

**The contribution of radio journalism to the return home of the LRA fighters: The case of “Dwog Cen Paco” (Come Back Home) radio programme on 102 Mega FM in Gulu, Northern Uganda.**

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**25<sup>st</sup> August, 2025**

## DECLARATION

This project report is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other institution.

Signature: 

Date: 25th August 2025

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This project report has been submitted to Uganda Christian University - Mukono, for examination with my approval as the supervisor.

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Date: 25th Sept, 2025

Prof. Dr. Monica B. Chibita

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The Lord almighty has exalted His name through my life, for his glory. He gives me hope in my final come [Jeremiah 29:11], and I am eternally thankful.

Fr. John Scalabrini, my guardian and father [1934 - 2016], gave me new dreams, he has not lived to see, but I see them for him.

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## DEDICATION

To Maa,

You, I have waited for in my heaven.

You, I love with my longing and prayer.

When I will see you again, I hope we can talk about the woman I have become. What I have missed about the woman you would be, if the Lord God Almighty had not snatched you away from me.

Well, I share His desire of you, and I will keep you in my heart, every century.

Do the afterlife citizens know how to read, Sara dear?

If so, then this is for you Maa, to read and smile again with me.

Till we meet again, Sara Ibera.

For a beautiful mother and wife [1956 - 1994].

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## **Abstract**

Radio in Rwanda has been accused of sparking the 1994 genocide estimated to have killed over 800,000 Rwandese (Tutsi only), in about 100 days. This incidence blurred the hope of whether media in Africa could play positive roles. When radio assumed a reverse role in nearby regions, it was used in Burundi to counteract hate speech, in Kenya to tone down post-election violence, and in the Uganda's LRA conflict resolution.

This study investigates the contribution of Gulu - northern Uganda's Mega FM's, "Dwog Cen Paco", (Come Back Home) radio programme, which grounded its messaging in the theory of Peace Journalism, to resolve the northern Uganda LRA fighter's conflict, that had lasted over (20) twenty years. The study asked (3) three questions that includes, the strategies used to persuade the LRA fighters into returning home, the external factors that contributed to the LRA return, and the best practices used on the LRA persuasion radio programme.

Using a qualitative research approach, Key Informant Interviews, In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions were used to garner data through Purposive and Snowball sampling of five (5) categories of respondents that included the principal subjects of the research, who were seven (7) ex-LRA fighters, a radio journalist and two (2) religious leaders (Anglican and Roman Catholic). Other subjects included five (5) Caritas NGO staff, and sixteen (16) Gulu residents. The study emerges with pioneering recommendations to peaceful conflict resolution, and offers a viable conflict resolution foundation to scholars conducting research guided by the theory of Peace Journalism.

**Keywords:** Media; conflict resolution; the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA); Northern Uganda Peace Journalism; Radio.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 General Introduction

This study is titled ‘the contribution of radio journalism to the return home of the LRA fighters.’ It investigated the “Dwog Cen Paco”, (Come Back Home) radio programme that was used on 102 Mega FM in Gulu, northern Uganda to persuade northern Uganda’s Lord Resistance Army - LRA fighters to return home.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The media are active spaces for articulating and solving conflicts that arise in society. Contemporary strategies practical for negotiations and countering social impasses include talk radio, radio operas, press releases, debates and edutainment concerts. While increase in media outlets may simply translate to excess flow of information, the need for well-adjusted information remains a social necessity. Radio occupies a significant place on the African conflict-resolution scene because of its accessibility and affordability.

#### 1.1.1 A Brief Overview of Uganda’s Broadcast Media

Media in Uganda were liberalised in 1993, and this opened the way to private ownership. As of July 2005, there were 87 registered parent radio stations and 37 repeater stations. There were also 10 television stations in operation. The broadcast stations have now increased to 130 registered radio stations, with 99 of them on air (Chibita, 2006, p.2). Kiseka (2018) indicates there are 292 licensed FM radios and over 35 television stations. Likewise, Uganda Communications Commission (2018)’s statistics indicate 33 operational television stations and 292 licensed radio stations (Uganda Communications Commission [UCC], p.4). According to BBC Media Action (2019), Uganda has nearly 300 radio stations and 30 (free to air) television stations

spread across all 5 regions of Uganda, conveying content like news report, reality shows, sports, talk and musical shows to an estimated population of 39 million, with 87% owning a working radio, and 34%, a television (p.2).

### 1.1.2 Radio and Conflict

In modern day radio has gained popularity in the quest for conflict resolution. Botes & Langdon (2006) acknowledge the impartial ways by which media moderators such as public radio talk-show hosts and conflict interveners each with varying responsibilities approach conflict situations as third parties. The question, however, is not whether journalists act similarly to more conventional third parties in dealing with groups in conflict, but whether it is possible for news media professionals, in this case public radio talk show hosts, to escape this intermediary social role (Botes & Langdon, 2006, p.269). Are actors able to behave like outsiders or observers of news events? “The watch dog role of journalists has challenged this viewpoint to the extent of delimiting their neutral observer’s role and directly engaging them as actors” (IWPR, 2004, p.168). This concept has indeed challenged journalists’ role as purveyors of information.

As far back as the 1990s, Gutierrez (1997) showed concern about the role of television media news. Television put more focus on “international conflicts, communal wars, religious upheavals, racial disorders, political debates, family disputes, arrests, strikes, shootouts ...and lawsuits” (p. 20). Notably, IWPR (2004) countered the perspective and encouraged cross-community dialogue between journalists, for the benefit of identifying areas of agreement rather than discord, to impact conflict resolution (p.172-173). When offering his contribution to improve conflict news reporting, Galtung (1998) pointed out that peace is the first victim in war, and he enlisted the following measures for consideration.

1. What is the conflict about? Who are the parties and what are their real goals, including the parties beyond the immediate arena of violence?
2. What are the deeper roots of the conflict, structural and cultural, including the history of both?
3. What visions exist about outcomes other than one party imposing itself on the other - what particular creative, new ideas? Can such ideas be sufficiently powerful to prevent violence?
4. If violence occurs, what about invisible effects such as trauma and hatred, and the desires for revenge and more glory?
5. Who is working to prevent violence, what are their visions of conflict outcomes, their methods and how can they be supported?
6. Who is initiating genuine reconstruction, reconciliation and resolution, and who is only reaping benefits like reconstruction contract?)

These guidelines have since evolved into contemporary Peace Journalism tenets that encourage focus on news reporting in ways that promote peace using broadcast media. Youngblood (2011) strongly asserted how radio has a singular, awesome power in Uganda, and throughout much of Africa, due to the advantage it holds for speaking in the local language, not requiring electricity nor the ability to read, to access its content, and not depending on broken down trucks and rutted roads for delivery (Youngblood, 2011). Youngblood's analysis premises most of the African continent found to use radio as the main source of information due to its accessibility. "In sub-Saharan Africa the accessibility, low cost and high role in four areas of informing, facilitating decision making, educating, and entertaining popularized radio" (Mwakawago, 1986, p.87). Scott (2016) concurs with Mwakawago. Radio media is prominent not only in the Sub-Saharan region but throughout Africa for its programmes that play a pivotal role in both conflict and post conflict settings especially in the Great Lakes region (p. 35).

### 1.1.3 The Northern Uganda Conflict

Historically, the conflict in northern Uganda traces its roots to the colonial times.

The British colonialists encouraged political and economic development in the south

of the country, in particular among the Baganda. In contrast, the Acholi and other northern ethnic communities supplied much of the national manual labour and came to comprise a majority of the military, creating a military ethnocracy (Amone, 2014, p.142). The Nilotic and particularly the Acholi Luo speakers earlier acclaimed by Samuel Walker Baker (1874) to be of “fine physique” were put in charge of the army and police. “The men of Shooli (as the Acholi were called) are the best proportioned that I have ever seen; without the extreme height of the Shilluks or Dinkas, they are muscular and well knit, and generally their faces are handsome” (Baker, 1874 in Amone, 2014, p. 74). Socially, Father Crazzolara (1950) described the Luo man:

He is frank, candid and pleasant in dealing with bonafide individuals who approach him; he likes to talk, joke and laugh. He is hospitable and generous to guests and visitors without distinction. He treats all as equals for there is no class distinction among them (Crazzolara, 1950 in Amone, 2014, p.73-74).

With the British colonialist’s arrival, a new model of administration was adopted which required that the existent ethnic groups be divided into what would become two manageable groups. Amone (2014) argues that the Acholi tribe were made a martial race in this model where the different Ugandan ethnic groups were classified into one of two categories, 'martial' and 'non-martial’.

The ostensible reason was that a 'martial race' was typically brave and well-built for fighting while the 'non-martial races' were those whom the British believed to be unfit for battle because of their sedentary lifestyle (Rand, 2006, in Amone, 2014, p. 141). The central elements of the martial race theory clearly reflect the practicalities of military organisation (Rand, 2006, p.14).

With such classifications, the political rule of Uganda following her 1962's independence from the colonialists largely remained in the hands of "the martial race". During Obote's first regime from 1962 to 1971, northern Uganda's Acholi and Langi tribes largely made up the Uganda People's Defense Forces-UPDF, as well as political offices, and the first president of the Republic of Uganda, Sir Milton Obote relied upon them to stay in power. The overthrow of Obote I, and take-over of the rule of Uganda by Idi Amin came with mass killing of Obote's army, the majority of whom were Acholi. Obote II returned from 1980-85. Tito Okello Lutwa of Acholi origin who overthrew Obote II would live a diminutive victory to shortly be deposed by the National Resistance Army - NRA, which took away the rule of Uganda from the raved martial race and transferred it to the sedentary Bantu.

Until the 1984 coup d'état led by Acholi Generals, Tito Okello Lutwa and Bazilio Olara Okello had met with defeat of their Military Junta in 1985 by the NRA (led by now-president Museveni), the 'martial' race concept was unquestionable. An attempt to undo the NRA victory was led by Acholi's Alice Lakwena's 1986 "Holy Spirit" movement which became a precursor rebellion to the infamous Acholi's Joseph Kony's LRA rebellion of 1987 - date. The imperatives of the LRA rebellion conditioned northern Uganda which was the rebel's base, into impoverished living and massive loss of lives and property, while the rest of Uganda carried on normally. While hard figures are impossible to determine, the northern Uganda LRA conflict is said to have claimed more than 15,000 human lives and displaced approximately 2 million others into internally displaced peoples' settlements or elsewhere in exile. This conflict once expressed by Maeland (2010) to be Africa's longest (p.3), caused massive loss of human lives, animals and the destruction of property.

ICG (2004) reduced the conflict into four torrents of scuffle. First, it is a struggle between the rebels and government, the Acholi people conscripted as LRA rebels and Acholi noncombatants, the difference of opinion between Sudan and Uganda government who supported each other's rebel groups and the North-South Ugandan provincial divide politicked from as far back as 1962 the year of Uganda's independence from colonial rule (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2004). With the northern Uganda situation nuanced expressions always surfaced:

The mutilation and summary execution of non-combatants, the abduction of children and adults for use as foot soldiers, sex slaves and porters, the rounding up of civilians in camps – 1,200,000 at the end of 2003 – have measured the cadence of this conflict with the regularity of a metronome (Van Acker, 2004, p.335-336).

#### 1.1.4 Earlier Attempts at the LRA Conflict Resolution

In 1998, Gulu town received its first FM radio station, the UPDF's established and closely supervised Radio Freedom operated on 88.8 MHz. "It was closely supervised by the army" (Otim, 2009). The town was on its way to prepare a foundation for Peace Journalism, when in their communication they gave words of encouragement to people living in the internally displaced people's camps, and especially persuaded the LRA fighters to consider demobilization through soft dialogue. Around that time, the Acholi parliamentary groups in the parliament of Uganda were moving a motion for a bill to counter the LRA conflict through exploring a possibility of government blanket amnesty for the LRA fighters.

#### 1.1.5 Amnesty for the Ex-LRA Fighters

As years of warfare and the experience of both rebel and state violence took their toll on the Acholi community, Finnegan as cited in Ross (2016) stated that a time

came for a mutual agreement across the broader Acholi community to embrace forgiveness rather than more violence (p.34). The question that remained was whether the LRA combatants would trust and accept this forgiveness and, was the government prepared to offer it as blanket immunity to each and every LRA fighter? When finally, (with exception of its five top commanders Joseph Kony, Vincent Oti, Dominic Ongwen, Rascal and Odyambo), the Act of Amnesty (2000)<sup>1</sup> passed in the parliament of Uganda, granted immunity to the LRAs who would return home within the span of a year of its granting, the Acholi insurgents that emerged against Museveni who took over rule of Uganda from the Acholi people, would be pardoned.

Essentially a blanket amnesty, the act established an Amnesty Commission whose goal was to encourage the LRA fighters to surrender by convincing them that they would be received peacefully (Ross, 2016, p.5).

The Amnesty Act prompted radio journalists to quickly move into radio spaces where journalists had greater control over content programming. In Lira, Pader and Gulu towns of northern Uganda, government independent FM radios that centered their programming on persuading the LRAs to return home were established.

Amnesty which was a legal space to pursue the LRA conflict resolution dialogue, added to the existent Acholi cultural rituals of forgiveness, previous conflict resolution attempts on Freedom FM, peace negotiation efforts by Acholi religious leaders and government envoys who were Acholi leaders, now permitted a forgiveness-dominating dialogue on the radio waves. “The amnesty process had been largely successful because it conformed to principles of forgiveness which were

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<sup>1</sup> Act of Amnesty (2000) was an act that provided amnesty for Ugandans involved in acts of war in various parts of the country. Although it was a nation-wide appeal, the amnesty targeted Joseph Kony’s LRA rebel groups of northern Uganda.



embedded in traditional cultural practices of the tribes affected by the conflict” (Owor & Ogora, 2008, p.5). However, its sternness which dictated upon a one-year period of surrender, for a group that needed persuasion was impractical. This called for immediate adjustments from the government to lengthen the LRA surrender time continuum.

#### 1.1.6 “Dwog Cen Paco” Radio Programme on 102 Mega FM

Northern Uganda’s response to openly pursue the LRA conflict through radio Peace Journalism was flagged off in 2002 by Radio Wa 89.8 FM, which broadcast in the local Luo language in the conflict-prone Lira District. In early 2002, it aired a weekly talk-show programme known as Karibu, Swahili for ‘welcome’. The programme called upon LRA combatants to disarm and return home under the 2000 government amnesty (Tayeebwa, 2019, p. 214).

In Gulu, the epicenter of the LRA rebellion, 102 Mega FM established the “Dwog Cen Paco”, (Come Back Home) programme through which a radio journalist relentlessly persuaded the LRA fighters to return home. The programme was a single idea and effort of one radio host, formerly the host of a similar programme on Freedom FM (Gulu), which quite never took root to promote the LRA conflict resolution, due to UPDF soldiers’ interferences. The LRA disarmament messaging on 102 Mega FM in Gulu town, soon gained traction and popularity with the LRA fighters, the Acholi community, and ultimately the president of Uganda, who gave the programme host, a prerogative to engage the LRA in on-air dialogues.

#### 1.1.7 The Forgiveness Rituals in Acholi Northern Uganda

Traditional justice in Acholi sub-region involved LRA returnees confessing to crimes, followed by civilian forgiveness and reintegration into their communities.

A forgiveness and 'welcome home' ritual rested upon clan leaders to organize people for rituals and sometimes even preside at their performance (Mbabazi, Chapter 7, 2010, p.108). Whereas this Acholi ritual did not have absolute say in the LRA conflict resolution, since there were other accompanying factors, scholarly research by Ross (2016) argues that from its onset local efforts for peace and the role of forgiveness in the northern Uganda conflict was central (p. 36). <sup>2</sup>'Mato Oput' amongst the many reintegration and forgiveness rituals had set up a forgiveness springboard, which the law of amnesty later complemented to alleviate the northern Uganda conflict. During the ritual, while clan elders from belligerent opposites investigate the cause for conflict, their disparate groups are barred from close association to deter extemporaneous physical meetings that could provoke immediate acts of revenge. Once a crime is determined and the perpetrators admitted to it, the contending clans will meet to 'Mato Oput'. This ceremony is stated by Owor & Ogora (2008) as one carried out in the event of intentional or non-intentional killing (p.1). It ends with compensation of the aggrieved clan with herd(s) of cattle used specifically for bride price, and in which case the first child born in that marriage is named after the deceased. This was the ritual used to reintegrate the LRA former fighters back into society. However, a rising concern this study points out with 'Mato Oput' for the LRA group is that the method was not fully feasible. LRA returnees were not in any way economically prepared for their victim's compensation. Besides, the unknown number of lives that each ex-LRA fighter might have claimed, either through mass murder or individually, during their years at war, was not one to easily

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<sup>2</sup> Mato Oput' loosely translated in the Acholi language as 'drinking Oput', is a conflict resolution approach that has been subjected to scholarly research. In this approach a piquant liquid made from the stem of the 'Oput' tree, is shared from an open calabash by the contending parties, after which there should be no more contention between previously opposite parties.

put a hard figure on. Moreover, their victims were not always able to identify all their assailants.

Another ritual used to bring about reconciliation was 'Nyono Tong-gweno', "stepping on the egg." The Acholi people believe that an egg being closed up, represents a voiceless innocence, and thus, stepping on it would not only cleanse one of their crimes/atrocities committed away from home, but ensure that these sins are not brought into the community into which ex-culprits are welcomed. Owor & Ogora (2008) agreed that 'nyono tong gweno' was successfully adapted for reintegration of former LRA fighters (p.2). Unlike with 'Mato Oput', which hinged on an economic recompense, 'nyono tong gweno' was viable for the LRA returnees, who did not possess material wealth for any needed compensation.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The constraints in peace caused by two opposing center poles, the LRA fighters and the government of Uganda was the source of great political instability in northern Uganda's sub-region, necessitating community peace restoration through forgiveness, rehabilitation, and reintegration of former LRA fighters into their former civilian communities. One key initiative to conflict resolution was the use of radio journalism, specifically Mega FM's "Dwog Cen Paco" (Come Back Home) programme. This study examines the contribution of radio to conflict resolution, focusing on the contribution of "Dwog Cen Paco" in resolving the LRA conflict.

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the contribution of "Dwog Cen Paco", (Come Back Home) radio programme in persuading the LRA fighters in Acholi, northern Uganda, to return home to their former communities as civilians.

### 1.3.1 Specific Objectives

1. To explore “Dwog Cen Paco” strategies used to persuade the LRA’s return.
2. To identify other players that contributed to the LRA fighter’s return.
3. To identify best practices on “Dwog Cen Paco”, (Come Back Home) programme.

### 1.3.2 Research Questions

1. What were the “Dwog Cen Paco” strategies used to persuade the LRAs return?
2. Which other players contributed to the LRA fighters’ return home?
3. What best practices were used on the “Dwog Cen Paco” (Come Back Home), programme?

## 1.4 Justification for the Study

Before the Joseph Kony LRA rebellion, northern Uganda was already conflict prone.

There were precursor conflicts as the 1987 ‘Holy Spirit Movement’ led by the charismatic Alice Auma, the 1971 Idi Amin’s coup, and emergency of Acholi’s Cilil rebel groups, aimed to resist President Idi Amin’s reign of terror.

The LRA conflict persisted for over two decades despite government efforts, until media intervention showed promise. Proven impact was seen on “Dwog Cen Paco” radio programme, successfully persuading of hundreds of LRA fighters to return home, showcasing its effectiveness in conflict resolution.

Unlike other radio programmes, the unique approach of the, “Come Back Home” featured a single host relentlessly engaging with LRA fighters, promoting reintegration and reconciliation. The study aimed to identify “Dwog Cen Paco” programme’s successful strategies and, comparative advantages that distinguished it from other LRA conflict resolution radio efforts on “Pem” (Let us Debate) in Pader

town, or "Vision for Peace" on Radio Waa 89.8 FM in Lira, that had less notable impacts, making "Come Back Home" a valuable case study.

Given the region's ongoing conflicts in Dr. Congo, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, the successful replication of the "Dwog Cen Paco" model in the Central African Republic, merited its closer look, with aims to extract valuable lessons from this conflict resolution approach.

The programme's gaining recognition and support from the President of Uganda, who granted the host permission to engage LRA fighters in on-air dialogues, amplified its reach and credibility and, the study sought to identify other gaps in government efforts that the programme effectively addressed.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The major contribution are lessons learnt on the role of radio in conflict resolution.

The study draws the attention of government, scholars and other agents of conflict resolution to the unique character of local language radio in appealing to both the heads and hearts of combatants.

## **1. 6 Scope of the Study**

Scope refers to the boundary of the research mainly in terms of geographical area, content and time (Etyang, 2018, p. 25). Other boundaries may include theoretical coverage and methodological coverage (ibid.). The scope statement here describes key deliverables of the study to include the geographical, content and time scope.

### **1.6.1 Geographical Scope**

This study was conducted in Gulu city, focusing on Mega FM, situated at Independence House, plot 11/13, Olya Road in the centre of Gulu city. Gulu covers an area of 3452 square kilometers and has a population of 177,400 inhabitants. Mega

FM uses a pair of 2 KW transmitters which covers a radius of 150 km around Gulu. Magango (2006) reported that the radio spans across Gulu District, her neighboring districts of Kitgum, Pader, Lira, Apac, Adjumani, Amuru, Amolatar, Oyam, parts of Masindi District and areas of Southern Sudan (p.6).

### 1.6.2 Content Scope

The study primarily focused on the strategies used on the “Dwog Cen Paco” (Come Back Home) radio programme to persuade the LRA fighters to return home, between the years 2002-2006. Ross (2016) pointed out that humanitarians and peacekeepers continue to record and relay the ‘Come Back Home’ messages on the airwaves in LRA-affected regions of the DR. Congo and Central African Republic, even as the LRA already left Uganda in 2006 (p.34).

### 1.6.3 Time Scope

The period investigated of the “Dwog Cen Paco” (Come Back Home) messaging is the year 2002-2006, which marks the year of commencement and peak of the “Dwog Cen Paco” programme.

## 1.7 Theoretical Framework

The theories of Peace Journalism, like Development Journalism, focus on influencing situations through the use of media to confront particular predicaments and to direct solutions to the affected masses. Like Peace Journalism, Development Journalism emerged in the 1960s when the idea of communication for development was gaining support in politics and academics. Xiaoge (2009) explains that in this period, journalists were expected to nurture national development (p.1). Subsequently, many journalists turned leaders in Asian, African and Latin American democracies. In essence, in developing economies, journalists were the intellectuals and philosophers best placed to apply communication development for national

economic development, which according to Schech and Haggis (2000) was equated to modernity (as cited in Ukwandu 2017, p.102). The concept of modernity is best grasped from the intellectual roots of modernization theory, whose earliest proponents built it on the decorum and by product of Western cultures. For instance, Mabogunje (2000) states that the term modernization is used to describe the transition from the traditional society of the past to the modern society of today, as it is found in the West (p.14007). This means that developing countries would only be considered modernized, if they go through development steps pioneered by the developed countries.

Theoretically, development journalism was strongly supported by modernization and development communication theories. In the logic of these approaches, for the developing or underdeveloped countries to modernize themselves, they should learn from the West, importing communication technologies along with ways of doing things from the West including concepts like press freedom and the watch dog function of the media (Xiaoge, 2009, p.1).

In this study the focus is on Johan Galtung's 1970's theory of Peace Journalism (PJ) traced as far back 1965, even if Galtung debuted his concepts of peace research as early as 1957. One of Galtung's peace-theory component extensively referenced in scholarly peace studies research is the notion of 'negative' and 'positive' peace. Galtung (1964) in his study, "What is peace research?" described negative peace as the absence of human violence and war, and positive peace as the absence of structural violence (p.1-4). Structural violence was expounded by Fischer (2013) to be the non-intended slow, massive suffering caused by economic and political structures in the form of massive exploitation and repression, and the absence of

the cultural violence that legitimizes direct and-or structural violence” (p.173). The absence of this structural violence, and presence of positive peace would then translate into building sustainable co-operations, with equity for the economy, and equality for a polity. A structure based on reciprocity, equal rights, benefits and dignity. “What you want for yourself you should also be willing to give others” (ibid: 173). Negative and positive peace, which formed the basis of Galtung’s theory of peacebuilding has since been regurgitated or put into consideration, by future peace studies scholars in postulating what Peace Journalism is.

In analyzing what makes foreign news newsworthy (Galtung & Ruge, 1965) came up with sets of ground-breaking ideas. Their ideas criticized the preferences specified by mainstream journalism around a world at war, society faced with violence and yet with inclinations towards publicity causes. When proponents of Peace Journalism Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick put the phenomenon into practice, they posited Peace Journalism to be a practice, ‘when editors and reporters make choices - of what stories to report and how to report them - that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent response to conflict (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p.5). ‘Peace Journalism can be seen as a set of tools, both conceptual and practical, intended to equip journalists to offer a better public service’(Ibid:5). Howard (2003) perceived Peace Journalism as a more ‘reliable journalism’ that connotes ‘practices which meet the international standards of accuracy, impartiality and social responsibility’ (as cited in Rukhsana, 2010, p.338). Christian et al. (2009, p.74) pointed out the need to engage in a ‘legitimizing process’ where the moral claims of all major actors in a particular public communication context are taken into account.



In proposing the normative structures of Peace Journalism, Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) elaborated a list of “dos and don’ts” of Peace Journalism that outline what differentiates peace or conflict - sensitive journalism from war or violence journalism (p.28-31). Youngblood (2019) highlighted two points developed from Lynch and McGoldrick’s 17 check points and created response to irresponsible reporting that contends with the peace process. “Some of these key points include avoiding reporting about conflict as if it is a zero-sum game (one winner, one loser); reporting about parties involved in the conflict, reporting only the violent acts and “horror”; and not reporting claims as though they are facts” (Youngblood, 2019, Chapter 1, p.9). Irvan (2017) explains how media ought to play a positive role in promoting peace. “Normative theories stress the proper role and function of the media” (p.34). This is distinctly different from any descriptive theory because in this case the “right” approach is prescribed and handed to subject deemed to apply it. The point is to motivate self-reflection so that journalists, guided by standards that regulate right and wrong, will act responsibly, and thus influence self-restraint and cause a positive direction of opinion in reporting.

The strength of Peace Journalism is more graspable from Galtung’s notion of positive or affirmative peace which urges journalists to strive for initiatives that conceptualises sustainable peace through constructive reportage. The advantage here is that theory drives editor’s (re) actions more towards peace building. However, this theory is seen to be grounded on a much complex postulation that journalists have a virtuous understanding of what constitutes ‘peace’ and, therefore, must appreciate the journalistic norms of peace. This expectation becomes even more problematic, when media owners or governments exercise control over media frames, and inhibit journalists from practicing fair and objective

reporting, which then make the mass victims of media deceptions. While objectivity in reporting is vital, “it is vital nonetheless to note that news said to be objective can, in fact, fuel violence” (Adebayo, 2019, p.74), and while conflict reporting at times carry negative consequences, when tenets of Peace Journalism are not adhered to, the theory often carry relevancy in its attempts to promote perspectives that allow peace - stakeholders to make informed decisions on how to resolve conflicts that transpire in their communities.

In postulating an ideal theory, scholars Ting Lee & Maslog argues that, “by taking an advocacy, interpretation approach, Peace Journalism concentrates on stories that highlight peace initiatives, tone down ethnic and religious differences, prevent further conflict, focus on the structure of the society and promote conflict resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation” (Ting Lee & Maslog, 2005, as cited in Gultung, 1965, p.98-99). “The prerequisite is for journalists to act on certain obligations that relate to a specific genre of required social values” (p.259). This is a relevant approach that Hanitzsch (2007) argues to be an individualistic endeavor of a journalist to embrace positive attitudes and behaviour that pushes them to produce coverage that will embrace the tenets of Peace Journalism (p.5). “The media thus become facilitators of positive change, rather than mere disinterested professional observers/reporters” (Howard, 2002, p.4). In defense of this view, Hyde-Clarke (2011) states that Peace Journalism finds relevance by placing enormous responsibilities on the media as society’s watchdogs (p.43). This means that both media and Peace Journalism inter-depend on each other to position into their common roles. While this theory may be over optimistic, if tactically employed the model would harmoniously consolidate into radio journalism practices, and challenge existent notions of violence when seeking to resolve conflict. For instance,

the case of 1995's radio Rutomorangingo's rejection of broadcasting into Burundi, the same anti-Tutsi invectives that incited the 1994 Rwandan genocide, through Radio-Television Libre des Milles Collines (RTLM) demonstrated a successful media's dependence on Peace Journalism tenets in abetting conflict resolution through positive decisions made by journalists.

#### 1.7.1 The Contribution of Theory to the "Dwog Cen Paco" Radio Programme

The theory of Peace Journalism significantly contributed to the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme by providing a framework for constructive conflict reporting. This approach focuses on promoting peace and understanding rather than sensationalizing conflict. The theory guided in reframing conflict narratives, encouraging journalists to move beyond typical war journalism frames, which often emphasize drama, crisis, and extremism. Demonstrable, "Dwog Cen Paco" adopted frames like cooperation, consensus, reconciliation, forgiveness, patience, and moderation to promote peace.

In exploring peaceful conflict resolution with LRA fighters, "Dwog Cen Paco" promoted a forgiveness-centered programming, on the foundation of government amnesty for LRA fighters. The programme featured former LRA fighters sharing their stories and appealing to their colleagues to abandon rebellion and return home. This approach helped to humanize the conflict and encourage reintegration. No wonder Momanyi (2017) agrees that when media (radio) and government interests converge and the interests of the political and economic elites and media elites are fulfilled, the controls and constraints that affect media in capitalistic settings do not affect media (p.7). However, it is not always often that these entities would completely agree, without one overarching partner over riding the other.

The programme demonstrated that radio can be instrumental in ending conflict, and showed the importance of conflict-sensitive reporting, which involves understanding the conflict's complexities and reporting in a way that doesn't exacerbate tensions. Tayeebwa (2014) agreed to this fact, stating: "In both Burundi and Northern Uganda, several initiatives have been undertaken to end ethno-political violence. One of such initiatives has been the use of 'peace radio' broadcasts" (P.3).

When normative conflict-resolving values of Peace Journalism was replicated into Mega FM's "Dwog Cen Paco" radio programme strategies, it was seen in using media as a tool for peacebuilding, rather than just reporting on conflict. The programme's success in persuading hundreds of LRA fighters to return home underscores the potential of Peace Journalism in conflict resolution. Nonetheless, this identifiable 'ought to know' guideline that "Dwog Cen Paco" exhibited still eludes some media practitioners. The practice of Peace Journalism is still challenged by the notion of violence in media despite a broad advocacy for peaceful conflict resolution through media. When expressing the use of mainstream media for conflict publicity, Galtung (1998) also contradicted his journalistic tenets when he argued that violence must also have a place in the media. His paradox is supported by Salama (2014)'s statement that reporters and editors are faced with a choice to influence peaceful alternatives to conflict resolution which societies may evaluate and value. No wonder the use of the RTLM during the genocide in Rwanda showed that journalists made a choice but one in which killings of minority groups during the Rwandan genocide was incited by media. According to one report by Stott (2006), the 1994 Rwandan genocide "effectively" wiped out over 800,000 people (p.97). Rwanda was not politically stable, yet the mysterious shooting down of the then Hutu-clan President Juvenal Habyarimana's plane triggered the Hutu people to go on mass

murders, while relying heavily on radio media for information and its interpretation. This role of radio premised a failing role in Peace Journalism building tenets. Not all journalists have the mind to adopt the essence in which the normative, assumes journalists to be capable of making best decisions.

In the Rwandan case, the killing of Tutsi minorities was largely enabled by radio journalists who “aided the hunt by exposing their hiding places” (Kellow and Steeves, 1998, as cited in Karen and Meghan, 2017, p.2). Essentially, for this framework to effectively work, journalists must be educated and trained. Then again, not all journalists may have access to training centers and resources. For this reason, the resultant disparity of ‘know-hows’ between trained and untrained journalists remains an obstacle that undermine the basics of Peace Journalism. In the case of Rwanda, it is reported “the journalists, who were not formally trained, inspired average citizens to savagely kill the friends and neighbors they previously lived with in peace” (Kellow and Steeves, 1998 as cited in Karen and Meghan, 2017: ibid). These incidents each validate the often-rising criticism of Peace Journalism for it’s being an overly idealized concept. In spite of it, efforts to conceptualize the practice have been on the rise and Peace Journalism has guided journalists’ responses when reporting conflict situation in media. When the “Dwog Cen Paco” programme journalist ventured into the unusual, empowering invisible voices by amplifying the voices of returnees and promoting their stories, the programme gave a platform to those often overlooked in conflict reporting.

Overall, the theory of Peace Journalism informed the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme's approach, enabling it to make a positive impact on conflict resolution and peacebuilding in northern Uganda.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter is a review of the seminal literature in Normative Theory. It demonstrates key strands of this body of literature and its relevance to the problem and objectives of this study.

#### **2.1 Contextualizing the Narrative**

When media and conflict experts from around the world met at a 1998 conference in Geneva, they examined the legitimacy of media intervention for peace. Betz (2004) reported that the media interventionists considered receiving a mandate from the international community if they were to intervene during open conflict. In addition, they argued that, “local staff need to be involved in regular content reviews to make certain that information broadcast is both accurately and effectively portrayed to its audience” (Heiber, 1998, as cited in Betz, 2004, p.41). Valuable to this convention was Howard (2002)’s preceding model in which there are five types of media intervention varying largely according to the stage of the conflict. Most pertinent to the case at hand are types four and five. Type four is described as being distinct from conventional journalism and is rather a “pro-active media-based intervention, usually designed for a highly specific audience and purpose. This type of intervention is often the product of an outside actor such as a peacekeeping force [...]. Type five involves programming that is specifically intent upon transforming attitudes, promoting reconciliation and reducing conflict and is usually conducted by non-governmental organizations (Howard, 2002, p.11). The latter approach implies that the type of intervention material is determined by its

relevance to the conflict on case. “The content of the programming in this case is determined by its appropriateness to fostering peace” (ibid: 11).

## **2.2 Historical Role of Media in Conflict Situations**

The study of media and conflict has garnered attention from media scholars and practitioners in the last decade. According to McQuail (2000), the importance of media for Peace Journalism is grounded in the fact that media is immensely important in conflict resolution in as far as they have unrivalled power in causing opinion change (p.424). Where media’s focus is still very much more on the negative contributions of media, Magango (2008) points to the fact that the media in conflict situations have the potential for two negative consequences. First, they can become a source of nationalistic propaganda that would heighten ethnic and religious tensions as in the case of Bosnia and Rwanda. Secondly, they can dehumanize conflict, such as happens when media reporters rush to a scene of conflict in order to provide extensive and graphic minute-by-minute reporting only to quickly leave the scene once the bloodshed is over (Magango, 2008, p.15). While the potential of media as a tool for peaceful resolution of conflict is neglected, the media has an important role in conflict prevention, in particular in alerting policy makers, and the public that influences them, to the catastrophic consequences that so often flow from no action being taken. More immediate and more graphic stories tend to take precedence, but there is much more that can and should be done to identify emerging issues, explain the human risks associated with them, and prod decision-makers into appropriate action (ICISS, 2001, p.26).

Historically, radio was the cheapest and most popular form of entertainment, especially during World War II. In 1930’s Germany, the first Volksempfänger, an affordable and extremely popular radio, was introduced in 1933, the year Adolf

Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany. “This was no coincidence. The fact that the Volksempfänger was a propaganda machine was never hidden, but because it was cheap, and could play music along with Hitler’s speeches, most people bought one anyway” (Allison, 2018). “The accessibility and availability meant it fueled propaganda and could reach a large number of citizens. Radio helped entertain and inform the population, encouraging citizens to join in the war effort” (Radio Propaganda in World War II, n.d). The propagandist’s message successfully pervaded its target listeners given that, “radio media is a powerful tool for propaganda to flow (Miller, 1941, p.69).

In the 1990’s media was yet again blamed for playing a central role in “the Balkan wars - in Slovenia 1991, in Croatia 1991-95, in Bosnia Herzegovina 1992-95, in Serbia and Kosovo 1998-99” (Laiho, 2009, p.14). Kurspahic as cited in Laiho (2009) claims that each side (Serbian and Croatian) propagated an “us versus them” mentality among their respective populations. “The media went even so far that journalists invented crimes, flamed ethnic tensions and ruined peacemaking efforts” (Laiho, 2009, p.17). Still in the 90s, media was liable for unbalanced reporting of the first Gulf war led by America against Iraq. Since then, the media’s role as according to Laiho (2009) has been under heavy surveillance.

When in 1994, radio in the Great Lakes Region - Africa was again in the headlines due to the Rwandan *Radio-Television Libre des Milles Collins* (RTLM) media-incited genocide, it became apparent that not since the Nazi propaganda machine had radio been used so effectively to incite violence. Thompson (2007) recaptures a gruesome encounter in the dark days of Rwanda, as a journalist clandestinely captured from a hotel rooftop, the image of a woman kneeling besides slain bodies on the streets of



Kigali - Rwanda, only a few minutes before her own demise. The Rwandan case was a helpless situation since media guided killers to their victims even while UN peace-corps were on the ground. Much of the international coverage focused on the scramble to evacuate expatriates from the country (Thompson, 2007, p.2). Baisley (2014) expressed that the RTLM radio propaganda in which over a million, mainly Tutsi and moderate Hutu people were killed in Rwanda was viewed as ethnic-based by foreign media and commentaries (p.41). “Essentially, radio has had a legacy of divisiveness and hatred in this part of Africa” (Betz, 2004, p.43). In neighboring Burundi, the beginning of the 1990’s civil war was characterized by hate press (Des Forges, 2007, p. 53). In Kenya, the 2007/2008 post-elections violence and conflict between the Kikuyu and Kelenjin tribes was partly blamed on vernacular radio journalists, for fanning violence by airing hate speech and framing issues with implicit ethnic overtones. According to Ojwang (2009) the violence was caused by intensified expectations, exaggerated pre-election opinion polls and subjective media reportage of alleged rigging (p.24). The obsession with reportage on violence and news from the warfront tended to mask the unfolding humanitarian crisis following the death and displacement of so many people. It was therefore not appropriate to comment that Kenya was on fire at a time when peace efforts were in top gear, especially after the arrival of the Panel of Eminent African Persons (Ojwang, 2009, p.28).

The behaviour of the Kenyan media proved in large measures how “mass media succumbs to sensationalism in conflict situations (Hieber, 1998, p. 2) and, challenge the reverse role of media, just like with the Rwandan genocide or the Balkans war, where media were accused of perpetrating pernicious exercises that directly incited these conflicts. The blatant realization is that radio media is in position to make life

and death decisions. Regardless, scholars and media practitioners have made efforts to direct and empower groups which previously were voiceless, by promoting peaceful ways of resolving conflicts. In Africa especially, radio journalists have in several instances adopted the use of radio media to diffuse conflicts. In an article in which she reviews the strength of Dr. Congo's radio Okapi in peacebuilding, Betz (2004) begins by pointing out that the potential of radio was not fully tapped and encouraged communities to ask how it could be (p.39). The scholar then quotes an interview in which radio Netherland's David Smith, MONUC's Chief of Information, explained what he believes to be the strength of Radio Okapi. "There is no single voice that unites all the Congolese people. This radio project will allow people in rebel held territories to speak to people in government-controlled territories for the first time since the war broke out" (Betz, 2004, p.45). Betz as well, lauded Media Network (2003)'s remarks on the role of radio in combating-communities "to convince people that it is in their interest to lay down their arms, and either be repatriated to their home country, if they come from somewhere else, or to find ways to join civil society and leave the war behind" (Media Network, 2003, as cited in Betz, 2004, p.45). "The use of the five major languages in the DRC (French, Lingala, Swahili, Tshiluba and Kikongo) for broadcast was crucial to the success of Radio Okapi's rebel out-reach project (ibid: 45). For African communities where polarity is high, this practice of adopting diversity in programming proved effective and set radio on a powerful agenda setting platform in the African continent. More recently, Makundi (2011) consented that teams of journalists that represent all groups have been successful in building public trust in the message. "People want to see their group represented in the face or the sound of the journalists" (p.28). Makundi's thoughts are later reflected in Ross (2016)'s argument who, when

speaking of radio media's role to disassemble the LRA rebels of northern Uganda pointed out that demobilization media efforts must be grounded in local contexts (p.34).

To critically examine roles of radio media in conflict on the African continent, the case of Rwanda is a good starting place. Months after the 1994 genocide of Rwandan Tutsi clans, said to have been organised locally and face to face, but generally fuelled by hate messaging by the Hutu extremists who were RTLM radio journalists, Hieber (1998) reports that the Hironnelle Foundation established Radio Agatashya broadcasting from neighboring Zaire to counter the effects of hate speech formerly from the infamous RTLM, that incited the Rwandan genocide. Radio Agatashya was “a radio that became famed as the first ‘humanitarian’ radio station inaugurated in a conflict area” (Hieber, 1998, p. 3). The practicability of radio media in conflict intervention, in this region was earlier demonstrated in the case of Burundi's civil war that started in 1993. “Journalists in Burundi were possibly the first on the African continent to immerse in the contemporary practice of Peace Journalism” (Tayeebwa, 2019, p.212). Des Forges (2007) commends the rejection of the 1995's radio Rutomorangingo broadcast into Burundi of the same anti-Tutsi invectives by the genocidal (RTLM) of Rwanda. “While requests by the Burundian government to jam its broadcast were not readily implemented by the United States of America (USA), the radio was successfully jammed in 1996 with the help of the Israeli government” (Des Forges, 2007, p.53). Frere (2017) also commendably remarked on Burundi's recovery from an era of “hate press” with the support of the “peace building” industry as the UN or other international NGOs, after a long civil war that went on from 1993-2003 (Frere, 2017). Such are feats that Makundi (2011) had described as the influence of media for positive change. “Since radio fed the fire in

Rwanda, it seems clear that it might be used to put it out in Burundi, where similar conditions existed and continue to exist” (Makundi, 2011, p.28). Makundi’s hopes are revived in the wake of success stories in Burundi and Rwanda, and where media for ‘positive change’ efforts were pushed into West Africa. Kimani (2007) commends Search for Common Ground- (SFCG) NGO for replicating the radio programme as were in Burundi into Liberia, by not only producing but airing peace programmes on disarmament and reconciliation using 22 radio stations, 10 of which were in the capital (p.2). At the end of the 1990’s and beginning of the 2000’s, several radio stations (Bonesha FM, Radio Publique Africaine, Radio Isanganiro, Radio-Television Renaissance) were established with an aim of contributing to reconciliation and promoting human rights (Frere, 2017). In 2004, the post-genocidal Rwanda, saw the establishment of a radio drama titled Musekweya (“New Dawn” in Kinyarwanda) by the Dutch NGO La Benevolencija. The team behind the Rwandan radio programme later developed the story further to convince members of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR, originally comprising genocide perpetrators who fled Rwanda in 1994), to return to Rwanda. “One report on this initiative highlighted that a number of ex-FDLR had listened to the programme in the DRC before returning to Rwanda (Ingelaere et al. 2009, as cited in Ross, 2016, p.35). This flourishing network of peace building, Hagos (2001) pointed was a successful duplication in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo). Hagos (2001) further commended the USAID funded American non-governmental organization (NGO), Search for Common Ground (SCG), for its setting up ‘Studio Ijambo’ (Kirundi for ‘wise words’), as an independent radio production studio to produce programmes that enhance peace building through promoting dialogue, peace, and reconciliation, and counteracting hate campaign to manage and resolve conflict in Burundi (p. ii).

### **2.3 Media and Conflict in the Great Lakes Region**

In the Great Lakes Region in East Africa, and Uganda particularly, the regions affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebellion in the last two decades all chose Peace Journalism as an approach to conflict resolution. Momanyi (2015) identifies Mega FM amongst several such stations set up by the United Nations, donor agencies, church organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Africa to help communities deal with the challenges of re-establishing peace after war. In the early 2000s, northern Uganda saw a proliferation of radio stations that aimed at ending LRA rebel activities. In Pader district, a peace-driven radio FM station engaged its listeners in an interactive programme dubbed, 'Pem' (meaning 'Let us Debate'), every Saturday from 10.00 hrs to 12.00 noon, and 'Vision for Peace' which broadcasts on Radio Wa 89.8 FM in Lira. Gulu town's 102 Mega FM adopted the same peaceful approach of conflict resolution to communicate to the LRA rebels through the "Dwog Cen Paco", (Come Back Home) radio programme, to broadcast key reconciliatory messages to encourage the rebels, many of whom were abducted conscripts, to escape and surrender. Ross (2016) observed that in the LRA conflict, one type of programme, which is the "come home" messaging stands out:

These locally grounded programmes take many forms, but for each one the underlying goal of the weekly broadcast is to encourage the rebels to demobilize (p.36).

With Mega FM's "Dwog Cen Paco", (Come Back Home) programme, several strategies were used. Kimani (2007) reports of an interview held with a one Boniface Ojok of the non-profit project, Justice and Reconciliation, in which the interviewee lauded "Dwog Cen Paco" (Come Back Home), programme for hosting former LRA rebel Oryema on the air to talk about his experiences (Kimani, 2007, p.1). On a website

reporting on the northern Uganda conflict, Otim (2009) narrated similar testimonies from former LRA child soldiers. In his narrative: Mega runs a montage format programme called “Dwog Cen Paco”, (Come Back Home). In this programme, former child soldiers speak straight to the audience and narrate their ordeal of captivity. I find it quite compelling... [...] I was glued for over an hour trying to follow the journey of a young girl from the day she was captured to the day she returned to her parents. This practically demonstrates the constructive role of the radio programme in the life of the rebels and non-combatant community at home (Otim, 2009). Typically during the Dwog Cen Paco programme, the former LRA combatants, re-integrated in the communities, are given a couple of minutes to call upon some of their colleagues still fighting to abandon rebellion and “come back home” (Dwog Cen Paco) (Tayeebwa, 2012, p.96). The general consensus is that “media can play a significant role in conflict situations and, not only in provoking hate and killing, but also in promoting conflict resolution, management and reconciliation” (Hieber, 1998, p. 2). Such evidences where the radio media was ably used to diffuse conflict, and another time the same media used to incite conflict documents a very iconic twist of peace and conflict developments in history, which should hopefully provoke the media sector to opt for constructive reporting in conflict situations, with this knowledge that society relies majorly on media for information and its interpretation. It is the reconciliatory strategies used on the “Dwog Cen Paco”, (Come Back Home) programme that gave the LRA returnees the courage to consider returning home. Thus, Ross (2016) concludes,

“Come-home messaging is a unique type of radio content that has played an integral part in the LRA conflict, and it warrants closer examination” (p.36).

The literature framework in this discussion considered the problem in this study, of a protracted armed conflict which challenged the government of Uganda, until such a time when government amnesty, triggered a new role of radio journalism in conflict resolution. In retrospect, this study revealed a major trend of media taking on an infamous role of inciting and sustaining conflict in the Nazi propaganda, Balkan wars, Rwandan genocide, and recently, the Kenya's presidential post-elections violence. A reverse role of radio media was tested when the Burundian government counteracted hate-speech, and inspired the replication of peace radio practices in varied parts of Africa. A close investigation of these conflated opposite roles demonstrates the feats of Peace Journalism adherents, and on the hand, the blood-thirsty inclinations of mainstream media for publicity causes, which Galtung, the grandfather of Peace Journalism criticised in the 1970s.

In this study, the "Come Back Home" messaging on the onset of programming, concurred with literature that influence conflict resolution, by embracing a peaceful conflict resolution approach, right from the way language was used to communicate with the LRA fighters. The mega FM programming choices concurred with Youngblood (2017)'s thought that, "the importance of responsible story framing is matched only by the importance of word choice (p.10). However, discord was found when, for assuming that editors 'knew what ought to be done', the "Come Back Home" radio host took a risk in featuring other unfiltered peace interveners as the political leaders, or the UPDF soldiers who, under an uncontrolled environment, could have stimulated more violence from the LRA through using strong language not in the established tone of the programme.

The gap in literature underpinning this study lies in its failure to take into account the limited resources which are not always equally distributed for journalistic trainings, and often times, in contemporary journalism, or that, even journalists with professional trainings covet the fame that come with catching public attention, regardless of outcome. Overall, the hypothesis in this study that radio media contributed to the return-home of the LRA fighters is demonstrated in the programme's pragmatic approaches that successfully corroborated the romantics of Peace Journalism, with their notions that using media can influence peaceful conflict resolution when editors who 'ought to know' the right approach, use those approaches positively in media news reportage.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This study sought to investigate the contribution of “Dwog Cen Paco”, (Come Back Home) radio programme in persuading the LRA fighters, to return home to their former communities as civilians. The study's main research questions were:

1). What were the “Dwog Cen Paco” strategies used to persuade the LRA fighters to return? 2). Which external players contributed to the LRA fighter's return home? 3). What were the best practices on “Dwog Cen Paco”, persuasion programme?

This chapter discusses the research design, approach, techniques and related tools used to answer to the above questions. It also discusses the sample techniques and



lays out the sampling strategy. Data collection procedures and analysis are elaborated. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations.

### **3.1 Research Design and Approach**

The research design of this study was a case study. According to Heale & Twycross (2018), a case study design is appropriate when the research aims to intensively and systematically investigate a single individual, group, community or some other unit in which the researcher examines in-depth data relating to several variables (p.7). The central tenet in this research design is in the need to explore an event or idea in-depth and in its natural context.

The strengths of the case study design lie in its capacity to allow a researcher examine complex phenomenon in their natural setting to increase better understanding of them, take complex and broad topics, and narrow them down into manageable research questions, which will produce in-depth answers arising from the intensive and systematic questions, while its major weakness, is in generalizing the applicability of a study's result to several units of cases. This is a big problem since case studies involve few participants, and whereas their actions may be typical to that group, it may not be representative of a larger group of people.

On the other hand, given that case study designs permit the garnering of detailed and in-depth ideas, the design was deemed the most appropriate for this study, since the researcher sought to focus on concrete details on the “Dwog Cen Paco” (Come Back Home) radio programme, in order to identify the in-depth strategies that were used to persuade the LRA fighters to surrender fire-arms. Notwithstanding its shortcomings earlier mentioned, the design enabled the researcher to exert control over and manipulate the variable (s) or subject of interest, by conducting interviews

in such a way that produced in-depth responses that were tested against theories and hypothesis of the study. The analysis of respondent's responses was grounded by the study's theory and literature, which explained the case in the study, uncovered new concepts, and challenged the case where there existed outliers that did not fit with established assumptions about the case study.

The research adopted a qualitative approach. Kumar (2011) explains that a study is classified as qualitative if the purpose of the study is primarily to describe a situation, phenomenon, problem or event; if the information is gathered through the use of variables measured on nominal or ordinal scales (qualitative measurement scales); and if the analysis is done to establish the variation in the situation, phenomenon or problem without quantifying it.

The description of an observed situation, the historical enumeration of events, an account of the different opinions people have about an issue, and a description of the living conditions of a community are examples of qualitative research (p.32).

In using a qualitative approach, the study gained a deeper understanding through recording different opinions that respondents had on the "Dwog Cen Paco" radio programming strategies. The researcher conducted Key-informant interviews, In-depth interviews and Focus Group interviews, with 31 respondents. Respondents included 1 radio journalist, 7 ex-LRA fighters, 5 Caritas NGO staff, 2 religious leaders, and 16 residents of Gulu city, interviewed using semi-structured interview guides, over a period of 13 days.

### **3.2 Area of Study**

The study was conducted in Gulu, home to the Acholi ethnic group of northern-Uganda. The Acholi people are part of the Luo speaking communities largely found in the northern, eastern, and west Nile regions of Uganda, and then in South-Sudan and Western Kenya.

Gulu is bordered by Amuru and Nwoya districts in the west and south-west respectively, Lamwo district in the northeast, Pader district in the east, Lira district in the southeast and Oyam district in the south. Like most parts of northern Uganda, Gulu's climate is tropical wet and dry, with agriculture emphasis on food crops, whereas for economic purpose cash crops like cotton, tobacco, sugar cane and simsim are grown.

### **3.3 Sources of Information**

Primary sources for this study included garnered data and deductions made after interviewing research respondents that were former LRA-fighters, Caritas NGO staff, Acholi religious leaders, residents of Gulu city, and the moderator of the radio programme in the research. Secondary data are "publications by authors who are reporting the works of other researchers" (Etyang, 2018, p.90). In this study, secondary data were retrieved from academic books, handbooks, blogs, journal articles, and other electronic sources like websites and online newspapers.

### **3.4 The Study Population**

Khan (2006) and Mensah et al., (2017) define target population as a group of individuals who have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. In this study all participants were considered to have retained memories which, according to Castello and Montagut (2015) could be (re)

constructed from a narrative assembly of oral and written memories, from expert opinions and from historical facts upheld by evidence (p.6).

This study thus targeted the accessible population from inhabitants of Gulu, who had accessed “Dwog Cen Paco” radio programme from the year 2002-2006, and deemed to have kept memories of the programme’s strategies.

#### 3.4.1 The Accessible Population

Following the cessation of fire in the year 2006, there were internal migrations of formerly Gulu town residents back into their ancestral lands, departures of the many situational NGOs who once worked in the town, and a dispersal of former LRA fighters into different villages. As such, the study only sampled from the accessible target population which included people who had accessed “Dwog Cen Paco” radio programme during its lifetime, and had stayed in Gulu after the cessation of conflict in 2006. If garnering data involves traveling to participants, Porter (1999) argues that the accessible population is first defined as “those persons from the target population who reside within the geographic region of feasible travel; these persons constitute the geographically accessible population (GAP)” (p.797).

To find an eligible accessible population for this study, the researcher travelled to Gulu city, home of the “Dwog Cen Paco” radio programme, and made contact with a radio journalist, Acholi religious leaders, Caritas NGO staff, ex-LRA fighters and some Residents of Gulu, who had closely interacted with, and had accessed the “Dwog Cen Paco” radio programme for over 6 years from the year 2000. She sampled 31 respondents who constituted the accessible population.

### **3.5 Sampling Technique**

A qualitative sampling design was used in this study. This implies that some units in the population were more likely to be selected than others. In this study, Purposive and Snowball sampling technique was used.

#### **3.5.1 Sample Composition**

For the fact that purposive sampling allows the selection of units based on their characteristics, the technique was deemed ideal because the inclusion criteria would allow the researcher draw the relevant data, and be able to describe major impacts that these data would provide. For this mentioned reason, the study used purposive sampling technique, to draw samples from Caritas NGO staff, religious leaders, Gulu residents and the “Dwog Cen Paco” programme host.

Snowball sampling was used to sample from the ex-LRA fighters, as this respondent category could not be selected using the purposive sampling technique, because the LRA returnees did not trust ordinary people who were not former fighters, for fear of falling victim to government espionage. With such concerns, identifying and gaining their confidence was made possible through initial introductions from YOLRED, a non-governmental organization that rehabilitates former LRA fighters in their custody. The ex-LRA fighters kept coming in, until such a time when the study started receiving repeated data (i.e reached saturation).

The advantage of using purposive sampling in this study permitted the researcher to squeeze out as much of desired content as possible, and this permitted a better matching of the sample to the aims of the research, and the snowball sampling for its being a fast method, suited the limited time and resources the researcher had for data collection, and it as well permitted the study to collect reliable data from authentic sources due to referrals from their trusted network.

### 3.5.2 Sample Size

Scholars in the qualitative research tradition decide upon the number of their respondents depending on varying circumstances. “For these studies, the intent is to describe the participants’ experience rather than to generalize from their experiences to that of the whole population” (Porter, 1999, p.796). For instance, Momanyi (2013) studied a conflict in Nakuru-Kenya, and through purposive sampling drew 384 respondents from the media, the government, NGO’s and international organizations since these respondents the researcher stated, had valuable information. The researcher arrived at this number simply by targeting media personalities drawn from Radio Amani and 32 other media, members of NGOs and other international organizations based in Nakuru County, and national government officials. With members of the general population, Momanyi (2013) used a quantitative approach, using simple random sampling, and then incorporated a qualitative approach, which used the snowball sampling technique in order to get unbiased samples. Acquah (2017) interviewed 50 respondents in his study of media’s use to resolve conflict in chieftaincy lines in Ghana. Purposive sampling technique was used to select apt respondents, and to resolve the financial constraints involved in taking the actual probabilistic sample size of three communities. Such divergence in scholarly approach for sample size offered this study the latitude to decide upon its own sample size depending on its circumstances.

In this study, there had been heavy internal immigrations from the town center, and back to ancestral lands of potential respondents with the LRA conflict waning after the year 2006. Relevant respondents such as non-governmental organizations, clergy communities or even the ex-LRA fighters that were closely involved with the radio programme had left the town area. The research time and resources were also

limited, and potential respondents were not as eager to participate during a time when contact was restricted due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that distorted the general nature of community gatherings. Pre-determining a number of respondents that were deemed knowledgeable about the study subject was complicated. As such, the researcher aimed to interview as many as could provide meaningful data, and stopped at 31 when data coming from the varied respondents began to verify one another (data saturation), instead of adding new knowledge.

The table below shows the sample categories in the study.

Respondents	Accessible population	Sample population (Male)	Sample population (Female)	Total
Radio journalists	1	1	-	1
Caritas staff	5	5	-	5
Ex- LRA fighters	7	4	3	7
Gulu residents	16	10	6	16
Religious leaders	2	2	-	2

**Fig. 1: A Table Showing the Different Sample Categories**

### **3.6 Procedures for Data Collection**

Having fulfilled all clearance requirements of Uganda Christian University-UCU's Research Ethics Committee (REC), an introductory letter was given to the researcher for presentation to the authorities in the area of research. The introductory letter is appended to this report. Preliminary phone calls were made to reach out and secure participation of identified subjects of research before making appointments with them. There were individuals such as the ex-LRA fighters whose mediators

required personal contact with the researcher before agreeing to arrange these interview appointments with the ex-LRAs. The coming together of this category of respondents was arranged through making phone calls to ex-LRA fighters, by YOLRED, their custodian NGO.

The researcher designed a consent form adapted from a previous study. This form was presented to pertinent authorities in the research areas. In Pece-Vanguard, where the Gulu Residents Focus Group Discussions were held, the Local Council I - (LC1), who had lived in the area for over twenty years helped identify his residents who had listened to “Dwog Cen Paco” programme in its lifetime. This same format consent form was presented to every respondent to sign, as a demonstration of will to participate. Prior to their signing, the researcher read and explained the content to respondents who were not literate enough to grasp the full meaning of the confidentiality and consent clauses in the form, as written in the English language. The researcher then verbally introduced herself, and where needed, the University introductory letter was shown to a respondent (s) before commencing an interview.

For data collection the researcher used a semi-structured interview guide to garner responses from research participants. The guides are appended to this research report. All interviews were recorded on a smartphone with audio recording capability. Due to conditions beyond the researcher’s control, interviews that had been planned to have with one respondent turned out to be with two, or more respondents. However, because they were not planned to join in a group, these have been treated as group interviews rather than formal Focus Group Discussions.

All research interviews were conducted from 15<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2021. The researcher conducted thirteen (13) interviews across five (5) respondent categories that



included the Programme host of “Dwog Cen Paco”, Religious leaders, Ex-LRA fighters, Gulu town residents and Caritas NFO staff.

The onset of these research interviews was with the Arch Bishop of Gulu Arch diocese, at the Bishop Residence in Gulu Cathedral for 33 minutes, on the 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2021. On 19<sup>th</sup> May, four (4) interviews were conducted with seven (7) ex-LRA fighters at YOLRED NGO headquarters in a suburb of Gulu city, along St. Mary’s Lacor hospital road. The first three respondents were two females and a male, who offered one-on-one interviews, lasting for 40, 44 and 68 minutes, respectively. A group interview with four (4) LRA fighters run for 90 minutes to end that day’s session.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> May, the researcher met and interviewed for 107 minutes the “Dwog Cen Paco’s” programme host at Riders lounge, a Gulu city center outdoor bar and restaurant. On the 25<sup>th</sup> May, the researcher met and led a team of sixteen (16) respondents from the Gulu residents’ group into two Focus Group Discussions.

Prior to the day of interviews, the area L.C I, had identified these 16 respondents deemed to have traits that qualify to the research intentions, and the researcher took the liberty of splitting the group into two equal numbers. One team started off with the discussion in the morning hours of the day and discussed for 80 minutes, and the following group met in the afternoon for 107 minutes. Both groups met with the researcher in a market area of a parish known as Pece-Vangaurd.

The morning hours of the 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2021, the Bishop Emeritus of Gulu Church of Uganda, was interviewed for 33 minutes at his home in Kirombe. That afternoon, four interviews with the staff of Caritas NGO were conducted on their premises in the Lacor area. The first three interviews were with the head of Psychosocial Support team; the Director and the Programme Manager. The last interview planned for 4

Caritas staff was done with only 2, due to the other 2 being engaged. Unfortunately, for this last 2 who participated, the audio record was accidentally deleted during transcription, leaving the study’s findings with only three voices from Caritas.

The table below shows response rate and demographics of research respondents.

	Respondents	Gender	Age Bracket	Total Participants
Radio journalists	1	Male	65-75	1
Religious leaders	2	Male	55-70	2
Ex- LRA fighters	7	4 males, 3 females	30-45	7

**Fig.2: A Table Showing Key Informant Interview Category**

	Respondents	Gender	Age Bracket	Total Participants
Gulu residents	16	10 males, 6 females	30-45	16

**Fig 3: A Table Showing Focus Group Discussion Interview Category**

	Respondents	Gender	Age Bracket	Total Participants
Caritas staff	5	Male	45-65	5

**Fig 4: A Table Showing an In-depth Interviews Interview Category**

### **3.7 Data Collection Methods and Tools**

This study utilized Key Informant Interviews, In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

#### **3.7.1 A Guide Accommodating Multiple Respondents’ Categories**

For in-depth interviews (Caritas Relief) and focus groups (Gulu Residents), which comprised respondents from similar backgrounds, the guide was readily applicable.

The challenge lay in customizing questions for key informants, who represented

diverse groups (LRA fighters, programme host, and religious leaders), to ensure each subgroup's unique perspectives were captured.

#### 3.7.1.1 Defined Objectives

To determine what to learn from key informants within a similar guide, the study customized questions based on each category's role and expertise, maintaining the guide's general format.

#### 3.7.1.2 Venue

The researcher chose appropriate venues for each respondent category (e.g., private settings for in-depth and key informant interviews, a neutral space for FGDs) and, planned for longer sessions with key informants and FGDs (1-2 hours) and shorter, more focused in-depth interviews (30-60 minutes).

#### 3.7.1.3 Interview Guide Format

For in-depth interviews focus was on open-ended questions exploring personal experiences, perceptions, and detailed insights and, for key informant interviews focus was on expert knowledge, policy insights, or organizational perspectives and, with focus Group Discussions interviews the focus was on designing questions to stimulate group discussion, capture collective views, and encourage interaction.

### 3.7.2 Sample Question Types from Different Respondent Categories

#### 3.7.2.1 In-Depth Interviews:

- a) What were the "Dwog Cen Paco", 'Come Back Home' programme strategies that were aligned with the peace initiatives of external players like Caritas?
- b) What range of expectations did 'Dwog Cen Paco,' 'Come Back Home' programme have in a partnership with Caritas?

#### 3.7.2.2 Key Informant Interviews:

- c) What were the specific 'Dwog Cen Paco' radio programme strategies that persuaded the LRA fighters return?"

d) What problems arose with the LRA rebels due to the ongoing persuasion programme?

#### 3.7.2.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

- e) What best practices would you recommend be adapted for conflict resolution in situations of armed conflict in other warring regions?
- f) Comment on the contribution of the Amnesty Act (2000) to the success of 'Dwog Cen Paco,' 'Come Back Home' radio programme?

#### 3.7.4 Key Informant Interviews

"Key informant interviews are in-depth discussions with persons who have special or expert knowledge" (Kun et al. 2013 as cited in Taylor & Blake, chapter 10, 2015, p.181). Marshall (1996) listed "ideal" characteristics of Key Informants ascribed to scholar Tremblay (1982) as follows:

1. Role in community. Their formal role should expose them to the kind of information being sought by the researcher.
2. Knowledge. In addition to having access to the information desired, the informant should have absorbed the information meaningfully.
3. Willingness. The informant should be willing to communicate their knowledge to the interviewer and to cooperate as fully as possible.
4. Communicability. They should be able to communicate their knowledge in a manner that is intelligible to the interviewer.
5. Impartiality. Key informants should be objective and unbiased. Any relevant biases should be known to the interviewer (Marshall, 1996, p.92).

Within the hierarchy of research methods, Key Informants Interviews therefore provide more knowledge than might be contributed by interviews with "ordinary" people, since their knowledge of a particular subject is based on community perspectives and long-term relationships. "Key informants are often identified because they hold "special or expert knowledge" on a topic"" (Taylor & Blake, 2015, chapter 10, p. 153). In spite the special role ascribed to key informant category of respondents, "The disadvantages are that informants may be expressing their

personal biases and opinions, and other experts within a community who are less visible may be overlooked” (ibid: 154).

For this study, Key Informants were necessary because the “Come Back Home” programme contained messages that pervaded more intensely into the lives of certain categories of people in the Acholi community that were more in touch with these messages. These individuals deemed to be apt key informants included the 7 (seven) LRA fighters, 1 (one) radio programme host who, not only moderated the “Come Back Home” discussions, but gave birth to the “Dwog Cen Paco” programme strategies, and 2 (two) religious leaders from the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, whose presence on the radio programme was cardinal in the lives of both Acholi LRA and Acholi civilians.

#### 3.7.4.1 How Key Informant Interviews Were Conducted

Key informant interviews were conducted with selected individuals possessing in-depth knowledge about the “Dwog Cen Paco” programme, including ex-LRA fighters, the programme host, and religious leaders. One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were guided by an interview guide, allowing for nuanced and expert viewpoints. Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed to identify valuable themes and information informing the research objectives.

#### 3.7.5 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews “also known as one-on-one” is a method of extracting more detailed information or deep understanding of a subject or concept” (Showkat & Parveen, 2017, p.3). In detail, “In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme, or situation” (Boyce & Neale, 2006, p.3). This interview method is

“useful when you want detailed information about a person’s thoughts and behaviors or want to explore new issues in depth. Interviews are often used to provide context to other data (such as outcome data), offering a more complete picture of what happened in the programme and why (ibid: 3). Apart from in-depth interviews being a research technique that allows collecting much more detailed information than other data collection methods, Boyce and Neale (2006) adds that it also may provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information, as people may feel more comfortable having a conversation than filling out a survey (ibid). However, disadvantages of the technique include the method being prone to biases due to respondent’s stake in the programme, interviews being time-intensive because of the time it takes to conduct and transcribe interviews, to analyze the results, and the interviewers need appropriate training to gain skills for one on one conversation, that include the capability to professionally inhibit the yes/no and leading questions, to not only appear interested, but make respondents comfortable, and to use appropriate body language, while keeping personal opinions in check (ibid).

Boyce and Neale (2006) encourage the use of in-depth interviews instead of focus groups if the potential participants may not be included or are uncomfortable talking openly in a group. Of the (5) five Caritas NGO staff, the Director, Programme Manager and Head of Psychosocial Support were interviewed individually, due to internal responsibilities each had, that did not allow them to have one sitting with the researcher. The last two, then jointly participated in a session.

Caritas respondents is what the study viewed as the tripartite category of respondents capable of providing more in-depth information. Firstly, Caritas staff interfaced with the LRA fighters on “Dwog Cen Paco” radio programme. Secondly,

Caritas tagged along with the peace interveners who went into the bush to meet with LRA fighters, and thirdly, they hosted ex-LRA fighters at their rehabilitation centers. This three-way position with the LRA fighters meant that they had access with “Dwog Cen Paco” peace strategies in three dimensions, and they could provide multi-faceted depth about the radio programme.

#### 3.7.5.1 How In-depth Interviews were Conducted

In-depth interviews were conducted with select Caritas Relief participants to explore their experiences with the “Dwog Cen Paco” programme. One-on-one, semi-structured interviews encouraged open-ended sharing of thoughts and experiences, providing rich insights. Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed to identify nuanced themes and patterns, offering a deep understanding of individual perspectives.

#### 3.7.6 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The focus group technique is a method of interviewing that involves more than one, usually at least four, interviewees. Essentially it is a group interview (Bryman, 2012, p.501). According to Carey & Ashbury, (2012) & Krueger & Casey, (2009), Focus groups are group discussions in which persons from a targeted population discuss and share their perspective of a specific topic or issue of interest, conducted by a facilitator (as cited in Taylor & Blake, chapter 10, 2015, p.154). The moderator runs the focus group discussion by guiding the session and not overly interfering. Smithson (2008)’s analysis of Focus Group Discussions finds “tension between participant-researcher interaction and interaction between participants, with interactions between participants in the group being a particularly distinctive characteristic of focus group methodology, although this is not always apparent from analysis of focus group data” (Smithson, 2008, p.367).

The strength of a focus group discussion in research is credited by the advantage that the researcher has to observe a large amount of interaction between participations on a specific topic in a relatively shorter time, as compared to if interviews were to be held with one person in the group, at a time. However, a researcher will often times experience the difficulty of assembling not only the right number of different individuals, but those with varying opinions, to come together in one sitting. In practice, groups tend to be based on availability rather than representativeness of sample. As opposed to in-depth interviews, “Moderating focus groups can be complex, and the data obtained can be difficult to transcribe and analyse” (Pini, 2002, as cited in Smithson, 2007, p.356). The facilitator must take on the responsibility first, to develop a rapport with participants so as to guide a discussion that will produce data pertinent to their study.

Focus Group Discussion technique of data collection was practicable for this study because the researcher sought to collect shared opinions on the same issue, from discussions, challenges and contradictions made by the group, about the LRA persuasion topic that had, in its lifetime naturally pervaded the Acholi community.

For the Gulu residents the 16 (sixteen) participants that willingly assembled for discussion qualified the interview for a Focus Group Discussion. The researcher took the liberty to split the numbers into 8 (eight) participants per group. Their inclusion was guided by the local council I leader, who knew the characteristics of his villagers, and therefore helped identify and contact participants who had lived in the area for over 10 years, and had, had access to the “Dwog Cen Paco” radio programme.



#### 3.7.6.1 How Focus Group Discussions were Conducted

Two focus groups were conducted with Gulu residents to gather insights on the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme. A semi-structured guide encouraged open-ended discussions, providing rich qualitative data. Sessions were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to identify themes and patterns, yielding valuable insights into the programme's impact.

### 3.8 Data Collection Instruments

#### 3.8.1 Interview Guide

A researcher-administered interview guide was drafted as a standard mechanism to elicit relevant qualitative data from the Key Informant Interviews, In-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions. Barnhill & Barnhill (2015) state that the format used for traditional focus groups is similar to that of the traditional individual interview (p.12). However, this being a qualitative study, the researcher left room for flexibility and spontaneity. The guides covered themes informed by the objectives of the study. Key themes included amnesty, the Acholi traditional justice, religious leaders, persuasive language, Acholi traditional music, and the LRA reintegration support.

### 3.9 Quality Control

The researcher used a smart phone with audio recording capability to capture and store the interviews. According to Barnhill & Barnhill (2015), smartphones are cell phones with added features that allow audio/video recording. To avoid unauthorized use, researchers should require smartphones to be password protected; the interviewers should also know how to deactivate the smartphone if it is lost or stolen (Barnhill & Barnhill, 2015, Chapter 2, p.11). For data safety, the researcher backed up the audio interviews in a laptop. For reliability, the researcher garnered comprehensive data by conducting interviews in such a way that permitted room for

deviant theories to accommodate opinions that were not reflected in research questions. Later, the researcher also used tables to record data, and did constant comparison of responses from the different respondents to ensure that more data which corroborated each other were stated in the study's findings. To maintain participant confidentiality, as mentioned in the ethics sector, the researcher relatively avoided the use of personal identifiers.

### **3.10 Data Processing and Analysis**

Qualitative data were collected, organized and made ready for analysis by transcribing and categorizing them using the steps proposed in Braun and Clarke (2006)'s thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that one of the benefits of thematic analysis lies in its flexibility (p.4). The six steps proposed in Braun and Clarke to carry out a thematic analysis include the need to familiarize oneself with one's data, assign preliminary codes to one's data in order to describe the content, search for patterns or themes in one's codes across the different interviews, review themes, define the name themes and finally produce the report (p.16-23).

In the collection phase, the researcher met and interviewed different categories of respondents, guided by the research interview questions/guide. These raw data were preserved in an audio recording gadget and each interview dated. The researcher listened to the different audio data sets again and then transcribed them verbatim, with the data occupying long sheets of 10-50 electronic pages from the different interviews.

A code sheet developed in a tabular form was used to capture data from the transcribed narratives, and then more pertinent data from the coded narratives. The table had four columns labelled as, 'Themes', 'Sub-themes', 'Category', and 'What

they said'. The theme column (presented in a question format) captured major themes 1,2,... and the like, depending on how many more would arise from actual interview questions.

Under 'Sub-themes' were underlying topics arising from the thematic questions (for instance amnesty was a response provided after the interviewer's asking about the strategies used on the radio programme, then Caritas NGO's involvement was provided as an example of external factors on the programme, and the use of religious leaders was given as one of the best practices used by "Dwog Cen Paco" radio programme), with each response stemming from the three (3) research questions, respectively.

Under the 'Category' column, were lists of research respondents identified by their occupation, age and gender, and what each of the respondent identified as a strategy, external factor and best practice used in the LRA persuasion messaging.

The last column, 'What they said', captured detailed narratives of respondents' responses to the presented questions from the theme column. It is worth noting that there were derivatives (what the interview questions had missed in the interview guides). It was from the derivative themes named 'Emerging themes' and 'what they said', that the researcher extracted a presentation, from which body of data the interpretation of findings was made.

In performing a thematic analysis, the study identified patterns that emerged from the data. The researcher ensured respect for the integrity of data and represented the interview as honestly as possible. Below is an excerpt from the final code-sheet used to represent data extracted from interview narratives.

Themes:	Sub-themes:	Categories:	What they said:
Major theme 1: What were the “Dwog Cen Paco” strategies used to persuade the LRA fighters?	Acholi Traditional music	“Dwog Cen Paco” programme host.	We actually, basically started by pleasing, entertaining the LRA, so they could smile in the jungles.  Making friends with them, oh yes with music. This was music with intentional messages. I sat down with the music artists and selected the best music with a proper kind of information, which could compel the LRA to think of defecting only.

Source: Primary data, 2021

### Fig. 5: A Table A Sample Code Sheet

The table above shows the approach for coding interview transcripts in order to garner report data. In this example the data is from the “Dwog Cen Paco” radio programme host.

### 3.11 Ethical Considerations

There are several stakeholders in a quantitative or qualitative research project. It is therefore vital that a researcher looks at ethical issues in relation to each of the stakeholders. The various stakeholders according to Ranjit (2011) include the research participants or subjects, the researcher and the funding body (p.218). Principles of research demand that in the pursuit of knowledge, ‘researchers should adhere to guidelines which are associated with authorship, copyright and patenting policies, data sharing policies and confidentiality rules in peer review’ (Akaranga &

Makau, 2016, p. 7). The researcher abided by these guiding principles including the necessary mandate of Uganda Christian University.

These principles included presenting of a consent form designed by the researcher for the research respondents to read, and only proceed with the research, first of all, willingly, and secondly, if their privacy and confidentiality issues were well addressed. This consent form stated that the respondents' names and location will not be revealed under any circumstance in the research report. In addition, respect for authority in the research area was observed, by seeking the area LC I's approval to conduct research in their villages. Finally, the researcher's interview guide was sensitive to not intentionally provoke painful memories, for a group who could still carry pain of having participated or been afflicted by the war.

In so doing the researcher conducted research in a manner that preserved the stake holder's dignity, privacy, consent and confidentiality. Additionally, the researcher's proposal was presented before a panel that conducted a follow up review before presenting it to the Research and Ethics Committee of the University.

### **3.12 Methodological Constraints**

A purely qualitative approach is normally criticized for not using large enough samples to ensure representativeness, and for its generalization of findings. The population that lived in Gulu town at the time of hard insurgency and the airing of "Dwog Cen Paco" radio programme, including NGOs, left town or were fatigued with talking about the war, as many researchers from different parts of the world had visited over the years, and subjected them to related questions. Of note, LRA ex-fighters were particularly hard to find. However, the researcher was introduced to one of the remaining NGOs that look after the needs of ex-LRA fighters.

The NGO's contribution included making phone calls to assemble former LRA fighters at YOLRED NGO office, and orienting them to the needs of the research. The research was conducted at the NGO premises, as their familiarity with this former-LRA custodian office assured comfort and privacy. To remunerate their time, the NGO's Director advised the researcher to provide intermittent refreshment, and reimburse transport fares, to and from the YOLRED office. Furthermore, the researcher was convinced that the depth of the findings would compensate for this shortcoming and be valuable for people who were more interested in understanding the experiences of field research, than discovering laws.

Since the study was conducted on a case that occurred over a decade ago, it was foreseen to pose a significant obstacle in finding lucid responses and relationships. However, in the experience of the researcher, respondents seem to have kept to heart this part of their experiences, because it mattered to them. The study deliberately relied on key participants who accessed the programme with keener interest compared to the rest of the population. All responses were readily provided and there were real emotions attached to spoken words.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This study explored the contributions of 102 Mega FM's, "Dwog Cen Paco", (Come Back Home) radio messaging in persuading the LRA fighters of northern Uganda to surrender arms, and return home to their previous civilian communities. The LRA fighters consisted of abducted civilians from neighboring Acholi towns and bordering States. The majority of these fighters were Uganda's Acholi people struggling against a government which they saw as inequitable, and whose sustained participation in the LRA war, in their view, had resulted in unnecessary loss of life and property in especially the Acholi sub-region.

The objectives of this study were to identify radio strategies used by the "Dwog Cen Paco" radio host to persuade LRA fighters who accessed the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme, into returning home to their civilian communities, identify external factors that contributed to the return-home of the LRA fighters, and then identify the programme's best practices, while determining the rootedness of findings in the actual surrender of the LRA fighters. The study therefore answered the following research questions:

**What strategies were used to persuade the LRAs into returning home?**

**Which external players contributed to the LRA fighters' return home?**

**What were the best practices used in the LRA persuasion programme?**

To investigate the programme, the study employed a case-study design and a qualitative research approach. The main research technique was a structured interview guide used to obtain data from respondents, who were sampled using

purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The next section of this chapter presents and discusses the major findings.

#### **4.1 Contextualizing the Data Analysis**

One of the major tasks of this study was to marshal and then study practical data in the quest to respond to the objectives of this research, of identifying the radio programme's strategies used to dissuade the LRA fighters from armed conflict, of identifying other external contributors to the LRAs' return home, and identifying the best practices employed in this radio conflict resolution model.

This study reviewed strategies/approaches used by interveners on the “Dwog Cen Paco”, (Come Back Home) radio programme, external players who contributed to the return home of the LRA, and the best practices used on the programme. The study investigated these issues by interviewing five categories of respondents. These included seven (7) ex-LRA fighters, and a radio programme host, all of whom were principal subjects of the research, two (2) Acholi religious leaders, five (5) staff from Caritas NGO, and sixteen (16) Gulu residents. Their responses were analyzed and presented in a narrative style, providing an in-depth corpus of knowledge from the “Come Home” messaging. It is important to note that the findings were subjective memories of participants deemed to have retained useful information from their direct or at times, passive involvement with the radio programme.

#### **4.2 Strategies used on “Come Back Home” (Dwog Cen Paco)**

The Department for International Development (DfID) inaugurated 102 Mega FM in the year 2002. The radio station became home for the “Come Back Home” messaging, which used several strategies that became the emotion of radio conflict resolution. “Lacambel’s programme sought to inform rebels about their eligibility for amnesty and encourage them to demobilize” (Ross, 2016, p. 40), through a



persuasive messaging that “hoped to demobilize the LRA peacefully, promote the state’s amnesty law and encourage reconciliation between rebels and the community” (Ross, 2016, p. 34). These strategies included the use of a reconciliatory language, the Act of Amnesty (2000), Acholi traditional music (aguma), UPDF soldiers and ex-LRA commanders, ex-LRA (child) soldiers, drama, topical debates, a united front of ARLPI-Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative members, parents of active LRA fighters, political leaders, Acholi cultural leaders/chiefs, and collaborators.

#### 4.2.1 Using Reconciliatory Language

At the onset “Dwog Cen Paco” programme embraced the role to sensitize community of the level of insurgency, and promote peace. To achieve this, the host used a reconciliatory language, including:

- Unexacting and friendly tone, to inform LRA fighters about the Amnesty Act.
- Caution when featuring UPDF soldiers to avoid inflammatory language. UPDFs who lost their contemporaries in LRA cross fire, he reported “were irritable and their speeches on the airwaves were likely displayed in anger language”.
- Humanizing approach, acknowledging the LRA fighter’s humanity and discussing the impact of their actions.

Young men and women in the jungle, each time you are given arms to go on an ambush, take note that you are doing this to your mothers. And these communities you have ordered ambushes against, are those here waiting to welcome-you back. What if at the very time of your return, you find it was your own mother killed in that ambush?

Then in some other ways the programme provoked hope:

Do you listen to our programme? Do you know where your parents are? I know you are told that they are already killed, but I know where they are. They are within the communities in the IDP camps, and wherever else they can be safe (“Dwog Cen Paco” Programme Host, Male, 70, Personal Communication, Ryders lounge, May 23, 2021).

To validate these claims above, the programme host invited former LRA fighters who had returned home to share personal experiences of family reunion on the radio, aiming to inspire and reassure LRA fighters still in the bush that they too could reconnect with their loved ones, upon returning home.

Participants from all two Focus Groups of Gulu residents concurred that the language was appealing. “The programme was so effective that Joseph Kony, and his deputy Vincent Otii, occasionally called into the programme to engage in dialogue”, reports a woman from the first Focus Group Discussion. This suggests that the radio programme’s approach and language were instrumental in reaching and engaging with high-ranking members of the rebel group, potentially contributing to the conflict resolution or reconciliation efforts. The woman recounts how language was used to convey a message on air.

These ruthless blood-shed in Acholi land will become a new culture by which we are forever defined, if the fighters do not convert and the civilians do not forgive. The whole thing will turn into a new culture, which indeed is a sad thing to embrace (Focus Group Discussion, Gulu residents, Female, 30, Vanguard, May 25, 2021).

#### 4.2.2 Act of Amnesty

After stakeholders, including religious, cultural, and political leaders, synthesized their discussions, Acholi parliamentarians tabled the proposal, leading to the Amnesty Act (2000). Radio stations in Northern Uganda then initiated broadcast messages explaining the law, allowing LRA fighters to return home without retribution. Below are some responses from ex- LRA fighters regarding the amnesty discussions on the radio programme:

I felt that my return was possible due to this blanket amnesty, and those who were still in the bush were dying, yet those returning home were given life. This amnesty was important (Ex-LRA, Male, 45, Personal Communication, YOLRED Office, May 19, 2021).

The radio talk gave us hope that on our return home, we shall have the choice between going back to school, farming the land or joining the UPDF (Ex-LRA, Male, 30, Personal Communication, YOLRED Office, May 19, 2021).

However, other LRAs remained apprehensive. One Ex-LRA who loved the programme, had this to say:

Sometimes I felt doubtful, as we had been told that LRA returnees speaking on the radio were simply recorded voices, and that these fighters had already been killed (Ex-LRA, Male, 55, Personal Communication, YOLRED Offices, May 19, 2021).

More ex-LRAs from what become group interviews, questioned authenticity of the radio voices. In spite their responses, A male, aged 65 from the Gulu residents' second Focus Discussion stated that amnesty; added weight to the radio programme

that warned against stigmatising ex-LRAs, and taught civilian Acholi to treat former LRAs with compassion upon return.

#### 4.2.3 Acholi Traditional Music (Aguma Songs)

The “Come back Home” programme used Acholi traditional music to persuade the LRA fighters to return home, leveraging the strong cultural bonds and kinship ties between the Acholi community and Acholi enrolled as LRA fighters.

We basically started by entertaining the LRA, so that they too could smile in the jungles. Making friends with them, oh yes with the Aguma music that we played (“Dwog Cen Paco” Programme Host, Male, 70, Personal Communication, Ryders Lounge, May 12, 2021).

Aguma music, a personal, educative and compelling genre, was used to persuade the LRA fighters. The programme host selected songs with lyrics that reminded LRA of atrocities they had caused to a community which included their own parents. An ex-LRA female, aged 30, from the LRA Group Interview, shared her thoughts on the impact of music:

My family used to love and dance to Aguma. In fact, all my brothers were in an Aguma band. Each time the songs played, I imagined them dancing... and I wished to dance with them again (Group Interview, Ex-LRA, Female, 30, Personal Communication, YOLRED Office, May 19, 2021).

Most ex-LRA fighters said Aguma songs evoked strong emotions, reminding them of their families and cultural traditions. A 25-year-old female participant, from the first Gulu residents Focus Group Discussions noted that the music created a longing for LRA fighters to return home and connect with their heritage.

The songs conveyed greetings, asked the LRA to return home, and provoked abhorrence for war atrocities. Songs such as ‘Gang otoo’ (home is dead), or ‘Yoo Awach rac<sup>3</sup>’ (the road to Awach is bad) accused the fighters of vehicle ambushes and murder. Beside their mocking tone, the songs also pleaded with the LRA to no longer order killings, as their own families could be the next victims (Focus Group Discussion, Gulu residents, Female, 40, Vanguard, May 25, 2021).

#### 4.2.4 UPDF Soldiers alongside Ex-LRA Commanders on the Programme

The "Dwog Cen Paco" programme facilitated reconciliation by hosting UPDF soldiers and ex-LRA commanders together. Key findings:

- Ex-LRA fighters found it significant that UPDF commanders participated in the programme, reading out names ex-of LRA defectors welcomed back into the community and LRA returnees validated these facts, promoting transparency and trust.
- Despite initial skepticism due to past conflicts, ex-LRA fighters appreciated the UPDF's effort to facilitate their return home, seeing it as a positive step towards reconciliation.

#### 4.2.5 Ex-LRA Fighters (Child Soldiers) Featured on the Programme

The "Dwog Cen Paco" programme featured former child soldiers calling fellow LRA fighters still in the bush, to return home. The programme host strategically selected LRA returnees of sound mind to speak and induce homesickness. He admitted using propaganda, promising "fancy gifts" and, even visiting the returned, with gifts like

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<sup>3</sup> Awach located in Paico County is an Acholi village off, of Kitgum highway from Gulu town. Its veering path from the highway was then famous for LRA attacks during the LRA days. ‘Yoo’ translates to ‘road or path’ in the Acholi language. ‘Rac’ simply means, something is bad or dangerous. ‘Yoo Awach rac’ therefore loosely translates to “The road to Awach is dangerous”. Local musicians in the land proverbially adopted and begun to use it to denote to the journeys in life. No one should have to rush to go into the road, since ‘yoo Awach rac.’

distilled drinks to contrast past looting with current kindness. The programme collaborated with NGOs, such as Caritas to feature live testimonies from former child LRA fighters who had returned home through Caritas' reception center in Pajule.

Here is a report from Caritas:

Many of them came to us and stayed for up to two years. It is from our centers that Caritas invited "Dwog Cen Paco" programme host to come meet and prepare the former LRA fighters that he would feature on the "Dwog Cen Paco" radio programme (In-depth Interview, Director Caritas, Male, 45, Caritas Office, May 27, 2021).

As well, all former LRA fighters admitted they were promptly sent to the radio station to address their fellow fighters still in the bush. Prepared by NGOs, these returnees spoke in a relatable manner, aiming to dispel rumors that returnees were killed by the UPDF upon arrival.

I was actually captured by UPDF army, and the belief would be that they had killed me. But my going to the radio and speaking, made known I was alive. When I spoke on the radio I said, 'we arrived well and we are okay. If you can find a means of coming back, please do so' (Ex-LRA, Female, 30, Personal Communication, YOLDRED Office, May 19, 2021).

A 65-year-old male participant from the Gulu residents' Focus Group corroborated this, stating that ex-LRA testimonies on the radio played a key persuasive role. They reassured fellow fighters of their safety, and of the welcome received from humanitarian organizations and the government.

#### 4.2.6 Drama

Locals created and recorded short radio skits promoting forgiveness, which entertained while reinforcing the theme. The programme host noted that LRA fighters feared the courts of law, and constant messages about government forgiveness encouraged them to surrender.

This approach possibly increased engagement, being that Radio skits make the message more relatable and memorable. The repeated messages about forgiveness in skits also helped LRA fighters feel more secure about surrendering.

#### 4.2.7 Topical Debates

The radio station hosted debates between "Lu rii tal" (mediators) foregrounding discussions on peace and reconciliation, with topics chosen by most affected community members, particularly IDP camp dwellers. Discussions focused on:

- Condemning violent behavior among educated populations.
- Promoting peace and preserving Acholi cultural values damaged by LRA atrocities.
- Restoring respect and rights of Acholi elders, usurped by fighters on a witch-hunt and killing, in the name of so-called ethnic cleansing.
- Reviving Acholi nationalism.

The "Lok i te yat" (Talk under the tree) debate on "Dwog Cen Paco" radio discussed cultural death and its link with the ongoing war. A female, aged 30, from the Gulu residents' Focus Discussion Group recalled how Ojok's call from Anaka sparked a response from Joseph Kony, LRA leader, who likened the caller's views to "a lid on a jerry-can." This reaction showed the community that LRA fighters still valued Acholi culture, allowing the radio programme to build on this shared interest and work towards a common Acholi dream.

#### 4.2.8 Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) Members

The "Dwog Cen Paco" programme collaborated with the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), an inter-denominational network established in 1999 to promote peaceful reconciliation in northern Uganda. ARLPI members, representing seven denominations (Archdiocese of Gulu (Catholic), Diocese of Northern Uganda (Anglican), Acholi Deanery of the Orthodox Faith, Acholi Muslim Districts of the Acholi sub-region, and the Anglican Diocese of Kitgum. In July 2011, top religious leaders of the Born-Again Faith Federation, Pr. Patrick Okecha, and Pastor Liza David of the Seventh Day Adventists Church joined). They used the radio programme to preach forgiveness, appeal to LRA fighters' humanity, and promote unity and peace. They emphasized the importance of a common language of forgiveness, consistent with government amnesty and cultural values, to facilitate reintegration of LRAs.

A 40-year-old female participant from the Gulu residents' Focus Group noted that religious leaders, were best suited to receive LRA child soldiers due to LRAs' mistrust of the military. The involvement of ARLPI in the programme fostered a sense of trust, leading to the surrender of many LRA child soldiers, with 80-100 returning and reuniting with their families by NGOs like GUSCO and Caritas during peak months.

The partnership between the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme and ARLPI demonstrated the critical role that religious leaders can play in promoting peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation in conflict-affected communities.

#### 4.2.9 Parents of Active LRA Fighters

The "Dwog Cen Paco" programme invited parents of LRA defectors to welcome their children back on air, with messages like "Please come and greet your children." The host encouraged parents of children still in the bush to show courage, emphasizing that their bravery would help build trust and encourage their children to defect.



By involving parents and emphasizing family ties, the programme tapped into emotional connections, promoting reconciliation and reintegration.

#### 4.2.10 Political Leaders

The programme partnered with carefully selected politicians to support the "Come Back Home" campaign, leveraging their positive influence in the region in promoting peace in northern Uganda to encourage LRA fighters to surrender. Collaborating with influential politicians, was a statement of utilizing their regional clout to promote peace and reconciliation.

#### 4.2.11 Cultural Leaders/Chiefs

The "Dwog Cen Paco" programme utilized cultural leaders to ensure traditional justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation, cultivating trust among LRA fighters. By emphasizing cultural redress and forgiveness, leaders assured fighters that broken relationships with the dead and living could be restored, and harmony could be achieved through their return and reintegration.

This approach highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity in conflict resolution, of traditional justice mechanisms in promoting forgiveness and reconciliation and, restoring relationships and social harmony. By leveraging cultural leaders and traditional practices, the programme effectively encouraged LRA fighters to return and reintegrate into their communities.

#### 4.2.12 Collaborators

The "Dwog Cen Paco" programme targeted LRA collaborators who provided vital information to the rebels. The host warned them of exposure on live radio and personally cautioned them about the rebellion's atrocities. When some were apprehended by the UPDF and identified by ex-LRA fighters, they begged not to be mentioned on air, promising to cease their informant roles.

This approach likely contributed to reducing LRA support and promoting reconciliation.

### **4.3 Radio to Harness External Players on the “Dwog Cen Paco” Programme for Peace**

The second objective of this study was to identify external players featured on the “Dwog Cen Paco” programme. Beyond playing strategic center pole in the northern Uganda conflict resolution, the “Come Back Home” messaging aligned itself with external players, such as the government of Uganda, Acholi religious leaders, cultural leaders, political leaders, and non-governmental organisations.

#### **4.3.1 The Government of Uganda Amnesty**

One of the most crucial external players in the LRA conflict was the government of Uganda. 102 Mega FM which was the home of the “Come Back Home” programme was a government-owned radio station. By enacting the Act of Amnesty (2000), government set the stage for all peace stakeholders including the radio, to act as auxiliary implementers of peace procedures.

#### **4.3.2 Acholi Religious Leaders**

The coming of religious leaders under ARLPI pushed the unity agenda. Their motto “Together for Peace” carried an underlying principle that transcended trivial religious differences as they recognized that they were all children of God. This oneness was intended to enable the fighters appreciate the urgency of identifying the fundamental causes of conflict, discussing and addressing them together as a community.

The presence of ARLPI was important for building trust, since their respected positions and commitment to peace helped establish credibility. Overall, the

presence of religious leaders played a crucial role in promoting unity, understanding, and community-driven conflict resolution.

#### 4.3.3 Cultural Leaders

This group was foundational to the peace process in the Acholi cultural conflict resolution context. They were needed not only in the persuasion programme, but for performing the grand cultural welcome for defecting LRAs. After the ‘Mato Oput’ forgiveness ritual, the two parties paused together for pictures that would be spread on media, for impact not only upon combating LRAs, but for the Acholi civilian to embrace the same acceptance.

#### 4.3.4 Political Leaders

Key political leaders, handpicked for their genuine concern for peace, supported the initiative. Notably, figures like the late Col. Walter Ochora and Betty Bigombe had established relationships with the LRA in the 1990s, paving the way for future peace talks. The programme leveraged these trusted leaders to promote peace on the show.

The selection of leaders with a genuine interest in peace and prior experience with the LRA likely contributed to the programme's effectiveness in promoting reconciliation.

#### 4.3.5 Non-governmental Organizations

Non-governmental bodies that included War Child, GUSCO, World Food Programme, and Caritas Relief aligned their roles to the “Dwog Cen Paco” radio programme and, welcomed, rehabilitated and reintegrated LRA defectors into civilian communities. The radio programme particularly featured Caritas because of the trust they enjoyed within the local community, stemming from their emergency relief response efforts

in, providing relief services to the IDP settlements, and serving ex-LRAs who had failed to locate their families. A Caritas staff had this to say:

With the warm welcome at home, the behavior of the war also started changing from heavy resistance to surrendering arms, and more LRAs defecting. “Dwog Cen Paco” itself was a very good programme. They told the LRAs, “once you are back home, we have networks, and these networks will support you, until you are in a normal situation” (Programme Manager, Male, 55, In-depth Interview, Caritas Offices, 27, MAY 2021).

#### **4.4 Best Practices on the “Dwog Cen Paco” Programme**

The study identified best practices from the “Dwog Cen Paco” programme, including: consistent peaceful conflict resolution strategies, offering amnesty to LRA fighters, exploring co-belligerence, valuing traditional leaders, foregrounding forgiveness, and using music to heal wounds.

##### **4.4.1 Consistent Peaceful Conflict Resolution Strategies**

The “Dwog Cen Paco” programme’s consistency in promoting peaceful conflict resolution strategies was a key best practice. The host advocated for LRA forgiveness from civilian and collaborated with trusted peace actors, such as religious and cultural leaders, to facilitate reconciliation. Ex-LRA Key Informant, female, aged 25, stated that the law of amnesty was consistent with the programme’s collaboration with other actors to reintegrate LRAs.

Consistency between programme message and practice meant that the programme’s emphasis on amnesty and forgiveness aligned with the beliefs of the peace actors involved. Overall, the programme’s approach demonstrated the value of collaboration, consistency, and trust-building in promoting peace.

#### 4.4.2 Amnesty to LRA fighters - “You are better off at Home”

The “Dwog Cen Paco” host addressed fears of retribution by preparing Acholi civilians to peacefully reintegrate with LRA returnees, reminding them of government amnesty and emphasizing the benefits of shared community space over continued conflict. The programme host recalled how he persuaded the LRAs:

Come home children, stop fighting. Come rest, come let us perform the reconciliation rituals, as now we want unity. There is no exception, for amnesty will be given to everybody (“Dwog Cen Paco”, Programme host, Male, 70, Personal Communication, Ryders lounge, May 19, 2021).

#### 4.4.3 Exploring Co-belligerence<sup>4</sup>

In an attempt to explore co-belligerence, “Dwog Cen Paco” programme brought ex-LRAs alongside the UPDF on air for a common cause. Together they persuaded LRA fighters in the rebellion to return home. This was crucial in building confidence among the LRAs. Response from an ex-LRA male, demonstrates how trust was built.

We listened to our fellow fighters, speaking alongside the UPDF, who were our first enemies asking us to come home, and it was very persuasive (Ex-LRA, Male, 45, Personal Communication, YOLRED Office, May 19, 2021).

#### 4.4.4 Valuing Traditional Leaders

The inclusion of traditional leaders on the “Dwog Cen Paco” programme helped build trust among LRA listeners, as they are respected and trusted figures in Acholi society known for speaking truthfully. Speaking on the role of external players, a respondent had this to say about Acholi chiefs on the programme:

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<sup>4</sup> Co-belligerence means fighting side-by-side with another against a common enemy.

The cultural leaders (chiefs) worked a lot on the programme, and Kony himself demonstrated love for his Acholi tradition when culture was discussed. In fact, it became apparent to us listeners that, LRA fighters loved the Acholi tradition. When they tuned in, and found that a chief was talking, they paid attention, making reasonable comments. And the chiefs went ahead and talked about “Mato Oput” forgiveness and reintegration ritual (Focus Group Discussion, Female, 45, Vanguard, May 25, 2021). A male ex-LRA, aged 45 added:

When we listened to the radio, we compared if the talks being made by the chiefs, like Rwot Oywak (Chief Oywak), corroborated what was spoken earlier by other parties. Once we found that they matched, it influenced us to trust in the messages. Traditional leaders as we know them to be, only speak what is true, in line with the principles of the Acholi culture. We believed in the programme, since the cultural leaders were involved, for a chief would not lie (Ex-LRA, Male, 45, Personal Communication, YOLRED Office, May 19, 2021).

#### 4.4.5 Foregrounding Forgiveness

The “Dwog Cen Paco” message of forgiveness resonated with both the LRA and Acholi civilians. An ex-LRA combatant, aged 50, stated that amnesty meant immunity from retribution, and the LRA demonstrated trust by releasing their wives and children to civilians, testing the amnesty offer and making forgiveness-centered messaging a valuable best practice.

The passage highlights the importance of forgiveness and amnesty in facilitating trust and reintegration between former combatants and civilians.

#### 4.4.6 Using Music to Heal Wounds

The “Dwog Cen Paco” programme used traditional Aguma songs to promote healing and nostalgia, covering themes like forgiveness, amnesty, and the impact of war.

These songs, featured in musical interludes called "bak mac," loosely translated to as "fan the heat", restored the LRA fighters' sense of hope and connection to their families.

These songs likely evoked memories of home, family, and community, encouraging LRA fighters to reconnect with their roots. The use of traditional music and the "bak mac" format helped restore, hope, giving LRA fighters a sense of possibility for a better future and, bridging the gap between fighters and their loved ones, facilitating reintegration. Overall, the programme leveraged music's emotional impact to support the rehabilitation and reconciliation of LRA fighters

In conclusion, the "Dwog Cen Paco" strategies, despite some being over-ambitious, effectively triggered internal change among LRA combatants and inspired their desire to defect, proving viable in promoting peace and reintegration. The programme's approach highlights the importance of a comprehensive and community-driven strategy in promoting peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation in conflict-affected communities.

The study's findings can be qualified by the identified themes of forgiveness, a key driver in persuading LRA fighters to return home. Cultural sensitivity to the Acholi community, community engagement with the religious, traditional leaders supported Peace Journalism i.e responsible media use and editorial decisions that serve the common good.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter interprets results with regards to themes that emerged from answering to objectives of the study, which were to identify strategies used by “Dwog Cen Paco” programme to persuade the LRA fighters into returning home, identify external factors that contributed to the return of the LRA fighters, and best practices used in the LRA persuasion programme. Issues arising, not reflected in research questions were the emerging themes which added meaning for in-depth interpretation of findings congregated from objectives.

#### 5.1 Summary of Key Findings

History shows how media have been best positioned to quell the fires of conflict and contribute to peaceful conflict resolution. The case of reformist radio Rutomorangingo that eventually displaced hate speech with reconciliatory messages in genocidal Burundi, inspired future innovations such as the “Come Back Home” radio messaging, that deflated the LRA conflict in northern Uganda, presented in discussions below:

##### 5.1.1 A Forgiveness Centered Programming:

At the onset of the “Come Back Home” messaging, the LRA conflict resolution strategies advocated for forgiveness, mercy, to persuade and encourage LRA fighters to surrender arms and return to civilian life. Note be taken, the extent of mercy hinged on government act of amnesty (2000). The programme being held on a government radio station, perhaps also limited the host's absolute control over content. Male respondents from the ex- LRA Group Interview aged 35, 40, 39 and 45, reported discrepancies in the programme's messaging, including, inaccurate



reports where, false claims of LRA commander deaths were made, when in fact they had only sustained injuries.

Perceived control by government spokespersons, shaping media frames, hiding UPDF weaknesses and, providing inaccurate reports not only led to doubts about the programme's trustworthiness but also, undermined its credibility making it harder for LRA fighters to completely trust the "Come Home" messages. It further meant that LRA commanders could use these discrepancies to discourage its junior fighters from trusting the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme.

#### 5.1.2 Reconciliatory Language and Music to Heal:

To enhance peaceable undertones of forgiveness, the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme employed reconciliatory language and music to promote forgiveness and healing, aligning with Peace Journalism theory's emphasis on a "right" approach. By using music to evoke nostalgia and establish a connection with LRA fighters, the programme host facilitated a foundation for persuasion and reconciliation.

The systematic approach to peacebuilding indicated the region and government's preparedness for LRA reintegration, reflected in the soothing messages that facilitated a smooth transition into civilian communities. A critical look at "Dwog Cen Paco" persuasion strategies reveals an open and free crafting of ideas which also, supports Botes and Langdon (2006)'s comment that "talk radio in all of its many guises has been sanctioned, and even excused for some of its antics, because it serves as an open public forum" (p.268). The programme host's mandate from the President of Uganda granted him the creative freedom to engage with LRA fighters, enabling innovative and persuasive communication strategies.

### 5.1.3 Amnesty as a Springboard for LRA Forgiveness:

The "Dwog Cen Paco" programme utilized forgiveness and healing as a foundation for promoting peaceful conflict resolution, with peace stakeholders building on this framework to facilitate LRA reintegration. The programme implemented government's amnesty, promoting peace and coexistence, in spite loopholes that remained in the amnesty clause.

Amnesty talks led to LRA leader Joseph Kony murdering potential defectors, including his deputy Alex Otii Lagony, rumored to be in talks with UPDF's Gen. Salim Saleh, to take advantage of amnesty (Ex-LRA, Male, 45, LRA Group Interview, YOLRED Office, May 19, 2021).

These incidences show-cased amnesty protecting against government retribution but not against internal LRA executions, causing rank reshuffles and suspicions.

In civilian Acholi, amnesty was ambiguous, leaving civilians questioning its meaning beyond coexistence. They struggled to welcome former LRAs who had caused harm, and felt the law unfairly rewarded perpetrators with "gifts" while victims remained uncompensated, with disparities in benefits among former LRAs themselves.

From the home of the Acholi paramount chief where we were called to assemble, I saw that former LRA top commanders like Mzee Banya were, instantly given a lot of money, worth over 3 million each, as they paused for photographs, whereas ourselves it was 263,000/=. Their mattresses were larger, yet ours were thin, with two saucepans and a hoe (Ex-LRA fighter, female, 35, Personal Communication, YOLRED Office, May 19, 2021).

Disparities in settlements for former LRA fighters posed a risk of them returning to the bush, undermining the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme's impact, despite its success in collaboration with NGOs like Caritas to bring back the LRA.

#### 5.1.4 ARLPI's Spiritual Tone:

The involvement of ARLPI members in "Dwog Cen Paco" added a spiritual dimension, promoting forgiveness and unity. The unified message from religious leaders reinforced a coordinated objective, fostering a sense of collective purpose. ARLPI demonstrated the potential for faith-based initiatives to transcend local boundaries and contribute to broader peacebuilding endeavors.

Life must be preserved, whether it be that of civilians or the LRAs. We religious leaders pick no side as we are spiritual parents to both parties (Arch Bishop, Roman Catholic Church, Male, 65, Personal Communication, Bishop Residence, May 27, 2021).

I intervened for the LRA forgiveness because the majority were abducted as children, whose lives lived at war interfered with their God-given right to a happy childhood. Our Lord Jesus Christ says the kingdom of God is like a child. If abducted and taken to war, it deters them from God's blessings, which in this context is life with their families. (Bishop Emeritus, Church of Uganda, Male, 55, Personal Communication, Kirombe, May 27, 2021).

A superseding role of external players in the "Come Home" messaging, was reported in July 2003 Ugandan newspaper, when ARLPI members, Bishops John Baptist Odama, Marcleord Baker Ochola II, and Rev. Nelson Onono-Onweng, slept on the streets of Gulu Taxi Park with thousands of displaced children in July 2003 (Ojwee, 2003). The children seeking safe sleeping area were a mix of former child soldiers

and civilian Acholi children, fleeing potential LRA abductions in rural areas. The act drew international attention, including from the BBC, and prompted government to establish security systems to protect children from sexual abuse in communal-sleeping areas. ARLPI's influence extended globally and, beyond aligning with the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme's messaging of spiritual parenthood for both civilians and former LRAs, it means ARLPI became a conscience for the Acholi sub-region.

#### 5.1.5 Involving Acholi Cultural Leaders:

Acholi culture places a high premium on the role of traditional leaders, and therefore, Acholi cultural leaders, sought to reintegrate LRA members through traditional justice ("Mato Oput"), demonstrating willingness to forgive and restore harmony despite past crimes. Mpyangu (2010) notes that in Acholi land of northern Uganda, "a clan leader is a prestigious social actor [...], especially with regard to the performance of rituals (Chapter 7, p.110). Discussing a cleansing ritual for former LRA girl fighters, Maeland (2010) stated that the process was a dual commitment between the dead and living. The living are obligated to practice certain rituals when spiritual harmony has been destroyed [...], and in turn the ancestors in the spirit world are obligated to protect those who practice the rituals (p.107). A respondent recalls a related speech made by a chief (Rwot), on the programme:

"I am Rwot Lugai, I am Rwot Acana, I am Rwot Apire. You children must know you are important to us. Return home so that we will perform the cleansing ritual, reintegrate you, to become a complete Acholi child. Living there, you will forget the tradition and lose your identity (Focus Group Discussion, Female, 40, Vanguard, May 25, 2021).

The "Dwog Cen Paco" programme's relevance in northern Uganda's conflict depended on the conflict's nature, specifically the Acholi-versus-Acholi dynamics, making

Acholi traditional justice methods contextually applicable. This meant that the Acholi traditional justice method of conflict resolution would only be modular in similar cultural settings.

### **Would Acholi traditional justice apply if the conflict was inter-state?**

Acholi traditional justice, and its applicability was context-specific, and rooted in the Acholi's "Mato Oput" tradition. Its value lies in settings where cultural identity and leadership are integral to conflict resolution. Moreso, cultural leaders' impact hinges on recognition of their cultural role, as exemplified by Acholi chiefs (Rwodi) in conflict resolution.

#### **5.1.6 Former LRA Child Soldiers on the Radio Programme:**

Ex-child soldiers' live on-air interactions with active LRA fighters helped build trust and credibility with the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme. And for those that were featured on the radio programme, the radio host had this to say:

“I selected only former LRA fighters perceived to be eloquent, clearheaded and with constructive ideas to speak on the radio and call their fellow LRA fighters to return home” (“Dwog Cen Paco” Programme Host, Male, 70, Personal Communication, Ryders lounge, May 15, 2021).

It meant that the rest of LRA in the bush would hear exactly what the radio programme intended them to, however, the radio programme's public naming of specific LRA members created a risk for those individuals, as it could alert their commanders and lead to repercussions.

On the other hand, LRA respondents stated that there were times when it all felt exaggerated and therefore doubtful. The programme's promises to build them homes, educate their children, while not holding them accountable to their crimes

seemed, as bait to lure them. Ex-LRA female, aged 30, stated that instead of persuasion, at times the messages were inconsequential because “some of the promises were belittling and this turned us off”.

We started to despise the way the returnees were having cheap talk on the radio programme, as if they were all trained to be in agreement. We heard them say things like, ‘I now sleep on a mattress, and I eat to my fill...’ So, did this mean that all these years we were in the bush, we did not eat? Certainly, we walked a lot, but we ate. There were seasons when we ate all types of meat to our fill, slept on mattresses, and then we got back up another season to walk again. This is the life of a soldier (Ex-LRA, Female, 35, Personal Communication, YOLRED Office, May 19, 2021).

As well as having LRA child soldiers on the programme, more influence came from the voices of child-soldier returnee wives, broadcast on Radio Njema from Central African Republic, with messages like: “Husband, I’m enjoying a new life, what are you still doing there?”, showcasing the bravery and resilience of female LRA fighters. Even so, replicating “Dwog Cen Paco” in Congo’s war zones would not yield same results, as the model’s success in northern Uganda relied on gradual trust-building.

#### 5.1.7 Political Propaganda on “Dwog Cen Paco” Programme:

On the other hand, the northern Ugandan peace stage was a great opportunity for political propaganda and, its being on the radio made it easier to drive influence, in ways stated by Miller (1941) that “by radio the propagandist can bring his voice and all the persuasive power of his emotions to millions of people, and with the speed of light” (Miller, 1941, p. 69). In the northern Uganda conflict, Bernsten (2010) stated, “Political actors that have been involved in this process have projected the child - soldier in a variety of ways in order to justify and accomplish their various

political and moral mandates in the peace process, thus making the child soldier phenomenon into a ‘discursive site’ of power struggle” (p.40). Indeed “Dwog Cen Paco” programme host confessed to using propaganda, for the common good. This meant that prevalent strategies on the programme were rather premeditated.

#### 5.1.8 Persuasive Language on the Radio Programme:

Persuasion was well-orchestrated on “Dwog Cen Paco” programming. Referring to LRA fighters as “our children”, created a sense of belonging the civilian Acholi, no wonder, 100-300 LRAs escaped and reported to the radio between the year 2003-2006, with the programme going past its usual stopping hour of 10.00 pm, to 12.00 am. Ex-LRA soldiers' wives also credited the radio’s persuasive language for motivating their escape, with one escaping after a UPDF ambush and another’s husband eventually considering her suggestions to defect.

The programme pushed me to widen my knowledge. I followed up with *Rupiny* and the *New Vision* newspapers to find out if the newspapers were speaking the same language as the “Come Back Home” messaging on the radio programme (Ex-LRA, Male, 47, Key Informant, YOLRED Office, May 19, 2021).

The persuasive radio programming led to significant changes in the times. Tayeebwa (2019) elaborates on how an enraged LRA leadership attacked and burnt the radio station on 27th Sept. 2002, when dozens of the LRA fighters started escaping and isolating themselves from the main fighting parties. Ex-LRA Key Informant, male, aged 35, recounts a time radios were confiscated from LRA fighters after a commander, engrossed in “Dwog Cen Paco,” led his battalion into a government ambush, revealing the fighters’ war fatigue and desire for news

Consequently, LRA commanders were prompted to tighten security and warn of killings, if they any LRA defected. Effective immediately, LRA senior commanders were forced to curtail the programme's influence on their soldiers by setting up new security systems to monitor their camp.

We women were not permitted to go to the well without a male escort. A spy network was established to monitor suspicious behaviour. Sluggishness during group walks was interpreted as a plan to escape, and it was severely punished. Any rumour of an individual or a group of individuals planning an escape led to their deaths. Conversations were monitored and LRA soldiers were expected to praise, and not criticise the insurgency (Ex-LRA, Female, 40, Key Informant, YOLRED Office, May 19, 2021).

The LRA's response above revealed their recognition of radio Peace Journalism's power and their desperation to maintain control through instilling fear and meting out punishment.

#### 5.1.9 NGOs in Conflict Regions (Caritas Relief):

The LRA's violent response to the radio messaging of killing civilians led to increased civilian displacement into IDP camps, prompting Caritas to shift its objectives towards emergency relief, food supply, and social-economic justice.

However, the issue of receiving LRAs who successfully made escape from the LRA rebellion into Acholi civilian communities remained a challenge. Caritas faced challenges in resettling all LRA returnees, particularly those too old for formal education, revealing a gap in support services despite the radio campaign's promise for equal education opportunities. Caritas also faced expectations from other networks to provide more follow-up support to LRA returnees, as religious leaders



believed their role ended with repatriation. The bishop of Gulu pointed out this limitation:

I am not very sure if as a nation we were prepared to welcome the LRAs back. Did we have the resources to resettle them? The children were being settled in rehabilitation centers as the GUSCO center. Having been received and counselled, the challenge remained in what would become of them after leaving the rehabilitation centers. How we resettled them, I think was not properly planned for. Even we the religious did not think through it, I must confess (Arch Bishop - Roman Catholic Church - Gulu, Male, 70, Personal Communication, The Bishop Residence, May 28, 2021).

All these meant that the whole network of the Acholi peace process evidently had put more focus on succeeding with the strategies, while forgetting the second most important phase of ending this war.

These shortcomings did not undermine Caritas's influence on the radio messaging. Caritas's efforts, including rehabilitation, medical treatment, and psychosocial support, complemented the radio messaging and played a crucial role, in persuading the LRA fighters to return home.

Caritas also served as a vital information source for the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme, filling gaps when the programme couldn't access offsite information. For instance, the signing of the cessation of hostility agreement (2006) mandated all LRA fighters to move along a demarcated corridor into South Sudan, and the government of Uganda, the LRAs, and the Secretariat of Juba mandated Caritas to deliver foods, none - food stuffs and assorted medicines to LRA assembly areas. Caritas's on-ground

presence allowed it to access vital information, which it shared on the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme, supporting its peace efforts.

How the programme host encouraged the LRAs who were afraid of returning home, by involving cultural and religious leaders to call for their return home, regardless of their nature of war crimes, was commendable (In-depth Interview, Director Caritas, Male, 45, Caritas Office, May 27, 2021).

In civilian Acholi community, Caritas's actions reflected their faith-based principles, aligning with the "Dwog Cen Paco" radio messaging and supporting peace efforts, including logistical support for provincial peace prayer weeks, supporting the "Dwog Cen Paco" radio messaging through local initiatives, such as making peace-promoting T-shirts and stickers with spot messages like "peace starts from you", providing food to ex-LRAs in non-gazetted IDP settlements, not in UN agencies' list, demonstrating a unified approach to achieving peace.

The collaboration and partnership with Caritas helped the programme leverage Caritas' expertise and resources in supporting former combatants. Caritas' involvement also demonstrated a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding, addressing not only the psychological and emotional aspects but also the practical needs of former fighters.

#### 5.1.10 Conclusion on Findings:

The "Dwog Cen Paco" programme's forgiveness and reintegration messaging, launched in 2000, yielded significant results two years later, with many LRA fighters returning home between 2003-2006, confirming the programme's successful contribution in northern Uganda's conflict resolution. "Dwog Cen Paco" programme host had this to conclude his interview.

We have integrated impeccably with the LRA returnees that one can hardly believe they live amongst us. Actually, they have demonstrated that hard work pays. These are hardworking boys and girls, who do not have pride like other community members. They know that their education was interrupted, and whatever capital was given to them has yielded fruits, while those who were in the IDP camps are lazy people who were accustomed to NGO handouts. The ex-LRAs maintain their gardens, and they love uniting for a common goal. If it means unity for peace, it is peace. If it means unity for education, or health, they always hurry, whenever there is helpful information for them (“Dwog Cen Paco” Programme host, Male, 70, Personal Communication, Ryders lounge, May 23, 2021).

This success premises “Dwog Cen Paco” programme as capable in theory and in practice. Mega FM implemented what proponents of Peace Journalism values as non-violent response to conflict, and supported literature around positive reporting. What remains of concern, is the impact of mixing former LRA assaulters and their victims, which can be grounds for ‘negative’ peace, which Galtung posited, was not the absence of direct violence, but of general cooperation between parties for a sustainable economic growth.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes findings guided by research questions, and the implication of results to the theory of the study and to practice. Recommendations for future research are provided based on findings and their implications to practice.

#### 6.1 Conclusion

The main task of the study was to identify strategies used to persuade the LRA fighters of northern Uganda, into returning home as civilians, identify external factors that contributed to the LRA fighters' return home, and identify best practices used in this persuasion programme in order to gain the perspective of these normative strategies dubbed by the radio host as "Come Back Home" programming.

Forgiveness was a key philosophical driver, supported by carefully crafted reporting strategies, and for deeper insights in the broader context of Peace Journalism, a further examination of the model is presented:

The primary objective of the model, was to encourage LRA fighters to return and reintegrate into their civilian communities. A unified approach by stakeholders including, government, religious, and traditional leaders underscored the effectiveness of a reconciliatory language in achieving this goal, rising to the cadence of Tshimba (2015)'s argument that "most, if not all African societies have had alternative methods of reintegrating the wrong-doers into society and letting them assume their societal roles as it might have been prior to the conflict (whether violent or not)" (p.68). This meant existing African conflict resolution methods, specific to each society, are often limited in scope to their local communities.

In the LRA conflict, 'Mato Oput' and 'Nyono Tong-gweno', central in the ex-LRAs cleansing and reintegration rituals, were viable and desirable, but specifically tied to the Acholi local setting, that could not be easily incorporated into the national justice system. Therefore, conflict resolution should aim to combine widely acceptable non-violent approaches with existing cultural methods.

In practice, the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme applied Peace Journalism principles, enabling journalists to make informed decisions that alleviated conflict through responsible media use. Despite being criticized as overly idealistic, this study commends "Dwog Cen Paco" programme for choosing PJ's "right" approach to confront conflict and influence positive change, by exhaustively exploring peaceful conflict resolution strategies. The programme validated the assumptions of Peace Journalism proponents, demonstrating that journalists and editors can make editorial decisions that serve the common good.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

To resolve conflict, government needs to understand its nature: the LRA conflict was both an intra-Acholi and Acholi-state conflict. The peace process prioritized resolving local conflicts before extending harmony with the state.

Secondly, peacebuilding institutions and conflict regions should consider traditional justice systems for local conflicts, and adopt broader methods only when external intervention is necessary.

Media houses should learn to play their role in conflict areas through the lens of the victims and assaulted. In the LRAs' case, the fighters had committed great war crimes and crimes against humanity, yet the community found them worthy of redemption. Lessons should be learnt from how the "Dwog Cen Paco" programme

appealed to LRA fighters' humanity through their creative and peaceable approaches including music and reconciliatory language, encouraging LRAs return home and reintegration as civilians.

NGOs should be willing to collaborate their efforts and share their resources in conflict resolution. Partnering with trusted community, religious, and cultural leaders enhances peace and reconciliation.

Future research should conduct quantitative studies to quantify the number of LRA fighters who returned home, and investigate the success of the "Come Back Home" messaging in the Central African Republic, where the model was replicated.

Future researchers of the LRA conflict resolution should consider a wider time and geographic scope, and more financial resources, allowing for extensive qualitative data collection.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: In-depth Interviews Interview Guide

NGO (Caritas Relief) Staff

**The contribution of radio journalism to the return-home of the LRA rebels: The case of “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ radio programme on 102 Mega FM in Gulu, northern Uganda.**

<b>Researcher Introductions</b>	<p>Agalo Suzan Pompilla is a student at Uganda Christian University pursuing a Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies. She is conducting research on: The contribution of radio journalism to the return-home of the LRA rebels: The case of “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ radio programme on 102 Mega FM in Gulu, northern Uganda.</p>		
<b>Participant Introductions</b>	<p><b>The Interview Process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome the candidate and explain why they are vital to this research.</li> <li>• This interview will last between 30-90 minutes.</li> <li>• The interview will be recorded through an audio device for purposes of correctness during transcriptions.</li> <li>• You retain the rights to opt out of any uncomfortable question.</li> <li>• You also have the right to opt out of the whole interview.</li> <li>• Feel free to add additional information that may be helpful to the research.</li> <li>• I am committed to abide by the recommended standard operative procedures that includes wearing of a face mask, carry a sanitizer and maintaining social distance as precautionary measures against transmission of the Covid 19 virus during the interview. I ask that the same measures be observed by the interviewee.</li> </ul>		
<b>Bio- data</b>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Interviewee(s): Designation:</p> <p>Duration in that designation: Required duration at “Dwog Cen Paco”: Location (dwelling): Age:</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; padding-left: 20px;"> <p>Caritas NGO Staff Psychosocial Support, Director, Programme Manager Two (2) other staff August 2002 - date 2000 - 2006 Gulu city 40-60 years</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Interviewee(s): Designation:</p> <p>Duration in that designation: Required duration at “Dwog Cen Paco”: Location (dwelling): Age:</p>	<p>Caritas NGO Staff Psychosocial Support, Director, Programme Manager Two (2) other staff August 2002 - date 2000 - 2006 Gulu city 40-60 years</p>
<p>Interviewee(s): Designation:</p> <p>Duration in that designation: Required duration at “Dwog Cen Paco”: Location (dwelling): Age:</p>	<p>Caritas NGO Staff Psychosocial Support, Director, Programme Manager Two (2) other staff August 2002 - date 2000 - 2006 Gulu city 40-60 years</p>		
<b>Objective I</b>	<p><b>To identify the ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ ‘Come Back Home’ strategies that contributed to the LRA rebel’s return.</b></p>		
	<p><b>From Research Question I</b></p>		

	1. What were the “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ programme strategies that were aligned with the peace initiatives of external players Caritas Gulu??
	2. What range of expectations did ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ ‘Come Back Home’ programme have in a partnership with Caritas?
	3. What setbacks did “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ programme encounter that impeded on meeting these range of expectations?
<b>Objective II</b>	<b>To identify other players that contributed to the LRA rebel’s return.</b>
	<b>From Research Question II</b>
	4. Which external players did ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ ‘Come Back Home’ programme influence in order to partner with in the radio programme peace initiative?
	5. What was the gap that the external players filled in becoming part of the radio peace initiative?
	6. What do you see as your contribution to the return home of fighters?
<b>Objective III</b>	<b>To identify best practices of “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ programme.</b>
	<b>From Research Question III</b>
	7. What best practices did “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ programme employ that won the support of the Non-Governmental Organization -NGO fraternity?
	8. In what ways did ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ ‘Come Back Home’ programme influence the agenda of Caritas NGO as a partner in the peace initiative?
	9. What best practices did Caritas bring to the ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ radio programme?
<b>Total Duration</b>	Caritas Relief: 4: 38 Minutes

In-depth Interview guide.

## Appendix B: Key Informants Interview Guide

Ex-LRA Fighters | Religious Leaders | The “Dwog Cen Paco” Programme Host

**The contribution of radio journalism to the return-home of the LRA rebels: The case of “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ radio programme on 102 Mega FM in Gulu, Uganda.**

<p><b>Researcher Introductions</b></p>	<p>Agalo Suzan Pompilla is a student at Uganda Christian University pursuing a Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies. She is conducting research on: The contribution of radio journalism to the return-home of the LRA rebels: The case of “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ radio programme on 102 Mega FM in Gulu, northern Uganda.</p>	
<p><b>Participant Introductions</b></p>	<p><b>The Interview Process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome the candidate and explain why they are vital to this research.</li> <li>• This interview will last between 30-90 minutes.</li> <li>• The interview will be recorded on audio device for data integrity.</li> <li>• You retain the rights to opt out of any uncomfortable question.</li> <li>• You also have the right to opt out of the whole interview.</li> <li>• Feel free to add additional information that may be helpful to research.</li> <li>• I am committed to abide by the recommended standard operative procedures that includes wearing of a face mask, carrying a sanitizer and maintaining social distance as precautionary measures against transmission of the Covid 19 virus during the interview. I ask that the same measures be observed by the interviewee.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Bio- data</b></p>	<p>Interviewee(s):            Designation:            Required duration at “Dwog Cen Paco”:            Location (dwelling):            Age:</p> <p>Interviewee(s):            Designation:            Required duration at “Dwog Cen Paco”:            Location (dwelling):            Age:</p> <p>Interviewee(s):            Designation:            Duration in that designation:            Required duration at “Dwog Cen Paco”:            Location (dwelling):            Age:            Interview hours:</p>	<p>Ex-LRA            Ex-LRA fighters            2000 - 2006            Gulu city            25-60 years</p> <p>Gulu Bishops            Archbishop Roman Catholic,            Bishop Emeritus, Anglican church            2000 - 2006            Gulu city            60 and over</p> <p>Radio host (Journalist)            “Dwog Cen Paco” programme host            August 2002 - date            2000 - 2006            Gulu city            70 years            1.27 minutes</p>

<b>Objective I</b>	<b>To identify the ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ ‘Come Back Home’ strategies that contributed to the LRA rebel’s return.</b>
	<b>From Research Question I</b>
	<p>1.What were the specific ‘Dwog Cen Paco ’radio programme strategies used to persuade the LRA fighters into returning home?</p> <p>2. What were the most used and under used strategies on the programme?</p> <p>3.What range of behaviours were influenced in LRA by these radio strategies?</p> <p>4.What problems arose with the LRA rebels due to the persuasion programme?</p> <p>5. Comment on whether the radio programme contributed to your return home decision?</p>
<b>Objective II</b>	<b>To identify other players that contributed to the LRA rebel’s return.</b>
	<b>From Research Question II</b>
	<p>7. Who were the external players, other than the radio host featured on the programme?</p> <p>8.What changes came about into the LRA rebellion due to the involvement of external players (like religious leaders and choli Achiefs) on the programme?</p> <p>9. In what ways did ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ ‘Come Back Home’ programme capitalize on the strength of these external players?</p> <p>10. What success stories did the programme have and, what were the reactions community to these success stories?</p>
<b>Objective III</b>	<b>To identify best practices of “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ programme.</b>
	<b>From Research Question III</b>
	<p>11.What best practices employed in “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come back home’ programme?</p> <p>12. What were the loopholes and strength in these best practices?</p> <p>13. What was adapted by ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ ‘Come Back Home’ programme to enhance amnesty?</p>
<b>Total Duration</b>	<p>LRA Fighters: 3:56 Minutes</p> <p>Religious leaders: 1:27 Minutes</p> <p>Programme Host: 1:47 Minutes</p>

Key Informant Interview guide.

## Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion Interview Guide

Gulu Residents

**The contribution of radio journalism to the return-home of the LRA rebels: The case of “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ radio programme on 102 Mega FM in Gulu, northern Uganda.**

<p><b>Researcher Introductions</b></p>	<p>Agalo Suzan Pompilla is a student at Uganda Christian University pursuing a Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies. She is conducting research on: The contribution of radio journalism to the return-home of the LRA rebels: The case of “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ radio programme on 102 Mega FM in Gulu, northern Uganda.</p>												
<p><b>Participant Introductions</b></p>	<p><b>The Interview Process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome the candidate and explain why they are vital to this research.</li> <li>• This interview will last between 30-90 minutes.</li> <li>• The interview will be recorded through an audio device for purposes of correctness during transcriptions.</li> <li>• You retain the rights to opt out of any uncomfortable question.</li> <li>• You also have the right to opt out of the whole interview.</li> <li>• Feel free to add additional information that may be helpful to the research.</li> <li>• I am committed to abide by the recommended standard operative procedures that includes wearing of a face mask, carry a sanitizer and maintaining social distance as precautionary measures against transmission of the Covid 19 virus during the interview. I ask that the same measures be observed by the interviewee</li> </ul>												
<p><b>Bio- data</b></p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Interviewee(s):</td> <td>Gulu municipal residents</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Designation:</td> <td>House-holds</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Duration in that designation:</td> <td>Unspecified</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Required duration at “Dwog Cen Paco”:</td> <td>2000 - 2006</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Location (dwelling):</td> <td>Gulu city</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age:</td> <td>25-60 years</td> </tr> </table>	Interviewee(s):	Gulu municipal residents	Designation:	House-holds	Duration in that designation:	Unspecified	Required duration at “Dwog Cen Paco”:	2000 - 2006	Location (dwelling):	Gulu city	Age:	25-60 years
Interviewee(s):	Gulu municipal residents												
Designation:	House-holds												
Duration in that designation:	Unspecified												
Required duration at “Dwog Cen Paco”:	2000 - 2006												
Location (dwelling):	Gulu city												
Age:	25-60 years												
<p><b>Objective I</b></p>	<p><b>To identify the ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ ‘Come Back Home’ strategies that contributed to the LRA rebels’ return.</b></p>												
	<p><b>From Research Question I</b></p>												
	<p>1. What were the ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ ‘Come Back Home’ radio programme strategies that were most effective in persuading the LRA fighters return home?</p>												
	<p>2. What did the programme get right and what mistakes did the programme make that in your opinion slowed its success?</p>												



	3. What are your comments on the ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ ‘Come Back Home’ strategies that were overly used and that which were underused?
<b>Objective II</b>	<b>To identify other players that contributed to the LRA rebel’s return.</b>
	<b>From Research Question II</b>
	4. Comment on the contribution of the Amnesty Act (2000) to the success of ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ ‘Come Back Home’ radio programme?
	5. What in your opinion could the amnesty clause included to have a better impact on the ‘Come Back Home,’ radio programme?
	6. What influence did other external players such as the religious leaders and NGO worker’s attendance on the show have on the success of the radio programme
<b>Objective III</b>	<b>To identify best practices of “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ programme.</b>
	<b>From Research Question III</b>
	7. What were the indicators of best practices on “Dwog Cen Paco”, ‘Come Back Home’ programme?
	8. What best practices would you recommend be adapted for conflict resolution in situations of armed conflict in other warring regions?
	9. What practices in ‘Dwog Cen Paco,’ ‘Come Back Home’ programme would not be relevant in other conflict areas?
<b>Total Duration</b>	Gulu Residents: 3:18 Minutes

Focus Group Discussion Interview guide.

## Appendix F: Uganda Christian University Research Introductory Letter



# UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

07/05/2021

To: Pompilla Agalo

Uganda Christian University  
0782282636

Type: Initial Review

**Re: UCUREC-2021-101: The contribution of radio journalism to the returnhome of the LRA rebels: The case of 'Dwog Cen Paco', 'Come Back Home' radio program on 101.2 Mega FM in Gulu, Northern Uganda., 1, 2021-03-22**

I am pleased to inform you that the Uganda Christian University REC, through expedited review held on **07/05/2021** approved the above referenced study.

Approval of the research is for the period of **07/05/2021** to **07/05/2022**.

As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and addenda to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the REC for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes.
3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or any new information which could change the risk benefit: ratio must be submitted to the REC.
4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by participants and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The REC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. Continuing review application must be submitted to the REC **eight weeks** prior to the expiration date of **07/05/2022** in order to continue the study beyond the approved period. Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study.
6. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence with the REC of record.
7. You are required to register the research protocol with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) for final clearance to undertake the study in Uganda.

The following is the list of all documents approved in this application by Uganda Christian University REC:

No.	Document Title	Language	Version Number	Version Date
1	Informed Consent forms	English	1	2021-03-22
2	Data collection tools	English	1	2021-03-22
3	Protocol	English	1	2021-03-22

Yours Sincerely



Peter Waiswa  
For: Uganda Christian University REC

No.	Document Title	Language	Version Number	Version Date
1	Informed Consent forms	English	1	2021-03-22
2	Data collection tools	English	1	2021-03-22
3	Protocol	English	1	2021-03-22

Yours Sincerely



Peter Waiswa  
For: Uganda Christian University REC

## Appendix G: The Research Consent Form

### Consent Form

Type: Participant/respondent consent.

**Re: The contribution of radio journalism to the return home of the LRA rebels: The case of 'Dwog Cen Paco', 'Come Back Home' radio program on 101.2 Mega FM in Gulu, Northern Uganda.**

This research is using structured interview guides to interview key informants who are: radio journalists, clergy and ex-LRA fighters and then focused-groups who are: Caritas NGO workers, and then the residents of Gulu city that listened to the radio program, featured on or did both from 2002-2006.

Where required transport remunerations and refreshments are provided. Due to the foreseen risk of exposure to the Covid 19 virus, standard precautions as recommended by the Uganda Covid19 task force will be observed. This includes the wearing of face masks, using a hand sanitizer and maintaining the required social distance of 2 meters between participants.

I the respondent have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. I therefore voluntarily agree to participate in this research knowing that:

- I will not benefit directly from participating in this research and agree that my interview is audio-recorded.
- Disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in mediums as dissertations, conferences, published papers and speeches.
- In case of risk or harm I may report to the relevant authorities - with or without the researcher's permission.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences of any kind and that my privacy will be respected.
- I am entitled to contact and verify with the university's ethics team.
- I will meet with the researcher at a mutually agreed upon venue, answer to research questions and sign the consent form at the end of interviews.

Vital contacts.


Uganda Christian University ethics committee chairperson: Prof. Peter Waiswa  
[+256772 405 357. pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug].


Researcher: Agalo Suzan Pompilla [+256782 282 636. pompisue@gmail.com].

Signature of researcher

 ..... Date 27th MAY 2021 .....

Name and signatures of research participant (s).

 27/5/21  
Rt Rev Nelson Onono-Omwengy

Jim Onyema Shiny Baptist (Lacambel),  
 23rd May - 2021  
a radio presenter at Mega fm in Tul



# UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

## UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF RESEARCH & POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

DISSERTATION CORRECTION COMPLIANCE REPORT BY THE CANDIDATE (POST VIVA FORM)

**Date:** 25th Sept. 2025

**Name of Candidate:** Pompilla Suzan Agalo

**Reg. No:** RS17M42/004

**Title of Dissertation:** The contribution of radio journalism to the return home of the LRA fighters: The case of “Dwog Cen Paco”, (Come Back Home) radio programme on 102 Mega FM in Gulu, Northern Uganda.

SN	EXTERNAL EXAMINER COMMENTS	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
	AGALO SUZAN POMPILLA: This study based on Gulu - Northern Uganda's Mega FM's, “Dwog Cen Paco”, (Come Back Home) radio programme, questioning whether and how the program contributed toward resolving the Northern Uganda LRA fighter's conflict. Theoretically, it uses peace journalism to advance knowledge. Interviews were used to inform the study's methodological processes. The only discouraging aspect for this dissertation is its use of VERY old literature sources. I expected the student to access and assess more recent studies in peace and radio journalism. Apart from this drawback, I believe this is an excellently executed study grounded in convincing theoretical and methodological positions. It is well researched and advances knowledge in the field.		
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

<b>SN</b>	<b>COMMENTS BY INTERNAL EXAMINER</b>	<b>ACTION TAKEN</b>	<b>INDICTOR</b>
1.	Overall structure and presentation Generally followed the university structure. Gaps lay in sub chapters and how much is covered in each section.	Chapters reworked as presented below:	
2.	Chapter One:  Introduction A very good introduction in general terms. The problem statement nearly veered off the main issue of study and the theoretical framework while appropriate, was not properly explored in terms of how it would be used in the study and the critical theoretical gaps missing.	Problem statement strengthened removing historical content that made it almost veer off main topic.  How theory was used in the study updated by showing relevance to the theory to the case (post -viva).	<b>Pg. 10</b>  <b>Pg. 18-20</b>
3.	Chapter Two: Literature Review The literature is largely appropriate and well written. The fundamental gap is in drawing out the debates, also including other efforts through other media, and focusing on whether this was about contribution of a radio programme to returning home or conflict resolution. The gap in literature is glossed over at the end, barely making up the gap.		
4.	Chapter Three:  Methodology Generally, an appropriate method was chosen, even tools. While it is suggested that the study analysis is grounded in theory and literature, neither of those clearly explain how this was to be achieved. Methodology too does not clearly point this out. The other issue with this is the manner in which the various aspects are treated. For example, section on focus group discussion is largely an essay on FGDs rather than what was actually done. This is in other sections too.	Added data to provide explanation on how Focus Group Discussions and all other data collection were done.  A multiple respondent's interview guide is added, and interview procedures listed.	<b>Pg. 41.48</b>
5.	Chapter Four:  Presentation and Analysis of Data Appreciated the Thematic analysis. Candidate clearly identified themes based on the specific objectives. The contributions although not qualified, kept emerging. However, the data was presented without some descent interpretation. Perhaps that is done in discussion.	Qualified the contributions of themes, demonstrating its contributions to the study.  Interpretation of data updated in discussion section. (post-viva).	<b>Pg. 70</b>  <b>Pg. 71-82</b>
6.	Chapter Five: Discussion of Results  Besides scanty reference to literature, this section is hardly a discussion of findings. It attempts to summarise the findings from chapter four then introduces a lot more fresh data rather than discuss from a theoretical, literal point of view, drawing out key issues and parallels from previous presentations, studies.	Findings discussed and interpreted with respect to research questions and theory.  All done at one (post-viva).	<b>Pg. 71-82</b>



7.	<p>Chapter Six:</p> <p>Conclusions (and Recommendations)  Candidate needs to reconsider what the major conclusion may be. The section could use some key observations in regard to what the main conclusion is. Having read findings, discussion and conclusion: I wonder if topic should change to strategies used by the radio? Only one journalist interviewed, even though this is the main case. It was okay to look at other actors, I'm finding difficulty with the idea that the study explored contributions of programme towards conflict resolution, which although is not what it seemed, became the main narrative. Initially my sense was how the programme enabled returnees to come home. Needs consistency.</p>	<p>Main conclusions and recommendations reworked and updated (post-viva).</p> <p>□Update shows contribution of radio to conflict (post-viva).</p> <p>□Drawing from findings pertinent recommendations are updated made to media practitioners, NGOs, conflict regions, government and future scholars</p>	Pg. 83-85
	<p><b>Conclusion: Passed.</b> No major revision needed. Corrections based on comments above can improve overall reading of thesis.</p>		

SN	COMMENTS BY VIVA VOCE PANNEL	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1.	<p>A passionate and well-informed presentation. The panel noted that the study is rich in content and reflects a strong personal connection to the topic. Relevance of the study to post-conflict communication and reintegration in Northern Uganda is clear and significant. However, to strengthen the academic rigour of the study, several aspects require improvement, particularly in methodology, data analysis, and conclusion.</p>		
2.	<p>Case Selection and Justification</p> <p>It was not clearly explained why the “Dwog Cen Paco” programme was selected out of all the possible radio programmes. Please include a strong justification for the choice of this specific case, perhaps in terms of its reach, historical impact, or unique contribution to reintegration efforts.</p>	<p>A strong justification on why “Dwog Cen Paco” programme was chosen is updated, including:</p> <p>Reach and historical impact.</p> <p>Similar programmes Vs. “Dwog Cen Paco”.</p> <p>Gaps in government efforts.</p>	Pg. 11
3.	<p>Research Instruments and Methodology</p> <p>Concern about the lack of FGD guide in the data collection tools. You mentioned that one general guide was used for all participants. For clarity &amp; methodological accuracy, explain: 1) How guide was designed to accommodate different groups, 2) Whether any adaptations were made during data collection, 3) Providing structure and application of the tool will strengthen the credibility of your data collection process.</p>	<p>Update is made on how each structure of the tool used, i.e FGDs, Interview Guides and In-depth Interviews were designed.</p> <p>A multiple respondents' guide is explained.</p>	Pg. 42-48

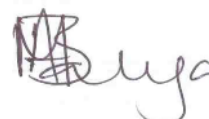
4.	<p>Theoretical Framework</p> <p>While you related your work to theories of peace and reconciliation, the specific contribution or relationship to theory needs to be made clearer. Ask yourself, 1) What does your study add to the understanding of media's role in peacebuilding? 2) Make sure your findings clearly connect back to the theoretical framework you used.</p>	<p>A practical contribution of theory is discussed, adding knowledge to how theory underpinned the problem to drive a narrative for peaceful conflict resolution.</p>	Pg. 18-20
5.	<p>Findings and Analysis</p> <p>Findings were compelling, but they need more structure, deeper analysis, and clearer evidence. Consider these: Try to 1) Organize your findings thematically, 2) Support each theme with direct quotes or data, 3) Go beyond description, interpret the significance of findings. (This will elevate your analysis and make conclusions stronger).</p>	<p>Themes re-reviewed, organized and supported with direct quotes from data or scholars and its meaning to findings are presented.</p> <p>Language edited for precision, redundancy, not pertinent to radio program removed.</p> <p>Findings, discussions &amp; conclusion updated.</p>	Pg. 71-81 Full chapter reworked
6.	<p>Conclusion and Recommendations</p> <p>Offer more practical and actionable conclusions. Try to: 1) Show how your findings can be applied by media houses, NGOs, or peacebuilding institutions, 2) Make clear, relevant recommendations based on evidence.</p>	<p>A well-adjusted conclusion is made in view of what is replicable, and what may not be.</p> <p>Drawing from findings, recommendations are made to align with media practitioners, NGOs, conflict regions, government and future scholars.</p>	Pg. 83-85 Full chapter reworked
Final verdict: PASS			

**Pompilla Suzan Agalo**  
Candidate's Name:



Signature:

**Monica B. Chibita**  
Supervisor's Name:



Signature: