms when deciding return. Younger household heads do: an increase in the acceptance of the role of such systems and their potential to facilitate peace and stability translates into a higher intention to return (the Outcome Attitude value for this return belief is significantly higher for those under 25 years of age compared with those over fifty, p 0.05). Since it is generally acknowledged that such systems have been effective in the past, but came under pressure and eroded during the war, it appears that older household heads may have become disillusioned about their potential role in post-return situations. However this analysis is based on the general return intent and not on the return option when there is 'peace'. It might well be that older household heads are more positive about the role of traditional peace and justice systems for that particular return option. It might, because these

are the people that have experienced first hand the in-ability of such mechanisms to manage conflict in the face of overwhelming threats resulting in their displacement, events which traditional systems were unable to deal with effectively.

Length of Displacement Duration

Household heads having experienced a displacement history of one to ten years, before claiming refugee status in camps on Ethiopian territory, demonstrate a strong and significantly higher intention to return compared with those having experienced either a shorter or longer displacement history (appendix 6.4.13).

The most influential beliefs for those who faced a displacement history of between 1 to 10 years are of the barrier type (beliefs belonging to the safety & security and the educational domain). Household heads having experienced a displacement history of less than a year express sensitivity to driver type of beliefs. The intention to return of those having experienced a displacement history of over 10 years seems to be predominantly informed by facing hardship and difficulties following their return (table 6.5).

Household heads having experienced a displacement history of less than a year record a high sensitivity towards the belief '*will return to my home village*': a change in either the level to which this belief is seen to be true or untrue, or a change in the evaluation of its outcome, will affect their intention to return. Households having experienced longer displacement histories feel even stronger about return to their home villages yet the belief is not found influential in deciding return. It seems likely that households which experienced a relative short displacement history are pre-occupied with return to their village as they contemplate the '*loss of home*'. Households who have repeated first hand experience of armed conflict and its implications might focus on the harsh reality of the situation in their home areas in deciding return.

The cost aspect of natural medicine is influential in informing the intention to return for households which have experienced displacement histories lasting over 10 years. Household heads who experienced shorter displacement histories are not sensitive towards this particular belief of the health domain but, alternatively, to the availability of modern health care services. This seems to indicate that long displacement histories generate sensitivity towards natural medicine as an important way to deal with health issues in volatile environments, and modern medicine in more stable camp situations.

Type of Conflict Posing Threat Towards Life in the Sudan

The intentions to return differ significantly between household heads regarding either intra-ethnic or the north-south conflict in presenting the main challenge towards future life in the Sudan on the one hand and inter-ethnic conflict on the other (respective values for intention are 0.0, 0.75 and 2.65: appendix 6.4.16). Households regarding inter-ethnic conflict as presenting the main challenge demonstrate significantly higher levels of return planning.

Beliefs in the safety and security belief domain are influential for all three sub-categories (table 6.5). The belief about being conscripted into an armed group, and its consequences within an environment where intra- or inter-ethnic conflict is perceived to be the main conflict-orientation, directly and

influentially informs the intention to return (correlation coefficients of .688 and .591 respectively: table 6.5, ‘type conflict threat future’). Recruitment in both cases is seen as likely. However the outcome of recruitment is evaluated negatively in return environments with the likelihood of intra-ethnic conflict. Its outcome is evaluated positively against a background of possible inter ethnic conflict⁸².

Household heads who regard inter-tribal conflict as posing the major threat are sensitive towards the ability to rely on traditional peace mechanisms. The value for this Outcome Attitude is already most strongly expressed by this household category followed by those regarding intra-tribal conflict or the north-south conflict to do so (outcome attitude values of 1.84, 1.32 and 1.01 respectively: see appendix 6.4.16 statement v13). Those who perceive the challenge to come from inter tribal conflict feel significantly more positive about traditional peace mechanisms than those considering the North-South conflict to pose the challenge (p 0.000). Households expecting inter- or intra-ethnic conflict as posing the challenge towards future life in the Sudan feel about the same regarding the ability of traditional systems to be functional. This indicates that traditional peace mechanisms seem to be more fitted to deal with south-south conflict than the north-south conflict, posing a challenge to harmonise such systems along the north-south ‘divide’ and competing spheres of interest (e.g. the pre-peace agreement contested areas of Southern Blue Nile, Nuba Mountains and Abyei, let alone Dar Fur).

Household heads regarding intra- or inter-tribal conflict as posing the major threat are sensitive towards the belief ‘*we will be different from those who stayed behind*’. This sensitivity is very strong for those regarding intra-ethnic conflict to form the main threat. Since this particular group does not record sensitivity to the ability to rely on traditional peace mechanisms their post return situation will pose particular challenges that will be hard to overcome.

Findings

Household categories stratified along gender, ethnic background, age of its head, the length of displacement as well as the type of conflict posing a challenge towards future life in the Sudan demonstrate sensitivity towards different sets of influential return beliefs (table 6.5). As the return decision is found to be differentially informed, it follows that the beliefs underpinning return intent result in dynamic return movements. The beliefs informing such return dynamics can be explored more accurately by looking at particular return moments in time rather than general return intent itself.

The analysis of the findings in this section was based on the beliefs at a first level of causality in line with clustering process described in section 6.6. The discussion is thus based on the main general cognitive construct that informs return decision-making of the refugee population at large. This implies that for particular household categories the cognitive construct may be markedly different from the main general construct. Therefore the outcomes should be treated with care, notably for household categories represented by relatively few households (e.g. household heads aged over 50)⁸³.

Comparing Return Options

Apart from determining the beliefs that influentially inform the general return intent for particular household categories, it is possible to establish which beliefs influence the return decision for each of the three return options presented as part of the questionnaire. By doing so, one can compare the most

influential drivers and blockages across the return options. The analysis presented in this section is based on the twenty three return beliefs placed at a central level of causality when undertaking the clustering process (section 6.6). The data are presented in table 6.5 (column 'return options'). Appendix 6.6 presents a comparative overview of the influential return beliefs over the three return options (based on the full set of seventy return beliefs).

Return within One Year (Dry Season 2002-3)

Regarding the option presented to the respondents to return within a year following the assessment, eleven out of the twenty-three beliefs (representing the entire list of seventy salient outcome beliefs) are influential. The influential barriers were found to be in decreasing order of importance (in brackets Spearman correlation co-efficients, all significant at p 0.000):

1. Will be conscripted into an armed group (.357)
2. Will be repeatedly displaced (.328)
3. Our children will be abducted (.317)
4. Face hardship and difficulties (.276)
5. To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation⁸⁴ (-.253)
6. Will be arrested (.252)
7. Our children will not have access to schooling (.244)
8. No modern health care services provided (.239)
9. Insecurity makes it difficult to have enough to eat (.209)
10. Will be difficult to have good governance (.200).

It is either a change in the level to which this belief is perceived to be true, or a change in the evaluation of the outcome belief, which will directly affect the intention to return in the next year.

There is just one influential driver (Spearman correlation co-efficient, p 0.000):

1. Can rely on traditional ways of peace making (.224)

Influential beliefs are thus found in the following domains: safety & security, health, educational, food security, return mode, and peace making. Most of these were acting as barriers towards return within the one-year time frame.

Return within Three Years (2003-5)

Compared with the one-year return option the three-year return option showed some differences. The dominant belief domain affecting the decision to return is still the safety and security domain. Return beliefs associated with health and education, and beliefs in the peace domain, do no longer influence the return decision. However, refugees express sensitivity towards the ability to achieve food security within a relatively short time period in informing their return decision.

Since there are no structural differences, it appears that household heads and the refugee community at large do not expect critical events to take place between the two return options which would strongly impact on their intent to return and the underlying cognitive structure informing that decision.

Return when There is 'Peace'

Out of a total of twenty-three beliefs that significantly correlate with the general intention to return, only seven do so for the return option 'peace'. The seven influential beliefs all form drivers towards return and are in order of their influence (Spearman correlation co-efficients, p 0.000):

1. Care for those without family support (.316)
2. Return to my home village (.304)
3. Aid, if provided, is best distributed by own leaders (.286)
4. Large household helps to become food secure (.273)
5. Can rely on traditional ways of peace making (.220)
6. Have religious freedom (.211)
7. Collect and consume wild foods to survive (.206).

The most influential beliefs affecting the intention to return when there is 'peace' are fundamentally different compared with the other two return options. Not only are all influential return beliefs acting as drivers towards return, as opposed to influential beliefs for the one and three year return options, the nature also changes towards beliefs in the food security domain, the peace making domain, the cultural domain as well as the support system and aid domains. The safety and security domain does not appear to be influential regarding a change in the decision to return for the return option 'peace'.

The belief regarding return to one's home village is the second most influential in informing the return decision (correlation .304). The cultural belief domain was shown to have a strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha 0.85; appendix 6.7): all the individual beliefs of this domain correlate significantly (coefficients over .2 at p level 0.000) with stated return intent for the return moment 'peace'. The cultural domain is thus a key belief domain influencing the decision to return when there is 'peace'.

6.8. Influential Social Referents

The attitude towards the intention to return is the foremost determinant influencing return. However the stated Subjective Norm was found to correlate significantly as well (Spearman correlation co-efficient .670, p 0.000). Therefore this section explores the influence of the various social referents on the return decision of particular household categories and return options.

Strength of Referent Subjective Norms

The salient social referents were identified through the initial focus groups with household heads or their representatives. In total, a list of eleven salient referents was established using the same procedure to select the salient outcome belief expectations out of all emitted return beliefs and expectations (see appendix 6.1).

A Referent Subjective Norm (RSN) is attributed to each of the social referents. It is calculated by taking the product of the motivation to comply (m) with the referent and the subjective belief that the referent would support the proposed action (sb). Both are measured on a bi polar 5 point scales ranging from +2 'very strong' to -2 'very weak' giving the referent subjective norm a score range of -4 to +4. The reasoned Calculated Subjective Norm (CSN) is the sum of these Referent Subjective Norms (see equation 2 in section 4.3) giving it a scoring range of -44 to +44. When the reliability of the Calculated Subjective Norm scale was tested it produced a Cronbach Alpha co-efficient of 0.80 (standardised item alpha), indicating that the scale of 11 referent subjective norms is reliable. The Calculated Subjective Norm was found to be relatively supportive of return but not strongly so (value of 15.5).

Appendix 6.8 presents the mean normative belief (sb), motivation to comply (m) and Referent Subjective Norms (RSN) for each of the salient referents⁸⁵. Referents that the refugees feel support their return to the Sudan (those perceived to agree with the households' return and whose advice refugees are motivated to follow) are in order of the expressed Referent Subjective Norm value:

1. The UNHCR (2.47)
2. Refugees' political leaders (1.82)
3. The Ethiopian government or ARRA (1.63).

These referents contribute most strongly to the overall Calculated Subjective Norm.

The referents that were attributed the least positive subjective norms were in order of increasing strength:

1. Chiefs and elders (0.89)
2. Parents (0.92)
3. Relatives (0.99).

These referents contribute least positively to the Calculated Subjective Norm.

Influence of Specific Referents

As in the case of the Outcome Attitudes regarding the influence of return beliefs, the correlation between Referent Subjective Norms (RSNs) and stated return Intent determines the influence of the individual referents. Though some Referent Subjective Norms may be strongly expressed in terms of their value, they may not be influential regarding the return decision making process.

When the sample is considered as a whole, the following referents are considered to influentially inform the general return intent (in brackets Spearman correlation co-efficients: table 6.6, column 'whole sample'):

1. The political leaders of the refugees: the SPLM/A (0.279, p 0.000)
2. The Ethiopian government or the Agency for Returnee and Refugee Affairs (0.200, p 0.000)

Both referents are influential in that either, a change in the normative belief, or the motivation to comply, will affect the level to which refugees plan to return. Both referents hold direct political as

well as military power. Both are seen to strongly agree with the return of the refugees, and refugees express to be strongly motivated to follow their advice. Interestingly the referent holding an international mandate with regard to refugee protection appears only to have a weak association with the general intent to return, though refugees' subjective belief and motivation to comply with the UNHCR is strong to very strong (appendix 6.8).

It appears that the institutional referents are influentially informing refugees decision to return as opposed to the community based referents who do not register the same strength of association with the refugees' general return intent.

Normative beliefs and motivations to comply are weakly to neutrally expressed for referents closer to the community itself. Refugees feel least positive about return regarding the following referents: recent arrivals from the Sudan, tribesmen who have remained in the Sudan, the refugee committee (the administrative body made up by refugees and set up in each of the camps by ARRA and the UNHCR), friends, relatives and parents. Refugee household heads express significantly stronger referent subjective norms for institutional referents when compared with community-based referents. The church seems to take an intermediate stand: the church is perceived to agree with people returning, the motivation to comply with the church is positive though ambivalent. The strength to which chiefs and elders are seen to agree with the refugees returning, as well as the motivation to follow their advice is neutral for the general intent to return.

How can this rather striking outcome be explained? One element that plays an important role is that the refugee community at large respects authority, and therefore they are positively inclined to follow the 'advice' of those referents or important 'others' in charge of the refugee programme. Refugees are fully aware that the Ethiopian government has granted them refuge on their territory under the auspices of the United Nations. When the Ethiopian government decides its time for refugees to go home the refugees have enough sense of reality to know that they have little choice.

As can be observed from the findings, there is a clear difference regarding the general return perspective between the authorities and community-based referents. This begs the question as to why the two groups of referents are evaluated so differently. This is a crucially important issue when it comes to the 'voluntary' nature of repatriation. How able and daring is the refugee community at large to challenge the opinion regarding return of the institutional referents? Certainly, when compared with the return opinion of community based referents, who are likely to be much better informed regarding the complexities and challenges posed by prospective return contexts.

Comparison of Sensitive Descriptive Household Categories

The level of influence of the social referents will vary across household categories. This will be demonstrated by looking at the categories of gender, tribal background, marital status, reason to flee to Ethiopia, type of flight, length of displacement history, knowledge regarding whereabouts of family and kin in the home area, main challenge faced by being a refugee and the type of conflict posing a threat in the post return context. Table 6.6 presents an overview of the Spearman correlations as a measure of influence for all eleven referents for the different household categories. These offer

Table 6.6 Influential Social Referents for Various Household Categories and Return Options (Spearman’s rho)

Influential social referents (a)	Whole sample	Gender		Tribes		Marital status			Prominent reason to flight			Type of flight		Length displacement history		
	n=645	male n=548	female n=96	Uduk n=180	Funj n=69	single n=98	married n=481	divorced n=64	war n=437	no food n=40	no shelter n=42	direct n=230	not direct n=415	< 1yr n=276	1-10 yrs n=282	>10yrs n=87
Church leaders			.267(**)		.464(**)	-.199(*)		.339(**)								-.211(*)
Chiefs and elders			.216(*)		.489(**)											-.300(**)
Recent arrivals from the Sudan	-.095(*)	-.092(*)		-.275(**)	.246(*)					-.335(*)	-.507(**)		-.198(**)			-.203(**)
UNHCR	.109(**)	.114(**)			.476(**)	.270(**)		.266(*)	.224(**)	-.330(*)		.219(**)		.276(**)		-.267(*)
Refugee Committee					.393(**)					-.356(*)						
Political leaders, the SPLM/A	.279(**)	.268(**)	.278(**)	.317(**)	.280(*)		.306(**)	.370(**)	.228(**)	.483(**)		.227(**)	.250(**)	.241(**)	.261(**)	
Parents				-.306(**)	.400(**)				.127(**)		-.495(**)		-.140(**)		-.164(**)	-.245(*)
Relatives				-.264(**)	.420(**)								-.156(**)		-.168(**)	
Friends					.376(**)											
Ethiopian government, ARRA	.200(**)	.194(**)	.214(*)		.239(*)		.200(**)	.301(*)	.239(**)			.224(**)		.255(**)		
Those remaining in the Sudan					.394(**)			.263(*)			-.501(**)		-.137(**)		-.148(*)	

(a) For mean Referent Subjective Norms and significance in difference (Mann-Whitney tests) reference is made to appendix 6.4.

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed); ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed); ns: non significant

Influential social referents (a)	Family in home area?			Type of conflict			Taking hhmembers upon return			Return moments			
	yes n=251	no n=192	Don't know n=173	intra n=34	inter n=93	N vs. S n=505	none n=86	some n=44	all n=509	1 yr n=645	3 yrs n=645	peace n=645	
Church leaders			.193(**)										
Chiefs and elders													
Recent arrivals from the Sudan			-.247(**)			-.593(**)				-.135(**)	-.088(*)	.088(*)	
UNHCR			.266(**)	.190(*)	.403(*)				.159(**)	.105(**)		.122(**)	
Refugee Committee													
Political leaders, the SPLM/A	.268(**)	.326(**)	.273(**)		.406(**)	.203(**)			-.307(*)	.364(**)	.272(**)	.181(**)	.205(**)
Parents			.231(**)						-.526(**)				
Relatives						-.659(**)			-.511(**)				
Friends									-.363(*)				
Ethiopian government, ARRA	.197(**)	.263(**)	.289(**)			.248(**)				.242(**)	.178(**)	.106(**)	.205(**)
Those remaining in the Sudan						-.547(**)			-.323(*)				.125(**)

(a) For mean Referent Subjective Norms and significance in difference (Mann-Whitney tests) reference is made to appendix 6.4.

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed); ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed); ns: non significant

indications of the susceptibility to social influence or pressure by the various household categories (all correlations $p < 0.000$ value unless mentioned otherwise).

Gender

Men express sensitivity to social influence or pressure from their political leaders, that is the SPLM/A. For women this is also the case, however they express sensitivity to a number of other referents as well: church leaders, chiefs and elders and the Ethiopian government. Men are sensitive to social pressure from the Ethiopian government (correlation 0.194) but do not demonstrate sensitivity towards church leaders, chiefs and elders.

Tribal Background

The Uduks are likely to respond negatively to social pressure from parents, recent arrivals from the Sudan or relatives. They will respond positively though when receiving pressure from the SPLM/A. The Funj demonstrate a high susceptibility to receiving pressure from all eleven referents, the most influential ones being chiefs and elders, UNHCR, mosque leaders, relatives and parents.

Marital Status

Household heads who are single, or either widowed, divorced or abandoned are sensitive to social pressure from the UNHCR, while married household heads are not. Married household heads are susceptible to social pressure from their political leaders and the Ethiopian government only. Widowed, divorced or abandoned household heads are sensitive towards pressure from church leaders and people who have stayed behind in the Sudan.

Prominent Reason for the Flight, Type of Flight and Displacement History

Households which state war as the main reason for their flight are sensitive towards the Ethiopian government, their political leaders and the UNHCR. Those stating lack of shelter as the main reason for their flight are not responsive towards these institutional referents. They demonstrate a strong negative influence deciding return when they receive pressure from recent arrivals, those who remained in the Sudan and their parents. Political leaders are influential in informing return intent of those households whose flight to Ethiopia was initiated by food shortages and famine. Such households are likely to react negatively towards pressure from the Refugee Committee, recent arrivals from the Sudan, as well as the UNHCR.

Households having experienced direct flight and a displacement history of less than a year also demonstrate sensitivity towards receiving pressure from the institutional referents. Those having experienced war first hand, and as a consequence fled straight to Ethiopia thus having a short displacement history, feel 'dependent' on these important 'others'. These institutions are seen as influential as they are associated with having the power and higher authority beyond community based referents when it comes to social influence or pressure affecting the decision to return.

Knowledge Regarding Whereabouts Family and Kin

Households having family and kin in areas of return do not express sensitivity to UNHCR as an influential referent, while the other household categories do. Independent of having family and kin in areas of return or not, return decisions are being influenced by the political leaders of the refugees and the Ethiopian government.

Type of Conflict posing Future Threat

Household heads perceiving intra-tribal conflict as the type of conflict posing a challenge towards future life in the Sudan are expected to react very negatively when receiving pressure from relatives, recent arrivals and their tribesmen in the Sudan. For them UNHCR is seen as the most influential social referent. Household heads fearing inter-tribal conflict only express sensitivity towards pressure received from their political leaders. Those seeing the north-south conflict as posing a challenge are receptive to the social influence from the Ethiopian government, their own political leaders, and to lesser degree, UNHCR.

Findings

When it comes to the general intention to return (the sum of the three return moments) refugee household categories are receptive to varying degrees of social pressure from different referents. Generally speaking, the influence of institutional referents seems to have precedence over community-based referents, with the church taking an intermediate position. In most cases the SPLM/A, as refugees' main political movement, is more influential than the Ethiopian government.

Since UNHCR is supposed to be the key player in terms of refugee protection, it is assumed that it is an influential referent for at least some household categories. Three particular groups express sensitivity to UNHCR as an influential referent. The first group is made up by single people. As these represent mostly young to middle aged men their 'interest' in observing UNHCR as an influential referent is most likely related to the resettlement programme implemented under UNHCR's auspices. A second group comprise those who are vulnerable, those in demand of support in the camp and in return: the divorced, abandoned and widowed household heads as well as those households who do not know the whereabouts of their family, or who know that they are not in prospective areas of return. A third group are households severely affected by war or expect to be affected by armed conflict following return.

This third group most strongly reflects the need for physical protection, in other words they are most in need of UNHCR's protection mandate. This group is made up of households fleeing because of the direct experience of armed warfare, those who fled their home villages directly to the camps on Ethiopian territory (having experienced a short displacement history). It also includes households anticipating intra ethnic conflict or the north-south conflict as posing the main challenge towards future life in the Sudan. This seems to suggest that those that are 'true' refugees, needing protection, are likely to respond to the UNHCR. However, others that may be in the camps for other speculative reasons will not.

Comparison of Sensitive Descriptive Return Options

The relative influence of the social referents is likely to differ over the three return options as will be discussed in this section (table 6.6, 'return moments'). Appendix 6.9 provides a comparative overview of the influential referents for general return and the three return options.

For the one-year return time frame the political leaders of the refugees are the influential referent. For return within a 3 year period following the assessment, not one of the referents signal a significant correlation (over 0.200) indicating that none of the referents is influential in informing the level to which refugees plan to return. When there is 'peace' the political parties of the refugees and the Ethiopian government are influential, their social influence or pressure influentially informs refugees' decision to return.

For all three return options refugee household heads do not demonstrate significant susceptibility to social influence or pressure from the UNHCR. In other words a change regarding the level to which UNHCR is perceived to agree with the return of the refugees, or a change in the degree to which refugees are motivated to follow their return advice, will not affect their return intent and thus return behaviour. UNHCR is seen as a referent very much in favour of refugee return, with refugees expressing a strong motivation to follow its advice. This underlines the legal as well as moral obligation of the organisation to be well informed about the situation in areas of return, and to critically examine and adhere to the principles of voluntary return. This is particularly so in light of those household categories which express sensitivity towards UNHCR regarding their decision to return, the most vulnerable.

6.9. The Nature of Perceived Level of Control

The elucidation of the Perceived Level of Control reading for each of the return options and general return is explained in appendix 6.1.

The Perceived Level of Control readings for the return options are strongly and significantly correlated with the level to which refugees plan to return for each of the three return options (correlations of .639, .596, .599 for return within a year, three years and when there is 'peace' respectively, all at p 0.000 level: table 6.7). The general control reading is strongly and significantly related with general return intent (.703, see table 6.7). The level to which refugees plan to return is thus found to be significantly informed by the level of control they express over the return process.

By correlating the emotively obtained control readings with the reasoned return beliefs and expectations of home (the Outcome Attitude values of those statements found representative of the overall refugee community in line with the clustering process) the nature of the control dimension can be explored: return beliefs and expectations that show a significant correlation are associated with issues of control. The control readings are moderately and significantly correlated with the Calculated Attitude for each of the three return options as well as for general return (values of .321, .330, .339 and .435 respectively: table 6.7). These correlations indicate the degree to which the nature of

perceived control can be explained by the listed salient return beliefs. The analysis in this section is based on the twenty-three key modal outcome beliefs representing the entire list of seventy salient beliefs (in line with the clustering process, see section 6.6).

The control dimension for the one- or three-year return time frames is found in the security- and mode of return-domains. Since control is associated with the barrier type of beliefs, refugees express a lack of control over the following return beliefs: *'facing hardship and difficulties'*, *'abduction of our children'*, *'recruitment into an armed movement'* and *'rebuilding one's life is better done based on spontaneous return than UN organised return'* (table 6.7 lists correlations over .300 only, p 0.000 level).

With 'peace', the control dimension shifts to the cultural-, support- and aid-domain. Issues of control are associated with beliefs of the driver type, indicating that cognitively refugees' express increased levels of control. By returning to one's home village, caring for those without family support and distribution of aid (if provided by the international community) by one's own leaders, refugees perceive to be able to 'exercise' control.

Table 6.7 The Nature of the Perceived Level of Control over the Return Options, Clustered Beliefs (Spearman's rho)

	Perceived Level of Control			
	Year 1	Year 3	Peace	SUM
Correlation of Perceived Level of Control with Stated Intent	.639	.596	.599	.703
Correlation of Perceived Level of Control with Calculated Attitude	.321	.330	.339	.435
Safety and Security Domain				
Face hardship and difficulties (v36)	.337	.400		.362
Our children will be abducted (v16)	.310	.294		.267
Will be conscripted into an armed group (v58)	.308	.281		.304
Mode of Return Domain				
To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation (v70)	-.374	-.333		-.282
Cultural Domain				
Return to my home village (v14)			.476	.253
Support System Domain				
Care for those without family support (v31)			.386	
Aid Domain				
Aid, if provided, best distributed by own leaders (v54)			.342	

6.10. The Nature of Vulnerability

General

The elucidation of the Perceived Vulnerability reading for each of the return options and general return is explained in appendix 6.1.

Since the Perceived Vulnerability reading significantly correlates with the stated Intent for each of the return options and general intent (values of respectively .625, .591, .556 and .715: table 6.8) it follows that return intent is significantly associated with a vulnerability dimension.

The Perceived Vulnerability correlates significantly with the Calculated Attitude for each of the return options and general return (values of .292, .331, .436 and .426 respectively: table 6.8). These correlations form an indication of the level to which the emotively obtained Perceived Vulnerability reading is informed by reasoned return beliefs (those found representative for the overall community at large following the clustering process). Vulnerability, taken as a central concept in disaster studies, reflects the potential for disruption and potential harm in post return environments.

All five return beliefs representing the safety and security belief domain are significantly associated with vulnerability for the one and three year return options. In other words refugees' return decision reflects an underlying pre-occupation with physical threats and hazards. Vulnerability is also significantly expressed in the mode of return, that is whether rebuilding one's life is best pursued by spontaneous repatriation or UN organised return. However, for the return option 'peace', these beliefs no longer inform the nature of vulnerability associated with return.

The Perceived Vulnerability reading is clearly associated from a resilience perspective for the return option 'peace'. The nature of that resilience is expressed in terms of: return to one's home village, support for those lacking a family to support or help them, distribution of aid by one's own leaders and the ability to become food secure when having a large household.

Comparing the nature of the Perceived Level of Control and the Perceived Vulnerability for the three return options, it is striking to note that they are strongly correlated and thus informed by beliefs found in the same domains. When correlating the Perceived Vulnerability reading with the Perceived Level of Control significant correlations show up, namely .667, .789, .704 and .788 for the one-year, three-years, 'peace' and general return options. This means that Perceived Vulnerability, which tends to be more influential regarding return intent than Perceived Level of Control, is itself highly associated with a control dimension.

Seen from the alternative perspective lack of control is associated with vulnerability, control with resilience. Its implications for repatriation programming are clear. For repatriation programming to take issues of control into consideration has clear implications for the level to which returnees express vulnerability or resilience in post-return environments. This underlines the critical importance of the notion of 'voluntary return'.

Table 6.8 The Nature of the Perceived Vulnerability over the Return Options, Clustered Beliefs (Spearman's rho)

	Perceived Vulnerability			
	Year 1	Year 3	Peace	SUM
Correlation of Perceived Vulnerability with Stated Intent	.625	.591	.556	.715
Correlation of Perceived Vulnerability with Calculated Attitude	.292	.331	.436	.426
Safety and Security Domain				
Face hardship and difficulties (v36)	.407	.406		.367
Might be arrested (v71)	.300	.314		.251
Will be repeatedly displaced (v10)	.339	.332		.269
Our children will be abducted (v16)	.323	.367		.315
Will be conscripted into an armed group (v58)	.290	.309		.299
Food Security Domain				
Large household helps to become food secure (v1)			.399	
Mode of Return Domain				
To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation (v70)	-.398	-.363		-.304
Cultural Domain				
Return to my home village (v14)			.483	
Support System Domain				
Care for those without family support (v31)			.424	
Aid Domain				
Aid, if provided, best distributed by own leaders (v54)			.405	

Vulnerability as Descriptor Variable – Return Option ‘Peace’

Being one of the four determinants of return intention the Perceived Vulnerability construct can be used alternatively as a descriptor variable. By doing so return intentions and their cognitive construct can be explored for household categories expressing various levels of vulnerability or resilience associated with return. This will be demonstrated for the return option ‘peace’ by utilising the full set of seventy salient beliefs.

Three categories were established: households expressing vulnerability in return (scores –4 to 0 on a Vulnerability measure range of –4 ‘vulnerability’ to +4 ‘resilience’), resilient households (scoring range 1-2) and most resilient households (scoring range 3-4). Refugee households expressing vulnerability associated with return when there is ‘peace’ constitute the smallest group (around 13% of the households) and most resilient households the dominant group (around 60% of all households).

Household heads expressing vulnerability associated with return score significantly lower return intentions when compared with resilient or most resilient households (respective values of 0.40, 1.29

and 1.77 on a scale of -2 'very low' to +2 'very high': appendix 6.10). Since households expressing vulnerability on return demonstrate a significantly lower return intent and the Stated and Calculated Attitude are significantly correlated with stated return Intent (table 6.10) the TORA model predicts a significant lower level of actual return behaviour compared with households expressing resilience associated with return.

The return intention of all three perceived vulnerability categories are significantly informed by both the emotive Stated Attitude as well as the reasoned Calculated Attitude (table 6.8). This means that the direct emotive attitudinal return response reflects consideration of critical return beliefs and expectations.

The strength by which Outcome Attitude values are expressed demonstrate significant differences for most of the salient return beliefs when comparing the household categories stratified along the three vulnerability-resilience classes (appendix 6.10). Vulnerability therefore appears to be a highly diagnostic factor, not only in terms of expressed return intent but especially how refugee households feel regarding return.

The return intent of households expressing vulnerability in return is influentially informed by beliefs in the food security-, mode of return- and cultural belief-domain (table 6.9). Households expressing resilience associated with return are sensitive to beliefs covering the safety&security-, health-, educational-, food security- and peace making- and the support system-domain. Resilient households therefore express sensitivity to a much wider variety of return beliefs and issues, including beliefs in the safety and security domain. Since their return intent is significantly higher (p 0.000) it appears that resilient households are more pro-actively return oriented. They expect to encounter smaller risks in return matched by a higher capability to manage them as compared with vulnerable households.

The perceived level of vulnerability of households expressing resilience in return is significantly informed by fear of GoS forces and the ability to rely on traditional peace mechanisms. A change in the strength to which they hold this belief, and its likely outcome, will directly affect their return intent. This underpins the fact that such households cognitively take into consideration security and safety threats posed by post return environments. It clearly indicates that such areas of return may be volatile even with return pursued when there is 'peace'.

Table 6.9 Return Beliefs Associated with Perceived Vulnerability Classes for Return following the Peace Agreement (Spearman's rho)

Outcome Attitudes	Vulnerable	Resilient	Most Resilient
	N=84	N=171	N=393
	13.0%	26.4%	60.3%
Return Intent for Option 'Peace' (scale -2 'very low' to +2 'very high')	0.40	1.29	1.77
Correlations – Determinants of Intention			
Stated Attitude	.592**	.518**	.465*
Stated Subjective Norm	.483**	.473**	.358**
Perceived Level of Control	.492**	.521**	.324**
Calculated Attitude	.287*	.257**	.182**
Beliefs (Outcome Attitudes values)			
Safety and Security Domain			
Fear of the Government of Sudan forces (v18)		-.231**	
Face hardship and difficulties (v36)		.210**	
Health domain			
No modern health care services provided (v61)		.303**	
Educational domain			
No educational services provided (v6)		.212**	
Children's education means a better future (v65)			.208**
Food Security Domain			
Wild foods form important part of diet (v48)		.208**	
Easy to fish to have enough to eat (V74)	.300**		
Trade to support my household (v49)	.418**		
Mode of Return Domain			
To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation (v70)	-.281**		
UNHCR or ARRA control my return (v32)	-.287**		
Peace Making Domain			
Can rely on traditional ways of peace making (v13)		.226**	
A peaceful Sudan means justice (v59)		.215**	
Cultural and Reintegration Domain			
Maintain our tribal identity (v23)	.282**		
Keep traditions and a way of life (v62)	.323**		
Support System Domain			
Will be vulnerable within my own community (v30)		.227**	
Humanitarian Assistance Domain			
Easier to care for my household than in the camp (v22)			.224**

Shaded beliefs act as barriers

NB * Significance at 0.05 level; ** at 0.01 level

Being vulnerable on return moderates sensitivity to needs-based return beliefs in the food security domain, the mode of return as well as issues of identity (maintaining a sense of belongingness). 'Resilience' moderates or 'allows' people to be sensitive to concerns dealing with security, the provision of health and educational services as well as mechanisms of keeping the peace and bringing about justice. They will take these into account when deciding return. The most resilient households perceive return as involving a small risk they are able to cope with. As a consequence it seems that they are positioned to take even higher aspirations into account when deciding return: the role of education in having a better future. The timing of their return decision is influenced by the ability to take best care of their households.

It is striking that return beliefs and expectations associated with the provision of humanitarian aid by the international community (beliefs in the humanitarian aid domain, notably those focusing on food aid) do not seem to influence the return decision when there is 'peace' (however both vulnerable and resilient households express sensitivity to coping mechanisms in the food security domain). With food allocations in the camps being phased out most resilient households will return as and when '*it will be easier to take care of one's household back in the Sudan*'. For vulnerable and resilient households phasing out of assistance provided in camps presents a more serious challenge. For resilient households it may lead to compromising influential return beliefs in the safety and security domain. For vulnerable households such a development is serious at best and disastrous at worst. They will be forced to take high risks in return which they are least likely to cope with effectively.

6.11. Discussion

This chapter explored the decision of refugees in camps in western Ethiopia to return to their home areas in the Sudan. The extended Theory of Reasoned Action was applied to study the return antecedents of the Sudanese refugees and the level to which they planned their return.

Findings

At a first and general level of analysis the TORA demonstrated that return intentions differ across various household categories. Households expressing a high intention to return are those likely to undertake spontaneous return, i.e. households regarding inter-tribal conflict as the type of conflict presenting the main challenge towards life in the Sudan, households in Bonga camp and households whose flight to Ethiopia was initiated by famine or lack of shelter. Households who indicated not to know the whereabouts of family and kin in the Sudan, households in Sherkolle camp and households who fled from their home villages directly to a camp in Ethiopia were found amongst those households expressing the lowest return intents. They are therefore most likely to take part in organised repatriation.

In general, refugees' return strategies were found to be differentially informed by:

- Time (return moment)
- Refugee camp

- Ethnic group
- Gender
- Critical event that initiated flight
- Knowledge regarding whereabouts of family and kin in the Sudan
- Length of displacement experience prior to claiming refugee status
- Prominent challenge faced by being a refugee in one of the camps on Ethiopian territory
- Type of conflict thought to present the main challenge towards future life in the Sudan.

At a second level of analysis it was found that all four determinants of intention were significantly correlated with stated return intent; they all influence the return decision. However, the attitude towards return was found to be the foremost determinant for the three return options and nearly all household categories. The return decision is thus governed foremost by refugees' own experience and knowledge regarding displacement and return. As both the attitude and subjective norm measures significantly correlate with the intent to return, the intent is considered a reliable predictor of future behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980).

Generally speaking the Perceived Vulnerability variable is the second most influential determinant indicating that return beliefs are associated with a profound vulnerability dimension. The Perceived Level of Control was also found to correlate strongly with stated return intent, a clear indication that return is not under full control of the refugees themselves. Finally, the decision to return is also informed by social influences and pressures emitted by various referents (Subjective Norm).

At a third level of analysis a total of seventy prominent return beliefs and expectations of home were found to be salient amongst the Sudanese refugee community. The general decision to return (the sum of the three return options) is influentially informed by the following beliefs that act as barriers (presented in descending order of influence):

- Will be conscripted into an armed group
- Face hardship and difficulties
- Our children will be abducted
- Will be repeatedly displaced
- Will be arrested
- No modern health care services provided
- No educational services provided
- Our children will not have access to schooling
- To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation
- Loss of chance for resettlement in western country
- Insecurity makes it difficult to have enough to eat.

The general return decision was found to be most influentially informed by the following beliefs acting as drivers towards return (presented in descending order of influence):

- Food-secure within a short period of time (within six months)
- Can rely on traditional ways of peace making
- Collect and consume wild foods to survive
- Large household helps to become food secure.

A clustering process grouped the seventy salient beliefs in a logical way, to represent attitudinal dimensions of return behaviour referred to as belief domains or systems. A total of eleven domains were defined: safety & security, health, education, food security, mode of return, peace makers, peace spoilers, cultural, process of change, community based support systems, and humanitarian assistance. Based on the correlation between pairs of return beliefs, the internal cognitive logic of these domains was drawn out. It was found to provide insight into the complex and dynamic nature of return decision making.

Correlating the Outcome Attitudes representing each of these eleven domains (influential return beliefs at a first level of causality in the clustering process) with the return intent for the three return options showed the dynamic nature of the influential outcome beliefs. Deciding to return within one to three year following the assessment was found to be influentially informed by beliefs of the barrier type, with beliefs in the safety and security domain being most prominent. The return decision for the return option 'peace' was found to be influentially informed by beliefs acting as drivers, prominently so by beliefs in the cultural- and community support-domain. Household categories take particular sets of return beliefs and expectations of home into consideration in informing their decision to return. In general, these reflected their background and particular return contexts.

For most of the household categories, and independent of the return option pursued, the emotively expressed attitude towards return (Stated Attitude) was found to correlate significantly with the reasoned Calculated Attitude. This indicates that the refugees' emotive return response is based on an analysis of reasoned return beliefs. Both the Stated Attitude (an emotive reading) as well as the Calculated Attitude (a reasoned reading) were found to correlate significantly with stated return intent (Behavioural Intent). Since the emotive attitude reading is associated with the calculated attitude (correlation of .459, $p < 0.000$ value) it follows that the direct emotive response reflects consideration of critical return beliefs and expectations. This indicates that, in the absence of extreme events or circumstances, the level to which refugees plan to return is based on their experience and the level of knowledge they have about prospective return contexts.

Refugees' return decision reflects an underlying pre-occupation with vulnerability. This Perceived Vulnerability is at a general level informed by the following beliefs:

- Face hardship and difficulties
- Our children will be abducted
- To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation
- Will be conscripted into an armed group
- Will be repeatedly displaced
- Might be arrested.

Generally speaking, return pursued within the one- and three-year return time frames is associated with vulnerability, and with resilience when return is pursued when there is ‘peace’.

In general, the level of control that refugees perceive to have over the return decision is strongly correlated with perceived vulnerability. For the one and three year return options refugees’ return decision is informed by a lack of control barring return. Pursuing return when there is ‘peace’ refugees perceive to have better control over their lives. The indication is, that for repatriation programming to take the issue of control into consideration, has clear implications for the level to which returnees express vulnerability or resilience in post-return environments.

Independent of the return option pursued, the most influential social referents informing the decision to return are:

- The political leaders of the refugees, notably the SPLM/A
- The Ethiopian government or the Agency for Returnee and Refugee Affairs.

The various household categories express a wider variety of both institutional and community based referents who influentially inform the level to which they plan to return.

In general, the analysis of the findings underline the importance of recognising the diversity in refugees background and return contexts regarding the level to which refugees plan to return and the way the return decision is informed. Understanding refugee’s decision to return gives insight into return dynamics over time.

The TORA as an Explanatory Model of Return Behaviour

Use of the extended TORA in exploring the return antecedents of Sudanese refugees’ suggests that the model has value as a potential explanatory model of return behaviour. Its findings in this particular case address the central theme of this chapter encapsulated by Rogge when stating (1994: 32):

‘We need to understand much more about the basis on which refugees make their decisions to return, whether individually or collectively; what sets of information do refugees primarily base their decisions to return on and what are the sources of information they most depend on?’.

One outcome recommendation of this particular study is that repatriation policy and practice should account for refugees’ agency by creating room for flexible return approaches that best fit refugees’ specific context and return strategies. Rather than being pre-occupied with the question ‘how do refugees return home’ repatriation discourse should be informed directly by asking the question ‘why do refugees return home’.

Based on the application of the extended TORA as presented in this chapter some of its strengths as a potential exploratory model are:

- It provides for an actor oriented reading of return and repatriation issues
- It does so in a participative way by building upon the solicitation of modal salient return beliefs and expectations of home as well as the salient social referents acquired during the TORA’s first stage implementation

- It provides for a structured approach to capture important elements of displaced peoples belief domains and cognitive constructs informing return decisions
- It explains the dynamic nature of return beliefs and issues influentially informing displaced people's return decision-making
- It highlights the nature of vulnerability associated with return.

The refugee study suggests furthermore that by employing the extended TORA as an exploratory model its descriptive utility generates findings that may be helpful in a number of ways. To mention some of the evident ones in line with the study findings:

- Informing decisions about humanitarian assistance and reintegration support by taking into account refugees' influential return beliefs and expectations of home
- Contributing to improved management of return dynamics along the nexus spontaneous- to organised-repatriation by mapping out return strategies that reflect refugees' different backgrounds and specific return contexts
- Enhancing community-based responses in support of sustainable returns
- Setting criteria to adhere to the principle of voluntary return by highlighting critical return issues, notably in the safety and security domain
- Calling attention to the role of information exchange and correspondence via influential referents, to ensure that social influences and pressures are directed and supportive of voluntary return.

The following chapter will look into more detail at the descriptive use of the extended TORA model with particular focus on the use of the Perceived Vulnerability variable.

Photographs Refugee Study



A group of Uduk (Kwanim Pa) seeking refuge in Sherkolle camp in February 2001 because their home village came under attack of Government of Sudan forces.



Sharing the horror of war and subsequent displacement by Dinka refugees in Fugnido camp (October 2002).



Food aid and services such as health care and education are provided in the refugee camps. That is not to say that life is easy. Refugees mention food, water shortages and tensions with local communities living in the vicinity of the camps as major challenges.



For most children, both boys and girls, the camp provides access to schooling for the first time ever. Education is highly valued by the parents and much enjoyed by the children.



Celebrating World Refugee Day by Uduk women in Bonga refugee camp. Each year on the 20th of June UNHCR ‘salutes the indomitable spirit and courage of the world’s refugees, giving them the encouragement, support and respect they deserve’



Hanna in front of her tukul in Sherkolle refugee camp (October 2003). ‘This is the baby of my daughter Teenah Teenah was killed when she fled her village ..’. ‘Only when peace really has come will I return’.



Contemplating return home (January 2006) Malual realises it won't be an easy ride:
'People are fighting themselves in Upper Nile, it's too dangerous to go back right now'



Displaced Nuer from Makuec have set up shelter along the Baro river in Ethiopia (November, 2004). Though they claim to stay in *'no one's land'* their presence is likely to raise serious tensions and conflict with both Anyuak and Nuer in the area.

7. Nuer and Anyuak Return and the Nature of Vulnerability

In chapter six it was demonstrated that different segments of the Sudanese refugee population in western Ethiopia express significantly different intentions to return. For example, differences in ethnic background, area of origin, the critical event initiating flight, and displacement history, proved to be highly relevant in terms of return intent and ultimately return behaviour itself. Chapter six also demonstrated that such differences are influenced by various beliefs informing the Stated Attitude towards return, Subjective Norm, Perceived Level of Control and Perceived Vulnerability.

This chapter aims to illustrate that the descriptive use of the extended TORA can be an important tool in further analysing return strategies of particular household categories. Emphasis will be given to refugees' own meaning of vulnerability, to enquire into the usefulness of the Perceived Vulnerability determinant as an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action suggested by this study. The return planning of two particular ethnic groups, the Nuer and Anyuak, are compared. Which influential beliefs underpin their intention to return? Do these reflect the local context and complexities presented by particular return areas? If so, is current repatriation policy and practice taking into account these critically important return beliefs, e.g. in determining the voluntary nature of return or wider repatriation challenges? If not, can or should repatriation discourse be made responsive to critical return beliefs as a directive element in a more targeted response by the international community?

Chapter seven is organised in seven sections. The first section introduces the various return arenas. This is followed by a more focused context analysis of one such return arena, the Gambella ~ Eastern Upper Nile cluster. Against this background the antecedents of return intentions will be compared between the Nuer and the Anyuak hosted in Fugnido camp. Section three looks at the general level to which both ethnic groups plan to return, inclusive of the influential return beliefs and expectations informing their return decision. Section four focuses on the Perceived Vulnerability variable, and compares the dynamics over the three return options. Section five presents the return antecedents for the return option 'peace'. Rather than utilising the key modal outcome beliefs in exploring return intent, as in the earlier sections of this chapter, the full set of seventy outcome beliefs is utilised to allow for a concise explanation of Nuer and Anyuak return. The nature of vulnerability inherent in return when there is 'peace' will be discussed in section six. An appropriate choice since the international community typically pursues voluntary repatriation following the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement. The last section presents a short discussion.

7.1. Return Arena's and Corridors

Due to natural obstacles and existing infrastructure, such as trade routes, Sudanese displacement into Ethiopia took place along several corridors. A proportionally high percentage of the population living close to the border were displaced into Ethiopia, compared with the far fewer uprooted people from more central locations in southern Sudan. Fighting on Sudanese territory along the Ethio-Sudanese border has been notably heavy as the SPLA and other Khartoum opposition forces had particular interest in controlling such areas. Not least in securing access to resources of countries sympathetic to their cause. Such as the former Derg government in Ethiopia to the SPLA and, more recently, Eritrea to the SPLA and other Government of Sudan and –Ethiopia opposition groups.

In terms of conflict and displacement dynamics, two main corridors linking the camps hosting Sudanese refugees with return areas just across the border or deeper into Sudanese territory can be distinguished (figure 5.1). The first one is the Gambella – Eastern Upper Nile and Jonglei area with the important border towns of Pochalla, Akobo and Jikow, and the town of Nasir in Eastern Upper Nile. The second major return arena is the Benishangul-Gumuz ~ Southern Blue Nile cluster with the important border towns of Kurmuk and Gizen.

The Gambella ~ Eastern Upper Nile Cluster

As we have seen in chapter five the Gambella ~ Eastern Upper Nile region is a politically and militarily highly charged area with important economic interests (oil and gold deposits). The corridor stretching from Gambella in Ethiopia to Nasir and Akobo in the Sudan is a sensitive area which has long experienced cross-border conflict and displacement. The name Gambella itself holds deep associations with Sudan's civil conflicts for both the pre-1972 Anya-Nya and the more recent post 1983 SPLA period.

Gambella Region is home to both Nuer and Anyuak, two major ethnic groups with strong associations with the Sudan. The Nuer predominantly reside in Sudan but have significant numbers in the Gambella area. The majority of the Anyuak reside in Ethiopia. After the peace agreement the home areas of both refugee groups will be administered by southern Sudan. However a latent potential for north-south conflict will remain in place as the Khartoum government, under the conditions set out as part of the comprehensive peace agreement, will be able to maintain links with pro-Khartoum groups in the area (e.g. former militias receiving support from the GoS and now being integrated in the South Sudan Defence Force aligned with Khartoum). The potential for south-south conflict is real, with a series of reported clashes between Anyuak and Nuers in the area. The Nuers are also plagued by intra-ethnic conflict amongst themselves, notably so in this sensitive border area. The area has not been under firm control of a central legitimate government, neither from the Ethiopian nor Sudanese side. Gambella, itself home to three of the five Sudanese refugee camps on Ethiopian territory, has experienced serious conflict and fighting mainly between the Anyuak and Ethiopian government forces in the period 2003-2004.

The Benishangul-Gumuz ~ Southern Blue Nile Cluster

Ethiopia's Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, home to Sherkolle and Yarenga refugee camps, has seen rather sporadic violent incidents. At the turn of the millennium the GoS waged major military operations in the area to challenge the steady advance of the SPLA in the Southern Blue Nile region. Heavy fighting and indiscriminate killing, including helicopter gunships shooting at fleeing villagers, led to significant displacements in 2001/2 (see box 5.1 and 5.2).

The home areas of the Uduk, Mabaan and the Funj are found in Sudan's Southern Blue Nile region. The Uduks have experienced a long history of displacement (most fled their home area in 1987) as they inhabit an area contested by both northern and southern Sudan (see box 5.3). Mabaan displacement took place more recently. The SPLA consolidated its grip on the southern parts of the Southern Blue Nile region, including the home area of the Uduk and part of the area inhabited by the Mabaan and Funj. Unlike the Uduk and Mabaan the Funj identify themselves ethnically and culturally with the north. Their home areas have seen heavy fighting, with war raging between the SPLA and GoS. Probably in no other part of Sudan's conflict zones this fighting has led to a stalemate, pitting SPLA and GoS against each other backed up by tanks and other heavy military equipment. If the current peace settlement starts to unravel the potential for north-south conflict in the home areas of the Uduk, Mabaan and the Funj is real.

The status of Southern Blue Nile has been disputed for a long time and, together with the status of Nuba Mountains and Abyei, was a crucial issue during the final peace negotiations. Though Abyei was granted an independent status with its citizens voting to be administered by either the north or south by the end of the interim period, Southern Blue Nile and Nuba Mountains will remain part of northern Sudan. Regarding the division of power between the national Khartoum based government and the Blue Nile State government, the latter has been granted significant powers.

Return Planning

Generally, the level to which refugees intend to return may, or may not, appear to differ considerably, as can be demonstrated by looking at the antecedents of return intent for the return option 'peace'. The Nuer and Anyuak hosted in Fugnido refugee camp express no significant difference in return intent and the values of its four determinants (except for the somewhat higher level of control over the return process expressed by the Anyuak: $p < 0.05$; see appendix 7.1). The Uduk and Funj refugees, hosted in Sherkolle refugee camp in the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, express significant differences in both intent to return and its four determinants (respective values for return when there is 'peace' 1.64 and 0.33 for Uduk and Funj respectively: appendix 7.1). When comparing Nuer with Anyuak, and Uduk with the Funj refugees, there are very different attitudes regarding most return beliefs and expectations of home (appendix 7.1, 'Outcome Attitudes').

This case study aims to demonstrate the descriptive use of the extended TORA model with particular emphasis on the potential role of the Perceived Vulnerability utility. With this, return antecedents of Nuer and Anyuak refugees will be explored, antecedents which at first glance do not seem to differ much. Both groups of refugees are hosted in Fugnido refugee camp in southwestern Gambella not far

from the Ethio-Sudanese border. The home areas of both groups are found in Eastern Upper Nile and Jonglei.

7.2. Context Analysis of Displacement Dynamics in the Gambella ~ Eastern Upper Nile Cluster

Both Gambella as well as Eastern Upper Nile experience conflict and unrest, notably so in the Ethio-Sudanese border area. The conflict in the area has its roots in Sudan's long running civil war and local military-political dynamics of the sub-region. Governing structures are weak, exacerbating the conflict. Lack of formal administration or control over the border area aggravates the situation. Events in the Sudan spill into Ethiopia destabilising the area and vice versa.

Animosity between Anyuak and Nuer

Gambella is home to both the Nuer and Anyuak, two of the major ethnic groups in the area with strong associations to the Sudan. The Nuer predominantly reside in the Sudan but have significant numbers in the Gambella area, mostly the Gajaak clan of the Eastern Jikany. The majority of the Anyuak reside in Ethiopia. Unlike the Anyuak, Nuer allegiances tend to be devoted to their ethnic nationality more than to their actual citizenship. Gambella hosted over 50,000 refugees in 2002. Dimma and Fugnido refugee camps provided 'care and maintenance' for over 23,000 Nuer and around 7,500 Anyuak refugees.

Migration

Both the Nuer and the Anyuak have a history of migration. Anyuak oral history recounts that in the eighteenth century they entered their present territory from the southwest. During their nineteenth century migration eastward across the White Nile, the eastern Jikany Nuer assimilated large numbers of Dinka and Anyuak on their way (Hutchingson, 1996). The Nuer are thought to have settled on Ethiopian territory as of the end of the 19th century⁸⁶.

Following the conquest of the area by Menelik II the Gambella region was brought into the Ethiopian empire at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. It was more formally incorporated into the Ethiopian State after the boundary agreement between British colonial Sudan and imperial Ethiopia in 1902. In the 1930s the Abyssinian administration began to consolidate its hold of the region by proclaiming its right to tax its inhabitants. With the establishment of the Ethiopian border, the territory inhabited by the Anyuak was divided into two. Traditionally the Anyuak Kingdom was predominantly established in the western part of the area inhabited by the Anyuaks (the Sudanese side) and to a lesser extent to its periphery in the east (current day Ethiopian territory)⁸⁷.

Arms and Territorial Expansion

The Anyuak were uniquely positioned on an important trade route linking the Abyssinian highlands with the peoples of the Nile basin. Acquiring firearms from the Abyssinians, the Anyuak fielded a strong rifle force in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Being unparalleled in strength

compared with its neighbouring peoples to the west enabled the Anyuak to challenge the eastward expansion of the Nuer into Anyuak territory (source: key informant interviews). Interestingly, Hutchingson (1996) reports that setbacks at the hands of the better armed Anyuak during the early 1910s motivated the eastern Gajaak to seek a reliable source of guns. As early as 1912 the British reported a burgeoning Gaajak ivory/Oromo guntrade with well-established meeting points and routes of traffic.

The eastward expansion of the Jikany Nuer led to series of violent clashes with the Anyuaks losing a significant territory over time. E.g. after their defeat at a place known as 'Beet' the Anyuak had to vacate the area, and when the Nuer took over the place was renamed Nasir. Today Nasir is a town deep into Nuer territory. When asked if the historic threat posed by the Nuer is real, most middle aged and older Anyuak will recall an old war song used by the Nuer to ready themselves to fight the Anyuak: *'The Anyuak people will urinate under the hill of Agaak'*⁸⁸. Younger Anyuak will simply mention the area recently lost to the Nuer and the threat of large numbers of Nuer moving in as refugees or settling as 'Ethiopians' in western Gambella.

Civil War in Sudan, Unrest in Ethiopia

The socialist government of Mengistu (1975-1991) granted access to the Southern Sudan Liberation Army providing them with military assistance. Large training camps were established on Ethiopian territory⁸⁹, often leading to strong resentment amongst the local population. So strong was the Derg's support for the SPLA that they formed the de facto administration in the area. The majority of the SPLA fighters trained and equipped in Gambella were Nuers, which by itself was regarded by the Anyuaks as a threat towards their relative sovereignty. With the escalating conflict in the Sudan hundreds of thousands of southern Sudanese found refuge in camps on Ethiopian territory. With the underlying tensions growing this provided a breeding ground for clashes, between the mostly Nuer refugees⁹⁰ and the Anyuaks living in the vicinity of the camps. Disputes over access and control over increasingly scarce resources, such as dry season grazing grounds, water sources and areas suitable for the cultivation of maize and sorghum turned violent on many occasions.

A series of fatal incidents in 1989 added to the resentment amongst the Anyuak regarding the unabated influx of Nuer. Anyuak villages were attacked near Itang, Akado and Fugnido. The attacks by SPLA soldiers caused the death of hundreds, most innocent Anyuaks. Since the incidents happened within a one-day's interval of each other the Anyuaks started to wonder what was behind the attacks⁹¹. The common understanding amongst Anyuak to this day is that the attacks were a deliberate and well-orchestrated effort by the Nuer to push the Anyuak out of the area. This, so the Anyuak reason, was with the intention of taking over Anyuak land, as at the time the war raging across the border in Sudan did not go well for the SPLA.

With the Derg appointing a Nuer to head the Gambella regional administration the Anyuaks started an armed movement know as the Gambella People's Liberation Movement (GPLM). The aim of the movement was to challenge what was not only seen as Nuer domination over the Anyuak, but the very extinction of the Anyuak as a tribe. The movement also aimed to challenge the settlement of highlanders, pursued by the socialist government of Ethiopia, in the Anyuak heartland⁹². In the late eighties the GPLM entered into alliance with the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the

TPLF led Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) with the purpose of disposing the Mengistu government.

With the defeat of Mengistu's forces in Gambella, the GPLM was rewarded for their contribution by filling the power vacuum left by the retreat of the SPLA⁹³. Thus the Anyuaks regained political influence in the area. Fearing reprisals many of the Nuer who had settled in Gambella moved, temporarily, to the Sudan. Armed Anyuaks attacked and destroyed many of the resettlement villages causing the death of hundreds of highlanders, with thousands more fleeing to the Ethiopian highlands to seek safety.

Ethnic Federalism

With the Anyuaks in a favourite position to dominate politics in the area, the Nuer established the Gambella Peoples Democratic United Party (GPDUP) in 1992, to challenge Anyuak aspirations. The 1994 housing and population census established that not the Anyuak but the Nuer formed the majority in the Gambella area⁹⁴. The Nuers saw this outcome as underpinning their demands for a fairer representation and share of federal resources to develop the Akobo and Jikawo districts in eastern Gambella inhabited by them. The Anyuaks on the other hand strongly challenged the outcome of the census⁹⁵.

Since the introduction of the policy of ethnic federalism by the current Ethiopian government, Anyuaks and Nuers have been at loggerheads about political representation. Though the Anyuak claim to be the first major group of indigenous people inhabiting the area the policy dictates that ethnic groups be represented in line with their numerical presence. Hardline Anyuaks have taken an increasingly strong stand against what they see as loss of political influence in favour of the Nuers by stating that the Nuers are taking over Anyuak land. The Nuer on the other hand persistently claim that, in line with the policy, they are not only entitled to be more fairly represented in the regional government, but also deserve a higher percentage of federal resources flowing to the regional government.

In 1999 the Government of Ethiopia superimposed an umbrella party known as the Gambella People Democratic Front (GPDF) hoping to bring together the Anyuak and the Nuer in one united party. By that time the differences between the two groups were running deep and the dispute to fill the Nuer position of vice-president, which became vacant mid 2001, added to a tense stand-off between the two groups. The lack of trust in the new administrative set-up by the Anyuak, and increasingly in the federal government itself, further aggravated the situation. Hardline Anyuaks felt that their rights and interests would not be respected nor sufficiently guaranteed by the Ethiopian government.

This situation resulted in the formation of yet another opposition party by the Anyuaks (the Gambella People Democratic Congress). This dissatisfaction also resulted in efforts to set up armed opposition groups, with one of them loosely referred to as the Anyuak One movement. At one stage this movement sought independence from Ethiopia, in order to challenge the loss of territory inhabited by the Anyuak due to the continued Nuer eastward migration and resettlement policies of the GoE. The movement attracted Anyuak fighters dissatisfied with the SPLA (annoyed with Dinka hegemony of the movement and discouraged by the SPLA's lack of understanding and interest for the Anyuak

cause), demobilised soldiers following the Ethio-Eritrean war of 1998/9 and members of the already weakened GPLM.

As political tensions and intrigue increased on the regional agenda, the political elites mobilised the backing of their respective ethnic groups. Much needed development efforts in the area received little attention. As a result of this political deadlock, and the failure of the Gambella People Democratic Front, Ethiopia's ruling party interfered again in 2002 by establishing a new broader coalition party known as the Gambella People Democratic Movement⁹⁶. By then the rift between the Anyuak and the Nuer had become so deep that it needed only a spark to ignite an explosive situation.

Refugees becoming Involved in the Problem

In July 2002 a serious incident took place between Anyuaks and Nuers near the former site of Itang refugee camp⁹⁷. Many lives were lost, and with the Anyuaks being defeated village after village by a well armed and numerical much stronger Nuer force, they had to evacuate the area. The vacated villages were ransacked, looted and burned before Nuers moved in to settle and started to cultivate sorghum and maize on lands vacated by the Anyuak. After several months the displaced Anyuak communities were told, on several occasions, by the Ethiopian Government to return. Yet, on doing so they were met by armed Nuer inflicting yet more casualties amongst the Anyuak. The level of trust in the Ethiopian government amongst the Anyuak in general eroded even further, as the government seemed not only unable, but even unwilling to intervene on their behalf.

Following this major incident at Itang, Anyuak gunmen took revenge later that month by assassinating over thirty Nuer refugees travelling by bus from Gambella town to Fugnido. Insecurity around the refugee camps, notably Fugnido, increased, with regular shootings and stabbings claiming the lives of Nuer, Anyuak and other refugees. Tensions in Fugnido refugee camp between Nuer and Anyuak quickly escalated. Later that same year Anyuak gunmen attacked Fugnido camp killing over thirty Dinka refugees. The Anyuak refugees left for local villages in the area, the vacated Dinka and Anyuak villages in the camps were looted by Nuer refugees.

The killing in December 2003 of eight Ethiopian government employees working with the Administration of Refugee and Returnee Affairs, sparked a killing spree across Gambella⁹⁸. In the days and months following the ambush over a thousand people were killed. High levels of insecurity, notably around the refugee camps and settlement sites, prevailed throughout 2004.

Conflict Amongst the Nuer, Subsequent Displacement and Anyuak Resentment

Intra-communal conflict amongst the Nuer is common when compared with the Anyuak⁹⁹. Such conflict is exacerbated by a lack of effective governance in the border area, rendering it to the mercy of armed militias, resistance movements, and armed bands of robbers and criminals. Disputes, such as those regarding access and control over natural resources, long standing feuds or arguments over bride wealth can easily spin out of control with firearms so freely available.

Nuer Displacement and Anyuak Resentment

Clashes in the border area between warring factions and militias resulted in the displacement of many Nuer, both inside Sudan as well as across the border into Ethiopian territory. In the latter case displaced Nuer communities have often settled in what they regard as no-man's land, the territory between existing Nuer settlements and the area inhabited by the Anyuak. Experience teaches that it is only a matter of time before disputes start between the cattle rearing Nuer and the more agricultural oriented Anyuak. Such disputes easily lead to armed conflict with the numerically stronger and better equipped Nuer defeating the Anyuak.

In January 2002 the Ethiopian Patriotic Front (a Nuer faction headed by the former Nuer governor of Gambella during the Derg era), fighting for more influence in the Gambella region, attacked Ethiopia's Akobo district bordering the Sudan. Nuers fleeing from the area settled amongst Nuer communities in Jikawo and Itang districts. Early in 2004 an armed incursion by the Lou Nuer led to the displacement of a further 12,000 Nuers from Akobo district into Jikawo, Itang and Gambella district itself¹⁰⁰. In the latter district they settled close to displaced Anyuak, who were pushed out of Itang town during the Nuer-Anyuak confrontation mid 2002. The incursion led to the occupation of seven to ten kebeles (administrative unit at ward or neighbourhood level) by Lou Nuer from the Sudan¹⁰¹.

As is often the case, disputes start small but quickly gather momentum to erupt into major conflict. This accounts for the recent Lou Nuer intrusion. Lou Nuer from the Sudan used to travel to Gambella to market cattle, buy food and goods in return, or visit friends and relatives. They used to do so by carrying their guns. Early in 2004 a group of Lou were forced to hand in their weapons to regional policemen in Akobo district. Initially refusing to give up their weapons, they gave in to the demands when promised that their weapons would be given back upon their return from Gambella. It seems that, in order for the weapons to be returned, a small amount of money was demanded. The Lou crossed the border and came back with some cattle and money, with which they retrieved their guns. Later, Lou Nuer militias returned in greater numbers to retaliate, by attacking and destroying the villages in the area¹⁰².

The war in the Sudan has provoked a tremendous dispersion of the Nuer population, both within and beyond their pre-war territories (Hutchingson, 1996). Internal displacements caused by the border dynamics create serious tensions and induces conflict along the Baro river system deep into Ethiopian territory, with its fertile soils and dry season grazing areas. Displacements in the volatile border area lead to high population densities in areas such as Itang and even Gambella town, which in turn leads to increased competition over scarce resources. As mobility is reduced because of insecurity, part of the livelihoods mechanisms utilised in times of food shortages and distress come under pressure. Shortage of food and good quality drinking water is commonly ranked as a priority need by Anyuak and Nuer communities, both the displaced as well as settled. A breakdown of the ability of reconciliation, as a result of loss of authority of traditional chiefs and elders in frontier areas, has led to an increase in migration itself¹⁰³. Settling in no-man's land inevitably leads to encroachment onto lands claimed by others, raising the prospect of disputes and conflicts. The case of the Nuer displaced communities settling on the northern bank of the Baro river between Itang and Gambella is a case in point.

Disputes and conflicts between the various Nuer subsections regarding access to dry season grazing grounds, essential water sources for cattle, and cattle raiding¹⁰⁴ are common. Apart from being exacerbated by insecurity in the border area development programmes in Ethiopia are blamed by the Nuer to have added to the tensions. Nuer living in the Akobo district of western Gambella blame the construction of a dam in the Alero river in central Gambella (as part of the Derg's development policies in the Gambella area) for increased conflict and insecurity in their district, particularly during the dry season when water resources for their cattle run critically scarce¹⁰⁵.

Absence of Effective Government Exacerbates Conflict

The border area itself is characterised by a lack of effective governance at both sides of the border. Since its establishment in 1991 the current Ethiopian government has not been in control of most of its national borders in the Gambella region. The GoE acknowledges that the Akobo district is not peaceful. One of the reasons given by them is that the area is in-accessible part of the year due to its many rivers and extensive marshlands. Forests in the border area are said to further complicate efforts to control the border. Because of insecurity basic services such as health care, education and banking services are not established. As a result of the military campaign, following the regional disturbances initiated by the December 2003 ambush on the eight Ethiopian government refugee workers, the Ethiopian government came to control part of the border area, notably in the Gilo district¹⁰⁶.

Ethiopia's border agreement signed with the GoS (including security and cross border trade arrangements) does not include its borders with the Sudan controlled by the SPLA or other factions. The comprehensive peace agreement signed between GoS and the SPLM/A is likely to change this. So far, according to the federal government sources, the Gambella regional government seems to be unwilling or unable to work out an agreement with the SPLM/A in the border area (the difficult Anyuak-SPLM/A relationship is not helpful in this respect). The absence of effective border regulations endanger the border populations and internal displacements caused by the border dynamics create serious tensions and often result in conflict in the Baro river valley including Gambella town. Such displacements also exacerbate the regular disputes and conflicts between the various Nuer subsections regarding cattle raiding, access to dry season cultivation, grazing areas and water. Since it is the responsibility of the Sudan and Ethiopian governments to maintain peace and stability in the border areas, the regional government wants the federal government to take immediate action regarding the border issue. The presence of large numbers of recently displaced Nuer adds a further complication to a peaceful resolution of the 2002 conflict. As long as the government is not breaking this stalemate, and fails to address the root causes of the recent displacement, it seems to be a matter of time before serious conflict will erupt again between the Anyuaks and Nuer.

7.3. Antecedents of Nuer and Anyuak General Return

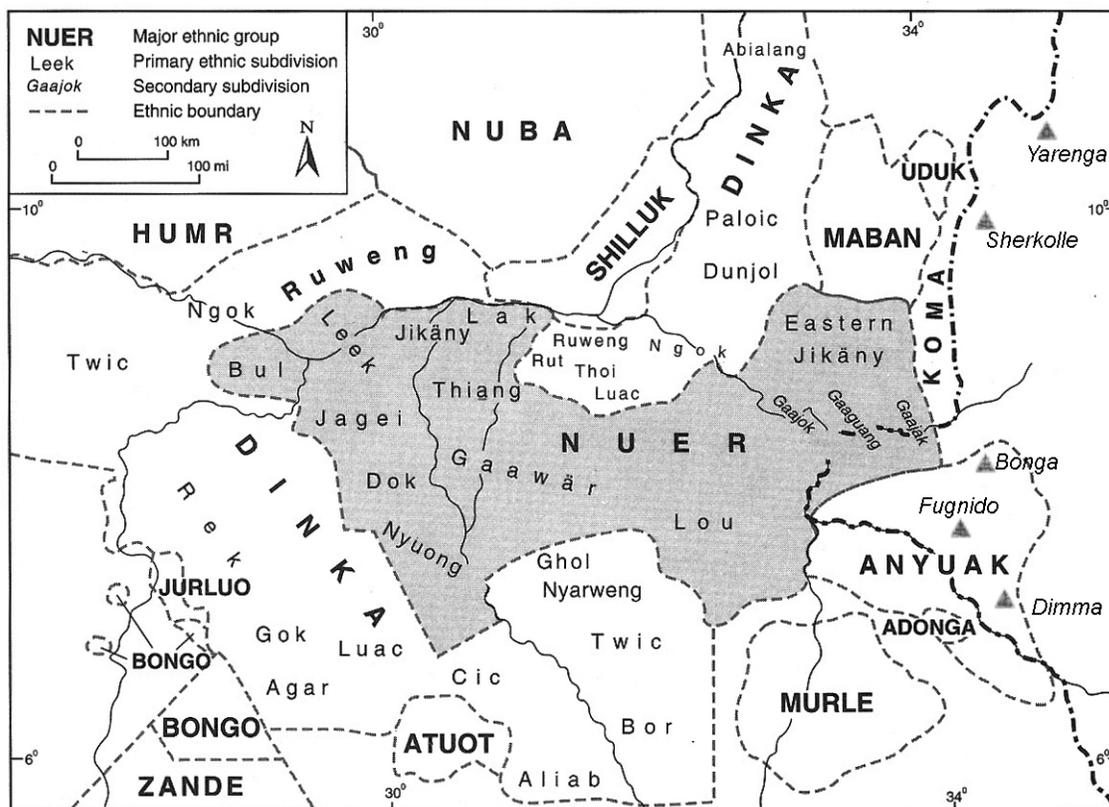
Characteristics of the Sample

The interviewed Anyuak and Nuer household heads represent the wider Anyuak and Nuer refugee populations in Fugnido refugee camp. Because of its smaller number in the camp, the Anyuak sample

better represents the overall Anyuak caseload¹⁰⁷. The area of return for Anyuak refugees is across the border. Prospective areas of return for their Nuer counterparts are found to the northeast of Fugnido refugee camp and extent deep into central southern Sudan (see figure 7.1). The Nuer sample is therefore likely to reflect more diverse return arenas.

Figure 7.1 Territories of Nuer and Anyuak in Eastern Upper Nile Region

(after Hutchinson, 1996: location refugee camps on Ethiopian territory added, from north to south: Yarenga, Sherkolle, Bonga, Fugnido and Dimma)



Both Anyuak and Nuer households mention war to be the prominent reason for their flight. The type of conflict posing the biggest threat towards life in the Sudan is the conflict between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A. Three percent of the Nuer household heads mention inter tribal conflict as presenting the main challenge compared with over eight percent of the Anyuak households.

A higher percentage of the Anyuak refugee households is headed or represented by females as compared with Nuer households. This is explained as a relatively large proportion of the Anyuak household heads are either divorced, widowed or abandoned (30% for the Anyuak and 11% for the

Nuer household heads). In terms of household composition the number of boys and men is twice that of girls and women in the respective age categories for Nuer households.

The majority of Anyuak households indicated that they had fled directly from their home village to Fugnido camp, compared with around a third of the Nuer households. Nuer households have experienced longer flight histories.

Not only did all Anyuak household heads indicate that they have family or kin living in the Sudan, knowledge about their whereabouts is high, with most household heads having received news from them over a two-year period prior to the assessment (94% of the households). Though the majority of Nuer households indicated to have family and kin in the Sudan, knowledge about their whereabouts is considerably lower. Only forty percent of Nuer household heads received news from family and kin in the two-year period prior to the survey.

For both Nuer and Anyuak households the prominent benefit associated with their refugee status are receiving (free) food, access to education and a chance for resettlement to a third country (America, Canada or Australia). Access to education is regarded by over half the Anyuak households as the major benefit. In terms of challenges, water shortages and restrictions on movements are the most commonly mentioned both by Anyuak and Nuer. Furthermore Nuer household heads indicate tensions with the local Anyuak living in villages in the vicinity of the camp, Anyuaks state a poor security situation in general as a prominent challenge.

A majority of the Nuer households have been refugees during the Derg era in Itang, Fugnido or Dimma refugee camp. Almost half of the Nuer refugees have had an experience of displacement prior to crossing the border to claim refugee status. These percentages are much lower for Anyuak households. Less than twenty percent of the households had been granted refugee status during the Derg era or indicated to have been internally displaced before claiming refugee status in Fugnido camp.

Influential General Return Beliefs and Expectations

The mean general return intentions (the sum of the three return options) for both Nuer and Anyuak are somewhere between neutral to strong, but do not differ significantly from a statistical point of view (mean values of 1.31 and 1.38 on a scale –6 very weak to +6 very strong intent to return; Mann-Whitney test: see appendix 6.4.3). Also the differences in return intent for the three return options do not differ significantly between the two tribes. Though the general intentions to return are in the same order, the Nuer and Anyuak are sensitive towards different sets of beliefs affecting a change in intent, and thus return behaviour itself (Stated Attitude is strongly and significantly correlated with return Intent for both groups). On comparing the beliefs which influentially inform the level to which both groups plan to return, striking differences appear. For this comparison, the key modal outcome beliefs that represent the various attitudinal domains of return behaviour, in line with the clustering process, have been used (see section 6.6).

For the Nuer, the most influential beliefs acting as barriers towards general return intent are in decreasing order of their influence on the return decision (Spearman correlation coefficients in brackets):

- Will be arrested (.411)
- Can not rely on traditional ways of peace making (.389) * ¹⁰⁸
- Will be repeatedly displacement (.335)
- Large household is not helpful to become food secure (.335) *
- Our children will be abducted (.280)
- Insecurity makes it difficult to have enough to eat (.271)
- Not food secure in a short period of time (.262) *
- Will not (be able to) care for those without family support (.242) *
- Face hardship and difficulties (.236)

The one influential return belief acting as a driver towards return is ‘*having religious freedom*’ (.424). Table 7.1 presents an overview.

For the Anyuak the most influential belief forming a blockage towards return is facing hardship and difficulties (0.546). The other influential outcome attitudes are all drivers towards return:

- Can rely on traditional ways of peace making (.471)
- Food secure in short period of time (.458)
- Return to my home village (.391)
- Large household helps to become food secure (.332)
- Children’s education means a better future (.280)
- Care for those without family support (.277)

For Nuer refugees the general level to return is predominantly informed by beliefs acting as barriers towards return, notably those in the safety and security domain. The level to which Anyuak households plan to return is informed by Outcome Attitudes that pre-dominantly act as drivers towards return.

7.4. Perceived Vulnerability

Emotive Readings for the Return Options

Vulnerability

Readings for the Perceived Vulnerability variable are expressed as a Vulnerability measure having a range indicating high vulnerability at the one end to high resilience at the other. Nuer and Anyuak household heads express neutral values for the Vulnerability measure regarding general return intent

Table 7.1 Influential (Clustered) Return Beliefs regarding General Return Intent of Nuer and Anyuak Households (Spearman's rho)

	Whole Sample n=651	Nuer n=90	Anyuak n=69
General intention to return (scale -6 'very weak' to +6 'very strong' -->	0,96	1,31	1,38
Cluster Representative Outcome Belief Statements			
Safety and Security Domain			
Face hardship and difficulties (v36)	.284(**)	.236(*)	.546(**)
Will be arrested (v71)	.252(**)	.411(**)	
Will be repeatedly displaced (v10)	.280(**)	.335(**)	
Our children will be abducted (v16)	.282(**)	.280(**)	
Will be conscripted into an armed group (v58)	.333(**)		
Health Domain			
No modern health care services provided (v61)	.244(**)		
Use of natural medicine is cheaper than modern ones (v15)	.138(**)		
Educational Domain			
Our children will not have access to schooling (v41)	.241(**)		
Children's education means a better future (v65)	.125(**)		.280(*)
Food Security Domain			
Insecurity makes it difficult to have enough to eat (v64)	.211(**)	.271(*)	
Food-secure within a short period of time (< half a year) (v12)	.244(**)	-.262(*)	.458(**)
Collect and consume wild foods to survive (v37)	.222(**)		
Large household helps to become food secure (v1)	.209(**)	-.335(**)	.332(**)
Mode of Return Domain			
To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation (v70)	-.240(**)		
Peace making Domain			
Can rely on traditional ways of peacemaking (v13)	.231(**)	-.389(**)	.471(**)
Have religious freedom (v44)	.190(**)	.424(**)	
Peace Spoiler Domain			
Will be difficult to have good governance (v33)	.180(**)		
Cultural Domain			
Return to my home village (v14)	.195(**)		.391(**)
Process of Change Domain			
Will be different from those that stayed behind (v19)	.143(**)		
Support System Domain			
Extended family helps one to cope in times of hardship (v56)	.146(**)		
Care for those without family support(v31)	.153(**)	-.242(*)	.277(*)
Aid Domain			
Loss of chance for resettlement in western country (v57)	.220(**)		
Aid, if provided, best distributed by own leaders (v54)	.174(**)		

Shaded return beliefs are of the barrier type

*, ** denote significance (p) at the 0.05 and 0.01 level respectively (2-tailed)

(values of 0.27 and 3.24 on a scale of -12 'vulnerability' to +12 'resilience': table 7.2). The Anyuak express a significantly higher level of resilience (p 0.000) when compared with the Nuer.

Regarding the one-year return option, Anyuak refugee households express a significantly lower level of vulnerability (that is they express a higher value on the Vulnerability measure scale) than their Nuer counterparts (p 0.003). For the three-year return option the Nuer express vulnerability, the Anyuak an ambivalent resilience (p 0.000). Regarding the return option 'peace' both Nuer and Anyuak show a strong to very strong resilience (values of 3.22 and 2.82 on a scale of -4 'vulnerability' to +4 'resilience': table 7.2).

The Perception of Risk and Coping Capability

The Perceived Vulnerability reading is obtained by enquiring into the level of risk associated with return as matched by the ability to manage that risk (see appendix 6.1).

Table 7.2 Comparison of Perceived Vulnerability, Risk and Coping Readings for Nuer and Anyuak regarding General Return and the Return Options (Mann-Whitney tests)

	Nuer	Anyuak	MW Sig.
General Vulnerability (scale -12 'very vulnerable' to +12 'very resilient')	0.27	3.24	***
return within 1 year (scale -4 'very vulnerable' to +4 'very resilient')	-1.58	-0.48	**
return within 3 years	-1.35	0.90	***
return when 'peace'	3.22	2.82	ns
General Risk Reading (scale -6 'very great' to +6 'very small')	0.11	1.45	***
return within 1 year (scale -2 'very great' to +2 'very small')	-0.88	-0.43	*
return within 3 years	-0.74	0.43	***
return when 'peace'	1.76	1.45	**
General Coping Reading (scale -6 'very small' to +6 'very great')	0.17	1.79	***
return within 1 year (scale -2 'very small' to +2 'very great')	-0.70	-0.04	***
return within 3 years	-0.60	0.46	***
return when 'peace'	1.47	1.37	ns

*, ** and *** denote significance (p) at the .05, .01 and .001 level (2-tailed) respectively; ns – non

The perception of risk mirrors the perceived seriousness of the problems encountered in the return process. In general, Anyuak refugees express a significantly smaller level of risk associated with return than their Nuer counterparts (values of 1.45 and 0.11 respectively: table 7.2). Nuer refugees expressed significantly higher perceptions of risk for the one and three year return options (p 0.027 and 0.000) but lower for the 'peace' option (p 0.002) when compared with the Anyuak.

Anyuak refugees express a significantly higher ability to cope with the risk associated with general return intention than do the Nuers (values of 1.79 and 0.17 respectively: table 7.2). Anyuak households expressed significantly higher perceptions of coping capability regarding the one and three

year return. Regarding the return option 'peace' Anyuak and Nuer express a coping capability in the same order or strength.

Regarding the return option 'peace' Nuer and Anyuak do not express significantly different levels in vulnerability, however the risk associated with return is perceived to be significantly higher by the Anyuak than for the Nuer (value of 1.45 for the Anyuak and 1.76 for the Nuer: table 7.2).

The Dynamic Nature of the Perceived Vulnerability Variable over the Return Options

By correlating the Perceived Vulnerability reading with the reasoned return beliefs and expectations of home, the general nature of vulnerability (the sum of the three return options) associated with return can be explored. For Nuer refugees the potential for disruption or harm is best informed by (only the six most influential clustered beliefs are presented in decreasing order of influence, in brackets the Spearman correlation co-efficients; table 7.3 provides the full data set):

1. Will be arrested (.581)
2. Not being food secure in a short period of time (less than six months) (0.531) * ¹⁰⁹
3. Our children will be abducted (.514)
4. Can not rely on traditional ways of peace making (0.508) *
5. Large household is not helpful to become food secure (.507) *
6. Insecurity makes it difficult to have enough to eat (.477)

In returning these beliefs represent areas where Nuers perceive the biggest risks to occur, which they are least likely to cope with.

For Anyuak refugees the general Perceived Vulnerability reading is most influentially informed by the following return beliefs and expectations of home in line with the clustering process (presented in decreasing order of influence, in brackets the Spearman correlation co-efficients):

1. Can rely on traditional ways of peace making (.578)
2. Return to my home village (.491)
3. Food security in a short period of time (.487)
4. Face hardship and difficulties (.472)
5. Children's education means a better future (.380)
6. Large household helps to become food secure (.356)

These are the beliefs that, in general, Anyuak refugees identify with taking risks in relation to the ability to cope with those risks.

Overall Nuer refugees identify the potential for disruption and harm in the return environment with beliefs found in the safety and security-, food security and peace making-domain. For Anyuak Perceived Vulnerability is informed by beliefs in the peace making-, cultural-, food security-, safety and security- and educational domain.

It appears that for both Nuer and Anyuak, most of the influential return beliefs that inform the general decision to return (see section 7.3) are identified with a profound vulnerability dimension. The key influential return beliefs affecting the level to which Nuer refugees plan their return reflect a strong pre-occupation with physical threats in the post return environment.

In exploring the nature of Perceived Vulnerability over the three return options some observations can be made. Regarding the Nuer refugees it appears that the nature of Perceived Vulnerability is informed by a relatively large number of attitudinal domains for the one and three year return option. For the return option ‘peace’ vulnerability is associated with beliefs in few domains only: safety and security-, peace making and aid-domain. Return beliefs in the safety and security domain express vulnerability for the one and three year return options, but resilience for return pursued when there is ‘peace’. Having religious freedom is informing the nature of vulnerability from the peace-making domain, it expresses resilience. Finally it appears that loss of the resettlement option is associated with vulnerability for the one and three years return option but with resilience for when there is ‘peace’. This possibly indicates that, from a vulnerability perspective, loss of the resettlement option when there is ‘peace’ is associated with a viable alternative, i.e. return to one’s home area.

In the case of the Anyuak the return beliefs and expectations of home associated with vulnerability remain the same, independent of the return option pursued. Interestingly the number of beliefs informing the Perceived Vulnerability reading increase when there is ‘peace’. Some of these express resilience, e.g. caring for those lacking family support. Others express vulnerability, e.g. abduction of children or loss of the resettlement option.

7.5. Return Antecedents When there is ‘Peace’

Using the Full Set of Return Beliefs and Expectations

In section 7.3 and 7.4 the key modal outcome beliefs, based on the clustering process, were used to explore the beliefs influentially informing the return decision, and to look into the dynamic nature of vulnerability across the three return options for both Nuer and Anyuak refugees. However, as the clustering process was based on the entire sample it represents the overall cognitive construct of the refugee community at large in informing the decision to return. As mentioned before, this cognitive construct is likely to show variations across particular household categories.

The clustering process itself is helpful in that it simplifies and demonstrates that the intent to return and, in this case perceived vulnerability, is influentially informed by particular return beliefs and expectations of home. In simplifying though, the clustering process leads to loss of information which may be of relevance when exploring the return intent of particular household categories to specific return situations: in this case Nuer and Anyuak return when there is ‘peace’. Therefore the full set of salient modal return beliefs is used in the following sections ¹¹⁰.

Table 7.3 Return Beliefs Informing the Nature of Perceived Vulnerability for Nuer and Anyuak Refugee Households Across the Return Options (Spearman’s rho)

	Nuer				Anyuak			
	General	1 year	3 years	peace	General	1 year	3 years	peace
Return Intent (a) -->>	1,31	-0,16	-0,23	1,7	1,38	-0,25	0,13	1,49
Cluster Representative Outcome Belief Statements								
Safety and Security Domain								
Face hardship and difficulties (v36)	.475(**)	.409(**)	.452(**)		.472(**)	.472(**)	.371(**)	.447(**)
Will be arrested (v71)	.581(**)	.436(**)	.645(**)	-.240(*)				-.246(*)
Will be repeatedly displaced (v10)		.496(**)	.435(**)	-.267(*)				
Our children will be abducted (v16)	.514(**)	.393(**)	.511(**)					.275(*)
Will be conscripted into an armed group (v58)				-.237(*)				
Health Domain								
No modern health care services provided (v61)	.372(**)	.348(**)	.322(**)					
Use of natural medicine is cheaper than modern ones (v15)								
Educational Domain								
Our children will not have access to schooling (v41)	.322(**)	.217(*)	.312(**)					
Children’s education means a better future (v65)					.380(**)	.389(**)	.335(**)	.294(*)
Food Security Domain								
Insecurity makes it difficult to have enough to eat (v64)	.477(**)	.324(**)	.491(**)					-.300(*)
Food-secure within a short period of time (< half a year) (v12)	-.531(**)	-.325(**)	-.559(**)		.487(**)	.449(**)	.404(**)	.505(**)
Collect and consume wild foods to survive (v37)								
Large household helps to become food secure (v1)	-.507(**)	-.373(**)	-.533(**)		.356(**)	.260(*)	.294(*)	.373(**)
Mode of Return Domain								
To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation (v70)				-.234(*)				
Peace making Domain								
Can rely on traditional ways of peacemaking (v13)	-.508(**)	-.439(**)	-.487(**)		.578(**)	.530(**)	.470(**)	.579(**)
Have religious freedom (v44)	.471(**)	.333(**)	.384(**)	.247(*)				
Peace Spoiler Domain								
Will be difficult to have good governance (v33)	.305(**)	.303(**)	.297(**)					
Cultural Domain								
Return to my home village (v14)	-.390(**)	-.324(**)	-.313(**)		.491(**)	.466(**)	.302(*)	.489(**)
Process of Change Domain								
Will be different from those that stayed behind (v19)	-.338(**)		-.488(**)					
Support System Domain								
Extended family helps one to cope in times of hardship (v56)								
Care for those without family support(v31)								.457(**)
Aid Domain								
Loss of chance for resettlement in western country (v57)	.258(*)	.238(*)	.332(**)	-.253(*)				.244(*)
Aid, if provided, best distributed by own leaders (v54)				-.212(*)				

Shaded beliefs are of barrier type

*, ** denote significance (p) at the 0.05 and 0.01 level (2-tailed) respectively

(a) scale 'general return intent' -6 'very weak' to +6 'very strong'; for return options scale range -2 to +2)

Antecedents of Return Intent for the ‘Peace’ Return Option

The intention to undertake a particular behaviour is considered a reliable indicator of future behaviour if Stated Attitude or Stated Subjective Norm strongly and significantly correlates with return Intent. For the return option ‘peace’ both Nuer and Anyuak record a significant correlation between Stated Attitude and return Intent (a correlation co-efficient of .347 for the Nuer and .753 for the Anyuak).

Figure 7.2 and 7.3 provide an overview of Nuer and Anyuak return antecedents for the return option ‘peace’ (appendix 7.2 provides a more detailed comparative overview; appendix 7.3. shows the relative importance of all salient belief outcomes in informing Nuer and Anyuak return intent).

All four determinants of return intent are significantly correlated with intention for both Nuer and Anyuak (figure 7.2 and 7.3). However the Perceived Vulnerability reading for Nuer refugees records a modest correlation co-efficient of -.219 (at p 0.05 level). It appears that the determinants read the intention to a higher degree for the Anyuaks.

When there is ‘peace’ a total of nine return beliefs are found influential in affecting the level to which Nuer households plan to return, for the Anyuak it is a total of twenty-two (figure 7.2 and 7.3; appendix 7.2 and 7.3). Nuer refugees are under pressure from the Ethiopian government and recent arrivals from the Sudan when deciding return. Anyuak receive pressure from their parents.

It is noteworthy that both Nuer and Anyuak households express sensitivity towards return beliefs and expectations associated with volatile environments for the return option ‘peace’. For the Nuer these are ‘being afraid of hostile tribes’ and the ‘abundance of small firearms makes it difficult to achieve lasting peace’ (figure 7.2). For the Anyuak ‘will face repeated displacements’ and ‘abduction of children’ (figure 7.3). It appears that ‘peace’ itself is not perceived as a situation characterised by the absence of physical insecurity.

It is therefore interesting to explore to what extent Nuer and Anyuak refugee households weigh up vulnerability associated with return when deciding to settle in areas of return. How do they perceive the risks involved in returning, and the level to which they perceive they are able to cope with that risk when deciding return.

7.6. The Nature of Vulnerability When There is ‘Peace’

Gearing Return Strategies from a Vulnerability Perspective: Risk Reduction or Increased Coping Capability?

The Perceived Vulnerability determinant is significantly correlated with stated return Intent for both Nuer and Anyuak refugees (p values of 0.038 and 0.000 respectively, figure 7.2 and 7.3). Vulnerability therefore is a dimension influentially associated with the decision to return regarding the return option ‘peace’. For the Nuer that influence is exercised via the coping capability aspect

Figure 7.2 Antecedents of Nuer Return Intent when there is ‘Peace’

- Shaded attitudes are acting as barriers
- r_s Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficients
- Degree of significance (* p at .05 level; ** p at .01)

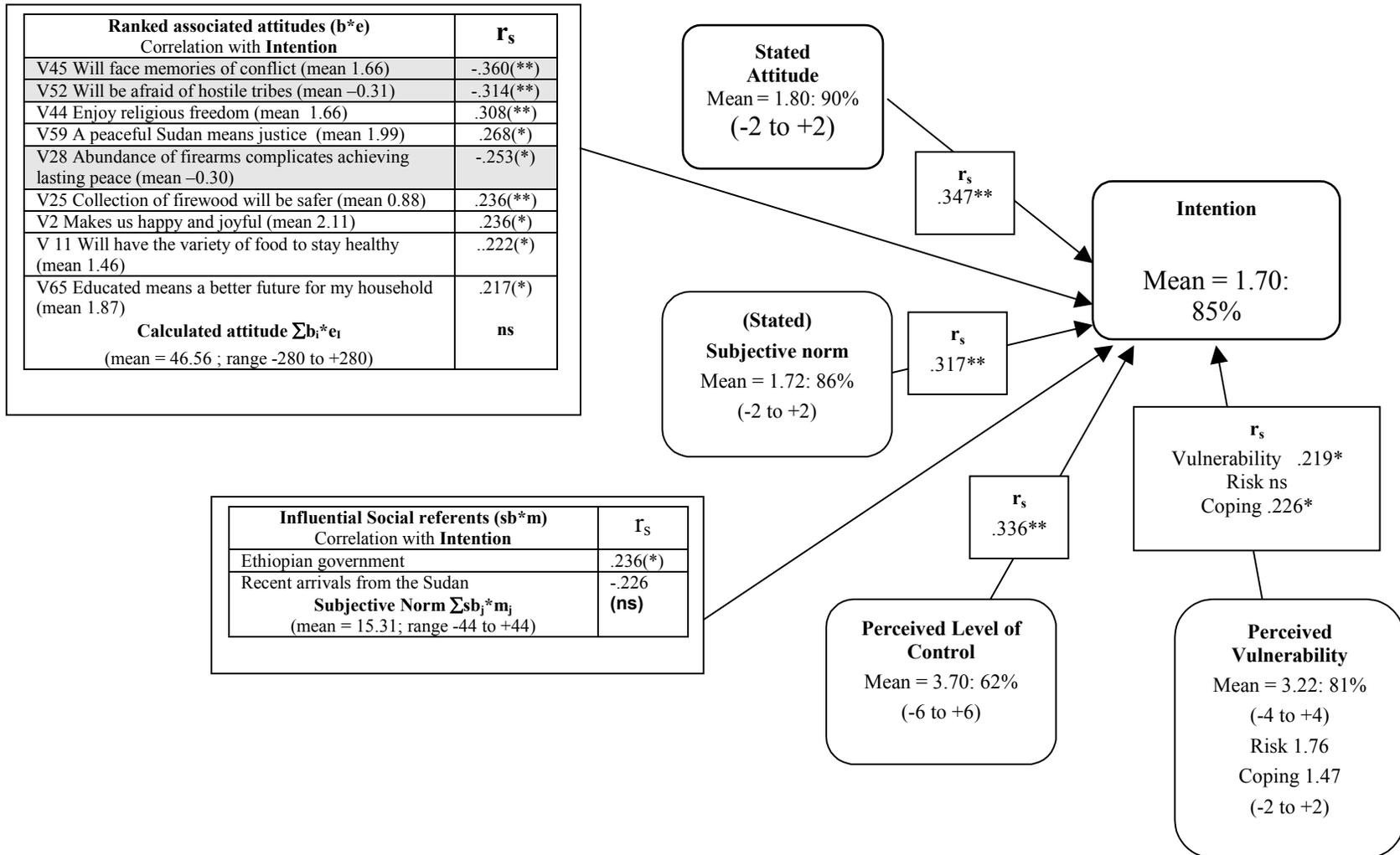
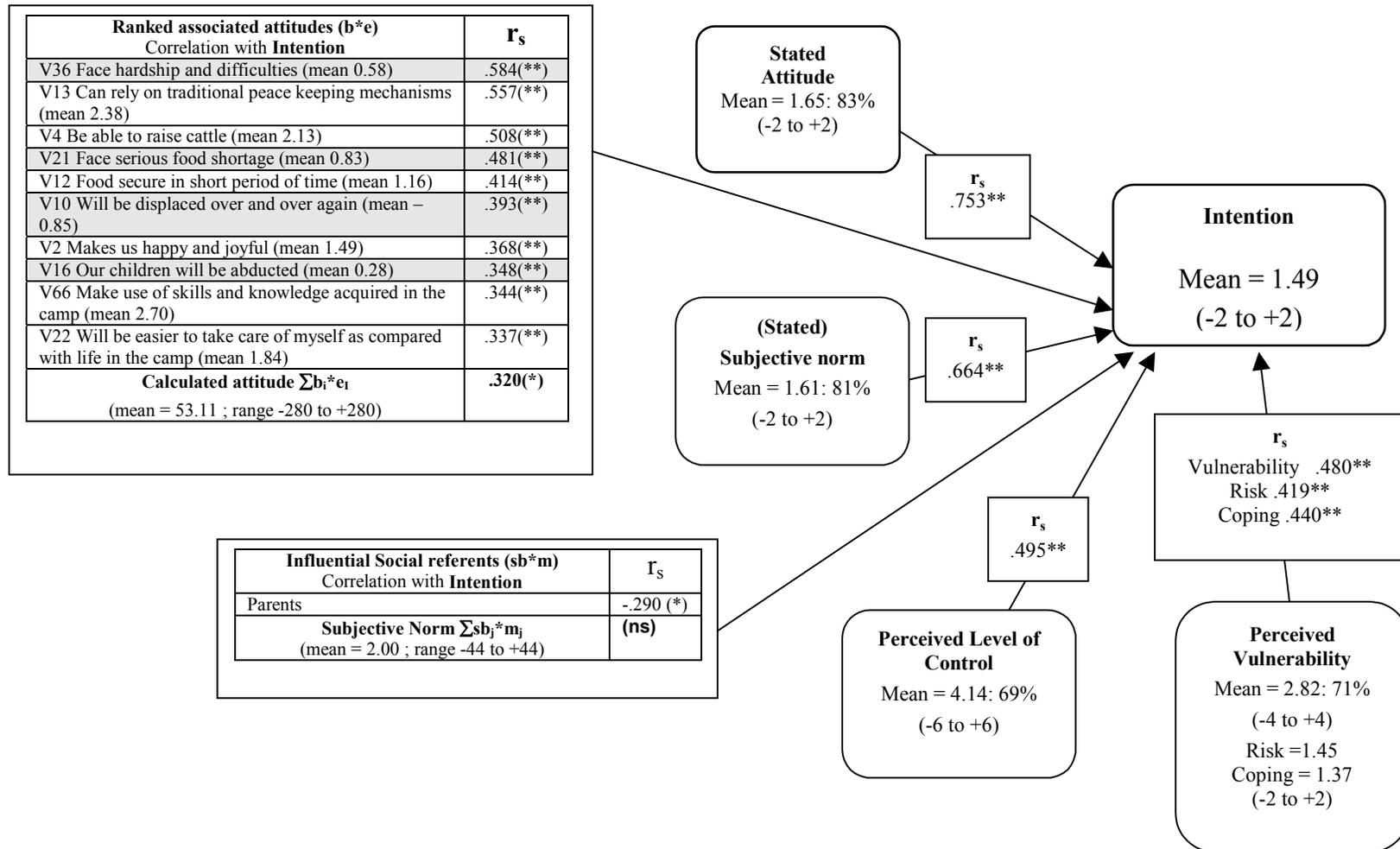


Figure 7.3 Antecedents of Anyuak Return Intent when there is ‘Peace’

- Shaded attitudes are acting as barriers
- r_s Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficients
- Degree of significance (* p at .05 level; ** p at .01)



(correlation coefficient of 0.226 with stated Intent; see figure 7.2): generally speaking it is a change in the level to which Nuer refugees perceive the ability to cope with the outcomes associated with vulnerability which affects their decision to return. From a vulnerability perspective their return decision is not influenced by changes in the perceived risk (non significantly correlation with stated Intent). In the case of the Anyuak the Perceived Vulnerability affects return intent from both risk and coping aspects (correlation coefficients of .419 and .440 respectively, both registering $p < 0.000$; figure 7.3).

The importance of this finding is that Nuer households are inclined to pursue return strategies which maximise coping capability from a vulnerability perspective. Anyuak refugees are expected to pursue strategies which try to strike a balance between reducing risk and maximising coping capability when managing the vulnerability dimension associated with return. This is a fundamental difference.

From a vulnerability perspective the Perceived Vulnerability reading is thus instrumental in establishing whether general return strategies are primarily geared by risk reduction, increasing coping capability (Nuer) or a combination of both (Anyuak).

Critical Return Beliefs Associated with Vulnerability

Correlating the Perceived Vulnerability reading with the reasoned return beliefs of home (the salient outcome attitudes) show which of these beliefs are associated with perceived vulnerability (table 7.4; appendix 7.4 presents a detailed comparison).

When considering the Nuer refugee households fifteen out of a total of seventy salient modal outcome beliefs are associated with a vulnerability dimension. The nature of vulnerability associated with return when there is 'peace' is most significantly informed by the following beliefs (six most important mentioned only; in brackets the Spearman correlation coefficients, all at $p < 0.000$ level):

1. Fear of hostile tribes (-.337)
2. Will be suspected (-.337)
3. Abundance of small firearms complicates achieving lasting peace (-.316)
4. Face memories of conflict (-.301)
5. Difficult to get good quality seeds for cultivation (-.282)
6. Will be repeatedly displaced (-.267)

Three out of these six beliefs are taken into account when deciding return (figure 7.2): fear of hostile tribes, abundance of small firearms and facing memories of conflict. The return decision of the Nuer reflects a pre-occupation with vulnerability and threats posed by the return context.

For the Anyuak thirty out of the seventy return beliefs are found to be associated with a vulnerability dimension. The six foremost beliefs best describing the nature of that vulnerability are (in brackets Spearman correlation coefficients, all $p < 0.000$ level):

1. Easier to care for my household than in the camp (.616)

2. Can rely on traditional ways of peace making (.579)
3. Will be able to raise my own cattle (.553)
4. Face a serious food shortage¹¹¹ (.527).
5. Have to rebuild our houses and villages (.518)
6. Will make us happy and joyful (.507)

Except for the belief that return means rebuilding one's village they are all beliefs directly informing the level to which Anyuak refugees plan to return. Contrary to the case of Nuer refugees, this seems to reflect the positive attitude of the Anyuaks towards being able to cope with threats in the post return environment.

The nature of vulnerability associated with return is different for Nuer and Anyuak refugees. Firstly, Nuer express vulnerability in terms of barrier type of beliefs, Anyuak in terms of drivers. Secondly, for Nuer vulnerability is strongly associated with beliefs in the safety and security domain, for the Anyuak it is not. This indicates that Nuer refugees contemplate a volatile post-return environment in terms of physical insecurity and threats.

Dealing with Conflict Following Return

There seems to be a crucial difference in how Nuer and Anyuak perceive their ability to deal with conflict following return when there is 'peace'. This crucial return issue will be explored for the return belief '*fear of hostile tribes*' (influentially informing the return decision of Nuer refugees) and the level to which one '*can rely on traditional peace keeping mechanisms*' (influentially informing the Anyuak return decision).

Table 7.4 Attitudes, Belief Strength and Outcome Expectation Associated with Vulnerability for Nuer and Anyuak, Return Option ‘Peace’ (Spearman’s rho)

Attitudes	Nuer			Anyuak		
	Belief Strength	Outcome Evaluation	Outcome Attitude	Belief Strength	Outcome Evaluation	Outcome Attitude
Fear of hostile tribes (v52)	.321(**)		-.337(**)			
Will be suspected (v50)	.359(**)		-.337(**)	.348(**)		-.278(*)
Abundance of firearms complicates achieving lasting peace (v28)	.322(**)		-.316(**)			
Face memories of conflict (v45)	.322(**)	-.246(*)	-.301(**)			
Difficult to get good quality seeds for cultivation (v34)	.327(**)		-.282(**)			
Will be repeatedly displaced (v10)			-.267(*)			
Easier to care for my household than in the camp (v22)	.245(*)		.257(*)	.618(**)	.456(**)	.616(**)
Can rely on traditional ways of peacemaking (v13)				.569(**)	.512(**)	.579(**)
Will be vulnerable within my own community (v30)				-.436(**)	-.260(*)	.449(**)
Face a serious food shortage (v21)	.221(*)			-.484(**)		.527(**)
Have to rebuild our houses and villages (v55)				.499(**)	.365(**)	.518(**)
Will make us happy and joyful (v2)				.489(**)	.505(**)	.507(**)

Shaded attitudes are acting as barriers

*, ** denote significance (p) at the .05 and .01 level respectively (2-tailed) - Spearman's rho

NB 1. Appendix 7.4 provides a detailed overview

NB2. Number of significant correlated Outcome Attitudes with Perceived Vulnerability: Nuer 15 and Anyuak 30, first 6 listed for both groups

Table 7.5 Attitudes Associated with Vulnerability, Risk and Coping for Nuer and Anyuak Households, Return Option ‘Peace’ (Spearman’s rho)

Attitudes	Nuer			Anyuak		
	Risk	Coping	Vulnerability	Risk	Coping	Vulnerability
Fear of hostile tribes (v52)		-.273(**)	-.337(**)	.339(**)		
Will be suspected (v50)		-.246(*)	-.337(**)		-.298(*)	-.278(*)
Abundance of firearms complicates achieving lasting peace (v28)	-.373(**)		-.316(**)			
Face memories of conflict (v45)		-.232(*)	-.301(**)			
Difficult to get good quality seeds for cultivation (v34)		-.343(**)	-.282(**)			
Will be repeatedly displaced (v10)		-.405(**)	-.267(*)			
Easier to care for my household than in the camp (v22)	.304(**)		.257(*)	.624(**)	.516(**)	.616(**)
Can rely on traditional ways of peacemaking (v13)				.561(**)	.498(**)	.579(**)
Will be vulnerable within my own community (v30)				.364(**)	.447(**)	.449(**)
Face a serious food shortage (v21)		-.362(**)		.437(**)	.496(**)	.527(**)
Have to rebuild our houses and villages (v55)	-.265(*)	.219(*)		.513(**)	.419(**)	.518(**)
Will make us happy and joyful (v2)	-.234(*)	.297(**)		.520(**)	.411(**)	.507(**)

NB 1. Appendix 7.5 provides a detailed overview

Nuer and Anyuak: Fear of Hostile Tribes

By correlating the Outcome Attitudes values of these two return beliefs with the Perceived Vulnerability readings it was found that fear of hostile tribes does strongly inform the level of vulnerability associated with return for Nuer, but not for Anyuak refugees. It is possible to indicate whether it is the strength to which the influential belief is held, or the evaluation of its likely outcome, that is influentially informing vulnerability.

For the Nuer ‘being afraid of hostile tribes’ is significantly associated with vulnerability (correlation - .337, p 0.000)¹¹². As the belief strength is the influential aspect, a change in the level to which this return belief is considered to be true or untrue will affect the perceived vulnerability of the Nuer (and thus intention to return: appendix 7.3, statement v52). A change in the outcome evaluation of this return issue will not affect the Nuer’s sense of vulnerability associated with return.

By correlating the risk and coping aspect with the Outcome Attitude value of the belief ‘*fear of hostile tribes*’ it is possible to establish whether it is the risk or the coping aspect that is influential (table 7.5; for a more detailed comparative overview reference is made to appendix 7.5).

By doing so it appears that coping capability is the influential aspect. This means that the level to which a Nuer household perceives being able to cope (thus not a change in perceived risk) influences the degree to which the household head perceives to be ‘afraid of hostile tribes’. A higher coping capability means less fear of hostile tribes. A change in perceived risk associated with fear of hostile tribes does not influence Nuer’s perceived vulnerability regarding this particular threat. The indication is that while the threat, and with it the perceived risk, remains there, it is the level of coping to manage that risk which informs the decision to return for the Nuer.

The return belief ‘*fear of hostile tribes*’ does not influence the intention to return for the Anyuak when there is ‘peace’ (correlation of -0.038; appendix 7.3 statement v52). Although ‘*fear of hostile tribes*’ is not associated with vulnerability, the risk aspect is (it is ranked a modest 21st place amongst the risk-outcome attitude correlations: correlation of 0.339 at p 0.000, see appendix 7.6). So, though the Anyuak do not express sensitivity to the belief of ‘fear of hostile tribes’ nevertheless they cognitively associate it with vulnerability, doing so from a risk perspective.

Anyuak: Reliance on Traditional Peace Keeping Mechanisms

For the Anyuak, reliance on traditional peace keeping mechanisms is an influential return belief informing the decision to return. It is also a belief significantly associated with Perceived Vulnerability, expressing resilience for the return option ‘peace’. Both belief strength and outcome expectation significantly inform the Perceived Vulnerability reading (values of .569 and .512 respectively: table 7.4, statement v13).

For the Nuer, however, it is neither an influential return belief, nor associated with Perceived Vulnerability. The Outcome Attitude value is significantly more positive for the Anyuak as compared with the Nuer (values of 2.38 and 1.37 respectively, p 0.000: appendix 7.4; statement v13).

For the Anyuak, reliance on traditional peace keeping mechanisms is associated with resilience for both risk and coping aspects (correlation coefficients of .561 and .498 respectively, table 7.5). Since reliance on traditional peace mechanisms is influentially informing the level to which Anyuak refugees plan to return, the level to which traditional peace keeping mechanisms are able to reduce risk, or contribute to an effective coping instrument in times of dispute and disagreement, influences their intention to return.

Nuer refugees seem to be insensitive to the degree to which they can rely on traditional peace mechanisms when deciding return when there is 'peace'. As mentioned, it is not a reduction of the perceived risk, but the ability to cope with the fear of hostile tribes which influentially informs their decision to return. Considering the militarised nature of Nuer communities at large, their return, and dealings with the actions of hostile tribes is likely to be 'managed' by either armed response or displacement. This is because their insensitivity regarding the role of traditional peace mechanisms. If displacement will disperse such communities into hostile frontier areas, their exposure to hostile tribes is likely to provoke further armed responses. This issue will present a major challenge for any form of 'legitimate' governance in such frontier areas.

Findings

For the Anyuak, elements of risk and coping associated with return when there is 'peace' are primarily encapsulated in re-enacted structures of peace making and reconciliation, as well as fulfilment of a basic livelihood. Obviously local peace efforts with Nuer tribal groups, and other groups with which the Anyuaks have had hostile relationships, are instrumental in increasing the Anyuaks' intent to return.

The perception of vulnerability in the case of the Nuer seems to be primarily informed by their coping capabilities in the face of fear of hostile tribes, suspicion of household members, the abundance of small firearms and facing repeated displacements. The Nuer clearly expect their areas of return to be plagued by continued violence even when they return when there is 'peace'. This sets a dangerous precedent, as 'internal conflict' and subsequent displacement of Nuer populations into the fringe areas is likely to generate conflict, which (in the absence of effective mechanisms) will quickly erode both incentive as well as the momentum for peace.

The belief basis on which Nuer and Anyuak decide to return reflect a pre-occupation with vulnerability or resilience. From a vulnerability perspective, repatriation programming has to take into account the following critical elements in order to make Nuer and Anyuak repatriation work when there is 'peace', particularly in frontier areas where potentially conflicting Nuer~Anyuak interests lead to dispute:

- Ensure a legitimate local authority which can deal effectively with insecurity generated by ethnic based armed groups and militias, by enforcing conflict resolution. Rehabilitation programming can be used as 'peace dividend' or as an initiative to address (potential) disputes over limited livelihood resources, e.g. by drilling wells to provide access to a source of reliable and clean drinking water, or the construction of watering places for cattle.

- Tackle the proliferation of small firearms, especially amongst the Nuer, by increasing the authority and control over such weapons by legitimate leaders and authorities sanctioning abuse. Since small firearms have come to carry a non-military significance (e.g. by entering the bride wealth system) compensation schemes could consider exchanging valuable livelihood resources (e.g. cattle) for weapons.
- Increase the sensitivity to traditional peace mechanisms, notably amongst the Nuer, to be able to manage dispute and potential conflict by promoting community based peace and value systems.
- Harmonise community-based peace and justice systems in frontier areas across hostile tribes, or groups with competing interests. Community based leaders should be enabled to effectively oversee local peace agreements and have the legitimate power to contact authorities to deal with those breaking the ‘code of conduct’.

7.7. Discussion

The Theory of Reasoned Action proved to be instrumental in exploring the temporal and context specific dimension of return and repatriation for Nuer and Anyuak return. This is achieved by establishing the relative importance of the determinants of intention as well as the beliefs and social pressures of referents and important others informing return planning across the return options for both ethnic groups. Though the expressed strength of intent to return does not differ significantly between Nuer and Anyuak refugees, the case study clearly demonstrated that return planning is differentially informed by particular sets of influential return beliefs and expectations of home. These reflect both temporal and context specific variations which present unique challenges for Nuer and Anyuak refugees contemplating return.

Reflecting on the complexity and dynamics of prospective areas of return (sections 7.1-2) the descriptive use of the extended TORA model as an exploratory tool was found to be helpful in assessing critical return factors (sections 7.4-6) that need to be addressed to make return and repatriation work. These issues were found to reflect the difference in background of Nuer and Anyuak refugees and to highlight fundamentally different return contexts and the way vulnerability is defined and managed.

Extension of the TORA model with a Perceived Vulnerability variable reading was found to enhance the descriptive value of the TORA, as it established the importance of vulnerability associated with return, and the ability to explore the nature of threats associated with vulnerability in post-return environments. In that sense the inclusion of Perceived Vulnerability in the TORA construct functions as a predictive warning utility regarding the potential for disaster following return.

By exploring the return antecedents of both Nuer and Anyuak refugees for the return option ‘peace’, it was found that both groups expect a volatile return environment, yet their ways to manage potential conflict was found to be fundamentally different. In fact, strategies to manage conflict as related to risk and coping capability were found to be dysfunctional in addressing the potential of conflict between Nuer and Anyuak in frontier areas where their spheres of interest are likely to interact.

Promoting repatriation when there is apparent 'peace', while refugees themselves cognitively express a sense of threat in prospective areas of return, poses an issue of critical importance for the international community.

The Perceived Vulnerability variable as a tool within the extended TORA allows exploration of the nature of threat that needs to be taken into account when observing the principle of 'voluntary return', and in informing repatriation by providing for effective protection following return. The findings of this case study suggest that the inclusion of a vulnerability concept enhances the sensitivity and descriptive use of the TORA model in volatile and hazard prone contexts.

**PART III - Return of Internally Displaced Dinka Ngok from Camps and
Squatter Areas in Khartoum to Abyei**

8. Internal Displacement in the Sudan, the Case of Abyei

The second part of the thesis applied the extended TORA to study the level to which Sudanese refugees, hosted in camps in western Ethiopia, plan to return to their home areas. Particular attention was given to the descriptive use of the Perceived Vulnerability variable to enhance the model's sensitivity when dealing with volatile return contexts. This third part of the thesis tests the appropriateness of the extended TORA construct as a general model to study return decision making of war-displaced people for particular contexts. It explores the return planning and strategies of a group of internally displaced people, the Dinka Ngok of Abyei living in displaced people camps and squatter areas in and around Khartoum, to their home area. First a context analysis is presented, sketching internal Dinka Ngok displacement, recent developments and aid interventions in their home area of Abyei (chapter eight). Subsequently the extended TORA model is employed to review the success of the assisted returns and to elucidate recommendations on repatriation policy and practice (chapter nine).

This chapter is organised into six sections. The first one introduces the issue of forced migration in the Sudan, and sketches some of the major developments in the so-called disputed areas: Blue Nile, Nuba Mountains, Abyei and more recently Dar Fur. Section two focuses on Abyei as the home area of the displaced Dinka Ngok. This is followed by an introduction of the United Nation's draft strategy for the return of the displaced, the *'Roadmap to Peace'* which aims to assist the return of the displaced to Abyei *'as a safe and secure environment with opportunities for sustainable livelihoods'*. Section four describes the actual experience of the returnees in Abyei Province, the area controlled by the Government of the Sudan. Section five describes the experience of the returnees in Abyei County, the part of the home area of the Dinka Ngok controlled by the SPLM/A. The chapter ends with a discussion regarding the return of the internally displaced, and the efforts of the international community to make return work.

8.1. War and Displacement in the Sudan

Sudan's civil war broke out in 1955, a few months before independence on January 1st, 1956. Sudan's first civil war lasted for seventeen years before it was halted by the Addis Ababa peace agreement in 1972 in which the south was granted regional autonomy. It is estimated that during the first civil war, one half to a million southerners were slain, the majority in the cross fire between the Anya-Nya and the government forces (Hutchinson, 1996). The war resumed in 1983 as a result of what was seen by the Southern People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) as an unilateral abrogation of the agreement by the Khartoum government (Deng, 1999). This second civil war claimed many more lives, and resulted in massive displacements (section 5.2). Following the SPLA leadership split in 1991, the number of Dinka and Nuer who died of factional conflicts and other South-on-South confrontations exceeded those lost to the North-South conflict (Jok and Hutchinson, 1999).

Sudan is home to the world's largest internally displaced population. An estimated four million people are internally displaced, and despite a ceasefire in 2002, fighting continued in Sudan's 20 year old civil war, causing hundreds of thousands more people to be displaced. In October 2002, the two main warring factions, the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) signed a Memorandum of Understanding which called for the cessation of hostilities and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid. In spite of this agreement, a new IDP crisis emerged in Dar Fur where conflict escalated in 2003. Despite ongoing fighting in 2002/3, both sides remained in negotiation and reached a historic security agreement in September 2003, though this agreement did not include the Dar Fur region. (Source: Norwegian Refugee Council, 2003).

As early as in 2003 the return and reintegration of all displaced people and refugees was identified as a top priority once a comprehensive peace deal was signed. With peace brokered, the UN estimated that about one million IDPs along with half a million refugees would return to their home areas. The challenges of mass return were seen to be overwhelming and local administrations appeared unprepared. In addition to a massive demand for basic services and new infrastructure, a functioning judicial system would be needed to settle land disputes. Despite the signs of hope at the negotiating table, the reality on the ground for millions of IDPs, many of whom facing continued hunger and insecurity, did not improved in 2003. (Source: Norwegian Refugee Council, 2003).

With both parties to the conflict re-affirming their commitment in February 2004 to enter into a peace deal to end Sudan's war, the two pending issues were power sharing and the status of the three disputed areas during the transition period: Abyei, the Nuba mountains and the Southern Blue Nile region. Peace negotiations in early 2004 resulted in a compromise regarding the status of Southern Blue Nile and Nuba mountains. The administrative future of Abyei proved to be a last major discussion point to conclude the peace talks.

Under heavy pressure from the international community, and facilitated by the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM/A signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement on the 9th of January 2005. This agreement followed a declaration in June 2004, confirming both parties' commitment to six negotiated peace protocols¹¹³, including one regarding the status of Abyei. The historic comprehensive peace agreement holds a promise for peace. Yet at the same time the commitment towards genuine peace in the Sudan is questioned as Dar Fur was not included in the agreement and conflict in that region continued to rage unabated.

The Disputed Areas

In the late 1980's militias were formed among the Rufaa cattle nomads, and raiding started among non-Arab communities in Southern Blue Nile. These militias were backed up by Government of Sudan forces. One of the major groups fleeing the area at the time were the Uduk people (self name: Kwanim Pa). Another group affected by fighting in the area were the Mabaan. The majority of those displaced found a safe haven in camps on Ethiopian territory just across the border. In 1990 one of the Ethiopian liberation movements swept through Ethiopia's Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, defeating the Derg forces in the area and destroying Tsore refugee camp on the way. Tens of thousands of refugees were thus pushed back into hostile Sudanese territory, in the middle of the dry season. After a long trek over ten thousand Uduk arrived in Gambella in 1992. They were offered

temporary shelter at Karmi and were relocated to Bonga refugee camp in 1993¹¹⁴. During the second half of the 1990's, Southern Blue Nile saw renewed conflict with thousands of uprooted people seeking safety in Ethiopia. Sherkolle refugee camp was established in 1997 to provide shelter and assistance for those fleeing war and insecurity, predominantly Uduk and Mabaan. Intense fighting in Southern Blue Nile between SPLA forces and GoS troops in 2001/2 created fresh influxes and the arrival of a new major group of refugees, the Funj. Thousands of Funj were sheltered in Sherkolle camp, with thousands more being provided assistance in Yarenga camp which was established to the north of Sherkolle by the UNHCR in late 2001. Uprooted and displaced people in Southern Blue Nile suffered hardship and lost many of their family and kin due to direct conflict and harsh conditions during their flight.

The scale of displacement, insecurity and the resulting suffering in the Nuba Mountains attracted major international attention. However, international assistance to SPLM controlled areas of the Nuba Mountains was blockaded until the US government Danforth Initiative in 2001. Due to international involvement and pressure a ceasefire was signed in January 2002 and observed relatively well by the warring parties. A Joint Military Committee (JMC) has been established overseeing the ceasefire. Though a minimum of humanitarian resources was provided by the international community, the Nuba Mountains has seen spontaneous return with a number of destroyed and abandoned villages being re-established.

The area of Abyei has only relatively recently received international attention. Abyei has been hard hit by conflict during the second half of the 1980's and the 1990's. All Dinka Ngok villages north of the Kiir River, the main homeland of the Dinka Ngok, were evacuated and left de-populated since the mid 1980's. In 2002 and 2003 a few thousand displaced Ngok returned to four of the abandoned villages. Abyei has been playing a key role in the recent conflict in the Sudan and bears cultural, racial, socio-political as well as economic connotations to the complexity of the conflict. Also access to and control over water and grazing resources by the Dinka Ngok and the Arabic Missiriya tribe, and of late substantial oil deposits in the area, made Abyei a particular difficult issue to solve.

After final arrangements regarding the administration of the Southern Blue Nile region and the Nuba Mountains, one of the last sticking points to conclude the peace talks was the resolution of the Abyei conflict. Dinka intellectuals regard the underpinning of the GoS claim¹¹⁵ that Abyei belongs to the north as an historic wrongdoing, and feel that Abyei should be '*uprooted from the north ... and transplanted into the south*'.

On May 26th 2004 a protocol was signed between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army on the resolution of the Abyei conflict¹¹⁶. The principles of the agreement acknowledged that Abyei forms a bridge between the north and the south and defines the territory as the area of the nine Dinka Ngok chiefdoms transferred to Kordofan in 1905. The principles also acknowledge that the Missiriya and other nomadic peoples retain their traditional rights to graze cattle and move across the territory of Abyei. During the interim period Abyei will be accorded special administrative status, and at the end of the interim period the residents of Abyei will cast a vote to decide whether Abyei will retain special administrative status or be administered by the south.

Dar Fur was not part of the peace negotiations and therefore not included in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement reached in 2005. Observers labelled the war in Dar Fur as the most serious humanitarian crisis on the African continent during 2004 (Winter, 2004)¹¹⁷.

8.2. Abyei

Abyei area is part of the transitional zone between northern and southern Sudan. Abyei town, the main administrative centre of the area, is regarded by the GoS to be part of West Kordofan State. Bahr el Ghazal State, administered by the south, is found just south of Abyei town. Both southern Kordofan State as well as Bahr el Ghazal State have been severely affected by the civil war resulting in large-scale displacement of its population to safer areas notably so since 1983. Being a transitional zone, Abyei is one of the areas that serve as a point of entry for returning southern Sudanese who have been displaced to the north.

The Dinka Ngok sub-tribe, inhabitants of the Abyei area, is made up of three sections, which are further subdivided into nine clans (sub-sections). The majority of the Dinka Ngok lived in villages north of the Bahr el Arab or Kiir River. Following fighting in the Abyei area, all villages north of the Kiir River were evacuated in 1984-6 leaving the area depopulated. The cattle-keeping Missiriya cross this area on their annual trek south of their main centre at El Muglad in search of dry season grazing grounds for their cattle.

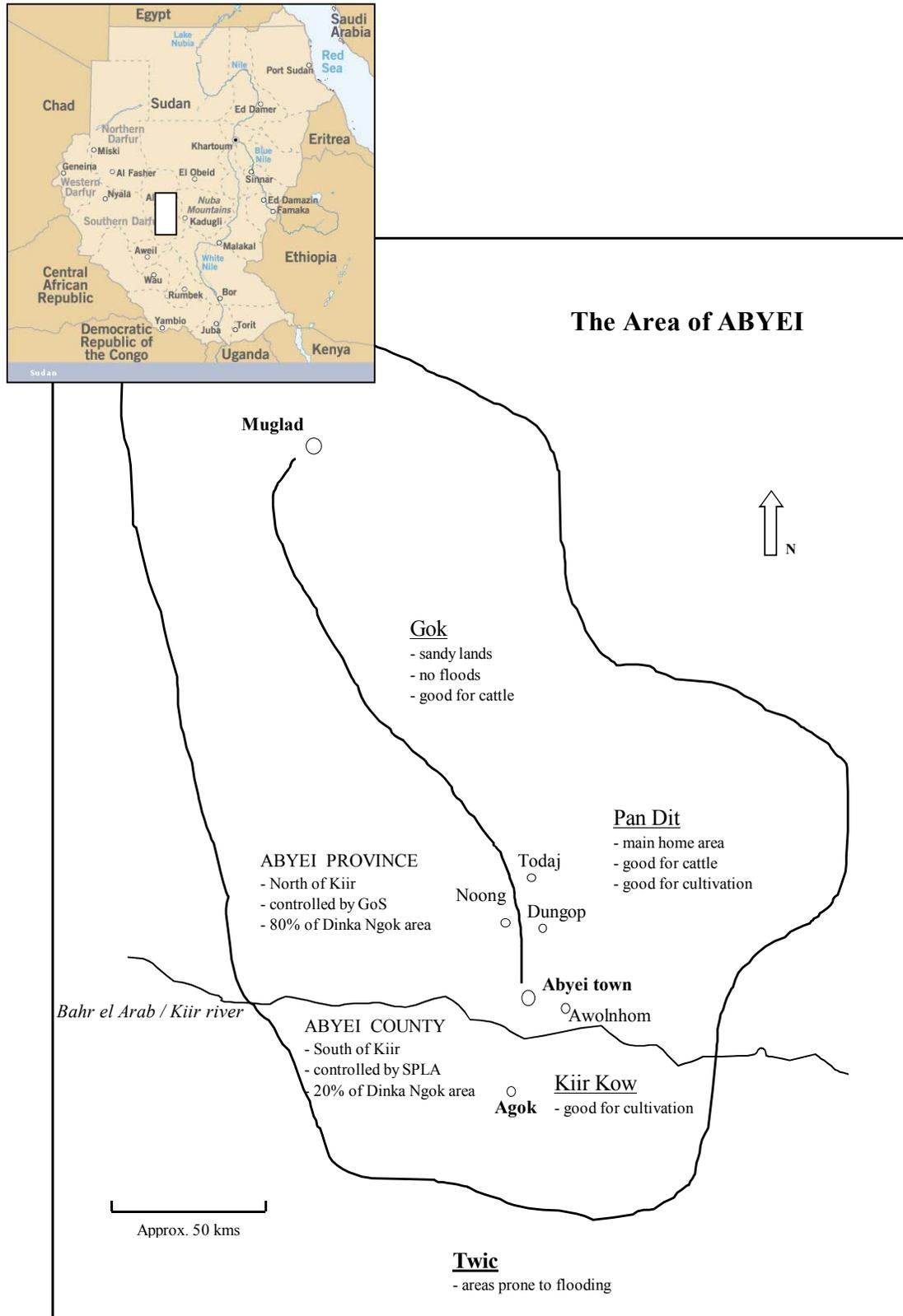
The Dinka Ngok distinguish three main areas in their homeland: '*Gok*', '*Pan Dit*' and '*Kiir Kow*' (see figure 8.1). '*Gok*' is the area in the northern part of Abyei. These lands are sandy, rainfall is less than in the other parts of Abyei and there are no floods. The area is good for cattle. '*Pan Dit*' is seen by the Ngok as their main home area and good for cultivation (predominantly '*dura*', sorghum and '*simsim*', sesame) and keeping cattle. '*Kiir Kow*' in the southern part of Abyei is a fertile area used for growing sorghum and maize.

As of recent years the Bahr el Arab or Kiir River forms the line of control. '*Gok*' and '*Pan Dit*' are located to the north of the Kiir River and '*Kiir Kow*' to the south. The area north of the river is referred to as '*Abyei Province of West Kordofan State*' and is controlled by the Government of Sudan. The area south of the Kiir refer is referred to as '*Abyei County of Bahr el Ghazal State*' and is controlled by the SPLA. Abyei Province constitutes around eighty percent of the area inhabited by the Ngok before the current conflict, and Abyei County the remaining twenty percent.

Dinka Ngok Displacement

Following the Addis Ababa peace agreement¹¹⁸ Sudan enjoyed a period of relative peace and calm between 1972 to 1983. However, Abyei remained an insecure area because of the failure of both the Southern Government and the Khartoum Government to honour the agreement to hold a referendum for Abyei, deciding on its administration. The arming of the Missiriya by successive Khartoum governments¹¹⁹ against the Ngok and other Dinka tribes south of the Kiir, and the discovery of

Figure 8.1 Sketch map of the Abyei Area.



substantial oil deposits in the area added to this insecurity.

Starting in 1983 massive raids by the Murahaleen pushed the Dinkas to their south, thereby depopulating large swathes of territory north and south of the Bahr al Arab river. Tens of thousands of people were killed and hundreds of thousands displaced. Though famine in western Sudan seemed to have fuelled the early raids¹²⁰ (Keen, 1995), the scale of devastation from 1985 onwards was the result of government complicity and assistance to the Murahaleen¹²¹. Keen (1995: 215) presents a comprehensive summary by writing:

'Ill-equipped to suppress rebellion in the South – the heavily indebted government could little afford to fund a large army in a protracted war – the central administration opted to arm disaffected and marginalized Baggara and other Arab groups and to encourage them to direct their discontent at even more marginalized groups in the South, notably the Dinka¹²². It provided these militias with weapons, ammunition and intelligence as well as immunity from prosecution for theft, killings and other violations of the law as they raided southern villages for cattle, grain and people¹²³. The raiding precipitated the movement of large numbers of people, notably to the Sudanese towns and to Ethiopia, thereby disrupting future grain planting and depopulating rural areas. These various processes precipitated starvation and famine. By 1988 death rates among southern Sudanese were amongst the highest ever recorded anywhere in the world'.

With conflict peaking in 1986, all villages north of the Kiir River were evacuated and large numbers of the Dinka Ngok fled to the north. Most of them ended up in urban centres, particularly in Khartoum. Smaller numbers of Ngok fled south into Dinka Twic territory and even further south, as increased Murahaleen activity led to dry season sprees of raiding, killing and looting contributing to a general sense of insecurity in the area. Northern militia activity was high in the area south of the Kiir, and with no significant counter force present at the time, looting and killing took place unabated. The group of Dinka fleeing south consisted of Ngok who took cattle on their annual migration and the population who lived south of the Kiir at large. A serious loss of cattle was experienced due to raiding, disease and overgrazing in the Dinka Twic area. Only in the late 1990's when security improved were some of the Ngok able to rebuild their herds, though not to pre-conflict levels.

Not all Ngok evacuated the area south of the Kiir. Some continued to grow sorghum near their villages during the wet season when militia activity was strongly reduced. Increased militia activity during the dry season forced them to hide in the forests or to move south into safer areas. From 2000 onwards the SPLA forces established themselves in the area and firmly controlled the area up to the Kiir river. Observing an improvement in the security situation some of the Dinka Ngok displaced into Twic territory returned to Abyei, to open up their farms and construct tukuls (traditional huts). Anticipating peace, more Dinkas returned from Twic and Khartoum as of 2001/2, to open up farmland in Kiir Kow, the fertile lands just south of the Kiir River.

Accurate Ngok displacement figures are lacking. According to the Dinka Ngok leadership in Khartoum and Abyei around 70,000 to 90,000 Dinka Ngok were displaced to the north, ending up in Khartoum. An estimated 15,000 to 30,000 Dinka Ngok fled south into Dinka Twic territory or beyond. Around 30,000 to 40,000 Dinka Ngok were said to reside in Abyei County, the majority of them recent returnees. As Dinka-Ngok leadership estimate the total number of Ngok to be around 200,000¹²⁴ some 60,000 Ngok have been displaced to other locations including smaller urban centres

in the north, the rural areas of southern Sudan or as refugees into neighbouring countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Egypt.

8.3. Roadmap to Peace - the Return of the Displaced

In anticipation of the conclusion of the peace talks, the Office of the United Nations Resident and the Humanitarian Co-ordinator for the Sudan presented a draft strategy for the return of displaced people in the Sudan (United Nations, 2004). The main objective of the strategy was to involve the Government of the Sudan (GoS), the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM), the United Nations system and partner agencies in facilitating and supporting sustainable reintegration of returnees in the Sudan¹²⁵. The approach centres around four key components: human security, capacity building, rehabilitation and recovery, and the return of the displaced. From the UN's perspective, the primary responsibility for displaced persons rests with the authorities Agencies are expected to be responsible and accountable for co-ordinating with the GoS, SPLM, and civil society.

As one of the UN specialised agencies, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been focusing on the disputed areas, particularly Abyei, as such areas are seen to present particular political challenges. UNDP's engagement in the Abyei area aimed to *'enhance the space for development of accountable and legitimate local governance and administration by the residents, and those who would choose to return to those areas'* (UNDP, 2003).

Within the framework of the Programme Advancing Conflict Transformation in Abyei (PACTA), which is a multi agency, cross conflict programme, interventions aimed at support of a people to people peace process in the Abyei region have been put in place. The overall strategic goal is to *'support conflict transformation between the Dinka and the Missiriya tribes which facilitates sustainable, just and equitable access to resources in the Abyei - Twic region'* (United Nations, 2002). A number of organisations subscribed to the PACTA framework including FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-OCHA, WFP, WHO as well as a variety of Non Governmental Organisations both international (such as GOAL and SC-US) and local: the Peace and Local Development Organisation (ANGATO), the National Development Organisation (NDO) and the Abyei Community Action for Development (ACAD).

Re-establishment of Villages in Abyei Province in 2002

As a direct outcome of the people to people peace process in Abyei (box 8.1), around 2,500 former inhabitants of Noong, Dungop, Today and Awolnhom (living in the garrison town of Abyei) began to re-establish their villages in 2002¹²⁶ (box 8.2). The UNDP led the formation of the interagency Abyei Task Force (ATF) to co-ordinate the response to support the effort of the returnees. WFP took on the responsibility of facilitating shelter construction through a Food for Work project. UNICEF responded to support water, health and education needs. FAO has the responsibility to provide supplies of seeds and technical assistance for livestock owners. The WHO undertook to support the health system in the area. UNDP responded to the urgent need of the returnee households by supporting conflict transformation and risk management, some sustainable livelihood development, and management and

sustainable delivery of basic services. Working through national NGOs as partners, and enhancing their capacity in the process, was seen as the key strategy for addressing longer-term sustainable interventions in the area. Through these partnerships UNDP supported the activities of the Abyei Peace Committee by facilitating the people to people peace process, and the provision of training to set up various committees at village level.

Box 8.1 War and Peace, the Perspective of Dinka Ngok Leadership

'In the 1970s and 1980s impoverished Missiriya were tempted to join the Murahaleen, as the interest of those militias was on raiding cattle and looting. Yet the Missiriya and the Murahaleen had conflicting interests, because raiding and looting affects the longer-term interests of the nomads. Initially the Missiriya did not stop the raiding by the Murahaleen, possibly because they did not realise the consequences. Traditional leadership was weak at that time because the government of Sudan was trying to break the traditional leadership to "free" the population in order to control them'.

'So a small movement started to resist the Murahaleen, begun by the sons of Abyei. But as they were weak they were forced to join the main movement. It was only by the early 1990's that the SPLA had grown strong enough to pose a serious challenge to the raiding Murahaleen down south in Dinka Twic territory. By 1997-98 the strength of the SPLA persuaded the Murahaleen not to raid again south of the Kiir. The SPLA had practically defeated the Murahaleen by killing many of them. The SPLA came to the forefront and the Murahaleen were unable to fight their way across to raid cattle. They were left without any loot'.

'By late 1999 the Dinka SPLA let it be known that if the Missiriya, through which the Murahaleen came, would cross the Kiir river, their cattle would be taken or shot. This happened on a number of occasions. It affected and touched the nomads deeply, and they wanted peace. This initiated the Abyei and Muglad Peace Committee, both of which were established in December 2001. Six Dinka elders talked with the SPLA who were positive about the idea. Though the SPLA was about to attack the Missiriya around Abyei they called it off. Sixteen Dinka and eighteen Missiriya leaders met and discussed the conditions and terms of a peace agreement. The Abyei Peace Accord for peaceful co-existence between the Dinka Ngok and Missiriya Adjiera was signed in January 2002. It was signed under the auspices of the European Union, GoS political advisors, the Commissioner of Abyei Province and the chiefs'.

'Both sides see benefits in this agreement. The interest of the Dinka is to re-establish their villages north of the Kiir, the Missiriya to have access to the grazing lands south of the Kiir river which is essential for the survival of their cattle. If the Murahaleen want to, they can easily destroy the newly established villages. For the Missiriya the issue of security is simple, as they will demand the authorities for good security. They can generate serious political pressure on the political leaders in El Fula and Khartoum. If the Murahaleen destroy the Dinka villages, the Missiriya will be stopped by the SPLA from crossing the Kiir river on their annual trek south in search of dry season grazing lands for cattle. With the loss of their cattle they lose their wealth and livelihoods. This creates a strong incentive for peace. So that is why they are interested in peace... we the Dinka leaders are ready to talk with them'.

In September 2002 the SPLA Commander Adward Achuin Daw crossed the Kiir river from the south and raided Todayj village. Over fifty of Todayj's villagers were taken across the river as a result. The Commander stated that the raid was to protect the Ngok in the Todayj area from the GoS forces.

Clearly this was not in line with the understanding reached in the 2001 Akor peace agreement, which had been honoured by all actors in the area. As a direct result of the SPLA incursion, the GoS forces evacuated the people from all four villages to Abyei town. Consequently the critical first harvest was almost completely lost. Later on that year the National Development Organisation (NDO), a newly set up Dinka Ngok NGO involved in the assisted returns, found only a total of 747 persons living in the four villages where the pre-conflict population figures of these villages was around ten thousand households or around fifty thousand people (estimate by Dinka Ngok leadership in Khartoum and confirmed by leaders in Abyei Province).

Box 8.2 Rebuilding the Village of Todayj – ‘It’s better to suffer in your own land than to suffer in the land of others’

Excerpts from an Interview with the Amir (supreme chief).

‘This is the story of the village of Todayj and the sons of our sisters that married men from the Dinka Anyiel. Their daughters and sons belong to the people of Todayj. Many generations ago the village of Todayj was established by a man named Lual, he is our grand grand father. His people, the Dinka Ngok Gok Bango, were cattle herders. They were grazing and watering their herds along the Fawul, Damlui, Dakjor and Mabiék rivers. His people found that the grazing lands were good, the lands fertile and the rivers full of fish. Over time this became the land of our grand fathers and fathers’.

‘Biong Aloor was residing with his tribe Abior along the Kiir river. Then he came to meet with the people who were led by Lual. Biong Aloor came to suggest that his people and Lual’s people to be united under the leadership of one. So the Dinka Ngok Kouj Abior came to be united with the Dinka Ngok Gok Bango under the leadership of Biong Aloor. They united as at that time tribal wars had broken out between the Dinka and the Nuer to their east, and between the Dinka and the Missiriya to their north. They agreed, and the people of Abior positioned themselves along the river Kiir up to the far northwest. The people of Bango positioned themselves along the Nyamora river up to the far east. And they were united and stood strong’.

‘Minor conflicts between the Dinka Ngok and the Missiriya have always happened. But in 1964 a major conflict took place in the area. The Missiriya had killed a Dinka Twic who had come to graze his cattle in the land of the Dinka Ngok. The Missiriya cut off the dead man’s hand and started to beat their drums with the hand of the dead man, singing “we killed the slave, we killed him”. This angered the Dinka Ngok, they could not accept this to happen to one of their brothers in their own land. This was a humiliation! That is way the Ngok started to beat their drums in the villages to send the message. In a co-ordinated attack the offenders were killed and in the fight that followed the Missiriya were chased out to their area in Muglad. Many people were killed in the fighting. The Missiriya organised themselves for a counter attack which they successfully did with support of the army. All the villages north of Todayj, the lands of the Dinka Ngok Bango were destroyed and had to be evacuated. Some of Todayj villagers stayed, but most moved to Abyei town with many migrating even further south into the area of the Dinka Twic. The paramount chiefs of the Dinka Ngok and Missiriya, Deng Majok and Babo Nimir, signed a peace agreement in 1965. Since the people were fearful the Ngok villages in the far north were not rebuilt’.

‘Following the Addis Ababa agreement the Umma party started to form militias, named Murahaleen, to accompany the Missiriya nomads on their annual migration south. A strong political agenda emerged and the Dinka Ngok were treated badly. It was in 1983 that the sons of Abyei, the young and educated under the leadership of Michael Deng Majok, formed a rebellion movement in the area of the river Kiir. This was to stop the Missiriya and the militias with armed force. During 1983 and 1984 the people of Abyei started to leave the

area. Conflict peaked in 1985 and 1986 when villages of the Dinka Ngok were attacked, ransacked and burned down. People were killed and cattle looted. People started to run for Abyei. The Government of Sudan forces and the rebel movement fought each other around Abyei town’.

‘On the 21st of February 2001 the Akur peace agreement was signed between the Dinka Ngok and the Missiriya. Though the agreement was seen as a guarantee of peaceful co-existence people were fearful to return. Anticipating the forthcoming agreement, a total of fifteen households returned to Todaj. The majority of these people were leaders. They demarcated the village, defining the residential areas and the land plots. People received half food rations from the World Food Programme for a three-month’s period. People were weak and the work hard: we had only one man in each household to clear and prepare the land. We planted sorghum, maize, okra, simsim and watermelon. During the rainy period the people depended on wild foods for their survival’.

‘In 2002 things looked much better for Todaj. More people had returned from Abyei to the village and the area under cultivation had considerably increased. Just before the maize was to be harvested the SPLA surrounded the village on the 21st of September and they took fifty-four persons with them when retreating to the south. The remaining people were evacuated by the Government of Sudan forces to Abyei for their safety. The people of Todaj did not harvest in this critical second year. On the 18th of December 2002 most of the families who undertook rebuilding the village during 2001 and 2002 returned to Todaj, a total of hundred and fifty people’.

‘During 2003 more people of Todaj returned from Abyei as they felt that peace was coming ... people felt the momentum shifting to peace The group that came from Khartoum to Todaj by the assisted returns of May 2003 were few. They brought nothing with them though they were promised food aid and other benefits. Only some of the middle aged and older people stayed. In June 2003 six internally displaced Dinka originating from Todaj village returned from Khartoum to Abyei. They came as part of the assisted returns. They are still here’.

‘It’s good for the people to return from the North: “Mam Piny Da Anguen, Mam Piny Lei” (it’s better to suffer in one’s own land than in the land of others). We need more people to rebuild the village, we are eagerly looking forward for them to come’.

Assisted Returns in 2003

Anticipating the prospects for peace in the Sudan UNDP supported two small-scale assisted returns in May and June 2003, aiming at bringing back around one thousand displaced Ngok households from Khartoum to the newly established villages in Abyei Province. The May 2003 assisted return involved a total of around 840 people who were provided with transportation to Abyei town, around 900 kilometres southwest of Khartoum (box 8.3 describes the motivation to return of one its participants). The second assisted return took place in June 2003 and involved around 1,400 persons. Contrary to the first assisted return, those taking part in the second assisted return received assistance upon their arrival in Abyei. Both return programmes were funded by the international community¹²⁷ and implemented by the National Development Organisation a well-intentioned but relatively new local Ngok NGO.

By the end of 2003, the number of people who had settled in the four villages had only slightly increased to a total of around 1,118 persons, or around 260 households (NDO statistics, end of 2003). Following the establishment of a strong military outpost in the vicinity of Awolnhom around eighty

young and middle aged men left the village, most of them crossing the Kiir to the south into SPLA controlled areas. According to a December 2003 UNDP population assessment the total population figure stood at 764 persons, far less than the 2,500 people who returned initially.

Another striking outcome of the UNDP population assessment at the end of 2003 was the high female-male ratios. It appeared that up to three times more women than men were present in the four villages and Abyei town. This reflects the highly militarised nature of Abyei, a northern garrison town, and a strong suspicion of GoS- and security-forces towards young to middle-aged Ngok men.

The assisted May and June returns aimed at increasing the number of people in the villages of Noong, Dungup, Today and Awolnhom. They clearly failed in this. By January 2004 only around three hundred, out of a total of over 2,250 people assisted to return in 2003, were found to live in the four villages north of the Kiir river.

Organisation of the Assisted Returns

The May 2003 assisted return was funded by the Deutsche Entwicklungsdienst (DED). Originally the money was earmarked for a survey amongst displaced Dinka Ngok in Khartoum. DED found that the Dinka intelligentsia and the National Development Organisation (NDO) were not open to the idea of a survey, and strongly insisted that the money should be spent on the transportation of some of the displaced back to Abyei. In line with this request, the available budget was spent on the purchase of bus tickets. According to DED there was no further request to provide additional assistance for the returnees upon their return. Though DED saw this form of assisted return as a pilot project, some frustration was communicated regarding the weak follow up given by the UNDP and NDO team on the ground in Abyei. Asking former NDO staff members about this, they indicated that the lack of resources was an important factor in failing to follow up on the well-being of the returnees: *'no additional financial or material resources would be available anyway, so provision of further assistance if and when required would not be possible'*. With NDO made responsible for the organisation of the return of the displaced, DED staff remarked that the returnees were left on their own upon arrival in Abyei.

According to Dinka intellectuals in Khartoum and the National Development Organisation (headed by an intellectual itself) many of the displaced were interested in taking part in the assisted returns. Out of the 840 people participating in the May assisted returns¹²⁸, 217 people were found in the villages in January 2004. With settlement failure rates (Ngok assisted returnees who made it to their villages originally but who then left those villages) of around 40 to 50%, it can be assumed that around 400 persons involved in the May 2003 assisted return made it to the villages initially¹²⁹. The majority of the returnees who did not make it to the villages, or failed to establish themselves, crossed the Kiir to the south, with most of them joining family and kin there. Others made their way back to Khartoum or remained behind in Abyei town as displaced people.

A second assisted return took place in June 2003 and this time much more thought was given in providing support, including food rations upon arrival. Though the USAID money was to be released during the first quarter of 2003 it only became available in early June. Within a week of receiving the money the National Development Organisation had the first people transported to Abyei. NDO felt under pressure to implement the operation as quickly as possible as the rainy season was beginning in

the Abyei area. When asked UNDP about the events an UNDP official mentioned that they had resisted the idea of an assisted return in the Abyei context stating timing, political reality¹³⁰ and the non-voluntary aspect as major concerns. Nevertheless the USAID money was made available to NDO through the UNDP.

UNDP staff in Khartoum indicated that they were putting in every effort to make the planned support for the returnees work, especially the crucial food rations for the returnees in Abyei. WFP flew in an assessment team two weeks after the arrival of the people, to undertake a formal assessment, in line with procedures for the release of food aid. To their frustration the team found few returnees, as most had gone in search of food and shelter. Organisational problems also occurred in terms of the distribution of mosquito nets and blankets. The initial plan was to distribute these items on departure from Khartoum. Fears that such essential items would be sold on the way made the organisation decide to distribute the items upon arrival in Abyei. This did not happen, as NDO had difficulties in getting the needed GoS permits to transport the items to Abyei. When the goods eventually did arrive it proved difficult to trace most of the June returnees. Instead of being distributed, most of the items were stored awaiting formal donor approval for an alternative use.

Box 8.3 The Return of Uncle Ameed Ajiuad Magol from Khartoum to Abyei Town

Displaced in Khartoum Ameed, aged 89, one day heard that the local Ngok organisation 'National Development Organisation' *'was going to do something and that the white men would be involved'*. Ameed decided that he wanted to be in Abyei: *'I belong there and Abyei is where I have to die ... in the land of my grand fathers'*. Ameed managed to get registered, received a bus ticket and was one of the Ngok joining the May 2003 assisted return. He did not tell his son that he went back to Abyei: *'My son would refuse to let me go, he would have stopped me ...'*

As Ameed got off the bus in Abyei town he met his sister Nyan Guek by chance. He did not know that she was living in Abyei town. *'When she saw me she became very, very happy! And so was I! That same day she had a goat slaughtered to celebrate my arrival'*. Ameed saw that the people in Abyei were facing hardship, he himself found the burden acceptable. He insisted that it was good to be back, away from the land belonging to others. *'I was and will be trusting the help of my kinsmen and my fellow brothers'*. Ameed was born in the village of Amiet, not far from Todaj village. *'No-one is living there now, since the evacuation of the village the place lays empty ...'*

Ameed mentioned that he had sent a letter to request his son and family of six in Khartoum to join him in Abyei. *'If he does not have a good job there please let him come. There is a school here so my son's oldest daughter, she is twelve, can join. The most important thing now is to rebuild Awiet, let the people of Awiet return! It is a good area to grow sorghum, it's higher grounds very good for keeping cattle during the rainy season. I am begging for my son and the people of Awiet to return ...'*

The administering of a measles vaccine to the returnees proved difficult to organise. The World Health Organisation was ready to provide it in Khartoum, but concerns were raised by the Ministry of Health demanding that vaccines should be given in El Fula or Abyei town (this would be the responsibility of the hospital/clinics in the area of return). Measles vaccinations were given to most children at the bus

station in Khartoum, with the WHO facilitating the hospital in El Fula to administer the vaccine to the remaining returnees. This did not materialise as the convoy, rather than taking the major roads through El Fula's city centre bypassing its hospital, was re-directed and passed El Fula via its outskirts. Though no official reason was given for this change of plan, it is thought the authorities wanted to downplay the scale of the operation in order not to raise public awareness regarding the unprecedented scale of the return at that particular moment in time. Though UNDP had insisted that the returnees would dis-embark in the villages of their choice (the experience of the first assisted return had shown that Abyei town was not a good drop-off point) local officials directed the buses to Abyei town before returnees could be dropped of in their village of choice.

Only eighty returnees, out of a total of 1,400 people participating in the June assisted return, were found to live in one of the four villages north of the Kiir by the year's end (NDO statistics). The May assisted return proved to be far more successful from a donors perspective, with a quarter of its participants found to be living in the villages.

Factors Contributing to the Sustainable Assisted Return 'Failure'

Donors and implementing agencies interviewed in Khartoum voiced their concern regarding the 2003 assisted returns. The overall feeling was that for assisted returns to be successful, such return programmes must be much better prepared and co-ordinated. Some donors stated that NDO, by signing the agreements, had assumed responsibility for the whole operation, and was in fact the responsible agent to blame for the return failures. Speaking with NDO staff in January 2004 they said that they themselves too had serious doubts about the return, especially regarding its timing aspect. However since it seemed that they would either take or lose the money they decided, so they said, to accept it and make the best of the assisted return.

Clarifying this with UNDP and USAID, both organisations indicated that at the time no doubt was voiced by NDO: *'the whole initiative was at NDO's insistence and demand'*. Sharing this point of view with NDO's senior staff, they said that those who registered themselves knew the risks involved, but had wanted to return anyway: *'they just lacked the money to pay for transportation'*.

The main factors contributing to what was perceived as a failure of the *'sustainable assisted returns'* by the UNDP included the timing of the assisted returns, the selection process of potential beneficiaries, the short time available for preparation of the prospective returnees and the timely humanitarian assistance in villages of return (see box 8.4 for the opinion of the Ngok intellectuals about the role of the international community). These factors were reinforced by the perception of most returnees that the situation in Abyei town (the drop-off point for the May 2003 return and the first stop in Abyei for the June 2003 return) was not safe and *'resembled a war-like situation'*. Settlement in one of the outlying villages without guarantees of security nor coverage of basic needs thus became a bold step. A majority of the returnees decided to cross the Kiir River to the south to join family or kin (the May assisted return), or moved back to Khartoum (the June 2003 return).

Box 8.4 About the International Community: ‘You are Swallowing the Camel but Filter the Fly’**Excerpts from a heated interview with some of the Dinka-Ngok Intellectuals regarding the role of the international community**

‘The issue is that that the United Nations are usually in co-operation with the government. Most of the plans and the ideas are the government’s, they are being adopted by the United Nations agencies for implementation. So the UN should be keen enough not to allow the government to plan or dictate things according to their own interests’.

‘Everybody recognises that the government of Sudan’s military is the most crucial factor in these areas. How to approach them? The UN and donors said that we should not talk openly about such issues. What is the UN fearing? Their biggest shortcoming is that they think about the point of view of the government, while they are coming for the people. And if you are the UN we assume you have power. What should they bother about? It should not succumb to the policies of the Khartoum Government. You have to see were the power rests, the power is with the government. Sometimes those of the UN who observe understand it well, but when they go other people take their place’.

‘You know these two particular repatriations in May and July. Some of us thought “let the gentleman from Europe take their money back”. This is what we said in the meeting ehhw. One of the facts of these repatriations was just the talk. The European man who was in charge of the job here was telling us in a meeting, let it be done silently. Quietly, not to arouse the multitude looking for repatriation. And also not to provoke the government. And then we asked ourselves what is this, what kind of repatriation is this? And therefore the hire of buses was suggested to let people go slowly by themselves. Alone, not an official repatriation being implemented by the UN but by a local organisation! Then we became very suspicious about this kind of thing. And some of us thought “this is going to bring us all a problem”. Because how are we going to segregate people, telling A to go and B not to go? And how are we going to explain that funding is available for A but not for B. And also, in this kind of repatriation the repatriates were told not to carry anything. In fact, in this type of repatriation it was the ticket being paid, only the ticket! And then we said “what sort of repatriation is this? Are they pushing us to life or to death?”. And that is why some of us said let the Europeans go back with their money. That was too extreme ..., so we said, let us talk to the Europeans slowly. These types of repatriation are too bad, mutilating and useless. This is my opinion’.

‘You people representing the international community... swallow the camel but filter the fly! You swallow the camel by not addressing the real issue, which is the government and its policies. But you do filter the flies by being very cautious and particular about the return of the people. It means you are powerless. Really, if you are powerful you swallow the camel so that we can filter the flies ourselves’.

In the Abyei area the rainy season sets in during April, May. In order to maintain at least a very minimum level of food security the cultivation of sorghum is a critical concern for returnees. Clearing of bush and preparations of fields needs to start not later than February. Likewise there is a need to construct a temporal shelter for which a particular kind of grass is needed. This becomes scarce and hard to find¹³¹ by the end of January. Returnees in Abyei mentioned that the ideal time for return is the period from November to January, but certainly not later than March. From a donors perspective early assisted returns do not sound attractive as they require additional food aid. Even assisted return in March would require a minimum of six months food rations during the primary stage of village re-

establishment north of the Kiir in the dry season of 2003-4. As early as January the communities in the newly established villages indicated that they were facing serious food shortages while hard physical labour was needed to clear the forest area and prepare fields to cultivate sorghum.

UNDP, through NDO, made a tractor available to facilitate communities to open up farmland more easily and help absorb the returnees. With the GoS military claiming the tractor for their own use it took UNDP months to get it returned. Even then its use created tensions, as some of the Ngok wanted to exploit the tractor for their own benefit by extending their own area of arable land rather than having land opened up for newcomers.

The terms and conditions on which bus tickets were made available to the displaced in Khartoum had important consequences, and contributed directly to the high 'failure' rate. Bus tickets for the May 2003 return were made available by NDO to displaced people in Khartoum '*fitting the criteria*'. Namely a one-way ticket to Abyei, a limited amount of luggage and a very short notice period to decide and prepare for return. Speaking to some of the returnees in Abyei they remarked that '*since the international community was involved in the preparations for our return we were expecting more assistance ...*'. Regarding the June 2003 return, NDO made bus tickets available to all nine sub-sections of the Dinka Ngok on a proportional base. As the re-established villages represented only two sub-sections, and almost all returnees wanted to return to their own village the 'failure rate' automatically became high. Beneficiaries were also found to have inevitably their own agendas, contradicting with those of donors and implementing organisations. One of the 'failed' returnees in Khartoum explained that he had signed up in order to visit a family member in Abyei town, before returning to Khartoum.

8.4. Experience of Returnees – Abyei Province

Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were held with returnees in the newly established villages north of the Kiir river. As the visit to Awolnhom was not permitted by GoS security and intelligence personnel only the villages of Dongup, Today and Noong were visited. Each visit started with a village walk, after which some key informant interviews were undertaken (box 8.5), followed by a general meeting with the villagers. General return issues and experience of life in the re-established villages were discussed. All activities were overseen by GoS intelligence personnel. Based on the insights, a structured questionnaire was established, exploring the return experience. These questionnaires were administered on a one to one basis by Dinka Ngok facilitators well trusted by the villagers. The administering of these structured questionnaires was not overseen by GoS intelligence.

The most widely shared experiences of the people in the villages related to the sense of security, the issue of food security and the degree to which they felt settled. Life in the area was said to be safe and secure. Probing this issue, it was mentioned that since their return to the villages not one of the villagers had been killed, a rather narrow interpretation of security. Villagers made regular reference to the 2001 Akor peace agreement signed between Dinka Ngok and Missiriya leadership. This agreement was said to be observed well, including by the military and intelligence personnel, and it was clear that the Akor peace agreement had generated some trust amongst the villagers.

Box 8.5 The Return of Aguek Kiir Ajeang from Twic Territory to Dongup

In 1986 Aguek and other people of Dongup village brought a great many cattle with them on their flight to the south. All of them lost cattle due to overgrazing, diseases and insecurity. Aguek was one of the few who lost all his cattle. He and his family were depending on the cultivation of sorghum and some maize and “*Twic is not a good area for that*” he remarked.

‘Of the twenty years in Twic area the first ten years were very difficult, mainly because of insecurity in the area. Food dropped from planes helped us to survive. When the militia raids and aerial bombardments became less and less, security improved. Food aid helped us to establish ourselves and to become independent: “when you eat you work and when you work you eat”. It is like the Ngok south of the Kiir .. they are independent now and no longer need food aid’.

‘With peace the people of Dongup will come back. Our land is fertile, it is not like the land of the Dinka Twic. We will open up large fields and produce enough sorghum to be able to buy goats and then cattle. This land is good for doing that. If you have one cow and two goats you will have two to three newborns within two to three years. Then you will manage. When people return and receive some assistance they will do well. The people of Dongup used to be self-sufficient. They were not a dependent people!’.

Most villagers indicated that they were facing hunger, another important issue related to food shortages. The first two sorghum harvests had been very disappointing. In 2002, the newly established villages experienced a near total loss of crops due to the SPLA attack on Todaj village. The subsequent evacuation of all the villagers to Abyei town meant that an abundance of birds could forage freely on the small area under sorghum production. The 2003 harvest was not much better since rains started late and harvest time also saw some heavy rains. Reliance on the consumption of wild foods was said to be high. Without the availability and the freedom to access these foods life would have been very hard indeed, especially during the most critical time of the year, the time known as ‘*Ruel*’. This is the period between August-October, a time of weeding and a time to await the harvest. With villages just established and with two consecutive poor harvests, consumption of wild foods was mentioned as critical for survival. Though children generally looked well nourished in January 2004 the issue of child nutrition was brought up by some women. Villagers were found to be very busy with a variety of tasks, all requiring a lot of effort and energy.

Most villagers felt that they became more settled and lived more ‘normal’ lives. Opening up of farmland and cultivation of maize and sorghum was found to be an important indicator of this. Clearly the villagers expected more returnees to join them in their efforts to expand the farmlands and develop the village. They were looking forward to family re-unification. The most important consequences of others joining them were said to be (in decreasing order of importance):

- Further development of the village
- Re-establishment of family and kinship ties
- Integration and family re-unification

- Increased ability to help oneself in becoming less dependent on outside aid.

A point of concern voiced was that with new arrivals the villagers expected serious food shortages, with the locally available supply of wild forest foods being outstripped. Though of a temporary nature, the villagers emphasised the need for additional food aid in order to ‘absorb’ the new arrivals.

Important referents regarding life as returnees in the re-established villages were reported to be the NGOs (notably at that stage NDO and UNDP), traditional leaders, and the local authorities. NGOs played a major role in establishing or funding the services available in the villages such as water yards (water pumped from tube wells and stored in metal containers above the ground), health care services, tools, agricultural inputs and educational facilities. The Greater Nile oil company paid for extensive repairs to the hospital as well as the construction of a secondary school in Abyei town. The company also funded the construction of a water yard in two of the villages. Traditional leadership is strong in the villages, and the chiefs play a vital role in the establishment of the villages. They serve as important spokespersons for the NGOs and local authorities. The village committees established by the NGO’s and UNDP play a much more limited role regarding village life and its challenges¹³².

Vulnerable Groups

From the interviews it appeared that the returnees were particular about the people at risk (*‘Koc Mam’*): especially youngsters (*‘Koc Riny Thei’*) and elderly (*‘Koc Dit Ci Theiop’*). Youngsters were found to be nearly absent in the villages of Dongup, Todaj, Noong and even more so in Abyei town. Talking with some of them it is clear that their key concern is related to security. Fear of being suspected to support the SPLA or spy for them and *‘things that could happen to us’* makes life dangerous. This issue was highlighted by the departure of around eighty youngsters and middle-aged men from the village of Awolnhom into SPLA controlled areas south of the Kiir after the GoS had increased their military presence in the vicinity of that village.

Young people without family or kin in the villages mentioned that, since they did not know how to construct tukuls, they expected to have to pay for them. Some of the older women in the villages supplement their income by collecting grass, which they sell to middlemen in Abyei. By early February good quality grass becomes scarce, and the women earn around forty US Dollars for an amount sufficient to thatch a mid-sized tukul. Youngsters expect to face a food shortage in the villages, and combined with the lack of job opportunities life is perceived as difficult. Young people operate from a different concept with regard to acquiring food security and this has led to arguments between the older and younger people. One such argument was witnessed during a visit. Older returnees regard production of sorghum and maize as well as cattle rearing as the way to acquire food security. Reflecting their urban exposure youngsters are oriented towards job opportunities that will earn them money, with which they plan to buy food. However it appeared that youngsters are also interested in tending their own fields, if provided necessary tools and inputs. In contrast to the older generation they are probably more receptive to try new ways of agricultural production.

With a number of well documented cases of government soldiers raping young women, sexual violence was mentioned as a serious problem. Though concerns had been shared by relevant agencies with the authorities the problem persisted. Most cases of rape and harassment related to young women

travelling to or from Abyei town from across the Kiir river. Young women in the villages and Abyei town will doubtless feel at risk as well.

8.5. Experience of Returnees – Abyei County

A considerable number of Ngok have never completely evacuated their villages south of the river Kiir. During the years of insecurity they hid in the bush surrounding the villages or they moved south to Twic territory during the dry season in order to avoid potential danger or confrontation with armed militias.

During the rainy season military activity in the area by GoS supported Murahaleen was strongly reduced, creating opportunities for cultivation. Those staying in or near their villages opened up small fields to cultivate sorghum. Others came out of Twic territory, constructed a small wet season hut, and cultivated sorghum or maize in their home area during the rainy season. At times the Murahaleen destroyed the crops, trying to discourage the people from cultivating in order to vacate the area permanently. Therefore harvest was undertaken at the earliest possible occasion. Rather than storing it on a platform on stilts in the traditional way it became common to store the sorghum underground on top of a layer of wood and grasses. The storage place would be covered by a layer of branches and grass, and topped with clayey soil to hide it from the Murahaleen. Water seepage, insects and rodents were said to spoil the sorghum and maize in many such underground storages. In any case, a considerable number of Ngok kept on trying to grow their dura (sorghum), and by doing so a fairly substantial production capacity was maintained in the area.

By the late 1990s Murahaleen raiding was challenged by an increasingly potent SPLA organised armed resistance in the area south of Kiir, inflicting heavy casualties amongst the raiders. As the incidence of Murahaleen incursions was strongly reduced the security situation greatly improved. Starting in 2000, plots of land were opened up in Kiir Kow as far as the southern bank of the Kiir river. Most of the farmers were Dinka Ngok returnees originating from villages in the area. They were joined by a substantial number of impoverished Dinka Twic who sought to cultivate sorghum to feed themselves and market their surplus in order to re-acquire cattle. The Twic were welcome to cultivate land in Kiir Kow as they had provided the Ngok shelter and residence during the years of conflict. Though allowed to cultivate, the Twic cannot exercise ownership rights over such lands. In due time, when the rightful former owners return they have the right to claim their fields back and request the Twic to open up another plot of land.

As of 2002 people in Abyei County were expecting peace, and by early 2004 seemed to be increasingly confident about a positive outcome of the peace talks. Relatively large numbers of Ngok were found settling in Kiir Kow (box 8.6 presents the story of May Naykuec Marac). As another sign of that confidence household heads started to bring their wives and respective children from Twic territory and Khartoum to settle in the area (in times of duress 'positioning' of wives and their respective children at different locations is employed as an important coping mechanism).

Within one to two years following their return some returnee households were able to produce a significant surplus of sorghum. The area is fertile, and a number of sorghum varieties produce up to

two crops a year. ‘Ruoth’ or ‘Ruath’ is a particular favourite variety in the area and is cultivated with the prime purpose of acquiring food security quickly. Part of the surplus production is traded or exchanged for items such as salt, sugar or, more importantly, for cattle. Part is kept to cover food needs in case the next crop fails. Dinkas who own cattle (mainly kept at Twic territory so far) organise work parties by inviting their neighbours to work their fields in exchange of food and beer brewed from sorghum. As relatively few of the Khartoum arrivals come with enough assets to organise such work parties, they depend on family and kin for their direct survival, and their support help them to open up a small field of their own.

Box 8.6 May Naykuec Marac’s Return from Khartoum to Agok

In 2003 May Naykuec, her husband and their four year old son returned to Agok area from Khartoum. May’s husband had left the Agok area for Khartoum as a young boy in 1983. May herself left in 1988 as a young girl. A few years ago they met and married in Khartoum where they lived in Haj Yousif, one of the IDP camps.

‘In Khartoum you have to look for a job always. We were dependent and our culture was eroded. In Khartoum there is hardship, the Arabs dishonour you. They say “you earn this much” but when they pay you it is half or even less. They are treating us as slaves, as small children. I was not prepared to wash for them for the rest of my life. We also had no good shelter there. Even this dry season hut is better than the shelter we had in Khartoum’.

‘My husband and me, we saved money to pay for transportation from Khartoum to Abyei town. But the truck that took us broke down and we were stranded for almost a week on the way. Even drinking water was not for free, we had to pay for it. People would not give it to us for free. We spend almost all our savings on that journey ...’.

‘Crossing the Kiir river was another problem. We were stopped at the army barracks. We were questioned and our items were taken. The valuable items, such as our radio cassette recorder and the locally made pots that we were bringing. It was taken by them ... At this side of the Kiir river we were welcomed, there were no such problems’.

‘We arrived here in the month of May, 2003. Too late to clear the bush and cultivate. This year we will open up a farm. My husband recently joined the SPLA and is now under training. He joined to have an income but more so because of the bad treatment that we received by the Arabs in the north. Our relatives here are helping us. Especially my sister Angkor. She came with her husband from Twic to this area in January 2003’.

Twic territory is characterised by flood plains. During the wet season the area is not suitable for cattle as diseases become endemic and can result in substantial loss of animals¹³³. Since the low laying clayey and fertile soils are prone to flooding, sorghum cultivation is limited to the poorer higher situated sandy soils, which in turn are prone to drought. Traditionally the Dinka Twic exchange cattle for grain in Abyei County and Twic women barter baskets for grain. With an heifer netting around one hundred kilos of dura and a young bull around fifty kilos exchange rates in the dry season of 2004 were not favourable for the Dinka Twic. Since the Dinka Ngok produced a surplus of sorghum in the area they have the purchasing power to acquire cattle and start rebuilding their herds.

Returnee influx from the north takes place along four different crossing points of the Kiir. These crossing points can be reached in a two to three hour walk from Abyei town. Visiting the major crossing point in January 2003 around three hundred people were seen to cross the Kiir on what was said to be a typical day. Around two hundred of them were returnees, just over half returning Ngok. As crossings are permitted only twice a week by the GoS, the total number of Dinka Ngok returnees is around two-hundred. When the three minor crossing points are included around five hundred Ngok returned every week, or two thousand a month. According to the peace monitors, appointed to document the number of returnees, crossings start early November and come to an end by April/May. December till February are seeing the highest numbers of returnee crossings, a rough estimate of around six thousand people. During the other four months an additional two to three thousand enter. This brings the total number of returnees into Agok County to around eight to nine thousand people for the 2003-4 dry season period¹³⁴. This is a considerable number, considering that the assisted returns of 2003 involved a total of less than three thousand people.

Returnees settle in the payam's (administrative units) south of the Kiir River according to their section and clan. Because of the Ngok returnee influx from both the north and south into Kiir Kow, as well as the influx of impoverished Twic, Abyei County has seen a recent but very significantly increase in the number of people moving there. This influx has been managed without massive outside aid¹³⁵. Indeed, the Dinka Ngok in Abyei County realised a surplus of an estimated two thousand metric tons of sorghum in 2002, the only surplus area in West Kordofan and Bahr el Ghazal (personal communication senior staff UNDP). The international community has been providing some basic services such as access to safe and reliable water sources (tube-wells), medical as well as educational services.

The Dinka Ngok territory south of the Kiir River will not be able to sustain large numbers of Dinka Ngok for a prolonged period of time. During the years of conflict fields south of the Kiir River have been farmed and soils depleted, mainly because simsim, a cash crop and natural soil fertilizer, has not been grown in the area due to dysfunctional markets (cultivation of simsim is an essential element of the land use system – without it sorghum production is not sustainable in the long run). As a result, farmers have given up sorghum production in certain areas already to allow the soil to recuperate. Increasingly new plots are opened up farther away from village centres, and thus farther away from perennial and seasonal streams, leading to increased seasonal movements of Ngok households in order to access water sources in the dry season.

8.6. Discussion

The aim of the assisted returns of 2003 was to facilitate the return of displaced Ngok households from the camps and squatter areas of Khartoum to the newly established villages of Noong, Dungop, Todaj and Awolnhom. UNDP's immediate objective, to be achieved by the end of 2003, was to assist the return of up to five hundred displaced households to a '*safe and secure environment with opportunities for sustainable livelihoods*'. Clearly this objective was not met. Not only had the number of people living in the villages dropped to 800 by the end of 2003, with around a quarter of them participating in the assisted returns, but the villages environments could not be described as safe and secure, let alone to offer possibilities for durable livelihoods.

Preparatory planning and thoughtful projection is needed regarding what will happen when people arrive in areas of return. Even then well-informed flexible responses and pre-positioning of relief aid is needed to avoid a humanitarian crisis, not to speak about the many challenges involved in longer-term development (box 8.7). Procedures should be appropriate to circumstances, e.g. it does not make sense to carry out a needs assessment in order to define the number of food aid beneficiaries two weeks after returnees were dropped off by bus in Abyei town.

Box 8.7 Why Area Based Recovery Plans will have to Work, at least Initially ...

Excerpts of an interview with a senior aid official

'Can it work? It must work! It's the only way out! Area based recovery plans are ideal grounds for NGOs. An NGO is very localised. They don't have the big picture about what's going on but they have the picture for the 15 villages they are working in. And I think that's the way forward. To go from relief to recovery, to get the communities involved more and more. That's the challenge as the donors want to see progress. The UN is running the show now with recovery but as soon as we move into developmental planning the government will have to take over. As soon as the government takes over that project it can collapse in five or six seconds. Because as soon as you do development you need the Ministry of planning. Now its fine ... there is nothing so you can act quickly. But you do need a strategy, a vision for longer-term development. Where is the SPLA's vision and where is the GoS vision?'

'So what is the problem in Abyei? We have to look at that because it will be different from Upper Nile, from Bahr el Gazahl, Wau. But the potential of the area is better understood by those working in there. That is why we move into area based recovery. Because the intervention is much more intensive. You go from seeds/tools to livelihood recovery. Capacity building, community involvement. Where do you have somebody on the ground to follow that project full-time? As long as we are in relief or early rehabilitation ... but when it becomes development then the point is to what extent is the government serious, is committed to develop its communities. Sudan for the last fifty years ... they have done nothing.'

The idea that the displaced lacked only the financial means to return is an in-appropriate generalisation of displaced people's return behaviour. A general question as to whether or not a displaced Ngok wants to return to Abyei can set a dangerous precedent. The answer to such an emotive oriented question provides insufficient grounds on which to base an intervention. Though the assisted returns were seen as a failure by the UNDP and its donors, the returns were exploited by a considerable number of Ngok in pursuit of their own agendas, interests or return strategies. However, the offer of free transportation seems to have invited a considerable number of people to outweigh an emotional return response for a more reasoned one, placing a considerable number of people effectively at risk. Areas of return, and certainly the area north of the Kiir, were found to present a volatile return environment, particularly so for young men, girls, women and the elderly.

At the time of the assisted returns, the scale of spontaneous return was of a much more significant order than the assisted returns, with thousands of displaced Ngok returning from Khartoum to the area

south of the Kiir river, making use of their own resources and means. Yet no efforts were taken in trying to understand the background of these people, their expectations and motivations for return.

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement identify the rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of internally displaced persons in all phases of displacement (OCHA, 1998). The Principles set forth guarantees for safe return, resettlement and re-integration¹³⁶ (appendix 8.1). The guidelines rightly emphasise that full participation of the displaced themselves must be sought in the planning and implementation of return, resettlement and reintegration programmes.

Participation of the displaced in the planning and implementation of return process pre-assumes a critical understanding of displaced people's return strategies and options. It is not about how people return, but why they undertake return. What constitutes return environments that displaced people are willing and prepared to return too? What are their beliefs and expectations of home that inform their decision to return? The next chapter, chapter nine, will explore the return antecedents of the displaced Ngok in Khartoum by applying the extended TORA model.

Photographs IDP Study



Living conditions in the camps in and around Khartoum are very poor and life is hard.



Discussing return issues with displaced Dinka Ngok in Jabarane camp, Khartoum: *'We all long to return to the land of our grand fathers!'*



Many communities in southern Sudan depend on food aid to avoid severe malnourishment, yet many of its leaders are adamant: *'we are not a dependant people and with peace we will look after ourselves!'*



Recalling Dinka Ngok ~Missiriya discontent in the past and how tribal leaders used to manage potential conflict and calm down the situation: *'the politics of those in power have brought havoc to our area!'*



Facing the hunger gap. With food stocks running low as early as February 2004, and the rainy season months away, this Dinka Twic household will face hardship.



For many Ngok youngsters return to Abyei presents a harsh reality. Villages have to be rebuilt from scratch after total destruction in the mid 1980s and rural life will be different from the urban lifestyle in displacement.



Dinka Ngok setting up dry season shelter near Agok in Kiir Kow as water becomes a scarce commodity further away from small streams



Markets are a place to meet and enquire about the whereabouts and well-being of relatives and kin. Many Dinka from Abyei County cross the Kiir river to visit this important market in the garrison town of Abyei (February, 2004).

9. Return Planning of Internally Displaced Dinka Ngok

This chapter explores the antecedents of internally displaced Dinka Ngok, residing in camps and squatter areas in and around Khartoum, to return to their home area of Abyei. The intention of this chapter is to demonstrate the application of the TORA in forced migrations situations in general, and its practical use in answering important questions related to return policy, and programming in particular.

The initial study was commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Khartoum to provide insight into the factors driving return of Internally Displaced People (IDPs). Questions needed to be addressed regarding the issues taken into account when deciding return by one such particular group, the displaced Ngok of Abyei, and whether these were generally common across the displaced Ngok population or whether there were important differences? Research into the sources and channels of information used by the displaced to inform the return decision was also needed. Insight in issues like these would be of great value for informing return strategies and support programmes. In the light of the mixed experience of the assisted returns in 2003, as described in chapter 8, this was especially relevant.

Anticipating a break-through in the peace process, another imminent issue for the UNDP centred around the question of what would happen after the signing of the peace agreement in terms of return processes. Would this lead to an exodus of the displaced back to southern Sudan, putting serious strains on relief and re-integration efforts in areas of return? Questions and issues like these call for the need to gain insight in the level to which the internally displaced plan to return, and understand the way their return decision is informed. This is instrumental in helping to support and manage the return of the displaced.

This chapter is organised in seven sections. The first section introduces the application of the extended Theory of Reasoned Action in the study of Dinka Ngok return, followed by a description of the Dinka Ngok sample in the second section. The third section presents some of the major findings of general return intent. The fourth section reflects on the 2003 assisted returns (described in chapter 8) by analysing the data obtained by the TORA model. The fifth section explores the dynamics of influential blockages and drivers influencing the level to which the displaced Ngok plan to return. Section six deals with the issue of vulnerability, both vulnerability expressed in displacement as well as vulnerability associated with return. The last section, section seven, concludes the chapter by providing a short discussion.

9.1. Applying the Extended TORA in the IDP Study

Fieldwork was carried out in Khartoum and Abyei in early 2004. In Abyei, Dinka Ngok communities were visited in the resettlement villages north of the Kiir river, under control of the Government of Sudan forces, and south of the Kiir in areas controlled by the SPLA. In order to increase the relevance of the study three return moments were defined: imminent return (the 2003/4 dry season), return directly following the peace agreement (dry season 2004/5) and return to a peaceful and stable Abyei. In April 2004 the second stage TORA was implemented by administering the structured questionnaire to Ngok household heads in camps and squatter areas of Khartoum. With the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement in January 2005 the outcomes of this study are particularly interesting in exploring return dynamics in the post peace agreement stage.

The research involved a two-stage interdependent data gathering process. Initially the outcome beliefs and social referents common to the displaced Dinka Ngok population were identified through focus groups discussions with household heads, or their representatives, in four IDP camps around Khartoum (a participative process). The second stage was to incorporate the identified salient outcome beliefs and pertinent referents in a structured questionnaire which was administered to household heads in twenty-seven different IDP camps and squatter areas. In all, 279 useable responses were acquired by face-to-face interviews undertaken by well-trained and respected Dinka Ngok enumerators.

For an introduction of the Theory of Reasoned Action reference is made to section 4.3 and 4.4.

First Stage

The majority of the Dinka Ngok fleeing the conflict in Abyei to the north ended up in urban centres of northern Sudan, notably Khartoum. In and around Khartoum the Ngok are found scattered over various camps, squatter areas and major building and construction sites. According to Ngok leadership in 2004, relatively large numbers could be found in Jaborana, Mayo, Hai Yousif and Dar es Salaam displaced people camps. The first-stage assessment concentrated on the Ngok populations in these camps. People in the camps have reasonable access to water, health care, schooling and in some cases electricity. Though living conditions vary, by far the majority of people live in absolute poverty, in little more than shacks. They describe their lives as miserable. In the past food aid was distributed by the international community, but this was phased out some years ago. Regular food targeting exercises were said to be undertaken to avoid widespread malnutrition amongst the camp dwellers.

In each of the four camps nine focus group discussions were organised by Dinka Ngok facilitators. In total thirty-six focus group discussions, involving seventy-nine men and ninety-seven women, represent the overall return opinions and perspectives of the displaced Ngok in Khartoum. The aim of the discussions was to get an insight how the displaced Ngok perceive return and what their expectations were of home. Feedback was obtained by using a structured questionnaire to discern for return beliefs and expectations, their prominence and importance across the different focus groups. Three distinct return moments were selected regarding people's intention to return and settle in order

to explore the dynamic nature of return: those households who were going to return 'now' irrespective of the peace agreement, those whose return is dependent on the signing of a peace agreement and lastly those who will only return once they are convinced that the region of Abyei is at peace. The participants were furthermore asked from whom they would seek advice regarding their decision to return to settle in Abyei. The focus groups discussions were facilitated by Dinka Ngok who had received a short training, and given follow up during their work. Key informant interviews were held to further explore some of the emerging issues coming out of the focus group discussions (e.g. the different situation in the area controlled by the SPLA as opposed to the part of Abyei controlled by the Government of Sudan).

The most important beliefs and referents (accounting for at least 75% of all emitted return beliefs and referents in line with recommendations of Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) form the basis of the second stage application of the Theory of Reasoned Action.

Second Stage

The second stage of the TORA, the structured interview schedule, consists of two parts. The first part deals with the so-called descriptive variables, and the second part with the TORA variables.

Regarding the descriptive variables, the survey sought to identify differences in return intentions and its four determinants by differentiating displaced Dinka Ngok household categories on a number of criteria's. Reference is made to table 9.1.

The second part, the TORA variables, sought at a first and general level to identify the displaced Ngok's migrational return Intent. At a second level direct readings of Stated Attitude, Stated Subjective Norm, the Perceived Level of Control and Perceived Vulnerability were taken. At the third level more informed readings were taken for attitude and subjective norm. Reference is made to figure 4.1 and appendix 6.1 which further describes the construct of the interview schedule, the specific areas of enquiry and the way in which each variable has been elicited and measured (the structure of the IDP study is analogous with the refugee study).

The TORA claims that the intention to undertake a particular behaviour is a reliable indicator of future behaviour if the expressed attitude toward this behaviour (Stated Attitude), or the perceived social pressure to do so (Stated Subjective Norm), correlate closely with stated Intent. A comparison of the strength of the correlation of Attitude¹³⁷ and Subjective Norm¹³⁸ with stated Intent¹³⁹ to return indicates which of the components has greater influence on refugees' decision to return. The Perceived Level of Control¹⁴⁰ is an extension of the model, to make it more sensitive towards behavioural intentions which are not under the complete control of the subjects' themselves. The Perceived Vulnerability¹⁴¹ is a further extension to the model, as suggested by this study. This extension was added in order to enhance the sensitivity of the TORA model to hazard prone or risky contexts.

Particular note has to be made of the observation that some of the return beliefs elicited during the first stage of the interview process are evaluative and represent, to speak with the words of Carr (1989: 212) '*grey areas where beliefs shade into values*'. Such value statements are not covered by the

model. For example the statement *'returning to settle in Abyei is best done when transport is organised by the international community even if no further assistance is provided upon arrival'* is, as such, not a return belief or an outcome expectation of return, but rather a return modality. Statements like these are therefore omitted when measuring the Calculated Attitude. However, rather than leaving out such statements completely it was decided to take them into account when discussing Ngok return since they represent information that makes sense, for example in exploring the various belief domains associated with return. Appendix 9.3.1 indicates which return statements do not represent true expected outcomes related to return.

The TORA interview schedule can be found in appendix 9.1. The development of the questionnaire closely followed the format recommended by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980: 216-273). A total of 279 Ngok households were interviewed through an at random, stratified cluster sampling process involving Ngok communities located in twenty-seven camps/squatter areas in and around Khartoum. Regarding the sampling methodology reference is made to section 4.4. The cluster sampling process is presented in appendix 9.2.

The research applies bi-variant analysis to compare one group with another in turn. Therefore non-parametric statistical methods, such as the 'Mann-Whitney U' test and the 'Spearman' correlation were used. Data was analysed by using the statistical software programme SPSS.

9.2. Displaced Dinka Ngok Households

General Characteristics

A total of 279 Dinka Ngok household heads (72%), or individuals representing the household head in his or her absence (28%), were interviewed in 27 camps and squatter places. Over half the respondents were female (51%)! With an average household size of 9.4 persons the sample covers 2,600 persons representing the total Dinka Ngok displaced community in Khartoum. With an estimated population of around 80,000 the sample covers 3.25% of the overall Ngok population in Khartoum.

Table 9.1 presents the general characteristics of the sample in line with the descriptive variables.

9.3. General Intention of Displaced Ngok to Return to Abyei

Return Intentions

The overall intention of the displaced Dinka Ngok in Khartoum to return to Abyei is strong (mean value of 4.00 on a scale of -6 'very weak' to +6 'very strong' intention to return; appendix 9.3.1). However, distinct differences in return intent are expressed for the three return options. The intention to return 'now' (that is April/May 2004 before the signing of the peace agreement) is slightly positive (value of 0.51 on a scale of -2 'very weak' to +2 'very strong'). With the signing of a peace

agreement the intention to return becomes strong to very strong (mean value of 1.57). When peace has been established and tried on the ground, return planning is very strong (a mean value of 1.92). The outcomes demonstrate that return planning becomes stronger over time. The signing of a peace agreement between GoS and the SPLM/A marks a strong increase in return planning, from an ambivalent positive level to a strong to very strong level. There still appears to be a considerable difference in return intent following the signing of a peace agreement, and with Abyei seen to present a stable and peaceful environment to return to.

Table 9.1 General Characteristics of the Dinka Ngok Sample

Descriptor Variable	Categories
Location of camps or squatter areas	Khartoum (34%), Omdurman (33%) and Khartoum North (34%)
Dinka Ngok sections	Kouj (43%); Akook (35%); Gok (23%)
Location of home village	North of Kiir (83%); south of Kiir (17%)
Re-construction process in camp	Lost house due to re-construction over last two years (66%); those who didn't (34%)
Perceived vulnerability in displacement	Highly vulnerable (75%); moderately- (19%); slightly- (4%); not-vulnerable (1%)
Type of respondent	Household head (72%); his or her representative (28%)
Age categories	43 years (mean): under 25 (6%); 25-50 (73%); over 50 (22%)
Gender respondent	Women (51%); men (49%)
Marital status	Single (5%); Married (71%); widowed, divorced or abandoned (25%)
Number of wives/household head	One wife (50%); two or more wives (50%)
Household size	Average 9.4 persons; less than 4 persons (3%); between 4 to 8 (47%); over 9 (49%)
Educational background	No schooling (66%); primary or secondary (29%); college or higher (5%)
Professional training	Health- or educational-sector (9%); military or police (9%)
Wealth status prior to conflict	Owned a farm (90%); owned cattle (93%)
Income of households	Out of a regular job or daily labour (90%), no income out of job or daily labour (10%)
Critical event initiating flight	War or conflict (37%); killing of people (30%); destruction of homes, property and raiding (18%); kidnapping of children (4%)
Type of Flight	Direct to Khartoum (67%); indirect (33%)
Displacement experience	Refugees (0%); being internally displaced before (33%); no prior experience (67%)
Whereabouts family/relatives	Kin in Abyei (90% - of those 36% in/close by home village); not known (10%)
Visited home area in last two years	Household heads (21%); relatives (84%)
Key benefits of staying in Khartoum	Access to education (33%); 'no benefit at all!' (32%); good security (32%)
Key challenges of staying in Khartoum	Finding a job (36%); poor/difficult living conditions (24%); imprisonment (7%); discrimination (6%); poor wages (5%)
Biggest threat towards future in Abyei	Conflict Dinka and Missiriya or Murahaleen (98%); conflict GoS-SPLA (1%); conflict Dinka - other southern tribes (1%)

Tendency in Undertaking Spontaneous vs. Assisted/Organised Repatriation

Considering the sample as a whole, households demonstrating a high intention to return are regarded as most likely to return spontaneously. Household categories expressing a high degree of return planning are (in brackets values of return intent on a scale of -6 'very weak' to +6 'very strong'; and the percentage of sample represented by the particular household category; see appendix 9.3):

1. Households lacking an income from a job or daily labour (4.81; 10%)
2. Households whose head has had professional training in the field of policing or the army (4.68; 9%) or health or education (4.42; 9%)
3. Households expressing no seen benefit by being in Khartoum (4.48; 32%)
4. Households whose head has attended higher education (4.36; 5%).

Household categories expressing relatively low return intentions are likely to return at later stages, or to participate in assisted returns or organised repatriation (if provided). The following household categories express relative low levels of return planning:

1. Households perceiving themselves moderately vulnerable in displacement (3.20; 19%)
2. Small household made up by one to three persons (3.25; 3%)
3. Households who regard education as the main benefit of being in Khartoum (3.47; 33%)
4. Households not having family or relatives in Abyei (3.55; 10%)
5. Households having a regular income from a job or daily labour (3.56; 90%).

Statistically significant differences (Mann-Whitney tests) regarding the level to which household categories within any particular descriptor variable plan to return can be seen as a function of return. At a general level (sum of the three return options) return planning and return strategies are found to be a function of just three variables (household category showing highest intention to return vs. lowest):

- Income from a job or daily labour: those lacking such income vs. having such income
- The perceived level of vulnerability in displacement: those regarding themselves highly vulnerable vs. those regarding themselves moderately vulnerable
- The benefits associated with being in Khartoum: households not seeing any benefit vs. households regarding education as the main benefit.

Households having an income from a job or daily labour show a significantly lower intention to return when compared with households lacking such income (mean values of 3.90 and 4.81 respectively: scale -6 'very weak' to +6 'very strong' intention to return: appendix 9.3.14). For return 'now' and 'after the signing of the peace agreement' return planning is significantly lower for households having such income. But 'when there is a true and lasting peace' households with an income from a job or daily labour show a strongly and significantly higher intention to return (values of 1.94 and 1.74 on a scale of -2 'very weak' to +2 'very strong' intention to return). So it appears that households enjoying an income tend not to give up such benefits for what they may perceive as a rather insecure future in Abyei in the immediate aftermath of the signing of a peace agreement.

Household heads perceiving their household to be highly vulnerable in Khartoum (there is a strong relationship here with the absence of income from a job or daily labour) demonstrate a significantly higher level of return planning in general, and for the return option 'now' as compared with households expressing to be moderately vulnerable in displacement (see appendix 9.3.15). This is likely to partly reflect a desire to improve on one's living conditions in Khartoum by returning to Abyei.

The level of intent expressed by household heads that do not see any benefit in staying in Khartoum is significantly higher than that expressed by households that regard education as the main benefit. This is the case for both general return intent and return option 'now' (appendix 9.3.21). Each category constitutes around a third of the displaced Ngok population in Khartoum. The importance of education in Khartoum translates into a lower return intent.

In general, household heads expressing high levels of return intent are those that seem to be of the opinion that: '*Mam Piny Da Anguen, Mam Piny Lei*' (literally: 'it's better to suffer in our own land than to suffer in the land of others').

Return Beliefs and Expectations of Abyei – Strength of Outcome Attitudes

In total fifty-one salient modal return beliefs were established. The full and original statements are found in the interview schedule (appendix 9.1). Shorter statements are used in the text, tables and appendices (see appendix 9.4 for an overview of these shorter statements). Regarding return to Abyei, the displaced Ngok in Khartoum feel most positive about the following return beliefs (Outcome Attitude strengths in brackets, that is the product of belief strength and outcome evaluation):

1. Happy to be in the land of our grand fathers (3.60)
2. Best done in the period December to March (3.45)
3. Come to own goats or cattle (3.34)
4. Need provision of handtools to cultivate (3.30)
5. Open up a field and start cultivating (3.20)
6. Keep my birth rights (3.18)
7. Burial in my home area (3.18).

The Ngok feel most negative regarding the following return beliefs:

1. The abundance of firearms makes it difficult to achieve lasting peace (-2.01)
2. Our young people lack access to higher education in Abyei (-1.76)
3. Will not be possible since I can't afford transportation (-1.76)
4. Face serious shortage of safe and reliable drinking water (-1.46)
5. Difficulties in constructing our tukuls or shelters (-1.16)
6. Difficult to make use of modern health care services (-1.13)
7. Experience serious food shortages and face hunger (-1.08).

Appendix 9.4 presents all fifty-one return beliefs and expectations of home ranked in decreasing order of Outcome Attitude strengths.

Household categories demonstrating the highest attitude to return are: households whose head has a professional background in the military or police; households not having an income from a job or daily labour; those whose head has a background in education or health sector; households which do not see any benefit of staying in Khartoum, and; households whose head has visited Abyei in the period May 2002-4 (appendix 9.3).

Household categories demonstrating the lowest attitudes to return to settle in Abyei are: households whose head is younger than 25 years; small households made up of one to three people; households which perceive themselves as moderately vulnerable in displacement; households not represented by their head at the time of interviewing, and; those households which regard education as the main benefit of staying in Khartoum (appendix 9.3).

Social Referents - Strength of Referent Subjective Norms

Chiefs and traditional leaders (the displaced refer to their local leaders elected in the camps as well as the tribal leaders in Abyei), family members, NGOs and the GoS were commonly mentioned as important referents regarding the decision to return to Abyei. As such the SPLM/A or political leaders of the Ngok were not mentioned at all. This most likely relates to the sensitivity of the environment and the presence of GoS security and intelligence during this stage of the assessment. Realising the importance of the SPLM/A the ‘movement’ was included as a prominent referent in the administering of the structured interview. Table 9.2 provides an overview of the social referents.

Table 9.2 Calculated Subjective Norm Ngok Study: Normative Beliefs, Motivation to Comply and Referent Subjective Norms

Referent Subjective Norms	Normative Belief (b)	Motivation to Comply (m)	Referent Subjective Norm (b*m)
United Nations, the international community	1.91	1.90	3.68
Political Leaders (SPLA)	1.29	1.20	2.17
Close Family and Household Members	1.25	1.18	1.97
Relatives	1.10	1.08	1.92
Traditional Leaders	1.03	1.08	1.81
International or Local NGOs	0.51	0.51	1.72
Recent arrivals from, or visitors to, Abyei	0.59	0.44	1.20
The Khartoum Government	-0.28	-0.44	0.85
Sum of Referent Subjective Norms (n 8): scale –32 to +32			15.4

NB 1 Scale b and m: –2 ‘very weak’ to +2 ‘very strong’

Referent Subjective Norms most strongly expressed in support of return are the United Nations or the international community (America and the European Union were seen to be the major driving forces behind the peace process and the return of the people), the political leaders of the displaced and household members and family. The Ngok perceived the government of Sudan as being against their return to Abyei, their motivation to comply with Khartoum was found to be weak.

Household categories demonstrating the highest subjective norms to return are: those whose head has had military or police training; households not having an income from a job or daily labour; face poor living conditions in Khartoum; originate from villages south of the Kiir river, and; do not see any benefit of staying in Khartoum (appendix 9.3).

Household categories showing the lowest subjective norms to return to settle in Abyei are: household heads which did not own a farm or cattle prior to displacement; represented by heads under the age of 25; not having family in Abyei, and; those who fled because of destruction of their villages, grain reserves and the raiding of cattle (appendix 9.3).

The Nature of Behavioural Control

The Perceived Level of Control is the ease or difficulty of returning to settle in Abyei and is assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles. The overall mean value for the level of control indicates that households regard themselves as being slightly in control of the return decision and process (5.6 on a scale of -18 'no control' to +18 'complete control').

Household categories demonstrating the highest level of control are: those not having an income from a job or daily labour; whose head has attended college or university; see poor living conditions as their main problem of being in Khartoum; households whose head have a background in health or education, and; households regarding security as the main benefit of being in Khartoum (appendix 9.3)

Household categories expressing the lowest levels of control are: heads that are single; heads who do not see a benefit of being in Khartoum; those households stating that to find a job is the main challenge they face in Khartoum; households not having family or direct relatives in Abyei, and; households in Khartoum north (appendix 9.3).

Household categories showing significantly different levels of perceived control within particular descriptor variables reflect the overall nature of behavioural control (in brackets the order of significance based on Mann-Whitney tests):

- Wealth: households which owned over fifty head of cattle before displacement express significantly higher levels of control compared with households not owning cattle (mean general values of 6.85 and 3.24 respectively: p value of 0.001, see appendix 9.3.12)
- Income: households lacking income from a job express significantly higher levels of control compared with households with at least one of its members having such income (p 0.000, appendix 9.3.14)
- Type of critical event initiating flight: households indicating that the foremost reason for fleeing Abyei had to do with the killing of family members or relatives, rather than the

- experience of war and fighting itself, demonstrate higher levels of control (p 0.000, appendix 9.3.18)
- Type of Flight: households which did not flee directly to Khartoum express significantly higher levels of control compared with households which fled directly (p 0.000, appendix 9.3.19)
 - Family and kin in Abyei: households having family members in Abyei signal a significantly higher level of control than households not having family there (p 0.000, appendix 9.3.20)
 - Benefits associated with being in Khartoum: household heads regarding good security or education as the main benefit associated with being in Khartoum show significantly higher levels of control than households not seeing any benefit by being in Khartoum (p 0.000, appendix 9.3.21)
 - Problems and challenges associated with being in Khartoum: the level of control over the return process to Abyei is significantly stronger expressed by households stating poor living conditions or poor security as the main challenge of being in Khartoum, compared with households whose main challenge is to find a job (p 0.000 and 0.001 respectively, appendix 9.3.22).

It appears that wealth prior to displacement, the nature of the critical event initiating flight, the type of flight experienced, whereabouts of family and kin in Abyei and the main benefit associated by being in Khartoum are differentially associated with the Perceived Level of Control. This suggests that these elements are a function of the nature and strength of control over the return decision and the return process. E.g. households who owned cattle before displacement may demonstrate a higher level of control because they are likely to have maintained a stake in cattle wealth which means a clear return advantage over those households who cannot rely on cattle wealth¹⁴². Likewise, households having family and kin in areas of return may express higher levels of behavioural control, reflecting the important role of extended family structures in prospective areas of return to make repatriation work.

Interestingly households who lack income from a job, state a poor living condition or a poor security situation in Khartoum as the main challenge of being in Khartoum, express higher levels of control over the return process compared with households who have an income out of a job or state no such challenges. This possibly reflects the lack of control the first mentioned categories of households perceive to have over their lives by being in Khartoum.

The Nature of Perceived Vulnerability

The Perceived Vulnerability is a person's perceived risk of return to settle in Abyei in relation to the perceived coping capability to deal with those risks, in short, the potential for harm associated with return. The overall mean value for the Perceived Vulnerability is neutral to strong (mean value of 3.44 on the range -12 'highly vulnerable' to +12 'highly resilient').

Household categories demonstrating resilience (thus a relatively high numerical positive value on the Vulnerability measure) are: households not having an income from a job or daily labour; those stating good security as main benefit of being in Khartoum; small households having one to three members;

those that did not flee directly to Khartoum, and; households whose main challenge in Khartoum is poor security (appendix 9.3).

Household categories expressing vulnerability are: households not having family or close relatives in Abyei; households whose head is single; those not having owned a farm prior to displacement; households not seeing any benefit of staying in Khartoum, and; households whose head is under 25 years of age (appendix 9.3).

Household categories within particular descriptor variables showing significantly different levels of Perceived Vulnerability reflect the nature of vulnerability associated with return (in brackets order of significance, Mann-Whitney tests):

- Income out of a job or daily labour: households lacking an income from a job or daily labour express significantly higher levels of resilience than households enjoying such income (p 0.000, appendix 9.3.14)
- Event initiating flight: households stating the killing of family or relatives express significantly higher levels of resilience than households who fled because of the experience of war itself (p 0.05, appendix 9.3.18)
- Type of flight: households which did not flee directly to Khartoum demonstrate a significantly stronger level of resilience than those fleeing Abyei directly to Khartoum (p 0.000, appendix 9.3.19)
- Benefits associated with being in Khartoum: households stating good security and education signal significantly higher levels of resilience over those not seeing any benefit (p 0.000, appendix 9.3.20)
- Main challenge associated with being in Khartoum: households stating poor living conditions or security as the main challenge record higher levels of resilience compared with households perceiving the difficulty in finding a job as the main problem (p values of 0.001 and 0.001 respectively, appendix 9.3.22).

On a general level, vulnerability associated with return is thus differentially informed by having or not having a steady flow of income from a job or daily labour, the type of critical event initiating flight, the type of flight experienced and the main benefit, as well as the main challenge faced by being displaced to Khartoum. Interestingly, these factors formed a function of behavioural control as well. In other words this suggests that expressed vulnerability in return is characterised by a strong behavioural control element: lack of control as a dimension of vulnerability.

9.4. The 2003 Assisted Returns

Exploring the return antecedents of the Ngok, the experience of the assisted returns of 2003 can be placed in a broader perspective. The experience of assisted return will be discussed from three different perspectives: expressed strength of return beliefs (Outcome Attitude values), the cognitive construct of the 'mode of return' belief domain and the cost of transportation.

Perspective from Strongly Expressed Return Beliefs

By offering free transportation to Abyei the May 2003 assisted return appealed to the Ngok in terms of the strongly expressed return belief that *'return will not be possible since I lack the money to pay for it'* (section 9.3). The assisted returns of June addressed a number of strongly expressed beliefs that the displaced felt very negative about in terms of return planning: the cost aspect of transport to Abyei, the need for food aid to make integration work and provision of modern health care services.

In a sense both assisted return initiatives appealed to the displaced Ngok by touching upon strongly felt return beliefs and expectations of Abyei. These particular negative return feelings were in effect given a positive twist by the nature of the two interventions. The assisted returns did not address, or to a much lesser degree, other strongly expressed return beliefs that the displaced felt negatively about, e.g. the proliferation of firearms in relation to peace, access to higher education in the Abyei area and the perceived difficulties related to the construction of shelter.

However the most strongly expressed return beliefs do not need to be influential in terms of affecting the level to which household heads plan to return. Exploring the return antecedents for the return 'option' now (section 9.5) it appears that the belief *'will return when transport is provided regardless the situation in Abyei'* is not influential in affecting the return decision. Provision of food aid upon arrival, construction of water yards and tube wells and medical care are influentially taken into consideration when deciding return (section 9.5), thus explaining the far greater interest amongst the displaced Ngok to participate in the June assisted return. This probably also explains why the leadership of the displaced Ngok conditioned participation in the second assisted return (offering additional benefits following return) based on the numerical presence of the nine Ngok sub-sections in Khartoum. By doing so the aim of the international community to increase the population of the newly established villages north of the Kiir river was compromised, as those villages represented only two out of the nine sub-sections (see section 8.3 regarding the role of the selection process in the failure of the assisted returns).

As return planning was found to be a function of three descriptor variables (section 9.3) the assisted returns were most likely to attract households lacking income from a job, expressing high levels of vulnerability in displacement, and household heads not seeing any benefit of being in Khartoum. Such households are likely to be amongst the most vulnerable in Khartoum.

Perspective from the Attitudinal Return Domain 'Mode of Return'

At the time of the assessment one of the ongoing discussions in the international community was whether or not money should be provided to assist returns of the displaced. Primarily from a financial point of view, it was felt on balance not to provide free transportation, as this would set a costly precedent and consume substantial parts of the total aid budget expected to become available. Another argument was that the offer of free transportation would significantly promote return, as a result of which locally available resources in areas of return would be quickly outstripped. So the unwritten policy at the time was not to promote assisted returns by paying for transportation, though exceptions were made such as in the case of the Dinka Ngok.

This raised the question of how provision of transportation would impact on displaced people's return planning and their strategies. Clustering of the fifty-one salient return beliefs found that a relatively large number of return beliefs dealt with the modality of return. Fifteen out of the fifty-one salient return beliefs were logically grouped in the attitudinal domain dealing with mode of return (a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.41 indicates that various constructs are measured as part of this domain: appendix 9.5). These return beliefs were (mean Outcome Attitude values presented in order of decreasing strength, from beliefs the displaced felt positive about regarding return to those they felt negative about):

1. Best done in the period December to March (3.45)
2. It helps to have family or relatives in areas of return (2.47)
3. Better face hardship in Abyei than to remain in Khartoum (2.09)
4. Is best done directly following the signing of the peace agreement (1.81)
5. Is best done within the first year following the signing of the peace agreement (1.81)
6. Better stay south of the Kiir river even when one's home village is north of it (1.69)
7. Best done with part of the household first (1.51)
8. Better take part in return organised by the international community than by oneself (1.45)
9. Regardless the condition in Abyei, will return when transport is provided (1.12)
10. Self return is preferred over UN organised return in order to rebuild one's livelihood (0.77)
11. Returning immediately following a peace agreement means taking risks (0.32)
12. Having several wives makes return easier (0.18)
13. Making use of public transport on return means harassment, loss of possessions (-0.03)
14. Difficulties in constructing our tukuls or shelters (-1.16)
15. Will not be possible since I can't afford transportation (-1.76).

One way of looking at the impact of paying for transportation as a form of assisted return is to look into the associations of the particular return beliefs in the mode of return domain (its procedure is described in section 6.6). Figure 9.1 presents the general cognitive construct of the attitudinal return domain 'mode of return'.

Regarding the general level to which the displaced plan to return, it appears that the mode of return attitudinal domain is represented by four beliefs that influentially inform the return decision (in brackets Spearman correlation coefficient and p value):

1. Facing difficulties in tukul construction' (.245, p 0.000)
2. Best done in the period December to March (.189, p 0.002)
3. It helps to have family or relatives in areas of return (.181, p 0.003)
4. Return directly following a peace agreement means taking risks (.179, p 0.003).

All four influential beliefs represent part of the mode of return domain and place the assisted returns in a broader context.

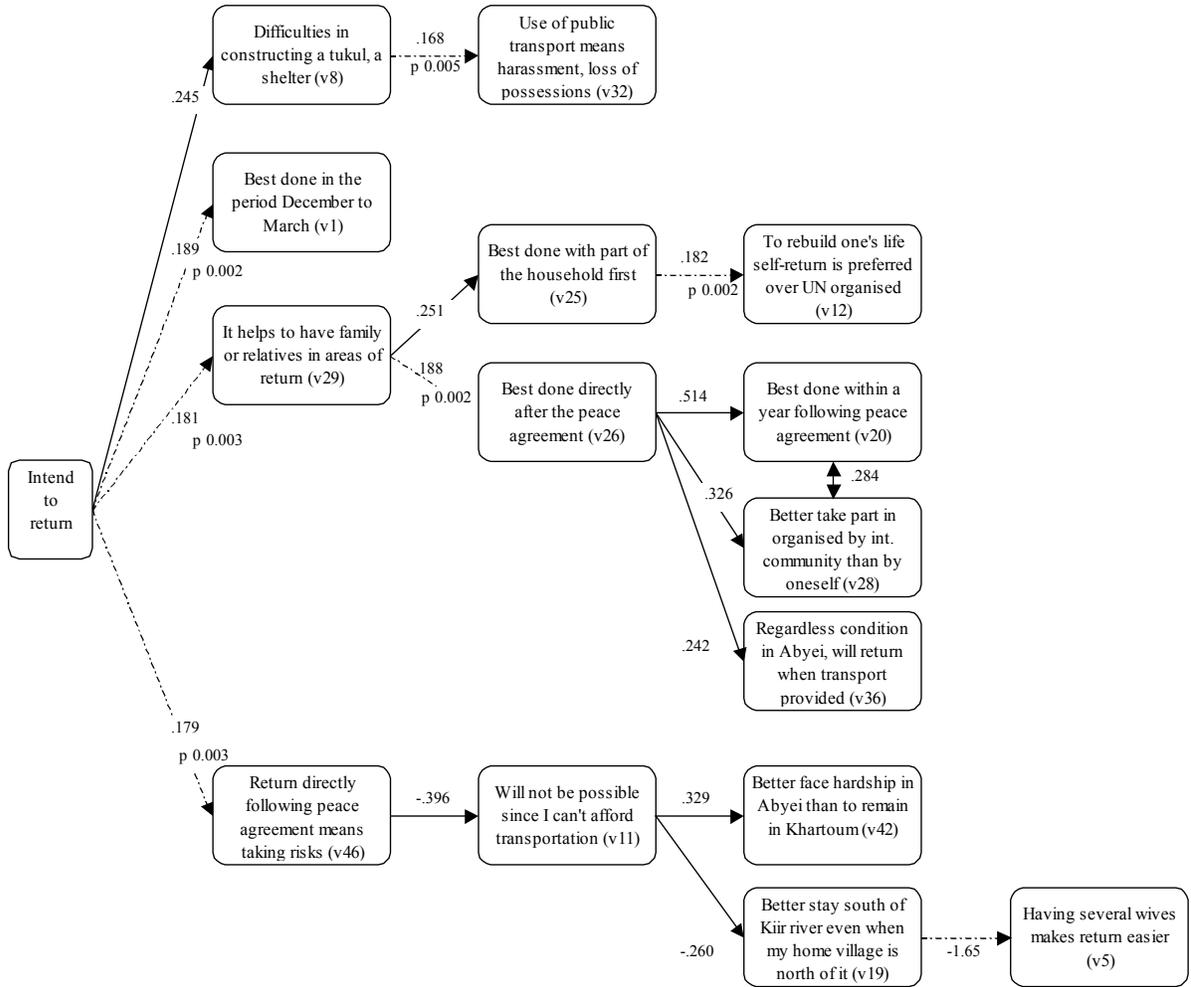
'Facing difficulties in the construction of shelter upon arrival in Abyei' is cognitively (though very weakly) associated with the risk of loosing assets or savings when making use of public transportation (figure 9.1). Both 2003 assisted returns prevented loss of assets or savings as they were overseen by the international community (though very few belongings could be taken during the May 2003 assisted return, a maximum of 20 kilo's per person).

'Return to Abyei is best done in the period December-March' is a strongly expressed return belief that the Ngok feel very positive about. Though not significantly correlated with other beliefs of the mode of return domain, return in the period December-March is strongly related to beliefs of the food security domain, most prominently with *'open up a field and start cultivation'* (correlation .429). The assisted returns in May and June failed this important timing aspect, seriously compromising returnees' ability to cultivate during the 2003 rainy season and rendering them dependent on others in terms of their food security for at least a year and a half.

The belief *'regardless the situation in Abyei I will pursue return when transport is provided'* is part of the cognitive construct of the mode of return sub-domain represented by the belief *'return is easier if one has family or relatives in areas of return'* (see figure 9.1). The cognitive construct clearly links the belief *'will return when transport is provided'* with *'return following the peace agreement'* which in turn is associated with having family and relatives in areas of return (provision of transportation following the signing of a peace agreement is likely to appeal to those displaced who have family and kin in areas of return). Thus the cognitive construct suggests that provision of transportation by the international community is not logically associated with return prior to the signing of a peace agreement. This suggests that taking part in the assisted returns of 2003 by those not having family and kin in areas of return goes against the logic and rationale of the displaced. This is yet another indication that people may have joined the assisted returns based on emotive considerations to return 'home', such as in the case of Uncle Amed (see box 8.3).

The belief *'return is not possible since I lack the money to pay for it'* is associated to the influential return belief *'return directly following the peace agreement means taking a risk'* (the correlation with stated return intent is a mere .179 at p level 0.003 indicating that the association is rather weak). Since the correlation between the two beliefs is strong but negative (correlation of -.396), it implies that the higher the risk associated with return following the agreement, the less one is motivated to spend a scarce resource such as money on undertaking return. The cognitive construct furthermore seems to suggest that those displaced who feel that it is better to suffer in one's own land than in Khartoum are the ones who lack the money for return, the marginalised and destitute Ngok in Khartoum. This means that the cognitive construct clearly indicates that there is a tendency that, if provided the money, such displaced will return even though it means taking a risk following a peace agreement (the wording of the belief statement), let alone the risk involved in return prior to the signing of a peace agreement (the assisted returns). Furthermore, the cognitive construct suggests that if transportation is paid for directly following a peace agreement, the preferred destination would be south of the Kiir, even if one's original home village is located north of it. This is what happened with the 2003 assisted returns: rather than increasing the numbers in the re-established villages north of the Kiir the majority of the returnees 'disappeared' south of the Kiir.

Figure 9.1 Cognitive Construct of the Attitudinal Belief Domain ‘Mode of Return’



In conclusion, the associations and relative influence of various beliefs in the mode-of-return belief domain ‘explain’ the assisted returns ‘failure’ and show that a significant number of the Dinka Ngok participating in those returns were placed at risk. The study of the assisted returns presented in section 8.3 and 8.4 validates the cognitive construct. This suggests that mapping out cognitive constructs of particular attitudinal domains can be a valuable tool in anticipating impediments in well-intentioned interventions.

The Cost of Transportation

At the time of the assessment a one-way bus ticket Khartoum-Abyei costed around 7,000 Sudanese Dinar, the equivalent of around 30 US Dollars making the cost for a family of five around 150 US Dollars. This is a substantial amount of money considering the fact that by far the majority of the displaced live in extreme poverty, depend to a large extent on income from a job or daily labour or, lacking such income, search desperately for a job to cover their basic needs. It is therefore probable that the offer of free transportation appealed most to those displaced who were least able to afford it financially. By inviting them to give added weight to the emotional motive to return 'home' over a more reasoned return response this would, in effect, place people at risk following their return.

Though the financially better-off would be able to afford transportation to Abyei, they are likely to be amongst the least interested in undertaking early return (section 9.3). Such people will think twice before giving up their jobs or higher studies. For example, a good senior construction worker may earn as much as 200 US dollars a month, so it is not realistic to expect that such benefits will be given up for what may be seen as an insecure future in Abyei. However, such resources may well be used to enable relatives to undertake the return and support them while they establish a farm and acquire cattle.

From the sample acquired it appeared that one out of every five household heads had visited the Abyei area within a two-year period prior to the assessment (April 2002/4). During that same period, seventy percent of the household heads indicated that relatives had returned to settle in Abyei. Obviously there is a considerable movement of people to and from Abyei who pay for transportation themselves. For the poorer segments of the displaced Ngok population, the cost aspect of return may well present a serious obstruction to return, yet they demonstrate high intentions to return and settle in order to improve on their lives.

9.5. The Return Options

Antecedents of Return in the Dry Season of 2004

Cognitive Barriers and Drivers Influencing the Decision to Return

The intention to return in April 2004 was found to be neutral to strong (mean value of 0.51 on a scale of -2 'very weak' to +2 'very strong'; appendix 9.3.1). When the whole sample is considered, the relative influence of the determinants on the return Intent, are in order of decreasing influence, the Stated Attitude, Stated Subjective Norm, Perceived Vulnerability and Perceived Level of Control. The dominant determinant informing the return decision is displaced people's experience as well as their knowledge and perspectives regarding return (their attitudes).

Figure 9.2 provides an overview of return antecedents for the return option 'now' (appendix 9.6 and 9.7 present a more comprehensive overview of the influential return beliefs and social referents respectively).

By looking at the associations of salient Outcome Attitudes¹⁴³ values (OAs) with stated Intent (I) it is possible to isolate those issues that are acting as cognitive barriers or drivers influencing the level to which the displaced Ngok plan to return¹⁴⁴. When the whole sample is considered, eleven of the fifty-one salient modal beliefs were found to be influential. The influential issues that act as barriers towards return are in rank order of decreasing influence (Spearman correlation coefficients presented in brackets):

1. Experience serious food shortages and face hunger (.419)
2. Find that we have become different from those who stayed behind (.363)
3. Face serious shortage of safe and reliable drinking water (.284)
4. Difficulties in constructing our tukuls or shelters (.278)
5. The international community not providing food aid means we might die (.223)
6. If provided, aid is best distributed by our own leaders (.217)
7. Face repeated displacement (.207)
8. Will be suspected (.201).

Influential return beliefs and expectations acting as drivers are:

1. Children will have access to school (.313)
2. Burial in my home area (.216)
3. Depend on forest foods and fish for survival following return (.208).

Specific Referent Subjective Norms¹⁴⁵ (SRNs) that are found to correlate closely with the stated Intent to return indicate which referents are likely to have greatest influence on the subjects' decision regarding return. The social referents who were found influential over the displaced household heads are their political leaders (SPLA), recent arrivals from Abyei and close relatives. The displaced are not responsive to fellow family or household members that stay with them in the camp, chiefs and elders, the international community or NGOs. The displaced are expected to react negatively when social pressure is applied by the GoS (negative correlation).

Perceived Vulnerability is significantly associated with return intent, highlighting a volatile return environment when pursuing return in the 2003/4 dry season. Since the Perceived Level of Control is significantly correlated with stated Intent, it follows that decision to return and the return process itself is not under full control of the displaced.

The Nature of the Influential Beliefs and Expectations

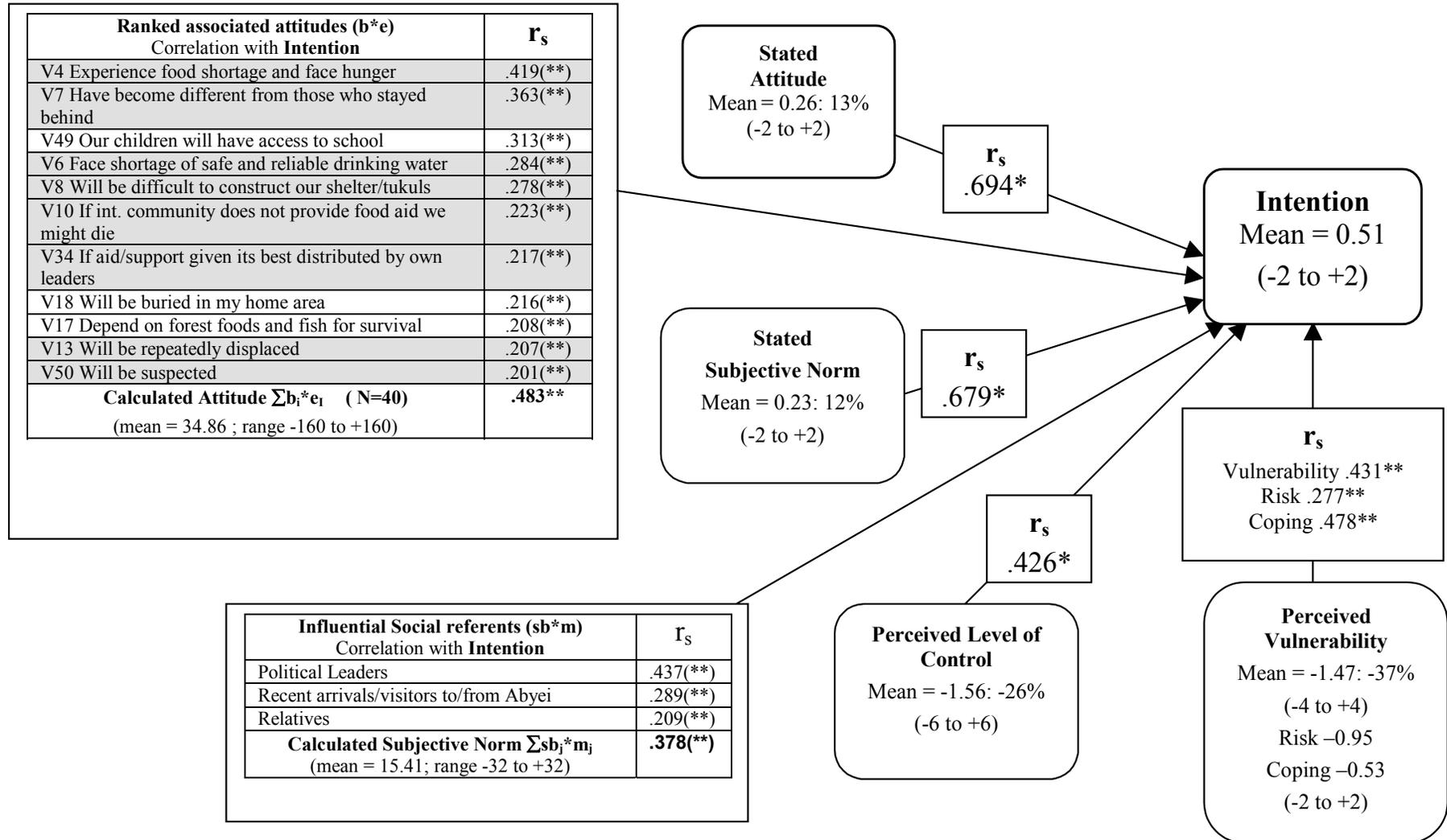
An overview of the influential beliefs, the relative importance of belief strength and outcome evaluation as well as the control and vulnerability dimension are presented in table 9.3A.

Experience of a Serious Food Shortage and Facing Hunger

Facing a serious food shortage is the most influential belief informing a change in the level to which the Ngok planned to return by the end of the 2004 dry season. The belief strength is correlated with

Figure 9.2 Return Antecedents of Dinka Ngok for Return in the 2003/4 Dry Season

- Shaded attitudes are acting as barriers
- r_s Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficients
- Degree of significance (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$)



intent. A reduction in the level to which this belief is perceived to be true results in a higher return intent (a negative correlation of -0.381 , $p 0.000$).

The displaced Ngok do not express sensitivity towards behavioural control. It appears that the experience of food shortages is cognitively perceived to be under the control of the Ngok themselves. However '*facing a serious food shortage*' is associated with a vulnerability dimension. The risk aspect does not record sensitivity, but the coping aspect does. This indicates that it is not a reduction in the risk of facing a food shortage, but rather a change in the level to which a household head perceives being able to cope with food shortages that initiates a change regarding the level to which the displaced intend to return. The cognitive construct of the food security domain for return in the 2003/4 dry season would provide further insight into the interrelationships with other return beliefs of this domain.

Have Become Different From Those Who Stayed Behind

This influential belief is particularly informed by the evaluation of its outcome. The outcome of this belief is expressed as 'bad' (mean value of -0.79 on a scale of -2 'very bad' to $+2$ 'very good', table 9.3.a). If the outcome evaluation is perceived to be less bad it would lead to an increased return intent. In the case of this particular return belief, household heads express a perceived control dimension (0.391 , $p 0.000$) indicating that '*having become different*' has been partly outside their control. In other words, they perceive themselves to be different, evaluate that as negative, and yet express that this is partly beyond their control. This probably reflects the exposure to urban life over a prolonged period of time. '*Having become different*' is also associated with a vulnerability dimension, accentuated by both a risk and a coping aspect. A reduction in the risk associated with '*having become different*' and an increase in the ability to cope with that difference will inform a higher intent to return. Interestingly, most aid interventions do not focus on this social dimension of return as they tend to be pre-occupied with addressing direct physical needs. Minimum standards in the delivery of emergency aid are not socially informed. Yet being different from those who stayed behind is associated with a potential threat by the displaced when contemplating return.

Our Children Will Have Access to Schooling

An increase in the level to which household heads anticipate that children will have access to school, and a more positive outcome evaluation of schooling itself, results in a higher return intent. The importance of this influential return belief is underlined by the fact that around one third of the households indicate that education is the main benefit associated with their presence in Khartoum. Provision of educational services in Abyei is clearly influentially taken into account when considering return.

Face a Shortage of Safe and Reliable Drinking Water

A decrease in the level to which the displaced think that they will face a serious drinking water problem when returning to Abyei will result in a higher return intent. This critical return belief is

Table 9.3 Cognitive Barriers and Drivers, Control and Vulnerability Dimension Influencing the Level to which Displaced Ngok Plan to Return (Spearman's rho)

A. RETURN OPTION: DRY SEASON 2003/4				Ranked associated attitudes			PLC Dimension	Vulnerability Dimension		
Influential Attitudes Affecting Return Intent	Mean Values			Correlation with Intention			Level of Control	Risk	Coping	Vulnerability
	Belief Strength	Outcome Evaluation	Outcome Attitude	Belief Strength	Outcome Evaluation	Outcome Attitude				
Experience serious food shortages and face hunger (v4)	1,65	-1,83	-1,08	-.381(**)		.419(**)				.250(**)
Find that we have become different from those who stayed behind (v7)	0,84	-0,79	-0,68		.290(**)	.363(**)	.391(**)	.275(**)	.307(**)	.315(**)
Children will have access to school (v49)	1,25	1,6	2,28	.300(**)	.241(**)	.313(**)				
Face serious shortage of safe and reliable drinking water (v6)	0,96	-1,39	-1,46	-.205(**)		.284(**)	.331(**)	.303(**)	.417(**)	.400(**)
Difficulties in constructing our tukuls or shelters (v8)	0,89	-1,32	-1,16	-.212(**)		.278(**)	.253(**)	.271(**)	.326(**)	.325(**)
The int. community not providing food aid means we might die (v10)	0,41	-1,56	-0,8			.223(**)				
If provided, aid is best distributed by our own leaders (v34)	-0,66	-0,91	1,9			.217(**)				
Burial in my home area (v18)	1,65	1,85	3,18	.207(**)		.216(**)				
Depend on forest foods and fish for survival following return (v17)	1,09	1,21	1,92	.203(**)		.208(**)	-.246(**)			
Face repeated displacement (v13)	0,22	-0,49	-0,19			.207(**)	.482(**)	.376(**)	.325(**)	.396(**)
Will be suspected (v50)	0,49	-1,38	-0,59			.201(**)	.487(**)	.230(**)	.250(**)	.274(**)

B. RETURN OPTION: FOLLOWING PEACE AGREEMENT				Ranked associated attitudes			PLC Dimension	Vulnerability Dimension		
Influential Attitudes Affecting Return Intent	Mean Values			Correlation with Intention			Level of Control	Risk	Coping	Vulnerability
	Belief Strength	Outcome Evaluation	Outcome Attitude	Belief Strength	Outcome Evaluation	Outcome Attitude				
Experience serious food shortages and face hunger (v4)	1,65	1,83	-1,08	-.310(**)		.324(**)				
Find that we have become different from those who stayed behind (v7)	0,84	-0,79	-0,68		.228(**)	.302(**)	.233(**)			
Children will have access to school (v49)	1,25	1,6	2,28	.277(**)	.223(**)	.295(**)			.249(**)	.232(**)
Life will be different from what it used to be before the conflict (v3)	0,98	-0,17	0,26		.217(**)	.257(**)	.300(**)	.228(**)		.206(**)
Face repeated displacement (v13)	0,22	-0,49	-0,19	-.204(**)		.246(**)	.238(**)			
Difficulties in constructing our tukuls or shelters (v8)	0,89	-1,32	-1,16	-.208(**)		.229(**)				
Burial in my home area (v18)	1,65	1,85	3,18	.207(**)		.221(**)				
Face insecurity in our home area (v48)	0,54	-1,51	-0,72			.220(**)	.358(**)			.202(**)
Face serious shortage of safe and reliable drinking water (v6)	0,96	-1,39	-1,46			.203(**)			.271(**)	

C. RETURN OPTION: PEACE AND STABILITY IN ABYEI				Ranked associated attitudes			PLC Dimension	Vulnerability Dimension		
Influential Attitudes Affecting Return Intent	Mean Values			Correlation with Intention			Level of Control	Risk	Coping	Vulnerability
	Belief Strength	Outcome Evaluation	Outcome Attitude	Belief Strength	Outcome Evaluation	Outcome Attitude				
Happy to be in the land of our grand fathers (v41)	1,81	1,94	3,6	.356(**)		.345(**)				.201(**)
Come to own goats or cattle (v37)	1,71	1,88	3,34	.286(**)		.266(**)				.202(**)
Rely on our traditional ways of peacemaking to live in peace (v47)	0,51	0,45	1,14			.214(**)				
Keep my birth rights (v31)	1,65	1,83	3,18	.236(**)		.210(**)	.205(**)	.286(**)	.221(**)	.267(**)
Burial in my home area (v18)	1,65	1,85	3,18	.244(**)		.209(**)				

Shaded attitudes act as barriers towards return; * and ** denote significance at .05 and .01 level respectively (Spearman's rho)

associated with a lack of perceived control: seen from this perspective, return is assumed to be met by impediments or obstacles associated with access to water. This particular return belief records the highest vulnerability dimension of all influential beliefs when it comes to the return in the 2003/4 dry season. The perceived vulnerability is to a somewhat higher degree informed by the coping capability than its risk aspect.

Difficulty in Constructing Temporary Shelter or a Tukul

A change in the perceived strength to which this belief is held influences return intent. The evaluation of its outcome is not influential, indicating that having inappropriate shelter is seen as always bad. Construction of shelter is perceived to be partly under control of the returnees. Both risk and coping aspects inform the vulnerability dimension. Risk can be reduced by making sure that one will be able to construct shelter. Coping capability can be increased by, initially, staying at friends or relatives before being able to construct a shelter of one's own.

If the International Community Does Not Provide Food Aid We might Die

This influential return belief is informed by its perceived belief strength. The more it is perceived to be true, the lower the intent to return. Neither perceived control nor vulnerability are associated with this belief. Displaced household heads perceive they have some control over the far-reaching consequence of not being provided with food aid. As this element is not associated with a potential threat following return, it seems that the displaced do not perceive themselves to be completely dependent on food aid for their survival. Being dependent on food aid by the international community for one's survival is perceived to be very bad anyway (mean value of -1.56 on a scale of -2 'very bad' to $+2$ 'very good', table 9.3.a), yet another indication that displaced people are generally speaking geared towards becoming independent of international food aid if and when provided in support of return.

If Aid and Support is Given it is Best Distributed by Our Own Leaders

The belief strength is the influential aspect, and is negatively correlated with stated Intent. An increase in the level to which the outcome statement is thought to be true leads to a decrease in return intent. Though the belief does not record sensitivity in terms of a potential disaster element in post return environments, it is clearly not seen to be under the control of the returnees. Therefore, uncritical pursuit of the popular drive by the implementing agencies to delegate control to local leaders should be scrutinised in pre-peace agreement returns.

Will be Buried in My Home Area

An increase in the level to which household heads believe that following return they will be buried in their home area will result in an increased return intent. The evaluation of its outcome ('very good' with a mean value of $+1.85$!) is less influential. For the internally displaced Ngok to be buried in one's home area bears strong cultural connotation associated with return to the land of '*our grandfathers*', exercising one's birthrights, the ability and rights connected with farming and return to one's home village.

Depend on Forest Foods and Fish for Survival

The strength to which the belief is held is the influential attitude aspect. A change in the level to which the outcome is evaluated in terms of good or bad seems to be less influential regarding the intention to return. Dependence on wild foods and fish is clearly not regarded to be under full control of the displaced household heads. This possibly indicates environments where access is greatly reduced because of insecurity or other related threats. Dependence on wild foods or fish is not identified with a threat in the post-return context, which reflects the degree to which consumption of wild foods and fish is still integrated in the food pattern of the Ngok. This is a striking finding, as in most studies reliance on wild foods is an important coping mechanism in times of distress.

Will be Repeatedly Displaced

A change in the level to which this belief is perceived to be true or false, or a change in its outcome in terms of good/bad, influences the level to which Ngok households plan to return. The Perceived Level of Control is strongly and significantly correlated with stated Intent, indicating that displaced Ngok households perceive themselves to having little control over such events when pursuing return in the 2003/4 season. An increase in the level of control over such displacements taking place will positively influence the return intent. This is yet another factor explaining why so many of the ‘failed’ returnees made it across the Kiir river. Displacement is strongly associated with a disaster context, with both risk and coping capability recording high sensitivities. A decrease in the risk of displacement and /or an increase in the ability to cope with displacement encourages a stronger intent to return.

Will be Suspected

Being suspected following return records the highest association with the Perceived Level of Control indicating that ‘being suspected’ is cognitively seen as being beyond the control of the household heads. The potential for disaster in post return contexts regarding return comes from both a risk and a coping aspect. Either a decrease in the level to which suspicion is thought to present a risk, or the ability to better cope with suspicion, informs the return decision positively.

Influential Social Referents

For the return option ‘now’ the influential referents are, in order of decreasing influence:

1. The political leaders of the displaced (.437)
2. Recent arrivals from, or visitors to Abyei (.289)
3. Relatives (.209)

The displaced Ngok do not appear to be sensitive to social influence or pressure from the international community or the United Nations (appendix 9.7 provides an overview of influential referents for each of the return options).

Antecedents of Return Following the Signing of a Peace Agreement

Following the signing of a peace agreement, the level to which the displaced Ngok plan to return becomes strong to very strong (mean value of 1.57 on a scale of –2 ‘very weak’ to +2 ‘very strong’;

appendix 9.3.1). Prior experience and knowledge about return, as well as social influences by important others, are the two key determinants informing return Intent. As both these determinants are significantly correlated with stated return Intent (correlations of 0.613 and .614 respectively, $p < 0.000$ level; figure 9.3), the TORA predicts that intentions reliably predict return behaviour. Strikingly, the Perceived Level of Control and Perceived Vulnerability demonstrate low correlations. Overall return beliefs and expectations of home are no longer pre-occupied with a lack of behavioural control over the return process and threats in the post return environment. See figure 9.3 for an overview and table 9.3.b for the particulars.

Following the signing of a peace agreement, a total of nine out of the fifty-one salient beliefs are influential. The seven that act as barriers to return are, in order of decreasing influence (in brackets the Spearman correlation co-efficient):

1. Experience serious food shortages and face hunger (.324)
2. Find that we have become different from those who stayed behind (.302)
3. Life will be different from what it used to be before the conflict (.257)
4. Face repeated displacement (.246)
5. Difficulties in constructing our tukuls or shelters (.229)
6. Face insecurity in our home area (.220)
7. Face serious shortage of safe and reliable drinking water (.203).

The two influential beliefs acting as drivers are (Spearman correlation coefficients in brackets):

1. Children will have access to school (.295)
2. Burial in my home area (.221).

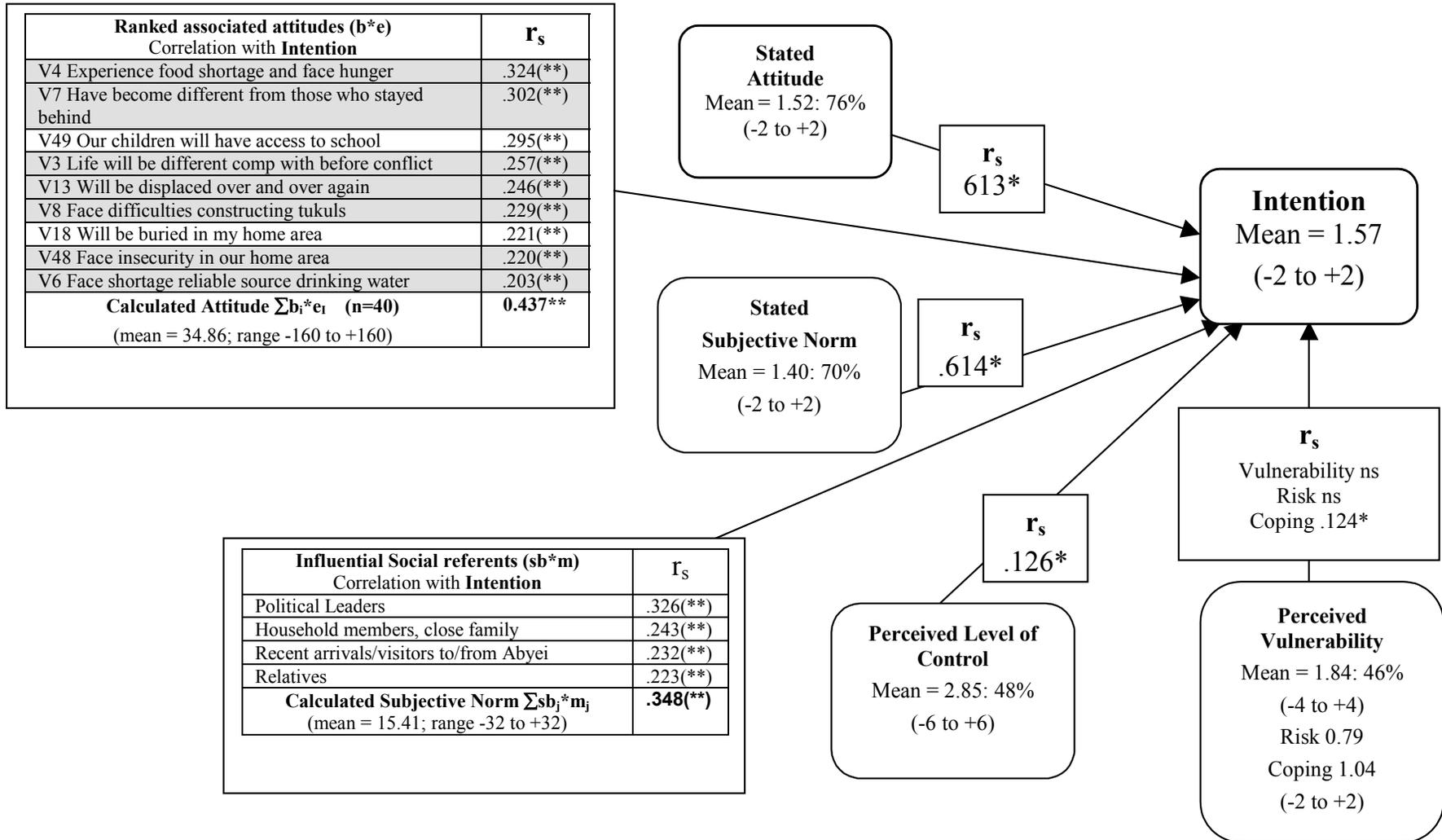
'Life will be different compared with what it was before the conflict', and *'will face insecurity in my home area'* are beliefs which have become influential when compared with the return option 'now'. Facing insecurity and fear of displacement are influential return beliefs indicating that return areas are not de facto seen as safe environments. Returnees perceive themselves as having little control over both these crucial return beliefs (table 9.3.b). To face insecurity is associated with vulnerability; surprisingly displacement is not.

The influential belief *'have become different from those who stayed behind'* recorded a significant vulnerability dimension regarding return in 2003/4. It ceases to do so for the return option following a peace agreement. What has been perceived as a potential threat prior to a peace agreement is no longer seen so following an agreement. The consequences of being different seem to be expressed in more neutral ways when it comes to perceptions of risk and coping capability.

The provision of aid, the way it is distributed and dependence on forest foods cease to be influential attitudes affecting return intent. The fear of being suspected and its potentially negative consequences also ceases to be a decisive return belief.

Figure 9.3 Antecedents of Dinka Ngok Return following the Signing of a Peace Agreement

- Shaded attitudes are acting as barriers
- r_s Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficients
- Degree of significance (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$)



Compared with the return option 'now', household members and close family become important referents regarding the decision to return. However, the political leaders of the displaced are still the most influential social referent (figure 9.3).

Antecedents of Return with Abyei forming a Stable and Peaceful Return Environment

With Abyei becoming a peaceful and stable area to return to, the intention to return of the displaced Ngok in Khartoum becomes very strong (mean value of 1.92 on a scale of -2 'very weak' to +2 'very strong'; appendix 9.3.1). As can be seen from figure 9.4, the attitudinal component is of a higher significance as compared with the subjective norm. Table 9.3.c provides more information regarding the nature of the influential return beliefs.

Of the fifty-one return beliefs, only five are influential. They all form drivers of return and are in order of decreasing importance:

1. Happy to be in the land of our grand fathers (.345)
2. Come to own goats or cattle (acquire wealth) (.266)
3. Rely on our traditional ways of peacemaking to make and maintain peace (.214)
4. Keep my birth rights (.210)
5. Burial in my home area (.209).

The level to which one perceives being able to rely on traditional peace mechanisms becomes an important determinant informing return. This has not been so for the return options 'now' and 'following a peace agreement'. The only influential return belief expressing a control dimension is related to one's birthrights. Maintaining and exercising one's birthright is cognitively perceived to be under partial control of the returnees themselves. This influential return belief is associated with perceived vulnerability in return, both from a risk and coping aspect. For a household head to be able to exercise his or her birthrights is cognitively associated with risk reduction and coping capability. This suggests that the concept of exercising one's birthrights can therefore be partially understood as a direct measure of resilience.

With Abyei presenting a stable and peaceful return environment relatives are the only influential social referents (figure 9.4).

Findings

On comparing the influential barriers and drivers of return over the various return options, clear differences appear. Out of the eleven return beliefs influentially informing a change in return intent during the 2004 dry season, eight acted as blockages and just three as drivers. Following the signing of the peace agreement, seven out of the nine influential beliefs are acting as blockages. When there is a true and lasting peace in Abyei, the five influential beliefs are all acting as drivers towards return.

Almost all of the influential beliefs informing the decision to return in the pre-peace period deal with safety and security, and fulfilment of basic needs. However, the beliefs informing the decision to return when there is peace are of a very different nature. Basic needs and security related issues appear to have less influence on the decision to return. The decision to return is informed by the degree to which the displaced Ngok subscribe to, and positively evaluate the outcome of, being in the land of their grand fathers, acquisition of cattle, reliance on traditional ways of peace-making and exercising of their birthrights. Interestingly, the expectation of being buried in their homeland influentially informs the decision to return independent of the return option. Certainly, older Dinka Ngok will weigh up this belief in considering return.

Return decisions in 2004 were found to be informed by the political leaders of the displaced, arrivals from or visitors to Abyei, and relatives. Household members and close family will also influence the decision to return following the signing of the peace agreement. Relatives of the displaced are the only influential referents informing the return decision when there is peace.

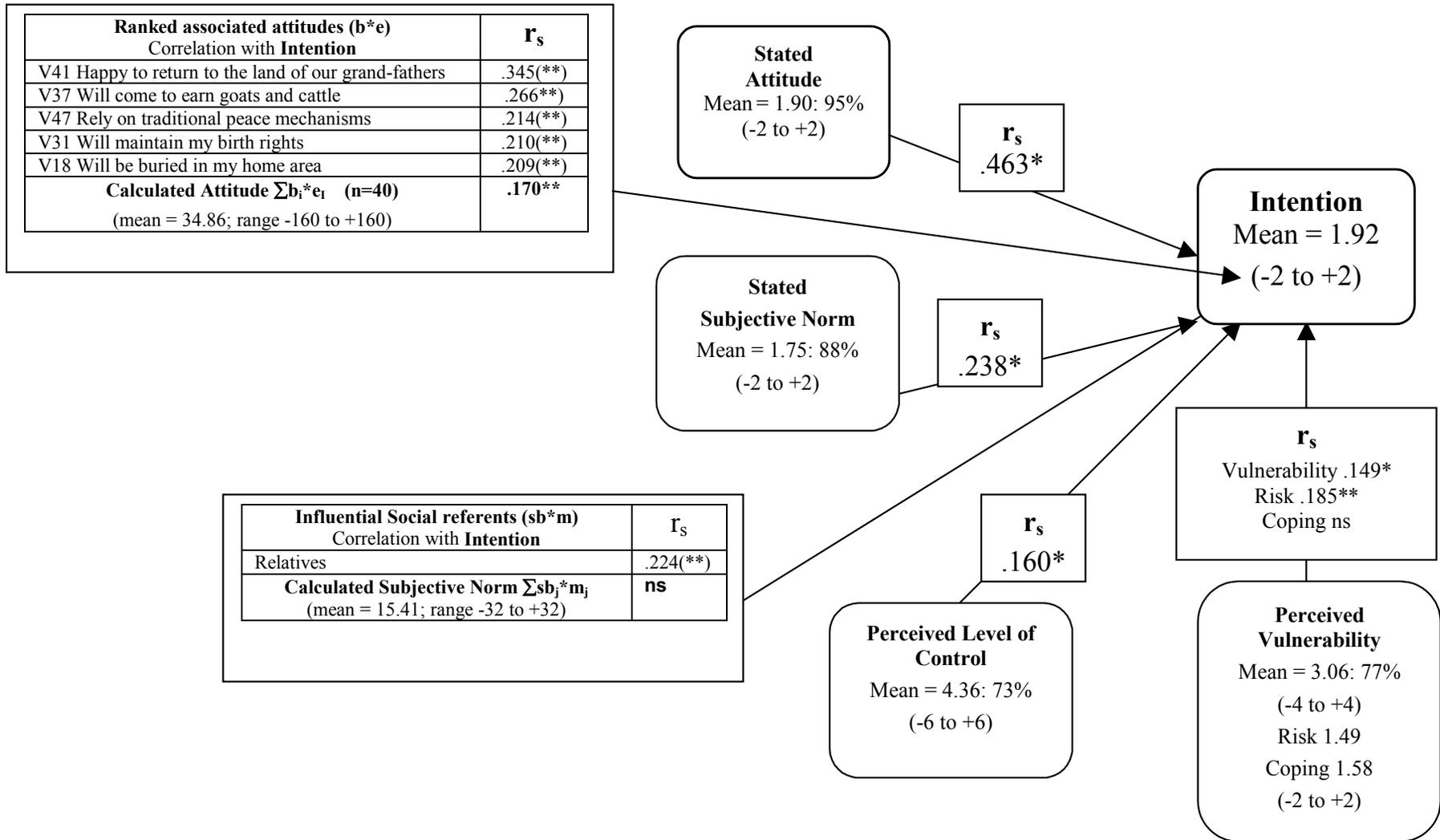
In terms of social influence and pressure, the study illustrates that the intention to return is foremost a political decision by the SPLM/A as long as return takes place in a highly charged political environment (return now and following the signing of a peace agreement). The displaced are not motivated to take the opinion of the GoS into account regarding their decision to return to Abyei. The GoS is also the only prominent referent seen to disagree with the return of the displaced.

Recent visitors to, or arrivals from Abyei, family or household members as well as relatives are referents critically informing the intention of the displaced to return. From the sample it showed that ninety percent of the household heads have talked to people coming out of Abyei, twenty percent visited Abyei themselves, and relatives of over eighty percent of the household heads have visited Abyei within a two-year period prior to the assessment (see table 9.1). The flow of information regarding the situation in Abyei has been quite extensive and important in terms of informing the decision to return.

Information campaigns targeting the displaced community at large regarding return issues, for example the promotion of assisted returns or raising awareness regarding the right of the voluntary nature of return, should focus on the influential referents as they are being listened to and their opinions regarding return taken into account. However, it appears that the most effective campaigns should build on the existing information channels and ways of communication already in place. Information exchange between Abyei and Khartoum could be further promoted, e.g. an option might be the provision of telecommunications services between Abyei and Khartoum, to facilitate direct communication between the displaced and family and kin in areas of return.

Figure 9.4 Return Antecedents of Dinka Ngok with Abyei Presenting a Stable and Peaceful Return Environment

- Shaded attitudes are acting as barriers
- r_s Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficients
- Degree of significance (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$)



9.6. Vulnerability and the Level to Which Households Plan to Return

This section looks more closely at the concept of vulnerability from two different perspectives. First, the nature of the Perceived Vulnerability reading over the three return options is explored. Secondly, the influence of vulnerability on the level to which the displaced Ngok plan to return will be examined. This will be done based on the level to which vulnerability is expressed in displacement, and by treating the Perceived Vulnerability reading as a descriptor variable.

The Nature of Perceived Vulnerability over the Return Options

Perceived Vulnerability significantly influences the level to which returnees intend to return regarding the return option 'now', that is, in the dry season of 2003/4 (correlation with the return intent for that period is .431: see figure 9.2). Return strategies are informed from a coping perspective rather than from a risk perspective, indicating that it is the level to which household heads perceive being able to manage the risks that will influence return from a vulnerability perspective (correlations of .478 and .277 respectively; figure 9.2). Vulnerability considerations cease to be a significant factor informing return following the signing of a peace agreement and with Abyei presenting a stable and peaceful return area. That is not to say that some of the influential return beliefs for these return moments are associated with a vulnerability dimension as was shown in section 9.5.

The Perceived Vulnerability reading for each of the return options is informed by particular sets of return beliefs and expectations. However, independent of the return option pursued, the nature of vulnerability is informed by the following beliefs (in brackets correlation co-efficients):

1. Expectations regarding safety (.483)
2. The level to which one perceives being vulnerable in one's community (.403)
3. The level to which one expects to face insecurity in one's home area (.370)
4. Duration of expected food support in relation to the time needed to become food secure (.361)
5. Having family members or relatives in areas of return (.272).

These five return beliefs capture the constant aspect of vulnerability across the return options. Appendix 9.8 provides an overview of the dynamic nature of vulnerability over the return options.

The Influence of Vulnerability Expressed in Displacement on Intention to Return

A specific descriptor variable was included in the structured second stage questionnaire to measure the level to which households perceived to be vulnerable in displacement. Displaced Ngok household heads were presented with four vulnerability levels to choose from: not-, slightly-, moderately- or highly-vulnerable (table 9.4).

Table 9.4 Perceived Level of Household Vulnerability in Khartoum (n 279)

	Frequency	Percentage
Not vulnerable	4	1.4
Slightly vulnerable	12	4.3
Moderately vulnerable	54	19.4
Highly vulnerable	209	74.9
	279	100

When comparing the level to which highly vulnerable households intend to return, with moderately vulnerable households, striking differences appear. General return intent is strongly and significantly higher for highly vulnerable households (values of 4.22 and 3.20 respectively, $p < 0.000$ level: see appendix 9.3.15).

Household heads who perceive their households to be highly vulnerable in displacement feel differently about many of the return beliefs when compared with their fellow displaced households who expressed moderate vulnerability (see ‘attitudes’ appendix 9.3.15). Highly vulnerable households feel consistently more positive regarding negative oriented return beliefs, and more negative regarding positive oriented return beliefs than household heads who expressed moderate vulnerability in displacement. E.g. regarding the belief that following return, one will face a serious food shortage, highly vulnerable households feel less negative than moderately vulnerable households (-0.82 and -2.00 respectively: see statement v4: appendix 9.3.15). Highly vulnerable households are less positive about the belief that it is better to wait for organised repatriation than returning spontaneously (values of 1.12 and 2.30 respectively: appendix 9.3.15 statement v28). Such a conditioned response translates into a significant higher intention to return by highly vulnerable households regarding return prior to, and directly following, the peace agreement (at $p < 0.000$ and 0.050 level respectively, appendix 9.3.14). The perceived level of vulnerability in displacement clearly conditions the degree to which households plan to return.

Vulnerability-Resilience Measure as a Descriptor Variable: Return Following a Peace Agreement

By using the Perceived Vulnerability reading as a descriptor variable, the return planning and strategies of household categories expressing different levels of vulnerability or resilience on return can be studied. This will be demonstrated for the return option ‘following the signing of a peace agreement’. Three household categories are defined: those expressing vulnerability on return (scores of -4 to 0 on the Vulnerability measure with a scoring range of -4 ‘highly vulnerable’ to +4 ‘highly resilient’), resilient (scores of 1 and 2) and most resilient (scores 3 and 4).

Following the signing of a peace agreement, the household category expressing resilience on return demonstrates a significantly lower intention to return than do the vulnerable and most resilient households (respective values of 1.44, 1.69 and 1.85 on a scale of -2 very low to +2 very high return

intent; appendix 9.9). The level to which vulnerable and most resilient households intend to return does not statistically differ.

Since either Stated Attitude or Stated Subjective Norm are found to correlate significantly with return Intent (table 9.5), the TORA model predicts that stated Intent is a reliable indicator of return behaviour for all three vulnerability categories.

Interestingly, the correlations of the Calculated Attitude with stated return Intent indicate that, with increasing levels of resilience associated with return, the return decision reflects a critical consideration of reasoned return beliefs and expectations of Abyei. The return decision of households expressing vulnerability is only marginally informed by the reasoned return beliefs (non significant correlation between stated return Intent and Calculated Attitude: there are only two influential outcome attitudes; see table 9.5). The return decision of most resilient households reflect a highly significant consideration of reasoned return beliefs (correlation between stated return Intent and Calculated Attitude is .469: table 9.5). From this perspective, vulnerability associated with return can be understood as a function of the degree to which the return decision is based on an analysis of reasoned return beliefs and expectations of the return context. The return decision of households expressing vulnerability in return is based on the initial emotive attitudinal response, and is likely to reflect the strong desire to improve on ones living condition, and by doing so omits a consideration of what may be critical return beliefs or issues.

Households expressing vulnerability on return consider only two beliefs when deciding return: *'having access to schooling for our children'* and *'return by public transportation may result in loss of assets or savings'*. Households expressing resilience or strong resilience in return consider a much wider array of return beliefs, including those belonging to the security & safety and food security domains. For example, though all three household categories express negative attitudes in the same order of strength regarding the belief *'will face repeated displacements'*, only the resilient and most resilient households take this issue into account when deciding return (see appendix 9.9, statement v13). This means that vulnerable households are taking on the highest risks in return, yet they are least likely to cope with them. As more resilient households time and undertake repatriation based on a much wider set of critical return beliefs, following the signing of the peace agreement, it indicates that they are better positioned to optimise risk management.

Vulnerable households were found not to be sensitive to social influence or pressure. Resilient households take the opinion of their political leadership into account when deciding return. As this group represents sixty percent of the displaced Ngok the majority of the Ngok are receptive to social influence or pressure of their political leadership when deciding return. Therefore, any information or awareness raising campaigns regarding return planning should take into account the role of the political leaders of the displaced in order to be effective. Interestingly, the most resilient households will also take the opinions of International NGOs (INGOs) into account when deciding return. A change in the motivation to follow the return advice communicated by INGOs, or the stronger most resilient households perceive NGOs to be in favour of their return, the stronger the intention to return.

Table 9.5 Influential Cognitive Barriers and Drivers of Return Associated with Perceived Vulnerability Classes for Return Following a Peace Agreement (Spearman's rho)

Outcome Attitudes	Vulnerable	Resilient	Most Resilient
	N=49 17.8%	N=168 60.9%	N=59 21.9%
Stated Return Intent (scale -2 very weak to +2 very strong)	1.69	1.44	1.85
Correlations – Determinants of Intention (Cor. with stated Intent)			
Stated Attitude	.647**	.609**	.270*
Stated Subjective Norm	.565**	.525**	.779**
Perceived Level of Control			.490**
Outcome Attitudes (Correlations with stated Intent)			
Safety and Security domain			
Face repeated displacement (v13)		.230**	.361**
Health and water domain			
Face serious shortage of safe and reliable drinking water (v6)			.368**
Educational domain			
Children will have access to school (v49)	.408**		.317*
Food security			
Experience serious food shortages and face hunger (v4)		.336**	.308*
Come to own goats or cattle (v37)		.218**	
Mode of return domain			
Having several wives makes return easier (v5)		-.266**	
Difficulties in constructing our tukuls or shelters (v8)		.253**	.328**
Self return is preferred over UN organised return (v12)		-.220**	
Using public transport means harassment, loss of possessions (v32)	.325*		.453**
Cultural domain			
Settle directly to my home village (v22)		.277**	
Processes of change domain			
Find that we have become different from those who stayed behind (v7)		.218**	.323**
Aid domain			
If provided, aid is best distributed by our own leaders (v34)		.239**	
Calculated Attitude	ns	.237**	.469**
Correlation Stated Attitude with Calculated Attitude	ns	.317**	ns
Referent Subjective Norms (Correlations with stated Intent)			
Political leaders (V8)		.291**	
International NGOs (V5)			.353**
Household members or close family (V2)		.176*	.343**
Calculated Subjective Norm		.218**	

Shaded beliefs act as barriers

NB * Significance at 0.05 level; ** at 0.01 level

9.7. Discussion

Researching the Impact and Appropriateness of Repatriation Interventions

As a repatriation intervention, the assisted returns of 2003 were based on the belief that the displaced Ngok were in need of free transport to Abyei (the May 2003 assisted return), including some limited assistance upon their arrival (the June assisted return) to make their return to the newly established villages north of the Kiir river sustainable. According to the analysis of the data obtained by the extended TORA model this proved to be an inappropriate understanding of Ngok return strategies.

By reviewing the cognitive construct of the decision to return in early 2004, prior to the signing of the peace agreement, it appeared that the assisted return interventions addressed issues that the displaced Ngok in Khartoum felt very strongly about, e.g. *'return will not possible since I can't afford the money to pay for it'*. However, most of these beliefs were not found to be influential in informing the level to which the Ngok intended to return. Also, the cognitive construct of the 'mode of return' domain does not indicate that the provision of free transport was closely associated with the intent return at that particular moment in time. Rather, payment of transportation was found to be cognitively associated with return following a peace agreement, and would particularly appeal to the displaced that have family and kin in areas of return.

It was found likely that the 2003 assisted returns attracted the most vulnerable amongst the displaced, compared with far fewer Ngok who intended to return anyway by making use of their own resources. Analysis of the data demonstrated that the majority of the returnees did make a more emotive return response by going 'home' as opposed to a more reasoned response. Therefore the findings indicated that most of the returnees were rendered at risk and were initially a burden on the Ngok communities in the Abyei area, many of whom were struggling to establish themselves.

The 2004 assessment into the experience of Ngok communities and recent returnees in the Abyei area illustrated clearly that the objectives of the 2003 assisted returns were not met. Not only did the assisted returns fail to increase the number of people in the four re-established villages, but it did not offer options for secure and durable livelihoods in the area north of the Kiir river. The cognitive construct clearly demonstrated that fear of displacement at such a point in time is associated with the belief that it is better to settle south of the Kiir as a strategy to reduce risk. This is what actually happened, as a substantial number of the assisted returnees crossed the Kiir to the south to join family and kin. In that respect the predictions of the TORA findings proved to be highly accurate, and demonstrate its ability to explore the impact and appropriateness of proposed repatriation interventions (predictive warning utility).

Dynamics of Return Planning to Abyei

The TORA findings indicate the importance of both return beliefs and expectations of home (the attitude) and social influences (subjective norm) over vulnerability associated with return, and factors making carrying out return more easy or difficult (control beliefs).

Looking into the influential return beliefs and expectations of Abyei, return planning for the three return options is informed by different combinations of beliefs and expectations. At a general level of return planning (the sum of the three return options) the decision to return is influentially informed by the following beliefs, which act as barriers (in brackets Spearman correlation coefficients):

1. Experience serious food shortages and face hunger (.398)
2. Find that we have become different from those who stayed behind (.361)
3. Face serious shortage of safe and reliable drinking water (.247)
4. Difficulties in constructing our tukuls or shelters (.245)
5. Life will be different from what it used to be before the conflict: *'life has changed'* (.237)
6. If provided, aid is best distributed by our own leaders (.222)
7. Will be suspected (.215).

Influential return beliefs and expectations acting as drivers are in decreasing order of influence (in brackets Spearman correlation coefficients):

1. Children will have access to school (.345)
2. Burial in my home area (.259)
3. Rely on our traditional ways of peacemaking to make and maintain peace (.218)
4. Depend on forest foods and fish for survival following return (.208)
5. Come to own goats or cattle (.204)
6. Half food rations for a year is better than full rations for 6 months (.200).

The decision to return in 2004 was found to be pre-dominantly informed by a set of influential barriers, including the fear of displacement and facing suspicion, as well as meeting basic needs. According to the survey findings, the signing of the peace agreement results in a strong increase regarding the level to which the displaced Ngok plan to return. Yet, the influential return beliefs and expectations of Abyei form a combination of both drivers as well as barriers towards return. The increase to which the displaced Ngok plan to return is not as such informed by a dramatic change in the type of beliefs as in its nature. This implies a strong reduction in the perceived vulnerability and an increase in the level of control over the return process associated with these influential beliefs. Considering the critical return issues regarding safety and security, food security and water, it is unlikely that the signing of a peace agreement triggers a massive spontaneous return movement of the Ngok (though it will result in a strong significant increase of the level to which the displaced plan to return). In general, the return decision is to a highly significant degree based on an analysis of critical return beliefs and expectations of the return context (the correlation between Calculated Attitude and stated return Intent is .437 at p 0.000 level).

When the peace agreement is signed, the return of displaced Ngok from Khartoum to their home villages north of the Kiir river could be promoted by giving appropriate attention to the influential return beliefs. This would mean:

- Meeting basic needs in areas of return. The most influential and crucial one appears to be the issue of food security, followed by shelter/tukul construction and provision of safe and reliable sources of drinking water

- Focus on issues dealing with identity, social integration and adaptation to life in Abyei since the displaced not only perceive themselves to have become different from those who stayed behind, but expect life to be different from what it used to be before the conflict broke out
- Access to schooling and re-establishment of the educational system will positively influence the decision to return, particularly for those households having children of school age
- Recognition by the international community and its actors that Abyei, following the signing of a peace agreement, is still regarded as presenting a volatile return context with threats concerning insecurity and displacement, over which the returnees feel they have little control. There is an important role for the international community to ensure that the principles of a peace agreement are adhered to in the Abyei area. Peace may also need to be enforced to ensure that no critical events take place, such as armed confrontations between SPLA and GoS forces, and arming of Murahaleen militias by the GoS. As the return belief '*ability to depend on traditional peace mechanisms*' is not as yet regarded influential in informing the return decision, it is crucial to strengthen traditional peace values and build trust amongst and between Missiriya and Ngok communities by strengthening community-based peace and justice systems
- Take into account the cultural connotations of belongingness and return to the land of '*our grand fathers*' ('*return means to be buried in one's home area*'). This is an important feature of the process driving return. Already this aspect is emphasised by returnees receiving a public blessing upon their arrival in their home villages by the elders.

Political leaders (the SPLM/A), household and family members are the most influential referents and channels of information.

With Abyei presenting a peaceful and stable environment to return to, the decision to return, of those still displaced at that point in time, is influenced by an increase in the degree to which they subscribe to cultural connotations, or a more positive evaluation of its likely outcomes. Critical beliefs dealing with conflict, or its effects and coverage of direct basic needs no longer influence the decision to return to Abyei. Interestingly, the ability of traditional peace mechanisms to manage potential conflict and instability becomes an influential return belief. The level to which the, by then still displaced Ngok believe that one can depend on such mechanisms to live in peace determines to a great extent their return to the area north of the Kiir river. This in effect will determine the speed and success of the reconstruction process in that area.

In short, exploring the return decision of the Dinka Ngok in Khartoum demonstrated that the extended TORA, as a general method, provides for a context specific understanding of return strategies and probable behaviour and its dynamic nature over time.

Expressed Perceived Vulnerability In Displacement and Return

The nature of vulnerability, both in displacement as well as associated with return, was found to be informed by different sets of return beliefs and expectations of home which, generally speaking, renders those expressing vulnerability at risk, and those expressing capacity to manage risk as resilient. In general, the nature of vulnerability across the three return options is best described by the following reasoned return beliefs

- Expectations regarding safety
- The level to which one perceives oneself to be vulnerable in one's community
- The level to which one expects to face insecurity in one's home area
- Duration of expected food support in relation to the time needed to become food secure
- Having family members or relatives in areas of return.

The study found that those households that are marginalized and destitute in displacement express the highest levels of vulnerability on return. This is because their return decision was found to be based on an emotive return response, which is the desire to improve on ones' living condition in displacement. By not taking into account a more critical analysis of the return situation such households are most likely to be at risk in the post-return context.

In order to guarantee the right to return in safety and dignity, as laid down in the Principles on Internal Displacement, it is recommended that the most vulnerable households in displacement be enabled to plan return based on an actual analysis of their return situation, including those in the critical safety and security issues. This issue raises the moral obligation of the government and international community to ensure that the lives of people during their displacement are not spent in sheer destitution, but that at least fundamental human rights are respected and basic needs covered. Without this the most vulnerable are likely to base their return on the wish to go 'home', irrespective of the threats posed by the post return context.

Conclusion

The refugee study, presented in part two of this thesis, established that the extended TORA model is a useful method to better understand return planning and strategies of Sudanese refugees hosted in Ethiopia. Analysis of the data obtained by employing the extended TORA to explore the return planning of displaced Ngok in Khartoum suggests the appropriateness of the model to study migrational decision making of war-displaced populations in a variety of forced migration contexts. This chapter also demonstrated the usefulness of the TORA construct to explore the appropriateness of repatriation interventions in terms of their planned objectives.

Part IV – Analysis and Conclusion

10. Analysis and Conclusion

Forced displacement and the response of the international community have long been pre-occupied with refugees. People fleeing conflict and disorder by crossing an international border qualify in most cases for refugee status, and with it access to an established system of international protection and assistance. More recently the international community has been grappling with what has come to be known as the global crisis of internal displacement (Cohen and Deng, 1998; Korn, 1999; UNHCR, 2000b). Internal displacement poses a challenge for the international community, as the United Nations has no right under its Charter to intervene in the affairs of a state (Boutros-Ghali, 1992; Cohen and Deng, 1998). This significantly reduces the ability of the international community to provide assistance or protect internally displaced persons (IDPs). However, whether in dealing with refugees or IDPs, the international system has been struggling to prevent forced displacement, to address its consequences (even in terms of covering basic needs) and to find 'durable' solutions.

Though the responses by the international community regarding refugees and internally displaced people are driven by different sets of norms, institutions, legal frameworks and operational strategies, the very reasons for dislocation, the experience of flight and displacement as well as the perspectives regarding return do not fundamentally differ between refugees and internally displaced.

This study is motivated by the need to take displaced people's experience and perspectives into account when facilitating spontaneous return or managing planned organised repatriation. A better understanding of displaced people's decision to return, and the way that decision is constructed, is seen as fundamental in developing strategies to deliver effective protection, humanitarian assistance and reintegration support for both refugees and internally displaced peoples.

This final part of the thesis reflects on the results and findings of the refugee and internally displaced studies as presented in part II (chapter 5, 6 and 7) and III (chapter 8 and 9). The discussion takes into account the pertinent issues and concerns raised in part I (chapter 2, 3 and 4). In order to systematically capture the findings and their implications, chapter 10 is structured along four major thematic lines: conceptual, methodological and instrumental, empirical and lastly policy and practice. The research components, introduced in section 1.3, are systematically dealt with under the four thematic lines.

10.1. Conceptual Perspective

The Need for Actor Orientation (Research Component 1)

Focus on the Displacement Experience: Questioning the Assumed Certainties of Policy and Practice

Conflict has been one of the major driving forces, displacing millions of people around the world, making displacement and the responses of the international community one of the most pressing challenges of contemporary times. Due to the complexity of the problem, and the changing nature of involuntary war-related migration, a new research agenda is emerging. This agenda stresses the importance of the experience of displacement, focuses on repatriation which has come to be seen as the main durable solution for the forcibly displaced, and calls for inter-disciplinary research in order to embrace this new challenge (Koser, 1996; Bakewell, 1999; Hammond, 1999; Voutira and Harrell-Bond, 2000) (chapter 1).

By focusing research on the experiences of the displaced, rather than on the causes of displacement (which lie to a considerable extent within the international system itself), the assumed certainties of policy and aid practice are called into question. This is important, as the external environment has changed dramatically following the end of the Cold War and more recent developments, such as the war on terror (chapter 2). One of the consequences has been the growing proportion of humanitarian work that takes place in or near zones of active conflict. Increasingly aid is provided in complex and dynamic contexts raising questions about established policy and practice.

Repatriation Discourse is at Risk of being Fundamentally Flawed

The lack of attention paid to the experience of the displaced as returnees has been blamed for the predominance of ‘voluntary’ repatriation as the main durable solution (Koser and Black, 1999). Repatriation discourse therefore risks being fundamentally flawed, eroding the principle of voluntary return, and potentially presenting huge challenges for displaced people in volatile post-return environments. On the other hand, inappropriate generalisations about refugees and other war related displaced people have encouraged ignorance of war-displaced people as conscious and active human beings, strategising their return options within particular return contexts. With repatriation presented as the main durable solution for war related migrants by the international community and its donors, and humanitarian actors struggling with interventionism in the emerging new world ‘disorder’, there is clearly a need to inform repatriation discourse with the voices, opinions and perspectives of its prime actors, the displaced (Slim, 1996; Stein, 1994; Koser and Black, 1999) (chapter 3).

Flexible Inclusive Approach to Repatriation in Dealing with Complex and Dynamic Settings

Dealing with highly diverse and complex settings around the world, voluntary repatriation demands a flexible, inclusive approach. For such an approach to contribute to the discourse on repatriation it should embrace a number of essential elements. Firstly, the potential of returnees themselves to make

repatriation work should be emphasised and taken into consideration (Stein, 1994). Secondly, there is a need to learn much more about *‘the way particular displaced populations are internally differentiated and about how such differences affect preferences for and against, and decisions about home coming and home making’* (Allen and Turton, 1996:17). Thirdly, there is a need for explanatory models that can inform decisions about assistance (Hammond, 1999; Webb and Harinanayan, 1999). Fourthly, returnees as main actors of repatriation need to be empowered by promoting their own initiatives and ability to devise strategies that fit their specific history and set of current perceived future circumstances (Eastmond and Öjendal, 1999) (chapter 4).

Actor Orientation to Enhance the Quality of Humanitarianism in a Changing World

Actor orientation has been notably absent in the repatriation discourse, which so far has predominantly reflected the interests and priorities of the international community and its donors (Harrell-Bond, 1986; Slim, 1996). However it has been acknowledged that *‘it is only by understanding the choices, preferences and decision-making procedures of the people (read: the war-displaced) themselves that it will be possible to give substance to the much repeated objective of empowering them. It is also a necessary precondition of another much repeated objective: making aid to refugees and returnees “development oriented”’* (Alan and Turton, 1996: 17).

If managed well, actor-oriented approaches can make an important contribution, informing a new discourse on repatriation, thus enhancing the quality of humanitarianism in a changing world. This study explores displaced people’s meaning and understanding of return and repatriation, as well as their return perceptions and expectations of home, and argues that these can and should inform repatriation policy and practice.

10.2. Methodological and Instrumental Perspective

The TORA as an Actor Oriented Model (Research Component 2)

Exploring Displaced People’s Knowledge, Value and Power Domains of Return and Repatriation

This study found that the Theory of Reasoned Action (TORA), a psycho-social model so far not utilised in forced migration settings, can effectively be applied as a structured actor oriented approach in order to elucidate the antecedents of displaced people’s return behaviour (section 4.3). This is because the TORA utility facilitated the exploration of displaced people’s knowledge, value and power domains concerning issues of return and repatriation.

The Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1985, 1988 and 2005) was selected as most reviews in the field of behavioural research have drawn attention to the TORA as one of the principal theoretical constructs for both the study of behavioural decisions and prediction of behaviour. The theory has been applied to a wide variety of behavioural domains proving its record in predictive power and its ability to perform in different contexts (e.g. Armitage and Conner, 2001; McKemey and Rehman, 2002) (section 4.3).

The informational base within the extended Theory of Reasoned Action allowed for a detailed explanation of displaced people's intention to return to their country or home area. At the initial level, return behaviour is assumed to be determined by the intention to return. At the second level this intention is explained in terms of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. This study suggested a further extension of the model by introducing a fourth determinant of intention, named Perceived Vulnerability. This to capture a dimension of return behaviour, thought not accounted for by the first three more traditional antecedents of behavioural intention, when applied in risk prone migration contexts. The third level of analysis identified the importance of particular return beliefs and expectations of the return home, as well as the importance of normative beliefs related to specific social referents informing the decision to return. Each successive level of analysis in this sequence provided a more comprehensive account of the factors determining return and repatriation decisions of the displaced (chapter 4.3). The TORA was applied in order to explore and compare the return antecedents of Sudanese refugees residing in camps in western Ethiopia (part II of the dissertation) and a group of internally displaced people living in Khartoum (part III).

War-Affected Communities Strategise Their Return

Forcibly displaced people are often seen as exceptional, outside of normal social experience, and disoriented because of their flight in which they were forced to leave everything behind. However, analysis of the data obtained by employing the Theory of Reasoned Action clearly demonstrates that displaced people strategise return by taking into account particular sets of influential return beliefs and expectations of home. By assessing displaced people's thinking and feelings about return, both the refugee and IDP studies demonstrated that displaced people evaluate beliefs regarding the outcomes of return and take into account the social pressures on whether or not to return, the level of control over the decision to return, and vulnerability associated with the return.

The extended TORA was found to be a dynamic construct with the ability to identify different combinations of influential beliefs by descriptive variables such as time, place, cultural background and displacement history (see section 10.4 on empirical perspective).

Findings of both the refugee and IDP studies demonstrated that displaced people possess 'agency'. That is, they process social experience and devise ways to manage key migrational decision-making, even though this may not be perceived to be under their full control. Therefore, to do right to displaced people, they should be regarded as actors strategising their return and integration.

Actor Orientation as an Instrument to Inform Localised Return Strategies and Programmes

This study showed that by employing 'value expectancy' models such as the TORA, a good insight can be gained into the complex set of considerations and beliefs, as well as their interrelationships and respective degrees of influence, on the decision to return. These findings reflected the construct of refugees' and internally displaced peoples' knowledge, value and power domains regarding projected return behaviour. The research demonstrated that by applying the TORA model, an understanding can be gained of the complexities and dynamics associated with specific areas of return from the perspective of the displaced. Such specific knowledge regarding the factors influencing the displaced people's decisions to return is critical to the discourse on repatriation, so as to enable more locally

informed return strategies and programmes to be developed, which capture the complexity and dynamics of particular return environments (section 3.3).

Contribution to an Understanding of Migrational Decision-Making

The TORA, as a research methodology, was found capable of uncovering deeply held values in the return decision-making process of those displaced by war. Both refugee and IDP studies demonstrated that the extended version¹⁴⁶ of the TORA applied in this research is a powerful and informative theoretical construct, particularly when compared to the traditional ‘push-pull’ and ‘assimilationist’ migration and assimilation theories that still dominate much of the discourse on migration (section 2.1). This is because the TORA directly takes into account the experience of migrants. The absence of this aspect is precisely why the former models have been criticised (Leopold, 1992). Although framed in a discourse of exploitation and conflict, the application of the TORA, as a migrational decision making model, permits the war-displaced migrants to be viewed as social actors, seeking room for manoeuvre within the constraints of the wider social-political context.

Perceived Vulnerability as an Extension of the TORA (Research Component 3)

Enhancing the TORA’s Explanatory Power in Hazard Prone or Risky Contexts

The authors of the TORA, state that ‘*future research might demonstrate the need to consider additional factors in attempts to predict and understand behaviour*’ (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980: 247). Ajzen proposed an expansion of the model by including ‘Perceived Behavioural Control’ as an additional element, thus enabling the theory to function in contexts where the behaviour in question may not be under the direct volitional control of the subject/s. This extension became known as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1988). In this study the more generic term the ‘Theory of Reasoned Action’ (TORA) has been used, although, the Perceived Behavioural Control element has been included.

Criticism of the TORA is not so much directed at the model itself, but rather offers suggestions for enhancing its power within different contexts or with particular types of behaviour (e.g. McKemey and Rehman, 2002). As migrational behaviour of war-displaced people is often characterised by volatile or risky contexts this study proposed the introduction of a fourth variable named ‘Perceived Vulnerability’. Vulnerability deals with the context of human responses to potential suffering, in this particular context defined as the awareness of potential risk or threat and the perceived ability to cope with these. The suggested expansion of the TORA with a measure of Perceived Vulnerability aimed to make the model sensitive to potential hazards associated with return.

The addition of the Perceived Vulnerability variable may not as such have improved the predictive power of the model, since its influence was found to be partially accounted for in the attitudinal and normative components. However, in hazard prone behavioural contexts, the addition of ‘Perceived Vulnerability’ to the TORA was found to give greater explanatory power, drawing attention to a critical relationship between perceived vulnerability and behavioural intention (section 4.3). It was found that by associating the return beliefs and expectations of home with the measure of Perceived Vulnerability, a deeper understanding was gained of the nature of the expected vulnerability in repatriation¹⁴⁷.

Exploring a Potential Disaster Context in Post Return Environments

Findings from both the refugee and IDP studies suggest that the addition of the Perceived Vulnerability variable enhanced the TORA's applicability in volatile and hazard prone return contexts by drawing attention to a potential disaster dimension in post-return environments. The Perceived Vulnerability determinant allows the exploration of the dynamic and context specific nature of perceived risk and the capacity of households to manage that risk.

A comparison of the refugee and IDP studies illustrated that household categories express different levels of vulnerability or resilience associated with return (chapter 6 and 9). Such differences were found to be informed by particular sets of influential return beliefs and expectations of 'home', including the perceived security of their respective displacement contexts. Identified critical risk return issues were found to reflect the dynamics and local complexities in prospective areas of return (chapter 7).

The Perceived Vulnerability measure proved also to be instrumental in determining whether strategies to deal with vulnerability should primarily address risk reduction, increased coping capability or a combination of both. As the case study of the Nuer and Anyuak return-decisions clearly demonstrated, such insights highlight the need for fundamentally different strategies to manage threats in post return environments pertinent to each tribe (chapter 7).

'Perceived Vulnerability' as a Risk and Capacity Assessment Methodology

Most repatriation programmes concentrate on meeting immediate needs rather than on reducing vulnerabilities by strengthening capacities. Of course immediate needs have to be addressed as a requirement for survival and initial integration. However, vulnerability, as a concept referring to longer-term factors which affect the ability of a community to respond to critical events is an important dimension to address in order to make return and repatriation work. It is also acknowledged that recognition of both vulnerabilities and capacities of war-affected populations must be regarded as essential in the design and implementation of humanitarian responses, as well as resettlement strategies, that are intended to have a developmental and sustainable impact (Anderson and Woodrow, 1998) (section 3.2 and 4.1).

By reviewing the progress in the analysis of social vulnerability and capacity since the early 1990's, it was observed that there remains a clear need to apply the pool of knowledge regarding Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis within both useful and usable assessment methodologies (Blaikie et al., 1994; Davis, 2004; Wisner, et al., 2005). The Perceived Vulnerability component, as part of the TORA construct, provides a clear example of an actor oriented approach, which can shed light on displaced people's perspective of vulnerability on return.

The expanded TORA was found instrumental to analyse vulnerability associated with key migrational decisions. It is not only possible to identify which household categories are at risk but also to determine the nature of that risk from their perspective. The risk perception of would be returnees may differ considerably from what technical experts and agencies tend to think about risks involved in the return of the war-displaced. Failures of agencies to grasp what is 'socially perceived as risk' have reportedly resulted in resettlement failure (Cernea, 2000).

As such the Perceived Vulnerability measure allows for a risk and coping capacity analysis which can be developed into a potent means of strengthening policy formulation and the management of repatriation by focusing due attention on vulnerability and the level to which it informs return planning. As such it delivers a vital risk assessment prior to return itself and could therefore have a predictive warning utility. Critical return issues should be taken into account by the international community and its donors to determine when repatriation can be seen as voluntary and promoted as a durable solution. Critical return issues reflecting challenges in localised areas of return are also important to allow for the timely development of strategies that can deliver appropriate protection and aid programming both of which are crucially important issues following return.

One of the strengths of the Perceived Vulnerability measure (numerically expressed on a scale from very vulnerable to very resilient) is its standardised scale against which to measure and compare expressed vulnerability or resilience between particular household categories within or across displaced populations. This makes it possible to set benchmarks against which to explore different levels of vulnerability, or resilience, and to develop appropriate support strategies for those households expressing vulnerability in return.

Perceived Vulnerability and Perceived Level of Control

The findings of both the refugee and IDP studies suggest that, in conflictive or volatile contexts, the Perceived Vulnerability variable is a more diagnostic determinant of return intent, and ultimately return behaviour, than 'Perceived Control'. However, rather than replacing the Perceived Level of Control variable, it is recommended that Perceived Vulnerability is used in conjunction with it, as it is found to be a determinant of it. By including the measure of behavioural control, the model remains sensitive to the level of influence of any controlling social or military-political organisation, which may, or may not, be felt to overpower individuals' freedom of choice, directing their movement in one way or another. A more practical argument for not discarding the Perceived Level of Control determinant is that it is relatively simple to measure, does not require much additional time, and may demonstrate significant associations with the return intent in the case of both the refugee and IDP studies.

Independent of the return options pursued, both refugee and IDP studies found strong correlations between Perceived Vulnerability and the Perceived Level of Control. This highlights the fact that vulnerability in return is to a considerable degree pre-occupied by lack of control over certain aspects of the return process and context.

In situations where the Perceived Level of Control is found to be the most influential determinant in informing the decision to return, it may imply major consequences regarding the voluntary nature of that return, and the kind of threats faced in post-return environments. The deliberate manipulation of threat or sanction by powerful social entities may induce compliance that is not matched by the internalised return beliefs and social norms of the displaced¹⁴⁸. It is clear that in such situations the rights based criteria of voluntary return are seriously compromised.

10.3. Empirical Perspective

The Decision of Sudanese Refugees in Camps in Western Ethiopia to Return (Research Component 4)

Context

The Horn of Africa has been plagued by violent conflicts, consisting of a complex arrangement of both historical and contemporary factors. Over time, local conflicts and disputes tend to become integrated into a wider composite of regional interests and national contests, and may result in massive population displacements. With border areas in the Horn of Africa seldom under full control of national governments such areas can be in a state of crisis for prolonged periods of time.

Stretches of the Ethio-Sudanese border are sensitive areas with long experience of cross-border interaction, both in terms of offering refuge to war-affected communities as well as a base for warring parties to train and mount operations. Chapter five showed that parts of the border area constitute a constrained operational environment for the UNHCR to manage its refugee programme, and for refugees to manage complex and dynamic return and repatriation challenges.

What are refugees' return beliefs and expectations of home? Which of these beliefs influence their decision to return? Which beliefs are critical and need to be addressed by the international community to ensure that repatriation is voluntary, takes place in safety and dignity and is appropriately supported (chapter 6)?

Strength of Return Intent

In November and December 2002, 652 Sudanese refugee household heads were interviewed in three different camps in western Ethiopia by using a structured questionnaire based on salient return beliefs and social referents identified in the earlier participatory qualitative stage of the research. At a first level of analysis direct readings of refugees' return intent were obtained for a number of return moments. The return moments or options presented were to return within a year, within three years or when there is 'peace'. Comparing return for the one-year and three year time-frames demonstrated a slight increase in the intention to return as the timeframe increases. However, the intention in both these cases is negative to ambivalent. In comparison, and in line with expectations, the intention to return becomes strong to very strong when peace is perceived to be established. Peace, and therefore conflict resolution, is a crucial factor in determining the degree to which people intend to return (section 6.3).

Return Intent is Primarily Informed by Attitude

Independent of the return option, intent was found to be significantly informed by beliefs regarding expectations of home once they have returned (e.g. *'following return we will experience a serious food shortage and as a consequence face hunger'*), normative beliefs reflecting social influences (e.g. *'the Ethiopian government which is hosting us thinks that we should return home'*), control beliefs (e.g. *'I*

myself do not have full control over the decision to return)’ and beliefs regarding the risks involved in returning matched by the perceived ability level to cope with them (perceived vulnerability: e.g. *‘returning involves risks which I will not be able to cope with fully’*). Refugees’ attitude towards return was found to be the foremost determinant, informing the decision to return for almost all household categories, and independent of the return option pursued. According to the TORA, since the Stated Attitude correlated strongly with Stated Intent, the stated return Intent is considered to be a reliable predictor of return behaviour (section 6.4).

Barriers and Drivers Influencing Return Intent

Regarding the general return intent, measured by taking the sum of the three return options, analysis of the data demonstrates that return amongst Sudanese refugees in western Ethiopia is influenced by the following belief-based attitudes, which are acting as cognitive barriers to the decision to return (presented in order of decreasing influence):

- Will be conscripted into an armed group
- Face hardship and difficulties
- Our children will be abducted
- Will be repeatedly displaced
- Will be arrested
- No modern health care services provided
- No educational services provided
- Our children will not have access to schooling
- To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation
- Loss of chance for resettlement in western country
- Insecurity makes it difficult to have enough to eat.

Belief based attitudes acting as influential cognitive drivers informing the decision to return were found to be:

- Food-secure within a short period of time (less than six months)
- Can rely on traditional ways of peacemaking
- Collect and consume wild foods to survive
- Large household helps to become food secure.

The general intention to return was also found to be sensitive to the following household category descriptors:

- Time (return moment)
- Camp location
- Ethnic group
- Gender

- Critical event initiating flight from one's home area
- Flight pattern and duration of the displacement
- Knowledge about whereabouts of family and kin in the Sudan
- Prominent challenge faced by the refugee regime and camp environment
- The type of conflict which is thought to present the main challenge towards future life in the Sudan.

Comparing the most influential return beliefs affecting the intention to return when there is peace, with return for the one or three-year period, showed fundamental differences. Analysis of the data indicates that without peace livelihoods back in the Sudan are expected to be under pressure. The security situation and its implications for returnees' livelihoods is seen as a serious obstacle for return. However, provision of aid and services in relatively stable and peaceful areas will directly result in a higher return intent, particularly if the destination is one's home village. Once there is peace the provision of aid and services in areas of return cease to affect the decision to return. In the 'when there is peace' option, the focus shifts towards social integration issues. For example, the level to which returnees perceive Sudan to be their homeland, are able to rebuild their communities and livelihoods, acquire wealth (cattle), can rely on traditional peace making and expect justice to be done, become the important return beliefs and expectations influencing the level to which households intend to return (section 6.7).

Social Referents

The level of influence of the salient social referents was found to vary between the different household categories and over the return options. Analysis of the data showed that the SPLA and the Ethiopian government are the most influential referents for all three return moments, and that they play a critical role regarding return following peace. I.e. a change in the motivation to follow the advice of these referents, or in the degree to which these referents are perceived to agree with the proposed return, will affect refugees' decision to return. This clearly illustrates that the decision to return is only partially under control of the refugees themselves, and that the SPLA and Ethiopian government represent important power domains regarding the return of the refugees (section 6.8).

Perceived Level of Control and Vulnerability

Control beliefs were found to influentially inform return intent, a clear indication that return behaviour is not necessarily volitional, and only partly under the control of refugees themselves.

The Perceived Vulnerability reading was also found to correlate significantly with Stated Intent to return across all three return moments. In general, return beliefs and expectations of home are to a considerable degree cognitively associated with aspects of vulnerability.

From a vulnerability perspective refugees' return decision prior to 'peace' is pre-occupied with perceived threats and hazards posed by the return context. The nature of that threat was found to be informed by a number of beliefs (section 6.10):

- Face hardship and difficulties

- Our children will be abducted
- To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation (spontaneous return vs. organised repatriation)
- Will be conscripted into an armed group
- Will be repeatedly displaced
- Might be arrested.

The Perceived Vulnerability reading expresses resilience for the return option peace. Generally speaking its nature is informed by the following beliefs:

- Return to my home village
- Care for those without family support
- Aid, if provided, best distributed by own leaders
- Large household helps to become food secure.

The Internal Differentiation of the Refugee Community

Findings of the refugee study draw attention to the internal differentiation of the Sudanese refugee community in west Ethiopia. Return intents differ significantly across household categories and return options. Intent was found to be differentially informed by various determinants, with the attitude towards return being the most prominent variable. Different levels of return planning, and the way it is informed, were found to reflect a rich diversity in people's background as well as in different return contexts and their dynamics over time (section 6.10).

Descriptive Utility of 'Perceived Vulnerability': the Nuer ~ Anyuak Case Study (Research Component 5)

Context Specific Variation in Return Intent and Nature of Vulnerability

By looking into the level to which various ethnic groups plan to return to their home areas in the Sudan when there is 'peace', the refugee study demonstrated that some groups may demonstrate high return intentions while others demonstrate significantly lower intentions (the case of Uduk versus Funj return, chapter 7.1). Yet other groups may not show a difference regarding the level to which they intend to return, but do demonstrate significant differences in the underlying antecedents of return (the case of Nuer versus Anyuak return, chapter 7.1). The descriptive utility of the TORA construct, and in particular the Perceived Vulnerability utility, was demonstrated in chapter 7 by exploring the return antecedents of Nuer and Anyuak refugees for the return option 'peace'.

The case study clearly showed that return intentions as well as the nature of vulnerability are governed by particular sets of return beliefs and expectations of home. Such sets were shown to reflect context specific variations with return pursued for the option 'peace'. Some of the influential beliefs informing both Stated Intent and Perceived Vulnerability dealt with security and safety related expectations, indicating that returnees contemplate a potential disaster element in post-return environments (section 7.3 and 7.4).

Return Strategies: Risk Reduction or Increased Coping Capability?

By correlating Perceived Vulnerability with the salient return belief-based attitudes, it was possible to identify which beliefs were associated with the respondents' perception of vulnerability on returning home. This actor oriented understanding of community vulnerability thus provides a unique opportunity for exploring the nature of a potential disaster component in post-return situations. The Nuer~Anyuak case study clearly demonstrated that the potential for disruption and harm is a complex socially constructed process, involving various critical return beliefs and expectations of home. Though disaster can be caused by an external agent such as hostile tribes in case of the Nuer, or failure of traditional conflict mediation mechanisms in case of the Anyuak, such events by themselves are linked to a wider understanding of the causality of the particular threat and its consequences in terms of the return and rehabilitation process (section 7.6).

By looking at the relative importance of both aspects of vulnerability, risk and coping capability, it was possible to establish whether migrational decision-making is informed primarily by the perceived risk, the ability to cope, or a combination of both. Nuer return strategies were found to be primarily informed by the perceived ability to which they expect to cope with threats posed in post return environments. For the Anyuak, it was a balance between an actual reduction in the perceived risk, and ability to manage the risk that informed the return decision. The Nuer feel more threatened and less able to mediate the threat. In contrast, the Anyuak, although recognising the same threat, felt that their traditional conflict mediation process would enable them to achieve a peaceful return and rehabilitation. This finding has important implications regarding return strategies for both groups (section 7.6).

Hazardous Return Environments Present Critical Return Issues even with Return being Pursued when there is 'Peace'

The Nuer ~Anyuak study highlighted the fact that return intent and vulnerability can be associated with physical insecurity even in cases of return taking place when there is 'peace'. The imminent importance of influential Nuer beliefs, such as fear of hostile tribes, and lack of control by a central authority over small firearms at such a point in time highlights the volatility of prospective areas of return. However, as clearly demonstrated for the Nuer refugees, the decision to return was found to be dependent on the perceived ability to manage the threat, and not by a reduction in the threat itself. This indicates that, cognitively, Nuer returnees expect the threat to exist anyway. Unfortunately other beliefs, which influence the level to which Nuer refugees plan to return, suggest that their reaction to that threat is likely to be a violent one. The absence of viable non-violent forms of coping with the threat is likely to place other tribes at risk which will, no doubt, generate further vulnerability amongst the returnees.

In such situations, the principle of voluntary repatriation to ensure that return takes place in safety and dignity, together with the desire of the international community and its major donors to promote repatriation when there is peace, are likely to present a difficult choice for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Absence of constructive alternatives to deal with the threats in return environments thus presents a dangerous vacuum in terms of effective protection and rehabilitation programming.

Context Specific Nature of Risk and the Capacity to Manage It

From a legal rights perspective repatriation policy is based on the cornerstone of ‘non-refoulement’, i.e. refugees will not be repatriated to insecure or volatile areas where their lives might be endangered. Yet repatriation programming is often initiated following the signing of peace agreements at the national level. It often struggles with or fails to take into account localised dynamics and complexities presented by particular return areas. The findings regarding Nuer and Anyuak return illustrate that it is helpful to identify and take into account refugees’ influential return beliefs and expectations of home, as well as their perceived vulnerability. The Perceived Vulnerability construct was shown to be an effective tool to map out the context specific nature of risk, the ability to cope and prospective coping strategies. These bear important connotations for critical return issues. Such issues are of particular importance as concerns about the erosion of the principle of ‘non-refoulement’, and concerns about the voluntary nature of repatriation itself, reflect the difficulty of managing repatriation in today’s world of complex emergencies (section 7.6).

General Applicability of the TORA: the Decision of Sudanese IDPs to Return (Research Component 6)

Context

Following the Addis Ababa peace agreement Sudan enjoyed a period of relative peace and calm in the period 1972 to 1983. During that period Abyei, at the frontier of northern and southern Sudan, remained an insecure area. The main reasons for this had to do with the failure of both the Southern Government and the Khartoum Government to honour the agreement to hold a referendum for Abyei, deciding its administrative future either by the north or the south. The arming of the Missiriya by successive Khartoum governments against the Ngok and other Dinka tribes south of the Kiir, and the discovery of substantial oil deposits in the area added to the tensions.

Starting in 1983, massive raids by the Murahaleen into Dinka territory pushed out the Dinkas and depopulated large swathes of territory, both north and south of the Bahr al Arab river. Tens of thousands of Dinka were killed, hundreds of thousands displaced, and the livelihoods of many more seriously undermined. Though famine in western Sudan seemed to have fuelled the early raids, the scale of devastation from 1985 onwards was the result of government complicity and assistance given to the Murahaleen (Keen, 1995). With conflict peaking in 1986, all villages north of the Kiir River were permanently evacuated, and large numbers of the Dinka Ngok fled to the north. Most of them ended up in urban centres, particularly Khartoum. Smaller numbers of Ngok fled south into Dinka Twic territory or beyond, to escape from marauding Murahaleen militias (chapter 8).

Strength of Intent

As part of the structured interview schedule, a total of 279 displaced Ngok households were interviewed in various camps and squatter areas in and around Khartoum during April 2004. Three distinct return options were defined in order to explore the level to which households planned to return over time: return ‘now’ (the 2003-4 dry season), return ‘when a peace agreement has been signed’ (dry season 2004-5) and ‘when there is a true and lasting peace in Abyei’. The intention to return in the dry season of 2003-4 was found to be slightly positive, but increased to strong to very strong

following the signing of a peace agreement. With Abyei presenting a peaceful and stable area to return to the level to which households plan their return becomes very strong.

Intent Informed by Attitude

General return intent, the sum of the three return moments, of the Dinka Ngok was found to be strongly informed by both attitude and subjective norm, and weakly by the Perceived Level of Control and Perceived Vulnerability. As in the refugee study the attitude towards return is the foremost determinant informing the decision to return, and was found to be strongly correlated with stated Intent, indicating that the stated Intent is a reliable predictor of return behaviour (section 9.3).

Influential cognitive barriers to return were found to be (in order of decreasing significance):

- Experience serious food shortages and face hunger
- Find that we have become different from those who stayed behind
- Face serious shortage of safe and reliable drinking water
- Difficulties in constructing our tukuls or shelters
- Life will be different from what it used to be before the conflict: *'life has changed'*
- If provided, aid is best distributed by our own leaders
- Will be suspected
- Face repeated displacement
- The international community not providing food aid means we might die
- Face insecurity in our home area
- Half food rations for a year is better than full rations for 6 months.

Influential cognitive drivers supporting return were found to be (section 9.5):

- Children will have access to school
- Burial in my home area
- Rely on our traditional ways of peacemaking to make and maintain peace
- Depend on forest foods and fish for survival following return
- Come to own goats or cattle
- The expected duration of food assistance.

Different household categories expressed sensitivity towards particular sets of influential return beliefs and expectations over the various return options. General return intent showed significant differences regarding three descriptive variables: having an income from a permanent job or daily labour in Khartoum, the expressed level of vulnerability in displacement, and the benefits associated by being in Khartoum.

The nature and number of influential return beliefs that affect the decision to return change over the return options from barriers to drivers, and from beliefs dealing with fulfilment of basic needs and security to socio-cultural oriented beliefs. With Abyei presenting a secure return environment, the

decision to return of those still displaced in Khartoum is influentially informed by the following outcome attitudes:

- Happy to be in the land of our grand fathers
- Come to own goats or cattle (acquire wealth)
- Rely on our traditional ways of peacemaking to make and maintain peace
- Keep my birth rights
- Burial in my home area.

The Influence of Social Referents

Concerning social influences, the SPLM/A was found to influence the return decision of the displaced Ngok as long as return takes place in a volatile context (return now and following the signing of a peace agreement). The displaced are likely to react negatively to any social pressure from the Government of the Sudan. Interestingly the displaced Ngok are of the opinion that the GoS is the only salient referent which is against their return. With a true and lasting peace visitors to, or arrivals from Abyei, family and household members as well as relatives are referents influentially informing the decision to return of those who are still in Khartoum at that point of time. Clearly over the return options the shift is from institutional referents to more community based ones as the prospect of peace increases.

Perceived Vulnerability Associated with Return

In general, the displaced Dinka Ngok were found to cognitively associate vulnerability with a number of beliefs, of which the following inform the nature of perceived vulnerability most closely:

- Expectations regarding safety
- The level to which one perceives to be vulnerable in one's community
- The level to which one expects to face insecurity in one's home area
- Duration of expected food support in relation to the time needed to become food secure
- Having family members or relatives in areas of return.

The emotive Perceived Vulnerability reading is only significantly correlated with the Stated Intent for the return option 'now', primarily so from a coping perspective. However, this is not to say that vulnerability ceases to be an influential dimension when it comes to return to more peaceful contexts. Individual return beliefs that were found to influentially inform the return decision correlate significantly with Perceived Vulnerability. Return following the signing of a peace agreement is associated with facing insecurity in Abyei. With Abyei constituting a safe and peaceful environment to return to, maintenance of one's birthright is significantly associated with the Perceived Vulnerability expressing resilience. The ability to exercise one's birthright is cognitively associated with risk reduction and coping capability in the case of when there is peace (section 9.5).

Expressed Vulnerability in Displacement Conditions Return Intent

It was found that levels of perceived vulnerability amongst IDPs in displacement trigger significantly different levels of return intent, informed by distinctively different sets of influential return beliefs. For example, for return in 2004, households which indicated to be highly vulnerable in displacement registered positive return intents, whilst moderately vulnerable households expressed negative intents. Vulnerable households do not express sensitivity regarding critical return beliefs in the safety and security belief domain, whilst moderately vulnerable households do. It appears that highly vulnerable households are prepared to take on the biggest risks regarding return prior to the signing of a peace agreement, risks they are least likely to manage compared to more resilient households (section 9.6). This, to a large extent, may be because the most vulnerable are most likely to be most insecure in their current displaced context and therefore more likely to respond positively to any option to return, irrespective of possible risk.

Potential of the TORA as a Standardised Exploratory Model

There is a need for aid agencies and other humanitarian actors to learn about the way displaced populations are internally differentiated, and how these differences affect the decision to return, in order to manage or support voluntary return and repatriation in complex environments successfully. The findings of the refugee and the IDP studies demonstrate that the application of the TORA provides a means of gaining a deeper insight in the antecedents of displaced people's migrational decision making. This is managed in a structured yet flexible way by exploring displaced people's knowledge, power and value domains regarding issues of return and repatriation. Analysis of the data of both the refugee and IDP studies demonstrates that such belief, value and power domains are not static but dynamic over various return options, and are differentially informed for various segments of the displaced populations.

Reflecting on the TORA's application in both refugee and IDP settings it can be concluded that it has been helpful in highlighting the internal differentiation of war-displaced populations, and the influence of these differences on the level to which particular household categories plan to return, and how that decision is constructed. By understanding return decision-making and the choices and preferences influencing the decision it is possible to empower war-displaced peoples in return and repatriation process and to make aid more developmental as recommended by Allen and Turton (1996: 17). The application of the TORA to differing displacement contexts has demonstrated its potential to help inform repatriation and reintegration policy and strategy.

Comparing the Return Decision of Refugees and IDPs (Research Component 7)

Salient Belief, Knowledge and Value Domains

Both the internally displaced Ngok and the refugees expressed long lists of salient beliefs regarding return and expectations of home. The salient beliefs for both populations can be grouped in a number of identical attitudinal dimensions made up of related beliefs i.e.:

- Safety and security
- Health

- Education
- Food security
- Return modality
- Peace makers
- Peace spoilers
- Culture and integration
- Processes of change
- Community based support systems
- Humanitarian aid.

Clustering the beliefs for each of the attitudinal domains both the refugee and IDP studies demonstrated that an interesting insight into the cognitive structure informing the return decision could be gained (section 6.6 and 9.4).

Social Diversity of Displaced Populations

Studies (e.g. Bascom, 1994) have challenged the perception of war-displaced people as homogeneous social entities, and stress the need to clearly appreciate the differentiation amongst such groups. Such differentiations reflect particular repatriation strategies and have profound policy considerations (section 10.5). As mentioned, the findings of the refugee and IDP study underline the social diversity and internal differentiation of the displaced populations in terms of the level to which household categories plan to return, and how their return decision is informed by the various determinants. This diversity in return responses reflects the different backgrounds of displaced households and the variety of return contexts.

Return-Decision Informed by Attitude Over Subjective Norm

Both the refugee and IDP study established the influence of the attitude towards return over the subjective norm. The findings underline displaced people's disposition to return based on their personal experience and evaluation of return beliefs and issues. The Perceived Level of Control and Perceived Vulnerability were found to be strongly correlated with general return intent in the refugee study, but weakly in the IDP study.

Perceived Level of Control and Perceived Vulnerability

Independent of the return option pursued, the refugee study demonstrated a significant correlation for both Perceived Level of Control and Perceived Vulnerability with stated Intent. For all three return options the Perceived Vulnerability showed a strong correlation with the Perceived Level of Control, indicating that vulnerability is cognitively associated with a lack of control over influential return issues. Regarding the one and three year return options, the nature of vulnerability is informed by beliefs that act as blockages towards return; they deal with beliefs in the security and safety- and mode of return-domain. For the option 'peace', the Perceived Vulnerability variable is associated with beliefs that act as drivers in the food security-, cultural-, community support system- and aid domains, which express resilience and control.

The IDP study found that only for the return option ‘now’ (the 2003-4 dry season) the Perceived Level of Control and Perceived Vulnerability were significantly correlated with the level to which the displaced Ngok intend to return. In other words return intent prior to the peace agreement is significantly informed by the level of control the displaced Ngok perceive to have over the return decision, and the volatility of Abyei as the prospective area of return. Following the signing of a peace agreement and with Abyei being a safe and stable return environment both the Perceived Level of Control and Perceived Vulnerability are no longer strongly and significantly correlated with stated Intent. This indicates that, in general, issues of control and vulnerability cease to be important dimensions affecting the decision to return.

Generally speaking displaced people perceive areas of return to be volatile. However it appears that the internally displaced are generally more positive about the impact of a peace agreement, or having peace compared with some of the refugee groups, notably the Nuer and Anyuak. This clearly indicates the volatility of particular areas of return even when there is ‘peace’. For example the Nuer express vulnerability at such point in time in terms of critical beliefs, notably those of the safety and security domain, e.g. the fear of displacement following return, the fear of being suspected and facing insecurity in areas of return.

Perceived Vulnerability as a Descriptor Variable: Households at Risk

Households expressing vulnerability associated with return demonstrated significantly lower levels of return intention in the case of refugees but a significantly higher intent for IDPs when compared with more resilient households in their respective communities. Refugees’ attitudes were found to be significantly informed by an analysis of reasoned return beliefs and expectations of home, independent of the level of vulnerability or resilience associated with return. The IDP study found that the return decision of those households indicating to be vulnerable in return was emotively informed, i.e. not taking into account an analysis of what may be critical return factors. However, the more resilient the IDP household, the higher the degree to which their return decision was found to be informed by an analysis of return beliefs and expectations of home.

This fundamental difference between vulnerable refugees and internally displaced households is, to a considerable extent, explained by the effectiveness of the protection regime of refugee programming, and illustrates the lack of it in IDP programming, both in displacement and return. Vulnerable IDP households demonstrate a strong return intent, partly because they live in deplorable situations in exile (the situation in the IDP camps in and around Khartoum is inhumane) and may want to improve on their situation by returning to their homeland. In doing so vulnerable IDP households are not only prepared to take on the biggest risks, but are also the ones least likely to cope with it effectively (particularly when return is considered prior to the signing of the peace agreement).

Therefore the right to take a well-informed return decision, based on an analysis of reasoned return beliefs and issues (notably those in the safety and security domain), is recommended to be a key element of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement¹⁴⁹ (chapter 9). However, for the internally displaced to be able to take more account of the risks they may face on returning to their previous homes, the conditions in exile must be humane. As mentioned above the IDP study found that the most vulnerable amongst the displaced Dinka Ngok decide return based on the need to escape from their current deplorable conditions thus possibly placing themselves at risk in areas of return.

Therefore, to help avoid future inappropriate return of the most vulnerable, the conditions in exile of the IDPs must meet basic standards. Though the Guiding Principles identify the right of IDPs to request and receive humanitarian assistance from relevant authorities¹⁵⁰ the international community should see to it that these rights and guarantees are observed as in reality they are seriously compromised in many situations.

The Use and Limitations of the TORA in Forced Migration Settings (Research Component 8)

Return Context: Pinpointing Critical Return Beliefs

Both the refugee and IDP studies demonstrated the value of the TORA in isolating influential return beliefs and issues that need to be addressed in protection and aid programming to make return work from the perspective of its prime actors, the displaced. Some researchers would argue that quantitative data raises more questions than it answers and therefore research must rely on qualitative data. In one way this observation is correct in that the application of the TORA points out critical return beliefs and issues, but does not explain their rationale in a wider context. In this respect, the process of clustering of influential outcome beliefs was found to make an interesting contribution by mapping out the cognitive constructs of the various attitudinal domains. By doing so it ‘framed’ all salient return beliefs within the particulars of a specific return context.

The TORA does not make sociological or anthropological oriented research redundant, rather it can direct such research to explore critical return beliefs and expectations of home. A more practical observation regarding qualitative studies is the tendency of some UN and agency staff managing aid interventions to refer to sociological or anthropological studies as presenting the particular opinion of its author and ‘*though interesting ... is of little help for our aid programming*’ (personal note: this was, for example, the case of Wendy James’ research amongst the Sudanese Uduk refugees in Bonga refugee camp, Ethiopia, in 2000). The advantage of the TORA as a quantitative and objective process, if correctly implemented, is that its outcomes are statistically underpinned (it offers a verifiable statistical approach). In that sense its findings and implications are less likely to be disregarded easily.

A Participative Approach in Exploring Displaced People’s Knowledge, Value and Power Return Domains: Managing the Nexus Spontaneous Return ~ Organised Repatriation

In forced migration contexts the lack of participation has been much criticised. For most of its advocates the participation of communities involves a lengthy process for which there is perceived to be little time or space in the management of war-related population movements. The first stage of the TORA is a participatory process, which elicits return beliefs and salient referents by means of focus group discussions. These cover groups of displaced household heads of various backgrounds such as tribal group, gender, age and prospective return area. Key informant interviews provide room to explore emerging issues and enable a dialogue to discuss return within a broader context, covering topics such as camp management, the role of important others, the situation in areas of return and to verify the level and quality of information gained in the initial process. The second stage structured interview process enabled displaced household heads to articulate their needs and perspectives regarding return in a structured way, but grounded on the initial participatory findings. The TORA

therefore enables the capture of displaced people's knowledge, value and power domains regarding return and repatriation, which is underpinned by an initial participative enquiry.

The initial analysis of the data obtained by applying the TORA requires, apart from a basic understanding of statistics and experience with computer programmes, an understanding of forced migration issues and interest in the displaced populations. However, the initial analysis, findings and recommendations need to be validated in a dialogue with representatives of the objective displaced communities.

The understanding of the decisions of the displaced to return, gained through the application of the TORA, can facilitate a profound consultation and exchange of views and opinions between UN and aid agencies, camp management and other relevant authorities and representatives of the displaced communities. Such a forum is not only helpful in facilitating learning, but may also initiate and support a dialogue regarding the way return and repatriation are to be organised. Particularly, with regard to placing displaced people's return initiatives within the nexus of spontaneous return and organised repatriation. Sensitivity to this nexus is crucially important in order to avoid mass returns, which have been criticised for their adverse consequences and tendency to compound serious post war reconstruction problems (e.g. Allen and Turton, 1996: 2).

Most studies note the importance of refugee-decision making in the repatriation process. Opondo quotes studies in Africa, Asia and in Central and Latin America that provided evidence that many repatriation processes were initiated, organised and implemented by the refugees themselves without formal assistance, often in the face of official opposition (Opondo, 1996: 29). It is important, therefore, to recognise that war-displaced people are at the centre of, and should therefore ideally play a central role in, the determination of when to repatriate and how to go about it (Opondo, 1996: 33).

The extended TORA thus forms a helpful instrument as it provides not only insight in the level to which war-displaced households plan their return but explains these in terms of influential outcome and normative beliefs.

Mapping Changes of Return Intent over Time

The intention of war-displaced people to return changes over time. The refugee and IDP studies enquired into such dynamics by presenting various return options which reflected major developments such as return prior to and following the signing of a peace agreement, and with home areas presenting safe and secure environments to return to. By presenting various return options the relevance of both studies was greatly enhanced.

Major unexpected incidents may affect return intent and the way it is informed, particularly when such events underline the volatility of the area of refuge or what seemed or was claimed to be so-called 'safe areas'. Physical threats in exile can have particular far-reaching consequences, and may result in an odyssey exposing those who flee to serious threats, such as the flight of Sudanese refugees from their camps in Ethiopia in 1990 and 1991 into hostile Sudanese territory.

Critical events that destabilise areas hosting war-displaced people are not only likely to influence the intention to return home, but may also result in flight to safety when going home is not an option. This

is illustrated by the situation in Gambella, which saw increased levels of conflict during the end of 2003 and beginning 2004, including a number of major attacks on Agenga village at the vicinity of Fugnido refugee camp. As a direct consequence Anyuak refugees left the camp for local Anyuak villages in the vicinity, with a majority eventually crossing the Ethio-Sudanese border into Anyuak territory. They did so fearing that their fellow Nuer refugees in the camp would revenge the attacks by local Anyuak guerrilla fighters on them.

Following this escalation of violent conflict Nuer refugees would probably have expressed a different return intent with the poor security situation in and around the camp forming an important driver towards return. The fact that a Nuer exile at that particular point in time did not happen had probably more to do with the lack of control over the return decision. UNHCR had evacuated from the Gambella area, and flight to Nuer territory would expose the refugees to ambush by bands of armed Anyuaks. It is likely that with the situation coming under control of the Ethiopian government, and with the Anyuak refugees having returned to the camp, the events have had a lasting impact on the future decision to return. Re-applying the TORA will gain an understanding of how these events have been framed in the refugees' knowledge, power and value domains, and how critical these events have been in influencing return intent for particular household categories. It is interesting to note that Nuer and Anyuak households stating poor security in and around the camp as the main challenge of being a refugee in Fugnido camp demonstrated higher return intentions prior to the events in 2003 and 2004.

Return and Repatriation in Complex Emergencies

Voluntary repatriation is the corner stone of the 1951 Refugee Convention and a central element in repatriation discourse (section 2.2). Reflecting on the complicated nature of voluntary repatriation and return in complex emergencies, UNHCR has reluctantly come to differentiate between three forms of repatriation: repatriation not supported, repatriation facilitated, and repatriation promoted¹⁵¹. This differentiation has been criticised for compromising the nature of voluntary return. The application of the TORA to explore the intention to return home of different household categories can help in planning for return in safety and dignity across such repatriation options by identifying criteria which will help insure this desired result.

For example, at the beginning of 2004 a considerable number of Uduk refugees returned to their home areas prior to the signing of the peace agreement. They returned by using their own resources. However, the risk in returning was seriously increased by UNCHR embarking on a series of unprecedented strict re-validation exercises at that point in time¹⁵². A new type of ration card was introduced carrying for the first time a photograph and finger print of the beneficiary: refugees who were not able to present themselves in person stood to lose their food ration and other benefits. This seriously undermined an important coping strategy of the returnees, namely that in case of failed return or loss of crop they would return to the camp to fall back on their food rations. This case illustrates that understanding war-affected people's decision is helpful in guiding interventions that support and build on displaced people's return strategies. Distant policy makers and fund providers may want to see peace dividend paying off in terms of a reduction of the number of refugees, and enforce strict registration procedures to that aim. At the same time this contradicts the interests of the displaced in their aim to initiate and increase agricultural production in areas of return preparing for the return of their families.

TORA's Role in Multi-Way Information Exchange Mechanisms

Return beliefs and expectations of home are based on a combination of displaced people's experience, implied knowledge, information or hearsay. Such domains of knowledge are not static but change over time, for example because of the experience of return. The TORA predicts that if return beliefs, on which certain actions are based, prove to be false, the behaviour itself will come under pressure. E.g. when a group of male Uduk youngsters returned to Southern Blue Nile in early 2002, motivated by the offer of education, the enthusiasm of other would-be returnees quickly eroded when they heard that their friends had to take up arms before being 'rewarded' with education by the SPLA.

Employing the TORA as a method to map displaced people's perceptions regarding return provides for a context specific, localised and up to date understanding of return challenges and opportunities. That is, granted that there is an exchange of reliable and up to date information between members of dislocated communities and people in areas of return. Both the refugee and IDP studies found that a significant number of household heads had visited areas of prospective return in the two-year period prior to the implementation of the survey. Having informed themselves first hand, their views and opinions are highly valuable in informing other stakeholders involved in the management of population movements, such as the UNHCR and humanitarian agencies. On the other hand, factors or aspects of return and integration seen as important by the UN, hosting and home governments and NGOs may not be known or realised by potential returnees, yet may have far reaching consequences. Examples are preparations for imminent military campaigns, fresh mining activity or aid agencies' cessation of essential life-saving services in areas of return.

Dysfunctional communication between decision-makers and groups affected by displacement has been identified as one of the roots of resettlement failure (Cernea, 2000: 51). The need for multi-way information exchange mechanisms between displaced communities and other relevant stakeholders is thus underlined. Such mechanisms will be instrumental in making return programming of humanitarian actors more sensitive to displaced people's localised return strategies¹⁵³. It may also enhance displaced people's capacity to take well-informed return decisions.

The Politics of Returning Home

For the Government of the Sudan, the SPLM/A and the international community, the return of the hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced will send a positive message throughout the Horn of Africa, and the world at large. The comprehensive peace agreement demonstrates the huge political consequences for the GoS and the SPLM/A: elections will be held during the six-year interim period and, in a sense more importantly, a population census midway through the interim period will determine the South's access to various sources of national funding and services. A December 2003 IRIN report highlights this issue by quoting the SPLM/A spokesperson, Samson Kwaje, as saying 'It is very important, because of the elections during the interim period, that these people (read: the refugees and IDPs) are transported back to their homes so that the results will be credible' (IRIN, 2003).

For both the IDPs and the refugees the decision to return was found to be influenced foremost by their attitude towards return. However the subjective norm registered a significant influence as well with both IDPs and refugees expressing sensitivity to the influence of the SPLM/A prior to, and following

the signing of a peace agreement. Clearly it is in the interest of the SPLM/A that as many as possible of the displaced return to their respective home areas prior to the population census¹⁵⁴. Abyei is an even more politicised environment as both the SPLM/A and the Government of Sudan have an interest in the return of the Dinka Ngok and the Missiriya respectively. The protocol between the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM/A on the resolution of the Abyei conflict states that ‘the residents of Abyei’ will determine the status of Abyei, i.e. whether Abyei will retain special administrative status or will be administered by the South. The same protocol specifies the residents of Abyei as ‘the members of the Ngok Dinka community and other Sudanese “residing in the area” (quotation marks mine).

Managing the potentially conflicting interests between the political leadership and the displaced will present a key challenge for the international community, assuming the international community is serious about the right to voluntary return as encapsulated in refugee policy and a guiding principle on internal displacement. It definitely presents a challenge for those displaced from frontier areas, as social pressure may outweigh a more rationalised return decision informed by critical return beliefs.

The same December 2003 IRIN report quotes the director of the SPLM’s humanitarian wing, Elijah Malok, as saying ‘People are ready to go, they will go home. Once the guns are silent, they will go home. We just need the resources to resettle them’. The TORA findings predict a much more realistic picture. Although, the SPLM/A may want to see return as simple and straightforward, it is not so for the majority of those displaced within and across the borders of Sudan. This friction highlights the difference between politics and the reality of going home. Hopefully the international community and its donors are more realistic about the manifold challenges faced by those wanting to go home.

Monitoring Changing Attitude and Return Intentions: De-Professionalising the TORA Application

In particular complex emergencies it may be recommended to carry out a TORA type study periodically so as to monitor changing attitudes and intentions regarding return. In order to achieve this, the application of the TORA needs to be simplified and de-professionalised.

One important element in simplifying the TORA is to operate from pre-established checklists of key return beliefs and expectations, and to determine their salience during the first stage focus group discussions and key informant interviews. It is suggested that the return beliefs and expectations emitted as part of the refugee and IDP studies presented in this research, would be an appropriate starting point or baseline. Such a list could be adapted and further extended, based on literature research regarding displaced people’s return attitudes and behaviour. The checklist could be validated and made sensitive to local contexts by inputs of key community members, agency staff and other locally available resource persons. However, if not managed well, operating from a pre-established checklist risks leaving out unique return beliefs that may critically inform the decision to return and could have major implications for return and repatriation programming¹⁵⁵.

De-professionalising the TORA will make the approach more widely available and increases its cost-effectiveness. It will certainly facilitate re-application of the TORA at particular points in time to explore changes in return planning, the way those plans are informed and its implications for return and repatriation programming.

Serving Institutional and Community Interests

The aspect of community learning in de-professionalising the vulnerability assessment and analysis is an interesting issue (section 4.1). Further research could explore the potential of the TORA as an instrument to raise critical awareness about particular return issues and beliefs. To illustrate this point, several refugee household heads invited to participate in an evaluation session after the data collection and a preliminary data analysis were finalised, indicated that by reflecting on the interview they had come to rethink return more critically. It would be interesting to see to what extent this critical reflection has affected the level to which they plan to return and how that decision is informed compared with those that were not interviewed.

10.4. Policy and Practice Perspective

The TORA's Suitability to Inform Repatriation Policy and Practice (Research Component 9)

Accommodating Actor Orientation

An actor orientation has been lacking in the repatriation discourse. As a consequence the needs of the displaced have not been prioritised in repatriation discourse. Findings of both the refugee and IDP studies suggest that the TORA as an actor-oriented, yet formal approach, is a helpful instrument to inform both policy and practice with displaced people's critical return beliefs, and expectations of home. The TORA is instrumental in helping to highlight essential guarantees for return to take place in safety and dignity. Instead of being pre-occupied with the question '*how do refugees return home*' repatriation discourse should take into account the more important and directive question of '*why refugees return home*'. By understanding the decision of war-displaced people to return, repatriation policy can be geared towards empowering displaced people to take initiative, devise their own return strategies and to build on those.

The TORA as a Standardised Exploratory Model to Inform Flexible Approaches

Complex emergencies are characterised by highly diverse and dynamic return environments and settings. This challenges the principle of voluntary return and presents a variety of challenges for returnees in the post return environment. Repatriation policy and practice in complex forced migration settings should be more flexible and responsive so as to take refugees' intentions to return into account.

The outcomes of the refugee and IDP studies underline the need for flexible approaches so as to enable the displaced to better manage return and its challenges. Such approaches should build upon displaced people's return strategies by incorporating their critical return beliefs and expectations of home. Instead of massive repatriation programmes it would be advantageous to allow for a more fluid mode of return programming in order for the displaced to establish whether the situation in the prospective areas of return fit their specific history and set of circumstances.

This presents a challenge for the international community to better manage the nexus between spontaneous return and organised repatriation. This can be done by framing war-displaced peoples' return intentions and efforts within the nexus of spontaneous return and organised repatriation. Findings of both the refugee and IDP studies suggest that the extended TORA offers a standardised explanatory model which is useful in informing flexible approaches to return and repatriation.

Enhancement of TORA Utility to Explore Behavioural Intentions in Forced Migration Situations

It was not until the evaluation of the assessment that one of the Mabaan refugee women, talking about home-coming mentioned landmines casually, not as a threat associated with return and reintegration, but as a fact-of-life statement. Threats posed by landmines and unexploded ordnance, and other important return issues found critical in return and repatriation elsewhere, could be presented in the form of a checklist as part of the key informant interviews during the first stage of the TORA application. If such issues are not emitted as salient beliefs, but are indicated to be a factor in return by key informants or others, they may be listed as descriptive variables to gain an understanding of their importance and their influence on the decision to return. E.g., if a particular household category indicates that mines are found in their area of return, repatriation programming can take the issue into account by targeted awareness raising campaigns and making de-mining part of the repatriation package before pursuing 'voluntary' return. Such an approach would have made a difference for the people of Okoki (see Foreword).

Rather than exploring general return beliefs and issues as has been done in both the refugee and IDP studies, attention can be focused on one particular knowledge and belief domain, which is known to form a critical element in return. E.g., an in-depth exploration of the safety and security domain may be instrumental in devising effective protection strategies during and following return. One of the advantages of concentrating on a particular belief domain is that its cognitive construct can be drawn out in a more detailed way, which can be instrumental in planning and managing specific interventions dealing with protection issues.

Accuracy of Information: Improved Planning and Increased Accountability

Analytical frameworks concerned with explaining when repatriation occurs have typically focused on the question of conflict resolution or the motivations of the international community (Harrell-Bond, 1986; Habte-Selassie, 1992; Rogge 1994). More recent studies have highlighted the importance of refugee decision making in the return process and the important role of information in deciding return (Bascom, 1994; Ager, 1999; Walsh et al., 1999) (section 4.2). Poor information obtained by the UN and other implementing agencies has resulted in major weaknesses in the planning process because of faulty assumptions about people's motivation to return (Karadawi, 1983; Harrell-Bond, 1986; Allen and Turton, 1996; Hammond, 1999) (section 3.4).

The Theory of Reasoned Action underlines the importance of accurate and timely information. Both the refugee and IDP studies found that a considerable proportion of household heads or their relatives were visiting prospective areas of return well ahead of the signing of the peace agreement. The level of that information exchange at community level was found to be very significant. The accuracy of information regarding return environments and the associated return challenges were found to be both

detailed and context specific. However, in situations where the exchange of information is restricted, return beliefs and expectations of home should be regarded more critically in that they may not reflect the actual situation in areas of return. False evidence or information needs to be addressed since it governs displaced people's behaviour. In general, the international community should, wherever possible, facilitate the exchange of timely and accurate information across and within displaced communities.

Some researchers suggest that, regarding the production and use of information, there is increasing evidence that information which potential returnees actually trust is that which is generated by themselves, or by people they know well, and which is oriented directly towards their own personal concerns (e.g. Walsh et al., 1999: 124). Information needs are likely to vary widely within and across displaced populations.

Prior to, and directly following a peace agreement, the displaced refugee and IDP populations express more sensitivity to social influence or pressure from institutional referents over community based ones¹⁵⁶. At the same time information regarding return environments and the associated return challenges was found to be more context specific and detailed in the case of community based referents, in contrast to that of institutional-referents. Both findings underline the need for multi-way information systems, as discussed in section 10.3. This would be helpful to inform important institutional stakeholders in return and repatriation programming about the dynamics and context-specific nature of localised areas of return. This is an interesting observation as Cernea observes that '*dysfunctional communication between decision-makers and groups affected by displacement are one of the roots of resettlement failure*' (Cernea, 2000: 51). In other words transparent information is still a rare occurrence. Thus the TORA's utility and its findings for particular contexts may be of use to structure and facilitate communication and dialogue between the prime actors and other stakeholders involved in the planning of return.

The UN and implementing agencies have been blamed for their pre-occupation with accurate statistical data as a tool to direct accountability, in terms of number of beneficiaries and needed resources, towards donor governments (Harrell-Bond, 1986). The application of the TORA may therefore be regarded as an advocacy tool by communicating displaced people's critical return beliefs and their dynamics over time and place. This could balance the emphasis on numbers of displaced people with a focus on their critical return beliefs and issues, both being presented in an accurate statistical way.

Policies on Voluntary Return: the Use of Emotive and Calculated Return Responses

Voluntary return, as a cornerstone of refugee policy and the guiding principle of IDP policy (section 2.2), encapsulate the right to take well-informed decisions regarding return and reintegration. In this regard a first major step is for the international community, and those involved in humanitarian programming, to acknowledge displaced people's opinions and perceptions of return. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement state that full participation of the displaced themselves must be sought in the planning and implementation of return, resettlement and reintegration. Participation of the displaced pre-supposes a critical understanding of displaced people's return strategies.

Both the refugee and IDP studies' findings suggest that the extent to which the stated Intent to return is informed by reasoned return beliefs and expectations of home, can be regarded as a general measure of the voluntary nature of return. This finding is of crucial importance for the UNHCR to avoid placing returnees at risk, as many repatriation programmes have been operated based on emotive return responses, overlooking the functionality of a more reasoned response (section 3.3).

The IDP study provided a clear example of what may happen when an emotive response of the displaced outweighs a more rationalised response. Most of the Ngok taking part in the 2003 assisted returns crossed the Kiir to the south into SPLA controlled territory (the vulnerable) or made it back to Khartoum (the more resourceful, see section 9.4).

It is crucially important to realise that situations of severe deprivation in displacement can lead to instances of behaviour that may be counter to the subjects' underlying beliefs. As mentioned above, many repatriation programmes have, knowingly or unknowingly, been based on an emotively informed return attitude. Following the comprehensive peace agreement signed between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A in early 2005, agencies wanting to capitalise on donor pressure to demonstrate 'tangible peace dividends', risk operating from displaced people's emotively informed desire to return home. The inherent consequence of such population movements is that it may place the most vulnerable at risk, which goes against the very principle of 'non-refoulement'.

Perceived Vulnerability: a Potential Tool for Development of Disaster Policy and Practice

Apart from being a key concept in disaster studies, vulnerability has recently become an important focus in the approach to world development. Both refugee and IDP studies demonstrated that in behavioural domains dealing with hazard prone contexts, the Perceived Vulnerability construct can draw attention to what may be a critical relationship between vulnerability and behavioural intention. The Perceived Vulnerability construct also enables the exploration of both the importance and nature of vulnerability associated with key migrational decision-making. By including the Perceived Vulnerability construct it enables the extended version of the TORA to be a potent tool for mapping individual and community vulnerability.

As the extended TORA allows exploration of the relationship between risk and the ability to manage or cope with that risk, the model may be developed into a potential risk assessment methodology. In a sense, by expanding the TORA model with a Perceived Vulnerability measure it gains a predictive warning utility, which enables the displaced and other actors involved in the management of population movements to support or develop effective return strategies prior to return itself. In the field of war-displaced people's migrational decision-making, such insights are useful to help adhere to the principle of voluntary return, or to address such concerns by building preparedness and mitigation measures into repatriation programming. In general, the extended TORA model was found to have potential as a tool for the development of disaster management policy and practice in risk prone contexts.

The Moral Obligation of Policy to Deal with Complexity

As emergency relief, rehabilitation work and development assistance all co-exist in times of conflict and crisis, the need to integrate these activities in longer-term strategies is emphasised. Increasingly it is recognised that since complex emergencies pose distinct challenges, specific strategies need to be developed for which an understanding of local conditions is vital (OECD, 2001: 108) (section 3.2).

One of the problems of repatriation policy is that, because of its very nature and purpose, it simplifies complex forced migration situations. By doing so it lacks sensitivity and may therefore skim over important local variations, as prospective return areas in complex emergencies are shown to present complex and dynamic environments. The policy itself is therefore at risk of leaving out critically important return issues, which may not only compromise the principle of ‘non-refoulement’, placing returnees in life threatening situations, but may also result in misguided and inappropriate repatriation and reintegration programming. In complex and dynamic contexts mechanisms that shape homogenised policy responses should be made sensitive to local differences (Frerks and Bender, 2004).

The challenge for policy makers is to ‘incorporate in repatriation initiatives refugees’ own meaning of repatriation, an their perceptions and expectations of home’ (Koser and Black, 1999: 9-10). In this light the extended TORA demonstrated its ability to make useful contributions to more localised policy and practice regarding return and repatriation.

The tendency has been to discuss return, repatriation and resettlement predominantly in terms of events, outcomes and practicalities (Allen and Turton, 1996). From a policy perspective the value of the TORA in forced migration situations is that it may contribute to the development of policy, which enables a genuine, more participatory and open-ended approach to planning and decision-making. Such a policy would be better able to accommodate the complexities inherent in return and repatriation situations, not only by taking into account displaced people’s perspectives but by supporting and building on these, in order to make return sustainable and dignified.

Finally, the moral obligation to deal with complexity in return and repatriation comes down to the question of respect. Respect for the people who are forcibly displaced as well as respect for the complexity of what ‘voluntary’ return constitutes in today’s world. That is, if policy and practice seek to be sensitive to, and respect the displaced.

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Summary

Return After Flight

Exploring the Decision Making Process of Sudanese War-Displaced People by

Employing an Extended Version of the Theory of Reasoned Action

Research Issues and Approach

Forced displacement and the response of the international community is one of the most pressing challenges of contemporary times. Whether in dealing with refugees or internally displaced people the international system has been struggling to prevent forced migration, address its consequences and find ‘durable’ solutions (chapter 1). This study concentrates on repatriation policy and practice, which are considered to lack responsiveness to the needs, initiatives and strategies of the displaced as the prime actors (chapter 2 and 3). The assumption addressed in this study is that a better understanding of displaced people’s return planning, and the beliefs, values and motivations underpinning them, is fundamental to developing effective strategies that result in appropriate protection, humanitarian assistance and reintegration support as well as sustainable development for people displaced by conflict.

Displaced people are not helpless and passive recipients of ‘well-intended’ aid. Inappropriate generalisations about refugees and other war related displaced people have encouraged ignorance of war-displaced people as conscious and active human beings, strategising their return options and making sense out of often highly complex and dynamic return environments. Displaced people are therefore to be regarded as actors possessing agency, i.e. they are capable of processing social experience and devising ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion. This study therefore emphasises the importance of human agency in informing both repatriation policy and practice.

The research presented in this thesis has:

1. Explored the factors that have greatest influence on the return decisions of war-displaced people

2. Looked into the ability of an actor oriented model to account for, and explain, the dynamic nature of return beliefs and issues informing the decision to return
3. Examined the application of the extended Theory of Reasoned Action in terms of increasing the understanding of prospective return behaviour as compared with more traditional models
4. Tested the inclusion of the vulnerability concept in enhancing the sensitivity of the model in volatile and hazard prone contexts
5. Looked into the appropriateness of an actor oriented formal model in informing both policy and practice.

Method

The Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) was selected as the actor-oriented model of choice to explore war-displaced people's return decision-making. Most reviews in the field of behavioural research have drawn attention to the TORA as one of the principal theoretical constructs for both the study and prediction of behaviour. The theory has been applied to a wide variety of behavioural domains proving its robust nature, predictive power and its ability to perform in different contexts (section 4.3 presents the rationale for its application to this study). This research presents the first time this theoretical construct has been applied to study the systematic identification of return beliefs and issues taken into account by people displaced by war when making decisions regarding return and repatriation.

The information gathered through applying the TORA allows for a detailed explanation of displaced people's return decision-making (see figure 4.1). At a general level return behaviour is determined by return intent. The principal theoretical assumption underpinning the approach is that attitudes and social normative pressures inform behavioural intent. A third variable, Perceived Behavioural Control was later included in the model to expand the TORA's ability to address behaviours that are not under the full volitional control of the subjects under study, i.e. the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985, 1988 and 2005). This study suggests a fourth determinant, Perceived Vulnerability, based on the assumption that it would enhance the sensitivity of the model when dealing with risk prone behavioural contexts. The third level of analysis accounts for attitudes and subjective norms in terms of beliefs about the consequences of return and about the normative expectations of relevant referents. Each successive level of analysis in this sequence provides a more comprehensive account of the factors determining repatriation (reference is made to figure 4.1).

One of the components (section 1.3) of this research is to apply the extended TORA model in exploring the return intent of a group of Sudanese refugees sheltered in three camps in western Ethiopia. Another, and related component, is to test the appropriateness of the extended TORA in different forced migration situations by exploring return intent of a group of internally displaced people in the Sudan. The application of the Theory of Reasoned Action within both displacement contexts is described in section 4.4, 6.1 and 9.1. The findings are presented in chapters 6, 7 and 9.

Research Findings

Research Question 1: What factors have greatest influence on the decision to return of Sudanese refugees and IDPs? Are these structurally different?

Both the refugee and IDP study demonstrate the influence of attitude over social norms. Return intent, and ultimately return behaviour, was found to be primarily governed by displaced people's own experience and perspectives regarding return, as opposed to social influences or pressures. The Perceived Level of Control and Perceived Vulnerability, though strongly correlated with general return intent for the refugee study and weakly for the IDP study, are less influential compared with attitude (both variables are strongly correlated with each other indicating that vulnerability expresses a significant perceived lack of control). These findings underline displaced people's disposition to decide return based on their personal experience and evaluation of the consequences of return (sections 6.4 and 9.3).

Various descriptive variables were defined to distinguish between differences in displaced people's backgrounds and contexts. Generally speaking, refugees' return planning and strategies were found to be most significantly influenced by:

- Camp location
- Tribal background
- Gender
- Type of critical event initiating flight
- Flight pattern and length of displacement experience
- Knowledge regarding whereabouts of family in the Sudan
- Prominent challenge faced by being a refugee
- The type of conflict thought to present the main challenge towards future life in the Sudan.

The internally displaced study found a much more limited number of variables which registered significantly differences in return intent:

- Having or not having an income from a permanent job or daily labour
- The expressed level of vulnerability in displacement
- The type of benefits associated by residing in or near Khartoum.

The difference in the number of diagnostic variables partly reflects the diverse make-up of the refugee study, which was comprised of eight ethnic groups and many different return contexts, as compared with one particular tribal group and return area for the IDP study.

Analysis of the refugee data found that, in general, return intent is influenced by the following barriers or blockages presented in decreasing order of influence (section 6.5, appendix 6.6):

- Will be conscripted into an armed group
- Face hardship and difficulties

- Our children will be abducted
- Will be repeatedly displaced
- Will be arrested
- No modern health care services provided
- No educational services provided
- Our children will not have access to schooling
- To rebuild livelihoods better not wait for UN repatriation
- Loss of chance for resettlement in western country
- Insecurity makes it difficult to have enough to eat.

Influential drivers for return were found to be:

- Food-secure within a short period of time (less than six months)
- Can rely on traditional ways of peacemaking
- Collect and consume wild foods to survive
- Large household helps to become food secure.

Either, a change in the level to which these beliefs are seen to be true or untrue, or a change in the attributed value to these prospective outcomes, affects the intention to return and, therefore, ultimately return behaviour.

The IDP study found the following blockages presented in order of decreasing significance (appendix 9.6):

- Experience serious food shortages and face hunger
- Find that we have become different from those who stayed behind
- Face serious shortage of safe and reliable drinking water
- Difficulties in constructing our tukuls or shelters
- Life will be different from what it used to be before the conflict: *'life has changed'*
- If provided, aid is best distributed by our own leaders
- Will be suspected
- Face repeated displacement
- The international community not providing food aid means we might die
- Face insecurity in our home area
- Half food rations for a year is better than full rations for 6 months.

Influential drivers affecting the return decision were found to be:

- Children will have access to school
- Burial in my home area

- Rely on our traditional ways of peacemaking to make and maintain peace
- Depend on forest foods and fish for survival following return
- Come to own goats or cattle (re-build wealth status)
- Half food rations for a year is better than full rations for 6 months.

The seventy salient beliefs emitted by the refugees, and the fifty-one by the IDPs, were grouped in a logical way to represent attitudinal dimensions of return behaviour referred to as belief domains or systems. A total of eleven domains were defined: safety & security, health, education, food security, mode of return, peace makers, peace spoilers, culture and integration, processes of change, community based support systems, and humanitarian aid.

For both the refugee and IDP study influential barriers informing general return are found in a number of belief domains: safety and security, health, educational and food security. Influential drivers in the traditional community based peace making, food security- and aid-domains. Interestingly only the IDP study found that loss of identity and processes of change are influential in deciding return. It appears that prolonged exposure to an urban lifestyle has formed a deterrent towards return, as the displaced feel that they have changed and therefore life in Abyei will never be the same. However, on the other hand the desire to be buried in one's homeland forms an influential driver towards return. Both influential beliefs reflect an underlying schism between the older generation who grew up in Abyei and a younger generation having hardly any memory of their home area and a rural livelihood. In a different way this generational divide is also found amongst refugees and is expressed in the popularity of the resettlement option to America, Canada or Australia amongst the younger refugee generation. For them the potential re-settlement option forms a strong barrier against return to the Sudan.

It was shown that clustering of all salient return beliefs provided an interesting insight in the general cognitive structures underlying the various belief and value domains that inform decisions to return. Associations of influential beliefs acting as barriers, or drivers with less influential ones, provided an understanding of the complexity and dynamics of the beliefs taken into consideration when deciding return (figure 6.1 in section 6.6 and figure 9.1 in section 9.4).

Research Question 2: Can a structured actor-oriented model account for, and give insight into, the dynamic nature of return beliefs and expectations of home that inform displaced people's decision to return?

The findings identified through the data analysis of the refugee and IDP studies underline the importance of recognising the diversity in backgrounds and return contexts over time that exist within war-displaced populations. Application of the TORA construct identified how such differences are reflected in the attitudes, social norms and perceived level of control and vulnerability. The degree to which household heads plan to return, and the type of return beliefs and issues informing the decision to return, showed a very significant variation across different segments of both the refugee and IDP population, as well as across the various return options presented (for the refugee study: return in the 2002/3 dry season, the period 2003-5 and when there is 'peace'; for the IDP study return in the 2003/4

dry season, following the signing of the peace agreement and return with Abyei presenting a safe and secure home area). The decision-making process of displaced people regarding return was thus found to be both dynamic and context specific.

Findings of both studies highlighted the social diversity and diversification of the communities regarding migrational decision-making. Household categories were found to express a diversity of return responses. Generally speaking, and in line with expectations, the intention to return was found to increase over time with peace signalling a strong increase in that intent. This highlights the importance of conflict resolution to the return decision-making of people displaced by war and conflict. Independent of the return option pursued, the return decision of both refugee and IDP household categories was found to be governed foremost by displaced people's experience and knowledge regarding displacement, and expectations of the return process and context.

Analysis of the refugee data demonstrates that prior to peace the security situation and its implications for returnees' livelihoods are seen as serious obstacles for return. However, provision of aid and services in relatively stable and peaceful areas was found to directly result in a higher return intent, particularly so for those households planning to return to their home village. Findings of the IDP study demonstrated the same pattern, with those planning to return before the signing of a peace agreement preferring the SPLA controlled southern part of their home area. Interestingly, if peace is seen to exist, the provision of aid and services in areas of return no longer affects displaced people's decision to return: the focus shifts towards social integration issues including community support systems.

Both the refugee and IDP studies found that the nature and number of influential return beliefs informing the return-decision change over the return options from barriers to drivers and from beliefs dealing with fulfilment of basic needs and security to socio-culturally connotated beliefs. If peace exists the influential return beliefs informing the decision of both refugees and IDPs form all drivers towards return. The one common influential belief for both groups is the perceived level to which one can rely on traditional mechanisms to manage conflict within their own and across tribal territories (section 6.7 and 9.5).

The Subjective Norm (perceived social pressure) registered a strong correlation with stated Intent to return for the refugees studied, independent of the return option pursued. Although, perceived social pressure was also found to strongly influence IDPs' return decision in the immediate or proximate future, it became a weaker factor once the location (Abyei) was considered a peaceful and safe environment to return to.

Regarding the refugee study, both the Perceived Level of Control and Perceived Vulnerability were found to strongly influence the return decision independent of the return option. In general, refugees' decision to return prior to 'peace' reflects both an underlying pre-occupation with threats and hazards in what are perceived as potentially volatile post return environments, as well as a lack of control over the return process itself. Following 'peace' return is associated with resilience and increased levels of control. The IDP study found that the perceived level of control and vulnerability only informed the decision to return prior to the peace agreement. Following the signing of the agreement and with Abyei being safe and secure both variables do not significantly inform the return decision. Generally speaking this reflects refugees' tendency to take issues of vulnerability and control into account when

deciding return independent of the return moment itself. For the internally displaced Dinka Ngok this depends on the peace process, following the signing of a peace agreement vulnerability and perceived control no longer influence the decision to return as such.

As a structured actor oriented model the TORA was thus found to be able to explain the dynamic nature of return beliefs and issues in informing displaced people's decision to return.

Research Question 3: Will the application of an 'actor-oriented' approach lead to a greater understanding of prospective return behaviour than currently applied models on which return management and policy are based?

A majority of the studies on displaced people's attitudes towards repatriation reflect the importance of displaced people's decision-making in the return or repatriation process (section 4.2). Yet most formal repatriation programmes are conceived by governments and agencies with little reference to, and understanding of, the return decision making process of war-displaced people, their return strategies and in many cases pro-active stand regarding return.

Rather than explaining return behaviour as emanating from the external context (socio, economic or political) the TORA explains behaviour by exploring the psychosocial antecedents informing the return decisions of displaced people. The TORA, as a method, encapsulates the concept of human agency by exploring displaced people's knowledge-, belief-, value- and power-domains which inform the decision to return. Displaced people are not the passive receivers of 'well intended' aid but participate and interact with other actors involved in the return process and reconstruction efforts. The beliefs and issues that were found to influence their decision to return reflect both their background and the specific nature of return contexts (chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, 9).

The findings of both the refugee and internally displaced people studies demonstrate that the descriptive utility of the extended Theory of Reasoned Action is a powerful and informative conceptual model. Certainly when compared with the traditional 'push-pull' migration theory as well as assimilationist models of migrant integration that still dominate much of the discourse on migration (section 2.1). The TORA directly accounts for the experience of migrants, a failure of former models, for which they have been criticised (section 10.2). The TORA also presents a participatory approach (the elucidation of salient return beliefs and issues across a displaced population during the first stage of the interview process). Lack of participation, due to insufficient time or space, has been a common criticism of repatriation policy and practice. Additionally the TORA's findings are supported statistically, while more socio-anthropological oriented studies are sometimes critiqued for their biased outcomes, reflecting the personal views and opinions of the researcher, and their lack of representation.

Research Question 4: Does the inclusion of the notion of vulnerability enhance the sensitivity of an actor-oriented model in volatile or hazard prone environments?

The addition of the 'Perceived Vulnerability' variable as an extension of the TORA drew attention to displaced people's understanding of a potential risk associated with the proposed return. The variable makes it possible to analyse the context specific nature of risk and ability to cope, thus providing an insight into their perception of vulnerability.

The refugee study found that the decision to return is very strongly informed by the Perceived Vulnerability variable, independent of the return option pursued (section 6.9). In general, the nature of Perceived Vulnerability expresses vulnerability associated with beliefs in the security and safety-domain before, and following peace resilience associated with beliefs related to the food security-, cultural-, community support- and aid-domains. The case study on Nuer and Anyuak return (chapter 7) illustrated that prospective return areas may present hazardous environments even with return pursued when there is 'peace'. From a vulnerability perspective the imminent importance of influential Nuer beliefs, such as fear of hostile tribes, and lack of control by a central authority over small firearms at such a point in time highlights the volatility of prospective areas of return. All of these form influential deterrents regarding return.

The IDP study demonstrated that the return decision is strongly informed by the Perceived Vulnerability variable for 'immediate' return only, i.e. return in early 2004. The decision to return following the signing of a peace agreement and with Abyei presenting a peaceful return environment was not informed by the Perceived Vulnerability variable. However, some individual influential return beliefs were found to be associated with aspects of vulnerability, notably beliefs in the safety-security domain and cultural domain respectively (section 9.5 and table 9.3b and 9.3c).

The importance of the Perceived Vulnerability variable is that it draws attention to critical return issues and explains them in terms of the context specific nature of the hazard. Seen as a predictive warning utility the Perceived Vulnerability determinant enables to uphold the voluntary nature of return and to inform appropriate protection and aid programming over and following return, prior to return itself. The Nuer and Anyuak case study also demonstrated its use as an indicator of whether return strategies are based on risk reduction or increased coping capability. Nuer return strategies were found to be primarily informed by the level to which they perceive themselves able to cope with threats posed in post-return environments. The return strategy of the Anyuak was found to be based on a combination of risk reduction and increased coping capability. The case study highlighted the potential of such differentially informed strategies to be dysfunctional in that they are likely to generate conflict in frontier areas where Nuer and Anyuak interests overlap (see section 7.6).

Perceived Vulnerability, as a variable of return intent, is numerically expressed in a Vulnerability measure based on a scale ranging from very 'vulnerable' to very 'resilient'. The 'Perceived Vulnerability' scale is useful for measuring and comparing expressed vulnerability or resilience levels both within and across displaced populations. The nature of expressed vulnerability or resilience can be explored by looking into the associations with the reasoned return beliefs and expectations of

home. This ability makes the extended TORA a potent tool in community-based vulnerability and capacity analysis when considering return behaviour.

By using the Perceived Vulnerability reading as a descriptor variable, the return planning and strategies of household categories expressing different levels of vulnerability or resilience in return can be studied. Following the signing of a peace agreement, the IDP study found that households expressing vulnerability in return (as opposed to households who express themselves to be resilient or highly resilient) are prepared to take on the biggest risk, while at the same time they were found least likely to cope with that risk. Further analysis established that the return decision of households expressing vulnerability in return is emotively informed, and does not reflect an analysis of what may constitute critical return beliefs and issues. The findings of the IDP study also indicated that, with increasing levels of resilience, the return decision reflects a critical consideration of reasoned return beliefs and expectations of Abyei. In contrast, independent of the level of vulnerability associated with return, refugee household's decisions to return when there is 'peace' were found to be significantly informed by an analysis of reasoned return beliefs and issues.

As a descriptor variable the Perceived Vulnerability determinant proved to be a highly differentiating variable, explaining the level to which refugee or IDP households plan return, the particular sets of return beliefs and expectations of the return context influentially informing the return decision, the nature of vulnerability or resilience expressed in return as well as how the different household categories feel about return (in terms of return beliefs and expectations of home).

Destitution amongst vulnerable IDPs is often more pronounced when compared with refugees. Refugees, independent of the level of expressed vulnerability, have recourse to an established system of international protection and assistance which IDPs lack. The importance of the finding that most vulnerable IDPs make an emotively as opposed to reasoned return decision highlights the fact that situations of severe deprivation can induce instances of behaviour that may be counter to the subjects' underlying beliefs. In a sense one can say that the voluntary nature of return, a key Guiding Principle on Internal Displacement is itself compromised by pronounced levels of destitution in displacement, which can place the most vulnerable particularly at risk on return.

The expansion of the TORA with the 'Perceived Vulnerability' variable was found to enhance its descriptive utility in exploring the potential for disaster in post-return environments. Both this ability and the findings of the refugee and IDP studies suggest that, in contexts where the elements of threat or fear are associated with the decision in question, this extended version of the TORA will enhance the explanatory power of the model for the study of risk-prone behavioural decisions.

Research Question 5: Can a formal theoretical model be suitable for general application to inform repatriation policy and practice?

Is the extended TORA as a formal theoretical model suitable for general application to inform repatriation policy and practice? Findings of the refugee and IDP studies suggest a positive answer to this question on three different accounts.

First, the value of the extended TORA construct as a model for isolating specific return beliefs and issues. These need to be taken into account in policy and strategy formation in order to inform direct interventions in the field of protection, provision of aid and re-integration support. Also, its descriptive utility is a valuable tool in managing more effectively the nexus between spontaneous return and organised repatriation.

Secondly, as an extension to the TORA the Perceived Vulnerability construct enables the exploration of both the importance and nature of vulnerability associated with key migrational decisions. This makes the TORA construct a potent tool for mapping social or community vulnerability in volatile or hazard prone contexts. With vulnerability being a central concept in disaster studies, and a more recent focus as an aspect of world development, the construct of Perceived Vulnerability is a potential tool for the development of disaster policy and practice.

Finally, this research has drawn attention to the importance of the level to which the emotively expressed attitude towards the return decision is informed by the analysis of reasoned return beliefs and expectations of home as an indicator of the voluntary nature of return. This is an important finding, as many a repatriation programme or assisted return has been initiated based only on an emotively informed return response. This has led to misguided interventions resulting in a waste of resources at best, and at worst placed returnees at risk. The findings of both refugee and IDP studies suggest that for voluntary return to take place in safety and dignity, the decision to return should to a significant degree reflect a reasoned analysis of pertinent return beliefs and issues.

Based on the findings of this study recommendations are made regarding areas where the extended version of the TORA can be applied to inform the development of both policy and practice. To mention the most promising (chapter 10):

- Its role in multi-way information systems to enhance communication between the major stakeholders in the management of population return
- Compilation of a checklist of beliefs derived from other research into critical return beliefs as a check to make sure that potentially critical return issues are taken note of
- Rather than exploring general return planning and strategies, particular belief and value domains may be focused upon, e.g. exploring in-depth the security and safety domain with the purpose of informing protection programming
- The need to simplify and deprofessionalise the models' application in order to make the construct more widely available and cost-effective, e.g. to facilitate its re-deployment to account for changes of return intent over time
- Rather than focusing on the institutional interest and need to understand displaced people's decision-making, attention should be given to the models' utility in serving 'direct' community interest, e.g. as a tool of community learning regarding critical return factors.

Conclusion

By applying the extended TORA an understanding of war-displaced people's return decision is gained which is instrumental to guide humanitarian aid and development interventions that support and build on displaced people's return strategies. The extended TORA can contribute to the development of both repatriation policy and practice, which enables a genuine and more participatory approach to planning and decision-making. This would result in interventions which take account of the complexity inherent in return and repatriation. Honouring displaced people's agency allows for taking into account their critical return beliefs and issues. Ultimately, this comes down to the question of respect. Respect for the complexity of what 'voluntary return' constitutes in today's world and, even more important, respect for the people who are forcibly displaced. This means insuring a return to their places of origin in safety and with dignity, not as a favour, but as a fundamental human right.

Samenvatting

Terugkeer na Vlucht

Inzicht in de Besluitvorming van door Oorlog en Conflict Ontheemde Soedanezen door Toepassing van een Uitgebreide Versie van de Theory of Reasoned Action

Onderzoeksvragen en Aanpak

Vlucht voor oorlog en conflict, en de reactie van de internationale gemeenschap daarop, is één van de grootste uitdagingen van deze tijd. Ongeacht of het vluchtelingen of intern ontheemde mensen betreft, het internationale systeem is slechts in beperkte mate in staat om de oorzaken die tot vlucht leiden te voorkomen, de consequenties daarvan adequaat het hoofd te bieden en tot duurzame oplossingen te komen (hoofdstuk 1). Deze studie kijkt naar beleid en praktijk van terugkeer. Beide worden door onderzoekers bekritiseerd vanwege een gebrek aan aandacht voor, en inzicht in, de initiatieven en de terugkeerstrategieën van vluchtelingen en intern ontheemden: de primaire actoren van terugkeer. De aanname van deze studie is dat een beter begrip van, en inzicht in, terugkeerstrategieën van door oorlog en conflict verdreven mensen, alsook hun verwachtingen, waarden en motivatie waarop deze strategieën zijn gebaseerd, fundamenteel zijn om te komen tot effectieve internationale interventies gericht op adequate bescherming, humanitaire hulp, langere termijn integratie en uiteindelijk duurzame ontwikkeling.

Door conflict en oorlog ontheemde mensen zijn niet de hopeloze en passieve ontvangers van 'goedbedoelde' humanitaire interventies. De beeldvorming over vluchtelingen en intern ontheemden (mensen die op drift zijn geraakt door oorlog of conflict maar in tegenstelling tot vluchtelingen niet hun landsgrens hebben overschreden) heeft er toe geleid dat zij in onvoldoende mate worden gezien als pro-actief handelende, rationele mensen die opties en mogelijkheden tot terugkeer inschatten en die inzicht hebben in vaak complexe en dynamische processen die plaatsvinden in gebieden van terugkeer. Door oorlog ontheemde mensen dienen daarom gezien te worden als actoren die in staat zijn om ervaringen en inzichten te verwerken die hen in staat stellen om, zelfs onder de meest extreme vormen van dwang, met uitdagingen en problemen om te gaan. Deze studie benadrukt dat het cruciaal

is rekenschap te geven van dit vermogen van vluchtelingen en intern ontheemden als het gaat om terugkeerbeleid en praktijk.

Dit onderzoek heeft zich gericht op een aantal vragen:

1. Welke factoren liggen ten grondslag aan de beslissing om terug te keren naar gebieden van oorsprong? Zijn deze verschillend voor vluchtelingen en intern ontheemden?
2. Zijn actor-georiënteerde modellen in staat om inzicht te geven in de dynamiek van opvattingen en verwachtingen die van invloed zijn op de beslissing tot terugkeer?
3. Is de *Theory of Reasoned Action* een goed model om inzicht te krijgen in terugkeergedrag van vluchtelingen en intern ontheemden in vergelijking met meer traditionele migratiemodellen waarop terugkeermanagement en beleid zijn gebaseerd?
4. Verhoogt de gesuggereerde uitbreiding van de *Theory of Reasoned Action* met een *Perceived Vulnerability* variabele de voorspellende en verklarende waarde van het model in risicovolle omgevingen?
5. Kunnen actor-georiënteerde modellen bijdragen aan terugkeerbeleid en praktijk?

Methode

De *Theory of Reasoned Action* (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) is geselecteerd als een actor-georiënteerd model om de terugkeerbeslissing naar gebieden van oorsprong te onderzoeken. De meeste beschouwingen op het gebied van gedragsonderzoek refereren aan de *Theory of Reasoned Action* als voornaamste theoretische model voor de studie en voorspelling van gedrag. Het model is toegepast binnen een grote verscheidenheid aan gedragsvelden en heeft z'n degelijkheid en voorspellende waarde bewezen in uiteenlopende contexten (paragraaf 4.3). Het is voor het eerst dat dit model is toegepast om op een systematische manier terugkeerverwachtingen in kaart te brengen van door oorlog en conflict ontheemde mensen met betrekking tot hun beslissingen om terug te keren naar gebieden van oorsprong.

De informatie die door middel van het model wordt verkregen maakt een gedetailleerde analyse mogelijk van de besluitvorming tot terugkeer door ontheemde huishoudens. Op een eerste en algemeen niveau wordt inzicht verkregen in de intentie om terug te keren (zie figuur 4.1) De principiële aanname van het model is dat deze intentie, die resulteert in een specifiek gedrag, wordt bepaald door de volgende variabelen op het tweede niveau van analyse: de persoonlijke attitudes ten aanzien van terugkeer en sociaal normatieve invloeden. Een derde variabele, *Perceived Behavioural Control* (de mate waarin men denkt controle te hebben over de terugkeerbeslissing en het terugkeerproces zelf), is in het verleden aan het model toegevoegd om gedrag te onderzoeken dat niet geheel onder de controle van de respondent valt, dit model staat ook wel bekend als de *Theory of Planned Behaviour* (Ajzen, 1985, 1988 and 2005). Deze studie stelt voor om een vierde variabele van intentie te introduceren. Deze variabele, *Perceived Vulnerability* (de mate waarin men denkt kwetsbaar te zijn), wordt verondersteld de analytische diepgang en gedragsvoorspellende waarde van het model te verbeteren, voor wat betreft gedrag in risicovolle contexten, zoals conflict gerelateerde

migratie. Het derde niveau van analyse kijkt in groter detail naar de houdingen en sociale normen die gekoppeld zijn aan het te onderzoeken gedrag. In dit specifieke geval betreft dit persoonlijke verwachtingen omtrent de gevolgen van terugkeer en de normatieve verwachtingen ten aanzien van relevante rolmodellen, organisaties of andere bronnen van sociale invloed of druk hieromtrent. Elk van deze drie niveaus van analyse geeft opeenvolgend een voortschrijdend en dieper inzicht in de factoren die terugkeergedrag bepalen.

Eén van de doelstellingen (paragraaf 1.3) van dit onderzoek is dit uitgebreide model toe te passen om het besluit tot terugkeer en de terugkeerstrategie van Soedanese vluchtelingen in drie kampen in West-Ethiopië te onderzoeken. Een andere hiermee verbonden doelstelling is om de geschiktheid van het model te testen in een geheel andere context waarbinnen vlucht heeft plaats gehad. Derhalve wordt het model naast de vluchtelingenstudie ook toegepast om de beslissing om terug te keren naar Zuid-Soedan van de Dinka-Ngok, die thans leven in kampen in en rondom Khartoem, te onderzoeken. De toepassing van de *Theory of Reasoned Action* in beide situaties is beschreven in paragraaf 4.4, 6.1 en 9.1. De hoofdstukken 6, 7 en 9 bevatten de bevindingen hiervan.

Bevindingen

Onder de bevindingen van deze studie worden systematisch de vijf onderzoeksvragen behandeld.

Onderzoeksvraag 1. Welke factoren liggen ten grondslag aan de beslissing om terug te keren naar gebieden van oorsprong? Zijn deze verschillend voor vluchtelingen en intern ontheemden?

Zowel de studie naar vluchtelingen als naar intern ontheemden laat zien dat de attitude ten aanzien van terugkeer meer invloed heeft op het besluit terug te keren dan sociale invloeden of sociale druk. De intentie om terug te keren, en uiteindelijk terugkeergedrag, is dus primair gebaseerd op de ervaring en perspectieven ten aanzien van terugkeer van de ontheemde zelf (het model stelt dat intentie een betrouwbare voorspeller van gedrag is als óf de attitude en/of sociale invloeden significant gecorreleerd zijn met intentie). De *Perceived Level of Control* en *Perceived Vulnerability*, alhoewel in sterke mate gecorreleerd met intentie voor wat betreft vluchtelingen, en in minder sterke mate voor de ontheemden, zijn beide minder invloedrijk dan attitude. Dit laat zien dat besluit om terug te keren in eerste plaats ingegeven wordt door persoonlijke ervaring en evaluatie van de verwachte consequenties van terugkeer.

Als onderdeel van de studie zijn beschrijvende variabelen gedefinieerd om verschillen in terugkeerintentie te onderzoeken tussen verschillende huishoudcategorieën. In zijn algemeenheid kan gezegd worden dat voor vluchtelingen planning en strategieën voor terugkeer beïnvloed worden door de volgende variabelen:

- Locatie van de vluchtelingenkampen
- Ethnische achtergrond van de vluchteling

- Sekse van de persoon die het huishouden vertegenwoordigt
- Kritische gebeurtenis die tot vlucht leidde
- Vluchtpatroon en duur van ontheemding
- Kennis betreffende verblijfplaats van familie en/of verwanten in Soedan
- Prominent probleem gerelateerd aan vluchtelingenstatus
- Het type conflict wat wordt gezien als meest bedreigend voor de toekomst in Soedan

Voor wat betreft de intern ontheemden studie hebben slechts drie variabelen een significante invloed op terugkeerplanning en strategieën:

- Het al dan niet hebben van een inkomen uit een vaste baan of ongeschoolde arbeid
- De mate waarin men aangeeft kwetsbaar te zijn in Khartoem
- De aard van het profijt wat men heeft door in Khartoem te zijn

Het verschil in het aantal diagnostische variabelen die de intentie om terug te keren beïnvloeden weerspiegelt de grote diversiteit onder de vluchtelingen, in totaal zo'n acht ethnische groepen met een grote verscheidenheid in terugkeercontexten. In het geval van de intern ontheemden is er sprake van slechts één ethnische groep, de Dinka-Ngok, met Abyei als gebied van oorsprong.

Analyse van de gegevens laat zien dat de intentie van de vluchtelingen om terug te keren wordt beïnvloed door de volgende verwachtingen die als barrières, gepresenteerd in afnemende mate van invloed, fungeren:

- Gedwongen dienst in een leger of bewapende groepering (bijvoorbeeld een militie)
- Ontbering en tegenspoed
- Ontvoering van kinderen
- Herhaling van de vlucht
- Risico om gearresteerd te worden
- Afwezigheid van moderne gezondheidsvoorzieningen
- Afwezigheid van of geen toegang tot scholing en scholingsmogelijkheden
- Het opbouwen van een nieuw bestaan is makkelijker door niet op een door de Verenigde Naties georganiseerde repatriatie te wachten
- Verlies van de optie om zich in een westers land te vestigen (asiel)
- Onveiligheid maakt het moeilijk om voldoende voedsel te hebben.

Verwachtingen die terugkeer op een positieve manier beïnvloeden en als een drijfveer fungeren:

- Het bereiken van voedselzekerheid in een relatief korte periode (binnen een half jaar)
- Het kunnen vertrouwen op traditionele vormen van vredeshandhaving
- Het verzamelen en consumeren van wilde planten, vruchten of wortels om te overleven
- Een groot huishouden helpt om voedselzekerheid te bereiken.

Indien één of meerdere van deze invloedrijke verwachtingen omtrent terugkeer als minder waar (in geval van barrières) of als meer waar (in geval van drijfveren) worden gezien, of als de uitkomst van één of meerdere van deze invloedrijke verwachtingen als minder negatief (in geval van barrières) of als meer positief (in geval van drijfveren) worden gezien, leidt dit uiteindelijk tot een hogere terugkeerintentie.

De intern ontheemden studie laat zien dat de intentie om terug te keren wordt beïnvloed door een aantal barrières (appendix 9.6), deze zijn in volgorde van afnemende belangrijkheid:

- Ernstige voedseltekorten en honger volgend op terugkeer
- Identiteitsveranderingen ten opzichte van hen die niet gevlucht zijn
- Tekort aan veilig en betrouwbaar drinkwater
- Problemen met betrekking tot het maken van een hut voor goed onderdak
- Verandering van levensstijl vergeleken met hoe het was voor het conflict
- In geval van verstrekking van hulpgoederen, verdeling daarvan door eigen leiders
- Worden gewantrouwd
- De mogelijkheid om opnieuw te moeten vluchten
- Noodzaak van voedselhulp om te overleven
- Onveiligheid in het gebied van terugkeer

Verwachtingen die als drijfveer functioneren:

- Scholingsmogelijkheden voor kinderen
- Begraven worden in eigen land
- De mogelijkheid om in vrede te leven door middel van gemeenschapssystemen ten aanzien van conflictpreventie en management
- Gebruik van wilde planten, vruchten, wortels en vis om te overleven
- Mogelijkheid om vee te verwerven (opbouw van kapitaal en status)
- Beter om halve voedselrantsoenen voor een periode van een jaar te ontvangen dan volle rantsoenen voor zes maanden

De in totaal 70 saillante verwachtingen omtrent terugkeer aangegeven door Soedanese vluchtelingen, en 51 door de intern ontheemden, zijn op een logische manier gegroepeerd, zodat ze verschillende domeinen van terugkeer weerspiegelen. In totaal zijn elf domeinen gedefinieerd: veiligheid, gezondheid, educatie, voedselzekerheid, terugkeer modaliteit, vredesopbouw, vredesafbreuk, cultuur en integratie, sociaal-culturele veranderingsprocessen, basisgemeenschapsstructuren, en humanitaire hulpverlening.

Invloedrijke verwachtingen die als barrières voor terugkeer fungeren voor zowel vluchtelingen als intern ontheemden worden gevonden in de volgende domeinen: veiligheid, gezondheidszorg, educatie en voedselzekerheid. Invloedrijke verwachtingen die terugkeer bevorderen worden gevonden in de domeinen vredesopbouw, voedselzekerheid en humanitaire hulpverlening. Interessant genoeg blijken sociaal-culturele veranderingsprocessen alleen van invloed zijn op de beslissing om terug te keren

voor de intern ontheemden. Klaarblijkelijk heeft het langdurige verblijf in een urbane setting geleid tot veranderingen binnen deze groep, die worden gezien als een complicerende factor als het gaat om terugkeer. Aan de andere kant, de wens om begraven te worden in eigen land vormt een belangrijke drijfveer voor terugkeer. Invloedrijke verwachtingen onderstrepen de kloof tussen de oudere generatie die opgroeide in Abyei en een jongere generatie die opgroeide in de kampen in Khartoem. Deze laatste groep heeft weinig of geen affiniteit en voorstelling van Abyei en het plattelandleven. Dit verschil in perspectief tussen de oudere en jongere generatie komt ook tot uiting onder de vluchtelingen, met name de grote populariteit voor asiel in westerse landen onder voornamelijk de jongere mannelijke vluchtelingen. De mogelijkheid voor asiel in Amerika, Canada of Australië vormt een belangrijke afweging om de vluchtelingenstatus niet snel op te geven.

Het blijkt dat het correleren van de verschillende terugkeerverwachtingen binnen elk van de domeinen, een clusteringproces, een interessant inzicht verschafte in de onderlinge cognitieve structuur van die verwachtingen. De associaties tussen de verschillende verwachtingen weerspiegelt de complexiteit en dynamiek van de verwachtingspatronen op grond waarvan het besluit om terug te keren wordt beïnvloed (zie figuur 6.1 in paragraaf 6.6 en 9.1 in paragraaf 9.4).

Onderzoeksvraag 2. Zijn actor-georiënteerde modellen in staat om inzicht te geven in de dynamiek van opvattingen en verwachtingen die van invloed zijn op de beslissing tot terugkeer?

De bevindingen van beide studies onderstrepen het belang om de diversiteit in achtergrond, terugkeercontext, en de dynamiek daarin, van door oorlog of conflict ontheemde mensen te erkennen. Toepassing van de *Theory of Reasoned Action* laat zien hoe zulke verschillen tot uiting komen in de attitude ten aanzien van terugkeer (de dominante factor), sociale invloeden en sociale druk, de mate waarin het intern ontheemde huishouden controle heeft over de beslissing om terug te keren, alsook de kwetsbaarheid van zijn of haar huishoudleden ten aanzien van terugkeer. De mate waarin huishoudhoofden plannen om terug te keren, alsook het type verwachting dat die beslissing beïnvloedt, varieert in aanzienlijke mate tussen segmenten van beide groepen ontheemden. Aanzienlijke verschillen in de intentie om terug te keren, en de verwachtingen waarop deze zijn gebaseerd, blijken ook te bestaan tussen de verschillende terugkeeropties zoals die aan de respondenten werden voorgelegd: A. voor de vluchtelingenstudie: 1. terugkeer in het droge seizoen 2002/3, 2. de periode 2003-5 en, 3. in geval van 'vrede'; B. voor de intern ontheemden studie: 1. terugkeer in het droge seizoen van 2003/4, 2. na tekening van het vredesakkoord en, 3. in geval Abyei een veilig en vredig gebied is. Beslissingen omtrent terugkeer en repatriatie veranderen niet alleen met de tijd, maar ook naar gelang de context. Zo blijken bijvoorbeeld de verwachtingen die van invloed zijn op de terugkeerbeslissing in sterke mate te verschillen tussen de diverse ethnische groepen en naar gelang de duur van de vlucht en de kritische gebeurtenis die vlucht initieerde.

Huishoudcategorieën demonstreren een grote variatie in terugkeerstrategieën. In z'n algemeenheid, en in lijn van de verwachting, neemt de intentie tot terugkeer toe over de drie terugkeeropties, en in zeer sterke mate in geval van vrede. Dit benadrukt het belang van het oplossen van conflict voor wat betreft terugkeerprocessen. Echter, ongeacht het moment van terugkeer, wordt de beslissing daartoe eerst en

vooral ingegeven door de vluchtervaring, kennis omtrent terugkeer, en verwachtingen omtrent terugkeerproces en context (de attitude).

Analyse van de data van de vluchtelingenstudie laat zien dat in geval van repatriatie, voordat er sprake is van vrede, de veiligheidssituatie en z'n implicaties voor levensonderhoud gezien worden als belangrijke barrières ten aanzien van terugkeer. Humanitaire hulp in relatief stabiele en rustige gebieden leidt direct tot een hoger terugkeergedrag, met name als het gaat om terugkeer naar het eigen dorp. Bevindingen van de intern ontheemden studie wijzen op eenzelfde patroon: degenen die besluiten terug te gaan naar Abyei vóór tekening van de vredesovereenkomst geven aan een sterke voorkeur te hebben voor door het Zuid-Soedanese bevrijdingsleger (de SPLA) gecontroleerde gebieden. Een interessante vinding is dat in geval van vrede, voor zowel vluchtelingen als intern ontheemden, de mate waarin humanitaire hulp gegeven wordt in gebieden van terugkeer niet meer van invloed is op de beslissing om terug te gaan. Sociaal-cultureel georiënteerde verwachtingen vormen in dat geval de belangrijkste overwegingen om te komen tot het besluit om terug te gaan.

Zowel de vluchtelingen- als de intern ontheemden-studie laten zien dat het karakter en het aantal invloedrijke verwachtingen van de drie terugkeeropties verandert: van verwachtingen die fungeren als barrières naar drijfveren, en van verwachtingen omtrent veiligheid en voorziening van basisbehoeften naar sociaal en cultureel georiënteerde verwachtingen. In geval van vrede vormen de invloedrijke verwachtingen voor zowel de vluchtelingen als de intern ontheemden drijfveren ten aanzien van terugkeer (paragraaf 6.7 en 9.5).

In geval van vrede wordt een verandering in terugkeerintentie, voor zowel de vluchtelingen als de intern ontheemden, geïnitieerd door een verandering in de overtuiging en/of de evaluatie van de uitkomst van invloedrijke terugkeerverwachtingen die alle fungeren als drijfveren. Vluchtelingen en intern ontheemden hebben slechts één gemeenschappelijk invloedrijke terugkeerverwachting: de mate waarin traditionele systemen om conflict op te lossen op een niet gewelddadige manier succesvol geacht worden om vrede en stabiliteit te handhaven in gebieden van terugkeer.

Vluchtelingen zijn gevoelig voor sociale druk van personen, organisaties of politiek-militaire bewegingen ongeacht het moment van terugkeer. Voor wat betreft de intern ontheemde Dinka-Ngok in Khartoem wordt de terugkeerbeslissing slechts in geringe mate ingegeven door sociale druk. In geval Abyei als vredig en stabiel wordt gezien speelt sociale druk geen rol meer in de overweging al dan niet naar Abyei terug te keren.

Zowel de controle over het terugkeerproces, als de kwetsbaarheid geassocieerd met terugkeer, vormen een belangrijke medebepalende factor voor de mate waarin Soedanese vluchtelingen en ontheemden tot terugkeer besluiten. In z'n algemeenheid blijkt dat, voordat er sprake is van 'vrede' in gebieden van oorsprong, de beslissing om terug te keren beïnvloed wordt door verwachtingen die geassocieerd zijn met een gebrek aan controle over het terugkeerproces en kwetsbaarheid volgend op terugkeer. In geval van 'vrede' voor wat betreft de vluchtelingen, en na het tekenen van een vredesovereenkomst voor wat betreft de intern ontheemde Dinka Ngok, worden verwachtingen die de mate van terugkeer bepalen geassocieerd met een toename van controle over zijn of haar leven en veerkracht om zijn of haar leven op te bouwen.

Onderzoeksvraag 3. Is de Theory of Reasoned Action een goed model om inzicht te krijgen in terugkeergedrag van vluchtelingen en intern ontheemden in vergelijking met meer traditionele migratiemodellen waarop terugkeermanagement en beleid zijn gebaseerd?

Recente studies op het gebied van migratieprocessen benadrukken de rol van de individuele besluitvormingsprocessen van vluchtelingen en intern ontheemden (paragraaf 4.2). Toch worden vrijwel alle formele repatriatieprogramma's gedefinieerd door overheden of internationale organisaties met weinig oog voor de besluitvormingsprocessen van door oorlog of conflict ontheemde mensen, hun terugkeerstrategieën en pro-active houding ten aanzien van terugkeer.

De waarde van de *Theory of Reasoned Action* is dat, in plaats van terugkeergedrag te zien als een resultante van externe omgevingsfactoren (zowel sociaal, economisch als ook politiek), de beslissing tot terugkeer verklaard wordt vanuit de psychosociale antecedenten van de ontheemden. De theorie gaat uit van het feit dat ontheemden 'agency' hebben. Ze zijn niet de passieve ontvangers van 'goedbedoelde' assistentie, maar participeren en interacteren met andere actoren die een rol spelen met betrekking tot terugkeer en wederopbouw. Ontheemden nemen kennis en informatie in overweging, en ontwikkelen hun eigen contextspecifieke strategieën om terugkeer op een succesvolle manier te ondernemen. Specifieke verwachtingen en verwachtingspatronen op grond waarvan veranderingen in de intentie om terug te keren tot stand komen vormen een reflectie van achtergrond en specifieke context van ontheemde huishoudens (hoofdstukken 5, 6, 7 en 8.9).

De inzichten in de manier waarop Soedanese vluchtelingen en intern ontheemde Dinka-Ngok hun terugkeeropties blijken te overwegen en op een bepaald moment besluiten tot terugkeer, geven aan dat het beschrijvende en analytische vermogen van de *Theory of Reasoned Action* krachtig en informatief is. Zeker wanneer dit wordt vergeleken met de analytische en voorspellende waarde van het meer traditionele 'push-pull' migratiemodel, of assimilatie modellen, die het denken omtrent repatriatie nog steeds domineren. De *Theory of Reasoned Action* geeft rekenschap van de ervaring en perspectieven van de ontheemden, iets wat de meer traditionele modellen niet doen en waarvoor zij bekritiseerd worden (paragraaf 2.1). Bovendien vormt de *Theory of Reasoned Action* een participatieve methodiek, in die zin dat verwachtingen van en perspectieven op terugkeer in de eerste fase van implementatie vanuit de ontheemde groepen zelf aangedragen worden. Het gebrek aan consultatie en participatie van de doelgroepen zelf, vaak vanwege tijdsgebrek of gestructureerde methodieken, is één van de belangrijkste kritieken op het huidige terugkeerbeleid en de daaruit voortvloeiende interventies. De bevindingen van de TORA zijn bovendien statistisch verantwoord, terwijl meer sociaal of antropologisch georiënteerd onderzoek vaak bekritiseerd wordt vanwege z'n mogelijke 'bias' ten aanzien van persoonlijke opvattingen of zienswijze van de onderzoek(st)er en vanwege een gebrek aan representativiteit.

Onderzoeksvraag 4. Verhoogt de gesuggereerde uitbreiding van de Theory of Reasoned Action met een Perceived Vulnerability variabele de voorspellende en verklarende waarde van het model in risicovolle omgevingen?

De toevoeging van *Perceived Vulnerability* als een determinant van intentie is belangrijk om de contextspecifieke aard van risico's geassocieerd met terugkeer, en de mogelijkheden om met deze risico's om te gaan, in kaart te brengen.

De vluchtelingenstudie geeft aan dat de kwetsbaarheid geassocieerd met terugkeer als een belangrijke factor wordt meegewogen in het besluit tot terugkeer, dit ongeacht het moment van terugkeer (paragraaf 6.9). Voor de vluchtelingenstudie als geheel wordt *Perceived Vulnerability* met betrekking tot terugkeer geassocieerd met kwetsbaarheid ('*vulnerability*') voor het domein veiligheid in geval van terugkeer voordat er sprake is van vrede, en met veerkracht ('*resilience*') voor de domeinen voedselzekerheid, cultuur en integratie, en humanitaire hulp in geval van terugkeer als er sprake is van vrede. Echter een vergelijking tussen Nuer en Anyuak terugkeer (twee etnische groepen onder de Soedanese vluchtelingen) laat zien dat gebieden van terugkeer worden gezien als risicovolle gebieden ook in geval men terugkeert als er 'vrede' is. Qua kwetsbaarheid onderstrepen de invloedrijkste Nuer verwachtingen (met name de angst voor vijandige etnische groepen, de consequenties van verbreiding van vuurwapens en verwachtingen omtrent hernieuwde vlucht) de onstabiele situatie in gebieden van terugkeer. Deze verwachtingen beïnvloeden direct de mate waarin met name de Nuer tot terugkeer besluiten.

De intern ontheemden studie laat zien dat de beslissing om terug te keren in belangrijke mate beïnvloed wordt door overwegingen met betrekking tot de risico's die men loopt bij terugkeer en de mate waarin men denkt daarmee om te kunnen gaan in geval van terugkeer vóór tekening van de vredesovereenkomst (terugkeer in het droge seizoen van 2003-4). Alhoewel *Perceived Vulnerability* als determinant relatief weinig invloed heeft op terugkeergedrag, volgend op de ondertekening van zo'n overeenkomst, is het wel zo dat bepaalde individuele, maar invloedrijke verwachtingen geassocieerd worden met kwetsbaarheid. Dit betreft met name verwachtingen in de domeinen veiligheid, en cultuur en reïntegratie (paragraaf 9.5, table 9.3b en 9.3c).

Het belang van de *Perceived Vulnerability* determinant is dat hiermee een mogelijkheid wordt gecreëerd aandacht te vestigen op context specifieke verwachtingen, die een kritische rol spelen met betrekking tot terugkeer. Deze functie kan gezien worden als een 'early warning' instrument aan de hand waarvan, onder andere, de criteria waaraan het vrijwillig karakter van terugkeer onder internationaal recht moeten voldoen, getoetst kunnen worden. Ook kunnen door het inzichtelijk maken van de aard van potentiële risico's, voordat repatriatie plaatsvindt, adequate maatregelen genomen worden op het gebied van protectie en repatriatieprogramma's.

Voor wat betreft *Perceived Vulnerability* blijkt dat de terugkeerstrategie van Nuer vluchtelingen, in geval van 'vrede', geënt is op de mate waarin huishoudens in staat denken te zijn om het hoofd te bieden aan de risico's en gevaren in hun toekomstige gebieden van terugkeer. Wat dit betreft volgen de Anyuak een andere strategie, die erop gericht is een balans te zoeken tussen een actieve manier om de gevaren en risico's te minimaliseren, en tegelijkertijd hun vermogen om hiermee om te gaan te optimaliseren. De Nuer ~ Anyuak studie illustreert bovendien het reële gevaar, dat dergelijke

verschillende strategieën om met kwetsbaarheid om te gaan, met elkaar in strijd kunnen zijn. De analyse geeft helder aan dat in die gebieden, waar de belangen van Nuer en Anyuaks verstrengeld zijn, dit mogelijk resulteert in gewelddadige confrontaties en hernieuwde vlucht (paragraaf 7.6).

Perceived Vulnerability, als een determinant van de intentie om terug te keren, wordt getalsmatig uitgedrukt op een schaalverdeling van kwetsbaar ('vulnerable') tot veerkrachtig ('resilient'). Deze schaalverdeling maakt het mogelijk om kwetsbaarheid of veerkracht te vergelijken tussen verschillende huishoudcategorieën binnen, alsook tussen verschillende groepen ontheemden. De aard van deze kwetsbaarheid of veerkracht kan worden geanalyseerd door te kijken naar de associaties met de terugkeerverwachtingen. Op deze manier toegepast kan de *Perceived Vulnerability* factor gezien worden als een potentieel formele methode om op een gestructureerde manier de kwetsbaarheid en veerkracht te analyseren van door conflict of oorlog ontheemde gemeenschappen.

Toegepast als een diagnostische variabele kan de getalsmatige waarde van *Perceived Vulnerability* gebruikt worden om terugkeerstrategieën te vergelijken tussen huishoudcategorieën, die terugkeer associëren met verschillende niveaus van kwetsbaarheid, dan wel veerkracht. Zo kan bijvoorbeeld bekeken worden in welke mate de meest kwetsbare huishoudens hun terugkeer plannen, welke verwachtingen hierin een cruciale rol spelen en wat de kritische risico's zijn met betrekking tot terugkeer. Bijvoorbeeld, volgend op de ondertekening van een vredesovereenkomst in de Soedan geeft een forse groep intern ontheemde Dinka-Ngok huishoudens in Khartoem aan kwetsbaar te zijn voor wat betreft terugkeer naar Abyei. Toch is hun intentie om terug te keren hoger dan die van meer veerkrachtige huishoudens. Dit betekent dat de meest kwetsbare huishoudens grotere risico's nemen, risico's waarmee ze bovendien in mindere mate van succes mee om kunnen gaan dan meer veerkrachtige huishoudens. Uit nadere analyse is komen vast te staan dat hun beslissing om terug te keren naar Abyei voornamelijk gebaseerd was op een emotionele reactie en niet gebaseerd op een analyse van hun meer rationele verwachtingen en perspectieven aangaande repatriatie. Het blijkt dat de mate waarin intern ontheemde huishoudens verklaarden over veerkracht te beschikken een afspiegeling vormt van de mate waarin beredeneerde verwachtingen en perspectieven de grondslag vormen voor hun beslissing om naar Abyei terug te keren. Daarentegen blijkt dat de terugkeerbeslissing van vluchtelingenhuishoudens gebaseerd is op een analyse van rationele verwachtingen, ongeacht de mate waarin huishoudens zichzelf als kwetsbaar zien. Dit is een duidelijke indicatie van de effectiviteit van het protectie regime in geval van de vluchtelingen in de kampen en de afwezigheid daarvan voor intern ontheemden met voor hen verstrekende negatieve consequenties. Het besluit om terug te keren, onafhankelijk van de mogelijke risico's en gevaren in gebieden van terugkeer, kan die intern ontheemden die terugkeren, in een moeilijke en zelfs levensbedreigende situatie doen belanden.

Toegepast als een beschrijvende variabele blijkt de *Perceived Vulnerability* factor een in hoge mate diagnostische factor te zijn. Zij geeft niet alleen inzicht in de verschillende mate waarin kwetsbare en veerkrachtige huishoudcategorieën hun terugkeer plannen, maar analyseert ook de invloedrijke verwachtingspatronen, de aard van de risico's en het vermogen om daar mee om te gaan, alsook hoe de verschillende huishoudcategorieën denken over bepaalde verwachtingen.

Armoede en gebrek onder kwetsbare intern ontheemden is vaker van een meer uitgesproken aard vergeleken met dat van kwetsbare vluchtelingen. Vluchtelingen, ongeacht hun kwetsbaarheid, kunnen

aanspraak maken op de diensten en goederen van een relatief goed functionerend internationaal systeem. Zo'n systeem ontbreekt voor intern ontheemden; voor hen bestaan geen bindende internationale verdragen op grond waaraan zij rechten kunnen ontleen. De constatering dat de meest kwetsbare intern ontheemde huishoudens tot repatriatie besluiten op emotionele gronden, impliceert dat mensonwaardige situaties in ontheemding terugkeergedrag kan oproepen, welke niet in overeenstemming is met een rationeel ingegeven besluit. Op grond hiervan stelt dit onderzoek vast dat de *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* niet werkbaar zijn in die situaties, waarin veiligheid onvoldoende gegarandeerd is, of waar intern ontheemden in onvoldoende mate kunnen voorzien in primaire levensbehoeften. Het recht op het nemen van rationeel georiënteerd terugkeerbesluit zou dan ook één van de principiële punten van deze *Guiding Principles* moeten zijn.

De toevoeging van de *Perceived Vulnerability* variabele aan de *Theory of Reasoned Action* blijkt het model tot een waardevol beschrijvend instrument te maken om risico's en mogelijke rampspoed voor repatrianten in bepaalde gebieden van terugkeer in kaart te brengen. Dit analyserend vermogen, en de bevindingen van zowel de vluchtelingen- als de intern ontheemden-studie, suggereren dat de toevoeging van de *Perceived Vulnerability* het model geschikter maakt om gedrag te bestuderen in conflictueuze omgevingen.

Onderzoeksvraag 5. Kunnen actor-georiënteerde modellen bijdragen aan terugkeerbeleid en -praktijk?

Bevindingen van de vluchtelingen- en intern ontheemden studie suggereren dat de uitgebreide *Theory of Reasoned Action* een geschikt model is om zowel repatriatiebeleid als -praktijk te informeren. Dit vanuit drie verschillende perspectieven.

In de eerste plaats maakt het model het mogelijk om specifieke verwachtingen die het besluit tot terugkeer beïnvloeden te identificeren. Deze verwachtingen dienen door de internationale gemeenschap in overweging te worden genomen door middel van het formuleren van repatriatiebeleid, strategieontwikkeling en definitie van terugkeerprogramma's op het gebied van veiligheid, humanitaire hulp en langere termijn ontwikkelingsgerichte interventies. Inzicht in de aard van terugkeerstrategieën van verschillende huishoudcategorieën is tevens een voorwaarde om het spanningsveld tussen spontane terugkeer en de door de internationale gemeenschap 'officiële' repatriatieprogramma's beter te kunnen overbruggen.

Ten tweede, de *Perceived Vulnerability* factor, als een uitbreiding van de *Theory of Reasoned Action*, maakt het mogelijk om het belang en de aard van kwetsbaarheid, geassocieerd met migratiebeslissingen, in kaart te brengen. Dit maakt de TORA tot een instrument om sociale- of gemeenschapskwetsbaarheid te onderzoeken in risicovolle contexten. Kwetsbaarheid is bovendien een centraal concept in het denken over rampen, alsook een focus voor de 'world development index'. Dit maakt dat de *Perceived Vulnerability* factor een potentieel instrument is voor de ontwikkeling van rampenbeleid in brede zin.

Tenslotte heeft dit onderzoek de aandacht gevestigd op het belang van de mate waarin een eerste, en vaak emotioneel ingegeven, wens tot repatriatie is gebaseerd op een analyse van meer rationele

terugkeerverwachtingen. Dit blijkt een belangrijk criterium te zijn voor de mate waarin repatriatie van een vrijwillig karakter is en voldoet aan de internationale criteria (vluchtelingen) of aanbevelingen (intern ontheemden). Dit kan worden beschouwd als een belangrijke bevinding, omdat de meeste repatriatieprogramma's gebaseerd zijn op een emotioneel geuite wens tot terugkeer. Dit heeft als resultaat gehad dat repatriatieprogramma's op z'n best geleid hebben tot het niet optimaal inzetten van fondsen en middelen, en op z'n slechts degenen die terugkeerden in risicovolle situaties heeft doen belanden. Om terugkeer of repatriatie te laten plaatsvinden in veiligheid en respect voor de vluchteling of intern ontheemde is het van belang dat de vrijwillige beslissing om terug te keren genomen kan worden op grond van realistische terugkeerverwachtingen en overwegingen.

Op grond van de bevindingen van beide studies zijn een aantal suggesties gedaan om de rol van de TORA te optimaliseren met betrekking tot beleidsontwikkeling en repatriatieinterventies. De belangrijkste hiervan zijn (hoofdstuk 10):

- De rol van de TORA, als een actor-georiënteerd model in informatiesystemen om communicatie tussen de belangrijkste belanghebbenden met betrekking tot repatriatie en repatriatieprocessen, te versterken
- Het opstellen van een lijst van terugkeerverwachtingen en overwegingen, die in andere situaties van terugkeer cruciaal zijn gebleken, om er zeker van te zijn dat factoren die een mogelijke kritische rol kunnen spelen in het succes of falen van repatriatie, ook daadwerkelijk geadresseerd worden door middel van relevante interventies
- In plaats van te kijken naar terugkeerplanning en strategieën in z'n algemeenheid kan gefocust worden op een bepaald aandachtsveld dat als kritisch wordt gezien voor succesvolle repatriatieprogramma's. Door bijvoorbeeld in meer detail te kijken naar de veiligheidsaspecten van repatriatie en integratie kan een adequaat protectieprogramma gedefinieerd worden.
- Er is een noodzaak om de methode te simplificeren om daardoor de beschikbaarheid te vergroten. Bijvoorbeeld om het mogelijk maken het model na een bepaalde periode opnieuw toe te passen om zicht te houden op veranderingen van invloedrijke verwachtingen en overwegingen, die de mate bepalen waarin bepaalde huishoudcategorieën overwegen te repatriëren.
- Naast het belang van inzicht in repatriatieprocessen voor institutionele organisaties en voor de internationale gemeenschap kan het model ook worden ingezet om de belangen van ontheemde gemeenschappen direct te dienen. Bijvoorbeeld als een instrument om kritische factoren omtrent terugkeer en integratie gericht aandacht te kunnen geven.

Conclusie

De *Theory of Reasoned Action* is een belangrijk model gebleken om inzicht te krijgen in de manier waarop, en op grond van welke factoren, door oorlog of conflict ontheemde mensen het besluit nemen om naar gebieden van oorsprong terug te keren. Ook bleek de *Perceived Vulnerability* variabele, als een voorgestelde uitbreiding van het model, het analyserend vermogen en voorspellende waarde in risicovolle contexten te vergroten.

Zulke inzichten zijn van fundamenteel belang om te komen tot gerichte en effectieve humanitaire en ontwikkelingsgerichte interventies die gebaseerd zijn op relevante en context specifieke terugkeerstrategieën van de primaire actoren: de vluchteling of intern ontheemde. De *Theory of Reasoned Action* kan een belangrijke en waardevolle bijdrage leveren aan de ontwikkeling van repatriatiebeleid en praktijk, gebaseerd op participatie van de doelgroepen in planning en besluitvorming. Dit met als gevolg dat interventies ruimte bieden aan de complexiteit van terugkeerprocessen door kritieke terugkeerverwachtingen van specifieke groepen ontheemden te adresseren.

Context specifieke interventies doen recht aan de complexiteit van repatriatie en dragen bij aan duurzame oplossingen. Het recht op terugkeer in veiligheid, en op een respectvolle manier, is niet een gebaar van goede wil van de internationale gemeenschap, maar een fundamenteel recht van door oorlog en conflict ontheemd geraakte mensen.

Acronyms

ARRA	Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs
ATF	Abyei Task Force
DED	Deutsche Emtwicklungs Dienst
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GoS	Government of Sudan
GPDC	Gambella People Democratic Congress
GPDF	Gambella People Democratic Front
GPDUP	Gambella Peoples Democratic United Party
GPLM	Gambella People’s Liberation Movement
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD	Inter Governmental Authority on Development
JMC	Joint Military Committee
KII	Key Informant Interviews
NDO	National Development Organisation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PACTA	Programme Advancing Conflict Transformation in Abyei
SPLM/A	Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement/Army
SSIM/A	Southern Sudan Independence Movement/Army
TORA	Theory of Reasoned Action
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
TPLF	Tigrean People’s Liberation Front
UN	United nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Glossary

Attitude	An individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing a behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980).
Behavioural Intention	The intent to perform or not perform a behaviour.
Cronbach's α	A measure of the reliability of a scale. The alpha coefficient is generally accepted to be the most accurate index of internal consistency reliability.
Descriptor variable	A variable that helps describe a sub-category or sub-stratum of the object population.
Discourse	An ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to phenomena (Hilhorst, 2000: 1; quoting Gasper and Apthorpe, 1996).
Domain	Areas of social life that are organised by reference to a central core or cluster of values which, even if they are not perceived in exactly the same way by all those involved, are nevertheless recognised as a locus of certain rules, norms and values implying a degree of social commitment (Long, 2001: 59; by quoting Villarreal 1994: 58-65)
Expectancy-value models	'These models assume that decisions between different courses of action are based on two types of cognitions: (1) subjective probabilities that a given action will lead to a set of expected outcomes, and (2) evaluation of action outcomes. According to this approach individuals will choose among various alternative courses of action that will be most likely to lead to positive consequences or avoid negative consequences (Hewstone et al.: 449). The Theory of Reasoned Action is an example of one of these models.
Forced Migration	The involuntary movement of usually a large group of people due to external pressure.
Governance	The mechanisms through which people and groups express their concerns, negotiate their differences, exercise their obligations and ensure fulfilment of their rights (Barnett, 2001: 139).
IDPs	Persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee or to leave their places of habitual residence as a result of, or in order to avoid, in particular, the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters, and who do not cross an internationally recognised state border (United Nations definition).
Integration	The ability of individuals and groups to interact cohesively, overcoming differences without a breakdown of social relationships and conflict (Preston 1999).
Mann-Whitney test	A non-parametric test that looks for differences between two independent variables (Field, 2005).
Non-parametric test	A family of statistical procedures that do not rely on the restrictive assumptions of parametric tests. In particular they do not assume that data come from a normal

	distribution. (Field 2005).
Normative belief	Beliefs which underlie a person's subjective norm. i.e. The person's beliefs that specific social referents think s/he should or should not perform a behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980: 7).
Outcome belief	Beliefs that underlie a person's attitude toward a behaviour, outcome expectancy judgements (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980: 7).
Perceived Level of Control	The perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour. The Perceived Level of Control is assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles (Ajzen, 1988: p. 132).
Perceived Vulnerability	The perception of the potential for harm or disruption associated with performing the behaviour (technically the sum of the perceived risk and the ability to manage that risk associated with return).
Policy	A purposive course of action by an actor or actors to deal with problems (Barnett, 2001: 139).
Reconstruction	'Reconstruction' as opposed to 'integration' seems typically to refer to top-down development initiatives in post-war societies (Preston, 1999).
Refugee	All persons who may be deemed to have been coerced for one reason or another to leave their country and/or stay in other countries (Coles, 1985) Any person who, owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside his country of nationality and is unable ... or unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (Article 1 of the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of a Refugee).
Repatriation	Preparations for return, the process of return, and the reception and arrangements for integration made immediately after arrival in the country of destination (Quick et al, 1995: 2).
Salient belief	A salient belief is one which comes most readily to mind when a particular behaviour is under consideration. They are those beliefs which are at the 'top of the mind' and therefore influential in the decision process regarding the particular behaviour under consideration. 'Although a person may hold a large number of beliefs about a given object, it appears that he can attend to only a relatively small number of beliefs -perhaps five to nine- at any given moment. these salient beliefs are the immediate determinants of the person's attitude' (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980: 63).
Salient modal belief	A salient modal belief is a belief that is commonly salient amongst the majority of the population of interest. 'Although these modal salient beliefs do not necessarily represent the behavioural beliefs held by any given individual, they provide a general picture of the beliefs that are assumed to determine the attitudes for most members of the population under investigation. Within the modal set will be many beliefs that are a salient for a given individual. By measuring belief strength and evaluations with respect to the modal salient beliefs we can not only predict a given individual's attitude but we also obtain information about the determinants of his attitude' (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980: 72).
Salient social	A person or group in the subject's social environment who is influential in

referents	establishing normative components (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980).
Spearman's correlation coefficient (Spearman's rho)	A standardised measure of the strength of a relationship between two variables that does not rely on the assumption of a parametric test. It can take a value from -1 (as one variable changes, the other changes in the opposite direction by the same amount), through 0 (as one variable changes the other doesn't change at all), to $+1$ (as one variable changes, the other changes in the same direction by the same amount). (Field, 2005).
SPSS	A computer software programme for statistical data analysis
Subjective norm	The perception that most people who are important to an individual think s/he should or should not perform the behaviour in question (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980).
Two tailed test	A test of non-directional hypothesis (Field, 2005).

Curriculum Vitae

Jan Gerrit van Uffelen was born in Oldenzaal, the Netherlands, on the 2nd of April 1965. He graduated from Wageningen University in 1991 obtaining a MSc. (Ir.) Degree in Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. He spent over ten years working with displaced communities and disaster victims in Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Ethiopia, gaining extensive experience in the design and management of relief and rehabilitation programming. He oversaw a wide range of interventions dealing with food security and livelihood diversification, vocational skills and income generating activities, water and sanitation as well as community services and environmental education and protection. During his last major overseas assignment as a country representative for ZOA Refugee Care in Ethiopia he developed a keen interest in conflict transformation, community based peace and justice systems and advocacy work.

The PhD research originated from his first hand account of the impact of repatriation on war-displaced communities in various return contexts. His experience with context analysis, participatory assessments and stakeholder analysis led him to opt for an actor oriented yet formal approach to understand displaced people's return decision. This with the aim to inform policy and practice with the voices and opinions of the displaced.

More recently Jan Gerrit van Uffelen has been providing consultancy services for the United Nations and other international organisations in the field of peace and development programming in both conflict and post-conflict situations.

Notes

Chapter 1: The Aim of the Study

¹ Personal communication with Dr. David Turton during the workshop on Settlement and Resettlement in Ethiopia, 28th – 30th of January, 2003 in Addis Ababa

Chapter 2: Forced Migration and the Evolution of Humanitarian Policies

² In his report to the Security Council on the sources of conflict in Africa the Secretary General underlined that historic legacies form an important factor leading to conflict (United Nations, 1998: 3-4). The report states that: *'At the Congress of Berlin in 1885, the colonial Powers partitioned Africa into territorial units. Kingdoms, States and communities in Africa were arbitrarily divided and unrelated areas and peoples were just as arbitrarily joined together. In the 1960s, the newly independent African States inherited those colonial boundaries, together with the challenge that legacy posed to their territorial integrity and to their attempts to achieve national unity. The challenge was compounded by the fact that the framework of colonial laws and institutions which some new States had inherited had been designed to exploit local divisions, not overcome them'*.

³ Richmond sets this scale of proactive/reactive migrants against determinants of movements, which he broadly describes as socio-political and economic. Later on he expanded this multivariate model by giving a detailed typology of reactive migration categorised by principal determinants and secondary factors (Richmond, 1993).

⁴ Article 1C of the 1951 Convention state that the Convention cease to apply if: 1) He has voluntarily re-availed himself of the protection of the country of his nationality, or; 2) Having lost his nationality, he has voluntarily re-acquired it, or; 3) He has acquired a new nationality, and enjoys the protection of the country of his new nationality, or; 4) He has voluntarily re-established himself in the country which he left or outside which he remained owing to fear of prosecution, or; 5) He can no longer, because of the circumstances in connection with which he has been recognised as a refugee have ceased to exist, continue to refuse to avail himself of the protection of the country of his nationality, or; 6) Being a person who has no nationality he is, because of the circumstances in connection with which he has been recognised as a refugee have ceased to exist, able to return to the country of his former habitual residence.

⁵ The 1967 Protocol removes the time limitation written into the 1951 Convention, the applicability of which was restricted to persons who became refugees because of events occurring before 1 January 1951.

⁶ UNHCR may assist persons displaced within their own countries and contribute to the rehabilitation and reintegration of returning refugees and 'externally' displaced persons. Goodwin-Gill (1998: 29) observes that recent practice indicates that in some circumstances UNHCR may exercise a protection function with respect to the internally displaced, but its legal standing in that context is less certain.

⁷ Not surprisingly, some countries refuse to co-operate which led the representative on IDP issues remark that 'Clearly it is not acceptable that countries experiencing serious problems of internal displacement should be able to evade international scrutiny and, in some cases, also deny their internally displaced populations international assistance and protection' (Deng, 1999).

⁸ Gorman lists four central principles, emerging from the dialogue following ICARA II and field practice, on how refugee aid and development might be linked: 1) Refugees' basic needs must be met in ways that do not prejudice the condition of host country nationals; 2) Assistance should encourage and enable refugees to attain self-reliance; 3) Development assistance should anticipate the impact that refugee populations have on the economic and social

infrastructures of host countries, and; 4) The identification, formulation and implementation of refugee programs and refugee-related infrastructure and assistance should involve input and participation from refugees and local hosts (Gorman, 1999: 228-229).

⁹ Gorman questions the ability of UNHCR to implement the refugee aid and development strategy: 'proper orientation for a strategy of linking refugee aid and development is one thing, effective implementation is quite another' (Gorman, 1999: 229).

¹⁰ The agency distinguishes indirect and direct preventive protection. Indirect preventive protection involves such activities as early-warning, preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution, human rights promotion, and economic and social development. Direct prevention consists of activities such as the establishment of open relief centres, the delivery of assistance to the internally displaced or victims of conflict, and the monitoring of human rights and physical safety with appropriate follow up action. (Stafford, 1992).

¹¹ Following discussions about the new modalities in humanitarian action the General Assembly, in Resolution 46/182 of December 1991, reaffirmed respect for sovereignty and territory and spoke of humanitarian assistance being provided 'with the *consent* of the affected country'. In the past the focus has been on 'the *request of*' the respective country. But in both practical and political terms, UNHCR has found that protection and assistance cannot be conducted without the consent of the government and/or local authorities. Meaningful humanitarian access must be gained and maintained by continual and often painstaking negotiations with all the relevant parties, based on at least a minimum of mutual trust.

¹² UNHCR's involvement in preventive action is based on the following conditions: 1) The option of asylum remains open; 2) UNHCR is given full access, security and other conditions so that it can operate; 3) UNHCR's particular expertise is needed and sufficient funding is available; 4) UNHCR's involvement is based on the consent of the parties and the approval of the international community, and; 5) UNHCR's involvement is solutions-oriented, neutral, non-political and humanitarian in character.

¹³ The first option of 'repatriation not supported' is applied in case the situation in the country of origin is seen to be too dangerous or unstable for UNHCR to offer any support for people to return. In those cases repatriation is not supported. The second option of 'repatriation facilitated' applies when the country of origin is peaceful enough for people to return, but the stability of the peace may be in question, or the formal process of arranging repatriation through tri-partite commission has not been possible. The third option of 'repatriation promoted' applies when UNHCR, the country of asylum and the country of origin have agreed on a formal procedure of repatriation through a tri-partite agreement. The refugees are informed that it is safe to return and are encouraged to do so, and UNHCR (through its implementing partners) will arrange for people to move.

¹⁴ Many observers argue that in circumstances where refugees are not forcibly deported but are nevertheless going home under duress, UNHCR should clearly avoid the use of the phrase 'voluntary repatriation'.

¹⁵ Those advocating the need for international protection of environmentally displaced persons are aware that uncritical use of the term 'environmental refugees' can undermine the validity of refugee status claims. Authors, like Lee, therefore underline the importance to clarify differences between environmental migrants and refugees, political and environmental refugees, and environmental victims and refugees thus reducing the controversy (Lee, 1997).

¹⁶ These criteria are: 1) Consent of the state concerned, and were applicable, other entities in a conflict; 2) Access to the affected population; 3) Adequate security for staff of UNHCR and implementing partners; 4) Clear lines of responsibility and accountability with the ability to intervene directly on the protection matters, and; 5) Adequate resources and capacity (UNHCR, 2000b: 1).

Chapter 3: Humanitarian Practise & Repatriation Discourse

¹⁷ Roche stresses the necessity of finding 'stabilising points' which do not resolve the conflict but may provide a foundation or base for future development.

¹⁸ Aid as a transfer of resources in conflict zones can contribute to war efforts directly when the warring parties for their own support use aid. Indirectly it can support conflict because it frees up internal resources for support of armies or fighters. Aid may be used by manipulating civilian populations, distort local economies or increase competition over scarce resources. As well as a message of compassion and humanitarianism aid was found to carry other implicit ethical messages with a tendency to feed into continuing conflict. Aid may be provided in ways that are perceived to accept the terms on which war is fought, aid may bestow legitimacy on warriors, aid can undermine values that are important for peace time, and provision of aid may reinforce animosity (Anderson, 1996: 18-19).

¹⁹ These are: 1) The 'frozen nature' of conflict meant that no conflict has been resolved to the extent that normalisation could begin; 2) The need for greater accountability of actors in the region, major actors in the area were not responsive and demonstrated a lack of accountability; 3) Security threat towards humanitarian personnel; 4) The terms of humanitarian aid, and; 5) The absence of the necessary synergies between humanitarian and diplomatic action (Hansen and Minear, 1999: 259-266).

²⁰ The development of theoretical sophisticated approaches to peace building bear, according to Stubbs, '*little or no relation to the development of projects on the ground*'.

²¹ Since the context of conflict is in constant change dividers and connectors may disappear and new ones emerge.

²² Frerks also noted that development and development-co-operation may not only help to prevent conflicts, but also may induce them.

²³ The challenges for development as a conflict resolution include: 1) Analysis and understanding of conflict processes; 2) The lack of an institutional evaluation policy framework to collect findings and lessons learned; 3) The definition of what one's role needs to be in conflict; 4) Political challenges; 5) Multi-track diplomacy, and; 6) Involvement of grassroots organisations (Frerks, 2003: 7-9).

²⁴ These are: 1) The art of mid-war operations as agencies are pulled in from the periphery of war to much nearer its epicentre; 2) The need to protect civilian populations who are now within reach from violence; 3) The management of military-humanitarian combinations in UN operations, and; 4) The focus on peace programming as a means of ending war.

²⁵ Crisp observes that the traditional hospitality of African States offered to displaced from other states have become expensive liabilities: '*Host countries are no longer willing to tolerate the indefinite presence of large refugee populations. Countries of origin would like the refugees to return, as it confers legitimacy on their government and provides a bias on which to appeal for additional economic aid. The donor countries, looking for a means of limiting their long term commitment to refugee assistance, are keen to promote the return and reintegration of refugees in their country of origin*' (Crisp, 1984: 21)

²⁶ Political interest in the repatriation option has gone hand in hand with increasing restrictions on the granting of refugee status.

²⁷ Koser and Black (1999: 6) observe that UNHCR finds itself in an increasingly difficult position with regard to respecting the sovereignty of both host and home states, and their insistence upon the right to manage migration.

²⁸ The promise of land seemed 'to get people on the move' and initiated a 'race' for the best land. Most refugees were returned to northwestern Cambodia which was at the time of return not only heavily mined but also characterised by

political unrest and insecurity. Eastmond and Öjendal conclude that *'facilitating spontaneous repatriation, rather than vigorously resisting it, and reinforcing self-support measures on arrival in Cambodia, would probably have been more beneficial to the returnees in the long run'*.

²⁹ According to Crisp this includes: 1) The provision of full and accurate information on the situation in areas of return; 2) Fact finding missions by freely elected refugee representatives, and; 3) A maximum of refugee participation in the planning and implementation of the voluntary repatriation programme. Tri-partite Commissions between the country of asylum, the host country and UNHCR should include refugee representatives as well as independent voluntary organisations.

³⁰ Marsden's studies amongst Afghan returnees in southern Afghanistan found that refugees who had returned were facing far greater difficulties surviving than had been assumed (Marsden, 1999: 65). He found that members of extended families were often too poor to help each other and that little money was being sent to relatives in Afghanistan from members of their extended families in Iran or Pakistan.

³¹ Koser and Black remark that further complexity is added to the intersection between 'home' and 'ethnic' identities where they do not correspond with 'national' identities.

³² Hugo Slim remarks that the international community's system of humanitarianism is still extremely hierarchical and this is reflected in the discourse which surrounds it: *'by far the most deafening part of humanitarian discourse is still that part of the conversation voiced by the international (and largely western) humanitarian system in discussion with itself. Comparatively little in-depth discourse by, about or between people who actually endure war permeates the barrage of this dominant institutional conversation'*. Slim, 1996.

Chapter 4: Methodology

³³ Davis states that community vulnerability analysis has been neglected as a result of: 1) A bias to physical sciences concentrating on physical and economic vulnerability; 2) Political bias explained by government's fear that sections of society are found to be at risk; 3) Lack of agreed methodology to assess risk factors, and; 4) Lack of assessors from a professional background suited to this demanding role (Davis, 1993).

³⁴ Davis also remarks that a situation has developed where there is minimal evidence of systematic vulnerability analysis in which the physical, economic and social data are comprehensively integrated together (Davis, 1993: 11). Assessing progress in the analysis of vulnerability in which the three broad areas are integrated showed little progress over a ten-year period (Davis, 2004: 139).

³⁵ A better understanding of the uncertainties which underscore human behaviour in risky environments is a first step not only to crisis prevention but also to making development sustainable (Webb and Harinarayan, 1999).

³⁶ Wisner (2004) notes three kinds of contingency that need to be accounted for: 1) Social vulnerability is not a permanent property of a person or groups of people, but changes in respect to a particular hazard; 2) Vulnerability is constantly changing depending on seasonal or yearly circumstances of a person's situation regarding access to resources and power, and; 3) Contingency born out of the complex interaction of particular overlapping identities and forms of empowerment or marginality.

³⁷ Standardized scales have yet to be derived for vulnerability. So far when assessing vulnerability practitioners tend to do instead with 'expert opinion' and/or available proxy variables. 'Expert opinion' explicitly recognizes not only the absence of objective measures but also the importance of indigenous perceptions of risk and possible responses (Maxwell, 1996). This approach requires heavy investment in understanding local contexts, contacts and constraints, but it can generate a depth and quality of insight not easily matched by more remote statistical systems (Seaman, 1993; Boudreau, 1998).

³⁸ The importance of religion was to a large extent related to propaganda campaigns by Islamic fundamentalist groups amongst the refugee community. Identifying the refugees with the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front they were seen by the fundamentalists as a radical pro-Christian and anti-Muslim movement (Habte-Selassie, 1992: 30).

³⁹ Besides introducing the concept of perceived behavioural control some authors also include a concept of perceived moral obligation arguing that this concept could capture some personal normative considerations which the subjective norm can not (Beedell and Rehman, 2000).

⁴⁰ As with Perceived Behavioural Control, this study proposes a direct causal effect of Perceived Vulnerability on stated Intent.

⁴¹ Salient modal beliefs are salient with all members of a given population; they are susceptible to change and may be strengthened, weakened or replaced by other beliefs in their status as 'top of the mind' beliefs (McKemey and Rehman, 2002).

⁴² A bi-polar scale captures both negative and positive opinions or values, e.g. very weak to very strong, with the midpoint represented by a neutral statement (McKemey and Rehman, 2002).

⁴³ The results of the field / pilot test were not statistically analysed given the time and cost this would have involved. Therefore testing of the reliability and internal validity of the different scales was not carried out before the main survey. The scales' individual and grouped reliability and internal validity were tested afterward using the coefficient Alpha. The Alpha coefficient is the mean of all possible split-half coefficients. It avoids the need to test - retest to establish reliability (Cronbach 1951).

⁴⁴ Undertaking future oriented assessments amongst displaced communities is often a sensitive issue. As a consequence obtaining a permit from relevant authorities to undertake the assessment may prove difficult, is a time consuming process, or might be refused altogether.

⁴⁵ The refugee study took place as an element in a much wider community services programme with the aim of learning about the perspectives of refugee's in order to improve the quality of services provided in the camps and to design new interventions aiming at facilitating the 'self-help aspect' of the refugees.

⁴⁶ In the case of the IDP study permission was granted by the relevant authorities and the initial process closely overseen by security and intelligence personnel. This, no doubt, has influenced the initial outcomes of the focus group discussions. Low profile key informant interviews proved their value in that certain critical beliefs and referents, not mentioned during the focus group discussions could be included in the structured questionnaire.

⁴⁷ The IDP questionnaire itself had to be approved by GoS officials. Salient beliefs like 'return would mean facing the consequences of the conflict between the Missiriya and the Dinka had to be reframed to 'we will not face the conflict between the Missiriya/Murahaleen and the Dinka'. Such indirect constructs made the question somewhat awkward; 'how good or bad is it not to face the conflict between the Missiriya and the Dinka' and resulted in some confusion. Rather than taking out such erratic or doubtful individual responses, the line taken was that if in general the question was well understood the multiplicity of responses would balance out such erratic responses. Interestingly very few of the displaced in Khartoum mentioned the SPLA as an important referent (not a surprise really). The political leadership was included as an important social referent based on the insight of the researcher who felt that displaced people's views regarding return was likely to be influenced by the SPLA.

Chapter 5: Migration in the Ethio-Sudanese Border Area

⁴⁸ Resettlement applied to only a fraction of the Ethiopian population. Resettlement, as opposed to villagisation, was characterised by people being moved long distances, in a process which entailed the break up and mixing of

communities. Millions more were villagised being moved short distance while remaining in their communities of origin.

⁴⁹ The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) resembled a coalition of ethnically-based armed groups formed by the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) during the war. The EPRDF coordinated its final assault on Addis Ababa with that of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) on Asmara, the capital of Eritrea. Following the overthrow of the Derg government the EPRDF's military wing assumed responsibility for national defence and internal security immediately. The EPRDF agreed in a referendum in 1993 to the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopia.

⁵⁰ Turton argues that the new political system of ethnic federalism was introduced by the Tigray People's Liberation Front with the purpose '*.. to maintain the continuity of the Ethiopian borders .. while introducing a degree of regional and local autonomy and preserving the hegemony of the TPLA*' (Turton, 1997). He adds that the creation of ethnic federal units without genuine power sharing could well have disastrous long-term consequences.

⁵¹ Such movements were not necessarily undertaken by people who considered they were thereby losing their ethnic identity. It was under colonialism, that many of today's 'tribal' identities became 'frozen' by territorial demarcation (Turton, 1991). The border between the Sudan and Uganda, established in the early years of the last century, divided closely related populations speaking the same languages. 'Tribal' identities were formalized and regulated for the sake of administrative convenience.

⁵² There are unconfirmed reports that highlanders have been resettled in the far east of the Gambella region.

⁵³ Nyaba remarked that the volatile mixture of guns, politics, economics, and ethnicity favoured by the reigning military intelligentsia created '*a war that does not end*'. (Nyaba, 1997: 5).

⁵⁴ According to Cohen 'ethnic federalism can be understood as a strategy of devolving public sector powers and tasks to regions dominated by the country's major ethnic groups (Cohen, 1995: 138).

⁵⁵ The Ethiopian case illustrates the ways in which political and economic objectives of devolution of power can be in conflict. Cohen (1995) concludes that if regions are granted extensive power to determine development priorities, establish economic and social policies, and control revenue and budgetary allocations, then devolution can undermine the federal economic objectives and reforms while serving as an effective tool of conflict resolution through regional self-governance. On the other hand, if the federal government retains substantial policy, revenue and budgetary control while limiting the capacity of devolved government levels to determine and finance their own priorities, then the political effectiveness of ethnic federalism as a strategy of peaceful reconstruction will be undermined.

⁵⁶ A large group of around 5,000 Anyuak refugees from around Akobo arrived at Fugnido prior to the re-establishment of the camp. Though they were granted refugee status they remained in newly set-up villages in the Tata area, some ten kilometres southwest of Fugnido refugee camp along the Gilo river.

⁵⁷ Though the attack was claimed to be carried out by Anyuak gunmen conclusive evidence has not been provided by the Ethiopian authorities.

⁵⁸ The Anyuaks fear that the highland population will grow and in time will present both a political as well as a practical challenge (in that they will take over Anyuak land). Conflict between Anyuak and highland settlers has been simmering since the establishment of the resettlement villages, with incidents and killings being reported every year. At times conflict has escalated such as in the early 1990's. The latest spree of violence erupted when Anyuaks were blamed for the ambush in December 2003.

⁵⁹ It is rumoured that the concession covers a third of the landmass of the Gambella Regional State. Observers have noted that against a background of a possible border demarcation dispute in the near future exploration is planned to start in the area directly bordering the Sudan. It is in this area that the GoE has deployed a strong military force after the

federal army was ordered in to enforce law and order in the Gambella Regional State following the incidents in late 2003.

Chapter 6: Return Intention and its Antecedents of Sudanese Refugees in Ethiopia

⁶⁰ Focus group discussions at Sherkolle camp, organised at a somewhat later stage, did not reveal novel return beliefs and expectations nor social referents.

⁶¹ The descriptive variables were established based on the findings of four independent sources: focus groups discussions (organised after the semi-structured session to elicit salient outcome beliefs and social referents was finalised); key informant interviews, literature, and insight and understanding of return issues by the researcher.

⁶² Around a fifth of them are recent arrivals, they arrived within a two-year period prior to the assessment.

⁶³ By the end of 2003 the overall security situation came to seriously affect the relations between refugees and locals to the extent that the UNHCR feared a further escalation of conflict, especially around Fugnido and Dimma refugee camps in the Gambella Regional State.

⁶⁴ The strength of the intent (I) to return to live in the Sudan is measured on a 5 point bi-polar scale from very strong to very weak (range -2 to +2). General return intent is the sum of the three return options giving it a possible score ranging from -6 to +6 from very weakly to very strongly.

⁶⁵ Return to visit was found to be rather common, with eleven percent of the household heads indicating that they had visited their home areas over a two-year period prior to the assessment.

⁶⁶ Two measures of attitude are taken. The Stated Attitude (SA) measures the general emotive reaction to the return intention on a 5 point scale from very good to very bad (range -2 to +2). The general Stated Attitude is the sum of the three return options resulting in a scale with a range of -6 to +6. The reasoned or Calculated Attitude (CA) is arrived at by taking the sum of the Outcome Attitudes. An Outcome Attitude is measured by multiplying the strength to which a particular belief is held (on a scale of very true to very false with range +2 to -2) by the evaluation of its possible outcome (measured on a scale very good to very bad with a range of +2 to -2). In this study 70 outcome statements were found to be salient giving a possible Calculated Attitude range of -280 to +280.

⁶⁷ Two measures of subjective norms are considered. The Stated Subjective Norm (SSN) measures the general emotive reaction of how supportive referents or important 'others' would be of the subject's decision to return. The Stated Subjective Norm is a measure on a 5 point bi-polar scale from very unlikely to very likely (range -2 to +2). The general Stated Subjective Norm is the sum of the three return options resulting in a scale with a range of -6 to +6. The Calculated Subjective Norm (CSN) is the sum of the individual Referent Subjective Norms (RSNs). Referent Subjective Norms are calculated by multiplying the motivation to comply with specific referents (on a scale of very strongly to very weakly with a scale of +2 to -2) by the normative belief attributed to each of the referents (on a scale of very strongly to very weakly with range +2 to -2). In this study 11 social referents are considered giving a possible Calculated Subjective Norm range of -44 to +44.

⁶⁸ The Perceived Level of Control (PLC) is assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles. The strength of perceived control is measured on a 5 point bi-polar scale for the dimensions ability to, control over, and difficulty involved in undertaking return, giving it a possible score range of -6 for no control to +6 for full control for each of the return options that may be pursued. The general Perceived Level of Control is the sum of the three return options resulting in a possible score range of -18 to +18.

⁶⁹ Perceived Vulnerability (PV) is assumed to capture the potential for harm or disruption involved in repatriation. The strength of Perceived Vulnerability (PV) is measured on a five point bi-polar scale from very great to very small for the risk component (range of -2 to +2) and a five point bi-polar scale for the coping capability component from very

unable to very able (range -2 to +2). The Perceived Vulnerability reading is the sum of the risk and coping component and is expressed as a Vulnerability measure with a scale ranging from highly vulnerable to highly resilient (-4 to +4). The general Perceived Vulnerability reading is the sum of the three return options giving the Vulnerability measure a scale with scoring range of -12 to +12.

⁷⁰ For many of the Bor refugees it took an extraordinary trip to seek safety across Sudan's borders. This trek became known as that of the 'lost boys of the Sudan' and demonstrated the difficulty to seek protection across international borders and underlines the appropriateness of the protection regime for internally displaced people.

⁷¹ Since the belief dealing with spontaneous return vs. organised repatriation is showing a negative correlation with intent it follows that an increase in the level this belief is perceived to be true or the outcome is regarded more positive (the mean value indicates that the result is perceived to be negative) will lead to an increase in the return intent (its outcome strength becomes less negative). See appendix 6.5, statement v70.

⁷² Mc Kemey and Rehman quote Elliott (1995) who suggested that evidence from practical TORA applications suggests that the sum of the five most salient beliefs about an attitude object is more highly correlated with a person's attitude towards that object than is the sum of the remaining non-salient beliefs.

⁷³ Cronbach suggested that if several underlying factors or constructs exist the formula should be applied separately to each factor or construct. In that sense Cronbach's remark supports the logic and sense of the clustering process. Generally speaking values for Cronbach's alpha of over .7 are taken to indicate the reliability of the scale. Calculating alpha values for each of the domains presented in appendix 6.6 some demonstrated values lower than .70. Field (2005: 668) remarks that when dealing with psychological constructs alpha values below .7 can realistically be expected and can be seen to highlight the diversity of the constructs being measured.

⁷⁴ In this study 70 beliefs were clustered into a representative 23 beliefs (reflecting the cognitive attitude construct underlying the attitude towards return intent) giving the clustered Calculated Attitude a possible range of -92 to +92.

⁷⁵ This suggests that the consequences are serious in both cases though it may even hint at complicity between the two.

⁷⁶ Since neither provision of health care and its accessibility are significantly correlated with the cost aspect of natural medicine it seems that accessibility of modern health care is not governed by the cost aspect of modern medicine.

⁷⁷ Applying the TORA to explore health and nutritional issues in camp situations with wider ratifications for post-return contexts would be an interesting study by itself.

⁷⁸ The outcome attitude 'having a large household helps to become food secure' is significantly correlated with 'becoming food secure in a short period of time' (correlation .24, p 0.000 level). Because of its significant correlation directly with stated Intent the outcome attitude becoming food-secure quickly is frozen at a first level of causality.

⁷⁹ As both belief strength and outcome evaluation of the outcome attitude 'dependent on UN and other aid' show negative values the positive correlation with 'back in the Sudan it is easier to take care of my household' indicate that a higher ability to take care of oneself goes together with a lower dependence on aid or a more negative outcome.

⁸⁰ As both belief strength and outcome evaluation of the outcome attitude 'dependent on UN and other aid' show negative values the positive correlation with 'back in the Sudan it is easier to take care of my household' indicate that a higher ability to take care of oneself goes together with a lower dependence on aid or a more negative outcome.

⁸¹ Even for the return option peace the Funj show a significantly lower intention to return when compared with the Uduk (0.33 on scale of -2 'very weak' to +2 'very strong'). For the return option peace (see appendix 6.4.3) the Funj also demonstrate vulnerability as opposed to resilience for the Uduk (values of -0.47 and 2.82 on a scale -4 'vulnerability' to +4 'resilience').

⁸² The Outcome Attitude value regarding conscription is negative for those expecting intra-tribal conflict to form the major threat, but positive for those regarding inter tribal conflict to pose a challenge. This is because the outcome of

conscription is evaluated positively in case of inter tribal conflict (mean belief strength of 0.84 on a scale of -2 'very weak' to +2 'very strong'; outcome evaluation of 0.27 on a scale of -2 'very bad' to +2 'very good'; resulting Outcome Attitude value 0.69). Against a background of possible intra-ethnic conflict recruitment is perceived to be more likely and evaluated more negatively (belief strength 1.26, outcome expectation -0.59; resulting Outcome Attitude value -1.08). For those regarding intra-ethnic conflict to pose the challenge conscription forms a barrier to return, for those regarding inter tribal conflict to be pose the challenge conscription is a driver for return. Conscription into armed movements against a background of possible north-south conflict does not record sensitivity. The perceived belief strength is relatively low, though the outcome expectation more negative, when compared with the recorded mean values for both intra and inter tribal conflict. It is likely that this, to some degree, reflects the relative freedom of choice to join the main opposition movements in their struggle against the north compared with much higher levels of coercion involved in the recruitment by militias and other armed groups (notably in contexts of potential intra-ethnic clashes)

⁸³ The sub sample size for the household category whose head is over fifty years is 21.

⁸⁴ A negative correlation indicates that this particular return belief, generally perceived to be a driver, acts as a barrier for this particular return moment.

⁸⁵ The Government of Sudan was not mentioned to be a salient referent by the refugees. Its actions are viewed with suspicion. When the Ethiopian government allowed a GoS delegation to visit Sherkolle refugee camp in 2002 to meet with refugee leaders to discuss repatriation, well over 10,000 refugees left the camp in protest. They only returned after the Ethiopian government cancelled the scheduled flight of the delegation and both UNHCR and ARRA formally agreed to consult refugee leaders first before considering whether to invite delegations in general.

Chapter 7: Nuer and Anyuak Return and the Nature of Vulnerability

⁸⁶ Hutchingson (1996) states that in 1931 there were approximately 2,000 Gaajak who were permanent residents of Abyssinia and an additional 45,000 eastern Jikany who crossed the frontier annually on their way to dry season grazing grounds.

⁸⁷ On the Sudanese side most villages are royal villages. On the Ethiopian side few royal villages are found, with most villages ruled by a landlord.

⁸⁸ Agaak is a hill near Bonga about 30 kilometres upstream from Gambella town along the Baro river. The hill sits near the northeastern periphery of the area inhabited by the Anyuak, at the very edge of the Ethiopian highlands. The meaning of the song is that the Anyuaks have to run to the foothills of Ethiopia's highlands (densely populated and unable to expand into) where *'we the Nuers will finish those still having the strength to fight'*.

⁸⁹ Bonga, Fugnido as well as Dimma camp are located near former SPLA training sites.

⁹⁰ About three quarters of the Fugnido camp occupants in 1997 were found to be ethnic Nuer, refugees in Dimma camp were found to be predominantly Nuer males (USCR, 1997).

⁹¹ The incident in Fugnido was sparked off by the death of some young Nuer SPLA soldiers who dived onto spears which were placed under water at a popular diving/bathing place at the Gilo river. The SPLA, suspecting that Anyuaks had placed the spears, demanded that the local Anyuak community would come forward with the suspects. When they refused fighting erupted between the SPLA and some armed Anyuaks. According to local Anyuak living at Agenga, close to Fugnido, well over a hundred innocent Anyuaks, including many women and children, lost their lives in the fighting.

⁹² The Anyuaks had not been consulted about granting the SPLA setting up training camps in Anyuak territory nor about the establishment of the resettlement schemes.

⁹³ After the collapse of the Derg the ruling EPRDF dominated the political system by favouring regional parties affiliated with it, and clamping down on opposition groups. It also sought to dominate the emerging civil society through bureaucratic and legal restrictions and various forms of harassment of activists (Human Rights Watch, 1997).

⁹⁴ According to Ethiopia's 1994 Housing and Population Census, out of a total of 162,397 people living in Gambella 64,473 were Nuers (around 40% of the total population), 44,581 Anyuaks (27% of the population), 39,191 highlanders (24% of the overall population), 9,350 Mezengir (6%) and 4,802 Opos and Komos (3% of the total population) (Ethiopian Register, 1996).

⁹⁵ According to the Anyuak, the number of Nuers was seriously overstated as Nuers on their annual migration to dry season grazing grounds along the Baro, as well as a considerable number of Nuer refugees, were included in the census. Anyuaks also stated that during the time of the census many of their villages were not accessible and were therefore not accounted for in the outcome of the census. Another argument brought forward by the Anyuak was the dual nature of Nuer citizenship, that is, for the sake of the census Sudanese Nuer would claim to be Ethiopian citizens. The Ethiopian government acknowledges that the identification whether a Nuer is an Ethiopian citizen or not is problematic. So far claiming Ethiopian citizenship is relatively easy for Nuers coming out of the Sudan. Citizenship claims can be processed and granted at kebele (ward or neighbourhood) level in Akobo and Jikawo woredas (districts). In such cases antecedents will be checked, but getting Ethiopian identity papers is stated not to be a serious problem.

⁹⁶ Consisting of three ethnically aligned parties representing the Nuer, Anyuak and Majangir.

⁹⁷ One of the triggers of the 2002 conflict between the Nuer-Anyuak has been the nomination by the Nuer of a person to fill the Nuer post of vice-president. Since the Anyuak were not happy with the candidate, the Anyuak president refused to accept the candidacy. As government investigators claimed that the president fuelled conflict by encouraging radical Anyuak elements to set up armed gangs he was jailed, further infuriating the Anyuaks.

⁹⁸ Though the Ethiopian government blamed Anyuak gunman for carrying out the attack no conclusive evidence was provided.

⁹⁹ Up to the 1950's conflict amongst the Anyuak was common, with villages attacking each other. Most villages maintained defence works (known as *Kirr*) which fell out of fashion (the last such defence works can be found around some of the recently vacated Anyuak villages near Itang). Anyuak elders point to the positive role the church has played in reducing intra-ethnic Anyuak conflict.

¹⁰⁰ The armed Lou Nuer elements used advanced weaponry including rocket-propelled grenades.

¹⁰¹ Though the GoE has been in contact with the SPLA to find a solution (the Torit faction under control of Rieck Machar) the SPLA is not able to control events in the area, as they have only a few hundred soldiers compared with thousands of well-armed Lou Nuer militiamen.

¹⁰² Some sources mentioned that the Ethiopian army was employed, including a helicopter gunship to stop the advance of Lou Nuer fighters.

¹⁰³ This has also been reported for the Anyuaks. Because of a serious conflict the people of Pinydidi left the area inhabited by the Anyuak to settle near a place called Pokol in the Southern Nations Regional State.

¹⁰⁴ Cattle raiding takes place across the Gambella border area. Nuers are active in the north while Murle at times raid cattle across the border further south.

¹⁰⁵ The Anyuaks living along the Alero river downstreams of the dam have faced the negative impact as well. The large ponds which naturally provided them with a rich abundance of fish in the dry season have dried up, and dry season moisture cultivation along the banks of the Alero have been greatly reduced.

¹⁰⁶ The Gilo district is found in southwestern Gambella and directly borders the Sudan. It is in this particular area that exploration for oil started in 2003.

¹⁰⁷ Sixty-nine Anyuak household heads were interviewed (representing 7.8% of total Anyuak caseload) as compared with ninety Nuer heads (representing 4.7% of total Nuer caseload). The December 2002 caseloads present in Fugnido refugee camp: 12,086 Nuer refugees (57% of total) and 7,216 Anyuaks (29% of total). World Food Programme statistics.

¹⁰⁸ Return beliefs indicated with * were expressed by the entire group of respondents (representing the overall refugee population of the camps) as drivers towards return. However since they recorded a negative correlation for the Nuer refugees they are acting as barriers for this particular household category. Therefore the beliefs were reframed in the opposite way and given positive correlation-coefficients in order to enhance its readability.

¹⁰⁹ Idem as note 104.

¹¹⁰ By applying the full set of salient outcome beliefs the most influential beliefs impacting on the decision to return are different from those in section 7.4. This underlines the need to employ the full set of salient outcome beliefs when exploring critical drivers and barriers towards return for particular household categories and, or, particular return options.

¹¹¹ Anyuak refugee households disagree with this statement as its strength is valued negatively: 'false'. Therefore they hold a positive and influential attitude with regard to having sufficient food.

¹¹² Though for Nuer refugees 'fear of hostile tribes' is an influential belief informing return intent, and is associated with vulnerability, the actual strength of the outcome attitude is significantly more negatively expressed by the Anyuak (respective values of -2.09 and -0.31 for Anyuaks vs. Nuer refugee households: appendix 7.1, statement v52). 'Being afraid of hostile tribes' is seen to be more true by Anyuak refugees (mean value of belief strength 1.4 for Anyuak versus 0.2 for Nuer on a scale of -2 'very false' to +2 'very true': appendix 7.2, statement v52) and its outcome is evaluated more negatively (mean value of -1.50 for the Anyuak as compared with -1.30 for Nuer on a scale of -2 'very bad' to +2 'very good': appendix 7.2).

Chapter 8: Internal Displacement in the Sudan, the Case of Abyei

¹¹³ These are the Machakos protocol, framework agreements on security, wealth- and power-sharing and agreed terms for Abyei and southern Kordofan (Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile). The Machakos protocol includes a six months transitional 'pre-interim period' followed by a six year 'interim period' of autonomy for a southern entity within the context of a national unity government; a referendum in the south after the six-year interim period to chose union or secession; freedom of religion in southern Sudan; cessation of hostilities and unimpeded humanitarian access during negotiations.

¹¹⁴ The survival of the Uduk in the Sudan-Ethiopian borderlands, their trek and the discontinuity of aid has been well documented by Wendy James (James, 1968, 1979 and 1996).

¹¹⁵ The GoS's argument is that since the former powerful Dinka Ngok chief, Deng Majok (the father of Francis Deng, the UN's Special Representative on Internal Displacement) opted to be administered by the north, the area of Abyei belongs to the north. Dinka intellectuals argue that while the Ngok are part of the Dinka tribes in the south, their former paramount chief Deng Majok preferred to be administered by the central government at that particular point in time, to protect his people from unrest and potential war in the south.

¹¹⁶ A proposal entitled '*Principles of Agreement on Abyei*' was presented by US Special Envoy Senator John Danforth to H.E. First Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha and SPLM/A Chairman John Garang on the 19th of March 2004.

¹¹⁷ Successive Sudanese governments have used proxy forces, the so-called militias, as an integral part of the war with the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (e.g. Mawson, 1991). More recently, documents proved beyond any doubt

that Sudanese government officials direct the recruitment, arming and support for Janjawid militias in Sudan's western region of Darfur implicating high ranking officials in '*a policy of militia support*' (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

¹¹⁸ During the peace talks the position of Abyei was disputed, with the southern rebels asserting that Abyei was part of the south, while the government claimed it to be part of the north. The compromise reached in article 3iii of the Addis agreement gave the Dinka people of Abyei the right to choose whether to remain within the north or to join the south.

¹¹⁹ In 1973 the Dinka petitioned president Nimeiri for administrative transfer of Abyei to Bahr el Gezabl as a result of increasing atrocities, insecurity and lack of civilian protection under the administration of Kordofan. In 1977 the tension between the Ngok and the Missiriya intensified, and fuelled by the administration of Kordofan resulted in the massacre of hundreds of Ngok Dinka who were travelling from Muglad to Abyei. The intensification of tribal conflict resulted in the Ngok abandoning the northern parts of their homeland.

¹²⁰ Keen states that the 1980s famine arose from a combination of four processes: the loss of assets and production (primarily because of raiding); the failure of market strategies; the failure of non-market survival strategies; and the inadequacy of relief (Keen, 1994: 13). According to Keen all these processes yielded important benefits for a loose and shifting coalition of politically powerful groups within Sudan.

¹²¹ Since the coming to power of the current military government in Khartoum in 1989, the relationship between the army and the Murahaleen has been formalised through the creation of the Popular Defence Forces (Mawson, 1994).

¹²² Keen states that such tactics were not new, as central governments in the nineteenth and twentieth century Sudan repeatedly attempted to appease potentially disaffected elements in the north by tolerating or encouraging their exploitation of the south.

¹²³ Keen reasons that the government thereby gained a cheap means of quelling southern opposition, whilst at the same time defusing unrest amongst the Baggara, Islamic elements and the Sudanese army itself.

¹²⁴ According to the 1953 census there were around 35,000 Ngok, the 1972 census established a total number of around 150,000. Based on a predictive growth rate of 2.5% per year the number of Ngok would be around 270,000 at the turn of the millennium. The estimate by Ngok leadership is probably more realistic and accounts for those who perished in the 1980 famine and fighting.

¹²⁵ The draft strategy builds strongly on two documents produced by the Displaced Persons Task Force, namely: '*Basic Principles and Potential Implications*' and the '*Summary of Recommendations and Activities*'.

¹²⁶ Though a number of households were expected to return to the village of Tajalai the Government of Sudan authorities blocked this process.

¹²⁷ The first return was funded by the Deutsche Entwicklungsdienst and the second one by USAID.

¹²⁸ According to a DED assessment the total number of the May returnees had been around 900 persons.

¹²⁹ Only figures for Noong and Dungop could be realistically established.

¹³⁰ Though the GoS committed itself verbally to make the return work at federal, state and local level, concerns remained with its practical implementation.

¹³¹ Villagers mentioned that because of the rains, which were somewhat erratic in 2003, good quality grass was less abundant than in normal years. Cattle grazing by the Missiriya added to the shortage, particularly as grass is deliberately set on fire to induce some fresh re-growth for their cattle to feed on. This might have been a particular problem in 2004 as the Missiriya had to postpone the crossing of the Kiir, due to some unresolved conflict between the Dinka and Missiriya south of the river.

¹³² An average of 35% of the village population is involved in one of the newly established committees (the peace-, health-, or water-committee) or interest groups (women-, youth- or farmer-groups). The committees and interest groups have been established by the NGOs operational in the villages.

¹³³ In the area north of the river the Dinka Ngok used to keep their cattle near their villages during the rainy season. Cattle were kept at the higher and sandier places in the landscape while they were grazed in the Acacia forests.

¹³⁴ In Agok a meeting was held with the peace monitor. Their task included data collection on returnees at each of the four crossing points. However it proved impossible to get a reliable confirmation of the number of returnees since data formats were not kept in a standardised and regular way.

¹³⁵ People have been, and still are, though to a much lesser extent, exploiting famine relief provided by the World Food Programme delivered in Twic territory and further south. During the years of conflict and insecurity this was an important coping strategy as well as a means of establishing themselves and becoming less food insecure, when security became less of a problem

¹³⁶ Though the Principles do not constitute a binding instrument, they reflect and are consistent with international human rights, humanitarian law and analogous refugee law. The Principles provide guidance to: the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs; states faced with the phenomena of internal displacement; authorities, groups and persons in their relations with IDPs, and; inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations when addressing internal displacement (OCHA, 1998). The Government of the Sudan as well as the SPLM/A have not officially subscribed to the principles on internal displacement. At the IGAD conference on Internal Displacement in September 2003, the GoS did agree that the General Principles were to be respected and reflected in its policies, legislation and strategy.

Chapter 9: Return Planning of Internally Displaced Dinka Ngok

¹³⁷ See note 66. In the Dinka Ngok study 40 Outcome Attitudes were established, giving the calculated attitude a possible range of -160 to +160.

¹³⁸ See note 67. In the IDP study 8 social referents are considered, giving a possible calculated subjective norm range of -32 to +32.

¹³⁹ The strength of the Intent (I) to return is measured on a 5 point bi-polar scale from very strong to very weak (range -2 to +2). The general Intent is the sum of the three return options giving it a possible score ranging from -6 to +6.

¹⁴⁰ See note 68.

¹⁴¹ See note 69.

¹⁴² Cattle play a crucially important social and economic function in Ngok society associated with livelihood strategies, wealth, marriage (dowries) and the like.

¹⁴³ An outcome attitude (OA) is the product of the strength of belief (b) in the outcome and the importance attributed to the outcome (e), both measured on a 5 point bi-polar scale, giving a possible Outcome Attitude score range of -4 to +4.

¹⁴⁴ The statistical approach adopted is a non-parametric one, utilising Mann Whitney U tests to identify significantly differences and the Spearman Rank Order Correlation.

¹⁴⁵ A referent subjective norm (RSN) is the product of the motivation to comply (m) with the referent and the subjective belief that the referent would support the proposed action (sb), both measured on a bi polar 5 point scales, giving a possible referent subjective norm score range of -2 to +2.

Chapter 10: Analysis and Conclusion

¹⁴⁶ Inclusion of the Perceived Vulnerability element

¹⁴⁷ The level to which vulnerability, as a dimension of behavioural intent, is mediated through attitudes provides an understanding of the nature of vulnerability in terms of reasoned return beliefs and so increases the TORA's descriptive power within hazard prone contexts.

¹⁴⁸ For example, if the TORA had been applied to explore the return intent of the displaced Khmer in Okoki (see Foreword) the Perceived Level of Control might have been the foremost determinant informing the return decision, with the Khmer Rouge being the powerful social entity.

¹⁴⁹ This is of particular relevance to Section V of the Principles which deals with 'Principles Relating to Return, Resettlement and Reintegration'.

¹⁵⁰ Principle 3 of Section I 'General Principles'.

¹⁵¹ See note 13.

¹⁵² UNHCR's unprecedented strict revalidation exercise at that point in time did not make sense from a refugee point of view. It reinforced refugees' idea of not being taken seriously and trusted, and being blamed for exploiting the system. For the Uduk in particular it reinforced their idea that they could not depend on aid alone, and certainly not count on the continued support provided in camps. An important factor driving Uduk return in 2004 was a dramatic incident in 1996 when, without any notice or explanation, food rations were not delivered for three subsequent months (caused by a lack of funds and serious breakdown of the food pipeline according to WFP officials). This caused widespread famine and resulted in the death of over twenty Uduk. Following this incident Uduk leadership motivated their people to expand agricultural activities well beyond the parameters of the refugee camp and to undertake return at the earliest possible occasion.

¹⁵³ Particular attention should be given to the management of threats associated with vulnerability in post-return environments. Exploring the nature of that vulnerability is instrumental in developing and facilitating initiatives to reduce vulnerability prior to, over and following return. In this regard both the refugee and IDP studies highlight the importance of traditional and localised mechanisms to manage dispute and conflict, an area fast becoming a field of 'expertise' by many aid agencies, and seen as a popular cause of support for donors.

¹⁵⁴ By mid 2004 hundreds of de-mobilised SPLM/A soldiers and officials amongst the displaced Ngok and Sudanese refugees had returned to the Sudan to take up military or civil positions in their home areas.

¹⁵⁵ No doubt there is value in observing how return beliefs and values change regarding existing salient beliefs over time. However, once one starts to adjust the initial list of salient beliefs it may lose its validity as a comparative baseline. If new salient beliefs are seen to be emerging it would be more appropriate to solicit new salient belief lists and then compare, over time, the final results of the TORA analyses.

¹⁵⁶ The IDP study found that with increasing levels of control over the decision to return and the return process itself (return pursued with Abyei presenting a safe and peaceful environment to return to) community based referents play an influential role in informing the return decision, while institutional referents do not. The refugee study on the other hand found that, independent of the return option pursued, the SPLA and the Ethiopian government were the most influential referents).