

**‘Beyond the State Police in Urban Uganda and Sierra Leone’, *Afrikaspectrum*, 41, 1 (2006), 55-76.**

If the use of legitimate violence or the threat of it within society is such a distinguishing mark of sovereignty, then evaluating policing in African states becomes a ready method of evaluating the degree of state sovereignty. Faced with the inability of the state police to provide full security in the urban areas of Uganda and Sierra Leone, there has been a diversification of policing agencies. This paper explores the range of options available beyond the state police. It examines who is authorising and delivering this multi-choice policing. It finds that on the basis of the state ability to provide law and order and crime control within its territorial boundaries, sovereignty is weak if not fragmented in the two countries. Fragmented policing is securing, to different degrees of effectiveness and permanence, variable social orders within single state territories. No single policing authority has, necessarily, exclusive control within a certain social space, but may compete and overlap with other authorities. However, for historical reasons, the two emerging patterns of sovereignty in Uganda and Sierra Leone are not identical.