Exploring Intervention

Exploring Intervention:

Displacement, Cultural Practices and Social Knowledge in Uganda

Edited by

Jan Kühnemund and Laura Tommila

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I am about t sketch You a picture
of what goes on around here sometimes.
tho I don’t understand too well myself
what’s really happening.

(Bob Dylan 1965)

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Jan Kühnemund & Laura Tommila

INTRODUCTION

In his book about a nine-year research study conducted in South Sudan in the 1970s and 1980s, Conradin Perner (2017) touches on two particularly intriguing facets of ethnographic research in non-familiar surroundings. The first one concerns the researcher's motivation and is raised by one of his respondents the moment he realises that Perner is leaving the village in which he conducted his study:

> "[T]ell me. Why did you come if you leave us again? Why?" It was said in a very firm, almost aggressive tone, as if I had done something wrong. "I told you," I answered, "I shall be back." "No," he replied, now with a low voice. "I know you will not". (388)

Why did you come if you leave us again? This question is one that most of the authors who contribute to this volume will have heard several times, in different forms, over the course of their research undertakings in various regions of Uganda. It is a deeply troubling question. In Oana Talos' chapter on psychosocial support in Nakivale, one of the largest refugee settlements in Uganda, her respondent put it into different words: "So, my request is, can you remember me when you leave?" (chapter five). In Émilie Blackburn's study of Congolese refugees' narratives, some of the conversations took a highly personal and emotional turn, culminating in one respondent's plea to give relief: "You, put yourself into my place. If you were me with all these problems that I have here, what could you do?" (chapter two).

It does certainly make sense to read quotes like the ones above in the context of the colonial/neo-colonial production and ordering of difference. What many of the chapters in this volume, however, illustrate is how the differentiation between "us" and "them" is constantly also being (re)produced in many (research) settings. The quotes hence also underline the impossibility to ignore the permanent (re)production of difference in the field. This is not only prominently reflected in many of the book's chapters, the authors also aim at verbalising where and how humanitarian, economic and academic interventions contribute to (re)producing difference and what this implies not least with regard to how it constitutes and structures

the experience of social reality and one's own position in it (Mecheril 2008).

All projects were originally drafted and continuously re-drafted on-site, hence they not only present the results of the research conducted, but must also be considered a result of the reflection and negotiation of the (re)production of difference, alongside the continuous re-positioning of the researchers in their environment. Exposing themselves to the life situation of their respondents for more than just a couple of days or weeks must, in this regard, not be understood as a reprehensible attempt on the part of the authors to replicate their respondents' life realities, but rather as an attempt to respond to the still-dominant pattern that data-gathering takes place in the former colony, "while theorising happens in the metropole" (Connell 2007, ix).

The second intriguing facet of this research touches questions of ownership and authorship in often-delicate settings and power structures between the researcher and "the researched". What is it that spending time together, talking, arguing and so on eventually leads to? In some cases, the researcher has become a friend or at least a person of trust, a person one got used to having around. Packing his things, a villager approaches Perner and asks him:

> "What are you doing?" "Can't you see," I answered, "I am packing. You don't know that I am leaving soon?" "What?" he exclaimed, "you are packing all the things we have told you? All our history, all our stories? You can't do that! This belongs to us, it is ours! You can't pack it and go away with it! No, you are not allowed to do this!" (2017, 388)

Whose experience is it that we take away when we leave? Almost half a century ago, in a speech at the annual meeting of the Kroeber Anthropological Society, Gerald Berreman (1971, 90) issued a demand for accountable research practices, stating that the substance of questions like the ones referred to above should not be ignored: "What has been the effect of your work among us? Have you contributed to the solution of the problems you have witnessed? Have you even mentioned those problems? If not, then you are part of those problems." Against the background of what has been said above one has to ask who actually identifies and defines what a problem is and what an adequate solution might be. But while a clear cut methodological answer to such questions may not be available, the chapters in this volume have in common the goal to render the questions more precisely.

Reading the articles collected in this volume, it also becomes clear that those kinds of questions very much influenced, if not actually determined,

the authors' research practices and outcomes. Indisputably, the nine authors took something away from the many respondents who formed part of their projects. But at the same time they aimed to make the weaving of so many different people's experiences and thoughts, concerns and questions, remarks and interactions into knowledge as transparent and cooperative as possible. This was especially true in the case of Matteo Carbognani's participatory art-based study with young Congolese refugees, which produced a result that can be clearly understood as giving something back in return. Something new emerged that is more than the sum of its parts: a number of co-written and produced songs (chapter one).

A third facet, taken from a study by Christina Clark-Kazak, may at first glance seem primarily to illustrate the fundamental artificiality and performativity of the encounter between refuge-seeking individuals and the humanitarian aid regime—but on a closer look it exposes aspects that most ethnographers are familiar with. In her book Clark-Kazak (2011, 73) refers to young Congolese refugees who "play the system because they are obliged to do so: 'I am a refugee, so I must play the game as refugees are expected to. I must act weak and humble.'" Many authors in this book refer to observations which mirror this statement. While some refer to a certain research burnout effect (Allden et al. 2009), which refugees in a settlement context especially suffer from, Oana Talos in her chapter reflects on her discovery that people in the settlement started raising fees for making referrals to her for interviews. This phenomenon also illustrates how little control the researcher has over the setting, and how much care he or she has to take in collecting, reading and interpreting the material. At the same time, it underlines the paramount necessity to reflect the potential replication of colonial power relations manifesting in the research situation; as well as the fact that both humanitarian intervention and academic reflection contribute to producing and shaping "the refugee" they are confronted with in the first place.

What the examples most clearly demonstrate, however, is that the ethnographic analysis of humanitarian, economic and intellectual interventions—which many of the studies and eventually also this volume set out to scrutinise—has to be aware that in itself it represents a profound intervention. The authors necessarily sully their hands in spaces that are structured by asynchronic power relations, and in which their research potentially sustains a system they actually aim to challenge (or at least to question). Ligia López López exemplifies this in her article based on visuals and visuality in The Camp (chapter three); but it is also obviously reflected in Oana Talos' realisation regarding the commodification of her undertaking, mentioned earlier. Émilie Blackburn's description of the effect that

her presence—as a white Canadian woman in a refugee settlement—had on the self-narrations of the Congolese refugee families she interacted with is also telling. It reveals that her informants' "responses to spatial mobilities and uncertainties may inform, complement, or possibly even contradict the intentions and assumptions of the fieldworker in revealing ways" (Coleman and Collins 2011, 5).

Instead of focusing on issues of its morality and merely scrutinising its (Western) logic, humanitarian, economic and academic intervention—in its different explicit and implicit manifestations and representations—is primarily approached with regard to its entanglements and contradictions with local cultural practices; and with the mechanisms which structure the production of life realities and knowledge. This is most obvious in Thea Grydeland Ersvik's chapter, which examines female genital cutting practices among three different ethnic groups in eastern Uganda as embodied socialities (chapter seven), and in Ina Rehema Jahn's explorations into post-conflict reburial practices in Acholiland (chapter nine).

Many of the authors are looking for what Connell (2007) refers to as "social knowledge". They bring different systems of values and knowledge into contact with each other—one being filtered through the other and vice versa. The challenges that the authors met in conceptualising and conducting their studies are reflected prominently in the nine articles. In some cases, the contextualisation and handling of methodological, theoretical and practical challenges that the authors encountered even form the core of the chapter. While the authors stayed in the country for several months, different levels of being an insider/outsider play an important role in their work. What it means to position oneself in the field, and at the same time in an epistemological system, is additionally illustrated by a strong focus on power relations in the post-colonial situation, in a tone which conveys considerable unease with knowledge production in such a sensitive setting. When Blanca de Mingo Miguel presents her study on north-western Ugandan youths' imaginaries and ambitions to be mobile she puts "what we know" under scrutiny and draws a picture that differs drastically from the stereotypes which European security discourses currently evoke and rely on (chapter four).

The aspect of knowledge production is crucial not only with regard to the question of *whose* knowledge is eventually presented but also how transparently and self-reflectively the aspect of *production* is dealt with. As Coleman and Collins (2011, 5) put it,

> [as] ethnographers, we are faced with the epistemological but also political challenge of how we build in to our analysis and strategies the ways in which informants themselves thematise issues relating to place and the

> grounding of social relations, taking decisions that both reflect emic understandings of locality and have an impact on where we as researchers are to locate the relations that we seek to interpret and reframe.

In this regard research is understood as "a conduit that allows interpretations and influences to pass in both directions, and final products thus may take a variety of forms" (Aull Davies 2008, 6). It is equally important that the authors in this volume work towards pushing the boundaries of what is understood and valued as knowledge; their respondents do not share their experience solely in order to get it analysed and categorised. The respondents are, more importantly, also expected to share their interpretative knowledge by actively participating in the translation of subjective relevancies, rules, views and interpretations of their social sphere of activity into knowledge (Bogner, Littig and Menz 2002).

It is a common feature of the chapters in this book that the nine authors deal with their respondents as the true pundits of their life situation. Instead of devaluing or exoticising their experiences and social knowledge, the authors rather normalise it by giving accounts of the individuals' perceptions of their situation. This is illustrated not least in Pablo Pereira de Mattos' conversations with local communities about potential displacements connected to the discovery of commercially viable oil (chapter six) and in Bani Gill's enquiries into the social construction of the wounded body in post-conflict northern Uganda (chapter eight). What the nine chapters further have in common is their attempt to self-critically and self-reflectively capture the complexity of the moment of academic intervention—and the complexity of people's lives and contexts—by means of multi-perspectival approaches. The authors share a specific democratising and transformative understanding of academic work—rather than merely observing and describing societal transformation processes, they aim at interaction and exchange, and are deeply concerned with questions of impact, relevance and outreach.

In a volume that is dedicated to a critical reflection and awareness of knowledge production in delicate settings, we consider it paramount to shed as much light as possible on the context and structural circumstances of the emergence of these chapters. All nine studies build on research conducted between 2012 and 2016 in the network carrying the African-European Master course EMMIR.[1] All projects have been carried out in close cooperation with teachers and researchers, governmental and non-governmental organisations and other civil society actors based in Uganda. Moreover, as EMMIR is an African-European partnership, all contributors

[1] European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations, http://www.emmir.org

were able to do major parts of their work towards their degree in Uganda, supported by teachers from Mbarara University of Science and Technology and other (associated) partner institutions. The group of contributors is diverse in terms of their geographical backgrounds—authors come from the Americas, Europe and India—and in terms of their disciplinary perspectives—anthropology, history, social sciences, ethnology, cultural studies, law and educational science.

Regional and Historical Context

The chapters in this book refer to contexts, in which different layers of humanitarian, economic and academic intervention heavily influence and interact with social norms, cultural practices and societal transformation processes. They illustrate not least how complex the overall socio-political setting in Uganda is. Nevertheless, although Uganda is the country that hosted all the studies collected in this volume, the nation-state is only rarely the main point of reference in these articles. Apart from the relevant national legislation and political agenda setting, the authors' focus is on the regional level. In most cases their work hardly fits into the nation-state container at all, and in many cases reflects upon settings that are instead subject to transnational, cross-border social arrangements. Many of the chapters also allude to contexts beyond Uganda or Africa, not only if resettlement—a humanitarian practice and a durable solution for very few, but at the same time a trigger for imaginaries, and often one of very few reasons for hope and optimism among displaced individuals—comes into play.

The colonial heritage and the often-brutal struggles over power since Ugandan independence in 1962 have created a country in which different layers of conflict still overlap. On the one hand, ethnicity[2] is still a crucial factor in a country that consists of a high number of different ethnic groups and in which artificially drawn demarcation lines[3] are still separat-

[2] The authors are fully aware of the deficiencies of the term "ethnicity". And yet, the concept plays a vital part in explanations of the social structure and sources of conflict in contemporary Uganda. In a constructivist sense it is used here as a shorthand for complex entanglements of "power, resources, social relations and institutions (which may and may not be) informed by cultural identities and ideas of ancestry" (Carter and Fenton 2010, 1).

[3] The so-called General Act of the Berlin Conference in 1894–95 created a political and legal framework for the partition of the African continent among the colonial powers. The Berlin Conference transformed "Africa into a conceptual *terra nullius* [where] only dealings between European states with respect to those territo-

ing people that share a similar ethnic identity. On the other hand, the country has yet to see a sustainable reconciliation process, and the "lack of clarity about specific conflicts, and a corresponding lack of awareness of the numerous conflict related traumas, tensions and reconciliation needs … are major obstacles to thinking through the shape that a comprehensive national reconciliation process needs to take" (Refugee Law Project 2014, 2–3).[4] Not only have human rights violations committed under the regimes of Milton Obote (1966–1971), Idi Amin (1971–1979) and Tito Okello (1985–1986) gone unpunished, but in addition the five-year bush-war conducted by the National Resistance Army (NRA)—which brought current President Yoweri Museveni into power—remains contested, and "historical grievances continue to divide the country" (Otim and Kihika 2015, 1).

Especially, but not exclusively, in the northern and eastern Ugandan regions investigated in section III of this book, the savage twenty year-long conflict between the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA, 1986–2006) still affects people's daily lives. It featured brutal human rights violations, including the LRA's pervasive use of child soldiers and the abduction of an estimated 75,000 children between 1979 and 2005 (Pham et al. 2007). According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2013), the conflict displaced at least 1.8 million people and caused thousands of deaths.

The so-called Juba Peace Talks between the GoU and the LRA (2006–2008) produced a number of agreements regarding accountability and reconciliation, before LRA leader Joseph Kony refused to sign the final peace agreement. Since the talks, "there has been no official transitional justice process that goes beyond talks and drafts" (Otim and Kihika 2015, 4), and "civil society was largely excluded from the drafting stages" (International Center for Transitional Justice 2015).[5] In 2000, the Ugandan

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ries could have decisive legal effect" (Anghie 2007, 91). It "determined in important ways the future of the continent and … continues to have a profound influence on the politics of contemporary Africa" (ibid.) because its "ahistorical units" are still producing disastrous consequences (Mutua 1995, 1114).

[4] Documenting the long history of conflict in Uganda, the Refugee Law Project in 2014 listed 125 armed and unarmed conflicts that took place since the country's independence; the authors found that "the majority of the conflicts are never discussed, and where there are atrocities, abuses and failures of governance, they are effectively silenced by the broader narrative of Uganda's post-1986 'renaissance'" (ibid. 2).

[5] The paramount necessity to involve the victims was also stressed by Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, when she pledged to support "any bill that enables smooth transitional justice among victims of war in Northern Uganda"

parliament passed an Amnesty Act which offered pardon to all Ugandans engaged in acts of rebellion against the GoU since January 1986. Seeking to "balance the more immediate needs of resolving conflict with the longer-term demands of justice" (Refugee Law Project 2005, 4), the Act has also been understood as a response to ongoing conflicts. Presenting a rather restorative approach to justice, it contrasted with the more retributive or punitive forms of justice as brought forward by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Against the backdrop of debates around the Amnesty Act and the involvement of the ICC in post-conflict justice measures, numerous questions remain open regarding the role the ICC should play as well as regarding the question if there can be peace without justice and vice versa.[6]

What many of the chapters in this book clearly illustrate is that the post-conflict situation in Uganda is primarily one in which different ethnic groups are still dealing with the repercussions of the conflicts they have been subjected to. Ethnicity continues to be a powerful political force (Amone 2015) and hence provides an extremely relevant subtext, specifically for those studies that have been conducted in Uganda's border regions. What can additionally be observed is an extensive "districtisation process (often along ethnic and sub-ethnic lines)" (Refugee Law Project 2014, 2) that increasingly divides Uganda's citizens.

At the same time, Uganda hosts some 1.4 million people who are seeking refuge from military conflict that is still prevalent in the region (UNHCR 2018a)—making Uganda the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. Four of this volume's chapters explicitly refer to the Nakivale Refugee Settlement, located in the south-western part of Uganda, near the Tanzanian border. Nakivale is Uganda's oldest settlement, established in 1959, and until recently it has also been the biggest. According to official figures the settlement is currently populated by more than 100,000 refugees, most of them from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, but also from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan (UNHCR

(Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, 2016). As of April 2018, however, no such bill has been taken to Parliament. For further insights see this volume's chapter 8 by Gill.

[6] In 2003, Uganda's president Museveni asked the ICC to investigate the actions of the LRA in northern Uganda. Currently, Dominic Ongwen, a senior commander of the LRA, is on trial in The Hague; it is the first ever investigation of the ICC into the conflict. For a more detailed enquiry into the theoretical peace versus justice debate see for example Branch 2011; Keller 2008; Refugee Law Project 2005a and 2005b.

2018b). It covers an area of approximately 185 square kilometres (Refugee Law Project, 2015).

Nakivale is highly illustrative of Uganda's approach to refugee management in settlements that are located in specific rural regions. The introduction of the 2006 Refugee Act and the 2010 Refugee Regulation constituted fundamental steps forward in centralising "refugee management" in Uganda.[7] At the Refugee Act's core lie the settlement system and the self-reliance strategy (SRS). The latter was jointly designed by the UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in 1999 and had the ultimate goal of empowering refugees, while they were living in the settlements, by supporting sustainable livelihoods and reducing material assistance. Back then, this strategy was regarded as part of a new development-oriented approach in humanitarian relief that aimed to meet biological needs while also promoting emotional and social well-being (Williamson and Robinson 2006). In this conception refugee settlements are seen to be not only a solution for the integration of refugees, but also a means of reviving under-populated or impoverished rural zones—designed as sites of agricultural production supposed to achieve self-sufficiency after a number of years, at the end of which the UNHCR would withdraw (Agier 2011).

Some international scholars, most prominently Alexander Betts et al. (2016),[8] have recently painted a distinctly positive picture of Uganda's refugee policies, not least based on the argument that functional refugee integration mechanisms result in an economic boom in hosting countries.[9] However, as the authors researching in Nakivale in this volume observed, the physical characteristics of the settlements and the heterogeneous needs and abilities of the refugees are often not directly suitable or compatible with the SRS. To put it more clearly, although this strategy is based on the

[7] Central aspects of the refugee policy include: "(1) opening Uganda's door to all asylum seekers irrespective of their nationality or ethnic affiliation, (2) granting refugees relative freedom of movement and the right to seek employment, (3) providing prima facie asylum for refugees of certain nationalities, and (4) giving a piece of land to each refugee family for their own exclusive (agricultural) use" (World Bank 2016).

[8] As Kigozi (2017) put it, some of the book's conclusions "have been superseded by events, while others are based on extrapolation from specific areas of the country and refugee populations that are not necessarily representative. A detailed look at some of the book's findings reveals an incomplete picture which risks conveying the impression that refugees in Uganda are better off than they actually are."

[9] See also Taylor et al. (2016, 33), who in a study conducted for the World Food Programme and the GoU found that "refugees create positive impacts on local economies in and around the settlements in which they live" and that "most of the economic benefits that refugees create accrue to host-country households."

distribution of small plots of land to each refugee in order to progressively reduce their dependence on food rations supplied by humanitarian agencies, it does not take into consideration that sufficient land for cultivation is often not available, and that the repetitive and hyper-intensive exploitation of the plots has already resulted in widespread exhaustion and unproductivity of that land. Additionally, the economic autonomy that may be achieved by (labour market) integration remains "precarious, unstable and elusive to the point that many prefer the rather basic assistance they receive in camps to the self-reliant destitution they experience" (Pascucci 2017).

Regardless of Uganda's commitment to the main international refugee and human rights conventions, displaced populations have always faced a range of humanitarian and security problems within the country. Refugee settlements in Uganda, although not physically fenced and theoretically not particularly restrictive, are in practice located in remote areas with limited infrastructure, and furthermore are the only spaces where refugees are recognised as such and therefore provided with humanitarian assistance. It is thus not by chance that Agier refers to refugees' camp-like environments as spaces at the "margin of the world" (2008, 10), or "a priori an out-place and a vacuum" (2011, 155); or as Foucault described the "heterotopic" place, "a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet is actually localizable" (Foucault in Leach 1997, 332).

In the case of Nakivale all durable solutions that the international community is striving for seem quite unrealistic in the foreseeable future. First, ongoing conflicts in the refugees' countries of origin do not allow for *repatriation*. Second, *local integration* is precluded by increasing hostility towards refugees and the implementation of restrictions regarding the scarcely available resources (Kigozi 2017); it is also still being "hindered … by Uganda's conflicting laws" (Ahimbisibwe, Ingelaere and Vancluysen 2017, 21). Third, while *resettlement* to a third country is a real option for leaving Nakivale, it applies to only a very small number of individuals.

Structure of the Book

The book is divided into three thematic sections.[10] The first section is primarily concerned with (self) representations, positionings and narra-

[10] In order to allow the reader to navigate this volume as productively as possible, the editors identified a number of links between the different book chapters and added references to the footnotes accordingly.

tives/narrativisations in the settlement context. While research in the field of forced migration, humanitarian aid and resettlement often strongly refers back to institutionalised mainstream humanitarian approaches—or is limited to criticising particular shortcomings of humanitarianism—most chapters in this section are instead characterised by a deep scepticism towards the system of humanitarianism as a whole. Moreover, in all articles, the role and gaze of the researcher and his or her objects/subjects of study are considered at least equally important. They account for pre-fixed knowledge and imaginaries, as well as for emotions in the research process. Furthermore, they aim at opening up space for creativity and performativity in order to grasp the diverse visualisations, representations and narratives of migration and (im)mobility.

Following a co-constructive and innovative art-based approach, **Matteo Carbognani** contrasts the self-perception of young Congolese in Nakivale Refugee Settlement with the exceptionality of the settlement situation in general. Based on the participatory music-making project *Sauti Zetu*, instigated with young Congolese refugees, his chapter aims to provide alternative perspectives on the settlement situation, taking into account the youths' lived experiences and the narrativisation of their flight, refuge and hopes for the future. Intending to amplify unheard voices and widely neglected perspectives, at the same time the article points to the challenges that empirical researchers face in delicate social environments. His study has a visible and easily accessible outreach: the music produced is available on CD and online.

Émilie Blackburn also focuses on the narrativisation of Congolese refugees in the Nakivale Refugee Settlement. Investigating the (im)possibility of escaping the specific language and conceptualisation related to the field of humanitarianism, she analyses how context influences discourse: more specifically, how humanitarian structures and the presence of a white female researcher shape the narratives, hopes and dreams of Congolese living in Nakivale. The author establishes an interdisciplinary framework and temporal perspective in order to generate alternative views on forced migration and "refugeeness".

While **Ligia López López**'s research also starts out in Nakivale, her enquiry into the visuality of the humanitarian and development aid regime applies a much wider angle and takes a deeply concerned stance regarding imaging and visualities in The Camp as a generic normative place. Investigating the connections, implications and applications that images produce in dis/ordering humanitarian arrangements by means of different examples, her chapter offers an invitation to meditate on the ways in which our ocular experiences, and the epistemological paradigm in which

they emerge, orient our perception and attention in matters of migration. The author's invitation is to scrutinise both the naturalness of the "reign of the image" and the complications they face in spaces such as the refugee camp—where notions of time defy concepts of linearity, modernity and humanity, and where matters of "life", "health", "protection" and "freedom" remain suspended for different participatory engagements.

Blanca Mingo de Miguel in her chapter shifts the focus away from Nakivale and actual refugees to the people who are, from a Western perspective, often looked at as potential migrants and refugees and hence subject to a specific securitisation discourse: young Ugandan men and women in Mbarara municipality. Investigating the conceptual threads linking imageries of the West with aspirations and im/mobility in daily discourses and practices, she grounds her research in imagination exercises. It turns out to be a useful method not only to unveil aspirations to be mobile but also views on self-perception, (neo-)colonisation, global power dynamics and social inequality.

The volume's second section is concerned with normative frameworks, rights and responsibilities. Both chapters in this section identify a gap between the theoretical and practical availability and implementation of human rights and international support and protection systems. Both chapters—from very different perspectives—look at events that occur in structures of unequal power relations, strongly influenced by state interests, international organisations and/or transnational companies. The focus is thus on interventions that come from "outside", with the people most affected suffering from a lack of transparency and information, and having little or no say in the interventions. The articles do not look solely at processes on a policy and legal level, but also include the perspectives of the people (potentially) displaced—their hopes, struggles and fears. The question is also raised how far legal frameworks and humanitarian aid organisations can actually protect the human rights of (to be) displaced people and deliver support.

Oana Talos in her chapter analyses the accessibility of psychosocial support that refugees receive in Nakivale Refugee Settlement. Against the background of ongoing medicalisation and pathologisation of refugees—and accounting for the different constructions of helplessness and vulnerability that still form the basis of mental health support in humanitarian settings—the author contrasts the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)'s procedural guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support with the actual procedures followed in Nakivale. Talos argues, following

Akesson (2005), that in such a setting it is not the mind that needs to be mended, but an entire social universe.

Pablo Pereira de Mattos' point of reference is the applicability of human rights and especially the "right not to be arbitrarily displaced" in the context of commercial oil exploitation in two western Ugandan regions, Kabaale and Buliisa. He investigates how, on the one hand, displacement is a political tool deeply entangled with economic development; while on the other hand the local communities that are most affected by international development projects are rarely considered as stakeholders or participants in such processes, let alone obtaining any benefit from them.

The topics of the three chapters in the third section are related to the human body, namely female genital cuttings, the social construction of the "wounded body", and reburials in post-conflict Uganda. The discussed (body) practices are already, to different extents, subject to (Western) academic work and humanitarian intervention, frequently adhering to a specific set of values that pay hardly any attention to the motivations and power relations that such practices embed in a specific community. The authors conducted intense field work and interviews and gained remarkable insights into the coping strategies and decision-making processes connected to the body, on both an individual and a community level.

The case study presented by **Thea Grydeland Ersvik** examines female genital cutting practices among three communities in north-eastern Uganda. The author posits that the discourse that has been allowed to dominate, and largely articulate, the legislation against female genital cuttings builds on a mostly individualistic conception of "self" and body that is stereotypical for the West. Thus, through their promotion of a view of the practice as "harmful" and allegedly legislatively eradicable, the transnational policymakers are deemed by the author to be unwilling or, possibly, unable to acknowledge the complex realities preceding and accompanying the decisions that individuals and families in practising communities make regarding female genital cuttings; and how these contemplations differ from one community to another.

Bani Gill sheds light on the so-called post-conflict situation in northern Uganda. The twenty years of armed hostilities between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda (1986–2006) witnessed extreme brutality and widespread human rights abuses. For people who were wounded and maimed during the conflict, this embodiment of violence remains permanently inscribed upon their personal, social and political body. Building on the concept of "embodied peace" (Hollander and Gill 2014), Gill argues that for many of those disabled or

severely wounded by the war, neither the cessation of hostilities nor the advent of a formal peace process has been accompanied by an experience or enjoyment of peace.

Ina Rehema Jahn's chapter, finally, is an investigation into reburials among the Acholi people of northern Uganda, a practice which has become widespread since the end of the conflict between the LRA and the Government. The war was characterised by forced encampment of the majority of the Acholi population. The displaced population was thus forced to bury their deceased family members in the camps and hence far away from "home", which greatly contravenes Acholi cosmology, and is seen as having the potential to severely aggrieve the spirit of the dead. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Pabbo, formerly the largest camp in northern Uganda, the author discusses the phenomenon of post-conflict reburials by engaging with two strands of literature in refugee studies and the anthropology of burial.

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