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Annika Witte

An Uncertain Future – Anticipating Oil in Uganda

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Figure 1: A shop selling agricultural produce in Hoima town (2013).

1 Introduction

> I am grateful for the dialogue that we are going to discuss with you on this matter related to our new baby, which is still in the womb. And you are expecting. We are expecting. Either baby boy or girl by the name of either oil or gas. But me, I am expecting that we get a baby girl because girls give more. […] My prayer as a LC 5: let there be oil first. […] Because when you still have a baby in the womb you might not know that you have a stillbirth, you might have what, you might have what. The most important thing is we should have the oil. That is when we shall boast as a region (Chairman LC 5[1] Nebbi, Multi-stakeholder dialogue, Nebbi, 2012).

During a civil society multi-stakeholder dialogue on oil and gas and its future potential for Uganda, the Chairman LC 5 from the host district of Nebbi in northwestern Uganda, compared the status of oil in Uganda to a pregnancy. Uganda is pregnant with its oil. In 2006 oil was discovered in Uganda and the country started preparing for its new found wealth: plans were made, policies and legislations were put in place, infrastructure constructed, more oil exploration undertaken and many negotiations held between the government[2] and the oil companies Tullow Oil Uganda Ltd., a

[1] Local Council (LC) 5 is the highest elected political representative at the district level with seat at the district capital. LC 1 is the lowest level, elected at village or town quarter level. In 2016, general elections were held in Uganda, including elections for the office of LC 5. The chairmen named in this dissertation have since changed. I will refer to them as LC 5 though since it was the position they held during my research.

[2] In this dissertation I use "government" for the central government and "local government" for the district governments.

smaller, independent company, multinational Total E&P Uganda Ltd and the Chinese multinational China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). These oil companies formed a joint venture in 2012.

Instead of fast-tracking access to the mineral wealth though, Uganda decided to take it slow. Even ten years after the first discovery, there is still no oil. The wait on oil is still on and it is not yet clear what impact the oil will have in social, economic and political terms. During the long wait the possibility of a stillbirth, in the form of the discovery of dry wells or the withdrawal of the oil companies, was still hovering. In Nebbi, people were expecting and hoping to find oil soon but in 2012 Nebbi could not claim any oil, unlike other districts such as Buliisa or Hoima. No oil had been found and eventually in 2013 the companies withdrew their activities from the district to apparently more promising sites.

The quote and especially the analogy are illustrative of the state of oil in Uganda during my research and even up to the writing of this book. My research was situated at the "interstices of everyday life" (Gasparini, 2004), which refers to those in-between experiences in time, space or communication like waiting, travelling or silence. One could also say the research happened at the interstices of what the oil companies call the "oil life cycle," which progresses from exploration through development to production and then decommissioning. The use of "cycle" for a linear perception of time that progresses from untapped oil to exploited oil up until no more oil can be extracted might seem odd at first but it refers to the whole business operation. While an individual well can only go through these stages once, the oil companies repeat them over and over again. When I arrived in Uganda in 2012, the country was at the transition from the exploration phase to the development phase. Uganda had successfully attracted investors through presenting geological and geophysical proof of the presence of hydrocarbons in its soil. Small and independent oil companies took the risk and invested into exploration, which confirmed commercially viable quantities of oil. First exploration successes were made in 1998 and it has been known for at least a century or even before colonial times that there was oil in Uganda. This was the beginning of the presence of oil in Uganda and the development phase was expected to arrive soon but it never did.

This ethnography shows that the interstices of the oil life cycle are not times of hibernation but moments filled with various negotiations and attempts at setting the course of oil in Uganda. The politician cited above referred to the expectations connected to the oil and the experience of waiting and anticipation during the exploration phase. In his speech he also commented on the many discussions that were being held in Uganda during that time by civil society organisations (CSO).[3] He asked

[3] I will use the term CSO for any organisation operating in Uganda that is presenting itself as non-governmental and interested in the promotion of not-for-profit goals, such as human rights or environmental protection. These organisations include international and national as well as community based or faith-based organisations. I will differentiate amongst the different types of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) only when it is crucial to the analysis. I use the term civil society as a self-ascribed label by certain organisations operating in Uganda.

the audience to remain calm and wait for the oil to materialise before debating its effects. But during the wait, the main oil-related activity was anticipating risks and opportunities from the oil and communicating visions of a future with it.

Rather than truly being absent, oil in Uganda is simply not yet present: It is in a state of latency, of not-yet-ness (Adam, 2009), a concept I use to fathom the temporal qualities of oil and their societal impacts. Not-yet-ness describes a phase of liminality, which is a moment of uncertainty that enables new positionings with regard to a future that lies beyond this phase. Not-yet-ness thereby refers to processes of future-making in the present. Not-yet-ness is similar to the concept of "presence of absence" (Bille et al. 2010), which highlights the ways materiality and temporality are connected. But not-yet-ness is a concept directed at the future, not the past.

The not-yet-ness of Ugandan oil posed several methodological challenges. My initial research question was to understand the influence of (inter)national political and economic forces on the development of oil in Uganda and more especially their impact on people in the oil region. Due to the not-yet-ness in which the oil was stuck, it seemed an impossible undertaking, since the big developments and transformations I had hoped to find failed to materialise. Realising the importance of this waiting for Uganda's oil, and the future it promised, I started to focus on the ways Ugandans anticipated the oil in speech, action, and infrastructural development.

In the phase of not-yet-ness oil-related activities are not yet permanently fixed to certain sites. I therefore decided a broad, multi-sited ethnography was best suited to focus on oil-in-the-making. During the more than 15 months of fieldwork I conducted in Uganda between 2012 and 2015, I was mainly based in what is known in Uganda as the "oil city" Hoima, which functions as a gateway to the oil region, and made several trips to villages in the exploration areas. I established relationships and conducted interviews with a variety of persons, including actors from civil society and donor agencies, representatives of oil companies and their international and Ugandan subcontractors, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD)[4] and other government agencies concerned with the oil, as well as oil exploration workers, residents and politicians of the oil region. I participated in conferences, workshops and other stakeholder engagements held by both civil society organisations and the oil companies. In this book I consider how all these various actors play a role in making the resource and how local, national, and global forces were, and still are, weaving the story of oil in Uganda.

This book contributes to a growing anthropology of oil that looks at oil from a holistic perspective including the practices and processes of exploration, production, transportation, consumption, and signification (Behrends et al. 2011, Behrends and Schareika, 2010). Moving away from a focus on oil as revenue that prevails in many studies in economics and political science, the anthropology of oil expands into the materiality and temporality of the resource (Rogers, 2015). Anthropologists working on oil use classic ethnographic methods to learn more about the social significance of

[4] In the dissertation I use the shorter terms MEMD or Ministry of Energy.

oil in all its facets: from production to consumption, from raw material to commodity and revenue, and from power resource to object. Yet the role of immateriality that is the absence or not-yet-ness of oil, so pertinent in the Ugandan case, has not been studied sufficiently. Anthropologists have noted though that oil can have an impact and cause conflicts even when it is not yet there (Behrends, 2008). This ethnography analyses processes and negotiations that take place even before the first drop of oil is produced and it reflects on how risk narratives such as the "resource curse" are employed to influence and gain leverage in these early negotiations. The resource curse concept, developed in economic and political sciences, seeks to explain the postulated "paradox of plenty" (Karl, 1997: 4), that is how and why, despite greater revenues, resource-rich countries perform worse than resource-poor ones in terms of poverty, corruption, democracy and political stability (e.g. Auty, 1993; Humphrey et al., 2007; Ross, 1999; Yates, 1996).

This book connects to perspectives on oil that take into account both the material and temporal aspects of resources. The concept of "resource materiality" (Richardson and Weszkalnys, 2014) emphasises that resources do not exist in and of themselves, but rather they are brought into being through knowledge, as well as technologies, infrastructures and practices. The ethnographic approach is particularly well suited to understand these processes in new or future oil states because looking at the practices of "resource-making" (Ferry and Limbert, 2008) allows the researcher to explore how various actors negotiate the significations of oil (Behrends and Reyna, 2011; Behrends and Schareika, 2010). The concept of "resource-making" is defined as processes of social and political negotiation (Ferry and Limbert, 2008: 4). This ethnography then looks at how different actors from the state, the oil companies and their service providers, Ugandan companies, the extractive communities, and civil society tried to influence the process of oil-making in Uganda. It looks at key actors of this development and analyses the various visions and their implications, as well as the changes the oil has brought to Uganda even when the oil was still "in the womb."

Studying oil in a formative phase emphasises that oil is not just a variable within a setting, but rather that it is formed by the context. The phase of not-yet-ness is a phase of uncertainty and openness. The oil life cycle is not a smooth transition from one stage to the next, but rather the transition can get expanded as one phase has ended and the next one is yet to start. It is a temporal moment which various actors use, and even prolong, in order to influence the nature of the next stage. This book shows how resources are not just made within the phases of the cycle of exploring, developing and producing oil but also at the interstices of this cycle.

In this ethnography, I bring insights from the anthropology of risk and uncertainty to the study of oil by suggesting that in order to understand processes of resource-making, we need to move away from (more or less) deterministic models such as the resource curse. Instead, we should appreciate the uncertainty of the future as an openness that different actors may use to influence present and future outcomes. In this sense, resource-making is also future-making.

Uncertainty is a "state of mind and minding" (Reynolds Whyte, 2009: 213) that denotes the recognition of a lack of knowledge to predict the outcomes of events. Uncertainty thus emphasises an awareness of the contingencies of the future. Risks in turn can be seen as a way to anticipate possibilities and to thereby manage or even profit from uncertainty. I follow a relational understanding of risk that asks "why and how something is considered a risk" (Boholm and Corvellec, 2011: 176), and according to which risk is "a product of situated cognition positing a relationship of risk linking a risk object and an object at risk" (ibid.: 178). Objects here refer to "any kind of physical, cultural, or social artefact that can be delineated and singled out" (Boholm and Corvellec, 2011: 177). Risks are not self-evident in this view but social concepts that point to what is of value in a given social group, or even society as a whole. This relational concept enables me to gain insights into what is at stake for different actors in Uganda by analysing different risk narratives. In a sense, oil is not the only resource in the process of becoming, because the construction of risks itself can be understood as a kind of resource-making. Once 'made,' the risks can be drawn upon as power resources to influence how the oil is made.

The oil project in Uganda can be understood as an "arena," (Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan, 1997) meaning a social space that is constituted by various actors and institutions that are involved in the oil-making, such as the state, the oil companies, the extractive communities and civil society[5]. These actors have also been described as the "oil complex" (Watts, 2005), yet the arena concept turns the focus more narrowly towards the negotiations that influence the present and future development of the oil project. This concept also highlights the interests each set of actors or strategic group brings to the negotiation (Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan, 1997). It is constituted by the relations between the different actors and these are not stable but subject to change, reinterpretation and even breaking. Furthermore, there is no stable totality of relations. Rather actors can always endeavour to create linkages to the oil project in order to profit (financially or in other ways) from it.

This book looks at how actors communicate about and establish risks of the oil and thereby negotiate their position within the oil arena. They even influence the constitution of the oil complex itself by forging or cutting relations to other actors in the complex, and by qualifying the relations through according blame, an important part of the risk communication (Douglas, 1992). Stephen Hilgartner (1992) who was the source of inspiration for a relational theory of risk was concerned with how risk objects are constituted. He calls this the "emplacement of risk" and highlights how risks can shape the (future) form of socio-technical networks. Risk emplacement is a negotiation of power and it leaves room for agency and engagement if successful. Risks can be used as power resources in negotiations because a risk that

[5] The term civil society in this dissertation refers to a strategic group comprised of (mainly) non-state and non-profit organisations and actors with a similar position with regard to the oil. I discuss the term in more detail in chapter four on the resource curse.

is emplaced shapes various aspects of the arena: the language used, the knowledge produced and the code of conduct.

This book considers various attempts at risk emplacement at different nodes of the complex: from the state, to companies and civil society actors. In showing how risks are used in negotiations to influence present and future outcomes, this book also contributes to the anthropology of risk. Important questions for analysing my material were to note who or what was said to be at risk from whom or what. Further questions were how persons communicated the risk and with what knowledge. Finally, I analysed my material by considering what options for management the risk narratives offered, whether the risk found acceptance, what effects the communication produced and how it helped the actors to gain a more powerful position in the oil arena.

Thus, this ethnography contributes to four fields in anthropology: oil, risk, uncertainty, and the future. It introduces not-yet-ness as a moment in time of oil production that is of importance and that has hitherto not been studied sufficiently. By looking at processes of anticipation in this uncertain phase, this book can offer new insights into the relation between risk and uncertainty that move beyond conceptions of linear progressions from uncertainty to risk. Furthermore, the book establishes that risk narratives are an important way to alter the arena of the oil project, or for that matter any arena. Careful attention to how actors make and use risks and uncertainty in negotiations can help understand why a certain discourse can dominate in an arena and at times even why certain normative rules are set the way they are.

In the following, I give an overview of the chapters of this book. The second chapter introduces the theoretical and methodological framework. It explains the conceptual tools with which this work operates and that served as guiding principles throughout the research and analysis of the data. While uncertainty and risk have been connected in many studies, the combination with oil is novel. Although the risks of the oil industry are mentioned in many publications on oil, these studies work with more vernacular notions of risks and do not conceptualise it. After introducing the concepts individually, I discuss how risk and uncertainty can be put to (profitable) use. The chapter also introduces my research and my methodology. I discuss the question of how to study oil in its not-yet-ness: that is, how to empirically make use of the combination of the three concepts. I describe the sites of my research, the methods used and I reflect on the challenges I faced and the impact of my positionality on my research.

After setting the frame, I relate the history of oil in Uganda in the third chapter, drawing mainly on a review of the literature and newspaper articles. The not-yet-ness of oil in Uganda becomes more plausible when the history of the resource is taken into account. Oil has been in the making for a very long time. This has led to some frustrations, which also gave room for negotiating just how the oil would come to be. I start the history of oil in Uganda with the early exploration activities and follow it up to recent events of various scandals and debates around legislation. I show the risks that are connected to the search for oil for the oil companies and for the state.

In Uganda, the development of oil has been delayed many times and these delays are risky to both the government and the oil companies. This historical account also points to the negotiations that are part of the resource-making process. I will show how risks can be used as leverage in these negotiations once they have been acknowledged. In this way the government used the risk of delays in developments and the oil companies threatened their withdrawal in order to get an upper hand in the negotiations.

The next three chapters then turn to my research findings. They are each concerned with a sub-arena of the oil arena, centred on the revenues in the economy of expectation, land issues in the oil region and national content. In these last three chapters I present negotiations of participation in the oil and the petro-future. Structurally, these chapters are on the same level and could have been ordered differently. The advantage of the chosen order is that it progresses from the broader narrative about the oil that taints all interactions towards more specific interactions between the state, the oil companies and people in the oil region. These in turn are important to understand the positions held by the different strategic groups in the sub-arena of national content.

The fourth chapter focuses on a set of actors that has been very influential on oil in Uganda: civil society organisations. The chapter looks at how they communicate the resource curse as a risk. In brief, the resource curse discourse creates a causal link between the presence of oil in a country and negative social, political, and economic outcomes. It is a concept exported from economics and political sciences by civil society organisations who intend to impact on the governance of oil. Despite criticism from within social sciences, the resource curse has become a rallying cry for civil society actors in oil-producing states and notably also in potential petro-states (Weszkalnys, 2011). In this sense, the resource curse is a travelling model that has been translated to the Ugandan context (Behrends et al., 2014; Reyna, 2007).

I show how civil society organisations drew on an international discourse of the resource curse to communicate what they saw as the risks associated with oil, and to make recommendations on how these risks could be managed. I argue to look at the resource curse as a risk narrative that helped civil society actors in Uganda to gain influence and broker space. The resource curse is the anticipation of a catastrophe and it comes with risk management tools or international advice on resource governance for preventing the curse, such as accountability and transparency. In the resource curse discourse, oil is equivalent to a potentially destructive force unleashed by the oil companies and the government on Uganda and its citizens.

I present the results of an analysis of documents and presentations by civil society organisations that are explaining the resource curse. I will discuss in more detail a video production that illuminates the main points of the discourse. In order to be able to make my argument, I take a critical look at the term civil society and relate my understanding of civil society as a strategic group in Uganda. I consider the resource curse discourse to be a way of changing the oil arena in Uganda. Other actors from the oil companies and the government have taken up the resource curse concept in their language, thus acknowledging the risk although claiming it would not happen in Uganda.

The resource curse risk also has an impact on local people in the oil region. Many expressed to me a sense of uncertainty with regards to their future in an oil-state. The talk about a resource curse combined with past experiences of state neglect, experiences of unfair compensation during exploration, and in general life in a region the state considered 'hard to reach and hard to stay' made a future with oil seem to be a looming disaster rather than a blissful promise.

The experiences of people since the discovery of oil, and the expectations they held with regard to the oil, are central to chapter five. The chapter starts out by embedding these experiences in the uncertainties of the past. It then continues with statements from various actors in villages of the exploration areas that speak of their doubts, worries, and unease with regard to the oil. I have singled out the major issues that came up during my research: the hope for jobs in the oil industry; the concerns over a rise in immoral acts and security threats; the disruptions from seismic surveys and other developments such as the construction of a road or a refinery; and in general worries about displacement and land grabbing. While many civil society activists suggest that people in the oil region live in dire uncertainty, without agency, and in need of spokespersons, I show how the people in a village in the exploration area also knew how to mobilise resources at the national and international level. People in a fishing village on the shores of Lake Albert[6] demanded compensation for the alleged destruction of their cultural sites during exploration by presenting both their heritage and the success of the oil exploration in their area to be at risk. They drew support from the national legislation on the protection of cultural sites, from the king of Bunyoro[7] and from an international community that seeks to protect indigenous rights and cultural heritage.

The last chapter is centred on another friction between the oil companies and Ugandans: the intricacies of national content, meaning the participation of Ugandans in the oil industry. National content is another social arena, or rather sub-arena, within the oil complex. To the oil companies, national content was a legal requirement and part of their corporate social responsibility approach. In a debate on the participation of Ugandans in the oil sector and the use of international standards, Ugandan entrepreneurs from village to national level challenged the oil companies of intentionally excluding Ugandans from the profits of oil. Tullow[8] and its joint venture partners tried to make Ugandans acknowledge the risks they defined and to handle them according to international mechanisms, thus creating a "technological zone" (Barry, 2006) around the oil, in which all objects and processes are judged

[6] The lake is called Mwitanzige in Runyoro. I continue using the colonial name because it is used by most actors in my field and in Uganda in general.

[7] Bunyoro is a former kingdom that covers several districts in the oil region but today is only a cultural institution. I will give some more details in chapter two.

[8] In this thesis I use Tullow for both Tullow Oil plc and the Ugandan subsidiary Tullow Oil Uganda Ltd. The same applies to Total and CNOOC.

according to a common standard. The oil companies tried to influence how the oil would be produced in Uganda. Like civil society and state officials, they also drew on the risks of environmental pollution and human accidents to argue for their disentangled style of business operation (cf. Appel, 2012a; Zalik, 2009). In the chapter I also show how this business style is connected to the financialisation of the oil industry. I elaborate how oil companies like Tullow follow the logics of shareholder capitalism, which is centred on the demands of shareholders and shareholder value, and the effects this has on the participation of Ugandans in the oil business.

Overall, the book covers different negotiations between actors and institutions of the oil complex. Throughout the book, I show how different actors use risk narratives in negotiations to gain a space for brokerage or space for profit-generation. I suggest that a fruitful way of studying oil, especially in a state of not-yet-ness, is to consider these risk narratives around the oil as they reveal both how the future is anticipated and what influence actors can derive from these visions.

Figure 2: Signposts on the way to Butiaba at Lake Albert (2012).

2 The Conceptual and Methodological Framework

The timing of research is always important and in my case it fundamentally influenced my choice of theories and methodologies, which I elaborate in this chapter. Following the local politician I cited in the introduction, Uganda's oil project is like a pregnancy. Indeed, just like a pregnancy means waiting for the baby, Uganda was waiting for its oil. Likewise, the dominant activity in my research was waiting. Waiting in a broad and a very mundane sense. I was waiting for my research permit, for interview appointments or even just to hear back from potential interviewees. I was waiting for buses and for conferences to start. And I was waiting for the oil developments to kick in and for the oil to eventually materialise. I was not the only one waiting.

The oil industry was also waiting and so were Ugandan politicians, state officials, civil society actors, businessmen and -women, and people in the exploration areas. It was a time of waiting filled with anticipation, with plans, fears, doubts, hopes and calculations. After all, it was not certain what developments the oil would bring for the country. However, contrary to my expectation, I did not find widespread excitement about the oil. It had already been a long wait for everybody. Truly, the oil future was too slow in coming as in 2012, six years after commercially viable quantities of oil had been discovered, there was little to show for the first excitement.

Frustrated at first, I started realising with time that my fieldwork would not be on the massive changes oil brings, but rather on the wait for them. A maxim of street-level bureaucrats in Benin states that "C'est le terrain qui commande" (Bierschenk, 2014a: 238). My field was calling the shots – and my field was making me wait. Therefore, I decided that my research would have to be about how people waited for the oil; how the oil was being anticipated. Commonly in social anthropology, the empirical research is not just a means to flesh out the theoretical frame with data. Rather the conditions in the field render (parts of) the theoretical frame useless for understanding what is going on (Bierschenk, 1984: 16). Accordingly, I reoriented my framework incorporating concepts that are future-oriented and can help to analyse the processes and narratives of anticipation in the wait for oil. Notably, waiting is not passive but rather a very focused activity. Waiting turns the gaze towards the future and fills the gap between now and then with imaginations, calculations and distractions. People cope with protracted uncertainty through hoping for a better future. It is hopeful waiting that keeps people afloat and able to persevere through their predicaments (Brun, 2015).

In Uganda, waiting consisted of more than hope: it was a time of hope- and doubt-mongering, as well as preparation.[9] The Parliament was passing an oil legislation, Ugandan companies were trying to obtain contracts from the oil companies and civil society was busy anticipating the risks connected to oil production. I started looking at these visions and tools that helped people make sense of or even influence the petro-future, a future that is shaped by the oil, imaginations of it, and the significations people give to the oil. Focusing on the anticipation of oil means turning towards an understanding of oil not just in material but also temporal terms. Concepts of temporality, future, immateriality and potentiality or not-yet-ness came to be important to my research, enabling me to see what was going on when apparently nothing much was going on. These concepts focus on the narratives about the oil, the visions of the future people created, and the practices of anticipation.

My research in the "interstices of everyday life" (Gasparini, 2004: 339) meant that my field was not clearly delineated by activities of the oil companies or by oil sites such as a refinery. Rather, my field was quite elusive and not easy to access. In this chapter, I present my methodological approach and my theoretical framework, that is the concepts that enabled me to study oil in this uncertain phase. I had to work with concepts that allowed me to understand the future-oriented waiting for oil in Uganda. I position myself within the anthropology of oil. I outline my understanding of oil, and more especially oil-making, and of the other two major concepts of this work, namely risk and uncertainty. I show how these theoretical engagements helped to ask meaningful questions of my empirical material and how it enabled me to both conceptually and methodologically engage the wait for oil in Uganda. After-

[9] Weszkalnys (2016) calls the contradictory expectations with regard to the future development of oil in São Tomé and Príncipe "doubtful hope" and stresses the need to engage with what she terms "resource affect". Chapter 5 considers such affects expressed by people in the oil region.

wards, I continue the chapter with an introduction to my field and a description of my methodology.

2.1 Oil, Risk and Uncertainty

Adding to the current growing field of anthropology and oil, this ethnography combines insights from social science studies on oil with studies on risk and uncertainty in order to see how various actors stake their claims on the petro-future in the present. In this sub-chapter, I proceed by first elaborating what an anthropological perspective on oil means and what perspective I follow in this work. Then I introduce risk as an analytical concept. Due to the colloquial notion of risk, it is important to set out clearly what sociologists and social anthropologists have contributed to our understanding of risk and how this is relevant in my work. Although often used interchangeably, I will show that it is fruitful to discuss it separately from uncertainty. I show how anthropologists have engaged uncertainty and what insights I draw for this ethnography. The final point of this theoretical framework is the consideration of how both uncertainty and risk can be used, which is a vital point for the main argument of my book.

Oil

In a call for more ethnographies on oil, Andrea Behrends and Nikolaus Schareika (2010) highlight the relevance of this approach.

> [T]he ethnographic study of practice can reveal how in particular oil zones in Africa a localised mix of actors, stakes, interests, resources of power, and cultural understandings enter processes of interaction and negotiation that yield specific outcomes (Behrends and Schareika 2010: 3).

Following their call, I used a practice-oriented approach to understand the process of oil-making in Uganda. The research question was how the oil was turned into a resource and what signification were ascribed to the (future) oil. In this sub-section, I point out what contributions anthropologists have made to the study of oil and I position myself within this field with a special focus on the temporality of the resource. I then define my perspective on oil and the oil project as an arena.

Anthropology of Oil

Oil can be considered in its geological, energetic or economic dimensions. The former two understandings build on the material qualities of the substance, while the latter derives from its exchange value. The economic dimension of oil has dominated debates mainly in economics and political science, which have been focused on the economic and political effects of this commodity. The major explanatory concepts of the 'rentier state' and the 'resource curse' derive from studies on the effects of oil production on countries in the Middle East and the Americas in the 1970s and 1990s respectively. I discuss these concepts in detail in chapter four. Here it suffices to say that the resource curse thesis has been criticised for excluding the context, e.g. the type of regime that was in place when oil was discovered (Basedau, 2005). Furthermore, these concepts mainly look at oil as revenues, as simply money, and do not consider the ways in which oil is converted from a physical substance to an economic or political object. They also neglect the embeddedness of states in a global economic setting, in which large corporations wield influence. This narrow focus on the country places sole responsibility on the government while forgetting the international linkages and the geo-strategic characteristic of oil (Watts, 2008).

Social anthropology has added another perspective to our understanding of oil that combines the different facets of oil: the material, economic, political, and social structures of its production, transportation, trade and consumption. Oil in this book is understood from this anthropological perspective as the product of technological, social and natural processes that are intertwined and feed back into each other, producing this specific substance and ascribing meanings and uses to it (cf. Mitchell, 2009). This holistic perspective has been the strength of social anthropology and it is this strength that allows oil to be looked at from a new angle that transcends the narrow focus on oil as substance or money. What can be gained though by looking at oil holistically and by considering it as a social phenomenon? I suggest here that anthropologists have brought new insights to the study of oil by looking at it from a global, a political, a reflexive, and a historical perspective. It is important to consider these studies as they formed the initial perspective I had on oil.

First, social anthropologists accounted for the global dimensions of oil production by emphasising the influence of corporations and the global capitalist market (Appel, 2012a; Ferguson, 2005; Shever, 2012; Yessenova, 2012). In a widely cited article, James Ferguson (2005) postulates that the oil industry is almost working like an island, disentangled from its surroundings. He argues that it is not nation states anymore that receive investment but only certain territories, splitting Africa once again into useable and unusable parts. In both cases the state seems peculiarly absent: one part is governed by companies and the other by international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO). It seems once more that a scramble for Africa's resources is on. And the companies have scrambled for the best parts of the continent, leaving the useless parts for the population while keeping them out of the useable parts. Left out to be taken care of not by a state but by internationally financed NGOs. This trend has also been noted by other scholars (Frynas and Paulo, 2006; Yates, 2006). Unlike mineral extraction, which is considered labour intensive work, the oil industry is capital-intensive only, seeking labour not locally but flying in its experts.

The oil industry in this description is an international industry, financed by international capital and exceedingly disconnected from the nation state where its operations take place. And like other industries operating globally, it is protected by international trade regulations and arbitration courts. Nicolas Donner (2011) has a similar understanding of the industry, calling it the immune nature of oil enclaves. Building on Ferguson's analysis and looking at oil from a material perspective, Hannah Appel analyses oil companies' business operations in Equatorial-Guinea as constitutive of a petro-capitalism which seeks disconnectedness based on modularity (Appel, 2012a,b).

Second, looking at oil from a political perspective, Suzanna Sawyer's study of indigenous movements against oil production in Ecuador analyses the discourses and actors of this resistance directed at the oil companies (Sawyer 2004). She shows the struggles over the oil profits between the Ecuadorian state, multinational oil companies and indigenous communities and even within these communities. Elaborating on the connection between oil corporations and culture, Rogers (2012) studied the image campaigns of Lukoil and PermRegionGaz in Russia in which they used certain material qualities of oil and gas to relate to the people of the region. They connected the depth of the oil with a depth of regional culture, while the gas pipeline system was connected to sociality and connectedness. With this account Rogers shows how particular qualities of a resource are used in a politicised field of significations and shows how global connections of oil feed back into society and in different ways than anticipated by concepts like the resource curse.

Third, drawing once again on a classic tool, anthropologists have used the reflexive gaze to understand how the accumulated oil knowledge of academia was translated to and influenced the political, economic and social processes in oil states. They show that the concepts of the resource curse and the rentier state have been influential in shaping the discussion of oil and what to anticipate, expect, hope and fear (Hoinathy and Behrends, 2014; Weszkalnys, 2011; Witte, 2017).

Fourth, social anthropologists have considered the history of an oil state to understand how it evolved without assuming it followed pre-determined oil-driven trajectories. In one of the early ethnographies on oil, Thomas Bierschenk (1984) looks at the effects of oil in the sultanate of Oman from a historical perspective: His ethnography analyses the formation of a rentier state. Later ethnographies on oil have also looked at the processes of change and the notions of progress in oil states such as Venezuela (Coronil, 1997) or Nigeria (Apter, 2005). While in both Apter and Coronil's books, the oil is not the central theme, they manage to show how the state and the performance and representations of the state are essentially influenced or even dominated by oil. They emphasise how oil states used the oil money to create their visions of a state. Looking at the FESTAC (World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture) in 1977, Apter describes how the oil boom gave rise to a new confidence and celebration of African and Nigerian culture. He situates these cultural politics within the political economy of postcolonial Nigeria with patron-client-relations or ethnic clientelism as a salient feature. Similarly, Coronil analyses how the idea of a Venezuelan nation at the beginning of the 20th century was closely intertwined with oil. He describes the oil boom and bust and its effects on the Venezuelan state and society, more especially the way oil money corrupted the state and society in general.

Comparing the historical trajectories of oil and carbon and their impact on democracy, Timothy Mitchell (2011) points to the importance of following the oil and looking at the infrastructures of oil production to understand its impact on society. Furthering these insights from historical contextualisation, Jannik Schritt (2016) argues that oil is not a total game changer but just another way of playing the political game. By showing what is going on before any oil is actually produced, ethnographic studies add to our understanding of the dynamics in resource states. In her ethnography on Chad, Andrea Behrends (2008) notes how the spectre of oil alone can already lead to conflicts.

These four insights from anthropology have added new layers and shades to oil but are only part of what the anthropology of oil has to offer especially regarding the temporality of the resource. While the studies mentioned so far influenced my initial research programme and directed my attention to the physical and technological qualities of oil and the infrastructure needed for its production, transport, and consumption, this framework was insufficient to engage what was going on in my field. It is here that studies emphasising the temporality of resources came to be of greater importance.

Temporality of Oil

Temporality was already important in studies that consider the historical trajectory of the resource and the state. However, the temporality in these studies was mainly focused on the past. What can anthropologists offer though for studying resources in the future? Richardson and Weszkalnys (2014) explore the question of how to study the process of resource making ethnographically. They propose to look at resources not as commodities but as parts of resource environments (Richardson and Weszkalnys, 2014: 7). In particular, they suggest a focus on the resource ontologies – on knowledge about the resource, the infrastructure needed to exploit it, and experiences with and embodiments of the resource by people in touch with it (ibid.: 16). According to this perspective, resources do not simply exist but are brought into being. They consider this process as one "par excellence" of nature being turned into culture.

> [N]atural resources are not 'out there' ready to be seized upon and utilised but always in flux and open-ended. They 'become' as resource materialities, that is, as constitutive of and constituted within arrangements of substances, technologies, discourses, and the practices deployed by different kind of actors (Richardson and Weszkalnys 2014: 16).

Before a natural resource is worth being turned into a commodity, a social system with all its values, imaginations, anticipation and technologies needs to be in place.[10] Materiality and temporality are intricately bound together and being always has a temporal quality. While resources are obviously material and factual, they equally pertain to the temporal domain. Studies focusing on temporality consider oil in its trajectory and the imaginations and future visions connected to the various stages of the oil life cycle and to both its absence and presence (Limbert, 2010; Weszkalnys, 2014).

Mandana Limbert (2010) looks at how people in Oman perceive the development oil brought as an illusion that will fade away once the oil is gone. She describes how Omanis live in uncertainty with regard to their oil as they constantly expect the oil's decline. Imaginations of a future without oil build on the oil-less past as a template. The orientation towards the future, the modes of anticipation invented or followed by actors, are as important as the actual materialisation of the resource. Elizabeth Ferry and Mandana Limbert (2008) combine temporality and materiality by highlighting the linkage between temporality and resources.

> Resource-making is a social and political process, and resources are concepts as much as objects or substances. Indeed, to call something a resource is to make certain claims about it, and those claims participate in an ideational system […] that has a history, perhaps multiple histories. To call something a resource is to presuppose a set of interactions between 'nature' and 'society' that creates goods, products, and values. Moreover, particular expressions of this ideational system, what we might call resource imaginations, often have a strongly temporal aspect: they frame the past, present, and future in certain ways; they propose or preclude certain kinds of time reckoning; they inscribe technologies; and they are imbued with affects of time, such as nostalgia, hope, dread, and spontaneity (Ferry and Limbert 2008: 4).

Resource-making or oil-making is informed by social and political processes of negotiating what the future with oil will look like. This is part of what this anthropology of oil sets out to do, to cover the processes of oil (states) in the making. The special state of oil in Uganda necessitates an exploration of the temporal domain of the immaterial. Immateriality is a kind of absence. Absence does not have an existence per se but is one that needs to be perceived and performed. An absence marks a thing out of an infinite number of things that are not present in any given context (Fowles, 2010: 39). Out of all the things that are not present, persons focus their thoughts and emotions on one or several things that are not there and whose absence is hence registered. The moment the absence becomes noticed, it becomes a presence of absence. This concept is drawn from archaeology and it is different from the absence

[10] Matthew Huber shows in "Lifeblood" (2013) how essential oil consumption is to the American way of life and the rise of neoliberalism because it is so embedded in the ordinary life.

of presence where the absence is simply not felt or noticed by the actors (not the observer) (Bille et al., 2010: 11; Buchli and Lukas, 2001).

Fowles (2010) points out that absence has been neglected in thing theory: Latour could talk about the present key as a viable actor but not about the absent key. Absent things need a human subject to acknowledge, to perceive them. Thus, they do not exist in themselves as agents or actors (Fowles, 2010: 25). The same could be said of oil which is absent, immaterial or simply not yet there. Absences can acquire object-like powers and potentialities when they have their own presence in the world. They then become "full participants in the social characterized by their own particular politics and, at times, their own particular emotional and semiotic charge" (Fowles, 2010: 27).

Oil in its absence poses a challenge for research. In a state of not-yet-ness, the final materialisation of oil is postponed. The presence of oil in a country is the result of a materialising process, which is the combination of various social, political, geological and economic activities that help to discover and develop the resource. Oil production is contingent on the interests of the oil companies and the government as well as on price fluctuations on the world market and demands by the shareholders. For this process to set in the resource needs to have an economic exchange value and the oil quantity must be above the threshold of commercial viability. Without passing this line, the oil deposits do not count on the international energy market. The crossing of this threshold is much less a geological fact than one co-created by market prices and technology available for exploration and extraction.

Barbara Adam raised the question of how the future could be studied and stressed that empirical science is not well equipped to study the future since its competence lies in "the present not the future" (Adam, 2009: 21). Therefore, the way the future is created by humans has been neglected for long. Anthropological conceptualisation of future in the present are for example "waithood" (Honwana, 2014) and "timepass" (Jeffrey, 2010). These concepts are concerned with how young men and women who, due to economic hardship have not yet gained adult status and thus remained in a socially liminal phase as neither children nor grown-ups, organise their lives in anticipation of a better future. While these concepts are useful to understand the situation of youth in Uganda, they do not speak to the anticipation practices around the oil. Therefore, I suggest that the concept of not-yet-ness, based on Adam (2009), allows to think together temporality and (im)materiality of the oil.

The entanglement of time and matter becomes evident in the concept of presence of absence: it is the imagination that is geared towards the past or the future that brings or keeps things in our lives. Adam has stated the importance of the future and especially future in the making for our contemporary world.

> [T]oday's social world encompasses not just social relations, institutions and social structures but also the natural environment. In its futurity, much of this world is not material in the conventional sense but marked by latency and

> immanence. It is a world of deeds under way that have not yet materialised as symptoms, not yet congealed into matter (Adam, 2009: 8).

The concept of not-yet-ness I propose here resembles a phase of liminality of being in-between. Not-yet-ness is characterised by uncertainty and is a phase in which the future with oil is anticipated in practices and discourses drawing on risks and uncertainty. The concept of liminality describes a phase of ambiguity in which a sense of uncertainty prevails. The concept of liminality is derived from the anthropology of rituals and used to describe the phase between stages in the rites of passage, in which the participants are left in limbo (Turner, 1967; Van Gennep, 1960).[11]

Like liminality the phases Uganda has to go through to become an oil producer are clearly delineated by the oil life cycle. Following the time concepts of Roman Loimeier (2012), which include natural, religious, social, political, global and clock time, the oil life cycle would represent an economic time concept. This time is structured by the different key moments such as first oil or the inauguration of a refinery.[12] Unlike liminality though, not-yet-ness is neither structured nor does it have a definite end; in fact, its end may never come. It is precisely not within a ritual time frame but like the concept of waithood it is directed at a future that may never come. Not-yet-ness covers the time at the interstices of the oil life cycle.

In this book, I follow the perspective of Ferry and Limbert (2008), who highlight the process of how oil comes to be a resource of national value and of value to the people. The aim of this book is to understand the process of resource-making, or to be precise the process of oil-making in Uganda. For almost a century, Uganda's oil was in a state of absence of presence. With this book I explore the lines between the present and the future – the not-yet-ness of oil. The way I look at the not-yet-ness of oil is through the concepts of risk and uncertainty. Two concepts that speak to the human ability and desire to handle the future and its contingencies.

Oil Arena

The relevant actors of the process of oil-making are described by Watts as forming an "oil complex," which is "a configuration of social, political, and economic forces with a broadly similar 'petrostructure'" (Watts, 2005: 378). Later, Watts (2012) called this "oil assemblage," which remained conceptually close to the oil complex. The oil assemblage relates to an understanding of oil from the vantage point of actor-network-theory, which highlights the co-production of oil through actors and actants and the creation of linkages. This is a potentially fruitful perspective to study oil but it does not account for the immateriality which is important in Uganda.

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[11] For a recent discussion of the concept see Thomassen (2009).

[12] Loimeier sees these different concepts of time as adding up to a distinctive timescape ("Zeitlandschaften" in German).

Building on Watts, I see the oil complex as a network of actors such as the petro-states and the consumer states, the transnational oil industry and the national oil companies, the banks and shareholders, the insurance industry, the militaries, paramilitaries and security companies, civil society organisations, lobbying groups, research institutes, the consumers, and the various groups in the extractive communities. The concept highlights the strategic and everyday importance of oil by encompassing the many connections oil creates in our hydrocarbon societies. It points to the importance of looking at a variety of national and international actors and the linkages between them when studying oil.

Individual national oil projects could be described as arenas in which different actors of the oil complex are in confrontation over oil-related issues and negotiate the oil. It is the actors who constitute what is understood as an arena in (political) anthropology (Lewellen, 2003: 95). Arena has been used as a concept to analyse political conflicts and the formation of strategic groups. Political conflict may refer to a narrow sense of politics as between politicians or to a broader understanding of local politics that includes a variety of actors (Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan, 2003, 1998).[13] The arena concept, in conjunction with those of conflict and strategic groups, was chosen by Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan (1997) as ideal for ethnographic research and indeed it provides a solid methodological purchase (Olivier de Sardan, 2003). It was applied by Bierschenk (1988: 43) to analyse a development project in Benin, which was determined by a struggle over perspectives, interpretations, plans for the future, political power and material resources of different strategic groups. Bierschenk points out that there is not just one development project but rather there are many projects each group pursues.

An arena can contain various stages or arenas (Renn, 1992).[14] An arena is a field of actions that are influenced by heterogeneous interests. Essentially, an arena is not a place but a relational space, a space of confrontations or conflicts, to which a set of rules applies in Bailey's conception of the term (Bailey, 1969: 28). Basically, an arena consists of actors who are joined by a common issue and strive for their own interests, forming strategic alliances of greater or lesser permanence. Therefore, an enterprise such as oil production can be viewed as an arena. Combining the concepts arena and oil complex, the former underlines the fluid character of alliances between individual actors to strategic groups on a micro level, while the latter highlights the macro level structures such as the national state, the international oil industry or the capitalist system.

The project of oil production in Uganda which is at the base of the resource-making is the arena where many different actors position themselves following their particular interests and form strategic groups. The arena concept is well suited to analyse

[13] Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan (2003, 1998) used arena in an analysis of political processes of democratisation and decentralisation at the local level in Benin.

[14] In Renn's conception an arena is the political actions, that is actions that seek to influence policy decisions, of all actors involved in a certain issue (Renn, 1992: 181).

the negotiations around the oil in Uganda, such as the resource curse, land issues or the national content discourse. To Bailey, the acceptance of (but not necessarily the adherence to) a common set of rules was a defining characteristic of the arena. There are normative and practical rules, that is rules of how the game should be played and rules of how to win the game. I argue that risks can be used as resources in arenas and they can thereby change the (normative) rules of the game being played.

It is especially the struggle over perspectives, interpretations and the future which is of interest to this book. This ethnography looks at how people negotiate the meaning of oil and what positions they take with regard to it, and more especially how these positionings and the visions people create, inform the futures that are conceivable and possible.

In the following I introduce risk and uncertainty as analytical concepts. I set them apart from other concepts and terms with which they are often conflated, such as insecurity or danger. After considering how risk and uncertainty have been conceptualised so far in the social sciences, I turn to the question of how people do not just cope with but profit from risk and uncertainty.

Risk

The visions of the future that were exchanged in the oil arena in Uganda where full of threatening scenarios and risks. What are risks though and how can we engage them theoretically? Different concepts of risk have been developed across the social sciences. One very prominent and early contribution was Frank Knight's *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit* (1964). According to Knight the main difference between risk and uncertainty lies in the ability to calculate. Unlike uncertainty, risks are known and can be calculated. What does calculation mean though? In economics risk is understood as the probability of an event, which is calculated numerically. The ability to calculate with numbers is connected to the existence of a calculative agency, of knowledge and of tools to do so (Callon, 1998). In fact, the rise of risk has been connected to the rise of probability (Hacking, 1990, 1978). Arnoldi refers to this as a probabilistic approach to risk (Arnoldi, 2009: 14). He points out how risk is connected to the rise of probability in science and a belief in its utility for controlling the future (ibid.: 33).

> Probability made it possible to induce the chances of something happening in the future. This is the cornerstone of the modern concept of risk: the scientifically (probabilistically) calculated likelihood of something unwanted happening (Arnoldi, 2009: 21).

Probability is seen as a way of turning future uncertainty into scientifically known risks and this is the basic premise of risk management (ibid.: 34). Through calculations and statistics, the likelihood of an event can be predicted. And once this is done, once the risk is assessed, decisions can be taken on the basis of that knowledge.

A social understanding of risk differs from this probabilistic approach. In sociology, risks are often understood to be inter-subjective and socially constructed (Arnoldi, 2009: 15). There are different approaches to the study of risk from sociology and social anthropology. Two approaches are prominent and widely known: Ulrich Beck's risk society and Mary Douglas's cultural theory of risk.

To Beck (1986) there are objective risks in the world and they have proliferated with the rise of new technology. According to Beck, we live in an ever more risky world and risks have become ubiquitous in our lives.[15] We are confronted with them in warnings, alerts, insurance demands and safety measures. These risks do not affect everyone in the same way as people are vulnerable in different ways or to different risks. Since some are more vulnerable than others, Beck sees risk vulnerability, rather than income difference, as the major difference in society at the end of the 20th century (Beck, 1986).[16] He calls risk the "Noch-Nicht-Ereignis" (ibid.: 43), literally translated a not-yet-event. Elaborating his concept into that of world risk society, Beck defines risk as the orchestration or staging of an anticipated catastrophe (Beck, 2007: 30). The not-yet-ness of oil in Uganda has been filled with stories of the not-yet-catastrophes of oil.

However Beck's concept of risk is only useful up to a certain extent because he built it on the assumption that risks are more or less objective phenomena that only need to be discovered. Social anthropologists in turn, argue that risks are essentially cultural (Douglas, 1992; Douglas and Wildavsky, 1983). They found that the perception of risks is connected to the norms and values of a culture. Risks are not the same across cultures. Rather each culture has selected risks out of all those that could be imagined. Mary Douglas (1992: 26–27) compares risks to taboos: they both create connections between actions and harm and influence or regulate (future) behaviour. An important question is always who is accorded the blame if something goes wrong (Douglas, 1992). This cultural or relativistic theory of risk has been for a long time anthropology's most prominent contribution to risk. However influential even beyond social anthropology it has been, it has been criticised by social anthropologists for being neither based on empirical data nor substantiated later on by empirical studies (Boholm, 2015: 58). Furthermore, the concept is built on an essentialist idea of culture.

The cultural understanding of risk failed to consider all the layers involved in risk and treated them as mere black boxes (ibid.: 64). In order to overcome these shortcomings, Åsa Boholm suggests a relational understanding of risk, which considers risk as a concept that bundles relations. According to her definition, a risk is when something of value to humans could possibly be harmed or destroyed yet it is

[15] To some extent this could also be said of Anthony Giddens' contribution (1991) to risk research. While many risks have been reduced with the onset of modernity, some new high-consequence risks have been created. He understands the proliferation and monitoring of risks as an expression of modernity's reflexivity (ibid.: 114).

[16] However, there are some global risks that would affect all people equally like air pollution. Beck called this the boomerang effect and pondered on the chances of them opening ways to a new utopia.

not certain this will happen (Boholm, 2003: 166). Risks can be related to physical or mental or even transcendental harm. What is perceived as a risk is the result of negotiations and it can, as mentioned above, vary between societies or within one society and it is always open to contestation (ibid.: 161).

> The argument […] is for the conceptualisation of risk not as a phenomenon in itself but as a frame that produces contexts that link together a risk object (a source of potential harm), an object at risk (a potential target of harm) and an evaluation (implicit or explicit) of the possible human consequences. Seen in this way, risk is a relational order constituting the connections between people, things and outcomes (Boholm, 2015: 87).

This understanding of risks as frames of looking at the world, is based on Erving Goffman's frame concept, defined as "principles of organisation which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them" (Goffman, 1974: 10–11). In this frame, a risk object is linked to an object *at* risk by a contingent and causal relation. Risk objects are things and actors that are identified as having dangerous qualities, the qualities being precisely how they put another object or actor at harm. To identify these causal links and the actor or object from which they emanate, knowledge and the organisation and evaluation of that knowledge is necessary. The object at risk is something to which value is attached and that one wishes to keep safe from harm. This understanding of risks highlights how important the identification of the risk is, that is the establishing, assembling, and organising of knowledge to form these relations and the social processes of attaching value to an object (Boholm and Corvellec, 2011).

All of this means that risks cannot be regarded outside the social and cultural context in which they are situated. In a relational understanding of risk, probability is not as important as the establishment of linkages. "Risk is a matter of connecting things," (Boholm and Corvellec, 2011: 183) and not primarily a matter of calculating something. For instance, Mairal (2008) suggests in an analysis of Daniel Defoes's *A Journal of the Plague Year* that European notions of risk have more to do with narratives of possible negative events than the rise of probability and statistics. Accordingly, not just calculations are important but also, or especially, narratives of risks – with or without numbers.

The relational theory of risk draws its major inspiration from a science and technology perspective on risk: Stephen Hilgartner argues that risk objects do not exist but are constructed and emplaced into sociotechnical networks such as auto-based transportation (Hilgartner, 1992).[17] The struggle to construct and control risks is also a negotiation over the future shape of the sociotechnical networks influenced

[17] Auto-based transportation is a sociotechnical network that includes a great variety of components such as drivers, cars, highways, manufacturing firms, investments banks, oil fields and government agencies (Hilgartner, 1992: 44).

by power relations (ibid.: 50). Hilgartner suggests that the study of risks should not focus so much on the general public but on the agents that are working on emplacing the risks (ibid.: 52). Hilgartner divides the construction of risks into two levels: creating the object itself and creating the object as risky, that is constructing a linkage between the object and harm.

> In other words, to emplace a risk object means to turn it into something to be reckoned with, something that is capable of influencing the future of the network. To displace a risk object means precisely the reverse: to strip the object, and its risks, of their significance; to neutralize them; to remove their capacity to influence the evolution of the network (Hilgartner, 1992: 49).

In this perspective, determining what is risky and what is not is a powerful resource. To assert dangerous causal links and to make others believe in them is to have a special power resource at hand. Like risk power is also relational and not a feature or a stable category (Bernoux, 1985: 126). Power is a social field or process in which different actors negotiate their position drawing on different resources to strengthen it (Alber, 2003: 158). Being able to define a risk means to create and mobilise knowledge in a certain way so that the risk can be perceived by a wider public. It means convincing other people of one's own perception of reality, gaining a *Deutungshoheit* (which can be loosely translated as interpretive authority). Knowledge is an important factor in identifying risks but it is not a stable category. Rather it gets constantly broadened and alternated. This holds especially true for new technology. With the expansion of knowledge, new risks come and old risks go. As Beck already pointed out, new technologies pose a special problem as they cannot be assessed with accuracy and sometimes not even anticipated in any way what catastrophes they might bring.[18]

An ongoing emplacement of a risk can be viewed in the discussion of the effects of fracking. While one side views fracking as an extreme case of environmental pollution, the other portrays it as completely harmless. The causality of whether chemicals in the water have negative consequences on the environment, is being debated and scientific knowledge is mobilised on both sides. Yet what is important is whether the causality gets wide recognition. This debate has not come to a conclusion yet, since the experts creating a linkage between the fracking activity and contamination of groundwater or even earthquakes have not yet managed to successfully emplace the risk and thus shape the whole sociotechnical network called fracking.[19] This example points out that with new technology one needs to start anticipating that which cannot be anticipated.

The insights from the studies on risk show that a risk is socially constructed, because it emerges from the combination of knowledge of these links combined with

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[18] The recent century has provided ample examples of new technologies at first believed to be safe that have turned into health risks – think of FCKW, amalgam or smoking, especially passive smoking.

[19] For an overview of the debate in Germany see Schirrmeister (2014).

a narrative and the ability to predict or even calculate the likelihood of such events happening. A risk is connected to cultural and social values, it is a recognised potential threat, an anticipated catastrophe, it is being performed and sometimes it can be calculated through probability calculations that control contingency or chance. The risk set-up of a society may change and new risks can emerge as old ones get modified or displaced. These changes are connected to wider social developments and changes in knowledge and beliefs of societies.

Risk and Agency

A problem when talking and writing about risk is that it is often not distinguished clearly from other words such as danger or hazard. However, differentiating between these terms is helpful as it reveals a major difference: risks do not strike like lightning. Niklas Luhmann (1991) defines the main difference between risk and danger as whether the outcome is attributed to a decision or is external, i.e. caused by an (uncontrollable) environment. With risk the damage is attributed to the decision-maker while with danger the damage is attributed externally to the environment. The difference lies in the agency that is attributed to humans, their culpability of harm. This connects to Douglas' insight that blame or the ability to accord it is an important element of risk. If potential harm is deemed beyond human agency or culpability then it is a danger or hazard and not a risk. Still, the line between the two terms is not clear-cut. In her work, Susanna Hoffman (2002) shows that so-called "natural catastrophes," which in a clear-cut distinction would be a hazard are also connected to human behaviour. Luhmann does caution that whether the agency or culpability is perceived to lie with someone is the result of perception and negotiation (Luhmann, 1991: 40). Nevertheless, risk is more directly connected to decision-making, that is to choosing from alternatives.

Decision-making is a form of agency (Boholm 2015: 124) and the agency of the decision-maker is juxtaposed by the "patiency" (ibid.) of those who are affected by the consequences of his or her decision. Based on Alfred Gell's concept of agency (Gell, 1998), Boholm stresses this differentiation between agents and patients or agency and patiency. Boholm describes agency as "a capacity to do things and get things done" (Boholm, 2015: 123); a capacity though that is not a feature of a person but attributed to him or her. Agency refers to the pursuit of goals or the disposition to the enactment of projects. Agency is not a property of individuals but rather a reflection of power relations in certain webs of social relations (Ortner, 2006: 151–152). Sherry Ortner (ibid.: 147) described this kind of agency as being "about people playing, or trying to play, their own serious games even as more powerful parties seek to devalue and even destroy them".[20] Patiency follows from the fact that the goal of agency lies outside of the acting being. His or her decision has consequences

[20] Serious games in Ortner's conception are cultural formations involving culturally variable and subjectively complex actors. Seen from this perspective social life is "actively played, oriented toward

for others who thereby become patients to this decision (Boholm, 2015: 124). This means the same issue can be a risk for someone (the agent) and a hazard for someone else (the patient) (ibid.).

Boholm applies her relational conceptualisation to situations, in which risks are negotiated or communicated. In risk communication it is suggested that conflicts might be mitigated by encouraging dialogue and sharing viewpoints and hence creating a sense of agency for everyone involved. However, this does not happen; people that are affected by the risk decision of another will continue to perceive their status as being a patient. This connection between risk and agency is important in this book when discussing the effects of the resource curse discourse on people living in the oil region.

Risks as Modes of Anticipation

Following a relational concept, risks can be conceived of as modes of anticipating the future. The verb anticipate derives from *anticipat,* Latin for acted in advance, meaning to guess or be aware and to take action to be prepared. Anticipation can go beyond merely expecting or predicting something. It can mean to take action based on an expectation. In this sense risks are a way of handling the future as they open options to actors to influence the future through present actions. Risks are a way to obtain agency over the uncertainty of the future, which by its very nature is full of contingencies.

The difference between risk and uncertainty was captured by Brian Wynne (1992) on a scale that is based on knowledge with risk meaning the odds are known, and uncertainty, meaning the odds are not known. Further along the scale, ignorance is if we do not even know that we do not know and indeterminacy refers to a state where knowledge cannot be obtained (Wynne, 1992: 114). Based on Wynne, Arnoldi (2009: 91) referred to uncertainty as known unknowns, ignorance as unknown unknowns and indeterminacy as unknowable unknowns. An example of unknown unknowns is the 1986 radioactive fallout over Wales and Cumbria described by Wynne (1996). While the future is full of contingencies, i.e. events that are possible but cannot be predicted with certainty, risks are a way to handle these contingencies to some extent. It is in this way of being a means to anticipate the future that a relational risk concept is relevant to the study of oil in a state of not-yet-ness. In the following sub-chapter, I turn to uncertainty as an anthropological concept.

culturally constituted goals and projects, and involving both routine practices and intentionalized action" (Ortner, 2006: 129).

Uncertainty

For Susan Reynolds Whyte (2009: 213), uncertainty is a "state of mind and minding" that refers to an inability to predict the outcome of events. Uncertainty is a state that is related to unpredictability, instability, lack of (accurate) knowledge, unreliability, and the difficulty to interpret or even fathom life (De Boeck, 2012: 200). In a study on the life of Rashaida in Sudan, Sandra Calkins describes uncertainty as "a universal phenomenon, a lived experience resulting from an unease about acting in view of an unpredictable future" (Calkins, 2016: 2). She points out that uncertainty is not present everywhere and all the time, and that it is not a uniform property of action but is perceived, experienced and acted upon in different ways (ibid.). Common to all these studies is the emphasis on instability and the lack of knowledge.

It is only when a lack of certainty is registered or felt that a feeling of uncertainty arises. In this way, uncertainty is the absence of certainty. This could also be described as non-knowledge.[21] Non-knowledge is considered to be a kind of ignorance where the borders of knowledge are either known or wilfully ignored (Gross and Bleicher, 2013: 319). The transformation of uncertainties into risks hinges on knowledge. However, a gain in knowledge does not straightforwardly mean a reduction of uncertainty.

More knowledge does not necessarily lead to certainty but rather opens the mind to all the yet unknowns and hence increases uncertainty. In their book *Acting in an Uncertain World* (2011), Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe define uncertainty as "we know that we do not know, but that is almost all that we know" (Callon et al., 2011: 21). Basing their definition thus on Socrates' realisation of the boundaries of human knowledge – the knowledge of non-knowledge.[22] While with risk, we know the groups who are at risk, we know the events that could take place, their causes and their possibility, with uncertainty these conditions are not met (Callon et al. 2011: 20–21).

> Contrary to what we might have thought some decades ago, scientific and technological development has not brought greater certainty. On the contrary, in a way that might seem paradoxical, it has engendered more and more uncertainty and the feeling that our ignorance is more important than what we know (Callon et al., 2011: 18–19).

Gaining knowledge basically means opening the door to a new room. A room that one will find to be filled with more doors. And each door opens to rooms with even more doors. Hence the deeper one penetrates into this knowledge maze the more one is not just aware of the doors one did not open but also of the doors that are

[21] For a discussion of various types of non-knowledge see Gross (2007) or for the interlinkage between uncertainty and ignorance see (Smithson, 1989).

[22] This element of his philosophy is stated for instance by Plato (2011) in his apologia.

possibly still waiting ahead. In this situation it becomes clear that certainties are an illusion, or rather they are themselves creations. But we consider the state of certainty, of no doubts or questions, to be the proper condition. This already becomes evident in how we refer to the different states. While certainty is the basis, we use the prefix un- to refer to the other state, a state of absence, the absence of certainty. It seems that we perceive the doubting of knowledge and reality, the questioning of the steadiness of our world as the unusual, the extraordinary.

Looking at uncertainty in this way allows us to see that it is not a condition inherent to a situation but rather it is a question of perception. How does one then come to perceive uncertainty? Most importantly this is through knowledge, as shown above. As long as there is no knowledge about certain things or effects, they are not on the agenda. Someone, be it a scientist or an activist, needs to show that reality is not what it appears to be. Someone needs to sow doubt about reality, or at least aspects of it.

Reynolds Whyte (2009: 214) argues that uncertainty in Africa is "a source of anxiety and fear because of the prevailing conditions of insecurity." Although uncertainty and insecurity are often used interchangeably, they need to be distinguished from one another. Reynolds Whyte argues that while uncertainty is a state of mind, insecurity is a social condition that refers to a lack of protection and weak social networks that provide no safety in the face of adversity.[23] Likewise, Calkins (2016) also stresses the necessity to distinguish clearly between uncertainty and insecurity. Uncertainty for her is a radical questioning of what reality is.

> Uncertainty emerges from the difference between reality and world. It entails the more or less radical questioning of what is presented as reality and opens a horizon to imagine other social arrangements […] Insecurity and risk also entail a lack of knowledge, because if everything was known there would be neither insecurity nor risk. But in contrast to uncertainty, these phenomena denote a certain knowledge concerning what knowledge is lacking […] insecurity does not lead to a radical questioning of the reality construction but refers to uncontrollable hazards within it (Calkins, 2016: 60–61).

Uncertainty is not just caused by a lack of knowledge about the future but by doubts about the nature of things, or rather about how they appear to be. Uncertainty hence reaches deeper and affects life more fundamentally. While appreciating this distinction, I suggest that it is also possible to talk of uncertainty when only parts of reality are subjected to a fundamental or radical questioning.

For my case study I use insecurity to refer to situations of threats for people's life such as an increase in crimes or the spectre of terrorist activities, while uncertainty

[23] She further distinguishes both terms from contingency, which to her is an existential condition, meaning one is dependent on "something else that cannot be fully foreseen or controlled" (Reynolds Whyte, 2009: 214).

describes a broader sentiment and includes less imminent threats such as the potential dispossession in areas of the oil region. How do people handle this uncertainty? Is uncertainty inhibiting action or what ways have people devised to live with uncertainty?

Reynolds Whyte (1997) shows that the way people handle diseases and other misfortunes are culture-specific and humans from different cultures neither ask the same questions nor devise the same methods in the face of adversity. Reynolds Whyte has been working on questions of misfortune, health and uncertainty in Uganda for several decades and has analysed how Nyole question (mis)fortune (e.g. Reynolds Whyte, 1997). In an analysis of a diviner session in Bunyole, she shows how it is used to move from a stage of uncertainty and ignorance about the cause of illness or misfortune (on both the side of the affected person and the diviner) to a stage of certainty, at least temporally (Reynolds Whyte, 1990, 1997: 67). Seeking a diviner and gaining temporary certainty is one way of handling uncertainty, while another would be to create more contingencies. Reynolds Whyte and Etyang Siu (2015) show how HIV/AIDS patients in Uganda deal with the uncertain situation of their healthcare by creating relations to many people. The term contingency highlights how creating social relations is a way of dealing with uncertainty. While social relations are sources of uncertainty themselves, they carry the potential of opportunities and assistance. Creating contingencies means making oneself available for positive contingencies (ibid.).

While the uncertainty discussed so far is one of mainly negative connotations, this is not necessarily always the case. Uncertainty can also be considered as the basis for curiosity and exploration (Dewey, 1929). Uncertainty can be productive and it can be used creatively. In a recent collection on uncertainty, Elizabeth Cooper and David Pratten (2015) argue that one needs to look at the positive side of uncertainty, a claim not unfamiliar to anthropologists working on pastoralism. By virtue of their occupation pastoralists actually "live off" uncertainty (Krätli and Schareika, 2010). Dealing with the concept of uncertainty from a pastoralist perspective reveals that it can be used as a resource. Departing from earlier perspectives on coping strategies, in this new view pastoralism is regarded as a high-reliability production system as it harnesses from a structurally unpredictable environment. Instead of being focused on avoiding risks, it is rather one that explores the potentials of risks (Krätli and Schareika, 2010; Roe et al., 1998). Pastoralists navigate their environment by using the chances provided by the inherent risks and uncertainties of that environment, rather than being constrained by them (Krätli and Schareika, 2010).

Henrik Vigh (2009) shows for Bissau where existential uncertainty was the constant of everyday life how people struggled to both survive in the present and gain life chances in the future. People had a heightened sense of the relatedness of people, events, harm and chances. The analytic term of "social navigation" expresses the social movement of people in an ever-shifting environment and their relations to it (Vigh, 2009: 426). Since people do not act in stable and unchanging environments, it is necessary to realise how the environment is part of the game.

> [R]ather than being predefined and cartographically pinpointed, our environments and futures are […] contingent upon our knowledge of the past, our experience of the here and now as well as the emergent or potential possibilities and difficulties within it, entailing that the map is never a static set of coordinates but a dense and multi-dimensional imaginary, which is constantly in the process of coming into being (Vigh, 2009: 429).

Knowledge and anticipation are of essence to navigate. The concept captures very well the notion of people living vis-à-vis bigger forces and touches on how people themselves change the social environment. Expanding on this point, one may add that the uncertainty of the environment is not just there but can be created. In the next sub-chapter, I turn to the question of how uncertainty and risk can also be utilised and profited from.

Profiting from Risk and Uncertainty

In the following paragraphs, I review what academics working on risk and uncertainty have added to our knowledge of how people do not just manage risk and uncertainty but actively use them. Building on Michel Foucault's theory of governmentality (Foucault, 2006a,b), risk and uncertainty may not just be profited from but they can also be used in governance in general and more especially in capitalism and the oil industry (Arnoldi, 2009: 53–61). They can be used to actively shape the future in the oil business and in prospective oil states.

The governmentality scholars look at how risks could be used as tools in governing populations with special focus on the role of insurance companies and their probabilistic logic for societies (Ericson et al., 2003). This probabilistic logic has also extended to the oil industry, where insurance companies and especially the reinsurers are important actors with regard to risk assessment and management. They have an economic interest in reducing risks that they cover for the companies. Therefore, they make the companies implement certain standards in order to avoid having to end up paying.

In his book *Risk, Uncertainty and Government* (2004), Pat O'Malley points out the dividing agency of risk and how it is one way of imagining the future and making it bear upon the present. He traces out the genealogies of risk and uncertainty from (social) liberalism to neo-liberalism, thus arguing that uncertainty and risk are always ways of governing subjects with regard to visions of the future that are deeply intertwined with predominant economic and social theories.

> Risk ceases to be a literal depiction of the world that provides objective indicators of future harms. Instead it emerges as a diverse family of ways in which certain choices are presented to us, and through which practitioners of particular kinds of expertise define the future. Risk assigns us to categories,

> creates divisions among us and incorporates us in diverse solidarities of fate (O'Malley, 2004: 180–181).

According to O'Malley, the differing attitudes to risk and uncertainty can be viewed as long-term governmental policies (O'Malley, 2004: 6). He points out that risk and uncertainty are both government techniques, hence what is perceived as risk and uncertainty and the regimes connected to managing them (through e.g. new subjectivities or insurances) are non-necessities. In other words, they are changeable. He claims that governmental configurations are not necessary, that they could have been and can become otherwise (O'Malley, 2004: 11). This approach to risk focuses on the intentions of governments for constructing risks: governing subjects. The main insight from this perspective for this book is that an analysis of risk can help reveal how and for what purpose risks are used to guide the actions of others.

In economic theory using uncertainty is understood as being open to the future, which is considered enabling to entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial freedom, and profit (Samimian-Darash, 2013: 12). According to O'Malley (2004), earlier liberal conceptions were based on calculative rationality, which sought to create certainty through science, statistics and bureaucracy. The idea was to tame uncertainty and thus tame the future and achieve stability that would allow freedom for all. But with the neoliberal turn the calculative rationality was replaced by a valorisation of "flexibility, imagination, inspiration, acuity and inventiveness" (O'Malley, 2004: 59). O'Malley (2000) writes about uncertainty as a (neo-)liberal way of governing the self, economic activity and social relations.[24] On the market, uncertainty is appreciated because it leaves room for speculation that can drive the shareholder value and increase profit for the companies. Shareholder value measures the performances of companies listed on stock exchanges by, broadly speaking, comparing their financial inputs and outputs. The higher the outputs or returns for investors, the better.[25]

This valorisation of uncertainty can also be traced in the work of Zaloom (2004). She shows from her research on the Chicago Board of Trade that risk is not just a threat but can be profitable. Risks and risk-taking can bring rewards on the financial markets. She analysed the pit behaviour of traders and how in some kind of alchemy they turned risks into profits. Financial markets can be viewed as an uncertain environment and the behaviour of the traders is thus making use of it. She explains how risk taking keeps the market going, and therefore traders who do take them

[24] This liberal governance through uncertainty relies on "a creative [emphasis in original] constitution of the future with respect to positive and enterprising dispositions of risk taking and on a corresponding stance of reasonable foresight or everyday prudence (distinct from statistical and expert-based calculation) with respect to potential harms" (O'Malley, 2000: 461).

[25] One such performance measure is called the Return on Investment (ROI) but there are diverse metrics, connected to the respective consulting groups like McKinsey or Price Waterhouse Coopers, to measure in- and outputs. For a discussion of these consultancy metrics and the promises they carry see Froud et al. (2010). An investor is anyone who provides a company with financial means. If the investor holds a stock in the company, s/he is called a shareholder.

are rewarded. Another perspective on stock markets is offered by Anthony Giddens who suggests that they actively use risks to "create the 'future' that is then colonised" (Giddens, 1991: 118).

Taking risks is also a fundamental element of the industry. The high risk and minimal time for reflection, which characterises the work of the rig workers, shows some parallels to the work of the financial traders Zaloom describes in her work (Zaloom, 2006, 2004).[26] Risk taking is rewarded as can be seen very clearly in the example of wildcatters. Wildcatters are oil companies that come into a country early on to explore for oil when little data is available on the oil potential. These companies take the wildcat risk in order to profit from it. Their intention is to take on a wildcat, and build a good success ratio. Of course this does not always happen and miscalculated ventures can bring trouble to a rather small company. Sometimes companies hold licenses only speculatively, hoping maybe for the right world market price to sell it. Yet, the risk can also be sold on, sometimes outright fraudulently, sometimes more skilled and hidden.[27]

Mazen Labban (2010) points to the use of hedging devices in the oil industry to deal with risks. There is the physical hedging through hoarding or expansion into upstream production and the hedging through oil derivatives. Hedging devices are financial tools that use bets on prices to generate profits. Futures are classic hedging devices by which two parties agree on a price at which a commodity will be exchanged at a certain point in time. Options in turn are newer hedging devices, which build on futures but are only giving the holder the right, not the obligation, to buy or sell an asset. Options thus allow to hedge the risk posed by price volatility though at a much smaller cost. Options were at first viewed as gambling but got mathematical credibility once a formula, the Black-Scholes options pricing formula, was published in 1973. According to this formula the value of an option is determined by the volatility of the underlying asset – the more volatile, the higher the price (Johnson, 2015: 198–199). However, hedging as a strategy to reduce the risks of the market actually ends up increasing them. Labban works out how derivatives and hedging work destabilise the oil market because they are sources of volatility by becoming almost indifferent to both the trade and production of their underlying assets (Labban, 2010: 546–547).

Uncertainty can be manipulated by companies and even created by them for others – investors, governments and other companies. The ability to use uncertainty for one's own advantage has already been stated by Bailey who describes how uncertainty can be used as a trick to disorganise the opponent. It is especially appealing to create uncertainty for others as it makes it harder for the opponent to react when he cannot

[26] A retired oil worker describes in his autobiography the risks and velocity involved in the work on a drilling rig (Lynch, 1987).

[27] In their monograph "Easy Money," the historians Roger Olien and Diana Davids Olien (1990) describe the speculation and fraud going on in the booming U.S. oil industry of the early 20th century. Then, selling stakes in dubious or even in-existent ventures and wells was a widespread practice.

predict one's next move. This can be done by for instance introducing a new move to the game.

> Victory in the game depends (among other things) upon creating uncertainty in the opposing team and so disorganising it. But the game can only remain orderly so long as this uncertainty remains slight. Order is at a maximum and uncertainty at a minimum if it is known that a certain move allows for only two kinds of riposte. […] But if a move is entirely new, then the riposte also must be new. Neither side can anticipate what the other will do next: the choices become very wide (Bailey, 1969: 116).

If one side creates uncertainty, the other side needs a new riposte. The underlying assumption to this is that the game is usually orderly, that is both sides know the rules of the game. Uncertainty can thus be cultivated and put to use. For instance, David Michaels (2006) argues that "polluters and manufacturers of dangerous products," (Michaels, 2006: 159) such as the tobacco industry, manufactured uncertainty in order to avoid regulation of their sectors by the state. These companies invest resources into questioning the scientific evidence that is used to support regulation with the support of consulting companies. However, it is not just "polluters" who can use uncertainty. Britt Dahlberg (2016) describes in her ethnography on an environmental waste site in the United States how a concerned resident sought to cultivate uncertainty in her neighbours about the asbestos remains in the community through her actions and talks. She made people aware of how they lacked knowledge about the effects of the asbestos to make informed guesses about their future in close proximity to this toxic material. Uncertainty is the realisation of a lack of knowledge, as I described above, and thus through creating uncertainty the riskiness of the waste site could start to be perceived. The emplacement of risk thus hinges on the realisation of a potential harm and one's lack of accurate knowledge about it. Dahlberg defined uncertainty as a technique of directing collective attention and to create demand for more knowledge. The uncertainty opened attention to future harms.

However, creating uncertainty can also be a powerful tool for causing inaction. In their collaborative ethnography, Javier Auyero and Debora Swistun (2008) describe how residents in a heavily polluted community called "Villa Inflamable" in Buenos Aires continue their life routines undisrupted by contamination. They call the denial, blindness, and misinformation on (or misunderstanding of) the source and form of contamination a "toxic uncertainty," collectively produced by the residents, state agents and doctors (Auyero and Swistun, 2008: 366). Uncertainty about the future in this understanding precludes action, unlike risk that can lead to action.

Creating uncertainty can be the ground for a risk to be emplaced in a socio-technical network, that is to be accepted and taken into account. But as I show in this book, this can mean entering a vicious cycle of uncertainty since the presence of too many risks can be overbearing and highlight ever more strongly the lack of knowledge. Risks do not just manage uncertainty but can also be used to create uncertainty by actors who know how to harness the potential they offer.

The combination of risk and uncertainty with oil allows this ethnography to explore the ways people deal with and use uncertainty and risk to manipulate the becoming of oil and the negotiations in the oil arena in their favour. After this overview of my theoretical concepts, I turn to the methodological questions. Especially, of how and where to study oil that is in the making.

2.2 Waiting for the Oil: Research at the Interstices

Oil in a state of not-yet-ness is surrounded by uncertainties that make it complicated to find and delimit a field for research. Where can activities of resource-making be observed? Being in a village in the exploration area does not ensure data gathered will be actually on oil. There are very obvious field sites such as oil camps or oil companies, however these are regulated by strict access rules. Therefore, doing research on oil that is not yet present begets the question of how to study the immateriality of oil. At the beginning of my fieldwork I was struggling even though I had carefully thought out plans of who I wanted to talk to, what I wanted to ask, where I wanted to go and even ways of how to get access. But all these plans were premised on the idea that the oil had a physical presence in Uganda. It took some time to realise that it was not this simple.

Not-yet-ness draws one almost subconsciously into the act of waiting. To make my wait meaningful, I took up activities such as attending workshops organised by civil society organisations or I talked to various actors that I thought could be connected to the oil in one way or the other, from hotel managers to managers of petrol stations. But I constantly felt dissatisfied with my research: I was not even getting close to my topic! Eventually, I got in touch with international oil workers and obtained my research permission. Excited at first that finally the wait was over, I realised that the oil was still far away and in fact, after my first year in Uganda, many oil workers had been laid off and the industry went into hibernation. After all, the oil remained yet to come. In this section I lay out in detail the places, methods and challenges of my research and I want to suggest a way of engaging oil in a state of not-yet-ness.

I propose that it is necessary to look at the arenas where the future of the new oil state is negotiated. There are a variety of actors who are relevant to the petro-future and who have different imaginations of it. I used the multi-sited approach (Marcus 1995) as it is well suited for doing research on oil as "[t]he essence of multi-sited research is to follow people, connections, associations, and relationships across space" (Falzon 2009: 2). However, I do not pretend to have studied the whole of the oil complex nor do I think this is possible. My selection of sites was as much informed by methodological choice, restrictions and serendipity, as is any kind of fieldwork. It has been pointed out how problematic the thought of using multi-sited research to understand a bigger whole by looking at various sites is (Cook et al., 2009: 47–48). I used multi-sited research as a methodological tool that allowed me to bring together the different arenas where oil was being negotiated. It enabled me to look at the risk experts, the ones who establish risks. These experts create visions of a petro-future and take part in the oil arena and are therefore especially relevant for research in a formative stage.

My research project on oil in Uganda started in 2011. I had decided on Uganda because it was expected to start production in 2012. This would have meant that my research would have coincided with the most active periods of the oil life cycle: the development and early production phase. While a lot of research has been conducted in Uganda, very little has been concerned with Uganda's oil. In 2012, I made a first exploratory visit to Uganda. I went back for initially five months of research in September 2012 and then returned in March 2013 for another six months. My fieldwork did not end after the first long stay in the field though. It is not uncommon for ethnographers to return to their fields after the analysis of their data (Breidenstein et al., 2013: 176). An analysis of my data had led me to risk and uncertainty as a theoretical framework. I found it necessary to return to the field with these new concepts at hand and to expand my data in this direction. I returned again for a final research phase of around three months in 2015. In the next sub-chapter, I present the sites of my research.

Research Sites

My research was mainly based in three sites: Kampala, Hoima and Pakwach. Kampala is the capital of Uganda. It is the biggest city with official estimates of roughly 1.5 million inhabitants. It is the seat of parliament and of several ministries including the Ministry of Energy.[28] Kampala is also the headquarters for oil and gas operations in Uganda. Most companies active in the oil and gas sector have their offices there, especially the international oil companies and many service providers and even most of the NGOs had their offices there. Oil was also noticeable in Kampala as new training institutes have been set up, such as the Institute for Petroleum Studies in Muyenga. Universities offer courses that are praised as a gateway into the oil industry.[29] I conducted many interviews in Kampala, but the main part of my research was in the oil region, above all in the so called "oil city" Hoima.

Oil was first discovered in the Exploration Area 2 (EA2) in the Western part of Uganda but exploration has also been going on in West Nile and Acholi, regions

[28] Interestingly, the Petroleum Department is located in Entebbe, which is also the seat of the State House.

[29] These institutes cater to expectations people have of getting a job in the oil industry. I elaborate on these hopes and the labour regime of the oil industry in the following chapters.

Figure 3: Map of Uganda with research sites (modified from http://www.d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=26960&lang=de [April 2018]).

in the Northwest and North of the country respectively. Together these regions are generally referred to as the oil region.[30]

[30] Following this usage, I call oil region in this dissertation those districts of Uganda that have seen oil activity or that include exploration areas in their territory, that is or has been under license. This is to distinguish this area from other parts of the country that form exploration areas that have never been licensed. However, whenever possible I will refer to the district, county, sub county or village to give a more nuanced picture. A map with the exploration areas made by PEPD can be found online under https://web.archive.org/web/20120813053642/http://www.petroleum.go.ug:80/uploads/Drilled%20Wells%20August-2012.pdf [February 2018].

I conducted research in the capital and across the oil region in villages that were neither connected to the electricity grid nor had a proper road network and in new district capitals like Anaka of Nwoya District. I visited prospective extractive communities in Hoima and Buliisa district and lived six weeks in Pakwach.

During my research, the exploration efforts of Total shifted to inside the Murchison Falls National Park. I could not follow them there without permission from the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). Furthermore, I followed NGOs on their field trips and on various workshops or conferences they organised on oil in Kampala, Hoima, Masindi, Biiso, Nebbi and Arua. I start by a description of Hoima and then turn to my second major site: Pakwach.

Hoima, Exploration Area 2

Hoima is considered to be the oil city of Uganda. Allegedly, this name was first used by a radio moderator on the local radio station Spice FM but it can also be found in Uganda's national development plan "Vision 2040." Hoima is the gateway to exploration areas and to the area of the proposed refinery. Hoima is a town of roughly 100,126 inhabitants. The population has increased quite sharply from around 27,934 before the oil discovery in 2002. By 2014, Hoima was the eleventh biggest urban centre in Uganda.[31] It is situated 200 km from Kampala, reachable via a smooth tarmac road that undulates its way through the hills of Western Uganda into the centre of Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom.

Bunyoro is one of the ancient kingdoms in Uganda that currently is no longer a political entity but rather holds a status as an officially recognised cultural institution.[32] All kingdoms in Uganda were abolished under the presidency of Milton Obote in 1966 and were only allowed to be reinstalled under the regime of the National Resistance Movement (NRM)[33] in 1993 although under the condition that they abstain from politics. The current king of Bunyoro or Omukama Salomon Iguru Gafabusa was crowned in 1994.[34] Banyoro[35] complain of having suffered from the dominance of their Southern neighbour and rival kingdom Buganda and Buganda's better relations with the colonialists (Doyle, 2006: 79,93). Up until today, many Banyoro feel treated unfairly by the Ugandan state (Weichs, 2013: 19; Kiiza et al., 2011: 21–23). Bunyoro lacks industries and infrastructure in health, higher education and electricity (Kiiza et al., 2011: 17–18). For example, the roads

[31] See the 2014 "National Population and Housing Census" (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

[32] For more information on Bunyoro kingdom around the time of Uganda's independence see Beattie (1960, 1965).

[33] NRM is the ruling party in Uganda. It formed out of the National Resistance Army (NRA) that fought in the civil war against President Obote.

[34] For a detailed account of these processes and a discourse analysis of the concurrent changing dispositifs of power in Uganda see Raphaela von Weichs (2013).

[35] Banyoro are the ethnic group while Bunyoro is the region or former kingdom and Runyoro is the language.

to Bunyoro were improved as late as the new millennium. Based on her research on Bunyoro kingdom between 1999–2000 the social anthropologist Raphaela von Weichs (2013: 17–18) relates that the tarmac roads ended right at the borders of the kingdom and the roads to Hoima and Masindi were bumpy dirt roads that were terrible to pass. The only good road that existed during her research was the tarmac road up to Gulu that went through Karuma Falls and past the tourist attraction of the Murchison Falls national park.

Hoima is home to the *Omukama* and his palace. It is a rather peaceful town set in a hilly landscape. It has two major streets: one connecting to Kampala and Lake Albert, and another connecting to Fort Portal. But apart from oil-related activities, there is little other movement on the big roads. Hoima is neither a trading hub nor an industrial centre. There are no industries and no universities. It is reported that since the discovery of oil, its amenities have improved. Hoima now sports branches of several banks, restaurants, hotels of different categories, a big new market building and a forex bureau. It is on its way of losing the "up-country flair" it used to be associated with. The manager of a hotel told me that she thought Hoima was a place for "backward people," when she first moved there for her job. However, she was surprised to find branches of Kampala businesses and banks in Hoima (Interview, 2012).

During my stay in Hoima, there were few foreigners, especially few development workers, in Hoima compared to Kampala or Gulu, which have big foreigner communities. There was an Indian community whose members ran supermarkets, a hotel and a restaurant. There were a couple of development workers from the United States of America, a few missionaries and several expatriate workers of a U.S.-American oil industry service provider. In the beginning these oil workers were residing at Hoima Resort Hotel, but later the company set up a camp for them on Kampala road outside of town. From time to time, Turkish men working for a Turkish construction company that was building the road from Hoima to Kaiso, showed up in town.[36]

Despite the nickname "oil city," Hoima was only the gateway to the oil region. Seismic surveys and drilling were going on in communities near Lake Albert, from Buhuka up to Buliisa. Villages close to the drill sites in Hoima District were formerly hard to reach. Many lay on the shores of Lake Albert separated by the rest of Uganda either by water or by a steep escarpment. Roads down the escarpment had been opened a few years back by a South African tour operator who had established a wildlife reserve and lodge for hunting in Kaiso.[37] Perhaps due to the steep escarpment, trade and family relations with villages across the lake in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in West Nile had been strong. Many of the residents in

[36] Kaiso is a village on the shores of Lake Albert that is located right next to oil wells and has seen a lot of exploration activity.

[37] Of course, the establishment of a national park does not go unchallenged (Kesseler 2017). In the case of Kabwoya, the lodge owner complained of villagers poaching game and collecting wood from within the reserve.

Kyehoro and Kaiso were Aluru who had come from West Nile and settled there. All across the district many Congolese had settled too, not only in the refugee camps of Kyangwali. With the oil exploration, these formerly hard to reach places were getting more and more connected to the rest of the country, especially to Kampala. A new road was built to connect Hoima and Kaiso. These days there is a daily bus connection from Kampala to Kaiso while previously there had been only one minibus per day starting in Hoima.

Oil so far had only temporarily impacted on the lives of people in these fishing communities. Tullow had financed a health centre and HIV awareness campaigns. It had brought temporary job possibilities to the young people in the community. And young men from outside, even from Kampala, moved to Kyehoro hoping to secure a job in the oil industry. Most of the casual workers I talked to were not originally from the town, but had come looking for a job and were thus renting a room in the village. When I arrived in 2012 the exploration activities had slowed down, jobs were scarce, the health centre had been handed over to the government and consequently the quality of service had dropped.

Pakwach, Exploration Area 1

My second major fieldwork site was Pakwach, a small town in Nebbi District just within the border of West Nile. It is situated 368 km or six hours by bus from Kampala on a tarmac road. It lies on the River Nile, along a busy road leading to Arua, a trading hub in the North of the country. Pakwach faces away from the river, which serves as a water and food reservoir. Its most strategic feature is the bridge across the river, the only connection of West Nile to the rest of Uganda. Like any strategic bridge in Uganda it was guarded by both military and police alike and access was restricted.

Pakwach is a trucking hub and a popular rest place for truck drivers on their hauls from Mombasa to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Despite its small size, Pakwach sported a bank and had several small guesthouses and restaurants in close proximity to the main road. Along the road, traders of all kind could be found selling crafts, phone credit, mobile money services, or other goods people passing through might need. At night the informal sale of qat, a stimulating herbal drug, took over the sandy sidewalks. Pakwach had a small business school and a cotton ginnery, which was out of business during my stay. In 2013, Pakwach experienced a small oil boom. Many oil workers were lodged in guesthouses across town by their companies.

The oil boom made finding a place to stay in Pakwach difficult. I was told that the cost of living had risen since the exploration activities started because the newly rich men had money to spend and because young men and women came looking for jobs or opportunities to earn money. They settled down and space for renting became scarce. The typical mining or oil town developments of an increase in population, housing shortages, price increases and increase in leisure activities with the connected social and health problems fit what I saw and heard about Pakwach though on a small scale (Goldenberg et al., 2010; Lynch, 1987; Yergin, 2009). Companies filled the lodges with their workers. And in other villages with a recent surge in activity I was told that landlords took advantage of the fact that oil companies were renting the rooms and hiked the prices. Some restaurants got to supply lunch to the workers, which assured them of a regular income.

The cost of living did not only rise for the new residents but was also said to have risen for the locals, as prices of food on the market increased. The increase in population also increased the availability of leisure activities. While I was staying in Pakwach the first night club of the village, Matonge, opened. Painted all black on the outside, it was referred to as Sodom and Gomorrah by elders. People took to it though and during a night out I saw many familiar faces from all strands of town life.

Research Methodology

In the beginning of the chapter I pointed out how the not-yet-ness of oil in Uganda necessitated that I change my research question and adjust my research accordingly. The initial aim of my research was to understand how national and international political and economic forces influence developments in the oil region and how people in the area react to these influences. The idea was to capture how oil companies, communities and national authorities interacted and how they negotiated the (potential) impacts of the oil industry. I started by finding out who was involved in the oil business and how these actors related to actors in the oil region. Although I collected data on the few transformations that were visible, more importantly, I looked into what was expected to happen.

I conducted interviews with a broad array of actors from politics, churches, media, civil society organisations (CSOs), oil companies, Ugandan and international oil industry service providers with economic actors in the region such as farmers' organisations or hotels and of course the relevant government authorities such as the Petroleum Exploration and Production Department (PEPD) at the Ministry of Energy and the National Environmental Management Agency (NEMA). This allowed me to gain an overview of the relevant actors in the oil arena and what negotiations were going on.

I relied on the classic ethnographic methods: participant observation during workshops, informal conversations and interviews. I formed my research design based on knowledge gathered during previous fieldwork for my M.A. in Benin and from classic guides on ethnographic fieldwork or qualitative research (Beer, 2003; Burgess, 1994; Olivier de Sardan, 1995, 2015; Silverman, 2007). I conducted semi-structured interviews according to a guideline elaborated for each set of actors and kept editing it according to new developments or changes in my knowledge (Flick, 2000).[38] I generally used descriptive questions of various kinds (grand tour and mini

[38] I had guidelines for oil workers, journalists, hotel managers, petrol station managers, priests, local politicians, local elites (in this case the royalty from Bunyoro kingdom) and for residents in the oil

tour, example and experience) as well as structural and contrast questions (Spradley, 1979). For instance, I asked oil workers to describe to me their working routine. Or I asked casual workers to walk me through the process of getting their job. In interviews with civil society actors, I asked them to describe the dynamics within civil society since the oil discovery and to explain what had changed. In my guideline for local politicians I included questions that asked them to describe what was going on in their jurisdiction, or I asked managers of oil industry service providers to explain to me the services the company was providing.

During the interviews I intuitively added further questions based on the opinion, knowledge or emotions of my interlocutor. I mainly used the interview guidelines during formal appointments, while in more informal conversations I started talking about a topic of concern to me and then let the conversation take its course, periodically bringing it back to my topics. All interviews were then transcribed, coded, grouped and analysed according to major themes.

Participant observation was possible mainly during the workshops, conferences and activities of civil society. I followed NGOs on their activities in the oil region and attended altogether 22 of their activities. At these events a variety of actors were brought together to negotiate Uganda's future with oil and to advance their own agenda. I made a point of attending other ceremonies such as the celebrations of 50 years independence in Hoima, the coronation anniversary of the *Omukama*, the king of Bunyoro, called *empaango*, or the presidential inauguration of the Kabaleega hydro power dam near the refinery area. I also attended two meetings held by the oil companies. One was a conference for civil society in Hoima and another was a community meeting in Buliisa to inform the people of a seismic exercise due to take place. Furthermore, I visited Tullow's rig camp next to Kaiso and the camp of an oilfield service provider in Hoima. Not all of these events yielded material I could directly use but they helped gain insights into the oil business and Ugandan society, and they helped me to develop rapport with relevant actors.

Most of these events heavily relied on speech, or speech combined with action, rather than action alone. Therefore, my approach partially follows the demands of "neoclassical fieldwork" (Meyer and Schareika, 2009a) of doing ethnography not by talking about the social reality but by registering actual, and especially communicative, events.[39] Particularly my participation at conferences and meetings was guided by the method of "participant audition," which is described by Meyer and Schareika as follows:

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region.

[39] Meyer and Schareika call it neoclassical fieldwork as it builds on innovative concepts contained in Malinwoski's classical ethnographic fieldwork but it also incorporates methodological advances in sociology back into social anthropology. It represents a theoretical departure from the platonism that underlies classical fieldwork.

> [L]istening carefully to what the locals speak among themselves and to how they perform speech acts, how they attribute meaning, how they shape, comment on and explain events and phenomena in the world (Meyer and Schareika, 2009b: 3).

The authors stress the advantage of recording and analysing such "natural talk" as it is an important part of social interaction and directed at relevant social actors, not the anthropologist herself as in an interview (ibid.: 15–16).

Furthermore, I followed the actors in order to cover also the before and after of the events. I did not just meet the activists at these conferences but also visited them in their offices for interviews or informal chats during a courtesy visit. I went out with them, joined them for a Swahili class, or received them at my home. I talked to them about the events and I followed dynamics, especially among civil society actors in Hoima. I was therefore able to contextualise the events. A major difference with regard to participant audition as intended by the authors is of course that most of the events I refer to are staged interactions in the sense that a workshop or a conference already implies an audience. And the language was mainly English, albeit Ugandan English with its own idiosyncrasies and speech patterns.

Finally, I also followed the coverage of oil issues in the Ugandan press. I collected materials from NGOs, state agencies and oil companies and their subcontractors. I used these materials in my analysis and triangulated them with my data from interviews and observations. My data analysis was conducted in multiple steps. Already during my field stay, I went through my data and tried to discern certain themes that kept coming up. I tried to understand or rather find new ways of asking questions or find new interlocutors to help me gain new perspectives, better insights or the chance to triangulate my data. Triangulation is an important part of anthropological research because it prevents the researcher from unconsciously privileging one view over others (Olivier de Sardan, 1995: 12).

Anthropologist have also stressed the importance of immersion in life at the field site which allows the anthropologist to gain insights that are harder to gain through other less interactive and participant methods (Olivier de Sardan, 1995: 4–5). Consequently, I sought to immerse myself in Ugandan ways of life, and I chose my residences accordingly.

In Hoima, I rented a small semi-detached house located on a compound shared with the landlord and two other tenants. For my transport I used a bicycle in town and public bus or private motorbike-taxi for longer journeys. In Pakwach, I rented a room on a compound close to the central market, just off the main road, with several small rooms connected in a rectangular-shaped building with a central courtyard. There was neither running water nor electricity, as Pakwach was not connected to the national grid. I tried to spend as much time as possible in town, either lounging around one of the restaurants frequented by the oil workers, visiting the office of a Community-Based Organisation (CBO) I knew, or sitting in a small internet café when I needed power to work on my laptop.

In Kampala, I lived in diverse types of accommodation. At the end of my long fieldwork I stayed in a student hostel in Kampala. This again opened another perspective onto Ugandan society. The residence was one for well-situated students and was located close to the main gate of Makerere University. It had security guards and access control. In the hostel were students from Uganda and other African countries alike. During my final research stint in the summer of 2015 I rented a small apartment together with a colleague, which was cheaper than the hostel option. Choice of accommodation was driven by my wish to always be as close as possible to Ugandan life and by finances.

Anthropological common sense has it that the researcher should learn the language the people she works with speak and thus gain better access to social life. In the oil region at least four different languages namely Runyoro, Rugungu, Aluru and Acholi were spoken. Additionally, some of the workers in the oil industry were Baganda who spoke Luganda. I learned Runyoro to the level of small-talk and learnt greetings in Aluru. But in such a multi-lingual setting, it was not possible to learn all languages and I mainly relied on Uganda's lingua franca, English. In most cases no translator was needed as conferences by civil society were in English and most of my interlocutors spoke English. Only seldom did I have to rely on a translator recommended by contacts in the village. For most of the activities of civil society organisations no assistant was needed and it would have been an additional burden as most of the times I travelled with the organisations in their vehicles. The advantage of travelling with the organisations was that I could participate in the before and after of such events. As the events themselves became part of my research focus, this enabled me to get a better understanding of the organisation of the activities and to foster good relations with the employees. Instead of having a key informant, I had friendly relationships with a diverse set of people I met regularly: be it donors, civil society entrepreneurs, directors and employees or oil workers.

Upon my return I transcribed all my interviews with the software programs F4 and Transcriptions and I started software-based data analysis using MAXQDA. From the preliminary analysis during the fieldwork I set up a code system with codes for actors of the oil complex and the significations and impacts of oil. I then went through my data and coded everything according to this system. Over time I had to partially amend the system to allow for new perspectives such as my focus on temporality and risk. I used the codes to navigate my data from either an actor or a topical perspective. I logged the data gathered during my second field stay into the database as well and coded it too. Data analysis continued and I expanded my database while writing on chapters to include for example more reports from oil companies or materials from civil society organisations. I analysed the narratives in these documents following deconstruction strategies set out by Czwarniawska (2004).[40]

[40] I elaborate on this in the chapter on the resource curse where the results of this analysis are presented.

Out of my theoretical framework I formed some analytical questions that helped me in the analysis of my data: Who or what is said to be at risk? Who is accorded the blame? Who communicates the risk? What knowledge is mobilised in the argumentation? Who accepts or rejects the risk? What effects does the risk communication produce? What options to manage the risk are mentioned?

These questions helped to make sense of how actors talked about the effects of oil or the correct way of running the oil business. What kind of relations did the civil society activists or the representatives of the oil companies create and on what knowledge did they draw to argue for their respective risks? My analysis is not meant to evaluate these risks but to understand what these emplacements of risks mean for the actors and for the oil arena in Uganda. Incorporating a relational risk perspective into the study of oil tunes the attention to the role of the future in the negotiations in the oil arena and its role in the oil-making process. Combining a relational risk perspective with multi-sited research works very well as both rely on a relational understanding of fieldwork.

Reflections on Positionality

In anthropological fieldwork it is important to consider the person of the researcher as the data is deeply intertwined with and connected to the personality and positionality (Caplan, 1993: 178; Lentz, 1992: 335; Madison, 2011: 7–8; Olivier de Sardan, 1995). The assignment and negotiation of roles involves a process of interaction between researcher and people in her field. And it is the positioning within a society that sets the stage for what one can see or experience and it ultimately influences the course of the fieldwork (Lentz, 1989: 127). A reflexive stance to my positionality underlay my research, my analysis, and also my writing.

Many researchers have stressed the importance of considering how gender radically influences fieldwork e.g. in terms of access or security (Bell, 1993; Clark and Grant, 2015; Nilan, 2002; Pollard, 2009). In studying oil, this is important as the oil industry is a male-dominated field, which has certain implications for a young, female researcher. I found access to circles of oil workers easy but maintaining access was problematic at times due to uncomfortable advances made by some male informants. In order to avoid potentially dangerous situations, I chose to only meet those persons in company of others or to end relations altogether. In turn, with older oil workers I managed to have quite amicable relations but in some cases this drifted towards a paternalistic attitude.

One evening when I was out with the expatriate oil workers at a bar in Hoima, one of them tried quite aggressively to draw me into a discussion. It was during a birthday celebration of one of his Ugandan co-workers and everyone else was in a merry mood. At first he challenged me by saying that I was certainly the last born of the family because I was so selfish to come and do research in a place like Uganda, putting myself at risk without caring for the feelings of my parents. He demonstrated his disapproval of my research by claiming that he could do it in three minutes. He remembered my research as being about the local communities and their problems. In an arrogant and paternalistic tone he explained to me that one look at a village would suffice to answer my research question: all one needed to know was that they did not have water and electricity.

The expatriate continued his verbal attacks on me throughout the night, getting more aggressive (and eccentric), the more he drank. He started making me and everyone at the table feel uncomfortable. His final tirade before he went to his hotel room was to ask me whether I had ever seen a dead person and then asserting that not only had he already seen dead persons, but in fact he had actually killed someone before. He claimed that one time in Nigeria he had killed two attackers with his truck as they tried to assault him. I do not know whether this was meant as a paternal lecture on the risks of working in Africa or a display of his manliness. His colleagues, themselves surprised by his behaviour, set about to assuage me and made jokes of how he had had one too many.

This episode reminded me that again and again one has to negotiate access during fieldwork and that one's presence might not go unchallenged, especially if one is a young female researcher in a male-dominated field. The incident did not deter me from hanging out with the group and served as a joke between me and the other expatriates for some time.

Aside from gender, the economic and social situation with which we enter the field also matters. If as anthropologists we consider the impact of personality and positionality, we also have to reflect on the constraints, challenges and chances that are connected to the financial or other leverage with which we enter the field. I began my fieldwork as a young researcher who had just completed her M.A. degree. I had neither an extensive network in Uganda nor great financial means. I came not as a full member of a university but as a Ph.D. student, as it also read on my business cards.

At the beginning of my research I went through a period of uncertainty as to whether I would actually be able to move ahead with my project. A grant allowed me an exploratory visit at the beginning of 2012. I was a total stranger to Uganda and had to set my project on track. I came equipped without any institutional connections, only with a letter of recommendation by my professor. Yet, I found most people I talked to very helpful and friendly. I managed to speak to many civil society organisations and researchers concerned with oil issues in order to find out about the situation in the oil region and the pressing issues to their view. Furthermore, I was fortunate to obtain an institutional affiliation from the Department of Sociology at Makerere University.

After the first exploratory trip, the financing of the project itself was not clear but then in mid-2012 a position as scientific assistant at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Göttingen allowed me a field stay of five months. After this, I obtained a scholarship for another six months and at my return to Germany, I got a position as a research assistant. From this position I travelled to Uganda again in 2015 for another research stint. While I had all necessary financial means to do my fieldwork, I did not have a grand budget like some NGOs or other research projects that would allow employing someone or even buy equipment like a motorcycle or a car.

Accessing the Oil Region: Researchers as Risks

A major constraint of my research was the difficulty of gaining official access to the oil region, which is controlled by the state. Any oil-related activity in the region had to be agreed to by the state and in particular Petroleum Exploration and Production Department of the Ministry (PEPD).[41] Indeed, PEPD or Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD) in general are responsible for the licensing of the exploration blocks, the approval of field development plans and in general any oil-related activity. According to their definition, "oil-related activity" included research by social anthropologists like me, or workshops by civil society organisations (which are clearly unrelated to any technical details of oil exploration or production). This made research on oil in Uganda problematic. During more than half of my stay, I worked under restricted conditions while I waited for my official research permission. Instead of the promised three months, it took me around nine months to obtain all permissions, from the Uganda National Council of Science and Technology (UNCST), the Office of the President, and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development.

At the beginning the permit process went smoothly. A few weeks after handing in my research proposal, I received a letter of approval from UNCST in July 2012. However, the process stalled after this. Upon my return to Uganda, I enquired several times about the status. In October 2012, I was informed by UNCST that I needed to clarify an aspect of my proposal. I resubmitted and followed it up again. In the meantime, I used the letter of approval to introduce myself to the authorities in Hoima. But not all were satisfied with it, especially not the District Internal Security Officer on Oil Matters. I kept calling or visiting the UNCST officials to follow up on the permission. I was informed it was with the Office of the President.[42] Even though one was not allowed to contact the office directly to enquire about the status of a permission, I eventually persuaded the annoyed official at UNCST to give me the numbers of the office.

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[41] The Petroleum Exploration and Production Department of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development was formed in 1991 out of the Petroleum Unit of the Geological Survey and Mines Department. In 2015, PEPD was renamed into Directorate of Petroleum and restructured into three departments: Department of Petroleum Development and Production (Upstream), Midstream Petroleum Department, Department of Petroleum Supply and Distribution (Downstream). Ernest Rubondo is the Executive Director of the Directorate of Petroleum. The Ministry of Energy is headed by Minister Irene Muloni.

[42] Later, I learned from a former employee that this office has an intelligence department that proves the veracity of researcher claims, e.g. where they are getting their funding from and whether their affiliation is correct.

Fortunately, the officials I talked to reacted sympathetically and after hearing how long my permission had taken, processed it straight away. Shortly thereafter I was able to collect my permission from the Office of the President, which had in effect been signed already in December 2012 but not been forwarded. It is not clear why the process took as long as it did and whether this was just an unfortunate chain of events. However, I was not the only researcher for whom the process of getting access to the field took a long time. Researchers from Leeds University working on oil also took a year to get all their permissions (van Alstine et al., 2014).

Although not part of the procedural guideline on seeking research permissions in Uganda, as stated above the Ministry of Energy also asked researchers who work on oil or in the oil region to seek their permission. Lawyers from civil society organisations told me that such demands had no legal basis and even state bodies such as the UNCST were not sure of whether or not the ministry was actually responsible. Nevertheless, the oil companies were not willing to cooperate with me or grant me interviews without a letter of approval from the ministry. Even though I had met some oil company employees during conferences or in hotels in Hoima, I was not allowed formal access. According to the then Commissioner of PEPD, anything happening in the oil region was of concern to the Ministry of Energy and thus permission must be sought for any activity within the oil area. In an interview, he explained to me the reason for this:

> Your study is on oil. All your questions have been on oil. And those questions couldn't be answered by any other ministry but the Ministry of Energy (PEPD Commissioner, interview, 2013).

He stated that I could not just go and do research without them knowing. Researchers were sources of potential harm he told me. And as I elaborated in the theoretical chapter, a potential harm is effectively a risk. Therefore researchers needed to be known in order for Uganda to be able to calculate the probability of them causing harm. And in order to manage this risk, there were the various institutions researchers had to go through: UNCST, the Office of the President and in case of oil the Ministry of Energy.

Once in the district, researchers had to present themselves to the government appointed Resident District Commissioner (RDC), the elected Chairman LC 5, the internal security officers and then the corresponding elected LCs of villages or parishes. While most of my interlocutors from state and companies either explicitly demanded to see the permission or only relaxed once I showed the permission of the Office of the President, many of these officials were themselves not aware that they should be demanding permission from the Ministry of Energy too. The letter of the Office of the President sufficed to reassure people of the legality of my research. Civil society activists explained that to most people the Office of the President runs supreme as it is the President who appoints the Minister of Energy.

The Ugandan state was also prepared for the eventuality that someone failed to follow procedure. Many times I was told that informants, referred to as "spies," were in every village of the country. One hotel owner refused to talk to me on the grounds that this had caused him trouble before and that I should mind my paper trail. By this he meant that wherever I went and left traces, state security agents would come following up, interrogating my interlocutors and causing them trouble whilst I would simply get thrown out of the country. This caused me some distress in the beginning as I did not want to jeopardise my permission or cause harm to anyone. Although sometimes these stories seemed exaggerated, it was hard to ascertain how true they were. One researcher claimed she never obtained permission and hence had to face the problem of security agents restricting her movements (Agena, 2012: 23–24). When I presented myself to the Deputy District Security Officer of Buliisa in 2013, eventually equipped with my license, he told me that it was good I had permission because once a researcher had been sent out of the district when found working without permission. He explained that the government did not want people to get scared by the negative images the NGOs created. Considering all these statements I felt I had to tread very carefully in the beginning not to foreclose the possibility of continuing the research. Despite a rather discouraging entry, I was never stopped from moving around freely and I obtained all necessary permissions in the end.

It was only after the permission hurdles were taken that I could eventually focus on getting access to the oil companies. With the permissions, it was possible for me to schedule formal interviews. However, I had wished to get closer and participate in their activities, or at least get the information when and where activities were going to take place. This proved difficult but I managed to go to a couple of such interactions. I had to be in touch not just with the community liaison officers (CLO) but also with people in the area to get information on when an activity was taking place.

Generally, it proved easier to get in touch with the subcontractors. They would talk to me without the permission from MEMD and they appeared more open and relaxed. This might be due to the fact that they are not on the front line of public perception when it comes to the oil. To the oil companies, side-stepping regulations and demands by the state could be a risk and helping an unknown Ph.D. researcher was certainly not one worth taking.

It was also easier to get access to civil society. Most organisations were open and helpful. They invited me to their conferences or took me along on their field trips. It was especially my close contact to some civil society actors in Hoima that allowed me to know which organisation was coming when to Hoima.

2.3 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduced both my theoretical framework and my methodological approach and the sites of my fieldwork. I have worked with a multi-sited approach as my intention was to analyse how the oil was being negotiated in Uganda. While this intention itself does not necessitate a multi-sited approach, and it could be even argued that it makes it harder to get the same depth of data as fieldwork focused on a single site, it was very useful to my study. I used multi-sited research to stay in touch with the shifting sites of resource-making in this phase of not-yet-ness. However, I did not abandon sites altogether once the activity of the oil industry was low but rather expanded to other sites.

I included a broad array of actors into my research. I participated in many conferences and workshops on oil and joined oil industry companies on their campaigns and in their camps. I used classic tools of ethnographic research within the multi-sited approach. In my analysis I included documents from the oil industry, the government and civil society. It captured how different actors talked about oil and Uganda's petro-future. I paid attention to the words and metaphors they used and how they framed their talk.

It turned out that risk and risk communication were an important part of the oil industry and civil society discourse on oil. Risk is the binding element of the different negotiations of oil that I covered with my research and this book. During my analysis and my second field stay, I therefore focused on the oil talk as a form of risk communication. I take a temporal perspective on oil using the concept of not-yetness. I look at how actors anticipated a future with oil and their own place within it by using risks. I follow a relational understanding of risk that considers the linkages between risk objects, objects at risk and knowledge as a basis for analysing risk communication.

This chapter contained some more general information on me as a researcher to enhance legibility of my analysis and data. Of course, the process of positioning myself and a reflexive stance do not end with this chapter but continue throughout the book.

Figure 4: Grass-thatched houses with oil rig in background in Buliisa district (2013).

3 The Risks and Uncertainties of Exploring for Oil

The search for oil in Uganda was characterised by risks and uncertainties. In this chapter, I present the major developments of the exploration for Uganda's oil from a risk perspective. While other accounts of the history of oil in Uganda have considered either the government's risks (Kashambuzi 2010) or those of the oil companies' (Patey, 2015), I consider risks from both perspectives. I describe some of the risks oil companies had to handle such as the potential discovery of dry wells or the delays caused by corruption scandals or decisions from the Ugandan government. At first it was the international oil industry that delayed engagement in Uganda, whereas later, it was the government – yet delays were potentially harmful for both sides. The government delayed the development of oil to gain expertise and set the regulatory framework in order to avoid the risk of getting bad contracts. This risk management by the government put the oil companies at risk as they needed to make fast progress to satisfy their shareholder demands. Other accounts of Uganda's oil history are directed towards discussing the potential consequences of the oil for Uganda's politics, economy and society along the lines of the resource curse discourse (Babies and Pfeiffer, 2011; Vokes, 2012) and its impact on the regional economy of East Africa (Anderson and Brown, 2011). My account of the development process in Uganda shall deliver a balanced picture and give insights into the vagaries of oil exploration that both sides have to face.

In this chapter, I point out that both the government and the oil companies used risks as resources in the negotiations. The first part of the chapter is on the history of exploration and it follows a chronological order.[43] After that I turn to an analysis of the use of delays in the exploration process and to the special case of corruption scandals.

3.1 History of Oil in Uganda

Uganda is currently preparing for the development phase and thus at an early stage of becoming an oil producer. It has passed the first round of explorations and massive changes are just around the corner and Uganda is expected to start production in 2020, over ten years after the first big discovery. Moving slow as Uganda does, it is still years away from producing its oil. This seems a long period especially considering that the time span from first commercially viable discovery to first produced oil has been considerably shorter in other new oil producers. In Ghana for example, it only took three years. It could be asked why the urgency argument, according to which poor states rush to produce oil, did not apply to Uganda although it is a fairly poor country that relies heavily on foreign aid (cf. Jones, 2009: 6).

Reasons for variations between the development time span can be assumed to lie in the individual context of each country and the specific shape of the oil complexes (Watts, 2008). A comparison between Uganda and Ghana shows that the duration of the development process is related to the political intentions and the capacity of the involved government authorities, in these cases the petroleum authorities (Hickey et al., 2015a). Certainly, Uganda is not the only country that is moving slowly. Countries such as São Tomé and Príncipe seem to be equally stuck in the process and are thriving only on the economy of expectation of the oil (Weszkalnys, 2011, 2014). There are four major phases I distinguish; the early phase when Uganda was still a high-risk project, the phase after the first discoveries, the pause in developments to set the legislative framework and finally, the recent activities of the oil companies.

The Early Phase: Uganda, a Wildcat

Oil exploration in Uganda dates back to the end of the 19th century when oil seepages on the shores of Lake Albert, especially in Kibiro, were reported to the colonial authorities. The Banyoro claim to have known even before colonial times that there was oil in those areas (Kiiza et al., 2011: 6). Since little is known about this period, I start the history of oil from the colonial exploration activities, i.e. from the time

[43] Information on the history is compiled from literature on oil in Uganda (Kashambuzi, 2010; Kiiza et al., 2011; Miirima, 2013; Patey, 2015; Vokes, 2012) as well as presentations and materials from MEMD and PEPD and news reports. I have followed news reports on oil issues in Uganda since the end of 2011.

when oil was turning into the important lifeblood of first the Western and by now the global economy.[44]

A first camp was established in Kibiro in 1913 but it was abandoned with the onset of the First World War. In 1938 the first well was drilled by the African-European Investment Company from South Africa. However, exploration stagnated again with the onset of the Second World War. After the war, between 1948 and 1951 several unsuccessful wells were drilled. Then in the 1950s new big oil discoveries were made in Angola and Nigeria while in Uganda the only activity was the passing of the Petroleum Act. Under President Milton Obote exploration rights were given to Shell and Kirkwall Associates and Collin Oil and Gas but in the following period of Idi Amin's regime and the second one of Obote, referred to as "Obote II," the exploration process stagnated again. With the end of Obote II in 1985, the World Bank gave Uganda credit to improve the capacity of the Geological Survey and Mines Department (GSMD) and to assist in the promotional effort to attract companies. GSMD formed a Petroleum Unit (PU) which was the precursor of the Petroleum Exploration and Production Department.

Exploration in Uganda was halted in the mid-1980s by new leader Yoweri Kaguta Museveni who later explained this intervention as a way to ensure Ugandan participation in this nascent sector. This was meant to prevent Uganda from getting a bad deal. The government set the first legal framework for the promotion and negotiation in 1985 with the Petroleum Exploration and Production Act. The staff of the Petroleum Unit were sent abroad for training programmes and petroleum geosciences and Uganda started lobbying for investors, trying to persuade them of the potential. In his book *The Story of Petroleum Exploration in Uganda 1984–2008* (2010), former PEPD Commissioner Reuben Kashambuzi relates his struggle and that of PEPD (and its precursors) to grow Uganda into an interesting investment destination for the international oil industry. In a passionate and detailed insider description, he writes about the hardships, the derision, the obstacles, and most of all the lack of funds to the operation of PEPD.[45]

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[44] Though it might be possible to date back the knowledge about the oil to times before colonialism, the oil as a resource probably had a significantly different form of "being" as a resource because usages and significations of resources change over time in conjunction with the development of technologies such as the combustion engine in the case of crude oil. While it would be interesting to look at changes of perception of the oil over time, this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[45] A detailed overview of activities is given in the 2013 annual report of MEMD. Including information on the individual well testing and the seismic surveys. Apparently there have been smaller delays due to the discovery of unexploded grenades and "disagreement on compensation rates" (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 2013).

The first production sharing agreement (PSA)[46] was signed with Petrofina[47] in 1991. The government had been in negotiation with Shell, Esso and Petrofina since 1988. By 1991, all but Petrofina had dropped out of the negotiation, which, according to Kashambuzi, heightened the sense of urgency on the Ugandan side and the fear of losing a potential investor. But he also notices that the oil companies were more seasoned negotiators and knew how to push the Ugandan government to a corner by pointing to faster moving negotiations in the Democratic Republic of Congo for their part of Lake Albert and by referring to the "risk of doing business in an environment that lacked convincing data" (Kashambuzi, 2010: 3). The risk meant here is that of not finding oil, which would of course mean a financial loss for the company. It would also weaken the government's negotiation position with other oil companies interested in exploring for oil in the country.

Uganda did not get a good deal because the Ugandan negotiators were not experienced enough and they had insufficient evidence, i.e. geological data, to counter the company's position that Uganda was a wildcat. A wildcat is an oil well on which there is no or insufficient geological data.[48] One could add that the bad deal was also related to Uganda's oil being situated in a landlocked country without adequate infrastructure in place to explore and produce it, which made its oil more expensive for the oil companies and hence less attractive at a time when the crude oil price was below 20 US dollars a barrel. This was the background for the bad deal with Petrofina, which however passed without Petrofina fulfilling their work program obligations. Hence the license was reverted to the government two years later. As much as PEPD celebrated the end of this deal, they knew that the departure of Petrofina meant that the promotion of Uganda's prospects was to be even harder than before (Kashambuzi, 2010: 4).

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[46] Production sharing agreements are made between an oil company and a mineral rights owner, usually the government, on the production of petroleum. The agreement stipulates the terms of the production of the oil and encompasses the definition of cost and profit oil. Usually, exploration costs are paid by the company upfront and then recouped later if production starts but at a fixed rate and for a fixed period of time. Cost oil refers to a portion of the produced oil that is set aside for the operator to use it to recover costs made during exploration, as specified in the production sharing agreement, before having to share revenue with the mineral rights owner. Profit oil, in turn, is the amount of production, after cost oil has been deducted, that will be divided between the participating parties and the host government. A risk for the oil company is that it will not recoup costs if exploration is not successful (Bridge and Le Billon, 2013: 59; Downey, 2009: 86).

[47] The Belgian Petrofina merged with the French Total to TotalFina in 1999 and then a year later with the French Elf Aquitaine to TotalFinaElf, which was renamed to Total in 2003.

[48] Additionally, Uganda could be considered a wildcat because its regulatory framework was not in place. That means it is likely to change, leading to readjustments in the agreements with the company or court cases (Patey, 2015: 20). I discuss this part of the wildcat risk in the section on corruption scandals.

Making First Discoveries – De-Risking the Wildcat

After a period of no activity, the breakthrough came with the signing of a production sharing agreement with Heritage Oil and Gas Ltd. for exploration area 3 in 1997. In 1998, the seismic surveys by Heritage brought positive results. In 2001 another production sharing agreement was signed with Hardman Petroleum and Energy Africa for exploration area 2. The first exploration well of Heritage was drilled in 2002. A year later, Heritage sold 50 percent of its license to Energy Africa, which in 2004 was bought by Tullow. Tullow Oil Uganda Ltd. is a subsidiary of Tullow Oil PTY, an Irish oil and gas exploration and production company listed at the London, the Irish and the Ghanaian stock exchange.[49] The company was founded by current Chief Executive Officer Aidan Heavey in 1985 and has been mainly active as a wildcatter.[50] It has assets in 21 countries out of which 11 are in Africa and employs 1,403 people. The general manager of Tullow Oil Uganda is Jimmy Mugerwa. With the purchase of Energy Africa, Tullow thus gained 50% rights to exploration areas 2 and 3. Heritage kept expanding, gaining working interest in exploration areas 1 and 3A. 2004 also saw the signing of another production sharing agreement with Neptune Petroleum.

In 2005, Hardman made a first discovery at Mputa-1 and in 2006 Tullow/Heritage made discoveries at Waraga-1 in Kaiso-Tonya and Kajubirizi-1 in Hoima district (Petroleum Exploration and Production Department 2014).[51] By the end of 2006, Tullow announced it would take over Hardman Resources for 1.1 billion US dollars and thus gained access to their licenses as well. Finally in the new millennium, with the first oil discoveries made and after years of struggling, Uganda became a promising prospect (Kashambuzi, 2010).

The oil discoveries meant the real breakthrough for Uganda's oil industry. PEPD Officer, Catherine Bekunda described the promotion effort of PEPD on a conference in 2013 as follows:

[49] Tullow's top three main shareholders in the company are Capital Group Companies (11.98 percent), Genesis Asset Managers (8.01 percent) and Oppenheimer Funds (4.96 percent). In 2017, Tullow was rated B by Standard and Poor's and B2 by Moody's with a negative outlook. In recent years Tullow's market capitalisation collapsed from 14 billion pounds to 1.5 billion. In 2016, it reported a post-tax loss of 600 million US Dollars. It has 58,400 barrels of oil equivalent per day (roughly 21.14 million barrels of oil equivalent per year).

[50] Tullow describes its business as finding oil and then monetising it through production or the sale of assets. Exploration success is paramount for generating value. For more on their business strategy see https://web.archive.org/web/20170217123127/http://www.tullowoil.com/about-us/business-model [February 2018].

[51] As usual in oil exploration, also gas reserves have been found. Their amount is estimated at 12 billion standard cubic feet, i.e. 3.4 million cubic meters (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, (n.d.)).

> Previously […] our geologist did geological mapping, they carried out gravity and geological data. So they would package it, take it to conferences in America, take it to conferences in South Africa and South America, everywhere and tell people 'Here is our data, please come and look at our Albertine Graben. There is potential for oil'. And people would always brush us aside 'Aah aah, that is a place where not to look for oil' […] But when we did, when Hardman made the discovery, they de-risked, they de-risked the entire Albertine Graben and now its people who were coming, rushing 'Please, can you give us acreage. Can you give us acreage?' But then we said 'No.' Now that we are a beautiful girl with our oil, we are not going to license anymore until we have a mechanism to provide for competitive bidding. Because now we know our beauty, the other time we were still there with worries (PEPD Officer, conference by the Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment-West Nile (RICE[52]), Nebbi, 2013).

As Bekunda pointed out, oil discoveries are de-risking, they are reducing the risk that comes with a wildcat. De-risking is not just done by proving that there is oil but rather wells with oil finds are counted and measured against dry wells to get a success ratio which is then used again in the promotion effort. Exploration failure is a risk to oil companies since it means the absence of oil, the loss of capital and the connected loss in shareholder trust.[53] To date, it is not possible to predict with a hundred percent accuracy where commercially viable wells are located. This risk is being countered by improving prediction methods and through continuous improvement of seismic and drilling methods. But it cannot be fully controlled. Potentially, a company can still hit a dry well that is a well that does not have any or at least does not have sufficient quantities of oil. Also, something could go wrong during the drilling, blocking the well.

In promoting oil wells it is crucial to have the right arguments to make the risk look attractive to wildcatters. When they come in and explore for oil, they are the ones making the discoveries and hence creating the success ratio. Wildcatting being a risky business, these companies seek to make a profit and do not stop short of fraudulent methods. I learned from an industry insider that the tricking of competitors through miscalculating, manipulating or "salting" probes from oil wells is a known practice. These practices give the risk a face-lift to make it look more attractive in order to hand it down to another company. However, even the companies buying licenses from other companies know about these strategies of deceit.[54] The oil

[52] The Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment West Nile (RICE-WN or RICE) is a Ugandan community-based organisation registered in 2005 and based in Arua in West Nile in the northwest of Uganda.

[53] The role of shareholders is discussed in the chapter six on the debate around national content.

[54] A connected practice of overrating reserves was exposed in 2014. Shell admitted that it had overestimated its proved reserves by 20 percent by moving probable reserves into proved reserves in the books. The amount of reserves impacts on a company's stock market value. They do this because the

industry creates uncertainty through this alteration of probes from an oilfield or by withholding information on oilfields. Oil companies keep their measurements of oil reserves and hence their knowledge of oil fields confidential.

> The geological processes that make measurement so uncertain are the source of the extraordinary profits that oil producers can earn. As oil becomes more difficult and more expensive to find, the geological complexity of its location requires even greater amounts of capital investment. The potential for profit and the increasing size and vulnerability of investments make oil companies unwilling to publicise those measurements […] the knowledge of oilfields has not become a political field, or even a unified science, in the way the study of climate change has managed to do. The measurements are conducted privately and held separately, field by field, by rival companies, or by oil service firms contracted to private or national oil-production companies (Mitchell, 2011: 244–245).

It is thus hard for companies, investors and even countries to know what is on the ground and to make an informed decision about their investments. This lack of transparency leaves room for speculation. Speculation that promises profit in a financialised economy. Many oil companies are registered on stock exchanges and depend on the market to get capital. It is financial analysts who mediate between companies and investors by measuring company performances and creating stories to attract investors.[55] Financialisation refers to the ever-growing importance of finance for the economy and even society as a whole. Ronald Dore (2000: 10) describes it as an economy that is centred on “the stock market as the measure of corporate success and on the stock market index as measure of national well-being.”

The oil companies do not know what technologies will be invented and how much oil will then be found and recovered. In the end, nobody knows for sure where the oil is and how much a well yields. One could say everybody knows the rules and the stakes of the game. And while this is common knowledge, the real skill of the oil companies lies in presenting themselves as if they had that knowledge, as if they did guard the secret to the oil reserve, and this is used in negotiations with governments as a leverage mechanism.

Speculation seems to have been the predominant activity in the beginning in Uganda when not much activity was noticed in the exploration areas. Petrofina and then the U.S. company Uganda Works and General Engineering Company had held licenses but abandoned them without fulfilling their obligations. Also Dominion

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U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission considered only the proved reserves. By overbooking Shell increased its value and hence also its ability to attract investors. With the adjustment Shell looked weaker compared to its rivals, according to a Bloomberg News report (Carey et al., 2004).

[55] For ethnographic insights into how these analysts create their stories see e.g. Wansleben (2012, 2013) or Leins (2013, 2018).

Petroleum did some exploration work but failed to find oil. Licensed in 2007, they pulled out in 2012 after allegedly facing difficulties with the government.[56] To these early risk-takers, risk is an opportunity that they can turn into profits.

The increased activity in the early 21st century can be attributed to a recent rise in energy needs and in fuel prices. The rise in fuel prices on the stock market has made it economically sensible to start exploring the potential of formerly unattractive prospects.[57] Likewise oil prices influenced the exploration activities in Uganda (Patey, 2015: 5). Furthermore, the movements of the oil price were also used by the oil industry and the government to renegotiate terms, in busts or booms respectively (ibid.: 21).

In the theoretical chapter, I already noted that the oil markets and subsequently oil prices have been impacted by financialisation (Labban 2010).[58] There are actually two oil markets: the physical one and the financial market. The price of oil on the financial market is not directly connected to its physical supply. While the volume of trading on the financial market is independent of the physical market, prices on the physical market are informed by the ones on the financial market (Labban, 2010: 547).[59] Despite the importance of the spot market, production of oil remains important and oil companies do invest money in it as it is the basis for physical oil being traded and hence for all the financial market activities around it.

The oil price is dependent to some extent on the material qualities of the oil. The material qualities of the oil are meaningful to its ranking within world oil reserves and what price it could fetch on the world market. Uganda's oil is sweet but of a waxy consistency.[60] It is heavier than light crude oils such as Brent and West Texas Intermediate (WTI) that serve as a benchmark for the oil price market but still lighter than heavy crude oil.[61] As an approximate for the price Ugandan oil could fetch, one has to look at these light crude benchmarks. The characteristics of the oil also influence how the oil can be extracted, processed and transported. Uganda's oil

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56 This information is from a well-informed news blog on oil in Uganda (Young, 2012).

57 After 2006, crude oil prices increased from below 30 US dollars to above 60 US dollars, which made "tough oil" (Klare, 2012) more attractive. Tough oil lies deep underground, highly landlocked outside of Western territories, far offshore, in complex geological formations like shale rock or in the Arctic. Oil in landlocked countries such as Uganda thus became more interesting as the age of easy oil was over.

58 I discuss the role of the financialisation for the oil industry in more detail in chapter 6.

59 So oil price crises are not to be explained mainly by physical aspects of the oil such as reserves or demands but rather by the financial logic ruling the market. However, researchers from the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, which is sponsored by big oil corporations such as Total or BP, see no causal link between the financialisation of oil futures markets and oil price volatility for a period between 2003 and 2008 (Fattouh et al., 2012).

60 It has one of the lowest sulphur contents worldwide. It is medium with American Petroleum Institute (API) gravity ranging between 24–33°. It becomes viscous at over 40 °C.

61 While there is some variation in the definition of light oil, with some sorts, especially U.S. ones, being lighter than others (e.g. Canadian, European, Mexican and Middle Eastern), heavy crude is below an API gravity of 25°. For more information on crude oil see Downey (2009).

is difficult in two ways; it is found in a landlocked country and it is not possible to move it without either processing it or building a heated pipeline because to achieve mobility its temperature has to be kept at not less than 60 °C (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, (n.d.)).

Setting the Legislative Framework

More oil discoveries were added in 2008, which catapulted Uganda to a point of international interest.[62] Officials from PEPD stressed that the exploration in Uganda has had a very good success rate that hence ameliorated the government's negotiation position. Uganda used this new interest, as noted by the PEPD official cited above, to take a step back and review their legislative framework. Licensing of new acreage was halted in order to prepare for competitive bidding rounds and the government and the Parliament started developing a legislative framework before delving into oil production. To the dismay of the oil companies this caused delays in the development process of the oil, as I show below.

In 2008, the National Oil and Gas Policy was formulated and stated as its goal to use the oil to eradicate poverty and create value for society (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development 2008: viii). It was henceforth the guideline for the industry until the creation of oil legislation. There have been prolonged negotiations of the "Petroleum Bills" in and outside of the Ugandan Parliament. In February 2012, two oil bills namely the "Exploration, Development and Production Bill" and the "Refining, Gas Processing and Conversion, Transportation and Storage" were placed before the Parliament (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 2012a,b). They were passed in December 2012 after long-drawn consultations.

There had been debates in Parliament and media and many interventions such as conferences and workshops from national NGOs that were especially directed at changing "clause 9" on the "Functions of the Minister" which gives the Minister of Energy the right to grant and revoke licenses and to negotiate and endorse petroleum agreements.[63] This was dubbed the creation of a "super-minister," as s/he would have too many powers to influence anything to do with oil, even though s/he might lack the technical knowledge required to make such decisions. To civil society actors and journalists this meant that the minister was exposed to corruption and ultimately, since the Minister was appointed by the President, this meant that it would be the

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62 According to the Ministry of Energy, foreign investment in the oil sector picked up considerably after 2006. From 12 million US Dollars in 2005 to 352 million U.S. Dollars in 2010. These figures are from a 2012 powerpoint presentation of the commissioner Ernest Rubondo.

63 The clause reads in full: "The Minister shall be responsible for (a) granting and revoking licences; (b) initiating, developing and implementing oil and gas policy; (c) submitting draft legislation to Parliament; (d) issuing petroleum regulations; (e) negotiating and endorsing petroleum agreements; (f) approving field development plans; (g) promoting and sustaining transparency in the petroleum sector; (h) approving data management systems; and (i) any other function incidental or consequential to his or her functions" (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 2012a, clause 9).

President who would be in charge. Civil society activists and donors repeated over and over that now was the time to influence what oil in Uganda would amount to. Clause 9 was therefore brought up in conferences and the participants were asked to provide feedback to their Members of Parliament (MP).[64]

After many discussions on the bill and lobbying by civil society and MPs, including those from the ruling party that were subsequently labelled "Rebel MPs," the clause was revised. It was changed to give the powers over licensing and field development plans to the Petroleum Authority. However, just a few days later, a motion was advanced by the ruling party to move the original clause back into the bill. This motion met resistance from parliamentarians and civil society actors who had supported the altered version. The Parliament was supposed to vote on the recommittal of the clause by end of November 2012. The day before the vote, NRM held a caucus meeting and the president allegedly called MPs to make sure they vote according to the government's wish.

The matter came to a heat on the day of the vote. There was an uproar of Members of Parliament and visitors from NGOs that lead to the adjournment of the vote. The parliamentarians who caused the uproar had wanted to debate further on the oil bill. The Rebel MPs and civil society actors asked for a suspension of the vote. NGOs and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)[65] had decided to go and protest at the Parliament on the day of the vote. On the day of the vote, police deployed anti-riot units in front of the Parliament that stopped activists from entering. The police had also declared any demonstration as unlawful. Through the intervention of a popular bishop, the actors of the NGOs and CBOs were eventually allowed into the public gallery of the Parliament.

The atmosphere inside was described to me by those who took part in it as heated. The debate turned chaotic when one parliamentarian said that the Parliament would not be turned into a "voting machine" and another MP asked his fellows to stand up. In the ensuing commotion, one section of the MPs and the visitors chanted "No vote. Our oil" while another section shouted "Let's vote."[66] Eventually, the Speaker of Parliament Rebecca Kadaga was reported to have fled the room and the Parliament premises through the backdoor. She left it to her deputy to chair the vote the following week. The civil society actors I spoke to were exhilarated and expressed their enthusiasm about doing the right thing and trying to play their role in preventing harm from Uganda.

However, the bills were passed end of 2012 and later signed by President Museveni in March and June 2013.[67] I received the news of the passing of the bill

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[64] The debate is part of the negotiations of the oil in Uganda structured by the resource curse discourse, which I will discuss in more detail in chapter four on the resource curse.

[65] For a description of civil society in Uganda compare chapter four.

[66] See newsblog article "MPs Revolt Against Creation of a 'Super' Oil Minister" (Oil in Uganda, 2012a).

[67] The agitation around the bills and the formation of an opposition to the government from within their ranks, e.g. in the Parliamentary Forum on Oil and Gas, has put Museveni and the NRM under

together with some civil society actors at a dinner during a conference in Nebbi. They expressed their frustration at the passing and commented that the oil companies would be happy, as now their deals could move ahead. Indeed, Tullow signed a production-sharing agreement with the government, which paved the way for a farm-down deal of two thirds of Tullow's concession to CNOOC and Total E&P at the end of 2012.[68]

The China National Offshore Oil Corporation is a Chinese national oil company founded in 1982 and listed on the Hong Kong, New York and Toronto stock exchanges.[69] The Chinese state is the largest shareholder with around 65 percent while other investors hold percentages around or below one percent. President of CNOOC Uganda is Xiao Zong Wei.[70] CNOOC is active in 20 countries outside of China, with six in Africa, and it is part of several joint ventures. Forming joint ventures is part of China's business strategy for its multinational corporations aimed at gaining on a managerial and technical level and getting a foothold in a new country (Alden and Davies, 2006: 87).

Total E&P Uganda Ltd. is a subsidiary of Total E&P, a multinational integrated oil company, which has its roots in France but has a worldwide presence. The company emerged from several mergers with Elf Aquitaine, Total and Petrofina. Total is listed on the Paris and New York stock exchange. 5.1 percent of Total's shares are held by group employees, 7.8 recent are owned by individual shareholders and 87.1 percent by institutional shareholders.[71]

greater pressure. The issue of oil in relation to Museveni's power struggles is briefly discussed by Vokes (2012). In 2013, the "Rebel MPs," were expelled from the NRM and afterwards had to fight to maintain their seats in Parliament.

68 According to Patey, Tullow was not able to get the $10 billion needed for the development of the oil fields (Patey, 2015: 9).

69 In 1998, before entering the World Trade Organisation (WTO), China started a restructuring of its formerly purely state-owned companies in order to prepare them for international competition and to develop China's oil and petrochemical industry more efficiently (Meidan 2016, 28). The restructuring was necessary to allow the companies to get listed on international stock exchanges for fund-raising and improving their management skills with regard to accounting and reporting of (financial) performance (Meidan, 2016: 29).

70 According to its company profile CNOOC has 4.32 billion barrels of oil equivalent. It has 20,585 employees and its current directors are Yang Hua and Yuan Guangyu. In 2015, it reported a profit of 20,246 million RMB (2.76 billion Euros). In 2017, credit ratings for CNOOC were A+ from Standard & Poor's and Aa3 by Moody's with a stable outlook.

71 Total's major shareholders are the group employees and Black Rock with 5.5 percent. In 2015, Total reported an adjusted net income of 10.5 billion US Dollars. In 2016, Total has been rated A plus/A-1 by Standard & Poor's with a negative outlook. Total has 2.347 million barrels of oil equivalent per day (roughly 8.49 billion barrels of oil equivalent per year). The company has a total of 96,019 employees.

Busts and Other Recent Activities

The year 2013 saw a lot of activity by Total, with the drilling of 23 wells, which added more discoveries to Uganda's portfolio. Tullow was less active with only one appraisal well, while CNOOC did not drill wells but secured a production license for the well Kajubirizi-1. In February 2014, after two years of negotiating, Uganda signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the joint venture partners, allowing the companies to move along their schedule towards production. In 2014, more discoveries were made that boosted the reserves to 6.5 billion oil barrels (bbl), with an estimated 1.2 to 1.7 billion bbl recoverable reserves.[72] By the end of 2014, altogether 116 wells (80 appraisal wells and 36 exploration wells) had been drilled out of which 112 encountered oil and/or gas. All in all, 21 discoveries[73] have been made, 17 of these have been appraised and four discoveries reverted to the government.[74]

However, in 2014 a massive downsizing in the industry took place and persisted in 2015. This downsizing was related to a fall in the global crude oil price starting in mid-2014. International subcontractors such as Halliburton, as some of my industry contacts informed me, had almost completely withdrawn from Uganda while Total and Tullow had laid off a considerable amount of staff (cf. Patey, 2015: 12). This downsizing was also connected to the drop in oil prices. Interesting about the falling prices is not that activities are reduced (usually momentarily) but rather how this is used as a risk in negotiations by the industry. Patey argues that a price boom allows the government to renegotiate more favourable terms while a bust allows oil companies to renegotiate (Patey, 2015: 21). In a bit of a surprise move, Total sent the general manager of Total E&P Uganda back to France at the end of 2014. Allegedly, it was sending a signal of impatience to the Ugandan government (Tumusiime, 2015). Total took eight months to appoint Adewale Fayemi, a Nigerian national, as the new manager of Total E&P Uganda.

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[72] In comparison, Nigeria has 37.5 billion bbl. An oil barrel contains about 159 litres. According to a presentation held by the commissioner of PEPD in 2012 less than 40% of the Albertine Graben had been evaluated so far. And there are still other exploration areas in Uganda (Hoima basin, Moroto basin, Lake Kyoga, Lake Victoria and Wamala basin).

[73] Discoveries count for fields and several wells can be drilled to obtain further information about one oilfield, hence the difference in numbers.

[74] For more information see a map of drilled wells and discoveries in Uganda online at https://web.archive.org/web/20120813053642/http://www.petroleum.go.ug:80/uploads/Drilled%20Wells%20August-2012.pdf [February 2018]. The statistical report of MEMD from 2014 shows slightly different numbers though. According to it, 118 onshore wells have been drilled, 83 of which were successful (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 2014). There seems to be a diverging way between MEMD and PEPD to measure the success of wells. Possibly, PEPD's higher success number counts in all shows of oil and gas and not just the discoveries of sizeable quantities. The numbers also do not indicate whether these wells contain enough oil or gas to produce them commercially. To use higher numbers makes sense, as it makes the success rate seem better, which is of course in Uganda's interest in order to de-risk its assets and to attract investors.

While the oil price was in crisis in 2014, the price has always been very volatile, which means that it will increase again. Oil companies usually try to paint a picture of scarcity to keep the price up. However, they have to walk a tight rope as too high a price and too scary a scarcity scenario might be another reason to send consumers and governments searching for alternative fuels and energy sources. Besides, the oil price is also about competition between international oil companies and national oil companies. It is assumed the latest drop was due to members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) refusing to lower their output, hence putting U.S. shale gas out of profitability and securing its own market. Especially Saudi-Arabia can do this, as its production costs are very low.

Having established that oil price changes are not unusual, the claim that the latest dip of 2014 caused the downsizing can be put into perspective. While during the time of the first big discoveries, the price was booming in 2008, with the onset of the financial crisis, the oil price dropped by around 100 U.S. Dollars on the spot market from 133 to 39.[75] Yet this development did not stop exploration activities by the oil companies in 2008 and afterwards, they only led to measures to reduce risks and increase efficiency. In Tullow's yearly report the Chairman Pat Plankett referred to 2008 as an outstanding year:

> 2008 was another year of record achievement for Tullow. Exceptional exploration and appraisal results, strong production, profitable portfolio management and the recent successful fund-raising underpin our ability to continue to grow (Tullow Oil PLC 2008a: 8).

In comparison, the bust of 2014 meant a less drastic drop of around 50–60 U.S. Dollars on the spot price market. This seems less grave but was countered with similar measures of risk reduction and efficiency improvements. Additionally, it was more prominently remarked on in Tullow's annual report. Another Chairman of Tullow, Simon Thompson, explained the drop in oil prices and Tullow's reaction to this. They decided to reduce future expenditures on complex deepwater operations as long as the costs are high. With the fall in mid-2014 they reduced the overall exploration budget from $0.8 billion in 2014, to approximately $0.2 billion in 2015 and refocused on low-complexity offshore and the lower-cost onshore. However, in an apparent attempt to assuage shareholders, Thompson also stated that the industry was cyclical and that the cutback by majors and independents was creating the condition for a price increase again.

> The combination of high costs and falling prices means that the whole industry faces a significant margin squeeze until operating and capital costs can be reduced to more sustainable levels, a process that is already under way. […]

[75] Crude prices for WTI and Brent from 1986 to date see are available online at www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/PET_PRI_SPT_S1_M.htm [February 2018].

> The oil industry is cyclical. As majors and independents alike cut back or defer capital investment in new production in response to lower prices, the industry is already creating the conditions for a revival of the oil price (Tullow Oil PLC, 2014a: 4–5).

In 2015, the oil industry in Uganda was still laying low, as Total and Tullow were waiting for the government's approval of their field development plans, which are also the basis for the award of a production license.[76] In August 2016, Tullow and Total were granted production licenses. Subsequently, Tullow sold the majority of its shares in the licenses to Total. This farm-down of 21,57 per cent of the license owned by the joint venture for 900 million US Dollars included Tullow's retreat from the operation. The company remains in the country but as a non-operating partner. This move comes after Tullow had just recovered from a crisis initiated by the slump in oil prices in 2014. According to Bloomberg news, Tullow's market capitalisation has followed the oil price closely (Rascouet 2017).[77] This sale could possibly be understood as a gradual return to its old strategy of monetising rather than producing assets.[78] For Total this meant a boost of its interest in the project to 54.9 per cent.

Up to this point, I have given an overview of the history of oil in Uganda from the beginnings in the early 20th century up to recent developments. This section has shown how throughout exploration relations between the oil companies and the government have not been smooth. The reason might not just be the change in oil prices but also the government's attitude towards oil. Instead of rushing to production, the Ugandan state took its time to move ahead. In the following I relate these strategies of delaying.

[76] Total's website offers little information on its Ugandan project (www.total.com/en/uganda [February 2018]).

[77] The share prices of other oil companies like CNOOC and Total also follow the oil price but not as closely as Tullow's does.

[78] Furthermore, the founder and long-time CEO of Tullow, Aidan Heavey, is stepping down and preparing the company for his retirement in two years.

3.2 Risky Delays

This sub-chapter discusses the delays within the development of Uganda's oil from a risk perspective. It considers how the slow process presented a risk to the business operations of the oil companies and how they tried to deal with this. Already in 2013, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum[79], Irene Nakalyango, asserted in an interview with me that the delay had started to frustrate the oil companies and their subcontractors:

> They [the oil companies] have invested and there is no activity to back the investment. And they also need to make money. Government tries to learn but they can learn from other countries. So it shouldn't take them so long (CEO, Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, interview, 2013).

During my research, I heard expatriate oil workers complain that things were not going as smooth as they were 'supposed' to. The Country Manager of a subcontractor told me the oil industry in Uganda was stagnant as the companies were not getting the permits they needed to drill. Asked why the government was withholding them, he told me "This is Africa." Supposedly, government officials were interested in money and were waiting for bribes. In Uganda, he continued to explain, politicians and officials in the ministries were being difficult as they thought they were now the "big boss" of the oil industry. In Kenya, however, it was no problem to get a "go ahead"[80] and since Tullow had had several political problems in Uganda and had already lost a lot of money, they had started to orient themselves to Kenya (Country Manager, international drilling and cementing company, field notes from informal conversation, 2013).[81] The same was mentioned by two other expatriate managers of another international oilfield subcontractor. They thought that the government was

[79] This industry chamber was founded in 2000 as Uganda Chamber of Mines and in 2010 expanded to the oil industry. Among its council members are Total, CNOOC and Tullow. It has its offices at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development. According to its own definition it is an NGO that represents the interest of the mining and petroleum industry in Uganda. Among its activities, it counts the creation of an arena for stakeholders to meet and share information; the facilitation of business and hosting of networking events, workshops and conferences. Furthermore, it has a quarterly magazine that can be found online at www.ucmp.ug/ [February 2018].

[80] While Uganda was the first country in East Africa to announce commercially viable reserves of oil, oil and gas reserves were also discovered in Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya. And the prospects in Kenya are said to be promising as well with an estimated 750 million bbl from the first discoveries.

[81] This statement was made during an after-work meeting. Throughout this thesis I anonymise my interlocutors if they made controversial statements in an informal conversation, which could be harmful to them or their company/organisation. I consider interviews as official statements, which do not request anonymisation unless it was requested. Interviews and conversations used in this thesis were based on the consent of my interlocutors and their knowledge about my research project.

annoying the oil companies and that these companies were thus contemplating to leave Uganda. According to them, the companies had already started bringing people to Kenya (Managers, international drilling company, interview 2013).

The subcontractors are also concerned by the dealys because such risks of oil exploration are not just borne by the oil companies but also by the service providers. Contracts with service-providers usually include stand-by clauses that reduce costs for the oil companies. According to the contracts, the oil companies can cancel these at short notice. The Human Resource Manager of a logistics company with contracts in the oil industry said in an interview that they could tell the subcontractors to mobilise or demobilise the same day. At the time of the interview in February 2013, the company was on stand-by. They did not have any contracts and were planning to divert away from depending on just one sector (Interview, 2013). To the subcontractors, stand-by times are not good as they in turn are also not making the profits they promised their shareholders to whom they are accountable (Country Manager, international rig operating company, interview, 2013).

These arrangements are typical for "supply-chain capitalism" (Tsing, 2009) where the contracting company dictates the terms to the service-provider and thereby externalises some of its business risks to the service-provider.[82] All companies in the commodity chain are bound to the chain albeit as independent enterprises (ibid.: 148).[83] This affected both national and international service-providers but the international service-providers usually had projects in other countries to fall back on while some of the Ugandan companies had just started realising that they needed to diversify.

The managers of the oilfield service companies framed the delays the government imposed on them not as a matter of an informed and cautionary approach to the development of oil but rather as an arrogant "big boss" behaviour that was solely focused on generating bribes. Rumours of Tullow leaving the country and orientating its business towards Kenya can be understood as a sort of risk management, away from investment-unfriendly conditions to more stable ones. The possibility of a withdrawal from the country or just the threat of it must, however, also be viewed as a power resource the oil company used in the negotiations with the government. The companies wanted the government to move fast to enable them to move at their own pace without further interference. This desire of the companies for creating smooth, meaning undeterred, operations has been described as disentanglement work (Appel 2012a) or enclave operation (Ferguson, 2005).

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82 For more on this topic see the chapter on national content.

83 Based on a study of Walmart's business model Anna Tsing (2009: 150–151) shows how an analysis of supply-chains appreciates the bigness of capitalism without homogenising it. She describes Walmart as the latest influence on our understanding of the bigness of capitalism after the influence of Fordism in production and the franchise model: "Walmart is a food and general merchandise retail chain that has prospered through two basic strategies: first, cutting costs; and second, dictating conditions to the suppliers of its products" (ibid: 156).

The Risk of a Bad Investment Climate

> A limited amount of money goes after the best investment opportunities. What we have been trying to say is that you need to create the best investment climate. If you have the best investment climate, you get the money in. If you get the money in, you get jobs, services, employment, industry, and the whole standard of living rises (Interview with Aidan Heavey, Tullow, Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, [2013]a: 10).

This comment conjures up magical qualities of the oil in creating development that have already been deconstructed by scholars working on Nigeria, Venezuela or Gabon (Apter, 2005; Coronil, 1997; Yates, 1996). It is a matter of debate whether it is crucial for Uganda that the money comes in as I show in the discussion of the resource curse in the next chapter. However, the money is certainly important to the oil companies. What will happen if it does not come in soon, was a matter of speculation.

Many commentators did not exclude the possibility that in the end, the oil companies might leave altogether without developing Uganda's oil potential. This would mean for the government that they will not get any revenues out of their oil any time soon. The companies tried to present this as a risk to the government, seeking to improve their own bargaining position. But it is not entirely certain that the government recognises this risk. President Museveni also suggested an end could be put to the working relationship if no agreement could be reached (Hickey et al., 2015b: 20). Putting the other party at risk is a power resource each party tries to deploy in the negotiations. The withdrawal threat, however, also causes uncertainty for Ugandan companies as they might not be able to prepare properly, e.g. get the bank loans to invest in oil-related activities (Operations Manager, Ugandan logistics company, interview 2015).[84]

The Ugandan government did not accept the risk of not having the best investment climate. Rather, it went ahead and filed court cases over tax evasions that could further harm its image to investors. With this move it effectively prioritised the actual damage of tax evasion over the risk that the companies had constructed. In September 2012, Tullow sued the government at the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes based in the USA on the imposition of value added tax on goods and services bought for the oil exploration. The case was resolved in 2015 in a settlement outside court.[85]

In another tax dispute, the government demanded Tullow should pay Capital Gains Tax for the farm-down deal with CNOOC and Total. To Tullow this was a

[84] The difficulties Ugandan companies face is dealt with in more detail in chapter 6 on national content.

[85] For the procedural details but not the agreement see the website of the centre: https://icsid.worldbank.org/en/Pages/cases/casedetail.aspx?CaseNo=ARB/13/25 [13.11.2017].

breach of agreement signed with the former Minister of Energy. Chief Executive Officer Aidan Heavey claimed that Tullow had spent over $2.8 billion in exploring for oil in Uganda in the last 10 years based on their understanding that the agreement would be honoured. The agreement included important incentives that were given to a company that takes the wildcat risk.[86] In July 2014, Uganda's Tax Appeals Tribunal ruled against Tullow and ordered it to pay 407 million U.S. Dollars to the Ugandan government. Tullow threatened to challenge the ruling at the High Court in Uganda and to seek international arbitration. A year later, it reached a settlement with Uganda whereby Tullow would pay Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) 250 million U.S. Dollars.

Seeking international arbitration may take a case to neutral grounds but it also involves high costs as the government noticed in the Heritage case (Hickey and Izama 2017: 178). The ability to seek international arbitration was one of the main points of disagreement between the oil companies and the Ugandan government in the negotiation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) as I detail later in this sub-chapter under 3.2.3.

From a company's point of view, these tax issues increased the risk to operate in Uganda as they couldn't be sure whether the contracts would be honoured. The unsettling effect of changing rules is that they force all players to make new calculations. Regulatory instability is part of the wildcat risk. Uganda did indeed change the petroleum legislation and was also improving the regulatory regime in line with international standards of the oil industry.[87]

In Uganda, the companies were resentful that the government had halted the process many times and by different means: officially stopping licensing or simply delaying giving out licenses and work permits. To the oil companies, delays at this stage can put their profits at risk as potential investors might get cold feet if governments put too many restrictions on companies and their activities. The delays pose a threat to the company's profits and market value. Delays lead to stand-by times, which consume a lot of money, as everything needs to be kept available without any success or development to show.

The Argument for Fast Development

The CEO of Tullow, Aidan Heavey, commented on the urgency of advancing the process of developing the oil in an interview printed in the newsletter of the lobby organisation of the mining industry in Uganda, Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum.

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[86] For further information see Kigambo (2014).

[87] The Ministry of Energy is very intent on moving the Ugandan standards with regard to the oil industry up to the levels set by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (Official from UNBS, interview, 2015). I discuss the standard question in more detail in chapter six.

> What is important for Uganda is how quickly you can produce that oil. The reason as to why countries want to develop oil quickly is because technology is changing quickly. There is a possibility that in five or six years' time somebody can invent some gadget where someone doesn't need fuel in the car. That happens, the oil loses value (Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum newsletter, [2013]a: 10).

This quote from Heavey points to the temporality of oil and the future of the resource. While technological developments can improve the production and render more oil recoverable, it could potentially also render oil obsolete, as Heavey notes. According to him, if oil could be replaced by another resource, just like oil replaced coal, this would change the game for Uganda. Hence, he argues that Uganda should be in a rush and that it was the oil-replacing technologies that urged countries to produce fast and not the wish to have revenues as fast as possible. His argument implicitly includes the oil companies who are assisting in the production. The oil companies would lose their business and importance with new technologies and such changes are more or less unforeseeable. These changes constitute an uncertainty for the oil companies as there cannot be enough knowledge to manage this or to subject these future possibilities to calculations.

One way the oil companies handle this uncertainty is to focus on short time horizons. This relates to oil exploration and production in such a way that it becomes important and economically sensible to produce as much, as fast as possible. To produce while the oil still has value and while the oil business is still profitable. However, such statements should also be read carefully. To date, there are still many untouched oil reserves and oil companies are also still withholding reserves from the market. It is still part of the business to maintain certain licenses and to manage the risk of price gluts and overproduction that have been so common in the oil industry ever since its inception.[88] The risk of such developments are more imminent and measurable and are certainly very important in the way companies act. Then again, uncertainty in the exploration can also pose a chance rather than a challenge. Viewing uncertainty not as something that needs to be avoided but as something that can bear fruit, is quite helpful to understand the oil industry. Uncertainty and risk are put to speculative profit in the future oil price market where oil price volatility can be used to generate profit.

Widening the horizon to the uncertainties of the future, as Heavey does in the above quote, can be read as a tactical move in the negotiations with the government. If the oil loses its value, both the oil companies and the producing country would be

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[88] Attempts at market regulation by the industry include agreements such as the "Red Line"- and the "As Is"-Agreement. And before that it was John D. Rockefeller who saw a risk in price fluctuations and devised the integrated oil company as a tool to manage the risk of a free fall in oil prices after a major field discovery. The successful management of this risk (among others) led Rockefeller's Standard Oil to be the most influential oil company of its time. For more information on the history of the oil industry see Yergin (2009) or Sampson (1975).

affected negatively. Instead of laying the focus only on why it makes business sense for a government not to delay the activities of the company, Heavey uses a narrative in which both company and country stand to lose and according to which they have the same interest: moving ahead faster – clearly meaning the government should speed up its processes. Moving fast possibly means doing things hastily, which could cause harm to the government. Good legal frameworks cannot be put in place, contracts cannot be negotiated properly and the government runs the risk of getting a crude deal. So moving slowly at times, as the government has done, is essentially a good risk management by the government (Humphrey et al., 2007: 15). Notwithstanding the risk of departure of the oil companies, the government did not move faster.

Negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding

In this section I take a brief look at how risks were used in the process of negotiating the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding on the plan for the commercialisation of the oil between the government and the oil companies. Each party defined the risks to themselves and in light of this assessment tried to drive the best bargain. A recent article reconstructs the negotiation process from interviews with people from both sides who were present at the negotiations (Hickey et al., 2015b). The government was represented by officials from PEPD, the Ministry of Energy, Uganda Revenue Authority, Bank of Uganda and the Ugandan Investment Authority and the oil companies, Total, CNOOC and Tullow, were represented by national staff, lawyers and international technical and legal experts (Hickey et al., 2015b).

The authors name three main points of contention: the use of international arbitration, the approval process of field development plans and the refinery. While the oil companies wanted to secure the ability to seek international arbitration, the government officials rejected it as it involved "too many unknown variables" (Hickey et al., 2015b: 18). International arbitration brings in many new and unknown elements and makes it harder to identify potential sources of harm. This is one of the uncertainties for the country. The government failed to get its view approved and the oil companies succeeded as they pointed out that international arbitration was an industry standard.[89]

With regard to the oil field development plan, the oil companies wanted an integrated development or basin-wide approach, which would mean all the developments, including the refinery and the pipeline, would be integrated in one plan and approved and operationalised together to achieve economies of scale. The government only acquiesced partially, allowing the possibility for it to be included in the MoU with the oil companies but maintained it was more interested in a non-integrated approach, so that delays in one area would not hold up the whole development of the oil and projects like the refinery could move ahead as soon as possible (Hickey et al., 2015b). In an ironic twist, in this case it was the government officials who were

[89] In chapter six I discuss in detail the companies' use of international standards in negotiations.

referring to the risk of delayed development, not the oil companies. The refinery was indeed a project of the government that they were intent on realising. Establishing the refinery was a cornerstone of the government's attempt at creating Ugandan participation in the oil industry and avoiding the negative impacts of a resource boom on the national economy, commonly referred to as the 'Dutch disease.'[90] While the oil companies eventually accepted the refinery after some negotiations, they stressed the importance of transport. Aidan Heavey, the CEO of Tullow, commented on the refinery issue that it was not possible to have an oil industry without a pipeline, while it was possible to have one without a refinery. The logic being that if oil companies invest money, they want to be sure they get returns which is easier if they can pump the crude out (Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, [2013]a: 10).

The discussions between the government and the oil companies also revolved around the parallel project of creating a heated pipeline for crude oil export. For the crude export pipeline, different routes were debated such as one that would connect from Hoima on to the port of Lamu, Kenya called the Hoima-Lokichar-Lamu route. The pipeline coming from Hoima would connect to the LAPSSET (Lamu Port Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport) corridor at Lokichar, which is meant to involve highways, railways and airports. It is Kenya's second large infrastructural corridor, next to its Mombasa corridor, to connect to South Sudan and Ethiopia. This route makes sense for Kenya where oil has been found in the Turkana basin adjacent to this corridor.[91] Another option was a southern route, going from Hoima through Eldoret to Lamu or Mombasa.

Yet another option discussed a little later was to connect through Rwanda to Tanzania. To define the most viable route for the pipeline, the oil companies on the one side and Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda on the other had conducted surveys. The Tanzania option was favoured by Total as it feared the closeness of the other route to the Somalian border and thus to acts of terrorism by the Salafi-oriented group al-shabāb.[92] Total accused Tullow of having a twisted interest in the Kenya route, as Tullow also has assets in Kenya. The proposal for the Tanzanian route was rejected by Uganda as apparently Kenya had made several concessions to Uganda to win its favour. In August 2015, President Museveni and the President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, declared their intention of following through with the Kenyan route. However, Uganda continued negotiations with Tanzania and then in March 2016, President Museveni and John Magufuli, the President of Tanzania, issued statements that they would build the Tanzanian route, preferred by Total while Kenya was left

[90] The impact being that the thriving resource sector hurts other sectors in the country. I explain this causal mechanism in the chapter on the resource curse. The refinery case is discussed in detail in the chapter on national content.

[91] For more information see the project's website: www.lapsset.go.ke/ [February 2018].

[92] The full name of the group is ḥarakat al-shabāb al-mujāhidīn. For further information on al-shabāb see Loimeier (2016: 288–292). Loimeier calls al-shabāb a "jihād-minded" group that does not care much about doctrine (Loimeier,2016: 35).

to itself to continue its pipeline project.[93] These negotiations reveal how the ability to set one's risks on the agenda is a resource in bargaining. The finishing of the pipeline deal also meant that developments could move ahead.

From the above I derive that the better one party can prove its risk claims, the better its bargaining position. It seems that thanks to their high level of technical knowledge on oil and the oil industry, the Ugandan negotiators were very adept at getting their risks, such as the risk of suffering from the Dutch disease without a refinery, acknowledged and hence getting what are alleged to be some of the best oil deals in Africa (Hickey et al., 2015a,b).

After all these delays, in the beginning of 2015 the government opened the bidding process for six blocks: Turaco, Kanywataba, Taitai, Ngassa, Ngaji and Nvule. No major company showed interest in the licenses, although the Ministry of Energy estimates that another 8 billion barrels are yet undiscovered. From the active companies, only Tullow threw in its bid. The government then shortlisted 16 companies, all of them were smaller or independent ones. Some argue that the disinterest of major companies was caused by Uganda's approach to the oil industry. Though de-risked by the good success ratio and the presence of major companies, it could be that Uganda being tough in the negotiations in conjunction with the drop in oil prices stifled the interest of the oil companies. However, four companies proceeded to negotiation stage and in September 2017 the government signed a PSA with Armour Energy (Ssekika, 2017).

In the past section I have focused the attention on how the delays of the exploration process have posed a risk and been a matter of negotiation between the oil companies and the government. In the following section I take a closer look at delays caused by corruption allegations and more disputes over taxes between the government and the oil companies. I set these delays apart from the general history to ensure the readability of this chapter. There are parallel activities and negotiation strands running through the history of oil in Uganda, which could be confusing to present in a purely chronological order.[94]

[93] For a more detailed analysis of the pipeline negotiations see Patey (2015).

[94] For a chronology of events I refer to the table on the oil history in the appendix.

3.3 Corruption Scandals

Further delays in the oil project resulted from the unravelling of corruption scandals, which I consider here in their complexity and effects. Over time, Uganda has been ridden by very many corruption scandals and therefore the scandals that evolved around the oil deals do not stand out.[95] Oil companies identify corruption allegation as risky because they could lead to court cases in the USA and costly fines under the Dodd Frank Act if the company is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Furthermore, they could damage the company's image, also leading to financial losses. The allegations themselves do already cause harm to the company, as countering these allegations binds resources and they at least momentarily impact negatively on the perception of the company.[96] One way to manage this risk, is to avoid corrupt practices, which is for instance what Tullow lays out in its business standards.

In the two cases that I discuss below, corruption allegations were an attempt by one set of actors to cause harm to another party. In the first case an opposition politician put ministers under pressure and tarnished the government's image. In the other case one oil company tried to harm another one by bringing up corruption allegations during a court trial between the companies. The outcome of the first corruption scandal was a moratorium on the signing of further agreements with the oil companies.

In 2011, Ugandans witnessed the uncovering of a corruption scandal surrounding the sale of Heritage shares to Tullow. This scandal involved some high-ranking politicians, as well as the oil companies ENI and Tullow. Back in 2009, Tullow was in a joint venture with Heritage. Heritage decided to offer its shares in the exploration areas 1 and 3A to the Italian oil company ENI. Tullow made use of its pre-emption right and bought the shares in January 2010. In 2011, the MP Gerald Karuhanga[97] alleged that ENI had bribed then Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi and President Museveni while the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sam Kutesa and the former Minister of Energy Hilary Onek had been bribed by Tullow to get government's approval of the sale.[98]

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95 For an overview of corruption in Uganda including analysis of a broad range of scandals see Asiimwe (2013) Tangri and Mwenda (2013, 2003). For a general analysis of corruption in Africa see Bayart (1993) or Blundo and Olivier de Sardan (2006).

96 In Rachel Boynton's documentary Big Men (2014) one can see how Anadarko leveled such allegations against Kosmos Energy, in what appears to be some sort of dirty trick. Anadarko reported Kosmos to the U.S. Authorities for a possible violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Although the U.S. Authorities closed the case without filing charges, the allegation did have consequences for Kosmos: a reshuffle in the board of directors and management, the loss of a sales deal with Exxon and a severance in relations to the Ghanaian government.

97 Karuhanga was then Western Uganda Youth representative and not member of the ruling party NRM.

98 These allegations can also be found in cables from U.S. embassy officials that had been leaked on wikileaks (https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09KAMPALA1401_a.html [February 2018]).

President Museveni refuted the allegation saying that it was contempt of the highest order to accuse him of taking money from a *mzungu*, meaning European in Swahili. Mbabazi responded that those documents had been forged. The Attorney General Peter Nyombi also dismissed the documents as being suspect and said their admission was illegal as they had not been verified before submission to the Parliament. The Parliament instituted a commission of inquiry that was to investigate the claims. They also demanded a halt to any oil deals, affecting the farm-down-deal between Tullow, CNOOC and Total.[99] Tullow also responded to the allegations, contesting to the parliamentary ad hoc committee in April 2012. Then executive director, Graham Martin, brought documents from the Metropolitan Police, the UK Serious Fraud Office and the Maltese police along to disproof the allegations.[100] He is quoted by the newspaper Daily Monitor as saying:

> 'The allegations affected Tullow deeply not only in Uganda but the entire world. We have a 25 year history of zero tolerance to corruption and we will prove to you that they [the documents] were false and I think the local media is starting to appreciate that' (Imaka 2012).

In the end the ministers and Tullow were cleared of the allegations by a parliamentary commission. Despite the exoneration, the scandal tarnished Tullow's image and the result of this scandal was a hold on the issuance of further licenses and signing of contracts, meaning the companies could only work under existing licenses (de Kock and Sturman, 2012: 45).

During this scandal it also surfaced that the license Heritage sold had been due to expire in February 2010, unless a production license had been sought by then, which apparently Tullow failed to do. The then Minister of Energy Onek wrote to Tullow and Heritage in August 2010, alerting them to the fact that they had failed to apply for the production license and that the license under which they were active in exploration area 3A had actually expired. He informed them that the Kajubirizi Discovery Area therefore ceased to form part of the Petroleum Exploration Area 3A under Tullow's license.[101]

It thus transpired that the sale of an almost expired license had drawn various parties into a big corruption scandal. Heritage, however, made a handsome profit as it gained 1.45 billion U.S. dollars out of the transaction and boasted in a 2010 report of having paid its shareholders a dividend of 100 pence per share through the monetisation of assets, that is the sale of an asset (Heritage Oil Plc, 2010: 9). In this

99 The commission claimed they came upon difficulties trying to trace the money due to the complexity of the investigation, several complications with institutions in Uganda and limitations of the parliamentary investigations overseas.

100 Investigations in Uganda and Britain found that the documents proving bank transfers from Tullow to the ministers were forgeries. It was not resolved though who made the forgeries. For more on the scandal see Mwenda (2011).

101 Excerpts of the letter were cited in a newspaper article (Obore, 2011).

annual review the CEO of Heritage Oil, Anthony Buckingham, also highlights the strategy of "gaining a first mover advantage" (ibid.: 16). The interest of Heritage is to make a profit by monetising assets and to thereby generate value for shareholders and thus increase the shareholder value (ibid.). This first-mover advantage is what I described earlier on as the wildcat risk.

Despite the exoneration uncovering the details of this sale of Heritage's license, this still makes the oil deals in Uganda seem to be the classic murky deals of the oil industry. The transaction proved to be a longer struggle between the three parties as the government refused to approve the transaction without the taxes being paid. In the tax dispute, the Ugandan government claimed Heritage had left the country without paying their capital gains tax for the sale.[102] In order to get the taxes it demanded, the government used Tullow's need to get the license renewed.

Tullow thus came under considerable pressure: it had to pay taxes (and maybe even bribes) for a license that was about to expire and whose renewal was depending on the goodwill of the government. Getting a renewal was important because if Tullow would have had to get the license through new negotiations, it would have possibly increased in value. The prize for Tullow was exclusive access to the most promising oil fields in Uganda and also a primary negotiating position to bring in new partners. At the time of the sale it is alleged that Tullow was in negotiations with ExxonMobil though it appears they lost interest later on (Browne, 2011).

So Tullow set out to appease the government and in October 2010 agreed to pay $121.5 million to the Uganda Revenue Authority and to put the rest into an escrow account and set about seeking legal redress with Heritage. After this settlement, the license was renewed.[103] This paved the way for the signing of the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding between the oil companies and the government. When the scandal erupted in 2011, Tullow was already in negotiations about a farm-down-deal with CNOOC and Total. The moratorium the Parliament had put in place that was supposed to halt any further negotiations with oil companies, affected the farm-down

[102] The case was at first dealt with by a Ugandan court but was then relegated to the international arbitration court in London. Heritage argued that paying the tax was not part of its contractual obligations as it claimed that Tullow did not pay any tax on their acquisition of Hardman Resources. Furthermore, they argued that the sale of assets took place on the Channel Islands and was hence not taxable in Uganda. The Ugandan Tax Appeals Tribunal challenged this argument by pointing out that the sale was of assets located in Uganda and the consent of the government was needed for the sale to go through. Heritage eventually lost this case to the government with the latest ruling from United Nations Commission on International Trade Law dating from February 2015. This success of the Ugandan party caused a scandal in 2017 when it was made public that Museveni had thanked the responsible government agents with what was termed a "golden handshake," giving each several million Ugandan shillings.

[103] For more information see Mutaizibwa (2013). According to another media report the British High Commissioner, Martin Shearman, got involved in the negotiation and called up President Museveni in August 2010 to lobby on Tullow's behalf. The report adds that at the time Shearman's wife was an employee of Tullow Oil suggesting a conflict of interest on the side of the British (Butagira, 2013).

deal. Nonetheless, the NRM caucus and President Museveni decided to continue with the negotiations according to a news report (Obore, 2011).

Tullow then sued Heritage for its refusal to pay back the tax money to Tullow. Heritage had refused on the ground that the payment was not made by Tullow out of legal obligations but rather out of commercial motives. The issue was taken to court and in June 2013 the High Court in London ruled in favour of Tullow. This court case brought another round of corruption allegations against Tullow. During the court case the legal counsel of Heritage pointed out that in August 2010 Tullow's exploration director suggested in a group email to pay Museveni 50 million U.S. Dollars. Heritages's counsel is reported as saying that Tullow toyed with the idea of funding President Museveni's election campaign for the election in early 2011. The NRM MP Theodore Ssekikubo told a Ugandan tabloid about these revelations that they had unprecedented and unaccounted for money in the election campaign (Red Pepper, 2013).[104] The allegations were refuted by the Office of the President. In its final judgment though, the High Court in London cleared Tullow of the corruption allegations made during the trial. Such trials are problematic for the oil companies as they pose the threat of reduced profits which is not in the interest of the shareholders. These trials caused further delays. They affected the smoothness of the exploration process and the completion of Tullow's farm-down-deal to Total and CNOOC.

From the above it can be derived that corruption is a double-edged sword for the oil companies as it contains two different kinds of trouble which both affect the value of the company negatively: while paying bribes could have legal and image consequences, not paying bribes could lead to delays and both affect profits negatively. The negative impact though depends on how public the company is. Not every company stands to suffer as much from corruption. For instance, I heard bribery allegations connected to the 2015 licensing round. I was told by an industry insider that one of the bidding companies had given President Museveni money for his 2016 campaign.

According to Tullow's risk assessment, corruption is a risk because the company could get sued which would mean image damage and impact negatively on the market value of the company. Management of this risk involves a company and ethic codex as well as regular evaluations and reports. Using the example of corruption I want to highlight how risks are negotiated. Corruption started to be a problem for oil companies since legislation condemning corrupt practices had been passed. Under the concept of the resource curse, scientists and activists have widely discussed the influence of corruption on the state and society. And the blame is not just put on corrupt officials but also on the oil industry (Corrigan 2014; Carmody 2009; Humphrey et al. 2007). Tullow highlights that they are bound by international law, espe-

[104] These statements should also be read against the background that Ssekikubo along with other "Rebel MPs" was called to a disciplinary council of the ruling NRM party in February of the same year and later on expelled from the party. However, they were invited back into the party in 2015 ahead of the 2016 elections.

cially the UK bribery act.[105] Furthermore, there are international initiatives like EITI (Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative), which Tullow has signed and Publish What You Pay (PWYP) that lobby for transparency in the oil industry and whose agenda is supported by many NGOs.[106] Corruption scandals pose the risk of more delays to oil companies, which means more time and more money spent reducing the overall profitability of the asset.

3.4 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the general development of oil in Uganda by focusing on its risks and uncertainties. The overview of the exploration process has shown how exploration is a process of negotiation and re-negotiation between parliament, government and oil companies. The negotiation of oil takes place in various forums such as media, parliament, and conferences or behind closed doors. Risks are an important element of these negotiations. Government and oil companies manoeuvre according to the risks they perceive and they can use risks by either putting the other party at risk, for instance by delaying the progress of the project, or by putting their risks on the agenda such as in the case of the refinery.

In the following chapter I turn to the gloomy future civil society activists warned their fellow Ugandans about. This negotiation of oil within civil society circles went along the line of the resource curse narrative that holds no good promises for Ugandans.

[105] See their code of business conduct online at https://web.archive.org/web/20170218025020/www.tullowoil.com/about-us/corporate-governance/code-of-business-conduct [February 2018].
[106] More on this is discussed in the next chapter.

Figure 5: Conference on Oil and Gas, Hoima District (2015).

4 Oil as Risk: Anticipating the Resource Curse

Is oil a blessing or is it a curse? I have heard this question innumerable times during my research and I take it as a starting point to consider one sub-arena of the process of oil-making in Uganda: the resource curse. In this chapter, I explore the predominant discourse on oil in Uganda, which is structured to a great extent along the narrative of the resource curse. Whether government or state officials, civil society activists, journalists or even workers in the oil industry – they all anticipated a future with oil according to the structure of the resource curse narrative, although with different conclusions. Civil society actors in Uganda explained the resource curse by using a plain equation: oil plus bad governance equals bad outcomes for Ugandans.[107]

At a donor workshop in Kampala in April 2014, the organiser was trying to make the attendants from NGOs and the government aware that each of them were wearing „specs" that either coloured everything in great and bright colours or made the future look all dark and gloomy. The workshop had been organised to overcome what was conceived by this donor agency as a stalemate between the curse and the blessing side. I understand the resource curse discourse as a risk narrative. It is an anticipatory practice employed by civil society actors who staged the resource curse

[107] A similar observation has been made by Gisa Weszkalnys (2011) for São Tomé and Príncipe.

as an, in Ulrich Beck's term, anticipated catastrophe (Beck, 2007: 29). At its centre is a powerful narrative that enjoys support from international donors.

I show how civil society activists translated the concept of the resource curse from its usage in academia, mainly economics and political science, to the Ugandan context. The new risk influenced how various actors talked about the oil and how they anticipated a future with it. Even the oil companies and the Ugandan state, who are blamed in the curse narrative, referred to it and thereby helped establish it as a risk, while emphasising that appropriate risk management was already in place. I argue that the successful translation of the resource curse concept to Uganda opened a new brokering space to civil society actors. In fact, civil society actors used the risk of the resource curse as a power resource in the oil arena to gain this space for brokerage. Notably, a space to exert influence on the oil-making process and very importantly, to seize opportunities for earning a living.

This chapter looks at the narrative of the resource curse, the actors who promote it, and the benefits they derive from it. I start out by introducing the civil society actors and their ways of doing business in more detail. Then I examine the narratives of the resource curse and the resource blessing, which are basically two sides of the same coin because resources are argued to be only a blessing if they are extracted in the 'right' context and in the 'right' ways. After the analysis of this risk narrative itself, I turn to the question of how civil society actors, who established the risk, benefited from it. Here, I show that while they can be understood as a strategic group with regard to the oil itself, a look at the controversies among these "development brokers" (Bierschenk et al., 2000, 2002; Mosse and Lewis, 2006) shows that the development aid targeted at combatting the resource curse was another kind of spoils in the oil arena.

4.1 Civil Society in Uganda

Generally speaking, Uganda has a vibrant civil society, which encompasses organisations at national level based in Kampala and those at regional level. Organisation types vary from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Faith-Based Organisations and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). I understand these organisations as part of a strategic group with a common position with regard to the oil. NGOs in Uganda are either local chapters of international NGOs, such as Transparency International or International Alert, or national NGOs, such as National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)[108],

[108] All acronyms are explained at first mention. I kept usage to a minimum. With regard to the names of NGOs I think the acronyms increase legibility. In Uganda, these acronyms are usually read like a name and not spelled out. For example, the organisation RICE is pronounced rice like the food and not R.I.C.E. It is thus easier to read the acronyms than the long and bulky names they represent. Only when the full name is generally used, I will also use the full name.

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO), Global Rights Alert or Water Governance Institute, that obtain funding from international donor agencies, with some also getting project-related funding from Ugandan government agencies. I will give more details on these organizations in the course of the chapter.

The strategic group "civil society" could be seen as encompassing more actors usually not considered as part of civil society, such as Bunyoro Kingdom or the local government, because they also assumed a critical position towards the government and the oil project. Based on his research in the Kingdom of Buganda in central Uganda, Mikael Karlström (1999) argues that institutions such as the clan system or kinship more generally, the monarchy, and the local government system, which are not included in conventional definitions of civil society, are in fact mediating state-society relations. Thereby, Karlström questions the analytical advantage of definitions of the term 'civil society' that exclude organisations with linkages to the state or to ethnicity or religion.[109] Kingship and local governance have been reformulated since the NRM regime took over to "develop new and more satisfactory ways to conceive and enact relations between local populations and the state" (Karlström, 1999: 117). Following this argument, Bunyoro Kingdom can be considered as part of civil society as a strategic group. However, I focus my discussion on CSOs because they have been more central to my research than Bunyoro Kingdom.

Most members of civil society portrayed themselves as a counter force towards the industry and the state. Indeed, during my research, the government had probed several NGOs, accusing them of conspiring with foreigners against the government or the state. As such, leading NGOs of coalitions on oil had come under pressure from the government. In a Parliament speech in early 2012, President Museveni accused the organisations ACODE (Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment)[110], AFIEGO, NAPE and Global Rights Alert of acting on behalf of foreign interest and of crippling and disorienting the development of Uganda's oil. Around the same time ACODE's bank accounts were investigated by the Central Bank of Uganda. These frictions reveal that for the government the NGOs were political actors that were engaged in political manoeuvres. Yet, the government's action against NGOs were evoking images of an embattled civil society and therewith re-enforcing civil society's and donors' perception of a clear distinction between the state and civil society.

Concerns among CSOs and donors about the freedom of expression and speech were also aroused by two bills the Parliament passed in recent years, which portray a trend towards stricter state control. In 2013, the "Public Order Management Act"

[109] For a discussion of the history and diverse usage of the term and idea of civil society, see also Comaroff and Comaroff (1999).

[110] ACODE is a research institute and think tank based in Kampala and registered as an NGO in 1999. On its website it describes its core business as "advocacy-driven public policy research and analysis on contemporary and emerging public policy and governance issues that have a significant impact on national development" (http://www.acode-u.org/About_Us.html [February 2018]). Its current executive director is Dr. Arthur Bainomugisha. In 2004, ACODE was also registered as a company.

(Republic of Uganda 2013a) was passed, which stipulates that any public meeting with the intention of discussing political issues has to be authorised by the police.[111] It came after a shutdown of several news outlets including two major independent newspapers, due to criminal investigations in relation to them printing a controversial statement by the Army General David Sejjusa.[112] In 2015, Parliament passed the "Non-Governmental Organisations Bill" (Ministry of Internal Affairs 2015), which was criticised – already before the passing – for curbing the freedom of NGOs.[113] Many contested provisions were removed before passing the final bill, but a disputed section, stipulating an organisation can be dissolved if the NGO board considers it necessary in the public interest, remained in the bill signed into law by President Museveni in 2016.

Despite these developments and the necessity to maintain an apolitical image for CSOs in Uganda, it should be noted that clear-cut differentiations into spheres of state or government, economy, and civil society are problematic because there is something profoundly misleading about these categories. They are not self-evident, "natural" categories, but exist in relation to each other and help each other carve out their space as a way of structuring society:

> We must take such distinctions not as the boundary between two discrete entities but as a line drawn internally, within the network of institutional mechanisms through which a social and political order is maintained. The ability to have an internal distinction appear as though it were the external boundary between separate objects is the distinctive technique of the modern political order (Mitchell, 1999: 77).

Drawing on Mitchell's analysis, Karlström notes that "an excessively sharp distinction between state and society derived from a particular phase of European history" (Karlström, 1999: 115), which could not easily be translated to the African context. Ferguson (2007) challenges the conception of the state being above and civil society being below. He calls for a rethinking of this vertical power topography and shows how both the bottom and the top have been transnationalised. He explains how after the nation-building approach to African states, a new paradigm took over that emphasised "the local" and civil society and looked on the state with scepticism. This paradigm was a reversal of the first and it was connected to neoliberal economic approaches (Ferguson, 2007: 387–392).

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[111] The Deputy Africa Director of International Alert described it as a "serious blow to open political debate" (Amnesty International, 2013).

[112] In a letter to the media, he alleged that Museveni was planning the assassination of opponents in an attempt to install his son Muhoozi Kainerugaba as his heir to the presidency; thus, establishing a political monarchy in Uganda – the so-called "Muhoozi project."

[113] Human Rights Watch (2015) claimed the bill would "subject groups to such extensive government control and interference that it could negate the very essence of freedom of association and expression."

> [W]e are dealing with political entities that may be better conceptualised not as 'below' the state, but as integral parts of a new, transnational apparatus of governmentality. This new apparatus does not replace the older system of nation-states […] but overlays it and coexists with it. In this optic, it might make sense to think of the new organisations that have sprung up in recent years, not as challengers pressing up against the state from below but as horizontal contemporaries of the organs of the state – sometimes rivals, sometimes servants, sometimes watchdogs, sometimes parasites, but in every case operating on the same level and in the same global space (Ferguson, 2007: 392).

There is a parallel between NGOs and businesses that should be noted here as well. International NGOs heavily rely on management methods of the business world and act like private companies in competition with each other and "this competition encourages them to seek good positions (and why not, good victims) to provoke donors' favours" (Abélès, 2008: 249). Abélès explains this with the recruitment of personnel from the top management of companies and large international organisations (ibid.: 249). The business character of NGOs can also be noted in the operation through projects.[114] The duration of the project is not necessarily coupled to the duration of the problem though, as Meinert and Whyte (2014) show for the fight against the AIDS epidemic in Uganda. CSOs are thus more or less successful enterprises run by people who depend on them for their livelihood. They generally have no resources of their own:

> [They] have a very broad and diffuse substantive orientation. The primary aim of the NGO founders […] is to find a remunerated position on the market for development services, and the promotion of their own jobs (Bierschenk, 2014b: 83).

In fact, several organisations, such as ACODE, are not only registered as an NGO but also as a company. According to one of my informants, registration as a company allows the director to maintain a better grip on the organisation. As an NGO the organisation is open to internal contestation that may see a director lose his or her position and therewith the ability to enjoy the fruits of his/her work. This double registration as NGO and company showcases the business character of Uganda's civil society. Applying these insights to my research, I analyse civil society in Uganda not as a neutral group of actors advising uninterestedly 'on the side-lines' of the oil project. Rather, I discuss them as important actors in the oil arena. In the next sections, I look at CSOs working on oil matters, the coalitions they formed and the activities they undertook.

[114] Modern project management has been dated to industry and military projects starting around the 1950s (Stretton, 2007).

Civil Society and Oil Matters

With regard to oil, informants from civil society attested to me that the percentage of NGOs dealing with oil has grown over the past decade. With the discovery of oil in Uganda, NGOs started adding oil and gas advocacy to their portfolios. However, quantifying this process was difficult. The NGO Board at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which is supposed to oversee NGO (or CSO) activity, informed me that they did not have any information on the number and names of NGOs working on oil. I was only given a brief list of NGOs that in over a year of fieldwork I had never heard of before and that were not publicly active. While only a handful of NGOs registered with the NGO Board as working on oil and gas, the most active ones were not formally registered for these issues. Apparently, NGOs active in oil advocacy had just taken up this subject after registering with the NGO board and did not include it when renewing their registrations.[115] This is not unusual as most CSOs do not have a single agenda but promote various endeavours, ranging from water safety to gender equality. CSOs tend to expand their portfolios to include topics that are en vogue with the donors.

Another development with the prospect of oil in Uganda was the formation of NGO networks working on oil at both the national and the regional level. The creation of these coalitions was presented to me as a way of pooling resources such as knowledge, expertise, and personnel to obtain better access to international donors and to shield individual organisations from state pressure. At the national level there were the Civil Society Coalition on Oil and Gas (CSCO, pronounced as Cisco), Publish What You Pay, and the Oilwatch Network. Publish What You Pay Uganda is chaired by Global Rights Alert. Its agenda was aligned with Publish What You Pay International. Publish What You Pay is an international coalition of CSOs that calls on extractive companies to disclose their financial transactions to host governments. It was also launched in 2002 by six London based organisations including Global Witness, Oxfam and Transparency International.[116] Global Rights Alert (GRA) is a Ugandan civil society organisation founded in 2007 and based in Kampala. It focuses on natural resource governance with regard to gender, transboundary resource governance, transparency and accountability, and citizen's participation through religious institutions.[117]

[115] According to a friend at a donor organisation, the stance of the NGO Board was precisely that they did not have a clear overview over who was doing what. Nevertheless, one officer at the Board stated he had more information but only divulged names of NGOs that were very vocal about oil in the media such as AFIEGO.

[116] For more information see the website www.publishwhatyoupay.org/about/history/ [February 2018].

[117] Global Rights Alert is directed by Winfred Ngabiirwe. Aside from hosting the PWYP coalition Uganda chapter, it is also a member of CSCO. For more information see www.globalrightsalert.org/what-we-do [February 2018].

The Oilwatch Network was formed by two NGOs, NAPE and AFIEGO. AFIEGO is a Ugandan NGO based in Kampala with a regional office in Hoima. It is focused on public policy research and advocacy. It is a very vocal NGO that has challenged government in court over the disclosure of the Production Sharing Agreements and was preparing a court case over the refinery resettlement action plan.[118] NAPE is a Ugandan NGO founded in 1997. NAPE works from Kampala and with organisations in their project areas. It receives funding from international donors. Among its activities NAPE counts research and community sensitisation. NAPE is working on environmental issues, water governance, land grabbing, gender issues and oil extraction.[119]

CSCO is an initiative of Ugandan CSOs and NGOs. It describes itself as a non-registered network open to any CSO committed to CSCO's objectives and with a portfolio relevant to the oil and gas sector. At one point, its status as 'non-registered' caused frictions with the government. The Ministry of Internal Affairs branded all non-registered coalitions illegal. However, the former Chairman of CSCO explained to me that there was no need to register because each organisation in the coalition was already registered individually. The coalition itself was just a loose network operating on the constitutional rights of freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. This would allow member organisations to express themselves more freely without fearing government intervention, because without registration it was not a legal entity and thus could neither be sued nor "crushed." According to the Chairman, the government was fighting this ability of the coalition to function as a shield for its members (Director Water Governance Institute, interview, 2013).[120]

In Bunyoro, there were the Bunyoro Albertine Petroleum Network on Environmental Conservation (BAPENECO), which was formed in 2010, and the Bunyoro Civil Society Coalition on Oil and Gas (BCSCO), the Bunyoro chapter of CSCO, which was formed in 2012, and the Bunyoro Coalition on Oil and Sustainable Livelihood (BUCOSA), led by Caritas Hoima. BCSCO was chaired by Kitara Heritage Development Agency (KHEDA). KHEDA is a Ugandan civil society organisation with its seat in Hoima town. It was founded in 2006 by the lawyer Shem Byakagaba, who also directed it during the time of my research. The organisation held several sensitisation workshops and conferences on oil and gas. Its activities were limited to Bunyoro, which includes Hoima, Buliisa and Masindi district. For its oil program

118 AFIEGO's chief executive officer is Dickens Kamugisha. AFIEGO is part of the Civil Society Coalition on Oil and Gas, Publish What You Pay and the Oilwatch network. It has three programs, all focusing on energy: electricity democracy, extractive industry governance and renewable energy efficiency. The objective of the oil project is to promote good governance through research and advocacy. For more information see: www.afiego.org/about-us/who-we-are.html [February 2018].

119 NAPE's executive director is Frank Muramuzi. For more information see http://nape.or.ug [February 2018].

120 For more information on the coalition see the website http://csco.ug/# [February 2018].

KHEDA received funding from International Alert.[121] I am not aware of similar networks for other regions such as West Nile or Acholi. However, there were active civil society organisations like RICE[122] from Arua, which also received funding from International Alert under the same programme as KHEDA.

The oil networks followed different approaches and were intent on maintaining their distinctiveness from each other. However, many organisations were part of several networks and especially local CBOs were part of more than one network. Despite the overlaps, the networks did not coordinate their activities in the oil region and often also failed to do so within the same network. This lack of coordination included donors who up to 2012 provided funding for the networks without rigorously crosschecking applications (van Alstine et al., 2014: 53).

Funding for oil sensitisation campaigns was provided by different organisations and donors such as International Alert or the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF). International Alert is an international NGO focusing on peace-building. It has been active in Uganda since 1987. It focuses on the economic dimensions of peace and conflict, the new oil industry and the recovery process in Northern Uganda.[123] DGF is a basket fund from several European embassies endowed with a substantial amount of money to support, amongst others, good resource governance in Uganda. They provided funding to several of the organisations mentioned in this book and were instrumental in facilitating the Parliamentary Forum on Oil and Gas, which included the so-called "Rebel MPs" and was vocal in the oil bills debate mentioned in the history chapter.[124]

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[121] KHEDA also hosted an essay writing competition sponsored by Tullow Oil, which is discussed in the next chapter. For more information see https://web.archive.org/web/20140102005329/http://khedakitara.org/ [February 2018].

[122] They are working in West Nile, Acholi and Bunyoro on community health (HIV/AIDS and malaria), environment and natural resources (oil), sustainable agriculture, governance, human rights and peace (land rights), and economic empowerment. They have received funding from national and international donors and organisations. They cooperated with International Alert from 2011 to 2014. And from 2013 to 2016, RICE had their own oil project "Bringing Uganda's oil to the surface, Increasing community capacity to handle oil resource effectively" funded by an international donor. For more information http://riceuganda.org/about-rice-westnile/ [February 2018].

[123] International Alert's current country manager in Uganda is Richard Businge. It has three major programs in Uganda: Business for peace (funded by SIDA), the Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (funded by UKAid) and oil in Uganda called "Harnessing the Potential of Oil and Gas to Contribute to Peace & Development in Uganda" (funded by UKAid and Irish Aid). International Alert funded organisations in the oil region such as KHEDA and RICE. It carried out research, set up oil information centres and engaged the oil companies. It hosted several conferences in Kampala and the oil region, including one on national content in Masindi that is discussed in the chapter on national content. For more information see: http://www.international-alert.org/projects/5126 [February 2018].

[124] DGF was established by Austria, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the European Union with the aim to "strengthen democratisation, protect human rights, improve access to justice and enhance accountability in Uganda" (https://www.dgf.ug/what-dgf [February 2018]). I was in contact with the manager for the resource governance program, who

Overall, civil society actors in Uganda could be described as doubt-mongers because they tried to impress the extractive communities with scary images. Unlike the doubt-mongers Albert Ogien (2015) describes, civil society actors in Uganda did not direct the doubts at science but rather used results from social sciences to sow doubt about the future with oil. CSOs were part of the oil arena, not as mere spectators, but brokers, creators and performers in the process of oil-making. In the next section, I give an overview of civil society activities, especially those events at which the resource curse narrative was explained and discussed.

"Sensitisation" Events on Oil

The main events where CSOs spread their visions of the future with oil – the curse and how it could be avoided – were conferences, workshops and sensitisation campaigns held in communities located in the oil region. The conferences usually took place in one of the luxurious big hotels of Kampala or the better hotels of towns in the oil region. Conference participants were mainly from other NGOs, oil companies, and the government. For community meetings, CSOs usually drove to the target village, stayed a few hours, held presentations, showed their respective documentaries, handed out information material, and gathered comments on the situation in the community in a discussion round.

Some of these meetings included puppet theatres, as in Figure 6, which were a favourite choice of community intervention tools during my research. These theatres were used to draw public attention and were found to be easily accessible for people in the village. The puppeteers usually wrote the play script based on information given by the CSO.[125] The play was surrounded by dance and live music, both referred to as "traditional."

Usually, community meetings took place directly in the affected villages and included a broader range of actors than the conferences. They also included some information material or incentives, for instance free food and beverages or allowances. The necessity to pay allowances could be related to the fact that CSOs usually came according to their own programme to gather information or carry out sensitisation, rather than on a request by the community.[126]

shared with me his experiences with and opinion on the on-goings in Uganda's civil society working on oil matters.

125 The theatre group had considerable freedom how they termed the message. On one occasion, one of these groups claimed oil company men would come and infect the community with HIV. The CBO that had contracted the group disapproved of this and members complained about it in the car as we left the venue.

126 A local politician of Kyehoro explained to me that politicians were the ones who had started paying allowances to people who showed up during their campaigning and that this system was later taken up by NGOs. By the time I did my research, NGOs claimed it was not possible to draw attendants from communities if they did not offer at least some refreshments. Allowances varied between different locations, whether village, town or the capital, and they varied according to the financial

Figure 6: Puppet theatre play on oil exploration, Masindi District (2012).

The conferences served different purposes. First of all, they provided a forum for CSOs to present themselves and their work, and to offer information on oil to the participants while also gathering information from them. Some of these events also promoted a dialogue between community members, officials from the Ministry of Energy, officials from the local governments, and the oil companies. They thereby offered a platform for participation of the extractive communities in the resource-making.

For the organisation of the events, NGOs from Kampala relied on their partners in the communities to organise workshops or meetings, and to make sure that mobilisation of participants goes well. These events were not always planned long-term, but at times organised ad hoc when a project was ending and money still needed to be spent. The trips were popular among the CSO staff as they included per diem payments, which were appreciated as a salary supplement.

Most national NGOs operated mainly from their offices in Kampala and only went occasionally on field trips. Most CSOs, be it national NGOs or CBOs, only have a minimal presence in the affected communities. According to a recent study by researchers from Leeds University, oil governance in Uganda by both state and non-state actors was ad hoc and fragmented with four major gaps:

leverage of the CSO hosting the meeting as well as according to who was attending. Ministers, parliamentarians, or guests of honour received higher allowances than (elected) representatives of villages.

> [L]ack of coherence among civil society organisations (CSOs); limited civil society access to communities and the deliberate centralisation of oil governance; industry-driven interaction at the local level; and weak local government capacity (van Alstine et al., 2014: 49).

Based on a comparison of activities noted in the register of the Chairmen LC 1 of villages in the oil region, they discovered that NGOs and the local governments were less often in the village than oil companies or the (central) government, and that the latter engaged with the communities only on a need basis for example for seismic surveys. There has been more activity on the national level, especially around the development of a legislative framework due to the way the state controlled and at times obstructed CSO's access to the region (van Alstine et al,. 2014: 54–56.).[127]

The low frequency of interactions with local communities meant that they might have been left for long spells with the pessimistic images NGOs created, without any further information on oil activities. In the communities, sensitisation activities of CSOs were viewed ambivalently. While some appreciated the work of the CSOs and the information they distributed, others believed the CSOs were just doing business. During a group discussion with (former) casual workers of the oil industry in Kyehoro, one of them claimed that CSOs did not come to the village to help, they rather came to serve their own interests. He was supported by the others who said that CSOs were just doing their business and that it was right for them to pay people allowances for the information they gave to the NGOs (Casual workers and Chairman LC 1, group interview, 2012).[128]

In turn, CBOs were normally based in the district capital and therefore closer to the affected communities than national NGOs but they also did not live in the communities they claimed to represent. Most CBOs suffered from a lack of financial and operational resources, most of them continuously lacked even phone credit to find out what was going on in the communities. CBOs only visited communities along with national NGOs, as most of them did not have a travel budget of their own. Instead, I saw community members visiting CBOs in their office in Hoima, while I was there on courtesy visits. As one of the leaders of a national NGO explained to me, it was only when national NGOs (normally sponsored by international NGOs) moved to the district that local CBOs and CSOs got the resources to visit communities. In addition, national NGOs sponsored trips of CBO members to Kampala so that they may participate in conferences or events such as the protest at Parliament on the passing of the petroleum bills. The connection between NGOs and CBOs can be interpreted as a patron-client relationship (cf. Bailey, 1969).

[127] I commented on those difficulties for researchers and activists in the methodological framework.
[128] The Director of KHEDA also mentioned during a dialogue between NGOs, PEPD, and the oil companies organised by International Alert that the community leaders told his organisation that people were tired of all the meetings and talking to researchers when they did not see any results (International Alert conference, 2012).

To sum it up, one can say that CSOs were rarely based in the communities they advocated for and did not even visit them on a regular basis. None of the CSOs I got to know during my research had a wide base of members or supporters. Taken together these characteristics are in line with Ferguson's claim that civil society in Africa is not as grass-roots as it claims to be but is closely linked to national and transnational entities (Ferguson, 2007: 391). However, the grassroots claim is important to the self-image and business of civil society, because they derive their legitimacy from being perceived as representatives of and lobbyists for (disenfranchised) people. In the next sub-chapter, I turn to the discourse civil society spread on oil.

4.2 The Resource Curse: A Risk as Travelling Model

> New discoveries of natural resources in several African countries – including Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique – raise an important question: will these windfalls be a blessing that brings prosperity and hope, or a political and economic curse, as has been the case in so many countries? […] Resources should be a blessing, not a curse. They can be, but it will not happen on its own. And it will not happen easily.
> (Joseph Stiglitz, Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, [2013]a: 50–51)

The remark by the renowned economist Joseph Stiglitz, printed in a magazine of the Ugandan lobby organisation Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, is actually a typical plea made by organisations promoting action against the resource curse. Civil society circles spread narratives of the risk of the curse and the potential remedies. In this quote, Stiglitz first creates uncertainty by posing the question whether the oil windfalls will be a blessing or a curse, breaking the assumption that they are something positive. He then takes a normative stance by saying that resources should be a blessing. However, the way to get there requires action. The resource curse is a concept developed by economists and political scientists, which has been translated to the Ugandan context by civil society.

Weszkalnys refers to the discourse surrounding the resource curse as an "anticipatory apparatus" that creates uncertainties and suspicions and tries to instil the 'proper' kind of anticipation in people (Weszkalnys, 2014: 231). This discourse is building on knowledge generated elsewhere, from experience in other countries and from social sciences trying to understand these experiences. The new knowledge is presented to the people mainly by civil society organisations. Not only does it show people how little they know, but it also shows the many potential dangers that could arise and would have otherwise gone unnoticed.

In her research on oil in São Tomé e Príncipe, Weszkalnys (2011: 356) looks at the repercussions of the resource curse concept and criticises it for being a black box. According to her, unlike black boxes of science and technology studies, which are analytic devices cloaking the functioning of a technological complex (Latour, 1987; Winner, 1993), the resource curse concept masks the failure of economists to explain the paradox of plenty with their common tools and data. The resource curse concept covers these gaps and it "works" even though "nobody knows quite why or how" (Weszkalnys, 2011: 356). Social scientists have tried to fill the black box with explanations, yet so far with only limited success.

From its origin in economics and political science the concept of the resource curse was turned into a travelling model by civil society (Reyna, 2007; Weszkalnys, 2011). It is not unusual for scientific or academic knowledge and concepts to get adapted and promoted by laymen as Jamison (1996) shows with regard to the role of NGOs in the global environmental agenda. Travelling models have been described as "an analytical representation of particular aspects of reality created as an apparatus or protocol for interventions in order to shape reality for certain purposes" (Behrends et al., 2014: 1–2). The models do not diffuse from one place to the other, rather they travel through translation – translation meaning they are conveyed or interpreted (ibid.).[129] The models are de-territorialised, that is disconnected from a setting, and then re-territorialised in another setting, which includes a process of creative interpretation (Behrends et al., 2014: 3–4). Remadji Hoinathy and Andrea Behrends (2014) have analysed the World Bank model of revenue-sharing, employed in the oil producer Chad, as a travelling model. Measures to prevent the resource curse in Chad and to avoid conflict failed – not the translation of the model. In fact, it was adapted or re-territorialised to the rationalities in the Chadian setting.

In the following, I first look at the concepts of the resource curse and the rentier state as well as the criticism levelled at it within academia before I address how the concept has been translated to the Ugandan context.

The "Original" Resource Curse

In this section I give some important background information on the resource curse as an analytic concept. In academia the resource curse concept is meant to explain the developments in petro-states. In the 1970s, several studies emerged on the impact of oil on petro-states in the Middle East. These studies considered oil as a rent that dominates the economy and is centrally received by the government (Beblawi and Luciani, 1987; Mahdavy, 1970).[130] Rather than viewing the successful development of their potentials as a mere question of the 'right' developmental politics, these studies showed that it is necessary to consider the specific economic characteristics of oil as a traded consumer good and the technological structure of its production (Bierschenk, 1984: 154, 156).[131] Oil states or petro-states (Karl, 1997, Soares de

[129] For a concept of translation of ideas (and not language) see Czarniawska and Joerges (1996).

[130] For a good overview of the rentier state concept including its development and usage see Ross (2001).

[131] The concept is connected to a debate in economics about how the world economic system impacts negatively on developing countries and more specifically how the terms of trade between resource-

Oliveira, 2007) are defined as rentier states as their economy generally depends on one resource, which generates an external rent. In economics, rents are generally understood as a kind of unearned income because it is generated without the input of capital or labour. The rents are external as they accrue from the extractive activity of international oil companies and the sale of the resource on the world market. As a result, the revenues of the state are connected to the world market price of oil and therefore also subject to its volatility (Yates 1996: 22).

The resource curse concept starts with the realisation by a development economist that windfall gains can have negative effects on a country (Gelb 1988). It was used mainly in economics and political science to explain the "paradox of plenty" (Karl, 1997: 4), which challenges the assumption that resource-rich countries performed better economically than resource-poor ones due to the revenues they get from the resource. Instead, resource-rich countries were found to perform worse economically and regarding political stability than resource-poor ones (Auty. 1993). Most importantly, oil or other mineral resources are said to impede democracy (Ross, 2001) and to correlate with lower economic growth (Sachs and Warner, 1997). The revenues are considered to have a negative effect on institutional capacity, which in turn negatively impacts on growth (Sala-i-Martin and Subramanian, 2003). Furthermore, resource-rich countries were found to have greater inequalities in wealth distribution, higher levels of poverty and corruption, and were often associated with despotism, political instability and internal or even international conflict (Humphrey et al., 2007: 5–6, Kaldor et al., 2007; Klare, 2004, Ross, 2001, 1999; Strüver and Wegenast, 2011; Yates, 1996). The three major causalities explicated in the resource curse concept are therefore that oil leads to economic decline, conflict and authoritarianism. How could resources have such negative impacts?

The major macro-economic explanation of the resource curse is a phenomenon called the Dutch disease. The term was initially coined for the negative developments in the Dutch economy after the gas boom in the 1970s, when an inflow of rents from the resource resulted in an appreciation of the exchange rate. Imports became cheaper and exports more expensive leading to a decline in the productive sectors (cf. Heinrich and Pleines, 2012: 445). With the Dutch disease only the resource sector and the service sector thrive when fed by the resource income, which increases rent dependency and discourages diversification of the economy (ibid.: 445). For petro-states, the dependence on the resource is further increased by the enclave character of the industry. Enclave character means that the industry necessitates technology, which is not available in the country and therefore gets provided by foreign companies. A technology transfer does not take place, the profits are expatriated, and no linkages with other sectors available in the country are created.

There are different explanations for the causal links between resources and conflict. One study suggests that as an export commodity, oil is subjected to price vola-

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rich, developing countries and industrialised countries develop in a way that is not favourable to the developing countries (Heinrich and Pleines, 2012).

tility that triggers the onset of conflict (Kaldor et al., 2007: 12, 24) while another sees the reason for conflict in the availability of finance for rebels through the export of resources (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). This is also referred to as the "greed and grievances" approach (Collier and Hoeffler, 1999, 2002, 2004; Collier, 2001). James Fearon (2005: 503–504) in turn argues that it is rather the weakness of such states that spurs conflict. Macartan Humphrey (2005) considers greedy rebels, greedy outsiders, grievances, a weak state and sparse networks as motives for conflict while he sees the feasibility, i.e. the availability of rebel finance as an opportunity for civil war. While Michael Watts (2008) argues that it is the distribution of the oil rent that sparks conflicts.

Finally, the connection between oil and authoritarianism has been explained with the rentier state theory. An effect of the oil on society is that while the state is dependent on oil as a rent, it is independent of the citizens' tax payments. This is said to reduce people's representation in politics; hence, undermining the legitimacy of the state. The lack of legitimacy is compensated by distributive policies, which allow the state to use the rents to co-opt opposition by purchasing consent (Yates, 1996: 33). The state focuses on distribution rather than production of wealth. Additionally, it is said to lead to the development of a class of rentiers, a circle of people directly profiting from the rent and frequently involved in corrupt activities. Hence, high levels of corruption are also described as a characteristic of rentier states. Yates connects this to the development of a rentier mentality that is focused on consumption rather than production of wealth. As rents are unearned income, they sever the usual connection between labour and reward, challenging the liberal ethos of hard work (Yates, 1996: 18). Where allocation policies fail, repression takes over and some rentier states start spending heavily on security to ward off any democratic pressures. Next to the rentier and the repression effect, the modernization effect has been identified as another causal mechanism. It is derived from modernisation theory, which connects democracy to social and cultural changes including occupational specialisation, urbanisation and higher educational levels caused by economic development (Ross, 2001: 336). In a quantitative analysis of oil's effects on democracy, Ross found the link between the lack of occupational specification and a low demand for democracy to be evidenced by his results (Ross, 2001: 356–357).

Notably, all three causal explanations offered by the resource curse concept have come under criticism, which complicates the picture of the resource curse. Overall, the supposedly negative effects of oil revenues have been questioned. While in 1999, one of the major proponents of the curse, Michael Ross (1999: 297), claimed a correlation between resource-abundance and negative economic and societal impacts, he later criticised himself and admitted that little evidence supported claims that "extracting oil leads to abnormally slow economic growth, or makes governments weaker, more corrupt, or less effective" (Ross, 2012: 3).

Studies attesting slow economic growth had not considered the high volatility in growth-rates in resource-rich states that is caused by unpredictable price fluctuations (Ross, 2012: 189–194).[132] Nevertheless, Ross insists that since the 1980s oil-producing countries in the "developing world" had become less democratic and more secretive, and that already authoritarian governments were less likely to turn into democracies if they had oil revenues (Ross, 2012: 71). However, the connection between oil and authoritarianism has also been questioned (Haber and Menaldo, 2011; Herb, 2005).[133]

Other scholars have suggested that rather than solely focusing on oil as a revenue, it was also necessary to look at the social and political context (Basedau, 2005), the ownership structure in the export sector (Di John, 2011) and the international linkages (Watts, 2008) in order to understand the dynamics in resource-rich states.[134] Michael Herb (2003) objects to the causal linkage between representation and taxation claiming it derives the importance of taxation for democracy from the role of parliaments as tax collectors in European history. Thereby, it mistakenly assumes the European democratic process to be universal.[135] A straightforward connection between the availability of revenues from oil and conflicts has also been contested (Basedau 2007; Basedau et al., 2010; Basedau and Lay, 2009; Basedau and Richter, 2011; Brunnschweiler and Bulte, 2008; Le Billon, 2008, 2001).

Some authors even suggest that resources might be a blessing but that too little attention has been paid to social and political factors that favoured development in resource abundant countries, while too much emphasis had been given to the pathologies of oil (Rosser, 2006). All this criticism illustrates the lack of consensus among economists and political scientists as to how oil affects the economic, political, and social development of a country. However, as the next section shows, these studies have not lifted the spell of the curse – on the contrary, it remains popular within the Ugandan and international civil society. The resource curse concept's complexity was simplified in the translation and certain elements were emphasised and related to the Ugandan context. The resource curse concept had a strong narrative appeal and worked as an "interpretive frame" (Boholm, 2003: 175), defining the elements of the negotiation: oil could either be a blessing or a curse.

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[132] Some studies suggest that oil price volatility has a negative effect on economic growth (Cavalcanti et al., 2011; Leong and Mohaddes, 2011). Yet, only significant price shocks could have a macroeconomic effect while the financial market could already be affected by minor changes and therefore oil companies are sensitive to volatility on the oil market (Oberndorfer, 2014: 68–69). Ramsay (2011) also suggests that world oil prices, strategic cartels, and drilling and environmental policies in the "developed" world can have a short-term effect on the political development in resource states (ibid.: 526–527). To van Robays (2012) in turn it is high macroeconomic uncertainty that causes oil price volatility.

[133] Herb (2005) found rentierism to be no more harmful to democracy than other variables pertinent to the Middle East.

[134] Di John (2011: 969) notes that in order to understand the rent-seeking behaviour of politicians it is important to consider how they came to power.

[135] Furthermore, there are always reasons other than taxation, for citizens to demand accountability from their governments (Herb, 2005).

The "Translated" Resource Curse

In this section I discuss how the resource curse narrative was presented to Ugandans. In the translation of the concept to the Ugandan context, NGOs highlighted how the three major causalities, explicated in the academic concept, were relevant to Uganda. I first look at the relevance of the causal links before I turn to the narrative.

The risk of suffering from a Dutch disease was considered likely because Uganda does not have a very strong industrial sector and the most common economic activity is farming, which would become unviable in a Dutch disease scenario. The government tried to control this risk by creating forward linkages to the processing of the oil through the construction of a refinery. The government also stressed the necessity of national content to initiate a technology and knowledge transfer and NGOs assisted in this effort by holding dialogues on national content.

The possibility of oil to spur conflict has been stressed in Uganda as people of the oil region have already expressed demands to get their share of the revenues. Both Banyoro and Acholi have demanded to get ten percent of the oil revenues. Furthermore, Uganda has a troubled past with civil wars, conflicts and terrorist attacks within the past 40 years. Although the government emphasises the peace it has brought to the country since the 1980s, the North has only very recently returned to stability. Aside from the internal conflicts, Uganda is also involved in conflicts in neighbouring countries such as South Sudan and the DRC (Tangri and Mwenda, 2013). With the DRC there have been border disputes on Lake Albert that ended in several deaths. A relapse into conflict seemed a possibility and the organisation International Alert hosted a cross-border conference in Hoima in June 2013 to further discuss and assess possibilities of cross-border initiatives and to develop recommendations for peaceful oil exploitation.

With regard to the link between oil and authoritarianism, the same president has been ruling Uganda for 30 years and a multi-party democracy was introduced as late as 2005. The country has been described as a "hybrid regime" (Tripp, 2010), in which both authoritarian and democratic characteristics are present. Many civil society actors found it worthwhile to ask what would happen with the new oil revenues and whether Museveni was holding on to power because of them. The past three elections have often been described as violent or at least marred by irregularities and civil society actors related this to President Museveni's desire to stay in charge of the oil wealth.

The Narrative

The resource curse narrative was brought up and discussed in various forums like media publications, or conferences, workshops, and publications by CSOs. In general, national NGOs had their own publications, which were available on the internet or disseminated during their events. Funding for these publications was secured from various donors, who also seemed to be the main audience. In the villages I have not encountered copies of long NGO reports but mainly brochures, posters, or calendars. However, some CBOs like KHEDA had copies of reports available at their office libraries to be read there. For my analysis of the resource curse discourse, I considered a panoply of publications, news articles and speeches from civil society. These texts represent the narrative, which in this case includes images, while the discourse includes the actors and the way they produced, presented and consumed the narrative. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) show how discourse analysis distinguishes between text, discursive practice, involving text production and consumption, and social practice namely how discourse influences the order of the discourse. I have chosen to focus this discussion on the documentary "Blessing or Curse? Oil and Uganda's Future." It is representative of the rhetoric and images used in the discourse about the oil, exploring whether it is a blessing or a curse. I use the documentary to stress important elements of the resource curse as a risk narrative.

The documentary was produced for the Ugandan NGOs NAPE and AFIEGO. It was funded by Publish What You Pay and was screened at workshops, community meetings, dialogues and conferences organised by different CSOs. The documentary was produced for the two NGOs with the intention of putting oil on the agenda for the 2011 elections, as one of the directors of the production company told me. From my observation it was used more widely afterwards as a means to inform people about oil.

The documentary raises the question of what will happen to Uganda with the newfound oil. In the video, the oil exporter Nigeria is taken as example for the negative effects of oil and compared to the diamond exporter Botswana, a showcase example in which supposedly everything went right. In Botswana, the revenues from the diamonds were invested in education and building of vital infrastructure for the country. The movie skilfully plays out the dichotomy of blessing-curse/Botswana-Nigeria. The following description of the film is a mixture of direct quotes and paraphrases. Although focused on the text, it includes some emblematic pictures. The documentary is cut together from different materials such as archive clips, TV clips and animations, which, as can be noticed in the stills displayed below, have different qualities and different styles. Some parts of the documentary must have been shot in Kampala for the purpose of the documentary though. The documentary uses a lot of images but not all are clearly connected to the text.

The documentary starts with people who state their expectations for Uganda, ranging from education, health care, a stronger farming sector, markets for their produce, employment, electricity, or good governance to development. After this the narrator starts speaking and suggests that people have to learn about oil no matter what their hopes for Uganda's future are. He then gives basic information about Uganda's oil, such as the amount, what products can be gained from it, and how much money it will likely generate. The speaker also points out that the oil belongs to all Ugandans and not to a private person or company. He enumerates the positive developments that could arise from the new income such as the improvement of schools, hospitals, and of roads and electricity, which will spur business growth and


Figure 7 and 8: Niger Delta (Stills from documentary "Blessing or Curse?": 7:14, 7:26).

thereby create jobs. The oil money would free Uganda from foreign aid donors and allow Ugandans to determine their own destiny. He then continues with a warning about the negative effects of oil:

> But natural resource wealth, the money earned from things like oil or diamonds, or gold is very strange money. If not handled very, very carefully, instead of making a country richer, instead of improving the lives of its people, it can make them much poorer. Instead of being a blessing, it can be a curse. Here are the stories of two countries, one cursed by natural resource wealth, the other blessed by it. With the oil money Uganda's future will be like one of these countries. We do not yet know which one.

The documentary turns to the first country example: Nigeria "the curse of natural resources". It points out that despite 600 billion US Dollars from the oil, there is sickness, poverty, and war. The images, seen in the stills above (Figure 7 and 8), convey this image of dereliction and conflict. It lets Nigerians speak who contemplate how the fish and water were better before the oil came. They complain about a colonisation by a Nigerian elite and the oil corporation, about the lack of food and infrastructure and about a lack of interest by the companies in the humans in the Delta. A man claims they have had 369 oil spillages per year in the Niger Delta.[136] The final quote comes once again from a man who claims that this situation was brought upon them by the Nigerian government whose politicians had broken their promises. The narrator then tells the viewer Nigeria's story of environmental destruction, conflict, corruption and poverty.[137] It claims the death rate of children to be among the high-

[136] This seems a moderate estimate since according to Amnesty International there were 553 oil spills in 2015 (Amnesty International, 2015).

[137] It claims that seven out of ten Nigerians are poor today while twenty years ago only half of the people were poor. This estimation of the poverty rate matches data from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency see https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html

Figure 9 and 10: Botswana (Stills from documentary: 11:22, 10:41).

est in the world.[138] The documentary describes the causal mechanism of how oil revenues can hurt the economy through the Dutch disease phenomenon.

> When a lot of foreign money floods into a country, there can be a big change in the exchange rate. Imports become cheaper and exports become more expensive making it harder for local producers, especially farmers and factories to compete.

The documentary then turns to the positive example: Botswana – "the blessing of natural resources." In Botswana, the narrator explains, revenues from the diamonds were invested to improve the overall status of the country with four times the average income than Uganda.[139] The documentary shows images of mines and orderly cities (Figure 9 and 10). It then gives voice to some Batswana who praise how the diamond mine has helped build the country because its revenues were invested in development.

The documentary continues by reflecting on the differences between Botswana and Nigeria and points out the rarity of Botswana's trajectory.

[February 2018]. However, the World Bank reports 46% poverty in 2009 (http://data.worldbank.org/country/nigeria [February 2018]).

138 The child mortality rates are decreasing but not as fast as in other countries. For an overview see a statistic from the World Bank on the child mortality rate in Nigeria: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.MORT?locations=NG [February 2018].

139 The documentary clams the average person in Botswana earns 6400 U.S. Dollars. This estimation is similar to the nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of 2011 (cf. www.tradingeconomics.com/botswana/gdp-per-capita [February 2018]). What this estimation leaves out is that Botswana also has a very high income inequality (www.worldbank.org/en/country/botswana/overview [February 2018]. Uganda's nominal GDP per capita was 646 US Dollars in 2011 and therefore Botswana's was almost ten times higher (cf. www.tradingeconomics.com/uganda/gdp-per-capita [February 2018]). The comparison must have been between Botswana's nominal and Uganda's GDP per capita adjusted by purchasing power parity, which is 1649 US Dollars in 2011 (www.tradingeconomics.com/uganda/gdp-per-capita-ppp [February 2018]).

Figure 11 and 12: Animation on corruption (Stills from documentary: 7:44, 7:55).

> We all wish our country's future will be like Botswana and not like Nigeria. But we must take careful note, Botswana is the only resource-rich African country to escape the curse. The story of Nigeria has been repeated again and again. Angola, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan. All of these countries suffer from some part of the curse. We don't want Uganda to be next. What made Botswana so different from the other countries? What must we Ugandans do to follow Botswana's path to avoid the curse and reap the blessing?

The documentary cuts to a speech from Barack Obama, introduced as the president of the United States, on the issue of transparency in the extractive sector, claiming that corruption was the "single greatest barrier to prosperity" in many places and a violation of human rights. Corruption is illustrated with an animation as shown in Figure 11 and 12.

The documentary continues with different Ugandans saying they wish their government would fight corruption and get democracy to end the political instabilities. The documentary then lists some of the latest corruption scandals in Uganda such as the one around the Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting:

> The same may already be happening to oil. Government cannot or will not say how it has used the bonus money paid by the oil companies. If government continues to act in this way, then Uganda will surely suffer the curse.

Another cut follows to another speech of President Obama where he stresses that development depends on good governance and that good governance could unlock Africa's potential but that this was the responsibility of Africans.

> Government will not change by itself and the outside world will not change it for us. But we Ugandans can change the way government behaves. We will not have a better future simply by wishing for it. We can have a better future

Figure 13 and 14: Animation on future for Uganda (Stills from documentary: 17:39, 17:45).

> if we all work to make government accountable. […] Which Uganda will you work to create? […] We must all work to create a bright future for Uganda. We must insist that government not simply talk about ending corruption but take serious action. We must no longer give our votes in exchange for promises or small gifts but for deeds. If the people and Parliament of Uganda act together, we can make government handle the oil money openly and honestly. If we choose to do this we can reap the natural resource blessing. If we do not do this we will be doomed by the curse.

The last sentences are underlined with the animations depicted in Figure 13 and 14 that visualise the two futures by a man either crying or laughing (AFIEGO, NAPE, PWYP, Documentary, Blessing or Curse (n.d.)).

Let us take a closer look at the narrative by analysing the documentary with some deconstruction strategies (Czarniawska, 2004: 97).[140] Czarniawska suggests dismantling dichotomies, examining silences, attending to disruptions, focusing on the element most alien and interpreting metaphors or even reconstructing the story by changing the main elements. I explore the first five points in the following section.

Deconstructing the Narrative

Several dichotomies are noticeable: blessing/curse, Botswana/Nigeria and corruption/good governance. Blessing/curse and Nigeria/Botswana are also metaphors used to describe the effects of the oil. The documentary uses the sketches of two African countries to paint the picture of Uganda's petro-future. It ends on the question, which way Uganda would go: the Nigerian way, or the Botswana way. This is one

[140] I am aware that my analysis only focuses on two aspects of the documentary, namely the text and the pictures and leaves aside other elements such as sound or cut. This is in line with my overall analysis, which is focused on images and narratives.

element of the resource curse discourse that can be found throughout: there is always a negative and a positive example.

In the documentary Nigeria was portrayed in dark pictures showing pollution and dereliction, accompanied by melancholic music. The example of Nigeria was so popular that Nigeria became a metaphor for all that is bad about oil. The Director of the national NGO Water Governance Institute (WGI)[141] answered as follows when I asked him what Nigeria stood for:

> A basket case. A bad story about oil. And yet, those who visited Nigeria know that oil is not the only resource there. But in the minds of people, oil can be a disaster. Oil is bad. Oil kills. Ken Saro-Wiwa. You remember those stories, right? So that's what Nigeria portrays to many in Uganda (Director, WGI, interview, 2013).

Accordingly, many times Nigeria was equated with corruption, bad governance, oil pollution, greedy oil companies, and politicians and widespread poverty.

The documentary also polarises between Ugandans, mainly referred to as "we" and the government. The government is not included in the group of Ugandans and is rather associated with corrupt leaders. The text switches twice from "we" to "you," once at the beginning and once at the end. It thus creates a disruption in the text flow. With "you" the speaker addresses the audience directly, saying that they should learn about oil and gas and that they should know which Uganda they wish to create. By allowing other Ugandans to speak, the documentary gives itself legitimacy to use the "we" as a representation of the general public. However, the viewer does not learn the names or profession of those filmed. They remain anonymous faces with voices, sometimes even just voices.

The same switching between a collective "we" and "you" was employed by the Director of WGI during a sensitisation campaign in a village near the refinery area. Promoting the NGO's tool for monitoring oil-related activities in the oil region, the Director emphasised the responsibility people have:

> It is your responsibility to make government listen to you. Government doesn't care about you. But government is there to do things on our behalf. If these people do not listen to what the people say, nothing will be done. You need to talk. Government world over only listens to numbers: the voters. […] And remember, we are dealing with people that are super rich. People that have access to power. But you must know what you are fighting for and [have]

[141] Water Governance Institute is a Ugandan NGO based in Kampala and directed by Henry Bazira. It was established as an NGO in 2008 and as a company in 2009. Bazira was the chairman of the Civil Society Coalition on Oil and Gas from its beginning up to 2012. WGI is working on water and environment issues and has also taken up oil on its portfolio. For more information see http://www.watergovinst.org/test/index.php [February 2018].

> resolution. Don't fight your wars alone (Director, WGI, NGO community meeting, Nyahaira, 2012).

In his speech he asked people to fight together. He kept changing between the pronouns of "you" and "we" and positioned the "we" group against the people with power and money. The director of another NGO that also participated in this campaign left no doubt about the legitimacy of that richness. He accused the government and the oil companies of being thieves, who were stealing from the people.

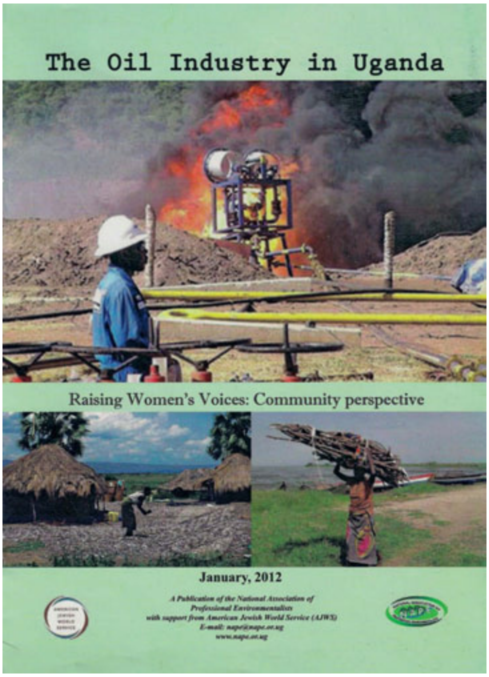
Czarniawska (2004) suggests looking at what is silenced, which in this case are the voices of the oil companies and of the government of Nigeria and Uganda while the Presidents Mogae and Obama were quoted. Despite their important role in the narrative, they are not commenting on it. Strangely absent is also the wider economic setting. The oil or natural resource wealth is the most alien element, as it is new to the Ugandan setting and it has wondrous characteristics. It could bring prosperity but also sickness, poverty and war.

Another important element of the narrative is the imagery employed: the documentary shows flames, polluted environments, derelict buildings, and cartoons of corrupt and evil officials. It contrasts this with images of prosperity and happy people. It creates a scenario in which oil in the hand of evil and corrupted people poses a threat to Ugandans and their livelihoods. Similar pictures were used in presentations and leaflets that can be seen in the two examples depicted in Figure 15 and 16.

NGOs stressed the importance of swift action highlighting the imminent threat posed by any oil activities.

> Looking at our current legal framework, you will appreciate that Ugandans are sitting on a time bomb and to avert this imminent danger, there is need to overhaul the current legal regime and usher in an all inclusive legislation that is people centred. Addressing the sharing of revenues from oil sales, establishing a mechanism of adequate accountability and transparency in all oil deals should be the pride of every Ugandan in their respective capacities (Kamugisha, 2010: 5).

In this quote Kamugisha, the Director of AFIEGO, speaks of a "time bomb" and an "imminent danger" while in other publications activists complain about a "danger," "peril" or "doom." Like the sensational text metaphors, the imagery was also rather sensationalist. NGOs claimed that this was meant to warn the public of the threats and help demand a prosperous future for all from their government. Some claims even went as far as making it appear certain that oil would pollute the waters in the oil region – an area where many people depend on fishing for their livelihood. One national NGO widely used pictures of fire explosions and polluted rivers in the Niger delta, subtitling them e.g. "Polluted Ogoni River – Oil in Uganda if not well managed, will pose a threat to community livelihoods" (NAPE, 2012a: 7).



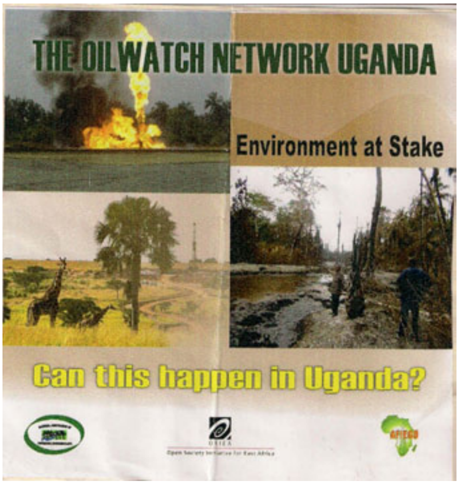


Figure 15 and 16: Cover page of NGO publication (NAPE 2012a), Sticker from oil coalition likening oil in Uganda to Nigeria (Oilwatch Network).

The negative language combined with the portrayal of careless leaders and horror scenarios from other countries created an infernal picture of Uganda's future with oil. During an interview with the Chairman LC 1 of Kaiso, I noticed a poster on the wall of his house, hung in between calendar posters of President Museveni and President Kabila of the DRC. The poster, shown above, was from NAPE and pictured an oil rig flaring gas. Asked about it, he explained to me that the poster was making them worry because of the fire burning. He said they worried it might look like that in their area at some point (Chairman LC 1 Kaiso, interview, 2012). When I asked him about the activities of NGOs and whether they were helping them, he said that they didn't see any change. The NGOs just came and taught the people a few things, leaving behind books and posters like this and thought this was enough but they neither really helped nor changed anything, nor told people how to get help. According to the Chairman LC 1, they just came, dropped information and disappeared again, leaving the local people behind with new worries and a sensation of "not feeling at home" (Chairman LC 1 Kaiso, interview, 2012). This discomfort might not just be connected to these horror images but also to the terms, in which the new risk was expressed.

The Meaning of Curse

Translating a concept from Western-dominated academia to Uganda comes with its intricacies, as the following quote shows. The Chairman LC 5 from Nebbi accused NGOs of overlooking the good effects oil could have and creating undue fear by using the notion of a curse.

> Some agents whenever they come here, they ask the question is oil a curse or is it a blessing? Now, what do you answer? When they talk of the cursing part of it they say that oil is a curse because of ABCD. […] Now, when does oil come, what are we going to do? You begin looking at your community. You think of digging your own grave. When the oil comes you bury yourself. Some people don't talk about the good part of oil. But when you hear about other countries, you will find out they are living vis-à-vis the oil production. If it is a curse, why are those people not dying? (Chairman LC 5 Nebbi, RICE-WN conference, 2012).

The Chairman LC 5's statement raised the question, which sort of connotation the word "curse" may have. In the Western academic context, it was connected to narratives like that of King Midas (Karl 1997). Typically, in the re-territorialisation a travelling model can get adapted in unintended ways because some elements of the model might refer to something, which is not present in the new setting or at least not in the initial way (Behrends et al. 2014: 4). In Uganda, a country where witchcraft beliefs are not uncommon, calling the oil a curse can be viewed as a very real and menacing threat (cf. Behrend 2007). The curse metaphor should therefore be considered in the context of existing discourses.

The Chairman LC 5 quoted above was from Nebbi District in West Nile, a region that has experienced conflicts and an uneasy relationship with the central state and is most infamously known for its offspring Idi Amin. Mark Leopold (2005a) describes how people in West Nile talked about being cursed in the turbulent times of his fieldwork in the 1990s. The curse they referred to was claimed to date back to the cruel Belgian rule and was cast on those collaborating with the government. Through rituals to lift the curse and historical narratives, elders in West Nile attempted to reconcile and change the perception of West Nile from both inside and outside. In such a context talking about a curse could indeed, as the politician suggested, give the idea that once again conflict and violence would return to the region. Thus, alongside the mobilisation of academic knowledge within the discourse on oil new interpretations and meanings can get connected to this knowledge as in this case where the LC 5 draws a clear connection between curse and death. Knowledge is always embedded in a specific context; it is intertwined with its environment and both feed back into each other. Hence, a translation of the resource curse into a new context transforms the new context as much as the context alters the concept.

The concept leaves two questions to be asked: who can curse and why? Whether in a biblical sense or in a Runyoro understanding of a curse, the basic principle behind it is one of responsibility and blame. Resource curse is translated into Runyoro as *omukyeno gwa amafuta*, which literally means "curse of oil."[142] According to different sources, *omukyeno* is a curse that torments somebody who has done evil, like killing someone or abusing her or his parents. It was conferred by those who have the power to curse like parents, elders or victims and cast on someone who has done something wrong or evil. Curses open up a space for assigning responsibility; thus, enabling people to blame misfortune on someone (Reynolds Whyte, 1997). In general, the logic of blame inherent in curses and witchcraft is connected to risks, which by revealing relations between risk objects and objects at risk also allows for assigning blame.

Blaming itself is a political activity directed at community-making (Douglas, 1992: 8). Douglas and Wildavsky (1983) describe how blame varies according to the gravity of the harm: "for a total disaster, responsibility is located at the top" (ibid.: 39). As such, when a whole country suffers from the resource curse, the leader(s) of the country must be responsible. The NGOs tried to assign responsibility for a potential disaster to the political head, namely to the government, and thus – in a democracy – ultimately to the people. Everyone must be vigilante to prevent the curse and any suffering would hence be the people's own fault.

Seen in this way, the resource curse concept places the responsibility on the states and the people suffering from the curse. It confines the resource curse to a national debate and disregards the influence of international forces and other states. However, going further than the resource curse concept, the CSOs in Uganda also assigned blame to the oil companies putting them at times above, at times on par with the government. While the government was "quick-fixing" oil governance, the oil industry was "making a kill" and their activities were called a "scramble," or "oil bonanza."

So far, I have established the elements of the narrative and shown how the resource curse was used to assign blame. The next section explores further how the resource curse can be understood as a risk narrative.

A Successful Risk Narrative

Resource curse is a catchy term that seems effective in conveying the seriousness of what is at stake, and it allows civil society actors to assign blame and convey their idea of what is right and wrong behaviour. In their publications, the NGOs presented the resource curse as a risk and offered possible solutions to manage it. The wellbeing of Ugandans, especially those residing in the extractive areas was put at risk by the government of Uganda and most especially the corrupt members of the government for inviting economic havoc that jeopardised the wellbeing of the citizens. To make this

142 Sometimes it is also called omukyeno gwa amagita, but the meaning remains the same.

causal connection, the narrative draws on knowledge from diverse sources: concepts from economics, political and social science, statistics from bodies such as the World Bank, previous corruption scandals in Uganda, and concepts from developmental and civil society discourse, such as good governance. In this sub-chapter, I consider the level of success of this narrative.

The Resource Blessing

So far, I have shown that the curse is a powerful narrative that draws on striking examples, such as Nigeria, and plays out a dichotomy between the good and the bad, the blessing and the curse. In the following, I look at the counter-argument that resource wealth could indeed be a blessing.

The "governance curse" (Pegg, 2006), a variation of the resource curse, stipulates that a country only suffers from the curse, if there is poor governance hindering transparency and accountability. It blames governments in the producing countries for how they handle the resource and revenues from it. Regarding armed conflicts, it was criticised that international organisations like the UN have put too much focus on the greed of rebels, rather than on controlling the resource mismanagement by governments (Vines, 2006). Since the turn of the century, the governance curse concept has been taken up by non-academic and non-governmental actors, such as Global Witness or Transparency International (Weszkalnys, 2011: 355–356). Later, also international institutions like the World Bank became involved in the famous "Doba-model" in Chad. Despite doubts over the efficacy of fighting the curse, as raised for the Chad-Cameroon pipeline project (Pegg, 2006), the governance curse is influential outside of academia and has exponents in civil society and the government in Uganda. The major question in Uganda was how to put the right governance structures in place to make oil a blessing for the country.

Proclaimed solutions to the resource curse that may help turning the oil into a blessing include: oil should remain in the ground until the country has set the right policy and governance framework; civil society and international corporations should try to influence developments in the oil sector; resource extraction should not be left solely to the private sector; good contracts should be negotiated and sound investment strategies developed; incentives should be explored to prevent actors from rent-seeking behaviour; and finally transparency and accountability should be pursued (Humphrey et al., 2007: 15–18). These have been widely picked up by civil society actors.

In Uganda, CSOs managed to create a threatening scenario through the documentaries, publications, and posters, which left no doubt about responsibilities: without good governance and transparency, the government officials will allow the curse to happen, making them responsible for putting Uganda's people and environment at risk. However, the resource curse was presented as a risk that could be managed, given transparency, good policies, and good governance were in place.

> Oil is a blessing to Uganda. It is a curse only when it is badly managed. Petroleum wealth has the potential [of] lifting millions of Ugandans out of poverty, but it also runs the risk of plunging them further into abject poverty and [into] the resource-curse syndrome much touted in the resource-rich developing countries like Uganda. In order for oil to continue being a blessing, it requires a robust legislative and institutional framework that provides transparency and accountability in the management of the sector (Bazira, 2012: 2).

Several civil society actors I interacted with were in touch with academics from around the globe and were invited to workshops held by international NGOs or worldwide initiatives such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and Publish What You Pay that promote better and more transparent resource extraction. EITI is an international organisation describing itself as a "global standard to promote the open and accountable management of natural resources."[143] On its board are implementing and supporting countries, as well as representatives from civil society, the industry, and institutional investors. Since its foundation in 2002, countries and companies have been able to sign up to the standard, and thus commit themselves to publishing information on the oil and gas operations.[144] These initiatives set out to help any new or prospective oil producing state to avoid the pitfalls of the resource curse. Uganda has a Publish What You Pay chapter and EITI has been trying to get the government's commitment – albeit without success so far.

While the governance curse indirectly declares the government as a risk object, the people are considered a crucial element for managing this risk. CSOs encouraged the audiences at their events to actively participate in the resource management and take responsibility for shaping Uganda's future with oil. Just like the narrator at the end of the documentary I cited above, attendants of conferences and community meetings were repeatedly asked how the oil could be turned into a blessing, how its benefits could be harnessed and how the curse could be avoided. The solution for turning the oil into a blessing or "harnessing" its potential was applying the "internationally recognised mechanisms for managing such impacts" (International Alert, 2011: 13) as developed by international experts. The negative assessments described in the sub-chapter of the resource curse were balanced by comments about the "potential" to "reap" the benefits of oil if the right mechanisms were employed.

The panaceas prescribed to make oil extraction a successful endeavour in Uganda included accountability, transparency, capacity-building and good governance. Thandika Mkandawire (2010: 267) points out how "good governance" was initially an input of African scholars to the World Bank stressing that the main challenge to development was the establishment of state-society relations that are democratic, respectful of citizen's rights, socially inclusive, and maximising economic growth.

143 See the EITI website at https://eiti.org/about/who-we-are [February 2018].

144 For a critical analysis of the effectiveness of EITI see Corrigan (2014) and Kasekende et al. (2016). According to both studies, EITI has failed to reduce corruption scores.

However, it has been incorporated simply as a technocratic term or perhaps one could say, as an ingredient needed for the economic policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to work, in other words, "one more instrument for ensuring the implementation of adjustment programmes" (Mkandawire, 2010: 267). Used in this way good governance was less about state-society relations than state-world economic system relations, as it left little room for governments to act according to their democratic mandate but judged them according to the implementation progress of these institutions' policies.

Overall, the cures can be viewed as a reflection of current beliefs in the development sector. The words of the development discourse, such as transparency or good governance, have enjoyed increasing popularity because of what they promise, their ability to establish consent, and ultimately because of their "feel-good factor" (Cornwall and Eade, 2010: 6).[145] Thomas Bierschenk notes that such reforms have often failed, characterising them as "the full-scale transposition of organizational models developed somewhere else as solutions to specific problems found elsewhere" (Bierschenk, 2014b: 82).

The resource curse is a risk narrative that sets out what is at stake: the wellbeing of people in the country and especially the extractive communities and national security. And it points to what is threatening it: greedy persons in the country and in international corporations. The curse offers a way to handle this risk: by following international best practice. With the translation of the resource curse as a travelling model to Uganda "local ideas of development" (Bierschenk, 2014b) or visions of (un)desireable futures are produced.

A Bright Future

The resource curse narrative caught on beyond the circles of civil society, with representatives of the oil companies and government and state officials also positioning themselves within the resource curse debate claiming oil to be a blessing if managed well. In line with images raised in the resource curse narrative, Nigeria served as a point of reference also for oil companies and government officials when talking about the oil curse and worries about Uganda's future. The CEO of Tullow, Aidan Heavey, declared the oil a blessing for Uganda in an interview with the magazine of the Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum.

> Uganda has a great opportunity. It is first in the queue for a lot of oil developers in East Africa. And the whole of Uganda needs to get behind the oil project and stop being very critical of the same. To say that oil is a curse really means that Uganda can't handle its oil. Uganda is very well able to handle its

[145] A collection of critical essays surrounding development discourse deconstructs many of the words used in it (Cornwall and Eade, 2010). For further critical analyses of concepts of the development discourse see the "development dictionary" (Sachs, 1992).

> oil. Everybody should be supportive of the industry […]. Unfortunately, the whole oil industry has a bad name. That name was quite right 20 years ago. Everybody for instance points at Nigeria to see what a bad name it had. But you can't look back 20 years ago and say that is what the oil industry is. The companies are responsible today, there is transparency. There might not be transparency in some of the countries, but there is transparency in the companies because they are obliged by the stock exchange rules. Our books are open (Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, [2013]a: 10).

In this interview quote, Heavey acknowledges that what happened in Nigeria created a bad image of the oil industry, but he tries to project the image into the past as if all that caused Nigeria to become a metaphor for the negative effects of oil has ceased to be true. He stresses how the oil industry had changed, how it had grown in terms of responsibility and transparency and attributes this change to the influence of shareholders and financial transparency required by stock exchanges.[146]

In other publications Tullow speaks more clearly of a resource blessing (e.g. Tullow Oil PLC, 2015: 11). The CEO also applies the language of good governance and transparency, commonly used in NGO circles. He clears companies of corruption while blaming governments for it. He therefore appropriates the travelling model of the governance curse as it deflects blame from the oil companies to the government.

He stresses that Uganda can handle its oil and asks everyone to support the project, knowing that a lack of support could lead to a situation similar to the developments in the Niger delta. Thus, he promotes a view of the Ugandan government as autonomous and functioning, clearly taking a different position than many NGOs that lamented government's lack of transparency and incapacity to deal with the oil industry. It is not surprising he makes these claims, as the government's legitimacy is connected to the legitimacy of the contracts his company is holding.

The government of Uganda joined the oil companies in promoting oil as a blessing. However, it also found that this was only possible if properly managed. One of the government's initial plans related to oil was the National Oil and Gas Policy in 2008, which aimed at using the oil revenues to eradicate poverty, create value for society, and to avoid the oil curse:

> It [the policy] also recognizes that if the country's petroleum resources and revenues are not well managed, the sub sector [sic] has the potential to have the most negative impact on society, 'The Oil Curse' or the paradox of plenty. The oil curse is the negative effect of oil and gas resource utilization leading to economic stagnation, environment degradation and increased poverty. The oil curse can and should be avoided (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 2008: x).

[146] The rise of shareholder value is discussed in more detail in the chapter on national content.

The National Oil and Gas Policy advises that high expectations of the public with regard to the oil should be managed and anxieties reduced through a "constructive dialogue" between all stakeholders (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development 2008). The 2008 policy functioned as the industry guideline until the creation of dedicated oil legislation in 2013. The policy stresses the need to mitigate expectations and disseminate information in order to deal with concerns raised by the public – very similar to many civil society publications.

Subscribing to the resource curse hypothesis, many state and government officials positioned their arguments within the curse/blessing dichotomy framework by portraying Uganda to be in a prime position to enjoy the blessings of oil. During a civil society workshop, the District Community Development Officer (CDO) from Arua district also reiterated this point of view.

> With industrialization and urbanization we will see big business come to our country. How do we achieve this? Definitely these things will come, as the country grows, as the country realizes its own revenues. And the revenues will come from the oil. The oil revenues shall be invested in infrastructure and social services and then everyone will benefit. So oil is not a curse. You have heard yesterday that if it is a blessing or a curse, I am saying it is a blessing (CDO Arua, RICE workshop, Arua, 2013).

Countering the gloomy projections from the CSOs, the officer suggested that easily, almost naturally, wealth and development would flow from oil. Rather than refuting the curse/blessing dichotomy established by civil society, government officials stressed what they had achieved for Uganda, and their commitment to continuing their dedicated service to the country. Government representatives used the resource curse frame in their public speeches like the Chairman LC 5 of Buliisa during a civil society workshop held by the Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation (BIRUDO).

> We don't want to run away from treasure. We don't want to be sad when we should be happy. Everybody wants to talk of the oil as a curse. As if it is a rule. Oil curse is not a rule. Oil becomes a curse only where there is bad governance. And I think the concern of Uganda especially from 1986 to date has been a positive trend toward good governance (Chairman LC 5 Buliisa, BIRUDO workshop, 2012).

The statements from the chairmen LC 5 and the legislation texts show that the resource curse risk has been established in the public discourse. While the state officials did accept the risk of the resource curse, they did not see the same chances for a negative outcome as CSOs. In fact, both government officials and oil companies created visions of a bright future for Uganda.

In his 2012 state of the nation address, President Museveni proclaimed: "With our oil, matters will be easier. We shall be able to fund the roads, the railway and the power stations easily using our own money" (Museveni, 2012). Oil would enable the fulfilment of the development plan "Uganda Vision 2040". This plan envisages "a transformed Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years" (National Planning Authority, 2013), seeing Uganda develop from a predominantly low income to a competitive upper middle income country. In his 2015 state of the nation address, Museveni stressed that the government had long made major accomplishments with limited financial resources, and suggested that with oil and gas revenues, they could achieve even more.

Oil revenues are central to the government's Vision 2040 as they would be invested in the development of the country's infrastructure and education system. The hope stated in this vision is that oil and gas would present opportunities for economic growth by creating employment and fostering technology transfer. To "effectively harness the opportunity" (National Planning Authority, 2013: 48) that oil and gas provide in stimulating economic growth, good governance would be essential, otherwise these opportunities would be missed and the resource curse would unfold. Therefore, efforts should be focused on the development of infrastructure, technology, and human resources as well as guaranteeing peace and security.

Based on the assumption that it would add value to the oil by creating forward linkages to other industries, the government demanded the construction of a refinery in Uganda. To further stimulate industry linkages, the government also planned to offer capacity building and establish local area development funds for local businesses. Towns would be upgraded to cities, and Hoima would become the oil city of Uganda. The cities would get public transportation, airports, (inter)national referral hospitals, as well as science and technology parks. The Vision 2040 also postulates that the government would strengthen the legal and institutional framework of the sector providing transparency, environmental protection, and good governance (National Planning Authority, 2013). Altogether, the document stipulates a grandiose vision for Uganda.

The grand vision of using the anticipated oil wealth to elevate the country to a better overall status are reminiscent of the glorious futures other petro-states such as Nigeria and Venezuela once proclaimed. Yet, they failed to deliver on their promises and subsequently served as the empirical grounds for the resource curse. They fell into the trap of the rentier state: they thought modernity was a commodity to be purchased instead of a process; they believed the allocation of oil rents was the same as real development (Yates, 1996: 173–174). Coronil, in turn, calls representatives of the state tricksters and magicians who "embodied the myth of progress and gave it a specific form" (Coronil, 1997: 369). They tried to use oil money to buy development, but because money was not productive they could only simulate development with it (Coronil, 1997: 389). Rather than delivering development, the states merely performed development and modernity (Apter, 2005). Yet, such performances are an essential element of politics, as political anthropologists working on rituals have shown (e.g. Kertzer, 1988). Visions and plans can also be seen as political performances of modernity and development. Planning has been described as a future-directed activity that is a performative promise between actors perceived as corporate entities, e.g. the state and the citizenry (Abram and Weszkalnys, 2011). As such performative acts, these plans may work even if they do not deliver the modernity they promise.

Unlike their former Nigerian and Venezuelan counterparts, the Ugandan state officials considered the grand failures of other countries in their grand visions for the future. The acceptance of the resource curse risk is a major feat for civil society, because once a risk is accepted, it can be used to influence future developments by opening up a space to voice questions of blame and how the risk should be managed. The successful emplacement of a risk considerably shapes the future of any socio-technical network (Hilgartner, 1992: 52). If the risk object was not accepted, there would be no grounds for discussion (Hilgartner, 1992: 48–50). The risk of a curse and the promise of a bright future influenced the anticipation of oil and how people perceived their future with oil production close to their homes. Effectively, in Uganda, the establishment of the resource curse risk changed the oil arena and created a need for certain actors and institutions, such as CSOs, to engage in risk management and to prevent the resource curse. The risk calls for management, policies, and institutions to deal with it. The next sub-chapter looks more closely at the ways in which this risk narrative was relevant to civil society actors and their work.

4.3 Crude Brokering: Profiting from the Resource Curse

The resource curse was promoted with donor money and this donor money could be viewed as part of the revenues circulating in the oil arena or in fact as constituting its own sub-arena. In a way, resource rents and development rents are similar, since both are unearned income and states dependent on aid could also be considered as rentier states (Bierschenk, 1999). The major difference is that rents from aid come from different sources and always need to be lobbied for. Paul Collier (2006) also thinks that development aid could be considered as a rent but to him the key difference lies in the fact that development aid, at least from European or North-American donors, is usually tied to conditions.

From this vantage point, Uganda has been a rentier state for some time since it has been highly dependent on international capital in form of development assistance (Jones, 2009: 9). Jones (2009: 6) cites a background report of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning according to which donor assistance to the government represented more than 50 per cent of the country's total budget between 1985 and 2005. Uganda has been described as the "poster child" (Jones, 2009: 1) of liberal approaches to economic and social development in Africa with initiatives of deregulation of the economy and decentralisation of the state (ibid.). The aid money was also important for actors within civil society. Here, I focus on their effects on civil society. I consider the benefits civil society actors could gain from promoting the resource curse.

The economy of expectations developed its own dynamic and money granted to civil society to fight the negative effects of oil revenues turned out to have controversial effects. Rather than uniting and strengthening civil society, it broke up alliances. To understand these developments it is necessary to consider the role of civil society actors in the oil arena.

Creating Space for Brokerage

In social anthropology, the role of a broker was described by Jeremy Boissevain (1966) in his study on patronage networks in Sicily. This "man in the middle" has many dyadic relations that put him in "a position to place two people, possibly unknown to each other, into a mutually beneficial relationship from which he derives profit" (ibid.: 24–25). The Ugandan civil society brokers I write about did not just link two people, but two sets of actors to one another. Civil society actors in Uganda presented themselves as the linkage between communities and the government. They are comparable to brokers in a Baileyian sense, who mediate between different structures and systems and have a rather ambiguous standing (Bailey 1969: 167). Civil society brokers did not just mediate between the state and its citizens in faraway villages, they also mediated between international organisations and these communities. Thus, they did not just broker between two structures, but rather various interlacing structures or systems.

Brokerage has been adapted to the development context with the term "development brokers" (Bierschenk et al., 2000, 2002; Mosse and Lewis, 2006). Development brokers function as mediators between target groups and their assumed needs and donors. They translate between different culture codes and they mobilise external funds for the social arena in which they play a more or less direct political role.[147] The Ugandan civil society actors are best described as such "development brokers" who know how to gain, maintain and use the rents from donor aid available in the "economy of expectation" (Weszkalnys, 2011).

The work of brokers is based on patron-client-relations (Bailey, 1969; Bierschenk et al., 2000, 2002; Mosse and Lewis, 2006). In Uganda, the CSO directors channelled resources like a "sensitisation workshop" or an invitation to a regional or national conference to leaders in the community and obtained their cooperation in return. Cooperation meaning that those leaders "mobilised" the right kind and number of people in their communities, so that the organisation could achieve its outreach targets and the sensitisation workshops were considered a success by the donors. Maintenance of these relationships was necessary to ensure continued flow of

[147] In a recent article, Bierschenk (2014b) distinguishes further between the brokers and the "norm entrepreneurs" that are active in "watchdog NGOs" and part of the translation of travelling models of the global "social engineering" (ibid.).

donor money. Thus, the community support, these development brokers depended on, was connected to the broker's ability to create patron-client-relationships.

In order to get access to funding that allows building such relationships they needed to create a space for brokerage and present themselves to both donors and communities as the go-to person (Bierschenk et al., 2000, 2002; Mosse and Lewis, 2006; Murphy, 1981). Brokers do not just respond to needs but provoke them themselves (Bierschenk, 1999: 65). This is done by portraying communities in ways that demand the broker's intervention and neatly fit their expertise.

CSOs in Uganda gained their broker space in two ways. First, they established the resource curse as a risk, as shown in the previous sub-chapter. Being able to establish a risk, means influencing not only the outlook to the future but also the future itself. CSOs argued that good governance was needed to prevent the resource curse. Good governance could not only be entrusted to the state but necessitated an active civil society as checks and balances. Second, CSOs argued people lacked knowledge about oil and needed to be informed about their role to demand good governance from the state, and they established that CSOs were best suited to carry out these sensitisation campaigns.

According to CSOs, communities in the oil area lacked basic knowledge about oil and were therefore unable to formulate their demands and effectively communicate their grievances. One organisation described communities as "grappling in the dark" and being ignorant and uncertain about the environmental effects of the oil industry (NAPE, 2011: 12). Indeed, a lack of information was decried by people in the oil region who lived far from the political and economic centre of the country. Again and again, people stressed to me how they did not know about oil and felt generally left out. While people wanted information, there seemed to be no steady and reliable information flow from the companies or the state.[148] I also heard civil society activists talk about misperceptions people had about oil. According to them, people were wondering whether oil flowed like a river, or thought they could fetch oil from the well with their jerry cans like they do with water, and thereby become instant millionaires.[149]

I have rarely encountered such high expectations during my fieldwork. Maybe this was a disillusionment resulting from the successful work of CSOs, media, and the government to reduce expectations. Another explanation would be that such

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148 The relatively free, open and vibrant media in Uganda does cover the developments around the oil but does not publish exact and timely information on when and where drilling or seismic surveys start. Furthermore, access to media is limited in the more distant places of the oil region where newspapers and magazines do not reach and only radio or online news, if a digital device is at hand, are available. While I collected all oil-related newspaper reports, I could not follow all the local radio stations. NGOs did use them though during their sensitisation campaigns, buying time on air to deliver information, gather feedback and hold discussion rounds.

149 Though with Uganda's high inflation rate, one can already be a millionaire with the equivalent of around 270 Euros.

expectations were dramatised by CSOs and used to demonstrate the need to sensitise the communities.

> They [people in Hoima and Buliisa] believe the presence of the industry will affect their moral and cultural integrity of the local communities and worsen the climate change situation in the region. The team's perception is that where oil activities are occurring, people are relatively aware of the oil industry's presence and operations. They have received some information about the industry but still consider that information inadequate (Water Governance Institute, 2012: 4–5).

Displaying the ignorance of communities was useful to the CSOs because it turned information dissemination into a necessity if the risk of the resource curse was accepted. A need that could be addressed by CSOs. Hence, ignorance and lack of agency of communities were essential for the CSOs to legitimise their work. Once created, the broker space was defended against infringements from other brokers, as the next section elaborates.

Manoeuvring within Oil Coalitions

There are differences in strength among brokers; with strength being measured in resources (e.g. personal, financial, knowledge) they have access to. Brokers can move in and out of the broker zone depending on their network skills to maintain their broker position or their ability to 'upgrade' it to a better position. Just like the brokers Bailey described these activists were helping people to make demands but they also directed money from different structures to their own organisation and hence to their own resources. Several times, the management style of directors from CSOs came up as a problem in coalitions that had formed around the oil. I discuss these struggles below, because they further substantiate the broker argument, highlighting how the actors manoeuvred within coalitions to gain a better position and therefore access to the funds.

With a new wave of donor money, several oil coalitions were riven by rows about the allocation of these revenues. During my stay, I witnessed three different struggles within civil society surrounding the allocation of donor money and positions, which I will briefly discuss here. They all highlight how gaining and maintaining broker space and control of funds is essential for development brokers. There were two big scandals around the leadership of the coalition within the national networks and both originated from the same development broker. Donors who provided funding to these networks were exasperated by the capability of one individual to usurp coalitions and render them immobile.

Publish What You Pay Uganda was the first to come under this sort of inside attack. The said broker raised suspicions in some members regarding the way funds had been used by the coalition's leadership. Accusing the leadership of a lack of accountability, this group of organisations split from the network. They started lobbying for funds themselves while continuing to use the name of Publish What You Pay, thereby claiming ownership of the coalition. A DGF manager told me they stalled this controversy over ownership of the coalition by not dealing with the split-off section and by Publish What You Pay International coming in to solve the issue. In October 2013, Publish What You Pay held a workshop trying to find out how the process of re-instituting the network and solving transparency issues was progressing.

CSCO also came under pressure from the same broker (actually then the Vice Chairman of CSCO), who after having left or being forced to leave Publish What You Pay, continued to be part of CSCO. He riled up other members by alleging that the Chairman of the coalition reverted coalition funds to his own organisation and lacked transparency in his dealings. Allegedly, the Vice Chairman apparently tried to convince leaders of local CBOs to vote for him, promising them money from the funds that were going to be released by donors after the election. The donors weighed in though, making it clear that they would release the funds only under the condition that none of the parties involved in this struggle were going to become Chairman. In the end, the incumbent Chairman was not nominated in the election and a third party assumed the leadership role.

In both cases the organisations were involved in schemes to access oil-related money from donors, reducing the networks to arenas for rent-seeking. This opinion was held by the DGF representative who was disappointed to see how the money of his institution failed to support civil society and instead incapacitated it by increasing internal fights. At one point, he seemed at a loss to know where to spend the considerable amount of money available, as he feared it would either foster corruption or weaken instead of strengthen civil society.

At the regional level, a process comparable to that in the national oil coalitions unfolded. The Hoima NGO Forum, which was not primarily focused on oil, got stirred up by a quarrel between two opposing factions within its network. Once more, the alleged misappropriation of funds and allocation of project positions was at the core of the argument. The NGO Forum's members were dissatisfied with the lack of transparency in the use of new funds. The leadership of the forum comprised founding member organisations that had contributed in building this association. They were annoyed that people only talked about transparency once funds were available.[150] Funds that the founders claimed they themselves had brought to the coalition. The leaders were "ousted" by other organisations in an unconstitutional, not orderly called, general assembly of member organisations. These organisations then formed an interim board, taking over the leadership of the network. The parties tried arbitration, involving first the national NGO that had brought in the funds, and then the Chairman LC 5 of Hoima district. I was friends with people on both

[150] The money was from a research project on oil from Leeds University. In this sense money from research projects could also be counted as revenues of the oil arena.

sides of the split and heard passionate accounts of betrayal from both sides. In an interview in 2013, the Chairman LC 5 explained the case to me as follows:

> Our civil society here is still young. It needs nurturing. And people are not in these NGOs on principle. They are there to […] earn a living. And this recent fight has been about resources. People fighting over some little money, which came from a certain funder, and then people struggling to say who now controls it. Then taking arbitrary steps to push out others so that the others can enter office and be in charge of this fund. And it has ended up in court. That's why I've said that we have no serious […] civil society to talk about yet. It's just in its formative stages. Because behind it all people are looking for survival (Chairman LC 5 Hoima, interview, 2013).

As these arbitrations failed, the ousted board sued the interim board and eventually won the case. They were re-instituted as board and the interim board was convicted to pay indemnities, which they failed to pay in full.[151] While the case eventually got settled, it destroyed the Hoima NGO Forum. Once again, this conflict reveals the extent of competition over resources and prestige that emerged in the wake of new revenues oil had brought to Uganda.[152] The case involved a variety of actors and displayed many conflicts, and personal issues between the members. It can be viewed as a competition for leadership and access to resources. Different tricks were used to gain leverage. While the board used legal language referring to the constitution, the interim board orchestrated an attack based on claims of intransparency and corruption.

The struggles within these rather young networks might be more than cases of individual mistakes. The confrontations emerged with the availability of donor money for researching the impacts of oil or fighting the resource curse. In all cases, there were irregularities in procedure at the base of the allegations reminding of patronage and lack of transparency. If we look at these struggles from a broker-perspective, we can say that the oil money, and here I mean donor money, represented new spoils in a Baileyian sense.

For CSOs the first goal was to get those spoils because only once they gained access to this money, they could use it to pursue other goals such as the pronounced objectives of the organisation, or making a living, gaining status and power, and perhaps also creating a (political) following. In order to get followers, organisations needed to be able to redistribute resources as pointed out above. Donors and Ugandan organisations were active in the same development game. International organi-

[151] The weight of this debt was hovering over them for over a year after the ruling as they were still at risk of getting arrested for failing to honour the ruling.

[152] My research project and me were part of the arena. However, as indicated in the methodological framework, my project was very small and I could not provide any regular funds for any person or organisation.

sations determined some of the rules in this game, i.e. what language needed to be used, what style needed to be employed in proposals and organisation management, or what issues should be addressed. However, they did not control the game and the context it was embedded in. They could not control the intentions of other actors and how the donor money allocated to oil governance could be used in other arenas.

Development brokers mobilised these funds, and adopted ideas and rhetoric from international organisations to attain their own goals. The donor money itself was an arena, in which actors fought over access to resources and power. United as a strategic group in opposition to government and oil companies, civil society struggled with each other in the arena of development aid.

4.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter was concerned with how actors within Uganda's civil society, international donors, and the Ugandan state tried to influence the anticipation of Uganda's future with oil. Even though it had not yet materialised, oil was present in donor money for sensitising communities and mobilising against the resource curse. Oil had already become a relevant stake in an economy of expectation. With the resource curse narrative, CSOs alerted Ugandans to a new risk. According to this risk, Uganda's political leaders could potentially harm the country and its people in social, economic, and environmental terms, because of the poor management of the resource wealth. CSOs successfully established the resource curse as risk shaping interactions in the oil arena and influencing the constitution of the oil complex. Civil society actors used the resource curse concept as an interpretive frame to guide negotiations regarding oil's significations. The concept created a specific anticipation of a petro-future: oil could either be a blessing or a curse. To turn the oil into a blessing, internationally recognised mechanisms were presented as risk management that required civil society. Hence, the development brokers secured themselves a space for brokerage. Development brokers were thus deeply implicated in the process of oil-making.

The resource curse as a risk narrative was connected to a sense of uncertainty in the oil region. Generally, it is said that risks reduce uncertainty, but this was not the case in Uganda's oil region. Paradoxically, showing people in the oil region the risk along with the means to manage it did not reassure them or eliminate uncertainty, but rather aggravated it. For new risks to get established a sensation of uncertainty needs to arise for instance from the experience of changes or an ever-shifting environment (cf. Dahlberg, 2016). With this knowledge, the risk can be established and ways identified to manage this risk. As a result, the uncertainty is turned into something manageable. Yet, this anticipatory practice goes along with the recognition of the limitations of one's knowledge, which can lead into a state of uncertainty again.

As the next chapter shows, the resource curse information promoted by CSOs was received ambivalently in the exploration areas. On the one hand, people feared losing their homes or livelihoods, while on the other hand they also hoped to profit from the oil. They positioned themselves in the framework set by the resource curse and used Nigeria as a metaphor for the negative effects of oil. The resource curse narrative painted the picture of a possibly gloomy future. Managing uncertainty via the resource curse narrative did not create certainty, because it demonstrated to people how little they knew and how little influence they had. The risk further opened the horizon to unforeseen uncertainties, making life in the extractive areas appear risky beyond any management options.

The following chapter examines in detail the effects of both the resource curse narrative and the oil exploration on communities in the oil region. I show issues that were relevant in the oil region during the time of my research, such as job opportunities, security concerns, road construction, and most importantly struggles around land acquisition, and the use of land during exploration activities.

Figure 17: Halliburton trucks helping another truck on a murram road, Hoima district (2012).

5 Living with Uncertainty in the Oil Region

The wait for oil was filled with hope and expectations. In the introduction I cited a politician from the oil region who compared the wait for oil to a pregnancy. With time, Uganda's wait for oil has turned out to be a pregnancy beyond the expected birth date; the pregnancy has become indeterminate. Tangible changes were mainly experienced by those most directly affected by the oil. The slowness of moving from exploration to production that I described in the chapter on the history of oil, disappointed Ugandans I spoke to in the oil region. Instead of enjoying new wealth, new risks and uncertainties had started to cloud their outlooks. A sense of uncertainty appeared to pervade life in the exploration areas. Politicians, fishermen, farmers and entrepreneurs seemed unsure how oil would affect their lives. They stressed their lack of knowledge about the oil, and felt generally left out of its development: they had heard about the oil, but they had not seen it. They only learnt about activities when the companies actually started working, and even then, they did not know or understand what the companies were doing. Many interlocutors' statements reflected an unease about the future, an uncertainty about whether the oil would come and whether their way of life could resist the changes oil would bring. Even those who were lucky to work as casual labour in the oil industry found their future somewhat uncertain; they could lose their jobs overnight.

Anticipation of the oil in the oil region oscillated between fears and hopes, high expectations and discouraging experiences. A donor-funded study on expectations and information Ugandans have on oil (Grossman et al., 2015) concludes that Ugandans in the oil region are better informed about oil including expected revenues and the resource curse than others, but are less likely to exert political demands based on this knowledge. Rather, people were not inclined to "rock the boat" (ibid.: 7); a finding the authors thought to be alarming with regard to the governance of oil and the likelihood of a resource curse in Uganda.[153]

In this chapter, I show how people in the extractive communities experienced the wait for oil by looking at how they anticipated it and the future with it. I show that the resource curse risk had a vital influence on these anticipations. I describe the uncertainty and how people lived with it. I look at the experiences people in the oil region have made with the oil, how they talked about it and how they reacted to the changes that came with the exploration activities of the oil companies. These changes were still minor compared to what is expected to happen in the development phase, which will necessitate the construction of more infrastructure and consequently a greater availability of work.

In this chapter, I combine observations from the oil region with comments interlocutors made to me, NGO reports and essays written by pupils in an essay competition on the impacts of oil and gas on Bunyoro organised by a community-based organisation in November 2012 in Hoima and funded by Tullow Oil.[154] I start this chapter by putting this uncertainty in context with other experiences of uncertainty in Uganda. Then I look in more detail at the expectations people have: the resource curse, a moral decline due to immigration, and insecurity concerns. Finally, the chapter turns to the sub-arena of land issues: the construction of a refinery and a road, land use during seismic surveys, and the contested destruction of cultural sites. Cultural sites here refer to places of worship or burial grounds that are not necessarily easy to make out as even stones and trees can be considered important sacred places. Through this case I show how people in the oil region, the ones with the least resources available to them, also tried to influence the resource-making in Uganda, and potentially gain benefits from the oil by emphasising their own risk frames. People attempted in various ways to create linkages to the oil industry, or put differently, to make themselves contingent on the oil companies (Reynolds Whyte and Etyang Siu, 2015).

[153] The study contributes to research and advocacy work geared at understanding and preventing the resource curse in Uganda.

[154] In this essay competition, students from primary and secondary schools in Hoima town were asked to discuss the positive and negative impacts of oil on Bunyoro. Before the competition the teachers were informed about the likely effects of oil and gas and in their turn taught their pupils. Accordingly, essays from one school have greater similarity among them than with others. There is sufficient difference in the essays though that it can be assumed that they include reflections of the pupils.

5.1 Uncertain Past

In a way, an uncertain and insecure environment is nothing new to Uganda. The country has seen a lot of violence with several civil wars – the latest lasting up to the point of oil discovery. The horrible and fear-inspiring years during the governments of Idi Amin and Milton Obote in his second turn at governing, referred to as "Obote II," ended with the take-over by Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA). But war ended only in the central parts of Uganda, a civil war raged on in the North, especially Acholi and Lango, up until the new millennium with millions who lost their land or were (temporally) displaced to camps for IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons). Chris Dolan (2009) has referred to this crisis as "social torture," highlighting the painful and uncertain situation of Ugandans in a part of the country without a safe haven as they were torn between atrocities committed by the rebels as much as by the military.[155] In the Western region and in West Nile other terrorist groups caused unrest that was contained by the government (Leopold, 2005a,b; Weichs, 2013). In the 1990s, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) had been a widespread security threat in the Western region with recurrent attacks on civilians in Hoima and Kibaale that alienated the local population and furthered support for the central government (Weichs, 2013: 43). The alienation of the local population contributed to ADF's defeat at the end of the millennium.[156] This latent sense of insecurity differed from the civil war that was going on in the districts of Acholi and Lango (Weichs, 2013: 44).

Conflict was not the only cause of insecurity and uncertainty. The neoliberal reforms that started in the 1990s supervised by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) aimed at a basic restructuring of society (cf. Kuteesa et al., 2010).[157] The political scientist Jörg Wiegratz (2012, 2010) describes how Ugandan society has been deeply impacted by the neoliberal turn. In his case study on relations between smallholder farmers and market traders in Eastern Uganda, he notes that the restructuring was intended to create a market society with corresponding norms and behaviours at the expense of a pre-existing set of moral codes. The neoliberal restructuring did not only target political but also moral economies by "drying

[155] For the history of this conflict and the after-effects in Acholi see Behrend (1993, 1995, 1998), Finnström (2008) or Vorhölter (2014).

[156] Since its defeat is has been based on the Congolese side of the Ruwenzori Mountains. The group is composed of fighters from different groups and is nominally Muslim but has been attributed a lack of a clear ideological or religious agenda; the only goal being the overthrow of the NRM government. For an analysis of the history and ideology of the group see Titeca and Vlassenroot (2012). The group resurfaced with attacks in Uganda in 2014 but its leader was captured and put on trial in 2015.

[157] For analyses of the structural adjustment program see Ochieng (1991), Mugyenyi (1991), Lateef (1991). Privatisation as a development policy has been analysed by Tukahebwa (1998). The more recent relationship between Uganda and the World Bank, which is based on a rhetoric of partnership rather than the previously more coercive methods has been analysed by Sande Lie (2015).

up the sources of power" of those who did not conform to neoliberalism (Wiegratz, 2012: 68). He argues that with structural adjustment in Uganda, fairness had ceased to be a business principle and cheating business partners had become acceptable under neoliberal restructuring. He notes that the reforms of the 1990s kept the old insecurity and uncertainty, known from years of conflict, in place and even endorsed it and unleashed new ones because insecurity and uncertainty are core characteristics of neoliberal life worldwide (Wiegratz, 2010: 128). Such processes have been described by David Harvey (2005) as neoliberalisation, which refers to neoliberalism being a pervasive discourse and a process of "creative destruction" of not just the political framework but also of social relations and everyday life (Harvey, 2005: 3).[158] In a similar vein the political scientist Graham Harrison (2010) understands neoliberalism as social engineering of the state and society at large and not just the economy (ibid: 32).

Another source of uncertainty that ran parallel to these developments was the spread of HIV/AIDS. The virus ravaged through Uganda and at its height the "slim disease" killed thousands of Ugandans. Chances of contracting it were high and not much was known in the beginning of how the disease developed, how it spread and how it could be defeated. It was a silent killer and nobody could be sure they were not in danger. The ones closest to a person could turn out to be the traitors that bring death. The ones supposed to deliver care, like doctors and hospitals, could also bring death – by reusing needles or transplanting blood without testing (Fireman, 2016). Heike Behrend (2011) has linked horror stories of cannibals to the ravaging of AIDS in Uganda. Left without explanations and ways to manage this risk, people felt an uncertainty that found expression in such stories. Behrend makes clear that these stories did not circulate as explanations for HIV but were rather a symptom of the overall uncertainty of life in that time. Rumours of witchcraft and cannibalism still persist today as I also show in this chapter.

Oil thus entered a country with a long history of uncertainties. The oil was connected to new risks that once again aroused uncertainties about life and livelihoods. There have been several transformations in the oil region and in Uganda in general. The last chapter described how Uganda's future was anticipated within the framework of the resource curse concept, that oil was either a blessing or a curse. So far, various actors created visions of a future with oil and the expectations created also needed to be managed. During a district dialogue organised by the CBO KHEDA, the Deputy Resident District Commissioner (D/RDC) Wantimba from Hoima district, also pointed out the importance of managing and controlling the expectations and the excitement that according to him, the politicians themselves had raised:

[158] David Harvey (2005) defined neoliberalism as "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade" (ibid: 2).

> It is now our duty to go down [to the village level] and remove the excitement. Because it is us who caused it and is us who have to remove it (D/RDC Hoima, KHEDA district dialogue, Hoima, 2012)

From the impression I got during my research in the oil region, the combined effect of both the oil companies and the government delaying developments, left people in a state of suspension and ended their hopes of betterment. They were not employed and received only small compensation sums. Thus the excitement was removed – whether intentionally or not.

5.2 Expectations and Changes in the Oil Region

This sub-chapter explores the ways people in the oil region anticipated a future with oil and the experiences they had made during the exploration for oil. The discovery of oil evoked both hope for a better future, and discomfort and doubts. People in the region hoped for employment and improved infrastructure, while fearing an influx of foreign men, a rise in "immorality" and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) rates, and a loss of land and "local culture." Their statements reflected the resource curse narrative. The politicians, casual workers and cultural leaders[159] I talked to, expressed to me feelings of distance to the government and the oil companies. Many people were quite critical of the government and resigned to think that the new revenues from oil would be drained by corruption anyhow.

> We keep our fingers crossed but with our government… Because oil is politics. They are drilling oil on our land but we will not be the first beneficiaries. People say that they will drain the oil underground to the big man's homeland. Where the big man hails from they will set up the refinery (Former casual worker, interview 2013)

People did not just wonder whether they would profit from the oil but also worried whether it might have negative repercussions for them. On my trips to villages in the

[159] I use this term as one that was used by my interlocutors to refer to persons who have some superior knowledge and are considered custodian of the traditions of their respective community. They represent and guide their community on matters of tradition. Furthermore, the category encompasses people with ascribed spiritual and healing powers. The cultural leaders I talked to could more concretely be described as traditional healers or spiritual leaders in order to differentiate them from the cultural leaders such as the Omukama. The „Institution of Traditional or Cultural Leaders Act" (2011) considers as cultural leaders those who derive allegience from birth or decent (Republic of Uganda, 2011: 5, 1). The role of the cultural leaders is defined as promoting and preserving "the cultural values, norms and practices which enhance the dignity and well being of the people where he or she is recognised as such" and furthermore to promote "the development, preservation and enrichment of all the people in the community" (ibid.: 9).

exploration areas I targeted mainly casual workers and politicians for interviews as they were the ones to be most directly in contact with the oil industry. I found many to be sceptical about the glorious petro-future since the oil discovery had brought tensions to the oil region and many didn't seem to know whom to trust.

Farmers, fishermen and even politicians in villages situated in exploration areas expressed their lack of knowledge about the oil and how it would affect their livelihoods: "Because we don't know what may happen in the future. […] We just see things changing" (Elderly resident of Kaiso, interview, 2012). A local politician of Kaiso described quite diffuse fears that were caused by the exploration activities. Fishermen feared losing their right to fish and some worried they might have to leave the area altogether (Politician, interview 2012). Farmers worried they might lose their land and thus their livelihood. Relocation was a major and threatening issue to the people – one of the most important ones with regard to oil. This is a major fear and one that is related to experiences made during the exploration activities and the construction of a new road.

In the essays from the aforementioned essay competition organised by KHEDA the overall top three expectations were work, roads and resettlements.[160] They portray the ambivalent picture of expectations being both negative and positive. Other widespread positive expectations in the essays were a better overall standard of living including schools, hospitals, better transport and a market for local produce and an industrialisation of the region. There were roughly as many negative as positive expectations but most essays drew a hopeful conclusion.[161]

The hopes for improved infrastructures were partially answered by the construction of new roads, health centres and schools and many new and more exquisite hotels in Hoima town since the oil came. However, the bright future the government painted and that was reflected in some of these hopes was counterbalanced by images of the resource curse risk civil society brought to the oil region. Concurrently, the essays did mention worries as well such as forced resettlement, pollution of the air, water and the environment in general, overcrowding, diseases, desertification, an increase in criminality, deforestation, a decline in agriculture, and cultural change. In the following, I show how people also drew on metaphors from the resource curse narrative to express their experiences and worries.

Reflecting the Resource Curse

The preceding chapter showed how civil society made people aware of risks attached to the oil and hence also the very uncertainty of their future. As Britt Dahlberg (2016) described it, making people aware of their uncertainty is an important step to get wider acceptance of the risks one perceives. And indeed, people pronounced their

[160] I did a qualitative content analysis. I generated a list of topics from the essays and then counted frequencies.
[161] Potentially, this might be due to the fact that Tullow Oil was sponsoring the event.

lack of knowledge and their inability to make informed guesses about the future on which they could act. Uncertainty is the presence of absent knowledge. The oil talk of a resource curse along with the experiences residents made fuelled an uncertainty about their future in a petro-state.

During seismic activities people's houses and fields were destroyed and fishermen were prevented from fishing by a temporary ban because of the use of explosives – both experiences that were often remarked on. People in the villages on the shores of Lake Albert mostly relied on fishing for their livelihood and access to the lake is important for them. Just as land and access to it is important for communities around the refinery area, where people rely on agriculture and herding. In a chat with a local politician from Kyehoro he highlighted the importance of fishing to the community and the fear people had:

> Fishing is the livelihood of the people. All are fishermen. Even I go fishing. And the shop owners, the bars, [the] video hall, they are all for the fishermen. We depend on their money. It is our fear that the oil could interfere with this. They shouldn't spoil what is on my plate. The oil is good, it is for all Ugandans and it will benefit the economy and bring development to the country but the big pot is not the same from what is on my plate (Local politician, field notes from informal conversation, Kyehoro, 2012).

The quote points out that there is a difference between the wellbeing of the nation and the individual. The politician rejected the idea that what was good for the country was good for everyone in the country. The spoils might not be shared equally and what reaches someone in the village might be very different from what is available to the state. The quote could also be read as a fear that oil activities would pollute the lake, which would have direct repercussions for the fishermen who would lose the base of their existence while not profiting from the overall development. This is of course a possibility that has been raised again and again by the civil society activists who visit the communities carrying their pictures of destroyed environments. Many other statements also suggested an uneasiness regarding the future, an uncertainty about whether the basic cornerstones of their lives will resist the oncoming of the oil industry and the curse.

> We hear from countries like Nigeria and the bad thing of drilling, so that is another fear. What about the next generation? It might be better without oil (Politician of Kaiso, field notes from informal conversation, 2013).[162]

In fact, leaving the oil in the ground has also been considered a possibility if the 'right' governance structures were not in place (Humphrey et al., 2007: 14; Ross,

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[162] The other fears he mentioned were about resettlement and compensation and whether people will benefit from the oil.

2012: 235). During conferences held by civil society the audience reacted to the calls for engagement and joined them in the pleas for good governance of oil. After having seen the documentary "Blessing or Curse?," some participants asserted their wish to prevent in Uganda what had happened in Nigeria: „We shouldn't go the Nigerian way which is called the oil curse. Let's go the Botswana way" (CNOOC-Tullow conference, 2012). At another conference on the impacts of oil on the youth organised by the CBO RICE in Arua, a participant said:

> In some countries oil is a curse because the management of this thing is not what they have been planning for. If we manage it wrong, the oil will become a curse. If we manage it well, it will be a blessing (Youth Dialogue RICE-WN, 2013).

Another participant in this youth dialogue said that she was wondering when they would be right to refuse having any oil production in Uganda.

> At first, as we were waiting for our facilitator we were introduced to a film [documentary described in chapter 4.1.3.] that we saw up there. And it was so scaring to me that I saw no benefit of oil exploration. That was why the Nigerians were objecting it. They said 'No', they don't want it at all. Now may I know from our facilitator what methods are this people going to employ in Uganda? Are they going to consider the environmental effects? If not, if it happens that […] it is like that one of Nigeria shall we be right to say no to evil so? (Youth Dialogue RICE-WN, 2013).

People repeated that if things were to go wrong with the oil, it was Ugandans who would be to blame for it. These remarks are close to the risk frame and the language set up by civil society. Nigeria was the metaphor for the horrors of oil. Saying no to evil, that is avoiding it, is one possible reaction to uncertainty, to being confronted with something one lacks accurate knowledge about. Other reactions would be calculation (weighing benefits against harm), having trust in those managing the risk or precaution (Boholm, 2015: 83–84). I suggest another option is to engage this uncertainty and to participate in the negotiations of the oil arena like these people did. These claims of ignorance are positionings by the actors who make them in the oil arena. People saw that donors were funding organisations promoting the resource curse risk. It was obvious that revenues were not just available in the oil industry but also in the economy of expectation. The statements convey an awareness of the new funding opportunities that came with the oil. People declared their lack of knowledge or their support for the cause of an NGO and thereby positioned themselves as active participants in the economy of expectation using those opportunities the oil had brought, including sensitisation campaigns on the resource curse.

Some of these statements were directed at me, a researcher from Europe, whose affiliations might not have been clear to everyone, although I always introduced myself as a Ph.D. student and stressed that I was not working for an NGO or any of the oil companies. Displaying a lack of knowledge and hence playing the part the NGOs have given to communities of being in need of knowledge, may help bring more interventions to the community or invitations to workshops with per diems. Openly displaying a lack of knowledge thus opened the chance to partake in the spoils of the oil arena. Playing their part, they can hope to garner support from either a researcher like me or a CSO. I understand these complaints as both worries about a future and a way to deal with this worrying uncertainty. Another opportunity was seen in the employment by an oil company as I discuss in the next section.

Employment Opportunities

Initially, it was said people in the oil region and even other parts of Uganda had the hope there would be employment opportunities in the oil industry. In an economy where a high percentage of the population is jobless and especially the youth fail to find a job and thus gain the basis for having their own family, economic opportunities are a major hope. The expectations were fuelled from different sides: civil society, the oil companies and government took part in expectation management, that is creating the right expectations. Managers of Total and Tullow tried to channel the expectations towards the development of infrastructure and services and away from a focus on the oil production and the oil companies. The former General Manager of Total Uganda, Loic Laurandel, stressed how Total would work together with the people of Uganda towards sustainable development in the oil and gas sector, which would lead to development in the infrastructure and social amenities as well (Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, [2013]b: 38–39). And his colleague at Tullow, Aidan Heavey, expanded the expectations even further by talking of a big boom and billions of dollars.

> People look at selling oil and gas, and the profit from that. But actually the single biggest input in the country is the investment in the infrastructure and the services that support the oil industry. […] There is going to be billions of dollars spent here. If you look at the countries that have found oil and gas in the past, the big boom to the economy was in the development stage (Interview with Aidan Heavey, Tullow, Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, [2013]a: 10).

In a speech given at a conference by International Alert in Hoima, the Minister of State for Bunyoro Affairs, Ernest Kiiza, encouraged Banyoro and Ugandans to hope to benefit from the oil sector.

> With the dawn of the petroleum industry, there is a lot that Ugandans can benefit from the sector. These include: Employment opportunities for skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour in the sector. The companies are encour-

> aged to recruit casual labour from within the local communities where operations are taking place. Semi-skilled labour is primarily sourced from within the region while skilled labour is advertised competitively with Capable [sic] Ugandans being given first priority (Minister of Bunyoro Affairs, Cross Border Dialogue, quote from a distributed copy of the speech, 2013).

Indeed, young men moved from the capital to remote villages on the shores of Lake Albert hoping to find a job as a casual labourer. Other men spent days waiting in front of the gate of a subcontracting company hoping to get hired. Others lounged around trading centres where recruitments were supposed to take place. The Chairman LC 3 of Pakwach sub-county told me that it was not announced in advance when the recruitment was to take place or rather on such short notice that young men had decided to hang around trading centres, waiting for the recruitment teams to arrive, instead of helping out on the fields (Chairman LC 3 Pakwach, interview, 2013).[163]

While some of these young men did get employed by an oil company or one of the subcontractors at least for a short period, for most Ugandans the expectation of jobs was barely fulfilled. The ones recruited usually entered at the lowest, the entry level and payment for unskilled workers in the industry did not always match the expectations, although it tended to be better than other low-skilled jobs. It was usually around 10,000 Ugandan Shillings (3 Euros) per day worked while e.g. a waitress in a small restaurant in town can earn around 100,000 Ugandan Shillings (30 Euros) per month.[164] Most of the workers I talked to felt that the money was little but there was no unionisation or something similar to push for a better pay.[165] The migrant workers struggled to pay for rent and sometimes even a family as they stayed in a place that wasn't their home and where they couldn't stay on family land for free.[166]

The ones who got a job in the industry reported to me that there were many risks they were taking, especially when working on a risk, and no less uncertainty. Yet, the jobs offered little in terms of security. From the comments I heard on several conferences, work for the oil industry was perceived as being risky, even life-threatening, by many people. A man at a youth dialogue organised by RICE claimed that: "Some parts of the jobs are very risky, so let our people be killed by other things and not by this job." (Youth Dialogue RICE-WN, 2013). Indeed, work on an oil rig is risky as

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163 Details about the recruitment process are discussed in the next chapter.

164 The oil industry workers are generally divided into three categories: unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled. Between the different type of workers are spatial and visual hierarchies such as accommodation or uniforms.

165 This could be related to the temporary nature of the labour contract, which is a common feature of the flexibilisation of the workforce in contemporary capitalism (Garsten, 2008).

166 The unskilled ones are usually not accommodated in the camps, they rent for themselves in the village. The companies assume they are recruiting locals who usually have family land they can live on. While in fact the casuals are oftentimes not from that particular village or even area.

it involves working with heavy machinery and chemicals under high pressure – both time and well pressure.[167]

When I talked to several casual workers, they complained to me about the uncertainty associated with their jobs – not just with regard to the riskiness of the tasks but also regarding the overall economic situation of few well-paying job opportunities especially in the rural areas of Uganda. They complained that they could not do any jobs on the side. I overheard some casual workers speak out during their lunch that the money was little and that back home they could have businesses on the side instead of only earning money from this job.[168] I was also told that if fishing was good, a fisher earned more than a casual worker. Only that fishing was not a stable income (Casual workers, interviews 2012, 2013). So sometimes it happened that the workers got frustrated and left their job, as one Ugandan Human Resource Manager of a Ugandan logistics company told me.

> The first time we employed was in Buliisa. So we got locals that are not educated. After three months, they started working bad, calling in sick, refusing. Then they wanted to stop and after a month, they wanted the job back. And after a year they want to earn money like the expats (Human Resource Manager, SLL Logistics, interview, 2013).

She interpreted it as a laziness and unreliability of the locals. However, there could be a connection between the workers leaving the job and other seasonal, or short-term lucrative income opportunities such as fishing when catches at the time are good. Once they have left or lost the job, some of these men still hung around the villages, waiting for another opportunity. Others took up a business, reverted to fishing or left the place to look for a job elsewhere. The hiring practices of the oil industry especially with regard to casual labour did not allow for long-term planning. The workers had to cope with this uncertainty and taking a more lucrative job for some time, might well be one of them. The hiring practice is a classic outsourcing or externalisation of supply-chain capitalism. The companies expected people to accept being employed, laid off and recruited again whilst they themselves did not allow people to move freely in and out of the labour pool.

There are striking similarities among many different workers in the industry, I interacted with, in terms of how the rhythm of the oil industry influenced their lives: the ups and downs of the industry were reflected in the insecurity of jobs. Once the Ugandan oil project slowed down, subcontractors laid off staff. Some became unemployed, some started being on stand-by and some got posted to another country. Being on stand-by means less pay for the expatriate workers who told me they only earn well when they are on a project abroad. Letting go off workers during busts is a

[167] For an autobiographic description of the work conditions on a rig see Lynch (1989).

[168] It is quite common in Uganda to have different sources of income like a business or a farm next to a formal employment.

common practice in the oil industry since its inception. Of course such hire-and-fire practices are not only common in the oil industry. Temporal work is a widespread phenomenon with specific recruiting agencies.[169] Furthermore, the conditions for casual labourers were very constricting while they left a lot of flexibility to the employer: the workers could not call in sick without losing their pay, they could not take time off to attend to family matters as the monthly salary was based on the actual days worked. They are recruited as human work machines and not as social human beings.

The oil project imprints its rhythm on the lives of its workers even in times when the project is active. Expatriate workers for example were on back-to-back cycles with one other person for the same position. They stayed in Uganda for several weeks at a stretch, during which they worked usually 12-hour shifts but were 24 hours on call for emergencies. During afterwork beers with them, some confided in me that it had a serious impact on their family and love life and that once back home they felt out of place.

Despite the risks and instability of the jobs, the hope for employment persisted and people from other regions moved to exploration areas to secure a job. The arrival of job-seekers was conceived as a risk by people in the oil region because it would make competition tough and it was expected to lead to a decline in moral and cultural values as I discuss in detail in the next section.

Rising Immorality

A recurring complaint in interviews and conferences was about the sudden increase of population which resource booms usually cause. This population increase was viewed critically since it meant an influx of foreigners. People feared these foreigners would bring their own cultural practices that might challenge the local or ”traditional” ones. In her essay, a pupil from Senior one said she expected cultural change:

> Many people will come from different areas of the country and outside with their own cultures where by [sic] the culture of Bunyoro will be changed loosing their value (Essay, Pupil, Senior Secondary S1).

Others feared that the influx would lead to intermarriages that would further threaten the traditional order. However, the oil discovery was not the first time that the oil region experienced an inflow of people from other regions or countries. There have been immigrations from other parts of Uganda, such as West Nile, and also from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. I often heard complaints that the young, (and mainly non-local) men who got a job in the oil industry were spending their salary on food, drinks and women. I was told that elders in Panyimur, a fishing

[169] For an ethnographic insight, see Christina Garsten's ethnography on the temping agencies and the people who work for them as a “temp” (Garsten, 2008).

village on the northern shore of Lake Albert, complained that with these fortunate young men around, the local men could not find women to marry anymore. Stories of oil workers taking young women or even other men's women abounded. One resident of Pakwach and former casual worker I talked to, was resolute that he would not let his wife work for an oil company. He himself had made enough money as an unskilled worker to start a small business in Pakwach town. Not because of the hard work but because he would fear the boss could harass or charm her. He explained the behaviour of "these guys" as follows.

> These guys have the money but they don't mind. The ladies come from the village, put on make-up and 'aah!' […] The situation guys have brought on is alarming, immorality talking. Marriages are breaking up. They have gone as far as snatching settled wives. Several marriages have broken because of these guys (Former casual worker, interview, 2013).

I heard a similar assessment from an unmarried Ugandan oil worker. He had worked for an international subcontractor in Pakwach and explained to me how the women were running after the men with money. He called them "stupid and villagers" for going with those men while the men did not consider them as their girlfriends but only as their "by the ways," meaning the men were just interested in having affairs or prostitutes. Asked about the prevalence of HIV in Pakwach he summed up the situation with a blunt "that place is fucked up" (Casual worker, interview 2013). When I told these complaints of oil guys taking away the women and girls from resident men with less money to one of the older expatriate oil workers in Hoima, he laughed and said that it was the same everywhere in the world "no money, no honey" (Field notes from informal conversation, 2013).

Repeatedly, I was told that many women and girls from the surrounding villages came to Pakwach on market day and then simply stayed on instead of going back home. The community development officer of Pakwach explained to me that these girls hoped to find a man or in the end at least customers. They resided in mud huts, usually sharing one with several girls. These huts were referred to as "lodges" and could be rented by the hour. And even though Pakwach has had prostitution before due to being a sleepover place for truck drivers coming from Kenya or Congo, she told me the situation worsened when the oil activities started as many young men moved into the area (CDO, field notes from conversation, 2013).

I mainly interacted with oil workers in Pakwach and hence captured their perspective on the situation. Of course, the women involved in this might have a very different perspective. Prostitution could for instance also be considered a form of debrouillardise (Homaifar, 2008). However, I was not able to establish good contact with any of the women that would have enabled me to bring out this sensitive topic. A study on "something-for-something-love" in Uganda shows that the motivations for women to enter sexual relationships with a man based on him giving her gifts are complex (Samara, 2010). Economic, family or peer pressures as well as curiosity or interest in luxury goods are among the factors that can (alone or combined) make a woman participate in this kind of relationship. It is not stupid but rather appears as a calculation women make and a risk they take in order to attain other goals such as education or social standing (ibid.). Such calculative attitude of women is also referred to as "detoothing" in Uganda where a woman uses her sexuality or the promise of sex to extract money and gifts from a man (Sadgrove, 2007). Romance and finance are connected in intricate ways and money flows in relationships foster sexual identities for both men and women (Mills and Ssewakiryanga, 2004).[170]

A problem connected to the rise in prostitution is the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Uganda. Local government sources have noted an increase since the oil activities started, although no data is available. It has to be noted here that fishing villages in Uganda and "trucker" places like Pakwach have always had high HIV-rates.[171] The arrival of the oil industry was perceived as a risk by the people who feared that with the arrival of foreigners a loosening of morals and a concurrent increase of the HIV/AIDS rate would ensue.[172]

Security Concerns

People in the exploration areas complained about the effects the increase of foreigners in their region might have not just on the morality but also on overall security with a rise in offences. Having an economic driver such as the oil industry in the region could have a downside, as it would attract people to the region where not all could get a job and would hence turn to crime. A pupil wrote in the essay competition that job scarcity would lead to idleness resulting in moral decay and crime.

> The possibility of finding job opportunities will encourage many people to migrate to the region leading to swelling [sic] of population and as a result jobs will become scarce. The idle population will turn to crime and other immoral acts leading to moral decay within the region (Essay, Pupil, Senior Secondary S4).

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170 It would be interesting to consider the statements made in the oil region further within the wider discourse of gender relations and changing gender roles in Uganda but this is beyond the scope of this dissertation. For further analyses of gender relations see e.g. Parikh (2005); Vorhölter (2014, 2012) or Wyrod (2008). In a recent book Parikh (2016) anaylses the regulation of romance in times of HIV and the agency of youths in this regard.

171 An analysis of fishing communities and HIV/Aids in Uganda was done by Westaway et al. (2007).

172 Overall in Uganda, the rate of new infections has been dropping with the general trend still being a yearly increase in people living with HIV. For more information see "The HIV and Aids Uganda Country Progress Report 2014," (UNAIDS 2014). The prevalence rate in 2015 was at 7 percent among those aged between 15–49 (World Bank Statistics on HIV prevalence in Uganda, online at http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.AIDS.ZS?locations=UG [February 2018]).

At a civil society conference, the District Police Commander (DPC) of Buliisa asked for a better security system so that they might deal with the "oil boom offences:" among which he named land conflicts with murders or assaults, smuggling across borders and fuel theft. All of which however are neither new nor exclusively related to oil-production.[173] He complained that people lacked access to justice in Buliisa and had to go to court in Masindi.

> In Buliisa we don't have cells to keep someone […] We need the DPP [Directorate of Public Prosecution] and we need also the chief magistrate court. […] Two years from now, three years this baby will be born. Oil will bring a boom. […] We need a new prison. That prison there cannot handle the oil boom offences (DPC, BIRUDO workshop, 2012).[174]

The Ugandan state was also concerned with security in the oil region. In 2014 there had been an attack on army and police posts by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels in Bundibugyo in Western Uganda near the oil region. In 2007 a border dispute with the DRC ended in Congolese soldiers shooting a member of a seismic exploration team of Heritage close to Rukungiri island on Lake Albert which was claimed as territory by both Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Maybe due to such security issues, none of the oil companies has ventured into drilling on the lake itself.[175] In November 2012 again, Ugandan newspapers reported exchanges of gunfire between Congolese militia and Ugandan police on Lake Albert.

Uganda increased its security measures in the oil region in four ways. First of all, in the districts with oil exploration there were special security officers on oil matters who were concerned with the security of the oil sites. These officers reported directly to the minister of internal affairs. They were also interested though in knowing about any oil-related activity and for my research I was also asked to inform this officer. Secondly, the police created a special oil force.[176] Thirdly, extra military was deployed in the area and the military was planning to build new barracks in Kyangwali in Hoima District.[177] And fourthly, the presidential guard brigade was protecting the oil wells, which raised suspicion as the presidential guard was led by Museveni's son Major General Muhoozi Kainerugaba. This was controversial because of the aforementioned Muhoozi project around which a scandal erupted in May 2013.

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173 For instance, fuel-smuggling operations by the "Opec boys" in West Nile (Titeca and Lecoutere, 2007).

174 Buliisa was still a small town of roughly 28,000 inhabitants.

175 Although this might also be related to technical issues. I was told by some engineers from Halliburton that the water of the lake was as unpredictable as a sea and therefore the rig would need to be as stable as the ones in the North Sea, which of course involves more costs than an onshore rig.

176 See the website of the Uganda Police Force: www.upf.go.ug/index.php/about-us/directorate [February 2018].

177 Reportedly, the army was also planning to institute community security committees to report suspicious incidents (Oil in Uganda, 2012b).

Some commentators thought it was a bad omen that security in the oil region was closely connected to the president's inner circle. The presidential guard lead by President Museveni's son was protecting the oil wells and the private security company Saracen, allegedly owned by his brother Salem Saleh, was responsible for the oil companies' security.[178] I brought up the issue of security in the oil region in an interview with then commissioner of PEPD and now Acting Director of the new Directorate of Petroleum Ernest Rubondo. Asked about future threats in the oil region he said:

> I don't think there are any [threats]. We don't see it being a problem. Get the people informed and that is being done. So they know the activities that are being done. Tell them the benefits and deal with the challenges. So as long as this is dealt with, there will be no threats. […] There is value in the area so you need security in the area. Security needs to be strengthened so that nobody takes advantage (PEPD commissioner, interview 2013).

The statement points to the importance of adjusting people's expectations and giving them information, albeit state officials usually emphasised that it should be the "right" information. A disgruntled population poses a risk because if they feel cheated, they might resist the appropriation of their land and thus threaten the progress of the oil project. The increase in security measures helped the state to gain information and monitor any oil-related activity in the oil region.

Another source of uncertainty, which was more closely connected to experiences made, was the fear of losing their land. Some villagers confronted this uncertainty by voicing their grievances with the assistance of CSOs and the media. In the following, I discuss the question of land dispossession in more detail.

5.3 Uncertain Grounds

This sub-chapter looks at the fear of land loss whether through dispossession or land grabbing and at the complications caused by the temporary use of land e.g. during seismic surveys. It also considers the ways in which people deal with the oil activities in their homeland; how they confront the uncertainty. I describe a case that I view as a creative way to deal with the uncertainty by trying to establish one's own risk. I analyse how people made use of their knowledge to establish risk relations that present both the companies and their cultural heritage as being at risk. I place this case in the context of various claims of land loss or land grabbing and the disruptions people experienced on their own land due to seismic surveys.

The uncertainty of a petro-future extended to an uncertainty about the land the people were living on. In the oil region land issues emerged in connection with the

[178] See a report by the NGO Global Witness (2010). For an analysis of the militarisation of Uganda that looks at different facets of the phenomenon see Kagoro (2015).

oil developments: roads were constructed to link the exploration sites to the capital and land was acquired by the state to build a refinery or to be temporarily used. Sometimes things on it got destroyed during seismic exploration activities. Some residents had already lost (parts of) their land and possessions like houses or crops due to the construction of the Kaiso-Tonya road or of the refinery and compensation rarely lived up to what people had hoped for. Sometimes compensation was not even the actual worth of the land at the time of the compensation. Yet people had very limited means of negotiating their dispossession. They took what the government offered them, even if the rates were too low and compensation took too long. They had to face the uncertainties that were caused by the many delays and the negotiations between the government and the oil companies. As I show in the case of the refinery, the developments meant long spells of waiting and uncertainty for the residents of the area.

Hedda Askland (2016) emphasises an understanding of displacement as a condition of loss with regard to the present, past and future. She uses a triad of concepts to address these different temporal dimensions of loss: nostalgia for the past, "solastalgia" (Albrecht et al., 2007) for the present, and her own concept of eritalgia for the future. As she describes it eritalgia points to the "embodied sense of displacement that may occur when there is a rupture between lived realities and imagined emplaced self." While the displacement of people in Uganda's oil region had not yet taken place (or might never happen for some people), they already felt the (potential) loss of a future on their land. They might no longer live on the land they cultivated and where some had buried their ancestors – the projection of their current self into the future has been interrupted by the presence of oil. In the following, I first give a brief overview of Uganda's land system and then I lay out the problems that came in the wake of the oil discovery and the reactions of the farmers, fishermen and local businessmen and women to them.

Generally, there are four different types of land tenure in Uganda: customary, leasehold, freehold and *mailo* land, a special land category whose origin lies in agreements between the Kingdom of Buganda and the British government during colonialism (Joireman, 2007). According to statistics from Uganda's National Planning Authority from 2010, customary land is with around 41 percent the largest category followed by unregistered freehold with around 36 percent and leasehold with 16 percent while mailo only accounts for around 8 percent of land nationwide (Hundsbæk Pedersen et al., 2012: 14–15). The distribution varies greatly though once split up into regions: in the central region, which includes the capital, less than one percent are customary whilst in the Northern region customary land is at around 76 percent (ibid.).

Since independence Uganda has seen three land reforms: the Land Reform Decree under President Idi Amin in 1975, the 1995 constitution and the Land Act of 1998 under President Museveni. This land act provided for customary land to be recognised and titled. It also created tenure security by recognising squatters, who had occupied and utilised a land for at least twelve years and had not been challenged by the registered owner, as *bona fide* occupants (Joireman, 2007: 470). The act also stipulates as lawful occupants those who have entered the land with the consent of the owner and those who are customary tenants. Both bona fide and lawful occupants can even apply for a certificate of occupancy (Coldham, 2000: 66). Rights to land in Uganda are therefore not exclusively tied to ownership of land. Indeed, much land in Uganda has not been formerly registered. According to the government, 95 percent of landowners do not have a land title (National Development Plan 2010/11–2014/15 from the National Planning Authority cited in Hundsbæk Pedersen et al., 2012: 14). In this setting land conflicts are quite common, especially on customary land (Hundsbæk Pedersen et al., 2012: 24).[179]

After the oil discovery, a big problem in Bunyoro was that the government had verbally banned the issuing of land titles. While intended to avoid land grabbing, people complained that it was the rightful landowners who failed to get their land titles while persons in the government were profiting from the ban as they could circumvent it and process land titles anyhow even if their claim to the land was not recognised by the community. This was problematic, as the value of the land remained lower without a title than with a land title. When I talked to a local politician in a village in an exploration area, he explained to me that the ban and the rumours had instilled fears in the people that they might get evicted from their land without proper compensation.

> Since oil was discovered here in 2006 by Hardman, now the deepest worry even up to date is eviction. Because eviction, what I mean by eviction, that people may be chased away from here minus compensation. Or people the superior people in the government may come and even chase people away forcefully and retain the what, the land. That's the people's fear. […] That's the most important thing. What everybody is fearing. Even though we are living here but we are not living in peace. After the oil discovery. […] what brings us that picture that […] we will be evicted in future [is] that we're ever getting information, verbal information, that the president has stopped from 2006 that nobody is allowed to get a land title for his land in this Albertine area […] where the oil business is going on. So that one clearly shows us that, we are like not the rightful owners of the land. Because if I'm the owner of the land and why do you instruct me not to get the title for the land? And then how do I call myself the rightful owner of the land? So that is our fear (Local politician, interview, Kyehoro, 2012).

By emphasising that people did not know what would happen and did not live in peace anymore after the oil discovery, the politician expressed a sense of uncertainty. To the politician and other residents affected by the ban on land titles, it was a negative sign. Statements such as this one decry a lack of knowledge to assess their place

179 For more on the land tenure system and land rights in Uganda see Coldham (2000).

in a petro-future and a sense of being left out and taken advantage of. With his statements in the interview, the politician made me see his lack of knowledge about the oil and its contingencies. And he was not the only one to express these sentiments of uncertainty. People talked to me about it and I read about these concerns in many of the essays pupils wrote in the aforementioned essay competition. Many expressed their fears with regard to resettlement. In their analysis on the social impact of oil exploration in Uganda, Petrus de Kock and Kathryin Sturman (2012: 33) noted that rumours about displacement were widespread and that land insecurity fomented uncertainty. Patey (2015: 35) states that land insecurity has become exasperated with the first oil discoveries.

The Uncertainty of a Refinery

During the time of my research, negotiations were going on about a refinery between the government and the oil companies. They involved the question of who would succeed in making a better case of the risks involved with it. For affected people in the gazetted area the negotiations were not accessible and they had little means to influence them. While to the government and the oil companies the refinery was a question of financial or economic risks that were negotiated, for the people in the refinery area it was the very basis of life, namely their land, which was at stake.

Development projects such as the refinery, in general are not just success stories but have reverberations beyond the positive development rhetoric: The social anthropologist Valerie Hänsch (2012) discusses the uncertainty people experienced from a development-induced displacement around the Merowe dam project in Sudan. From a relational perspective of risk, it can be argued that with this move towards implementation, the refinery, rather than being an object of hope and expectations, had started to be a risk object for residents in the refinery area. They were put at risk of losing their land and thus their livelihood and the realisation of this lead to an atmosphere of uncertainty.

In 2012, the government mandated a Ugandan consulting company called Strategic Friends International (SFI) to conduct a survey of the area and to draft a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) for the 29.6 square kilometres of land needed. But the process was going slow and residents were complaining that they had no certainty of what would happen. The RAP process was marred with irregularities from the beginning: land owners complained that they had not been registered or that their land was too small. When I arrived in Hoima in October 2012, plans showing the demarcation of the lands were hanging in the foyer of the local government.[180] These were the result of the survey SFI had conducted to assess the land size and land owners. After this, SFI was also given the mandate to do the resettlement or the compensation exercise. This, many NGOs claimed, was a conflict of interest. Some

[180] This publication of the maps was meant to allow everyone to raise objections. But the refinery area is an hour's drive from Hoima town and the seat of local government is outside of Hoima town.

alleged this was the case because the company was connected to a "senior" official in the government.

In general, most people preferred to get compensated as earlier on rumours had been going around that they would be resettled to Karamoja, a very remote and poor region in northeast Uganda. Other rumours, spread in civil society circles, had it that this misinformation had been given out by SFI on purpose so that people decided for compensation. The "resettlement to Karamoja"-rumour spread the fear of a dire future and people did not know where or when they would be resettled once the government took their land. Typically for rumours, it is not clear who started it and why. But no matter the source of or motivation behind the rumour, it had the effect of making the resettlement look risky and eventually more people opted for compensation than resettlement.

From the demarcation onwards, it took over a year before eventually the RAP kicked off. Journalists and civil society organisations reported that people claimed they had been left in limbo. A retired politician in Buseruka sub-county, who lives not far from Kabaale and at whose house I was staying for a brief period, mentioned in a conversation with me that the farmers in the refinery area were left thinking they should not grow crops after harvest because resettlement would take effect shortly after that. With the process dragging on and little information reaching the farmers, their discontent grew further. The lack of ability to assess the behaviour of the government, of SFI and of the oil companies, created an uncertainty in the communities of the refinery area. They vented their feelings of uncertainty and anger in the media. By the end of 2013, the compensation exercise started. But the compensation was done in a peculiar way: people were urged to sign receipts for money they had not yet received. This was not only claimed by NGOs but also intimated to me by a land officer responsible for the resettlement at PEPD. He explained to me the procedure was done this way because the government feared that by the time they were to release the compensation they might not be able to relocate the citizens anymore to make them sign for the money received (Land Officer at PEPD, interview, 2013).[181]

In the wake of these developments, resistance formed in the area aided by a national NGO. Refinery area residents mounted demonstrations helped by AFIEGO, an NGO from Kampala. The worry of AFIEGO was not so much that the people would never see the compensation but that with the high inflation rate in Uganda the compensation would have considerably lost value by the time it would be paid. Another discussion revolved around the effect the compensation would have on the people economically and socially. Claims were made that the farmers would not know how to deal with the compensation money and spend it all instead of putting it to sound use. Other voices feared that men would act unwisely, get more wives and leave their family homeless and without any means. Hence the RAP brought uncertainty to the refinery area as a social community and to the individuals.

[181] This contrasts with the image of a state full of spies that may know your every move that I often encountered as I described in the methodological framework.

During my field trip in August and September 2015 I found that CNOOC had already started acquiring land for a pipeline that would connect its Kajubirizi well to the refinery. Also in 2015, almost 3 years after the resettlement programme started, most people had received their compensation but the resettlement was still to take place and construction of the refinery was still not under way. The people who had opted for resettlement had still not been resettled. These residents claimed that they lived in a deserted or bushy surrounding as their neighbours had moved away, which posed a threat to their security. Furthermore, their children could no longer go to school (Director AFIEGO, conference, Hoima, 2015). In 2015 then, it was determined where they would get land and detailed plans were made public. The plans of their new homes were shown to the residents, who accepted them after some revisions. I found that the RAP, which is a rather open process of land acquisition by the government, was often discussed in conjunction with the issue of land grabbing, be it in the refinery area or elsewhere, which frequently outraged NGO activists and participants in conferences.

In 2015, I visited the refinery area to meet with a former oil rig worker, whom I got to know in 2013. While I was back in Germany, he had been laid off due to the low activity in the industry and was now running for the office of district councillor. He showed me around the trading centre of Kabaale, to the boundary of the refinery area where only bush was to be seen. As we were driving around he pointed out to me land that had been bought by big politicians, such as Amama Mbabazi, the former Prime Minister and later contestant of Museveni for the Presidency in the 2016 elections, or even the President himself. While I am not aware of how these politicians acquired the land, in general there were many rumours of rich businessmen or politicians "grabbing" land in the oil region that further fuelled sorrows about dispossession.

Land Grabbing

Land grabbing has been defined as land acquisition that involves deceit, violation of human rights and the lack of informed consent, transparency, democratic planning or thorough assessment, although in some countries with corruption a formally and legally correct acquisition is not necessarily a fair deal for the former landowners (Ansoms and Hilhorst, 2014: 2). For Uganda, it is suggested that land grabbing was enabled by civil violence and authoritarian rule (van Leeuwen et al., 2014). I use the term here as it was brought up by actors in the field. Land deals were a contentious issue and they were being related to the prospect of oil in the region (Augé and Nakayi, 2013: 12).[182] I had heard a lot about cases of land grabbing especially from civil society organisations and the media. It is usually alleged that a businessman

[182] However, struggles over land were not just common in the oil region but happened in other parts of Uganda too (Kandel 2016). Not even all struggles in the oil region did arise from oil. Some were related to other developments such as the creation of a refugee centre in Kyangwali.

from Kampala comes to the village and tells landowners scare stories about how they would lose out once the exploration started. Yet people lacked information and knowledge to prove these claims and indeed sometimes, due to the lack of transparency with which the exploration process was handled, simply had no chance to obtain them. As a reaction to this uncertainty, some people were said to have sold their land for too little money. These stories engage the image of the poor, hard-working farmer versus the rich, fraudulent businessman with the morale of the story being that knowledge is power. Here, I do not concern myself with the (legal) veracity of each of these claims. Rather, I look at them together as ways people react to the changes brought in the wake of oil development. They indicate a wide perception of a new uncertainty of land tenure in the oil region.

A 2011 study by the NGO consortium Uganda Land Alliance claims that 42 percent of respondents had reported land encroachment and land grabbing and that land disputes had increased by 27 percent due to oil discovery (CRED (Civic Response on Environment and Development), 2015: 5). They present four cases that include scenarios that people in the oil region fear such as the damaging of their houses and crops without compensation, eviction or the appropriation of community land through government officials. In one case, it is alleged that district level politicians and land board officials in Hoima grabbed community land and then demanded payments from Tullow that had been active in this area (CRED, 2015).

The Diocesan Secretary of the Church of Uganda in Hoima explained to me that when people in higher places, meaning either in business or the government, knew that there was going to be the oil business, they came and spent a lot of money on buying land. And people sold their land and happily bought motorcycles only later realising that the price of the land had increased and they could not get land again.[183] He said that now these people regretted having sold their land but that it was their own fault. While the offer, maybe as little as 1 million shillings, had sounded a lot to these farmers, it was not enough to buy another land or house in the oil region (Diocesan Secretary, Church of Uganda Hoima, interview, 2012).

In Pakwach, there was a problem about different claims on land between the Jonam and the Acholi. The Jonam had left their land in Purongo sub-county during the conflict in the North and Acholi had settled there. After the end of the conflict, Jonam started demanding back their land, which they claimed had been grabbed by politicians and military officers. The conflict intensified with the installation of oil related infrastructure, such as camps and warehouses, by Total E&P, which was at that time conducting seismic surveys in nearby Murchison Falls National Park.

On a workshop in Hoima organised by Tullow and CNOOC, one of the development brokers spoke out vehemently about the issue of land grabbing. He talked about compensation with regard to the rates and how it was done for the Hoima-Kaiso-Tonya road before turning to the issues with the refinery. As he was shouting

[183] I do not have statistics on land prices but claims of price increases for land and housing in the oil region were widespread.

the following statements, he was advancing from the back of the room towards the podium where representatives of Tullow and CNOOC were seated.

> The thing you have to look at is who is owning land currently in Albertine region. I'm giving you an example of an area gazetted for what? For refinery. […] Who are you compensating? A new title today is saying the right ownership of land is by that person who registered it. Meaning if you have been on land without registration and someone has registered it, it is his land and he is to compensate you. What if you go to compensate that person with the title now and I am an existing bonafide owner of that land and I refuse to leave. And I organise chaos. We collect ourselves and we burn the pipes. […] There is […] a historical perspective of Banyoro fighting for that resource [land] since time immemorial. *Nyangire* 1 and *Nyangire* 2. You may find yourself in the situation of causing *Nyangire* 3 if you don't consider the issue of land appropriately (Representative of the Bunyoro Local Oil and Gas Advocacy Group, CNOOC-Tullow conference, 2012)

Nyangire, which means "I have refused" or "refusing" in Runyoro, refers to the resistance of Banyoro against the imperialist Baganda and Britons around 1900. *Nyangire* 1 was the war between Britain and Bunyoro under Omukama Kabaleega from 1894 to 1899 and ended in defeat for Bunyoro. Kabaleega was exiled and only allowed to return in 1923, but he died on his way before he reached his former kingdom. *Nyangire* 2 or also known as *Nyangire Abaganda*, which means "I have refused the Baganda," was in 1907 when Banyoro chiefs rose against the imperialism from the Baganda and momentarily threw the Baganda from the posts the British had assigned to them. They also fought to obtain back the so called lost counties of Buyaga and Bugangaizi, that had been taken from Bunyoro and given to Baganda by the British high commissioner Henry Colvile in 1893 for their service in the former war and that returned to Bunyoro by referendum in 1964 (Weichs, 2013: 20, 129–134).[184]

Connecting the current struggles to earlier struggles against external domination and to the grandeur of the former Kingdom, may sound like a rallying cry to fight back. His speech did not seem to be perceived as very threatening as many in the audience were laughing. It has not been followed by action so far and while I have often heard the worry that conflict might spring up due to these grievances, a recent study has found the prevalence of a rather cooperative "don't rock the boat" attitude in the oil region (Grossman et al. 2015).[185] The threats can be read as a very open

[184] For more information on the rebellion see Steinhart (1993). In 2013, the warriors of Nyangire 2 were awarded medals by the Omukama. Raphaela von Weichs (2013: 85) also speaks of a Kabalega myth that came up in the twentieth century and that she understands as a counter discourse to the dominance of Buganda.

[185] At another conference the NRM secretary general of Hoima suggested very calmly that Banyoro should have two groups to push for their issues: one cutting down oil pipelines and one creating dialogue (KHEDA Regional leaders dialogue, Hoima, 2012).

reminder to the oil companies and the government that their operations are at risk if they do not meet the expectations of the people in the region. The statement also highlights very clearly the dire importance of land and the critical attitude towards the government, as people wonder whose interest their government serves. The next section looks at another land issue: the impact of the construction of a new road.

Road Construction and Vampires

One of the perks of oil production is claimed to be infrastructural development according to civil society activists and state officials. And indeed, new roads were constructed in the oil region or were in the planning. A road has been constructed between Hoima and Kaiso[186] and in 2016, CNOOC finished work on the access road for the Kingfisher discovery, an area that was up until then only reachable cross-country or via Lake Albert. Another tarmac road is meant to be constructed up to Buliisa, which is a small town in the oil region and capital of Buliisa district that was created in 2006.[187] It had seen a lot of oil activity and it was also one way, though underused, into the national park. In 2013, Buliisa still had the feel of a drowsy town to it. The town was very sprawled out and the major T-junction in the middle of town was always almost empty – except for a few cyclists and goats nibbling on small roadside bushes or discarded plastic bags. The oil activities in these areas were mainly within the park, albeit some seismic activities extended beyond the borders of the park. There were plans to connect Buliisa to the national grid and in 2013 I saw how the masts for power lines were being erected.

However, these developments were not geared at improving lives of people in the region but at ameliorating the transportation of goods and machinery to the oil sites with the side-effect of improving transport for all. Roads have been discussed as common visual of modernity, which is imitated in a kind of infrastructural fetishism even if few cars for the road exist (Dalakoglou, 2010).[188] During my research the construction of Hoima-Kaiso road was going on and allowed me to witness some of the processes, improvements and disillusionments connected to the road construction. It is important to notice that the experiences people made during the road construction influenced their outlook to a future with oil.

Rather than being a pure blessing to residents of the area, the road from Hoima to Kaiso-Tonya sparked a lot of controversy. People along the road complained they were not compensated properly. The compensation came late and people found it unfair because the compensation was not enough to build a new house to replace the one demolished for the construction. The compensation rates were an issue of

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[186] Kaiso and other villages along the road were reachable via a murram road before the road construction.

[187] Up to the writing of this dissertation Buliisa can be reached via a murram road that gets close to impassable in the rainy season with parts of the road flooded.

[188] For an overview of anthropology's contribution to the study of infrastructure see Larkin (2013).

contention all over the oil region. Compensation rates were set by the chief government valuer and then passed by the district land boards. Several times I heard that old compensation rates had been used, which, given the level of inflation in Uganda and the increase of land value in the oil region, resulted in compensation sums that could not buy new land. I obtained the Hoima compensation rates for 2012 according to which a "good and mature" mango tree was compensated at 100,000 Ugandan Shillings (UGX), then around 30 Euros, while a simple grass-thatched hut with mud and wattle walls and a bare floor was compensated at 30,000 UGX per square meter. A tin roof raised the amount by 10,000 UGX, around 3 Euros, (Compensation Rates for Hoima District approved 18.9.2012 by Mugisha Andrew, District Valuer). However, according to informants the prices for constructing houses had increased over time, which made this too little money to construct a new hut. Currently, I was told tin sheets go for around 16,000 to 21,000 UGX per sheet and a hut of around two square metres would use about 5 sheets for a roof. With the mud bricks for the walls being at around 50,000, the price of a self-constructed and cheap hut with tin roof would be around 130,000 UGX rather than the 80,000 UGX the compensation rates allow for.

The construction of the road had a wider impact than improving transport. It also changed life on the side of the road. The road now paves its way past homesteads and through fields and trading centres. While the dirt road that existed before allowed easy access from a homestead or field to and across the road, the new immaculately smooth tarmac road reduced this access. On both sides of the road is now a deep trench and at first only few access bridges or branch-offs were constructed. Many homesteads were thus temporarily stripped of their direct access to the road. Hence, the people who live literally right next door to the infrastructure improvement and development, were temporarily cut off from it. The road construction was finished in 2014.

The construction of the road was accompanied by a lot of dirt and noise from the big machines and by interactions between the workers of the Turkish construction company and the people along the road. The presence of the Turkish construction workers was accompanied by stories, gossip and complaints. Several times people expressed to me their indignation at the Turkish men's behaviour towards the women: sleeping with many women and with sex workers in Hoima and sexually harassing female casual workers at work.

Another more chilling rumour depicted the Turkish men as some kind of vampires. As the road work was going on in front of the house of the former Chairman LC 3, with whose family I stayed for around two weeks, his grandchildren were standing with me by the side of the road watching the progress of the work. I noticed that they watched the Turkish workers and the big machines with great interest but maintained their distance. The oldest told me that their parents had warned them to not go too close to the Turks. They had heard that the Turkish workers would lure children with money, then abduct them and drink their blood. According to another child, they would not drink the blood but spill it on the road. Their grandfather confirmed that these stories circulated but said they were just the imagination of people and that the Turkish men would only sacrifice goats not humans for the road. They followed the by-now familiar motif of the foreign men, be they from Turkey or from other parts of Uganda, who come and "steal" the jobs and the women.

The relationship between rumours and uncertainty is interesting in this regard as a rumour contains some information but usually the recipient does not know where the rumour came from and how reliable the source of that information is. In a context of insufficient information, rumours sow doubts and they gain a social significance. When I heard the rumours I was reminded of the "lionmen" stories that circulated in Chad and in which Exxon oil workers were eaten by lionmen (Reyna 2011). Comparing it to the old English epic of the Beowulf, Reyna argues that this story was a narrative way to respond to fears of people in the Doba basin caused by the arrival of the oil industry. It created distrust and resistance against this imperial domination.

In general, such rumours and horror stories are far from limited to the context of oil exploration. With their concept of "millennial capitalism" the Comaroffs (2000) have shown the connection between witchcraft stories and capitalism.[189] Already in 1993, they connected the rise of the occult to the spread of capitalism (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1993). Witchcraft and cannibalism can thus be perceived as a 'modern' phenomenon rather than archaic remnants of traditional beliefs (Behrend 2011, Geschiere, 1997). Such stories were also widespread in Uganda and they can be connected to massive social changes. I have heard stories of cannibals living in Kibaale district who had a big hole covered by a carpet in their living room, on which they would ask visitors to sit so that they fall into a pot that was in the hole and could be cooked. Or friends told me stories that they had seen with their own eyes a house with dead bodies of children on the roof. Heike Behrend describes similar stories of cannibalism for Uganda and relates them to the horrors of the first wave of HIV/AIDS and the fortifying effect of Christian Churches' fight against witchcraft (Behrend, 2007, 2011).[190] Luise White (1995, 2000) connects vampire stories in neighbouring colonial Kenya to the massive social changes brought by colonialism.[191] Similar rumours with a cannibal note were analysed by Pamela Schmoll for Niger, where soul-eaters were said to take the form of uncanny animals, surprise their victims and capture their souls in order to eat them out of greed or jealousy. She understands these stories of soul-eating as an expression of the stressful situation brought on by the monetisation of society (Schmoll, 1993). In an article on witchcraft accusations in Acholi, Tim Allen (2015) analyses the case of "Mr. Red," who had been accused of

[189] Furthermore, it has been incorporated into new Christian movements as Birgit Meyer (1999) shows for Ghana.

[190] A connection between AIDS and witchcraft was also made by Bawa Yamba (1997) for Zambia.

[191] For a broader and cross-regional discussion of rumours around witchcraft, cannibalism and sorcery see Stewart and Strathern (2004).

witchcraft and subsequently subjected to mob justice, as practices of moral populism by politicians and elites to maintain their authority.

Building on these studies, I suggest the stories of blood-drinking construction workers are an instantiation of the uncertainty people in the oil region felt. The rumours can be viewed as reactions to the massive changes that suddenly arrived: big machines ploughing through the landscape driven by foreigners who do not even speak a familiar language like English. These horror stories show a level of distrust towards the foreigners that come to the oil region and from whom children and women, as I wrote earlier on, were supposed to keep or be kept away. In this perspective, the rumours also function as a means of control of children and women. Furthermore, the stories reveal mistrust towards the companies or more especially their workers. A participant in a multi-stakeholder dialogue claimed that people were being "bulldozed" by Total with regard to land issues:

> We are new in the industry. We know nothing almost. And we have our sons and daughters who are now with the Total, multinational oil company. It is unfortunate they are in the pocket of the company and not looking at their land. […] The issue of acquisition of land we are being bulldozed by the Total. Because of ignorance, because we know nothing. […] Total they know their way of how they work out their interest (Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue by RICE-WN, Nebbi, 2012).

Mistrust was rife – on the side of the affected people in the oil region and more surprisingly also on the side of the oil companies as I show in the next section.

Relations of Mistrust

This section highlights community-company relations that always contained an element of mistrust. Mistrust or the inability or unwillingness to believe how things are presented to be aggravates uncertainty. The interactions between people in the oil region and the oil companies (and even some of the subcontractors) were handled by their Ugandan Community Liaison Officers (CLO). They were in charge of communicating dates of activities, company policies regarding compensation or recruitment, receiving complaints and guiding the compensation and the recruitment process. They were the brokers between the company and the locals, the one to translate the company's intentions. They enjoyed a certain prestige in their area of activity (by their position and the money they earned), which was not necessarily their home area. The interactions were interspersed though by frictions and mistrust that do not fit the great narrative of creating bonds, in which Tullow describes the activity of its CLOs.

> Tullow is very keen to listen to and receive feedback from the community. We have a dedicated Community Liaison team whose responsibility it is to talk to community members and receive their feedback on a day-to-day basis. We also hold regular community engagement sessions to ensure the community has a platform to air their views about any issues they might have (Tullow Oil PLC, (n.d.)).[192]

The feel-good image of an ethical company barely covers the power relations at work. The oil companies intended to regulate the interactions as far as possible and hence to manage any risk the community could pose to their activities. By offering these platforms and allowing people to speak about their grievances, the oil companies appeared approachable. However, at times this interactive approach rather takes the voice from the people than give it to them, turning these platforms of engagement into mere "theaters of dissent" as Boholm (2015) argued in her analysis of consultation meetings during an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of a railway tunnel project in Sweden.[193]

Activities of the oil companies were according to their necessities and not on a regular basis but at least they always came to inform people "before the big cars come," meaning the vehicles of the oil companies that transport machinery for exploration activities (Representative of the Beach Management Unit Kaiso, interview 2013).

The exploration activities were taking place in areas that were populated, however sparsely this may sometimes have been. Especially before and during seismic surveys there was a lot of interaction with the population. In general, seismic surveys are done in order to discover possible oil deposits in the ground and to determine where it would be viable to start drilling for oil. It involves recording the underground vibrations from detonating explosives along set lines through a certain area. The explosives are buried in the ground either following a line or a grid. If an explosive should be ideally put where a house is, the engineer has to go around the house. While generally houses are avoided, gardens can get partially destroyed, but then compensation needs to be paid. The companies needed to interact with the local communities in order to inform them about a planned seismic survey and to settle compensation claims.

A lack of information and irregularities in the compensation process were often mentioned as grievances in the conferences I attended. Generally, compensation was

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192 This is from their booklet "Frequently Asked Questions." The question to the answer was: "Does the community have a genuine voice? For example, how can our concerns be addressed and our views taken into account?"

193 While the railway planners invited the people affected negatively by the project to participate in the dialogues, air their views and get information, this did not make the people feel included in the decision-making process. Boholm describes these dialogues as "two sets of monologues, separated by a coffee break" (Boholm, 2015: 123), because the railway representatives failed to engage with the complaints of the people and rather re-stated the project's reasons.

planned as a process, in which people had to prove their right to the land through a certificate or a letter from their chairman LC 1. The landowners would then be informed of potential damage and had to give their approval. After the use of the land e.g. for a seismic survey, an assessment of the actual damage was to be done. At the end of the process the landowners would sign a form with the companies, which would state the receipt of the money and point out the prospected amount and the actual amount of land used and the number of plants destroyed. During a stakeholder engagement meeting of Tullow and CNOOC in Hoima, a development broker from Buliisa, raised the story of a man under whose land the Kasamene-1 well had been found. At first Tullow had taken some land, saying they would use it only temporarily. But four years later Tullow was still on the land and had allegedly even extended the land used without consulting the man. He therefore asked the oil companies to explain how long temporary was (Representative Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation, CNOOC-Tullow conference, Hoima, 2012).

Didas Muhumuza, the Stakeholder Engagement Manager (SEM) from Tullow, acknowledged that the definition of temporary was a serious issue and explained that this man had been paid for a temporary disturbance during the seismic survey. No land had been taken yet and so far only crops and property had been compensated for. It was not yet determined which land would eventually be acquired by the state for production wells as the field development plans were still under planning. He emphasised that the oil and gas industry was a project of the government of Uganda and that the government had to set the framework for compensation of the value of land (SEM Tullow, CNOOC-Tullow conference, Hoima, 2012). This man was left hanging at the interstices of the oil life cycle as a potential production well was situated under his land but neither was it determined yet whether the well would be a production one nor how much he would get paid in that case.

In the following, I describe an information meeting from the subcontractor BGP[194] and Total for residents of a community in Buliisa on seismic surveys due to take place sometime in the following weeks. The companies decided when and where to start for instance the seismic activity but this process was not very transparent to the local community. Dates for the seismic to start were announced but not necessarily adhered to. Though I had been calling the CLOs many times to ascertain the date of the meeting, I learned about it taking place only one day in advance from a member of a community-based organisation in Buliisa who said he had also just been informed.[195] At the meeting, two CLOs of BGP and one of Total were present.

The meeting was held on an open court in front of the house of the Chairman LC 1 in Kabandindi (see picture). The meeting was set for 2 pm. Before 2 pm people

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194 This geophysical service company that assists in seismic surveys belongs to the China National Petroleum Corporation. There is no explanation for the acronym (www.bgp.com.cn/ [February 2018]).

195 Of course it is possible that the community had been informed, while the information did simply not reach me. But this was not the impression I got from talking to very many people about how such interactions generally proceed.

started gathering but left again as they saw that the representatives had not yet arrived. The representatives of Total and BGP then arrived only 15 minutes late for which at the end of the meeting they were nevertheless admonished by the Chairman LC 1. They arrived in a green BGP pick-up, three men and one woman; one man being the CLO of Total.

The procedure of the meeting at first followed the usual protocol: the Chairman LC 1 welcomed the guests, a prayer was said and introductions started. However, the people of the village were not asked to introduce themselves, as according to one of the CLOs from BGP "They are many." Then one CLO started talking in Rugungu, explaining the process of the seismic: from pre- to post-assessment and what people should do. He also informed them that they were going to need workers and will let them know when recruitment was taking place. He told them the salary (10,000 Ugandan Shillings/3 Euros per day) and how the recruitment process was done through the ballot system. Afterward, the other CLO translated to Aluru. Then the CLO from Total also talked to the people. However, because he was an Acholi, he addressed them in Acholi claiming the people would understand him. Still it was translated later on. He stressed transparency and how it would not be possible for anyone to steal from someone who should get compensated.

After the speeches a question and answer session started. It got interrupted by rain though and the meeting was rushed to a derelict community hall. The hall basically consisted of mud walls that were partially already coming down. There were only a few plastic chairs, which were reserved for the guests. The village people were standing or sitting on mats. Most questions were concerned with who can get a job, when the interviews will be held and what will or will not be compensated. One man asked whether they also compensate for cultural sites. To that question the CLO from Total replied that some people had tried to forge cultural sites and that people should refrain from doing that because the company would find out about it.

While the CLO of Total started answering the questions one part of a wall collapsed causing a short uproar. However, the meeting simply continued afterward. After the CLO had replied to all questions the Chairman LC 2 spoke up saying that when Tullow did the seismic there were some problems because people, especially those ones whose land the survey was on, did not show up for the meetings. But he asked people to come to the meetings so that they do not fail to get their compensation. While the Chairman LC 2 was still talking the CLO of Total already started packing up. Lastly, the Chairman LC 1 spoke and stressed that they all are Bagungu and should be aware of the survey. While he was talking someone started distributing biscuits Total had brought and as some started enjoying the biscuits, others started to get restless as they also wanted some. In the mounting unrest, the Chairman LC 1 called the end of the meeting and while he was still talking the CLO of Total waved at the people and rushed out of the hall seemingly in a hurry to leave the place. Even though the CLOs were in a rush to leave the meeting, they still took their time to talk to me before they drove away to another meeting in Paraa in the Murchison Falls National Park.

The meeting was structured by the presence of the oil company and its subcontractor. Their arrival started the meeting and their obvious intention to leave ended the meeting. The question of who waits for whom reflects power relations (Loimeier, 2012: 15). Waiting and more especially keeping someone waiting can be considered a form of temporal politics: In an ethnography of the experience of waiting in immigration offices of Buenos Aires, Javier Auyero (2012) describes clients as "patients of the state" and argues that the waiting reproduces the political subordination temporally. Here, manipulating the time of others is seen as a governmental technique. In this case it is the representatives of Total and the seismic company who can let the people in Kabandindi wait. Certainly, it is interesting though that everybody was very punctual and that 15 minutes was noticed, which generally is not a noteworthy delay in Uganda – especially in the rural areas. The reproach of the local chairman could thus also be understood as a reaffirmation of his position in relation to the companies.

It was the community liaison officers' decision not to have the people introduce themselves and thus remain unknown as individual community members. This was apparently done due to time constraints, as they had to go to another meeting as well. Still it kept the community members fixed in a mass of farmer-villagers. However much though the meeting was initiated and directed by the company, the organisation was left to the Chairman LC 1. He had to provide chairs and space and inform his people. The meeting also shows that even though the seismic was done by BGP, it was not done under its own banner but under Total's represented by its own CLO. Total thus tried to keep control of (at least some of) the interactions between the communities and its subcontractors.

The community in turn was left in a rather uncertain situation. As already the organisation of the meeting was communicated late to the community, the same can be said for the seismic. Although a date had been given, I was continually calling the CLOs and informants in the area to find out whether the seismic was taking place as planned but it was again and again postponed without the communities being informed.[196]

The most interesting aspect of this vignette is the reference to the forgery of cultural sites or graves. In accusing the people of forging cultural sites in order to get more compensation, the CLO revealed a level of mistrust from the company towards the community. He stylised the company as a victim of forgery but also threatened the people that they had means to find out.

As noticed earlier, the mistrust was mutual. Much as the companies themselves seemed to be mistrustful of the population, the people were mistrustful of them.

[196] Curiously, in terms of safety this meeting does not align well with the overall emphasis on safety within the oil industry that I describe in chapter 6. This meeting can be contrasted to a conference held by CNOOC and Tullow in Hoima. Whilst collapsing walls in the village did not seem a reason to re-consider the venue of the meeting or even break it up due to safety concerns, in Hoima there was even a safety instruction comparable to the one given on an airplane, informing the attendants of the location of the emergency exits.

Figure 18: Information meeting on seismic survey by Total and BGP, Buliisa District (2013).

Ugandans blamed the oil companies for just being profit-orientated and not really concerned with the needs of the people.

> Here we are dealing with business people. Those people are out here, even when they sit here, they are calculating on how much profit they are going to get out of oil. […] And even if it was me, that's what I would be doing if I'm here for business, I would play my cards so well such that I get huge profits out of it (Representative of Empagi-za-Bunyoro, CNOOC-Tullow conference, Hoima, 2012).[197]

People in the oil region remained mistrustful of the oil companies. Several times I heard someone wonder whether the oil companies were being honest about the progress of the exploration process. Many suspected them of secretly stealing the oil. During a district dialogue in Nebbi, a volunteer of RICE mentioned that people could not believe there was no oil in West Nile. They did not believe Total had not found any oil, rather they thought the explosives used during seismic surveys made the oil move to another part of the country (RICE conference, 2013). In answer to

[197] In her comment she equally lashed out at the government complaining about the integrity and work of NEMA, the local government and the district land board. She expressed her disbelief that these agencies would keep Banyoro safe and help them benefit from the oil.

that the local government official and the PEPD representative briefly explained the technicalities of exploring for oil with explosives. Both used the image of scanning, like the scanning of a pregnant woman's womb, to make the attendants understand that by the seismic activity, the oil companies were trying to get an image of the subsurface. Once again, pregnancy served as an analogy for oil developments. Many times the way politicians and state officials explained the oil by reference to what people 'in the village' are expected to be familiar with such as local beer or pregnancy. They bring images to the oil talk that are familiar and turn oil into something benign, something that gives joy and that can be understood by anyone.

Curiously enough, Total's CLO was talking to them in Acholi and not in English, although most people did not speak Acholi and it had to be translated into Rugungu. So why did he not speak English? I would view this as a means to create trust by showcasing his Ugandaness: He was not talking English, the foreign language, but was one of them, a fellow Ugandan. At conferences sometimes Ugandan representatives of oil companies tried to use their 'Ugandanness' in order to create a "we"-sensation with the audience. They portrayed themselves as being on the side of Ugandans:

> There seemingly appears to be quite a lot of suspicion that the public may have in regard to the operators and all that. But one thing that we all should appreciate is that all of us are Ugandans and all of us really at the end of the day carry the country wherever we are. If I was white or I'm from wherever maybe that would warrant some suspicion but what we are trying to do is, we are trying to do in the best interest of our country. Because at the end of the day where do we go? We shall remain, I remain in Uganda, you remain in Uganda and everyone will be in Uganda so we should really try to appreciate that. And criticism is good but if its constructive then it becomes quite valuable (CNOOC representative, CNOOC-Tullow conference, Hoima, 2012).

National content had another advantage for the company by giving their operations a Ugandan face: A Ugandan face to remind Ugandans that they too can benefit.

In her study on railway planning in Sweden, Boholm (2015) analyses the failure of risk communication at community dialogues as an inbuilt problem because participants are bound to be either agents, that is the ones making a decision, or patients, the ones suffering from that decision (Boholm, 2015: 129). As Ugandans aired their mistrust, so did the CLO air the company's mistrust. Not only had the communities to deal with a new and powerful international player who was backed by the government but they also could not be certain when he would leave, what he would destroy and whether they would get compensation for it. Many times I heard people struggling to know whether they could plant their crops and what would be compensated how and when. And in the end, they could see that the compensation could take very long, be too little to set up a new life or be altogether refused because the claims were not accepted.

This section has shown that the relations between the oil companies and the extractive communities were rife with mistrust, which was expressed in accusations and in rumours. The mistrust can be seen as furthering the uncertainty in the oil region. In the following, I go into more detail of a case where cultural sites were claimed to have been destroyed. I show with this case the agency that people have despite being "patients" in Boholm's sense.

5.4 The Cultural Sites Controversy

So far, I have worked out how people in the oil region are living vis-à-vis a petro-future they cannot assess well. Lacking the ability to calculate the future or being patients to the resource curse risk does not mean they were stripped of their agency. In the theoretical chapter, I highlighted that agency is the capacity to act (including making decisions) and to pursue one's projects. While the people in Kaiso were not free to decide whether or where the oil companies drilled, they did have the capacity to mobilise their social networks and other powerful agents to pursue their own goals.

Here I present a case, which I consider a creative way of dealing with the uncertainty that comes with the exploration for oil. On the surface, it was just a negotiation between people from a village next to an exploration well and the oil companies about the compensation for their destroyed cultural sites.[198] Yet this was also a negotiation about the participation in the oil project. It highlights the uncertainties involved for people in the oil areas during the exploration process. In this process the oil companies had to interact closely with the communities of the oil areas. Although such communities, a term that bundles together all people residing in villages close to oil sites, are quite often portrayed as powerless in this encounter, due to a lack of knowledge of oil or financial resources, I use this special case to highlight the agency they have or rather the means they have to pursue their own intentions. I show that people from the oil region also tried to set their risks on the agenda. They tried to convince the government and the international community that cultural heritage was at stake and that the oil companies put themselves at a risk they did not even recognise; the wrath of the spirits of the lake.

Cultural Sites as Risks

In Kaiso, a fishing village on the shores of Lake Albert, the Ngassa wells (Ngassa-1 and -2) had been drilled by Tullow in 2007 and 2009 respectively because it was expecting a major find in this area. In 2009, the Abayaga and Abayagakati clan of the village started claiming officially that Tullow had destroyed some of their cultural sites, among them one called after its spirit "Ijomuka." Cultural sites are supposed

[198] For a detailed account of this destruction see Agena (2012).

to be compensated. The first oil bill states that a licensee shall not exercise any rights under a license if he does not have the written consent of the relevant authority if the land has been granted as a culture site (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 2012a: clause 132, 1a). However, it does not specify the need to compensate for cultural sites. It stipulates only that compensation shall be paid to the landowner for damage to the surface of the land or to crops, trees, or buildings (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 2012a: clause 136, 1). A PEPD officer pointed out during a conference in West Nile that the companies were not supposed to disturb people or their cultural sites and that if they did, they should compensate people "up to the level of the disturbance" (RICE Conference, Nebbi, 2013).[199]

The people from Kaiso had complained many times to the oil companies and were advised to complain officially. I first heard about this case from the news (Ssebuyira, 2012) and later from one of the complainants (Interview, 2012). I first met the complainant at a function by the NGO WGI in Kaiso where he was one of the few attendants. Later I was told by the Principal Private Secretary of the *Omukama* that he was very knowledgeable in all the medicinal plants of the area down at the lake. He also participated in a study on the cultural sites by the Kingdom of Bunyoro and the national NGO NAPE.

End of 2012, I talked to this complainant and the respective cultural leader and he explained to me that the destruction had enraged the spirits and yet the leaders were not able to perform rituals to appease the spirits as the site was fenced off. The claimants wanted Tullow to restore the site and compensate them. They were not happy that Tullow only sent what they thought were mere messengers and not people who could make decisions. They wanted the top management of the oil company to come and negotiate with them. The complainant showed me two complaint letters they wrote to Tullow, one in July 2009 and one in November 2011 about the destruction of nine cultural sites, i.e. places of worship or of spiritual value.[200] The second letter had the NGO NAPE and the Prime Minister of Bunyoro Kingdom as co-recipients. However, according to him, Tullow kept quiet. The claimant explained to me the problem of the destruction: the spirits of the lake were angry. The spirits appeared to the cultural leaders in their dreams. At the end of October two people had died when their boat capsized on the lake, one of them being a cultural leader (Interview, 2012). The Chairman LC 1 from neighbouring Kyehoro confirmed this story to me that the destruction of the cultural sites had caused accidents on the lake because it had disturbed the spirits. He described that people had died in the shallow waters even without being drunk (Chairman LC 1 Kyehoro, field notes from informal conversation, 2012).

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199 Someone had complained that the oil company Heritage had destroyed cultural sites without compensating the people.

200 The sites are called Nsonga Ijomuka, Mukogi mukoto, Kibaale kya Kiberekimu, Mwija mboga's house, Mukogi mutaito, Jjwaliro lya ijumuka, Kibaale kya mulindwa, Jziba lya ijumika, Nyanuhanga iboona.

Yet the destruction was not just bringing mishap to the Abayaga and Abayagakati. The complainants claimed that the anger of the spirits was also the reason why the company had trouble with the well (Interview, 2012). And indeed, Tullow had encountered some difficulty in drilling the Ngassa well. A first well (Ngassa-1) had to be abandoned and the new well (Ngassa-2) had to be drilled from another location (Tullow Oil PLC 2007a: 27). The deaths of people in the lake and the difficulty Tullow was facing during the drilling of the well were explained by the complainants with the characteristics of the spirits that are able to kill and manipulate if not paid attention to.

When I asked Kaiso's Chairman LC 1 about the sites, he said they did not exist. In fact, he had given the go-ahead to the drilling. This denial another politician, a chairman of the NRM party residing in Kaiso, claimed was related to religious beliefs, the traditional religions versus the (born-again) Christians.[201] This politician stressed that the oil companies did not consult the people, but only the Chairman LC 1, and just drilled the well thereby destroying the cultural site. He alleged that the Chairman LC 1 had taken money from the oil companies. He told me that the oil companies thought the claim of spirits haunting the destroyers of their shrines was a joke but they would suffer the negative impacts. If they did not let the cultural leaders perform the rituals, they would not get the oil (Field notes from informal conversation, 2013). This politician then helped me talk to the cultural leaders and translated for me. The cultural leader of Kaiso described the situation as follows:

> They destroyed the cultural site, so now there is no fish, people are dying. I wanted them to rebuild the cultural site but they refused. The site consisted of a certain stone and a pot that was put there long time ago. It was destroyed and removed but we don't know where. I am very annoyed about the destruction. Every night I dream about that destruction […] Tullow thinks they are doing the best thing. They got a security man to protect the Ngassa-2 well but then the man fell sick and died when he was taken to Kampala. The man said he was there one night guarding the well when two men came and asked him for cigarettes. He asked them who they were and picked his gun inside. When he came back out, they were gone. But they were not people but ghosts. And after that incident the man fell sick. But Tullow does not take it seriously. It will keep being like that. Those things will keep happening. Until they come and respect, no oil will come and no machine will work. […] There is oil there but they will not get it out. The machines will always block unless they fulfill the demand […] They [the oil companies] overlook me. They think I am a small man. In Nigeria, they ignored the cultural leaders and where is Nigeria now? But if they give me what is mine, if they give me respect, if the place is

[201] In her ethnography on youth and cultural change in Acholi, Julia Vorhölter also notes that her interlocutors reported a dismissive stance against or even ban of "pagan" cultural practices by Christian, particularly Born-again, churches (Vorhölter, 2014: 163–164).

> rebuilt then the oil will come. But if they don't respect me, no oil will be there. Millions will be wasted (Cultural leader Kaiso, interview, 2013).

With this statement the cultural leader tried to conjure up a risk for the oil companies, warning them of the failure of their exploration efforts if they proceed without his and the spirits' consent.

These stories resemble the involuntary sacrifices attributed to angered roadside spirits told by Mawri in Niger that Adeline Masquelier (2002) describes. She analyses these stories about bloodthirsty spirits of the road, that kill people in road accidents, as cultural articulations of violent experiences in the past and troubling encounters with modernity. In these stories the spirits could trick and then kill their victims for example by taking the form of a harmless looking foreigner. Such stories translate the opportunities and dangers or violent forces of modernity to local belief systems.

I suggest looking at these stories not just for what they represent but also for what the people telling them do with them. It is insightful to look at these stories from a risk perspective and to consider what linkages the narrator creates and what effect the risk would have if established. The cultural leaders offered a new causality for the accidents in and around the lake and the exploration sites. It was the anger of the spirits that caused deaths and accidents and that hindered the exploration process. The leader threatened not only the oil company but also painted a dark picture for Uganda, invoking the image of Nigeria. If he was not respected and not enabled to appease the spirits, there would not be any oil. The failure of the oil company was made comprehensible as the failure to find oil was likened to the failure to catch fish. When fish are scarce, it is due to the spirits, the cultural leaders told me. So when there is no oil and when people die it is also because the spirits had been angered.

This time the usual option of appeasing the spirits was no longer available because people were not allowed to the sites. The leader thus challenged the oil companies and the government to take the risk of not getting any oil because they had angered the spirits and failed to pay what was due to them. As mentioned earlier, a risk can only be perceived if the knowledge of causal links between an event and outcome (like smoking and cancer) exists and is accepted. However, the causal linkages the cultural leaders established were not grounded in science or visible things but on local customs and beliefs. This different kind of knowledge, which would be referred to as traditional in Uganda, was not widely accepted though. This becomes apparent as the cultural leader himself points out that the Chairman LC 1 did not support their claims.

I also talked to another cultural leader from Mbegu. He claimed sites from Tonya up to Mbegu had been destroyed by the Chinese who were doing the seismic survey for Tullow.[202] He said they destroyed traditional things with bombs on the water. They had closed off those areas, dropped bombs on the lake, probably the explosives

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[202] He did not specify the company but it was most likely BGP as they are the only Chinese company I know of doing seismic surveys in Uganda.

used during seismic surveys, and destroyed, what he called places of spiritual power. Only on the island (where the Ngassa well is) they were not successful. There they could not succeed and instead it started chasing them. The cultural leader from Mbegu explained that the Chinese came with their own power to fight the traditional power here but that in the end the Ugandan spirits were stronger and prevailed and the Chinese spirit died.

The coming of foreign spirits is not a new phenomenon as there have been spirits attributed to the Europeans such as *Enjungu* (Weichs, 2013: 91). In her ethnography, Weichs (2013) describes three overlapping categories of spirits that are known to Banyoro: the *embandwa, emizimu* and *cwezi*. *Embandwa* personify nature's powers, diseases and unusual events and the spirits reside in nature and they can take possession of human, terrestrial and material bodies and manipulate or kill them or make them tremble and burst. The term *embandwa* encompasses a concept of agency that ranges from protection to attack and the term contains the fathomable and the unfathomable (Weichs, 2013: 92). Historically, some of these spirits were attributed to certain families and clans as protective spirits and every family had a medium that could get in contact with the *embandwa* through diseases that were treated in ceremonies including rhythmic music, songs, prayers and e.g. the smell of tobacco. The spirits assist the healer in diagnosis and treatment and build a lasting relationship with the sick person. This distinguishes the *embandwa* from other ancestral spirits, the *emizimu*, which manifest themselves in dreams, visions and diseases and have to be appeased to go away (Weichs, 2013: 89–90). Finally, the *cwezi* are hybrid spirits that combine characteristics of *emizimu* and *embandwa* and are assigned supernatural powers. They are ancestral spirits of the kings and their clans of a former dynasty that are associated with health, prosperity, success and purity (Weichs, 2013: 93–94).

Equating the arrival and activities of the oil companies with a war between local and foreign spirits could be seen as a reflection of the substantial disturbance and uncertainty caused by these activities. The expectation of a loss of traditional culture is picked up in this narrative, yet the traditional comes out victorious. The cultural leader from Mbegu told me the spell could be broken by a donation of two million Ugandan Shillings to hold a ritual involving gifts such as a goat and to hold a gathering of the cultural leaders from along the lake shore (Cultural leader Mbegu, interview, 2013).

Reactions from Oil Companies and Government

The oil companies did not respond to this risk as the leaders had hoped for. Compensation for cultural sites was for the oil companies not a way of managing the risk angered spirits posed but rather the risk an angered community could pose to their "social license" to operate.[203] And more importantly it was part of their agreement with the government.

And while the issue had been reported in newspapers and letters of complaint had been written, it seemed to be rather ignored by the government. I talked to the already mentioned Stakeholder Engagement Manager of Tullow who told me they were aware of the issue but that it was down to the government to verify the destruction of the cultural sites. He stated that they did not note this site during the pre-assessment and that in the end it was the decision of the government whether the claimants would be compensated.

> This is a government of Uganda project. Before that site was assented to, a lot of consultations were done through ESIA [Environmental and Social Impact Assessment] consultation processes and the like and no one mentioned it. Yes, it is true. This side was decades ago a cultural site where they would go and perform their cultural stuff. And that sort of behaviour, those cult-like […] religion was abandoned. But with the advent of oil and gas they try to say 'Aah, this used to be our site.' There is nothing, which was found there anyway. But they'll always tell you that 'This was desecrated'. First of all, the people ascribe, who belongs to that community, they all don't agree with the sort of approach. But the matter was received and handed over to the government of Uganda to handle. And there is a cultural heritage policy in Uganda, there is a whole ministry and the department of community development in every district links with that. The issue was very simple. You know if Tullow is going to pay money for compensation of such things, it's a recoverable cost, government has to approve it. But besides that there is real need to have genuine claims. We have worked at previous sites where real tangible things are seen and […] the people have been supported to transfer their valued what? Items. There was nothing to transfer that site, ok? Just to claim that 'We used to go there,' that's it. […] The issue is we keep engaging with these people. We've discussed these issues several times. When I was a CLO there, we used to discuss this thing at every meeting. I said 'Put your claims in writing'. They put their

[203] The social license to operate is not an actual license issued by an institution but a concept that refers to the acceptance of the company where it operates and the image it holds. It has been defined as "the demands on and expectations for a business enterprise that emerge from neighbourhoods, environmental groups, community members, and other elements of surrounding society" (Gunningham et al., 2004: 308).

> claims in writing and it was handed over to government (Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Tullow, interview, 2013).

The reaction of the Stakeholder Engagement Manager has to be read against the fact that it was only a faction in the village that supported the claim while others (including the Chairman LC 1) did not. Noticeable is his attitude towards "traditional" beliefs, which is a widespread discourse in Uganda where these beliefs are considered backward, harmful or even criminal.[204] The reluctance to accept claims of cultural sites can also be seen in the remarks of the CLO who visited the community in Kabandindi. Apparently, the companies assume that often these cultural sites do not really exist and that people just make them up so that they can get a higher compensation. The view that there is "nothing there" would be challenged by an adherent of the "traditional" beliefs. As the Principal Private Secretary to the *Omukama* pointed out to me that the cultural sites in Africa are not comparable to European ones:

> Our cultural sites are not of stones like cathedrals in Europe. People know to which stone to pray to. African history is not in ruins or rubble. Our shrines have continued until today. While the Roman and Greek shrines have vanished, African shrines still exist. African history is in those natural stones (Principal Private Secretary to *Omukama*, interview, 2012).

As the sites are not easy to make out, it is hence difficult to verify claims for an outsider since they cannot be seen like Christian churches. Masquelier (2002) speaks of a "mystical geography," in which physical landmarks are not neutral but constitute "a complex phenomenal reality anchored in people's active involvement with the invisible forces that surrounded them" (Masquelier, 2002: 839). However, only that which is considered in the impact assessment will be compensated. The composition of participants in these assessments impacts on the evaluation of the land. Potentially in the case of Kaiso the group involved in the assessment was not balanced enough to account for differences and factions in the village.

In the end the question of the veracity of the sites needs to be negotiated between the government and its people, as it is the government that pays for the compensation. I asked the Chairman LC 5 of Hoima, in whose constituency Kaiso lies, to explain to me the government's position on the case.

> Yeah, I've heard it [cultural sites case]. But I'm hoping also it is not speculation. People trying to position themselves to make some quick money, yes. […] they are saying 'We had a cultural site here and we want'. You could, if you allow even that now you could end up with a thousand cultural sites coming up with every small house becoming a cultural site. So you need to

[204] Nevertheless beliefs in witchcraft or cannibalism are widespread and serve as explanation for misfortune and disaster (Behrend, 2007) as elaborated earlier.

> go slow over that to really establish which one, which one exactly where. […] But with the advent of Christianity also many of those former old cultural practices have died out. And the young generation, people don't know much about all these things. […] So we have to assess really and be sure that when somebody talks of a cultural site, he really means that and he is not trying to position himself to make some quick money (Chairman LC 5 Hoima, interview, 2013).

The government and the oil companies were expressing the same position: cultural site claims had to be scrutinised for their veracity since they perceived these claims to be more about the money than about the beliefs and traditions.

Negotiating with Cultural Sites and Risks

Viewed through the lens of a relational theory of risk, the cultural sites were destroyed because no value had been attached to them and they had not been recognised as objects at risk during the impact assessment. Hence, the sites were destroyed during exploration activities. A study on the destruction of a ceremonial landscape shows how Native American people failed to get their sites acknowledged before the construction of a Hoover Dam bypass bridge across the Colorado River (Stoffle et al., 2004). In re-analysis of this case, Boholm and Corvellec (2011: 184) illustrate how the definition of what is a risk is contingent on what is considered of value. The Native Americans had failed to convince the public authorities of the value of their ceremonial landscape and therefore failed to construct it as an object at risk.[205]

In the present case however, the Abayaga have shown that destruction does not put an automatic end to value or risk construction and thus to claims. They sort of inverted the roles. They emphasised how the sites in their destroyed state are a risk object: for the community as the spirits caused people to drown in the lake and for the oil companies as the spirits threatened their success at the well. The sites were thus converted to risk objects since "riskiness" is not necessarily a characteristic of the object but something attributed to it. Possibly it could be said that all objects have the ambivalent potential to become object at risk and/or risk objects as the cultural sites can either be at risk of destruction or a risk themselves.

From the viewpoint of the oil companies what was really at stake was the efficiency of their activity. To them the risk was not the spirits or the destroyed cultural sites but the people who claimed them. For one, accepting more cultural or sacred sites would mean more entanglements with the communities and with the government. Too many entanglements as suggested by Appel (2012a) are not desirable, as

[205] The "Standing Rock protest" about the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline is a similar case that was a hot issue in the U.S.A. in 2016. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe was lobbying for the stop of a pipeline construction close to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota, which to them threatened to destroy sacred sites and to pollute the Missouri River.

they reduce the company's ability to act solely focused on profit. Furthermore, the proliferation of cultural sites was a risk to them because more cultural sites would mean more compensation and more delays or a halt to further exploration altogether as there were also intentions to turn the whole of Lake Albert into a sacred site.

> Communities in Hoima and Buliisa districts of Bunyoro region, Uganda, are reviving their traditional practices and customary governance systems for the protection of sacred natural sites around Lake Albert. Accompanied by the National Association for Professional Environmentalists (NAPE), these communities are defending their ancestral lands from mining, commercial fishing, a game reserve and other activities which directly impact on and restrict access to the sacred sites, undermining their cultural and spiritual practices. […] Work is underway to develop a legal precedent that will secure recognition of the rights of local custodian communities to govern and protect Lake Albert as a sacred lake. This would be another first in Africa, affording legal protection to an ecosystem based upon recognition of the customary governance systems of local communities (Chenells and Nadal, 2015: 26).[206]

Claims of compensation for cultural sites have come up elsewhere as well. The King of Bunyoro, the *Omukama*, himself also raised a claim. He and a group of locals with the assistance of NAPE even made a map of cultural sites and they listed several trespasses on shrines and the drilling of the Waraga well on royal ancestral burial grounds including the tomb of Omukama Isaza Nyakikooto Waraga Rugambnabato from the eleventh century, a place of prayer and sacrifice (NAPE, 2012b: 12–14).

These claims can be viewed as staking claims in the idiom of oil (Schritt, 2016; Watts, 2008). What is interesting in this case is the versatility of claims drawing on the idiom of oil and of the cultural. Reference to culture can be used as power resources in dealing with the oil companies because of an international context that promotes human and cultural rights and the protection of cultural sites or cultural landscapes through the UNESCO (Hauser-Schäublin and Bendix, 2015). The UNESCO recognises as cultural landscapes sites that represent the "combined works of nature and of man" (UNESCO, 1972, Article 1). The "UNESCO operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage convention" (2008) distinguish between landscapes designed and created intentionally by man, organically evolved landscape and associative cultural landscapes that can be inscribed on the World Heritage List based on "the powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which may be insignifi-

[206] This report was submitted to the African Commission in a call to act on the feared loss of the cultural sites. The report was funded by the European Union.

cant or even absent" (UNESCO, 2008: 86).[207] The latter category could encompass the kind of site claimed to exist in Kaiso.

The cultural leaders tried to establish a new risk in the oil arena.[208] For the community, if acknowledged, the claim could bring compensation while for the oil company a disrespect of culture could put their social license to operate at risk. The rhetoric of the cultural leaders took on the big oil companies, rendered them vulnerable to the actions of their spirits. However, the knowledge they used to build the linkage was not accepted and thus could not be used as a power resource in the negotiations. The construction of the sites as being at risk also failed in the first step but as the recent study shows, there are attempts that move beyond an individual well and in that case would threaten the progress of the whole oil project.

Epilogue to the Controversy

In 2014, Tullow decided to abandon the well, claiming it to be uneconomic due to complex geology. Even though it had had high expectations and had spent $67 million on the well. In August 2015 when I visited the village again, the well had been closed and already restored.[209] An online news blog on oil in Uganda assumed that maybe the bigger problem was the proximity of the community and hence the risk of big damages in case of an oil spill (Nalubega, 2014). In the end it seems the prophecies became true and the spirits won back their realm. However, the cultural leaders had received no compensation for the destruction. I was told that the cultural leaders had not performed any ritual on the site even though it was now open to public access again. Some say the cultural leaders had then also abandoned their compensation claims.

This case has shown another way of how people in the oil region reacted to the destruction that comes with the oil exploration. As I have not been long enough in the village to note all the dynamics involved in this negotiation, I therefore focused my analysis on the claims that were made. Some people in the community tried to create a new risk, and hence created relations between the activities of the oil companies, themselves, their grievances and belief systems by warning the companies of a negative outcome. It shows that establishing risks is not just a way the "powerful" can influence negotiations in the oil arena. Finding the right arguments and alliances, it can also be mustered by those presented as the "weak" in the oil encounters. They may have failed in their attempt of getting the compensation but in an ironic

[207] For a discussion of the UNESCO concept of cultural landscapes and the dynamics around the nomination of such sites see Bergs and Peselmann (2015).

[208] I would like to stress though that as much as risks can be used as leverage in negotiations or to stake claims, this does not imply that the linkages the actors construct are not of importance to them.

[209] The withdrawal of the oil companies was witnessed by people in the community. Tullow also kept the Chairman LC 1 of Kaiso informed about the closure of the well and the shutdown of operations. He remembered that they told him that big trucks would come to take away the pipes (Chairman LC 1 Kaiso, field notes from informal conversation, 2015).

twist the cultural leaders' prediction of the company not getting oil at this site was ultimately confirmed.

Beyond being power resources in negotiations these claims also reflect a way to deal with the uncertainties that come with the oil industry. They can be viewed as translating what is not quite fathomable, the oil industry and its workings, into local terms. They are a way of incorporating all the changes and uncertainties the oil companies have brought. They allow the cultural leader to reach certainty in otherwise quite uncertain outlooks.[210]

5.5 Chapter Conclusion

The wait for oil was not a uniform or unifying experience in Uganda but expressed power relations of who can let whom wait. The fishermen and farmers in the communities or the young men willing to work as casual labour were not the ones to decide when the waiting for the oil should end. It was the government and the oil companies that could influence the length of the wait. The choice people in the communities had was to ignore the oil – despite being continuously reminded of the risks and uncertainty.

This chapter was concerned with different facets of life in the oil region since the oil discovery. The chapter portrayed topics and issues that were relevant during the time of my research. Many times I have heard and read that uncertainty was prevalent in the oil region. People did not really know what to expect from a future with the oil. They did see some changes – some positive, some negative but they also saw that things moved slowly. Stranded between ad hoc activities from the oil companies, civil society organisations or government agents, who were following their own time schedules and interests, and long passages without any sign of oil, the ability to make informed guesses was reduced.

The chapter looked closely at land as a sub-arena in which people in the exploration areas took part in the negotiations of the oil arena. The case of the refinery showed that for the people directly affected, the developments and negotiations at national level are a source of uncertainty. In the course of oil exploration activities people's homes and fields were destroyed or they were asked to relocate like the refinery area residents. There have been many claims of insufficient compensation and of land grabbing, but one case stood out for me: the destruction of cultural sites. To me this case was special as it did not just position the community as the ones at risk, as is usually the case.

Knowledgeable brokers from the community with the help of a national NGO aired their claims for compensation building on an international and Ugandan interest in the protection of cultural sites and presenting the communities' sites and

[210] For the use of divination to understand misfortune and to move from uncertainty to certainty that is performed by diviners see Reynolds Whyte (1990).

livelihood as being at risk from the oil companies. Interestingly, the cultural leaders argued that the destruction of cultural sites had already angered the spirits of the lake and that this also put the oil companies and their business at risk from their wrath. The cultural leaders thus turned compensation claims into a service they offered the company: if they get money to perform a ceremony and appease the spirits, the oil company gets the oil.

This case shows the agency that actors maintain in the face of uncertainty: they can bring their own ideas and knowledge of the world into the oil arena and try to influence how the process of oil-making is progressing. People in the oil region did not remain passive but found ways to deal with uncertainty and make the changes intelligible through rumours of cannibalism, threats of rebellion and through other risk constructions. Of course, one has to be careful not to romantically overstate their agency as ultimately the oil companies have more resources to draw on. Yet it shows that people creatively make use of the new opportunities that come with the new developments – be it from the oil companies, NGOs, the kingdom or researchers like me – to eke out their own living and/or wellbeing. The case of the cultural sites shows that resource-making cannot proceed in a disconnected or disentangled way, like the oil companies try to as I show in the next chapter. Rather entanglements are abundant and people forge connections through demands for employment or compensation.

The next chapter turns to more attempts of creating connections to the oil industry through national content, which is another sub-arena where the petro-future was invoked and shaped.

Figure 19: Closed well with safety warnings, Hoima district (2012).

6 Challenging Standards: The Intricacies of National Content

Sharing in the spoils of the country's oil is a major expectation of people in Uganda. People hoped to find jobs or get contracts from the oil companies. The government has encouraged the participation of Ugandan companies and has motivated people in the exploration areas to seek opportunities in the service sector. There have been training sessions to explain to people about national content and the nature of the industry and where and when opportunities could be expected. During a conference in Nebbi in the oil region held by the community-based organisation RICE, one of their programme officers explained business opportunities for the people as follows:

> This oil thing is like a mango [tree]. [...] When the mango fruits are coming most of them are around the outside. When somebody is inside you may think he has the best access to them, yet most of the fruits are outside. Inside is the oil money for Uganda. But that money is little compared to the opportunities that are around it. They are like those outside fruits. They can be even like a 100 times of what government is getting from oil (Program Officer, RICE, RICE-Conference, Nebbi, 2013).

However, getting the outside fruits is not as easy as it may seem at first glance. Ugandans soon found out that the oil industry had a regime of international standards that their service providers had to adhere to and to verify through certificates. Remaining with the tree metaphor, the problem was that people were told that they could not pick the fruits how they used to. In line with best international practice, they would need an expensive device, which was hard to come by. The special 'picking device' was the knowledge of standards and the know-who in the industry. While the knowledge of standards seemed to be a straightforward training problem, I argue in this chapter it is more than that. As all sides are trying to profit from the oil project, it is an example that reveals the intricacies of national content.

This chapter is concerned with the debate around the implementation of national content in Uganda. Based on observations from a conference on national content and interviews with the relevant actors, I show in this chapter that national content was a sub-arena of the oil arena where the oil companies, Ugandan companies and people from the exploration areas negotiated how the oil would be produced. This chapter shows how risks were mobilised as resources to gain a better position in the oil arena: the oil companies used standards in health and safety to exert their influence in the oil arena while Ugandan companies raised the risk of enclave production, which is producing oil in as disconnected a manner as possible from the country setting.

The oil companies' regime of international standards manages key risks in the oil industry, such as major industrial accidents or human accidents. These standards were challenging to Ugandan entrepreneurs as they were higher than the Ugandan ones and most Ugandan companies did not reach them. Ugandans insinuated unfair play and challenged the standards and the way the oil companies emphasised them as effectively preventing them from partaking in the new opportunities of the oil industry. Ugandan business owners were outraged, as the reference to the standards by the oil companies seemed like a see-through manoeuvre aimed at exploiting Ugandans. I argue that maintaining high standards and thereby angering Ugandans and forfeiting cheaper local services still made business sense for the oil companies because it allowed them to keep risky connections to the Ugandan context at a minimum.

I start this chapter by introducing the concept of national content and the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in mediating necessary connections to the extractive communities and the country. Then I relate the state of national content in Uganda, including the plans for a refinery before turning to a debate about national content. In a second step, I take a closer look at the positions of four strategic groups, the government, the oil companies, Ugandan companies and the extractive communities. I give special attention to the oil companies because it is their standards that set the tone. Finally, I analyse this debate as an establishment of a "technological zone" (Barry 2006).

6.1 National Participation and CSR

This sub-chapter introduces some necessary theoretical background knowledge about national content and a connected new "ethical" wave of corporate social responsibility. National or local content refers to the integration of national (in this case Ugandan) workers and companies into the foreign extractive industry (Ovadia, 2016: 21). It is supposed to prevent the dreaded enclave nature of the extractive industries from wreaking economic havoc on a producing country. National content has been described as being part of a change in corporate social responsibility (CSR), as a way of handling community relations by extending "cheap to give" opportunities rather than tangible assistance (Rajak, 2016). According to Blowfield and Frynas (2005), CSR is a concept with diverse definitions that can be narrowed to three main principles: companies have a responsibility for their social and environmental impact; companies are responsible for their business partners; and companies need to manage their relationship with wider society (ibid.: 503). A crucial point is that CSR is voluntary. The idea of CSR is that sustainability and social welfare are being integrated as forms of profit maximisation into the capitalist system. CSR is not a countermeasure against the bad effects of capitalism (Rajak, 2011: 10–11). It is either a way of managing external threats and thus part of risk management or a chance to benefit from new external opportunities (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005: 512).

The business case for CSR was prominently made by the economists Michael Porter und Mark Kramer (2002).[211] Much research, academic or activist, has been dedicated to estimating the impact of such activities (e.g. Blowfield and Frynas, 2005; Frynas 2005; Reed, 2009; Rogers, 2012; van Alstine and Barkemeyer, 2012; Wiig and Kolstad, 2010). CSR is intended to create new consumers among the poor and make the company more attractive to consumers, investors and governments and hence pay back the company in more dividends (Rajak, 2011: 11; Welker, 2009: 145).[212] Jedrzej Frynas identifies four reasons why oil companies engage in CSR: obtaining a competitive advantage because government favours a socially active company; maintaining a stable work environment; managing external perceptions and keeping employees happy (Frynas, 2005: 583–586). There is continuity between CSR and older forms of philanthropy, but its real rise came in the 1990s (Rajak, 2011: 10). The rise of CSR can be connected to the stakeholder movement where stakeholders put pressure on companies. Through CSR the companies could manage this pressure and project an image of a socially responsible and ethically minded business (Garsten, 2010: 57).

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[211] For an overview of research on CSR see Kolk and van Tulder (2010).

[212] For a brief description of the rise of the CSR industry see Welker (2009: 145–146). Welker also points out in this article that against the logic of CSR helping to improve relations, her fieldwork in Indonesia has shown that it can also produce "fresh zones of struggle and new forms of violence" (Welker, 2009: 148).

Ethics and responsibility have come to be "en vogue" in business and can be viewed as a business strategy to adapt to new market conditions (Garsten and Hasselström, 2003: 263). With an increased perception of companies as corporate citizens, the companies can be pictured as responsible for how they interact with greater society (Garsten and Hasselström, 2003: 261). Highlighting the importance of responsibility, Garsten and Hasselström thus connect risk and CSR. Human or environmental scandals involve high costs for the company – costs that have to be avoided to please the shareholders and to maintain a good shareholder value. The risk of environmental pollution has been defined by environmentalists and put on the agenda of the public. In combination with this rise of ethics in business, they obliged the companies to take responsibility. Shareholder movements such as the "socially responsible investment" (Welker and Wood, 2011: S57) have changed the dynamic between shareholders and companies. They created an image of shareholders who were not just focused on profit but who also wanted to take social responsibility.

CSR is also a mechanism companies use to maintain their corporate power. CSR "provides corporations with a moral mechanism through which their authority is extended over the social order" (Rajak, 2011: 13). Meaning that corporations reframe social problems in a way that is in line with their business agenda and in this manage to enlist actors with potentially divergent interests such as NGOs or community leaders. CSR can also be used though to distance the company from the surrounding communities like Chevron tried to disconnect itself from the Bengali population with "empowerment" initiatives (Gardner, 2015). However, this attempt failed because the moral economy of disconnection of Chevron met with a moral economy of connection in Bangladesh, that did not allow Chevron to establish itself as a partner to the people but accorded it the role of a patron – albeit one that did not live up to its obligations.

While the oil companies present national content as part of their corporate social responsibility, it is usually a requirement by the corresponding national governments. National or local content is an arena of negotiations and challenges opened by exporting countries. Oil-producing countries have tried to increase the participation of their national companies in the extractive sector through tariffs and legislations or through assistance to local industries. Historically, oil was extracted by a foreign oil industry until producing countries tried to increase their share of the profits from oil by nationalising industries, indigenising the workforce or joining together in organisations like the OPEC (Ovadia, 2016). However, the policies of nationalisation and indigenisation were mainly successful as a way for the elite to capture the oil rents (ibid: 22). The rise of local content started at the beginning of the new millennium, but already the effectiveness of new local content regulations has been cast into doubt. For Nigeria, the political scientist Jesse Ovadia (2013) concludes that it was an "elite-led attempt to increase its own power and wealth" (Ovadia, 2013: 338).[213] Although Ovadia sees a positive overall economic effect from national content for the country, it is not the majority who will benefit but the top percent – the well-situated individuals.[214] Contributing to Ovadia's argument, a comparison of Tanzania, Mozambique and Uganda states that national content primarily helps the ruling elite as they are faster to capture the local content market (Hansen et al., 2014). It shows that local content is the unregulated or non-scrutinised spoils of the extractive sector and the key arena of rent-seeking (Hansen et al., 2014: 21).

In Uganda, the CSR and national content activities of the oil companies were also contested as not delivering enough connections to the Ugandan economy and in fact rather reducing connections through the insistence on high international standards. After this general overview of CSR and national content, I turn to a discussion of national content in Uganda.

6.2 National Content in Uganda

National content in Uganda is an arena in which the participation of Ugandans in the oil industry in the present and future is negotiated. National content in Uganda was foremost driven by the government. First, I look at the set-up of national content by the government and then its inclusion into CSR by the oil companies.

Government's National Content Policy

In the national oil and gas policy emphasis is put on national content in oil and gas activities to make use of employment opportunities and to help Ugandans acquire skills that can be transferred to other sectors (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 2008: 2). It states that national content through shareholding in licenses and the provision of goods and services will stimulate value creation in the country. However, it acknowledges a lack of financial and technological capacity as a major impediment for Ugandan entrepreneurs to participate in the oil sector:

> The extent to which the country's private sector and its entrepreneurs can participate in oil and gas activities is currently limited by their financial capacity, together with their management and technological skills. It is therefore necessary for the country's private sector to acquire and develop the skills necessary to participate in this sector of development, and where possible, for it to be provided with the opportunity to participate (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 2008: 17).

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[213] Ovadia makes the same argument of national content helping elite accumulation for the case of Angola (Ovadia, 2012).

[214] The positive macroeconomic effect of local content in Nigeria has also been noticed by Adedeji et al., (2016).

Highlighting the skills limitations, the policy stresses the importance of capacity building to enable Ugandan participation in oil and gas activities. The oil and gas sector shall thus contribute to "sustainability, endurance and prosperity" (ibid.: 21). The policy prescribes capacity building for both national institutions and entrepreneurs. It postulates an expectation towards the oil companies of contributing to capacity building and technology transfer (ibid.).

In the Petroleum Acts national content is laid out in different clauses. First of all, a National Oil Company was created.[215] The participation of the state in the industry is secured through joint ventures (Republic of Uganda, 2013b). The provision of services by Ugandans is supposed to be prioritised unless the goods or services cannot offer quality and availability comparable to international offers.[216] It is not mandatory but it is said that the licensee shall give priority to "citizens of Uganda and registered entities owned by Ugandans in the provision of goods and services."[217] Furthermore, the licensees shall have programmes for the recruitment and training of Ugandans.[218] These clauses are meant to guarantee employment of Ugandans and technology transfer.

Since early on, a refinery was considered a crucial part of Uganda's strategy to handle the oil revenues, to participate in the oil project and to prevent the Dutch disease. Construction of a refinery was also included in the National Oil and Gas Policy from 2008 (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 2008: 24–25; Hickey et al., 2015b: 15–16). Even though the wish of the government to build a refinery was accepted by the oil companies, the size of it had been a point of contention. A feasibility study on the refinery was done by Foster Wheeler, a former Swiss consultancy agency that was taken over by its competitor AMEC in 2014. It suggested that a refinery with a capacity of up to 180,000 bpd was cost-effective and economically productive for Uganda and that there was enough oil to have both pipeline and refinery (Hickey et al., 2015b: 17). The study had also compared different possible sites for a refinery and suggested Kabaale in Buseruka sub-county, Hoima District, which is close to the biggest discoveries so far made.

There had been a longer quarrel with the oil companies over the refinery because the oil companies wanted to export the crude oil. Generally, oil companies prefer exporting crude oil because it is cheaper and can be more flexibly adjusted to market demands. The government though had several arguments as to why the construction of a refinery was rational and necessary. In a presentation at the already mentioned conference by RICE-West Nile in Nebbi in 2013, the invited PEPD Officer listed the following reasons in her presentation on the status of the oil and gas industry in

[215] See Petroleum Exploration, Development and Production Act (Republic of Uganda 2013b: clause 43–46). The company was registered in June 2015 and one year later the board of directors appointed Dr. Josephine Wapakabulo as CEO.

[216] See Republic of Uganda (2013b: clause 125).

[217] See Petroleum Refining, Gas Processing and Conversion and Transportation and Storage Act (Republic of Uganda, 2013c: clause 53).

[218] See Republic of Uganda (2013c: clause 54–55) and (2013b: clause 126–127).

Uganda: The refinery is supposed to ensure the supply of petroleum products and boost the region's refining capacity. It shall also help to improve the country's balance of payment by reducing the petroleum products import bill. She said that PEPD considered a refinery a rational exploitation of the resource by promoting sustainable development. Furthermore, the products of the refinery would contribute to the country's growing energy requirement and mix. Also PEPD expected a refinery to create jobs for Ugandans and to be a way to transfer technology in refining and associated industries. She concluded her argument by pointing out that the refinery would increase the competitiveness of Uganda and East Africa in general.

In listing these benefits, the government displays an awareness of negative economic effects such as the Dutch disease, which can affect a country if the oil industry proceeds with enclave production. The government thus mobilised knowledge generated in the economic and political literature on the resource curse to argue for a refinery as a matter of prevention. The government succeeded in its demands for a refinery.

However, the refinery posed a risk to the oil companies, as it would divert crude into a possibly unprofitable project, which could reduce their ability to profit from the oil. Therefore, while the question of whether or not a refinery would be built was decided in favour of the government, the size of the refinery and the pace of its development vis-à-vis the pipeline were the main points of disagreement between the government and the oil companies in the negotiations of the Memorandum of Understanding in 2013 (Hickey et al., 2015b). The government envisioned a refinery that would start relatively low at around 20,000 bbl, then pass a mid-stage of around 60,000 bbl and then reach 120,000 bbl at peak production. The oil companies in turn wanted no refinery at all or only a considerably smaller one.

After a year of disagreements and negotiations, the final MoU between the government and the oil companies was signed in February 2014.[219] The government had successfully pushed for a refinery although with a starting capacity of only 30,000 bpd but with the option of an expansion and a first call on new resources. The government had also successfully rejected an implication of future licensees in the refinery supply obligations as demanded by the oil companies. This would have reduced future input from the joint-venture partners into the refinery (Hickey et al., 2015b: 18–19). Early in 2014, the government started looking for partners to develop the site and operate the refinery. At the beginning of 2015, it was announced that the Russian company RT Global Resources with the partners Tatneft, a Russian oil company, and the Russian VTB Capital, a globally active financial service provider, won the tender to build the refinery. In May 2015, RT Global Resources announced that it would take four and a half years to build the refinery once the agreement with the government was signed. Hence the refinery will not start production before 2020.

[219] Allegedly, some diplomatic pressure was applied by Britain, China and France to make Museveni eventually sign the agreement (Patey, 2015: 17).

National Content Initiatives of the Oil Industry

After discussing the government's strategy, I now take a look at the national content initiatives of the oil companies. I focus the discussion on Tullow because they had been active for longer and were more accessible for me. All joint-venture partners, Tullow, CNOOC and Total, had their own policies and departments or employees to take care of national content framed under CSR. National content gave the companies the "social license" to operate. Employing Ugandans made them partake in the business and benefit from the oil and hence less likely to strike or cause problems to the oil company (National Content Advisor Tullow, interview, 2015). This indirectly lowered costs for security thereby boosting profits and the attractiveness of the company to shareholders.

The social license to operate and the consent of government are important pillars of success. If these actors deem the company's behaviour unfit for their interest (which of course may differ starkly between communities and government), the company may well lose the very material basis for its operation and value-creation: the access to the actual oil. In its corporate responsibility report, Tullow makes this point quite clear by referring to the effects a neglect of environmental and health and safety risks would have: "delays, potential disruptions, increased costs and a reduction in the value of our projects" (Tullow Oil PLC, 2014b).

The oil companies and subcontractors alike prided themselves in the percentage of local workers and employees they had. According to Tullow, in 2013 88% of its 177 employees in Uganda were Ugandans (Tullow Oil PLC, 2013).[220] In its company structure, Tullow had the national content department under supply chain but in a restructuring of the company it was shifted and renamed to public affairs and national content. It is curious that this restructuring happened after the rather heated debates around national content in 2013. In 2015, after a serious scale-down of operations, there was one national content advisor plus the head of the department for public affairs and national content (Interview, 2015).

Tullow's approach to corporate social responsibility has changed over time from a more philanthropic approach to one centred on investment, as the Stakeholder Engagement Manager explained to me:

> [T]he paradigm is changing. You know CSR is really philanthropic as it were but we are calling it social investment. And it's a transformation from CSR to social investment. So it's not different but one and the same. But building on the existing blocks. […] going forward much more emphasis will go towards alignment with the business objectives and management of impacts (Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Tullow, interview, 2013).

[220] No numbers were obtained for Total or CNOOC.

The philanthropic approach had not been very successful as the CSR projects were not sustainable. Criticising the construction of a cultural centre for Bunyoro Kingdom in Hoima town, the Principal Private Secretary of the *Omukama* told me that CSR was peanuts and did not mean taking a share in the oil revenues.[221] This concern is not unfounded if one considers that some of Tullow's projects in Kaiso and Kyehoro have become inefficient within a short time of being put in action.[222] Generally, Tullow's CSR in Uganda was not aligned to the development plans of the districts; hence, putting their sustainability into question (van Alstine et al., 2014).[223]

After 2013, another rebranding to "creating shared prosperity," (CSP) which was still in use in 2016, took place. An analysis I did of CSR reports between 2007 and 2015, showed that these developments took place within the time span of a few years (Tullow Oil PLC, 2007b, 2008b, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014b, 2015). The first shift occurred in 2010 with a change from corporate social responsibility to corporate responsibility, which included responsibility to shareholders. CSR was rebranded as "socially responsible investment," at first partial and then full replacement took place in the 2012 report. On their website they described their social investment as "focused on business objectives, efficient, compliant and sustainable."[224] From 2013 onwards it was referred to as "creating shared prosperity" and included national content, transparency and business ethics. Unlike earlier descriptions of empowerment and support, the new paradigm foresaw the fostering of business relations with community members.

Tullow's overhauled corporate social responsibility strategy places emphasis on the business sense rather than philanthropy. Tullow used its national content policy to further its image of a responsible company interested in creating what they call "shared prosperity."

[221] At first the Kingdom had only built a fence for 100 million Ugandan Shillings (30,300 Euros) as the secretary alleged. At the end of 2013, Tullow sent a manager to help finalise the project and in the end, a cultural centre was constructed.

[222] A new health centre collapsed as it could not withstand the local conditions. It was built on a hill and the area is rocked by earthquakes of different strengths every day. Though most of these are mini quakes that cannot even be felt and are only visible on the seismograph. In a group chat, casual workers complained that once Tullow stopped paying the schoolteachers and government took over, teachers reverted to not showing up at the beginning of the term (Interview, 2012). Also the lake rescue centre that had an operating crew while Tullow was sponsoring it was unattended when I saw it in 2012.

[223] In comparison, Total took a firm stance of not funding activities that were not aligned with the district development plan and backed by a majority. At a dialogue meeting hosted by RICE in Nebbi, a Total representative emphasised that they would not allow "shopping lists" of individuals but would only contribute to community projects and not fund them completely or give out free things. He stressed that Total would not replace the government as this was not sustainable (RICE dialogue, Nebbi, 2012).

[224] By now this information is no longer available online.

> At Tullow, we talk about 'Shared Prosperity;' this relates to the reciprocal pact made between us and the people of Uganda. Our success as a company is only as good as our ability to make a lasting, recognizable contribution. By aligning with the Government's priorities, we are investing in skills and capability which will one day contribute to developing a diversified economy where local and international enterprise can be allowed to flourish. We have no intention to simply set up in Uganda and then disappear. We want our legacy to be measured according to what we have helped make happen while we were here and what continues to flourish when we have left (Tullow Oil PLC, (n.d.)).[225]

Tullow had set up a not-for-profit company that was supposed to help local farmers improve their farming and to forge business ties between Tullow's caterers and the farmers. Traidlinks' mandate was to help Ugandan farmers to raise standards, in order to benefit from the myriad opportunities it proclaimed existed around oil and gas exploration. During my research the effectiveness and reach of Traidlinks was quite limited. The only cooperation it had set up was between the local farmers' association and a catering company delivering food to Tullow's camps.

The rebranding is not just a change of name but of strategy. From offering assistance in the form of hospitals, schools, education campaigns or scholarships Tullow started viewing the relationship with the community more as a business relation, hence refusing the philanthropy implied in CSR. Curiously enough though the two acronyms used to describe these very different strategies are very similar. They are not even a full letter but only a small line apart. CSP manages the risks the communities pose but it also improves the public image and allows even ethically conscious shareholders to consider investment. The redirection of Tullow's approach is potentially also a way to disengage themselves from the image of the paternalistic company by stressing the business relations.

Despite these efforts from the government and the oil companies, analysts from social sciences are not very optimistic about the success of national content in Uganda. The political scientist Anne Mette Kjaer (2013) postulates that Uganda's economy was not likely to benefit from investments in the oil as it lacks capacity and so far has few linkages to the international industry (Kjaer, 2013: 9). Another impediment lies in the political situation in Uganda with an increasingly fragmented ruling party, which they claim results in a focus on short-term political survival, rather than long-term policies and a concurrent politicisation of the oil by the ruling elite (ibid.: 12). Ovadia situates Uganda in a wave of local content, in which the regulations have become more pro-business and less clear on definition and measurement of local

[225] This is an answer from a booklet on "Frequently Asked Questions." The question to this answer was "How is Tullow living up to its promise of making a long-term, sustainable contribution to Uganda? What does this mean in practice and what evidence will there be when Tullow leaves?"

content (Ovadia, 2016: 29).[226] Another study sees two major difficulties for national content in Uganda: one, the political context which drains rents from the sector towards the political elite and accordingly to its political survival and second the weak capacity in terms of manufacturing that is done by small companies with low levels of technology (Hansen et al., 2014: 21).

The studies on local content in Uganda reflect widely held positions in the country that Ugandan companies lacked capacity to profit from the new opportunities. These representations reflect concerns raised in the resource curse debate, I discussed in the fourth chapter. Overall, most of Uganda's economy is based on micro to medium scale enterprises out of which many operate in the informal sector (Mawejje and Okumu, 2016: 442). There were few companies that could easily compete with international oil field service providers. Therefore, they failed to get contracts from the oil companies.

In the next sub-chapter, I turn to the debate about national content as it shows the opportunities, problems and challenges of national content as perceived by the various stakeholders that I see as forming four major strategic groups: the international oil industry, the Ugandan government, national oil companies and last but not least the extractive communities.[227]

6.3 A Conference on National Content

Mid-2013, International Alert Uganda organised a conference in Masindi, in the oil region, to bring together local companies and entrepreneurs, all three oil companies (CNOOC, Tullow and Total), ministry officials and the lobby group Association of Ugandan Oil and Gas Service Providers (AUOGS). The lobby group was formed at the national level by bigger national companies that joined together in an attempt to enlarge their share in the oil business. The creation of this association was stipulated in the National Content Policy with the intention of developing suppliers' capacities. In their work, the association stressed the indigenousness of a company in order to qualify as Ugandan and thus benefit from the national content legislation.[228]

In the first part of the conference, presentations were held by a representative of the Ministry of Energy and a policy consultant on energy law of the consulting com-

[226] This is his conclusion from a comparison of local content provisions across different countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. His brief discussion on the state of it in Uganda is based mainly on the studies cited above and reports from MEMD (Ovadia, 2016).

[227] It is untypical from an anthropological perspective to talk of extractive communities as a collective actor because it hides the factions and struggles within communities and problematically freezes actors in their position as community members. Still, I use this label as it was taken up by residents of the oil region when speaking out on the issue of national content.

[228] AUOGS includes the following companies Eagle Air, Richflo Lift Services, Bemuga Forwarders, Threeways Shipping and Quantum Associates. The group is led by Prof. Charles Kwesiga.

pany Bridge Consult[229], a representative of Tullow and the spokesman of the lobby group AUOGS. After the presentations there was time for questions from the plenary. In the second part, after lunch, participants formed three groups to discuss different elements of the policy draft of Bridge Consult and offer recommendations.

The atmosphere at the conference was quite tense and the oil company representatives got attacked both by the spokesman of AUOGS and by the audience. The discussion at the conference between the oil companies, Ugandan companies and people from the extractive communities centred on standards in the oil industry. In the following, I present statements made during the conference that are representative of the positions held by each of these strategic groups. In subsequent parts of this sub-chapter, I go into a detailed analysis of these statements to contextualise them by analysing e.g. why the oil companies enforced international standards. I relate the observations from the conference to other data I collected in my research and thereby expand out from this single event towards a more generalisable statement about these positions.

During the conference, a European local content projects manager from Tullow's supply-chain department explained to the audience Tullow's National Content Policy. He presented the oil life cycle, pointing out at which phases of the cycle, demand would be high and local companies could offer their services to the industry as long as they reached Tullow's minimum standards for product quality and operational safety. Faced with an irritated audience, he denied allegations of unfairness and arrogance by stressing the importance of the standards. In turn, he lamented over the divergent expectations levelled at the oil companies:

> There have been discussions in many countries about standards, international standards. Many people feel that those standards have been high and that they're abused to exclude the local people from working in the oil and gas industry and other industries. That's not true. We have to comply with these international standards. We are an international company. We borrow our money that we invest in exploration, appraisal and development from international organisations […] If you borrow money from [these organisations] you have to perform to their performance standards. If we were not implement[ing] international standards in the way we did with our work for example in health and social, we would be criticised […] by exploited Ugandans and expecting Ugandans because we are not looking after their health and we're not looking after their safety because of cheap. Our argument that well, we're trying to work with the improvements, doesn't wash. So we have been squeezed at times that people expect us to perform to international standards and we have this

229 This is a Norwegian consulting company. The company has also assisted in drafting a 2011 study on national content for the Ministry of Energy. Norway has been very active in helping Uganda develop institutional capacity on oil and gas matters (Kashambuzi, 2010; Miriima, 2013).

> problem the other end of getting local companies up to the standard where they can work for us (Local content projects manager Tullow).

The representative pointed out the two stakeholders that are important for the companies to consider with regard to national content: on the one hand stakeholders in Uganda who want to participate but do not qualify and on the other hand, the institutions that lend the company money for its operations. Tullow relies on its "operating cash flow," which is money generated from the business operations and external sources including commercial banks, multilateral project financing[230], and debt capital markets.[231] Without these funds, Tullow (and to a lesser extent the other companies) could not be doing its business. The expression he used of them being "squeezed" denotes a feeling of unfairness of being torn between opposing demands.

Fairness also came up on the side of the Ugandan companies when the AUOGS spokesman attacked the oil companies in his presentation:

> Previously, local companies cooperated well with the international oil companies but this has changed […] They sounded so friendly, they sounded to have a good will but at the end of the day they remain business people and they showed us their colour. They started leaving us by the roadside. They started talking about standards. Standards, standards, we didn't know what are standards. Where? And what the word standards meant. We thought that they had changed the meaning of the word standards. […] We are asking for fairness. That's what we're asking for. We're not asking for preferential treatment, we're asking for fairness. […] When we are debating we need to have a clear definition of what local content is. We need to have a clear definition of what a local company means. […] We should not compromise on those things. Otherwise, this oil that we're having in our country […] it's going to enrich other economies that are not Ugandan (Spokesman AUOGS).

Such statements turned the standards and the question of who gets to define them into an issue to be discussed. Reference to international standards was taken to be unfair play directed against the Ugandan companies. The AUOGS spokesman referred to a different treatment of other international companies. Oil companies were accused of being arrogant, lacking transparency and blocking the access to the industry for Ugandan companies. The spokesman was accusing the companies of favouring foreign companies. He mentioned the connection to the wider participation of

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230 An example of multilateral project financing in the extractive sector is the International Finance Corporation, which is an arm of the World Bank and according to the journalist Tom Burgis accounts for most of the World Bank's spending on oil and gas (Burgis, 2015: 154).

231 See: https://web.archive.org/web/20170218100208/www.tullowoil.com/investors [February 2018]. On capital markets long-term capital (e.g. in form of bonds) can be acquired with the assistance of investment banks that broker between companies and investors.

Ugandans in the spoils of the oil and thereby drew on risks known from the resource curse discourse. Also, it was a clear appeal for a legal framework to protect Ugandan companies. Furthermore, he stressed that it should be clearly defined what a Ugandan company is, with the intention of keeping out companies that were set up by foreigners in Uganda.

Representatives of the Ministry of Energy and the Petroleum Department supported the oil companies. The representative of MEMD asked the audience not to blame the oil companies but to deliver their suggestions because this was what, according to her, the dialogue was about. A senior geophysicist of PEPD and the current head of the national content unit at the Directorate of Petroleum, exclaimed that he did not know why Tullow did not stand up and point out that their general manager was a Ugandan. They suggested that people should look for the "little" opportunities in the oil industry like doing the catering. Furthermore, they emphasised that jobs were only given to Non-Ugandans if the knowledge they have could not be found among Ugandan applicants. They reminded everyone that the creation of AUOGS was a suggestion by the government aimed at creating a link between itself and the oil industry that would help monitor the implementation of national content.

In turn, many people from the extractive communities joined together with AUOGS against the oil companies. A lady from a CSO focused on women empowerment from Nebbi asked the oil companies whether they could reduce their standards "to feed the local communities". The very limited negotiability of the standards annoyed and irritated people. A radio journalist from Hoima complained about the claim of lacking skills:

> And the talk of we don't have the skills. Which skills? We have the skills. But maybe we are only at a certain level. Only that we need to be improved. You talk about the welders. We have the welders. They are welding. You talk about electricians. They are there (Radio journalist from Hoima).

He acknowledged though that the local welders and electricians would need to be "improved." It has to be noted here that while the invited community members did join in the criticism of the oil companies during this conference, the issue of national content also put people from the extractive community at loggerheads with the national companies: these were perceived as taking the job opportunities away from the people in the oil region. Furthermore, sentiments in the community reflected the notion that it is mainly the elite who captures the profits from national content (cf. Ovadia 2013).

At the conference it thus seemed that there were two big factions: the ones opposing the international standards (the extractive communities and AUOGS) and those backing them (the government and the oil companies). Why were the standards so important for the oil companies that they accepted angering Ugandans in the capital and in the extractive communities? And why are the same standards not relevant to

Uganda companies? The following sub-chapters analyse and contextualise these positions in more detail.

The Position of the Government

During the conference the government supported the oil companies and their insistence on the international standards. In general, the government was actively pushing for national content though. With the national content regulation, elaborated above, the government intended to further linkages between the companies in the oil industry and Ugandan companies and Ugandan people. The companies had to employ a certain percentage of Ugandans and build capacity among Ugandans to achieve a skills transfer. In an interview, the Commissioner of PEPD Ernest Rubondo related to me the government's approach to national content:

> You need to approach local content holistically: By having the industry we now have opportunities for companies that didn't exist before. There are already Ugandan companies working for the oil companies. I am surprised by the extent to which Ugandans transport, drill, do catering and provide air travel. You also need to recognise that the industry needs standards. The biggest thing now is to build the standards in Uganda. The effort spent in the debate should be dedicated to identify the gaps and how to build the companies [i.e. help them bridge the gaps]. I'd rather want to go to a successful company and find what they do good to copy it. And government is already doing that. Government has done a study on local content. […] The study recommended that an association should be built and that happened. It recommended that government should have a special unit and it is in place. It recommended a policy should be done which is in progress. You need an organised framework for local content and government is doing that but while building it you should go for the low-hanging fruits and ensure that we get that much of local content which is possible (PEPD Commissioner, interview, 2013).

The study he referred to was conducted by the Ministry of Energy on the state of local content in 2011. It found that up to 2009 14 percent of foreign investment was retained in Uganda and 35 percent of contracts were between Tullow and Ugandan companies. The figure was given with the caveat that this could include shell companies, which are companies without active business operations or significant assets (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 2011: 19). In the interview the Commissioner pointed to the standard gap, meaning the difference in standards between Ugandan companies and the demands of the oil industry. In order to bridge the gap his department and the Ministry of Energy in general were interested in aligning the Ugandan standards with international ones.

In an interview with an Information Officer at the Ugandan National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) in 2015, he mentioned that the ministry was very interested in moving forward what he called the "indigenisation" of standards, meaning the adoption of international standards through UNBS. The ministry was facilitating a technical committee on oil and gas by financing the meetings or even the adoption of standards from the American Petroleum Institute (API).

An alignment of Ugandan standards with international ones means that the purchase of certificates becomes cheaper for Ugandan companies because they do not need to seek certification from expensive international agencies that are authorised or accredited (e.g. by the International Accreditation Forum) to perform certification.[232] This helps bridging the pronounced 'standard gap.' In the interview the officer also told me that the standardisation process was done by consensus and companies could choose to have representatives on board. Asked about any challenges in the process, he told me:

> We have not had much of that [controversies around standards]. I think mainly because [the] Ministry of Energy actually understands our obligation to be able to use requirements which are accepted internationally, yes. So we've not had much challenges. We had a challenge to do with… I sat in a meeting of the service station. We had a challenge. […] We picked a South African standard and we were trying to customise it for Uganda, make it indigenous. So a couple of areas were rejected by the industry like 'No, this is not for us. It's for, you know, the developed world' (Information Officer, UNBS, interview, 2015).

Ugandan companies active in the downstream sector of the oil industry influenced the adoption of standards they thought were too high for them to achieve. While UNBS sets the standards in Uganda, international standards are set by standards organisations such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) or with special regard to the oil industry also the API. The ISO defines risks and how they should be managed or avoided, i.e. what standards should be applied in different industries. ISO is a non-governmental membership organisation, which forms technical committees consisting of representatives of industries, NGOs, governments and other stakeholders. Uganda is a member body of the ISO.[233] Standard setting is a process without a final endpoint. The way the standard-setting organisations work

[232] For more information on certification bodies see the websites of the International Organization for Standardization (https://www.iso.org/certification.html [February 2018]) or that of the American Petroleum Institute (http://www.api.org/products-and-services/standards/purchase [February 2018]).

[233] For developing standards, member bodies, i.e. national standard organisations, can decide to participate fully or just be an observer to the technical committee. The committee creates a draft, which is then voted on by the ISO members. If it reaches consensus the draft becomes an ISO standard, otherwise it goes back to the technical committee for further editing. See the ISO website: www.iso.org/iso/home/standards_development.htm [February 2018]. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 percent of the member bodies casting a vote (www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:31000:ed-1:v1:en [February 2018]).

allows for outsiders to initiate a review process in which standards are being negotiated.

For the government, national content was important because it offered a chance of (further) developing Uganda and generating employment opportunities for its people. In chapter four, I presented the government's position that they understood the oil as a future blessing because the 'right' governance mechanisms were in place. National content regulations fall under this governance because they aim to prevent negative economic effects of the oil industry such as enclave production and Dutch disease. While the Ugandan government demanded national content on the one hand, it recognised on the other that it had to meet international standards. The indigenisation of standards was a means to lower the threshold for Ugandan companies, but problems of offering training institutions that can deliver up to the standards remained. In a way, the government took up a position not altogether different form the oil companies: standards were not negotiable. I turn to the oil companies' stance in the following sub-chapter.

The Position of the Oil Companies

The position of the oil companies in the debate was that their standards would have to be reached by all their service providers. Representatives of the three joint-venture partners stressed time and again that they did not intend to exclude Ugandan companies or be unfair but that it was a question of whether the companies were able to reach the international standards, as the following quote from an information brochure of Tullow points out.

> The oil and gas industry is a highly skilled business, with a wide range of specialist support skills. At the moment, these skills are simply not available in Uganda, where the oil and gas industry is still in its infancy. We have to bring in expatriates for the more senior jobs, to harness their expertise and to ensure that our activities run efficiently, on schedule and on budget (Tullow Oil PLC, (n.d.)).[234]

This statement is a means of managing the employment expectations of Ugandans. It does so by referring to the special skills needed in the industry. The argument is in line with the national content policy of the government. Tullow's joint venture partners supported this line of argument. The Ugandan CSR manager of CNOOC also stressed how important international standards were and that local companies most of the times failed to reach the health and safety standards requested and even stressed that local companies had to be rejected when they were sub-standard. According to him, local companies lacked an awareness of health and safety standards

[234] This quote is from the booklet "Frequently Asked Questions" and the question was "Why is there need for expatriates?"

(Interview, 2013). It may seem odd at first that a Chinese company stresses international standards since Chinese companies have a reputation of neglecting standards in health and safety and labour rights (Tan-Mullins 2014). However, CNOOC has been described as being more international and closer to "Western" business practices from the outset (Meidan 2016: 29). Furthermore, CNOOC is itself listed on stock exchanges and is thus not just owned by the Chinese state but also to a minor part by international institutional or individual shareholders.

Additionally, CNOOC, Total and Tullow formed a joint-venture and as such were interested in harmonising their approach to standards. In 2015, they had not yet achieved a proper harmonisation (National Content Adviser, Tullow, interview, 2015). Indeed, there have been investigations into CNOOC by Uganda's Human Rights Commission on alleged mistreatment of workers with regard to salaries, work conditions such as the ability to take leave days and the suppression of opinions. CNOOC workers had complained in a letter to senior managers about double standards between Chinese and Ugandan staff.[235] Reportedly, the company was admonished in September 2014 by the commissioner of the petroleum department and told to fix their human resource challenges (Imaka and Wesonga, 2014).[236] During my field trips to Uganda, such issues have not been reported on widely and I did not hear any complaints that differed from those levelled at the other companies.[237]

Despite differences in the implementation of national content between the joint venture partners, the rhetoric was the same and is similar to this comment a Ugandan Stakeholder Engagement Manager of Tullow made during an interview:

> I will tell you one thing, IHS[238] standards are a must in oil and gas. And it's a good thing to make sure that they are adhered to. It helps a lot. There are serious issues of health and hygiene […] and then serious issues of environmental protection and so forth. Now, those standards what is going to be helpful, to enable potential contractors or business and suppliers people to be educated on them and learn how to fulfil them. Because […] there's not going to be any

[235] The letter was leaked to the national newspaper Daily Monitor, which reported on the case in July 2014 (Imaka, 2014).

[236] This issue could explain why CNOOC was more edgy about an interview appointment in 2015 compared to 2013. While in both cases I was not allowed to record the interview, the second time I could not have an interview alone with staff from their Quality, Health, Safety and Environment department and I was not able to access the manual of that department, which I was told included a risk matrix and laid out their overall approach. After the interview I was asked to have my interview transcript approved by my interlocutor and the Corporate Affairs Manager.

[237] However, in Pakwach casual workers did complain to me about the accommodation of a Chinese service provider. According to them the Chinese workers were accommodated in containers with airconditioning while the Ugandan casuals had to sleep in tents.

[238] IHS (Information Handling Services) is a company that offers products and services such as technical documents on standards from various standard organisations, industry data and analysis, software and consulting services. Since 2016 it is called IHS Markit after a merger with the company Markit.

> circumvention. They have to be followed. And fortunately it offers an opportunity to them to also do things properly. Handle food well, transport it well. Not just slaughter an animal and then make another person carry it on a *boda boda* [motorcycle taxi] like this. No, it doesn't make sense. You have to carry, treat something you eat properly. It has to be dressed well, it has to be packed well, it has to be transported well. Simple. […] I have been in the oil and gas industry; it's coming to five years. I've learnt a lot. It's about compliance and it's about learning. But it's not difficult, they're not really very difficult. It's about understanding what they want and how to apply it (Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Tullow, interview, 2013).

This quote underlines the importance of knowledge when it comes to standards and risks. To the Stakeholder Engagement Manager it was clear though that the standards of the oil companies made sense and were the ones everybody should operate with. The example of the local butcher who transported meat on a motorcycle was mentioned in other interviews too. A Community Liaison Officer (CLO) from Total in Pakwach told me how rigid the control for meat transport was and how the oil companies would not compromise on such standards. He also mentioned that apart from the standards, the oil companies needed the suppliers to be reliable and to work within a strict time frame. Yet, many local contractors failed these requirements and thus did not benefit (CLO Total Pakwach, interview, 2013).

Although national content was a formal requirement branded as CSR, it could also be justified with economic reasons. Contracting Ugandan labour and using Ugandan products and services was cheaper than the wages paid for expat labour and the taxes paid for and time spent on importing items.

> National content is not just about meeting legislative requirements or ticking a box to demonstrate that we have spent money locally or created the requisite number of jobs; it is also about reducing project costs. It makes good business sense, and we have aligned our local content strategy with our business needs. We believe that developing local content is responsible business practice, creates a positive social and economic impact, and enhances our bottom line and reputation (Tullow Oil PLC, 2010: 26).

Knowing it made good business sense, the Country Manager of one of the subcontractor companies told me that his company was interested in hiring local people but could not take the risk of work not being done properly (Country Manager, international rig operating company, interview, 2013). According to what I was told by representatives of both international and national companies in the oil business they thought that the people from the villages lacked working morale and were unreliable. It annoyed some of the companies that they were forced to recruit in the region though many people were unskilled, i.e. lacked qualifications for the work or were not educated enough.

Several foreign companies in the industry expressed to me the frustration they felt because of the diverse expectations from in- and outside of Uganda that they had to deal with just like the representative of the company complained at the conference in Masindi that they were being "squeezed." The Country Manager of the abovementioned international rig operating company explained to me how there was no single Ugandan expectation but rather divergent demands from various interest groups that had to be taken into account. He also expressed a feeling of unfairness, because he felt that rules were stricter for his company than for Ugandan companies. While Ugandan companies would not pay taxes, the government would scrutinise whatever they as a foreign company were doing. Indignated, he told me that according to one of his Ugandan employees the Ugandan government considered *mzungu* companies to be "milky cows" (Country Manager, interview 2013).

The debate evidences that the oil companies had to navigate between various claims, those of their international investors, those of international NGOs and those of diverse actors in Uganda. The oil companies were walking a tight line between not offending people by not employing Ugandans and offending them by employing the 'wrong' Ugandans. They were juggling different demands and expectations all the while experiencing mistrust from the government, civil society and people they interacted with in the oil region as noted in the previous chapter. All these demands were potential sources of harm as a negative, mistrustful atmosphere against the oil companies. A failure of managing stakeholder relations could lead to a to a loss of the social license to operate, resulting in conflict with the population in the exploration area, sabotage or violence against the companies and their workers, which are well known in other contexts such as Nigeria.

National content and the connections it creates to Uganda and its people thus also poses a risk to the oil companies but it is a risk they cannot avoid. They can only manage it by establishing certain rules or standards for it that keep the risky elements, that is the sub-standard companies, out. The oil company representatives thereby moved the negotiation of participation to a technical level. Not giving contracts to Ugandan companies was presented as a business necessity. A necessity that was hard to challenge because it built on the need to adhere to international standards. The oil companies took the stance that international standards were self-evidently important to good business operations and therefore could not be lowered. They underlined how they were actively helping Ugandans through their CSR programs and an employment policy that favoured Ugandans. To make their point about the standards (and skills) in the debate, the oil companies used examples that seemed 'common sense' about health and safety, such as carrying meat openly on a motorcycle, when clearly the exigencies of the oil and gas industry go beyond common sense as the examples of the safety regimes that I describe below illustrate.

The Safety Regime

The oil companies have safety regulations that are intended to prevent accidents from happening. Naturally in a high-reliability industry like the oil industry, safety risks abound. They are managed through the observance of certain safety measures presented as unavoidable international standards of risk control. The safety culture is supposed to manage all accidents that could happen to workers of the companies, residents of the communities of the production area or the environment during exploration or production.

What qualifies as an accident is the result of negotiations. In the early days of the oil industry up until late in the twentieth century this kind of risk awareness did not exist. The current risk awareness and management is, according to Appel (2012a: 702), the result of scandals and catastrophes in the oil industry such as the Exxon Valdez in 1989.[239] Others date the emergence of environmental awareness earlier: either to the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill (Olien and Davids Hinton, 2007: 136, 146) or to the Torrey Canyon disaster off the coast of Cornwall in 1967 (Mitchell, 2009: 408).

In Uganda, the environmental stakes of oil exploration and production are particularly high since some of the discoveries were made within the boundaries of the Murchison Falls National Park. Doing exploration and later production in a National Park bore more risks to the company because there was more scrutiny on these areas. Operations within the national park were under many constraints. In case of a serious spillage, a damage to the company's image seems very likely. A lot of emphasis was put on not destroying the natural environment. Total claimed it was trying to keep its environmental impact low by doing an environmental baseline survey, instituting an expert "watchdog committee" to monitor their exploration activities and by using vibrator trucks in the seismic surveys (Corporate Affairs Manager, Total, interview, 2013).

Generally the oil industry countered the risk of humans ending up in and causing accidents by adopting a safety concept, in which oil workers routinely had to participate in safety trainings of recognised institutions, each day started with a safety induction, each activity required a special permit and at work the personal protective equipment (PPE), i.e. helmet, goggles and boots, needed to be worn all the time (cf. Appel, 2012a). Furthermore, there were hazard observation cards (HOCs) that workers needed to fill out on any potential risk they encountered at their workplace.

This safety culture was pervasive to the point of annoying the oil workers. While having an after-work beer with expatriate workers of a big international subcontractor in Hoima, one of them started joking about HOCs. They were both tired of them and reference to HOCs had become somewhat of an insider joke. Half-jokingly, the older one explained the procedure: Looking at the centre hole for an umbrella in the plastic table we sat at, he said that he would have to fill out an HOC stating that

239 For a brief description of the development of the environmental movement see Jamison (1996).

there was a potential hazard his glass might fall into the hole. Hazard registration had a low threshold within the oil industry. The low threshold is needed to account for the unknown unknowns that could cause harm. It might seem ridiculous or superfluous in that moment but might prove important later on. This is the logic of the precautionary principle that has taken precedence in Western societies in the past century (Beck, 1986; Rose, 2010).

Tullow publicly displayed a very pronounced stance on safety regulations, stressing them in various ways.[240] At the beginning of a conference, the Community Liaison Officer of Tullow gave the attendants safety instructions indicating the emergency exits in case of a fire. At their office in Kampala while waiting for my interview appointment, I was given a safety instruction card by the receptionist, which explained to me how to behave in case of a fire. When the secretary walked me to where my interlocutor was, she waited for me to put my hand on the banister for going up the staircase and pointed out any tiny hump on our way lest I trip and fall. In the hallways on a table next to a pair of armchairs a framed safety instruction was informing about proper sitting at work. At the coffee/tea table a sign was advising the potential consumers that the water was hot and so on.

While the safety regime looks very stringent on a representational level – sometimes even bordering on the ridiculous (cf. Appel, 2012a) – actual practices may, of course, differ from it. In one of my first interviews, my interlocutor who had been working in the oil industry for many years and, at the time of the interview, was running a training institute called Petroleum Skills[241] in Kampala, told me the following about the oil industry:

> So the practical side you need, you can't come out of university with a degree, go on a drilling rig and manage it. It's impossible. Because it's such a completely different beast from anything else that I've ever encountered. […] you need the theory combined with the practical. And it's got to be back and forward and it'll depend on the personnel how quickly they then move on to the next level […] In the UK, I know of people who were […] assistant supervisors let's put it and they actually couldn't read and write. So the oil industry

[240] In this analysis I again focus more on Tullow than the other companies more material is available online on their risk management. It creates the image of an earnest, clean and social company that nevertheless has economic success and profit as its core values. From the general information I got on Total's website, their system is similar to Tullow's. When I first checked, nothing regarding safety standards or risk management could be found on CNOOC's homepage. Since 2015 their Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) unit has undergone improvements and their website now includes information on employee responsibility and social responsibility, including operational safety, environmental protection and response to climate change. This corresponds to the obersvation that Chinese oil companies have only recently turned to implementing risk management in line with market demands (Kong 2010: 144).

[241] The institute later merged with Ogas Solutions. For more information see their website: http://ogassolutions.com/about-us/ [February 2018].

> is a strange beast that you can do things through bad colouring and this was people who were working mixing chemicals and they can do it. There's ways you can get round that and as long as you know you've got the experience of how to measure certain viscosities, certain weights, you can get by (Director, Petroleum Skills, interview 2012).

At first sight, the quote basically highlights how important practical knowledge is in the oil industry. And indeed, many careers have started from "below" and continued to rise up to the top, e.g. the management of a drilling rig.[242] However, the quote goes beyond a statement on the relevance of practical knowledge. The director considered the rig to be a different beast and linked it to the otherness or strangeness of the whole industry. He pointed to informal regulations and laid bare a contradiction of the industry that on the one hand hails high safety standards and on the other hand allows an illiterate person to mix chemicals. Things are done "through bad colouring" or knowing how to "get by." The director labelled this as the industry being "a strange beast."

The beast metaphor resonates with general perceptions of an oil-hungry industry that scrambles for African countries. An industry that doesn't care about the environment or human rights but devours all that comes its way; an industry that poses a risk to people, states and the whole earth. This perception corresponds with an image many researchers and journalists have created of the oil companies focusing on their power and obscure or even illegal machinations that disempower most Africans (Burgis, 2015; Frynas and Paulo, 2006; Klare, 2004, Sampson, 1975; Shaxson, 2008; Soares de Oliveira, 2007; Watts, 2008; Yates, 2006; Yergin, 2009). A perception fed further by stories and studies telling of destruction of environment, livelihoods and lives altogether (Breglia, 2013; Reed, 2009; Sawyer, 2004). Time and again, the oil industry has been found to do things "through bad colouring," salting their probes, by-passing legislations and externalising the risks and uncertainties of their operations onto their workers and other stakeholders spelling disaster for environment and extractive communities, most lately at the Deepwater Horizon (Watts, 2015).[243] What seems to be important is that the certificates are right and that everything appears to be right. But at the level of practices, it seems quite common to circumvent rules.

Nevertheless, the safety regime is more than just a show. It is intended to protect the workers from harming themselves and the business. From a governmentality

[242] Especially in the early ages of the industry, there was no formalised training, no prior knowledge, everything was done as learning on the job. This hands-on knowledge and working one's way up are part of what could potentially be described as an oil worker identity (Lubeck, 1989, 1978; Lynch, 1987).

[243] Watts demonstrates on the Deepwater Horizon disaster that the risks of the offshore industry have become unmanageable and that it was the result of "cutthroat corporate cost-cutting, the collapse of government and regulatory authority, and the deepening financialization and securitization of the oil market" (Watts, 2015: 217–218).

perspective on risk (e.g. O'Malley, 2000), the safety regime is a system to govern workers. The strict camp management, that regulates life at rig camps, could be understood as a means to maintain or even increase the work efficiency of the workers. The camp structure, the routines, the regulations and the constant control or threat of it can be compared to a panopticon (Foucault, 1994, 2006a,b).[244] So far, I have elaborated on how the oil companies tried to achieve and portray safe operations to their shareholders and Ugandans. In the next section, I turn to the importance of the shareholders.

Risk management, Shareholders and Financialisation

In order to understand the safety regime and the risk management of the oil companies in general, it is necessary to throw a glance at the underlying business logic. Therefore, I now turn to the role of shareholder value and the impact of financialisation on the oil industry. Shareholders are of paramount importance to the oil companies, especially for Tullow to start its "business cycle of value generation." For Tullow, successful value creation means generating profits through successful business operations and effective risk management, which allow the company to grow and expand, and deliver returns to the shareholders who had invested money in the company. On its website Tullow states:

> Effectively managing risk across the Group is a competitive necessity and fundamental to creating and maintaining shareholder value and protecting our business, people and reputation.[245]

At the centre of Tullow's risk management are the economic success of the company and the achievement of their business objectives. Shareholder value is at the heart of Tullow's risk management despite claims that "Tullow considers the community the heart of everything it does" (Tullow Oil PLC, (n.d.)). In Tullow's 2013 CSR report is a graphic on its strategy of "creating shared prosperity" at the centre of which is a dollar sign with "financial & operational performance" written under it and explained in the legend as "Deliver returns to shareholders and providers of capital" (Tullow Oil PLC, 2013: 4).[246] Shareholder value is an important guiding figure for the oil

[244] Labour control strategies of the oil industry, such as company housing in company towns, have been discussed for Nigeria by Ihonvbere (1998). Company housing not only creates patron-client relations between company and workers but also eases surveillance of the workers. According to Shever (2008, 2012) similar strategies were employed by the Argentinian national oil company.

[245] See Tullow's website: https://web.archive.org/web/20170218100358/www.tullowoil.com/about-us/risk-management [February 2018].

[246] Tullow does note though that the financial performance "underpins our ability to meet our commitments to our employees, suppliers and providers of capital" (ibid.). Other elements of the graphic like local content, stakeholder engagement, environment, health and safety or social performance are considered to be important to run the business successfully.

industry. To be attractive companies generate returns for investors by monetising assets.[247]

The focus on the shareholder value is a rather new phenomenon, especially in Europe. In 1999 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) set it as a principle that corporations should be run in the interest of the shareholder. Up until the 1970s, companies were first led and controlled by family owners and later by salaried managers, whose position was then challenged by the idea to give control to the shareholders (Aglietta, 2000: 149; Lazonick and O'Sullivan, 2000: 15–16). It was popularised in the United States and Britain in the 1980s by economists who wished to leave the conduct of corporations to the market. Shareholder value was considered as being a way to allow the free market to do so. It prioritises the shareholder over other constituents of the firm (Ho, 2009: 183; van der Zwan, 2014: 107). The main objective is to maximise dividends and keep the stock prices high. The performance of the company is judged by financial performance measures such as return on equity or return on investment,[248] international accounting standards and publication of quarterly reports (van der Zwan, 2014: 108). The financial gains of a good performance are not (completely) reinvested in production, but are distributed to the shareholders through dividend payments and stock repurchases at high prices (Lazonick, 2015: 3). This strategy is a way the shareholders and the CEOs of the company, who are usually shareholders themselves, profit from it (Lazonick and O'Sullivan, 2000: 29).[249]

Shareholder value is connected to the process of financialisation that has transformed capitalism at least since the 1970s and arguably even earlier (van der Zwan, 2014: 117). Financialisation means the spread of finance out of the market realm and into everyday life:

> [T]he web of interrelated processes – economic, political, social, technological, cultural etc. – through which finance has extended its influence beyond the marketplace and into other realms of social life (van der Zwan, 2014: 101).[250]

[247] For more information see Tullow's website www.tullowoil.com/investors [February 2018].

[248] Both return on equity and return on investment measure efficiency. Return on investment measures the efficiency of investments by comparing the cost of investment to the amount returned. Return on equity, which is the value of an asset minus the value of liabilities on that asset, measures the efficiency of a company by calculating how much profit it generates with the money invested by shareholders.

[249] The CEOs and shareholders could also be viewed as rentiers who derive their income from financial assets and transactions and not production (van der Zwan, 2014: 105).

[250] It is important to note though that financialisation studies have an Anglo-American focus and the sweeping ideas of how financialisation impacts on every aspect of life and ultimately even on identity appear somewhat deterministic without being able to explain why indeed financial markets have had different impacts on different economies (van der Zwan, 2014: 115–116). Especially the spread of shareholder value beyond the U.S.A. is a process that needs more attention (ibid: 110).

This has also been described as a resocialisation of corporate America through Wall Street, where Wall Street managers impose their corporate culture on others (Ho, 2009). Ronald Dore (2000) calls this a managerial economy because the managers who run companies have to handle demands from insurance companies, pension funds, investment funds and banks which again are run by managers (Dore, 2000: 12–13).

Unlike producer markets, financial markets are not concerned with the production or distribution of goods but with trade of goods that are not meant for consumption (Knorr Cetina and Bruegger, 2002: 912). Financial transactions are a "second-order economy" (ibid.: 913) only indirectly linked to the "first-order economy" (ibid.) of production through the profits they generate. It is important to note this difference between the markets as the financial markets follow other objectives than the first-order economy but have gained a serious influence over the first-order economy through the shareholder value. Knorr Cetina (2012: 122) argues that the essential difference between financial markets and exchange transactions is the orientation towards the future in financial markets. Unlike in exchange situations, in financial markets a transaction is a promissory engagement, in which the two actors connect their futures. The importance of financial markets for our capitalist economies lies in their capital-extending function (Knorr-Cetina, 2012: 119–120). She describes finance as the fourth pillar of our economy, next to production, consumption and exchange (ibid: 116). This promissory element is fundamental to financial instruments like derivatives: Appadurai shows in his recent work "Banking on Words" (2016) that these instruments are nothing but contracts that profit from underlying chains of promises and that make "risk an independent source of profit" (ibid.: 10).

The oil industry has been thoroughly impacted by financialisation as already mentioned in earlier chapters. According to Sandy Smith-Nonini (2016) financialisation has helped the major U.S. oil companies to continue the uneconomic production of fossil fuels with low "energy return on energy investment" through speculative debt financing. Financial tools are important for the oil industry in their risk management. While the insurance companies once played a big role in the industry, the geographer Leigh Johnson (2015) notes a considerable shift in the oil industry away from classic insurance towards hedging devices. The oil industry now uses hedging and financial tools to counter the negative effects of (natural) catastrophes, such as a hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico, on their business. Hurricane derivatives consisting of futures and options on individual storms and seasons, turn the hurricane risk into a "quasi-commodity" (ibid.: 207–208).[251] She states that the insurance industry is now in competition with the financial traders, as some companies go completely without insurance these days. Risk management is thus not passive, but includes

[251] Combined with "natural hedges," i.e. the storage of fuel at times of low prices in order to sell it during times of high prices, it adds to the profit. Furthermore, they pay for their own meteorologists, getting more accurate information than the general public.

active elements of shaping the environment in a way that is advantageous to the companies.

Risk-taking then is to ensure the success of the company measured in the shareholder value, that is its ability to deliver high returns on investment to its shareholders. The evaluation of a company's investment worthiness falls to financial analysts who draw on a variety of data, calculations and gut feelings to create investment advices for their clients (cf. Leins, 2013, 2018; Wansleben, 2012, 2013). The stories analysts write about the market are not structured by the numbers, as one might assume, following a "classic" economic understanding of risk as calculated uncertainty, but rather the numbers are matched to the story. Contrary to the saying, numbers do not speak for themselves, it is narratives that create meaning.

Risk management is thus an optimisation strategy to minimise negative effects on the shareholder value. The value could be affected negatively by disruptions in the operations, which are ultimately increasing costs, or expensive accidents and an increase in costs reduces the profit of the company or even their asset base as noted above. This means a lower return on investment. The risk management must make sense to its shareholders to ensure that shareholders are willing to invest their money, extending Tullow or other oil companies the financial means to conduct its business. The shareholders' satisfaction is the object at risk in Tullow's reports to the shareholders while the government and extractive communities become risk objects.

This sub-chapter has shown that it is always fruitful to look at that which is presented as obvious and self-evident. Although presented as universal necessities, the oil industry standards are not self-evident. Rather, they pertain to a specific kind of risk awareness and management pertinent to financial capitalism. The stance on international standards can only be understood if the safety regime and the reasons for it are considered. The new wave of business ethics, described under the discussion of CSR, in conjunction with the importance of shareholders in the oil industry has increased the importance of (apparently) high standard business operations in an industry that is more known for its risky and reckless production methods than for concerns for human beings and the environment.

This analysis of the safety regime and its link to financialisation was necessary in order to understand what the representative at the national content conference in Masindi meant when he spoke about them being "squeezed" by different demands. The oil companies had to answer demands from Ugandans and they had to protect their shareholders' interest in safe and successful business operations. The oil companies praised themselves for helping Ugandans take part in the industry and assisting in development through their CSR. These claims were challenged though at the Masindi conference. In the next section, I discuss the position of Ugandan companies.

The Position of Ugandan Companies

Here I present the position held by Ugandan entrepreneurs and companies that countered the rhetoric of shared prosperity of the oil companies. In his speech, the AUOGS spokesman suggested that there was unfairness and that they needed a clear definition of a local company. He drew on the resource curse discourse, suggesting others than Ugandans would profit from the oil.

AUOGS stressed the indigenousness of the company, meaning that the company was fully incorporated in Uganda and owned by Ugandans. AUOGS was trying to cut out subsidiaries of foreign companies or companies that were incorporated in Uganda but owned by foreigners. Furthermore, the spokesman stressed the importance of local content at the managerial level. Only then the money would also be invested in Uganda and there would be more trickle-down effects as he claimed that 30 people relied on each employed Ugandan (Vice Chairman AUGOS, interview, 2013). AUGOS members were trying to get their foot into an international business via national legislation. They urged for a protection of local businesses by giving them an extra hand in reaching the international standards and by levelling out the advantage international competitors have had through prior experience and relations to the oil companies. Drawing on an element of the resource curse discourse, the risk they highlight is that of having an enclave industry in the country.

AUOGS thus framed its concerns as not just that of a few companies but as an essential element of Uganda's participation in the oil industry. The emphasis on particular standards produced a feeling of exclusion for Ugandan entrepreneurs who did not know the rules of the game and who had to question their own concept of running a business. AUOGS agreed with the oil companies that there was a 'standard gap' between what Ugandan companies could deliver and the international standards but they thought it was the responsibility of the oil companies to help Ugandan companies bridge that gap.

AUOGS was in touch with parliamentarians and ministers and tried to get publicity for their demands. As mentioned before, the creation of AUOGS was encouraged by the government as part of their national content strategy. AUOGS was promoting their services and lobbying, sometimes rather aggressively, for a bigger participation in the oil industry. They also demanded the enforcement of joint ventures between Ugandan and international companies, which was taken up in the oil legislation (Vice Chairman, AUOGS, interview, 2013). Joint ventures were desired as it was expected that they would help in the knowledge transfer. Likewise Ugandan entrepreneurs and politicians were hoping to get better insights into the industry in order to be able to become more self-sufficient. In an interview I asked the Vice Chairman of AUOGS about the differences in standards. He told me an anecdote of his own experience of the standard gap[252]:

[252] He had two companies Quantum Associates for warehousing and storage and Ecosol for waste management.

> I think the government has a responsibility and I do think that the oil companies also, they have a responsibility. Because you know, like I said, to come and say 'You don't meet the standard, so as such we cannot hire you' is very unfair. […] It's more standard we've ever followed. […] I'll give you an example, a small anecdote. I went down to Hoima with some gentleman from Total. We were building a warehouse and I had contracted an Indian company, which in here, in Uganda, is very reputable. Almost everybody uses them, they're efficient, they're speedy. So we got to my site and with these two guys from Total. They were just doing a feasibility study, […] they hadn't moved yet in some two, three years ago.
>
> So we go to the site and I thought they'd be very impressed with the way work was going. So we get to the site and they look around and nobody was wearing helmets. They're like a hundred people, workers, hammering away, welding what. No one was wearing helmets. No one was wearing protective goggles. No one was wearing a reflective jacket. The way we do building, there was some guy who was round about ten feet off the ground […] on a little plank of wood, carrying concrete and wood, pushing it up. With no safety down, no support, nothing. […] It was a hazard. […] That's how we've always done it. And this is a company that's reputable, my contractor, Indian, very good, very… always meets time line. So these guys [from Total] tell me 'If this was a contract, we would cancel it. Now. Say, this is an accident waiting to happen.' […]
>
> Now, I was not aware that there's a certain health and safety minimum standard that is required. What we've always been aware of is financing: Am I working within the budget. This is my budget, can you deliver within my cost. How you do it, I don't really care. […] So that's what I'm talking about standards. So that was my eye-opening. So I realised what people want. So I called Chris and said 'Man, get your people in helmets. I want to see reflective jackets. Get some sort of health and safety here.' It was nothing like a first aid box anywhere. If any accident happens you've got a potential fatality. […] It is a learning curve. So the willingness to work is there. […] nobody was born with the knowledge of standards. […] These are things that can be acquired. These are things that can be passed on. And that's why it's very important to have JVs [joint ventures], to have MoUs because then, you just migrate this practice (Vice Chairman, AUOGS, interview, 2013).

This quote highlights the disparity between risk perception between the oil companies and Ugandan entrepreneurs. For the Total representatives the way construction was going on was an "accident waiting to happen." This was not acceptable and not according to the health and safety regulations that rule the industry as I laid out in the last section. It was a risk Total was not willing to take since it might lead to accidents that will either be the direct responsibility of the company or in case of a bigger accident delay the whole operation and thus affect the company as well.

According to his initial perception the Vice Chairman of AUOGS was ready for the oil industry. However, safety standards were not part of his business planning. To him the risk was not relevant, not because of a failure to perceive the possibility of an accident happening, but rather because it was not important in his business logic. It could not substantially impact either costs or the public image of the company in a way that would make them lose profits. While the oil companies had to adhere to certain standards in order to manage or avoid risks, to Ugandan companies apparently only two business factors were important: budget and timeline. Any extra cost to the budget means a reduction of profit and could negatively influence the image of the company. A company that fails to deliver within the set budget and timeline was not attractive. Therefore, on the Ugandan market, a company that could deliver on time and within budget had a competitive advantage.

The spokesman at the conference appealed to fairness several times – a notion of fairness not further specified. What does fairness mean to a businessman in Uganda? While I was not able to talk to him about fairness, I asked the Vice Chairman of the association to elaborate their position on fairness and he stated that the speaker had misrepresented their interests and in fact, he had to have a conversation with Tullow after the conference to clarify that they were not "on the war path" again. He elaborated to me that they as an association did not expect Ugandan companies to take up specialised services like supplying drill bits that they do not have enough knowledge about. A refusal on this ground by the oil companies was logical to him and could only be changed through joint ventures and knowledge transfer. The unfairness the Vice Chairman saw was if the Ugandan companies did offer comparable services and still failed to win the tender:

> The unfairness that I would probably myself allude to would be the fact that me and company X have a pretty much equal footing in terms of competence in terms of price, right? And then company X will take one tender and take another tender. […] I would detect a little of an unfairness. That is unfair because I can match you for price. I can match you for competence. Why do you keep winning? You see? That is where the unfairness is. But I cannot say that I'm gonna come and […] compete with Halliburton and expect to win. It's not likely. It's not likely (Vice Chairman AUOGS, interview, 2013).

The unfairness he alludes to in this quote is cronyism: the suspicion he and the speaker of the association expressed were that the oil companies were favouring certain companies not based on business principles but on clientelism. In a publication, an AUOGS member claimed that there was favouritism in the oil industry, that despite the improvement of capacity by Ugandan companies, foreign firms were still in an advantageous position. The Vice Chairman accused the oil companies that the lack of capacity was being used as an excuse to exclude Ugandan companies from the oil business (Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, [2013]c: 37). AUOGS understood how the reference to international standards undermined their ability to deliver services and they resisted it. Given the image of or even the revelations of the multinational oil companies as shady and mafia-like corporations that disregard ethics, human rights, and environmental protection as long as they can make a profit (e.g. Burgis, 2015; Shaxson, 2008), it does not seem surprising or exaggerated to accuse them of unfairness.

It was the pronounced goal of AUOGS to establish transparency and to increase local expertise as well as know-how and know-who in the oil industry through joint ventures. Know-who was very relevant in the oil industry, which, as many workers told me, was very small and where everybody knew everybody. If one made oneself a bad name in one company, one would not be able to get a foot down again in the industry. The cronyism ascribed to the oil companies is not so far away from how business is done in Uganda's economy.

Know-who is also important in Uganda's economy and clientelist features including maintaining good relationships to the government and kick-back payments are part of how business is done in Uganda. It is alleged that many big Ugandan companies have connections to the ruling elite or are actually owned by an elite member and do not have to conform to budgets or timelines.[253] Corruption scandals are almost a common feature of politics and in 2013 a major one had just swept across the Ministry of the Prime Minister.[254]

Often, Uganda has been described as a neoliberal economy because of the major structural adjustments it underwent during the NRM regime, most notably a broad privatisation of public enterprises in the 1990s (Kiiza et al., 2006).[255] The neoliberal reforms have been described as having had far-reaching consequences for market and society in Uganda with a decline in fairness in market transactions (Wiegratz, 2010). However, in neoliberalism fairness is generated through a free market where no state protection or monopolistic corporation would decide.

The narrative of a successful neoliberal economy is potentially relevant for attracting investors. On the "Ease of Doing Business Index" by the World Bank, which measures the business experience of small and medium-sized companies across 190 economies in the world, Uganda ranks among the top ten in Africa and third best in East Africa after Kenya and Rwanda.[256] Despite accounts of such global neoliberal

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[253] The alleged connection being an escrow agreement between the official owner of the company and the silent owner who is officially in the government. Widespread are allegations of a link between Museveni's brother Salim Saleh and Saracen but despite such rumours circulating around the big companies, there is little evidence to show.

[254] For more on corruption in Uganda see Tangri and Mwenda (2013).

[255] For an account of this process by two employees of the International Finance Corporation see Nyirinkindi and Opagi (2010).

[256] The pronounced objective of the index is to improve the regulatory environment for business around the world. Data of the index is gained from a combination of methods such as an analysis of laws, information from registrars and questionnaires. For more information see http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/uganda [February 2018].

influence as promoting selfishness and transforming the shape of economies, the importance of personal relations noted above persists.

The profoundest difference I see between Uganda's economy and the economic system in which the oil companies are rooted is the absence of widespread financialisation. Currently, the anthropology on financial markets and stock exchanges is focusing on North American and European markets, yet ethnographic research on e.g. the Ugandan stock exchange could deliver new insights into processes of financialisation in Africa and beyond. In 2016, the Uganda Securities Exchange listed only 16 companies.[257] Most Ugandan companies are not traded on the stock exchange and therefore have no shareholders to whom they are responsible. Therefore, Ugandan companies were not confronted with the same demands as the shareholder-driven oil companies and standards for health and safety were not as important. While in financial capitalism, the shareholders have a very powerful role, in Uganda's economy this group of actors is almost absent and most likely the important actor is the (often secret) owner of the company who is to be satisfied with profits and whose interest is to be kept safe from harm. In shareholder capitalism it is necessary to display standards to a diverse set of actors while in Uganda it is mainly the opinion of the owner that matters. The connection to and penetration by the financial market is different and this is reflected in the different positions towards safety standards.

To sum it up, in the debate, the companies were challenging the way the oil companies tried to settle in a more disentangled way building on pre-established relations with international service providers. With their lobby organisation the Ugandan companies emphasised the need for fairness, meaning assistance to Ugandan companies or protection of the service market via national content legislation, to avoid the pitfalls of the resource curse. They did not accept that the standard gap should be an excuse for the oil companies' preference for international service providers.

AUOGS targeted the way the oil companies operated in Uganda. The Ugandan companies were still finding a unified position in 2013 and the approaches ranged from challenges of the use of international standards to the challenge of the insufficiency of the national content policy of the companies, that is their willingness to invest in trainings for contractors. While it may seem they were taking a position for all Ugandans, people in the extractive communities were demanding their share of opportunities and considered national companies a threat to it as I elaborate in the next section.

[257] The companies listed included banks, media groups, an airline and a brewery, a power company and a supermarket. The exchange was established as a company in 1997. For more information see www.use.or.ug/ [February 2018].

Positions from the Extractive Communities

In this section I would like to discuss a position that differed from that of the companies from Kampala and AUOGS that claimed to be lobbying on behalf of all Ugandans. In the extractive communities the standard debate was just as vibrant as in the capital. Restaurant and shop owners were frustrated that the oil companies would not buy their food and drinks locally and people did not understand why they would not employ the local welders, electricians and drivers. At numerous conferences, citizens expressed their frustration with the employment and contracting practice of the companies. Same as on the national level, the reference to international standards was perceived as a criteria designed to exclude Ugandans especially those in the extractive communities. Naturally, the extractive communities are neither a homogenous nor an institutional group, as will also become apparent in this sub-chapter. Still, I would like to discuss the positioning of residents in the oil region as coming from a strategic group united by their claim of belonging to the extractive community and the entitlements they derive from this.

A recurring question during conferences and conversations was why standards had to be the way they were. In 2013, just before a radio show on oil issues facilitated by the civil society organisation RICE, the presenter started talking off air about standards.[258] He said that he had done a small investigation about the subject and found out that most people were unhappy because it was companies from Kampala that did the catering or camp maintenance and not them. The programme officer of RICE explained to the journalist that this was due to the international standards and the presenter queried why the standards had to be international.

As highlighted in the fifth chapter, one of the major expectations created by oil discovery is jobs or general income opportunities. These expectations were reflected in a rise in private institutions geared at providing oil-related education. The proliferation of private schools and universities Uganda has experienced since 1988 (Kasozi, 2002), has now expanded into the oil sector making use of people's expectation of finding job opportunities within the wider oil industry. A friend of mine in Hoima was willing to spend a substantial amount of money for a course at one of these universities because he was made to believe that with this certificate he could get a job in the oil industry. However, this is highly unlikely as a certificate alone without experience or connection does not pave the way into the oil industry. As the statement by the director of the training institute, mentioned in the sub-chapter on the oil industry, made clear: both theory and practice are needed. At conferences or in conversations with me, I often heard youths from villages of the oil region complain that no or not enough casual work was available and accessible. These statements reflect a feeling that while indeed much money could be made, like the government and civil society stressed, it was Ugandans from Kampala who were profiting and not

[258] Usually, as part of their activities, CSOs buy radio time to have discussions with various actors, e.g. from the Ministry of Energy or the oil companies.

the ones from the oil region because they lacked the 'picking device' to harvest the outside fruits of the mango tree mentioned in the introduction of this chapter.

With regards to jobs, again and again the question was raised who was being recruited and where this person came from. In the villages of the exploration area the concern was not so much with Europeans or Americans but with Ugandans coming from other parts of the country to do the casual work. Instead of seeing their youth gain money from the industry, they saw the consequence of young men from other districts moving into their area as I pointed out in the fifth chapter.

Recruitment for jobs with the oil companies differed from company to company but in general the casual work was given to allegedly 'locals' while the higher positions were advertised in the Ugandan newspapers that in theory are available nationwide.[259] Under Tullow's system in villages along the shore of Lake Albert, I heard politicians complain that the recruitment system had worsened with the Ugandanisation of the oil companies, which was in fact part of the implementation of the local content policy. According to them, other Ugandans, not them, were profiting from this policy.

> The system used to be good. When they used to come for casual workers, people got jobs. Also Tullow did provide jobs to the community. But the corruption of the people working there started. They were getting their brothers jobs. But before for the company it was good, there was no discrimination. They would come and tell how many people they need and it was then down to the chairman to decide who was good to propose to work for them (NRM politician Kaiso, interview, 2013).

Also a Chairman LC 1 of one of the villages close to exploration activities told me on several occasions that with the Ugandanisation of Tullow, recruitment became worse with clientelism whereas the "wazungu" had no brothers or sisters in Uganda. This is a very different perspective on the effects of national content. It proposes that national content or the entanglement of the industry with the national economy comes with the Ugandan way of doing business. Once again know-who appears as an important factor and the unequal starting positions of companies and workers from Kampala and those in the extractive communities came to bear. The changing interaction style of the company and the actual decline in recruitment was attested to the involvement of Ugandans and not to overall company policies or business necessities.

Unlike the complaint against Ugandanisation levelled at Tullow by some actors, the Chairman LC 5 in Total's exploration area in Nebbi district complained about the lack of personal relations in the recruitment system. According to Total, they informed the community in advance that recruitment would take place. On

[259] However, few if any newspapers reach the villages and if so then mainly those in local languages or the state-owned New Vision. However, news from the papers are read out on local radio stations.

recruitment day an employee of Total and local politicians (Chairman LC 1, women and youth representatives) were present and informed the applicants on duration of work, requirements and work conditions and all interested filled out an application form. All applications were put in a big box and then the workers' names were drawn publicly. The lucky ones were then informed and sent for the physical examination. This process was meant to create equal opportunities for all and to prevent patronage.[260] This new standards of recruitment were contested though. The Chairman LC 5 of Nebbi district expressed his discontent with the recruitment system at a multi-stakeholder dialogue organised by RICE in his town.

> So, I know recruitment is very crucial. And I'm told the method of your [addressing a representative of Total] recruitment is also transparent. That you just go and when you need about ten people, you have number one, two out up to 100 and then you pour them in a basket, then someone comes from behind and comes and picks. So when you get number one, you are recruited. When you get number… the method is good, alright. But sometimes it will not give you competent people who will work. Because for us, we know our people better than any other person. […] You will pick someone who are weak and who will be a problem to you and tomorrow you will begin regretting that these people of Panyimur, they're lazy. […] These people of Alur, they're lazy. And yet they're not lazy. We know the people who are capable, who can help you. But for you, you say, we don't want political involvement in this thing. We don't want technical… now what do you want? […] Who is the head of this thing? Eh? Eh? Politicians are claiming to be there and even technocrats are claiming to be there. You consult them, eh! Nobody is an island. We are here to help you. And we are here to guide you on the best way to carry your good job. Because when you get the *muyaaye*[261] from the roadside, that *muyaaye* got number one or number six, then the second day he is recruited. Then when he is disturbing you, who will you come and consult? You go and consult that number which you have drawn. Don't consult us (Chairman LC 5 Nebbi, RICE dialogue, Nebbi, 2012).

The ballot system could be viewed as a mechanism to reduce connections to the community by not depending on local expertise but on a lottery system. This system creates an impartiality meant to dissipate feelings of unfairness on the side of the community. From the quote it can be deduced that it is precisely the intention of

[260] The system may differ for subcontractors depending on the contracting company's policy. Total's subcontractors were supposed to follow the lottery procedure and Total's CLO was supposed to participate in their recruitment exercises. Other subcontractors just hired workers from among men who were waiting at their gates, as one casual worker had experienced it himself (Casual worker, Caroil/rig operating company, interview, 2013).

[261] Muyaaye is Lugandan for thug or idler and is usually used in derogative way. This politician is not a Muganda but some Lugandan words are used by speakers of other languages too.

reducing the amount of brokers and the non-involvement with local politicians that distressed the Chairman LC 5. He exclaimed it was impossible to proceed in such a disentangled way, as "nobody is an island." A mechanism that was supposed to ease relations with the communities, leaving little room for accusations, was contested as also leaving little room for negotiation and intervention. The disapproval of the Chairman LC 5 was not a light thing since it could have impacts on the social license to operate if the LC 5 mobilised people against the company.[262]

However, when I later discussed this speech with a close relative of this Chairman LC 5, who is himself a politician, he claimed that the ballot system was superior to Tullow's recommendation system because it provided equal chances. In comparison to the Ugandan job market in general, which relies heavily on know-who, Total's recruitment system indeed held at least the chance of recruitment without connections. The politician laughed at the comment of his relative and said that he was only campaigning for support (Field notes from informal conversation, 2015). Clearly, the companies' recruitment systems were used in politicking. Depending on the recruitment system politicians could either use it to widen their patronage system or could use disgruntlements to garner supporters for their campaigns.

Despite the claims of impartiality, more than once was I told stories of patronage and of loopholes in the process. There are many rumours of CLOs being involved in giving out jobs to friends and relatives. I confronted a representative of Total with these accusations and she was well aware of them but alleged they stemmed from pure envy and frustration (Corporate Affairs Manager, Total interview, 2013). The complaints around the recruitment systems reveal the intricacies of national content: While Total's lottery system was criticised for lacking the personal note that is so important in the overall Ugandan economy, Tullow's was criticised precisely for keeping personal relations in the recruitment process.

This section has shown how the connections between the oil industry and Ugandan entrepreneurs were also debated in the extractive communities and attempts of disentanglement challenged. It was the standards of safety and the recruitment systems that aroused objections since they threatened to keep smaller entrepreneurs out of the oil business, taking from them the ability to partake in the fruits of the industry. The standards the industry was trying to enforce were perceived as quite alien compared to what was going on in Uganda's economic and political system and failures of the standards, especially with regard to fair recruitment, increased the feeling that these were mere smokescreens set up to extract profits without sharing the spoils.

Coming back to the mango tree metaphor, the perception was that the oil companies and the better situated companies from Kampala were not just tapping the inside of the tree but also picking the many fruits on the outside and yet the tree was standing on the soil of the extractive communities but all they would get was the fallen mangos and leaves.

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262 The exploration license cannot be affected though because it is issued by the central government.

Analysis: Establishing a Technological Zone

So far, I have elaborated the positions of four strategic groups have taken with regard to the debate on national content. All positions centred on the inhibiting effect international standards had on national content. The standards were presented as non-negotiable. Demands for lowering them or accusations of unfairness where refuted with reference to the demands of the shareholders. Ugandans were told they could expect gaining options on business opportunities from the oil but only if they conformed to the way Tullow, or the oil companies in general, do their business. This came into conflict with the position from Ugandan companies who were not used to operate in shareholder capitalism but who have done well in an economy that necessitates know-who and that does not follow strict labour policies. While the Ugandan companies claimed to be speaking on behalf of all Ugandans, complaints from the extractive communities show that they were actually speaking on behalf of an elite, thus proving Ovadia's perspective on national content as a means for elite enrichment (Ovadia, 2016). In this section I will analyse the national content debate further with regard to the oil industry's disconnection strategies.

My initial perception of the debate was that the national content intricacies are a clear case of how the market regulates itself through offer and demand and of Ugandans catching up with what the world market demands. However, this would mean black-boxing the safety demands of the market represented through the international standards. So why indeed should the standards be international as the radio journalist from West Nile put it? After all, as I have shown, international standards are not self-evident but an expression of a certain risk perception and risk management.

Standards that were implemented by the oil companies were connected to the risks the companies saw and tried to establish. Thus standards cannot be easily disentangled from different perceptions of risks and of how to do business. The oil companies were very well placed to argue for their standards because they could draw on a deep practical knowledge of the industry, scientific knowledge and the certificates of recognised international standard organisations. Additionally, they could count on the Ministry of Energy that was interested in turning the international standards into indigenous ones. The reference to the internationality of the standards lent legitimacy to the companies' claims. The standardisation through bodies such as ISO suggests that there are objective kinds of risks that can be managed through risk management mechanism. But as Boholm (2015: 105) stresses, this is a positivistic attitude that disregards the findings of many risk scholars that risks are not just out there but are socially constructed and hence not separable from the cultural and social values they represent.

The risk management that underlies the international industry standards, I suggest in this chapter, is connected to the financialisiation of the industry. Companies on the stock market do not only need to lay open their corporate structure, projects and profits but also their risk management. Purchasing international standards, that is the knowledge and technologies, is a way of proving a sound risk management to shareholders. Standards function in shareholder capitalism as a guarantee for the investors. Additionally, it is possible to argue that shareholder capitalism which operates through externalisation and modularity, came into conflict with Uganda's personalised and owner-centred economy.

National content works counter to attempts by the oil companies to work in a disentangled or disembedded way. Ferguson (2005) famously postulated that oil companies produce oil in an island-like, i.e. disentangled, fashion. Anna Zalik (2009) points out that the oil companies construct disembeddedness by moving to the supposedly spatially isolated offshore. In her article, she compares displacement of people from key extractive sites in Nigeria and Mexico offshore. She describes these zones of extraction as zones of (state assisted) exclusion of the local population showing that the offshore is actually not disembedded from the social surrounding and especially not from the state. Rather it needs a more regulated state (Zalik, 2009: 577). Saulesh Yessenova (2012) also describes how these enclaves of efficient, but at times lawless, production need assistance by the host state power in order to maintain their business operation. In the case of the Tengiz oil enclave the state helped quell riots of workers.

Writing on the offshore oil industry in Equatorial Guinea, Hannah Appel (2012a) shows that disentanglement is an image of disconnectedness created discursively and technologically by the oil industry. The oil companies create an image or narrative of disentanglement. While connections with the surroundings exist, the intention of the oil companies is to appear clearly disconnected from the local communities. This leads to the perception that the end product, the oil, has been produced frictionlessly. The oil companies achieve this via modularity – that is, connecting their industry system, which encompasses a set of technologies, infrastructures and people who strive to work independently of the environment, to the system of Equatorial Guinea in a specific way that is intended to create a minimum of linkages and that can be reproduced in other parts of the world without changing the set-up of the local system (Appel, 2012a: 697).

According to Appel, the industry achieves disentanglement not just by ignoring the entanglements but also by ignoring the risks that their workers face outside of work.[263] Appel calls this modular capitalism. In offshore production, modularity is supposed to maximise profit and increase shareholder value. In order for the shareholder value to be high, certain risks need to be taken, while others avoided. There are two types of risks in the oil industry, which are mutually dependent: the profitable one of trading on the oil futures market which promises high profits and the explosive one which threatens lives, equipment and operations (Appel, 2012a: 703).[264] The oil industry externalises what is a risk to their shareholder value. Dis-

[263] Appel (2012a) describes how modularity runs through the life of Equatoguinean workers who are the connection between the two different systems, Equatorial Guinea and the oil industry, and how they handle this externalisation of risks unto their lives.
[264] The productive life of risk has been noted on elsewhere (Zaloom, 2004).

entanglement is a way of reducing unproductive risks from the surroundings from which the oil companies cannot entirely withdraw since oil is a territorial resource. Therefore, oil companies need to be attentive to their environment, monitor all that could potentially have a negative influence on the shareholder value and (re-)act accordingly.

The oil companies in Uganda did worry about the effects a dissatisfied community could have on their operations: delays, increased costs and loss of value. These in turn could lead to less return for shareholders and hence dissatisfied shareholders and thus ultimately a plummet in shareholder value. Looked at from a relational perspective of risk, extractive communities in Tullow's understanding of risk are the risk object and not the object at risk. The risk management is thus not primarily engineered to protect the communities from the risk of the oil exploration and production. The final objective is business success and benefits for the community are simply part of the deal by now.

Disconnectedness, or the appearance of it, is important for the business operation and profit generation, and I had the impression during my research that it also speaks to a widespread sense of being different among the workers in the oil industry. In the analysis of the oil companies' position, I noted that the industry perceives itself as a strange beast and this was reinforced by the country manager of an international drilling and cementing company in Uganda, according to whom the industry perceived itself as a foreign element in a country. He described the oil industry as an organism in a system, which they do not know or understand. They would come, do what they know best, i.e. drilling and cementing, and then leave again (Country Manager, field notes from informal conversation, 2013). Demarcations of difference are both physical such as the fence that separates a rig camp from its surrounding areas, and intangible such as the safety regulations that regulated access to and life on the camp.

An island-like operation is appealing to the oil companies because work in community areas involves a lot of negotiations that can slow down the exploration process. Therefore, the disconnection work is easier in an offshore setting than in onshore projects especially in a land-locked country like Uganda. Nevertheless, in Uganda there are spaces similar to the ones Appel found in Equatorial Guinea, especially the rig camps and the gated communities. The rig camps differ starkly from their surroundings, as the director of a CBO from Hoima concisely put it during one of our first conversations: "They have brought Europe down there" (Interview, 2012). Access to them was controlled and the life inside the camp was governed by company-made rules.

Disconnection work in Uganda was favoured by the fact that exploration activities were allowed within the national park Murchison Falls. There the companies only had to deal with the animals and the environment and not with communities.[265] It

[265] The agencies concerned with regulating the environmental impact of the activities of the oil industry are the National Environmental Authority (NEMA), Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and to a

offered the great advantage of only causing technical problems that could be solved by engineers, rather than social problems that would involve lengthy negotiations. The metaphor of a strange beast points to the functioning of the oil industry through modularity, which in Uganda is achieved by high standards, and simultaneously it highlights the flexibility of the industry in their business operation. While modularity was indeed at work in Uganda it was the lack of flexibility that was central to contestations by Ugandan companies. In Uganda, the oil companies insisted on the unacceptability of getting around regulations and thus controlled linkages to their environment by defining which Ugandan companies can be given contracts to. While the application of modularity in Equatorial Guinea was successful, this chapter showed that modularity is the result of negotiations.

The standards enabled the oil companies' disentanglement work that is severing or obscuring linkages to the Ugandan environment. While the Ugandan government was trying to enable entanglement through the national content regulation, its support of the standards had the opposite effect and eased the disentanglement work. I argue that the standards of the industry can be understood with Andrew Barry's concept of "technological zones" or more especially "zones of qualification". Within these zones everything, all objects and practices, are judged according to common standards and criteria (Barry, 2006: 240). In Barry's words:

> A technological zone can be understood, in broad terms, as a space within which differences between technical practices, procedures or forms have been reduced, or common standards have been established (Barry, 2006: 239).

The impact of such standardisation on local companies has been discussed by Elizabeth Dunn (2005). She describes how orientation towards European Union standards has changed the meat industry in post-communist Poland by dividing it into small-scale and sub-standard slaughterhouses that service countries to the East and large-scale, high standard factories that deliver to the West and are at times even owned by Western corporations. She notes that standards do not just make products but also firms "by making standards into targets as well as measures, and by using audit technologies to make the activities of the firm visible" (Dunn, 2005: 176). This is an example of how the adherence to higher standards pushes certain actors out of the market because they can only deliver sub-standard products or services. The indigenisation of standards, as intended in Uganda, is therefore not a simple matter of passing regulations but one that can have serious implications for companies – if the regulations get enforced.

However, the technological zones have no clear boundaries like nation states but are rather unstable, contested and uncertain. According to Barry technological zones are best researched as they unfold.

lesser extent also the National Forest Authority (NFA). Monitoring was weak though considering the poor resources of these institutions.

> [I]n the middle of events, at times and places where the discrepancies between the public statements of international organisations, multinational corporations and NGOs and the complexity of social forms become most apparent, and when the direction of change is uncertain and contested (Barry, 2006: 244).

My research took place in a state of not-yet-ness which is characterised by many negotiations in the oil arena, including such a formative moment of the zone of qualification around the oil industry and of the oil project in Uganda in general. The disentanglement through the establishment of a technological zone made the industry appear to Ugandans as that "strange beast" it considers itself to be. The establishment of a technological zone could be described as a "technological drama" (Pfaffenberger, 1992). Pfaffenberger lists strategies for technological regularisation once a new technology is introduced to society among them standardisation, which "diminishe[s] local autonomy and marginalize[s] local culture" (Pfaffenberger, 1992: 293). While Pfaffenberger writes about the introduction of new technology, one could expand this argument to the establishment of the oil industry in Uganda because of the technologies and risk associated with oil exploration and production. The oil industry comes with its own standard system, rules of procedure and technology, which are presented as non-negotiable. However, as became evident in this chapter, a technological drama is always filled with controversies and negotiations. Ugandans questioned the standards and discussed the willingness of the companies to help them reach the standards.

Taken together, these negotiations around standards as a new "technological zone" reveal once again how important risks are in the oil-making or resource-making in general. Risks that find acceptance provide leverage in negotiations and thus enhance the chances of influencing how the oil will be produced. The oil companies needed to ensure, in the interest of their shareholders, that the process of oil-making brings high returns to them. The self-evidence of the standards on which they relied, backed by the government, made a successful challenge of them difficult.

The technological zone therefore selected who was allowed into the circle of the industry and who had to stay out because they were sub-standard. Much as people rejected this, the consequence of taking up resistance and thus becoming a real threat to the operations, were not chosen. I have heard rumours of a small strike of oil workers in Buliisa but it was subdued quickly and did not spread. It seems the uncertain situation, in which the extractive communities found themselves, reduced willingness to resistance. Even the usual allies of the extractive communities, the civil society organisations, who were at the forefront of managing the resource curse risk, were not offering much assistance since also to them, from what I got in conversations and comments made during conferences, the standards were self-evident. It seemed the only option was to reach the demands of the company.

6.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter was concerned with the way oil companies negotiated their business operation in Uganda and therefore their current and future position in the Ugandan oil complex. It is through the establishment of risks that the oil companies tried to maintain their place in the oil complex, and influence the oil project and their way of profiting from it. With the acceptance of the international standards that govern the industry and which show in their risk management, the industry could postulate that there was a standard gap between them and the Ugandan companies. They thus created a technological zone around the industry that was hard to enter for Ugandan companies. While formally giving opportunities to Ugandan entrepreneurs and workers, the institution of a technological zone prevented many of them from actually partaking in the profits. Sometimes baffled, sometimes outraged Ugandans realised that the industry was that 'strange beast' it portrayed itself to be. A beast that managed to set itself up as a gatekeeper to the benefits from the oil.

The chapter has shown how this standardisation has been challenged by Ugandan companies, thus putting into stark relief the power negotiations that a simple reference to the internationality of some standards obscures. Like Dunn (2005) shows in her study for Poland, standards and regulations are a way of homogenising capitalist processes, in other words of making modularity possible – albeit probably never achieving it entirely. Essentially, standards, irrespective of their value, do keep certain entrepreneurs and companies out of the market. Just like in post-communist Poland where EU regulations kept small butchers from selling their produce on the EU market, in Uganda the standards of the oil industry kept local companies out of the oil industry. It was not sure who was really responsible for making them catch up to a well-established oil industry that keeps expanding and changing its technologies and machineries.

My research suggests that in order to understand the developments of capitalist projects such as the production of oil, it is helpful to look at the rules or standards and more broadly the risk management it is based on. In this case of national content, the successfully established risks to the environment or safety set the conditions for interactions in the arena.

Figure 20: Hoima-Kaiso Road (2015).

7 Conclusion

The fact that oil bears hazardous qualities for people, states and the environment has been widely commented on. The exploration for as well as the production and consumption of oil are associated with massive environmental degradation – from polluted rivers and lands up to climate change. Oil is the prime source of energy of a capitalist society that is driven by a thirst for ever more growth and expansion. And oil is the black gold that has made many people rich and brought suffering upon many others at the same time. While many studies have looked at oil when its effects have become visible; when the riches have materialised in impressive buildings and white elephants, or when the destruction of nature and livelihoods has brought hardship and conflict to people in the extractive areas, my dissertation project was done at a time when the massive changes were on the horizon but had not yet taken place. People had already experienced disruptions during the exploration for oil and they formed the outlook to the future that was yet to come. My research took place at a moment of waiting for the oil and focused on the processes and practices of anticipation. The whole dissertation project, including the writing of this book, was situated at the interstices of the oil life cycle.

The aim of this ethnography was to understand how the not-yet-ness of oil was seized by Ugandan actors to negotiate the oil and their position vis-à-vis the oil. In the introduction I quoted Ugandans who compared the wait for the oil with a pregnancy. A pregnancy is a state of anticipation, which is filled with both joy and anxiety. Like a baby during pregnancy, Uganda's oil had not yet fully materialised but was, and still is, becoming. And as I have shown throughout the book, various actors connect both hopes and fears with the oil. Much of the talk around the oil involves the dichotomy of blessing/curse and it was not clear which one the oil would be. The analogy of pregnancy is appropriate in another sense as well: while there are already changes during a pregnancy, the major changes will come once the baby is born.

Unlike a pregnancy though, the waiting for oil in Uganda is characterised by indeterminacy. There is a timeline but every year it gets expanded and in 2018, over ten years after the first discoveries, having oil still seems to belong to an uncertain future. During my research, some people even started doubting whether the oil would ever come and feared it had already been secretly taken by the government. This ethnography looked at oil in this state of not-yet-ness and thereby described how various actors in Uganda, from the state, to the oil industry, the civil society, and the extractive communities, influenced the becoming of oil as a resource and the constitution of the oil complex.

Not-yet-ness is a concept that is concerned with the impact of the future on the present. It considers how actors anticipate the future. To understand the not-yet-ness of oil in Uganda, I have used risk and uncertainty as an analytical perspective. I have argued that risks are particularly helpful for understanding how oil is turned into a resource because they are ways of anticipating the future and managing its uncertainty. The actions people take based on the knowledge of the risk influence the future. Once recognised they can be reduced, avoided or put to profitable use. I combined insights from studies on risk and uncertainty with studies on oil.

I applied a relational understanding of risk to analyse the anticipation of oil in Uganda. Risks depend on who creates what kind of linkages between that which is at risk and that which creates the risk. Risks do not exist outside the social construction of them, which includes scientific knowledge, norms and values and power interests. Established risks are power resources in the arena in which the negotiations of the oil and the petro-future take place. With risks, blame can be assigned and broker space obtained for those who know how to manage the risk. People in Uganda communicated and used risks to anticipate and influence the future with oil and most especially their own place within it. In the following, I briefly summarise the main arguments of each chapter and relate them to the main argument of this book.

The history chapter delivered information on the history of oil exploration in Uganda, which was characterised by many setbacks and delays. The chapter showed how risks figure prominently in the exploration process. The government sought to de-risk its (potential) assets to attract investors and gain better deals. Some investors in turn intended to profit from the wildcat risk. Investors can gain a lot of money when their gamble on a prospective oil field proves right and lose dearly if all they find are dry wells. As the chapter showed getting one's risks acknowledged provides a better bargaining position. Convincingly argued, risks can thus open a space for brokerage for the one communicating the risk. The chapter highlighted how again and again actors argued on the basis of risks and uncertainties to influence the development of the oil project in their own favour. For example, by establishing the risk of enclave production, the government successfully pushed for a refinery in the negotiations with the oil companies.

In the fourth chapter on the resource curse I considered in detail the visions of a petro-future that circulated in Uganda. One major way in which the oil was being anticipated in Uganda was the resource curse. I analysed the way civil society activists communicated about the curse and the reactions this provoked. Gathering knowledge from social science, Ugandan civil society organisations translated the resource curse to the Ugandan context by holding conferences and radio talk shows and publishing articles, documentaries, posters and other material to inform their fellow citizens of the resource curse. With the aid of donor money, the resource curse was established as a risk in Uganda. The chapter looked in detail at the risk narrative and how it caught on beyond civil society. The resource curse as a travelling model had become a power resource that could be used in shaping the country's future with oil: The development brokers secured themselves a place in the oil arena to monitor the activities and ultimately influence how the oil would be produced.

In the fifth chapter I showed how the risk narrative – including threatening images of the Niger delta – had repercussions on people in the oil region. Together with the effects from exploration activities, such as destruction of homes and displacement, the discourse on oil created uncertainty for the people in the oil region with regard to their place in the petro-future. The chapter looked at the hopes and expectations and at the ways people reacted to the changes that have taken place such as the immigration of job-seekers, the construction of a road, the acquisition of land, and the seismic surveys and other exploration activities which resulted in the destructions of houses, fields and even cultural sites. This chapter portrayed the viewpoint of residents in the oil region regarding the oil and their future, and how they managed the uncertainty that came with the oil. I discussed a case of compensation claims which showed that people in the community were also participating in the oil arena by emphasising their risks. On the one hand, cultural leaders claimed that the oil companies were at risk of the spirits whose sites they had destroyed unless they paid the leaders to hold ceremonies. On the other hand, they presented the destruction of these cultural sites as a risk to the community and to the area's cultural heritage, drawing on international and national desires to protect heritage. The cultural leaders were not successful in this negotiation and their different attempts of risk establishment failed.

This failure does not mean though that communities have no leverage in the negotiations. Communities present a risk to the oil companies as they can increase the cost of exploration and production or even revoke the social license to operate and create havoc for the oil company. Trying to manage this risk, the company sought to maintain good relations through corporate social responsibility. Through safe operations and attempts at creating shared prosperity with Ugandans, or at least the pretence of it, the oil companies tried to maintain a certain level of control over how the oil would be produced. Their risk management relied on international standards, which were too high for most Ugandan companies to attain and thus excluded them from the opportunities in the oil industry.

The sixth chapter centred on this issue of national content, which as an idea holds out the hope of a more prosperous future to Ugandans. In practice, the participation of Ugandans in the oil industry was not an easy solution to the resource curse but complicated by intricacies. Maintaining high standards, the oil companies argued, was good for Ugandans and the environment. However, these standards created an exclusionary technological zone around the oil. Access to the zone needed better education and training options that were not within reach of most Ugandans. To the oil companies, the technological zone also had the advantage of enabling them to refuse risky connections to sub-standard Ugandan companies and thus go about their business in a more disentangled way. This disentanglement is needed for a business operation that is ultimately only interested in creating shareholder value.

Comparing Uganda to other petro-states can be a fruitful exercise, and one that has informed this ethnography throughout the research and the analysis. Reading about countries such as Nigeria, Angola, Gabon, or Venezuela the society-changing role of oil becomes more than apparent. In these societies, the oil appears to be everywhere and behind everything. Unlike Uganda, these countries have seen decades of oil production and therefore could only help me understand what prospects Uganda might be facing. Indeed, as I showed in chapter four on the resource curse, it is countries such as Nigeria that serve as a horror vision of what could go wrong with oil.

In the present though, it is more fruitful to compare Uganda to other early oil-producers or those waiting to become one. Uganda seems to be having similar experiences to São Tomé and Príncipe (Weszkalnys, 2011). In both cases, we see an economy of expectations at work that is not only testament to the social dynamics before any oil is produced but also to the rents oil generates before it is even produced or traded on the market. Here, oil is relevant not as an all-dominating force that sweeps a country into a bleak future, but rather as a new arena in which actors can negotiate their positions, as this book has shown. Such dynamics can lead to conflicts as they did in Chad (Behrends 2008), but this is not a deterministic feature of the oil itself but greatly depends on the context.

This ethnography supports the necessity of looking at oil at an early stage and before its revenues circulate "like blood through the national body" (Apter, 2005: 23). A comparison of Uganda to Niger, a new oil producer, shows remarkable similarities, such as the way oil is used as a new idiom in politics (Schritt, 2016). However, there are also certain differences, such as less urgency on the Ugandan side to produce the oil and an altogether different configuration of oil in Uganda. The different set-up of the oil industry in each country, a Chinese state company in Niger and a joint venture between a Chinese, an Irish, and a multinational company in Uganda, are relevant when it comes to the negotiations of the oil.

To conclude this book, I would like to point out how this book speaks to four different concerns in contemporary anthropology – the future, risk, uncertainty and oil – and how it contributes to the discussion of the impacts of oil on Uganda.

Looking at the not-yet-ness, oil in Uganda is relevant to the recent anthropological interest in the future (Appadurai, 2013; Guyer, 2007). Most importantly, this study joins a trend to further split up the future conceptually: there is not just the distant and the near but also the not-yet. The not-yet is a future-in-the-coming, without knowing when the arrival will be. It is a future threatening or promising to materialise but without reference to closeness or distance in time. It is a future that could have already started and that got postponed, or one that will never come. People have their approximations of "knowing the future" through risks or divinations and they use forecasts of the future to shape the present. The future as we research and analyse it is a construction in the present and it speaks to the present. This becomes abundantly clear when looking at risk as a mode of anticipation that is used to directly influence both present and future.

This book conveys how a focus on risks and their communication can be fruitful to the anthropology of oil. And more especially oil in a state of not-yet-ness. Looking at who blames whom and what is considered to be at risk reveals what is of value. Furthermore, it allows us to see what use the communicator can draw from this communication. Most times putting risk and oil together in one sentence conjures up images of reckless oil companies and destruction on a local or even global scale, but this is not the way this book looks at risks and oil. Risks are rather dependent on the position of the actor in the oil arena and they can be used to gain space for brokerage or leverage in negotiations. Risks are one way to influence the future, since they are a means to anticipate it and to deal with its uncertainties. The imagination of a petro-future is filled with risks, which are not just pending catastrophes but also ways to profit from the oil.

This book also contributes to anthropology of uncertainty by looking at a phase of uncertainty and how people manage it. Uncertainty can feel overpowering and it can foreclose agency but it may also be appreciated for leaving the options open. People might strategically seek contingency (Whyte and Etyang Siu, 2015) or they might also use uncertainty as a power resource in negotiations. In Uganda, actors used uncertainty to promote their vision of the future and to influence partners in negotiations. Hopes of becoming rich with oil were cast into doubt by civil society actors, who presented the effects of oil in the resource curse risk narrative. Both risks and uncertainty can thus be used as power resources. Uncertainty serves to confuse the other actors in the arena, while risks change the arena and make certain moves possible or impossible. Another insight from my analysis is that risk and uncertainty are not connected in a linear fashion from uncertainty to risk, or from lack of knowledge to approximation of knowledge. Instead, they are connected in a loop. Risks do not reduce uncertainty but can actually bring new uncertainties.

This study contributes to the anthropology of oil, which has been concerned with the question of how people live with oil, how they handle its effects and how they imagine their futures with and without oil. This study adds to an understanding of the social dynamics of oil in oil producers-to-be. The study is situated at the interstices of the oil life cycle, which are rarely paid attention to. Instead of seeing these interstices as times of waiting in which nothing much is going on, this book has shown that waiting is an activity, which involves anticipation and practices aimed at influencing the process of oil-making.

Finally, this study offers a comprehensive view of oil in Uganda. It is the first major anthropological study on oil in Uganda that pays attention to the perspectives of various actors and their performances in the oil arena. Rather than following a well-trodden path of estimating whether the oil will turn out to be a blessing or a curse, this book looked in detail at practices of resource-making. I emphasise the advantage of looking at the visions, narratives and practices of anticipation to understand how the oil is turned into a resource both materially and socially. I suggest that in order to understand oil in Uganda and the future the country has, we should look at the negotiations in the oil arena as they are taking place and more specifically at the role visions of the future play in these negotiations.

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9 Appendix

9.1 Table on History of Oil in Uganda

Year	Oil in Uganda (including other important political events in Uganda and international oil-related events)
1890	First remark on oil seepages at Lake Albert in colonial records by Frederick Lugard
1900	Licensing of British East African Syndicate
1913	First exploration camp, Kibiro
1925	Reconfirmation of evidence of hydrocarbons by geological survey
1926	Cooperation between Anglo-Persian and Britain
1938	First wells drilled, African-European Investment Company, promising prospects in Butiaba Waki B-1
1948–1951	Unsuccessful test wells by colonial government
1957	Petroleum Act passed in Legislative Council
1962	Independence
	Milton Obote becomes President
1964	Exploration rights given to Shell
1971	Exploration rights given to Kirkwall Associates and Collin Oil and Gas
	Idi Amin becomes President in a coup d'état
1973	Oil crisis
1978–1979	Uganda-Tanzania war ("Liberation war")
	End of Idi Amin's regime
1980	Milton Obote's Second Term
	Begin of civil war ("Bush War") between NRA and Milton Obote's forces
1980–1984	Aerial magnetic survey
1985	World Bank credit for seismic survey to GSMD
	Establishment of Petroleum Unit within GSMD
	Passing of Petroleum Act
1986	End of civil war and begin NRA/NRM regime with Yoweri Museveni as President
	Military successes of Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) by Alice Lakwena

1987	Military loss and dispersal of HSM
	Formation of Lord's Salvation Army (later Lord's Resistance Army, LRA) by Joseph Kony
1988	Negotiations with Esso, Petrofina, Shell
1990	"Agreement of Cooperation for the Exploration of Hydrocarbons and the Exploitation of Common Fields" between Uganda and Zaire signed
1991	Production Sharing Agreement (PSA) with Petrofina signed
	Establishment of Petroleum Exploration and Production Department (PEPD) at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development
1992	800 km gravity survey of Lake Albert by Universities Columbia, Leeds and Lubumbashi, Fina Exploration Uganda and PEPD
	Aeromagnetic Survey of North Eastern and Central Uganda revealed Kyoga and Kadam-Moroto sedimentary basin
1993	Expiration of Petrofina's license
1994	Presentation of Uganda's prospects by PEPD at American Association of Petroleum Geologists convention, Denver, Colorado
1995	PSA with Uganda Works and General Engineering Company signed
1996	Presidential elections: Yoweri Museveni voted as President
1997	PSA with Heritage Oil & Gas Ltd. signed for EA 3
1998	Seismic survey of EA 3 by Heritage with positive results
	Attack of Kichwamba Technical College by Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in Semliki Area (EA 3)
2001	PSA with Hardman Petroleum and Energy Africa for EA 2
2002	Exploration well by Heritage
	Syda Namirembe Bbumba becomes Minister of Energy
2003	Heritage sells Energy Africa 50% stake in EA 3
	Exploration well by Heritage
2004	Appraisal well by Heritage
	Tullow buys Energy Africa, gaining exploration rights to EA 2 and 3
	Heritage awarded 50% working interest in EA 1 and 3A
	PSA with Neptune Petroleum for EA 5
	Subsidy of Norway for "Strengthening the State Administration of the Upstream Petroleum Subsector project"

2005	Discovery at Mputa-1 (exploration well) by Hardman Resources
	Removal of presidential term limits by parliamentary vote
2006	Discovery Mputa-2 by Hardman Resources
	Discovery at Waraga-1 by Hardman Resources
	Discovery at Kajubirizi (former Kingfisher)-1/-1A and Nzizi-1 by Tullow Oil/ Heritage
	Takeover of Hardman by Tullow
	MoU with Tullow signed
	PSA between DR Congo and Heritage signed
	Presidential elections: Yoweri Museveni retains power
	Daudi Migereko becomes Minister of Energy
	Peace Agreement with LRA
	Creation of Buliisa District
2007	License to Dominion Petroleum for 4B
	Five exploration or appraisal wells by Tullow
	Flow test at Kingfisher confirms commercial viability
	Skirmish between DRC and UG army on Lake Albert
	"Arusha Agreement": Uganda and DRC sign new agreement on cooperation in surveying and prospecting
2008	Draft of "National Oil and Gas Policy"
	Establishment of Civil Society Coalition on Oil and Gas
	Discoveries by Tullow (Taiti-1/1A, Kigogole-1), plus five exploration and appraisal wells
	Discoveries by Heritage (Ngiri-1, Jobi-1, Rii-1, Kajubirizi-2, 3/3A)
2009	Court case filed for publication of PSAs by Greenwatch and two journalists
	Heritage offers ENI 50% in EA 1 and 3A
	Discoveries by Tullow (Ngassa-2, Nsoga-1, Kigogole-3, Wahrindi-1), plus five exploration or appraisal wells
	Hilary Onek becomes Minister of Energy
	Dry well by Neptune (Iti-1)

2010	Tullow buys Heritage's stakes in EA 1 and 3A
	Foster Wheeler feasibility study on refinery by the government and Norway
	Discoveries by Tullow (Nsoga-5, Mpyo-1, Kigogole-2/-4/-5), plus five appraisal wells
	Dry wells by Neptune (Avivi-1) and Dominion (Ngaji-1)
	Dodd–Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act signed into law
2011	Discoveries by Tullow (Nsoga-2A, Kigogole-6/6A, Ngege-2/2A, Jobi-2/2A, Jobi-East-1/2/2A, Mpyo-3, Gunya-1) plus two dry wells
	Presidential elections: Yoweri Museveni retains power
	Corruption scandal involving ENI and Hilary Onek, Amama Mbabazi and Sam Kutesa
	Parliamentary committee instituted to investigate bribery allegations
	Moratorium on issuance of licenses and signing of contracts until passing of oil bills
	Irene Muloni becomes energy minister
	Sell and purchase agreement between Tullow and CNOOC and Total
2012	Pull out of Dominion Petroleum
	Ophir Energy buys license to Block 4B
	Discoveries by Tullow (Ngege-3/4/4a/5/7, Nsoga-3/3A/4, Waraga-2), plus one appraisal well
	Discoveries by Total E&P (Ngiri-3, Jobi-3/4/5/5A), plus six exploration or appraisal wells
	Dry wells by Neptune and CNOOC
	Proposal, debate and passing of oil bills in parliament
	Standoff over clause 9 of Exploration, Development and Production Bill
	OPM (Office of Prime Minister) Corruption Scandal and suspension of aid from European donor countries
	PSA with Tullow signed for EA 1 and Kanywataba despite moratorium
	Farm-down deal of 2/3 of Tullow's concession to CNOOC and Total E&P completed
	Land demarcation, Refinery Area
	First Ugandan head of oil company in Uganda: Jimmy Mugerwa becomes General Manager of Tullow

2012 / cont.	Internal struggles at CSCO and PWYP-U
	Tax dispute between Tullow and the government at the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes
	Oil discoveries in Kenya and Tanzania
2013	"Exploration, Development and Production Bill" and "Refining, Gas Processing and Conversion, Transportation and Storage Bill" signed into law
	High Court in London rules in favour of Tullow in Tullow-Heritage case
	Corruption allegations against Museveni and Tullow
	Discoveries by Total E&P (Ngiri-5/5A/6/7, Mpyo-4/4A/5/5A), plus 15 appraisal wells and two dry wells
	One appraisal well by Tullow
	Production license for Kajubirizi-1A for CNOOC
	Commissioning of first oil laboratory in Kampala
	NRM expels four of its Members of Parliament for participation in the Parliamentary Forum on Oil and Gas
	Compensation of Refinery Area Residents
	Mineral Wealth Conference in Kampala
2014	MoU with Tullow, CNOOC, Total signed
	Completion of Hoima-Kaiso Road
	New discoveries boost Ugandan reserves to 6.5 billion bbl
	Uganda Tax Appeals Tribunal rules against Tullow Oil in tax dispute
	Recall of Total E&P's general manager
2015	Restructuring of PEPD into Directorate of Petroleum
	First competitive bidding process for licenses
	RT Global Resources wins tender for refinery construction
	Settlement of tax dispute between Tullow and the government
	Appointment of new general manager by Total E&P

9.2 Transcript of the Documentary "Blessing or Curse?"

The following transcript includes brief descriptions in brackets of the pictures and persons shown in the film.

[Sceneries from Uganda such as women walking on a road or school children running along the road] *Male narrator:* "What do you wish for Uganda's future?"

[A middle-aged man] "I want a bright future for Uganda."

[A young woman] "I wish to see a developed, a developed Uganda in the future."

[A young man who speaks English with English subtitles] "I would like the country to improve the economic standards of the country. We should bring up and put into position employment opportunities so that the youth can gain."

[A group of school children shouting] "Education."

[A school building and children] *Female voice translated into English:* "We need to make sure that education is good and that class rooms are not overcrowded."

[A woman with child] "I wish my children to be educated from primary, secondary and even get a professional course."

[A doctor] "Health care."

[Patients at a hospital] *Female voice translated into English:* "I wish for more supplies in our hospitals and more drugs. We need medicine to help children get well and more nurses at rural clinics."

[Karimojong women carrying jerry cans and wood] *Male voice translated into English:* "Our country needs stability and protection from rebel groups."

[A man with salads on a bicycle] "Economy."

[A field] *Female voice translated into English:* "I hope for a stronger farming sector to help with job creation and productivity."

[A man standing in front of a field] "I would like the government to create a good market for our produce."

> [A man who speaks English with English subtitles] "We are growing many crops but we don't have market because of poor roads."
>
> [Flooded road] *Male voice translated into English:* "Better roads will allow more transport of goods and crops around the country."
>
> [People moving down stairs] *Female voice in English but with subtitles in English:* "Our country has a large young population and our young people need employment."
>
> [A young woman] "Electricity."
>
> [An old man] "We want good governance."
>
> [Ugandan parliament building from outside] *First young woman speaks again:* "We need to agree as citizens how we want our our country to be like."
>
> [A woman] "Development. That's what we want."

[Sunrise] *Male narrator*: "Whatever your hopes for Uganda's future you must learn about oil and natural gas. [Oil rigs] A very large amount of these valuable resources has been discovered in our country. At least two billion barrels of oil and there may be much more. Uganda will soon become an important oil producer. The law says that this oil belongs to our country, to all of us, not to any private company or person. After the oil and gas are pumped from the ground, they can be made into petrol, electricity, important chemicals and even fertilizer. Things that are very valuable both here in Uganda and to the rest of the world. Finding, pumping, and processing the oil is difficult and expensive. [Oil men working] So our government must partner with foreign companies who provide the skill and money. In exchange the foreign companies are given a share of the oil. Government will also sell some of the oil to foreign countries. And the money Uganda will earn will be very great: the equivalent of at least two billion US Dollars. [Animation of a stack of dollars] That is over four and a half trillion shillings every year for the next twenty-five years. [More stacks of money] This will be the greatest source of income our government has ever had. This money could help make life much better for all the people [A child pumping water] of Uganda. [School children under a tree] Improving schools and medical centres. Aiding farmers, providing good roads, electricity and other things that will allow business to grow and create jobs. It could free us from foreign aid donors, allowing us to determine our own destiny.

But natural resource wealth, the money earned from things like oil or diamonds or gold is very strange money. If not handled very, very carefully, instead of making a country richer, instead of improving the lives of its people, it can make them much poorer. Instead of being a blessing, it can be a curse. [From a picture of children on a playground, cut to an empty building, then animation of a map of Africa, Uganda in yellow, Nigeria in red and Botswana in green] Here are the stories of two countries, one cursed by natural resource wealth, the other blessed by it. [Kampala downtown skyline in the background and a shanty settlement in front] With the oil money Uganda's future will be like one of these countries. We do not yet know which one. [Back to map and zoom into Nigeria]

Nigeria – the curse of natural resources. Nigeria is Sub-Saharan Africa's largest oil producer. It has earned over 600 billion US dollars from oil since the 1960s. During all this time the people of the Niger Delta [Dark sky and flame of gas flaring], the region where the oil is being produced, have been promised the oil would bring them a better life. But instead it has brought sickness [Dirty barrel of shell and child walking next to it], poverty and war."

> *Male voice, English with English subtitles:* "Before the coming of oil we had good fishes, rich estuaries, good coastal land. We had fresh water that was floating, unpolluted that our parents and our grandparents had. [Woman rowing a boat, then appearance of a face to the voice] They were just living and they were getting by. And then this thing called oil came." [A man wandering around next to an oil site, wet ground under him and dark clouds over him.]
>
> *Male voice, English with English subtitles:* "In the Niger Delta, we have been colonized by the Nigerian elite, by the corporation."
>
> *Male voice, English with English subtitles:* "Every kid in the village will know that he is starving because of the oil."
>
> *Another male voice, English with English subtitles:* "No medical attention. No food commodities. No housing. No road. No electricity. It has absolutely nothing. It's a hundred percent zero." [A wire-mesh and a rig, then cut to a man]
>
> "We have about 369 oil spillages in a year in the Niger delta.[266] That is one every day." [Two small children]
>
> *Female voice, English with English subtitles:* "We don't know what we are going to leave for our children. They don't care about the human beings who are here. [Cut to the woman to whom the voice belongs] All they care about is the money they make." [Street in a shanty settlement]

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[266] This seems a moderate estimate since according to Amnesty International there were 553 oil spills in 2015 (Amnesty International 2015).

> *A man:* "The situation that we find ourselves today was brought upon by the Nigerian government. Promises that were made by politicians were broken. Those promises were broken."[Boat in river]

Narrator: "The land and water in the Niger Delta have been poisoned by oil. It is now impossible to earn a living from fishing or farming. Clean water and electricity are rare [Dark cloudy water puddle on a road, then cut to a skinny old woman]. With few clinics and schools [Derelict building], the sick go without medicine. And many have no chance to learn to read or write. The death rate for children is among the highest in the world.[267] [Rebels on a boat]. People live under the constant threat of violence. How did this great wealth, this 600 billion U.S. dollars cause so much poverty and misery. What is it that causes the resource curse? The most important reason is government corruption. There is a very big difference between what oil companies said they paid the Nigerian government and what the government says it received.

[Animation of a white man giving money to a black man, then the black man counts the money with an evil smile] According to a United Nations report half or more of the country's natural resource money may have been stolen by a few big men. This corruption has weakened democracy and accountability. With the millions, the billions of dollars they have stolen, corrupt leaders are able to hire militias and bribe and threaten judges, election officials, members of parliament and voters. So the people can never remove them at election time. [Voting scenes and street barricades in flames] Greedy generals who want the money have several times taken over the country, replacing a corrupt civilian government with a corrupt military dictatorship.

Also, in most countries the government needs their people and the economy to be strong. So it will have tax revenues. But this is not true in many countries with natural resource wealth. With all the natural resource money the leader may no longer care about the economy or whether people earn enough to pay taxes. Because these governments receive most of their revenues from the oil companies. They also have failed to insist on strong environmental protections during oil production. Instead they have allowed communities near the oil to be poisoned. Natural resource wealth has often brought war. Both within a country and with its neighbours as people fight for control over the resource.

Natural resource money can hurt the economy in one other way. When a lot of foreign money floods into a country, there can be a big change in the exchange rate. Imports become cheaper and exports become more expensive making it harder for local producers, especially farmers and factories to compete. Unless the oil money is invested in ways that counteract this, farmers may earn much less money even in

[267] The child mortality rates are decreasing but not as fast as in other countries. For an overview see this statistic from the World Bank on the child mortality rate in Nigeria: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.MORT?locations=NG (February 2017).

a good growing season. Factories and business can lose money and have to close, leaving many people without jobs. In Nigeria this means that people all across the country not only in the oil producing region are poorer than they were before the oil. Twenty years ago half of the people in Nigeria had escaped deep poverty. But now poverty is much worse with seven out of every ten people very poor.[268] [Cut to the map and zoom into Botswana]

Botswana – the blessing of natural resources. [Sun setting or rising then a diamond under zoom] Natural resource wealth, in this case diamonds, has truly been a blessing for Botswana. Before diamonds were discovered, Botswana was the third poorest country in the world. Far poorer than Uganda has ever been. From the time of diamond discovery in the late 1960s until now Botswana had the highest rate of economic growth in the world. It is now the most prosperous and stable country in Africa. The average person has an income of 6400 US Dollars or over 14 million Ugandan Shillings in one year.[269] That's four times as much as the average income in Uganda today."[270]

> [A mine then cut to a man in helmet and vest standing in front of it.] "This is the mine that has built this country. All the resources, the money that has come of it, has been invested in building this country." [A diamond factory]

> [Cut to a woman.] "I am what I am because of the diamonds. Whoever out there is whoever theyare because of the diamonds. The schools, the infrastructure, the whole development that you see is because of the diamonds."

> [A man in an office]: "In Botswana the legislation is such that all mineral rights are invested in the Republic of Botswana."

> [Festus Mogae, Former President of Botswana] "We have used them for to develop infrastructure, to develop the people themselves, to provide water – we are a semi-arid country – to provide health. We said 'ok, what we should do is

[268] This estimation of the poverty rate matches data from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency see https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html [February 2018]. However, the World Bank reports 46% poverty in 2009 (http://data.worldbank.org/country/nigeria [February 2018]).

[269] This estimation is similar to the nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of 2011 (cf. www.tradingeconomics.com/botswana/gdp-per-capita [February 2018]). What this estimation leaves out is that Botswana also has a very high income inequality (see http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/botswana/overview [February 2017]).

[270] Uganda's nominal GDP per capita was 646 US Dollars in 2011 and therefore Botswana's was almost ten times higher (cf. http://www.tradingeconomics.com/uganda/gdp-per-capita [February 2018]). The comparison must have been between Botswana's nominal and Uganda's GDP per capita adjusted by purchasing power parity, which is 1649 US Dollars in 2011 (http://www.tradingeconomics.com/uganda/gdp-per-capita-ppp [February 2018]).

to educate the people so that in the future when the diamonds are finished and people say what did you do with it, we say that we educated the people'."

Narrator: "The leaders of Botswana made certain that the wealth gained from its natural resources was invested in improving health, education and the economy while preserving the natural environment. Making it a blessing for all people. We all wish our country's future will be like Botswana and not like Nigeria. But we must take careful note; Botswana is the only resource-rich African country to escape the curse. The story of Nigeria has been repeated again and again. [A map with countries that suffered from the curse, showing them in red and Botswana in green] Angola, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan. All of these countries suffer from some part of the curse. We don't want Uganda to be next. What made Botswana so different from the other countries? What must we Ugandans do to follow Botswana's path to avoid the curse and reap the blessing?"

[Cut to a speech from Barack Obama, President of United States] "We know that countries are more likely to prosper when governments are accountable to their people. So we are leading a global effort to combat corruption, which in many places is the single greatest barrier to prosperity. And which is a profound violation of human rights. That's why we now require oil and gas and mining companies that raise capital in the United States to disclose all payments they make to foreign governments.[271] And that's why I urge the G20 to put corruption on its agenda and make it harder for corrupt officials to steal from their own people and stifle their nation's development."

[Cut to Festus Mogae in an interview setting] "From day one of our independence, we pursued democratic principles. Therefore we built consensus on what our priorities were through a democratic dispensation and an accountable government."

[Cut to first man of the video] "We would like to see a serious government fighting against corruption."

[Cut to a man repairing a bicycle, translated into English] "I would like to see us work on the problem of corruption in our country. Because resources are in the hands of very few individuals but nothing is done."

[Cut to second man of the video] "We need to have democracy in the country. We don't need these political instabilities in the country. That's what we need to fight upon so that we can develop."

[271] Obama is referring to the Dodd-Frank Financial Reform and Consumer Protection Act that was passed in 2010 by the U.S. government.

Narrator: “President Obama and president Mogae tell us and many Ugandans already know [Corruption animation again] eliminating corruption and making government accountable to the people is the most important thing we can do to escape the natural resource curse. And reap the blessing. If all the agreements and payments between government and the oil companies are made out in the open where all can see, then it will be much harder for corrupt officials to steal the money. It is easy to say we must end corruption but achieving it is much harder. Government has made many promises but there are forces within that resist. Much financial information is still secret or hard to get and some officials who have stolen the countries money go unpunished. We have seen great quantities of money lost [Animation of dollars stacks dwindling] to corruption again and again. Tens of millions of US dollars in grants from the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, 27 million US dollars meant for the 2007 Commonwealth Head of Government meeting, 4.6 million US dollars from the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations, billions of shillings meant to help farmers through NAADS never reach the people. These are just a few examples. The same may already be happening to oil. Government cannot or will not say how it has used the bonus money paid by the oil companies. If government continues to act in this way then Uganda will surely suffer the curse.”

> [Cut to a speech of President Obama] “Development depends on good governance. That is that is the ingredient, which has been missing in far to many places, far too long. That’s the change that could unlock Africa’s potential. And that is a responsibility that can only be met by Africans.” [Cut to Statistics House in Kampala]

Narrator: “Government will not change by itself. And the outside world will not change it for us. But we Ugandans can change the way government behaves. We will not have a better future simply by wishing for it. We can have a better future if we all work [Two men shown working on a field] to make government accountable. Parliament has a specially important role to play in this. [Scene from inside Uganda’s parliament] It is parliaments right and duty to establish the laws governing oil. And to oversee the management of the oil wealth, to make sure it is free from corruption. Uganda needs a strong independent parliament that can make sure the law is followed and that corrupt cabinet members and MPs and public servants are removed and punished.

Which Uganda will you work to create, one that is cursed by the oil with money disappearing to corruption and doing more to destroy our country than to develop?

Or a Uganda that is blessed with the oil money reaching all our communities? One where democratic institutions are weakened and parliament becomes irrelevant or one where government acts as the guarantor of good governance and democracy flourishes? One where farming and manufacturing are strangled by the oil and jobs and livelihoods are destroyed? Or one where money is invested in ways that help farmers and industries to create more jobs and higher wages? A country where roads remain poor and electricity and clean water are rare? Or one that uses money to invest in infrastructure, creating better conditions and a better transport system for goods and crops and better conditions for business? A Uganda where schools get worse and our young people lack the skills to earn a living or a country where we can build new schools, have more teachers and make education available to all? [School children] A future where health centres fall apart and health workers, supplies and drugs are hard to find and people die from sickness? [A health centre] Or a Uganda where our people receive the health care and medicines that they need.

We must all work to create a bright future for Uganda. We must insist that government not simply talk about ending corruption but take serious action. We must no longer give our votes in exchange for promises or small gifts but for deeds. If the people and parliament of Uganda act together, we can make government handle the oil money openly and honestly. If we choose to do this we can reap the natural resource blessing. If we do not do this we will be doomed by the curse." [First a shanty building and final scene is a lake clouded over with heavy dark clouds]

(Afiego, Nape, PWYP Documentary, Blessing or Curse).

9.3 Acronyms

ACODE..................... Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
ADF........................... Allied Democratic Forces
AFIEGO.................... Africa Institute for Energy Governance
AIDS.......................... Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
API............................ American Petroleum Institute
AUOGS..................... Association of Ugandan Oil and Gas Service Providers
BAPENECO............. Bunyoro Albertine Petroleum Network on Environmental Conservation
BBL........................... Oil Barrel (Measurement unit)
BCSCO..................... Bunyoro Civil Society Coalition on Oil and Gas
BIRUDO................... Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation
BUCOSA.................. Bunyoro Coalition on Oil and Sustainable Livelihood
CBO.......................... Community-Based Organisation
CDO......................... Community Development Officer
CEO.......................... Chief Executive Officer
CLO.......................... Community Liaison Officer
CNOOC.................. China National Offshore Oil Corporation
CNPC....................... China National Petroleum Corporation
CRED....................... Civic Response on Environment and Development
CSO.......................... Civil Society Organisation
CSCO....................... Civil Society Coalition on Oil and Gas
CSR........................... Corporate Social Responsibility
DPC......................... District Police Commander
DPP.......................... Directorate of Public Prosecution
DRC.......................... Democratic Republic of Congo
D/RDC..................... Deputy Resident District Commissioner
EA............................. Exploration Area
EIA........................... Environmental Impact Assessment
EITI.......................... Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
FESTAC.................... World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture
GDP.......................... Gross Domestic Product
GSMD...................... Geological Survey and Mines Department
HOC......................... Hazard Observation Card
HSE.......................... Health, Safety and Environment
HIV.......................... Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDP........................... Internally Displaced Person
IMF.......................... International Monetary Fund
ISO........................... International Organization for Standardization
JV............................. Joint Venture
KHEDA..................... Kitara Heritage Development Agency
LAPSSET.................. Lamu Port Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport

LC............................ Local Council
MEMD..................... Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development
MoU .... Memorandum of Understanding
MP............................ Member of Parliament
NAPE .... National Association for Professional Environmentalists
NEMA...................... Natural Environmental Management Agency
NFA.......................... National Forest Authority
NGO .... Non-Governmental Organisation
NRA .... National Resistance Army
NRM .... National Resistance Movement
OECD .... Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC....................... Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PEPD........................ Petroleum Exploration and Production Department
PPE........................... Personal Protective Equipment
PSA........................... Production Sharing Agreement
PU .... Petroleum Unit
PWYP .... Publish What You Pay
RAP .... Resettlement Action Plan
RDC .... Resident District Commissioner
RICE .... Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment
SFI .... Strategic Friends International
STI............................ Sexually Transmitted Infection
UNBS .... Uganda National Bureau of Standards
UNESCO .... United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNCST .... Ugandan National Council of Science and Technology
UGX......................... Ugandan Shillings
URA .... Uganda Revenue Authority
UWA......................... Uganda Wildlife Authority
WGI .... Water Governance Institute

9.4 List of Figures[272]

272 If not stated otherwise, the photographs are by the author (Annika Witte).

The discovery of oil in Uganda in 2006 ushered in an oil-age era with new prospects of unforeseen riches. However, after an initial exploration boom developments stalled. Unlike other countries with major oil discoveries, Uganda has been slow in developing its oil. In fact, over ten years after the first discoveries, there is still no oil. During the time of the research for this book between 2012 and 2015, Uganda's oil had not yet fully materialised but was becoming. The overarching characteristic of this research project was waiting for the big changes to come: a waiting characterised by indeterminacy. There is a timeline but every year it gets expanded and in 2018 having oil still seems to belong to an uncertain future. This book looks at the waiting period as a time of not-yet-ness and describes the practices of future- and resource-making in Uganda.

How did Ugandans handle the new resource wealth and how did they imagine their future with oil to be? This ethnography is concerned with Uganda's oil and the way Ugandans anticipated different futures with it: promising futures of wealth and development and disturbing futures of destruction and suffering. The book works out how uncertainty was an underlying feature of these anticipations and how risks and risk discourses shaped the imaginations of possible futures. Much of the talk around the oil involved the dichotomy of blessing or curse and it was not clear, which one the oil would be. Rather than adding another assessment of what the future with oil will be like, this book describes the predictions and prophesies as an essential part of how resources are being made.

This ethnography shows how various actors in Uganda, from the state, the oil industry, the civil society, and the extractive communities, have tried to negotiate their position in the oil arena. Annika Witte argues in this book that by establishing their risks and using them as power resources actors can influence the becoming of oil as a resource and their own place in a petro-future. The book offers one of the first ethnographic accounts of Uganda's oil and the negotiations that took place in an oil state to be.

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