

WHY REPRESENTATION MATTERS: THE ROLE OF POLITICAL SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

Human security is an emerging field in security and peace studies, focusing on ensuring peace through harnessing resources towards meeting peoples' needs. In human security, attention is given to issues about collective good as a precondition for ensuring national security. One of the elements of human security as conceptualized in this study is political security. Therefore, this study was carried out to understand how the promotion of political security can facilitate sustainable peace. To achieve the purpose of this study, a mixed method approach was adopted and questionnaires were distributed to members of Acholi, Lango and South western Uganda. Data collected was analyzed using a variety of analytical methods, including, correlation, and narrative methods of analysis. The findings showed a positive correlation between political security and sustainable peace, $r(381) = .683$, $P < .001$, an indication that the higher the level of political security, the more likely sustainable peace will be achieved. It was the recommendation of the researchers that the government needs to set up a truth and reconciliation program that will bring together the conflicting parties with the aim of ensuring peace. Also, the government needs to encourage youth participation by making it easier for young adults to vie for major political office.

KEY WORDS: Sustainable peace, Northern Uganda, Political Security, Human security

INTRODUCTION

War and conflict are not a new concept, and since the earliest humans, people have fought wars in a bid to protect their people, revenge a death, or simply feed themselves and their families (Pettersson, et al. 2019). Conflict appears to be embedded deep in the fabric of human society, and not a single year has passed in the last 100 years without at

least two countries engaging in war against each other (Pettersson, et al. 2019). Some countries have not had a decade of peace since their founding. For instance, according to the Shah (2020) in his report on the history of US war, stated that that the US has been at war for 225 years out of the 243 years since 1776, implying that the US has spent 92% since their founding fighting wars. South Sudan, Somalia, Central African Republic, Israel are some countries that comes to mind when talking about incessant wars. The timeline of 20th and 21st-century wars as depicted by the Imperial War Museum (n.d) showed that no year has passed since the early 20th century, where there has not been some major conflict going on. They explain that 187 million people have died as a direct result of wars from 1900 to the present. They go on to warn that the number (187million) is more likely to be significantly higher as there is a tendency to underreport casualties in the media (Imperial War Museum, n.d). These wars and constant conflict have led to perpetual increased concerns over the wellbeing and security of people all over the world. In the last 10 years alone, over 200 million people have been displaced as a direct result of conflict and millions have died in some form of conflict or the other.

One of the most notable conflicts in recent years is the Arab Spring uprising that began in 2010 over the disillusion felt by a young vegetable seller in Tunisia who set himself ablaze after being maltreated and victimized by securities. This singular act opened the eyes of the people of Tunisia to the widening gap or divide between the rich (haves) and the poor (have-nots), and the general abysmal standard of living in the country. This act would set in motion a chain of events that led to the toppling of different leaders in the Arab world and would lead to the destruction or rebuilding (depending on the perceptive you agree with) of various nations in the Arab world and North Africa and such countries included, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Syria, Bahrain, among others. In total, almost 10,000 people lost their lives to this uprising (Relief web, 2021).

Since 2011, there has been numerous wars and conflicts around the world, the most recent being the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which has so far claimed thousands of lives and displaced millions.

The UNDP annual report of 1994 expressed concern over the way peacebuilding was being approached. The alluded to the fact that the current approach to peace building was simply not tenable and that to address the issue of insecurity and ensure lasting peace, there is a need to understand and address the root causes of the conflict and disharmony.

The 1994 UNDP annual development report expressed misgivings about how the issue of peacebuilding is approached and proffered a solution to unending wars by suggesting an approach to peacebuilding that focuses on the provision and protection of individual rights as against state rights and security. According to Act Alliance (2020 as cited in Annan, et al., 2021), engaging with the people at the grassroots level to solve their human security needs positively impacts their ability to survive, and earn a livelihood in dignity, and then durable peace can be achieved. Therefore, in an ideal situation, where the needs of the people are met, then issues of conflict will be a long-forgotten memory. The UNDP report of 1994 came up with what they called 'the seven pillars of human security' and they are; food, health, personal, environmental, community, political, and economic security. The idea was that if these seven pillars are present, then there is a high probability that sustainable peace can be achieved.

It was therefore based on this premise that the researchers decided to embark on this study to find out the effect of political security on sustainable peace in the Northern part of Uganda.

Contextual Perspective

The study was carried out in the Northern region of Uganda. This region is one of the five regions in Uganda with a population of about a 7.1million people (2014 census of

Uganda). The region is made up of 30 districts. This region suffered major conflict for close to 18 years that led to the deaths of thousands and the displacement of more than a 1.5million people (The New Humanitarian, 2005). This conflict though abated in recent times, its impact persists even today and has had deleterious effects on the economic and political stability of the region, in terms of a mass exodus of the people in search of greener pastures, stunted development due to investors shying away from the conflict-prone region amongst others. Cattle rustling and land grabbing are other issues that persist in this region and threaten fragile peace. All these factors lead to a major problem in terms of human security. This prompted the research to focus on this region. In particular, the Acholi and Lango sub-regions were the main focus of this study. These two regions were selected because they are the two of the most affected regions in terms of conflicts in the whole Northern region of Uganda. In a recent report by the Daily Monitor, Lango was described as the “new hotbed of land conflict”. Similarly, the LRA, which are the major antagonists against the Ugandan government, claims to fight for the rights of the Acholi people, making them the recipients of much of the brunt of the Ugandan government. Based on this, the researcher opted to select these two regions as the main study area for this research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In many UNDP member nations, the nature of violence is shifting dramatically. Between 1992 and 2003, the number of state-based violent conflicts decreased by more than 40%, according to the 2005 Human Security Report. Between 2002 and 2006, according to the 2008 Human Security Brief, both state-based and non-state-based conflicts decreased by 18 percent. However, in many nations, social violence, instability, and social dislocation are on the rise. Every year, around 740,000 people are killed as a result of armed conflict. Homicide and inter-personal violence account for more than 490,000 of these deaths in non-conflict nations. Only about 55,000 people have died as a direct result of the war. Violent conflict fueled by political and identity problems continues to be a major issue.

Consultative and inclusive methods, which permit elite bargaining and negotiation as well as public engagement, have been shown to contribute to popular acceptability of the transitional political process and its outcomes in a number of nations (Annan, et al., 2021). There's also evidence that the lack of these systems has damaged a number of transitional processes. For example, constitution-making procedures that excluded key constituents frequently resulted in contentious constitutions that lacked legitimacy and failed to settle the country's primary conflicts (Kritz, 2019). This section includes a few case studies that show the value of inclusive political processes as well as the repercussions of processes that lack inclusive and consultative structures.

In Iraq, during their building back period following the US invasion, the lack of a proper transitional process that allows for genuine dialogue and participative decision-making caused a major rift between the Sunnis, Baathists and the rest of Iraq. The De-Baathification policies that excluded former Baathists from the formal and reconciliatory political processes led to a feeling of illegitimacy for the entire transitional process by members of the affected groups. Since they were excluded from the process, they did not feel the need to embrace or be part for the process which led to even more conflict and political wrangling where peace should have been the main goal (Eck, et al., 2021). The US and its Iraqi allies chose against broad participation in the political process at each level of the transition, despite the fact that options existed that could have established a political space for debate and discourse (Eck, et al., 2021).

Observers from all over the world have highlighted that the constitutional debates that took place in Iraq during the summer of 2005 were harmed by the United States' lack of participation of Sunni Arabs and participation in the negotiations (Arjona, 2017). Furthermore, in the October 2005 referendum, over 77 per cent of the eligible voters cast their vote in support of the current constitution and only 21 per cent voted against it. The manifesto was rejected by 97 percent and 82 percent of voters in the largely Sunni Arab areas and strongholds of Anbar and Salaheddin, respectively. Even if a more inclusive and

lengthier debate had been held, it can still be argued that the Sunni will still not support or embrace the Shia-Kurdish federal arrangement. However, analysts remark the Sunni viewpoint has evolved to accept federalism as potentially being to their benefit. Different Sunni Arab mediators were responsive to certain forms of Iraqi federalism in August 2005, as indicated by Morrow, however they couldn't support them without bringing issues to light among their networks concerning what these models included (Arjona, 2017). A more robust approach would have ensured that political actors had more time to talk and to convince their constituents by educating them about the goals and create public awareness about the process.

Burundi is one more illustration of how extended and lengthy conversations can lead to an improvement of the political process in achieving some sort of peace deal. Following the 2000 Arusha Accord, which was endorsed after over two years of conversations, talks continued in 2001 to set up a power-dividing framework between the signatories and until 2004 to acquire those parties who had or wouldn't sign the agreement.

Two factions of the rebel movement signed cease-fire agreements in October 2002, and some of their leaders joined the government in early 2003. The primary military group, the Hutu-led CNDD-FDD, decided to join the peace process at the end of 2003 after the signing of a political power sharing, defense, and security protocols with the government of Burundi. The essential features of the post-transition constitution, as well as the initial steps toward a combined security apparatus of the state, including the armed forces, were hammered out during this protracted period of discussions. 'The Arusha agreements may best be regarded as a process, partly discussion, partially behind-the-scenes diplomatic horse-trading, partly exercise in communication, spanning a long period of time,' writes René Lemarchand (2007). During the discussions, foreign troops, including the South African protection force and, in 2003, the African Union peacekeeping operation, maintained basic security in the capital city (Lemarchand 2007).

Public engagement is also possible during the constitution-making process. Transparency and public involvement played a role in the Albanian constitutional debates from 1997 to 2008, when a hands-on approach and an approach that encouraged public engagement and participation counterbalanced the attempts of the elites that wanted to disrupt the process (Carlson & Perrew 1999). Following the civil upheaval of 1997, Albania began a constitutional process. A large-scale nationwide public engagement initiative was undertaken. When one of its leaders was slain in 1998, a coup attempt was launched, and the international community engaged diplomatically to guarantee stability.

There are a variety of hurdles to women and young people participating in politics in Mali, Niger, and Senegal. On a political level, a monopoly on power has been maintained by a mostly male and older elite, tokenism rather than genuine representation of women is typical, and women and young people frequently lack crucial skills that is needed to participate and contribute to formal politics. Economic marginalization of both women and adolescents, as well as restricted access to education, particularly for girls, are social and economic issues that keep these groups out of decision-making positions in the public domain.

At the cultural level, patriarchal systems, attitudes, and conservative and religious views, represented in religious leaders' increased influence on political leaders and procedures, also contributed and encouraged to the banning of women from certain public venues. These concerns are exacerbated for young people by the lack of specified representation quotas, age limitations on formal political participation, inadequate experience, and the expensive expense of politics. Furthermore, youngsters are particularly prone to radical armed group recruitment and increasingly dangerous migration to Europe as a result of unemployment and underemployment. A variety of efforts have been launched to improve the political engagement of women and youth. In Niger, a gender quota legislation was passed in 2000, while in Senegal, a parity law was passed in 2010.

Advocates for legal gender quotas and those pursuing gender parity in Mali have struggled to unite around a single policy. Even in Uganda, there is a law in place that guarantees women and youth representation at all levels of policy and decision making in the country.

Civil society actors in Mali, Niger, and Senegal have created a variety of tactics to promote women's involvement in elections as candidates and voters, frequently with the backing of the government and regional and international partners (Ryerson (2010 as cited in Anna et al., 2021). These efforts resulted in the creation of election monitoring platforms in Senegal and Mali, which promote women to vote, enable their involvement as electoral observers, and include them in conflict prevention activities to reduce election-related tensions. Women's political engagement in Niger is boosted by the national High Authority for Peacebuilding's acknowledgement of their role in the country's plan for security and development in the Sahel Saharan zones, as well as the execution of programs. Youths from political parties and civic society have mobilized in all three nations to urge their participation in politics, including voting and monitoring governance processes. This kind of political program has been implemented in Uganda and the whole of East Africa for more than two decades now.

Despite many promising attempts, the activities of civil society groups are hampered by a variety of flaws, including excessive competitiveness, partisanship, and insufficient internal governance and transparency. As a result, the majority of women and adolescents continue to be excluded from politics. The research by Glasius (2008) makes the following seven proposals for increasing women and youth political involvement, all of which might benefit from increased national and international support.

First, improve democratic governance and political engagement through implementing current standards and strengthening institutions. Innovative strategies should be developed to bridge the gap between norms and implementation, ensuring that the various standards and principles formulated to advance democracy and inclusive

governance practices, such as gender equality and women's and youth's political participation, are fully realized.

Secondly, Glasius (2008) explains that, women's and youth's capacities should be strengthened. Women and youth should gain skills in areas such as lobbying, leadership, public administration, conflict resolution, and gender mainstreaming to guarantee meaningful involvement in decision-making processes.

He further explained that existing women's and youth's movements should be strengthened. Stronger solidarity and synergy among female leaders across political party lines, as well as between young political elites and their excluded counterparts, can assist women and young people gain access to more political space. Also, Glasius (2008) suggested that there is a need to improve the delivery of social services and promote private-sector initiatives. Individual and communal empowerment, as well as women's political engagement, are all dependent on girls' education. Young people with good occupations are less likely to join extreme organizations, and are more willing to air their frustrations within the political system rather than through violent means.

Encourage multi-sectoral methods and media involvement. Innovative initiatives must address women's economic and social standing, as well as attempt to improve broader community development, in addition to political rights. The media, as part of a multipronged strategy, may play an essential role in changing perceptions towards gender equality and women's and youth's political engagement.

Glasius (2008) proposes that construct links between organizations and communities. Women's organizations need to interact with religious leaders who advocate for inclusive politics based on a tolerant and progressive understanding of sharia law to challenge conservative narratives that limit women's public involvement.

Finally, it was proposed by Glasius (2008), that there is a need to encourage multi-sectoral methods and media involvement. Innovative initiatives must address women's economic and social standing, as well as attempt to improve broader community development, in addition to political rights. The media, as part of a multipronged strategy, may play an essential role in changing perceptions towards gender equality and women's and youth's political engagement.

Challenges to Political Participation

A lot of individuals have rejected politics as a result of the loss of trust between elected officials and citizens that plagues state-society ties across the world. This is particularly true among young people in the Sahel area, where politics is commonly regarded as a corrupt pastime and, in some circumstances, a way of rapid wealth (Allansson et al., 2017). At the same time, in most Sahelian nations, years of bad administration and a lack of the rule of law have blurred the borders between the state's entity and the government that governs it. As a result, each change of government puts the state's stability in jeopardy.

The ongoing deterioration of state institutions, as well as their failure to restore social cohesion when tensions rise, demonstrates the importance of citizens' meaningful participation in the public sphere, particularly among women and youth, for long-term national and regional peace, security, and development. Women and young people play an important role in rallying support for political candidates. However, they are mostly excluded from formal decision-making positions and procedures or have restricted access to them. Furthermore, even though women are disproportionately impacted by war, their safety in conflict-stricken areas and engagement in conflict prevention and peace activities are at best negligible (Arjona, 2017).

Various political, financial, and cultural issues continue to stymie women's and youth's engagement in political and peace processes, perpetuating the gap between people's aspirations and governance practices and outcomes. The dominance of politics by male

and older elites is a fundamental obstacle to genuine political engagement by women and youth. Women and teenagers find it difficult to get their voices heard due to men's long-standing virtual monopoly on political authority. In Mali, for example, the parliament rejected a system of gender quotas in 2006, which may have enhanced women's participation. As a result, women make up only 10% of parliamentarians, a figure that has decreased during the previous three legislatures and as such, women are still marginalized in government as well. They make up 16 percent of the cabinet, with five women out of thirty-one ministers in the administration formed in April 2014. In this light, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children, and Families' small budget (0.25 percent of the national budget) is insufficient. The passage of a parity law in Senegal in 2010 may not have resulted in parity, but it did help to elect a record number of women to parliament in July 2012. Aminata Touré, a woman, was appointed Prime Minister in September 2013, however the president stripped her of her duties in June 2014. Touré's thirty-two-member cabinet had five women, while the thirty-three-member government led by Mahammed Boun Abdallah Dionne in July 2014 included eight women. Several governmental organizations, notably the National Assembly Bureau (the office in charge of setting the assembly's discussions and administering its services), have failed to reach parity. There is still more work to be done to guarantee that Senegalese women achieve gender equity. Similarly, young make up 2–3% of parliament, a low level of engagement that has a detrimental influence on lawmakers' consideration of their goals and concerns.

A discussion of political security cannot be complete without discussing human rights and how the assurances of these rights ensures that people feel more politically involved and motivated. In the African context, a major reason why a lot of people feel political disenfranchised, which in turn leads to more agitation, is because their fundamental human rights to vote and be voted for is often trampled upon by the political class. According to the Commission on Human Security (2003), "human security is also

concerned with deprivation: from extreme impoverishment, pollution, ill health, illiteracy and other maladies....and encompasses the provision of the vital core of human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment". Our ability to interact with who we want and identify with whatever groups (if they are legal) is a fundamental right that greatly impacts our sense of fulfilment and identity.

Apart from right to political participation, other human rights like right to education, right to health and other basic human rights all play a significant role in ensuring lasting peace, if these rights are provided. In Uganda, over 260,000 University graduates are without jobs and a lot more are underemployed which has made them a ticking time bomb that will eventually go off if measures are not put in place to address the issue (EACSOE, 2022).

Based on the foregoing, the researchers want to answer the following question:

1. What roles does political security play in ensuring sustainable peace?

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This study made use of the pragmatism paradigm, as it is most suitable for this study because both qualitative and quantitative approaches will be needed to answer the research question. This study sought to understand the role of political security in ensuring sustainable peace in Uganda. And to properly understand and study this phenomenon, data on the level of political security in the communities of northern Uganda were studied and analyzed. To get a more holistic view of this phenomenon, it was also important that key informants that can provide relevant information on this issue were also interviewed.

Study population and sample size

The study population for this study included residents of the Acholi and Lango sub-regions of Northern Uganda and South Western Uganda sub-region of Western Uganda. The sample size frame was individuals living in these communities that are at least 18 years old. By being 18 years old, the residents would be aware and knowledgeable about the history of their communities and have a more vested interest in the peace within the same community.

According to the Minority right Group International (2018), the population of the Acholi sub-region in Northern Uganda is about 1.5 million and those of the Lango sub-region are almost a 2.1million people while the population of South Western Uganda sub-region is almost a 4.3million people. Therefore, the study population was approximately 7,900,000 individuals from Northern and South Western Uganda.

Using an online sample size calculator available on www.calculator.net and a confidence level of 95%, a margin of error of 5% population proportion of 47% - Population proportion was derived based on the statistical fact that people aged 18 and above represent 46.6% of the total population in Uganda (www.worldpopulationreview.com). Therefore, based on these parameters, and based on the population proportion, a sample size of 383 was arrived at. Therefore, the sample size for this study was 383.

Sampling techniques

This study made use of both purposive and stratified random sampling. For the quantitative data, stratified random sampling was used. In the case of this study, the population of the study was subdivided based on the districts. Therefore, in this study, three strata were identified. Once these sub-regions were identified and selected, the researcher then randomly distributed a predetermined number of questionnaires to each stratum identified in this study. Furthermore, to ensure that only relevant and qualified

candidates fill the questionnaire, the researcher made ensured that only people aged 18 and above, and only individuals that are culturally from these regions were allowed to complete the questionnaire. The reason for selecting this demographic of individuals is because they are more likely to have a vested interest in the security of the region than an outsider or very young adults. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to state their age and their tribe. If they did not meet the minimum requirement as stated above, then such a questionnaire was disqualified from the dataset.

Table 1: Computation of respondents for quantitative data

Category of Respondents	Target population	Sample size	Percentage
Acholi sub region	1,500,762	73	19.2
Lango sub region	2,061,694	101	26
South Western Uganda sub-region	4,272,405	209	54.8
Total	7,834,861	383	100

Source: Author (2021)

To collect qualitative data, purposive sampling was used. In this study, key informants such as community leaders, political leaders, farmers, climate change experts, security personnel, market leaders and health experts were consulted and interviewed to collect their professional and personal opinion on the issue being discussed and researched.

Table 2: Respondents for qualitative data

Category of Respondents	Region	Number Sampled	Sampling Technique
community leaders	Acholi sub region	3	Purposive Sampling
	Lango sub-region	3	
	South Western Uganda sub-region	3	
political leaders	Acholi sub region	2	Purposive Sampling
	Lango sub-region	2	

	South Western Uganda sub-region	2	
Youth leaders	Acholi sub region	2	Purposive Sampling
	Lango sub-region	2	
	South Western Uganda sub-region	2	
Total		21	

Source: Author (2022)

The participants above were purposively selected for the in-depth interviews because they could provide their professional and personal opinions (based on their unique experiences) on the issue being discussed and researched and were instrumental in ensuring that the study objectives were achieved. These individuals included community leaders, political leaders, youth leaders and other key stakeholders that contribute to or are impacted by the availability or lack, of human security. These individuals were selected because it was assumed that they would be able to provide much-needed and in-depth information on the subject matter.

In arriving at 21 participants, the researcher ensured that each study area was properly represented in each category. Also, with a total of 21, saturation was achieved and there was no need to include more individuals in the study.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Relationship between political security and sustainable peace in Northern Uganda.

To discuss the role of political security, it is imperative to first establish if there is a relationship between these two variables. To confirm if there is indeed a relationship between political security and sustainable peace, a Pearson correlation coefficient was carried out and the result is presented in the table below.

Table 3: Correlation between political security and sustainable peace

Correlations

		Sustainable Peace	Political Security
Sustainable Peace	Pearson Correlation	1	.683**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	383	383
Political Security	Pearson Correlation	.683**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	383	383
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The table above shows a positive correlation between political security and sustainable peace, $r(381) = .683$, $P < .001$. This indicates that the higher the level of political security, the more likely sustainable peace will be achieved.

The findings are supported by data collected from in-depth interviews conducted with key stakeholders. Respondents explained that when people feel like they are part of the process and feel included in the decision-making process and the selection process, then they tend to want to protect what they have and even protect their votes and decisions by ensuring that peace is not truncated. In particular, when asked what they thought about grassroots participation in politics and how it might affect peace in their region, a community leader from Acholi explained that:

One major issue we have had in this region and why I think the youths are a bit restless when it comes to politics at national or local level, is the fact that they do not feel involved or like part of the process. From my interactions with a lot of the youths here, their major concern is that they feel leaders are forced on them and their votes do not matter, nor do their opinions. Some have completely lost any hope in the process and have decided to stop voting and are seeking alternative, often violent, means of getting their voices heard. If things continue and the youths and people in this region are overlooked and ignored, I foresee a major issue coming up in the future. (Personal Communication, July 12, 2022).

This sentiment was shared by political leader from Acholi, participant 3, a political leader from one of the opposition parties had this to say;

...I can assure you that if the electoral process is not made more transparent and inclusive, peace will only remain a mirage. Look at the appointments are the national level, hardly will you find people from my community appointed into any sensible positions and those appointed are obviously bought and paid for by the powers in the center. This has to change otherwise the agitations will only continue. (Personal Communication, July 18, 2022).

Similarly, a community leader in Lango sub-region explained that:

Allowing and actively encouraging grassroots participation is the bedrock of any democratic society. People should be properly informed about the process and encouraged to participate. This participation should not be limited to just telling people to vote, but should also include creating a society where anyone can vote and be voted for. Elective positions should not be the exclusive right or a certain class of people or individuals from a certain region...so in my opinion, the lack of political participation of my people has played a role in fueling their distrust for government and might also lead to a breakdown of law and order especially in the next presidential elections. If it appears that people will be forced on us, I can assure the youths of today will not stand for that. (Personal Communication, July 14, 2022).

A leader from Southwestern Uganda, explained:

The truth is people think our region are politically favored, but the truth is that majority of us still feel excluded as only a small portion of the population are politically active and relevant. As at today, it appears that just having your kinsman in power is enough, but it is only a matter of time before the youths start thinking that they should also be part of the process and not just cheerleaders. There is still a need for the government to do more and involve the local communities in the political process. (Personal Communication, July 20, 2022).

A staff of an NGO that monitors the integrity of elections explained that;

Political security is all about ensuring that no one feels left out and that every single individual within a community is satisfied with the process of selection, election and appointments within the polity. The role of the community members goes beyond just voting, grassroots should also be

involved in the election process themselves. They should be encouraged to monitor the elections as they proceed to ensure that there is fairness and no rigging in the process. This participation should not only be encouraged by government, but the government should actively ensure grassroots participation by giving the people a more direct and important role in the electioneering process. If this is done, and people are satisfied that not only was the process transparent, and they were actively involved in ensuring the smooth running of the process, they will be less likely to be agitating for any change or heating up the polity since they are a part of the process. What leads to breakout of violence, or agitations is that fact the people do not feel like they are part of the process. (Personal Communication, July 12, 2022).

DISCUSSION

This study aimed at examining the influence of political security on sustainable peace in Western and Northern Uganda. The researcher wanted to find out if political security, in the form of grassroots participation, high level of democratization and protection against state regression, contributes to sustainable peace. To achieve this objective, the researcher made use of Pearson correlation coefficient to test for the relationship between the two variables. The result of the analysis showed that there is indeed a positive significant relationship between political security and sustainable peace. This indicates that the higher the level of political security, the more likely sustainable peace will be achieved.

The findings are supported by data collected from in-depth interviews conducted with key stakeholders. Respondents explained that when people feel like they are part of the process and feel included in the decision-making process and the selection process, then they tend to want to protect what they have and even protect their votes and decisions by ensuring peace is not truncated.

The findings support those by Kritz (2019) who explained in his thesis that constitution-making procedures that excluded key constituents frequently resulted in contentious constitutions that lacked legitimacy and failed to settle the country's primary conflicts. He explained that key constituents include the community members you want to serve and who you expect to abide by the laws and policies enacted by the government. This clearly shows that grassroot participation is a key component in ensuring sustainable peace especially in a multicultural and multireligious country like Uganda.

Another study that this finding lends credence to is that of Arjona (2017) who explained why the peace talks in Iran around 2005 ultimately failed. He explained that observers from all over the world have highlighted that the constitutional debates that took place in Iraq during the summer of 2005 were harmed by the United States' lack of participation of Sunni Arabs and participation in the negotiations. Since a major community was excluded from the political process, it was difficult to ensure sustainable and long-lasting peace.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the case of the political security, the study found out that grassroot participation, and high level of democratization impacts the sustainability of peace. In a nutshell, peace will remain a mirage if a segment of the population feels secluded and disenfranchised politically. The findings have indicated that people from Northern Uganda feel politically disenfranchised since 1986. This perhaps explains the incessant conflict in the region. Based on this, there is a need for the government of Uganda to set up a truth and reconciliation program with the main purpose of bringing all conflicting parties to a table in order to iron out their differences, find a middle ground. This reconciliation meeting should involve key stakeholders in government, religion and tribe/ethnic group.

Also, the government needs to encourage youth participation by making it easier for young adults to vie for major political office. The youth parliament is a good start, but does not completely address the issue of political inclusivity, therefore creating a political environment that ensures that the youths.

Further, in policy development and implementation, there is a need to involve the grassroots in the process so they do not feel like they are being targeted by policies that might not necessarily benefit them personally, but might benefit the country as a whole. Therefore, the recommendation is that when policies are being made, MPs representing disadvantaged communities like Acholi and Lango should ensure that local community members are included in the conversation and policy formulation and implementation stages because they are a key stakeholder in the successful implementation of such policies.

Finally, there is a need for the government to publicly denounce any form of political intimidation by security forces or political actors in the country. Failure to do so, and the people might feel like the government endorses and supports such attacks against them.

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