Subsequent chapters examine various ethical dilemmas faced by humanitarian organizations. Stephen Hopgood offers an interesting exploration of what constitutes humanitarianism by asking whether WalMart could be considered a humanitarian organization. Janice Gross Stein examines why humanitarian organizations are reluctant to discuss the issue of accountability. Michael Barnett and Jack Snyder offer a useful taxonomy of humanitarian strategies based on how political and how ambitious they are; they seem to advocate backing a decent winner, a political strategy that is not too ambitious. Laura Hammond argues that recent attacks against humanitarian workers are deliberate performance strategies that send a message to an audience, both near and far. The chapters by Peter Redfield and Jennifer Rubenstein make clear that humanitarian organizations do not base their decisions entirely on the needs of affected populations; other moral and ethical considerations determine how and where they spend scarce resources. Michael Barnett draws parallels between humanitarianism, which strives in vain to stay out of politics, and social science scholarship, which tries to stay detached from its field of study. He calls on both to reflect on their involvement in their subjects and to forgo maintaining a dispassionate distance.

This volume is by scholars for scholars. The last chapter, by Peter Hoffman and Thomas Weiss, is a worthwhile but ultimately disappointing effort to make the book relevant to humanitarian practitioners. It draws six lessons from the previous chapters, though none is central to any of the chapters. The authors call for greater collaboration between academics and practitioners; however, describing humanitarian agencies as "learning disabled" (283) is unlikely to win them many fans. In the end, the book is most useful for a graduate seminar on the dilemmas of humanitarianism, assuming that the students have sufficient background knowledge about specific cases.

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Ben Jones. *Beyond the State in Rural Uganda.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2009. xv + 199 pp. Maps. Illustrations. Glossary. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $105.00. Cloth. £22.99. Paper.

In 2002 Oledai village had no NGO projects, no clinic, no local school. This village, deep in Teso District, Eastern Uganda, was not merely undeveloped. The parish chief visited twice in a year; there was not even a concerted effort to collect taxes. Ben Jones argues that what we see in Oledai is state withdrawal—he speaks of "extraversion"—a process that began decades earlier in Uganda. Ever increasing donor support in the 1990s allowed the Ugandan state to pull ever more resources out of local government; by 2002

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there seemed to be little compelling reason for the state to engage with those living in the countryside.

Oledai is a subparish, the lowest unit in the Ugandan administrative hierarchy, and the social unit that often corresponds best to the face-to-face community. The physical remains of a more prosperous—and less marginal—way of life are still visible in the village and the region, reminders of the long decline from the well-established cotton and cattle economies of the colonial and early postcolonial days.

Drawing on eighteen months of field work (in 2001–2) and extensive historical research, *Beyond the State in Rural Uganda* is an empirical, grounded challenge to the notion of "state-sponsored development." In his introduction Jones identifies several themes (seniority, prosperity, propriety) that will shape the analysis to follow and serve to frame his interest in the interplay between social institutions and the role and scope of individual actors.

Jones starts his study with the colonial construction of Teso society, drawing on a wealth of historical literature and the reflections of Oledai residents upon their own immediate past. He shows us Oledai as a village in decline in a region that has been in decline for more than thirty years; prosperity is a thing of the past. There are three interwoven histories here (perhaps not fully discussed in relation to one another): the *longue durée* from precolonial times to the present Teso districts; the economic decline in the Teso region that began with the destruction of the cotton economy in the 1970s; and finally the more immediate catastrophe of the Insurgency (1988–94), when seniority and propriety were brutally challenged.

In the next chapters Jones's focus shifts as he examines in more detail changing community life "beyond the state." Since the late 1980s decentralization and democratization have been key parts of the Ugandan reform program, attracting significant donor interest and adding to Uganda's reputation as a progressive African state. In chapter 3, "The Village Court and the Withdrawn State," Jones skillfully blends ethnographic insights from Oledai with a historical analysis of the role of village courts in Teso, and more generally in Uganda and Africa. He argues that the continuing relevance of village courts has little to do with decentralization and much to do with historical continuity.

The village courts, established in colonial times to deal with local problems in relative autonomy (at least in comparison with practice elsewhere in Uganda), continue to function at village level. Jones observed all thirty-six "official" cases reported for 2002 (many other cases were decided informally) and interviewed participants. Brief case studies of disputes show that the largest single group of cases had to do with enforcing male seniority and that localized lineages played a large role in the decisions. Litigation in the village court, where decisions can be referred to the sub-county court or the police post, remains the principle remaining link between Oledai and state institutions because it is useful to villagers. This is a valuable discussion

of the complex role of the village council chairman, who both represents the village and is referred to as the "eye"of a government that Jones insists is largely uninterested in performing its seeing function—though his claim could have been strengthened by more case material. More recourse to the methods and analyses of legal anthropology would have allowed Jones to explore legal continuity.

In chapters 5 and 6 Jones traces the recent expansion of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) into the village as well as the growing importance of the traditional churches for village life. The careers of these churches provide more examples of local institutional development and the adaptation of practice to local needs and conditions.

The PAG has become prominent in the period since the Insurgency. In contrast to the Anglican and Catholic congregations, the PAG makes demands on its members, and this may require significant lifestyle changes for men—in particular, giving up the drinking that is a part of male sociality. However, Jones stresses that Oledai Pentecostals have not withdrawn from village society and PAG members remain active in village and lineage affairs. Their church seems to have inspired revivalist tendencies in the established churches, though Jones is also careful to trace the role of the Insurgency and its aftermath in religious practice. He argues that all three denominations have become more central to village life, responding to developing local consensuses on seniority, propriety, and prosperity.

The increasing prominence of the evangelical and charismatic in village religious life is paralleled by an innovation in burial practice: the introduction of the burial society. Burial societies are known from other parts of Uganda and began to appear in Teso after the Insurgency, serving at one level as a community burial insurance scheme. Membership is essentially obligatory and dues are collected in cash and kind to cover funeral expenses (including food for mourners and cement for the grave). Members' names and contributions are inscribed in the society book—a tangible and transparent record of community membership.

Jones explores this new village-level institution, grounding his discussion in observation of and participation in funerals in Oledai and documentation of burial society contributions and costs. The chapter also traces the transformation of burial practice in Teso from precolonial and colonial times, stressing both innovation and continuity in funeral ritual and practice. Jones gives particular attention to the stress and trauma of the Insurgency, during which generational conflicts could be deadly and there were few resources—either economic or social—for funerals. Oledai villagers remember the Insurgency killings and appreciate both the financial and moral role of burial societies. However, underlying tension between generations remains. Religious and burial society leaders strive to emphasize "respect for rules and authority" (154), promoting a vision of community that reflects the still tenuous age hierarchy that has been reestablished only in the last decade.

Jones's discussion is one of a very few ethnographic accounts of burial societies and their practices, and a significant contribution to the African literature. More generally, this final substantive chapter carries forward the argument that communities like Oledai, relatively untouched by the developmental state, are nonetheless engaged in building up their own institutions. These local institutions (village courts, churches, and burial societies) are not the products of decentralization but rather consequences of the withdrawal of the center. They draw on past practice while responding to today's needs, "beyond the state."

This is a short book—165 pages—and Jones spends many pages working through Teso history and relating his own ethnography to earlier work. This, of course, makes *Beyond the State in Rural Uganda* an excellent choice for the teacher in search of a compelling case study, but it also means that much has been omitted. Oledai's agricultural economy is barely mentioned; many households are said to receive contributions from migrants but we learn nothing about these wider social and economic relationships. And although Jones very rightly emphasizes the importance of seniority and gerontological "order" in post-Insurgency Oledai, we are offered very little on young men and women, on marriage, and on primary and secondary education (surely here the Ugandan state is present?). Concentrating on seniority, prosperity, and propriety proves a productive strategy for following recent history and exploring the current tentative "restoration" of gerontocracy in Oledai. But the voices of young men and women, some of whom might see their future in a larger Uganda, are seldom heard.

All this notwithstanding, Jones has produced a very readable book and one that challenges current development discourses with good ethnography and historical scholarship. It is a book that will be particularly useful for teaching in undergraduate courses and in postgraduate seminars (although only if the paperback version can be obtained). And it is essential reading for students of Uganda, and indeed for students of Africa.

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