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"The Yira Cold War: Secessionism, Authority and Imagined Futures in the Uganda-Congo Borderlands"

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Abstract

This thesis examines secessionist sympathy and activity in the borderlands of Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo, which stems from the historical legacy of the secessionist Rwenzururu Movement. The Rwenzururu Movement led to a quasi-independent, albeit unrecognised, kingdom-state in the Rwenzori mountains from the 1960s-1980s, led by the charismatic “king” and “president” Isaiah Mukirania. Today, many Bayira people (a name that refers to the cultural unity between the Bakonzo of Uganda and the Banande of Congo) continue to aspire to, and act towards the creation of a Yira State. This thesis contends that understanding a secessionist movement requires a dual emphasis on the construction of the "nation" as a community with a shared and idealised identity, and on the "state", the apparatus of governance itself. This is because the realm of state “politics” is viewed as an amoral domain of ruthless, individualist power grabs, a realm that is intrinsically threatening to the moral identity of the national body. This dual moral association reflects more broadly onto the behaviours and products associated with the "cultural" or the "foreign", the former being moral and in need of revival, and the latter being morally circumspect, but nevertheless necessary to the political and technological transformation that they desire for their futuristically imagined nation-state. The thesis follows the construction of these two domains by myriad authority figures, and examines how the Bayira tactically manage the opportunities and dangers associated with combining these morally antonymic but mutually dependent domains. This pattern is analysed through an adaptation of Ekeh’s (1975) “two publics” theory. This case demonstrates that for all the weaknesses assumed of the nation-state in the 21st Century, it continues to be a desirable imaginable construct for self-determination, yet remains susceptible to local adaptations.

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Table of Contents

Regional Maps	6
Yira State Map Images	7
Introduction: Akeethu Kathere, "That Which is Lost"	8
Chapter One: The Historical Background of the Bayira	61
Chapter Two: The Bayira's Two Knowledges	101
Chapter Three: The Yira Homespun Historians	139
Chapter Four: The Yira State and Prophetic Hope	176
Chapter Five: The Endurance of the State and its Technologies	214
Chapter Six: Discourses of Moral Authority and Violence	258
Conclusion:	291
Bibliography:	303



Figure 1: Kasese and Bundibugyo Districts, Western Uganda. Aspect of image from Ezilon Maps, available from: https://www.ezilon.com/maps/africa/uganda-road-maps.html. Accessed: 02 November 2017.

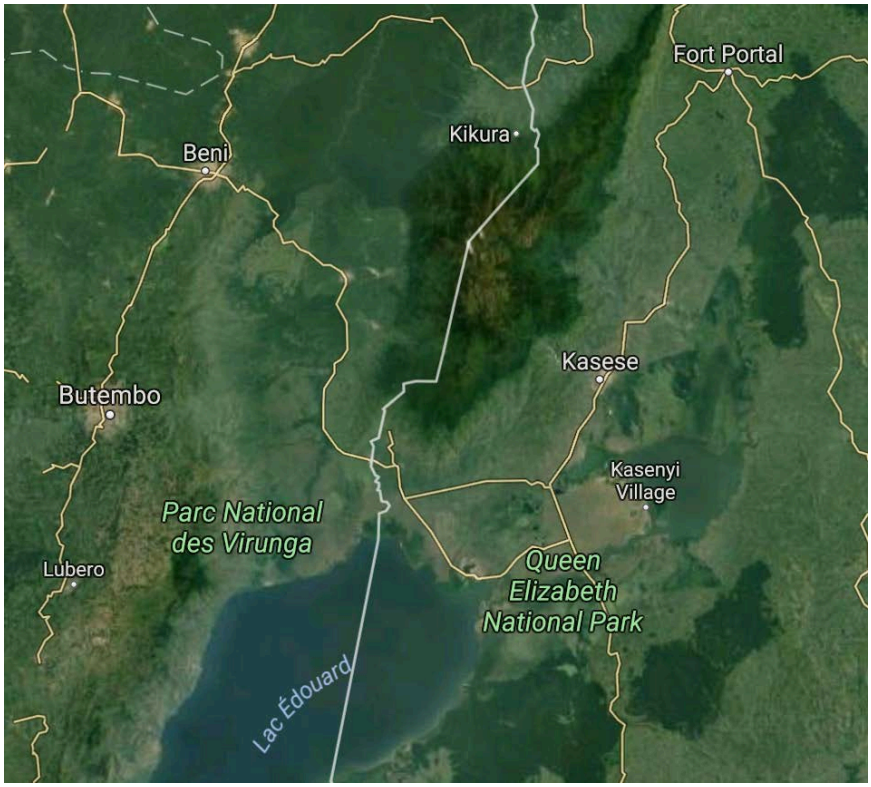


Figure 2: The Uganda-DRC border, with locations of Beni and Butembo, North Kivu, DRC. Image from Google Earth, Accessed: 02 November 2017.



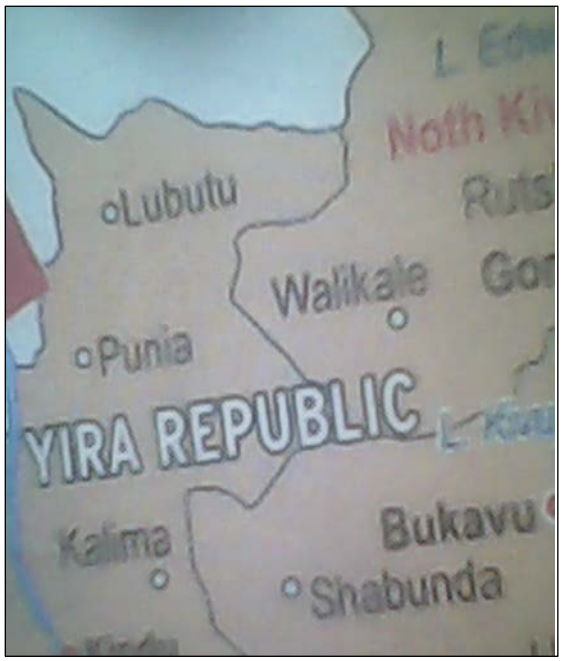


Figure 3 and 4: Photographs given to me of a digital map of the proposed Yira State, or Yira Republic.

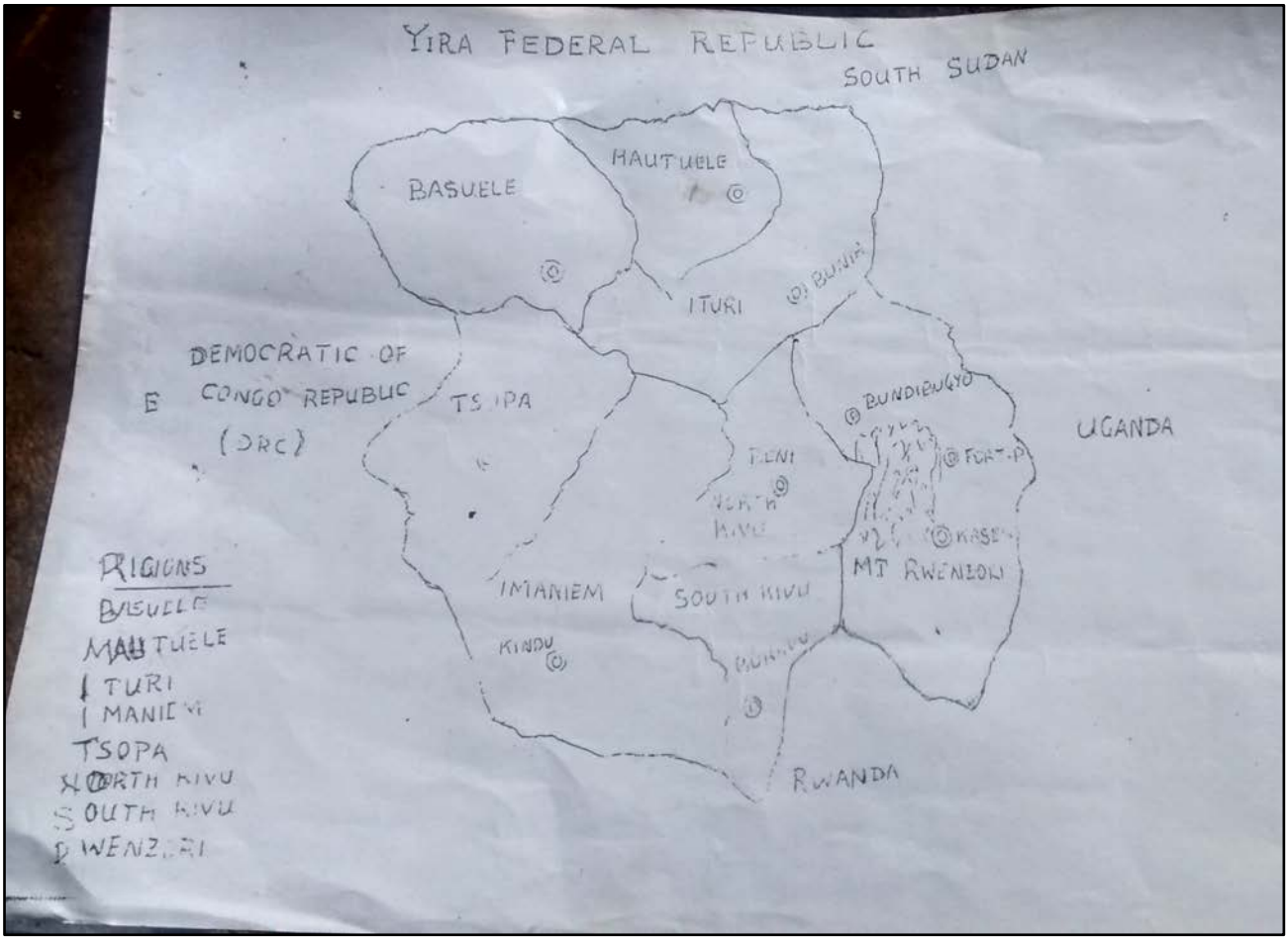


Figure 5: A hand-drawn map of the proposed Yira State or Yira Republic.

Introduction:

Akeethu Kathere, "That which is lost"

In 1960s western Uganda, on the recently-formed border of what is now called the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a man named Isaiah Mukirania became both president and king of a people known as the Bakonzo, and claimed for them a new country of Rwenzururu in the Rwenzori mountains that make up the borderlands. The Bakonzo had experienced a brutal subjugation at the hands of Toro Kingdom with the aid of the British Protectorate government, and the Rwenzururu struggle represented for them a long-awaited freedom from an intolerable situation. Mukirania, his detractors claimed, was an invented king among a people who had never had one. Invented or not, the unrecognized kingdom-state of Rwenzururu remained quasi-independent for twenty years, a long time after Mukirania's death in 1966, when his young son Charles Mumbere Iremangoma succeeded him[1]. A period of negotiation in 1982 between the Ugandan government and Rwenzururu led to King Charles Mumbere descending from the mountains and accepting a scholarship to America in exchange for peace. Rwenzururu was disbanded, and eventually recognised as a "cultural institution" in 2009[2] – alongside Uganda's other "cultural" kingdoms, which had been stripped of their political power in the wake of national independence – with Mumbere as its king (Omusinga). However, the original Rwenzururu kingdom-state is still remembered as a dream of sovereign independence that was tantalisingly close to coming true. As this thesis documents, that dream never really went away.

[1] "Iremangoma" means "the leader of the drum", the drum being a symbol of royalty among a number of central African kingdoms.

[2] This is an official designation by the Ugandan government, which "recognises" certain former monarchies as "cultural institutions", permitting them to exist in a (theoretically) apolitical form.

At this point I must introduce a confusing series of ethnic name-changes. The Bakonzo, the protagonists of the Rwenzururu movement, see themselves as the cultural kin of the Banande of eastern DRC, the ethnic group that predominates in North Kivu province but extends into a number of other regions. (The Banande concur). Both Banande and Bakonzo, particularly those who are more committed to the project of ethno-nationalism, insist that the names "Banande" and "Bakonzo" are not their real names, and that they were originally a united people called the Bayira, a name which many insist they should revive and use instead. At the request of a number of informants, I shall use the name "Bayira" in my own writing. This is despite the fact that many people I quote use "Bakonzo" and "Banande" in their own language, out of habit, or perhaps out of lesser interest in the name change. The use of any of these names is not a neutral act, but I will use "Bayira" for the further reason that the name is part of the ethno-nationalist efforts that this thesis is about. The name for the new state that the secessionists would make is the Yira State.[3] However, if clarifying that I am referring to the people of a singular side of the border, I may use the phrases "Bakonzo-Bayira" or "Banande-Bayira". (In the singular form for the individual person, the prefix "Mu" is the standard form, i.e. Muyira, Mukonzo, etc.)

The Rwenzururu Movement of the 1960s to 1980s has been documented in a number of studies, particularly Doornbos (1970), Syahuka-Muhindo (1994), and Peterson (2009, 2012), whose works will be reviewed in Chapter One. However, the story of Rwenzururu, and the way in which the dream of secession seems to have expanded since the original movement, is becoming of increasing importance to scholars of the Great Lakes, albeit for sobering

[3] The Yira State is the most common name in discourse for the product of imagined secessionism, though the Yira Federal Republic or Yira Republic. is also regularly heard. Media articles and online references about it tend to spell it "Yiira" State or Republic, although I have continued to use the spelling "Yira", following Magezi et al (2004). Whilst it is regularly called "Yira Republic" in writings about it, I will use the name "Yira State" because that was how I most regularly heard its name, and also because, as we shall see, its political design is not entirely republican.

reasons. Recent episodes of violence around the current Rwenzururu cultural institution, particularly the large-scale attacks of the 5th July 2014, and the November 2016 attacks by the Ugandan government on the Rwenzururu palace (discussed in Chapter Six) have highlighted the need for greater understanding of Rwenzururu's legacy and future (see Syahuka-Muhindo and Titeca (2016), Reuss and Titeca (2017)). Meanwhile, the porous nature of the Uganda-Congo border (Titeca, 2009), the felt connection between the Bayira of the two sides (Facci, 2009), and the history of cross-border militant activity (Prunier, 2009, Vlassenroot and Perrot, 2012) mean that Rwenzururu's legacy and activity is far from limited to Uganda.

The Bayira have an expression, "Akeethu kathere", which loosely translates as "that which is lost". A superficial explanation for the phrase is that it refers to the dignity lost by the Bayira under their humiliating colonial-era treatment, and also the loss of their culture under a period of forced cultural assimilation by their Batoro rulers. However, in certain circles of Bayira, the meaning of akeethu kathere is more significant. Muhima, a Muyira friend, eventually revealed its deeper meaning:

> "It means the better way. If you misplace a book, is it you or the book that is misplaced? You are responsible for finding your way… We have lost our culture, our mountain, our deity, so we should go back. The territory is not lost. 99% of Bayira will say that we have lost our territory, but it is not lost, but we must go back to it. But we are not specific what of ours has got lost for security reasons. We use it to mean what has got lost, but we don't specify in the statement."

That which is really "lost" is not only a culture and a sense of self, but their lands and independence, which for a time they had, in a way, attained. The loss of that "state" of Rwenzururu, and the failure to find what they hope for in the state(s) they currently live in, means that the dream of a truly independent state has never left them. For "security reasons", this dream cannot be alluded to directly in the expression, for fear of political reprisals.

However, over time spent with the Bayira, the true aspirations of many for a new independent state unfold, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, always nominally secretive, though never entirely so either. The quasi-mythical Yira State – believed by many to have been promised by Isaiah Mukirania in a divine pact – is in many ways a utopian dream, but that dream is all the more fascinating for how it is grounded in current political reality.

This thesis seeks to confront the question of how the state and the nation, as different but complementary constructs, survive as ideological aspirations, in the midst of postcolonial disillusionment with state governance, and the seeming threats to the sovereign integrity of the nation-state in the 21st Century. A secessionist movement offers us a unique window into how the nation-state, as a desirable vehicle of self-rule, survives and evolves, despite the challenges to its sovereignty in the age of "global flows" (Appadurai, 1990). I use both the terms "secessionist movement" and "ethno-nationalist project", usually to refer to different aspects of these overlapping efforts, but also for lack of a better term, since this is far from an official, united movement. It is made up of numerous collectives of people who see themselves as part of a bigger ethnic polity that must be both culturally re-constituted and then made independent. This thesis examines a number of sociological registers of this movement, to see how they construct an ethno-nationalist identity that portrays them as "naturally" moral and powerful political agents ready for a spectacular role on the global stage, and how they deal with the advantages and trials that the nation-state as a construct, both imagined and real, presents.

For all the scholarship positing the weaknesses of the state in the age of the so-called "neoliberal turn" (e.g. Ferguson, 2006, 2008, Hanlon, 2000) and that arguing that many modes of resistance (particularly in Africa) represent an "exit" from the state (e.g.

Lemarchand, 1992, Mbembe, 2002) new nation-states remain in demand around the world. Appadurai (1990), remarking on a few such demands, writes:

> "In many societies, the nation and state have become one another's projects… while nations… seek to capture or co-opt states and state power, states simultaneously seek to capture and monopolize nationhood… Sikhs, Tamil Sri Lankans, Basques… each of these represent imagined communities which seek to create states of their own or carve pieces out of existing state" (pg. 304).

True that may be, it still raises important questions. For many years, theorists have observed that the realm of "politics" in postcolonial states is seen, and indeed popularly constructed (Gupta, 1995) as a tainted, dirty and immoral zone of activity, one which threatens not only the wellbeing of the national population, but morality itself. This is not only so for Africa (e.g. Ekeh, 1975) but is visible across many nation-states in the postcolonial world (e.g. Spencer, 2007). Certainly this view of government and the political realm held true for the Bayira. It struck me that their hope for a new state jarred paradoxically with daily discourse about the nature of "politics". Below is a sample of some of their statements:

> "Politicians in most cases are liars, because you can use something small to achieve a certain goal, and make people believe it, but you can forget about the repercussions." **Mbusa, a man in his forties in Bundibugyo District.**

> "The reason people love the cultural institution [Rwenzururu Kingdom], it is more neutral than political leadership. When a minister visits a certain subcounty, there will be prior mobilization, lots of security deployments. But when the Rwenzururu Prime Minister visits, people express themselves freely without fearing they will be quoted. But not with a political leader. So these leaders are a bit neutral compared to the elected leaders." **Mbindule, a Rwenzururu kingdom minister.**

> "People here are not satisfied with these politicians, they would prefer it if we had our own state. People will have to shed their blood. Like Jesus, they will have to lay down their lives to something greater. But it must happen. It will happen. These things are not easy, you do not do it in a day. It took South Sudan many, many years of bloodshed and struggle. But we must do it. In Uganda it is difficult to talk about it. But in Congo, where the rule of law is weak, it is easy to talk about it. And people in Congo are even more desperate than us. Because they are being killed. In Uganda if you asked ten Bakonzo if they want a new state, maybe seven will support it. The government is trying to use these divide and rule tactics. The colonial masters divided us, but that international border is nothing to us. Now this government is trying to divide and rule us too." **Nzyabake, a university student in Kasese District.**

> "The problems are caused by the politicians! Because the politicians are looking for where they will benefit from. They don't mind if we fight or kill each other so long as they get what they want." **Mathe, a middle aged farmer in Kasese District.**
>
> "The kingdom does not behave like government, it is more like a church. The kingdom would share the resources with the subjects, without corruption like you hear about in government. But the problem is that government is cheating us!" **Bisogho, a young Rwenzururu kingdom volunteer.**

These statements all exhibit the same contempt of politicians and their morality. One might reasonably suggest that this contempt of their current national politicians explained the Bayira desire for secessionism, rather than mystifying it. To be sure there is an element of truth in that, although in fact this wariness of state politics is, as we shall see, carried forward, even into the designs for their own imagined state. Yet the above statements also show that their cynicism of "politicians" is not limited to a single political party. It is not particular members or "levels" of state government (Gupta, 1995) that draw their distaste, but the category of "politicians" as a whole. The Bayira in Uganda are (mostly) opposed to the current President Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM) party, and overwhelmingly favour the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) opposition. Yet, even in their pro-FDC political engagement, or in support for individual candidates, there remains a resigned cynicism that politics will inevitably corrupt the best of people.[4] Engagement remains worthwhile, but expectations of political behaviour remain low. Corruption, from the sample of quotes above, is but one ill of politics, and violence is a more serious one, caused again by unscrupulous politicians prepared to stir and exploit tensions. "Politicians", regardless of party allegiance, are expected to maximise their personal gains regardless of the consequences for the people. In effect, the realm of state "politics" and its actors is

[4] During a local election in Kasese, I ran into a friend on her way to vote for the incumbent candidate. I expressed surprise given that she had been complaining about corruption within the district administration two days before. She replied that one had to give a politician at least one term to satisfy his family and personal network's demands for state resources, after which he might do some work for the district.

discursively constructed as one of individual avarice, deceit and violence. Indeed, as I shall endeavour to show through the course of the thesis, this construction of state politics is even anticipated and reproduced in secessionist designs.

This distaste for politics amidst secessionist ambitions raises numerous questions, not least that, if peoples' view of the practice of politics is so low (even to the point where a new nation-state will not necessarily cure its ills), why does such a new nation-state persist in being the desired form of escaping the current one? Lemarchand (1992) argued that resistance movements could deal with their grievances with "voicing" them to the state or "exiting" from it, the latter of which could take multiple forms, such as millenarian spiritual movements. Yet the idea of a new nation-state (as a form through which exit from the current one could occur) has a tenacious grip, not only in this case, but in numerous other examples in Africa and beyond. If we are to understand why this is, it is necessary to separately examine the constructions of the "state" and of the "nation", to see what it is that the Bayira, and separatist movements more broadly, find to be indispensable about this political form, even as its power in this century is perceived to be crumbling. I begin by assessing the literature on ethnicity in and around nationalism, as well as that on African secessionism, to draw out the relevant theoretical directions around these constructs.

Ethnicity and Ethno-Nationalism

"Nationalism" as a stand-alone term is unwieldy for our purposes, since it may stipulate the nation-building projects of state governments, or grassroots movements' politicisations of identities. Whilst some scholars subscribe to more centralised ideas of the spread of nationalisms (e.g. Gellner, 1983), particular views of the process tend to arise given the

scholar's area of focus, or indeed their particular case study (Pratt, 2003). For instance, whilst Hansen and Stepputat (2001) see the development of a shared national identity as a "language of governance" that defines a nation-state, they do not take that to be the sole mode of developing nationalist sentiment. Anderson (1983) argued that national "imagined communities" became constructed with a sovereign at the centre through the scaling up of a worldview in which social groups were inevitably hierarchical, although the workings of that imagination could not be created by sovereign power alone.

Anthropological approaches to nationalism have largely centred on the construction of an identity, an "ethno-nationalism", which is more relevant to this particular case. I am disinclined to try and distinguish "ethnic" and "national" identities on any more substantial grounds than the forms through which they are politicised, and indeed those forms are themselves often ambiguous relative to each other. Thus I shall here review helpful approaches to the construction of these overlapping themes, and outline my own approach to Yira ethno-nationalism. In the course of doing so, however, I wish to suggest that looking only at the substance of the "nation" that embodies identity is insufficient for understanding secessionist movements. This is because creating a "state" and practicing "politics" is not only essential to successful secession, but these "politics" also presents a moral challenge to the identity that the "nation" is meant to safeguard, one which deeply affects the form of their secession.

What makes an ethnic identity has been debated throughout the history of anthropology, though particularly after anthropologists began to study the effects of the colonial and postcolonial state on the identities of their research subjects. Arguments that a consistent set of social practices and values became an identity only after being politicised (Cohen, 1974),

or whether the cultural "content" of an identity was less significant than the endurance of ethnic self-identification (Barth, 1969) were inroads into the study of ethnicity as fluid and politically charged. For my part, I would rather follow Farndon's (1996) lead, which asserts that there is no exceptional quality to ethnic identity, but it is a difference like any other, constructed with what is at hand in its socio-political context. That said, three valuable aspects of certain anthropological works on ethnicity should be acknowledged for their usefulness, both generally and for our purposes here – those which highlight ethnicity as a *moral* construct, as a *historical* one, and as a *natural* one.

Ethnicity's political relevance and its moral connotations are mutually formative processes, operating in:

> "…a dialectic of articulation between a local system and its encompassing context" (Comaroff, 1982, pg. 146).

For instance, Geschiere (1996) convincingly argues that the particular stereotypes that ethnic groups have of each other are moral commentaries on the nature of particular social inequalities. Lonsdale's (1992) approach to moral ethnic renewal among the Kikuyu in their colonial resistance efforts illustrates this well. Moral renewal was framed as a necessary aspect of political emancipation. Kikuyu leaders:

> "…argued that in a colonial world of unequal collective identities the only way to overcome others' disdain was to renovate the moral fibre of a wider communal, as much as filial, duty. And this community had to be newly conceived" (Lonsdale, 1996, pg. 28).

Lonsdale termed the morality that Kikuyu ethnic and political leaders cultivated "civic virtue". The advantage of civic virtue for Kikuyu "unity" was that it allowed individuals to distinguish themselves irrespective of socio-economic class, and so was intended to overcome the internal divisions that the new (urban) economy was presenting. Certainly the

cultivation of ethnicity as a form of virtue and dignity in a marginalised context is a fact of Yira identity production. Many Bayira do fear increasing individualism, social stratification, and abandonment by their wealthy progeny in favour of a life in the city or abroad, as well as the corrupting effects of wealth, particularly its potential to encourage treachery to their cause by corrupting trusted individuals. They also greatly worry about the effects of globalised cultural currents, especially portrayals of western lifestyles, and fashions that they believe promote sexual promiscuity and erode gender norms.

"Culture", furthermore, has come to acquire a self-explanatory moral value, particularly given the vogue of NGOs wishing to incorporate "culture" into their developmental models. I would regularly hear the English word "culture" in a speech otherwise conducted in the vernacular Lhukonzo (or Luyira) language, at both cultural events and in ordinary conversation (and even occasionally in the speeches of people who otherwise spoke no English). This is not because there is no similar (if not identical) word in Lhukonzo, but rather, I suggest, is indicative of the self-affirming moral value that an internationalised notion of "culture" has acquired. As a result, there is substantial potential for "culture" to serve as a morally enforcing tool of governmentality (Adebanwi, 2016), by dint of its "virtue". The word itself becomes a justification for trying to regulate sexual, ritual, economic and personal conduct within the vector of ethnic identity, particularly when it is also associated with tangible political and material gain.

There is thus a strong moral dimension to Yira identity production, but there is also a temporal one, for which studies of historical ethnicity serve us well. Lentz (2013) reminds us that an excessive focus on the instrumentalization of history risks leading us back to the "presentist" trap of historical anthropology, which assumes that history is an endlessly

malleable resource for political leverage. She rightly demands that the study of ethnicity be situated with an eye on history's formative influences, as well as its potential for political expediency. Nevertheless, she also argues that both oral and written historical records, particularly after the boom of locally produced ethnographies around African independence, allow us to see:

> "…new forms of self-representation under the influence of a written culture which compels people to embed their communities in a wider geographical and historical context" (Lentz, 2006, pg. 11).

Such writings can reveal how contemporary influences affect the construction of a historical identity. Law (1996) shows that Christianity was a formative aspect of Yoruba ethno-nationalism. The local Yoruba scholars producing texts on Yoruba history suggested that their rapid conversion to Christianity was evidence of a distinctively "high level of traditional Yoruba culture" (pg. 79). These locally produced histories also often reveal a form of corrective self-presentation, an attempt to overcome derogatory stereotypes inflicted on them in the recent past. For instance, Leopold (2005) writes of Lugbara attempts to dispel a colonial idea of them as a "war-like" people. This practice represents what Eshun (2003) refers to as "counter-memory", a post-colonial effort by African scholars to dispel the derogatory historical meanings attached to Africa and its people by colonial rulers and writers. Such an exercise in historical writing is thus undertaken with present and future concerns in mind. It is in a similar spirit that the Bayira, amongst other cultural revivalists, approach building their understandings of their past.

Ethno-historical narratives tend to idealise a "purer", authentic past that has been corrupted, and must be rediscovered (though, as Mbembe (2002b) points out, this has the compounding effect of "racializing" ethnic difference). As Malkki (1995) points out, the language of "naturalness" has a subversive effect on the concept of a multi-ethnic nation; it implied that

some ethnicities had greater, more "natural" claims to nationhood and its associated rights than others. The second is the need to "naturalise" ethnicity in order to protect its recognised rights and properties, and claims rooted in distant history are inevitably more "natural" in appearance, and less subject to contestation. However, as most famously documented by Geschiere (2009), rendering ethnicity "natural" is a difficult and dangerous game.

The claim to be the "sons of the soil", autochthony, is in theory the most indisputably "naturalised" claim to territorial and citizenship rights, which, by extension, lessens the rights of non-autochthons, or allogènes. Yet despite the seeming certainty of the autochthony claim, the impossibility of trying to verify descent "from the soil" also sows tremendous uncertainty, and creates fissions between claimants as the status of "autochthon" gets ever more exclusive. Such notions of autochthony matter for the Bayira because, as we shall explore in the next chapter, the ritual aspect of their cultural practice, and so their ethnic reunification, is exercised in relation to the land. Consider these words from Bwambale, a Muyira academic who is a geographer by training and pursuing his PhD.

> "What is it about the Bakonzo that is special, that they want to keep us ignorant? Why do they not want us to appear on the world level? What is the secret? There is something special here. This mountain is our inheritance from God. It is a very incredible environment where both the hottest and the coldest points on earth meet! This is not a coincidence. God gave us this special land. God plans for every tribe. Our hydrology makes us special. No other mountain looks like that. The Nile comes from Rwenzori. The Albertine has fuel, but people here don't know they're sleeping on it… In 1954 oil was discovered, but the whites kept it from us. So in 1986, Museveni found out there was oil…. There are also minerals. If we had technology, we'd be one of the richest countries in the world. But because of these riches, people, each and every one, have come to destroy the Bakonzo."

Bwambale is not personally a believer in secessionism, though is well aware of the desire to secede – his objection to a new state is that the breakup of a small country like Uganda would not be cost-effective. He is particularly interested, like a great deal of the Bayira, in the potential of scientifically studying cultural knowledge for technological development. His

view of the Bakonzo-Bayira as the people divinely connected to a unique environment is evident in the above quote. We see that the exceptional qualities and powers that the Bayira believe lie within in their culture are reflected, in their eyes, in the extraordinary ecological environment that they live in, which makes for a natural relationship between one and the other. However, this extraordinariness is also what opens the way to danger from malicious Others who wish to control their power, and their land. Moreover, those others are believed to have a terrifying power to corrupt the Bayira themselves and turn them against each other. There is thus a strong conspiratorial element not only within the Bayira political consciousness, but, resultantly, in how this revived Yira ethnicity is being constructed.

By way of introduction to this point, I quote from an interview with Muhindo, a man in his early forties who is a teacher, an amateur historical researcher, a spirit medium, and an avid secessionist. He describes a categorization of Bayira according to their loyalty to the secessionist cause, the original project of the kingdom of Rwenzururu. ("Munyarwenzururu" (singular) or "Banyarwenzururu" (plural) are also names frequently used to describe inhabitants of the kingdom of Rwenzururu. They refer to the Bayira identity, but with specific reference to the Ugandan kingdom of Rwenzururu. Isaiah Mukirania was the original secessionist leader, king, and president of Rwenzururu, a character we shall meet properly in the next chapter.)

> "A Munyarwenzururu is a person who believes what Isaiah Mukirania did was right, and that he was the first king of the Bakonzo. That category of Banyarwenzururu is "Banyarwenzururu Hene Hene, or Nzongole", both of those words mean pure… Hene Hene know who they are; they are Bakonzo. They are proud their culture, and they know their objective. There is a second category. "Banyarwenzururu Ndabanguli". That category already knows everything, that Mukirania was the first king, but they are confusing people. They are opportunists.... they know the history, but they want to take the opposite direction. Ndabanguli means people who confuse. I know that this beer is [the brand] Eagle, but one of those will say it is Pilsener. These people have no loyalty. The third category is Banyarwenzururu Ndaghanli. They believe everything is false. They lack knowledge and they do not want to learn. In history they collaborate with enemies."

In this categorisation, dangers are close to home, since members of one's own ethnic group can either be loyal comrades, ambivalent deniers, or dangerous traitors. This categorisation thus implies that ethnic identity is not just a given from the sharing of a language, a "culture", or even a matter of self-identification. Politicised ethnicity is also thus a matter of degree, and commitment to a cause. Whilst the unwilling and the potentially treacherous are perhaps their ethnic brethren, they are only so by a technicality, rather than in spirit. Such a degree is enforced through a number of social registers; of practice of "good cultural behaviour", as it is normally put, or of knowledge of the "culture" that the Bayira feel has been lost to their violent colonial and postcolonial history, and of loyalty to a cause that sometimes goes unspoken – that of secessionism. Though many Bayira express sympathy for secessionism, and the dream of Isaiah Mukirania has never truly left them, those who distinguish themselves by taking action, of one sort or another, are those who tend to classify themselves, and their fellows, as "Banyarwenzururu Hene Hene". Yira ethnic identity, though it is to some extent spoken of in racialized terms (Mbembe, 2002b), is thus also refracted through a prism of loyalty.

Appadurai (2013), writing of nationalism, says:

> "...we should not ask how sentiments of the small worlds of family, marriage, and kinship can be extended upwards to the scale of the nation, but rather the reverse question; how does the nation succeed in suffusing the world of one's near and dear, in spite of its large and remote characteristics?" (pg. 109).

No doubt the factors which implant that fervour in one's kin vary between nations, but I believe this categorisation that Muhindo described may give us an answer that would be applicable in numerous cases. If, as he says, people are either true patriots, ambivalent bystanders or traitors, then one's relationship to the nationalist cause is not just a political

opinion, but a matter of defining one's moral self amid one's closest fellows, within a narrow set of choices. It is in light of the above that I tend to use the term "ethno-nationalism", because it strikes me that here the ethnic self is being constructed in referent to explicitly political, indeed national goals, as much as it is in moral, historical and natural terms (all of which also have bearings on nationalism). The more dedicated ethno-nationalists, as above, distinguish their true ethnic brethren not only through language, culture and so on, but through their dedication to a political end.

Thus in analysing Yira ethno-nationalism, I shall be attempting to highlight the historical, moral and natural dimensions of identity construction, and remain cognisant of the fact that appeals to the substance of the past is grounded and created in tandem with the concerns of the present and future. As Bayart (2005) points out, traditions are not so much invented as they are "recycled" and adapted to contemporary circumstances. Yet, I want to posit that examining ethno-"nationalism" should not be the limit of studies of self-determination movements. For the Bayira have a more ambitious plan than reviving an "authentic culture". They wish to secede and create not just a new nation, but a new nation-state. They recognise that they cannot determine their political future as a nation without having a state to accompany it. I will begin this discussion with a literature review of studies of African secessionism, with the particular view of highlighting that self-determination movements act with a global audience in mind, and know that it is not only domestic but international support that they require. This requires confronting the realm of the "state" as well as the "nation.

Secessionism in Africa: A Literature Review

Anthropology has played a surprisingly limited role in the existing studies of African secessionism per se. The discipline has actively engaged in studies of ethno-nationalism and ethnic mobilisation, and has also produced numerous insightful works on popular construction of and engagement with the state. Yet in studies of self-determination, it is rare to find works that engage with both domains. Therefore this literature review is a cross-disciplinary tour of material on African secessionism, which allows us a wider window into the most important aspects for study.

Political scientists have addressed the matter of African secessionism in statist terms in greater depth, and one of their principal questions is why secessionist movements in Africa are, seemingly, relatively rare. Englebert and Hummel (1995) state that Africa has had comparatively fewer secessionist movements than other continents, despite high levels of factors associated with separatism, and high levels of other kinds of political violence. They suggest that this is so because local elites have greater material prospects if they continue to leverage their influence within the state, rather than if they attempt to secede. These authors' focus is, however, limited to movements that erupted into a classifiably large-scale secessionist conflict or those that were successful. Given that numerous secessionist movements do exist and mobilise at lower (albeit less impactful) levels, it would be misleading to suggest that a proportionally lower number of large scale secessionists conflicts reflects a lack of secessionist interests across the continent.[5] Small-scale violence likely accompanies the existence of a number of such movements, including Yira ethno-

[5] In a surprising illustration of not only the large numbers of obscure movements, but also their connectivity and ability to publicise their desires, a recent article documented a number of lawyers protesting outside the US Embassy in Nigeria. The protestors were demanding US recognition of Biafra and then listed in solidarity over twenty other African secessionist struggles, including "Yiira Republic" in Uganda. See Ameh (2017).

nationalism, so one's conclusions on secessionist proclivity in Africa may well be affected by how one defines "conflict".

This rather underscores a point that Simpson (2014) makes around the Biafran secessionist attempt: that in cases of secessionism, history is very much written by the victors, since secessionist movements tend to be viewed as illegitimate on the international stage until after their successful secession, upon which the secession is recast as justifiable in international language. This revolves around the difficulty of applying the human rights notion of "self-determination", especially in Africa where the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had decided in its founding charter to retain the integrity of colonial borders. International recognition, we shall see in this case, matters a great deal on both emotional and practical levels to would-be secessionists, and my own informants, had they access to representatives from international organisations, would be devastated to hear that their claims were considered illegitimate, for the idea of a sympathetic "international community" that has the power to intervene (even if it has not done so yet) is a tremendous source of hope. Just as one cannot exclude the global when examining the local (Ferguson, 2006), one cannot understand the enduring power of the "national" without the "international".

Nevertheless, it seems that in certain circumstances such recognition is not an essential commodity for internal legitimacy, and domestic support is often sufficient to keep a nationalist movement energised. Even in the rare cases where external powers were aiding secessionism, grassroots support is critical. As Larmer and Kennes (2014) argue for the case of Katanga, whilst it is often seen as an effort by Belgians and local elites, said local elites were required to play to a rhetoric of collective tradition and Katangese nationalist sentiment for success. In the case of Somaliland, Pegg and Kolstø (2014) find that the Somaliland

government has successfully provided comparative security for its citizens, and thus enjoys a high level of legitimacy. However, it continues to mimic the symbols of sovereign statehood and to campaign for international recognition. For the population, however, national legitimacy is less a matter of the spread of symbolic governance than it is about the sheer efficacy of that governance. Pragmatism is also a powerful sell in Yira ethno-nationalism, and indeed something that its proponents purport to offer at times, through exploiting the failures of the existing state and insinuating their own alternatives. The "state" matters in driving the imagined nation, particularly the shortcomings of the existing one.

A more sociological consideration of secessionism and nationalism is found in Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Mhlanga (2013), who argue that claims for self-determination were bound to be exacerbated by the OAU's commitment to maintaining colonial borders, and that recent cases of secessionism such as South Sudan vindicate theorists that argued a "re-tribalization" of Africa was inevitable, given the structural inequalities created within colonial states, and their practice of "race-making" within defined territories. They refer to nationalist sentiments based on these enclaves as "the northern problem", which they define as such:

> "The 'northern problem' does not imply a geographical place but a state of being a particular national identity that considers itself deserving some degree of or total right to self-determination. The term 'northern problem' encapsulates the feelings of those minority groups which were historically disadvantaged by the random slicing and drawing of African borders by colonialists and later by the OAU decision on the inviolability of colonial boundaries" (pg. 15).

Ylönen (2013) builds on this analysis with reference to South Sudan, since in the eyes of Khartoum, it represented a threat to a unified and Islamised Sudanese state, and thus the Sudanese government continued to violate the peace agreements that had led to a federal area of South Sudan. The fear that this inspired among the South Sudanese was what led to their demands for secessionism rather than federalism. He also argues that post-independence

political competition in South Sudan is violent because of the historical involvement of the state in forcible assimilation. These perspectives thus recognize the role of marginalization in the development of ethno-nationalist identities, making the valuable point that claims seemingly based on "identity" are rarely if ever formed in isolation from conditions of political-economic inequality. The "northern problem", as Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Mhlanga (2013) put it, is also insightful comparatively, insofar as it also shows the importance of a shared sense of identity and cultural values for effective nationalist mobilisation.

This need was also identified earlier by Ranger (1968), who criticised scholarly attempts to treat "political" nationalist movements (i.e. those that operated with recognisable, secular apparatus such as parties or armed groups), separately from "primary" resistance movements that mobilised around cultural or religious sensibilities. He recognised that successful "political" nationalist movements became (sometimes by trial and error) cognizant of the need to appeal to concepts of shared historical memory, and that such "primary" resistance movements were often appealed to in support of that goal. A converse example can be seen in Frankland and Noble's (1996) examination of the Marxist-Leninist Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (EPLF). They argue that the EPLF's explicitly feminist doctrine alienated many potential sources of domestic support, and thus the EPLF later attempted to harmonise their goals with shows of support for national culture. Nationalists, as we shall see, are conscious of what the "international community" (i.e. development and international organisations and donor states) expect of those they engage with, and how these concepts can also conflict with local values. This set of "international" expectations is performed to as far as possible, but often with artful shifts in the usage of certain concepts to render them locally meaningful.

In a similar vein, Wilson (2015) studies the practice of law-making by the government-in-exile of the unrecognised nation of Western Sahara. In their attempt to build a unified Sahrawi identity among the population of refugees it governs, they have created a legal code amalgamated from aspects of the customary law of the numerous ethnic groups that are represented among their people. They are thus attempting to "de-tribalise" their "national" legal code. This legal code is one of the many technologies of statehood that the government uses to try and levy international support and recognition, although in practice, the refugees they govern tend to selectively, but discreetly, practice the customary legal codes of their own ethnicity. This study is one of a regrettably small number dealing with the performative nation-statehood of unrecognized nations in Africa. Ebolo Elong (2013) offers up an another interesting case: the performative nation-statehood of the Federal Republic of Southern Cameroon (FDRSC) that exists mostly online, since nationalist movements advocating for the Republic's secessionism were designated terrorist organisations under the Biya government. Such "cyber nationalism" (pg. 149) highlights that the performativity of nationhood need not be large-scale or backed by the resources of political and international office to effectively rally at least some secessionist sympathisers. The FDRSC has a consular website and other symbols of national independence that can be relocated online, displaying the tendency that is mirrored in this study of Bayira ethno-nationalism, to insinuate a power associated with symbolic markers of an internationally recognised state and, as we shall see, the "international community" itself.

The majority of the above sources, from a variety of disciplines, concur that nationalist actors are, and must be, cognizant of what makes a state in "global" terms as much as what makes a nation, in the sense of an "imagined community". As I shall show in this case, and other authors such as Ebolo Elong (2013) above show, this goes for small-scale secessionist

movements as well as larger and better-known ones. Certainly in the case of the Bayira, we are not dealing with a united movement that is politically engaged at high national or international levels of politics (despite what some of its supporters would like to insinuate). Thus this study is one of ethnic nation-building and performative nation-statehood.

There are a small number of studies of performative nationhood in Africa, most notably Malkki's work (1995, 1997) on the imagined nationalism of Hutu refugees, which has been of invaluable help in this research. However, neither Malkki, nor the other authors reviewed above, have examined the tricky relationship between the idealized, pure construct of the nation and the amoral, dangerous connotations of the state that must accompany it in cases of ethno-nationalism or secessionism. For if there is one thing that unites all these reviewed cases of self-determination and secessionism, it is the fact that the ambitions of the actors in question were globally oriented as well as locally. They understood that they could not do without the apparatus and symbols of international geopolitics, bound up in the organs of states. To follow Pratt (2003), "culture", through its (re)discovery and the propagation of its practices, is being politicised towards an end of nation-statehood, and thus the "identity" aspect of ethnic mobilisation is inseparable from the political-economic apparatuses that spur this identity production.

Yet as we have already seen, the discussions of state "politics" that emanate from those bureaucratic structures are far from positive in the Bayira's tellings. They have no objection to the idea of a nation, as an imagined, pure and moral community, but the politics of the state are almost inevitably a source of moral degeneracy. A few writings on secessionism have commented on the relative moral meanings of the nation and the state. Spencer (2007) describes how the descriptions of South Asian secessionist fighters of the state that they were

fighting to make were always extremely vague, and this was because of the tainted image that the politics of statecraft had. Thus, for the fighters,

> "…the sublime vision of the state-to-be retains its purity because it is always and endlessly deferred" (pg. 142).

Such a differentiation between an ideological nation and an immoral state also inhabits the discourses of political opposition leaders in the region, who try to:

> "…separate the nation and its cultures from the realm of regional statecraft, and to adopt a moral, anti-political critique of political leaders" (ibid, pg. 142).

Navaro-Yashin (2012), in an ethnography of the unrecognized state of Turkish-occupied Northern Cyprus, shows that this imagined and performed state is an affective construction that, though it creates engaged state subjects (insofar as there is tremendous competition for lucrative civil service positions), those subjects also experience tremendous apathy towards the state for its very futility, and so national identity is performed in and around state organs, but is not ideologically imbibed. One might also compare different authors writing on nation and state in the same country. For instance, Gupta (1995) shows that corruption and scandal are key discursive substances with largely negative connotations that construct the Indian state as a multi-layered, bureaucratic entity, but the effective result is very different to that of the Indian nation that Appadurai (2013) recalls as a mythologised entity that permeates social identity in an altogether more positive light.

The Bayira's tainted image of "politics", the realm of avarice, individualism and violence, is also the moral antithesis of the "culture" that they wish to revive. Nevertheless, we shall also see that they have a global as well as a domestic audience in mind, and, like the above discussions of secessionism, they are savvy enough of international politics to know what they cannot do without. In this light, I will proceed to describe an illustrative framework that

I will use to analyse the creative design of the hypothetical Yira State and the identity being (re)constructed in the workings of Yira ethno-nationalism, designs which aim to manage this potential moral quandary.

Revisiting The "Two Publics"

Two distinct spheres of influence affect the discursive (and sometimes written or performed) construction of the imagined Yira State. These are the domain of what is considered to be authentically "Yira", including; "traditional culture", pious and conservative behavior, traditional gender roles, spiritual intimacy, and particularly the magical and spiritual powers associated with that spiritual relationship. As conveyed in the expression "Akeethu Kathere", these things, along with an implied political independence, are believed to have been "lost" and so must be redefined, recovered and made common practice once again. The second sphere of influence constitutes the powerful, desirable, but morally circumspect products and aspirations that are "global", "western", imported and foreign. They include status symbols and expensive technologies, imported Abrahamic religions, formal education, aspirational lifestyles and political influence.

The latter influences are similarly conceived in relation to the former as the apparatus of the "state" is conceived relative to the "nation". Formal education, government jobs and expensive technologies are enticing, insofar as they represent prosperity and status. The secessionists do not just want to create any state, but they envisage a high-tech, prosperous, indeed futuristic one, which will be the exception to the rule of African states having lower positions in the global rankings of inequality (Ferguson, 2006). They also want global recognition of their state and to take their place within international powers, and thus, as

pragmatists, they know they will require the tools of statehood, education and technology to attain it. This is not to suggest that the Bayira conceive of themselves and their "culture" as ill-suited to the latter domain. The opposite is true, for as we shall see, the ethno-national identity that they create of their culture portrays them as "natural" scientists, intellectuals and religious believers. Rather, they wish for the best of both worlds, and design their ethno-nationalism and their future state accordingly.

Still, government jobs, formal education, imported religions and prosperity also have dangerous associations for the Bayira. They are the source of cultural loss, individualism, misfortune, corruption and even betrayal of one's fellows. They are those things which cause the younger generation to abandon their traditions and their social responsibilities and flee to the cities in search of prestigious lifestyles. Thus there is a parallel between the images of these two constituent spheres of influence, and the relative moral associations of "nation" and "state". The substance of the moral, authentic ethnic identity that makes the "national" Bayira imagined community, is presented with both opportunity and risk in its encounters with the imported "state" and its associated products, the formal education and the aspirational lifestyles seen in the flows of globalisation. The secessionists do not just want to create any state, but they envisage a high-tech, prosperous, indeed futuristic one, which will be the exception to the rule of African states having lower positions in the global rankings of inequality (Ferguson, 2006). The tools for political emancipation, global recognition and aspirational lifestyles lie at least partly in the latter, and the Bayira are keen to embrace the opportunities that they represent, but wish to avoid the moral pitfalls that will undermine the ethno-national body. The combination and separation of these domains are considered and managed by the Bayira within all aspects of their ethno-nationalist and secessionist efforts.

Africanist readers may recognize echoes of what Peter Ekeh termed, in 1975, “the two publics”. Ekeh argued that, contrary to the western state, where a state’s behavior must for the most part obey the moral logics in the private realm, in postcolonial Africa:

> “…there are two public realms… with different types of moral linkages to the private realm. At one level is the public realm in which primordial groupings, ties, and sentiments influence and determine the individual's public behavior. I shall call this the primordial public because it is closely identified with primordial groupings, sentiments, and activities, which nevertheless impinge on the public interest. The primordial public is moral and operates on the same moral imperatives as the private realm. On the other hand, there is a public realm which is historically associated with the colonial administration and which has become identified with popular politics in post-colonial Africa. It is based on civil structures: the military, the civil service, the police, etc. Its chief characteristic is that it has no moral linkages with the private realm. I shall call this the civic public. The civic public in Africa is amoral and lacks the generalized moral imperatives operative in the private realm and in the primordial public” (pg. 92).

I do not wish to embrace Ekeh’s model unproblematically. For one thing, his distinction between two wholly separate moralities is, at least for the Bayira, an exaggeration. Though they are thoroughly cynical of the realm of state politics, i.e. the civic public, they are unsatisfied by the fact that they cannot expect what they consider moral behaviour from the civic public, and attribute this to a certain extent to their history of marginalisation. Indeed, as I shall argue, they often use normative, liberal rhetorics of how governance should work in criticism of the state they live in. This said, they remain very wary of the domain of “politics” as a whole, insofar as they recognise that the work of governance will inevitably involve immoral acts, and this goes for their hypothetical state too.

Nor is the non-state public, what Ekeh terms the “primordial” public, uninhibited by moral infractions or individual transgressions. Nevertheless, the concept of “two publics” is tremendously useful in examining how the Bayira navigate aspirations for a political community and possible statehood, since it reflects the problem at the heart of fighting for new nation-states amid political cynicism. I thus use the “two publics” as an illustrative tool

throughout. However, whilst I retain the serviceable term of "civic public" to refer to the realm of statecraft, I will substitute "primordial public" for either the term "ritual public" or "cultural public", depending on context. "Cultural public" because the (English) word "culture" is widely used among Bayira ethno-nationalists today, to refer to both the practices of an authentic traditional "culture" that they believe they have lost and must revive, and more broadly to the substance behind a common ethno-nationalist identity.[6]

To explain my periodic employment of the term "ritual public", I will refer back to the "technologies" of nation building itself. I use the term of "technologies" partly with inspiration from Adebanwi (2016), who argues that Ekeh's "two publics" thesis correctly identified the problematic application of normative political morality to the "civic public", given the limits of practical "self-determination" allowed by colonial rule. However, Adebanwi argues that this is better elaborated through a Foucauldian lens of governmentality, given that separate "technologies of rule" were used by colonial regimes in the state and in modes of indirect rule. This continues to be applicable in post-colonial politics because:

> "…colonial technologies of domination produced certain mentalities of rule in the (post)colony which have generated particular kinds of 'conduct of (mis-)conduct', as well as certain forms of 'counter- conduct'" (pg. 9).

Thus we continue to see, for instance, African resistance movements based on identities that have taken on:

> "…thematics of identity and difference, as classically exemplified in the master-bondsman relationship, is surreptitiously reappropriated by the ex-colonized" (Mbembe, 2002b, pg. 244).

[6] I will periodically place the word "culture" in inverted commas in my own discussion, to indicate a self-consciousness in its usage, as a product that the Bayira envision in a certain, often rather functional way. I do not mean this so much in the marketable sense that Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) describe. Rather, in the sense that the Bayira ethno-nationalists often use the word, it is a catch-term for an irreducible and extraordinary character of their people, one which, by its extraordinariness, gives them magico-spiritual advantages that could have endless political usages.

(Certainly this is a feature of aspects of Yira ethno-nationalism). For current purposes, though, let us consider which "technologies of rule" matter in the creation of these publics.

The myriad "technologies" involved in nationalism and nation-building have been recognised in numerous works, such as Anderson's (1983) focus on print media and linguistic monopolies, and Gellner's (1983) on education. However, it is necessary to look in both domains of influence, i.e. both publics, if we are to recognise a wider variety of technologies at work in Yira ethno-nationalism. "Language" certainly remains important, but the study of the languages of nation building in this day and age must go far beyond the spread of a single vernacular tongue. For the "languages of governance" (Hansen and Stepputat, 2001), those practical and symbolic discourses of power of a nation state, and also the languages of international "governance", especially those espoused by development organisations, are deployed as tools for building of an "imagined community" by the Bayira.

Crucially, though, we also see indigenous technologies, the codes of "culture", and especially the technology of ritual, being used in a process of unification and synchronisation. I shall examine how this works in detail in the following chapter, but briefly, the Bayira today believe that their devastating experiences under colonial rule, and their division into two countries after the border of Uganda and Congo was created, fractured what was once a united and prosperous ethnic entity with formidable magico-spiritual power. It is this united community, and these powers, that they seek to recreate. This is thus the "cultural" or "ritual" public. "Cultural" because, as we shall see, the necessity of restoring "good cultural behaviour" among the populations on both sides of the border is seen as imperative, and, I shall argue, a mode of restoring relationships with the spirit world that are perceived as damaged. In re-instating an "authentic" cultural character to the Bayira through enforcing

practices that define that character, the Yira ethno-nationalists are partaking in the "cultural work" (Peel, 1984) of naturalising a political project by recourse to historical and spiritual authority. In the restoration of these spiritual relationships lies the capacity to recover the extraordinary powers that have been lost to them. It is a "ritual" public because, not only does such a restoration of spiritual relations require proper and regular ritual practice (which has been damaged over the years by colonial interference and the influence of imported Abrahamic religions), but also because it is the synchronisation of ritual practice across their imagined community that is seen as crucial for their power and unification.

Moreover, though, I shall argue that the construction of both the "civic" and the "cultural" or "ritual" Yira publics require some synchronisation with each other. That is, not only do the Bayira recognise the practical uses of tools of bureaucratic state governance (the civic public), but, in a careful and proper relation to the practices and technologies of the cultural public, these tools have the ability to enhance the latter. This pattern also holds for cultural practices and powers. The domain of knowledge and education is particularly revealing in this light. If cultural and ritual knowledge is the substance of the pure, untainted "national" community, the imported models of schooling and foreign technologies are akin to the "civic public". They are desirable in many ways, and have tremendous potential to be applied to the "development" (my informants' word) of cultural and ritual "technologies", although care must be taken to protect the moral character of the former from the corrupting influences of the latter.

We might consider the careful synchronization of these two realms and their associated technologies a "temporal synchronization". This can be thought of as an earthier, politically tailored form of Eshun's (2003) "counter-memory", a re-addressing of the political and

temporal meanings attached to societies and their components. The Yira cultural revivalists are painfully aware that their traditions are associated with the past, not only by national governments (particularly that of the avowed "modernist" Yoweri Museveni in Uganda), but by the global world, and by members of their own ethnicity, even the younger generations of their own family. The "future", for sceptics of tradition, is to be found in the tempting (if often immoral) technologies and lifestyles associated with the west, and broadcast as aspirational in the global flows of money and media. To put it crudely, "culture" must be made competitive, recast not as an anachronistic lifestyle, but a means to such an aspirational lifestyle, though with the added benefit of moral guardianship. As Peel (1984) notes, the ethno-nationalist must:

> "…'manage' an unruly present by means of precedents from the past; but first he has to justify the relevance of the past to the present, even to an audience which is disposed to believe that there are such precedents. He is thus a mediator between what he believes of the past and what his audience knows of the present," (pg. 118).

Hence the word "technology" was hardly used by me alone in this study, but was a favourite term of the ethno-nationalists and secessionists themselves. For instance:

> "I had stayed in Congo for eight months, and I was assured faith can do something. I went to Goma, Rutsuru, Kanyabayanga, and Nyemirima. I found that the Bakonzo [Bayira] there are winning battles using some magic, like against M23.[7] The Bakonzo won against the Banyarwanda using cultural magic in deep villages, where the UN and FARDC are not reaching. The Bakonzo are protecting them, they are Mai Mai.[8] I wasn't believing in it. but we went into a battlefield in Kishoro in Nyemerima, where I believed that day that a bullet cannot kill a person. The technology of the Mukonzo is above the gun, if he believes and follows the instructions."

[7] The abbreviation of the March 23 movement, a Congolese anti-government rebel group that took the city of Goma in 2012. Its membership was predominantly Tutsi and it is thus associated with the enemy "Banyarwanda" or "Hima" by the Bayira ethno-nationalists.

[8] Mai Mai, or Mayi Mayi, are often classified as rebel groups but are arguably better understood as domestic vigilantes. Raeymakers (2007) sees the Mai Mai groups of North Kivu as products of a multitude of factors, including responses to the cross border conflicts of the 1990s, the associated anti-Hima, anti-Tutsi or anti-immigrant sentiment, and more recently, as a form of security guarding Nande territorial boundaries.

This is a passage from an interview with Kahangwa, a secessionist with a militant background and militant ambitions, whom we shall meet again later. For him, the powers latent within an authentic Yira culture and "cultural magic" are superior to imported technologies. We shall see much more of this analogical framing of Yira cultural and ritual "technologies" throughout. Suffice to say for now that the Bayira believe that the powers they might rediscover could easily render their culture as aspirational a substance as anything that foreign imports can offer. Thus for them, there is no contradiction between "culture" and "modernity", only temporal perceptions of these categories that must be rectified. This dual-orientation in temporality is commonplace among numerous social movements involved in acts of resistance, including nationalist (e.g. Pratts, 2003, Lan, 1985), millenarian (e.g. Fields, 1985) and in artistic performance (Erlmann, 1992).

This dual temporal orientation is thus also a contestation of the idea that the "authentically African" is inevitably to be relegated to the "past", since it is incompatible with aspirations of "modernity" and the possibilities of the "future". This temporal binary also runs parallel to the two publics binary, and is thus also practically problematic for ethno-nationalists, both in its existence and in attempts to reconcile it. People, in this case the Bayira, are understandably loath to see the essence of themselves anachronistically, and are keen to argue that their "authentic" or "cultural" characteristics are quite compatible with the contemporary and future world. The opportunistic and moral relationships between their own "culture" and the "culture" associated with the products of the globalised world are tricky to navigate, but not impossible to do so successfully. It is thus argued that the relations between two publics, and the products and temporal connotations of each, must be carefully managed at every stage of the ethno-nationalist and secessionist process.

The final note that must be made in laying out this framework is on the matter of authority. In this struggle to reclaim akeethu kathere, that which is lost, those who have the relevant knowledge find themselves able to carve out instructional roles. I approach the subject of authority in different ways, for the "authorities" creating themselves employ numerous creative exercises of power (Arens and Karp, 1989) to advance their causes. In a "movement" (such as it is) that is clandestine, decentralised, and divided as to how an ultimate goal should be achieved, there are myriad lenses into the matter of authority, some of which we shall explore across the following chapters. We shall see that the imaginings of both the political "state" and the ethnic "nation" allow different figures to carve out "niches" of authority in certain contexts (Pratten, 2006), as different narratives about the direction and character of the struggle and its people are deliberated, projected and adopted. I proceed now to describing the fieldwork, the methodology of the study, and the outline of the study itself.

Location, Methodology, Informants and Ethics of the Study

The Ethics of Studying Secessionism

It is impossible to write an ethnography of clandestine secessionism without addressing its potential political consequences. It is therefore necessary for me to clarify here that I do not believe these sympathies and works present a significant threat to the territorial integrity of either Uganda or the Democratic Republic of Congo, nor are they likely to do so in the foreseeable future. Whilst violence has arisen around the question of the Yira State, including incidences on a significant scale in 2014 and 2016, there is much that could have been done by the Ugandan state in particular to prevent such violence, and they were the primary instigators of the latter attack. I shall probe these incidences of violence in the final chapter,

and I hope to show that there is still much the Ugandan government could still do to promote peace in the region. What I observed were small pockets of activity and overt sympathy, and a more latent sympathy and hope for independence from a larger majority of ordinary people. This is not a unified or centralized effort. Rather, I am reminded of Worsley's (1968) study of cargo cults in Melanesia, in which a widely known millenarian "message" made for a "fissaparous dispersion of leadership in the persons of numerous leaders" (pg. xv). A large number of charismatic prophets preaching variations of a similar message came to enjoy small-scale levels of personal authority, but did not form a centralized or coordinated movement, as we shall see in Chapter Four. Similarly, among the Bayira, individuals with particular types of knowledges (some of whom represent the secessionist message, whilst others have more abstract, "cultural" messages") cultivate different forms of authority, be that advisory authority, or the capacity to give instructions.

I have thus far used the terms "secessionists", "cultural revivalists" or "authorities", but these categories, it is crucial to emphasize, do not always overlap, and nor is the matter of secession necessarily settled in the minds of those who discuss it. When I use the term "secessionists", I refer specifically to people who aspire to create the independent "Yira State". "Cultural revivalists" or "ethno-nationalists" refers to those who engage in the work of invigorating ethnic identity by way of *practice*, i.e. through their own efforts to promote both enthusiasm for, and adherence to, what they define as "culture", as well as pride in the Yira ethnic identity, and an idea of a pan-ethnic Yira national identity. Among this category there is a variation of interest in secessionism; some are committed secessionists, and others (like the academic Bwambale quoted above) are in favour of ethno-cultural unity and development but do not wish to secede. By "authorities", I mean all those who invoke a

degree of personal authority, based on their own superior knowledge, in forwarding either (or both) of these "messages" of secession and/or cultural revival.

I am chiefly interested in those individuals who are both secessionists and cultural revivalists, since it is the combination of both "messages" that principally characterize the secessionist ambitions of the Bayira. However, I will quote a range of informants across the thesis who represent one, both or neither of these categories. In an attempt to illustrate this diversity of opinion, I will "introduce" the informants I am quoting from, and specify their personal views. I shall attempt to give some information about their personal background insofar as I am able to without identifying them. On occasion, it will be necessary to be deliberately vague about the background and associations of those speaking, in order to protect their identity. With certain exceptions of well-known figures whose opinions are already in the public domain, I shall refer to all my informants by "birth name" pseudonyms. The Bayira have birth names, which reveal the number of siblings of each gender that preceded an individual's birth, and sometimes refer to unusual circumstances around their birth. There are several tens of these birth names, and each name will be shared by many hundreds of people. This said, I do not use the real birth name of the informant I am quoting, in order to protect their anonymity.

I had originally intended to study local modes of resistance to the extraction of natural resources in the Uganda-DRC border region, and had been drawn to the Rwenzori region as a result of the historical secession activity of the Rwenzururu movement, curious as to whether this history would affect local resource politics. My interest was compounded by the unexpected outburst of violence in the region in July 2014. Seemingly coordinated attacks took place in two separate districts, Kasese and Bundibugyo, in which local Bayira youth

attacked an unsuspecting army barracks in Bundibugyo, and a police station as well as some villages of ethnic Basongora in Kasese (Human Rights Watch, 2014). It quickly became apparent in the media coverage that this was the result of friction between the (theoretically apolitical) "cultural kingdoms". However, it was some weeks into the research before I learned that at least some people still had a strong desire for a separate state. Though this was, as everyone constantly pressed, a secret matter, it was a secret that people were surprisingly willing to talk about, even when they did not know me well - indeed some even encouraged discussion of it.[9] As it became apparent that this desire for secessionism was a significant feature of peoples' lives, I began introducing questions about it myself. I would always preface these particular questions by saying that they were under no obligation to answer it if they did not feel comfortable doing so, and guaranteed them anonymity. Even as the prescience of the Yira State became more apparent, I had serious reservations about it as a central ethnographic object, and indeed I do still.

Had it been as "secretive" as it is often made out to be, I would not have discussed it in depth. However, there is a fair amount of material about the state in the public domain. It is largely comprised of mentions in news articles, particularly those covering the aftermath of the July attacks and more recent outbreaks of violence in 2016 (Red Pepper, 2014, Thawite, 2016). A Muyira Resident District Commissioner (RDC) sparked controversy in September 2014 by openly declaring that the Bayira had the right to demand their own state (Ninsiima and Mumbere, 2014). A local research centre in Fort Portal also published a report titled "Insights into the discourse on shadowy Yira State as a potential source of Conflict in the Rwenzori Region" (Kabarole Research Centre, 2014). Even the Omusinga himself has had to engage in

[9] One man, whose name I never caught, came up to me at a black-tie event celebrating the Rwenzururu king's coronation anniversary, having learned that I was a researcher. Numerous public officials were also present at this event so it was hardly a secretive environment. He told me "You must put in your research recommendations that we need our own state", and then walked off.

political side-stepping on the problem of the state; he appeared in the news in April 2015 declaring that he could have no involvement with the matter of the Yira State, since that was a political issue and he was a cultural leader. The razing of the Rwenzururu Palace in November 2016 by the Ugandan army, which resulted in the deaths of tens of people, was justified in response to a supposed rebel group existing within the palace that was said to be preparing for a secessionist attack.

The fact that it is in the public domain does not lessen the ethical difficulties about researching and writing about a potential secession. However, apart from its academic value, and the unique chance that this case presents for understanding what the African state should mean to people, as well as what it does mean now, and for the light it can shed on the creation of ethnic identity, there is a further reason I have chosen to make the would-be state the focus of this thesis. This is that a huge number of people wanted me to write about it. I would always begin by assuring people not only of their own anonymity in the study, but that if they did not wish me to use their responses on the matter of the state, I would not. Far from seeming relieved, a number of people seemed annoyed. A former Rwenzururu fighter responded:

> "If you do not talk about the state you are the enemy of the Bayira. We want the state, we don't want to be in Uganda. You tell the people outside. The Bayira want a state!"

I am unable to fulfil the wishes of many of my informants, that I become an advocate for them to be granted a separate state. This was not only given the conflict and political complexity such a move create, but also for fear of the violent responses that I fear would await the Bayira if their demands were further publicised. Moreover, given the legal charges levied against many members of Rwenzururu Kingdom, including the current king himself, after the November 2016 attacks, the urgency for confidentiality has only increased.

However, I feel I would do many a disservice by not discussing it either. I fear a number of people who trusted me with information, and who were kind enough to help me complete this, may not like what they read, for which I can only apologise, and maintain my sincere respect and gratitude to them.

Conducting the Fieldwork

I arrived in January 2015, and based myself in the small town of Kasese, which is about forty kilometers from the Congolese border, and home of the Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu (OBR), the cultural kingdom of Rwenzururu, and its Omusinga (king), Charles Wesley Mumbere Iremangoma, the son of the first Rwenzururu rebel king, Isaiah Mukirania. These "cultural" institutions, theoretically, have no political power; indeed, their mandate forbids monarchs to involve themselves directly in politics. Their rather vaguely stated role is to promote "culture", though they also undertake "development" activities. The OBR has a "cabinet" with numerous "ministers", whose titles largely mimic their official state counterparts in the capital of Kampala; Prime Minister, Minister for Land and Minerals, Minister for Water, Minister for Education, Minister of Finance, Minister of Culture, and so on. They also have (rather to my surprise) a "Minister of Native Administration", who is theoretically charged with coordinating the kingdom's grassroots level activities through their system of "saza chiefs" (chiefs accorded to particular parishes) and their village representatives. The Ministers mostly work in a set of offices in Kasese Town centre, though the offices are dusty, poorly maintained, and have no electricity. The Ministers work on a voluntary basis; whilst a majority of them work for the kingdom part-time and earn their income through other work, a number of them work there full-time for no pay. Interestingly, a number of young people,

particularly “Royal Guards”, although also administrative workers, dedicate a significant majority of their time to volunteering their services for the kingdom.

The Omusinga himself lived, up until the attack of November 2016, in Buhikira Palace, just outside of the centre of Kasese town. The palace is a large, suburban-style house, with a big compound enclosed by a high concrete perimeter wall. Within the compound are a number of thatched huts, some of which serve as meeting places, though most are shrines for ritual activity. The palace is permanently guarded by voluntary Royal Guards, although to the disgruntlement of some, especially the Royal Guards, the Ugandan Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) also stations one or two soldiers there most of the time, to serve as the king’s official state protection. Royal Guards are also stationed at the offices, and are sometimes deployed to more rural areas to protect ritual sites, particularly in the aftermath of disputes.

The Ministers, along with the Speaker, and a number of other representatives, form a “Parliament”, which, in theory, is meant to meet twice a year. However, there was no Parliamentary session throughout the fourteen months that I spent on fieldwork. This is illustrative of one of the difficult situations the Rwenzururu Kingdom finds itself in. The king himself is given a government stipend to allow him to live comfortably, but the kingdom’s activities are not state-sponsored. Thus, the Ministers have numerous ideas of both “cultural” and “development” projects that they would like to do, but are unable to fund them, and so produce little in the way of tangible output. Nevertheless, for the OBR to manifest itself in the public imagination, it must have, at the very least, an apparatus, and produce *talk* of activity. Thus those at the kingdom offices spend much of their time writing proposals for NGO funding, holding meetings, and engaging in numerous, visibly *bureaucratic* practices, though on an unpaid basis, and with little potential to realise their ideas for kingdom projects.

I began my fieldwork by spending the majority of my time with the Ministers and staff of the kingdom in the offices, conversing with them, and interviewing them about their roles, and their perspectives on the kingdom and on local political matters. Their help and insight was invaluable to my research not only at the beginning, but throughout. In this early period of getting to know Kasese and its inhabitants, I also had the great fortune to befriend a number of local journalists working for both print media outlets and radio stations, who were Bayira themselves and keen supporters of the kingdom – though with the investigative and critical skills that their trade required. I will not name them here or allude to their identities further. Suffice to say that while some were more convinced by the prospect of secessionism than others, their social networks and local knowledge, as well as their generous assistance in introducing me to informants who represented all manner of perspectives, were crucial to this work.

Emerging, then, is a general picture of my "snowball-sampling" ethnographic methodology. As Sadler et al (2010) point out, the advantage of snowball-sampling (in which the social networks of initial "participants" (though in my case, perhaps "informants", or simply "friends" is more apt) are used to source more informants), is that there is an element of trust displayed by the introducer, lessening suspicion of the researcher, something that was advantageous, if not entirely necessary, in this case. The downside is that similarities among informants and a lack of representativeness are inevitable. I hope, however, to have counteracted some of this bias by getting to know a number of people with different viewpoints, and also interviewing members of other ethnic groups who had different views on the Bayira revivalists' and secessionists' efforts.

Whilst a quantitative survey of opinion on a topic as sensitive as this one would have been impossible, I have attempted to capture the views of a large spectrum of people, across different socio-economic brackets, rural and urban habitats, and genders. This said, the secessionist and/or cultural revivalist activity I was interested in was most commonly conducted by men, and so unfortunately men represent the majority of respondents who will be quoted in the thesis. In terms of socio-economic status, I was interested to note that, while secessionism appeared to be generally more appealing to my less well-off informants (those with less to lose and more to gain should it be a success), secessionist wishes were not limited to them. I met a number of middle to upper class Bayira – who have high levels of formal education, successful businesses and enviable lifestyles in Uganda – who still believe whole-heartedly in the creation of the Yira State.

I enrolled in Lhukonzo language classes, and came to have some basic conversational skills in it. To my regret, I never mastered it with the confidence or the necessary vocabulary that would have allowed me to conduct my own interviews in it. Lhukonzo is a complex language, and, as I shall discuss, has "secrets" of its own, insofar that it is replete with code words, spiritual words and even what was once described to me as a "hidden level" of language, understandable exclusively to those with "pure" cultural knowledge. Fortunately, my friends included keen linguists who helpfully explained the meanings and etymology of particular words that were significant to this work, and I shall relay their understandings of the meanings. Thus, I was forced to rely on translators, although this proved to have its own advantages.

As we shall see in Chapter Three, a significant number of Bayira, particularly those with secessionist sympathies, though also many who are interested in their culture and history for

its own sake, are keen researchers and writers.[10] These researchers made up a significant proportion of my respondents, and I was tremendously fortunate to befriend two in particular, Mandekia and Muhima. They would often accompany me to interview particular people, to help me translate, and to ask their own questions. Both were strongly pro-secession, and also strong believers in the necessity of cultural restoration, and in the involvement of the spiritual world in this process. Muhima was a spirit medium and claimed to have divinatory powers.

It was not only their practical help that advantaged me here. In their company, I began to get a clearer understanding of what it must be like to seek answers about who "our people" are, of how that knowledge was lost, and how it might be restored. Mandekia and Muhima often had suggestions of people we should visit, and through my own meetings in Kasese I was also given the names of other people to contact. We would thus very often work together, travelling within Kasese Town, or to other towns and villages, sometimes in remote mountain locations, to find particular people. Mandekia and Muhima's research work was reminiscent of Donald's (1999) observation of the anthropologist's similarity to the detective. The "secrecy" that surrounded many of the tales told to us gave the impression that there was always a missing piece of the puzzle, more to be discovered, and that a complete picture would yield the beginning of the millenarian dream of the state unfolding. Those we interviewed spoke of competing local histories, stories of treachery, and the limitless spiritual power that the Bayira used to possess before they were colonized, subjugated and made to forget themselves. The stories we collected sometimes contradicted each other, particularly over matters of land conflict and different clan's claims to traditional authority.

[10] A number of OBR Ministers have written, or are writing, histories of their own, and one of the projects the OBR are keenest to undertake involves thorough documentation of their cultural sites, as well as their history and practices, with the eventual hope of making a museum.

Since Mandekia and Muhima were predominantly interested in history, they were especially keen to meet those who had been involved in the original Rwenzururu movement. Whilst this certainly constituted selection bias, it often allowed me to see these figures interact with their family, their neighbours, and with the younger generation. Particularly in the more remote locations, this instructional relationship between the older Rwenzururu generation and their younger relatives was a window into just how the dream of the Yira State was kept alive. Navaro Yashin (2012) said of the education of children in the illegal state of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus that "Identity is constructed in association with the presence of statehood, despite (or perhaps because of) its legal absence" (pg. 91). Given the remote mountain villages, where a majority of the Bayira still live, were the heartland of the old Rwenzururu kingdom, and which have seen very little attention from the Ugandan government since, it is perhaps unsurprising that it is not the Ugandan state that children are taught to identify with. This is particularly so when the promise of a new state carries such strong aspirational qualities.

Jessee (2011) notes that in every oral history interview there is a degree of "authority sharing", as the researcher may try to gravitate the interviewee towards the research questions, while the interviewee seeks to construct a particular historical narrative. I was interested to note, however, that when I discussed the content of a particular interview with Mandekia and Muhima soon after its conclusion, they very often seemed prepared to accept that interviewee's position, which sometimes contradicted previous stances that they had iterated earlier. I do not raise this to make a negative judgement about their mode of research. Rather, I see it as indicative of the way that the Yira revival zeitgeist works in practice. Varenne (2007) helpfully suggests that "education" should not be seen only as a pedagogical process, but a deliberative one. He states that:

> "Education is a conversation among those who have been made "consociates" as they must face, together, potentially dangerous ignorance, and as they must then figure out what to do next…" (pg. 1569).

This process is borne from what he terms "productive ignorance" (pg. 1564): a felt lack of knowledge about a certain subject that prompts an active, and often collective, solution.

In this case, it is a felt lack of collective self-knowledge which has been lost, one of the components of "*akeethu kathere*". As Mbembe (2002) says of African self-writing, there is an Enlightenment-era, colonial paradigm framing understandings of the "traditional", one which delimits a cultural identity in both racialized and geographical terms:

> "...the claim that Africans have an authentic culture that confers on them a peculiar self, irreducible to that of any other group. The negation of this self and this authenticity would thus constitute a mutilation" (pg. 253).

The particular historical experience of the Bayira, which involved forced cultural assimilation, renders understandable the sense of an authentic self which has been lost. The net result, however, appears to be a series of networked relationships of dependency. I believe this explains why my research colleagues were often inclined to reassess what they thought they already knew in light of new information. Particular people who are considered to be knowledgeable – of the past, of "culture", or of the spiritual world and its involvement in state creation – thus become "authorities" to the knowledge seekers, if only transiently. Incidentally, it is not only their knowledges that are sought. The researchers themselves become vectors of knowledge, and while they may not have "authority" in the political sense, they can acquire the advisory or directive role of the intellectual (Fierman, 1990). It is not only "traditional", "cultural" knowledges, or spiritual ones, that are sought by those who live in the conscious imaginary, and seek to do otherwise.

Those with high levels of formal education (including and especially these researchers), and those who claim to have international or political knowledge, also carve out influential "niches" (Pratten, 2006), since their knowledge is instrumental to state creation. But it is this "productive ignorance" that researching alongside researchers helped to highlight for me. Bayira are made to feel a sense of cultural incompleteness, which must be filled by acquiring knowledge of themselves, and behaving accordingly. However, because of conspiratorial influences, misleaders, disunity, and a lack of knowledge pooling, this authentic self is only ever partially discovered.

This type of "research with researchers" was an interesting and fruitful blend of both participant observation and in-depth interviews. The bulk of the quotations I will feature in the thesis come from interviews (both group and singular format), since these discussions allowed for more depth in illustrating abstract notions. However, I also recall periods of participant-observation, particularly meetings and ceremonial occasions, in which I was observing rather than discussing. Mandekia and Muhima were not the only researchers who helped me find people and translate for me, but it was with them that a significant majority of this research, especially that based in and around Kasese Town, was conducted with, as well as all material from DRC. Tragically, our work together was cut short by Mandekia's death from an undiagnosed cancer in November 2015. This thesis is dedicated to his memory.

Whilst I was based in Kasese Town for the majority of my fieldwork, with regular travels in the nearby region, I did two other longer-term excursions. I spent five weeks in the town of Bundibugyo, the district to the north of Kasese, which also borders DRC. This district is where the bulk of the violence in July 2014 occurred, which stemmed mostly from the installation of another cultural kingdom, the Obudingihya Bwa Bamba (OBB) in 2014, on

territory that Bayira believed rightly belonged to Rwenzururu. (Constitutionally, the cultural kingdoms have no territorial boundaries, though in practice this makes for considerable ambiguity.) Bundibugyo is divided between two main ethnicities, the Bamba and the Bayira, but after the installation of OBB, activity associated with Rwenzururu Kingdom was forbidden in the area. This is also not constitutionally permitted, but the Bayira believed the Bamba were able to get away with it because of their close relations with government, which ultimately led to the violence. A significant part of my time in Bundibugyo was spent interviewing both participants in the attack and its survivors, of both ethnicities, to try and understand and reconstruct it. Again, I obtained a research assistant who was himself an amateur historian, and so a similar methodological system occurred here.

The second trip was a two-week excursion to North Kivu Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The connection between the Ugandan Bakonzo and the Congolese Banande, who both consider each other one and the same people, was an extremely regular feature of discussion among my informants, and their current separation from their "brothers in Congo" due to the imposition of the colonial border was a principal motivation cited by secessionists. Maps of the would-be state include North and South Kivu provinces in DRC. The OBR has a "Minister for Kyatenga Affairs" as well (Kyatenga being the Lhukonzo word for Yira-inhabited Congo), with the aim to encourage mutual development and general ethnic "unity". Their projects include trying to write an orthography to make a unified vernacular writing style, since vernacular writing largely developed after the border separation. More generally, a number of people (including Mandekia and Muhima, as well as a number of Congolese Bayira I encountered) expressed interest in creating a unified history of both sides of the border.

Along with Mandekia and Muhima, and a number of representatives of OBR, I travelled to Beni, DRC in August 2015 to attend a week-long conference of E'Kyaghanda Yira, an ethnic organization founded and run in DRC, dedicated to Bayira unity and development. The Omusinga himself was invited, but was unable to attend for political reasons, although his representative, the Minister for Kyatenga Affairs delivered a message from him. Indeed, the Ugandan authorities appear to associate E'Kyaghanda with secessionist activity, since only one Rwenzururu representative was allowed to cross the border at the last minute, and rumours abound about the murder of a journalist who had recently returned from the conference some years before. Thus, while E'Kyaghanda does not have, to the best of my knowledge, a secessionist agenda, it has come to occupy a place in the political imagination of the Ugandan secessionists, of both danger, but also opportunity. Two other pro-secessionist Ugandan Bayira who also attended the conference continued to insist E'Kyaghanda was founded with secessionism as their primary aim. I asked then why the matter was barely discussed at the conference, and they said it was due to fear of government spies.

There were about five hundred attendees at the conference, who seemed to have a variety of hopes about what they would get from it. The aim of "uniting" their clans and people on both sides of the border, and re-invigorating their cultural practices and traditional authority, were widely cited as hopes for the conference. I was struck as well by some of the words of younger attendees. Queen, a woman in her early twenties, told me "I am here because I want to learn to be a good Muyira." It seemed the search for answers about how to be Yira had entered the consciousness of the younger generation. I interviewed the founder of E'Kyaghanda Yira, who was now the President of the thirty-member "Conseil Culturelle" (the cultural council, which is a panel of senior Nande figures who organize the conference

and coordinate E'Kyaghanda's projects. They include traders and religious leaders, but also appear to reserve senior positions for members of the Nande diaspora). The President of the Conseil Culturelle described his motivations for establishing E'Kyaghanda as such. He is a wealthy engineer and former minister based in Kinshasa. He described his motivations for creating E'Kyaghanda as such:

> "Before I began this, I worked in a government ministry. When I was a child I used to think that the people in government in Kinshasa were taking care of us. But when I began working there I realized that nobody takes care of anybody, we had no one. So I said to myself "No, in these conditions, in this war, we will all die. We will eventually disappear from Congo and Uganda." And I realized it was necessary to build a structure for which we could organize ourselves.... We have a common language and common territory… we have multiple clans, and each clan has their chief. And as a result it was not easy for them to deal with that which concerns the Bayira together. Each chief would deal with the problems on his territory separately but there was no common structure. So Kyaghanda is here to nurture what we have in common - the language, the territory, our life, even. What we are. If we are attacked, if someone does not like us, if we are disunited it will be easy for someone to attack us, but if we are organized they will not attack us."

His story is emblematic of the "self-help" ethos that Jones (2004) describes. With Mandekia and Muhima acting as translators, we documented the proceedings of the conference, and the presentations, which followed myriad themes, many of which are similar to those discussed by Ugandan Bayira, including the potential of spiritual "technology", the annals of history, and the crucial relationship of the Yira authentic past to the prosperous future. We also interviewed a number of the presenters. After the conference concluded, we continued to the town of Butembo, where we went to examine the Yira historical writings in the library of L'Université Catholique du Graben, a project funded by wealthy Nande traders. Butembo is an almost exclusively Nande-Yira city, whose infrastructure and trade is managed by these Nande traders (Kabamba, 2012). The relative success of Butembo is indicative of why secessionism per se is not seemingly a priority of the Congolese Bayira. The penetration and influence of the Congolese state is minimal, so people are largely in charge of their own affairs already. The Nande traders and the Catholic Church do the bulk of the work that

would normally be left to a state government. It is necessary for the Nande traders to organize Butembo's own security against eastern Congo's numerous militias (in the form of their own vigilante-militias), and to create economic opportunities and stability. We also interviewed spiritual doctors associated with the Bayira-Banande "Mai Mai" militias who prepared their battle medicines, and other local historians. I later returned to DRC in November 2015 over two single-day trips to interview a celebrated prophet who lived near the Lamia border.

Finally, I was fortunate to be associated with Mountains of the Moon University in Fort Portal, Uganda. One of their projects is digitizing the local district archives of the Rwenzori region. Whilst this project was still underway, the university kindly allowed me to examine their archival materials, a number of which yielded helpful historical information about the Rwenzururu movement.

Structure and Chapter Outline

The following six chapters are loosely divided into two sections reflecting the Bayira's dealings with the "two publics", though there is also a great deal of overlap since the two publics are, for better or for worse, co-dependents. The first three chapters build up a picture of how a "cultural" and "ritual" public is being developed through the invigoration of a "national" shared Yira identity, which is exercised through the practice of "good cultural behaviour". The last three chapters deal with the matter of a "state", a "civic public", and the more explicit question of secessionism, and how it might or might not be done, or at least how it might remain a popular aspiration.

In Chapter One, I review the literature on Bayira traditional systems of authority and land

authority. I show that authority depended on a leader's effective practice of rituals to protect the spiritual health and prosperity of his territory, though these leaders had to take care to also build alliances with potential ritual competitors. This is because it is necessary for ritual activity within a territory to be synchronised if stability is to be maintained. Ritual leaders, known as *Omwami* (kings) or *Isyemalhambo* (ridge leaders) must be effectively succeeded by a righteous heir, and failure to end the period of interregnum leads to tremendous disorder. Given the upheaval that authority systems experienced during the colonial period, I argue that the Bayira today conceive of their misfortunes since then to be the result of a prolonged, collective interregnum across their population, because they cannot be certain if their current leaders are rightful, or performing their duties. Thus the solution, envisioned in the Yira nationalist project and the revival of the "ritual public", is to restore their rightful ritual leaders and have them synchronise their ritual practices across all Yira territory, creating a united Bayira "national" entity. I then outline the history of the Bayira peoples on both sides of the border to contextually frame the thesis and explain this synchronising logic. I also argue that the seemingly radical political changes that were instigated by Isaiah Mukirania under the original Rwenzururu movement were consistent with this logic of ritual synchronicity.

In Chapter Two, I examine the epistemological foundations of the development of Yira ethno-nationalism, which, I argue, is based on what they perceive as two separate domains of knowledge, domains which mirror the binary of the "two publics". There is local, pure and moral "natural knowledge", and "school knowledge", that taught in formal education systems, and a knowledge which is highly prized among the Bayira, although simultaneously regarded as dangerous, given that many of its contents are antithetical to culture, and it risks leading its students down an individualist path and towards the abandonment of culture.

Nevertheless, there are tremendous benefits associated with potential combinations of the two, or, more specifically, the application of “school knowledge” in service of the “development” and re-collection of “natural knowledge”.

Specifically, the Bayira believe that the “technologies” of spiritual power that they still have, though once had to a greater extent, can be revived and “developed” through the application of “school knowledge”. Moreover, it is the tools of “school knowledge” that are essential to the recollection and corporatisation of the “natural knowledge” that they feel they have lost, through the medium of “research”. The power associated with the mutual use of two knowledges is finally exemplified with an examination of the person of Isaiah Mukirania. I argue that his ability to legitimately assume kingship of the Bayira during the Rwenzururu Movement was contingent on his possession, and effective mutual deployment of the two knowledges. I also argue that this combination of knowledges is a rejection by the Bayira of a “disjunctive” idea of African modernity (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2004), which suggests that Africans must choose the “past” or complete alienation from it.

In Chapter Three, I examine the works of Bayira “homespun historians” (Peterson and Macola, 2009), who are the conductors of the “research” that the previous chapter’s informants extolled the need for. They are using the “two knowledges” to create a new knowledge product that aims to establish consensus about who the Bayira are and what their “cultural behaviour” should be. Through the act of writing their findings, “entextualising” their research, the historians maintain a delicate balance of the two knowledges, and put school knowledge at the service of natural knowledge, through selecting and formalising a version of it, and so of Yira identity, that can then be trasmitted across the Bayira population and made equivalent to “law”. Moreover, they are also engaged in the work of synchronising

the traits of Yira identity with the aspirations of the global, contemporary world. By presenting Yira culture as not only compatible with mainstream religion and technological innovation, but exemplary of it, they are synchronising the supposedly disjunctive aspects of "Afro-modernity" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2004). Their works thus aim to reinforce a common "cultural" identity with which to make up a "cultural public" stylised as a "nation".

In Chapter Four, I examine the means of action to create the Yira State from some of the most dedicated secessionists I met, many of whom were members of prophetic "cults". These prophets, and the kinds of tasks that they give their followers to do, are a source of hope for secession in an environment of tense political oppression, where discussion of a new state is a dangerous activity, and where the odds of secession by secular means are overwhelmingly against them. The capacity of the prophets to instigate radical change is, I argue, contextually grounded in the Yira cosmological concept of "*akalaiyirire*", which loosely translates as "destiny", but is in fact also a means by which chosen individuals gain the authority to instruct people in how to fulfil the will of the spirits. The tasks that the prophets instruct their followers to do (mostly the obedience of religious rules, but also other actions), what I call the "work of prophecy", illustrates the logical extension of the creative relationship between the two Yira "publics". For, in obeying the commands of the spirits completely and adhering to their rules, the prophets mimic the work of the cultural revivalists creating the "cultural public", i.e. by (re)creating the "authentic" Yira identity and enforcing adherence to its norms. Doing so is meant to engender spiritual power and favour, and in doing so prompt radical political transformation. This chapter also proposes a more thorough examination of the role of hope in studies of prophetic authority, for, as I argue here, the prophets' power and elevated status is where the capacity for hope amongst the followers lies. This is briefly illustrated by comparison to the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army.

In Chapter Five, I take a closer look at the nature of the "state", i.e. the "civic public", and ask why, despite a flurry of scholars implying that a state's authority is being eroded in this century, and despite its negative connotations for many in the postcolonial world, it is still the optimal vehicle for self-determination in the eyes of the Bayira. I posit, firstly, that their constant emphasis on a need for "recognition" stems from their historical experience of liminality, in which other state-like powers were able to assign degrading categories of meaning to their people. Likewise, they see themselves as still having a liminal place within their current state, and so still vulnerable to assignations of meanings other than their own, and thus only a separate state has the equal power to "recognise" them the way they would like.

Secondly, I examine the "languages" (Hansen and Stepputat, 2001) of governance and "development", and suggest that the current Bayira institutions of E'Kyaghanda and Rwenzururu Kingdom find these amenable to insinuating greater authority than they might legally have, and also to enforce the "cultural behaviour" that they hope to see among their "subjects". Next, I examine the "international relations of Rwenzururu", the stories of several people about supposed international dealings with the United Nations and other foreign governments to secure their independence. I suggest that these stories represent both the "global" consciousness of the Bayira secessionist project, and also entrenches the power of the "state" in the eyes of the Bayira. In their stories they project powers onto the UN that the organisation doesn't have, but, in the "international order of things", to paraphrase Malkki (1995), the UN's protective power will guarantee the security of an independent state. Finally, I examine the structure of power within the imagined Yira State, which is designed, by numerous secessionists, in the manner of a constitutional monarchy. In their eyes, then,

the moral sphere of the "ritual, cultural" public is controlled by the King, and the dirty, inevitably immoral sphere of the state, the "civic public", is controlled by a President. It is this de-facto separation of powers that allows the Bayira to believe that their state will be the exception to the political misfortunes of other postcolonial states.

In Chapter Six, I wish to ground the Bayira's deliberation of the "state" or "civic public" and what it means to them in their contemporary circumstances, rather than in their imagined state. In doing so I caution, to a certain extent, both Ekeh's (1975) "two publics" thesis and my own tailored use of the model, by suggesting that, despite a general view of the sphere of state politics as tainted and immoral, the Bayira still contemplate their situation with reference to the moral authority that a normative state should have. That is, they use the values of a normative, liberal state as one political referent among many as they deliberate their political futures, and contemplate the matter of the Yira State, and whether or not it is their only hope for a dignified life. I illustrate this contemplation with a closer look at the "formations of violence" (Feldman, 1991) of the attacks on the 5th of July 2014, that shocked the Rwenzori region.

Though the violence was largely covered by the media as an "ethnic" conflict, the Bayira attackers did not attack members of their supposed ethnic rivals, the Bamba, but a number of government institutions, in order to protest the unequal treatment that they were receiving relative to the Bamba. Their attack, I argue, was a symbolic attack on the "state of exception" that the Ugandan state appeared to them to be operating in, signifying that they expected that there was a somewhat more moral "state of normality", and that until they were treated according to it, they would turn the language of sovereignty, violence, back on the state. The position of the Yira State, in the minds of the youth who attacked, was unfixed, though all

had contemplated it. The question of secession was settled as absolutely necessary for some, but others wondered if less radical solutions within Uganda might remain available, although, if they were not, then secession was certainly the next logical step. This is to say that the "state", the "civic public", survives as an idea also partly because the values it is meant to represent are "good to think with". They are good to think with especially in their practical absence, for they thus provide a theoretical tool to criticise the existing state, to legitimate alternatives, and to become one among many ways through which people can consider their political futures.

Chapter One: The Historical Background of the Bayira

In this chapter, I review the existing anthropological literature and the historical background on the Bayira on both sides of the border, in order to situate the context of the thesis. In my introduction to, and analysis of Yira authority systems, I will show that traditional leaders' authority depended on effective ritual practice, and also the building of alliances with rival ritual practitioners. Alliance building took the form of synchronised ritual performance. Such ritual performance was vital to the spiritual health and wellbeing of the land and its people, and the leader's death was followed by a period of disorder and misfortune. I will thus argue that, given the upheaval of traditional authority systems during the periods of colonial rule, the contemporary Bayira fear that their current traditional leaders are not the "rightful" ones, and may thus be neglecting their duties. Their current misfortunes are often understood in light of this failure of ritual practice. They thus perceive themselves, I suggest, as living in a period of extended, collective interregnum, through which they interpret their current marginalised and disunited situation. It is this situation which has led to the need to create a synchronised "ritual public" that will restore rightful leadership across Yira lands and unite their powers, unleashing a new age of peace and prosperity. In light of this logic of synchronisation, the "invented" ascension of Isaiah Mukirania to a unifying "king" becomes rather more comprehensible from the point of view of legitimacy, for it was an expansion of existing modes of ritual alliance building.

Uniting the Bayira

> "We should strengthen our unity and do away with the colonial names. We must have a name that unites us! We should remove with immediate effect those barriers the colonialists used to use, the names, and use the name Bayira! This name is united, rather than this is a Mukonzo, this is a Munande. Those other names are false! This name should be forwarded to the constitution of both countries to tell them that this is our real name!"

> (Extract from a speech made by Omusinga Charles Wesley Mumbere Iremangoma to a Congolese delegation of Bayira attending his coronation anniversary, October 2015.)

A number of scholars have argued that Banande (the Congolese Bayira) identity is one that is oppositionally constructed, against other ethnicities, and in reaction to the influences of colonial historical paradigms (Raeymakers, 2007, Kabamba, 2012, Bergmans, 1970). I would argue that the same could be said of Bakonzo (Ugandan Bayira) identity, and of the arguably more recent significance of the "mega-ethnic" Bayira identity (Appadurai, 1999). The sense of cross-border connection is understandably strong given both the cultural commonality and extended kin and relationship networks across it (Facci, 2009). However, increasing ethno-nationalist efforts appear to be politicising this connection in a new light. The recent history of both sides of the border sees an increasing mobilisation and corporatisation of "pan-Yira" ethnicity, and a tremendous emphasis on unity. The Yira construction of history, has been and is ever more so, I shall argue, *cyclical*, and *expansionist*. This is because of Bayira understandings of both temporality, and of political stability.

Peel (1984) describes how numerous African societies have an understanding of time which can be characterized as "stereotypic reproduction":

> "…where possible, present practice is governed by the model of past practice and, where change does occur, there is a tendency to rework the past so as to make it appear that past practice has governed present practice" (ibid, pg. 113).

Sahlins (1981) likewise notes that "stereotypic reproduction" is a feature of numerous societies with rhythmic concepts of the passage of time, but he also emphasized that reproduction does not preclude transformation. It merely requires that such transformations, often caused by external forces, enter into a dialectical process with existing modes of thought and practice. Such stereotypic reproduction is certainly a feature of Yira society. A newborn boy is given the name of his grandfather, and there is a powerful emphasis on the

need to maintain clan and family craftsmanship traditions and social roles (such as iron forger, spirit medium, traditional doctor and so on.) As a speaker at E'Kyaghanda bellowed to the crowd, "You must resemble your parents from the womb!" Packard (1981) likewise described the temporal understanding of the Bashu clan of Bayira as "ecological", reflective of an organic cycle of growth, decay, death and rebirth, and this view extends to the cycle of political leadership. The substantial socio-political changes of recent history, the changes in the nature of ethnic consciousness, and the increasingly future-oriented conception of ethnic identity, are, I shall argue, all conceivable within this pattern of cyclical history. This is so long as we understand the inextricable link between ritual practice and political (in)stability.

As shall be explored in this chapter, Bayira traditional authorities establish control over areas by way of both ritual practice, and alliance building with competing ritual practitioners. Ritual synchronicity and efficacy is the means to averting misfortune and political instability (Packard, 1981). What we see in the contemporary process of Yira corporatisation, in the nationalist sense as well as in calls for greater "unity", is an appeal for greater frequency of ritual practice, and greater *synchronicity* of that practice, over bigger areas of Bayira territory than have been united in the recent past (hence, expansionist). This expanding synchronicity requires more corporatized, or we might say more nationalised, social structures. What we shall see in this chapter is that historical periods of ethnic subjugation are met with forms of resistance that incorporate ethnicity into more formalised structures, including kingdoms and/or nations, and this logic of ritual practice remains consistent with these patterns.

There is reason to believe that emphasis on a unified Bayira identity is a postcolonial legacy. Packard (1981) conducted a historical ethnography among the Bashu clan, one of the major Banande-Bayira clans, in the late 1970s, and said that there was little sense of a corporate

Nande identity at the time, and that agnatic lineage and clan identity was of greater importance. My own data from the E'Kyaghanda Yira conference suggests, then, that the emphasis on a unified ethnic identity is a recent but prescient one, and a partial product of the failure of the Congolese state and the ethnic violence perpetrated by militia groups, particularly those of Rwandan origin, though others with less explicit motives such as the Allied Democratic Forces as well. The E'Kyaghanda Yira organisation in DRC, as we shall see in Chapter Five, is establishing forms of bureaucratic control to corporatize and synchronize Yira ethnicity and self-help activity. In Uganda, I argue that the desire for secessionism is not new, but has merely adapted from its origins in the Rwenzururu movement to today's political landscape, and to the utopian, futuristic vision that it has cultivated in reaction to global cultural "flows" (Appadurai, 1990).

The Ethnogenesis of the Bayira

It must be noted at this point that much colonial and mid-twentieth century scholarship of the region (e.g. Speke, 1863, Ingham, 1958, Beattie, 1959, Dunbar, 1965) is influenced by the now-discredited "Hamitic Hypothesis". This was an attempt at scientifically differentiating "races" in Africa, and separating the "Negro" from people believed to have been of Egyptian, Abyssinian or Caucasian descent. The latter, it was believed, must have been responsible for any technological innovations, such as iron smelting (Hoover, 1974) used across the continent, and came to be perceived by the colonialists as a natural "ruling class". The "Hamitic" peoples were associated with cattle-keeping, in opposition to the Bantu cultivators. Despite its academic discreditation, the aftermath of this "scientific" racism is still pervasive in Africa (Jackson, 2006), and the conspiratorial fear surrounding the "Hima" people is

prevalent in Bayira rhetoric about autochthony.[11] Many Bayira consider the "Bahima" to be their enemy, and their opposition to the pastoral Bahima (or Banyarwanda, often, though not necessarily, meant with a connotation of Tutsi,) is one of the pillars of their "oppositional" identity today (Raeymakers, 2007, Kabamba, 2012).

A number of historians trace the origins of the Bayira to the entity of Kitara, although given the difficulty of separating fact from myth around Kitara, this is hard to verify (Kiwanuka, 1968, Dunbar, 1965). Kitara was believed by many to have been an empire, ruled by the mythologized Bacwezi dynasty until they were conquered by the Babito dynasty around 1830 (Beattie, 1957, 1959, Dunbar, 1965, Syahuka-Muhindo, 1994). The Babito are the ancestors of the majority of Runyakitara-speaking peoples today. (Runyakitara is not the language of the Bayira today, though both tongues have Bantu roots. The Bayira tell me they can easily understand Runyakitara dialects, but that speakers of those dialects are unable to understand Lhukonzo-Luyira, a statement that most of my non-Bayira informants corroborated. The Bayira often use this as evidence that they are the autochthonous ancestors of this land, since Runyakitara must have developed later from their own language). Packard (1981), however, said his informants claimed the Babito were their ancestors as well. Syahuka-Muhindo (1994), contrastingly, does not consider Kitara as the point of ethnogenesis of the Bayira, but sees the "original" Bayira to be descendants of the Bukobi people of what is now eastern Congo. These Bukobi intermingled with migrants from Kitara, Rwanda and the kingdom of Buganda, to form the group now known as Bakonzo, Banande and/or Bayira.

[11] Some informants spoke of the threat posed by an intended "Hima-Tutsi empire" (see also Raeymakers, 2007), whereby Bahima people (including Presidents Museveni and Kagame) were supposedly intending to annexe swathes of territory throughout the Great Lakes region into an Hima-dominated empire. This, in their telling, included the territory that was rightfully Bayira and that which would make up a hypothetical Yira State. This was often framed as a justificatory reason for secession.

Pre-Colonial Social Organization

Whether Kitara's reach and power was exaggerated (Kiwanuka, 1968), or whether it simply broke down from internal strife (Balyage, 2000), Packard (1981) and Bergmans (1970) both state that the clans of "Nande" were established points of social organization several generations prior to colonial arrival. However, their authority structures were subject to flux, and it is also difficult to establish whether this mode of organization was identical on both sides of the present Uganda-DRC border prior to its creation, or if the cultural unity that Yira nationalists claim today is somewhat idealised. The rapid and dramatic change that Yira social organization underwent on the Ugandan side of the border in the mid 20th Century has resulted in some contemporary Yira ethno-nationalists from Uganda revering their Congolese counterparts as "…true originals", and representatives of their *authentic* culture. Whilst it is true that the socio-political change of the 20th Century on the Congolese side was less dramatic than on the Ugandan side, it is still difficult to construct an ideal-type model of Yira social organization. Nevertheless, I will here sketch such a model from existing ethnographies, since it is necessary for us to appreciate the characteristics of authority over land and people throughout.

The highest ranking figure in this system is the clan leader, the *Omwami*, or to give him his full title, the *Omwami mukulu owe kyaghanda*. Yira clans are exogamous, totemic and patrilineal. The *Omwami* is concerned with the "…law and order, unity, security, and continuity of the clan" (Magezi et al, 2004, pg. 77). According to Packard (1981), the *Omwami's* role is conceived as one of mediator, between the domestic, tame sphere of the homestead, and the wild, untamed forces of the bush, where ambivalent and dangerous spirits reside. He was also responsible for ritual and sacrificial duties on behalf of the clan.

Theoretically, the *Omwami's* authority was based on "first-comer" legitimacy (Lentz, 2013), claiming authority and ownership over the land on the grounds of being the descendant of the original settlers on virgin land. These settlers would have to have spiritually established their right to settle in the area by means of a ritual. However, Packard (1981) locates the formation of Nande "royalty" within the *Omwami* as originating in the 19th Century, which was less concerned with descent claims than it was with alliance forming. The *Omwami* established control over an area through establishing "ritual synchronicity", by way of forming alliances with senior ritual practitioners, and coordinating rituals for the well-being of the land, or land "cleansing". The ill-effects of ritual competition are still considered a problem today, among all types of ritual practitioner. This was an interview I conducted with a rainmaker, one who is called upon by the clan head to make rain in the event of drought. He acknowledged, however, that he is not always able to produce results, and I asked why this was, to which he replied:

> "There are also sunmakers, and the sunmakers can make it out of jealousy and cause that drought. By causing all the sunshine to fail the rainmaker. So he has to find out if it was that jealousy, or if it was natural like that. If it is the sunmaker blocking rain out of jealousy, he will figure out how to handle that. There are so many methods, if the sunmaker is using another trick."

That is, to be effective, ritual practice cannot be confronted by a contrary ritual, and so must be, ideally, centrally coordinated. The *Omwami*'s power to centralise, however, was somewhat hostage to the efficacy of those rituals. Should ritual practice fail to alleviate misfortune, it allowed rival practitioners to flaunt their wares in an attempt to appropriate his ritual authority rather than to bolster it. Successful alliance building could mitigate this to a degree, but in ritual efficacy lay the limitations to *Omwami* authority (ibid). Therefore, Yira land "ownership" is best understood as performative. Only in the successful and synchronised conduct of ritual could ritual chiefs be said to be the rightful authorities over an area. To

some extent this is descent-based; a failing Omwami might be attacked as a false claimant to the position on grounds of ancestral claims to land, and rivals may attempt to claim that their ancestors, were, in fact, the original settlers. (Packard (1981) describes numerous informants claiming, if only half-heartedly, that their ancestors were in fact the rightful lineage to be *Omwami*, a claim that I also encountered frequently on both sides of the border.)

The *Omwami*'s death is interpreted as the start of a period of disorder, and until elaborate succession rituals have been performed, the wild, untamed forces of the bush have free reign in the usually ordered, domestic sphere of the homestead. This interregnum period of disorder and vulnerability continues until the proper new leadership has been restored and ritual conduct can begin again, the start of a new organic cycle of ritual power. The office of a *Omwami* is inherited, ideally by the first born son of the *Mombo,* a woman presented to the *Omwami* on his accession (Bergmans, 1974). Packard (1981) disputes this, and says that the *Mombo* plays a more symbolic role. In practice, one of several sons of the *Omwami* will be selected by his council. This can also play to the successor's disadvantage, as disgruntled subjects may suggest the wrong heir was chosen.

The clans that the *Abami* lead are intimately associated with particular areas. Whilst in practice people of many clans live in a single place, the historical settlement patterns of particular clans are an enduring factor in their authority, although in theory, the *Omwami* himself is not responsible for land administration and distribution. However, the Ugandan Bakonzo-Bayira call their equivalent leader to *Omwami* an *Isyemalhambo,* and these figures are meant to undertake land administration. This is commonly translated as "ridge leader", though the Isyemalhambo is also the local clan head, thus the equivalent of an *Omwami*. This difference between Uganda and Congo is possibly as a result of the alterations made to

authority systems by the Rwenzururu movement of the 1960s. “Isye” means “father”, and so the figure is understood to be the “father” of a particular number of mountain ridges. The head of the family that first settled in a particular area would have, it is believed, performed a ritual to spiritually establish his lineage as the caretakers and leaders of that area, and this position is also passed from father to son. Future settlers on the mountain ridges under his control would be allocated land by him. Eventually, as populations grew, administration of land would be further delegated to “sub-ridge leaders”, or *omukulu wo’bulambo*. Both *Isyemalhambo* and *omuku wo’bulhambo* would be involved in distributing land, and managing disputes over land boundaries in their respective areas.

The *Isyemalhambo* was also, crucially, in charge of maintaining the spiritual health of his area through the organization of sacrificial rituals. He would be aided by traditional doctors, an *omuthawa* (plural: *abathawa*), since these rituals had to be conducted over wide areas to cleanse the land of evil spirits, *ebirimu*. (There is some disagreement today, however, as to whether the *Isyemalhambo* is meant to conduct such sacrifices personally, or whether he is merely in charge of coordinating those with spiritual gifts, such as the *abathawa*. The “ridge” thus usually also maintained the authority of an agnatic descent group (*nda*), and it was this network of the *nda* that was the primary unit of social interaction (Packard, 1980, writing of the Bashu among the Banande, though the same is true for the Bakonzo in Uganda). In practice, then, spheres of authority and locality fluctuate in influence depending on the activity of the individual. As Tosh (1973) says of the Lango:

> “In the context of everyday life, it was the lineage that counted; but once a Lango travelled outside his own neighbourhood, his clan affiliations were more significant” (pg. 475).)

Much like the Omwami, the Isyemalhambo must be properly succeeded by their rightful descendant who must assume ritual responsibility. Failure to do so will result in similar misfortune befalling the land and his people.

It is crucial to note the misfortune associated with lack of properly conducted succession rituals. Even if it does not always follow an exact hereditary pattern, rituals must be performed, and synchronised with those of potential competitors through alliance building, if the new leadership is to be effective. The person who can perform ritual effectively is the "rightful" leader, whether he be called a Congolese *Omwami* or a Ugandan *Isyemalhambo*. Should this responsibility be neglected, or should a "wrongful" leader take power, disaster will surely follow. As many informants on both sides of the border made abundantly clear when discussing authority systems, if anyone who did not have the right to perform such rituals (a right which is discursively described as hereditary) attempted to do so, they would die. My fieldwork was rife with stories of false chiefs, who had commandeered traditional authority roles, either through colonial appointment or through their own deception, but now refused to perform the rituals expected of them for fear of the spiritual repercussions. This deceit, they told me, had resulted in myriad misfortunes, and the only solution was to test both the family histories and ritual capacities of those contesting a title, to see who was the true leader.

Moreover, as we shall see in the histories of the two sides of the border in the next section, the upheavals of the colonial period saw the displacement or replacement of many such Omwami and Isyemalhambo, an occurrence that remains deeply disturbing to many Bayira in both countries, for "wrongful" chains of descent have surely accompanied the impostors who replaced the rightful heirs. For instance, the current Rwenzururu Kingdom's Minister for

Culture said the following:

> "We have been facing a lot of confusion, these political wars, and in most cases it has destabilised many of our traditional leadership. So how do you trace it? You can only trace it if you know that you are a leader of this area traditionally. You submit your history and it is that history will tell you who is the one who came first…If history does not reveal it then you must perform a ritual. It is this which will that will tell you that that is really the right person. Do you know what happens if you are not the rightful one and you try to perform a ritual? You can't complete seven days if you are not rightful leader. You die. Sometimes you don't even spend a day. You can come out of this place and reach your home, and you say "okay let me just rest here" and it becomes the death. That's how things used to happen. Up to now it is still working, because most of these people know that they are really not the rightful, that is why a majority of them refuse to do those performances."

Thus I wish to suggest that the Yira "cultural" and "ritual" public is a response to a perceived period of extended interregnum, in which misfortune has abounded because they are unsure if the right ritual care of land and community has been performed by the right people, right across the Bayira as a collective. My friend Muhima summarised the problem thusly:

> "In Congo you can have several crowned kings in different places, but you have to wait until they are all dead until you can crown new ones. So they are praying the old ones die so they can perform new rituals."

Judging from the existing literature, this sentiment is recent, for Packard (1981), Kabamba (2012), Bergmans (1970) and so on make no mention of needing all clans to perform their succession rituals at the same time. This idea is recent, and, given the discourse at the E'Kyaghanda Yira conference (E'Kyaghanda has been operating since 2008), I would venture that this is to a great extent the influence of the organization. A speaker at the conference said the following:

> "All our defined territories should accept ritual performance, so that we can cleanse our land. There are others who are self-styled Abami, and that's why they are reluctant to perform rituals, as they know they will die. So the problems all stem from this, when it comes to rituals they keep quiet! We should, for the sake of all the Yira, force these self-styled chiefs to surrender their assumed authority. So that we have the rightful ones who can now perform rituals. This ritual performance should be publicly announced so that one day is arranged to go to sacrifice, so the self-styled kings can be done away with it. So that rightful ones now organise one big ritual for every

Muyira wherever he is!”

Should they wish to remedy the resultant misfortunes, and to fully develop their collective potential, they must revive the rightful leadership across the board and collectively synchronise their rituals, in “one big ritual”, building a formidable alliance across their territory, and in so doing recover their people’s good fortune.

Colonial-Era History: Uganda’s Kingdoms and the Creation of Toro

The socio-political changes that the Bayira underwent are most pronounced on the Ugandan side of the border, changes in which the establishment of the kingdom of Toro played a significant role. In the mid-nineteenth century, the two largest monarchical states in what is now Uganda, Buganda and Bunyoro, were engaged in a new spat stemming from a historical rivalry. Bunyoro, now ruled by the Babito dynasty that had taken over Kitara, had lost its supply of iron-ore to a Buganda raid. Its king, Nyamukatara, began looking towards the south-west region of Busongora, home of the Bakonzo-Bayira, aiming to take control of emerging trade networks (Syahuka-Muhindo, 1994). However, his plans were disturbed by the actions of his own son. The prince Kaboyo broke away from his father while on a journey to collect tribute, and established his own kingdom of Toro, by seizing the south-eastern edge of Bunyoro and attempting to expand from there. He brought with him allies from Bunyoro to be his chiefs, and began attempting to create his own kingship there, and subsuming other local ethnic groups (including Bakonzo) into his rule.

The Toro royal family eventually cultivated some support among Bakonzo chiefs in Busongora region. However, it was not a particularly favourable relationship, given the tendency of the Batoro to treat the Bakonzo as their inferiors, and this period may have

seeded Konzo-Yira ethnic class-consciousness (Syahuka-Muhindo, 1994). It marked the beginning of a series of migrations of Bakonzo further up the slopes of the Rwenzori mountains to escape Toro overrule, something which would prove definitive in the conduct of their later struggles (Pennacini, 2008). However, Toro was eventually defeated in 1887 by Nyamukatara's successor to Bunyoro, Kabalega, and its territory was re-absorbed into Bunyoro. Kabalega had the Toro royal family assassinated, which might have prevented Toro's re-emergence, but for one who escaped. One of Kaboyo's wives, and the mother of his heir Prince Kasagama, who was only an infant at the time, fled with her child into the mountains, where they were aided by a Bakonzo chief (*Omwami* or *Isyemalhambo*) of the Baswagha clan, named Ruhandika (Stacey, 2003). Ruhandika arranged for the young prince to be smuggled to safety in Buganda, although his deed came at a price for the Bakonzo. Kabalega sent his army after Ruhandika, but, after failing to capture the child, used his soldiers to take control of the Bakonzo region of Busongora (Syahuka-Muhindo, 1994). That surviving child Kasagama would have a radical impact on the Bakonzo-Bayira, and the future of the whole region.

Colonial Arrival

The thriving salt trade in Busongora region quickly piqued the interest of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) and its representative Frederick Lugard, when they arrived in 1890. IBEAC had religious as well as commercial objectives, and was seeking to wrest dominance in Buganda from the Catholic White Fathers, and an increasing wave of conversion to Islam, in favour of Anglican advantage (Apter, 1997, Karlström, 1999). Sensing an advantageous alliance, the King of Buganda, the Kabaka, allowed IBEAC-associated missionaries freedom to seek converts, and a monopoly on new trade agreements

(Ingham, 1958). Buganda and Lugard also shared a hostility towards Bunyoro and its King Kabalega, who had refused the explorer Samuel Baker's demand that he allow Bunyoro to be annexed into the Equatoria Empire. Though Baker was a representative of the Khedive at the time, he kept in touch with the Colonial Office in London, and had fed them a crude and unpleasant stereotype of the Banyoro (Doyle, 2006, 2009). Lugard, determined to take control of the salt lakes in Busongora, advanced and forced Kabalega's soldiers to retreat (Dunbar, 1965).

Lugard had also taken on this expedition the young Toro prince Kasagama, who had been sheltering under Ganda protection ever since his escape from Kabalega, aided by Ruhandika. On his journey westwards, Lugard re-installed Kasagama as the ruler of a revived kingdom of Toro. Kasagama's purpose as "prefect-king" of Toro was to buffer Kabalega's interference in advancing British interests (Ingham, 1958, Syahuka-Muhindo, 1994). Toro was to establish "Saza Chiefs" (County Chiefs) to collect tax on behalf of the British Crown. Uganda was declared a British Protectorate in 1894. In 1900, the Toro Agreement extended Toro administration and revenue collection into Bwamba and Busongora counties, the areas in which the Bakonzo-Bayira, and another ethnic group named the Bamba, lived. This essentially rendered Toro a colonial state in its own right (albeit one subsumed by a second colonial power), in the eyes of the Bamba and Bakonzo (Syahuka-Muhindo, 1994). Lugard began an offensive to defeat Kabalega with the aid of Baganda troops, which turned into a five-year guerrilla war, during which time Bunyoro's population was decimated. Kabalega was finally defeated and exiled in 1897, and Bunyoro was annexed into the Protectorate (Doyle, 2006). Now safe from Kabalega's attacks, Toro was able to exercise its influence into Bakonzo and Bamba territory unhindered.

Toro's Internal Colonialism

The treatment of Bakonzo-Bayira under Toro rule was dehumanising to an extent that it remains seared on Bayira collective memory to this day, and continues to shape Bayira action in western Uganda. Once Toro obtained jurisdiction over Bwamba and Busongora counties, the homeland of both Bakonzo-Bayira and the neighbouring Bamba people, it created an ethnically based class system. Bamba and Bakonzo were considered "unclean" by Batoro, and were not allowed to share food with Batoro or eat inside their houses. Intermarriage was forbidden, a taboo which increased in potency as tensions between the groups ratcheted up (Doornbos, 1970). My own informants recalled even more extreme acts of dehumanisation and segregation. One elderly man in a village in Bundibugyo described how chiefs would insist Bamba and Bakonzo prostrate in front of them as a mark of respect, even if it was raining. (This was a gesture that was considered controversial by other ethnic groups when done voluntarily for the King of Buganda (Karlström, 1999), so being forced to do so for a culturally unaffiliated chief was a truly humiliating experience.) Another man in the same village recalled this disturbing anecdote:

> "There was also a scenario which, if the chief wanted to spit, and he needed a spitter, he would say that a Mukonjo should come and put there his mouth. So he can spit in it. It was degrading experience."

This sense of humiliation was further compounded by shock at how suddenly it was imposed. The Bamba and Bakonzo-Bayira had little cultural commonality with the Batoro, and little previous interaction. Moreover, the Batoro could not understand Lhukonzo, and so they had to speak Rutoro to each other. As well as degrading social treatment, land alienation, appropriation of crops and extremely high levels of taxation were forced on the Bakonzo. A further source of anger was the finalization of the border between Uganda and Congo, which triggered anger at Bakonzo-Bayira being separated from their kin (now the Banande-Bayira),

and it similarly affected the Bamba (Kibulya, 1972). The original border, drawn along the 30° Meridian, had to be revised multiple times to allow for geographical changes, and its limits were not formally agreed until 1919 (Langlands, 1972), but the separation between Ugandan and Congolese Bayira had begun.

These factors helped to trigger the first Bakonzo revolt, from 1919-1921. A prophet and medicine man named Nyamutswa, and his two companions Kapolyo and Tibamwenda, led this brief revolt, until their capture and hanging in 1921, after which they were buried in one grave in present-day Kasese District. There is unfortunately little historical record of the first rebellion, although Kabananukye (2000) suggested mobilization for it may have started as early as 1916. A number of my informants told stories of rituals that Nyamutswa performed, including some he used as selection techniques for those joining his revolt. Father Balinande, a Catholic priest and cultural historian in Kasese Diocese, recounted:

> "…they had to make sure that those people [they recruited] were very strong. So they would get a stick with certain herbs and they would tell people "You jump that stick" and if you would urinate while you jump the stick, it means you were not strong enough. So he recruited those people who did not urinate, and because he performed those rituals people started believing in him. And then when they were fighting with Toro, Toro kingdom had some foreigners with them and they would try to shoot them, but because of Nyamutswa, those bullets wouldn't touch them. That was the proof."

What is unclear in these stories is the role in which identity played in mobilization for this revolt. However, the above does show the importance of ritual and its efficacy in the creation of a leader's authority.

Syahuka-Muhindo (1994) argues that the first rebellion was primarily triggered by economic marginalization and discrimination against Bakonzo and Bamba in service provision. This pattern of discrimination continued throughout the remainder of the colonial period. Older

Bakonzo today recall, with particular vitriol, the lack of opportunities for Bakonzo to advance in education. An elderly man in Kilembe Town recounted:

> "…my brother's son was in Primary 6 in Fort Portal. He had the best marks and was meant to be given a scholarship. But the head teacher was a Mutoro, and told the boy he must repeat the year, and he gave a scholarship to his own daughter, who had not performed well."

That said, for the few Bakonzo and Bamba who were able to enjoy limited education and social advancement, their exposures profoundly shaped their political self-consideration. As Doornbos (1970) states, "Rising material welfare, increased access to education, and an infusion of egalitarian values thus militated increasingly against continued acceptance of social and political inequality" (pg. 1090). It is difficult to say how deterministic education was in catalysing the eventual resistance activities, but, as I shall discuss in Chapter Three, the tremendous value placed on education certainly continues to shape contemporary Bayira ethno-nationalism.

Isaiah Mukirania and the Bakonzo Life History Research Society

In 1954, a British journalist and ethnographer named Tom Stacey arrived in Rwenzori region, in Bwamba County, to study the Bakonzo. He employed one of the few Bakonzo with some education as a research assistant. Isaiah Mukirania was a young Mukonzo primary school teacher. He himself had only completed education up to secondary school (Stacey, 2003), enough to qualify as a teacher of vernacular languages. As Stacey's research assistant, Mukirania developed a passion for studying his own peoples' history and culture. He and Stacey travelled around Bayira regions in Uganda and crossed into Congo territory as well, documenting lifestyles and traditions.

As Stacey was preparing to leave, Mukirania announced that he would be forming a society to continue this research work, which would be named the Bakonzo Life History Research Society (BLHRS). BLHRS was organized in branches; representatives from all over Bakonzo populated areas were selected to document their history and culture, though it also quite explicitly aimed to instil an identity consciousness among their respondents (Peterson, 2009, Syahuka-Muhindo, 1994). Though the Bakonzo and the neighbouring Bamba people were still denied permanent representation in Toro Kingdom's parliament, which was still the organ of governance of the region, the formation of districts in Uganda had raised a hope that they might obtain their own district in Bamba and Bakonzo populated areas, and so greater autonomy. The BLHRS initially used their findings to appeal to the Toro Parliament for a separate district (Doornbos, 1970). Whether Mukirania developed grander ambitions of a separate state in the early days of the society, or whether this was a product of later confrontation with Toro, is not clear, but the pamphlet outlining the conclusion of the BLHRS paints a primordial, perhaps irreconcilable, difference between they and the Batoro.

> "we… are created different from [Toro people] in our build, appearance, traditions, languages, customs, marriage, native dances, circumcision, and mourning for our deceased relatives" (quoted in Peterson, 2012, pg. 966).

BLHRS was the organization which spawned the Rwenzururu movement, the political incarnation of the struggle for Bakonzo and Bamba liberation. Rwenzururu comes from the Lhukonzo word "*nzururu*", meaning "the snow", which served as a symbol of unity between Bakonzo and Bamba, since they shared a common proximity to the snow-capped peak of Mount Rwenzori.

Prior to 1961, the Parliament of Toro Kingdom, the Rukrato, was made up the king's appointees, but that year, the first ever elections for representatives were held (possibly to better mimic national structures, given Toro's determination to preserve its nationality within

a coming independent federal Uganda). Eighteen Bamba and Bakonzo representatives were elected in 1961, with Isaiah Mukirania among their number, in a parliament of fifty-eight seats. Whilst this did change the ethnic composition of the Rukrato quite substantially, it soon became clear that Toro had no intention of sincerely involving Bamba and Bakonzo at an equal level, despite the latter's appeals being made in the "language of liberalism" (Syahuka-Muhindo, 1994, pg. 295). Mukirania and his Bamba counterpart Yeremiah Kawamara used their new status to protest aspects of the federal constitution that Toro was preparing to submit for inclusion in the national constitution. In a Parliamentary session on March 13th 1962, they demanded that their ethnicities, Bamba and Bakonzo, were acknowledged as part of Toro Kingdom, and that the position of Prime Minister would be rotated between these three ethnicities. Toro refused both demands on contradictory grounds; to the first claim, Parliament replied "We are all Batoro", and to the second, "Only a Mutoro Nyakabara (true Mutoro) shall become Katikiro (Prime Minister) of Toro" (Doornbos, 1970). This event caused all eighteen Bamba and Bakonzo elected members of parliament to walk out of the session in protest.

This denial that separate ethnicities existed, effectively "We are all Batoro, but some Batoro are more equal than others", was not unprecedented. It was a common tactic used by Batoro when facing concerns of ill-treatment forwarded by the protectorate. I was shown a letter in Bundibugyo written by the Rukrato's Information Officer only a few days before this confrontation, which stated the following:

> "…in the kingdom of Toro, we have very many clans and we have people from Kyaka, Mutagwenda, and we have Bakonzo, Bamba, Banyabindi, Babwizi… and other clans. If one clan decides to try and separate us, it can bring out misunderstandings and that one clan will die completely and nowhere it will be heard of. Therefore, it cannot be possible for such a plan [of a new district] to bring confusion in Toro and Uganda." (Signed: From the authority of Information Officer,

> Government of the King, Kabarole, Toro, 8th March 1962. Letter in possession of Martin Mutusera, Harugali Parish, examined on 11 November 2015).

This is a translation from Rutoro, but the Rutoro version used the word "*enganda*", meaning clan, rather than "*endimi*", to mean ethnic group or tribe. Thus the importance of being "recognized" among Bakonzo is not just a matter of ethnic patriotism. It is a historically founded concern, where denial of their ethnic identity is simultaneously an experience of humiliating subjugation. Syahuka-Muhindo (1994) characterizes the foundational tenet of the Rwenzururu Movement as a "democratic struggle". He uses the concept of democracy in a Marxist rather than an institutional sense, arguing that in a context of existing inequality, *democratic* struggles are struggles to equalize the rights of minorities. He argues that the original work of creating a popular consciousness among the Bakonzo was for an assertion of Bakonzo "national" identity rather than secessionism. The liberally minded Bakonzo leaders initially wished to participate as equals in the soon-to-be independent Uganda. However, their Toro overlords had a different view of nationhood, and were instead looking to enforce the integrity of their monarchy's internal power, and power within the eventual federal system.

When these ideas of nationhood clashed and the Bakonzo and Bamba leaders saw Toro had no intention to reform, the militant secessionist struggle of the Rwenzururu movement began. The violent response of government against the civilian population gave the movement popular support, as did Rwenzururu's initial establishment of grassroots democratic systems. Mukirania, his ally Kawamara, and another prominent Bamba leader named Petero Mupalya, were arrested shortly the walkout, on the grounds of insulting the Toro King. This prevented them attending constitutional provision meetings in which Toro's federal status was to be determined, since they were kept in jail until after the Uganda Constitutional Conference, in

June 1962, was over. After demands for a separate district were also denied by colonial authorities, secessionist sympathies came to a head. On June 30th, 1962, the flag of Rwenzururu was raised in Bwamba County, and Rwenzururu's "independence" from Toro was proclaimed. Peterson (2012) states:

> "Mukirane and his colleagues described how, on 30 June 1962, Rwenzururu's founding fathers had celebrated their national independence: on a hilltop in the northern Rwenzori Mountains they had lit a bonfire, hoisted a flag, and sung an anthem. It is not clear that these ceremonies actually took place. But on paper, at least, Rwenzururu's founders were claiming an inspirational political history" (pg. 966).

Certainly, Rwenzururu "independence day" is still celebrated to this day on the 30th of June. What was unclear at the time was what form of independent entity Rwenzururu movement considered itself to be. Had it declared independence from Toro alone, or also from Uganda, which itself would not be officially independent for another few months? It became clear that Mukirania no longer saw himself as subject to Ugandan law when he escaped custody in October 1962 and fled back into the mountains to join Rwenzururu. The government responded with a violent crackdown on Bakonzo and Bamba civilians, which only entrenched support for the Rwenzururu cause (Syahuka-Muhindo, 1994). That said, the Bamba leadership was more moderately inclined than Mukirania, and the Bamba largely decided to pursue changes to local district administration, meaning their role in the "independent" Rwenzururu was limited.[12]

Despite the apparent power of monarchies within the Uganda Protectorate, and, as we shall see, the influence of kingdoms on Rwenzururu political action, the kingdoms did not fare

[12] The role of the Bamba in the formative stages of the Rwenzururu Movement is particularly contested in current narratives. As we shall see in Chapter Six, the Bamba recently established their own cultural kingdom, which Bayira Rwenzururu supporters often see as a threat to Rwenzururu's authority, and for some it represents a betrayal of their alliance against Toro. Amidst the tension between the two kingdoms, there is a tendency by some Bayira to present the Bamba as significant participants in Rwenzururu (thus having no need for their own kingdom), whilst most Bamba today said that they never participated in a secessionist movement, and their demands were limited to a district.

well after Ugandan independence in October 1962. The Buganda king Edward Mutesa, and his political party Kabaka Yekka (The King Alone) had had to form an uneasy coalition with the northern-dominated Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC) in order to defeat their Democratic Party rivals in the first national elections. Early party politics had had little effect on the kingdom states, given that the first constitution had left the federal powers of the kingdoms and kingdom parliaments intact. However, Mutesa and Obote's partnership was short-lived, and a dispute over Buganda-claimed lands triggered Obote to seize the presidency, suspend the constitution and exile Mutesa. Obote, along with his chief-of-staff Idi Amin, abolished all kingdoms within Uganda, fearing rival claims to power (Hansen, 1977, Bouckaert, 1999, Tripp, 2010).

Rwenzururu Kingdom-State and Isaiah's Initiation

Despite their eventual abolition, the power of kingdoms as institutions during the colonial period had made its mark on the Bakonzo. Soon after returning to the mountains in October 1962, Mukirania bestowed on himself the titles of "President" of Rwenzururu, and later, Omusinga, or "king". Prior to Obote's seizure of power, the Government of Uganda has tried to enlist Tom Stacey as a mediator to negotiate with Rwenzururu, though the negotiations failed, partly due to government refusal to meet Mukirania's demands, but also possibly because the Rwenzururu imagined community, the nation, was now truly alive. (Doornbos (1970) argues that the distinct, isolated geography of the Bakonzo-Bayira homeland in the mountains was a significant factor in their rapidly choosing to opt for secessionism, as oppose to persisting with demands for inclusion within Uganda.) Mukirania established Rwenzururu's administration along the same lines as Toro kingdom, but in conjunction with existing systems of Bayira clan and territorial authority. He called a meeting of Bakonzo clan

leaders in 1963, at which they agreed to keep fighting for a separate nation state (Syahuka-Muhindo, 1994).

Isaiah was to be President of this new state, and other Ministerial positions such as Minister for Security, Culture, Finance, and Education, were appointed. Rwenzururu territory was divided into seven county chiefdoms (or sazas), with "saza chiefs", *Omwimaniri w'eri saza*. (One of the territories, Kyatenga, was in Congo). Below sazas were *gombololas*, or subcounties, and village leaders were also to be appointed. Each of these positions were to serve alongside a military attaché. The headquarters of Rwenzururu State was located in Matungu, a mountainous area over the Congo border, to protect it from Ugandan government raids. According to Syahuka-Muhindo (1994):

> "Evidence abounds that the Banande or Bakonzo of Zaire became receptive to Rwenzururu nationalism and pan-Africanism. Many local chiefs and the peasantry welcomed the Rwenzururu leaders and the idea of uniting and forming a single nation," (pg. 308).[13]

What is less clear is at what point Mukirania transitioned from self-styled President to self-styled king, or whether he was officially both. A story that was repeatedly told to me by numerous informants implied that this kingship was popularly granted by the closest equivalent Bayira had to kings pre-colonially, the clan leaders, or *Abami*. There is considerable variation between versions of the story, not least to do with when this appointment happened, or whether the title of "King" or Omusinga was bestowed on him at

[13] I would caution that this reception of the Banande-Bayira to the idea of a united nation does not necessarily mean the Congolese Bayira, as a whole or even in part, saw themselves as subjects of Rwenzururu. It is true that Rwenzururu certainly had influence there. There was a "Kyatenga chiefdom", one of seven chiefdoms in the new Rwenzururu "state". A number of important families who lived on the Congolese side of the borderlands certainly supported Mukirania. The grandson of the prophet Mukeri, of the royal lineage of Basikania (who lives on his grandfather's land on the Congolese side, an hour or so by motorbike from the Lamia border in Bundibugyo), confirmed that his grandfather aided Mukirania several times and supported his kingdom. However, he did not give the impression that his grandfather saw himself as a Rwenzururu subject. Moreover, whilst the current Congolese Bayira have great respect for the Omusinga, Mukirania's son, they do not see him as "their" king, and appear to regard him more like the equivalent of one of their Abami. I would take that to mean that Mukirania's authority as a king was thus limited amongst the Congolese Bayira.

that point, or whether he was king or president first. Some versions suggest it may have happened as early as the mid 1950s, when Mukirania was leading BLHRS's research efforts, while others suggest it occurred in the early 1960s.

Though there are variations in the story, most of my informants agreed that, at a meeting between clan leaders and Mukirania, it was agreed amongst the clan leaders that Mukirania was destined to lead the struggle for their liberation. To endow him with the authority to lead effectively, a ritual was performed, in which the clan leaders simultaneously placed their hands on Mukirania, a symbolic transfer of authority. (It is possibly for this reason that the clan heads of Ugandan Bayira are now called "*Isyemalhambo*" rather than "*abami*", given that "*omwami*" is associated with royalty, which was now transferred to a unifying king.) Let us examine some of these recollections.

> "When Mukirania came, he found all those chiefs formed a segmentary society, which is why they were so vulnerable to colonialism, as they were not united, according to him. That segmentarity never gave them the cohesion to resist colonial rule. That's why he formed Rwenzururu United Kingdom. Crowning a king depends on the traditions of each culture of each clan. Like they said in the [E'Kyaghanda] conference, some Abami were not crowned and it was delaying the ritual performance. In Congo you can have several crowned kings in different places, but you have to wait until they are all dead until you can crown new ones. So they are praying the old ones die so they can perform new rituals. We were discussing back in the clan meetings outside the conference. We were saying that if we can change the system. We agreed to consult the ancestors to see if we can adjust. So Mukirania's government was uniting the Isyemalambo - they called them Isyemalambo on the Uganda side." **(Muhima, a young teacher and historical researcher from Kasese, and my regular research companion. 23rd September 2015.)**

Muhima is analogizing the present situation in DRC with the past of Rwenzururu, though given that the authority of *Isyemalhambo* is predominantly ritual, and that the Rwenzururu military campaign was centrally controlled. I believe he is correct in saying the tactical aspect of the *Isyemalhambo* unification under Mukirania was a ritual one, rather than a military one. (His words again illustrate the critical need for ritual synchronization between the *abami*

(kings) that is felt by contemporary ethno-nationalists.) However, in relation to both Rwenzururu and the present activity of E'Kyaghanda, the link between unity, territory and ritual synchronicity is evident. Mukirania in this way was behaving similarly to Packard's (1981) description of how *Mwami* established their authority over territories, through the cultivation of alliances with ritual practitioners, so that they can synchronize their activity to guard, and improve the collective fortunes of those under their authority. Rwenzururu's state-building activities alongside the procedure of ritual unification was an act of incorporating that authority into a single, united entity.

Peterson (2009) argues that this ascent to royalism was "entrepreneurialism" consistent with Uganda's historical context. As Uganda neared independence, the kings of the internal monarchical states, particularly Buganda, stiffly resisted any notions of their kingdoms being assimilated effusively into a multi-ethnic nation, given that their monarchies were ethnically legitimated. Toro Kingdom at the time was trying to ensure its monarchical endurance and nationhood within the forthcoming federal state. The marginalised Bakonzo-Bayira, having failed to persuade their overlords in Toro Kingdom to allow them proper representation in the kingdom parliament, thus borrowed their structures of royalism when creating the initial Rwenzururu Kingdom, having learned from experience the durability of kingdom structures. Thus for Peterson, Rwenzururu represented numerous forms of political entrepreneurialism. He also notes that later historians who were critical of Rwenzururu based a number of their attacks on the moral failings of royalism. Peterson is no doubt correct that the power of the federal monarchies of Uganda inspired Mukirania's royal claims, but we must not lose sight of what remained consistent within this period of change.

Since Mukirania mimicked and aggrandized the same techniques of ritual alliance building that Bayira clan chiefs have historically used, his politicking can be seen as a developmental adaptation of existing socio-political systems, rather than an outright invention. Thus Peterson's (2012) assertion that the notion of Rwenzururu was situated in "linear time", with the leaders acting as the "heirs of their forefathers", is true, but it neglects to emphasize that the movement was embracing both progressive change *and* cyclical continuity, through the expansion and upscaling of an existing system. This said, Mukirania, a schoolteacher, is not generally considered to be of chiefly descent, meaning that his assumption of ritual authority was also a breach in the cycle of stereotypic reproduction. How, then, is this aspect of his accession accounted for? There are numerous aspects to the answer of this question, which will be picked up on throughout the thesis, but these responses begin to give part of the picture.

> "These ridge leaders (*Isyemalhambo*) were to keep their authority as it was a God-given inheritance, and they would perform rituals under the central government. The power they have is the dreaming, telling the future. So they were to advise the king on matters of land. These leaders were the ones who laid their hands on him and gave part of their spiritual power to him in 1961, on the 15th of August. They saw Mukirania as the only trusted person to lead the people. They based their decision on research that he made, he did research on both sides, wrote down whatever they told him, so they thought that he had the most information and is the only one who has done this research, so we know that this is the right man." **(A Former Chief Justice of Rwenzururu Kingdom, Interviewed 25th August 2015.)**

> "It was in 1953 when all the ridge leaders from Uganda and Congo met and Mukirania was a guest at the meeting. At the end of the meeting they accepted to let him lead them, they surrendered their grounds, and gave him the power to guide them on that Cold War, that research work. Because he was educated - many of them were not educated." **(Baluku, a historical researcher in his late thirties in Bundibugyo, Interviewed 19th November 2015)**.

Both of these testimonies express a similar theme in different ways when describing why Mukirania was able to become a king of unprecedented scope, despite having no ancestral claims to chiefly authority. His education, and the act of his having done research (which itself was possible because of his education), singled him out. The unique value that the

Bayira attach to formal education is discussed more extensively in Chapter 3, and the mode by which productive action endows individuals with seeming spiritual authority is further explored in Chapter 4. For now, however, I wish to suggest that this point in history, in which Mukirania's education and what he did with it became central to his leadership, is indicative of an increasingly "statist" (Mitchell, 1991) political consciousness. It had become clear to the traditional authorities that the world was changing, and their political emancipation was contingent on their mastery of the new tools and languages of national and international governance.

Certainly, Rwenzururu had swiftly acted to try and place itself in the new hegemonic order of nation states. Mukirania and his Ministers sent a deluge of letters to the United Nations, the Organisation for African Unity, the Queen of England, and other international authorities, demanding that they "register" Rwenzururu as a newly independent state. Doornbos (1970) notes, "…so compelling was the need to communicate that one of the first actions of the secessionist Rwenzururu government was to establish a training school for typists" (pg. 1124). Yet for all this politicking, many still believe Isaiah recognized the limits of republican-style governance.

> "Presidents are elected and kings are not. They are installed. So he [Mukirania] knew his visions, and he thought maybe as president his time of rule would end before he had achieved his objectives. So he became the first king of the Bakonzo and Rwenzururu. He changed from president to king having observed that a local without power to rule would not succeed in a world as president. He was advised to change to king to succeed in fighting bad leadership." **(Mathe, a former Chief of Police of Rwenzururu Kingdom, Interviewed 14th December 2015).**

In Mathe's testimony it is rather unclear which came first, the kingship or the presidency (and indeed that often depends on who is being asked, though it would be reasonable to assume that Mukirania maintained a usefully ambiguous relationship to both terms). There are two aspects of this passage that are revealing for our purposes. The first is the reflection on the

longevity of these two types of rule, and by extension, the durability of the institution that they create. By his establishment as king, not only did Mukirania himself not have to fear his legitimacy being usurped, but he also founded a dynasty. "Bad leadership" might destroy a fragile government, but a royal, heritable dynasty was an altogether more durable.

Interestingly, Syahuka-Muhindo (1994) argues that the kingship was a "mistake", since it eroded the democratic character of the movement, and revealed the movement intelligentsia's "inability to distinguish between the form and character of the state" (pg. 308). He believes the kingdom survived as long as it did not because of any competent leadership, but because of the self-organization and enduring grassroots democratic systems upheld by the masses. For my part, I found that veterans of the Rwenzururu Movement for the most part spoke highly of Isaiah Mukirania, but this may just as easily reflect their consciousness of present politics as well as their memories. Syahuka-Muhindo's point would suggest, plausibly to my mind, that the idealism surrounding Mukirania's kingship is at least somewhat retrospectively assigned. Nevertheless, while Toro's history might have inspired Rwenzururu's first foray into kingship, royalty has its uses when it comes to establishing a future as well. A second interesting feature that we see here is a picture of Mukirania as a sort of "king at home, president abroad", a fusion of secular and spiritual authority. This fusion is believed by some to have had serious consequences.

Mukirania's Death and Successor

Mukirania's sudden death in 1966, only a few years after Rwenzururu's establishment, remains a mythologized event. When asked how he died, most informants responded that it was under "mysterious circumstances". A current OBR official told me that Mukirania announced he was "going on a journey", before passing away peacefully the next day. (Doornbos (1970) says he died of dysentery.) However, later critics of Rwenzururu have

cited his untimely death as evidence that Mukirania overstepped the bounds of his authority. Caleb and Baluku (2005), two Bakonzo-Bayira authors, wrote a pamphlet highly critical of Rwenzururu to try and prevent its eventual recognition as a cultural kingdom, in which they say that Mukirania's death was divine intervention. They recount a story of him being bitten by a frog (a sign of a tremendous taboo violation among Bakonzo) as he tried to stage a coronation ceremony. Whether or not this was a formative event in current views of how authority should work in the would-be Yira State is unclear, however, some secessionists certainly see it as a cautionary tale. This is an extract from an interview with an elderly prophet, who served in Rwenzururu as a spiritual advisor.

> "He [Mukirania] died because he didn't follow some of the procedures. Example, the soldiers, the atabali, would come from war and salute him directly after they killed people, and Kithasamba [a god in Bayira cosmology] was not happy with that. He wanted a king never to be saluted for such. The kingdom is not meant to wage war. Kithasamba never accepted it. Not everything we do is holy. The purpose of the kingdom is to make sure people maintain the cultures like circumcision and the code of dressing. And offering sacrifices. The Kingdom is to remind the chiefs to play the roles and maintain the language."

In Chapter Five we shall examine the legacy of Mukirania's death on secessionist consciousness. For now, we might consider how our "two publics" (Ekeh, 1975), as described earlier, could also be used to reflect on Durkheimian notions of the sacred and the profane (Durkheim, 2001). As described earlier, the Bayira see the state, the organ of national politics, as something of a necessary evil, replete with both immorality and opportunity. By contrast, then, the realm of the spiritual and the ritual, the domain of the king, is meant to remain pure, if it is to maintain a positive relationship with the divine and ensure fortuitous circumstances. In such light, Isaiah's overreach may have precipitated his death. Mukirania's fourteen-year-old son, Charles Wesley Mumbere Iremangoma succeeded him, in a coronation ceremony conducted by the disruptive prophet Timosewo Bawalana who Peterson (2012) described. However, Bawalana's influence was short-lived, and Charles was then aided

throughout his reign in the mountains by senior ministers who had been Mukirania's original companions.

Two Governments and the 1982 Negotiations

Throughout Rwenzururu's existence, the citizens living in between the spaces governed by Uganda, and governed by Rwenzururu, were hardest hit. They found themselves paying taxes to two governments, and threatened by one against any cooperation with the other. To be sure, there were also many who embraced this "dual citizenship" with enthusiasm, going down into Uganda-controlled areas to work and earn money in the morning, and bringing their earnings back up to support the rebel government in the evening. However, as peace between moderate factions of Bamba and Bakonzo began to prevail in the lowlands, thanks to Idi Amin's peacemaking gesture of creating two new districts, one called Rwenzori for the Bakonzo, and another called Semliki for the Bamba (which are today named Kasese and Bundibugyo respectively, after their main towns). The Bamba largely gave up resistance of all sorts after this, since they had achieved what they set out to, and many more moderate Bakonzo began descending into the new district as well, weakening the legitimacy of Rwenzururu's leaders.

This laid the groundwork for eventual negotiations. After Idi Amin was toppled by Julius Nyerere in 1979, and a number of political transitions in Kampala, Milton Obote was re-elected under dubious circumstances for a second time, albeit to significant popular dissatisfaction. Obote had good reason to believe his political rivals might attempt to try and stoke rebel activity against him and use Rwenzururu as a proxy, and so thought it best to initiate a settlement. Their negotiator Amon Bazira managed to persuade Rwenzururu leaders to come down from the mountains voluntarily in August 1982. They were offered amnesty and local government positions, and Omusinga Charles Mumbere himself was offered a

scholarship to go and study in the United States (Syahuka-Muhindo, 1994, Syahuka-Muhindo and Titeca, 2016). However, my own fieldwork suggests that most Rwenzururu participants did not see this as a permanent settlement, nor, it seems, did the Omusinga himself want them to. What many believed was that he was going for education in order to learn how to run a state, and from then on, he would proceed to negotiate peacefully for formal state creation. An oft repeated line, attributed to him and recited with some variation by many people, was "The struggle with weapons is over, and from now we shall begin the struggle with a pen!" Mumbere left for America shortly afterwards, and would not return for almost two decades.

The National Resistance Army and Museveni's Presidency

Obote's second period of rule was authoritarian and tremendously unpopular, and inspired one of his political rivals, Yoweri Museveni, to begin a guerrilla war to bring him down. Museveni's force, the National Resistance Army (NRA), began advancing from the NRA's Rwenzori mountain hideout towards Kampala in 1982. As they took over villages, the NRA laid the grounds for a new political system. Each village established its own "Resistance Council" (RC), which did away with the chieftaincy system that had remained since the colonial era; villagers would instead elect their village representative. It was also designed to relieve some ethnic tension. Immigrants had been barred from leadership positions in Buganda prior to the NRA takeover, but the RC system was based on residence rather than descent, so in theory anyone could be elected. In fact, this looked more reformist than it really was, since the more prosperous and established village members had larger followings and so tended to be elected anyway (Mamdani, 1996). However, the NRA, in comparison to the unruly UNLA, solicited a huge amount of support because they were able to protect civilians from their own national army (Allen and Vlassenroot, 2010). Their own ranks swelled rapidly as a result. In 1986, the NRA marched into Kampala, and unleashed a swift

and efficient coup (Tripp, 2010, Allen, 2006).

Museveni's thirty-year rule, from 1986 to the present day, can be characterized as something of a rise and fall. Initially he was hailed as a hero, not only in Uganda but across the world. The insecurity in the countryside that had characterized Obote's second term largely ended, the military was well disciplined, and investment began flooding into the country. Or, at least, so went the story of Uganda's "economic miracle" (Jones, 2009). The figures looked good. From having been in economic freefall, Ugandan annual GDP growth rate rose fast, and averaged 7.1% from 1992 to 2012 (African Development Bank, 2013). His liberal monetary policy and talk of democracy earned Uganda huge support from foreign donors, and he was hailed by Bill Clinton in 1998 as representing "a new generation of African leadership" (Mutiga, 2014). However, his increasingly authoritarian style has significantly dented his popularity, both domestically and internationally (although he continues to retain a substantial amount of support within Uganda).

Kingdom Restoration

One of Museveni's most popular moves was to restore the kingdoms that Obote had banned, albeit as "cultural institutions" with no political authority (at least in theory). The constitutional clause that concerns such kingdoms, Article 246, is rather vaguely phrased. Section 1 states:

> "Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the institution of traditional leader or cultural leader may exist in any area of Uganda in accordance with the culture, customs and traditions or wishes and aspirations of the people to whom it applies." (The Constitution of Uganda, 1995).

Interpretations of this article have made for serious misunderstandings within and between kingdoms (or to use the official term, "cultural institutions"), as a result of this vagueness. For one thing, the sentences above do not specify whether or not government "recognition" is

necessary for a cultural institution to exist. That clause alone implies not, but later clauses set out that a cultural leader is entitled to receive certain benefits from government. These can be substantial; a salary of five million shillings a month, a car, accommodation, bodyguards from the national army, and so on, and unsurprisingly, as a result, nearly all Ugandan cultural institutions have competing claimants, insisting that they are the true leader. However, to the fury of the Bakonzo, Rwenzururu was not one of the kingdoms that was restored, on the grounds that it had not existed pre-colonially (though also likely because of Museveni's suspicions that they continued to harbour secessionist sympathies).

Given this refusal to recognise Rwenzururu, relations between Museveni and the Bakonzo were tense. Charles Mumbere's scholarship had also been cancelled when Museveni came to power. Mumbere, as a result, spent much of the rest of his time in America working as a low-paid nurse's aide once he was no longer able to study.[14] More gravely, Article 246 had no mention of the territorial boundaries of these kingdoms. Although there was a clause saying that no person could be forced to engage with cultural leadership, now that Toro was going to be restored, there was understandable fear among Bakonzo that they would be returning to their previous subordinate status. There was another barrier to Bakonzo getting their way on Rwenzururu restoration. Charles Mumbere was accused of being involved with the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebel group, and their affiliate at the time, the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU). Captured documents in Congo indicated he had a remote advisory position as chair of NALU. When this information was revealed to the public, the Bakonzo were both incensed at government attempts to tarnish their leader, and fearful of returning to the status of Toro subordinates. There were thus numerous threats to retreat into

[14] The unglamorous reality of Mumbere's life in America is not widely known among many Bakonzo-Bayira, who continue to circulate a variety of rumours about what happened whilst he was overseas. Many believe he has powerful international connections that will aid the secessionist effort as a result of his years there, and I also regularly heard a rumour that he had been militarily trained by elite units of the U.S. Army.

the mountains and rebel again. It was decided, then, to allow Charles Mubere to return to Uganda for a consultative period of two months, to visit his home area and engage in government talks (Syahuka-Muhindo and Titeca, 2016).

Two crucial organisations were created in the duration of Mumbere's two month visit to Uganda in late 1998. The first was the Rwenzururu Veterans Development Association (RVDA). According to Syahuka-Muhindo and Titeca (2016), the veterans of Rwenzururu had been seeking to form a unifying organisation for some time, but had been impeded by government suspicion of rebel sympathies, and possible collusion with NALU or ADF. Charles Mumbere met with the Minister for Security, together with the veterans, and the veterans protested that they were not rebel sympathisers. The organisation they wanted to form was to "…participate in fostering security in the Rwenzori region" (ibid, pg. 13). Today the RVDA has about forty thousand members, according to its chairman, and, while its development projects vary from branch to branch, the senior veterans are tremendously influential in Rwenzururu kingdom. It was the second committee established on Mumbere's journey, the Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu Restoration Committee, that allowed for the eventual restoration of the kingdom. (The kingdom's full name in Lhukonzo is Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu (OBR)).

The OBR Restoration Committee began petitioning government to restore Rwenzururu, but did not describe Rwenzururu in ethnic terms. They suggested Rwenzururu would be a multi-ethnic entity, involving Bamba, Bakonzo, Banyabindi and other ethnic groups living in the Rwenzori region. The catch-term "Banyarwenzururu" is still frequently used today, and is said (at least by its proponents) to mean all people who drink the waters made from the snow melt of Mount Rwenzori. Meanwhile, Bakonzo youth movements were also agitating for the restoration of Rwenzururu, some more peacefully than others. In 2001, Museveni held a

meeting with Rwenzururu representatives, promising to examine the issue. Whilst an earlier study (Kabananukye, 2000) had found that 85% of Bakonzo favoured Rwenzururu's restoration, it also pointed out there were some camps of people who were just as passionately opposed to it. Museveni commissioned an investigation known as the Kajura Report in 2005, to see how these grievances might be resolved, since it was looking increasingly unlikely that he could avoid recognizing it. The report recommended the institution be restored in line with Article 246 of the constitution, and these recommendations coincided with key figures opposing the restoration changing their positions. Museveni was also quite possibly considering the 2011 elections by the time he agreed that the recognition should go ahead. Charles Mumbere was "crowned" in an installation ceremony on the 19th of October 2009 (Syahuka-Muhindo and Titeca, 2016).

The recognition of Rwenzururu was not the start of peace in the region that Museveni had doubtlessly hoped for. Nor, to his irritation, did he begin enjoying Bakonzo-Bayira political support. Bayira are generally opposition voters in Uganda, which some among the NRM political class see as a measure of ingratitude, given Rwenzururu's restoration. Moreover, devastating incidences of violence have also affected the region profoundly, which are more fully discussed in Chapter Six. Rwenzururu's future as a cultural kingdom is looking increasingly uncertain, but, as we shall see, inhibiting the kingdom will not suppress demand for something greater.

On the Congolese Banande-Bayira

It would be impossible to undertake a comprehensive review of Congolese history, or even the recent history of the Kivu provinces, in the space available, so I must regrettably limit

discussion here to a summary of the effects of colonisation on 20th Century Nande political systems, and the more recent political-economic history of the Bayira-Banande. After King Leopold II of Belgium was forced to cede control of the Congo Free State, a bloody form of non-governmental organisation that had allowed him to run the area for his personal profit, with appalling treatment of Congolese workers, the Belgian government formally annexed Congo as a colony in 1908. Packard (1981) notes that the consolidation of colonial rule represented a general period of decline for the Banande, but also a change in the nature of the chiefship of the *Omwami*. The *Abami* became de facto colonial administrators, and thus a more secular and administrative dimension of their authority arose.

Packard (ibid) suggests that this had a relatively limited impact on the ritual role of the *Abami*, a role that he implies they were able to continue mostly undisturbed. Nevertheless, he also notes that the Bashu clan, on which his own ethnography was based, experienced interference in the secession practices of Abami by the Belgians, who failed to appreciate the ritual significance of the *Abami* and were interested only in their administrative efficacy. Though they appeared to follow the line of descent to some extent, they would choose candidates who had not necessarily undergone the rites of secession, thus throwing the ritual system into disarray. The Banande-Bayira today whom I encountered certainly retain a deep appreciation for the importance of ritual conduct by the *Abami*, but collective memory is equally very troubled by the disturbances in the patterns of descent and possible failures of proper secession, as described above. It is this disturbance that seems to prompt the building of a Yira "ritual public" on this side of the border, complementing the efforts of their Ugandan counterparts.

Protestant missionaries began establishing capitalist development schemes in Butembo in the early 20th Century, giving rise to a new generation of Nande traders. Raeymakers (2007) emphasises, however, that past and contemporary Nande traders should not be reducibly viewed as "capitalists", given the complex array of social networks and obligations that their businesses depend on. During the Mobutu era, business elites profited from Mobutu's neo-patrimonialism, but the collapse of his Zairianisation project and the end of his rule resulted in such ties of dependency being redirected. In the case of the contemporary Nande traders, that dependency was extended into local networks of "trust" (Raeymakers, ibid) with each other, which allowed them to develop lucrative trans-border and international trade networks. Though the traders are often painted as the de facto rulers of the Nande in North Kivu, particularly in Butembo, both Kabamba (2012) and Raeymakers (2007) argue that they continue to maintain ties with the state government, and that their "governance" style activities should not be read as an act of competition for state authority. Rather,

> "The socio-economic redistribution that occurred in Butembo's landscape, therefore, reminded more of an opportunistic form of "gift-giving… than of genuine social service provision. By repairing bridges, or providing funds for public projects, the Nande trust network substantially confirmed the view that politics, rather than being a fight for scarce resources, is essentially a struggle for the means of legitimacy. As a result of their growing "public" role, the lower social strata of Nande society would increasingly look at them for support, assistance and advice rather than go to the corrupt and predatory state apparatus" (ibid, pg. 91).

From my own data on E'Kyaghanda Yira (which is substantially financed by the Nande traders), I would concur that whilst the organization makes use of the "languages of governance" (Hansen and Stepputat, 2001) and its associated technologies, it is not necessarily trying to wreak control from the Congolese state (such as it exists in North Kivu) with a competing "civic public". The E'Kyaghanda's emphasis is, to my knowledge, focused on creating a synchronized "ritual public". This said, E'Kyaghanda has numerous irons in the fire, and is establishing a "development" fund as well, with which to fund agricultural

projects. It is a self-help ethos reminiscent of that documented by Jones (2009). In the context of the violence of the Kivu conflicts, and the violence typical of land acquisitions (Jackson, 2007), the Nande traders have also created a privatized security system, or rather systems, through paying various rebel groups and Mai Mai groups for their protection (Raeymakers, 2007). Thus, though they may not seek to build a "civic public" in the sense of a new state, Nande elites are, I venture, able to capitalize on the legitimacy this quasi-provisioning of services gives them. As Raeymakers (ibid) notes, their use of contracts and documents in their provision of rebel-security points to a blurring of the formal and informal. Such a useful ambiguity allows them to insinuate government-like authority in the building of the ritual public. Whilst they may have no ambitions at this time for grander forms of political recognition, they freely use the tools of state governance, as we shall see in Chapter Five. Thus their political potential, especially in the eyes of their secessionist-inclined Ugandan kin, could be seen as capable of greater things.

It is worth briefly addressing the matter of a notorious rebel group that is currently active and often associated with Rwenzururu. The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) militia, currently one of the most active in Eastern Congo, claims partial descent from the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda, which was itself formed partly by members of the original Rwenzururu movement that refused to surrender in the 1982 negotiations. Whilst the ADF claims to have Islamist motivations, there is evidence that their commitment to an Islamic state is limited and that their ideology is rather mixed in practice. (As Titeca and Fahey (2016) point out, this has allowed various interested actors, particularly the Ugandan and Congolese governments, to frame the ADF in ways which suit their own purposes. Scorgie-Porter (2015) adds that there were significant differences in how Islamised the different ADF camps were, a conclusion which my own limited findings on the ADF from the field would

support.)[15] To whatever extent such motivations may be present, it had former Rwenzururu fighters among its ranks, and their descendants continue to occupy senior ranks (Scorgie-Porter, ibid). The ADF are, to the best of my knowledge, no friends of Yira ethno-nationalists in North Kivu. Whilst in DRC I heard numerous conspiracy theories from people who suspect that they may be a front for unknown enemies wishing to kill Bayira. The more institutionalised that Yira ethno-nationalism becomes, the greater its impact on Great Lakes geopolitics will be. I hope that this thesis serves also as an insight into this movement (in what may prove to be its formative years) and contributes to the contextualisation of the legacy of Rwenzururu.

Conclusion

This review of the history of the Bayira, their social organisation and the Rwenzururu Movement, aside from serving as necessary historical background, has argued that Yira political action today should be viewed through the lens of a perceived collective

[15] I interviewed a close relative of a number of senior ADF commanders, the older generation of which were originally Rwenzururu fighters. Said relative remains in touch with these ADF commanders and visits them in a safe-house in North Kivu, but does not support the rebel movement. He gave me a cache of digital documents that were mostly English translations of writings of Al-Qaeda linked jihadist ideologues, including some notorious ones like Anwar al-Awlaki and Abu Muhammed Asim al-Maqdisi, as well as more obscure writers. The themes of the texts varied; a number were about women's proper religious behaviour, and a number of others extolled the writings and actions of the mujahedeen. These documents were, according to the relative, used by ADF leadership, though to what extent they were circulated or imbibed I am unsure. I also conducted an interview with a young female former ADF member, who had been abducted at the age of nine, but had recently returned and claimed amnesty after ten years in the bush. She had converted to Islam whilst with the movement, and she continues to be a practicing Muslim and wear a hijab. However, she said that she remained unsure of the ADF's political motives throughout her time with them, and whilst she was told stories of obscure enemies, she did not appear to know about any plans to establish an Islamic state. I asked what the difference was between the Islamic practices of the ADF and the practices of her current place of worship, and she said it was the same. I am unsure where she worships, but my impression was that she did not see her faith as a political calling. This would support Scorgie-Porter's (2015) finding that ADF units vary in their Islamist ideological commitments. I was also told that recent high-profile defections by former Rwenzururu fighters were because of disagreement with the Islamist inclinations of some of the leadership, again supporting the conclusion that ADF ideology is fractured.

interregnum. This is because the authority of the *Omwami*, as described by Packard (1981), depends on effective ritual performance, and alliance building with rival ritual practitioners, in order to synchronise ritual conduct over a given territory, an essential practice for the wellbeing of land and people. Ritual authority waxes and wanes in organic cycles, with the death of the leader and the succession of a "rightful" new one, the period in between which is marked by danger and disorder. However, the colonial destruction of traditional authority systems has left the Bayira in fear of false leaders who are not performing their ritual duties, which would explain their ongoing marginalisation. In this light, the (re)creation of a united "ritual public", in which all rightful leaders would synchronise ritual performance, is seen as a means to rectifying this trouble, and ushering in a new age of a united, prosperous ritual nation. Moreover, in such a light, the kingship of Isaiah Mukirania becomes rather more comprehensible than an "invention", for his actions were an extension of the practice of synchronised alliance building, reinvigorated for his time with reference to contemporary constructs.

Chapter Two: The Bayira's Two Knowledges

This chapter is about the epistemological foundations behind a political act of would-be secessionism, which simultaneously represents, for the Bayira, a rejection of an "Afro-modernity" characterized by disjuncture and contradiction (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2004, Coe, 2005). The former write that:

> "Afromodernity is experienced as a series of antimonies: between continuity with the past and a radical alienation from it…" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2004, pg. 345.)

The Comaroffs soundly reject modernization theory (which mandates an evolutionist transition from the "traditional" to the "modern") in principle. However, by starkly characterizing "Afromodernity" as an experience of lived antinomies, and implying Africans have little choice but that between "tradition" and antithetical "futures" (ibid, pg. 345), they fail to overcome modernization theory's core paradigms. This is not to say that Africans do not experience sometimes disturbing clashes between local values and the influences of globalization – certainly the Bayira do. However, to suggest that their agency is limited to a binary choice is thoroughly limiting, and certainly inaccurate in this case, particularly those inclined towards secessionism or other forms of ethnic autonomy. What we will see here, rather, is an effort to "synchronise" these supposedly contradictory domains. Though they are associated with the opposing poles of the "civic public" and "cultural public" binary, much like a state they still have the potential for a mutually empowering relationship.

In this chapter, I will discuss a distinction that the Bayira make between two types of knowledge. The first is *amenge wakibutirwana*. Depending on who is asked, this translates as "pure knowledge", "cultural knowledge" or "natural knowledge". The second is *amenge' w'omwithendekero*, meaning knowledge acquired from school, or "school knowledge". Though the two types are considered distinct, and in some ways antonymic, both have certain

common features, but also crucial differences. Both contain hierarchies of sort. Obviously, the more levels of education one passes through, the more knowledge one acquires. Moreover, the scarcity of education, particularly secondary and higher education, among the Bayira, has resulted in a palpable hunger for it, and an enviable status for those who have it. In the case of *amenge wakibutirwana*, "pure", "natural" or "cultural" knowledge, everyone has a degree of it, since it is used to describe instinctual knowledge and that which is acquired from ones' family. However, there are also individuals who are believed to have particularly strong, and spiritually guided levels of it. This domain of knowledge is also associated with magic and spiritual power.

However, the Bayira see a crucial difference between the roles of the two knowledges. *Amenge w'omwithendekero*, school knowledge, though it is acknowledged to contain merits of its own, is, in the eyes of the Yira ethnonationalists, a facilitating form of knowledge that will allow them to maximize the potential of a rediscovered and enhanced *amenge' wakibutirwana*. Thus, I wish to show that the two knowledges are now engaged in dialectically shaping their intended *deployment* in ethno-nationalist and secessionist efforts. Specifically, the Bayira insist that the epistemological *techniques* associated with educational knowledge and science should be applied to "cultural knowledge", in order to optimize it and "develop" it. Thus, we can extend the metaphor of the "two publics" to knowledge, "school knowledge" being associated with both the temptations and dangers of the "civic public", and "natural knowledge" the substance of the "cultural" or "ritual public". This allows us to see how, like with a would-be state, the two domains may have different moral representations, but also tremendous potential in careful combination.

It is this divide in knowledge, and the dialectical influence between the two, that is the epistemological underpinning of the Yira ethno-nationalist project. This is because it collapses the "Afromodernity" binary between "traditional" and "modern", or "past" and "future". In their view, "cultural", or "natural" knowledge is the *foundation* of their potential power, and educational knowledge and its products are *the tools one needs to harness* the power of natural knowledge, and also to function in the global order of bureaucratic nation states. Indeed, some people argue that educational knowledge is merely a particular development of "natural" knowledge. This represents a rejection of the Afromodernity binary more broadly, because it emphasizes that all those things that people desire and perceive to be the product of other countries – technology, education, prosperity, international prestige – are all to be found within their own "authentic" Yira cultural selves, only their Yira equivalents will be "purer", unsullied by the amorality that wealth, foreign goods and power are known to bring. This is because the possession of a high level of *amenge' wakibutirwana* is, as we shall see, *indicative of loyalty and trustworthiness to the Yira patriotic cause*. Thus, in the two knowledges, we see a mirror image of the earlier reconceptualization of Ekeh's (1975) "two publics"; the amoral, imported state, filled with desirable power but also with avarice, and the "pure" or "natural" ethnic community that that state will serve.

This exercise of restoring "natural" knowledge, *amenge' wakibutirwana*, by way of educational knowledge, further legitimates the project of ethnic unification, because, as we have seen, the Bayira believe that their self-knowledge has been scattered and divided, first by the disturbances of colonialism, and, more recently, by their perceived enemies in government and beyond. Their loss of self is interpreted as a loss of natural knowledge, *amenge' wakibutirwana*. That loss and disunity necessitates acts of scientific information-gathering and research, the techniques of school knowledge. I shall venture that it is the

information-gathering practices taught in formal education, rather than any specific lessons institutional education might teach, that are the most immediately relevant features of "school knowledge", as far as the Bayira are concerned. For this, I shall follow Appadurai's (2013) argument for a globalized and democratized, rather than professionalized, view of "research". He argues that research should be considered the practice of expanding relevant knowledge, which itself simultaneously renders aspiration possible.

I shall show that, rather than accepting an "Afromodernity" paradigm, which might assume that the two types of knowledge are antithetical (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2004), the Bayira ethno-nationalists see both knowledges as analogical equivalents of each other, both key to political emancipation and high-tech societal transformation. Both have transformative capabilities in their own right, but it is "natural knowledge" that is the truly transformational force. We have already seen, and shall continue to see, an anxiety about a loss of knowledge of the authentic "Yira" self, hence the need for unity and rediscovery. Meanwhile, the power associated by the Bayira with formal education leads them to reflect on their own felt powerlessness as coming from their relative *lack* of education. Thus, as they deliberate what they lack, they are creating an epistemological response to this lack, based on both the domains of knowledge that they currently encounter. Varenne's (2008, 2008b) notion of "productive ignorance", that which is "…discourse about discourse triggered by the insufficiency of the earlier discourse" (ibid, 2008, pg. 1564.), is the epistemological condition in which the two knowledges are considered and combined.

Explaining "Ignorance"

That lacking of knowledge among Bayira is often explained with references to unknown enemies, or conspiracies by those in power. The enemy might vary, but their intentions to deny the Bayira knowledge and education do not. Take, for example, the below dialogue. This was between Mutagwenda, a Rwenzururu administrative chief at a sub-county level, who was having a meeting with his subordinate parish and village chiefs in Bundibugyo District. They are discussing the collection of funds for one of Rwenzururu Kingdom's projects, the Rwenzururu Heritage University. I was informed that all kingdom administrative chiefs were told to raise one thousand Ugandan shillings from each of their subjects, the cost of a brick with which to build the university (a somewhat controversial matter in the eyes of some, given that social pressure to donate to the kingdom makes for a disconcertingly close practice to tax collection, that which a "cultural kingdom" is not meant to have the power to do).

> **Mutagwenda**: Okay, the next agenda item is education. Rwenzururu is starting Rwenzururu Heritage University. I gave you authority to go and look for bricks from your subjects. How far have you gone with that, and with the issue of raising money for it?
>
> **Village Chief**: Because of the government poking its nose in Rwenzururu affairs, people have lost morale to contribute to the kingdom, as it is going nowhere. So can you look for organisations to help construct the University?
>
> **Mutagwenda**: Since 1962, the government of Uganda has been stepping on our programs. Maybe the government is stopping us because they think, "These Bakonzo, they are building this to expand their brains!" So if people don't contribute, the government will have achieved its goals!

There are two remarkable points embedded in this exchange. Firstly, the "subjects" under the management of these chiefs in Bundibugyo lived, for the most part, off of subsistence agriculture in remote, mountain-based villages. I visited a number of these villages during my time in Bundibugyo, and people would regularly complain about a lack of accessible quality secondary and even primary education, to say nothing of many peoples' inability to afford the schools' fees. Not unlike Stoler's (2009) description of the Dutch colonial state wanting to

train an “artisan class” to produce goods the majority of inhabitants of colonial Sumatra would never be able to afford, the fact that this university would be inaccessible to a majority of the people being asked to pay for its construction did not make it any less central to the *design* of the kingdom’s future. That fact becomes rather more explicable when we consider Mutagwenda’s remark about how the government must be disrupting the project to prevent the Bayira from “expanding their brains”.

It is not made clear in this exchange what exactly is found within the curricula of standard formal education that the government is so determined to prevent the Bayira from accessing. However, an undeniably extraordinary value is being attached to educational knowledge by the Bayira. It is not only, as we shall see, a wellspring of potential technological transformation in their eyes. Possessing “school knowledge” allows those who have it to subvert and oppress those who do not. Eve Sedgwick’s (2003) essay about “paranoid knowing” describes paranoia as an epistemology which places:

> “…an extraordinary stress on the efficacy of knowledge per se - knowledge in the form of exposure” (pg. 138).

Sedgwick does not consider paranoia in this sense a pathological condition, but rather a style of knowledge, one that is constantly on the lookout for the “bad surprises” that enemies and oppressors have in store.

Paranoid knowing, then, has powerful ramifications for the practice of secrecy, knowledge that is hidden. Not only does it become necessary to constantly discover the secrets of the enemy and their malicious strategies. It equally forces a need to keep one’s own sources of power secret. Thus, I shall argue in this chapter, formal education or “school knowledge” (especially its upper levels) is seen as a body of secret knowledge, and thus power, power that the Bayira’s enemies possess and are keeping from them. Likewise, the “levels” of

knowledge within *amenge wakibutirwana* take on a new significance in the context of a perceived onslaught by enemies attempting to block their struggle for independence. Secrecy regularly shrouds "cultural" knowledge "…at its deepest and most true" (Coe, 2005, pg. 107, Bellman, 1984). However, I shall argue that these forms of secrecy take on a new significance in the context of a clandestine dream of secession, and through the practice of "paranoid knowing". The aura of secrecy "charismatizes" the holders of this knowledge (Goody, 1968), and so renders the unknown contents of their secrets all the more potent, valuable, and, indeed, critical, to their ultimate political emancipation.

Further to that, I shall argue that by way of analogy (following Tambiah, 1973), the Bayira create a natural relationship of equivalence between their two types of knowledge, a relationship that is imbued with great power. Through augmenting the power within the knowledge held by those with a "high level" of *amenge wakibutirwana*, and through analogizing the products of their rituals to the much-desired technological products that they would usually associate with wealth, Westernisation (or "modernity"), the Bayira overcome the perceived contradiction between "traditional" and "modern", between the "past" and the "future". Rather than being contradictory, both must be harmonized in practice to unlock the full potential of each.

I shall begin with a closer look at how each type of knowledge (firstly "school" knowledge and secondly "natural knowledge") is understood by the Bayira. I then lay out examples of this practice of analogizing the two. Finally, I return once again to the case of Isaiah Mukirania, and argue that he was able to accomplish what he did because he was perceived as possessing both sorts of knowledge. The fusion of the two led to his charismatic ability to appropriate an unprecedented level of power. I shall argue that his legacy, and his command

of the two knowledges, continues to have powerful repercussions for structuring the contemporary secessionist strategy and political consciousness.

Educational Knowledge: Amenge W'omwithendekero

Before beginning this investigation of "school knowledge" as the Bayira see it, it is necessary to revisit some of the key debates in the broader anthropology of education. Whilst I am following a distinction between two knowledges that was put to me by my informants, the lessons of much recent educational ethnography warn against considering "education" exclusively within the confines of the school. Recent works have tended to critique the model put forward by Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) of schools as hegemonic, reproductive systems, since this model neglects to analyse the dialectic of school education and local forms of informal education (Rockwell, 2011, Varenne and Koyama, 2011). It is this very dialectic that is the principal subject of this chapter; the process of analogy, equivalence, and mutual influence of the two knowledges for the purposes of "developing" each other.

Indeed, Varenne (2008b) argues convincingly for expanding "education" as a concept to encompass:

> "…the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities, and any learning that results from the effort, direct or indirect, intended or unintended" (pg. 567).

Seeking knowledge is a social activity, and a deliberative, reflective process. He argues that whilst this might just as easily be conceived of as "learning", "education" is a more apt term because it captures the political, authoritative aspect of knowledge seeking. *When answers are sought, someone is given the authority to teach*. This speaks to the "productive ignorance" (Varenne, 2008, 2008b) in which this learning process is forged; the desire for

self-knowledge, and the transient, dispersed and "fissiparous" (Worsley, 1968) character of authority directing the (re)construction of Yira ethnic identity, and the would-be secession.

What I am undertaking in this section is not a typical anthropology of education per se. Fascinating though it would no doubt have been to study the teaching practices of pro-secession teachers, I had not envisaged education being such an integral part of this story, and so had not undergone ethical clearance for studying schools at the time of fieldwork. Moreover, I am more interested in peoples' understanding of what education can do. To follow Sedgwick (2003), I wish to examine how educational knowledge itself is seen as performative, or is believed to have politically performative results. It is thus necessary to revisit the contentious effects of modernization theory and its role in the curricula of formal education.

Ethnographies of education, culture and generation

Despite my earlier criticisms of a disjunctive approach to "Afromodernity", there is plenty of ethnographic evidence that formal education, "culture" in the more abstract sense, and traditional social practices, do not make easy bedfellows. Coe (2005) documents the unforeseen epistemic consequences of the Ghanaian state's efforts to include a standardized "cultural" education in the curriculum, aiming to both preserve it, but also to harmonize it with "modernizing" aspirations and religious sensibilities (and to ensure the monopolization of state power over chiefs). This created an inadvertent bifurcation of "cultural" knowledge, between that which was taught in schools, and the more "authentic" knowledge retained by chiefs and ritual practitioners, which was secretive and guarded. Thus, the exercise

inadvertently strengthened the position of chiefs and ritual practitioners as guardians of "culture".

Ngwane (2004) describes how schooling led to generational conflicts in post-Apartheid South African communities, primarily because it engendered an increasingly individualistic mindset and different lifestyle aspirations, and discouraged young men from investing their resources into passing initiation rites. He argues that such conflict might, in fact, have been evitable. So long as men continued to engage in initiation rites, the power of the chiefs was protected, and so schooling itself needn't have been a source of tension. Rather, it was the fact that the men began refusing to undertake initiation rites that led to the tensions, and this resulted in the chiefs perceiving formal education as a de-masculinizing influence. Conversley, educated men considered their schooling a key component of their "modern" masculinity.

Stambach (2000) has written an extensive ethnography covering numerous aspects of girls' schooling in a Tanzanian Chagga community. Particularly fascinating, for our purposes, is her discussion of the "modernizing" aspects of the Nyerere-era curriculum, and its "home economics" lessons for girls. Why, Stambach asks, did schools continue to go to great lengths to teach these home economics lessons, which involved memorising hypothetical uses of ovens, fridges, and other technologies that most of the students were unlikely to possess, either now, or in the foreseeable future? The answer lies in how "…the school is viewed as instrumental in moving people from one social *condition* to another" (pg. 59, emphasis added), and thus these lessons are not about their current circumstances, but a "…part of the …learning about social class… about what they might achieve" (pg. 59).

Interestingly, Stambach also describes how elders insisted girls didn't need such lessons, since good domestic practice was taught as part of their initiation rites anyway. Elders thus analogized the Chagga initiation rite to home economics lessons, whilst simultaneously opposing the two forms of education, because of the differences in their perceived *ends*. One was conservative, the other was transformative. Likewise, the schoolgirls described to Stambach their aspirations to marry in a church while wearing a white dress, the type of wedding which "…conspicuously materialised the effects of school education" (pg. 69). Meanwhile, the elders feared the resultant decline of traditional marriage ceremonies, and the values associated with them.

Despite their different approaches, all of the above authors tend to concur with Stambach's crucial insight that schooling has the value and desirability that it does in Africa, because of its association with the transformation of material circumstances and social class. These ethnographies also help to highlight the more complex relationships people of all generations, particularly the older ones, have with education. Certainly for the Bayira, there are mixed opinions, but whilst schooling is not unanimously considered bad by the older generation, its adverse effects are also well-known, and it is by no means an unquestioned force for good. Below are the words of Mbayahi, a kingdom minister (himself a headmaster of a primary school). In our conversation, he complained that his people were getting "lazy" and neglecting the hard work of agriculture, and I asked him why this was so.

> "They have gone modern, they wanted cheap things, so they have gone into trade, they do not want to dig. They want to trade, and more especially, they want these types of freedom given to children and women. Mostly you find that men… education actually. Education in disguise, even when it is good, encouraged laziness, among us the Bakonzo."

Mbayahi's complaint about how the educated had little respect for culture or hard work was common enough. However, there was a further negative connotation to education. Below are

the words of Muliro, a Muyira elder who was involved in attempts to resolve a prominent land conflict in Bundibugyo District which we shall encounter in Chapter Six. Muliro is describing a report which argued in favour of the opposing party's claim.

> "It is young men who wrote that report, who don't know the history of this area. They are getting politically motivated to talk about issues that they don't know about. The trees and what is found on the land date back fifty years. Culturally, we are supposed to plant certain kinds of trees as indicators that this land belongs to you. Many of our children who have gone to university have a hidden agenda. We learnt that the Bantu migration came from the Congo basin 800 years ago in schools. We may have spread to different places. Whoever is saying "we were here first" does not know the history of migration. But this is politics motivated by the land economy… A politician thrives in troubled waters, so they will never get in the same boat with those who want peace."

That sentence, "Many of our children who have gone to university have a hidden agenda", looks somewhat out of place, given that on either side he is describing local migratory history in the manner of someone well-educated in the matter. He goes on to use his opponents' supposed lack of historical knowledge to discredit them, but finishes by saying (once again) that one can never trust a politician. It seems to serve as a reminder of the need to maintain vigilance even against one's closest, anticipating the "bad surprises" of paranoid knowing (Sedgwick, 2003), and it illustrates the apparent ability of education to corrupt. But it is the following mention to politicians, and their ability to exploit conflict, that is more revealing of what he means by the "hidden agendas" of the educated. And it is this association between the dirty, amoral politics of the state, Ekeh's "civic public" (1975), and education, that is crucial to appreciate. Consider the statements below.

> "Educated people confuse the world. They are the ones confusing, even now." **(Musoki, an elderly lady in a Bundibugyo village).**

> "Politicians in most cases are liars, because you can use something small to achieve a certain goal, and make people believe it, but you can forget about the repercussions." **(Kabusa, a teacher in Kasese).**

> "I'm a proud Mukonjo now and I think it is because of economics. The Bakonzo are only known now that they are rich and they can influence people. Businessmen, in Parliament, they can influence people, so we are no longer inferior." **(Mumbere, a**

young IT technician in Kasese, who is highly critical of the Rwenzururu Kingdom and does not support it.)

The first two people quoted were supportive of Rwenzururu and its ethno-nationalist efforts more broadly (though their feelings about secession are not known). Mumbere is a comparatively wealthy young man in his early twenties, who completed both secondary and higher education. He believes the Cultural Kingdom exploits peoples' ethnic patriotism for free labour, and, as he says here, believes that, while the Bakonzo-Bayira did continue to experience some stigma, it was improving due to their growing influence in the Ugandan business community. Despite their disagreements, all three are touching on a similar theme that is common in everyday political discourse. Education and its associated benefits and futures are the path to either a political career, or, as Mumbere points out, to political influence. However, state politics and the moral compasses of national politicians are far from highly regarded, and politicians are more often seen as exploiting office for personal enrichment.

This sentiment becomes particularly strong when people perceive active forces working against them; assuming corrupt or disproportionate political influence on the part of the enemy is a near-reflex. And, since education exposes youth to both the potentially corrupting temptations of materialism, as well as to greater political access, its promises are as threatening as they are inviting. Nevertheless, education is much like the state or "civic public" that Bayira secessionists would like to create. As much as they recognize its moral pitfalls of the state and education respectively, they also accept that their transformative capacities are not only worth the risk, but unquestionably necessary for participation in both national and international politics, and for the futuristic technologies they desire to create. It is these two specific purposes that the Bayira ethno-nationalists have in mind when they

extoll the need for education. We shall here analyse how education is understood to be able to meet these goals.

Education for Political Negotiation

The below is a transcript from a group interview organized by Mbaju, a young man I met in Kasese District who offered to introduce me to a group of elders, two men and one woman, so that they could tell me about history and culture. By this point in the discussion, the elders had hinted that they were unsatisfied with the cultural institution as it was, and wanted something more significant with which to be "recognized".

> **E.B**: So are you disappointed with the Kings acceptance of the offer of a cultural institution?
>
> **Elderly man 1**: We are not disappointed with the king's decision to accept a cultural institution, but we are viewing the cultural institution as a stepping stone towards achieving a bigger goal.
>
> **E.B**: If the cultural institution is a stepping stone, what should the next step be?
>
> **Elderly man 1**: The next step is the state. When the Omusinga descended from the mountain, there was already an army, ministers, the judiciary, and the cabinet. So the people thought, or I thought, that the King going to education outside means that he was going to learn how to run the state.
>
> **Elderly man 2**: We have a belief that, when the Omusinga went out, he would have made contact with foreign nations and bodies, and people who can assist us. For the people here to achieve their liberation.
>
> **Elderly lady**: We believe that through the mechanisms that King will put in place, it will follow and we will achieve. Through the King, and his contacts and his level of education, we will be able to operate for people to achieve their state.
>
> **Mbaju**: When the king went to the USA to study he was a soldier, and when he came back he was a soldier. So I think that the king should bring the design of the state. During Obote II [a reference to Obote's second period as President], what Obote said was that we could not have our own, what we wanted, because we were not educated. But when we have some education, what he says will not be true.
>
> **E.B**: So was it the right decision for the king to negotiate in 1982, or should he have kept fighting?

> **Mbaju**: It was not a particularly wrong decision for the king to come down since it got him education. The peoples' expectation was that, once he got some education, he would continue with the struggle.
>
> **E.B**: Will there be more fighting?
>
> **Elderly man 1**: We do not expect more fighting. What we think, what the king told us, is that now that the war by fighting was over, and what would begin would be the war of the pen.

To add to the generational variety, here is one more quote from a conversation I had in Bundibugyo District some months later with my friend Baluku, himself an enthusiastic secessionist sympathiser. I had remarked to him that I was interested to see that a very large number of Rwenzururu Kingdom Ministers who had jobs on the side of their duties were teachers. I asked him why he thought this was so.

> "It is true, these were teachers. The importance of education to Rwenzururu, and why they fought, they were anticipating that in the future of their children would get the jobs in government, as ministers and ambassadors. So it is a dismayed to see that the children are really educated but they are still down. Through education, they would know us, we the Bakonzo."

I do not wish to overstress the significance of the proportion of teachers within the cultural institution, or indeed relative levels of secessionist sympathies among Bayira teachers. For a start, as I have previously emphasized, there were tremendous differences of opinion as to the question of the Yira State among kingdom ministers. Secondly, education is an enormous public sector employer in Uganda since the introduction of the Universal Primary Education policy, and, given the fairly small number of white collar jobs available in the commercial sector in Kasese and Bundibugyo, it is not particularly surprising that those with a fair amount of education would turn to teaching for their income.

However, Baluku's response was quite strikingly similar to those of the elders (and their young friend Mbaju) in the previous extract. He was in his mid-thirties and would not have

been born during the 1982 negotiations, whereas the elders may have remembered, and indeed experienced, the ramifications of that event. Yet all those quoted repeatedly emphasize education, specifically the Omusinga's attainment of education, as evidence that the struggle for the state was not over. Rather, both Baluku and one of the elders insist that the war of weapons was merely to be replaced by "the war of the pen". I have no evidence that the Omusinga did or did not make that statement, but certainly the rumour that he did was very prevalent. The rumour deviates from the official narrative of the event, which suggests that the Omusinga and his forces unequivocally surrendered, and that the scholarship he was given to the United States was merely an incentive for the conflict's resolution. In the eyes of the people quoted above, that education represented a future negotiating tool and an instruction in state governance.

It also speaks again to the (admittedly obvious) association between educational attainment and political influence. The young man with the elders stated that:

> "…what Obote said was that we could not have our own, what we wanted, because we were not educated. But when we have some education, what he says will not be true."

This attitude to educational attainment as equivalent to a perceived *right* to participate in politics was identified in Uganda by Brisset-Foucault (2011, 2013). Following the enduring colonial "bifurcation" between educated and uneducated, urban and rural, civilized and uncivilized, and citizen and subject (Mamdani, 2006), Brisset-Foucault observed aspiring political commentators and operatives signaling their educational attainment, and so political capacity, in public political discussions. They did this through an elaborate use of English, but also through implicit or explicit statements that the uneducated rural population should limit their social participation to the supposedly politically-neutral activities of "development", and leave the complex, technocratic work of "politics" to the educated

urbanites. Educational attainment thus represents both a perceived capacity and a right to engage in political discussion at national and international levels, making it indispensable to the aspiring secessionist.

Technology, Culture, Science and Research

Consider the following conversations.

1. **E'Kyaghanda panelists in dialogue, on a panel titled "technology":**

Panelist 1: "Choose the old lifestyle. Today we have a way of communicating, but the old way was that a bee could come and buzz around you to tell you you will get a visitor. In terms of technology, if you are outside, I can pray for you and heal you… Chinese herbal medicine is Congolese herbal medicine! We can make women give birth safely using traditional medicine."

Panelist 2: "We shall have the other technology they talked about. We shall not need a aeroplane because we can fly in a traditional way. (Applause) if you are crossing a river, call Ndyoka (a water spirit in the form of a giant snake), and it will raise its back and you cross over."

Panel Chair: "Research is the beginning of our cultural revival. This is the beginning. We have a conference without soldiers outside. The spirits are protecting us and we will continue like this and harmonise this culture into modernity."

2. **Kahangwa, a major participant in the 5th of July attacks, who is also a member of a small prophetic cult, and the prophet leading it is receiving spiritual instructions to prepare for the creation of the Yira State.**

"Americans have bullet-proof jackets. But we don't make bullet-proof clothes. The body itself makes it bullet-proof. You can smear oil on your body, or you bathe in it and you go to the battlefield. This technology is advancing. We are getting [spiritual] updates on how to strengthen it."

3. **Bwambale, a senior staff member in Rwenzururu Heritage University in Kasese, that founded by the kingdom. He is not a secessionist, but is a strong supporter of the kingdom, and of the need to educate the Bayira and improve their circumstances. In this conversation, he is showing me a futuristic-looking computer generated architectural plan for the eventual design of the university, pointing out different buildings and their planned purposes.**

"Here, we have our hospital. It will be a hospital for western medicine, but also for traditional medicine. As old people die, that knowledge is lost. So this will be a research

university for traditional medicine, using both indigenous science and modern science."

4. **Kanzira, an ardent secessionist who was attempting to build and train a group of vigilantes, both to protect and develop shrines across the kingdom to restore the magico-religious powers of the Bayira, which he often refers to as "Afro-chemistry". He envisioned his group as a paramilitary organization, whom he hoped to obtain weapons and military training for, as well as developing magical capabilities for them to use in the eventual battle for secessionism.**

"If we connected members of different clans with some cultural characteristics, we will come up with something industrial and developmental, by my understanding. If you take the people with the same characteristics. Culture has science in it, so if we share everyone's knowledge we can come up with something scientific. There is a way Africans used to talk to ghosts, by applying herbs, and it worked! Someone at a distance is possessed is forced to talk words out of his or her consciousness, and when the message was delivered to the family, the ghost would go… So we were saying if people of that nature were brought together, to put together more technology and to modernise that, it would be the cheapest way of communication. Cultural men would add value to that technology and we wouldn't have to buy airtime. And they should put rules to regulate the use of these spirits so they can't kill people, but can only be used for communication from a distance. And the best way to modernise it is to have stronger regulations on how that power is used."

5. **On another occasion, Kanzira says the following when showing me a mountain shrine.**

"These shrines are acting as communication masts. They send signals to different areas by supporting one another, and the cultural powers of Uganda will be connected to the cultural powers of Congo."

All of these statements are fascinating in their own right, but they all share a common conviction in the latent power of "culture" and the magical abilities contained within it. That power is presented as competitive with existing advanced technologies, able to achieve the same ends of material transformation (and also socio-political power). These magics are spoken of as needing "development" and "harmonization", but also described in terms of *analogy*; shrines are analogised to telephone masts, indigenous science to natural science, culture to science, and spiritual battle tactics to bullet-proof vests. Other anthropologists, such as Piot (2010) have noted people drawing parallels between magic and technology, but in this case there is none of the "desire for the new and… cargo cult-like rejection of the old" that he

describes (pg. 129). Indeed, the old is sometimes described as the wellspring of the new, as when one of the E'Kyaghanda panelists said "Chinese herbal medicine is Congolese herbal medicine!"

On another occasion, Kanzira pursued the analogy between creating technology and augmenting magical power further, saying of an optimized set of "cultural" powers:

> "…it would be a modern cultural invention. Technology involves visions as well, don't you think? Someone has a vision… and it is when they put the vision into practice that technology comes out."

I am unsure if Kanzira was aware of the history of western social science's (particularly anthropology's) debate about whether there are fundamental differences in systems of thought between "primitive" and "modern", "western" and "non-western" peoples, and between "science" and "religion" or "magic" (Levy-Bruhl, 1923, Evans-Pritchard, 1977, Horton, 1973). However, this process of equivalency and analogy (common to all those quoted) again reads as a refutation of the well-known binary that would seemingly prevent the Bayira achieving the material fruits of "modernity" on their own terms. Tambiah's (1973) essay on analogy in ritual was also attempting to (somewhat) refute the binary between western and non-western thought. He suggested that differences were most likely products of specific historical trajectories rather than fundamentally different modes of thought, though is not his answer to this specific question that I am attempting to address here. Rather, I am interested in his treatment of analogy as a performative act of "persuasion".

Tambiah argues against looking at magic as "failed science", and is instead inclined to see ritual's purpose as "effecting social results" rather than "achieving practical results" (ibid, pg. 226). (Anthropologists who examine the efficacy of ritual (e.g. Csordas, 1988) might beg to differ.) However, analogy as a persuasive strategy to effect a *particular socio-political*

direction, rather than an immediate tangible effect, is a very useful perspective for our purposes here. By analogizing "culture" as equally powerful as "science" (if not more so), and equally capable of producing desired technological outcomes (which themselves have political implications), "culture" is made competitive with the global technological drivers of the twenty first century. Its relevance is situated in the present and projected into the future, dispelling the notion of it as an anachronism, or an inhibitor to material and social aspiration. Moreover, this analogy doubles as a blueprint for action, action which also requires the knowledge and techniques of formal education. The jargon used in the above quotations pertaining to cultural power, and what is to be done with it, are squarely associated with the domain of "school knowledge": "technology", "science", "modernize", "harmonize", and, crucially, "research", all words purveying the creation of education's most tangible products. Yet, for all the above talk of scientific application to "culture", the next step is to collect further information, to pool knowledge, i.e. the rather vague category of "research". As the panel chair at E'Kyaghanda announced, "Research is the beginning of our cultural revival".

Appadurai's (2013) definition of research as an open-ended process of the expansion of knowledge relevant to individuals, rather than a professionalized or technical one, is the best way to consider the myriad activities of the Yira knowledge-seekers. However, I would argue that there is a particular component of "research" as an activity, even in a de-professionalized sense, that is squarely situated in the domain of "school knowledge". This is the necessity of "entextualisation" (Barber, 2005, Kuipers, 2013), the capacity to collect knowledge from a source, extract what is relevant, and transmit selected aspects of that knowledge from its original context into a new one, in order to achieve a particular end.

"Entextualisation" was originally conceived of in relation to the study of literacy (Barber, 2005). Whilst neither the transplanting aspects of "entextualisation" (at least in Kuipers' view), or of Appadurai's understanding of "research", definitively need to involve literacy, the Bayira's constant emphases on the need for education, and its evident role in cultural rediscovery, suggests that they are very much aware of the advantages that education presents for this process of "research". Literacy allows one to collect, preserve, exchange and reproduce troves of information on a different scale to that of memory alone. As Goody (1968) said of written charms in Ghana:

> "The written charm is considered to be so effective because it gives speech a concrete embodiment… Because they materialize speech, it is easier to extract the full power, the full meaning, from written formula" (pg. 227).

Education, particularly higher education, among the Bayira is a scarce resource. Speaking specifically of literacy, Goody (1968) refers to "restrictive literacy", that being the "value" that texts take on because of the scarcity of people who can read them; to the illiterate, they contain secrets. Naturally, this also makes for a form of authority for the educated "interpreter", in our case, those who have the optimal abilities to collect, transplant, and so "entextualise" knowledge. (We shall see this process in practice in the following chapter.) However, the matter of authority is more complicated than this in the case of the Bayira, as we shall see in our examination of the kind of knowledge these researchers might be collecting.

Amenge' Wakibutirwana

In the later months of my fieldwork, after I had learned of the existence of this category of knowledge, I began posing the question of "*What does amenge' wakibutirwana mean?*" to a large number of people I spoke to. This was partly because epistemological categories are

rather elusive concepts in themselves, but also because different people had different, yet not unrelated, ideas about what it constituted. In this section, I lay out some of the range of responses I got to that question. Consider these quotes:

> **Kambere, an elderly Isyemalhambo living in Bundibugyo:** "It's like inheritance. It's like when a child is born and the father has an activity does, a farmer, a carpenter, etc. This is the first knowledge he would get. If a parent is a leader, you will get a knowledge of leadership. It's like a language. Batoro children learn Rutoro, Bazungu [white] parents talk to you in English."
>
> **Biira, an elderly lady living in a remote village in Kasese District:** "That knowledge, you are just born with it… in those years where women waved baskets, you would use your knowledge in your head and copy them. At the Isyemalhambo's place, there is a fire that they used to use without a matchbox, they would just use a stick. It is through African knowledge that the Europeans copied, they copied how Africans made fire and developed it, they produced a matchbox."
>
> **Muhongya, a senior Rwenzururu Kingdom Minister:** "This is the original knowledge which one gets naturally, which one gets without learning. Born-with knowledge. For example, if it's my first time seeing this flash disk (picking up a USB stick on his desk), I will probably know this is a handle. If I get somewhere I don't know, I can use my knowledge to find the place."

These responses above portray *amenge' wakibutirwana*, natural or pure knowledge, as a kind of basic knowledge-competence. It appears to be encompass numerous forms of knowledge that have been often been discussed as separate categories by anthropologists. There are mentioned the skills of one's parents or elders that are taught informally (what might be called "informal education" (Stambach, 2000) or "cultural education" (Rockwell, 2011). There is also an instinctual dimension to some of these descriptions, an appreciation of both reaction and adaptation based on experience of living in the world, what Rapport (2001) might consider "embodied knowledge", an accumulation of an individual's (unique) embodied experiences which, he argues, may be distinguishable from "cultural" experience.

I do not wish to try and classify *amenge' wakibutirwana* within the existing categories of the literature; rather, I wish to unpack an apparent paradox that emerges when this notion of

knowledge is examined closely. Whether the components of *amenge' wakibutirwana* are taught informally, are imitated, or are instinctual embodied actions, all these things, and indeed all the above descriptions, point to an egalitarian form of knowledge, something that should, in theory, be equally accessible to all of able body and mind within a particular social system. In practice, it is rather more complicated. Consider this description from Nzyabake, an elderly man who was closely related to Isaiah Mukirania:

> **E.B.:** What is amenge wakibutirwana?
>
> **Nzyabake:** That knowledge is got from the parents. For example, if you tell your children to go to the garden, a loyal child will follow you to the garden, and a stubborn one will not follow you. Another one may obey when you say, "you, go to school", and one may refuse. The one who refuses is mukafiri (pagan), the one who goes to school becomes wise, and therefore she has natural knowledge.
>
> **E.B.:** So does natural knowledge means following your parents' orders?
>
> **N:** Yes, it is like following your parents. A loyal child grows with that amenge' wakibutirwana.
>
> **E.B.:** But why is one child wise and another one stubborn?
>
> **N:** When you give birth, you first give them a name. From naming that child, you start studying them. We the Bakonzo had a sickle and a hoe. That child, formerly, would be educated in farming. Through farming and working together, you learn which of your children is knowledgeable and not knowledgeable. The actions of that child tell you who that child is.

Here, we see rather more complex notions interjected into this form of knowledge – that of an individual's personality, their personal agency, and the choices that they make. It implies that, while everyone might have a degree of inherited knowledge and subjective experience, some have recognizably higher "levels" of *amenge' wakibutirwana* than others, even at a very young age. This raises the even more complex matter of the Bayira notion of agency, fatalism and personal subjectivity, a topic we shall cover in Chapter 4. It is worth questioning at this point, though, whether "knowledge" is perhaps the best English translation of *amenge'*

wakibutirwana, certainly given the western conception of "knowledge" (distinct from "intelligence" and the like) as a commodity acquired through formal education.

"Wisdom" has been forwarded by epistemological theorists as a concept with which to challenge the practical problems created by the western dissociation between acquired, supposedly objective "rational" knowledge, and the knowledge of "sensibility" and subjective experience (Wright, 2003). For instance, Maxwell (1984) feared that "rational problem-solving" as a raison-d'être for research resulted in diverting knowledge creation away from solving humanity's collective crises, and encapsulating it in abstract theoretical problems. (In doing so, he somewhat echoes the Bayira's concern about the dangers of formal education, which, for all its benefits, risks altering the "problems" that the educated person prioritizes, away from collective and towards individualistic ones.) For Maxwell, "wisdom" means prioritizing action that explicitly aims to solve the most pressing of humanity's problems, and means orienting the development of knowledge to those specific aims, rather than the pursuit of detached objectivity. In a similar vein, Targowski (2016) forwards the following definition of wisdom:

> "Wisdom is based upon skillful judgement and choice driven by the art of living, towards the accomplishment of the purpose of one's life" (pg. 185).

Certainly Targowski's concept would correspond to Muhongya's earlier description of *amenge' wakibutirwana*. In our interview, Muhongya continued by saying:

> "The level of determination of a person, and how they use it, determines natural knowledge… Like these first people who built an aeroplane, who taught them to fly it? And they made it with no training. They did not go to class, they used that natural knowledge."

An individual's "determination", and their application of that determination, are complex aspects of personhood. I pressed Nzyabake about his explanation of the child exhibiting *amenge' wakibutirwana* (or lack thereof) through obedience or disobedience.

> **E.B.:** Can a stubborn child become wise later in life?
>
> **N:** You can't throw away your child, you keep on advising, and sometimes they change.
>
> **E.B.:** So can a changed child have amenge' wakibutirwana?
>
> **N:** Such a child, if he changes, can be doing good things, and we thank the spirits that the child has changed.

His answer is indefinite, but he does not appear to see later changes in behavior as an onset of knowledge. Given, then, these testimonies about a child's *amenge' wakibutirwana* being evident or not from a young age (and given what we shall explore later in discussions of fatalism and destiny), it appears the Bayira think of an individual's level of "determination", and their inclinations to use it one way or another, as a near-phenotypical trait. However, agency is also obviously recognized and necessitated. This is an unsolvable debate that every cosmology struggles with; a belief in all-powerful supernatural supremacy, which is simultaneously belied by the chaos of human decisions. For our purposes, however, we only need recognize that the emphases on obedience and responsibility, expressed in those explanations of *amenge' wakibutirwana* (as well as the concern about increasing individualism and cultural erosion that we have seen throughout), make it obvious how a person should apply themselves if they wish to be credited with a high level of *amenge' wakibutirwana*. Since, after all, it is a "knowledge" founded in the "cultural" (and antonymic to the knowledge of school), an individual's demonstration of that knowledge must be directed toward the good, and the preservation of the "culture" and its people.

We are not yet finished with *amenge' wakibutirwana's* complexity; a further dynamic emerges when we press what it means to have a higher level of it. To illustrate this, I will recount the time that I first encountered this term. In December 2015, I was staying in Bundibugyo and working closely with Baluku, my part-time research assistant, who was, again, a keen historical researcher himself. On one of our trips to the mountain villages, we had heard of a celebrated prophet, Mukeri, who had lived in Congo, not too far from the nearest border-crossing at Lamia, a short distance from Bundibugyo town. Mukeri's son, Basikania, an *omwami* king, had also been a close ally of Isaiah Mukirania's, assisting him when he fled into Congo to escape Ugandan forces after the original secessionism of Rwenzururu. Both the original Mukeri and Basikania are now deceased, but Basikania's son, who also goes by his grandfather's name of Mukeri according to Bayira custom, is still alive. Baluku and I went to Congo for a day to go and meet him in the mountainous village where he still lives, and where his father is buried. After he recounted some of his family history for us, he spontaneously exclaimed:

> "The Bayira still dying, many! The most dying in the Congolese wars. Rwenzururu People used to stay here, they are brothers. I don't know why we are still oppressed. The ones being killed are the youth, the energetic ones, and people with knowledge."

I asked him what kind of knowledgeable people were being killed, and before Mukeri could answer, Baluku responded:

> "We have what we call natural knowledge, people who can advise, trustworthy people. It is called *amenge' wakibutirwana*."

Those with this "natural knowledge", according to him, are *trustworthy*. At this point it is necessary to recall a conversation I quoted in the introduction, about the *categories* that the secessionist Bayira see within their own ethnic group. There are the Bayira or the *Banyarwenzururu Hene Hene*, the "pure" ones who are cultural patriots, resistant to

temptation and demonstratively committed to the ethnonationalist (usually secessionist) cause. There are the *Banyarwenzururu Ndaghanli,* those who are uncommitted to the cause of either side, and, while largely uninterested in learning about their culture, are at risk of becoming collaborators with the third category. These are the *Banyarwenzururu Ndabanguli*, the deceptive opportunists out only for themselves, and prepared to maliciously spread falsehoods to undermine the Bayira's emancipation, in exchange for their own wealth and power. Effectively these are simply grades of loyalty, but, as I have argued, that ethnic loyalty is itself a pillar of Yira ethnic identity as it is currently being constructed. Just as there is believed to be an "authentic", "pure" culture, distinguishable from the polluting influences of colonialism, so there are "true", "pure" Bayira people, committed to embodying that "pure" culture, whatever the cost.

In the context of what Sedgwick (2003) might call "paranoid knowing", and in that of what Varenne (2008, 2008b) calls "productive ignorance", the felt inability to distinguish truth from falsity, it is unsurprising that 'trustworthiness" becomes an ontological compass. For instance, Muhima, one of my regular research companions, said one day:

> "Museveni was against the Rwenzururu struggle. So he designed a mechanism under which he would destroy it. So he made sure he trains others who have another history. Which is the opposite of what we know originally. He trained others... he trained people at the national level to confuse the historians who have the rightful information."

Amidst a widespread fear of misinformation spread by enemies, it is quite natural that information which appears to support the Bayira's best interests would appear true. As Lukes (1973) points out in his essay considering the potential extent of differences between different cultures' "modes of thought", whatever differences may exist, Levy-Bruhl was wrong to assume that there are as many different ideas of "truth" as there are cultures, since what counts as "truth" is universally socially determined, i.e. a form of general social

consensus. Going against the grain of common consensus diminishes an individual's credibility, while conversely, the more registers of consensus (be they "facts", "values" or simply unspoken understandings) an account hits, the greater one's position in a "hierarchy of credibility" (Stoler, 2009).

Along these lines, we must examine a further dimension of *amenge' wakibutirwana*. After Baluku's description of this "natural knowledge" as "trustworthy", I turned the question to Mukeri, and asked for his definition of *amenge' wakibutirwana*. He replied:

> "It is knowledge from people who were pure, not in contact with any other world. They are born with this knowledge. Mukeri (his grandfather) would only eat greens and bush meat, but no other meat. Such foods gave them knowledge about the world. If you come and mention God, they respected God too much, and would not mention him - it was like a curse. One time someone came who was putting on a collar of these reverends, but he did not survive many days. Those people who say they know God but they don't, and if they came to talk to him about God, they die."

Mukeri's description of the bearers of *amenge' wakibutirwana* as individuals with highly privileged access to divine truths, such as his grandfather, is reminiscent of Max Weber's "charismatic" individuals. Weber's "charismatic authoritarian" (Weber, 1947) was modelled on the prophet, he or she who literally embodies the divine through possession, or through the passage of a message (Weber, 1964, Lindholm, 1990). In fact, Mukeri was alone among my informants in ascribing that degree of exclusivity to *amenge' wakibutirwana.* Nevertheless, many more people described visible markers of high levels of *amenge' wakibutirwana,* which some individuals possessed while others did not. Inevitably, it was elders, especially those with particular "cultural" skills and roles, who were the exemplars of such descriptions. Thembo, a Muyira linguist living in Kasese, responded thusly when I asked him what this "pure knowledge" was.

> "They have strong words that old people use, old Lhukonzo. Like when a Mukonzo says engoko, to mean a chicken, you will hear old men, especially abatahwa (traditional doctors) will call the chicken "engwesa". It comes from erekwesa, to

> search, because chickens are always searching for food. Then fire is omuliro to most people, but they call it omubangukyi. When you hear such terminology, you know this is an old man who has original knowledge. He may have a conversation in language you don't understand. They used proverbs, sayings which only wise men use. It is a hidden language, I call it a hidden language. Like you go to your mother and you say I'm hungry. She replies "wamakwira enyotha yelusi". You were asking her food, but her words mean "You are thirsty at the river". But the old woman is telling you there is nothing, you won't get food. When someone uses language like that, you know that person is wise. And you look more original than people who just use light statements when you use that language."

His description resonates with Bellman's (1984) observation that secrecy is often more of a *method* of concealing information, rather than the concealed information itself. Evidently, there is little power to be gained from the revelation that the mysterious word "*engwesa*" actually means a chicken. Such "secret" language has been documented elsewhere. Geenen (2016) describes the elaborate coded languages of pleasure seeking amidst the conflict in Butembo, DRC. Coe (2005) described such an incident.

> "A middle aged woman told me that one never stopped learning Twi because at a funeral or other event, an old woman would sometimes use a word for a common object, like a chair, that she had never heard before. Sometimes this exclusive language was seen as arrogant or showing off one's erudition. It also served to keep younger, middle aged adults out of the discussion and made the information being communicated accessible only to certain participants" (pg. 140).

Such language, then, is primarily a signal of one's knowledge (and, equally, one's authoritative potential, since it marks one out as a desirable person to consult for knowledge and guidance.) Yet, in the context of secret (and especially secessionist) activity, these secretive words have a more pressing purpose, for concealing one's intentions to all but trusted comrades. Thus this use of language, a mark of knowledge which is implicitly also trustworthiness, signals a status as a *Munyarwenzururu hene hene*, a trustworthy fellow patriot. It is a mark of membership, for speaking in exclusive coded terms signals both commonality and intimacy (Geenen, 2016). Shortly after hearing Thembo's description, I returned to Bundibugyo, and ended up having a conversation with Mbahimba, a young man

with strong secessionist sympathies. I asked him if he had ever heard of this "hidden language", and he responded:

> "Yes, even me, a Mukonzo, I cannot understand them. Why, before the 5th of July (the day of the mass attacks in 2014), we heard them saying mangoes and maize. Emyembe is mango the fruit, but what they meant was esyomango, the youth[16]. Ebikusa, maize, meant guns. Because the Bayira have been disorganised, we have knowledge about how to communicate with the world. That's why we say Bayira hene hene, or yira yira."

When he spoke he gave the impression that he didn't know what those code words referred to, to which I expressed surprise, since I had always gotten the impression he had been involved in the preparation of the attacks. He replied:

> "Of course I knew, I was helping, but from afar. You cannot show you are a coward when it comes to fighting for the tribe."

That is, to know and to say these code words acts as a mark of membership, of purity, of one's *hene hene* status. Even within those prepared to participate in violence, there are grades of loyalty, the highest of which are rewarded with exclusive knowledge. Loyalty is a cornerstone in the construction of the "true" Yira cultural identity. The final point to emphasize about *amenge' wakibutirwana* is the spiritual dimension of it, that portrayed by Mukeri, albeit not quite to the Weberian charismatic extent that he described. Below is a quote from an interview I conducted with Kathya, a senior minister in Rwenzururu Kingdom, in which I asked him about *amenge' wakibutirwana*. As he emphasized that this kind of knowledge was not like that gotten in schools, he said:

> "There are those people who are doctors in history, who are professors in history, and if you ask them about their own history and their own culture they will say nothing. So we believe for us that somebody to have that kind of knowledge of being committed to these matters of our culture, there must be spiritual guidance behind a person."

[16] Esyomango can refer to the Rwenzururu kingdom's volunteer youth wing, but also to a young person in general, a matter closer examined in Chapter Six.

With the exception of malevolent witches who acquire perverted forms of spiritual knowledge and power by evil means, Yira spirits and the powers associated with Mount Rwenzori are supporters and guardians of the Bayira people and the original Rwenzururu struggle. Nzeruko, a young singer, said this of attempts to destroy the history of Rwenzururu by destroying Isaiah Mukirania's grave:

> "The mountain has supernatural powers. One day the grave of Isaiah Mukirania… people who don't wish Rwenzururu well wanted to exhume his body, as a way of fighting evidence that the kingdom exists. They were attacked by red ants and bees. They stung them and they ran away."

The forces of nature and the spirits of the mountain are active agents, working for the best interests of its rightful Yira inhabitants. Whilst spirits punish those who violate the moral order of things, they reward, or at least, guide, those who are prepared to go to significant lengths to uphold it. Moreover, in the eyes of the secessionists, those who believe they are the purest of the *hene hene*, spiritual forces are active agents in the slow creation of the Yira State, and will guide those prepared to take risks for the cause. Either way, this is to say that the spiritual guidance, necessary to acquire the markers of a high level of *amenge' wakibutirwana,* is the best guarantee of an individual's trustworthiness and loyalty. Displays of *amenge' wakibutirwana* are by no means foolproof, since corrupting forces can strike at any age. Even close comrades of Isaiah Mukirania who are believed to know all of Rwenzururu's secrets, and who still remain heavily involved with the kingdom, are often subject to the suspicion that they have been corrupted. Yet, the verification of the spirits remains the gold standard of truth to those who believe in them, and so displays of *amenge' wakibutirwana* are intimately associated with a "purity" of truth, and thus trustworthiness, since, as we may recall, one's positive actions and decisions are among this knowledge's formative processes.

This, then, is the crucial difference between the two knowledges. For all the benefits of formal education, it exposes people to amoral forms of knowledge and individualism at best, and to temptations of wealth and power at worst. *Amenge' wakibutirwana*, on the other hand, reveals a "purity" in a person's moral and cultural identit(ies). As we have seen, those who partake in the malevolent actions of the *Banyarwenzururu Ndabanguli* do not share a value system with those who are "pure", nor, arguably, do they have the same kinds of cultural knowledge. Thus, it might be argued that they cannot be said to share the same "culture". I will not over-complicate things by following that argument to its end. I will simply continue to argue that the Yira ethnic identity being constructed by the more passionate ethno-nationalists (of which the secessionists are large, though not total, majority), has at its core more than a set of common practices, beliefs and a language. Loyalty, *a purity of intention*, is one of this Yira identity's pillars.

The Educated Researcher and The "Cultural" Elder

As we saw from the quotes with which we began the discussion on *amenge' wakibutirwana*, "research" and the transformative capacities of education are believed to be necessary tools to unlock Yira authenticity, material prosperity, and political emancipation. However, how exactly the fruits of "school knowledge" might be mobilized for "research" among those with "cultural knowledge" is not usually discussed in detail by those who extoll the need for it. That said, the enduring appeal of the idea of mutually deploying two knowledges is much more understandable when the extraordinary legacy of Isaiah Mukirania is considered. In this section, I wish to consider what the transfer of information between individuals with different types of knowledge means for the authority of both. Whilst the current Yira researchers themselves are the focus of the next chapter, Isaiah's story reveals much about the enduring

relationship between the two epistemologies. The below is another extract from my conversation with Kathya, in which I posed to him another common question of mine: Why was Isaiah, as opposed to anyone else, able to assume such an unprecedented level of authority? He replied:

> "Isaiah said… we must reinstate our culture, and talk about ourselves and value our culture and see how we can really come together. So he started a movement for that, the Bakonzo Life History Research Society, and it is out of that BLHRS that knowledge was revealed to him! When he consulted the elders, the elder said these politics have disorganised us totally, we are almost failing to trace our origin. So they came up with the idea, that he should come up, their young son, he would come up and they would guide him. They told him to go and see this person, this person, such and such a family, such and such family…. Ruhandika guided him and told him what to do. So as he reached certain places, he could be guided more. Out of that research work, he was told to bring all those people together… So Isaiah moved around and came up with new research. That research revealed to him that some people who pretend to be the leaders of this area are not the rightful leaders. So he had to explain this to the elders… and the leaders of different chieftaincies, he brought them together, and said "This is what I have found out, this is how we have got lost, and we must reinstate this cultural leadership. Where do we begin from?" Then the elders said "Now that you have come up with this good idea, we are empowering you… Now that you have struggled to do this as you have been able to get this research, for which you were almost dying, from today onwards, we say that you should become our traditional leader. As joint traditional reader. So as long as we have given you a blessing you will do your work and you will succeed."

This, then, is Kathya's version of the story of what came before Isaiah was "crowned" king (Omusinga), when the chieftains (*abami/isyemalhambo*) placed their hands on him and endowed him with their powers. Important here is the "guidance" that Isaiah, a young man, received from the elders who were ready to help him resist the Batoro by imparting their knowledge to him. Now, the researcher, in this case Isaiah, had the abilities to record, analyse, and selectively draw on and transplant (or entextualise (Kuipers, 2013, Barber, 2005) information that they collect from those with *amenge' wakibutirwana*. His level of education was by no means high, but he could read and write, design questionnaires (and, indeed, frame his questions in ways that were bound to elicit desirable responses (Peterson, 2012)). He also had a number of researchers working alongside him, and, with his ability to

write, he had the ability to (in theory) collect, analyse and synthesise an unprecedented amount of data about the Bayira.

However, it would be wrong to argue that, in collecting "cultural" information from elders and spiritual practitioners, he was in some way usurping their ritual authority. Indeed, given Bayira cosmology, a complete monopolization of ritual power would be impossible, since local areas need ritual attention by a hereditary practitioner. Rather, a successful chief (*omwami*) unites those practitioners and synchronizes their activity (Packard, 1981). Isaiah's own conclusion, according to Kathya and many others, was that rightful local chiefs had been displaced and were unable to perform their rituals. Thus, collecting information on rituals and their practitioners alone does not give a researcher the ability to take over that power. Yet, that practice of research was the main reason cited by all those I asked as to why Isaiah, specifically, could assume an unprecedented leadership position. For instance:

> "They saw him as the only trusted person to lead the people. They based their decision on research that he made, he did research on both sides, wrote down whatever they told him, so they thought that he had the most information and is the only one who has done this research, so we know that this is the right man." **Kambere, an elderly man who once served as a judge in Rwenzururu under Isaiah's leadership.**
>
> "Maybe the knowledge of traditionalism and education, and they saw him as a strong man…" **Kabusa, an Isyemalhambo**.

In these descriptions, and also in Kathya's earlier one, there is an appreciation of Isaiah's knowledge of culture, a direct result of his research work, and no doubt necessary for the creation of a kingdom that was designed to protect a unique culture that had already been damaged over years of oppression. Lest there be skepticism that his education, however minimal, was not recognized in its own right for its practical advantages, here is an extract from a heated discussion between Muhima, myself and some of his friends who were also secessionists.

> "If Mukirania had lived earlier, we would not have this problem now. We would already be free!" I pointed out that Mukirania was not the first to lead an armed struggle to liberate the Bayira; Nyamutswa and his companions had done so in 1921. He replied, "In that time though, there was no education, there was no literacy. But by the 1950s, at least some people had literacy. If Mukirania had been at the 1945 Manchester conference with people like Nkrumah, we would not have this problem now. It's why West Africa got independence much earlier."

Yet, as Kambere said earlier, Isaiah was also "trusted". This is to argue that Isaiah was able to do what he did because he operationalized the potential of using two "knowledges". The way in which he evidenced his own *amenge' wakibutirwana* – his "wisdom", trustworthiness, and (as we shall see more later) his spiritual guidance – was by applying his *educational knowledge*, voluntarily, and at considerable personal risk, to the betterment and emancipation of his people. His agentive *use* of his education was simultaneously a demonstration of trustworthiness, and thus, also, of spiritual favour, in fact, as we shall see later, a unique form of spiritual selection. The contents of both of his knowledges had obvious practical and well-recognized advantages, but they alone would not have legitimated him to assume an unprecedented degree of power. For that, his actions spoke louder than words.

Conclusion

Education is an indispensable tool for deploying the complex potential of *amenge' wakibutirwana,* and the understanding of one type of knowledge analogically informs peoples' considerations of the other. The two are shaped in a dialectical relationship. However, educational knowledge, *amenge' w'omwithendekero,* is the less perfect of the two knowledges. For one thing, it is not the source of more powerful "natural" knowledge, but merely its facilitator and developer. Secondly, its individualistic doctrines, and the opportunities that it presents to enter the amoral world of the bureaucratic state, make it a double-edged sword for the communities of the people who receive it. Nevertheless, it is a

necessary double-edged sword in a clandestine struggle for political autonomy. Without it, one cannot hope to command authority and deal with the technicalities of the global order of nation states. Moreover, its research techniques are necessary for the recovery of *amenge' wakibutirwana*, a process that is explored in further depth in the next chapter. Since those with high levels of *amenge' wakibutirwana* are dispersed, divided and losing their authority, as a result of colonial activity and nefarious enemies, they form "fissiparous" points of authority (Worsley, 1968), rather than a distinct hierarchy of unified knowledge.

Amenge' wakibutirwana is a complex and multi-dimensional form of knowledge. Whilst everyone has some level of it, a small number of people have an obviously higher level of it. Those who have high levels of it tend to display secretiveness around aspects of their knowledge, and so mark themselves out as "members" of a knowledgeable elite. However, since a high level of *amenge' wakibutirwana* comes with spiritual guidance, it is also a mark that the possessor of this secret knowledge is trustworthy, and loyal to the Yira patriotic cause. This relationship between the two knowledges is the epistemological foundation of contemporary Yira ethno-nationalism. *Amenge' wakibutirwana* represents all that is "culturally", authentically Yira, including loyalty, a pillar of the new construction of Yira ethnic identity. It is an analogical equivalent to the educational knowledge, imported from abroad and taught in schools. In the view of the Bayira ethno-nationalists, it is more inherently powerful than educational knowledge, and more virtuous, but this is not to say education, and the associated technologies, paradigms and languages that go with it, are not valued. They are tremendously, particularly since, as Isaiah Mukirania demonstrated, to command both knowledges makes not only for tremendous individual power, but also radical social transformation, in theory at an ethnic, national and international level. Thus the "two knowledges" align with the same constituent bases as the "two publics", the indigenous and

moral, and the imported and dangerous. The latter is a risk, but the former cannot be without it in this day and age.

Chapter Three: The Yira Homespun Historians

In the previous chapter, I quoted a number of Bayira announcing the necessity of "research", and described the felt need for formal education that would allow them to conduct such research. I develop these themes in this chapter, which takes a closer look at the works and lives of a number of those historical researchers. I have referred to a number of these local scholars already, and it is likely clear that they are numerous, and highly engaged in the act of (re)creating the Bayira ethnicity. But what exactly are they researching, and why? Furthermore, what does their engagement in research mean for their own position and authority within the developing Yira socio-political consciousness? I shall argue that these historians are engaged in creating a semblance of *consensus* about who the Bayira are, and in doing so are aiming to strengthen the creation of a "cultural public". Their work is effectively that of cementing the construction of an ethnic identity. Interestingly, though, despite labelling their research as primarily "historical", they are, I argue, framing their research according to multiple temporalities; not only past, present, future, but also linear and cyclical conceptions of time. Their "historical" presentations portray the Muyira as inherently suited to a utopian, futuristic and high-tech world, founded on "cultural" principles.

Unity, Identity and Consensus

The urgency for the Bayira of holding oneself to a doctrine of "authentic" cultural practice becomes more apparent when we examine the emic term for "culture", and its colloquial synonyms. Thembo, a Muyira linguist, explained the Lhukonzo translation for "culture" thusly:

> "There is nature and culture. The word for culture is "ebyekyibuthiranwa". "Ebye" means "of", and "kyibuthiranwa" means something you are born with. It can also be understood to mean "acquired from birth", so not purely something you are born with. However, people often also use the word "ebyo'obuhangwa", which literally means "nature". Because "ruhanga" means something got through creation, because "hangwa" means created. People use them interchangeably. Most people know the word culture, but sometimes mistake it for nature. But "ebyekyibuthiranwa byethu" means "our culture"."

Going against an identity that is syntactically made "natural" in daily discourse is a disturbing concept for those who considered matters of "culture" closely. Whilst people would often consciously acknowledge cultural change, and even the need to eliminate "negative cultural practices" such as child marriage, "culture" remains an inescapable calling to be true to one's "natural" self. We have already seen that ritual authorities have been assigned a responsibility to restore and harmonise ritual practice for the Bayira's broader good. However, the responsibility for restoring a broader moral order cannot be achieved at the level of ritual authorities alone. Rather, this "restoration" must happen at both the level of individuals, as well as of authorities – every Muyira, in the eyes of ethno-nationalists, has a responsibility to live rightly by their "culture". In a cosmology where spirits are active agents in social life, individual moral misdemeanours have far-reaching consequences, since they risk angering benevolent spirits, an anger which affects the entire community. The solution, very often, involves periods of community-wide enforcement of restorative, and socially conservative, behavior (e.g. Behrend, 1999, Whyte, 1997).

Packard (1980) says, in his ethnography of the Bashu clan of what is now called the Bayira, that they understand misfortune and disorder as the result of forces of the wild zone, the bush, entering the orderly, domesticated sphere of the homestead. Misfortune was often interpreted as either deliberate witchcraft, or as a revocation of the protection of the ancestors in response to socially unacceptable behavior. Whilst this specific dichotomy between

homestead and bush was not an idiom that I came across very much among the Bayira on either side of the border during my own fieldwork, ideas of dangerous supernatural forces that needed mitigating are still prevalent. Moreover, the immoral behavior of individuals was still regularly expressed as a causal factor in perceived misfortune, and explained as a result of the upset of benevolent spirits. Thus the solution to restoring and protecting spiritual relations, and so good (political) fortunes, lay in promoting what people usually referred to as "good cultural behavior".

However, the felt lack of *exact* knowledge about what "good cultural behavior" is has been a difficult factor for the Bayira to contend with. In this chapter, I follow Leach's (1977) examination of "law", "custom", and what those things ultimately reveal about social consensus, and use these observations to contextualize the work of the Yira historians. Leach argues that written law exists in those societies which have it in order to "…*impose an appearance of universal consensus*" (pg. 29), a consensus which is, in reality, often lacking. He sharply contrasts these societies with those that operate on unwritten "custom". Wilson's (2015) work, on the attempts by the unrecognized state of Western Sahara to synchronise multiple customary justice systems into a single legal code, exemplifies the particular difficulty that secessionist movements face when they try to turn unwritten and varied "custom" into "law". "Custom" among the multiple ethnicities within the nascent Sahrawi state was hugely variable, and the state's attempt to create a single penal code from numerous customary justices, in order to make itself "legible" in international terms, often alienated those Sahrawis that the justice system claimed to be representing. For Leach, however, the most significant difference between the systems of law and custom is not their (un)written form, but the nature of "public" and "private" crimes.

According to Leach, a "public" crime is that which is serious enough to require the involvement of the society's most senior authorities. In systems which run on "law", those crimes tend to be homicide, theft; those which can harm the safety of the individual and his property. However, the "public" crimes of societies organized around unwritten "custom" are more likely to be the sacrilegious, those which would offend cosmological agents. Whilst homicide is certainly not acceptable, it is settled directly between the perpetrator's party and the party of the aggrieved, and only need involve external authorities if agreements for compensation cannot be reached. By contrast, the breaking of sexual taboos is believed to put the entire community in danger, and thus require the intervention of senior authorities. In Leach's words, public crimes endanger:

> "…the implicit social contract with divine ancestors to obey the rules that they laid down. Faliure to conform to conservative custom amounts to an act of sacrilege which will automatically bring about supernatural disaster. The pressure which public opinion exerts in favour of conformity will then depend upon the strength of the belief that the ancestral deities will in fact punish deviation" (pg. 31).

I do not cite this passage for the sake of categorising the Bayira as a "customary" society or not. However, Leach's work has two useful aspects for the argument here. Firstly, we can begin to appreciate that gaining or creating consensus on what "custom" (that is, cosmologically-appropriate sociological behavior) is, has highly significant ramifications. It becomes a tool with which to usher in a new historical age, or cycle, a "new moral order" (Lemarchand, 1992) of Yira unity and power (which may involve, at least in the minds of some, a state). In this new moral order good fortune will better prevail, since boundaries will be established, internal purity will be monitored, and people shall know themselves and their culture, and so obey its rules. Secondly, rather than upholding Leach's distinction, the Bayira case suggests that by *researching* and *entextualising* (i.e. by detaching supposedly consenting opinions from multiple sources, and presenting them as homogenous) their "culture", they are

establishing an “appearance of consensus”, not unlike Leach’s notion of written “law”. One might almost suspect they had read Anderson (2016) and recognized his attribution of the importance of the printed word in nation building, although not quite in the way that Anderson imagined.

The Yira community is already imagined, but reifying it needs the tools of contemporary nations; a shared history in written form, accessible to all wishing to know themselves. Thus, in this chapter I shall argue that Yira historical “research” (as a broad rubric) has a twofold set of intentions. Firstly, it exists to create an essence of truth and consensus about who the Bayira are, and how they might practice that identity. That consensus is envisaged as necessary for their unification and social-ritual synchronization (and, ultimately, their political emancipation). It is tricky to extract from secessionists what the basis of law would be in a Yira State; most who touched on the subject were vague, but implied that there would be all necessary laws for a “modern” state, albeit with “culture” being given a stronger role. Essentially though, research and its consensus for public practice relates to both publics in certain ways, although we might best think of it as again applying the tools of the civic public to strengthen the ritual/cultural public. Secondly, this research, whilst it is mostly described by its conductors as “historical”, is in fact an act of “temporal” synchronicity as well, since it recasts the essence of Yira identity, as not only compatible with contemporary global forces such as Abrahamic religion and scientific innovation, but exemplary of it. It thus again rejects an Afro-modernity of “discontinuity” between “the past” and “radical alienation from it”, and a supposed “…inability…to resolve or dissolve those antinomies” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2004, pg. 345).

Historians, in theory, study the past. Yet, I found that few of the Bayira historians were engaged precisely with the goal of what De Certeau describes as "bringing the past to life", i.e. getting an exact reconstruction of what happened at certain points in the past. They did discuss what might have happened in the past, according to their work and their interpretations, but they consistently related these findings to the present, and their contemporary relevance. I shall argue that, as the Bayira (re)discover their "authentic" ethnic identity, they are facing competition for allegiance to it within the present. Mainstream religions, the temptations that globalization offers, and the fact that "tradition" is often perceived as an anachronistic inhibitor to "development" means that the significance of "cultural" identity often goes unappreciated, particulatly by younger generations. Therefore, the historians face the task of making an authentic past compatible with the demands of the present and the aspirations of the future. They are creating consensus about Yira identity that spans multiple temporalities.

Problematizing the Study of Indigenous Historians

How, though, do we examine such research(ers) as ethnographic objects, within the context of the socio-political Yira project, without ascribing value judgements based on western academic norms to their work? African history conducted by outsiders, and particularly by colonial-era academics, has a troublesome legacy, given that:

> "…the "science" of such studies was substantially constructed around the notion of the absence of indigenous intellectual and scientific authority" (White, Cohen, and Miescher, 2001, pg. 5).

We must acknowledge that these works are highly politicized, yet be mindful of the fact that they are also sites of knowledge production. As White (2008) points out, even when the products of historical knowledge are not created with normative academic conventions in

mind, they should remain of interest to the academic historian, since they offer insight into the meanings that populations attach to events. In a similar vein, I wish to examine the multi-temporal focus of the historians I shall introduce as reflective of current crises of meaning to the Bayira, and their envisioned solutions.

Peterson and Macola (2009) offer the helpful conceptualization of the "homespun historian". They point out that individuals who may not have the luxury of high levels of formal academic training nevertheless recognize the value of history, and are not waiting for foreign foreign researchers to come and undertake studies, but are doing so themselves. These individuals also understand that historical research has a more prescient value for their circumstances than knowledge production for its own sake. Periods or perceptions of crisis often see people look to the past for answers, in the spirit of moral revival, and they keenly produce written works with which to promote "traditional" behaviours. Young intellectuals, frustrated by political and economic inequalities, also look to the past to find both sources and solutions for their troubles, or to advance particular claims to representation or entitlement. Whilst they recognized that not all works by "homespun historians" were parochially orientated, they consider these histories a form of political entrepreneurship, writing:

> "We take history writing to be a mode of argumentation, a means by which entrepreneurs conjured up constituencies, claimed legitimate authority, and mobilized people around a cause. The histories that African political entrepreneurs wrote were interventions in a field of argument, not affirmations of an existing locality" (ibid, pg. 16).

One might take issue with the implication in this definition that homespun historians are, first and foremost, "political entrepreneurs", and it does beg questions about who qualifies as a "homespun historian". I would caution against making "historical *writing*" a definitive quality of such a historian. I was often given hand-written pages about local genealogies, or

particular versions of historical events, by various informants who would not describe their efforts as “research”, or themselves as “historians” or the like. That said, those people who wrote some history, but did not describe themselves as researchers of any sort, tended to have more parochial points to make in those documents; often they were to do with disputes over land and ritual authority in a particular area.

By contrast, those who adopted more professionalized labels, such as “historian”, “historical researcher” and so on, and who described their work as “research”, tended to have a broader focus on the “Bayira”, or at least the “Bakonzo” or “Banande” as a whole. This is what Peterson and Macola (2009) are recognizing, stating that:

> “Historical writing is a powerful vehicle of political argument because it is addressed to a collective “we,” not the individual “I”” (pg. 8).

Whilst we should not preclude natural curiosity as much as “political entrepreneurship” as motives for homespun historians, those Bayira who called themselves “historians” or “researchers” had chosen their “mega-ethnic” selves (Appadurai, 1999) as a research object.

Reification of social groups is arguably an inevitable byproduct of any research on them, but again, the self-described Yira researchers tended to have begun their work after they had become engaged in ethno-nationalist activism. Consider this testimony from Kahangwa, a coordinator of the July 5th attacks on 2014, and an ardent secessionist. Kahangwa is the son of a fighter in the original Rwenzururu war under Isaiah Mukirania, and was ritually “initiated” as a fighter for Rwenzururu when he was still a child, and thus had been exposed to the secessionist agenda since childhood. This was his response after I asked him to tell me about his background, and how he came to believe this violence was necessary:

> "When I was a student I studied history, economics and divinity as A Levels… I was advocating to be a historian and make a historical record, like of Napoleon. I wanted to be both a historical figure and write history. I started writing some pamphlets, and was bringing them to elders, and was asking so many historical questions to elders. They called me to join them in editing Bakonzo history booklets… after that I also wanted to understand the lifestyle of our brothers and sisters in Congo. Now I went there and I stayed at a hill called Isale. I started interacting with elders there in 2010 and 2011. I met elders and asked many questions, and they explained that we have many different powers and can do anything different. If we are united. They highlighted the issue of disunity among the Bakonzo, and easily being bribed. They said if we leave those, be united and believe in our father [God] and his angels, if we accept their power to be on earth, our life will be changed and we can get total freedom because we have everything in our land."

His admission that he wanted both to write history and also to be a "historical figure" shows his view of an intertwined past and present, a belief that history is not a past that has been overcome, in the manner of Certeau's (1988) western historian, but an ongoing story. He sees a need to know history, so that he might know his own role in its next act. It is not the history of his family or clan that he was integrated into writing about, but the history of his ethnicity at large, hence his reason for going to Congo. It was not only history he wished to learn, but the "lifestyles" of his compatriots.[17] Thus, he sees power latent within the practice of an "authentic" lifestyle. Whilst there, he was told that anything would be possible if the Bayira should unite and submit to divine will, including their "total freedom". Kahangwa was not the only descendant of prominent fighters to have begun historical research with an explicit intention of shaping present and future action. These are the words of Muhima, one of my two regular research companions, when I asked him to describe the origins of his interest in history:

> "I was gifted with an understanding of history, which I have been studying the many years up until I studied at Makerere University. I studied history and I have been able to integrate the knowledge from school with the knowledge of our fore-grandfathers. During my youthful days I used to stay with old people in different places to ascertain… to obtain knowledge about our past. It is from the interaction with these

[17] As I mentioned in the introduction, there is a tendency among Ugandan Bayira to see their Congolese counterparts as living a more "authentic" existence given their relative isolation and the fact that they were not ethnically subjugated in the colonial period.

> elders that I am in a position to analyse and understand the past. And in doing so the present and looking to the future. And being born into a cultural family when my father was a Rwenzururu fighter, who trained Isaiah in 1963, in struggling to fight against undemocratic institution of the Toro kingdom, I have been following a lot of information concerning him, although he died too early."

Muhima also acknowledges his family history as highly influential in his historical interest, and the "elders" he would have been interacting with (and continues to interact with) would have been of the generation of the Rwenzururu movement, or its preceding oppression by the Batoro. It is thus unsurprising that, when the chief source of historical information are the oral testimonies of elders, those testimonies, and the accompanying history, will be significantly shaped by their formative political consciousness. That consciousness was formed through two stages of ethnic reification; first ethnic oppression, and then an ethnically-defined liberation movement. This pattern is replicated in the narrative of Yira ethno-nationalists today, for they continue to see themselves as a marginalized people whose freedom must be won. As Muhima himself says, he looks to the past in order to understand the present and the future. The current generation of homespun historians see themselves as the inheritors of their forebears' mission of liberation, and see history not as an era overcome (Certeau, 1985), but as shaped by the same forces that define their present.

The Authority of Homespun Historians and the Limits of Documentation

There is a further important question to extrapolate from Muhima's words above. How does the practice of assimilating the knowledge of elders, the perceived fount of cultural knowledge, empower the historian? And equally, does this passage of knowledge diminish the status of the elders as the principal sources of knowledge about the substance of Yira "culture"? In fact, the elders were as equally enthusiastic as the historians about the process of "documenting" their knowledge, and did not seem to feel that their authority as sources of

knowledge would be threatened. A small focus group of elders, two men and one woman, once lamented to me that young people no longer sought their advice. I asked them what they would like to say to young people if they were given the opportunity, and they replied, in turn:

> **Elderly man 1**: "We want their children to know the history of the Bakonzo, what they have passed through, their nature, and their culture."
>
> **Elderly man 2**: "We also want the help of the youth in documenting their past, their culture and their practices, and their histories."
>
> **Elderly woman**: "Yes, we want the documentation to be a bit permanent, so that when one has passed away, if he has told the story, the writing will be permanent."

As described in the previous chapter, whether they were literate or not, all Bayira embraced the value of the written word, for its status, its reach, and also for its capacity for preservation. The Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu kingdom ministers were also emphatic about the necessity of documenting their history and their cultural sites, as well as of the need to preserve a historical record of the Rwenzururu Movement. For a time, I assisted them by writing records of a number of cultural sites, and the significance that people attributed to them. However, while the need for preservation of the "knowledge" of elders might have been broadly agreed on, the limits of what knowledge should be recorded was more complicated.

This was to do with ritual knowledge. Whilst most Bayira were keen to talk to myself and to other historians about the general structure and meaning of ritual performances, there were certain details that were "secret", and had to be kept back. For example, I had asked Paluku, an elder in Kasese, for a description of a "hill cleansing" ritual, which would remove malevolent forces and spirits from the hills and mountainsides under the control of a particular *Isyemalhambo,* and so preserve the land's health and fertility. He obliged with

generous detail, although there was one piece of information he kept back. The ritual requires bundles of herbs, which are distributed to all local ritual practitioners, and which are moved back and forth by the practitioners in a sweeping motion over the area being cleansed. Paluku explained that he could not tell me which herbs were used, since:

> "This must be kept a secret, as the enemy may know them. An enemy against others may chase us from here, but if they know these herbs, they can keep cleansing and nothing will happen to them. But if they don't know they cannot stay here."

Indeed, aspects of ritual secrecy are seemingly *less important to document,* despite their power. The reason for this is perhaps partly that ritual knowledge is "private" knowledge; it is heritable, and so families invested with ritual authority are responsible for its passage, rather than the Bayira community at large. The other reason, however, is that ritual knowledge is seemingly subject to spiritual insurance. Below are the words of Thembo, a linguist and historian from Kasese. Thembo is also of Congolese descent although he lives in Uganda, and he inherited the status of *omwami* after his father's death, so he is also well-versed in ritual knowledge and practice. I had asked him about this dilemma of whether or not to preserve certain secrets in writing, and the potential risk of discovery, and asked him whether he had encountered this problem when writing the book. He replied:

> "Yes, there were some things we did not put in. But when writing these religious and cultural documents, it is funny. It is as if when something is not supposed to go in it, you will not manage it. You will forget it, or lose the book, or the book will be burned in a fire, and you will ask "How did the fire start?" And if you forget something, you will wake up thinking about it, and wonder "Why does this keep crossing my mind?"

It became clear that the information that was most crucial to document, in the eyes of both the historians engaged in it and the population at large, was not knowledge of powerful ritual secrets, but knowledge of markers of identity. These were "traditional" behaviours, magical powers (not how to exercise them, but their effects), the recognizable features (if not the finer details) of ritual practice, and all those things that which might enable their recognition as a

people, and the construction of a collective, cohesive self-knowledge. Essentially, the priority was to document those aspects which could act as building blocks in the (re)construction of Bayira ethnic identity, and we shall see this in the coming introductions to some of the historians and their work. Thus, as for the question of authority, the historians were not inclined to usurp elders' ritual knowledge, or what Coe (2005) calls "cultural knowledge… at its deepest and most true…" (pg. 107), and what I described in the previous chapter as a high "level" of *amenge wakibutirwana*.

This is not to say that historians had no authority within the ethno-nationalist efforts, nor to imply that they were simply passive vectors of elders' selected knowledge; far from it. Rather, their "role" can be understood as "entextualising" and "reconciling" information, and their conclusions bolstered the construction of Yira identity. In this way, they can be seen to have the "directive" role in Yira identity creation that Fierman's (1990) "peasant intellectuals" were conceived of having in rural Tanzania. Fierman stated that these intellectuals:

> "…are characterized not by their thought but by their social position, which is directive, or organizational, or educative. Peasant intellectuals, defined socially in this way, mediate the relationship between domination and discourse, between the active creation of political language and long-term continuity, and also between local society and the wider world" (pg. 5).

As Kuipers (2013) points out, in a context of a known lack of knowledge, the simple presentation of evidence is an "authorizing act", establishing superior knowledge. The historians' role is "directive" insofar as they are tasked, or task themselves, with collecting and analyzing multiple sources (often written as well as oral), and drawing their conclusions from these, which they legitimate through the presentation of evidence. This process can involve dealing with contradicting information, and reconciling it to produce a "truth" that

then constitutes a part of authentic Yira identity. I asked Muhima and Mandekia about how they dealt with contradictions in the information that they collected.

> **Muhima:** "For many of these people, I stayed with, they were family members of the Bakonzo Life History Research Society [Isaiah Mukirania's research organization]. So they told me information concerning what they found out, they were researchers and many of them still alive. So they were telling me real information that they had gathered firsthand from the Bakonzo Uganda side and the Bakonzo Congo side.
>
> **Mandekia:** "To add to that, some of the stories that we get are the very people who participated in the struggle. The Bakonzo Bayira in the Rwenzori region. I realised that these people must be known, they must identify themselves and promote themselves through this research. So that people can know who the Bayira Bakonzo are of this particular issue. That way we participated very much, we would just go there already, we meet them, and they tell us the true things. That's when we sit down, and we take notes of what is happening and we consult research, and researchers, and we will see the way forward for them."
>
> **E.B.:** Have you ever had someone tell you a story that you later discovered was not true?
>
> **Mandekia:** Yes, well, we have heard some different stories, but again we have to reconcile. Those stories to make sure that we get stuck a real true story of what happens to the Bakonzo.
>
> **Muhima:** When we have contradicting information and some false information, that's one we…. from 1986 when Museveni took over power in Uganda, Museveni was against the Rwenzururu struggle. So he designed a mechanism under which he would destroy it. So he made sure he trains others who have another history… he was trying to advise them to look at the other side of the history, to create falsehood history that would fight the original history.

This dialogue again reveals the tendency to attribute "true" information to Bayira and Rwenzururu patriots, those who have already proven their loyalty to their brethren, and the reflexive suspicion of planted "false information". Not all contradictions are equally suspect, however. According to Mandekia, some can be "reconciled". This calls to mind again Stoler's (2009) "hierarchies of credibility", but also White's (2008) "formulaic" stories in Tanzanian oral history. Some social "truths" are known but unspoken, or rather they are only indirectly spoken. A lack of knowledge about a particular murder did not deter the Dutch colonialists whom Stoler studied (via ethnographic archival work) from accepting lurid

accounts of the violent passions of the native population as the cause of the murder. They simultaneously dismissed allegations that the Dutch colonial planters provoked anger through abusive treatment of workers as a motivating factor. The credibility of various accounts lay within their conformity to accepted narratives.

White (2008) similarly describes the "formulaic" quality of oral histories of the colonial period in Tanzania, and their consistent featuring of vampires. White argues that it is not the obvious historical inaccuracies that should be of most interest to the historian, nor should the historian dismiss them for their evident falsities. Rather, these stories are rhetorical devices with which people can express meaning, confusion, and commentary on power relations. What people can "know" from these stories is not the truth or falsity of whether vampires exist, but what the events of that era meant in terms of relationships with colonial powers. These "formulae" thus shape knowledge of not just what is true, but similarly what is false, since stories that contradict the established relations that the majority of narratives propagate are unlikely to be believed.

This is all to say that, whilst historians might see themselves, and the Bayira might see the historians, as uncovering truths about themselves which are *lost*, the historians tend to interpret their information about Yira identity according to what they "know", or believe to be true already. Or rather, information that is not useful to their research aims of creating an empowered and admired Yira "cultural public" is not of interest anyway, since their research is not an academic history for its own sake. Effectively, information is graded in the same manner as people. I recounted in the categories of Bayira, usually used by secessionists to grade a person's loyalty, potential sympathy or treachery. Bayira *Hene Hene* are those with loyalty, whilst the conniving Bayira *Ndabanguli* are the potential traitors. Here is the grading

reflected in another exchange, where a secessionist, Mumbere, described a problem of government spies within the Rwenzururu Kingdom administration:

> "The government of Uganda has sent spies in Rwenzururu, among the veterans, so that any time the veterans prepare a document, the spies block it. These are Bayira Ndabanguli - the spies. Like the black sheep in wolf skin. The Bayira Hene Hene are the ones with the secrets."

Here too, we see the perception that only loyalists will have the secrets that the historians are concerned with documenting. Thus, though their research would be seen as selective in normative academic terms, to criticize it as such would be to miss the point of it, which is to invigorate a shared, aspirational Yira identity. This aim is evident not only in recording different and nuanced versions of known events (for example, the contentious matter of whether Rwenzururu fighters were heroic liberators, or also perpetrators of violence against those Bakonzo-Bayira unwilling to help them), but also for what behaviours are, according to historians, "cultural" and "authentically Yira". For example, as we shall see in the examination of one of our historians, Biblical religious sensibilities and what is "cultural" are found to be entirely compatible.

The Theories of the Past in the Present

However, before we introduce these characters, it is necessary to consider how we approach the influence of present interests in the work of history, since this is a problem that historical anthropology has long struggled to overcome. It is a truism that history is not a neutral exercise in any culture. Certeau (1988) well-recognized that historical knowledge, "the real", certainly for the Western historian, is the product of a dialectic between what the historians "knows" of the past, and the historical operation itself – tools, methodology, the limits of what can be known, and the effects of present interests. However, anthropologists have

questioned to what extent the treatment of history by a society must be subject to cultural relativism.

The "presentist" anthropologists, notably Bohannan (1952), argued that a lack of written history allowed the living of oral cultures to freely manipulate historical discussion to advance their present interests, as Bohannan discussed in her work on Tiv genealogies. As later theorists (e.g. Peel, 1984) pointed out, according to such an interpretation, history as told in the present would be entirely detached from what happened in the past. If this were true, it is very unlikely historical arguments would carry any legitimating weight. A more controversial theory than presentism was the "invention of tradition", forwarded by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983). They describe "invented traditions" as novel responses to periods of social change, which involve a creative

> "…process of formalisation and ritualisation, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition" (ibid, pg. 4).

Ranger (1983) elaborates on colonial "inventions" of tradition in Africa, suggesting that colonial powers, particularly the British, extolled the virtues of preserving "African tradition" in theory, but did not find "tradition" in practice to be amenable to their aims of rule, particularly among more acephalous societies. They thus "invented" more administratively useful constructs, including, perhaps, that of the "tribe". Whilst most Africanist theorists agree that colonial rule exacerbated and reified "tribe" or "ethnicity" as a social referent, Ranger was taken to task by a number of critics for the "top-down" nature of his approach. For instance, Spear (2003) argues that, not only is the agency of Africans that would have had to participate in these "inventions" underappreciated in Ranger's approach, but also that such a system could not have functioned without some resonance with existing socio-political

systems. Ranger's later response to his critics (1993) admitted that a more plausibly generalizable perspective would involve creation alongside continuation.

This brings him into closer agreement with the critics of "presentism", who argue that, while historical interpretation is subject to change, it is not nearly so flexible as to allow wholesale historical revisionism, even when there is something to gain. This is partly because, even within communities, there are a multitude of different interests in play. As Appadurai (1981) points out, there is always competition to impose historical meanings on certain situations, and the relative success of efforts to do so depends on a number of factors, including the extant authority of the competitors, the degree of continuity of different versions with historical understandings, and so on. Stoler's (2009) theory of "hierarchies of credibility" allows for these practical difficulties. This acknowledges the fact that majority consensus on a version of events is no guarantee of fidelity to what actually occurred, since social biases may limit peoples' willingness to accept certain things. However, it also demonstrates that individuals cannot simply tailor histories that suit their purposes. Historical revisionism certainly happens, but it must do so within the bounds of popularly accepted "truths", and within the limits of what is already "known" to be indisputable.

Temporal Relativism, and the Multi-Temporal Reach of "History"

It is not only "values", "formulaic" stories, or present interests that shape how a society produces history, but also their understandings of the passage of time. The fact that certain societies experience time passing not only in a linear fashion, but in a cyclical fashion, has been explored by numerous anthropologists, notably by Sahlins (1981). He suggested that Polynesian culture was subject to "stereotypic reproduction", in which the stuff of (mythical)

history was metaphorically applied to the similarities of the present, so as to make history appear a continuous set of cycles. Sahlins, in a break from Sassurean semiotics, did recognize that the signs of the past in the present did not exist independent of human agency, and thus people aligned the signs of history with their present objectives. Peel (1984) is rather more explicit about the narrative *work* needed to establish a cyclical passage of time, citing examples of behavior such as the inheritance of names of the deceased by the younger generation. He states:

> "...the important point is the mutual conditioning of past and present which is thus achieved: where possible, present practice is governed by the model of past practice and, where change does occur, there is a tendency to rework the past so as to make it appear that past practice has governed present practice. This stereotypic reproduction serves both to slow down social change and to deny that such change occurs." (pg. 113).

As I have previously argued, this stereotypic reproduction is very much a feature of Bayira life. Young boys are given the names of their grandfathers, and, as Packard (1981) says that the power of the *omwami* is "…viewed as an almost organic substance that grows, declines, and is reborn" (pg. 31). This said, and to quote Packard again, Bayira time is not only cyclical but "multidimensional". Peel (1984) says of the Yoruba Ijesha that, while they did engage in stereotypic reproduction, they were also conscious of the passage of linear time, and that not all was identical between cycles. People noticed and marked events that symbolized social change; the first PhD graduates, the first television in the region, and so on. Naturally, as we have seen with the Bayira, and as ethnographers like Stambach (2000) describe, the features of globalization are differently perceived by members of the same societies, as advancements, dangers, or a little of both. This, as we have discussed, forces the narrative engineers of the past in the present, those giving semblance to the cycle,

> "…to justify the relevance of the past to the present, even to an audience which is disposed to believe that there are such precedents. He is thus a mediator between what he believes of the past and what his audience knows of the present" (pg. 118).

In the case of the Bayira, I argue that the historians we encounter are engaged in not so much a "justification" of the past in the present, but a synchronization of it. They recognize that the desire for industrial technologies and material prosperity is not going away, nor are the influences of mainstream religions. Therefore they must correct the idea that a "traditional" or "cultural" Muyira is an antithetical presence to these global forces. If the Bayira currently see themselves as living in a chaotic interregnum writ-large, complete with false ritual authorities, neglect of spiritually favourable behavior, and failure to synchronize and harness ritual power, the solution is to begin a new "cycle" of rightful ritual authority and coordination. Not only must they establish what culturally rightful behaviours *are* in order to propagate them to broader Bayira society, they must also perceptively "synchronize" these requirements with popular aspiration. Thus, historians use evidence of the past to shape understandings of a supposedly inherent Yira "cultural identity", and portray that identity as a natural fit for an aspirational, "culturally" correct, pious and high-tech future.

Isaiah Mukirania and The Bakonzo Life History Research Society

Once again, we turn to the transformative figure of Isaiah Mukirania, this time in his capacity as a historical researcher, to see how his work, and that of the Bakonzo Life History Research Society (BLHRS), served to create narratives which both illustrated social consensus and rejected a binary between "traditional" and "modern", or "past" and "future". James Scott (1998) remarked that, when statesmen consider profound change:

> "The degree of knowledge required would have to be roughly commensurate with the depth of the intervention" (pg. 183).

Isaiah was able to make the radical transformation of Yira society that he did because he fashioned himself as a master of both intimate "cultural" knowledge of the Bayira, *amange wakibutirwana*, as a result of his research, and of technical "school knowledge", thanks to his

(limited) education. This combination of knowledges that he professed gave him the ability to begin a new "cycle" of history, one which preserved the essential modes of past rule (ritual synchronization) and past practice (the cultural "rules"), but also recapitulated these into the new global order of nation states, on an unprecedentedly large scale. In order to do so, however, he had to first establish, again, consensus of who his people were, and why they could legitimately claim their right to this land, and so maintain the ethnic "purity" of both people and territory by way of national borders (Malkki, 1995).

Regrettably, none of the original BLHRS writings or Isaiah's work survived the Rwenzururu era, to my knowledge. I was, however, given a copy of a document by the ministers in OBR entitled "Bakonzo Life History Research Work Society Central Conference Meeting for Revealing our Grievances Held", 14th April 1961". It is a reconstruction of the minutes of the final meeting, compiled by two Rwenzururu Veterans and "approved" by Yolamu Mulima, the first Prime Minister of Rwenzururu under Mukirania. The authors include an appendix titled "List of Respondent Old Men of Rwenzori Region From Whom The Research Information Was Collected", a list of sixty-seven names. Only one of those sixty-seven names matches one of those on the list of attendees at this meeting they are reconstructing; the others consulted would likely have heard the story second hand. I thus cannot attest to how accurate a reconstruction it is of this meeting. However, the findings were translated by a member of Rwenzururu veterans, and the signed approval of the later Prime Minister Mulima is on the document, and it was the latter who suggested I read it. Thus, even if it cannot be taken to be a completely reliable reconstruction of the meeting itself, there is reason to believe it captures the spirit of Mukirania's project, and so helps to illustrate this point.

The document is divided in the manner of a meeting's minutes, with sections for each agenda, although the translators have endeavoured to give some further information in parts. Often it is clear when sections are their own additions, whilst in other places it is difficult to tell what is their own writing and what is meant to be a reconstruction of proceedings. In the first section entitled "Reports" (i.e. the presentation of BLHRS reports to meeting attendees), it states:

> "Isaiah Mukirania and his friend Tom Stacey (International Journalist) worked jointly to do research around the Rwenzori Mountains. Their main concern was to know the traditional leaders and their areas of rule and the clans in which they originated. In the same way, Isaiah Mukirania and his secretary Samuel Mutooro worked hard to know the constitution of their ancestors and the rules that were governing their societies. About the history that concerned the constitution, they realised there were rules and regulations that governed society but they were not written down in books for future reference. Isaiyah Mukirania and Mutooro went ahead to make research from elder men and women that were brilliant about the rules and regulations of the society plus their constitution that protect them because they knew how to write and they wrote them down for future reference" (pg. 2).

It then lays out that constitution, with sections entitled "Respect of the Rules and Regulations", which mandates good relations with God and ancestral spirits, including the continued practice of sacrifice to ancestors. There are further sections on female behaviour; "Rules and Regulations that Protects the Dignity of a Female Muyira", outlining dress, sexual and family obligations. These rules are described as:

> "…natural traditional rules and regulations that protected them that contributed to their respect for others and their God…" (pg. 4).

There are other sections on "Fundamental Rights of The People Around the Rwenzori Mountains" and "The Human Rights of the Rwenzururu People" (though the former focuses on outlining the nature of rule and governance in Rwenzururu). Emerging is a pattern of analogy between the "traditional" or "customary" social codes and the later technologies (in this case, a "technology of rule" (Adebanwi, 2016)), an analogy which serves as a form of tactical cultural relativism. Furthermore, the description of these apparently customary

behavioural regulations as "natural rules", and their preservation in a written "constitution", effectively fuses Leach's (1977) categories; custom and law are not separate, rather, *custom becomes law, since it is written to symbolize societal consensus*.

But how is it that such "rules" were collected and evidenced? Peterson (2012) offers the most detailed portrayal of the inner workings of the BLHRS, and is worth quoting at some length:

> "The 'Bakonzo Life History Research Society' was founded in the early 1950s… Their aim, said the Society's constitution, was to 'instill patriotism among the Konzo people and have them unite together'. Swalehe Musenene asked the central research questions in an open letter to the Society's chairman. He began by asking about Konzo language. 'Why is it whenever you find a Konzo person he is always speaking a diluted Konzo language?'… 'How should we rejuvenate the purity of this language? How should we know the real names of the Konzo children from the 1st to the 12th born? What are the equivalent Konzo names for West, North, or South?
>
> … members of the Bakonzo Life History Research Society set out to do fieldwork. Researchers were given a cyclostyled form on which a series of ethnographic, linguistic, and historical questions was printed… The questions were didactic and instructional. Konzo patriots had little time for objectivity. The first question was 'What was the origin of the Konzo people?'. 'Who was the main chief of the Konzo people in ancient times?', went another question. Researchers were identifying the Konzo as indigenes, possessing a social structure of their own.
>
> … Their research led to an inescapable conclusion. 'Now that the Toro have suppressed the Konzo', went the questionnaire's final declaration, 'they should go'." … With their research findings in front of them, Mukirane and his colleagues could prove that 'we . . . are created different from [Toro people] in our build, appearance, traditions, languages, customs, marriage, native dances, circumcision, and mourning for our deceased relatives'. Their culture and biological makeup made their political independence seem necessary." (ibid, pg. 964-965).

To return to the documented minutes of the final BLHRS meeting, we find a section towards the end entitled "Way Forward and Work Plan". The first point, "Name of the Land", states:

> "Members resolved that depending on the topography of our land, it is mountain which is snow caped (sic), on this members resolved this area be called Rwenzururu which the Europeans calls Rwenzori because their language could allow them to correctly pronounce the name Rwenzururu." (pg. 15).

Thus the "mother land" referred to above is reclaimed as rightfully, historically theirs by establishing that the word "Rwenzori" was merely European mispronounciation of the

rightful, traditional name. The later minutes lay out the meeting's decision to create Rwenzururu Kingdom and Government. One final section of interest, "The Natives and Their Constitution (Laws)", states:

> "Based on the naturality, customs, norms and traditions of the Bayira... and basing on the history of the ancestors and their native laws, it is revealed that the Bayira are the true natives of Mt. Rwenzururu the beloved. The Bayira has their rules and regulations that used to protect them. These have been written down as their constitution like other Africans and Europeans have done in their areas. Basing on historical research especially from the Banande of Eastern DRC, they got these rules and regulations (constitution)" (pg. 15).

As Peterson (2012) rightly says, the BLHRS questions were evidently framed to generate a certain kind of answer in regard to the land, one of rightful ownership, and of the natural, divine right of indigeneity, of autochthons (Geschiere, 2009), and this language is reproduced here. Thus, while there has likely always been contestation over who "owns" land (usually framed in terms of ancestral settlement and solved by ritual practice (Packard, 1981)), the shift in meanings which are attached to land ownership and exclusivity by BLHRS researchers represent a transformation of meaning (Hodge, 1990). The one who must now be excluded from Bayira lands is a wider Other, the Batoro, and those whose land it rightfully is are framed as a wider collective, the Bakonzo-Bayira.

Furthermore, the customs and norms that people might once have envisioned as all serving separate purposes now also represent a holistic and protective technology of rule. By ensuring adherence to "pure" cultural practice, they equally ensure purity of identity among the practitioners, and serve to exclude the Bayira's oppressors. As Malkki (1995) says of national borders, this cultural "constitution" serves to safeguard an identity's purity. Thus *the meanings associated with "traditions" and practice have been shifted, and aligned with the purposes of the contemporary nation-state*, thus resolving a potential contradiction in establishing a new state to protect the old ways. The BLHRS collected, entextualised, and

homogenized the “customs” (Leach, 1977) generally agreed on by their informants and rebranded them, not only as a written proof of pan-ethnic consensus on who they “naturally” were, but as a technology of the nation-state. Thus the supposed *substance* of whom a collective people “were” in the past, before their unjust oppression and cultural dilution, is transformed into a national technology of the present.

The Historical Reconciliation of Religion and Culture: Paluku’s Work

In this section, a historian who use religious texts as historical sources is presented. His work locates the Bayira within the Biblical history, and compares their cultural customs to those of the Israelites; the similarities are seen as proof that they are descendants of the Israelites. By situating themselves and their culture within Biblical history, the historians create an ethnic self-understanding that is capable of overcoming one of the most troublesome, and most painful conflicts in Yira life, the perceived incompatibility of religion and “culture”. The colonialists and missionaries labelled non-Christian religious practices as “Satanic”, a rhetoric that has strongly persisted. Most Ugandans and Congolese are devout religious believers, though very often also observant to their own cultural traditions as well. Many people expressed sadness about this supposed incompatibility, and some of the more ardent ethno-nationalists would describe Christianity as a destructive force. Kambere, a young Congolese man who was on the organizing team of E’Kyaghanda, said:

> “The colonisers, though we are still colonised, use their spirits to try and modify identity. Colonisers trying to cut the spiritual chain, by giving people Christian names, names of white grandfathers, and forcing them into the church. That's why we are Jules and Julius, not our own names. Ils voulaient couper la chaine spirituelle! It was the strategy of the colonisers to modify Yira identity, and we could no longer invoke Yira assets. The whites had assets of saints and prayers, and we would only know saints and Christian names… They baptised us. We were forbidden from speaking about your own grandfather's religion. So it was a strategy to make us lose identity.”

I asked what he meant when he said that they were still colonised.

> "The Occidental church here still guards its roots that are more recent than our culture. What I explained above continues to this day."

Kule, the manager of a small cultural museum in Kasese, responded thusly when I asked him about this relationship between the devotions to culture and to religion:

> "I would describe it as a cold war. Because elders are never confrontational. They have a cool kind of side, but they keep on advising. So it's a cold war. Elders keep advising, but they keep advising differently. And the religious guys keep talking as well and keep talking differently. So there becomes kind of a clash."

Thus, overt or not, this seemingly irreconcilable set of allegiances was undeniably felt at intimate levels of social life. Yet, as far as I am aware, many of the people I spoke to who blamed Christianity for the destruction of culture were not only also churchgoers, but sincere believers. As the majority of Yira ethno-nationalists realise, the Church cannot be ignored, and nor do they necessarily wish to ignore it; its teachings are powerful influences in the everyday lives of the majority of people. Without reducing the spiritual significance of religion, it is also important to note that the Church in Uganda and Congo represents not only local religious communities, but transnational networks which have both material benefits and political influence (Vokes, 2009, Kassimir, 1998, Raeymakers, 2007, Tripp, 2010).

Truthfully, I was for a time rather surprised by peoples' insistence that the relationship between cultural revivalists and the religious establishment was such an antagonistic one, given that there were large numbers of (particularly Catholic) clergy in senior positions in both Rwenzururu and E'Kyaghanda. The chair of the Nyabaghole Foundation (the Rwenzururu Queen's charitable foundation), which aimed to teach cultural values to young women, was a Catholic Father, as was the Minister for Religious Affairs in the Rwenzururu Kingdom. The President of the Conseil Culturelle (Cultural Council) of E'Kyaghanda during the 2015 conference was Père Vincent Machozi, an Assumptionist Catholic Father. He was a near-constant presence on the panel of E'Kyaghanda throughout the conference, and

repeatedly intoned that, as a religious leader, he could authoritatively say that traditional cosmology was compatible with Christian beliefs.

The Catholic Church is certainly the most accommodating of religious denominations when it comes to Bayira "culture". The contemporary Ugandan Catholic Church (which has a historical advantage and greater reach in western Uganda (Vokes, 2009)), in fact has a varied relationship with tradition. Whilst Behrend (2011) describes Catholic struggles to combat witchcraft and cannibalism in the recent past in Fort Portal, Vokes (2009) suggests that in fact, Catholic belief in intercessory spirits is more amenable to co-existence with local cultural understandings in Uganda. My interest here, however, is less to do with the process of acculturation, or why Catholicism in particular shows greater willingness to coexist with local beliefs. Rather, I wish to consider what *historians specifically* can do to ease the relationship between church and culture, in a way that religious authorities cannot. Below is the testimony of Father Balinande, who is a Catholic Priest and also the Rwenzururu Kingdom Minister for Religious Affairs. I had asked him how he felt about the clash that people described between religious and cultural values. He responded:

> "I am a Christian and a priest, but traditionally I still believe in certain things, traditional things. Yes, that conflict is there, but those people have not read much. For me, I am enlightened. I can know what is happening in the Middle East, in Europe, in America. So I, Father Balinande, I can say it produce these things and it can help. I think it can help tradition.... you can follow… Christian spirituality or African spirituality, but both I can understand, and I know how to handle both. But someone who has never gone to school and who knows nothing about this cannot."

He is a well-known authority on cultural history and is keen to overcome the antagonism between religion and culture, yet he also seems somewhat resigned to the fact that, despite his authority in both fields, he will unlikely be able to convince a person with less education that this is correct. The critiques of "presentist" anthropology may serve us well in seeing why. Though it may be desirable to think that there is no conflict between culture and religion

because an authority figure says so, it is not necessarily credible, given the decades of conflict between the two cosmologies. Contrary to what the presentist theorists of anthropology asserted, to extoll an easy relationship between religion and culture is so to go against the grain of a peoples' *experienced* history, and what they know to still be true. Father Balinande above is not placing his argument in historical context. A *historical* perspective, however, has the potential to reconcile a cultural identity with a Christian religious system, and to delegitimize allegations of current Yira culture as anti-Christian, by finding its forebears in Biblical history. It can, perhaps, transform the meaning of the relationship between religion and culture, by locating the history of one within the other.

It is with some hesitation that I apply John Mbiti's view of African temporality here. Mbiti has a tendency towards post-structuralism and, as a theologian, a particular inclination to find evidence of monotheistic religion in African cultures (p'Bitek, 1970, Greene, 1996). It was Bwambale, a regular informant and a PhD student himself who repeatedly told me I should read Mbiti if I wished to understand Bayira culture. (I suspect he shared Mbiti's inclinations toward seeing the structures of Christianity within traditional religion. Nevertheless, this is not dissimilar to what the Biblical historians we are about to meet are aiming to do, so perhaps bringing in Mbiti is fitting.) Moreover, given that Lhukonzo has multiple past tenses, one of which refers to the "far far past", that beyond living memory, I believe Mbiti's approach is warranted for illustrating this point. Mbiti (1969) describes the African past with reference to two Swahili terms; *Sasa*, meaning the recent, memorable past, and *Zamati*, the far past which is beyond the memories of the living, and which is thus the domain of myth and religious history. Therefore, a relatively recent declaration that the "cold war" between religion and culture was over, if it was based in the present, would lack legitimacy if religious thought is still intertwined with the mythic domain of the far past.

Ephraim Paluku, our historian, took the stage at the E'Kyaghanda conference late in the week. Paluku worked in the administrative team at L'Université Catholique du Graben in Butembo, where he had also studied for a few years. However, he told me later, he had been working on his own research for fifteen years, studying the similarities between the Bayira and the Jewish people, particularly the Israelites, largely by way of studying the Bible. It was his initial observations of these similarities, back in 2002, that motivated the research. This is his presentation:

> "King Solomon married the Queen of Sheba from Ethiopia. That's where the Yira come from, so we are related to Solomon. Sheba was a Muyira. God chose our people to be the fathers of believers. God told Abraham a secret and told him to offer sacrifice. After he offered the sacrifice, God came back in the evening and told him that this was the land of Haran, and it was made for his descendants. That land begins from the Red Sea. After forty years his descendants would inherit that land. The Bayira were part of the people that God promised land and wealth to. So during the journey from Egypt under Moses, Moses was told that he would not enter the promised land. Instead it would be Joshua, and that the land was between two rivers, which are not mentioned. According to me, the way I understand the Bible, these rivers are the Red Sea and Kalhemba, which is the river near Beni.
>
> According to my research, that land would have mountains and plains. One of the rivers flows from the mountain and passes through two salty lakes. These are Katwe and Kasinyi. among the mountains which formed part of that land... Moses stopped at River Jordan, and handed over to Joshua and Abrahams descendants… The people who remained were the ones to offer sacrifice, the ones of Manasseh. They were the Bayira now… Because their land was full of resources, and God gave them all the blessings. God said these people who remains would enjoy peace after a long period of suffering, with many people planning to take over that land. The two clans that crossed has similarities with the ones who remained. Number one, circumcision like the Jews. Number two, sacrifices on the mountain. Number three, the preservation of virginity. Number four, forbidding the killing of clan mates. When the Jews were hungry in the wilderness, God gave them manna. He told Moses to put his stick on a rock and it gave water. This manna from heaven resembles millet and sorghum flour, which we cultivate here."

Whilst his evidence for his claims may appear a little thin to the outsider, the claims remain a very powerful tactic. The "culture" that had been decried as Satanic by the colonialists is now presented as the very same as that of God's chosen people. His presentation was well-timed

for impact; earlier that day at the conference, there had been a procession of young women and girls dressed in white, who were enrolled in a program of virginity preservation organized by E'Kyaghanda. They had been applauded and crowned with tiaras. A display of a cultural value, a matter of social consensus, was then further reinforced by its accordance with religious texts, demonstrating that the two sets of values were not antagonistic, but aligned.

Furthermore, it seems that the notion of the Bayira sharing ancestry with the Israelites, and common descent from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, is a fairly uncontroversial assumption among the Bayira; Ephraim Paluku was not the only historian I encountered who repeated that story. The Biblical verse that described the meeting between Solomon and Sheba is notoriously vague, and does not entail a sexual relationship (Book of Kings, Chapter 10, New Internationalist Version). However, the notion of that relationship, as well as a conception of Sheba's African origins, was popularized by an Ethiopian legend called the Kebra Nagast, in which the land of Sheba is said to be current Ethiopia (contrary to the more common scholarly belief that Sheba is in present-day Yemen). In the story, King Solomon tricks the Queen of Sheba into sleeping with him, and she gives birth to Menelik, who Solomon later anoints as King of Ethiopia, after he fails to persuade Menelik to remain in Israel as his heir (Hoberman, 1983). Given this fairly widespread narrative of an African Queen of Sheba, it is not so hard to imagine that people might find plausible a version of Biblical history in which their own believers have an ancestor. Finding not only common heritage, but common cultural traits, with central characters from the Old Testament, would thus be a tremendously powerful conception for reconciling spiritual-cultural revival with ongoing Abrahamic religious identity and worship.

It is difficult to say how this presentation resonated with the audience in general; a lack of overt criticism does not necessarily mean they now feel the conflict between religion and culture is resolved. Yet it is quite possible that a historian, as oppose to a religious leader, can lend a valuable form of legitimacy to the resolution of this conflict, one that is crucial in a temporal worldview in which mythic conceptions of identity are located in the domain of the far past (Mbiti, 1969). Reconciliation between religious and cultural values has been located not just in the domain of the mythic "far past", but stereotypic reproduction between Biblical and present time is also adhered to, as Bayira and Israelite cultural values are found to be one and the same. The contemporary relevance of "culture" is made not just a matter of what is "civic virtue" in the eyes of cultural elites (Lonsdale, 1992), but of religious virtue as well.

Presenting evidence of the cultural core of Yira identity, through finding similarities between behaviours of the present and a centuries-old religious text, in the domain of the *far past*, not only negates an antagonism between the practice of "culture" and the religious establishment, but bolsters present consensus about what Yira cultural values are. It portrays the Yira as a "naturally" pious people, who, contrary to both colonial era and current orthodox views, are perfectly attuned to the practice of Christian beliefs as they are. Ephraim Paluku was not alone in using similarities of belief as a claim to Christian identity. At one point earlier in the E'Kyaghanda conference, we were divided into clan groups to discuss clan-specific problems, and so I went to join the honorary clan I had been given, the Basukali. As I arrived, a middle aged man told me:

> "It is good you chose this clan, because Basukali were Christian before the whites arrived, as they already knew it was wrong to rob, rape and kill. We were Christian before."

To locate the substance of Christian identity in the far past, and thus effectively transcend the influence of foreign missionaries in that religious identity, renders it compatible with a

prosperous but pious future that is, above all, based on a "cultural", authentically Yira foundation.

A History of Cultural Innovation: Kakule's Work

Yira traditionalists have another force to reckon with, this one not spiritual, but material. What is the relevance of "culture", associated with the past, in the high-tech aspirations of the present and future? Or rather, the historians have sought to ask whether the constituents of technological advancement and scientific inquiry, associated with knowledge, literacy, innovation, development, all those things which lead to a materially prosperous future, be found within Yira culture. The need to inspire innovation in technology is expounded by government ministers, development practitioners and an array of others in both Uganda and Congo, and Ugandan ministers regularly extoll the need to promote STEM subjects in schools. If people are to invest their energies in maintaining the practices of the past, then the past must speak to peoples' material hopes as well, perhaps not unlike how the "prosperity gospel's" religious competitiveness stems from addressing the needs of both sacred and profane (Piot, 2010). We have already seen in the last chapter a powerful belief in Yira "technology" among certain practitioners. But can there be a historically founded consensus that the "authentic", "natural" Muyira was a scientific innovator, and the kind of person who, if politically uninhibited, might create a high-tech, futuristic state?

Anticipation had been building over several days of the E'Kyaghanda conference for a particular presentation by a historian named Kakule, linked to a research institute in Butembo. Kakule is in his early thirties, with a confident manner and a flamboyant dress sense. After completing university in Butembo, went to pursue art. He now has an art studio



Figure 6: Kakule's Painting of the Alphabet.

in a disused building in Butembo, often painting portraits, and also conducts his own historical research. He was due to speak on the subject of a written Yira alphabet that he claimed to have rediscovered. His brightly coloured painted tableau of both the alphabet and of a numerical system had been on display in the conference hall all week, and the excitement around them was palpable. His presentation, on the penultimate day of the conference, went thusly:

> "Our ancestors started writing and their mode of writing was putting marks on weapons that they were using, on pots, on houses, on stones. These marks have a significant meaning and it is what's been gathered in order to form a modern way of writing. This history has been forgotten and that's why we don't have a unified language. Our language is mixed with other languages and so we are starting a journey today to start organising our alphabet. I have been organising this alphabet and grammar since 2008. The Yira language is from our ancestors who have developed a mechanism of writing. The Yira had started writing before colonialism."

In the following questions, he elaborated that he had discovered the alphabet by interviewing elders, and recovering pieces of pottery with the markings remaining on them.[18] Given the anticipation that had built up around his presentation, it was to my surprise that it was received with rather more scepticism than those of the Biblical historians inserting Yira history into the folds of the Old Testament. An audience member made the following point in response:

> "We are discussing a complex concept. We should not rely on one source of

[18] Discoveries of new alphabets and languages have also been recorded in millenarian and prophetic movements. Pratten (2007) documents how the charismatic Oberi Okaime church in colonial-era Nigeria which for some time taught a script revealed to its leaders in their own school. See also Sarró (forthcoming), *Mandombe: Agency and revelation in an African prophetic script*. Though the historians are not prophets, the significance of (re)discovering a written language by a historian has a similar potency to millenarian discoveries of such languages, insofar as it heralds a radical future direction for those who find it, given the power associated with the written word.

> information. I concur that what has been said is true, but we should have as many sources as possible so that it is not distorted by future historians. Our writers are rushing to finish their books and so only half the source gives half the information. They don't give us related literature and we don't know if it's a personal history. We should continue consulting as many people as possible to get further information. Someone writes information based on his grandfather without having someone else coming from another direction."

A moderator then suggested that a panel of historians selected by E'Kyaghanda must sit down together and iron out the contradictions in their histories, a motion which was passed. It was also emphasized that these historians must come from both sides of the border. Muhima whispered to me at this point that "The Bayira decide information by consensus". The conference thus felt that there had been an insufficient number of people consulted to be entirely certain of the alphabet's general validity. This returns us to the nature of historians' authority in this context. Their authority, as I have argued, is based on their educationally acquired skills, which allow them to act as collectors, interpreters and vectors of elders' knowledge, of *amenge' wakibutirwana*. They are thus "entextualisers" (Barber, 2005, Kuipers, 2013) of cultural knowledge, not sources of it in their own right.

This begs the question, though, that if people need historians to produce a homogenized form of cultural knowledge, how do they feel that said historians are in a position to judge whether it is accurate, or adequately sourced? Again, the "hierarchy of credibility" (Stoler, 2009), or the "formulaic" (White, 2008) comes into play, as well as the normative research practice of consulting multiple sources for validity. Numerous speakers throughout the E'Kyaghanda conference insisted that gendered and conservative sexual behavior was Yira "culture", yet they were never challenged about that claim, or whether they had consulted enough sources to trust its accuracy. This is unsurprising given that anxiety about changes to gender and sexual norms as a result of globalization are part of everyday discourse, in Africa and elsewhere, not only because of cultural norms, but also because of conservative religious

discourse. By contrast, the supposed Bayira alphabet was apparently unknown to the audience until now. However desirable this revelation might seem, it isn't necessarily credible. To be sure, no one asserted outright that this claim was definitively *false*, but given that the substance of Yira identity would have to be based on societal consensus (or at least a strong semblance of it), the fact that the majority of those present had no knowledge of this at all was inescapably problematic.

Despite those methodological reservations from the audience, the moderator praised Kakule and told the audience to remember that "…the first scientific calculator was invented by a Muyira!" I met Kakule again in Butembo, and asked him what the moderator meant by that. He responded with reference to the archaeological discovery of the Ishango bone.

> "It was a Belgian archaeologist called Jean de Heinzelin de Braucourt. He found the Ishango bone... There are certain nicks in the bone, engravings, from which it is possible to decipher the mathematics of Yira. subtraction, addition, division, … we know from this bone that it was the black Yira man of Ishango was the man of the new mathematics, a system of writing and other sciences that exist in the world. At the time the US president was Roosevelt and he came to assist with this operation. It's true, there are even pictures. And when he returns to America he announced, "Finally, we found the most ancient bone of humanity!" And that was why they started to say that Africa was the cradle of humanity, because that is where the oldest bone of humanity was found."

There are some easily falsifiable points in this story. Roosevelt was not President in 1960, and I can find no record of either he, or Dwight D. Eisenhower (who was President in 1960) having any involvement with Congolese archaeology, or mentioning of the Ishango bone. However, the bone itself, discovered by de Heinzelin in 1960, has been the subject of much archaeological debate, and was indeed thought by de Heinzelin himself to be a possible mathematical instrument (though he does not posit the ethnicity of the maker) (de Heinzelin, 1962).

Kakule continued:

> "…this was where the empirical civilisation of Ancient Egypt began. So it was the place where people began existing… our ancestors who moved up to Egypt followed the route of the water of Kalhemba. Others stopped on the beaches, and each time they found a place to settle would construct a small village near the river. That's how they found themselves in Egypt, and on the way they would build other villages. Like in Meroe, the civilization at Meroe, at the side of the route of Kalhemba. Now, the Semliki divides when it reaches Egypt. The people of Egypt, the Egyptians, they drink the water that comes from here. So people were not leaving Egypt. People were leaving here, and they built all of these villages along the river and then when they arrived there they built their centre. The centre of the formation of ancient knowledge.
>
> And if you read Greek history you will see that the names of the ancient thinkers of Egypt were our names. Like the philosopher Thales. Thales comes from our word omuthale, which means metal worker. From there we arrived in Greece. So the thinkers of Greece came to learn in our schools. And they brought back ancient knowledge to Mesopotamia. The Greeks came to learn from the Egyptians, and they brought that knowledge of Africans back to them. Now that we have started making anthropological and scientific studies on the Ishango Bone, they are beginning to see that scientific knowledge originated from here… the creativity and the scientific strength of this man that they had discovered."

Though he does not say so explicitly, it is possible to also see Kakule's theory as a reversal of the Hamitic hypothesis, which denotes the Bantu people as the receivers of knowledge from the Hamitic peoples, possibly of Arabic origin, coming from the Horn of Africa, or from further north (Sanders, 1969, Spear, 1987). By portraying the current of civilization moving northwards with the Yira's unique riverine systems, Kakule reverses this dynamic, presenting a rejection of "culture", or more loosely, the past (Bantu in general and Yira in particular) as antithetical to technological innovation.

Kakule might not have entirely convinced his audience, but we are still able to see the intended direction of his research. Though "historical" in nature, his work aims to cement a conception of the identity of the "authentic" Muyira. That identity must be compatible with the demands, and aspirations, of a globally linked future. If the soon-to-be politically emancipated Bayira are to be the global players on the world stage that they wish to be, then

they must be innovators, and must possess all the characteristics that they are told they need by the formal educators, the NGOs, and other actors associated with social transformation. Again, we see a persistent rejection of an "Afromodernity" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2004), characterized by an incompatible binary of "tradition" and "modernity".

Conclusion

As we have seen throughout this chapter, the homespun historians of the Bayira are creators of consensus about what Yira identity is, and are also engaged in reconciling the contradictions that many a theorist of Afro-modernity has pointed out (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2004). Rather than accept an inevitable break between past and future, the historians are creating a broad Yira cultural identity that is not only compatible with the demands of religion and technological innovation, but exemplary of them, and indeed the source of further development of them. They collect information, mostly from a number of elders, and then extract a picture of consensus with the agreeing pieces of that data; in short, they entextualise it. The products of their work, their writing and their presentations, will theoretically represent the authentic character of the Bayira and their culture, and act as blueprints for practical adoption by society as a whole.

Isaiah Mukirania was the only historian who literally turned these written representations of culture into "law" (Leach, 1977), though, as we shall see in Chapter Five, E'Kyaghanda and Rwenzururu are also aiming to encourage widespread practice of such "culture", and to preserve it (in text) and promote it in the manner of law. Such a restoration of cultural behavior will, alongside ritual synchronization, invigorate the dawn of a new cycle of history, synchronizing all the Bayira with each other in a unified entity, which couples the best of the

past with the potential of a bright, globally aspirational future. The Yira “cultural public” that they are making is thus a new “cycle” that preserves the characteristics of the past (Peel, 1984) by making those characteristics tools the tools for an aspirational future.

Chapter Four: The Yira State and Prophetic Hope

The grand project of the Bayira ethno-nationalists to reunify, ritually synchronise and live according to a unified "culture" is ambitious in its own right, but those who are secessionist-inclined dream of taking it further. The secessionists are certainly in agreement with this broader project of revival, and usually see it as a necessary accompaniment to establishing a state. However, most ethno-natioanlists with secessionist inclinations are either extremely vague, or openly unsure, as to how this cultural reunification will lead to a new state. It is this missing link that sees many of the secessionist-inclined able to hope, but limited in their ability to put their energies into ways of achieving their goal, what Zigon (2009) calls "active hope". Johnson-Hanks (2005) argues that intentionally acting to achieve a certain future depends on that future's semblance to the past, for the past is where peoples' capacity to predict comes from. More uncertain futures (particularly one that involves a radical change, at least in geopolitical terms), is far more difficult terrain in which to ground meaningful action. Thus most ordinary people who desire secessionism are able to do little about it except hope, since state creation would require the involvement of political powers that they cannot envisage accessing. However, there were also those who had a plan, which involved the intervention of gods and spirits, and they were, as far as possible, taking action.[19]

[19] Zigon (ibid) insists his Muscovite informants would suggest persistently hoping, in the face of unfavourable odds and without an obvious avenue for action is far from "passive", as Crapanzano (2003) suggests. I agree with his criticism of Crapanzano's view of hope as the "passive" counterpart of active "desire". Nevertheless, I believe a degree of distinction within Zigon's concept of "active hope" is merited in this case. Whilst many Bayira hope for secession, and maintaining that hope and passing it on to new generations is indeed a kind of action, there remains a contrast with those who wish to pursue direct action to create the Yira State in the here and now. To put it another way, there are degrees of activity in "active hope", and it is those who are willing to invest significant personal action and resources for more immediate solutions that are the subject of this chapter.

In this chapter, we explore how Bayira cosmology engenders an "active hope" (Zigon, ibid), a way of translating a long-held dream of secession into action, which, it is believed, will deliver victory against overwhelming odds. The involvement of such spiritual forces, it shall be argued, is what is seen to have delivered the first victory of secession, the original Rwenzururu Kingdom-State in the 1960s under Isaiah Mukirania. Chiefly among such forces is the power of *akalaiyirire,* which can be loosely translated as "destiny", though in practice is far more multi-faceted. Likewise, the hope of a new state in a seemingly hopeless context survives (at least partly) because of what the spiritual world may yet do, and this hope will more than likely survive long into the future. Here, we shall meet those who are not prepared to wait, and we will see what actions they take, and how the power structures within their enclaves endure *because that power is itself a source of hope*.

The enclaves I refer to are small-scale prophetic movements, or "cults", centred around a leader who is receiving messages from the spiritual world about what must be done to bring on the dawn of the state, for it seems that only when the commands of the spirits are satisfied will the process of state creation begin. I have argued so far that the Bayira believe their relationships with the spirit world have been damaged by the erosion of their proper culture, the changes in lifestyles and the influence of Abrahamic religions, and that the cultural revival movement is motivated by a felt need to repair these spiritual relations. It is in this context that we must consider the actions of the prophets and their followers. Moreover, this exploration helps to highlight the practical linkage between our two publics. That is, the "cultural" and "ritual public", when it is created and the norms it represents are adhered to, will prompt spiritual intervention to create the more elusive apparatus of the "civic public", the official, internationally-recognised independent state. Whilst all secessionists tend to see

this connection as formative for the state, the actions that the prophetic secessionists take to advance the state caricature it.

In the course of my fieldwork I was able to meet three such prophets and some of their followers (with varying degrees of access and data), although numerous anecdotes lead me to believe that there could be many more. Though the prophets did not represent any particular demographic, the followers of the movements I encountered were overwhelmingly young men with either a history of militant activity, or strong militant aspirations. I do not feel that I have a large enough sample to comment on this demographic observation, nor do I wish to perpetuate a narrative that suggests large populations of young African men will inevitably be "angry" enough about their limited material prospects to resort to militancy (e.g. Tinsley, 2015). I point it out only to emphasise the fact that those who were the most determined to acquire a state by any means necessary seemed to feel that membership of such cults was a productive form of secessionist action, which forces the question of why.

To my regret, I can only offer a limited window into the operations of the prophetic movements I encountered. Where possible, I shall describe the prophets' predictions, and the actions that their members take, but the movements are extremely secretive, which naturally compromises a complete ethnographic picture. I was only able to secure one or two interviews with most of the prophets I shall introduce here, and, whilst they told me about their beliefs to greater or lesser extent, I was not allowed to witness their ritual conduct, or to participate and observe in a significant manner (with the exception of the young man Muhesi, who took me on some brief tours of the shrines he was building). However, it is critical to note that their need for secrecy is itself the reason that this kind of action exists. In the context of a repressive state in Uganda (where two of the prophets we meet here live) and in

the volatile eastern provinces of Congo (where the third lives), open political mobilisation for secession is extremely dangerous, if not impossible. More importantly on the theme of secrecy, however, is to note that secrecy is a critical component of the "creativity of power" (Arens and Karp, 1989) of the prophets. This is because secrecy either masks their power or at least makes the inequalities of power legitimate, because in prophetic power's capacity for secrecy lies the possibility of hope.

I begin with a literature review on prophetic movements in Africa and elsewhere, in order to establish the relevant theoretical questions, and to clarify with reference to Bayira categories of spiritual practitioner what is meant by "prophet". In the second section I examine the emic term "*akalaiyirire*" or "destiny", and argue that it refers not only to "destiny" in the Fortesian sense of pre-destiny and personhood (Fortes, 1959), but also to a latent cosmological power that can accomplish extraordinary things. At its most tangible, this power becomes invested in a person, who is then able of instructing people how to accomplish the fantastical things *akalaiyirire* is capable of. I also suggest that notions of "destiny" can render action imperative for members of our prophetic movements. In the third section, I introduce the prophets and argue that the dedicated (and often militantly inclined) secessionists invest their activity in these cults, not only for lack of other options, but also because the "work" that the prophets give them (obedience to rules, ritual performance, building shrines etc.) is structured around the prophets' revealing of secrets. In the secrets that are yet to be revealed lie hope, hope of instruction as to how this desired new state might be created, and how their small numbers and lack of resources will overpower the forces of two countries.

Prophets, Politics and Change

There is no shortage of literature on the roles of prophets and charismatic spiritual figures in nationalist or other political struggles, in Uganda and in Africa more broadly. The influence of such movements has not always been duly recognized; Ranger (1968) highlights how there has been a tendency to see modes of "primary resistance" as separate and secondary struggles to those of secular nationalist movements, a mistake made both by scholars and occasionally by aspiring nationalist politicians. In fact, as Ranger notes, successful nationalist movements, armed or otherwise, tended to appeal to both local moral discourses and to historical memory of heroised "primary" resistors. For instance, Lan (1985) describes how Shona mediums were able to successfully rally support for the ZANLA movement by usurping the moral and ritual authority of the chiefs, who had tainted their legitimacy through alliances with colonial regimes. Fields (1985) argues that the millennial Christian Watchtower Movement inspired widespread and largely non-violent resistance to colonial regimes by exploiting the contradictions between the two pillars of colonial authority, the "custom" enshrined in indirect rule, and the religious goals of the missionaries. Since Christian religious practice could not legitimately be outlawed, Watchtower preachers could reject the yoke of customary law and tell their followers that all they need do to resist was get baptised and wait for a divinely induced liberation. Johnson (1994) argued that Nuer prophets could take on multiple roles in the colonial state's expansion of authority, occasionally as resistors, but sometimes also as peacemakers, and thus prophetic politics are not always associated with violence.

Prophetic action is not limited to political resistance movements in the colonial period either. For instance, Sarró (2009) describes how youth-dominated political parties in Guinea subverted gentocratic power systems with the help of charismatic iconoclastic religious leader conducting a jihad against idols. In Uganda, the best known post-colonial examples of prophetic leaders are Alice Auma "Lakwena"'s Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF) and her

successor, Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) (see Allen, 1991, Behrend, 1999, Titeca, 2010). Whilst Lakwena's HSMF could unproblematically be described as a "resistance" movement, given that it mobilised Acholi to fight when they believed they faced ethnic annihilation by the new Museveni regime (Allen, 1991, 2006, Allen and Vlassenroot, 2010, Behrend, 1999), the LRA's overwhelming reliance on forcibly abducting fighters (Blattman and Annan, 2010) and its tendency to murder the very Acholi people it claimed to be saving makes its motivations more ambiguous. It is better understood as a millenarian movement which used violence as a form of "purification" to kill sinners, and rituals within its ranks to create *Acholi mayen* (new Acholi) and ensure their salvation (Titeca, 2010, Beevor, 2016). The fact that the LRA coercively engendered belief in the power of the spirit possessing Joseph Kony among its ranks is, however, illuminating by comparison to a majority of prophetic movements, a fact we shall return to upon meeting the Bayira prophets.

For all their differences, the above studies share the view that these spiritual and prophetic figures present both themselves, and their political agendas, as guardians of cultural morality in times of transition, even when the prophets themselves are architects of that transition. This reading of prophets as simultaneous moral guardians and political revolutionaries is found widely across sociology, anthropology and history. A generalised picture emerges of a sense of social and institutional breakdown, which allows a figure (often, though not necessarily claiming spiritual authority), to rally followers behind a radical vision, one which is often based on an idealised past and calls to a collective identity (e.g. Cohn, 1992, Rinehart, 2006, Borchardt, 1990, Adas, 1979). This picture, stemming from the polarised interpretations of Weber (1947, 1964) and Durkheim (2001), is sometimes described as having reached an overly formulaic "crisis model" (e.g. Johnson and Anderson, 1995). Although we run the significant risk of ignoring particularities when we talk of "models", I

would argue that it is hardly necessary to treat an observable pattern as a model, particularly when there are simple explanations for why such a pattern exists. As Andreas (2007) points out, when social institutions are perceived to be gripped by crisis and rendered ineffective, charismatic authority (the Weberian hallmark of the prophet, authority bound in his person rather than any institution,) has a niche advantage of rapid action. It can uniquely mobilise people without the need for formal structures, and so produce solidarity and a direction for action much more quickly, matching the urgency of a sense of crisis.

For all the legitimate criticisms of Weber's (1947) tripartite model of rational-legal, traditional and charismatic authority, I concur with Bloch (1974) and Lentz (1998) that, even if these ideal types are never actually found in isolation of each other, they remain "good to think with" (Lentz, ibid). This is, I shall argue, particularly so for "charismatic authority" when it comes to dealing with prophets (Weber, 1962), since it highlights the role of knowledge and exclusivity, or "secrecy". If the prophet alone is capable of receiving the otherwise secret knowledge or instruction of the divine, only he or she is capable of transmitting such knowledge to those who need it. So long as this is the case and so long as the ultimate goal remains unfulfilled, the prophet is indispensable. Different kinds of relationship between prophet and follower can come from this relationship; in rare cases such as the LRA a coercive yet dependent one can arise, or, as we shall see for the Bayira, a hopeful one.

What I wish to highlight through this case study, however, is the importance of the *hope that is located in the exclusive knowledge of prophets*. Hope latent in secrets has been observed and sometimes remarked upon in writings on prophetic and millenarian movements. For instance, Crapanzano (2003) recalled descriptions of cargo cults in which members hoped for

fellow members to reveal secrets. Festinger et al (2008) describe a UFO cult leader who was observed pressing her own followers to reveal secret instructions she hoped they must have for her prophecies to be fulfilled. However, an emphasis on how the yet-unknown secrets that prophets are able to reveal represent hope for prophetic followers remains largely lacking in studies of prophetic and charismatic authority.

Before this is broached, it must be established what a "prophet" actually is. As Johnson and Anderson (1995) rightly point out, in a society with ritual diviners, one cannot distinguish the "prophet" through predictive powers alone. What, then, makes a prophet in Yira cosmology? It is a difficult question to answer. Not only are the categories of spiritual practitioner often indistinct, but there is also little consensus of what a "prophet" is in both academic literature and colloquial understanding (Emmet, 1956). Given the nature of *akalaiyirire* (destiny) and its selective power, we shall also see that such an attempt to limit prophecy to a particular kind of spiritual practitioner is misleading. Nevertheless, Yira prophets today have clear roots in traditional systems of spiritual office, even if they differ somewhat in modes of operation.

Two categories of such office concern us here, a traditional doctor (*omutahwa*, pl. *abatahwa*) and a spirit medium (*omuhandi*, pl. *embandhwa*). Both types inherit their spirits within family lineages, though not always through a direct mode of inheritance from parent to child, since several generations often pass before the spirits select their next agent of communication. The principal difference between the two categories (at least in theory) is that the *omutahwa* is focused on providing remedies for ailments that his or her clients report, whilst the *omuhandi* is better considered a spiritual messenger for a particular community, mediating between human and spiritual realms. He or she may or may not themselves then be required to perform the action, ritual or secular, that the spirits have dictated. It is sometimes

said that the *omutahwa* must perform rituals to invoke the power of their spirit, whilst the *omuhandi* can speak freely to their spirit, or the spirit can speak freely through them, at any time, although this boundary is less clear in practice, and varies among individuals.

My friend and regular research companion Muhima described himself as a medium, and said that an ancestral spirit, whom he referred to as a grandfather, constantly possessed him and could speak through him at any point. The occasions when his grandfather spoke did not seem to obstruct his personal consciousness. I conducted a long interview with him about spiritual matters at his home over beer, and at one point after several bottles, he remarked:

> "It's good that I can tell you freely in a way that I could not when I'm sober. When I take alcohol and begin to feel my head heating up I can speak what I did not know, the spirits communicate faster."

I asked if I was speaking to himself or to his grandfather at that moment, and he replied "Both". Muhesi, however, another prophetic medium that we shall meet later, said that he required a private ritual room in a shrine to receive his messages. He also needed help recalling the messages from his trusted younger brother who acted as his assistant, a role called *omuhekyi owe isaho*, meaning "bag carrier", after the bag containing herbs mediums require for the rituals that the spirit commands. Muhesi's spirits' commands, though, always related to the kingdom, the state, and the "spiritual strength" of the Bayira as a whole. Thus, whilst his need for structured ritual is closer to that of a doctor, his spirits focused on the "moral community", on engineering a radical political change, and on instructing associates, also lends him the character of a prophet.

The role of "prophet" thus generally corresponds slightly more easily to the category of *omuhandi*, medium, since (with some exceptions) they rely somewhat less on ritual invocation, taking orders directly from their spirits instead, and tend to deliver messages of

community-level importance, rather than diagnoses of individual ailments. How, though, does one ascribe some mediums the status of prophets, but not others? Kahangwa, a secessionist and former militant, whom we shall get to know throughout this chapter, said the following (in English):

> "There are grades of responsibility among mediums. They are prophets. They reveal what will come 100 years before it does, so a whole generation can pass."

He relates one category to the other without distinguishing them, but also talks of "grades of responsibility", by which, it shall become clear throughout the conversations with him that we shall see, the highest grade of spiritual responsibility is a role in the struggle for an independent state. Those in this grade also have remarkable levels of predictive power. Again, then, the inescapable political significance of the prophet returns. Whilst there is a spectrum, there is a "grade" of spiritual figures who are trusted with enacting the greatest level of change. Thus, to answer Johnson and Anderson's (1995) call for spiritual specificity, and as a general rule, I suggest that a Yira "prophet" is a variety of medium, an *omuhandi*, who believes, and whose followers believe, that their task is to predict and enact radical political change on the instructions of the spirit possessing them. To elaborate a little more through comparison, Muhima, the *omuhandi* who can speak more freely with beer, is a secessionist and a historical researcher, but the actions that he takes in accordance with his secessionist desires are not spiritual in nature. Nor, to my knowledge, does he do his agenda-led research as a result of direct spiritual commands. Those others that we shall meet, however, are spiritually directed in the steps that they take to meet their explicitly political goals.

Akalaiyirire

At the risk of a rather sharp diversion from the matter of prophets, it is now necessary to examine a major feature of the cosmological context in which our prophets operate, and which they gain their authority from. Though the Abrahamic religions have penetrated the lives of most Bayira, including for some of their prophets, this has not, for most I spoke to, resulted in an abandonment of belief in their own religion. The Bayira attest that they also have a supreme creator God, whose name is not to be mentioned, and who is principally served by Kithasaamba, the god of the mountain, and his "angels", who are perhaps better described as other gods with particular responsibilities.[20] Yet there is another power which, though it has a somewhat ambiguous relation to the other gods, and is not personified as one, still has an overwhelming influence on life in general, but particularly on secessionist ambitions. This is *akalaiyirire*, which is easiest translated as "destiny", though in fact has multiple meanings and associations, some of which are more relevant to particular actors' conceptions of it. I therefore approach *akalaiyirire* less as a singular concept than what Parkin (1978) would describe as a "…paradigm of associated ideas" (pg. 160). I do this by reconstructing what I did in the field, collecting and comparing various peoples' descriptions of what it is and why it matters.

Akalaiyirire as Destiny

The most immediate translation of *akalaiyirire* in a single word that I was usually given was "destiny". Baluku, the PhD candidate and academic at the upstarting Rwenzururu Heritage University, defined it so:

> "It is associated with predestination… It's because people believe "I'm poor because God intended me to be poor". Or God wanted you to become a doctor, so you will, even if someone wants to stop you! So it gives people courage."

[20] My informants speaking in English or translating for me would usually call them "small gods'.

Thembo, a Muyira linguist, who we shall see giving far more complicated descriptions of *akalaiyirire* later in the chapter, initially said, "Ah yes, destiny", when I visited him and told him I wanted to ask him about it. Baluku's description above appears to be one of pre-destiny, a belief in a divinely determined and inescapable trajectory for one's life. Pre-destiny for the Bayira (and others) is essentially synonymous with a normative idea of personhood (Fortes, 1959), particularly when conceived of within notions of "stereotypic reproduction" (Sahlins, 1981) or the "past in the present" (Peel, 1984). This is revealed in emic ideas of inheritance. Kanzira, the young vigilante and aspiring militant, described the Lhukonzo terms for inheritance thusly:

> "…there is the inheritance of property, erisaghalya ebindu, and then there is what we call inheritance of the past. That is erisaghalya ebiyakera. Ebiyakera means spiritual strength, characteristics, shrines, rituals, and guidance of what is meant to be done, so people can be relieved from problems."

His description of inheriting "the past" as a transfer of modes for the retaining of "spiritual strength" makes it easy to see why *imitativeness* of the past is a powerful measure of security, and a necessity for conserving that good which exists. Like in Bloch's (1986) description of Merina blessing transfer rituals, the descent group is imagined like a vessel that must retain the spiritual blessings it was given. We have already seen that knowledge, wisdom, and the status of a "good" or "pure" Muyira are associated with obedience to cultural norms and the imitation of one's forebears, as well as reproductive approaches to personhood in cyclical time. Grandchildren inherit the names of their grandparents, and so on. Such ideals can become specified within the confines of clans or families. Quite often, this is expressed in terms of *amenge wakibutirwana*, or natural knowledge, in relation to professional specializations. As Biira, an old lady in Bundibugyo put it:

> "You may find a family whose work is a blacksmith. There is a family which is blacksmiths, and if you are not a blacksmith in that family it's very hard to you to get

that knowledge of being one."

This is all to say that an idea-type form of *erisaghalya ebiyakera*, the inheritance of the past, should be unremarkable; a descendant effectively assumes and replicates the characteristics of their forebears. The same logic naturally overlaps with notions of pre-destiny in *akalaiyirire*. Whilst it is possible that generations will be skipped in the reproduction of specialists (particularly in the inheritance of spiritual roles, such as mediums, where the spirits may wait several decades before choosing their next medium,) *akalaiyirire* is believed to ensure that the traits of these lineages will, eventually, be replicated. Yet, it appears that destiny can also be shaped by the actions of humans. Kahangwa is the militant and ardent secessionist who was heavily involved in the attacks on July 5th 2014. He claimed government amnesty in exchange for surrender afterwards, though to his frustration, he remains, he claims, under suspicion and surveillance. He is also the son of a senior commander in the original Rwenzururu movement, and he once told me that he wished to be a "historical figure" in this struggle for independence. He is also, as we shall see, a member of one of our prophets' followings. When I asked about his background, this is what he told me:

> "In the early 1960s, King Isaiah Mukirania made an agreement with God to liberate the Bayira from colonisation. God accepted his request. That's why every Muyira is ready for this. I got it from my family background due to King Isaiah's struggle. I am a son to a senior veteran. My father was also a spiritual one, and dedicated me to the struggle. I grew up protected by God and angels, and the angels were preparing me for the struggle… Because of the shrine that my father joined when he went to dedicate me. I was about eight years old. I was given a knife, a spear and a stool. I was seated there. The ritual was performed, and I was accepted. In my family we have different responsibilities. Mine was to continue my father's struggle."

Despite the fact that this anecdote would appear to privilege human agency over pre-destiny, this isn't necessarily a contradiction of the latter's logics. As Fortes (1959) recognized, at the heart of the logic of pre-destiny lies the positive connotation of the fulfilment and

perpetuation of social norms, but also a kind of absolution for those who fail. Should the individual deviate from their social responsibilities, it may be understood as a pre-destined path from which there was no escape. As Izebake, an elderly veteran remarked,

> "Akalaiyirire is circumstantial and does not depend on only good practice, it can be witchcraft. If you had a witch in the past in your family, even if you go to church a thousand times it doesn't matter. Someone will be born with that heart and they will say he has inherited it from so-and-so."

Similar to the Tallensi that Fortes described, the Bayira also consult ritual diviners when considering matters of destiny, and indeed it was a diviner who performed the ritual of dedication that Kahangwa's father instigated, described above. They are therefore able to discern something of the path of their destiny should they so wish. Moreover, through ritual performance, the spirits remain the ultimate arbitrators of a person's path; for instance, the spirits are described by Kahangwa as "accepting" him. Given that Rwenzururu and the broader Bayira "struggle" is framed in terms of the preservation and perpetuation of ethnic identity, along with the fact that his father was a Rwenzururu fighter, Kahangwa's dedication similarly represents an assumption of responsibility that lies within the perpetuation of cultural personhood, consistent with logics of pre-destiny. However, what we must recognize from Kahangwa's story is that if a person knows what their destined role is, it is imperative that they find a way to fulfil it. Kahangwa himself, describing another prophet and his family, recounted:

> "A man called Musambala prophesied many things. Like roads in the lower mountain which are tarmacked. He said "One time, they will come something like a belt passing round the mountain". Unfortunately, his sons and family members joined the church and was singing that this was Satanic. Now that family has four mad people, after they failed to listen and do what is needed to be done in that family."

Though he did not relate this story back to his own situation, such stories of failed destiny and its unpleasant consequences are rife in Rwenzori region, and likely compel those who

know what they must do to fulfil their roles. Kahangwa was the only person I met who described being dedicated, but like him, a great majority of the members of prophetic cults who shared aspects of their background with me told me that they were also descendants of Rwenzururu fighters. The logic of descent and reproduction of parental personhood, combined with the potentially sinister consequences of failure, amplify the need to fulfil the path of *akalaiyirire*. It is thus likely more than hope alone that propels such individuals to action.

Yet this presents a dilemma for them, one which Kahangwa is an example of. His status as a known former militant, and the government suspicion that accompanies that, as well as his lack of resources and his inability to recruit potential militants in these circumstances, limits his capacity to fulfil his destined role. His situation is not necessarily typical, but it is representative of the broader dilemma facing the secessionist-inclined. They know that they must act, and they want to, but they also know that they are up against repressive and dangerous forces, and will need the intervention of other agents with far greater power. Crapanzano (2003) argued that such (unfulfilled) dependence on other parties results in passive "hope" as oppose to active "desire", though Zigon (2009) disputes this, arguing that such recognition of need for help can itself provoke hopeful action. In this case Zigon is proven correct. The Bayira do know of powers that they can engage, and one such power goes by the same name as "destiny", though with a different, yet related meaning.

Akalaiyirire as Power

To my surprise, I later heard the word *akalaiyirire* in a very different context. I was with Kanzira, the young vigilante leader and his group, when one of the company told me they

needed more weapons. I asked what weapons they already had, since I had seen some of them carrying large knives. One of the group replied "*akalaiyirire*", thus listing it as a weapon in their arsenal. He elaborated:

> "That… is the natural mighty. As the originals of this land, we believe in our kingdom that our gods have given us the mighty, that when we decide to wage war, our god moves with us and protects us… So even if we are fighting people with guns and we only have spears and batons, we will still succeed because we tried it before in the struggle, when we were stateless. But God paved us some way and it became a success."

Akalaiyirire is here pictured as a malleable force, able to ensure a military victory in various magical fashions. I began from then on to ask other people for their understandings of what *akalaiyirire* was, and received some surprisingly varied answers, not only to do with destiny or fate. Another member of the vigilante group said:

> "It is something mysterious, it is like a rescue, when people are not expecting to be rescued. If the gods wish we do not perish in a fire if this house catches fire, we escape, and we will say that akalaiyirire has worked."

Another time, I visited a memorial in Kagando, near Kasese, where Nyamutswa, Kapolyo and Tibamwenda, the leaders of the First Bakonzo Revolt of 1921, are buried in one grave. A stone pillar marks the grave, but a little way behind that, there is a very large tree with an undeniably remarkable feature; it has grown three, nearly equal-sized trunks from one base. Whilst standing there with Mbusa, a man in his early twenties local to the area, I asked what *akalaiyirire* was. He replied:

> "Let me give an example. On the grave here, we planted a bark tree. But because of akalaiyirire, it has separated itself into three trees, to imply there are three strong men in this grave."

Akalaiyirire, then, is seemingly responsible for all sorts of mysterious, but essentially positive happenings, that are not related to the trajectory of an individual's pre-destiny.

This second conceptualisation of *akalaiyirire* left me somewhat confused, for I had been given to believe that the generalised term for mystical power was *amaka awekitwa,* which literally meant "the power of the mountain", in reference to the sacred Mount Rwenzori. Kanzira, in an attempt to clarify my confusion, told me that when people pray for rain, or for good fortune, they begin with *"By the power of the mountain, amaka awekitwa, we pray for rain*". He continued to insist, however, that this power was the same as *akalaiyirire*.

I was able to extract only the subtlest, and still uncertain distinctions between the two terms. I would venture that *amaka awekitwa* is perhaps better understood as the source of more mundane but vital "blessings"; good rains, plentiful harvest, fertility, peace, and so on, those things which make up what Finnström (2007) referred to as "good surroundings", while *akalaiyirire* denotes a power behind more extraordinary occurrences. Yet it is the similarities between the two, rather than the differences, that are more revealing about how these powers are manifested. Below are descriptions of *akalaiyirire* and *amaka awekitwa* respectively. The first is by Muhesi, one of the prophets whom I shall introduce properly later. I had just asked him why he did not attempt to mobilise more people to join his prophetic movement. The second is by my friend Kule, who was explaining the etymology of *amaka awekitwa*.

> "It's because when secrets are revealed, when akalaiyirire is revealed, the Bakonzo suffer. That is why it is better to wait for the secret to mature into something good, so that it cannot be countered by bad people." **Muhesi**

> "Amakubo is connected to amaka awekitwa. It means ways or means, literally. It's a bit of a cultural, secret way of dealing with the spirit world, a secret or hidden away getting in touch with them. So instructions can work as a translation. But I stress secrecy because you have friends that you have a means of getting something for, that you don't want others to have. You have your own means, the secret means of a particular person or people. If we relate its two rituals, only a few specific people do rituals, who perform amakubo. Not all can perform that ritual. It must be someone with knowledge of those amakubo." **Kule**

Both descriptions stress secrecy, but more specifically, they imply that a person must possess the secret knowledge of both powers for them to have a tangible impact on human life. To

equivocate the two further, when the Bayira need rain, they call upon a rainmaker with an inherited role to perform those rituals, the person with "the knowledge of those *amakubo*". However, as Kule points out, it is imperative that the power remains secret to those with the mandate to perform it, in order to prevent its abuse. Likewise, the power of *akalaiyirire*, if it is to be manifested as help to those who need it for their struggle, must have a human conduit. However, until said conduit is in a strong enough position to enforce *akalaiyirire's* changes, they must practice critical secrecy in order to preserve themselves and their mission, and even when they are in a position of strength, they must retain secrecy as a security measure, limiting the dispensation of information to those who can be trusted to use it rightly. There is no better illustration of how this works than the man who began it all, Isaiah Mukirania.

Isaiah's Akalaiyirire

Before Isaiah Mukirania was researcher, a rebel, a president or a king, he was a primary schoolteacher, with no legitimate claim (to my knowledge) to spirit mediumship, chieftaincy, or ritual office of any kind. Nor did anyone I met refer to his having had prophetic or spiritual powers until *after* he began the agitations that led to the Rwenzururu Movement. Yet, the later Isaiah Mukirania, the rebel leader and king, was regularly described having predictive powers, as well as the ability to become possessed. Depending on who you asked, the word "prophet" was sometimes attributed to him. Consider these descriptions of his predictive gifts, including a recollection in which he made a mysterious declaration of departure shortly before his own death.

> "This Isaiah was also a prophet, able to talk to God himself. God visited him and they discuss. That's why he succeeded in many of his missions, until he died and the

> connection was lost… So when prophecy of the state, when Kithasaamba it came to Isaiah, and told him about the state… This is a prophetic message." **Mbusa, a young vigilante.**
>
> "We do not know how Isaiah died, but a day before he died, he told people simply "I'm going to war, I'm going away." Then he died." **Nzanzu, a Rwenzururu Kingdom Minister.**
>
> "He could foretell… he prophesied that even those in the mother's womb now will join the struggle when they grow up. And indeed we are doing it now, even though he was already dead! Even a child knows the prophet Mukirania, the prophet who liberated us from Toro." **Mbaju, a young man in his twenties, and the son of a former Rwenzururu Movement fighter.**

For many, it was the very fact that Isaiah's efforts were spiritually mandated that made the goal of the state both a certainty and an obligation. The historical prophecy of the state, given by Isaiah, ensured its own continuation by its very nature:

> "That battle for the state is soon starting. We are waiting for the authority of the gods. They will tell us when the time is right and we will automatically know and do it. Because Isaiah Mukirania made an agreement. This battle will remain for Mukirania – he made an agreement in the spirit world, that the Bakonzo must be liberated. That's why we call it etabalho' eye Isaiah – the struggle of Isaiah." **Kahangwa, the former militant.**

Yet, it was also made clear to me, Isaiah's prophetic powers were not quite like those of established spiritual mediums and doctors. Musoki, a well-known traditional doctor in a village near Kasese, said the following:

> "He had his protective powers from the hills. They were not the same as mine. His spirits came to him via Kithasaamba to make sure he guides people. He was to protect people and fight for their rights. They were the same spirits as mine but he could not summon them – Kithasaamba sent them."

Father Balinande, the Rwenzururu Minister for Religious Affairs, and a Catholic priest, described Mukirania's powers as follows:

> **F.B.:** "Sometimes he would prophesy and things would become true. He would say that there are people coming to attack, and then they would move before the people came to attack."

E.B.: “Did he have a spirit that told him these things?”

F.B.: "No, it was a sort of natural thing. The mountain has powers. There are some gods on the mountain and you can cry for assistance, and they assist.”

This recalls the earlier description of *akalaiyirire* as an unexpected rescue, a form of assistance that is cosmologically granted in dire need. Thembo, the linguist, explains this further in relation to Mukirania.

> "When you look at the way Bakonzo were being mistreated, and how he came up bravely, it was something that was not expected, because people were fearing. And because of whatever he would say, using his words, he was evoking the supernatural and it happened. It is like a family of helpless children who are not being cared for, and there is no one to fight for them. And then one stands up and says "This land is ours, and our rights are not being respected! May the gods help us fight for what is ours!" If they see change, if they see the one who is oppressing you is getting weaker, they will say "You are very strong! You told the spirits of our grandfathers to come and fight for us, and they have!" That is how akalaiyirire works, if you use the words and change happens, if it comes true, then you have the power of akalaiyirire. So to relate that to Isaiah Mukirania, the powers came to him through the words he was speaking - he said to Kithasaamba, "Why are we being oppressed? Come and help us!" And he got that power."

We begin, then, to see a process of *recognition* in the workings of *akalaiyirire*. A person who achieves extraordinary, positive change, and who is receiving instructions from the spiritual world in order to accomplish it, is thus recognized as imbued with the power of *akalaiyirire*, and naturally this provokes a response. Kule elaborated on Mukirania:

> “…he began by doing this and doing that, he’s being imprisoned, he’s doing this, and so people see that Mukirania is not alone, he has fate following him. And all people now start seeing that that fate will come and do something important in the future. And of course they feel obliged to help and assist.”

For, naturally, if a person is believed to be receiving the knowledge of the spiritual world and relaying instructions for emancipation directly it, he cannot be disobeyed. And indeed Isaiah was giving instructions, codifying culture into the law of Rwenzururu and leading the fight

against their Batoro oppressors. Kule proceeded to give me a final description of *akalaiyirire*, one which comes as close as I have yet heard to unifying its different conceptualizations.

> "So for example, God said Let there be… It means you have the authority, and it will be there… it is the instruction. "Let there be this!" and it HAS to be there. It is not about negotiation or what, it is a religious kind of instruction… Akalayirire is an instruction or an order that carries with it fate."

Conceived as "instruction", we begin to see how *akalaiyirire* can mean both an instructed path for a person's life, a pre-destiny, and also the "activating principle" (Gilbert, 1989) of spiritual will and extraordinary power, which is dispensed by the instruction of an individual who must be obeyed, since he or she possesses divine, secret knowledge that others do not. This highlights the similarity between the more regular rituals that depend on the "power of the mountain", *amaka awekitwa*, and *akalaiyirire*. Both types of spiritual agent (be they doctor, rainmaker, practitioner, or person endowed with destiny), receive, relay, give and obey instructions. It is in this light that we must consider our prophets, who are operating in a cosmological universe in which individuals can be believed to yield incredible power through their instructions (if, of course, observers of them are convinced enough to become followers.) Since *akalaiyirire*, delivered through the "prophetic" figure of Isaiah yielded de-facto secession and liberation once, it is becoming easy to see why those most determined to secede will place their faith in spiritual individuals and their instructions.

Introducing the Prophets

I will here give as thorough an introduction to the three prophets I was able to interview as I can, and, where possible, relay the points of view of some of their followers. Given the difficulties of accessing them, I regret that I cannot comment a great deal on the journeys of individuals into these prophetic movements, save for one or two exceptions. However, I will

outline what it is that I believe the prophets are able to offer their followers in this section, namely, what I call the "work of prophecy", the hope that that work represents, and the ways in which such work underpins, legitimates and masks the power relations inherent in these groups, taking cues from Bloch (2007) and Arens and Karp (1989). With some variation, all the prophets I introduce here dispense rules, tasks and instructions to their followers, in the manner of those invested with the potential of *akalaiyirire*. A number of these rules, I argue, can be treated as ritual techniques or technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988, Crossley, 2004), intended to develop one's purity and spirituality (with the latter representing a growing intimacy and positive relationship with the spirit world).

Whilst many of these rules are in line with the sorts of cultural rules our earlier historians might wish to encourage among the broader Bayira, others are obviously associated with tenets of the Abrahamic faiths, and so make for a more syncretic religious movement. Some rules have less obvious associations, however, when they are considered alongside the spontaneous imposition and revocation of certain rules, they reveal a power dynamic that entrenches prophetic authority. This is thus partly an argument for de-mystifying "charismatic" prophetic authority and examining its more transactional nature, which, in this case, is based on the provision of "active hope" (Zigon, 2009) through the "work of prophecy" and the possibility for spiritual secrets to be revealed. A brief comparison with Joseph Kony's LRA will be presented to illustrate this.

Lhusenge

Kahangwa, the former militant and one of the coordinators of the 5th of July attacks, had mentioned his following of a prophet a few times, and eventually offered to introduce me to

him. Lhusenge, the prophet, is an elderly man in his nineties, who lives in a small compound with his son and, occasionally, one or two of his followers, who, I am told, amount to twelve in number. He reportedly comes from a family lineage of famous prophets, and his son, now in his late teens, has recently also begun receiving these predictions. Before I met their family, Kahangwa recounted his journey of belief in Lhusenge's powers:

> "The first time I met them, they told me to stop sins, so that I remain a holy person on earth. I wasn't believing. I thought maybe it's not true. But as we joined the group we had a friend, who was also told to stop sinning. People did not automatically believe that the voice was from God, and we continued sinning until he was shot dead. He had been advised several times to remain holy. Another man, he had a journey. That family [of Lhusenge] told him not to continue with the journey to Congo, but he insisted and was also shot within 24 hours. Until then we began to believe this is a true voice and we should follow it."

It turned out that the latter friend he referred to was a journalist whose unsolved murder on a journey to Congo was the subject of many a conspiracy theory among the Bayira, who suspected government involvement. I cannot verify the truth of the journalist's membership of the cult, but two points for our purposes are discernible from this anecdote. The first is that Kahangwa's circumstances, of high suspicion and apparent danger, leave him with few options for action that are not clandestine. Secondly, Lhusenge's power, in Kahangwa's eyes, required a process of *recognition*, which in this case was proven through others' failure to obey Lhusenge's commands (to remain "holy" and not to undertake a journey), and their subsequent misfortunes. In the pattern of the power of *akalaiyirire*, once it was recognised, obedience was imperative, for survival, but also for hope of achieving their common goal.

I interviewed Lhusenge alongside Kahangwa and his son. Lhusenge claimed to have worked alongside Isaiah Mukirania and began by recounting his struggle:

> "After all was turned to Toro, no one was sacrificing to Kithasamba. Chieftains did not play their role, heads of clans forgot their role. Chosen families and people forgot

> him. People forgot styles of dressing, ways of living, and started saying that they are Batoro and that they are Europeans. They started saying they wanted the life of Europeans. So from there, Kithasamba made the reports to submit to God, and told him how people were misbehaving. Kithasamba was angry, so he selected one person, Isaiah Mukirania, and took him to God. To anoint him, Isaiah Mukirania, as a King, to be king of the Yira tribe. So Isaiah should play a role of telling all of the chieftains, priests, witch doctors, native doctors, fighters, soldiers, to always obey God and Kithasamba... So Isaiah told people to begin rebelling. So people would begin behaving according to our own traditional culture."

His words reflect the broader idea of spiritual anger at peoples' neglect of their rightful identity and the rules of culture that they are spiritually compelled to live by. Isaiah is presented as the commander who would restore the Yira relationship with the spiritual world by enforcing obedience once more. Lhusenge continued, and in doing so appeared to cast himself in a similar role, one who must receive the commands of the spirit and ensure absolute obedience if the goal of a new state was to be realised:

> **Lhusenge**: In most cases we get a message when we have not asked the question. That is God's plan. But if we have a question and we do not know the answer we perform a ritual. And then if you do not follow instructions, if Kithasaamba says do A, B, C, D, but you miss a step, and you are in a war, you die in huge numbers. When we fulfil all the conditions while in the battle, all the fighters survive. The latest updates about the liberation… Kithasaamba wants democratic nations. He told us that Egypt will collapse, Libya will collapse. By the time we heard this we never believed it as we saw those presidents were very powerful, but then we saw them being conquered. He finally said part of East Africa and part of central Africa will have to collapse. If we are to fight a successful war to liberate our people, then Congo must collapse first.
>
> **E.B.:** What happens if Uganda collapses first?
>
> **L:** Many people will die, for absconding Kithasaamba's laws. We cannot misfire.
>
> **E.B.:** When will this liberation start?
>
> **L:** Some will collapse by war, and others will be peaceful elections. Kithasaamba has not specified the day, month or year. But this is the season.

Lhusenge, despite his age and his emphasis on the need for tradition, appears to be equally attuned to the idea of synchronising the unified Bayira with contemporary "global" ideals (Ferguson, 2006), in this case democracy, and he finds evidence for the realisation of his

prophecies in recent geopolitics. He has used the prefix “we” rather than “I” when describing receiving commands, but in fact it is he and sometimes his son who receive the words of the spirit (although they may be assisted by their followers with ritual performance). As Bellman (1984) pointed out, the power of secrecy often lies more in its performance than in its content, and certainly it seems Lhusenge and his son readily share the information they receive with their followers when they get it. Yet as we continue to examine his words, it is necessary to remember that performative aspect of secrecy. For only Lhusenge and his immediate family have the capacity to receive this information, and even if they do not keep it secret from their followers for long, the necessity of their persons for the transfer means that they retain the performative power of exclusive information. This power dynamic is more evident when it takes the form of rules, which Kahangwa outlined thusly:

> “I cannot sleep with a non-Muyira woman, unless accepted by God himself. I cannot steal, tell false, be angered, and others. I cannot take alcohol. Sometimes we are stopped from eating meats like pork, rats and mudfish. This depends on your responsibility in the spiritual world. But I can't eat pork until the Bayira are liberated. Others can be stopped from drinking alcohol, while another can take it. We can be conducting fasting, but not all will be conducting fasting at the same time. Like I and three others will spend three days fasting and praying that others will not.”

Such prohibitions against pork and alcohol, or periods of fasting and limits on inter-ethnic relations, are more resonant of Abrahamic religious taboos than of the corpus of Yira “traditional culture” (the latter being fairly unconcerned with food taboos save for those around totemic animals). Lhusenge’s movement is explicitly syncretic in a number of ways; he described how the movement was being instructed to make a church with which to preach Kithasaamba’s message and to secretively mobilise secessionists, and that the Bible was part of that. He thus also sees no contradiction in the practice of Yira religion and Christianity, and this is reflected in his rules. I wish to draw attention, however, to the *periodic* application of certain rules evident in Khanagwa’s testimony.

There are permanent regulations against certain foods and sexual behaviour, but also temporary ones, and some members of the movement will conduct fasts whilst others do not. The changes in the application of these rules are critical to appreciate for their significance, for it makes obeying the corpus of rules an ongoing *active* process, one suited to both the context of Bayira cosmology and their historical-political circumstances. "*My God plus my leg*" was an explanatory proverb given to me by several people, meaning that neither *akalaiyirire* nor prayer alone would generate desired results without your own work. This necessity of one's own "work" to realise one's destiny, even if one does not yet know what it is, is seen in other ethnographies reckoning with pre-destiny (e.g. Elliot, 2016). A process of waiting for divine intervention without much action, as seen in certain other prophetic movements (e.g. Fields, 1985) might not have resonated with current Yira ideas about regenerating spiritual intimacy, particularly in the context of their political weakness.

Crapanzano (2003) describes how, if a single prophetic ritual fails, another is often performed along similar logics in order to "reset" the conditions for spiritual intervention, a process that can be seen as an action to reset the capacity for hope. In this case, the staggered instructions and the changes in rules mean that a ritual climax is consistently averted, even while those same actions increase hope for it. It is thus a still-singular process of action, and so a generator of "active hope" (Zigon, 2009), that does not need "resetting" yet. However, these changes are simultaneously processes of perpetuating an internal power structure, for, should the instructions for state creation be known all at once, Lhusenge and his prophetic family members would no longer be necessary. Yet, if for Arens and Karp (1989) the "creativity" of power lay in an unequal relationship of *creativity* (through which the workings of power were either augmented, masked or legitimated), we might de-mystify the creativity of prophets by

examining their power in a more transactional light. For Lhusenge's followers are not only obeying the rules for his sake or those of the spirits, but also for themselves, for through these rules, the "work" that he gives them, they are able to feel not only hope, but "active hope" (Zigon, 2006), that which, thanks to the course of action they have been given, they now feel they have a realistic chance of working towards.

Kaikara

Kaikara, our second prophet, is from Butembo in DRC, and I met her during the E'Kyaghanda conference, and later visited her for an interview in her home. She is a self-described "traditional doctor" for Mai Mai vigilantes and rebels, and is possessed by a spirit after which she is named. She is one of the few Congolese Bayira I met who talked emphatically about secession, and sees her own spirit as having the crucial role in instigating the process:

> "…that is the only spirit… that spirit is not known by the Bayira, but it is the final spirit that will finally capture that territory. Eventually. Because they do not know me they keep looking for other doctors, other traditional spirits, but eventually, when that nation will finally be a nation, it is that spirit that will do it."

She claims to have a following of five people, including her husband, though none of them live with her, but are scattered across eastern Congo and receive her spiritual commands remotely. She also described having been an active rebel leader, leading a band of soldiers fighting for various groups in different battles in Congo's recent past. Her leadership, however, was not her own, but that of the spirit speaking through her. Below are some extracts from our interview in which she describes the spirit's commands, both in battle and in general.

> "That spirit is holy. And she demands from me to be holy as the spirit is, and for all other followers to be holy. So for example that spirit does not want fornication or does not want to do certain things, that person must be holy all the time."
>
> "The technology is basically spirit communication. They did not have a specific technology to use, but whatever technology the spirit indicated, they would use. If she said "you should go naked and don't look behind" the enemies would not be seeing them… anything, any stone around her, they could pick it and throw it and it would turn into a bomb."

The above example she cites, of fighting naked to ensure success, might appear to contradict conservative Yira demands on female dress and deportment, but there may be a rather more traditional foundation for it. Packard (1980), writing on the Bashu clan of the Bayira, argued that they sharply differentiated the safe, domesticated sphere of the homestead with the wild and dangerous environment of the bush. However, the latter was also the domain in which the power of the spirits, both benevolent and dangerous, was the most prevalent. Women were considered more vulnerable to possession by both kinds of spirits, but this was occasionally used tactically. During a buffalo hunt:

> "…the wife of the hunt leader would stand naked on a hill over-looking the place where the buffalo was found and cry, "uli nyama y'omukali", "you are an animal of women". This was said to make a buffalo tame and easy to kill" (pg. 246).

The fact that the woman off her clothes, a symbol of her civility, was thought to bring her closer to the powers of the bush. In such a light, Kaikara's command could be read in line with the broader Yira project of reviving cultural tradition and instigating obedience to it among her followers.

Like Lhusenge, she appears to dispense rules that are continually subject to change, entrenching the need for her leadership to persist. In this case her rules are dispensed on an active battleground, and obedience to them is essential to both military victory and the survival of her own fighters, a pattern reminiscent of Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement (Behrend, 1999). Regrettably I was unable to spend much time with Kaikara and did not get

to meet any of her followers. I am thus unsure to what extent the creation of the Yira State featured in their actions. Nevertheless, given what we know of the "work" that her followers do, also the obedience of rules, it stands to reason that she would employ similar techniques in trying to fulfil that action.

Muhesi

Muhesi, our third prophet, is a young man from Kasese, and he is closely associated with Kanzira's band of vigilantes, who are effectively his followers. I say effectively given that there is less of an emphasis on absolute obedience to rules in his movement, and so the power dynamics are less explicit, yet it is still through his spirit that instructions for prophetic work are received. The "work" that he assigns the vigilantes is that of building shrines in strategic places across the region, with the view of boosting the Bayira's "spiritual strength" and instigating secession. Before we examine that further, however, it is worth accounting for the role of hope in the extraordinary personal lives of this vigilante group. Kanzira's group of vigilantes, who built shrines on the instructions of the prophet Muhesi, spent a great deal of time guarding the shrines that they built. It transpired that some of them had been doing similar work for a few years, committing several months at a time to voluntary duties such as guarding "cultural sites" of spiritual significance as well as the shrines they built. Such time is time that could alternatively be spent trying to gain an income. I asked a small group of them living in a shrine hidden in a forest about how their families felt about this. One young man responded thusly, though these words were translated from Lhukonzo by Kanzira. I heard his original words, which included "*akalaiyirire*". His speech was translated as:

> "We have very many problems. Some of our ladies have already divorced us. Families have broken because we have stayed a long time on duty, on which duty we don't earn pay. We are volunteering because we are hopeful that something may

> happen in future, God willing. We have in mind that maybe one day God will answer us and we will have our state. Yet we have children and these are school-going children, but the home is not supportive enough to these children and therefore the wives see it as if they have been abandoned, and some of them have chosen to go back to their homes."

His hope is self-evident, and its fulfilment involves the actions of *akalaiyirire*. Kanzira, who was translating, then chipped in, "When you are hopeful, you shall be paid later." *Akalaiyirire* was, I believe, mentioned because it is the powerful force that would fulfil their hopes for a state and render their extraordinary personal sacrifices worthwhile. It is important to note that the vigilante group had pre-existed contact with Muhesi, though their work of building shrines began, to my knowledge, after he joined them. Its members were children of formerRwenzururu fighters who had wished to assume a similar role to their parents, and it is through this connection that the group originated in the first place. They had already begun a kind of action toward creating that state which they hoped for, through their decision to guard important "cultural sites" that they suspected enemies were trying to destroy, but it seems Muhesi's instructions to build shrines served to energise the group. That is, the "work" that he gave them increased their capacity for "active hope" (Zigon, 2009). Muhesi described the purpose of the shrines as such:

> "Through rebuilding them it gives us the start of the strength of spiritual akalaiyirire, that empowers the Bakonzo of the mountain… Strength of mountains has been resumed as we have started. Nothing evil will happen to people of the mountains without being noticed. That is if all the shrines that are ordered to be constructed are built. We shall have caught up with the spiritual strength of the fathers in Congo."

His use of the somewhat ambiguous phrase "spiritual strength" refers, I believe, to an enhancement and reparation of relations between the Bayira and their spirits (I asked if there was an exact Lhukonzo translation for "spiritual strength" and he said there wasn't). Indeed, for Muhesi, the model for a society's restored spiritual strength was one in which widespread relations with the spirits were as intimate as his own spirit possession:

> "Some years back, people would get instructions live. The spirit would talk to you directly. So by building these shrines all over the kingdom, we want to build up the spiritual strength of the kingdom, so people can do that again."

In asserting this he implicitly makes a positive example of himself, further legitimating obedience to his instruction. He accompanied his instructions with prophecies around secession and global power, although his tended to focus more on the monarchical aspects of it. One day, he took myself and Kanzira on an extremely difficult climb to the top of a mountain, on top of which there was another shrine and a large boulder, which Muhesi claimed was a natural map of Africa (it did look like one). Muhesi said:

> "Since creation there has never been a king of Africa, but it has been revealed that through God's plan, the Bayira will be leaders of Africa in kingship. Even though we have suffered we will be kings of Africa. It has been revealed that the Queen of England is meant to come and sit on top of this rock, as she comes to make a relationship with the king of Rwenzururu. The King Iremangoma is the king of all African kingdoms, and is to lead all African kings."

I tried to gently point out that the Queen was not as young as she once was, and that getting here involved a singularly difficult climb that I had barely managed myself, and surely her age might be an obstruction to this prophecy. Muhesi did not seem discouraged, and replied:

> "The prophecy has said that she will reach here, it is akalaiyirire [i.e. fated], and so she will help us build a road, that is clear. She commissioned Queen Elizabeth National Park so she should come and visit this site as a source of friendship with the King of Rwenzururu. A Cultural Trinity will come in for the world to exist in peace, between the King of Africa, and the Queen of England, and the Pope."

Once again, even in what might be taken to be an "alternative" moral space to the state (as Lemarchand (1992) interpreted prophetic cults), Ferguson's (2006) point that analysis of African events cannot be detached from global realities is once again proven. Despite the event being fated, however, Muhesi made clear that work would have to be done for it to occur, and asked me if I might be able to send a letter to the Queen on their behalf. As Elliot

(2016) said of the relationship between pre-destiny and hope, notions of destiny do not prevent people from acting in ways that they know will, in the real world, help to fulfil their hopes, and should their hopes occur it serves as proof that this was indeed their destiny. Having introduced the prophets and some of the theoretical considerations their "work" presents, I will now forward a more general theory of prophecy, hope, and power, as it applies to the Bayira prophets, and to prophetic movements more broadly.

Hope, Fear and Power

I wish to interpret the works of prophecy described above (obedience to rules, shrine building and so on), in the broader context of the Bayira's felt need to restore a harmonious relationship with the spirit world. We have seen that a number of the rules are concurrent with the contemporary Yira ideas of what "culture" should be (which currently also often align with the moral conduct encouraged by Abrahamic religion), and these could rightly be read as an extension of emphasis on regenerating the "past in the present" (Peel, 1984). Yet that very goal of revival is in itself conceived in light of the perceived damage to spiritual relations, so it is worth examining the logics of the practice of rules more closely, to see why they are thought effective. Gilbert (2015) also came across the term "spiritual strength" in Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, and, similarly to how I believe Muhesi intended it, the members of the church saw the building of "spiritual strength" as a development of the religious self. She found that members' practice of personal spiritual development affected their perceptions of what might be possible in the future, and generally made members more optimistic about their personal prospects. In alternative words, the practice of developing a spiritual self opens up a space for hope.

Thus I suggest that these rules and the broader "work of prophecy" (i.e. the obedience of spiritual commands directed by a prophet), are thought to be effective by the members since they constitute an ongoing form of "embodied ritual" (Crossley, 2004). To fine-tune this approach, we can examine the rules as Foucauldian "technologies of the self", practices through which people:

> "…effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (Foucault, 1988, pg.18).

The rules, to use Lhusenge and Kaikara's words, render the practitioner "holy", through the observation of abstinence or fidelity and the avoidance of foods such as pork (one of the more common Abrahamic food taboos, included in the taboos of Leviticus (Douglas, 1993)).

Continued observation maintains a state of "purity", an explanatory theme in other prophetic uses of rules, such as Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement and Joseph Kony's LRA (Behrend, 1999, Titeca, 2010). Though I shall later extend the argument that changes in the rules are a crucial tool of maintaining prophetic power, these adaptations to change and members' obedience to other spiritual commands such as the building of shrines, equally represent a demonstration of ongoing dedication and submission to spiritual will, a performative proof of devotion. For Crossley (2004), the practices of such "embodied ritual" have the dual ability to signify group membership through shared understanding of what these actions accomplish, as well as circumventing a verbal negotiation of the "fuzzy" and perhaps inexplicable logics of ritual. Ultimately, though, he sees ritual as "transformational" (pg. 43) insofar as it modifies the emotional state of its practitioners, and so their intended relationship with the world. In this case, the rules are an ongoing embodied ritual intending to bring the practitioners into a more intimate relationship with the spirits.

There is of course a further motive driving these movements, which is to create the spiritual conditions that will pre-empt divine agency to create the Yira State. Miyazaki's (2004) observation about hope as self-knowledge is useful for approaching this. He follows Fijian indigenous people seeking compensation from the government for the seizure of their ancestral lands, with the conviction that, should they be paid such compensation, it will be on account of having presented themselves correctly, as indigenes whose claims cannot be refused. The means by which their hope is sustained are thus an expansion of their knowledge of themselves as a people. In the case of the Bayira cultural revivalists-cum-secessionists, the party to which an authentic practice of self-knowledge must be presented are their gods and spirits. As we have seen throughout, codifying "good cultural behavior", which is achieved by means of research to expand their self-knowledge, is not an exercise merely for its own sake, but a means of alleviating a felt period of prolonged misfortune. When their luck changes, it will be because their authentic cultural selves have been restored. This logic is extended in the practice of the prophetic movements, through the development of a religious self as a display of worthiness for the state that Isaiah Mukirania destined for them.

This brings us, however, to the matter of power and authority (I take a cue from Arens and Karp (1989) about the need to maintain the Weberian distinction between coercive power and legitimate authority, particularly when we are dealing with the overly mystified "type" of "charismatic authority"). Unequal power might more commonly be assumed to be what hope works against, rather than within, yet *it is the very inequality of the relation between prophets and followers that, in our cases, generates hope*. It would be fair to question whether my emphasis on hope comes at the expense of one on fear, which, no doubt, also has a part to play for the followers, whether it be fear of failing one's destined role, of death in battle, or of

dedicating one's life to an unwinnable cause. A comparative approach with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) helps to both untangle relative prophetic usages of fear and hope, as well as to interrogate and de-mystify prophetic "charismatic" authority.

The astonishing frequency with which LRA leader Joseph Kony was described as a "charismatic" leader, not only by journalists but also scholars (e.g. Doom and Vlassenroot, 1999, Vinci, 2007, De Waal, 2012, Lancaster et al, 2011) illustrates a broader tendency to mystify charisma rather than explain it. Its ubiquitous application to Kony was particularly odd though, given that "charisma" in the normative Weberian sense implies a voluntary following based on a leader's "…exceptional powers or qualities" (Weber, 1947, pg. 358). Kony's LRA, contrastingly, was unique among African rebel movements for its overwhelming dependence on forced conscription rather than recruitment (Blattman and Annan, 2010). This is not, in fact, to suggest that commentators were wrong to call him charismatic. Even on technical grounds Kony could be called such, insofar as he was the sole dispenser of prophetic commands in the movement, and a significant proportion of returned abductees attested to having believed in his spiritual power whilst in the movement (e.g. Blattman and Annan, 2010, Allen and Schomerus, 2006).

This is to say that charismatic authority (in the prophetic sense and beyond) is an important object of study, but one that must be conceptually interrogated rather than used as a fig-leaf for seemingly mystical power. There are numerous similarities between Kony's prophetic practices and those of the Bayira prophets I have described, including rules of religious behavior that were subject to change, and narratives that included themes of cultural loss and religious purity. These similarities, but also their differences, force the question of how their charismatic authority is created. What inspires the belief of followers (or in Kony's case, mostly abductees) in the spiritual powers of leaders? I argue that this is achieved through the

instrumental usage of fear and hope, and the ways in which the LRA and the Bayira prophets differ in their usages of these emotions illustrates this.

Violence was strategically deployed internally in the LRA, from the terrifying entry through abduction, which often involved beatings and forced marches to distant camps. Though mercifully not ubiquitous, forcing the abductees to then witness or take part in violence against one of their fellows was common (Blattman and Annan, 2010). Abductees were then "purified" in an initiation ritual, from which moment they are referred to as *Acholi mayen*, meaning "new Acholi", members of a new, pure society (Titeca, 2010). The new abductees then began life in LRA camps, a life that required constant adherence to myriad rules that were dictated by Kony's numerous spirits. These included rituals to be performed before battle, restrictions on food, occasional periods of abstinence, even a taboo against loitering and time wasting (Titeca, 2010). One former abductee described how those who ate during periods of fasting, arbitrarily imposed by the spirits, would invariably be shot in the mouth,

> "... but they would not die. They became living testimonies of Kony's greatness" (Beevor, 2016, pg. 13).

In this case, however, rules (at least initially) became adopted by the abductees as a response to fear. As Skidmore (2003) and Vinci (2005) argue, fear is an instinctual, overwhelming emotion that overrides more complex, cognitively produced ones such as hope, at least initially. But, as testimonies of fighters have also shown, the rules eventually came to represent a mode of overcoming fear, and so to attain a kind of hope. Mergelsberg (2010) quotes a former abductee as saying:

> "The rules strengthened me a lot. Because I saw that if I follow the things. ... I would stay alive, be safe. I did not have fear, was always strong-hearted" (pg. 162).

For, like in the LRA's predecessor, the Holy Spirit Movement of Alice Lakwena, absolute

obedience guaranteed survival because the fighters' spiritual "purity" was preserved (Behrend, 1999, Titeca, 2010). Here, then, we see that a tool of coercion and obedience similarly represents a desperate form of hope for survival. They were a tool of turning coercive power into legitimate authority, and also, given the constant changes to the rules, to perpetuate the need for Joseph Kony by the movement, for only he *could continue to receive information that was otherwise secret*, and pass it on to those who depended on it.

In something of a reversal of the application of the emotions of fear and hope, the Bayira prophets I have documented in this chapter do not (to my knowledge) engage in violence against their followers. No doubt motives vary between individuals; some may feel more fear about neglecting their felt-destiny than others, whilst some are motivated more by hope of an oncoming state. Yet, the absence of violence against followers by the prophets suggests that a shared object of hope is the primary driver behind the formation of the groups, since, like with the LRA, *the secrets from the spirit world that the prophets can receive are the means for their hopes to be realised*.

Conclusion

The "charismatic" authority of prophets lies in their ability to engender not only hope, but "active hope" (Zigon, 2009) in their followers, since, through their exclusive access to knowledge of spiritual powers, they can instruct their followers in means, or "work", with which to achieve their hopes. This capacity to instruct is already contextually grounded in Yira cosmology, because the power of *akalaiyirire*, that which can make happen things that must be, is manifest through instruction. Given that Rwenzururu founder Isaiah Mukirania was able to invoke tremendous transformation because he was believed to be endowed with the spiritual mandate of *akalaiyirire*, there is a powerful precedent for a belief in secessionism by divine intervention, intervention which works through a person.

Our most dedicated secessionists find solace for their hopes of a second, complete independence in prophetic cults, because the cults are sites for action that can remain unnoticed by an oppressive state. The "embodied ritual" that their action takes is a logical extension of the broader Bayira cultural revivalist movement's actions, since they both aim to restore their spiritual relationships, and create "spiritual strength", through cultivating an authentic self-knowledge of who they should be in the eyes of their divinities. The "work" that this embodied ritual entails allows them to turn a hope that exists on the precipice of hopelessness (Crapanzano, 2003) into "active hope" (Zigon, 2009), because the followers now have a means to create the state that they desire through the courting of spiritual intervention. This illustrates the "creative" relationship between the Bayira's two publics. In the face of overwhelming odds against secession in the secular world, the spiritual world must be involved if a Yira State is ever to be possible. The help they need from the spirits, though, will not come until the obedient religious and cultural Yira self is rediscovered and spiritually strengthened. The apparatus and independence of the "civic public", i.e. a state, cannot come without a purified ritual and cultural "public", a pure and authentic Yira nation. In their quest for constant "purity" of the self through obedience to rules and the work of prophecy, the prophetic secessionists exemplify this dynamic. The focus on hope as a central tenet of prophetic authority allows us to somewhat de-mystify "charismatic" or prophetic authority, even in apparent outlying cases such as the LRA where the following of the prophet is not originally voluntary. The prophet's ability to supply "active hope" to their followers (upon followers' recognition of their powers) is what comes to legitimate them, even as the tools of that active hope are simultaneously tools of power. It is thus very unlikely that the hope for the Yira State is going to be diminished by political unlikelihood alone.

Chapter Five:

The Endurance of the State and its Technologies

In this chapter, I wish to take a closer look at the apparatus of the state, the "civic public", in the eyes of the Bayira, and examine why the notion of the state as a whole survives in a time when its sovereignty is precarious, and how the Bayira aim to manage the corrupting dangers that a state represents. I thus want to posit that, despite all the weaknesses that the twenty-first century state faces, in Africa and in the world, it is not going anywhere in the political imagination. It will endure as a form that is idealised, and thus made real, long after illusions about its transformative potential and its intact sovereignty are tainted. Over the course of the next two chapters, I wish to probe the matter of why this is. Indeed, as has been argued throughout, the state's image is already tainted. It is associated with corruption, selfishness, violence and immorality, the antonym of the good, the moral and the "cultural". In the last chapter, we saw that numerous prophetic movements and logics of destiny have an integral role in making this state seem possible. Yet such "cults" are regularly interpreted as an alternative moral space, an "exit" option, a way to retreat from, or cure, an immoral world (Lemarchand, 1992, Ferguson, 2006, Behrend, 1999). Restoring morality is one of the driving motivations of the Bayira revivalists. The paradox of the Yira State is why an "exit" option (Lemarchand, 1992) that is (at least partly) about morality takes on the very form that is associated with fundamental immorality? And, what does this paradox mean for the extensive literature that is arguing, in various forms, that the state's power as an institution is weakening? (e.g. Mbembe, 2000, 2001, Ferguson, 2006, Pierce, 2006, Appadurai, 1999, 1990, Hanlon, 1991).

I have implied throughout that this is partly because the Bayira understand the realities of the international order as it is now, and are prepared to compromise to do business with it. However unrealistic their goals may sound, and however much their hopes may be bolstered by spiritual beliefs, there is an earthly, pragmatic quality to the secessionist project, one which seemed to accept the need for compromise and adaptation if they are to deal on the world stage as they wish. I will retain that thread of the argument around pragmatism, though I also wish to go further. I draw on the works of Malkki (1995) and Navaro-Yashin (2002) to take us part of the way. The former argues that nations endure as imaginative constructs because their boundaries are imagined to safeguard ethnic purity, and because they offer order – those without a nationality are de facto disordered. The Bayira would see nothing objectionable about a *nation* that safeguards an identity. It is the apparatus of the *state* that shapes and controls the nation, a government, where trouble starts in their eyes. Yet, pragmatically, they also know the two must go together. Navaro-Yashin (2002) argues that even the most cynical citizens, embittered and angered by their own state, do their part to reify the state ideologically, but they do so inadvertently, through their very cynicism of it. Dwelling in their "chic bitterness" (pg. 170), which we might also think of as an enlightened kind of "paranoid knowing" (Sedgwick, 2003), makes the state an inevitable and insoluble fact, and, she argues, renders the imagining of an alternative near impossible.

Both of these perspectives are highly fruitful, not least because of what they reveal in comparison, which is that privileging either state or nation as one's point of analysis yields very different results. For the Bayira, the form of a *nation* offers, as Malkki (1995) suggested, the hope of preserving and projecting their identity, and protecting themselves. So far, we have seen that the practices of the Ugandan governmental *state* have been a source of cynicism at best and fury at worst. Moreover, we shall see that such cynicism even holds to a

certain extent for the state that the Bayira themselves might make. Yet they equally recognise that, for all the amorality of a state, it retains transformative power. It is the site of opportunity creation, and it marks the centralisation of power that preserves a national structure, and represents a people to the world, and it is the world's image of them as much as their neighbours' that the Bayira have in mind. Thus making a nation-state is a gamble, and its risks must be mitigated. The opportunities a nation offers for moral self-preservation and futuristic transformation are, to some extent, offset by having to take on the amoral work of a state as well. Why, if this is such a gamble, might they not be content with the "cultural institution" in the form of Rwenzururu Kingdom that the Ugandan government offered them? To put this in terms of our "two publics", this chapter is about *how the apparatus of the dangerous "civic public" the state, still has multiple uses, and, moreover, that the Bayira have a design in mind for their new state that will manage the danger it represents.*

Without unnecessarily abstracting from the secessionists' purely pragmatic reasons for desiring a state, I argue that the form of the nation state, in this case the would-be Yira State, also represents an enduring guarantor of dignity, of wellbeing, in the form of *recognition*. For all the usurpations (from immediate neighbours, or corporate and international bodies) of their sovereignty, the colonial *borders* of African nation-states have remained, for the most part, intact (Mbembe, 2000). In terms of sheer endurance, and in terms of global acknowledgement, the nation state, for all its weaknesses, remains the ultimate guarantor of *recognition*, and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. As Ferguson (2006) has convincingly argued, it is impossible to consider the self-perceptions of contemporary Africans without regard for their place in the *global* order of things, including in the scale of global inequality, and Africa's unfavourable position within that ranking. Thus the Bayira's bid for dignity and recognition in the form of sovereign independence is not only for African

eyes, but for global ones. Furthermore, the very design of their would-be state, we shall see, is intended to make them the exception to the rule of African states being lower in the ranks of global prosperity. By retaining their morality, they will retain their magico-spiritual power, which, unleashed in combination with the knowledges of science and technology, will catapult them into the high ranks of global powers. Thus, for all their cynicism, the Bayira have not lost hope about the capabilities of the nation, or indeed the state. However much it has disappointed them, they do not see the form of the nation-state as a spent cause, but rather feel that the one they currently live in has failed them.

In this chapter, the two sides of the border serve as mirror images around what the presence (or absence) of a state has meant for ethno-nationalist political designs, even though the content of their cultural revitalisation and transformation programmes are similar. I shall venture that, since the oppressive Ugandan state is perceived as the greatest threat to Bayira recognition on the Ugandan side, the ethno-politically-minded believe an equal, if not greater force is necessary to match it. Hence their stronger emphasis on secession and state-making. In Congo, the state's influence is little-felt in the eastern Kivu provinces, and thus is not an obstruction that needs to be competed with. Whilst, as we shall see, E'Kyaghanda's structures and projects do look a lot like the efforts of governance of a centralised state, its leaders are, to my knowledge, largely unconcerned about whether it is "recognised" as a state, or an ethnic development organisation, or something in between.

I shall begin by discussing the concept of "recognition" and what it means at a social and emotional level. I shall begin to examine how Bayira engage with the aspects of the Ugandan state that, they feel, *should* guarantee their recognition and rights, with a particular look at their inclusion in state constitutions. I shall look at how the perceived moral failures of the

state are used to justify secession, which goes to show that it is not exactly the concept of the state, they believe, that is the dead-end, but rather the one they are living in. I shall proceed to examine how Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu (OBR) kingdom and E'Kyaghanda operate as "twilight institutions" (Lund, 2006a, 2006b), in that they draw on and mimic functions of the state, in a process of "negotiating authority" (Doornbos, 2010). I argue that this goes to show an appreciation for the symbolic power of the governance of state technologies. In the next section, I shall examine the rhetoric of "development" and what it means for governance, in this state, and in the building of the next. I shall show that, while Ugandan political elites may see "development" as the antonym of "politics", and the lower concern of the rural classes as oppose to the technocratic work of the elites (Brisset-Foucault, 2011, 2013), the reverse is true for the Bayira. For them, a state's political legitimacy is contingent on the kind of material transformation that development organisations also promise. I shall show that the OBR, E'Kyaghanda, and certain secessionists are adopting the language and practices of development to advance secessionist goals. Thus, whilst critical development theorists argue that development organisations undermine state sovereignty in certain ways, its practices can also be deployed for attempts at nation, and indeed state-building.

I shall then examine what I refer to as the international relations of Rwenzururu, and of the Yira State. This section documents stories of past engagement with international powers and the United Nations, as well as secessionists' current international imaginings, and their attempts at forging UN documents to rally people to their cause. Such appeals to international legitimacy, I argue, again go to show that the nation-state, for all its failings, is still perceived as the optimal vehicle for recognition, prosperity, and respect, at a national and international level. It also brings home Ferguson's (2006) point that the African self-consciousness cannot be considered apart from global factors, and the relative position of African nations in an

unequal world. With that in mind, I will turn to the final section, which examines the design of the imagined Yira State, and how its envisioned separated spheres, its "two publics", will, in the eyes of its would-be creators, protect the moral and spiritual relations that give the Bayira their unique magico-spiritual power. It is this power that will make them an exception to the rule of African states' largely unfortunate positions in global inequality rankings. To illustrate the need for this separation of realms, I examine stories of the death of Isaiah Mukirania, and show how his transgressions of these realms are believed by some to have killed him.

Recognition: Constitutions and Kingdoms

> "In Uganda we have tribes and they must be recognized by the government, so for that we need to be recognized." **Nzeruko, a young kingdom minister describing the current need for the cultural kingdom.**

> "I am an old person. I joined Rwenzururu in 1962. We started because of oppression to us, we were not being recognised so we had to make a revolt for identification." **Kambale, an elderly veteran, describing what compelled him to join the Rwenzururu Movement as a young man.**

"*Thukasonda thumenyerwerwa*!" This was one of my informants' most common refrains, which translates as "We need to be recognized!" But what exactly is meant by this demand for "recognition"? I suggest that, given the Bayira's recent history of colonization and cultural erasure under Toro Kingdom, and the subsequent government repression and suspicion surrounding Rwenzururu Movement, and later Kingdom, "recognition" of them as a people with a distinctive identity represents a guarantee of dignity, and the prospect of an equal citizenship that they feel has so far been denied them. A regular complaint, particularly among young men, was that the government still saw Bayira as "rebels". It was sometimes strange to hear the ardent secessionists among these complainants express sadness and anger over government's suspicion of them one minute, and then be talking determinedly about

secession – precisely that which the government was suspicious of – the next. Yet this exemplifies a cyclical worldview when it comes to their relations with government. All slights are moral injuries that are connected to recent history of oppression, and an ongoing experience of it. This cycle produces an enduring demand for the new Yira State. It is, in my view, quite true that the government allows the state's history of contested relations with the Bayira to affect their current their dealings with them, but the same is true Bayira themselves. The cycle was visible in descriptions of this marginalization, in which the grievances of the past were not separated from those of the present. Mumbere, a popular musician with outspoken ethno-nationalist sympathies, said:

> "I developed a passion to defend my tribe since the Bakonzo were not respected as humans. Our cultural identity wasn't respected. We were taken as slaves before recognition. We were marginalized in education. The Bakonzo are segregated in government employment. So I was forced to use my talent and defend my people."

Mumbere is in his early thirties and too young to have experienced the Rwenzururu Movement. Yet he connects the events of the past, those that happened prior to and during the 1960s Rwenzururu Movement, to a current lack of representation in government employment, making them different symptoms of the same problem. When I mentioned this propensity for people to talk about "recognition" to another friend, himself a member of the Rwenzururu Royal Family, he acknowledged it was very common, and added that people interchangeably used the word *erisikibwa*, meaning "respect", with *eriminyerwerwa*, meaning "recognition". Both of these are highly emotive concepts, the power of which was very evident in numerous testimonies. This is an extract from an interview with Mugenyi, a member of the kingdom's volunteer youth wing, the *esyomango*:

> "I joined because, one, I wanted to build my kingdom, and two, because I have a heart for my kingdom and I love my king much, and you have to work for the kingdom. It is my life, because someone without a king is like nothing! Because if you have a

> king, you have someone who will fight for you. It is about identification. When you are identified, you feel ok! When someone has a kingdom, no one can tamper with you. You are respected, because you have a kingdom."

Recognition, for Mugenyi, is bound up with a sense of security, of mattering. This emotive quality of recognition has been reflected upon by numerous moral philosophers, notably Taylor et al (1994), who, writing on multiculturalism, stated:

> "…our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves" (pg. 25).

Later works by anthropologists, such as Fischer (2014) add that recognition is connected to a sense of both dignity and fairness. To be recognized is to be treated as an equal citizen, with a fair chance of succeeding in society. Taylor was later criticized by other theorists, such as Honneth (2001) for failing to account for the economic dimension of recognition, in the sense that the concept speaks to matters of dignity. As Ferguson (2006) would concur, identity (ethnic, cultural or otherwise) forms in and around conditions of equality. Richards and Gardner (2013), in their study of the Chilean Mapuche indigenous group's demands for recognition show that these demands are as economic as they are political, and the promise of "recognition", for the Mapuche, is attached to an expectation of economic redistribution, or at least more equal material treatment. For the Bayira, it appears that the relations between material prosperity and recognition are something of a vicious cycle; visible prosperity is needed for adequate recognition, which is needed to boost prosperity. This became clear in discussions around the Rwenzururu Kingdom palace.

Buhikira Palace is a mid-sized, suburban style house in a large compound on the outskirts of Kasese, surrounded by a high concrete perimeter wall. It is luxurious enough by the measures

of Kasese, but it is not as large, ornate, or as identifiably palatial as the palaces of Uganda's more established kings, such as Buganda and Bunyoro. The comparative modesty of Rwenzururu's palace is a great source of upset to numerous Bayira royalists. (A few of the kingdom's critics also gleefully cited this desired grand palace as a deviation from OBR's supposedly "cultural" goals, since it would hardly resemble a traditional thatched roundhouse). What particularly struck me was that even some very poor people I interviewed, who were struggling to meet their own needs and who also insisted that the kingdom must work to help people prosper, stressed the need for a grander palace as a fundraising priority. One middle aged man, Kabusa, who was looking for funds to set up his own development project for poverty alleviation, also stressed the urgency of a new palace. I asked him why this was such an urgent need, given the far more difficult circumstances of a majority of the king's subjects. He responded:

> "It is true, people are poor. But the Palace is very necessary. For the Rwenzururu to be developed, the Palace must be there. Then the government cannot take the Rwenzururu's power."

There was a pervasive fear that, since "recognition" in the form of perceived equality and citizenship was not being freely given, and would not be unless their existence as Bayira was patently obvious and symbolically powerful, those advances that they had achieved over the past few decades would be taken away. Indeed, Kabusa identifies the grandeur of the palace as a determiner of whether Rwenzururu can "develop" materially or not.

Another fascinating site where this lack of recognition was indignantly expressed was in discussions of the Ugandan national constitution. One of the most frequent justifications for either secession, or for the original Rwenzururu Movement, or both, followed the formula expressed by these people:

> "Before that [the Rwenzururu Movement] the Bakonzo had never been in the constitution in Uganda and DRC. so after realising that, they walked out and said we have our own state it started on 30 June as an independent state. Until 1995 when the government of Uganda accepted Bakonzo in their constitution." **Ndungo, an elderly Rwenzururu veteran.**
>
> "The Bakonzo were nowhere in the Constitution of Uganda. This was like the Bakonzo not being recognized, which was one reason for Mukirania's fallout. So if they were not in the constitution of Uganda, and they were not in the Constitution of DRC, then where were they?" **Ndandiko, a young factory worker.**
>
> "I learned that the Bakonzo of Uganda and DRC were not involved in their constitutions up to 1995 in Uganda, and 1997 in Congo. This meant we were not part of government." – **Kahangwa, the militant and member of Lhusenge's prophetic cult, recounting his journey to rebellion.**
>
> "They know we want this Yira State! Formerly we weren't in the Constitution of Uganda, so we were in another state!" – **Kasereka, a man in his twenties in Bundibugyo.**

Uganda has had three constitutions in its national history; the 1962 independence constitution, the 1967 one-party state constitution forced in by Milton Obote, and the NRM constitution of 1995. In the 1995 constitution, the first category of citizenship is defined as such:

> "…every person born in Uganda one of whose parents or grandparents is or was a member of any of the indigenous communities existing and residing within the borders of Uganda as at the first day of February, 1926, and set out in the Third Schedule to this Constitution. (Constitution of Uganda, Chapter 3, Paragraph 10).

A list of fifty-six ethnic groups, including the Bakonzo, is available later in the document, which, as such, can be taken as proof of their current inclusion in the constitution. However, the previous two constitutions of 1962 and 1967 had no such list, and defined citizenship merely as having been born within, or having parents and grandparents born within Uganda's borders. This would technically mean that the Bakonzo-Bayira were "included" in those constitutions, not by ethnicity, but by place of birth (Constitution of Uganda, 1967, Chapter

2, Paragraph 4). It is actually the current constitution which has been accused by one critic of "tribalising citizenship" (Bichachi, 2014).[21]

This said, the 1962 constitution, concurrent with the start of the Rwenzururu Movement, also included a "special schedule" for Toro Kingdom, which then occupied Bayira lands and ethnically oppressed Bayira people. That provision allowed it to maintain a semi-autonomous status, which could be interpreted as "recognizing" the Batoro monarchy, at the expense of identifying the people it also occupied. Indeed, one of the reasons Isaiah Mukirania's career as an MP in the Toro Kingdom Parliament was cut short was that he was trying to lobby for permanent representation of the other ethnicities in the kingdom, with the view of having that enshrined in Toro's constitutional provisions (Syahuka-Muhindo, 1994). By the time the kingdoms were abolished in the 1967 constitution, Rwenzururu had already, at least in theory, seceded. The point, though, is not to ask whether Bayira making the claim of constitutional exclusion are legally correct or not. Indeed, this reference to constitutions is so widespread that I would be surprised if the majority of people who uttered it had themselves been able to compare constitutions past and present. As my friend Kombi remarked when I mentioned that people were so frequently referencing the constitution:

> "Yes, it is very important to them, and the bad thing was that it was not translated into vernacular languages, so there are only certain classes of people who could access it."

The point rather, is to illustrate that this reflection on marginalisation (which may have proved a convenient reading of the situation for ethno-nationalists to spread), still dwells on matters of legitimate state citizenship. It is not the notion of a state itself that it is illegitimate per se, but the behavior of governments in the state that they have so far lived in. In this view

[21] Indeed, it was a rather surprising change from the government of Museveni, notorious for seeing "tribalism" as antithetical to his modernist politics (Karlstrom, 1999, Tripp, 2010).

of a history of discrimination that is not only intimately linked to the recent past but is still ongoing, the inclusion of the category Bakonzo in the 1995 constitution is usually spoken of as the first acknowledgement of their existence in Uganda, and one that was only given grudgingly. For example, a young vigilante in Kanzira's group, Muhindo, said, justifying his desire for secession:

> "We have only of recent been involved in the constitution of Uganda in 1995, and we feel that just because we have recently been involved, they have continuously neglected our existence, and it is assisting other tribes the way it is supposed to assist its own citizens, but it has continuously neglected us. So I feel we are still a stateless people."

The long wait for this form of acknowledgement, as well as current felt experiences of marginalisation, are thus simultaneously interpreted as part of a continuous prejudice. Sedgwick's (2003) "paranoid thinking" works along these lines; not as a judgement of whether a person is genuinely being discriminated against or not, but as a description of the "paranoid's" tendency to habitually attribute misfortune to the conspiratorial malice of others. To recall Malkki (1995), the Bakonzo-Bayira see their supposedly shifting status in the national constitution as evidence of their "liminal" status, a status in which new meanings are formed without them being in control of what those meanings are. Their treatment under the Kingdom of Toro in the colonial period, where they were degraded and unequal subjects who could not escape Toro's control, but also could not truly be part of the kingdom on an equal footing, means that they have recent and painful historical awareness of the dangers of liminality. Likewise, they continue to feel their recognition is at the mercy of a hostile state, the ultimate assigner of meanings and categories for its people. Only an equal power, another state, will allow them to control the meanings of their own lives once and for all.

Mimicking the State

The constructivist approach to the power of the nation-state (Anderson, 2016, Mitchell, 1991) was not only discovered by academics. A number of non-state institutions, in Africa and elsewhere, find themselves able to "negotiate authority" (Doornbos, 2010) of a state-like kind by borrowing its forms. In this section, I want to examine how Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu and E'Kyaghanda Yira borrow the images, techniques and "languages of governance" (Hansen and Stepputat, 2001), and play off their ambiguous status in the manner of "twilight institutions" (Lund, 2006, 2006b). Twilight institutions are those which "…are not the state, but they exercise public authority" (Lund, 2006, pg. 673) in a situation where:

> "...public authority becomes the amalgamated result of the exercise of power by a variety of local institutions and the imposition of external institutions conjugated with the idea of a state" (Lund, 2006b, pg. 686).

Despite the differences of form that secessionists in Uganda and ethno-nationalists in Congo strive for, their techniques, interestingly, are not overly different. Whilst E'Kyaghanda, from my impression, does not seem overly concerned about whether it is referred to as a state, a substitute for a state, or an NGO, it still strives to administrate and coordinate matters of the "cultural public" in a centralized manner. As we have seen, there are ritual reasons for synchronized action, but it seems they find the language and technologies of state governance amenable to this goal. Rwenzururu as a cultural kingdom faces closely-proximate competition in its use of the languages of governance from the Ugandan state. Thus ambiguity is an advantage for it (although also sometimes a risk), since it allows them to blur the legal limits of their authority with an array of state-like actions, symbols and structures. They have a "parliament", a "cabinet", "ministers", "branches of government", and a system of local representatives, "chiefs", the *isyemalhambo* and their lower-level local authorities, based on traditional patterns of land tenure. Consider how Mbindule, a Rwenzururu kingdom administrator, describes its structure:

> "We have three arms of government. The Executive - the cabinet headed by the Prime Minister. Then the House of Representatives, that is Parliament, which is headed by the speaker. Then there are the chiefdoms. To submit proposals, we have different categories of representatives. For example, if it is a youth proposal, it must pass through the Minister of Youth, and then the Prime Minister forwards for review by the Executive Branch."

He used the word "government" unprompted and deliberately, and it is self-evident that the model closely follows the workings of a national state. Or at least, in theory it followed such workings. In practice, these machinations were largely static, not least because this "government" was meant to focus its efforts purely on the supposedly neutral efforts of "culture" and "development". Even these efforts mostly required money that they didn't have, and so Ministers spent much time writing proposals and calling meetings, though without usually being able to produce results that would require an executive branch's action. Parliament never met throughout my fourteen months of fieldwork. Nevertheless, there were appointed ministers for every conceivable matter, including those that would likely be considered outside the realms of "development" (such as Minister for Land and Minerals, Minister of External Relations, Minister for Congo Affairs, and so on).

The Ministers borrow the "languages" of governance very literally, though Hansen and Stepputat (2001) expand the idea of such languages, to include three "practical" languages and three "symbolic" ones. These, when combined, they argue, create the authority of a state, or something like it. Their practical languages are:

> "1) the assertion of territorial sovereignty by the monopolization of violence by permanent visible military and police forces; 2) the gathering and control of knowledge of the population - its size, occupations, production and wellbeing - of this territory; and 3) the generation of resources and ensuring the reproduction and well-being of the population; in brief, development and management of the "national economy"" (pg. 7).

The "symbolic languages are:

> "… 1) the institutionalization of law and legal discourse as the authoritative language of the state and the medium through which the state acquires discursive presence and authority to authorize; 2) the materialization of the state in a series of permanent signs and rituals: buildings, monuments, letterheads, uniforms, road signs, fences; and 3) the nationalization of the territory and the institutions of the state through inscription of a history and a shared community on landscapes and cultural practices." (pg. 8).

I will not write an exhaustive list of examples of each of these "languages" as used by E'Kyaghanda and OBR. This is because there is a great deal of overlap between them, some of these matters are discussed elsewhere, and, because they are "twilight institutions" and not actual states, they are unable to assume them all. Indeed, for the following examples I would prefer to collapse the categories of "practical and symbolic", since, in a twilight institution that is competing for authority, the superficially "practical" is actually far more "symbolic" in function. I shall thus focus on two broad themes within these "languages" (bureaucracy and documentation, and security) as examples of how these institutions "piggy-back" on the idioms of the state (Lund, 2006b, pg. 692). I suggest that they are employing these idioms of the state in service of protecting and formalizing what they consider to be "traditional", as well as ambiguously insinuating greater authority than they actually have. The hallmarks of a seemingly opposed domain serve those of the other through their authority, durability and globally recognizable style. Their adopting the languages of governance is thus what Blundo and De Sardan (2006) term "the progressive institutionalisation of the informal" (pg. 101).

One such theme is that of documentation. People would often describe OBR as something that its supporters "subscribed" to. Generally, this meant lending one's ideological (and often financial) support on a voluntary basis. However, the somewhat confusing language led me early in my fieldwork to ask the Deputy Prime Minister of Rwenzururu how people "subscribed" to the kingdom. He replied, "We have clan cards. These cards have the totems of the Bakonzo clans." The card featured its holder's name, photograph, address, parish, and the cover had a picture of their clan. They could be purchased for 5000 shillings (about £1). I

was advised to buy one so that people would know I was an OBR supporter, even if I returned years later. As a simple and fairly affordable symbol of support, I could readily understand the appeal of clan cards for those who purchased them, even though there were no occasions on which people were required to present them. Nor, to my knowledge, did the kingdom collect the data on the card or have any use for it.

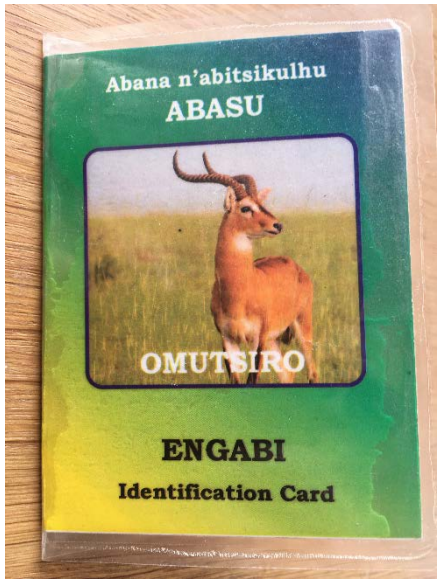


Figure 7: My clan card. The details inside contain the holder's name, birth name, village, parish and a stamp.

More mystifying in my eyes was the kingdom's attempt to begin selling its own marriage certificates, despite the fact that the institution did not have a role in performing weddings. The certificate, which stated that the kingdom had recognized the marriage in question, would thus have to be purchased above and beyond any marriage documentation given by the Ugandan state. The price of the certificates struck me as very high; the cheapest was 50,000 shillings, the most expensive was 150,000, and the difference between the types was the quality and colour of the paper it was printed on.[22] I pressed Kambasu, an elderly veteran who continued to work with the kingdom and who had been explaining traditional marriage systems to me, about what might motivate people to purchase this document. He replied:

> "Everybody, many people in Africa here, who have joined churches, over 90% are members of churches in Africa. Mosque or whatever, but churches. So people want to promote their church and respect its law, and when they do that they say yes we have done the law as church members. They still want to promote their culture and respect their traditional leadership. So we also make an option of buying one."

Perhaps sensing that I was still skeptical of the appeal for purchasing them, he continued:

[22] One hundred and fifty thousand Ugandan shillings is about thirty pounds, which is a very substantial sum in the eyes of a great majority of Ugandans. To put that in perspective, it is slightly less than the cost of a term's school fees for a young child at a modest, non-boarding private school.

> "We are also trying to educate people to make it a priority, because actually it is something that helps the church, to know that this person has been accepted by the two families. We have seen families, a son, and a daughter, with the son loving a certain daughter when the parents are not happy. There is that confusion. So having this traditional marriage certificate before church shows that the two families have accepted, because the two families have to sign."

Whether these factors motivated people to buy these largely cosmetic documents or not, there is one common thread in both of these explanations. The "traditional", be that family consensus about marriage or a general show of respect for their cultural leadership, is being protected or promoted with the tool of the "civic public", the state. This is not to say that the content of the "traditional" is being altered to fit these tools, or at least, not consciously. (Indeed, though they are referred to as "traditional marriage certificates", they do not, from what I understand, stipulate that a "traditional" marriage ceremony must have taken place; as Kambasu describes, they seem to have been created with church-based weddings in mind). As with the two types of knowledge, the tools of "school knowledge" - that which is imported, global, foreign – were not envisaged as replacing, subsuming or altering "cultural knowledge". "Cultural knowledge", being the locus of morality and magical power, was superior, but required the tools of "school knowledge" to be restored, unified and developed. Similarly, the tools of the bureaucratic state were not, in theory, infringing on the character of the "traditional". They were being used to formalise the "traditional", to protect it, and, in doing so, they also allowed Rwenzururu to mimic the powers of the state that many of its hardline adherents saw it as competing with.

Intrinsic in such strategies, and in the cultivation of authority in general, is an emphasis on encouraging behavioural change, which in this case, like with the "rules" of the prophets and the cultural codes of the historians, involved both formalizing and adopting "traditional" behaviours. For a more pronounced attempt at this, we can look to E'Kyaghanda Yira, who, at their conference, announced that it would, from then on, be compulsory for Banande-

Bayira to obtain a (free) marriage certificate from E'Kyaghanda, stipulating that a "traditional" marriage had taken place, before the couple could marry in church. They said that they would work with religious leaders in Nande areas to ensure adherence (which, given the large number of religious leaders involved in the conference, might well be feasible). Having no pressing competition for authority or restrictions on their behavior, E'Kyaghanda only needed to ally itself with the strongest local authority system, in this case the *abami* chieftains and the churches, to begin exercising controls on peoples' behavior. The founder of E'Kyaghanda, who announced the initiative, stated:

> "After paying dowry, people should get a certificate from Kyaghanda to prove that they are Muyira. If you do not produce that in church, it means you are not Muyira, but Banyarwanda. That certificate will contain the name of the Father, mother, person they wish to marry, grandfather, grandmother, Omwami, and their name. You sign the certificate on oath, that I, the son or daughter of XYZ, from X territory, from today, have decided that X is my husband or wife, and I will abide by the Yira traditions of no divorce. There will be a space for the church leader to sign."

The Banyarwanda, it was emphasized on both sides of the border, were the enemy, and thus to be recognized as one of them by failing to produce a certificate was a serious threat. Again the document is binding, not legally (at least not in the eyes of the Ugandan or Congolese states), but morally, in that it represents the protection of "tradition". On both counts, then, the certificate really serves as a certificate of group *membership*, a factor which applies equally to the largely cosmetic documents of Rwenzururu. West (2003) says that documentation which proves allegiance to a marginal identity, especially when the documents have no practical function, are a deliberately risky display of membership, an indication that one is prepared to be identified with said group, make sacrifices for them, and accept the consequences of that marginality. Although clan cards and marriage certificates are not inherently controversial, the practical futility of the documents for those who dispense them shows that the true audience being affected is the document-holder. The state-like institutions make their claims to authority felt by making people obtain documents that look

much like their counterparts issued by the state, but which simultaneously seem to conserve a morality and culture that is felt to be being lost. The legitimacy thus resonates on two levels, the levels of the two publics.

Another theme of imitation in the "languages of governance" is that of security and defence, and a claim to a legitimacy of use of violence, if not a Weberian monopoly on it. Though Rwenzururu could not have "permanent visible military and police forces" (Hansen and Stepputat, 2001, pg. 7), not least because, as we shall see, that would have risked questions of what territory that force was guarding, the kingdom did have its own visible, and controversial, security arrangements. The kingdom had a volunteer force of about ninety "Royal Guards", visible from their green and white uniforms and berets, and their wooden truncheons. They were divided into ranks, the same ranks of a state army, and worked in shifts, dividing their time between guarding the palace, the kingdom's offices in Kasese Town, and some "cultural sites" such as shrines. However, to the chagrin of a number of them, there was also a small detachment of Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) soldiers stationed at the palace, who were also on guard duty, and to whom the Royal Guards were expected to defer. The relationship between the two sets of guards was extremely fraught, since the UPDF did not see the Royal Guards as having any legitimate authority or purpose, while the Royal Guards felt that as this was "their" king, it was primarily their responsibility to protect him. Muthaka, a young Private in the Royal Guards, complained:

> "The government thinks that if they let us manage our security we will start a rebel group. They refuse to train our Royal Guards or give them guns, so we cannot ensure proper security. Can you help us?"

Slightly alarmed by the request, I said I could not help with this matter, and asked what it was he thought the king needed protecting from, and why the armed UPDF were not enough. He replied:

> "But we do not know the mandate of these people, we do not know their instructions. They said why do you need Royal Guards? We will provide security. But the UPDF does not respect us. They do not listen to us. We do not know what they are doing. We would like for the UPDF to take the people we choose and train them and then they can be Royal Guards under UPDF. But they refuse."

I came to know some of the Royal Guards well, and I never doubted that they took their efforts to protect the king extremely seriously. However, it often seemed that they saw making themselves *visible* was a crucial factor in doing so. One exercise reflected this very well, in a paradoxical manner. About halfway through my fieldwork, the Royal Guards established what they called the "VIP Protection Unit", which was described as a unit within the guards that had special responsibilities for protecting VIPs at events, and would be wearing suits rather than Royal Guard uniforms. Its commander explained the logic of it thusly:

> "We created the unit after seeing security threats to the king. We thought our enemies would earmark the guards in uniforms, but at the function where many people are wearing suits, it might not be so clear to our enemies."

The paradox was that the unit was, visually, completely unmissable. At the Coronation Anniversary ceremony in October, about forty members of the unit followed the king wherever he went, and directed people coming in and out of the palace. They were dressed identically in black suits, blue shirts, red ties and sunglasses, and they kept their sunglasses on both indoors and outdoors throughout the day. Their authoritative postures, evident chain of command, and close proximity to the king distinctly resembled exaggerated security details seen in movies, which, it transpired, was partly the point. Their commander described how he was training the unit partly through watching films, as he explains here:

> "We use two types of films. The first films that show VIP visits, like presidential visits, to see how security personnel do their duty. Two, these action films so they know how to do their duty in times of war. When you protect someone and there is danger, you must act professionally with or without a gun, you must protect yourself and the VIP."

Whatever the nature of the "enemies" that the guards felt the kingdom needed protecting from, the fact is that most of the people who attend the kingdom ceremonies (those where the Royal Guards and their VIP Protection Unit will be on display), are loyalist Bayira themselves. These elaborate displays of security would again muddy their image of what kind of authority and power the king wielded, yet clarified that a "cultural" kingdom could adopt the "languages" of state power freely.

Development

A general argument of critical development theorists and development-focused anthropologists is that the deregulation orthodoxy of the last few decades, has been bad for states. When international organisations (such as the IMF and World Bank) impose monetary policy on African governments, while many functions of the state are turned over, or appropriated by NGOs, the net result is not one of private-sector based efficiency, but an erosion of the state's own capacity to provide security, services and so on (Ferguson, 2006, 1990, Hanlon, 1996, Sampson, 1996, Kasfir, 1998). Further than that, anthropologists have argued that NGOs begin to mould individual subjectivities and the production of domestic life, the domain of the biopolitical (e.g. Piot, 2010), or that NGO notions of "empowerment" are constructed around empowerment being *given* by those same organisations to dependents, rather than acquired through peoples' own efforts (James, 1999). That is, NGOs are seen to be subverting state authority and assuming their own over those people in their sights. Taken to its logical extension, this argument implies that the construct of the state, hollow, increasingly unable to act, and revealed as little more than a legitimating tool for the work of international organisations, would lose its ideological grip in the minds of its people, particularly when one takes a constructivist view of its authority. For the Bayira, this does not seem to have held quite true.

NGOs are pervasive in south-western Uganda.[23] Most of the offices of local and international organisations are located in the districts' chief towns, but even in more remote areas where they are less of a permanent presence, their languages and concepts have firmly taken root in everyday discourse. In a memorable example, I had arranged to visit my friend Kaswera who lived in a fairly remote village in Kasese District, and casually mentioned on the phone that I might try and do some interviews with people whilst I was there. I certainly hadn't asked her to make any preparations for it, but on reaching the village, I found that she had arranged about ten focus groups for me which were sorted into (in her words) "target demographics', including "youth", "women", "young mothers", "persons with disabilities" and so on, reflecting NGO target groups. NGO jobs are highly desired, and at least once every few days I was given a "project proposal" by people I met and asked if I could help seek funding for their local development initiative. One enterprising thinker I met was even trying to set himself up as a "consultant" for people writing project proposals.

But what does this pervasiveness and awareness of NGOs and their languages mean for the state and its powers? Jones (2009) has argued, from his work in Iteso in northern Uganda, where neither the state nor NGOs were invested in "developing" the region or trying to bring it under their control, that in such conditions, people undertake the "projects" that matter to them of their own accord. That may be so in Iteso, but less discussed in Jones' work is whether people would have *liked* greater attention from the state and/or NGOs, had they the

[23] This is not to say that the fruits of NGO presence were universally felt. The languages of "development" seemed to have spread, but few people in either the towns or the remote villages I went to were (to my knowledge) directly benefitting from a current project. Sometimes they described having been involved with one in the past, although often the funding had dried up and the project ended after a period. Plenty of people had met NGO workers (often local but sometimes international). Many had taken part in the sort of focus groups Kaswera had set up, and most had been exposed to NGO discourse in one way or other, but hopes for NGO projects to come to their area were much more widespread than were tangible NGO projects.

option. For, in the Rwenzori region, the state is most often conspicuous either by its absence or by its moral failings. Yet its benevolent attention remains desired, partly for emotive reasons to do with "recognition" and dignity, yet also because the state is still *expected* to undertake the works of "development". The fact that it usually does not is its greatest moral failing.

Das and Poole (2004) say that at the margins of the state (and the Rwenzori is a margin, both ideologically, given its history, and physically, due to its border location (see Titeca, 2009, Raeymakers and Jourdan, 2009, Vlassenroot and Perrot, 2012)), it a series of *practices* that make and unmake it in the minds of those who encounter it. According to many Bayira, if the state wished to "recognise them" and make its governance legitimate to them, it is precisely the practices of "development" that it should be undertaking, that being everything from creating large-scale infrastructure, schools, hospitals and roads, as well as help with agricultural projects, job creation and so on. Yet, as Brisset-Foucault (2011, 2013) ably demonstrates, the Ugandan political elites of Kampala distinguish the technocratic, urban and distinguished domain of "politics" from the simpler, rural, and politically neutral realm of "development". In their eyes, rural people with less education should not concern themselves with the "political" work of the elites, and should instead undertake their own politically neutral, self-driven "development" initiatives.

However, from the point of view of the Bayira, development initiatives are the very work of state building, and the supposed erosion of state control that NGOs represent, according to critical theorists, has not lessened the moral responsibility of the state to undertake this work. NGOs' involvement (even if their pervasiveness did not match their effectiveness) was desired, but it really should be the government doing the work. The fact that the Ugandan and

Congolese states have not assumed their responsibility allows OBR and E'Kyaghanda opportunities to assume the moral authority of statehood that doing "development" represents, by packaging their own activities in its languages. More interestingly, Bayira secessionists are *adopting the techniques and languages of contemporary "development" for their own efforts at nation-building*. Indeed, they plan to exploit the very limits of state sovereignty that decentralization, neoliberal trade and the proliferation of NGOs has led to in order to accomplish this. They know the weaknesses of the contemporary nation-state, and are still quite prepared to use those to create their own.

Brisset-Foucault (2011, 2013) is certainly correct about the distinction political elites make in regard to "politics" and "development". In public events, when local and national politicians address people in speeches, said politicians tend to imply that the state has given adequate "development" help to the people, and it is those ordinary peoples' responsibility to bring it to fruition. A rather typical example is this speech given by the Local Council Chairman for Kasese District on Uganda's independence day, in the small, remote village of Mahango:

> "The district has done much for Mahango. They gave funds for education. Undertaking construction, they have constructed staff quarters for teachers, furniture in the primary school. The other programs that I am intending to do is make sure hard-to-reach areas are briefed on standards of education. On agriculture we have given 25 cows, 124 goats, 134 piglets and 2,700 banana plants. You should not be redundant now that trading centres are here, you should go and plant, and increase coffee production!"

His speech gave way to another one from the Resident District Commissioner, who reminded people that the national elections would be happening in a few months and stated:

> "So what is our challenge now, so we can get true independence in this country? It is to chase away poverty. In Kasese, since independence the Bakonzo have not worked with government! I want to use today to tell you, when we prepare your students to sit exams, teachers will be promoted according to performance. You are being prepared to sit an exam. If you do well, you will be promoted, you will have six bridges instead of one, schooling for everyone! You will be rewarded for performance!"

Even when President Museveni himself came to visit the district in October 2015, in order to launch his "crime preventers" initiative (a government-trained group of civilian vigilantes whose real purpose was widely believed by Bayira to be to manipulate the election result), he spent the majority of a long, rambling speech listing various things that people should be doing in order to "develop" the region. In no particular order, he insisted all people should be planting coffee, starting savings cooperatives, breeding livestock, keeping their children in school, educating girls, making crafts for tourism, and so on. Essentially, to politicians, "development" required local people to do much of the work themselves, and, should they need help from government, they would have to incentivize government to give it to them, which bluntly involved voting for the ruling party. Thus for politicians, Brisset-Foucault's point stands.

However, the Bayira adamantly disagree with politicians' seeming belief that the work of "development" is beneath them. Consider this outburst of anger against politicians from Mbolhu, a middle-aged man in Kasese. He is referring to the well-known practice in Uganda of politicians creating new constituencies and districts, since a new district offers the chance of both easier re-election, and creation of a fresh set of profitable relationships (Tripp, 2010, Reuss and Titeca, 2017).

> "I will use this Museveni's word, we put them in power so they would lead us into development! Museveni, he has talked of prosperity. So when we put these people in power, for us we are thinking of prosperity. When we give MPs our votes we expect them to bring it back, to bring back the money from the resources to put into infrastructure. We talk of schools, we talk of health centres. Of roads. That's what we expect. And to support those local initiatives, like those local groups, those SACCOs. But instead to our surprise, they want to cause division! We expect to see roads being worked on. We would like to see some drugs in our health centres. We expect to see bridges constructed, schools being developed and supported. But instead you hear of other things… the MP of Busongora South was voted for by both Basongora and Bakonzo. Instead of bringing that community together, he is talking about dividing

> the constituency. Why is he interested in creating a constituency? Because he failed to do what people expected of him. So he is creating a new constituency to create a favour, so he goes back to parliament!"

His view of the state's responsibility for the peoples' "development", framed not unlike a Hobbesian social contract, was typical among the Bayira. The neoliberal turn and the spread of NGOs and international monetary intervention has failed to budge the moral significance of government's responsibility in Bayira eyes. More to the point, this view of "development" as the hallmark of good governance presents an opportunity for ethno-nationalists. Rather than "development" unmaking the state, its provision (or at least a possibility of it) is what *would* make a state, and a legitimate one.

Rwenzururu Kingdom ministers of all political persuasions were largely united in their enthusiasm for the kingdom having a role in "development". This was not to say they were in a position to challenge the state as the principal distributor of development aid (such as it was), given the significant limits to their financial resources. Most of their established projects were small-scale, such as a seedling nursery and tree planting initiatives, whilst their more ambitious ones were constituted through rhetoric and projected plans rather than tangible results. However, a more significant role that, most people agreed, they could play, was the propagation of "culture for development" (a concept very much in development vogue anyway). Ideas for things the OBR could do were regularly forwarded, both by themselves and by NGOs, and they included the promotion of traditional sustainable farming practices, the preservation of cultural sites as tourist attractions, and "cultural conservation" in which "cultural" reasons for protecting endangered species would be promoted. As guardians of "culture', it also put the kingdom in the most legitimate position to rail against, in their words, "bad culture", that being that which went against international developmental norms, such as child marriage. This sentiment is here summarized by Masika, a development

practitioner from Kasese who heads her own organisation:

> "When the Omusinga issued a proclamation against bad cultural practices, like marrying young girls, some old men stood up in the meeting and said "No, this is our culture!" But as development practitioners we are very thankful to the Omusinga for that declaration. It will make our work much easier. I cannot go to the Palace if I am wearing trousers. But it will preserve culture in a developmental way. so we will promote the kind of culture that cares that the environment, that is good."

My commentary on authority is not to cynically imply that all those who engaged in "development activity" did so motivated by a cynical grab for authority, nor to suggest that many Bayira's expressed concerns for education, women's rights and so on were insincere. Yet, rhetorics of "development" were often deployed alongside values that, from the perspective of the western NGO practitioner, would contradict its aims. A particularly striking example was a speaker at the E'Kyaghanda conference, a Congolese woman called Kabiira, who introduced herself as a women's rights activist. This was her speech:

> "I am talking about the Yira woman in the past, and in modernity. Before, the woman was the most respected person in the community. These days we have no respect any more. We are being beaten and killed. Women are being mishandled and raped. They are prostitutes. Today, a woman is now an individual, and a husband-and-wife no longer connected with the family. Today women who are married have more power than their husbands, and are putting restrictions on their husbands from assisting their families. Women are going to bars. It is diluting the original arrangements where women stay virgins and have husbands chosen. As women they have problems. In tradition, women are not meant to go to school. I am encouraging all women to go to school as a way of emancipating themselves. Women are vulnerable due to lack of education. We should support them in the fight for education, so women can have skills if they can't go to school, so they can have incomes. Young ones must read, and revive past traditions of glory. Respect women, our role is important, women should come up and fight for their rights!"

For her, rights, schooling and economic advancement were necessary to "emancipate" women, but equally so were traditional values of femininity, including the need for marriage to a man of their family's choosing. Ultimately, "emancipation" from their current misfortunes was to be found in "respect", which in turn was found in adherence to traditional norms. Yet these values were here being *repackaged* in the language of development, giving

"cultural" systems the air of providing what government did not. Kabiira had taken the languages of "development" and rendered them locally meaningful (Falk Moore, 1993).

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The overt, prophetic secessionists, it turned out, were even more enthusiastic about seizing the opportunities that the neoliberal turn had presented them with. Here is Kahangwa, the former militant who is also a member of the elderly prophet Lhusenge's cult, which was receiving "updates" from the spiritual world about how and when the Yira State would be created. Of his fellow cult members, he said:

> "They are getting visions that they will be liberated and they are giving us tasks. They have tasked us to mobilise stakeholders of this coming state, both internal and external."

I asked what kind of stakeholders these would be.

> "We are tasked to get supporters: other countries, companies, big trading companies that can support us… Luckily God has shown us where we shall get money. God showed us hills where there is gold, especially in Congo, to be used in the coming state. When the time comes we shall get mining, and we will sell that gold to companies to get money for the struggle. We can start mining when we don't have money, as long as we have buyers."

This logic seems to embrace anti-sovereign neoliberalism in the extreme, ironically deployed in the service of nation-state building. Kahangwa states they are prepared to partner with "supporters" in the private sector, in the manner that NGOs often applaud. Yet they are also prepared to enter dubious relationships with mining companies, selling them minerals acquired from conflict zones, the kinds of private sector involvement that is much more dubious in the eyes of development practitioners. Evidently they were well aware of corporate ability to bypass state law and territorial sovereignty (Frynas, 1988, Ferguson, 2008). Not to be outdone, the prophet Lhusenge himself later told me:

> "We are establishing an NGO. We are in the process of registering it, in Congo first. We want to work with the community, but really we are planning the liberation of the Bayira on both sides. We are using an NGO as an umbrella. We have differences in Uganda and in Congo, so we wanted to learn those differences. We want to survey areas to know who is where, and we shall have women's and youth programs, we will sensitise on education and HIV/AIDS. Those are our external objectives. But the internal objective is to study the environment and mobilise the community. For planned liberation. We are still consulting whether we should register here; the angel Kithasaamba has not informed us yet. We will recruit experts in a AIDS, sanitation, gender and other fields. After when they are in the field we will do monitoring and evaluation."

The supposedly "neutral" field of "development" (Ferguson, 1990, Brisset-Foucault, 2011, 2013) was going to be used to "mobilise" the community for independence. A type of organization often seen as corrosive to state authority was being deployed to establish an authority relationship in a "target" community, but with a secret agenda of creating a new state. They were evidently aware that state sovereignty is compromised by corporate and development organisations, since it was those very tools they were planning to use to undermine the state they lived in, and yet the aspiration of a legitimate, benevolent state was no less potent. Indeed, given the moral connotations of the provision of "development" aid, it can be read as a strategy of nation-building through an emphasis on *moral* legitimacy, rather than classic interpretations of capturing sovereignty through violence (Hansen and Stepputat, 2005).

The International Relations of Rwenzururu

Ferguson (2006) says that African states have never been the dominant power brokers in their own territories, and have always been sidelined by international bodies, NGOs and corporations, both colonial and current. The same can sometimes be said of African civil resistance movements; whilst those movements having international linkages have been advantageous to social justice movements, it means we must refrain from nostalgia for the "local" and "authentic" when examining them, and recognize them as equally global actors.

Again, the Bayira are thoroughly globally conscious, and despite the cultural conservatism inspiring their movement, they are more than willing to seek both help and hope in the international arena. For them, international brokers of power, rather than undermining the ideological appeal of a state, become a source of hope for creating it.

In this section, I recount the imaginings of Yira secessionists about the United Nations and international powers, and their interactions with them, in person and by letter, both in the original Rwenzururu movement, and around the current idea of the Yira State. It is perhaps controversial to describe these as "imaginings", since, without an expensive and unlikely search through the UN archives and those of the former Organisation for African Unity (OAU), I cannot be completely sure that some of the documents described in the stories I am about to recall did not exist, or that they never reached their destinations. However, the implausibility of a number of aspects of these stories are extremely self-evident. Yet this is not a fact-checking exercise, but a further examination of the ideological health of the African state, in an international order which undermines its sovereignty on a practical level. In the spirit of White (2008), I want to suggest that these stories are also a commentary on Yira hope for international recognition, for "membership" (Ferguson, 2006) and equality in the ranks of the powers of the global order. These are the words of Hangyi, an elderly Rwenzururu veteran who had been an influential figure in the kingdom-state of Isaiah Mukirania.

> "Following Isaiah's death, the OAU met in Addis Ababa and we were invited to attend, following what Isaiah has already requested. I was one of the people who went as chair of the delegation of three. This was June 1968 June 29. The Rwenzururu has already written a memorandum to the UN and the OAU on 22 May 1968, to the Secretary-General. But we were blocked. We were intercepted in Rwanda. Three days before we left, Obote pleaded to Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda nots to betray each other and not to let dissidents go through. So we were jailed in Rwanda and spent two months in prison. But we were in touch with both the UN and the OAU, and both were advising us on what steps to take. But the information was always leaked. Three times. The UN and the OAU gave us advice. Firstly, they told us to prepare a landing

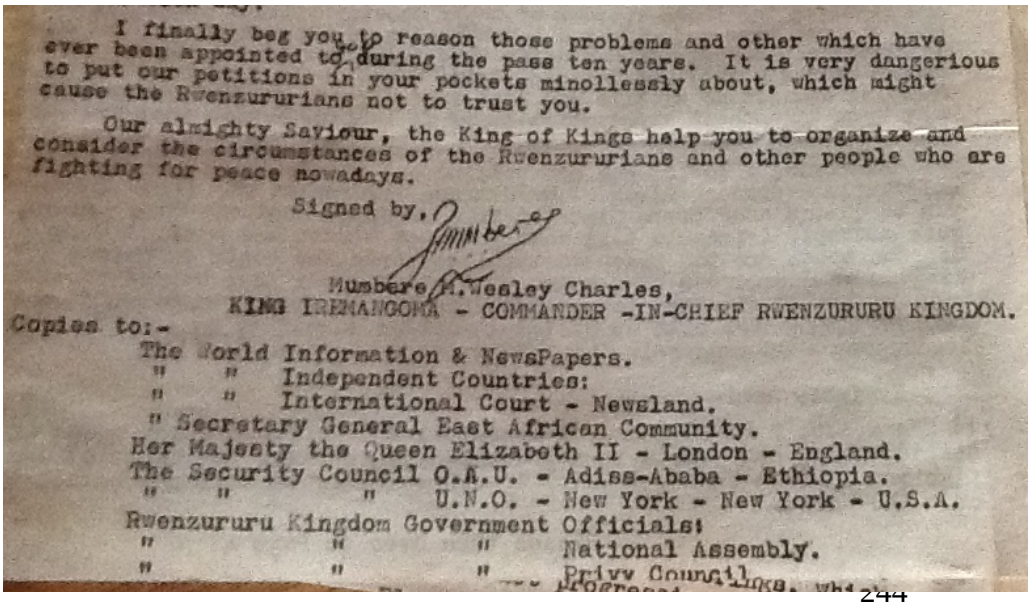
port for an aeroplane, to bring medicine and weapons and all fighting materials. They told us to clear two airfields, and we were given 24-hours for some expatriates to come and assist us. On the second attempt, the UN wanted to pass military aid through Kagando hospital. They told us to prepare another airfield. We started preparing another one but again in information leaked, and again those who came from the UN were given 24 hours to leave Uganda.

But we met a Muyira man who was willing to help and introduce us to the president of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta. We met and explained everything. Kenyatta promised to help and would rally a meeting in Addis Ababa, we were given passports. The passports were Kenyan to get them in. The problem was transport. Kenyatta wouldn't give them transport money to Addis Ababa. The transport would be 200,000 Kenyan shillings. So we returned to Rwenzururu and explained. Taxes were raised on the Rwenzururu subjects to raise money for the transport. But when that was ongoing, it was announced that Kenyatta had died! On that note, the Cuban government had promised to give military aid to Rwenzururu, and the UK was to handle administration. The US had pledged help with education and France was to handle the medical sector. This was in 1972. If they had only reached Addis Ababa those countries would have given aid. Kenyatta's death frustrated everything. Afterwards, the new president Arap Moi was also approached, but he refused. He said he was too new to handle such a delicate issue and he wanted to hand them over to the Ugandan military. After, there was internal divisions among Rwenzururu ministers, between those handling the issue at an international level, and those who were jealous. It was very confidential, but as a results divisions emerged. Those who were working for a country were persecuted by those who wanted a kingdom. Eventually those people were thrown out."

E.B. "How did the international communication happen in the 1960s and 1970s?"

"They were meeting them in Kenya. Kenyatta gave them a platform to meet people from these countries. We met the ambassadors. They had lawyers at the international level, and those lawyers brought written responses to us in favour. We hired lawyers, international ones, and those lawyers would go and make agreements with those countries on behalf of us. The lawyers were volunteers. They were meant to send one Rwenzururu representative to the UK, but those lawyers were also discovered and given 24 hours to leave the country."

It is true that there were letters written, both by Isaiah Mukirania and his son Charles Mumbere, which



I finally beg you to reason those problems and other which have ever been appointed to during the pass ten years. It is very dangerious to put our petitions in your pockets minollessly about, which might cause the Rwenzururians not to trust you.

Our almighty Saviour, the King of Kings help you to organize and consider the circumstances of the Rwenzururians and other people who are fighting for peace nowadays.

Signed by.

Mumbere M. Wesley Charles,
KING IREMANGOMA - COMMANDER -IN-CHIEF RWENZURURU KINGDOM.

Copies to:-
The World Information & NewsPapers.
" " Independent Countries:
" " International Court - Newsland.
" Secretary General East African Community.
Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II - London - England.
The Security Council O.A.U. - Adiss-Ababa - Ethiopia.
" " " U.N.O. - New York - New York - U.S.A.
Rwenzururu Kingdom Government Officials:
" " " National Assembly.
" " " Privy Council.

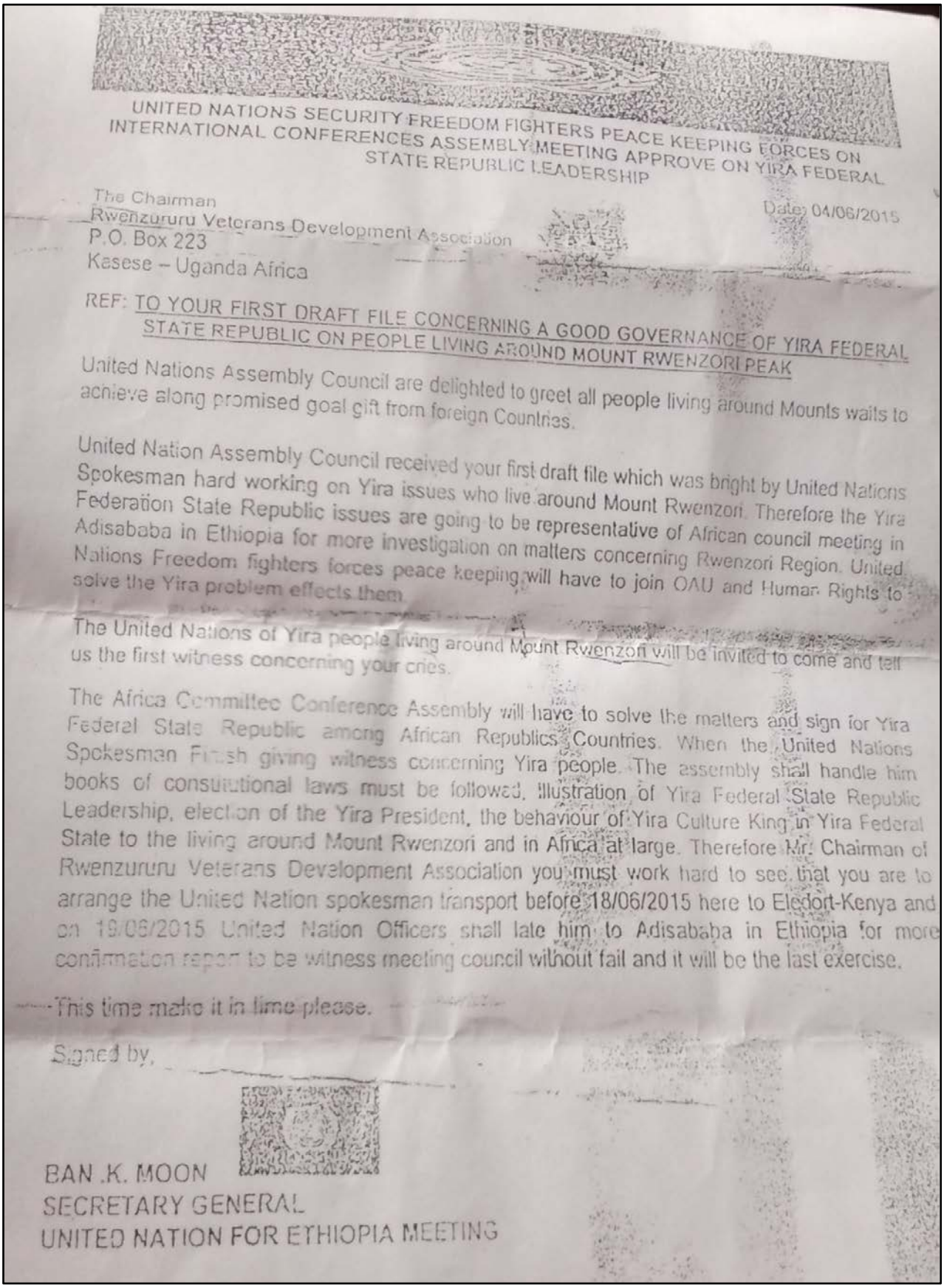
Figure 8: Signature page and addresses of a letter from Omusinga Charles Mumbere to UN and others, Fort Portal District Archive, c/o Mountains of the Moon University, Box 99, Folder 2

were addressed to international bodies; some are still available in the district archives (Figure 8). Whether they ever reached their destinations I do not know, though evidently there are highly implausible aspects to this story. The UN does not and did not have a mandate to interfere in a sovereign nation's affairs without a Security Council Resolution, nor to distribute weapons. Kenyatta was alive until 1978. Post-revolutionary Cuba and America would hardly have partnered to provide sector-by-sector services to an unrecognised nation. The OAU had also agreed in its founding charter to preserve colonial boundaries (Simpson, 2014). Nor does it seem plausible that Kenyatta would agree to help advance their cause for secession, but still not provide them with the transport fees. However, his mention of "volunteer lawyers" acting on their behalf piqued my interest, since I knew of another example of an individual posing as an influential UN representative and extracting money from the hopes of secessionists by pretending to act on their behalf. This was not a historical example, however, but someone I ended up meeting.

In April 2015, I ran into Prince Christopher Kibanzanga, the Omusinga's brother, who was also a government minister, and who often had to take on the role of mediator between government and Rwenzururu Kingdom during periods of tension. He angrily told me that trouble had erupted in Bundibugyo, because a number of fake letters, supposedly from the UN, had been photocopied and distributed around the district by the young men who had received them. The letters stated that the UN had granted the independence of the Yira State. Those distributing them had apparently been given them by someone else, but they were telling those to whom they distributed them to buy batteries for their radios, so that they might listen for the UN's announcement of their independence.

It transpired that these letters were widespread, and that this was not the first time they had

been received by people. A number of times after that, I was given one unprompted and asked whether I thought these promises would come true soon (although some expressed more suspicion, and asked for my opinion about whether they were real). There were numerous letters, some describing preparatory stages for secession, whilst others declared it imminent. According to the typed signature, it was Secretary General Ban Ki Moon who wrote them, although his name was misspelled in various ways, and a number of other international bodies (some defunct and some non-existent) were also listed as signatories or recipients. It turned out that their distributor had been in regular contact with an elderly veteran who is still influential among a number of hardline secessionist supporters. The distributor even reportedly had a number of fake UN uniforms. This veteran, who had become suspicious that the distributor was a fraud after several years of giving him money to deliver the letter, put me in touch with him.



UNITED NATIONS SECURITY FREEDOM FIGHTERS PEACE KEEPING FORCES ON INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES ASSEMBLY MEETING APPROVE ON YIRA FEDERAL STATE REPUBLIC LEADERSHIP

The Chairman
Rwenzururu Veterans Development Association
P.O. Box 223
Kasese – Uganda Africa

Date: 04/06/2015

REF: TO YOUR FIRST DRAFT FILE CONCERNING A GOOD GOVERNANCE OF YIRA FEDERAL STATE REPUBLIC ON PEOPLE LIVING AROUND MOUNT RWENZORI PEAK

United Nations Assembly Council are delighted to greet all people living around Mounts waits to achieve along promised goal gift from foreign Countries.

United Nation Assembly Council received your first draft file which was bright by United Nations Spokesman hard working on Yira issues who live around Mount Rwenzori. Therefore the Yira Federation State Republic issues are going to be representative of African council meeting in Adisababa in Ethiopia for more investigation on matters concerning Rwenzori Region. United Nations Freedom fighters forces peace keeping will have to join OAU and Human Rights to solve the Yira problem effects them.

The United Nations of Yira people living around Mount Rwenzori will be invited to come and tell us the first witness concerning your cries.

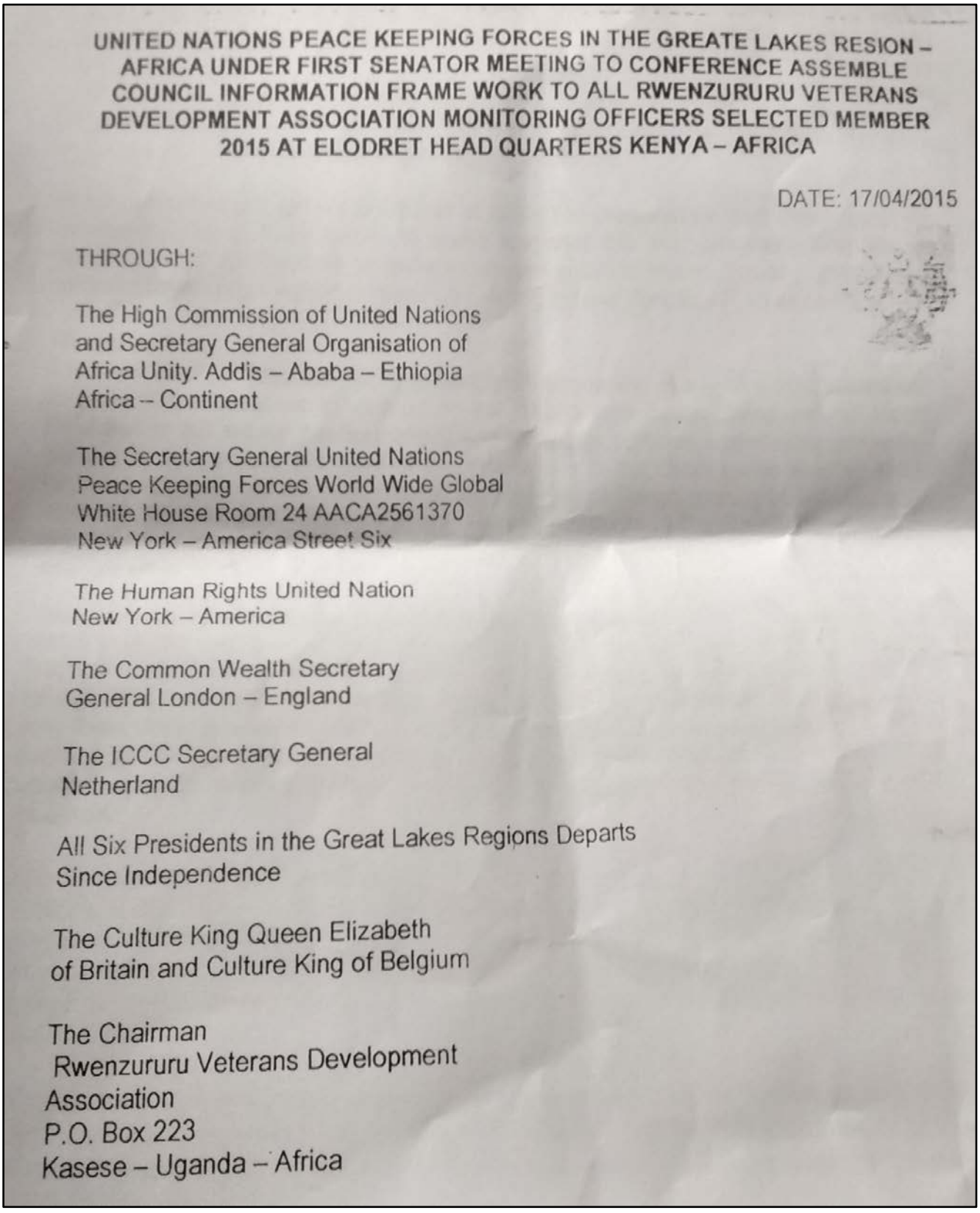
The Africa Committee Conference Assembly will have to solve the matters and sign for Yira Federal State Republic among African Republics Countries. When the United Nations Spokesman Finish giving witness concerning Yira people. The assembly shall handle him books of consultional laws must be followed. Illustration of Yira Federal State Republic Leadership, election of the Yira President, the behaviour of Yira Culture King in Yira Federal State to the living around Mount Rwenzori and in Africa at large. Therefore Mr. Chairman of Rwenzururu Veterans Development Association you must work hard to see that you are to arrange the United Nation spokesman transport before 18/06/2015 here to Eledort-Kenya and on 19/06/2015 United Nation Officers shall late him to Adisababa in Ethiopia for more confirmation report to be witness meeting council without fail and it will be the last exercise.

This time make it in time please.

Signed by,

BAN .K. MOON
SECRETARY GENERAL
UNITED NATION FOR ETHIOPIA MEETING

Figure 9: One of the numerous fake UN letters that were distributed on several occassions around Kasese and Bundibugyo.



UNITED NATIONS PEACE KEEPING FORCES IN THE GREATE LAKES RESION – AFRICA UNDER FIRST SENATOR MEETING TO CONFERENCE ASSEMBLE COUNCIL INFORMATION FRAME WORK TO ALL RWENZURURU VETERANS DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION MONITORING OFFICERS SELECTED MEMBER 2015 AT ELODRET HEAD QUARTERS KENYA – AFRICA

DATE: 17/04/2015

THROUGH:

The High Commission of United Nations
and Secretary General Organisation of
Africa Unity. Addis – Ababa – Ethiopia
Africa – Continent

The Secretary General United Nations
Peace Keeping Forces World Wide Global
White House Room 24 AACA2561370
New York – America Street Six

The Human Rights United Nation
New York – America

The Common Wealth Secretary
General London – England

The ICCC Secretary General
Netherland

All Six Presidents in the Great Lakes Regions Departs
Since Independence

The Culture King Queen Elizabeth
of Britain and Culture King of Belgium

The Chairman
Rwenzururu Veterans Development
Association
P.O. Box 223
Kasese – Uganda – Africa

Figure 10: The signature page of another of these letters with the numerous institutions that the letter is supposedly copied to.

I was not sure whether the distributor, who I'll call Mulhondi, would be frank or not. In my view the letters were poor forgeries, and I assumed he would not keep up the act very long if I asked about the discrepancies in them.

Upon meeting him, I instead began to wonder if he was a fantasist who genuinely believed his own act. He was wearing a light-blue t-shirt onto which was sewed the white letters "UN", and he showed me a laminated business card which he said was his UN ID card. It listed his division as "The National Prize Peacekeeping Forces World-Africa Forever". He claimed to have been working for the UN in Taiwan for a number of years before being assigned to carry out this secret mission of bringing correspondence between the secessionists and the UN. I later visited his home and he showed me more of these letters, a draft Yira State map that I had already seen, and a number of documents on the history of Rwenzururu. Whilst he had extracted high sums of money from those he had conned, claiming he needed it for transport, my honest impression of him was that he was only half-aware that what he was doing was a con. The enthusiasm with which he spoke of his imaginary work for the UN never wavered, even when I pressed him about the obvious inaccuracies.

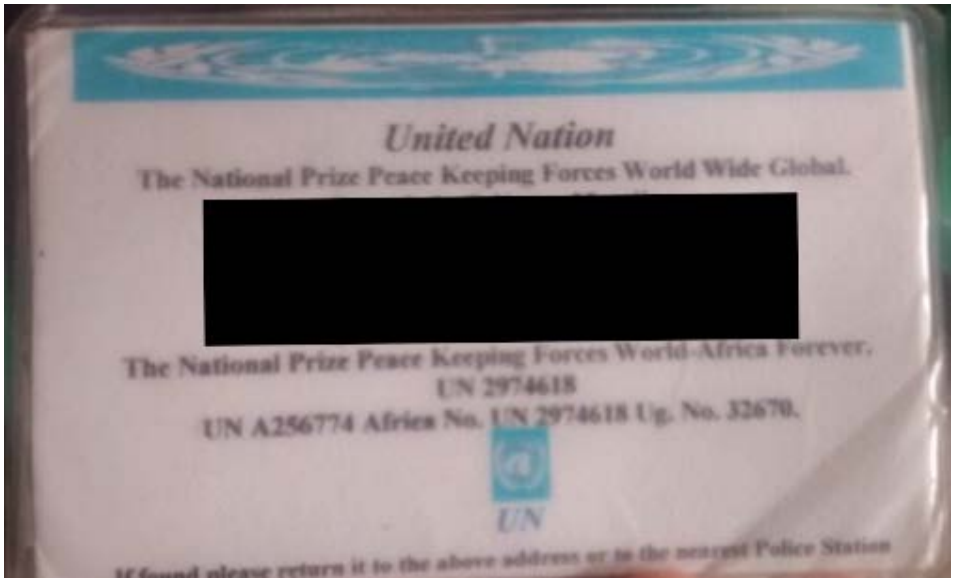


Figure 11: Mulhondi's supposed UN ID, with identifiable information redacted.

Perhaps I had been conned too, and he was merely acting out of mere cynical enterprise. Either way it did not change the fact that people not only believed in him, but believed in the

letters, the UN and international community's interest in their secession, and, if that international community did not engage to help them, then it would have morally failed. Below are a number of people making unprompted references to international bodies:

> "We are blaming the European Community, we had told them of the wealth here, that it must be protected and shared by the whole world. We still really blame the European Community for failing to understand this struggle for self-determination. The custodians of the wealth need to be recognised. These resources are not for us to eat and monopolise but must be shared by the world. But we do not want people to cheat the resources. They should be opened up the free enterprise, but so that the guardians of that wealth need to be recognised. We only want peace and security." **Kighoma, an elderly spirit medium in a Kasese border village.**

> "The only hope is for the UN to come up with a resolution. I think that's why the king is still surviving. The UN is protecting him, because when he came back, the government wanted to kill him as a rebel." **Mandekia, my regular research companion**.

> "[South] Sudan has just been given independence, but then that began long ago, so we have not been given ours. Has the world not heard our complaints? We have spent 50 years suffering, but Sudan just recently got theirs!" **Muthende, a young man from Bundibugyo**.

These were far from the only examples. Yet it is the very inaccuracies of the stories that are revealing. The secessionists, as we see, are projecting multiple powers onto the UN that it doesn't actually have. Yet in doing so, they see the UN as the ultimate guarantor of protection, above the powers of a nation-state, *so long as those it protects have a nation-state too*. The "international" represents the biggest source of hope for secessionism, recognition and protection within the "national order of things" (Malkki, 1995, 1997). Having been brutally marginalised in the colonial period, and given that their resolution to that marginalisation has left them shrouded in government suspicion ever since, they have given up on the government of Uganda seeing them as equal citizens. Thus they seek dignity, recognition, and protection in the rigidities of statehood from the "international community".

Monarchy, Statehood and Isaiah's Death

We are seeing, then, that the idea of the "nation-state" is a double-edged sword for the

Bayira. A new, internationally recognized *nation* might give them recognition, fulfilment, security and prosperity, but the accompanying apparatus of the *state*, and the avarice and violence that inevitably happens in it, risks corrupting the positive "cultural public" that they wish to secede in order to protect. In fact, their enduring belief in the potential of the nation-state does not mean that they were unwilling to imaginatively experiment with its design. These are a sample of the responses to my question, "How should the Yira State be ruled? Should it have a king or a president?"

> "It would be better for us to vote, but the Omusinga should be there. But they should also have a president." **Kaswera, a young woman in Bundibugyo**.
>
> "The King, Iremangoma, is the assignment to Isaiah. He will remain a king, he shall have to give his successor, and he shall never become president, according to Kithasamba's message. His lineage is that of Abasingas, they are not supposed to mix in politics." **Lhusenge, the elderly prophet**.
>
> "It should be as Uganda is now, a President with cultural kings." **Muhindo, an elderly man who met me to give me a copy of a map of the would-be Yira State.**
>
> "It should have a prime minister, not a president, it's not a republic, it is a constitutional monarchy." **Muhima, my regular research companion.**
>
> "It will be under cultural leadership and federal. Like you have the Queen and the Prime Minister is head of government." **Kanzira, the young vigilante group leader.**

I have to admit the responses surprised me initially. Given the emphatic focus on cultural restoration and anger over the Omusinga's limited influence, I had (too much in the manner of the anthropologist seeking the "traditional") assumed people would want an absolute monarchy. The technical terms they deployed for their new state's design varied; Muhima, above, said it would be a constitutional monarchy, whilst others described a "federal republic" or a "united kingdom". The latter two terms were used referring to the separate domains of *isyemalhambo* and *abami*, chieftains often considered kings in their own right, although united under a centralised monarch, in the way Isaiah Mukirania ruled above the united chieftains, the kings, after they invested him with their legitimacy. (However they also

often referred to the United Kingdom's constitutional monarchy arrangement as well, saying they needed a similar "united kingdom".)

In this final section, I suggest that the separation of the domains of "culture" and "state", akin to Ekeh's (1975) "two publics", the "civic" and what I call the "ritual" or "cultural public" (equivalent to Ekeh's "primordial public"), is also a legacy of the sudden death of Isaiah Mukirania, shortly after he became both a king and a president, in 1966. Exactly when and in which order Mukirania styled himself as king, and then president, is a matter of dispute. Undisputed is the suddenness of his death in 1966, which Doornbos (1970) attributed to dysentery, but which most Bayira simply describe as "mysterious". Some of the kingdom's critics have written their own works on Rwenzururu's history, arguing that his death was spiritual retribution for assuming a kingship to which he was not entitled:

> "It is believed that Mukirania had started having notions of having himself crowned as king… In spite of the warning that he was not the right clan to carry out certain rituals which was the reserve of the Baswagha clan, he insisted he must perform such rituals under all circumstances. Well, the ominous happened. He died a few days later under mysterious circumstances." (Bamusede and Kyaminyawandi, 2000, pg. 40).
>
> "It is the considered view of these authors that the occurrence [Isaiah's death] was divine intervention because even God the Almighty must have seen that his people… were being taken for a ride." (Mukirane and Muhesi, 2005, pg. 43).

However, there are also regular allegations today among some Bayira that it was his dual assumption of two kinds of power which killed him. Lhusenge, the elderly prophet, replied thusly when I asked him about Isaiah's death:

> "He died because he didn't follow some of the procedures. Example, the soldiers, the atabali, would come for war and salute him directly after they killed people, and Kithasaamba was not happy with that. He wanted a king never to be saluted for such. The kingdom is not meant to wage war. Kithasaamba never accepted it. Not everything we do is holy. The purpose of the kingdom is to make sure people maintain the cultures like circumcision and the code of dressing. And offering sacrifices. The Kingdom is to remind the Chiefs to play the roles and maintain the language… Kithasaamba does not like human bloodshed. If you are one of those who

> communicates to him, like the Omusinga, you must be purified. You cannot have caused any death or bloodshed."

Lhusenge, who himself was leading a covert spiritual quest for secessionism, was here insisting that the king's role be restricted to that of "culture", because violence, the domain of the state and the military, tainted his ritual purity. I asked if it was always so that politicians were responsible for violence. His son, in his late teens and also present at the interview, replied for him:

> "Of course! In politics you kill your enemies before they kill you! You saw how Obama and this Bush were killing people in Afghanistan. But the Queen has never killed anyone. She is a holy lady."

His answer suddenly made clear why I was regularly referred back to my own British heritage when asking about the design of the Yira State (I had previously wondered whether this was a legacy of British colonial influence). Our constitutional monarchy for them reflected a separation of spiritual and political powers, the former concerned with spiritualism and morality, and the latter with the immoral inevitabilities of realpolitik. Isaiah's death has thus been remembered as a cautionary tale about the separation of powers.

As has been stated throughout, and as Karlström (1999, 2004) has described of Buganda kingdom, it is erroneous to assume that "culture" is considered antithetical to aspiration. In fact, for the Baganda royalists, it was the deterioration of morality and culture that was impeding their "progress". Thus the restoration of their kingdom was intended to act as a moral guide in times of transformation:

> "Without kingship and culture, it seems, there is only anarchy, violence, and the destructive pursuit of individual self-interest…" (Karlström, 2004, pg. 606).

For the Bayira, the need for moral revival to assure futuristic, aspirational transformation is also apparent. However, in their desire for constitutional monarchy, they reveal something else, which is that there is substantial risk in conflating the moral and amoral domains.

This is similar to how "school knowledge" can collect, enhance and corroborate with "cultural knowledge", but need not change its core spiritual, moral character. Likewise, the current kingdom had amassed numerous potent symbols of statehood, yet there too those languages of governance worked principally in the interest of safeguarding the "traditional" (though had an added benefit of insinuating further authority). The documents associated with contemporary statehood were being deployed to bolster the spirit of "traditional" marriage, and its security force dedicated to protecting a ritual leader and cultural sites. That is, the kingdom played on ambiguity to advance its authority, and protected the realm of the ritual public, but did not assume the amoral actions associated with the state.

This is not to endorse Ekeh's (1975) notion that the "primordial" ("cultural") public was a site of untainted moral solidarity. Accusations of corruption over the kingdom's finances, or of ministers betraying the kingdom by "spying" or sharing its "secrets", were rife. Several OBR cabinet reshuffles occurred over my fieldwork period, which were mostly triggered by accusations of either embezzlement or spying. However, the explanation for these actions also always boiled down to the influence of the Ugandan state corrupting the kingdom's people. In November 2015, the Omusinga came on the radio to announce he was expelling six ministers who had both embezzled funds designated by government for the king's palace renovation, and for leaking kingdom secrets. All following discussions of the incident said that the government had surely bribed them to spy on the kingdom. That is, the immorality's original *source* was perceived to be the state's government.

These conclusions may appear to somewhat contradict literature that describes encompassing different domains of power as a source of even greater power (e.g. Moran, 1997). I am not, in fact, disagreeing with such conclusions at all, but merely wish to point out that as well as power, this encompassment is also a source of tremendous danger, and this is manifested in the trajectory of Isaiah Mukirania's *akalaiyirire*. There are a number of ways we might interpret Isaiah's perceived selection by *akalaiyirire*, and subsequent perceptions of the meaning of his death. Doja (2005) describes how, in Albanian understandings of charismatic figures born to be heroes:

> "...a hero made invulnerable by his birth, can die only if the singular conjunction produced at his birth is repeated once again" (pg. 453).

This conjunction, twice repeated, represents the opposing forces of good and evil.

Without straying too close to a direct comparison, this point about repetition of circumstance is helpful for reflection here. Mukirania's initial encompassment of two domains of power, in the form of an educational knowledge deployed to recapture traditional self-knowledge (back when he headed the research society), set him apart and paved the way for his recognition as an individual empowered by *akalaiyirire*. In the case of his collection of knowledge, however, he used the tools of education to recapture the "cultural knowledge", the source of Yira power, without fundamentally tainting the character of the latter in any way. At the same time, the power that this close mutual deployment of two knowledges created was unprecedented, and so dangerous, in the manner that Arens (1989) suggests allows individuals to develop charismatic authority. He states that:

> "…charismatic fervour has the added quality of defining society by drawing attention to its moral limits" (pg. 14).

These limits are often broken by the charismatic themselves, proving that they are uniquely powerful precisely because of their ability to break them and survive.

Though his knowledge collection did not breach a limit, insofar that it enhanced "cultural" knowledge rather than sullying its purity, the immorality of the domain from which "school knowledge" came was well-known. Thus there was an obvious risk associated with uniting the domains of kingdom and state, or ritual and civic publics. The man made powerful by one effort at encompassing domains of power was later killed by another, more serious breach of the two, one which compromised the purity of the moral sphere. Given the imagined designed of a constitutional monarchy for the Yira State, it seems that this lesson has been learned. Moreover, I would argue that it is this d*esign* of the state that gives the secessionists their remarkable confidence in the future of an independent Yira State.

When the Bayira speak of their "technology", the incredible powers their spirits possess, and how those can be harnessed for technological development, they are not suggesting that they are the only people in Africa who have spiritual powers. Rather, they are confident of their success, and their ability to surpass the current place of African states in global power rankings, because they intend to preserve their moral, ritual domain separately from that of the state. The technologies of governance, and indeed the technologies and education from around the world, can be used by them in conjunction with their spiritual powers, despite the risk to moral purity that the former presents, so long as amoral foreign products do not encroach on the moral sphere.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the nation-state occupies a paradoxical ideological endurance among the Bayira, and arguably in Africa more generally. It is paradoxical because state governments are seen as not only immoral, corrupt, and often violent, but also because, in the flows of globalized power, the state's sovereign power over its territory is increasingly weak. Yet, it remains powerful as an ideological construct because it is still the strongest guarantor of enduring, globally reaching "recognition", in the form of a nation. I have argued that institutions which are not states, in this case Rwenzururu Kingdom and E'Kyaghanda Yira, are able to borrow the authority of states by mimicking their "languages" of governance, and play off this ambiguity around their power in order to formalise the safeguarding of the "traditional" or "cultural".

Furthermore, despite the common wisdom that "development" is an apolitical, neutral practice that lies outside state power, and even deteriorates it, the Bayira not only see the material chance associated with "development" as the core of state responsibility, but also find its rhetoric and structures can be deployed in exercises of nation building. That the nation-state retains its appeal because of its global, not national, level of recognition is made obvious in the public imaginary of the international relations of Rwenzururu and the would-be Yira State. Finally, I argued that the Bayira secessionists are so particularly confident in their futuristic imaginings for their state because of their design for its separation of powers. The moral, ritual sphere headed by kings and chieftains will be separated from that of the violent, corrupt functions of the state (which, though immoral, are the inevitable price of and necessary equipment for a functioning nation). This separation of the powers of the "two publics" is meant to assure its prosperous future, since preserving morality means preserving the spiritual powers that will propel them into the top rankings of the international order of nation-states.

Chapter Six: Discourses of Moral Authority and Violence

In Chapter Five, I argued that the nation-state construct has endured, in general and for the Bayira in particular, despite numerous challenges to its sovereignty in the age of "global flows" (Appadurai, 1990). I suggested that this was, firstly, because the Bayira consider it the optimal vehicle for recognition and potential prosperity in the "national" (and we might add "international") "order of things" (Malkki, 1995, 1997). Secondly, because the languages and technologies of state governance have served Bayira ethno-nationalists and secessionists in their goals of protecting and enforcing "cultural" practices, and allowed the institutions using those technologies to blur the limits of their authority. They have also made use of the languages and notions of "development", both as legitimating tools in the face of a state that they believe is too reluctant to actually engage in the work of development, and also as potentially subversive tools of nation-building and secessionist mobilisation. I also showed that "the state" is subject to imaginative alterations in peoples' minds, and so, despite the power of the state as a construct, it is not beyond locally-specific tailoring.

In this chapter, I want to pick up and probe the implications of that final point, that the state is not a one-size-fits-all concept despite its endurance, and to confront the rather thorny question of the *values* of normative, "liberal" statism in political anthropology, and whether or not they have any meaningful place in the discipline. To borrow Spencer's (2007) words, is it right to assume that the language of European Enlightenment has truly made "liberal political subjects" of the world's populations, or is this a misleading

> "…intellectual capitulation to the "irreversible triumph" of the single language of political modernity" (pg. 68)?

We have seen the languages of governance, and of international liberalism adopted by the Bayira in particular efforts, sometimes reappropriated and made locally meaningful, but

sometimes not. Yet we have also seen that the Bayira ingratiate their cynicism of the "civic public" into their design for a new state. The question is whether this self-preserving cynicism is the end of the road for their dealings with the civic public, or whether they may still have higher expectations of it. Moreover, we must find a way to question the relevance of such ideas without capitulating to developmentalist ideas of what "function" and "dysfuntion" in states is (Gupta, 1995).

Though I have depended on a tailored version of Ekeh's (1975) model so far, I wish here to emphasise again that blanket moral relativism between the two publics risks obscuring the multiple ways in which the Bayira think about politics and deliberate their political futures. In doing so, I wish to forward another reason for the perpetual endurance of the idea of the "state", which is that the normative ideals of statehood, even when they do not exist in practice, remain a tool for criticism of, and deliberation about the state as it is now. *In holding a mirror up to what the state is not doing, these values help to preserve the very idea of what a legitimate state could be, as well as other ways that some of the positive attributes of these values might be achieved*. They are tools within a wider toolbox with which to consider "political possibility" (Rethmann, 2013). Furthermore, such deliberation inadvertently reifies the "state" as a construct (Navaro-Yashin, 2002).

This is a critical question in the investigation of Yira ethno-nationalism as it exists now, rather than how its fruits are imagined, because it is partly through the ideals of how states *should* work that the Bayira contest the sovereignty of the state that they currently live in, and how they legitimise the imagining of political alternatives. That is, the Yira State is desired, imagined and legitimised in a dialectical process with the Bayira's considerations of life under the Ugandan state. Does this mean, though, that Bayira ethno-nationalists and

secessionists see the values of state-centric political liberalism (what an NGO might call "good governance") as meaningful in their own right, or merely a mirror in which the state they live in can be shown to be an incurable hypocrite, justifying their case for secession?

I wish to approach this question through an examination of the violence of the 5th of July 2014, in which young Bayira people engaged in a coordinated attack against a number of targets, simultaneously in different districts. I base this approach on two fairly established tenets of political anthropology and the anthropology of violence. Firstly, that sovereignty over a given area is captured by the possibility of violence and its inscription on the bodies of its subjects (Hansen and Stepputat, 2005, Benjamin, 1986) and that therefore violence is a discourse of power (Feldman, 1991). Secondly, that the state's power is performed through imposing a sense of order against transgression, and that the state therefore *requires* transgression for its very existence and self-definition (Spencer, 2007). Insightful though the literature on these perspectives is, it risks of taking for granted the efficacy of these performances of power, and excluding the more moral dimension of legitimate power. I wish to argue that the 5th of July attacks on state targets are explained by the perpetrators of that attack as a response to the Ugandan state's transgressions of its own, in the moral sense. The use of violence turned the language of sovereignty back on the state, in a display of rejection of that sovereignty under present conditions. This is evidenced through the testimonies of multiple participants in that attack, which were phrased according to what a just state *should* do, and what the Ugandan state was not doing.

Does this act and its justification thus represent a meaningful adoption of normative state values on the part of the Bayira, or just a tactical adoption of the language of one's opponent? Or did such language become a vector for more localised meanings, in the way the discourse

of “development” was seen bolstering values that the liberal donor might disapprove of? I would argue, in the spirit of Falk Moore (1993), that such a zero-sum approach to political perspectives among a people is unhelpful. Rather, I wish to suggest that the values of equality before the state and the law, and other tenets of political liberalism, are not depersonalised, alien concepts to the Bayira. They do carry meaning, because there are tangible consequences when they are not adhered to, and the violation of such values is a source of genuine indignation and pain. However, it would be wrong to say that that meaningfulness excludes other ways of imagining politics, or that these “values” are well defined behaviours with precise limits, for they are discussed far less when their violation does not result in personal hurt. Moreover, such values are further given meaning in the failure of the existing state to live up to them, since they open up a space for the continual imagining and legitimisation of alternative “political possibilities”. In this chapter, then, what we are seeing is *the current phase of deliberation in the cyclical engine of justification for why a Yira State, at least for some, will be necessary*.

Rethmann (2013) describes a tension within the discourses of activists seeking alternative political possibilities, between the pragmatism of reform or a more radical total revolution, and whether the former would merely capitulate to current injustices. The process of considering the alternatives does not render one or other meaningless. Rather, they become theoretical tools with which people consider their current situation, and what might also be. A similar tension is, I argue, found in the political imaginings of the Bayira today. As we shall see in the testimonies of the attackers, the 5th of July was not an act of violence intended to either create the Yira State or to overthrow the government, but rather was an act of correcting the moral transgressions of the current state. It seems then, that even though a liberal ideal-type state is not the total sum of Bayira political desires, they are still prepared to

take tremendous personal risks to demand the practice of such values in the state they are in now.

In deliberating the aftermath of the attack, they continually raise questions of whether such a corrective is indeed possible, and whether the Ugandan state will ever allow them to live as equal citizens, according to the doctrine of equal citizenship that a state *should* espouse. It is the uncertainty of whether such acceptable conditions of living will ever exist in this state that acts as a springboard for legitimate consideration of the Yira State. This is to say that the question of secessionism is settled in the minds of some, but still up for debate in those of others, who wonder if there might still be a chance for an acceptable life in the Ugandan state, and it is (at least partly) through liberal ideas of equality before the state that they consider this possibility. Such values are thus "good to think with", because the state's regular failure to meet perpetually legitimates both criticism of it, and the consideration of other possibilities. They do not eschew the "cultural" reasons for Yira statehood in this process, but rather contemplate their futures through multiple lenses of political modernity (Falk Moore, 1993). This has significant implications for the future of the Rwenzori region, for, so long as the Ugandan state flouts the values that should legitimise it, the consideration of alternatives will become increasingly tantalising.

We must, however, situate the events of the 5th of July within the slipstream of "political time" (Spencer, 2007), the accumulation of political events that shapes outbursts of violence (since, as both Spencer and Das (1990) demonstrate, violence does not occur as an anomalous, irrational event, but as a continuation of extant conditions). In our case, this requires a long and short-term perspective. In the long-term, the collective memory of colonial oppression, the aftermath of the Rwenzururu rebellion, and the lukewarm (at best)

relations with post-colonial governments, particularly the NRM, have engendered among the Bayira what Sedgwick (2003) terms “paranoid thinking”, the practice of expecting malicious action, and interpreting misfortune as the result of such action. The “past in the present” can be political as well as cultural. In the short-term, the problematic ambiguities of the “cultural kingdoms” being “recognised” within a state are essential for understanding the 5th of July. I begin by sketching the events of the 5th of July, and then examining the practical problems of the notion of a “cultural” kingdom, and how these allowed Rwenzururu to insinuate authority over three territorial districts, and the ethnic groups within them, up until new kingdoms established themselves in response to it. I shall show how, in the district of Bundibugyo, disputes between the kingdoms arose over matters of territorial authority in light of these ambiguities, and what had the appearance of an “ethnic conflict” began to emerge. As a result, the events of the 5th of July were inevitably covered in the media as “ethnic violence”.

I shall then contest this narrative, and show that my informants were adamant that the violence was not about “ethnicity” per se, but about how government had betrayed its moral responsibility to treat citizens equally by apparently partaking in ethnic favouritism. Finally, I shall examine testimonies collected from numerous people who participated in the attacks, and show that the motive of the attack was ultimately corrective, rather than subversive, since it represented a use of the state’s own “language” of violence against it. In explaining their motives, the attackers cite the unequal treatment of different ethnicities by the government, a moral transgression of state responsibility that required corrective violence. So long as the state, in their eyes, flouts its moral responsibilities to them, I argue that the normative state’s moral responsibilities to its citizens remain meaningful through their enduring practical absence, since they allow the Bayira to continually legitimate the imagining of other political

possibilities. Chiefly among such alternative possibilities is the Yira State, which, in their narratives, is the logical next step should government continue to fail them.

Background to the 5th of July: The Attack, Kingdom Recognition and Land

Though there is no such thing as "sudden burst" of violence from nowhere, or violence disconnected from everyday social reality, as Spencer (2007) and Das (1990) have aptly argued and as I shall repeat here, a brief sketch of the events on 5th July 2014 make it easy to see why it came as a surprise. Three simultaneous strikes of violence occurred in three districts, in Kasese, Ntoroko and Bundibugyo, those three that make up the homeland of the Ugandan Bayira, and so, in the eyes of many of its supporters, the "territory" of Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu (OBR). In Ntoroko the violence appears to have been limited, with little information available about what happened. In Kasese, a village called Bigando of pastoral Basongora people was attacked by Bayira youth. Eleven Basongora were killed and houses were burned, and a policeman was also killed at the bridge on the outskirts of Kasese Town (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

The most shocking violence was in Bundibugyo, where the complete death toll is uncertain. Several hundred Bakonzo-Bayira youth attacked Kanyamwirima military barracks, security agents stationed just outside of Bundibugyo town, and two police stations, under the influence of traditional medicine. They then surrounded the town of Bundibugyo, before retreating into the hills. Twelve soldiers and policemen are believed to have died, whilst many more Bayira attackers (an initial statement put the figure at 41) were killed (New York Times, 2014). As they retreated, members of the Bamba ethnic group attacked and killed tens, possibly hundreds, of the original Bayira attackers in reprisal (Human Rights Watch,

2014). Their bodies were buried in mass graves, only exhumed in 2015, and a total death toll remains, to my knowledge, unavailable, but is generally estimated to be over a hundred and fifty (ibid).

Shortly after the more immediate rumours of ADF rebel activity were dispelled, official explanations fell on "tribal conflict", particularly when it was established that the Esyomango made up the majority of the Bayira attackers. The Esyomango is, in theory, OBR's youth wing, or, according to an introduction given to me in one of their meetings:

> "… a non-profit, non-political organization founded by the Omusinga to bring youth together, after realising there were gaps in the development process."

Uncomfortable a revelation though this was for OBR, I wish to emphasise it does not mean that it was planned by the Omusinga himself, or was a kingdom-led operation; indeed, the testimonies I collected will show that it was instigated quite differently. There is no official joining process to become an Esyomango, nor, despite attempts to formalize it, any clear program of Esyomango activities. As I was regularly told, one was Esyomango by dint of being a youth and having "a heart for the kingdom". Thus, any young Muyira person who claimed to be acting on behalf of the kingdom could call themselves such.

But what was it that had sparked this supposedly "ethnic" conflict in the first place and spurred the Esyomango to violence, in multiple places at once? Two new kingdoms had established themselves in the recent past. The minority pastoral Basongora people in Kasese hoisted their flag and had their own coronation ceremony in Muhokya, Kasese in 2012 (see Titeca and Reuss, 2017). Meanwhile in Bundibugyo, the Bamba ethnic group (who had been heavily involved in Rwenzururu as well, and partnered in campaigning for ethnic recognition alongside Isaiah Mukirania in the Toro Parliament), after a period of organising and lobbying, achieved government recognition of the Obudhingiya Bwa Bwamba (OBB) in June

2014, when Martin Ayongi Kamya was crowned Omudinghiya (king). Both Bamba and Basongora justified the creations of their kingdoms as a response to "cultural imperialism" by the Bakonzo-Bayira and the OBR, who they claimed were attempting to subjugate them and create an ethno-cultural monopoly.

Due to limitations of space, I am unable to fully reconstruct and analyse each point of violence on the 5th of July. I will thus focus on what happened in Bundibugyo, given that it was the scene of the most violence and thus the area on which I have the most data, though, whilst doing so, I shall briefly address the nature of the connectivity and simultaneous timing of these attacks. For a more complete profile of all the points in the 5th of July attacks, see Titeca and Reuss (2017) and Human Rights Watch (2014). These reports also outline crucial political economic factors, for instance, the effect of district creation as a mode of patronage politics, and how dividing districts is a strategy to weaken opposition strongholds (Titeca and Reuss, 2017, Tripp, 2010).

The Ambiguity of Kingdoms

To understand the Bundibugyo violence properly, it is essential to examine just how the "recognition" of "cultural kingdoms" (which, we may remember, have in theory neither power nor territory), had become so contentious. Once again we must return to the national constitution. Article 246 of the 1995 Constitution, "*Institution of traditional or cultural leaders*", is unfortunately vague. It stipulates little more than a "cultural leader's" right to exist in accordance with the wishes of their people, and the right to a state-provided stipend and benefits as the government sees fit. It states that the cultural leader shall not exercise any form of governance (administrative, legislative or executive), although it says nothing about

what a cultural leader may permissibly do (Constitution of Uganda, 1995). Whilst it is clear enough in writing that the "cultural leader" has no political power, the circumstances of the article's creation muddy those waters as far as popular perception is concerned.

President Museveni, ever suspicious of "tribalism" and all things "traditional" would probably have wished to avoid resurrecting the kingdoms and their politics, were it not for a powerful Baganda royalist lobby whose parliamentary backing he knew he would need to pass his draft constitution (Karlström, 1999, 2004). Thus in 1993, he restored the majority of kingdoms in Uganda that had existed prior to colonial rule as "cultural institutions", and their kings were crowned, to popular delight. However, Baganda royalists had hoped to gain Buganda kingdom the status of a federal state, and even though they failed, the "cultural institution" of the kingdom continues to wield political influence and monarchical authority (Brisset-Foucault, 2013b). Rwenzururu kingdom, however, was not restored alongside those kingdoms in the early nineties, and the Bayira had to lobby hard for over a decade before they were also allowed such a "cultural" kingdom. The government's eventual sanctioning of their king's coronation is described by most Bayira as having "recognized" that kingdom (though no requirement of such a process of recognition is mentioned in Article 246).[24] Museveni continued to refuse Rwenzururu's request to be "recognized" as a kingdom until 2009, despite a heated lobbying process by the Bayira, which, I am told by many, was often repressed with forced dispersal and teargas at numerous meetings. Eventually, after several studies of regional opinion and the realization that it was losing the NRM regional votes, Rwenzururu's king, Omusinga Charles Wesley Mumbere Iremangoma was "crowned".

[24] In Kasese, the Basongora's own crowned king told me that they decided to forgo the process of seeking government "recognition", since, as he (correctly) points out, there is no legislative requirement to do so when establishing a kingdom. Official validation is (to my knowledge) only necessary to claim the stipend for the cultural leader's allowance, which the Basongora king decided to forgo.

Government hoped that, by creating a cultural institution from the supposedly defunct kingdom of Rwenzururu in 2009, they would settle the matter for good, appease ethno-nationalist sentiment, and attract Bayira votes, which had overwhelmingly favored opposition parties. However, for the Bayira, when government "recognized" the kingdom in 2009, it was not *creating* a cultural institution, but finally *acknowledging the king's authority that had existed all along*, and allowing his kingdom to function once again.

Thus for many people, especially in rural areas, but even amongst some well educated people in major regional towns, the limits to the king's authority, relative to that of government, are blurred. Moreover, many of the restrictions on authority faced by Rwenzururu as a cultural institution (as opposed to a sovereign kingdom) were not interpreted by the Bayira as the inevitable changes of practice that had to accompany that change in status. Rather, these restrictions represented a failure by government to honour the "recognition" of the king's authority that they has supposedly granted when they restored the kingdom. An elder from Kasese district was complaining that government would not let them organize large-scale hill cleansing ceremonies any more, and said the following:

> "Whenever we do this, especially with the present government leadership, government does not let us do it freely, it stops us for reasons best known to themselves. I can cite very many anomalies where government has not truly authorised OBR to do certain activities, even though we are told we have been recognised."

Thus restrictions to Rwenzururu's activities post-recognition continued to be interpreted by the Bayira within Sedgwick's (2003) "paranoid" referent, a readiness to see ill-intention on the part of government. Rwenzururu's ambiguous status was exacerbated by the fact that OBR was named after a political movement, rather than a specific ethnicity like other Ugandan kingdoms, though this was something that OBR tried to play to its advantage, by

claiming to represent all ethnicities within the riverine region of their sacred mountain. Mbayahi, an OBR minister, explained the sometimes-used name "Banyarwenzururu", meaning "people of Rwenzururu":

> "We say Banyarwenzururu because we are including everybody, it's an umbrella! Banyarwenzururu means snow, Rwenzururu means snow. So there is the belief that everyone that drinks from the waters of Rwenzururu is a snow-man or a snow-woman. So they are all snow-men and snow-women, and they are called Banyarwenzururu."

To the optimist this could represent a spirit of cosmopolitan inclusivity, a "light" version of the natural metaphors and notions of shared substance which underlie idioms of national kinship (Malkki, 1997). However, the more cynical interpretation (and the much more common one among non-Bayira) was that Rwenzururu was using its ambiguous name to claim to represent people who had not asked for it. Muzamilu, a Musongora man in Kasese, pointed out irritably that "Rwenzururu" didn't refer to a specific culture, and yet was calling itself a cultural institution. Moreover, whilst Bayira were generally adamant that Rwenzururu was inclusive, there was never a question that it would be promoting a "culture" other than their own, or that they would compromise their privileged position within the institution. Yet for many Bayira, up until 2014, "Banyarwenzururu" was a serviceable myth for avoiding the question about whether they could claim to represent others within their imagined "territory". However, the perception of Rwenzururu's authority over the three districts and all ethnicities in them had a sharp shock in June 2014, when the Bamba king, the Omudingihya of Obudingihya Bwa Bamba (OBB), was "recognized" by government and crowned in Bundibugyo. In an interview with the Prime Minister of the OBB, he gave the following reasons for the institution's establishment:

> "After the OBR coronation in 2009, the Omusinga decided to visit, thinking Bundibugyo was under his control. We protested his visit as a king, but accepted as a man. On June 30th the President sent someone to find out what was happening in Bundibugyo. We told him the Omusinga forcefully came without consent, and that he is opening offices in our sub-counties without permission. From that, we conceived

> the idea of our own institution, to avoid forcible inclusion and subjugation by existing institutions, especially the OBR. We resolved to start the OBB. Because we said that Rwenzururu was the name of a political movement. Rwenzururu has no tribal attachment, which every institution has. The Queen of England is queen of the English, the King of Toro is for the Batoro, but Rwenzururu is not a tribe. So the OBB is for the Bamba."

This interview was conducted in April 2015, almost a year after the OBB's establishment. Yet the same language of ownership over land that the Omusinga was accused of deluding himself with is simultaneously being deployed – "…our sub-counties", etc. Nor was the Prime Minister the only Mwamba who appeared to have seen government recognition of their cultural kingdom as de facto (cultural) authority over the territory of Bundibugyo. His Deputy Prime Minister even once talked of lobbying for a "titular kingdom", which would work as a federal state in the manner that Buganda once was under the British Protectorate. Ordinary people tended to voice their superior rights to the land by their numerical superiority (building on the tradition established by cartographers, and later scholars including anthropologists, classifying areas of land as the homes of certain people and naturalising a connection to "the soil" (Malkki, 1997, Gupta and Ferguson, 1997, 1997b)). More recent censuses of Uganda have avoided recording the relative ethnic composition of the districts, and I was given several different numbers of the relative Bamba-Bayira distribution in Bundibugyo by both sides (although most put the Bayira population somewhere between 40 and 45%, with the remainder being mostly Bamba and some other smaller ethnicities). Bamba usually insisted that since they were the majority the district was "theirs", and therefore only their cultural kingdom could exercise authority here, whilst the Bayira tended to either contest the fact that they were fewer than the Bamba, or pointed out that it was almost evenly split.

Ethnicity or Government?

It is simple enough to see that the kingdoms are institutions through which ethnic identity crystallizes, but to focus exclusively on the ethnic dimension in local power struggles is to miss the critical role that the state plays in the arbitration of such conflicts (Lund, 2003, Reuss and Titeca, 2017). The tensions between the two kingdoms came to a head over a land dispute and the construction of a small house, and though the symbolic authority of the kingdoms in question was what was at stake, the catalyst for the 5th of July violence was, according to the Bayira, *the government's failure to handle the matter fairly*. (Indeed, many Bamba seemed to concur that this perception was at the heart of the matter, even if they thought the government had acted rightly). I was unable to speak to the senior government officials who made the decisions around this land case that were so controversial; it is possible they made some of these decisions with the aim of avoiding violence. However, within the "paranoid" (Sedgwick, 2003) "political time" stream (Spencer, 2007) of the Bayira's experience of marginalisation, government action was interpreted (not unjustifiably in some instances) as unfairly favourable to the Bamba, and/or further efforts to undermine the Bayira. It was this that shaped the "formations of violence" (to borrow Feldman's (1991) term) on the 5th of July.

Kirindi is a small village on the outskirts of Bundibugyo town. Though it does not appear a place of political significance, it is where Isaiah Mukirania's father Masanduku lived for a time, and the site is thus claimed by his sons as their ancestral land. Prince Christopher Taban Kibanzanga, the current Omusinga's brother, had attempted to try and restore a hut on the land in early 2014, and to start construction on another house. Kibanzanga is also a politician, formerly of the opposition FDC, but in the run-up to the 2016 elections, he switched parties and joined Museveni's NRM to campaign for the Bundibugyo seat, which he eventually won.

He also had a significant role in the peace delegations attempting to restore relations between the kingdoms both before and after the 5th of July attack. In early 2015, whilst he was still an aspiring candidate, I accompanied Kibanzanga on my first visit to Bundibugyo, and he drove over to Kirindi to inspect the site. Below is an extract from my field notes on the visit:

> Kirindi is by the side of a main road leading out of Bundibugyo; the site is a large clearing, obviously made by chopping down cocoa trees, since the debris still litters the ground. There's a dilapidated grass hut that's completely collapsed and keeled over, so its roof sticks out to one side. As we (me, Kibanzanga, and our host) get out of the car, we meet Kyakimwa as she walks by. Kyakimwa is in her late twenties, greets us warmly, and then reveals pretty quickly that she's got some fairly extremist beliefs. Kibanzanga begins to tell me that the hut was a shrine, and despite the fact that it was on his family's land, private land, they were not allowed to maintain it. The "shrine", the *e'kyaghanda* hut, is there since this was where the three Rwenzururu leaders used to meet to make plans. Kibanzanga is angrily recounting the story – this grass hut, on private land, was at one point last year under 24 hour armed guard, to prevent both the Bamba carrying out their threat of destroying it, or the Bakonzo who were trying to maintain it. Apparently at one point a senior government minister flew over from Kampala to the site to try and see what the fuss what about. Kibanzanga - "Can you imagine, in this century? A politician flying out from Kampala in a helicopter to go and look at a grass hut?"
>
> However, he is having a hard time talking over Kyakimwa, who is almost spitting with rage, shouting short, angry sentences in quick succession. She yelled "This is a place for the Banyarwenzururu, which means the Bakonjo!" Eventually she stops ranting long enough for Kibanzanga to tell me she's a senior leader in the Bundibugyo Esyomango, and she says, a bit cryptically, "Yes, I'm the planner." (I wasn't sure at the time if she meant the planner of general Esyomango activities or something else, but Kibanzanga later confirmed she was a senior coordinator planning the attacks on the 5th). She goes on to say that this hut was the real source of Bamba/Bakonzo conflict in Bundibugyo. All of the security agents guarding it were killed during the July attacks.… Kyakimwa - "How can they stop us? The Bakonzo make up 47% of the people in Bundibugyo, out of seven tribes, so we are more than the Bamba! But they are marginalizing us! I was born a Munyarwenzururu and I will die here to remain a Munyarwenzururu!"

This saga around Kirindi continued for the duration of my fieldwork, with the building of the house repeatedly stopping and starting, as government seemed to both give and withdraw their permission several times. In the wake of the attacks the previous year the heavy government response was perhaps unsurprising, though it did make for an odd sight. I visited Kirindi again several months later, and found thirteen armed Field Force Unit police guarding

the field with the collapsed "shrine" and the foundations of a brick house. In the exchange above, Kibanzanga emphasises the fact that this is his private family land, and thus the government denying him the right to build on it is the height of absurdity. Kyakimwa seems to vocally levy her anger against the Bamba. Yet, as she also says, the "security agents" guarding the shrine, i.e. national police and army personnel, were all killed in the attack, whilst Bamba civilians were not targeted. To better contextualise this, it is necessary to see what exactly was so objectionable about the building of this house in the first place that it prompted government involvement.

I have put the word "shrine" above in inverted commas, since whether the house itself was indeed a shrine is something of an unsettled question. "*E'kyaghanda*" (which it will be recalled is also the name of the Banande-Bayira unification organization in Congo), is actually a general word to describe a place in which people meet. It is used to refer to councils of elders, general assemblies, and so on, and can refer to both the group of people meeting and the building in which the meeting takes place. Yet, since people also meet in "shrines" i.e. huts in which rituals take place, it refers to those too, and indeed Kibanzanga was the one who used the English word "shrine" above. OBR does indeed perform rituals in similar huts, i.e. shrines, at their palace in Kasese. Up until 2014, Rwenzururu Independence Day celebrations had been held (Isaiah Mukirania declared Rwenzururu an independent state on the 30th June 1962,) in the area that is now Bundibugyo. Such celebrations involved the Omusinga travelling to Bundibugyo, and the celebration would also have involved ritual performance at a shrine.

The question of whether or not the house at Kirindi was a "shrine" was problematic, then, because, in the eyes of the new Bamba kingdom, the OBB, ritual performance in it would

symbolise Rwenzururu authority in the region. This became clear in several exchanges, the first of which, detailed in an extract from my notes below, involved Kibanzanga being asked about the use of the house in a meeting with two local men involved in the post 5th of July peace process.

> "One of the representatives says that they want to allay any confusion that comes from the building works going on, but for that they need to know if the structures will be for the cultural institution, or for the royal family. Kibanzanga says he's not sure why the hut has caused so many problems: "The Bamba say "We don't want it", we say why, they just say, "We don't want it!" But can you separate the royal family from the cultural institution? No, you cannot. Besides they always assume the hut is a shrine for bewitching, when actually it was never a shrine, but a meeting place, and what they are building now is a community centre, not a shrine. It will be for use by the royal family, but they hope to have ten cottages and a community centre, so guests can stay. And it will be available for events, it can be hired out, and our abalerawana (neighbours) can use it too."

Kibanzanga thus hesitantly accepts here that the matter is not so simple as the free use of his private family land, since the Rwenzururu royal family owning property here has strong symbolic connotations. However, he dismisses concerns that the house is a "shrine" that might be used for rituals of questionable intentions. The Bamba evidently had a different view of the house's significance, which became clear during the first coronation anniversary ceremony of the OBB in June 2015, an event with great fanfare, a tremendous turnout, and about a hundred and fifty of their own "Royal Guards". These were young people with T-shirts with "Royal Guard" printed on them, marching up and down the ceremony ground in the style of a military parade, holding sticks with which they later mimicked presenting arms. Apparently the OBB had wasted no time in following the OBR's appropriation of state-like symbols. The climax of the ceremony was the speech of the Omudingihya himself, during which I made the following notes:

> "…He (the Omudingihya) then says the construction of the house in Kirindi has been stopped, as it was degrading the kingdom. There is an absolutely explosive cheer. He continues, "It was stopped because it was against Bamba culture and signifying Rwenzururu authority over this place. It was very derogatory to the people of Bundibugyo. If it had been a normal house it would have been fine, but it was a

> shrine. We were able to stop its construction through dialogue." I ask my Mwamba neighbour in the ceremony if he thinks the shrine has been stopped for good. He says yes, they cannot build anything to signify authority over this territory. I asked what he thought the shrine would be used to worship, and he said it would be a symbol of authority over the region of Bundibugyo. I said that I was told it would be a community centre, but he said he thought not, and that was just a disguise. Or at least, that was what he was told."

It was amidst the muddied symbolism of the Kirindi dispute, and what it meant for the authority of both kingdoms in Bundibugyo (even though legally those kingdoms were unable to make any territorial claims) that two events in late June and early July 2014 catalysed what would manifest as the 5th of July violence. The first was that the Rwenzururu Omusinga's typical celebration of "Rwenzururu Independence Day" was stopped, despite having been celebrated in Bundibugyo every year since 2009. The Bayira youth of Bundibugyo, the Esyomango (likely more determined than ever to celebrate in 2014 given this new assertion of Bamba ethno-nationalism), had their preparations for the independence day celebration brought to a crunching halt a few days before, when government appeared to acquiesce to the OBB's request to prevent it.

A few days later, still smarting from their anger, more Esyomango went to the Boma Ground (the open ground around which most Ugandan small towns are constructed) to practice football. At the upcoming Rwenzururu coronation anniversary ceremony in October 2014 there was to be a football tournament, and they wanted to enter a team. Before they were allowed to start the match (as the story was recounted to me), they were met with a volley of teargas from the police, who were apparently acting on a request from the OBB to prevent any Rwenzururu activity on "Bamba sacred ground". (I specify these two events as they were the principal reasons described by my informants who participated in the attacks, although it is quite possible that some leadership figures had been laying the groundwork for a militant strike for some time before, and were able to seize their moment in the wake of these events.)

From what I have already described, it is probably unsurprising that the Ugandan government and the media overwhelmingly characterised the following 5th of July violence as "ethnic". Indeed, I admit, I was confused for some time that, given what I knew of the background of the attacks, and the anger that informants such as Kyakimwa expressed at the Bamba themselves, I would still constantly hear statements such as these:

> **Prime Minister of OBB: "**That was not a tribal conflict. Because they came and attacked government installations. They wanted it to turn into a tribal conflict. They would take out maybe ten Baamba and the rest would fear that and arm themselves. That aim of the Yira State, they still have in their minds. They know we don't agree with what they want to do."
>
> **Ndungo, a young Muyira man whose friend was killed in the attack: "**I would swear to my grave that this is not a tribal conflict."
>
> **Kyakimwa, the planner:** "The Esyomango had come to attack the barracks because they know they are not disturbed by the Bamba, they are disturbed by the government!"
>
> **Walina, a businessman in Kasese, referring to the supposedly "ethnic" nature of the 5th of July:** "It is politicians who are stirring it. It is only after people start to hear that they are being attacked that people start to have tribal fears, and then there starts to be tension."

It seems both sides of the "ethnic conflict" are adamant that it wasn't one. The OBB Prime Minister attributes the violence as part of a strategy to create the Yira State, whilst the Bayira insist that the blame lies with government. Yet all attribute this to political, not ethnic matters. Ethnicity might always be political, but if I were to try and define the notion of ethnicity that they were *rejecting*, I would use Burnham's (1996) description of an "ethnic" conflict occurring when:

> "…an individual perceives that the differences in motivation of another actor's behaviour are due to that actor's socialisation into another culture" (pg. 5).

Rather, they fall closer to Bayart's (2009) portrayal of ethnicity, as:

> "…allegiances [which] by definition form part of a "universe of shared meanings", that of the state. These generative dynamics are themselves facets of a wider process, the emergence of a new system of inequality and domination" (pg. 56).

It was not differences of "culture" that the Bamba and Bayira objected to in each other. It was the assumption that each had of the other's political intentions, and that Other's assumed readiness to manipulate political power. This was manifested in the "formations of violence" (Feldman, 1991) of the 5th of July, when, at least in Bundibugyo, it was government installations, not Bamba ones, that came under attack. Let us turn to hearing from the attackers themselves, and their reasoning for this.

Testimonies in the Aftermath

If we accept my informants' premise that, while ethnic competition of sorts exists between the Bamba and Bayira, the violence of the 5th of July was not an act of "ethnic" violence, then what was the purpose of the attack? Kahangwa was a senior coordinator of the attacks, and reportedly the individual that had organised the simultaneous strikes elsewhere. He is a determined secessionist as well, yet, to my surprise, made clear that the 5th of July was not done with the Yira State in mind.

> "By the time we were fighting, we were not creating the Yira state. That battle is soon starting. On 5th we were fighting for, one, we had made five appointments to meet Museveni, and they were denying us a chance to meet him. Two new kingdoms were planned, and one was installed, with no explanation of how the communities would cooperate and stay together. The government were not ready to do that, and they had started a system of blocking our king whenever he plans a journey. Our boys and girls in Bundibugyo were denied a chance to play football, and government did not explain why. Several cases at the police were not handled properly. There were land issues."

The leadership dynamic of the attacks was somewhat confusing. Though I had been introduced to Kahangwa after several people assured me that he was something of a mastermind behind the attack, the youth who participated mostly insisted that there was no senior leadership, but that it was a collective decision made of their own accord.[25]

[25] I have used the phrase "senior coordinator" for Kahangwa to describe his role in the attacks because that is how he and certain others tended to describe his role, though the "senior" aspect is quite possibly an exaggeration. He did play a number of significant organisational roles and may have

Nevertheless, Kahangwa, despite saying that the battle for the Yira State itself is soon beginning, insists that the 5th of July attack was motivated by the injustices of the state that they live under now. It is possible that he had hoped the 5th of July would rally further support for secessionism, but among other participants I interviewed, the Yira State had a less distinct place in their motives, and first and foremost for them was the matter of their present circumstances. Here are some of their statements explaining their motivations for attacking:

Kyakimwa, the planner:

> Due to the fact that that they [the Bayira of Bundibugyo] could not ask to meet the president, they could not make an appointment. So after that we had to say that the Bamba has no power to make all this, only the government has power!... We would meet and say "What can we do?" There was some committee formed by government to bring peace in the region, but while we were waiting for this peace from the government we could see all in all it was in vain. Today they do this, another day they do another thing, another day they do another thing. When it got to the point that they say we cannot play in the ground, that was too much worse. The government had to put together a security committee, with both Bakonzo and Bamba, so that they should see why they are refusing to let the Omusinga come here, but when we could see the committee was delaying and not giving an answer, that's when we had to see that whatever they are telling us, they are not giving us an answer. So let us fight for ourselves, because the government is not fighting for us! So it was something like making a strike. They had to go to the barracks so it was like at least if they die in the barracks let them die, because the government was not looking after us.

Bisika, a young female attacker who was imprisoned but later pardoned:

> E.B.: Why did you want to take part?
>
> B: It was a very good idea, as there is a lot of marginalization and mistreatment by the Bamba. So we must fight for our rights.
>
> E.B.: What were they hoping to achieve in the attacks?
>
> B: We just wanted to assert ourselves, and show government that we exist, and here we are! It was attention seeking!
>
> E.B.: Did it work?

---

been planning militant activity prior to the 5th of July, though I will refrain from commenting on the particulars to protect his identity. Nevertheless, the participants deny that they were coerced or inspired by anyone but their fellows. I suspect that participants may have seen Kahangwa, and others with important coordinating roles such as Kyakimwa, as equals with particular jobs rather than as leaders.

B: It worked! We got government attention.

E.B.: What happened after the attacks?

B: We are still watching government and waiting to see if it will take sides again in communal conflicts.

At the heart of both of these statements is the same ultimate grievance, that of unequal treatment by government in the resolution of communal disputes, a sentiment that Kahangwa also echoes above. The Bamba are mentioned in both and are somewhat culpable, but, ultimately, this is interpreted not through a prism of inherent ethnic hatred, but rather, a new example of the cycle of marginalisation at the hands of government. Both Kyakimwa and Bisika cited a lack of opportunities to meet the President, which may sound a rather presumptuous demand to a western audience, but is in fact a common feature of Ugandan politics. Museveni is strongly expected to personally meet community representatives, and is regularly pictured doing so in the media. The fact that they were denied such a meeting revealed for Kyakimwa that "the government is not looking after us".

Though, as Lund (2003) points out, we might assume that ethnic "conflict" (in the loosest sense of the term) would weaken the state, it in fact has a further effect of reinforcing state power, since the state becomes the guarantor of rights perceived to be at risk in the face of competition. Therefore, in their failure to guarantee the fair treatment of the Bayira in this case, the government has engaged in its own transgression of its moral responsibility. This is to say that, though they may not wholeheartedly have imbibed liberal political ideals (Spencer, 2007), the Bayira nevertheless hold certain normative ideals about how a state *should* work, one of which is equal treatment in the face of a state government. Their repeated denial of this equality, and the lack of opportunity for expressions of this grievance for the Bayira, is what is said to have justified their use of violence.

It recalls Asad's (2007) exploration of the legitimation of terrorist violence, which is made on a parallel track with the violence committed by the armies of liberal states, in that both legitimize violence through insisting that it is as much coerced as it is deliberate. Kwakimwa describes how their avenues for peaceful resolution of this conflict were repeatedly closed, by Bakonzo-Bayira being denied the chance to meet the President because of Baamba dominance of local government, and by the peace committee's failure to reach a solution. Thus violence was the only language of expression that they were left with. Bisika insists that, since government refused to even acknowledge their existence as political subjects worthy of their attention, only violence would engender change. Yet I wish to draw attention to the seemingly self-sacrificial tone of Kyakimwa's later words:

> "They had to go to the barracks so it was like at least if they die in the barracks let them die, because the government was not looking after us."

This violence was thus not intended to win a fight militarily. Even though the youth made extensive use of traditional medicines that they believed would render them bulletproof, Bisika also confirms that the fight was "attention seeking", not a plan to overpower state institutions.

What is it about willingness to both embrace death at the hands of agents of the state, and to inflict death on them, that they believe might make the government start to "look after" them, when they do not feel it has ever done so before? Agamben's (2005) writings on the "state of exception" offer fruitful grounds for reflection. The state of exception, as envisaged by Carl Schmitt and other political theorists, is when the sovereign suspends the laws of state on the grounds of exceptional circumstances, and thus power is concentrated entirely in the hands of the sovereign. Though war, especially civil war, is commonly where the state of exception

begins, aspects of its power may be extended or upheld in peacetime as well. The principal question, as far as legal theorists were concerned, was whether the state of exception was generated from within the law or without it. For Agamben, it was neither of these. Rather, the state of exception was a fiction that was designed to uphold the law whilst simultaneously exercising violence outside of the law's realm.

Though Agamben argued that the state of exception could exist in both democratic and authoritarian regimes, it must be remembered that Uganda is increasingly of the latter type, with power ever more concentrated in President Museveni's hands (Tripp, 2010, Reuss and Titeca, 2017b). Moreover, the Bayira's interpretation of their own political history sees them as forever the victims of the state of exception; they were, and feel they still are, marginalised within states. Thus, though they may not feel they have experienced the state of normality, such as it may be, through their awareness of their own marginalisation they know that there must be one, or at least a better condition than that which they exist in, which others no doubt enjoy. One young vigilante in Kanzira's group reflected on this sense of comparative inequality:

> "We have only of recent been involved in the constitution of Uganda in 1995, and we feel that just because we have recently been involved, they have continuously neglected our existence, and it is assisting other tribes the way it is supposed to assist its own citizens, but it has continuously neglected us."

While for Agamben, and particularly for his influencer Walter Benjamin, the law was not necessarily a benevolent force, but one that enforced all order through violence (Benjamin, 1986), the Bayira, though they may not be liberal theorists per se, still have strong ideas about how states *should* behave. Thus a more benevolent state of normality is, at least for some, possible. A state of normality therefore represents a possible defence, but to reach that they must first defeat the state of exception.

If, as Agamben says, the state of exception is a *fiction* that is employed to uphold the law whilst exercising violence outside of it, which gives the state power over life itself, then the fiction must be revealed as such. The basis of such a fiction is whatever reason (if, indeed, one is given) supposedly necessitates the population's submission to the state of exception, should they wish to be spared the state's violence. To put it another way, a peoples' *avoidance* of state violence allows the state to believe that their legitimising fiction has worked. What the Bayira attackers did on the 5th of July is the reverse. Using violence against the agents of the state, and indeed embracing the prospect of receiving it, as these narratives suggest, is to deprive the state of exception of that which it seeks to dominate, and that on which the fiction suspends power over – life itself. If the state of exception exists only because people will accept it to be spared violence, then to willingly inflict and receive violence on state agents is to deprive the state of exception, and the state itself, of its last resource of power. It is a rejection of sovereignty on current terms, meaning that sovereignty must be re-established on different, more moral grounds, those of the state of normality that the Bayira believe other ethnic groups in Uganda enjoy. Kyakimwa said at another point in our interview:

> "…in Bundibugyo the Bamba don't want the Bakonjo to benefit from what government brings, because they are the ones in the offices of government, so they don't want the Bakonjo to benefit. All of us are Ugandans! We are natives. But they don't want the Bakonjo to benefit. So we wonder why we should not get government services."

In this passage, she invokes the current national identity of the Bayira in Uganda as reason for their right to equal treatment and equal distribution of services, a default expectation of equality as a tenet of state membership. This kind of invocation, to my mind, is not especially surprising. Expectations of what a government service should do are fairly self-evident, and

the diversions of that expectation in reality are naturally jarring. As Mbembe and Roitman (1995) describe in Cameroon:

> "...when people refer to "insanity," they are not referring to a state which defects from reason, but rather to the unbearable discrepancy that exists between publicly announced reality and that other constantly changing, unstable and uncertain, quasi-elliptic realm that is consistently pursued and always dissipates, often emerging only after a long and exhausting bargain" (pg. 342).

Ideal-type state discourse, and the current failings of the state that it mirrors, filter through all levels of life in Uganda and elsewhere, through the media, in political rallies, in education, in the work of NGOs (both local and international) and in the discussions of daily life. Political engagement at any level means confronting what the state actually does with assertions of what it should be doing instead. And, given that the Bayira feel they are exceptionally maltreated by the state, it stands to reason that others are less so. Thus, to pick up Spencer's (2007) question of whether anthropology has overly capitulated to Enlightenment ideas about the state when examining peoples' relations with it, I wholeheartedly agree on the need for caution, but nor need we assume that such ideas are entirely meaningless. Rather, for the Bayira, I would conclude that normative values of moral statehood are one among many tools in their theoretical toolkit for confronting the question of their current political position, but are all the more significant because of their intangibility, and so their capacity to legitimise alternatives.

The fragility of the state institutions left behind by the British colonisers, and the subsequent ease with which they were able to be manipulated by factional interests (Tripp, 2010) has led to a situation in contemporary Uganda where ideals of "good governance" are extolled endlessly (by both Ugandans and outsiders), and yet the state appears increasingly unable or unwilling to follow them. The normative, liberal "values" of a state, then, are not meaningless or necessarily objectionable – indeed, for so long as one is a Ugandan living

there, their presence is (even if only for pragmatic reasons), more desirable than their absence. However, their eternal practical absence also gives these values another meaningful purpose, as a point from which other alternatives can be considered. Let us see how the Yira State fits into the attack participant's considerations of the aftermath.

Group interview with three young male attack participants:

> **E.B**: Have peace efforts been successful?
>
> **Participant 1**: There is no peace. There are no peace talks. After they finished talking, you hear our person has been beaten. The government keeps quiet. Bakonzo shops are destroyed.
>
> **Participant 2**: Even Europeans know Yira, they know we want it, why don't we have our own state?"
>
> **Participant 3**: The government of Uganda uses such tribes to fight the Bakonzo so we all die. Formerly we weren't in the Constitution of Uganda, so we were in another state! Now they see that we are going, they start killing us. The Bayira of Congo are dying, the Bayira public are dying. What is the intention of both governments, and aren't the Bazungu seeing how we are suffering?

Kyakimwa, the planner

> **E.B**.: So what is happening with the Esyomango now?
>
> **K:** If they get what they are fighting for they have no problem! I told you that they are fighting to get a district, to build their place there [at Kirindi] and to be allowed for the Omusinga to come here. And if the elders are allowed to meet their president to discuss their issues then they can peacefully live. They don't want anything apart from that.
>
> **E.B**.: So they don't want the Yira State that some people talk about?
>
> **K:** If we get peace, that's enough. If the state comes, that's ok! Because nobody hates to be free. If we get the state… it is a way by which we think we can be safe, and we organize for ourselves without anyone saying they will hinder you from what you are going to do. Because we are being hindered, if they see that you are developing then they will hinder you. So for us we are not worried, we are just looking for a way for how we can get peace. If we get the state we can get peace, but if we can get peace minus the Yira State it's ok!

The young men appear to believe there is a grander conspiracy against the Bayira as a whole,

and no state but their own will guarantee their freedom, whereas Kyakimwa seems to think that the Ugandan state may yet realise the error of its ways and offer them satisfactory conditions for life within it. However, she is clear, the Yira State remains a desirable (and perhaps preferable) possibility should Uganda fail. The matter of the Yira State is thus not entirely settled for all its discussants, but its place in their political futures is assessed in regard to multiple referents of political modernity (Falk Moore, 1993), as well as the Bayira's political past. Their referencing notions of what a state *should* do is not a wholesale adoption of Enlightenment liberal ontology, for people consider multiple ontologies in their navigation of life all the time (Vigh and Sausdal, 2014). I would suggest, rather, that this is indicative of the tension between the alternative political possibilities of more immediate (perhaps more pragmatic) reform and total radical change that are at the heart of debate around significant political change (Rethmann, 2013).

The vague, if unobjectionable tenets of liberal statism would not be able to accommodate many of the "cultural" expressions and ways of life that they Bayira wish to see revived, and so consideration of these values should not be taken to mean they are the only end game. Yet they still serve as a meaningful referent for their present situation, and as guidelines for how they might make their present condition more tolerable. However, those ideas also continue to demonstrate by their absence the Ugandan state's perceived enmity towards them, just as it has been, they believe, since they found themselves within the Ugandan Protectorate under Toro rule. Even as Kyakima suggests that life within Uganda would be acceptable so long as they could live peacefully and equally, she acknowledges that powers with the capacity to "hinder" them would continue to exist, and thus an alternative state would represent true freedom, although for the sake of "peace" in the short term they may be prepared to accept less. The young men, however, are clearly disillusioned and believe the prospect of true

reform is impossible, and the Yira State is their only option for a fulfilling life.

Conclusion

This deliberation of political possibilities has very real consequences for the Ugandan state itself. For even though the NRM regime is increasingly moving further from practicing a liberal kind of governance, and even though the Bayira feel they have never lived under a government that allows them their due freedoms anyway, they still know what a state is morally expected to do. They remain multi-faceted political thinkers, ready to make use of the languages and technologies of states and imbue them with their own designs, but their own "cultural" ways of politicking do not leave them blind to, or ambivalent to a normative doctrine of (in NGO-speak) "good governance". Indeed, the expectation of how they should be treated within a state pushed the young participants of the 5th of July violence to the point of being ready to inflict, and receive lethal violence, in order to undo the "state of exception" and restore the "norm" that they believed other, non-marginalised Ugandans enjoyed.

Given the statements that I have presented here were documented about a year after the attacks, however, it seems that any temporary successes of the attack, in the attackers' eyes, have failed to deliver much fruitful change. Moreover, later violence by the state against the Bayira and Rwenzururu Kingdom itself will have significantly diminished the hopes of those on the fence about secessionism that the Ugandan state will grant them a tolerable existence. The further the government strays from what people know that it owes them, the more necessary a radical alternative seems. In this chapter, then, I have aimed to clarify my position on how to deal with "the state", and the Enlightenment baggage that inevitably accompanies studies of it. Spencer (2007) is quite correct to challenge any capitulation to the

idea that the world is now made up of "liberal political subjects" thanks to the dominance of the "national order of things" (Malkki, 1995). Nevertheless, we should also not discount that a widespread global knowledge of how a state should operate (from the perspective of the normative liberal thinker) becomes part of peoples' theoretical toolkits when considering their political futures, for, as Falk Moore (1993) points out, there are numerous visions of political modernity with which to play. If only by their absence, then, the "values" of the Enlightenment state remain "good to think with", even as the aspects of them that people find appealing become repackaged in new visions of political possibility.

Chapter Epilogue: The State Against Rwenzururu

In November 2016, the Ugandan national army (the UPDF) launched a devastating attack against the offices and palace of Rwenzururu, and went on a killing spree for the supposed purpose of stopping kingdom-supported "rebels" with secessionist ambitions. I had left the field ten months previously, and thus am unable to verify or comment in depth on claims made by both sides, but in light of this chapter's argument, it is worth considering the impact of this attack. Though media claims are sometimes contradictory, it seems the long-standing dispute between kingdom and government over the Royal Guards had grown, to the point that the government suspected that they were acting as a paramilitary and potential rebel group, with the aim of mobilizing and arming people for a fight to create the Yira State.

On 26th November 2016, a convoy of military vehicles surrounded the OBR offices in the centre of Kasese and ordered nearby shops to close. The Royal Guards who patrolled outside the kingdom offices purportedly locked the doors and barricaded themselves inside, to which the UPDF responded by climbing over the walls of the compound, shooting eight guards and

seizing files and the office computer (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Violence ensued in the subcounties surrounding Kasese after that; men who were allegedly Royal Guards attacked numerous police posts, killing fourteen policemen and one Crime Preventer (ibid). On the following day, November the 27th, the UPDF surrounded Buhikira Palace, the Rwenzururu royal residence and compound, and gave the Omusinga a two-hour ultimatum in which to disband the Royal Guards, or face attack (Asiimwe, 2016).

I was told by a Muyira friend that the Omusinga had complied, but had requested more time with which to meet the demands. If this was the case it was evidently ignored, since the UPDF stormed the palace after the time elapsed, and proceeded to kill indiscriminately. The official figure was 62 people killed, 46 of whom were Royal Guards (Daily Monitor, 2016) The UPDF claims it attacked in self-defence, and that the attackers threw improvised explosive devices at them (Basiime, 2016). However, Human Rights Watch believes that the figure is much higher, and states that fifteen children are still missing after the attack. Rumours are arife that their bodies were buried in a hidden mass grave. Their estimate for the total death toll is 156 over two days, but they suggest it may be higher (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

The Omusinga himself, along with over a hundred others, were arrested. The Omusinga is facing charges of terrorism, treason, murder and aggrevated robbery, and another twelve Royal Guards are also facing charges (BBC, 2016, Asiimwe, 2016). He has since been released on bail but is under house arrest in Kampala. The government declared that they their actions were necessary to stop a rebel group called Kilhumira Mutima (the Strong-Hearted), of which many Royal Guards were said to be members, and which was supposedly based at the palace (BBC, 2016b). (A secessionist-inclined friend who knew the Royal

Guards well insists this group is a government invention). They also claim to have recovered a stash of guns and petrol bombs (BBC, 2016). I am unable to comment on the truth of allegations on either side. I knew the Royal Guards relatively well, and some (though not all) did discuss their secessionist sympathies with me. I had never heard of the name Kilhumira Mutima prior to these reports; it may have been a recent creation, or I was not trusted with the information, or it may be a political fabrication. Human Rights Watch is skeptical of the UPDF claim that the guns they supposedly found in the palace belonged to the policemen killed in the checkpoint violence the day before (Human Rights Watch, 2017). It is possible that the Royal Guards may have been able to obtain guns, but it is also a claim worth questioning given their own, and the kingdom's lack of resources.

Yet, whether or not the government's claims were true is irrelevant to the question of whether the UPDF's use of force was justifiable. Human Rights Watch attest that the offensive was a blatant violation of the UN Principles on the Use of Force. However, one hardly need be an expert in International Humanitarian Law and military principles of necessary and proportional use of force to see that the massacre of over a hundred people (the majority of whom would have been unarmed even if the government's claims were true), is a gross abuse of state power. Certainly that is what the Bayira will have seen. As I stated in the introduction, however powerful secessionist sympathies in the region are, no evidence that I have seen, or that the Ugandan government presented, suggests that they present a credible threat to the territorial integrity of Uganda or DRC. Whilst the state does have a responsibility to monitor militant sympathies and prevent violence where possible, they have greatly hurt their own cause in this callous display of violence. For all their cynicism of the workings of the state, the Bayira are entirely aware of what constitutes legitimate state power

in the normative sense, and, as we have seen, failure to live up to the principles of legitimacy only makes the imagined alternatives more tantalizing.

Conclusion

The performative creation and potential secession of a new Yira State in public imagination and discourse has, I have argued, relied on dealing with two separate domains of influence, which follow a parallel to Ekeh's (1975) "two publics" thesis. The Bayira are (re)constructing their own "culture" as an "authentic", naturalised, and so thoroughly moral identity. That identity stipulates conservative behaviour, religious piety, and so on, the practice of which is being increasingly codified and quasi-legalised in the works of researchers, the instructions of the institutions of Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu and E'Kyaghanda, those of the prophets, and so on. The morality inherent in this ethno-national identity is constructed in (largely antonymic) reference to the immorality associated with the realm of globalised culture, and the domain of "politics" in the imported construct of the "state". The materialistic but prosperous lifestyles showcased in media "flows" (Appadurai, 1990) are believed to promote individualism, sexual immorality and cultural abandonment. Formal education likewise can lead to places of prosperity and power that have a corrupting, even treacherous influence on their recipients. Education and prosperity also buy one government jobs and political influence, wherein lies the moral ill that is "politics".

These two seemingly antonymic domains have nevertheless been forced into a relationship of mutual dependence in plans for secessionism. One cannot have a self-determining, morally righteous and powerful ethnic "nation" recognised at a global level without its amoral counterpart, the "state", and the formal education, technology and so on that are needed to run it and to build it. Moreover, it is not only the functional properties of the "state" and the global products associated with it which appeal. The Bayira secessionists and ethno-nationalists do not reject formal education, technological innovation, material prosperity or

political influence; they desire them. Indeed, the identity they are (re)discovering is one that portrays them as natural intellectuals and scientific innovators. However, they cannot risk the abandonment of their inherent morality in these pursuits, for without practicing that "cultural" morality, they will not recover spiritual favour and the tremendous power associated with that, which they so desperately need for political emancipation, and for their culturally original form technological and social progress.

Yet, they face an obstacle in the relative temporal associations attached to these two influential domains. So long as the Bayira in general, and their younger generation in particular, associate the practices of "culture" with the "past", and global and material influences as the more desirable "future", there is little chance of boosting adherence to "culture", which further limits interest in ethno-nationalism and secessionism. If, in the cyclical as well as linear patterns of Yira temporal thought, the practices and values of the "past" cannot be synchronised with their aspirations for the "future", they cannot win hearts and minds for the struggle for *akeethu katheere*, that which is lost. Hence throughout we have seen a plethora of struggles for the authority to dictate not only what Bayira "culture" is, but to alter the temporal meanings attached to it.

There is a final question that I wish to address in conclusion, which is the matter of studying a political project conceived in future time, but which is still subject to culturally relative conceptions of the passage of time. Whilst the anthropology of "the future" is a broadening category (e.g. Appadurai, 2013, Piot, 2010, Weiss, 2004, Rowlands, 1995, Johnson-Hanks, 2005, etc.), the question of whether the future is a universal or a culturally specific category of temporality has also been raised (e.g. Evans-Pritchard, 1939, Peel, 1984, Mbiti, 1969). Mbiti particularly argued that the "future", or at least the distant future, was in fact of limited

significance in African temporal thought prior to colonial influences. I am not aiming to settle this debate, but I will argue that the conceptualisation of an aspirational future, one in which the ("futuristic") Yira State will exist, can comfortably work within what we have already seen of Yira temporal thought and political practice, and the practice of "stereotypic reproduction" (Peel, 1984).

Stereotypic reproduction, as Peel describes it, is a form of "cultural work" that achieves:

> "…the mutual conditioning of past and present… where possible, present practice is governed by the model of past practice and, where change does occur, there is a tendency to rework the past so as to make it appear that past practice has governed present practice." (ibid, pg. 113).

Those who establish themselves as "authorities" in matters of culture discursively emphasise what moral cultural practice is through recourse to history. Social change can thus be mitigated, and when it does occur, it can still be made to occur in a justifiable manner, so long as core elements of moral and ritual practice appear to have been adhered to. As we have also seen in discussion of Yira historical authority systems and the work of Packard (1981), cyclical patterns of time are marked through the natural growth and decay of a system of authority. That authority can be restored, and order along with it, so long as proper ritual and moral behaviour is performed again. The current misfortunes that the Bayira face are interpreted similarly to a period of collective interregnum and cultural loss, for the proper ritual authorities were displaced in periods of historical turmoil, as was the moral-cultural behaviour of the broader Yira public. However, it remains possible to begin a new and more prosperous cycle of history if that proper authority and cultural practice is restored. Moreover, the spiritual powers that will be recovered in the process allow them to hypothesise an even more glorious future.

Essentially, there is no paradigmatic obstacle to projecting the essence of the past beyond the present and into an aspirational future, so long as core moral behaviours and values are protected in the process. Thus the "mutual conditioning" (to borrow Peel's (1984) term) of "cultural" and "foreign" influences can be accomplished, so as to capitalise on the benefit of the latter whilst retaining the moral qualities of the former, as long as care is taken. Thus there is no ideological impediment to their futuristic, yet culturally grounded political imaginings. What might be thought of as a greater impediment to their imaginative goals by some anthropologists is the matter of conceiving their actionable future, particularly in the context of the cyclical passage of time. For instance, Johnson-Hanks (2005) argues that Cameroonian women avoid ambitious imaginings of their life plans, because the lack of certainty that the future holds inhibits their capacity to meaningfully plan their futures and act on those plans.

It is perfectly true that the Bayira secessionists also face an unpredictable, indeed extremely unlikely future for their political ambitions. Whilst there is a generalised implication that the restoration of the ethnic "nation", the "cultural/ritual public" will result in the spiritual aid that they need for secessionism, that creative relationship between the two publics remains uncertain. One might superficially assume that a cyclical view of the passage of time requires greater certainty of what will happen in the future to make such repetition possible, but Peel's emphasis on the construction of those cycles shows that it is not so. Cycles of history must constantly be made perceptible with narrative emphasis and ritual action, and do not occur by themselves. One does not need a certain future to emphasise what certainly must be preserved and repeated.

Furthermore, certainty of what will happen in the short term does not preclude a sense of certainty in the long-term, so long as there is faith in a doctrine of action that will ultimately right the situation. Guyer (2007) argues this in regard to the temporal nature of prophecy, stating that future aspirations can result in an "evacuation" of the near future and a focus instead on the distant future. That is, a transformative future can be imaginable, indeed expected through means of spiritual intervention, even if an immediate plausible strategy for action is elusive. Though prophecy is but one aspect of the struggles of Yira ethno-nationalism and secessionism, I would venture that there is a "prophetic", somewhat millenarian character to the movement (amorphous though it is) as a whole. There are not only influential prophets within it (including the prophetic character credited to its most famous leader Isaiah Mukirania), but there is also a quasi-millenarian pattern to the idea of a people rediscovering and purifying themselves, upon which their promised land will be granted to them. Or, for a less grandiose justification, Wright's (1995) definition of a "prophetic movement" also contains the main characteristics of broad Yira ethno-nationalism. A prophetic movement is:

> "… a conjecture of new and old in which old beliefs are reshaped to suggest a course of action to a profoundly troubled society. The momentousness can be thought of as an urgent sense of the present need and possibility for an epic resolution. It is sometimes characterised as millennial. The idea of a prophetic movement can be pursued in the absence of prophetic religion in the sense of an established form where prophets recur as recognised critics of belief and practice calling for purification" (pg. 124-125).

Since prophetic movements are very often (if not for the most part) ideologically hinged on idealising a moral past that must be rediscovered, there is no conflict of interest with the conservative demands of stereotypic reproduction in such a future orientation. Further to that, a new dawn hailed in millenarian rhetoric can equally be conceived of as the beginning of a new cycle of the passage of time. I do not wish to suggest that Yira secessionism is entirely millenarian or prophetic in the sense that their vision exists apart from grounded political

reality. As we have seen, it is rather a combination of pragmatic realpolitik and enduring faith in the limitless power of the spiritual world that defines their approach to their political future, two paradigms that once again map onto the domains of the authentically, morally Yira, and the dangerous but opportune foreign. A brief review of the previous chapters summarises how these domains work in dealings with the future.

In Chapter One, the review of Yira pre-colonial authority systems, and of contextual history and the history of the Rwenzururu movement, we saw that the seemingly radical "invention" of Isaiah Mukirania's kingship was not in fact without socio-cultural grounding. Mukirania, in partnership with the existing chieftains, simply extended the existing practice of ritual alliance building to extend a ruler's territorial authority, though also tailored the political symbolism to compete with the powers within Uganda at the time. This is not remotely to downplay the significance of the Rwenzururu Kingdom's genesis in the eyes of the Bayira; it was, and remains, in their eyes, a redemptive and transformational break from a humiliating past. Nevertheless, given its explicitly "cultural" foundation, and the preservation of ritual authority structures (albeit in an expanded form), the event was also able to mark itself as a new cycle of ritual authority. As Peel (1984) says of stereotypic reproduction, the past must appear to govern the present in its cycles. However, so long as proper practices of the past are maintained (and indeed in Rwenzururu they were exalted), it need not preclude markers of "progress", in this case a consolidation and revival of traditional political power, and a declaration of kingship and statehood. Likewise, Bloch (1986, 2004) shows that dramatic political change (similarly, centralisation) may subtly shift the meanings of ritual practice in support of new power structures, but retain its core elements sufficiently that the requirements of the past can be deemed satisfied. Equally, the Bayira have found creative ways to propel the requirements of the past into imaginings of the future.

In Chapter Two, we examined the epistemological foundations of the future trajectory that the Bayira imagine for themselves, that being their plan to gain the fruits of formal education, and to combine it with their "natural knowledge" (*amenge wakibutirwana*), in order to develop awesome new "technologies". It is the "technologies" that they described, the power of communication without telephones, of bullet-proofing the body, of flight and transport through spirits, and their regular assertions that these would be improvements to foreign technologies, which led me to using the word "futuristic". Indeed, it is the industrial potential of spirit technology that gives them the optimism that the eventual Yira State will break ranks with other African states and ascend to the heights of global power. Nevertheless, in this imagined trajectory, "school knowledge" always serves and never usurps "natural knowledge", for it is the moral character of the latter in which its power dwells. Thus even in projected future usages of "natural knowledge", its character is transplanted forward and maintained even as its potential is enhanced.

In Chapter Three, we see the works of local homespun historians, which are not only an effort to formalise an authentic character of the Bayira by documenting their "cultural" practices, but also to challenge the narrative that would suggest the authentic character of their past is incompatible with the challenges of present and future. They see in their culture a devout religious character, and an innovative capacity for scientific thought, aspects of their "past" that they wish to transport through future cycles of time. Indeed, the character of their "authentic culture" of the "past" *must* be preserved since it is the very key to the development of futuristic technologies that will make their people powerful, in their ever-more united cultural "nation", and maybe even in a state. These three chapters thus illustrate that the temporal phenomenon of the "past in the present" (Peel, 1984) does not obscure a capacity

for imagining and acting towards a futuristic world. However, in the overview of the next three chapters, I wish to highlight that a "futuristic" character of the Yira nation-state, though it is envisioned as a vast improvement that will be delivered by spiritual benevolence, does not mean a state of divine perfection in a truly millenarian manner. Rather, as Guyer (2007) puts it:

"The spaces opening up are not alternative or utopian in any holistic sense. They are reconfigurations of elements that are well-known already" (pg. 216).

In Chapter Four, our prophets seem to be something of an exception to Guyer's (2007) observation of the "evacuation" of the near-future in prophetic temporal conceptions (even though much of the rest of the Yira ethno-nationalist movement does show such an evacuation). The prophets are more explicitly confronting the problem of the unknown creative relationship between the two Yira publics. They are fully supportive of, and engaged in the creation of a "cultural" or "ritual" public, but are also unwilling (like their followers) to wait and see how, or if, it will feed into the creation of a state. Wait and see they still must, for the spirits will not tell the prophet all things at once, but nevertheless their hope is sustained by "action" that can be oriented towards both short and long-term goals. Whilst some "work of prophecy", such as observing rules, has no clear end-point at which results will be yielded, other works, such as Lhusenge's followers trying to establish an NGO through which they can subtly mobilise secessionists, are evidently oriented at actions in the "near-future". Guyer's (2007) pattern still stands to a certain extent, however, since this is equally part of the work that will contribute, in ways which are still uncertain, towards a positive future in the long-term, so long as the doctrine of absolute spiritual obedience continues to be followed to the letter. Thus, though the prophets are attempting to bridge the "action-gap" between creating the two publics, they are still hostage to a mostly unknown near-future, even if they feel they know more than those outside the prophetic groups.

What the prophets share with the majority of Bayira who believe in secession, is their intended design of the Yira State, as discussed in Chapter Five. All that I asked believed the Yira State should resemble a constitutional monarchy, in which the king would remain a "cultural" leader, with both ritual responsibility and the role of guiding the moral "cultural public", also conceivable as the "nation". There must also be a "state", with a president, but it must be a separate apparatus, tasked with not only administration, but also the inevitably dirty and violent character of governance. It seems that whether the state is recognised by the UN or divinely induced, there is no illusion that the moral ails of the state can be cured. They can however be separated from a moral peoples' "cultural" character. It is no millenarian theocracy, but a real state with real flaws that they envision. Thus this is not utopian millenarianism in the classic sense in which heaven on earth is to be created (e.g. Cohn, 1992). It is an idealised future, but one which is to be using the elements of the past and the present. To refer to "strategy" in the classical sense, it is the most desirable end that can be created with the available means.

In Chapter Six, we see the Bayira's reckoning with the state that they currently live in rather than that which they aspire to. To make life bearable so long as they are in Uganda, they refer to what they think a benevolent, legitimate state should do in the normative sense, if only for the sake of being able to see their own treatment for what it is, a violation of those values of statehood and citizenship. Indeed, their expectation of normative and equal treatment appears to withstand their political cynicism, to the point that they are prepared to violently reject state sovereignty and even risk their own lives in the process. Yet, within their historical trajectory of marginalisation, the Ugandan state's wrongful actions represent further evidence (conclusive for some and telling for others) that they will never get their dues without their

own state. They may not be “liberal political subjects” (Spencer, 2007, pg. 68) in the holistic sense, but they know the absence of legitimate governance when they see it. They are conscious of their own marginalisation and feel others must be receiving better treatment, and thus what they know to be the values of a normatively legitimate state continue to shame the one they live in, legitimising the quest for alternatives. In the “national order of things”, a “cultural public” or a “nation” is not enough to guarantee their recognition and to let them live their full potential, for within other states there will always be enemies trying to keep them down. Thus strategising for the future (even if it is the long-term future, for the near-future looks bleak) must continue.

The Bayira secessionists and ethno-nationalists have, in their discursive designs of the Yira State, creatively overcome the moral pitfalls that secessionist politics, and material and technological aspirations, might otherwise represent. Thus there is no reason to suppose that an imagined distant future is an alternative utopia, divorced from its cultural specificity or from present political reality. As Eshun (2003) shows, no future imaginings are created separately from present circumstances, but rather are critical reflections on a present state of affairs. Writing on the literary and creative genre of “Afro-futurism”, Eshun suggests that the futures projected in these works are critical alternatives to the futures imagined by those currently in power. He suggests that the damning portrayals of Africa, in the predictive reports of international organisations and the “futures” industry, inspire Black and African intellectuals to project more optimistic alternatives of their own. It is a logical, future-oriented extension of a practice that he calls “counter-memory”, that being a desire by said intellectuals to correct Africans’ exclusion as agentive and intellectual beings in imperial history.

We have practices similar to “counter-memory” at work in efforts to change the temporal meanings currently associated with Yira “culture”, as a product supposedly of relevance only to the past. This is particularly evident in the works of Yira historians, whose researches paint a “natural” ethnic identity that is intellectually and scientifically innovative, technologically powerful and religiously pious. Yira “culture” is no longer a feature of the past, but becomes the foundation with which future aspirations will be born. “Counter-memory” is similar to that which I referred to as “temporal sychronisation”, in that they are both interpretive practices of history that have corrective influences concerned with the present and the future. It is not an absolute parallel; Eshun’s analysis of Afro-futurism and “counter-memory” appears to focus predominantly on the critical works of urban and diasporic Black intellectuals, whilst the Bayira are engaged in conserving and projecting their “culture” into the future by lending it emancipatory qualities. Yet the similarity between these practices of correctively imagining futures is intriguing. It dispels notions that futurism is a strategy of an educated urban elite, and proves that a predominantly rural, historically marginalised population is equally conscious of the need to anticipate in the face of political adversary. Perhaps this goes to show the ever expanding reach of “global” influences (Ferguson, 2006), or perhaps that the future has never been as absent as anthropologists may have thought from reproductive conceptions of time.

History lives on not just in the present of the Yira secessionist project, but projected into its future. This goes for its political as well as cultural history, for, as we have seen, the promises of Rwenzururu have not been forgotten, and nor, as far as the Bayira are concerned, have their enemies gone away. The interpretive “paranoid” lens (Sedgwick, 2003), through which historical persecution is viewed as an ongoing process, and through which misfortune is perpetually attributed to a malicious enemy, continues to spur the necessity of achieving the

ultimate form of self-determination. Whilst a new nation-state is not without perils of its own, given the near-inevitable immorality that "politics" represents, and given the erosion of state sovereignty that contemporary global flows have resulted in, it remains the supreme arbitrator of power and self-preservation in the "national order of things" (Malkki, 1995). The design of the nation-state, moreover, may never entirely save a people from the ills of politics, but tactical tailoring to mitigate the associated risks is possible. So long as no more hopeful future is foreseeable within the states that the Bayira currently live in, it is unlikely that anything can avert the dream that Isaiah Mukirania began all those years ago.

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