

# Biting the dirty hand that feeds you

Relations and Resistance in the Bidi Bidi refugee camp, Northern  
Uganda



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## Abstract

In this thesis I address certain central aspects of the relations between what I define as different parties within the Bidi Bidi refugee camp. Based on fieldwork in and around the camp in 2019, I have analytically separated these parties into three as I see these as fundamentally striving towards different aims and, crucially, also often oppose each other, openly or covertly. In my analysis the humanitarian organisations and the Ugandan government comprise one party. The refugees and the local population constitute the two others. In my thesis I argue that the relations between these three parties are fundamentally driven or shaped by acts of resistance within a triangulated form of power relation. Furthermore, as I present the different parties it becomes evident that the humanitarian organisations and the Ugandan government comprise the most powerful party in the triangle, causing its shape to be lopsided rather than even. My triangulation, therefore, does not imply a horizontalization of relations but, rather, seeks outline also vertical relations of power. Concretely, I argue that the Ugandan government and the humanitarian organizations maintain this powerful role by controlling different forms of distribution, and being in charge of food, supplying jobs and giving courses. Through these practices they also produce various forms of governmentality which is supposed to make the refugees able to govern themselves the way the humanitarian organisations and the Ugandan government want. Throughout the thesis I also present multiple cases of both open and hidden forms of resistance by all three actors. I argue that even the humanitarian organisations and the Ugandan government are acting resistant towards the other parties through both acts of governing and disregarding acts committed by the other parties. I argue that, analytically, it is illuminating to see all these acts as resistant as it is the power of an actor that is resisted. The main party these acts effect are the refugees. I further argue, based on hospitality theory in anthropology, that despite the power of the Ugandan state and the humanitarian organizations, the de facto host community are still the main host in the everyday life in the camp. Crucially, they also practice both hospitality and resistance and, again, the one does not exclude the other. I then further argue that these resistant acts between the parties are the relations defining feature and, in this way, describes the relation between the parties well. With this argument I wish to argue that refugees can be empowered and that they don't have to be treated as they are in many countries. Looking closer at the relations between the parties, I believe it can be possible to find a solution to improving refugees situation in many countries.





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Mikko Virtanen

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## List of acronyms:

SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
ReHoPE	Refugee and Host Population Empowerment
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
ECD	Early Childhood Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ID	IDentity
SRS	Self Reliance Strategy
VHT	Village Health Team
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
AEP	Accelerated Education Program
ALP	Accelerated Learning Program
HC	Health Centres
FDP	Food Distribution Point
DP	Distribution Point
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army

# Map of Uganda



<https://www.voanews.com/africa/south-sudanese-refugees-transform-camp-city-uganda>

[Retrieved 22.01.20 - uploaded 07.09.19]

# Introduction

## *Presenting the power triangle*

*While sitting with the whole family around the shared plate between our six houses eating dinner— which, as always, is maize and beans— I hear a man's voice in a megaphone saying something in Juba Arabic and Kakwa. I ask the others what he said, and they tell me that he announced that they will start handing out food tomorrow at nine AM, starting with household size six (groups of houses having six people in them). We all finish our meal and sit around talking under the moon above with only a small light bulb connected to a solar battery as light. Someone picks up a phone which is able to show some funny videos or a game and we all crowd in front. The insects are swarming around the lightbulb hanging four meters away in a pole making a constant humming sound.*

*The next day at nine AM, the only people at the distribution point are people who are getting water from the nearby water point. The distribution point is a large open area covered in sand and rocks, and only four trees give any shade. There is one water point and three latrines set up by humanitarian organisations close by. My house is only 100 meters away so I can quickly go over when distributions start. At nine AM no one from the organisations has shown up, and the food still lays under the tents, covered with a tarp and protected by heavily armed military and a private security company. They are eating breakfast by their small tents right next to the food after guarding it through the night. At 0930 AM some cars from the organisations show up, they start to set up tables, fingerprint scanners and computers. At around ten AM, a bus with refugees arrives; they are trained in distributing food and gets driven from distribution to distribution. Refugees living nearby also come to work although they get paid less than the trained ones on the bus. They then clear the tarp from the food. Refugees who have a household size six start to show up, they get registered, and the distribution starts.*

The distribution of food is a monthly relief for most in Bid Bidi - the second-largest refugee camp in the world. Since the humanitarian organisations started to spread information in 2019 that one day the food distribution will stop or be reduced, the refugee's' sense and expression of relief at receiving food have become even more significant. Since the food is supposed to last 30 days, this is what the people account for. This routine is essential for sustenance and the well-being of their households. Indicative of such reliance is that late food distributions have

become a common problem which for the refugees means less food per person from the day they are told until the food is received.

Food is just one of many aspects of aid for refugees, although it is, perhaps, one of the most fundamental ones for the refugee's well-being. Furthermore, for some refugees in Uganda, food was one of the main arguments for them to come there instead of migrating to another country like DRC. Most refugees come to Uganda either because they have been there as refugees before or they follow their families and friends. Many know from experience how being a refugee in Uganda is, while others just follow their lead. Most of the refugees in the Bidi Bidi settlement has been there for three years which gives high level of awareness of what they can do as refugees and what they cannot. Their actions also affect the settlement, and their voices need to be respected due to new policies within humanitarian aid discourse in Uganda. Because of the refugees, there has come implementations such as guarding the food with military forces or operating fingerprint and eye scanners for various purposes of registration and surveillance.

Within the settlement, however, there is tripartite division of parties. The humanitarian organisations and the Ugandan government will be presented in relation to the others as one, the refugees as one and what is referred to as "the host community" by the humanitarian organisations, the Ugandan government and the refugees as one. These three parties, the humanitarian organisations and OPM, the refugees and the host community create a triangle of parties which creates friction between them. It is precisely the relations between these three parties this thesis will revolve around.

I will in the thesis refer to the Ugandan governments presence in the settlement as The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) unless stated otherwise. They work closely with United Nations High Commissionaire for Refugees (UNHCR) which is responsible for overseeing the partners that they are funding and their work within the settlements and because of this they have little personnel in the field. Other organisations work within the settlement where UNHCR is working as a donor and is funding them. When referring to humanitarian organisations, I am referring to both UNHCR and all their partner organisations within the settlement, unless stated otherwise.

### **Becoming a South Sudanese refugee in Uganda**

South Sudan is the youngest nation in the world (De Waal 2014). It politically and geographically split from Sudan in 2011 after a long and troublesome relationship. The people of South Sudan has been through multiple wars, some elders have lived as refugees for half

their lives, and many have fought in several armed conflicts. There are 64 different "tribes" in South Sudan who are all heavily affected and shaped by war and its consequences. In my thesis, when I refer to or use the term "tribe" or when using terms like "Dinka", "Nuer", "Kakwa" or similar terms, it is meant to refer to the self-assigned identity categories that are commonly used by refugees, host community and the humanitarian organisations and OPM alike. These are terms used for descriptive purposes of the operative categories, not as indicators of coherent ethnic groups or socio-political organisations.

In December 2013, a veritable civil war broke out in South Sudan. This war is still ongoing today, and for most South Sudanese it is viewed as a preacher in the settlement said, "a war without meaning". For some, however, the war was not a surprise. As de Waal (2014, 348-349) writes, there were several problematic aspects with the south Sudanese form of governance. It was kleptocratic in two ways, first in a way where the political leaders use every chance they get to steal public funds. Second, in the more original social-scientific sense where laws and regulations do not determine the functions of the authoritarian organs, but the mechanism of supply do. De Waal writes that governance is militarized, meaning that people in government use force or threaten with the use of it in bargaining. Furthermore, De Waal writes that "Governance transactions are highly monetised, and the cashflow to the rules is the heartbeat of governance." (2014, 348). This problematic and essentially contested form of governance was further exacerbated by militarising. As militarising occurs along tribal lines for personal security reasons (i.e. for protecting central figures of governance and their elites), this makes any military action risk for ethnic conflict (de Waal 2014, 361).

Bereketeab (2017) argues that the cause of the war lies in the personal conflict between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, the previous leaders of Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). The common understanding of what happened in 2013 is that the conflict started at a meeting between President, Salva Kiir from the Dinka tribe and vVce-President, Riek Machar from the Nuer tribe. The President accused the Vice President and ten others of attempting a state coup. Vice President Riek Machar denied the allegations, but the fighting between the tribal armies within SPLM had started. Machar quickly left South Sudan to control his forces from outside the country. Bereketeab (2017) also argues that because of the ethnic character of the personal conflict between the two leaders it quickly included other ethnic groups as well, making it a tribal war within the entire nation. The war has been met with multiple attempts at ceasefire and peace agreements from various initiatives, but none has achieved peace (Bereketeab 2017). Even though the war started in 2013, it was not until 2016 that the refugee stream out of South Sudan started.

In only six months, from August 2016 to January 2017, the largest refugee camp in the world at the time was made in Yumbe district in Uganda with over 280 000<sup>1</sup> people. The migration from South Sudan of refugees was mainly to Sudan and Uganda. In 2019 Uganda had 861 000 and Sudan 811 000 South Sudanese refugees each<sup>2</sup>. In 2020 there are 2,2 million refugees and asylum seekers from South Sudan in the world<sup>3</sup>.

What makes the situation even worse is the fact that the large majority of the refugees are women and children. Bidi Bidi settlement, with a population of 223 939 (numbers from 2018) Only 11,8 percent are men over the age of 18. There is 17,9 percent women above the age of 18, and 23,5 percent are children between the age of 0-4. This number is today higher since the count of children born in the settlement after 2016 had not been completed but was being conducted during my stay. Such numbers are troubling, especially when knowing that men over the age of 18 are often the sole provider of a household.

What helped the situation, is that as the people arrived, a pattern emerged where they migrate with friends, family or entire villages. Such migration where groups arrive together means that in Bidi Bidi each area has mostly people relating to each other or belonging to the same tribe. This was helpful, as most people try to stay with (or close to) their friends and family. Only the Dinka were placed in a specific area. They were placed close to the police station in the centre of the entire camp. The Dinka are commonly associated with the same tribe as President Salva Kiir, which is generally "known to be a tribe that wants war". For instance, when talking about the war and the different tribes with an elder preacher, he told me "The Dinka has said that South Sudan is theirs and that they just let the other tribes live there". Such things are often referred to when talking about the Dinka and are why they are not well-liked by most other tribes. Least of all by the Nuer commonly cast as the main opposing tribe in the civil war as well as in the past (See Hutchinson and Pendle 2015, Jok and Hutchinson 1999, de Waal 2014, Bereketeab 2017).

In the village where I gained access, there were mostly people from Central Equatoria, the Kakwa and Pojulu tribes, with Kakwa being the large majority. These two speak different forms of the Bari language. This makes it possible to communicate with few misunderstandings

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<sup>1</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/uganda-refugee-response-monitoring-settlement-fact-sheet-bidi-bidi-june-2018> [Originally published 30.06.18. downloaded 09.05.2020]

The number of refugees in Uganda has received much critique from foreign donors such as Germany, USA, and England. Moreover, the numbers were not accurate since the counting system of refugees had many flaws. Although the number was most likely much lower, the camp would most likely still be the largest in the world at the time.

<sup>2</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/southsudan> [Last updated 31.12.19. downloaded 06. January 2020]

<sup>3</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/southsudan> [Last updated 31.12.19. downloaded 06. January 2020]



(Vincent and Dihoff 1986). There are also several other languages spoken in the village. Therefore, it is mainly Juba Arabic that is spoken at meetings where the refugees meet. However, the meetings with humanitarian organisations and with OPM are usually held in English. Some refugees are quite good at English, but it varies greatly. The meetings are therefore usually translated by refugees, such as the village leaders. Actively translating makes them good at it, which make working for the organisations a lot simpler which can provide an income.

Uganda is one of the world's largest receivers of refugees, with a refugee population of almost 1,4 million refugees<sup>4</sup>. They have been recognised by leading UN bodies as world-leading in their treatment of refugees and it is alleged, having obtained certain competence for treating them (The World Bank 2017). Many of the refugees have also internalised such a view of Ugandan capacities, due also to personal experiences; also know this cause many of the people who are refugees today were refugees in the 1990s as well. At that time, they fled from the civil war with Khartoum and SPLM<sup>5</sup>. When the refugees arrived in Uganda in the 1990s they arrived at another war. Even today, refugees get scared by stories of refugees being killed, tortured and disfigured. Finnström (2008a) describes this being done by rebels in Northern Uganda in the 1990s for symbolic and silencing purposes.

For the refugees, these acts are not easy to forget, but even though people remember this, still today they want to flee to Uganda instead of countries like DRC or Tanzania. An impression from my fieldwork is that many flee to Uganda because they strongly believe that they will be treated better there—as is reflected in the following example from July 2019 on the border between Uganda and DRC:

*While visiting the Uganda-DRC border, I was sitting, waiting for a friend while he crossed the border to go to a market he had seen. While I was waiting, I sat on a bench under a metal sheet roof next to the road where people drove motorbikes loaded to the absolute maximum. Suddenly I see four children, a man and a woman, I assumed were their parents, walking across the border. They have almost nothing with them, the man carries a small bag, but that is all. Two officers come running out of a house to meet them, and they bring them over to the house where they sit down outside. I walk over*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/uganda-refugee-statistics-january-2020> [Released 01.02.2020. Downloaded 20. March 2020]

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/uganda-refugees-build-camp-of-plenty-1367494.html> [Published 03.04.94. Downloaded 09.05.2020]

*and ask the two officers what is happening. One officer explains to me that they are refugees from South Sudan. He manages to talk to the man who explains that his father was the one who had told them that they should flee South Sudan, but he had died on the way. They had been fleeing through the jungle for four months and managed to get to DRC. There, they had received some food and was put in a camp. They had then decided that they should rather go to Uganda. I asked why he thought that Uganda was better, the officer translated for me. The man said that in Uganda they will be taught English in school which they much prefer, and the humanitarian organisations give food and not just money to buy it like they do in DRC. This was their two main arguments for leaving DRC for Uganda. When my friend, who is also a refugee returned and met them, he gave them some of the food he had bought and gave them some money to aid them in the coming days. We then got back on our motorbike and started a long drive home.*

Such arguments as education, language and food, make fleeing to Uganda the preferred choice for many. Uganda has put in place acts and laws protecting the refugees, that are designed to make life easier for them and empower them. These acts and laws allow the refugees free movement, land to farm, food and not money at food distributions as long as it is possible. They also have a right to education for the children equal to the public-school system in Uganda. How my friend, as a refugee is able and willing to help out another refugee he does not know, show how he can understand the situation the family is in. It also shows how he who has been a refugee for almost three years has become able to aid others in worse situations than himself. The subject of how the refugees are empowered by OPM and other international documents will be discussed in chapter one. By making many of these laws' public knowledge for the refugees, they are given a tool to claim their formal and legal rights within the country when facing humanitarian organisations, OPM and the host communities. However, as the refugees have received this particular form of power of knowledge, so has the Ugandan host communities around the refugee camp. Of particular interest for the refugee camp dynamic vis-à-vis the local Ugandan community, is that OPM has adopted a policy that is widely known as "the 70/30 rule". One that all so-called host communities in Uganda are familiar with. It says, in rough terms, that for aid given by the humanitarian organisations, 30 percent is to go to the local community and the remainder to the refugees. The rule comes from the document "Refugee and Host Population Empowerment – ReHoPE". It is an international document

created by the World Bank and the UN to aid Uganda in sustainable treatment of the refugees through policies (The World Bank 2017).

Throughout the thesis, I use the term «host community». This refers to the category of people who are part of the communities that have given away land to the refugees to live on. Because of this, they have the right to receive 30 percent of all aid given by the organisations. After the 70/30 rule was adopted, it quickly became a policy for Uganda and made all host communities of refugees expecting their share. Many humanitarian organisations are against this policy, some, for instance, having their policies stating that all money from them must go to refugees. An aid worker made an example of this stating that they, as an organisation, were not allowed by their organisation to give aid to anyone but displaced people. An officer from OPM later told me that humanitarian organisations are not allowed to give aid in Uganda if they do not respect the 70/30 policy. The 70/30 rule creates a tension between the humanitarian organisations, host and the refugees—as I will show later in the thesis.

### **Approaching a triangle of power and resistance**

Above, I have introduced some fundamental aspects of refugee life, the reasons for the presence of refugees in Bidi Bidi and how a central dynamic revolves around the organisation of the camp and the distribution of food. Central here is the tensions between the parties. They are here described as refugees, the host community and the composite figure of humanitarian organisations and the Ugandan state. The refugee camp is a context where power is extensively exercised. Further, to understand the forms of resistance going on in the refugee camp—as in any form of society—one needs to pay analytical attention to how power is applied.

This thesis does not set out to discuss the nature of power itself. However, informed by fieldwork in the Bidi Bidi camp and, especially, the experiences of the refugees whom I lived with for six months, the thesis sets out to examine and analyse the mechanisms of power and how these are entwined with forms of resistance. Such a focus is informed by Foucault's approach to how power has been viewed: "This analysis simply involves investigating where and how, between whom, between what points, according to what processes, and with what effects, power is applied."(Foucault 2009, 1-2). These mechanisms are the ones that affect the relations within the settlement and what this thesis will go deeper in to, not what power is. The definition of power is therefore not necessary, only what one party's power is in relation to another party and how, why, and what consequences its use has, is relevant.

Foucault said “In effect, what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions:

an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future.”(Foucault 1982, 789). By analysing these actions alone, it would be easy to say that OPM and humanitarian organisations are in power and the only power the refugees or the host community has is to respond passively, but it is not so simple.

To understand this power relation, the whole notion of power needs to be approached in a more nuanced manner. Eric Wolf (1990) differentiates between four forms of power: 1) The personal form of power, i.e. that one person has the power to act and is capable. 2) The second form is the power one person has over another, i.e. one person's ability to impose its will on another person; this is where power becomes social. This form is much the same way as Weber (2009) understands power. 3) An organisational form of power is where someone or something has the power to control people's actions in different settings. This is a more comprehensive type than the second where one can impose its will on to multiple people in different situations. However, having organisational power, one will still have limits. 4) Structural power, Similar to organisational power controls what is happening within certain situations. However, it also set the situations up and then has the power to control the flow of power. Wolf (1990) use structural power as that which structure the political economy. In my analysis, I wish to analytically apply Wolf's fourpartite approach to understand what forms of powers are present and operating in the different scenarios in the settlement. Furthermore, this is helpful also to clarify how these actions are then acted upon within the limits of each party's form of power.

Although Wolf's(1990) terms for different forms of power is useful as a tool to think and discuss the power and it makes power more dynamic than that of for instance (Weber 2009). Dividing it into four types is not dynamic enough to get a complete understanding of the resistant acts that occur within the camp. It helps us understand what power one party has in relation to another, but not how or why that power is used and what consequences its use might have.

Approaching resistance: Within the camp and within anthropology, the actions in "actions upon actions" that Foucault describes in a power relationship, can be defined as forms of resistance. Since both parts in interaction have power, they will most likely have different amounts and types, as Wolf (1990) argues. In the instance of the refugees and the humanitarian organisations, one has structural while the other has organisational. To commit an act of power can then quickly become an act of resistance. But what defines an act of resistance?

Foucault wrote, “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault

1978, 95). Influenced by this view of resistance as *not* reducible to a position beyond power, I will argue that both the power and the resistance is dynamic, that it is continuously changing depending on the situation, the relation and the actors themselves. Power and resistance are therefore acted out in what Long (2003) calls “the interface”, i.e. the meeting point between two parties where every aspect of their lives meet. Such aspects are also dependent on the specific situation. Although he applies the concept of the interface to face-to-face encounters, Lie (2015) similarly argues that it is within the interface one can identify resistance, right in the meeting point between two parties with two different life worlds.

Based on such readings of interface and power, I will argue that resistance is not just something practised by the weaker of two parties but that we should approach it in a broader sense to encompass practices based on power to resist other people's power. I see resistance, as the countering force of power and at the same time power as that which makes resistance possible and necessary in the eyes of the beholder. Resistance becomes an act of power, and at the same time the power is what is resisted. The resistance is then acted out between two or more parties in a power relation, regardless of who has the most power. I will, therefore, define a resistant act as an act which is either intended to, or result in, either challenging or directly remove, whole or parts of another party's or persons power. It is therefore power that is resisted and not just the party itself. Foucault (1982, 789) argues: “In effect, what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future.” (Foucault 1982, 789) I understand the power, as the controlling factor. A party will therefore be defined by the amount and form of power they have. Therefore, resisting a party's power, one also resists the party itself. Actions are not resisted, but countered or responded to with other actions, which requires power. Empowerment, as I will discuss in chapter one, therefore, becomes that which makes one able to resist other parties' power.

While Hollander and Einwohner (2004) mainly discuss recognition and intent of the act as the important factors to deem an act resistant. When approaching resistance, the way I am, recognition becomes irrelevant as one need not recognise an act towards oneself for it to challenge or result in one losing power. The intent, however, is different, as it comes down to the resistant act being successful or not. A failed resistant act is still resistant. This will be shown examples of in chapter two. However, to get an understanding of the true act of resistance, both these factors will matter. To deem an act resistant, one needs to know the party's power in the situation, and one needs to analyse the situation well to understand each party's

position. The issues of recognition and intent are still relevant, but not for deeming the acts resistant or not, but to get a better understanding of the true act and thereby understand the relation between the parties better which is the goal. Issues surrounding recognition and intent will be discussed further throughout the thesis.

When discussing dynamic resistance, I will differ between two different forms of resistance, although their limits are fluent, it will help to give an understanding of the relation between the parties in the situation. First is resistance as a form of communication, this resistance is based on a sense of understanding between the parties—i.e. conforming to the notion of recognition. The understanding between the parties is something I will refer to as intersubjectivity, which I will discuss further in chapter two. However, in this guise, the resistant acts are not exerted necessarily to tear down the power of other parties or challenge them directly. The acts are, I would like to show, communicative in a way that they tell other parties that their acts are not accepted or that they simply disagree with how things are done. These acts can be hidden such as Scott (1985, 301) writes: "A harvest labourer who steals paddy from his employer is "saying" that his need for rice takes precedence over the formal property rights of his boss." Such acts can only be deemed communicative if the intention is clear for the resistor as the intent has to be communication. Even if it is not, it can still be deemed resistant as explained above but will come into the other category as I will soon explain. On the other hand, how the act is perceived if noticed at all is not important for deeming the act resistant or communicative, since it will only deem the act successful or not. Both parts are, however, essential to find out since the intention of the act and understanding of it by other parties can tell us a lot about the relation between the parties involved.

The other form of resistance is irreducible to effect. These acts can be resistant without tangible effect or an instrumentality. I will refer to such acts as unintentional resistance, not because the acts themselves are unintentional but because the acts often do not have a specific intention. These acts are often similar to what Scott calls "everyday forms of resistance" (Scott 1985) but can also be similar to the acts discussed by Abu-Lughod (2008) where they can be as simple as the way people talk about others, how they name them and making jokes. These acts are also resistant but have little effect unless they are part of a bigger collective, as Scott argues (1985, 44). If multiple people are feeling the same about the same party or different representatives of a controlling collective party, Scott argues it can result in collective acts. When asked about such acts, most participants would deny that it is resistant towards the other parties, but I will still deem it so. Conversations as Scott refers to, are resistant in and of themselves as they portray the other parties as none threatening. In accomplishing that, such

conversations are often a launchpad for more extensive resistant actions as they can entice individual resistant acts, part of a multitude of collective actions or can result in organised actions such as strikes or rebellions. As Scott (1985) argues, the individual acts do often not have a specific intention and often go unnoticed by the intended receiver of the resistant acts until they become a collective action at which point, they will affect the receiver where they will have a response. Scott uses the term “class” when discussing resistance. Within the settlement, however, this term is challenging to use because of the multitude of other factors that affects class within the settlement. Even though the class term is troublesome, the struggles in the settlement are similar to the class struggles in the rest of society and the settlement is not outside society at large.

In my analysis, I will treat these two forms of resistance as not distinctly separate and show how acts can consist of both forms of resistance simultaneously and vary for different actors. This will occur within the form which I have decided to refer to as unintentional resistance as such acts can be communicative without the person knowing the intentions. However, since the intent of the act is important, it comes down to the researcher to determine and understand the intent of an act. Nevertheless, intention and recognition are not essential to deem the act resistant or not, but both factors help in the understanding of the relation in the situation.

### **Cadastralization of refugees**

Ugandan aid workers often take great pride in their work with refugees. In particular, they pride themselves in having what they call refugee settlements and not camps like many other countries in the region— for instance, such camps as Liisa Malkki (1995a) describe from her book *Purity and Exile*. Anna Schmidt (2003, 4-5) defines camps by five criteria's in her text “FMO Thematic Guide: Camps versus settlement”. The first criteria is that in a settlement there is supposed to be freedom of movement. The more this is restricted, the more it takes the character of a camp. In Uganda, the refugees have freedom of movement—this is clear from the example where I joined a refugee interlocutor going to the DRC-Uganda border. However, it does not mean they do not have any restrictions. As an example, they are not allowed to go to South Sudan; this would mean they would lose their rights as refugees. Further, they have to report to the authority of the settlement whenever they want to leave. In practice, however, both of these requirements are mostly ignored by both refugees and authorities. The second criteria is the mode of assistance/economy; being able to farm and take part in the economy is often restricted in camps. In settlements, this often happens freely and with little restrictions. The

refugees in Bidi Bidi do receive land both to live on and farm. Most can farm the land they are given, but the quality of land differs greatly. The issue here is not the amount of land, but the quality of it, combined with an unpredictable climate. Farming will be further discussed in chapter one. The third criteria is the mode of governance. In refugee camps, decision making usually happens outside the camp, without involving the refugees. In a settlement, refugees govern themselves more than in a camp, and decision making happens, to some extent, among the refugees. In all the refugee villages in Uganda, there is a formally recognised leader. They are elected, for a two-year period. The power that a leader has can be extensive and they can have great respect among the people. However, among the humanitarian organisations, village leaders are often treated as just another refugee. Gender and equalisation were an important aspect within the settlement regarding the elections of village leaders and other positions of power. Both male refugees and humanitarian organisation workers encouraged women to take such roles as it is seen as a large part of gender equalisation in the settlement. However, the large majority of such roles were still vacated by men. The Fourth criteria is that the camp is designated as a temporary locations/shelters. This means that the camp is meant to be temporary and so the structures of the houses and policies surrounding the camp are created accordingly. In Bidi Bidi, they have received refugee ID cards that expire in 2024. Although not expressed by camp authorities, many refugees have taken this as a sign that that is the year Bidi Bidi will close. The last criteria are the population size and density. In short, camps have a much higher population density than what can be seen in a settlement. Additional land is also often given to the refugees in a settlement for farming. Such priorities would not be seen in a camp.

The five criteria defining camp versus settlement is generally helpful to delineate certain aspects of the camp. However, one aspect that Schmidt (2003) does not take into account, is biometrics which is eye and fingerprint scanning, and gives each refugee their own profile. Such technology was implemented by UNHCR partly as a response to the wrongful counting of the refugees to get an accurate number of refugees in the country<sup>6</sup>. Through biometric technology authorities can keep better control of the refugees. Biometrics will be further discussed in chapter three.

By talking to people, I got a good understanding of how the settlement is set up. The settlement started in a small village called Bidi Bidi, but the continuing stream of refugees

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.biometricupdate.com/201811/government-and-unhcr-complete-huge-biometric-refugee-registration-program-in-uganda> [Published 05.11.18. Downloaded 09.05.2020]



required expansion. OPM were forced to open new zones, and local communities were ready to give more land, and zone 2 opened, followed by zone 3, zone 4 and zone 5. This resulted in almost 250 000 people spread out on 250 square kilometres. Each zone held approximately 50 000 people. The zones were then divided up into villages, and each village was given a number as the land was cadastralized. The number of villages in a zone can vary between 10 to 25, and village sizes from a few hundred to 10 000. The density of the villages also differed, some being just across the road while others could be a 20-minute walk away. Because of organising purposes, the villages were put into clusters, from 3-5 villages in each cluster and some single because of their size or distance to other villages. As all refugees received 30\*30 meters of land, all these squares of land were placed just next to each other. The villages were divided into what they call tanks which is a geographically defined space in the village. All these structures are there to ease the distribution of aid. They were created as the camp expanded and it is the same today, three years later.

The map (Figure 1) below<sup>7</sup> is a detailed plan of how the humanitarian organisations and OPM wanted the settlement to look. When viewing the map on a computer, it is possible to see all details of infrastructure in the settlement.

The process described above may be seen analytically as a form of cadastralization, the object of which is to emplace people and link their spaces to particular areas on maps. Such processes make it easier for OPM and humanitarian organisations to monitor, control and govern the settlement. This form of cadastralization builds on James Scott (1998) use of the term. He discusses, broadly speaking, how governments emplaced people where a central aspect was that it happened through cadastral mapping. This serves to standardise their societies, easing the gathering of taxes and increasing production. Scott argues that with everyone following the same structures, it makes it easier to govern. I argue that cadastralization happens in the settlement, but for other reasons than in the large-scale nation-states or modernisation processes that Scott discuss. I argue that the government and humanitarian organisations do it to improve their aid distribution and governing of the refugees. Because of the differences between camp and settlement, I deem Bidi Bidi a refugee settlement and will refer to it as a settlement in the thesis.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/64491>[Published 25.01.18. Downloaded 15.05.2020]





As these cadastralizing structures are quite overarching within the settlement, they are impossible not to be affected by. Even though one is free to move where one wants, while staying there even I had the feeling of being controlled, governed, organised and living within a structured space. Even though the humanitarian organisations and OPM cadastralize the refugees to more effectively give aid, the refugees still experience negative consequences daily. These structures become a form of structural resistance towards the refugees as it limits their organisational power by not being able to structure their own space as they wish. This form of resistance shapes the refugee's lives, forming them and limiting them. These consequences will be further discussed in chapter three.

I argue, cadastralization is done to make the distribution of aid better and more efficient. To improve the efficiency of the aid, the humanitarian organisations also organize themselves to be able to cooperate. They therefore divided the organisations into seven different sectors, depending on what type of work they are doing or services they provide. These sectors are health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, food security, education, environment, child protection and shelter and other infrastructure. Organisations working in different sectors have what they call zone meetings where all organisations from all sectors meet. These meetings will be referred to in the thesis accordingly. In my analysis, I will not separate the sectors but simply refer to the humanitarian organisations. This is because the sector has little relevance to the relations between the refugees and humanitarian organisations.

### **Hospitality and resistance**

*Michael and I walk out into the bush, upon a small hillside. There, almost on the top, there is going to be a meeting between a leader from the host community and about ten refugees. The refugees there are the few that are interested in more land to farm and were told of the meeting. The man who is an Acholi from the local community has a long speech about him, giving them land, and he makes one point that stands out more than others. He says that he can remember when he was a child when he and his father were refugees in Sudan, in an area that is today South Sudan. They had received land from the local community to farm. He said that back then that land saved their lives, they would be living on the street if it was not for that community helping them. He then continued saying that the land in South Sudan is very fertile compared to here, but he would still give them as much land as they wanted.*

Reciprocity can become strong although it is rarely called upon as vocally as here. To remember what one has been given and then remember or even be able to give something back 25 years



later, can be a tall order. However, some of the host communities do precisely that. For a long time, there have been issues of land between the host communities and the refugees. The land in question is additional land to that given by the organisations which are 30\*30 to live on. Since the settlement is so large, there are multiple host communities, and they often solve issues in different ways. Some solved the land issues with the refugees by giving the host community 50 000 UGX (13,15 USD) for a plot of 50\*70 meters of land which became the refugee's property until they go back to South Sudan. In other parts of the settlement, the host community gave land for free to the refugees who are often supported with contracts med by the humanitarian organisations and some places the humanitarian organisations needed to be a negotiator between the parties. Such solutions have taken a long time to come up with and few are as hospitable as the host described above. Being the host, however, provide a form of power which is essential and is empowerment that can be explicitly used.

Rozakou (2012) looks at Greek hospitality for refugees as comprised of a power relation which is quite common in anthropological analyses of contexts where refugees and non-refugees co-inhabit. Indicative of such a vein of anthropological analysis, Rozakou argues that showing hospitality toward refugees is a way of showing acknowledgement and inclusion, but that it can also put the refugee in-between two categories of “biological life and complete political existence” (Rozakou 2012, 573). As the refugees in Greece lacked power and agency when meeting humanitarian organisation as refugees, the voluntaries visited the refugees, making them the hosts, giving them an agency in that situation (Rozakou 2012).

Different from Greece, the refugees in Bidi Bidi already have forms of agency; they are empowered to resist and be heard. Rather than a form of power-imbued hospitality exerted from the host community, I will in this thesis see reciprocity as a critical dynamic shaping the relationship between all parties in the settlement. This is because also the humanitarian organisations take part in the reciprocal relations within the settlement. Between the host community and the refugee’s hospitality and resistance, therefore, do not have to negate each other in these circumstances: The host can be friendly and hospitable based on acts of reciprocity or profit, but they can at the same time resist claims from the refugees since they are not necessarily always wanted.

When asked what they want, most of the refugees answer that they want to go back to South Sudan, but some also claim that they would like to stay in Uganda, that they have nothing to go back to in South Sudan. Some even want to become Ugandan citizens, being able to get land and make a living there, but few are willing to give up their rights as refugees as a consequence as their priority is to make life right now as good as possible. The host community,

on the other hand, want the water stations, schools, jobs and health centres which are the main reason most of them allow the refugees to stay. These aspects effect their relationship as it is often what their acts are based on. Hospitality will be further discussed in chapter four.

## **Conclusion**

When embarking on my fieldwork, my research was centred on the following question: How do OPM and humanitarian organisations support, affect the relationship between themselves, the refugees and the host community in the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement? My initial response to this post-fieldwork was that this occurred in several ways but that it revolved around a central and perhaps counter-intuitive socio-political dynamic; That the refugees and the host community have been empowered by documents from OPM and the humanitarian organisations which the refugees use to resist and shape the aid given to them. In the Thesis this focus has shifted towards the relations between the parties, how all parties affect each other and how their acts change depending on the situation and the relations they are set in.

During fieldwork and post-fieldwork there are multiple aspect that could have been discussed. One aspect could have been gender and where the organisations affect the performances and identity-making processes of both. Also, I could have discussed witchcraft or demon possession as this was also part of everyday life and central to religious practice. I could have looked closer at the perspective of waiting or temporality for refugees, never knowing when to go home. Focusing on the relation between the parties and not a specific aspect of it, I was able to get knowledge about the different subjects since they are all affected by some parts of the relations. Many of the different aspects such as gender or temporality became apparent when observing the relations as these aspects are not statically apparent among the refugees.

The thesis will discuss four topics in four different chapters all relating to the relations within the settlement. In chapter one, I will present my arrival to the field and some ethical perspectives, I will then discuss the definition of a refugee and then their empowerment in Uganda. I will then go on to present land and farming as it is an important aspect of being a refugee in Uganda. I will present specific ways in which the humanitarian organisations and OPM use cadastralization to gather information and govern the refugees. I argue that cadastralization shape the relation between the parties as it empowers and shapes the refugees and their acts.

In chapter two, I discuss some of the different ways resistant acts are played out by the refugees. Then, how they are responded to by the humanitarian organisations and OPM. I will

present two cases, the first one about a protest that turns in to a strike, and a second where a collective movement grew out from silently unorganized individual acts. I will argue that the resistance acted out are dependent on the form of power a party has as well as the other party's response to those acts. Resistant acts are dynamic, similarly to how power is dynamic. These resistant acts dynamically adapt to the situation, forms of power and the relations in which they take place.

Chapter three explores how the humanitarian organisations use Foucault's governmentality through multiple disciplinary mechanisms. I will then continue to discuss cadastralization from chapter one and discuss its potential consequences. As a form of cadastralization, I further discuss the biometric structures and their consequences. I then move on to show how the power the humanitarian organisations get through cadastralization and governmentality is resisted. I will argue that the resistance changes as the governing structures changes, showing examples of how the resistance is dynamic and continuously changing. This is all discussed with three different cases. The first case is about registration of the refugees, the second is about the resistant act of stealing food and the third about cheating the humanitarian organisations' systems. I will argue that these resistant acts are shaped and further shapes the power relations.

Finally, in chapter four, I present the host community and how they react to the situation of having refugees living on their land. I discuss this through acts of hospitality and resistance and argue that hospitality and the resistance do not have to oppose each other. The chapter goes through four different cases where the first two shows the differences in resistance from the host community in the past and today. The third case shows how the relationship between the host community and the refugees are often based on cheating and tricking. The fourth case focus on the misunderstandings of what the host community can receive from the humanitarian organisations. I will discuss how all these acts affects and are affected by the relations within the settlement. I will argue that the relationship between the refugees and the host community is shaped by their relation to the humanitarian organisations and OPM through reciprocity and hospitality.

Note that other than discussing different aspects that affect the relations within the settlement. There is an underlying argument throughout the thesis. That is, challenging the notion that refugees are people who have no influence in history. This contribute to a broader debate supporting Liisa Malkki (1996, 1995a, 1992, 1995b) and many others, who are argue that refugees are rendered as people without an agency and made speechless. This thesis will show that given a chance, the refugees can speak for themselves.

# Chapter 1

## *Becoming a refugee in Uganda and the receiving of land*



**Picture 1: farmland in-between houses and paths in a refugee village. Photo: Mikko Virtanen**

## Introduction

*Julia tells me of her arrival at the Bidi Bidi settlement while we are both sitting outside her house sharing some maize cobs: "When we first arrived, there was nothing. We arrived in a truck which dropped us off here. They told us where our land was, and that is where we made a tent out of the tarp UNHCR gave to us. The land was covered in trees and bushes, and we had nothing to remove it with. It was the bush. We had to pay the host community to come and remove it for us. I had some money with me from South Sudan and paid them to also build a house for me, but that was only after some time."*

The land that Julie refers to is the standard plot of land that refugees receive when arriving in Bidi Bidi: 30\*30 metres. The plot is intended for building houses, as well as a small plot of farmland next to the houses. In Bidi Bidi settlement, people are allocated a village and plot as they arrive, decided by the organisations. The village I lived in was large compared to other villages in the settlement. According to people's accounts, included the village leader, the village contained approximately 8000 people in 2017. In June 2019, the number was closer to 6000. Refugees in Uganda receive certain rights upon arrival. Although refugees have some fundamental rights all over the world, in Uganda, they are further empowered by rights. These rights includes receiving land to live on and to farm, move where they want when they want, as well as being allowed to participate in the local economy. However, the humanitarian organisations and OPM find ways to control and govern the refugees.

This chapter will first present how I settled in the settlement, how I found my informants and how I throughout both field work and writing process took ethical considerations. I will then discuss a definition of what a refugee is and some of their history. I will then go on to discuss how refugees are empowered in Uganda and how it affects them. Much of the empowerment happens through the land the refugees receive. I will go on to discuss the farming and the climate in the settlement and how this affects the refugees and their relation to the other parties. Towards the end, I will discuss what is referred to as the household. I will discuss how it shapes, and is shaped by, the refugees. I will argue that although a household is an institution implemented by the humanitarian organisation and is there for them to keep better control of the refugees, the refugees build and shape it to their liking. My main argument in the chapter is that although the refugees are empowered, they are cadastralized through farmland and the household by the humanitarian organisations and OPM.



## Getting settled

After an almost two months struggle to get all the paperwork done in Kampala to be allowed into the settlement, I finally arrived in Yoyo, the closest village to Bidi Bidi settlement in MONTH YEAR. I met Enoch Sengonze, a student of Professor Eria Olowo Onyango from Makerere University, and whom I had been in contact with before I arrived. Enoch worked as a health aid worker for a Ugandan organisation and was able to take me along on his daily work in the settlement. Through him I became quickly acquainted with parts of the settlement, learning names and locations of different villages which later turned out to be very helpful. Enoch included me in work within the settlement, among other things, health checks on children. Coincidentally, a male refugee translating during health checks had a house in his household that he did not use. Enoch introduced us, and it was this man and his family who became my host family in Bidi Bidi. Late February 2019 I met my host family, the people I was going to live with the next six months within the settlement.

An issue which came to my attention quickly, however, was that of transport. The village was too far away to be able to walk anywhere which would take me all day and bicycles on rocky and sandy roads were not very tempting. With the help of Enoch I managed to buy a motorcycle. Motorcycles were not uncommon in the settlement, and both my host family and the village leader had one. I concluded that it was socially acceptable for me to also have one. Having one also opened up the entire settlement as a fieldwork site as I was able to reach people and places, I had not been able to before.

My fieldwork was, however, not confined to that settlement alone, but following the arguments of Gupta (1997), the village became the central location of gathering information about the refugees in general. Through the village, I saw how people moved and developed by moving past the theoretical boundaries of villages and the settlement as a whole, as people frequently travelled to such places as South Sudan, Kampala as well as local towns.

The host family became a vital source of information, as well as my primary source of learning Bari, the language spoken by most in that village. Although I never became able to conduct a conversation in the language, learning it made me much more accepted in the village as they were not used to hearing white people speak their language. Coincidentally my host family were also neighbours with the village leader. He became my key informant and friend. As Hammersley (2007) argues for, quite early in my fieldwork I considered whether the relation could be of a hindrance in my fieldwork as people would respond to me differently. However, after some time, I realised he was more a respected friend to all than a leader. His knowledge of what was happening in the village also turned out to be invaluable to my fieldwork. He turned

out to be the gatekeeper, not only for the village, but also to village leaders in all nearby villages. On top of this, he made it possible for me to participate in meetings between the humanitarian organisations, refugees and the host community.

Both the head in my host family and the village leader were both prominent men in the village, who were well known and well respected by all. Furthermore, as Amit (1999) argues for the importance of key informants, my connection with them became one of my primary sources of information. Also, through them, my entire fieldwork opened up very fast. They advised me to go to the different churches and present myself to everyone, which is how I quickly became known to everyone in the village. I later found out that among many aid workers, I became known as the crazy white man in so and so village.

I stayed in the village for six months, and people got used to seeing me around, being in meetings and visiting different people almost every day. When I visited people, conversations often came to the subject of South Sudan and the war (de Waal 2014, 2019, Bereketeab 2017). This gave me an opportunity to ask about their experience of the war now and previous wars in South Sudan, as well as their experiences when fleeing South Sudan. Jackson (2002) writes about how survival stories might be of such a personal nature, and therefore not be told to anyone who might not understand. My impression is that it was an important story for them to tell, even though they probably knew I could not understand, and I cannot claim that I do understand their experiences. I asked one of the oldest men in the village if he wanted to tell me about his life, he asked me back "Why do you want my story? It is very simple; it is just war, war, war" He was however very willing to talk to me later and did so happily. I also wanted to hear stories from people that I did not necessarily have a close relationship to. Therefore, I asked the village leader if he might know someone who might be willing to share their story. As my information was retrieved through the village leaders' contacts, this might impact what stories I got and from whom. I concluded that the stories themselves would still be a true and a real recollection of events from South Sudan and refugee life in Bidi Bidi. The village leader helped me in getting in touch with a handful of people that were willing to share their stories. Sharing their stories in detail, and being happy to do so, they wanted to share their stories to anyone who would listen.

Jackson (2002, 96) claim that: "For refugees, their stories remain open, like wounds, for as long as it takes for dispersed families to be reunited, for lines of communication between them to be re-established, for the suffering and uncertainty in the homeland to end, and for the shock of resettlement to pass." This might be problematic for interviewing early arrived refugees. However, my fieldwork within the settlement was conducted almost three years after

their arrival, none of them had dispersed family members or broken communication, and few felt the shock of resettlement. The war in South Sudan is not over. Still, most people I talked with expressed a sense of safety in the settlement and were at ease with their situation. I also found that the people, despite of traumatic experiences expressed hope, strength in them surviving the situation and a more positive look to the present and future. This supports Kidron's argument in (Stromberg, Broch-Due, and Bertelsen 2016) that therapeutic constructs of trauma can often focus too little on the strength of the human spirit, endurance of the mind and that there is hope, also in refugee settlements. As Du Boulay and Williams (1984) argue for I also gathered life stories and stories from the war quite later in my fieldwork.

An issue for me with gathering such stories was that I never became adequate in their language to be able to gather such stories alone. Also, many lacked sufficient English skills to be able to express themselves adequately. This resulted in using the village leader as a translator to gather their stories. Doing that might have affected what they shared and how they told their stories. Still, it is not my impression that they held back. They elaborated their stories without my encouragement, and some even invited me to return so that they could share even more stories and experiences which I often did. Du Boulay and Williams (1984) also argue that talking in a native language, makes it easier for them to express themselves correctly and makes it simpler for them to tell their story. There are not many recollections of trauma and violence in the thesis. But I deem the discussion surrounding the ethics of collecting such stories an important subject. I find the stories of trauma to be an important part of their experiences, and to respect a vulnerable group, I include these stories to respectfully create a more whole image of their experiences.

Another important issue surrounding ethical principles while conducting fieldwork in a refugee settlement is that of anonymity. While the refugee's anonymity is essential, it is also important to not portray them as a homogenous group of people but respect their values as representatives of their cultures as well as being a refugee. This has been a focus throughout the writing process. Not doing this adds to the contestation that refugees are speechless (Malkki 1996). However, anonymising people and places are essential because of the close relationship between the different parties. It is crucial to make sure nothing anyone, including host or refugees, has said or done can cause them any harm in the future. Names are therefore changed, and specific places never stated.

All organisation names have been concealed, for two reasons. First, to make the workers statements can come to harm for anyone. Second; the lack of relevance the names have for my

argument. It is the actions of an organisation that matters, not what organisations it is. All aid workers are also anonymous, for the sake of work security.

However, an issue, presented by Hopkins (1996), is that my location and the people I interacted with make it difficult to keep all data completely anonymous and protected. Locals who read the thesis might be able to understand whom I am talking about. This is why I have, to the best of my knowledge, not included information that could come to harm anyone. However, I am aware that this can never be guaranteed.

### **Defining a refugee**

The history of the documented refugee is long, starting in the 1920s after WWI where the so-called Nansen passport was the first document to state that someone was stateless, allowing its bearers entry into 52 countries. As a consequence of WWII, the number of refugees increased as people fled their countries all over the world. It is, therefore, reasonable to say that the history of the refugee that we know today starts in this period, and in 1950 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established. The UNHCR was responsible for managing refugees in need, and as a humanitarian organisation, it has grown enormously in size and with an increasing amount of responsibilities since. During the "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees"—held in 1951—the first and still standing definition of a refugee was established. At the convention 26 countries signed the document which defines a refugee as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (Assembly 1951). What they agreed on in 1951 has helped millions of people after, but it has also been criticized. Penchaszadeh (2010, 64) argues that the definition of a refugee, made by the UN, removes the right of movement and settlement. By doing this, Penchaszadeh argues the right to receive refugees are over the right the refugees have to be received. By doing this, refugees no longer have the power to move and settle as they wish, but nations have the right to treat refugees in "special" ways. A similar case is also made by Paolo Gaibazzi who argue with cases of deportation from Angola. He argues for a different view on governance and dehumanization in anthropology. He writes: “Inhumanity degrades migrants to a state of bare prey rather than bare life” (2018, 478). He argues that migrants are abused in places they move to, making them prey. For the refugees, this can sometimes mean falling prey to the host community and even the humanitarian organisations. Examples of this will be seen in different cases throughout the thesis.

The state is not always able to give aid to refugees, and so the humanitarian organisations have responsibility for aid distribution. However, as Harrell-Bond (2002, 55) argues; by making someone dependent of aid also disempowers them, as one becomes the refugees' only life source. Therefore, humanitarian organisations are both giving aid as well as strengthening institutions that are disempowering for the refugees. This makes the refugees victims. Though refugees by definition are victims, this kind of victimization is not what is wanted or needed. This makes peace in their own country the only way for the refugees to be truly empowered again.

When I asked some of the refugees in the village if they would be able to stay if the organisations stopped giving them food, some respond with a distinct "No", others just laugh and ask me in return if I thought that would be possible or asked me if I thought they could. Even though the refugees have received land to become more self-reliant, they are still disempowered by a dependence to the organisations.

The definition made in 1951 definition also changes the refugees in ways they make a living. The definition changes their options and situation and thereby also changes their priorities accordingly. Their survival strategies and to how they get money and fend for their families, changes. Harrell-Bond (2002) writes that "The stereotype of the helpless refugees also informs refugees' perceptions concerning the role they are expected to play to gain the approval of the helpers and to be successful in obtaining aid." She continues: "As most refugees are able to infer, accepting their client role and ingratiating themselves with camp authorities and individual helpers is one of the survival strategies used in the context of fierce competition over scarce humanitarian aid resources." (Harrell-Bond 2002, 57). When being disempowered and having to rely on organisations for survival, the refugees are forced to start with alternative survival strategies to get the aid they require. On top of this, the refugees' fate is controlled by such things as organisations budgets and quality, public services, national and regional security and international developers priorities (Kelly, Timothy, and Leah 2016, 49). The refugees lose power over their own lives and left in someone else's hands.

This makes the power relation between the parties a skewed one, making the humanitarian organisations the definite most powerful actor within the settlement. It does not mean, however, that the refugees are weak or only has to follow. This will be shown throughout the thesis.

## **Empowerment through documents**

Reflecting the above international refugee apparatus, the refugees in Uganda are formally empowered majorly through three different acts or documents. I see empowerment similarly to how Page and Czuba (1999, Volume 37, Number 5) understand it, that;

...empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important.

With this understanding of empowerment, the power has to be understood in relation to other parties in a power relation. This means countering other parties acts as the refugees deem important. When they are able to affect other parties' power in different situations, empowerment becomes that which makes one able to resist other parties' power. I argue that the central part of empowerment to the refugees in Uganda happens through a series of documents. Even though they were able to do many of the same things before these acts and laws were documented, it is now the documents and the knowledge of them that empowers them as they can now be referred to and used to gain control. Although refugees received farmland and were allowed to participate in the open market before, it was the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) that formalised it in 1999 (Kaiser 2006). Through these documents, the refugees understood their rights in Uganda. In 2006, the refugee act gave refugees the right to work and choose their place of residence by law. This meant that a family could always live together and gave them access to live outside any refugee settlement and work there as well. Lastly, in 2017 the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) document renewed the SRS model from 1999. Although some of these models, acts and laws are new, their function pre-existed them, making that kind of treatment in Uganda a norm long before they were put on paper. For instance, when discussing land, ReHoPE (The World Bank 2017, 2) states that refugees are "allocated land for shelter and agricultural use". Also, *the refugee's regulations* (2010, 19) states that "A refugee who is residing in a designated refugee settlement or a refugee area shall have free access to use land for the purposes of cultivation or pasturing". ReHoPE further states that this is one of multiple "pathways" provided for the refugees to become self-reliant. Agricultural land and how it affects the refugees and the relations within the settlement will be discussed in detail below. Although documents such as ReHoPE are mostly unknown to the refugees, their effects are widely known to them. The ReHoPE document also implemented the



though such as travelling back to South Sudan, which is illegal. This was a common practice, and although they knew, the humanitarian organisations, nor anyone else never report it.

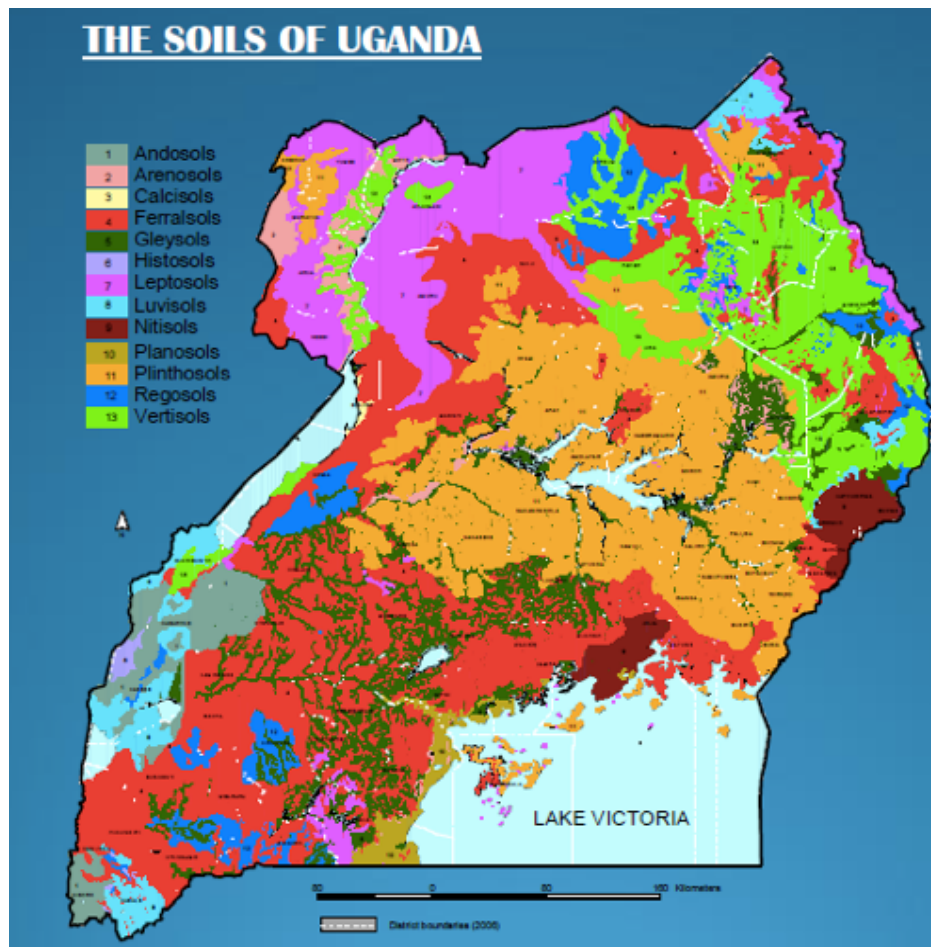
These kinds of empowerment do not only result in the refugees being empowered separately but used in combination they result in people being able to speak up against what they deem unfair treatment. It is what gives the refugees an organisational form of power (Wolf 1990) as discussed in the introduction. The power within these empowerments allows the refugees to be able to resist power within actions that might give results, and they can make a change. This empowerment, giving the refugees organisational power is in large part also what Schmidt (2003) argues, is the difference between a settlement and a camp. On top of empowerment through these documents, the refugees are, as I will show in chapter three, empowered through multiple institutions such as schools, health centres and courses.

### **Land and Farming**

Refugees are placed in settlements all over Uganda, but the large majority is placed in Yumbe and Mojo Districts both bordering South Sudan. Although documents are stating that refugees are to receive land for the time they stay in Uganda, there is no mentioning of where or what quality of land, an issue well documented by Kaiser (2006). Yumbe district, where Bidi Bidi settlement is located has mostly leptosol soil with exceptions of plinthosol soil around rivers and in the south of the settlement where there swampy. Leptosol soil means that the earth is shallow and usually rocky. Plinthosol soil is mostly found in lower wet areas which also makes it better for farming. Mostly, the land in Bidi Bidi has a high acidic level, making it suitable for growing plants such as groundnuts and maize, but many root vegetables struggle. One can find people growing cucumber, passion fruit, papaya, tomato and okra, but these are rare.

*One day me and Isaac walked to a football game on the large football court at the bottom of the village. Isaac has a master's degree in agriculture and is one of the people who do best when it comes to plants and harvest. While walking there almost at the bottom of the settlement, he asks me "do you see anything different here from up where you and I live?" I look around, and the only thing I can see is maize about 2,5 meters high. I tell him that the only thing I see is maize. Which was true, all along the road, blocking the view to everything else there was maize. He laughed and said "exactly" up where we live people also grow maize, but they never become as high, and the cobs never become as large as down here. He says that this tank in the village is always the one that produces the most maize.*





**Figure 2. The map shows the different soils in Uganda. In the north-west, there is mostly Leptosol and Plinthosol soils which is where Bidi Bidi is located.<sup>8</sup>**

The village where I stayed is on a small hilltop in a larger wide valley. The hilltop is surrounded by two rivers, one to the east and one to the west, meeting in the north. Because the village lays on top of a hill, the soil is mostly leptosol soil. It is hard and rocky and difficult to dig. This is experienced the hard way when digging latrines three meters deep, two meters long and one meter wide—which is the specifications everyone uses from the settlement authorities. The organisations give much of the tools used like hoes, but they rarely last much longer than two seasons, because of the hard soil that quickly wears them down.

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<sup>8</sup> Picture source: Priorities for sustainable soil management in Uganda. A Presentation at The African Soil Partnership By Zakayo Muyaka, Assistant Commissioner, Soil & Water Conservation, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry & Fisheries, Uganda. Powerpoint.

One major issue that is rarely talked about by the refugees and the humanitarian organisations is the handling of trash which has a large effect on the land quality. Although most people throw their trash in pits called wasaka dili. The trash is either burned or covered with soil when the amount of trash is enough. Primarily the pits they close off is for the trash to rot to make soil. They therefore try to put only organic trash in it. The next planting season, they will dig the pit up again to plant mostly sweet potato. They rarely succeed in just throwing organic material, and the soil therefore often contains plastic. The refugees are aware of that plastic in soil might affect agriculture and plants, and they see it when digging up the pits. Although, they often do not remove the plastic before they start planting. I did hear some rumors about a garbage pilot program that was going to start, but I never heard anything more about it.

### **A challenging climate and a difficult harvest**

The climate in Uganda mostly varies between rain season to dry season. In the south, these changes are quite regular, but in the north-west, the weather can be very difficult to predict. Rainy season can start in April, which is noticed by a drop in temperature, more wind from the east and more thunderstorms and rain. The drop in temperature can start in April with the combining winds, but it can be long between each thunderstorm and rain.

*While sitting under the tree in his household, I talked with the village leader, as we often did. Then he told me that the host community had told him that before the refugees arrived there had been multiple consecutive years where they had almost not received any rain. The year after the refugees arrived, there was an excellent rainy season with stable rainfall. They did not understand why it was so.*

The village leaders point in telling me this was that living in that area is not easy. Even though the rain did come when the refugees arrived, it was rather seen as a strange coincidence as the weather was so unpredictable. This has been proven in later years as rainy seasons has not been very stable, which has made digging and planting difficult work. This would be observed by the fact that timing for planting the first seeds varies greatly between farmers. Some can start planting once the first proper rainfall had come while others can wait for another month. Both have positive and negatives. When planting early, they risk there being little





**Picture 2: Tools used for digging latrines and graves get quickly worn down because of the rocky soil. Photo: Mikko Virtanen**



rain which will affect the harvest negatively, but then again, they will have the first maize on the market which they can sell for a higher price. Planting later when rains are more stable you can get a better harvest, but if they want to sell, they will have to do so at a market filled with others also selling maize. Then again you have the rare tomato planter, they are often able to be the sole provider of tomato in a village, but they also have their limits. For the lack of land, resources and workforce, the gains are nothing similar to those of Fredrik Barth's (1967, 171) "tomato man". But, the person can be able to set a higher price for the tomatoes as the option for customers is to travel to larger markets or villages which can be far away.

Farming can be a difficult practice for the refugees, but one thing is probably doing more harm than any others, and that is plant diseases. Diseases attacking the maize and other vegetables start to infect vast amount of maize stalks moving from one field to the next. Without treatment, it can ruin the harvest for entire villages. The most common disease can be treated by throwing ash on each maize stalk. Some people do this, but for those who only have fields further away from their houses and rarely go to check on them, this disease can ruin their harvest. This is also a result of inexperience. The refugees are differing significantly in their prior experience in farming. Some have farmed their whole life, some are educated, some are self-thought, and some has never touched a hoe or a seed before.

*Isaac, who has a master's degree in agriculture, tells me multiple times that a farmer has to communicate with his plants, to see what they need and try to give it to them. He illustrates this by walking over to his maize stalks 2,5 meters tall, the tallest in the area, and looking at it, checking the leaves to see which ones are struggling and which ones are doing well. He then tells me that a farmer cannot just plant something and then turn their back on it, He shows this by just turning his back to his field and saying with a funny voice "I am a farmer".*

Isaac's illustration is not just for a laugh, people never checking on their fields cause damage to the plants, disease to spread and baboons taking a large amount of their harvest. Baboons are problems for many who has field further away from the village, and some has gone together in groups so they can change on who is guarding the field, a job often done by children. Nevertheless, baboons manage to get away with large amounts of maize.

The land quality and the other difficulties surrounding farming makes it for many a hopeless endeavour. Although Kaiser (2006) did fieldwork in northern Uganda before many of the laws that are active today were implemented; one can see many of the same factors active

today. Some people have 5 min walk while others an hour to their farmland. The location of the settlement is also a large factor for the refugees' economic success as some can be located close to towns with large roads running through them and others far from any relevant infrastructure (Kaiser 2006). He also argues, as I have done in this chapter, that land quality differs in large degree in Uganda and can make a massive difference in living standard from one settlement to another. The differences can also be large within such a large settlement as Bidi Bidi. Even within a village, they can be considerable. All these factors make the income from agriculture incomparable to contracted jobs given by the humanitarian organisations. I will argue that the distribution of farmland to refugees in Uganda is a failed cadastralization since it is (The World Bank 2017)(The World Bank 2017)(The World Bank 2017)(The World Bank 2017)(The World Bank 2017)(The World Bank 2017)(The World Bank 2017)(The World Bank 2017)(The World Bank 2017)(The World Bank 2017)(The World Bank 2017)(The World Bank 2017)(The World Bank 2017) an implementation which was meant to be the same for everyone but instead resulted in people being unable to produce the same amount of food. Such differences make people jealous and angry, especially when humanitarian organisations are still expecting the same from them all. The injustice is cause for frustration among many refugees. Cadastralization will be further discussed in chapter three.

### **The Household**

A few days after the refugees arrive in the settlement, they are asked how many they are in each family and how many want to live together. This is done after they arrive at their plot. If anyone there does not want to stay there anymore, the humanitarian organisations and OPM will find a new place for that family member to stay. The refugees are in this way organised into what the organisations call a "household". These organisational entities, households, can be huge and the biggest one I heard about comprised 40 people. Every person within that household is taken a picture of and given a registration number. They then all end up on the same paper, a paper called a biometric card which there is only one for each household with everyone on it. These papers are of vital importance for the refugees and losing one can be very troublesome. On these papers, it says that they are not valid as refugee IDs. However, that is what they are used for and accepted as by everyone, including humanitarian organisations and OPM. If your name and picture are on such a document, you are a refugee.

For the organisations these cards are what defines a household. Within each such household, there has to be a household head. Since they are given land to live on, it could be logic to assume that those people will live together there. However, it is not so. People move to

other places such as towns or even South Sudan with parts of the household staying behind in the settlement. Individuals with their own biometric cards can come and live with their family on their land but still have a biometric card of their own. The importance of these biometric cards becomes apparent when food is given out. When a household receives food, it does so measure by how many people there are on the biometric card. People who are on the card but not present in the settlement will still get their share, and people who are living with others but have their own card will get their own food.

"Household" is a word used by the humanitarian organisations and therefore also used by the refugees. I will argue that what the refugees are doing within a household, is *dwelling* which makes their houses on the land they are given also *a dwelling*. The houses they have on their land are built by themselves, and as Heidegger (1971, 4) argues "*building* is really *dwelling*". He also continues to argue that "Dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the earth" (1971, 4) while he also argues that humans do many things that are not dwelling, such as work, business and travel. For the refugees working is a part of building, when they work with the land or work to get money, they put the energy back into the building. Dwellers who are not present in the dwelling are also contributing to building by aiding with money or making sure the dwellers who are present get more food from the organisations by being on the biometric card. Heidegger (1971, 4) argues that "*Building*, as *dwelling*, unfolds in two ways: the *building* that cultivates and the *building* that erects structures." The refugees here do both by staying within the dwelling and continuously building upon it. The word household, however, does not include the social interactions and continuous building, not just a house but a life as *dwelling* does. The refugees stay within what has become a household, but which *also* is a dwelling. The understanding of a household is essential because within the institution lies many actions and possibilities which aids the refugees to build and therefore also to dwell. "*Building* is really *dwelling*", and everyone who is on a biometric card in some way aid a household in building, either their houses, bodies or lives. Therefore, I will define a household as the place where a group dwells, but that contain people who may not be present but are on the biometric card. Because the biometric card determines the aid given to the refugees, it becomes what determines how much the people are able to build. The amount of people who dwells physically in a household and who aids in the dwelling does not have to be the same. Because of this, the biometric card is, as I will discuss later, also open for manipulation. This might contribute to more resources that can be used to dwell. By continually being able to dwell the refugees can empower themselves further. E.g. some can start to bake buns and sell them at the market, making an extra income for the family. Contributing their income to the household,

they can become able to send children to better schools. This will empower them even further. Building their household is only possible because they are empowered, but through dwelling, the refugees can empower themselves further.

Issues such as cheating the biometric systems are well known by the humanitarian organisations and OPM. To get better control of the households, the humanitarian organisations have started a program for the VHT's where they go around to every household. They count the individuals who lives there, noting if anyone is sick and what kind of sickness they have. They also note if anyone is pregnant, if they have guests or if anyone has died. They then make weekly and monthly reports that they send to the organisations. Biometrics and VHT's and their contribution to cadastralization will be further discussed in chapter three.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have discussed my presence in the settlement, how I managed to find my position there, and how I have been thinking about ethics while in fieldwork as well as in the writing process. I then presented the refugees, the international definition and how they are both given rights and disempowered through becoming refugees. I then narrowed in on refugees in Uganda and discussed different ways they are empowered. Arguing that through receiving land to live on and to farm, free mobility, freedom to choose their residence and freedom to work the refugees are empowered to such an extent as to have an organisational form of power.

I then moved on to discuss farmland and how the distribution of it in combination with the difficult climate makes a very uneven distribution of resources. Despite this, humanitarian organisations still expect the same production of food from everyone. I will argue that the distribution of farmland is a failed cadastralization as refugees are distinctively able to produce the same amount of food although that is the goal.

Towards the end, I discuss cadastralization of the refugees through the household. I argue that what is referred to as a household is actually a place of dwelling and that even though the refugees make it something they can call their own, they are still cadastralized through it. How the refugees are cadastralized and how they find ways to resist these actions are further discussed in chapter three.





## Chapter 2

*A struggle to be heard: Different forms of resistance for divergent goals*



**Photo 3: finished stacked food distribution site for a village nearby. Photo: Mikko Virtanen**

## **Introduction**

It has been well established in anthropology that «resistance» can occur in many ways (See Scott 1985, Hollander and Einwhoner 2004, Abu-Lughod 2008). I will differ between two forms of resistance; First, resistance as a form of communication, and second, what I refer to as unintentional resistance. The unintentional resistance is irreducible to effect, acts without tangible effects or an instrumentality. In this chapter, acts will be discussed as a form of communication. This meaning that the acts themselves are sending a message. Whether the message is received correctly, or at all, depends on the relation between the parties.

From those that we can allocate a structural position of being weak or weakened – as in Scott's expression "weapons of the weak" – resistance is often exerted in hidden ways. Some ways cannot always understood by others as resistance, or even be noticed. Even though I argue for the refugee's empowerment in chapter one, their resistance is not always heard or understood which becomes an issue.

I argued for an unconventional reading of resistance in the introduction. This chapter will continue that argument. I will show that based on my fieldwork material, the "usual" conceptualisation of resistance becomes one-dimensional when observing social-political movements. This depicts acts of resistance as if it is following the same patterns and that all resisters are oppressed. The "usual" conceptualisation of resistance also makes it seem like the relation between the parties is always similar. I argue in this chapter that this is not always the case, that resistance does not have to be observed as the resistance performed by an armed rebellion against a government or a mutiny on a ship. I will instead argue that all acts that challenge or remove whole or parts of the other party's power in a relationship of power are resistant. By defining resistance this way, the different aspects of the relation between the parties will become clear through analysing the committed acts.

I argue that the resistant acts are forms of communication. Therefore, it also has to follow the same criteria as other forms of communication, which make it possible to use some of the same theories. In this regard, Norris and Jones (2005, 126) argue that intersubjectivity, which is that which we presuppose as minimally shared when we participate in a conversation, has to be present. Says Norris and Jones (2005, 126): "This contract further concerns rules for role taking and intermeshing of participant goals and motives.". The first step to accomplish intersubjectivity, according to Norris and Jones, is to negotiate a shared situation definition. The situation definition is one party's definition of a situation, their understanding of it. The situation definition is important because it is based on that the party assume the other party's actions. I argue that intersubjectivity happens in the what Long (2003) calls the interface, where

resistance can be noticed, i.e. in a meeting between two parties and their entire life worlds. Different situation definitions can therefore complicate situations as I will show.

This chapter will discuss different ways resistant is acted out, why they are chosen and why they had the effect they did. I will also show how these acts are responded to by the humanitarian organisations and OPM. A point is that ignoring a resistant act can (and often will) only make the next act “louder” and more visible until the act is responded to, respectively. To understand the relation between these parties, we need to understand why some acts are noticed and why others are not,, giving us a better understanding of the relation between the parties by understanding the situation definition and possibly the intersubjectivity or lack thereof.

I will first present a case with an open form of resistance, how this is responded to and how the counter-responses are played out. It will illustrate both how Foucault's "acts upon acts" can be understood in a case study and how a misunderstanding of the situation definition can have serious consequences. The second, smaller case, will discuss how silent acts can also be resistant to communicative acts and how these acts are perceived and understood. I will discuss how the refugees' empowerment is being attempted taken away and resisted by the humanitarian organisations and OPM with responsive actions—all which shapes the relationship between the two parties.

### **A protest turned into a strike**

„I was sitting with the village leader outside under some trees. I often visited him in his household. It is sunny and hot as always, but the trees offer shade, which helps. Around us, his ducklings are running, they are growing fast and are quick to eat anything that falls on the ground. He tells me that they need better access to water. Recently some of his ducks died from disease—a common problem afflicting both the refugees and the host community that keep livestock. His children are sitting around a bowl on a small table, eating. I ask him why one of the workers in one of the organisations told me that his village was the most uncontrollable. He immediately told me that it is not true. He then continued to tell me that his village has gotten that reputation because of a protest they arranged last year. I was intrigued, and asked him what it was about, he looked at me as if it was common knowledge. He then started to tell me about the incident. He explained that last year it was decided that food distributions should be centralised:

*“The people in Kampala decided this. For us, it meant that we had to walk 5 kilometres one way to get our food.” He explained further, with an annoyed tone: “How can people walk 5 kilometres to get food? Many people here are old, and some have households of 15 people in it, how can they expect people to walk 5 kilometres with that amount of food?”*

I calculate that a household of 8 people would equal roughly 135 kg in food from each food distribution. He continues as if going through an inventory of everything that was wrong with that scenario:

*the organisations were not willing to pay for any transport, and so we would need to sell food to manage the transport, which the organisations do not like. They do not understand that if we are moving so far from our house, who is going to protect the house? Can they guarantee that we are safe with all that food on our way home? What if we get robbed? Can they guarantee our security on the way home? There are so many old people, people with bad health, people who would not be able to get that food home.*

I then asked about the strikes, and he responded:

*We did not strike; we protested he told me. There were strikes, but people from this village did not take part. We were the once who started it: us and some neighbour villages. We got together and decided that we should protest. We wrote letters saying that we have decided to strike because they started to move the distribution sites. We sent letters to multiple organisations and the OPM and the district office. For the protest, we all agreed that there was to be no violence; it should be a peaceful protest. We walked up, many hundred people to the food distribution where we should have gotten the food. 5 kilometres away. We had made signs and slogans that we repeated all the way there, and for the time we were there. It all went really well, there was no violence, people kept calm, and we gave them the message.*

*“How did the organisations react?” I asked.*

*They did not show themselves and said that we were angry and wanted to hurt them. We went to many of their offices and the health centre and told them that it was not true. A*

*few days later, a few other villages tried another protest. This was not so successful; they did not plan it as we did, and they ended up locking an officer in charge inside his car and let all the air out of the tires so he could not get away. They did not hurt anyone, but some things were stolen.*

I learnt later that this protest scared the organisations. Many aid workers did not come to work because of the situation. He then says that:

*The third one was the most serious, but that did not happen here, that was in Bidi Bidi, the centre of the settlement. There, refugees attacked a food distribution site, people stole a lot of food, radios, walkie-talkies, beat up some guards really bad. This made the organisations pull out of the settlement.*

*A few days later, we got a message that they wanted to invite many of the leaders to a meeting. We all went there, even some of the religious leaders attended. At the meeting were organisation workers coming from Kampala. There, they asked us what the problem was.*

The village leader looked at me and said:

*It was almost like they never read the letters we sent. We had written everything there, but still, they asked us about it. We explained it to them again; all the reasons why moving the food distribution point did not work for us. One of the religious leaders told them in a speech that they should try to carry that amount of food for five kilometres and see how they would manage.*

A speech used by many others after him. An OPM representative who worked in the settlement told me that there had been large disagreements between the staff on the ground in the settlement and the people sitting in Kampala. However, these disagreements had started after the refugees started striking. Not long after the meeting, the food distribution was back to where it had been, where all the refugees wanted it, in their village.

These open resistant acts by the refugees are not committed to remove the humanitarian organisations of all their power, but as I argue, communicative acts which simply “say” that

moving the FDP (Food Distribution Point) is not acceptable. This is also specifically stated by the village leader who organised the protest.

To understand the different actions which pursued we need to take a close look at intersubjectivity and the situation definition. In communication, one comment responds to another comment - like Foucault's "acts upon acts" - and so the conversation develops. The first act or comment quickly becomes the one that defines the situation – which sets the situation definition. However, intersubjectivity might not have been accomplished; acts might have been misunderstood or not received at all, which can cause the situation definition to change from that which the first actor intended. Intersubjectivity seems here like something that is or is not, but it should rather be understood as a continuum (Norris and Jones 2005). Intersubjectivity therefore exists when interlocutors share some aspect of their situation definitions. Typically, this overlap may occur at several levels, and hence several levels of intersubjectivity may exist (Wertsch 1985, 159). Also, intersubjectivity, as Norris and Jones (2005) argue, is between a small number of people. As I apply intersubjectivity within a settlement of almost 250 000 people one cannot assume that intersubjectivity is accomplished for all people within the settlement. Various degrees of intersubjectivity will occur between different parties in different places within the settlement. This might also be why refugees can respond differently to the humanitarian organisations moving the FDP.

The surprised and angry response to the humanitarian organisations choice to move the FDP implies that the refugees did not have the same understanding of the situation as the humanitarian organisations did. Some of the anger is also based on the fact that the choice to move the distribution was not made by anyone who was in the settlement, but someone over 500 kilometres away. The distance means that their situation definition in the settlement is based on entirely different criteria's than those present in the settlement. This is also shown through their lack of understanding the consequences of moving the FDP had to the refugees.

The organisations' decision to move the food distribution almost five kilometres away from where they previously distributed was for the refugees an act outside the intersubjectivity between them and the humanitarian organisations and OPM. This act by the humanitarian organisation disrupt more than just the refugees' situation definition for the specific situation, but the situation definition of the roles as refugees and humanitarian organisations.

The issue with situation definition is that it is not static and can change during a conversation or situation. The situation needs to continually be defined for all parties to make sure nothing is misunderstood. Within the settlement, the situation is rarely defined, and it becomes a lack of intersubjectivity, and the situation is rarely defined.

For the humanitarian organisations, the protests and strikes were acceptable acts since it was stated to be permitted in an international policy within UNHCR. For the refugees, however, even though they understand that the humanitarian organisations have structural power, they knew nothing about this policy which made the act less understandable. By conducting such an act, the situation definition changed for the refugees, although it had not yet changed for the humanitarian organisations and OPM. The refugees' actions would, therefore, be difficult to understand for the humanitarian organisations and OPM.



**Photo 4: A semi-permanent food distribution site for up to 5 villages. The site is controlled by the organisations with security forces and refugees aiding in the distribution of food. Photo: Mikko Virtanen**

In terms of the initial typology of resistance introduced at the beginning of this thesis, we see that it falls clearly on the side of clear intent. Furthermore, the acts are not a hidden form of resistance, but open in terms of a message that was composed to be loud and clear. It is because of the intent, the common understanding of it, and how many are affected by the conflicting act of central food, that makes an open form of resistance to happen. The refugees portray what Wolf (1990) calls organisational power, where they can change the outcome of



acts. In this instance, the refugees refused to participate and instead delivered the message that what the organisations were doing was wrong. They had a purpose of their actions or as Hobsbawm (1971, 111) argues:

The classical mob did not merely riot as a protest, but because it expected to achieve something by its riot. It assumed that the authorities would be sensitive to its movements, and probably also that they would make some sort of immediate concession; for the 'mob' was not simply a casual collection of people united for some *ad hoc* purpose, but in a recognised sense, a permanent entity, even though rarely permanently organised as such.

Just as Hobsbawm's mob, the two strikes were "organised", a mob with a goal. A group of people with the expectation of that their actions would receive a response from the humanitarian organisations and the consequences they wanted, although not organised, they did have a purpose with their acts. The gathering of a mob was, however, made possible by the empowerment discussed in chapter one as the refugees are free to move and can organise. The acts of the strikes, however, should not be mistaken as the same act as the protest, clearly stated by the village leader. The act of the protest was not an act by a casual collection of people, it was highly organised down to detail and to understand these acts as the same is to overlook the empowerment the refugees truly have. To make the same mistake which the humanitarian organisations are doing, to undermine the refugees' acts. Because of how the humanitarian organisations understood the refugees their response was to claim that the refugees were dangerous. This made the refugees and their acts something they were not.

Because of the lack of desired response from the organisations, the refugees proceeded with escalating their actions. While the intent was still the same, the second and third act was very different. No letters were sent out to inform any parties, nothing was formally organised by the refugees, and things went more out of control in the sense of lacking a coordinating centre and violence was conducted. The message itself became more important than the way it was presented. However, while the message intended was that the central food distributions did not work for the stated reasons the message received was just that something was wrong, or even worse, that the refugees are dangerous. The parties had a very different situation definition.

As these acts escalated so too did the responses to them. The organisation workers responded with becoming scared, and many workers refused to do their jobs for fear of reprisals. The refugees had shown that they were able to organise and willing to use their power, a power



the humanitarian organisations seemed to be surprised that the refugees could use that way. This resulted in the organisations responding with fear. This was not the intentions from the refugees. The situation escalated: The humanitarian organisations and OPM workers all pulled out of the park, responding with more fear and again little of the response the refugees wanted. The organisations then gathered leaders from the humanitarian organisations, OPM, and the refugees to discuss the situation. This turn of events meant achieving what the refugees wanted all along: to discuss the situation and to put a stop to the system of centralised food distribution. This story was told to me long after it happened, but still, it was told in incredible detail and involved strong feelings. For the refugees, the result is interpreted and conveyed as a victory as they forced the organisations to listen to them and to change how they work. Different aspects of these incidents are often mentioned in casual conversations, and when it is, it is often with a smile, frustration or even anger. For the organisation workers in the settlement, the incident is, perhaps surprisingly, not seen as a form of defeat but as a serious situation that should not have occurred. Only certain aspects of the narrative the refugees tell are, however, recounted by the workers—as in this narrative from a discussion between a OPM worker and a humanitarian worker whom I had the pleasure of sharing lunch with, in the settlement:

*I found myself in a discussion between workers from different organisations and OPM. They discussed what went wrong at the strike, I sat in my chair and listened as the discussion became louder and louder and a man started to stand up and shout. I noticed in the discussion that the only thing they discussed was the last strike where there was violence, and people got hurt. In a second of silence, I quickly asked everyone how many protests and strikes there was during that time. They all looked at me and became silent, the man standing up said that there was one. I asked them "what about the protest at the food distribution, where people refused to take food because of the distance, or the one where an officer got trapped in the car". They looked at me again, and one man said he had never heard about those. The standing man said that "those were no problem "because nothing happened there".*

In narratives as this, the organisations are effectively exerting their power by erasing the refugees' acts of resistance. This act not only shows how resistant actions are perceived but also portrays how a more powerful actor can still maintain their power by wilfully eclipsing these acts or perceiving and portraying them as insignificant. Feldman writes: "The event is not

what happens. The event is that which can be narrated. The event is situation organised by culturally situated meanings." (Feldman 2019, 14).

However, there is no singular narration of the event of the protest and strikes and narrations becomes very different depending on which party one asks. Moreover, in this scenario, the form and amount of power the two parties have cannot be forgotten. Dismissing the very events, the other party holds great pride in becomes a resistant act as it undermines not just the act itself but the power of the other party. While the refugees are empowered in Uganda, they are also disempowered through such actions, where their actions can be reduced to nothing. The humanitarian organisations and OPM are in this way giving with one hand, while taking away with the other, resisting the very power they have given to the refugees.

For the refugees, the need to be heard and the frustration that they were not, made the protests turn into strikes. For the humanitarian organisations, these actions were surprising coming from the refugees. Based on her work with refugees from Burundi and Rwanda, Malkki (1996) argue that refugees are seen as unreliable informants regarding their history, that they are dehistoricized. She writes that the refugees become speechless emissaries as they are never trusted to tell their own story. Similar to how Malkki (1996) writes that humanitarian organisation workers see refugees as untrustworthy and that it is the organisation workers accounts that matter. It is the humanitarian organisations understanding of the situation that matters regarding events in the settlement as well. As Malkki argues the refugees become speechless emissaries. She argues that the refugees are seen as supposed to be helpless and look like it. When the refugees are empowered to move where they want, to take part in the global market and live where they want, are they really refugees? For the refugees in Uganda, the answer is yes, but still, they need someone to speak for them. But when the very people that are set to speak for them goes against them and ignores what they say, the frustration can become overwhelming, and strikes can occur. The humanitarian organisations become so secure in their work that they stop listening to the very people they try to help. Barnett (2004, 40) argues that:

Organisations vary greatly in the degree to which they receive and process feedback from their environment about performance. Those insulated from such feedback often develop internal cultures and procedures that do not promote the goals of those who created the organisation or those whom it serves.

The act of putting a FDP 5 kilometres away from the people who receive the food is done by people who are not working with the refugees and who are unable to hear any feedback from

the them. The refugees become speechless as everything they say is ignored. Furthermore, they result to resistance to be heard by the people who are in charge and whom they depend on. Harrell-Bond (2002, 55) writes that the humanitarian workers are in an asymmetrical relationship with the refugees. She continues by saying that the refugees are symbolically disempowered by the very people whom they depend on survival and security.

Although the refugees are empowered to make a better life for themselves, Malkki (1996, 388) argues that “This vision of helplessness is vitally linked to the constitution of speechlessness among refugees: helpless victims need protection, need someone to speak for them.” As the refugees are made speechless, they are also made helpless, lessened into people without power. While being seen as helpless, they lose their voice to the very people who are in power to speak for them. They are made no more than refugees, without anything to their name. Even empowered to move freely, to farm, to have land and to live where they want, they are reminded that they are still speechless refugees.



**Photo 5: The refugees working together with people from the organisations to set up a food distribution close to a village. The refugees are doing the heavy work while the organisation workers are supervising. Photo: Mikko Virtanen**

## **A speechless resistance**

*In August 2019, the village leader was invited to a meeting between all the leaders in the zone under a large tree at the police station. This meeting was going to address some specific issues that were going to be presented for the humanitarian organisations and OPM by the refugee zone leader. I immediately asked my village leader if I could attend the meeting with him, although I knew he was going to ask me if I wanted to come with him, as he always did. We drove my motorbike to the meeting, only a five minute drive away, on a bumpy sandy road. There, at the meeting, many of the village leaders were already sitting on plastic chairs. Multiple people were still missing, and I think as always that this is just how time works here. I had finally gotten a bit used to this after having at this point spent almost five months there. This time, it was different. Usually, the organisers of the meeting would wait for a bit to see if people show up, but not now. This time, they started on time. Multiple issues are coming up: an organisation has been choosing their participants for a new project wrongfully, and many of the leaders are complaining. What was meant to be close to the end of the meeting dragged on, and then the last subject started. It was about participation from village leaders in zone meetings. At these meetings OPM, all humanitarian organisations and all villages are supposed to be represented.*

*One of the respected village leaders were sitting in his chair while everyone was silent, shaking his head. He then stretch out his hand and does not wait to talk; he exclaims, in anger, that he does not attend those meeting because they [the village leaders]are not listened to. He claims they are not cared about. He then continues with saying: "It is difficult to get to these meetings for them, the meetings last for almost five hours without any food, anything to drink and no transport money for them." He then says that they know that what they say is never included in the minutes. "Why should we attend?" All the leaders agreed with him and claimed that that was why none of them participated in the meetings. The village leader in charge then said that if that was why no one attended, then that had to be told to OPM and the humanitarian organisations because it seemed like they had not gotten that message or understood their actions in that way.*

*At the next zone meeting, only a few days later under the same tree at the police station almost all of the village leaders also attended. As all zone meetings do, this one also started about one hour later than what it was supposed to. When enough people had arrived at the meeting, an officer from OPM started. Organisations from all sectors*

*were given a specific time to talk as well as the village leader representing all refugees in the zone. When it was his turn, he spoke over time. This made the officer from OPM, who led the meeting, angry and told him to sit down and stop talking. This incident managed to overshadow everything the village leader tried to say. Later in the meeting, the issue was taken up again, and this time it was heard and responded to. Both the officer from OPM and some from UNHCR said that they will have to see further on this issue and that the participation from the village leaders was very important to them.*

ReHoPE (2017) states that refugee leaders are to be voted forward where their job is peacebuilding efforts between the different parties. In South Sudan, there are roles of the village leaders but also that of the chief. Their roles are to mediate disputes within their community (Fadlalla 2009). In South Sudan, their role within local communities is put down in law by the Chiefs' Courts Ordinance 1931, making their role within the community formal (Fadlalla 2009). The village leader is elected for two years in the settlement, while chiefs in South Sudan are appointed by the rest of the clan, based on the fathers' practice as chief, as explained to me in the settlement. Being village leaders in the settlement is an unpaid role and one that takes much time with leaders only receiving incentives in return.

Meetings between the village leaders in a zone are not common and usually only happens when there are large or urgent subjects to discuss. These meetings are also initiated by the village leaders alone, and no one else attends. The leaders are highly capable of organising themselves, but actions such as not going to the zone meetings are individual decision although acted out based on the same reasons.

As I attended zone meetings often, I knew that there were only one or two village leaders who attended them, and the subject of their absence was rarely talked about in any of the meetings. When it was addressed, however, it was usually in the form of complaints about them not being there. The village leader role is essential in keeping the people together and to make sure things are evenly distributed in the villages, and to keep the refugees organised. However, although the jobs are not paid, they are expected to do them well and without complaints. Many village leaders feel their job is not appreciated enough by the humanitarian organisations and that they are not listened to and respected, as shown in the case above.

The act of not attending zone meetings was not organised but was accomplished through unspoken mutual agreement between the leaders. The refugees only organised after it was taken up among them, although the act had been going on for many months. These acts had little personal gain for the village leaders and were to them an obvious statement that something was

wrong at the meetings. The humanitarian organisations and OPM at the meetings had been neglecting the very act of not participating and reduced it to lachrymose, a common view of the refugees in Bidi Bidi. As the meetings went on without almost any village leaders participating, the view of them not caring for their job grew, and an understanding that there might be another reason seemed far from their understanding of the situation.

(Geertz 1978, 32) discuss the social actions of bargaining at a bazaar in Morocco he writes that: "The whole structure of bargaining is determined by this fact: that it is a communication channel evolved to serve the needs of men at once coupled and opposed." Similar to the bargaining at the market in Morocco, space which is created by empowering the refugees has created a communication channel. A way for both parties to communicate, but not just with voices, but with acts, resistant acts. With these acts, the parties are, in a way, bargaining for a solution to what one or both of them see as a problem.

The parties here are both also coupled since both parties need each other and at the same time are opposed to each other. In relation to such a situation, Harrell-Bond (2002, 56) therefore comments: "Aid - the need for it and the responsibility to distribute it? is the unifying principle that binds these diverse actors together." However, even though the refugees are empowered, they will not be able to challenge the humanitarian organisations as they constantly disempower them, as stated by Harrell-Bond: whether or not they are aware of it, humanitarian workers stand in an asymmetrical relationship to refugees who are symbolically disempowered through becoming clients of those upon whom they are dependent for the means of survival and security. (Harrell-Bond 2002, 55).

Thus, while an empowered refugee is still a refugee, what their empowerment has accomplished is not making them equal to others. Instead, they have found use in the empowerment to resist and communicated what they understand as unjust actions, although the humanitarian organisations often resist this voice.

## **Conclusion**

As I have shown through mainly two cases in this chapter, resistance must, in the context of the Bidi Bidi settlement be analysed as comprising many additional dimensions than merely being simple acts to oppose oppressive parties through hidden acts. Resistance here becomes a form of communication and, as it does, it becomes a "language" of acts that need to be understood

for the parts to communicate correctly and for there to be an intersubjectivity between the parties.

Leblanc (1999) argues that resistance is something that is exerted by the oppressed. I argue instead that resistance are acts enacted by any party with the result of challenging or reducing another party's power. This is shown by the humanitarian and OPM workers discussion of what happened at the protest and strikes, as well as reducing their act of not showing up at meetings to pure laziness. Reducing the refugee's power by undermining their acts, as Scott (1985) and Abu-Lughod (2008) argue, are deemed resistant acts.

The cases make it clear that the form of resistance is determined by the act and power it counters and opposes and is, thereby, a dynamic entity. Furthermore, as an act upon an act, acts of resistance are determined by the intersubjectivity for that specific situation. Changing the situation definition without maintaining intersubjectivity can have serious consequences such as the distribution of aid stopping because of the refugee's violent actions which they deemed necessary.

I here also argue that some of the issues between the parties are that they do not just lack intersubjectivity but also lack an understanding of each other's power. I understand this from the humanitarian organisations' reaction to the refugees when they started protesting and striking. In the situation violence was not possible based on the humanitarian organisation's situation definition; aid workers therefore became afraid of the situation and what could come next. They therefore refused to continue work until the situation was solved.

For the humanitarian organisations, the refugee's empowerment goes against what a refugee is supposed to be. Because of this, their situation definition of the entire refugee situation is very different from the refugee's situation definition. For the refugees, using once empowerment and testing its limits seem to be understood as their right and helps understand how their empowerment can further aid them in their situation as a survival strategy.

The responses to the refugees' actions also have to be within the intersubjectivity so as not to escalate the situation. For the humanitarian organisations and OPM not responding to a situation or ignoring it might be understood as within the intersubjectivity, but as Foucault (1982, 789) argues what defines a relationship of power is an action upon action. Not acting is also an act, but depending on the importance of the case, the other party is then forced to commit an even stronger and "louder" resistant act to force the wanted response. In the case of moving the food distribution sites, the acts of resistance became too loud and stepped outside the intersubjectivity. However, ultimately, the refugees got the response they wanted all along.





## *Chapter 3*

### *The governed people and the acts of resistance*



**Picture 6: Because of the fear and threat of Ebola, self-hunted or so-called “bush meat” was forbidden within the settlement. Nevertheless, such meat was still sold and eaten, even by the village leaders and me. This is the meat of a bush pig, killed by a refugee. Photo: Mikko Virtanen**

## **Introduction**

Controlling its people is an act consistently attempted by governing parties. In this chapter I will first discuss how governmentality, as Foucault (2009) delineate it, is acted out by the humanitarian organisations and OPM. I will present different disciplinary mechanisms and argue for how they shape the refugees. Also, I will describe how the humanitarian organisations and OPM are able to govern through them. From there I go on to discuss how cadastralization, in addition to governmentality, is used within the settlement.

Scott (1998) argues that in large part state powers has cadastralized societies to increase production and made it easier to collect taxes and an easily controllable system. Cadastralization becomes that which makes the gathering of knowledge easier and, therefore, facilitates governing. Within the settlement knowledge about the refugees becomes essential to improve the humanitarian organisations distribution of aid. Cadastralization, in this way, does not have to be something negative, but it can, as I will discuss, have unthought-of consequences.

In this chapter, I will present a case where refugees register to live in the settlement. The case shows how the refugees are controlled through biometric scanning and what it requires of the humanitarian organisations to maintain such a controlling system. The chapter also presents how the refugees adapt and can use such a system to resist the humanitarian organisations, and at the same time as a survival strategy. I will end by discussing the upsides and downsides of biometric and how it results in dehistoricization.

Biometrics is one of several ways cadastralization happen. One is how the land they live on is divided up as explained in the introduction. Scott (1998) argues that this is done to ease the collection of taxes. In the settlement it is done to improve aid and to make each and every one equal to the other. The whole settlement is constructed with the improvement of aid in mind and the structures cares little of identity and background of the people living there, where they come from, what they have experienced or what culture they carry with them. I will therefore discuss how the refugees participate in cadastralizing actions such as counting each household and keeping account of how many are pregnant, sick and what kind of sickness they have. By doing this, they participate in maintaining the cadastralizing system. I will use examples from the so-called VHT (Village Health Team) that were undertaking this task on behalf of the humanitarian organisations. I will further discuss the potential consequences of such cadastralization on the refugees.

Within such a social scramble of governmentality and cadastralization there are few responses more natural than resistance. After discussing certain aspects of cadastralization I therefore move on to show two cases of resistance by the refugees and how resistance adapt to

other resistant acts which are meant to restrict their acts and thereby their power. As these acts change, the power changes and so, too, do the relations.

### **Governmentality**

Governing masses of people is a difficult task and in the context of refugees this has often resulted in them being placed in refugee camps where they are constantly controlled and restricted—a process Liisa Malkki (1995a) has documented very well. In Uganda they explicitly aim for making the refugees self-sustainable (The World Bank 2017). But is that the only thing they might accomplish when aiming for it? I will argue that they also achieve a form of governmentality. By governmentality Foucault (2009) refers to the relation of power amongst the state and its people, making people able to govern themselves the way they, the government, wants. This form of governing happens through what Foucault (2009, 5) calls disciplinary mechanisms. He argues that:

The disciplinary mechanism is characterized by the fact that a third personage, the culprit, appears within the binary system of the code, and at the same time, outside the code, and outside the legislative act that establishes the law and the judicial act that punishes the culprit, a series of adjacent, detective, medical, and psychological techniques appear which fall within the domain of surveillance, diagnosis, and the possible transformation of individuals.

Within the settlement these disciplinary mechanisms are such institutions as schools, health centres, distribution of food and other miscellaneous and job training and courses. Through governmentality the refugees are empowered as well as pulled into a power relation. The refugees then attempt to use the empowerment while at the same time are being transformed by the institutions and the very empowerment they are given. Mbembe (2001, 133) argues that;

The real inversion takes place when, in their desire for a certain majesty, the masses join in the madness and clothe themselves in cheap imitations of power to re-produce its epistemology, and when power, in its own violent quest for grandeur, makes vulgarity and wrongdoing its main mode of existence. (Mbembe 2001, 133)

In Mbembe's vision, this is where the people, the refugees are brought into or, better, appropriates the spaces of power. Instead of them clothing themselves as Mbembe argues, I

think they are clothed, the refugees are transformed, but that transformation is often not the transformation they want. They are forced, by lack of choices, to participate in the systems that have been constructed for them. This is because disciplinary mechanisms make a population able to govern themselves, but to be able to do that the populace require knowledge where power follows. This power is meant for the people to govern themselves but can at the same time be used to resist other parties. This becomes part of what the refugees brings to the interface as argued for in the introduction.

The refugees are able to achieve what Nielsen (2011) calls inverse governmentality; they are able to shape the way they are governed by the humanitarian organisations. They achieve this by using their knowledge and power, to resist the humanitarian organisations and OPM. Nielsen (2011) argues that governmentality happens through being governmentalized and then start acting to shape the very way they are governed by countering the governments acts and adapt to the governmentality so that they are able to change the governing actors.

Another theory that is often applied when discussing aid, is the developmentality that Lie (2015) argues for. Developmentality builds on the theory of governmentality but refers to the relation between donors and the receivers of aid. Lie (2015) argue that receivers of donor money are governed by the donors. As long as they spend the funds the way the donors intend, they are free to do as they want. Donors have to understand what the receivers want, and so govern in a way which makes the receivers of aid money seem to act out of their free will. This aspect works very well when discussing development on a macro level in Africa. Still, it becomes insufficient when one wants to do discuss aid on a micro level. This is because developmentality has little space for disciplinary mechanisms. In developmentality the disciplinary mechanisms are based on “auditing, accounting, monitoring and evaluation” (Lie 2015, 33). However, Lie (2015) has some arguments for using developmentality and not governmentality. First Lie argues that “Foucault wrote about governmentality emerging as an effect of European state formation.” (Lie 2015, 36), and that the relation between parties is made with much more intention than in governmentality. This is true, for the parties at a macro level. However, the refugees are not informed that such actions of control are in motion and that such effects are intentional. Although, the parties within the settlement are different from that of a state and its people, but the relation is less similar. Lie (2015) further argues that developmentality removes the focus of the state power and state centrism. This is however one of my points, that the humanitarian organisations and OPM takes on the role of the governing party which then again use such governing acts as governmentality to state their role.

By harbouring and deploying such forms of what could be labelled governmentality, the humanitarian organisation achieves a settlement population that experience feeling more free and more empowered. At the same time, it is the empowerment they are given through the institutions that makes them able to act resistant. This makes them able to achieve inverse governmentality as Nielsen (2011) argues for. Therefore, it results in a relationship where acts always has to be met with counter acts and where each sides power has to be resisted in some way or another by the other parties. By doing this, they are able to achieve a settlement population which is governed and who's power is constantly countered. A refugee population that has knowledge and knows how and are able to act.

It is important to note that the government in this case, the humanitarian organisations and OPM, do not lose their meaning when discussing governmentality. The government state their power by being the party that holds the information, the party that decides right from wrong. By portraying themselves as the keepers and the controlling party of this knowledge through such institutions the government stays in control and are rarely questioned. The relations within the settlement become shaped by this. The refugees and host community become those who should simply follow and accept, and the humanitarian organisations and OPM are those who govern. As Lie (2015, 35) argue, it is in the interface between these actors that resistance can be identified, where they can be seen deviating from the systems created to shape them.

Foucault (2009) states that governmentality is a good thing and important when governing. When Foucault discuss this theme, it is about the matter of the state and power. In a state, these actions evolve over generations, schools change, institutions evolve, and people are transformed with them through generations. In the settlement it is not like that. When a new form of governmentality is thrust upon people, it is often a form they are not used to. Among the refugees, some are not used to be governed. They are not used to sending their children to school, going to a doctor when they are sick, and only effected by the governing of the church. For them the rapid changes in a refugee settlement can be hard to accept. Their responses to being governed is often resistance, especially in locations where refugees who never have been governed are the majority.

### **The disciplinary mechanisms**

The institutions where governmentalization happens through, transforms the refugees slowly into people who can take part in governing themselves. These institutions, schools, health centers, jobs and courses is an important part of this. Services like schools and health centres

are also as argued earlier a large part of why the refugees come to Uganda specifically. By holding such institutions, the humanitarian organisations act as the ones holding the correct knowledge and that it is their role to teach it to the refugees. Foucault (2009, 100) argue that:

The wisdom required of someone who governs is not exactly the wisdom of tradition, in the form of the knowledge of human and divine laws, of justice and equity, but rather wisdom as, precisely, the knowledge of things, of the objectives that can and must be attained, and the “disposition (disposition)” one must employ in order to attain them: this is the knowledge that constitutes the sovereign’s wisdom.

These Institutions becomes a place where the humanitarian organisations show that they are the ones holding important knowledge and at the same share it in a way the refugees can use it to govern themselves. I will here show how these institutions are used by the refugees and what impact it has on them. I will show how the refugees contest some of the institutions since not all knowledge is held by the humanitarian organisations.

As explained in the thesis introduction, schools are an important factor for the South Sudanese refugees to come to Uganda. Many grownups have education from Uganda and knows the system. It is also a place where the schools are in English which they prefer to the French being taught in DRC. They also view the schools in Uganda of higher quality. School and education are also held in high regard and so quality education is important for them.

In the settlement the schools are placed in, or close to, all villages, they are run by both Uganda national teachers as well as South Sudanese refugee teachers. All who do not have a proof that they have finished primary school are able to become a student, no matter what age they are. There are many adults who also attend different courses to get their diploma. Because many lost all their documents in South Sudan there has been launched a 3-year program for people who claim to have finished school in South Sudan called AEP – Accelerated Education Program. In the program they are able to take 10 years of school in 3 years instead. This has resulted many to return to school.

The schools in the settlement are running on the Ugandan curriculum, which makes everyone exposed to the same teachings as everyone else in Uganda. This is an excerpt from my fieldnotes regarding this:

*When I heard this, I asked one of my 14-year-old friends if she knew what SPLM – Sudan People’s Liberation Movement was or if she had heard about it in school. While*



*talking many other children came over as well. They all said that they had never heard of SPLM which to me was very surprising since SPLM is in many ways what made South Sudan split from Sudan and plays a large part in their nation's history. They told me that they don't learn about South Sudan in school, mostly just Ugandan history.*



**Photo 7. The village school. Photo: Mikko Virtanen**

The refugees are in this way forgetting their nation's history and they are socialised into the Ugandan nation, although most have no wish to become Ugandans. Schools take a large part as a disciplinary mechanism as it teaches people what is right and wrong, and it decides what knowledge the people should have and gives them tools to use it. In this instance however it is a Ugandan school system teaching South Sudanese people what to know and how to use that knowledge.

Another issue with the teachings in the schools is that its only 1-3. Grade that has translated teachings. After that the teacher assume that everyone understands English, but many children told me that they do not. Such mechanisms put breaks in the disciplinary mechanisms.

But then again, it is contradicted by the fact that everyone has to repeat a grade if they do not pass the exam for each grade.

Often close to schools lies Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres which takes care of young children with war traumas which today, 3 years after their arrival, has taken on a role more similar to a kindergarten. The ECD has both refugee volunteers and organisations workers working there and aid families with taking care of their children while they are farming their land or have troubles with traumatized children. Many children who go to school also attend ECD since there is a large playground and the children has access to games as long as they are supervised by grownups. ECD takes on a role as a free space for children. A place designed for them to refocus from what they have gone through. It also makes it easier for them in their everyday lives and increase their learning in school.

Health centres (HC) are spread out all over the settlement and usually close to the villages. They give all kinds of health services and refer people to larger centres or hospitals if they are not able to treat them locally. Even though the service is appreciated by the refugees, there are many who oppose them. There are for instance often programs telling refugees to go to the HC to give birth, but still, many people refuse to do it. A Village Health Team (VHT) worker who had been at been at a meeting addressing this specific problem explained six reasons why women gave birth at home. The first was that the distance to the HC was often to long for the women. This issue has been addressed multiple times by the humanitarian organisations. They argue that from the time the women notice that the birth has started, they all should be able to get to the HC if they go straight away. The problem appears when they want to do it at home and then something complicates the birth and they have to get to the HC in the middle of the birth. This is a recurring issue. The second reason is that women claim that they are abused at the HC, getting complaints of how dirty and disgusting they are from the nurses. Many women complain that they are not well treated at the HC, especially when giving birth. A third point was that the expected due date was forgotten. Nothing was therefore prepared for the birth and if the women then go to the HC they receive scolding from the nurses which they do not like. A fourth issue is that sometimes the HC have large lines and the women has to wait in line to give birth and they are not taken care of while waiting. A fifth issue is that many women have a tradition of cutting the umbilical cord in a special way. Many women have reported that the nurses do not listen to them when they say how they want it and that the nurses cut it wrong. The final reason is that the women claim that they for many years have been given birth at home in South Sudan. They therefore do not see why they should start going to the HC to give birth.



When it comes to the refugee's health, it can be difficult for the humanitarian organisations to convince the refugees that medical health personnel at the HC are those with the best medical competence. The refugees have through experience, rumours, local doctors and others built their own knowledge of how to take care of their own health and even if they do go to the HC and receives medicine it is often combined with local herbs. Therefore, also the refugees are keepers of knowledge.

Refugees often participate in job training and other courses. The courses might be parental courses, courses in prevention of domestic violence, neighbourhood watch training and many more. For job training courses there are put up multiple training centres throughout the settlement where they are doing what they call Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). This program usually goes over 6 intensive months where one can learn all basic knowledge within a profession. They can choose between mechanic, plumbing, tailoring and hairdressing, depending on the training center. There are also other courses available at some of the larger centres. When finished they get a diploma which makes it possible for them to get a job within that profession. However, some problems occur when the training is finished. Some of the goal for these courses is for the refugees to get a job, but there are too many educated in each profession compared to the amount of work available. Previously there were also another issue where ten people had to share on one set of tools. They then ended up with splitting the toolkits since many of the people in each group lived in different villages. This made everyone unable to fix anything completely. This issue was however fixed later, when another organisation took over the training and managed to give each person their own toolkit.

Other courses are more focused on handling issues within the settlement, problems observed by the humanitarian organisations and OPM. These courses can be about teaching men how to better take care for their wife and family, courses directed directly towards domestic violence, teaching both men and women "correct" behaviour in their houses. The courses can be about how to act when one is patrolling in neighbourhood watch or something as complicated as how people can set up their own business. Courses like this are very popular.

By being the ones that hold the information and knowing how to use it, the humanitarian organisations are stating that they are the ones who are governing the refugees. As they share this knowledge they are also shaping the refugees. Foucault argues that "one who governs, should govern only in a way such that he will consider himself and act as if he were in the service of those who are governed." (Foucault 2009, 100). The humanitarian organisations are sharing information with the intent of service to the refugees. An OPM officer told me when talking about the refugees; "They [the refugees] are now thinking better than even the locals".

I see this as a statement that the organisations experience that they have shaped the refugees after their own opinion of what is “correct” behaviour.

In addition to these institutions, the humanitarian organisations are also able to show that they are those who is governing by controlling the FDP’s and distribution of other material goods, like soap. The refugees have to listen and follow the system the humanitarian organisations set up to receive what they need. Because of the importance of these resources, most refugees feel they have little choice but to do whatever they are told although some result to tricking and cheating the systems as I will come back to in chapter three.

The distribution of food or other necessary items functions as a disciplinary mechanism. The refugees are being taught what is expected of them, such as waiting in line, or not stealing or cheating. Such acts are often getting reported by the refugees themselves, which is an example of how they are governing themselves. Foucault (2009, 122) argues:

When one speaks of a town that governs itself (*see gouverne*), and which is governed on the basis of its drapery, it means that people get their means of subsistence, their food, their resources, and their wealth from drapery. It is not therefore the town as a political structure, but the people, individuals, or group. Those whom one governs are people.

The refugees do not have any such resource of their own and therefor lack the chance to govern themselves and are only able to do that through governmentality. Their main source of subsistence is the humanitarian organisations and are therefore governed by the humanitarian organisations. People governed by people, on the basis of resources.

### **The churches**

In between all the infrastructure and outside of the control of the humanitarian organisations, the refugees have put up churches. Some are made of the same dried mud bricks as all other houses and others just a roof of grass on poles. The largest of these buildings can fit over 100 people. There are five of these churches in the village I stayed in. Most people in the village follow the Anglican church, followed by the Catholic church. In South Sudan it is the other way around, with the Catholic church being the largest, followed by the Anglican church. They are followed by the Pentecostal, Charismatic and Baptist in that order. The Baptist being so small that only 5-10 people attend every Sunday. It is not possible to document the exact numbers of every church, as people can often change churches, and many prefer the one closest to their

house. Many say something like “it does not matter which one you go to, it’s all to the same God”. Even though there are Muslims as well in the village there are no mosques. This is because there are quite few Muslims in the village, and they cannot afford building one. They have therefore received permission to pray in the local mosque with the host community.

The churches are an institution where the humanitarian organisations don’t take any part. They are built entirely by the refugees, without aid from any humanitarian organisation, except for requesting the space from the OPM. They are completely run by the refugees themselves and are often part of a larger system of churches far outside the refugee settlement. This could be connections to the structures within the catholic church.

Although they are run by the refugees, the churches as physical structures also get used for more than religion. Most meetings with humanitarian organisations and OPM are held in the churches. They are also where the organise and have their own meetings. As these churches are controlled by the refugees, they become a space where the refugees are able to come together and share ideas, which often has nothing to do with the church. Therefore, the churches become a space for organising resistance toward other actors. This is the case for many cases of resistance in this thesis.



**Photo 7. The largest church in the village. Photo: Mikko Virtanen**

## **Registration day**

*Today is the day of registration and re-registration. This means it is a chance for the refugees to alter their biometric cards and fix any issues with it. Such issues can be adding or removing a person to it, making a new one if it is lost or solve system errors which can occur. Registration and re-registration took place at the police station. When I arrive the area is filled with people in a large, crowded circle. A woman from OPM is standing in the middle and explains what is going to happen and how the things are done. She takes a few questions from the crowd before they start working. The registration is a continuous process done by OPM with the aid from UNHCR. It goes from zone to zone and assist people in fixing any problem they might have with their biometric cards or biometric profiles. The registration last 3-4 weeks to finish everything. I get a chair inside one of the houses and sit next to two officers on computers receiving refugees and their issues. Just beside me sits a translator who is a refugee, ready to translate the conversation. First, a man enters that claims he needs a new biometric card because his house burnt down; he shows a police report as proof. The officer finds the man in the system and prints out a new card for him.*

*Next are two men who explain that one of them is the household head and the other comes from another settlement. He wants to move to this settlement and to the other man's household. The officer asks if he has the document from the office in his original settlement, the man says, he doesn't have them. The officer tells him that he has to go back to get them before he can do anything. The two men leave with sad looks on their faces and move outside. I later find the two men again and ask them about the settlement he comes from; he tells me it is the Rhino camp. The settlement is about a one-hour drive away and is difficult and expensive to get to.*

*The next family that arrives is a mother and two children. She says that she needs to register her baby. The officer looks at her and looks at the baby. He then asks her, repeatedly, if this is, in fact, her baby. The mother replies yes, repeatedly. The officer makes the translator ask the older sister if the baby is her brother and she say yes. The officer sends her to the other office where they can take pictures and tells her to come back to him after she has done that. I understand that the officer asked the mother multiple times because she know how common it is to borrow other people's babies to register them to get more food. Young babies can't have their fingerprint or eyes scanned and only picture taken which makes them easy ways to trick the organisations with. I never managed to find out if this baby was, in fact, the woman's baby.*

Biometrics or biometric scanning is when each person in a group or category, usually in a defined space, is identified by their fingers print and/or iris. Each person has them scanned and put into a personal profile and will therefor always be identified through it. Jacobsen (2015) argues that this system becomes what decides who gets aid and who does not. A disciplinary mechanism which contributes to governmentality (Foucault 2009) as argued above. If a person is not in the system, there are few situations where a refugee is still able to argue for the right of aid. Jacobsen (2015) also argues that the system is “contributed to rendering the digitalized, newly accessible and newly traceable body synonymous with the kind of body to be regarded as deserving of humanitarian protection” (Jacobsen 2015, 159). Biometrics becomes a part of the cadastralization of the society. It becomes a form of cadastral mapping of people. The intent is to keep a form of control and to simplify decision making. These decisions can be who will receive aid or not. Some of the consequences of biometrics is that the refugee become a number who receives aid, rather than an individual. Harrell-Bond (2002, 56) argues that refugees are heterogeneous by such aspects as age, education, gender and social class. She continues with how the distribution of aid equalizes them. They are all equally inferior to those who are in control of the distribution of aid. Biometrics emphasizes this homogenisation as people become profiles which is validated by a computer program. I noticed this especially through the food distributions. Here, all refugees are treated equally at a systemic level.

It takes a lot of recourses from OPM and UNHCR to maintain a biometric system as it is a constant process. This is the price to pay if one wants an up to date information on all refugees within the settlement. Although time consuming, gathering this information has become simpler as refugees come to the mobile offices when they are present in each zone. The consequences of not being registered means that they lose right to receive aid. However, it is more important to the humanitarian organisations that the registration is done correctly, rather than that they receive food. You see an example of this with the two men mentioned earlier who had to go back. Maintaining the system becomes more important than the need of the refugees. In this way, they are forced to give the information to OPM and UNHCR. Maddox, Cordell, and Ittmann (2010, 23) argue that: “Censuses, surveys, and other demographic exercises are more often than not the work of state agencies; and the state deploys demographic data to administer or control its inhabitants.” They further argue that “Friedrich Nietzsche, the nineteenth-century philosopher who characterized knowledge itself—the great achievement of the modern scientific age—as “an invention that masks a will to power.” (Maddox, Cordell, and Ittmann 2010, 25). Gathering and updating biometrics becomes an act of surveillance and

of governmentality which states if one is not on a biometric card one is not a refugee viable for aid.

Although the gathering of biometrics is a governmentalizing act it is also a cadastralizing act. Maddox, Cordell, and Ittmann (2010) writes that Van den Bersselaar (2004) repeats the familiar observation that colonial regimes devised schemes of data collection and classification ostensibly to describe their colonial possessions but also to assert their control (Maddox, Cordell, and Ittmann 2010, 42). The importance of cadastralization does not only become knowing where people are but the very gathering of information. Through gathering this information, OPM and UNHCR states that they are the ones with the most power. This also means they are the ones who govern. They also state that they are able to use the information they gather. Controlling what is often referred to as “the masses” require knowledge about them. As I argued before through Foucault (2009), the government needs wisdom, wisdom as the “knowledge of things, of the objectives that can and must be attained, and the “disposition (disposition)” one must employ in order to attain them: this is the knowledge that constitutes the sovereign’s wisdom.” (Foucault 2009, 100). Knowing how to gather information and how to use it constitutes OPM’s and UNHCR’s wisdom as well as their role.

As these acts are governmentalizing as well as cadastralizing they are resistant according to my definition of resistant acts. They are limiting the power of the refugees, but an act has to be responded to with another act. The refugees are therefore responding with such acts as using babies to manipulate the system. This partly ruins the system, since people are then counted twice. This is also part of a survival strategy which I will discuss later in the chapter.

Becoming homogenized can function as a survival strategy but becoming dehistoricized as a consequence rarely has upsides. Becoming homogenized through biometric scanning does not simply happen because the computers do so, dehistoricization was a problem long before this practice started. Malkki (1996) argue that aid itself comes with other practices that are dehistoricizing. When she wrote that, biometric scanning was not yet an issue. Malkki (1996) argue that dehistoricizing result in the refugees to lose their voice as historical actors and are simply viewed as victims. However, for UNHCR Dehistoricization becomes an easy price to pay for getting control of the refugee population. As Malkki (1996, 398) argues I agree that the humanitarian organisations do not do this consciously but that it is a consequence. She further argues that when dehistoricization is a result of the humanitarian aid, better solutions should be found.

Farraj (2011), coming from a human rights law perspective argues that biometric is a

situation improving application even though he later states that it is not free from misuse. Farraj (2011, 941) concludes that biometric scanning is “an important tool in protecting refugees and asylum seekers”. Jacobsen (2015) disagrees and argues that UNHCR changes the criteria’s for receiving aid to biological requirement, being traceable, without thinking about the potential consequences. Jacobsen argues that refugees becomes a profile in a system where the biometric apparatus is accorded a problematic form of decision power in deciding if a person is regarded as deserving or not. That the biometric system leaves the subjective out of a system which decides if people should receive aid or not, with little attention to the potential consequences. Since biometrics systems make an online profile of the registered people, it does not just leave people open for misuse, but open for attacks by people with interest.

### **Cadastralization’s repercussions**

When experiencing medical issues, one turns to a VHT (Village Health Team) worker. The VHT's are there to aid in any way possible. For someone sick, they write a reference letter that the person brings to the health centre. This ease the communication between patient and health personnel. Such letters are often helpful because of language barriers. VHT’s are also given phone money so they are able to call an ambulance in case of emergency, or births.

The VHT's work for the organisations. Although aiding sick and pregnant people within the village is their most important job, it is not their primary job. In a village, VHTs are responsibility for their own areas. They are supposed to have an overview of the number of people and their health status in every household in their area. This include such things as deaths, births, guests, sicknesses, pregnancies and more. This is then regularly reported to the humanitarian organisations, giving them an overview of the health situation in the villages.

The VHT’s has been payed less and less the last few years but has received a backpack, flashlight, raincoat, boots and an umbrella to make the job easier. The organisation has high expectations from the VHT's and give them much responsibility. At VHT meetings they are often told by organisations workers that "you do this to help your community".

The refugees in the villages are relying on and have expectations from the VHT's as well. They are well known in the villages as they always move around from house to house and talk with everyone, gathering information. People, therefore, have to show much trust to someone who is also their neighbour, not to share any of the information that is given. For the VHT's themselves such intimate knowledge about everyone can often complicate situations such as with my host who get problems with this almost every day in the mornings;

*My host who was a VHT wanted me to go and buy coboyo (a small soft biscuit often accompanied with tea) because he does not want to buy from the neighbours because there the one who makes them has TB. If he is seen going any other place to buy, they will become annoyed at him, and he does not want that kind of drama. So, he wants me to go and buy it because I am a third party. I went up to the place I was the day before and bought for 1000 UGX. I then went by his store to give some to him and then went home to give some to his family.*

Illnesses such as TB are considered demeaning to have within the settlement, and if a VHT knows anyone who has it, they are not allowed to tell anyone about it. In a situation like described, this can cause social complications, not just for my host alone as a VHT, but for everyone buying coboyo from the neighbour who might get exposed. My host stands unable to stop his neighbour from selling coboyo as it would mean exposing them and also cut them of what often is a vital income source for many households within the settlement. This is one of the effects the organisations have on the refugees where my host has this information because he is a VHT.

The social effects this form of control has on any population is not very well documented. The potential consequences of being counted and controlled through numbers are discussed by Appadurai (1996). He calls it "enumeration of bodies" which he discusses around its presence in the colonial rule of India where the British government used it as a way to get control over the exotic. He argues that "The modern colonial state brings together the exoticising vision of orientalism with the familiarising discourse of statistics." (Appadurai 1996, 133). However, they need the numbers to accomplish their goal.

Thus, the unruly body of the colonial subject (fasting, feasting, hook swinging, abluting, burning, and bleeding) is recuperated through the language of numbers that allows these very bodies to be brought back, now counted and accounted, for the humdrum projects of taxation, sanitation, education, warfare, and loyalty (Appadurai 1996, 133)

Their goal is not just to count for the sake of information, but to use it and for the humanitarian organisations to give aid. However, the consequences of how they get this information are rarely discussed. Appadurai further argues that;



colonial body counts create not only types and classes (the first move toward domesticating differences) but also homogeneous bodies (within categories) because number, by its nature, flattens idiosyncrasies and creates boundaries around these homogeneous bodies as it performatively limits their extent. (Appadurai 1996, 133)

For the refugees, it means that in the process of counting people, a process that they are themselves participating in as explained above, they are losing their agency and making themselves part of the numbers, numbers without any meaning to them. Appadurai asserts that "As far as the native is concerned, the regime of number, as every page of such documents makes clear, is partly there to counteract the mendacity that is seen as constitutional to most natives, both farmers and measurers." (Appadurai 1996, 125). Numbers considering the refugees are often collected by the VHTs, who also are refugees. The numbers often become common knowledge for them and shape them. It becomes part of their language and shapes how they view each other. Appadurai states that "the fact is that the colonial gaze, and its associated techniques, have left an indelible mark on Indian political consciousness." (Appadurai 1996, 134). Just as in India, the acts of the humanitarian organisations shape the refugees in ways that might be unchangeable. As the organisations attempt to change how the refugees think, as understood by the OPM officers quote, they might also change the refugees in ways they had no intentions or right to do.

### **Stealing food**

*I woke up to a rainy morning; the food distribution was on its second day, but I knew the food distribution today would be delayed because of the rain. I went to the village leader to eat breakfast with him. He told me that there were some problems with the food distribution because people were reporting to him that some of the refugees in the village were stealing food. He told me that some of the refugees that were aiding in the food distribution had also been aiding other refugees to steal food. He was angry that someone would do that, because it damaged the reputation of the refugees which he said he had been working hard to improve.*

*We both went over to the food distribution when the rain had stopped. The people from the organisations are controlling the computers, which the finger and eye scanners are connected to, in a tent. In front of them, on benches, approximately 30 refugees are sitting and waiting to be scanned and receive food. Around the food, refugees are filling bags with beans and maize while some sit and fill oil in bottles. There are also workers*

*on top of the piles of food, dragging 50 kg bags over to the others who fill the bags the refugees bring with them. There are people cracking cans of oil with rocks or use screwdrivers, then pour the oil in a large barrel where the oil is measured and given to the refugees. This is done on both sides of the pile of food, and refugees do all of it. Around the refugee workers, organisation workers are walking back and forth, observing them working and those receiving food. At the end of the food pile, there is a weight where all food is measured precisely, and food is subtracted or added to make the accurate weight. Both refugees and organisation workers do this work. After this, they have to hand in their biometric card for their household. The people doing this task can be a refugee or an organisation worker. This place is often crowded with people and bags moving back and forth. Organisation workers are also standing around in this area and observing what is happening. After the card is registered, the refugees may leave the area with their food.*

*As we arrive, the distribution was well underway. The organisations had also been told that some people were stealing food. I asked one of the organisation's supervisors how people were able to steal. He looked at me and told that there are many ways, the most common way is probably that when the refugees have gotten all their food in the bags, there are people, both refugees and organisation workers receiving the biometric cards so they can be scanned. He continues; by giving this to the refugee, he can hide it, and the refugee can say that he has had his card scanned to the organisations. I understand this can be done since many people are moving back and forth in a small area. He explains that the refugee hiding the biometric card can then wait until the person receiving food is outside of the area and go and give the unscanned card to him or her. The person is then able to either go again or give the card to someone else in his household who can go and get the food with some excuse. They can then do this again and again. He then told me that another way was that some of the refugees working in the food distribution could go and argue with the organisations if any cards were scanned twice. They could still let people through if the arguments were reasonable. What this argument could be, I was never told. He then also complained about all the food ending up on the ground. Because of stealing, 75 people did not receive their food this food distribution. The organisations did not understand how it could be such a large amount and told me that they might have received the wrong amount of food at the warehouses.*

I did some calculations and found out that 75 people would be equal to 19 bags of maize which weigh 50 kg each if a person in a household of 5 people would steal food once it would equal 63 kg of maize alone.

*After this incident, the humanitarian organisations were outraged, which resulted in the village leader becoming very angry. At the next food distribution, the village leader held a speech in front of all the refugees aiding the distribution where he said that if he saw anyone attempt any such acts this time, he would report them to the police and the organisations without any regrets. He said he would not let anyone damage their reputation and that people have multiple days without food because people are stealing. Things went well at that distribution. Everyone worked hard, and everyone got the food they were supposed to. The village leader also worked closely with everyone and observed the workers more closely. However, this time the vice village leader only sat on a chair inside the food distribution looking angry, continually being watched by organisation workers. People later told me that everyone knew that the vice village leader was the one that had been aiding people in stealing food, but no one dared to say anything.*

The form of resistance I will argue for here is not the communicative form which I argued for in chapter two, but what I refer to as unintentional resistance. These actions can also send messages and result in change, but the intent behind them is often not specific or conscious and as Scott (1985, 36) argue "Everyday forms of resistance make no headlines." This is one of the significant differences between the act portrayed in chapter two and three. Scott (1985, 28-29) also argue that peasants are never mentioned in history, except the times they pose as a direct threat to the state, which is not so often. Malkki (1996) argue that for refugees not being part of the history is because they have lost their voice through being dehistoricised, which happens through the distribution of aid that they have a right to. Because of their role based on their organisational form of power, the refugees most often have to stay outside of history even though they take part in shaping it as argued for above.

Stealing is quite common and is not only done to the humanitarian organisations, but also to the local population. They often the victims of stolen mangoes from their trees, and firewood from their land. At the distribution, however, it is a little different. There, stealing is more organised since stealing from the humanitarian organisations is no simple task. Scott (1985) argues that the acts of everyday forms of resistance have no formal organisations.

Although it is not formal, it is a form of organising which is required to manage such a theft. I will argue that it happens as Scott (1985, 35) argue “they may simply follow the line of least resistance.” The small form of organising which does take place is a necessity to accomplish the act. However, what makes the resistant act possible is also its Achilles heel. Scott (1985) argues that "By virtue of their institutional invisibility, activities on anything less than a massive scale are, if they are noticed at all, rarely accorded any social significance." (Scott 1985, 35). The requirement of a small form of organizing puts the participators at risk of getting caught, which happened. The punishment was to be publicly known as a thief, and thereby losing respect among the refugees and humanitarian organisations. I experience this as a mild punishment for theft of almost a ton of food. Their arguments for the punishment was that he was only a suspect. Had they been caught in the act their punishment would most likely be more serious. Especially since it is such a serious crime.

Most people in the village participate in similar acts, even if it is just stealing firewood from the locals or making fake documents to skip a grade in school. There are multiple other similar acts that also could count as resistant. Many resistant acts combined can make a change. As Scott (1985, 35) argues, “Multiplied many thousand-folds, such petty acts of resistance by peasants may in the end make an utter shamble of the policies dreamed up by their would-be superiors in the capital.” Just as in chapter two, resistant actions do elicit responses from the humanitarian organisations and OPM. I do not merely argue that these are simple responses by a superior power but acts of resistance towards the resistant actions of the refugees like "acts upon acts" (Foucault 1982). The humanitarian organisations are through resisting the act of the refugees resisting the refugees' power. Because the humanitarian organisations respond with a resistant act, the refugees are required to do the same. They are in the weakened position of being refugees and cannot afford lose power. They, therefore, have to continue their resistant acts. "It is in this fashion, and not through revolts, let alone legal, political pressure, that the peasantry has classically made its political presence felt." (Scott 1985, 36).

### ***Kobo aridja***

*After I had stayed in the village for a few months and the people had gotten used to me, I started hearing stories of how things were earlier in the settlement. I usually never got a full story, and so I often brought it up multiple times, or I went to the village leader whom I talked with daily to get more details. One such story started to intrigue me, the story of kobo aridja. I started to hear rumours about some things people did at food distributions before the biometric scanners were inserted, but I never got all the details.*

*I went to the village leader and asked him what kobo aridja was. He looked at me a little serious and then we sat down to talk. He told me that kobo aridja is called re-cycling in English, which is when refugees register at many different villages to receive food in multiple different places. He told me that they are unable to do that anymore because of the biometric scanning, but that it was common, he told me that many of the people I had become friends with did it, even the people I lived with. I asked him if he ever did it, and he said a fast "no, it was wrong". He then explains to me further multiple ways people used to cheat the organisations.*

*He explained to me further that kobo aridja is when a refugee registers multiple places to receive food. By doing this, people could go to other villages or even other settlements to receive food which they could sell. Some of the refugees could be registered in many even up to 5-6 different places. He tells me people would also borrow people's children and babies often for money so that they were more people when registering and would then receive more food each time. He then tells me that some refugees could bribe an officer in OPM so they would receive a new refugee document. They could then go to the border and receive a new starter pack which all refugees receive. These packs contained a multitude of tarp, kitchen wares, blankets and much more and were worth a lot.*

*After telling me this, I start seeing a smile on his face, and he tells me that there is a funny story they tell about kobo aridja. Once, two men had gone together to another settlement to get their food. They had been sitting by the FDP talking about kobo aridja loudly, repeating it over and over again in their conversations. Then a white man from the organisations had come over and asked them what kobo aridja meant, they looked at each other and said that it meant "come to stay". The white man had become so happy to hear this that he had given them everything even though they were not even in the line to receive anything. The men then went home to their village with a lot of food, laughing. He tells me this story while laughing loudly.*

As is clear from the narratives above, for the refugees, *kobo aridja* became a solution to improve their situation, a survival strategy. For many, the money and resources attained through these manoeuvres helped them in building new houses, helping in education or improving a business. After talking with the village leader about re-cycling, I spoke to a few other people about it; they told me that they would not do as well as they are today had they not gotten that money from re-cycling. A woman who had helped many in doing this form of re-cycling told me that

some did it because they wanted more food to eat and some did it to be able to buy more alcohol and drugs like khat and some getting opium.

Leblanc (1999) argues that the motive for an act needs to be conscious for the act to be deemed resistant. When intent and action are present, it makes strong cases for resistance. I agree with this to some extent, when intent and action both are known, it makes a strong case. To always see the intentions behind acts can be difficult to achieve. One can imagine that intent as a criteria for resistant acts might make us overlook some important, critical acts of resistance. Contra Leblanc, I will argue that although the criteria are not present the acts themselves can be deemed resistant. Scott (1989) also disagrees with Leblanc when he argues that:

"much of the politics of subordinate groups falls into the category of "everyday forms of resistance," that these activities should most definitely be considered political, that they do constitute a form of collective action, and that any account which ignores them is often ignoring the most vital means by which lower classes manifest their political interests." (James C. Scott 1989, 33)

As Scott (1989) argues, these small everyday forms of resistant are together a collective action, even if they are planned as such or not. If all refugees take part in kobo aridja, they do not do so as a collectively planned action, but their individual actions are part of a broader set of actions. When many people take part in kobo aridja, the acts get noticed by the humanitarian organisations, and they have to respond. However, they cannot respond to each one individually but has to make a collective response.

If the act is recognised by an observing third party and deemed resistance by them while at the same time not consciously intended by the performer, or recognised by the receiving party as intended, Hollander and Einwhoner (2004) call it externally defined resistance. When neither the intention of the actor nor the recognition by the target is there, it is hard to argue that it is a form of resistance that wants to change something. Hollander and Einwhoner argue that "to identify as resistance an act that is neither intended as resistance nor seen as such by those whom the act may oppose requires a heavy burden of proof." (Hollander and Einwhoner 2004, 545). To do this, the very act needs to be observed precisely and detailed. Since the act itself can be observed by the intended target but not recognised as an act of resistance, their account of the action can also be used by the third party. Since someone committed the act, the account can also be collected by them, seeing they are willing to tell. Obtaining all three parties account of the situation can give the proof that Hollander and Einwhoner argue for can be important.

Scott (1985) argues: the individual act does not stand alone and has to be seen in a larger picture where the acts take form as a collective action. When pursuing Scott's argument that the "everyday forms of resistance" is perhaps the most essential form of resistance as political acts, the arguments for the importance of conscious intent and other parties' recognition of the act becomes to some extent irrelevant for deeming the act resistant or not. As with the collective action of kobo aridja was stopped in the end and was understood as a resistant act which made the system the humanitarian organisations had inserted powerless. If the intent was to steal food to survive or to resist becomes irrelevant as the actions made the humanitarian organisations change their systems.

This further brings another issue with acts such as kobo aridja as resistant acts, the argument that there is simply no resistance in them, that they are purely acts of individual gain. Scott (1985) argues that "To insist on such distinctions as a means of comparing forms of resistance and their consequences is one thing, but to use them as the basic criteria to determine what constitutes resistance is to miss the very wellsprings of peasant politics." (Scott 1985, 295). To argue that the intent was not to resist but for the individual gain misses the point of the act as the act can be both, which is much the point of the act. That can also be seen in acts such as riots portrayed in chapter two and act portrayed by Bertelsen (2016) where riots followed the rise in prices of everyday commodities and public transport in Mozambique. Scott (1985, 295) argues that in any rebellion by the subordinate powers, the basic need of any household is what is at the centre. To get what they need to survive and to improve their lives is what is at the core. By stealing and tricking in the manner of kobo aridja, the refugees are not only resisting the higher classes or the people in control, they are using their power for individual gain and states that this is what they need. Scott (1985) argues that "The intrinsic nature and, in one sense, the "beauty" of much peasant resistance is that it often confers immediate and concrete advantages, while at the same time denying resources to the appropriating classes, and that it requires little or no manifest organisation." (Scott 1985, 296). If the refugees are motivated by individual gain, that gain can also mean that the organisations are not giving them enough. A person who has all the food he or she wants would not steal, and so the act itself becomes the act of resistance, saying that "I/we want more". When enough people commit such acts, they might give results. Kobo aridja becomes just such an act of resistance.

Kobo aridja had severe consequences for OPM and the humanitarian organisations, including UNHCR. Kobo aridja resulted in so many people being counted multiple times that it affected the number of refugees in both Bidi Bidi and Uganda. For a time, the official number

of refugees in the Bidi Bidi settlement stood at almost 300 000 people. This was incorrect and multiple aid workers told me that they knew that the number was wrong. When the number of refugees in Uganda is higher than it is in truth, then it means Uganda is also receiving more money than they are supposed to. This started a struggle between OPM and the international donors, also including multiple corruption cases. As part of the problem of miscounting, UNHCR conducted biometric scanning on all refugees in Uganda to get the number of refugees correct which stopped people from kobo aridja<sup>9</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

The humanitarian organisations and OPM's use of governmentality to govern the settlement unfolds through different institutions. For instance through schools, distributions and courses the refugees are thought how to behave and how to expect other refugees to behave. Most of these institutions are not set up by the humanitarian organisations and OPM with such an objective in mind (exceptions being courses specifically oriented towards behaviour) but it still has, as I have shown, a consequence. These disciplinary mechanisms shape the refugees.

However, in addition to making the refugees govern themselves, the humanitarian organisations and OPM also state that they are the ones in charge, the ones who govern. This happens through them being the ones in control of the knowledge in the settlement. This is sometimes challenged by such institutions as the churches or the use of local medicine instead of going to the health centres.

Another dimension I have demonstrated above, is that the humanitarian organisations and OPM explicitly make use of cadastralization to make aid distribution more effective. While I have presented multiple ways in which refugees are cadastralized. The consequences are most likely unknown to the refugees, humanitarian organisations and OPM. The two latter views this as a good way to govern the former. As the party with both the structural power and the most power, the humanitarian organisations have the authority to gather information. But I also argue that through cadastralizing the refugees they are also stating their role as the governing party by being the ones who gather harness and deploy knowledge to further govern the refugees.

The refugees, however, act resistant towards the humanitarian organisations and OPM as they are the superior power. I argue that their power is upheld through such actions as being the controlling organ of the governmental institutions and the ones who are in control of the

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<sup>9</sup><http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2018/11/28/audit-finds-un-refugee-agency-critically-mismanaged-donor-funds-uganda> [Published 28.11.2018. Downloaded 24.04.2020]



cadastralizing acts. As I have argued, such acts committed by the humanitarian organisations and OPM are resistant acts which must be responded to by a counter act. My main argument in this chapter is, therefore, that the refugees, when acting resistant, are responding to the effects of cadastralization and control. This happens through stealing and tricking or cheating the very control systems set up, effectively resisting the other parties' power. Such acts of resistance become an essential characteristic of the relationship between the humanitarian organisations, OPM and refugees.



## Chapter 4

### *Resistance, violence and hospitality*



**Photo 7: A refugee village in Bidi Bidi settlement. Photo: Mikko Virtanen**

## Introduction

As I have shown also in preceding chapters, the three parties within the settlement are engaged in a constant struggle wherein they are oriented towards achieving opposing goals. Further, this struggle unfolds in a multitude of ways, with the exertion of different types of power and through acts of resistance. To get a fuller picture of the situation in the settlement, I will here focus on the host community as their forms of power within this matrix is complicated and but heavily affects the other parties' actions. Specifically, I will, therefore, discuss how the hosts' role and power affect their relations with both the refugees and the humanitarian organisations within the overall context of the settlement. I will further discuss how a host can be both hospitable and resistant towards a guest and how the simultaneity of such dimensions affects the relationship between the parties.

To let people into your home and take care of them has a long human history and is known in anthropology through the term hospitality and is often conceptualized as occurring within a private sphere between a few individuals. In anthropology hospitality is often regarded as central to many different aspects of human sociality and Paolo Gaibazzi (2018, 472) goes so far as to argue that “Comparatively speaking, hospitality is often crucial for defining the very boundaries of humanity.” In several of such studies, through hospitality the host is responsible for taking care of the guest and can decide what is going to happen while s/he is there. Typically, there is a host and a guest, however in Bidi Bidi, there are two parties that act as host, but in very different ways: The local community and the humanitarian organisations<sup>10</sup>. When it comes to the refugee discourse, hospitality has a different understanding, I will, therefore, further discuss this aspect through King (1995), Pitt-Rivers (2012) and Rozakou (2012).

The roles the two host parties take upon themselves are not always cooperative, and their interests are often not mutually supportive or overlapping. The local community, commonly referred to in the development discourse also as the host community, are the ones who own the land the refugees live on and allow them to stay. However, they are unable to take care of the refugees, which is where the humanitarian organisations take over; they are there to take care of the refugees, the guests.

As the treatment of the refugees by the humanitarian organisations has been discussed throughout the thesis, this chapter will go deeper into the host community's and their relation to the other parties. The host communities include all people part of the communities that give away land for the refugees to live on and are the ones who get jobs, money, food and other

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<sup>10</sup> OPM will not be a part of either of the parties deemed host; this is because they are not in charge of the services given to the refugees and are not the ones giving the land, merely a broker.

opportunities as a direct effect of presence of refugees and humanitarian organisations, mainly from the 30 per cent the humanitarian organisations give as part of the 70/30 rule.

For analytical purposes, in preceding parts of the thesis I have not focused specifically on the host community and I will therefore start here by elaborating on how they are affected by the arrival of the refugees. I will then discuss what may be seen to comprise hospitality within the settlement and I will analyse what I see as a triangle of reciprocity. I will then go on to discuss how the host community undertake resistant acts towards the refugees, but that their act is a communicational form of resistance where the refugees are not the ones the communication is intended for. I then go on to show how violence and resistance towards the refugees has changed from the 1990s to today. I will also discuss the 70/30 rule further in this chapter through an example of how the host community can interpret this rule. Lastly, I will present a complex incident between the refugees and the host community to demonstrate how mutual tricking and cheating may occur.

### **Host community empowerment**

Because land in North-west Uganda is mostly owned by communities which means OPM has few land rights in the area. When the refugees arrived in 2016, OPM had to ask the local communities in the area if they were willing to give the refugees land to live on. Some communities said no, while others accepted. For those who said yes, their land became developed with roads, water points and infrastructure such as police stations, health centres and schools. The humanitarian organisations brought education and a health system that is also beneficial for the host party. Both OPM and the humanitarian organisations say that many of these schools and health centres will keep running with trained local personnel after the refugees have returned home. Many of the host communities also receive access to the water system, water continuously being the most wanted resource. Complicating matters, the host community also complain that after the refugees arrived, they have destroyed their river (which is their natural water source) because they throw trash and urinate close to the river, making the water undrinkable, even for the animals.

For the case of water, the host community are often referring to the 70/30 rule. This rule is often discussed since how it is meant to be used in practice is never stated, which creates issues for the humanitarian organisations when talking about it with the host community. Food is another aspect and one I will return to later. It says specifically in the ReHoPE document that food is not to be part of the 70/30 rule (The World Bank 2017). However, it is widely accepted that host community members are registered as refugees and take a part of the food as any

refugee, although it is not talked about. Although the issue of the 70/30 rule is with the humanitarian organisations the host community are often seen committing violence and resistance towards the refugees.

For the host community the 70/30 rule is their empowerment, the knowledge of it is what makes them able to set demands from the humanitarian organisations. Demands they would not be able to set with the Ugandan government or anyone else. This gives the host community a form of organisational power in relation to the humanitarian organisations, similar to the refugees. Being able to demand, further empowers them through better schools, local health centres and access to job training which they can also participate in. How the 70/30 rule affect the relation between the parties will be further discussed in this chapter.

### **Hospitality in the settlement**

Then, what is hospitality? Carol A. King (1995) discusses this and argue that hospitality has four main characters. The first is that it is a relationship between individuals who act as host and guest. Second, she says that social hospitality has a social obligation where the guest has to reciprocate being a guest and contribute to the relationship. Third, King writes that there should be a great pleasure for the guest and that security for the guest and the guest's property should be of concern. Fourth is that the process of hospitality includes the arrival and making the guest feel welcome. However, these aspects are simplifying the situation of hospitality. Here, she presents the guest as someone who is always to be taken care of and protected. Shifting the approach somewhat and drawing on research in Oceania, Pitt- Rivers (2012, 504) present the guest as something unknown; someone who can be anything and who's word cannot be checked. He further argues that even if a person is respected in their community, they cannot expect that same respected when being a guest in another. Pitt-Rivers' and King's approaches resonate somewhat with my material;

*After a struggle between the host community and the refugees, they had a meeting in the largest church in the refugee village. There an elder from the host community said that he though the refugees did not respect him or his family and that the refugees did not adapt to people in Uganda. All the refugees were quiet, then a preacher from the refugees stood up and apologised for their behaviour and told all the other refugees that they should all follow the phrase; "when in Rome, do as the Romans", that they should adapt to and respect their host.*

By doing this, they were able to be more accepted by their host. Pitt-Rivers argues that "The law of hospitality is founded upon ambivalence. It imposes order through an appeal to the sacred, makes the unknown knowable, and replaces conflict by reciprocal honour. It does not eliminate the conflict altogether but places it in abeyance and prohibits its expression." (Pitt-Rivers 2012, 513). It is the act of becoming host and guest, as long as the characteristics of hospitality which King (1995) present are followed. When these are broken, it can be experienced as a resistant act which is often responded with resistance. Such acts will be presented later.

The roles of the host and guests need to be maintained to maintain the relation. Rozakou (2012) writes about hospitality among refugees in Greece where being host and being hospitable is an empowerment. Aid workers visit the refugees in Greece so they can be made the host, to empower them. Rozakou argues that they then have the choice to be hospitable or not, but within having that option, there is a form of personal power. When discussing this in the context of African refugees and Bidi Bidi refugee settlement specifically, the understanding of hospitality has to change. As Rozakou discuss, there is empowerment in being the host and that power is given by the guest.

This is one of the issues in the Bidi Bidi settlement, that the roles are not always understood in this way, much cause the role are not distinct enough for everyone to know exactly the role they are dealing with. The humanitarian organisations take part in the social role of the host as they are the party that can take care of the refugees, the guest. As the refugees do not have a lot to give in return for the host communities hospitality, it is the humanitarian organisations and OPM who take on this role. They are the ones that can give the host community jobs, roads, improved education, a better health system, food, money and water for their hospitality for the refugees. the humanitarian organisation takes on the role as the party which must maintain the other roles as "Host and guest must pay each other honour." (Pitt-Rivers 2012, 513). King's third point is mixed between the different parties. It is the host community who has made it possible for the humanitarian organisations to treat the refugees the way they are. However, there are also multiple acts from the host communities which directly affect the pleasure of the refugees stay, such as giving extra land, letting them get food and other resources from their land and maintaining an economy between the two groups. As there is a relationship between the host, the guest there is also power. The host is the one with the power to choose to be hospitable, to treat the guest kindly, choose what to give and what not to, but within the refugee discourse, the power relation is a little different. Pitt-Rivers (2012, 514) writes that "A guest cannot be guest on ground where he has rights and responsibilities."

With this, he means that to have rights and responsibilities removes the host, its need to exist since the "guest" is in a situation where he or she is able to take care of themselves. Although the refugees do have rights within the settlement, these rights are based on the specific hosts' presence. If the host community had not been present, then the refugees would have no rights to receive land, and if the humanitarian organisations had not been there, the refugees would have no one to claim their right of aid from. Because of the lop-sidedness of power within the settlement, the refugees still hold the role as guests.

Within the settlement, two parties act as hosts, the local community and the humanitarian organisations. These parties do not always work together or have mutual interests. As the local community are the owners of the land, they are the ones who hold power over it. They have the structural power, as is explained by Wolf (1990) to decide what happens and how power is distributed on it. When the refugees come, the local community is not able to host them, but the humanitarian organisations are. The humanitarian organisations therefore go to the local community to get permission to use their land to treat the refugees. If the local community accept this, they will have little power over the land, but in return, they expect 30 per cent of all aid given in the area.

Because as Pitt-Rivers (2012, 514) argue "A host is host only on the territory over which on a particular occasion he claims authority." The host community authorise the humanitarian organisation and OPM to use theirs in change for 30 per cent of the aid given by the humanitarian organisations. By doing this, the host community also give away parts of their role as host. The 30 per cent are there as reciprocity for the hosts' kindness, King's second point, as the refugees are unable to reciprocate this themselves. The host community, however, are still the proper owners of the land, and they expect the refugees to behave while living on their land.

As the different parties have their rights, their power and who are all connected in a triangle of reciprocity, they all expect the other parties to act accordingly. Aid becomes an act of hospitality to the refugees. Since it is also given to the host community, it becomes a reciprocal act to them as well, from the humanitarian organisations. Since the host community know what they are receiving for hosting the refugees, they have few incentives to do anything extra for the refugees, and there are no expectations that the roles will ever change. Because of this, the expectations of reciprocity are much more urgent, and there is little hospitality towards the refugees without reciprocity.



### **A triangle of reciprocity**

Circular reciprocity was made famous by Marcel Mauss (Mauss 1990) in his book *The Gift* in which he discussed, among other things, the Kula ring of the coast of Papua New Guinea. There, bracelets and necklaces were handed to chiefs on different islands which circulated physically in adverse directions. This way, an exchange was made every time a necklace or bracelet was given to a chief. In the same book, Mauss argues for the *hau* of the gift, which is a form of power between the giver and receiver of a gift to make sure it was reciprocated. *Hau*, among the Maori, is a spirit within the gift that belongs to the donor of it and which must be returned, or harm may befall the receiver (Mauss 1990, 11).

Within the refugee settlement, the act of giving something does not conform to such a model of following the *hau* of the gift. For, when the host population gives something to the refugees, they expect the humanitarian organisations to reciprocate such a gift. The receiver and the reciprocator become two different parties. There is an understanding that the refugees are not in a position where they can reciprocate what they are given. Because of the relation between the parties, the *hau* in the gift disappears since the receiver keeps the gift without giving anything back. I will here argue that because of this change, the 70/30 policy is needed to formalise the reciprocity within the settlement to make sure acts are adequately reciprocated.

Within the settlement, the host community giving the basic land to all the refugees and later the additional farmland, is an act which requires some form of reciprocation. The reciprocation of these acts is supposed to happen through the 30 per cent, but what the 30 per cent really means are discussed continuously. Such acts never include just two parties of the triangle, but all three are always affected. The parties are always interconnected, and each party are nothing without the others, the power is given and taken by the other parts. This is part of the mutual dependency of the three parties within the context of the settlement. The humanitarian organisations become dependent on the refugees approving their aid and do not throw them out of the settlement as made an example of in chapter two. This is because as a UNHCR worker said: "We are UNHCR, we cannot fail". The host, however, receives nothing from the organisations if the refugees are not there. The refugees do not have land to live on and receive no aid if the other parties are not there.

While the host population is clearly not an aid organisation, they do have large amounts of land on their hands. Thus, when they give land, it may not be considered aid in a strict sense because they do so, based on the assumption that it will be reciprocated with the 30 per cent. From the refugees they expect to be able to trade, they expect them to maintain their land and to grow trees, some which can have a high value. This is not enough for most of the host

population, because they know that the refugees also bring much trouble with them. They might steal food and animals, be violent, introduce new types of drugs and they can ruin water sources such as rivers and water holes. Because of this and other perceived problems, the host population needs more—but the refugees have little to give.

To be able to give aid to the refugees (and control them), the organisations need them to be in a specific place and this land has to be given by the host population. That makes the gift of land not just a gift to the refugees, but a gift to the humanitarian organisations and OPM as well. This means that the land has to be reciprocated by them as well as the refugees. This is where the 70/30 kicks in, and the 30 per cent of all aid should go to the host population as a policy of reciprocity. Through this, the humanitarian organisations give the host population improved education, local healthcare, valuable trees, a road network and access to a water system with clean water. The host population are also often reminded that they get all this infrastructure, education and health care after the refugees have left as well. This is why OPM is always strongly arguing that the organisations should make permanent buildings and not make temporary health centres or schools.

These actions do have their exceptions, though. Some actions are done by individuals who are based on reciprocity based in hospitality. Such an example can be seen when some people from the host population give more land than they need to, or which is asked of them. One such example is depicted in the introduction. This is done because many from the host population has been refugees in South Sudan and were given land by the local population there. Now they wish to return the favour. Even though such friendly acts do happen, they are not common. The regular thing is still to give something and expect something in return. There is little hospitality towards the refugees without reciprocity, and without reciprocity, resistance becomes likely.



**Photo 8: one of the largest rivers which many locals use as drinking water. This river is often crossed by cars and trucks, but not all can make it across. Photo: Mikko Virtanen**

### **Resistance with a motive**

The OPM also says that violence has changed and that the motives are no longer the same. In an interview with an OPM officer, I was told that in 2016-2017 the host community were often attacking the refugees. The officer told me that they quickly went to the communities that were doing these acts, and when they arrived, the communities had other matters to discuss. OPM and the humanitarian organisations then started to understand that they were paying too little attention to the host communities. The host communities had started to attack the refugees because they knew the organisations would come and talk with them if they did. The officer told me with a surprised and serious look that a host community leader had told him that he had a group of young men ready to go out and do bad things to the refugees. The community leader so the OPM and humanitarian organisations would come and talk.

These acts are not intended as resistance towards the refugees. However, the refugees understood it as such and because of these actions, they responded with calling the OPM or a

humanitarian organisation which was precisely what the host community wanted. The resistant act becomes an act of communication to the "host" party and not to the recipients of the acts. When OPM and humanitarian organisations understood this, they started to pay more attention to the host community. When they did, the acts of violence from the host community quickly stopped, the officer told me.

OPM and the humanitarian organisations are responsible for reciprocating the host community for what they have given to the refugees. That reciprocation happens over a longer time and requires constant communication to happen. When the host community acts with such a goal in mind, they feel that there is a lack of reciprocation and communication about it. The refugees become caught between the humanitarian organisations and the host community as a communication tool. As Scott (1985, 35) argues, since the objective of the resisters is typically to meet such pressing needs as physical safety, food, land, or income, and to do so in relative safety, they may simply follow the line of least resistance. The refugees are precisely such a line to accomplish what they want.

### **Violence in the past**

Most of the refugees present in Bidi Bidi today have been refugees in conflict before, and many have been refugees in Uganda before. Most of them struggle with talking about their past experiences, and these experiences can be quite brutal. In the middle of the 1990s, there was a war in Sudan between what is today Sudan and South Sudan. Many people had to flee to other countries, and many have lived in other countries since. Those who fled to Uganda were met with another war, where some have both physical and psychological scars. As my friend Martin and I talked for some time in a small hut just him and me, I asked if he would tell me about that time:

*He tells me that the local people used to play a game with them. There were large groups of men who would grab refugees; they started to ask them a series of questions. They started by saying that they did not want the refugees there and then they asked if they were going to leave, if the refugee said no, they would cut off the persons ears because they do not listen. They would then ask if the person wanted to smile, if answered yes they would put a knife in their mouth and cut their cheeks up so they could always smile and if they answered no they would cut holes in the upper and lower lip and put a lock in them so they could not open their mouth. I saw that Martin struggled to tell the stories*

*and he ended with saying that they asked a lot more questions and did many more things, but he did not want to share.*

Luckily, this never happened to him, but these horrible stories were not uncommon. They are also being referred to when pointing out how bad the relationship between the refugees and the host community can be. For many such stories are a portrayal of the hardship, they have endured in the past. When I discussed this with the village leader, he tells me that the anger of the host community in the 1990s was understandable, "they were poor, and they did not receive what we did".

As the refugees from South Sudan escaped the war in Sudan in the 1990s, they arrived in Uganda to another war where they were met by rebel armies, government and humanitarian organisations. This is often referred to as the Northern Ugandan war or the Kony wars and started in 1987 and lasted until 2006 (Finnström 2008b). Kony and his lord's resistance army (LRA) started in 1987 after he took over the role as leader when his cousin Alice Lakwena lost a battle (Behrend 1999). LRA became widely known to be using child soldiers, branding and hurting people to a devastating extent. Because the Ugandan government did not want to supply the enemy, they put large parts of the Acholi population into camps where they lacked most basic resources (Finnström 2009). As LRA started to work together and found support with the Sudanese government at the time (Behrend 2000), their motivation to attack South Sudanese refugees likely increased.

### **Violence today**

Today, not everyone is friendly towards the refugees. The village leader told me of a refugee man from village 11 who got attacked on his way back from S.S on his bike.

*He had been taking a rest just outside our village when four men from the local community attacked him. It happened close to one of the houses in the village, and the man who lived there had noticed the fight; he had then phoned another man for help. They had grabbed some sticks and ran to help; they managed to stop the fight. The injured refugee had lost all his things, including the bike. He had then been brought to our village leader. The four men had taken everything with them and gone to their village leader. The refugee on the bike had then been given a place to sleep for the night, and his injuries had been taken care of. My village leader had then gone to the host community leader to talk about what had happened. The host leader had told him that*

*they should not be moving outside so late. My village leader had then said that it was only nine o'clock and that the four men were also moving outside so late. He then continued by saying that if people were not allowed to move outside so late, does that give other people the right to rob that man and beat him? The host leader had then apologised about what had happened, and my village leader had been told that the four men were the vice-chairman, youth secretary, general secretary and the son of the host community leaders' son. The case never went to the police as it was handled between the parties. My village leader told me that had they not apologised and regretted their actions he would have included the police. The next day they went to get the man's belongings, everything was still there, and the man continued to cycle to his village.*

Violence does occur between the host community and the refugees. Situations similar to the one pictured above are common and often kept between the refugee and the host community without the police and the humanitarian organisations ever knowing anything. Other acts, more severe acts also occur between the parties where women are raped and sometimes even cut with machetes; these incidences are more rare but do occur. Such acts are not excused in any way by the host community and often reported to the police, and individuals are arrested. The village leader told me that those acts do not represent the host community, and many of the different leaders have a common understanding that such acts are done by individuals and represent only individuals. When four men who represent the host, community do such acts as described above, it is different, which is also why the host community apologised for the act in the end.

The change in violence from the 1990s and today is notable. The time in history did matter and had the north Ugandan war not taken place when the refugees arrived; things would most likely be different. The changes in time and the changes in laws, policies and rules are what has changed the forms of resistance. The host community still resist the refugees today, and many communities still do not want them on their land, but the forms of resistance have changed. The violence is still present, but the messages are different. The host community does not want the refugees to leave as they did in the 1990s, but today the resistance is more of a frustration in the situation which can often result in the parties trying to cheat or trick each other.





**Picture 9:** „The difference in the amount of water in the river can cause problems, and for the locals, the only solution becomes going to one of the refugee's water stations. Photos: Mikko Virtanen

### **Water thief**

*A host man wanted to build a house for him and his family. To make the bricks he needs for the house, he needs water. The river is dry and the water station that was supposed to come near his house months ago has still not been put up by the humanitarian organisations. The man then remembers the 30 per cent he is entitled to as a host. He then takes two 30-litre cans on his bicycle and cycles to the nearest refugee village. He sees a water station which has three taps. While other refugees are filling up their water cans, he steps into the line. He then takes one of the taps and fills up his water cans; the refugees are complaining since they all know that this water is meant for them and that there is a specific amount for each person in the village. The man ignores them and*

*takes the cans filled with water and cycles home to make his bricks. This quickly gets reported to the organisation which goes to the man's house and warns him that he cannot do that. The man apologises for what he did, and the organisation workers leave. About a week later the man comes back to the water station, he needs more water but since he does not want more complains he goes out into the bush where the water pipes are, and he makes a hole in the pipe and connects his tap on to the pipe. He then continues to use the water to make the rest of the bricks. The man quickly gets caught by the organisation workers since the pipes are measured at specific points. This time the man was arrested and went to jail. The man complained and said that he had never taken any more than the 30 per cent, which was his right. Even the first time he had only taken water from one of the three taps.*

The understanding of what the 30 per cent really is, is difficult for the different parties to understand. For some of the host, it is seen as 30 per cent of anything that is given to the refugees, including what they can take at will. For the organisations the 30 per cent is everything the host are receiving for hosting the refugees. This also means that the 30 per cent are impossible to measure. How long buildings and roads will last, how education, health services and jobs will last and how much it can help all refugees is difficult to measure. For many of the host, a water station for their cows to drink is more important than maintaining the roads. For someone who has been sick for a long time, a health centre close to their home can change and even save their life. For many of the organisations the 30 per cent are also seen as money that is already scarce, that could have gone to help many of the refugees a lot more. The refugees do not look at the 30 per cent as something that should have gone to them, it is seen as an argument between the host community and the humanitarian organisations which they, the refugees often pay the price for.

### **Goats and bicycles**

*Isaac buys a goat; he tells his family, and asks them to take care of it. His children take it to the bush and tie it there. Only three days after he bought the goat, it runs away. Isaac goes to tell the chairman that he should announce to people that there is a missing goat of so and so colour. What he does not know is that the goat is found by Naamah, the wife of the security officer of the host community called Noah, and they keep the goat.*



*Meanwhile, a refugee called Michael has borrowed a bicycle to another refugee called Benjamin. Benjamin borrows this bicycle for so long that it almost becomes his. When a friend of Benjamin from the host community called Judas comes and ask to borrow the bike, he is told that he can. Judas then takes the bike to town but does not return with it. Benjamin then asks why, but Judas is hesitant and says the bike is broken. Benjamin says that they should go and get the bike, he can even pay for transport. Judas does not want to do that, and later Benjamin has no option but to go to the chairman of his village to ask for help and to create a dialogue with the host community as required in such cases. The chairman does this, but the host community says that Judas is a thief and if they get him, they should arrest him. They manage to get him and takes him to the community help desk to report him. Judas says the bike is in Yumbe and that he can get it in three days. Now the chairman asks what he can be given as security for him coming back with the bike. Judas, who is a national and part of the host community, Judas then says that the chairman can take his ration card. He goes to get the card, but it turns out that his picture is not in the card and so the only people who would be punished are his family and not him. The chairman does not accept this and takes him to the police. A few days later, the chairman sees the man walking free. He calls the police and asks why that is. The police say that they do not have any cell to hold the person in. The chairman complains, saying that they should have told him because now Benjamin might think that the police, Judas and the chairman has made a deal. He also asks who will be responsible now if there is any violence conducted because Judas is walking free. After Judas is released, he turns to the bush to hide, leaving home very early in the morning and returning very late at night. The bike is now lost, and no one knows where it is and to make things worse, Michael, the original owner of the bike wants the bicycle back.*

*Another place there is a man called Abraham, who has an ok, old bike. He wants to sell the bike to buy some goats. Benjamin, who borrowed the bike to Judas now has to get a new bike to give to Michael. Benjamin goes to Abraham and says he wants to buy the bike, but the seller wants two goats for it. He then goes to Martha, the wife of Judas and asks if they can compensate him for the loss of the bike in any way. She says she can be able to get one goat and some money as compensation. She then goes to buy a goat from Noah, whose wife found the goat in the bush. Martha then takes the goat to Benjamin, who needs a new bicycle to give to Michael. While Benjamin has the goat at home, Isaac, the real owner of the goat, sees it and and he tells the chairman that he*

*has seen his goat. They then go to talk to Benjamin who tells them he intended to give the goat with some money to Abraham with the bicycle so he could give back a bicycle to Michael. They ask Benjamin where he got it, and he tells them the truth. They then go back to Martha and asks her where she got the goat. She tells them and then she has to go to Noah and says that they either have to give her another goat, or the money back. They choose to give another goat. Martha then gives the goat to Benjamin, who needs a goat so he can get the bicycle from Abraham. Benjamin manages to do so and gets the bicycle and gives it to Michael. Meanwhile, Noah and Naamah from the host community who took the goat from the bush are walking free, including Judas who lost the bicycle. The bicycle is most likely sold, and Judas is keeping the money.*

Theft and trickery between the refugees and the host community is a common thing. The refugees are often seen as opportunities by the host community, as it is easier to trick them, and it has fewer consequences. In this situation with the goats and bicycles, Judas was a known criminal in the host community, that is why the police were included. As with the man on the bicycle, cycling from South Sudan and who got attacked, incidences, even violent ones often go unnoticed by all other parties, but the parties included in the incident. The incapability's of the police are also very well known by everyone. This makes it easier for people to do criminal acts as they know that there most likely will not be any consequences for their actions.

It is important to note that incidences, as described, are only possible because of the tight relationship between the refugees and the host community. For example: People from different groups are friends and often rely on each other's services. They have a shared economy which builds on this relation and requires that a good relation between the parties is maintained.

## **Conclusion**

Despite resistant acts between the parties, the refugees are still welcomed in the settlement. As the refugees have lived there for three years, the parties have started to rely on each other both socially and economically. The host community knows that the refugees are unable to reciprocate everything they have given, and therefore the host community expect the humanitarian organisations to do so. They then claim their right to receive 30 per cent of the aid from the humanitarian organisations, which is how the triangle of reciprocity works.

In the past, the refugees have been treated in horrible ways by the local population in Uganda, but today things have changed. The resistant acts committed are less violent and does not mean that they want the refugees to leave. The acts have to be seen in the light of their

situation, and for the host community, their acts go towards the line of least resistance to get what they most need, which Scott (1985) argue that the peasants did in India.

The power in the guest-host relation has changed in the settlement, much cause of the presence of the humanitarian organisations. Because of their presence, power shifts between the parties and can make the roles as host and guest obscure. My main argument is however that resistant acts and hospitality can be in the same relations and one does not have to oppose the other but can be communicative acts between the parties to maintain the honour within the relationship.



# Conclusion

## *conceptualising the relations*

Throughout the thesis, I have argued for an unconventional understanding of resistance being necessary to analytically unentangle the dynamics at work in the Bidi Bidi settlement contributing, as it does, to moving away from the typical oppressor and oppressed view on a relation. That is, even though the parties do have different forms and amount of power.

As Foucault (1978, 95) writes "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" And as there is a power relation between the parties, the resistance has to be there, in relation to the power. I have argued that what is resisted is power, and that since that power belongs to someone, one also resists the party. By viewing resistance and power in this way, one can view resistance as something more dynamic and that is situation dependent. As even the relations can be understood as dynamic, some aspects of them also become clearer. By understanding the relations in the settlement one can be able to understand the social need to improve the implementation of aid or the general treatment of the situation. Without such understanding, change can be difficult to accomplish.

Refugees around the world often stand powerless against the government in the nation-state they are staying in (Choudhury 2020, Peteet 2005, Tsitselikis 2019). However, as discussed in chapter one, refugees in Uganda are further empowered. This means that the refugees in Uganda can act in a way, refugees in other nations cannot. They are allowed to move where they want, live where they want, get work where they want and even get their own land to live on and farm, if they please. These empowerments change the role of the refugee. Although they are still refugees, they step out of their role since as Malkki (1995b) argues, refugees are expected to be helpless by the international community. An empowered refugee, therefore, becomes a contradiction in terms and humanitarian organisations policies and rules are typically made to fit an aid discourse surrounding a helpless refugee. Their work will, therefore, always have to adapt to the refugee's empowerment and how the refugees use their empowerment is quite unpredictable. This makes the relation between the two parties a complicated one. Although the humanitarian organisations and OPM are the governing party within the settlement, they are constantly challenged and have their power resisted by the refugees.

The humanitarian organisations and the OPM, I argue, therefore use governmentality and cadastralization, which maintains their control of the settlement. These methods challenge and oppose the refugees' empowerment, and I, therefore, deem them resistant towards the refugees. Based on cadastralization and governmentality, these measures limit the refugees' chances of acting resistant towards the humanitarian organisations and the OPM and at the same time, state their role as the governing party

Through cadastralization, I argue, the humanitarian organisations and the OPM are exerting their power as the party that gathers and keeps control of knowledge in the settlement. However, this is not the primary purpose of the process: As argued by Scott (1998), cadastralization is used, simply, to emplace people to specific areas on maps and to standardise societies to ease the gathering of taxes and increase production.

Based on my analyses above, I concur with Scott, (i.e. that it is used to improve the distribution of aid in the settlement) but that, additionally, it served to state their role as the governing party. Such forms of governing can, as Appadurai (1996) argue, shape the people in ways it can be difficult to change later. Cadastralization in the settlement happens in multiple forms, as biometrics which puts each person into a complete record of all refugees. In addition to this VHT's manually count each refugee in the settlement. By being the party that stands for the gathering of this information, the party that can use it and keeps control of it the humanitarian organisations state that they are the governing party.

In addition to cadastralization, I argue that the humanitarian organisations and OPM use governmentality. As Foucault (2009) argue, governmentality is a good thing when governing people as it makes people govern themselves through the rules and laws set by the state. I argue this happens through Schools, health centres, courses, job training and distributions as what Foucault (2009) calls disciplinary mechanisms. In the settlement, however, the people are not the regular people of a state, but refugees from a different state, becoming subjects to another. I, therefore, argue that governmentality pulls the refugees into something that they did not sign up for, which I, for instance, showed an example of with the refugees not being thought South Sudanese history, but Ugandan. The good thing about governmentality, however, is that it empowers the refugees through the same disciplinary mechanisms. I argue that it by shaping them into governing themselves they also become able to shape the governing party through what Nielsen (2011) calls inverse governmentality. I deem acts of inverse governmentality resistant as it challenges the power of the governing party.

Although both these forms are implemented in the settlement, the refugees and the host population still manage to act resistant. Power and resistance are dynamic as people adapt to

other roles, the situations and their power. As these situations changed, the refugees adapted and found new ways to act resistant in different scenarios depicted in both chapter two and three. As the situation changes, the resistance changes.

I have in this thesis differentiated between two different forms of resistance, first the form which I deem communicative resistant acts. Second, forms of resistance often more similar what Scott (1985) calls everyday forms of resistance, which I here call unintentional resistance because of the lack of specific intentions. The unintentional form, I argue, can often be communicative as well, but that it is often hidden acts with individual gains. Communicative resistance, I argue, is often an open form, conducted to deliver a message, for instance in chapter two where the food distribution was moved or where the village leaders stopped showing up at meetings. The reason to differentiate between these two forms is that it means something for the analysis of the situations and the understanding of the relation between the parties. As the strikes showed in chapter two, the people can gather if they want. Communicative acts, however, show that even though they can gather in numbers, the parties do not want the other parties removed as in a rebellion or a mutiny. Such acts can be highly successful, as was shown in the case.

Hidden unintentional acts, however, as Scott (1985) resistant because of their collective weight. As depicted in chapter three, the stealing of food does not mean simply that the person wants food, at the same time are saying that they do not have enough food. This makes taking food necessary. This is not accomplished through one act alone but through multiple acts, such as was the case with kobo aridja in chapter three. Although not as effective and visible, it can accomplish change and is an essential aspect of the refugee's resistant actions and politics. Such actions are examples of friction in power relations. The prevalence of such actions can, however, say something about the relation between the parties.

The prevalence of such actions can mean that there is a lack of what I argue is intersubjectivity—a shared understanding of a situation. Intersubjectivity happens in what Long (2003) calls the interface, the meeting point between two parties that carry with them their entire life world. Intersubjectivity is based on the parties' individual situation definition. However, if the parties do not have a similar situation definition or an understanding of each other's situation definition, there will be less intersubjectivity which will cause problems. The intersubjectivity or the lack of it means that the different parties in the settlement do not always understand each other's roles and power. Intersubjectivity or the lack of it is not just meant for the analysis of situations, but that different parties can misunderstand the complete and general roles of other parties. Such as the humanitarian organisations and OPM not understanding what the

empowerment the refugees receive through different documents and their governmentality do to their role. The lack of intersubjectivity, therefore, does not only mean that the parties misunderstand separate situations but can misunderstand the roles and power of other parties.

In chapter four, I catch up with the third party in the settlement, namely the host community. They are an empowered party in relation to the humanitarian organisations which maintain a lot of control within the settlement. They are empowered by the 70/30 rule, which states that 30 per cent of all aid given should go to the host communities. Host communities are therefore able to state demands from the humanitarian organisations. I argue that the three parties create a triangle of reciprocity. This happens through the host's act of giving land to the refugees, the refugees are, however, unable to reciprocate this act and so the humanitarian organisations do it through the 70/30 rule. The refugees are the party which receives from both parties as the host gives to the refugees and the humanitarian organisations give to both. As the host community are the owners of the land, they are the host of the refugees. I argue, however, that even though they are hospitable, they are also resistant and that these two forms of actions do not have to oppose each other. I show examples of this where, for instance, where a host community acts resistant towards the refugees. At the same time, it was meant as a message to the humanitarian organisations that they wanted to talk to them. Other actions are such as tricking and acting violent towards each other, while also sharing the local economy which has grown immensely since the refugees arrived. The host community shapes the relations in the settlement by being a party that has the power to demand, intervene and both give and take from the refugees. They shape the relations by creating friction between the different parties as well as being the party that facilitates friction. These actions, I argue, happens through acts of hospitality and resistance from their part.

As shown throughout the text, the relations in the settlement are power relations also in terms of how Foucault describes these as different parties continually acting upon other parties' acts. However, I also argue that as the resistant acts are dynamic, based on the roles, their power and the separate situations, so too are the relations. The relations between the parties are continuously changing while they at the same time are hinging on the roles staying the same. The humanitarian organisations and OPM cannot lose their role if they disappear, so will the refugees. As defined by international definitions, refugees have a limited range within which they can operate.. However, as argued above, the refugees have already pushed the limits of the international understanding of a refugee by becoming empowered to the extent they have. The host community, however, can change a lot. Definitions or policies do not limit them. They can continue changing their role by empowering themselves, putting up demands and develop. This



will also affect the relations within the settlement. This makes their role in time, unpredictable. So, attempting to answer what the relations are, is that they are dynamic power relations with resistant actions continuously changing, dependent on the parties power.

This thesis contributes to the anthropology of refugees by observing their power in their relations with their surrounding parties. A Focus on understanding the relations as dynamic because the power and resistance is dynamic, provides a different view on refugees and their lives.

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