FEAR OF THE MIDNIGHT KNOCK

State Sovereignty and Internal Enemies in Uganda

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Independent Uganda has suffered a more or less constant postcolonial debacle, with systematic state violence especially during Idi Amin's rule in the 1970s. Milton Obote failed to reverse the violent trend during his second presidency, which began in 1980, and in 1985 he was removed from power by his own army, just as Amin had removed him from power in 1971. The 1985 coup was the result of growing mistrust in the Ugandan army regarding the violent developments during Obote's second government. Tito Okello, an army general from Acholiland, northern Uganda, was head of state for a brief period before Yoweri Museveni and his National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) guerrillas seized power in early 1986.

"Politics," Karlström argues in an article on "moral rehabilitation" and "developmental eutopianism" in Buganda, central Uganda, has been a constant curse on Uganda's "moral community." It is politics, in other words, that characterizes the country's "postcolonial nightmare." The "developmental eutopianism" that is now taking root, he explains, is not the expression of a utopian impossibility but a realizable ideal, workable in everyday life (2004:595, 606, 608, passim.) Indeed, most people, Ugandans as well as outside observers, argue that things have been slowly developing for the better in Uganda since Museveni's military takeover (see, for example, Whyte and Whyte's comment accompanying Karlström's article). The postcolonial nightmare is finally over, so the suggestion goes, and Uganda is held to be a success story of economic liberalization, de-

velopment, progress, and increasing political stability and is, moreover, celebrated for its fight against HIV/AIDS. From this perspective, the long war in northern Uganda has often been regarded as a peripheral exception to the overall success. When commented on at all, there has been a one-sided focus on the various Holy Spirit rebel movements and thus on the religious and cosmological, even cultural aspects, of the war, by Karlström simply described as "a tragically suicidal popular uprising in northern Uganda" and "a mass movement of collective moral expiation and salvation" (2004:598).

In most respects, however, the war in northern Uganda is neither simply internal nor essentially localized. Even if it is emplaced in a local war zone, it is increasingly an international, even global, reality. By presenting four cases from everyday life in war-torn Acholiland (today's Amuru, Gulu, Pader, and Kitgum districts), where I have conducted anthropological fieldwork in periods between 1997 and 2007, I will argue that the postcolonial nightmare described by Karlström has shifted to the country's geopolitical peripheries. Museveni's no-party political system reformed politics at the grassroots, Karlström (1996, 1999) argues with ethnographic material from central Uganda. But as my material from northern Uganda will show, the same political reforms have also reproduced violent patterns that force us to question Uganda's alleged success story. In today's emerging global realities, to echo Kapferer (2004), war and violence are the very means of order and control, especially at the peripheries. More particular in the Ugandan case, war and a murky counterinsurgency industry are steadily becoming permanent. Even the involvement of the international community, I will show, is questioned by people in the war-torn north.

Thus, my aim is to reveal a violent continuity in state power as exercised in Uganda. I will situate the war in northern Uganda by outlining some thoughts on the state in Africa in general and in Uganda in particular. I will then proceed by presenting the local government council grassroots system introduced by Museveni, before finally introducing my four cases.

The Perpetration of War and Violence

After taking the oath as the new president in 1986, Museveni faced the difficult task of turning his guerrilla movement into a regular army, with the capacity to combat armed resistance that emerged in various locations in Uganda. In Acholiland, bordering Sudan, the conduct of Museveni's troops soon deteriorated. Killings, rape, and other forms of physical abuse

aimed at noncombatants became the order of the day. Thousands of suspected rebels were taken into detention, and Amnesty International soon concluded that "there has been a consistent pattern of extrajudicial executions] by soldiers since the NRM [Museveni's National Resistance Movement] came to power" (1992:29f.).

As time passed, elders and other influential members of Acholi society were instrumental in the increased recruitment of young people to rebel ranks. There were other people who did not explicitly support the uprising, but according to a standard version I often encountered, informants claimed that they saw no other way to survive than joining the insurgency groups in one way or the other. In many cases, joining the rebels was a direct response to the military brutality of the new government. Many of my informants claimed, not just rhetorically, that a situation had developed that was worse for them than the Amin era. Unlike Museveni's army, informants claimed, Amin's soldiers never bothered going deep into the rural areas to harass and loot, and to kill ordinary people. Lamwaka writes:

The government's counter-insurgency campaign increasingly threatened the lives and livelihoods of people in Acholiland and allegations of atrocities resurfaced. The government's stated aim was to 'annihilate the rebels.' Part of the strategy was to deny them access to food – by destroying civilian food stocks and domestic animals – and other resources that could strengthen them politically, economically and militarily. In October 1988, the government began mass evacuation of civilians from war zones without providing adequately for their basic care. (Lamwaka 2002:32f.)

She concludes that the time that followed immediately after a partial peace agreement in 1988 actually came to reinforce war, especially in the rural areas. "Thus, in the months following the peace agreement, the war's impact on civilians became more severe and widespread" (Lamwaka 2002:33).

The war has evolved over the years, with notably Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army/Movement (LRA/M) fighting Museveni's government. In what has developed into a regional war of proxies, the Ugandan government, backed by the United States, has supported the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in southern Sudan. The Islamist government in Khartoum has reciprocated, offering support to the LRA/M rebels.

The 2005 peace agreement in Sudan established the semiautonomous government of Southern Sudan, and in August 2006 the LRA/M and the Ugandan government signed a historical but shaky cessation of hostilities agreement, mediated by the south Sudanese, but in late 2008 heavy fighting resumed.

Throughout the years of war, the LRA/M has systematically avoided the Ugandan army. In hit-and-run raids, the rebels have instead focused

their military violence against the noncombatant population, and they have abducted thousands of minors. The rebels have orchestrated their activities from outside, from bases in remote areas of war-torn southern Sudan and eastern Congo, out of reach of Ugandan armed forces, and, at times, beyond Sudanese and Congolese state control as well. In October 2005 the International Criminal Court unsealed warrants for the arrest of the LRA/M leadership (see Allen 2006; Branch 2007).

In its counterinsurgency tactics, the Ugandan army has forced large portions of the population into squalid camps with strict curfews as a measure to deny the rebels food and other resources. This has drained the rebels' intelligence networks too. In 2005 the displaced numbered some two million Ugandans. Of the Acholi, more than 90 percent were displaced. In a slow but constant development from fully being in the world to bare life, displaced Ugandans live as marginalized noncitizens in a chronic state of emergency and exception (Finnström 2008: chap. 4; cf. Agamben 1998).

In December 2001, a few months after the September 11 attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, the global war on terror reached Uganda as the U.S. government included the LRA/M on its list of terrorist groups with which no negotiations, so it was stated, would under any circumstances be initiated. The Ugandan government immediately welcomed the rhetoric of no dialogue. In 2002, with direct U.S. support, the Ugandan army launched a campaign called "Operation Iron Fist," carried out also on Sudanese territory. In preparing for this campaign, and continuing the trend of militarization but going against the will of the parliament, the Ugandan government decided to cut by 23 percent the allocations approved by the parliament for all ministries, with the single exception of activities alleviating poverty. The funds were redirected to the military campaign against the LRA/M, to some irritation in the donor community, which continued, however, to fund around 50 percent of Uganda's government expenditure (Finnström 2008:112f.).

The Postcolonial State in Africa and Uganda

The war evokes historical antagonisms as well as deepens regional divides in Uganda. But to conclude that the war is all about ethnicity is reductionist. Reyna's description of postcolonial Chad shows something of a parallel to Uganda. "Wars that began as nonethnic clashes in a country with numerous ethnic groups," he writes, "have gradually evolved into such conflicts as whole regions have been *reimagined ethnically*" (Reyna 2003: 290, emphasis added). It is not least outside observers, as will be illustrated below, who sometimes seem keen on promoting such reimaginations.

Yet the Ugandan historian Omara-Otunnu pinpoints the development for Uganda. "What the opposition groups in the north and east of the country have in common is not ethnic identity or cultural traditions," Omara-Otunnu concludes, "but a history of being only peripherally included in the economic structures and processes of the country" (1995:230). In Acholiland, young adults with dreams of education and future employment are indeed frustrated with the way the Ugandan military elite increasingly absorbs national resources that they would have preferred to see devoted to the development of Uganda, especially its marginalized regions. The LRA/M rebels obviously tap into the local discontent with structural adjustment, privatization, and other neoliberal developments. In their manifestos the rebels acknowledge the importance of structural adjustment programs and other development measures, but they still question the way these are implemented. They hold that development is unevenly distributed and that peripheral regions of Uganda are lagging behind the central parts of the country (see Finnström 2008: chap. 3).

Young (2004) has declared the end of the postcolonial state in Africa. Since the end of the Cold War, there have been enormous pressures for economical and political liberalization in Africa, resulting in the "dramatic erosion of stateness itself," argues Young (2004:25). This has opened up the space for external organizations and a variety of more or less dubious actors. If the African state was associated earlier with a keen focus on development measures mainly in its health and educational services, built on massive aid flows, later, after years of withering, "budget reductions required by structural adjustment programmes compelled in practice cutbacks in social expenditures" (Young 2004:40). Nowadays, states have to share sovereignty with an array of transnational institutions like the World Bank, IMF, or WTO (Turner 2003:49). State accountability is less and less an internal affair only. The Tanzanian scholar Shivji forwards his bold conclusion: "The 'governors' are accountable to the 'donors' and their consultants and advisors on 'good governance' rather than to the people" (2003:9). So if the sovereign power of the state is undermined by various external corporations, to refer to Kapferer, this development also unleashes an internal and violent "wildness of state sovereignty" which in turn "contributes toward a form of structured chaos at the peripheries" (2004:10).

In other words, international actors and foreign governments implicitly or explicitly sustain the fragmentation and polarization of Ugandan society, and the perpetration of war adds to these developments. In a simultaneous development, maintenance of African security forces tends to trump social expenditures on the continent (Young 2004:40). As an indication of the trend, between 1987 and 1997 the Ugandan army increased the

number of its soldiers by 100 percent (Herbst 2004:360). And the special Presidential Protection Brigade, commanded by president Museveni's son and an organization parallel to the regular army, in recent years has grown from a few hundred elite troops to several thousand.

From Wallerstein and his followers, we may be used to conceptualizing the cores of the world system as being of the First World, while the Third World represents the drained periphery. Hardt and Negri suggest that we see beyond this merely geographical division to acknowledge a more complex geopolitical order, with the cores being globally omnipresent, all the time and by necessity out there alongside the marginalized people at the peripheries. Uganda sadly illustrates such a global organization of sociopolitical space, "characterized by the close proximity of extremely unequal populations, which creates a situation of permanent social danger" (Hardt and Negri 2000:336f., passim). But what illustrates any new world order is not only the weakening of the civil basis of states and thus also their political legitimacy. A major feature of the new order is the dramatic militarization of many states, their urban elites and rural allies, and also their oppositional groups (Reyna 2003; Sluka 2000:30ff.). At the same time, the regionalization of military violence undermines national stability. It is a paradox that the Ugandan army was to become one of many external fighting factions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, even as it remained incapable of defeating its most persistent *internal* enemy, the LRA/M. Thus, Uganda's military involvement in the Congo has added to the instability at both regional and national levels (see Herbst 2004:360; Prunier 2004). Still, in 2007 the Ugandan government sent troops to Somalia, and for the years 2009–2010, Uganda is accepted as a nonpermanent member of UN's Security Council.

Even though the Ugandan parliament passed a blanket amnesty bill in 1999, which the Ugandan president signed into law in early 2000, the army's hunt for rebels and rebel collaborators escalated. Ugandan authorities found murky support here from a law parallel to the amnesty law, the 2002 Anti Terrorist Act, which refers generally to opponents of the state. The army's "Iron Fist" operations and the "Anti Terrorist Act" have created internal fear and distrust of the blanket amnesty. The Ugandan army has "arrested scores of civilians, with little evidence, on suspicion of rebel collaboration; some of the detainees are supporters of the unarmed political opposition," reports Human Rights Watch (2003:5, 50ff.). The LRA/M's response was equally violent. Paradoxically, the rebels' attacks on civilian targets at the rural peripheries are undermining the Ugandan government's position, because exposed people regard the attacks as demonstrations of the army's lack of power and the government's lack of commitment to ending the war by peaceful means. My informants frequently

blamed the government for its failure to protect its citizens against rebel violence.

In periods, the rebels have focused more on exposing the weaknesses and thus the lack of legitimacy of the state under the present government than on offering any alternative political legitimacy. And as will be shown below, the state does indeed expose itself in its violent counterinsurgency tactics. Uganda's international partners in development are perplexed and remain largely so, thus licensing the violent state of exception. On the structural level, the practice of war as such, which has intensified the globalization of capital and trade and the mass movement of refugees, rebels, army soldiers, and smugglers within Uganda as well as across its borders, tends to undermine the sovereignty of state power in Uganda. It is against this background that the mistrust in the government's various measures must be understood.

The Local Government System in Museveni's Uganda

In the early 1980s, during the war in central Uganda, Museveni introduced a system of resistance councils (RCs) which were renamed local government councils (LCs) in the 1995 constitution of Uganda. This constitution also formally introduced the ruling no-party Movement system and was to make restriction of the scope of action for political parties definitive for another ten years. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the local councils were subordinate to the National Resistance Council, which was led by Museveni and his guerrillas (Ngoga 1998:96). The councils, or committees, now integrated with the ruling Movement and its local government structure, are expected to function at village (LC1), parish (LC2), sub-county (LC3), county or municipality (LC4), and district (LC5) levels. According to a Movement ideologist, the LC5 "is the parliament of the district level" that is "fully equipped to run the affairs of the district" (Kabwegyere 2000:103). Similarly, and according to the Ugandan constitution, the LC5 has "the highest political authority within its area of jurisdiction," while its chairperson is the "political head of the district" who is to "co-ordinate and monitor Government functions as between the district and the Government" (Republic of Uganda 1995:120, 121).

The workings of these local councils are subject to some scholarly debate, and it is difficult to draw any general conclusion for the whole of Uganda. Karlström, who has researched them in central Uganda, concludes that they revolutionized politics there. The system "has provided Ugandans with their first significant experience of democratic governance at the local level," thus a kind of "freedom from oppression" (Karlström

1996:498f, 486). In contrast to my data from the war-torn north, his informants were genuinely skeptical toward political parties. "Political parties," as one of Karlström's informants put it, "make each man the enemy of his fellow man. They just kill each other" (1996:495). Perhaps, as a genuine alternative to parties, the local councils have worked quite well in central Uganda. It must also be emphasized that people in central Uganda lived with war in the first half of the 1980s. For them, Museveni's takeover in 1986 ended war.

Karlström (1999:119, n.19) acknowledges that attitudes towards the local government system differ from region to region. Mentioning northern Uganda only briefly, he refers to Ottemoeller, whose explanation I find stereotypically superficial. The non-armed political opposition to Museveni and the Movement in the 1996 presidential elections, Ottemoeller (1998:102) writes, was "not a significant political force outside of several ethnically defined constituencies in northern Uganda (the 'Nilotic' ethnicities of the Lango, Acholi, and Iteso), which hold Museveni and the NRM [National Resistance Movement] in deep enmity for having disposed the government of their favourite son, Milton Obote." But in what way can Milton Obote be said to be a "favourite son" of the Acholi as a group? If the constituencies in northern Uganda are "ethnically defined," which Ugandan constituencies are not? After all, it was a general of Acholi origin, Tito Okello, who in 1985 ousted Obote, of Lango origin, shortly before Museveni seized state power. My informants based their skepticism about the ruling no-party Movement on the fact that for them, perhaps in contrast to the central Ugandan case delineated by Karlström, this system has come to represent political oppression and petty harassment, increasingly so over the years. Recall the argument of Omara-Otunnu (1995:230), quoted above. His point is that opposition groups in the north and east of Uganda do not have any supra-ethnic "Nilotic" identity as primary common grounds for political mobilization. Rather, these groups share a history of being only peripherally included in the development of the country. And since 1986, they have shared the experience of having their homelands turned into a war zone.

I should hasten to add that local government councillors have had the ability to air criticism of the Ugandan army's conduct. For example, rural local councillors in the war zone have publicly raised objections to the Ugandan army's silent and often hidden recruitment of underprivileged young men, even minors, to its paramilitary groups, the so-called local defense forces. Even so, in rural areas I more often encountered people who expressed the suspicion that the local government councils were working as Ugandan army intelligence, and in several cases I found that the local government councillors indeed had contributed to an environment hostile

to advocates of political pluralism and to known government critics. In the rural areas, and especially so in the congested camps, people alleged to be rebel collaborators often find themselves deserted by friends and relatives who fear harassment from Ugandan authorities and the army. Okuku's harsh conclusion has been sadly accurate for the war-torn north. "Once in power," he notes, "the RCs [now LCs] became instruments of control rather than popular participation" (Okuku 2002:26). The rebels, for their part, have found it fully legitimate to target functionaries of the local government councils.

Since, according to the constitution, the local councils are to be subordinated to the parliament, advocates of the local council system describe it as a system of genuine grassroots democracy. But as will be illustrated below, in periods the local councils have become a way for a quasi-military government, to use Oloka-Onyango's (2004:38) description of Uganda, to exercise dominance on the most local levels of society.

Experience (One): The Search for Rebel Collaborators

In early 2000, when Museveni signed the blanket amnesty passed by the Ugandan parliament, he stated at the same time that he did not believe in it. "We should apply the law of Moses; an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, to bring discipline to society," he said (quoted in *The New Vision*, 21 January 2000). As a final manifestation of his unwillingness regarding the whole issue, he did not sign the new law within the thirty days stipulated by the Ugandan constitution (Republic of Uganda 1995:163). And it was to be more than one year before the first office was set up in northern Uganda, making implementation of the law extremely slow. According to the amnesty law, any rebel who "renounces and abandons involvement in the war or armed rebellion" can surrender to the amnesty. Individuals who are "collaborating with the perpetrators of the war or armed rebellion" or "assisting or aiding the conduct or prosecution of the war or armed rebellion" can also take advantage of the amnesty (Republic of Uganda 2000).

The issue of the so-called collaborators has been a source of mistrust in northern Uganda. Government representatives frequently brand individuals who support the political opposition as rebel collaborators. In a public speech in Gulu town soon after the amnesty law was declared, the region's most powerful government politician, the then chairperson of the local government council on the district level (LC5), claimed that only rebels could take advantage of the amnesty. The government, he declared, should continue to hunt for the "bad collaborators," who would face trea-

son charges. The district chairperson even mentioned a few individuals by name, some of whom were eventually imprisoned without trial.

Most of my informants were distressed by his speech, which was given at a security meeting where he was flanked by senior Ugandan army commanders, local religious leaders and a representative of Save the Children. The religious leaders were not allowed to talk at the meeting, and the expatriate representative of Save the Children may have grasped little of the speech, which was given in the local language. The entire event fueled local discontent regarding both the government's measures to end the war and the local involvement of the international community in this. People concluded that the politician wanted to get rid of his political opponents and outspoken critics. The dilemma, as informants put it, is to criticize the government openly without being regarded as a collaborator with Kony's LRA/M. "If you say that you are pro multi-party," my friend Anthony Odiya-Labol noted, "you are straight away called Kony."

De Boeck's description of Kinshasa is pessimistic but parallel to the Ugandan case. "For most people," he writes, "the state has become the looting soldier's nocturnal knock on the door," when the soldiers are "turning the house upside down," as one of his informants described it (De Boeck 1996:96). In wartime Guatemala, notes Stepputat (2001:295), most institutions of the state hardly reached the rural areas, and state power was confined to cities and the garrisons of the military. For many years, Stepputat (2001:298) writes, governmentality was embodied in the occasional face-to-face and often violent encounters between villagers and army soldiers. In northern Uganda this encounter can take the form of the army soldiers' house searches, all part of the counterinsurgency hunt for rebel collaborators. Frequently the soldiers just break people's doors down in the middle of the night, as happened to Odiya-Labol. He had previously campaigned for an outspoken critic of the government. In early 2000, Odiya-Labol got involved in a quarrel with his neighbor over competing beer-brewing businesses. His antagonist was the chairperson on the village level in the local government council system (LC1). Odiya-Labol's antagonist tipped off the military, giving them a letter headed with the official local council logo and accompanied by all the necessary stamps. Odiya-Labol was described in the letter as a "notorious man with a gun" who had "the intention to kill Uganda army personnel on patrol."

In the middle of the following night, the military smashed Odiya-Labol's door and some twenty soldiers entered his home. The soldiers beat two of Odiya-Labol's wives and destroyed some property. They conducted a thorough search of his home before they arrested him. By walking with their army boots on the very bed in which Odiya-Labol and his wife had been sleeping a few minutes before, they violated the most private sphere

of their life, Odiya-Labol was released in the morning, however, and no formal charges were made against him. No weapons were recovered during the night search. Eventually the quarrel between Odiya-Labol and the local government council chairperson was resolved through mediation by the council at the sub-county level (LC3).

This was the second time the military had come to harass Odiya-Labol, and the fourth time they had come for a violent night search in his neighborhood. In Odiya-Labol's view, the local council representative exploited his official contacts with the Ugandan army to harass political opponents and business competitors. If anything, Odiya-Labol emphasized, referring to the fact that he was a Ugandan citizen and protected by the law, the quarrel should have been taken to the police, not the army. "The LC1 chairman is using the military for his own means," Odiya-Labol concluded. The Ugandan army, as stipulated by the country's constitution, is to foster harmony in society and cooperate with the civilians, while always subordinated to the civilian authority. But if the opposite is the chief experience people have of the army on the ground, the Ugandan government—and the state—will be seen as little more than a source of unconstitutional harassment of its citizenry. As Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian Nobel laureate, generalizes from personal experience, this is "governance through a forced diet of fear, most especially on the African continent – in common parlance, the fear of 'the midnight knock'" (2004:2).

Experience (Two): The *Panda Gari* Mass Arrests

Ugandan authorities, rather than disproving people's doubts in them, make sweeping mass arrests from time to time of people alleged to be rebel collaborators. These mass arrests are referred to as *panda gari*, "get on the lorry" in Swahili. They were common during the Amin (1971–79) and Obote II (1980–85) governments (Kasozi 1999:146f.). Now yet another Ugandan government has taken up the practice. One Sunday in January 2000, for example, my friend Odiya-Labol found himself taken away in such a sweep. The military arrived early in the morning, and everyone in the neighborhood, including priests, children, and women, was arrested and taken to a large field just outside town. All morning I saw army patrols arriving with groups of people, the great majority young men, who had been arrested in the nearby villages. About five thousand people were netted, according to *The Monitor* (17 January 2000), Uganda's daily independent. The figure of the state-owned *New Vision* (17 January 2000) was considerably lower. Leaving out the issue of *panda gari*, the latter paper wrote that "about 300 people were netted in security operations in Gulu town." Former

child rebels, in Uganda known as "computers," were forced to "screen" the people arrested, lined up one by one, in an effort to identify rebel collaborators. The majority of the arrested people were required to stand in the hot sun, passively waiting until late afternoon before the "computer screening" was completed. At the end of the whole exercise, besides some army deserters who were caught, fewer than five people were kept in custody. People who tried to walk away were rudely forced back by the army.

Odiya-Labol refused arrest more successfully. Always putting his words well, he questioned the legitimacy of the grounds for the whole exercise and he claimed correctly that all his papers were in order. He was eventually allowed to leave, but the army still confiscated the motorcycle we used in doing our research. Later on, Odiya-Labol and I went to the soldiers, asking rhetorically if the motorcycle was suspected of being a rebel collaborator. As one of us was a *muno*, or European, we got it back without too much arguing. Afterwards Odiya-Labol designed a rubber mudguard for the back wheel of the motorbike. *Kwo odoko tek*, it said, which means, as so many informants told us during the course of the research, "Life has become difficult."

Experience (Three): The Roadblock and Regional War Complexes

During most of 1999, there was a lull in the fighting in northern Uganda. Most LRA/M rebel units had withdrawn to base in southern Sudan. The intermission gave people new hope, although they still worried about the future as long as the conflict remained unresolved. It was now possible for Odiya-Labol and me to travel to remote places in rural areas. We even went to a cattle auction in Agoro, the northernmost part of Acholiland, bordering Sudan. The south Sudanese SPLM/A rebels came to exchange cattle for money; radios, clothes, and other things. In contrast to what they had done at previous auctions, the visiting rebels had left their guns in a nearby Ugandan army garrison. Most of them, however, wore their rebel uniforms.

The Sudanese visitors told us that they had walked for some twenty days with the cattle they had taken from the enemy. In this case, "the enemy" was people who found themselves caught in the middle. Since these people were not explicitly favoring the government in the south Sudanese rebels, they had been accused of supporting the government in Khartoum and thus turned into legitimate targets of militarily motivated looting. This is not unique to political violence in Sudan or Uganda. One central dilemma of living with war and armed conflict, according to my informants, is to orient in life when one repeatedly finds oneself labeled "supporter of the enemy."

On the journey back from the auction in Agoro, we passed the wreck of a lorry carrying a destroyed antiaircraft gun by the side of the road. We had already learned that it once belonged to the south Sudanese rebels. About a year before our visit, there was a period of heavy fighting in Sudan and the south Sudanese rebels were pushed south by the Sudanese army. As they had done many times before, they decided to regroup their forces on Ugandan territory. They entered through Kitgum district (eastern Acholi) and eventually went back to Sudan via Amuru district (western Acholi). They hoped thereby to be in a position to counterattack the Sudanese army from the rear.

During their effort to regroup in northern Uganda, the south Sudanese rebels were ambushed by the LRA/M. This ambush was not like the arbitrary killings that international media most often write about when it comes to the war in northern Uganda. Rather, as people to whom we spoke maintained, the wreck of the lorry stood as a most concrete symbol of proxy warfare and internationally orchestrated violence on a local scene. Ugandan rebels with bases in Sudan had attacked Sudanese rebels on mission in Uganda. The wreck suggested that Uganda is deeply entangled in a larger "regional war complex," to use a term of Wallensteen and Sollenberg's (1998). In a regional war complex, "neighbouring countries experience internal or interstate conflicts" (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1998:623, emphasis added). When the Ugandan army arrived with reinforcements, the LRA/M had eventually withdrawn.

The memory of the ambush was still vivid among people in the region when we visited the scene more than one year later. The fighting had been fierce, we were told, and some forty people had died. Bodies were abandoned to rot in the sun; most of them were simply thrown a few meters into the bush. Even now, skeletons and parts of skeletons of unburied men and women lay scattered on the ground. It happens now and then that the Ugandan army purposely leaves dead bodies behind as warnings so potential rebel supporters will appreciate the danger in opposing the government. We hurried to take some photos, and went back to the motorbike. Some miles further south we passed a group of south Sudanese rebels. Their army jeep had broken down, and some of them were resting in the shade under a tree, their weaponry off-loaded on the roadside. Two of them were working on the dead engine. With the experience of the burned lorry fresh in mind, we felt uncomfortable but continued without trouble, and we slipped through the final roadblocks of the Ugandan army—again, one of us being a muno (Westerner)—on the road to Kitgum town. The relative calm made the Ugandan soldiers relaxed.

The Sudanese rebels were also able to pass freely, but vehicles carrying local people were stopped, as we noted, and the travelers were forced to unload their luggage for the Ugandan army's search for collaborators and rebel weapons. Again the Ugandan state was increasingly associated with petty harassment of its citizens, while various external actors, like the Sudanese rebels or the visiting anthropologist, could enjoy the freedom of movement that Ugandans are denied. As a Swede visiting Uganda, I could afford to be part of the often-celebrated cosmopolitan global flow. So could the south Sudanese rebels. Ugandans living in the war-torn region cannot even be sure they will be allowed to pass a rural roadblock. On the contrary, during some periods army roadblocks are frequent along the major rural roads. Army soldiers may stop buses and civilian vehicles every five to ten kilometers. At gunpoint, the travelers are forced to slash the roadside bush, even to cut down trees and whole forests. The army's purpose is to eliminate spots where the rebels are suspected of having mounted ambushes, but local army commanders take the opportunity to profit from this shadowy wartime logging industry.

Experience (Four): Shadow Economies and Humanitarianism

In the final case, I will highlight some of the nonformal aspects of the economy of war in northern Uganda and attempt, in Nordstrom's words, "an ethnography of the shadows." As she writes, "In the frontier realities that mark political upheaval, the people, goods, and services that move along shadow lines are often closely and visibly linked to the most fundamental politics of power and survival" (Nordstrom 2001:216). The economic and political linkages of the shadows "move outside *formally* recognized state-based channels" (Nordstrom 2004:106), but are at the same time deeply intertwined with the formal structures of the state. Many of the on-the-ground agents of the state, notably soldiers, are also powerful actors in the shadow economy. Various organizations of the international community are also entangled with the shadow economy; trust and personal ties being important aspects of the nonformal exchange. The shadows and the formal state practices intersect in a myriad of ways, *"but they do not give up their own identity in this intersection"* (Nordstrom 2001:230). In other words, a government soldier who gets involved in the shadows will in most situations remain a government soldier. Indeed this was also the conclusion drawn by my informants. Likewise, personnel of the international relief organizations who get involved in the shadows can never fully detach

themselves from the organizations they represent, at least not in the experience of my informants.

The camps for internally displaced people in western Acholiland along the Karuma-Pakwach highway that connects Kampala with the West Nile region are located on the border of Murchison Falls National Park. The wild game in the park is a source of luxury food for the people in the area. Not only Acholi but also people from the West Nile region frequent the park to poach the game. In the camps, game meat is a welcome addition to the monotonous diet of home-grown vegetables and relief food. Of course, it is illegal to hunt the game. Ammunition and guns captured from rebels, or found in hidden rebel armouries in the bush, are taken to the local army quarters before they are shipped to Gulu town for registering. Sometimes Ugandan soldiers will keep some captured weapons for most dubious personal use, such as night robberies and petty harassments, often with the tacit agreement of the local army commanders (see Finnström 2008:1ff.). In the camps, army soldiers will sometimes lend captured guns to young men, who sneak into the national park to hunt wild game. In return for the weapon hire, the soldiers demand half of the collected meat, while the hunting party shares the remaining half. Obviously, on their poaching missions the young men have to avoid not only park rangers but also mobile army units, which may take them for armed rebels.

Olak, displaced to one of the camps, went to the park as a porter for a Ugandan army soldier called Opoka, who had a machine-gun. This was not the first time Olak had gone hunting in the park, and several other young men came along as porters. This time, however, they returned from four days in the park without any meat, and Opoka parted company from Olak and the other porters. After about a week, soldiers came to investigate rumors that Olak had a gun. They did not find Olak at home, as he was away working in his garden. Instead they arrested his younger brother and another young man. When Olak heard of this, he went into hiding, but the soldiers eventually located him. He was arrested and ordered to tell where the alleged gun was hidden. In the effort to make him talk, they set Olak's hut on fire, destroying his camp shelter. This is Olak's story:

I was arrested and taken to the army barracks together with another boy called Olum. Some person claimed that we had a gun. We told the soldiers that the gun was not ours, but the owner of the gun was an army man called Opoka. So they refused our talk. They start beating us, and they tied my arms and my legs. We were beaten seriously, and they burned our bodies with a melting plastic cup. They continued beating us before taking us back to the army jail [in the camps, an empty pit latrine]. We were ordered to disclose the identity of the man who had the gun. We agreed and we were taken to his place, but the man was not around. So the soldiers thought that I was deceiving them, and then they start beating me again. They start firing their guns. They just emptied two

magazines, and two bullets hit me. From there they took me to the army barracks again, where the commander again ordered the soldiers to shoot me, as he claimed that I still did not tell the truth. However, the soldiers now objected, and I was eventually brought to [a local] hospital, where I stayed for two days. After that I was taken to Lacor [Missionary] Hospital.

The army commander did not allow Olak to leave the camp, but after two days in the camp's hospital, a sympathetic police officer provided him with an authorizing letter, thus giving him an opportunity to travel to St. Mary's Missionary Hospital in Lacor outside Gulu town, where his bullet wounds could finally be tended to.

Olak's hunting missions reflect nothing less than his everyday existential struggle with extreme poverty. Yet the stories of such illegal hunting parties do not end in the camps, or with the destinies of young men like Olak. The wild game travels farther than that. To augment their income, Ugandan soldiers usually sell their share of wild game in Gulu town, or right on the spot in the camps. The potential buyers are visitors to the camps who have the means of transport to smuggle it back to town, and who are not stopped in the army's roadblocks. In Gulu town I met a Western staff member of an international humanitarian organization, who told me that he occasionally bought game from the soldiers in the camps, which he put in the back of his white NGO pickup and took back to Gulu town. "Those who may be on the forefront of aid may as well be in the backyard of profiteering," as Nordstrom (2001:226, n. 6) notes.

The displaced people in the camps, of course, take careful notice of such exchanges. Some of the meat, my expatriate counterpart told me, he consumed himself, but some he took to Kampala, where he sold it to friends and colleagues at the Kampala headquarters. For him, however, the profit must have been insignificant and the risks equally negligible, but I was left with the impression that the whole thing boosted his ego, as he was able to offer friends and superiors some exotic wild meat. At the other end of this route of illegal trade, however, are the young men in the camps who take the full risk alone. The buyers in Kampala know little, perhaps, about the young displaced men who put themselves in jeopardy. If caught, as Olak's experience told him, they may be taken for rebels, while the providers of the guns will deny any knowledge of the whole affair.

Conclusion

"At the end of this century," Wieviorka wrote a few years back, "the dominant trend is social violence rather than political violence" (2003:129). But my argument in this chapter is that most violence—in the case of Uganda,

on the part of the rebels and the Ugandan army—is part of a global and neo-imperial political structure of dominance, exploitation, and exclusion. Living through this moment in history, people existentially feel and register what is going on. They engage the world in order to be able to reflect on their experiences. And most often, despite lived uncertainties, they do so with the help of concrete and well-informed analyses, fully grasping how globalization always is emplaced to a local reality. People's lived experiences therefore reveal the violence, both in its physical and structural manifestations, as inescapably political. I have presented four cases, or experiences as I call them—of the burned lorry and midnight knock on Odiya-Labol's door, of the *panda gari* mass arrests; of the burned lorry and the roadblock; and of Olak's hunting missions. These experiences tell the story of how globalization is always situated.

What has developed in war-torn Uganda can be described as "global peripheralization." The description is rhetorical, however, because as we know, on the surface of a globe there are no peripheral edges. Rather, as Sahlins reminds us, "People act in the world in terms of the social beings they are, and it should not be forgotten that from their quotidian point of view it is the global system that is peripheral, not them" (1999:412). But in contrast to those living in the wealthy sectors of the global village—in Uganda, in the form of soldiers, rebels, researchers and humanitarian relief workers—those at the global periphery will seldom be allowed to be part of the often-glorified cosmopolitan global flows. For people who live with war on a daily basis, the global order with its war on terror is increasingly synonymous with the state's petty harassments, in some aspects discouraged but in many aspects silently fuelled by actors of the international community. Today's global flows, of which the perpetration of war and violence is a major characteristic, are imposed upon people's lives, painfully felt on their bodies. In the process, people's rights as citizens are increasingly denied them. With the army operating in neighboring countries, and in joining the global war on terror, and more recently by sending peace keeping forces to Somalia, even with a member voice in UN's Security Council, the Ugandan government asserts *external* state sovereignty. This development must be seen against the backdrop of developments back home. As my four cases illustrate, in the shadow of the army's Iron Fist operations, the government's *internal* sovereign power is feeding on unconstitutional counterinsurgency violence in itself. Throughout the years the LRA/M rebels have done their best in the most violent ways to prove the state's internal failure, and in periods they have been acting like the terrorists the international community has labeled them as. For the Ugandan citizenry at the country's peripheries, life has become difficult indeed.

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