

Acholi Manyen made us Fight': Understanding the Metaphor in the Former Lord's Resistance Army Female Fighters' Battle Spaces

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Abstract

Drawing on from literature on women's agency in wars and case studying the various battlespaces occupied by the former Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) female fighters, I seek to argue that the former LRA female fighters' role in the war was unthinkable without the non-utilitarian attitudinal-psychovalue motivation construct of Acholi manyen (New Acholi). Therefore, the repertoire of violence participated in by the former LRA female fighters, was constructed around the Acholi manyen, making it pervasive in the LRA war discourse and system. In a sense, I try to validate the point that the stage of the political in the LRA rebellion was majorly the reconstruction of Acholi many through re-Acholicisation. This reconfiguration and imagining, was to reconstitute the political, economic and social landscape of Acholi. A transition from the 'outside'-the bush (a metaphor for old Acholi, Acholi B) that was ambiguously inhabited, to the 'inside'-a restructured and re-spatialised continuum. A new 'Jerusalem' (as Acholi manyen was alternatively referred), as placeholder of the normal (Prugl, 2003). Second, by typifying the former LRA female fighter status, I connect to the broader literature on female fighter status (Coulter, 2008) and literature on the motivation of the female fighters.

Keywords: LRA Female Fighters; Acholi; Manyen; Battle Spaces