POLITICAL FACTORS AFFECTING SECURITY IN BIDIBIDI SETTLEMENT CAMP IN NORTH WESTERN UGANDA

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to explore political factors affecting security in Bidibidi Settlement Camp in North Western Uganda. The study adopted the cross-sectional and phenomenological research designs on a sample of 382. The data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire and an interview guide. The data was analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics and inferential analyses, and qualitatively through content analysis. The study found out that political factors had a positive and significant influence on security of refuges. It was concluded that political factors are linked to refugees' security. It is recommended that governments of host countries, humanitarian agencies and leaders of refuges should make effort to minimize political issues that threaten refuge security.

Keywords: *Political Factors, Security, Refugees, Bidibidi Settlement Camp*

INTRODUCTION

The major factor that drives refugees to flee is fear of attack leading to harm (Collinson, Darcy, Waddell & Schmidt, 2009). As refugees escape from their countries, they encounter many threats such gun shots and using of dangerous boats. Even in the camps where they settle, much of the time fears continue to dog them threatening their lives and dignity (Otieno, 2010). Refugees are frequently the first casualties of terrorism and absence of security (Murillo, 2009). Therefore, it is imperative to ensuring that physical safety of refugees is guaranteed. Therefore, it is imperative to examine the factors that affect their safety. This study analysed the factors that affect their security looking at socio-economic factors.

The significance of protecting the rights and making sure that refugees are safe is something that nations all around the world acknowledge. As an instance, according to international accords and national laws, such as the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (1948) and the American Convention on Human Rights (1969), every person has the right to seek and obtain refuge in the event that they are subjected to persecution (Worster, 2014).

Across Europe, every single member state of the European Union has accepted the Refugee Convention. According to Kaunert and Léonard (2012), Article 78 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) stipulates that the common asylum policy of the European Union must adhere to specific treaties, including the Refugee Convention and any other applicable treaties. It is the responsibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to report to the United Nations on the implementation of Article 35(2)(b) of the Refugee Convention. Additionally, the UNHCR is responsible for providing assistance

to EU institutions and Member States in order to guarantee that they meet their international legal commitments (Deschamp, 2008). Guild and Moreno-Lax (2013) state that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provides specific suggestions, legal opinions, and other contributions to the development of legislation and policy in the European Union (EU) in order to guarantee conformity with international refugee law. Within the framework of the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Bureau for Europe, which is headquartered in Brussels, plays a crucial role in providing advice on how the Refugee Convention should be applied.

More than 6.2 million people are considered to be refugees, with the majority of them residing in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is 29% of the total number of refugees worldwide. The nations of Ethiopia (736,100), Kenya (551,532), Chad (452,897), Uganda (1.4 million), and Cameroon (264,126) were the top five countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in terms of the number of refugees they were hosting in 2016. This information is cited by Addaney (2017) and Ahimbisibwe (2018). According to Lori and Boyle (2015), the Convention of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) from 1969 is the most important instrument in this area that addresses the protection of refugee rights. The Convention of the Organization of American States (OAU) ensures that refugees are granted the right to freedom of movement, housing, work, education, and legal assistance.

Coming to Uganda, since the early 1960s, the nation has had a "open door policy" for refugees since, following the founding of the OAU, African nations made a commitment to aiding their neighbours who were fleeing colonial dominance, oppression, and exploitation. The OAU Refugee Convention of 1969 also influenced Uganda's approach to accepting refugees (Ahimbisibwe, 2015). However, the first experience with refugees involved 7000 Polish refuges escaping the Second World War in 1942 that were 4000 refuges settled at Kojja in the Mukono district and 3,000 at Nyabyeya in the current district of Masindi (Office of the Prime Minister [OPM], 2016). As a result of turbulence caused by several independence struggles, including those in bordering Kenya, Zaire, Sudan, and Rwanda, there were soon a large number of refugees (Ahimbisibwe, 2015). According to Ahimbisibwe (2019), by the end of 2016, Uganda hosted 940,800 and was the largest host nation for refugees in Africa and the fifth largest in the world. The number of refugees reached over 1.4 million by January 2018. Most of them came from South Sudan's neighbours, including Burundi, Somalia, Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Political, social, and economic issues are the main sources of threats to the physical security of refugees (Minuto Snr, 2018). Regarding political aspects, refugees may be readily influenced due to their precarious situation. In some cases, local politicians mobilise nationals against refugees over land in attempt to evict them and deny them free movement which causes insecurity (Ahimbisibwe, 2017). Additionally, militarization and other forms of deception used by armed organisations to recruit new members raise the possibility of conflict if the local populace holds refugees responsible for the armed groups' infiltration (Fisk, 2019). Conflicts also break out in the camps between various ethnic groups and clans.

The Bidibidi settlement which covers 250 square kilometres with a quarter million people is the second largest refugee settlement in the world after the Rohingya camp in Bangladesh (Strochlic, 2019). The settlement is divided into five zones, each of which is further divided into clusters and individual settlements. The settlement's leadership follows the local governance (LC) model used in Uganda, which has local councils from higher levels of government to the lowest. The settlement councils are known as Refugee Welfare Council (RWC). The councils run from the village council (RWC1) followed by RWC2 and at each zone there is a RWC3 (Boswell, 2018). At each of the levels, the RWC is headed by a

chairperson. One of the biggest challenges is resolving disputes over resources like firewood between the host community and the refugee population. The everyday negotiations incite tensions, hostility, and feelings of insecurity. Refugees must negotiate daily access to the nearby area in order to collect biomass and firewood. A continual threat of attack, violence, and extortion exists. In the settlement, there are cases of insecurity caused by some refuges and interpersonal conflict which also threaten security. In June 2018 there was an armed confrontation between different refuge groups (Dawa, 2019). The above contextual evidence shows that there are insecurity challenges in Bidibidi settlement.

Statement of the Problem

Security is crucial for the welfare of refugees since it enables them to become independent rather than assuming an on-going need for care and upkeep, they are likely to get involved in development opportunities such as education, skills development trade, and agriculture (Ahimbisibwe, 2019). Still, safe camps make it simpler for refugees to return to their motherlands once peace has been established (Addaney, 2017). Recognising the importance of security for refugees, in conjunction with UNHCR, Uganda and its partners made efforts to promote security for refuges. For instance, councils (Refuge Welfare Council [RWC]) for refugees were created, refugees had greater freedom of movement and access to work (Hovil, 2018) and they enjoyed police protection in the camps (UNHCR, 2020). Despite this effort, insecurity in the refugee camp remained a challenge. There were frequent incidents of violence, assault, and extortion between refugees and members of the host communities. There were also cases of insecurity caused by some refuges and interpersonal conflicts and armed confrontation between different refuge groups (Dawa, 2019).

The most likely sources of conflict were political and socio-economic factors. For instance, local politicians mobilise nationals against refugees over resources (Ahimbisibwe, 2017), there was militarisation of refugee settlements for recruits leading armed groups' infiltration (Fisk, 2019) and ethnic, tribal and clans conflicts might result in insecurity (Kumssa et al., 2014). Power, gender relations (Freedman, 2016) and religious issues might also exacerbate insecurity (Kumssa et al., 2014). Also, conflict, violence, and murder are caused by competition for scarce resources like land, water, and other services, which compromises the safety of refugees (Ahimbisibwe, 2017). If this situation of refuge insecurity remained, the reputation of Uganda as a model country in treatment of refugees would be undermined. Therefore, to address the problem of refugee security, this study seeks to empirically explore factors which underpin the problem looking at socio-economic factors to suggest solutions.

Research Hypothesis

i.   Political factors have a significant influence on security of refuges in Bidibidi settlement camp in North Western Uganda.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The Human Security Theory, which was initially presented in the UNDP Human Development Report in 1994, will serve as the study's guiding principle (Tanaka, 2019). According to the idea of "human security," the safety of human lives should be the main goal of both domestic and foreign security strategies. The primary goal of security policy or the referent object is human life, which is the main idea (Fukuda-Parr & Messineo, 2012). The Human Security Theory states that human security is defence against long-term threats like poverty, disease, and tyranny. The theory states that human security also includes protection against sudden and damaging changes in daily routines (Baysoy, 2018). The core idea behind the Human Security Theory is that people are the primary referent object of security and that governments are unable to provide their requirements. According to the Human Security

Theory, national security should not come before the security of the people. People must be free from both desire and fear, according to the Human Security Theory (Trobbiani, 2013).

The theory holds that in order to achieve people's freedom from desire and freedom from fear, empowerment and protection are required. By using protection, people are shielded from risks. Making organisations, policies, and norms that carefully handle anxieties therefore requires a dedicated effort. When given the right tools, people can fulfil their potential and actively engage in the decision-making process. Since they complement one another, empowerment and protection are typically both required (Baysoy, 2018). According to Fukuda-Parr and Messineo (2012), Seven crucial aspects of human security are identified by the Human Security Theory: First, financial stability, which can be attained by employment, access to public resources and the environment, or dependable social safety nets. The second is food security that is the physical and financial availability to basic foods. The third concern is health security, which includes having access to private healthcare and preventative public health measures.

Fourth, there is environmental security that is protection from natural disasters and resource shortages caused on by environmental deterioration. The fifth category is personal security, which covers physical defence against armed conflict, human rights abuses, domestic violence, criminal activity, child abuse, and self-inflicted harm such drug abuse. The sixth is community security, which includes defence against prejudiced regional practices and interethnic violence. Political security also refers to the lack of official oppression and human rights breaches (Fukuda-Parr & Messineo, 2012). According to the Human Security Theory, there are seven aspects that have an impact on human security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, local, and political security. Therefore, this study done in a refugee settlement in Uganda investigated how these factors related to security.

Review of Related Literature

There are different scholars that investigated political factors affecting security in refugee camps. For instance, Ahimbisibwe (2017) investigated the challenges of the physical insecurity of Rwandan refugees in the South Western Ugandan camps of Nakivale and Oruchinga. Analysis revealed that local politics caused insecurity for refugees. This is because local politicians mobilise nationals against refugees over land. Local politicians mobilise local to evict refugees and deny them free movement which causes insecurity. Local politicians also engaged army personnel who threatened to kill and arrest migrants. Fisk (2019) highlighted implications for national and global refugee policies in a study that used data from Sub-Saharan Africa. The results indicated that communal strife was more common in areas where camps had been established to house refugees. The rates of communal conflict at the subnational level were much higher in the regions hosting camps generally as well as those hosting more refugees residing in camps. Communal conflicts are local disputes involving identity-based communities, such as ethnic, regional, religious, or livelihood groupings. In many cases, these conflicts "emerge over territorial disputes, local power disparities, resource access, and historical disagreements." Armed groups' militarization and other forms of manipulation in search of potential recruits and other refugee resources increase the risk of inter-communal conflict if the local population holds refugees accountable for the infiltration.

Using the Dadaab refugee camp in Garissa County in the North-Eastern part of Kenya, Kumssa, Williams, Jones, and Des Marais (2014) attempted to identify the human security concerns facing the refugees and explored the causes driving conflict between the members of the host community and the refugees. According to the survey, there was an influx of illegal weapons from nearby countries and refugees reported feeling uneasy around the national authorities. Conflict between refugees and locals in host communities is fuelled by

political power that cuts across borders. In the camps, disputes also break out between various tribes and ethnic groupings. Minority groups face discrimination, and the refugees faced the issue of cultural intolerance. Loescher and Milner conducted a study on the consequences of prolonged refugee situations on security in 2005. According to the investigation, insurgent movements and transnational terrorism occasionally flourish in refugee camps. As a result, extremist organizations frequently use the presence of refugees as a pretext to carry out operations that destabilize not just the host countries but also entire regions.

One major political factor influencing security in refugee camps is local politics, particularly in cases where local authorities view refugees as a threat to the distribution of resources, such as land. Ahimbisibwe (2017) examined the physical insecurity faced by Rwandan refugees in Nakivale and Oruchinga camps in Uganda. The study revealed that local political actors often played a role in exacerbating insecurity by mobilizing locals against refugees. This mobilization, driven by competition for land and resources, has led to cases where local politicians encourage the eviction of refugees and restrict their freedom of movement. As a result, refugees have experienced heightened insecurity due to threats from local politicians and their associates, including military personnel who have been involved in the persecution of refugees (Ahimbisibwe, 2017).

Moreover, national politics also plays a crucial role in determining the security conditions within refugee camps. In some cases, refugee populations are used as political pawns in broader national conflicts. Governments may view refugees as a destabilizing force, particularly if their presence is perceived as politically sensitive or if the refugees are affiliated with opposition movements in the refugees' countries of origin. This politicization of refugee populations can lead to restrictions on their movement, limited access to basic services, and increased military surveillance within the camps (Fisk, 2019).

In addition to local and national political factors, international relations also have an impact on refugee camp security. Refugee camps often exist as a result of international political agreements and are managed by international organizations, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). However, the security and resources allocated to these camps can be influenced by the political relations between host countries and donor countries. For instance, a lack of international support or strained relations between host countries and donor nations may result in inadequate funding and resources for refugee camps, leading to deteriorating security conditions (Milner & Loescher, 2020).

Finally, the political instability in the refugees' countries of origin also indirectly affects the security of camps. If the country of origin experiences ongoing conflict, the chances of militarized groups infiltrating refugee camps increase, posing a threat to both refugees and the host country (Jacobsen, 2019). In some cases, rebel groups use refugee camps as recruiting grounds, further destabilizing the camp's security environment.

O'Driscoll (2017) claims that rather than seeing migrants as victims of insecurity, there is an increase in xenophobia toward them. Refugees are mistreated and intimidated by government officials in the camps. Raleigh (2010) conducted research on violence, climate change, and political marginalization in the Sahel states of Africa. The study revealed that one of the security challenges of refuges is communal conflict. Accordingly, those who lived in regions with little government engagement used community conflict as a tool to control access to vital resources for their livelihood, such land and water, and to amass money. Additionally, the documented distance in kilometres between the capital region and other regions causes inter-communal conflict since locations farther from the government's headquarters in the capital lack territorial control or state capacity.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework, which can be seen in figure 1, demonstrates that political are related to security in terms of economic security, food security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. For example, the framework demonstrates that local politics, community disputes, rebel movements, xenophobia, and limited government presence are all examples of political elements.

Independent Variable   **Dependent Variable**

Political factors	**Security**
• Local politics • Communal conflicts • Rebel movements • Xenophobia • Limited government presence	• Economic security • Food security • Environmental security • Personal security • Community security • Political security
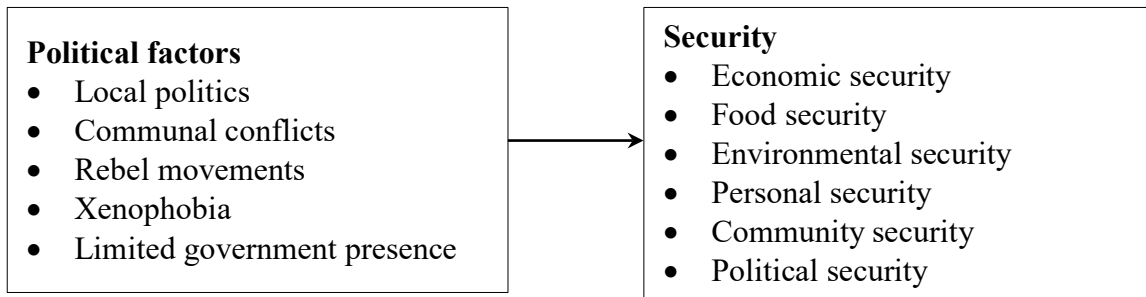
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Developed on ideas adopted from Fukuda-Parr and Messineo (2012).

METHODOLOGY

The study used phenomenological and cross-sectional research designs. A study using a cross-sectional research design looks at how the entire population is doing in relation to the research problem (Mason, Sabariego, Thng & Weber, 2019).

Refugees numbering 88,761 people that are 53,523 males and 35, 238 females above the age of 18 years in Bidibidi Refugee Camp form the population of the study (UNHCR, 2022). These have been selected because they are mature adults that can give informed consent to the researcher which is a necessary ethical requirement for data collection. Besides, the Police Officer in Charge (OC), Refugee Camp Commander, and four UNHCR Senior Staff in Charge of the Camp were also targeted. Therefore, the total population of the study was 88,767.

The people that made up the sample size that provided quantitative data were382 refugees. This sample size was established from the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table. From each category of the population, the sample size was determined using proportionate sampling. The Police Officer in Charge (OC), Refugee Camp Commander, and four UNHCR Senior Staff in Charge of the Camp were selected using purposive sampling.

The dominant method for collecting data was the questionnaire survey. Interview data was also collected from the Police Officer in Charge (OC), Refugee Camp Commander, and four UNHCR Senior Staff in Charge of the Camp.

After the data that was obtained was loaded into the computer, it was cleaned up using SPSS (24.0), frequency tables were constructed to edit the data, the data was converted to generate indices, and any abnormalities in the data were checked for significance. The data were then subjected to analysis. In the process of analyzing quantitative data, the response rate was reported, descriptive analysis was performed, and inferential analysis was performed in order to test hypothesis. Qualitative data was analysed through content analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

The researcher aimed to collect data from 388 participants, comprising 382 refugees for the questionnaire survey and six key informants for in-depth interviews, including the Police Officer in Charge (OC), Refugee Camp Commander, and four UNHCR Senior Staff in Charge of the Camp. Although 348 questionnaire responses and all six interviews were successfully collected, data from 34 participants was excluded due to missing information. Consequently, the final response rate for the questionnaire survey was 91.1%, exceeding the

threshold of 50% considered sufficient for humanity studies (Pielsticker & Hiebl, 2020). This high response rate lends credibility to the findings, ensuring a representative sample of the refugee population.

Descriptive Analysis

This section presents descriptive results on refugees' security and political and economic factors. The results are in terms of frequencies, percentages and means. The results follow for each variable.

Security of refugees

Security of refuges in this study is the dependent variable. Refugee security was studied using 12 questions. The results were as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Results for Security of Refugees

Security of Refugees	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean
The security situation is the camp is good	3	21	6	258	60	4.01
	0.9%	6.0%	1.7%	74.1%	17.2%	
The camp is free from violence incidents	63	210	00	66	66	2.28
	18.1%	60.3%	00	19.0%	2.6%	
There is rule of law in the camp	35	120	00	121	72	3.22
	10.1%	34.5%		34.8%	20.7%	
In the camp there is freedom of movement from one place to another	24	45	00	228	51	3.68
	6.9%	12.9%	00	65.5%	14.7%	
I feel safe entering and leaving the camp	36	66	15	180	51	3.41
	10.3%	19.0%	4.3%	51.7%	14.7%	
In this refugee camp I feel safe all the time	21	144	00	156	27	3.07
	6.0%	41.4%	00	44.8%	7.8%	
I am free to carry out business activities	12	54	39	147	96	3.75
	3.4%	15.5%	11.2%	42.2%	27.6%	
I easily access food without threats to my life	36	48	00	213	51	3.56
	10.3%	13.8%	00	61.2%	14.7%	
The environment in the camp enables health standards of living	18	33	00	282	15	3.79
	5.2%	9.5%	00	81.0%	4.3%	
Community members are safe from threats to life in the camp	27	57	00	207	57	3.60
	7.8%	16.4%	00	59.5%	16.4%	
I can freely participate in the political governance of the camp	81	108	00	147	12	2.72
	23.3%	31.0%	00	42.2%	3.4%	
In the camp there are no conflicts extending from our motherland	48	93	00	177	30	3.14
	13.8%	26.7%	00	50.9%	8.6%	

The results in Table 1 indicate that the majority of respondents (91.3%) perceived the security situation in the camp as good, with only 6.9% disagreeing and 1.7% unsure. The high mean score of 4.01, closely aligned with the "agreed" category (code 4), further reinforces this positive assessment. However, when asked if the camp was free from violence incidents, the majority (78.4%) disagreed, while 21.6% agreed. The low mean score of 2.28 indicates that refugees generally believed the camp was not free from violence incidents. Regarding the presence of rule of law in the camp, a slight majority (55.5%) of respondents agreed, while 44.6% disagreed. The average mean score of 3.22 suggests that, on balance, respondents believe there is a fair degree of rule of law in the camp.

In contrast to the above, a significant majority (80.2%) agreed that there is freedom of movement within the camp, with only 19.8% disagreeing. The high mean score of 3.68 reinforces this perception, indicating that respondents generally enjoy unrestricted movement within the camp. Regarding their sense of safety when entering and leaving the camp, a

majority (66.4%) of refugees agreed they felt safe, while 29.3% disagreed and 4.3% were neutral. The average mean score of 3.41 indicates that, overall, refugees feel fairly safe when moving in and out of the camp. However, when asked if they felt safe in the camp at all times, opinions were more divided, with 52.6% agreeing and 47.4% disagreeing. The average mean score of 3.07, corresponding to "fairly agreed", suggests that refugees generally felt safe in the camp, but with some reservations.

Refugees reported a high level of freedom to engage in business activities, with 69.8% agreeing and 18.9% disagreeing, while 11.2% were undecided. The high mean score of 3.75 reinforces this perception, indicating that refugees generally enjoy the freedom to conduct business activities. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority (75.9%) reported easy access to food without threats to their lives, with only 24.1% disagreeing. The mean score of 3.56 suggested a strong consensus that refugees could access food safely. The majority of respondents (85.3%) agreed that the environment in the camp supports healthy standards of living, with only 14.7% disagreeing. The high mean score of 3.79 reinforces this positive assessment, indicating that the camp's environment is conducive to healthy living. In addition, a significant majority (75.9%) felt safe from threats to life in the camp, with 24.2% disagreeing. The high mean score of 3.60 suggests a strong sense of safety among community members, indicating that they feel protected from harm.

Refugees' participation in political governance within the camp was a point of contention, with a slight majority (54.3%) disagreeing that they could freely participate, while 45.6% agreed. The average mean score of 2.72 suggests that, on balance, refugees feel somewhat restricted in their ability to engage in political governance. In contrast, a majority (59.5%) of respondents agreed that the camp was relatively free from conflicts originating from their home countries, with 40.5% disagreeing. The average mean score of 3.14 indicates that respondents generally perceive a limited presence of such conflicts in the camp.

To ascertain the security situation in the refugee camp, the respondents including the Police Officer in Charge (OC), Refugee Camp Commander, and four UNHCR Senior Staff in Charge of the Camp were asked to tell how insecurity in the refugee camp was. In their responses, several related responses were given. For example the OC police said;

> ''The insecurity challenges in the refugee camp result from high unemployment and poverty rates among refugees which lead to desperation, causing some individuals to engage in criminal activities like theft and burglary. This challenge remains because of limited policing and security presence in the camp due to limited police personnel. Hence, refugees' personal belongings, food, and livelihoods are often stolen, further exacerbating vulnerability. Other incidents include domestic violence, tribal conflicts, fights because of alcoholism and sex abuse including cases of rape and adultery.''

In relation to the above, the refugee camp commander revealed that;

> ''Common insecurity challenges are theft, house breaking, domestic violence, intertribal conflicts, fights and rape among others. Some of these challenges result from idleness and poverty which have resulted in substance abuse. Alcohol and drug abuse are prevalent among refugees, particularly youth. Substance abuse contributes to security issues like violence and theft. The problem is exacerbated by issues like limited access to counseling and rehabilitation.''

Further, one UNHCR Senior Staff like all the others stated;

> ''Common cases reported attacks on women by men including rape, defilement, and domestic violence. There are also cases of theft including housebreaks, waylaying and in some few cases robbery. Culture and lack fear of reprisal

increase the security challenge because the victims sometimes fear to report the cases. The challenge is also exacerbated limited transparency by some of the people responsible for their security and inadequate feedback mechanisms and response to reported cases."

The responses above suggest that the insecurity challenges in the refugee camp are the common ones that affect most rural communities including in none refugee situations. This suggests that as reported in the descriptive statistics, the security of the refugees was fair.

To find out how the security of the refugees was maintained, the interviewees were asked to tell how security is maintained in the refugee camp in the camp. Several related responses were given but the unique ones follow below. For example, the OC said;

"The Ugandan Police and Military play a critical role in maintaining law and order in Bidibidi refugee camp. Personnel have been deployed to patrol the camp and regular patrols and monitoring help to deter criminal activity and ensure a safe environment for refugees. The Police and Military also collaborate with camp authorities and humanitarian organizations, and share intelligence to enhance security. Whenever incidents are reported, there is effort to respond quickly to security incidents arrest the situation although sometimes because of limited personal there are delays. Remember, this camp is extremely big."

In the interview with Camp Commander revealed;

"Refugee-led security groups are a vital component of security in Bidibidi refugee camp. These community-based initiatives patrol the camp, reporting security concerns and mediating conflicts. They promote community policing, working closely with camp authorities and humanitarian organizations to address security concerns. In addition, local councils of the refugees play a vital role in the refugee camps. Local councils also play a key role in conflict resolution, mediating disputes and promoting peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities. They foster community engagement, encouraging refugees and hosts to work together to build stronger, more resilient communities. By working with humanitarian organizations and government agencies, the local councils help ensure a coordinated response to issues, settle minor cases and create harmony."

In the interview with the a UNHCR Senior Staff he said;

"We work with security forces that are the police and the army and refugee committees to address security challenges. In all these effort, UNHCR is a key player. We provide funding and resources for camp security, support the deployment of security personnel and infrastructure development. UNHCR also supports refugee registration and documentation, helping to identify and track refugees, and reducing the risk of insecurity. We also deploy UNHCR security personnel to the camp, who work closely with other agencies and camp authorities to address security concerns. UNHCR also collaborates with other agencies to address security concerns, ensuring a coordinated approach to security."

The responses above reveal that the security of refugees in Bidibidi refugee camp is maintained through a collaborative effort between various stakeholders, including the Ugandan Police and Military, refugee-led security groups, local councils, and humanitarian organizations like UNHCR. These entities work together to ensure patrol of the camp, respond to security incidents, mediate conflicts, and promote community policing. Tin addition, they share intelligence, resources, and expertise to address security challenges and ensure a safe environment for refugees. While there may be delays in responding to incidents

due to limited personnel, the collective effort helps to deter criminal activity, resolve conflicts, and foster a sense of community among refugees and host communities. Ultimately, the multi-faceted approach to security in Bidibidi refugee camp helps to protect the well-being and dignity of refugees. This why consistent with the descriptive statistics results, the security of the refugees in the camp can be described as being fair.

Political Factors

Political factors in this study were the first independent variable. Political factors were studied using nine questions. The results were as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Results for Political factors in Refugee Camps

Political Factors	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean
Local politics from our mother play in camp	3 0.9%	12 3.4%	00 00	222 63.8%	111 31.9%	4.22
The local politicians have united with their people against refugees	18 5.2%	33 9.5%	00 00	252 72.4%	45 12.9%	3.78
The army officers influenced by local politicians threaten refugees in the camp	116 33.3%	175 50.3%	00 00	51 14.7%	6 1.7%	1.04
There are conflicts with the locals	27 7.8%	21 6.0%	00 00	264 75.9%	36 10.3%	3.75
There are political conflicts between refugees	33 9.5	48 13.8	00 00	237 68.1	30 8.6	3.53
Ethnic politics play in the refugee camp	9 2.6	48 13.8	00 00	285 81.9	6 1.7	3.66
There armed elements in the refugee camp	17 4.9	28 8.0	00 00	260 74.7	43 12.4	3.82
There are rebel elements in the camp	4 1.1	9 2.6	00 00	309 88.8	26 7.5	3.99
The locals dislike refugees because of being foreigners	15 4.3	63 18.1	24 6.9	237 68.1	9 2.6	3.47

The results in Table 2 showed that an overwhelming majority (95.7%) of respondents agreed that local politics from their home countries influenced the camp, with only 4.3% disagreeing. The high mean score of 4.22, closely aligned with the "agreed" category, reinforces this finding. Furthermore, a significant majority (85.3%) believed that local politicians formed alliances with their constituents against refugees, while 14.7% disagreed. The high mean score of 3.78 supports this perception, indicating a strong consensus that local politicians united against refugees. A majority of refugees (83.6%) disagreed that army officers, influenced by local politicians, threatened them in the camp while 16.4% agreed, resulting in a low mean score of 1.04, indicating that such threats were rare.

Contrary to the above, a significant majority (86.2%) of refugees reported experiencing conflicts with locals, with 13.8% disagreeing, yielding a high mean score of 3.75, which suggests a strong consensus about the presence of these conflicts. A significant majority of refugees (76.7%) reported experiencing political conflicts among themselves, with 23.3% disagreeing, resulting in a high mean score of 3.53, which confirms the presence of political tensions within the refugee community. Furthermore, an even larger majority (83.6%) agreed that ethnic politics played a role in the camp, while 16.4% disagreed, yielding a high mean score of 3.66, which strongly suggests that ethnic politics were a significant factor in the camp's dynamics.

A majority of refugees (79.1%) confirmed the presence of armed elements in the camp, with 12.9% disagreeing, resulting in a high mean score of 3.82. Moreover, an overwhelming

majority (96.3%) agreed that rebel elements were present in the camp, with only 3.7% disagreeing, yielding a high mean score of 3.99. Additionally, most refugees (70.7%) believed that locals disliked them because they were foreigners, while 22.5% disagreed and 6.9% were unsure, resulting in an average mean of 3.47, indicating a moderate level of hostility towards refugees based on their foreign status. To provide the general understanding of the refugees' experiences with political factors, an average index was calculated based for the nine items measuring the construct.

The interviewees were questioned about the local politics, community disputes, and rebel activities that were taking place inside the refugee camp in order to determine the extent to which political considerations influenced refugee security. Several replies were provided in response to the issue of how the lives of refugees were influenced by the politics of the local community. Take, for example, what the Orange County Police Department said:

> "Local politics create tensions between refugees and host communities, leading to conflicts and social unrest. This is especially because of the instigation of local politicians including Member of Parliaments who seek to gaining political capital by portraying themselves to be championing the interests of the locals. This results in competition for resources negatively impacting social cohesion and community relationships."

In relation to the above, the Refugee Camp Commander indicated;

> "An issue that has been a pain in managing of refugee issues has been land disputes in involving the locals supported by the politicians against the refugees. There have been overlapping land claims, disagreements over land allocation, and boundary disputes leading to conflicts. The locals backed by the politicians have been conflicting with the refugees claiming that the refugees encroach on their land."

Relatedly, one of the UNHCR Senior Staff in Charge of the Camp said;

> "There are power struggles between local leaders and refugee leaders in Bidibidi refugee settlement because of disagreements over representation on committees, access to resources, competing priorities, and conflicting opinions on management and distribution of resources. The issue is exacerbated by power imbalances, cultural and language barriers, and differing desires for control and autonomy. The locals with the support of the local politicians oppose integration because they feel marginalised because they claim that refugees are better facilitated hence should not encroach on the little of the communities."

The responses above suggest that local politics have significantly impacted the security of refugees in Bidibidi refugee settlement, leading to tensions, conflicts, and social unrest. The manipulation of local politicians seeking political gain has created competition for resources, exacerbated land disputes, and fuelled power struggles between local and refugee leaders. These challenges have resulted in overlapping land claims, boundary disputes, and conflicting opinions on resource management, ultimately affecting social cohesion, community relationships, and the overall well-being of refugees. The opposition to integration from local leaders and politicians, who feel marginalized and claim that refugees receive better support, has further complicated the situation.

With respect to the state of communal conflicts in the refugee camp, the interviewees gave some related responses. For instance, the OC police said;

> "There are some ethnic and tribal conflicts which occur because of different backgrounds that bring pre-existing animosities, cultural differences, and historical grievances amongst them. To this adds competition for limited

resources, and stereotyping among refugee communities. These are visible among refugees from different ethnic groups."

Consistent with the above, the Refugee Camp Commander stated;

"Some of these refuges come with unresolved historical conflicts from their home countries. Ethnic divisions resurface reviving old rivalries and tensions quickly escalating into clashes and violence between groups."

Relatedly, one the UNHCR Senior Staff in Charge of the Camp said;

"There is a challenge of ethnic groups feeling underrepresented and marginalized in camp decision-making processes. This leads to conflicts because they perceive that their needs and concerns are being ignored. This leads to feelings of frustration, resentment, and powerlessness, causing groups to become more entrenched in their positions, and leading to increased tensions and conflicts."

The responses above shows that communal conflicts in the refugee camp are a significant concern, driven by a combination of factors including pre-existing ethnic and tribal animosities, cultural differences, historical grievances, competition for limited resources, and stereotyping. These conflicts are further propagated by unresolved historical conflicts brought from refugees' home countries, leading to the resurgence of old rivalries and tensions, and escalating into clashes and violence. Moreover, the feeling of underrepresentation and marginalization in camp decision-making processes among certain ethnic groups contributes to the conflicts, as they perceive their needs and concerns are being ignored, leading to frustration, resentment, and powerlessness.

Concerning the challenge of rebel movements in the refugee camp, the OC police remarked;

"There some armed elements that have infiltrated the refugee camp from Sudan on both the government and rebel side, these cause tension amongst the refugees because there are have some cases of forced recruitment, abduction, and violence against refugees."

Relatedly, the Refugee Camp Commander stated;

"There is the challenge of presence of spies and agents from the refuges country of origin both on the side of government and its opponents which has a destabilizing impact because refugees feel intimidated. This has disrupted community dynamics, and created an atmosphere of fear and mistrust. This compromises refugee protection, confidentiality, and camp security. This has led to a toxic situation because of erosion of trust in the camp."

Further, the UNHCR Senior Staff in Charge of the Camp said;

"The existence of rebels in the camp is a reality and creates fear and mistrust among refugees. The rebels' presence of rebels leads to a pervasive sense of insecurity, making it difficult for refugees to feel safe and protected."

The responses above reveal that there were rebel groups in the refuge groups and the presence of rebel movements in refugee camps poses a significant threat to the safety, security, and well-being of refugees. The infiltration of armed elements is connected with abduction, and violence. The presence of spies and agents causes instability in the camp, disrupt community dynamics and erodes trust. This toxic situation compromises refugee protection, confidentiality, and camp security, making it challenging for refugees to feel safe and protected.

Overall, the views above show that political factors including local politics, communal conflicts in the refugee camp and rebel movements in the refugee camp affect the security of

the refuges. This finding consistent with the descriptive statistics results which revealed that political factors related to refuge security were at a high level.

Correlation of Security of Refuges and Political factors

The correlation results helped to show the relationship between refugees' vulnerability to insecurity and political factors.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix for Security of refuges and Political factors

		Refugee Security	Political Factors
Refugee Security	Person correlation	1	0.508**
	Sig(2-tailed)		0.000
Political Factors	Person correlation	0.508**	1
	Sig(2-tailed)	0.000	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results suggest that political (r = 0.508, p = 0.000 < 0.05) had positive and significant relationship with security of refuges. This means that the hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

The primary purpose of the research was to determine whether or not political issues had a substantial impact on the safety of refugees living in the Bidibidi Settlement Camp, which is located in the northwestern region of Uganda. Therefore, the hypothesis was founded on the idea that political forces have a considerable impact on the safety of refuges. Based on the results of the hypothesis test, it was determined that political variables had a substantial and beneficial impact on the safety of refuges. This conclusion was in line with the results of other researchers, such as Ahimbisibwe (2017), who indicated that refugees experienced insecurity as a result of local politics. As a result, local leaders rallied citizens against immigrants in order to secure land. The local officials organized the locals to expel the migrants and prevent them from moving freely, which resulted in an atmosphere of insecurity. Local officials also engaged army officers who threatened to murder and arrest migrants. This was done in addition to the previous point. According to Fisk (2019), political confrontations were more prevalent in regions where camps had been constructed to shelter refugees. This is related to the previous point. Consequently, the rates of political disputes at the subnational level were much higher in areas that hosted camps in general, as well as in regions that hosted a greater number of refugees who were temporarily dwelling in camps. As a result, the militarization of armed groups and other types of manipulation in pursuit of prospective recruits and other refugee resources raise the possibility of intercommunal violence. This is because the local community would be held liable for the infiltration of refugees.

Kumssa et al. (2014) found that political power that transcends national boundaries was the driving force behind disputes that arose between refugees and locals in host communities. This conclusion is in line with the findings of the research. Consequently, disagreements arise between different ethnic groups and tribes inside the camps where they are established. In a similar vein, Loescher and Milner (2005) found that refugee camps sometimes served as fertile ground for the growth of insurgency groups and international terrorist organizations respectively. It would seem that extremist organizations regularly utilize the presence of refugees as a pretext to carry out activities that destabilize not just the nations that are hosting them but also whole regions. As a continuation of this line of reasoning, O'Driscoll (2017) observed that government personnel in the camps abused migrants and bullied them.

Furthermore, in accordance with the findings of the study, Raleigh (2010) disclosed that the security challenges faced by refugees included communal conflict. In regions where the government is not actively involved, there are politicians who use community conflict as a tool to control access to essential resources for their livelihood, such as land and water, and to amass money. In general, it is possible to assert that political issues have an impact on the

safety of refugees, which is in line with the results of previous researchers. The fact that these results are consistent across a variety of research highlights the extent to which political issues have a substantial influence on the safety of refugees. This underscores the need of addressing the political aspects of refugee security, with the goal of ensuring that refugee camps are not used for the purpose of gaining political advantage or serving as breeding grounds for internal strife.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

Political factors are linked to refugees' security. Local politics from refugees' home countries often persist in the camp leading to conflicts and tensions. In addition, local politicians may mobilize their constituents against refugees, exacerbating inter-group conflicts. Ethnic politics also play a role, with armed elements and rebel groups present in the camp, further destabilizing the environment. Moreover, the fact that refugees are perceived as foreigners by the local population contributes to animosity and hostility. These political factors intersect and compound, creating a complex and challenging security environment for refugees.

Recommendation

Governments of host countries, humanitarian agencies and leaders of refuges should make effort to minimize political issues that threaten refuge security. This should involve mitigate the impact of local politics from their home countries on camp dynamics through unity promoting programmes. Local politicians must be engaged to discourage mobilization against refugees and promote inter-group understanding. In addition, measures should be taken to address the presence of armed elements and rebel groups, and to promote social cohesion and acceptance among the local population.

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