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Overcoming ruptures: Zande identity, governance, and tradition during cycles of war and displacement in South Sudan and Uganda (2014-2019)

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Overcoming Ruptures

This book explores the effects of war and displacement on the South Sudanese Zande, a people frozen in time by the classical anthropology of Edgar Evans-Pritchard. The research started in Western Equatoria State, South Sudan, at a time of hopeful reconstruction (2014-2015). Yet after war resumed in 2015, nearly a million South Sudanese refugees fled to neighbouring Uganda – and so the study continues with South Sudanese Zande refugees there (2015-2019). Based on hundreds of interviews with refugees and stayees, chiefs and elders, government officials and former combatants, and ordinary people, this book places conflict, confusion, and the search for continuity at the heart of the historical ethnography of the South Sudanese Zande. The book focuses on the ties between people, between people and land, and the competing efforts to control those ties. These three foci relate to proto-legal questions that underpin human society: Who are we? To whom and where do we belong? And whose authority do we accept? This study shows that these foundational questions gain new salience in times of crisis, as people turn to nostalgia and utopia to escape present despair.

This is a volume in the series of the Meijers Research Institute and Graduate School of the Leiden Law School of Leiden University. This study is part of the Law School's research programme 'Effective Protection of Fundamental Rights in a pluralist world'.



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