“We’re all displaced, but some of us manage”

Urban space and community formation among northern Ugandans in Kampala

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Cover: Two figures walk in the direction of Kampala at dusk; Oyam District, Uganda.
Photo by author, 06.12.2010.

Above: *Uganda: Administrative Units Map (as of 22 Jul 2009)*
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1. **Migrant Communities**

On one of my last days in Kampala, Roland\(^1\) handed me a folder of documents. Inside was a survey tool created by a group called the Urban Internally Displaced Persons. Roland proudly explained that as the chair of the community’s Naguru branch, he was going to help lead a self-profiling assessment of the needs of IDPs to present to the government.

I asked him if he considered himself a displaced person.

He had come to Kampala as a young graphic designer before the escalation of the war. He came from an area which saw little violence, as it was on the main road that rebels avoided for fear of encountering government patrols. His wife admitted he came for “job reasons.” He had invested over four million shillings in building a solid house in Naguru and renting out its rooms. All of his children were in school. He appeared much more settled and prosperous than his neighbors, and certainly more than the image of the IDP. He responded:

\[
\text{we’re all displaced, but some of us manage.}^{2}
\]

This research is an ethnography of Acholi and Langi residing in Kampala. Since its establishment as the colonial capital of Uganda, Kampala has attracted large numbers of migrants from across the country and region (Parkin 1969; Bryceson 2008). These migrants include many northern Ugandans fleeing the conflicts between the government and armed rebel groups. Whereas the dynamics of Uganda’s internally displaced persons camps are well-documented, relatively little is known about northerners who migrated to the urban centres of the south. These migrations have resulted in new group relations, including between northerners and other city residents, and between different waves of migrants. They have also resulted in new spatial dynamics, with conflict-affected populations residing in neighborhoods in eastern Kampala that have housed northerners for decades. These migrations have brought about new political configurations, as some migrants are mobilizing as internally displaced persons, and are thus negotiating a new relationship with state and local Kampala authorities (Refugee Law Project 2007).

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\(^1\) Names may or may not have been altered to protect confidentiality.

\(^2\) Field notes, 28.11.2009.
Both policy makers and academics tend to treat displaced persons as a self-delimiting category (Malkki 1998; Brun and Lund 2003; Stepputat and Sørensen 2001; Fresia 2007). Those studies that do examine displaced persons in territorial or social context often focus on relations between ‘hosts’ and ‘migrants’, or between the ‘displaced’ and humanitarian agencies, portraying displaced persons as severed from their networks. Yet people who fled the conflicts in northern Uganda moved into a diverse migrant community of northerners with deep historical roots. A migrant community refers to “both populations of recent migrants and longer settled populations of migrant origin” according to Van Hear’s definition (1998:7). Given these migrations, this thesis asks: what are the effects of conflict-induced displacement on the “migrant community” of northern Ugandans in Kampala?

What is a migrant? And what is a community? Both terms are debated. For the purposes of this thesis, a northern Ugandan migrant refers to an individual who spends the majority of the year residing in Kampala. Most commonly, a ‘northern Ugandan migrant’ rents or owns a residential space in the city, or resides with a family member or acquaintance, though there are northern Ugandans who spend the majority of the year in Kampala and sleep on the streets or are otherwise ‘homeless.’ An important part of the definition of northern Ugandan migrant is that he or she defines ‘home’ as being outside of Kampala, most commonly in Acholi and Langi districts of northern Uganda. In this way, they are distinguished from other migrants (who live in Kampala and trace their ‘home’ to other Ugandan districts or countries), as well as from northern Ugandans who reside primarily in northern districts (visiting Kampala for short periods, such as for business trips or for medical treatment). This definition captures both the diversity among people of northern Uganda living in Kampala, as well as the potential for community-formation on the basis of a common history, experiences, or ethnic identity, the extent of which will be investigated.

The next question is: what is ‘community’? The breadth of this long-standing debate is beyond the scope of this thesis. Smith outlined three useful approaches to community. Communities can be territorial: people have something in common by virtue of living in the same area. Communities can be interest-based: when members are linked together by shared identities, such as a common religion or language. Probably most important for the purposes of this thesis is the notion of ‘communion.’ Communities also usually entail a sense of attachment to a place, group or idea. Practically speaking, this means members share a sense of reciprocity, which Putnam (2000) describes as the idea that members invest in assisting each other on the premise that they
will be assisted when they are in need. This is based on trust, the expectation that people and institutions within this community will act in a consistent way.

The notion of ‘community’ gained popularity in development circles with the rise of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques. These methods tended to assume commonality within a ‘community’ and to minimize internal hierarchy, in line with the goal of designing ‘community-supported’ interventions to improve living conditions. Similarly, studies of displaced populations often assume that a ‘refugee identity’—shared traits due to a shared experience of displacement—from which conclusions can be drawn about a displaced persons ‘community’ (Fresia 2007:108). Often this identity is assumed to be based on the trauma of being ‘untethered’ and ‘uprooted’ from ‘home’ (Malkki 1995). This is reified in studies that compare forced migrants to ‘host’ communities without exploring whether such a categorization is valid.

I operationalize the guiding question by looking how individuals access urban housing, social services, and the networks they identify as important. During the course of this research, people spoke of ‘managing’ and ‘not managing’ to describe their experiences in Kampala. This emerged as an important discourse about urban social hierarchies, which this thesis interrogates. It asks where and how individual migrants access a place to live in the city and other social services and the relation between these two, using Peluso and Ribot’s definition of access as “ability to derive benefit from things” (2001). It questions the boundaries of community by examining the heterogeneity of northern Ugandans in Kampala—and by extension among displaced persons—in terms of income, gender, experience during the conflict, ethnicity and other factors. By interrogating this ‘managing’ discourse, I examine why some individuals are said to do ‘better’ and others ‘worse’ in coping with the dynamics of displacement. To this end, the concept of access is a useful tool, since questions of who gains access to social goods and how is a question of inter-personal and institutional relationships, and how gaining access in turns shapes those relationships.

Communities survive among northern Ugandans, despite the traumas of displacement, the physical scattering of northern Ugandans, and the disconnection from ‘home’ due to the conflict and to urban poverty—and despite the stratification of northern Ugandans in terms of income and migration experience. This thesis examines how.
Wars in northern Uganda

The British declared a protectorate over Uganda in 1894. The protectorate was based on a policy of indirect rule that favored the Buganda kingdom of central Uganda, which is explored in depth in Chapter 3. Acholiland was seen as a marginal, dry, and sparsely populated land located too far north of the commercial centre of the Protectorate (Bøas 2004:286-7). The British administration helped cement the divide between north and south by cultivating southerners, particularly the Baganda, into administrative positions and recruiting northerners, particularly from Acholi and West Nile, into the armed forces (Bøas 2004:285).

This unequal development of the regions over time, particularly between north and south, also reflected the political schisms present in Uganda at the time of independence. As Dolan notes, these political divisions were also deeply-rooted ethnic, regional, and religious ones. The Uganda National Congress (UNC) party was predominantly Protestant, while the Democratic Party (DP) was predominantly Catholic. The Uganda People's Congress (UPC), that would come to draw the support of many northerners, formed in 1960, in opposition to both the Catholic political movement and claims for independent Buganda state. The Kabaka Yekka (KY) party drew its support mostly from the predominantly Protestant Buganda kingdom, and advocated for its autonomy (Dolan 2005:71). As Dolan notes, the independence Constitution demonstrated a hierarchy of different ethnic groups. It granted federal status to the kingdom of Buganda, semi-federal status to the kingdoms of Ankole, Bunyoro and Toro, and district status to many of the northern districts, including Acholi, Karamoja, and Lango (Dolan 2005:72).

In February 1966, Prime Minister Milton Obote suspended the Constitution in Uganda’s first coup d’état, abolishing the positions of president and vice president. The new Constitution of 1967 proclaimed Uganda a republic and abolished the traditional kingdoms.

General Idi Amin Dada began fomenting a military mutiny against President Obote in the late 1960s. Obote felt threatened by Amin’s actions, including his involvement in an attempt on Obote’s life, and the support Amin had built up among soldiers from his home region of West Nile. Fearing that Obote would arrest him for misappropriating army funds, Amin staged a military coup in 1971, while Obote was abroad at a conference. Amin began a purge of pro-Obote soldiers, among them many Langi and Acholi. Amin’s regime would last until 1979, and saw
massive amounts of repression of dissidents and the intelligentsia as well as full economic collapse when Amin exiled the south Asian entrepreneurial class (Conciliation Resources 2010).

Amin’s repression sparked a counter-response among dissident soldiers. Yoweri Museveni, the current president of Uganda and a Munyankole, established the Front for National Salvation guerrilla movement. With the assistance of other exiled opposition movements and the Tanzanian government, this united movement deposed Amin. Proclaiming itself the Uganda National Liberation Front, it established an interim government.

In 1980, deposed former president Obote returned to Uganda. His party, the Uganda People’s Congress, won the presidential elections. Museveni vowed to resist this result by claiming election fraud. In 1982, armed opposition groups, including Museveni’s own National Resistance Movement (NRM), began to attack government installations around Kampala (Conciliation Resources 2010). Large numbers of civilians were killed and displaced during the course of the counter-insurgency, particularly in the Luweero area north of Kampala.

Obote was in turn overthrown in 1985 by an army brigade composed mostly of ethnic Acholi troops who proclaimed a military government. Obote fled into exile. General Tito Okello led the new regime and began negotiations with Museveni’s opposition forces while promising concessions, such as free and fair elections. The Okello government nevertheless carried out brutalities during its counterinsurgency. This was an attempt to drain the NRM of its support. Despite peace talks, Museveni’s troops were pushed too far—in January 1986, the NRM captured Kampala. They overthrew the Military Council and during this time, many northerners were lynched and murdered in the city as a reprisal for supporting former president Okello (Conciliation Resources 2010).

The nature of the wars that ravaged northern Uganda is debated. It is not the purpose of this thesis to provide a comprehensive analysis of the motivations for the fighting from any of the factions. What is clear, however, is that shortly following the NRM takeover in 1986, an Acholi woman named Alice Auma began to preach resistance against the government’s brutality. Alice was popularly known as Lakwena (the messenger), because she claimed to be channeling a Christian spirit. She believed that Museveni’s government could be defeated militarily if Acholi people would rise up and cast off the ‘witchcraft’ and spiritualism of Acholi culture. Eventually, her supporters coalesced to form the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM). Despite capturing territory as far
south as Jinja, Lakwena’s fighters were defeated in 1987 by the Ugandan military. Alice fled to Kenya.

Following a brief lull in violence, remnants of the HSM and other rebel movements joined the group of Joseph Kony, which took on the name the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). Kony’s aims have changed over time and are debated extensively. Broadly speaking, the LRA kept the goal of ‘purging’ Acholi society of traditional beliefs in favor of a fundamentalist Christianity and a rejection of the immorality of the NRM regime. Vincent Otti, Kony’s second in command, stated the LRA’s motivations as:

fighting for the [biblical] Ten Commandments of God… because the Ten Commandments of God is the constitution that God has given to the people of the world (IRIN 2007).

James Obita, the LRA’s Secretary for External Affairs, offered a more political rationale for the resistance:

[the LRA/M] were convinced that to safeguard not only the Acholi or the people of Northern Uganda, all Ugandans had to be protected against the excesses of the NRA, which has de-humanized Ugandans and taken away their basic rights and freedoms… To bring to an end… the repressive policy of deliberate marginalization of groups of people who may not agree with the NRA ideology (Obita 1997).

The first step in this, of course, was toppling the NRM government.

As violence escalated, the NRM response was brutal (Dolan 2005:75). Soldiers wreaked widespread destruction of civilians’ property, seizing cattle, and living off the land. During Operation North, the government began screening civilians and restricting travel. The LRA, bolstered by Sudanese government support, also grew in strength. The LRA explicitly targeted civilians, often mutilating them beyond recognition, to ensure they would not cooperate with the government.

In 1992, the launch of the first Northern Uganda Reconstruction Program (NURP I) coincided with a general reduction in violence. This lull allowed Betty Bigombe, the government’s minister for the North, to arrange several negotiations between the rebels and the government. These collapsed when the LRA and NRM failed to reach an agreement. Museveni gave the LRA seven
days to surrender or face a further onslaught. In response, the LRA retreated into southern Sudan, and violence began anew. Bolstered by Sudanese support, the LRA committed a number of atrocities, including the massacre of men at Atiak village in 1995, and the infamous abduction of female students from a boarding school at Aboke. Civilians responded by arming themselves. Children were urged to cluster in urban centers at night to avoid forced recruitment by the LRA. By late 1996, the government began forcibly removing civilians to 'protected villages'—internally displaced persons camps—and routinely rounded up civilians for screening.

Violence escalated, despite the efforts of several civil society groups advocating for negotiation between the rebels and the government. The government, however, pushed on with military tactics against the rebels. From early 1999, most of the LRA returned to Sudan, the UPDF sealed the border as many displaced began to return to their villages. Through the mediation of The Carter Center, Uganda and Sudan began negotiations on how to normalize relations and end the conflict. The Ugandan parliament passed the Amnesty Bill for former rebels in 2000. The LRA, however, was not involved in the negotiations directly. They re-entered Uganda shortly thereafter (Dolan 2005:85).

By this time, approximately 400,000 people were living in ‘protected villages.’ Raids by the LRA and failed negotiations continued for the next few years. The drive to eradicate the LRA reached its peak in 2002 with the launch of Operation Iron Fist in southern Sudan (Conciliation Resources 2010). Rather than capturing the LRA, Operation Iron Fist drove them back into northern Uganda (Dolan 2005:90). By 2003, the LRA had reached as far as Soroti and Lira district.

In 2005, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Kony and four of his commanders, at the request of Museveni’s government. By 2006, the government and LRA were engaged in peace talks in Juba, southern Sudan. These Juba talks were suspended indefinitely in 2008, following Kony’s refusal to sign a peace agreement, citing the warrant against him. To date, Kony’s forces have been pushed mostly out of Uganda into the CAR, DRC, and Sudan. What remains of his troops are often described as “severely weakened” with estimates of active fighters ranging from between one and four hundred. Still, they manage to brutalize the population in Uganda’s neighboring countries (Delany 2010). In northern Uganda, civilians are being pushed to ‘return home’ from the IDP camps, despite their own fears of renewed violence (Kroes 2008).
Refugees and IDPs

The categories of refugee and internally displaced person have developed in two often conflicting domains—the international policy environment and academic literature.

The humanitarian world treats forced migrants as a demographic requiring special care. The category of the refugee as a legal person came out of Europe’s experience of World War II (Malkki 1995:498). The International Refugee Organization (IRO) was formed in 1946 to deal with Europe’s over 73,000 displaced persons. In 1950, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) was created and tasked with running respectable refugee camps, providing emergency food and care, and assisting refugees in their return “home,” among other priorities. As Malkki notes, because the refugee camp was a physically delimited space, it also helped to homogenize refugees as a social category outside of the wider society in which these camps were located (1995:498).

The guiding philosophy of the organization was the 1951 Refugee Convention. This international treaty defines a refugee as someone who has fled based on “a well-founded fear” of persecution “as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951” (UN 1951: (a)(2)). Its language is heavily marked by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It frames refugees as a community entitled to specific rights—mostly defined in terms of “protection from” grievous bodily harm and fundamental persecutions.

Fresia explains that the continued use of camps to house refugees since World War II is in part due to the crumbling economies of many refugee-receiving states during the 1970s and 1980s. World Bank-mandated structural adjustment programs were detrimental to many African economies. Given their emphasis on de-nationalizing industries and producing only a few key goods for export, many states found their economies vulnerable to global fluctuations in prices for their export goods. This created a situation of economic precariousness and domestic instability. Fresia argues that because of this, many governments engaged in progressively exclusionary policies with regard to refugees, another population that the state had to protect despite its domestic woes. The UNHCR responded by privileging repatriation of refugees over their integration in their countries of asylum. In the meantime, however, provisional methods were needed to receive displaced persons pending return. In order to facilitate the identification process and the transport of aid, the High Commission for Refugees and the governments of
nations of the South agreed that it was necessary to regroup refugees in camps (2007: 102-3). The UNHCR and governments thus constructed “displacement as an anomaly in the life of an otherwise ‘whole,’ stable, sedentary society… [under the] assumption that the homeland or country of origin is not only the normal but the ideal habitat for any person” (Malkki 1995: 508-9).

Yet the UNHCR was created to deal with refugee crises, not necessarily to address the vulnerabilities of internally displaced persons who, by definition, have not crossed international boundaries. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, when IDP statistics were first collected in 1982, only 1.2 million people were considered internally displaced in eleven countries. By 1995, this number grew to 20 to 25 million in more than 40 countries (IDMC 2008). By 1992, the UN had appointed a special representative on internally displaced persons, Francis Deng, who worked with the UNHCR to craft the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The principles define IDPs as:

> persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (UNHCR 1998: 2).

Many governments have used camps to regroup displaced persons. The government of Uganda called these ‘protected villages,’ which, despite their name, were particularly vulnerable to rebel attacks. They were created by the government’s forcible relocation of rural villagers in northern Uganda, and as an attempt to separate civilians from rebel troops in a bid to erode support for the LRA (Dolan 2005).

The Guiding Principles maintained the tendency of refugee frameworks to homogenize internally displaced persons, defining them in terms of flight and victimization. Yet this initiative contrasts with early refugee initiatives. It makes recommendations not just to states, but also to NGOs and other organizations interfacing with IDPs in order to enhance their protection. For example, IDPs are entitled to “dignity and safety” (principle 8), proper accommodation meeting “satisfactory conditions of safety, nutrition, health and hygiene” (principle 7). The Guiding Principles go further still:
at the minimum, regardless of the circumstances, and without discrimination, competent authorities shall provide internally displaced persons with and ensure safe access to: (a) Essential food and potable water; (b) Basic shelter and housing; (c) Appropriate clothing; and (d) Essential medical services and sanitation (UNHCR 1998: Principle 18).

These are privileges that even many ‘normal’ populations in developing countries do not enjoy. The Guiding Principles thus define internally displaced persons as a distinct social category with exceptional needs and unique vulnerabilities and a stronger right to claim protection and benefits from the state.

In October 2009, heads of African states met in Kampala to draft the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). The definition of an IDP that emerged conceives of people as normally sedentary—and the defining characteristic of “displacement” as the literal flight from “home” away from the threat of violence or upheaval:

“Internally Displaced Persons” means persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (OAU 2009, art 1(k), emphasis added).

This convention does not assume displaced persons necessarily wish to return ‘home.’ Rather it calls on states to “[r]espect and ensure the right to seek safety in another part of the State and to be protected against forcible return to or resettlement in any place where their life, safety, liberty and/or health would be at risk” (art 2(e)).

**Anthropology and forced migration**

Anthropological research has nuanced these official discourses. The field of ‘refugee studies’ emerged in the 1980s, a decade that saw some of the worst episodes of conflict-induced displacement. Furthermore, the camp provided anthropologists with a ‘village-like’ situation that was easy to study using ethnographic methods. There have been three coexisting streams of scholarship. The first deconstructs international refugee law, the second focuses on analyzing and denouncing the humanitarian aid system, and the third studies survival and adaptation strategies of refugees (Fresia 2007: 102).
By deconstructing international refugee law, anthropologists showed its fundamentally ethnocentric model of human society that classifies mobility and the loss of a link to a nation-state as a transitory, pathological condition (Fresia 2007: 104-5). As Jacobsen noted (2006), the issue of ‘secondary movement’— when refugees do not stay in their country of resettlement, but instead migrate of their own accord— is still a problem for the UNHCR (278). The Ugandan government shares a similar concern over ‘irregular migration.’ Northern Ugandans continue to move between camps and surrounding villages for many reasons, despite repeated efforts to convince IDPs to leave the camps and ‘return home’ once and for all (Kroes 2008).

The focus on camps led many scholars to denounce the entire refugee ‘aid’ system. This coincided with a broader ‘post-development discourse’ that emerged in the early 1990s among critical social scientists such as Escobar (1994) against failed and exploitative aid projects. Studies in this tradition tended to essentialize forced migrants as victims, and were thus hardly unbiased.

By contrast, studies of forced migrants emphasizing survival strategies generally portrayed individuals as actors in their own lives. This coincided with a theoretical turn towards micro-level analyses of ‘agency’ among vulnerable persons, as popularized by Norman Long (1992). While correcting for the ‘victimizing’ tendency of past work, these studies tended to pay little attention to the humanitarian institutions shaping the options forced migrants had, in favor of a sort of romantic populism of the ‘resilient refugee.’ Scholars from this perspective also made calls to design refugee assistance programs “from below,” advocating for their “participation” (Fresia 2007:107).

One of the most important accomplishments of anthropology was to show the inadequacy of the forced versus voluntary migrant distinction. As Van Hear notes:

[w]hat is the balance of force and choice for the supposed ‘voluntary’ economic migrant who ‘chooses’ to seek work in her country’s capital or abroad, but whose child would otherwise die if she does not earn money to pay for medical treatment? Forced migrants likewise make choices, within a narrower range of possibilities… Moreover, many if not most migration streams involve migrants with varying degrees of choice and who experience varying degrees of compulsion (1998: 42).

Different disciplines treat migration differently: for example, as product of social structures (typical of economics) or as a result of detailed individual deliberations (a more anthropological approach). Bakewell notes that Gidden’s concept of ‘structuration to migration’ has opened up a promising middle ground in this debate. He argues that “refugees can be seen as migrants who have particular constraints placed upon them (for example, language barriers) but use their own
social skills and resources to subvert these constraints and bring about their preferred outcome” (2002: 48). International institutions are starting to adopt this ‘middle ground’ approach by using the concepts of “mixed migratory flows” or “asylum-migration nexus” (Fresia 2007: 111). This study extends that approach by endeavoring to look at a group of forced migrants in their whole social context.

**Migration orders**

Northern Ugandans have been migrating between northern Uganda and the urban centers of southern Uganda since at least colonial times. The migration order—the pattern of movement of people—has varied according to the political, social, and economic context. The conflict in northern Uganda resulted in a migration crisis, an acute change in an established migration order “involving sudden, massive, disorderly population movements” (Van Hear 1998: 23). Van Hear offers a useful analysis of migration orders as having four domains: root causes, proximate causes, precipitating factors, and intervening factors.

Root causes are the “structural, background, underlying factors which predispose a population to migrate. These derive mainly from the macro-political economy… in particular from the disparities between places of migrant origin and destination” (1998: 19). In the case of northern Uganda, an important structural cause of outmigration was (and is) the economic marginalization of the northern districts under successive post-independence regimes. The inequalities between northern and southern Uganda in terms of infrastructure are reflected as inequalities in education, health, income and other factors between Uganda’s ethnic groups (Fanaka Kwa Wote 2009). They run deep and are an important push factor for northerners seeking work elsewhere in the country.

Second are proximate causes. These are related to root causes in that they are society-wide factors, but manifest themselves as specific events “such as a downturn in the economic or business cycle, a turn for the worse in the security or human rights environment generated by repression or a power struggle, the construction of a large scale development project that promises to involve displacement, or marked degeneration in the ecological sphere” (1998: 19).

For example, many northerners migrated south with the creation of road systems and the development of railways and port sector needing to be staffed with labor (Dak 1968: 1). By
contrast, in 1971, Amin’s troops targeted northerners living in Kampala for reprisals because of the support of many Acholi and Langi for the former president Obote, who Amin ousted in a military coup. Many elite northern Ugandans fled to other countries during this episode and again during Museveni’s National Resistance Movement takeover of Kampala in 1986 (Calas 1998).

Chapter 3 takes a historical look at Kampala as the locus of ‘inward-movement’ and the role of northern Ugandan migrants in developing the city since the colonial era. It discusses the socioeconomic stratification of Kampala city as a way of introducing the field sites. It traces how northern Ugandans talk about the relative benefits and detractions of particular neighborhoods, which is important to understanding ‘community’ formation and stratification.

Thirdly are precipitating factors. Within a migration order, these are triggers for departure that are unique to each migrant or migrant household. These are particular vulnerabilities such as the loss of a place of employment, the death of a breadwinner, the sickness of a child that requires a parent to migrate in search of income or treatment, or particular opportunities that make a location attractive (Van Hear 1998:20).

Finally are intervening factors that affect the pace of migration and determine who migrates and when, and who stays behind. These are factors that enable, facilitate, or constrain migration and are unique to each migrant or migrant household. Facilitating factors include “the presence and quality of transport, communications, information and the resources needed for the journey and transit period.” Constraining factors could include “the absence of such infrastructure and the lack of information and resources needed to move” (Van Hear 1998:20).

As Roland said, we may all be displaced, but some of us manage, and others do not. A sub-question, then, is what does it mean to “manage”? What intervening factors, in Van Hear’s terms, influence this?

While war is traumatic for anyone who experiences it, some experience greater emotional, social, and physical losses than others. This has to do with how an individual is positioned, favorably or less favorably, with regard to institutions and assets which help mitigate the effects of the conflict. An argument in this thesis is that an individual’s place in social hierarchies— for example, as a casual laborer, a landed professional, or informally employed young woman— is not necessarily changed significantly by the experience of displacement. This is because some people had buffers against the effects of the conflict in the form of, for example, economic
capital, privately-owned properties outside of northern Uganda, family networks in safe areas, or professional skills that could be easily transferred to the city.

Chapter 4 uses grounded theory methods to present ‘managing’ as a discourse that northern Ugandans use to talk about their experiences in the city. Not only a discourse, it also demonstrates social hierarchization in the process of “reformulation” of these migrant communities, which problematizes a common assumption that northern Ugandans automatically form a ‘community’ by virtue of a shared experience of conflict or regional identity. Managing means access to specific goods—a job, a place in school, an affordable room to rent. Managing also has a more subjective determination—the ability to lead a decent life. Finally, a significant component of managing is the ability to travel freely between ‘home’ and Kampala. Chapter 4 presents simple statistics about the informants, emphasizing their diverse backgrounds. It examines the relations between more recent migrants and northern Ugandans who have lived for decades (or for their whole lives) in Kampala.

Chapter 5 examines informants’ motivations for relocating to Kampala. It contrasts the informants’ experiences of ‘displacement’ with the official international definition. It develops an emic notion of displacement that views people as inherently mobile and differs from the internationally-accepted definition based on “flight from conflict.” It adds to the debate on the problematic distinction between voluntary and involuntary migration by suggesting that people could suffer the same effects of displacement if they were blocked from freely moving between northern Uganda and Kampala, even if they first came ‘by choice.’

Chapter 6 examines the social hierarchies to which the managing discourse refers. Where do people access a space to live? How do they choose particular neighborhoods? And to what extent is this related to access to other social services or communities? This chapter seeks to understand the skills, identities, structural and social relations, finances and physical assets people bring to bear in trying to manage displacement. It also analyzes the power relations that are reproduced in these processes.

Chapter 7 goes deeper into the question of whether northern Ugandans in Kampala can be considered a community—in spite or because of the conflict-induced displacements. This chapter asks how clan groups contribute to the regrouping—both physical and inter-personal—of ‘communities’ of northern Ugandans. It examines some of the ethnic networks of northern
Ugandans in Kampala and critiques the idea that because the conflict scattered people it necessarily resulted in a ‘moral and spiritual wasteland’ among the displaced in Kampala. It traces the roles contemporary clans.

Chapter 8 concludes. It addresses the guiding question by examining interactions across the diverse spectrum of individuals comprising the migrant community and their aspirations for the future. In light of these networks and communities, this thesis considers how the very real vulnerabilities of northern Ugandans who consider themselves displaced persons in Kampala might be addressed.
2. Methods, ethics, margins

This chapter addresses the practical, epistemological and ethical issues around studying forced migration. In 2009, three years after the supposed end of the conflict in Northern Uganda, a special report by the humanitarian news agency IRIN asked “[i]s Acholi society dying?”:

the conflict in northern Uganda has damaged the fabric of Acholi society. … The camps have played a role in eroding some [of] the Acholi people’s cultural traditions … The Acholi society was structured in such a way that every family lived in its own compound, and everyone gathered by the fireplace each evening for traditional teachings. This is not the case with the IDP camps, where parents are forced to sleep in one small hut with their children… Their continued stay in the camps is slowly destroying what little is left of their dignity (IRIN 2009, emphasis added).

Contrasting the examples of a social worker and a government official, the article mentions how everyone was affected by the war. The article, however, presents Acholi society as a unified ‘fabric,’ with essentialized cultural traditions. It thus determines all Acholi people as IDPs, and then casts IDPs as vulnerable as a group, and lacking in dignity.

While the war was certainly traumatizing, the homogenization of Acholi people into a victimized mass does little to explain how, four years after the officially-declared ‘end’ to the war, some northern Ugandans manage to thrive, others to cope, and some barely to survive, which this thesis addresses. Given the difficulty in distinguishing ‘forced’ from ‘voluntary’ migrants, it makes epistemological sense to study northern Ugandans in Kampala by not focusing only on those most easily identified as IDPs. The identity of ‘displaced person’ is discussed in chapter 5, and its policy implications are further explored in chapter 8.

The dominant narrative regarding northern Ugandans currently living in Kampala comes from non-governmental (NGO) groups and journalists documenting their work. Northern Ugandans are conceived as ‘forgotten urban IDPs’ caught between ‘return’ and ‘integration’ into the city. In particular, the Kampala-based Refugee Law Project has published several studies on ‘urban IDPs’

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3 For the purposes of this thesis, only Langi and Acholi are considered. This is not to discount the experiences of Aluru, Karimojong, Teso, Madi and other groups that also experienced spill-over effects of the conflict. Langi and Acholi are the most numerous northern Ugandan ethnicities represented in Kampala (according to the 2002 census) and for pragmatic reasons, I restrict my analysis to them.
and has assisted them to mobilize to receive government benefits. This is discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

A less nuanced view comes from Acholi Beads, a small project run by Americans who sponsor female residents of Acholi Quarters to produce jewellery out of paper beads. These are then resold for a profit:

The women we partner with fled a brutal civil war in the north of Uganda. Everyone in their Acholi tribe lost someone. They ended up in a hillside slum just outside of Uganda's capital, where the only way they could feed their families and the orphans they cared for was working in a dangerous rock quarry, crushing rocks for $1 per day - the international standard for Extreme Poverty (Acholi Beads 2010).

Again, the discourse about ‘ending up’ in Kampala renders this group of people passive in the face of adversity. Making beads provides the main income for many Acholi women, but it is certainly not the only way Acholi people in Kampala get by. What is problematic about this image is that it takes ‘IDPs’ to be uniformly victimized. This is a point that this thesis contests. As I later demonstrate, not all northern Ugandans living in Acholi Quarters, or even who identify as IDPs, necessarily fled because of war. The suffering of many northern Ugandans is real and should not be minimized. However, any useful analysis of this population should also consider its equally real stratifications and variety—particularly if such analysis is intended to help them.

There are subtle gradations in access to social and economic capital among displaced persons which warrant attention, but we do not often think of things this way. Still the ‘forced migrant experience’ remains an essentialized one. Forced migrants are assumed—especially in African contexts—to be poor, marginal, even if they are now considered actors in their own lives. They are often assumed to have unique vulnerabilities that differ from those of the urban poor, which may not always be the case. In my study, even persons who were living in Kampala since before the war, including some wealthier individuals who owned property, considered themselves displaced because of the losses they had sustained. But considering that they have lived in Kampala for much longer than some of the more recent ‘conflict IDPs,’ should they be considered ‘hosts’? Or merely another part of the ‘displaced persons’ community?

Much has been written on the poverty and victimization many northern Ugandans have endured, which is distressing. Yet this thesis provides a deeper look at a limited number of northern
Ugandan migrants—not only those who self-identify or fit the mould of the urban IDP—to understand social stratification and mobility.

**Studying displacement without studying displacement**

James Okech is a talented man. He runs a one-room art studio where he and several women make beaded jewellery and stitch tapestries based on his drawings of northern Ugandan life. A skilled multilingual networker, he has been recruited as a commentator on Acholi society by local news outlets. He maintains a small network of contacts in the U.S. and Europe, to which he persistently tried to recruit me. Yet he still struggles to make ends meet. He rents one room and a small studio from which he plans the different ways his group can distinguish itself in an already saturated craft market. Near the end of my stay, I visited him to say goodbye. He asked:

> How do you know what people tell you is true?... I mean, you know here in Africa, there are so many lies.
> - Lies?
> - Mistruths. People when they want something, they will always lie to you, not tell you the truth.  

James opined that where he comes from, Kitgum, people do not know “the benefit from telling the truth to researchers—they are used to them now and how to present themselves.” I asked if people discussed the war:

> yes, in the north there is hope. People talk about ‘oh, you remember so and so? He was such a fine boy. It is too bad he died.’

I asked if there was hope here as well.

> you know, we are busy with surviving here, so you don’t find that there is much time to talk about serious things. You work and then at the end of the day you are tired and you say, ‘ah, let me just rest.’ They talk there, if you go to the places where there is drinking. But it is drunken talk, not serious talk.

This research entailed significant methodological and ethical challenges. The difficulty was in getting to ‘serious talk’ with people that, having experienced war very intimately, had no obvious reasons to tell anything sensitive about their lives to me, a young researcher with no NGO

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4 Field notes, 22.10.2009.
5 Field notes 22.10.09.
affiliation and thus no promise of assistance or aid. Given this, the study does not attempt to create a representative portrayal of northern Ugandan migrants. Rather, this study focuses on diversity of migrant and displacement experiences by engaging deeply with a limited number of informants, rather than trying to get a baseline understanding of “what it is like for migrants.”

Neither does this study especially focus on the traumas of displacement. These are very well documented by the Refugee Law Project and in other works (Sohne 2006; Refstie 2008; Rowley 2006). Without sanitizing or romanticizing displacement, this study focuses on how northern Ugandans cope in Kampala. It engages not only those with classic IDP profiles, but also with more settled, professional northern Ugandans who nevertheless were affected by the wars in northern Uganda. Because of this, the study explores who copes with displacement, who does not, how this is discussed, how it came about and whether any communities can be said to have been formed from these processes.

**Margins**

Critical anthropology is vital to forced migration studies (Sørensen 2003; Indra 1999). Critical analysis of the type in this thesis enables us to question ‘categories’ (such as ‘IDP’) and to consider them as “political constructs produced in and by particular power relations” (Sørensen 2003:1). As a method, ethnography allows us to explore the complex dynamics between different actors in the field, how they are positioned and the implications of these relationships for policy-makers. A significant part of this study deals with history— not only of the ‘displaced’ themselves but also of the communities into which they settle in Kampala, and of the geographical space they occupy. Since the concept of ‘community’ also has a geographical component, understanding settlement patterns and how they evolved over time is equally important.

Studies of forced migrants often assume them to be marginal people. This is because they often occupy spatial hinterlands of host societies and are often among the most resource-poor city-dwellers (Cohen and Deng 1998). Yet to create a research design of ‘forced migrant’ specifically as a study of the ‘marginal’ makes assumptions about social structure that can be unwarranted. Because the ‘margins’ are infinitely negotiated, to aim for ‘the marginal’ is to aim for a moving target. This obscures complex sub-margins within a group such as ‘the landless poor’ and risks assigning marginality to members of populations that have no desire to imagine themselves as
such. Some of the war-affected or displaced northern Ugandans I interviewed occupied relatively privileged positions in their host societies, having managed to continue lucrative professions or travel abroad for their education. Are they marginal? In some ways, they are, but not in others, as this thesis shows.

Methods and ethics

There is no obvious sampling frame for northern Ugandans in Kampala, much less for forced migrants. I chose to work in areas where I was told (and where statistics and historical literature suggested) large numbers of northern Ugandans lived. I lived in a rented room in Banda neighborhood in eastern Kampala and adopted ethnographic methods. These involved participant observation and semi-structured interviews of 45 individuals with whom I had several visits each. I was aided by an assistant, Dorcus Apil, who interpreted between Luo and English for 20 of the interviews. All interviews are listed in appendix A. They are cited in-text with the corresponding code. Frequently, I make reference to individuals across chapters, and have included a list of informants as appendix A for the reader’s reference.

As with Lammers’ 2006 study of urban refugees in Kampala, individuals’ mobility and desire to remain under the radar, as well as the lack of information about the number and location of ‘urban IDPs’ or northern Ugandans made it impossible to create a representative sample. This is not to say that the experiences recounted are entirely haphazard. I believe that a great many northern Ugandans would be able to identify with the narratives presented in this thesis. From these transcribed interviews, I used grounded theory methods to code common themes in response to the interview guide questions listed in appendix B. I complemented these methods with a detailed historical account of Kampala as a receiving site and statistics from Kampala’s census.

While conducting research, I was frequently assumed to be a staff member of a non-governmental organization; passers-by asked me “what good news have you brought us?” My study was on northern Ugandans. Given the ethnic politics and history of Uganda, I had to figure out how to present myself so as not to appear to be bringing benefits to a select (ethnically-defined) group of people. Was I studying “northern Ugandans,” “migrants,” or “urban housing”? I consistently

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6 Average length: 44 minutes for first interview, range: 20-90 minutes. Informed consent was obtained orally for all interviews.
emphasized my role as a student—in which case looking young worked to my great advantage. But I also developed several explanations of my work so as to both minimize suspicions over the fact that, if anyone watched me closely enough, it would become clear that I was mostly interested in northerners, and also to remain truthful as to the purpose of my work. I then explained myself as a student interested in migration—and that in this area I was speaking mostly to northerners because they were the predominant migrant group in the areas where I was observed as working.

It was also important to communicate the findings of this research to local audiences. I agreed to share my thesis with the Centre for Basic Research. I also had a discussion with the director of the Refugee Law Project on what I had observed living among northern Ugandans and implications for their own advocacy work. Most importantly, I shared the preliminary results of my research in my ‘farewell’ meetings with all of my informants.

A final methodological choice I made was to balance the theme-oriented structure of the chapters with in-depth profiles of individual informants. This is in order to present individuals not just as a set of disconnected quotes, but of actual people with life trajectories. Chapters 3, 5, 6 and 7 are introduced through an individual’s story. The following chapter introduces Augustine Ojok, an elderly Acholi man living in Kampala and explores the history of Kampala as a city of migration.
3. **Kampala**

Augustine Ojok is a catechist for the Luo speakers at a church in Biina. He is 78 years old and was educated by the British in Gulu. He has witnessed as much of the Acholi people’s history as a single living person could. At his two room house in Kampala, one of the first things he says about the Acholi people is:

> We in Acholi, we did not yet stay five hundred years (in Uganda)... When they come, they move, they move, they move! (M04)

Augustine believes that the Acholi are a migrating people. While he remains very closely tied to ‘home,’ his comments highlight how individual Acholi people have been migrating within Uganda for centuries, even while maintaining a strong sense of ethnic identity (Atkinson 1994). This is particularly important for studying the effects of a relatively recent conflict on patterns of mobility among northern Ugandans.

Augustine believes that the reason Acholi and Langi and Teso are in Kampala is because of “this war of Lakwena and the government.” However, historical records show that large numbers of northern Ugandans have resided in Kampala since the colonial period. In recent years, many northern Ugandans have come to the city to flee the effects of war. As Augustine put it, “[b]ecause of this war, we are mixed up!” He explained:

> That is why I am also here. Because, at that time, I was also a chairman. LC3 [Local Council sub-county chairperson], the first formal chairman... so they were chasing for me, looking for me so much.
> C: who was looking? Government? Rebels?
> A: at that time it was danger for you, [you] cannot recognize this is government, this is what…but God was helping me (M04).

Recognizing the danger he was in as a local official, he fled Gulu district in the late 1980s:

> my work... was [as] a bricklayer. [I said] ‘I’m going away, I cannot stay in Gulu...I come to Kampala. I’m coming to Kampala’ (M04).

Despite his rough beginnings, Augustine has reached a level of security that many lack. He spent some time breaking rock at the quarries in Kireka, but now he has a strong support network. Of his three children, one has a doctorate and teaches in the United Kingdom, one is a member of...
parliament, and his youngest is finishing his diploma in Kampala. He began work as a catechist at the Catholic church through his personal relation with the church’s European pastor. He pays for Augustine’s rent through the church funds. Augustine owns a plot in Gulu that is about 1.5 square kilometers. “Like from here to Port Bell!” in size, Augustine boasts, and proudly showing me his beans he has grown on his land.

Space/place and forced migration

Kampala, also, is a place of migrants. In 1991, 59 percent of its residents were born outside the district; this percentage decreased to 53 according to the 2002 census (Kampala City Council, 2007:6). This study was conducted in Nakawa division, in the east of the city, in an area known for having a large number of migrants from eastern and northern Uganda. What explains this arrangement?

All migrations entail an outward movement from a place of origin or residence and an inward movement to another location (Van Hear 1998:41). During migrations, “[t]he problems related to deterritorialization are necessarily also problems relating to reterritorialization; the changing status, power and meaning of territories” (Brun 2001:19). Kibreab identifies three significant factors influencing refugees’ decisions about where to live which are also relevant for internally displaced persons. These are attitudes of a ‘host community,’ the policy environment in which refugees find themselves, and the livelihood opportunities available to them in these new locations (Brun 2001:21, quoting Kibreab 1999).

This study argues that livelihood opportunities are largely determined by where one lives in Kampala, especially when a low income rarely allows an individual to move much farther than where he or she can walk, given the costs of public transportation. Therefore, a study of livelihoods must take into account Kampala’s land and housing policies. These are confusing, piecemeal, and differ significantly from practices in northern Uganda. In Kampala, land is constantly contested between the government, the kingdom of Buganda, private developers, and tenant collectives. This results in an acute housing shortage. This is a particular struggle for the urban poor, including many northern Ugandan migrants, and a primary reason that they live in crowded conditions.
This chapter begins by explaining how African ‘migrant’ groups came to be concentrated in east Kampala. It then traces the reasons northern Ugandans migrated to Kampala, and the long-standing networks that received the more recent ‘conflict-related’ migrants. It then gives an overview of the housing situation. This section emphasizes the confusion over Kampala’s tenure and land development policies. These reflect the government’s preoccupation with ‘unplanned’ and ‘mushrooming’ settlements—precisely the areas where many northern Ugandans arriving in Kampala initially live. This chapter introduces the field sites where the research was conducted. It then explores how northern Ugandans assess the neighborhoods where they live and move, which is important background to understanding ‘community’ formation and stratification.

**Kampala’s beginnings**

On 12 September 2009, I sat in a taxi with nineteen of Kampala’s daytime population of three million. I was making my way to the east of the city—away from the riots. Ronald Mutesi, the kabaka (king) of the Buganda kingdom, had been stopped from visiting what he claimed were his subjects in the restive Bunyoro area of Kayunga. The government claimed that he was being protected from threats on his life from Bunyoro separatists. The Baganda claimed this move was a thinly-veiled attempt by Museveni’s government to curb Buganda’s political authority. Baganda youths took to the streets in protest; looters took advantage of the situation to attack shops. The government ordered the closing of pro-Buganda radio stations, arresting the kabaka’s information minister. The police crackdowns resulted in at least 27 deaths (Human Rights Watch, 2010). The ensuing days were violent and tense. No one was moving. Taxis were losing business. A frustrated driver told me, “[t]his is the worst violence since 1986!”

To understand Kampala, one must understand Buganda political organization, and something of the ethnicization of space. Kampala has been the administrative capital of the kingdom since at least the mid-1850s. The first recorded kabaka, Kintu, began to organize this primarily agricultural people over 700 years ago into a polity of sub-divided chief-tainties. Though theoretically all land belonged to the kabaka, an elaborate tenure system granted administrative rights to various batongole (‘chiefs’), who held life-time rights over estates. By the time the British made contact with Buganda in the mid-1850s, the Baganda were divided into fifty-two different clans. Each was headed by a batongole empowered to grant individual Baganda rights to be buried in particular plots of land (Mukiibi-Katende 2003:15). Bakopi (individual peasants)
were generally entitled to undisturbed occupation and use of land and its produce, and were able to sub-rent it.

In 1890, the British East India Company dispatched Captain Lugard to set up a trading camp on the banks of Lake Victoria. He and his contingent chose Old Kampala Hill, in the west of present-day Kampala (Kendall 1955: 19). This site rapidly became congested, and European settlement expanded eastward to Nakasero Hill. British commercial success grew during this time, prompting the British parliament to approve a declaration of Protectorate over Buganda in 1894. In 1899, Sir Harry Johnston was appointed Special Commissioner to Buganda to formalize a system whereby the British would remain formally in control of the Protectorate while allowing Buganda domination of southern Uganda. For example, as Roberts notes, the Ankole had long been raided by the Baganda for cattle. The British consolidated the strength of Buganda as a method of extending their Protectorate, bolstering the Buganda against their regional enemies and allowing them to expand (1962: 445).

With respect to territorial rights, the agreement distinguished between royal Buganda lands and land under colonial control. Within Baganda territory, the agreement divided land in a system akin to a British feudal system. In the first category were the freehold lands. These were lands that could be owned by organizations (such as churches) or individuals, were owned in perpetuity, and for which a certificate or title was issued by the British authorities. This system was common throughout Uganda, but particularly in the east and western parts of the colony. Secondly, there were mailo lands (derived from the English word “mile”). These were related to freehold lands in that they were owned in perpetuity according to a title, but they were only found in Buganda. This land was owned privately by noble families of Buganda, and rented out in small parcels to small-scale farmers and peasants. In total, 1003 square miles were given as the official royal estates: the kabaka was granted 350 of these, and the rest was divided among ministers and county chiefs. As Mukiibi-Katende notes, this privileged a certain segment of Baganda society, namely the kabaka, the three chief ministers, twenty chiefs and original one thousand nobles who received one square mile each under the terms of the agreement (2003:17-8). The remainder of Buganda essentially had to pay two forms of tax to be able to continue using Buganda land—the busuulu, a government-mandated income tax, and the envujjo—a tax paid directly to mailo landlords (Mukiibi-Katende 2003:18). These mailo landowners thus constituted an important political force in Buganda, and would often sub-divide their lands into small plots for sale. The
British perceived this system to be quite ‘disorderly.’ This which would be a point of contention in the mid-1950s, when the kabaka-ship was officially abolished by the colonial regime.

With regard to Kampala in particular, the 1900 agreement gave the city its dual character as both the centre of Buganda power and the commercial capital of the British protectorate. As Calas explains, there were two parallel legal orders with “the European norm [as] the basis of the public town, whereas the African norm determines the shape of the private town” (1998:55). These were supposed to be complementary, yet in reality were conflictual, because the urban ideologies of the British and the Buganda elite became irreconcilable.

Initially, the colonial regime had a strategic interest in facilitating Buganda control of large parts of the Protectorate beyond the royal capital (kibuga). As Roberts explains, “[o]nce the British were established in Buganda, their preferred method of consolidating their position on the Upper Nile was simply to enlarge Buganda” (1962:435). In that way Buganda obtained, between 1894 and 1900, control over southern Bunyoro and other areas of the country. Under the kabaka Mutesa (1857-84), there had been an expansion of the power of the kabaka through the creation of batongole (a “landed and peripatetic agency supervising the bakungu, the appointed territorial chiefs”) and the creation of a standing army and navy (Roberts 1962:437). Thus, Buganda provided an administratively efficient model which the British were able to appropriate, at least on paper. As Roberts explains:

[The British, then, were presented in Buganda with both personnel and a form of government easily adaptable to the limited purposes of British overrule… Buganda was ruled by literate officials, headed by a katikkiro or prime minister, by whom the values inculcated by the missionaries were indissolubly linked to success in the new era… With the formalization of the lukiiko, or gathering of the more important chiefs, as a council of defined membership and regular sessions, Buganda offered the British a model for native administration such as they had not encountered elsewhere in Africa (1962:437-8).

Though the British relationship with Buganda was the prototype of a colonial policy of indirect rule, the Baganda themselves also benefited from this relationship. This might be accurately called symbiotic imperialism, because the empire was able to expand through Southern Uganda, to include large parts of Bunyoro and Busoga.

7 “la norme européenne fonde la ville publique, alors que la norme africaine façonne la ville privée”
From the 1919 Kampala Planning Scheme, it is evident that colonial officials did not conceive of a role for Africans settling outside of the kibuga, i.e. in British-administered Kampala township. Of the zones identified on the map, none mentions ‘African’ settlement. European and Asian trading and residential areas are marked, with the remaining land divided between an officially uninhabited ‘green belt zone’ and ‘proposed public open spaces’ (Figure 3A). By 1913, the township had attracted large numbers of Asian traders. A memorandum by noted British planning
expert Professor Simpson recommended a policy to rationalize settlement in the city in order to avoid overcrowding and poor sanitation. This included a measure of racial separation between Asian and European areas of the city. A Central Town Planning Board was created in 1918 to codify this process (Calas 1998:63). As Simpson noted:

[T]he importance of the subject lies in its bearing on the health and prosperity of the town… Owing to the wonderful development of the country, and the paucity of officers, there has been no time to prepare a well considered plan of the town, from a health point of view, into separate quarters for Europeans and Indians, divided by a neutral belt on which neither can encroach with buildings (quoted in Kendall 1955:20).

Hardly a haphazard development, this cordon sanitaire was justified as part of a British colonial ideology of how to best ensure the prosperity of the city. The trading areas, too, are demarcated separately by race, though they are clustered more closely together. However, given concern with racial separation and the rational development, it is notable that Africans are not mentioned in this map, probably, I argue, because they were designated to the kibuga. Indeed, Henry Kendall, the director of Town Planning in Uganda in 1955 explained that there was an intent in 1919 to create a plan for the city that would involve, “separating the residential areas of the three principal races from each other” (1955: 21). However, Africans do not seem to have been incorporated into this final plan. As Calas notes, “the planners were interested solely in the spatial relations between whites and Indians; the place of blacks [sic] was regulated by exclusion” (1998:64).

**Kampala expands—the 1930 plan**

By 1930, the expansion of the city was so rapid that a consultant was called in to give advice. A. E. Mirams, a British land valuer, assessed the layout of Kampala to make it more orderly. His first report in 1929 is a flowery condemnation of ‘unreasonable’ development, and demonstrates the British colonial preoccupation with rationalizing the town:

Kampala… is a town of seven hills, and is a strange mixture of the delightful and the hideous… On the other hand the valleys of death-dealing swamp, covered with papyrus and traversed by sluggish streams, brickfields and “borrow” pits like ulcerous growths…It is by these and other signs that one is made to realise how terrible are the ravages created when our so-called civilisation forces its way uncontrolled into the heart of a new country… this state of chaos and almost licensed breach of all reasonable development (quoted in Kendall 1955, 22).
The 1930 plan produced from Mirams’ assessment was the first to designate African areas within Kampala city township, outside of the *kibuga*. Yet as the map indicates, these were on the edges of the township (Figure 3B). The area for “African railway employees,” for example, is south of the railroad tracks and rather isolated from the centre of the township at Nakasero. The area in the east marked “artisans quarters” would later expand into full-fledged estates to house African workers.

However, as Calas notes, Mirams rejected the idea that Africans could be fully integrated into the city. He noted that “[a]n African laborer is a strange person, to a certain extent nomadic in habits and independent to an extraordinary degree and as such providing family housing for him in town would be a far-fetched position” (1998:65). The result evolved into a racial geography that isolated African workers to the east of the city, as the 1951 plan would show.
Though there has always been labor migration in Africa (van Dijk et al. 2001), migration to Buganda accelerated under British colonial rule because of two factors. The first was the creation of a road system and the second was the development of the railways and port sector which needed to be staffed, and for which special recruitment agencies were developed (Dak 1968:1). By 1950, Kampala had evolved in such a way that there was a contradiction between, on one hand, the restrictive construction norms of the township and the unparalleled urban growth of the city, and on the other, the colonial laissez-faire policy of leaving African settlement to the kibuga and Buganda lukiiko (parliament) to determine (Calas 1998:68).

The 1951 Kampala Outline Scheme recognized argued that housing practices should be regulated, and that specific areas should be set aside for ‘Africans’ to live so as to accommodate the growing number of rural-urban migrants working in the port and railroad sectors. Thus, the first African ‘townships’ were established in 1948 at Kiswa, Bugolobi, Naguru, and Nakawa in the east. In Nakawa and Naguru, African laborers lived in buildings of several stories with small rooms equipped with common kitchens. About fifteen such buildings were aligned around a common square, where there were bathing facilities. It is notable that the first set of African housing complexes was constructed not by the colonial authorities, but by the Uganda Railways and Harbours Company (Calas 1998: 69), who owned a large number of these settlements. This demonstrates that the question of where to “settle” Africans was bound up with rationalizing the workforce that had expanded to serve colonial industries. Furthermore, the creation of Nakawa and Naguru estates precedes by several years the Colonial Office’s Memorandum on Housing in British African Territories, which would set a standard for accommodating African laborers in all British African colonies (Calas 1998:71).

After World War II, Kampala’s rapid expansion had dwarfed the kibuga, expanding around the royal palaces at Mengo in present-day west Kampala, and accelerating urbanization in the peri-urban areas of Buganda control (Southall and Gutkind 1957:4). Given the city’s expansion, the British thus sought to extend the territory over which they had control beyond that which was agreed in the 1902 agreement. The Buganda kingdom was suspicious over this encroachment into royal affairs, and feared losing its territory, piece by piece. The parliament of Buganda responded by passing several acts to regularize settlement in royal territories, thereby demonstrating that it
could deal with the rapid urbanization of Kampala without British colonial input. Prominent among these was the Buganda Town Planning Law (1947) and the Land Acquisition Law (1945). Furthermore, the lukiiko-ordained Town Planning Board advocated closer incorporation of commercial spaces of the kibuga into the township (Calas 1998:78-9). These set new regulations upon the ‘customary’ tenure system negotiated in the 1900 agreement, including provisions for the expropriation of mailo territories for public use (Southall and Gutkind 1956:5-6; Calas 1998:119). These measures provoked riots among some of Buganda’s subjects, in particular, the local mailo landowners who had developed their land hap-hazardly and wanted to keep it that way. As Calas notes, the “private appropriation of under-equipped territory, the morphological disorder of land parcels, the predominant precariousness of buildings which is simultaneously compatible with social fluidity [of the kibuga], and the frequency of intra-urban agriculture are the characteristics that differentiate the kibuga from the whole eastern part of the township” (1998:81).

**Northern Ugandan migration to Kampala—the early decades**

This was the situation to which large numbers of Acholi and Langi migrated during the colonial era to serve as labor for the colonial administration and its affiliated industries. According to Dak, this rise in migration was due to two factors. The first was the development of transport facilities between areas of emigration and immigration, including the extension of railway line to Lira in 1959 (Dak 1968:89). The second was the active partnership of the colonial government and associations of employers to recruit migrants to colonial industries, such as the railway and shipping industries. Such industries favored single male workers, and thus recruitment targeted young men. According to a 1931 census, single male migrants were 3,025 or 73.4 percent of total Acholi migrants, and accounted for about 4.8 percent of all Acholi males that year (Dak 1968:87).

Dak concludes that Acholi migration was motivated mainly by economic concerns. Is this a warranted assumption? Dak’s analysis is based on census data that did not interrogate migrants’ reasons for coming to the city. Yet his conclusion seems well-supported. The industrial boom in Kampala between 1959 and 1969 attracted large numbers of migrants who settled in the ‘African

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8 “Appropriation privée du sol, sous-équipement, désordre morphologique et parcellaire, précarité dominante du bâti cependant compatible avec une certaine mixité sociale, fréquence de l'agriculture intra-urbaine sont les caractéristiques différenciatives du kibuga par rapport à l'ensemble oriental du township”
estates.' Kampala more than doubled its population and as Hirst notes, over two-thirds of the African population was born outside the city, according to the 1969 census (1975:321).

There, social networks of co-ethnics were integral to determining where individuals settled, leading to the ethnicization of particular areas of the city:

[i]f ... searching for a residence is dependent upon the decisions made by earlier migrants from the same place of origin, then migrants from the same rural areas are likely to become associated with particular urban neighborhoods. This is especially probable if there is an acute housing shortage: in such a situation, the migrant, if he moves at all from his initial location, is likely to move to the resident of another friend or relative in the city (Hirst 1975: 320).

Hirst calculates the density and intensity of the Acholi population living in Kampala using 1969 census data (Figure 3C). (Langi and other northern Ugandans are not included in his analysis). He uses a definition of density as the number of persons in a given group per square mile and intensity as the percentage of a given group in the total African population. His analysis uses ‘birthplace’ as a marker for origin, since ‘ethnicity’ was not a variable in the 1969 census.

His map of Acholi settlement shows a convergence of intensity and density of Acholi migrants at Kawempe, Kiswa, Lubiri, Nsambya, Mbuya, and Luzira. His map also shows an intensity of Acholi settlement in Naguru and Nakawa parishes. Hirst affirms that “[t]his residential pattern… reflects segregation by occupation coupled with the provision of official housing quarters by the police, armed forces, prisons and railways …” (326). Indeed, there is still a police barracks at Kiswa, a military barracks at Mbuya, and Uganda’s largest prison at Luzira. Naguru estates and

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9 The number and boundaries of Uganda’s districts have ranged widely. Under the Uganda protectorate, Acholi sub-division comprised the modern-day districts of Pader, Kitgum, Amuru, and Gulu. Lango sub-division comprised Oyam, Lira, Apac, Amolatar, and Dokolo districts.
Nakawa estates, as previously discussed, attracted large numbers of northern Ugandan migrants during the colonial period. Northern Ugandans were specifically recruited into the armed and police forces and continue to be highly represented in the security guard industry, which likely explains the ‘marked residential clustering’ Hirst observed (1975: 327).

But is this still the case? The areas of residential clustering of Acholi are essentially unchanged in that Acholi continue to be concentrated in Nakawa division, with pockets of residence in areas around prisons and barrack—indeed, many of these areas are popularly known as ‘Acholi quarters.’ The overall percentage of northerners in Kampala is still small. According to the 1991 census, Acholi made up 2.6 percent of Kampala’s residents and Langi, 1.56 percent. However, in Nakawa division in eastern Kampala, the division with the highest concentration of Acholi and Langi, Acholi make up 6.7 percent of its residents and Langi make up 3.97 percent. The top four parishes with the largest percentages of Acholi residents were Naguru II (15.8 percent), Nakawa (15.7 percent), Institute of Teacher Education at Kyambogo (13.45 percent), and Luzira Prisons (11.13 percent). All of these are in Nakawa division. Exact replication of Hirst’s analysis is not possible, given the differences between the coding systems of the 1969 and 1991 census. However, the overlap of high concentrations of Acholi between the 1969 and 1991 census suggests that these neighborhoods continued to receive large numbers of northern Ugandan migrants over decades.

Post-independence confusion and contention

After independence, the government’s approach to housing in Kampala was far less systematic than it had been during the final decades of British rule. As Onoria notes:

The new governments did not rely on rural-urban migration controls symptomatic of the colonial period through by-laws. Instead, they shoved the poor to the underdeveloped portions of Kampala and other townships, thereby keeping them away from the affluent... Secondly, the nature of the land tenure was primarily of a dual character, that is, public land and mailo land, with the latter in the hands of a few landlords who had (and to-date have) no interest in the land and were happy to let shanty structures mushroom on the land and collect rent on it (2007:13-14).

10 There are many ‘Acholi quarters’ in the Kampala area. The most famous of these is Kireka, just over the Kampala’s eastern boundary in Wakiso district.
11 I was unable to obtain the 2002 census data from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics despite repeated efforts. Any future analyses of settlement patterns of northern Ugandan migrants in Kampala should incorporate this data.
By contrast, the city centre area including Nakasero and Kololo, which were previously the British colonial administration’s headquarters, housed government officials (Onoria 2007:14). The parastatal National Housing and Construction Corporation, incorporated in 1974, created many flats to accommodate civil servants. The first Kampala housing plan was created in 1978. It intended to upgrade low-income housing structures. It succumbed to the general economic collapse under Idi Amin, ushered in by the expulsion of south Asians from Uganda and the subsequent violence during the Okello and Obote regimes.

Museveni’s National Resistance Movement seized control of Kampala and the government in 1986. Once in power, they continued to liberalize control over land. In the 1992 National Shelter Strategy, for example, the government claimed a ‘facilitator’ and ‘enabler’ approach to an essentially market-driven housing policy, in line with the World Bank-mandated structural adjustment programs of Museveni’s first years in office. More and more housing complexes were thus snapped up by the private sector.
and resold or rented at greater profit to the affluent (Onoria 2007:17).

The sale of land to private developers made renting increasingly difficult for the urban poor. Currently, the annual housing needs from Kampala city are about 9,500 units for new households. The Ugandan government estimates a backlog of over 52,000 units (Onoria 2007: 13). As under the British, the discourse around Kampala city’s development still reflects a general opinion that the city ‘needs better regulation.’ Confusion reigns in Kampala over who controls the use of land and to what ends. The overlapping jurisdictions of government and non-state regulatory bodies are framed as a “problem” for the development of the city. The Kampala City Council (KCC), for example, laments its “underdeveloped settlements” and condemns the “illegal structures” that crop up on land over which ownership is contested. The problem, according to some analysts, is that there are too many authorities regulating land. The KCC Land Board, the national government, religious institutions, and schools all dispense land (Rulekere 2006) in addition to the Buganda Land Board.13

Given the increasing privatization of Kampala’s land, questions of “legality” of occupancy are prominent in Kampala. For example, the Land Act of 1998 recognizes “lawful” owners of the

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12 Citing in the inefficiency of Kampala City Council in governing the city, the Ugandan Parliament has been considering controversial changes to the administrative structure of the city which would be more closely tied to the executive branch of government. The New Vision reported a controversial proposal in December 2007: “[a]ccording to a Cabinet memorandum…Kampala will have a metropolitan planning authority and an executive director appointed by the President.” Further developments included that the president would appoint the Chief Executive Officer of Kampala on the advice of the Public Service Commission. The CEO would be “answerable to the local government minister and responsible for implementation of lawful [Kampala city] council decisions, presentation of annual budget to the council, advising the mayor and council on government policy, overseeing delivery of quality services to the population within the city. He or she will also have powers over physical planning, infrastructure development, transport systems, land management including allocation of land, road construction and revenue collection and management” (Osike, 2007). This development particularly disturbed Buganda authorities. The kingdom enjoys wide support among the majority Baganda residing in Kampala, and the proposal seems to place more authority in the hands of the president at the expense of the kabaka. This is ironic for a government committed to decentralization. As of 2009, the Minister of Local Government Adolph Mwesige said that the cabinet had approved a revised bill and it is awaiting Parliamentary approval. Mwesige defended the government takeover as ensuring a cleaner and better managed city (UGPulse 2009).

13 The current relationship between the Buganda kingdom and the National Resistance Movement regime is contentious. As of June 2009, the kingdom has declared that it will resist Kampala local government’s attempts to expand into the neighbouring districts of Mukono and Wakiso, until it recognizes formally that Kampala is still part of Buganda kingdom (UGPulse 2009). The Constitution currently does not list Kampala as part of the kingdom’s territory. The central government is preparing to assume authority over the city from the local government (Kampala City Council). In his statement, the kingdom’s Deputy Information Minister Seggona expressed concern that the city authorities would expand Kampala’s territory to assume control over important Buganda symbols: Kasubi Tombs, Lubiri Palace and Buganda’s administration headquarters in Mengo.
land, as well as “bonafide” owners (residents of more than twelve years) and “illegal occupants” (squatters). The 1998 Land Act also aimed to increase security of tenure by commodifying the land market, and reducing the government’s role in shelter provision.

In this context, the situation for the urban poor is difficult. Kampala is a city of renters. According to the 2002 census, 69 percent of Kampala’s households rented their dwellings, and only 22 percent owned the property on which they lived (Kampala City Council 2007:34). Evictions on false premises are common, and a large estimated percentage of Kampala’s workforce resides outside the city. Overcrowding is a persistent problem among low-income residents. Still, Kampala’s residents continue to find their own ways to organize urban space outside of formal regulations, such as occupying public land, undeveloped mailo land, wetlands and any other ‘free’ space (Rulekere 2006). One field site of this study, the Kirombe area of Butabika, is built on former wetlands, a mix of public and mailo lands where informal settlements are generally ignored. These are flood-prone and ecologically fragile areas. The Kampala City Council found that between 1994 and 2000, 55 percent of Kampala’s 2,889.9 hectares of wetland had people dwelling on it. Wetlands are crucial for natural filtration of sullied runoff water pouring into Lake Victoria – the source of the city’s piped water supply (Butagira 2010).

**Research sites**

Walking in Kampala involves a lot of climbing. Originally the city of seven hills, it has expanded to include over twenty-five hills. From 300,000 residents in 1962, the capital city officially now hosts 1.8 million, and twice as many during the day due to commuters (Butagira 2010). The topography of hills and valleys makes it impossible not to notice the disparities in relative wealth. Wealthier, higher-income estates cluster on hills in the centre, with lower-income housing concentrated on low-lying government estate lands, and ever-expanding municipal borders.
Over six months, I conducted 45 in-depth interviews\(^\text{14}\) while participating as much as possible in the life of the community in two main research sites known to have high concentrations of northern Ugandan residents. Area 1 encompasses Butabika, Mutungo, Luzira and Mbuya II parishes. Area 1 covers the neighborhoods of Mbuya, Kirombe, Mutungo, Biina, and Luzira.

The second research site, Area 2, encompasses Naguru II and Naguru I parishes. Area 2 covers the neighborhoods of Naguru go-down, Kasenke, Naguru estates, and Naguru Hill.

Together, areas 1 and 2 accounted for 34 of the 39 informants (Figure 3G). The remaining five northern Ugandans are dispersed across distinctly more affluent areas of Nakasero in the Central division, Mulago and Wandegeya in Kawempe division, and Tank Hill and Ggaba in Makindye division.

\(^{14}\) Thirty-nine of these are with northern Ugandans, six with key informants from other regions.
The two neighborhoods with the largest number of informants—Naguru go-down (area 1) and Kirombe (area 2) were both considered “slums” by the Kampala City Council before its dissolution. Yet they are different in some important ways. Kirombe is less crowded, more “quiet,” generally regarded as being a “step up” on the spatial ladder. Naguru is known as being “high crime” and densely packed with higher levels of unemployment. However, Naguru appears to have more NGO activity than Kirombe.

Naguru (area 1) used to be an area of housing estates owned by the government with buildings dating to the 1940s. The go-down area flanks the right side of the Lugogo Bypass, and is wedged in the valley between Kololo hill to the west and Naguru hill to the northeast. A local council chairperson in go-down told me that he considers its residents ‘squatters’ on KCC land. When asked who owned the land, he replied:

The land is for Kampala City Council. So us now we are squatters (K03).

15 These two neighborhoods alone accounted for 21 of the 39 interviewees.
I asked if this ever caused any problems with local government. His reply was somewhat resigned:

when they want to develop the area, they have to compensate you…you look where you can go.

He remarked that go-down had not yet had any forced evictions, but that he anticipated them:

I think like ten years from now, or about eight years.

C: what do you think shall happen in ten years?

LC: maybe they will have to compensate us and we shall leave… Because you cannot stop a development. When they want to develop the city, maybe we shall go to Mukono, Lugazi, Mpigi, Wakiso. Because Wakiso, Mukono, they are neighboring Kampala city (K03).

The area of Naguru estates, however, is now highly contested. The government is trying to sell overlapping parts of it to developers, resulting in a fiscal scandal. One resident of go-down since the late 1980s remembered that Naguru used to be much less crowded, because much of the land was owned by a coffee plantation. But now, he said, the area is slated for development, testifying to the rapid development of the land by private investors and the uncertain future that its residents would face (M16). I asked its residents if they were worried about being evicted. Most of these seem more preoccupied with questions of how to pay the rent than who has the right to own land. Though many in Naguru go-down did not fear immediate eviction, the recent struggles between tenants and private developers in Naguru estates were a cause for concern, especially since the evictions in Naguru estates often occurred hastily and with little compensation to those evicted.

At first, I found Naguru to be a maze of gutters and alleyways impossible to navigate, with houses with almost no discernible boundaries. Daizy Tian was my first contact in Naguru. A broad and self-assured woman, she seems to know and greet everyone she passes. The forty degree angles of many of the paths into the valley are challenging after a rain, when most people walk with their kikoy or pant trousers raised and their eyes on the ground. Walking in go-down involves avoiding large piles of refuse and bottles, condom wrappers, torn sheets of textbooks, ducks, and other objects of urban life.\textsuperscript{16} Collections of young women braid hair and chat. Men

\textsuperscript{16} Field notes 30.09.09.
who look generally to be loitering eat *chapattis*, shine shoes, talk or listen to the radio.\(^\text{17}\) People discuss in a mix of Luo and Luganda—this is a mixed neighborhood.

I first ventured to Kirombe (area 2) to attend a church service. I had become friendly with an Acholi security guard at a hostel where I was staying during my first few days. He told me that if I wanted to find northern Ugandans, I should come with him to a Catholic church in the Biina area. Butabika parish, in which Kirombe is located, feels less crowded than Naguru go-down. My research assistant and I came across the Local Council 1 secretary for one of the neighborhoods. Ambrose greeted us, and we spent an hour discussing the area’s land policies. While Butabika is considered public land, he remarked that:

> the Baganda still complain that this is *mailo* land.\(^\text{18}\)

Most of it is owned by private land owners. It used to be *mailo* land, but part of Butabika was given by the *kabaka* to the government for the building of a hospital. Ambrose comes from the east of Uganda, and I asked him why he believed that there were many northerners and easterners living in Nakawa division. His theory is the early independence government sought to fill positions for industrial labor with this population:

> [t]he Baganda, they all wanted administrative positions, so we were left with this work…In Kirombe here, the people are many because of the factories nearby.\(^\text{19}\)

Indeed, Nakawa division remains a very industrial place. Many of the car-dealing industries are along the Kampala-Jinja road, which goes through Nakawa to the east. He mentioned also that Butabika used to be largely a swamp area, so land was relatively cheap to buy from the few Baganda who were living here.

Butabika is being heavily built now, especially on the waterfront area of Kirombe. According to Ambrose, you cannot dig more than three feet before you hit groundwater. Still, the area comprises many mud and tin roofs houses as in Naguru, but intermixed with gated plots, owned by wealthier individuals. One of my informants took me to her afternoon dance practice on such a plot. Every Sunday, about 25 to 30 northern Ugandan men and women gather there to rehearse

\(^{17}\) Field notes 10.9.09.  
\(^{18}\) Field notes 17.09.09.  
\(^{19}\) Field notes 17.09.09.
Acholi songs and dances (Figure 3I). They regularly serve as hired performers for weddings and other events, making a sum of money that is, in theory, distributed among the members.

**Finding “a good place”**

There is a long history of northern Ugandans living in Kampala. This most recent phase of migration began in the late 1980s after the NRM takeover of Kampala, and the escalation of the conflict against the LRA. It is in this phase, also, that discourses of marginal spaces (slums) and marginal people (northern Ugandans) coincide. There is tendency to view slum areas in Kampala as under-developed and housing the marginal people. The presence of ‘urban IDPs,’ and northerners more generally, in Kampala is blamed not only for overcrowding in Kampala, but for the poverty of their home region. For example, during a drought-related food shortage in northern Uganda in 2009, a letter to the editor in *The New Vision* complained that “rural-urban migration (is) causing famine.” The author argued that the reason that the famine was so acute in the north was that the region lacks manpower in the agricultural sector, because all northern youths are descending to Kampala in droves, where they become “idlers in towns like Kampala, Mbale, and Masaka” (*The New Vision* 2009).

By analyzing how northern Ugandans spoke about different areas of Kampala, it is clear that northerners “descending” on Kampala are far from idle. Even displaced persons make complex decisions about where to stay, though the range of ‘choices’ available to them differs (and is analyzed in Chapter 6). People often spoke of trying to “upgrade” and find “a good place” in Kampala. But what is “a good place”? 
As is typical in rural-urban migration (Gugler 2002), where individuals settle depends significantly on income. Wealthier northerners are relatively scattered across Kampala, whereas lower-income migrants cluster in slum areas. I asked comparatively wealthy individuals why there are so many Acholi in east Kampala, and in particular, in Kireka. Rachel Odong is an elderly, retired educator who currently living at one of her family’s homes in Kampala. She opined:

It is easy to get into a slum area in Kampala when you are coming from up-country and you have no job. And there are some Acholi people who have been there for a long time, doing some pottery work, as potters… They would go to them before they settle (F06).

She added, however:

there are many Acholi who are professionals…they are all over Kampala (F06).

On the ‘non-professional’ northerners living in east Kampala, she stated:

they are very much displaced, they are just as displaced as the people in the camps. Sometimes it’s worse…Most of these people in Acholi Quarters, who’ve run from the village to Acholi Quarters, no one is helping them…The few people who are working in Kampala are overwhelmed, however much they might have wanted to help the displaced people in Kampala. They can’t. Because the cost of living is also very high now…so unless someone is really close to them, they can’t manage, they have to think of their family first (F06).

Frequently, individuals would talk of ‘upgrading’ from an initial experience living in Kireka to their current neighborhood of residence (F01, M04, F07, F08). What makes a place better, however, varied according to people’s early experiences in the city. Many living in Kirombe, for example, had tried to get a place in Kireka, but ultimately decided against settling there because it was overcrowded, as Vita and Janine did:

V: Kirombe is a good place, thieves are not so much here.
C: so you did not want to go to Kireka, Acholi quarters?
V: There the land was full we went and they could not take us…some went to Biina, some to Mutungo…we are so many here (in Kirombe)
J: yes, it is a good place. There is no disturbance here (F07, F08).
Furthermore, “a good place” was one where she could feel relatively comfortable among other northerners and easterners:

V: the rest of us (gesturing to the compound) we are tribemates, there is only one different person who is a Muteso. So we can share things among us. If I get something, we share with another one. So it makes life better.

C: would you share also if people were not from your tribe?

V: with the Mugandans… they don’t have the spirit of sharing. You see they want to eat from you and not give you also…They call us that we are ‘wanyongo’… so they call us, we are the ‘refugees’ (F07).

Augustine started working at St. James church in 1994, leaving Kireka and settling in the Biina area.

And the life in Kireka is still very difficult up to now…because the toilets, house, noise! And I said ‘no, I cannot continue like this’… here [Biina] is quiet, there, people are packed so many… [in Kireka] it is like camp! (M04).

Not all reviled Kireka as overcrowded. For many, the safety of Kireka outweighed concerns about sanitation and overcrowding. This perception of safety was due to networks of co-ethnics, and was common both among people who had lived there and people who had never set foot there (F01, M05, M06, F01, M04). Yet what makes a place ‘safe,’ however, cannot be simply assumed. Vita and Janine spoke of life being “better” because she shared her compound with tribemates. There can be safety, however, in ‘blending in’ to a diverse neighborhood. Lawrence lives in Biina. His landlord is from western Uganda, his neighbors are Baganda:

[s]o we are mixed up in that place. That’s why we are not scared yet, because we are mixed up (M06).

Paul owns a shop in Kireka— a small establishment with large open sacks of dry goods and the assorted Royco meat flavorings, toilet paper, light bulbs, and other common goods. I had accompanied Dorcus, my research assistant, to Kireka as she had to discuss some family affairs with her sister living there. Paul was interested in my work. Peter had moved from Naguru go-down to Kireka two years ago. He is eager to tell me that he “upgraded” because there was “more space here” and it is “quieter here”:

I was tired of renting so I got some little capital together [and built this house]. The problem of Naguru is a problem of leadership…They are reluctant, and shy. They are
not able to enforce order. Young men, they have no jobs, they just sit and drink and make trouble in Naguru. Just three weeks ago, a young man was killed in the day, like this [shaking his head]. At least here, it is quieter.\(^{20}\)

James Okech lives in Mbuya. Coming back to Kampala from Kenya, he says:

I had to struggle very hard…this was in Naguru Go-Down. [I] stayed there, but then, I was looking for opportunities to be able to get some money myself (M05).

Through his own networking, he made 50,000 UGX designing art for a home, and using this money, decided to find a better place to live:

I looked for a new place, to Kireka, stayed there…it was safer…Naguru, even the camera which I had brought along with me and many small documents that I had prepared… Were all stolen. Everything, everything. So I didn’t like it…it’s a very rough community (M05).

After some problems between the landlord and James’ wife, he went to neighboring Banda:

I would have even stayed there, the problem is, you know, I hope you understand. The problem is struggling so much, some lazy people think you are getting a lot and they make life difficult (M05).

He and his wife and children paid 50,000 UGX for a larger room, even managing to rent a small workshop. His landlord cut electricity, and when James went to complain to the Local Council official. The landlord said, ‘why don’t you move away, if you don’t like us.’

Perceptions of vulnerability and safety seem to be the primary concern of individuals in choosing a living space. But what was considered “safe” depended on individuals’ early experiences in Kampala. For example, others, such as Peter, who lived in Naguru viewed it as a relatively “good place” because it is safe:

Naguru I would say is a good place to live. Because majority of people here speak my local language.

C: do people assist each other here?

P: well it depends on the type of assistance. Like me if my children [or I] are not here, I can request a neighbor ‘please send one of your boys to go and sleep in my room [so it is not empty].’ That is already an assistance I am talking of (M09).

\(^{20}\) Field notes, 9.9.09.
He went on to discuss crime in Naguru, but thought that he could insulate himself fairly well based on the networks of neighbors he had constructed.

Judith, also, had lived in Kireka, but had moved to Naguru when she moved in with her husband.

C: So how is [Naguru] go-down compared to Kireka?

J: here, life generally is not easy. It’s difficult, even in Kireka. It is almost the same thing. It is difficult. But because in Kireka, some times they could even bring many beads, I would make for them, but here they are few. They bring not so much for me to make for them. But the only thing I feel is that I’m secure. Because in this place? I’m alone in this place. Alone like this, I don’t have any disturbance as I was staying with the sister of my grandmother (F23).

It is clear that people choose to settle in a place that they can afford, based on personal considerations of physical security and comfort with co-ethnics. “A good place” means something slightly different to everyone, but generally it is a safe and quiet place where family or co-ethnics are. The margin of choice in type and area of accommodation, however, varied on a number of factors discussed in Chapter 6, the most important of which was income. Despite clustering in particular areas of Kampala, Northern Ugandans migrants move between different neighborhoods. This has affects for the kinds of communities that they form. Kireka, for example, had opportunities that were not as available in other neighborhoods as Judith noted with reference to the bead-making groups. As relates to community formation, is there any sustained interaction across spatial and class boundaries? This is addressed in chapters 4 and 5. These distinctions become important when discussing how living in different places affects access to social groups and opportunities, as the next three chapters show.
4. Managing

Northern Ugandans living in Kampala construct distinctions among themselves, sometimes subtle and often stark, by speaking in terms of “managing” and “not managing.” This chapter explores this discourse—using the lens of access to understand how individuals cope with life in the city and the inequalities that are reproduced in that process. I developed this framework by coding instances in which informants mentioned the following: manage, managing, cope, coping, rich, poor, class, better (off), worse (off), suffer, and suffering. The definition that emerged has three components: managing as gaining access to a specific desired good, managing as generally keeping a decent standard of living, and managing as the ability to travel between ‘home’ (northern Uganda) and Kampala.

Managing as access to material or social goods

David has a well-paid job as an NGO consultant. He lives in Kampala and was eager to give his opinions about northerners living in the city:

coming from Gulu, you need to know where the cheapest market is…because you are not in the class of people who are financially endowed enough to manage urban life, without a farm (M03).

The first component of managing has to do with access. Peluso and Ribot (2001) define access as the “ability to derive benefit from things.” In the case of northern Ugandans living in Kampala, the ‘things’ of interest, on which they spend energy, time and money trying to gain, are reliable housing, places at school for themselves or their children, paid and consistent jobs, and thereby, sustainable incomes. “Managing” in this context means when individuals are able to benefit from opportunities they know exist. These opportunities include funds or scholarships from NGOs, rental assistance from churches, jobs offered by influential individuals.

A capital assets framework is useful for analyzing this first definition of managing. Rakodi explains this framework in the context of studies of poverty:

Key elements in determining …the factors which enable some to flourish, others to cope and others barely to survive include…the portfolio of assets
held by a household and the social relation of production and power within it, which influence its capacity to take advantage of opportunities, the distribution of material resources amongst its members, the gender division of labor, and the internal distribution of welfare outcomes (1999: 321).

By portfolio of assets, she differentiates among natural, physical, financial, human, social and political capital. “Managing” for northern Ugandans in Kampala involves the mobilization of all these types of capital for the specific goals mentioned above.

Social capital is particularly relevant to finding a place to live. There are many definitions of social capital spread across many studies. A broad but useful definition is that social capital is:

the rules, norms, obligations, reciprocity and trust embedded in social relations, social structures, and society’s institutional arrangements, which enable its members to achieve their individual and community objectives (Nayaran 1997:50).

Bonny, for example, found a place to live with her husband in Kampala by calling on a family relation who had good relations with a local landlord:

his uncle brought him [my husband] here...his uncle used to make the sweaters down there so he was staying here and this, he was a friend to the landlord...when he was sick and was leaving this place to go back the village, he told the landlord that, 'let me bring someone to come and stay in this house' and got my husband here (F22).

Lawrence Otim is an electrician working for a company owned by Ugandans of Indian heritage. He makes 180,000 UGX per month, but as I later learn, supplements this income with free-lance work. I asked him how he managed to pay the school fees for his children, one of whom is in a private high school in Gulu district and aspires to go to university. He told me that when he has a problem, he goes to his bosses and borrows some money on loan (M06). He is able to use his position and connection to his employers to access a financial resource – but it is not without strings. He told me that he often works extra hours in order to stay in the good graces of his employers.

Physical capital comprises the non-monetary assets individuals are able to use. Most important among them are access to land or secure residential living space, which impacts significantly on well-being, according to informants. As Patience explained:
the poor people of Kampala [from Central region] is better than those ones of the north...It is better because even if you find them frying the cassava on the road side ... you find that one is an Acholi. You get a Muganda one also. [But] you find that the Muganda one will always have property (F01).

Of course, in urban Kampala, there are also significant numbers of tenants from the Central, Eastern and Western regions without reliable access to land. But what is significant to the definition of ‘managing’ is the perception that access to living space, or more specifically land, is important.

David, the consultant, also highlighted the importance of land. He joked:

we are not matooke eaters, so you cannot come here and start eating bananas like the Bantus. You need a supply of some millet. You know? (M03)

I asked him about whether northern Ugandans also managed to practice urban agriculture in Kampala. He replied:

the accessibility of land has become a general problem, which is a characteristic of any urban area. The struggle between those who have and those who have not...it’s just a normal thing that happens. Unfortunately, these poor urban displaced now do not stand a chance in a situation where, development in the city is measured by investment and your ability to invest. So if you do not have any capital to invest, technically the government definition of development would prove that you, this is not your place (M03, emphasis added).

Human capital involves the “use of labor for production and earning income” (Rakodi 1999: 329). For many families affected by conflict, the death or incapacitation of family members creates financial and emotional strain. Violet, for example, came to Kampala in 1999. She sells firewood during most days and tries to send her children to school. She is living with her is a niece, Caroline, who is about fourteen years old:

and even this girl you are seeing is an orphan, the father and the mother have died... even up to now I have not managed to send her to school (F15).

How individuals manoeuvred to take advantage of the opportunities around them and cope with the shocks of urban life and displacement will be explored in later chapters. This first definition is one of ‘managing’ in the transitive sense—either one succeeds in obtaining a specific desired social good or not.
Managing as living a ‘decent life’

Florence has a lot of time on her hands. She is not employed, and is in Kampala to receive her anti-retroviral treatment from Mulago hospital. Her husband is with the Ugandan army on a peace-keeping mission in Somalia. She distinguishes between herself and the ‘working class,’ suggesting that managing has to do with accessing work:

it’s not easy at all…it’s hard. Since I’m not a working class…you see me, I’m just sitting (F17).

I used to spend hours in her room, and while speaking of local NGOs and associations, I asked her if she knew if her clan group ever assembled in Kampala. She said:

I do hear, but I’ve never, you know, come across any. Because I’m at times, like last year, I was sick, I was even admitted up to Butabika (psychiatric hospital), I was just like that…June, July I was again down (F17).

For many, managing or not managing was a continual process, conceived as a cycle of ups and downs, and not necessarily in relation to a particular goal. Managing also has an intransitive connotation. To manage meant to maintain a standard of living that an individual viewed as acceptable. The capital assets framework, then, does not account for these perceptions, given that the analysis is based on observable assets that people have or are able to mobilize.

Angwang first came from Kitgum to Kampala in 2002. She was adamant that:

[m]y coming here was not real. But by then the problem of the conflict, the LRA was too much. But from the village we tried but could not manage. We came to Lira it was the same problem. Then we came to Kampala (F12).

Angwang ‘could not manage’ because she was unable to achieve her desired level of security. Yet what does it mean to feel secure? Managing is relational and subjective. Patience contrasted her own situation, favorably, with that of an acquaintance that had arrived as a teenager in Kampala without having any relations in the city. At the time I interviewed her, Patience was an unemployed student from Oyam district. She was living at the house of a member of parliament. She was working unpaid as a housekeeper so that she would not have to pay rent, which left her vulnerable to abuse. But she had a house and therefore considered herself to be ‘better’ off than a friend of hers who had lived on the street. Describing her friend, she said:
She has given me her experience and I was like, my God. This is serious. She’s an Acholi but, she came here when she was a girl, eh? Her place was struck by the rebels… she managed to escape alone. Now when she escaped and came here, she was a girl, she didn’t know anyone… When she went to the street, of course now men are abusing…. they would rape her, they would do what, then she said ‘no I can’t stay here as a lady’. She told me she started getting that courage of fighting men at night…when one time I was chatting with her, she told me ‘ba nange! That is not a problem. I was first through a very difficult one. No one would help me. No one.’ Mmm. So she also told me that I and I picked [up] courage. I said ‘if I am not in the street, I can do better’ (F01).

Given the intensely difficult circumstances of some of these individuals, it is impossible to make rigid distinctions between those that manage and those that do not based on a researcher’s observations. To do so would risk creating “a categorization [that] may not coincide with the perceptions of the poor themselves, with respect either to who is considered poor, or to how their poverty and dependence are understood” (Rakodi 1999: 315). By examining both the subjective and the material factors that go into this process of ‘managing,’ I seek to understand why, as Rachel put it, there is the perception that “there are those that manage and those that don’t” (F06).

“Not managing” was described as a feeling of emotional strain and physical insecurity. Clementine and Odongo are a couple from Kitgum. Some of their grandchildren live with them; others are still in the village. When asked why the grandchildren were split up, Odongo answered:

because if they are all here, we cannot manage.

C: and they cannot all stay there in Kitgum?

O: they cannot stay there, because even there are no houses in the village, all the houses have got destroyed… The LRA, the LRA rebels burnt all the house down (F20, M13).

**Managing as mobility**

A third aspect of managing has to do with displacement and mobility and is explored in Chapter 5. Often, informants spoke of their displacement as ‘enforced immobility’—being ‘trapped’ in Kampala when they would otherwise be able to move freely between Kampala and home. This differs with the official definition of displacement as ‘flight from conflict.’ Thus, people
“managed” if they were able to go back home to ensure that their property was still available to
them, to visit family, to come and go freely from the city.

Mathilda is in her late seventies, the wife of a prominent former business executive. She has lived
in Kampala for her husband’s work since the 1960s, with periodic relocations so that her husband
would escape assassination by first Amin’s and then Museveni’s forces. Her son died in Kampala
in the mid-1990s, at the height of the insurgency. Her family nevertheless buried his body in the
north. As she explained, they ‘managed’ to travel because they had relatives who were in the
army which provided them a military escort. Yet this arrangement was not necessarily a
guarantee of security, since the rebels were targeting military vehicles at the time (F19).

Mathilda was able to move in a context when others were not, because she mobilized social
network to which she had access through her family members. Many others were unable to travel
to north because the trip as simply too dangerous. Thus the conflict—with its unpredictable ebbs
and flows of violence—affected different individuals’ abilities to be mobile in unique ways.

*People and hierarchies*

Who exactly does this thesis concern? The following simple statistics demonstrate the diversity of
self-identified northern Ugandan migrants living in Kampala. They are based on a total of 39
people who identified themselves as being from northern Uganda. These statistics are intended to
provide background on the informants—whose individual stories are explored.21

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21 This is because the small sample size and unrepresentative sampling techniques are not sufficient to make a
definitive statement about the entire population of northern Ugandans in Kampala.
Of the total, eleven individuals said they originate from Apac, Oyam, and Lira districts; these all identified themselves as Langi by ethnicity. The remaining twenty-eight originate from Gulu, Kitgum, Pader and Amuru districts; all identified themselves as Acholi (Figures 4A and 4B).
The sample was about 60 per cent female, and ranged in age from 21 years to individuals in their late seventies, with almost half the sample between 30 and 40 years (Figures 4C and 4D). Over two-thirds of the informants (71 percent) reported themselves married (Figure 4E).

Figure 4F shows the range of years during which the informants most recently relocated to Kampala. The two first bars indicate the early 1960s and the period 1980-1985, and there is a bar corresponding to each year from 1986 to 2009. As previously mentioned, the meanings of the terms ‘migration,’ ‘resettlement,’ ‘mobility’ and ‘relocation’ are debated, and forced migrants are more mobile than commonly accepted (Jacobsen 2006: 278). The effects of the conflict on individuals’ patterns of mobility are analyzed in Chapter 5. What this chart indicates, however, is that four informants relocated to Kampala before the escalation in violence in 1986 in northern Uganda. Given that the conflict has lasted over twenty years, there is a wide range in how long northern Ugandans, including many who call themselves ‘displaced,’ have been living in Kampala. In this sample, 1996 and 1997 had the greatest number of relocations, followed by 2003. But as Otia’s story shows, individuals move frequently to and from the city (M16). Even during the conflict, individuals who had been residing in Kampala took risks to return to live with family members, carefully weighing their options.

The informants also had a wide range of primary occupations or income-generating activities (Figure 4G). The largest single category was small-scale vendors (small-scale market retail) 8
bead-making 5
unemployed 5
retired civil servants 3
hair dressing 2
security guard 2
accountant 1
NGO consultant 1
catechist 1
artist 1
electrician 1
professor 1
doctor 1
land broker 1
plumber 1
bricklayer 1
seamstress 1
building supervisor 1
driver 1
hotel administrator 1

Figure 4G: current primary occupation or source of income by number of informants
market vendors. A category made up entirely of women, these individuals sold everything from charcoal (at a 200 UGX per kilo profit), clay stoves and vegetables, to the working person’s breakfast staple, the fried chapatti, and Ugandan gin, waragi. It is important to note that many had other forms of income that varied according to the season and the opportunities around them. What Figure 4G demonstrates, however, is a wide range in sources and degree of income.

The northern Ugandans interviewed did not limit themselves to describing their own circumstances. Rather, they spoke about each other in comparative terms of inequality. From these descriptions, it seemed as if a two-way distinction among northern Ugandans in Kampala—between ‘those who have’ and ‘those who have not,’ between ‘rich’ and ‘poor,’ the landed and the perpetual tenants, the working class and the unemployed. I often asked about individuals’ interactions across these lines that they had identified. The responses varied and the range of interactions was wide.

Those considering themselves to be ‘struggling’ frequently expressed hostility to those perceived as ‘well-off.’ Several informants expressed this spatially—areas like Naguru and Kireka being populated by persons who had fled the conflict or were otherwise down on their luck, and areas like Nnalya and Ntinda occupied by ‘Acholi who came for business reasons.’ James Okech, the artist who introduced in the first chapter, has a nuanced vision of issues of relative inequality among northern Ugandans in Kampala. Speaking about the Acholi ‘rich,’ he told me that:

> what brings together is the culture. [They] come together for the cultural groups but little else….they do quite less. Not what I expect them to do (M05).

Clearly, he seems disappointed about ‘rich Acholi.’ So I asked him what he actually expected them to do for the poor in the city. He replied: “you know… [raise] awareness, they don’t…awareness of all aspects of life. To escape from poverty.” He expects the wealthier Acholi to lift up the others, giving the example of his own group. His artwork is purchased largely by foreigners, and by Acholi living abroad, not in Kampala.

many Acholis take a shortcut and say they are bad people. ‘When they get rich, they are bad.’ No. The thing is the wealth, the wealth that our Acholis at the moment get is not true wealth. I can be damn poor not getting anything to eat today, but somehow, somehow opportunities can knock…the money poverty can go away, but that thing in the mind is there (emphasis added) (M05).
This proved a common feeling among other northern Ugandans who considered themselves ‘struggling.’ Lawrence, the electrician, draws the distinction between those, like himself, who came because of the war, and those who:

\[
\text{did not come here because of war, but they were working here a long time...[O]thers are working in [Luzira] prison, mostly those that are working in prison, they didn’t come because of war, they just joined, then they came for their training (M06).}
\]

Indeed, under the British and during the first decades of independence, northerners were heavily recruited into the armed forces and as police guards. As Chapter 3 noted, northerners living in Kampala are often concentrated around barracks and prison complexes, in neighborhoods such as Luzira (near Luzira prison) and the military barracks at Kiswa, and the police barracks of Naguru. I asked if he felt there were any differences between how they lived and how he lived. His reply was emphatic:

\[
\text{of course, of course! There is a big difference. Because for them now, most of them have even built the houses. But for us, for now we are still, we can’t afford to build a house. We cannot even afford to pay rent, actually (M06).}
\]

Having a house built emerged as marker of relative inequality, those who had arrived earlier having greater success in establishing themselves. I pressed on:

\[
\text{Do you think they ever interact with you, or with people in Kireka, or do they stick apart?}
\]

\[
\text{L: You know, these people of ours, they are a bit complicated.}
\]

\[
\text{C: You mean the Acholis?}
\]

\[
\text{L: Aha! They are a bit complicated in the sense that whoever is ok is well-off, he doesn’t care for the rest. That’s the biggest problem we have for Kampala. You cannot even go and get any assistance from him...You have problems and whatever, he might even be driving a car, but even if he gets you on the way walking, he cannot [will not] assist you. So these people who are well off, they don’t care for the rest. Actually, we don’t unite.}
\]

\[
\text{C: sure. Not even for cultural things?}
\]

\[
\text{A: maybe for cultural things—like funeral rites, and whatever, there people go and you sit, whatever. That things you do when you have problems, problem with school fees, you can’t get any assistance... (M06).}
\]
Many spoke of their dissatisfaction in terms of an inability to get assistance, and a blockage when it comes to social class. In this way, they distinguished between material needs and moral services.

Violet Olou differs from Lawrence in that her main source of income is much more variable. She collects firewood by walking around the more wooded, wealthier neighborhood of Kololo, and resells it at a profit in Naguru go-down, where she lives. I asked about whether she knew any wealthier northerners, for example, like the ones living in Kololo. She was dismissive:

I don’t know them, because the rich does not want the poor! And because of that we the poor people cannot go to the rich people because if you go they will look at you as if they don’t know you…Yes, I know the rich people who is actually from Pader! And they’re living in Naalya… [W]e met in the village there (F15).

This individual was not related to her. Given her statement about the ‘rich not want[ing] the poor,’ I asked if she felt this individual had any obligation towards people like her:

yes, we feel they have the obligation to help us. We have tried to contact them, like maybe to assist us with sponsors for the children. But they don’t respond… in Kampala here, we don’t know the real house where they are staying. Because if they are really good people and they feel obligated to help us, they would pick us and take us to their home that ‘this is my place where I am staying in case of any problem, you can come’ (F15).

Despite the perception that ‘rich’ northerners are reluctant to ‘assist’ those in need, interviews among wealthier informants revealed quite a different picture. Christine, for example, is a hotel administrator from Gulu. She and her husband own a house in an affluent hillside neighborhood and have lived here since 1981. Christine gave the example of how she and her husband helped a distant relation of hers relocate to Kampala. They helped to house them in the outskirts of Kampala:

He happened to know about me in Kampala. When he came, we helped him…with accommodation. We have some piece of land there (F02).

Christine helped to find him job as a cook, and because he had a family, she and her husband were able to get some food until he could plant some crops for him. I asked her what convinced her to help, since so many other informants had complained of being turned away when requesting assistance. She replied:
mainly because we were in a position to help. I know it can get overwhelming… The extent to which you can help really depends also on your own situation and your own values and your own belief and feelings. There are people who have the means but they don’t like to be inconvenienced by others… [it is] just the individual characteristics (F02).

Yet in terms of becoming involved in a systematic way, Christine admitted that she had never gotten around to it, and furthermore would not really know how to.22 This brings up an important point—families are the one locus across which these divisions are breached, though being a relative is no guarantee of receiving assistance.

Wealthier informants, on occasion, expressed a vague desire to “see” and “help” co-ethnics who they considered as living in marginal areas (F19, F06, M10, M11). I asked Mathilda, the elderly wife of a former business executive, to comment on why she thought so many northern Ugandans were living in low-income places like Naguru go-down and Kireka:

They come to where there are people they know… Our people are not rich, so when you come, you go where you can afford to live (F19).

I asked whether she has ever been there, she says that she has gone there but “not deep to where these people live.” Sitting on one of her voluptuous stuffed sofas in her house in an affluent area, it became clear that she thought of Kireka as where the homeless and the landless live, despite having never been there. The same was true for Rachel Odong:

I don’t have much contact with Acholi people who come purely because of the war, but I have a lot of contact with the Acholis that I have known before… [The former] are very much displaced, they are just as displaced as the people in the camps. Sometimes it’s worse… Most of these people in Acholi Quarters, who’ve run from the village to Acholi Quarters, no one is helping them (F06).

A shared sense of displacement does not translate to an automatic connection. Occasionally, comments about “the other side” were apathetic. Michael is an academic at one of Kampala’s universities. When I asked him for an interview, given my interest in persons living here due to

22 It is through Christine that I met James Okech. Despite Okech’s dissatisfaction with the behavior of ‘rich’ Acholi, he and his artisan group had actually benefitted substantially from his connection with William, Christine’s husband. One of the members of the group had been the school teacher of Christine’s husband, and Okech and he had grown up in the same village in Kitgum district. Christine’s family had helped to connect Okech to foreigners willing to buy his groups’ products and had financially assisted them. It is much easier in studies of displacement to focus on the disconnecting experience of conflict, rather than the ties that remain, or are recreated, in this context—which also deserve careful attention.
the conflict, he expressed surprise: “I have never thought about them until you mentioned [it].” He explained why he had never considered the displaced in Kampala particularly vulnerable:

whoever was thought to be in Kampala was assumed to be ok… And whoever stayed in Kampala did not want to give the impression of [having] problems! Of suffering. And whenever they go home, they show that (gesticulates) everything is fine!... They have two strategies: if they are honestly suffering, they don’t want to go back. Because it’s an embarrassment! To go home and to tell people you are suffering in Kampala! So there is no arrangement that could help them. From Gulu. Or there could be no organization here in Kampala meant to help them. … But of course, Kampala poor are there, and the organizations that help Kampala poor are the ones that attend to them…and I don’t think they themselves would want to admit that they are being helped as poor people, when they go back home.

C: You mean Acholi who are living here?

M: yes. And whoever comes here, it is like a conspiracy of silence. …Saying you are suffering and that you are in Kampala, you know it bestows on somebody status and superiority. And you wouldn’t want to let go of that under whatever circumstances […] So now with that kind of mentality being exhibited—do you expect any help? (M07)

Michael’s point was repeated elsewhere—even those who had fled the conflict to Kampala faced demands from family members ‘at home’ and were largely assumed to be doing better than those in ‘the village.’ Personally, Michael said he had never been to Kireka or engaged in any way with people living in Kampala’s slums. Matthew, the accountant, similarly “do(es)n’t know much about them” (M02). I asked him if he believed people living in Kireka were internally displaced persons, and he generally concurred. But asked if he had any interaction with them, he said “sometimes we just bump into them” (M02).

**Conclusions**

Northern Ugandans talk about themselves in terms of hierarchies, with a fundamental distinction between those that manage and those who do not. The first definition of managing is related to accessing specific material and social goods, and often corresponds to a disconnect along socioeconomic lines, as the discourse of managing in the first definition is also a discourse by the ‘poor’ about the ‘rich’ and vice versa. The second discourse of managing is about ‘living a decent life’ and also draws the distinction between those who have the means and the access to resources like housing and jobs needed to live ‘decently.’ The third discourse of managing also falls along socioeconomic lines. Informants conceived of managing as mobility—the ability to
move freely between Kampala and home, as the next chapter explores. While northern Ugandans of all backgrounds faced the fear of getting caught up in the conflict and were not able to move freely, it is the most resource-poor who are less able to re-establish pre-conflict patterns of mobility and are also unable to make the investments needed for rebuilding at ‘home.’ What is clear is that there is the perception of significant inequality among northern Ugandans in Kampala, and that these inequalities are the expression of social hierarchies both particular to northern Ugandans ‘in displacement’ and to African urban life more generally.

How did these discourses of managing come about? What are the processes by which these distinctions are reproduced? Chapters 5 through 7 examine how these distinctions are reproduced and the different barriers—spatial and institutional— that perpetuate these distinctions.
5. **Mixed migrations and complicated displacements**

Henry told me that he would take me to his home. First, he shows me where he sleeps. It is a tiny room that he rents separately from the rest of his family’s home because he is a young man in his twenties and must respect the custom of at least having a separate sleeping place. He proudly shows me “my only asset,” a large bicycle standing in a corner. Arriving at his father’s house, his mother, Wilfred, comes in and out of the house, as she is brewing waragi. The house itself is a single room, renting for 50,000 UGX per month.

Henry’s father, Otia, first came to Kampala in 1982. A former cultivator in Amuru (then Gulu) district, he had been recruited into the police force. He served in Naguru barracks until 1986, when he returned on leave to visit his family. The conflict caught him there. He was rounded up by the UPDF and imprisoned in Luzira for several years, losing his job and a secure place to live. Released from prison, he returned home and was soon elected as the Resistance Council (local government) chairperson of his zone. Being in a position of authority, he attracted the attention of the rebel forces. Fearing for his life, he decided to return to Kampala, which he knew fairly well. He began work as a minibus taxi conductor. Eventually, he was hired as a driver by a European aid agency. With this income, he managed to rent a room, and send for his family, including Henry, who was about eight years old. Henry is studying to become a customs official with the sponsorship from a local NGO, whose meetings his mother attends.
Otia’s story shows that even during the conflict, individuals managed to move between northern Uganda and Kampala several times when they saw lulls in violence, or when the desire or need to visit relatives or attend to business at ‘home’ overpowered their fear of getting caught up in the fighting. They made decisions about these movements based on careful consideration of their personal circumstances. This chapter asks: why do northern Ugandans come to Kampala in the first place and how do they migrate? How do individuals conceive of displacement and how does it compare with the internationally-defined definition?

It addresses this question by analyzing individuals’ experiences of migration. I coded the reasons people gave for coming and staying in Kampala, and present basic statistics as an overview. This chapter then examines how these reasons are interrelated. Finally, the chapter considers how the internationally-agreed definition of “internally displaced persons” does not wholly capture the experience of northern Ugandan migrants to Kampala who nevertheless consider themselves “displaced”—in part because this definition is based on flight.

**Coming to Kampala**

Individuals’ reasons for coming to Kampala were mixed. Often, they mentioned the conflict only half-way into the interview, speaking also of the opportunities in Kampala. This mix of push and pull factors is a common feature of all migrations (Lee 1966; Van Hear 1998).

No single reason was the most important—as people responded to the dynamics of conflict in different ways. The conflict was not as intense in some places as in others. Perceptions of threat were unique, and often related to vulnerabilities of being a woman (F01), a person in authority as local council official (M16, M04), a young man vulnerable to forced recruitment, or being in the path of major rebel troop movements (F09). Therefore, while some fled in the middle of the night in response to an attack, more often, the decision to move had taken some time to develop and was more anticipatory than reactive.

Before exploring how these reasons are inter-related, it is useful to identify people’s reasons for coming. Twenty-five persons identified a generalized ‘fear,’ or a specific threat. For some among these, fear was compounded by destitution resulting from the loss of a breadwinner for the
family. It was not only low-income, rurally-based persons who fled due to immediate threats of violence. Professionals, too, were often targeted (F19, M02). Authority attracted attention. Augustine and Otia, both feared interrogation at the hands of either the LRA or the UPDF troops since they were local council officials (M04, M16). As Henry explained about his father:

> during that period, when you are LC you are taken accountable for any things. Eh, you see? So the moment they get you, you will be answering, whether you know or not. They will tell you ‘please tell us the fact.’ So it was a little bit risky (M16).

The second most common reason was the prospect of employment. Twelve individuals came to Kampala to looking for work. This was common across the range of jobs, from low-income work as a security guard to professional work in healthcare consultancy.

Six individuals came to Kampala to pursue education for themselves, or to work in the city and allow their children to benefit from a better standard of education. For some, especially pre-war arrivals, Kampala was the natural location to pursue university education and a civil service post (F02, F19, M08). For others, the aim was more modest—educating children through secondary school (M09, F01, M06), even though this is not easy to achieve for households with limited income.

Three women came explicitly to join their husbands already working in Kampala. They come from a range of backgrounds. One is a university-educated wife who came in the 1960s (F19), joining her business executive husband, another a young woman who came in the early 1990s to join her graphic designer husband (F09), and the last is a woman who came to join her husband working in Kampala in customs at the port (F14). Finally, one woman came to care for her elderly mother (F05), another came to receive anti-retroviral treatment (F17), and one informant was born in Kampala (but nevertheless does not consider it his ‘home’) (M07).

The sum of these numbers is greater than thirty-nine. The reason for this is that individuals often gave more than one reason for their relocation. This is frequently the case among migrants of all sorts (Stepputat and Sorensen 2001; Massey et al. 1993; Bakewell 2003). Mixed reasons make it difficult to identify and aid displaced persons, by calling into question whether such a distinction is useful, let alone valid. Refstie’s (2008) study of ‘urban IDPs’ in Kampala explained that while individuals initially identified ‘education’ or ‘jobs’ as reasons for their relocation, when she asked
why he or she came at the particular moment they usually mentioned a specific threat (Refstie 2008:65).

Patience first came in 1997, first because of the fear of forced marriage, and later in 2004, seeking better education. She came with her sisters:

they just came because of the condition there. You know when the war started, you find parents also forcing you to get married…you find maybe you are not, you are not willing to do that. But they are forcing you to get married because they are fearing that if the rebels come, they will abduct you. Then they will have lost you completely (F01).

Patience worked as an unpaid house-girl for a family in Nnalya, a wealthier part of Kampala; in return, they funded her high school education. After high school, she returned to her mother’s homestead in Oyam district to look for work in 2003, when the conflict was still active. She soon returned to Kampala for different reasons:

I decided to move again to Kampala because the standard of education in north, is worrying…You can’t compare the northern level with the central. And many times in the north, the students they fail because they are not, you cannot concentrate, because every time you hear, ‘eh! these people [rebels] are here,’ you have to run. You are on the run all the time […] (F01)

James Okech, the artist, had initially been an unregistered refugee in Kenya. He came to Kampala because he could not make his way in Kenya as an illegal alien, and could not return to Kitgum because “rebels were there, so I had to look for some place in a slum.” I asked him why he chose Kampala in particular:

Kampala made sense because, one, if I struggle, I can sell… I mean if I draw a picture, I can find some market for it…At least I can draw something to sell. But in Masindi, I would find people to admire, but not to buy… but in Kampala, there is a market (M05).

Virginia’s reasons for coming to Kampala were similarly mixed. Her mother had come in 2003 to the city and “[s]he was alone. I come to take care of my mom; I leave my husband [in Masindi].” Only later did I learn that her mother had come after finding herself destitute because “the first thing was the rebels…killed her husband” (F06). Virginia’s father had been one of the many men summarily executed during the LRA attack on Atiak in April 1995. Virginia herself had narrowly escaped abduction.
While the reasons for coming to Kampala may have been common across ‘class’ boundaries, or between those doing ‘better’ and those doing ‘worse’—the mode of coming to Kampala differed:

If you can afford to pay a bus fare, then you make it to Kampala. Secondly, you need someone who knows his ways or her ways around Kampala. A relative, or someone. And you know in Kampala, the product of changes of regime led to…retrenching or laying off of so many of our people. When they were laid off, home was not the best place to go because they were insecure. So they would find themselves in the suburbs around and they provided the landing ground for the displaced people who were coming to Kampala.

David has done fairly well for himself. He moves back and forth from the north as a consultant for various NGOs. But he did not start out that way:

me, I came to the university with no idea where I’m going to sleep. I didn’t have a plan… being someone who lost his parents when I was in primary six, and the only asset they left us, we are four in the family, was one bicycle. No house, no bank account to talk of. So I went through school studying on credit (M03).

Through the good will of the head of school administration, he managed to fill out the application, and the director checked his admission status in Kampala, and gave him the money to get down to Kampala and fill out the necessary paperwork. David does not think of himself as displaced:

I am not displaced… Because I am here because of my job. Immediately, [the time that] the doors I knock to get my job closes or they all cease to exist, I can go back home to Gulu…It’s just my job that is keeping me here. And there are so many other professionals who are working in banks, different private sector, and public sector who are all here. But they have their homes, others have built, others are even investors. Yes, in Kampala. They are investors here, there are those with different businesses, the members of parliament, all of them stay here. It’s just the challenge of business that keeps them here (M03).

David is one of the few informants from a modest background to have become secure— with a steady income from a series of international NGOs, a rented house in the centre of town. But his point is valid: if an individual could afford to get out of northern Uganda, and furthermore, had a connection in Kampala, one got out early. This was a distinct advantage to settling in Kampala.

People who could afford to leave got out early, and people who had connections or multiple properties had an added advantage. Rachel Adong, an elderly retired educator, says: “I have been coming to Kampala on and off…since I was working with education.” In addition to having
several properties in Gulu district, her family maintains a ‘family home’ in a wealthy area of Kampala. This was where I interviewed her, and was a place that allowed her flexibility in responding to the threat of the conflict:

Gulu is my home district. I was born in Gulu, I married in Gulu, I have my relatives and friends in Gulu, so I wanted to stay there even now, I would stay there as long as I can. When it becomes dangerous, that’s when I run away for some time (F06).

The family of Matthew, the young accountant, had a farm which was “far down” from Gulu town, about fourteen kilometers away. He explained that when war started, they went back to the farm, where they stayed on and off. When it finally became “too hot” to stay where they were, it was through a connection with his sister working in a hospital in Kampala, which allowed them to rent a fairly comfortable home (M02).

Though each of these three individuals struggled in their own way, the examples contrast with the perpetual insecurity of many destitute informants. There are therefore particular differentiations by class related less to the reasons for relocating and more to the assets and connections people have in Kampala.

*Iterated and gendered migrations*

The most common dynamic was that young men came first, followed by their families (M01, M06, M05, M15, M13, M12). As Lawrence explained:

my family were at home but later, they followed me… My boys they are at home there with my uncle where there is school. You know in Kampala, you cannot pick big boys, you have to rent another house for them and so forth. So now the small, the young ones, are the ones I have here (M06).

In this way, migrations were also gendered. Often women came with men, or to join men, but rarely alone. None of my female informants came to Kampala alone. Only one, Patience, came with three of her sisters (F01). Women are affected differently by conflict, for example, as targets of sexual violence, or becoming destitute as a result of losing a husband or male breadwinner. This was also the case in northern Uganda (Okello and Hovil 2007).²³

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²³ Men also experienced sexual assaults, particularly as a tactic designed to weaken resistance and ensure compliance by forced recruits, as The Refugee Law Project has shown (2009).
For many, Kampala is not their first destination outside of northern Uganda, some went to Masindi first, others elsewhere. Because this research was about the experience outside of northern Uganda, I never explicitly asked about peoples’ experiences in IDP camps. Several, however, had spent years there. For some, fear made them flee to the camp, but other reasons make them choose to live in Kampala instead of somewhere else (F18, F17). During the course of interviews, I often asked – why did you choose Kampala and not another place like Jinja or other towns in central Uganda? For all who came to Kampala out of fear of violence it was knowing someone, such as an uncle (M06), brother-in-law (F15, F12), ‘tribe mate’ (F07). The nature of these family relations is later explored in Chapter 6. In this sense, the experience of this population when it comes to finding a place to live in the city mirrors the typical dynamic of migration. Many crowd in the slums, following relatives or contacts. During previous migrations during the colonial years, men also tended to come alone before sending for their families (Dak 1969). Thus, while the reasons for flight have been modified, often, the trajectories are similar.

**Mobility**

For 15,000 to 20,000 UGX, you can pick a seat in any bus headed to the north. There are at least six companies based in Kampala that move busloads of people, daily, up to Gulu, Arua, Lira, Kitgum, and Pader. Their clients include business people from all over Uganda and occasional tourists, but mostly northern Ugandans visiting their homes. In this study, at least 82 percent of those interviewed had travelled back to their home village since first coming to Kampala.\(^{24}\)

While the conflict in northern Uganda was active, it disrupted patterns of mobility for almost all informants, regardless of their income or background. However, now that the conflict is no longer being fought on Ugandan soil, income is a determining factor for how mobile individuals can be, and how satisfied they were in the connections with home. Professionals often spoke of having ‘good relations’ with home (F02, M07, M02, M03, F06), at least much better now that the LRA has largely been pushed out of Northern Uganda and into the Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo.\(^{25}\) Frequent travel and phone calls are expensive, however,

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\(^{24}\) 32 of 39 said that they had returned at least once to their village of origin, one had not, and from six it was unclear if they had been or not.

\(^{25}\) Where Kony and his troops actually are is unclear. Ugandan intelligence officials claim that he and his troops move frequently between Darfur and the Central African Republic, which the Sudanese government disputes (Radio Netherlands Worldwide, 2010).
and this is a reason that higher-income individuals spoke more frequently about their connections with home as satisfactory.

For example, Michael, the academic, was born in Kampala. His father was a police officer stationed in the city. He used to visit Gulu off and on during his childhood, finishing his secondary and university education in Kampala. For a few years in the early 1990s, he returned to Gulu to teach. But when the situation became too difficult, he returned to Kampala in 1996 and since then, “I have not left Kampala.” While being settled here, he visits frequently, saying “I am always at home” and remaining in contact on a daily basis with his parents:

so I don’t feel I’m away…and if they ask me, ‘where is your home,’ I will say in Gulu…so here I’m just working. If I’m to die, I will be buried there (M07).

Others spoke of not being able to provide for family or of missing home, particularly if the funds are not available to pay for a bus ticket. The most common reasons to travel home include holidays (M01, M09, F18), dealing with land issues (F15), caring for sick family members (M16), bringing supplies to family or returning “for a visit” (F01, F14, F20, M13, F22), and burials (F12, F15, F19). As Gugler notes, migrants often wish to be buried ‘at home,’ for which families, kin and co-ethnics will go to great lengths and expense to secure. Gugler even suggests that this can be taken as a useful “definition of a person’s “home” and for most Africans this is a rural “home” (Gugler 2002:24).

For many, these journeys were in the mid-1990s to early 2000s when the conflict was still raging, which is a testament to how important physical visits to northern Uganda are to many northerners based in Kampala. Some were even in the process of setting up a home there. Robert’s comments show that ‘return’ often involves going back and forth multiple times:

I shall go back. I will get our homes and stay as we used to.

C: sure. So when do you think you’ll go?

R: There’s no fixed day because one needs to go, put there some few few things, come back get some money go and it’s just like that one. It is not a one way kind of arrangement. You just go, come back. Go come back later on when you see that you are stable at home there. Then you can decide to go at once there (M12).

There is a strong bias in studies of displaced persons to view them as sedentary (Bakewell 2002: 42). What this chapter shows is that northern Ugandans, even those considering themselves to be
displaced, are more mobile than commonly understood. An understanding of people as fundamentally mobile has implications for definitions of IDPs. Reasons for migrating do not necessarily coincide with being displaced.

On displacement

In October 2009, the African Union organized a conference in Kampala to draft the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). The definition of an IDP that emerged shows an understanding of people as normally sedentary—and the defining characteristic of “displacement” as the literal flight from “home” away from the threat of violence or upheaval:

“Internally Displaced Persons” means persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (OAU 2009: art 1(k), emphasis added).

Similarly, the definition of “internal displacement” is framed in terms of the movement of the person or group:

“Internal displacement” means the involuntary or forced movement, evacuation or relocation of persons or groups of persons within internationally recognized state borders” [Art 1(l)] (OAU 2009: art 1(l), emphasis added).

For many northern Ugandans, their own displacement has less to do with why they chose to leave northern Uganda but rather if they were able to move freely. Many northern Ugandans say that though they did not “flee” from conflict or its effects, they felt “trapped” in Kampala, where they were already residing before the violence escalated.

This complicates the attempt to profile and identify IDPs, as many NGOs urge and as Uganda is now legally obliged to do. Is a successful NGO consultant who came to Kampala to study and found himself out of the line of fire in his home still “displaced” if he feels culturally dislocated? Is a man who fled to Kampala at night to prevent the abduction of his children automatically an
“IDP,” even though he no longer calls himself ‘displaced’ because he can now “move freely” back home?26

This chapter proposes two ways of thinking about displacement in addition to ‘displacement as flight’: displacement as ‘enforced immobility’ and displacement as ‘loss of opportunity.’ The northern Ugandans interviewed related these two ideas by speaking directly to how the inability to move freely prevents them from living their lives as they wish to. This immobility is linked to socioeconomic status in that those without the funds to reinvest in rebuilding demolished homesteads continue to be unable to ‘return home’ whereas those with higher incomes have often been able to restore ‘pre-war’ patterns of mobility between Kampala and ‘home.’

*Displacement as enforced immobility*

Christine is the head of human resources at a leading hotel in Kampala. One of my first interviewees, we talked over my first and only salad consumed “in the field.” A lady of elegant taste in dress, she spoke of many aspects of her life as a northern Ugandan in Kampala, not least among them, the feeling of being displaced. She first came to Kampala from Gulu district in 1976 as a student. Since then, she said, “I’m in and out of Kampala.” In 1981, she relocated to the city with her husband and started to work, negotiating and navigating until she achieved her current position: “my reason [for coming to Kampala] is really economic.”

Asked if she would consider herself to be a displaced person, she responded:

> I don’t consider myself displaced because I have the freedom to go to my home. Although there was a period where we considered ourselves displaced (F02).

That period, she explained, began in 1986 when many of her family members were still in Gulu at the start of the conflicts. She spoke of not having “the freedom to be with them, as and when I want to.” She remained largely in Kampala for the duration of the war through the 1990s and

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26 Interestingly, the Kampala Convention does not detail at what point an IDP will no longer be considered as such. However, the Convention states in article 11(2) that: “states Parties shall enable internally displaced persons to make a free and informed choice on whether to return, integrate locally or relocate by consulting them on these and other options and ensuring their participation in finding sustainable solutions.” While recognizing that IDPs may choose not to return ‘home’ but rather to settle in the place where they have fled, the Convention does not address when an individual will no longer be considered an IDP. The only definitional statement is, as previously discussed, a definition of IDP based on flight.
early 2000s. Christine conceived of displacement as a condition of restriction, in her case a temporary one, given that her economic status allows her to take her 4x4, kids and husband up north at least once a month.

Her definition of displacement was not related to the reasons for her relocation, which she terms primarily economic. Rather, displacement:

is to do with your mental perspective of whether you are free or not (F02).

Unlike Christine, Peter did have to make a quick decision to relocate his family. He had come down individually to Kampala, working as a security guard. This is generally considered a low-pay and low-status job.

It was the greatest height of the insurgency, I mean of the war in northern Uganda. As I found out that I could not bear it. Not only that, that my children had no education. So I decided to come and find a way as to secure their education, partly. Also to hide them from that war effect… [in February 2003] they escaped narrowly being abducted. Now when I learnt of this I had to go and collect them, all of them (M09).

As he put it, that is when he found himself definitively ‘displaced.’ Peter found one room to rent in Naguru. One day, I asked:

Would you consider yourself a displaced person?

P: Yes, at those times I considered myself to be among those who are displaced.

C: and now?

P: Now there’s no displacement….

C: why do you say that there’s no displacement now for you?

P: well, from behind there, the village there, things are now ok. I can move freely, I can come back. At the moment now I’m staying of my own will, with the intention of pushing my own children to educate themselves… I can move freely now. I can move freely to the village now. But those days, you would move with fear (M09).

These two persons, who differ in their motivations and timing for coming to Kampala, nevertheless both would have called themselves displaced at a point in time when they could not move as they freely wanted. The theoretical point is this — it is the inability to move rather than
an ‘abnormal’ mobility, as the internationally agreed definition suggests — that also defines displacement.

**Displacement as loss of opportunity**

While each story is unique, I group the narratives of displacement into three categories. This demonstrates the breadth and diversity of the category often called “the displaced.” It shows how far the realities veer from the definition of displacement codified in the IDP convention.

The first group portrays the most typical profile of the IDP—persons forced to flee because of immediate threat to their lives or property. Some spoke of losing property and the fear of losing their lives. Vita from Kitgum, says:

> yes, we feel we are displaced because we ran out of our home and all our things were destroyed (F07).

Judith calls herself displaced because:

> I came out of the conflict. Because if you see where I have stayed all there are so many displaced people there, even like the sister of my grandma, she also ran out of the home and came to Kireka (F23).

Akello draws the distinction between being displaced, and coming for “the job”:

> Yes, we are displaced because we did not come for the job … my plan was to go back to the village. But even that village, there is nothing in the village. And then we have children who are supposed to go to school (F10).

Rachel Adong was a prominent educator in Gulu and spoke of her displacement in terms of loss of investments in her home:

> I had invested a lot in Patongo, that’s where the farm is. All my gratuities I earned after leaving the job, was invested there…so…I was displaced actually because I had to leave the farm. We had two tractors that were destroyed by the army there, we had a lot of food […] I call myself displaced, even when I stay in Gulu…because you’re not on the farm (F06).

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27 Place name changed to protect anonymity.
The second group can be considered to be doubly-displaced. Having first been relocated to the government’s “protected villages,” IDP camps, many among them came to Kampala for reasons less directly related to the conflict. Their stories suggest that the question of the force or obligation to *flee* in the IDP definition is problematic. It takes what is fundamentally subjective—an individual’s calculation over his or her safety and how to best maneuver to avoid the effects of war—and makes it into an objective, legally-enforceable status.

Florence is from Lango and was a young woman when her family moved into an IDP camp. There, she married a UPDF soldier. He was deployed to western Uganda and she followed him. She moved to Kampala in 2003 to receive treatment for HIV/AIDS, which she believes she contracted from her husband.

C: Do you feel like you are displaced?

F: now, it’s really, I can say it’s a long story. …Me, I don’t listen to people [who say] ‘why is it that I’m married to a Muyankole?’ or whatnot. This question of mixed-tribal [marriage], but I said, ‘you people, it wasn’t my will. It wasn’t my will.’ Mmm. It wasn’t my will. At times I feel that I’m displaced but nothing to do […] my brother blamed me because I left my home. I did not get married to my tribe-mate…They were spoiling most of the girls. I was almost the last! (F17)

In the camp, Florence lived in physical danger.

[We] would come from that area and then move to the camps [we] hated the soldiers so much because when they came they came and destroyed the girls. They spoiled the girls… Then [I was] the last person to go with the soldiers. Then I left with them (F17).

I came to know Florence quite well. She admitted that, fearing rape, she married her husband for protection as she saw soldiers’ wives were less likely to be abused. He had a job and was a way to get out of northern Uganda, which she left in the late 1990s. Florence relates her displacement to feeling like “it wasn’t my will” to marry under the circumstances that she did. She later admitted that what keeps her in Kampala is the lack of money to relocate and the hassle of going to the government-run hospital every month to receive anti-retroviral treatment.

Maggie moved out of the camp when her husband took the opportunity to find work in Kampala:
when we were in the camp, this company Axis Security sent their representatives to register new people, and then my husband decided to join them. Then from there, we were brought here to Kampala and he is working in there, with Axis Security […]

C: Would you consider yourself to be displaced in any way?

M: yes that I think so, it is true. Because here I do not have any relatives anymore, and in the village, where we were staying, we used to live in a very large area, living happily and enjoying. But now, it’s a different case. My mother there in Lira, they have already grown old. Some of my sisters were abducted. So it made me feel displaced (F18).

Both women consider themselves to be displaced, even though they associate their relocation to Kampala with following their husbands. In Florence’ case, following her soldier husband to south-west Uganda and in Maggie’s case, accompanying her husband as he pursued the opportunity for a relatively stable life that contracted work in the city would provide. Yet the circumstances under which they relocated out of the camp makes it easy for the government to treat such cases as generally no different from other urban migrants pursuing jobs or access to better social services in the city (Refugee Law Project 2007). This is especially given the government’s eagerness to portray the conflict as “over” (Kroes, 2008).

The last category fits least with the official definition of IDP— people who were largely already outside of northern Uganda who found themselves trapped in the city for fear of getting caught up in the fighting.

Oneka is a medical doctor with a mobile past: “I was born in exile…in Kisumu, Kenya, where my father had moved due to the political upheavals in the country…during Amin’s time.” Having completed his education in Kampala, he did a series of rotations at hospitals all over Uganda as well as in his home sub-region of Lango. When asked whether or not he would consider himself to be displaced, he began with how the conflict prevented him from working in hospitals in the north:

Well, let me first address the issue of jobs. Maybe there were jobs. For example, there were opportunities for jobs in the government hospitals, but I mean it would have taken me two to three years to get hired and to start receiving a salary. Places where you could work and get a job, eh, the need was there but the jobs were not there. Because there were these displaced people, the doctor-patient ratio was terrible, but I wouldn’t say really that I was displaced. But it was just the lack of a job that wouldn’t keep me there.

28 Company name changed to protect anonymity.
But occasionally you would feel displaced when you couldn’t reach home because of the heat [fighting]. For example, one time my father sent me, decided to send me to take some money to buy a small piece of land [in Lango] but I refused because at that time there was a lot of heat between Karuma and Kamdini. Basically, that Gulu road was not easy. So I didn’t want to risk. But after that of course it cooled down and I went...Yeah in a transient sense, sometimes you wouldn’t reach home especially in Lango sub-region... (M08)

Oneka made the distinction between “these displaced people” in need of assistance and himself, saying “I wouldn’t say really that I was displaced.” But he admits also that he would “feel displaced” because he couldn’t reach home because of the violence. In later conversations, Oneka reflected on the distress of not being able to connect with family members still in Lango and of feeling unable to use his skill in his home region during the war. Yet he would not be considered an IDP according to the technical definition.

Mathilda is from Gulu and has resided in a gated community in Kampala off and on since the 1960s. Her husband, a prominent business executive, narrowly escaped assassination by both Amin’s and Museveni’s regimes for his political involvement. It took me several hours before Mathilda relayed her family’s history, and she refused to allow me to record her voice. The sense of being threatened and watched still lingers. She described displacement as:

> When you couldn’t move home...trapped...feel like you can’t move. This is a house, but you have a home elsewhere... even though I have lived here by choice (F19).

Even though she chose to live in Kampala, moving before the violence had escalated, she spoke of “wanting to be there [in Gulu]” but not being able to and of being “banished here.” Despite being wealthy compared to the majority of persons with whom I spoke, she was not immune from the negative experiences of displacement. At one point, Mathilda’s sister was killed in Gulu and she and her husband lodged eleven children from her family on their Kampala property. Technically, Mathilda would not be considered an IDP.

**What is displacement?**

If you were not forced to flee because of threats to your person or property, but instead find yourself unable to move freely to and from your home is there space for you in the international definition of IDPs?
Much has been said about the problematic dichotomy between involuntary and voluntary migration (Van Hear 1998). Bakewell notes a spectrum of migrant agency:

> [a]t one extreme, neo-classical models present the migration decision as resting with the individual based on their analysis of the costs and benefits of moving. At the other, structuralist models suggest that labour migration systems were established to serve the interests of capitalism and the individual has little choice in the matter (2002:48).

Forced migrants, as the name implies, are generally conceived as having had little choice in the matter of their displacement. Bakewell tries to reconcile the question of forced migrant agency, by arguing that “migrants should be viewed as social actors working with some room for maneuver while constrained by the wider social context in which they exist.” (Bakewell 2002: 48, adopted from Giddens 1984). In this view, the margin of choice available to conflict-affected individuals is generally narrower than for other migrants.

This debate would benefit from questioning whether people become IDPs because they flee from conflict, or because they cannot travel freely due to conflict, or both. This study and others reveal that within a single migrant family, there are some that come before the war, for ostensibly conflict-unrelated reasons (Stepputat and Sorensen 2001). Does it make sense to draw the traditional IDP distinction, if all in the family suffered comparable losses?

The policy focus on those who flee is pragmatic in that they tend to be the most acutely vulnerable of war-affected individuals, and flight thus serves as a comparatively easier ‘IDP’ identifier. But the official definition of “displaced person” covers only one section of the total persons who would self-identify as displaced by adopting a functionalist definition—“you are displaced because and when you flee.”

What is really at stake? At stake is the ability to access the resources that governments are supposed to provide for people who have suffered loss. And if “loss” is cultural or in terms of missed opportunities—it is neither less real nor traumatic. How can this be addressed?
Secondly, the psychological effects of displacement are severe, and are not limited to people living ‘on the margins’ of subsistence. Refstie (2008) argues that the definition of internally displaced person needed to go beyond the image of the “rural, camp-based” individual to comprise urban displaced with similar if not more acute vulnerabilities. I extend that argument to say that the definition of an IDP needs to go beyond ‘flight’ and also beyond the most impoverished. There is an implicit link between urban poverty and forced migrants—which is not always the case. Some comparatively wealthier or more ‘settled’ individuals in Kampala have suffered much. As David, the NGO consultant noted:

I’m not normal. When I was at school, we would go between the village and the classroom, and there would be bodies. It was awful. And at lunch time, everyday, the shooting would start. The guns! It was almost like the lunch time bell! We would hurry home, and hurry back, praying not to be caught. My family lost a lot. That scars you, you know (M03).

At stake also are the connections that are overlooked when non-governmental groups or government officials assume displacement to be synonymous with destitution and social marginality. Some of displaced are also within positions of power, particularly northern Ugandan ministers of parliament who faced exile or threats during the war. The networks and connections that such individuals have can be approached in devising initiatives to address the destitute situation in which many northern Ugandans find themselves in Kampala.

The following chapter examines how individuals gain access to urban living space. It also asks how they navigate networks and opportunities around them, and looks at factors that enable some to do so more successfully than others. This demonstrates that though individuals of many different backgrounds could have been displaced, the real effects of those displacements differ. A shared displacement does not necessarily lead to a shared sense of community.

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Daizy Tian looks tired. She has wasted most of the day waiting for representatives from Compassion International, a non-governmental organization, to register her youngest girl into its sponsorship program. The window for registration has just closed for the year. Daizy is deflated. She had asked some of the neighborhood women, “you people, why did you not tell me this?” She says that they told her that they assumed she was already aware of this development. As she tells me this story, she raises her eyebrows and flicks her wrist dismissively, expressing her discontent with her neighbors.

Daizy is considered one of the better-off women of the neighborhood. Her husband, Roland, is a graphic designer with his own business. He moved from Lira in the early 1990s, as Daizy put it, “because of the job.” Daizy moved down to Kampala in 1994, to join her husband and also to avoid the escalating violence. Over a few prosperous years, Roland and Daizy saved enough money to buy a plot in Naguru go-down and build a brick house with a wall. They found the place through her church network:

we have some friends from where we always pray… I said ‘I’m looking for a small plot’ …We have a pastor just, he’s a neighbour…So that pastor told us that ‘I’ve already bought a small place, down there … if you want it,’ because, that man, he wanted a born-again family [in that place]. So we bought this thing from these people (F09).

In her area, she tells me, you can tell who is badly off by the living space they occupy:
some of where they ['poor people’] are staying, you would not believe a human being is staying here… I know also people who are living at least in a better way…But most of my friends, they are people who are living in difficult life.

C: where are the people who are living ‘better’ living?
D: they are living within here—they are living within Naguru.

Daizy’s cousin, Patience, was also present, rolling paper beads, chiming in:

...Daizy, I will say she is ‘better’ because at least she owns a house, eh? But then if you go to where those kids [living in an adjacent plot] were calling us, eh? ... They put the timbers like that and top they cover with... a canvas. And they are sleeping in there. You know you can’t compare someone like that ... with someone like Daizy.
D: no you can’t compare.

Daizy is adept at navigating Kampala’s NGO groups. She visits neighbors throughout go-down as part of her (unpaid) work for the Salvation Army. She has the time and space to do such things because her husband is working. While I was in Kampala, the Salvation Army was running a self-help program for people in Naguru go-down. Daizy was chosen as a ‘community organizer’ responsible for registering all of the children:

When those people from the Salvation Army came down here, they elected me to be their representative of NGD... And also they gave me t-shirts! Two t-shirts...because people may not understand...I am the representative of the Naguru go-down for the children who are orphans and vulnerable children...I used to tell them ‘I have come to visit your children’ (F09).

The importance of lists in determining access to networks is an important theme of this chapter. Daizy’s outgoing personality and her position of authority work to her advantage. Several of her children are sponsored in school by NGOs. As her cousin noted, she is doing ‘better.’ As another local woman pointed out during one of Daizy’s visits:

Yeah, I know them [the rich ladies]...they come and visit. Like her [indicating Daizy] she comes and visits (F11).

This chapter is about access—to living space, to membership in an NGO or church, to income, to assistance from family members. It is about the relationship between having access to living space, in its diverse forms, and having access to other sources of assistance.

This chapter traces how inequalities in terms of access to these goods reproduce social hierarchies among northern Ugandan migrants. This is because gaining access to the benefits of these
networks—educational sponsorship, assistance paying rent, medication, food and otherwise—is a crucial component of ‘managing,’ as Chapter 4 demonstrated.

Gaining access is about relationships. As Peluso and Ribot note:

[s]ome people and institutions control resource access while others must maintain their access through those who have control. Attention to this difference in relations to access is one way access can be seen as a dynamic analytic. Access analysis also helps us understand why some people or institutions benefit from resources, whether or not they have rights to them (2003:154).

They also distinguish between the ‘right’ and ‘ability’ to gain benefit from things—not all that have the right to benefit from a particular social good or institution do (2003: 156). Within a migrant community, some individuals such as Daizy are better positioned to take advantage of the opportunities, however limited, that are available in their place of resettlement. Van Hear calls this ‘migratory cultural capital’:

knowledge of how to go about migration, how to deal with brokers, traffickers, border officials and bureaucrats, how to develop and maintain contacts in receiving countries, and how to find accommodation, secure social security entitlements or gain employment (1998: 51).

By tracing the migration processes, Chapter 5 demonstrated that those with prior contacts in Kampala, who arrived early during the war, or who had property assets (such as housing in the city), ‘managed’ the turbulence of displacement better than their counterparts, both according to my own and their observations. This chapter expands on the theme that it is often those with greater ‘migratory cultural capital’ that are better able to benefit from the networks around them that provide buffers against urban poverty.

**Living space**

Forced migrants often find themselves competing with other urban poor for living space (Landau 2004). Living space takes many different forms, but is here defined as a room, house, apartment, or other housing structure in which an individual sleeps while residing in Kampala. This can take many forms. In Naguru parish and in Butabika, families’ living space most commonly consisted of a single or at most two rooms, rented through a local landlord for between 30,000 and 90,000 UGX per month. This can be either by informal, verbal agreement or through use of a written contract. Occupancy ranged from one (F01) to eleven adults (F12). The living space of more
professional informants, residing in Mulago and Ggaba for example, are self-contained houses on plots to which they held land titles, often jointly with their families (F19, F02, M10, M11). Some informants still rented (M02, M03, M07, M08)—either while leasing out an owned plot, or allowing family to live in the owned plot, or while their house was being built. Almost all informants spent some time after their arrival in Kampala living at a relative or other relation’s (often a ‘tribe-mate’s’) residence. These arrangements were informal and for undefined periods of time, an often tense arrangement, as some informants who were ‘hosting’ their relatives complained of overstretched resources, or ‘over-staying’ guests (F03).

Finding a place to live is a marker of how well one manages urban life. As Lawrence remarked:

[The richer, settled Acholi] did not come here because of war, but they were working here a long time… Others are working in prison… they just joined, then they came for their training.

C: Do you think there is any difference between how you live and how they live?

L: of course, of course, there is a big difference. Because for them now, most of them have even built the houses. But for us, for now we are still, we can’t afford to build a house. We cannot even afford to pay rent, actually (M06).

It appears that people who arrived in Kampala before the war, or in the earlier years, were better able to establish themselves by building up financial or other types of capital over time that helped them to adjust to urban life. Patience, when I met her, was living at the house of her local member of parliament, who she had convinced to allow her to stay, rent-free, in exchange for doing housework:

These people here…eh! They have never been affected that much… They can acquire, maybe even if, they can buy a boda-boda, a motorcycle. …Those are the things they do. But, eh, northerner who has come from the north… let me say 88, 89, 1990 …they don’t have anything… Me, I have been in Kampala for … about five years. I have nothing! You see, I don’t have even where to sleep (laughs). I have nothing, you see? Because every time you try to do something, you cannot (F01).

Space was such an important marker of social standing and hierarchies that most often, my informants preferred to be interviewed in their homes. Individuals often wanted me to see and experience their ‘homes’ over the span of a few hours as an answer to my questions about how they were managing their lives in the city. As Clementine put it to my research assistant: “take her to my home, otherwise she won’t understand” (F20).
But how to find a place to sleep in Kampala? In general, many different kinds of mechanisms shape access processes and relations, including to living space. These include rights-based access: the ability to benefit from a good or network because of a socially- or legally-recognized right. An example of this would be an individual holding a state-endorsed land title for a plot and thus the ‘right’ to benefit from it. Another mechanism is illegal access. This is the case when squatters occupy government land intended for ‘development,’ or appropriate public swamp land to set up huts. There are also structural and relational access mechanisms, such as through mobilizing, links to authority, asserting an identity to claim a ‘right’ to live somewhere, and calling on social relations to find housing. In Kampala, this appears, for example, when individuals call upon social relations to secure housing, or when they mobilize identities as IDPs to gain access to government resources, like money to rebuild their homesteads in northern Uganda.

Some individuals, especially those with no or very few prior connections in Kampala, would travel around and inquire until they came across a vacant room and an agreeable landlord (M01, F01, M16). Renting a room outright is expensive in that landlords often require three months of rent money from the outset. This helps to explain the clustering of northern Ugandans in low-income neighborhoods. As Patience observed:

…if you go to Kireka there is this kind of house they make. They get timbers, then they, they just make them as a house. Just timbers. They put down some stones, they sleep in it…You go to them, you tell them your problem, they have ever been there. They will say ‘ok, don’t mind, join us’[…]

C: and your sister in Kireka, does she ever get help from people like that?

P: yes, my sister got help from a certain pastor. But then that one was also through another Acholi lady who also helped her. Because she also came, she was having more than, more than eight people in the house. … But when these girls came also crying, ‘… I don’t have what to do’, she said ‘ok, I’m going to take you to some friend of mine. I always pray with her. She will give you a job.’ ‘But now, I don’t have where to sleep.’ ‘Don’t mind [about that], sleep with us.’ They do like that (F01).

The vast majority, however, first lived with a family member, or found a room through their networks (F17, M09, F22, M02, M04, F04, F05, F06, F07, F08, M15, F20, M13). This dynamic is typical of rural-urban migration (Gugler 2002), as well as migrations due to conflict (Evans 2007).

Many recalled this period as a time of acute vulnerability, as Vita and Janine’s stories show. They are sisters from Kitgum district. Janine was widowed and Vita’s husband narrowly escaped:
We came here, there was nowhere to stay, and we also did not have money for renting. So someone from Gulu…gave us one room…. That person from Gulu has built a house somewhere here… my husband first came and went to him, then now after, we came to join my husband. The house did not have the windows and even the door. It was just open place. So we used to put clothes like this at the entrance and the windows. Then we put a mat and we lie down with all the children together (F07).

From that point, the sisters began doing ‘small small trade’ like selling fruit:

In the first… where we were staying, we were not renting. They had just given to us, but after some time…the owner of the house died and then his children could not tolerate us. So we had to leave and now find our place here (F07).

Staying with family members does not necessarily mean that one is less vulnerable. Being dependent on the goodwill of relatives or more distantly ‘tribe-mates’ is not a guarantee of security, as many individuals expressed how they were struggling to pay rent to family members or that their contact’s own limited means meant that they could be pushed out (F07, F08, F01, F15). Numerous others spoke of wealthier relatives rejecting their pleas for help (F16, F01, F11). As Patience put it:

I have an aunty, in Luzira port bell, down there. She’s very rich and working with the ministry. Very rich actually. She owns three houses in Kampala here, and very good, really good houses. But I have tried to talk to her as a relative, as an orphan, as someone who is in need of assistance. But she doesn’t, she chases you away. Just a mere opening [statement], you say ‘I am from north,’ she will say, ‘I’m not here for northern people.’...If you find very rich people who are in Kampala, they will not always help the northern people who are also in Kampala.

C: why is that?

P: ok I understand their situation in a way that, there is too much dependency in the north [on people in Kampala] (F02).

Importantly, it was not only individuals who fled during the conflict that called upon their family members in Kampala. Those ‘managing’ quite well, as Chapter 4 discussed, also relied heavily on family networks for accessing living space and opportunities. Upon finishing medical school, Oneka, a doctor, came back to Kampala and got a job with an HIV/AIDS organization:

getting the employment, it was a recruitment advertised of course. I applied, but of course the person who was in charge, the executive director, was from my tribe… he helped much. Because you can be qualified but…it doesn’t necessarily mean you will get the job (M08).
To find a place in Kampala, he rented a house in Naalya national housing estate for six months: “but then again it was a house of a relative, that’s why I got it at a fair price” (M08). He then eventually moved to thewealthier neighborhood of Mulago hill. Oneka has now invested in a plot in Wakiso. Another way to secure a living space, for those who can afford it, is to buy and build on a plot (M07, M08, F09, F19, F06, M02, M10, M11, M03). Some managed to get a place first through family, then bought plots (F09, M02). Some even maintained several different properties (F06).

Other, less frequent methods of accessing residential space are worth mentioning. Several individuals received housing through their employer, for example a British corporation (F19), or through the government as civil servants (F06, M10, M11). Some had husbands in the police (F17, F16), and thus guaranteed housing in police barracks. These were more comfortable circumstances for some family members fleeing the war. Augustine Ojok’s son, for example, was a civil servant living in the Bugolobi subsidized flats. When his father fled in the late 1980s to Kampala, he housed him.

The process of gaining access differed by gender as well. Almost all married women, including wives of professional men, attributed the decision about where to live to their husbands (F16, F17, F22, F14). As Faith Atim put it: “the decision comes from the boss!” (F14). These women also were largely dependent on men and men’s jobs to survive, but had a range of strategies to cope with this vulnerability. For example, when Apio’s husband died, she called on other family members for assistance (F11). When Mama Jimmy was abandoned by her husband, she began engaging in small trade to pay for a small room, because she could not continue to live in the room where she was because access to the housing unit was linked to her (absent) husband’s job (F16).

The means of gaining a place to live were similar across ‘class’ lines, except for purchasing plots and building houses, a mechanism of access reserved to those with professional incomes (M07, M08, F19, F06, M02, M10, F09). Also, the reasons for choosing a particular place were widely shared across divisions between ‘rich’ and ‘poor,’ those ‘managing’ and those ‘struggling’. Many chose their neighborhoods of residence because they were cheaper (M09, M16), or because of the very poor condition of their previous place (F10, F09), or the need to have more space to accommodate children or visiting relatives (F09, F14). Proximity to family was also important (M06, F11, M08), as was proximity to work (F01, M08), and the perception that ethnic networks
will help them (F10, M09, F11). Finally, safety was very important (F23, M05, M06, F20, M13, M09)—as Chapter 3 noted.

Getting reliable access to living space is related to two major factors: income and knowing someone in the city with whom one can stay or who can find an affordable place to live. Living space is important to accessing other opportunities to build up a buffer against vulnerability. Individuals with reliable access to a plot or house used it creatively, for example, to produce a marketable good and extra income. A place to live is also a workplace and a source of income. For most of the small-scale vendors, their living space doubled as a workplace, largely limiting the customers who bought their vegetables or *chapattis* to neighbors.

Those fortunate enough to own a house had a money-generating asset as they were able to rent them out. Michael, the academic, is building houses on the plot he owns in Kampala in order to rent them out. Daizy and her husband are local landlords, gaining as much as 70,000 UGX per month from the three rooms they rent out. Certain tenants practice urban agriculture on their plots (F16). This is technically illegal, but still widely practiced, and an important source of income for some families. Judith, when she gets time, collects vegetables from women living in Naguru barracks. Sometimes, the ladies there give her cassava leaves from their garden. Cassava leaves are rarely eaten, usually only during times of famine, but Judith prepares them as a meal for her family. She remarked that the women’s plots were also growing the green *gobe* plant, but that this plant is generally grown for sale, and thus having access to a plot to be able to grow marketable crops can be a source of additional income (F23).

In this way, social hierarchies are not only reflected in the kinds of living space people occupy—the type of living space one occupies can actually make one better or worse off. Having income and connections than can provide a ‘landing pad’ are critical to success in accessing living space—and, in turn, having access to living space opens up opportunities to build up ones assets—through urban agriculture, or through renting out extra rooms, for example. These are assets that are largely cut off to perpetually insecure tenants in such low-income ‘slum’ areas of Naguru go-down and Kirombe.
Landlords

Many who arrived early during the course of the NRM’s counter-insurgency campaigns were able to purchase land and build houses even in areas like Kireka, where land was less densely populated and cheaper, given its relative distance from the centre of Kampala, which was smaller in the 1980s. Several among them rent out their properties, often to other forced migrants, and gain significant extra income. Yet—it should be acknowledged—the former also labeled themselves displaced. They also had detailed histories of insecurity that caused them to come to Kampala. Indeed, some of the Local Council chairmen who represent the local government in the areas where I worked were themselves from the north and considered themselves displaced. In short, these hierarchies in terms of access to land should nuance the image of a uniformly oppressed bloc of IDPs.

The relationships between landlords and their tenants are often tense. In both areas of this study, evictions are common. Local Council chairpersons are routinely invoked to settle disputes, but as they are often tenants themselves, they are sometimes reluctant to “get involved.” Florence, the young wife of a soldier, finds it difficult to pay the rent. She is, however, a great believer in ‘interventions by God.’ A few months ago, she was having trouble paying the rent. It had been three or four months since her last payment. As she put it, the landlord knocked on her door four times that day:

He said ‘first [you] come, I want to talk to you.’ So I go out, and he says, ‘what’s up? Why have you not paid the rent…?’ And he started pressuring me. So I said ‘no, you first wait, it [the rent] will come’ (F17).

She returned to her place, really not knowing how she would find the money to pay him. Later that day, she got a call from someone who she had not seen in a while. When she explained her trouble, he gave her 100,000 UGX. When I asked who this person was, she said he was a tribe-mate, someone she knew from the village. Someone ‘who had taken long without seeing me’ (F17).

Florence’ situation was not atypical (F21, M14, F20, M13). As Peter noted:

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30 The role of Local Council chairpersons is explained in the next section.
if your job is still going on, it is easy to pay rent. But once you have been terminated, or you cease working, you find life difficult because there’s no way of getting money (M09).

Elizabeth and Julius had a similar problem:

after three months [of not paying rent], it becomes hot and they threaten to throw us out (F21, M14).

Some occasionally had good relationships with landlords, both northerners and Baganda (F01, M01), and attributed their survival in the city to sympathetic landlords. But regardless of whether the relationship was positive or conflictual, it is clear that restricted income and connections make people vulnerable. Access to space depends on access to cash and vice versa, and thus displacement does not affect all equally. Because access is dynamic and relational, it also reproduces subtle distinctions between those who ‘do better’ and ‘worse’ in weathering the effects of displacement.

**Networks and gatekeepers**

Having access to living space is related to accessing networks that provide services that people seek—jobs, education, rent payment assistance—in two ways. Formally, the approval of local council government officials is required for services such as enrolment in an NGO assistance scheme, school applications, and job applications. To maintain good relations with local council officials, one must be legally occupying a residential space within that zone, and in this way, is related to access to living space. Informally, where you live structures the opportunities about which you are aware, and your visibility and ability to meet the requirements of the NGO. I treat these two separately to argue that access to living space is related to, and in some cases determines, access to other networks.

**Local Councils**

In moving to a new zone in Kampala, residents must present themselves to the Local Council 1 chairperson. Failure to register with the LC1 chairperson creates problems. In the event of a dispute, as I was frequently told, the LC1 chairperson “protects the one he knows.” The Local Council system evolved from the National Resistance Army’s Resistance Councils (RCs). These were established in areas that the NRM controlled during its rebellion against Obote’s regime.
(Baker 2004: 333). It was organized along military lines in a tiered system with RCs at the village (RC1), sub-country (RC2), and county (RC3) levels. Initially, the focus was on recruitment, gathering intelligence and mobilizing support for the NRA, though the focus shifted with Museveni’s capture of Kampala in 1986 and the formalization of the NRM government. They established the Local Councils system (renamed in 1997) across the whole of Uganda to deal with routine issues of policing and justice, including civil matters like debts and drawing up contracts, assaults, property damage and trespass (Baker 2004: 336). LC1 chairpersons reside in the zone for which they are responsible. They are typically elected by the zone’s residents. The parishes’ LC1 chairpersons in turn appoint the LC2 chairperson. All currently work on a voluntary basis.

Letters from the LCs are required for job applications and referral to NGOs (particularly for “orphans and vulnerable children”). The four Local Council officials interviewed consider themselves as moral guardians of their communities. They purportedly “keep rebels out” and “make sure only good people live here” (K05). According to the Local Council members, having ‘good character’ is required for legitimately occupying space. According to Andrew, an LC1 chairperson in Butabika:

> [he or] she has to present him or herself to us first... usually with a letter, informing us of where he has been, whether he is good or bad. Usually when he comes with a letter it means he is a good man or person (K01).

Lists and official documents become important in establishing the right to live in a particular neighborhood. This process can be difficult if, because of the conflict, one’s documents are not available, or if one is living undeclared to the landlord or LC1 chairperson at a family member’s place. Patience’ cousin-brother, for example, had spent some years fighting for the LRA and now in Kampala, he tries to stay under the radar of local authority for fear of getting kicked out of where he lives (F01).

This is not empty rhetoric. Not only are the Local Council officials actually an official organ of the government, LC1 chairpersons play an important role in registering people for ‘assistance.’ They often identify the ‘most vulnerable,’ making recommendations of cases to NGOs and thus play a role in determining who is ‘worst off’ in their area. Ambrose is the LC1 secretary of one of the parishes in Butabika. He was remarkably frank as he described his role. For the NGOs helping kids, if you want your child to be taken, you have to live within the operational limits of the area.
In his area, the LC1 officials write letters to the three officers of the NGOs informing them of the need of assistance for the child. “From there they will come down to the home of the child, they will see the condition that the child is living in,” he said, and thus make their decision on whether to assist the child. But still:

you get it through connection... if I live in this area, a person can come to me and say ‘please, my child needs assistance.’ That is how you do it. Or a relative comes really in problems and will say ‘please go and help this family.’

He also mentioned that in the case of many NGOs, you are only able to access its resources if you have tribe-mates in the higher office.31

Despite being legally required to register with the Local Council office, many residents of Butabika and Naguru parishes slip under the radar by accessing these services ‘illegally.’ With a smile, Ambrose told me of one instance in his parish in which an Acholi woman was living in a relative’s home, without having registered with the Local Council. She wanted to receive some money from relatives through Western Union. This required a letter of authentication from the LC1 chairperson in her zone, and an identity card which they are supposed to provide. She did not get the letter from him, but instead went to another zone to get the letter from another, more malleable LC1 official.32 This type of maneuvering is common. As Patrick noted, “some people go around, paying 2000 [UGX] to another LC [chairperson] from another zone to pretend that they are from another place when coming to the new area.” LC1 chairpersons are not paid, so they often exact payments from people: “we have to get our salary out of whatever problems we’re handling.”33 “They like money too much” was a consistent gripe from many informants. Patience resolves this problem by knowing “which LCs are the best” and least likely to ask for money when she needs documents for job or school applications.

LC1 officials are thus important gatekeepers to certain groups and services. How much money you have to pay for the Local Council’s services that open these doors is important, yet access also indirectly depends on your moral makeup, even though individuals find ways around these barriers. This creates a situation in which those with more income to invest in the costs of accessing these opportunities benefit more than the truly destitute.

31 Field notes, 17.09.09.
32 Field notes, 17.09.09.
33 Field notes, 17.09.09.
NGOs

This section examines three different non-governmental organization (NGO) networks, two of which operate in the Naguru area (area 1), and one in Butabika (area 2). Three factors are important to accessing these networks: formal registration (and showing up for meetings), meeting the criteria of vulnerability required of each group, and knowing the procedures and the right people.

The NGOs do help individuals. Most of the informants had received some assistance, either drugs, school fees assistance or otherwise, and were thankful for that. But NGOs are also a point of contention in the surrounding community. Many only serve those that are registered in certain areas, or who can physically go up to their offices. If a person’s mobility is restricted due to finances or the demands of a work schedule, or if a person is unlucky enough not to be visited by what appear to be the rather random trajectories of NGO representatives, the individual is not served. Individuals complained that they had been told that they did not live in a correct parish; others spoke of organizations based in other parts of town deliberately excluding persons who were not able to attend additional meetings. Vita and Janine, two sisters living in Kirombe tried to access some help from a group operating in Naguru and in Kireka. She said that they were distributing posho (powdered cornmeal):

so when those things come, those people in Kireka, they do not inform us. That for them, they are now permanent group, and even in Naguru, they refused to pay our children.

C: why do you think they refused?

V: it’s hard to tell, because you cannot tell what someone is thinking.

J: they no longer call us for a meeting, in Kireka. They will tell you, “no, there is no meeting.” You will feel like you are wasting your time, and there is nothing there. And if tomorrow you come back, tomorrow you will hear that they have distributed the things… The problem is that people in Kireka, don’t want to call people from Namuwongo, or Mutungo, these distant places, to benefit from them (F07, F08).

People thus spend hours strategizing about NGOs. Many base their decisions regarding where to live on getting the support of groups providing their children with school fees, for example (M01, F12). Their goals include to get their kids sponsored, to get blankets or other goods, to get whatever else was being offered, to have their beads bought and resold for a small profit. Asked
about how she structured her day, Apio answered “[I] just go Meeting Point and come back in the evening and go to Salvation Army” (F11).

‘We believe in Meeting Point…’

Meeting Point International is one such network. It provides services mainly to HIV positive Ugandans at three offices in Kampala, and conducts home visits and counseling groups (Garcia 2010). In Naguru, Meeting Point runs adult education classes for women. It also resells the rolled paper jewellery the women make through Beads for Life, providing individuals with a small profit of 1,000 - 2,000 UGX per string. Most importantly for the women in my study, however, is the school fees sponsorship program that Meeting Point runs in conjunction with AVSI, an Italian NGO. Trying to get one’s children sponsored is the ultimate goal of many mothers who are overwhelmingly the beneficiaries of Meeting Point’s education classes. Meeting Point has helped many people in the community, and that should not be ignored. However, the NGO’s resources are stretched thin. This is a point of contention and jealousy among the women. In this section, I highlight what women had to say about ‘success’ accessing the NGO: primarily, getting your beads chosen for resale by Beads for Life (a local partner NGO), and getting your children sponsored.

Showing up

Every Monday and Wednesday, Meeting Point hosts literacy classes for women. I interviewed Jovin, a social worker for Meeting Point. Afterwards, she took me to the classroom. It is a single wooden building with a tin roof. The room is full of women grouped by level. As is common with visitors, the ladies sing a greeting song, using northern Ugandan *raka-raka* instruments34: “we are happy… we welcome visitors… we believe in Meeting Point.” Jovin gives a speech emphasizing how Meeting Point fosters ‘community’—love, trust—among the women. She calls them ‘sick’ and multiple times, she mentions that some among them had to be brought to Meeting Point in a wheelbarrow because they were so weak: “here, we are friends, we love each other… if one is sick then the whole group goes to visit” (K06).

One Wednesday, I walked with Mama Johnny, carrying her sack of beaded necklaces, to Meeting Point. She told me that now that she was feeling better because of her anti-retroviral treatment,

34 The *raka-raka* (named for the sound it makes) is one half of a hollowed-out calabash, which is scraped with a brush made of hard metal wires. In traditional Acholi dance, it is played by men while women dance.
she might get a job in a local restaurant through a connection of hers. But, she remarked, if she takes the job, she will not have the time to go to Meeting Point twice a week, as the group demands. Indeed, many of the women were concerned about losing access to the group’s benefits if they could not make the meetings, out of illness or need to work or gather food. In this way, the group indirectly favors women who are unemployed, many of whom are dependent on husband’s salaries, since what Meeting Point provides is not enough to live on. Women who need to work—either because they are single or because their husband’s or family’s income cannot sustain them all—can be left out from receiving benefits.

Indeed, continued assistance depends on living in a particular area and showing up for meetings. It is a major reason keeping people in Naguru go-down. As Angwang explained:

> yes, I think I should continue staying in Naguru go-down, because there are some of my children, in the group. Meeting Point is supporting them. So when I leave Naguru, they will not have the support… (F12).

**Being vulnerable**

Meeting Point was founded to help people with AIDS, so it is logical that HIV-positive status be a criterion for selection. Jovin, one of Meeting Point’s social workers, handed me a registry of clients. Names are arranged neatly and chronologically, beginning with the earliest cases from 1993 and 1994. In the comments section of many entries it is listed whether they are receiving anti-retroviral treatment. For many of the earlier cases, the comments section is written ‘deceased’ or ‘passed away.’ Meeting Point is perceived as an organization “mainly for the ones who are sick” (F15). Even though its income-generating projects and adult education are open to all, it appears that those who meet the criteria of being HIV positive, or widowed, are preferentially served. Bonny, for example, tried to get Meeting Point to sponsor her child.

> I have tried. There are some people who work around here, writing the names of children for sponsors, so when I contacted them, I told them I have one child, but they refuse, [saying] that [for] one child I can pay (F22).

However, Bonny’s husband is currently unemployed, so they are not able to pay the school fees for their only child.

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35 Field notes 4.11.09.
Knowing the system

Meeting Point is a Catholic organization, but as Jovin pointed out, “we serve everybody.” While I did see typically Muslim names like Ali and Mohammed on the case registry, Meeting Point’s offices show its orientation. Christian hymns are written on the blackboards, walls are adorned with posters of the Pope. Many of the women who benefited from Meeting Point are born-again Protestants. That, however, does not prevent them from portraying themselves as Catholic, or allowing their children to be instructed in Catholic theology. Daizy is proud to be born-again and ‘washed in the blood of the lamb.’ As a member, a few of her children are sponsored. “[t]hey make them do Catholic things,” but she did not seem bothered by this when I asked. In fact, one of the top officials of the staunchly Protestant Salvation Army is also a beneficiary of Meeting Point.37

Another issue related to access is that information about the programs seems to be selective, and benefits accruing to people ‘in the know.’ Florence, who is HIV-positive, used to be an active member, but isn’t any longer:

People are very selective …the people who are there, some of them are not sick! So they get whatever assistance like what, sugar, posho, beans even medication, I think. The school fees for children…the beading came also, I didn’t join… There is a way people behave, hmm? … At times you go there, they say ‘aha! No we’re enough…our groups are enough.’ So it’s sad. It’s sad (F17).

Brenda attends the Meeting Point meetings and is concerned that “[t]hey never take my beads”: we have Meeting Point, but then even there when you are taking beads, they just select some people. Then sometimes you just realize that ‘oh those people, they have just sold the beads.’… You who is not informed, yours [beads] stays there.

C: so do you think Meeting Point is helping, or no? (F13)

She responded that the food distributed— sugar, beans, and rice—had helped:

but the issue of paying school children is very difficult because they are selective. Sometimes they pick other people’s children and yours are not picked.

C: how do they pick people?

36 Field notes, 4.11.09.
37 Field notes, 4.11.09.
B: so in Meeting Point, the problem with the selection is that the representatives... the people in the office, most of them they are Acholis. So sometimes when you are a Langi, it’s very difficult to pick them because they first go to people who are close to them. And even when you hear that they are picking children for sponsor, they just come now with the names of the students, of the peoples already. When you go you just hear them reading out the names (F13).

Judith had heard of Meeting Point, but did not see much benefit in attending the meetings. Her only child is not yet old enough to attend school and Judith had already been educated to Primary 7, beyond the levels taught at Meeting Point. People only invest in those networks perceived as important to them. Better to use the time and effort doing something else:

you know things in Uganda nowadays goes with money. So sometimes I get discouraged because you may go there, you want some help, someone wants you to give money when you also don’t have money [...] the representatives started being very jealous about me, saying I am young, if I’m going to register my name down then I have to pay some money and then I couldn’t manage. So that is how I see it (F23).

This brings up the issue of access costs. Bonny tried to get her child sponsored but blames her failure on representatives charging money for registration:

we have tried. Like even to pay some money for their names for registration, like I paid 2000 [UGX]. But only people who paid much money, their children will be taken...And even last term my kid did not go to school she was in middle class and even this term I don’t think she will go because her father does not have a job. Maybe we shall wait till next year. Those representatives from Meeting Point, they always want money (F22).

Despite the narrative of unity, it is clear that not all members of the group benefit equally from it, given how frequently discontented many women seem with being excluded and sometimes having to pay to access the group. Despite aiding some, the resources of Meeting Point are a source of tension among its members and the wider population.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has also been running a project in the Naguru area for the past five years. It is about to run up for review of its funding. The Salvation Army is an international Christian NGO with an evangelical mission (Salvation Army 2010). According to Janet, the project’s area coordinator, the Salvation Army seeks to:

strengthen the community to construct their own capacity, to manage the... OVC [orphans and vulnerable children]...provide psychosocial support... We believe that
the community has an answer… they know who is most vulnerable (K04, emphasis added).

The Salvation Army’s work relies on a notion of ‘community’ that is assumed to be geographically defined. The Salvation Army first approached ‘the community’ through ‘local leaders’ who then identified representatives that could be recruited. These local leaders, according to Janet, were the LC1 chairpersons. The Salvation Army then engaged in a ‘community conversation’ to identify goals following which it ‘pass[es] the community through the community change process…” (K04). The Salvation Army relies on representatives to identify the most ‘vulnerable’ members of the community, and has provided school supplies and basic wares, including blankets. Also supports a small self-help initiative (Community Action Team) to make and sell beaded jewellery.

As with Meeting Point, access to the Salvation Army’s benefits depends on showing up, being vulnerable, knowing the system, and contributing spare time and money. I attended the Community Action Team meeting. A group of about fifteen women and two men were seated in an open clearing. The chairperson of the group speaks Luo, even though there are a few non-Luo speaking members. The group has mobilized over one hundred women, but eighteen are ‘core’ members. Being a ‘core member’ means coming to the weekly meeting, and contributing a bar of soap, 1000 UGX, and a half-kilo of sugar, which will then be either given to one of the women in the group, or distributed to ‘needy’ persons. Given the prices at the time, this amounts to at least 2000 UGX (1 euro) per week per member. This is a significant sum, roughly equivalent to a day’s income for some of the women (F23).

Making beads with the women individually, I heard the latest scandal. A large amount of money that was to be designated for the group’s use has disappeared after having been given to Millicent, a notable member of the Action Team, for safekeeping. A member of parliament for the area encompassing go-down had decided to visit his constituency. He had met with many of them in Naguru, and had given 200,000 UGX to start a poultry production project that would bring in more capital. According to Daizy, that money was never seen again; Millicent had ‘eaten’ it. She told me that people were so dissatisfied with the Naguru group, that they had started moving to Kasenke (a neighboring zone) to meet.\textsuperscript{38}

Peter, one of the few men in the group, had similar complaints:

\textsuperscript{38} Field notes, 22.09.09.
We were also trying to introduce the initiative for men, we wanted to introduce brick-laying. But that one needs some amount of money, it needs some capital… Salvation Army had promised us. But they also promise, and keep quiet, promise, and keep quiet… We had thought of poultry, but all the same, we ran short of cash (M09).

Janet had a different take on how ‘the community’ perceives the Salvation Army. She comments on the instrumentalism with which many people engage in NGO networks:

you see like people in the community, them, they are interested in material support, eh? They want to see what are you bringing. But after long time and seeing that our methodology was to teach the community to begin to do their own things, some of them went away… Men want quick things, eh? They can come quickly and see that I have, they cannot waste time when he has to go and look for his family work (K04).

She chastises people (particularly men) who give up too easily, who want ‘hand outs.’ However, participation in these groups takes time and money. Individuals are understandably frustrated when they think they are wasting their already meager resources. Despite the idealized view of community the Salvation Army espouses, the decision to participate in such ‘communities’ has as much to do with available resources and perceived benefits to be gained than of feelings of solidarity with one’s neighbors. 39

**St. James’ Church, Biina**

On Sunday mornings, the spacious sanctuary of St. James Church in Biina always overflows with worshippers. They come to the 8:30 service run by Father Scalabrini, the charismatic Italian priest who has worked in Uganda since the late 1960s. As a young priest, he worked for the Catholic Church in Gulu before relocating to Kampala in the early 1990s because of the conflict. Using funds he had raised, he re-established a church, St. James, in Kampala. Many of the people who worked for him in the north also followed him down here. 40

Because the 8:30 service is English and not Luganda, this service attracts northern Ugandans. As far as I could observe over the months, its attendants are almost uniformly Luo-speaking. Hymns are occasionally in Luo, which Scalabrini speaks fluently, and the church hires Luo-speaking catechists to teach the young. Latecomers crowd around the doors and following the service,

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39 To her credit, Janet invited me to speak to a regional meeting of the Salvation Army coordinators in late October. She was keen to have me share some of the concerns that individuals had identified about the group’s practices. Among these was the haphazard identification of ‘vulnerable’ individuals.
40 Field notes, 28.07.09.
several dozen gather at the back of the church to catch Scalabrini, known simply as ‘Father,’ before he leaves, where he blesses his parishioners with the sign of the cross on their foreheads.

Father has built an impressive hospital which treats patients for free and a boarding school to which exceptionally bright students get scholarships. Many of his parishioners find work as cooks, guards, and nurses in these institutions. He funds these projects through personal fundraising among Italian NGO and Catholic donors. He also has discretionary funding which he uses to help individuals on a one-off basis—‘clearing’ the rent, paying for school fees, buying household goods, etc.

These initiatives help many people and this should be applauded. However, the informal rules governing assistance from St. James and from Father are the same as for the other two NGOs. Access is determined by showing up, being vulnerable, and knowing the system. Importantly, the surrounding community perceives Father’s assistance as being “for Luo only,” as I was frequently told.41 There are parishioners of St. James from Central, Eastern and Western regions who attend other services and some have certainly benefited from its social programs. However, given the enormous demand and the haphazard way in which funds seem to be disbursed, and Scalabrini’s intentional preference for serving northern Ugandans, this preference does not go unnoticed.

I met Patience for the first time in Father’s office, where she had been waiting for hours to see him. She was trying to get a job in the school library. She had lost the cooking job she had previously had when she went to complete a law diploma, with St. James paying half her fees. Patience had worked out the best times to catch Father (as he was going to or leaving his office for lunch). Getting by his secretaries is another challenge. She also knows from the tone of the sermon and his behavior whether that day he is in a good mood, and approachable, or if she would just undermine her case. She also makes sure to attend every week and get her blessing, even though, as she put it, she prefers the theology of the born-again churches and was in fact baptized as Protestant. At St. James, boundaries to access are also moral boundaries—good ‘hard-working’ Catholics are preferred. The superiority of various aspects of the Catholic faith over born-again Protestantism is a common theme in Father’s sermons.42

41 Such comments are what led me to St. James in the first place. My first informant, Thomas, told me that “if you want to find Luo, you will find them there.”
42 In a sermon on the sanctity of the family and evil of divorce, Father once called on his parishioners to reject Protestantism. He claimed, incorrectly, that the Protestant church began when Henry VIII of England decided to break with Rome over the Pope’s refusal to grant him a divorce. This is the origin of the
Patience’ case is not unique. Frequently, individuals would complain that they were unable to get help from Father, either because they were unable to ‘catch’ him, or because they were not perceived as very needy (F07, F08, M06, F04, F05). Lawrence, an electrician, attends St. James in Biina every Sunday, but still does not manage to get his kids sponsored, because he has a job:

I’ve tried but you see, but like the other day I was talking to Father, he said he has so many… you know Father… only helps those orphans… You know when the Father is there, he says ‘why don’t you also work and you’ll get some money [for your children].’ So he’s not easy to get even (M06).

Other than St. James, individuals living in the Butabika area generally did not know of other NGOs, as there are few organizations operating there (K02). Again, this shows that where one lives matters to the networks one can access.

**Ethnicity and access**

Ethnic connections can be both a positive and a negative form of social capital (Portes 1998: 15). Being Acholi or Langi hinders some, but proves an asset to others. Northern Ugandan men and women often face discrimination when applying for jobs. The security guards I interviewed joked that with names starting with O—characteristically northern—a security guard job was the best they could do (M01, M09). This is outgrowth of a deeply-rooted animosity between northern Ugandans and Banyankole and Baganda (in particular), and reflects a broader structural inequality between northern and southern Uganda.  

However, others are able to use their ethnicity to their advantage. I encountered several small self-help initiatives organized around Acholi or Aluru traditional dances. These groups would perform at weddings of Ugandans of many ethnicities for a sizeable profit which would then be partitioned among the members. Some individuals were even able to begin small collectives making beads or artwork, obtaining funds from NGOs as groups for “displaced persons.” In

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Anglican church; the birth of *Protestantism* more generally is usually attributed to Martin Luther’s movement.

Launched and Acholi women’s names are often identical to men’s names except that they begin with A. For example, Apio and Opi, Atim and Otim, Akello and Okello.

many cases, wealthier families of northern Ugandans actively took on their relatives in need of a job as maids, security guards, or for other types of labor (M10, M11).

In the areas where I worked, I would talk with Ugandans from other parts of the country, too. They way they saw it, there was significant amounts of assistance for ‘northerners.’ As the LC chairman of one parish put it— “if you are Luo, it is not hard to get help.”45 While I was walking in Kireka (Acholi Quarters), I passed an area locals call the kiganda zone, down on the southern end of Kireka. The area is populated by Baganda who managed to move back into ‘Acholi quarters’ after it was supposedly granted to displaced Acholi by the kabaka in the 1980s.46 One northern Ugandan woman mentioned that many among them were resentful because they believed northerners were getting preferential treatment by the area’s NGOs.47 This perception of bias towards northerners may be due to the informal ethnicization of NGO networks that, by their admission, are supposed to be open to all. Ironically, this contributes to a sense of animosity between northern Ugandans and local residents from Central region, based on the perception that there are ‘benefits’ to being ‘marginal.’

**IDP identities**

In recent years, northern Ugandans have mobilized an identity as internally displaced persons in order to claim access to government funds for return. In February 2008, then Minister of Disaster Preparedness Musa Ecweru visited Kireka to view the living conditions of the urban displaced persons. The meeting was organized by the Refugee Law Project to convince the government to provide these persons with the same benefits that the camp-based IDPs receive (Refugee Law Project 2008a). Minister Ecweru also distributed bags of *posho* to attendees. In preparation for the 2009 Kampala Conference, groups of northern Ugandans carried out a self-profiling initiative in order to present their case before the government. These documents affirm an IDP identity based on flight, distinguishing themselves from “those who come to urban areas looking for employment, any type of employment” (2).

45 Field notes, 27.09.09.
46 Official documents indicate that much of Kireka is leased from a company called Kireka Estates by the National Housing & Construction Company, as Refstie has noted (2008:15).
47 Field notes, 14.09.09.
It gives a thorough run-down of the problems of IDPs living in Kampala, with this expressed goal:

That we be treated in exactly the same way as our brother and sisters internally displaced in the sub-regions; that Government undertakes to register and come up with a profile of the number of UIDPs...that all UIDPs be issued with Identity Cards for ease of recognition as we hopefully travel back to the sub-regions to start resettling; that the resettlement package extended to all IDPs within the sub-region be availed to UIDPs to help us settle; that Government should also allow Urban IDPs fill in the Cattle Compensation Claim Forms as the internally displaced people did (Okot 2009:4).

It lists that the UIDPs are found in nine different areas, mostly low-income ones. This has significant ramifications for who is ultimately listed as an IDP. The ‘IDP communities’ are spatially organized, with one leader representing each area. Roland, introduced in Chapter 1, is one such local leader. By his own admission, he does not fit this profile very well, as he “came for the job.” Of course, all reasons are interrelated. His wife, for example, left during the height of the war and calls herself displaced for that reason. While a definition based on flight might be useful for the purposes of this initiative, as Chapter 5 argued, the effects of displacement are not limited to individuals who had to flee.

This initiative is an example of a group invoking a ‘rights-based’ access mechanism: as IDPs they have the right to receive benefits, according to Uganda’s own laws. So far, it does not appear to have been very successful. There appears to have been significant numbers of people left out of the process. Few of my northern Ugandan informants, neither those living in ‘Acholi’ areas and especially not the professionals living in wealthier areas around Kampala, were registered or had received the benefits. If it works in the same way as the other networks, then access to this project also depends on who you know. Elizabeth and Julius remember the initiative to register IDPs in advance of Minister Ecweru’s visit:

the LCs were the ones informing us. They were writing down names—but registration cost 5000 [UGX]. We paid, but we have not received [the posho]... they told us they were going to give... the government is not looking at us (F21, M14).

48 These are “Kireka, Bandan (Olede) known as Acholi Quarters; Naguru Go-Down and Nakawa Zone; Kibuli in a place known as Acholi Quarters; Namuwongo Zone; Kamwokya Zone known as Acholi Quarters; Bukasa Zone; Mutungo/BBinna Zone [sic]; Kawempe Zone; Nsambya Zone” (3).

49 I neglected to ask most individuals specifically about whether or not they had heard about the initiative to register urban IDPs or the Refugee Law Project, so I cannot give a full account of the percentage that knew about them. I did, however, discuss with each whether or not he or she felt ‘displaced.’ Apart from Julius, Elizabeth, and Roland, only four people mentioned four people mentioned the IDP registration initiative, and only in vague terms (M05, M07, F04, F05).
It is hard to tell if this was an isolated case. But as with many services, it appears that being registered as ‘displaced’ also means going through the Local Council member since they have official statistics about numbers of households and individuals living in their area. Considering that a weekly contribution of 1000 UGX is too much for some of the area ladies to contribute to the Salvation Army meeting, some individuals were probably left out from the registration process. Thus they were probably also left out from receiving the benefits of being registered, if the government takes substantial action on this initiative. Based on this study, I agree with the descriptions of the difficult conditions in which many displaced people in Kampala live; and would support an initiative to gain government recognition and aid. However, almost none of the people I had talked to had ever been registered, and so the initiative is at least as selective as any of the others this chapter has analyzed.

**Conclusions**

In Kampala, education is key to social advancement, jobs are key to survival, timely rent payments key to not being evicted. Accessing these opportunities and assets—an education, a stable job, an affordable place to live—is key to ‘managing’ and coping in the city and with displacement. People endeavor to gain access to these resources through many strategies—mobilizing identities, maneuvering NGOs, scraping by on ingenuity, investing money and time in knowing the system. Clearly, this is easier for those endowed with capital and substantial assets and connections (professionals), and in this way, the process of accessing NGOs reproduces social hierarchies.

Ironically, individuals are often caught between being ‘not vulnerable enough’ to meet the criteria for being served by NGOs, and being too ‘unconnected’ and not aware of the opportunities that are arising. While it is understandable that many NGOs would wish to serve the most vulnerable individuals according to preset criteria, this tends to leave individuals out who are nevertheless in great need of the services they provide. Peter is an *askari*, a security guard, raising his children in Naguru go-down alone. He works long night shifts, and misses most of the meetings of many of the area NGOs. He described the process of trying to get his youngest daughter registered for assistance in paying school fees:
recently there was a certain NGO which came sponsoring children... Compassion [International], exactly. They managed to absorb [take on] some children from here. But the criteria they put was very difficult.

C: like what?

P: that the child must be purely an orphan. So I failed to take mine...I can’t pretend they are orphans (M09, emphasis in original).

At the same time, those who are ‘not connected enough’ often do not hear about registrations. Certain individuals could not afford the incremental payments needed to get enrolled in an NGO program (F22, F23), or could not attend meetings due to demanding work schedules (M09).

What is clear is that the displaced have nuanced understandings of how NGOs operate and invest resources that may initially appear beyond their means in order to secure them. Individuals took a fairly instrumental approach to NGOs. They carefully weighed whether the money it takes to register and receive benefits, the time it takes to attend meetings, and other investments were worth the effort when other activities, like looking for work, could be pursued instead.

While there is discrimination against northern Ugandans, there was also a widespread perception that it was ‘easier to get assistance’ if one came from northern Uganda. This is because groups organized around other identities—the Christian faith or ‘community’ anti-poverty goals for example—become ethnically linked when the majority of the population they serve is from northern Uganda.

Each individual is a member of very many different groups—from his or her family, NGOs, neighborhoods, churches. Can these be considered communities, as Chapter 1 defined, and in what ways?

Given the understandably instrumental approach most of the informants had regarding NGOs—because of the input of resources and time required to benefit from them—and given the tension that the NGOs resources often created among their recipients, it would be inaccurate to say that the NGOs contribute the creation of ‘communities.’ By this, I mean communities in either the geographical sense or in the sense of creating a feeling of mutuality and trust among displaced persons with a common ethnic or historical background and similar life experiences, despite the fact that almost all informants called themselves displaced persons.
An IDP ‘community’ may be emerging in part because of the initiatives of the Refugee Law Project to get northern Ugandans living in Kampala registered as IDPs. At the time of this research, it seemed fragmented and selective since only a few were aware of former Minister Ecweru’s promises to aid IDPs in their return (F21, M14, M05).

This chapter has focused on networks that northern Ugandan migrants encounter when moving to and living in Kampala. The following chapter examines the networks northern Ugandans make or maintain, based on ethnic or family connections.
Simon Lamara has been a leader for most of his life. From being ‘head boy’ in his secondary school, he is now the chairperson of the Kampala branch of the Panyinga community, his clan. He was also one of the first Local Council 1 chairpersons in Kitgum district following the NRM takeover in 1986. Before that, he had been working as a building contractor under ‘dictator Amin,’ building barracks throughout the country. With the escalation of the war in 1988, life became unbearable:

by the time I ran, I ran alone…In the night, at around 2 a.m., I told the wife that ‘you know, madam, I’m going away. I’m running away.’ The wife asked me, ‘where are you going? Where are you heading?’ I said I don’t know, just anywhere. If I get hit there, I die there… The wife allowed me because…the men were being hunted. So in that night, I moved footing [walking], eh? Twenty kilometers… There was no way of coming from Kitgum to Karuma. All the way was fighting, fighting, fighting. You move in [a] government convoy…on the road, gathering people. So I came to Kampala alone (M15).

He stayed at the home of his brother for a year without a job, slowly networking until he found work as a builder. In 1992, he sent for his wife and six children who joined him in his one room home in Kirombe. He describes the 1990s as a period of living hand-to-mouth. When I met him, he could no longer do the heavy lifting required of his former job. He had moved onto a managerial position as a building supervisor and was considerably more comfortable, though still displaced:

I consider myself to be displaced. Because fearfully I ran from home. You know, when a lion is coming to attack you, and you have a tree, a thorny tree standing here, to climb that tree can take you one second… It was like running from, from the war area. Now going back, for you to climb down from that thorny tree, you can’t really. ‘Oh! It’s piercing you here.’ You need people to help you. [To] lower you down (M15).

The difficulty of ‘going home,’ like climbing down a thorny tree, is one of the central problems facing many northern Ugandans in Kampala. Simon plans to resettle back in Kitgum, but has established himself here, and expects his children to spend much of their life in the city:

my plan? Old as I’m now [be]coming, hmm? I don’t want to stay in Kampala. I want to go back home…in Kampala, the age cannot allow you to… do the work that you used to do. In our culture, the older people now have to go back home… So I plan to go back home. Leaving my children and the young ones in Kampala.

C: do you think that your children and young ones want to stay here?
S: I’m telling you...if you are brought up in urban towns or urban areas, you cannot go in rural areas to stay there. You cannot. You cannot bear that life in rural area...but [eventually] our children will follow me, they will go and build homes there [Kitgum] (M15).

For Simon, keeping a connection to ‘home’ is important to fighting the sense of isolation and helplessness that urban displacement can bring:

I run...with my own aim, and my own difficulties. Individually, we come [to Kampala] like that. So when I come I learned ‘oh! Mr. Richard is here’ or ‘oh, Mr. so and so is there.’ So we keep moving around greeting one another. Interacting with one another. And then slowly slowly we came with an idea. Saying that now this staying of ours here, we need to come in one group. Under one association. So that we want to help in certain problems. We may sit as one body (M15).

This chapter is about the ethnically-based organizations that northern Ugandans have created in Kampala, like the clan group that Simon leads. It asks, to what extent are typical Acholi and other northern Ugandan social hierarchies articulated in these organizations? And to what extent can these groups be considered ‘communities’ despite the effects of displacement?

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 have shown how differential access to networks and living space have created social hierarchies among northern Ugandans in Kampala, enabling some to manage the effects of displacement better than others. However, northern Ugandans also formed their own communities that cut across these lines. The basis of these communities is the continued commitments northern Ugandan migrants, including displaced persons, have with ‘home.’ These networks are manifested in the form of clans, and are broadly perceived as legitimate. Indeed, home is bound up with sense of community.

One of the important ways in which links to home are mobilized is through the clan system. This chapter examines one clan—Panyinga clan from Kitgum— as a case study. It also presents the diverse experiences people have had with their own clans, as well as the issues related to access that make it difficult for those with little income and little spare time to participate. While these organizations are based on identity, they are hybrid ethnic and civic associations.

By exploring how northern Ugandan migrants feel about these networks, it is clear that continued investment in ‘home’ and family ties is as important a goal as surviving in the city. It demonstrates the endurance of these connections despite displacement.
Pressures from ‘home’

What is ‘home’? As Bakewell notes:

> [c]oncepts of home vary greatly between different societies, and between different individuals within societies, and it cannot be assumed that refugees will want to return to the place they were forced to flee. Although some groups may look to a particular piece of territory as their permanent homeland…the concept of home usually includes more than a physical location but also the community associated with that place (2002: 45)

The same is true of displaced persons, especially given northern Ugandans’ long history of migration to Kampala. Almost all people spoke about home in terms of a village of origin, a place where they desired to be buried. In Kampala, the ‘village’ exists as a connecting site among individuals in the city, and opens up opportunities for networking.

Urban migrants face demands from family members and relations at home (Gugler 2002) and the displaced are not exempted. With home being still ravaged by the breakdown of infrastructure due to the conflict, the demands of family members stretch thin the resources of Kampala-based migrants, even if this assistance is given willingly (M07, M03, M08).

As Patience put it:

> when you leave the village, and you come to Kampala, it means you have got a certain level of understanding, [a] level of reasoning things. So when you come here, even… those relatives who are still in the village, they are still on your neck: ‘please help us, please help us.’… Yes, you have to look after them also. Give a hand here and there. So you can’t do anything [in Kampala]. You cannot. Because now things that you had kept for some time [for yourself] has been already taken [by them] (F01).

Patience barely has enough income to get by in Kampala. Living at the home of a member of parliament, she was earning very little, and had few savings left over from her past jobs. Nevertheless, she supports her sister in Masindi district in school. She still sends 20,000 to 40,000 UGX to her mother when she can afford it. She gives the
sum in an envelope to one of the public bus drivers she trusts who knows which cross road on the Kamdini—Lira road leads to her mother’s place. Patience texts her young cousins to be sure to catch the bus as it passes by and retrieve the money. The driver, of course, takes a 5,000 UGX commission to ensure the money’s safe arrival. I once accompanied Patience on a trip home to visit her mother. Her mother is a widow who injured her leg when farming, and now has to pay some of the young men in the village to do it for her, with little profit accruing. During the bus ride, Patience told me how she constantly worries about how to balance her own struggles with those of her family:

   Even me, I have nothing, but I’m the only one to care for her. The others [brothers and sisters] in Entebbe, in Kampala, they don’t bother. But it is my home.  

As Chapter 5 showed, Patience considers herself to be displaced because she and her sisters initially came to Kampala fearing abduction by the LRA. Her mother, by contrast, never left her homestead in Oyam district, despite the war around her. The reason for this, Patience told me, was that the homestead is located about two kilometers south of the Lira road, such that the Lira road separated her village from the advancing LRA rebels. The rebels, she surmised, were too afraid to approach the road, given the frequency of UPDF troop movements along this main highway. They would not cross over to the other side of the road, two kilometers from which her mother’s homestead was located. Perhaps the perception that the area was relatively safe was the reason, perhaps Patience’ mother also decided to stay for other reasons. The irony is that Patience—‘displaced’—is supporting family members who do not consider themselves displaced, but were nevertheless affected by the general breakdown in social services and rural poverty that pre-dated the conflict.

Beatrice, a hairdresser living in Kirombe, frequently has relatives that come from the north and stay with her, which adds strain to her already limited income:

   There are many who want to come. They stay, sometimes feeding them is difficult, sometimes they are many. But most of them they just come, look for some small small help, and you tell them to go back in the village. You see, life in Kampala also is difficult…eh? They want you to give them some money, food, clothes, they stay for half a month and you tell her ‘now you can go back to the village’ (F03).

In spite of the social disruption of war, relations between Kampala-based ‘displaced’ northern Ugandans and their networks in the north remain strong. These were manifested in migrants’

50 Field notes 04.12.2009.
patterns of mobility and remittances. These practices ranged in financial investment from purchasing plots of land in Gulu to house their families during the height of the conflict (M07) to putting 40,000 UGX (about 15 euros) in an envelope and sending it with one of the public bus drivers to the village for delivery (F02). Every person that I interviewed, even those without money for the day’s food, was equipped with a cell phone which they used to call home routinely, and almost all of them had travelled to the north to assist in a funeral or a wedding since their initial displacement, and returned to Kampala.

The desire to remain connected to home, as well as the pressures from relatives ‘up north’ are equally strong for the more settled, professional informants as for the low-income informants with ‘classic’ IDP profiles. David, the NGO consultant who struggled to put himself through school in Kampala in the 1990s, constructed a home for his family when he built up enough capital out of a sense of duty to those left behind:

I constructed a home, because ... I had to start by educating my brothers. My elder brother stopped [getting] a diploma because he could not afford to pay for his degree. I’m the second born and I have two other guys behind me. So when I finished and got the job, I had to make sure he finished and got the degree, and then also continued to pay for the younger guys. ….if they have their degrees, then for me, I will feel like I have done what is expected of me...If I don’t educate these people, then they become my responsibility for my entire life (M03).

Rachel Odong is a retired civil servant whose family owns a home in a wealthy area of Kampala. Speaking of her relations in Gulu, she said:

...this year [in Gulu], in particular...there is shortage of food, so some of them come asking for food. Some of them come asking for money to help with children's education. I have been able to assist them. But now that my medical bill is getting higher and higher, I am finding it difficult to [do this]... (F06).

The pressures to ‘take care of home’ are widely shared, though the assets available to do so, including the ability to travel north to check on supported relatives, are not. This explains in part the sense of ‘entrapment’ or of being ‘stuck’ in Kampala among the particularly low-income set, identified in Chapter 4.


cClans in the city
c

The earliest ethnographic works on the Acholi date back to the 1860s. They described a people organized as many small chieftaincies, each with their own political leader (rwot). About sixty
small chieftaincies existed in eastern Acholi by this time. It was only during colonial times a paramount chief, the *Rwot*, was installed to represent the whole Acholi population (Baines 2005:21).

The Acholi can be traced back to Luo-speaking migrants from southern Sudan who settled in present-day Uganda in the fifteenth century. As Atkinson has argued, the socio-political organization of the Acholi in landed chieftaincies with clan-based communalistic tenure practices is a seventeenth century adaptation of structures of the Bunyoro kingdom just south of Acholi land (Atkinson 1989:22). The Lango also were part of a single migratory people who broke off at the present-day border between Kenya and Ethiopia. Encountering the Acholi, the Lango eventually settled in different groups in north-central Uganda, north of Lake Kyoga. Over time, they came to adopt many of the forms of the Luo language, such that contemporary Acholi and Langi are mutually intelligible, and its forms of clan-based political organization (Tosh 1978).

Clans are organized along territorial lines. Many of the place names on maps of northern Uganda are actually the names of clans. As with many primarily rural populations, land is of great social importance to northern Ugandan groups like the Acholi and Langi. Regardless of whether or not these are romanticized images, many predominately rural northern groups rely on herding and farming for their livelihoods, with social organization along clan lines and 'customary' forms of land tenure (Atkinson 1994; Dolan 2005; Ocheng 1995; Finnström 2003). Access to land bears cosmological significance—'home' to many Acholi is where you can be buried in the manner of your family members who have passed before you. Access to land or—more specifically—ownership of a plot is often a prerequisite for marriage and a significant marker of social status (Finnström 2003). The burning of land and looting of cattle by both the Lord's Resistance Army and government troops was thus a particularly brutal tactic of war since it removed access to the foundation of many Acholis' livelihoods.

Land is thus central to social organization in northern Uganda. Can these forms of organization still exist in urban Kampala, where clan members are scattered, and land is not owned communally? What has happened to ‘traditional’ Acholi and Langi social orders, and how have these changed or reformulated because of the displacement of northern Ugandans into Kampala?
When asked whether they knew of any clan-based organizations in Kampala, two thirds of the northern Ugandan informants claimed that they had (Figure 7B). Often this was either their own clan network, or in the case of many married women, the clan of their husband. Around a quarter of the informants (nine) had no knowledge of whether such clan organizations existed in Kampala. The remaining four informants claimed that in Kampala, clan organizations do not exist or, as Beatrice put it, “that one remains in the village” (F03).

What functions do clans perform in Kampala? This section focuses on one clan, Panyinga, representing four of my informants (M13, M15, F20, M12). According to many informants, clans in Kampala are preoccupied with keeping awareness among members of what is going on at home and offering cultural advice to its members, such as advising on the suitability and appropriate procedures for marriages and the settling of minor disputes (M02, F02, F19). “Home” is the focus of development activities—the specific issues of helping northern Ugandans cope with displacement in Kampala are generally not on the agenda. I acquired the Constitution of the “Panyinga community” from Simon. The first objective listed for the Panyinga community is “to do business...farming and ranching, building construction and selling hardwares” on land that is owned by the community in Kitgum (Panyinga 2(a)). Other goals include making small-scale loans to members, “to restore and promote cultural values...within Panyinga” (Panyinga 2(1)).

Still the idea persists that for the big issues—input from elders both in Kampala and at home is required. Odongo is member of the Panyinga clan. As he explained:

If there’s a problem in the village, they [the clan elders in Kampala] call us we go and join. And for us also if we have anything any issue here to be handled, discussed by the clan member, we call and also we discuss from here…We select a few people. Some elders come and then they will take back the resolution of whatever matter we have discussed.

C: what kind of matters are [the subject of] the discussion?

O: it can be matters related to land dispute. Since they are now, since the population has increased, so there are some people who wants to come and encroach on your land and take it…When you don’t unite us, the clan, they always take such land away from there.
C: and any problems here in Kampala that you discuss there?

O: we discuss matters for children. But here, our children, they are increased in numbers so how are we going to handle them? We come to discuss matters like that. So we call the elders from the village, who are quite ahead of us [senior] to come and help us to discuss these matters […] Simon Lamara is [the] one who leads us here. So he takes responsibility for the clan members in Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe (M13).

The mobility of elders between Kampala and northern Uganda, in both directions, is important to maintaining connections with ‘home’ (M05, F06, M06). Odongo considers himself displaced. He makes less than 100,000 UGX per month and rents one room, in which he, his wife, two adult children and several grandchildren sleep. However, he still invests heavily in his connections with home. He spends considerable amounts of money buying ‘airtime’ for his mobile phone, a critical tool for remaining in touch with elders at home.

For some, clans are for celebrating weddings and funerals, not as much for immediate material concerns. Oneka, the medical doctor whose father is from Lango and whose mother is a Munyankole from south-west Uganda, participates in his father’s network. He feels disenchanted by it, because:

the majority of them [clan members] have the advantage of having grown up in Lango itself. And some have experienced the war, they have really have close contact with the war…more than me who has been in Kampala most of the time (M08).

Oneka explains how they meet in the home of one of the elders, one that is centrally located, like the home of his uncle, who used to be the clan head before he passed away. Oneka is not sure how the clan decides who qualifies as a clan head, but:

the way I see it, it is someone who has retired from civil service so that he has time. Someone who has time, you know, for that…disposable income... Usually the clan head prepares the food (M08).

He described how clan members would notify each other of meetings via text messages. When I asked what issues the clan dealt with, he drew a distinction between those issues that are handled in Kampala and those handled “upcountry”:

some time last year we had a get-together, of the children, to know each other. And of course we get to know who's married, who's getting married. Who is wedding…So we make contributions. Then of course burial, funeral, actually, who has died… yeah, even dispute resolution is handled…the usual disputes, usually maybe marriage-related disputes. And upcountry it’s more land-related disputes.…And any other disputes, theft of a chicken or of produce! Most of the ones who are in Kampala are for celebrating and for funerals (M08).
Moral authority and legal pluralism

Clan networks have norms governing the social relations of their members, but they also interact with other sets of norms, in particular Ugandan law, as enforced by the Local Council members. I argue that this creates a situation of legal pluralism, a “state of affairs in which a category of social relations is within the fields of operation of two or more bodies of legal norms” (Woodman 1996: 157). The Acholi, in particular, have developed a 'traditional' justice system that emphasizes ritual and reconciliation in addressing common small-scale conflicts, including those over land (Akot Job 2007: 52; Finnström 2003). Regardless of whether or not these practices are indeed “traditional,” many of the practices are clan-based, with 'elders' occupying prominent roles. However, according to the Ugandan Constitution, dispute settlement at the local level is supposed to be handled by Local Council members. How do these two systems interact?

First of all, clans act as an important moral authority role—regarding burials, weddings, general respectable conduct. As Simon explains regarding the Panyinga:

We say our purpose in coming here to Kampala is to, like hunting, you must get something to take back home. So our aim our focus to come here is to work. [You] get money, help your family, educate your children, and then take back some money to help your parents...So we discourage lingering about when we are here in Kampala. This over-drinking, we don’t want that...We want to discourage that (M15).

Indeed, according to Simon, the role of clans, outside of their duties to develop ‘home,’ is primarily moral. I asked if the clan ever assisted individual members with monetary concerns like paying rent and feeding themselves.

actually, we don’t assist individuals so much. With the petty cash or something of the sort. We assist in ideas... Sensitization. Or, when someone is doing something wrong, we call him, we say ‘no, what you are doing is wrong. Don’t prove to be a marijuana smoker; don’t prove to be a drunkard.’ We aim at what brought you here in Kampala. You are here to develop yourself, your family and make sure the home there is proud of you being here in Kampala (M15)

Again, through this emphasis on home, clan leaders are convinced of their role as a kind of ‘moral police’ rather than as providers of immediate assistance to members in Kampala. The question of how this interacts with LC authority is complicated by the fact that clan elites often overlap with political elites. Chiefs and clan leaders are also leaders here in Kampala, often with significant civil roles (M02). Rebecca, the retired civil servant, reported that the rwat of her clan from Gulu actually lives in Kampala and was a government employee: “people here recognize
him as chief, and when they go home, he is still chief” (F06). In this way, elders can be senior clan members who either reside primarily in northern Uganda, or in Kampala (M02, M10, M11).

What makes an elder? I asked Simon Lamara:

And you yourself, sir, how did you get your position? You were elected to be the head of the Kampala group?

S: That position, you don’t campaign for… it comes automatically. It follows the birth age… They see now, ‘is he aged enough? Is he elderly enough? Is he here giving good teachings to the young ones to people?’ People just see…this one, he can really talk good. This one can lead… (M15).

Even though Simon says he got to his position by virtue of his good teachings and age, the Panyinga Constitution, by contrast, has a detailed section on how its executive committee and other organs must be formally elected by all members of the clan (Panyinga 7.1(b)). The community also traces its origins to “Dwongo, the Great father and Guci the mother,” and describes how membership “shall be by birth and by registration” (Panyinga 3(b)). However, I was recruited to be an ‘external’ member of the community. While the Constitution has no provision for non-Panyinga membership, there is a clause enjoining the community to “welcome outsiders…who come straight to it (Panyinga 2(e)). In these ways, the clan maintains a dual ethnic and civic character, which is a functional mix of formal and informal mechanisms of access and composition. It is perhaps this flexible nature that allows the system to survive in Kampala.

The deputy for Panyinga clan and one of my informants, Robert, is also an LC1 chairman. I asked him if his two roles ever conflicted. He responded that there was a fairly clear division of labor for these services. I posed a hypothetical question: what if a Panyinga clan member was involved in a violent physical fight with a neighbor? Simon responded:

[The] LC takes the way of law, or government…We, us [clan leaders], with us we take customary and traditional. So we sit together with the LC. We beg, we ask, eh? Where he is strongly wanting to go this way, with the law, for us, we stand on customary. Then we negotiate, we understand one another with the LC, if that one is to be taken straight to court, to jail… We may divert. We may divert. The LC may come and listen to us, then we solve that problem… but we don’t promote violence. We don’t promote crime… there is no tension (M15).

Is it wishful thinking that there is no tension between civil and clan authorities, especially on issues like marital disputes that bridge their jurisdictions? Is the distinction between customary
matters and civil affairs so concrete? While the system likely does not run as smoothly as Simon suggested, this distinction between clan and civil matters was affirmed elsewhere. Some LC1 chairpersons, like Andrew in Biina, were reluctant to talk about any issue that touches upon ethnicity (K01). However, his deputy Ambrose filled me in. He told me how, when it comes to issues of culture, the LC officials in his zone routinely invoked elders of the clan of the resident concerned. In particular, he recalled a case between Aluru residents from northwest Uganda in which an inheritance was being disputed. In order to find the cultural leaders to deal with the problem, he asked the individuals concerned to refer them to the appropriate clan leader. He keeps a list of prominent clan leaders in his area for future reference. As he put it, “you wouldn’t call in someone from the grasshopper clan to settle an issue for the antelope clan.”

The precise relationship between Local Council officials and clan leaders is probably haphazard and negotiated, rather than systematic (but warrants further research). However, people have a clear idea of the issues that are appropriate to bring before the Local Council, and those that go to the clan. The most frequently cited issues brought before LCs were delayed rental payments, disputes with landlords, physical violence. Violet Olou lives in Naguru go-down, and thinks it is a good idea to have clan networks in Kampala, because the “help in case of problems... any problem, be it death or sickness”:

if it is a problem involving the local authorities, we go to [the] LC1. but if it is a problem involving family, we go to a person we are used to [within the family], maybe you can borrow money from that person, or seek advice.

C: for what problems [do you] go to the LC?

V: fighting, quarrelling or anything bad anyone has done to you. But if it is too big, and needs the clan members, they take it back home in the village.

C: what kinds of problems are too big for the LC?

R: those are issues of that room there [gestures to her house], I mean the marital issues. Maybe fighting… those other problems, like unending quarrellings in the marital quarters (F15).

Whether or not these two systems coexist in clearly demarcated spheres or not is a question for further research, as the evidence is too scant to make significant conclusions on this issue. But clans do operate, they do have legitimacy, and they are important to people’s lives. In this way, moral networks are maintained across time and space even in an urban context in which many of its members are scattered and otherwise ‘displaced.’

51 Field notes, 17.09.09.
As Ubink notes, in the literature on chieftaincy in contemporary Africa, there is a tendency to romanticize ‘traditional communities’ as egalitarian and inclusive structures. This assumes:

the democratic nature of chiefly administration and the well-functioning checks and balances on traditional authorities... [T]raditional authorities assert the positive attributes of customary law as ideal principles rather than show that they operate in practice, relegating all consequences of social stratification within communities to the background (2008:17).

Similarly, clans in Kampala face issues of stratification by class. Despite the idealized picture that Simon presented, this stratification is manifested in terms of differential access to the clan network. As Patience put it, organizing is “not at the refugees’ level” (F01).

Indeed, of the individuals that did not know if clan groups existed in Kampala, or who affirmed that they did not, these were living only in low-income ‘slum’ areas of Naguru go-down and Kirombe. All the professional informants, however, were in touch with their clan networks. As Michael, the academic, explained:

I’m in touch with my fellow doctors, businessmen, those who are teaching in the university. If they were involved in anything, they should have let me know… So if it is lower than that…and they, people working at my level are excluded, then I don’t know about it (M07).

These differentiations exist despite a general sense that this clan should unite all of its members. For David, the clan is synonymous with ‘community,’ has the potential to cross class barriers:

…there are two reasons why people come together. When they are extremely happy or when something bad has happened. That’s when people identify themselves with their community. And if something happens to me now, I am sure the people who are not here as a result of displacement, and a considerable number of people who are here as a result of displacement who know me will do the things that Acholi people do when…something good is happening…that one would cut across the social differences, the discrepancies…

But you find that the person displaced there is either your aunty or some distant relative or something, so the way you relate would be the same way you would relate if you were at home. You should go and check on your aunty. Go and check on your kids. Their kids come and visit you, and you know, if they are in trouble and you can help, you give them the help they need (M03, emphasis added).

Reflecting on her own clan network, Rachel Odong explained:
there is no boundary, whether you are living in Kampala or in Jinja. The only complication [to being part of the clan] is to be from that clan (F06)

Yet in practice, there are significant restrictions to accessing clan groups. Lack of time (M09), or immobility due to sickness (F17), prevent some from accessing clan groups.

Peter is actively in touch with his family in Oyam district, phoning them regularly:

first of all, we have to know the condition of each person…The most important is sickness. If you are healthy, no problem. Life goes on (M09).

He knows that there are about three or four of his clan members in Kampala, because “we always interact on the phone”:

These clan people, they are scattered. Not all of them can be from the same sub-county…But all along what identifies you is your clanship, that identical name. Once you meet, you will identify [yourselves] (M09).

I asked if they had formed themselves in any group or had regular meetings:

I don’t know, the nature of my work presses me. At times, if I join, I may not be having time to attend meetings. Because anytime I can be called…you know this work of private security, you [cannot] to refuse. If you refuse, they say perhaps that you are disobeying orders. So that's why at times joining other organizations becomes difficult. I may be willing to join but the nature of work [prevents me] (M09).

Judith, from Kitgum, knew about a clan organization for her husband that meets on Sundays in Banda. She said that though the clan members had been writing letters to her husband, he had not yet had the time to go there, since he is constantly looking for work as a day laborer (F23). I asked if she had gone yet:

I have not gone there, my name is not yet on their list.

C: would you want to go if your name were on their list?

J: yes, if I get time, I feel I should go, because when you get problem in Kampala, they are those people members who helps you….You see when you join those groups, you are asked as a member to pay some money…So they gather all those money and keep, so that in case of any problem, maybe someone has passed away, they help the family with that money, plus the little they have, and then they transport the body to the village (F23).

I asked her if she knew of any other assistance besides burials that the clan could offer. She had not heard of any other type of assistance. As with the networks identified in Chapter 6, there are membership costs associated with accessing the clan. As Oneka noted, clan meetings take time,
and they take resources, and may place obligations on members that individuals may prefer to avoid. Both are in short supply among lower-income northern Ugandan migrants.

**Conclusions**

Despite the effects of displacement, Kampala is not a “moral wasteland” for northern Ugandan migrant communities. There are connections that survive in the form of clans and families. This reality does not suggest a complete “social breakdown” for individuals in displacement, given that individuals draw on clan networks that span across space and time.

Moral and cultural codes are still apparent, even if they are strained by displacement. There are still forms of ‘traditional’ authority that continue in the form of moral services—like marriages, burial, and dispute settlement—and these are widely perceived as legitimate. But as with all the networks identified in this thesis, people are left out. This is because these networks, as many of my informants explained, operate on different “levels”—like the difference between ‘the ‘refugees’’ level and the managerial class. The pressures and desires to remain connected to home are commonly shared across socio-economic, gender, age and other lines. However, the assets people are able to mobilize to assist those ‘back home’ differ, and are stretched thin among the resource-poor, more recently arrived northern Ugandan migrants most commonly identified as ‘IDPs.’ In this way, the narrative of ‘unity’ of all Acholis, or of the clan unit, contrasts with reality that though there are common ties, there are still significant inequalities in accessing or mobilizing clan networks.

Despite this, people generally perceived clan networks as legitimate. Clans are family. They involve ties of shared moral codes and of heritage, which lead many to invest strongly in these groups out of a sense of duty, even though there are some material benefits to participation. That explains why people had more faith in their family and clan members than in their neighbors. Among informants, there was a strong sense of the authenticity of clan networks. Augustine, the catechist featured in Chapter 3, draws the distinction between ‘real’ and other Acholi leaders, such as those of the Acholi Development Association, which he perceived as doing very little (M04). And as Charles put it, “you cannot deceive an Acholi.” I asked him about whether there were still Acholi ‘chiefs’ in Kampala:
Chiefs? Yes, but not in the same way. In Kampala…Acholi are modernized, but chiefs exist in theory, not as much in practice…They are still able to practice dispute settlement practices, we call on Acholi elders to discuss matters of concern to Acholi society, for example when someone dies, elders collect money to help the family for the dead person. You cannot deceive an Acholi. People know the difference between the ones claiming to be big men and the true chiefs (M01).

The most eloquent justification I encountered for feeling strongly about maintaining clan networks, despite the difficulties of displacement and scattering, comes from Rachel. A retired civil servant who lives at her family home in Kampala for many months out of the year, she sees herself as the connecting point in family:

you know... I'm now one of the eldest so I feel that we should keep the community, because if you have people living in Kampala, who have other people living in Gulu, who have people living in the villages, if there's communication, there's so little break-up. And we Acholi, our family ties, are still strong. And I wouldn't be you know happy to see it break up when I'm still living (F06, emphasis added).

When they have problems, such as concerning the health or the education of a child, they meet together as a family in her home. In her words, community is a feeling of connection between relatives here in Kampala and home.

Can these clan networks be mobilized to alleviate the suffering linked to ‘displacement’? This is a question for the next chapter. Ethnic networks appear to have a fairly strong degree of legitimacy among northern Ugandans of the different backgrounds represented in this study. Yet mobilizing along ethnic lines is difficult to advocate, given the history of ‘tribalism’ in Uganda. The concluding chapter also explores people’s thoughts on their futures—whether staying in Kampala or ‘returning home’ or keeping a foot in both worlds.
James Okech speaks often of wanting to go home. At the same time, he invests significantly in developing his artisans’ group, recruiting networks of supporters in Kampala, expanding the work of his small studio. I asked him about this tension between investing in making a life in Kampala while aspiring to return to the north. He replied:

the obvious thing is, I want to go home. The women [in the arts group] want to go home. But the trickiest part is 'how do you go home?' Home is zero. In fact, it's worse than zero … Now, we are no longer talking about displacement, we are talking about new things after displacement, ok? So we keep [most of the name of our group] but it's no longer [with] 'internally displacement' [in it]... So I want to go there [home], many plans here [Kampala] will do one thing— will help consolidate our establishment, hopefully. Then—two—[they] will give a few members confidence in themselves so that wherever they are, they know they are able to fend for themselves (M05).

James had removed the term ‘displacement’ from his group’s name, in a way, to mark a transition to ‘new things after displacement.’ He nevertheless wants to go home. This chapter considers this tension between wanting to go home and investing in activities in Kampala, as shown in what individuals planned and hoped to do in the future. This has implications for the future of Kampala’s northern Ugandan communities, which are discussed. As the concluding chapter, this chapter reviews the key findings of the research. It suggests directions for future research as well as IDP initiatives. Any program intended to benefit displaced persons should take into account migrants’ desires to keep a foot in both worlds—Kampala and their home region—as well as their entrepreneurial initiatives.

**Settling?**

What keeps people in Kampala? It is often not only that many northern Ugandan migrants cannot afford to travel home and reestablish homesteads and livelihoods, as the Refugee Law Project noted (2007a). It is also that they do not want to resettle in the short-term, having made significant investments in small business or land ownership. As chapter 6 noted, people manage (and want) to be mobile for things that ‘matter,’ going to and from the city, even when the bus fare equals half their monthly rent.
One of the most popular reasons for staying in Kampala is to pursue education, or, in the case of many parents, to work in the city in order to pay for children’s education in Kampala (F01, M10, M11, M06, F12, M01, F11, M09, F20, M13). Patience, for example, is trying to save up to attend university to get a degree in law (F01). Lawrence, a father of four, explained why he is still in Kampala, despite having ambitions to buy a plot in Gulu:

I want to see how far I can help this son of mine who is going to university next year, and this daughter of mine who is going to S[condary] 1, I don't know what I'll find. …I have to raise the money and finish up with him (M06)

Ironically, for some, the assistance they receive from NGOs in Kampala paying their children’s school fees is reason enough to stay in the city. As Angwang explained:

I would think of going back [to the north] but the issue is my children, that the Meeting Point groups are helping me with. In the village, even the houses are not there, if you are going, where to begin from is a problem… To me, myself; I feel like going back. But the issue is, if I go back, the children will remain here with their father. The father also goes to work. So who is to look after the children? And these children are paid o the condition that their parents has to report to the Meeting Point twice a week. Now if I am not there, who will be going there to report and to make all this registration? And then if I think of taking back these children, where to begin from? (F12)

Similarly, many northern Ugandans in Kampala were pessimistic about finding employment in the north (M04, M02, F02, F09). Matthew, an accountant, moved to Kampala as a young teenager in the early 1990s. Asked if he wished to resettle in northern Uganda, he responded:

I would prefer to stay this way [in Kampala], with visits home. The reason being, number one: there are very many things. It is very eas[ier] to move around than in Gulu…You know we work and study at the same time here. It's not possible in Gulu…It may not be so simple to get jobs there (M02)

The lack of jobs is only one aspect of what many viewed as the generally ‘bad’ condition of village life, and a reason for staying in Kampala for the short to medium term (M07, F12, F03, F22, M04, F13, F07, F08). This was attributed to a lack of infrastructure, such as the destruction of homesteads (F07, F08). Recent droughts have resulted in a lack of the type of grass used in thatching huts (M04), and weather changes have made it difficult to cultivate enough crops for sale (F13). For Florence, who receives anti-retroviral drugs, medical care is much better in Kampala and a reason to stay there (F17). As David, an NGO consultant noted, there are also conflicts over land in northern Uganda as people move out of the IDP camps and attempt to reclaim homesteads:
home is not very easy right now… the land conflict is rocking all parts of the conflict. So people are asking: ‘you are in the city, what bought you back?’ That is a hard question to answer and it has something to do with your self-esteem. So maybe many would prefer to survive in the city than go home, resettle back home (M03).

As Beatrice put it:

If I go now in the village—where would I start with life? Life is very difficult in the village, that is why I am here (F03).

The fact that many choose to stay in Kampala to take advantage of some of its benefits relative to northern Uganda does not necessarily mean that these individuals have ‘settled’ in the city. Every informant talked about returning to live in northern Uganda again in the future. Even Beatrice, who acknowledged the difficulties of village life, said:

I have to go back home; home is the best...time will reach when this work [as a hairdresser] does not help me, I have to go back home. Land is free, I have to go and dig for my future (F03).

David has a stable consulting job with various NGOs based in Kampala and also has ambitions to present his candidacy as a member of parliament. However, he plans to retire in the north, pursue his dream of having a farm. Most of the professional informants linked their return to ‘retirement’ from jobs in the city (F02, M03, M07, M10, M11, M15, M16). But as the Refugee Law Project has already noted (2007), lower income migrants often cannot afford the expenses of relocation (F04, F05, F15, F16, F17, F18). In this way, the reasons that many forced migrants stay in Kampala—education, employment, social services—mirror the dynamics of ‘voluntary’ migration (Gugler 2002) even if the reasons for their migration were related to the conflict.

**Migrant communities**

The ‘migrant community’ of northern Ugandans—migrants and individuals of migrant origin—is rather many migrant communities. This thesis has traced the processes of social differentiation among these individuals to understand the effects of conflict-induced displacement on the broader collective. This thesis focused on the different assets and backgrounds of individual northern Ugandan migrants that enabled them to ‘manage’ life in the city and displacement by examining access to social services and goods—including housing, education and jobs. Despite the social hierarchies evident among northern Ugandans, what is shared widely among northern Ugandan migrants in Kampala is both a common sense of ‘displacement’ and a common sense of
connection to home. These form the basis of communities that survive and are formulated in Kampala, despite the disruptive effects of the wars in northern Uganda.

Chapter 3 explained how African ‘migrant’ groups came to be concentrated in east Kampala. It then traced the reasons northern Ugandans migrated to Kampala, and the long-standing networks that received the more recent ‘conflict-related’ migrants. Rather than passively ‘ending up’ in slum areas, individual migrants strategize about where to live based on many considerations—security, cost of living, and networks available to them through pre-existing connections to individuals currently living in Kampala. It argued that where one lives matters for accessing different social resources and influences the kinds of communities that are formed.

Chapter 4 focused on the heterogeneity of the migrant community of northern Ugandans. Northern Ugandans in Kampala have a range of backgrounds, from professional to working class, pre-war arrivals to ‘conflict IDPs,’ Acholi and Langi men and women from their early twenties to late seventies. It discussed the discourse of ‘managing’ that informants used to describe their own and others’ lives in the city. It used the lens of access to understand how individuals cope with life in the city and the inequalities that are reproduced in that process. Speaking of their lives in the city, informants spoke of ‘managing’ in three ways. The first was gaining access to specific material and social goods —jobs, scholarships, reliable housing— as a marker of social success. The second was a more subjective judgment on managing as living a ‘decent life.’ The third was managing as the ability to be mobile—to move to and from Kampala as desired, which was further discussed in Chapter 5. Informants spoke about other northern Ugandans in Kampala in comparative terms of inequality, often in terms of a two-way distinction among northern Ugandans in Kampala—between ‘those who have’ and ‘those who have not,’ between ‘rich’ and ‘poor,’ the landed and the perpetual tenants, the working class and the unemployed. Those considering themselves to be ‘struggling’ frequently expressed hostility to those perceived as ‘well-off.’ Wealthier individuals often assisted those in need. Generally a sense of distinction between higher-income northern Ugandans and ‘those IDPs’ – spatial and social disconnect. A shared sense of displacement does not translate to an automatic connection between northern Ugandans.

Chapter 5 traced people’s migration histories. It highlighted the mixed reasons individuals had for coming to Kampala—how the fear of violent conflict was mixed with other motivations including finding better jobs and pursuing education. Chapter 5 then compared these stories to the
definition of internally displaced person codified in the Kampala Convention. Being an IDP is a legal status predicated on being ‘forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence’ (Organisation for African Unity 2009 1(k)). Being ‘displaced,’ on the other hand, is a negotiated and transitive identity, not only linked to the reasons one left northern Uganda. It is linked with class, with mobility, and, not being fixed to where the person is physically or the reasons for flight, differs significantly from the legal identity of IDP. While not everyone literally fled, for many northern Ugandans, their identity as displaced is rooted in loss of opportunity and loss of mobility.

Chapter 6 explored how often those with greater ‘migratory cultural capital’ that are better able to benefit from the networks around them that provide buffers against urban poverty upon arrival in Kampala. Many northern Ugandan migrants, especially those who came to Kampala during the war, occupy crowded living spaces in Kampala’s slums. As Chapter 6 showed, accessing a secure place to live was key to accessing other social services, such as NGO networks and jobs. It examined how individuals gained access to living space and the different kinds of living space they occupied. It traced the role of local council chairpersons as gatekeepers to important social networks. It examined three NGO networks in depth, arguing that accessing these networks was dependent on formal registration (and showing up for meetings), meeting the criteria of vulnerability required of each group, and knowing the procedures and the right people. These mechanisms of access also apply to the emerging ‘IDP’ networks that are currently mobilizing for recognition from the Government of Uganda.

In Kampala, education is key to social advancement, jobs are key to survival, timely rent payments key to not being evicted. Accessing these opportunities and assets—an education, a stable job, an affordable place to live—is key to ‘managing’ in the city and coping with displacement. People gain access to these resources through many strategies—mobilizing identities, maneuvering NGOs, scraping by on ingenuity, investing money and time in knowing the system. This is easier for those endowed with capital and substantial assets and connections (professionals), and in this way, the process of accessing NGOs reproduces social hierarchies. As Chapter 6 showed, these differences in terms access to housing, social services, and local authority should nuance the image of a uniformly oppressed bloc of IDPs. There is no homogenous group of displaced, any more than there is a homogenous group of northern Ugandans.
Chapter 7 focused on connections in displacement. It highlighted how, despite the traumas of conflict and the limited resources of many northern Ugandan migrants, strong communities exist in the family and clan systems. Clans act as moral and cultural authorities for northern Ugandan migrant groups in Kampala. There are still forms of ‘traditional’ authority that continue in the form of moral services—like marriages, burial, and dispute settlement—and these are widely perceived as legitimate and coexist with civil forms of authority.

**Tensions**

There are several tensions in the data that were difficult to reconcile. Informants spoke of losing their connections to loved ones and feeling ‘scattered’ in Kampala, yet they managed to reformulate their social networks despite displacement. Another tension was the difference between ‘being’ displaced according to the legal definition and ‘feeling’ displaced, a transitive state based on considerations other than the reasons for why a person came to Kampala. This thesis has explore such tensions using an ethnographic approach. Yet as a young, foreign female researcher, it is difficult to claim that these insights correspond to the reality experienced by my informants. The information presented to me was no doubt also carefully selected. As Lammers (2003) noted in her work on urban refugees in Kampala—why would anyone tell a researcher anything that was not in their interests, particularly on sensitive topics? I compensated for this by focusing on ethnographic approach and cultivating relationships of trust with the individuals with whom I worked. I would ask them to explain those instances in which a reality seemed to contradict simple narratives. In one instance, I interviewed a mother and daughter pair. The daughter supports her widowed mother by brewing and selling *waragi* gin. Both told me initially that they had no ‘assistance’ from anyone else. On later visits, pouring over family photo albums, I learned of another daughter who lived in Canada who helps support the pair. I learned also that the pair receives some money from the local church in making ends meet. I adopted this approach because I found that most previous studies of Uganda’s urban IDPs did not. If the findings here presented are context-dependent and complicated, it is also because northern Ugandan migrants’ lives are richer than anything that can be put to paper.

**Implications**

The findings of this thesis have many implications. I focus here on the implications for non-governmental organizations and government initiatives designed to address the needs of ‘urban
IDPs.’ Initiatives to benefit displaced persons should support the coping strategies that displaced develop themselves, including self-help collectives and micro-enterprises that indicate an investment in the area of resettlement. As this chapter has shown, making a respectable, semi-‘settled’ life in the city is a goal of many of Kampala’s northern Ugandan migrants. All people can be resourceful even in situations of victimization and deprivation. They deserve to have their ingenuity respected.

The primary challenge for any program designed to address the needs of forced migrants, whether in the legal or broader sociological sense, is to be equally available to all who have experienced the effects of war. This thesis suggests that assessments of IDPs in urban centers of Uganda should look beyond the “slums” where many who fled the wars in northern Uganda reside to mobilize networks of displaced persons who have access to institutions that support IDPs. These discussions should be held with members of local ethnic or sub-national coalitions with connections to the displaced population. This should be done carefully, however, not to be perceived by the surrounding community as stoking “tribalism.” As Stepputat and Sorensen noted, the process of aiding IDPs is potentially divisive in that:

the IDPs emerge as a state-endorsed category of citizens. Given the blurred boundaries of the category, and the extended and multi-sited networks in which people develop their livelihoods, the IDPs further complicate the process, adding the potential of generating conflicts between differently positioned people with comparable claims to having suffered the impact of armed conflict (2001:787).

The most important conclusion to be drawn from this research is that ‘assisting’ displaced persons—be it to facilitate rebuilding at ‘home’ or to create opportunities for secure livelihoods in the place where they reside—needs to involve more involve more actors than the NGOs, governments, and classic ‘IDPs.’ As chapter 7 showed, churches and clans are important loci for organizing among northern Ugandan migrants in Kampala. But any effective ‘action research’ with urban forced migrants should also be based on sound empirical work that compares this population with surrounding populations. This would allow an assessment of how (if at all) forced migrants cope differently with urban life. Most studies of ‘urban IDPs’ in southern Uganda are small-scale, primarily anthropological studies like this one (Sohne 2006; Refstie 2008) or statistical studies that do not include a comparison between migrant and non-migrant populations (Rowley 2006). One avenue for future research would be to conduct a random, two-stage systematic sample profiling initiative, in line with the Tufts-IDMC Urban IDP Study methodology (Jacobsen 2008). This initiative would gather enough data to be able to compare
northern Ugandan migrant populations to surrounding ‘host’ populations in order to accurately assess their needs relative to other populations.

Much more than merely ‘displaced,’ northern Ugandan migrants in Kampala bear many identities—as Ugandans, workers, professionals, and often but not only, part of the urban poor. This thesis has tried to show some of the diversity and resilience of these individuals, which is perhaps the strongest resource they have in dealing with the difficulties of displacement.
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# Appendix A: Interview Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alias</th>
<th>Initial Interview</th>
<th>Daytime occupation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F01 Patience</td>
<td>1 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Unemployed (looking for work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F02 Christine</td>
<td>8 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Hotel administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F03 Beatrice</td>
<td>10 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Hairdresser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F04 Mama</td>
<td>11 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Unemployed (dependent on daughter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F05 Virginia</td>
<td>11 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Waragi brewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F06 Rachel</td>
<td>15 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Retired civil servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F07 Vita</td>
<td>16 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Vendor (small-scale market retail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F08 Janine</td>
<td>16 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Vendor (small-scale market retail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F09 Daizy</td>
<td>25 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Beaded jewellery vendor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10 Akello</td>
<td>3 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Hairdresser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F11 Apio</td>
<td>3 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Vendor (small-scale market retail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F12 Angwang</td>
<td>3 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Beaded jewellery vendor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F13 Brenda</td>
<td>10 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Beaded jewellery vendor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F14 Faith Atim</td>
<td>10 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Unemployed (looking for work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F15 Violet Olou</td>
<td>10 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Vendor (small-scale market retail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F16 Mama Johnny</td>
<td>15 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Beaded jewellery vendor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F17 Florence</td>
<td>15 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Unemployed (dependent on husband)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F18 Maggie</td>
<td>15 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Vendor (small-scale market retail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F19 Mathilda</td>
<td>22 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Vendor (small-scale market retail), wife of former business executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F20 Clementine</td>
<td>27 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Vendor (small-scale market retail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F21 Elizabeth</td>
<td>27 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Seamstress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F22 Bonny</td>
<td>27 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Unemployed (dependent on husband)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F23 Judith</td>
<td>30 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Beaded jewellery vendor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M01 Thomas</td>
<td>25 Jul 2009</td>
<td>Security guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M02 Matthew</td>
<td>3 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M03 David</td>
<td>4 Aug 2009</td>
<td>NGO Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M04 Augustine</td>
<td>11 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Catechist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M05 Okoch James</td>
<td>19 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M06 Lawrence</td>
<td>23 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Contract electrician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M07 Michael</td>
<td>21 Aug 2009</td>
<td>University professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M08 Oneka</td>
<td>12 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Medical doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M09 Peter</td>
<td>15 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Security guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10 Marcus</td>
<td>19 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Retired civil servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11 Boniface</td>
<td>19 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Retired civil servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12 Robert</td>
<td>22 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Land broker (also, LC1 chairman Naguru)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13 Odongo</td>
<td>27 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Plumber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M14 Julius</td>
<td>27 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M15 Simon</td>
<td>23 Oct 2009</td>
<td>Building supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16 Otia</td>
<td>25 Oct 2009</td>
<td>Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K01 Andrew</td>
<td>7 Aug 2009</td>
<td>Local Council 1 chairperson, Biina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K02 Sissy</td>
<td>9 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Local Council 2 chairperson, Butabika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K03 Fred</td>
<td>27 Sep 2009</td>
<td>Local Council 1 chairperson, Naguru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K04 Janet</td>
<td>30 Oct 2009</td>
<td>Salvation Army coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K05 Sam</td>
<td>29 Oct 2009</td>
<td>President, MUBS Achoi Students Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K06 Jovin</td>
<td>4 Nov 2009</td>
<td>Social worker, Meeting Point, Naguru</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix B: Interview Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire for residents, KAMPALA</th>
<th>Code:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Version:</strong> Aug-09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Details on interview</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Location:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Interpreter Y/N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) If yes:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Language:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **2. Details on interviewee**                                             |       |
| a) Gender: M / F                                                          |       |
| b) Age: (known/estimated)                                                 |       |
| c) Ethnic group (self-described):                                        |       |
| d) Birthplace:                                                            |       |
| e) Single / Married / Widow                                                |       |
| **3. Details on migration history**                                       |       |
| a) How long have you been in Kampala? From where did you arrive and when? |       |
| b) Have you visited where you came from since you have come to Kampala?   |       |
| c) (if applicable) When you left your home, did you come to Kampala directly? Or from somewhere else? Can you tell me a bit about your journey? |       |
| d) In which part of Kampala do you stay now?                              |       |
| e) How did you locate this place where you are living now?                |       |
| f) Are you living by yourself or with others? If yes: Family members? Neighbours? Friends? |
| g) Who owns the place where you live now?                                 |       |

| **4. Livelihood activities and displacement**                             |       |
| a) Before you came to Kampala, how did you make your living during different times of the year? |       |
| b) Did you or your family own land?                                      |       |
| c) Do you know what has happened to this land since you have come here?  |       |

| **5. Actual livelihood activities**                                       |       |
| a) Now that you live in Kampala, how do you make your living during different times of the year? |       |
| b) What is your primary activity during the day? And during the night? Where do you do this? |       |
| c) Do you want to/ are you able to continue the activities that you did before you moved to Kampala? |       |
| d) What do the other members of your family currently do?                |       |

---

52 Adapted from Evans 2007; many thanks.
6. Networks and mobility
a) Since you have come to Kampala, have you received assistance from the government, an organized group not from the government, such as a church or an NGO? If yes, what kind of assistance and when did you receive it?
b) Does this assistance continue now, and if not, why not?
c) How do you spend the time that you are not working?
d) How often do you move outside of (insert appropriate area)? Where do you go?
e) Where are the members of your family now? Are you able to maintain contact with them and in what ways?
f) Are you aware of any organization or meeting for your clan in Kampala?

7. Thoughts on displacement
a) Do you consider yourself to be 'displaced' in any way? Why?

8. The future
a) Do you think that you will stay in Kampala or do you think you will relocate elsewhere? What would you like to do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If plans to stay:</th>
<th>If plans to go:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you think that you will try to live somewhere else in Kampala? If plans to go: Where do you plan to go?
### Appendix C: Key terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acholi</td>
<td>ethnic group of northern Uganda; residing primarily in Acholi sub-region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ankole</td>
<td>kingdom of south-Western Uganda; Museveni is a Munyankole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>askari</em></td>
<td>security guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Ba nange!”</td>
<td>Luganda expression of surprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bakopi</em></td>
<td>individual peasants of Buganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bakungu</em></td>
<td>appointed chiefs of Buganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>batongole</em></td>
<td>landed gentry under Buganda; often responsible for collecting tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>boda-boda</em></td>
<td>motorcycle taxi for hire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buganda</td>
<td>largest kingdom in Uganda; located in central Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunyoro</td>
<td>kingdom in western Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busoga</td>
<td>kingdom in eastern Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>busuulu</em></td>
<td>government-mandated income tax in Buganda under colonial rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>chapatti</em></td>
<td>fried dough pancake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>envujjo</em></td>
<td>tax paid directly to landlords in Buganda under colonial rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freehold</td>
<td>land tenure in which land is owned by individuals in perpetuity; originally by arrangement between colonial government and kingdoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>gobe</em></td>
<td>green leafy vegetable grown in Kampala region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSM</td>
<td>Holy Spirit Movement; Alice Lakwena’s rebel group active in Northern Uganda (1986-1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRO</td>
<td>International Refugee Organization; formed in 1946 as precursor to UNHCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kabaka</em></td>
<td>hereditary ruler of Buganda kingdom; currently Ronald Mutesi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>katikkiro</em></td>
<td>Baganda equivalent of prime minister; often appointed by <em>kabaka</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kibuga</em></td>
<td>Luganda for ‘capital’; royal city of Buganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kikoy</em></td>
<td>Cloth wrapped around legs; used by women throughout East Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCC</td>
<td>Kampala City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakwena</td>
<td>(Alice); leader of rebel Holy Spirit Movement; from Acholi term for ‘messenger’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langi</td>
<td>ethnic group of northern Uganda; residing primarily in Lango sub-region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luganda</td>
<td>language of Buganda; lingua franca of Kampala area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC1</td>
<td>Local Council 1 (zone or village level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC2</td>
<td>Local Council 2 (parish or sub-county level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leasehold</td>
<td>land tenure in which an individual title is held for a fixed period, involving rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRA</td>
<td>Lord’s Resistance Army; rebel movement in northern Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lukiiko</td>
<td>parliament of Buganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luo</td>
<td>Nilotic language/ supra-ethnic group; includes Acholi, Lango, Alur, and Kenyan Luo among others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mailo</td>
<td>land tenure in Buganda in which land is owned by individuals in perpetuity; often by arrangement with kabaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matooke</td>
<td>mashed green plantains; staple food of Central Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museveni</td>
<td>(Yoweri); president of Uganda since 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRA</td>
<td>National Resistance Army; fighting forces of Yoweri Museveni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>National Resistance Movement; ruling party of President Yoweri Museveni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>odii</td>
<td>sesame and groundnut paste; staple food in northern Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>posho</td>
<td>cornmeal powder, mixed with water to form loaf; staple food throughout Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public lands</td>
<td>lands owned by Kampala City government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raka-raka</td>
<td>Acholi term for chief or clan leader; pl. rwodi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGX</td>
<td>Uganda shillings; approx. 2000 UGX = 1 USD = 0.8 EUR (Dec 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UN refugee agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPDF</td>
<td>Uganda Peoples Defence Force (formerly NRA); Ugandan army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waragi</td>
<td>potent alcohol made from either cassava, banana, millet, or sugar cane</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>