

## UNIT 3 MODULE 2 - Report

### Conflicts over land? Returnees and Stayers - A Methodological Reflection by Ulrike Schultz

Wrong assumptions in the debate:

- Access to land is one of the major challenges of returnees, especially in rural areas
- As people return to places of origin, disputes over land and other property are to intensify
- Returnees return to one place
- Need of government or donor intervention – allocation of land/land reform from above

In this binary division of returnees and stayers, a gender and intersectional analysis is missing

Rigid categorizations of people: host, refugees etc. is wrong

Ethnic belonging in South Sudan is very important – it is a much ethnicized society

If returnees get land, one year later they have to leave the land??

A lot of community land is transformed into urban land, especially the land close to Juba.

One example is Gudele. It is a new settlement near Juba. People bought plots of land. The infrastructure is bad, Security problems, contested land rights.

The second example is Rajaf. Although it is very close to Juba, it was not transformed into urban land. The land owning community had to stay in camps during the civil war. So returnees are not a real issue. The real issue here is how to cultivate the land.

At the same time, government tries to sell as much land as possible to investor.

Intersectional analysis: categories of belonging in Juba

The binaries – people say, when we were suffering, you were in Khartoum

So:

- Returnees and stayers (not for the ones who were in the camps in Uganda)
- Pastoralists and agriculturalists
- Between the different ethnic groups
- Indigenous and “non-indigenous” people
- Gender (returnees might be in “mixed-marriages” – so then it’s difficult for them to claim their rights)
- Age
- Class (Juba land goes for fortunes – people become very rich, whereas those who own land far from Juba have nothing. In fact, if the land is far, they can’t even access it due to lacking infrastructure)

= Composed categories are relevant

examples:

- A female Bari returnee from Khartoum
- A male Bari returnee from a camp in Uganda

They are perceived and treated differently.

Bari people tend to emphasize their being indigenous – “Us indigenous stay, the others must go”

So not only belonging matters, but a whole set of components.

### **Conflict Over Land and Forest Resources: State and Refugees by Samuel Agblorti.**

Dr. Agblorti began by stating by giving us some statistics on refugees. He stated that there are 34 000 displaced people per day and refugees form 50% of displaced people since the end of the World War II. Which became an issue of contention during the questioning time.

He went further to solicit the views of participants on the definition of who a refugee is. After listing to the various views of participants, summed it up by stating that, refugees are people who are not living in their countries of origin due to conflicts perpetuated by the states. He also added that even though it is the state that has the responsibility of providing protection for the people but the state can protect such people and they have to leave the country and seek protection in another country.

The 1951 Refugee Convention vs. the 1969 OAU declaration – different definitions

The 1969 OAU declaration modified the definition of refugee to take out the Eurocentric aspects of the 1951 Refugee Convention cater for the peculiar situations of refugees in Africa.

The various sub-regional bodies have also re-define the definition of refugees to suit their circumstances.

### **Refugee Settlements: why Camps?**

He gave out some reasons why refugees have to be put in camps. These included:

- It is not everyone who has the resources to self-settle when the need arises to move out of the country.
- States camp refugees for security reasons so they can monitor them.
- Camps will make refugees visible in order to attract the attention of donors.
- Camping aids easy return of refugees.

- Refugees are often put in rural areas to attract the support of international communities.
  - For easy management of refugees
- Key Actors in Refugee Management**
- The state which provides land for refugees and create antagonism
  - The refugees who create conflict with natives by their activities.
  - The host population who are burdened with hosting refugees
  - Collaborators. Thus, agencies like local NGOs that support them.

### **How Do Refugees Come into the Land Question?**

- Misuse of land by refugees who try to earn a living notoriously. The coconut and cassava cases.

### **Land conflict Cycle in refugee camps**

From the state to refugees then to thee people

We were also made to understand that conflict between refugees and host communities is not because of land issues but the threat on the economic interest of the host people. There is always peace when there is mutual benefits. The Charcoal case.

The framework on peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities.

### **Return, integration, and sense of belonging among skilled Ghanaian Returnees by Kwaku Arhin-Sam**

Kweku first sought the views of participants' on conflict. After harvesting people's ideas on conflict, he then dwelled on Wehrmann, 2005 to elaborate on the definition of conflict. Some included:

- Boundary conflicts which is linked to inheritance
- Ownership Conflict due to legal
- Ownership conflict linked

### **Returnees and Land Conflict**

They are involve in land conflict because they may:

- Have inherited family property
- Be protectors of family land due to their social status and capital

- Private owners
- Intermediaries for friends and investors

## **Cases**

### **Akwesi's Case**

He has to fight encroachers on his land because he was a returnee and should have resources.

### **Land Guards-Types**

- Community Land guards
- Amateur Land guards
- Traditional authority land guards
- Professional land guard

### **Akua's Case with Land Guards**

Employing land guards to protect her land which often done by men

In conclusion. Land conflict is not unique to return migrants but for returnees, there is emotional attachment and a sense of belonging in owning land back home. This satisfies the sense of belonging to one's country as a return migrant.

### **Debate after Presentations:**

- Is it possible to think outside of the fixed categories of UNHCR statistics?
- Can you push the concept of belonging? What does belonging mean for returnees? How is it possible to create interaction between returnees and non-migrants?
- Interaction instead of integration
- Lots of similarities between returnees in Ghana and in Nigeria – often returnees in Nigeria buy land and Stayers cannot compete because they don't have the resources as e.g. returnees from the UK
- Amina proposed a book titled "How to lie with statistics?" – about data manipulation

**Report by Theophilus K. Abutima and Sara Dehkordi**