

MONUMENTS AND POST-CONFLICT RECOVERY IN ACHOLI LAND, ATIAK
MEMORIAL IN ATIAK SUB-COUNTY, AMURU DISTRICT, NORTHERN UGANDA

BY

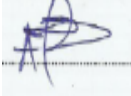
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DECLARATION

I, Anek Josephine, declare that this research proposal entitled “*Monuments and Post-Conflict Recovery in Acholi land, Atiak Memorial in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District, Uganda*”:
is my original work and has not been submitted to any academic institution for award of any degree.

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation, entitled “*Monuments and Post-Conflict Recovery in Acholi land, Uganda: A Case Study of Atiak Memorial in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District, Northern Uganda*”, has been produced under our supervision, and is submitted to the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training, Gulu University for examination, with our approval.

Sign:

Date:

Supervisor: Dr. Stella Laloyo Apecu

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late mother, Margaret Ladur Tokwiny, for having introduced me to learning, and for all the sacrifices she made towards my education; and to my husband, Dr. Murachi Jacob Eric, for his support while I pursued this study programme.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is not possible to mention the names of all the people who helped me during the period I was working on this dissertation. To all of them, especially my colleagues and classmates at the IPSS, I express my gratitude for the encouragement, advice and time that they freely accorded me.

I also thank my supervisor, Dr. Laloyo Stella Apecu, for the guidance and constructive criticism, without which this work could not have been accomplished.

However, I take full responsibility for whatever shortcomings this work may exhibit.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between monuments and post-conflict recovery in Acholi land, a case study of Atiak memorial in Atiak sub-county, Amuru district. The objectives of the study were to establish the role of the Atiak monument in post-conflict recovery, to examine the effectiveness of post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county and to establish the role of International Actors in memorialization and monument construction in Atiak sub-county, Amuru District-Uganda. The study was conducted using a case study design; data was collected using interview guides from 46 respondents. Interview data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis for objectives one to three. The findings were presented in form of tables and narratives from interviews. Findings revealed that the Atiak monument is central to the post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county. The findings showed that there is a multi-dimensional approach to healing both psychosocial needs and fostering educational, cultural and social awareness. Findings showed that the post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county have been largely effective, particularly in building social cohesion, peace, cultural restoration and justice. Findings further revealed that the construction of the Atiak monument was a significant achievement made possible through the collective efforts of various International Actors: United Nations and UNESCO, European Union, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, International Criminal Court (ICC) Governments and Embassies. The study recommends that to further enhance the impact of the Atiak monuments, the community should implement interactive educational programmes at the monument sites involving schools and local organizations in activities such as workshops, storytelling and history lessons, it also recommended that targeted interventions be implemented by local government to address the gaps in psychosocial support activities to the community, infrastructure, security and to build on the international support for the Atiak monument. It is recommended that the community and international stakeholders establish annual forums or commemorative events at the monument.

Key words: Monuments, Post-Conflict Recovery, Acholi land.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The role of monuments in post conflict recovery includes, Commemoration and remembrance, historical preservation, reconciliation and healing, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, education, symbolism, aesthetics, psychosocial impact and political and social function are roles of monuments (Craig and Inna, 2024). Social cohesion and reconciliation, psychosocial healing and trauma recovery can be seen as the long-term spillover effects of monuments if properly planned (Katherine, 2014). Economic reconstruction and livelihoods can be part of the results of post-conflict reconstruction overall but not monuments directly (Katherine, 2014). Post- conflict interventions are most likely to improve governance and institutional development, enhance peacebuilding and conflict prevention, stimulate infrastructure rehabilitation, amplify cultural restoration and identity among others denoted post-conflict recovery initiatives (Alexandra, 2017).

Post-conflict peace building starts when conflict has been controlled to a degree that normal social activities can be resumed and reconstruction of violence-torn societies becomes possible. As intense violence becomes less visible, conditions for longer-term political and social stability take root (Alexandra, 2017). This chapter presents historical background to the study, theoretical perspective, conceptual, contextual perspectives, problem statement of the study and objectives of the study respectively.

1.1 Background of the Study.

This section discusses historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual perspectives of the study.

1.2 Historical Background of the Study.

The study of monuments and post-conflict recovery has been significant in understanding how societies rebuild after periods of violence, trauma, and destruction. Monuments, both as physical structures and symbolic representations, play crucial roles in how societies commemorate the past, reconcile with trauma and foster collective identity (Alexandra, 2017). I provided a historical analogy starting from conflicts in

Africa etc. Latin America has faced numerous civil conflicts, authoritarian regimes, and human rights abuses, particularly during the Cold War period. Countries such as Argentina, Chile and Guatemala experienced brutal military dictatorships that left deep scars on their populations. In these countries, monuments served as a tool for remembering the victims of state repression and fostering national healing (Gusic, 2019). The region also experienced numerous civil wars, dictatorships, and human rights violations, particularly during the 20th century. Countries like Argentina, Chile and Guatemala faced state-sponsored violence, often referred to as the "Dirty War" or similar conflicts (Cottbus, 2017). Monuments in these contexts often commemorate victims of violence and serve as sites for collective mourning (Cottbus, 2017). For example, the memorial park in Buenos Aires is dedicated to the victims of the military dictatorship. These sites play crucial roles in collective memory, helping to reconcile national identity with historical injustices (Gusic, 2019).

According to Diznazi (2023), Asia's post-conflict landscape is diverse, encompassing events like the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia, the Vietnam war, and ongoing conflicts in regions like Kashmir and Afghanistan. In Cambodia, the Tuol Sleng Genocide museum memorializes the victims of the Khmer Rouge, serving as a reminder of the atrocities committed. Similarly, in Japan, monuments related to World War II, such as the Hiroshima peace memorial, symbolizes peace and reconciliation. In many cases, these monuments also faced challenges related to differing interpretations of history (Abou and Fakhani, 2018). On the other hand, Craig and Inna (2024) observed that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent conflicts in the Balkans left deep scars in Eastern Europe. The region has seen ethnic conflicts, wars of independence, and genocides, notably the Yugoslav Wars. In places like Bosnia and Herzegovina, monuments like the Srebrenica memorial serves to honor victims and provides a space for reflection. However, the region also faces challenges regarding the politicization of memory and how different ethnic groups interpret and commemorate their histories (Craig and Inna, 2024).

In the view of Wahba, Egypt and Minguez, Spain (2017), Sub-Saharan Africa had a complex history of colonialism, civil wars, and genocide, such as the Rwandan Genocide of 1994 and the prolonged civil wars in countries like Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Monuments often commemorate victims of violence and serve educational purposes. For instance, the Gisozi genocide memorial in Rwanda is a key site for remembering the victims and promoting national unity. These

monuments facilitate dialogue about the past and contribute to post-conflict recovery by fostering a culture of remembrance between Wahba and Mínguez. (2017). In Mali, the historic city of Timbuktu was severely affected by a protracted conflict, which in 2012 resulted in the demolition of its mausoleums, damage to its manuscripts, and multi-faceted attempts to erase the city's identity (Meskell, 2018). The reconstruction process mobilized the international community and centered on people's priorities and needs. It rehabilitated and trained artisans to restore and rebuild historic monuments following ancient practices and using traditional materials. The effort helped promote solidarity across borders, preserve what's left of the city's manuscripts and relics, and restore community facilities, public spaces and the functioning of the city (Meskell, 2018).

Somalia has experienced civil war since the early 1990s, leading to state collapse, clan warfare, and ongoing violence. The country's monuments often reflect the pre-war period and the aspirations for a unified state. In post-conflict recovery efforts, monuments can symbolize peace and the potential for national healing. However, the ongoing instability poses challenges to effective commemoration and memory work (Ocen, 2022). Uganda has faced significant conflict, including the brutal regime of former President Idi Amin Dada, the civil wars involving the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and ongoing challenges related to governance and human rights (Ocen, 2022). In Uganda, monuments like the Mausoleum of the Uganda Martyrs commemorates the victims of political violence and serves as sites for reflection and healing. The emphasis on reconciliation and memorialization is vital in addressing historical grievances and promoting national identity (Ocen, 2022).

1.3 Theoretical Background of the Study.

Theoretically, this study is informed by the Human Needs Theory in conflict resolution (Burton, 1990). Human Needs Theory explains violent conflict and recovery through the lens of universal, non-negotiable human needs rather than only material or political interests. Burton argued that conflicts become protracted when fundamental human needs are denied. Sustainable peace and recovery must therefore address those needs structurally and symbolically. The theory assumes that human needs are universal and non-negotiable (identity, recognition, security, participation, justice and dignity), unmet needs lead to social conflict and trauma; especially in contexts of war and mass violence. Sustainable peace requires structural and psychosocial responses, not merely

ceasefires or economic reforms, symbols and social institutions (including monuments) can help restore recognition. Identity, collective memory and post-conflict recovery must address psychological, cultural, political and economic needs simultaneously while participation and acknowledgement of victims are essential for reconciliation and legitimacy. These assumptions provide a powerful theoretical lens for analyzing how monuments like the Atiak memorial contributes to recovery processes in post-war Northern Uganda.

Burton's theory suggests that communities emerging from violence require restoration of identity, dignity, and recognition. Monuments serve as public acknowledgements of suffering, thereby meeting psychosocial needs and facilitating healing. The Atiak memorial represents collective acknowledgement of the 1995 massacre and contributes to community resilience. Human Needs Theory emphasizes recognition and validation of victims' experiences while memorialization provides spaces for mourning and remembrance, helping survivors feel seen and acknowledged, which reduces grievances and resentment that could perpetuate conflict. Burton highlighted the importance of truth and understanding in conflict transformation. Monuments preserve historical memory, preventing denialism and promoting intergenerational learning, which addresses the human need for truth, meaning, and identity continuity.

Collective trauma disrupts psychosocial wellbeing, memorial sites allow shared rituals and storytelling, fostering empathy and social cohesion key elements in satisfying needs for belonging and emotional security (Nora P,1989). When communities feel recognized and included, grievances decline. Monuments encourage dialogue and collective reflection, contributing to preventive peacebuilding consistent with Burton's emphasis on addressing root causes. Human Needs Theory recognizes the centrality of cultural identity. (Young, J.E,1993) In Acholi society, cultural practices, storytelling and communal rituals around memorials reinforce shared identity and cultural continuity after conflict. Symbolic representation communicates dignity and collective memory. Artistic expressions within memorials can humanize victims and reshape narratives of violence into messages of resilience and unity. Monuments also reflect governance and power relations. Burton emphasized participation and legitimacy; inclusive memorialization processes demonstrate political acknowledgement and responsiveness to citizens' needs.

In the context of Acholi land, the Atiak memorial serves multiple theoretical functions consistent with Burton's framework: Restored community dignity after the Atiak massacre, provides a culturally grounded space for mourning and healing, encourages inter-generational dialogue and historical awareness, supports reconciliation among survivors, returnees and former combatants, symbolizes political recognition and accountability for past violence and promotes peace, education and community cohesion (Pierre Nora,1989). Thus, the memorial becomes both a symbolic and practical mechanism for meeting fundamental human needs necessary for sustainable recovery.

Human Needs Theory was preferred over others because it provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the relationship between monuments and post-conflict recovery in Acholi Land. Emphasizing recognition, identity, dignity, participation and security, Burton's theory explains how memorials like the Atiak memorial contribute to psychosocial healing, social cohesion, governance legitimacy, cultural restoration and peacebuilding. (Maurice Halbwach,1989) theory highlights that sustainable recovery goes beyond material reconstruction; it requires symbolic and cultural processes that address the deep human needs arising from conflict experiences.

1.4 Conceptual Background of the Study.

Conceptually, monuments (statues, buildings, or memorials) are created to commemorate a person, event or cultural heritage with lasting symbols of historical significance and are constructed to ensure that future generations remember important events or figures (Peter and Osazuwa, 2024). Meanwhile, in the view of Joireman and Tchatchoua-Djomo (2023), monuments are officially designated sites or structures that are protected by national or international laws due to their historical, architectural or cultural significance.

This study conceptualized monuments as physical embodiments (commemoration and remembrance, historical preservation, reconciliation and healing, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, symbolism and aesthetics among others) of a society's historical events representing shared moments in history used to solidify collective memory and identity within Acholi community.

Post-conflict recovery refers to the process by which societies rebuild and rehabilitate after the cessation of conflict which typically involves restoring infrastructure, fostering reconciliation and rebuilding social, political and economic

institutions (Cottbus, 2017). In the view of Herut and Dube (2022), post-conflict recovery is the immediate humanitarian needs of populations affected by conflict, such as providing food, shelter, healthcare, psychosocial support, laying the groundwork for long-term development through rebuilding economies, institutions and communities.

This study, therefore, conceptualized post-conflict recovery as social cohesion and reconciliation, psychosocial healing and trauma recovery, economic reconstruction and livelihoods, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, infrastructure rehabilitation, cultural restoration and identity, justice and accountability among others not only physical reconstruction but also promoting peace, reconciliation and healing within divided societies, restoring trust between former abductees to prevent future violence.

1.5 Contextual Background of the Study.

Contextually, Atiak memorial commemorates the victims of the 1995 massacre when the LRA attacked Atiak trading center, resulting in numerous deaths and trauma for the local community. Amuru District encompasses various historical, cultural, social, and political dimensions (Julian, 2011). Memorials are intended to preserve memories of people or events. Many are designed to promote a specific political or spiritual narrative though individual experiences of them will vary. Memorialization sometimes conceived as symbolic reparations is perhaps perceived as a relatively easy entry point into this tangled territory (Makoka, 2024) Monuments serve as important cultural symbols that facilitate collective grieving and commemoration. In Acholi culture, ancestors hold significant spiritual importance (Van Dyke, 2019). The study by Esuruku and Tshimba reveals that while the Acholi reconciliation ritual Mato Oput remains symbolically important in northern Uganda's post-conflict landscape, its application in the aftermath of the Pajong massacre proved significantly constrained by contextual realities. The massacre generated deep and enduring fractures between the Pajong and Pubec- Pamong clans, both of whom advanced competing claims of victimhood, thereby entrenching hostility and obstructing cooperative reconciliation efforts (Golla and D'Alessandro, 2024).

The Atiak memorial provides a space for communal mourning and healing, enabling survivors and families of victims to come together to remember their loved ones and share their experiences (Obika & Otim, 2019). It acts as a focal point for collective healing in a society recovering from trauma (Adong, 2021). The memorial serves not only the immediate victims' families but also future generations, ensuring

that the history of violence is remembered, and lessons are learned to prevent future conflicts. The monument has also become an important gathering place for communal activities. Every year, residents, survivors, religious leaders, local government officials, and civil society organizations come together at the monument to commemorate the victims of the massacre through prayers, speeches, wreath-laying ceremonies, and moments of reflection (FJDI,2023). These commemorative events strengthen social bonds among community members and provide opportunities for collective mourning and emotional healing. Through these activities, the community continues to maintain a strong connection with the monument as a place that unites people around a common history and identity. Community members generally perceive the monument as a symbol of truth, memory, and resilience. Survivors view it as a permanent reminder of the losses endured during the conflict and as a place where their experiences and those of the victims are recognized and preserved. The monument also offers a space for emotional expression and healing, contributing to individual and collective recovery from the trauma of war.

Culturally, the monument aligns with Acholi traditions of remembering and honoring the dead. It serves as a link between past and present generations by preserving historical memory and educating young people about the consequences of conflict and the value of peace. Beyond commemorating tragedy, the monument symbolizes the community's strength, resilience, and commitment to reconciliation and peaceful coexistence.

In the aftermath of the conflict, Uganda has made strides towards reconciliation, but tensions remain between various groups (Adong, 2021). The memorial is a site for dialogue and understanding, contributing to peacebuilding efforts (Adong, 2021). The Ugandan government's recognition and support for memorials like the Atiak memorial reflects a broader political will to address past injustices and promote national healing (Adong, 2021).

According to Ocen (2022), the memorial symbolizes resilience in the face of adversity and the community's determination to rebuild after violence. It serves as a reminder of the past while promoting hope for a peaceful future. The Atiak Memorial functions as an educational site, raising awareness about the atrocities committed during the conflict and the importance of peace and reconciliation in society. While the memorial serves a vital role, it can also highlight differing narratives about the conflict,

particularly regarding blame and accountability. Engaging various community stakeholders in discussions about the memorial's meaning is crucial for inclusive healing. The maintenance and sustainability of the memorial are vital for its continued relevance and effectiveness in post-conflict recovery efforts (Ocen, 2022).

The Atiak memorial in Acholi land, Uganda, is a poignant representation of how monuments can contribute to post-conflict recovery by honoring victims, fostering community healing, and promoting dialogue about the past. Understanding the contextual factors surrounding the memorial helps illuminate its role in shaping collective memory and facilitating resilience in a community deeply affected by violence. Through this lens, the study of monuments and post-conflict recovery in Acholi land can offer valuable insights into broader processes of reconciliation and healing in post-conflict societies (Herut and Dube, 2022).

1.6 Statement of the Problem

Post-conflict recovery is often complex and contested, extending beyond the cessation of violence to include healing, reconciliation, restoration of livelihoods, and rebuilding of social fabrics (Cottbus, 2017). In many contexts, recovery processes are uneven, leaving gaps in psychosocial support, cultural restoration and economic reconstruction (Meskell, 2019). In Atiak sub- county, Amuru district is one of the areas gravely affected by the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency survivors continue to grapple with trauma, poverty and fragile community cohesion (Adong, 2021). Monuments erected in memory of the Atiak massacre victims serve as symbols of remembrance and resilience, yet their contribution to post-conflict recovery efforts remains inadequately understood (Ocen, 2022). The central problem is whether these monuments, beyond being memorials, effectively facilitate reconciliation, psychosocial healing, social cohesion, and community development in a setting still struggling with the legacies of violent conflict (Ocen, 2022). In post-conflict societies, monuments play a crucial role in preserving historical memory, fostering reconciliation and promoting healing among affected communities (Golla and D'Alessandro, 2024). However, in many contexts, including Acholi land in northern Uganda, the effectiveness of these monuments in achieving their intended purposes is often overlooked and under-researched (Herut and Dube, 2022). The Atiak memorial, constructed in memory of over 300 victims of the 1995 Atiak massacre, serves as a focal point for remembrance and reconciliation in the region (Ocen, 2022). Despite its symbolic significance, there

is limited understanding of whether the monument is effectively fulfilling its role in post-conflict recovery. Specifically, it remains unclear whether the memorial is preserving the history of the massacre, honoring the victims and providing a space for survivors and their families to grieve, while promoting peace, reconciliation and educating future generations about the impacts of the conflict (Adong, 2021). This study sought to investigate monument and post-conflict recovery in Acholi land, Uganda: A Case study of Atiak sub- County in Amuru district and reported in 2025.

1.7 Purpose of the Study

This study investigated the role of the Atiak monument in post-conflict recovery, in Atiak sub- County, Amuru district.

1.8 Research Questions

- 1) What is the role of the Atiak monument in post-conflict recovery efforts?
- 2) What is the effectiveness of Atiak monument in post-conflict recovery efforts?
- 3) Who are the Actors in memorialization and monument construction in Atiak Sub- County, Amuru District-Uganda?

1.9 Specific Objectives

This study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish the role of the Atiak monument in post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak Sub-County.
2. To examine the effectiveness of post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak Sub-County.
3. To establish the Actors in memorialization and monument construction in Atiak sub- county, Amuru district-Uganda.

1.10 Significance of the Study

The study shows that monuments are not just symbolic structures, but are active tools for peacebuilding, directly advancing SDG 16, Uganda's NDP IV priorities, and the African Union's vision for a peaceful continent. The study findings are expected to potentially benefit different stakeholders in the following ways:

The study contributes to SDG 16, through helping communities process trauma, reduce grievances, and prevent cycles of violence by acknowledging past suffering and

honoring victims, creating shared narratives and collective memory, which fosters dialogue, trust, and participation in reconciliation processes and serving as symbolic recognition of harm, complementing justice processes by validating victims' experiences and reinforcing rule of law principles. It further contributes to NDP IV by promoting post-conflict recovery and resilience (Programme: Governance and Security) with evidence that effective memorials inform interventions that promote healing, reintegration, and community stability. It highlights Acholi traditions and perspectives on death and remembrance, including supporting the preservation of cultural practices as part of development. They contribute to mental health recovery by offering spaces for grief, reflection, and collective healing which are key for rebuilding human capital.

The study will contribute to the African Union Agenda for Peace which aligns particularly with Agenda 2063 and the AU's aspiration for "a peaceful and secure Africa" (Aspiration 4), including frameworks like *"Silencing the Guns"*. Where it will contribute to conflict prevention and reconciliation, aware that memorials address root causes of conflict (unresolved trauma, marginalization) by promoting acknowledgment and dialogue. By emphasizing indigenous Acholi approaches to death and remembrance, supporting the AU principle of home-grown peacebuilding mechanisms with memorialization being a recognized pillar of transitional justice, helping societies move from conflict to sustainable peace.

In essence, the study showed that monuments are not just symbolic structures, they are active tools for peacebuilding, directly advancing SDG 16, Uganda's NDP IV priorities, and the African Union's vision for a peaceful continent.

The study result provides valuable insights into the role of monuments in transitional justice, particularly in post-conflict societies like Acholi land. It will help to understand how monuments like the Atiak memorial contributed to the healing and reconciliation process for individuals and communities affected by violence.

The study findings highlighted the importance of maintaining collective memory of past atrocities. This ensures that future generations are educated about the tragic events, fostering an understanding of the conflict's impact on the region.

Findings from the study informs policymakers, civil society organizations and local leaders about the effectiveness of monuments in post-conflict recovery. It could provide evidence to guide the design and implementation of future memorials or recovery initiatives aimed at fostering healing and reconciliation.

The research assessed the roles of monuments as an educational tool, contributing to knowledge about the conflict in Northern Uganda and promoting awareness among visitors, researchers etc. This is important for ensuring that the lessons learned from the conflict are passed on and that efforts to build a peaceful society are reinforced.

The study has the potential to enhance both local and global understanding of the role of monuments in post-conflict settings, contributing to broader discussions on the use of memorials as tools for recovery. It could serve as a case study for similar contexts globally, where communities are re-building after conflict or tragedy.

1.11 Scope of the Study.

Content Scope. Thematically, the study focused on monuments and post-conflict recovery. Selecting the Atiak Memorial for my research was justified because the site represents: One of the most devastating and under-acknowledged atrocities of the LRA war, a symbol of survivor neglect and unmet justice, a critical case study on memory, trauma, and the failures of both national and international accountability mechanisms. Atiak remains unique in its scale, historical erasure, and enduring trauma yet it is also central to conversations about inclusive and survivor-centered reparations, especially at a time when the ICC's Dominic Ongwen reparations process gained momentum.

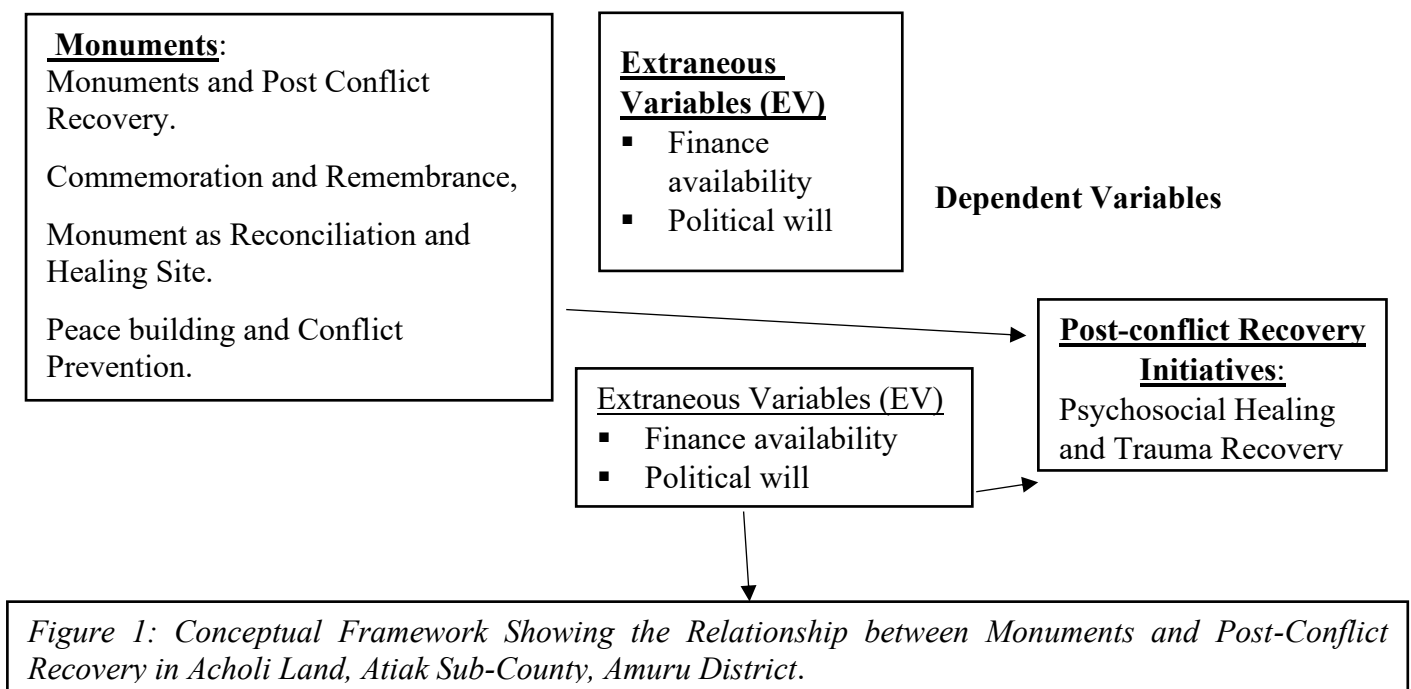
Geographical Scope. The study was conducted in Atiak Sub- County, located in Kilak North County, Amuru district. The sub-county covers an area of 1,181.6 km² and is home to about 18,473 (9,247 Male & 9226 Female) people. Source- (2024 Uganda National Housing and Population census).

Time Scope. The study collected data from the period between the years 2018-2024. The period 2018–2024 is of great significance because it marks Uganda's most concentrated period of debate, policy development, and accountability efforts since the end of the LRA war, creating a window in which the Atiak massacre regained national prominence within transitional justice and ICC-related discourse. The period is important because Atiak survivors have consistently lamented being “forgotten” in national reparations and truth-telling processes. Their calls resurfaced strongly during this policy-heavy period as communities questioned why their massacre was “never mentioned” despite transitional justice discussions.

Thus, 2018–2024 became a period of intensified advocacy to ensure the massacre is included in memorialization, reparations, and transitional justice programming a critical step towards remembrance, reconciliation, healing and recovery.

1.12 Conceptual Framework

Collective Memory Theory (Wertsch, 2022) Collective remembering is a dynamic, contested process, not a static set of shared representations. Conceptual contributions: Distinguishes between individualist and collectivist approaches, examines how institutions, identity projects, and media shape what communities remember or forget and emphasizes group formation and identity as active components of memory.



Source: Adopted from John Burton (1990). Human Needs Theory. Conflict: Resolution and Prevention.

Wydra (2018) argues that memory develops across generational units shared horizons of past and future. And further emphasizes “collective conditions of potential memories,” even if groups themselves do not literally remember. It Incorporates temporal and symbolic frameworks across generations.

Contemporary transitional justice research highlights that post-war societies engage in deliberate efforts to shape collective memory through memorials, truth

commissions, and remembrance policies. These processes influence victim recognition, political legitimacy and reconciliation dynamics. Memory politics research emphasizes the frictions between global and local narratives, as local communities may resist or reinterpret international norms around memorialization. Monuments are not neutral historical markers; they are political tools embedded in negotiations over justice, accountability and the right to narrate the past.

Emerald (2022) emphasized that trauma-informed memorialization theory views monuments as tools that help societies process collective trauma by creating spaces for mourning, reflection and meaning-making. Studies show that memorialization influences resilience, emotional healing and social cohesion. The effectiveness of such monuments depends on narrative framing, symbolic meaning, spatial design and the degree of community participation in their creation. This approach supports an analysis of monuments as psychosocial intervention spaces that may help survivors articulate trauma, reclaim agency and negotiate new social identities.

Monuments serve as sites of collective memory, allowing societies to remember victims, heroes and critical historical events. Human Needs Connection satisfies the need for recognition by acknowledging suffering and sacrifice, supports identity by preserving shared historical narratives and reinforces dignity, especially for victims whose pain might otherwise be silenced. Through remembrance, monuments prevent historical denial, which Burton views as a major trigger for renewed conflict.

John Burton (1990) asserts that monuments are not merely physical structures; they are symbolic and functional tools that help satisfy core human needs essential for sustainable peace. When integrated with broader post-conflict recovery initiatives such as reconciliation, justice, governance reform and economic rebuilding, monuments contribute to healing trauma, rebuilding identity, strengthening institutions and preventing future conflict.

John Burton argues that violent conflict arises when fundamental human needs; identity, security, recognition, participation, justice and development are unmet. Unlike material interests, these needs are non-negotiable. Sustainable peace emerges when social structures and institutions address these needs. In post-conflict societies, monuments and recovery initiatives both function as mechanisms for restoring these core human needs.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents relevant literature on roles of monuments in post-conflict recovery, the effectiveness of post-conflict recovery efforts and the Actors in memorialization and monument construction. The review focused on the different monuments and their influences on post-conflict recoveries. Many studies were consulted, for instance research reports, recent journals, textbooks and official documents among others based on the study objectives.

2.1 Roles of the Monument in Post-Conflict Recovery.

The role of monuments in post-conflict recovery is crucial as they can serve as symbols of memory, reconciliation, and national identity (Atabay, 2024). In Brazil, monuments often commemorate indigenous people and historical events, fostering dialogue about social inequality and historical injustices. They can promote cultural heritage and contribute to national identity (Diana Knott, 2020). Limited studies focus on how monuments influence local communities' perceptions of indigenous rights and historical narratives. Memorials and monuments can help us create a common history and keep the past alive as part of the reconciliation process (Mikelsen, 2025). In Atiak, this study explored how local monuments foster post conflict recovery in Atiak sub-county.

Atabay (2024), notes that monuments in Guatemala serve to memorialize victims of civil conflict and human rights abuses, promoting remembrance and healing. They often become focal points for activism and social movements. There is a need to understand how the emotional impact of monuments affects community resilience and activism. Meanwhile monuments in Chile, particularly those related to the Pinochet dictatorship, serve as sites of remembrance and protest past human rights violations. They reflect ongoing struggles for justice and truth (Isakhan and Zarandona, 2018). This study, therefore, in Atiak investigated the role of local monuments in post conflict recovery in Acholi sub-region. Further research could examine how public engagement with these monuments influences contemporary political discourse. In Atiak, this could

translate to understanding how local monuments contribute to dialogues about justice and reconciliation.

Donadio (2015) observed that Cambodian monuments particularly the killing fields memorials, serve as powerful reminders of the Khmer Rouge's atrocities. They aim to educate future generations and promote reconciliation. Isakhan and Zarandona, 2018's study is on the effectiveness of educational programs associated with these monuments in fostering understanding among youth. Findings above relate with this study objectives however, nothing was mentioned about the Atiak monument which was a content gap for this study to fill. This study focused on how local memorials influence education about the region's history and conflicts reported on.

Meskell (2018) reported that monuments in Vietnam often commemorate the Vietnam war and the struggle for independence, promoting national unity and identity. They can be seen as tools for state propaganda. There is a lack of analysis on how these monuments affect regional identities and historical interpretations. This study in Atiak explored how local monuments influence perceptions of history among different community groups. In the view of Gusic (2019), in Afghanistan, monuments can symbolize resilience and hope amidst conflict, often commemorating those lost to war. They serve as reminders of national identity and cultural heritage. This study reported on the role of monuments in promoting peacebuilding and reconciliation as it investigated how local memorials support community healing and resilience after conflict.

According to the study conducted in Mosul, it was reported that monuments serve as both physical and symbolic embodiments of the region's protracted conflict and the people's desire for self-determination (Craig and Inna, 2024). They carry layered meanings, as different groups interpret them based on their own narratives of the conflict. Monuments in Mosul frequently commemorate the victims of violence, serving as solemn reminders of the human cost of the conflict. These can include memorials for civilians caught in the crossfire, political activists, or those who disappeared during the insurgency. For many, these monuments represent collective suffering, a tangible expression of the deep wounds left by decades of unrest. Simultaneously, monuments in Kashmir often symbolize resistance. Many communities view these spaces as places to express defiance against oppression, occupation, and what they perceive as illegitimate state control. Monuments like the Martyrs' Graveyard, for example, embody the ongoing struggle for Kashmiri self-

determination and the aspiration for freedom from external control. These monuments do not just reflect past events but actively shape current political sentiment and mobilization (Craig and Inna, 2024). Monuments in such contested spaces can have powerful social and political implications. They become focal points for protests, expressions of political identity, and spaces for public mourning. However, research on how these monuments influence social dynamics, particularly in regions where conflict took place is limited. These sites often become battlegrounds for competing narratives, with state authorities and local communities offering conflicting interpretations of what they represent (Craig and Inna, 2024). This study filled the contextual gap by investigating the role of monuments in shaping community identity in post-conflict settings like Mosul. While Craig and Inna (2024) study focused on how monuments function in stable or post-conflict societies, little attention nothing was mentioned about the Atiak monument in Atiak sub-county which was the interest of this study.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, monuments frequently serve as memorials to victims of colonialism, genocide and civil wars. These monuments play a significant role in promoting healing and reconciliation by acknowledging past atrocities and providing a space for collective mourning. They can help communities process their traumatic histories and serve as symbols of resilience and hope for a peaceful future (Akagawa, 2015). However, monuments in this region have also become sites of political contestation. Different groups tend to have conflicting interpretations of the events or figures memorialized, which can lead to tensions. For example, a monument that one group views as a symbol of liberation might be seen by another as a reminder of oppression, leading to divisions rather than unity. There was a clear need for this research to explore influence of monuments in inter-community relations and social cohesion, particularly in regions with diverse ethnic or political groups (Akagawa, 2015). Understanding the impact of monuments on relationships between communities provide insights into their potential to either foster unity or exacerbate conflict. A study in Atiak focused on how local monuments contribute to building unity among the diverse groups affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency. The research explored and reported on how the Atiak monument served as shared symbols of healing and reconciliation based on the differing narratives of the conflict in Acholi land.

In Uganda, monuments often memorialize the country's struggles against tyranny, dictatorship and political violence, serving as symbols of resistance and national unity (Adong, 2021). These monuments help in the healing process by

fostering dialogue about Uganda's difficult past and encouraging reflection on the sacrifices made for freedom. They offer a space for communities to engage with their history and promote reconciliation by acknowledging shared experiences of suffering (Ocen, 2022). While Adong and Ocen studies explored the role of national monuments in Uganda, there is no focus on how Atiak monuments contribute to post-conflict recovery in Atiak sub-county and Acholi community at large. Atiak monuments hold unique significance for Acholi community directly affected by LRA, a region severely impacted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency. This study in Atiak investigated and reported on how Atiak monuments helped facilitate community engagement, especially among survivors and affected families in the aftermath of LRA war. This research explored and reported on how Atiak monuments contribute to building collective narratives about the conflict, fostering a sense of shared identity and promoting reconciliation.

2.2 Effectiveness of Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts.

Post-conflict recovery efforts aim to rebuild governance systems, restore social cohesion, rebuild livelihoods, and prevent a relapse into violence. Their effectiveness varies widely depending on the political environment, community participation, security conditions and long-term investment. Humanitarian and stabilization efforts are often among the most effective early interventions after conflict. They quickly deliver emergency assistance, reduce suffering and restore basic functions (Cottbus, 2017).

The UN Secretary General emphasized this in a 2018 peacebuilding report that "Early recovery is essential for creating conditions where humanitarian aid is no longer required and development can take root." UN Secretary General, Report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (2018)

Brazil's post-conflict recovery mainly addresses historical injustices against indigenous communities and victims of dictatorship. Efforts include truth commissions and cultural initiatives. However, economic inequality and unresolved social conflicts persist, limiting the impact of these efforts on long-term reconciliation (UNDP policy on DDR, 2017). The study did not report on how post conflict recovery efforts affect local indigenous communities' recovery and social cohesion in rural areas like Atiak. This study explored and reported on how post-conflict recovery efforts impact

indigenous identity and cohesion in a similar rural area, post-conflict setting in Atiak sub-county.

Meanwhile Fournet (2016) asserted that Colombia's peace agreement with the FARC is a major milestone, but implementation challenges persist, including delays in land reforms, reintegration of ex-combatants and addressing social inequalities. Localized violence continues in some regions within Colombia, hindering full post conflict recovery. The effectiveness of post-conflict recovery efforts at the grassroots level needs more research, particularly regarding the post conflict recovery efforts of local communities in sustaining peace. This study explored and reported on post conflict recovery efforts in sustaining peace and reintegration in a post-LRA context which is the content gap identified from Fournet's findings.

In Guatemala, recovery efforts have focused on truth and reconciliation, as well as addressing the legacy of the civil war. However, widespread inequality, corruption and limited accountability for past abuses still hinder national reconciliation (Alexandra, 2017). Alexandra reported solemnly on the case of Guatemala using document review and nothing was mentioned about post conflict recovery efforts in Acholi land, thereby, leaving methodological and content gaps for this study to fill using qualitative approach. Therefore, this study examined and reported on how effective post-conflict efforts or initiatives on building peace, stability and socio-economic transformation in Atiak sub-county, Acholi land. On the other hand, (Eventon, 2016) reported that Chile's post-conflict recovery, especially after Pinochet's dictatorship, has focused on truth commissions and legal accountability for human rights abuses. While effective in promoting historical memory, economic inequality remains a critical issue. Eventon's finding was from Chile in the year 2016 and over time things could have changed, thus, providing this study with temporal and contextual gaps to fill. In Atiak, this study explored how economic initiatives, such as agricultural programs, contribute to post-conflict recovery.

Cambodia's post-conflict recovery efforts following the Khmer Rouge regime has been centered on trials for war crimes and genocide as reported by Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC, 2018). While these efforts provide some justice, social healing remains incomplete, with gaps in addressing mental health and local reconciliation (Cheru, 2016). Cheru's study focused on grassroots-level reconciliation and trauma recovery in rural areas (Cheru, 2016). This study examined how localized mental health and trauma interventions affect long-term reconciliation in

post-conflict Acholi land. Vietnam's post-conflict recovery has emphasized national unity, economic development and reconciliation with former adversaries. While it has been successful in rebuilding the country, social divisions and economic disparities persist in some regions (UNDP, 2019). All the studies above (Cheru, IDMC and UNDP) didn't focus on the long-term social effects of national unity policies which are contextual and temporal gaps for this study to fill. This study examined the effectiveness of post conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub- county, Amuru district

Miznazi (2023) observed that Afghanistan's recovery efforts have been hindered by ongoing conflict, political instability and weak governance. Despite international aid and reconstruction efforts, security challenges and limited local participation have impeded lasting recovery endeavors. Recovery efforts in Afghanistan remain hampered by ongoing conflict and political instability. Limited reconciliation efforts, compounded by persistent human rights abuses, continue to create tension between communities (Drake, 2019). More research is needed on how community-driven recovery programs can overcome external dependency. This study focused on the effectiveness of locally driven efforts or initiatives in fostering sustainable peace and recovery in post-conflict in Atiak sub-county. In Atiak, this study explored and reported on the effectiveness of post conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county.

Adong (2021), post-conflict recovery efforts across Sub-Saharan Africa shows mixed results some countries like South Africa, have seen success through truth commissions and peace agreements, which have contributed to reconciliation and justice. However, many African countries like DRC, Central Africa Republic and Somalia Republic continue to struggle with deep-seated economic disparities, ethnic tensions and weak governance structures, limiting the overall progress of post conflict recovery efforts or strategies. Adong's study focused on the role of economic empowerment programs in promoting long-term recovery and social cohesion. Economic disparities are often a root cause of conflict and without addressing these issues, sustainable peace can be difficult to achieve. Empowering local communities through economic initiatives can be a powerful tool for fostering stability and rebuilding trust among diverse groups. This study explored how local economic development initiatives, such as agricultural projects, impact long-term peace and recovery; practical programs that improve livelihoods to provide insights into how

economic empowerment contributes to healing and sustained peace in a post-conflict Atiak sub-county.

Uganda's post conflict recovery efforts or programs after the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) conflict have focused on reintegration of former combatants, community reconciliation, and economic recovery. However, poverty, trauma and marginalization still hinder full recovery, especially in rural areas like Atiak sub-county (Ocen, 2022). Ocen's study didn't look at the role of local memorials and community-led initiatives in fostering long-term peace and recovery. This study, therefore, investigated and reported on post conflict recovery efforts using local monuments and community engagements to foster narrative-building, healing and social cohesion in post-conflict Atiak sub-county.

Colombia's ongoing peace process, following decades of armed conflict involving the government, paramilitary groups and leftist guerillas, has seen significant international involvement in memorialization (Showkat and Parveen, 2017). The United Nations and the European Union have supported reconciliation projects and the creation of memorials to honor victims of the conflict. International NGOs and human rights organizations have also been involved in building memorials and monuments in various regions, particularly for indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities affected by the violence (Showkat and Parveen, 2017). Findings above relate to this study objective; however, it left demographic gap for this study to fill. Data for Atiak was missing leading to incomplete understanding of a broader issue in post LRA war in Acholi land. Therefore, this study investigated and reported effectiveness of post conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county.

Cheru (2016) observed that Cambodia's most notable memorial is the Choeung Ek killing fields, which commemorates victims of the Khmer Rouge regime. International organizations like the United Nations, particularly through the UN-backed Khmer Rouge Tribunal (Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia), have played a role in memorialization. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from Europe and the United States, such as the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), have contributed to the preservation of historical evidence and the construction of monuments to educate future generations about the genocide (Cheru, 2016). This study was conducted to fill temporal gaps as findings above were reported in 2016 and overtime things could have changed, and it couldn't be generalized with the case of Atiak sub- county in Amuru district.

Miznazi (2023), in Asia international actors like UNESCO often participate in memorialization projects related to war, colonialism and human rights violations. For example, Japan's war atrocities such as the Nanjing Massacre, have led to the construction of memorials, with international involvement from countries affected by Japanese imperialism (Akagawa, 2015). In South Korea, the "Comfort Women" memorials, which honor women forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military during World War II, have received international attention and support from various human rights organizations globally (Isakhan and Zarandona, 2018). Findings above relate to this study objective but there is little empirical evidence to support their findings, thus indicating a need for further investigation. This study was conducted to provide evidence on the case of international actors in memorization of Atiak and monument construction in the post-conflict of the LRA insurgency in Acholi land.

According to Walasek (2019), in Eastern Europe, memorials related to the holocaust and the communist era have attracted significant international interest. Memorials like the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Poland have been preserved and managed with international support, particularly from Jewish organizations, the European Union and UNESCO. Post-communist memorials, particularly those remembering Soviet repression in places like Hungary, Poland and the Baltic states, often receive support from international organizations focused on democracy and human rights (Walasek, 2019). Walasek's study above focused on specific contexts of Hungary, Poland among others and reported nothing on the context of civil wars in the African setting where massacres took place as its relevant aspects are unstudied. This study, therefore, was meant to bridge the contextual gap identified above in Atiak sub-county.

Actors have been involved in memorialization projects linked to colonialism, slavery and more recent conflicts, such as the Rwandan Genocide (Craig and Inna, 2024). In Rwanda, the Kigali genocide memorial was constructed with the assistance of international NGOs and governments, particularly from Europe and the United States (Craig and Inna, 2024). The United Nations and other international bodies have also been active in funding and advising on memorial projects in post-conflict countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia and South Africa, with a focus on reconciliation and transitional justice (Craig and Inna, 2024). Research findings above was based on old data which may not be applicable to current conditions and, therefore, necessitated new empirical

studies to reflect modern contexts especially the case of Atiak monuments and post-conflict recovery in Acholi land, Northern, Uganda.

In Uganda, memorialization efforts are linked to colonialism, post-independence conflicts, and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency (Adong, 2021). International Actors, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) and various human rights organizations, have been involved in promoting memorial projects related to the LRA conflict in northern Uganda (Ocen, 2022). Memorials for the victims of massacres, such as in Barlonyo and Atiak, have received support from local and International NGOs focused on justice and reconciliation (Adong, 2021). Actors have worked alongside local communities to ensure that these memorials serve as both educational tools and spaces for healing (Ocen, 2022). This study did not find any substantial evidence to assume that findings above are universally applicable in the context of Atiak sub-county, thus investigated and reported on the case of Atiak.

(Ovonji, 2016), the Atiak Monument was selected partly because it exists within a cultural environment where remembrance, storytelling, traditional rituals, and collective mourning remain important mechanisms of recovery.

2.3 Atiak Massacre and ICC Jurisdiction

The Atiak massacre of April 1995, in which hundreds of civilians were killed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), occurred before Uganda ratified the Rome Statute in 1999. Consequently, the International Criminal Court (ICC) lacked jurisdiction, and Atiak was excluded from subsequent investigations. (Allen 2006; Human Rights Watch 1997). This exclusion highlights a critical gap in transitional justice literature, where early atrocities remain outside the scope of international accountability mechanisms. Community perspectives reveal that this absence has been interpreted as neglect. Survivors often describe themselves as "*forgotten victims*," contrasting their situation with later massacres such as Lukodi and Barlonyo, which received ICC attention (Finnström 2008; Dolan 2009). The lack of recognition has reinforced feelings of abandonment, with survivors expressing frustration over unfulfilled government promises of compensation and the absence of psychosocial support. Atiak's case underscores the need for scholarship and policy to address both ICC and non-ICC cases. By examining how communities interpret exclusion from international justice, the study contributes to broader debates on recognition, reparations, and the inclusivity of transitional justice frameworks.

This exclusion of Atiak from ICC jurisdiction, and the community's resulting sense of abandonment, provides the foundation for the findings presented in the next chapter, where survivors' voices and lived experiences further illuminate how justice gaps are perceived and articulated at the local level. This exclusion underscores the need for transitional justice frameworks that address both ICC and non-ICC cases (Hovil and Quinn 2005; Refugee Law Project 2004).

2.4 Conclusion

Although a substantial body of literature has examined memorialization, collective memory, healing, and reconciliation in post-conflict societies, there remains a notable gap in empirical research on the specific role of monuments in facilitating post-conflict recovery within local community contexts. Existing studies have largely focused on the broader functions of memorialization in preserving historical memory and promoting reconciliation, with limited attention given to how monuments contribute to survivors' healing, social cohesion, remembrance, and recovery in Northern Uganda. Furthermore, despite the historical significance of the Atiak Monument as a site of memory associated with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) conflict, little scholarly work has comprehensively explored its contribution to the post-conflict recovery experiences of affected communities in Atiak Sub-county, Amuru District. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by examining the role of the Atiak Monument in promoting healing, strengthening social cohesion, preserving collective memory, and supporting recovery among survivors of the LRA conflict.

Each country and region demonstrates varying levels of effectiveness in post-conflict recovery, with a common challenge being the gap between national and local recovery efforts. In Atiak, Amuru District, there was an opportunity to explore how local monuments, community-led projects and economic initiatives contribute to post-conflict recovery and unity, filling gaps (contextual, content, methodological and temporal) identified in these other regions.

Most of the scholars reported that the International Actors involved in memorialization and monument construction are UNESCO, Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), ICC, human rights organizations and the contextual governments, particularly in regions recovering from conflict or addressing historical

injustices. Their involvement not only provides financial and technical support but also helps ensure that these efforts contribute to healing, education and reconciliation.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed the research methodology adopted in the study, research orientation, design, target population, sample population, sampling techniques, data collection techniques, data collection instruments, administration procedures, ethical considerations, data analysis methods, quality control, assumptions, limitations and delimitations.

3.1 Research Orientation.

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore how monuments enhance post-conflict recovery. Qualitative research is particularly effective for investigating complex phenomena and gaining a deep understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It focuses on interpreting social realities from the perspectives of those involved, rather than quantifying variables or testing hypotheses (Creswell, 2015). The qualitative approach was selected over quantitative methods due to its ability to provide a rich, contextual understanding of the occurrence and its outcomes.

3.2 Research Design.

3.2.1 Phenomenological Design

Applied in research as a qualitative approach that sought to focus on person's lived experiences of a particular phenomenon. Phenomenology is concerned with understanding and describing human experience as it is lived rather than as it is theorized (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study focused on people's lived experiences of the Atiak massacre of 1995, the goal was to understand how individuals perceived and interpreted their experiences. It sought to understand meaning, perceptions and experiences and not to measure or predict and data was collected through in-depth interviews. For instance, studying how students experienced online learning during school closure following the outbreak of the covid 19 pandemic.

Phenomenological research was used as follows, I began by selecting a specific experience or phenomenon to study which included lived experiences of survivors, witnesses and their relatives during the massacre and the role of the Atiak monument in post conflict recovery. I formulated open ended research questions that focused on meaning and experience. Next was selection of participants, who were chosen purposively (not randomly) because they had direct experience with the phenomenon, with a sample size of 5-25 participants. Data collection was done; I was able to gather rich, detailed descriptions of participants' experiences. Methods included; In-depth interviews with survivors, focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

I set aside personal biases, assumptions, and prior knowledge about the phenomenon. This was followed by data analysis, and the goal was to identify essential meanings and themes. Validation of findings was done to ensure credibility, through use of member checking (participants review findings) and peer review. It has rich characteristics of focusing on lived experience, use of small, purposive samples, relies heavily on qualitative data and seeks deep understanding, not generalization which supports in giving an in-depth of occurrences.

In a nutshell, use of phenomenological design had more advantages because it chose lived experiences to study, collected detailed personal accounts, set aside personal bias, identified themes and meanings and described the essence of the experience

3.3 Target Population.

The targeted study population consisted of former survivors, former witnesses of the massacre, former students of Atiak Technical Institute, Ker Kwaro Acholi, Religious Leaders, Relatives of Atiak massacre victims and Chairperson Atiak massacre survivors' association. A total of 46 respondents in this category were targeted for the interviews.

3.3.1 Importance of each target population in the study.

In phenomenological research design which I used in the study, the core aim was intended to understand and describe the lived experiences of individuals who directly encountered the massacre. The groups I mentioned here were critical because each contributed unique experiential perspectives and were helpful towards developing a rich and holistic understanding of the event. Below is a structured explanation of their importance in the data collection process:

Former Survivors of the Atiak massacre: They were the primary source of lived experience who directly endured the violence, loss, and trauma. They provided first-hand accounts of what happened, emotional and psychological impacts of the massacre and personal coping and recovery narratives they are considered as central participants because they embodied the phenomenon itself. They're important because they formed the core data set, revealing the essence of the experience.

Former Witnesses of the massacre: These individuals may not have been victims but observed the events because they provided corroboration of survivors' accounts, additional details about how events unfolded and perspectives on community reactions during and after the massacre. They enhanced credibility and triangulation of data (verifying consistency across accounts).

Former Students of Atiak Technical Institute: They were likely affected as, youth living in the community during or after the massacre and as Individuals whose education and social lives were disrupted. They provided insights into the long-term impact on younger generations and experience of growing up in a post-conflict environment. Their importance was to broaden the study by showing intergenerational and societal effects.

Ker Kwaro Acholi (Cultural Institution): They represent Acholi traditional leadership and cultural values. Their role was to provide cultural interpretations of the massacre, traditional justice and reconciliation approaches (e.g., Mato Oput) and community memory and collective healing practices. The importance of this institution was to contextualize experiences within cultural meaning systems, which is vital in phenomenology.

Religious Leaders: They're often involved in trauma counseling, spiritual support, peace building and reconciliation. They provided insights into spiritual and moral interpretations of the tragedy and observed community healing processes. They were important because they illuminated the spiritual dimension of lived experiences.

Relatives of Atiak massacre victims: These individuals experienced indirect but deep personal losses. They provided accounts of grief, bereavement, and long-term suffering, stories of disrupted families and livelihoods and preserved memories and legacy of the victims. They're considered important because they revealed the extended impact of the phenomenon beyond direct survivors, enriching depth.

Chairperson of Atiak massacre survivors' Association: This was a key informant who represented organized survivors and provided aggregated experiences and shared concerns of survivors, historical documentation and organized narratives which were very instrumental in understanding the Atiak massacre. It's considered important because it offered a structured overview and access point to participants, improving data organization and depth.

In conclusion each group played a complementary role, survivors and witnesses provided direct lived experiences, while institutions and relatives contributed to interpretive, cultural, and extended perspectives. Together, they enabled me to construct a comprehensive and meaningful understanding of the phenomenon.

3.4 Sample Size.

Data was collected from a sample of 46 respondents; five cultural leaders, four political leaders and local government leaders who had been present during and immediately after the massacres, plus five security workers, eight NGOs and CSO workers and volunteers, two local journalists, six religious leaders eight survivors and eight relatives of the survivors, witnesses and six former students of Atiak Technical Institute. The sample size was arrived at through point of saturation as suggested in Creswell (2015).

Table 3.1: Distribution of the Sample by Category and Sampling Method.

S/N	Population category	Freq.	Data Collection Method/Tool	Sampling Method
1	Survivors of Atiak massacre	8	FGD	Purposive sampling
2	Relatives of Atiak massacre victims	8	FGD	Purposive sampling
3	Chairperson Atiak massacre survivors' Association	1	Interview	Purposive sampling
4	Former students of Atiak Technical Institute	6	Key Informant Interviews	Purposive sampling
5	Witnesses of Atiak massacre	6	Key Informant Interview	Snowball sampling

6	Religious Leaders	6	Interview	Simple random sampling
7	Political Leaders & Local Gov't Leaders	5	Key Informant Interview	Purposive sampling
8.	Ker Kal Kwaro Acholi (cultural Leaders)	5	Interview	Random sampling
9.	Annual Commemoration prayers	1	Interview	Participatory study
Total		46		

Source: Field data (2025)

3.5 Sampling strategy

A purposive sampling technique, also known as selective sampling, was used, which involved selecting samples from the overall sample size. I needed to meet with direct survivors of the Atiak massacre and their families so that I can hear lived their experiences. I arrived at this sample based on the consultative meeting I had prior to the data collection with local leaders within Atiak and with people who had information about the massacre. Because they were present during and immediately after the massacre on 20th April 1995 and could accurately tell the story. The meetings further shaped my research by refining its focus, improving its design, incorporating diverse perspectives, and ensuring alignment with stakeholder needs ultimately making the study more relevant, credible, and impactful.

3.6 Data Collection Method.

Interviews. The study involved the use of interviews as one of the data collection techniques. They were more effective than surveys because they provided deeper, more flexible, and context-rich data, allowed for probing and clarification, and were better suited for sensitive topics, the diverse participant groups, leading to more accurate and meaningful research findings. I needed to meet with direct survivors of the Atiak massacre, use of interviews had to be administered on cultural leaders, political leaders and local government leaders who had been present during and immediately after the massacres, security workers, NGOs and CSO workers and volunteers, local journalists, survivors and relatives of the survivors.

3.7 Data Collection Instrument.

3.7.1 Interview Guide.

Interview guide was used to collect data on the role of the Atiak monument in post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county, Amuru district, Northern Uganda, the effectiveness of post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county, Amuru district, Uganda and the International Actors in memorialization and monument construction in Atiak sub-county, Amuru district-Uganda.

3.7.2 Extraneous Variable.

Clarity on instructions, measures and variables helped to maintain the focus of this study variable as respondents better understood them and provided facts and correct information as required by the questions.

3.8 Administrative Procedure.

The Researcher, assisted by two (2) Research Assistants obtained an introductory letter from Gulu University, Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies to introduce her and the Research Assistants (RA) in the field. The RAs introduced themselves to the study purpose and sought ethical approval from the local government and community leaders, as well as the informed consent of prospective participants. Copies of the introductory letters were printed and given to the Research Assistants to formerly introduce and grant permission to data enumerators to go ahead with the activity. The Local Council 3 Chairperson, local leaders and Community Development Officers supported with mobilization of respondents. Interview appointments were made.

3.9 Data Analysis.

In this study, I employed thematic analysis as the primary method for analyzing qualitative data. This approach was chosen for its ability to allow themes to emerge organically from participants' responses without the imposition of pre-conceived notions. Inductive thematic analysis was particularly valuable for exploring diverse perspectives and uncovering degrees of insights into complex research topics (Creswell, 2015). Inductive thematic analysis involved identification, analysis and reporting themes in the data set. It was an interactive process where I immersed myself

in the data, generated codes, and identified themes that reflected participants' experiences and viewpoints. This method was ideal for my study because it provided the flexibility needed to adapt to the emerging nature of the data. I began by transcribing interview verbatim, ensuring that I captured participants' responses accurately. I then engaged in open coding, systematically labelling segments of data to identify initial patterns and concepts. These codes were subsequently grouped into broader themes that captured the essence of the participants' experiences with monuments and post-conflict recovery. Selective coding aided in creating relationships among the categories. The choice of inductive thematic analysis was justified by its suitability for exploring the complex, qualitative aspects of monuments and post-conflict recovery. This approach aligned with the study goal of capturing rich, contextually grounded insights and providing a comprehensive understanding of participant experiences (Creswell, 2015). Additionally, inductive thematic analysis supported theoretical development by generating new insights rather than merely confirming existing theories.

3.10 Ethical Consideration.

Interviews were conducted while following ethical considerations such as the do no harm principle, respect, non-discrimination and non-judgmental were applied. Interview questions were administered according to respondent category, time management was factored in and gender dynamics such as afternoon hours worked best for women because they would have completed their household chores such as cooking, fetching water, weeding and cleaning the house etc.

3.11 Assumptions of the Study.

The study assumed that monuments influence positive outcomes of post-conflict recovery in Acholi land; implying that there is significant positive relationship between these two variables.

3.12 Limitations and Delimitations.

The study experienced a variety of limitations, mainly in its extrinsic domain: A good number of respondents sought to win sympathy by giving exaggerated, inconsistent and inaccurate data and information. To mitigate the potentially adverse effects of this, I resorted to data-source triangulation to establish the veracity of data or information provided by such participants.

Some respondents were unwilling and reluctant to provide certain forms of information related to how the massacre was executed. As a remedial measure, I explained again the purpose of the study and assured them that they were at liberty to suspend or end the interview any time they felt like doing. This led to such participants relaxing, open up, and participating more candidly.

It was challenging to interview participants who had not yet fully recovered from the effects of their past traumatic experiences. They kept on breaking down during the interviews. This was delimited by empathizing with the participants and allowing him or her to compose themselves before resuming the interview at an appropriate moment.

Many participants (community members) had excessively high material expectations from their participation in the interviews. They complained about researchers constantly extracting information from them, without giving them anything in return. As a remedial measure, the researcher would clarify the reasons for collecting data. As for my case I explained to the respondents that the data being collected is for purely academic purposes and sought consent, permission and their time to allow me to do data collection.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis, summary of the findings and interpretations of results based on the study objectives formulated under chapter one. Inductive thematic analysis was used to analyze background statistics and objectives one, two and three. Interview data were both narrative and content analyzed.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

Table 4.1 represents the age distribution of respondents in a study, categorized by age group, gender, and percentage of the total sample. A total of 46 respondents is surveyed, with 24 females and 22 males.

Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents by age group

Age of respondents	Number	Sex		
		Female	Male	
20-25	4	2	2	
26-30	7	4	3	
31-35	11	5	6	
36-40	10	5	5	
41 and above	14	7	7	
Total	46	24	22	

Source of data: Primary data 2025

The results on *Table 4.1* shows that the majority (30%) of the respondents were in the age bracket of 41 and above years, followed by those in the age brackets of 31-35 years (24%), 36-40 years (21%), 26-30 years (16%) and 20-25 years (9%). On gender distribution, the finding showed that there was male: 24 respondents (52%) and female: 22 respondents (48%). The sample is almost balanced between men and women. Many respondents are 31 years and above (75%), with the largest proportion (30%) being 41 years and older. The selected age groups were significant to the research because, they provided direct or near-direct experience of the 1995 event, offered insights into long-term impacts and memory formation, they also acted as a link

between first-hand witnesses and younger generations and supported in analyzing trauma, memory, and post-conflict recovery in Atiak over time.

Findings indicate that the respondents are drawn across a wide age range (20–41+), but the older population dominates (ages 31+). Gender participation is nearly equal, ensuring both male and female perspectives are represented. The sample therefore provides multi-generational insights, from youth (20–30) to older community members (41+).

This therefore implies that older respondents (41+) likely lived through the height of the LRA conflict and the Atiak massacre of 1995 and thus bring first-hand accounts of trauma, loss, and the symbolic role monuments play in remembrance. Younger respondents (20–30) may not have direct memories but inherit narratives through collective memory, oral history and cultural transmission, shaping how monuments can sustain intergenerational remembrance. The near gender parity ensures the study captures both men's and women's experiences of war, trauma and recovery, including gendered perspectives on healing, memorialization, and cultural roles in reconciliation.

Since older groups dominated, monuments in Atiak should incorporate historical preservation, testimony, and commemoration for survivors. However, the presence of younger respondents highlights the need for educational, cultural and peace building functions of monuments so that youth can engage with history constructively. The strong representation of adults above 30 suggests that monuments in Atiak will not only be seen as symbolic but also as part of broader post-conflict recovery initiatives (psychosocial healing, cultural restoration, peace education). The Atiak massacre of 20th April 1995 is remembered not only as a historical event, but as a living social memory sustained through collective memory, oral history, and cultural transmission. These processes enabled respondents, survivors and community members to preserve and pass on knowledge of the tragedy across generations. As Halbwachs (1980) argues, “memory is a social construct shaped by the frameworks of the group”. In Atiak, this was evident through the shared experiences of violence, loss, and survival, which became deeply embedded in community identity. Respondents acknowledged that they held collective memories because they experienced or were connected to the 1995 massacre, reinforced memories through communal storytelling and commemorations.

4.2 Research Question One.

The role of the Atiak Monument in post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District, Uganda?

Table 4.2 below presents the roles of the Atiak monument in post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county, Amuru district. It is based on the views of survivors, relatives, witnesses of the Atiak massacre, and former students of Atiak Technical Institute. The frequency of respondents supporting each role is listed, along with the corresponding percentages.

Table 4.2: The Roles of Atiak monument in Post-Conflict Recovery in Atiak Sub-County (Survivors of Atiak Massacre, Relatives of Atiak Massacre, Witness of Atiak Massacre and Former Students of Atiak Technical Institute).

Roles of Atiak Monuments in Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District.	Number	%ages (100)
Commemoration and Remembrance.	46	100
Historical Preservation.	46	100
Reconciliation and Healing	30	65.2
Peace building and Conflict Prevention.	36	78.2
Monument and Post Conflict Recovery.	31	67.4
Monuments as Symbols and Aesthetics	32	69.5
Monument and Culture.	34	73.9
Monument as Political Structure.	35	76.1

Findings on Table 4.2 above shows that every respondent agrees that monuments are critical for honoring victims and ensuring that the memory of the Atiak massacre and wider LRA atrocities is not forgotten. There is unanimous agreement (100%) that monuments safeguard community history and narratives and protect them from distortion or erasure. A majority recognize (78%) viewed monuments as tools for fostering peace and preventing conflict recurrence by promoting dialogue and mutual understanding. Over two-thirds acknowledge the importance of monuments as teaching tools for younger generations, providing lessons on conflict, resilience, and peace. Many respondents see monuments as cultural and artistic expressions of resilience, pride, and identity, beyond their historical role. Monuments are considered helpful for trauma healing and emotional well-being, offering survivors a place for grief,

reflection, and solidarity. Monuments are also viewed as political and social symbols, signifying recognition of survivors by government, while also serving as sites for collective gatherings and advocacy.

These findings indicate that there is unanimous consensus on the commemorative and historical roles of monuments. High recognition (65–78%) exists for their roles in healing, peace building, education, psychosocial recovery, and politics/social life. The results highlight that monuments are seen as multi-dimensional tools not just memorials, but also social, cultural, psychological and political instruments of post-conflict recovery.

This implies that it's important for memory and Justice: The universal consensus (100%) on remembrance and preservation shows that monuments are indispensable for truth-telling and transitional justice. They help communities confront their past, making denial or revisionism less likely. In post-conflict societies such as Rwanda and Sierra Leone, memorialization has been an important tool for resisting denial and historical revisionism, while promoting reconciliation and collective memory.

Healing and Reconciliation: With only 65.2% support, reconciliation remains contested indicating that while monuments can support healing, they cannot substitute dialogue, justice, and psychosocial programs. Monuments need to be linked with wider reconciliation efforts.

Peace building: The 78.2% support for peace building shows that monuments can act as preventive tools by educating communities about the costs of war and fostering intergroup understanding, especially among the youth.

Educational Value: At 67.4%, the findings stressed the need to integrate monuments into formal and informal education, linking them with schools and cultural institutions so that the younger generation learns about history and peace.

Psychosocial Recovery: Since 73.9% recognize psychosocial impacts, monuments should be maintained as safe spaces for mourning, solidarity, and trauma release, particularly for survivors still carrying emotional wounds.

Politics and Governance: With 76.1% endorsement of political/social functions, monuments also represent a government-community interface. If managed inclusively, they can reinforce trust in institutions; if politicized, they risk division.

Table 4.3 presents an analysis of the role of the Atiak monument in post-conflict recovery efforts, based on the views of key community stakeholders: the Chairperson of Atiak Survivors Association, religious leaders, political leaders, local government leaders, Ker Kal Kwaro Acholi (cultural leadership), and representatives from the Annual commemoration prayer organizers. The frequency of respondents acknowledging each role is listed, alongside the percentage.

Table 4.3: Analysis Results of Roles of Atiak Monuments in Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak sub-county: Survivors of the Atiak Massacre and Relatives of Atiak Massacre Victims (N=24). See table 3.1

Roles of Atiak Monuments in Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District.	Number	%ages (100)
Commemoration and Remembrance.	24	100
Historical Preservation.	24	100
Monument as Reconciliation and Healing Site.	24	100
Peace building and Conflict Prevention.	24	100
Monuments and Post Conflict Recovery.	20	80
Monuments as Symbols and Aesthetics	21	87.5
Monument and Culture.	21	87.5
Monument as Political Structure.	21	87.5

The findings from Table 4.3 show that survivors of the Atiak Massacre and relatives of victims perceive the monuments in Atiak Sub-County as playing multiple, critical roles in post-conflict recovery. Commemoration and Remembrance (100%): All respondents (24 out of 24) agreed that the monuments are vital for honoring the lives lost, keeping alive the memory of victims, and preventing the community from forgetting the events of 1995. This underscores the monuments' symbolic value as collective sites of mourning and memory preservation.

Historical Preservation (100%): All respondents acknowledged that monuments act as historical archives, ensuring the preservation of the massacre's narrative. As one community leader noted, *"this monument keeps the truth for us, it is like a record that cannot be destroyed."* Another relative of a victim in Atiak explained the archival importance of the memorial saying, *"This monument keeps the truth for us. Even when those who witnessed are no longer here, this place will still speak. Our children and*

their children will come and learn what happened in Atiak. It is like a record that cannot be destroyed, reminding everyone of our history.”

Another respondent, a relative of a survivor of the massacre emphasized intergenerational knowledge: *“Not all of us can tell the story forever, but the monument tells it for us. When young people come here, they ask questions, they listen, and they understand. It is our way of making sure the massacre is never forgotten.”* This demonstrated how the memorial site functioned as an enduring repository of collective memory, bridging generational gaps and safeguarding historical knowledge.

Reconciliation and Healing (100%): Survivors and relatives in Atiak consistently recognize the memorial as an instrument that encourages healing, reconciliation, and coexistence. As one respondent explained, *“the monument helps us to grieve together and to teach our children what happened so that it never divides us again.”* This highlights how memorialization not only preserves memory but also fosters dialogue and collective recovery.

Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention (100%): Respondents unanimously emphasized the preventive role of monuments. They are seen as reminders of the painful consequences of war, instilling in the community a collective commitment to peace and non-violence.

A survivor in Atiak highlighted how the memorial will help prevent future violence: *“This monument is a warning to all of us. When people come here and see what happened, they understand the pain that violence brings. It teaches our children that such things should never happen again, and it reminds the community to live in peace.”* Another survivor stressed its role in shaping future behavior: *“We do not keep this place only to remember the past, but to protect the future. When leaders, visitors, and the young generation see this, they learn the consequences of hatred and war. It helps stop such violence from repeating.”*

Educational Role (80%): A majority highlighted the educational value of monuments, though not with complete unanimity. This indicates that while monuments serve as informal teaching spaces especially for the younger generation, some respondents may feel that this role is under-utilized or not strongly emphasized in current practice. A survivor emphasized the learning aspect for younger generations: *“When school children come here, they begin to understand what really happened. The monument teaches them our history in a way that books alone cannot. It helps them ask questions and learn why peace is important.”*

Another witness linked the site to awareness and understanding:

“This place educates people, especially those who did not experience the massacre. When visitors come, they hear the stories and see where it happened. It opens their minds and helps them understand our past.”

However, reflecting the lack of complete unanimity, one participant expressed a more cautious view:

“The monument teaches, yes, but not everyone comes to learn. Some young people only see it as a place, without fully understanding the history unless someone explains it to them”.

A community elder further reinforced the conditional educational value:

“It has value for teaching, especially when we gather here and explain to the youth and other younger generations. Without that guidance, the monument alone may not be enough, but it still plays an important role.”

Symbolism and Aesthetics (87.5%): Most respondents appreciated the symbolic and aesthetic dimensions of the monuments. This reflects the fact that their physical design and artistic form resonate with community identity, cultural pride, and resilience. As one community member explained, *“it is not just a structure but represents the lives we lost and the strength of those who remained.”* This suggests that beyond their historical function, monuments serve as powerful symbolic markers, communicating meaning, dignity, and collective identity through their physical and visual form.

Psychosocial Impact (87.5%): A large proportion of survivors and relatives recognized that monuments provide psychosocial benefits, offering emotional relief, a space for grief, and collective healing. However, the fact that not all respondents agreed suggests that psychosocial recovery is complex and may require additional interventions beyond monuments. Participants shared several psychological benefits of the monument as highlighted below:

A survivor expressed how the memorial supports emotional healing:

“Before this monument, many of us suffered quietly with our pain. But now we have a place where we come together, remember, and release that pain. When we gather here, we cry, we pray, and somehow the burden becomes lighter.”

Another relative of the victims emphasized the importance of shared grief: *“This place allows us to mourn as one community. We lost our people in different ways, but here*

we grieve together. It helps us feel that we are not alone in our suffering, and that gives us strength to continue”.

A relative of a victim highlighted its role in ongoing healing: *“Healing is not something that happens once, it takes time. The monument helps us in that process. Each time we come here, we remember, but we also find some peace in our hearts.”*

A community elder further reflected: *“This is where we bring our sorrow, but also where we begin to find comfort. The monument gives us a place to face our past together instead of carrying it alone.”*

Political and Social Function (87.5%): The majority also valued the monuments for their political and social significance. They provide platforms for recognition of victims by the state and Actors, while also serving as spaces for annual commemorations, advocacy, and community mobilization. A survivor emphasized the role of the monument in public recognition and acknowledgment:

“This monument shows that what happened here is recognized not just by us, but by leaders and the whole country. It also tells the world that our suffering matters and should never be ignored.”

Another community member highlighted its role in strengthening social unity: *“When we gather here, it brings together people from different backgrounds leaders, survivors, relatives and visitors. It helps us feel united as a community and reminds us that we must live together peacefully.”*

A community elder pointed to its importance for justice and accountability: *“This place stands as evidence that what happened was real. It reminds those in authority of their responsibility to protect people and to ensure such does not re-occur”.*

A younger participant stressed its broader societal meaning saying: *“The monument connects our village to the rest of the country. It makes people understand our history and respect what we went through, it gives our community a voice.”*

Generally, the results reveal a strong consensus among survivors and relatives that the core roles of the monuments, remembrance, historical preservation, reconciliation, and peace building are essential and universally recognized. Secondary but still important functions such as education, symbolism, psychosocial healing, and political/social purposes are also widely acknowledged, though with slightly less consensus. This demonstrates that monuments in Atiak are seen as multi-faceted institutions that contribute not only to memory and history but also to ongoing community recovery, education, and identity formation.

4.3 Research Question Two.

Effectiveness of post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak Sub- County, Amuru District, Uganda?

Table 4.4 evaluates the effectiveness of post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District, based on feedback from survivors, relatives, witnesses of the Atiak Massacre, and a former student of Atiak Technical Institute. It measures the success of various recovery indicators by frequency and percentage of respondents acknowledging their impact.

Table 4.4: Effectiveness of Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak Sub-County (Survivors of Atiak Massacre, Relatives of Atiak Massacre, Witness of Atiak Massacre and Former Student of Atiak Technical Institute), N=46.

Indicators of Effectiveness of Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District.	Number	%ages (100)
Social Cohesion and Reconciliation.	46	100
Psychosocial Healing and Trauma Recovery.	39	78.2
Economic Reconstruction and Livelihoods.	41	89.1
Governance and Institutional Development.	42	91.3
Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention.	46	100
Infrastructure Rehabilitation.	38	82.6
Cultural Restoration and Identity.	46	100
Justice and Accountability.	46	100
Displacement and Resettlement.	46	100
Education and Capacity Building.	43	93.4
Security and Rule of Law.	30	65.2
Reintegration of Ex-Combatants.	46	100

Accordingly, findings from Table 4.4 reveal that post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District, have been implemented across multiple dimensions, with varying levels of effectiveness as perceived by survivors, relatives of massacre victims, witnesses, and former students of Atiak Technical Institute. The result indicates very strong progress in key recovery indicators. Universal agreement (100%) was observed in several areas: Social cohesion and reconciliation, peace building and conflict prevention, cultural restoration and identity, justice and

accountability, displacement and resettlement, and reintegration of ex-combatants. This demonstrates that the most fundamental aspects of re-building community trust, healing divisions, and restoring collective identity have been effectively addressed.

Social cohesion and Reconciliation: Participants commonly explained the importance of the Atiak monument for social cohesion and reconciliation in ways that connect memory, acknowledgment, shared identity, and healing. Below are key themes with concrete examples of how participants articulated this:

Recognition of shared suffering and Collective Memory: Many participants emphasized that the monument acknowledges the suffering of victims, which is essential for bringing communities together.

For example: Survivors and community members noted that the Atiak massacre had long been under-recognized, and the monument now serves as a public acknowledgment of pain and naming victims or symbolizing them, the monument allows families and the community to say: “What happened here is real and matters.”

Creating a neutral space for Dialogue and Commemoration: Participants often described the monument as a gathering point where people from different backgrounds can meet. For example: Annual memorial events in Atiak brings together survivors, Local leaders, Government representatives and Former combatants in some cases. During these commemorations, people share testimonies, prayers, and reflections. It has contributed to reconciliation through the site becoming a safe, neutral space for dialogue and it encourages open conversations about the past, which is crucial for rebuilding trust.

Promoting Forgiveness and Healing: Some participants linked the monument directly to processes of forgiveness and emotional healing. For example: Survivors reported that visiting the monument helps them grieve collectively rather than in isolation and they begin to let go of anger. Religious and cultural rituals performed at the site (e.g., prayers, cleansing ceremonies) were cited as helping individuals move towards forgiveness.

Peace Building and Conflict Prevention: Participants described the Atiak monument as a powerful tool that transforms memory of violence into a foundation for peace,

emphasizing that remembering past atrocities helps communities consciously avoid repeating them.

First, participants noted that the monument acts as a visible reminder of the consequences of conflict. By marking the site of the Atiak massacre, it keeps the memory of violence alive in a way that discourages future aggression. For example, during commemorative events, community leaders often refer to the killings to emphasize the cost of war, urging people especially the youth to reject violence. Participants explained that this constant reminder helps shape attitudes, reinforcing a collective commitment to “never again.”

The monument was described as an important site for peace, education and awareness creation. Participants highlighted that young people who did not witness the conflict learn about it through stories shared at the monument. For instance, elders and survivors use visits and memorial gatherings to explain what happened, why it happened, and how it affected families and the wider community. This intergenerational transfer of knowledge was seen as critical in preventing misinformation, denial, or glorification of violence, which could otherwise fuel future conflict.

They emphasized that the monument contributes to dialogue and trust-building among different groups. Memorial events bring together survivors, local authorities, religious leaders, and sometimes individuals associated with former armed groups. These gatherings create opportunities for open discussions about the past and share reflections on peace. For example, joint prayers and public speeches during anniversaries were cited as moments where communities re-affirm unity and peaceful co-existence. This interaction helps rebuild trust and reduces suspicion among groups that were previously divided.

Participants linked the monument to healing and emotional stabilization, which are essential for preventing renewed conflict. They explained that unaddressed trauma and unresolved grievances can lead to anger, revenge, or renewed violence. The monument provides a space for mourning, remembrance, and communal support. For example, families reported that having a recognized place to grieve allowed them to process loss more peacefully rather than harbor resentment. This emotional healing reduces the likelihood of conflict being reignited.

Finally, participants highlighted that the monument strengthens collective identity and unity, which are key to conflict prevention. By framing the massacre as a shared

community tragedy rather than the experience of a single group, the monument helps foster a sense of togetherness. For example, commemorations often emphasize unity messages, encouraging people to see themselves as one community with a common history. This reduces divisions and makes it less likely for conflicts to emerge along social or group lines.

4.4 Cultural Restoration and Identity

Participants noted that the monument helps preserve and publicly acknowledges the history of the Atiak massacre, which might otherwise fade or be denied. By marking the site and naming the tragedy, the monument restores a shared historical narrative, allowing communities to reconnect with their past in an honest way. For example: Some explained that younger generations now learn about what happened through the monument, strengthening intergenerational continuity and awareness. It was seen as more than a physical structure because it serves as a repository of memory, a symbol of dignity, a foundation for identity, and a focal point for healing and cultural renewal.

High effectiveness was also recorded in education and capacity building (93.4%), governance and institutional development (91.3%), suggesting that formal structures and human capital development have been strengthened to support long-term recovery. Participants pointed to the increased visibility and functioning of local government structures (e.g., sub-county leadership, district engagement, and collaboration with national programs). These structures have helped coordinate recovery efforts and maintain order after conflict.

Evidence: Local leaders are actively involved in organizing commemorations at the monument, showing institutional ownership of memory and reconciliation processes. The rise of local associations, survivor groups, and cultural committees, which complement formal structures. These groups strengthen both governance and social capital.

Available evidence points at: Committees organizing memorial events and cultural activities demonstrate locally driven leadership and coordination skills and Survivor groups and community initiatives provide peer support, advocacy, and collective problem-solving, enhancing grassroots institutional strength. There has been availability of improved livelihoods and economic participation, participants linked human capital development to economic recovery, supported by structured programs and training. Evidence is that agricultural support programs and skills training have

enabled households to resume productive activities and diversify income sources. Including increased engagement in trade and local markets reflects growing economic agency and applied skills among community members.

Similarly, economic reconstruction and livelihoods (89.1%) and infrastructure rehabilitation (82.6%) were widely acknowledged, showing that recovery efforts have gone beyond social healing to include tangible improvements in livelihoods and services.

Moderately high effectiveness was seen in psychosocial healing and trauma recovery (78.2%), highlighting progress in addressing mental health and trauma-related needs, though this still leaves a notable proportion of affected individuals whose psychosocial needs remain unmet. The lowest effectiveness was recorded in security and rule of law (65.2%), which, despite majority acknowledgment, indicates lingering challenges in law enforcement, protection of rights, and ensuring a stable security environment.

The *table 4.5* below presents an analysis of the effectiveness of post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county, Amuru district, based on the views of key stakeholders: the Chairperson of the Atiak Survivors Association, religious leaders, political leaders, local government leaders, Ker Kal Kwaro Acholi (cultural leadership), and Annual Commemoration Prayer Organizers' representatives. The table outlines various indicators of recovery, listing the frequency of respondents supporting each indicator, along with the corresponding percentages.

Table 4.5: The Effectiveness of Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak Sub- County, Amuru District, Uganda (Collected from chairperson Atiak massacre survivors' association, former students of Atiak Technical Institute, and witnesses of Atiak massacre, religious leaders, political leaders and Ker Kal Kwaro Acholi Cultural Leaders):

Indicators of Effectiveness of Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District.	Frequency	%ages (100)
Social Cohesion and Reconciliation.	21	95.4
Psychosocial Healing and Trauma Recovery.	22	100
Economic Reconstruction and Livelihoods.	19	86.3
Governance and Institutional Development.	18	81.8
Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention.	22	100

Infrastructure Rehabilitation.	19	86.3
Cultural Restoration and Identity.	20	90.9
Justice and Accountability.	22	100
Displacement and Resettlement.	22	100
Education and Capacity Building.	21	95.4
Security and Rule of Law.	19	86.3
Reintegration of Ex-Combatants.	22	100

The results from Table 4.5, based on views of survivors' representatives, former students, massacre witnesses, religious and political leaders, as well as Ker Kal Kwaro Acholi cultural leaders, demonstrate that post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak have been widely recognized as effective across multiple dimensions. The strongest effectiveness is reflected in psychosocial healing and trauma recovery, peace building and conflict prevention, justice and accountability, displacement and resettlement, and reintegration of ex-combatants all of which scored 100%. Testimony from a Survivor who has been healed and recovered from trauma because of the monument. *"When we come here, we feel a sense of relief. It gives us a place to mourn together and slowly heal from what we went through."* *"The monument has helped us talk about our pain openly. Before, many of us were suffering in silence."*

This suggests that both the emotional/psychological aspects of recovery and the legal, political, and social reintegration processes have received significant attention and achieved broad consensus as successful.

High effectiveness was also noted in social cohesion and reconciliation (95.4%) and education and capacity building (95.4%), pointing to improvements in rebuilding community trust, unity, and human capital for long-term development. Similarly, cultural restoration and identity (90.9%) was acknowledged, underscoring the importance of traditional institutions and cultural revival in strengthening recovery. As stated by a community elder here; *"For us in Atiak, recovery is not only about rebuilding homes or livelihoods it is also about rebuilding who we are as a people. Our cultural practices, our elders, and our traditions guide us and bring us together again. When we revive our customs and respect our traditional leaders, we feel stronger, more united, and more confident about the future."*

Moderate yet notable progress was recorded in economic reconstruction and livelihoods (86.3%), infrastructure rehabilitation (86.3%), security and rule of law

(86.3%), showing that while economic and physical recovery efforts are commendable, there are still challenges in sustaining livelihoods, rebuilding infrastructure, and guaranteeing security. Here are several suitable voices of community members that reflect those challenges: *“We have made progress in rebuilding our lives, but it is still difficult to sustain a steady income. Opportunities are limited, and many of us struggle to meet daily needs despite the efforts made so far”*.

“Some infrastructure has been restored, like roads and schools, but many areas are still in poor condition. This makes it hard for us to access markets, healthcare, and other essential services”.

“Security has improved compared to before, but people still feel uncertain at times. There are lingering fears, and we are still not yet fully confident that the peace will last.”

“We appreciate the support for recovery, but without reliable livelihoods and stronger systems in place, it is hard to move forward sustainably.”

“Rebuilding is happening, but it is slow, and many families are still trying to recover from what they lost. We need more consistent support to truly stabilize our lives.”

The lowest ratings were in governance and institutional development (81.8%), which, while still a strong majority, indicate lingering concerns about institutional effectiveness, leadership structures, and policy implementation that may need more targeted interventions. Here are community leaders’ voices capturing those lingering concerns:

“Even though we have made good progress as a community, there are still gaps in how institutions work. Sometimes decisions are not clearly communicated, and it can feel like leadership structures are not fully responsive to people’s needs.”

“We trust that recovery is moving forward, but there are still concerns about how policies are implemented on the ground. What is planned does not always match what is done, and this affects how much confidence people have in the systems and leaders around them.”

4.5 Research Question Three.

Actors in memorialization and monument construction in Atiak Sub- County, Amuru District-Uganda?

Table 4.6 identifies key Actors involved in the construction of the Atiak monument in Atiak sub-county, Amuru district, based on responses from survivors, relatives, witnesses of the Atiak massacre, and former students of Atiak Technical Institute. The table provides the frequency and percentage of respondents recognizing each Actor's involvement.

Table 4.6: Actors of the Construction of Atiak Monument in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District (Survivors of Atiak Massacre, Relatives of Atiak Massacre, Witness of Atiak Massacre and Former Students of Atiak Technical Institute).

International Actors in the Construction of Atiak Monument in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District.	Number	%ages (100)
United Nations and UNESCO	38	77.7
European Union:	38	77.7
Human Rights NGOs:	46	100
International Criminal Court (ICC)	46	100
Governments and Embassies	41	86.1

Findings above on table 4.6 reveals that 38 respondents (82.6%) acknowledge the role of the United Nations and UNESCO in the construction of the Atiak monument, 38 respondents (82.6%) similarly recognize the European Union's involvement in the monument's construction, all the 46 respondents (100%) agree that human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) played a significant role in the monument's construction, all the 46 respondents (100%) affirm the ICC's involvement, indicating its support for justice-related initiatives connected to the monument and 41 respondents (89.1%) recognize the involvement of foreign governments and embassies in the project.

The Atiak monument is a community-driven and human-rights-led initiative, supported by the Actors highlighted below. Together, these actors contributed to creating a memorial that promotes remembrance, justice, healing, and peacebuilding in northern Uganda.

Amuru District Local Government: The Amuru district Local Government played a leading and coordinating role. It provided the institutional framework, land, and administrative support necessary for the establishment of the monument. It also works closely with the community to organize annual commemorations and maintenance of the memorial site, ensuring that the monument serves its purpose of remembrance and public awareness.

Human Rights Organizations: Human-rights organizations were the main drivers behind the monument's construction. They advocated memorialization, mobilized survivors and victims' families, and supported initiatives aimed at justice, healing, and reconciliation. Groups such as the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) Refugee Law Project plus others have facilitated memorial activities, training, and community engagement, emphasizing the monument as a symbol of remembrance, peace, and prevention of future violence.

UNESCO: Its role is largely indirect and normative, it promotes the preservation of cultural heritage, memory, and education for peace, which supports initiatives like the Atiak monument. Although it may not have directly constructed the monument, UNESCO provides guidelines, technical support, and global frameworks that encourage safeguarding historical memory and strengthening post-conflict reconciliation.

European Union (EU): The European Union contributes mainly through financial and development support. It funds broader programmes in northern Uganda focused on post-conflict recovery, governance, and social cohesion, which indirectly supports memorialization projects like the Atiak monument. Its role is therefore that of a development partner, enabling local and civil society actors to implement such initiatives.

The Atiak monument is a community-driven and human-rights-led initiative, supported by the Actors highlighted above. Together, these actors contributed to creating a memorial that promotes remembrance, justice, healing, and peace building in northern Uganda. Voice of a survivor participant *"Without the NGOs, this monument would have remained just an idea. They helped us organize, brought resources, and made sure our stories were documented properly. But sometimes it felt like they were also guiding how our story should be told."*

Voice of a Local council leader *“The district local government gave legitimacy to the monument. Without their approval, the project could not move forward. They helped allocate land and ensured the monument is recognized officially.”*

Community elder *“All these actors: NGOs, government, and international bodies diligently played their part. But the real ownership must remain with the people of Atiak.”*

The construction of the Atiak monument in Atiak sub-county was supported by a variety of Actors, particularly local human rights NGOs and the International Criminal Court (ICC), both of which received unanimous acknowledgment (100%) for their roles. Although the ICC’s role in the Atiak monument was indirect, it contributed by promoting justice, accountability, and recognition of victims, which in turn inspired and supported the establishment of memorials such as the Atiak monument. This indicates strong international support for the monument, particularly in relation to human rights advocacy and justice. The significant involvement of organizations like the United Nations, UNESCO and the European Union (82.6%), as well as foreign governments and embassies (86.1%), highlights the global recognition of the Atiak massacre and the importance of international collaboration in post-conflict memorialization. The study concludes that the construction of the Atiak monument was a collective effort driven by multiple international actors. This wide-ranging support underscores the global interest in addressing the historical atrocities of the Atiak massacre, promoting justice, and aiding in the post-conflict recovery of the community. The monument stands as a symbol of international solidarity and commitment to peace building, human rights, and reconciliation in post-conflict regions.

This *table 4.7* presents the views of key local stakeholders: Chairperson of Atiak Survivors’ Association, religious leaders, political leaders, local government leaders, Ker Kal Kwaro Acholi (cultural leadership) and representatives from the Annual Commemoration Prayer organizers on the involvement of international actors in the construction of the Atiak Monument in Atiak sub-county, Amuru district. The frequency and percentage of respondents acknowledging each international actor's role are listed.

Table 4.7: Actors in Memorialization and Monument Construction in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District-Uganda (Collected from chairperson Atiak massacre survivors' association, former students of Atiak Technical Institute, witnesses of Atiak massacre, religious leaders, political leaders and Ker Kal Kwaro Acoli Cultural Leaders): N=22. See Table 3.1

Actors in the Construction of Atiak Monument in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District.	Number	%ages (100)
United Nations and UNESCO	22	100
European Union:	20	90.9
Human Rights NGOs:	22	100
International Criminal Court (ICC)	22	100
Government and Embassies	21	95.4

Findings on table 4.7 shows that Actors played a pivotal role in memorialization and monument construction in Atiak Sub-County. All respondents (100%) recognized the contribution of the United Nations and UNESCO, Human Rights NGOs and the International Criminal Court (ICC). This underscores the strong presence of international institutions in ensuring justice, human rights, advocacy and cultural preservation in post-conflict contexts as highlighted in participants' testimonies below;

Significant recognition was also given to government and embassies (95.4%), highlighting the collaboration between Uganda's state institutions and diplomatic missions in supporting the memorialization process. The European Union (90.9%) was also credited, reflecting its continued support in funding, policy advocacy and post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Northern Uganda.

According to the Chairperson's testimony, he highlighted the role of the organizations as a catalyst for long-term positive change and hope, he emphasized that human rights organizations helped transform lives by providing access to education, mentorship, and opportunities that many beneficiaries would not otherwise have had. They further noted that the organizations helped build confidence, discipline, and leadership skills, especially among young people. The work of the organization also strengthened communities by empowering individuals to become self-reliant and contributors to society.

Many former students shared testimonies about how organizations enabled them to continue with their education, which changed the direction of their lives. They credited

the organizations for providing financial support, guidance, and emotional encouragement during difficult times. Several noted that they gained life skills, confidence, and career direction, helping them secure jobs or pursue higher education. Some expressed that they are now able to support their families and give back to their communities, thanks to the opportunities they received. Overall, they described the organization as having given them hope, purpose, and a second chance to success.

The Chairperson highlighted that the collaboration between ICC, the European Union, and Amuru district significantly improved access to education, justice awareness, and community support services. The former students further noted that many beneficiaries, especially young people, have gained opportunities they would not have had otherwise, including schooling, skills development, and exposure to leadership. They confirmed that the programs have contributed to healing, resilience, and empowerment among communities previously affected by conflict and hardship. The Chairperson emphasized that the partnership has helped build a more informed, confident, and self-reliant community, capable of shaping its own future.

Former students shared that through these initiatives, they were able to return to school or complete their education, which changed the course of their lives. Many admitted that they received financial support (such as school fees, and other scholastic materials), mentorship, and psychosocial support, helping them overcome the difficult backgrounds they were coming from. They expressed that the programs helped them build confidence, life skills, and a sense of purpose, enabling them to pursue careers or further studies. Several noted that they are now employed or self-reliant and can support their families, something they credit directly to the support received. Some also highlighted increased awareness of rights, justice, and civic responsibility, which has empowered them to become active contributors in their communities. They described the support as having restored their hope, dignity, and opportunity, transforming them from vulnerable individuals into empowered adults.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.0 Introduction

In this section I discussed findings in relation to the recent literature, basing on the role of monuments, effectiveness of post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county, Amuru district and the Actors in the construction of monuments in Atiak sub-county, Amuru district.

5.1 Role of the Atiak Monument in Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District, Uganda.

The findings that the Atiak monument played a critical role in post-conflict recovery underscores the depth of its importance to the community. The universal consensus on their roles in remembrance, historical preservation and peace building highlights how essential this monument is for both individual healing and collective memory. Serving as places of commemoration, the monument ensures that the atrocities of the past are not forgotten and provide an emotional anchor for survivors and their families. Historical preservation through these monuments also ensures that future generations understand the legacy of conflict and the community's resilience. Additionally, the monuments recognized roles in reconciliation, education and psychosocial healing further reveal their active function in the community's long-term recovery process. They are not just reminders of the past; they are also tools for rebuilding relationships, fostering understanding, and offering emotional support to survivors. The recognition of their symbolic value emphasizes their broader role in uniting the community around a shared history and hope for a peaceful future. These aspects make the Atiak monument vital to not only healing the scars of conflict but also building a more informed and resilient society.

Findings of this study are in line with other researchers. For instance, in Brazil UNESCO (2018), UNESCO (2021) in Guatemala, UNESCO (2019) in Chile, Donadio (2015) in Cambodia, Meskell (2018) in Vietnam and Akagawa (2015) in Sub-Saharan Africa reported that monuments commemorate indigenous peoples and historical events, fostering dialogue about social inequality and historical injustices. They can promote cultural heritage and contribute to national identity. While UNESCO reports and various scholars highlight the positive role of monuments in promoting cultural

heritage and national identity, critics argue that monuments often serve as tools for selective memory, glorifying certain narratives while suppressing others. For example, in many countries, monuments have been critiqued for reflecting the dominant perspectives of those in power, thereby marginalizing the voices and experiences of indigenous people and oppressed communities. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, monuments erected during colonial or post-colonial eras often emphasize the achievements of colonial rulers or national elites, overshadowing the suffering and exploitation of local populations. Akagawa's (2015) claim that monuments contribute to national identity might be questioned, as these structures can deepen divisions by perpetuating selective historical interpretations.

Moreover, monuments are not always catalysts for productive dialogue. In some cases, they provoke conflict or resistance, particularly when they are perceived as representing oppressive regimes or eras of inequality, as seen in debates around colonial monuments in places like Vietnam (Meskell, 2018) and Cambodia (Donadio, 2015). Critics argue that the commemorative purpose of these monuments may fail to address ongoing systemic inequalities, instead reinforcing a narrative that freezes historical injustices in time without confronting their legacies in contemporary society. Therefore, while monuments may indeed promote cultural heritage, their capacity to foster meaningful dialogue about social inequalities and injustices can be limited by the power dynamics that shape their creation, interpretation, and preservation.

5.2 Effectiveness of Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak Sub- County, Amuru District, Uganda.

The post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county have been commendably successful, especially in key areas such as social cohesion, peace building, cultural restoration, justice, displacement, and reintegration of ex-combatants, all receiving unanimous approval. This broad consensus indicates that the community has made considerable progress in fostering reconciliation, reviving cultural identity and ensuring the long-term reintegration of individuals affected by the conflict as equally echoed by authors like Fournet (2016) in Colombia, Alexandra (2017) in Guatemala and (Cheru, 2016) in Cambodia. Success in these areas reflects strong efforts to rebuild social relationships, restore trust, and lay the foundation for sustainable peace in the region. However, there are ongoing challenges that need attention, particularly in the areas of psychosocial healing, infrastructure rehabilitation, security and rule of law which was

the consent of (Miznazi,2023) in Afghanistan and (Drake, 2019) in Kashmir. The lower percentages in these areas suggest that while significant progress has been made, some community members continue to experience trauma and face difficulties accessing adequate mental health support. Similarly, the need for infrastructure improvement is evident, as a lack of robust roads, healthcare facilities, and other critical services may hinder long-term recovery. The relatively low rating for security and the rule of law highlights persistent challenges in maintaining stability and ensuring legal protections, which are crucial for lasting peace.

While post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county have been widely celebrated for their success in areas like social cohesion and reintegration, a critical perspective might argue that the challenges in psychosocial healing, infrastructure rehabilitation and security undermine the broader narrative of success. The lower percentages in these crucial areas indicate that despite progress, the recovery is uneven. The persistent trauma experienced by many community members, coupled with insufficient mental health support, suggests that true reconciliation may be fragile. Additionally, inadequate infrastructure and gaps in rule of law point to vulnerabilities that could hinder long-term peace and development, as noted in similar contexts like Afghanistan and Kashmir. Therefore, the claim of comprehensive success may overlook key vulnerabilities that threaten the sustainability of recovery.

5.3 The Actors in Memorialization and Monument Construction in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District-Uganda.

The construction of the Atiak monument exemplifies a remarkable display of international collaboration, especially in the realm of human rights advocacy and justice. The unanimous acknowledgment of the roles played by human rights NGOs and the International Criminal Court (ICC) highlights the monument's significance as a symbol of justice and accountability. These organizations' involvement demonstrates the global commitment to recognizing and addressing the atrocities of the Atiak Massacre. Additionally, the support from organizations like the United Nations, UNESCO and the European Union, alongside foreign governments and embassies, underscores the international community's investment in post-conflict memorialization. This global backing reflects the importance placed on acknowledging historical wrongs and assisting communities in rebuilding and healing after violence. It also points to the growing recognition that such monuments play a crucial role in peace

building, reconciliation, and preserving human rights. The monument, therefore, serves not only as a memorial to past tragedies but also as a beacon of international solidarity and cooperation in ensuring that the lessons from conflicts like the Atiak massacre perpetrated by the LRA contribute to long-term peace and justice.

Findings of the study is consistent with reports from other researchers like UNESCO (2017), Showkat and Parveen (2017), Cheru (2016), Walasek (2019), Drake (2019) and Adong (2021) who reported that the United Nations and other international bodies have also been active in funding and advising on memorial projects in post-conflict countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia and South Africa, with a focus on reconciliation and transitional justice. While UNESCO and other researchers emphasize the positive role of the United Nations and international bodies in funding and advising these initiatives, critics argue that such external interventions often impose top-down approaches that may not fully resonate with local communities. For instance, in countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia, and South Africa, international bodies may prioritize reconciliation and transitional justice through memorials, but these projects can sometimes overlook the specific cultural or historical contexts that are essential to meaningful healing. Local communities might feel disconnected from these externally driven memorial efforts, viewing them as symbolic gestures rather than practical solutions to their ongoing struggles. Moreover, international funding often comes with specific agendas that may not align with local needs, potentially leading to projects that are more performative than transformative. In this light, the involvement of international organizations might be seen as well-intentioned but limited in scope, raising questions about the long-term effectiveness of such memorial projects in addressing the deeper issues of justice, inequality, and social repair.

5.4 Conclusion

The Atiak monument is central to the post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county. It provides a multi-dimensional approach to healing by addressing both psychosocial needs and fosters educational, cultural and social awareness. The overwhelming support for its role in remembrance, peace building, and historical preservation shows that it's deeply embedded in the community's identity and is crucial to reconciliation process.

The post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county have been largely effective, particularly in building social cohesion, peace, cultural restoration and

justice. However, to achieve a more comprehensive recovery, greater focus is needed on psychosocial support, infrastructure rehabilitation and enhancing security and rule of law.

The construction of the Atiak monument was a significant achievement made possible through the collective efforts of various actors. This collaboration demonstrates the global community's recognition of the Atiak Massacre and its commitment to justice, reconciliation and peacebuilding in post-conflict regions.

5.5 Recommendations

To further enhance the impact of the Atiak monument, the community leaders should implement interactive educational programmes at the monument site. These programmes could involve schools and local organizations in activities such as workshops, storytelling and history lessons. This would deepen their educational role and ensure that the lessons of the past are continuously passed on.

To strengthen recovery efforts, it is recommended that targeted interventions be implemented to address the gaps in psychosocial support, infrastructure and security: Expanding psychosocial support services by training more community health workers in trauma counseling and mental health care to ensure widespread access to healing resources, accelerating infrastructure projects, prioritizing critical facilities like schools, healthcare centers and roads to improve access to services and promote economic recovery and enhancing local security through improved policing, conflict resolution programs and reinforcing the rule of law by ensuring that justice mechanisms are accessible and responsive to community needs.

To build on international support for the Atiak monument, it is recommended that the community and international stakeholders establish annual forums or commemorative events at the monument site. These events could serve as platforms for dialogue on peace building, justice, and human rights, involving both local and international participants. Such initiatives would ensure the monument remains an active site for promoting global awareness, continuous advocacy, and ongoing support for post-conflict recovery in Uganda and other conflict-affected areas worldwide.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies

This study did not cover all the aspects of monuments and post-conflict recovery in Acholi land and, therefore, suggests the following virgin areas:

1. Cultural Heritage Sites Role and Post-Conflict Identity Restoration: A Comparative Study of Acholi land and Northern Uganda.
2. Education and Memorialization: Analyzing the Impact of Post-Conflict Monuments on Peace Education in Northern Uganda.
3. Gender and Memory: The Role of Women in Post-Conflict Memorialization and Healing in Northern Uganda.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide for Survivors of Atiak Massacre, Relatives of Atiak Massacre, Witness of Atiak Massacre and Former Student of Atiak Technical Institute.

Category of respondents		Age group	Tick
Survivors/ witnesses of the 1995 massacre and relatives of victims: • Atiak Massacre Survivors Association • Atiak Technical School Survivors Association • Relatives of people killed	Tick	20-35 years	
		35-50 years	
		50+	
Sex	Tick		
Female			
Male			

Theme One: Roles of the Atiak Monument in Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District, Uganda.

- 1) In your opinion what are the roles of Atiak monuments in post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county in Amuru District?
 - i. Commemoration and Remembrance.
 - ii. Historical Preservation.
 - iii. Reconciliation and Healing.
 - iv. Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention.
 - v. Educational Role.
 - vi. Symbolism and Aesthetics.
 - vii. Psychosocial Impact.
 - viii. Political and Social Function.

Theme Two: Effectiveness of Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District, Uganda.

1. In your view, what are the indicators of effectiveness of post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county, Amuru District?
 - i. Social Cohesion and Reconciliation.
 - ii. Psychosocial Healing and Trauma Recovery.
 - iii. Economic Reconstruction and Livelihoods.
 - iv. Governance and Institutional Development.
 - v. Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention.
 - vi. Infrastructure Rehabilitation.
 - vii. Cultural Restoration and Identity.
 - viii. Justice and Accountability.
 - ix. Displacement and Resettlement.
 - x. Education and Capacity Building.
 - xi. Security and Rule of Law.
 - xii. Reintegration of Ex-Combatants.

Theme Three: Actors in Memorialization and Monument Construction in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District-Uganda.

1. Who were the Actors in the construction of Atiak monument in Atiak sub-county, Amuru District?

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.....

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Chairperson Atiak Survivors' Association, Religious Leaders, Political Leaders and Local Government Leaders, Ker Kal Kwaro Acoli and Annual Commemoration Prayer Organizers' Representative.

Theme One: Roles of the Atiak Monument in Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District, Uganda.

2) In your opinion what are the roles of Atiak monuments in post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county in Amuru District?

- ix. Commemoration and Remembrance.
- x. Historical Preservation.
- xi. Reconciliation and Healing.
- xii. Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention.
- xiii. Educational Role.
- xiv. Symbolism and Aesthetics.
- xv. Psychosocial Impact.
- xvi. Political and Social Function.

Theme Two: Effectiveness of Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts in Atiak Sub- County, Amuru District, Uganda.

2. In your view, what are the indicators of effectiveness of post-conflict recovery efforts in Atiak sub-county, Amuru District?

Social Cohesion and Reconciliation.

Psychosocial Healing and Trauma Recovery.

Economic Reconstruction and Livelihoods.

Governance and Institutional Development.

Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention.

Infrastructure Rehabilitation.

Cultural Restoration and Identity.

Justice and Accountability.

Displacement and Resettlement.

Education and Capacity Building.

Security and Rule of Law.

Reintegration of Ex-Combatants.

Theme Three: Actors in Memorialization and Monument Construction in Atiak Sub-County, Amuru District-Uganda.

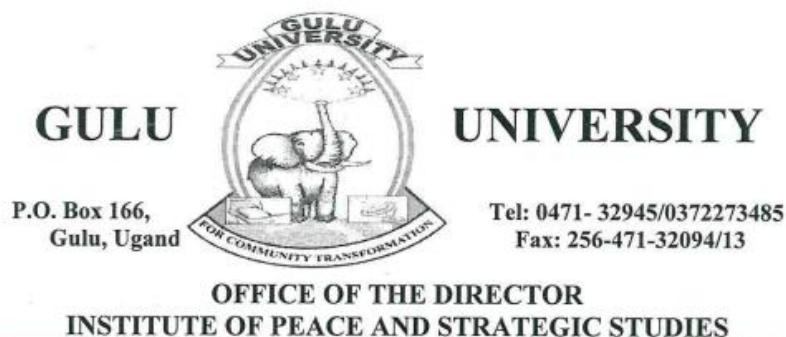
2. Who were the Actors in the construction of Atiak monument in Atiak sub-county, Amuru District?

.....

Appendix C: Study Budget for Field Data Collection.

S/N0	Budget Item	Quantit y	Unit Cost	Freque ncy	Amount (UGX)
1	Research Assistants	2	500,000	1	1000,000
2	Camera	1	750,000	1	500,000
3	Secretarial services: Stationary like papers, pens and files	1	500,000	1	500,000
4	Vehicle hire	1	750,000	2	1,500,000
5	Voice Recorder	1	300,000	1	300,000
6	Refreshments	1	500,000	1	500,000
7	Accommodation	9	50,000	2	900,000
8	Airtime for Mobilization and Coordination	1	100,000	1	100,000
9	Internet Bundles	1	100,000	1	100,000
10	Report Production	1	300,000	1	300,000
	Total				5,700,000

Appendix D: Introductory Letter from Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies



8th September, 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: MS. ANEK JOSEPHINE

This is to introduce **Anek Josephine REG. NO. 12/U/2495/MAC** who is a Master student in Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies at the Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies, Gulu University.

Her area of research is: **"Memorialisation of Massacres in Post-War Northern Uganda. The Role of Monuments and Commemoration Days as a form of Symbolic Reparation for Survivors and Communities.**

Please, we request that you accord her the necessary assistance she may need as she does her research.

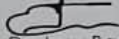
Thank you.



**Dr. Langole Stephen
DIRECTOR
INSTITUTE OF PEACE AND STRATEGIC STUDIES
GULU UNIVERSITY**



Appendix E: Amnesty Letter from Academic Registrar Office.

GULU P.O. Box 166 Gulu - Uganda		UNIVERSITY Tel: 256-471-432921 Email: ar@gu.ac.ug URL: www.gu.ac.ug
OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC REGISTRAR		
Our Ref:		
Date:	Wednesday 20 th September, 2023	
Name:	ANEK Josephine	
Reg. No.:	12/U/2495/MAC	
Prog:	Master of Arts in Conflict Transformation Studies	
Faculty/Institute:	Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies	
Dear Josephine		
RE: REINSTATEMENT UNDER AMNESTY FOR OVERSTAYED STUDENTS		
Reference is made to your application for reinstatement under amnesty for overstayed students.		
The University Senate has approved your application for reinstatement to: Master of Arts in Conflict Transformation Studies in the academic year 2023/2024; to complete your Research.		
You are required to pay reinstatement 25% Tuition Fees and Functional Fees as follows:		
Tuition Fees (25% per semester)		250,000=
Registration Fees (Per Semester)		30,000=
Library User Fees (Per Semester)		20,000=
Medical Fees (Per Semester)		20,000=
Technology Fee (Per Annum)		50,000=
Student Identity Card (once)		20,000=
National Council for Higher Education Fees (Per Annum)		20,000=
You are advised to concentrate so as complete your studies without further delay. Where applicable , Internship fee, Teaching practice fee, Community/Field attachment fee and Placement fee shall be paid accordingly by the student.		
Yours sincerely,		
		
Dr. Jerry Bagaya ACADEMIC REGISTRAR		
Copy:	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs) University Secretary University Bursar Principal Assistant Academic Registrar (Admissions) Senior Assistant Academic Registrar (Examinations) Dean Faculty of Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies (SAAR) Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies	

Appendix F: A Sketch Map of Amuru District Showing the Study Area.

