

GOVERNING THE VULNERABLE SELF AT HOME AND ABROAD: PEACE AND JUSTICE IN NORTHERN UGANDA AND “KONY 2012”

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ABSTRACT On March 5, 2012, a US-based group called Invisible Children posted a video online, “KONY 2012,” which called for US military support for the Ugandan army so that it could capture the leader of the Lord’s Resistance Army to bring him to justice at the International Criminal Court (ICC). The video received attention and criticism from various parties, including international NGOs that had been involved in previous debates over peace and justice in northern Uganda. By looking back at past efforts of the international NGOs to end the conflict and achieve justice for the Acholi, this paper attempts to explain why the international NGOs took KONY 2012 seriously, why their positions on the ICC differed, and why they generally maintained their distance from Invisible Children while trying to learn from its marketing success. The paper demonstrates that KONY 2012 and the general issue of peace and justice in northern Uganda were not only connected with international NGOs’ therapeutic visions of governance in northern Uganda but also related to governance in their own homelands. At the same time, the paper unveils the fragile and unstable nature of the therapeutic vision of governance, both in the Acholi sub-region and in northern societies.

Key Words: Acholi; Colonialism; Civil society; Global governance; Trauma.

INTRODUCTION

On March 5, 2012, a US-based organization called Invisible Children posted a 30-minute video online titled “KONY 2012.” The video described the atrocities committed by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), including forced recruitment of child soldiers, and the plight and misery of the people in the region. The video called for a social movement to put an end to the suffering by urging US politicians to continue providing military advisors to the Uganda People’s Defense Force (UPDF) to enable the capture of Joseph Kony, leader of the LRA, so that he would be brought to justice at the International Criminal Court (ICC). Within one week, the video had been viewed more than 100 million times and had garnered countless responses on Twitter and Facebook. At the same time, the viral video received harsh criticism from journalists, NGOs, and researchers of various nationalities, including Ugandans (Branch, 2012; Jardin, 2012; Mamdani, 2012; Zachary, 2012; Zuckerman, 2012). The main points of such criticism were the video’s factual errors, its reductive oversimplified story of good-versus-evil to describe the long-running complex conflict, its paternalistic neo-colonial portrayal of the Acholi as helpless invisible children living in misery who lack agency in making a difference in their lives and their need to be rescued by heroic northern saviors, its blind support for ICC justice and for the

military expansion into neighboring countries by the UPDF, which had been just another party to the conflict in northern Uganda, and its superficial provision of empowerment to young northerners.⁽¹⁾

Many international NGOs who had been involved in previous debates over peace and justice in northern Uganda were quick to initiate internal debates on organizational policy and proactive and/or reactive responses to this video. Some of them, such as Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW), were supportive of Invisible Children's call for ICC justice, while some other organizations, such as Oxfam, took an ambiguous position on the issue (Amnesty International, 2012; Ellis, 2012; Human Rights Watch, 2012; Oxfam, 2012). Despite such differences, they generally maintained their distance from Invisible Children and represented themselves as more ethical agencies with expert knowledge on the Acholi sub-region who would not treat or depict the Acholi as helpless children. At the same time, they praised and tried to learn from Invisible Children's huge marketing success.

Invisible Children was founded in 2004 in the US by two film school students and Jason Russell, a recent film school graduate. Following their trip to Uganda in 2003, they produced various documentary films to expose the plight of the people of northern Uganda and screened their films at hundreds of schools, churches, concerts and other venues in the US and in other countries. Invisible Children works with more traditional international NGOs when such collaboration is deemed necessary, but it is generally seen as a group of students, filmmakers, and marketing and advertising experts. Therefore, traditional international NGOs tended to perceive KONY 2012 as a product of amateurs who were ignorant of the real situation in northern Uganda and did not adopt "ethical" and "professional" codes of conduct, which had been developed by international NGOs since the latter half of the 1980s, in portraying southern populations (Enomoto, 2006a).

Based on my fieldwork and literature review, as well as on my 11 years of experience working for one of the international NGOs that took part in a series of debates on peace and justice in northern Uganda,⁽²⁾ this paper attempts to explain why the international NGOs reacted to KONY 2012 as they did; more specifically, why they took KONY 2012 seriously, why their positions on the ICC differed, and why they generally maintained their distance from Invisible Children while trying to learn from its marketing success. This paper first outlines some of the past efforts of "professional" international NGOs and other aid agencies to end the conflict and achieve justice for the Acholi. Such an examination reveals that there is only a very fine line between Invisible Children's "old-fashioned" narrative of the helpless Acholi in need of heroic rescue and many aid agencies' "ethical" and "professional" narratives of the Acholi as vulnerable to dysfunction and in need of empowerment. By looking back at international NGOs' past efforts and their underlying assumptions, this paper demonstrates that their differing reactions to Invisible Children's call for ICC justice reflected their existing policies on ICC intervention in northern Uganda, which were founded on their interpretation of "Acholi tradition" and on their therapeutic conception of the self. It also points out that international NGOs took KONY

2012 and the issue of peace and justice in northern Uganda in general extremely seriously and maintained their distance from Invisible Children while trying to learn from its marketing success, not only because these issues had to do with their therapeutic visions of governance in northern Uganda but also because they had much to do with their governance of themselves and their homeland constituencies. Taken together with my earlier findings that this therapeutic paradigm of governance seems to have been interpreted and utilized by various Acholi actors who have held differing worldviews (Enomoto, 2009; 2010; 2011), this paper unveils the fragile nature of the vision of governance held by international NGOs, both in the Acholi sub-region and in northern societies.

PEACE AND JUSTICE IN NORTHERN UGANDA

In January 1986, the southern-based army, led by the current president Yoweri Museveni, overthrew Tito Okello's regime, which was dominated by the Acholi. After their defeat, many soldiers from Okello's regime fled to northern Uganda, where they formed or joined several anti-government groups. One of the groups, called the LRA, led by an Acholi, Joseph Kony, emerged in the late 1980s and gained strength; the war between the LRA and government forces, the UPDF, persists to this day. Although the LRA claimed that it was fighting for the Acholi people, the group began abductions, especially of the Acholi, from northern Uganda and ordered them to commit atrocities against their families and communities. The government forces have also been accused of committing atrocities in northern Uganda (Human Rights Watch, 2003).

When the ICC announced its investigation into the situation in northern Uganda in January 2004, both the LRA and the UPDF at first seemed to be appropriate targets for the Court. However, this was met with an unexpected barrage of criticism from the so-called traditional and religious leaders of the most affected Acholi sub-region.⁽³⁾ It also received criticism from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) based in the sub-region or in northern Uganda, such as the Human Rights Focus, the Gulu District NGO Forum, and the Concerned Parents Association, as well as from local and external researchers, most notably those of the Refugee Law Project of Makerere University and the Liu Institute for Global Issues of British Columbia University (The Coalition for Peace and Justice in Northern Uganda, 2004; Hovil & Lomo, 2005; Rose et al., 2005). Many critics pointed out that the investigation would complicate any efforts to negotiate with the LRA and might prolong the war and the associated suffering of the people in northern Uganda. Another point of concern was that the ICC would be used as a political tool by the Ugandan government to gain international support for its policy of pursuing a “military solution” to the conflict. It was also argued that the ICC was unlikely to deal with the crimes committed by the government forces and that this would worsen the north-south divide that had been created during colonial rule and that fuelled much of the country’s post-independence political turmoil. Furthermore, many critics argued that Acholi

traditional justice could be a more appropriate way to deal with the crimes committed during the conflict.

In response to such criticism, various researchers and international NGOs, especially international human rights NGOs, claimed that it was the ICC, and not Acholi traditional justice, that would deliver genuine justice and long-lasting peace in northern Uganda. For instance, AI compared “traditional reconciliation procedures” with “independent and impartial courts in accordance with international law and standards,” and stated that “these traditional reconciliation measures do not involve judicial determinations of innocence or guilt. They also do not effectively ensure that the full truth about crimes will be known, or provide victims or their families with full reparations” (Amnesty International USA, 2005). HRW, another major international human rights NGO, claimed that “a major shortcoming of the traditional reconciliation approach is the tolerance of impunity,” and criticized that it did not require the perpetrators be punished or pay material compensation to the victims (Human Rights Watch, 2005: 55–56).

In the course of the debates on this matter, it has often been argued that Acholi traditional justice is restorative and based on forgiveness and reconciliation, whereas ICC justice is retributive (Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda, 2005; Lacey, 2005; Volqvartz, 2005; Blumenson, 2006; Nielsen, 2008). Various researchers, journalists, activists, and aid workers, particularly non-Acholi, have tended to take the view that Acholi traditional justice does not have punitive elements and is irreconcilable with the idea of punishment. Some supporters of Acholi traditional justice have argued as if the Acholi had a unique ability to forgive, while some critics, such as HRW, have condemned Acholi traditional justice for being tantamount to impunity.

Amid the continued heated debates, the ICC launched a formal investigation in July 2004, issuing sealed arrest warrants for five senior members of the LRA in July 2005; these were unsealed in October 2005.⁽⁴⁾ During the peace talks initiated in 2006, the LRA and the Ugandan Government sought to satisfy the ICC’s principle of complementarity⁽⁵⁾ by agreeing on a national alternative judicial approach. However, the final agreement was not signed by the rebel leader Kony.

Since 2005, the LRA has been operating mainly in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and South Sudan. After peace talks broke down in late 2008, the UPDF launched Operation Lightning Thunder against the LRA, with intelligence and operational planning support from the United States and the cooperation of the military forces of the DRC and South Sudan. However, it did not succeed in capturing the indicted LRA leaders and triggered massive attacks on civilians by scattered LRA remnants. In May 2010, US President Barack Obama signed into law the “Lord’s Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act,” and in the same year, he decided to dispatch 100 US troops—mostly special operations forces—to the region as advisors in the fight against the LRA. However, none of the indicted LRA leaders have been arrested.⁽⁶⁾

RESTORATIVE ACHOLI JUSTICE?

Transitional justice usually refers to a range of justice approaches adapted to societies in transition after a period of pervasive human rights abuse. Encompassing both restorative and retributive approaches, transitional justice is expected to play a role in healing individual trauma and promoting a sense of emotional well-being by providing justice for victims, thus addressing both the consequences and the causes of violence (Barsalou, 2005; Hovil & Quinn, 2005). Among its broad range of approaches, restorative justice, in particular, is expected to heal both offenders and victims, restore broken social relationships, and help offenders such as ex-soldiers reintegrate into the community. Originally, the concept of restorative justice emerged through efforts to reform the justice system in northern societies during the 1970s (Zehr, 1990). Beginning as an alternative to, or a complementary mechanism of, the existing “retributive” justice systems of northern states, such a classification of justice mechanisms moved into the international arena in the 1990s, when transitional justice became one of the critical issues in the context of peace building.

Although Acholi traditional justice is associated with restorative justice, a closer examination of local practices indicates that it is also possible to apply the retributive framework to make sense of them (Enomoto, 2009; 2010; 2011). This does not mean that Acholi traditional justice must be understood as retributive justice, or as a combination of restorative justice and retributive justice, or as something in-between. The local practices currently described as Acholi traditional justice have historically been understood by external actors by situating them in the context of various frameworks, such as traditional medicine, alternative medicine, and Acholi religion, which implies that they do not, in fact, need to be narrated even as justice mechanisms. However, in the debates following the ICC intervention, Acholi traditional justice has been widely perceived as an Acholi variant of restorative justice, and some researchers, aid workers, and journalists, particularly the non-Acholi people among them, have tended to understand that Acholi traditional justice is irreconcilable with the idea of punishment.

Even before the ICC intervention, the Acholi tradition was already under the spotlight of multilateral and bilateral aid agencies and NGOs and had been “revived” in the name of peace building, conflict resolution, reconciliation, or the reintegration of ex-soldiers. Through aid projects, the “traditional” clan chiefs were identified and formally reinstated in the latter half of the 1990s, and the chief of the Payira clan was elected as the Paramount Chief in 1999. Ker Kwaro Acholi (KKA), an institution consisting mainly of the Paramount Chief, chiefs, and elders, was founded in 2000. Prior to this, there was, in essence, no such institution to bring together all the chiefs of the area. The title of Paramount Chief was also new (Liu Institute for Global Issues et al., 2005: 44). However, the ensuing internationally and locally supported efforts to revive or empower the roles of traditional leaders and institutions strengthened the presence and influence of the traditional leaders in the area. As a result, various “traditional”

rituals, including newly created ones, were conducted by chiefs and elders with the financial and logistical help of external aid agencies (Enomoto, 2006b). Aid agencies also cooperated with chiefs and elders to raise awareness of “traditional” values and ideas in the sub-region.

Within the policy frameworks of the external aid agencies, some of the root causes, as well as consequences, of the conflict were the psychological dysfunction and broken social relationships of former LRA members, many of whom had been abducted and forced to become soldiers or the “wives” of soldiers. They were believed to possess the potential to resort to violence due to their traumatic experiences while in captivity. The external aid agencies assumed that traditional rituals would effectively deal with the psychological problems of the former LRA members. They also expected that the same traditional rituals would help restore broken social relationships, bring about reconciliation, and reintegrate the former LRA members into their communities. Additionally, they believed that awareness-raising of Acholi traditional values and ideas would nurture the general sense of reconciliation and unity. The “revival” of tradition was expected to be a culturally relevant way to serve the purpose of healing, reconciliation and the reconstruction of social relationships among the Acholis.

Obviously, there is some overlap between the reintegration of ex-soldiers and restorative justice in terms of ideas and practices. Therefore, when those who specialize in transitional justice learned of the “traditional” practices, which had been promoted as a way to reintegrate former LRA members into their communities, they were likely to have perceived such practices as restorative justice. The fact that other post-conflict justice mechanisms adopted in Africa since the 1990s, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa and the Gacaca of Rwanda, have often been portrayed as restorative may have reinforced such perceptions.⁽⁷⁾

VISION OF THERAPEUTIC GOVERNANCE

Since the 1990s, aid agencies, researchers, and the media have generally asserted that recent wars, unlike those in the past, have been mostly civil conflicts and have tended to involve excessive violence deliberately directed against civilians and essential infrastructures, livelihood systems, and cultural institutions (Boutros-Ghali, 1992; Kaldor, 1999; Collier, 2000; Commission on Human Security, 2003; Commission for Africa, 2005). As Duffield (2001) argues, conflict came to be understood as a threat to human development, while underdevelopment itself came to be seen as a source of instability. This thinking considers poorer countries to be at a higher risk of falling into conflict because the poor are more likely to be incited by charismatic or violent leaders or to think that they have more to gain from war than from peace (Anderson, 1996; Commission on Human Security, 2003). Traumatic experiences, such as conflicts, are considered to trigger psychological dysfunction, leading to a vicious cycle of trauma and violence (Commission for Africa, 2005: 152; Millennium Project, 2005: 187).

The ideas behind this concern over an individual's psychology can be traced to the reinterpretation of social problems as psychological matters in northern societies in the latter half of the twentieth century, where the lack of strong, shared convictions and collective consciousness led to the conception of the self as vulnerable (Pupavac, 2004). Previously, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, psychologists and sociologists in general maintained ideas that the masses tended to be driven by their emotions rather than by reason, whereas the elites could act rationally (Trotter, 1924; Ortega y Gasset, 1964; Le Bon, 2002). Compared with such earlier arguments, current therapeutic approaches, now widely accepted in these societies, are based on a more general retreat from the belief in human rationality (Pupavac, 2000). The ideal of the modern, autonomous, rational subject has been replaced by a model of the vulnerable self who is continually at risk of psychological breakdown (Pupavac, 2006). The lines between sanity and insanity, normalcy and abnormalcy, rationality and irrationality have dissolved, and individuals are seen as universally susceptible to psychological breakdown (Nakajima, 2008). Public policy is developed on the basis of this general vulnerability, and psychological care has become part of a daily feature in schools, workplaces, and the home. The idea of healing the psychological scars of offenders, victims, and communities through restorative justice has thus gained popularity as a way to reform northern states' justice systems. By the end of the twentieth century, therapeutic perspectives had become rooted in the way that people in northern societies, including aid workers, researchers, journalists and policymakers, made sense of themselves and others.

Despite increasing concern over psychological breakdown and doubts over the project of modernity and its underlying premise of human rationality in northern societies in the latter half of the twentieth century, the idea of reducing the causes of conflict to individual psychology only started to dominate academic literature and aid agencies' policy documents after the end of the Cold War (Locke, 2012). Previously, such an idea was condemned by national liberation movements, newly independent states, and the Soviet bloc as delegitimizing liberation movements, neglecting the wider structural and international aspects of violence, and legitimizing interference in the domestic affairs of southern states (Pupavac, 2001a). However, as the Soviet bloc dissolved and the non-aligned movement lost much of the leverage it was once able to exert, the psychological state of southern populations became a major subject of debate among aid workers, researchers, journalists and policymakers (Pupavac, 2001a; 2001b; 2004). While emphasis was placed on individual psychology and intimate relations, the historical, structural, and international dimensions of violence were generally obscured in this debate (Pupavac, 2000).

Today, peace education, trauma counseling, transitional justice mechanisms, and other reconciliation measures are daily features of international intervention during or after a conflict, as they are seen as addressing both the consequences and the root causes of the conflict. Coupled with the gradual shift throughout the latter half of the twentieth century in the notion of development from material transformation to basic needs, resilience, and subjective well-being, the ideas of

development and security were brought together in the 1990s (Duffield & Waddell, 2004). The boundary between humanitarian aid and development aid has become blurred, and aid donors now problematize not only macro-economic management and the political system but also an individual's psychology, values, beliefs, attitudes, conducts, and intimate relationships.

The proponents of such an approach promote this approach under the name of empowerment and see it as entirely different in nature from the paternalistic and disempowering practices of previous development and humanitarian aid. They claim that the "old-fashioned" approaches were founded on the assumption that the recipients of aid were helpless children, and have sought to change aid practices as well as to develop "ethical" codes of conduct in portraying southern populations (Enomoto, 2006a). However, this new "ethical" approach is in fact founded on the model of the self as ever-vulnerable to dysfunction, not as an autonomous, rational subject, and problematizes the right to self-government and autonomy of southern populations, and legitimizes pacification interventions at the level of people's psychology and intimate relations (Pupavac, 2000).

Throughout the "revival" of tradition in the Acholi sub-region, external aid agencies projected this therapeutic model of the self upon the Acholi people, and its associated concept of justice upon local practices. Both before and after the ICC intervention, when non-Acholi actors portrayed "the tradition," it was often a reflection of their own therapeutic visions for governing the Acholi people.

Before peace talks began, in 2006, approximately 90% of the population in the sub-region was contained in squalid internally displaced persons' (IDP) camps. Although the government called them "protected villages," they were often compared to concentration camps (Mamdani, 2010). Rather than protecting the camps from LRA attacks, the UPDF soldiers were often themselves accused of violent conduct against the IDPs. Having lost their livestock and detached from their fields, most IDPs were forced to rely on aid agencies for food, water, sanitation, and medical treatment, although their supplies rarely met the IDPs' needs and were halted when security conditions deteriorated. In such a setting, aid agencies eagerly sought to "heal the trauma" suffered by the Acholi through various therapeutic interventions, including "traditional" dances, songs, and rituals, as they perceived this as one of the fundamental needs of the IDPs.

GOVERNANCE AT HOME AND ABROAD

Following the ICC intervention, international NGOs based in the north assigned considerable importance to the issue of peace and justice in northern Uganda and spent substantial time and effort internally discussing and agreeing on organizational policy, as well as on proactive and/or reactive responses to inquiries. As mentioned earlier, external agencies generally believed that "Acholi traditional justice" has no punitive elements and, therefore, does not meet the universal standard of justice, but their decisions differed as to how to respond to the ICC

intervention. The international NGOs who had been providing aid in the sub-region, such as Oxfam and Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), took an ambivalent stance on the ICC intervention, while international human rights NGOs, such as AI and HRW, condemned “Acholi traditional justice” as equal to impunity and supported ICC justice.

The former group of international NGOs was keenly aware of the problems with the ICC intervention, and feared that any arrest warrants issued by the ICC could push the LRA to commit further atrocities against the Acholis and to intensify their attacks in the sub-region, which would make it difficult for aid organizations to provide life-saving aid. Moreover, organizations such as Oxfam and CARE had been leading the Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU), a coalition of domestic and international civil society actors founded in 2002 to advocate for a “just and lasting peace in Northern Uganda” (Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda, 2004: vi). Given that the domestic members of the CSOPNU were, in general, firmly against the ICC intervention and preferred to take a strong public line against it, those international NGO members who often represented the coalition at an international level could not openly support the ICC intervention. At the same time, while the staff at the Kampala offices of the international NGO members of the CSOPNU were largely against the ICC intervention, staff at their headquarters in northern cities, such as Oxford and New York, tended to have different perspectives (O’Callaghan & Gilbride, 2008: 29–30). The headquarter staff were concerned that openly criticizing the ICC intervention or pointing out its possible political and historical implications could be perceived as questioning the universality and desirability of the “international norm” that they had worked arduously to build since the 1990s. It also would have posed a substantial risk to their legitimacy and their brand image. The conflicting internal needs and opinions among international NGO members of the CSOPNU made it difficult to develop a coalition-wide consensus on the issue or to take a strong joint stance against the ICC intervention (O’Callaghan & Gilbride, 2008: 29–30). Due to their homeland concerns, the CSOPNU’s international NGO members, such as Oxfam, tended to choose not to proactively advocate against the ICC intervention, although neither did they advocate for the intervention. Instead, they remained rather quiet in their public communication and worked reactively on this issue until the sealed arrest warrants were actually made public by the ICC in 2005 and, as feared, the LRA atrocities against the Acholi and humanitarian aid workers ensued, pushing aid agencies to suspend their programs and leave the IDPs to suffer.

On the other hand, AI and HRW decided to publicly support the ICC intervention. As international human rights NGOs had been the core civil society actors in the process of developing the ICC statute, doubting the efficacy and legitimacy of the ICC in its first-ever case was not an option. In addition, human rights NGOs were not running any aid projects in the sub-region and worked fairly independently from the domestic NGOs, and could therefore formulate their positions on the ICC intervention from an international legal perspective,

and based on their need to maintain the legitimacy of the ICC.

In northern societies, where international NGOs are often expected to provide ways to cultivate a “new and improved” self-image as an ethical global citizen, both the human rights NGOs and the humanitarian and development NGOs had already marketed and sold their idea of the ICC to their supporters. Thus, if they had suddenly argued against the norm, they would have been blamed not only for the act itself but also for destabilizing the identities of homeland supporters, as well as of those working inside their own organizations. As one of the competing experts who specializes in what Rose (2007) calls ethopolitics—politics that seek to regenerate and reactivate sentiments, values, and beliefs and to shape individual conduct—an NGO’s ties to its supporters are necessarily contingent on the organization’s perceived legitimacy. As Bauman (1992: 200) points out, the production and distribution of certainty is the defining function and the source of power of the experts, while disappointment and going back on one’s word are major threats to the already precarious and vulnerable self-identity of postmodern agents. Faced with these homeland needs, and based on the therapeutic understanding of “Acholi tradition,” the international NGOs chose either to remain fairly quiet on the ICC intervention or to proactively support it.

Several years later, following the launch of KONY 2012, many international NGOs that had participated in the previous debates on peace and justice in northern Uganda were again quick to initiate internal debates on organizational policy and proactive and/or reactive responses.⁽⁸⁾ AI and HRW echoed Invisible Children’s call for the need to bring the LRA leaders to justice at the ICC, while humanitarian and development NGOs, such as Oxfam, again took an ambiguous position on the issue. Despite such differences, they generally maintained their distance from Invisible Children and represented themselves as more “ethical” organizations with expert knowledge on the Acholi sub-region, who would abide by the codes of conduct related to the ethical portrayal of southern populations without treating or depicting them as helpless children in need of heroic rescue. At the same time, they praised and attempted to learn from Invisible Children’s huge marketing success.

As pointed out earlier, there is a fine line between Invisible Children’s “old-fashioned” narrative of the helpless Acholi and many aid agencies’ “new and improved” narrative of the Acholi as ever vulnerable to dysfunction, as opposed to being autonomous, rational subjects. Nevertheless, the proponents of the latter narrative see it as ethical and empowering. As noted above, the international NGOs routinely seek to communicate their versions of “non-neo-colonial” ethical ideas and visions, which are founded on the vulnerable model of the self, in their efforts to shape the conduct of their homeland constituencies. By distancing themselves from Invisible Children, they attempted to prove their higher ethical ground and the legitimacy of their approach, both to their homeland constituencies and to their own staff, who continuously seek to affirm themselves as ethical and fit to govern others.

This time around, the central problem that necessitated serious internal debate

and action by the international NGOs was not primarily the implications of KONY 2012 relative to the situation in northern Uganda. Similarly, these international NGOs were not necessarily concerned about Invisible Children's techniques in mobilizing their key audience, who were young Westerners. This said, international NGOs and experts in marketing and campaigning attempted to analyze and learn from the huge marketing success of the video (Chalk, 2012; Mogus, 2012; Ousley, 2012; Watson, 2012). The most critical problem they faced was the direction in which the video would mobilize people and what kind of emotions the video aroused. Above all, KONY 2012 was seen as counterproductive to the international NGOs' enduring commitment to empower and govern individuals at home. Learning from Invisible Children's techniques, the international NGOs attempted to use them to mobilize people in their own "ethical" direction.

CONCLUSION

As Cooper and Stoler argue, the nineteenth century European bourgeoisie fostered and embraced the idea of citizenship and, at the same time, they perpetuated a sense that citizenship was "a faculty to be learned and a privilege to be earned" (Cooper & Stoler, 1997: 3, quoting Eley). The colonial "gaze" was fixed on the colonized, but at the same time fixed just as squarely on Europeans themselves (Stoler, 2002: 1). It was directed not only at marginal Europeans but also at the well-heeled entrepreneur or Paris-schooled polytechnician (Stoler, 2002: 1). Racism was not subsequent to the bourgeois order but, rather, constitutive of it and part of the making of Europeans themselves (Stoler, 2002: 144). The strategies of bourgeois identity-making and self-affirmation were labile, affirmed by a cultural and epistemic repertoire of virtues, such as self-discipline, sexual morality, and self-control. The cultivation of a self that was self-reliant, without pretense, and morally pure was thought to define the interior landscapes of "true" Europeans (Stoler, 2002: 157).

Since the 1990s, external agencies have projected their concept of the vulnerable self upon southern populations and devised a series of development, peace-building, and conflict-resolution technologies designed to act upon individual emotions and intimate relations. The case of the peace and justice issues in northern Uganda and KONY 2012 shows that the same gaze has been directed at people back home.

This case also shows that just as colonial regimes were not monolithic, and colonizers had competing agendas and strategies for rule (Comaroff, 1997; Cooper & Stoler, 1997: 6), today's "global governance" entails both tensions and competing practices for those who try to govern others at home and abroad. It also reveals the uncertainties and constraints that they face, both among themselves and in their relations with people at home. As one of the competing forces in ethopolitics, their project to govern the people at home is necessarily precarious in nature, and their own identities, as well as their legitimacy with their homeland

constituencies, can be easily disturbed and destabilized. The ICC intervention and KONY 2012 induced intensive and at times emotional debates within international NGOs, due precisely to the fragile nature of their legitimacy and that of the self-identity of people at home.

As I have argued in previous papers (Enomoto, 2010; 2011), the authority of the external agencies has also been fragile and unstable in the Acholi sub-region. Their aforementioned understanding of recent conflicts and its foundational therapeutic conception of the vulnerable self have not been straightforwardly embraced or reproduced by Acholi actors. Instead, the therapeutic paradigm seems to have been interpreted, utilized, and circumvented by various Acholi actors with differing, and at times hybrid, worldviews and visions of governance. The “revival” of Acholi tradition since the 1990s, along with the attention and enthusiasm accorded to “Acholi traditional justice” following the ICC intervention, have enabled various local actors, including chiefs and elders, to attempt, albeit in a new and hybrid form, to reorder society, (re)establish social norms, and (re)gain their power and status.

For instance, some of the Acholi proponents of “tradition,” such as the KKA, problematized the vengeful spirits brought by the “impure” former LRA members who had committed crimes while in captivity, and emphasized the need to deal with those spirits, which might cause further suffering and disorder and create a cycle of violence in the sub-region. By identifying the vengeful spirits, rather than psychological dysfunction, as the root of all evil, and claiming the authority of the newly reinstated chiefs and elders to cleanse the former LRA members and others of the spirits in accordance with the “traditional” regulations and codes of conduct, the chiefs and elders seem to have attempted to force the former LRA members and their families and clans to submit to their authority.

Within the framework of external aid agencies, what can be understood as a consequence of vengeful spirits, such as nightmares, is regarded as a symptom of “trauma,” which can be healed through psychological programs provided by aid agencies. Such an argument implicitly denies the claim that former LRA members are suffering because of the vengeful spirits brought about by their conduct, which requires ritual processes organized by chiefs and elders. Indeed, in the course of my research, many proponents of Acholi tradition seemed well aware that donors supported Acholi tradition as a way to deal with the Acholi people’s alleged trauma and, at times, expressed concern and unease about activities such as counseling and psychotherapy. However, in trying to discourage foreign aid personnel from carrying out such activities, the Acholi actors generally did not deny the therapeutic understanding of Acholi individuals and the conflict and, instead, presented “traditional” practices as more appropriate for healing trauma in the Acholi context. Although it was almost impossible for Acholi actors to receive donor funding unless their proposals fitted within the frameworks already set by donors, the chiefs and elders were able to attempt to recapture their lost power and status in a new form by utilizing the donors’ frameworks and negotiating with the Western psychological approach.

The social relations that have been or will be “restored” as a result of the

“revival” of tradition in the Acholi sub-region are unlikely to be the same as those that existed before the conflict started; nor do they seem to function in the way that external agencies would have expected. This suggests how limited outside agencies can be in putting their ideas and visions into practice, that is, the fragility and instability of their authority. Taken together, the elements of the case described here reveal not so much the vulnerability of the Acholi, but the fragile and contingent nature of the therapeutic vision of governance, both at home and in northern Uganda.

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NOTES

- (1) The somewhat ambiguous terms “north” and “south” are used throughout this paper in preference to others (rich/poor, developed/developing, West/the rest, metropolitan/borderland, etc.). It should be noted that they do not necessarily reflect an empirical reality or an absolute spatial division between homogeneous spaces; rather, they are imagined spaces and are produced and reproduced in different contexts (Stavrianakis, 2010: 12).
- (2) Fieldwork was conducted in March–April 2006, February–March 2008, November–December 2008, and January–February 2010 in Uganda. I have been working as a policy officer in the humanitarian section of an international NGO since 2003. The analysis in this paper is my own and does not reflect the position of the NGO.
- (3) In the Acholi sub-region today, the phrase “traditional leaders” often refers to the chiefs and elders of various clans. Christian and Muslim leaders are generally called “religious leaders.” The conflict has affected other sub-regions of northern Uganda, southern Sudan, eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic.
- (4) Dominic Ongwen, Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo, Raska Lukwiya, and Vincent Otti.
- (5) The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Article 17. The principle of complementarity grants primary jurisdiction over the crimes defined in the Rome Statute to the respective States Parties on whose territory or by whose nationals the alleged crimes are committed.
- (6) Two of them, Raska Lukwiya and Vincent Otti, are reported to have died.
- (7) Other factors that could have reinforced the conviction that Acholi traditional justice is restorative are explained in my previous papers (Enomoto, 2009; 2010; 2011).
- (8) Some of their public responses and inter-organizational documents are available on the Internet (Action Aid UK, 2012; Amnesty International, 2012; European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development, 2012: 20; Human Rights Watch, 2012; Oxfam, 2012).

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