

The Cultural White Nile River

A cultural perspective on local experiences of dispossession
consequential to the Bujagali hydropower dam in Uganda



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MSc Thesis
International Development Studies

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Abstract

The Bujagali hydroelectric power station built on the White Nile river is an attempt by the Ugandan government to connect more people to the national grid and bring development to the country. The people who lost land and/or property in this process were given compensation mainly in the form of money, land, and/or housing. To some extent, this covered their losses, however, dispossession entails more than what has been acknowledged and compensated. Commodification of nature as part of the government's national development plans has disrupted people's direct surroundings. Most people have been living in this area for a long time and their family for some generations as well, and often, all these people make extensive use of this area. My interest in this thesis is to understand what the disruption of their environment means for their way of living and their connection to their land. I argue that the connection is more than the practical use of it to sustain a livelihood; there is an important cultural dimension. In compensating dispossession, the local culture and, accordingly, the cultural valuation and appropriation of the water- and landscape have not been acknowledged sufficiently. Hence, for some people the changes have worked out positively but for most the effects of the dam have made life more difficult, and continues to do so. Therefore, with the use of semi-structured interviews and other more interactive methods, this research sheds light on people's cultural understanding of their surrounding landscape and the White Nile river. It explores how this is shaped by their experiences of dispossession as a consequence of the hydropower project, and, in turn, how this cultural understanding shapes feelings of dispossession. Gaining knowledge about people's valuation of their natural surroundings gives insight into their experiences of disruption and dispossession that goes beyond economic and practical issues.

The dam disrupts the environment people live in, and the losses felt regarding the water- and landscape entail a certain connection people have with the land and the role it plays in their daily live; in the local culture. Moreover, the changes of the area affect daily practices, because people have lost assets and some important means to sustain a livelihood. Getting to know the daily activities and what it means for people in their lives and livelihoods, provides a better understanding of the local culture. In turn, understanding a local culture, or at least some key aspects, helps in understanding the dispossession that people experience. Furthermore, the way people make sense of what happens in the area, how they give meaning to, connect to, and live in the area is influenced by spiritual beliefs in different forms. This entails the spirits of family members whose graves needed to be relocated, the believe of sacrifice to please the spirits for good fortune, and increase in witch craft due to extra pressures people experience.

Projects such as the Bujagali dam have to consider the broader local historical and cultural context in which they interfere. Looking at dispossession with a cultural perspective sheds light on alternative forms of dispossession, which, so far, have often been neglected. Moreover, insight in people's cultural understanding of their natural surroundings also shows their resilience and adaptivity in their drastically changed, and still changing, livelihoods.

Table of contents

<i>Abstract</i>	iv
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
<i>Map</i>	viii
Introduction	1
<i>Vignette</i>	<i>1</i>
1.1 <i>A lack in acknowledging local culture</i>	<i>2</i>
1.2 <i>Academic and societal relevance</i>	<i>4</i>
1.3 <i>Structure of the thesis</i>	<i>5</i>
Context of the Bujagali dam	7
2.1 <i>Introduction</i>	<i>8</i>
2.2 <i>National historical context</i>	<i>8</i>
2.3 <i>Process of Bujagali hydropower project</i>	<i>9</i>
2.3.1 <i>People affected by the dam</i>	<i>10</i>
2.4 <i>Compensation regulations</i>	<i>11</i>
2.5 <i>Land tenure</i>	<i>13</i>
Methodology	15
3.1 <i>Introduction</i>	<i>16</i>
3.2 <i>Research population</i>	<i>17</i>
3.2.1 <i>Snowball sampling</i>	<i>17</i>
3.2.2 <i>Mixed backgrounds</i>	<i>19</i>
3.3 <i>Used methods</i>	<i>19</i>
3.3.1 <i>From proposal to the field</i>	<i>19</i>
3.3.2 <i>In the field</i>	<i>20</i>
3.3.3 <i>Data analysis process</i>	<i>22</i>
3.4 <i>Position as a researcher in the field</i>	<i>23</i>
3.4.1 <i>Trust</i>	<i>25</i>
3.4.2 <i>Emotional well-being</i>	<i>25</i>
Theoretical Framework	27
4.1 <i>Introduction</i>	<i>28</i>
4.2 <i>Environmental justice</i>	<i>28</i>
4.3 <i>Dispossession</i>	<i>30</i>
4.4 <i>The cultural dimension of a place</i>	<i>31</i>
4.4.1 <i>Sense of place</i>	<i>32</i>
4.4.2 <i>Social production and construction of space</i>	<i>33</i>
Changes in the land- and waterscape of the White Nile river	35
5.1 <i>Introduction</i>	<i>36</i>
5.2 <i>Waterscape</i>	<i>36</i>
5.3 <i>Landscape</i>	<i>38</i>
5.3.1 <i>Buganda</i>	<i>38</i>
5.3.2 <i>Busoga</i>	<i>41</i>
5.3.3 <i>General landscape issues</i>	<i>41</i>
5.3.4 <i>Future governmental plans</i>	<i>43</i>
5.4 <i>Discussion</i>	<i>43</i>
Adjustments in daily life	46
6.1 <i>Introduction</i>	<i>47</i>

6.2	<i>Effects of changes in the waterscape</i>	47
6.2.1	Water in daily life	48
6.2.2	Fish	48
6.2.3	Tourism	50
6.2.4	Naminya resettlement	51
6.3	<i>Effects of changes in the landscape</i>	52
6.3.1	Crops	52
6.3.2	Women, Men	53
6.3.3	Naminya resettlement	54
6.3.4	Emotions in the experiences of land loss	55
6.4	<i>Other complications of the Bujagali dam</i>	56
6.5	<i>Discussion</i>	58
6.5.1	The cultural waterscape	58
6.5.2	The cultural landscape	59
	Spirituality and ancestry of the water- and landscape	61
7.1	<i>Introduction</i>	62
7.1.1	Reflection and methodologies	63
7.1.2	Tribes, clans, and ancestral land	64
7.2	<i>Ancestral land, its graves, and its spirituality</i>	64
7.2.1	Bujagali spirit	65
7.2.2	Spirituality in land- and waterscape	66
7.2.3	Graves on ancestral land	67
7.3	<i>Spiritual practices</i>	70
7.3.1	Islam and Christianity	70
7.3.2	Living with the spirits	71
7.3.3	Sacrifice	72
7.4	<i>Discussion</i>	73
7.4.1	Ancestral land and graves	74
7.4.2	Spiritual practices	75
	Conclusion	77
8.1	<i>Local cultural meaning and dispossession of the White Nile river's land- and waterscape</i>	78
8.2	<i>The local water- and landscape</i>	79
8.3	<i>The culture of in daily activities</i>	80
8.4	<i>Spirituality and ancestry</i>	81
8.5	<i>For future research</i>	82
	Bibliography	84
	Appendices	89
	<i>Appendix 1: List of key informants by pseudonyms</i>	89
	<i>Appendix 2: Photos</i>	91

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Map



In this map, I have added the names of some relevant features of the area, to function for this thesis as an overview of the research area. It is not a perfect representation. This map is made by myself and it is based on the map made by Monica (see photos 1a, 1b) and my memories of the area.

Legend:

- Green Subnational kingdom of Uganda
- Orange Market
- Blue Factory
- Black Village or dam
- Points to the exact location of the feature

Chapter I

Introduction

Vignette

Once breakfast was finished, we made our way to Nairo market either by bodaboda (motor taxi) or a matatu (taxi van). We would walk to a road where these pass by often or where the drivers are waiting for someone they can give a ride. Nairo is a busy market where a lot of different products are sold; all sorts of food, clothes, furniture, household products, and places to top up your phone credit. Besides it being a market where people can sell their products it is a meeting point and located at a busy crossroad, which makes it a good connection place for public transport. It is here where we find a bodaboda driver who can take us to one of the villages where we do our research. The bodaboda drivers are standing all together and it is quite a social gathering. The drivers approach us and ensure us that they can take us where we need to go. Over the weeks we have gotten to know some drivers whom we can trust and know the places we need to go to. This has made this process of transport a lot easier. Nevertheless, it remains a moment of interaction with many people offering us a ride every day we get there. Once we are heading towards one of the villages on the west side of the river, we drive off over a concrete road, pass the busy market, a gas pump, side roads, of which some lead to tourist facilities. It is one straight road, next to which the villages are located. Before we arrive at these villages, there are some large factories, which cannot be seen because they are surrounded by high walls and gates. The area is a little hilly but the road is mostly straight. On some days you can see the polluted air – a lot of smoke – hanging between the hills further down the road. Along the way we stop at Samu's shop where we buy some water. Along the roads there are multiple stands where people sell their products, such as fruit, vegetables, and chapatti dishes. There are many dirt side roads that take you further into the villages and towards the river or, on the other side, into the hills. When we have our water, we hop back on the bodaboda and drive to where we have agreed to meet someone.

When we go to Naminya resettlement we drive on one of those dirt roads on the left side of the road that takes us into the hills. We pass houses, churches, a police office, boreholes where people are getting their water, schools, and a medical centre. Closer to the resettlement, after taking some turns, the road becomes more difficult to drive, but a skilled bodadriver works his way through it. The more you go into the hills the greener it gets, and it is beautiful. We greet the people we pass, meet our translator and start the day off at her house with some tea, cassava, and conversations.

1.1 A lack in acknowledging local culture

The vignette has taken you as a reader into the field of this research, as I have done many times during my fieldwork. It describes natural surroundings, the industrial settings, the people, and much more in my research area upstream of the Bujagali dam. All of which will be discussed in some way throughout this thesis.

In 2012, the Bujagali hydropower dam was ready – as the government claimed – to increase the development of Uganda and help its population thrive. It would connect more people to the national grid and decrease the amount of power cuts. In general, the dam would benefit the whole population of Uganda but it is questionable whether this is reality for people living in the area of the project. Where the Ugandan government sees the development of the country as a form of socioeconomic transformation (NPA, 2013), there is a lack of attention for the socioeconomic consequences of hydropower projects (Olanya 2016), which implies a possible discrepancy between the aim of the Ugandan government and actual local consequences. Moreover, when people's livelihood and the context they are used to live in changes, there are also psychological and cultural losses (Bebbington et al. 2008). Neglecting such forms of dispossession can have longitudinal and substantial negative consequences. Accordingly, non-sufficient compensation for people's experiences of dispossession and the development of the industrial and agricultural sectors, possibly create a bigger gap between the rich and the poor of the country. As Bebbington also argues, '[the] extractive industry produces both incredible wealth and destruction at one and the same time', since 'capitalism consumes life and environment and produces poverty' (2012, 5). Whether the local disruptions, or more importantly the experiences and perceptions of people locally situated about these disruptions, are sufficiently compensated for is unclear (Oestigaard 2015). Some losses cannot be translated to assets but encompasses a different form. While the government can try to compensate by providing some money and housing for people, there are different issues that lack recognition (Oestigaard 2015; Olanya 2016; Bebbington 2008).

It is most likely not possible to compensate, let alone value, some forms of dispossession. Not all losses consequential to the Bujagali dam can be addressed, acknowledged, and compensated. However, I believe there is some form of a middle ground between the unreachable ideal and the past and present reality of this case, especially for those directly affected. Consequences for the local population could have been addressed better if the cultural context and the impact of the dam on the local culture would have been taken into account more sufficiently. The aim for development of such projects causes a disruption in the local environment, and the impact beyond technical and economic losses also entails dispossession for affected people. This thesis researches the impact of a dam on a long term, but it is relevant for the future as well, since the amount of hydropower dams keeps increasing.

Even though, hydropower dams are not a new phenomenon, the World Bank Group – which has been involved in the funding of the project – states that the Bujagali project was 'a first hydropower project in Africa after a relatively long period of absence in the sector' (World Bank 2018, 2). Nowadays, there is even talk of a 'hydropower boom', since the amount of dams around the world has grown considerably (Zarfl et al. 2015). It is a way to use the land- and waterscape to generate electricity to be sold to local consumers and other countries. Hence, it is a way to use natural resources present in the natural environment for economic and/or developmental gains. Land in the area was not for sale at

the time, but the government could compel people to give up their land for this development project and they would receive money or new land in return. Thus, creating hydropower dams, entails land reforms and changes in the controlling of land (Peluso & Lund 2011). In the case of the Bujagali, part of the river and the land surrounding it is currently being controlled by the government and the company Bujagali Energy Limited (BEL), which lead to people having to adjust their lives and livelihoods and adapt to the new situation.

The disruptions in people's livelihoods and daily lives changed their usage of the river, and other everyday life issues. The people who have been resettled had lived by the White Nile river and have (had) some type of connection to the river. Looking at the compensation that is provided, some damage and disruption has been acknowledged and compensated for. However, this acknowledgement is limited. The relation people have with nature and what role it plays in their daily lives is not considered beyond a source of income or place to live. The relation between humans and nature can be much more complex. Some losses cannot be translated to assets but encompasses a different form. The change in natural surroundings is also affected in terms of spirituality, culture, and psychologically (Oestigaard 2015; Olanya 2016; Bebbington et al. 2008; Lacey 2001; Muwumuza 2014). Compensation that people have received for the disruption of their lives, have been in the form of money, land and/or housing. These tangible forms of compensation do not do justice to other forms of dispossession people have experienced, due to this disruption in their living environment.

This is problematic and makes it a case of environmental justice, because, according to the FAO, after compulsory land acquisition by the government it should leave '...communities and people in equivalent situations while at the same time providing the intended benefits to society' (2009, 2). Thus, people should not be worse off with the changes in their lives and the adaption that they have to make; '...affected owners and occupants should be neither enriched nor impoverished as a result of the compulsory acquisition' (ibid., 23). However, the FAO also states that it is not straightforward on how to compensate non-economical issues such as historical, cultural, religious, emotional aspects of land and religious, historical and cultural claims to land. A way to prevent such feelings of loss after land acquisition is to consider these issues from the start of the valuation process, to include people's perceptions on their environment, and understand local cultures, systems, and habits that are present.

Yes, it is difficult to take such matters into account when determining the compensation, but this does not mean it should be ignored at all. In aboriginal Australia, there has been the first case of compensation for the loss of native and spiritual land (Code 2019). People have different perceptions of and connections with their natural environment, not only world wide but even within a country. This is also the case for the Bujagali dam, which in fact has flooded the falls that inhabited the spirit Bujagali. The Bujagali spirit has, allegedly, been relocated to a new shrine, which will be explained in Chapter VII. However, there is more spirituality in the area that has not been taken into account. Cultural understanding of land goes further than local spiritual believes; it is the way people give meaning to their life and every day practices to sustain this meaningful life. Furthermore, it entails more than economic and technical matters, but it has only been compensated in such a way. Hence, this research shows that, currently, there are still unresolved forms of dispossession due to the Bujagali dam.

The research objective of this thesis is to explore local cultural understanding of the water- and landscapes of the White Nile river, and the dispossession thereof by people who

live in the area of the Bujagali dam. How they feel the hydropower project has affected their life and their connection and use of the water- and landscapes of the river. By doing this, in-depth information will be provided to close the academic knowledge gap regarding a lack of attention for cultural losses and how this impacts the lives of affected people.

1.2 Academic and societal relevance

The societal relevance of this research should be of interest of the Ugandan government, the local residents living in the area of the hydropower projects, and advocacy groups for cases of environmental injustice. The government aims to develop the country economically and focus on nation building, which means to create more coherence in the culture of Uganda where all citizens are included (NPA 2013). In order to earn people's trust and create a unity within the population it is important to know their needs and interests. This relates to the question whether all people who experience dispossession are compensated sufficiently and if other needs are met besides the economic and technical needs. If this is not the case, the gap between rich and poor has more room to grow. For the local population living in the area of the projects this research is relevant since it goes into their interests that might not be taken into account when compensations are provided. Also, it acknowledges people's agency and how they deal with the changes in their livelihood, instead of a focus on negative consequences of the projects. This acknowledges their power and people are not simply framed as victims. It gives people a voice and a chance to tell their own story, experiences, and power. Perhaps, the insights of this research will not directly help those people affected by the Bujagali dam. It could help other people, organisations, and governments in the future to help those who have to deal with similar situations of dispossession in a more sufficient way.

Academically, this research relates to at least two hiatuses. Kirchherr, Pohlner and Charles (2016) have analysed 237 articles about research on the social impacts of dams and in the article they mention some academic gaps that are in need of attention. One of these gaps is the lack of attention for psycho-socio-cultural impoverishment as a consequence of involuntary displacement. This is a hiatus I also noticed while reading up on the consequences of hydropower dams (e.g. Kirchherr, Pohlner & Charles 2016; Tilt, Braun & He 2008; Zarfl et al. 2014). There is not enough recognition for cultural matters, such as spirituality of the area and ancestral land. It is addressed in several impact assessments and by several NGOs working or having worked on the Bujagali case. Thus, in practice it is recognised as a problem by some actors. Looking at the literature about hydropower dams and matters of dispossession, the lack of attention for the matter is mentioned, however, there is no, or not a lot, of in-depth information about the matter that makes it usable for practice or to make a case. The lack of attention for cultural losses by officials and the lack of attention for the effects of it by academics makes this research even more important, since it will fill this gap. Furthermore, many researches are done within a short timeframe after the building of dams with a large focus on negative social impacts (Kirchherr, Pohlner & Charles 2016), which is the second knowledge gap this research fills. In the case of the Bujagali dam, the first people were resettled in 2001, and the dam was ready for use in 2012. The fieldwork for this research has been done from November 2018 until January 2019, and, thus, concerns experiences of dispossession a long term.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

To research the dispossession regarding people's cultural valuation of this area, this thesis finds an answer to the following main question: **How has the Bujagali hydropower dam impacted the cultural understanding of the land- and waterscape of affected people, and how has this shaped their experiences of dispossession?** In order to have a sufficient understanding of the case, Chapter II will provide the context of the hydropower dam in Uganda. This entails a short relevant history of the country and a process description of the dam. Furthermore, two issues that stretch throughout the thesis will be explained; compensation regulations and land tenure. Chapter III explains the methodologies of this research. Here, determination of the research population, the methods I have used and choices I have made accordingly, and my position as a researcher in this field will be explained. It is a chapter that revolves around reflections of the choices I have made throughout the research, and how these and myself, due to who I am as a person, could have influenced the research. Chapter IV is the theoretical framework of this thesis. Research for it has been started with a proposal and I continued updating it to make it as fitting for this research as possible and create a clear theoretical perspective. With this framework I consider a place to be actively shaped and created by the local culture and, in turn this place actively shapes and created the local culture. It is an approach of the continuous shaping of a place by the people and their culture, which makes the place and the lives people live here, inherently cultural. This concept and many more will be further explained in this chapter.

Chapter V is the first empirical chapter of this thesis, and describes the area and its changes through the eyes of the local population. It explores the cultural place in an overarching manner. Hence, it gives an answer to the second sub-question *What are people's experiences concerning the changes in their natural surroundings caused by the Bujagali dam and how has this impacted the way they perceive the area?* Chapter VI zooms in on the daily lives of affected people, and the adjustments they have had to make. Local culture and the cultural understanding of an area is strongly shaped and influenced by people's daily practices. It concerns how people make use of the area, how they make sense of the area, and how the area shapes their lives. To explore this, the chapter answers the third sub-question: *How have people adjusted their daily lives and livelihoods due to the project of the dam and how has it shaped local culture?* The last empirical chapter, Chapter VII, goes into aspects of the local culture which are less visible at first sight, and are less tangible but deeply rooted nonetheless. Local cultural understandings entail the presence of spirituality in the natural environment, and people's personal connection regarding ancestral land and family graves. This is explained by exploring the presence of the Bujagali spirit, alternative spirituality, and family graves. This is followed by spiritual practices in the area, concerning the presence of religion, living with spirits, and sacrifice. Some say spirits have disappeared with the arrival of Christianity and the Islam but in several ways it is still quite present and rooted in people's understanding and use of the area. Hence, this chapter explores the cultural understanding of land, regarding spirituality and ancestral connections people have to the land. In all, this chapter will answer the sub-question: *How is spirituality present in the cultural understanding of the land- and waterscape and how has this been affected by the dam?*

The thesis will end with a concluding chapter, where the main question will be answered and some lessons from this research for future researches with this topic will be discussed. I believe, there is a lot to gain by taking a cultural perspective, and understand

dispossession in the realities of those affected. It is a way look at the needs of directly affected people in a holistic way, rather than valuating it in economic and technical terms. This way, the impact on these people can be limited, and even prevent the gap between rich and poor from growing. It is impossible to know beforehand the exact impact such a large project will have, which is all the more reason to stay involved locally. Projects as these are top-down, and staying aware of what happens on the ground can prevent negative consequences on both the short and the long term. Moreover, it entails an acknowledgement of the local cultural values and understandings that are important to people.

Chapter II

Context of the Bujagali dam

We drove through grassy areas and land that was being used by people living in the area, some people could be seen working on the land other pieces there were crops growing but no one was on the land that moment. It was a small dirt road that brought us to the river. From this point she showed us the view on the dam that could be seen from there. At this place in the river there was a big pile of rocks and she explained that there were two islands in the river that have been flooded. There was a big stone (on the island) that they have drilled into many pieces and is has been put on the banks of the river. It was just put here [she said indignantly]. They needed to get rid of this rock, so they drilled it into many pieces and thrown into this part of nature. In the rocks the drill holes can still be seen. A woman was washing her clothes with water from the river, fisher boats were laying in the water, there were big fishing nets, some cows were grazing. A small distance from the river small fish were on the ground drying in the sun, this is silver fish.

- Field notes 22-11-2018; Drive from Nairo to Kikubamutwe

2.1 Introduction

The Bujagali dam is a 250MW hydropower plant located approximately 12 kilometres north from Jinja town. It gets its name from its location where the Bujagali falls used to be. The project was approved in 1994 and was commissioned in 2012. A hydropower dam like this is not an isolated project that has come into being out of the blue. It is part of the Ugandan historical process of development and it is part of the plans for the country's future. It fits into a greater whole, and so does this research about cultural valuation of the area. In order to understand this, the general national context, and the plans and vision of the Ugandan government need to be explained. Therefore, to start off, the first section of this chapter elaborates on the national historical context that has led to this project and some global trends it links to. Besides the country's history, the Bujagali hydropower dam also has its own substantial and eventful history. Many international actors have been and are involved, both public and private. In line, the second section of this chapter goes into the project of the Bujagali dam with a chronological explanation of the project's process and some relevant in-depth information. In addition to the national and the dam's process, there are some specific contextual topics that are in need of explanation prior to going into depth in this research and its data. One concerns compensation, and more specifically compensation for cultural losses. This is relevant and helpful in understanding this research, since its aim is to go into depth about other experiences of dispossession than those included in official compensation. The second concerns land tenure, to provide some context for the local experiences of land loss.

2.2 National historical context

After Uganda's independence in 1962, Jinja became a 'boom town' in the country's industrial growth. Prior to this growth in the post-colonial period, the need for energy had already grown, which led to the establishment of the country's first hydropower dam Nalubaale on the Owen Falls in 1954 (see map). It allowed the country before and after colonisation to build large factories and develop the industrial site. Moreover, plans were made for the second large hydropower project; the Bujagali dam. These developments would help the area of Jinja in becoming the principal source of industrial power in Uganda and this stimulation of growth would make it an attractive political and economic climate for overseas investors (Hoyle 1967). Even when Winston Churchill visited the town in the beginning of the 20th century, he foresaw that one day the banks of the River Nile would be filled with factories and warehouses (1908, 119-120). 60 years later, Hoyle (1967) states, these predictions have come true; Jinja area has an increasing concentration of agricultural and industrial development, and thus industrial expansion on the banks of the River Nile. Jinja and its surrounding environment are very attractive for industrial development due to factors such as the river Nile (ibid.), which is in the interest of the country. Over the years, the country seemed to be doing well, since the national poverty level reduced from 56 percent in 1992 to 31 percent in 2006. However, with rural poverty making up 90 percent of the national poverty level, the population in these areas remained very vulnerable (World Bank 2018, 1), which also concerns most people living in the villages directly affected by the dam.

The energy sector is seen as part of the solution of this problem for years. In the 2004 Poverty Eradication Action Plan, the ambition for Uganda to become a middle-income country and eradicate mass poverty in the next twenty years was expressed. Under the policy pillar 'enhancing competitiveness, production and income', the energy sector was

part of this plan. The World Bank also underlines the importance of developing the energy sector; 'Achieving these goals would contribute toward poverty reduction through income and employment generation, thereby improving the quality of life in Uganda' (World Bank 2018, 2).

In 2007, this line of national development was given more substance by the approval of *Vision 2040*. This is a national development policy, created by the Ugandan government. The aim of this vision is to transform the '...Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years' (NPA 2013, III). Currently, there are still several focus points which are considered to have held the country's development back since its independence, one of which is the provision in energy (Olanya 2016, 146). The river provides possibilities for generating energy, it should help solve the problem of the gap in the national grid for businesses and Uganda's population. The growing industrial and agricultural also sector goes hand in hand with a growing need for energy, and still dams are constructed to generate more electricity and to foresee in this growing need (NPA, 2013). Hydropower dams are framed as being a part of the global trend of a transition towards renewable energy, which is also mentioned as a conscious choice by the government (NPA, 2013, 74). Moreover, it stimulates factories to settle in the industrial area near the dam. Furthermore, the commodification of Uganda's natural sites in order to produce value fits well in the global capitalist trends of growing in terms of economic development. The constructions for hydropower exploit the River Nile, commodify its water, and change Uganda's waterscapes (Olanya 2016, 145). Moreover, the hydropower dams transform the waterscape of the River Nile.

Long-term 'national development' processes, global capitalist trends, and a trend of transitioning to renewable energy have led to the development of the Bujagali hydropower project. Hence, the dam is part of bigger trends and influences, and thus is not an isolated project. To make the context more specific, the next part goes into the process of the case for this thesis; the Bujagali hydropower dam.

2.3 Process of Bujagali hydropower project

Building the Bujagali dam was initially approved in 1994. The dam was considered to be the lowest cost option to generate more energy (World Bank 2018), and was going to be the second dam downstream from Lake Victoria. It is called the Bujagali dam, because it is built on the place of the former Bujagali falls. The building of this dam has not always been smooth and it was a process of setbacks and great determination from the government. Thus, even though the actual building of the dam started in 2007, it only officially finished in 2012. Its setbacks included economic, social, and environmental issues. Economically, the dam was thought to be much cheaper. The World Bank states that the actual costs for the Bujagali Hydropower project were almost 694 million US dollars, instead of the estimated almost 475 million US dollars (World Bank 2018, 37). However, Oestigaard states that the actual costs were 902 million US dollars, instead of the estimated 447 million US dollars (2015, 27). Independent investigations by the Ugandan parliamentary ad-hoc committee on energy put the dam's actual cost even at 1.3 billion US dollars (NAPE 2014). Even though different resources have different amounts for both the estimated and the actual costs, there has clearly been an economic setback due to which the actual costs are much higher. Furthermore, a great setback for the Ugandan government was the need for AESNP to pull out of the project. AES Nile Power was an American based company that would undertake the project. However, after an inspection of the World Bank in 2001 some

great shortcomings were found. The inspection panel stated that the “performance shortfalls in the dam implementation in relation to social, economic and environmental aspects, including evidence of corruption and failure of financial disclosure to the World Bank Group. AES pulled out of the project in 2002, and as a result, the dam project stalled for five years.” (NAPE 2014, 7).

What followed was a breakdown of the project into two separate projects which would remain connected. These two separate projects were Bujagali Energy Limited (BEL) and the Bujagali Interconnection Project (BIP). BEL was established as a private public partnership, which would be in charge of the building and construction of the power plant. The BIP was established as part of Uganda Electricity Transmission Company. The public private partnership BEL, seemed like a fresh start and the project being executed by a public private partnership was considered an example for development in Africa (Blackstone 2013; Aga Khan Development Network 2015; Kasita 2012). However, a local villager explained that the people in office in the times of AESNP stayed in office once the project was taken over by BEL. Thus, the people who worked for the organisation that had to drop out due to corruption actions, kept working for BEL (interview 12-01).

Despite these setbacks and change in organisation the World Bank remained committed with its funding. The World Bank is one of the most important international financial institutions that is included in this project (NAPE 2009, 2). It stayed committed since it still believed in the project as being the ‘long-term, least-cost electricity supply option for Uganda’ (Lilley 2003). In 2018 the bank even agreed to refinance the project. This request was made to pay outstanding debts, due to expenses of the project which did not match its profit; the costs for energy from this dam are too high (NAPE 2007). In order to reduce electricity costs in Uganda for her population the World Bank will finance the outstanding debts. In line with this, the government has committed to ‘fully pass on the refinancing cost savings to consumers, in support of their goals to reduce electricity costs, expand access to electricity, and spur economic growth.’ (World Bank 2018, 21). There are some strings attached to the involvement of the World Bank in funding the project of the Bujagali dam. There are certain rules the bank lives by, which entail matters of compensation and even compensation for – so called – cultural losses. Before going into the compensation regulations, the next section explains about the people who are affected by the dam.

2.3.1 People affected by the dam

In line with the requirements from the Ugandan National Environmental Management Authority, Ugandan laws, the World Bank, and the International Finance Corporation, an Environmental Impact Assessment has been created for AES Nile Power in 2001. The Resettlement and Community Development Action Plan (RCDAP) is part of this EIA (ESG International Inc. & WS Atkins Intern 2001, ii). In this RCDAP, project affected people are determined as people who have lost assets such as land rights, structures, crops, or a combination of these, due to the project. This includes all people who had to be resettled from the area, people who could resettle on their own land, and people who could remain in their house but still lost assets. The total of affected households is 1288, or 8700 people (ibid, v). Of this amount, 101 households would be displaced, or 714 people, of which 19 households could move to an unaffected plot of their land (ibid., iv).

During my field work, it became clear that there are more people who consider themselves to be affected by the dam. People making daily use of the Nile and its landscape

are the people living in the villages near the river. The river changed upstream of the dam, hence, the people living in this area, or those who used to live here, were directly affected. It changed their direct environment, and with it their livelihoods, and it influenced daily practices and ways to generate an income. Furthermore, fishermen from other parts of the country, or even from other countries, used to come to the area to fish. Also, the river was intensively used for tourism by outdoor organisations making use of the rapids in the water, e.g. rafting companies. Tourism in this area was also good for the people living in the villages near the river. Jobs were provided in sectors such as restaurants and hospitality but people also found their own way in making money of tourism. People living and/or working in Jinja also profited from tourists who visited, amongst others, the shops, restaurants, and hotels in town. Furthermore, the source of the Nile is an area that is considered highly spiritual. It attracts people from different parts of the country, and perhaps even beyond, to perform spiritual practices.

According to one of my key informants, Monica, the villages with affected people are: Kikubamutwe, Naminya resettlement, Malindi, Buloba, Bujagali, Kyabirwa, and Namizi (see map).

2.4 Compensation regulations

The RCDAP contains some compensation regulations. It states that a resettlement area was created in Naminya village, and that ‘... the resettlement area is a short distance (a few kilometres) from the affected peoples' present location, thus causing minimal social and psychological disruption. This area is conveniently located near the main road and Jinja town. A primary school and a clinic are available in the vicinity.’ (ibid., v). It sounds promising, but the actual situation is less optimistic. The resettlement can only be reached over small dirt roads, which are not accessible in heavy rains. For those few kilometres people either have to order a bodaboda to cross this distance, which costs money, or walk, which costs a lot of time. The primary school is closed due to a lack of educated teachers and the health centre is too small for the needs of the people in the area. More of the local experiences from people living in Naminya resettlement will be discussed in the empirical chapters.

The compensation package for either physically or economically affected landowners is as follows:

- the provision of a plot on the resettlement area; this plot will have slightly greater surface area than the present affected person's plot, and similar or better agricultural potential;
- the provision of a replacement house, improved vis-a-vis usual houses, featuring among other improvements a corrugated iron roof, a concrete floor, and a ventilated pit latrine. It is based on a model developed in Uganda by the NGO "Habitat for Humanity", which has been widely consulted on the house design;
- agricultural inputs such as seeds, seedlings, fertilizers;
- cash compensation against the value of lost perennial crops plus disturbance allowance;
- cash compensation against the cost of moving.

Households who do not opt for resettlement or who are not eligible for it, will get cash compensation for their land, for their perennial crops, for their buildings. (ESG International Inc. & WS Atkins Intern 2001, v)

The compensation people received was for their land and everything on their land, which includes materials as houses and fences but also the crops that were present on the land at the time.

In the year 2000 valuers came to the area to record all the crops that people had grown based on which compensation for each person would be determined. A research done in 2001 by the Norwegian institute Fivas, showed that this process was not clear and transparent for people affected. In the compensation for crops promises changed throughout the process. At first people heard that they would receive compensation for all their crops. People kept on working on their land and kept growing new crops, since this is one important daily life practice for many, with the understanding that they would receive compensation for everything they owned at the time and would lose. Later, they heard that the crops from one to four months old would not be compensated. This is problematic since it would mean that compensation money would be less than people were told in first instance (Finholt & Fyksen N.D.). This is also a big disappointment expressed by affected people in my research. Fivas' researchers Finholt and Fyksen explain that 'Seedlings of vanilla and coffee are bought at the market at a price of approximately 700 US\$ per plant. Some of the people we talked to had more than hundreds of such seedlings, which were younger than four months at the time of valuation. Not compensating these perennial crops, was conceived as quite unfair. Before valuation they did not know that such crops would not be compensated for.' (ibid.). Furthermore, they explain 'The few villagers who had received their compensation said they had to sign a compensation agreement including conditions for compensation payment. We were shown a copy of this form. It is written in English, even though many of the villagers do not understand English. The form they signed also stated in English that "this has been explained to me in a language that I understand..." (ibid.).

Other compensation that needed to be provided regarded cultural matters. A Cultural Property Management Plan (CPMP) was established to make sure that local cultural issues and losses were dealt with properly. Culture, in the RCDAP, is referred to as cultural property, which encompasses remains left by humans and natural features. Additionally, culture is referred to as spirituality, gods, spiritual leaders, and graves. The aim of the CPMP is to preserve cultural property as much as possible, and damage must be prevented when possible. Where possible, action must be undertaken to relocate spiritual sites (ESG International Inc. & WS Atkins Intern 2001, 95). The Bujagali spirit was, allegedly, relocated with the proper rituals and by the spiritual leaders who could do this. However, again, the situation on the ground seemed to be different where bribes and corruption were involved. This will be explored in Chapter VII that discusses the spiritual and ancestral valuation of the land- and waterscape. Furthermore, the report states if the loss of a cultural property, such as the Bujagali falls, is unavoidable, that the benefits of the project need to be significant. In order to have a complete understanding of 'traditional culture' and 'ensure full consideration ... detailed studies were commissioned to specialist consultants' (ibid., 96). This entailed a study of the traditional Basoga people and the significance of the Bujagali site. As a recommendation based on this research it is stated that:

It is clear that preventative measures need to be undertaken before construction work commences to ensure that traditional religious beliefs and practices are respected and to the extent possible cultural objects are preserved. Two main areas need to be addressed. Firstly, it is essential that where necessary, spirits/ objects must be found new dwelling places and that transfer and settlement rituals are carried out. Secondly it is important that members of the project team, particularly those that are new to the area (e.g. workers coming into the area) are aware of customs, beliefs and practices and that these are respected. (ibid., 109)

Other points of recommendation address the transfer of the dwelling places of spirits including the required ceremonies and rituals, flexibility in the mitigation design since this is in the hands of the spirit, and the inclusion of 'interested parties' (ibid., 109,110). Furthermore, a survey revealed that 'the spiritual value of the Falls is not an over-riding issue to the majority (83%) of the local community ... It is therefore considered that whilst the Falls will be inundated this is not seen as a cultural or spiritual issue of over-riding significance by the majority of people who will be directly affected, at the individual, household, local community or national level' (ibid., 113).

For several reasons, the compensation safeguards are problematic since locally many intended effects did not work out in the way that people are better off. Furthermore, the understanding of culture in the RCDAP and CPMP includes only a part of the local culture, due to which a lot of cultural dispossession has not been taken into account as such. There is a deficit between the culture addressed in the RCDAP and compensation matters, and the actual local culture. There is a valuation and understanding of the affected land- and waterscape that goes beyond cultural property, and matters as spirituality and religion.

The following, and final, part of the context, will explain the land tenure system.

2.5 Land tenure

It is stated in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda that the government can take land from anyone, despite their official status when 'the taking of possession or acquisition is necessary for public use or in the interest of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health' (Government of Uganda 1995, Article 26 Section 2). When this happens, fair and adequate compensation is to be provided and the ability for anyone to go to court who has an interest or ownership of this land. Valuation for the compensation was done in phases. Local people explain that the valuers came several times. First it was to scan the area and see what is there. When they came to see the people that would have to be resettled or would lose land, the officials valued people's property, on which the compensation would be based. Everything that was on a person's land – houses, fences, crops – was taken into account. Financial compensation was given for materials on this land that would be lost, such as houses and fences. When the properties on the area and the value thereof were determined, people received an overview of the amount of compensation they would receive. This was much lower than people in first instance were told they would get (interview 3, 09-01). Additionally, for land loss, people could choose between another piece of land or money as compensation. The people who chose money as compensation were not able to buy the same amount of land which is as fertile as what they used to have (interview 12-02). Therefore, a long-term investment that would make sure their situation would not become worse was not possible for most people. Those who chose

land as compensation were lucky when this land was in the area where they live and was as fertile as their previous land.

Moreover, people explained that they were promised land rights, for the land that they still owned, as part of the compensation. Thus, most people did not have an official land title but it was an informal recognition of ownership. It is defined by local norms and customs which land is recognised as whose property. It is private land that is owned by individuals, families, or clans, and locally recognised within the community (Sebudde et al. 2015, 30; LANDac factsheet 2016). This type of tenure puts people in a fragile position, as it does not provide security of tenure for landowners (Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development 2013). From the interviews it became clear that owning land is very important in the creation and sustaining of livelihoods. It is used intensively and important for food and income for the owner's family. One man who had to move because of the dam, explains that he and his family are dependent on the land they own. The land they used to have was much more fertile, thus even though they did not own more land, they could still grow more crops (interview 30-11). However, it remains difficult for people to obtain official land rights. People are scared to lose more land and applications for land rights are not being granted; people are waiting for years. When people have land rights, they would have a better position to negotiate when the government, or anyone else, wants to buy their land. Someone living in Busoga explained that future development of the area entails Jinja officially becoming a city. It will expand and economic development in the area is deemed necessary (interview 11-01). In such processes, local population can become a victim of development. A NAPE employee even states that 'development is a bulldozer' (interview 19-11); anything that comes in its way will be crushed. Having an official recognition of land ownership provides more security and a stronger position to negotiate in such developmental processes.

Moreover, having official land rights would empower women (Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development 2013). Many people explained how land has been given from one generation to the next. More specifically, a man often inherits (a part of) his father's land. Sometimes women are assigned a piece of land as well, but this is not often the case. When a woman marries, she moves to her husband's family and lives on his, or his father's, land. Hence, there is a strong tradition of local ownership that is inherited from father to son, and it does not stimulate land ownership by women (ibid.).

Chapter III

Methodology

Evita and I arrive at Nairo at 07:45 where we were supposed to meet our translator at 07:30. We are always a bit late, since she always is as well. Finally, she arrives around 09:00 and together we take a matatu to Ambercourt, which is on the other side of the bridge, from where we take a boda to Namizi. We go to Namizi first since the chairperson from this village was going to take us to Kyabirwa and introduce us to the chairperson of this village. We were going to meet at a crossway between Namizi and Kyabirwa but he was not there yet so we sat for some time on a wooden bench in the shade. After a while a different man comes up to us and Monica said he was sent here to bring us to Kyabirwa, so together we walk.

- Field notes 09-01-2019

3.1 Introduction

The methodologies to be used for this research are based on the topic and type of research. The type of research is qualitative and ethnographic. It concerns the experiences of local population, thus in order to discover these, qualitative and ethnographic methods have been used. The topic came into being due to a collaboration with two fellow students and the organisation Both ENDS. My fellow students and I had decided to do a research on the same case all with our personal topic. The reason for this decision is that it is a good way to gain a more in-depth understanding of one case, and we would be able to support each other and discuss our ideas during our research. We saw and still experience a great benefit in this decision. Throughout the process of the research we could brainstorm together easily, supported each other while living in a culturally different environment, and gain more in-depth information as we were involved in each other's processes.

Finding a suitable case for our research, Both ENDS helped us to find one in which our research could be helpful for organisations and the local population in gaining more information and insight in this case. Both ENDS is a Dutch non-governmental organisation working on human rights and environmental issues. It is in contact with local societal organisations in other countries and from there it tries to make a change on, mostly, policy levels (Both ENDS, ND). Hence, the organisation is up to date on projects these organisations are working on and where we could be helpful. Demarcating to a specific topic for our researches, we listed our interests and went to the office of Both ENDS in Amsterdam for a meeting. We learned about their projects and together we created a list of cases in suitable countries, regarding safety and language. Considering our options, interests and conditions we came to the conclusion to shape our research around the case of the Bujagali dam in Uganda. Both ENDS brought us in contact with people from the National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) and Friends of Environment for Development (FED) which are both NGOs involved in the case of the Bujagali dam and who could help us with practical issues and share their knowledge with us. This research does not have an activist character or aim since it is quite explorative and it is meant to get a longitudinal understanding of the case on a local level.

From here on, I started reading about the case and with personal interest of land issues in mind and some brainstorm sessions with people around me I came to a specific topic of dispossession in terms of cultural appropriation of the river and its surrounding landscape by the local population. Overall, dispossession is a debatable process and discussed extensively in academic literature. However, there is not a lot of attention for the impacts related to the local culture in this matter. It is a hiatus I noticed in the case and in academic literature in general (e.g. Kirchherr, Pohlner & Charles 2016; Tilt, Braun & He 2008; Zarfl et al. 2014). Following, I decided how to conduct my research.

This chapter continues with an explanation of the research population, including the use of snowball sampling method and some reflections and considerations about the research population. Following, I will elaborate upon the methods that have been used for conducting the research as well as the analysis of the data, and the decision making throughout this process. Finally, I will elaborate and reflect upon my position as a researcher in the field. This chapter consists of explanations of the methods for this research, as well as of the theoretical, methodological, and personal reflections made throughout the research. These reflections are interwoven in the chapter.

3.2 Research population

There are many people who have been affected by the dam, as has been explained in the context chapter. For this research, there was not enough time to include all these groups, considering it would be even possible to get into contact with all of them. Therefore, I decided to focus on the people who live in the villages directly next to the river, and those who have moved to the area of Naminya resettlement. Still, this is a large group of people, therefore I decided to mainly focus on people who had lost land and/or had to move. These were the people who made use of the land that had to be flooded by the river in order for the dam to work. Access to these my research population was possible with the help of two translators, to whom people from NAPE introduced us. One translator lives in Naminya resettlement and the other lived in a village close to and on the west side of the river. The organisation of NAPE was mainly focussed on helping people on the west side and was mostly present here, and not on the east side. An explanation given for this is that people in these villages on the west side reached out to NAPE. However, people on the east side of the river stated that they tried to reach out as well, but it did not work. It has not become clear what exactly has happened that the villages on the east side were not included as much. Some said people from NAPE did not come to meetings when they were invited, others explained that villagers on the east side were not as active in seeking help and only collected their compensation. Nonetheless, due to this starting point of access, the focus of my research was mainly on the west side of the river. To make the research population more inclusive, the second half of the field work was mainly focussed on the east side of the river.

Thus, eventually, the research population for this research consists of people who have lost land, who had to move due to the building of the dam, and/or who live in the villages upstream from the dam. For this research, I have talked to people from the affected villages Kikubamutwe, Buloba, Malindi, and Naminya resettlement, which are located on the west side of the river, and Namizi and Kyabirwa on the east side of the river.

3.2.1 Snowball sampling

The research population for this research has been established with the use of the snowball sampling method. This process started with my thesis supervisor who brought us into contact with an NGO located in Amsterdam, who, in turn brought us into contact with NGOs in Kampala, and they introduced us to two women living in the area. They would be able to translate for us during our interviews and they know many people living in the area who have been affected. People from NAPE told us that an introduction with the chairman of each village was important before interviewing the people living there. Sometimes this was in the form of a complete interview, sometimes it was simply a matter of introduction and shaking hands. Besides this necessary introduction, the snowball process on the west side of the river was a bit more informal and spontaneous than in the villages on the east side. On the west side, the translators already knew some people to talk to who have been affected by the dam. Sometimes these people knew other people who were in the same situation. Some people even approached us to talk to them. Thus, through the network of our translators and other people in the villages, and just by simply walking around in the area the research population grew. In first instance, the focus remained on the west side of the river, since through snowball sampling we were introduced to people in these villages. To not fall in the snowball sampling trap of staying in a certain bubble too much, I initiated an expansion to the other side of the river. In Busoga there are also people who are directly

affected by the dam, since the river expanded both ways. However, the networks of the people from both sides of the river are not very intertwined. Therefore, I had to initiate this expansion rather than only going with the snowball sampling.

One of our translators could bring us into contact with a chairperson from Namizi-West, a village on the east side of the river, but her network was not as extensive as in Buganda. Therefore, after an introduction with the chairperson of one village and having explained the research he agreed to do an interview and this is where the snowball on the east started. After the interview with this chairperson he introduced us to other people living in the village we could talk to. Talking to these people they told about other people in the village who could also be included and interviewed. Also, we were brought into contact with a chairperson from another village, who in turn introduced us to people from his village. Getting into contact on this side of the river had a bit more of a formal and official character. Also, the villages on the east side were more difficult to reach with public transport and it took more time. Hence, for this research, the villages on the east side of the river were less accessible and it asked more patience and time. Nevertheless, with the snowball sampling, and some personal suggestions and input, the research population of both sides of the river was established.

Of course, each approach and each context has its shortcomings, of which I am aware. There is a risk of staying too much in the same bubble of the network people have, especially when people have the same friends. Existing structures of social networks are difficult to understand and cannot be known beforehand. A consequence is that some people or groups of people will be left out of the research. For this research, the starting point was the translators, they know the people in the area and who had been affected by the dam. To make sure the research population does not only exist of the people they know, I also asked interviewees whether they know someone who could help with this research. Furthermore, walking around in the area as clearly being outsiders, and being introduced to chairmen of the villages, word spread of our presence. Thus, by simply being present people came up to us to talk about what we were doing and some asked if we would visit their house to talk to them. This enlarged the scope of the research group. Furthermore, while walking in the villages it was not just a matter of following our translators to the next person, but also initiate trying to talk to people whose houses we passed. It depended on the translator of how easy this was. One of our translators was a bit more hesitant and seemed to be less willing to do something if she did not think it was useful, instead of helping us regardless. Dealing with the presence of translators will be explained further in section 3.4.

A final way to prevent of staying in the narrow scope of snowball sampling has been to use the information of the case in general and stay critical on who to include. As the translators live on the west side of the river and most of the information was focussed on the west side, I got curious about the east side of the river and how people experienced the changes here. To realise the inclusion of the people living here, again, we had to actively initiate this approach with one of the translators who knows a chairperson there to set up a meeting and an introduction. As previously explained, the east side was a bit different. It was less accessible, and finding people to talk to mainly went via a chairperson or someone else who would introduce us to people in the area. Also, there was more anger in this area about the project and it felt more necessary here to have someone who would introduce us there and explain us about the situation and how they have experienced it. On both sides of the river trust was quite important to gain, and snowball sampling is often a useful method

in such situations (Malejacq & Mukhopadhyay 2016). The importance of trust in relation to my position as a researcher will be further explained in section 3.4.

3.2.2 Mixed backgrounds

The two sides of the river belong to two separate kingdoms of the country. These regions have their own historical background and language. However, during the research it became clear that the difference of the population of this area goes further than these two kingdoms. Asking people about their background, they explained that their ancestors come from different tribes and clans, and different parts of the country. Families often have been living there for some generations, but the population of the area is quite mixed and could be considered relatively new. People whose families have been living on the same land for generations can be considered to have a stronger connection to their land; they have a longer ancestral connection (Hay 1998). Therefore, one could argue that the people living in this specific area have less of an ancestral connection to their surrounding water- and landscape. However, with the concept of sense of place an alternative perception is provided. A sense of place comes into being by physical contact with the area on a daily or periodic basis. Life takes place somewhere and at this 'somewhere' there is a sense of place for the local population (Beidler & Morrison 2016; Cross 2001; Hay 1998).

In this case of the people living in the villages surrounding the Bujagali dam, the people are not only in the area on a daily basis but they make extensive use of the river and land to make daily life in this area possible. Therefore, some people of the research population might have an ancestral sense of place but many people make such extensive use of their natural environment it also establishes a strong sense of place. Furthermore, the different cultural backgrounds of people's families do not preclude the creation of a local culture. The people situated in this area have integrated their surroundings in their way of living and vice versa. Such practices create a local culture, despite differences in tribes and clans. With some help from the theoretical framework, this will become clear throughout the rest of this thesis. Additionally, Chapter VII discusses the diversity in the area regarding origins of tribe and clans more into detail and how this relates to ancestral land.

3.3 Used methods

The choices and usage of methods to collect the data have slightly changed and adjusted throughout the process of this research. In order to elaborate on this process, I will first explain how I went from the initial ideas of methods with which I went into the field to the ones I eventually used, and my decision making in this process. Finally, I will explain how I analysed my data to create and some reflections on this process.

3.3.1 From proposal to the field

Before entering the field, I proposed to make use of certain methods, which were based on my knowledge of the area and the aim of this research. Not surprisingly, this changed once being in the field because it is impossible to know exactly beforehand how everything will work out. Reflecting on the use of methods sheds light on the decisions that have been made to use or not use the methods as planned beforehand. The base of this research is qualitative and ethnographic in order to explore the local cultural dimension of dispossession concerning the river- and landscape. To achieve this, research has been conducted locally in the area of the Bujagali dam, and included people who have been

directly affected due to this interruption in their livelihoods. Data gathering has been done with the use of flexible research methods. Flexible research methods are participant observation, informal conversations and semi-structured interviews. Using these methods required a flexible attitude, since there was a need to adapt to the changes and events that happen throughout the process of conducting fieldwork (Boeije, 't Hart & Hox 2009).

As a matter of introduction to the area, I proposed to start the research by going to the river in Jinja and have informal conversations with fishermen and observe other activities. Also, my initial idea was to have small talks with people in the area to get familiar with the case, the area, and people living here. Interviews, both semi-structural as open, would be used in a later stage as a way to gain more in-depth information of issues that came up in the small talks and observations that I already had. Furthermore, I proposed to talk to people of organisations or collectives in the area who issues themselves with this topic. This was a good proposal for when access and language would be difficult at the start of the research, however, this was not the case and the research process went a bit different. In our first week in Kampala we were already introduced to one of our translators who lives in the area, and she was in the city for a different meeting. She and another woman would be our translators and could help us get our research started in terms of information about the case and introductions to other people. Thus, access was not a problem, and, once on location, the research started immediately with a tour of Naminya resettlement and boda rides along the villages of the area, including some first introductions.

3.3.2 In the field

For this research, several methods have been used for methodological triangulation (Mikkelsen 2005). In the field I decided which methods to use and when to use them, because these methods require flexibility in the field (Boeije, 't Hart & Hox 2009). The main research method has been semi-structured and open interviews. Before doing the interviews we discussed a payment for our translators in consultation with a contact person in Kampala. In this agreement we explained what the aim of our research was and how we wanted to do this research. This way, the translators knew from the beginning what our aim and intentions were, while we explained the flexibility of our research. My research population overlapped with those of my colleagues, and we often did interviews together. The reason is that it saved time for the interviewees and our translators. It was an effective way of doing interviews and to not put too much of a burden on the interviewees and the translators. Furthermore, doing the interviews this way allowed researcher triangulation and we could discuss the information given amongst each other and our interpretations of it (Mikkelsen 2005). However, in order to make sure that we all got to ask the questions we wanted and gain the information we were looking for, we had to put some structure in the interviews. Thus, some interviews were semi-structured.

Not all interviews were the same, and its length and depth of the information depended on the time, energy, and willingness of the interviewee. We did not want to make anyone feel pressured to participate, thus it depended on these factors whether I could diverge from the structure and get more in-depth information or whether I stuck to the questions I wanted to have answered at that time. A semi-structured interview was something people often felt more comfortable with and was the easiest, and thus most accessible, way of talking to people and collecting data. An interview was often not planned beforehand, it was a matter of visiting their house and see whether they were present or not at that moment. When a person wanted to participate, chairs would be brought out for us

and men to sit on, women would mostly sit on the ground. Sometimes we joined the women sitting on the ground, but we did not want to be disrespectful so it was a decision based on a feeling of what was appropriate in a specific setting. Besides going to the river, I also did such walks in and around some villages.

Another research method was doing observations. These were mainly done while walking around in the area between interviews, thus non-participant observation, or when walking to the river accompanied by a local villager. Since everybody in the area could see that I was an outsider and often attracted people's attention, a different type of observation, such as sitting around and see what was happening, was not quite possible. However, we walked around or had to wait a lot in the villages, so the observations made during these times have provided a lot of information too. Moreover, these observations led to new insights and allowed to ask about more specific matters, mostly with people I saw more often and with whom I had established a relation of trust. Observations were especially useful in gaining more insight in issues people did not necessarily talk about openly. These are mainly topics discussed in Chapter VII about spirituality and ancestral connections to land, and this chapter also includes an extra section of reflection.

As a way to have more active and participatory methods of gathering information, I have asked people to go the river with me and talk about whatever came up, what they saw, and what I saw. It allowed for more insight in how they experienced and understood the area. It entailed more a reaction to the area from which conversations sprung, instead of questions that were set up previously. It was also a good way to avoid the interview setting that was often created immediately once we visited someone at her or his home. Another active approach was a mapping exercise. This entailed actually creating a map by Monica. She is invested in the area, what happens here, and with the people living in the villages. Therefore, she knows what the area looks like and its developmental processes, such as the dam and factories. The map I refer to in this thesis to indicate specific places, is based on the map she created. Furthermore, to gain an overview of important events throughout the process, I asked someone to create a timeline, while we were talking about the matters that came up. The timeline is a way to have an overview of events that have been important during this process (Mikkelsen 2005, 92). This was done with a key informant, Winston, since he knows the aim of this research, and he has been quite invested in the effects for the local population of the Bujagali project, so he seemed to be the right person to create such an overview of important events. It was more the conversation that sprung from this which was insightful, than the timeline itself. Hence, the exercises were a more open way for people to explain what they have experienced as important and how they saw the area. During the process I decided to do this with the people who I had gotten to know better and understood what the research was about but also what my position as a researcher and a student was. It did not feel suitable to do with anybody, since people had limited time and/or had certain expectations.

In total I have conducted 33 in-depth interviews, of which 30 with affected people, and three with other people from outside the area, but also relevant. Furthermore, it was difficult to arrange a focus group, because it was time consuming for us to arrange and for people to participate, and we have been in a situation where nobody showed up. On the other hand, interviews were rarely planned, and when going to people's houses, it has also happened that where more people present and it became a group discussion. Officially, I have done one focus group. The two mapping exercises were not repeated with other people, since it was more about the conversation/explanation that rose from it, besides of

the map and timeline itself. Also, I went to the river with different people four times a more active and interactive method. From all these research activities, 13 were conducted in villages on the east side of the river, 13 on the west side of the river with people who were directly affected but remained on their land. Twelve research activities were conducted in Naminya resettlement. Additionally, I have had small talks with people in- and outside the research area, and visited villages further away to one of the translator's family and friends, which were also relevant for this research. In my thesis I will refer to the semi-structured and open interviews, and the focus group as 'interview', because these were in-depth conversations, held in an interview setting. To other activities – walks, mapping exercises, small talks, and visitations outside the area – I will refer as 'notes'. Furthermore, throughout this thesis, I refer to some key informants by pseudonyms; Simone, Steven, Monica, Winston, and Peter. These people have been important for my research for different reasons. I often visited these people, and could ask them for clarification about information, they helped me getting around in the area and as translators. Also, I could talk to them about more sensitive topics or issues that were more difficult to get to. More background information about each person can be found in Appendix 1.

All the information was collected in my notebook, as I did not record any of the interviews. It did not feel appropriate to work with recording, and I think it would have compromised some interviews had I done it. Some people were hesitant of outsiders coming to the area and ask questions about an issue that has drastically changed their lives. Moreover, some people are afraid that information they provide would be used for other purposes. Once people understood who we were and what our aim was, they were willing to talk to us. However, for this same reason I decided not to record any of the interviews but instead write it down. For the purpose of safety and keeping information private, I wrote most of my notes down in Dutch, with the exception of quotes that are descriptive of the information and local experiences. Additionally, I worked out my notes on my laptop including reflections on and thoughts about the research process.

3.3.3 Data analysis process

Analysis of the data already started during fieldwork. Informal but important were the discussions and brainstorming with my colleagues when we stepped out of the field. During the research period we resided the first half of this period in the town of Jinja and the second half in a village on the other side of the river called Bukaya. Since my research area was mainly the villages located upstream of the dam (see map), I stepped out of the field once I went home or when we went to Jinja town to do, for example, some food shopping. We discussed our experiences, interpretations, and difficulties. Sharing thoughts and insights, and discussing about it were some initial analyses of the information gathered that day or throughout the process in general. It helped me gain insight in where I was at that moment regarding the data I had gathered so far, where I wanted to go, and what were topics I needed to explore further. These initial analyses, helped me structure the information but also guided me further in the research. Since I worked out my notes on my laptop, I had already structured the information chronologically.

The data of this research is a construction of people's reflections. The research is focussed on people's experiences and changes in their lives before and after the dam. It explores a sense of loss people have felt over the years, and perhaps still do. Hence, the data gathered and analysed is often about how people explain that things used to be better years before. This does not mean that the situation was so good before the dam, people

could be romanticising their past situation. Nor does it mean that the situation now is all bad. Nevertheless, the experience people express is one of how life has gotten more difficult when people look at their situation now and reflect back on the years before. There is a sense of loss and this experience is what this research is clarifying. Moreover, the data analysis has not been about finding out an objective truth of how the situation has been and how it is now. It concerns people's experience in reflecting on their life, and this is what their truth is nowadays and with which they are living.

After the period of doing fieldwork and having worked out all my notes, I started coding the interviews. Writing in a notebook during the interviews, working them out digitally, and organising this document, forced me to go over the information a couple of times which helped in creating a structure for the empirical chapters of this thesis. Whilst structuring and analysing my data, I extended and amplified my theoretical framework to create a strong base for this research. Furthermore, as part of collecting data, I have taken some photos. These are used to give an idea of what I am talking about in certain cases. The photos can be found in Appendix 2.

3.4 Position as a researcher in the field

During the research in the field I have had experiences of my position as a white, female, researcher influencing myself and the process of research. Before going into the field I was very aware that my background and who I am as a person would influence the research. The choice to do the fieldwork for this research in Uganda was partly due to the accessibility in language, since one of the official languages of Uganda is English. Also, it was important for me to feel comfortable as a woman during a research, which, according to Both ENDS and experiences from other people, this would be the case in Uganda. Furthermore, I knew that going into the field I had to get used to a new culture and how people react to me. Luckily, there were no obstacles in gaining accessibility to the area. People from NAPE, the national NGO introduced us to two women who live in the area and could translate for us, because despite English being an official language there were many people in the field who only spoke Luganda or Lusoga. Working with a translator could bridge some of the differences between me and the interviewee by language but also in culture and habits (Malejacq & Mukhopadhyay 2016). One of the translators took great care of us in hospitality and making us feel welcome but also in the process of the research. She explained us some of the local habits and customs, gave insights in the situation of certain areas, helped us in finding people for our research, and welcomed us into her home anytime.

Being in Uganda I tried to adapt to the situation according to what is appropriate and what is not. An issue that has not always been easy was that women and men were not considered equal. Men were considered to be positioned above women and this could be felt in many situations; it came up during interviews, but also in our daily life and the lives of our (close) contacts at the time. We felt it while walking in Jinja, in short interactions with people such as bodaboda drivers, where people would make inappropriate comments, ask us out, or look at us as if we were a tasty meal. There have been moments of sexual harassment but luckily not on a daily base or anything traumatising. Nonetheless, it has made us more careful in daily life. For example, we did not often go out at night when it was dark, especially since there were no streetlights where we stayed the second half of our stay, always kept each other up to date about our whereabouts, and were careful with choosing bodaboda taxis. This was something natural and logical for us to do, and only

when we discussed our experiences with other European men we had met the extent of differences between our experience really dawned on me. They felt more free to do anything they want and felt much less restricted in the way we did. Hence, working with two female translators made me feel more comfortable, especially in the beginning when everything, every situation, and every person is new to me.

Another issue of who I am that needed reflection, is the fact that I am white and did research in villages with an all black population. Because of this, some people asked if we were from BEL, the company of the Bujagali dam. For some, the only white people who talked to them about the dam have been people from BEL. Furthermore, in daily life as well as during the research, people expected us to be rich. Soon we knew that we would always pay more for a bodaboda taxi than a local villager. We did not mind this, as we were very aware of the fact that in that context we actually are richer than most people who were part of our research. In order to deal with the issue of payment for our translators, we could talk to one of our contacts in Kampala about an appropriate fee and how to handle this negotiation. Furthermore, during interviews some people expected that we could do something for them in terms of money, visa, contacts, and sponsoring children - to name a few. Luckily, our translators understood our situation and position, and knew that we could not help people in such a way, which she would explain to the interviewees.

Before going into the field I knew that I would not only be researching during my fieldwork, but the people of the area would also do research about me. The way I position myself, interact with others, and my activities overall, influence the way people see me and shapes their opinion about me (Brown 2009). Many people hear stories about what happens in the area from other people, hence, some people already knew about our presence and research in the area before we met. This was positive in the sense that people would also come up to us to talk about their experiences, which made access easier. However, sometimes people who came up to us had the idea that we were there to help them immediately with their issues with BEL; they had expectations. Also, sometimes a translator would explain to people that we were in contact with NAPE. We then explained that it was important for interviewees to know that we are not from NAPE and do not work for them; that we our research are completely independent and are part of our study program. This could influence the interview and I had to make sure that I would get answers to the questions I had in addition to that what a person thought I wanted to hear. Hence, my positionality goes two ways; it is the way I present myself and deal with situations, and how other people see and judge me (ibid.). This was something I could only prepare for to a certain extent before going into the field, but it was mainly dealing with it on the spot and throughout the whole process.

Overall, the access we gained to the field through NAPE has not influenced my positionality during the research. However, looking back, all the way to our first meeting with Both ENDS, I started the research with a perspective of the local population being wronged; a case of environmental injustice. The problem was already in my head, partly because it was formulated as such by Both ENDS and NAPE. Now I still do agree with this point of view and they are professionals in this field, but in hindsight it would have been interesting to ask about and check these presumptions with the people I had talked to. To ask people about the process of the Bujagali in general and more open questions about their experiences, which I did as well, but it could have been more had I taken this presumption in consideration more. Not to be mistaken: I definitely do think the outcomes and the issues

people discussed would have been the same, it would simply have been an interesting addition.

3.4.1 Trust

As mentioned in the previous section, our translators were important for the accessibility to the field (Malejacq & Mukhopadhyay 2016). People from NAPE advised us not to ask people to sign a form of informed consent. The reason was that it would be seen as a sign of mistrust by the local population, also because most people would not be able to read the form they would have to sign. He advised that it would be better to explain our research and we also had to ask permission to the chairperson of each village (notes 15-11; Norman 2009). Our translators were locals, which helped with people feeling comfortable to share their experiences with an outsider. Furthermore, the relationship with the translators was also one of trust. Especially with one woman I felt comfortable to ask questions of clarification and for her to help us navigate through the research area, physically and socially. Soon, there was a relationship of mutual trust and over time we got to know each other quite personal, which was only positive. However, there were also people who – we got the impression – wanted to be involved for personal image, or financial reasons, which also makes perfect sense of course. These and more issues created a lack of trust and was an obstacle for the fieldwork. Over time, I got to know more people and there were other people who wanted to translate. For me, I based my trust in people on my gut feeling, and on more practicalities such as our conversations, their intentions and involvement in my research. To build such a relationship of mutual trust, I visited these people regularly and tried to be personally involved. Being interested in people personally and sharing some of my reflections of the research has been important in creating this relationship. Also, when leaving the field, we made sure we had a proper goodbye with people who have been invested in our research and made sure that they know we appreciated their help and time (Norman 2009).

3.4.2 Emotional well-being

How I dealt with my surroundings and how other people dealt with me has not only influenced my research but also my emotional well-being (Brown 2009; Diphooorn 2012). All three of us were very happy to be there together, since it allowed us to share our experiences and talk about our feelings of certain situations. Hence, my own experiences and how to deal with my position within this specific setting, as previously explained, sometimes affected my emotional well-being. Of course, this is an inevitable part of doing fieldwork and I had expected beforehand that this would be the case. Moreover, it is also very insightful for me personally and for the research I am conducting. When a situation or happening led to unpleasant emotions I, or we together, needed to reflect on what it exactly was that made me, or us, feel that way, and what the bigger picture was. It helped in understanding structures, local culture, and expectations from people. Thus, reflecting on emotional well-being could be difficult, but also very helpful in different ways.

Emotional well-being does not only concern my own, but also of the people I came into contact with (Diphooorn 2012). Some people have experienced horrible situations – think of murder, theft, abuse – which, according to some people, were sometimes part of the consequences of the dam. I will not go into specific cases, since these are highly personal and if I deem it relevant for this research it will be discussed in the empirical

chapters. Nevertheless, people have experienced great losses and could get emotional over their situation. Feelings of grief, frustration, desperation, and anger were not uncommon for them and myself. Every person, including myself, has their own history, background, and discourse that influence our emotions (ibid.). How I felt about certain situations is quite different from how others felt about the same. This research is not based on sharing emotions and I mostly shared feelings I had about a situation in the form of empathy. It was not my place to express my personal opinion about situations, behaviour, and statements made by others. Thus, as Diphooorn argues ‘...that emotional experiences are not obstructive and detached experiences from the more objective analytical data, but when reflected upon, they are illuminating and interconnected to other data that we regard as knowledge.’ (2012, 203).

Reflection on emotions has been important for this research, both my own as those of the people I have talked to. Throughout the process, it has helped me making decisions of how to proceed with the research. Trying to understand why certain things made me feel that way, helped me with how to handle, address, and approach certain situations and people. Furthermore, reflecting on the emotions of those people I have talked to, gave more insight in their personal experiences regarding the topic of discussion. Hence, it showed me how they felt about their personal process and situations they have been in. Especially since this research has a long term focus, it showed how matters or experiences are still present. Hence, emotions and emotional well-being for the people involved in this research is part of the data I have gathered. It could not always be pinpointed as such throughout the empirical chapters, but it is an important part of the research in its entirety and the effects of the Bujagali case on the local population.

Chapter IV

Theoretical Framework

He states that 'development is a bulldozer': it influences psychologically people's stance.

- Field notes 19-11-2018

4.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework should be seen and understood as several building blocks which together create the theoretical perspective for this research. The first block is an explanation of environmental justice. The increasing amount of hydropower dams around the world can be concerning. As is the case for most hydropower projects, the Bujagali dam was aimed at development for the Ugandan country as a whole but the people living close to the project have to bear the biggest burden of this dam. When a change in an environment happens, such as the building of a hydropower dam, it has an impact on the people locally situated. The disruption of the environment and, accordingly, the consequences for locally affected people make it a case of environmental justice. This first section explains the concept of environmental justice in general and as specifically being a problematic issue of most hydropower projects. As explained in the problem statement, the injustice central to this research is the lack of attention for alternative forms dispossession. In theory, many changes could be seen as a form of dispossession, but this does not make the concept very useable. There is a challenge in making the concept applicable for this case that enables identification of dispossession through a local lens. To fully understand and grasp the dispossession that is a play, the third block explains the cultural dimension of a place. The official compensation and valuation has been described in Chapter II concerning this case's context. This theoretical section about the cultural context will explain how it is understood in this research. Further concepts in this chapter are part of the operationalization of cultural valuation. Trying to understand the local cultural valuation can help understand alternative experiences of dispossession and vice versa.

The last part of this theoretical framework is the active creation of a place, which in this case concerns the land- and waterscape. A place is actively shaped and created by the local culture and, in turn this place actively shapes and created the local culture. Hence, I emphasise an active inclusion of local culture. This is explained further with the concept of sense of place. The sense of place concerns the connection between a person and a place in a multidimensional way. The final section goes into Setha Low's conceptualisations regarding the social production of space and the social construction of space. It is an approach of the continuous shaping of a place by the people and their culture, which makes the place and the lives people live here, inherently cultural.

4.2 Environmental justice

Environmental justice is both a movement and a concept to analyse developments in the world, and in some ways theory and practice inform each other (Schlosberg 2013). For this research the focus is on the theory of the concept which will help analyse the case and specify the dispossession at hand. The concept of environmental justice has found its way into the academic debates at the end of the twentieth century. Over the years, many academics have tried to give meaning to it and work out what the concept actually entails. Initially, the term referred to uneven distribution of the environmental bads, which means that some communities have to deal with more environmental risks than others. The theory suits many of the problematic situations certain communities have to deal with; inequity, misrecognition, and exclusion. It concerns the link between the environment and social justice (Sze & London 2008; Walker 2009). However, Schlosberg (2007; 2013) argues that environmental justice entails more than the distribution of the burdens. The concept was soon further explored by defining what 'environment' exactly means, understanding the

pluralist conception of the 'justice', and the factors that lead to environmental injustice. The definition of the 'environment' shifted from the idea of the big outside to the area where people live, work, and play. This is an important shift since it puts the emphasis on the people and the environmental conditions of their daily life, but it does not neglect endangered species or landscapes. With defining 'justice' it became clear it does not just concern equity, recognition, and participation but the basic needs and functioning of individuals and communities in general. What has been important in defining environmental justice is acknowledgement of the plurality of environmental (in)justice experiences. Furthermore, it includes the risks for nonhumans and natural environments in relation to human beings; how we, as human beings, are immersed in our environment and have manipulated nature (ibid. 2013). The term environmental justice is about going further than claiming certain communities to bear the bigger burden. It also concerns discovering why these communities were devalued in the first place; what the factors are that have led to environmental injustice.

Hess, Ribeiro, and Wieprecht (2016) dig deeper into environmental justice in cases of hydropower projects. They state that such projects provide benefits as well as they have negative impacts. Therefore, the focus should be on how these are distributed in society; it concerns the allocation of benefits and burdens from hydropower. This relates to the initial conceptualisation of environmental justice. Attention to issues of environmental justice in hydropower projects is important since the amount of such dams is growing extensively worldwide. There is even talk of a global hydropower boom (Zarfl et al. 2015). Such projects generate energy that fits well in the aim to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and can generate a lot of, so called, renewable and clean energy. Furthermore, they embrace the eco-efficiency discourse without major changes in the already existing political, economic, and technological structures. The problem with hydropower dams is that there is an imbalance in the distribution of the burden of negative environmental consequences, since the consequences are highly concentrated in the area of the dam. '... due to their location in rural areas they are likely to affect poor rural communities and traditional populations disproportionately, whereas most benefits are generated in urban areas far away from the dam' (Hess, Ribeiro & Wieprecht 2016, 95-96). Moreover, the biggest burden is most often on people who have to be displaced and who are directly affected. This trend has been found in many hydropower project cases (Siciliano et al. 2015), and can therefore be considered as a general hydropower problem (Hess, Ribeiro & Wieprecht 2016). As argued by Schlosberg, environmental justice does not only entail the distribution of the burden. It also concerns recognition, and this refers to the importance of the recognition of all affected people. Not just the existence of these people needs to be recognised but also their traditions, cultures, and ways of life (ibid.; Schlosberg 2007).

Large hydropower projects can be argued for being beneficial, generate as much energy as possible to close gaps in the national grid and to be used as export product, whilst fitting the frame and global trend of generating renewable energy. However, looking at it from the environmental justice point of view there is much to criticise on such projects. 'For the local population the price to pay remains high and the benefits low and/or doubtful' (Hess, Ribeiro & Wieprecht 2016, 105). The concept of environmental justice is an alternative approach to analyse the sustainability of hydropower projects and to assess its socio-environmental impacts. It includes definitions of the environment, recognition of the people, and justice in accordance. The injustice this research focusses on is dispossession. Dispossession of aspects that are part of the local cultural valuation but have not been

acknowledged in compensation processes. This following section provides an explanation of the concept of dispossession.

4.3 Dispossession

‘The action of depriving someone of land, property, or other possessions’ is the definition of the term dispossession given by the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). The reference to ‘other possessions’ in the definition exactly shows that dispossession is not easily identified in practice. Moreover, when analysing the academic interpretation of the term, its complexity grows further. To start off exploring the term, I refer to Butler and Athanasiou (2013) who discuss the duality of the term dispossession on a more abstract, perhaps philosophical, level. On the one hand, they state that a person is dependent on its environment and on other people who sustain and motivate this person’s life. A person is moved by what happens around it and it is not always clear what this specifically is. They argue that this interconnection between the outside and the self is what makes a person inherently dispossessed. However, being inherently dispossessed is connected to, but does not legitimise their second way of defining dispossession. This idea of dispossession concerns the deprivation of issues such as livelihood, food, shelter, protection, and citizenship of a person. The concept carries the presumption that there is something that rightfully belonged to a person and has been taken away. According to Judith Butler ‘... dispossession is precisely what happens when populations lose their land, their citizenship, their means of livelihood, and become subject to military and legal violence’ (ibid., 3). Dispossession described as such is forced and concerns private lives and possessions. It relates to the first line of thinking, since dispossession can only occur due to the fact that human beings are interdependent and whose pleasure and suffering depends on a sustained social world, a sustaining environment (Butler & Athanasiou 2013).

Due to this inherent connectedness of a person and the external factors of its environment, dispossession is authoritative and controls the spatiality, mobility, affectivity, potentiality, and relationality of the subjects (ibid., 10). As Athanasiou states ‘In such contexts, “dispossession” offers language to express experiences of uprootedness, occupation, destruction of homes and social bonds, incitation to “authentic” self-identities, humanitarian victimization, unlivability, and struggles for self-determination’ (ibid., 10). Thus, the relations people have with their property control the moral concepts of personhood, self-belonging, agency, and self-identity (ibid., 13). Gaining insight in such matters is important since dispossession is an ever present matter. Moreover, new opportunities for exploitation, due to the development of technology, bring new threats to material and cultural bases of people’s life-worlds. Bebbington (2008) even states that these threats to forms of life and social organisation can be understood as colonisations of the life-worlds. He states that attention given to these threats lack the inclusion of cultural issues; there is a shortcoming and the cultural and psychological losses need to be taken into account when focussing on these threats (ibid.).

This is also in line with Escobar’s (2001) argument that livelihoods are inherently cultural. He states that people do not only produce an income but also create meaning and capabilities. Livelihoods cannot merely be discussed in terms of how people make a living without including the meaning people give to their life and their struggle to defend and enhance the valuation of this life (Bebbington 2004, 180). How people sustain their lives and their decisions they make accordingly are, therefore, inherently linked to their culture, due to the meaning they give to the livelihood they are trying to sustain (Escobar 2001,

Bebbington 2004). Moreover, the way people make a living can change the way they value this livelihood and what is meaningful for them personally (Bebbington 2004, 180). People give meaning to the lives they are trying to make, which means that dispossession in these livelihoods is also cultural (Escobar 2001). To get a more extensive idea of dispossession and its impact, its cultural dimension is central in this research.

In order to understand the dispossession people experience, more attention needs to be given to the impact a change has on the people of the environment. Understanding a local culture, how this actively creates a place and vice versa, is crucial here. It gives more insight into the area in which people work, play, and live, and in turn, sheds light on the impact of a development project and malpractices of its compensation. To explore the cultural dimension of dispossession, I combine the concepts sense of place, social production of space, and social construction of space. Combining these will help in understanding the cultural understanding of a place. Cultural valuation and understanding of an area, includes issues such as cultural heritage sites, religion and spirituality. However, how people deal with issues and shape their livelihoods on a daily basis is also central to the dynamics of (local) culture; 'Every human society is culturally constituted' (ibid., 86).

4.4 The cultural dimension of a place

In order apply a cultural perspective on dispossession, this section explains how this cultural perspective is operationalised here. Regarding the presence of culture in the case of the Bujagali dam, the context has explained how cultural aspects have been addressed in the Resettlement and Community Development Action Plan. This document is based on safeguard regulations of the World Bank and IFC and it showed that cultural aspects that were included in compensation process, and thus acknowledged, were issues such as spirits, shrines, graves, and spiritual leaders. This research entails the argument that local culture and cultural appropriation of the area is much more than that and is actively created by the whole population of the area. It is extremely difficult to define a concept such as culture, and many academics have tried (see Spencer-Oatey 2012). However, it should not scare one away of specifying the definition and operationalization of the term for a research. In this case, it is in line with James Spradley's definition of culture. He defines culture as 'the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior' (1980, 6). Moreover, culture refers to '...the *patterns* of behaviour, artifacts, and knowledge that people have learned and created' (ibid., 86). It is an organisation of things and it is the meaning given to objects, places, and activities by people (Spradley 1980). Focussing on the cultural dimension of a place, entails the need for sensitivity of the local context; the local culture of a place. The local culture of a place is not static, it is always changing and is created by the former, current, and future local population. Central to this concept is an active approach and inclusion of place and an active approach and inclusion of culture within this place.

A place is made up of spatial practices which means that it is experienced, as for example the culturally meaningful space of home; place is the lived space. Thus, the place is contained within the space (Low 2017, 12-14). More specifically on the term 'place', Margaret Rodman (1992) argues for an active use of the term place, since this is where personal and cultural comes into being. Putting an emphasis on these understandings empowers these ideas of a certain place and with it the personal and cultural understandings. A focus on place allows for the inclusion of perceptions and experiences

of people who are not always heard. According to her a place is the lived space of an individual's experience (ibid.).

Hence, I advocate for an active approach when studying the cultural dimension of a place; a culture is actively created and so is a place. Moreover, they influence and shape each other. One cannot generalise different cases when applying a cultural perspective. It is important to look at the local context and see what is there on the ground. Moreover, to be able to look at and understand the cultural dimension of dispossession regarding a certain place, one must understand people's connection to this place. Therefore, this section will proceed with an explanation of the concept of sense of place, which is also well discussed by social scientists and concerns people's ties to a place in all its different ways and forms.

4.4.1 Sense of place

Sense of place concerns a relationship between a person and 'its place'; when a person grows up in a certain environment this person develops a *sense of place*. It can be seen as a multidimensional concept that includes more than the materiality of a place, it also concerns immaterial aspects. Hay refers to a sense of place as 'feeling at home and secure there, with feelings of belonging to the place being one anchor for his or her identity' (1998, 6). One cannot actually speak of a single sense of place. It is constructed with a whole set of cultural preconceptions people have that influence how they react to and (re)shape a place to fit those same preconceptions (Cross 2001, Hay 1998). A person's presence in an area influences a sense of place. For example, ancestral roots in a place and daily contact with a place creates a different feeling of a sense of place than someone who travels more often and is more mobile (Hay 1998).

Besides the fact that there is not an entirely straight-forward definition, the concept is more often used for practical issues, such as planning and development, which entails urban environments (e.g. Ujang & Zakariya 2015) (Beidler & Morrison 2016). Building a hydropower dam to increase a country's development entails a physical adjustment to an area. With such a, so called, development project, the physical aspects of the environment are easier to measure than the immaterial, where the latter entails emotional and cultural ties to a place. The sense of place concept will help understand what these immaterial changes entail for people dealing with displacement and dispossession. The fact that sense of place is a multidimensional concept, makes it difficult to disentangle. Many academics have tried to make the concept more tangible, which makes sense of place a well-discussed concept in academic literature (e.g. Cross 2001; Hay 1998; Beidler & Morrison 2016; Ujang & Zakariya 2015; Clermont et al. 2019; Jorgensen & Stedman 2001; Tuan 1980 & Soini, Varala & Pouta 2011). In their article, Beidler and Morrison (2016) provide an overview of some of the different academic ideas of the concept and combine the views of academics over the years to make it more tangible and concrete. Based on all these works, they have organised the concept into a four-dimensional model.

The first dimension is the self, which is the centre of all experience and the starting point of how a person is connected to a place. All the different people who find themselves in this certain place have their own development of a sense of place, and all of them are part of the general sense of place. The personal senses of place can create collective themes that influence the development of a place and are inseparable from the environment in which they occur (ibid.). The self is situated in a certain environment, and the latter is identified as the second dimension. The sense of place concerns an actual physical environment, which consists of certain facets that create and influence people's experiences

of a place (ibid., 207). The self and the environment are not a bilateral relationship; it is interlaced with a third dimension; social interaction. This suggests that social interaction in a place is more important for a sense of place than simply the relationship between a person and the place. Meaning given to a place regarding the social interaction can be found in memory, experience, and social relations (ibid., 208). Early academics considered the physical environment and people's social interaction to be dominant in disentangling the sense of place. However, currently, the influence of a fourth dimension, time, is being recognised in the multidimensional approach (ibid., 211). A sense of place cannot develop overnight; the time spent by a 'self' in a 'physical environment' with 'social interaction' influences the development of one's, or multiple people's, sense of place. Several academics have constructed levels in the experience of a sense of place based on time (Jorgensen & Stedman 2001, Beidler & Morrison 2016).

A shortcoming of practices as planning and development is that they are still primarily focused on the physical environment they are working in. However, people's experiences of a place and what makes a place a place, clearly entails more. As Beidler and Morrison state '...individual interpretations, environmental understandings, sociocultural encounters, and temporal experiences are ultimately intertwined in the transformation of space into place' and, considering all the discussed academics, they define a sense of place '... as the overarching transformation of space into place' (2016, 212). A change in a physical environment needs a more holistic approach of the sense of place which is crucial for its inhabitants. This is in line with Cross' (2001) idea that the relationship between a person and its environment is transactional; one gives something to the environment and the environment gives to the people, which can be both positive and negative. Furthermore, she states that to some degree people create their own place, thus a place exists of both physical and social features (ibid.). A sense of place is not just a relationship or a connection between a person and its environment. It entails more, since this also constructs a place. One person who has devoted many articles and books to the anthropology of space and place is Setha Low. Many of her publications are about how places and spaces are created. To elaborate a bit further on people's sense of place and the creation of it, the next part elaborates upon the idea of social production and construction of space.

4.4.2 Social production and construction of space

The social production of space and the social construction of space, both concepts by Setha Low, and are based on many anthropological works, starting with works from the 1970s. They are part of her more overarching concept of spatializing culture. For this thesis I will not go into this concept in detail, but the concepts of social production and construction of space are quite fitting and support this theoretical base. The first concerns all factors that result in the physical creation of the material space. It has a materialist emphasis. The focus is on historical, economic, political, and social forces that have shaped a physical site. It is a way of linking macro- and micro-social processes and sheds light on how processes of, for example, development projects are created to reach the goals of a certain group or government but are disadvantageous for the majority of the poor and working-class residents. Analysing the social production of space gives insight in the processes of uneven development and how capitalism destroys and rebuilds a certain environment. This rebuilding, however, is done in a quest for profit that never ends. It also shows how these processes might be contested and confronted by locals living in this environment (Low 2017).

Low's explains that the social construction of space '...is the social, psychological, and functional transformation of space—through people's social exchanges, memories, images, emotions, and daily use of the material setting—into scenes and actions that convey meaning' (ibid. 2011, 392). It concerns the meaning people give to a landscape and a built environment, and explains the roles of politics, unstable meanings, and culture in this place-making. This meaning giving comes from a wide range of perspectives, which coexist as alternative strategies, and are in some cases competing points of view (ibid. 2017, 74-75). The social construction of space is a frame that cannot be used as 'place-as-matter' to explain the world. Changes in an environment, how it is interpreted and how it is represented influence the social construction of space and, in line, people's appropriation of the space for their needs. With this frame, both implicit and explicit assumptions about the world can be uncovered by observing material and discursive practices of social actors. She mainly refers to changes in urban settings and states that the concepts are dialogical. The change of a space has an influence on social and cultural meanings within the population. On the other hand, she gives examples of how groups have mobilised different urban discourses of the past to fight transformations planned in a certain urban landscape (Low 2017).

Where the sense of place is a multidimensional concept of a relationship between a person and a place, Low's concept of social construction of place goes into how people's social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of this material setting transform a place. A sense of place is formed by multiple factors, and Low's conceptualisation of these spatial dimensions gives insight in how these are constructed. Both these issues are important for studying the cultural place. The cultural place concerns connections people have to land in all its forms, which can be, for example, ancestral, more practical for daily use, and spiritual. It is important to get to know the local cultural understanding of a place, in order to see the less visible forms of dispossession. In the case of the Bujagali dam, and in many others I am sure, the importance of this focus has always been quite absent. Getting to know the cultural place, allows to understand alternative forms of dispossession than those addressed in compensation matters, which is central to this thesis. It lays bare the cultural valuation there is of this place. Moreover, when the actual local culture is taken into account in compensation processes the impact on the local population can be handled far better, and it acknowledges the people that live in the area, and what is important to them.

Chapter V

Changes in the land- and waterscape of the White Nile river

Today I decided to take a walk along the Nile in the area of Jinja town. It is a warm day and I have not set a certain route to walk, but I will just start and see what is there. There is a sand path that leads to the 'bodabridge' to cross the river. People walk here, go by bodaboda or on a bicycle. Alongside the path there are small self-made houses where people live, I assume. I walk over the path and halfway over the bridge. A bit higher is the bridge of the railway. I have heard that is not used often anymore. Under this bridge and along the path towards the bodabridge crops have been planted. Different crops are cultivated on both sides of the path. On the other side of the river there is a place where people can easily access the water and where men are cleaning their bodabodas. Standing on the bridge I can hear the birds, that cannot easily be heard in the city. There is not a lot going on on the water. From where I am standing I see three boats, on one I see a fisherman and on the others I am not sure. On the other side of the bridge and on the other side of the river are factories and breweries. There is more industry and smoke is coming from the buildings. The one side of the river is more serene and a nice scenic area, whereas the other side has more business-like and industrial scenery. On the 'quiet' side of Jinja there are big houses that look expensive in comparison to other places of Jinja. The landsides are hilly and there is a lot of green. Somewhere in the distance music is being played.

- Field notes 13-12-2018

5.1 Introduction

Everybody sees an area in a different way, as is the case for the land- and waterscape surrounding the Bujagali Falls. Officials might see an opportunity for development, factory holders might see the area as fit for their business, due to its location and possibilities, whereas the local population sees it as the area in which they live. Focussing on this last group, the people living near the Bujagali dam, make extensive use of the area and spend most of their time here. It is where people work, live, and play (Schlosberg 2013). As Schlosberg explains, in studying environmental (in)justice, an understanding of the environment as the place where people work, live and play is important. It makes the big outside world more tangible and something to be actively studied. Moreover, the people living in this area have the strongest sense of place and actively create the cultural place. Hence, the place is the lived space of the experience of individuals (Low 2017).

Looking at the area from this perception, shows that an important change has been the presence of governmental control. It has affected how people are able to use their environment, their sense of security even, and their independence. Furthermore, disruption in the water- and landscape has also disrupted people's experience of it and, in turn, the local culture. Local culture influences the way people use and see their place, this environment, while at the same time, the environment also influences the local culture. Therefore, in order to understand affected people's perception of the land- and waterscape, this chapter portrays the place through their own eyes and their experiences of its changes. It looks at dispossession people have experienced on the scale of land and water loss and entails more of a macro perspective on this cultural place. It explains what the environment of this case actually means for the affected people and how they perceive it (Schlosberg 2013). Moreover, it includes the perceptions and experiences of people who are not always heard (Low 2017 & Rodman 1992).

I believe that if we want to understand the cultural place that has been disrupted and how dispossession has impacted people's lives, we first need to understand the actual place we are talking about. The environment is important for the local culture, and is part of creating and sustaining it. Hence, if we want to understand the cultural dimension of dispossession, we have to take the physical place into account. Hence, the question answered here is: *What are people's experiences concerning the changes in their natural surroundings caused by the Bujagali dam and how has this impacted the way they perceive the area?* The first section goes into the changes of the White Nile river, the waterscape, that people have perceived and experienced. The second section concerns perceptions and experiences concerning the changes in the landscape of Buganda, Busoga, some issues that concern people from both sides of the river, and future plans of the government, since these entail more changes in the area.

5.2 Waterscape

The change of the waterscape happened with the building of the dam. Nowadays, when you look north along the river Nile you will see the dam that cuts the rest of the river view off (see photo 2). People thought it would also become a bridge, which would make it easier to cross the river. This was experienced as an important aspect of the dam, because, as Winston, who has been actively involved in the process of the dam and its legal issues for local inhabitants, explains, many people who live here originate from Busoga, and it would economically be beneficial (interview 12-01). A bridge would enable people to visit families, it would give more job opportunities, and selling products would become easier.

However, this did not happen and the dam became nothing more than a horizontal object across the river that cannot be accessed easily or at all for most people, Monica explains (notes 22-11). It is as a bubble dropped has in this place, lacking adaption to its cultural surroundings. Besides the establishment of the dam on the river, it also changed the waterscape substantially in other ways.

For the water to flow through the dam and generate energy a reservoir had to be created, which made the river grow here considerably. Several people, most of whom used the river extensively in daily life, explained that it used to be about one third of its size today. The land that would be flooded by the river is marked with the use of small stone poles. On the side of Buganda, the government owns the land directly next to the river but on the side of Busoga, it concerns the land of local inhabitants. On the side of Busoga, the water has taken more land than officially planned and agreed upon (see photo 3). Even though the river cannot be fully controlled, this makes the situation even more difficult for the people who have to deal with this. It causes stress about the future and frustration when such unexpected changes happen.

Not only land has been taken by the river, the Bujagali falls also disappeared. The falls were multiple rapids in the river within short distance from each other, and were important for different reasons, for example tourism, fish population, quality of the water, and its spirituality. The building of the dam meant that the Bujagali falls, and with it the place where the Bujagali spirit is situated, would disappear. The big rocks in these rapids needed to be removed to create a reservoir for the dam to function. These rocks have been dumped on the riverbanks of Buganda (see photo 4a, 4b). Looking out over the water, an informant explains that the water used to go like ‘waaaah’, by which he means that there were many rapids and the flow was much faster in this part of the river; ‘the water used to be wild’. Since the area is quite hilly, he used to sit under a tree on his land from where he has a good view over the river. He used to come here, clear his head, and look at the scenery of the Bujagali falls. He still can do this, but the experience of the area has changed (see photo 5) (notes 11-01). This change in the flow of the river is mentioned by many, but the changes encompass more. At the waterfront in a village more to the west of Jinja (see map, Kyindi) fishermen explain that the level of Lake Victoria has decreased over time. The river originates from this lake and developments such as the Bujagali dam have led to a withdrawal of the lake on the banks. This consequence has also been determined by environmental activists (International Rivers ND; Kull 2006; NTVUganda 2015).

The broadening of the river and the removal of its big rocks, changed the face of the river significantly. Now, due to the relative calmness of the river, the population of large fish, mainly Nile Perch and Tilapia, has decreased significantly, which many people experience as a negative consequence. It used to have a very prominent place in both their food culture and their daily pursuits. Besides the decrease in presence of fish as change in the river, water plants have been able to survive. The lack of flow and the plants in the river have, according to some people, lead to a decrease in the quality of the water. A man explains that, in the past, they used the water ‘for cooking, fishing, washing, and even to drink’ (interview 2, 19-01). A woman states that ‘it was exciting when you go there’ (interview 1, 26-01). Now they make less use of the water, as do other people, since even though it is still used for such purposes, the liveliness of people on the river banks has decreased.

A final great change in the waterscape that people have perceived is the disappearance of the islands. The soil of these islands was very fertile which made it

suitable for people to grow their crops all year round. In general, people seemed to like the scenery of the islands. Concerning growing crops, some people are happy that they got a different piece as compensation on the main land, since this is easier to reach. Farmers used to row to the islands over the water, which was not always easy (interview 1, 30-11). However, the dynamics of the waterscape and its islands was a place that attracted many animals, amongst which different kinds of birds. The changes have led to the disappearance of these diversity in animals, it has affected the area's biodiversity (Restrepo 2007; NAPE 2007, 2009). As part of the mitigation measures for the negative impacts on the environment, the Kalagala offset was designed. It is a selected natural area that would function as a compensation for loss in biodiversity due to the Bujagali dam. In an Indemnity Agreement signed by International Development Association (World Bank) and the Republic of Uganda in 2007 it is stated that Uganda shall 'set aside the Kalagala Falls Site exclusively to protect its natural habitat and environmental and spiritual values in conformity with sound social and environmental standards acceptable to the Association.' (Restrepo 2007, 9). New plans for building the Isimba dam, however, would flood some of this offset. This project is not funded by the World Bank, and initially its inspection panel stated that the World Bank is, therefore, not responsible to act on these infringements (Inspection Panel 2018). Nonetheless, since this project would breach the Indemnity Agreement, the World Bank has worked together with the Ugandan government to mitigate in the impacts by expanding the Kalagala Offset (Nabwiiso 2019). In my research, nobody mentioned the Kalagala offset, and when I asked some people about it most did not know what it was. Thus, this offset was exclusively for the environmental impacts of the dam and do not benefit the local population.

5.3 Landscape

The Bujagali project was accompanied by the promise of the government that it would bring development and improve the situation of the local population. Therefore, in first instance, people were happy with the changes in the area, since it was in the interest of the dam, and would bring development. It seemed for the people that the costs of the loss of different environmental aspects would weigh up to the benefits that they were told they would get from it. To create an environment for the dam to function, a basin had to be created. This meant that upstream of the dam, the river had to grow in width to store more water and control the flow. Inevitably, the building of the Bujagali dam has changed the landscape. This section goes into the changes people have experienced regarding the landscape, and how they perceive the area now.

5.3.1 Buganda

Buganda is the region on the west side of the river, and it is the side from where, when allowed, the dam can be accessed. To discuss the changes of the landscape mentioned by local inhabitants, I will start from the banks of the river and move into the mainland from there.

The strip of land directly next to the water upstream of the Bujagali dam, has been assigned as an environmental piece of land. Here too, the strip is demarcated with the use of small stone poles and is controlled and falls under the protection of by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) (see photo 6). Since this land is owned by the government, the big rocks that used to be in the river and were demolished have been

dumped here (see photos 4a, 4b). Walking around on the environmental strip, Winston explains about the situation. The purpose of this environmental protection is to plant trees and plants to make up for the loss of some of the natural area. Therefore, people are not allowed to build anything in this area or grow crops, but it still happens. With the growing population and decreasing quantity and quality of land, the need for good land is growing. People try to find places to grow more crops, which leads to people using this area. Furthermore, Winston explains, it could be that locals already used this land to grow crops and are not giving up using this fertile ground for the NEMA. At the same time, some other people explain that they have a positive attitude towards the establishment of an environmental strip (interview 2, 05-12, notes 15-12). They say that the authority protects the area in a way that local people would not or could not do. These people worry that others would misuse the area and they want it to be preserved. However, Winston shared some of his concerns. He states that the NEMA is supposed to control and protect the area and stimulate the natural environment of the environmental strip. It could be that the environmental strip is used as a strategic move by the government to own land close to the river, in case they need to use more for purposes such as factories or wood production for export. Crops are not removed from the area, which allows people to use this land to a certain extent. At the same time, its actions against anything that has been built in this area are quite strict. When the NEMA comes to check in the area, farmers who have illegally built something are punished. However, it turns a blind eye to the factories and their practices in the area.

As explained in the context, this area has been an industrial area for centuries already. However, the power centre Bujagali has made the area more attractive for more and more factories to settle. This does not happen on a terrain separated from the villages, they are built wherever convenient, which is also in between the villages. Such developments of the area bring consequences for the environment. For one, the emissions can be seen and smelled walking around in the villages. People complain of the air quality that they are living in now. But also, dirty water and other waste is dumped here (interview 1, 30-11). In general, the industrial practices harm both the natural environment and people's health. Many local villagers experience the changes and influences of the factories on the environment as negative. The factories change the environment, and add considerably to the change in the landscape on the west side of the river. Some people from outside the area see the factories as development (interview 2, 19-01). Even though, some locals also perceive them as development (interview 1&2, 05-12), for most it is experienced as a burden and a negative change.

In Buganda, not only the land that has been flooded by the river had to be compensated but also the land that is ascribed for environmental protection. Moving land inwards, passing the small stone poles the rest of the villages begins, since this is where people can actually build their houses. A big change in the area regarding the villages is the establishment of Naminya resettlement.

Naminya Resettlement

Naminya Resettlement can be found in the hills of Buganda, about six kilometres west of the river (see map), and can only be reached over not particularly well maintained dirt roads that lead you into the hills. The resettlement has been created as a place for people to be resettled to, and was part of the compensation. Before the creation of the settlement, the area was a property of one family that rented out land to neighbouring villagers for their

cattle to graze. A former user of this ground, Peter, and people currently living in the resettlement explained that there used to be 'nothing' when resettled people arrived. The resettled community got to choose who was going to live in which stone house that had been built as part of the compensation they received, and where plants and trees were going to be grown. Over time the area has changed further by growing more trees, building not only more houses but also a church. People currently living in the resettlement explained that a school had been built for the children in this area, boreholes for water provision were created, there was a fishpond, a medical centre has provided for locals, a market was built to make it easier to sell products, and people live in stone houses and receive power. The resettlement is also known as Muyenga, which refers to an area in the hills of Kampala where many rich people live. The reason for it is the stories of good facilities such as a healthcare centre and a primary school, which would make living there very luxurious. Arguably, the facilities in the resettlement sound much better than a grass house without electricity, from where one would have to sell products or walk to a distant market. However, these facilities in the area have not always worked out so well.

Our translator who lives in Naminya resettlement, Simone, explained that the school is closed due to a lack of schooled teachers in the area and mutual distrust of money management of the school. She also explains that one borehole is already 'spoiled', which means that it is not working anymore. The fishpond was 'spoiled' due to misuse of power by certain people responsible for it in their village. The power that is provided for inhabitants of Naminya resettlement is still expensive, too expensive according to some. Small power poles that transport this power make a constant buzzing noise and the transmission line with its towers goes through the villages (interview 1, 25-11). The medical centre only has space for a few people and does not always have sufficient supplies. The market is in a different village and it is not in use, it is also referred to as a 'ghost market'. The intention of an extra market is good but, apparently, it is not integrated in the local structures of daily life, since it is not used to sell and buy products. Two former fishermen – not happy with their current situation – state that there used to be 34 households in the resettlement and now there are only 20. They say that people have left because of the living circumstances. They have sold their house and moved somewhere else 'Far away, even Kenya. They decided to sell and go' (interview 1, 29-11). Moreover, they think more people will leave if nothing changes. It is quite interesting to hear these men talking like this about the resettlement, since walking around in Naminya resettlement there are mostly women present. In some way, most men have already left the resettlement and are spending more time with their co-wives, whom they were able to marry with the compensation money. Sometimes men visit Naminya resettlement, but it is not often.

Some people that have remained in the area of Naminya resettlement, explain that the situation in their previous village close to the river is much better now, since development is happening there and it is becoming more of a city, whereas the villages in the hills are left behind (interview 3, 08-12). There is a certain jealousy from people living in Naminya resettlement of those still living in their previous villages close to the river. At the same time, there is also jealousy towards those living in Naminya resettlement from the people in other villages, due to the previously discussed promises of facilities that were made (interview 1, 12-12).

Thus, not only has the landscape directly next to the river changed but also further in the hills, where a new living area has been created with all types of stories, expectations, and feelings such as jealousy.

5.3.2 Busoga

On the east side of the river, in the Busoga region, people have seen the same changes of the river itself. However, their view now also includes more and more factories that are being built on the other side of the river. On the Busoga side of the river there is no environmental strip, just a demarcated area that is now government's property for the river to flow. Walking along the Nile over his land, a secretary of one of the villages explains that the places the water has not reached are still being used to grow crops by local inhabitants. However, the government has bought land that is being used for growing trees which, according to this man, are used for timber to export. The government is looking for expansion of such areas and wants to plant more trees, supposedly for the protection of the environment, but local people are not easily agreeing or willing to sell. They do not trust such efforts due to previous experiences of changes in their landscape. A villager explains that they do not mind having more trees in the area, it is the government's reason behind it that matters. It could be that it is to make up for the environmental loss of the dam and/or factories, or to create a more scenic area, or to plant trees that will be used for timber to be exported, or for the government to own more land and have more space to execute future plans (notes 11-01; interview 2, 17-12; interview 3, 09-01). A villager who has been involved with the developments in the process, states that they do not want 'them' to plant the trees, also saying 'I don't want your trees'; they want to do it themselves. He states that the government does not look ahead and is only looking for ways to increase foreign income (interview 3, 09-01).

Besides the presence of the government, there are more and more *mzungu* people (white people) settling down in the area. The *bazungu* (plural of *mzungu*) buy large pieces of land and built large houses on it, who were attracted by the scenery of the area. In some areas, these developments have affected the access villagers have to the river, since some *bazungu* do not allow other people on their property. Furthermore, an Indian entrepreneur has bought land to open a large hotel, who also seems to be very strict. The area attracts many people with a higher income, wanting to buy large pieces of land. These processes change the face of the environment, which can clearly be seen standing on the Buganda side of the river. From there, you can see many large houses on the landscape of Busoga, which is also referred to as the *mzungu* strip; the place where many white people have settled (notes 15-12). The access to the river has been further restricted due to the hilliness of the area which makes going to the river more difficult (see photo 7).

5.3.3 General landscape issues

For the population in the villages on both side of the river upstream of the dam, the water would flood their land due to the widening of the river, and, hence, some people had to give up (a part of) their land. People explain that if the government wants land, they will take it even if a person is not willing to sell. There was not really a choice for people whether to do this or not, since it is stated in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda that the government can take land from anyone when 'the taking of possession or acquisition is necessary for public use or in the interest of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health' (Government of Uganda 1995, Article 26 Section 2). When this happens, fair and adequate compensation is to be provided and the ability for anyone to go to court who has an interest or ownership of this land. Hence, in this case,

people had to give up their land, but they would receive a new piece of land as compensation or a certain amount of money, based on the amount of land they would lose. Outsiders came to the area to determine whose land would be lost and what the value of this land would be for compensation. Owners of this land do not feel like they were included in this process and people do not think this is fair (interview 1&2, 26-01).

The extensive use of land in daily life inevitably creates a connection between the people and the land they own; it is an integral part of a family's existence. Not surprisingly, the Bujagali dam and the loss of land due to the growth of the river brought difficult decisions for the choice of compensation for the local population. This land was ascribed to them; they did not have a lot to say about it. Someone in Busoga does explain that people were offered land or a place to live in Naminya resettlement. However, most people land here on this side of the river because Naminya resettlement is too far away and people did not want to move there, even though the amount and quality of land were less (interview 18-01). Hence, there seemed to be some options for a few people.

In this experience of compulsory land acquisition, some affected people say that, at the time, they gave up their land willingly. However, there are also experiences that include force. A chairperson in Busoga says that 'It hurts in my heart that it happens like this and that people lose their land. They will come with their guns so it makes it impossible to resist' (interview 1, 09-01). Having to give up land came with the promises of development, of jobs, and of a better situation for those affected. Now, looking back at these promises years later, some claim that they have not been fulfilled, and the changes in the area and their personal losses are no longer seen as weighing up against what they received in return. Several people said that they were promised official land rights but this never happened: 'They were like "To hell with you" and nobody received a land title still today' (interview 2, 09-01).

People have to bear a big burden of the imbalance in positive and negative effects of the project. Even though the project is aimed at reducing poverty, it has appeared to be difficult for directly affected people to deal with changes and disruption of their environment, which also increases the risk of poverty. Therefore, now, the consequences people have to deal with in daily life are much heavier and more difficult than what the project has brought to the people. It was not easy for people to go to court if they wanted to fight the decision making of compensation for their land and everything on it, for land rights, or anything else. Talking to a mother, whose children have moved to the city to look for alternative ways to earn money, she says that if they would go to court, their cases are put on the bottom of the pile. She explains that you need to money in order to be heard: 'I am poor, when you are poor you cannot talk. Only the rich people can say something ... They listen to that one who have money' (interview 1, 26-01). People spend a lot of time using their land. As previously mentioned, most people are born here and they have seen what happens. When there are problems with land property, it can be solved locally with, when needed, the help of the council and elders. Elders can help in solving disputes because 'they are elders so they know' (interview 1, 12-12). Land has been integrated in people's lives and in the local culture for generations now. There was a system people created themselves to live on and from the land. When there were problems that led to difficulties for people to live on and of their land, it would be solved locally. Hence, the local culture was shaped in such a way to deal with land issues and, in turn, land also shaped the local culture.

5.3.4 Future governmental plans

People in Busoga are under extra pressure due to governmental plans that Jinja will officially become a city (interview 11-01, interview 2, 26-01). What this technically entails, is not clear but people do feel pressured by it. A woman who lost more land to the river than expected, is worried about these developments. She explains that she is afraid that the measurements and valuations done by officials earlier, will be used for other purposes than only the compensation process regarding the Bujagali dam; that they will use the information from the previous measurements for the purpose of developing Jinja (interview 11-01). In line with these plans, a woman and a man who are both farmers and who have to sell land to be able to afford school fees for their children, say that people need to have official land rights. They are urged by the government to have official documents of their land but people do not have and do not receive the means to arrange this. They find this is contradictory. The government is getting more involved and the area becomes more regulated, since people need to have a plan for their house and their land, he says (interview 2, 26-01). Furthermore, Winston explains that people who own large pieces of land also have to pay more taxes than they used to (notes 12-01). This makes having and buying large pieces of land less attractive. He also explains that people are told to set up businesses that will develop their land. He says it is a way of the government to make more money from the people living there, since they would also have to pay more taxes (notes 12-01). Such initiatives from the government of taxing and commercialising small local businesses slowly change daily activities and income generating activities.

Responsibility for development of the area, is partly put on local's shoulders but they have no insight in or influence on possible future plans, for which land could be taken away, which is something people have heard will happen. On the east side of the river, the government wants to buy 100 meters more land inwards along the river (interview 2, 09-01; interview 2, 26-01). People are told this is for environmental protection and to plant trees, as previously discussed. However, everybody I have talked to about this is worried about such developments and do not see how they can benefit from it. Especially, since many do not feel their losses in the past were worth what they have received. Future plans of the government are still threatening to the people living on the land in this area. On the west side of the river, the future of the landscape does not seem too bright either, due to the increasing amount of factories. More and more factories have come to the area, and people can be asked to sell their land. If they do not, it can become a new case of compulsory land acquisition in which people are forced. A man living close to the river explains that he used to own land on the islands. As compensation for this loss, he received new land in a village further away. He says that he does not want to live in an area that is so polluted and bad for his health, and that he would be willing to sell if he was asked. Answering the question of where he would go he mentions the village where his new land is 'but it can be any other place' (interview 1, 30-11).

5.4 Discussion

This part of the research and this chapter had the aim of answering the sub-question *What are people's experiences concerning the changes in their natural surroundings caused by the Bujagali dam and how has this impacted the way they perceive the area?* In doing so, this chapter goes into a macro perspective of this cultural place. It concerns the loss of landscape experienced by people, which concerns a description of the entire area through

the eyes of the local population. It concerns interpretations and experiences rather than facts. This way, I tried to avoid looking at the environment and taking it for granted as how I see it as a researcher – an outsider. Hence, this chapter operationalises the concept of environmental justice, as it puts an emphasis on the people and the environment conditions of their daily life, but does not neglect the natural environment itself; the water- and landscape (Schlosberg 2007; 2013). For the compensation process, the area has been valued by outsiders, they have determined what aspects actually make this specific area, and, moreover, what is important and are its values. By trying to go beyond these perspectives and focus on the one that is important here – that of the affected people – it gives voice to those who have been ignored throughout the process or have not been taken into account enough (Low 2017; Rodman 1992). Moreover, wanting to research the cultural place and people's understanding of the place, consists of how people have perceived these changes. These are the matters which are important for people in their daily pursuits and partly make the water- and landscape into the *place* it is for the people of the villages in the area (Cross 2001).

The environment of this case concerns the water- and landscape upstream of the Bujagali dam. The first section of this chapter discussed the local perception on the waterscape and its changes. This concerns, for example, the growth in size and the disappearance of the falls, which has led to a much calmer river. There also used to be islands in the river, which have all been flooded now. Animals used to live on these islands and some were used for farming. Concerning making use of the river, a decrease in fish population and the quality of water are issues that are mentioned by many. Tilapia and Nile Perch are much less present and the calmer river is a good environment for water plants to grow. The plants have made the water less suitable to be used for cooking and cleaning, according to local villagers. Living near such a source of water inevitably shapes the life of people. It is much more than meets the eye and part of the local culture (Hess, Ribeiro & Wieprecht 2016; Schlosberg 2007).

The loss of land entails more emotions and feelings regarding the changes people have experienced. People have received some form of compensation for that what they would lose, but still many feel like they lost; there are still issues of dispossession. The reason for it is that many affected people state that promises and expectations have not been lived up to. The place where people live and have been living for most or all of their life has changed, and their experiences with it are quite invasive and unfair. Moreover, land is inherited and has often been in the family for quite some time. People feel less secure about their land, because the feeling has grown that the government will take it whenever deemed necessary, and there is nothing they can do about it. People's living environment is disrupted, and not in a good way.

Acknowledging and including the environment as such, is a recognition of the affected population and its traditions, cultures, and way of live (ibid.). Moreover, the processes and feelings affected people deal with also changes their sense of place. The concept of a person's sense of place regards the relationship this person has with a place, which is multidimensional. Beidler and Morrison (2016) have structured the concept into four dimensions; self, environment, social interaction, and time. Here, the affected people are the 'self' in this place. This self is set in a certain environment, and this chapter has set out people's experiences of the changes in their environment. Asking people about their experiences and perceptions of the area before the dam and in present time, makes people reflect on this time period and what it entails for them. The issues that people mention now,

are part of their sense of place and gives more insight in how they experience not only the changes due to the dam but also how they perceive the area in general. The influence of time on people's sense of place is not only based on past experiences, but also the plans for the future. The increasing presence of the government and growing amount of factories in the future, for example, influences the way people feel in the area. Some are considering moving somewhere else, because they feel like the environment they live in is going to be worse.

Moreover, it gives a more inclusive understanding of the dispossession people have faced and still do. As Butler and Athanasiou argue that people are inherently connected to the external factors of their environment. People are sustained by the environment they live in and, hence, the environment also creates the way people live. This interconnectedness of people and their surroundings, inherently leads to dispossession in disruptions such as the Bujagali dam. The changes of the river, inevitably changes people's experience of the area and their ability of using the river to sustain a livelihood. It is the same for the landscape, but this does have a different base. The river used to be a place where everyone could go to and make use of; it was a shared source for different activities and there was plenty of it. The change in the landscape, however, is quite different. Control of the government and how it shapes the area has increased considerably. Hence, dispossession regarding the landscape is also authoritative. How to move, make use, and relate to the area changes due to growing control of the government. The environmental strip, plans to buy more land, the Bujagali dam, and the increased presence of officials in the area, change the appropriation of the place and the role it has in people lives. There are experiences of violence, corruption, insecurity, and loss of control.

The external influence from the government affects people's sense of place. There is a growing control and authority from the government. The increasing presence of the government is felt in promises that have not been lived up to (they will do what they want), in buying land which is now under its control, and future plans for the area. It is an important part of how people understand and live in the area, and affects local culture. This can be clarified with Low's concept of the social production of space. A place and its culture cannot only be studied by looking at people's sense of place. The physical creation of the space by building the Bujagali dam has led to the uneven development; locally affected people often feel like their situation has changed due to this development project. It rebuilds an environment to reach the goals of the Ugandan government but it destroys the environment people live in (Low 2017).

Overall, the change in the waterscape has affected people's possibilities in how they use their environment. Fisher(wo)men used to be very present, which has decreased greatly. This is not just part of gaining an income, it is a way of life and part of people's identity. The loss of land brought insecurities about the future, loss of family inheritance, loss of income, and for some loss in accessibility. This affects people's sense of place but also people's cultural understanding and the meaning they give to the environment, since local culture and the environment its in mutually shape and sustain each other.

Chapter VI

Adjustments in daily life

They told us that many women of the community work on the sugarcane plantation and are back around 14:00. When we ask about the men, they start laughing and say that the men do not work there. Issues that are mentioned are that the resettlement is far away from school. The school in the resettlement is closed and other schools are far away. The same is for work, jobs are far away which makes it difficult for people to find a good job. They cannot live as they used to before because the ground here is not good for their crops, it is not fertile, and they cannot fish anymore. Now they have to find a different source of income, which is the sugarcane factory and there are very strict rules in this job. The women work everyday from very early in the morning until 13:00. They cannot skip a day or they will be cut off from their job.

- Field notes 25-11-2018; Introduction to Naminya Resettlement

6.1 Introduction

A disruption in an environment, such as building the Bujagali dam, inevitably disrupts the livelihood of those living in this area, especially when the use of land is quite intense, as will become clear in the stretch of this chapter. Thus, a change in a person's direct environment or having to be resettled, inevitably changes the structures of one's daily life. In turn, these changes also affect the cultural valuation local people have of their environment, since daily life is inherently cultural (Escobar 2001). The place where people live is created by people's social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of this material setting (Low 2011). Hence, analysing the daily practices and local people's experiences of changes thereof will provide more insight in the cultural meaning given to the land- and waterscape of the river Nile. In turn, getting to know the adjustments people had to make in daily life sheds light on dispossession they had to deal with. The affected people in the villages upstream of the Bujagali dam, either had to be resettled or have had to deal with changes of the river itself, loss of land, and government controlling in the area. Many men used to fish generate an income for their family, but some women also put a net in the water to catch some fish throughout the day (interview 3, 07-12). Every person I have talked to grew crops for their own consumption. Hence, many families did both; fishing and farming. People used the river as well as their land in daily practices and to sustain their livelihoods. Therefore, the focus of this chapter is on the changes in every day life that people have experienced and had to adjust to.

The most important daily life issues that have come up by talking to people, will be discussed here. These issues have been structured into three sections. The first section concerns the adjustments in life regarding water use. It contains the role of the river in people's daily life; how they had to adjust to the changes of the river and changes of their living environment. The second is about the changes in the landscape and how this has made people adjust their daily practices. These two sections discuss Naminya resettlement separately, because there are certain issues that only affect the people living here, or affect them differently. The third section discusses issues that have changed in daily life that are less related to the change in the water- or landscape, but are a consequence of the dam. All in all, this second empirical chapter will answer the sub-question *How have people adjusted their daily lives and livelihoods due to the project of the dam and how has it shaped local culture?*

6.2 Effects of changes in the waterscape

For most of the people I have talked to, life before the dam was quite different. The river has always been very important in making a living and it made the area attractive for people to settle, for businesses to settle, and for tourists to visit. Locally, the change of the river inevitably changed its role in people's life and how they made use of it. One thing that became clear is the intense use of the river by the local population. An elder living in Naminya resettlement, who lived next to the river her whole life, says 'water is life, water is for everything' (interview 2, 07-12). The first part of this section, goes into the role water of the river had in daily life and how change has affected people negatively. Second, the influence of the change in the presence of fish will be discussed, followed by the role of tourism in the area. Finally, some specific issues for people who were resettled to Naminya resettlement will be elaborated upon.

6.2.1 Water in daily life

The river provided for different aspects of people's livelihood that mainly consisted of household tasks, food, and income. This has decreased considerably due to the fact that the river itself has changed but also the access to the river is limited. On the east side of the river it is mainly investors who have bought land for hotels, which limit the access to the river, and white people who have bought land to live there (interview 2&3, 09-01). On the west side of the river the environmental strip prohibits people in their daily tasks, since less activity is allowed there. The factories that are also present on the west side of the river are more closed off and do not allow outsiders on their property. Some are located close to the river (see map), which prohibits access to the river here. When people do get to the river, the changes of the river itself further prohibit their usual activities. The water quality has decreased due to a change in the flow which also allowed water plants to grow. Therefore, the water has become less suitable for cooking, washing clothes, bathing, and drinking. The riverbanks used to be busy with people fetching water, bathing, washing clothes, and fishing (interview 2, 19-01). Now the use of the river has changed considerably, and it can no longer be used in the same way; 'there is nothing anymore' a man living on the west side and close to the river says (interview 1, 30-11).

To make up for the lack of water access, boreholes were provided. However, these are not always up to standards and often overcrowded. A chairperson on the east side of the river explains that they have two boreholes for 5000 people, that is not enough. Another one was built but this got 'spoiled' (interview 1, 09-01). Often, boreholes are 'spoiled', which means that these do not work anymore, and makes the functioning ones overcrowded. The river provided endless water supply, this is not the case anymore, which can lead to violence when it becomes too crowded (interview 2, 19-01). The boreholes have become more important in the villages, but they do not live up to the standards and do not fulfil the loss of water access sufficiently. The growing population is also not helping here. The amount of people in the area is, despite the bad circumstances for many, still increasing. Hence, getting water and the use of water had to be adjusted, which leads to changes in daily practices that partly make the local culture.

Besides these uses of water, the river also provided fish, which was important for consumption and as a source of income.

6.2.2 Fish

One important issue in many people's lives, no matter what clan or tribe someone belongs to, is fish. Over generations it has become an inherent part of the local culture in this area. This is not surprising of course, with a river as a backyard, but it should not be taken for granted or underestimated either. To the question what they used to do at the river, a mother and daughter answered 'it is the common answer of things such as fishing and washing. Now, fish is too expensive to buy' (interview 1, 26-01). The waterscape partly shaped the lives of the local population and fish had become very present and very important for most people; it shaped the local culture. The presence of fish in the local culture has different forms. It was most important as part as people's diet and a source of income, especially Nile Perch and Tilapia, it was so present that people 'used to boil water, run to the river, catch fish and when they came back the water was cooking and they could prepare it' (interview 19-11). People living here, and their ancestors, have integrated fish in their diet. The decrease of the population of these fish in the area changed this food culture substantially, both for the people living close to the river as for the people living in Naminya

resettlement. An elder couple living on the east side of the river explain their 'buffet' is the most significant change in their life. Fish was very important and their life used to be good; they used to eat fish and have a good buffet. Now, the man explains, fish has become very expensive and their 'buffet is not so good anymore' (interview 2, 17-12). Another resident of the resettlement also emphasises that 'fish is important in our diet, otherwise it is not complete' (interview 2, 29-11), and an elder woman says that they used to be stronger because they had better food (interview 2, 07-12). The area people live in has influenced people's food culture and used to be an inherent part of their lives. This type of food was caught by people themselves and a way for them to sustain their family.

Catching fish has often been taught to people by their family members who are or have been fisher(wo)men. People were more independent when it considered food, since most of the people were able to fish. It made their diet more diverse, since there is no affordable substitute now. Now, instead of a net and a boat, people need money, and quite a lot too. Fish can still be bought on the market, where other fisher(wo)men sell their products but it is expensive, too expensive for most people. The fish is caught in from other parts of the river or Lake Victoria, where they are more present. One man explains that a fish costs 30.000 Ugandan shilling to feed a family (interview 1, 30-11), which is about €7,50 and a lot of money for most people living here. Which brings the second important role fish used to have in the local culture; a source of income.

Most people I have talked to come from a family of fisher(wo)men. This tradition has made Nile Perch and Tilapia an important part of the local population's income. Thus, besides as part of people's 'buffet' or 'diet', fish was also important for a family's income and the ability of sustaining a livelihood, which is another way of how fishing played a substantial role in the local culture. A man living in Naminya resettlement describes that men used to catch the fish, give it to the women, and when they came back with a new batch the old batch was already sold. Life was always 'moving' (interview 2, 29-11). Most fishermen have lost their job, and thus their family's main source of income. A NAPE employee states that 'Communities used to live from the river, now this source of food is less stable' (interview 19-11). It was part of a local economy with fast transactions. Moreover, people say that the banks of the river were often busier than they are nowadays. There was a whole business around it which attracted people from outside this area (interview 1, 17-12). Concrete structures were built where fish could be weighed and organised (see photo 8). Moreover, people learned how to fish from their family member and did not receive a different type of education. Therefore, it has become extra difficult to find a different job, when the most important thing they learned was fishing; 'It has become very challenging for fishermen' (interview 1, 17-12). As a result, former fishermen are struggling a lot with providing an income for their family. People's income always consisted of small amounts of money in a short period of time. People learned from their family members how to sustain themselves in the situation they live in. 'Life used to be good' the eldest woman of Naminya resettlement, also called 'the mother of the resettlement', explains (interview 2, 07-12). Now, their steady source of income has partly disappeared. The water is not flowing as it used to and now only smaller fish can be caught, which does not lead to enough income. Fishing as a source of income disappeared almost completely for most people when the dam came.

The loss of fish has greatly impacted people's sense of place regarding the river. Fishing for food and fishing to generate an income made the practice important for people, and being a fisher(wo)men was for some all they knew. It is part of their identity, part of

who they are. A Naminya resettlement villager says that it is 'psychologically not okay if the man cannot work. He is the one that should provide the income in the household but there is no work, so this is not possible' (interview 2, 25-11). Fishing was part of the local culture and crucial for many men in providing for their family. Earning an income is generally ascribed to the man of the household, whereas women are responsible for feeding the family and other household tasks. Now, these men cannot fish anymore and cannot fulfil this responsibility of generating an income. Money from the compensation was often spend quickly after they had received it, and now there is no more to sustain their family. However, women are still responsible for taking care of the family. Hence, due to existing cultural structures and habits that have not been taken into account, the loss of fish as an income has resulted in many difficulties for families and puts pressure on many women. It is not only the practice of fishing that is no longer possible but it also has a greater effect on people in the communities, due to the way it was integrated in the local culture and how the families and communities functioned. The area they live in cannot be used in the same way as they used to, with all its consequences and adaptations to be made. Accordingly, it changes the way people make use of their environment and how it influences their lives.

Besides the change in the presence of fish in the river, a more human presence changed too; tourism.

6.2.3 Tourism

Besides boats with fisher(women), the river and the Bujagali falls were also visited by tourists. They were attracted by the scenery of the area but also to the ability to do water sports, such as canoeing and rafting. Wherever tourists are, money can be made. Local villagers were able to sell some of their products such as food, and crafts and artifacts they made. They could also sell services, such as bodaboda rides, entertainment with traditional dancers, and work as guides in the area. There were more possibilities also in other parts of the sector for people to earn money. Concerning hospitality, there used to be more local initiatives for campsites and people who worked in hotels. Walking around in Jinja, a man who works in tourism explains that there are people who used to work in this sector and have lost their jobs, due to a decrease in tourism. Moreover, tourists who visited the falls often stayed in town for a while from which local shop owners profited. They also feel the decrease, he says. People near the Nile but also people in the city have lost their shops or their jobs (notes 09-12). All in all, tourism was quite an accessible way for people to earn money, which has largely changed due to the Bujagali dam that changed the face of the river. However, tourism does find new ways, from which local villagers can profit. For example, during an interview, tourists on quad bikes ride through the village. This is a collaboration with tourist operators, who give some money to the community of the villages they pass through. The local villager talks about it as something positive as it is an initiative from which they can still benefit (notes 09-01). For me personally, sitting there and quad bikes driving through the villages on its dirt roads felt quite invasive and interruptive. However, it seemed that the benefits of this tourism are more important than the peace in the village.

As is the same for fishing, people's role in tourism was a way of earning money more independently. People would sell their own products and there were more local campsites. There were more local initiatives and people were their own boss. Now, there seems to be a trend in which people have to work for somebody or receive money from tour operators instead of making money from their own initiatives. Of course, there are also downsides to tourism, as a chairman explains that children now go to school instead of begging for

money from tourists. He says that working in tourism and begging are not structural plans, and going to school is. Children who go to school can contribute more to their family's wellbeing on a long term. There is also more social control in their village to make sure that children are not skipping school (notes 09-01). Still, changes in tourism fit in the trend of growing involvement from outsiders, which are for example the government and entrepreneurs building large hotels. The place is valued and appropriated differently due to these changes and processes. The influence from outside is growing in different ways and the local population feels it happening and try to adjust to it in daily life.

6.2.4 Naminya resettlement

The ones who experienced perhaps the biggest consequences of the changed river, are arguably those who needed to be resettled. These people had to move from living (almost) directly next to the river to about six kilometres away from the river. Most of them used to live in Kikubamutwe, the village closest to the dam on the west side. Naminya resettlement can only be reached over small dirt roads, which are prone to weather conditions. Due to its location, accessibility both to and from the resettlement is limited. Accordingly, the resettlement delinked the town from the river and the community needed to find a different approach of sustaining a livelihood. In line with previous sections, many of the villagers used to be fisher(wo)men, but for most people it is no longer possible to do this. Even if they would want to fish, the change of the river makes it impossible to do it the way they were used to. A fish pond was provided by NAPE which would give people the opportunity to generate an income and keep fish in their diet (interview 19-11). However, due to bad maintenance this pond got 'spoiled'. Allegedly, eleven people were responsible for the functioning of this pond, but one or a few abused this power (interview 1, 05-01). Even though it did not become clear to me what exactly had happened, it is clear that the presence of fish in the local culture cannot be solved by fish ponds, nor can it replace the connection people felt to the practice. Fish ponds do not do justice to the actual role fish and the practice of fishing had in the lives for many people. What makes it more complicated is the fact that many people have not received or finished an education. They only learned from their family how to fish and this used to be enough to sustain a livelihood (interview 2, 29-11; interview 1, 07-12).

Besides fishing, the river was used for many other household practices. Now, people have to get water from a borehole for such tasks. While we are walking to a borehole to get water, Steven, a villager of Naminya resettlement, explains that the one standing a few meters away got spoiled, so now there is only this one that they can use. People have to think strategically about when to get water so that they do not always end up waiting in a line. Fetching water has become more difficult and more insecure. The endless source of water from the river is no longer available for this community and they depend on the functionality of the boreholes. The community being delinked from the river also has complications for the use of land. Further away from the river, their land is less fertile. Even if people have received a larger piece of land, about which claims differ, it is that much less fertile and they are not able to grow the same crops as they were used to (interview 19-11; notes 25-11; interview 1; interview 2, 29-11; interview 2, 30-11; interview 11-01). This will be further elaborated upon in the following section about the effects of the change in landscape.

6.3 Effects of changes in the landscape

In order for the dam to function land had to be flooded by the river. Consequently, people lost their land and their crops on this land. Besides fishing as a source of income, farming was also important. Land loss meant that people either had less land to farm on, when they received money as compensation, less fertile land, or land further away, when they chose new land as compensation. Hence, the dam has affected the ability for people to grow crops, which is being done for personal consumption and to sell. Furthermore, the changes in the landscape, large sums of compensation money, and growing insecurity, has put pressure on family structures, for which the burden it often carried by women. After discussing these matters, and some specific issues of Naminya resettlement, this section will end with explaining some feelings and emotions people have expressed concerning the impact of the changes in the landscape.

6.3.1 Crops

People did not only lose their land but also their crops on this land, for which compensation was provided in terms of money. It was not my intention to dive into the official process and figure out exactly what happened, how much money people received, and what the conditions for compensation were. However, many people stated that this was not a fair process and compensation was even decreased over time. A man living on the east side of the river denied picking up his cheque of compensation money because he wanted to make a case against the process. He showed us the official papers of compensation and how the amount was decreased in a second valuation of their crops, keep in mind that 4.000 Ugandan shilling is about €1, -. One person was to receive 1,9 million shillings, but only received 400.000; which is 1,5 million shillings less than this person was promised. Another person was supposed to receive 500.000 shillings but only received 100.000. The reason given for this decrease was that only mature crops would be compensated and younger crops were left out. People did not receive enough money to sustain themselves for the long term. The man explains that he always refused to collect his cheque because he wanted to fight this matter. He was the last one to eventually collect his money, after at least six months. The compensation was determined by officials from the government and there was no negotiation possible (interview 3, 09-01).

More people have mentioned this as unfair; valuers from outside come to the area, have a look around and go to the city to determine the amount of valuation based on what they have seen. Another issue is that valuers came multiple times but there was no deadline given until when they could dig or which crops would be taken into consideration in the compensation process. Thus, people kept on digging and working on their land, however, only the mature crops have been compensated. Furthermore, the man who did not collect his cheque for months, stated that he received less land in return than the amount he gave up. The compensation process is not only experienced as unfair by many but it has brought difficulties for the following period. The process of growing crops and selling became more difficult.

Many people had land close to the river where they harvested their crops and let cattle graze. Crops that can often be found on people's land are maize (see photo 9), coffee (see photos 10a, 10b), pawpaw (papaya), jackfruit, cassava, beans, sweet bananas, and matooke (see photo 11), which is a type of non-sweet banana used as a basic ingredient for several dishes. Same as for the fish, the crops were harvested to sell as well as to be used for their own consumption. There are different places where people go to to sell their

products. When people sell their products at a market, they go to Nairo and Mbiko on the west side of the river and Ambercourt on the east side. These are lively areas and popular to buy all sorts of products but are not close to home for everyone. Some people have to walk over an hour to get to the Mbiko market. Bodabodas are often too expensive but some people prefer this as a selling point over something closer to home, such as the 'ghost market' in Malindi (interview 1, 08-12). At these markets, income is for some apparently greater. However, one can also stay closer to home and buy from one of the many stands along the road. These make the streets more alive nearing the end of the day and it is mostly women who sit on the ground with the vegetables to sell. It can also be more personal where people visit each other and buy directly at someone's home. This source of income has changed drastically for the people in Naminya resettlement as well as for the people who could remain in their village. A man who inherited his land from his parents and has lost a significant part of it to the dam, explains that he cannot 'cultivate beans and different vegetables anymore' and he had to give up farming as an income all together (interview 2, 19-01), which has been the case for more people. Before the disruptions, even though income was not set, people had found a way to steadily generate an income.

6.3.2 Women, Men

In the area of the dam there is a cultural structure in which the expectations from women and men differ. This section will go into some of the issues of disruptions that appeared due to the changes in the living area, regarding the roles of women and men. It will not be a detailed description and analysis of the tasks ascribed to them. For more in-depth insights in this topic with a focus on women in Naminya resettlement, I refer you to the thesis of Annemarie van der Meer about the Bujagali dam. In this section, I will go into the dispossession as a consequence of a lack of attention for these cultural structures.

As explained in Chapter II, land is mostly given from father to son, and this land is central for a family to live on and from. In line with this tradition, men are considered the head of the household and are responsible for the family's income. Moreover, since a man inherits land from his father, he also becomes the owner of this land and everything that is on this land and that is harvested. Consequently, the men are the people who have received compensation money, not the women (interview 19-11). Where a man is the head of the household and responsible for an income, a woman carries the responsibility of providing food for her family. This means that she also works on the land often. The land people received as compensation is often not as fertile, and compensation money was not enough to buy the same amount of land of the same quality. Hence, a consequence felt by many is that it has become more difficult to grow crops, and compensation money does not sustain families as long as their previous land did.

Men are mostly responsible for generating an income for their family, and since they were the owners of the land, they are also charge of the compensation money. Compensation money was provided all at once, and most of them were not used to such an amount of money. It felt like this much money would last 'forever, and ever' (interview 1, 25-11). Moreover, this money made a lot of things more accessible, such as marrying more women. An elder representative of a village explains that it is a long standing tradition for men to have multiple wives (interview 1, 12-12). A woman living in Naminya resettlement says that 'men are womanisers, even when they wear a ring [even when they are married]'. Furthermore, she says that a man is the boss of the family and she 'has to be down, because it is his house and [she needs to] leave him to his power' (interview 3, 07-12). The elder

explains that a man needs to have a sufficient amount of land and money, in order to provide for these women. In turn, he explains that having multiple wives means they can help take care of this large piece of land. He says that, for most men, it is no longer possible to have multiple wives because it has become too expensive to take care of them and the children they would have (interview 2, 12-12). However, with the compensation money the men received, some felt like they could sustain more people so they married more women. Some women explain that they think this is okay as long as a man can sustain his wives and children (interview 1, 12-12). Moreover, the large sum of money led to men drinking more alcohol, gamble, and buy cars. Many men had no jobs and a lot of money to spend at once. When they cannot handle this amount of money 'they ate the money', which means that they were not spending it well and spent it too fast (interview 18-01).

Once compensation money was spent, this was no longer the case and women feel like they bear an even bigger burden. When they cannot grow enough crops to feed their family and money is not provided by their husbands, there is nothing else to do than start working and generate an income. This can be, for example, on the sugarcane plantation or in the factories. A woman who divorced her husband because he treated her badly, says that men are embarrassed about working around women at the sugarcane plantation. Instead, many have started drinking (interview 1, 08-12). Other women started laughing at the question of why men did not work on the sugarcane plantation as the women do and say that 'men do not work there' (notes 25-11). A former fisherman also explains that it is difficult for them to find a job, because all they know is fishing. To the question of why they do not start working on places as the sugarcane plantation as many women do, he says that this work is too heavy for them to do (interview 2, 29-11). Since a woman is often considered to be responsible for providing food for her family, even if there is no money, many women now carry the biggest burden of the project's consequences. A woman in Naminya resettlement states that the woman is the one who does everything now, taking care of the household as well as generating an income (interview 1, 25-11). Of course, there are also men who have found alternative jobs to provide an income for their family. Nonetheless, there seem to be strong ideas about what men and women should do, which also influence the way compensation money has been used and integrated in people's lives. The structure of their lives changed and with it the structures of the household with regard to expectations of men and women's responsibilities.

6.3.3 Naminya resettlement

Those who lost their house and land near the river could be resettled to Naminya resettlement. This resettlement already happened in 2001, and there are about 35 families who moved to the resettlement. In the mean time, quite some people have moved away because it did not feel good living there, due to the circumstances or because they did not know anyone; 'they decided to sell and go' (interview 2, 29-11). Some people decided not to go there at all but directly bought land or rented a house somewhere else (interview 2, 30-11). People reacted and acted differently to the choices they had.

Naminya resettlement has some issues which are mostly present in this area. First of all, the area where the resettlement has been created was previously used by people already living in the area. It was property of one person who rented it out to other people who could use it. While doing interviews in Naminya resettlement, the question came from people in surrounding villages why they were not included. It is not just the people in Naminya who were affected but also the people who were using the land before the resettlement was

established, Peter explains. He says that he, and before him his parents, rented this land to let their cattle graze. When the land was sold, they no longer had a place for their cattle, so they had to sell it. Thus, also for them, the dam led to a change in daily life, even though this was more indirectly (interview 10-01). Now, some of these people also work at the sugarcane plantation or in the factories. From working for themselves, people had to change to working for a boss. This was also the case for the people who now live in Naminya resettlement, Peter explains.

People who had to be resettled to Naminya not only lost most of their income, but due to the location of their resettlement, jobs that these people would be able to do are more difficult to find, because much of the 'action' still takes place near the river, the dam, and the factories. This combination makes earning an income with other jobs extra difficult. Markets to sell products are further away. Daughters and sons go to the market to buy and sell products, which is an hour and a half walking distance away. A market has been provided in Malindi, however, this is not in use (notes 22-11). People prefer other markets that are further away because that is where people come to buy products (interview 1 08-12; interview 3, 07-12). It is not clear why the Malindi market is not functioning as it is supposed to. For some reason it is not integrated well into the villages of this area. Furthermore, where people used to be able to sell products from home this is not possible anymore for the people living in Naminya resettlement (interview 1, 25-11).

Moreover, growing crops to sell has become more difficult. The land people have received as compensation is much less fertile than the land they used to own, when they still lived near the river. Due to a difference in fertility their current land is less suitable for growing crops intensively and it needs more time to recover. However, most people cannot afford this and are used to a different way of using their land. This has negative consequences for the abilities of the use of their land. Many people state that they are in need of fertiliser, but it is too expensive. Before, people were able to grow crops for their own consumption and to sell for extra income. For many families, it was part of quite a steady income. Farming and 'digging crops', as people locally referred to it, is an important aspect for many people's daily life, no matter from which tribe or clan people come from. With the land people have received or have bought with the compensation money, their use of it has also changed.

Another important issue people in Naminya resettlement have to deal with still today, is their access to firewood. It seemed that this was sorted out quite well in their lives previous to the dam. There were many trees they could grow and from which they could chop wood for fires to cook on. Now people have to walk further and even go to areas where it is illegal to find wood. It is most often women and children who collect firewood. They go when it is still dark, so they are less likely to get caught. However, the woods they go to are not close by, and on their way back they carry heavy loads of wood. While being in the resettlement at the end of the morning, we often saw children and women coming back, carrying a lot of heavy wood. Not only do people have to walk further now, since firewood is less present and accessible in the area, it is also a dangerous task. Women are at risk of getting raped when they walk at night, and there is a risk of getting caught and arrested. However, people do not have a choice and they need wood to prepare their food.

6.3.4 Emotions in the experiences of land loss

Land loss due to the dam has affected many aspects of daily life. The processes have an impact on how people feel about their situation and their connection to their land.

Moreover, pressure that people have been under, help that they did (not) get, and promises that have not been lived up to, bring up certain emotions. When people have accepted their situation as it is now this is because they feel that there is nothing they can do about it. While visiting people who moved to Naminya resettlement, an older couple said that they 'love it here ... because there is nowhere else to go' (interview 2, 25-11). Another man says that it is impossible to go back to the Nile where he came from. At first he missed his life, but now it is not bad because he can still visit his friends and family living there. Another man also explains that compensation was planned, so there was nothing they could do about it and he had to move along with the plans. People felt like they had to accept it 'because it was development' (interview 3, 08-12). Many express the feeling of not being able to do anything about it and that they can do nothing but go on, even if this is with less availability of food, money, and living in more dangerous situations. When the dam was built, explosives were used to remove large rocks from the river. These blasts had lead to cracks in the houses where people live, which increases insecurity and vulnerability to, for example, natural disasters; 'they are sitting on a time bomb' an elder explains (interview 1, 12-12).

People say that they feel like they have been mistreated (interview 3, 07-12). This is because they had to move from a place they knew to a different place they did not know. A woman says she had to leave everything behind and this is why she feel mistreated (interview 3, 07-12). Feelings of being mistreated and even anger are mainly a consequence of the promises which have not been lived up to by officials. Walking around in the villages on both sides of the river, anger about the project and unfair treatment seems to be biggest on the east side. Many people here explain that most of the help went to the villages on the west side of the river, which has lead to feelings of an unfair process and a lack of help. Moreover, the effect of losing land, houses, and crops is greater than the compensation provided. A chairman on the east side of the river says that people from the community have given up their land for this electricity and 'they do not see anything from it, no electricity' (interview 1, 17-12). People have given up a lot of their way of living, material aspects and immaterial aspects, and most people do not feel like they have gotten enough for it in turn. For many, it feels like an uneven exchange.

6.4 Other complications of the Bujagali dam

The previous sections of this chapter have elaborated upon the consequences of the changes of the land- and waterscape and gave more insight in the dispossession regarding the cultural valuation of this area. Besides these immediate issues, some other consequential to the dam have come up during the interviews which are deemed important by local villagers. A promise that could only make the situation of local villagers better, and, moreover, was an important aim of the dam in the first place, is electricity. Those who have received power with the building from this dam experience it as a positive change. It creates safety, because darkness in the villages at night makes the area unsafe, especially for women, and people have more access to technology, such as the easier use of phones. Even though the aim of the Bujagali hydropower dam is to close the gap in the national grid, some people say that the power they receive comes from a dam more upstream that was build years before the Bujagali dam (notes 18-01). For some it remains too expensive or it is practically unreachable. For example, facilities for power were provided in Naminya resettlement. People in the villages surrounding the resettlement, who also feel affected, have to create their own facilities for the cables to reach their house so they can have power too (interview

10-01). Still, when people do have facilities, it can remain too expensive. In a village on the east side of the river, where people still do not have power and feel like they have not profited from the dam, they try to find alternatives. Talking to a chairman of one of the villages it appears to be quite an emotional topic. He wonders why they do not profit from the electricity generated by the dam, while the poles go straight through their villages. If he had the facilities, he says firmly, he would fight it. However, he does not have the money or time to go to court. Instead, they try to find alternative ways of generating electricity. The chairperson is in contact with a company that can provide them with solar panels, but it is still quite expensive for many people (interview 1, 17-12).

Besides power, the dam created jobs and was supposed to provide a source of income for local villagers. It would be a way for people to earn some money as an alternative to the things they lost. Initially, this was welcomed locally but it worked out quite different for many. What seemed to be a good, and no less than fair, promise did not always work out so well, as many people explained that corruption was at play to their disadvantage. The chairperson's family members were ascribed jobs to keep them happy and it would make them less likely to interfere in the project. Furthermore, people from other areas, allegedly, received the jobs because they could pay to buy a job, so to say (interview 1, 19-01; interview 1, 17-12). People needed to have money in order to earn money. Therefore, many people experienced the promise of jobs as unfulfilled. Even though guidelines are set as conditions for financing the project, how it works out on the ground can still be questionable. It is a clear example of how local political structures greatly influence how safeguarding policies. The jobs and trainings as part of the project were part of the compensation for the losses people were facing. This type of compensation, however, did not reach the ground and many people were not able to benefit in this way from the dam.

Where some people did not get a job due to corruption, others were too scared for the working circumstances, since people got injured or, allegedly, even died while working there (interview 2, 05-12; interview 10-01). A man who was injured explains that the main problem for his family is their income. He used to work at the dam until he got into an accident, and has permanent damage to his back. He received some money after the accident but on the long term he is still struggling with earning enough money, since everything becomes more and more expensive. What was good before, or what was a situation in which he could live has become less bearable because income does not increase as the prices do. While he worked at the dam he says that the income was not very good either. He says that the employers were 'afraid that people became lazy if they paid them more' (interview 2, 05-12). People's income was kept low so the employees would work hard. Another man who lives in the hills on the west side of the river has also worked at the dam for several years. One day he went to work and the employer told him that he did not need to come back, since there was no more work for him to do. He says that there was no warning or compensation for this situation. He states that it is good the dam provides jobs for people in the area, but in all it has not lived up to the expectations (interview 2, 05-12).

A different issue that was already present for the dam, but is stimulated by the dam are the factories. These are very closed off from the rest of the area. The factories are surrounded by high walls and nobody who does not need to be there is allowed in. Transparency of what is going on in these factories is not present. Someone says that the factory holders do not acknowledge the people living in the area, they are not interested in those affected, only in investors and those who bring something to the table that benefits

these factories. Furthermore, the factories are an alternative way of generating an income, and a growing business in the area is the factories. It seems to be kind of the same case as the dam; people find it positive that they bring jobs, because ‘Really, we need jobs’ (interview 1, 12-12). Some people who were not able to fish anymore started working in the factories. However, the payment here is bad; not even a euro a day. Which ‘is not enough, you can buy lunch’ (interview 1, 12-12). Besides the payment, the working environment is often not good. People have to work with chemicals for which they do not get any protection. The employers of the factories ‘cheat’. Which means that they pay whatever they want to pay and let people work whenever they want them to work. People go to the factory and might get send home without an income. Besides the fact that the factories bring jobs to the area, many do not have positive experiences with living in an increasing industrial area. Payment is not enough to sustain yourself, it brings pollution to the area, and the working conditions are very bad. Girls who have been working at the factory for a year have much heavier voices now, due to the chemicals, and they do not have gloves (interview 1, 30-11). It is also said that someone has lost an arm while working there, and he did not receive any help or compensation for it (interview 1, 12-12). Furthermore, a sign at the entrance of a factory states that they do not employ anyone under the age of eighteen. Officially they do not do this, but there are younger people who work there, but this is not registered (interview 1, 12-12). Such practices make it understandable why the factory owners are not very transparent about what is happening inside.

6.5 Discussion

The aim of this chapter has been to explore how the Bujagali dam has changed daily live activities. With this information, my aim was to figure out how these changes have affected people to gain more insight in the cultural place and people’s cultural valuation of the area. This chapter answers the question *How have people adjusted their daily lives and livelihoods due to the project of the dam and how has it shaped local culture?* The way people shape their lives and daily activities is inherently cultural. People’s actions are based on what they know of the area, how they make sense of their environment, and how they want to or are expected to live. In this area, people make extensive use of the area in many of these activities. Moreover, people use acquired knowledge to interpret experiences and generate certain behaviour. Hence, people judge their current situation based on the values they live by, and, in this case, the losses are experienced as a lot. The acquired knowledge to interpret and act is part of a culture. Also, culture concerns the meaning people give to activities, places and objects (Spradley 1980). Getting to know the daily activities and what it means for people in their lives and livelihoods, provides a better understanding of the local culture. When you understand a culture, or at least some key aspects, it helps in understanding dispossession that people experience. Where the previous chapter discussed the loss of land- and waterscape on a macro level, this chapter zoom in to the losses on a more individual level, on the assets. The losses people experiences in their daily activities and the adjustments they have had to make.

6.5.1 The cultural waterscape

Before the dam, both the people living in Naminya resettlement as other affected villagers seemed more independent in practice but also how they felt about themselves. People were working for themselves instead of for someone else with more money and/or power. The river was very important for this independence. A structure was created where people

would go to the river that would foresee them in many of their needs; fish for personal consumption and as a source of income, and to get water for laundry, cooking, and other household chores. The river gave people a lot from which they could live, and in turn the river was valued accordingly. The valuation of the river was created by the role it fulfilled in the area where most people have to make extensive use of their surroundings, due to poverty but also due to the habits of the local culture created over time. The river did not only provide the means for people to sustain a life, but also structured their life, habits, and what was deemed important. It gave people independence, since they could provide for themselves, and created a life that was always moving. Moreover, besides being independent in practice, it gave people more a personal association with being independent.

The waterscape gave people the ability to fish and take care of themselves. This also created a structure in life that was always moving. The environment shaped daily activities, for example, to generate an income. These activities, in turn, also make the place into what it is; a place is made up of spatial activities which gives it cultural meaning (Low 2017, 2011). Hence, even though, such areas are quickly addressed as a poor area, there is much more to it. People shape their lives and find a way to sustain themselves. Additionally, the river became, in a sense, part of people's identity. Being a fisherman and being able to fish in general, was important for many people. Thus, ponds and reservoirs are not sufficient compensation or alternatives for the dispossession that people experience. Fishing for income and food, but also as part of the local culture is a loss that has not been acknowledged. The river was a source for keeping live moving and making people independent, and, moreover, giving them a feeling of independence. Such an aspect of people's living environment needs a lot more than half functioning boreholes and fish ponds to make up for the dispossession of these cultural aspects of the river.

6.5.2 The cultural landscape

Besides the river, the landscape has changed and many people have lost (some of) their property. This loss of land has disrupted people's livelihood and local culture. As part of income practices, farming was and still is important to generate an income and to provide a person's own family with food. The land that people own now can be further away, of less quality, and/or smaller, since they could not buy the same amount of land as they used to have with the compensation money they received. Nowadays, people cannot sell as many products as they used to. Thus, the loss of land led to a loss of farming jobs. Furthermore, people cannot grow the diversity of crops as they used to, some even had to give up farming all together.

Land is very important for the affected people living in this area; it is what people live on and live from, which inevitably creates a connection to it. Even though the population of the area is relatively new, the land most of the people live on now has been in their family for some generations. Moreover, the land people own is used extensively. People live, build, grow crops, and let cattle graze on their land. It is crucial in their daily activities, and in sustaining a livelihood. Some people who have lost land and who are struggling now in daily life, are worried about their future; they do not know what to do when they would lose even more. Hence, owning land and using land is an important part of the local culture. Moreover, the sense of place is strong due to the role it has in people's life, and the valuation people have of it goes beyond practical use and economical matters. It is such an inherent part of the local culture, that this is not simply solved by giving people new land. This does not acknowledge the local culture and how it is valued by its

habitants. Most people I have talked to, feel worse off with their new residence, their new land, or the money they have received for what they have lost. Hence, the conversations I have had with people showed that dispossession entails much more than what has been acknowledged and, to a certain extent, dealt with.

Furthermore, the changes have had different impacts on women and men. How they have used the land and how they are still able to do so depends on structures of the local culture. The cultural place is partly structured by these ideas and norms of who does what, and disruptions in daily life has put pressure on families. Women and men have certain roles ascribed to them and make different use of the area. The large amount of compensation money has influenced the functioning of families and family members. The impact of compensation has, in some cases, led to more dispossession and possibilities for women, which puts an extra burden on their shoulders. Thus, existing roles ascribed to women and men have influenced the use and impact of compensation, which in turn impacted the functioning and well being of the same people. Furthermore, discussing other effects of the dam, such as electricity, working for BEL, and factories have left many local villagers disappointed, and for them to experience more feelings of dispossession than gains. A very present problematic process is that localities get overruled by large businesses and big players such as factory owners, BEL and the government. The local culture and 'moving' of the economy seems to have changed, especially for households. Exploring local cultural structures, sheds more light on the impact of the Bujagali dam, which shows alternative forms of dispossession.

There is more to explore about the cultural understanding of the land- and waterscape, which regards spirituality of the area, ancestral land, and family graves. These connections to and understandings of the area will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter VII

Spirituality and ancestry of the water- and landscape

She explains to me later that, when people die, family members dream about this person. Relatives have dreamed about him and told his wife this, so this would mean that he is dead. However, she does not say this, because it is hard enough as it is, having to cope by herself and losing a husband. It would be too difficult for her to acknowledge that he has passed away. This is why she tells people she does not know what has happened to him.

- Field notes 07-12-2018

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is an addition to the previous two empirical chapter because it discusses a different aspect of the local culture than it being produced and reproduced in daily activities. Local culture is created and keeps on changing by how it is lived by people in the area and the possibilities the area gives people to live with. Besides daily life practices and pursuits, people also give meaning to their surroundings and understand their surroundings in other ways. The way people make sense of what happens in the area, how they give meaning to, connect to, and live in the area is influenced by spiritual beliefs in different forms. Interest about spirituality was sparked, for me personally, by reading academic literature and reports about consequences of hydropower projects, in which spirituality as part of dispossession was left out in general, or in which a lack of attention for spirituality of such an area is mentioned (e.g. Kirchherr, Pohlner & Charles 2016; Tilt, Braun & He 2008; Zarfl et al. 2014; NAPE 2014; IRM 2012). An important aspect of this project was that it had to flood the habitat of the Bujagali spirit, and the spirit had to be transferred to another place. Accordingly, the media coverage of this case sparked my interest, since it was mainly focussed on the spirits of the Bujagali falls and finding a new resting place (e.g. Griffin 2018; Bardeen 2015; Okalebo 2012; Musinguzi 2011). Throughout the research process, the stories people told me gave more clues and topics to research.

Since spirituality is a contested issue in many other cases, for example in Brazil (Frayssinet 2015) and Australia (Code 2019), and compensation for such matters is often not included, this research is aimed at getting more information about such alternative forms of valuation of the area. Spirituality appears to be quite present in this area as well. To discuss this presence, this chapter focusses on spirituality within the tangible land- and waterscape, and spirituality in people's behaviour and actions. The first part starts with discussing the presence of the Bujagali spirit and the flooding of the shrine. Even though the Bujagali spirit has been part of the compensation process to some extent, it is actually only a part of local beliefs and spirituality. Other matters came up which are also part of how they understand their environment and what it means to people; the local valuation of the area. Hence, the discussion on the Bujagali spirit is followed by explaining other forms of spirituality in the land- and waterscape. One matter that is quite a personal aspect of spirituality is ancestral land and its graves. Spirituality for the people living in the area includes those who have passed away, since the spirit of those people remain and influence the lives of people still alive. Hence, this about spirituality in the tangible environment ends with the consequences of the dam on ancestral land and graves.

Afterwards, the presence of spirituality in people's behaviour and actions will be discussed. Two larger religions have influenced traditional belief systems. Over time, Christianity and the Islam have, allegedly, taken the place of the 'small gods'. 'Small gods' is a reference to the more traditional belief system, where people worship spirits and serve them. However, I think small gods and spirits are not always the same thing, so the distinction made in this chapter is based on how people talked about it themselves. The two larger religions and the small gods/spirits is an interesting interplay and both still influence the way people experience disruptions the place they live in. To explore this in relation to the dam and with it their cultural valuation of the area, section 7.3.1 goes into Christianity and the Islam in the area. It is followed by other aspects of the presence of spirituality in people's actions. This section about spiritual practices finishes with a practice that closely relates to spiritual beliefs regarding the Bujagali dam; sacrifice. Of course, how people

experience the spirituality in the land- and waterscape overlaps with their behaviour and actions, thus both can come up in either sections. This also shows how much the matters being discussed are actually integrated in the local culture and how people value their area.

Going into the field I tried to have an open view and to not immediately dive in to the matter of Bujagali spirit, since, initially, I wanted to have an understanding of the area through people's own perceptions and not be led by what the media had covered. Therefore, the question this chapter will answer is: *How is spirituality present in cultural understanding of the land- and waterscape and how has this been affected by the dam?* Before going into this dimension of cultural valuation, some reflections and methodological explanation will be provided. Spirituality of the area concerned topics that were not always easy to address and discuss. Hence, especially for this chapter, it is important to understand the process of researching this matter and how I came to the information discussed. Furthermore, throughout the thesis ancestral connection to land has been explained to some extent. This chapter goes more into depth about it. The area knows a diverse population, thus the introduction will also explain more about tribes, clans, and ancestral land.

7.1.1 Reflection and methodologies

Spirituality in the area is a topic that has not been easy to come to and to thoroughly understand during this research. People seemed to be a little hesitant to bring up or talk about topics of spirituality. This could be due to my position as a non-local, white, female researcher, which clearly made me an outsider. Someone told me that people might fear that I would not understand this part of their culture or would judge them for it. It could also be that most, or the only, white people they talk to about the Bujagali dam have been officials of the project or the government, to whom they only talk about technical and economic matters. Several times I was asked if I was a BEL employee. It could also be a taboo topic, due to the fact that there is a Witchcraft Act that makes some practices illegal (The Supreme Court of Uganda 1957), or due to the growth of religion that has overshadowed the more traditional spiritual beliefs and practices.

The difficulty of getting to this information became really clear when we were having dinner with people who originate from a western country but have been living in Uganda for many years now. Even though they state they still feel like outsiders in the area, they do have insight in the emic perspective from the villagers. Moreover, as people who might never be real 'insiders', they know how people look at me as an outsider and the type of complications it might bring in conversations regarding this topic. They also explained that spirituality is everywhere and in many different forms. Another important aspect of dealing with my position as outsider has been my investment in a relationship of trust with certain local villagers who understood that my position influenced what people would and would not tell me (Norman 2009). This trust created more space for me to ask them certain questions and clarifications, which helped me gain more insight and knowledge in the matter. Moreover, using the snowball sampling method helped in getting access to individuals and already created some trust (Malejacq & Mukhopadhyay 2016). The issue of trust for this research has been explained in Chapter III about Methodologies. Overall, even more reflection, reassuring, and asking the right and strategic questions has been important to get to the information for this chapter. Over time I learned to not only listen

to what people told me, but also what they did not tell me, and take in to account my observations more actively in exploring and trying to find answers.

7.1.2 Tribes, clans, and ancestral land

As explained in Chapter III about Methods, the population of this area, on the western as well as on the eastern side of the river, is quite mixed in the sense that people originate from different tribes. A villager from Kyabirwa (Busoga) said ‘In this village there are people from about five of six different tribes’ (interview 3, 09-01). Winston explains at first when people moved here they remained close to people from the same area but over time this has become more mixed overall in the area (notes 12-01). A man from a neighbouring village states the same, and gives the explanation that land around the Nile and Lake Victoria is very fertile, so people moved here for the fertile ground. He has seen it happen because he originates from this area, and his parents and grandparents are also buried there (notes 19-01). In Buganda, Winston explains a bit more about the mixed population. He states that about 10% originates from this area and many find their origins in Busoga. His own family moved to Jinja and found that the land here was very fertile. Just like his did, other families from different areas moved here and spread the word back home (notes 12-01; interview 2, 26-01).

Peter, who used the land of Naminya resettlement before it was bought for compensation, explains that in the hills close to his house live many people from the Bugisu tribe. Bugisu is a kingdom located northeast of Busoga and the people who moved here originate from a hilly area, therefore they chose to live in the hills when they came here. Peter said that they do this “to keep their culture moving” and, moreover, that people bring their culture to new places (interview 10-01). During an interview on the east side of the river with two men who are neighbours and originate from different tribes, they refer to food as a difference in their cultures. They are used to eating different types of food. One explains that his habit is to eat potato where the other states that his habit of food is ‘millet’ and ‘maize’. They do agree on the dislike when people ‘come and stamp on our land and our wives’. They explain that they do not like it when people come to intervene in their lives, referring to the project of the Bujagali and its process (interview 1, 19-01). One of the men originates from the area, but both have experienced the disruptions on their land and in their lives. On the west side of the river, there are villagers who originate from Busoga. Thus, they still have family living on the other side of the river. For them the promise of a bridge was important (notes 12-01). It would be a way of having closer contact with their family members and closer ties to their place of origin. Today, this remains an unfulfilled promise.

7.2 Ancestral land, its graves, and its spirituality

Spirituality of the area has been a bit difficult to get an into depth understanding of but the more I got to know about it the more I saw it in the area, and the more I found ways to steer towards this topic. Dispossession that has been acknowledged by officials, and moreover has stalled the project for several years, is the Bujagali spirit but there is more. This section explains the spirituality in the land- and waterscape, which also regards ancestral land and family graves. Ancestral land can be a tricky use of word, due to the mixed population of the area. However, there have been people who referred to their land as ancestral, or expressed their connection to the land as part of their family history.

First, I will explain the situation of the Bujagali spirit and how officials handled the situation to be able to build the dam. Afterwards, I will explain some other ways of how spirituality is present for people living in the area. And lastly, a more personal presence of spirituality in the landscape will be discussed, which are the graves on ancestral land.

7.2.1 Bujagali spirit

Previous to the colonisation of Uganda by the British, the country existed out of several kingdoms, and these cultural kingdoms still exist as part of Uganda (The Economist 2008). The Bujagali spirit was located in Busoga and is part of this kingdom's culture (interview 19-11; notes 20-11). The spirit was present in two ways: the Bujagali falls were considered to be the place where the spirit resides, therefore it is a sacred place, a shrine, and there is always a man who embodies the spirit in person (Oestigaard 2015; notes 20-11; interview 1 09-01). During the building of the dam this position was filled by Jaja Bujagali. The fact that the Bujagali spirit also resided in the Bujagali falls, makes it no surprise that it has been in the centre of attention regarding the cultural and spiritual consequences of the project, and had to be integrated in the compensation process. The project has been stalled for a decade due to the spirit, and due to issues of corruption (Oestigaard 2015), as explained in the context.

While visiting the river with local villagers, one man explains that Jaja Bujagali, who used to stay close to the river, was removed from the area, since he was seen as dangerous for the project. He says that Jaja Bujagali was against the project and the officials were afraid that he would bring harm upon the project (notes 22-11; interview 1, 17-12). Not without reason, since he had said that it is not possible to relocate a spirit and that if the site were to be destroyed, the spirit would bring harm upon the project (Oestigaard 2015). Besides these warnings and non-compliance of Jaja Bujagali, and the delay of the project, rituals had taken place that would relocate the spirit. These rituals were led by a different traditional leader, Benedicto Nfuudu (ibid.; NTVUganda 2011). Healers challenge each other about such powers, and Nfuudu states that he is superior in everything related to water and water spirits (Oestigaard 2015). Jaja Bujagali stated that it was orchestrated by the Christian anti-witchcraft movement in parliament (Oestigaard 2015, 20-21), and it was 'a ritual drama' (ibid., 64). A new shrine for the spirit was created and financed as part of the compensation by BEL (NTVUganda 2011). A NAPE employee also states the sacred site was given away without taking into account the relevance for local communities. Relocating the spirits is not possible, he says; 'The spirits choose where to stay and cannot be moved' (interview 19-11).

Hence, there are different and contesting ideas about who is rightful in judging the relocation of the spirit. Nonetheless, *The East African* headlines in 2011 that "Budhagali' water spirits find a new resting place' and states:

The acting Kyabazinga (king) of Busoga Kingdom, Kawunhe Wakooli, who was the chief guest said: "Today is an important day for Busoga and Uganda. Giving up our shrine was not easy — but for development's sake, we had to. The government should give our children jobs because the power project will benefit all of us. Busoga Kingdom should also get its fair share of the proceeds from the project." (Musinguzi 2011)

Simone and Peter explain that they heard there was a lot of money involved. Now, a large shrine has been built for the traditional healer who has relocated the spirit, and a lot of women and children come there 'it is a good place and he is very rich' (interview 10-01). Jaja Bujagali stated that 'The spirit furiously attacks the hydropower station by every means and aims to harm the dam through its divine powers, since sacred places, including the rapids have been destroyed' (Oestigaard 2015, 72). He is not alone in the idea that the dam has angered the spirit 'Even contractors and engineers allegedly claim that the problems they have faced with the dam's output are down to the Budhagaali spirit' (ibid.). Besides harm upon the project, the unsettling business for the spirit would cause people to die (Oestigaard 2015). There are more people who have feared this in the sense of being sacrificed. This will be explained further in section 7.6.2.

Discussing the presence of the Bujagali spirit in the village, a chairman explains that people from his village in Busoga used to come to Jaja Bujagali for healing or when they had other issues. Jaja Bujagali used to stay close to the river but this is not possible anymore. Now, he stays in one of the villages. The chairman gives the example of how this man used to float on a river sitting on animal skin and nobody knows how he did it. People saw it as magic because 'How was this possible?' (interview 1, 17-12). Jaja Bujagali's place closer to the river used to be good for the community because his presence on the river banks attracted tourists, which generated income and considered to be good for the whole community. Furthermore, herbs grew on the banks of the river which were also used by other traditional healers/ and witch doctors in general. Asking about the local villagers, a different chairman explains that some people visit him when they have issues, but most do not take him seriously in this work, since the rise of religion has decreased belief in the spirits (interview 1, 09-01).

7.2.2 Spirituality in land- and waterscape

The source of the Nile is a special area for many reasons. It is not only very beautiful, good for tourism, and full of both human and animal life, it is also considered to be a highly spiritual area. This encompasses more than the Bujagali spirit discussed above. For outsiders this is not always visible. They will not have seen the Bujagali spirit in the falls before it was relocated and flooded. There are places where spirituality is more specifically visible. Personally, I saw it clearly in places of worshipping when we visited a village more to the east of Jinja, located directly on the banks of Lake Victoria. After a bodaboda drive of over an hour from the research area, we arrived at the village where Simone's mother lives. In this area, we walked around and went to some secluded places, some of which are used for worshipping. We went to cave like places, and our informants explain that these are places for sacrifices and other types of worshipping. Those being worshipped were referred to as 'the small gods'. The small gods are an alternative to the one god of the Christian and Islam religion, and are also referred to as spirits. There are objects that people use for worshipping which they put there themselves (see photos 12 & 13), but there are also some natural places or objects which are inhabited by spirits. Walking in the area with some friends and their family, we stop besides a rock and they explain that it possesses a spirit and it is used as a place for worshipping and keeping this spirit satisfied. They explain that they do not believe in these small gods, however, they did not feel comfortable hanging around this rock so we moved on. Walking along the caves, a woman explains her discomfort as a fear of the caves collapsing, so she prefers to not linger around for too long. Reassuring us again that they do not believe in these spirits, they also ask us if we are scared

of the place with its stories and alleged spirits. Thus, even though people reassure that they do not believe in the small gods or in the spirits, they do not want to come too close or stay for too long around a place or an object with spiritual activities.

During the fieldwork in the research area, people explain that they only worship and believe in one god, however, their stories, actions, and behaviour imply something different. There could be a language barrier at play, because some people stated that they do not believe in the spirits, but they also acknowledge that these spirits exist. It seems that when people talk about believing in the spirits, they mean the practice of worshipping in accordance, rather than this spirituality being part of their personal ideas and understanding of the natural environment. An example of this, is an explanation given by Steven, who grew up in Busoga and has converted to Christianity. He said that, when he was young, he used to hear the spirits roam at night but when he converted to Christianity and the presence of religion in the area increased these spirits disappeared (notes 07-12). He and his wife explained that they do not believe in spirits because they are Christians, but with his stories from when he was young he does acknowledge their presence. Furthermore, there are specific sites in the area that people avoid due to certain stories of spiritual activity. For example, there is a lake close to Naminya resettlement that allegedly eats people. The story goes that once every year the lake needs to feed, and when this time comes, the lake turns red and within a few days someone will have fallen into the lake and have disappeared. The story is told when we are walking along the lake and our companions were not so comfortable, so they did not feel like wandering around for too long. When asked about these occurrences, they explained that they had never seen this happen, but they heard about it from people who heard it from other people who had seen it happen, and this is why they stay away.

Thus, whether people claim to believe in the presence and activities of the spirits or not, it is very present. The way people experience the area and understand the area is partly shaped by stories and experiences of its spirituality. Local understandings of the water- and landscape entails more than how it is used in daily life. Moreover, even though people claim to not believe in spirits it has played or still plays a substantial part in people's lives; it is very present. Hence, there is a spiritual valuation of the area, which includes people wanting to keep the spirits happy and satisfied and not upset them, which according to some has happened when the dam was build. The water- and landscape entails more than the Bujagali spirit that has been acknowledged by officials. The next section will explain more about a personal issue that also contains some spirituality; family graves and the connection personal land.

7.2.3 Graves on ancestral land

When the river flooded parts of the land, it did not only flood everything on the land but also everything in the land. When a family member passes away, there is a longstanding tradition to bury this person on the family's property. During an interview Peter points to a tree and says that his family members 'are all buried under that avocado tree' (interview 10-01). Someone explained that they used to travel the deceased person back to their place of origin, but over time they started to bury the people in this region where they have been settled for a while now. It is difficult and costly to arrange for the deceased person to be transferred to her or his place of origin. Additionally, he says that habits are changing and that they have to adapt to the situation (interview 2, 26-01). Hence, the term ancestral land can be quite tricky to apply in a region where many people have ties to other areas, some

more than others. Some have referred to their land as ancestral directly, and some in a more indirect way. I still chose to use this term to describe those cases where people have expressed a personal connection to their land, due to heritage over generations and/or family members who are buried on their land. Burying people on one's own property is very personal because this way a family member is always close by. Due to the project the graves had to be moved and this did not feel good for people. People can get emotional about this and say that it does not feel good to have this taken away (interview 10-01; notes 12-01; interview 2, 19-01). People had received compensation for this land in terms of money or new land, but the additional value and emotional connection to the area has not been taken into account.

A reason why people could not leave the graves of their family members where they were, is that the government does not want people to have graves in the area because then they will still have a connection to this land (notes 12-01). Winston explains that the government does not want people visit the graves when they are still there, because this is common to do and people will find a way, he says. Furthermore, they could try to make a claim on the land because of these graves, so that it is a way of having full sovereignty over the land and river by the government. People need to resettle their whole livelihoods, which include their family graves (notes 12-01). Another woman said that 'You cannot leave them behind because they are your family, so you have to take them with you' (interview 2, 19-01). Besides the argument that the government does not want people to sustain a form of connection to the area that it has bought, another reason could be that there is a believe, by family members as well as the government, that people who have deceased are not entirely gone. The idea that the spirit remains that you do not want to intervene with (notes 12-01). This last idea is in line with some other explanations given by villagers.

Several people say that you do not want to and it is not good to dig up and move family graves because it is a very emotional process. Someone explained that it is not good to do it yourself, because it would bring up a lot of emotions, but it had to happen; 'It is bad (...) leave people where they are. Peace for you and the dead. You can be punished. Need to leave them untouched and leave them be' (interview 10-01). In several interviews it became very clear that people were not happy nor comfortable with having to relocate their family graves. It is not surprising that this is not a comfortable thing to do, but over time I had learned that there is often more to a story than people initially might tell, especially on a sensitive topic as this, and that spirituality is basically everywhere. Therefore, I decided to talk to Winston with whom I had built some trust, from both sides, and I carefully asked him if he could explain more about the issues regarding the graves and people having to relocate them. He explains when people dig up their families they believe that their spirits come free as well (notes 12-01). There is a risk that the spirit takes over your body, which is in line of emotions taking over as other people have talked about it. Moreover, a NAPE employee explained that people are attached to their deceased family members, and death does not mean that people are dead (interview 19-11). Such believes make dealing with the consequences of land loss even more complicated. There are special companies who relocate graves for people but this job is not very socially accepted. The people who do this type of work are often considered strange people, or it is done by people who are mentally ill (notes 12-01). There is often alcohol involved when people do this job in order to deal with it.

Susan Whyte has done extensive research in Uganda about 'Lifeworlds and the pursuit of well-being: ... research on pragmatics and management of uncertainty in

situations of everyday life and relations to family/significant others' (University of Copenhagen, revised at 23-03). In her article about belonging, burial and AIDS she discusses matters of the importance of burials and graves for Ugandans (2005). She mentions that it is important for people to be buried on their family's land. For a man this is his own or his father's land, since there is a tradition of land being inherited by sons from their father. Once a woman is married, she belongs to the family of her husband. Therefore, she is also buried on this land. Additionally, Whyte mentions that the mother belonged to her children, and after she passes the children should want to take for her grave and her spirit. Moreover, children should take care of the spirits of their deceased parents, and when a person is buried in the wrong place, it may lead to misfortune upon the children (ibid.). Therefore, Whyte explains, some people dig up graves of their parents and bury them in the 'right' place to settle the spirits '...and prevent it from bothering the children' (ibid., 162).

Ancestral land knows many different aspects that are important in people's lives. For people living in this area, land is crucial in sustaining a livelihood and is an integral part of the local culture. Fertile land allows people to earn money on a steady and daily basis. This land is given from a father to his sons. Which means, that the land owned by one man will be divided over multiple men and over time will have to feed more and more people. All the more reason why having good land is deemed important; it is not just for one family in this time and place, but also for their children and their children's children, and so on. This way of living makes almost everyone in this area a farmer. Furthermore, land ownership and ancestral land is crucial in burying family members, making sure their spirits are at ease, and prevent misfortune on the people still alive. Even though most of the population of the area is not considered to be indigenous since their tribe and/or clan originate from a different region, over time they have adapted to this new area and created an ancestral and spiritual connection to the land. Problematic in the case of the Bujagali dam, is that this complexity of ancestral land and its graves has not been taken into account sufficiently. This type of connection has not been part of the compensation matters, since this was only focussed on the amount of land and the crops and materials on it. The multidimensionality of ancestral land and graves entails less visible characteristics of the area but nonetheless an important aspect of the cultural place. Perhaps it is not possible to translate such matters into compensation, to give it a certain value, but it is part of the local context where compensation will be provided.

The project of the Bujagali dam has not only disrupted people's daily lives and livelihoods, but also the less visible matters of the local culture, such as graves. I do believe there is a better scenario possible than what people have had to deal with here. A more sensitive approach to the impact such a project will have on cultural matters such as graves, which are also highly personal, would go a long way. Providing facilities, space, and time for people to handle matters such as relocating graves, would have been the least compensation to be provided. Some say this has been the case, that they have received money to arrange this, but others do not. It is not only the practicalities of relocating the graves, but also what it means for people. The dead are not considered to be dead, and digging up family members can affect the living. There must be more that can be done in helping people in having to deal with these experiences.

7.3 Spiritual practices

As explained before, spirituality of the area is a bit of a contested issue, especially when it comes to people's actions and behaviour according to it. The Bujagali spirit was an issue that has been dealt with in, some way, as part of building the dam and changing the water- and landscape. Talking to people about their experiences of the changes in the area, there are other experiences related to spirituality and 'small gods' in the area. However, more people started talking about their religion, as either being a Christian or a Muslim. This could be due to my position as an outsider, which could have made people feel hesitant to talk to me about spirituality in the area. It could also be due to the idea that you cannot believe in small gods while being a Christian or Muslim (interview 10-01). Or it could have become more of a taboo topic as witch craft it is illegal and strongly links to spirituality. Nevertheless, religion is important for people, how they make sense of what happens in their lives, and changes in their environment. However, it still seems to live side by side with a more traditional belief system that resolves around the 'small gods', and what people would say they believe in sometimes differed from their actions. To explain this, the presence of the Islam and Christianity will be explained first. Next, I will go into how living with spirits is still present in people's lives. Lastly, the matter of sacrifice will be explained which relates to the previous section about graves on ancestral land. All in all, this section explains more about practices of spirituality

7.3.1 Islam and Christianity

When asked, and sometimes not even asked, people always referred to themselves as either Muslim or Christian. There are still some villages in this area where either a majority of Christians or Muslims live, but there are also villages where this is very mixed and a church can be found next to a mosque. One person, who is also a pastor, explains the strong presence of religion because people need it. People in developing countries, he states, are more in need of extra support to get them through the difficult times. 'If there is no food, money or other difficulties, people turn to their religion for support. This helps them a lot and that is also why people are often very dedicated. In developed countries people do not cope with these basic issues and do not need a religion as bad' (notes 07-12). Religion is used to make sense of what is happening to people in this process of the dam, and in the aftermath. An elder of a village used religion to explain the situation of the Bujagali project. He states that it was 'God at first but later it became Satan' (interview 1, 12-12). This means that at first it was good and it was expected to bring development to people, God's plan. However, later it became Satan in the sense that it has brought and still brings bad things to people; development has not come, and the project has cost people; 'God and Satan move together in these projects' (ibid.). Furthermore, religion is used as a coping mechanism in times when people feel that there is nothing else they can do about the situation. A woman explains that even though she cannot change anything about her situation now, there can be chances that come out of nowhere, without her expecting it. 'When this happens we thank God for these opportunities' (interview 1, 07-12). God is the one who decides how everything will go, another woman says (interview 2, 08-12). The disruption in people's lives that is created by the dam is difficult for people to deal with when they have no one to turn to for help. In this sense, religion helps people to deal with disruption, and the frustration about the project. Furthermore, it gives people hope that anything can happen, as it is in God's hands.

The arrival of Christianity, the pastor explains, faded the presence of spirits. When he was young he used to hear the spirits roam at night, they were very present, he said. When Christianity came and people started focussing on and dedicating themselves to this religion, the presence of the spirits and the 'small gods' have decreased. Life is better for him now that the spirits are less present because it is more peaceful. He states that religion is also the reason why the Bujagali spirit has become less present in people's lives. The presence of the Bujagali spirit is felt most strongly among the villagers in Busoga, but it has decreased (notes 07-12). According to these stories of his experiences, it seems that people have become less engaged with the worshipping of small gods and are quite involved with either Christianity or the Islam.

The presence of small gods and spirituality has a longer history than that of religion in this region, and even though many people claim that religion is stronger in their lives, the small gods and spirituality are still very present in different ways. The growth of religion has not eradicated the presence of other forms of worshipping and spirituality. People explain that it concerns a traditional belief system from their ancestors and that there are still some people who practice accordingly to it. Being in the area for three months, more and more can be seen that shows the presence of a belief in spirits and the small gods. Moreover, allegedly, it attracts people from other parts of Uganda or other countries. These findings show that in some way, spiritual activity in the area is an inherent part of the local culture and knows a long ancestral history. Therefore, it is not only part of but also has strong roots in the local culture. The following paragraphs will dive into this cultural aspect of the area and the presence of spirituality that is, in first instance, less visible.

7.3.2 Living with the spirits

An activity of which people have said that it has become more present is witchcraft. Officially, it is illegal (The Supreme Court of Uganda 1957), which has made it not an easy subject to get to and go into depth about. Nonetheless, throughout the research some people claimed that witchcraft has increased as a consequence of the Bujagali project. As discussed in the previous chapter, many men have received a large amount of money as part of the compensation package, and with this money some men have married more women, since, at the time, they had the means to take care of more than one family. Rivalry among co-wives is said to be very present. In some cases, a co-wife decides to turn to witchcraft to curse her husband's other wife. To do this, they have to go to a certain person who practices witchcraft. This is not someone who is publicly known by the community in doing this, but one must be introduced to the witchdoctor by someone who is already in contact. Hence, contacting a witch doctor and making use of its abilities, does not happen out in the open. However, not everyone believes the witchdoctors. Simone and Peter say that 'witch doctors are ever liars', 'their brain is twisted' and 'they want money' (interview 10-01). Nonetheless, there are stories of some practices and happenings regarding witch doctors who are more publically known.

Jaja Bujagali, the man who embodied the Bujagali spirit was also referred to as a witchdoctor. His practices and activities near the river were seen as a threat to the dam by officials, and was removed from the area, as explained in 7.2.1. Hence, not only is witchcraft acknowledged locally, it is also acknowledged by officials. This is done in a legal form, by creating a witchcraft act 'to make provision for the prevention of witchcraft and the punishment of persons practising witchcraft.' (The Supreme Court of Uganda 1957). But also in practical matters, such as removing Jaja Bujagali from the area since he

was seen as a threat to the dam. People visit witchdoctors also for medicine to heal illnesses, which is allowed according to the act: 'For the purposes of this Act, "witchcraft" does not include bona fide spirit worship or the bona fide manufacture, supply or sale of native medicines.' (ibid.). Lines between legal and illegal, and believing or not believing in such practices are thin.

Walking around in the area some observations could be made that show the believe in presence of spirituality in the area. There were people, mostly children and women, who wear special charms around their belly. Allegedly, this keeps out the bad spirits from a person's body. Furthermore, most children have one or both of their ears pierced. The reason for it is that there is a threat for children to be kidnapped and murdered by other humans as a sacrifice to the spirits or small gods. The best sacrifice is someone whose body is intact and unharmed. Children are believed to be pure and have the biggest chance of not being physically harmed yet, and this is what makes them a good sacrifice. For this reason, there are many children with pierced ears, both girls and boys. When a child has a hole in her or his body this person is no longer considered as a good enough sacrifice, since it is no longer unharmed. It is a matter of protection. The fear of being sacrificed for the small gods is not uncommon. Some people did not want to work for the dam, since there are stories of people being sacrificed to satisfy the spirits, while being on the job. The following section will explain the spirituality of sacrifice.

7.3.3 Sacrifice

In the paragraph about spirituality in the land- and waterscape the matter of sacrifice has already been mentioned briefly. The places close to Lake Victoria we visited that contained a lot of spirituality and where sacrifices were made was one example. Another was how children get their ears pierced to protect them from being kidnapped and sacrificed. Sacrifice is not only present in daily practices, but, allegedly, also in large projects such as the hydropower project. Of course, I could not prove that it has actually happened, but what I am going to discuss has been mentioned by several people. Thus, this believe and fear that it brings for some people is something worth mentioning, since it concerns the way people make sense of their surroundings and what happens. It concerns the idea is that people have been sacrificed and built in the building of the dam to satisfy the 'smallsmall' gods (interview 10-01). People claim that sacrifices have been made, on purpose and per accident, where people fell down while working dangerous tasks during the building of the dam. People would be left there to satisfy the spirits and/or gods. Not only is this mentioned by people from in- and outside the area, several people mentioned that it also happens when large buildings are being built in Kampala.

As explained previously, people who have died are not considered to be dead. Those who pass away are still present. Death has a certain value for those who are alive, especially family members. At the same time, death can function as a sacrifice to satisfy other spirits, small gods, and help in daily life but also for projects such as the Bujagali dam. Just as children are being kidnapped to be killed for sacrifice, people were afraid to work at the dam and get in a fatal accident. Peter explained that during the building of the dam, people have died working there, which were accidents and sacrifices (notes 10-01). A man who knows many people who have worked there said that many accidents happen and people work in dangerous situations (interview 2, 05-12). Thus, when people were able to work at the dam, there was also a risk of getting injured or worse. Moreover, there were also people from further away who were working for the project. A reason for this, two chairmen on

the east bank explained, is that people had to pay in order to get a job; ‘you need money to get a job’ (interview 1 17-12; interview 1, 09-01). Furthermore, Peter explains that those people who have been sacrificed serve the small gods and for good fortune of the dam, have often been people who lived further away, so that people in this area will not miss the person when something happens. The difference between an accident and a sacrifice is that, with the former the body is sent home to his family and with the latter the body remains within the dam (interview 10-01).

Allegedly, sacrificing people for good fortune of the dam happens more often. Stories are told that there are also bodies buried within the walls of large buildings in Kampala. Such sacrifices will protect the building and satisfy the small gods. Whether this is true or not is not important in this case, more important is that it is part of how people see the area and that spirituality is still present in different forms and, most likely, on different levels. It concerns people’s experiences, feelings, and ideas of the area they live in. Sacrifice to serve and satisfy the small gods, the spirits, is part of the local culture and partly makes the place that people live in; it is part of the cultural place.

7.4 Discussion

Before going into the field and reading up on the case of the Bujagali dam, the Bujagali spirit was the most prominent ‘cultural’ matter addressed (ESG International Inc. & WS Atkins Intern 2001, Griffin 2018; Bardeen 2015; Okalebo 2012; Musinguzi 2011). In the information gathered during the fieldwork there was a lot more to find out about the cultural valuation of the area besides the Bujagali spirit. The Bujagali falls were a shrine for the spirit and the relocation and compensation for this loss is debatable. In the field, some people explained that he still lives somewhere in the area but they do not visit him, because they do not take him serious. Some others say they still do, for healing practices or other spiritual related matters. Nonetheless, the flooding of the Bujagali falls was addressed by chairmen as a cultural loss of villages in Busoga. In the process of relocating the spirit, there seemed to be quite some corruption at play and finding people willing to cooperate. This was being done, to make sure that the Bujagali spirit would not get in the way of the dam and it would seem as if it has been relocated successfully. Whether dispossession regarding the Bujagali spirit has been dealt with appropriately, remains doubtful. Being in the field, the Bujagali spirit was not a matter people brought up by themselves. Other issues seemed to be more present.

What was interesting in exploring the presence of spirituality in the land- and waterscape, is that the people who told me about it, state that they only believe in either Christianity or the Islam, and it does not seem reconcilable. However, being in the area and hearing what people say about the landscape, insinuates something different. The region of the source of the Nile is considered to be highly spiritual and, allegedly, attracts people from far away. There are certain specifics of natural landscapes that entail spirituality, based on stories people have told me. Spirits can possess natural elements such as rocks and lakes. On the shores of Lake Vitoria, there are cave like places that are being used to worship the spirits (see photo 12). Also, Steven explained how he used to hear the spirits roam at night when he was younger. Hence, the spirits were actually present in the place where he lived. Now, they have disappeared because Christianity and the Islam have become more present and taken over the area. The spirits that Steven used to hear are not as present anymore, and have been expelled by these religions. Hence, trying to find out more of the local spiritual presence in the land- and waterscape, besides the Bujagali spirit,

some other issues came up that have not been addressed as such cultural losses due to the dam. Even though some people state that they do not believe in the spirits/small gods (anymore), there is a long history of such traditional beliefs and still today it remains present in the local culture, for some more than others. In the introduction of the chapter the diversity of tribes and clans in the area has been explained a bit more. The area knows a diverse population with different backgrounds. Today, these cultures together keep on creating the local culture and the cultural place.

Dispossession regarding spirituality is less visible than dispossession in daily activities. People did not bring up this topic by themselves often. However, I do think forms of dispossession can be found here as well, for example when looking at family graves and ancestral land.

7.4.1 Ancestral land and graves

It becomes clear that, over time, the population of the area has become denser. People moved to the area due to its fertile land and perhaps due to the development of Jinja town, the industrial area, which brought jobs in factories. People from the different tribes have brought different cultures and, consequently, the local culture of the area changes but also the culture that people bring and live with. Over time, the land has become ancestral for the people living here, in the sense that it has been given from one generation to the next for some generations now. Thus, even though the largest part of the population does not originate from this area in an indigenous way, forms of ancestry and feelings of connections to their land that goes beyond its practicalities are present. Hence, the sense of place people feel might not be based on a long time rootedness, in terms of generations, but concerns an 'everyday rootedness'. This develops when a person becomes bonded to a certain geographical area where '... that person routinely travels or is aware of in a detailed way' (Hay 1998, 6). Moreover, Hay argues that when a person has lived in the area for years or is raised there a sense of place is developed '...feeling at home and secure there, with feelings of belonging for the place being one anchor for his or her identity' (ibid.).

Not only time, but also the social environment and the physical setting influences people's connection to their land; their sense of place (Beidler & Morrison 2016). In this case, no matter the alleged differences in culture or origins, people have created a life here, they have a connection to the land that goes beyond its practicalities. Hence, the different tribes and clans in the area shows the multidimensionality of a sense of place. Where the first chapter explained more about the the physical setting, and the second chapter related stronger to the dimension of the self and the social environment, this section has explained a bit more about the dimension of time. No matter people's background, the population of this area makes extensive use of their surroundings to create and sustain a livelihood. The social construction of the space is done by people from different backgrounds. People adapt to the changes in their life and their families have done so for many generations, which was both forced, as in cases of the Bujagali dam, and voluntary, when people decide to move to a different area. Cultures from different tribes and clans come together and a local culture that is created has also made the space into the place that it is today (Low 2011, 2017). An insightful matter of spirituality in the ancestral land is the graves of family members.

Graves are very insightful in trying to understand the ancestral connection people have to their land, despite the relatively 'new' population, and in gaining a complete understanding of the presence of spirituality in the area. Where people are buried when they pass away involves a personal place and connections to the family. In Uganda, people

are supposed to be buried on their family's land, which means that men are buried on their or their father's land and women on their husband's land (Whyte 2005). Not only does a woman become a part of her husband's family once they are married but it is also important for a woman to be married where her children are. The children are supposed to take care of the spirits of their deceased parents (ibid.). The location of a burial can therefore not be randomly chosen. Moreover, it is in line with the thought that death does not mean that people are dead, as a NAPE employee stated (interview 19-11). Graves and how people deal with death is part of the local culture and, moreover, influences the way people understand and value the place where they live. Thus, land is not only ancestral because it is, most often, given from father to son, but the graves on the land create an extra personal connection to land. Not only did the acknowledgement of the spirituality fall short in the compensation people received, the personal connection people feel to land and their ancestry has not been taken into account either.

7.4.2 Spiritual practices

Discussing the presence of spirituality in people's behaviour has been less accessible to discuss, however, it is present in people's understanding of their environment and part of the local culture. Observations, stories, and conversations with key informants have helped me gain more insight in the matter and see this presence of spirituality. In dealing with dispossession people have experienced in general, people found support in their religion, the Islam or Christianity. The project of the dam is explained at first being God's plan, since it would bring development. Later it became Satan since it has brought many bad things to people. In asking how people are dealing with these bad things, many say that there is nothing they can do but to go on in the situation they live in now. Some also explain that it is up to God whether they will receive more chances and opportunities. Religion is a coping mechanism for their lives and dealing with dispossession they have to deal with. Hence, religion seems to be very important for people. It is often also one of the first things they mention about themselves and about what they do in their daily life. Identification with a religion is important for people and it gives them support. Additionally, it casts a shadow on other forms of spirituality in daily practices.

Walking in the area, you can see children with pierced ears and people, both children and adults, walking around with special charms around their belly. The first is a way for parents to prevent their children to be kidnapped. Children are at risk of being kidnapped, since their bodies are still unharmed which makes them a suitable sacrifice for the small gods. It does not necessarily mean that the parents themselves believe in such sacrifices, but almost every child had one or both of its ears pierced. This indicates the presence of such a threat and was confirmed by several people I have talked to. Hence, there are quite some people in the area, or who come to the area, to find a fitted sacrifice for the small gods. Furthermore, despite the Witchcraft Act that prohibits some of their practices, witch doctors are quite present and active in the area. These issues are part of how a place is created by social interaction between people (Beidler & Morrison 2016; Low 2011, 2017). The understandings, meanings, and different perspectives of an area create a space into a place that it is of the area (Low 2011, 2017). The building of the dam is a combination of historical, economical, and political forces and has shaped the physical site. Hence, it is part of the social production of this space (Low 2017). The dam has affected people's lives and consequently stimulated such practices, which is not necessarily a bad or a good thing. As discussed in Chapter VI, the compensation has mainly provided men with a large sum

of money in one time. This gave men the opportunity to marry more women, since they would be able to sustain an extra family. As a consequence, men had multiple wives and rivalry between these wives is not uncommon. Some even decided to curse their co-wife. Witchcraft has possibly increased in the area due to the Bujagali dam.

A more direct matter of spirituality in cultural valuation of the land- and waterscape, and the disruption of it, is sacrifice. The dam has disrupted the area, and sacrifice is a way to serve the spirits so they would not harm the dam. It is not uncommon, since it allegedly happens often in large projects or large buildings, for example in Kampala. People are buried in the building for good fortune of this building. Hence, there were people who were afraid of working for the project, since they could die on the job per accident or to function as a sacrifice. This would mean that there is definite spiritual activity in the area and people act according to it. It is part of the local culture, and how people experience and understand the area. It pertains a certain knowledge which makes people interpret experiences leads to certain behaviour (Spradley 1980). Moreover, it is part of how people give meaning to the place and activities in this place (ibid.).

This chapter has explained the spiritual and ancestral land- and waterscape as part of the cultural understanding and meaning given to the natural environment. It answers the question: *How is spirituality present in cultural understanding of the land- and waterscape and how has this been affected by the dam?* The presence of spirituality is addressed in how it is present in the actual surroundings and in people's behaviour and actions. Moreover, it shed light on how spirituality is part of the cultural place, how it is present in people's lives, and how they deal with it. Some implications seem to be indirect consequences of the dam, for example growing rivalry between co-wives who go to witch doctors to curse the co-wife of the husband. There are also more direct implications and forms of dispossession. People have lost land that has been in their families for some generations and people have had to deal with relocation of family graves. There are connections to land, whether it can be called ancestral or the fact that their family is buried there, which entail more than the use for daily practices. To fully grasp the impact of the dam and the dispossession consequential to it, these matters cannot be ignored. Overall, spirituality of the place knows different forms, which have been affected by the dam differently. The dam has not only disrupted the shrine of the Bujagali spirit but has had many more spiritual consequences, which, in turn, affected people's lives negatively, and their understanding and valuation of everything in the place.

Chapter VIII

Conclusion

At first he was happy about the arrival of the Bujagali project, he was celebrating but after some years he realised the loss of value. People lost a lot from their daily lives and do not profit from the project. The same is with the factories. The employers at the factories cheat. ... About the projects he says that it was God at first but later Satan; which means that at first it was good but now it brings bad things for people. God and Satan move together in these projects. ... He says that it is good that they bring investors because 'Really we need jobs'. They would be content but they do not have the freedom to express their issues. The government recognise them as people living in the area but the investors do not [this is a problem]. Investors do not recognise local leaders; only one and that is the president of Uganda. They ignore local leaders and cultures. They do not acknowledge others.

- Field notes 12-12-2018

8.1 Local cultural meaning and dispossession of the White Nile river's land- and waterscape

The aim of this thesis has been to explore alternative forms of dispossession than those addressed with compensation, by taking a cultural perspective. Researching the impact of the dam on cultural understandings of the natural environment and on daily practices that shape local culture, gives a more comprehensive understanding of dispossession people have experienced and the impact this has on their life. In an attempt to close the gap between the needs and provision of electricity, the government of Uganda decided to build a dam on the White Nile river that should provide electricity of the amount of 250MW. A growth in the supply of energy would make it available for more people in rural areas, boost sectors such as agriculture, reduce poverty, and, overall, help lift the country to a middle-income country (World Bank 2018). Hence, the dam would benefit all of Uganda and her population. To do this, the physical environment had to be adjusted; a dam had to be built and a basin had to be created. Hence, historical, economic, and political influences have changed the place (Low, 2017). These people living here make extensive use of their natural surroundings, and it is an integral part of their lives and livelihoods; it is the place they live, work, and play (Schlosberg 2013). For them, the changes in the natural environment has affected every part of their existence.

The land- and waterscape of the White Nile river is disrupted due to the Bujagali dam. Dispossession was inevitable and to make up for such losses, compensation was determined by officials for those directly affected, and adjusted throughout the process. Compensation should have helped decrease the amount of injustice being done to the locally affected people. As the FAO states that people should not be worse off in the case of compulsory land acquisition and, moreover, should be provided with more compensation than they lost, to make up for issues that cannot be valued in money and/or commodities (2009). Academics have expressed the need for attention to such immaterial losses (Oestigaard 2015; Olanya 2016; Bebbington 2008; Kirchherr, Pohlner & Charles 2016). However, it is not sufficiently addressed what the effects of this lack are, nor is it addressed in such a way that makes it usable in practice. This thesis helps in closing this knowledge gap; by using a cultural perspective in practice and see the implications it entails.

At first, the people living in the villages upstream of the dam were happy with the project, since it would bring them a lot of advantages, according to the promises that were made to them by officials of the project. Unfortunately, these promises of such benefits have not been lived up to and many people feel like they are worse off than they were before. People have lost control and mobility in the area to the increasing presence of the government. They have lost the ability of daily practices such as fishing, which was a way to generate an income, but also part of people's identity. The way people generate an income has become more difficult and less secure. The local economy that was fast, had small transactions, and always moving has been disrupted by this and by the large sums of compensation money people received. Compensation money has also put pressure on family structures, due to which women have to bear a heavier burden. Also, family graves had to be relocated, which disrupts their spirits. The matters are some examples of how dispossession entails more than what has been compensated for, and has greater consequences than those taken into account. Moreover, the impact of compensation in a specific setting should be taken into account to be sure it fits with local structures and needs. Hence, this thesis answers the question 'How has the Bujagali hydropower dam impacted the cultural understanding of the land- and waterscape of affected people, and how has this

shaped their experiences of dispossession?’. This research is conducted from November 2018 until January 2019, and resettlement of people located on the land to be flooded had already happened in 2001. Hence, this research concerns people’s experiences with the project on a long term, which does not happen enough and helps in closing a second knowledge gap (Kirchherr, Pohlner & Charles 2016).

8.2 The local water- and landscape

To understand the dispossession people have experienced regarding their cultural understanding of an environment, it is important to understand the environment it concerns (Schlosberg 2013). The environment is the place where people live, make extensive use of, and value in their own way. An active use of the term place is needed, as Rodman also states, because it is where the cultural comes into being (1992). Emphasising the local understanding of a place empowers these ideas and cultural understandings, and gives a voice to those perceptions and experiences that are not often heard (ibid.). It might not help the people who have been affected by the Bujagali dam, but can help others in future cases. Hence, understanding how people perceive the area and the changes it has encountered over time, is the first step in understanding the cultural place and the cultural meaning people give to it. A place is constructed with a whole set of cultural preconceptions that influence how this person reacts to and (re)shapes a place to fit those same preconceptions (Cross 2001, Hay 1998).

Chapter V has explained the changes in the water- and landscape people have mentioned in Buganda, the west side of the river, and Busoga, the east side of the river. It concerns losses people have experienced regarding the water- and landscape, which also affected people’s sense of place. Some key issues that came forth concerning the waterscape are the change in fish population, the quality of the water, the access to water, the growth of the river, the calmer flow of the river, and the disappearance of the islands and the rapids that made the Bujagali falls. Since people of this area make extensive use of their surroundings, such changes inevitably change their daily lives. Some losses have been compensated for by, for example, providing fish ponds and boreholes. However, these could not substitute the functions of the river sufficiently. Some characteristics of the river were essential for people’s lives and their daily pursuit. The way they made use of the water and the role the river played in people’s lives made it the place that it is. It was actively involved in the local culture, and now they can no longer use it as they did previous to the dam. The landscape of Buganda has come under more control of the government. An environmental strip has been created, which is government’s property and meant to protect the environment. Officials come to the area more often to inspect the area and control people’s actions. Furthermore, the amount of factories on this side of the river has grown, since it is stimulated as an industrial area. In both Buganda as Busoga, many people have lost (some of) their land, due to the growth in size of the river which has had great consequences. The loss of land brought insecurities about the future, loss of family inheritance, loss of income, and for some loss in accessibility. People have had to adjust to this situation, some more than others, and find new ways to deal with such issues. The Bujagali dam has been quite invasive and disruptive in the land- and waterscape where people live.

8.3 The culture of in daily activities

Cultural meaning given to a place is influenced by the way people make use of this environment. A person is inherently connected with its surroundings that sustains it (Butler & Athanasiou 2013). Moreover, the way people make a living, can change the way they value this livelihood and what is meaningful for them personally (Bebbington 2004; Hay 1998; Beidler & Morrison 2016). This makes the dispossession in these livelihoods they give meaning to and try to sustain, also cultural (Escobar 2001). Hence, the second empirical chapter, Chapter VI, focussed on the changes people have experienced in daily life.

The dam has affected people's daily life in different ways, which entails experiences of dispossession. There were many who earned an income by fishing and farming. Moreover, this was not just a way to earn money but has always been significant in these people's lives. It is part of people's identity and of the local culture. Some fishermen explained that fishing is all they knew, it is what they grew up with and is all they learned from their family, and fish had become an important part of people's diet. Hence, the change of the river has led to a loss of jobs for fisher(wo)men, a loss of fish in the diets, and in general a loss of something people identified with. It is important for men to earn money to sustain their family, according to cultural norms. This has become much more difficult and has put pressure on existing structures within a family. Eventually, this has lead to women doing more work than they did before, and having more responsibilities. Furthermore, the river was also easy accessible to get water for household chores. Alternatives that have been provided for these losses of the river, such as fish ponds and boreholes, are not sufficient and do not encompass the cultural valuation the river fulfilled in daily life practices and how daily life was structured. The role river played in people's culture, the cultural valuation of the river for the local population, has not been taken into account sufficiently, and neglects losses besides fishing and access to water as practicalities.

Furthermore, the land that people lost was a loss in crops – which was much more sustainable than the compensation money people have received – but it also puts more pressure on land property, which is part of the local culture. The loss of land is an emotional process and disrupts the cultural structure of land property, which has led to frustrations and insecurity. Every household grows crops which makes many people farmers, both for personal consumption as for crops to sell. Fish and crops were an important aspect of the local economy which was always moving. Hence, the structure of these jobs created a life for people that kept on moving, and involved less amounts of money. The change in the area and large sums of compensation money have disrupted this local economy.

For the people who lost their house, they had the possibility to move to Naminya resettlement. The resettlement with brick houses on personal property was provided for those who had to be displaced. Those who lost some of their land, but not their house could choose between another piece of land as compensation or an amount of money based on their amount of land. Furthermore, crops and materials on the land were compensated in terms of money. Some other facilities were provided, such as a market (which is not in use), boreholes (of which some are broken and are not being fixed), a school (which had to close due to a lack of educated teachers), medical centre (which is not big enough for the amount people it is supposed to take care of, and not all medical supplies are present when needed).

The Bujagali dam has not only disrupted the national area, but also people's use of this area and their daily pursuits in all its forms. Hence, the culture that is created through social interaction, people's sense of connection to the environment, people's identity, and the role the environment has in people's daily life, have all been disrupted due to the Bujagali dam. Many ways of how people have been affected have not been taken into account by officials and compensation matters, which leads to unresolved and even unaddressed forms of dispossession, regarding the local economy, ascribed gender roles and family structures, the ability to use land and water, and even people's identity.

8.4 Spirituality and ancestry

Zooming in further and digging deeper in the local culture brings up the presence of spirituality and ancestral connections to land. Before going to the field and do empirical research, I gained some knowledge about the area by reading literature, reports, and media articles. This is where I learned about the Bujagali falls that were flooded was also a place of residence for the Bujagali spirit; it was a shrine. Hence, traditional believes entail a spirituality of the area. It raised my curiosity to see how this has been and perhaps still is present in local culture. Spirituality is often a contested issue and lacks acknowledgements in large projects such as the Bujagali dam (e.g. Kirchherr, Pohlner & Charles 2016; Tilt, Braun & He 2008; Zarfl et al. 2014; NAPE 2014; IRM 2012).

The Bujagali spirit was considered an important aspect of the cultural kingdom of Busoga, and, moreover, is central to the guidelines for compensation for cultural losses (ESG International Inc. & WS Atkins Intern 2001). New shrines have been built to which the spirit was relocated with the appropriate rituals. However, not everybody agreed with the solution to the problem of destroying this religious site. Some believe that a spirit cannot be relocated, since it decides its own habitat. Nevertheless, another traditional leader was found who was willing to relocate the spirit. It is said that corruption was at play to make this happen and to be able to continue building the dam, and the traditional healer who conducted the rituals has received a lot of money and lives a good life now. Such stories about the process of dealing with this spirit adds to the idea that the government can and will do whatever the government wants. The Bujagali falls were a shrine for the Bujagali spirit and this part of the local spirituality had to be completely destroyed to built the Bujagali dam. However, being in the field, the Bujagali spirit did not often come up as a significant loss for the local population, which does not necessarily mean that it actually has not been important for people. It did make an understanding of the presence of spirituality in other ways even more important to get a grip on the cultural understanding of the area.

Something that did come up fairly quickly in conversations is religion, and more specifically, people identifying as Christian or Muslim. The religions have given people support in feelings of loss when officials did not live up to the expectations. Hence, Christianity and the Islam are an important part of the local culture for people living in this place. The belief in these two religions has changed the cultural place and how people understand and value their area. Allegedly, the presence of the spirits has faded when the presence of the religions grew. Moreover, people state that they do not believe in the spirits or worship them. Nonetheless, the presence of spirits is still visible in the local culture, even for an outsider as myself, in forms such as worshipping places, witch doctors, and ornaments. Natural environments exist of more than its practical use and nice scenery. Just like the Bujagali falls were habitat by the Bujagali spirit, other materials of a natural

environment can function as a shrine and inhabit a spirit. Hence, spirituality as part of the local culture is present in the natural environment, and since the source of the Nile is considered to be highly spiritual, I highly doubt that the Bujagali falls are the only spiritual site affected by the dam.

A more personal dispossession in line with spiritual presence are the graves on family land. Graves had to be removed from the land that was bought by the government, since affected people could not retain a connection to this area. Hence, the graves had to be dug up and moved, which was not comfortable. It is believed that the dead are not actually dead and remain present in people's lives. Accordingly, their spirits need to be put to rest and need to be served, otherwise they can bring harm to those alive. Personal property contains more than being able to live on it and use it practically for daily use. Hence, dispossession in the loss of land is not only the physical land, the crops, and materials on the land. Losses also entail ancestral land, family graves, and the peace for the (family's) spirits.

8.5 For future research

While analysing my data and writing the thesis, an interesting extra research question has come up, which is more theoretical and conceptual. It concerns the actual impacts of changes in people's life. Something can be initiated as a development but works out quite different (for some). For me, it raised the following questions: *When can a change be considered as development? When can a change be considered as dispossession? Can development and dispossession co-exist?*

The Bujagali hydropower project had the aim of stimulating development for Uganda in different fronts. Decreasing the amount of power outs, giving more people access to electricity, and more possibilities for sectors such as agriculture, were formulated as part of the development and sounds promising. However, as is often the case with environmental (in)justice, there is certain group that carries the big burden of such a project and their situation actually gets worse. People having to deal with poverty are hit harder and have less means and possibilities to deal with such a shock. Hence, for many, their situation has not developed for the better. They state that they did not benefit from the development. Also, the increasing amount of factories in the area does not work out positively for the local population. Government's plans for the future should bring changes for the better and bring development. Still, the question remains, when can a change be considered as development? In large top down projects, it is difficult for those who are often not heard due to their position in a society or corruption to take a stand against these plans. Hence, plans and projects with the aim of development can actually enlarge the gap between rich and poor. From which position development is judged as being development can entail the consideration of a negative impact of other people as a form of collateral damage. For the case of the Bujagali hydropower project, the impact on directly affected people has not been taken into account and dealt with sufficiently. Saying that this is a project for the development of Uganda, neglects these people.

In line with questioning development, dispossession is also difficult to determine and define. When a project like the Bujagali dam is built in the area a lot changes for all the affected people. Who determines which changes are for the better and which changes are not? Moreover, who determines what dispossession is and who the people are that are affected by it? It is not always a straight forward answer and full of cultural significance. An outsider determining dispossession might not do justice to what is actually

dispossession for those affected by it. Furthermore, determining dispossession beforehand is difficult because you can never know how a project will exactly work out, or the effects it will have on those involved or affected. Fully trying to understand dispossession, requires an understanding of those affected. Not only practically but every aspect of life that such a project will interfere with. And then still the question remains, when is a change dispossession and who decides this? There is perhaps not one answer, which makes it even more important to try to grasp it.

Finally, can these two matters co-exist? Can there be development where there is dispossession? Perhaps they are not mutually exclusive because, beforehand, you do not know exactly how something will work out or impact people. People who are involved can perhaps judge for themselves whether they experience something as development or dispossession. Moreover, a development initiative might not be able to please everyone. Accepting this, however, can be dangerous. Not being able to address every person's need and being able to please everyone, should not be an argument for justifying the collateral damage being done.

Remaining critical of such concepts and theories about how it works and the interplay between the two, also concerns the people involved. When talking about development or dispossession, who are the people involved? What are the existing structures and cultures that determine or influence such judgements and impacts? More specific conceptual, theoretical, but also practical research about these questions would be beneficial both academically as societal, as it would help in a more thorough understanding of the impacts of projects such as the Bujagali hydropower dam.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of key informants by pseudonyms

There are some organisations and people – key informants – who have played an important role in this thesis and how it came to be. For background information on the organisations I quote information from their website, because there is no one better to explain what they do and what they stand for, than themselves. Additionally, I explain shortly their role in my thesis. The names of the key informants are not their actual names but pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity. It is not something they asked for but I decided to do out of respect for and safety of their situation.

Both ENDS is an NGO located in Amsterdam. ‘The vision of Both ENDS is a world where long-term environmental sustainability and social equity take priority over short-term profits. In order to make our vision reality, Both ENDS strengthens global civil society to gain decisive influence on the use of nature and the environment, thus contributing to societies that stay within our planetary boundaries and respect all human rights, including the rights to water, food and a safe living environment. Civil society actors should have a free, independent, active and influential voice about the use of the natural resources that determine the quality of their daily lives and the future of their children. Respecting the planetary boundaries is a precondition for sustainable development. We should minimise climate change, loss of biodiversity, pollution and ozone depletion, and use land and water in a responsible way, in order to keep our planet livable. At the same time, sustainable societies should respect all human rights. Not only the rights to water, food and a safe living environment, but also gender equity, indigenous rights and space for civil society.’

With its network, Both ENDS helped me and my fellow students to find a suitable place to do research, regarding the case and the country to go to. In a meeting with some employees from the organisation, we had explained our thoughts and interests, and they gave us some suitable options. Once we chose the Bujagali case in Uganda, they brought us into contact with NAPE and Robert.

NAPE is a Ugandan NGO based in Kampala. ‘The National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) is an action organization committed to sustainable solutions to Uganda,s most challenging environmental and economic growth problems. We monitor government actions, conduct research, provide educational materials, develop science-based strategies, organize affected communities, make common cause with other civil society organisations and international organizations, and engage government officials at all levels.

It is an ambitious undertaking, but as lifelong Ugandans we cannot ignore what is happening to our precious homeland. While we stand ready to work with anyone committed to the public interest, we also will not allow powerful political or special interests to intimidate or silence us. We have done so since our founding in 1997. We choose our actions carefully to use our skills and resources most effectively, addressing our most

urgent challenges first, and expand our impact by involving like-minded organizations and individuals, and communities in need.’

Our first week we stayed in Kampala and worked at the NAPE office, they gave us more information about the Bujagali dam and introduced us to translators. We gained easy access to the field with their connections and helped us getting around in the first week in Kampala.

Robert has started the NGO Friends of the Environment for Development (FED) in Kampala, where he also lives. He has been very involved in the case of the Bujagali dam, and how it has affected the local population and the environment. Years later, when other organisations have moved on to new cases, he still tries to stay involved and up to date on the situation. He was our main contact person while being in the field, and in Kampala. He could help us with problems we encountered or practical questions we had.

Simone was one of our translators and she lives in Naminya resettlement with her family. Before having to be resettled she lived in Kikubamutwe. She is one of the few people living in the resettlement who speaks English. Before going to do interviews, we went to her house for tea and lunch. She opened her house to us and

Steven originates from Busoga, and before moving to Naminya resettlement he and his family lived in Kikubamutwe. We visited him and his family often, and he knows a lot about Christianity. He explained about the growing influence of religion, what it meant to him and to other people in the area. Also, because he grew up in Busoga and his relatives still live there, he could explain more about his experiences with the Bujagali spirit and spirituality in general.

Monica was our other translator and she lives in a village next to the river. She is politically active in the area and knows many people. Her network and knowledge of the area helped in finding people for my research. Besides Luganda – the local language in Buganda – she also speaks Lusoga – the local language in Busoga. Therefore, she went with us to the villages on the east side of the river, to translate where needed.

Winston lives in a village directly on the west side of the river with his wife and children, and he is a shop owner. He has been very involved in the project, especially with the transmission lines. This included helping in court cases and keeping up to date on what was happening. He helped me as translator during interviews, in getting to know the area, and information on governmental presence and influence.

Peter lives in the village next to Naminya resettlement and is politically active in his village. He reached out to us, since the people in his village made use of the land before Naminya resettlement was created. His family and many other people in the area rented this land for their cattle to graze. He saw the transformations in the area and he has a background in social studies. His input was twofold: his experiences as an outsider who was also affected by the dam, and his view on the processes with his educational background.

Appendix 2: Photos



Photo 1a: Map drawn by Monica

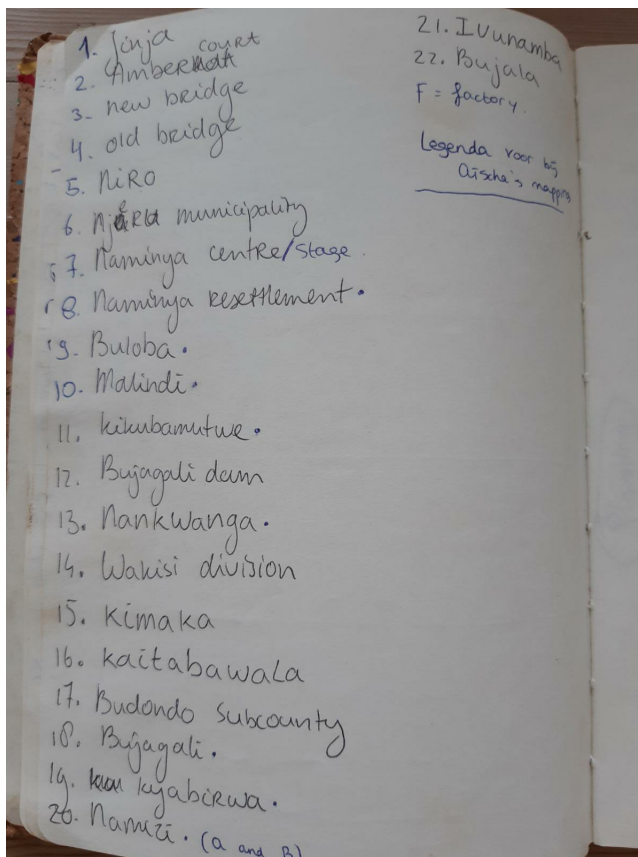


Photo 1b: Legend of the map, made by Monica



Photo 2: Dam breaks the view over the river Nile.



Photo 3: River has flooded more land inwards than officially agreed upon.



Photo 4a: Rocks from the river dumped on the banks



Photo 4b: Drill holes in the rocks



Photo 5: View over the calm river from an informant's land



Photo 6: Stone pole that demarcate the environmental strip on the west bank



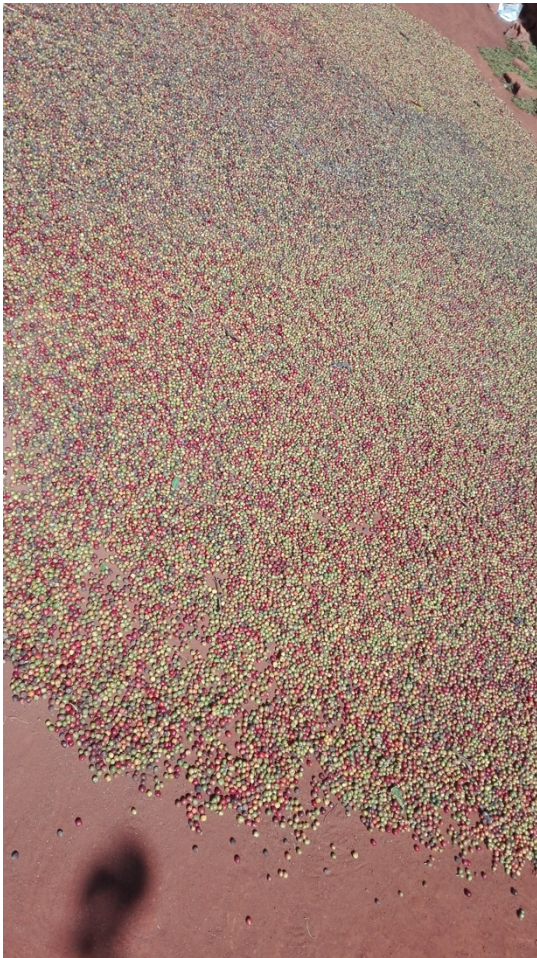
Photo 7: People drying their fishing nets on the hilly riverbanks of Busoga



Photo 8: Concrete structure on the banks of the river for fish to be weighed and organised



Photo 9: Maize in front of a house



Photos 10a & 10b: Coffee drying in the sun



Photo 11: Banana plants



Photo 12: Materials made of metal and wood stuck in the ground for worshipping the spirits



Photo 13: Caves used for worshipping. Objects are covered with white sheets and in the front there are long metal objects stuck in the ground