

Fathering and Substance Use in Northern Uganda:  
An Ethnographic Study

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**Dedication**

To my dearest friend Emily – we have walked together through the most painful times of our lives and the most joyful times – through it all, I have quite enjoyed the company. Thank you for being my partner in this journey.

## **Abstract**

Parents are the most proximal influence in children's lives and parenting practices can moderate the relationship between risk-laden contexts and child outcomes. The present study is part of a broader project supporting parents in Northern Uganda and adds to the small but growing literature focused on the impact of fathers in children's lives. In this study, I utilized ethnographic in-depth interviews with 19 fathers, focus groups, informal conversations with community members, and field observations to learn about the roles of fathers in Northern Uganda and the perceived impact of alcohol use on those roles and their relationships. Findings that emerged from the data show that fathers have three primary roles: to provide for their children, to educate their children, and to provide a stable and peaceful home. Each of these roles is seen as being negatively impacted by "over-drinking." These roles are all future oriented and occur within broader systems including partner relationships, extended family, and a societal context characterized in part by a defined social hierarchy, recovery from war, and a developing economy. Findings provide directions for future research with fathers and will support this research team's inclusion of fathers in future parent education programs.

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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

### **Chapter Overview**

In this chapter I provide relevant project, contextual, and historical background content that informed and influenced this study. This chapter will begin with a brief study overview to provide the reader insight into the relevance of the subsequent background information. I then provide a brief history of Northern Uganda, ending with the most recent conflict and the current context. I discuss previous research conducted by our workgroup and briefly describe my previous experiences in Northern Uganda. This chapter will culminate in an explication of the study purpose and research questions.

### **Study Overview**

In this study I build on previous research conducted by members of our larger international workgroup, victim's voice (*vivo*; [vivo.org](http://vivo.org)) in Northern Uganda. The Acholi people who inhabit most of northwest Uganda have been subjected to decades of brutal violence. Although the most recent conflict largely ended in 2006, the economic, social, and psychological impact remains. While the Acholi people are clearly survivors and demonstrate resilience, external support has been welcomed. At every juncture, the support and research conducted by this workgroup has been responsive to the requests of the community in Northern Uganda and we have been cognizant of the additional complexities and ethical dilemmas inherent in cross-cultural research.

Building on previous family-oriented research conducted by our team, my aim in this study was to better understand fathers in this community. My predominant method of exploration was critical ethnography as defined and discussed by Madison (2012) and

informed generally by Spradley (1979). My goal was to better understand the roles of fathers and the impact of alcohol on these roles. I relied on a range of informants, experiences, observations, and media to guide my learning. In this study I focused on the present culture; I was not interested in investigating the past or recent changes in-and-of-themselves but the past was often discussed to give context to the present. This was true in my interviews and it is for this same reason that I provide a brief history below.

## **Northern Uganda**

### **Brief History**

The history of any area provides context to the current culture and this is certainly true of Acholiland, the northwest region of Uganda inhabited by the Acholi people. In providing this background I try to provide factually objective information where possible, such as dates and names. However, history has many sides and this is especially true in an area that has been subject to multiple conflicts. My subjective interpretation of history in the region and the impact of this history on the current culture are based on the perceptions of the Acholi people I have spoken with as informants, colleagues, or friends. As the bulk of my discussions with fathers surrounded fathering practices, I have also drawn on other recent anthropologic work by Sverker Finnström (2008). The history I provide here is brief and readers who want a broader discussion of history, war, and context can find a critical examination in Finnström's work or elsewhere.

The Acholi people are traditionally known as successful hunters, pastoralists, and agriculturalists. Society was organized by families, clans, and small chiefdoms. The importance of family organization continues today and during my research many fathers

made reference to the importance of knowing who is in your family and clan. Prior to the 1900s, most outside contact came in the form of Arab traders who acquired ivory from Acholi hunters.

The Acholi people are one of over 30 people groups or tribes within Uganda. Uganda as a whole was a Protectorate of the British Empire from 1894 through 1962. The remnants of this time can be seen in the now-abandoned railroad tracks built by the British, the widespread Christian beliefs brought by missionaries, and the Indian-owned businesses. Since the independence of Uganda the government has changed hands numerous times, often through military coups. Periods of violence since independence have waxed and waned between coups and other rebel groups. The reasons for these conflicts are, as always, multi-faceted.

The most recent protracted conflict involved the rebel group led by Joseph Kony known as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The war with the LRA is said to have begun around 1986, although conflict in the region existed before this, as one of my informants pointed out. The war with the LRA lasted until 2006, when the Ugandan government forces pushed the LRA out of Northern Uganda. During this time, the LRA abducted an estimated 20,000 children to serve as child soldiers and "wives" to LRA officers. Others were also abducted but children are thought to have made up 75% of those abducted in the midst of the conflict (Pham, Vinck, Wierda, Stover, & Giovanni, 2005).

This war was characterized by horrific acts of violence. For example, children who were abducted were sometimes forced to kill other civilians, eat human flesh, or

dismember bodies. The vast majority of the population was displaced; those with resources fled to the south or to other countries as refugees and those with fewer resources moved to camps for internally displaced people. While the horrific acts of violence affected many, an even greater number of people were impacted by disease and malnutrition in the camps. It is estimated that around 1.85 million Acholi people lived in camps across Northern Uganda, but it is unknown how many fled to other regions. Even less measurable than the number of people displaced or the effects of camp life is the disruption of social norms and practices that resulted from displacement.

This conflict has been further complicated by the human rights violations committed by the government forces. Some Acholi people believe that the government had an interest in continuing the war (or at least letting the war continue) because it received foreign support as a result of the conflict. Many Acholi were looted by rebels and government forces. One of Finnström's informants was beaten and tortured by government forces and then the rebel forces soon after. Finnström recounts statements by individuals who supported neither side (2008, p. 26) but also documents that some supported the fight against the government but not Kony and his methods. Still others joined rebel forces as a means of survival. Kony – who is Acholi himself – became an enemy to his own people but many Acholi did not feel the government was on their side either.

Making matters even more complicated was the use and impact of child soldiers. A 12-year-old boy killed in a battle with the government forces would be counted as an enemy killed. If that same 12-year-old boy escaped the LRA, he was counted as a rescued

abductee, although often still stigmatized. In many cases, the fate of abductees was and is unknown, resulting in a state of ambiguous loss and protracted grief.

### **Current Context**

Since the cease-fire in 2006, people have been reestablishing themselves in their villages. Even those who live in Gulu Town have family land and hold this as an important part of their family identity. As people relocated from the camps, they returned to farming, built businesses, and found jobs with the many non-governmental organizations that had come during and after the conflict. Infrastructure was improved and the region became relatively safe. Gulu Town currently has about 150,000 inhabitants and serves as the economic hub for the north.

The region is green and beautiful. Red dirt roads are dusty during dry periods and turn to slippery mud when wet. A few upscale hotels exist on the northern end of town and most munos (white people) in Gulu can be found in this area or in one of the few coffee shops or cafés with consistent power. Electricity in the region is intermittent. During my first period in Uganda there was consistently no power on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and any time it rained; during my recent fieldwork it was less predictable.

In Gulu town, many people rent huts or brick homes in the sprawling, densely-built residential areas. Outside of Gulu, families are more likely to live on family land in traditional compounds with a living hut for the parents and young children, a cooking hut, and a hut for older boys and one for older girls, if applicable. Men with multiple wives often have a compound for each wife. Families living in town must pay rent and buy food

whereas families living in villages can grow their food and pay for little; therefore, men in town are more likely to have a business or be employed outside the home than men in villages.

During my recent fieldwork, there was a 10:00PM curfew in place in response to a recent uptick in violence and robbery. The robbery declined while I was still in the field. Some local Acholi and expatriates speculate that the recent departure of many of the largest aid organizations from the region have contributed to increased unemployment and therefore increased crime.

The region is still developing and rebuilding after decades of conflict. Some are achieving this more successfully than others. The theft of land, the loss of family members, psychological trauma, and other lasting effects of the war have made rebuilding especially difficult for some. Significant humanitarian needs still exist within the area. However, I would also like to be clear that there are success stories and many I talked with are hopeful for the future. The youth especially have hopeful energy and are motivated to lead their generation.

### **Study Background**

This study is part of a larger program of research and applied work conducted through vivo, a non-governmental organization with the goal of treating and preventing traumatic stress in individuals and families. The researchers who founded this group developed Narrative Exposure Therapy (Schauer, Neuner, & Elbert, 2005) to treat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in areas of war and organized violence. Researchers associated with vivo have been in Northern Uganda since 2006.

During this work in Uganda and elsewhere, communities requested support with family-related issues. In response, Dr. Elizabeth Wieling joined vivo colleagues in the field and – in 2010 – conducted fieldwork with mothers in Northern Uganda. Eventually, this line of research led to the adaptation of Parent Management Training – Oregon Model (Patterson, 2005) to the needs and culture in this community. I assisted in aspects of this adaptation process and devoted the majority of my time to this project over the course of my doctoral studies. In 2012, Dr. Wieling, doctoral students from Germany and the United States, three Acholi vivo counselors, and I tested the feasibility of this intervention with 14 mothers. The implementation was largely successful with some further adaptation needed (Wieling et al., in press).

During the 2012 project, I spent about 10 weeks in the field. The majority of my time was spent on research-related tasks such as co-facilitating the interventions, overseeing the translation of materials, training interpreters, collecting data, and data management. Through these experiences and through building relationships outside of the research project, I began to learn more about the community and the culture. It is worth noting that the vivo office is positioned on the south end of town, in the midst of a residential area. Most foreign groups and expatriates stay on the north end of town and – from my perspective – many maintain a clear boundary between themselves and the local community. While there are also clear boundaries at the vivo office, they are more permeable and I was fortunate to – I think – *live* there rather than simply stay and observe from afar. I shopped at the local markets, played soccer with the neighbors, became friends with young men, and went on long runs outside of town.

Throughout the research with mothers and while living there, I observed, encountered, and had conversations with fathers. Repeatedly, fathers requested that we do not forget about them. Husbands of the women in the intervention came to an informational meeting and requested education around parenting strategies. Dr. Wieling heard similar requests during her research in 2010.

Some men complain that there is much support for women and children but little for men. From my perspective, the additional support for woman and children is warranted at the group level due to centuries of power differentials; however, on an individual level I can appreciate the concern. Furthermore, on a broader level I appreciate the importance of fathers in their children's lives.

During this time we also heard about the high-levels of alcohol use among men. Many women reported that they perceived their husband's alcohol use to be the source of conflicts and disruption in the home. Previous research has confirmed the high levels of use in Northern Uganda with estimates of around 50% of men consuming alcohol at hazardous levels (Saile, Neuner, Ertl, & Catani, 2013). We are also only aware of one alcohol treatment program in Northern Uganda, a community-based organization that follows the Alcoholics Anonymous model. Alcohol use in Uganda will be discussed in greater detail in the literature review.

Vivo researchers maintain the perspective that cross-cultural work must be requested by the community. As outsiders, we cannot assume that we have the answers to others' problems or even that our assistance is wanted. Even when assistance is requested it is a slow process. Again, we cannot assume that our knowledge from western

communities is relevant to other communities, so we must be careful to not impose our views on others. The statements and requests by men and women to include support for fathers served as the request for assistance that guided my project and critical approach (Madison, 2012).

### **Problem Statement and Research Questions**

Before including fathers in future support programs for parents, there was much we had to learn. We knew that – in most cases – mothers are the primary caretakers of children, so we needed to know the extent and manner of the involvement of fathers. We were unsure if supporting fathers would mean including them in a full parenting intervention or if it simply meant having supplemental meetings for fathers. We discussed the possibility that supporting fathers in parenting could undermine aspects of a mother's role and therefore her power in the family.

Furthermore, we knew from conversations with men, women, and children, as well as previous research that alcohol use is rampant among men. However, we did not know if or how this impacted their relationships with their children. We speculated that fathers in particular might benefit from substance use treatment or support before or concurrent with a parenting intervention.

All of our previous experience, the conversations we had with members of the community, and the speculations and problems listed above resulted in two primary research questions:

- (1) What are the roles of fathers in Acholi families?
- (2) What are the perceived relationships between alcohol use and these roles?

## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

### **Chapter Overview**

In this chapter, I first review the theoretical work that informs my understanding of parenting in high-risk contexts. I provide a brief review of literature related to the intergenerational transmission of violence and risk behaviors, as well as current research regarding the relationship between parenting behaviors – particularly those of fathers – and substance use. Whenever available, I include citations from research conducted in Uganda or other non-Western communities.

In this study, I viewed my role as that of a learner (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3) and I held myself open to learn what my informants had to teach me. I do not believe it is possible or needed that I set aside what I know while conducting interviews, but as a learner I maintain the belief that what I know may or may not apply to this community. Therefore, this literature review does not so much provide a foundation of knowledge upon which my study was designed, but rather it provides an overview of the reasons I believe these topics were worth further investigation. In this way, this literature review is as much an exercise in bracketing (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3) as it is a summary of the literature that came before the present study.

### **Theory**

#### **Social Interaction Learning**

My thinking about parenting issues and motivation to pursue parent-focused education has been informed by Social Interaction Learning theory (Patterson, 2005; Patterson & Reid, 1984). Social Interaction Learning provides an explanation of the paths

from risk contexts, to parenting, to child outcomes and serves as the theoretical basis for intervening with parents to impact child and parent outcomes. The Social Interaction Learning model suggests that parenting is the factor with the greatest impact on child development and adjustment. Relevant to post-conflict contexts, this model provides a theoretical explanation of how parenting can moderate a child's response to traumatic events and other associated risk factors.

The Social Interaction Learning model posits that risk contexts (e.g., poverty, living in a high crime area) contribute to an increase in coercive family interactions and a decrease in positive parenting strategies. In distressed families, these coercive interactions are functional and escalate over time through negative reinforcement. As these patterns escalate, children develop anti-social behaviors first within and then outside the home, which are positively reinforced by deviant peers and siblings. Increases in harsh discipline and poor monitoring further contribute to a child's association with deviant peers. The Social Interaction Learning model provides a behavioral explanation of parent-child relationships wherein the impact of parental emotion and affect on child outcomes is explained through the impact of affect on parenting behaviors such as discipline and monitoring (Patterson, 2005).

Each aspect of the Social Interaction Learning model has been tested longitudinally both passively and with experimental designs (Patterson, 2005; Patterson, Forgatch, & DeGarmo, 2010); however, these studies have only taken place in Western cultures. Despite the lack of empirical support for this model in the Ugandan community, at face value it appears to be a good theoretical fit for that context. Northern Uganda is certainly

a risk-laden environment in terms of poverty, the disruption of social norms, and historically high levels of war-related violence. The use of coercive (as it is referred to in this Western-based theory) discipline strategies are the norm and are functional and adaptive to the context. Our research group's current program of family and parenting-related research will continue to elucidate whether or not this model does in fact fit for this community. Future studies may reveal that principles of the theory apply but that they manifest in slightly different ways. The findings of the present study provide some insight into the theoretical fit of the Social Interaction Learning model to fathering in Northern Uganda.

## **Research**

### **Intergenerational Continuity of Outcomes**

The cascading and inter-generational impact of conflict on a community can lead to an increase in adverse experiences for children. For example, in many post-conflict communities there are high levels of male substance abuse (Affinnih, 1999; Barrett, 2007; Ezard, 2011; Vlahov et al., 2004) and increases in violence witnessed and experienced by children (Catani et al., 2010; Catani, Schauer, & Neuner, 2008; Olema, Catani, Ertl, Saile, & Neuner, 2014), and these two risks are often related (Dube, 2001; Saile, Ertl, Neuner & Catani, 2014). Parental substance use and adverse experiences like abuse have both been shown to contribute to increased risk that children will later abuse substances (Afifi, Henriksen, Asmundson, & Sareen, 2012; Anda et al., 1999; Dube et al., 2006; Huang et al., 2011). Parenting practices can moderate the impact of traumatic events on children and influence child outcomes such as substance abuse (Gewirtz,

Forgatch, & Wieling, 2008; Kelley et al., 2010). Unfortunately, conflict necessarily impacts parenting in a number of ways, whether through an increase in substance use, an increase in family violence, and/or a need to change parenting practices because of displacement (e.g., the disruption of familial roles or concern about child protection laws after international resettlement).

**Cycle of violence.** Community and family violence has been shown repeatedly to increase the likelihood of future family violence. Children who witness intimate partner violence are more likely to engage in family violence themselves in the future (Busby, Holman, & Walker, 2008) and engaging in intimate partner violence is predicted more by witnessing partner violence than personal experiences of abuse (Iverson, Jimenez, Harrington, & Resick, 2011). Families characterized by maltreatment are more likely to produce children with insecure and disorganized attachment styles, which can contribute to the perpetuation of unhealthy family relationships (Cyr, Euser, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & van Uzendoorn, 2010).

Abusive parenting predicts similar parenting by children when they start their own families (Dixon, Browne, & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005; Pears, & Capaldi, 2001). This cycle is likely exacerbated by war violence (Catani, 2010) and indeed communities that have experienced high levels of war-related violence show high levels of family violence (Catani, Schauer, & Neuner, 2008; Saile et al., 2014). One study of Palestinian youth showed that a strong predictor of family violence was the number of political stressors experienced by the family (Haj-Yahia, & Abdo-Kaloti, 2003). In a study of former Burundian child soldiers, participants reported that former child soldiers were more likely

to use harsher discipline, although some also reported being less likely to use corporal punishment because of their experiences (Song, Tol, & de Jong, 2014).

The impact of this cycle of violence is far reaching. Children exposed to multiple forms of violence are at the greatest risk for emotional and psychological difficulties (Garrido, Culhane, Petrenko, & Taussig, 2011). The path between parental violence and children's perpetuation of violence is not clearly understood, especially in the context of war (Catani, 2010), but is clearly multi-faceted (Siegal, 2013). Parental substance use may further contribute to the cycle of violence (Kelley et al., 2010) as will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Fathers' traumatic stress is another potential contributor to the cycle of violence in war contexts. Symptoms of posttraumatic stress in fathers with military experience in the United States may be related to less use of positive parenting strategies (Gewirtz, Polusny, DeGarmo, Khaylis, & Erbes, 2010), lower parenting satisfaction (Samper, Taft, King, & King, 2004), and poor relationship quality with children, including less time with children and more disagreements (Ruscio, Weathers, King, & King, 2002). Symptoms of posttraumatic stress may also be related to greater hostility and neglect (Stover, Hall, McMahon, & Easton, 2012), and increased aggression (Leen-Feldner, Feldner, Bunaciu, & Blumenthal, 2011; Lauterbach et al., 2007).

### **Alcohol Use in Northern Uganda**

High rates of alcohol use have been documented in Northern Uganda. Saile (2013) reported that close to 50% of fathers consumed alcohol at hazardous levels. Out of 26 countries surveyed, Ugandans reported the highest levels of total alcohol-related

consequences, including acute consequences (e.g., headache, nausea), personal consequences (e.g., guilt, neglecting responsibilities, hang-over), and social consequences (e.g., finances, employment, relationships, getting into fights) (Graham et al., 2011). In a sample of Ugandan adolescents between the ages of 12 and 19 (not specific to Northern Uganda) collected in 2004, 14.2% of boys and 8.5% of girls had consumed alcohol, both of which were higher than use in Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Malawi (Kabiru, Behuy, Crichton, & Ezeh, 2010). Roberts, Ocaika, Browne, Oyok, and Sondorp (2011) found that 32.4 % of forcibly displaced people in Northern Uganda surveyed in 2006 drank alcohol at a potentially hazardous level with 17% meeting criteria for probable substance use disorder; alcohol use was associated with being male, older age, and number of traumatic events experienced. Alcohol use in Northern Uganda has been found to be directly or indirectly implicated in many suicides in the region (Kizza, Hjelmeland, Kinyanda, & Knizek, 2012).

### **Fathers and Substance Use**

In general, less is known about fathers than mothers in the parenting literature. This is in spite of research showing that mothers and fathers differ in their parenting behaviors and that the relationship between parenting and child outcomes differs based on parent and child gender (Gryczkowski, Jordan, & Mercer, 2010; Meunier, Bisceglia, & Jenkins, 2011). Broadly speaking, the impact of fathering practices is less well understood than the impact of mothering and, specifically, gaps exist surrounding the impact of fathering on the development of substance abuse (McMahon & Rounsaville, 2002). McMahon and Rounsaville (2002) have argued that, among other things, research needs to clarify the

ways in which substance abuse contributes to compromised parenting and the ways in which this impacts children's development. Over the past decade, the importance of fathers has garnered increasing attention in the West but fathers remain underrepresented in the literature and in parenting intervention research. Of particular relevance to the present study is the relationship between substance use and fathering, families and child outcomes.

**Father substance use and child outcomes.** Children in substance abusing families are more likely to be at risk for a range of adjustment problems (Dunn et al., 2002; Harter & Taylor, 2000). One study found that after fathers left treatment for alcohol abuse, the number of children with adjustment problems increased for children with fathers with high levels of alcohol use but decreased for children in other father-use-level groups (Andreas & O'Farrell, 2007). Paternal substance abuse is associated with child behavioral problems cross-sectionally (Chassin, Rogosch, & Barrera, 1991; Kelley & Fals-Stewart, 2004) and longitudinally (Kandel, 1990). An association with psychological or emotional disturbances is likewise seen cross-sectionally (Chassin et al., 1991; Kelley & Fals-Stewart, 2004) and longitudinally in the form of depression and anxiety (Chassin, Pitts, DeLucia, & Todd, 1999; Lam, Fals-Stewart, & Kelley, 2008). Children of substance abusing fathers are also more likely to abuse substances themselves later in life (Chassin et al., 1999; Guo, Hawkins, Hill, & Abbott, 2001; Latendresse et al., 2008).

**Fathering practices and substance abuse.** Because children of fathers who abuse substances are at increased risk of internalizing symptoms, externalizing symptoms, and their own future substance use, a Social Interaction Learning perspective would suggest

that this intergenerational path is mediated by changes in fathers' parenting behaviors.

While this path is not clearly understood, fathers' substance use causes or is related to a host of negative parenting behaviors. Fathers' substance use disorder is related to parenting that children perceive as inconsistent and is associated with a greater number of relationship problems (Arria, Mericle, Meyers, & Winters, 2012). A study comparing fathers enrolled in a methadone clinic found them to be less satisfied with their parenting and exhibit fewer positive parenting behaviors than matched controls (McMahon, Winkel, & Rounsaville, 2008). Substance abuse in fathers is associated with both neglecting children (Dunn et al., 2002; Stewart, Mezzich, & Day, 2006) and abusing children (Harter & Taylor, 2000; Walsh, MacMillan, & Jamieson, 2003). The relationship between fathers' substance abuse and neglect or abuse has also been seen in prospective longitudinal data (Chaffin, Kelleher, & Hollenberg, 1996).

Other longitudinal studies have examined the ordered relationship between substance abuse and parenting. Kandel (1990) showed that heavy drinking was associated with increased punitive discipline strategies in the future. Alcoholic fathers are more likely than non-alcoholic fathers to get aggravated with infants and one study collecting data at five time points found that fathers' alcohol problems were related to lower sensitivity with infants, which was associated with later father-infant attachment (Eiden, Edwards, & Leonard, 2002). Another longitudinal study found that children's perceptions of their parents' monitoring mediated the relationship between parental substance use and children's later substance use (Latendresse et al., 2008).

Paternal substance abuse also serves to model substance use behaviors to children.

It is most often suggested that the association between parental substance use and children's substance use may be moderated by the parent-child relationship, such that a positive relationship is protective. This suggestion is supported by studies showing that positive relationships decrease the likelihood that children will abuse substances in the future (Urberg, Goldstein, & Toro, 2005). On the other hand, some suggest that based on a social learning perspective children are more likely to model behaviors of those they have good relationships with. This perspective has also been supported by research (Andrews, Hops, & Duncan, 1997). In part, this discrepancy may be explained by differences in measuring substance use versus substance abuse. That is to say that perhaps substance use as a whole (including non-problem drinking and smoking) is more likely to be modeled in positive parent-child relationships, but the impact of modeled substance abuse is buffered by positive parent-child relationships.

**Father's substance use and the family.** Paternal substance abuse is additionally associated with family-level constructs that may impact children and their development. For example, paternal substance abuse is associated with family conflict (Kelly & Kowalyszyn, 2003) and less forgiveness and trust in the family (Scherer et al., 2012). It is also related to disrupted organization and routines within the family (Bijttebier, Goethals, & Ansoms, 2006) and less family cohesion (Bijttebier et al., 2006; Scherer et al., 2012). Families with substance abusing fathers may also be more likely to suffer from financial strain (McMahon et al., 2008).

Finally, paternal substance abuse is often cited as being related to intimate partner violence and this relationship has been shown in Northern Uganda (Saile et al., 2013).

However, a meta-analysis concluded that the evidence to support this association is weak and perhaps skewed by publication bias as the smallest studies showed the largest relationships (Gil-González, Vives-Cases, Álvarez-Dardet, & Latour-Pérez, 2006). In a similar vein, another study found that the relationship between male substance use and intimate partner violence was mediated by the male's views of power and women (Johnson, 2001). However, this relationship is almost certainly more nuanced than a simple linear relationship between substance use and intimate partner violence. For example, in one study couples reported that alcohol use was higher before more violent conflicts and was sometimes the topic of conflicts (Murphy, Winters, O'Farrell, Fals-Stewart, & Murphy, 2005).

### **Chapter Conclusion**

As a study that was primarily exploratory, my research questions do not necessarily follow from gaps in the existing literature. Rather, the theory and research presented here provide an overview of the literature that has guided my thinking in these areas. In the context of this study, this literature provides evidence that fathers matter in children's lives and that fathers' substance use likely impacts their children. These basic beliefs, coupled with requests to include fathers in a future intervention, provided the basis for the present study. As a learner in the community, my understanding of these topics from the literature did not dictate the direction of my interviews but there is little doubt it provided one of many filters through which I heard and understood what I learned.

## **Chapter III: Methods**

### **Chapter Overview**

In this chapter I discuss the methodological approach I used to frame this study, including design and my role as the researcher/learner. I provide an overview of my informants and discuss my modes of data collection. Finally, I end the chapter with a description of my procedures for coding, analysis, and establishing trustworthiness.

### **Study Design**

This study is a cross-sectional, descriptive, qualitative investigation of fathering and the perceived impact of father's alcohol use within the Acholi culture. I utilized ethnographic interviewing as my method of investigation. I investigated, in terms of research literature, a relatively unexplored topic. Investigating an unexplored topic made ethnography a particularly well-suited methodology for this study, which will be elaborated upon in the following sections. My position as a researcher and my application of ethnographic interviewing follows from my epistemological stance.

### **Epistemology**

All research is rooted in the epistemological stance of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I define my stance as post-positivist, in that I pursue objective reality while acknowledging that this goal is unattainable (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). I reject the idea that the researcher is independent from his or her data but believe that rigorous methods can reduce the influence of the researcher on the results. I believe that objective realities exist but that the complexity of reality precludes complete understanding. Furthermore, I believe that the ways in which we represent reality are

limited by individual perspective and interpretation, and by the dependence on socially constructed language. However, I disagree with some that this position necessarily dictates that researchers are unconcerned with the actions that result from their research (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011); on the contrary, I believe that the very reason researchers should use rigorous methods is to increase the likelihood that actions following from research will be as effective as possible. I also disagree that it follows from a post-positivistic stance that including the voice of participants threatens objectivity (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011); rather, I believe that because it is impossible to fully know reality it is beneficial to gain as many perspectives on reality as possible. My stance influences my research in two specific ways.

First, this stance underlies my interest in both qualitative and quantitative methods. The use of multiple methods to study a range of data increases the number of perspectives we can use to inform our understanding of a subject. Whether using multiple methodologies in a parallel or iterative fashion, we are able to gain a more informed perspective of reality through methodological triangulation.

Second, my epistemological stance suggests that because I can never know reality accurately or completely, I must hold what I believe to be true loosely and with humility. Furthermore, I cannot assume that my view of reality is consistent with that of others. I can acknowledge that I have content knowledge related to a subject such as parenting and simultaneously acknowledge that what I know is rooted in my experience, culture, and understanding of research conducted in specific communities. It is this acknowledgement that dictates the importance of reflexivity and positioning myself as a learner while

interviewing.

### **Ethnography**

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research methods enable a researcher to capture information beyond predetermined interview or survey items. There is no assumption that I as the researcher know all of the relevant variables or factors associated with the area under investigation. This has two significant benefits. First, this broadens the potential for scientific discovery. Second, being open to any factor, variable, or perspective on a topic gives greater power to the population being studied. When conducting research in a community as an outsider there is a great and ever-present risk of imposing one's own views, judgments, or interpretations. By acknowledging methodologically that there is much I do not know, I am positioning myself as a learner and my informants as the content experts.

The position of the researcher as a learner is at the root of ethnographic inquiry. Spradley states, "Ethnography starts with a conscious attitude of complete ignorance" (p. 4). In this case, a position of ignorance means that I believe fathers are important for children but I do not know if all people agree with that belief or why members of this community would say fathers are important. Similarly, my previous time in Uganda gave me an idea about the possible roles of fathers but I had no idea if what I learned captured existing variations in perspectives or if I interpreted the information I gathered in the way it was meant. Ignorance does not mean that I assume I know nothing, but rather, I acknowledge what I know, my potential biases, the sources of my knowledge, and the fact that the knowledge I have may or may not apply to other communities. For this

reason, I follow language used by Spradley (1979), of “informant” rather than “participant.”

In traditional ethnographic learning, the researcher’s position of ignorance was perhaps more evident. Traditional ethnography involved the in-depth study of a culture largely unknown in European and American literature. Anthropologists engaged in lengthy fieldwork to learn the language and investigate a community from within. However, more recently ethnography has been applied to the study of subcultures within or outside of the researcher’s culture of origin. When studying a subset of a culture there is inherently an assumption that the researcher has some knowledge or perspective that guided the choice of sub-culture to be studied.

Critical ethnography builds on traditional ethnographic approaches by seeking to use these methods to address injustice, rather than simply gaining new knowledge (Madison, 2012). This has a number of implications for every aspect of this study. A critical approach influenced my sampling methods as it was necessary to try hear from fathers with varied background, not only community leaders or those who might perpetuate a single dominant narrative. This approach clearly influenced the presentation of my findings as I tried to present the voices of my informants while also guarding against simplistic and reductionistic explanations of current situations. A critical stance also dictates that my research not be an end in and of itself (Madison, 2005); this project was specifically designed as a step toward addressing the injustice of disparities between communities.

In the case of this study, I sought to learn about a subset of Acholi culture on a

specific topic. The topic was guided by my broader belief that parents (and fathers, specifically) have an impact on children's future outcomes and provide a means to prevent future negative health and behavioral outcomes in the next generation. I was open to learning anything my informants could teach me about the roles of a father, even if their perspectives contradicted my belief that fathers are important for children's outcomes.

### **Researchers and Reflexivity**

No research is free of bias. As a critical ethnographer, I must acknowledge and examine my own position, power, privilege and biases (Madison, 2005). Rather than try to artificially set aside my background and dismiss the impact it has on my research, I try to know, acknowledge, and critically reflect on myself and my position, which is the essence of reflexivity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Much of what is written below came from entries made to my personal journal prior to and during my time in the field. Another key source of information was an in-depth discussion with my co-researchers about our backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs of what we might find.

### **Primary Investigator**

I have come to love Northern Uganda and the people, and I am committed to this work as long as it is welcomed. I entered my doctoral studies with the goal of conducting applied research to benefit those dealing with the consequences of mass trauma with significant levels of psycho-social needs but I had no specific people or place in mind. Unfortunately, many communities around the world – including in the United States –

would easily meet these broad criteria. Through my work with Dr. Wieling the opportunity to join her work in Northern Uganda arose.

My desire to work with communities with significant needs stems from a growing awareness of my power and privilege and the fact that this privilege was partially born out of the oppression of others. While it would be easy for this perspective to morph into a savior complex or a guilt-laden sense of debt, I believe that my motivation is based in the assumption that with power and privilege come a moral responsibility to use that privilege to benefit those with less privilege. Through critical discussions with others and self-reflection/questioning I try ensure that my research is responsive to the needs and requests of others and is based on an understanding that the knowledge I have and the knowledge of community members are equally valuable. I hope that I am able to balance the understanding that the knowledge I have may not be valuable to other communities with the belief that it would be wrong to withhold information or resources that may be helpful to others because of a fear of over-stepping my bounds.

I am a white male and was raised in a suburban family in the Midwestern United States. I have experienced financial stress but have never worried about having clean water, food, shelter, or education. Relevant to this study, I was raised by my birth parents who are still married today. I have always had a good relationship with my father and have always respected his work-ethic, his generally positive outlook, and the emotional and cognitive support he offers in our family. I have a master's degree in couple and family therapy and I am currently in my fourth year of a doctoral program in family science and couple and family therapy.

I admittedly had mixed feelings going into this project. On the one hand, I was excited to see my friends in Uganda, conduct this research, learn from fathers, and spend time in a place I enjoy living. On the other hand, I was not looking forward to being apart from my wife for these months and felt stressed about the inability to maintain progress on other projects while I was gone. These feelings generally carried through my time in the field until my wife came to visit for the last week of my project. I always enjoyed the research and time with friends but, at times, missed home and questioned if I had any right to be there.

My role in this research was designing the study, formulating the interview guide, conducting the interviews, and analyzing the data. Dr. Wieling oversaw each of these tasks and had access to audio recordings of my interviews, my journal, and my field notes. My co-researchers in the field were Achan Laura and Okot Thomas.

### **Co-Researchers and Interpreters**

Laura is an Acholi woman and has been a counselor for vivo for almost ten years. Her role was to interpret when needed, help me navigate local logistics and cultural issues, provide feedback and reflection on interviews, and transcribe interviews. Her insights, dedicated work ethic, and feedback made the project possible. She was one of the three counselors that worked with us in 2012 to test the parenting intervention.

Thomas became my right hand in the field. He accompanied me for every interview, interpreted when needed, offered reflections based on the whole of the interviews we conducted, and made the logistical issues of fieldwork manageable. He had also worked on our projects in the past transcribing and interpreting. While the academic

tasks related to this study fall on my shoulders, the fieldwork and learning was certainly conducted and experienced together.

As the first step of our research together, I shared about my background and interviewed them about theirs, especially as they relate to fathers. For readability, the following paragraphs are still written from my perspective, but the words largely belong to them. Both Laura and Thomas grew up in the south during the war. Thomas's mother is Laura's sister and Thomas was raised by his mother and Laura. He does not know his father but felt he had a good upbringing with Laura and his mother. He has been successful in school and is currently working toward a bachelor's degree. He has no children himself and appreciated the learning that took place in the interviews as much as I did. His views on fathers and Acholi culture come from personal experience, observing others, and discussing issues related to culture, gender, and families in university courses.

Laura knows her father but he lives in Canada and his relationship with her has largely consisted of financial support. She has formulated her own opinions of gender roles in her culture and her views could be considered quite modern ("modern" was a word used by my informants and will be discussed later) and some might say critical. She has a master's degree and is currently teaching part-time at a local university.

### **Informants and Other Data**

The data for this study came from in-depth ethnographic interviews with fathers, three focus groups with fathers, conversations with other community members and one group of mothers, observations, personal experiences, and media. The in-depth ethnographic interviews made up the bulk of the data and the other forms of data helped

to fill in the narrative with additional contextual details and descriptions. The first two focus groups also provided additional examples of the domains I was discovering and the final focus group served as an in-depth member check of the preliminary analysis. Each source of data will be described here with the most attention paid to the primary father informants.

### **Primary Father Informants**

In this section I am referring to the 19 fathers I interviewed individually and in-depth, following my interview guide. Other fathers and community members I learned from are discussed in the following section. My goal was to recruit fathers from town, from villages, and fathers that varied in their level of alcohol use. I recruited fathers with a child between the ages of 5 and 14 but a few fathers I interviewed did not have a child in this age range. I recruited fathers in a number of ways. First, I paid two recruiters in remote areas to locate fathers and introduce me. I told the recruiters I hoped to talk to fathers that people might consider good or bad fathers, fathers who work, fathers who only farm, fathers who drink little or no alcohol, fathers who drink too much alcohol, and every possible combination of these characteristics. Second, I met with various community leaders and asked to be introduced to fathers who met my criteria. Third, Thomas recruited diverse fathers through neighbors, friends, and drinking locations. In total, we interviewed 19 fathers individually and 8 of these fathers also participated in a final focus group for member-checking.

These 19 fathers ranged in age from 29 to 63 years ( $M = 42.3$ ) and had an average of 5.4 children. The mean age of informants' youngest child was 6.6 years and the mean

age of the oldest child was 17.6 years. Demographic information for each informant is presented in Table 1 (in generalized form to protect confidentiality).

**Informant biography samples.** As examples of these informants, I will present a brief biographical overview of three fathers I interviewed.

*Father 1.* I spoke with this father sitting in the shade and on the side of a giant ant hill near the village where he lives. He spoke little English so Thomas served as an interpreter. He spoke softly and slowly and often picked at the ground with a stick as we talked. In his early 30s, he had one wife and half a dozen children, which he still considered a small family. He, like all fathers, spoke about his children's future but he added context to his concerns by speaking about his injured leg that might prevent him from adequately providing for his children. To me, he looked physically worn out and his visibly-scarred leg could be seen under the tattered cuff of his worn pants. As a subsistence farmer, he worried that he would not be able to continue providing in this way until his infant child was grown. He was keenly aware of the traditional gender roles but he painted a picture of love and care that included interactions somewhat atypical for a traditional father's experience. He talked about bathing the young children and bending over to invite his children to run into his arms as he approaches home. As with all my interviews, we primarily talked about the present, so while I do not know all the details of his past, I know that the first of three times he was abducted was during his late teens; his time held captive ranged from a few days to a month. In more words, he also made it clear that he drinks as a result of his trauma and despite his desire to have a good relationship with his family, he is violent when drunk.

Table 1

*Generalized demographic overview of informants*

Father ID	Rounded Age	# of Children <sup>a</sup>	Additional dependents <sup>b</sup>	School-age child <sup>c</sup>	Wives <sup>d</sup>
F1	60	6		Yes	1
F2	50	6			1
F3	65	10			1
F4	35	2	Yes	Yes	1
F5	40	2		Yes	0
F6	40	6	Yes	Yes	1
F7	40	6	Yes	Yes	1
F8	45	6		Yes	>1
F9	45	10		Yes	1
F10	35	6	Yes	Yes	1
F11	35	6	Yes	Yes	>1
F12	45	6	Yes	Yes	1
F13	40	6	Yes	Yes	>1
F14	50	15		Yes	>1
F15	60	6		Yes	0
F16	30	2	Yes	Yes	1
F17	30	2		Yes	1
F18	45	2	Yes	Yes	1
F19	30	2		Yes	1

<sup>a</sup>1-3 children reported as 2, 4-7 reported as 6, 8-12 reported as 10, 13-20 reported as 15

<sup>b</sup>Informants reporting additional dependents reported 1-3 dependents

<sup>c</sup>School-age defined as 5-13 years

<sup>d</sup>Informants reporting >1 wife reported 2 or 3 wives

**Father 2.** The second father was employed in town and spoke English, without interpretation we were able a lot of content during the interview. He was around 40 years old, with five children, and one current wife. He was professionally dressed and spoke with confidence. As the clear head of his home he conveyed his authority in all things related to his family. He completed secondary school and seemed to be doing well enough financially. Much of our conversation surrounded his previous use of alcohol. The situation he portrayed during his years of heavy drinking was a stark contrast to the power he currently holds in his family and, in fact, it was the loss of his position as head of the family and his loss of relationships that convinced him to stop drinking. He was one of the few fathers who openly stated that he would not be interested in any type of parenting education because his strategy of strict but just use of rules, education, and corporal punishment seemed to work well for him.

**Father 3.** The third father was around 50 years old with four children, the youngest of whom was a young teenager. He had a professional job and did well enough to have a motorcycle and a nice home. Like nearly all Acholi people, he also remained connected to his village home and had gardens and livestock that he and his sons would attend to on weekends. He was soft-spoken and spoke English well. I really enjoyed my time with him and made a note that he might be a great father to lead a parenting group in the future. We laughed as he explained the games he plays with his children and the ways he teases them. I appreciated the thought he had given to melding modern and traditional views of parenting. He spoke of trying to encourage his wife to take leadership in things and create an environment of equality. Although he hoped for equality, he also clearly

acknowledged the existing hierarchy within society and families by suggesting that any attempt to change families must include a program for fathers. He was never abducted during the war but, like nearly everyone, had been displaced multiple times.

### **Other Informants**

In addition to the formal interviews conducted with fathers, we learned about fathering and fathers' alcohol use from a number of other sources. We discussed fathering practices and alcohol use with a group of mothers; I had frequent brief conversations with vivo counselors; we spoke with a priest who leads an alcoholics anonymous group; we spoke with a few children in their late teens; and Thomas and I spoke with a few men at a drinking place. These conversations often served to fill in minor gaps or clarify questions that I did not have time to address during interviews. For example, I was able to learn about types of alcohol, the differences between day and boarding school, and the typical social structure within a family with multiple wives.

We also had three focus groups with fathers. The first focus group took place in a village and the second in Gulu. The fathers who participated in these focus groups were recruited in the same way as the primary informants. For the sake of time, I did not collect demographic information from focus group members but I have no reason to suspect they differed in any significant ways from the primary informants. The third and final focus group (which served as member checking) was made up of fathers who had participated in individual interviews or earlier focus groups.

### **Additional Data**

Through one of our informal meetings with men at a drinking joint, Thomas and I were invited by one father to a traditional family/story time around the fire (wang-oo) at his compound in a village and were able to observe and reflect on that experience. Laura was able to transcribe a radio show that consisted of community members discussing issues related to men and alcohol.

Finally, I paid particular attention to interactions I encountered between men and children, although I cannot be sure they were always father figures. These observations took place in every-day settings. For example, the vivo office is located next to a Pentecostal church. Every Sunday morning when I walked to find food for breakfast, I would scan the church yard for what appeared to be fathers with children. I most often saw interactions as families were coming or going and noted details such as where the children sat on the motorbike or if young children had physical contact with the adult men. As another example, on my runs outside of town I would pay attention to families digging together or families walking from one place to another. All of these observations and experiences were documented in my field notes. Although these observations are not as explicit in my findings as the interviews the information I learned in these ways added to the narratives I convey in the findings. In addition, these observations helped to give context to the things I learned in interviews and gave me a better understanding of the information I was learning.

### **Interview Procedures**

My interview strategy generally followed Spradley's recommendations for ethnographic interviewing (1979). Half of the interviews were conducted in English as

was the final focus group, the rest were interpreted. Some interviews were conducted at the vivo office, some at a compound in a village where the vivo counselors met clients, and others in places of informants' choosing. Interviews lasted one to two hours and the focus groups lasted two to three hours. I interview each of the 19 fathers one time. In total, I had approximately 45 hours of audio-recorded interviews, which were transcribed verbatim. Interviews that were interpreted were transcribed by Laura and she directly translated the informant's answers rather than transcribing the spoken interpretation from the interview.

I began my interviews with a broad grand tour question: "Teach me about fathers in Acholi families. What is their role? How are they important?" This was followed up with a range of questions to approach the topic in different ways: "If your bother was becoming a father for the first time, what would you tell him?" "How do fathers differ from mothers?" "How are you similar or different from other fathers you know?" I also asked broad questions about substance use and then followed up on the roles they defined. I felt we began to reach saturation with regard to the roles of a father after interviewing three fathers in town, two in the village, one focus group in a village, and brief conversations with others.

The focus groups were conducted based on the same interview guide but attention was paid to consensus and disagreement between group members. The focus groups were also used as a venue for collecting examples. In the group setting, I was able to ask fathers to council one father in an example of teaching me (as his child) how to perform various tasks.

In the next wave of interviews, I began by listing the roles of a father we had learned, asked for any corrections or differences of opinion, and spent the remainder of the interview continuing to explore each domain and the semantic relationships we began to discover. As the interviews progressed, I focused more and more of the interviews on specific examples (e.g., “You have said that teaching is important, what was the last thing you taught your child?” or “Pretend I am your child and I did poorly on an exam, what would you say to me?”).

After two focus groups and 15 interviews, I took two weeks off of interviewing. I used this time to conduct a preliminary analysis of my interviews thus far and identify gaps I wanted to address. In my final five interviews and the final focus group, I was able to clarify some taxonomic issues, ask for examples in areas in which I had few, and confirm what we thought we had learned. The final focus group lasted three hours and covered my preliminary analysis in detail. The fathers in this group validated much of what we learned, clarified a few remaining areas of confusion, and made minor suggestions regarding taxonomy. A few issues, such as discipline, resulted in discussions between fathers with differing opinions.

Throughout my interviewing process, I kept a journal of field notes and separate journal of personal reflection. My field notes contained notes I made during interviews, my thoughts after interviews, notes from debriefing interviews with Thomas and Laura, notes from informal interviews and observations, and sketches of interview locations. My personal reflections contained thoughts about my purpose for this research, my right to be there, and my feelings about being in the field and away from home.

## **Language and Interpreting**

Thomas, Laura, and I discussed language issues throughout the interviews. The Acholi language simply has fewer words than English and so most questions I wanted to ask could not be directly translated. Prior to beginning the interview process we discussed word choices surrounding alcohol use, how to refer to fathers, and the translation of key words like “role.” In some cases, an easy solution was available. For example, we chose to use *wego* rather than *baba* in most cases as the former is closer to father and the latter is closer to daddy. In other cases, the solution was not a simple one. For example, “What is the role of a father in Acholi families?” failed to capture the entire meaning of role I had in mind because role was best translated as “what do fathers do?” To address this issue, we would often ask multiple questions simultaneously. For example, “What do fathers do? What are the ingredients that make up a father? What does a father add to a family? Maybe you can tell us a little about this.”

Thomas and Laura tried to clarify questions to informants if the question was misunderstood and if there was still confusion we simply came at the issue from another direction (e.g., regarding the role of a father, we could ask, “If your younger brother just had his first child, what would be important for him to do and know?”). After interviews we discussed any language issues they or I perceived.

## **Coding and Analysis**

My analysis consisted of two tracks. Throughout this section, I follow Spradley’s (1979) use of the term “domain” to refer to largely descriptive categories that make up the area of culture being studied; I use the term “theme” to refer to underlying beliefs or

values that may or may not fit within a domain. In the first track, I conducted a search and explication of domains – in this case, a description of the roles of fathers in Northern Uganda. This process took place throughout the interviewing process and I elaborated on these codes after returning from the field. The second analysis track consisted of a search for themes – implicit and explicit beliefs, values, and attributions related to fathering and fathers' alcohol use that emerged from the data. I made notes of potential themes during my fieldwork and was able to explore some of these areas in interviews, but the bulk of my thematic analysis took place while analyzing the interview transcripts. The iterative process of preliminary analysis and interviewing allowed me to explore areas I would not have known to explore prior to interviewing. As a result, not all interviews covered the same content; for this reason, I sought saturation through my preliminary analysis described below and did not seek to weigh the frequency of each domain and theme.

### **Coding for Domains**

My search for and explication of domains largely followed Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence (Spradley, 1979). The Developmental Research Sequence is a guide for the entire ethnographic research process and lays out a process of iterative interviewing and analysis. This process is largely one of semantic exploration as a means of identifying domains, the content of domains, and the boundaries between domains. This search consists of a domain analysis, a taxonomic analysis, and a componential analysis.

**Domain analysis.** The domain analysis occurs during the interview process and, once established, subsequent interviews consist of an exploration of one or more of the

domains discovered. Potential domains were identified through broad structural questions such as, “Teach me about the role of fathers in Acholi families.” As I began to establish a preliminary list of domains, I began to ask fathers about the differences, similarities, or overlap between these potential domains (e.g., “Is paying a child’s school fees part of how you teach a child or part of how you provide, or is it something different?”). Through this intertwined process of interview and analysis, I was able to establish a list of potential domains.

After establishing potential domains, I began to make note of terms included in each domain and the semantic relationship of these terms to the domain. Through subsequent interviews I was able to ask questions based on these semantic relationships to further explore the content and boundaries of each domain. For example, after an informant told me one *way he teaches* his children, I could ask what other *ways he teaches* his children, and I could further ask for an example of the last thing he taught a child and explore the *way he taught* in the example. Through the process of analysis and subsequent clarification and learning through additional interviews, I was able to reach saturation by confirming these domains with informants from numerous backgrounds. In the Developmental Research Sequence, the terms and semantic relationships uncovered are then used to conduct a taxonomic analysis (Spradley, 1979).

**Taxonomic analysis.** The taxonomic analysis also took place in the field and in the midst of the interview process. I asked questions to explore the relationship between domains and their included terms by asking informants to compare and contrast potential domains. I also asked relationship questions, such as “If a father is injured and cannot

work or dig to provide, does that change teaching in any way?” During interviews I also made lists of the potential domains (using English or by drawing pictures) and asked informants if and how these things were related. Through this analytic process, I was able to solidify the domain structure. The most salient example of this process might be my realization that the domain of “discipline” was actually a sub-domain of “teaching” and was one of the *ways fathers teach*.

To confirm the domains and taxonomy I discovered through the interview process I also coded my interview transcripts for domains. Using the domains I had already identified with my informants as pre-set codes, I coded every statement in the interview transcripts for its fit within these domains. For example, when fathers talked about “providing” I tagged the statement with a “P.” I also remained open to discovering new domains or a revised understanding of the taxonomy of domains and made note of statements that did not easily fit into my pre-determined codes.

**Componential analysis.** The third stage of analysis in the Developmental Research Sequence is the componential analysis (Spradley, 1979). This analysis explores the components and attributes of the included terms within a domain. This exploration takes place after domains have been established. My primary mode of componential exploration involved exploring contrasts or differences within the broader community. For example, I explored whether or not mothers teach the same ways as fathers, whether fathers in villages teach the same things as fathers in town, or what the differences were between modern discipline and traditional discipline. My primary focus of componential exploration involved an exploration of the impact alcohol use on each domain. I asked

about differences between fathers who do not drink alcohol, who drink socially, and who drink too much within each of the domains. I asked which domain might be the first to change if a father begins to “over-drink” and I explored my informants’ personal examples of fathers who drink too much.

While I was able to explore componential attributes related to alcohol use in quite a bit of depth, my limited time in the field prohibited my ability to conduct a complete componential analysis of all potential contrasts. With more time, I may have been able to construct a table with – for example – all of the ways a father teaches on one axis, and attributes on the other axis (such as used in town, used in village, used for girls, etc.). Instead, questions surrounding componential exploration outside of alcohol use became much of the substance I analyzed for themes.

### **Coding for Themes**

My search for themes was largely a search for beliefs, values, and contrasts related to fathering. Whereas domains were descriptive and explicitly formulated with informants, themes involved more interpretation in analysis. Some potential themes began to emerge and were explicitly discussed in the interviews while other themes emerged through later analysis.

Borrowing coding strategies common to most thematic analytic techniques, I coded for themes in a two-step process of open coding and distilling themes from the codes. These strategies were particularly useful as way to gain a fresh look at my data. By the time I coded for themes, I was acutely familiar with my data. I had analyzed my data for domains throughout the process of interviewing and had made notes of beliefs, values,

and contrasts that I thought may serve as themes. Because of my familiarity with the data – as well as my background knowledge – my stance in this process aligned with that of Charmaz (2007), that initial coding should be open-ended while still acknowledging that the researcher holds prior ideas. Open coding facilitated open-endedness by allowing me to isolate and decontextualize individual meaning units that were *less* informed by my overall feelings about an interview or my preconceived ideas about potential themes.

**Open coding.** I coded my transcribed interviews utilizing unit-by-unit open coding, meaning that I attempted to code each stand-alone statement, thought, or question whether it was a few words or a few lines. Coding in consistent, smaller units (e.g., line-by-line) would have provided even greater separation from my interpretation or previous ideas, but the nature of language translation and varying grammatical quality often made it difficult to understand small units. To accomplish the open coding process, all transcripts were copied into spreadsheets and notes were made in a column adjacent to the interview text. Examples of my open coding are included in Appendix I.

**Distilling themes from open codes.** All the codes from the open coding process were then copied into a list, separate from the transcripts from which they came. This resulted in a list of approximately 1,500 codes and further allowed me to view the data outside the context of my feelings about the interview or my previous thoughts. I then printed and read through this list multiple times, making notes in the margins and underlining things that stood out. An example is shown in Appendix II. During this process, I tried to keep in mind two questions: (1) What influences, impacts, or changes the role of a father or the way those roles play out? and (2) What creates, explains, or

describes differences between fathers? I then typed out my list of notes and began to group these into potential themes. I wrote notes, color-coded, and revisited my list of codes as I explored the ways in which the data fit together. Eventually this process allowed me to distill the data into themes that captured underlying beliefs, values, and perceived differences related to fathering and fathers' alcohol use. I then checked these themes against interview transcripts and my field notes.

### **Trustworthiness**

A strength of (most) qualitative research is the open acknowledgement that no research is free of bias and that the researcher him- or herself impacts the process. This acknowledgement does not negate the need ensure that the research process is rigorous, credible, and reflective of the information learned from participants. Creswell and Miller (2000) outline several methods of increasing the validity or trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry. Following the description given by Creswell and Miller, I will highlight four methods I used in this study: prolonged engagement in the field, reflexivity, member checking, triangulation, and an audit trail.

The first of these steps was prolonged engagement in the field. As noted by Creswell and Miller (2000), ample time in the field allows researchers to follow-up on questions and hunches. In my case, I had spent 10 weeks in Gulu in 2012 and another 10 weeks in the field for this study. This time in the field gave me the opportunity to conduct a preliminary analysis and fill in the gaps I noticed through a second round of interviews. The length time in the field for this study further contributed to trustworthiness through the fact that Thomas and Laura were with me throughout this entire time and provided an

insider/outsider perspective to the data we collected. (Laura and Thomas are insiders as members of the community but outsiders because neither is a father.)

Reflexivity was another important piece of increasing the trustworthiness of the data. By keeping a personal journal, and documenting my own background, social position, and reflections throughout the project, I am acknowledging that these factors may influence the research process. Similarly, the literature review provides a form of reflexivity as it explicates the academic views that inform/bias my thinking. By making these reflections explicit, I hope to lessen the extent to which they influence the process and what I learn.

Another step I utilized was member checking through the final focus group. This focus group was completed on my last day in the field and with fathers I had previously interviewed. I printed a table with each domain, an explanation of the domain, and the ways in which alcohol use impacts that domain (Appendix III). We sat with these fathers for three hours and discussed every box. I initially worried that fathers would simply agree with whatever I presented, in part because of a power differential and in part because I understand Acholi culture to be generally passive (at least with outsiders) and it was occasionally difficult for me to detect confrontation. This fear turned out to be unfounded. Perhaps my fears were unwarranted from the beginning or perhaps our concerted attempts to position ourselves as the learners in every interaction were successful. In any case, fathers studiously examined each box one at a time. Fathers asked for clarification when a bullet point did not make sense and would ask, "What do you mean by this one here?" I would explain what we thought we learned and the father

would confirm, disagree, or indicate he was checking to see if I had the same examples in mind that he thought of while reviewing that point.

Triangulation provided another means of increasing the trustworthiness of the data and results. For example, in trying to understand the relationship between the role of providing, I was able to approach the relationship in at least three ways. First, I simply asked some fathers how they think these things are related. Second, I asked fathers what might change as a father who does not drink alcohol begins to drink too much. I occasionally drew a picture of a happy and upright man on one end of a piece of paper and a drunken man on the other end of the paper. I asked, "As the man over here becomes this man, what would change?" Third, I could ask, "If there was a father who drank too much, but you never saw him drunk or drinking, how would you know he drank too much? What signs would there be?" By asking about the same issues in different ways and getting similar information, I was able to ensure that my results were not solely based on the way I asked a question or the way a concept was interpreted. In addition, I was able to ask about these same concepts with fathers from all different backgrounds. Learning similar information from different fathers was further triangulation of the data.

As a final method of increasing trustworthiness, Dr. Wieling audited each stage of the study. While in the field, I periodically uploaded audio of interviews for Dr. Wieling to listen and comment. I also made my field notes and journal available to her by keeping them in a shared folder while in the field. Dr. Wieling provided written feedback throughout the process and we talked via Skype weekly. Her feedback provided perspectives and insights from outside my current surroundings. We discussed coding

procedures before beginning to code and met throughout analysis to discuss the process and findings.

Each of these steps added to the trustworthiness of the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). These steps did not rid the study of bias, but ensured that the bias was not solely mine and acknowledged that it exists. These steps did not guarantee that I captured everything informants tried to convey, but they increased the likelihood that I accurately captured more than I would have otherwise. Including others in the process and member-checking did not result in a complete representation of any truths that exist in these topics, but they guaranteed that the perspective used to formulate the findings is not solely my own.

### **Ethics and Study Support**

The study and procedures described here were approved by Institutional Review Boards at the University of Minnesota and Lacor Hospital in Gulu, Uganda. The research was also approved by the Ugandan National Council for Science and Technology. The research was conducted in collaboration with vivo Uganda. The study was funded by grants from the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota and the Center for Personalized Prevention Research at the University of Minnesota.

## **Chapter IV: Findings**

### **Chapter Overview**

The findings included here represent the domains and themes that emerged from individual interviews, informal discussions, observations, focus groups, and other experiences. Quotations are identified by the informant ID that corresponds to Table 1 where applicable. Sources of quotes used from other informants or data are identified in text. I often edited quotations for the sake of readability and clarity but I tried to remain as true to the original language as possible. Also note that half of these transcripts have been translated from Acholi into English. These findings represent the combined effort of in-the-field analysis and in-depth analysis of transcripts and notes.

### **Preface to Primary Findings**

Most of what I mention in this preface will be elaborated upon throughout the findings but is given to provide a context to the in-depth presentation of the findings that follows. First, it is important to know that while the findings from this study clearly show the importance of fathers in Acholi families, mothers spend more time with children in the majority of families. This was apparent throughout my interviews, observations, and informal conversations. Even so, it is strongly believed that fathers impact their children's futures. There is an Acholi saying I heard numerous times that sums up this belief: "the hind legs follow the front legs" ("Obong tyen mapiny lubu ma malo"). Every time I heard this saying it was in reference to fathers as the front legs and children following their lead. In this way, children also reflect on their father. One of the most

common answers I received when asking how to tell a good father from a bad father was, “You see his kids.”

In spite of the fact that mothers have more contact with children, the children belong to the father. In most cases, if a couple divorces, the children stay with the father. The father then may find a new wife or perhaps his mother will come help take care of the children. In most cases, fathers primarily see their children in the evening and on weekends but, as with all my findings, there was variation in this.

### **Variation within Fathers**

The roles of a father became clear from conversations with my informants but, of course, there was variation in the execution of these roles. Sometimes this variation was a result of circumstances (e.g., a father who lives in a village and farms is more likely to teach his children how to weed than a father in town); sometimes this variation was the result of the father’s education level (e.g., fathers with education see greater value in education); and sometimes this variation was directly a result of the father’s economic situation (e.g., families with more money often send kids to boarding school, which mean they have less time together). Some variation simply resulted from differences in family structure. Polygamy is becoming less common but is not rare. Fathers with more than one wife often build neighboring compounds for each wife and will rotate his time between them, which impacts the amount of direct time he has with his children from each wife.

**Modern versus traditional fathers.** Other variation between fathers was the result of the degree to which fathers were more traditional in their beliefs and perspective or more modern (*modern* being the word my informants used). Traditional perspectives are

characterized by more strict gender roles and the father is decidedly the head of the family; modern perspectives are conversely characterized by a more flattened hierarchy. These are not clearly defined categories and some fathers seemed somewhat traditional in one area but more modern in another.

After the description of each role I will highlight the most salient variation within that role. In particular, I will highlight the differences between the more modern and the more traditional perspectives I heard. In this way, the theme of modern versus traditional perspectives will be addressed throughout the findings.

### **Over-drinking**

In asking about the relationship between fathering and alcohol use I inevitably learned a lot about alcohol use in general. I learned about various types of alcohol and drinking locations, and I spent time in some of these gathering places observing and talking with men. Fathers' perceived relationship between alcohol and the roles of a father will be discussed within the description of each role but again, I think it is relevant to provide brief background information to give context to alcohol use.

There are many types of alcohol available but all are typically consumed while socializing. For those who live in villages or with relatively little income, locally brewed alcohol is readily available in plastic bags as are cheap sachets of mass-produced waragi (a distilled alcohol). Those with more income might drink marua out of long straws from a shared pot. The most expensive drink is beer and is typically only available in town.

Over-drinking was the term many people used for problem drinking. In most cases, this referred to people who get drunk. However, with investigation it became apparent

that a father could over-drink in three ways: (1) drinking to drunkenness, (2) spending too much money on alcohol, or (3) spending too much time drinking alcohol. Some of my informants thought that any alcohol was too much but most differentiated between social drinking and over-drinking.

Some women drink alcohol but over-drinking is widely viewed as male problem. In fact, a radio show while I was in the field asked community members about their thoughts regarding the need for more regulation with alcohol. Overwhelmingly, women voiced support for greater regulation (often citing the troubles it leads to with their husbands) while the majority of men opposed regulation.

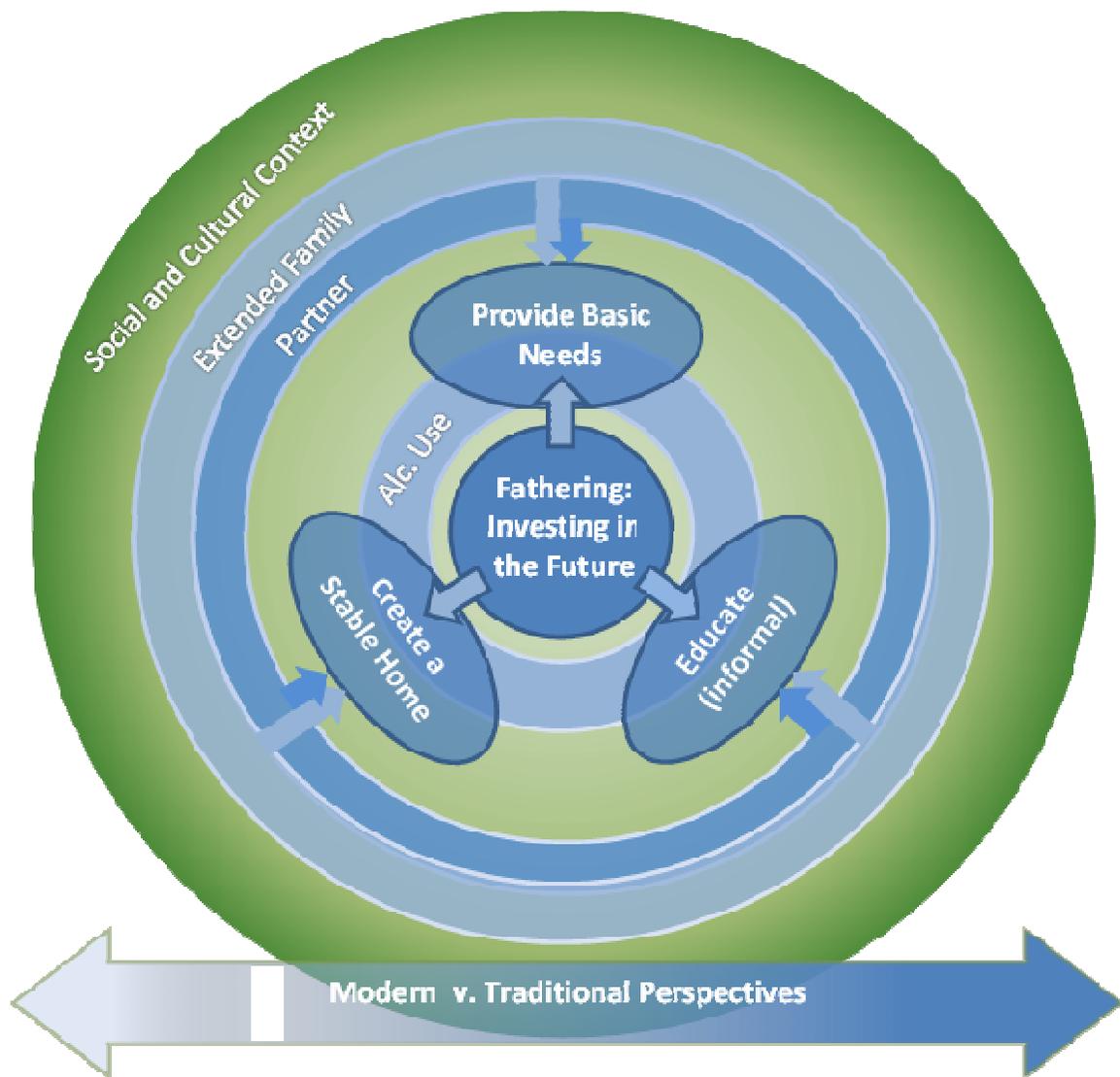
Everyone I spoke with estimated high rates of over-drinking, some reporting they think over 50% of men over-drink, while others stated that the majority of men over-drink. Many explanations for the high levels of over-drinking were related to the war and displacement. Some suggested that idleness in the internally-displaced persons camps led to an increase in drinking. Others suggested that men lost a sense of their role during the war. Still others suspected a link between trauma and alcohol use. Other explanations I heard included economic stress or conflicts with a wife.

## **Findings**

### **Overview**

As shown in Figure 1, the central theme that emerged was the belief that fathering is investing in the future. The ways in which a father does this are by fulfilling his three primary roles: providing for basic needs, educating children, and creating a stable home. A description of these three roles addresses my first research question: What is the role of

a father in Acholi families? In response to my second research question (What is the perceived relationship between alcohol use and these roles?), I learned about the ways alcohol impacts and colors each of these roles. Descriptions and examples of these roles make up the bulk of my findings. Within each role, I document the perceived impact of alcohol use. After discussing each role, I describe the variation within each role as well as the ways in which that role relates to and overlaps with the other two roles of a father.



*Figure 1:* Interrelated domains and themes.

In addition to these roles, fathering takes place within a broader context. A father's relationship with his partner and her role in parenting necessarily impact a father's roles. Extended family members are also often involved in the execution of these roles, sometimes by invitation and other times by intervention. The roles of a father and the relationships that impact these roles take place within a broader social and cultural context that includes recovering from war, economic factors, religion, and broader cultural shifts in values. The social and cultural context is also seen in the socially-constructed hierarchies that organize and influence all societal, extended family, partner, and father-child relationships. Finally, the ways in which a father performs his roles, the ways he interacts with the broader systems, and his endorsement of the social hierarchy varies based on his position along a spectrum from modern to traditional. I will present these results in the order discussed in this overview (again, with the exception of the modern/traditional perspectives, which will be illustrated throughout the results).

### **Central Theme: Fathering is Investing in the Future**

I did not set out to find one overarching theme but one clearly emerged. The primary motivator in fathering – at least ideally – is the future of the child and family. Fathers educate their children so they know how to behave in life in the future; fathers provide for their children so they can live happily and healthily into their future; fathers create a stable home so that children have an example of how to live and so children feel close to them, which enables education. “The most important thing a father does is ensuring the safe future of his child” (F2). Although less often mentioned, fathering a child is also an investment in other family members and the father's own future.

**Investing in the future of the child.** Simply put, fathers should want the best future possible for their children. “A father who is not serious is one who will not think ‘What will this child eat? What is the future of this child?’” (F2). Fathers hope that their children have more success than they do themselves: “My child should go beyond me, for a better future” (F1). One father said that he hopes to instill in his children that it is better not to have children until you can provide for them. He went on to say that he hopes his children impart this on his grandchildren.

A father’s orientation to the future permeates each of three primary roles of a father. The reason to have a loving relationship and stable home is to prepare a child for the future:

A child who notices that he is not loved – and when it is true that you as a parent did not love the child – in the future, the child will start doing bad things because you did not show them love. (F8)

Another father made a similar statement, “The love of a father is very important, so if a child lacks the love of a father then he or she never becomes somebody responsible. There are many things that a child will lack in future” (F19).

The reason fathers teach their children and the things they teach children are based on setting the child up for a successful future: “I should teach them how to lead a good life, which in the future will give them good life” (F8). Fathers are preparing their kids for the time when they will be responsible for themselves:

We as parents educate the child on how to live life in the future – the way he should live life in order to make him a good person. He should be a good person and a

person who can support himself despite other problems. He should be able to support himself. So that is the task of us the parents. We are supposed to let the children know these things early. (F9)

For example, teaching children to work hard and making sure they know how to farm is part of preparing children for a successful future:

Most especially I am teaching my children that if you want to be okay in the future, you will get things when you work. And for that reason we should make good use of the hoe. Even if they may not be able to attain high education – since I have very many children and I may not be able to fund for their education – I want each one of the children to become good at farming. When you carry out farming, you are able to get all the good things that people have. What you gain out of the farming will help you and you will be a hard worker and you won't become a thief. (F14)

Providing for children's basic needs is likewise future-oriented. At the most basic level, if a child does not have food, medical care, or shelter, then the child might not survive into the future. In this way, providing for a child's basic needs is the primary consideration when thinking about a child's future. In addition, providing a child's school fees is part of providing a child's basic needs and, in this case, providing becomes part of ensuring a successful future for the child: "They should perform well [in school] to enable you the parent to have hope that this child will find a job in the future and he will do well" (F10).

Many of my discussions with fathers regarding alcohol use became future oriented as well: "According to me, since I do not drink any alcohol, my children should do the

same. This will help them to find ease while managing their families in the future” (F8).

Another father stated,

When parents find their children drinking alcohol, they tell them not to drink because their age is still tender for alcohol consumption. They also wonder the kind of future this child will have if that is how they are drinking at the moment. (F17)

*Two examples of investing in the future of the child.* Two examples of fathers investing in the future of their children stand out as the most poignant. The first example is something one of my informants recounted about his own father. His father knew he might not live much longer and his son (my informant) was still young. Because he wanted to prepare his child for the future, he wrote out the things he wanted to teach his son as his son grew up. My informant said,

He wanted to write in such a way before he became very weak; he said that he would not be there for long. I was the youngest child. He knew that when he is not there and when I reach the age of 30 or 40, how will I know how to live like a man? At that time, he knew that he could not give me all that information at once, so he thought it better to put some in writing. It is like that. When I follow it, it feels like my father is still alive. (F17)

The lessons and advice left in this journal ranged from “don’t sell off any land” to “visit another country to compare how people live and adopt the best of what others do.” My informant proudly stated that he has been able to follow the advice of his father to this day.

The second example is a father who worries what will happen if his children cannot succeed via formal education.

What gives me fear is that not all my children are intelligent most especially the oldest. He is not intelligent and that is why I started to bring in some other options, so that in case he fails to continue with education, there will be another way by which he can earn money. I bought for him goats and the other children I bought for them chickens. I do all this because I worry about their future. You know that it is not easy to find a job. For the case of my older son, I will take him to a vocational school after completion of primary seven so that he may learn construction and he will easily find a job. (F10)

This father demonstrated what many other fathers said, a father must know his children to know how to best parent them. In this case, the father wanted to ensure that each child has the best chance to succeed in the future given each child's abilities.

**Investing in the future of others.** A few fathers talked explicitly about the secondary impact that fathering a child may have on others, including himself. For example, one father alluded to the burden that results from a child dying before being able to provide support to the parents. Another father joked that paying for his children's education was a way to ensure his proper funeral:

And sometimes I even tell them jokingly, I am buying my coffin. I have seen people in the villages dying here, they're buried without a coffin. So you know, if I don't take you to school, do you know what is going to happen? By the time I die here, you will say 'Who's now going to buy a coffin, we don't have money.' If you are

working, do you think you would accept your father to go down without a coffin?

So I'm buying that coffin now. (F1)

Even if it was not explicitly mentioned, it was clear that children can provide a sort of safety net or retirement plan for parents.

Furthermore, if older children are successful economically, they may be able to help support younger children: “A father may say, you elder children should marry, you are big, you can bring a wife – you can now live on your own, get something and begin to support the young ones” (F4). The older children are also expected to help care for younger children and fulfill the roles of a parent when the parents are not around, and so investing in the future of the older children has a secondary impact on younger children.

A child's success may also be seen as a means to bring a family out of poverty and improve the family's situation over subsequent generations. Indeed, fathers mentioned hopes that their grandchildren will have good lives while also hoping or planning to not bear responsibility for their grandchildren. Finally, children will carry on the legacy of the family and father specifically. A child who is well-regarded will reflect positively on the parents, family, and even clan.

In practice, fathers may act or make decisions in the moment and without regard for the future, but ideally, the motivation for everything a father does is rooted in preparing the children for a successful future. A well-fathered child then has a better chance of surviving into adulthood, knowing what he or she needs to know to live a good life, having the means to succeed economically, and having the ability to give back to the

family. The central theme of fathering as an investment in the future will be seen throughout the remaining findings.

### **Roles of a Father**

Early in my interviews, I thought that an order of importance to the roles of a father began to emerge. Through further exploration, my informants taught me that all three roles are important and are interconnected. One father nicely summed up the interconnectedness of providing, teaching, and creating a stable home:

When the home is stable, there will also be teaching. Without stability there is no provision of anything like teaching. Where there is stability there is peace in the home. When your mind is peaceful, you will have time to think of doing the right thing for your family. In that process, providing will come in and learning will become easy. (F18)

My initial thought – based on my early interviews and the informal conversations I had with community members – was that providing was the most important role of a father. As I will discuss later, there is some support for this perspective, but a father can still be a good father without being able to provide because there is value in each role of a father:

[Even if a father can't provide] the other roles like maybe teaching the children, advising them, are really very important roles. Even if you cannot provide for their food and education. [...] advising the children is very, very important for life. Because to me, that is when the man can use this opportunity to tell his children about his experience in life. What he has seen on Earth, not from books, but from Earth. (F11)

At the end of the description of each role in the following sections, I will describe the relationship of the role being discussed to the other roles. The order of the roles presented here reflects the order in which most informants presented the roles of a father to me during interviews. The relative importance of each role and the relationship between the roles will be discussed but my intention is to represent them as interrelated as shown in figure 1.

### **Role 1: Provide for Basic Needs**

Providing for the basic needs of a child was typically the first response informants gave when discussing the roles of a father: “I have to provide the basic needs for my children. It's my sole responsibility” (F13). In one way, this role is the most important simply because the other roles of a father will not matter if a child does not live into adulthood. Beyond basic survival, additional forms of providing (e.g., buying new shoes) have a similar level of importance to the other roles.

Providing for a child not only ensures the survival of the child but is one way a father can show love: “Sometimes even when you give him bread, however small it is, he becomes happy that father is back. That is the way that he will know that you love him” (F5). One father said, “Generally here people associate love with provision of what they need” (F6) but another father thought love needed to go beyond provision: “You can buy them all things but love cannot be bought. [...] It's like I slap you and I give you money. Do I love you?” (F12).

The importance of provision is also seen in the way the extended family interacts with a father. As I will discuss in later sections, the extended family (e.g., in-laws,

siblings, parents, cousins, aunts and uncles) can be involved in any of the roles of a father, by invitation or by intervention. However, I learned that intervention was unlikely as long as a father was providing for the child's basic needs. In fact, even an abused wife might be told to stay with her husband as long as he is still providing. Although my informants told me that providing for children is not the only role of a father and that a good father must also fulfill his other roles, it was apparent that some may view a father as good enough as long as he provides.

Despite a father's desire to provide for all of his children's needs, his economic situation may prevent it. The following story from an informant's childhood illustrates an acknowledgement of the importance of providing but also demonstrates that a father can be a good father even if he is unable to provide something needed:

It was during that time when I was still young, I remember it so well. My father was not very rich. He was poor. I remember he used to have some problems with money. I had some pain which was disturbing me so much. I don't know where this came from but I would feel some aching all the time, it was very painful. But here's a man who does not have enough money to take me to the hospital to check that problem. But when I would be feeling very bad, he would say, 'My son I know that you're now in great pain. But I do not have money. And there is nothing that I can do about it. But I am still your father.' And he would even carry me. And then I see his love and I would say, 'You don't mind. Maybe in some ways we may find a solution.' You can hear those words. It's not money. And I would still remember that my father loves me even when he cannot take me to the hospital, not because I

was young and I do not know that I was supposed to be taken to a hospital, I knew that was my right. I was supposed to be taken. If it was other people's father he would take them. But this is a poor one. And I would not want anyone else to be my father. I love him. (F12)

When fathers are unable to provide for some reason, they may seek support from others, for example, “If you as a parent have no energy to look after the children, at least there will be other people in the family [to help]. Brothers can also be there” (F5). Fathers think about provision in the present but also for the future:

I am going to become weak soon just like my father was. I had an accident and my leg is swollen. That is why I think along the line of domestic farming. I may not be able to pay further for education. If my leg gets bad and I am not able to dig then I will turn to the animals I am rearing as a source for survival. The children should engage in animal rearing so that they are able to support themselves in the future. (F10)

**Things a father provides.** Providing includes things like providing food and shelter, paying school fees, and protecting the child’s safety:

You have to make sure the children, the family is well fed, that is the responsibility. So you have to take to digging if you don’t have any kind of job or office work. You have to dig so that you're family gets food. That is the most important fact. Secondly you take children to school. Children without education will not have a way of surviving. Let the children be dressed up, fed, sleep properly. There should be some kind of accommodation for them. Protect their security, their security is

protected. You must ensure that there is the food. Medical, yes definitely, medical, yes. Your children must grow healthy. (F1)

***Provide food.*** Fathers who live in town primarily provide food by working and buying food at the market. However, because a family's ancestral land is so important, a father who lives in town may also return to his village weekly and attend to some crops or livestock. In villages, providing for food is not a source of significant stress. Fathers in villages can dig (farm), keep livestock, and hunt:

Digging in the garden... although that one is not only for the father but the father plays a role there. And then things like when they have animals, the father ensures they are being properly kept. And then getting food for the family using other sources like hunting, apart from what is in the garden or animals kept at home for food. (F2)

Traditionally, culture dictates that fathers are responsible for food: "When you are a family head you should rear animals for example cattle because that is what culture requires" (F8). While fathers are responsible for providing food, women are responsible for preparing food and feeding the children. Furthermore, while fathers reported that this responsibility falls on them, mothers also contribute to farming. In my observation, I saw roughly equal numbers of men and women digging outside of town; in town, I more often saw women attending to small gardens.

***Provide shelter.*** "As a father, you make sure to have put at least a semi-permanent building where children sleep in good rooms so that it offers protection" (F6). When I asked one father for an example of the most recent time he showed his children love, he

talked about building a hut for them:

Less than two weeks ago, when my second wife and children went farming, I got news that there are no huts for them to sleep in where they were carrying out farming. I went there and built for them a beautiful hut. (F8)

In town, a father is more likely to provide shelter by paying rent than building a home. If a family rents a home, it is likely one building with different rooms or a hut or two for the whole family. If a family lives on their own land, the father will build a primary hut for him, his wife, and their young children. He will build a separate hut for boys over 12 years and another for girls over 12 years. There will also be a separate, smaller hut for cooking. (This group of buildings makes up the compound.) If a man has more than one wife, then he will most often provide a separate compound for each wife or at least a separate hut within a shared compound.

***Provide clothing.*** During conversations with informants I often asked how I could tell a good father from a bad father without really knowing him. Many fathers responded that I could look at their kids and specifically stated that if I saw a child without clothes or with tattered clothes, I would know they have a bad or drunk father. Many fathers mentioned clothing in their lists of ways to provide: “Ensure you provide proper clothing to them, proper bedding, and ensure they sleep in good houses to protect them” (F6).

***Provide medical care.*** Modern medicine is available (although may require traveling for hours) but can be expensive. Many of my informants included medical care as a way they provide, protect, and show love. One father said, “we protect them also against illnesses, yes that is a protection” (F6) and another said, “In relation to providing,

yesterday at around 2:00pm, one of the girls developed headache and Malaria. I took her to the hospital and she got treatment then I brought her back home” (F8). Because fathers are concerned about the health of their child and because medical care is expensive, fathers took seriously misbehavior that might jeopardize a child’s health.

***Provide a formal education.*** Providing a formal education for children is important for all fathers, but a father’s economic situation and the degree of value a father sees in education may dictate the extent of a child’s education. Fathers facilitate their child’s formal education by paying school fees and encouraging their children to study. One father explained that digging is important but should not interfere with school:

I don't encourage laziness in the family, but then again during the course of their studies I don't want somebody's time to be wasted because you are going from here to there for food. No, that one you leave it to me. So I give you time to concentrate in books, rather than this digging here, leave this one to me. (F1)

Boarding school is generally thought to provide a better education than day school but is also more expensive and results in less time with children. Fathers with the greatest wealth are likely to send kids to a boarding school in southern Uganda as the quality of education available is higher. Boarding school is seen as better because there is more structure, fewer distractions, and it is more difficult for children to skip school: “[In day school] they don't perform well, why? There are a lot of things. One is that there are other things which happen between home and school” (F16).

Education is valued for girls and boys, but circumstances might prevent all kids from being able to attend school. In some cases, an oldest daughter cannot continue in

school because she must care for younger siblings or an oldest son might be required to fulfill the role of an absent father. If a father cannot afford to pay school fees for all his children, he may decide to only pay for those with the most educational promise or he may decide that the youngest children should get a chance to start school.

I thought it was telling that fathers insisted that formal education was part of a child's basic needs; their insistence shows the value placed on school. Fathers feel like having education ensures the safe and productive future of their child. Formal education differs from informal education, as discussed in the second role of a father, but the two complement each other.

***Provide security and safety.*** In a broad sense, everything a father does is protecting the well-being and future of the child. However, my final focus group helped to clarify that there is a specific type of protection that falls under provision of basic needs. This type of protection largely consists of physical protection against harm:

For example, a father can raise a dog and that dog can protect the family. The father can also have things like a bow and arrow in the house for security. Anything that comes, it is the father who should come and face it so the family feels secure. That is why a child knows that a father has the ability to protect them. When something goes wrong he says 'I'm going to report you to my father' because he knows the father is there to protect him. (F2)

Providing security and safety also may include keeping away people who may disturb the family, "You know as a father, you wouldn't allow other people to disturb the home. You will make sure when anybody comes home and tries to cause disturbances in

the home, you will chase that person away” (F6). Knowing one’s children, monitoring them, and setting rules can also be a part of protecting the children’s safety: “Like in the evening you put some measures, not to allow them move around at night, that is also protection” (F6).

**The impact of over-drinking on providing.** Over-drinking may impact a father’s ability to adequately provide in four basic ways: he may be unable to work or dig, he may spend money on alcohol instead of basic needs, he may steal or sell off possessions to buy alcohol, and he may be unable to protect the family. One father summed this up well,

A person who does not drink at all has got no problem. For the people who drink for leisure have less problems but for those who drink excessively fight, steal from home, sell food that is stored at home. He will not be able to pay for education and he will not have energy to go and dig. His energy goes down as he continues to drink. (F14)

Another father gave a concrete example of being drunk, “wildcats may come to catch chickens and when you are drunk the cat will catch the chicken and go away with it” (F8). Others simply said, “maybe even if you have money, you go and drink it off” (F1).

As an illustration that a father who provides might be seen as – or consider himself to be – good enough, many informants told me that fathers who drink a lot of alcohol may justify their drinking by saying that before they go away for the rest of the day to drink they leave money for their wife to buy food for the children. After hearing this from fathers who do not drink themselves, a father who clearly spent a lot of time drinking alcohol said,

When I am done with my work and when I am back from the garden, I can wait for the evening hour. Then I will go to drink. But before I do that, I provide all the basic needs required at home, like salt, soap, sugar for that day. If necessities are lacking then if I have 2,000 shillings, I will give 1,500 shillings for buying what is lacking and I will go spend the 500 shillings with my friends. (F11)

When over-drinking begins to noticeably impact a father's ability to provide, extended family might step in. In some cases, the wife's family may take in the wife and kids until the father can prove he can provide. In other cases, older children take up responsibility for the younger children. One informant gave an example of such a case: "Some of the children never continued with their education. Fortunately, the first two children had already attained higher education and they came in to rescue the family. They took up educating the younger ones" (F18). In another example, a father's realization that he was not fulfilling his role of providing was given as the likely motivation to stop drinking alcohol:

He stopped drinking alcohol because it was extreme, because his wife ran away and he was unable to help his children in school. He was a teacher but he was fired, so his world was crumbling down. Maybe he realized that it was all his making because of drinking. So he decided to say no to drinking and now he is back to work working and paying his children's fees and that is good (F3).

**Variation within providing.** The things a father provides are fairly consistent; after all, all children need food, shelter, safety, and their other basic needs met. The things that vary most within this role are the means of providing and the degree to which

these roles are shared with the children's mother, the latter being generally captured under the differences between a modern or traditional perspective.

As mentioned previously, fathers in town are most likely to provide by working at a professional job or owning a business and purchasing basic necessities. For many fathers, this results in town life being more stressful. For fathers in town, everything costs money. However, there are also more resources and opportunities in town. Fathers living in villages have less stress about providing food and shelter but may have less money for school fees or medical bills that arise. One father said,

In the town, people are more concerned with survival. A living, I must work hard to earn some money, to rent the house, to pay the school fees, and we have to buy water because everything in town means water. In the village that's not the case.

(F3)

Still, some fathers insisted that differences between fathers are not rooted in town vs. village differences, but rather differences in economic situations: "I think that all fathers are the same but the difference between an urban or rural father depends on your ability financially" (F14).

Whether families live in town or in a village, the responsibility of providing sometimes leads fathers to seek employment away from home. Some fathers work in other countries and come home a few times a year and other fathers work in town and try make it home to their village at least a few times each month. This necessarily impacts the amount of time a father spends with his children but is generally accepted because of the importance of meeting a child's basic needs.

*Modern versus traditional perspectives in providing.* In general, fathers with a more traditional view of their role in providing believe that the responsibility of providing falls solely on them. For example, one father said, “If my wife [provides], then it comes maybe out of excitement or something of that kind, she doesn't feel that it is part of her responsibility” (F13). Another father explained that when his wife makes money, she brings it to him and they discuss how to spend it; when he makes money, he takes a portion straight to the bank without telling her so he can be sure it is not wasted.

Many fathers demonstrated an incremental shift from more traditional to more modern views. One father said that provision in some areas fall on him while others can be shared:

Even though your wife is working the children look at you as a father, the head of a family, to provide school fees. Then others like food, that one can be shared. Like hospital bills can be shared. But providing shelter and then the school fees, that is responsibility of the head of the family. (F7)

Fathers with a more modern view believed that the responsibility of providing should be shared. Some explained that there are benefits to sharing this responsibility, like knowing the family can be provided for even if one parent is not there. Another benefit is greater respect from the children for both parents:

If it's only me holding the money in the family and my wife is not holding money in the family, the kind of mentality or perception a child may have is that their mother cannot help them with anything. It is only the dad who can. Eventually because they say money has power, I will tend to dominate decision making at home

because the children will say, ‘after all you have nothing, let me go to my father.’

And then they will not really obey the mother. (F4)

**Relationship of providing to educating and providing a stable home.** Providing for a child’s basic needs influences and relates to educating children and creating a stable home in a number of ways. Providing a child’s basic needs allows a child to focus on learning what he or she needs to learn; a child who is hungry will have a difficult time learning from his or her father. Furthermore, children may learn unwanted behaviors, like stealing, in an effort to meet basic needs. “You should work hard and store enough food, for example, a sack of beans. Children should not go around begging or stealing food” (F14).

A family that has its basic needs met will also be more stable. “When you provide the basic needs, your children don't go hungry, that makes your home stable, and you don't fight anyhow” (F6). Stability through provision also comes in part because providing shows love and makes children feel secure:

When children say ‘daddy, at school I need this’ and he says, ‘Okay, tomorrow I will go to school and pay it’ and he pays. And then, ‘We need the book’ and he goes and buys the book [...these are] indications of love. (F3)

When provision is absent, it can cause instability. One of my informants gave the example of a friend who lost his job with an NGO when the NGO left the country. The financial stress that resulted made him stressed, irritable, and rude.

Providing can also interfere with a father's ability to educate or build his relationship with children. Fathers who work have less time to teach their children, which can have negative consequences as one father pointed out:

They come home very late and they leave very early. Their time with the children is almost not there. They say 'I'm tired please let me rest.' ... Time for the children is only maybe at weekends or on when there is public holiday. But most of the time they don't have time. And the children, seeing that the parents are not always with them, begin associating with many in their peer group. (F3)

As mentioned previously, a father who needs to be away from his children for work is not seen as a bad father, although having more time with children is preferred. In these cases, fathers seen as good fathers make every effort to be home when children are sick, when children are home from boarding school, or whenever problems arise.

### **Role 2: Educate Children**

It did not take long to learn that there is a clear difference between formal (school) and informal education (teaching at home). This role of a father refers to informal education, the education that takes place at home: "[Fathers should] provide a sense of direction, in other words, educating the children" (F2). Although it is different than formal education, informal education provides a foundation for the learning that takes place in school. Again, mothers have more time with children and therefore a greater role in teaching in terms of contact with the children. Even so, the teaching of a father remains important, especially for boys. I heard from informants and other community members that boys may be less likely to listen to their mothers and there is a perception that it is

especially problematic for male children if the father is not able to fulfill his role teaching.

Informal education is a necessary piece of preparing a child for the future. One father explained that preparation early in life will help the child succeed in the future, “He will grow up and we should prepare him for that. Things happen in life and if we don’t prepare them, it will become difficult for them. It is our responsibility to inform or educate them early enough” (F9). This importance is seen in the things a father teaches, which are presented in the following section.

The importance of teaching is further emphasized by the belief that parents have the most significant and the first impact on children; children do learn from friends but some of my informants believed that a child who is taught well will not be swayed by peers. One informant told me,

A child who comes from a good family, every evening they are always together sharing. The father always keeps on reminding their children of the do’s and the don’ts. So, that thing is always in their mind and makes them fear to do bad things, even if they stay together always with bad friends. (F19)

On the other hand, even though fathers are thought to have the most significant impact on children, another informant told me that a positive community can buffer against the negative effects of a bad father.

Teaching a child is also a way that fathers show love, both in the ways a father teaches and the things a father teaches. Teaching is loving in that it is providing information needed to live well in the future:

When you teach them, you give them instructions on how to live, how to behave.

That is love. Because if you don't love your children you will not tell them this is right, this is wrong, you will just leave them to grow in their own way. That is a sign that you don't love your children. Because as a father, I have to give some instructions to them, to guide them what is good and even to appreciate what they have done. That is love. (F6)

As mentioned previously, one of the ways to tell a good father from a bad father is to look at his children. “What shows that this is a good father is the teaching. You see the children in his home, the way that he has taught them” (F5). People suppose that a child who behaves poorly must not have been taught well, which reflects on the father.

However, teaching takes time and this becomes a barrier for some fathers: “Actually, sometimes I'm left behind in [teaching] because of the time that I'm committed to other things” (F4). Regardless of the amount of time fathers have with children, the things they teach and the ways they teach remained similar.

**Things a father teaches.** Generally speaking, boys are taught how to be men and girls are taught how to be women. There are some differences between what girls and boys are taught but there is more overlap than difference. Furthermore, the extent of the difference varies between those with a more modern perspective and those with a more traditional perspective.

***Fathers teach children how to behave and relate to others.*** Fathers teach children these lessons by teaching children what to do and what not to do. Children are taught to behave “according to what the clan requires. [...] If the child is seen dressing or behaving

contrary to the way the clan expects, the father is now the target” (F2). Fathers teach children basic behaviors like the importance of greeting people, which is highly important in the culture. Children should also learn foundational qualities like responsibility: “Being responsible for yourself, [if you lose your school fees] that is being irresponsible” (F7). One informant even talked about the importance of making sure girls learn about men: “The father can be able to tell them that men think like this, behave like this. Because in future they may want to satisfy men in some ways” (F12). However, with topics like sex, the extent to which a father would directly teach is limited and he might utilize other modes of teaching. By teaching a child how he or she should behave, the child becomes responsible for his or her own future, as one father explained as if talking to a child, “When you don't listen don't blame me, you will blame yourself for not taking my advice” (F3).

Fathers also tell children not to associate with bad people and behaviors to avoid. Fathers teach children to not drink, places to avoid, and to not engage in violence.

I also advise them not to insult people, not hit friends with stones, to live peacefully with other people. They are still young and they do not know what is wrong or right. I do tell them not to pick what does not belong to them and I also do teach them other basic things about life and the things that I never did because they were not right. (F11)

In addition to teaching these things, fathers often teach children what the consequences might be for not heading their advice; as one father put it, “These are the kinds of things, bad company. There are children out there that you need to keep distance

from them. If you stay with them, the consequences will be like this” (F2). Sometimes the consequences given are legitimate information and other consequences may be exaggerated or inaccurate but are given as a teaching tool (for example, that drinking causes malaria), which will be further described as a way that fathers teach.

***Fathers teach children about religion and spirituality.*** The majority of Acholi people identify as Christian and this was also true for my sample. Fathers use spirituality and Bible scriptures in their teaching about other issues and also directly teach about their religious beliefs. One father said,

I share simple scriptures that are in the Bible. Like a story maybe of how Jesus grew up and became responsible before he began his ministry. Then I ask maybe a question, ‘how many would want to be like Jesus, how many would want to do the ministry like Jesus.’ (F4)

Another father said,

As Christians, you should let your child know the way of God. If possible you should get him involved in religion because that is the way to getting him into being a upright person because he will be aware of the actions that don’t please God. (F9)

***Fathers teach children necessary skills and chores.*** Fathers teach children everything from the need to sweep the compound and the proper way to do it, to how to dig in the garden, to how to build a hut, to – in some cases – how to cook. Fathers teach not only how to perform a task, such as digging, but also the outcomes of the labor: “I tell him that in the future we shall eat the cassava and also need to weed the maize” (F5). Of

all the things a father teaches, the skills he is most likely to focus on tend to be gender specific. For example, while all children are taught how to dig, fathers are more likely to teach boys the skills that they will need to provide for a future family, such as building huts and keeping animals.

The things that I teach them, when you come back from school and you find that there is no water in the hut, you should go to the well. And you as a girl, when you find that the utensils are dirty, you should wash them before a meal is prepared.

(F5)

The things a father teaches varies some from the town to the village out of necessity, but all my informants desired that their children know how to live in either setting. For example, one father from town said, “I want my children to know both lives, town life and village life. That is why I take all of them to the village. That's why I bought some cows. We go dig and feed them” (F7).

***Fathers teach children about their family.*** In addition to teaching children specific behaviors expected by their clan, as quoted previously, fathers teach children about their family members. One father simply explained that he teaches his children the names of their recent ancestors. Other fathers explained that kids need to know who is in their families so they do not marry a cousin. Learning about one's family is also tied to the family's land. I was told by informants and others that all Acholi people know their family land and many remain connected to it even if they live most of the time in town.

**Ways a father teaches.** Fathers described teaching their children in a number of ways that were largely consistent across all of my informants. These methods of teaching

did not seem to differ generally from the ways that mothers teach, although the amount of time mothers have with children is different and within individual families there may be differences between the mother and father. Regardless of whether a father was more traditional or modern, tough or soft, these methods of teaching were often described as the things a good father should do. As one father said, sometimes you have to be tough on kids, “sometimes you have to talk calm, and sometimes you have to shout” (F2).

***Fathers teach by showing.*** In one long exchange during a focus group, I had a father teach me how to dig as if I was his child. He went into his hut and brought out a hoe for himself and a hoe for me. We walked over to the garden barefoot and he stood beside me showing me how to hold the hoe and how to cut into the ground, pull the soil back, and kick it forward with my foot. He pointed out what to do, what to avoid, and warned me not to cut my toes, but mostly he showed me. The other men in the group counseled him and made sure he showed me all I needed to learn. In contrast, when they illustrated a bad father, I was not shown what to do and was given instructions and criticized.

Teaching by showing was usually described in reference to digging; for example, “You can then teach them and show them that you dig the land like this and this. You should give them small hoes” (F14). But teaching children by showing things can also be used for any physical task. “You have to be practical. You have to [teach] it physically” (F7).

***Fathers teach by telling.*** Most commonly, fathers explained that they simply tell their children what they want them to know. They tell them what to do and how to

behave, they tell them what not to do, and they tell them the consequences of not doing what they should. Sometimes this occurs one-on-one and sometimes within groups:

“Sometimes you gather them all together and say, ‘Today I want to tell you that, we are not cooperating in the work and now I would like you to take up the responsibility like so and so’” (F3).

Teaching by telling includes everything from telling children they should respect their teachers and study hard to telling them when to complete which chores. Many fathers related the things they tell their children to religion: “Sometimes I talk to them and relate it to Christian teaching” (F6).

Fathers tell children what will happen if they do not listen to the father’s guidance by telling them what the consequences might be of their behavior or choices. In some cases, these consequences are largely factual and direct. For example, “I give them examples of those people who fall around with alcohol” (F14). Another father said,

One day I told them ‘if one day you see me coming drunk staggering on their road [...] you combine and beat me up.’ That’s a joking way of telling them that getting drunk to that level is not needed and not necessary. (F6)

In other cases, the consequences and reasons given to children for behaving a certain way are exaggerated and induce fear. For example, one father explained why he was told not to throw knives when he was a child: “When you throw it, maybe your uncle will die or your mother will die. And an aunt whom you love is going to die” (F2). As other examples, children are sometimes told that pots that contain valuables have spirits living under them and shouldn’t be disturbed; some children are told that drinking

alcohol can cause malaria; other children are told not to disturb chameleons because if they bite you there is only one hospital that can remove it and it is a six-hour bus ride away in Kampala.

***Fathers teach by example.*** The previously referenced saying – “the hind legs follow the front legs” – exemplifies the thinking behind this mode of teaching. One informant used this saying and explained, “It can be that a child copied from the parents” and as an example he later said that violent fathers will teach their children by example, “When your child goes out to play and gets into a fight, people will say that this child is violent like the father, or people can say this child took after the mother if the mother is violent” (F11). Another father said that the way fathers teach children is “the way you live your life, children will naturally copy the way that you live and they will love to be like their father” (F2).

Fathers can teach their children by providing a good or bad example:

They will copy the way you live. If you like quarreling with neighbors, your children will copy the same thing. They will see your neighbors’ children. They will begin beating them and quarreling. But if you are not doing that, if you are living peacefully in harmony with your neighbors, they will do it also. (F7)

***Fathers teach with rewards and appreciation.*** A number of fathers mentioned the importance of praising or rewarding children who do something well. In some cases, this was explicitly mentioned as a method of teaching and other times it was simply said as something that fathers should do. This can include small gifts or sweets but it can just be praise: “It does not mean that once a child does well I should give him a present.

Thanking him is the same as the gift that you would give him” (F17). One father seemed like he stumbled across this idea one day when he thanked one child for doing well at a task and for the rest of the day, the rest of his children tried to out-do each other to earn a compliment.

Another father gave examples of praising his children:

‘This is well done,’ ‘this is wonderful’ and you try to acknowledge what they do.

Like cooking, when they have done the cooking I say ‘the food is nice, this is good,’ when they help us with some work in the garden, when they come back from the garden I say ‘well done. This time you have done very well.’ (F6)

Another father gave an example of using gifts to reward his son for changed behavior at boarding school, although he said his son will end up with the gifts with or without change:

I will be going to visit them. For him in particular I am taking a new chair and a new pair of shoes. He wanted new shoes for playing football. Before I give to him what I brought, I will start with finding out how he is doing. When I understand that he is changing then I will thank him and tell him that your teacher will give you a present. If he has changed then I will ask the teacher to give him the gifts the next day. (F17)

***Fathers facilitate teaching from extended family members.*** Extended family members are involved in supporting children in a number of way and even strangers feel free to correct or offer advice to others’ children. In some particular cases, the teaching of an extended family member is especially sought by the father. For example, some

subjects are less appropriate for fathers to discuss or it is believed that children will be less open to listening to teaching from fathers about certain subjects:

There are certain things that the parents can tell the child directly, but there are certain things that, they can tell their uncle to teach them if parents feel that they are not comfortable talking about it with their children directly. With the uncle they are free. (F3)

Another father explained that all he can teach his daughter about sex is that “There are some people who might now begin to say they love you and begin to show you some affection, but really, be careful about their intentions” (F12), and beyond that he asks his sister to talk to his daughter (because her mother is not in their life).

Other fathers said they may enlist the help of family elders, “You can even call other relatives to talk to the child. Elders. They talk to the child, especially those who are a little bit knowledgeable. You can say ‘okay, go and visit your uncle’” (F1). In one example, a father said that after his son tried to commit suicide, he had his son go live with a brother who is a pastor for a few weeks. Another father talked about helping talk to a brother’s child who was not attending school.

***Fathers teach by telling stories.*** All Acholi children know traditional stories because they are told by parents, grandparents, and teachers. Some fathers said they told stories when their children were younger, some said they frequently tell stories, and others said they have never used the stories because they seem old fashioned or because they were usually told at wang-oo (which is described next). Traditional stories involve animal characters with consistent qualities (e.g., Mr. Hare is wise or the villain is called

the beast). Even parents who do not tell these stories themselves may refer to the characters in their teaching by, for example, telling a child not to be like the beast. At the end of the story there is a lesson, and if the story-teller does not conclude with “so this teaches us...” then the children will likely ask for the lesson.

As an example, one father told me the following story about the leopard and the dog.

There they were and they were friends. The leopard allowed the dog to live in her home as a servant. The leopard had many many children. Then she would go out to hunt for food, but the dog remained home and hungry. And so the dog started eating the children of the leopard. And then the last day when one child was left, that one child was crying so the leopard came and said, ‘Oh, you bring my baby to suckle.’ That one was brought, taken back, brought again, taken back. Then it was discovered. The leopard said, ‘Let me go and check for my children myself.’ Then the dog ran. And that's why up to now they are not friends. That kind of animal has never been friends again with the dog. The teaching here is when you're friends you need trust one another...you need to be kind. You need to protect. You need that kind of thing. You don't need to be a liar. You don't need to create enemies, because the dog and the leopard now they have remained enemies. (F6)

***Fathers teach during wang-oo.*** Traditionally, stories would be told at wang-oo, but wang-oo is more than just stories. Wang-oo is the name for the traditional family gathering around the fire in the evening. Although this is not a single, concrete method of teaching like the other ways of teaching documented here, it is a way of teaching because

of all it encompasses; wang-oo is more than the sum of its parts. Throughout my first interviews I repeatedly heard references to wang-oo. Fathers told me that they teach during wang-oo, or that before the war people taught during wang-oo, or that the problem with teaching in town is that they cannot have wang-oo.

Wang-oo includes a fire, diner, stories, riddles, teaching and conversation and/or preparing harvested crops. Overall, wang-oo is more than just these things: “Wang-oo is not actually the fire, it is the gathering. Wang-oo is a process actually” (F3). This father went on to explain that there may be teaching and stories with all children present; then the young ones go to sleep and the older children may be taught what they need to know; finally, the older children go to bed and the adults may discuss their business. Because grown sons typically stay on their family’s ancestral land, wang-oo may include all the extended family living in the immediate area. Another father explained how his family does wang-oo,

I do it in the evening when I am at home, then we light the fire. We then sit by the fire place and I teach them most of the things that I mentioned earlier and share riddles. I also teach them how to live life. During harvest season for simsim, before the simsim is dry, we prepare some of them by the fire place so that it is dried under the sun and it is ready for consumption. During wang-oo we tell stories, and other traditional tales. (F14)

I asked my informants why, if wang-oo is so important, do many people not do it anymore. Some of the answers were practical, such as not being able to have a fire if you live in town; other less common answers were more or less that it is old-fashioned. I

asked what it was about wang-oo that really made it wang-oo; could not the same thing be accomplished in town by gathering the family in a different way? My informants laughed at this idea. Wang-oo is not the fire, but the fire and the environment are part of the experience. Wang-oo was disrupted during the war and while many in the villages have resumed the tradition, others lament it as one of the results of a changing society.

One of the lengthier experiential sources of data during my time in the field was an evening spent with a family for wang-oo, deep in the bush outside a village. Thomas and I met a father at a drinking place in town who said he regularly has wang-oo as a way to keep his children and three wives united. We accepted his invitation to join him one evening. Our four-wheel drive got us to the edge of his family's land where we met his mother. She was over 90 years old and told us that the "old Acholi" used to have more singing and dancing at wang-oo. We collected some of our host's nieces and nephews as we walked to his compound. The older boys started a fire and one of the host women went inside to cook dinner. Thomas, the father, and I all sat on chairs while the women and children sat on plastic or grass mats. For the next three hours, the older children, the father, and the mothers told stories and riddles. They served us dinner on our own plates but the family ate off a platter together. It was clear to see that wang-oo is more than just the teaching and stories that take place. It is a gathering that sends a message, it is teaching by telling, by stories, by showing, and by example, all wrapped into one.

I have given a relatively large amount of attention to wang-oo for a specific reason. Wang-oo seemed to be a symbol of an ideal, of a time when families would gather together regularly and in the safety and atmosphere made possible by a fire and being

together. It seemed to be a symbol of the changes brought by simultaneously recovering from war and adapting to a globalizing society. And it seemed symbolic of the ways that various fathers have tried to adapt to these changes, some by leaving the tradition in the past and others by trying to revive the practice.

***Fathers teach by disciplining.*** Much of my discussion with fathers about teaching surrounded teaching when the child has done something wrong. When a child does something wrong, a father might use some of the methods of teaching already discussed. In many other cases – especially after repeated misbehavior – fathers discipline the child. Occasionally it was difficult to know how truthfully fathers reported their use of each method of discipline. In part, I think this was because discipline is currently a major topic of discussion within the community. There are awareness campaigns about the consequences of violence on the radio and laws against severe corporal punishment, which is utilized by parents and teachers. Even so, we felt most fathers were open with us about the methods of discipline they use. When children misbehave, fathers may tell them about future consequences of their actions, about the right way to behave, or fathers might have other family members talk to the children. In addition, we learned of three primary ways a father disciplines.

Within each of the ways a father disciplines, fathers talked about their own emotion and the role of fear in disciplining the child. Fathers said that their emotion impacts their disciplinary action. One father explained that if he is already in a bad mood “the level of reaction to some problems goes much beyond how it should be. After that, I begin to think that maybe the way I reacted was too much” (F2). Ideally, fathers indicated that

they should be in control of their emotion when disciplining: “Usually, I try to reduce my anger” (F4). Most fathers also said children should fear discipline: “Children should fear that ‘if I do this my father is going to [punish me], or he will not like it. He is going to punish me’” (F2). On the other hand, fathers can make children too fearful of them. Issues of fear and authority parallel differences between modern and traditional perspectives in discipline. These differences in perspective result in much variety within the ways a father disciplines. The three primary ways an Acholi father disciplines – although not every father necessarily uses all three – are by caning/beating, by delaying or denying things, or by being stern or shouting.

*Fathers discipline by caning.* I had much discussion with fathers about caning (sometimes fathers used the word *caning* and sometimes the more general word *beating*). The two general perspectives are easily summarized. Some fathers believe that “Children also learn by sticks” (F4). Other fathers stated, “I think beating is not the best. Maybe it helped in the past but not now, I don't believe in hurt” (F3).

Disciplining by caning is the cultural norm and a father might be criticized by his peers or by his wife if he chooses not to cane his children. One informant reported, “Sometimes even my wife says that ‘you only talk to children but these children are too naughty, maybe talking alone is not [enough], the best is to make them remember by giving them slashes.’ I don't accept that” (F3). This same father explained the cultural view:

The culture of child raising approves a certain measure of caning. They first believe in talking, but if talking alone cannot help the child to improve or correct – like if a

child is ever stealing – they say ‘we cane this one also to deter other children who would copy his example. If you steal you are caned, so if you don't want to be caned you don't steal anything that doesn't belong [to you].’ So it is a way to discipline not only the culprit. (F3)

The majority of fathers endorsed some measure of caning and some who originally said they do not agree with caning later said they still need to cane at times. Even if fathers did not cane their children, their wives might.

Those in favor of caning explained that it can be used appropriately and excessively. Some fathers indicated that they readily use caning: “Well, with me, when the children misbehave, sometimes I beat them. Depending on how often is the same mistake and the weight of that mistake, I beat them. But sometimes I talk to them as a parent” (F4). Some fathers further explained that some offences require immediate caning, such as playing with fire near the grass roof of the hut or losing school books: “[He came home without his books and] that was a time I did not only teach him but I caned him. ‘You are careless. When you play football, get a friend and let him take care of them’” (F7).

Fathers agreed that part of appropriate caning is making sure the child knows why he or she is being caned: “Before caning him, I had to make him realize he made a terrible mistake I didn't want him to make. And when I was caning him he knew I was caning him rightly. And after he had to apologize” (F13). Most fathers also believed that caning should typically only be used after other methods have failed: “Before you risk caning, you talk to them. You repeat this, then you expand your talking. Before you go to

caning, you really you must have tried all avenues and faith” (F1). Another father who said there are times he immediately canes also said he thinks caning should usually come after warnings,

There is a saying for us Africans, the best [way to learn] here for kids is on the bottom. At times, when you tell them this, they do that. They are trying to test you also. But when you warned him or her three, four times, still repeating the same thing, please cane. That is not bad. You are trying to help him or her to cut out of that. (F7)

All fathers agreed that there should be limits to appropriate caning. In addition to making sure a child knows the reason for the caning, the child should only be hit on the buttocks and especially not near the face: “You should know that as you use a stick, at times you can beat the child’s eyes and that will bring a problem because your money that you had saved [has to be used for the hospital]” (F5). Most fathers in my final focus group agreed that two or three swats with a finger-sized stick was appropriate, although they also laughed and said that it becomes a problem when two or three is no longer enough. Fathers also generally agreed that it should not be the only form of teaching used and that it should be proportional and developmental. One father addressed this when he said, “Caning should be the last one and it should be proportional to the age of the child and to the offence that the child has committed” (F1). Multiple fathers also recounted times when they regretted their use of caning.

Other fathers said they do not cane and/or are against caning. One father simply said, “For me they listen to me. That is why I do not beat them” (F5). Some fathers don’t

think caning is effective:

When I was still a child myself, I saw that certain parents were caning a child from sunrise to sunset [...] but the children grew to be completely undisciplined, so from that time I say I don't believe in caning. (F3)

He went on to explain that,

I don't believe in caning because I have tried it myself, I tried caning but I realized that when I cane a child the child will still try to justify himself. But when I bring a child down and talk to the child I see that the child changes completely. So to me, caning will not tell the children between wrong and good. (F3)

I talked to many fathers who have reservations about caning, a few said they have never caned and others said they prefer not to but do not feel they have a choice in some cases.

One father said,

Another challenge that I have in my home is the school mode of disciplining children and then my own. Because from the school, they practice corporal punishment, which I am against. When I don't pick a stick, and yet from the school they are beaten, they tend not to listen to me until I threaten them. (F6)

Most fathers, even those who report not using caning, also use the threat of caning. For example, "I tell them not to do it again because I will beat them. I tell them that so that they do not repeat the same in the future" (F9). Another father said,

If there is one who is trying to hesitate [to go dig], then I become tough and raise my voice at him, I even pick a stick and tell him that if you delay I will cane your buttocks. Then he will run to the garden. (F14)

*Fathers discipline by denying or delaying things.* Some fathers talked about delaying things a child would have received or denying the child access or attendance to something as punishment. For example, “Sometimes we delay breakfast [...] or deny a child from going to a fun place” (F2). One father explained that he might threaten to deprive the child of something: “I tell him that if you do not do it, you will miss something; that statement will make him to do the chore” (F9). Another father further elaborated on this by saying,

I prefer talking to them and sometimes I go to the extent of denying them even some of those basic needs, but not education, those temporary ones, those day to day things. Like sometimes I say ‘Okay, you are going without breakfast because you don't want to go and work.’ Sometimes we buy small presents, I feel denying them some of those, ‘For you, you are not getting it because of this,’ so that they have internal feeling about, ‘Okay I think if I continue I will be missing this thing.’ With that they can correct themselves. I remember I instructed one that I would not wish to see him go out of the home. ‘You stay in the compound, do other things but don't go out unless you have been sent. And if I send you, go and I will time. You go and come back.’ That kind of thing. So when they feel they are being denied those privileges, they can learn. (F6)

*Fathers discipline by being stern or shouting.* My informants explained that, in some cases, just being stern with children is enough of a discipline. “Raising your voice is already a punishment” (F2). Fathers told me that this conveyed anger: “I will talk in a little harsh tone, then they will know that you are getting angry” (F5). They also said that

it is an incremental escalation if talking politely does not work: “When a child does wrong, call him up politely and tell him his wrong and correct him. But if he continues with the same mistake, then you can become rude and show him some aggression to make him learn” (F10).

Some fathers said that a stern or angry expression showed displeasure and will make the child take him seriously. Others implied that this can be used as a threat because it might make the child remember that he or she could be caned. In other cases, my informants explained to me that too much aggression or rudeness is not helpful and might make a child wary of you.

*The ways a father teaches should be developmentally appropriate.* Whether disciplining or teaching in general, teaching should be appropriate to the child’s age, both in the content of the teaching and the amount taught at once. “All the teaching must be in keeping with the age of the child. You cannot teach certain things [...] certain things should wait until the right time” (F3). Another informant explained that a father “should know that people do not learn at the same level” that it is the duty of a father to know if a child is “doing it purposely or is it because of a weakness” (F1). Many fathers stated that children’s minds can only handle so much: “Their brains cannot contain a lot of things at a time and so they cannot follow it all at once. It is up to you to know what to teach them” (F17).

As examples, a few fathers talked about teaching young children how to dig with a hoe short enough for their height:

Even at the age of five you can teach them how to dig around the compound. You

can teach them and show them that you dig the land like this and this. You should give them small hoes. If you see that they have some energy then you take them to dig together with his siblings. He may dig less but he will be working together with the siblings. (F14)

Others explained that certain methods of teaching are better for younger ages, such as the exaggerated consequences of playing with a chameleon or disturbing the pots with spirits under them. At a certain age, fathers stop using these exaggerations and fabrications: “there is an age group that you have to tell the truth” (F2). As another example, stories are more likely to be used for teaching with young children: “For the young ones, I chat with them stories that make them happy because their stage makes it still difficult for them to grasp some information” (F9).

**Impact of over-drinking on educating children.** Over-drinking can limit a father’s ability to teach his children what he is supposed to teach and can lead to teaching children negative behaviors. Furthermore, over-drinking can limit a father’s ability to judge the appropriate level of discipline in a situation.

A father’s ability to teach the things he ought to teach is limited by a number of factors. Fathers may simply not have the opportunity to teach their children because they are away from home drinking or, when they are home, their children may hide from them. Even if a father is around the children when he is sober, children may become distrustful: “A child may now not believe you” (F1). My informants thought that fathers who over-drink are less likely to praise or appreciate their children and may not be able to think straight to be able to give good direction.

One father who drinks told me he thought that he could still teach his children not to drink alcohol by pointing out the negative impact of alcohol:

You can also tell your child not to drink alcohol and you tell him that ‘see how alcohol mistreats me, that is why you are not doing well in this house.’ A child can listen to that statement and they will think that they are suffering as a result of the alcohol that their father drinks. So, in order not to have that problem they will not drink alcohol. In our community when you are teaching, when you drink alcohol, you should let your child know that it is alcohol causing the problems that you experience. (F11)

But other fathers said that children will think, “What he is saying, he is not doing” (F2) and that this will likely not work for teaching children not to drink alcohol.

Over-drinking also teaches children a range of negative behaviors. Children may learn to drink by following their father’s example and this may be especially true for boys who look up to their father. Children may also learn to drink by tasting their father’s alcohol, either when the father is not looking or because their father told them to go buy it and bring it back. If children are sent to buy the locally brewed alcohol they may choose or may be asked by their father to taste it and make sure it is good before buying it. A few of my informants reported getting their first taste of alcohol this way when they were as young as five years old.

Fathers who drink too much may set a bad example that children might follow in other ways as well. Children may learn to be aggressive like their father when he is drunk. They may learn that they do not have to follow their fathers teaching because he

does not follow it himself. They may also learn to lie to cover-up for their father because they may see the father steal and then feel obligated to lie to the mother to protect the father.

My informants also reported that fathers who over-drink are more aggressive in general but also specifically when it comes to disciplining. “Instead of talking in a calm way and saying [to the child] ‘when you are sent you should go and come back fast,’ he beats, and to me that is not helpful” (F5). Perhaps the best example of this sentiment was given by one of my informants who is a recovering alcoholic. He recounted that he often felt guilty when he thought back over his use of caning. He caned his children for things he would not cane them for when sober and he found himself caning his children at every misbehavior because he worried that their behavior would reflect on him:

I think alcohol also contributed a lot to my caning. At times when I'm sober I feel that it is not necessary to cane this child because of his mistake, and yet I recall that this child made the same mistake some time back and I caned very seriously. I'm regretting now why I caned the child. I think alcohol contributed a lot. [...] because I'm drunk and I know people [...] all look at me as an outcast now. So I had to defend myself. [...] So any child who makes a mistake, would be betraying me because that child would be compared to me. ‘This kind of behavior is like that of a drunkard and you'll grow up and become like your father.’ I don't want that measure to be made. So to avoid that, I have to put my children in line, so that they're not compared with me after making a mistake. (F13)

Finally, some informants also suggested that a father who drinks too much might

provide an example for children of what not to do. In some cases, a child follows a father's example and begins to drink later in life. In other cases, the opposite is true: "They can say, 'what my father is doing is not right.' They will know straight away because they had people that in school, at home, or on the TV say that too much drinking is bad" (F3) and they decide to be different.

**Variation within educating.** The primary source of difference reported within educating children was the difference between modern and traditional perspectives. However, other sources of difference also exist.

Some difference exists between town and village fathers but my informants told me they are minimal. Living in the village may be related to more emphasis on farming or rearing livestock, but as I have mentioned, most fathers in town also hope their children know these things. Fathers who live in town also typically work professionally while fathers in the villages primarily rely on subsistence farming. Working outside the home leaves fathers with less time for educating their children than fathers who only farm: "If a child does wrong, [the father] is not aware since he is never home" (F14).

My informants also said that variation in teaching and discipline can exist with step-children or other dependents as compared to biological children. Specifically, fathers reported that some parents are harsher with dependents. There is also some variation based on birth order. Parents may be more likely to directly teach to the oldest, who in turn may take care of and/or teach younger children. One father explained that because he was the oldest, his mother taught him how to cook even though he was a boy so he could help while she was sick.

Formal education also interacts with informal education. A father has less time to teach his children if they are at boarding school. Typically, there is only one family visitation day each semester at boarding school, although parents can arrange for additional visits. Between semesters, children are home for about three weeks during the holiday break.

A father's own level of education might impact the things and the ways he teaches his children as well. One father said, "You cannot teach somebody if you yourself don't know it" (F1). Another informant indicated that his own father became less sure of his ability to teach his child as his child achieved a higher level of formal education than he did:

Once the child is growing older, the parent tends to assume that the child is educated and has got all the knowledge. He forgets that the child still needs to be taught because he has got knowledge only on administration, which he learns at school. Let me say that when I reached primary seven my dad started to say that 'my son, I believe you know everything.' I disagreed with him and told him that I know everything concerning that level at school but not from home. (F17)

*Modern versus traditional perspectives in educating.* Fathers with a generally more traditional perspective were more likely to speak favorably toward corporal punishment and more likely to hold to more rigid gender roles compared to fathers with a more modern perspective. Again, the lines between these perspectives are not perfectly clear and many fathers discussed their attempts to blend the two.

Informants reported that more modern fathers are more likely to explain things to

their children, which will “enlighten them more” (F18) than caning. The fathers with a more modern perspective reported either not caning or preferring not to cane. For the more modern father, teaching responsibilities are shared with the mother. If the children misbehave, both parents are responsible for addressing the issue. On the other hand, a father at the traditional end of the spectrum might hold the ultimate responsibility for running the house but delegate much of the teaching to the mother. The result of this hierarchy combined with a father’s limited time at home was made apparent in the following statement,

Fathers, these days, do not have enough time to give the informal teaching to their children, but they expect their children to do the right things always. And if a child makes a mistake and does something wrong, the blame is always on the mother because we expect the mothers to guide them. (F13)

Fathers with a more traditional perspective are more likely to focus their teaching on the boys, while more modern fathers reported teaching all of their children and trying to teach all chores and tasks to each child. One father explained that he teaches each of his children male and female chores, but at a certain age they will adhere more to traditional gender roles: “By that time, the girls will now be fully in their kitchen or in the house” (F7). A more modern father compared his style to the traditional roles:

As a father, traditionally, we tend to teach more of the boy children on the roles of men in the family. [...] But now, especially with some of us who are educated, we teach both. Like in my family, I teach both girls and boys in the domestic chores. Because for me, I am good at all those, even cooking, I know everything. But here,

traditionally men are not to cook, they leave the cooking aspect to the wife. (F6)

**Relationship of educating to providing and creating a stable home.** If a father successfully teaches his children what he is ideally expected to teach, his children will be able to provide for themselves in the future and the home will be more stable because children will behave well. Children will learn the skills they need to find employment or farm to provide for their basic needs and the needs of their family. By being able to provide and as a result of being taught right and wrong, children may be less likely to engage in behaviors or crimes that could endanger themselves or the family: “What I do not want is stealing or theft because people lose lives daily as a result of theft” (F14).

The ways a father teaches can also impact the stability of the home. A father who uses a lot of caning and few positive modes of teaching may cause the home to be chaotic. One father said that his frequent beating in the past made his children fear him, “they would hide their mistakes with the fear that I'm going to beat them, but today I think they know that if they report, I advise them” (F13). On the other hand, using other modes of discipline might increase love and stability in their relationships: “when I thank them for the good that they have done, it helps to improve the relationship and respect between me and the child” (F17).

### **Role 3: Create a Stable and Peaceful Home**

“A serious father is one who intends to have a good family life with the wife and the children” (F2). A stable and peaceful home is one in which there is love and respect, one in which children feel free to talk with their parents, and one that provides a positive environment for children to learn and grow. The opposite of a stable and peaceful home

is described as one that is chaotic and is characterized by poor relationships and fear. “A father should make sure that people live happily at home. At least there should be no unnecessary chaos” (F5).

A stable and peaceful home creates a foundation for a child’s future:

A child who grew up in a home without respect will be a child who will insult people and also cause fights among people. The child will be a violent type and a dubious person who does not respect people or people’s property. They think that all the time there should be fights. This is because he grew up in a home without respect. (F11)

Even if children are exposed to negative influences outside the home, a stable and peaceful home serves as an example of how to live in the future:

I have lived with my wife for a number of years and I see that we are stable. And when there is peace people live peacefully among themselves, the children love each other. Like sometime I told them, as children grow they learn about violence from the neighborhood, from the school and when they come back home, they pick quarrels, they want to fight, to beat another. [I say], ‘Have you ever seen me beating your mother? Have you seen your mother beating me?’ These are the things I don't want in my home. I don't believe in it. (F6)

**Ways a father creates a stable and peaceful home.** A father can create a stable home by the way he interacts with family members, through his impact on the environment of the home, and by making sure he knows his children’s needs. Many fathers would say that a father cannot single-handedly create a stable and peaceful home

but he could single-handedly disrupt it.

***Fathers create a stable home by showing kids love and respect.*** Showing love and respect to children – whether by providing for them, showing affection, or talking respectfully – is needed to have a stable home. For young children, this might mean holding the children or letting them sit in your lap: “That happens when a child is still young. You carry and sooth them” (F5). Physical affection like this is typically not seen with children around four or older. Although some fathers show physical affection and continue to play with children for longer than is traditionally typical: “I am now educated and I know a lot and, why should I not play with them?” (F7).

The way a father talks to his children and his expressions can convey love and respect or aggression and dislike: “A harsh tone which is inappropriate is a clear indicator that he does not like the children and people in his home” (F8). A father’s expressions are even important for babies: “The way you attend to her/him matters. That is when they begin to learn from your facial expression. When he sees a smiling face, he will think that the father or mother loves him” (F18). When I asked one father if buying things for children was the only way to show love, he replied,

The way you talk to them, that is even enough [to show love]. Like for my case, when I go back home from my place of work here, I go back home, they come to welcome me. That is showing love. Your mood, the expression of parents will show. They are very keen. (F7)

Children who are treated in this way will feel free with their fathers, free to interact, play, and ask questions. This freedom creates a foundation for learning and guiding

children:

My children are free with me and that is how I made it. Whenever they tell me that they have a question to ask me, I am not rude to them and tell them that I will plan for time to take questions. I simply give them a go ahead. [...] I am a parent that they are used to and feel free with. (F14)

***Fathers create a stable home by treating family members with equality.*** This requires little explanation. If a man has more than one wife, he should treat them equally; likewise, a father should treat his children equally. However some fathers also said they might deliberately give a reward or special treatment to a child who did something good as an example to the other kids. Generally though, treating some better than others could cause instability.

For example, in reference to children, a father said,

If I give this child something today, next time I will give to another child. If you are to show love to only one child, other children will not love you. They will say that father loves the other child and he does not love me. Your home should be a peaceful home and you should love all your children so that you are all happy.

(F14)

Another father shared a similar sentiment regarding multiple wives:

In Acholi culture if you show your love only on one wife then the rest of the women will not be happy with the one who is loved. You should not show that ‘I love this one.’ Everything should be done equally. I sleep in each home three days. If I am distributing resources – for instance, on Christmas day – I will give to each

one based on the number of children one has got. But if what I have to give is directly for the mothers, I distribute equally. (F14)

Others do not feel that it is possible to have stability with multiple wives and that there will always be jealousy. One informant recounted that this was his experience as a child,

My father had two wives and when I look at the past, the way he treated his two wives, we children [of each wife] were treated differently. The difference I want to make is that I want to have one wife so that I bring up my children in a way I know they don't suffer in future. (F19)

***Fathers create a stable home by not fighting or quarreling.*** A stable and peaceful home is one in which parents are not aggressive with the children and the parents do not fight between themselves. Some of this is related to caning: “The love that you portray to them will make them to listen to you. When you beat them, the next time that you call a child, he will think that you want to beat him” (F8). Beating a child – or at least beating too much – will cause a home to be unstable and not peaceful because children will begin to fear their father. Even if he raises his voice, they might become fearful that he is about to beat them. In addition to this, as a child ages, he might begin to fight back against a father:

[The child] will reflect back then when he used to be beaten, [...] and the older he grows, he will no longer run away from you when you want to beat him but he will come to you and beat you. (F10)

Fighting between parents also impacts the children: “The children also will feel the effect [of their parents fighting]. They will feel it more than you who is fighting. That

thing will remain in their mind for so long” (F7). Another father explained, “I don't fight, I don't remember fighting my wife, don't believe in it. To me that is how I make my home stable” (F6).

***Fathers create a stable home by knowing their children.*** In order to create a stable home, a father must know his children so he can address any concerns that may arise. Like any of the roles of a father, this is an ideal and varies in practice by the amount of time a father has with his children. At the most basic level, knowing children requires spending time with them. As one father said, “I have to love them and spend time with them in order to make life okay” (F8). Another said,

Your presence at home is a big sign of love for them. I make sure I don't delay out unless I have some serious program, usually I make sure by around 7:00 to 8:00 I am at home with my children. (F6)

Part of the reason for spending time with children is to know what they need by asking them and observing them:

You can even ask what they are thinking or feeling. He may even be feeling hungry. When you ask him calmly he can tell you. It is important for you to be observant once you are with a child. It will help you to know what is going on and you can work upon changing it. (F9)

Fathers ask children about their day at school, about the people they are spending time with, and any problems they are having. As an example, one father said he asks, “How was school? Which teacher met you? What did you do in school?” (F4). In other cases, a child might bring a new friend home and the father might ask the friend questions to learn

what family he or she is from and what type of person he or she is. Some fathers require everyone to be home at a specific time and they will ask the other children where any missing child might be.

***Fathers create a stable home by not over-drinking.*** This will be discussed in more detail in the relevant section below detailing the impact of alcohol. Simply put, over-drinking seemed to be used as a synonym for an unstable home. For example,

Fights should be absent, then the home will become peaceful. But if you are a chaotic person, you come home drunk and you threaten your wife and children. If your children run away from home and sleep in the bush or you beat your wife or the children almost all the time; these are the things that makes a home not to be stable. (F14)

***Variation within creating a stable and peaceful home.*** The primary variation within this role is the difference between fathers with modern or traditional perspectives. Other small differences exist, such as differences in the age that fathers will play and joke with children. Some fathers are clear that they do not show physical affection (e.g., holding, soothing, or playing) past about three years old while others play games with their children until the children are teenagers and no longer want that type of attention from their fathers. It may be the case that this relates to modern and traditional differences as well, however, I spoke with some fathers who seemed otherwise more traditional who played with older children. Perhaps this illustrates that the modern versus traditional spectrum is nuanced and complex.

***Modern versus traditional perspectives in creating a stable and peaceful home.*** In

general, more modern fathers are likely to create a stable home by trying to treat other family members with respect and equality, while more traditional fathers are more likely to try to create a stable home by enforcing rules and expectations for the family member's behavior. One father explained this traditional perspective by saying,

The understanding by some individuals could be, when there is misbehaving then you beat people around then they claim their home is very stable. I am saying this because that is a common understanding with the Africa men especially in Acholiland here, the men beat their wives, they beat children. (F6)

Another father implied that a stable home is harder to accomplish for more traditional fathers for this very reason. He went on to say that violence "is how a peaceful home is created in a traditional way, which is not the case these days, violence is not the way to live these days. The world is changing" (F18).

I think that these quotes represent the traditional end of the modern-traditional spectrum, but it would be misleading to imply that there are not also traditional fathers who are loving and do not use violence. The primary difference between the two perspectives may be better distinguished by the differences in the view of hierarchy. A more traditional father tries to enforce a stable home from the top down. A modern father may try to facilitate peace from a position closer to equality.

**Impact of over-drinking on creating a stable home.** The impact of over-drinking on a stable and peaceful home is simple in some ways. For example, when some fathers are drunk they are more likely to fight, be rude, or be otherwise aggressive. As mentioned previously, a father who is drunk may use more severe discipline, which contributes to

chaos and fear in the home: “So when you become rude the children begin to fear you. And they will begin avoiding you. When you come home, they hear your voice coming and they run to their bedroom. They pretend as if they're sleeping” (F7). Fathers who over-drink often spend too much time away from home, which does not show love and prevents a father from knowing his children well: “I have seen some fathers [who drink alcohol] take a lot of time outside. Up to 9:00 or 10:00 pm you go home, your children are already asleep, to me that is not a sign of love” (F6).

In other cases, the impact of over-drinking on a stable and peaceful home is seen as more complex. A father who drinks too much might begin to have problems with his wife; problems with his wife may contribute to him seeking out additional sexual partners; having multiple partners can contribute to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. These kinds of consequences – I was told – may lead to jealousy, the wife leaving or being taken back by her family, or witchcraft. One example of the potential complexities that can arise from over-drinking was given in this statement:

At the end of the day, they even sleep separately because of the smell of the alcohol. Two, he comes home with abusive language undermining or underrating the woman. You are there with your friends outside. You are getting other woman. You could even be dating another woman [or prostitutes]. You come home and you don't value your wife. Then the woman feels so bad. Now, when the woman feels so bad, she doesn't perform to your expectations. There is quarreling at home, the home is torn apart. The man is not giving money any longer. He's giving money to

the next wife. The wife is left alone. The children are just struggling. No school fees. So many issues involved. (F4)

**Relationship of creating a stable and peaceful home to providing and educating.** As stated earlier, a stable home creates an environment in which teaching can take place and children can become adults capable of providing for themselves; it is foundational to raising children. If a father is aggressive, is drunk, does not know his children, or does not make children feel loved, they will not learn what they need to learn.

Children who feel loved “will do good things based on what you taught them” (F8). If a father shows respect to his child “the child will also respect you and you will be able to understand each other and this will bring about good relationship” (F11), which will facilitate teaching. Furthermore, providing a stable home teaches children by example how to live with others and how to live in their own family in the future: “For example if I fight with my wife, I do not have respect. Even if I tell my children not to be violent, they will not take my word since they see me doing it.” (F11)

If a father is not close with his children, then the children will not learn what they need and “when a child becomes an adult and he does something wrong then people say that he did not get enough education” (F11). Children “should be free to ask [questions] and feel free to joke with me” (F13) to be able to guide them. In order to know how to guide children, a father must know his children well. Knowing children well also allows a father to protect his children because he will know who they are associating with and may know if they seem to be getting sick and need medical care.

### **Fathering Takes Place within a Partner Relationship**

It should be clear by now that the roles of a father overlap with the roles of a mother. Although it was not the focus of this study, mothers also teach their children, contribute to creating stable homes, and – in varying fashions – contribute to providing for children. I cannot say generally how members of the community would discuss or frame the roles of a mother but many would say that children are often closer with their mothers because of this difference in contact time. The difference between the roles of a mother and the roles of a father are greater for those with traditional perspectives, but regardless of these perspectives mothers have more time with children and have more direct interaction with children. For fathers from any perspective, fathering takes place within a partner relationship.

If a child's mother is not around, the father will likely find help from another female to fill that role (e.g., his mother); on the other hand, if a father is not around, a mother may raise a child without a male parental figure. In families with a father who over-drinks or otherwise neglects his roles, a mother has to take on his responsibilities: “It could also happen that the mother took up all the teaching responsibility and a child can learn from the mother” (F17); however, this informant went on to say that the child will “be lacking basic necessities that he should have received from the [father].”

Some informants talked about the value of a partner as a source of support: “With the various experiences I have had, I have realized that it is women who stand behind a man to succeed. Without a woman, a man will never go far. And that is why I value her a lot” (F4). As described in detail previously, a father with a modern view of family life is

more likely to share parenting roles more equally and value his wife's contribution on more areas. Even providing becomes a shared responsibility: "Buying food, a man and the mother of his children can all contribute to that. You go and dig together and you harvest the crops and bring it home" (F8). Other, more traditional fathers, acknowledge the role mothers play but the hierarchy and power differential is much more distinct: "If I give her money now, to take the children to school, I expect the children to be at school tomorrow. How she is going to take them will not be my problem" (F13).

Many of my informants also talked about the need to discuss parenting issues, make decisions, and not fight with a spouse. One informant spoke highly of his father and conveyed appreciation that his father "was somebody who respected his wife; we could have a nice time when we were together" (F19). It was shown previously that fighting between parents contributes to a home that is not stable. One father elaborated on the importance of discussing parenting methods but not opposing each other in front of the children:

I first talk to my wife when I see that we differ on methods of disciplining children. I always make sure that I don't oppose her in the face of the children. I know the danger of parents opposing each other before the children. The children will take sides, they will say 'okay we are for mommy because she is in our support' or 'we are for daddy.' Then they will even deceive you, they will tell stories about the other parent. (F3)

### **Extended Family Members Participate in Parenting**

Extended family members play a role in parenting by invitation or, sometimes, by

intervention. One of the ways that fathers can fulfill their roles is to include other family members. Fathers who need to teach a child about a sensitive subject like sex might ask an aunt or uncle to talk with the child and examples that illustrate this have already been given. Fathers who are having financial trouble or are injured may seek help with provision from family members. One informant said,

If you as a parent have no energy to look after the children, at least there will be other people in the family. They will say that this guy has got a problem and what shall we do? Brothers can also be there. (F5)

If a father is not fulfilling his roles, extended family might intervene. Based on the examples I was given and conversations with community members, intervention by the family is unlikely if a father is providing even if he is not teaching his children or is not creating a stable home. In these cases, if intervention does occur it may be in the form of confronting the father and telling him to behave differently. This conveys a message that as long as a father is providing, he is fulfilling his minimum responsibility. When a father becomes unable to provide for his children and that inability is the result of his poor choices, then extended family members may intervene.

All the examples I heard of these situations involved a father who was over-drinking and unable to provide. Remembering his own years of over-drinking, one father said, "The fees of my children were being paid by my sisters. My children were with my mother. I was providing nothing to my family" (F13). Another informant remembered that his mother-in-law took his wife back home and he had to "look for money to take for my mother-in-law because when I went to negotiate with her, she told me I have to pay

something” (F4). He went on to say that this is when he learned the value of money and stopped drinking alcohol. Providing another example, one of my informants talked about a family member trying to earn his children back from his in-laws after he stopped drinking alcohol:

The change in fact was gradual because when he stopped drinking he had no money yet, but he would go and see the children and talk to them. And that is how I think the in-laws realized that he was changing. Then he asked if the children can come over and they said ‘okay the children can come over during holidays to stay there and see.’ [...] Then they asked him ‘can you pay the next school fees?’ then he said ‘I’ll try.’ Then he paid [the fees] and they eventually realized he is not drinking now. I think they were even making inquiries. Then they said, ‘okay let the children go back.’ Now the children have come back and he is paying their fees and the children are very happy of course. (F3)

### **Fathering Takes Place within Cultural Contexts**

Culture is complex, varied, and fluid; therefore, it is prudent to remember that I am reporting here what I learned from my informants. I am painting with a broad brush but still trying to convey the variety of perspectives that were shared with me. I would not wish for the general findings I report here to contribute to a simplistic narrative of the Acholi people, especially a narrative that defines a community by a war. There were a number of cultural factors that I learned are especially relevant to fathering. The two most significant of these were the impact of the war and the social hierarchy that permeates all levels of society. Other salient contextual factors include poverty and

wealth, religion, public conversations about social issues such as corporal punishment, and the increase in the availability of information (or globalization).

Some of these factors have been addressed throughout these findings. I previously noted that there has been a great deal of attention paid to corporal punishment recently. Some people have become concerned about the severity of discipline some children receive, especially from teachers. New laws have been put in place and child-protective systems are in place, although I do not know whether or not they are considered effective by the local community. Some fathers seemed to feel like this public and legal attention to corporal punishment impeded on their autonomy. One father told me that maybe other modes of discipline – such as taking away a toy – might work in Kampala where people have more money, but he said that his children do not have toys for him to take away and so beating is what works.

This father's statement conveys the significant impact of poverty (or wealth) on fathering. Some fathers feel like their choices for discipline are limited by their resources, and this is certainly the case for providing. Families who have more money send their children to better schools, have less stress about basic needs, and may have been able to flee to the south during the war. For some, the stress of providing has increased with the recent departure of major NGOs and the jobs they bring. One of my informants reported that some say it would be good to have the war back for a short time so the NGOs would return.

For many, religion also permeates parenting. Most Acholi identify as Christian and many hold to traditional spiritual beliefs as well. Beliefs originating in Christian

teachings create a backdrop for many social issues and necessarily impact the things a father teaches. Although – as is likely the case everywhere – fathers with all sorts of beliefs and positions on social issues justify their positions with religion; more traditional fathers say the Bible tells kids to respect their parents and so their discipline is justified, and more modern fathers say kids are supposed to respect both their parents and so equality between spouses is needed.

Parents also reported trying to adapt to the changes brought by technology, media, globalization, and access to more information. “These days, people are saying these children are now difficult to teach, it’s like they are now getting information from other places” (F2). Parents worry about the movies their children go see and the information their children have access to through television. Parents find that the exaggerated consequences they use to warn their children (e.g., drinking causes malaria) are not as effective because children learn the truth at an earlier age. Some fathers also feel their culture is threatened by children’s exposure to other cultures.

Some fathers reported wrestling with these changes and said they are trying to adapt and mix old and new, modern and traditional. One father said, “I’m trying to marry the whole thing, traditional and this modern way of life. I’m trying to marry the whole thing so that we are not stuck. When changes are coming, don’t be rigid” (F7). Fathers worry that in the changing culture family ties “are not very strong now” (F2), which makes it difficult to have aunts and uncles teach things to your children. Some of these changes are seen as negative, but some participants also seemed to embrace aspects of these changes. In an example of embracing change, one father said that traditionally if a

father holds their child's hand or looks after the younger children "people can say that a woman has overpowered/controlled you, but that is not the case, it is because that is how you want to run your home [...] I do that to make my family happy and okay" (F10).

**The war impacted culture and fathering.** The disruption caused by the war was great, especially considering that the disruption of social and cultural systems happened not just in the most recent conflict but also during preceding periods of instability. The parents of today lacked sufficient opportunities for formal education. Nearly all of the population was displaced, the vast majority to Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps. Some blame the rampant issues with alcohol and trauma resulting from the war, on decades of idleness in the camps, and on the increase of women brewing alcohol to make money in the camps. Even the ways a father provides changed in some ways as – for example – families before the war judged much of their wealth in cattle, most of which were killed or confiscated by both rebel and government forces. Land theft has also been an issue following the war, which has significant implications for a culture that so strongly values their ties to the land both as an identity and a way to provide.

Fathers frequently referenced the war's disruption of wang-oo and it seemed to symbolize the cultural changes that have occurred. One father talking about wang-oo simply said, "In the villages even now I am sure it is not going on very well because the camps somehow disorganized the setting of the fire where they could sit and talk" (F2). Another fathers provided a lengthier explanation,

At the time I was growing up, we were brought up differently. The old Acholi brought up their children differently, unlike the youth of today. This is what I

think, according to me this came as a result of insurgency in this country, especially in the north. Because during our time, informal education was paramount, very important. In the evening our parents would gather us. The girls would go inside the house and cook, prepare supper, after a long day or a day at school or whatever it was. The boys would go, get the cows back and then they come in and get some firewood and come back into the compound. And then they would tell them legends. That is where a father would really teach his children, especially the boys. But right now, because of this insurgency, the youth did not get proper informal education. (F1)

**Fathering takes place within a hierarchal social structure.** Social hierarchy seemed to be evident in most of what my informants taught me. At least in terms of authority, the hierarchy of power seemed to go from clan elders, to fathers, to mothers, to sons, to daughters. Fathers serve as the link between the clan and the family:

Sometimes there can be an issue that the clan needs to know. It can come to the head of the clan and they tell things to the father and the father has to disseminate the information down to the family. (F2)

Within his family, the father is the head of the household. The ways in which this plays out in each family can vary between fathers with modern perspectives of gender and fathers with traditional perspectives of gender.

Father with a traditional perspective of gender roles make this hierarchy explicitly clear. For example, one father with a self-described traditional perspective said, “As a father, before I go for a wife, I have already planned how many children I am going to

produce” (F13) and he went on to describe the conflict that can arise if a wife disagrees and gets birth control without his knowledge. Another father said, “women are women; they are weak” and explained they would waste money if the man did not control the finances (F7). This hierarchy can also be seen physically. For example, if there are only a few chairs at a gathering, the men sit in chairs and the women sit on mats with the children.

Those with a modern view of gender roles still make it clear that this hierarchy exists, although they reported they are trying to level the hierarchy in their family. For example,

To me, I see that being the head of the house, that one in our tradition here is something that people just inherit. Once you are a man, you are the head of the family. Because it is taken in the sense that it is the man who goes out to look for a wife, so it is automatic that you are the head. But in my home I look at my wife as if we are on par. Both of us are responsible and have always been encouraging her that we are both at the same level, husband and wife there is no difference, we are both heads of the family. Except I see in her a kind of feeling that she is inferior is always there, she wants me to be the final decision maker [...] I say, ‘make a decision but an idea is this and that.’ (F6)

This exemplifies what many informants with modern views of gender conveyed. The culture dictates that the man is the head of the house. When a father wants to level that differential, he uses that culturally-inherited power to encourage his wife to see herself as equal.

According to my informants, even children see the culturally ordained power differential between fathers and mothers. One said that if a mother were to be the one getting drunk, a child might “tell their father, ‘send mommy back to her home, [...] she is a doing nothing here, she is disturbing us, we are better off with you’” (F1). Another father said that some children “might even tell their mothers that ‘if you beat me I’m going to report you to my dad’” (F2).

When this hierarchy is challenged, some men are threatened:

Unfortunately in our setting, sometimes when the woman is working there can be a lot of difficulty with the man because his responsibility and his willingness kind of shrink down. He cannot be in the position where he wants to be. (F12)

In a similar vein, another father talked about his perception of the way advocacy for women’s rights has received:

You know this issue of rights has been wrongly interpreted in our local language.

[Men] don’t want to hear that women have rights and that women have power to do this and that. In our Acholi African setting here, they always want to remain powerful and feel their authority is not being taken. [...] The rights people translate it in Acholi to mean power. So when you talk about rights, people begin to see struggle in power. (F6)

In spite of the statements quoted above which indicate children may complain to their father about their mother in some circumstances, typically mothers clearly have more authority in the family than their children. Mothers have the most time with children and therefore do most of the disciplining and teaching.

After mothers, sons have more authority than daughters. One father said, “Fathers have really little to do with their daughters, usually the responsibilities for daughters are levied on their brothers, their brothers are the ones that look after them” (F1). In large part, this is because brothers need their sisters not to be “spoiled” so their sisters receive a high dowry price. The dowry received for their sisters will be in turn used by the sons to pay their own dowry when they find a wife.

The discussion of hierarchy could have perhaps been broken into two separate discussions of gender and of fathers as the head of the house. Throughout the findings, the differences between modern and traditional perspectives have been highlighted. Modern and traditional fathers all operate within the same socially constructed hierarchies but they use their power in different ways. Like all of the findings I have presented, this view of hierarchy reflects what I learned from my informants, who were primarily fathers. It need not be said that cultural context is more complex than what I have presented here but, again, I tried to convey what I learned.

## **Chapter V: Discussion**

### **Chapter Overview**

In this chapter I will summarize the findings, integrating current literature where relevant. I will then discuss the implications of these findings, first for the larger project and then more broadly for prevention and intervention. Finally, I will discuss the strengths and limitations of the study and the related suggestions for future research.

### **Summary of Findings**

#### **Fathers in Northern Uganda**

A father is a valuable member of an Acholi family. While important, fathers are often less involved than mothers in the direct rearing of children, as is true in many communities (McBride, Schoppe, & Rane, 2002; van Ee, Sleijpen, Kleber, & Jongmans, 2013). However, even outside face-to-face parenting, fathers have an important position. Traditionally, fathers have served as the link to the larger clan and as the head of the home. Children traditionally belong to the father and the father is ultimately responsible for their wellbeing, even if he delegates much of the day-to-day parenting to the children's mother.

Many factors make the position and responsibility of a father in Acholi families more variable in the present time than it has been traditionally. The wars and conflicts of the last half-century have disrupted every major aspect of Acholi life, from economic disruption, to displacement, to the disruption of social norms and familial roles. Nearly all families were displaced and most lost family members due to the war. While displaced, most men were unable to fulfill their roles in the traditional ways and some

believe that this resulted in a challenge to their identity and to the increase in alcohol use. Families have been impacted by a wide range of stressors including psychological and traumatic stress. Still, the Acholi people have survived and are continuing to rebuild their community.

For some, rebuilding has meant attempting to return to traditional roles and values. For others, rebuilding has meant blending modern changes and perspectives with traditional values. There is likely no one who could be categorized as completely traditional or completely modern, and fathers vary greatly along this spectrum. A father's economic situation, level of education, and choice to live in town or in the village all potentially contribute to a father's position along this spectrum.

Regardless of an individual father's perspective, society still largely dictates that the father is ultimately the head of the house in terms of power and responsibility, although this is in flux. While a clear social hierarchy still exists, it is not as defined and concrete as perhaps it once was. For some men, this has been interpreted as a threat to their identity; there necessarily exists a tension between the role of a father as the sole head of the home and movements toward gender equality. Many have embraced and welcomed changes and redefined what it means to be a father, using their power to encourage and facilitate some of these changes. Others have been able to return to largely traditional roles, and still others have struggled to reconcile their role with the changing culture. For now, men remain at the top of the social hierarchy, but as society continues to change they will continue to redefine their roles within the family.

### **Interrelated Roles of a Father**

The central goal of a father is to prepare his children for the future, for their own benefit and the benefit of others. Fathers accomplish this goal through three primary roles: (a) providing for a child's basic needs, (b) educating his children, and (c) creating a stable and peaceful home.

**Providing for basic needs.** In one respect, providing for a child's basic needs is the most important role of a father because all else is moot if the child does not survive. As a result, there are instances in which providing interferes with the other roles. For example, a father may find employment away from home enabling him to provide but reducing his contact with children and his ability to teach or influence the home environment. Some fathers seem to use the importance of providing as an excuse to justify their lack of involvement with children by conveying that they are fulfilling their role as a father as long as children have food, shelter, clothes, medical care, and school fees.

Other informants made it clear that to be a good father requires more than just providing and that ensuring a successful future for one's children requires fulfilling all three roles. Furthermore, my informants indicated that a father can still be a good father even if he is unable to provide despite his best efforts.

**Educating children.** Beyond providing for a child's basic needs, including formal education (by paying school fees), fathers ensure the future of their children by teaching them. Fathers teach children what they need to know about their family, about how to behave, about religion, and the skills and chores they need to be able to complete to be self-sufficient in the future.

Traditionally, fathers have a particular role in teaching their sons how to be Acholi men. Men and women in this community suggested that boys may be less likely to mind their mothers as they age, which potentially makes it especially problematic for boys if their fathers are absent. Research in Western communities aligns with this perspective by indicating that fathers' involvement may be related to their son's externalizing outcomes even when mother's involvement is not (Gryczkowski et al., 2010).

Fathers teach their children through verbal instruction, by showing their children how to do things, through being an example, by giving rewards for good behavior, by telling stories, and through discipline. Historically, much of the verbal teaching occurred at wang-oo, the traditional family time around the fire in the evenings. Wang-oo is one tradition that was disrupted by the war and fathers have reinstated this practice to varying degrees in the villages; wang-oo seems not to be practiced at all in town.

***Disciplining.*** Discipline strategies consist of caning, being stern or shouting, or delaying or not allowing children treats or food. Corporal punishment is a topic of active conversation in Northern Uganda. Government initiatives and public awareness campaigns have tried to reign in the use of corporal punishment as it has traditionally been the primary mode of discipline for both parents and teachers. My informants displayed a wide range of views on the use of corporal punishment, from a few being completely opposed, to some preferring not to but finding it necessary, to others steadfast in their belief that this is what works.

Even amongst fathers who support the use of corporal punishment, there is a difference between appropriate levels of corporal punishment and excessive corporal

punishment. Appropriate corporal punishment should consist of only two or three switches with a small stick, should not be given out of anger, should only be on the buttocks, and the child should know why he or she is receiving the punishment.

Researchers and clinicians in parenting often cite a relationship between corporal punishment and increased externalizing behaviors in children (e.g., Hecker, Hermenau, Isele, & Elbert, 2014). However, a meta-analysis of longitudinal studies indicated that when severity of corporal punishment is taken into account, this relationship becomes trivial to small (Ferguson, 2013). A longitudinal study of mothers' corporal punishment is instructive on this issue: minor corporal punishment was associated with children's externalizing cross-sectionally but not longitudinally, while harsh spanking was longitudinally related to mother-reports of children's externalizing behaviors (Lansford, Wager, Bates, Pettit, & Dodge, 2012). Also important to note is that mild spanking was related longitudinally to harsh spanking. Despite potentially weak relationships between minor corporal punishment and externalizing, there is also little evidence of any longitudinal benefit of even mild spanking (Ferguson, 2013).

This literature was noted in part to buffer against readers' potential reaction to vilify all parents in this community who use corporal punishment. It may be that mild corporal punishment in the context of a loving relationship is not exceptionally harmful to children. That said, mild corporal punishment can quickly escalate to certainly harmful levels and this concern was voiced by some of my informants. Furthermore, the use of corporal punishment in schools is more often than not outside the context of an otherwise caring relationship. I am empathetic to the sentiment of some of the fathers who feel they

have no other choice because they believe their children do not have any possessions to take away as a form of discipline. However, the majority of my informants indicated that they were interested in or at least open to learning other methods of discipline.

**Creating a stable and loving home.** A stable and loving home provides the setting needed for children to learn what they need for healthy development. One of the clearest ways a father can jeopardize the successful fulfilment of this role is by drinking too much. A child should feel free to interact with his or her father and should feel respected and loved. The ways a father makes a child feel loved are more likely to be related to providing than perhaps would be the case in Western societies. Although, it could be that the root of showing love is the same across cultures in that, as one study submitted, love is conveyed to children by giving things that are perceived to be rare and valuable (McNeely & Barber, 2010). Fathers can also create this stable and peaceful setting by limiting fights and arguments in the home, which can disrupt a child's healthy development (Cyr et al., 2010). Finally, in order for a father to create this setting he must know his children well enough to know when additional support, teaching, or intervention is needed.

### **Fathers and Alcohol**

The most commonly referenced challenge facing fathers is the rampant use of alcohol among Acholi men. Many explain this as a direct or indirect result of the war. Poverty also contributes to widespread alcohol use as many women brew alcohol for additional family income and men may be more likely to drink when work is not available. My informants generally said "half of" or "most" fathers drink too much

alcohol, which is perhaps slightly more than the prevalence found in large surveys in the area (Saile et al., 2013; Roberts et al., 2011).

Alcohol use is predominantly a social activity, whether it is drinking from a shared pot in town or drinking small sachets of local gin at a gathering point in the village. This is not to say that men never drink alcohol by themselves but this in itself may be indicative of problem drinking. My informants taught me that a father can drink too much by spending too much money on alcohol, by spending too much time drinking alcohol, or by coming home drunk. There is much variation in men's views of alcohol within the community but I perceived women to more consistently view alcohol use as a problem. Both men and women, however, reported that drinking too much alcohol can impact every aspect of fathering.

Consistent with the literature previously summarized evaluating the relationship between alcohol abuse and fathering, my informants reported that fathers who drink too much are more likely to use harsh discipline, abuse children, or neglect children. Consistent with a social learning perspective (Andrews et al., 1997), informants explained that some children will model their father's drinking behaviors if they look up to him, or might see him as an example of what not to do if they do not respect him. On the other hand, fathers also suggested that some children of alcoholics might be more likely to drink because they did not get the education they needed.

The relationship informants described between drinking too much and the family also aligned with previous research; they described families with a substance abusing father as being characterized by more family conflict, more disruption and chaos, and

more violence or aggression (Murphy et al., 2005; Kelly & Kowalyszyn, 2003).

However, given the gender-based hierarchy in Acholi culture it would not be surprising to find that the relationship between male substance use and intimate partner violence in this community is also mediated by the male's views of power and women (Johnson, 2001). Finally, fathers also described a relationship between drinking too much and financial strain on the family, as has been seen in other populations (McMahon et al., 2008).

### **Fathering in Context**

Society places fathers at the head of the family but fathers certainly do not parent alone. Mothers have more direct contact with children and so the ways in which a father relates to and interacts with the children's mother necessarily impacts his fathering. Some fathers strive for equality in every aspect of parenting while others use their position as head of the family to dictate how children are parented. Fathers also include extended family members in their parenting. They might request that a brother or sister talk to their child about a sensitive subject or might send a troubled child to live with a relative for a while. Extended family members also involve themselves in a family when it appears that a father is not fulfilling his roles, especially his role of providing.

In addition to the role of partners and extended family I paid specific attention to a few aspects of fathers' social context within the findings, namely social hierarchy, the impact of war, and fathers' economic settings. Needless to say, the social context is endlessly more complex than these artificially discrete topics. For example, increasing gender equality leads to more women working and owning businesses, which further

levels the hierarchy in a family as women become more capable of being independent.

On the other hand, children are still generally considered to belong to fathers and so mothers may still feel powerless to leave abusive relationships lest they lose their children.

Increasing gender equality also means that formal education is now valued for both boys and girls. In families who choose not to use family planning methods – or who are unaware of these methods – paying school fees for all children is prohibitively expensive. School fees represent just one of the many and increasing financial responsibilities in this growing economy. The growing need for financial resources to pay for education, medical costs, or even cell phones, drives some to seek formal employment rather than relying solely on subsistence farming. For many, this means moving to town to pursue employment. Once in town, even things that did not cost money in the village like food and shelter now cost money. Formal employment and living in town can present many opportunities but it can also decrease the amount of time fathers have with children and can increase the stress associated with providing. Town life is also somewhat at odds with the high value Acholi people place on being connected to their land and extended family.

The growing economy has also likely contributed to increases in the production and availability of commercially produced alcohol; the need for financial resources as also likely contributed to the increased number of women brewing alcohol at home for sale. (As another example of the impact of the war, many of these women started brewing alcohol for sale while in the Internally Displaced Persons camps to earn income to

supplement the often meager aid rations that were available.) But while the developing economy has likely contributed to the availability of alcohol, few have resources to receive treatment for alcoholism in Kampala (if they even know this exists). In and around Gulu, only one treatment option is available, has limited funding and no in-patient services like those available in the south.

With the opportunities that come from a developing economy, from increased gender equality, and with the increasing availability of formal education, it is inevitable that some succeed financially to greater extents than others. Although I never heard this explicitly, these factors likely serve to create a divide between emerging or growing class differences. Even while visiting with men at a drinking joint I learned that the men I was talking to were sitting together because they were from villages and suggested they would feel judged if sitting with another group of men from town.

The ways that fathers interact with their children are continuously changing because of the changes in their social context. Fathers will continue to adapt as society continues to change. Each father decides individually how to incorporate traditional and modern perspectives on gender roles, discipline, family structure, and education. Collectively, these individual choices reshape society and inform the next round of individual choices.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

The design and execution of this study provided many benefits but must be viewed in the context of its limitations. Utilizing ethnographic methods was appropriate for the research questions and the stage of research in which this study is situated. This

methodology allowed me to engage in open-ended conversations with informants that were not restricted to a rigid interview guide or predetermined measures. The time I had in the field allowed me to analyze interviews as I went and hone the focus of the interviews as I began to learn more about the subject matter. Having local interpreters/co-researchers with me at every stage of the process provided additional cultural insight and reflection after interview and experiences. Having multiple sources of data (individual interviews, observations, informal conversations, media, and focus groups) allowed me to triangulate the information I was learning. The final focus group served as a thorough member check and provided valuable adjustments and validation.

The sampling method I used was a strength and a weakness of the study. By paying local community members to recruit fathers for me I was able to access fathers I might have otherwise not had access to on my own. I was able to talk with a wide range of fathers in terms of education, level of alcohol use, and family composition both in town and in villages. This diversity gave me greater confidence in perceived saturation as I learned similar information from fathers with many different backgrounds. On the other hand – even though it is not generally considered a goal of qualitative research – it is worth noting that this sampling method was non-probabilistic and therefore I cannot assume my sample is representative of the entire community. It is quite possible that my sample was skewed in one way or another. The most salient limitation of my sampling methods was that I found most of my participants in four general areas and it is possible that even more rural areas would have yielded more variety.

Finally, extensive measures were taken to increase the trustworthiness of the data collected. Thomas and Laura were with me as interpreters and co-researchers throughout the interviews to help interpret the data guarded against my potential misinterpretations as an outsider. The final focus group served as a fairly extensive member-check of my preliminary findings. Dr. Wieling reviewed the audio recording of the majority of my interviews while I was still in the field and audited my entire coding process. Even with all these steps, it is likely that my own background and knowledge influenced my interpretation of the information I learned and the topics I choose to pursue during the interviews. It is also likely that the information my informants chose to share with me was influenced by my position as an outsider, as white, or as someone perceived to have money or power. Finally, the fact that I do not speak Acholi certainly limited my understanding of the information my Acholi-speaking informants tried to convey. Even with the best possible interpretation, meaning is lost.

## **Implications**

### **Implications for this Program of Research**

Our team's long-term goal is the widespread implementation of culturally relevant and sustainable support for mothers and fathers with the goal of interrupting the adverse intergenerational impact of war. Our previous research has shown that parents are requesting this type of support and that a parenting intervention is feasible for mothers. In subsequent iterations, we would like to be able to respond to requests to support fathers too. The findings from this study will allow us to proceed in this direction.

Through this study, we have learned that most fathers play an active role in the lives of their children but, as expected, have much less time with children than with mothers. The extent to which fathers are involved with their children and the nature of their involvement also varies much more than mothers. For these reasons it would be unwise to design an intervention that depends on father attendance. On the other hand, it would also be unwise to exclude fathers. In fact, the buy-in of some of the most “hands off” fathers may be most important if they are the ones to dictate how the children are raised. It may be useful to provide some couple-based groups as well as some groups for mothers with a supplemental group for fathers.

The findings of this study also demonstrate that fathers value their roles as teachers and in creating a peaceful home. Parent education can be framed in a way to demonstrate that the strategies employed in an intervention may contribute to these outcomes in a number of ways. Many fathers expressed an interest in learning new parenting strategies and learning about alternative methods of discipline. Furthermore, fathers would be interested to know that in other communities, use of positive parenting strategies have been shown to contribute to children’s later success in life.

These findings suggest that parenting also may be a valuable access point to a father’s life in need of support for alcohol abuse. Regardless of how much fathers drink, they want the best for their children. Some could potentially be empowered to participate in treatment for alcohol abuse as part of a multi-pronged effort to ensure the best possible future for their children. Our future intervention efforts may benefit from partnership

with a substance abuse treatment program or the integration of a substance abuse component to a multi-component intervention.

Finally, I learned through my discussions with fathers that there is interest in parenting support and a willingness to attend educational meetings. The changes in society surrounding women's rights, urbanization and economic changes, and the disruption of men's roles during war and displacement have resulted – for some – in a quest to recreate their identity. In my view, support and education around parenting can play a role in this development.

### **Prevention and Intervention Research and Clinical Implications**

The broader implications of these findings are numerous. Research and clinical work within the Acholi, and perhaps other East-African communities, can use this in-depth study of fathers to gain a better understanding of family roles and structure. While the findings of a study can never be directly applied to an individual client, therapists working with clients from African or war-affected communities may find it beneficial to review some of the potential views and variation within a community that may exist related to parenting.

Clinical researchers can build on the results of this study with research that aims to better understand successful implementation of a family-level intervention that includes fathers. It is likely the case that most fathers in every community are invested in the future of their children but their roles are often different than the roles of mothers. Likewise, their impact on children may be different than the impact of mothers. It would follow that they likely need to be engaged in different ways than mothers and that

perhaps different means are necessary to retain and train them. The findings of this study provide a view of what is important to fathers in this community and perhaps these values are similar in other communities that share some of the same characteristics.

In addition to the continued development of our team's specific program of research, future research can build on the findings presented here and address some of the limitations of this study. I believe that qualitative and quantitative methods are often best used in an iterative process of description, interpretation and measurement. The roles of a father documented here and the relationship of alcohol abuse to these roles can be evaluated statistically with a representative sample of the population to further our knowledge of these topics.

Longitudinal studies, both within and outside this particular community, can continue to elucidate the relationship between paternal substance abuse and child outcomes. In light of the present findings that show great variation with these associations, these studies could attempt to use continuous and nuanced measures of constructs such as alcohol use, corporal punishment, family stability, father-mother relationship dynamics, and the ways in which parents convey love to their children.

Other cross-cultural intervention research and programs can also broadly draw the results from this study as an example of the importance of an incremental and iterative process for working cross-culturally. For example, without the results of this study it would be easy for an outsider to assume that parent education would only be relevant to mothers, or conversely that fathers should automatically be included in a parenting

program. This study captured some of the variation that exists between fathers and illuminated potential variation of needs for different parents.

Finally, the research illuminating the relationship between paternal substance abuse and children's future substance use is still developing. However, clinicians cannot wait for research to provide definitive answers to all related questions before they proceed with clients. With that in mind, clinicians working with families with a substance abusing father can use the developing literature, including the findings in this study, to inform their work. This study shows that there is great variety between families with respect to the perceived impact of alcohol use. With the findings of this study serving as a background, clinicians can seek to learn from each family the ways in which they see alcohol impacting their family and relationships.

### **Conclusion**

Along the journey that is this research, I have often been asked to share the most surprising or shocking thing I have learned. I have learned a lot – much more than what is contained in these pages – but I would be hard pressed to find much that was shocking. I set out to describe the roles of fathers and the impact of substance use as they see it. What I found is that fathers love their children and want what's best for them. I found that the horrific war and ongoing stressors like poverty have disrupted families in a number of ways, but these things do not define them. I found that in spite of these stressors, families are surviving and thinking about the future. And I found that fathers are trying to adjust to a changing world and to deal with the challenges of raising children in a society that is drastically different than the one in which they grew. Little about this is surprising and I

do not think that should be unexpected; I think people around the world have many more commonalities than differences.

Layered on top of this belief that people have more commonalities than differences is the recognition that some communities and some individuals face more challenges than others. Most of the Acholi people have overcome war, poverty, and all of the accompanying struggles. Many Acholi people do not feel supported by their government and feel stigmatized by people from other regions. They are continuing to rebuild but must do so with limited resources, an unreliable infrastructure, and a heavy reliance on foreign support. It is telling that people attributed higher unemployment and increasing crime during my fieldwork to the departure of many of the major relief organizations.

My comment that little of this is shocking is not to negate the value of the many things I learned and documented. I learned about the specific ways fathers execute their roles, the relative importance of these roles, the relationships between their roles, and the variety within fathers. The things I learned will be instrumental in supporting this community and for the next stages of research. But perhaps equally as important as the knowledge gained from this study was the process of learning itself. I repeatedly question, “Who am I to think I have something to offer others?”

At the root of this question is my belief that with power and privilege come a responsibility to address injustice where it exists; however, power and privilege also carry the risk of engaging in colonialistic, paternalistic, misguided, uninformed, or otherwise harmful intervention. I have a keen desire to avoid the latter but it must not come at the cost of doing nothing. So I have had to decide how I will move forward. My

current answer has been community-engaged, methodologically sound, and culturally aware research. This research may not result in direct and widespread support as quickly as a rush to service, but it will be more effective in the end; this research may not be as efficient as a highly-controlled project conducted entirely by outside academics, but it will be more in line with the needs and desires of the communities with which I work. Perhaps most important in this pursuit is continuing to recognize the depths of what I do *not* know. In answer to my question of, “Who am I to think I have something to offer others?” I think that part of the answer is that as long as I am willing to be a learner first at least I am starting out on the right foot.

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### Appendix I: Example of open coding

Transcript	Domain	Open Code
C- maybe you could tell me, when you think about the future, what are your hopes for your children?		
F- Mmm. I want them to get education. If God gives me money for their education and God willing they may get good jobs in the future. There is nothing more that I wish for	P	want children to have education, God gives money, education for job in future
C- Aaa. Okay. is there anything else that you hope for them?		
F- I hope that in future they live a good life.		
C- what do you mean a good life?		
F- my children should have a stable family and they should be able to provide for the family	S, P	want kids to have stable family in future
C- Aaa. Okay. can you tell me more about live well with the family. How does that look like?		
F- how they teach, relate and provide for their family just the way we brought them up and cared for them. we may not have done it at a higher level but they should do it better and lead a high standard of life. Since they will be educated, they can educate their children as well.	P, S, E	same way we raised them, they could do it better than us with education
C- Aaa. What kind of people do you hope that they will be and what do you think that people will say about them?		

F- Mmm. The example is , I want people to say that this child took after the father. That will not be bad because I know that I have a good personality. I may make mistakes but It is not very bad. I am a human being and I bound to make mistakes but I am not a bad person and I would not want my children to be called bad people

want people to see child is like father, I am good, want children to not be bad people

C- Mmm. Aaa. And so then how do you help them become people with good character that looks after the family and also took after the father?

F- Mmm. Number one: since I am still alive, I will live together with them just the way that I am doing now. I watch what they do and I do correct them. I also advice them not to insult people, not hit friends with stones, to live peacefully with other people. They are still young and they do not know what is wrong or right. I do tell them not to pick what does not belong to them and I also do teach them other basic things about life and the things that I never did because they were not right.

Ew, Et live well, correct wrongs, advise what not to do, advise live peacefully, young don't know right and wrong,

C- so since you never did those thing, will your children not do it because you told them not to or because you do not do it? Or is there other way?

F- these children, even if they may do something bad in the future, that wrong they will do won't exceed the wrong that other people would do

T-Mmm

F- this is because I already gave them some knowledge and they also are aware that if you do wrong to your colleague it is not good. Also in future they will keep this knowledge and they will not go wrong to the extent of that child who was not given that information

E children will do less wrong because of teaching

C- okay. maybe you can give me a few or even two words to these questions. What are the ingredients of a good father?

- F- Quality of a good father is good things that a father is able to do in the family for example being non violent. For example if I fight with my wife, I do not have respect, even if I tell my children not to be violent, they will not take my word since they see me doing it. It is like that
- S, Ew nonviolent, fight is disrespect, kids learn from example more than words
- C- okay. what kinds of problems would violence bring at home?
- F- Number one, you lose respect, the second one when your child goes out to play and he gets into a fight; people will say that this child is violent like the father; people can also say that this child took after the mother because the mother is violent
- Et, Ew people compare kids to parents, learn violence from parents
- C- Aaa. Okay. are there other good qualities of a father?
- F- other good qualities of a good parent is that he should feed the children well, keep the child clean and wear them clean clothes so that even when the children go in public they are not ashamed. You could be having the qualities but without empowerment, it becomes difficult
- P clean clothes prevent shame
- T- Mmm
- C- is being respectful and living well with your children, is that the same as loving and caring for them or is that something different?
- F- if you respect your child then it is a sign that you love the child. The person you respect you definitely listen to that person. If a big person respects a child, the child will also respect you and you will be able to understand each other and this will bring about good relationship
- S respect child is sign of love, parents respect kids then kids will respect, respect enables understanding
- C- Aaa. Okay. it sounds that you were saying that there need to be love and respect before you teach children things. Or can you teach children things even when there is no love and respect?

## Appendix II: Example of distilling open codes

used (sex)

[example] talked about daughter's sexual life, noticed boys getting close  
daughter got close to boys, worried boys might sexually abuse her, told daughter men want sex..., don't want you to  
be victim, learn from my mistakes, told daughter what could happen

*expanded family*

*monitor*

*- talking about sex sensitive*

*indirect*

told daughter risk of abuse in hidden places, "becoming their wife" instead of rape, father can't speak directly about  
sex to daughter, if you go even I can't help, teaching is trying to be in places you can't be, time together creates love  
incest risk, time together creates (desire), some fathers fall into incest

if daughter doesn't listen to me then I'll bring other family members

daughter may take it serious but not listen, others can reinforce lesson, my words helped, I noticed changes

I made faults, nobody to advise me, I wanted to reach higher level, wanted qualification like others

went to university, going to university was mistake

worked until 5 and then university so home late, every problem came from business

wife left, cared for babies when wife left, brought babies to class, I cared for kids until now, now met this lady (help  
with parenting)

*Kids belong to mother*

single father, had to get another wife because daughter felt alone, daughter thought chores were boy chores because  
family was boys, father and boys did men and women's chores, daughter went looking for females

some fathers say kids should work for themselves

(some categories based on providing?), some fathers follow up on children too much, children will become like father  
these parents might even cane child at school,

some fathers feel children don't know anything, these fathers beat whatever child does, some children need to wait  
for father to bring up topics, these children fear father,

some parents don't care, if parent doesn't care he doesn't correct, parent who doesn't care just protects self  
planned how many kids before marrying, family planning brings complications, women slow to produce

These are traditional roles of fathers, rights of women, mother may want to be head, man automatically head and  
runs family

a lot of disagreement in families

men/women conflict

women may provide but not out of responsibility

lucky to have wife who can provide, most wives leave if man doesn't provide

some fathers want to be head, remain real father according to tradition, other fathers submissive to wife, submissive  
to wife makes man like wife

third category of fathers is equal with wife, tried to be equal with wife, equal didn't work so I went back to head

some fathers only provide money, some fathers leave everything to do to mother

some fathers help with children, other fathers just provide, (example of paying school fees but not attending school  
meetings)

I expect kids to be in school, mother responsible for getting kids to school

mothers are more close to children

fathers don't have time for informal education, if children misbehave the blame is on mother, we expect mothers to  
teach, formerly fathers would teach around fire, today fathers drink, mothers do most of the work

home before 8

kids rather watch tv then listen, equality in family (seen as negative), mother may disagree about when to talk to  
children, blame mother if they fight tomorrow

pray together with kids

discipline form of teaching, son feared telling of mistake, cane and told what not to do  
if not talk then normal to cane

*blame mothers*

*equality = conflict*

*fear*

*hierarchy*  
*Head*

*Fear*

*Some don't care*

*Correct = care*

goal to provide home in 5 years  
 want shop to protect land along road  
 having a shop would show/teach that owning a building is important  
 want kids to live like me, people will say you are like your father  
 I am good, I am leader (wants this for kids)  
 want kids to be hard-working, education and hard-work outside of education  
 concerned children are not intelligent, worry about kids future, bought goats for son incase he doesn't finish school  
 children's performance gives hope for job in their future  
 father struggled with school fees  
 had to dig to pay school fees so quit  
 leg injury, won't be able to pay school fees if injured, animal rearing for income  
 will take son to vocational school, vocational school to find job  
 buy things at Christmas, sell chickens for cloth  
 teach to not destroy others' things  
 don't steal maize, even if you aren't caught you are bad  
 don't destroy property of elderly  
 things you do determine who you are, correct child politely not rush to punish, if child makes same mistake then  
 show rude and aggression, rudeness and aggression to make child learn  
 good fathers spend time, good to hold hand and take to church  
 bathe young kids  
 play with kids

you - want kids to be me

hard-working

Future

prepare child according to abilities

bathe young kids

power

some Acholi say that playing or bathing kids means woman overpowered you, some men want to run house this way  
 collecting firewood to cook is women's job, I do all chores, make my family happy  
 I start the cooking (good father)  
 bathing typically mother role but any can do it  
 ask children if one missing  
 children may have gone to bad place  
 children should be home for wang-oo  
 children may go to dangerous place w snakes  
 greeting=love, carry young kids shows love, tell kids to run to you  
 carry until 6yrs  
 don't carry older kids because it is the young kids turn, give most to youngest, older kids already had nice things  
 loving is part of stable home  
 when something was spoiled use quiet voice, loud voice kids become fearful of fight, kids might tell others that  
 parents are fighting  
 in a stable home children come to you willingly, in home with chaos children run  
 without love older children will not come around you  
 when kids are older they fight back  
 children want to mimic, children may drink when they see father drink  
 men drink when there is nothing else to do  
 most men think working is over at 10am  
 wang-oo daily  
 want children to have education, God gives money, education for job in future  
 want kids to have stable family in future  
 same way we raised them, they could do it better than us with education

across gender lines

ask about / check for kids

run to you

fear vs willing

drink when idle

God gives

better future than us

explained wrong before cane, child knew caning was justified, made son apologize after caning  
made son thank for beating

*caning justified*

(example) son didn't want to go to school and didn't listen to father but listened to mother, told kids no money for school fees, "you cannot direct me", (power), questioned why son listened to mother not him  
left issue to mother,

*thank for beating*

waste of money to pay school fees is child will fail

*pay school fee for future (vs. right)*

caring fathers teach to greet, I greet so they greet, make competition

tell jokes, find time to correct children

*jokes / indirect*

mothers are harsh, children are happy when mother away, kids happy with father, let children say what is not going right in family, all kids share responsibilities, kids should see what needs to be done with being told

I was first born, had sisters so didn't learn to cook, don't want children to experience same pain, preparing sons in case mother is not there and no wife

kids should be free to ask and joke, jokes best way to guide kids

calmed self before punish, parent talked to parent about problem, didn't address problem for 3 days, teach from Bible, don't repay wrong for wrong, if you had killed her...whole family problems

*calmed self*

mood okay to bring it up

calm self down

used to beat first, I beat bc you broke my rule, (power), used to get explanation after beating, I felt I was doing it wrong, found myself caning all kids every day, I began to feel guilty for caning, everyone crying

changed style to cool down

three warnings before beating

caning resulted in bad mood, missed laughter and jokes

*less beating = less fear*

with less beating kids report their mistakes

kids used to hide mistakes, fear, now kids know I wont beat right away

performance at school improving

mother barks at kids, advise kids about mother, kids complain about mother

trying to bring kids closer to mother

timetable for watching tv

bought bike for one who did best in school, buying for other kids was punishment to others

*left out as punishment*

kids came with pride

*pride*

thank kids

(example) child cleaned compound early, child asked for comment on cleaning, when I'm quiet it's good

child was happy with praise, after praise other kids competed for appreciation

kids cleaning to get appreciation

I was drunkard for 5 years

family talked to me about drinking

eventually saw I was not moving forward, family and friends deserted me, joined AA group

sober for 5 years

*loss of family reason to stop drinking*

most alcoholics are men, drinking unlucky, drinking causes fights, father drinking breaks down family, alcohol is first

thing money spent on, no time to teach, men brought to PACTA

caned for things when drunk that wouldn't have if sober, regret for caning when drunk, family looked at me as

*regret*

outcast, had to defend myself, beat kids for mistakes because reflected on him, beat kids so not compared to him

proud to be head, most don't perform tasks of father

most don't have time for kids, fathers betting, fathers not home don't care if children do something wrong

after drinking kids wanted to be near

*(pride into adulthood but really not responsible)*

when drinking family pretended to be asleep, now sober kids are free and open, now kids love me, parents now

proud of me

*proud*

*adult kids*

*fear vs free/love*

wife now tells he is husband

father now calls him to check in, parents gained confidence in him, he is getting more responsibilities as the oldest,

sons should get authority or respect in family, respect not given when drinking

*adult check-in*

**Appendix III: Printout of preliminary analysis for member check in the field**

<b>Provide</b>	<p>Ways to do this...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pay school fees</li> <li>- Provide shelter (build or pay rent)</li> <li>- Provide clothes</li> <li>- Provide food (buy or dig)</li> <li>- Pay medical expenses</li> </ul>	
<b>Educate/Train Children</b>	<p>Ways to do this...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Show them how to do something</li> <li>- Tell the child what to do</li> <li>- Stories</li> <li>- Be example (could be good or bad)</li> <li>- Discipline ..... →</li> <li>- Facilitate teaching from extended family</li> </ul>	<p>Ways to discipline and correct...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talk to them (give exaggerated example, give reasons, say the right way, etc...)</li> <li>- Cane/beat</li> <li>- Delay food or treats</li> <li>- Look at them and tell them they will suffer the consequences as they age</li> <li>- Have other family members talk to the child</li> </ul>
	<p>Things you teach...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Boys to be men</li> <li>- About family</li> <li>- About culture</li> <li>- How to do things like dig, raise animals, chores...</li> <li>- To respect elders</li> <li>- What not to do (don't fight, don't steal, etc...)</li> <li>- (some things are taught by aunts/uncles bc kids may be more free w them)</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Have a stable and peaceful home and relationships</b></p>	<p>Ways to do this...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't quarrel in front of kids</li> <li>- Don't come home drunk</li> <li>- Be present / family time</li> <li>- Know your children so you know when something is wrong</li> <li>- Treat children with respect (e.g., have a kind tone of voice)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Alcohol's impact on Providing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spends money on alcohol rather than basic needs and education</li> <li>- May steal things or sell things from the home to pay for alcohol</li> <li>- May not be able to work or dig to earn more money</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Alcohol's impact on Educate/Train Children</b></p>	<p><b>Alcohol's impact on</b> Ways to do this...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- May not be around to teach children</li> <li>- May not know what children need because he is away drinking</li> <li>- Children may not listen because they don't respect him</li> <li>- Children may fear him and not learn from him</li> <li>- ....as a result, children may get more learning from other places</li> </ul>	<p><b>Alcohol's impact on</b> Ways to discipline and correct...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children may not take him seriously</li> <li>- He may be more aggressive/harsh with his discipline</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Alcohol's impact on</b> Things you teach...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children may learn to be aggressive by seeing father's example</li> <li>- Children may learn to drink</li> </ul>	

	<p>alcohol by seeing father's example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children may not learn the things they need to – especially if others in the family/community cannot fill the gap left by the father</li> </ul>	
<b>Alcohol's impact on <i>Have a stable and peaceful home and relationships</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Father may be more aggressive and quarrel</li> <li>- Mother may be upset with father</li> <li>- Children may become undisciplined and even may steal to get basic needs met</li> <li>- Father won't know the children or needs</li> </ul>	