ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Deconstructing borders: Mobility strategies of South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda

Sarah Vancluysen

Institute of Development Policy, University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium

Correspondence
Sarah Vancluysen, Institute of Development Policy, University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium
Email: Sarah.vancluysen@uantwerpen.be

Abstract

Taking the current presence of South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda as a case-study, this paper explores how different forms of mobility enable them to better cope with the harsh conditions caused by their displacement. Based on extensive field research, the results of this article show how for South Sudanese refugees, crossing borders can be empowering, although these complex strategies do not fit within the mutually exclusive 'durable solutions' proposed by the international refugee regime. Looking through a transnational lens, it is illustrated how different forms of movement enable the refugees to hold on to certain aspects of 'normal life', such as being employed, enacting customs and visiting loved ones, blurring the distinction between voluntary and forced migration. This results in a deepening of transnational networks as the generally large South Sudanese families find their members dispersed across Ugandan and South Sudanese town centres, villages, refugee settlements and third countries in Africa and elsewhere.

KEYWORDS
borders, mobility, refugees, South Sudan, transnationalism, Uganda

INTRODUCTION

In forced migration studies, the movement of refugees is either taken as *a fait accompli* (Lubkemann, 2010) or considered as inappropriate, following the sedentary logic of the international refugee regime (Scalettaris, 2007). The lives

of refugees are often described in terms of exception and immobility, whereby refugee settlements are seen as 'non-places', the ultimate embodiment of their isolation (Diken & Laustsen, 2005, referring to Augé, 1995). Researchers that do study refugee mobilities, tend to focus on secondary or 'onward' movement, or third country resettlement. As such, too little attention is given to the 'navigation and exploitation of borders and boundaries in the course of people's (forced) migration journeys' (Kaiser, 2010, p. 45). Taking the current presence of South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda as a case-study, this paper explores their 'everyday mobilities' and how they cross and make use of borders more specifically.

The social landscape of the South Sudanese refugees is characterized by two important forms of mobility. First, many of the refugees are attracted by the living conditions and socio-economic opportunities available in neighbouring town centres. Still, they commute to the settlements at least once a month as their registration is a sine qua non condition to remain eligible for support. Second, a relatively high degree of cross-border mobility can be identified between the northern Ugandan settlements and South Sudan. Driven by diverse push and pull factors, the refugees cross the proximate and porous border with their former 'home' country,[1] for short visits as well as extended stays.

The contribution of this paper is twofold. First and foremost, in line with Lubkemann's (2010) work on wartime (im)mobilities, this paper shows how for South Sudanese refugees, crossing borders can actually be empowering, although these complex strategies do not fit within the mutually exclusive 'durable solutions' proposed by the international refugee regime.

The findings underline that, although they find themselves in adverse circumstances, the refugees showcase a high degree of agency. It is illustrated how different forms of movement enable refugees to hold on to certain aspects of 'normal life', such as being employed, enacting customs and visiting loved ones. For the majority of the South Sudanese refugees, displacement remains the dominant form of mobility, having only limited room for rather exceptional movements during occasions of decease, illness or celebration. Yet for others, the forced displacement itself has transformed into other forms of mobility over time (Van Hear, 2003).

A second contribution is to look at how South Sudanese refugees navigate borders, using a transnational lens. Transnationalism indicates that, given contemporary global developments, social ties and interactions are spanning across the borders of nation-states (Vertovec, 1999, p. 447; Horst, 2008). In this line of thinking, the central role of nation-states and their borders as determinants of migrants' activities and identities is questioned (Horst, 2008, p. 31). Recently, the mobility of refugees and its implications on national and regional policies have become more than ever at the centre of attention, among researchers as well as policy makers; and especially in the sphere of refugees and asylum seekers, states want to exercise full control (Koser, 2007). Since the majority of refugee streams take place within the global South, and taking into account displacement to a neighbouring country provides more possibilities for transnational activities (Brees, 2010), this study considers refugee mobilities between northern Uganda and South Sudan. Looking at this particular example of South-South movement, the study responds to a gap, as the literature on refugees and transnationalism has focused on South-North movements so far (e.g. Hammond, 2013; Oeppen, 2013).

That refugees engage in cross-border movement between the host and 'home' country is not new. In her study of Sudanese refugees, before southern independence in 2011, Kaiser describes the extent in which the movement between northern Uganda and southern Sudan[2] 'has been influential in the protection, livelihood and development tactics of refugees at all stages of their forced migration trajectories' (2010, p. 45). And also among other displaced communities, similar flows have been discussed, such as Somali refugees as 'transnational nomads' (Horst, 2008) or Karen refugees crossing the border between Thailand and Myanmar (Bird, 2019; Brees, 2010; Horstmann, 2014; Sharples, 2020). Given that refugees have multiple boundaries to navigate, this paper describes how the South Sudanese are exploiting country borders, as well as those of the refugee settlements.

Considering the asylum country as a new and 'unfamiliar' world (Malkki, 1995, p. 508), the conflict-refugee approach blinds us for the fact that movements of refugees during exile are often a continuation of pre-flight mobilities (Monsutti, 2008). So although transnationalism is sometimes wrongly seen as a 'passe-partout' (Boccagni, 2012;

Portes & DeWind, 2004), the framework permits a better and more realistic understanding of (forced) migrants' daily lives and activities (Boccagni, 2012, p. 128).

As such, the study takes a closer look at the 'everyday mobilities' of the South Sudanese, while at the same time zooming out to include broader regional, as well as personal histories. Doing so, the findings give insight into how the choices of refugees are made based on a continuation of previous practices, mobilities and relationships (cf. Barret, 2009, Kaiser, 2010). Older nodes of networks continue to exist, while new ones are created as a response to new conditions people find themselves in. This results in a strengthening of transnational networks as the generally large South Sudanese families find their members dispersed across Ugandan and South Sudanese town centres, villages, refugee settlements and third countries in Africa and elsewhere. These realities confirm that binary distinctions between 'refugees' and 'migrants' or 'refugees' and 'hosts' are blurred or even artificial (cf. Allen 1996; Scalettaris, 2007).

One of the main pitfalls of a transnational approach, however, is the risk to overlook the structural inequalities that influence migrants' (lack of) mobility (Brees, 2010). According to Al-Ali et al. (2001), one's capability to participate in transnational activities is determined by both desire and ability. As we could expect, not all our respondents had the ability or the desire to be mobile; with many being hampered by the structural lack of resources characterising the northern Ugandan region.

As refugee flows should be placed within their broader socio-economic and historical context (Barrett, 2003, p. 1), this paper will first provide a short overview of the northern Uganda and South Sudan border region, especially in light of past and current cross-border activities. Second, the methodological section elaborates on how empirical results have been attained. In the results section, it is described how mobility proves to be an important element of the refugees' survival strategies. Hereafter, the article ends with a discussion on how to rethink refugee mobilities and what this could mean for future repatriation efforts.

SETTING THE SCENE

From the 1950s onwards, the region of northern Uganda and South Sudan is in the grips of wide-scale violence and refugee flows, beginning with the First Sudanese Civil War (1955–1972), whereby thousands of Sudanese crossed the border with Uganda. The other way around, after the overthrow of Idi Amin in 1979, a large part of the northern Ugandan population had to seek refuge in southern Sudan (Allen, 1988; Harrell-Bond, 1986). When the Ugandans gradually returned, they were soon followed by their Sudanese neighbours who were fleeing the Second Civil War (1983-2005) (Hovil, 2018; Refugee Law Project, 2006).

After the hopeful signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLA/M) in 2005, and South Sudan's independence in 2011, nobody expected the newly established nation would so soon fall victim to war again. In December 2013, conflict erupted between government forces loyal to President Salva Kiir (SPLA) – and opposition forces following his former Deputy Riek Machar (SPLA-IO). Even though a peace agreement has been signed in 2018, at the time of writing, conditions for a 'safe and dignified repatriation' were not yet in place (UNHCR 2020).

Next to relatively smaller numbers of refugees from other countries, including DRC, Rwanda and Burundi, Uganda currently hosts more than 880,000 South Sudanese, of which the large majority in the northern districts (GoU & UNHCR 2020). Uganda is widely praised for its progressive refugee policy, most especially its 2006 Refugee Act, that grants refugees the freedom to work and the freedom to move. This results in a significant amount of mobility and interaction with surrounding communities in terms of trade, social events and sharing of services. Refugees are also free to settle independently in urban areas or town centres, but given that settlement registration is a sine qua non condition for the refugees to be eligible for support, most of the South Sudanese remain in the rural settlements. Fieldwork for this paper took place in Adjumani district. Being part of the relatively marginalized north-western region of Uganda, the district is hosting more than 200,000 refugees across 13 refugee settlements (GoU & UNHCR 2020).

These settlements are operated by UNHCR and its implementing partners, under the coordination of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

The border between Uganda and South Sudan is intensively crossed in both directions, for both *life-sustaining* ('everyday mobilities') as well as *life-rupturing* forms of mobility (including forced displacement) (cf. Barrett, 2009). Mobility happens in various forms, driven by many other factors than physical insecurity (Kaiser, 2010), including the search for betterment in terms of education, employment and intermarriages. The respondents especially underlined how Uganda offers an attractive alternative for South Sudan's poor education facilities.

Moreover, the colonial border cuts across several ethnic communities, meaning the same communities can be found at both sides (Leonardi & Santschi, 2016; Leopold, 2005; Merkx, 2000). The ethnic interconnections facilitate cross-border trade, with trading patterns going back to pre-colonial times (Meagre, 1990; Titeca, 2009). Over time, also the informal trade of legal and illegal goods has become increasingly popular (Leopold, 2009). Especially during the period after the CPA (2005), the border area was characterised by economic opportunities, driven by a high demand for goods and state-building processes (Schomerus & Titeca, 2012). Since at both sides of the border, areas have not only been physically but also politically marginalised, a 'coping economy' has emerged for local communities, turning the border into the main resource to provide development (Titeca, 2009). As such, the border can be seen as negatively imposed, while it is also 'a valuable resource to be exploited' (Leopold, 2009, p. 475).

Being characterized by repeated cycles of violence, war has become the 'normal context for the unfolding of social life' (Lubkeman, 2010, p. 1), turning forced migration into an important element of the social landscape. For many South Sudanese it is not the first time to live in exile in Uganda; and some of them can fall back on previously established social ties. As entire Equatorian communities had to flee to Uganda during the war before independence (Schomerus & Titeca, 2012), there is a large group of South Sudanese that grew up in the Adjumani settlements or town. So although the 1995 Constitution does not allow refugees to obtain citizenship, there is a high degree of *de facto* integration, facilitated by their 'border identity' (Merkx, 2000). Oftentimes, in view of the shared history, people have questioned if it would have been 'more natural' if people from the northern Ugandan districts (West-Nile) belonged to South Sudan (Leopold, 2009, p. 470).

METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on data collected during approximately six months of fieldwork, spread over three periods between 2018 and 2019. As the rural settlements are the backbone of Uganda's policy framework, two settlements were selected to study movements to outside locations, namely 'Boroli' and 'Alere'. Because the broader study purpose was to study refugee-host dynamics and in view of South Sudan's unstable conditions at the time of study, research efforts were focussed on the selected settlements and the districts' main town centre, Adjumani town. Adjumani town is easily accessible from nearby settlements, including Boroli and Alere. Other settlements are at larger distance and more isolated due to the district's poor road infrastructure. From town it is approximately 50 km to the Elegu - Nimule border post.

Around two thirds of the interviews were conducted in the two selected settlements, chosen because of their diverging composition. Boroli settlement – divided into Boroli I and II - is home to 15,000 refugees, all new arrivals since 2013, belonging to a multitude of ethnicities (GoU & UNHCR 2019). The Alere settlement is home to around 6,700 refugees (GoU & UNHCR 2019), belonging to Dinka, Nuer, Kuku and Madi. Alere includes both new and old caseload refugees. Another third part of the respondents were 'urban refugees', selected in Adjumani town. Adjumani town is home to many South Sudanese refugees that self-settled. Next to the more recent arrivals, some old caseload refugees are settled in town until today, while they registered themselves again as refugees during the recent influx. In order to obtain a diversified sample, a purposive sampling technique was applied. Overall, the sample was balanced in terms of gender and included respondents from 14 different ethnicities, all between 23 and 67-years-old. The sample mostly includes new caseload refugees.

This study goes 'beyond processes of refugee labelling' by taking into account the refugees' life histories and geographical context (Horst, 2008, p. 203). More than 75 interviews have been conducted, including life-history interviews in which the respondents were asked to talk about the different locations they have lived as from birth, and to a second extent, current whereabouts of household members, to be able to situate the individual within a larger network of 'meaningful others' (Horst, 2008). The life histories were complemented with semi-structured interviews with key respondents including other refugees and representatives of the implementing agencies, OPM and UNHCR as well as informal discussions and observations. Interviews were conducted by the author in English; or in Arabic, with the help of a South Sudanese research assistant. In a second stage, the audio files were transcribed in English. Interviews in Arabic were transcribed by a second South Sudanese research assistant so that translations on paper could be crosschecked with those given in the field. To guarantee the respondents' anonymity, all names in this article have been replaced by pseudonyms. The study was approved by the University's Ethical Advice Commission for Social Sciences.

RESULTS: CROSSING BORDERS

Even though refugee settlements are usually located in marginalized areas, they are not secluded from the outside world. Rather, refugee settlements are places of arrival, onward movement, temporary visits and voluntary return and hence, figure as nodes in larger national, regional and international networks. The often-held assumption that as soon as a person has been assigned refugee status (s)he is no longer mobile, does not correspond with reality.

Applying Giddens' structuration theory to migration, Richmond (1993) considers the voluntary-forced dichotomy to be a continuum between 'proactive' and 'reactive' migration. Indeed, when deciding on whether to take refuge or not, where to go to and how long to stay, different factors are taken into account.

> Those who remained there [in South Sudan] are people who are working. If you are working right now you can live in Juba because you can afford life. But if you don't have any job you can't stay there because life is difficult. To feed alone is a problem. So people who decided to stay there these are working class, but if you are not working life is hard. So both of my relatives are in the camp.

> Male refugee, 34 years, October 2019, Adjumani town

When individuals do not have a source of income in South Sudan, the decision to flee might be more easily made. Other factors taken into account are whether someone is enrolled in education, having children or not, the location of family members, personal preferences such as whether to stay in a rural area or town; and as argued before, previous experiences of displacement. As a consequence, the decision to leave is rarely based on one factor solely and people decide for themselves which factor priority is given to. Josephine, for example, is a 25-year-old refugee who arrived in Boroli in 2018. Her parents already came in 2014, but Josephine wanted to finish her secondary education first. Together with her husband, she owns a house in northern Uganda, which she rents out to other people as she prefers to stay in the settlement in the company of her parents and siblings. Josephine's example illustrates the Ugandan settlements are far from isolated from other localities.

Referring to their previous period of exile in Uganda before independence, Kaiser already demonstrated that to meet the needs of their families, the Sudanese came up with a 'portfolio of strategies, tactics and approaches' (2010, p. 57), far exceeding the immediate camp environment. This paper will discuss to what extent such dynamics still exist in their current period in exile; but more especially, it will zoom in on two forms of everyday mobility that are strategically pursued in order to lead a life that is as normal as possible – given the fact that they are physically relocated from homes and loved ones. As such, mobility forms an essential part of many South Sudanese refugee households and wider families. Nevertheless, mobility is not always desired nor possible, as a number of pre-conditions should be in place.

Crossing settlement borders

There are only few who strictly stay in the camps.

Police constable Adjumani district, October 2019

As indicated by a police constable working in one of the settlements, there are only few refugees who never leave the settlements. Next to the old caseload refugees that self-settled, new caseload refugees are also swapping the rural environment for the more urban setting of Adjumani town or outside the district, *provided* they have the means to do so and depending on their needs and preferences (cf. Kaiser, Hovil, & Lomo, 2005). During the previous influx, Hovil (2002) noted the striking difference between settlement refugees and those who self-settled, in terms of how they responded to the conditions. Also now, these town refugees are generally more resourceful, as an urban lifestyle is more expensive compared to living in a settlement. Some of the respondents described having two homes and enjoying the flexibility – to spend a weekend in town for example; others never put down a structure and moved to town immediately.

Driven by diverse social and economic motivations, many more daily movements between the settlements and town centres are happening along the muddy roads of the northern rural landscape. The main motivations to settle in town are clear: access to better quality education, healthcare services as well as livelihood opportunities. Others, having first-hand experience with how it is to spend your childhood in a refugee settlement, do not want their own children to go through the same. In the statement below, one of our female respondents refers to a conversation she had with her husband when arriving in Moyo district, before deciding to search for a place in Adjumani town, where her sister had already settled with her family.

How can we grow up all these years in the camp and then we are taking our children to suffer in the same camp. For how long? It doesn't work!

Female refugee, 40 years, November 2019, Adjumani town

The Ugandan government grants the refugees the flexibility to settle anywhere, given they are registered in one of the settlements. As settlement registration is a sine qua non condition for the refugees to be eligible for support, the town refugees have to commute at least once a month during the distribution of food and cash. During distribution days, the otherwise sleepy settlement streets get filled with queues of vehicles and motorcycles, from people who transport bags of beans and corn to their homes outside. Ugandan, but also many self-settled South Sudanese business(wo)men from town take this as an opportunity to come to the settlements and sell their products such as clothing, cooking utensils and cell phones. Similar to the previous influx of the Sudanese, the freedom to move out of the settlement leads to a win-win situation, as the refugees are now better able to contribute to local economies (Hovil, 2002).

Although neighbouring town centres are sites of attraction, mobility also happens in the opposite direction. One of the old caseload respondents, a single mother that arrived in Uganda in 1987, explained how she was temporarily living in town for the education of her children but later moved to the Alere settlement. Life in a settlement, whereby food and a piece of land is provided, proved to be less costly and demanding than an urban lifestyle. She now combines agricultural work with a part-time position as community development worker with one of the agencies.

I stayed in the town for 3 years and I found life was very difficult. By that time Alere refugee settlement was closed. In 2012, it was reopened for refugees who were relocated from Moyo district. UNHCR told people in town that if you are not able to manage the life in town, better get yourself a place in the nearest camp where you can stay in, so that you can be helped.

Female refugee, 46 years, old caseload, Alere, November 2019

One of our respondents, Jacob, is studying and living in Kampala (Uganda) – in a house owned by his brother who is a soldier in South Sudan. Jacob regularly comes to the Alere settlement to visit one of his three wives and children, and then continues his journey to Juba (South Sudan), to check upon his other family. Generally, the intense multi-directional mobility is enabled by the physical layout of the 'camps', being open rural settlements without any concrete boundary such as a fence. Therefore, mobility does not have a permanent character per se, but happens in the form of many daily movements, including a lot of interactions with surrounding host members who are coming and going, for example to sell their agricultural produce.

Crossing country borders

> Ideally as a refugee you are not supposed to move back to your country of origin until it is proved to be secure enough for you, so that you can go officially. But it[3] became very difficult for us because our family needed to survive.

<div align="center">Male refugee, 40 years, teacher in South Sudan, Adjumani town, November 2019</div>

In addition to the countless internal movements, a significant degree of cross-border mobility between Uganda and South Sudan can be identified, whereby in principle the refugees are bringing their status in danger. More specifically, regarding visits of the refugees back to the country of origin, the 1951 UN Convention (art. 125) posits that certain states could consider that the refugee re-avails himself of the protection of the former home country; although these cases have to be judged on individual merit. So far, the Ugandan government is tolerant and many of the movements happen irregularly across the porous border.

The mobility goes hand in hand with the improved security in South Sudan, as this study took place in the run up to and right after the signing of the Revitalized Peace Agreement in September 2018. However, as more than a year later sustainable conditions for return are not yet in place (UNHCR, 2020), this study took place in an 'interim period', during which go-and-see visits to their places of return can be observed (Huser et al., 2019).

The nature of the cross-border movements varies from short-term return visits (King & Christou, 2011) to pro-longed stays. An often-used strategy by (mostly) male South Sudanese is to leave wife and children safely in Uganda and to remain in or return to South Sudan in search of a livelihood. Some never joined their families across the Ugandan side of the border; others did register as refugees but found themselves disillusioned by the lack of livelihood possi-bilities in and around the settlements. As a consequence – mostly male but to a lesser extent also female – refugees try their luck on Juba's labour market, opt to cultivate a piece of land just across the border or take advantage of the border region to do business. This is similar to the previous period of exile in Uganda, where the refugees described southern Sudan as an 'extension of their socio-economic network, made possible by its accessibility' (Hovil, 2002, p. 15)

> Yes, I go and visit people in South Sudan. I have my child who is sick who is under treatment in the village, taking the local herbs. Last year I took her to South Sudan for treatment but up to now she is still under treatment. I only don't go to South Sudan because of my child. If my child was not sick or did not have any problem and she plays and move alone, I would have gone to work and support my children.

<div align="center">Female refugee, 38 years, November 2019, Boroli</div>

This respondent, a single mother, explained how she sometimes goes to South Sudan to get traditional treatment for her daughter, who is mentally disabled and living with her in the settlement. She emphasized that if her kids could live more independently, they could stay in Uganda, while she would go to work in South Sudan, to be better able to support them financially. This statement confirms how safety is associated with Uganda, while for work, people want to return to South Sudan.

The border is also crossed to maintain social relationships and activities. More specifically, the respondents mentioned trips to South Sudan to visit relatives (e.g. taking care of a parent, attending funerals or celebrations), to go for treatment in formal health facilities or traditional healing in the village, or to enrol for secondary or university education in Juba or elsewhere. The other way around, those who are employed in South Sudan or take part in its education system, spend holidays in the secure environment of the northern Ugandan settlements and towns, surrounded by their family members.

A less widely occurring, but nevertheless interesting reason to cross the border towards South Sudan, is to 'seek room to enact customs' (cf. Jansen, 2018, p. 65). Whenever there is friction between the customs or norms of the South Sudanese and Ugandan law, they actively choose whether to hold on to their familiar values or appropriate the 'new system' (Vancluysen & Ingelaere, 2020). In case certain customs or values are considered to be too important to let go, people can decide to go back to South Sudan, for example to perform a marriage that would not be allowed in the Ugandan settlement. Relatedly, conflicts that prove difficult to solve in the settlement context are brought to customary leaders 'at home' for resolution (Vancluysen & Ingelaere, 2020). In the Alere settlement, two men argued over a wife with children, whose late husband had died. The incident escalated and it was decided more proper resolution could be provided in South Sudan.

> This case brought a lot of tension. People wanted to fight. We tried to resolve it at the local level but it failed. Until these people said yes, let us go back to our country and resolve this problem.

> Male refugee, 33 years, October 2019, Alere

For the majority of the South Sudanese in Adjumani, displacement remains the dominant form of mobility, having only limited room for exceptional movements during occasions of decease, illness or celebration. Yet for others, the forced displacement itself has transformed into other forms of mobility over time (Van Hear, 2003). To this category, I consider those who left the settlement and now commute across the border to engage in livelihood activities in South Sudan. For them, displacement has not yet ended, but they find themselves further along the continuum from forced to voluntary migration. Moreover, the respondents proved to have a rather fluid understanding of countries and borders. For example, some of them, being nomadic pastoralists, explained that they did not know they were in Uganda before they were told so.

Applying a transnational perspective, there is a continued flow of people between the Ugandan settlements, rural villages as well as town centres and South Sudan; and to a lesser extent third countries in Africa or elsewhere. The movements expressed by the refugees are both a continuation of pre-conflict mobilities as well as a response to the new insecurities faced through displacement. For many this is not the first time to be displaced and certain groups have even spent the majority of their lifetimes in exile. According to Lubkemann, (2010, p. 193) displacement comes down to 'the transformation of the context of material (including ecological), social, and symbolic resources available to social actors,[4] in ways that render essential life projects harder to achieve' (2010, p. 193). Wartime movement can be one possible form, but equally, immobile individuals or households can be 'displaced-in-place'. Importantly, movements that happen during conflict do not necessarily need to be disruptive as, in certain cases, war-time mobility can also be *empowering* (Lubkemann, 2010).

In fact, these war-time mobilities are empowering, as they enabled the South Sudanese to better cope with their changed conditions and helped them to lead a normal life. In order words, while displacement to Uganda has been a life-rupturing event, they now engage in forms of mobility that are life-sustaining, including for education, work or social events (cf. Barrett, 2009). Indirectly, this might also positively impact the hosting communities, as it allows refugees to be less dependent. This confirms the artificiality of the line that was drawn between 'migrants' and 'refugees' after World War II and for which separate regimes have been created accordingly (Karatani, 2005).

Nowadays, barriers of distance are more easily overcome through the use of digital communication and social media, as these tools can make transnational interactions more frequent and meaningful (Marlowe et al., 2017). Yet,

transnational activities were not possible for all respondents we talked to, and many see their plans restricted by the structural lack of resources that characterises the northern Ugandan context. Generally, the more resources (i.e. financial and social capital) one has, the more possibilities for mobility and transnational interactions one can access: for paying transport, to go and compete on Juba's labour market, to have start-up capital for cross-border trade or to have access to digital technologies. Other decisive factors are practical, such as closeness to the border and the accessibility of locations more generally. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the movements the South Sudanese engage in, are forms of 'forced transnationalism' (Al-Ali et al., 2001). As living in exile to a certain extent means that your life is put 'on hold', much effort is invested to counteract this process and continue pre-flight activities.

South Sudanese families as transnational networks

> I want them to continue [education] from here so that they can learn more about Uganda and those [of my children] who are in Juba will learn more about South Sudan. And then one day we will come together and each and every one will be able to talk about their experience from these two countries.

> Male refugee, 61 years, November 2019, Boroli

In line with the realities outlined so far, the statement above suggests that the refugees turned their new setting into a 'transnational social field' (Schiller et al., 1992). Or put differently, 'a borderless spatial system' is created, defying the clearly demarcated nation-state (Tati, 2012). Over time, transnational networks are strengthened as the generally large South Sudanese families locate their members across Ugandan and South Sudanese town centres, refugee settlements, villages and further abroad.

Being part of a transnational family allows the refugees to better handle the aversive conditions brought forth by their displacement and to benefit from opportunities otherwise not available to them. In others words, through transnational interactions with family members, including cross-border movements, the South Sudanese can more easily access better education and health facilities; find ways to supplement the support they receive and keep in touch with relatives back home. The splitting-up of family members in order to spread risks is the underlying logic of migration theories, but its application in refugee studies is rare (Horst, 2008).

The networks provide a form of social security, whereby each family member figures as a 'node'. Contributions are complementary (cf. Monsutti, 2008) and vary from taking care of children, providing income and sending remittances to getting education as a future investment. Depending on the circumstances, people shift roles, take up other responsibilities and move to new locations. Many of the respondents have already temporarily gone back to South Sudan, for short visits or prolonged stays: children for education, mothers to take care of elderly parents and men to find employment; while non-refugee family members come to visit the camps during weekends or holidays.

Generally, a gendered pattern could be identified in the division of tasks as men search for employment, while women settle in Uganda taking care of children or elderly family members. The economic motivation for men to go back to South Sudan, is well illustrated by the following respondent:

> These men came here with their wives because South Sudan was not good. A man cannot stay with the wife while not providing anything. It will bring problems in the family. Some were in the army and they ran [to Uganda] with their children, some were working with their hands and they ran with their children. And they see that there is no point of being here because they are not helping. So they decided to return leaving the wives and the children so that they can be able to provide for them.

> Female refugee, 38 years, November 2019, Boroli

For example, one of the respondents, Isaac, is living alone in his maternal house in Juba, where he works for a humanitarian organization. His wife, children, brother and sister are living in Uganda as refugees. Every three weeks,

he crosses the border to visit his family in Adjumani, the place he now refers to as his 'home'. Continued meaning-ful engagements across multiple localities, such as those of Isaac, spur debate on the usefulness of concepts such as 'home' and 'belonging'. A (reconstructed) home can be translocal, with multiple meaningful localities being part of it (Eastmond, 2006, p. 142), and whereby refugees are no longer expected to live either *here* or *there*, but in different places simultaneously (Portes, 1997, p. 3) (own emphasis).

Searching for a livelihood activity or accessible education and visiting family members during celebrations or funer-als, are all aspects of 'normal life' that get significance as people are now categorized as refugees; and even more so as they cross an international border (Barrett, 2009). The examples given in this paper, however, demonstrate how certain forms of mobility put the refugees in a better position to cope with the challenges of being 'uprooted'. Gener-ally, mobility and the geographical distribution of family members, allows people to better manage complex situations (Serra Mingot & Mazzucato, 2019). At the same time, the relevance of mobility strategies varies according to structural factors and refugees' individual agency and duration in exile (Sturridge, 2011).

To engage in this kind of cross-border mobility and to stay in often insecure regions in South Sudan while being separated from family members is not without risks and certainly not desired for. Therefore, these are mostly forms of 'forced transnationalism' (Al-Ali et al., 2001), as the refugees are pushed out of (northern) Uganda by unfavourable conditions. The uncontrolled movements across the border make the management of crime more difficult. The respon-dent below explains some of the risks involved, including robberies and ambushes.

> Actually, it is a risk because occasionally, there are ambushes on the road where sometimes vehicles are ravished and people lose their lives. Within Juba itself it is not safe. There are a lot of robberies, ending in loss of lives. And there are others taking the risk of going to places like Kajo Keji. Because they left a lot of food in the field; others have a few belongings that they still feel they can go and pick. And they end up losing lives. We have heard so many cases of people going from the camp back and they end up dying there. This is what is happening. But because of the pressure, the need… you can't stop it.
>
> Male refugee, 40 years, November 2019, Adjumani town

Although the refugees are free to work, formal employment opportunities are few and they have to compete on a labour market that is small and saturated. Secondly, the food or cash support the refugees receive is too little to sustain their generally large families. The allocated land is too small for both housing and cultivation and hence, does not allow for meaningful agricultural production (Bohnet & Schmitz-Pranghe, 2019; Vancluysen & Ingelaere, 2020). And while UNHCR and its implementing agencies invest in primary education facilities, scholarships for secondary education are few.

While this transnational lifestyle helps families to pool resources, at the same time it comes with great sacrifice, as a transnational set-up of families can be seen as corrosive (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002), having repercussions on the dynamics between and well-being of its members. Family members live separated from each other during prolonged periods of time. Children grow up in Uganda, enrol in its education system and learn the local language. One of our male respondents explained how, through the education system, his children are now fluent in Madi[5]; while he only speaks Arabic and English (Male refugee, 44 years, October 2019).

DISCUSSION: RETHINKING REFUGEE MOBILITIES

Mobility as empowering

When talking about refugees, mobility is still too much considered to be problematic (Scalettaris, 2007). Taking a step back from our thinking in terms of nation-states or 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer &

Glick Schiller, 2002), a transnational way of thinking aligns better with the reality of the displaced, who move back and forth between rural villages and urban centres within Uganda as well as across the border with South Sudan. Domestic units and wider families split up across complementary locations to respond to the challenges they are confronted with.

Given many of the transnational interactions are instigated by the displacement to northern Uganda, and as this way of living can be corrosive for family dynamics, these are examples of 'forced transnationalism' (Al-Ali et al., 2001). Yet, for the South Sudanese refugees, who have repeatedly been confronted with conflict and displacement, the mobility of family members proves to be an important strategy to cope with challenges. Turning their households (and wider families) into transnational networks, with members at complementary locations, they are able to avoid risks, diversify livelihood activities and continue social processes such as attending celebrations and funerals, doing business or visiting loves ones. By all means, it should be recognized that for a significant part of refugees worldwide, possibilities for movement are heavily restricted; as camp and/or nation-state borders still structure their lives. Nevertheless, this paper has illustrated to what extent forced migrants' mobilities contribute to their survival strategies.

As we have seen in this paper, communities in northern Uganda and South Sudan share a long history of cross-border activities, dating back to pre-colonial times (Leopold, 2009; Titeca, 2009). By consequence, the South Sudanese can fall back on pre-existing social ties with co-nationals as well as host community members, based on shared ethnicity, trade or earlier experiences of displacement. Such pre-existing ties, however, are not captured by the separate conceptions of 'refugee' or 'immigrant' (Hyndman & Walton-Roberts, 2000).

Experiences of migration in the past, were duly considered to optimise their decision-making today. The familiarity with the people and places of Moyo and Adjumani districts has facilitated local integration: ties with host community members have been maintained, others can rely on family members or further relatives to go to, as not all South Sudanese repatriated. In some cases, the refugees could even return to the land they had self-settled on before. Although in the meantime conditions have slightly changed, these 'experienced' refugees know how it is to live in a Ugandan refugee settlement and hence, can more easily navigate it. As refugees, they got introduced into the Ugandan education system and established social ties and border spanning businesses, that were continued during periods of peace in between. Those who were previously displaced to Kenya and Ethiopia, now opted for Uganda, known for its good security, service provisions and freedom. The findings of this paper illustrate how for South Sudanese refugees in Uganda, local as well as transnational wartime mobility can be empowering and is not necessarily disruptive (cf. Lubkemann, 2010).

Although policy frameworks often focus on the containment of refugees, freedom of movement here results in a win-win situation, whereby the refugees themselves are less dependent and at the same time are contributing to local markets and communities (cf. Hovil, 2002). In fact, the refugees who were regularly involved in activities across the border in South Sudan, also turned out to be respected members in local communities, with a rich network of Ugandan friends. This confirms the double engagement of (transnational) migrants as having activities in the country of origin does not rule out engagements in the host country (Mazzucato, 2008).

More fundamentally, the findings once again question the relevance of mutually exclusive notions such as 'refugees' vs 'migrants' and 'home' vs 'host'. The voluntary-forced dichotomy, however, remains 'sticky', as dissecting it could potentially shake up our current international refugee regime (Erdal & Oeppen, 2018). The internal and external movements discussed in this paper are made possible by the Ugandan government's progressive and flexible attitude; and gives a positive example to other countries where the movement of refugees is more restricted. But still, the discussed trajectories underline once again that rural settlement policies generally do not meet the needs of South Sudanese refugees, as they have to navigate settlement as well as country borders for economic survival and social commitments. The policy framework constrains the contributions refugees can make to local economies and communities (Hovil, 2002). In this light, the mobility of displaced persons, both during as well as after exile, should receive more attention and be integrated into policy frameworks.

Rethinking return

> My father is no longer in South Sudan, my husband is also no longer in South Sudan and this thought disturbs my mind every day. […] I will never return to South Sudan. […] My children, if they are big and they are working and they are mature, they can go back and leave me. If Uganda says they don't want refugees any longer, I will look for another place like Kenya, Ethiopia or America, if possible I will go. But South Sudan, no.
>
> Female refugee, 39 years, November 2019, Ayilo

After six years of civil war, a transitional coalition government was formed in February 2020, sealing the peace agreement signed in 2018 (Aljazeera 2020). Understanding now the nature of the South Sudanese transnational networks, what does this mean for future return and repatriation efforts?

The transition from a conflict to post-conflict stage happens gradually; and since people and places change, a 'complete return' does not exist (King & Christou, 2011). Referring to the Sudanese' previous period of exile in northern Uganda, Kaiser (2010) described the extent to which their 'portfolios of strategies' deployed during exile, were continued in their search for durable solutions. Indeed, our respondents narrated how children stayed in Uganda for education, while parents returned and rebuilt previous communities or started anew, illustrating that return and local integration are not mutually exclusive possibilities. Instead, there are many options in between, including the continued presence of family members in the host country. Just as the splitting up and dispersion of family members across different locations empowers them during exile, ongoing migration reduces vulnerability and can facilitate reconstruction upon return (Monsutti, 2008). Patterns of a 'split-return' can vary according to a number of characteristics of a household, such as its size and gender composition, as well as the circumstances of return (Harpviken, 2014).

Presumably, after spending such a long period abroad, notions of 'home' may have changed and can be attributed to different places (Eastmond, 2006). As a response to the repeated insecurity in South Sudan and familiarity with the Ugandan context, people sometimes referred to the idea of having *two* homes, or likewise, to have one foot at each side of the border (cf. Bakewell, 2000). Next to a possible distant home in South Sudan, permanent structures are built by the refugees in the outskirts of Adjumani town and elsewhere, investments that illustrate the mistrust in their country's future. Moreover, those who never repatriated referred to how those who did, came back in a bad condition and how this refrains them from ever going back. Overall, refugee-host relations in the region are cordial, and local Ugandan communities are understanding of the fact that similar to the previous period of exile, a part of the refugee population will not return.

According to Long, repatriation should not necessarily involve any physical return. Instead, it can be seen as a political process, being a return to citizenship (2010, p. 3). Return itself should not be seen as a 'single and definitive' event, but rather as dynamic and open-ended, involving continued mobility between home and host (Eastmond, 2006, p. 144). The durable solutions framework, however, leaves no room for the interaction of multiple strategies (Kaiser, 2010), and is seen as incompatible with continued forms of mobility (Scalettaris, 2009). While mobility itself can be challenging, it can increase the access to socio-economic opportunities, while contributing to processes of development (Long, 2010).

CONCLUSION

This paper explored the everyday mobilities of South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda, and how they navigate borders more specifically. Two important forms of mobility were discussed. To begin with, there is a lot of mobility between the rural settlements and neighbouring town centres, as self-settled refugees commute to the camps,

especially during days of distribution. This way, they are able to overcome the protection gap for self-settled refugees, as aid is still anchored to the settlements. Moreover, the refugees engage in cross-border mobility to and from South Sudan, for short visits as well as prolonged stays.

The findings contribute to the literature on (forced) migration and transnationalism in two ways. First, I argue that wartime mobilities and the crossing of borders are not always disruptive, as it allows refugees to hold on to certain aspect of 'normal life'. A second contribution has been to study the everyday mobilities of the refugees using a transnational lens. Over time, transnational networks are strengthened as the generally large South Sudanese families locate their members across Ugandan and South Sudanese town centres, refugee settlements, villages and further abroad. Taking a step back from the usual focus on conflict, and by including broader regional, as well as personal histories of the refugees, a more realistic understanding of the refugees' daily lives and activities has been provided. Importantly, however, these mobilities are not always possible nor desired: many households lack the resources to go out of the settlements and the transnational set-up of families has repercussions on the well-being of its members. Overall, however, mobility forms an essential part of many South Sudanese households and families and is empowering in different ways.

Knowing the splitting up and dispersion of family members across different locations can empower refugees during exile, the paper ended with a reflection on what this means for a future return or repatriation. Both during exile as well as in the post-conflict stage, solutions in which there is room for mobility are likely to be more sustainable, as they correspond more closely to refugees' daily realities.

ORCID

Sarah Vancluysen https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9612-0693

ENDNOTES

[1] While the distinction between 'home' and 'host' in this region is blurry; the paper refers to 'home' as the country the refugees have fled from (South Sudan); and to 'host' as the country where they found refuge (Uganda). In the discussion, however, a critical reflection is given on how 'home' can be considered as 'translocal' (Eastmond, 2006).
[2] Southern Sudan refers to the country before its independence from Sudan.
[3] 'It' meaning not going back to South Sudan.
[4] Defined by Lubkemann (2010) as 'lifescape'.
[5] The local language of the Madi, the main ethnicity in Adjumani district.

REFERENCES

Al-Ali, N., Black, R., & Koser, K. (2001). Refugees and transnationalism: The experience of Bosnians and Eritreans in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 27*(4), 615–634, https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830120090412

Aljazeera (2020). *South Sudan rival leaders from coalition government.*. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/south-sudan-rival-leaders-form-coalition-government-200222121043672.html

Allen, T. (Ed.) (1996). *In search of cool ground: War, flight and homecoming in Northeast Africa.* Africa World Press.

Allen, T. (1988). Coming home: The international agencies and the returnees in west Nile. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *1*(2), 166–175, https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/1.2.166

Augé, M. (1995*). Non-places: Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*. Conference of Socialist Economists.

Bakewell, O. (2000). Repatriation and self-settled refugees in Zambia: Bringing solutions to the wrong problems. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *13*(4), 356–373, https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/13.4.356

Barrett, M. (2009). The social significance of crossing state borders: Home, mobility and life paths in the Angolan-Zambian borderland. In S. Jansen & S. Löfving (Eds.), *Struggles For Home: Violence, Hope and the Movement of People*, (pp. 85–108), Berghahn Books.

Barrett, M. (2003). *Social landscapes and moving people: The mysterious meaning of migration in western Zambia*. (UNHCR Working Paper No. 78).

Bird, J. N. (2019). Bound within borders or free as a bird? Karen life in refugee camps on the Thai–Burma borderlands. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 1–19, https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2019.1700387

Boccagni, P. (2012). Rethinking transnational studies: Transnational ties and the transnationalism of everyday life. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *15*(1), 117–132, https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431011423600

Bohnet, H., & Schmitz-Pranghe, C. (2019). *Uganda: A role model for refugee integration?* (BICC Working Paper No. 2).

Brees, I. (2010). Refugees and transnationalism on the Thai–Burmese border. *Global Networks*, *10*(2), 282–299, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2010.00286.x

Bryceson, D.F., & Vuorela U. (Eds.) (2002). *The transnational family: New European frontiers and global networks* (pp. 3–30). Berg Press.

Diken, B., & Laustsen, C. B. (2005). *The culture of exception: Sociology facing the camp*. Routledge.

Eastmond, M. (2006). Transnational returns and reconstruction in post-war Bosnia And Herzegovina. *International Migration*, *44*(3), 141–166, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2006.00375.x

Erdal, M. B., & Oeppen, C. (2018). Forced o leave? The discursive and analytical significance of describing migration as forced and voluntary. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *44*(6), 981–998, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1384149

General Assembly, U. N. (1951). Convention relating to the status of refugees, 28 July 1951. United Nations Treaty Series, *189*, p. 137. https://www.refworld.org/docid/3be01b964.html

Government of Uganda and UNHCR (2020). Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal, https://Ugandarefugees.Org/En/Country/Uga

Government of Uganda and UNHCR (2019). Settlement Village Statistics.

Hammond, L. (2013). Somali transnational activism and integration in the UK: Mutually supporting strategies. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *39*(6), 1001–1017, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2013.765666

Harpviken, K. B. (2014). Split return: Transnational household strategies in Afghan repatriation. *International Migration*, *52*(6), 57–71, https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12155

Harrell-Bond, B. (1986). *Imposing aid: Emergency assistance to refugees*. Oxford University Press.

Horst, C. (2008). *Transnational nomads: How Somalis cope with refugee life in the Dadaab camps of Kenya* (Vol. *19*). Berghahn Books.

Hovil, L. (2018, October). *Uganda's refugee policies; the history, the politics, the way forward* (Rights in Exile Policy Paper).

Hovil, L. (2002). *Free to stay, free to go? Movement, sand integration of refugees in Moyo district* (Working Paper No. 4). Refugee Law Project.

Horstmann, A. (2014). Stretching the border: Confinement, mobility and the refugee public among Karen refugees in Thailand and Burma. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, *29*(1), 47–61, https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2014.892692

Huser, C., Cunningham, A., Kamau, C., & Obara, M. (2019). South Sudanese returns: Perceptions and responses. *Forced Migration Review*, *62*, 7–10.

Hyndman, J., & Walton-Roberts, M. (2000). Interrogating borders: A transnational approach to refugee research in Vancouver. *Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe Canadien*, *44*(3), 244–258, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0064.2000.tb00707.x

Jansen, B. J. (2018). *Kakuma refugee camp: Humanitarian urbanism in Kenya's accidental city*. Zed Books.

Kaiser, T. (2010). Dispersal, division and diversification: durable solutions and Sudanese refugees in Uganda. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *4*(1), 44–60, https://doi.org/10.1080/17531050903550116

Kaiser, T., Hovil, L., & Lomo, Z. (2005). *We are all stranded here together": The local settlement system, freedom of movement, and livelihood opportunities in Arua and Moyo districts* (Working Paper No. 14). Refugee Law Project. https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/refugee-law-project-working-paper-no-14-we-are-all-stranded-here-together-local

Karatani, R. (2005). How history separated refugee and migrant regimes: In search of their institutional origins. *International Journal of Refugee Law*, *17*(3), 517–541, https://doi.org/10.1093/ijrl/eei019

King, R., & Christou, A. (2011). Of counter-diaspora and reverse transnationalism: Return mobilities to and from the ancestral homeland. *Mobilities*, *6*(4), 451–466, https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2011.603941

Koser, K. (2007). Refugees, transnationalism and the state. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *33*(2), 233–254, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369830601154195

Leonardi, C., & Santschi, M. (2016). *Dividing communities in South Sudan and northern Uganda: Boundary disputes and land governance*. Rift Valley Institute.

Leopold, M. (2005). *Inside west Nile: Violence, history and representation on an African frontier*. James Currey.

Leopold, M. (2009). Crossing the line: 100 years of the north-west Uganda/South Sudan border. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *3*(3), 464–478, https://doi.org/10.1080/17531050903273743

Long, K. (2010). *Home alone? A review of the relationship between repatriation, mobility and durable solutions for refugees*. (UNCHR/PDES Evaluation Report PDES/2010/02).

Lubkemann, S. C. (2010). *Culture in chaos: An anthropology of the social condition in war*. University Of Chicago Press.

Malkki, L. H. (1995). Refugees and exile: From "refugee studies" to the national order of things. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *24*(1), 495–523, Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.002431

Marlowe, J. M., Bartley, A., & Collins, F. (2017). Digital belongings: The intersections of social cohesion, connectivity and digital media. *Ethnicities*, *17*(1), 85–102, 10.1177/1468796816654174

Mazzucato, V. (2008). The double engagement: Transnationalism and integration. Ghanaian migrants' lives between Ghana and the Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *34*(2), 199–216, 10.1080/13691830701823871

Meagher, K. (1990). The hidden economy: Informal and parallel trade in north-western Uganda. *Review of African Political Economy*, *17*(47), 64–83, 10.1080/03056249008703848

Merkx, J. (2000). *Refugee identities and relief in an African borderland: A study of northern Uganda and southern Sudan*. (UHNCR Working Paper No. 19). https://www.unhcr.org/research/working/3ae6a0c80/refugee-identities-reliefafrican-borderland-study-northern-uganda-southern.html

Monsutti, A. (2008). Afghan migratory strategies and the three solutions to the refugee problem. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, *27*(1), 58–73, 10.1093/rsq/hdn007

Oeppen, C. (2013). A stranger at 'home': Interactions between transnational return visits and integration for Afghan-American professionals. *Global Networks*, *13*(2), 261–278, 10.1111/glob.12008

Portes, A. (1997). *Globalization from Below: The Rise of Transnational Communities*. WPTC-98-01 Working Paper. Princeton: Princeton University.

Portes, A., & Dewind, J. (2004). A cross-Atlantic dialogue: The progress of research and theory in the study of international migration. *International Migration Review*, *38*(3), 828–851, 10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00221.x

Refugee Law Project (2006). *Invisibly displaced persons in Adjumani district* (Working Paper No. 19). Refugee Law Project.

Richmond, A. H. (1993). Reactive migration: Sociological perspectives on refugee movements. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *6*(1), 7–24, 10.1093/jrs/6.1.7

Scalettaris, G. (2007). Refugee studies and the international refugee regime: A reflection on a desirable separation. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, *26*(3), 36–50, 10.1093/rsq/hdi0241

Scalettaris, G. (2009). Refugees and mobility. *Forced Migration Review*, *33*, 58–59.

Schiller, N. G., Basch, L., & Blanc-Szanton, C. (1992). Transnationalism: A new analytic framework for understanding migration. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *645*(1), 1–24, 10.1111/j.1749-6632.1992.tb33484.x

Schomerus, M., & Titeca, K. (2012). Deals and dealings: Inconclusive peace and treacherous trade along the South Sudan-Uganda border. *Africa Spectrum*, *47*(2-3), 5–31, 10.1177/000203971204702-302

Serra Mingot, E., & Mazzucato, V. (2019). Moving for a 'better welfare'? The case of transnational Sudanese families. *Global Networks*, *19*(2), 139–157, 10.1111/glob.12224

Sharples, R. (2020). Movements across space: A conceptual framework for the Thai–Burma borderlands, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, *35*(5), 693–708, https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2018.1438915

Sturridge, C. (2011). *Mobility and durable solutions: A case study of Afghan and Somali refugees*. UNHCR, Policy Development and Evaluation Service.

Tati. (2012). Territory and border crossing or livelihoods among (voluntary and forced) migrants from DRC to Swaziland: The re-imagining of a borderless spatial system. In C. U. Rodrigues, , & J. Tomàs, (Eds.), *Crossing African borders: Migration and mobility*. (Vol. *2012*). Centro de Estudos Internacionais.

Titeca, K. (2009). The *hanging cross-border trade dynamics between north-western Uganda, north-eastern Congo and southern Sudan* (Crisis States Working Papers Series No.2, Working Paper No 63). http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28477/1/WP63.2.pdf

UNHCR (2020). *South-Sudan regional response plan 2020–2021*, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/74596

Vancluysen, S., & Ingelaere, B. (2020). Conflict resolution as cultural brokerage: how refugee leaders mediate disputes in Uganda's refugee settlements. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *33*(2), 300–315. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feaa037

Van Hear, N. (2003). *New issues in refugee research. From durable solutions to 'transnational relations': Home and exile among refugee diasporas*. (Working Paper No. 83). UNHCR Evaluation And Policy Analysis Unit. Geneva: UNHCR. https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4ff3f01e2.pdf

Vertovec, S. (1999). Conceiving and researching transnationalism, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *22*(2), 447–462, https://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329558

Wimmer, A., & Glick Schiller, N. (2002). Methodological nationalism and beyond: Nation–State building, migration and the social sciences. *Global Networks, 2*(4), 301–334, 10.1111/1471-0374.00043