Ker Kwaro Acholi

A Re-invention of Traditional Authority in northern Uganda

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SUMMARY

In this thesis I examine the 'revival' of Ker Kwaro Acholi – the widely recognised traditional cultural institution in Acholiland, northern Uganda. I illustrate the ways that its emergence over the past decade has been shaped by dominant discourses at local, national and international levels, concluding that Ker Kwaro Acholi is an ambiguous entity that functions as a new power base in the political landscape of Acholiland.

The thesis challenges common perceptions that often reduce Ker Kwaro Acholi to a council of traditional chiefs and offers a more nuanced picture that reveals the complexities of Ker Kwaro Acholi. I argue that the process of Ker Kwaro Acholi's 'revival' has been a strategic project of crafting images of the institution that appeal to powerful discourses, and that these images have served to obscure inherently political agendas of Ker Kwaro Acholi's central actors.

As a result of my study not only is there evident need to reject pervasive uncritical understandings of Ker Kwaro Acholi and to recognise Ker Kwaro Acholi's potential for fuelling further conflict and upholding a patriarchal and disciplinary regime in Acholiland, but also to further question the collaborative and facilitating role western donors have continually played throughout Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

CAP – Community Action Program

CNA – Community Needs Assessment

CRCM – Community Reconciliation and Conflict Management

IDP – Internally Displaced People

INGO – International Non-Government Organisation

PRDP – Peace Recovery and Development Programme

NGO – Non-Government Organisation

NURP-1 – Northern Uganda Reconstruction Project

NUSAF – Northern Uganda Social Action Fund

NUTI – Northern Uganda Transition Initiative

UGX – Ugandan Shillings

UK – United Kingdom

US – United States

UN – United Nations

UNIFEM – United Nations Development Fund for Women

USAID – United Stated Agency for International Development

WB – World Bank

GLOSSARY

Bul ker – royal drum

Dak ker – wife who marries *rwot* at his coronation

Ker – royal authority

Kaka – a lineage segment

Kal – village and household of *rwot*.

Ladit (pl. *Ludito*) – village elder

Ladit-pa-Rwot/Ladit kaka– elder of the *rwot*

Lakwena (pl. *Lukwena*) – messenger of *rwot*

Lobong – subordinate or commoner lineage

Lawirwodi – leading *rwot*

Laloyo Maber – 'good ruler'

Lukiko – parliament or council of *rwodi*

Rwot mo (pl. Rwodi mo) – anointed chief of lineage

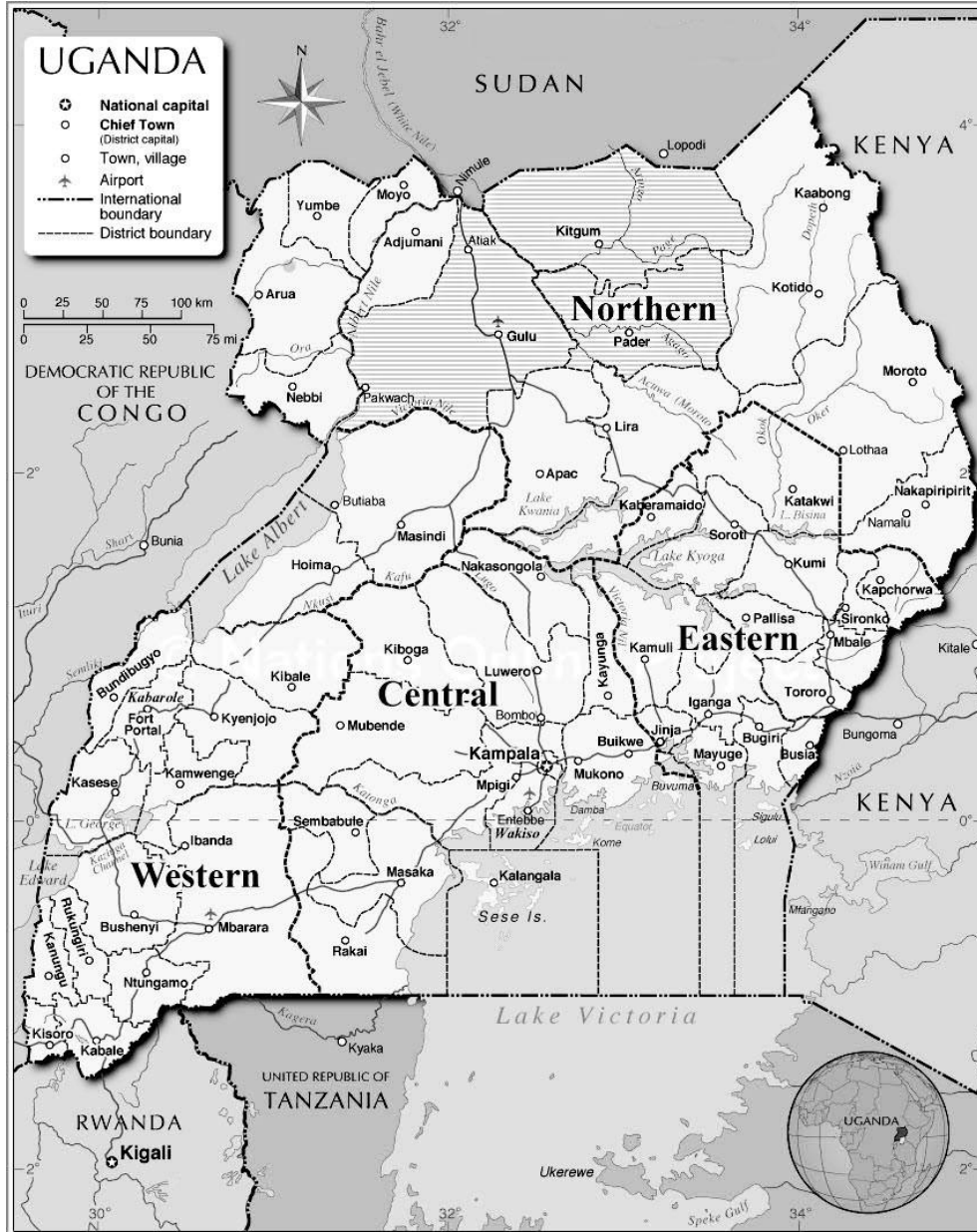*Rwot Kalam* (pl. *Rwodi Kalam*) – chief 'of the pen', appointed by colonial government

Rwot Okoro – female leader of farmer group

Rwot Kweri – male leader of farmer group

Ton ker – royal spear

Won piny – father of the land

MAPS

Uganda, with Acholiland in northern Uganda highlighted

http://www.nationsonline.org/maps/uganda-administrative-map.jpg

Ethnographic map of Uganda

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I examine the 'revival' of Ker Kwaro Acholi[1] – the widely understood traditional cultural institution in Acholiland, northern Uganda. I argue that Ker Kwaro Acholi is a new power base in the political landscape of Acholiland and illustrate that its emergence over the past decade has been constituted by multiple discourses, contingent events and strategic practices. In the thesis I identify how these discourses, events and practices have combined to produce three dominant images through which Ker Kwaro Acholi has become known. I also identify and examine less visible discourses that constitute Ker Kwaro and shed light on the disjunctures between these dominant images and less visible discourses of the institution. Through the analysis I reveal that Ker Kwaro Acholi has emerged and exists predominantly through negotiating a series of dominant images that, when held against the light of less visible discourses that are constituted by the everyday practices of the institution, are challenged and undermined in significant ways.

The three dominant images that, I argue, have enabled Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival and that have significantly formed the institution, are images that cast Ker Kwaro as a traditional authority; a government-cultural institution; and an agent of sustainable development. The less visible discourses that undermine these ways of seeing Ker Kwaro Acholi render the institution far more amorphous than the relatively neat dominant images suggest and reveal how Ker Kwaro Acholi has become a site of renewed clan rivalry and struggles amongst traditional leadership, a platform for political aspirations, and a lucrative venture for some well-placed individuals.

As a result, and in the light, of the more complex and multidimensional picture I offer of Ker Kwaro Acholi, there is an evident need to reject one dimensional and uncritical understandings of the institution and for greater recognition of Ker Kwaro Acholi's potential, not only for facilitating peace in northern Uganda, but also for fuelling further conflict, and recognising not only its potential as a cultural and political representative of Acholi on the national stage, but also its potential for upholding a patriarchal and disciplinary regime within Acholiland. And finally, although Ker Kwaro Acholi may have

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[1] Ker Kwaro Acholi is also referred to as Ker kal Kwaro Acholi or KKA. I will use Ker Kwaro Acholi or Ker Kwaro in this study.

the potential to be an effective agent of development, there is need for greater recognition of the alternative agendas, as well as the unintended effects, resulting from donor partnerships.

In terms of the people who constitute Ker Kwaro Acholi today, the institution is composed of a Paramount Chief, a Prime Minister, Council of Chiefs, Executives of the Council of Chiefs, a cabinet of Ministers, a secretariat of development practitioners and a number of male and female elders. As mentioned above, and as I will further illustrate through my study, Ker Kwaro Acholi is constituted by more than its roles of office, appointed positions and employees – but while this is an important point of my thesis, the people who constitute Ker Kwaro and those who have encountered the institution at various stages of its revival are central characters and agents who have knowingly and unknowingly shaped Ker Kwaro Acholi.

WHY STUDY KER KWARO ACHOLI?

Ker Kwaro Acholi has been recognised by the Government of Uganda as one of the nation's traditional, cultural institutions – a recognition marked by President Yoweri Museveni recently funding the building of new houses for the 'chiefs' of Ker Kwaro.[2] As well as the Ugandan Government, Ker Kwaro Acholi is also recognised by numerous international and more locally based development organisations. For example, in 2009 International Alert advised business investors in northern Uganda to recognise and include Ker Kwaro Acholi in consultation processes, as this was thought 'enormously significant in gaining access to operating in the region'[3], and USAID partnered with Ker Kwaro Acholi on a project to revive farmer groups across Acholiland.[4] Other multilateral and bilateral donors such as The World Bank, United Nations Development Fund for

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[2] M. Olupot and C. Ocowan, "Museveni Gives Acholi Chiefs Houses," *New Vision*, 17 November 2010.

[3] International Alert, *Contributing to a Peace Economy in Northern Uganda: A Guide for Investors* (Kampala 2009), 44.

[4] USAID, *Spring Implementing Partners Information Pack* (Stability, Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Uganda Project, 2009).

Women (UNIFEM)[5] and the American Embassy have also recognised and partnered with Ker Kwaro Acholi on projects to booster conflict reconciliation and conflict management in northern Uganda, to promote women's rights in Acholi and preserve Acholi cultural heritage, respectively. A host of other bilateral donors,[6] as well as INGOs[7] have, to greater and lesser degrees, recognised Ker Kwaro Acholi as the traditional cultural institution of Acholi and supported its empowerment. The Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP), a local NGO formed in 2005 as a research initiative between the Gulu District NGO forum and the Liu Institute for Global Issues at the University of British Columbia, has engaged with Ker Kwaro Acholi as a representative of the Acholi people and sought to bolster its own legitimacy by highlighting that the JRP was 'formed with the support of Ker Kwaro Acholi'.[8] However, despite the recognition and enthusiasm shown towards Ker Kwaro Acholi from such influential actors, few appear to understand the processes that have led to and shaped the establishment of Ker Kwaro. While International Alert has demonstrated some recognition of this,[9] there remains a gap in knowledge that calls for redress.

The second reason Ker Kwaro Acholi and its revival needs to be better understood is because, contrary to the enthusiasm shown towards Ker Kwaro Acholi from government actors and international development organisations, a number of academics have been critical of the project to revive and empower traditional leaders in Acholiland.[10] These criticisms are based on concerns that the project has been externally

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[5] In 2011 UNIFEM merged with the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Division for the Advancement of Women, to form the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). I will however continue to use the acronym UNIFEM throughout the thesis as this was the entity engaging with Ker Kwaro Acholi during the period I cover in my study.

[6] Such as the U.Ks Department for International Development (DfID), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA), the Belgium Government, Ireland's Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Irish Aid).

[7] Such as the Norwegian Refugee Council, World Vision, Oxfam and Caritas.

[8] Liu Institute for Global Issues and Gulu District NGO Forum, *Justice and Reconciliation Project Annual Report 2007* (Vancouver, BC: Liu Institute for Global Issues, 2007), 4.

[9] International Alert, *Contributing to a Peace Economy in Northern Uganda: A Guide for Investors* (Kampala2009), 44.

[10] M. Bradbury, *An Overview of Initiatives for Peace in Acholi, Northern Uganda* (Cambridge: Collaborative for Development Action, 1999), ACORD, ed. *Background Papers Presented to the*

initiated and funded, aims to restore an authority structure that privileges male elders, and that there is a weak evidence base to suggest that people in Acholiland consider a restoration of a traditional structure a key priority. It has also been noted that a great deal of myth making has gone into creating an Acholi Paramount Chief, which is 'a violation of traditional customs' because 'in the past there was no such thing as a paramount chief'.[11]

Tim Allen, in 2006, was also critical of the way the 'council of chiefs', and the process of their revival, was contributing to the institutionalisation of the ritual *mato oput,* and that the subsequent activities of many chiefs had led to confusion over the meaning of *mato oput* and its potential use for reintegrating ex-LRA back into the communities.[12] Allen and Adam Branch have highlighted the convenient effect that promoting a particular view of traditional justice has for traditional authorities, and have been critical of traditional authorities who have strategically sought to reproduce a particular social order in which they have a privileged position.[13] Branch has questioned the empowerment of traditional authorities and elders in Acholi, arguing that during the current period of post-conflict reconstruction in Acholiland, they may contribute, alongside international donors, NGOs and the state, less to opportunities for increased democratisation and political inclusion and more to a situation of further discipline and coercion.[14] While critiques of traditional authorities in Acholiland are relevant and

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Conference on 'Peace Research and the Reconciliation Agenda', Gulu, Northern Uganda, September 1999 (London: ACORD,2000), T. Allen, *Trial Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Lord's Resistance Army* (London: Zed Books, 2006), T. Allen, "Bitter Roots: The Invention of Acholi Traditional Justice," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), C. Dolan, *Social Torture: The Case of Northern Uganda, 1986-2006* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), A. Branch, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[11] T. Allen, *Trial Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Lord's Resistance Army* (London: Zed Books, 2006), 149.

[12] Ibid., 165.

[13] Ibid, T. Allen, "Bitter Roots: The Invention of Acholi Traditional Justice," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), A. Branch, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).Allen, T, 2006 and 2011; Branch, A, *Displacing Human Rights*, 2011, see chapter five, Ethnojustice: The Turn to Culture.

[14] A. Branch, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 178.

informative for a study of Ker Kwaro Acholi, and will be returned to later in the thesis, they do not in themselves amount to an examination of Ker Kwaro Acholi, which, as stated above, is constituted by more than its 'traditional' leaders.

The little analysis and commentary that does refer explicitly to Ker Kwaro Acholi does not go beyond conceptualising the institution in terms of its traditional leaders. For example, while Allen quite rightly notes there is a lack of evidence to support claims that Ker Kwaro Acholi dates back to the fifteenth century, Allen is referring to Ker Kwaro as an 'authority of Acholi grandfathers/elders';[15] and while Branch has been critical of the role of Ker Kwaro Acholi in the process of reviving traditional justice mechanisms, Ker Kwaro is being critiqued as the 'body of Acholi chiefs and elders'.[16] Similarly, in a report written in 2005 and in conjunction with Ker Kwaro Acholi, Erin Baines defined Ker Kwaro Acholi as the revived 'contemporary institution of the Acholi Paramount Chief, established in 2000 [and]…consisting of an Executive Council of 19 Chiefs and Elders, as well as a youth representative and two women representatives'.[17] Although reference was given to the women and youth representatives of Ker Kwaro Acholi, the author, Erin Baines, further reported that despite these representatives Ker Kwaro Acholi 'is an institution of men who hold traditional views on appropriate gender and age roles'.[18]

One reason for offering a study of Ker Kwaro Acholi, therefore, is because there are no substantial critiques of the institution beyond its 'traditional' leaders. As Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival has been anchored within the project to revive and empower 'traditional' leaders, an examination of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival contributes to qualifying arguments and research that engages with Acholi 'traditional' authority. While such research provides important insights that are drawn upon in this thesis, it is largely based on a particular understanding of Ker Kwaro that engages with just one aspect of this multidimensional institution. This thesis seeks to understand Ker Kwaro

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[15] T. Allen, "Bitter Roots: The Invention of Acholi Traditional Justice," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 248.
[16] A. Branch, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 164.
[17] E. Baines, *Roco Wat I Acholi, Restoring Relationships in Acholi-Land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2005), 31, 141.
[18] Ibid., 32-33.

more broadly and to expand current conceptualisations that tend to reproduce restrictive views of Ker Kwaro as an institution of traditional leaders.

In addition to addressing the lack of research on Ker Kwaro Acholi, and thus offering a contribution towards historical and contemporary analysis of Acholiland and northern Uganda, an examination of Ker Kwaro also contributes to the growing body of literature concerned with the recent revival of 'traditional' authorities across sub-Saharan Africa.[19] More specifically my study of Ker Kwaro Acholi contributes in three ways. First, my study contributes to redressing a bias towards analysing 'traditional' authorities who are associated with Kingdoms and more centralised structures and offers a case where traditional authority is being negotiated and re-imagined in the context of a traditionally polycephalous society. Second, my study of Ker Kwaro Acholi adds to other cases of traditional authority revival that are occurring in contexts of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction, where variables, such as the dominant presence of international humanitarian and development organisations, are common[20]. Third, and related to the last point, my study of Ker Kwaro's revival supports other studies that have moved away from a state-centric perspective, which have as a central driving question what roles traditional authorities can play in the process of democracy consolidation in

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[19] L. Buur and H.M. Kyed, eds., *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan,2007), O. Vaughan, ed. *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press,2005), E.A.B. van Rouveroy van Niewaal and R. van Dijk, "Introduction: The Domestication of Chieftaincy: The Imposed and the Imagined," in *African Chieftaincy in a New Socio-Political Landscape*, ed. E.A.B. van Rouveroy van Niewaal and R. van Dijk (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 1999), T. Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa," in *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth Century Africa: Essays in Honour of A.H.M. Kirk-Greene*, ed. T. Ranger and O. Vaughan (London: MacMillan, 1993). See also the *Journal of Legal Pluralism* special issues, no. 37 and 38 (1996).
[20] H.G. West and S. Kloeck-Jensen, "Betwixt and Between: 'Traditional Authority' and Democratic Decentralization in Post-War Mozambique," *African Affairs* 98 (1999), R. Fanthorpe, "On the Limits of Liberal Peace: Chiefs and Democratic Decentralisation in Post-War Sierra Leone," *African Affairs* 105, no. 418 (2005), L. Buur and H.M. Kyed, "Traditional Authority in Mozambique: The Legible Space between State and Community," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Africa,[21] to focus on the production of traditional authority through multiple exogenous factors, such as discourses of development.[22]

An increasing number of studies are identifying how discourses of development are shaping traditional authority revival and empowerment, and there are some interesting examples of local actors, both claimants and advocates of traditional authority, strategically appropriating multiple discourses, including discourses of development, in order to craft public images and position themselves advantageously.[23] As a contribution to these studies, my research on Ker Kwaro Acholi's 'revival', which reveals the dominant role discourses of development have played in shaping the institution, also contributes as a study from which lessons can be drawn by development practitioners, especially as, despite the increased engagement with traditional authorities by donors, there is a lack of analysis informing such encounters.

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[21] P. Skalnik, "Authority Versus Power: Democracy in Africa Must Include Original African Institutions," *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, no. 37-38 (1996).

[22] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), W. Zeller, ""Now We Are a Town": Chiefs, Investors and the State in Zambia's Western Province," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), E.A.B. van Rouveroy van Niewaal and R. van Dijk, "Introduction: The Domestication of Chieftaincy: The Imposed and the Imagined," in *African Chieftaincy in a New Socio-Political Landscape*, ed. E.A.B. van Rouveroy van Niewaal and R. van Dijk (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 1999), J. Abbink, "The Elusive Chief: Authority and Leadership in Surma Society (Ethiopia)," in *African Chieftaincy in a New Socio-Political Landscape*, ed. E.A.B. van Rouveroy van Niewaal and R. van Dijk (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 1999).

[23] J.M. Williams, *Chieftancy, the State, and Democracy: Political Legitimacy in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), W. Zeller, ""Now We Are a Town": Chiefs, Investors and the State in Zambia's Western Province," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), A.L. Chiweza, "The Ambivalent Role of Chiefs: Rural Decentralization Initiatives in Malawi," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), N. Kleist, "Modern Chiefs, Tradition, Development and Return among Traditional Authorities in Ghana," *African Affairs* 110, no. 441 (2011), C. Lentz, "The Chief, the Mine Captain and the Politician: Legitimating Power in Northern Ghana," *Africa* 68, no. 1 (1998), J.M. Ubink, *Traditional Authorities in Africa: Resurgence in an Era of Democratisation* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), H.G. West and S. Kloeck-Jensen, "Betwixt and Between: 'Traditional Authority' and Democratic Decentralization in Post-War Mozambique," *African Affairs* 98 (1999).

FIELDWORK

To understand the process of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival I consulted archival records in the United Kingdom and Uganda, conducted six months fieldwork in northern Uganda in 2010, utilised newspaper reports predominantly from Uganda's two national English language newspapers (New Vision and Daily Monitor), and drew on a wide range of secondary literature concerned with northern Uganda, traditional authority revivals in sub-Saharan Africa and critiques of development.

The archival research I conducted in the UK, at the Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House, and the research undertaken at the colonial archival records in Entebbe, were insightful for understanding the ideologies and practices that shaped protectorate governance of Uganda. Letters amongst colonial officials, and in particular, the monthly and annual district and provincial reports, shed light on the relationship between colonial officers and appointed 'chiefs'. This archival research helped to inform and shape my fieldwork trip.

The archives I consulted at Gulu's local government District Headquarters were more contemporary, dating back to the 1970s. These sources have been invaluable in detailing important events that have contributed to constituting Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival and have indicated the relationship between Ker Kwaro and Gulu District authorities. My attempts to conduct similar research at Kitgum's District office was cut short after being told that all archives had been lost or destroyed over the course of the recent insurgency. I was also unable to access the Acholi District archival records that Cheryl Gertzel had consulted in the early 1970s for her research on Acholi politics between 1945 and 1962, which were also said to be missing.

During my fieldwork, between February and July 2010, I lived in Gulu and over the course of the months I conducted 61 semi-structured interviews. I wanted to gather a range of views of how people saw Ker Kwaro Acholi, and how they narrated the revival. I conducted interviews with *Rwodi* (chiefs of Ker Kwaro Acholi) from across the districts of Acholiland in order to harness a range of views and opinions. From the 54 *Rwodi* listed in Ker Kwaro Acholi's Strategic Plan 2009, I was able to interview 20. I had been provided with mobile phone numbers for many of the *Rwodi* but it was still not possible

to reach all of them and arrange interviews. Most of my interviews with *Rwodi* were conducted in the towns of Gulu, Kitgum or Pader, because they either lived in town or were there for meetings. A handful of these interviews were conducted at the home of the *Rwot*. For many of my interviews with *Rwodi* I used a translator, and have been conscious in my use of these interviews of the potential for lost information or mistranslation. I have tried to overcome this limitation by cross referencing.

Most of my time was spent at Ker Kwaro Acholi's offices in Gulu, talking with the two project officers, Mike Ocaka and Sarah Achiro and the Programme Manager, Santo Okema. I also interviewed two Ministers of Ker Kwaro Acholi, Matthew Otto and Reverend Joseph Okumu, and two key elders, Janet Lakor and another who requested anonymity.

I conducted two interviews with the Ker Kwaro Prime Minister, Kenneth Oketta, but was unable to interview Paramount Chief Acana until the following year when he was in the UK. The difficulty of arranging an interview with Paramount Chief Acana during fieldwork was frustrating and seemed to be part of a more general reluctance on the part of staff who were a relative of the Paramount Chief and responsible for arranging his appointments. The interview I was able to conduct with Paramount Chief Acana, while he was living in Birmingham undertaking a university course, has been a crucial contribution to the study.

In addition to those closely associated with Ker Kwaro Acholi, I also interviewed Rosalba Oywa, Bishop Ochola and Esther Luk, who have been advocates of reviving tradition and traditional authorities in Northern Uganda; development practitioners who had engaged with Ker Kwaro; and three key local government figures, the Resident District Commissioners of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader and the deputy Local District Councillor V in Kitgum.

Inevitably, my study and the analysis I offer of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival is limited by the time length of fieldwork, the number of interviews I was able to conduct, and the challenges of accessing interviewees. There is in

As I am not offering the final word on the subject, but rather an initial investigation into a newly emerged institution in Acholiland, there is scope for further analysis.

A NOTE ON 'TRADITION' AND DISCOURSE

I approach 'tradition' and thus 'traditional' authority in nonessentialist terms that need to be understood as specific constructions at a specific time and for specific purposes. I therefore, do not refer to 'tradition' as a predefined analytical concept, but rather I am more interested in how 'tradition' is employed in various contexts and by various actors. In processes of re-defining traditional authorities it is evident that particular conceptions of traditional authority have taken on particular significance in recent political reconfigurations in Africa.[24] In my study I am interested in how Ker Kwaro Acholi presents itself as a traditional authority and how this image resonates with dominant discourses that reproduce Ker Kwaro Acholi as a traditional, legitimate and desirable authority in Acholiland. For aesthetics and ease of reading I will not continue to place traditional authorities in inverted commas and will use the terms traditional leaders and chiefs interchangeably. Where I am referring to lineage-based authorities as opposed to colonially appointed chiefs, and where this difference matters, I will indicate the distinction.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The chapters to follow are both a presentation of my findings and a reflection of the process and path my study has taken over the past four years. The three parts of the thesis form, firstly, an engagement with relevant bodies of literature and a historical contextualisation of my study. The latter two parts of the thesis are my in-depth study of Ker Kwaro Acholi and are informed primarily by empirical data.

In chapter one I will explore literature that has responded to the recent emergence of a multiplicity of 'traditional authorities' across sub-Saharan Africa. Whilst I will give an overview of dominant debates and assess the ways in which scholars have approached the subject of 'traditional authorities' and traditional authority resurgence in sub-Saharan Africa since the 1990s, it is also an examination of the encounter between

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[24] L. Buur and H.M. Kyed, eds., *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan,2007)

traditional authorities and various exogenous forces since the colonial period and with reference to countries across sub-Saharan Africa. As I will show, a number of studies in the recent literature point to discourses of development, particularly that of democratisation, as discourses that are shaping and redefining traditional authority revivals and, as a case in South Africa will illustrate, what it means to be a traditional authority.

In chapter two I will focus on traditional authorities in Uganda, with particular attention given to Acholiland. The aim of this chapter is to historically situate the recent 'traditional' authority revivals in Uganda that gained momentum after the Government lifted the ban on 'traditional' leaders in 1993. In the first section I will introduce the most relevant traditional leaders for a study of Ker Kwaro Acholi; the *Rwodi* (clan heads). I will give an account of how they are thought to have existed in the precolonial period and draw attention to the contestation over the supremacy of the Payira clan amongst other clans in Acholiland. I will then discuss late colonial rule in Uganda and highlight the superior status of the Buganda Kingdom over the other kingdom and non-kingdoms areas of Uganda, highlighting the effect this had across the protectorate amongst aspirants who sought to occupy positions of a similar status to the *Kabaka* (King) of Buganda. For example, in non-kingdom areas, districts such as Acholi had the opportunity to establish a constitutional head that was taken as an opportunity to have a ceremonial representative who could occupy a position on par with the *Kabaka*. As I will show in chapter two, this matter became an arena in Acholi where 'traditional authority' was negotiated through discourses of party politics and religiously defined cleavages that also ran along a geographical split between east and west Acholiland.

In the final section of chapter two I will move into the postcolonial period and trace the banning of traditional authority in Uganda by post-independence President Milton Obote in 1967, through to the lift of the ban by the current President Yoweri Museveni in 1993. A focus of this section, and a theme that will run throughout the thesis, is how discourses of traditional authorities in Uganda have been shaped by the Buganda Kingdom and its relationship with the state.

In part one my overall aim is to offer a brief historical overview and examination of traditional authorities across sub-Saharan Africa with attention given to the discourses

that have shaped the forms they have taken and their relationship with state authorities and other 'external' actors, and with a particular focus on Uganda and Acholiland. This study will form a background for the analysis I offer on Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival, and which I present in parts two and three.

Part two is divided into three chapters, where I will examine three different phases of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival. Each chapter looks at the emergence of a dominant image of Ker Kwaro that, as I will argue, has emerged through the combination of multiple discourses, contingent events and strategic practices. The first phase of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival and its image as the Acholi traditional authority, examined in chapter three, will be shown to have been predominately shaped by discourses regarding the recent conflict in northern Uganda and, in particular, the real and perceived effects of the conflict that have been understood in terms of a breakdown of moral and cultural norms. In relation to such dominant discourses I will identify the contingent events, such as the coronation of an Acholi Paramount Chief, and strategic practices, such as the production of a historical background for Ker Kwaro, that have together provided an enabling environment for the carving of a public image of Ker Kwaro Acholi as the legitimate traditional authority of a newly imagined Acholi 'chiefdom'.

In chapter four I will turn to examine when Ker Kwaro Acholi sought to be known as a cultural institution with the potential capacity for political governance. I will explore how Ker Kwaro Acholi's strategy to present itself as a 'government structure' was in response to and shaped by government discourses on traditional authorities. I will focus on government proposals to create a regional tier of government as one of the formal means by which to incorporate traditional authorities into the state structure, and government rhetoric that casts traditional authorities as 'cultural institutions'. In this chapter I aim to highlight the seemingly inherent tension of Ker Kwaro Acholi's attempt to project itself as both a non-political cultural institution as well as a 'government structure' that reflects its state counterpart. One central point in this chapter is that the Buganda Kingdom does not only shape other traditional authorities in Uganda indirectly, by way of influencing government discourses on traditional authorities, but also more directly as traditional institutions such as Ker Kwaro Acholi seem to be mimicking the way the Buganda Kingdom has been revived.

Building directly on its image as a traditional authority, I will illustrate in chapter five how Ker Kwaro Acholi, in the third phase of its revival, appropriates discourses of international development to consolidate an image as an agent of sustainable development in Acholiland. In this chapter I will focus attention on the encounter between Ker Kwaro Acholi and the World Bank's Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) and argue that preconceived ideas of traditional authorities held by NUSAF were bolstered by images being projected by Ker Kwaro Acholi. Ker Kwaro Acholi's strategic practices, such as creating a secretariat and producing a Ker Kwaro Acholi Strategic Plan stating its developmental vision and objectives, will be shown as crucial in enabling the institution to be not only recognisable as a traditional authority, but desirable as a partner of development.

In part three, which contains chapter six, I turn to examine a more complex picture of Ker Kwaro Acholi. Examining how Ker Kwaro Acholi has emerged through an interplay of multiple discourses, contingent events and strategic practices, I also shed light on the less visible discourses that constitute Ker Kwaro Acholi, but are often obscured or subjugated by the dominant images discussed in part two. A key aim of chapter six is to highlight the disjuncture between images of Ker Kwaro Acholi and how the institution works in practice. I divide the chapter into thematic critical reflections where I seek to identify and untangle complexities of Ker Kwaro Acholi, and in so doing point to some of the implications and problems associated with how Ker Kwaro Acholi has emerged.

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY REVIVALS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

To aid my study of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival it is helpful to turn to a broader body of literature than that focused on northern Uganda, which has explored similar questions in relation to the resurgence of 'tradition' and 'traditional' authorities across Sub-Saharan Africa. An overview of this literature provides insights and potentially useful conceptual frameworks for my critique of the 'traditional' authority Ker Kwaro Acholi and whilst my study of Ker Kwaro Acholi contributes to filling a gap in knowledge on Ker Kwaro Acholi, I also seek to offer a contribution through my case study of Ker Kwaro Acholi to studies and debates of traditional authority revivals across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Before I continue, however, it is necessary to note that I approach 'tradition' and thus 'traditional' authority in nonessentialist terms, that need to be understood as specific constructions at a specific time and for specific purposes. I therefore do not refer to 'tradition' as a predefined analytical concept, but rather I am more interested in how 'tradition' is employed in various contexts and by various actors. In processes of re-defining traditional authorities it is evident that particular conceptions of traditional authority have taken on particular significance in recent political reconfigurations in Africa.[1] In my study I am interested in how Ker Kwaro Acholi presents itself as a traditional authority and how this image resonates with dominant discourses that reproduce Ker Kwaro Acholi as a traditional, legitimate and desirable authority in Acholiland.

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[1] L. Buur and H.M. Kyed, "Introduction: Traditional Authority and Democratization in Africa," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 22-24.

For aesthetics and ease of reading I will not continue to place traditional authorities in inverted commas and will use the terms traditional leaders and chiefs interchangeably. Where I am referring to lineage-based authorities as opposed to colonially appointed chiefs, and where this difference matters, I will indicate the distinction.

COLONIAL RULE AND THE DEMISE OF CHIEFS?

As colonial officials sought to establish control and governance they found societies organised on a spectrum from hierarchical and centralised forms of authority to acephalous lineage systems. Whilst local vernaculars distinguished the nuances of power amongst various leaders, colonial officials adopted the term 'chief' and applied it broadly to denote the person who was recognised by the colonial government as the legitimate and official ruler of a particular polity or administrative area. Criteria for legitimacy, in the eyes of the colonial official, were often the result of a compromise between the influence a chief exerted amongst the population and his willingness to cooperate with colonial administration. Those appointed chief, therefore, ranged from previously existing hereditary rulers to non-hereditary impositions who welcomed the opportunity for advancement offered by colonial rule, as was the case in Acholiland as I shall touch upon in the following chapter. Wishing to work through familiar systems of governance, hierarchical relations between traditional authorities and between colonially invented 'tribes' were strengthened, or where hierarchies were not found they were also invented and imposed. Chiefs were integrated into the governing apparatus as intermediaries between the population and colonial government in often administrative roles such as collecting tax and recruiting and supervising forced labour. Chiefs were also expected to act as an extension of the colonial regime curbing organised resistance against colonial rule.[2]

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[2] M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), A. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

As the dawn of political independence across Africa was realised newly elected government leaders were sceptical of chiefs, regarding them as either outdated anachronistic throwbacks to a primitive age or hand maidens of the colonial state and thus corrupt collaborators with the old oppressors. African nationalists regarded colonial rule and chieftaincy as 'unheavenly twins linked by mutual support' and 'an unholy alliance' that was 'jointly destined to enjoy the fate of all doomed anciens régimes'.[3] There was also little room for chiefs in nationalist ideologies of material modernisation and economic transformation.

> Chiefs were widely regarded as barriers to the achievement of either of these goals; they stood for the past, for other-worldly values, and were opposed to both individualism and modernizing corporatism. The processes by which chiefs ruled, the rituals and ideas which maintain their authority, were, it was widely claimed, the enemies of rapid transformation. Africa's and African's besetting problems were broadly those of 'underdevelopment'; chieftaincy was seen as a significant aspect of the problem rather than as part of the solution.[4]

With such widespread views across Africa, political independence in most countries saw the abolition of traditional authorities, as in Uganda under Milton Obote in 1967. Powers of traditional authorities were severely curtailed in Ghana, and in Mozambique, Tanzania and Burkina more repressive actions were taken.[5] The exceptions to this trend were Botswana, Nigeria, Malawi and Zambia, whose governments conceded recognition of traditional authorities and sought their incorporation into state structures. Whether rejected or incorporated by governments, it was generally assumed by modernists that traditional authority would wither away and die as a new citizenry emerged embracing the benefits of democratically elected government and the wave of development promised to arrive. Just as aristocracies across the world had been rendered obsolete, the expectation was that chieftaincy would succumb to a similar fate.[6]

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[3] R. Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftancy in Ghana, 1951-1960* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), 3.

[4] Ibid.

[5] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 33.

[6] R. Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftancy in Ghana, 1951-1960* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), 2.

However, whilst scholarly attention was directed to elite experiences of post-independence state building a wave of retraditionalisation and traditional authority revival was rolling over the continent and being largely ignored.[7] Given the certainty that traditional authorities, particularly chieftaincy, were in their final death throes only a few decades ago, recent traditional authority revivals have also taken many scholars by surprise. But not only has the fact of 'revival' been surprising, the multiplicity of forms 'traditional' authorities have taken has also interested scholars in the field. From Sierra Leone to Somaliland and Niger to South Africa traditional authorities currently appear in a multiplicity of forms. Some traditional authorities claim royal status and adorn dazzling regalia, as in Ghana, Zambia, South Africa, Cameroon and Uganda. Whilst in contrast others have invoked 'traditional' principles to mobilise as self-defence groups, as in Tanzania and Sierra Leone.[8] Councils or Houses of Chiefs at local and national levels have formed in Ghana, Zambia, South Africa and Namibia, whereas in Ivory Coast, Togo, Niger and Chad, traditional authorities have emerged in the form of 'associations'.[9] These diverse expressions of traditional authority are an integral feature of the political landscape in Africa and to varying degrees play significant roles in the ongoing reconfiguration of power on the continent.[10]

TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES AND THE POSTCOLONIAL STATE

The post-colonial state has become the focus of most studies on traditional authorities, where scholars have asked if weak or strong states are more likely to be home to

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[7] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 34.

[8] J. Mwaikusa, "Maintaining Law and Order in Tanzania: The Role of Sungusungu Defense Groups," in *Service Provision under Stress in East Africa*, ed. J. Semboja and O. Therkildsen (Copenhagen: Centre for Development Research, 1995), P. Muana, "The Kamajoi Militia: Civil War, International Displacement and the Politics of Counter-Insurgency," *Africa Development* 22, no. 3/4 (1997), J. Hirsch, *Sierra Leone: Diamonds and the Struggle for Democracy* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2001).

[9] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 40.

[10] Ibid., 34.

traditional authority revivals and whether traditional authorities are compatible with and a desirable agent of effective state-building in Africa. The 'failed state' thesis has been popular in initial scholarship exploring the resurgence of tradition authorities.[11] This position holds that where states have been unsuccessful in nation building, failing to establish strong arms of the state in rural areas, a "hollowed out shell"[12] is left, which has been filled with leaders exercising authority with reference to tradition. Amongst the rural populace both 'modern informal governance' and 'old-new chiefdom type politics' are contesting the monopoly of the state and places of internal armed conflicts are particularly vulnerable as the state struggles to exercise control. Baker has argued that the weakness of states, where there has been a collapse of public authority and service provision is lacking, people are able to take advantage of the lack of social control.[13] In countries with challenging geographies, opportunities may also arise for relatively large outlying groups to mobilise around ethnic and cultural symbols that may compete with the state.[14] Where states face a 'crisis of legitimacy', van Nieuwaal and van Dijk have argued, traditional authorities are often recognised and incorporated as a way to acquire some measure of legitimacy for implementing laws and policies.[15] As Kyed and Buur put it, 'capturing traditional authority under the ambit of the state is envisaged as a means of coming to terms with the problems of the failed state: the result becomes the solution!'[16]

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[11] P. Chabal and J.-P. Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), B. Baker, *Escape from Domination in Africa: Political Disengagement and Its Consequences* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), J. Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[12] P. Skalnik, Chiedfdom: A Universal Political Formation?, in *Focaal European Journal of Anthropology* 43, (2004): 76-98.

[13] B. Baker, *Escape from Domination in Africa: Political Disengagement and Its Consequences* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000).

[14] J. Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 145-146.

[15] Kyed and Buur point to Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Somalia and Angola as examples of states formally recognising traditional authorities as a means to bolster state legitimacy when it has been threatened. See L. Buur and H.M. Kyed, "Introduction: Traditional Authority and Democratization in Africa," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[16] Ibid., 4.

However, Englebert has challenged the weak state hypothesis, pointing to evidence showing that the most far-reaching traditional authority revivals are occurring in strong states such as South Africa and Uganda, and there is a 'relative lack of traditional resurgence in weak or failed states'.[17] This could indicate, Englebert suggests, that societies have no real need for state-like structures, and although grassroots organisations may take over the provision of services attributed to states when the state fails to deliver, this does not necessarily mean local populations want to 'revive' structures of authority and indeed, the failure of the state might be welcomed where it has been regarded as an instrument of domination.[18] Alternatively, the reason stronger states display more traditional authority revivals could be that they 'are confident in their own institutions and stability, and are therefore more likely to tolerate the rise of alternative sources of identity.'[19] The formal recognition of traditional authorities in South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana and Namibia may be all cases in point. Strong states also tend to be undergoing processes of democratisation through the adoption of multi-party democracy and decentralisation policies, which has stirred concern amongst scholars and post-colonial governments alike for how relevant and desirable traditional authorities are for these processes.

Skalnik has argued for including traditional authorities in consolidating democracy in Africa on the grounds that 'original' and 'authentic' African institutions rest on democratic principles, contrary to misunderstandings produced by scholars documenting pre-colonial African institutions in the colonial period.[20] Drawing primarily on research in northern Ghana and the Voltaic basin, Skalnik contends that incorporating 'original African institutions' is essential for successful democracy in Africa and does not undermine democratic efforts because 'authentic' African institutions were 'subject to various rules and limitations imposed by the populations'

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[17] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 44.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., 44-45.

[20] P. Skalnik, "Authority Versus Power: Democracy in Africa Must Include Original African Institutions," *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, no. 37-38 (1996): 111.

and the 'plurality of authority…ensured that the whole population of a particular area shared ideas and practices related to public arrangements, and recognised the leaders who in turn respected the rules and accepted the influence of the population on public affairs'.[21] On this premise traditional authorities today could act as 'correctives to the power of the modern imported state' and be 'elements of direct democracy complementing representative democracy.'[22] Such ideas of chiefs exercising an 'authentic' African form of democratic governance is prevalent within the political imaginary of democratisation and is bolstered as it resonates with other powerful mobilising discourses on cultural diversity, pluralism and participation.[23]

However, although mechanisms of discrediting chiefs exist, judgements of what makes a dubious and undesirable traditional authority, who decides what is an 'authentic' and 'original' traditional authority, are contingent upon relations of power that are not necessarily democratic. The patriarchal structure of the chieftaincy often was and still is a reflection of a broader patriarchal structure within society. Kessel and Oomen have argued that chieftaincy in South Africa is 'not in accord with the precepts of democracy in its late twentieth century version' as

> chiefs are not elected, but hereditary. Secondly, chiefs are mostly men, which goes against the principles of non-sexism, Thirdly, only Africans can become chiefs, which goes against the grain of having a non-racial society. Fourthly, chieftaincy serves to accentuate the forces of ethnicity, which had become thoroughly discredited in the apartheid years when it was used as the organising principle in the divide and rule strategy of ethnic homelands.[24]

Ntsebeza has also been critical of traditional authority revival in South Africa, seeing the processes as nothing short of a return to apartheid-era tribal authorities.[25] Equally critical of traditional authority revivals, Mamdani regards the continued presence of

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Skalnik points to the *naam* (chieftaincy) in north-eastern Ghana as an example. See Ibid.: 119.

[23] J.M. Ubink, *Traditional Authorities in Africa: Resurgence in an Era of Democratisation* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 29.

[24] I.v. Kessel and B. Oomen, "'One Chief, One Vote': The Revival of Traditional Authorities in Post-Apartheid South Africa," *African Affairs* 96, no. 385 (1997): 572.

[25] L. Ntsebeza, "The Resurgence of Chiefs, Retribalization and Modernity in Post-1994 South Africa," in *Readings in Modernity in Africa*, ed. P. Geschiere, B. Meyer, and P. Pels (London: International Africa Institute, 2008), cf. L. Ntsebeza, *Democracy Compromised: Chiefs and the Politics of Land in South Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

traditional authorities either as evidence of state failure or an unwise empowerment of "decentralised despots" who perpetuate a bifurcated state of citizens and subjects.[26] In a bifurcated state where there is an unequal division of power between 'modern' and 'traditional' sectors, traditional authorises may reinforce bifurcation where their jurisdiction remains limited to customary fields, such as land allocation, dispute settlement and ceremonial duties. Houses of chiefs are often examples.[27] A handful of studies also show that the incorporation of traditional authorities by the state risks undermining any downward accountability and popular legitimacy traditional authorities often rely upon.[28] This may be acute in former war zones and along fragile borderlands where state policies are particularly unpopular and the legitimacy of the state is contested due to militarised governance. With reference to Mozambique and Namibia state recognition has been seen to create 'an ambiguity between upward (state) and downward (community) accountability, where the former is not viewed per se as the source of democratic, legitimate governance by rural populations'.[29]

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[26] M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[27] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 53.

[28] M.V. Höhne, "From Pastoral to State Politics: Traditional Authorities in Northern Somalia," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), S. Hagberg, "Traditional Chieftancy, Party Politics, and Political Violence in Burkina Faso," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[29] L. Buur and H.M. Kyed, "Introduction: Traditional Authority and Democratization in Africa," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 16. See also L. Buur and H.M. Kyed, "Traditional Authority in Mozambique: The Legible Space between State and Community," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), W. Zeller, ""Now We Are a Town": Chiefs, Investors and the State in Zambia's Western Province," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), and T. Zack-Williams, "Introduction: Africa at the Millenium," in *Africa in Crisis: New Challenges and Opportunities*, ed. T. Zack-Williams, D. Frost, and A. Thomson (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

Although challenging the idea that traditional authorities are in some way inherently good and democratic, there is the view that traditional authorities should be incorporated into the democratisation process because 'for better or worse, they are there, and are clearly important exercisers of 'public authority' on the ground in much of Africa'.[30] Logon argues that mixed systems of traditional authorities and electoral politics are inevitable and desirable, and thus need to be better understood. Contrary to common perceptions, she argues, 'chiefs and councillors, sultans and MP's, kings and presidents all inhabit the single, integrated political universe...[and] in the perceptions of ordinary Africans, it seems that democracy and the chieftaincy can indeed coexist'.[31] On the premise that traditional authorities are both expected to exist and are subject to local mechanisms that prevent 'so-called pretenders and dubious kings' holding office,[32] a moral argument is constructed for recognising and incorporating traditional authorities in state building enterprises in Africa.

Englebert is also keen for democratisation processes to build upon traditional institutions as a way to 'reduce the illegitimacy of the African state', but he also recognises that this view presumes a 'rare degree of effective existence of the former', when in many instances 'rather than existing sui generis, resurgent traditional institutions have become contingent structures with their salience dependent on the strategies of local vis-a-vis exogenous forces'.[33] To explore this idea further, of the contingent nature of traditional authorities with regards to local and exogenous 'forces' I will turn to literature that offers critiques of the effect various discourses at local, national and international levels have on traditional authorities in their recent guises. I

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[30] C. Logon, "Selected Chiefs, Elected Councillors and Hybrid Democrats: Popular Perspectives on the Coexistence of Democracy and Traditional Authority," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 47, no. 1 (2009): 102, C. Lund, "Twilight Institutions: Public Authority and Local Politics in Africa," *Development and Change* 37, no. 4 (2006).

[31] C. Logon, "Selected Chiefs, Elected Councillors and Hybrid Democrats: Popular Perspectives on the Coexistence of Democracy and Traditional Authority," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 47, no. 1 (2009): 103-104.

[32] R. Sklar, "The Premise of Mixed Government in African Political Studies," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 19-20.

[33] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 54.

am also interested in the practices and strategies employed in processes of traditional authority revival by claimants to traditional authorities and others implicated in the process.

ENABLING DISCOURSES FOR TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY REVIVAL

Democratisation is part of a wider process of liberalisation politics reconfiguring power relations across Africa, acting as a normative backdrop and a political imaginary enacted in social and political spheres yet never made fully permanent.[34] Shifts from one-party to multi-party states, policies of decentralisation and the devolution of power, as well as a resurgence of identity recognition are examples of developments that have occurred in the name of, and been animated by, democratisation. Within these reconfigurations of power, spaces have opened up for mediators or interlocutors between the state and the people, as well as for leaders associated with groups who are mobilising on traditional or ethnic grounds.[35] Even where groups and associations are not recognised on the basis of ethnicity officially, such as in Burkina Faso, in practice 'ethnic identification remains a major basis for solidarity and collective action in many associations'.[36] The failure of many post-colonial African states to consolidate national identities creates an environment where democracy provides opportunities for those

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[34] L. Buur and H.M. Kyed, "Introduction: Traditional Authority and Democratization in Africa," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[35] J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, "Introduction," in *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa: Critical Perspectives*, ed. J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 46, L. Laakso, "Changing Notions of the Nation State and the African Experience: Montesquieu Revisited," in *Challenges to the Nation-State in Africa*, ed. L. Laakso and A.O. Olukoshi (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 1996), 10-11.

[36] S. Hagberg, "Ethnic Identification in Voluntary Associations: The Politics of Development and Culture in Burkina Faso," in *Rights and the Politics of Recognition in Africa*, ed. H. Englund and F.B. Nyamnjoh (London: Zed Books, 2004), 195.

seeking 'to return to traditional communities or to imagine new ones'.[37] Local elections, for example, can incite the mobilisation of political loyalties around kin and ethnicity,[38] whilst the devolution of power to "we, the people" provokes the question of who "we" the people are.[39]

Williams has challenged the idea of democratisation as an enabling environment for traditional authority revival, pointing to cases in South Africa where traditional authorities have increased their functions despite democratisation, which has posed challenges through the construction of new government institutions at the local level. Chiefs responded and adjusted to what was seen as a threat in the new circumstances by demanding representation on the councils.[40] In Botswana too, where structures of power have been based on tradition, democratisation has led to a relative decline in the influence of chiefs.[41] Members of the House of Chiefs, for example, have felt ignored as power has shifted towards government through the loss of control over land.[42] Ubink has also pointed to cases in Ghana where elected local government has posed a threat to traditional authorities.[43]

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[37] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 47, P. Chabal, *Power in Africa: An Essay in Political Interpretation* (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1994), 47.

[38] S. Hagberg, "'It Was Satan That Took the People': The Making of Public Authority in Burkina Faso," *Development and Change* 37, no. 4 (2006): 779.

[39] M. Ottaway, *Africa's New Leaders: Democracy or State Reconstruction?* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000).

[40] J.M. Williams, *Chieftancy, the State, and Democracy: Political Legitimacy in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010).

[41] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 48.

[42] Ibid. with reference to D.I. Ray, "Report on the Symposium on Traditional Leadership and Local Government, Gaborone, Botswana, 23-26 September 1997," (London: Commonwealth Local Government Forum, 1997).

[43] J.M. Ubink, *Traditional Authorities in Africa: Resurgence in an Era of Democratisation* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 21. Ubink conducted a survey that showed people considering chiefs as only the third or fourth most appropriate actor to perform certain tasks that had been identified by the same people as the traditional functions of chiefs. The two lowest levels of elected government, the Unit Committee and the local representatives of the District Assembly, were regarded as more appropriate than chiefs in carrying out five of the seven tasks identified. See also J.M. Ubink and J.F. Quan, "How to Combine Tradition and

Besides the State, donors and financial institutions have shown increasing interest in traditional authorities. The interest in engaging with traditional authorities corresponds with donors' increased emphasis on working through grass-roots processes and in partnership with local 'stakeholders'. When donors and financial institutions were faced with a 'development gridlock' at the end of the 1980s, dubbed 'the lost decade', blame was directed at poor domestic politics and inefficient state institutions in developing countries. Blame was directed back towards the same development institutions for imposing economic models and state institutional models based on Weberian bureaucratic principles that were alien to the host country. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund were criticised for lacking a 'human face', especially in their engagement with Africa.[44] The 1990s saw a 'new' development strategy emerge and with the growing scepticism towards either the state or the market having sole responsibility for development the new development economics and anti-development paradigm were, for the first time beginning to 'speak in the same register'.[45] Local actors, local knowledge, and locally embedded interventions were now seen by both neoliberals and post-Marxists, those on the 'new' left and 'new' right, as key to development. 'The local' was being reconceptualised as a potentially progressive space from which could emerge 'progressive civic organisations that could bring about democracy and development if only the state would get out of the way'.[46]

Since the 1990s traditional authorities have featured high on the agenda of international organisations as worthwhile agents or partners of development, in part because 'they appear to outside aid agencies as readily available local counterparts with

Modernity? Regulating Customary Land Management in Ghana," *Land Use Policy* 25, no. 2 (2008).

[44] O. Mehmet, *Westernizing the Third World: The Eurocentricity of Economic Development Theories* (London: Routledge, 1999), 132.

[45] M. Watts, "'a New Deal in Emotions': Theory and Practice and the Crisis of Development," in *Power of Development*, ed. J. Crush (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995), 59.

[46] J. Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 95-96.

a substantial measure of authority and capacity to mobilise'.[47] This shift in international development practice has provided a new avenue of recognition and access to material power for traditional authorities. Donors have actively promoted and facilitated the rise of traditional institutions, not least through sponsoring conferences such as the Africa Development Forum. Since 1999 the Economic Commission for Africa has collaborated with the African Union Commission (AUC) and African Development Bank (AfDB) to organise the biennial African Development Forums with the aim to establish an 'African-driven development agenda that reflects consensus and leads to specific programmes for implementation'.[48] Traditional authorities from across Africa, such as the *Asantehene* Osei Tutu Li from Ghana and Kgosi Leruo Tshekedi Molotlegi, King of Bafonkeng in South Africa, participate alongside Heads of State and Government, African Member State policymakers, development partners, other UN agencies, International Government Organisations/Non-Government Organisations, academics, practitioners, Civil Society Organisation's, the private sector, policy and opinion leaders. In 2008 the Queen of Buganda gave a statement advocating for the role of traditional leaders in promoting development in Africa, and made a number of recommendations to the Forum, including 'a proposal that governments and NGOs should partner more with traditional leaders when promoting programmes in reproductive health'.[49]

In 2007 the ECA produced a substantial concept paper entitled *Relevance of African Traditional Institutions of Governance*, which sought to define and advocate for the role of traditional systems of governance in achieving good governance and provide a 'theoretical framework for the dynamics that enable traditional governance institutions to play a more "developmentalist" role in modern governance systems'.[50] The paper based its assessment and recommendations on the premise that the 'essence' of

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[47] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 50.

[48] Steering Committee of the Eighth African Development Forum (ADF VIII), "Governing and Harnessing Natural Resources for Africa's Development," (Addis Ababa: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2012), 1.

[49] ECA Information and Communication Service, "Second Day of Adf Vi Focuses on Gender and Socio-Economic, Socio-Cultural and Political Rights," (Addis Ababa: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2008).

[50] Ibid., v.

customary laws and political values of African societies and traditional institutions has not been fundamentally altered and continues to enjoy a level of loyalty by rural populations. African political values, the report argues, converge with the essential characteristics of modern democracy, even if the mechanisms by which African democratic values are exercised vary significantly from those of the modern democratic system of liberal democracy, for example they operate on the basis of direct participation rather than on a representative basis and decisions are made on a consensual rather than on a majority basis. African traditional values are essential to the transformation of Africa, the report claims, and as such traditional authorities are important because they practice and maintain these values.[51] Three categories of roles are identified for traditional authorities to play in the process of 'good governance'. The first is an advisory capacity to government, as well as participating in the administration of regions and districts. Secondly, traditional authorities are thought well placed to play a developmental role through mobilising communities to implement development projects, sensitise on health issues, promote education, encourage economic enterprises, inspire respect for law and encourage participation in the electoral process. And finally, traditional authorities are thought able to play a role in conflict resolution.[52]

A result of donors engaging with traditional authorities to strengthen them in these various roles is part of a broader change in the African material environment that is 'promoting or facilitating the rise of traditional institutions'.[53] The reallocation of foreign aid to strengthen civil society and the informal sector is thought to be creating a shift in material power and redefining rules of authority.[54] Although there is nothing necessarily new about chiefs being involved in the welfare of communities, as Williams points out in relation to Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa, people there do conceive that there is

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[51] Ibid., 23.

[52] Ibid., v.

[53] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 51.

[54] H. Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors: An Analysis of Systems Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).in P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 51.

something new about contemporary development, and that the implementation of development projects has become a critical issue.

CRAFTING IMAGES AND APPROPRIATING DISCOURSES

As I have just touched upon, the ability to attract and procure development projects is becoming a defining characteristic of a traditional authority in the Kwazulu Natal Province of South Africa.[55] Ones hereditary line, where one is from, used to be the key legitimating factor of a traditional authority, whereas more recently we are seeing what one does in relation to development as a crucial determiner for being recognised and accepted as a traditional authority.[56] 'In post apartheid South-Africa, numerous chiefs have become adept in combining the resource of tradition with appeals to western models and the discourse of liberation politics. Thus, chiefs project themselves as guardians of African custom, but simultaneously as pioneers of rural development'.[57] There is 'pressure for the qualifications for being a traditional leader to change, because of the desire' from the younger and more educated 'to acquire development projects'.[58]

In this way development is redefining what it means to be a traditional authority, but as Williams also shows, most traditional authorities are successfully appropriating the development process in creative and unexpected ways, for example, being actively involved in accessing and implementing development resources and projects, or at least being seen to be doing this. Involvement in development can also, however, bring potential challenges. The failure of a development initiative could, for example, undermine the legitimacy of the traditional authority associated with bringing the project to the area. This is heightened by the extent traditional authorities have gone to go beyond being merely 'gatekeepers' who give permission for a development project to take place. Contrary to assumptions and expectations within South African Government,

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[55] J.M. Williams, *Chieftancy, the State, and Democracy: Political Legitimacy in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010).

[56] Ibid., B, Oomen, *Chiefs in South Africa. Law, Power and Culture in the Post-Apartied Era*, (Oxford: James Currey, 2005).

[57] I.v. Kessel and B. Oomen, "'One Chief, One Vote': The Revival of Traditional Authorities in Post-Apartheid South Africa," *African Affairs* 96, no. 385 (1997): 562.

[58] J.M. Williams, *Chieftancy, the State, and Democracy: Political Legitimacy in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 181.

it was thought traditional authorities would play a predominately ceremonial role after being initially recognised by the state in the early 1990s. However, in tune with expectations and desires of the rural communities, traditional authorities have been active and influential participants in decision making processes within the development committees. These committees became prevalent in the rural areas in the mid-1990s and designed to link rural communities with the ANC government. Traditional authorities, such as chief Biyela, were proactive in establishing development committees in their areas, facilitating meetings for the election of members and granting permission to others involved in setting them up. In the case of the Nzimakwe Development Committee the chief was the leader and responsible for making all the decisions on development in the area. The elected councillors were also expected to report to this committee before finalising decisions concerning development.[59] The decision-making skills and knowledge about development issues, demonstrated by women, has also resulted in chiefs encouraging women to be on the committees, which women have found invaluable experiences to show that 'they should be more involved in local matters'.[60]

Williams shows that whether chiefs actually have the capability to access resources, which often they do not, is less important than the way they appropriate the development process. Although the state-created development committees were superimposed onto pre-existing boundaries, leading to the community associating development activity with chieftaincy, at the same time, chieftaincy has selectively altered development institutions and processes to enhance their own authority and go beyond their roles as gatekeeper. As local populations attached importance to whether a traditional authority could deliver resources, traditional authorities needed to negotiate the dilemma of their lack of capacity to do so. One way they did this in Kwazulu-Natal was by insulating themselves

> from any criticism of not delivering resources by simultaneously telling the community that they are in favour of development and that it is up to the development committees and the local government to provide the necessary funds. In this way, traditional leaders have been able to deflect blame and earn praise no matter what actually transpires...traditional leaders have

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[59] Ibid., 176.
[60] Ibid., 180-181.

demonstrated the extraordinary ability to make strategic decisions that will not threaten their status as the community leaders and as the symbol of unity.[61]

The images traditional authorities project of themselves and the expectations the community holds of traditional authorities seem to converge and mutually shape one another, producing a situation where politics seems as much about perceptions as anything else.[62] Giving the impression one is working towards development, for example by facilitating meetings, seems as important as whether development resources materialise. For a traditional authority to be seen as putting his own interests first and not working in the community's interest significantly undermines his standing. Chief Mtembu became a particularly unpopular figure as people felt he was uninterested in improving their conditions and noticed that his large home was well serviced by access to water, electricity and telephone service, whilst his community went without these basic commodities. Chief Biyela and Chief Mlaba, on the other hand, actively encouraged the formation of development committees and instructed their traditional authority assistants, izinduna, to assist their communities with development matters.[63] In the Western Province of Zambia, Senior Chief Yeta was successful in securing the construction of a tarmac road in his area which, Zeller writes, 'achieved something of high symbolic and material value', and which became a demonstration to 'his subjects that the institution he represents, criticised by some as archaic, self-indulgent, and essentially useless in present-day Zambia, can deliver tangible benefits for ordinary people'.[64] These days Senior Chief Yeta has become more prominent on the national political scene and is rarely seen performing his "traditional" duties, but this is less of a concern for the Mwandi people because the chief is an effective direct link to state authorities and in dealing with entrepreneurs who wish to acquire communal land and resources.[65] Chiefs elsewhere in Zambia also play a central role in managing NGO and government development projects, as well as seeing it as their 'responsibility to

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[61] Ibid., 186.

[62] Ibid., 203.

[63] Ibid., 202.

[64] W. Zeller, ""Now We Are a Town": Chiefs, Investors and the State in Zambia's Western Province," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 218-219.

[65] Ibid., 226-227.

make people participate in development projects in the area, e.g. to contribute labour to construction work on communal buildings'.[66] Although mobilising communities to contribute labour is a more 'traditional' role for a chief it has been noted that traditional leaders also present themselves as key actors for effecting broader changes in the community such as women's rights. Women for Change and the Law and Development Association in Zambia have carried out sensitisation workshops with traditional leaders on human rights on the grounds that, once sensitised, traditional leaders are appropriate 'drivers of change' for such work.[67]

In a similar case to Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa, the Government of Malawi expected traditional authorities to play a minimal role in development and for a gradual shift of power towards locally elected councillors to occur or that chieftaincy would transform and become more democratic. However, chiefs have been at the 'forefront of organising community meetings and acting as a link between local communities and the area and village development committees'.[68] Many chiefs have brought community residents into the process of projecting an image to donors of being ready for development and 'fit for funding' by mobilising communities to mould bricks. 'Bricks are very important', Chiweza quotes one village headman as saying, 'and that is where our participation is evident. Without bricks, there is no development that we want...This project that you see in this community, we had to mould bricks first and then ask government to help us with the rest. That is how we got it.'[69] Chiefs believed that decisions on granting projects were related to having some material object on show as a token of preparedness to participate and it seems chiefs have been successful in using this method of projecting a public image of themselves as effective mobilisers of communities and representatives of their needs. However, although it appeared as if communities were participating in identifying projects, in practice chiefs presented ideas to communities rather than discussed needs and focused 'on inculcating in community residents the importance of

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[66] L. Prestegard and E. Moen, "Study on Drivers of Change in Three Chiefdoms in Southern Province in Zambia," in *Norad Report: Discussion 8/2007* (Oslo: Norad, 2007), 5.
[67] Ibid., 12.
[68] A.L. Chiweza, "The Ambivalent Role of Chiefs: Rural Decentralization Initiatives in Malawi," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 67-68.
[69] Group village headman, Nkhatabay District, July 2004, quoted in Ibid., 69.

doing development work' as a way to obtain their support 'to provide labour and other resources'.[70]

In Ghana the *Asantehene* and *Okyenhene* have positioned themselves in the line of donor vision and emphasised that their 'traditional authority can ensure local ownership, accountability, transparency and hence results'.[71] Following the enstoolment of Osei Tutu as *Asantehene* in 1999 he made it publically clear that his vision for his people and also his vision for how he was going to perform his role was by breaking with the tradition of fighting political wars for territorial expansion and becoming a leader of socioeconomic development.[72] *Asantehene* Osei-Tutu subsequently went on to seek funding from The World Bank to realise his vision. He was successful and The World Bank granted the Ghanaian Government US$4.5 million for a Promoting Partnership with Traditional Authorities Project (PPTAP), and initiated a partnership with the Asanteman Council to implement its activities.

Chiefs such as the *Asantehene* and *Okyenhene* are part of a broader movement of well-educated migrants returning to their home countries because they have been elected or are seeking recognition as chiefs.[73] Kleist writes how "return chiefs" in Ghana have strategically positioned themselves and presented public selves through practices of imagining, articulating and performing in particular contexts. As ways of engaging with transnational resources from Ghanaian migrants and potential donors, chiefs 'emphasise their foundation in tradition' and perform their chieftaincy through displays of dress and conduct, 'as well as articulating their position in terms of moral

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[70] Ibid.

[71] N. Kleist, "Modern Chiefs, Tradition, Development and Return among Traditional Authorities in Ghana," *African Affairs* 110, no. 441 (2011): 641.

[72] A.B. Asiedu, A.L. Kwame, and B. Osei-Tutu, "An Asanteman–World Bank Heritage Development Initiative in Promoting Partnership with Ghanaian Traditional Leaders," *Africa Today* 55, no. 4 (2009): 3.

[73] See also examples from Cameroon and Zambia in F.B. Nyamnjoh, "'Our Traditions Are Modern, Our Modernities Traditional': Chieftancy and Democracy in Contemporary Africa," (Dakar: CODESRIA, Undated), and W. Zeller, ""Now We Are a Town": Chiefs, Investors and the State in Zambia's Western Province," in *State Recognition and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?*, ed. L. Buur and H.M. Kyed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 2007.

obligation'.[74] Building on this foundation, 'chiefs also describe themselves as agents of development with international experience'.[75] Although in some cases chieftaincy has experienced more continuity than discontinuity, the revival of traditional authorities and institutions is a process of aspiring chiefs becoming 'traditional' and becoming 'modern' in specific ways according to and in response to how discourses of tradition and modernity have been produced at the various levels to which they appeal and seek legitimacy. Chiefs are therefore often caught up in ambivalent tension as they seek to draw upon what Lentz describes as 'registers of legitimacy'.[76] Lentz's study of three 'big men' in Ghana, including a chief, further illustrates how public images or 'public selves' are skilfully crafted in order for each to become a chief, a mine captain and a politician, and to become truly 'big' in these roles. [77] The ambivalence produced through chiefs mediating between the past and present by 'propagating the image of itself as a "symbol of tradition" while, at the same time, striving to serve as an agency for "modern projects"' has also been understood as chiefs operating on 'two distinct fields, with different languages'.[78]

While recent traditional authority revivals occur within a particular locality and are thus shaped by historical specificity at the local level, at the same time revived traditional authorities are the product of and are shaped by exogenous factors and discourses 'beyond' the local. However, as the cases discussed so far indicate, traditional authorities are not shaped and invented by dominant forces through a process of imposition. Rather, local actors, including claimants to traditional authority, are engaged in a strategic appropriation of discourses in local, national and international spheres as they craft public images in ways that relates their authority 'to differently conceptualised worlds...and to what people imagine about these worlds'.[79] Examples

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[74] N. Kleist, "Modern Chiefs, Tradition, Development and Return among Traditional Authorities in Ghana," *African Affairs* 110, no. 441 (2011): 632.

[75] Ibid.

[76] C. Lentz, "The Chief, the Mine Captain and the Politician: Legitimating Power in Northern Ghana," *Africa* 68, no. 1 (1998).

[77] Ibid.

[78] J.M. Ubink, *Traditional Authorities in Africa: Resurgence in an Era of Democratisation* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 25.

[79] E.A.B. van Rouveroy van Niewaal and R. van Dijk, "Introduction: The Domestication of Chieftaincy: The Imposed and the Imagined," in *African Chieftaincy in a New Socio-Political Landscape*, ed. E.A.B. van Rouveroy van Niewaal and R. van Dijk (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 1999), 4.

discussed here illustrate how traditional authorities have sought to project images and position themselves in order to appeal to local, government and donor discourses and garner recognition, legitimacy and access material resources.

Terrance Ranger returned to the idea of 'the invention of tradition' he had pioneered with Eric Hobsbawm in the early 1980s,[80] and through a discussion of the subsequent literature[81] concluded that he preferred to speak in terms of 'imagined traditions', to indicate the desire and role of local actors in the construction of new models of authority.[82] West and Kloeck-Jenson also found through their study of traditional authorities in post-war Mozambique that 'all authority, along with the community over which it is exercised, is 'imagined', which carries the implication that 'in each generation, in each historical epoch, 'traditional authority's' past versions are subject to erasure even as they are rewritten, and new forces are brought to bear on the fabrication of political legitimacy'.[83] As a result of their study West and Kloeck-Jenson wanted to encourage further research on traditional authorities to have as their essential question, 'not, then, whether or not traditional authority, or a particular claimant, is legitimate,' but to pay attention to the 'larger questions that frame these, such as 'who claims 'legitimacy', by what argument, who is persuaded, and why?' Traditional authority, they asserted, is 'the product of multiple and sometimes conflicting 'imaginings''.[84]

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[80] T. Ranger, and E. Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[81] Ranger was particularly influenced by R. O'Hanlon, "Histories in Transition: Colonialism and Culture in India," in *Popular Culture in Question* (University of Essex1991), R. O'Hanlon and D. Washbrook, "Approaches to the Study of Colonialism and Culture in India," *History Workshop* 32 (1991), W. Sollors, *The Invention of Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), and S. Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals, Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

[82] T. Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa," in *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth Century Africa: Essays in Honour of A.H.M. Kirk-Greene*, ed. T. Ranger and O. Vaughan (London: MacMillan, 1993).

[83] H.G. West and S. Kloeck-Jensen, "Betwixt and Between: 'Traditional Authority' and Democratic Decentralization in Post-War Mozambique," *African Affairs* 98 (1999): 484.

[84] Ibid.

'SETTING UP SHOP'

A trend that deserves further scrutiny is the mushrooming of administrative bodies established on the premise of supporting traditional authorities in their traditional roles, and in particular in their roles as agents of development. To return to Ghana, the Promoting Partnership with Traditional Authorities Project, funded by the World Bank, found the institutions of the *Asantehene* and *Okyenhene* 'decayed' and management systems lacking. As a result the capacity building of the traditional institutions was a component of the project, with the intention not only to strengthen partnerships between government and traditional communities, but also between traditional authorities and other development practitioners. The capacity building component was intended to strengthen and modernise aspects of traditional authority structures 'in order for the institution to contribute in meaningful and substantive ways to the social and economic development of their communities'.[85] A secretariat for the *Okyenhene* was created and 'equipped with computers and accessories, other office equipment and furniture... [a] 4x4 Nissan pickup and accounting software'.[86] Sensitisation workshops, training programs and ICT training, were also part of The World Bank programme to modernise the chieftaincy. The example of the *Asantehene* partnering with The World Bank is an illustration that he, and the institution he heads, has been recognised as a legitimate traditional authority that warrants being strengthened in order for it to play a positive role in decentralisation and democracy building in Ghana. Evidently an administrative body for the chieftaincy was seen by The World Bank as a necessary requirement if it was going to contribute in any substantive way to socio-economic development.

Traditional authorities are also taking advantage of the legal status and increased attention donors are giving to strengthening civil society by creating NGOs. In Uganda, for example, the Buganda Kingdom has established two development NGOs, the

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[85] K.A. Boasiako, "Ghana: A King of Our Times," *New African*, August/September 2007., quoted in A.B. Asiedu, A.L. Kwame, and B. Osei-Tutu, "An Asanteman–World Bank Heritage Development Initiative in Promoting Partnership with Ghanaian Traditional Leaders," *Africa Today* 55, no. 4 (2009): 6.
[86] World Bank, *Implementation Completion and Results Report,* (World Bank: Washington, 2007) 25.

Buganda Cultural and Development Foundation (BUCADEF) and the *Kabaka* Foundation, which 'raise funds internationally and are actively involved in project administration and management'.[87] The *Kabaka* Foundation directs funds that more directly strengthen the traditional institution, for example it attracted funds for the restoration of the highly symbolic Kasubi Tombs destroyed in March 2010. It was reported the foundation made a donation of $50,000 towards the rehabilitation of the Wamala Tombs.[88] BUCADEF on the other hand is focused on the socio-economic development of Buganda. One of its projects is hosting a radio programme on the Central Broadcasting Service aimed at 'sensitising, mobilizing, informing and educating listeners about the projects BUCADEF is engaged in and encouraging them to participate in the development of the programmes'.[89] The radio and other media, such as the Internet, is an increasing method traditional authorities are using to raise their profile and promote their image and message.[90] The Otumfuo Osei Tutu Charity Foundation, for example, has an attractive website setting out its mission statement, vision, future programmes and an impressive list of its current achievements. The Foundation has been recently established to serve as an umbrella encompassing the Education Fund, a Health Fund and the Serwah Ampem Aids Foundation that have been created since Otumfuo Osei Tutu II's enstoolment in 1999. In addition to these funds the foundation includes 'programmes on capacity building to empower traditional authorities and their secretariats [so they can] play effective and efficient role[s] in Ghana's decentralisation agenda and community development within the context of a modern Ghana'.[91]

Olofin II, Olofindji Akandé, the Vizir of the King of Ketou in Benin and head of the Benin Association of Traditional Leaders, also heads the Africa-Cultures International Institute, an NGO with a focus on the promotion of traditional systems and authorities. The UN recognised the organisation and its 1999 World Conference of Kings, Queens,

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[87] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 50.

[88] R. Mwanje, "*Kabaka* Appoints New Foundation Boss," *Daily Monitor*, 21 February 2012.

[89] The Buganda Kingdom website, http://www.buganda.or.ug, (accessed 02.09.12).

[90] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 51.

[91] Otumfuo Charity Foundation, http://www.otumfuo-charityfoundation.org/culture.html.

Traditional Chiefs and Religious Leaders on Conflict Prevention in the Twenty-First Century.[92] The NGO claims to have an 'emphatic orientation towards Pan-Africanism' and is 'in line with Vizir Olofin's self-perception as a national leader...and as a world leader',[93] with members including university lecturers, entrepreneurs, civil servants and traditional healers. The central focal point of Africa-Cultures, unlike the Buganda and Asante NGOs, is to implement a set of initiatives that revolve around laying to rest those who died as victims of the transatlantic slave trade. With this goal in mind the NGO is initiating the creation of 'a monument, university, craft centre, and centre of pilgrimage and renewal' at Igbale Aiye, a small town bordering with Nigeria. After coming into contact with Africa-Cultures in 2002 the American academic and self-identified diviner-priest-healer in the sangoma tradition, Wim van Binsbergen, seems to be taking a leading role in its advocacy.

CONCLUSION

An exploratory overview of current literature on traditional authority revivals in Sub-Saharan Africa provides a number of interesting insights and ways of approaching the subject. Although there is a bias of state-centric analysis, it is evident that the relationship between post-colonial governments and traditional authorities cannot be ignored as discourses observed at a 'national' level of analysis play an important part in producing traditional authorities. However, the attention of scholars has been increasingly captured by the relationship between discourses of development and traditional leaders and the resultant effects of interest shown by international agencies towards authorities perceived as locally embedded and thus locally legitimate. Traditional authorities have harnessed the local/non-local tension to position themselves as desirable to local communities and outside agencies looking to anchor and legitimate their programmes and projects. I will now turn, in chapter two, to the

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[92] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 51.

[93] W. van Binsbergen, "Cotonou, Benin: Second Conference of the Ambassadors of the African Renaissance, 15-17 January 2004," http://www.shikanda.net/topicalities/cotonou.htm.

local and national historical complexities and contexts which shape Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival.

CHAPTER TWO

ACHOLILAND AND TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY REVIVALS IN UGANDA

In this chapter I first of all introduce political governance in Acholiland over the long durée. I seek only to paint a general picture of Acholiland in the pre-colonial period before focusing primarily on chiefdom heads, the consolidation of an 'Acholi' ethnicity and the creation of a ceremonial head for this new polity in the colonial period. In the second section I map other traditional authority revivals across Uganda and finally introduce the context within which calls were heard to revive Acholi traditional authorities in the 1990s.

GOVERNANCE IN ACHOLILAND

The Luo-speaking Acholi of today are composed from waves of migrations into northern Uganda from around 1600 onwards. Those living in the same village shared a *kaka*, a lineage segment, and were usually related through patrilineal descent, although relatives from the maternal line or those considered simply as 'close relatives' sometimes also constituted *kaka*.[1] Each village was composed of clusters of households within a hamlet where the adult males were the authority figures. A *kaka* could be identified and differed from those around through their common ancestor, praise name and repertoire of ceremonies. Village elders were known as *ladit* (pl. *ludito*) and mediated internal disputes and represented the village to outside groups. A number of *kaka* were recognised as *ker* (royal) *kaka* and had villages of *lobong* (commoner) *kaka* attached to them. The cluster of numerous *lobong* villages, the *ker kaka*, and the land for hunting and cultivating, constituted the widest polity and as such did not have an Acholi term of reference. This domain came to be commonly called chiefdom by colonial authorities. In the late nineteenth century it is thought there were about thirty chiefdoms in Acholiland, constituted by thousands of *lobong* villages. The ruling

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[1] T. Allen, "Review of Ronald R. Atkinson, *the Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda before 1800*," *Journal of the International African Institute* 66, no. 3 (1996): 475.

authority over the chiefdom was the head of the *ker kaka*, known as the *Rwot* (pl. *Rwodi*) and his household was considered a village and known as *kal*.

The authority of *Rwodi* came primarily from the conceptualisation of his role as the *won piny* (father of land).[2] His ritual duty of rainmaking together with the provision of food and security, made possible through the paying of tributes, ensured his authority and attracted other *kaka* to commit allegiance. The paying of tribute symbolised one's recognition of a *Rwot* and was paid in kind or in service, with a primary purpose being to redistribute the tribute and forge social and political relationships.[3] Certain *lobong kaka* heads paid tribute to the *Rwot* through forms of personal service such as anointing the *Rwot* at his installation ceremony, maintaining the ancestral shrine or providing beer at sacrificial rituals. These practices incorporated the *lobong kaka* heads into the ancestor ceremonies of the *Rwot* and thus strengthened their ties to the chiefdom.[4] An early anthropologist researching in Acholiland in the late 1940s early 1950s, Frank Girling, wrote that some of his informants who wanted to claim that their clan had been independent did so by saying "*Pe wa tyero tyer bot ngadi*", "we did not take tribute to anyone".[5] Royal regalia were also important symbols of *Rwodi* authority, particularly the *bul ker* (royal drum), where it has even been said that 'chiefdoms and royal drums became so linked in Acholi that it became virtually impossible for people there to conceive of one without the other'.[6] Two early colonial officials, Frank Bere, an administrator, and Captain Ernest Grove, saw that other regalia such as the spear, shield, 'other valuables and heirlooms from the past' played central roles in *Rwodi* succession ceremonies[7], whilst Grove wrote how the *ton ker* (hereditary spear) seemed to embody the power of the *Rwot*, particularly as it was used in oath making.[8]

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[2] R.M. Bere, "An Outline of Acholi History," *Uganda Journal* 11, no. 1 (1947): 4.

[3] R.R. Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda before 1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 92-93.

[4] F.K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960), 96.

[5] Ibid., 94.

[6] R.R. Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda before 1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 95. Atkinson was involved in the History of Uganda Project facilitated by Makerere University in the 1970s, which informs to a large degree the information presented in his 1994 book *The Roots of Ethnicity*.

[7] R.M. Bere, "An Outline of Acholi History," *Uganda Journal* 11, no. 1 (1947): 5.

[8] E.T.N. Grove, "Customs of the Acholi," *Sudan Notes and Records* 2, no. 3 (1918): 173.

The role of the *Rwot* as the ritual head of a political group did not mean he was the apex of a single-structure of a descending hierarchy[9]; rather, the clan heads in the chiefdom played key political roles as advisors to the *Rwot* and representatives or spokesmen of their respective *kaka* lineages. In this role an elder was known as *ladit-pa-rwot* (elder of the *Rwot*), *lakwena* (messenger) or *ladit kaka* (elder of the lineage). Members of a chiefdom who disagreed with the *Rwot*, could leave the chiefdom through appealing to their kin in another chiefdom, which thus limited the coercive powers of the *Rwot*.[10] The most significant woman able to exercise a degree of authority over other women in the chiefdom was the *dak ker*. She was the woman who married the *Rwot* on the occasion of his succession and provided the heir to succeed him. As the sons of a *Rwot* had no special position, they did not have the means to attach to themselves land or people, unlike the sons of *Rwodi* in Bunyoro-Kitara and did not, therefore, pose a significant threat to the ruling *Rwot*.[11] Also, in contrast to the Alur, the sons of the *Rwot* who were not chosen as heir did not usually have the means to move away and become new rulers of 'chieflets'.[12]

Rwodi also derived power from the chiefdom *jogi* (sing. *jok*), spirits that determined the moral order of society, claiming to use the power of the *jok* to 'heal' society or to kill.[13] *Jogi* were distinct from ancestors and tended to be associated with the oldest lineages in the respective areas and lived in nearby geographical features such as a rock outcrop, cave or waterfall. To maintain good relations with the ancestors, the *ajwaki* of the village maintain the hut-like construction, called *abila*, and offered explanations and cures for when 'evil befalls a village or when someone becomes ill'[14]. The *ajwaka* was thus a very powerful figure within the village, attaining great respect and gifts for his direction and guidance. The chiefdom and its *abila* was thus associated with a geographical feature and a named *jok*, which,

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[9] F.K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960), 123.
[10] Ibid.
[11] R.R. Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda before 1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 91.
[12] A.W. Southall, *Alur Society: A Study in Processes and Types of Domination* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2004).
[13] For critique on the concept of *jok*, see H. Behrend, *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits: War in Northern Uganda, 1986-1997* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999). See also E.T.N. Grove, "Customs of the Acholi," *Sudan Notes and Records* 2, no. 3 (1918): 174.
[14] F.A. Malandra, "The Ancestral Shrine of the Acholi," *Uganda Journal* 7, no. 1 (1939): 31, E.T.N. Grove, "Customs of the Acholi," *Sudan Notes and Records* 2, no. 3 (1918): 175.

underlined the position of the chief [*Rwot*] as a mediator with, and a propitiator of, the realm beyond moral relations...Chiefs were thus connected with the bush 'outside', while at the same time embodying the values of the 'inside', and at moments of general crisis, such as failed rains, their intermediary quality rendered them invaluable.[15]

Complex patterns of marriage and military alliances formed the backbone of relations between *kaka* and chiefdoms, with events such as drought instigating military alliances and confederacies [16] as did the later invasions from slave and ivory traders, as well as colonial rulers. Despite these groupings, however, Atkinson claims there is no evidence to suggest there was ever Acholi-wide organisation and cooperation prior to colonialism. The Payira chiefdom did manage, however, a significant degree of extra-polity functioning over nominally independent chiefdoms, due to the chiefdom's central location in a particularly fertile part of Acholiland, which was also an area difficult to access. Payira attracted numerous *lobong* villages fleeing the effects of drought or warfare, and became the largest chiefdom by the late eighteenth century.[17] Payira seemed to assign to themselves a superior status above other chiefdoms because of the recognition the *Rwot* of Payira received from the Bakama (king) of Bunyoro-Kitara, the kingdom to the south-west of Acholiland from where one of the migrations into Acholiland came. In addition, Girling observed a tendency of Acholi rulers to look to the 'feudal kings of Bunyoro, with whom many claimed agnatic kinship', and attempts 'to establish in Acholiland the same forms of authority', and saw this no more so than within Payira. [18] It is impossible, however, to deduce from historical accounts the extent that other *Rwodi* recognised the Payira *Rwot* as a leading *Rwot* because firstly, the accounts available do not give details on how power was effectively exercised, whether it was voluntary or coercive 'recognition'; secondly, there is an over representation of the histories of chiefdoms and *kaka* in the west of Acholiland, such as Payira; and finally assertions that Payira *Rwodi* had considerable authority over 'Acholi' is more likely to be a reference to the central and western areas of what constitutes today's Acholiland. As the following sub-section illustrates, as well

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[15] T. Allen, "Understanding Alice: Uganda's Holy Spirit Movement in Context," *Africa* 63, no. 3 (1991): 382.
[16] R.R. Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda before 1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 266.
[17] Ibid, F.K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960), 156.
[18] F.K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960), 106.

as the thesis more broadly, the Payira *Rwot* has not been able to claim a paramount position in Acholiland without contest from others who also invoked 'tradition' in their challenges. Indeed, the introductory picture here painted should not be taken as an account of a static reality frozen in time. Rather, authority was in constant contestation and relations amongst people far more fluid than is often portrayed of pre-colonial societies. Tensions were no doubt endemic as many different people, sometimes over a long time, sought to imbue multiple imaginings, such as *kaka*, the Luo language and customary laws, with meaning and thus to imagine it further.[19]

COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION, ACHOLI 'ETHNICITY' AND A CONSTITUTIONAL HEAD

According to Acholi historian and colonial administrator, R.M Bere, 1898 is 'the year from which modern administration may be traced' in northern Uganda.[20] It was at this time that the British sought to connect Acholiland with the emerging Uganda protectorate instead of with Egypt and Sudan. Treaties were signed with several *Rwodi* and military posts were established. Three prominent *Rwodi* caught the attention of the first British explorers. These were *Rwot* Ochama of Payira, *Rwot* Ogwok of Padibe and *Rwot* Olia of Atiak. *Rwot* Ochama collaborated with Samuel Baker who was appointed under the Khedive of Egypt, carrying out violent raids in the pursuit of establishing authority. Ochama obtained guns through his coalitions with Baker and through encounters with slave and ivory traders. His son *Rwot* Awich continued to assert coercive authority across much of today's Acholiland, carrying out raids against neighbours and trying to establish authority as head of the large and scattered Payira clan. Guns were used to reward *Rwodi* who collaborated with British administrators, providing new coercive means to assert not only their authority but the authority of those who they were mediating on behalf of.[21] *Rwot* Awich resisted cooperation with British administration, refusing to agree to the treaty proposals and instead providing

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[19] T. Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa," in *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth Century Africa: Essays in Honour of A.H.M. Kirk-Greene*, ed. T. Ranger and O. Vaughan (London: MacMillan, 1993), 81-82.

[20] R.M. Bere, "An Outline of Acholi History," *Uganda Journal* 11, no. 1 (1947).

[21] T. Allen, *Trial Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Lord's Resistance Army* (London: Zed Books, 2006), 149.

refuge for the fleeing Kabarega of Bunyoro from Colonel Coleville and allying with the remaining Nubi soldiers in attempts to capture *Rwot* Ogwok of Padibe whose clan had chopped off the head of his father *Rwot* Ochama in 1877, placing it inside the captured royal drum. While *Rwot* Ogwok sought protection from *Rwot* Awich with recourse to the 1898 treaty, *Rwot* Awich continued to evade capture until he was finally arrested and imprisoned in Nimule in 1901.[22] Only one year later, however, Awich was reinstalled as *Rwot* of Payira and in 1904, contrary to expectations, requested the Church Missionary Society to send missionaries. His continued resentment towards British colonial rule and his support behind the Lamogi uprising in 1912 led to a second arrest and an eight year imprisonment in Kampala. Payira 'country' was divided into two and Awich's two sons, Eria Alikair and Yona Odida, were appointed chiefs. Writing in 1947 the first District Commissioner of Acholi District wrote that Awich, although successful at raids and defending himself with cunning, 'must be counted a failure' and be seen as 'a thorn in the side of peaceful administration'.[23] *Rwot* Ogwok, in contrast, found favour with the last of the Egyptian Government officials, Emin Pasha, who established his military station at Padibe, and also formed alliances with British officials as external attempts to govern Acholiland shifted from Egypt to Uganda.

In 1910 British colonial offices were opened in the newly established Gulu district, followed by the creation of Chua district to the east in 1914, with its headquarters in Kitgum (see map of Uganda, page vii). Local men who could exercise influence over the rural population and were sympathetic to colonialism were appointed 'chiefs' by the Colonial Administration and made part of the government organisation. By 1914 the Provincial Commissioner of the northern Province informed the General Governor in his annual report that

> All chiefs have been encouraged to engage their own clerks, who are Acholi educated at the local missions; practically every chief has his clerk now, and latterly a considerable number have commenced to tackle Tax Registers. Houses of a more substantial and civilized type are being built by the chiefs, many of them own bicycles, they all possess chief's robes, and their police are now organized. All these improved introductions tend to make the chiefs realize their responsibilities and show it by a more dignified bearing, which it

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[22] R.M. Bere, "Awich – A Biographical Note and A Chapter of Acholi History," *Uganda Journal* 10, no. 2 (1946), 77-78.
[23] R.M. Bere, "An Outline of Acholi History," *Uganda Journal* 11, no. 1 (1947), 7.

may be said is not a natural characteristic of these people. Several promising young chiefs have replaced men whose influence was found to be detrimental to the local administration. Five chiefs have been deposed: Andrea Olal (Okellomwaka's son) succeeded Ugwal of Paranga and he is reported on by the District Commissioner as probably the best chief in the District. Owor of Palaro, very old and useless, has been succeeded by Lupir who as regent to Anderea Lugarra/Logarra did excellent work in Patiko during his minority. It is reported that Lapir has now evolved order out of chaos in Palaro.[24]

Achieving order, efficiency and economic productivity drove colonial policy and on these ground Acholiland underwent a 'routine pacification' that included collecting the thousands of guns that had amassed, clearing land affected by sleeping sickness and moving large portions of the population in Western Acholiland to inhabit areas beside the main road.

Impressed by the political organisation found in Buganda,[25] which reflected a constitutional monarchy, colonial authorities exported this model across the rest of the protectorate. Characteristic of the Buganda system exported across the Ugandan Protectorate in the early colonial period was a three-tiered hierarchy of appointed, non hereditary, territorial chiefs, with both administrative and judicial functions, topped by a three man group of senior chiefs called 'Ministers' in Buganda and 'Senior Officials' elsewhere. One was the chief executive (Katikiro or Nganzi in the kingdoms and Secretary-General elsewhere), another was the Chief Justice, and the third the Treasurer. Together these formed part of the Government and were linked to the Native Council.[26] This hierarchical structure, known as The Ganda model, altered the position of chiefs in the western kingdoms (Bunyoro, Toro and Ankole) and Busoga, and made further reaching adjustments in areas with less centralised political organisation, such as Acholi. Chiefs outside Buganda were more directly under the control of the provincial administration.

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[24] Entebbe Archives, A46/808 Secretary Minute Paper, no. 2135. Northern Province. Annual Report 1914-15.

[25] For the nineteenth century political system in Buganda see L.A. Fallers, "Social Stratification in Traditional Buganda," in *The King's Men*, ed. L.A. Fallers (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

[26] For the three tier structure see D.A. Low and R.C. Pratt, *Buganda and British Overrule, 1900-1955* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

Lukiko (a Bantu word for a council or parliament) were also created across Uganda for chiefs to meet regularly, in Gulu it was the first Monday of each month, and ensure the effective dissemination of information from colonial authorities.[27] The *Lukiko* had no legislative power and could only amend native law and custom subject to the approval from the Governor, thus their power and authority was limited.[28] The *Lukiko* in Gulu met at the baraza, which perhaps ironically was built by the people from Puranga accused of murdering or complying with the murder of their non-hereditary appointed chief, Okello Mwaka. Mwaka had been appointed Chief of Puranga and was Major Delm-Radcliffe's interpreter and 'right hand man'.[29] A colonial report spoke of Chief Mwaka as 'the most loyal and hardworking Chief of the Nile Districts' who had been 'murdered by some discontented followers.'[30] The Puranga were not the only Acholi who resented being ruled by an appointed chief. For example the Labongo resisted rule by Chief Eliya Aliker, resenting it as an attempt of Payira paramountcy.[31]

Further attempts to increase efficiency and reduce costs saw Acholiland divided into six counties and twenty-two sub-counties in the late 1930s. Counties were named according to local geographical features to avoid political repercussions from adopting any of the clan names. The sub-counties, however, were named by the largest traditional domain/chiefdom in the area. Those appointed as County Chiefs were officially known as *Rwot*, but this did not indicate he had any authority over 'traditional' domains. To differentiate between hereditary *Rwodi* and those appointed as chiefs, the latter were known locally as *Rwodi* Kalam (of the pen) and the former as *Rwodi* mo (of the oil). Appointed over the sub-counties were *Jagi* (singl. *Jago*). Within each sub-county there were three to five Parishes under a Mukungu (pl. Bakungu), and in each Parish two or three villages, each under a *won Paco* (pl. *wegi Paco*). None of these posts were hereditary and all were salaried officials of the Native Administration.[32] The heads of

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[27] Provincial Commissioner, "Northern Province Monthly Report," ed. B.P.o. Uganda (Entebbe: Entebbe Archive, 1914).

[28] C. Gertzel, *Party and Locality in Northern Uganda, 1945-1962* (London: Athlone Press, 1974), 17.

[29] R.M. Bere, "An Outline of Acholi History," *Uganda Journal* 11, no. 1 (1947).

[30] Provincial Commissioner, "Northern Province Monthly Report," ed. B.P.o. Uganda (Entebbe: Entebbe Archive, 1914).

[31] J.O. Dwyer, "The Acholi of Uganda: Adjustment to Imperialism" (Columbia University, 1972), 19.

[32] F.K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960), 196.

commoner lineages, *ludito kaka*, were not recognised by the Administration, although were unofficially recognised by the chiefs and were responsible to the *wegi Paco* for the people in their village. They formally participated in governance only through a few of them being selected by the other *ludito kaka* to sit on the sub-county council.[33] Although the *ludito kaka* was usually a local elderly man, as a result of administrative requirements young men could also be found in this role. Similarly to the distinctions made between *Rwodi Mo* and *Rwodi Kalam*, distinctions were also made between those appointed because they could interact and perform governmental tasks and those elders who were there according to Acholi custom. The former were known as *atekere* and the latter as *ladit kaka me cik*.[34] The District Commissioner was at the apex of this structure of chiefs and was responsible to the Provincial Commissioner. Appointments tended to be made from the emerging educated class, leaving only three *kal* lineage *Rwodi* filling three of the six County Chief posts of Aswa, Lamwo and Agago. They were the sons of *Rwot* Ochama of Payira, *Rwot* Ogwok of Padibe and *Rwot* Odieng Abar of Adilang respectively. In the other counties the chiefs were 'either strangers in their areas or the descendants of commoners there'.[35]

The Districts of Gulu and Chua were amalgamated in 1938 as part of the 'urgent trend in modern administration...to bring the clans together and to make the Acholi conscious of their unity as a single people'.[36] However, with the new Headquarters based in Gulu, the creation of an Acholi District provoked resentment from the east at the loss of district status. [37] Despite the attempt to unite the clans, the Aswa River acted as a border that naturalised a division between east and west or upper and lower Acholiland. Today amongst the Acholi this division has come to separate the more 'traditional' (positive statement) or 'backward' (negative statement) Acholi of the upper/eastern areas, from those in the west.[38]

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 198.

[35] Ibid., 197.

[36] R.M. Bere, "An Outline of Acholi History," *Uganda Journal* 11, no. 1 (1947): 8.

[37] Issues of grievance in the east towards the west also included fewer government services, poor communication and less extensive educational development, which resulted in fewer opportunities to fill jobs that required educational qualifications. C. Gertzel, *Party and Locality in Northern Uganda, 1945-1962* (London: Athlone Press, 1974), 68.

[38] S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 33.

The creation of an Acholi District caused a significant change in administration. Attempts to revert to a traditional system of government were thought too difficult, particularly as it was thought that the checks previously used to arbitrate the power of rulers and which ensured the response of the ruler to the demands of their subjects had been eroded. Thus, a system of councils was introduced based on the British Local Government Authorities and 'they were to ignore such facts as kinship, traditional political allegiance, and ritual authority'.[39] Power was fiercely fought over at the district level and although the councils were meant to act as checks and replace the direct rule of the county chiefs, instead the two authorities functioned more in a parallel system.[40]

Leys observed that sentiment for the thirty or so 'old chiefdoms', which the British tried to undermine by imposing an administrative structure of six counties, was kept alive through competition for 'status in the modern political system'.[41] Girling on the other hand wrote that 'the polycephalous system of mutually opposing domains...where power, influence and status were widely distributed'[42] had all gone. But Gertzel's account of emerging party politics and the establishment of an Acholi paramount chief or Constitutional Head supports Leys' view that allegiance and rivalry amongst clans was still strong.

County chiefs, or *Jago* as they were also called because they held authority within a government drawn jurisdiction, were the most politically vocal group in the immediate post-war years.[43] They were keen to secure greater powers for the Acholi African Local Government and in 1944 began to campaign for an appointment of a secretary general to represent the Acholi at a higher level. After the Uganda African Local Government Ordinance of 1949, the District Commissioner withdrew from his post as chairman of the district council, which opened up the chairmanship to one of the county chiefs, to be elected by the district council. Although legally the district councils enjoyed only deliberative and advisory functions, the recognition they received was considerably

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[39] F.K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960), 199.
[40] Ibid., 195.
[41] C. Leys, *Politicians and Policies: An Essay on Politics in Acholi, Uganda 1962-65* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), 16.
[42] F.K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960), 177.
[43] C. Gertzel, *Party and Locality in Northern Uganda, 1945-1962* (London: Athlone Press, 1974), 58.

higher.[44] As three of the county chiefs were from royal ancestral lineages, the issue of establishing a secretary general or president was complicated by clan rivalries as each wanted their man to hold this post. The District Commissioner, R.M Bere, was however opposed to the idea of a paramount chief, stating in 1949 that:

> It will not be permitted to try and make a sort of hereditary king whose family would become rulers. This would not be at all in accordance with modern ideas and the intention of giving the people more say in their own government.[45]

There remained a need, however, for the Provincial Government to establish better communication between local and central government, and so in 1950 two new posts were created: *Lawirwodi* who would chair the District Council and act as Senior Executive Officer of the Acholi local government, and *Langolkop Madit* who would be Chief Judge of district courts. As the title *Lawirwodi* translates as '*Rwot* who is first among equals' and its advocates were associating it with the concept of paramount, the colonial administration were specifically opposed to Payira or Padibe filling the post.[46] The district councillors from among the County Chiefs instead elected Mateo Lamot, Chief of Agago[47] as *Lawirwodi* and Yona Odida, Chief of Aswa,[48] as *Langolkop Madit*. There was increasing competition for the *Lawirwodi* post, which aroused 'considerable chiefdom rivalry'.[49] In 1953 Mateo Lamot lost the post to Phillip Adonga, County Chief of Chua, and *Rwot* of Pajule.[50]

The District Council was not, however, satisfied with the *Lawirwodi* post and still sought an executive district head who would then be able to meet with the *Kabaka* of Buganda and the *Kyabazinga* of Bunyoro on an equal footing. In 1959, after much debate between the Protectorate Government, the Ministry of Local Government and the District

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[44] Ibid., 19.
[45] Entebbe Archives, ADM 21/A. Acholi District Council, Minutes of Meeting, 12 April 1949, quoted in Ibid., 59.
[46] Ibid. The two clans were also different in dialect owing to belonging to two different waves of migrations into the area. See S.J.M. Gray, "Acholi History, 1860-1901 - Part I," *Uganda Journal* 15, no. 2 (1951): 134.
[47] Son of Rwot Odieng Abar of the Adilang *kal* lineage.
[48] Son of Rwot Awich of the Payira *kal* lineage.
[49] C. Gertzel, *Party and Locality in Northern Uganda, 1945-1962* (London: Athlone Press, 1974), 58-59.
[50] Leys' account records Philip Adonga as the ex-county chief of Pajule and describes him as the 'head of Pajule'. Gertzel also describes him as 'from the royal family' and so it understood Adonga was the anointed Rwot of Pajule.

Council, the *Lawirwodi* position was abolished and a ceremonial head, entitled *Laloyo Maber* (good ruler), was created. The *Laloyo Maber* post, although non-executive, once again sparked considerable rivalry, particularly amongst the major clan heads.[51]

At the same time as the '*Laloyo* issue' two political parties sought to consolidate power. These were the Uganda National Congress (UNC), which later became Uganda's People's Congress (UPC) and the Democratic Party (DP). According to Leys, although clan loyalty was significant in Acholi politics, its centrality could be easily exaggerated and was 'distinctly subordinate to party allegiance'.[52] East and west Acholi was generally divided along UNC/UPC and DP lines, with the former also being predominately Protestant and the latter Catholic. Not only this, the official UPC candidates for the two parliamentary positions in west Acholi were Payira, Alex Ojera and Peter Oola, and to secure Payira votes promised to install the retired County Chief *Rwot* Yona Odida as *Laloyo Maber*.[53] This created tensions within the UPC party as UPC leaders in east Acholi were under pressure to support an eastern based Padibe candidate.[54] When the District Council met in 1963 to fill the new office of *Laloyo Maber*, Philip Adonga, the DP backed candidate, who had previously been the *Lawirwodi*, was elected owing largely to a defector from the UPC.[55] The creation of constitutional district heads across Uganda were being locally conceived in terms of creating their own '*Kabaka*-substitutes' in imitation of Buganda.[56] As Leys wrote, during the years of Buganda's dominance, the remainder of the country had learned to envy her advantages and to aspire to a similar degree of administrative autonomy, even to having similar political arrangements, in particular some form of traditional king'.[57]

The way the issue of a *Laloyo Maber* featured as part of campaigns for the General Election in April 1962 and the District Council Elections, illustrates the way a new class

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[51] C. Gertzel, *Party and Locality in Northern Uganda, 1945-1962* (London: Athlone Press, 1974), 19, C. Leys, *Politicians and Policies: An Essay on Politics in Acholi, Uganda 1962-65* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967).
[52] C. Leys, *Politicians and Policies: An Essay on Politics in Acholi, Uganda 1962-65* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), 16.
[53] Ibid., 20.
[54] C. Gertzel, *Party and Locality in Northern Uganda, 1945-1962* (London: Athlone Press, 1974), 75.
[55] C. Leys, *Politicians and Policies: An Essay on Politics in Acholi, Uganda 1962-65* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), 20.
[56] Ibid., 10.
[57] Ibid., 32.

of Acholi was emerging; an educated class often with experience of living away from Acholi and who could strategically appeal to traditional sentiment for political leverage.[58] The fact that the *Laloyo Maber* issue had political leverage demonstrates that there was support amongst the Acholi for such a position, although who occupied the post was an issue of contention. People were also in favour of council members being elected directly by the people and were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the rule of county chiefs. The UPC tapped into this feeling and became 'champions of the people against officialdom', challenging their dominant position in the councils and challenging the chiefs on the grounds of incompetence, inefficiency, inability to change with the times, and oppressive behaviour towards the rural population.[59] In the face of a dominant colonial power structure, Acholi ethnicity also became actualised through 'struggles to participate in central power' and as Acholi sought to 'objectify their own way of life' through the invention of Acholi traditions and an ethnic history.[60] The method of British administration also contributed to the emergence of an Acholi ethnicity and reified the group as a 'tribe'.[61]

Although clan loyalty remained 'alive' and translated into rivalry and competition over political posts in local Government, the political power of traditional authorities had been severely weakened and undermined. Girling wrote that only the ritual authority of minor traditional functionaries remained and he expected that this would eventually too fade away. He wrote of an emerging new class of Acholi, mainly from commoner lineages, economically empowered and 'cut off from the values of the traditional order of society'.[62]

> The old men who enshrined in their persons the values of the traditional order were dying out, their sons had difficulty in maintaining the traditions if they wished to do so....The ritual contexts in which the *Rwot* is important become fewer. The ritual counterpart of political authority remains after the decay of the latter, but ritual, too, tends to disappear in time.

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[58] M. Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* (London: Heinemann, 1976), 189-227.

[59] C. Gertzel, *Party and Locality in Northern Uganda, 1945-1962* (London: Athlone Press, 1974), 68.

[60] H. Behrend, *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits: War in Northern Uganda, 1986-1997* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), 18.

[61] For view on the contested origins of the denomination *Acholi* see F.K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960), R.R. Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda before 1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

[62] F.K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960), 202.

The persistence of an ancestor-worshiping cult had, however, maintained social cohesion amongst the village lineages, even though the chiefdoms which they formed were disappearing as a relevant polity.[63]

NEO-TRADITIONALISATION ELSEWHERE IN UGANDA

In areas of the Uganda Protectorate where a more centralised system of governance operated (Buganda, Bunyoro, Toro and Ankole) the 'kings' were afforded a special status in comparison to the authorities, such as *Rwodi*, found in the 'state-less' societies.[64] Gingyera-Pinycwa argued that it was because the monarchical institutions resembled more closely the "civilised" states of Europe and therefore were through to have a higher level of cultural development, unlike the 'savages at a lower level of development'.[65] Colonial Administration ruled more indirectly through centralised structures and gave a unique and favourable status to Buganda over the other kingdoms[66] in Uganda through the 1900 Agreement.[67] This caused bitterness throughout the rest of the protectorate and resulted in attempts to emulate monarchy.

Initially the *Omukama* of Bunyoro, *Omukama* of Toro and the *Omugabe* of Ankole were able to exercise more centralised power through a patrimonial and personalised politics, but over time their increasingly autocratic behaviour was criticised and in the cases of Bunyoro and Ankole the *Omukama* and *Omugabe* found their authority significantly curtailed and undermined by the 1930s. In Bunyoro, educated Banyoro, ex-

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[63] Ibid.

[64] Although colonial anthropologists often categorised African states as either Kingdoms or acephalous, at least in Uganda, it is unhelpful to take this distinction too strictly. Although in areas like Buganda and Bunyoro British explorers found well established hierarchies with a king-like leader at the epicentre, in areas like Ankole and Busoga political organisation did not fit neatly into either category.

[65] A.G.G. Gingyera-Pinycwa, "Monarchism an Anachronism? The Republicans Outlaw the Royalists in Uganda," *East Africa Journal* 4, no. 7 (1967): 9-10.

[66] The term kingdoms only came into use in the late 1950s, prior to that the usual term was 'district'. M. Doornbos, *The Ankole Kingship Controversy: Regalia Galore Revisited* (Kampala: Fountain, 2001), 70.

[67] See also D.E. Apter, *The Political Kingdom in Uganda: A Study in Bureaucratic Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), M. Doornbos and F. Mwesigye, "The New Politics of Kingmaking," in *From Chaos to Order: The Politics of Constitution Making in Uganda*, ed. H.B. Hansen and M. Twaddle (Oxford: James Currey, 1995).

chiefs and disappointed aspirants to chiefships, were critical of the *Omukama* for by-passing the Bunyoro council in local government affairs, eventually resulting in 1955 with the *Omukama*'s position being reduced to that of a constitutional head, with his powers thereafter gradually declining.[68]

Ankole experienced the farthest reaching decline in its monarchy, but from the 1930s also shows the most impressive attempt at a 'revival'. By the mid-1930s the Ankole kingship's traditional functions and 'essential meaning' had been eroded[69] and so in response to a decaying monarchy the ruling group in Ankole, the Bahima, increasingly focused attention on the ceremonial aspects of kingship, which became lavishly adorned. Despite initial reluctance to recognise and support anything that did not seem 'genuinely' traditional, the District Commissioner at the time not only agreed to a request for the *Omugabe* to have a throne, but asked if there were any symbolic decorations they would like incorporated into the woodwork.[70] Following this success, the *Engazi* requested a crown and ceremonial robes for a fully-fledge coronation of the *Omugabe*. Over the 1940s and 50s 'the Ankole royalty [was] made more royal' through the adoption of quasi-traditional titles such as *Omuramuzi* (Chief Judge) and *Omubiki* (Treasurer), terms that had gained currency at the time, borrowed as they were from Buganda.[71] The wife of the *Omugabe* was given the title *Omwigarire* and it was agreed that the English equivalent of this was Queen, with their sons and daughters becoming known as princes and princesses. In addition to special regal looking clothes, there were 'still other ways the monarchy was dressed up'. The residence of the *Omugabe* became known as a Mugaba (palace), a Royal Standard was designed and printed on official stamps and seals of the Ankole government. Amidst the re-invention of traditions there were also only a few attempts to revive cultural attributes that had been practiced prior to colonialism which had fallen into disregard. One of these was the preservation of the royal drum.[72]

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[68] T.V. Sathymurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda, 1900-1986* (Aldershot: Gower, 1986), 332-334.

[69] M. Doornbos, *The Ankole Kingship Controversy: Regalia Galore Revisited* (Kampala: Fountain, 2001), 42.

[70] Ibid., 63-64.

[71]Ibid., 66.

[72] Ibid., 67.

The Ankole may have sought to make royalty 'more royal', but in Busgoa the Presidential position that headed the Native Administration from 1919 was officially re-titled *Kyabazinga*, and made 'King' in the eyes of Busoga in 1938. Politics up to the mid-1950s was largely shaped by the two main contenders for the *Kyabazinga*ship, as well as the status of the district and its position in wider Uganda.[73] Although the British accepted the *Kyabazinga* title they insisted the post was not a Kingship and Busoga was not a Kingdom, despite Busoga attempts to mimic the Buganda in this way. In 1962, *Kyabazinga* Sir William Nadiope 'personalised the *Kyabazinga*ship in such a way that the institution became hereditary and succession was confined to his sons and affines'.[74]

The economic strengthening experienced by Baamba and Bakonzo living in the Rwenzori mountains in Western Uganda during colonial rule, and the exclusionary politics they were subject to under the Toro Kingdom and the minority circle of Mwenga, resulted in the Rwenzori Rebellion. The Baamba and Bakonzo demanded separation from Toro and began to talk in terms of the 'Rwenzururu Kingdom'.

The Independence Constitution of Uganda in 1962 served to uphold rather than undermine the more politically centralised parts of Uganda as Bunyoro, Ankole and Toro were for the first time constitutionally recognised as Kingdoms, rather than Districts. A federal structure was established giving Buganda full federal status, Bunyoro, Toro and Ankole semi-federal status, Busoga was recognised as a 'territory' and the non-Kingdom areas were divided into unitary districts.

POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE, MUSEVENI AND 1990S REVIVALS

The process towards political independence in Uganda was fraught with 'ethnic' and regional differences operating through the framework of a multi-party political system. The uneasy UPC-*Kabaka Yekka* (the King alone) political alliance took Uganda to independence in 1962. An amendment to the constitution in 1963, resulting from

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[73] T.V. Sathymurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda, 1900-1986* (Aldershot: Gower, 1986), 338.

[74] A.R. Nsibambi, "The Restoration of Traditional Rulers," in *From Chaos to Order: The Politics of Constitution Making in Uganda*, ed. H.B. Hansen and M. Twaddle (Oxford: James Currey, 1995), 42.

complaints by Buganda who refused to recognise a Prime Minister over the *Kabaka* and other hereditary chiefs, saw *Kabaka* Mutesa II posted as the ceremonial President of Uganda. Milton Obote was vested with executive powers and relations between the new Government and the Buganda Kingdom soon broke down, reaching its lowest moment in May 1966 when Obote ordered an attack on the *Kabaka*'s palace, killing hundreds of people. The next day a state of emergency was declared, the Baganda Kingdom was announced defunct and the following year a new unitary Constitution was imposed. The 1967 Constitution removed the *Kabaka* as President, dissolved the post of Prime Minister, placed Obote as the Executive President, and abolished monarchy and federalism. This dramatic move was felt most deeply amongst the Baganda as the Constitution dismantled the long standing hierarchy of traditional authorities, divided Buganda into four districts and stripped Buganda of its federal status.[75] Obote sought to rectify the dual operation of government by targeting the prototype, the Buganda model, as well as its representational head, the *Kabaka*. Obote wanted to establish 'one state, one Government, one Parliament, one People' and so denounced the *Kabaka* and also the educated elite, put emphasis on the 'common man' and proclaimed that the 'rulers of Uganda must be all the citizens of Uganda as a whole.'[76] Abolishing Kingdoms and centralising power would also dismantle the powerful district authorities that had been based on the Buganda model.[77] The neo-traditionalisation efforts across Uganda came to a standstill, and although we can today see that it would only be temporary, at the time the abolition of traditional authorities seemed to mark the final nail in the coffin, as with Ankole, or the beginning of the end.

As soon as Idi Amin took power in 1971, however, there followed proposals from the Baganda for their Kingdom to be restored. At a Conference of Elders, the Baganda carefully worded their proposal to make clear that their request was for the restoration of Kingship that would be restricted to Buganda alone, and was not a request for a King

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[75] S. Lindemann and T. Goodfellow, "From Strongest Ally to Fiercest Rival? The Fallout between the Museveni Government and the Buganda Kingdom," in *ASAUK Biennial Conference* (Oxford2010).

[76] Uganda News, June – September 1968, *passim*, in D.A. Low, *Buganda in Modern History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 247.

[77] See M. Doornbos, *The Ankole Kingship Controversy: Regalia Galore Revisited* (Kampala: Fountain, 2001), S. Lindemann and T. Goodfellow, "From Strongest Ally to Fiercest Rival? The Fallout between the Museveni Government and the Buganda Kingdom," in *ASAUK Biennial Conference* (Oxford2010).

of Uganda. The money to run the Kingship, they insisted, would come from the Baganda. They too harked back to the colonial period when Uganda 'was happy and progressive' as a Republic under a Governor General, with the Kings of Uganda alongside the district administration, and tried to strengthen their argument by referring to the tribal problems of Zambia that they said were created not by Kings but by 'greedy, self-seeking politicians'.[78]

Although there was a circle of elite in Baganda with a determined drive to see the restoration of the Kingdom, in other parts of Uganda reactions to the abolition of traditional authorities was not received with such disdain, but rather the broad mood was a 'pervasive indifference' and only 'occasionally joy'.[79] The series of Memoranda written to Amin following the 1971 conference by elders of Kigezi and Ankole are an example. Although the Baganda were only requesting that their monarchy be restored, the fear shared by the elders of Kigezi and Ankole was that this would spark revivals across Uganda. The elders did not see a place for 'tribal' authorities because the roles they used to play in the past, such as the allocation of land and court cases, were seen as having 'naturally and rightly been taken over by appropriate arms of the Uganda Government' and that these arms should not be surrendered to 'local and tribal institutions'[80]. Some of the specific reasons the elders gave against restoring Kingdoms and chiefdoms in Uganda was that it would 'most likely revive political divisions and factionalism' and 'definitely cause undesirable disunity in Uganda', 'hamper Uganda's economic and social development' and 'lead to victimisation and possible bloodshed in the Region'. The Kigezi Elders were also keen to point out that those who supported the restoration of traditional institutions were of 'the old order' seeking to amass a personal gain from the restoration of traditional institutions'.[81] One of the underlying fears driving the elders' view that was widely felt across Uganda was towards the possibility

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[78] Memorandum by the Elders of Buganda to the President, General Idi Amin Dada, on the Restoration of Kingdoms, Uganda News, (Kampala, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 24th August 1971), in M. Doornbos, *The Ankole Kingship Controversy: Regalia Galore Revisited* (Kampala: Fountain, 2001), 128-133.

[79] Ibid., 94.

[80] Ibid., 136.

[81] Memorandum by the Elders of Kigezi to the President, General Idi Amin Dada, on the Restoration of Kingdoms. Memorandum by the Elders of Ankole to the President, General Idi Amin Dada, on the Restoration of Kingdoms. Uganda News, (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Kampala, Uganda, 24th August, 1971), in Ibid., 128-133.

that a restoration of the Buganda Kingdom may lead to a restoration of a Buganda sub-imperial rule. The concern both Amin and Obote, who had a second term in office after overthrowing Amin in 1979, had towards restoring the Buganda Kingdom and *Kabaka*ship was its potential to shift power back to central Uganda, to the Buganda, when both Obote and Amin were from northern districts and ruled as such, placing northern elite in positions of power and recruiting for the army from their home areas.

A restoration of traditional authorities was to come, however, as both a result of pressures from monarchists and a need for votes by the most recent governing party in Uganda, the National Resistance Movement (NRM). Following Yoweri Museveni's bush war that led to the National Resistance Army (NRA) seizing power from Obote's second period as President in 1986, the Baganda expected ample rewards for its assistance through the contribution of people and territory towards the NRA's victory.[82] Initially the Baganda were given prominent representation in the post-1986 administration[83] and later, in 1993, under pressure to secure votes for a prolongation of NRM rule in a no-party system, the NRM amended the constitution to cancel the abolition of traditional rulers.

The 1995 Constitution, Chapter sixteen, Article 246, posited that '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'.[84] Conscious of preventing political challenge from traditional leaders, or rather from Buganda, as this was the only Kingdom that posed a potential threat, the constitution makes clear that 'a person shall not, while remaining a traditional leader or cultural leader, join or participate in partisan politics', and stipulated that 'a traditional leader or cultural leader shall not have or exercise any administrative, legislative or executive powers of Government or local government'. Unlike other countries in SSA, such as South Africa, the Ugandan government was not going to formally incorporate

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[82] S. Lindemann and T. Goodfellow, "From Strongest Ally to Fiercest Rival? The Fallout between the Museveni Government and the Buganda Kingdom," in *ASAUK Biennial Conference* (Oxford2010).
[83] The overrepresentation of Baganda at the central state level began to decline significantly, however, from 2000. See Ibid.
[84] *Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, 1995, Article 246. In 1967 Milton Obote, then President of Uganda, abolished traditional authorities, viewing them as incommensurate with his vision of a newly independent modernising state.

traditional authorities into the state apparatus. Instead the Government has explicitly and repeatedly referred to traditional authorities in terms of 'culture', re-producing culture and politics as binary opposites, to the intended effect of situating traditional authorities firmly in the former. I will return to the NRM's government's discourse of cultural institutions in chapter four.

Whilst the constitution enabled a new freedom to recognise the *Kabaka*, of equal importance for Buganda was the Traditional Rulers Statute that included a restoration of assets (the Baganda call Ebyaffe, meaning 'our things') that had been confiscated from Buganda in 1967. These included the *Kabaka*'s palace, Bulange (the *Lukiko's* parliamentary building) and 350 square miles of land, including the obligatory rent and rates on this land from tenants. In anticipation of constitutional amendments, in July 1993 Sabasajja Muwenda Mutebi II was crowned *Kabaka* of Buganda, which was also quickly followed by coronations in Toro and Bunyoro.

The restorations of the latter two Kings in Uganda have been coloured by controversy and tensions. For example, although the Toro Kingdom has been reinstated, its former boundaries, which included areas that were majority Baamba, Bakonzo and other non-Bantoro, have not. The Toro kingship, as a result, has 'lost much of its former significance and appeal as a result of the 'secession' of Bundibugyo and Kasese districts'.[85] In Bunyoro, there was little enthusiasm to revive the monarchy and the process of restoration has been beset by a struggle between two contenders from the royal Babiito clan.[86] In the same year Ankole monarchists crowned the 22nd *Omugabe* of Ankole, Prince John Barigye, but, given the potential for objections publicised the event as the last funeral rites of the previous *Omugabe*. The NRM swiftly declared the coronation null and void fearing that a restoration of monarchy in Ankole would incite a revival of antagonisms between the Bairu and Bahima, many of whom worked alongside one another in the NRM, united by their common involvement in the political party.[87]

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[85] M. Doornbos, *The Ankole Kingship Controversy: Regalia Galore Revisited* (Kampala: Fountain, 2001), 95.
[86] Ibid., 95-96.
[87] Ibid., 98.

The restoration of the *Omugabe* in Ankole has since been at the centre of fierce debate,[88] which still remains unsolved.

The restoration of the Buganda Kingdom has been particularly pertinent, especially as Buganda-State relations continue to shape traditional authorities elsewhere in Uganda. Englebert argues it has been one of the most far reaching restorations of a traditional Kingdom in Africa as, following the impressive theatrical display at the coronation in 1993,

> the king wasted no time creating executive, legislative and administrative structures...Mutebi appointed a parliament (*lukiko*), with representatives of districts, clan elders and other appointees...[he also] promptly set up a government, in many ways a modern cabinet with the portfolios one finds in its national counterpart, including a prime minister (the Katikiro) and ministries of land, public buildings, finance, commerce and industries, local government, water and electricity, information and broadcasting, education, health, agriculture, economic planning and youth, as well as an attorney general, together with fourteen 'ministers of state'.[89]

Symbols were also reinstated or created, such as an anthem, a flag and national monuments, and an ideology emerged 'based on a claim of moral regeneration' that is 'pro-development,...albeit a development based on the rural world and predicated on a return to tradition'.[90] As discussed in the previous chapter the Buganda Kingdom has established two NGOs: the *Kabaka* Foundation to fund the strengthening of the traditional institution and the Buganda Cultural and Development Foundation (BUCADEF) that claims to work for the socio-economic development of Buganda. BUCADEF publicises an impressive list of funders on its website ranging from international donors such as USAID, ACDI-VOCA, Water AID, UNDP small Grants Programme and the McKnight Foundation, to religious groups such as the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints in the USA and local and central government. The success of many projects has resulted not so much in the mobilisation of famers or generating income for local communities, but rather in 'generating cultural awareness and promoting ideological unification among Buganda, while sending the signal to

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[88] Ibid.

[89] P. Englebert, "Born Again Buganda and the Limits of Traditional Resurgence in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, no. 3 (2002): 349.

[90] Ibid.: 351.

remote villages that the kingdom is back'.[91] This was particularly the case for the project to restore cultural sites as tourist attractions under the Heritage Trails project funded by the Uganda Community Tourism Association and the British NGO Action for Conservation through Tourism.[92]

Although the Kingdom projects images of its main NGO, BUCADEF, as an extension of the Kingdom that facilitates development for the Buganda, there is a danger for Kingdom authorities that rural Baganda perceive it differently. BUCADEF projects are not only administered through district authorities rather than traditional counties, they are also mainly funded by foreign donors and therefore may be producing a sense of alienation, often the product of relations between the development industry and local population.[93] Despite such challenges Buganda has created a quasi-state institution, through carving an international as well as local public profile, enhancing its fiscal independence, promoting its own development policies and engaging in numerous development projects. According to Doornbos, what has been revived in Buganda 'is not so much the culture of Buganda but rather the potential power of culture in the political process.'[94]

The restoration of Buganda also ushered in a renewed debate between supporters of federalism and 'decentralisation' and as far as Buganda is concerned they have wanted to make sure they are prepared for a time when monarchists can make a credible claim for autonomous local self-government in a new federal system.[95] A decade on and relations between the Buganda Kingdom and the NRM Government have soured and come to significant and violent blows,[96] as I will return to discuss further in chapter four.

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[91] Ibid,. 357.
[92] Ibid.
[93] P. Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda* (West Hartford, CT: Kumerian Press, 1998), 360, cited in P. Englebert, "Born Again Buganda and the Limits of Traditional Resurgence in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, no. 3 (2002): 360.
[94] M. Doornbos, *The Ankole Kingship Controversy: Regalia Galore Revisited* (Kampala: Fountain, 2001), 93.
[95] P. Englebert, "Born Again Buganda and the Limits of Traditional Resurgence in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, no. 3 (2002): 364.
[96] S. Lindemann and T. Goodfellow, "From Strongest Ally to Fiercest Rival? The Fallout between the Museveni Government and the Buganda Kingdom," in *ASAUK Biennial Conference* (Oxford2010).

The 'revivals' of traditional authorities have not been restricted to Kings, however, as numerous 'traditional authorities' across the country have sought state and local recognition over the past fifteen years. Englebert has noted with interest that there are also a 'multiplicity of political entrepreneurs from groups in Uganda without a strong tradition of centralised statehood or kingship who have claimed the status of traditional leaders in order to benefit from the recognition granted by the constitution.'[97] Busoga royalists, for example, have resumed the monarchization process they had got underway in the 1950s, by crowning, for the second time, the seventy-four year old Henry Wako Muloki in February 1995 as *Kyabazinga*. Following his death in 2008, Busoga entered a tense period as a new *Kyabazinga* was elected from the royal clan heads. One newspaper reported that the 'Kingdom' was torn 'between two princes, Edward Columbus Wambuzi from Bulamogi and William Nadhiope of Bugabula, who were both elected *Kyabazinga* amid controversy'.[98] In 2011 there was a heavy deployment of police forces around the Kingdom headquarters as Wambuzi finally assumed office as *Kyabazinga*, despite continued petitions against the election.[99] Advocates of the Rwenzururu Kingdom were reported in the national newspapers not only to be reinstating the King, but also training a private army and beginning to collect taxes.[100] The Itseo, Padhola, Alur, Lango, and Acholi have also witnessed ceremonies 'reviving' 'traditional leaders.'[101] Contrary to the other traditional authority revivals in Uganda, however, calls to revive Acholi traditional authorities in the 1990s were voiced against the background of a protracted conflict and widespread violence in northern Uganda.

[97] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 37.

[98] A. Kirunda, "Busoga Royal Chiefs Face Sack If New Kyabazinga Is Not Elected," *Daily Monitor*, 15 December 2009.

[99] D.Kira, Heavy Deployment as Wambuzi Assumes Kyabazinga Office, *The New Vision*, 20th December 2011,

[100] *The New Vision*, 10th January 1994, in P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 37.

[101] Itseo crowned Paphras Imodot the *Emorimor* in 1996, the Padhola crowed Moses Stephen Owor as *Ahola* in 1999, the Alur officially reinstalled Philip Olaker Rauni II as *Rwot-Obimo* in 2006, the Lango discreetly coronated Yocam Odur as the *Won Nyaci* in 2003, and although *Rwot* Godfrey Acana of Payira was selected to be installed as Paramount Chief in Acholi in 2000, he died shortly before the ceremony. His son, David Acana, succeeded and was crowned in 2005.

CONCLUSION

The question of what exactly should be revived with regards to 'traditional authorities' has been central to debates and tensions across Uganda and as the following chapters show, this also holds true for Acholi. In relation to the Ankole restoration of traditional authorities Doornbos has pointed out a divide amongst advocates for a revival who have imagined the reinstatement of traditional authority in different ways, taking for granted the vision each has as the obvious and 'genuine' expression of traditional authority. On the one hand a group envisioned and 'took for granted that reinstatement would concern the institution as it had been inherited from colonial times, not the pre-colonial Nkore kingdom', whilst others argue this would amount to symbolically reviving an ethnically ascribed kingship, which was discriminatory over regions that had not historically formed part of the kingdom. They claim it would be more traditional to revive the pre-colonial Nkore kingship with roots in the fifteenth century, than the 'colonially restructured institution that had lasted little longer than sixty years'.[102] This case confirms the assertion by much of the broader literature on traditional authorities that 'regards tradition as a specific construction at a specific time for specific purposes'.[103] As I show in the following chapters this also holds for the revival of Acholi traditional authorities and the emergence of Ker Kwaro Acholi.

In order to be able to move more lucidly through my critique of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival, I have painted in this chapter, through broad brushstrokes and moments of highlighted details, a picture of Acholiland and Uganda in relation to governing authorities over the long durée. I have introduced the authority of *Rwot* as it has been conceptualised prior to the recent revival of Acholi traditional authorities and drawn attention to the moment when Acholi was appointed a ceremonial head or Laloyo Maber in the 1950s. I then mapped the inventing and re-imagining of traditional authorities across Uganda, highlighting the process of monarchization in Busoga and the

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[102] M. Doornbos, *The Ankole Kingship Controversy: Regalia Galore Revisited* (Kampala: Fountain, 2001), 107.

[103] E.A.B. van Rouveroy van Niewaal and R. van Dijk, "Introduction: The Domestication of Chieftaincy: The Imposed and the Imagined," in *African Chieftaincy in a New Socio-Political Landscape*, ed. E.A.B. van Rouveroy van Niewaal and R. van Dijk (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 1999), 1.

desperate attempts to keep monarchy alive in Ankole. I also pointed to the central and influential role the Buganda Kingdom plays in traditional authority politics in Uganda. The overview I have given of traditional authorities in Uganda has drawn from the thin body of literature available. Besides Englebert's critique of how Baganda monarchists strategically and successfully restored the Buganda Kingdom far beyond its stipulated cultural role, the only other significant study of a contemporary traditional revival in Uganda is Doornbos' critique of attempts within Ankole to restore the monarchy and its colonially created territorial boundaries. Although these significant contributions give crucial insights for critiques of traditional authorities in Uganda and beyond, scant attention has been given to the numerous other traditional authority revivals in the country.[104] My study of Ker Kwaro Acholi, therefore, is a contribution to this lacuna.

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[104] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005). is an excellent discussion of the rise of tradition-based political action in Africa since 1990s, but makes only brief reference to examples in Uganda.

PART TWO

CHAPTER THREE

BECOMING A TRADITIONAL CULTURAL AUTHORITY

In the midst of prolonged conflict in northern Uganda, calls to revive Acholi traditional authorities and the international support these calls received re-introduced a cohort of *Rwodi* to the political landscape in Acholiland. A Paramount Chief of Acholi was also elected from amongst the *Rwodi* and a relatively discreet ceremony in 2000 marked this unprecedented event as well as the re-installing of numerous *Rwodi*. Over the following five years the Council of *Rwodi* headed by a Paramount Chief became more commonly known as Ker Kwaro Acholi and recognised as the institution of traditional authorities and custodian of Acholi culture, amongst national and international actors, and found particular support by those in the field of 'traditional justice'.

In this chapter I analyse both the dominant discourses that enabled and shaped the first phase of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival as a traditional cultural institution, as well as the events and strategic practices of the central actors of the emerging Ker Kwaro Acholi. I begin the first part by giving an overview of the recent conflict in northern Uganda that became an enabling environment for the revival of traditional authorities and emergence of Ker Kwaro Acholi. I do not, however, seek to give a comprehensive account of the complexity of war in northern Uganda, as this has been done extensively elsewhere[1]; rather, in my overview I want to draw attention to the emergence of particular discourses that shaped the initial phase of Ker Kwaro Acholi's 'revival'. I discuss how discourses of 'cultural breakdown' and 'traditional justice' emerged and became dominant ways of understanding the situation in northern Uganda and which framed the calls to revive traditional authorities. In the second part of the chapter I turn to analyse pursuits by Ker Kwaro that were significant in the process of Ker Kwaro becoming known, particularly amongst national and international actors, as the

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[1] The most recent and comprehensive studies are in T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot, eds., *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality* (London: Zed Books, 2010).

traditional cultural authority in Acholi. In this section, I discuss public ceremonies, examine Ker Kwaro Acholi's first Strategic Plan published in 2005 and show that Ker Kwaro Acholi's dominant self-presentation is to a significant degree re-produced in a key document on traditional justice produced by Dr Erin Baines of the Conflict and Development Programme, Liu Institute for Global Issues at the University of British Columbia. One of the purposes of the chapter is to illustrate and emphasise that the emergence of Ker Kwaro Acholi was founded upon ideas to revive traditional authorities on the premise they had the potential to bring peace and stability to northern Uganda.

VIOLENCE IN ACHOLILAND AND POLITICAL RECONFIGURATION

Whilst the NRA/M were forming alliances with Baganda in the 1980s and later experiencing the benefits of relative stability, economic liberalisation and development in the 1990s, northern Uganda was becoming increasingly unstable and debilitated by physical, emotional and psychological violence.[2] Despite Obote's attempts to de-ethnicise Uganda, the 1970s and 1980s saw an increase in tension along ethnic, religious and sub-regional lines – including the reinforcement of a north-south divide. Under Idi Amin, Acholi political order was widely destabilised as local government became an extension of the security forces. The 'violent political purges in Acholi and Lango districts, leading to tens of thousands of civilian deaths' and which drove Acholi elite into exile and lineage-based authorities to 'generally withdraw from political life', served to sever 'the link between the Acholi in the district and the national state'.[3] The

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[2] Cf. C. Dolan, *Social Torture: The Case of Northern Uganda, 1986-2006* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009).

[3] A. Branch, "The Roots of LRA Violence," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 29. In an application form to work for the Ugandan Civil Service in 1978, Justine Acana, son of Rwot Yona Odida, stated that his father's occupation was 'peasant farmer', perhaps recognising that his status as Rwot of Payira carried little currency in the climate of anti-'tribalism'. G. Acana, "Pension Form 2, Gulu District Administration, Pensions and Gratuities Particulars and Computations," (Gulu: District Archive, 1978).

colonial stereotype of Acholi as warriors and a martial people[4] was also re-produced by Museveni as he fought his bush war and sought to garner support from Baganda and other southerners who had felt they had been at a disadvantage since independence under the series of rulers who all came from the north.[5] A major battle fought between the NRA and Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) in the ethnically heterogeneous area of Luwero in central Uganda, was effectively framed by Museveni in regional terms, as a fight to 'throw out the north in favour of the south.'[6] As the inhabitants of Luwero had suffered during the UNLA's counter-insurgency, and the UNLA was populated predominantly by Acholi, the latter felt the brunt of the perpetuated anti-northern sentiment.

Contrary to opinions of observers from outside Uganda, Museveni's Government brought little relief to northern Uganda, rather the violence in central Uganda merely shifted 'toward the north and the country's other peripheries'.[7] It was reported that twenty-seven different rebel groups were taking up arms and resisting the government following Museveni's takeover of power.[8] Soldiers from the previous governments fled northward and many who initially formed a base in Sudan returned to Gulu and formed the Uganda People's Democratic Movement/Army (UPDM/A). On arrival they tenuously cooperated with Acholi elders and 'faced with a common external enemy' who 'identified all Acholi as its ethnic enemy', managed to 'stabilise internal order around a discourse of Acholi identity'.[9] Hot on the heels of ex-UNLA were Museveni's bush rebels turned army who captured Gulu in 1986, committed violent atrocities and looted the

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[4] The British colonial rulers adopted a policy of recruiting for the King's African Rifles from northern areas, whilst encouraging southerners, and particularly the Baganda, to fill civilian white collar jobs.

[5] Milton Obote was from Lango, Idi Amin was from West Nile, and Bazilio Olara-Okello and Tito Okello were both from Acholi

[6] A. Branch, "The Roots of LRA Violence," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 30, S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 74.

[7] S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 69.

[8] G.C. Bond and J. Vincent, "The Moving Frontier of Aids in Uganda: Contexts, Texts, and Concepts," in *Contested Terrains and Constructed Categories: Contemporary Africa in Focus*, ed. G.C. Bond and N.C. Gibson (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002), cited in S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 69.

[9] A. Branch, "The Roots of LRA Violence," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 34.

majority of cattle. According to one of Finnstrom's informants 'it appears the NRA soldiers were repeatedly told that the Acholi were the enemies, so when the NRA arrived in Acholiland, they first behaved well, but soon begun to destroy Acholiland systematically'.[10] The army's looting of cattle was broadly perceived in Acholi as a deliberate strategy to plunge Acholi into poverty.[11]

The peace agreement signed between the UPDA and NRA in 1988 only signalled a further consolidation of war in the rural areas, and saw mass displacements in government efforts to evacuate civilians from the war zone. Between 1988 and 1994, in addition to intense fighting in northern Uganda, 'the NRA forcibly cleared approximately 100,000 people from their homes in and around Gulu town' whilst committing 'hundreds of extra-judicial executions' and 'burning down homesteads and granaries'.[12] Further restrictions were placed on people's movement when in 1992, for example, a resolution was passed that 'any person leaving his place of residence and going for a visit to another area must get a letter from RC1 [Resistance Councillor at the village level] of his area. On arrival there he must report to RC1 of that area. When leaving he must get a letter from RC1 showing that he is leaving the place'.[13]

Although the NRM claimed to be introducing a participatory form of democracy through the establishment of Resistance Councils (RC) and committees from the village level to the National Resistance Council, in Acholiland the RC system embodied 'a hierarchy of agents, serving an ethnically exclusive central state'.[14] Forming out of what had become a crisis of leadership across Acholiland was Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement (HSM).[15] Her primary objective was to purify the Acholi and later the whole of Uganda

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[10] Onyango-Odongo, (informant) quoted in S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 82.

[11] Ibid., 72.

[12] Amnesty International, "Breaking the Circle: Protecting Human Rights in the Northern War Zone," (London: Amnesty International, 1999), 75, quoted in C. Dolan, *Social Torture: The Case of Northern Uganda, 1986-2006* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 45.

[13] I. Ojara, "Resolutions Passed at a Joint Meeting of Councillors RCV, RCIV and Division Operation Commander 4th Division, 4 April," ed. G.D. Council (Gulu: Gulu District Archives, 1992).

[14] A. Branch, "The Roots of LRA Violence," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 40.

[15] Lakwena is the name of the spirit thought to have possessed Alice, whose family name was Auma. For more on the HSM see T. Allen, "Understanding Alice: Uganda's Holy Spirit Movement

from the violence and corruption inflicted through the NRA/M. Within Acholi, one of the actions of the HSM was to reintegrate and rehabilitate the returning soldiers who had become 'liminal and impure', and to 'redefine their place in society'.[16] Elders and lineage-based authorities who also felt they had a vested interest in wanting to restore or maintain a particular moral order are thought to have collaborated with the Holy Spirit Movement, whilst also laying claim as the sole authorities and principle arbiters of traditional rituals and customs in an attempt to strengthen their positions, especially as the Holy Spirit Movement, and Alice Lakwena in particular, was challenging the patriarchal order.[17]

Although the HSM was short lived, another group formed in the aftermath, the Holy Spirit Forces, that later took the name the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony. However, although the two groups were perceived as similar in their spiritual motivations in comparison to the politically motivated UPDM/A rebel groups,[18] there was a significant difference between the cleavages the HSM and LRA operated upon. Whereas the HSM sought to cleanse the Acholi and later those outside Acholi from the NRA, the LRA sought to cleanse those *within* Acholi who were not considered genuine Acholi because of perceived collaboration with the NRA/M.[19]

in Context," *Africa* 63, no. 3 (1991), H. Behrend, *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits: War in Northern Uganda, 1986-1997* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).

[16] H. Behrend, *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits: War in Northern Uganda, 1986-1997* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), 43.

[17] A. Branch, "The Roots of LRA Violence," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 32, 36-38. Finnstrom gives a slightly different picture, as he points out that over time the movement 'came to conform to more conventional African gender hierarchies' and 'in addition to this...several of the female spirits possessing Alice Lakwena were increasingly marginalised when new male spirits entered the scene' S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 77.

[18] S. Finnström, "An African Hell of Colonial Imagination? The Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, Another Story," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 77. Although Finnstrom observed that Acholi made this distinction, it did not mean that Acholi saw the LRA as only spiritual and non-political, as has been its popular portrayal in western and Ugandan media, and amongst academics such as Branch (A. Branch, "Gulu Town in War...And Peace? Displacement, Humanitarianism and Post-War Crisis," in *Crisis States Research Centre Working Papers* (London: LSE, 2008).) Finnstrom goes on to argue this point in the chapter cited above.

[19] A. Branch, "The Roots of LRA Violence," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 38-42.

Over the years the LRA constructed a reign of violence in Acholiland and adopted tactics to discipline society according to the LRA's needs.[20] Thus, rules and sanctions were imposed that restricted, for example, when people could move about, how they travelled and the days they worked. Drawing on a deplete source of volunteers in Acholi, the LRA resorted to forced abduction and in 1991 began to use tactics of mutilation and maiming, including padlocking people's mouths and chopping off lips and ears to send the message to the wider Acholi population to beware of communicating with the Government.[21] Havoc ensued throughout the 1990s, supported by the Sudan Government and with little protection from the Ugandan army.[22] Indeed those assigned to protect civilians have been accused in frequent reports of misconduct including rape, fatal shootings, robberies and thuggery.[23] The formation of local 'homeguards' and local defense units, who collaborated closely with the NRA, also were insufficient efforts to safe-guard the population or to reduce levels of violence. Even minors were recruited, voluntarily or forcefully, into the homeguard units, becoming the first line of defence and easy targets of LRA attacks.

Following a series of major atrocities committed by the LRA in the mid-1990s, the Government implemented a strategy of moving the population into 'protected villages', that later became known as Internally Displaced People camps. By 2000 approximately 472,000 people were living in camps in Acholiland, in 2002 the figure was 522,000, and in Gulu district those that lived in camps represented 74% of the population of the district.[24] According to Finnstrom, whose anthropological study offers invaluable insights into the violent changes to everyday practices in Acholiland and ways Acholi have conceptualised and coped with these changes, 'forced encampment has undermined Acholi ways of organising life' and threatens 'traditional values, cultural

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Much has been written about the LRA, see for example the contributions in T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot, eds., *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality* (London: Zed Books,2010).

[22] For critique of LRA-Khartoum relations see M. Schomerus, *The Lord's Resistance Army in Sudan: A History and Overview* (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2007).

[23] S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

[24] These figures are quoted by C. Dolan, *Social Torture: The Case of Northern Uganda, 1986-2006* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 107, who referred to UNHCU and FEWS. Dolan also attached a cautionary note that these figures should be treated as indicative only.

knowledge, and social institutions of everyday life'.[25] His informants complained that the practice of evening meetings around a lit fire, known as *wang oo*, where young people were told educative stories and tales, were no longer possible because of camp curfews and the fear that the light would attract rebels.[26] Also being jeopardised was the balance between the living and dead as it was proving too costly to perform the appropriate rituals for moving the ancestral shrines (*abila*) that would usually be an integral part of the movement of groups in order to maintain 'roots of belonging' that are 'conceived... in kin groups, in ancestors, and in a genealogical position'.[27] Social relations formed through marriage were changing too as the inability to pay bridewealth due to loss of cattle and means to raise funds, meant women found it difficult to establish themselves as an unthreatening insider within the new social context of her husband's *kaka*, because until bridewealth is paid, 'many Acholi argued, the woman's loyalties will remain uncertain'.[28] In addition, 'her partner will have neither the legal right to nor the formal responsibility for the children, adding to the uncertainty of her and the children's situation'.[29]

From Dolan's perspective the Government's strategy of 'protected villages' upheld by a number of actors such as international humanitarian organisations, has been central in a process of 'social torture' in Acholiland, where physical and psychological debilitation and, what Dolan terms, 'cultural debilitation' rendered people unable to break out of their situation and return home.[30] 'If asked to be specific', Dolan recalled, 'people could point to a long list of concrete indicators of breakdown'. For example,

> Parents were unwilling or unable to help young people to marry in the way they would have done in the past, yet young girls were at times being turned into camp followers by their own parents. Children were being abducted and forced to kill, girls were committing suicide because their teachers had made them pregnant. Teachers were drinking too early in the day, women were swallowing pesticides in protest at the untenable positions they were left in

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[25] S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 146.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 192.

[29] Ibid.

[30] C. Dolan, *Social Torture: The Case of Northern Uganda, 1986-2006* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 160.

by their husbands' over-drinking, and fear of HIV created a climate of inter-personal distrust.[31]

Dolan also observed, in line with Finnstrom's insights, that 'the language of moral, cultural and social breakdown' enabled its users to internalise responsibility and thereby,

> allowed some sense of control, or at least the possibility of regaining control over a chaotic situation. Reversing moral collapse, re-instilling traditional values, re-integrating traumatised youth, picking fallen women off the floor, all are within the realms of the feasible – unlike other aspects of the war situation, such as the rebels, or the army, or the food distributions, which were externally controlled, and therefore, in a literal sense, out of control'.[32]

However, although 'an unacknowledged consensus emerged that there was a breakdown going on…perspectives differed on what exactly was getting broken. Teachers saw moral breakdown in the youth, youth saw it in women, parents saw it in teachers (and their own children), and religious leaders noted it in "men drinking alcohol"'.[33] One particular event involving elders and lineage-based authorities was widely thought to have contributed and exacerbated the continuation of social breakdown in Acholi. Acholi traditional leaders are alleged to have given a blessing to Joseph Kony when he took up arms. During the 1993-1994 peace talks Komakech George, an LRA field commander, 'claimed that Acholi elders had presented them with the *oboke olwedo* twigs as a blessing'.[34] Kony himself and other prominent LRA commanders further claimed that the blessing was turned into a curse 'after a prominent elder in Gulu town…ritually displayed his penis while condemning the rebels…saying "if these children who are in the bush originate from my penis, I curse them"'.[35] Whether the incidents occurred or not rumours of the curse may have had the effect of increasing violence against elders, healers and 'other arbitrators of Acholi cosmology'.[36] Part of this backlash was the killing of two elders in 1996 by the LRA when

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[31] Ibid., 171.

[32] Ibid., 187.

[33] Ibid., 169.

[34] S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 212.

[35] Ibid., 213.

[36] Ibid.

they sought to negotiate peace with Kony.[37] In the eyes of some Acholi, the escalation of violence in the mid 1990s could be explained by 'some kind of fundamental imbalance' that was 'haunting the Acholi surroundings of the living and the dead'.[38]

Museveni's declaration to collaborate with the USA on a military tactic to end the conflict, following the failed peace talks initiated by an Acholi MP Betty Bigombe in 1994,[39] unsurprisingly fuelled concerns in Acholiland that increased militarisation would exacerbate violent activity, lead to the loss of more lives, the further abduction of children and a further breakdown of the moral order. Elders and *Rwodi*, alongside the religious leaders of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), became particularly vocal in advancing a non-military solution to the conflict and were involved in trying to revive peace talks. They were also at the forefront of suggesting the restoration of an Acholi traditional justice system. Their support for the blanket amnesty passed by the Government in late 1999[40] was closely linked to their expressed desire for a restoration of Acholi traditional approaches to justice, said to be based on principles of reconciliation, forgiveness and a non-punitive approach.

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[37] For more on this incident see R. Gersony, "The Anguish of Northern Uganda: Results of a Field-Based Assessment of the Civil Conflicts in Northern Uganda," (Kampala: Commissioned by US Embassy and USAID Mission, 1997), S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 212-213.

[38] S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 216.

[39] In an act that undermined Bigombe's efforts, Museveni issued an ultimatum to the LRA to turn themselves over to government forces within seven days. Instead violence resumed and brought to an end the prospect of peace that had looked likely. It is questioned whether this was a deliberate attempt by Museveni to derail the peace negotiations, as the continuation of war has certain political advantages: see T. Allen, *Trial Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Lord's Resistance Army* (London: Zed Books, 2006), 48-49. Dolan has looked at the continuation of 'social torture' as opposed to 'war' having particular advantageous affects for the Uganda Government and other actors: see C. Dolan, *Social Torture: The Case of Northern Uganda, 1986-2006* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 219-252.

[40] There were a number of problems left unresolved in the amnesty, that Bradbury noted were masked by the unanimous support for the Bill, see M. Bradbury, *An Overview of Initiatives for Peace in Acholi, Northern Uganda* (Cambridge: Collaborative for Development Action, 1999), 16. Finnstrom's young informants were also skeptical of the amnesty offered by Government, seeing it as part of a strategy to side-step the political issues at the national level S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 119.

INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION OF A "CULTURAL BREAKDOWN"

The perceived and real devastation across northern Uganda provoked the arrival of international organisations, although relatively few. Between 1996 and 2000 the number of relief agencies had increased from five to sixty,[41] with the majority concerned with addressing the local or 'internal' aspects of the war.[42] In line with the official government discourses on the conflict and therefore perceiving the situation in terms of an intra-Acholi affair, many international organisations contributed to re-producing a depoliticised discourse. Ethnic mythologizing of the Acholi and the fantastic emanations of the conflict produced through poor media coverage[43] also encourage a resignation that the war in northern Uganda was too bizarre to comprehend, rendering it almost by default a humanitarian rather than a political crisis.[44] According to Finnstrom, images of the LRA and northern Uganda have been constructed in accordance with colonial and western stereotypes of Africa and conflict more generally. With reference to film documentaries on the conflict, such as *The Mission* (1998) and *Invisible Children* (2003), he points to the reproduction of the 'heart of darkness' narrative and criticises De Tenerman's *Aboke Girls* documentary novel for dehistoricising events in northern Uganda.[45] The other problem Finnstrom notes is that the conflict is often reduced to a single individual, Joseph Kony, which has enabled solutions of the conflict to be reduced to the elimination of Kony.[46] The Ugandan national media has also played a significant role in misrepresenting the conflict, preferring sensationalist headlines and emphasis on the bizarre and spectacular.[47] One of the effects of depoliticising and internalising the conflict was that the causes of the conflict became 'located in the 'weakness' of Acholi

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[41] UNOCHA, "Report from Conference on Internally Displaced Persons: Lessons Learned and Future Mechanisms," (Oslo: UNOCHA, 2001), 14.

[42] M. Bradbury, *An Overview of Initiatives for Peace in Acholi, Northern Uganda* (Cambridge: Collaborative for Development Action, 1999), 16.

[43] T. Allen and J. Seaton, eds., *The Media of Conflict: War Reporting and Representations of Ethnic Violence* (London: Zed Books,1999), 4.

[44] S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 116.

[45] Ibid., 111.

[46] The *Kony 2012* campaign by the US NGO Invisible Children launched earlier this year, and the international support it seemed to receive, is an example of how tenacious this framing of the conflict has been.

[47] C. Dolan, *Social Torture: The Case of Northern Uganda, 1986-2006* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 31.

social institutions, rather than in national or regional politics'.[48] International organisations such as Responding to Conflict, Mennonites and the Nairobi Peace Initiative thus sought to train local development NGOs and religious leaders in 'community-based peace-building reconciliation strategies'.[49] Bradbury noted how local organisations began to appropriate the language and approach of community based reconciliation, which further contributed to locating the causes and solution to the conflict internally.[50]

Perceiving the conflict as an internal Acholi affair, discourses of a 'cultural breakdown' gained traction and were taken up by international actors. However, international discourses of cultural breakdown in Acholiland were distinct from local discourses of a societal and cultural breakdown in an important way. For many local Acholi, as discussed above, they sought to make sense of their surroundings and drew on local cosmologies, as well as their historically rooted understanding of local, national and international politics, to do so. Within local discourses making sense of the conflict, and trying to gain a degree of control within such uncertain circumstances, in terms of a breakdown of social order rarely meant depoliticising or dehistoricising the conflict and their everyday practices. In fact, politics understood as the 'order of things' was at the heart of Acholi conceptions of a cultural breakdown. Within local discourses there was evident concern for power relations, for example amongst the living and dead, and amongst local and national state political structures, and a desire for a solution to the violence in Acholiland that would address these relations of power. At an international level, on the other hand, discourses of an Acholi cultural breakdown tended to be produced through depoliticised and dehistoricised perceptions of the conflict and therefore had different effects, both intentionally and unintentionally. International discourses of cultural breakdown produced an unreflexive approach to the position of international actors and were effective in framing intervention in neutral, non-political terms. The tendency to regard causes and effects of conflicts in terms of a breakdown in social order, is not unique to Acholiland, but has been particularly prevalent within international development discourses since the 1990s. Duffield has pointed out that

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[48] M. Bradbury, *An Overview of Initiatives for Peace in Acholi, Northern Uganda* (Cambridge: Collaborative for Development Action, 1999), 27.
[49] Ibid., 26.
[50] Ibid., 22-27.

where outcomes of violence are understood in Hobbesian terms, there is a certain utility...[whereby] the destruction of culture furnishes the *opportunity* for aid agencies to establish new and replacement forms of collective identity and social organisation'. Within this framework international intervention is also positioned as urgent.[51] It also provides an opportunity and moral premise for the type of intervention predominantly pursued by international development institutions – that of embedding particular norms and values favourable to a liberal conception of development.

As part of a broader critique of the politics of intervention in northern Uganda, Adam Branch has recently traced the shift from humanitarian rights intervention, premised upon 'upholding human rights through international intervention without regard for state sovereignty', to what he terms 'total intervention', which is an,

> expanded human rights discourse, in which intervention was no longer to fulfil only the basic humanitarian rights of people in crisis, but a wide array of human rights, from children's rights, to the right to development, to victim's rights, to the right to mental health, to the right to peace.[52]

In addition, Branch notes that the causes and consequences of war and violence in Africa are understood in terms of 'poverty, weak states, disease, rights violations, environmental pressures and so on', and thus war is perceived as so widespread that it is 'presumed to be ubiquitous.'[53] The ubiquity of war, with its 'symptoms...conceived of as internal deficits', produces the ideal argument for remedial external intervention. Similarly to Duffield's argument that intervention is ultimately about embedding liberal norms and values, Branch has highlighted that within international human rights discourses each solution claims to bring African individuals, societies, economies, cultures, or states back into line with models of properly functioning, normal, responsible models, all in the name of peace'.[54] So, although a distinction between local and international discourses of cultural breakdown seems to be the absence of a concern for politics in the latter, in fact, politics is also at its heart. The refusal by international agencies of intervention to recognise their own politics does not detract

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[51] M. Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (London: Zed Books, 2001), 123.

[52] A. Branch, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 16.

[53] Ibid., 30.

[54] Ibid.

from the pursuit of producing a liberal political order, envisioned predominantly by international, western actors, or from its desired effects, which have implications for the practices, behaviours and most importantly for this study, what authorities are deemed legitimate and worthy of attention. In addition, and on the other hand, because intervention relies on local access, has a 'desire for efficacy and legitimacy through participation', is 'emergency-centred' and employs 'a vague human rights discourse' over an 'expansive domain' it is open to instrumentalisation by those within the target population who already exercise arbitrary power and are 'looking to increase it further'.[55] In Acholiland Branch is concerned that 'intervention offers resources that can consolidate unaccountable power'.[56]

TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

As noted in the previous chapter, the coronation of Buganda's *Kabaka*, prior to official recognition of traditional authorities in the 1995 Constitution, ignited a wave of revivals of traditional authorities across the country and Acholiland was not an exception. Indeed, as an informant who has been closely involved in Ker Kwaro Acholi's emergence remarked, there was an awareness of traditional authority revivals in West Africa, Kwazulu Natal in South Africa and in Somaliland.[57]

In Acholiland, during June 1992, at a meeting that included the newly elected Acholi Resistance Councillors and some Gulu district elders, the secretary of the Gulu District Elders, Levi Arweny, relayed a message to the members of the meeting.[58] After congratulating the newly elected councillors the message from the Gulu Elders expressed concerns about the lack of respect shown to elders in Acholi. They 'urged on respect and cooperation with elders by councillors and not to take elders as "scraps"', whilst also requesting that councils of elders be formed at all level of RC's I to V, and for committees to be formed to explore economic development through 'the exploitation of

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[55] Ibid., 35.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Interview with R. Oywa, Gulu, 20 April 2010.
[58] Gulu District Elders, "Message to Acholi Councillors," (Gulu: Gulu District Archive, 1992).

our resources [and] urging the assistance of loaning and donor agenices'.[59] The Council of Elders finally 'emphasised on "Unity under one leadership with the team spirit geared at accepting mistakes and solving our common problem together"'. It is unclear whether this was a suggestion for the establishment of a paramount chief/*lawirwodi* position or a plea for unity under the NRM's Resistance Council structure. In light of the broader message from the Gulu Elders it seems likely to be the latter. In response, the Gulu District Chairman (RCV) 'vowed to work together' with the elders, stating that 'an honourbale elder...has "an ability in society derived from tradition, to inform, advice, warn and act as an arbitrator"'. Gulu elders certainly seemed to be trying to restore these roles, as early that year they had contacted the Deputy Minister for Public Affairs, Charles Alai, with the minutes of a meeting a group of 'prominent Gulu elders' had held. They received a positive reply from Alai, who was keen to support the idea of integrating elders and making them 'part and parcel' of the Resistance Councils. Alai also agreed with the Elders that the problems in Acholi were related to *culo kwor* and that *mato oput* was needed to restore peace. Alai advised that the District Resistance Council should pass a bye-law to enforce cleansing ceremonies on the basis that peace and unity are prerequisits for development. [60] Although no such bye-law was passed the Elders organised Reconstruction and Development Meetings at the District Council Hall in Gulu and invitied the District Administration to take the 'opportunity to meet some of Acholi intellectual sons and daughters with reconstructional and developmental abilities working and living outside Acholi districts of Gulu and Kitgum', framing the meetings as important for deciding the future of Acholi. Local government did engage with the Council of Elders and worked closely with them, for example, when forming the Local Defense Units mentioned earlier.

The Payira Cultural Association was also seeking support from District authorities in the early 1990s, but its request for financial assistance to 'promote the association' was turned down with the excuse that the revenue base of the district was too low.[61] However, the Association was also suspected of being a political organisation, as was

[59] Ibid.

[60] C.L. Alai, "Letter from Deputy Minister Public Service to Gulu District Chairman RCV, 1 June," (Gulu: Gulu District Archives, 1992).

[61] R. Luzni, "Letter to Mr Latim Odaki, Organising Secretary of the Payira Cultural Association, Gulu, from Rodento Luzni, Chairman RCV/Gulu Drc, 28 February," (Gulu: Gulu Archives, 1994).

hand scribbled across the archived letter, clearly not intended to be viewed by the Association. It is unclear to me who constituted the Payira Cultural Association, although it was evidently an organisation with the intent of bolstering the Payira in some way. Curiously, a group of '*Rwodi moo* Councillors', also known as *Kal Kwaro*, emerged by 1997 with the Payira *Rwot* Godfrey Acana as the chairman, and too made requests to the District.[62] They wanted a collection of taxes and 'market dues' as a way of raising funds to help *Kal Kwaro* with 'the upkeep of their visitors'. The request was refused on the grounds that 'because of the insurgency, the District is unable to collect any locally generated revenue' and because 'there was no provision for the upkeep of the Kal Kwaro in the 1996/97 budget. A 'special grant' was requested by the District from central government and was apparently approved, but no funds had been released. Finally in the letter, the District Chairman LCV,[63] Stephen Lanek, assures the Gulu *Rwodi moo* of its assistance wherever possible.

Evidently, Acholi traditional authorities, both elders and *Rwodi*, at least in Gulu District, were becoming increasingly recognised by local government, even if not always with a positive response, and were seeking to carve a space for themselves within the governance structure in Acholiland: a structure that as I have already mentioned, was weak and regarded with suspicion by the majority of Acholi. One space within which traditional authorities could claim exclusive authority and seek to exercise power was in the realm of 'the traditional', which was a space or field of practices that 'modern' government officials were implicitly exempt. Collaborating closely with religious leaders in promoting forgiveness towards the LRA and lobbying for the Ugandan Government to pass and take seriously the Amnesty Act, it is perhaps unsurprising that Acholi traditional authorities were also therefore at the forefront of a call for what was framed as a restoration of an Acholi traditional justice system, which became part of an international agenda following the Kacoke Madit ("big meeting") in 1997 and the publication of a report written by Dr Dennis Pain.

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[62] S. Lanek, "Letter to the Kal Kwaro, *Rwodi* Moo Councillors, Gulu, from District Chariman Lcv, Stephen Lanek, Gulu, 12 March," (Gulu: Gulu District Archives, 1997).
[63] The Resistance Council structure changed name to Local Council in 1995, with the five local government spheres I-V remaining.

Created in 1996 as an international forum, *Kacoke Madit* was organised and financed primarily by the Acholi London diaspora and later received funding from the British Government and the London-based INGO Conciliation Resources. The series of meetings in '97, '98 and 2000 [64] brought together religious leaders, Acholi traditional authorities, representatives from the Government of Uganda, Acholi members of Parliament and district leaders, to raise the profile of suffering in Acholiland, represent different views and agree on practical solutions for ending the conflict.[65] The discussion during the first meeting in London revolved around the 'erosion of Acholi values as a result of war, and a decision was made to promote Acholi unity and strengthen the Acholi cultural heritage'.[66] Following the meeting International Alert commissioned Pain to produce a report that would give feedback to those 'who have a role to play in resolving the conflict in northern Uganda', based on consultations with 'opinion leaders' in Acholiland.[67] Pain's report, *The Bending of Spears*, described a 'unique' Acholi approach to justice that he described stood 'among the highest practices anywhere in the world'.[68] Although criticised for its methodological and conceptual flaws,[69] Pain's report was influential amongst the NGOs and donors whose remit was to address conflict resolution in northern Uganda.[70]

Advocates of an Acholi traditional justice system, asserted that the Acholi have their own alternative approach to justice, which is based on principles of reconciliation, forgiveness and reintegration, and the ritual of *mato oput* was given particular emphasis

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[64] The Kacoke Madit in 2000 held in Nairobi was cut short as Kenyan officials were concerned participants may be carrying the Ebola virus that was present in Gulu at that time.

[65] Branch has criticised the diaspora for failing to engage in Ugandan politics in any meaningful way. A. Branch, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 88.

[66] T. Allen, "Bitter Roots: The Invention of Acholi Traditional Justice," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 245.

[67] D. Pain, "'the Bending of Spears': Producing Consensus for Peace and Development in Northern Uganda," (London: International Alert, in partnership with Kacoke Madit, 1997), 8.

[68] Ibid., 3.

[69] C. Dolan, "Key Research Findings: An Introduction to the Conference," in *Background Papers Presented to the Conference on 'Peace Research and the Reconciliation Agenda', Gulu, Northern Uganda, September 1999*, ed. ACORD, *Cope Working Papers* (London: ACORD, 2000).

[70] M. Bradbury, *An Overview of Initiatives for Peace in Acholi, Northern Uganda* (Cambridge: Collaborative for Development Action, 1999).

and 'talked about as if it was something unique'.[71] The Acholi principle of conflict resolution, Pain wrote,

> is to create reconciliation which brings the two sides together. Between individuals this involved elders, particularly the moral authority of the *Rwot kaka*, investigating the circumstances, leading to an acceptance of responsibility for carrying out a wrong action and an indication of repentance. Then terms were laid down by the elders such as 10 cows or a girl for compensation implying potential for a future marriage, possibly elsewhere, producing replacement in the case of death and restoring a nexus of relationships.   Then reconciliation occurred with the simultaneous drinking of a bitter root extract drink from a common calabash set on the ground - "*mato oput*".

> Between groups the process required a delegation of elders to investigate the fault and identify the cause and for those concerned to accept their responsibility. The acceptance of responsibility is a group acceptance - not so-&-so, son of X, but <u>we</u> have done this. Then the compensation is determined, traditionally cattle or girls, and lastly reconciliation occurs with the "bending of two spears" and *mato oput*. "There should be individual *mato oput* for children at the sub-county level and a final *mato oput* between groups - Acholi, Government and LRA - at a public event".

> In spite of their marginalisation from political authority, the *Rwodi-mo* continue on occasion informally to carry out reconciliation with a compensation element to the victim in addition to court decisions. This is to ensure restoration of relationships, which modern court proceedings neglect. Although rebels are seen to have rejected society, "if society now establishes the means of reconciliation, the rebels will accept that authority". Such acceptance has been confirmed by a representative of the LRA.[72]

Pain urged 'an international donor or NGO...to support the traditional authorities in establishing the reconciliation procedures to be used in resolving the conflict'.[73] Traditional authorities and particularly *Rwodi* were also emphasised elsewhere in the report as a traditionally important authority in Acholi culture, whose eroded power has contributed to a sense of disorientation amongst the Acholi. The marginalisation of the *Rwodi* since the colonial period is presented as their 'potential strength' in that the *Rwodi* have 'become independent of the political and administrative processes', and are

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[71] T. Allen, "Bitter Roots: The Invention of Acholi Traditional Justice," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 245.

[72] D. Pain, "'the Bending of Spears': Producing Consensus for Peace and Development in Northern Uganda," (London: International Alert, in partnership with Kacoke Madit, 1997), 82.

[73] Ibid., 87.

left with a 'residual and traditional importance in the settling of disputes and in reconciliation [that] is just what is needed'.[74] The Payira clan are also given particular attention as holding 'pre-eminence' amongst the clans, with *Rwot* Payira seen as 'de-facto primus-inter-pares of the *Rwodi*-mo'.[75] Other traditional authorities, such as the *ludito kaka* (male elders) and the *lawi-mon* (women elders), are also mentioned as important stakeholders to fostering peace in Acholiland, and it is recommended that together with *Rwodi* and church leaders they agree on a 'common approach to a full mato oput reconciliation process'.[76]

Empowering traditional authorities is seen in Pain's report as part of a wider process to 'repair the positive traditional cultural elements which have been so destroyed by political events over the years' and an opportunity for Britain, through its NGOs and donors, to apologise of the ills of colonial rule.[77] Throughout the report NGOs and donors are referred to as neutral actors who could play a crucial role in monitoring processes such as the payment and use of compensation monies between reconciling parties.[78] Although Pain recognises that assistance given by the government may compromise the position of the *Rwodi*, it is envisioned that assistance by development agencies would not. The relationship advocated by Pain between development agencies and the empowerment of traditional authorities is presented and reduced to an unproblematic endeavour of technical capacity building.

Stirred by *The Bending of Spears* report the Belgian Government funded further research into the potential of traditional authorities in Acholiland to contribute to consolidating peace. The Agency for Cooperation and Research (ACORD) was tasked with the research project and in contrast to Pain's findings painted a slightly more critical picture. Working together with local government and religious leaders ACORD travelled throughout the Acholi districts 'holding consultations with local leaders to identify who the *Rwot* are, and to discuss what the role of elders could and should be'.[79]

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[74] Ibid., 77.

[75] Ibid., 75.

[76] Ibid., 87.

[77] Ibid., 93, 95.

[78] Ibid., 92.

[79] M. Bradbury, *An Overview of Initiatives for Peace in Acholi, Northern Uganda* (Cambridge: Collaborative for Development Action, 1999), 18.

One of the key findings was that traditional structures were 'weak and fragmented', to the extent of 'widespread disagreement' about who 'the *real* traditional leaders' actually were.[80] The conclusion stated however that there was 'little doubt that the traditional leaders' had the 'potential to play a large role in healing and reconciliation processes at the local level', but for this potential to be realised some obstacles caused by the conflict would have to be addressed.[81] For example, the traditional leaders were 'no longer automatically respected' and 'some rituals' had become 'unclear through disuse'.[82]

Importantly, the opinion that the positive roles traditional authorities could potentially play in Acholiland led to support for a ceremony in 2000 to officially re-install a number of *Rwodi* and create the post of an Acholi Paramount Chief. The chairman of the *Rwodi* moo Councillors, Godfrey Acana, was elected from amongst a handful of *Rwodi* who were around at this time, although there had been contestation over the post.[83] Falling sick shortly before the ceremony in 1999 Godfrey Acana called his son David Onen Acana back to Gulu from Rwanda where he was working. He died soon afterwards with instructions that his son was to succeed him as *Rwot* Payira.[84] It was also decided amongst the *Rwodi* that the young man *Rwot* David Acana would fill the post of Paramount Chief and that the post would rotate amongst the *Rwodi* every five years. Over the following years, between 2002 and 2005, this loose cohort of *Rwodi*, headed by Paramount Chief Acana II, became known as Ker Kwaro Acholi through a series of

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[80] C. Dolan, "Key Research Findings: An Introduction to the Conference," in *Background Papers Presented to the Conference on 'Peace Research and the Reconciliation Agenda', Gulu, Northern Uganda, September 1999*, ed. ACORD, *Cope Working Papers* (London: ACORD, 2000).
[81] Ibid., 12-13.
[82] Ibid., 13.
[83] According to Englebert Dr Martin Aliker had claimed to be crowned "big chief" of the Acholi in March 1993. P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 37. Dr Aliker was Minister for State and Foreign Affairs and Leader of the Government Delegation to the Kacoke Madit in 1997.
[84] One source dates Rwot Justine Acana's death to 20th July 1999 and the appointment of David Acana as rwot on 1st August 1999. E. Baines, *Roco Wat I Acholi, Restoring Relationships in Acholi-Land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2005), 32 n.86. Although there is little reason to doubt this information, I found informants were often quite vague when talking about Rwot Justine Acana, the timing of his death and when his son succeeded.

events and strategic practices, and by re-producing and appropriating dominant discourses.

INCREASING VISIBILITY AND RE-IMAGINING TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY

The 'unprecedented, uncoordinated and fragmented rush' of international agencies followed a particularly violent phase of the conflict in Acholiland caused by the Uganda People's Defence Force offensive, *Operation Iron Fist*, and the fierce response by the LRA. The increase in attacks and abductions prompted the displacement of more than 90 per cent of the population of northern Uganda', which pushed the number of displaced living in 218 official and dozens of ungazetted camps, to 1.6 million by 2005.[85] The increase of international attention and agencies, however, is commonly cited as following the visit and declaration by the United Nation's Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs in 2003, who shone a spotlight on northern Uganda by calling it "the biggest forgotten, neglected humanitarian emergency in the world today."[86]

Most agencies were concerned with humanitarian relief in the camps and the rehabilitation of LRA returnees who were mostly children, but there was also an 'injection of funding and external support for the implementation of the traditional justice agenda, premised on the assumption that local rituals performed under the auspices of chiefs and elders would... lead to social reconciliation'.[87] Randy Harris, a former World Bank delegate to Uganda and senior consultant on northern Uganda to USAID recalled in an interview that he had nominated Paramount Chief David Acana for sponsorship to undertake the International Visitors Programme of the US Government in New York aimed at empowering young leaders in Africa.[88] Paramount Chief Acana's

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[85] UNOCHA, "Humanitarian Update Uganda: Volume Vi, Issue Vii," (Geneva: UNOCHA, 2004), quoted in S. Perrot, "Northern Ugandan: A 'Forgotten Conflict', Again? The Impact of the Internationalization of the Resolution Process," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 188.
[86] Agence France-Presse, "War in Northern Uganda World's Worst Forgotten Crisis," *Reliefweb*, 11 November 2003.
[87] T. Allen, "Bitter Roots: The Invention of Acholi Traditional Justice," in *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*, ed. T. Allen and K. Vlassenroot (London: Zed Books, 2010), 248.
[88] with R. Harris, Kampala, 23 June 2010.

experience in the US was cut short, however, with the bombing of the twin towers in 2001. Another opportunity shortly followed to study abroad again, this time in Birmingham, UK. Rosalba Oywa, a Program Coordinator at ACORD, said that she had suggested to Respond to Conflict, the organisation that had funded her conflict resolution training in the UK, to offer the same chance to Paramount Chief Acana.[89]

After Paramount Chief Acana II returned from the UK he began to act on a vision he had of Ker Kwaro Acholi as a "strong and mighty government".[90] He drew on the expertise of Kenneth Oketta, an Acholi development consultant he had come to know when his father was sick in 1999. As Oketta described it, he came on board informally at first "to pick up" the cultural institution as it had "gone into limbo" and shared the view with Acana that Ker Kwaro Acholi needed to become more known, "not only locally but also nationally and internationally."[91] Oketta's role was made more formal through the creation of a Prime Minster post within Ker Kwaro Acholi and to which he was appointed in 2006.[92] Already Paramount Chief Acana was working closely with *Rwot* Francis Oryang Lagony of Koch because as Acana described him, "he was elderly, more knowledgeable…[and] more experienced". Indeed although Paramount Chief Acana did not mention it, *Rwot* Lagony was also a civil servant working for the Public Services Commission and had lived in Tanzania. Paramount Chief Acana, *Rwot* Lagony and Oketta, would have been all too aware of the lucrative potential traditional cultural institutions had in attracting donor funding, as the Buganda Kingdom was demonstrating in central Uganda, where both *Rwot* Lagony and Oketta lived. The influx of NGOs and donors into Acholiland looking for local partners with which to anchor their projects created an opportune moment for these central actors to pursue initiatives that would present Ker Kwaro as the traditional cultural institution of Acholi.

It is important to remember at this point that although particular positions of leadership and authority can be traced into the recent and distant past, such as the position of a *Rwot* within today's Acholiland, these positions have never been, and are still not, fixed. All authority is in a constant process of being reinscribed and reimagined

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[89] Interview with R. Oywa, Gulu, 20 April 2010.

[90] Interview with D.O. Acana, Birmingham, 20 June 2011.

[91] Interview with K. Oketta, Gulu, 19 June 2010.

[92] I will discuss this development in Ker Kwaro Acholi in the following chapter.

through discourses of the present, which draw on memories of the past and expectations and aspirations of the future; where 'traditional' and 'modern' are utilised more as powerful metaphors than as a description of an inherent reality. With this in mind I now turn to discuss moments and strategies Ker Kwaro Acholi utilised to present itself in a particular way that would strengthen its image and consolidate a politics of truth about Ker Kwaro as the traditional cultural institution of Acholi.

CLEANSING AND RECONCILIATION CEREMONIES

Between 2003 and 2005 Ker Kwaro Acholi was reported to have conducted thirty one cleansing ceremonies,[93] mostly facilitated by the International Organisation for Migration, Caritas and Catholic Relief Services, with the Liu Institute funding two and the UNDP funding one.[94] At least seven ceremonies are reported to have featured the 'appearance of *Rwodi* moo from different clans, led by the Paramount Chief of Acholi', the attendance of Elders, Local councillors (1-5), community members, local NGOs and UPDF; and speeches by *Rwodi*, the deputy paramount chief and lastly the paramount chief.[95] The same report recognised that one effect of the ceremonies was for participants and onlookers to see the *Rwodi* and Paramount Chief 'stand together as an example to local communities', which strengthened 'the leadership of cultural leaders'.[96] Sixteen of the thirty one ceremonies Ker Kwaro Acholi are reported to have facilitated, involved large groups ranging from twenty six to eight hundred, reaching over two thousand people in total.[97] Although from a population of over 1.8 million this only represents a small minority of Acholi. Alternative views, particularly amongst some of the elders, saw the adaptations being made to cleansing and reconciliation rituals, for example with large groups, as deviating from Acholi tradition, and where it was being conducted in towns there was concern that the rituals would concentrate *cen* (spirits of

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[93] E. Baines, *Roco Wat I Acholi, Restoring Relationships in Acholi-Land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2005), 44.
[94] Ibid., 95-96.
[95] Ibid., 44-45.Baines, E, Roco Wat i Acholi, 2005, pp. 44-45.
[96] Ibid., 46.Baines, Roco Wat i Acholi, 2005, p. 46.
[97] Ibid., 95-97.

the deceased) in that place.[98] *Rwodi* were also accused of 'interfering' in rituals seen as the preserve of elders and even of 'fighting against the real rituals'.[99] However, although there was confusion and controversy over how the ceremonies were being conducted and where, a confusion caused by the Paramount Chief and the *Rwodi* themselves,[100] the events remained opportunities for *Rwodi* to negotiate their positions of authority and, particularly when the Paramount Chief was involved, for Ker Kwaro Acholi to present itself and make itself known both locally and to the journalists, NGOs and donors who witnessed the ceremonies.

CORONATION AND INAUGURATION

Although increasing the visibility of *Rwodi* and the Paramount Chief was a side effect of the cleansing ceremonies, the decision to organise a public coronation ceremony for Paramount Chief Acana and a public inauguration ceremony for the *Rwodi* was a strategic decision to draw attention to Ker Kwaro Acholi and cast it in a particular light. An organising committee was established in 2003 and set to work raising funds for the occasion. The budget calculated at over sixty five million Uganda shillings, approximately twenty eight thousand dollars, indicates the event was intended to be a grand spectacle. One thousand guests were expected to attend with great consideration paid to the 'ceremonial venue' and surrounding area, so that its decoration 'would match the status of the occasion'.[101] A large portion of the budget was allocated to repairing and renovating the old colonial offices where Ker Kwaro Acholi now had an

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[98] J.O. Latigo, "Northern Uganda: Tradition-Based Practices in the Acholi Region," in *Traditional Justice and Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: Learning from African Experiences*, ed. L. Huyse and M. Salter (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2008), 104, T. Allen, *Trial Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Lord's Resistance Army* (London: Zed Books, 2006), 155.

[99] T. Allen, *Trial Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Lord's Resistance Army* (London: Zed Books, 2006), 155-156.

[100] Ibid., 165.

[101] K. Oketta, "Budget for Coronation of the Paramount Chief of Acholi - Rwot David Onen Acana Ii - and Inauguration of the Council of Acholi Traditional Chiefs," (Gulu: Gulu District Archive, 2003).

operational office. Although nothing like the calculated budget was raised, the optimistic budget illustrates Ker Kwaro Acholi's desire to make an impressive impact.

Drawing inspiration from monarchies across Uganda and beyond money was allocated to purchase ceremonial items not only to set the Paramount Chief apart and as the leader of the *Rwodi*, but also to elevate him and set him amongst the Kings of Uganda. Royal robes, a royal carpet and a crown were thus purchased, with coronation shades and uniforms for guards intended to further create a sense of pomp and circumstance. Apparently a leopard skin was also bought for just under $140, as an important symbol of rwotship.[102] In order for the images of the coronation ceremony to be widely dispersed Ker Kwaro Acholi used radio, television, print media, t-shirts, posters and banners to convey a message that just like other kingdoms across Uganda and Africa, the Acholi also had a comparable traditional institution. The event took place in January 2005 with the attendance of the President of Uganda, other government officials, NGOs and members of the general public. The following year anniversary celebrations were held with Kings from across Uganda invited, fleets of cultural dancers sent to the towns of Kitgum and Pader in Acholiland and ten bulls allocated for the feast. The overall cost amounted to over seventeen million Ugandan Shillings, donated by individuals and institutions such as the EU-Acholi Programme who gave three million, four hundred and fifty thousand shillings, The World Bank's Northern Uganda Social Action Fund who gave over two million shillings, World Vision who gave eight hundred and forty thousand shillings, and Care International who gave seven hundred and fifty thousand shillings. President Museveni also showed his support for the event by donating one million shillings. [103] These donations from international institutions and President Museveni, although relative to their funds are miniscule, are tokens of recognition and illustrate the importance the donors also attached to the symbolic public display of Ker Kwaro Acholi as the Acholi traditional cultural authority.

The national newspaper reported on the ceremony, noting the 'silk blue robe decorated by golden embroidery and a matching headdress' the enthroned Paramount Chief wore,

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[102] Interview with K. Oketta, Gulu, 19 June 2010.

[103] J.A.A. Otto, "Letter from James A.A. Otto, Chairman of the Finance Sub-Committee to the Organising Committee of the First Anniversay Celebrations, 27 February," (Gulu: Gulu District Archive, 2006).

the 'thousands of cheering people [who] braved the scorching sun to witness the coronation ceremony,' and the dancers who entertained the cheering crowds, who ululated and applauded with drumming'.[104]

RE-WRITING HISTORY

In 2005 Ker Kwaro Acholi produced a booklet entitled *Ker Kwaro Acholi, Strategic Plan 2005-2007.* To ensure the content reached its target audience the Strategic Plan was launched at an event in September where NGOS and donors were invited to attend. The purpose of the Strategic Plan seemed to be an attempt by Paramount Chief Acana, with his close associates Kenneth Oketta and *Rwot* Francis Lagony of Koch, to give Ker Kwaro Acholi (including the 'non-traditional' members who were soon to be appointed into Ker Kwaro, as I will discuss in the following two chapters) a focused vision and set of goals for the future. However, not all the *Rwodi* had a copy of the Strategic Plan and many *Rwodi* could not read the document as it was produced in English. It also became clear to me in interviews with Paramount Chief Acana and Kenneth Oketta that in fact the main purpose of the Plan was to publically present an image of Ker Kwaro Acholi to an audience of state officials and donors as an organised group of traditional leaders, who together form a body that has traditional roots in Acholi, and who have developed a programme of activities for the coming years and for which they require financial support. Kenneth Oketta was brought on board, Paramount Chief Acana told me, as 'a consultant' and 'a subject who is loyal and had the expertise to help free of charge', and *Rwot* Francis Lagony played a role in scrutinising the document.[105] With reference to the Strategic Plan, Oketta proclaimed in our interview that, 'you cannot only be known locally, you must also project yourself globally and nationally',[106] and this was one of the purposes of the plan.

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[104] A. Wasike, C. Ochowun, and J. Moro, "Acana, Acholi's Hereditary Leader," *New Vision*, 16 January 2005.

[105] Email Correspondence with D.O. Acana, 1 February 2012.

[106] Interview with K. Oketta, Gulu, 19 June 2010.

Calling the booklet a Strategic Plan suggested at the outset the focus of the booklet lay in the latter half where the proposed activities of Ker Kwaro Acholi were set out. This has the effect of casting the first half of the Plan where the historical background of Acholi and of Ker Kwaro is given in a matter of fact tone, where the reader is introduced to the basic 'facts' about Acholiland and Ker Kwaro. In a later chapter I will return to the latter half of the Plan, but here I want to examine the section that presents a particular historical narrative of Ker Kwaro, in order not to reveal a hidden 'truth', but to elucidate the image Ker Kwaro presented of itself, intentionally or unintentionally, to its target audience.

The two most salient messages in the booklet are that Ker Kwaro Acholi is a traditional institution and secondly that the institution is the custodian of Acholi cultural traditions. Ker Kwaro Acholi is described as an institution that dates back 'to about 1400 AD' and comprises of the 'fifty traditional leaders of Acholi'. Although somewhat ambiguous, the 'traditional leaders' referred to seem to be the *Rwodi* and the impression given in the booklet is that as 'kings' of chiefdoms over the past six hundred years they have also existed in an alliance, as a fairly homogenous and organised body of chiefs known as Ker Kwaro Acholi. Each of the *Rwodi*, who are listed next to their 'clan/chiefdom (kaka)', were all simply described as having 'been enthroned by their various clans' with no further details given about the process that led to their reinstallations or the disputes and tensions stirred in many cases by identifying and reinstalling *Rwodi*. Rather, a general and simplistic picture is given of fifty 'traditional leaders' organically emerging and being enthroned as a result of local desires in their clans, which suggests they hold local legitimacy. In describing the *Rwodi*, emphasis is given to their 'traditional role' in 'reconciliation and conflict management', with elders described as being 'directly under the *Rwot*' to offer advice on matters 'concerning social justice [and] harmony between different clans'.[107]

British colonial administration and a vague reference to 'political changes' that have 'taken place all this time' are identified as the factors that have weakened the *Rwodi* and thereby Ker Kwaro Acholi. In particular, colonial administration was identified as abolishing what is portrayed as a stable pre-colonial Acholi society of fifty 'well-

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[107] Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Strategic Plan: 2005-2007* (Gulu2005), 5.

established, semi-autonomous chiefdoms' through the appointment of non-hereditary chiefs. The reconstitution of Ker Kwaro Acholi, dated to 2000, is therefore framed as the revival and 'reinstallation' of a particular stratum, namely the *Rwodi*, of the traditional authority structure, that is said to date back to 1400 AD and although weakened by colonial rule and unidentified 'political changes', has remained resilient and relevant as an authority in conflict resolution and reconciliation. As the Paramount Chief wrote in the Foreword, 'the *Rwodi* ha[ve] limited capacity but as an institution they are themselves a resource'.[108]

The position of the Paramount Chief is dehistoricised in the narrative, with no mention of it being a newly created post or how and why this position was created. Instead the booklet simply states that 'the Paramount Chief of the Acholi Chiefdom come[s] from the Payira clan' and that 'each of the clans in Acholi has cultural obligations to the Paramount Chief'.[109] These statements have two important effects. Firstly, Acholi is re-imagined as a 'chiefdom', rather than a district, which 'traditionalises' the boundaries that currently form the state created Acholi sub-region and provides the Paramount Chief with a domain within which he can begin to inscribe his authority. Employing the term 'chiefdom' plays on the common misunderstanding that the Acholi existed as a coherent group of people who self-identified as Acholi prior to the colonial period, and thus the idea of an Acholi chiefdom serves to bolster the image that Ker Kwaro Acholi also existed in the distant past.

Interestingly the chiefdom of Ker Kwaro Acholi as depicted within the Strategic Plan takes no account of the substantial Acholi population who live across the northern Uganda border in South Sudan. It is unclear therefore from the Strategic Plan how Ker Kwaro Acholi seek to relate to cross-broader Acholi populations, and the lack of recognition of Acholi outside Uganda further suggests that the Strategic Plan is a document for the consumption by actors who work primarily within state boundaries, such as the Government and western donors. Secondly, the statements about the Paramount Chief imply that the post always hails from Payira, which the historical reflections in chapter two of the thesis have shown to be problematic.

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[108] Paramount Chief, Foreword, in Ibid., 1.
[109] Ibid., 6-7.

Although an 'Acholi Traditional Leaders Council' is mentioned in the Plan, as constituted by the fifty traditional leaders working together 'with their elders, women and youth leaders', and said to function as 'the highest governing council of the institution', this is presented as an innovation since the reinstallation of the traditional leaders in 2000. The brief mention of the Acholi Traditional Leaders Council, with no further information given about who exactly constitute it (more specifically than 'women' and 'youth') or how it functions, contributes to producing the idea that Ker Kwaro Acholi is not only rooted firmly in the past through the 'traditional leaders' but is also relevant for the present through its recognition of women and young people on the governing council of Ker Kwaro Acholi.

In addition to emphasis given to the traditional roles of the *Rwodi* in reconciliation and conflict management, the second predominant image projected of Ker Kwaro Acholi is as 'the custodian of Acholi cultural practices and traditions'.[110] The booklet summarises what Acholi culture comprises of and what cultural practices used to do 'in the past, before the insurgency'.[111] Acholi culture is presented as something that was bounded and stable in the past and inherently good, 'promoting economic development, good health, unity, education and the general standard of living', but 'since the war' has been in a steady decline.[112] The decline in 'cultural development' is then said to have been the cause of and resulted in the 'decline in health standards, production levels, education and unity, and rise in spread of diseases, deaths, conflicts, frustrations etc'.[113] The discourse of a cultural breakdown in Acholiland is re-produced alongside descriptions of Ker Kwaro Acholi as the 'custodian of Acholi cultural practices and traditions', which has the effect of presenting Ker Kwaro Acholi as part of the solution to what it describes as the 'steady decline in the cultural development of the people of Acholi...during the past 15 years'. I will pick up on this point again in chapter five, but for now I want to draw attention to the way discourses of a cultural breakdown in Acholiland, that turn on essentialist conceptions of a pre-colonial Acholi cultural identity disrupted by colonial and post-colonial society and infected by western ideas and practice, provided space

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[110] Ibid., 3.
[111] Ibid., 2.
[112] Ibid., 3.
[113] Ibid.

and an ideological framework where Ker Kwaro Acholi could position itself as the traditional authority that enabled and facilitated this golden past.

In Pain's report eight years earlier, *The Bending of Spears*, a similar picture of *Rwodi* was presented, as traditional and neutral mediators of conflict, custodians of a 'true' Acholi culture and in need of empowerment so they can resume their traditional roles and be restored as unproblematic positions of authority in Acholiland. Thus Ker Kwaro Acholi's self-presentation in the Strategic Plan, for those who may have read or browsed Pain's report, would have supported an image of traditional authorities in Acholiland they had already encountered. Erin Baines, the author of *Roco Wat i Acholi* ("the restoration of relationships")[114] that was published in the same year as the Strategic Plan in 2005, built on Pain's report as she examined and offered 'analysis of what traditional justice in northern Uganda is, how it is currently practiced and what value it could add', which was part of a broader objective to 'document traditional rituals with the aim of seeing how they could be further adapted to suit the context of an enduring conflict.[115] The report drew extensively on the views and opinions of elders and *Rwodi*, who the author and researchers had been in a working relationship with since 2002.

In *Roco Wat*, Baines works within a similar ideological framework and 'ethnojustice' discourse[116] as Pain and Ker Kwaro Acholi. Although Baines described Ker Kwaro as a 'contemporary institution', she also saw Ker Kwaro as the body of Acholi *traditional* leaders. The further empowerment of Ker Kwaro was thus advocated in the report

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[114] E. Baines, *Roco Wat I Acholi, Restoring Relationships in Acholi-Land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2005).

[115] E. Baines, Executive Summary, *Roco Wat I Acholi, Restoring Relationships in Acholi-Land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2005).

[116] Branch draws on a critique of ethnophilosophy by Hountondji and analyses what he terms 'ethnojustice'; 'an agenda that focuses on promoting social order through so-called traditional justice'. Branch also describes ethnojustice as a discourse 'that combines elements from ethnography and from the study of law and morality to describe what it claims are traditional systems of justice of non-Western cultures. In describing a traditional system of justice, ethnojustice purports to describe a single, coherent, positive system that is presented as being universally, consensually, and spontaneously adhered to by all members of that culture and that, even if in abeyance today, remains valid and should be revived'. A. Branch, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 154-178.

because traditional authorities were seen as central for successfully reviving the traditional justice mechanisms viewed as crucial for restoring relationships in Acholiland.

In a section on *Rwodi* the report bolsters the view that Payira have a more natural and legitimate claim to hold the Paramount Chief position. Although it is recognised by an anonymous informant in the report that the Paramount Chief post is a re-invented institution in Acholi, the report identifies the Payira *Rwodi*, Ocama and his son Awich, as 'informal leaders of Acholi' during colonialism. In the post-independence period, the report goes on to say, '*Rwot* Adonga of the Payira clan' was 'installed by *Rwodi* as "the perfect leader" (laloyo maber)', but 'displaced' by Amin's dictatorship. The narrative casts Payira *Rwodi* in continual positions of leadership over Acholi, at least since the 1960s, as elected by the other *Rwodi*, and only disrupted by the brutality of Amin's rule in the 1970s. This interpretation of history is inaccurate on a number of counts, such as *Rwot* Adonga being of Pajule and not Payira, but as it was written with reference predominantly to interview material and with no explicit reference to historical accounts, what is being reflected is how the traditional leaders and informants wished to remember and recall the past. Although for particular purposes there is significant value in such an endeavour, the report does not present the information in these terms and with consideration that memories are often reinterpreted to suit needs and desires of the present.

Although the report seeks to identify the weaknesses and challenges Ker Kwaro Acholi are contending with, such as its ad hoc coordination of activities, centralisation in Gulu, being too political in its activities and working too closely with Government, and concerns over its male dominated representation, the report remains committed to empowering what it takes as a modified traditional authority in Acholi, even if its expectations and hopes are that Ker Kwaro Acholi will adapt to the changing gender and age roles in Acholi society, because it sees Ker Kwaro Acholi's ability to adapt as being where the legitimacy of the institution ultimately lies.[117]

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[117] E. Baines, *Roco Wat I Acholi, Restoring Relationships in Acholi-Land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2005), 32-33.

The EU-Acholi programme recognised Paramount Chief Acana as the legitimate authority in Acholi in 2003 by funding the building of a four bed-roomed brick house for Paramount Chief Acana next to the building where Ker Kwaro Acholi was locating its offices. Although the house has come to be referred to as the Palace of the Paramount Chief it does not look particularly palatial but it does stand out in stark contrast to the mud huts that surround its relatively spacious grounds. The President of Uganda also marked his recognition and approval of the new Paramount Chief position created in Acholi and the provision of a grand house, by laying and engraving the foundation stone (see Appendix B).[118]

CONCLUSION

Changes to the 1995 Ugandan constitution opened up new possibilities for claimants to traditional authority across Uganda to carve a space for themselves in the socio-political landscape. In anticipation of this constitutional change the Buganda Kingdom coronated the *Kabaka* in 1993, in a flamboyant ceremony that was sponsored by multinational corporations. In northern Uganda, those who sought recognition and empowerment with recourse to a traditional authority status did so in the midst of continual violence, mass displacement and emerging discourses that understood the situation in terms of an inter-Acholi affair. Without dismissing the enormous difficulties anyone living in northern Uganda at this time faced, the conflict also created opportunities. Tendencies to view the conflict in northern Uganda as an internal Acholi issue where a real and perceived breakdown of moral and social norms was viewed as both an effect of conflict and sometimes thought to have prolong violence, led to support for reviving traditional leaders who were being reimagined almost solely in terms of traditional reconciliation and as neutral mediators of conflict and brokers of peace. Evidently not any expression of traditional cultural authority would find support from government and international

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[118] Approximately twenty three and a half Uganda shillings, over nine thousand US dollars, was provided to the Gulu District Local Authorities for the building of the house. Reference two documents: G. Obura, "Letter from Godfrey Obura, District Engineer, Gulu to the Chief Administrative Officer, Gulu, Re: Construction of Rwot Acana Ii's House, 23 December," (Gulu: Gulu District Archive, 2003).

actors, as the groups that were precursors to Ker Kwaro Acholi, the Payira Cultural Association and *Rwodi* moo Councillors, found.

In this chapter I have sought to analyse what I call the first phase of Ker Kwaro Acholi's emergence by highlighting dominant discourses that created fields of possibilities and a fertile environment for a revival of traditional authorities in Acholiland. I have also sought to elucidate ways Ker Kwaro sought to become known as the traditional cultural institution in Acholi arguing that Paramount Chief Acana, Kenneth Oketta and *Rwot* Francis Lagony re-produced dominant discourses in a process to render Ker Kwaro Acholi recognisable as a traditional authority in national and international spheres.

Having been recognised by significant actors, such as the President of Uganda and donors, as the legitimate traditional cultural authority of Acholi, Ker Kwaro goes on, as I will analyse in the following two chapters, to re-imagine the traditional authority further, as a cultural institution and government body, and as an agent of development. Once again these images of Ker Kwaro Acholi, which become realised to a degree, are produced in the context of dominant discourses that shape the strategic practices of the central figures of Ker Kwaro Acholi.

CHAPTER FOUR

BECOMING A GOVERNMENT-CULTURAL INSTITUTION

In 2004 Kenneth Oketta was appointed Prime Minister of Ker Kwaro Acholi, which was part of a broader initiative to create, what Ker Kwaro called, a 'government structure' for Ker Kwaro Acholi. In addition to establishing a Prime Ministers post, a host of Ministers have also been appointed over the years, including an Attorney General. This second phase of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival, where a government structure was gradually created, was framed by Ker Kwaro as an initiative to strengthen the institution through improving the efficiency of the Paramount Chief and *Rwodi*. At the same time significant changes were also being proposed by the Government of Uganda, which would alter power relations between local and central government, and between government and traditional authorities.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, since Paramount Chief Acana's return to northern Uganda in 2002, after his trips abroad, Ker Kwaro Acholi began to establish itself in the public eye as a legitimate traditional cultural authority of Acholi. I discussed how through drawing on vestiges of the recent and distant past to re-cast Acholi history and traditional authorities in a particular light Ker Kwaro Acholi projected images of itself that appealed to various audiences. Upheld by, and contributing to, dominant discourses in northern Uganda, that emphasise the cultural devastation of the region over the past two decades and the need to revive cultural practices of reconciliation, Ker Kwaro Acholi experienced little resistance to its 'revival' and found willing facilitators within the international community. In this chapter, I illustrate how Ker Kwaro re-imagines itself as a stronger institution through the creation of a government structure, examining this process in the light of changes in Uganda's political landscape and government discourses on traditional cultural institutions.

I have divided the chapter into three sections, starting with an examination of a concept paper written by Ker Kwaro Acholi in 2006 for district authorities, which presents a proposal to set up a 'government structure'. The document illustrates Ker Kwaro Acholi being further imagined as both a traditional authority and government structure, and a

desire for this vision of Ker Kwaro to be recognised by local government officials. I then turn to discuss the national scene, summarising NRM attempts to capture power at the local level and discussing Government discourses on traditional cultural institutions that have emerged out of power relations between local and central government and, more significantly, out of power relations between the NRM and the Buganda kingdom. In the third section I will return to how Ker Kwaro sought to frame its relationship with government as one of partnership, whilst seemingly subverting government discourses by adopting overtly political language for the structural changes of the institution.

A PROPOSITION

Paramount Chief Acana told me how impressed the *Rwodi* had been of Kenneth Oketta in 2005 as Oketta successfully led the production of the first Strategic Plan and liaised with World Bank officials of the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund on behalf of Ker Kwaro Acholi.[1] Out of the other elders such as Amboise Ola, who had also been assisting Ker Kwaro, Oketta was described by Paramount Chief Acana as 'having more points than the other ones', and so when it came to creating the position of a Prime Minister of Ker Kwaro Acholi in 2006 as part of developing Ker Kwaro as 'an institution of its own with full capacity', Oketta was voted in. In June the same year, Ker Kwaro Acholi invited various government officials, including the Chief Administrative Officers across northern Uganda in Gulu, Kitgum and Amuru, to attend a 'workshop for the formation of the Ker Kwaro Acholi government structure'.[2] The workshop was due to take place on the 26th June at Ker Kwaro Acholi, Gulu premises, and would involve reviewing the governing structure of Ker Kwaro, detailing duties and responsibilities of the various offices in the structure and, once coming to an agreement on the proposal, determining the way forward for its implementation.[3] The letter of invitation was accompanied by a 'concept paper' written by Ker Kwaro Acholi which set out and described it's proposed

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[1] Interview with D.O. Acana, Birmingham, 20 June 2011. I will return to Ker Kwaro Acholi's engagement with the World Bank's Northern Uganda Social Action Fund in the following chapter.

[2] D.O. Acana, "Letter of Invitation from Lawi *Rwodi* Acholi, David Onen Acana Ii, to Mr Patrick Langoya, Chief Administrative Officer, Gulu, 21 June," (Gulu: Gulu District Archives, 2006).

[3] Ker Kwaro Acholi, "Proposed Government Structure Concept Paper," (Gulu: Gulu District Archives, 2006).

'government structure' for Ker Kwaro Acholi. The authors of the paper, Paramount Chief Acana working in close consultation with Prime Minister Oketta and *Rwot* Francis Lagony of Koch, sent out particular messages by proposing such a structure, to an audience that included local government officials and in particular one of the most powerful positions in local government, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO); the appointment of which, in 2005, had been recentralised.

The fifteen paged concept paper began by introducing Ker Kwaro Acholi, in much the same way as the Strategic Plan had done. There was a paragraph on the 'history of the Acholi people', information on how Acholi is organised politically, economically and socially, details of the lineage of *Rwot* Payira and a summary of Ker Kwaro Acholi's background. The concept paper then went on to summaries the background to the proposed structure of Ker Kwaro Acholi government, gave bullet points identifying problems of 'the current structure', provided two diagrams of the proposed government structure and finally detailed the 'functions, duties and responsibilities' of not only the Paramount Chief and Council of *Rwodi*, but also of the newly proposed positions. There seems to have been a clear intent that what was being proposed would be open for discussion with the fifty participants invited to the workshop, given the three days allocated for the event and the provision of a concept paper to be reviewed before the workshop. However, the concept paper did not provide a clear picture of what was being proposed but rather is full of inconsistency and incongruence. Below are the two diagrams of the proposed structure which illustrate, for example, different relations between the Prime Minister, Executive Committee and Council of *Rwodi*.[4]

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[4] Gulu Archives, 'Cultural Villages. Ker Kwaro Acholi'. CR/D/1059, CR/1059/2.

The Structure of Ker Kwaro Acholi Government

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                          │  COUNCIL OF RWODI    │
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          │   PRIME MINISTER     │           │   SPEAKER    │
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- CULTURE, ANTIQUITIES, AND SOCIAL. DEV.
- TREASURER GENERAL
- EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY
- ATTORNEY GENERAL
- GENDER, YOUTH AND SPECIAL INTEREST
- REHABILITATION & ECON. DEV.
- HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELFARE
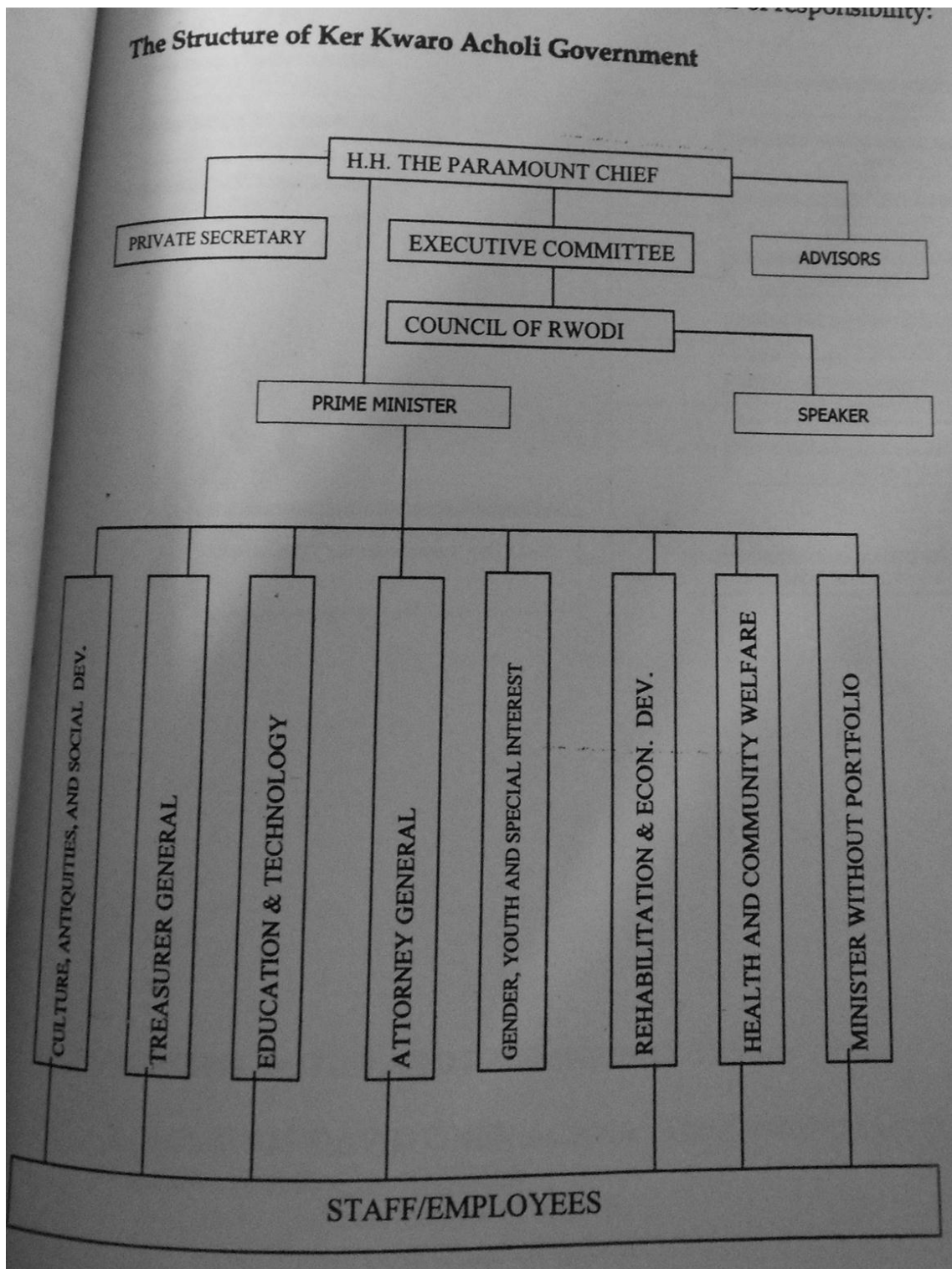- MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO

STAFF/EMPLOYEES

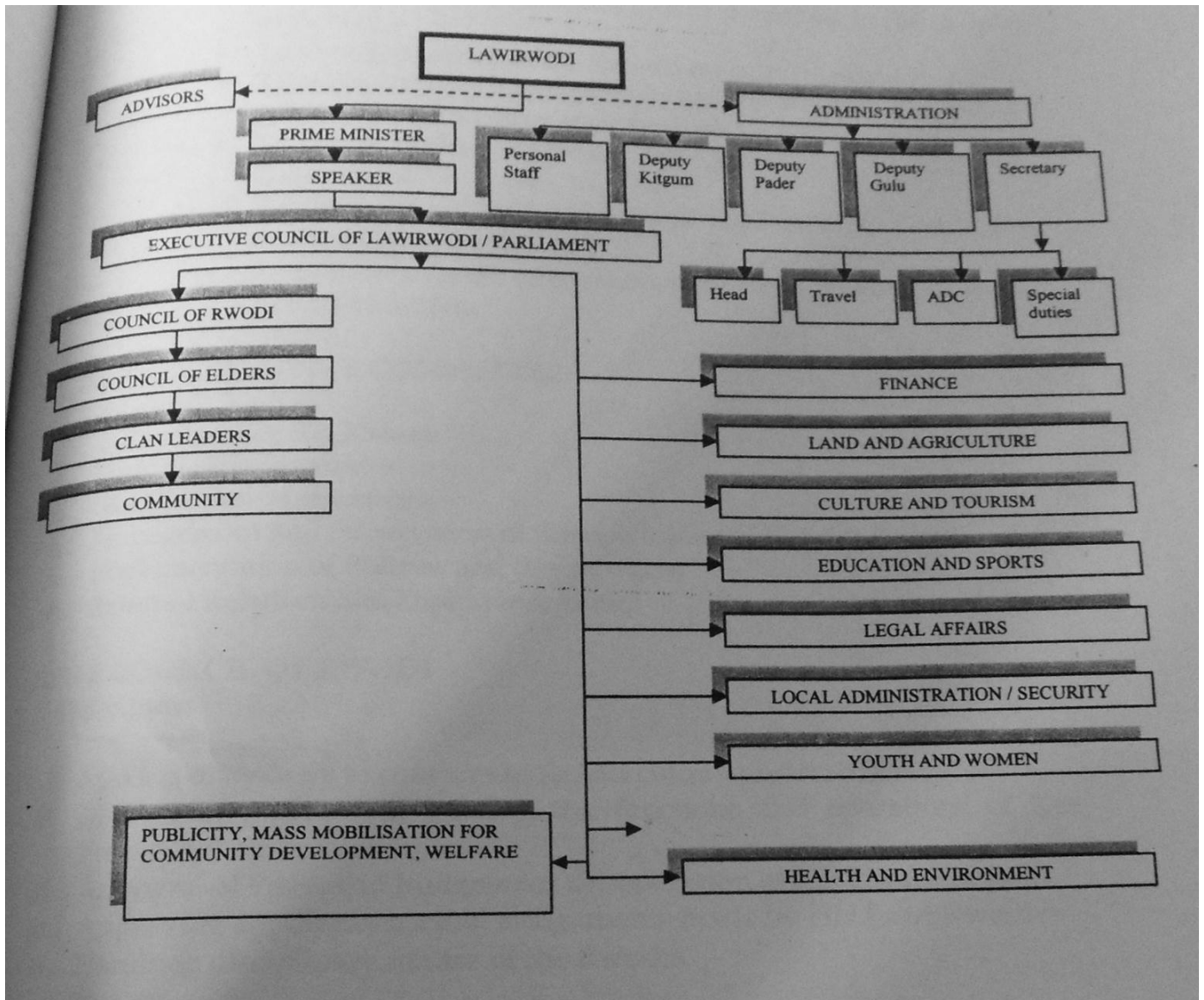**Diagram A of Ker Kwaro Acholi's proposed government structure.**

Diagram B of Ker Kwaro Acholi's proposed government structure

In the first diagram the Prime Minister seems to hold a position below that of the Executive Committee and Council of *Rwodi* and functions in a separate branch of Ker Kwaro under the Paramount Chief and directly over the Ministers. Whereas, in the second diagram the Prime Minister is above and seems to have a leadership or managerial role over the speaker, Executive Council, Ministers and the structure of traditional authorities. Details of the Prime Ministers duties and responsibilities given later in the paper do not provide much more clarity, as it states he will act 'as a secretary to the executive committee and the Council of *Rwodi*', which does not seem to reflect either diagram. Despite the lack of clarity in the document, images of a future Ker

Kwaro Acholi as an institution with competencies and capacities in a plethora of areas, that take Ker Kwaro beyond only acting within the realm of traditional reconciliation, were projected.

Framed as a response and solution to a list of observations made on the 'current structure' of Ker Kwaro, which were that Ker Kwaro

> does not clearly allocate responsibility, [is] too general, cannot support the work load and responsibilities the institution is handling, does not clearly define power and authority, the structure is not yet gazetted, [and] in some cases it is not in conformity with cultural practices both in Acholi and elsewhere,

Ker Kwaro then stated,

> We need to have a small, vibrant but standard structure of government, with competent people and clear mandate in order to lead and serve our people effectively. We need the Legislative arm and the Cabinet to run the Ker Kwaro Acholi Government. We need to reduce the workload on HH and the *Rwodi* as far as the administration of the Chiefdom is concern[ed]. We need to understand that serving in this structure is voluntary and out of respect and dignity one accords to his cultural institution, but not for financial gains or prompts.

To achieve this vision of a government structure it was proposed that a host of Ministers be appointed, with expertise in a wide range of areas, such as; 'Culture, Antiquities and Social Development; Education and Technology; Gender, Youth and Special Interest; Rehabilitation and Economic Development; Health and Community Welfare'. The Minister's duties, the paper details, are to revolve around liaising, promoting, mobilising and advocating, through engagements with a range of actors such as central government, local government, NGOs, Faith Based Organisations and development partners. The Minister for Culture, Antiquities and Social Development is the only Minister assigned the duty of making policies, whilst the Minister for Gender, Youth and Special Interest Groups, is assigned the role of liaising with government and development partners in the creation of policies and programmes. Each Ministerial role is expected to liaise with central government, local governments and development partners in the promotion, formulation and implementation of programmes and strategies related to their area of ministry.

An Executive Committee, or Executive Council of Lawirwodi/Parliament as it is also called in the second diagram, is described as the 'cabinet' of Ker Kwaro and expected to have an outward looking role overseeing 'external relations and diplomatic affairs'. This organ of newly appointed non-traditional members of Ker Kwaro are also to manage the operations of Ker Kwaro Acholi, and is envisioned to formulate and implement policies and programmes, along with the Ministers and Council of *Rwodi* who are also expected to make bye-laws that conform to Acholi culture and traditions. The other additional post that constitutes Ker Kwaro Acholi's government structure is the post of Attorney General. This is the only other post, in addition to the Council of *Rwodi*, assigned to formulate by-laws. However, the Attorney General is also expected to propose and formulate ordinances to be approved by the Council of *Rwodi* and to represent Ker Kwaro on legal issue and in Court, and is to draft agreements, memorandum and contracts on behalf of Ker Kwaro.

The newly created post of Prime Minister was clearly established for the main purposes of being the predominant interface of Ker Kwaro Acholi as the position was assigned the role of 'liaising with central and local government on all administrative, financial and political matters concerning and affecting' Ker Kwaro Acholi. Also the Prime Minister's post came with far-reaching responsibilities within Ker Kwaro Acholi, tasked with managing, controlling, supervising, overseeing and coordinating to greater and lesser degrees each aspect of Ker Kwaro Acholi. In contrast to the Prime Minister's role, the Paramount Chief's roles and responsibilities emphasise his 'cultural' leadership position over the people of Acholi and the *Rwodi*, and his role as mediator of 'cultural disputes' and presider 'over all cultural ceremonies in accordance to the Acholi traditions'.

In summary, the images of Ker Kwaro projected in the concept paper illustrates a further imagining of the traditional institution by the leadership of Ker Kwaro Acholi, and shows that as far as they were concerned a strong cultural institution needed a body of non-traditional members who were authorities and experts in various fields from economics and law to cultural activities and education. Similarly to the Buganda Kingdom the leadership of Ker Kwaro intended to incorporate its body of experts using the form of a Parliament with a Prime Minister, cabinet of Ministers and an Attorney General, and similarly to Buganda it seems Ker Kwaro Acholi was also being re-imagined as a quasi-state-like structure.

Amidst the details of the proposal, Ker Kwaro Acholi made reference to the national context shaping the changes. The invitation letter stated, 'keeping in mind that the regional tier system of government will begin in July 2006, I invite you for a workshop for the formation of the Ker Kwaro Acholi government structure and assigning duties and responsibilities for different departments', and it was noted in the concept paper that 'this is a local affair taking place within a national framework...so what we shall come out with will reflect on us both nationally and internationally'. In addition, the message in the concept paper was that the *Rwodi* and other stakeholders of Ker Kwaro were to be educated on a number of government related issues, such as, Roles and Mandate of Cultural Institution in Uganda; Structure of Governance; The Systems and Functions of Governments; The Functional Relationship between National Government and the Cultural Institution Government; and The Regional Tier System of Government. It was further written in the paper that understanding these issues was crucial if the *Rwodi* and other stakeholders were to contribute effectively to the cultural institutions. The relationship between Ker Kwaro Acholi and government was clearly an important matter to the leadership of Ker Kwaro and authors of the paper, who seemed to want to also convey this publically.

Turning to examine the national context in the following section, I will show it is perhaps unsurprising Ker Kwaro Acholi sought to project an image of itself to local government as an institution with institutional, and more specifically, governmental strength, given the characteristics of the NRM's decentralisation policies, proposals to implement a regional tier system of government and the souring relationship between the NRM and Buganda Kingdom. Although over the years Ker Kwaro Acholi has substantiated its government structure, which I will touch upon in chapter six, in this chapter I remain concerned predominantly with the years 2005/2006 and the initial articulations of Ker Kwaro being further imagined as a government structure.

NATIONAL POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT DISCOURSES ON TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES

DECENTRALISING AND CAPTURING LOCAL POWER

Since the NRM came into power in 1986 it has invested significantly in the local government structure. Local democratic control was instituted through the creation of Resistance Councils and there was an increase of popularly elected posts. Compared to previous post-colonial rulers, the NRM was transforming Uganda's local government system. The Resistance Councils were organised into a five tiered structure, and since 1995 the names of these councils have been Local Councils, representing the village (LCI), parish (LCII), sub-county (LCIII), county (LCIV) and the district (LCV). Financial decentralisation and the devolution of decision-making functions on matters of local significance, has increased powers of the Local Governments, not least in the area of land. The 1998 Land Act decentralised control over land from the Uganda Land Commission, based in Kampala, to District Land Boards and Parish Land Committees.

Despite the Government's stated intentions for decentralisation to give equal power at the various levels of the LC government system, it has been overwhelmingly concentrated at the district level.[5] The LCV for example receives financial support from central Government, unlike LCI-LCIV who until 2005 had to raise revenue through the Graduated Personal Tax, which proved unpopular and therefore low yielding as a source of financial support. In addition donors often bypass Government and fund directly through the district, which creates further fiscal concentration at the district level.[6] To capture power and maintain control over local politics the NRM established NRM Committees that were established at each level of local government and as each committee elected the members of the lower level, they constituted NRM party members. Although these committees still operate when there is an election, on a day-to-day basis central Government maintains a hold on power at the district level through

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[5] E. Green, "Decentralisation and Conflict in Uganda," *Security and Development* 8, no. 4 (2008): 432, J.S. Wunsch and D. Ottemoeller, "Uganda: Multiple Levels of Local Governance," in *Local Government in Africa: The Challenges of Democratic Decentralisation*, ed. D. Olowu and J.S. Wunsch (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2004), 207.

[6] E. Green, "Decentralisation and Conflict in Uganda," *Security and Development* 8, no. 4 (2008): 433-434.

the two posts created to represent central Government; the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Resident District Commissioner (RDC).[7] In 2005 the CAO position was recentralised and the appointment of the post taken over by the Public Service Commission from the District Service Commission. The Ministry of Local Government has also been known to take over the functions of appointing and firing the CAO.[8] The role of the Resident District Commissioner is responsible to and appointed by the President, whilst also being in charge of overseeing planning on the District Development Committee and government programmes more generally. Museveni has tended to appoint NRM candidates who have been unsuccessful in elections to the RDC position and thus has built up a cadre of political allies at the district level across Uganda.[9] As Green notes, quoting a Ugandan Parliamentarian, decentralisation in Uganda seems to have boiled down to powerful district leaders being appointed and assigned by central government, rather than elected locally.

The prolific creation of districts has also been a key feature of Museveni's decentralisation approach, premised on the argument that more districts will take services closer to the people. The NRM has been criticised for using district creation as a distraction from its power hold on the district and, because a new district creates a number of jobs and have thus proved popular, Museveni has been criticised for using district creation to 'buy votes'.[10] In 2005, the creation of twenty one districts, the largest number created at one time, was announced, months before elections in 2006 and one week before Parliament voted to over-turn the presidential term limit, allowing Museveni to run for office for a third time.[11] Between 1986 and 2008, the number of districts rose from thirty three to eighty, and an incredible one hundred and eleven by 2010. Acholi sub-region had three in 2006, but today in 2012, stands at seven.

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[7] Ibid.: 436-438.
[8] Ibid.: 437.
[9] It is commonly thought in Acholiland that Rtd. Col. Walter Bosco Ochora was appointed RDC of Gulu after he failed to be re-elected as LCV of Gulu in 2005.
[10] E. Green, "Patronage, District Creation, and Reform in Uganda," *Studies of Comparative International Development* 45, no. 1 (2010).
[11] E. Green, "Decentralisation and Conflict in Uganda," *Security and Development* 8, no. 4 (2008): 443.

The concentration and control of power at the district level is a reflection of Museveni's efforts, that began in the mid-1990s, to 'control and manage all steps towards political liberalisation...[and] began to actively limit political space and centralise power'.[12] Tripp has argued that despite some of the genuine democratic features in Uganda, they are tangled up with a façade of democratisation, which has left Ugandan politics constituted by contradictory realities that include 'seeds of democratisation' and 'reminders of its grim authoritarian past'.[13] One of the most significant contradictions, certainly for a study of Ugandan traditional authorities, has been Museveni's rhetoric to minimise the salience of ethnicity whilst at the same time harnessing ethnic politics to exercise power.[14] For example, in the previous chapter, I mentioned how Museveni garnered support for his bush war, fought in Luwero, in regional and ethnic terms and how Museveni has continued to frame conflict and insecurity in northern Uganda as an inter-Acholi issue and problem rooted in Acholi ethnicity. NRM political appointments have also become more regional and ethnically determined with Baganda and western Ugandan's, including Ankole (Museveni's group) holding the majority of government posts since 1986, whilst those in the east and north have been marginalised.

As Goodfellow and Lindeman have observed, whilst data suggests Baganda enjoyed prominent representation at the central state level following 1986, after the turn of the century Baganda overrepresentation fell from 101% in 2000 to 38.2% in 2008, and many of the influential Baganda ministers who were close to Mengo had been sidelined.[15] In 2007, Baganda occupied none of the top seven strategic state positions, and a Banyankole-Bahima dominance (Museveni's group) in the army became firmly entrenched, which excluded Baganda access to 'what is arguably still the real locus of power in Museveni's Uganda'.[16] In fear of opposition politics, reformists in the

[12] A.M. Tripp, "The Changing Face of Authoritarianism in Africa: The Case of Uganda," *Africa Today* 50, no. 3 (2004): 8.

[13] Ibid.: 24.

[14] S. Lindemann, "Just Another Change of Guard? Broad-Based Politics and Civil War in Museveni's Uganda," *African Affairs* 110, no. 4 (2011).

[15] S. Lindemann and T. Goodfellow, "From Strongest Ally to Fiercest Rival? The Fallout between the Museveni Government and the Buganda Kingdom," in *ASAUK Biennial Conference* (Oxford2010), S. Lindemann, "Just Another Change of Guard? Broad-Based Politics and Civil War in Museveni's Uganda," *African Affairs* 110, no. 4 (2011): 396.

[16] S. Lindemann and T. Goodfellow, "From Strongest Ally to Fiercest Rival? The Fallout between the Museveni Government and the Buganda Kingdom," in *ASAUK Biennial Conference*

Movement, particularly multi-party activists have experienced suppression, as have Baganda who supported the restoration of a Baganda political monarchy through a federal system of government.[17]

Kingdoms in Uganda pose the other significant loci through which power can potentially be exercised. As I discussed in chapter two, the Buganda Kingdom wasted no time following the coronation of the *Kabaka* in 1993 in establishing a prime minister, parliament and government with ministers. However, although some of the assets the Baganda call *ebyeffe* were restored to the Kingdom, the demands of Buganda monarchists for federal status have been continually refused by the NRM who do not wish the Kingdom to exercise any political powers. In efforts to manage the challenges posed by the Buganda Kingdom; to attract voters, whilst maintaining control; the NRM have made specific constitutional provisions that have been intended as a compromise but which staunch Buganda monarchists have rejected. The NRM has also invented a specific rhetoric of traditional authorities as 'cultural institutions', and an opportunity is rarely missed where Museveni reminds traditional authorities of their roles as custodians of culture and as such 'important tools' for local and national development. I will now turn to discuss Government discourses on traditional cultural institutions.

GOVERNMENT DISCOURSES ON 'TRADITIONAL/CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS'

In early 2003, 'more than 100,000 Baganda held a peaceful demonstration demanding the restoration of federal rule (*federo*) for Buganda and the return of Kampala to the kingdom.'[18] The introduction of multi-partyism in 2005, further strengthened calls amongst royalist Baganda for a federal system of government. Although Museveni's government has kept in staunch opposition to this demand, in 2005 an alternative was

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(Oxford2010), 8-9. See also A.M. Mwenda and R. Tangri, "Patronage Politics, Donor Reforms and Regime Consolidation in Uganda," *African Affairs* 104, no. 416 (2005): 460.

[17] J. Oloka-Onyango, "'New Breed' Leadership Conflict and Reconstruction in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: A Socio-Political Biography of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni," (Unpublished: CODESRIA, Undated). cited in A.M. Tripp, "The Changing Face of Authoritarianism in Africa: The Case of Uganda," *Africa Today* 50, no. 3 (2004): 8. See also J. Oloka-Onyango, "The Question of Buganda in Contemporary Ugandan Politics," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 15, no. 2 (1997).

[18] A.M. Tripp, "The Changing Face of Authoritarianism in Africa: The Case of Uganda," *Africa Today* 50, no. 3 (2004): 16.

proposed; to establish, what Ker Kwaro Acholi were acutely aware of in their proposal to establish a government structure, a regional tier of government. To understand what was being proposed in a regional tier structure and how it would alter relations between the state and traditional authorities we need to trace the relationship between the Buganda Kingdom and the NRM over the matter of federalism and look at Article 178 of the 1995 Constitution; an Article that is directly referenced in Ker Kwaro Acholi's 2005 Strategic Plan as part of its claims over state recognition and legitimacy.

As I touched upon in chapter two, federalism has been a demand of traditionalist members of the Buganda Kingdom since the NRM came into power in 1986, as the close relationship at the time between the NRM and Buganda, and the restoration of traditional authorities in 1993, seemed to open a new window of opportunity. The government's pursuits of decentralisation had, for many Baganda elites, proved unsatisfactory and the creation of districts, unlike elsewhere in Uganda, was viewed with deep suspicion that it was part of a 'divide and rule strategy' that would ensure Buganda does not act as a single unit.[19] Although not all Baganda have supported federalism, its popularity in Buganda has increased considerably beyond Mengo.[20]

As a concessionary alternative to federalism and in response to Mengo's dissatisfaction with the Government's creation of districts on non-ethnic criteria, Article 178 of the 1995 Constitution gave the provision for culturally similar districts to cooperate in the areas of culture and development and for that purpose to set up councils, trust funds or secretariats. In effect, Article 178 was allowing for Baganda to create a 'Buganda Council' that could coordinate over policy in Buganda's districts and be 'granted certain legislative powers', although not to levy taxes. The districts of Buganda were, in addition, assumed to have 'agreed to cooperate' on the coming into force of the constitution. 'What the constitution offered the kingdom by and large, was the

[19] S.S. Kayunga, "The Federo (Federalism) Debate in Uganda," in *Working Paper* (Kampala: Centre for Basic Research, 2000), 28.
[20] S. Lindemann and T. Goodfellow, "From Strongest Ally to Fiercest Rival? The Fallout between the Museveni Government and the Buganda Kingdom," in *ASAUK Biennial Conference* (Oxford2010), 12.

assumption that the districts located on Buganda territory had come together to recognise the authority of Mengo to represent them in certain matters.'[21]

Buganda monarchists rejected this provision on two points. Firstly, they saw that Article 178 positioned the Kingdom as a derivative of the district, rather than recognising that Buganda historically predates districts and, in their eyes, politically transcends them.[22] The empowerment of the state structure over the Kingdom was also seen as displacing the centre of agency and creating a dependency that Mengo found unacceptable.[23] There was also concern that a Buganda Council would not be able to levy taxes and that the arrangement would only grant positions of power to those directly elected, which ruled out a substantial proportion of the Mengo elite who favoured a political King and appointed Prime Minister (Katikiro).[24] Although the Mengo ultra-royalist core wanted nothing less than to integrate Buganda as a sovereign entity, Englebert has noted a class and generational gap on the issue and identified Ganda educated elite and civil servants who are interested in maintaining a situation that enables them to straddle positions in both systems, whilst younger Mengo officials have been interested in pursuing opportunities as political entrepreneurs above a loyalty to 'the purity of Buganda's rebirth'.[25]

In the run up to the 2006 presidential elections Museveni was under increasing pressure to engage in negotiations on the issue of federalism, if he was to retain votes in Buganda. In the hope of stemming the federalist tide, whilst retaining Buganda's favour, and in response to the rejection of Article 178, Museveni introduced the idea of a 'regional tier' of government that would sit below central government and above the

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[21] P. Englebert, "Born Again Buganda and the Limits of Traditional Resurgence in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, no. 3 (2002): 363.
[22] Ibid, S.S. Kayunga, "The Federo (Federalism) Debate in Uganda," in *Working Paper* (Kampala: Centre for Basic Research, 2000), 57.
[23] P. Englebert, "Born Again Buganda and the Limits of Traditional Resurgence in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, no. 3 (2002): 363.
[24] S. Lindemann and T. Goodfellow, "From Strongest Ally to Fiercest Rival? The Fallout between the Museveni Government and the Buganda Kingdom," in *ASAUK Biennial Conference* (Oxford2010), 12.
[25] P. Englebert, "Born Again Buganda and the Limits of Traditional Resurgence in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, no. 3 (2002): 363.

district.[26] Tabled as an amendment of Article 178, the regional tier, as stated in Uganda's 2006 Constitution, provides for, not only that districts can cooperate and form councils, trust funds and secretariats, but that a regional tier of government may form through district cooperation and have 'political, legislative, executive, administrative and cultural functions in the region.'[27] The regional assembly, constituted by elected members, with representation of women, youth and disabled people, would also be able to establish 'standing and other committees or organs for the efficient discharge of its functions'.

The constitution assumes or anticipates that 'representatives of cultural interests' in a region 'shall constitute the standing committee on cultural matters', and 'as against the rest of the members of the regional assembly' will be given 'exclusive jurisdiction on the cultural matters of the region.' The constitution defines 'cultural matters' as,

a) the choice and installation of a traditional leader or cultural leader

b) all traditional and cultural matters relating to the traditional or cultural leader and to the institutions of the traditional leader or cultural leader as well as royal members of the traditional leadership

c) the choice, appointment and succession to clan and subclan leadership

d) clan, traditional and customary matters

e) matters relating to cultural rites, cultural succession and customary heirs

f) cultural or traditional lands, sites, shrines and installations

g) clan lands, sites, shrines and installations

h) traditional, customary and cultural practices which are consistent with the Constitution

Stating that representatives of cultural interests will form the committee on cultural matters seems to remove the need for the members of the regional assembly to be in favour of forming a committee on cultural matters, as it has been given constitutional provision. In effect, therefore, the constitution allows sympathisers of traditional authorities to form a committee that would have the exclusive power to choose and

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[26] S. Lindemann and T. Goodfellow, "From Strongest Ally to Fiercest Rival? The Fallout between the Museveni Government and the Buganda Kingdom," in *ASAUK Biennial Conference* (Oxford2010).
[27] *Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, 2006, Article 2 and Fifth Schedule.

install a traditional leader of a region, as well as exercise power over the appointment and succession of traditional leaders in the rest of the traditional structure. Compared to Article 178 that only granted powers to those elected, the amendment in 2006 seems to be an accommodation for Mengo elite to maintain power over electing the *Kabaka* and appointing the Katikiro.

With regards to what the constitution was offering, the traditional or cultural leaders who exist in the region, and thus the *Kabaka*, they shall

    a) be the titular head of the regional government.

    b) be the titular head of the regional assembly and shall open, address and close the sessions of the regional assembly.

    c) enjoy the benefits, privileges and roles as provided for in Article 246 of Constitution and by Parliament and the regional assembly

However, in addition it was made clear that the standing committee on cultural matters must 'consult the traditional or cultural leader of the region as well as the relevant clan leaders', and that a 'decision of the standing committee on cultural matters shall not be effective until the decision has been approved by the traditional or cultural leader of the region and, in the case of succession...by the clan or cultural leader's council'. These provisions, which Museveni's Government couched as concessions for the Buganda Kingdom, were understood more widely as attempts to incorporate the later whilst restricting and limiting its power.

The rhetoric of traditional authorities as distinctly 'cultural institutions' has formed the Government's strategy to contain the Buganda Kingdom and keep it from being a political threat. At any opportunity, and particularly the coronation ceremonies he attends, Museveni reiterates that cultural institutions must focus on 'cultural matters' such as the 'preservation of culture' and languages, and 'fill the gaps that are not addressed by structure of modern democracy'.[28] An address Museveni gave to Uganda's Kings and Cultural Leaders Forum in 2009, and on the occasion of the forum's establishment, is illustrative of the public relationship between traditional cultural institutions across Uganda, excluding the Buganda Kingdom, and Museveni's

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[28] A. Ondoga and B. Okethwengu, "Museveni Cautions Cultural Leaders," *New Vision*, 31 October 2010.

Government.[29] The Forum was established at the same time as a new draft bill on traditional leaders was being approved by Museveni's Government.[30]

As published on Uganda's State House website newsletter, Museveni began by 'challenging traditional leaders to contribute to the recovery of the African people's dignity by promoting and protecting African languages and cultures instead of creating disunity' and in reference to the 'embarrassment' he felt at hearing Africans speaking in English charged the traditional leaders present to 'save our people from behaving like African Europeans...[and] to help our people to properly describe their languages...[and to] go back to our roots and rediscover ourselves'.[31] It was not long before Museveni 'cautioned traditional leaders against creating disunity among the people and against partisan politics, adding that there are already too many politicians and there is an oversupply' and added that,

> When I supported the restoration of cultural institutions, I emphasized the additional role of promoting unity – okwongera omugaso – not create new problems or resurrect old ones. This is what I told *Kabaka* Ronald Mutebi in London, to unit[e] the people like they were before, not disunite them.

Whilst addressing a number of issues, such as high power tariffs, and making appeals for the traditional leaders to support policies he was pursuing, such as not granting bail to hard core criminals, Museveni also announced that he was 'considering increasing support given to traditional leaders' and on the issue of regional tier suggested that royalties to Kings and to local governments would be 'worked on'. 'Cultural institutions' were also ensured they would 'get some funding for agricultural modernization to promote food security'. The message was clear; there are benefits to be had from supporting the government, staying out of politics and remaining within your cultural roles. The forum of traditional authorities pledged they were committed to non-partisan development programmes and had met 'to see how they can communicate to their

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[29] The Uganda Kings and Cultural Leaders Forum was established in 2009 as a limited company and is chaired by the King of Bunyoro-Kitara, Rukirabasaija Gafabusa Iguru I. Its members are the 'Kingdom and Cultural Institutions of Bunyoro, Toro, Buganda, Ker Alur, Busoga, Alur Kwong, Ker Acholi, Lango, Teso, Rwenzururu, Bunyala, Buruli, Jopadhola, Bugisu, Ankole, and Koki. http://www.bunyoro-kitara.org/94.html.

[30] M. Henry, K. Pascal, and B. Gladys, "Cabinet Approves New Bill on Kings," *New Vision*, 18 November 2009.

[31] "President Challenges Traditional Leaders on African People's Dignity," *State House*, 18 November 2009.

subjects messages that cause development and bring the people together to build Uganda'. The traditional leader of Adhola ended the meeting by 'commending the President and government for restoring traditional and cultural institutions and providing them with decent transport to carry out their work' and in an open display expressed that the forum of traditional leaders now felt 'firm to support government policies and programmes in harmony and to help correct the wrong impressions caused by negative forces'.

The establishment of the Uganda Kings and Traditional Leaders Forum and the meeting attended by Museveni in November 2009 occurred at the same time relations between the Government and Buganda Kingdom hit a particular low. In September that year the President had blocked the *Kabaka* visiting a district that the *Kabaka* claimed came under the Buganda Kingdom, which resulted in rioting protests in Kampala and the Government responding to this by closing down the Buganda Kingdom's radio station, Central Broadcasting Station.[32] A month after these riots the Energy Minister, Hilary Onek, was in Gulu addressing the Gulu University inter-cultural gala, and criticised 'some politicians for using cultural institutions for selfish gains', which according to the Minister had contributed to the Buganda riots, and took the opportunity to reinforce the Government's view that 'culture must not be mixed with politics'.[33] He then 'warned cultural leaders against seeking elective political positions, describing the situation as a conflict of interest', before reminding the audience that 'the Constitution prohibits cultural leaders from getting involved in politics' and finally that 'as cultural leaders, if you get involved in elective politics, the public will undress you and you will lose face. Your role is to settle disputes between estranged political leaders and to preserve our cultural values for the future generations'.

In what seemed as a political manoeuvre to emphasise the sort of activities that Museveni approved cultural institutions concerning themselves with, he launched the

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[32] F. Muzale, "Ssabanyala to Fight and Defeat Mengo's 'Black Colonialists'," *Daily Monitor*, 10 November 2010, R. Kalumba, "September 11 Returns to Haunt Government, Buganda Relations," *Daily Monitor*, 11 September 2010, A. Wandera, "Baganda Refuse to Back Down on Demands," *Daily Monitor*, 11 September 2010.
[33] P. Aber, "Politicians Urged to Stop Meddling the Kingdoms," *New Vision* 2009.

Bamasaba cultural circumcision ceremony in Mbale District in 2010.[34] Falling almost at the anniversary of the Buganda riots in 2009, Museveni once again took the opportunity to give 'a stern warning to cultural leaders not to engage in active politics, saying that this might cause violence in the country', and adding "My advice to you is to play the roles and responsibilities within your boundaries." Museveni had donated UGX 10 million towards the function, ended his speech by, in a similar gesture to that made at the cultural leader's forum, pledging to provide a vehicle to the Bamasba cultural leader and backed a proposal to carve out a new district in the area.

APPROPRIATION AND COOPERATION

With such strong government rhetoric on traditional authorities as cultural institutions, and the clashes between Government and the Buganda Kingdom over 'cultural' matters, Ker Kwaro was aware of the importance of being seen and known in overtly cultural terms and of avoiding involvement in politics. In each of Ker Kwaro Acholi's Strategic Plans there is a strong narrative to consolidate the institution as a traditional authority, while appropriating government discourse on 'cultraul institutions' as bastions of cultural heritage. Both Plans state that Ker Kwaro Acholi 'was reconstituted in 2000…as a legal Cultural Institution' and in the 2005 Plan the 'goals' of Ker Kwaro were 'to achieve sustainable cultural integration of the Acholi people as a mean[s] of achieving lasting peace, and enhancing their welfare and productivity.' The 'vision' and 'mission' in the 2005 Plan were along similar lines to those in 2009; they read, 'A prosperous and culturally enlightened people with one identity' and 'to promote, develop and preserve the culture of Acholi'.

Ker Kwaro also emphasised the 'cultural' nature of the institution before delivering the proposal for a government structure. The concept paper read,

> As we go to discuss on the new structure and form a government to run Ker Kwaro Acholi, we need to note that: We are a cultural entity with perpetual succession,…protected by the constitution and supported by government.

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[34] M. Kolyangha, "Politics and Culture Don't Mix, Says Museveni," *Daily Monitor*, 8 August 2010.

It then went on to stress the cultural role of the Paramount Chief, described as he was as the 'Cultural Leader of Acholi' whose role was to 'provide cultural leadership...to the people of Acholi', 'issue guidelines to the *Rwodi* on cultural matters', 'settle cultural disputes', chair 'cultural meetings' of Ker Kwaro and 'preside over all cultural ceremonies in accordance to the Acholi traditions'.[35]

As well as overtly framing Ker Kwaro Acholi in cultural terms, Ker Kwaro also embeds the institution within government discourses on cultural institutions through reference to Article 178 and expressing its intentions to work in partnership with the government. Article 178 is referred to in Strategic Plan 2005 at the outset as part of where Ker Kwaro 'draws its mandate...to promote, preserve and document the culture of Acholi as a way of promoting holistic development of the Acholi people'.[36]

Ker Kwaro also communicates in its second Strategic Plan in 2009 that it has aligned its 'strategic intervention...to contribute to national and local government development strategies such as PRDP' (The National Peace, Recovery and Development Programme) and 'will work together with its people [and] the government'.[37] PRDP was launched in 2007 by the Government of Uganda, 'to stabilise and recover the north', recognizing that 'Northern Uganda has not improved at the same pace as the rest of the country'.[38] The Commissioner of PRDP received an acknowledgment at the beginning of the Strategic Plan from Oketta for the 'financial and technical assistance' given in the production of the Plan; a request Oketta had asked of the Commissioner based on their personal relationship.[39] Ker Kwaro also claimed to have played a key role in 'mobilising the community on development programmes such as PRDP and 'other government programmes', as well as explicitly stating that the PRDP, along with the District's Development Plans, were taken into consideration during the writing of the Strategic Plan. Part of the support the Commissioner provided to Ker Kwaro was the sponsorship of a workshop to develop the plan and to 'sensitise' on PRDP so 'that they could also come up with what should be in the plan'. Perhaps as a result of this workshop the 2009

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[35] Ker Kwaro Acholi, "Proposed Government Structure Concept Paper," (Gulu:Gulu District Archives, 2006), 9.

[36] Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Strategic Plan: 2005-2007* (Gulu: Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2005), 1.

[37] Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Strategic Plan, 2009-2014*, (Gulu: Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2009), 2,4.

[38] Government of Uganda, "Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda," (Kampala: Government of Uganda, 2007), vi.

[39] Interview with K. Oketta, Gulu, 19 June 2010.

Strategic Plan speaks directly to the government's PRDP agenda in northern Uganda, through both reflecting its main concerns as well as adopting key phrases and at times mirroring its format.

The four main stated concerns of the PRDP were to strengthen local state governance, assist the reintegration and development of communities, reactivate productive sectors in the region, and ensure a continued prevalence of peace. Ker Kwaro's strategic objectives similarly include activities to contribute to each of these objectives in PRDP, even proposing to provide 'farm inputs, micro credits and technical support' to communities and 'establish farm input centres', which seem a far cry from cultural activities such as preserving language and rituals. Although these are arguably useful and needed initiatives in Acholiland, to be provided by Ker Kwaro illustrates how the institution is imagining its functions in increasingly broad terms. With regards to PRDP, which puts significant emphasis on improving the economic productivity of northern Uganda, particularly through agricultural means, the Plan speaks directly to one of the Government's main stated concerns by identifying these possible programmes.

Also central to the PRDP, is a concern with consolidating state authority in northern Uganda. The Government proposes to strengthen the 'demand side' of local governance and enable 'civil society and informal governance structures... [to] demand more accountability, responsibility and transparency of local authority.'[40] Ker Kwaro Acholi's fourth strategic objective, to 'promote inclusive governance', proposes to contribute directly to strengthening the 'demand side of governance', by acting as a facilitator of 'activities that raise awareness on the rights of people and the responsibilities of government', as well as 'supporting community monitoring mechanisms' of government and community development initiatives'. Ker Kwaro Acholi imagines itself as a 'platform' that will 'increase opportunities for vulnerable people to strengthen their membership in civil society organisations that include and involve them in decision making', and will 'facilitate continual linkages and learning between communities, CBOs and various local government institutions'.[41]

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[40] Government of Uganda, "Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda," (Kampala: Government of Uganda, 2007), 38.
[41] Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Strategic Plan, 2009-2014,* (Gulu: Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2009), 10-11.

However, whilst Ker Kwaro has responded to government discourses on cultural institutions by shrouding the institution in cultural rhetoric, supporting Article 178 and aligning itself with the PRDP, Ker Kwaro has also responded to government discourses by pursuing a strategy to increase Ker Kwaro Acholi's technical capacity and expertise, and has presented this structure using distinctly governmental and political terms. The questions this provokes is whether Ker Kwaro has intentions, beyond mere administrative efficiency of the institution, to assume a governance position and shares Buganda's aspirations for a federalist state. There is little in Ker Kwaro's self-presentations that point in the direction of Ker Kwaro as a political governing body in Acholi, which renders the seeming contradiction within Ker Kwaro Acholi's public image, as both a non-political cultural institution, but with a government capability, puzzling.

Recent communication with Paramount Chief Acana and Prime Minister Oketta did little to help me understand the puzzling contradiction and to understand why they chose to present an advisory body of experts as a government structure, particularly when it was so important to be seen as a strictly non-political cultural institution in order to remain in the Governments favour, which was more important for weaker traditional institutions who have received houses from the Government, than for the Buganda Kingdom. Instead, Paramount Chief Acana and Prime Minister Oketta seemed to want to distance the creation of a government structure from regional tier, and instead insist in vague terms that these changes to Ker Kwaro Acholi were in response solely to the internal needs of Ker Kwaro.

In response to asking about the relationship between the creation of a government structure for Ker Kwaro Acholi and the Government's proposal to establish a regional tier of government, Acana responded that,

> the creation of a governance structure at Ker Kwaro Acholi was to effect the administration of the Paramount Chief; not in the real sense of a governance with its parliament, judiciary and staff. So we created the offices of PM and Ministers to facilitate Paramount Chief in administering the Ker…The coming in of the Regional tier was to create a formal working relationship between government and cultural institution.[42]

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[42] Email communication with D.O Acana, February 2012.

It seemed as if Acana was keen to make clear that Ker Kwaro's government structure should not be associated to governance, 'with its parliament', but rather simply to improve the administration of his role as Paramount Chief. Acana then dismisses acknowledges that regional tier was introduce a particular working relationship between government and cultural institutions such as Ker Kwaro, but does not elaborate on what this more formal relationship might look like, and seems to want to distance the creation of a 'governance structure at Ker Kwaro' from 'the coming in of regional tier'.

The Executive Council, whose functions in the concept paper were described as, the 'Cabinet of Ker kal Kwaro', to formulate and implement policies and programmes and deal with the 'external relations and diplomatic affairs' of Ker Kwaro, was also described by Paramount Chief Acana, in a casual way, as being 'all about administration' and constituted by 'people who can make things happen...who can make decisions, and...bring together the Minister and *Rwodi*.[43]

When I asked if Ker Kwaro Acholi's structure had been modelled on Buganda, Oketta replied that 'The Ker Kwaro Acholi organs... [are] for ease of administration and coordination of the functions of the various chiefdoms in their functions of preserving the culture and welfare of the Acholi Community' and are not modelled on Buganda but 'base[d] on our understanding of institution[al] requirements'.[44]

Oketta also framed his role and that of the ministers in technocratic terms, saying that their purpose is only to 'provide the technical backup which the chiefs require in order for them to function properly'. In addition to this image of a technically capable institution, Oketta claimed that Ker Kwaro is also at an equal footing and standing to Buganda because of these changes to Ker Kwaro.

Signs that the Paramount Chief and Prime Minster were strengthening the institution in preparation of more than internal administrative effectiveness and to be able to cooperate with local and central government, became visible when Paramount Chief Acana said that his 'vision to make Ker Kwaro mighty and able to perform its roles' was to get Ker Kwaro 'to a level, because at one point, definitely, we have to deal with

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[43] Interview with D.O. Acana, Birmingham, 20 June 2011.
[44] Email communication with K. Oketta, February 2012.

government on some issues that could be really, really, really controversial and we need people with brains to be there.'[45] The suggestion that Ker Kwaro Acholi's relationship with government may not always be easy or amicable is not communicated in Ker Kwaro's dominant images, and self-projections, but, as I will touch upon in chapter six, there is a disjuncture between Ker Kwaro's projections as a government structure and how the institution works in practice.

CONCLUSION

Since 2006 Ker Kwaro Acholi embarked on a process that involved drawing on its images as a traditional cultural institution to project a further image of Ker Kwaro as a government structure. In this chapter I have sought to illustrate that this phase of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival needs to be understood in the light of changes in Uganda's political landscape and in particular to government discourses on traditional authorities. More specifically I have argued that Ker Kwaro's pursuits to establish a government structure was a response to Article 178, proposals for a regional tier of government, and the opportunities these provisions could bring for Ker Kwaro Acholi. Although for the monarchists of the Buganda Kingdom, anything less than a federalist state was not deemed preferential, for Uganda's other Kingdoms and cultural institutions Article 178 and regional tier promised a status and role in the affairs of their areas they would otherwise struggle to attain given the weaker public support they receive in comparison to the Buganda Kingdom.

Ker Kwaro's adoption of overtly political language to describe a new structure of the institution that was 'solely for administration', as Paramount Chief Acana described it, seems puzzling and produces a contradiction for an institution that seeks to be seen and known as an explicitly cultural institution. However, this seeming contradiction is reproduced by Ker Kwaro Acholi in the public images it projects, which provokes the question as to whether there is a productive effect from the contradiction. In chapter six I will return to this question as I examine less visible discourses of Ker Kwaro and the disjuncture's between these and the dominant images Ker Kwaro has sought to project.

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[45] Ibid.

In the following chapter I turn to critique the third phase of Ker Kwaro Acholi's 'revival' and the production of its dominant image as an agent of sustainable development. Similarly to the previous two chapters I draw attention to both strategies and practices within Ker Kwaro that carve a particular image of the institution, whilst illustrating how they are situated and shaped by dominant discourses at local, national and international levels of analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

BECOMING AN AGENT OF DEVELOPMENT

Ker Kwaro's excellent list of core values...shows that the institution could possible become a very important and useful institution. It shows that it's not going to be anchored on the past, but that it's looking at its relevance in the future and the present contexts.[1]

Before 2005 Ker Kwaro Acholi was predominantly understood as a cohort of chiefs revived in order to address the issues of conflict and peace in northern Uganda through facilitating reconciliation rituals. Indeed advocates for the revival of Acholi traditional authorities lay great emphasis on reconciliation being the main reason for the empowerment of *Rwodi*. However, despite Ker Kwaro's involvement in facilitating reconciliation and cleansing ceremonies and advocating for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, it was a loosely organised institution and a relatively peripheral and little-noticed actor within northern Uganda.

There was a significant turn-around for Ker Kwaro Acholi, however, when it began to actively consolidate an image and project itself as the traditional cultural institution of Acholi, particularly when it began to receive attention from the state and development practitioners. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Ker Kwaro then further built upon its identity as a traditional authority, to re-imagine and project itself as a governmental institution, with a Prime Minister and cabinet of Ministers, through appropriating and resisting national discourses of traditional authorities. In this chapter, the final of part two, I will continue exploring the way Ker Kwaro's revival was shaped by the interplay of strategic practices and dominant discourses and focus on how Ker Kwaro became known as an agent of development; as a suitable partner for organisations seeking to implement and fund sustainable development in northern Uganda. Between 2005 and 2010 the attention Ker Kwaro received from NGOs and international development institutions resulted in the creation of a Ker Kwaro Acholi secretariat to undertake the day-to-day workings of the institutions, and facilitate partnerships with donors on a

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[1] Interview with J. Huber, Gulu, 21 April 2010.

variety of projects, from altering agricultural practices to addressing the issue of gender-based violence in Acholiland. As far as donors such as The World Bank, the United Nations and USAID were concerned, Ker Kwaro Acholi was becoming an important agent for the development of northern Uganda.

To explore this phase of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival, I first draw upon my initial encounter with Ker Kwaro in 2006 and return to the 2005 Strategic Plan to illustrate how Ker Kwaro sought to project a particular image of itself that once again built upon its image as a traditional cultural authority, in order to position itself as a vital actor for development in northern Uganda. I then turn to analyse the engagement between the World Bank's Northern Uganda Social Action Fund and Ker Kwaro Acholi, shedding light on a mutually productive relationship between the preconceived imaginings of traditional authorities held by the World Bank and images Ker Kwaro Acholi projected of itself. Having focused attention on the period around 2005 and 2006, in the final section of the chapter I discuss the setting up and subsequent bolstering of Ker Kwaro's secretariat in 2009 and the second Strategic Plan that the new secretariat of Ker Kwaro produced that year. The aim of the chapter is to examine the emergence of a dominant way of seeing and knowing Ker Kwaro as an agent of development and to show how it has been produced through Ker Kwaro's self-presentations and discourses within international development.

ENCOUNTERING KER KWARO ACHOLI

As I sat in Ker Kwaro's office building in Gulu, in September 2006, waiting to meet with one of the deputy Paramount Chiefs, I was handed Ker Kwaro's Strategic Plan 2005 by a young man, Solomon, sat behind a desk and computer. The formality of the building and business-like manner of Solomon had struck me on this first encounter with Ker Kwaro Acholi, as did the suited deputy Paramount Chief who kindly agreed to talk with me. With little prior knowledge of northern Uganda and even less of traditional authorities in Acholi or beyond, I was not sure what I expected to find at the residence and offices of the Acholi Paramount Chief. I am sure, however, that I was typical of most other novices

of chiefs in Africa, and expected to find a robed man occupying a grand and elaborate home made from traditional materials of mud and thatch.

In my meeting with the deputy Paramount Chief, where I was asking basic questions about the situation in northern Uganda, he was keen to emphasise the authority of Ker Kwaro Acholi as the traditional custodian of Acholi culture and traditional representative of the Acholi people, and was crucial to the peace process because of its facilitating role of the ritual *mato oput*. The Acholi, he said, wanted to forgive the LRA, including Joseph Kony, so that the Acholi could be 'one' again and any international intervention with a punitive approach would be going against Acholi culture. Mato oput, he insisted, was the ritual of reconciliation the Acholi people wanted and thus the only solution to the conflict in northern Uganda.[2] Although I was sceptical that a consensus of this view existed within Acholi in the emphatic way the deputy chiefs were insisting; particularly as this view relied on a gross generalisation of the Acholi, at the time I was unaware of alternative perspectives.

With this image of Ker Kwaro at the centre of facilitating traditional reconciliation rituals in Acholiland, I turned, later that day, to flick through the Strategic Plan that had been handed to me on my visit. Immediately I noticed that on the back cover was a colourful photo that continued to corroborated more closely with my preconceived ideas of African chiefs. Paramount Chief Acana was sitting in a large chair that looked like a throne, was wearing a regal robe and a grand hat, and met the onlookers gaze with a serious expression. As I glanced through the shiny booklet, the first half continued to ignite curiosity and feed a picture of Ker Kwaro Acholi as a centuries old institution that had been at the centre of Acholi political life until events of the last century had prevented it from fulfilling its traditional roles. The 'fifty traditional leaders of the Acholi people' seemed to be have all been restored, however, since 2000, and had formed a Council with elders, women and young people.

Continuing through the Plan, however, and my preconceived ideas of traditional authorities were once again challenged. Firstly, by the order and layout of the booklet, and secondly by the programmes Ker Kwaro seemed to be busily engaged in, such as fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS and 'gender mainstreaming' cultural activities. Both the

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[2] Interview with M. Otinga Otto Yai, Gulu, 18 September 2006.

form of the text and the programmes were what one might expect to read in an NGOs briefing mandate or policy document. But here it seemed there was a traditional institution of chiefs, rooted in Acholi culture and history, that was not only interested in building peace through traditional reconciliation and cleansing practices, but was also pursuing broader development objectives that were in line with issues at the top of the international development agenda. It was precisely Ker Kwaro Acholi's traditional cultural role, the Strategic Plan made clear, that rendered Ker Kwaro a 'vital supplement to address challenges of peace and development' in Acholiland.

The challenges identified, where Ker Kwaro saw its 'cultural roles' could help, were labour productivity, poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS prevention and gender equality. Clearly Ker Kwaro Acholi was presenting itself as wanting to be active in more than a peace building capacity, but it was not immediately evident what Ker Kwaro Acholi's 'cultural roles' were or how these were to address developmental issues, such as those identified. Further on, the Strategic Objectives proposed in the Plan, followed by a breakdown of activities, gave an indication of what exactly Ker Kwaro Acholi was claiming it could do, in its cultural capacity, to contribute to development in Acholiland. The six Strategic Objectives were as follows:

1. Consolidating peace and reconciliation amongst the people of Acholi.
2. Mobilizing the community on education, agricultural production and increasing household incomes.
3. Gender Mainstreaming of cultural activities.
4. Fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS at the impact level and reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS on the community.
5. Capacity building of the traditional institution in Acholi.
6. Documentation and communication of Acholi Cultures and Traditions.

This list affectively proposed that Ker Kwaro Acholi's 'cultural roles' were to mobilise people on particular issues, alter practices within 'cultural activities' that improved gender equality and practices more broadly in society related to the spread and impact of the HIV/AIDS virus, build the capacity of Ker Kwaro Acholi as well as be involved in the codification of culture and tradition. The underlying assumption, and thus the impression the list also gave was that Ker Kwaro Acholi held widespread legitimacy

throughout Acholiland, which would enable the institution to foster change within people's everyday practices.

The breakdown of activities proposed in the Plan further illustrated and reinforced an image of Ker Kwaro Acholi as an institution that could exercise influence over groups within Acholi, such as youth, clan leaders and farmer groups and thus bring about 'development'. Under the first strategic objective, for example, Ker Kwaro Acholi proposed to 'sensitise local leaders on how to dialogue', as well as 'sensitise youth on peace building and conflict resolution' and under the second strategic objective Ker Kwaro Acholi proposed to 'organise sensitisation meetings on land matters'.[3] Particularly related to youth, Ker Kwaro Acholi presented one of its roles as the 'integration of children and youth into the Acholi cultural practices and dignity';[4] suggesting Acholi young people had fallen 'outside' of Acholi cultural practices and with this lost their dignity. The 'mission' of Ker Kwaro Acholi to 'promote, develop and preserve the culture of Acholi' seemed associated, therefore, to restoring a lost morality in Acholiland, particularly amongst young people.

Although preserving Acholi culture and integrating young people into these practices was being presented as contributing to improved morality within Acholiland, in addition, Acholi cultural practices were claimed to have 'promoted economic development, good health, unity, education, and the general standard of living of the people' before the insurgency.[5] Over the past fifteen years, therefore, the 'decline in health standards, production levels, education and unity, and [a] rise in spread of diseases, deaths, conflicts, frustrations, etc' can be explained, the Plan suggests, by the 'steady decline in the cultural development of Acholi'.[6] The message seeming to be that cultural practices promote 'good things', which as a result of the recent conflict and its effect on culture, have been in decline.[7] Accompanying this claim was a description of Acholi culture as comprising of 'Acholi music, dance, drama, Acholi cuisines, Acholi dresses, Acholi language *Leb Lwo Kur*, and Acholi means of production'.[8] Thus, these

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[3] Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Strategic Plan: 2005-2007* (Gulu: Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2005), 13-14.
[4] Ibid. 12.
[5] Ibid. 2.
[6] Ibid. 3.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid. 2.

cultural practices were presented as the means through which Ker Kwaro Acholi would improve the plight of Acholi.

Although the above description of Acholi culture is very restrictive and bounded the Plan suggests elsewhere that Acholi culture, and thus identity, is in a process of fundamental change, and although the process of change may at times seem to be a project to restore and return to a 'true' Acholi identity that has been damaged over the years, the Plan also presents the process of change in Acholi culture and tradition as taking up 'new' values. Ker Kwaro provides a list of values the institution has recently been guided by, but that are 'besides the hereditary Acholi culture and traditions'.[9] The list read as follows:

- It upholds respect for human rights and dignity

- Promotes voluntarism and self help

- Doing much using little resources

- Working through grassroots and community based projects

- Cooperation with central and local governments

- Promote participation and empowerment; will power to advance together and reciprocity

- Transparency and accountability

- Equity and equality, equal opportunities, equal rights for all and equality between men and women

If presuming Ker Kwaro Acholi was seeking to present itself and the culture it sought to preserve in a favourable light to its readership, one might be surprised that Ker Kwaro Acholi was suggesting these principles were not part of Acholi culture or tradition. It is as if Ker Kwaro was speaking to the 'heart of darkness' discourse, which regards any values regarded as civilised as the preserve of the West, to be learnt by Africans if they are to experience progress and modernity. However, given the pride attached to Acholi culture and traditions elsewhere in the Plan, the purpose here is not to put down Acholi culture or render it backward; as a culture that lacks respect for people's dignity and is oppressive. Rather, this list is an explicit statement that Ker Kwaro Acholi aligns itself with other organisations who claim to hold similar principles. Describing the principles

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[9] Ibid., 12.

as 'besides' Acholi culture and traditions, allows Ker Kwaro to retain its 'traditional' cultural identity, whilst also making clear that it has signed up to a particular set of values common to discourses of international development.

In addition to this set of principles, the Plan also quotes a definition of culture developed by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which although is quite different from the description of Acholi culture quoted at the beginning of the Plan, states that this definition has been taken into 'full consideration' when developing Ker Kwaro Acholi's vision, mission and development objectives.[10] The definition described culture as,

> a whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions, habits and beliefs.[11]

Interestingly, although the Plan suggests Ker Kwaro Acholi has taken into consideration UNESCO's definition of culture, where emphasis is placed on the complexity of features that constitute culture, including, various value systems, a plurality of traditions, habits and beliefs, the Plan elsewhere remains tied to a more homogenous understanding of culture as Ker Kwaro envisions to promote the integration of the Acholi into one 'culture of Acholi' constituted by 'one identity'.[12] Despite, or perhaps through, the tension between conceptualisations of culture within the Strategic Plan, an image of Ker Kwaro Acholi as a progressive 'traditional' cultural institution is consolidated. By quoting UNESCO's definition of culture and listing a set of guiding principles that correspond to values associated with western liberal norms, as well as claiming to have taken these on board, presents Ker Kwaro Acholi as aware of concerns on the international development agenda and as desirous to be seen as a like-minded agent of development.

Since the 1980s, international development discourses more broadly have come to adopt a similar perspective on 'culture' as developed by UNESCO; that moves away from views that see culture as an expression of unchanging tradition and towards a

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[10] Ibid.

[11] UNESCO, "Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies," in *World Conference on Cultural Policies* (Mexico City: UNESCO, 1982), 1.

[12] Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Strategic Plan: 2005-2007* (Gulu: Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2005), 13.

perspective that casts culture as dynamic and reactive, as the site where individuals are socialised and values are formed and transmitted.[13] During the 1990s in particular, the shift towards empowering and harnessing civil society for sustainable development was coupled with a shift towards regarding 'culture' as a crucial consideration in the implementation of successful and sustainable development. The Commission for Africa in 2005 identified the 'inattention to culture in policy making of many donor countries' as part of the reason for 'the failure of so many development initiatives in Africa over the years',[14] whilst the World Bank has been advised to recognise that human incentives are of paramount importance in the productivity and sustainable development of Africa's public and private sectors, and 'human incentives cannot be dissociated from a people's history and culture'.[15]

Although not quoted in Ker Kwaro Acholi's Strategic Plan, UNESCO's definition of culture continues on to reveal a normative underpinning. Having defined culture as more than the arts, constituted by modes of life, value system, traditions and habits, culture was further defined, at The World Conference on Cultural Policies held in Mexico in 1982, as what

> gives man the ability to reflect upon himself. It is culture that makes us specifically human, rational beings, endowed with a critical judgement and a sense of moral commitment. It is through culture that we discern values and make choices. It is through culture that man expresses himself, becomes aware of himself, recognizes his incompleteness, questions his own achievements, seeks untiringly for new meanings and creates works through which he transcends his limitations.

Thus, with such a definition that imbues culture with a normative purpose of producing reflective, rational beings, endowed with a critical judgement, it is unsurprising that UNESCO links 'culture so irrevocably to development'.[16] The positive correlation between culture and development is also a consistent theme of the Strategic Plan, summarised by Paramount Chief Acana in the Foreword as he declares that Ker Kwaro

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[13] The Commission for Africa, "Our Common Interest," (Commission for Africa, 2005), Economic Commission for Africa, "Relevance of African Traditional Institutions of Governance," (Addis Ababa: Economic Commission for Africa, 2007).

[14] The Commission for Africa, "Our Common Interest" (Commission for Africa, 2005), 122.

[15] M. Dia, *Africa's Management in the 1990s and Beyond: Reconciling Indigenous and Transplanted Institutions* (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1996), 53.

[16] UNESCO, "Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies," in *World Conference on Cultural Policies* (Mexico City: UNESCO, 1982), 1.

Acholi draws its mandate from the 1995 Constitution that 'promotes culture for development' and provides the provision for Ker Kwaro 'to promote, preserve and document the culture of Acholi as a way of promoting holistic development of the Acholi people'.[17]

As there have been warnings that any development programme that ignores culture is destined to fail,[18] the images that Ker Kwaro projects of being a traditional cultural institution with authority not only in ritual ceremonies, but also within the site of norm and value production, have the potential to be very appealing to donors, such as the World Bank, who, in 2005, began talks with Ker Kwaro about partnering on an aspect of the Social Action Fund they had been struggling to implement in northern Uganda since 2002.

NORTHERN UGANDA SOCIAL ACTION FUND

In September 2005, Ker Kwaro Acholi not only launched the Strategic Plan, but also met with members of the World Bank's Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF). This workshop resulted in a series of recommendations for the traditional leaders of Ker Kwaro Acholi to be involved in the 'booster initiative', organised by NUSAF's Management Unit, for enhancing the Community Reconciliation and Conflict Management (CRCM) component of the Social Action Fund. In the meantime two traditional leaders' meetings were held at St. Monica's Girls Tailoring School and the ACORD Resource Centre in Gulu where one of the points discussed and agreed upon was Ker Kwaro Acholi becoming 'a facilitating and implementing entity for CRCM sub-projects'.[19] For Ker Kwaro Acholi to undertake this role it was seen that its technical capacity would have to be developed.

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[17] Paramount Chief Acana, Foreword in Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Strategic Plan: 2005-2007* (Gulu: Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2005), 1.
[18] The Commission for Africa, "Our Common Interest" (Commission for Africa, 2005) T. Kelsall, "Going with the Grain in African Development?," *Development Policy Review* 29, no. S1 (2011).
[19] D.O. Acana, "Report on Consultation Meeting for Traditional Leaders of Acholi and NUSAF, 15 November 2005," (Gulu: Gulu District Archives, 2005).

Two months on and another meeting was held between Ker Kwaro Acholi and NUSAF at Sunset Hotel, one of the new leisure sites resulting from the snowballing of development organisations needing places to hold meetings and conferences and to accommodate the high turnover of development workers flooding through Gulu on short term contracts. At this meeting on the 15th November, the following objectives were drafted; to follow up on the recommendations of the meetings of traditional leaders and the CRCM workshop, develop a CRCM implementation framework for Acholi traditional leaders and identify priorities and plan core CRCM activities for implementation by Acholi traditional leaders.[20] What led to this point of engagement between NUSAF and Ker Kwaro Acholi is the focus of the discussion in the next section, which draws attention to the way traditional authorities and Ker Kwaro Acholi specifically are conceptualised by the Bank and how these preconceived ideas shaped the engagement. I will then lead into a brief critique of the meeting at Sunset Hotel.

IMAGINING TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES

In 2002 the World Bank presented the Ugandan Government with a Project Appraisal Document proposing a US$100 million credit to establish a Northern Uganda Social Action Fund. The project implementation date was forecast for five years, although entered a second phase in 2009 despite controversy over the implementation and accountability of phase one.[21] The objective of NUSAF has been to 'assist Government in its efforts to tackle poverty and bring about development through participatory community efforts that utilise community value systems.'[22] Although the design of NUSAF was guided in part by the Ugandan Government's development policies, such as the goals of the Country Assistance Strategy and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, it was also designed based on lessons learned from two precursory World Bank funded projects, the Northern Uganda Reconstruction Project (NURP-I) and the Community

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[20] Ibid.

[21] R.M. Kavuma, "NUSAF: Developing Northern Uganda," *Guardian*, 11 January 2010. The second phase of NUSAF fell under the Government's, largely donor funded, Peace Recovery and Development Plan, launched in 2007.

[22] World Bank, "Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Credit in the Amount of Sdr 80.1 Million (Us$ 100 Million Equivalent) to the Republic of Uganda for a Northern Uganda Social Action Fund," (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2002), 30.

Action Program (CAP).[23] The former was a large, top-down, supply driven program that focused on infrastructural development such as building roads and schools, but was heavily criticised for poor community involvement.[24] CAP on the other hand was 'a demand-driven local infrastructure program, rooted in local community preferences and characterised by a strong participatory thrust'.[25] In Robinson's critique of the design and initial implementation of NUSAF, he comments that

> While NURP-I achieved many of its physical objectives, many investments were not sustainable, and its contribution to institutional development was negligible. By comparison, the CAP is generally acknowledged to have been a great success in terms of community assets and building local capacity.[26]

NUSAF was designed, therefore, to be a move away from the top-down approach characteristic of NURP-I, with a key policy change involving the 'placing [of] money and its management in the hands of the communities'. Like CAP, NUSAF was to build local capacity through, for example, fostering 'community action, leadership development and resource mobilisation' as well as mobilising 'vulnerable groups'. Those labelled and targetted as vulnerable groups included 'unemployed youths', 'female headed households' and 'orphans', with the goal of bringing them into, and have them 'join', the 'mainstream development process'.[27] As the target groups participated in the development process NUSAF proposed to 'uphold the principles of community-driven development...by directly funding their priorities'.[28] The World Bank was also driven by their own priority to reach communities and empower them in order that they 'demand quality services from the sub-county, district and national levels'.[29]

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[23] CAP was originally being part of NURP but evolved into a separate program funded by the Netherlands government. See M. Robinson, "Community-Driven Development in Conflict and Postconflict Conditions:The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund Project," in *Aid That Works: Successful Development in Fragile States*, ed. J. Manor (Washington D.C.: World Bank Publications, 2007), 254.

[24] World Bank, "Northern Uganda Reconstruction Project: Performance Audit Report," (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2000).

[25] M. Robinson, "Community-Driven Development in Conflict and Postconflict Conditions:The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund Project," in *Aid That Works: Successful Development in Fragile States*, ed. J. Manor (Washington D.C.: World Bank Publications, 2007), 255.

[26] Ibid.

[27] World Bank, "Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Credit in the Amount of Sdr 80.1 Million (Us$ 100 Million Equivalent) to the Republic of Uganda for a Northern Uganda Social Action Fund," (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2002), 30.

[28] Ibid., 10.

[29] Ibid.

As CAP had demonstrated, an approach that was demand-driven, where project management is situated at the community level, can have favourable results for the effective implementation of large development projects. For example, 'significant contributions of materials and unskilled labour for community investments' occurred, local institutions were strengthened and were able to manage the maintenance of the local infrastructural projects and finally, local institutional capacity at local government levels were bolstered.[30] Despite these 'successes', however, CAP had faced challenges and the design of NUSAF took these into account.[31] NUSAF was thus learning from problems such as delays when mobilising the community to identify appropriate income generation ventures and the poor technical quality of small-scale infrastructure investments. The key limitation, however, found during CAP and which NUSAF wanted to avoid was the unintended creation of a parallel administrative structure, which did not integrate effectively into the local government machinery and thus caused tensions between governing bodies.[32]

Bearing in mind lessons learned from CAP and NURP-I, NUSAF consisted of four component projects. These were the Community Development Initiatives (CDI) intended 'to construct and rehabilitate small-scale socio-economic infrastructure'; Vulnerable Groups Support Sub-Projects; Community Reconciliation and Conflict Management; and Institutional Development which included the staffing of a small autonomous NUSAF Management Unit. Although much might be said for each of these components,[33] for the purposes of the thesis and my study of Ker Kwaro Acholi I will focus on the third component, CRCM, and the Bank's conceptualisation of 'social capital'.

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[30] M. Robinson, "Community-Driven Development in Conflict and Postconflict Conditions:The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund Project," in *Aid That Works: Successful Development in Fragile States*, ed. J. Manor (Washington D.C.: World Bank Publications, 2007), 260.

[31] Ibid., 261.

[32] SNV, "Decentralisation and Empowerment: From Rehabilitiation to Growth in West Nile Region, Uganda. Report of an External Evaluation Mission," (Arua/Kampala1999). quoted in M. Robinson, "Community-Driven Development in Conflict and Postconflict Conditions:The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund Project," in *Aid That Works: Successful Development in Fragile States*, ed. J. Manor (Washington D.C.: World Bank Publications, 2007), 261.

[33] M. Robinson, "Community-Driven Development in Conflict and Postconflict Conditions:The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund Project," in *Aid That Works: Successful Development in Fragile States*, ed. J. Manor (Washington D.C.: World Bank Publications, 2007).

A World Bank assessment of Social Fund effectiveness, published in 2002, reported that increasing 'community cohesion and the capacity for future community-based initiatives', termed "bonding" social capital, as well as 'improvements in the community's links with outside', known as "binding" social capital, are being enhanced through the opportunities World Bank Social Funds offer for collective action as communities work together on subprojects. However, as only five percent of sixty-six Social Fund projects 'mentioned increasing social capital and community cohesion among their objectives...the Bank's strategy for social protection proposes further increasing the emphasis on social capital in social fund projects'.[34] A few years before, a paper presented by the liberal theorist Francis Fukuyama to the IMF conference on Second Generation Reforms, had also advocated that 'the stock of social capital' ought to be increased where possible, as 'social capital is important to the efficient functioning of modern economies, and is the *sine qua non* of stable liberal democracy'. Interestingly, Fukuyama emphasises the point that although trust and networks are associated to social capital they are epiphenomenal; 'arising out of a result of social capital but not constituting social capital itself'. Comparing this statement with the brief reference above to the World Banks' review on Social Funds and their impact within communities, it seems the review is also referring to the products of 'social capital', such as 'capacity for future community-based initiatives', collective action and 'links with outside', rather than making clear what actually brings about these 'goods'. Although social capital is often defined in terms of its manifestations, it is also commonly defined as the norms that produce active connections amongst people. The World Bank defines social capital as 'the norms and networks that enable collective action. It encompasses institutions, relationships and customs that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interaction'.[35]

The Bank saw a particular role for 'social capital' in northern Uganda, believing that the 'restoration and transformation' of social capital would 'address poverty' and improve

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[34] World Bank, "Social Funds: Assessing Effectiveness," (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2002), 41.
[35] World Bank, "Overview: Social Capital," World Bank, http://go.worldbank.org/C0QTRW4QF0.

security by providing 'powerful entry points' and developing 'community safety nets'.[36] One of the key objectives of CRCM was to 'support social capital formation and create community cohesion' and proposed to do this by 'supporting community reconciliation and traditional leadership'.[37] Traditional leaders in northern Uganda, the Community Needs Assessment (CNA) concluded, played a 'critical role in instilling values', providing community cohesion and, especially in Acholi, formed 'a strong building block for the peace building (efforts)'.[38]

The role of traditional leaders in NUSAF's projects was in part informed by previous social fund experiences. As we can read from the Bank's report in 2002 on Social Funds in Malawi, Zambia, Nicaragua and Jamaica, local leaders, which includes village chiefs, headmen, engineers, mayors and religious leaders, 'typically acted as intermediaries for getting social fund sub-projects to communities'.[39] The process in Malawi, the reports inform us, often involves village leaders seeking the backing of chiefs, who then call the community together to inform them of a plan to apply for help to, for example, rehabilitate a school, which the community is required by the chief to participate in through the provision of resources or labour. On procuring the subproject any adults refusing to contribute incurred a monetary or livestock fine from the chiefs.[40] The report concluded that local leaders or "prime movers" as they were also referred to, through mechanisms of mobilising communities and 'enforcing community contributions', played an important role in the social funds.[41]

The CNA, conducted to 'bring out the views, perceptions and aspirations of the communities in the North', also pointed to examples from northern Uganda where 'traditional' or 'informal' institutions had been 'instrumental in mobilising communities to promote participation for physical implementation of community activities'.[42] In

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[36] World Bank, "Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Credit in the Amount of Sdr 80.1 Million (Us$ 100 Million Equivalent) to the Republic of Uganda for a Northern Uganda Social Action Fund," (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2002), 4.
[37] Ibid., 80-81.
[38] Ibid., 75.
[39] World Bank, "Social Funds: Assessing Effectiveness," (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2002), 138.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., 139.
[42] World Bank, Community Needs Assessment UGANDA: Northern Uganda Social Action Fund, Annex 12, in World Bank, "Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Credit in the Amount of

Acholi, for example, the CNA reported that communities had contributed materials for school construction and in nearby Teso materials and labour. No concrete example was given for neighbouring Lango, save for a vague mention that Langi 'communities have a history of local efforts to address local problems'. The concluding statement, again lacking in specificity, stated that 'in general all communities have indicated commitment and willingness to contribute to the development of their areas', a commitment and willingness the report saw was 'tied to traditional practices and values, which still exist and can be brought out with good facilitation'.[43] With such a strong association between traditional practices, norms and values and their potential to lead to community willingness and contributions to development, coupled with conceptualisations of traditional or 'informal' institutions playing a 'critical role in instilling values', it is unsurprising the CNA report expressed concern for such institutions 'getting extinct', particularly in Acholi.

SUNSET HOTEL

Although NUSAF had been active in northern Uganda since 2003, including the CRCM component, there was little engagement with Ker Kwaro Acholi until September 2005. As a result of the CRCM component experiencing a slow-rate of sub-project generation from inception compared to other components,[44] the Northern Uganda Management Unit designed a booster initiative to enhance CRCM delivery. Two key objectives of the meeting at Sunset Hotel were therefore to discuss and 'develop a CRCM implementation framework for Acholi Traditional Leaders' and 'identify priorities and plan core CRCM activities for implementations by Acholi Traditional Leaders'. The booster initiative was said by Ker Kwaro Acholi to have been 'specially geared towards traditional and religious institutions because of their special roles and responsibilities in the

Sdr 80.1 Million (Us$ 100 Million Equivalent) to the Republic of Uganda for a Northern Uganda Social Action Fund," (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2002), 76.

[43] Ibid., 75-76. There seems to be a conflation of 'participation' and 'willingness', particularly when practices such as fines were in place to ensure individuals cooperated, as in the Malawi case. In the Acholi case there seemed to be an assumption that a desire for 'development' translated as a mandate for the particular development agenda pursued by the World Bank.

[44] D.O. Acana, "Report on Consultation Meeting for Traditional Leaders of Acholi and NUSAF, 15 November 2005," (Gulu: Gulu District Archives, 2005).

community'.[45] Indeed Ker Kwaro Acholi were informed at the meeting that NUSAF and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were of the opinion that if the 'ancient Acholi traditions, values and norms' were 'restored' this 'could help to accelerate a speedy end of the conflict and achievement of sustainable peace and development in Northern Uganda.'[46] Ker Kwaro Acholi were also informed that NUSAF had appointed a consultancy firm to work 'in collaboration with NUSAF, CSOs, CBOs and individuals in the sub-region to critically investigate the position of Ker Kwaro Acholi in respect of tradition, norms and skills available to resolve conflict or calamities such as wars, disease, famine and the roles of Witch Doctors and the issues of inter clan cattle rustling'.[47]

In addition, the purpose of the consultancy investigation was to find ways of enhancing 'unity and cooperation between and among the local and government leaderships' and spearheading communities to find solutions that will 'bind cultural practices and literatures on Acholi cultures and traditions in conflict resolution.' In other words, the research was not only to make sure NUSAF avoided the problems experienced on previous World Bank projects, as discussed earlier, such as creating parallel administrative structures that did not integrate effectively into the government structure, but also to ensure that NUSAF and CRCM effectively engaged and mobilised the community by unlocking 'positive' social capital within Acholi cultures and traditions. Preconceived ideas about traditional or informal institutions in other parts of Africa and northern Uganda seemed to have shaped NUSAF's approach towards Ker Kwaro Acholi, placing expectations on Ker Kwaro Acholi to act as an 'entry point' for NUSAF to access communities. Or perhaps more specifically, the expectation was for Ker Kwaro Acholi to act as an entry point for NUSAF to access the sphere of culture and within this sphere, the specific norms of social capital, in order that culture and social capital be harnessed for the sustainability of CRCM objectives.

From the minutes reporting on the meeting at Sunset Hotel there seemed to be an enthusiasm from Ker Kwaro Acholi to work with CRCM as an Implementing Agency, assigned to identify potential facilitators within communities who could generate

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

subprojects for NUSAF to fund, as well as identifying innovative ways traditional approaches could be used for sustainable peace and development in northern Uganda. In the immediate weeks after the meeting it was expected that there would be a process of budgeting for the seven 'core activities' identified, compiling of office reports, submission of a request for funding from NUMU and further meetings for planning, all to be undertaken by Ker Kwaro Acholi. The Paramount Chief was specifically responsible for 'monitoring and supervision', writing 'progress and accountability reports' as well as reviewing and planning meetings, alongside the District and NUSAF.

In order to manage these tasks and the technical issues of the CRCM projects under their responsibility, Ker Kwaro Acholi proposed that its 'technical capacity should be developed'.[48] In the Paramount Chief's opening address at the meeting he said there was 'urgent' need to establish an 'institution committee' to oversee the implementation of NUSAF funds and report progress and accountability to NUSAF offices. In addition it was agreed by Ker Kwaro Acholi that financial support from NUSAF should come directly to the office of Paramount Chief, rather than through the district, on the grounds that this would be the best way to make good use of NUSAF funding.[49] One of the ways Ker Kwaro Acholi proposed to make use of NUSAF funding was through the 'purchase of office furniture and equipment', as a 'prioritised core activity' to take place over a six month period. The listed items needed included a generator, public address system, fridge, safe, cabinets, carpets, fans, stationary, office desks and a lawn mower. Fourteen tents, two hundred chairs, ten tables and thirty six office chairs, were also requested, which seem more appropriate items for ceremonial events than to furnish a handful of offices for administrative tasks. Perhaps this is an illustration that Ker Kwaro Acholi was well aware that its ability to perform the tasks CRCM requires such as mobilising communities, relied upon the public and spectacular events Ker Kwaro Acholi could host.

Reviewing the progress of NUSAF in 2006, *Findings* reported in relation to the CRCM component, that 'the organisational integrity of the traditional institutions, especially in the Acholi sub-region is beginning to be strengthened, enabling them to start influencing local government structures to deliver services to the needy and to promote

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

positive synergies between the state, civil society and the poor'.[50] However, it was also commented that there were concerns over the sustainability of some traditional authorities, followed by suggestions that traditional authorities should develop 'Community Foundations' that can then 'tap into various sources for funds'.[51] The Patiot Development Services, a consultancy firm with its head office in Gulu, had also wrote to Ker Kwaro Acholi in 2005 with similar advice, stating that after the coronation of the Paramount Chief

> there is need now to focus on the sustainability of the Ker Kwaro Acholi institution. It is expected that the Ker Kwaro Acholi will have a set of Cabinet handling different issues/departments. It follows therefore that the formation of the Ker Kwaro Acholi foundation as an NGO will enhance easy way of sourcing for funds for its sustainability.[52]

The expectation of the Patiot Development Services is most likely explained by the trend amongst other traditional cultural institutions in Uganda to set up, following the 'restoration' of a traditional leader, not only a cabinet of ministers, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also some sort of foundation or NGO that can source for funds. Although in the Strategic Plan 2005, Ker Kwaro proposed that one of its 'major strategies' was to start a 'Trust Fund...to cater for other social and economic development[s] of the people', this initiative has not materialised. But what did begin to emerge, following Ker Kwaro's engagements with NUSAF, and the increased attention from other international donors, was a Ker Kwaro Acholi secretariat. This was also proposed in the Strategic Plan; envisioned as a necessary component to build the capacity of the cultural institution.

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[50] C. Laker and N. Suleiman, "The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund: Community Reconciliation and Conflict Management Empower Communities in a Post-Conflict Setting," (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2006). Findings reports on work carried out by the World Bank and its member governments in the African Region. At the publication of the article Laker was the Executive Director of NUSAF and Namara a Social Protection Specialist, World Bank Country Office, Uganda.

[51] Ibid.

[52] J.C. Okodi, "Letter from J. Charles Okodi, Programme Manager, Patiot Development Services, to Rwot Francis Oryang Lagony, External Relation, Ker Kwaro Acholi, 22 February 2005," (Gulu: Gulu District Archives, Cultural Village, Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2005).

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By 2006, Paramount Chief Acana and Prime Minister Oketta had recruited a handful of administrative support staff, on a voluntary basis, but this was to significantly change as donors began to partner with Ker Kwaro and fund salaried staff at the secretariat for the duration of the partnerships. In 2009, Ker Kwaro sent a circular to the District RDC's, CAOs, Chairmen of District Councils, NGOs and 'all stakeholders' of Ker Kwaro, to inform them of new staffing positions and that Ker Kwaro had 'beefed up its secretariat'.[53] Reminding the readers in the letter that the purpose of creating the offices of Prime Minister and Ministers was 'to separate the *Lawi Rwodi* [Paramount Chief] and the *Rwodi* from the day to day operation of Ker Kwaro as an institution and leave them to perform their traditional roles more effectively', the letter then presented the strengthening of the secretariat as facilitating the separation of traditional leaders from the day to day operations of Ker Kwaro further. The purpose of the circular was not only to inform, but to ask for necessary cooperation and assistance from the Government and NGO recipients.

Over the following year Ker Kwaro Acholi's offices in Gulu were further furnished with a photocopier, laptops, printers and filing cabinets adorned with USAID stickers, with each piece of equipment and furnishing engraved carefully with the initials of one donor or another. The Danish Embassy and World Vision funded items such as video and recording equipment; Irish Aid provided a pick-up truck and Catholic Relief Services two motorbikes. All the staff of the secretariat have a background in development or the "NGO world", as Mark Avola, Ker Kwaro's first Programme Manager, put it to me. Avola had worked with World Vision for ten years and before that with Save the Children. With the secretariat growing and donors showing increasing interest, Prime Minister Oketta felt the Secretariat had become "fully fledged...with technical capacity", with himself as the "technical head of Ker Kwaro Acholi".[54]

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[53] K. Oketta, "Letter from Kenneth Oketta, Prime Minister of Ker Kwaro Acholi to the Resident District Commissioners, the Chairman District Councils, the Chief Administrative Secretaries, the Non Government Organisations, All Stakeholders of KKA, of Gulu, Amuru, Kitgum and Pader Districts, 9 April " (Gulu: Gulu District Archives, 2009).
[54] Interview with K. Oketta, Gulu, 19 June 2010.

One of the first projects the new salaried secretariat was assigned, led by Prime Minister Oketta, and funded by USAID's Northern Uganda Transition Initiative (NUTI), was the writing of Ker Kwaro Acholi's second Strategic Plan. NUTI sponsored a retreat for writing the Plan, subsequent meetings for its fine tuning and 'to make it come out properly' and its launch that, according to Oketta, 'brought so many donors, which projected our image and visibility and... made us look not just like a footloose organisation these people used to think of, but we looked like a firm organisation with capacity'.[55] Indeed the impression the second Strategic Plan gave smoothed over any images of Ker Kwaro as 'footloose' and instead projected images of success, organisation, efficiency, cohesion within Ker Kwaro and effective working relationships with various stakeholders.

The second Strategic Plan began by identifying Ker Kwaro Acholi's activities and achievements, which included maintaining community cohesion, facilitating reunification and reintegration of ex-combatants, the resolution of conflicts within the Acholi community and supporting resettlement of IDPs. It also pointed out that 'the institution plays a key role in [the] mobilisation of the community on development programmes such as education, infrastructures, HIV/AIDS, PRDP and other government programmes; and empowering women' whilst also 're-establishing good relationships with the neighbouring tribes'. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the Strategic Plan also embeds Ker Kwaro Acholi within the national development framework and by presenting itself as a platform of opportunities for vulnerable people to become active members of civil society, and a facilitator of linkages and learning between communities, and local government, Ker Kwaro is thus presented as a potential generator of social capital; as a key link between the poor and civil society, as well as civil society and government, and therefore a potential key organisation for consolidating state authority.

Whilst predominantly embedding the Plan within the national development framework and pledging to contribute to the consolidation of local governance in northern Uganda, it is also made clear that Ker Kwaro Acholi intends to continue working in partnership with international donors and consolidating their work and presence in northern

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[55] Ibid.

Uganda. The language of the Strategic Plan, similarly to the first, is common to development discourses, although there is an improved 'fluency' in the use of the language, which improves Ker Kwaro Acholi's legibility for potential donors. The Plan also explicitly expresses Ker Kwaro Acholi's wish to 'strengthen partnerships, corporation, and cooperation spirit with…donors and financial institutions',[56] and acknowledges NUTI's input in the editing stage of the Plan.[57]

With thirteen proposed areas of work, including peace building, promoting community empowerment, increasing household incomes, fighting HIV/AIDS, strengthening the capacity of traditional courts, and gender mainstreaming both within society and in the cultural institution, the Strategic Plan continues to present Ker Kwaro Acholi as an institution with an ambitious vision, despite remaining under-resourced. The continued assumption underpinning the Paramount Chief's call for support from 'various stakeholders in Uganda and beyond',[58] is that with external support Ker Kwaro Acholi's inherent and latent capacity for mobilising, representing and strengthening Acholi people will be unlocked and realised.

Accompanying the request for external assistance the Strategic Plan also highlights that for Ker Kwaro Acholi's 'functionality' it 'continues to restructure and organise itself into a working institution by putting in place other structures and policy organs such as the Council of Chiefs, Executives of the Council of Chiefs, Cabinet Ministers, [and] Secretariat'.[59] The functions of the policy making organs and the secretariat, it states, are to deliberate 'on issues' and to 'deliver the services for the Institutions' of the various *Rwodi*, whereas the Secretariat is to take care of 'day to day administrative issues'.[60] Compared to the previous Strategic Plan, Ker Kwaro Acholi by 2009 sounds as if it has become highly organised with experts and an administrative staff recruited to facilitate the implementation of the services Ker Kwaro Acholi has identified and proposes to deliver. Attention is also directed to a list of Ker Kwaro's 'core values',

- Upholds Respect for Human Rights and Dignity

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[56] *Ker Kwaro Acholi, Strategic Plan, 2009-2014*, (Gulu: Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2009), 5.
[57] Prime Minister Oketta Kenneth, Acknowledgment, in Ibid., iv.
[58] Paramount Chief Acana David, Foreword, in Ibid., v.
[59] Ibid., 2.
[60] Ibid., 5.

- Transparency and Accountability

- Equality and Equity

- Commitment and Dedication

- Open to Learning

- Innovative and Inclusive

These, Ker Kwaro Acholi regard, 'as the principle vehicle to achieving its objectives,' with particular emphasis on upholding 'the principle of accountability and adherence to policies and norms as it carries out its responsibility'.[61]

The image of a more organised and efficient institution is reaffirmed through the pages of budgeting information that constitutes almost half of the entire booklet. Once again the impression given is that Ker Kwaro Acholi has an ambitious vision for the 2009-2014 period with an estimated total budget at a surprisingly high total of UGX twenty billion, equivalent to an estimated US$ eight million. This is ten times the budget quoted in the Strategic Plan 2005, which although was for a three, rather than five year period, is still a dramatic increase. The two most highly budgeted activities are to 'facilitate the functioning of the council of chiefs, executives, cabinets and secretariat', and the 'construction of [a] Cultural centre at each chiefdom',[62] estimated for the 2010/2011 financial year at UGX 806 million and UGX 1.3 billion consecutively. Comparing this amount to the figure quoted to 'support farmer groups with farm inputs', estimated for 2010/2011 at UGX 375 million, it is evident that the empowerment of Ker Kwaro Acholi, through the additional organs and the chiefdoms of the *Rwodi*, is of paramount importance. In the Acknowledgement written by Oketta, 'special recognition' was given to the *Rwodi*, 'because it was the inputs of various ideas from the *Rwodi*, which were filtered to produce this document'.[63]

The overall impression of Ker Kwaro Acholi in the Strategic Plan is that the institution, with its traditional, governmental and developmental branches, has the capacity to address key concerns within post-war northern Uganda; is aligned with government authorities as well as non-government organisations; is well placed to contribute to

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[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., 12-13.
[63] Prime Minister Oketta Kenneth, Acknowledgment, in Ibid., iv.

development because of its capacity to reach and empower poor and vulnerable people through being a platform; can establish and consolidate networks between community organisations and local government; and create links between traditional and formal justice systems. In the eyes of NGOs and donors, who are seeking local counterparts through which to work, under pressure also to align development initiatives to national development frameworks, wishing to strengthen civil society and support traditional practices that do not undermine western norms, the Strategic Plan paints a very attractive picture of Ker Kwaro Acholi.

However, although the overall and predominant impression the Strategic Plan presents of Ker Kwaro Acholi is one of hope for its potential, I also found that there are moments in the Strategic Plan when a different image of Ker Kwaro Acholi can be glimmered, usually when there is a lack of clarity or when inconsistencies arise. It is as if alternative discourses are pushing against the dominant discourses the authors wish to produce through the Plan, and subverting the neat images Ker Kwaro Acholi has sought to project. As I explore in the next chapter these moments and areas of tension that are only subtly evident within the Strategic Plan will be shown as manifestations of deeper rooted realities of Ker Kwaro Acholi, often hidden from the dominant images projected of the cultural institution.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have looked at ways images of Ker Kwaro Acholi, as a traditional cultural institution, have been the foundation for casting Ker Kwaro Acholi as a potential agent of development, despite 'tradition' and 'culture' previously being associated to anti-modernisation and blocks to 'development'. Written for a donor audience, the Strategic Plans presented Ker Kwaro Acholi as a 'genuine' traditional cultural institution of Acholi through an historical narrative that dated Ker Kwaro Acholi to the fifteenth century. The Plan then projected images of Ker Kwaro Acholi both in the present and of an empowered Ker Kwaro Acholi in the future. These images aligned Ker Kwaro Acholi with international development discourse in a number of ways, positioning Ker Kwaro Acholi as a potentially important actor not only in the

peace process, but more specifically in the development process in northern Uganda. Firstly, and perhaps most strikingly, the presentational design of the Strategic Plan echoed the way information is often organised within public literature of development organisations, in terms of stating the goals, vision, mission statement and strategic objectives of the institution. The language adopted also made use of familiar terms or buzzwords commonly used in development-speak. For example 'gender mainstreaming' and 'sensitisation workshops' hold no specific meaning outside of development discourses, whereas within development discourses they function as signifiers to particular policies and practices. Thirdly, claiming to be guided by principles akin to those associated with western liberal norms, as well as taking into consideration UNESCO's definition of culture, presented Ker Kwaro Acholi as a like-minded institution, who although foundationally traditional is at the same time sufficiently modern. The Strategic Plans presented Ker Kwaro Acholi as both legible and desirable to donors through the interplay of both the familiar and alien, for example, amidst the familiar language and form of the text were littered signifiers, such as infrequent use of Acholi Luo, a photograph of Paramount Chief Acana in royal attire and the list of Payira's *Rwodi* lineage, implying Ker Kwaro's link to local 'tradition' and culture. The most explicit and literal symbol was Ker Kwaro Acholi's watermarked emblem repeated across each page.

I focused on Ker Kwaro Acholi's encounter with the World Bank's NUSAF, particularly the CRCM component, to illustrate an example where images produced by Ker Kwaro Acholi were met with preconceived ideas of traditional authorities held within an international institution engaged in development. When NUSAF approached Ker Kwaro Acholi it is important to remember that there was little evidence Ker Kwaro Acholi could mobilise communities, influence their behaviour and identify the most appropriate people to become CRCM facilitators for subprojects. However, based on generalisations of 'traditional' or 'informal' institutions in Africa, NUSAF assumed Ker Kwaro Acholi had this potential, which was only perpetuated through the impressions Ker Kwaro Acholi gave through, for example, its Strategic Plan.

The second Strategic Plan further built upon Ker Kwaro's emerging reputation and image as an effective agent of development, and claimed the institution was already an effective facilitator of ex-combatants in their community, key in mobilising communities on development programmes such as education, and had empowered women through

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reviving traditional agricultural practices. The establishment and bolstering of a Ker Kwaro secretariat, made possible through partnerships with donors, also increased Ker Kwaro's capacity to more effectively carve its public image as a traditional cultural authority desirous to work together with local, national and international development organisations for the benefit of Acholi.

In the final part of the thesis, to follow this chapter, I offer a reflective examination of a more complex picture of Ker Kwaro that is not contained in any of the three dominant images and ways of knowing Ker Kwaro that have been explored in part two, and through which Ker Kwaro has negotiated its revival. I focus on the less visible discourses that constitute Ker Kwaro and how they interact with the dominant discourses I have discussed thus far, primarily with reference to the dominant images within these discourses. Whilst wanting to avoid suggesting that what Ker Kwaro Acholi is or has come to be, is somehow 'unreal' or just existing in people's imaginations, which is of course not the case, I have sought up to now to emphasise the centrality of the role of imagery in making possible and shaping Ker Kwaro Acholi's 'revival' and as the final part of the thesis will illustrate, there is a disjuncture between how Ker Kwaro is predominately known and imagined to be and how Ker Kwaro has emerged and functions in practice.

PART THREE

CHAPTER SIX

ALTERNATIVE IMAGES AND SUBJUGATED KNOWLEDGE

In part two, chapter three, of the thesis I analysed how Ker Kwaro Acholi's image as a traditional cultural authority was enabled and consolidated through discourses of cultural breakdown and conflict resolution in northern Uganda. In chapter four, I argued that Ker Kwaro Acholi's image as a cultural institution with governance capabilities was produced in response to proposed political changes and government discourses on traditional authorities. And finally, in chapter five I examined how Ker Kwaro Acholi's image as key to sustainable development was produced at a time when donors were looking to partner with local actors in order to secure peace and improve the sustainability of development in northern Uganda.

I have, thus far, shown that Ker Kwaro Acholi has been produced through multiple discourses, where dominant images of being a traditional authority, a government-cultural institution and an agent of development have become significant images or discourses in an 'economy of discourses'[64] that have enabled Ker Kwaro to exercise varying measures of power and authority. Examining Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival only with reference to dominant discourses and images that have constituted Ker Kwaro gives an important insight into what has shaped the institution and how, but this only provides a partial story. It is, therefore, the aim of this final part of the thesis to explore a more complex picture of Ker Kwaro by examining the less visible discourses and every day practices that also constitute the institution, but that are often obscured by the dominant images with which Ker Kwaro has engaged and through which it has negotiated its 'revival'. I draw extensively on the six months fieldwork I undertook in northern Uganda in 2010.

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[64] M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. C. Gordon (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980), 93.

The chapter is divided into five sections. In the first section I draw on an interview with Rosalba Oywa, who has been closely involved in Ker Kwaro Acholi's 'revival' and today continues to engage with the institution through giving talks on issues intended to educate and build the capacity of *Rwodi*. I have chosen to draw extensively on Oywa's interview because she provides a narrative and picture of Ker Kwaro and its revival that sits in contrast to the dominant narrative produced by the institution that part two of the thesis has explored. This first section thus serves on one level as an introduction to the less visible discourses on Ker Kwaro that I subsequently discuss.

The chapter is then written as a series of thematic critical reflections, organised into four sections; the *Rwodi* of Ker Kwaro Acholi, the Paramount Chief and Payira politics, the practices of the secretariat and finally, Ker Kwaro Acholi as a political institution.

ROSALBA OYWA

I wanted to interview Rosalba Oywa, a successful Acholi woman in her mid 50s, because she worked at ACORD in the late 1990s and until 2003. At that time she had been an advocate of reviving traditional authority in Acholi, and still is, despite being author of research that pointed out there was widespread disagreements in Acholiland over who the *real* traditional leaders were during the research undertaken in the late 1990s[65], as discussed in chapter three. Since 2004 Oywa has been working for Coalition for Peace in Africa, an NGO she started up with colleagues after taking a course on conflict resolution in the UK that was sponsored and facilitated by the British INGO, Responding to Conflict. During my fieldwork in 2010 I saw Oywa giving talks at meetings organised by Ker Kwaro Acholi, one of which was a workshop in Kitgum on training *Rwodi* how to be traditional leaders where Oywa gave a presentation on leadership. The following month she gave a presentation at a workshop for 'the training of cultural leaders' on 'women and the traditional justice system' based on the United Nations Security Council

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[65] R. Oywa and C. Dolan, "Key Findings from Research on the Role of Traditional and Modern Leadership Structures," in *Background Papers Presented to the Conference on 'Peace Research and the Reconciliation Agenda', Gulu, Northern Uganda, September 1999*, ed. ACORD, *Cope Working Papers* (London: ACORD, 2000), 2000.

Resolutions 1325 and 1820. She evidently had close dealings with Ker Kwaro Acholi, and claimed to have been in part responsible for Paramount Chief Acana's sponsored trip to the UK in 2002. I was interested in hearing what she thought about Ker Kwaro today, how she would retell the story of its 'revival' and what she thought the future held for the institution. Oywa was happy to meet with me and during the ninety minute interview I was struck by the energy and emotion behind some of her opinions and the frustrations she voiced about Ker Kwaro Acholi, which, as I was already becoming aware by this point in my fieldwork, functioned behind a kind of facade or as I have talked about in this study, behind a series of images. For Oywa, Ker Kwaro Acholi was 'an amorphous' entity that needed to come under critical scrutiny.[66]

Thinking back over ten years ago Oywa remembered, almost with nostalgia, how she had been influenced and inspired by the traditional authority revivals in Somaliland, South Africa and Kenya, where traditional authorities were involved in creating new positions of power and recalled that she had been close to Dennis Pain during his research and how he encouraged her to become more interested in particular aspects of Acholi culture. The idea, she then emphasised, was that the revival of traditional authorities in the late 1990s was of 'the whole traditional structure', so they could play a critical role in resolving disputes at a critical time. Pain's research, she said, confirmed that the revival of traditional authorities should go ahead and funding should be sought to facilitate it.

I asked what she thought about Ker Kwaro Acholi developing into an institution that has a Prime Minster, cabinet of ministers, a secretariat, project officers and that is engaged in development programmes. I also asked if she had ever thought this would be part of Ker Kwaro's revival. Oywa responded with agitation saying,

> We never imaged that. We knew very well that the kingship in the south [of Uganda] had things like the prime minister, ministers and what, we knew that was the right one [for]...the kingship in Buganda, in Toro, in Bunyoro, but we never imagined that that would be our structure, because we were never existing in the formal kingdoms, but we were existing in the form of chiefdoms, and the simplest structure within the chiefdom was a chief where he would have a council of elders coming from different villages within his chiefdoms and then within that there would be the women...where the *Rwot*

[66] Interview with R. Oywa, Gulu, 20 April 2010.

Okoro would be functioning and *Rwot Okoro* would be having a leader, then we would have a youth wing where the *Rwodi Kweri* are very important to organise agricultural production, where the women, the *Rwot Okoro*, has to do the weeding, the *Rwodi kweri* were to organise the cultivation and all that, and then we and the youth wing would be organising culture activities like dances, so that was what we were saying, and if that was revived then we could see harmony within a clan and then if there was any problem then the chiefs would deal with it very quickly, so that the subjects are peaceful, so that was what we were saying at that time.

I asked if she thought it was problematic that Ker Kwaro seemed to function like an NGO, she replied:

I just find it very confusing and I don't even know how to deal with it, because right now the chiefs are now failing to play that role of providing clear leadership, all the time they talk of Ker kal Kwaro which is amorphous, to me it is so amorphous that it will not help anything...

Land will be the real test...now you find when there are land disputes it is the Paramount Chief that should appoint who should be dealing with that, [but] then they go all over the place and attach to that so much financial support because when they go out, you have to give them, you have to facilitate them, which is right, but then we have to pay those allowances for that work and in a way the chiefs have become so materialistic, in fact... you know I had a different intention for their coming and normally when I talk to them I talk with a lot of emotion, and I keep on telling them this is not something I ever imagined would occur. I did not know this process would bring us to a level where the chiefs become so money minded, they are really money minded and when they organise their own meetings you have got to give them allowances, apart from giving them accommodation, feeding them, they just want allowances and I almost got pissed off especially when NUTI was now helping them to re-bury the dead. Culturally that is our responsibility, you don't have an external agency taking you to identify those bones... so the whole thing has been commercialised and I think we have lost, we are regularly losing our cultural values which is something I never imagined.

When talking about the houses being built for the *Rwodi* Oywa lamented that around the *Rwodi*

there are people who cannot do anything and the chief is [also] not doing anything. So I think at the end of the day I don't know what will become of these, we were very clear at that time, it was about peace making, first reconciliation...and all this but right now it has become something else. It has become a process to enrich people, to make people different, to make them powerful financially and that is making them run away from the real responsibilities and their own subjects don't like that. So you find especially young people wanting to go overseas.

Oywa thought that the future of Ker Kwaro Acholi was under threat because of the enrichment of *Rwodi* and their lack of interest in 'real responsibilities'. Being aware that references to Ker Kwaro Acholi are sometimes a reference to the Rwodi or the 'traditionial' structure, I asked Oywa what she meant by Ker Kwaro Acholi; was she referring to the *Rwodi* or did she conceptualise Ker Kwaro Acholi more broadly, to include the secretariat and the ministers? Oywa replied,

> I think it [Ker Kwaro] means the organisation, although for them when we talk about Ker Kwaro, they always want us to believe we are talking about chiefdoms...[but] I know there is a real distinction between the two, Ker Kwaro is a mobile structure which came from nowhere, it is more of borrowing things from Buganda, from the kingdoms and trying to make them here and it is another way of centralising people as if we want to become a kingdom, which will never happen.

> Then you talk to individual chiefs, they always say "we are all equal", that is the irony, they believe they are all equal and nobody should be imposing anything on them, that is their belief. So [Ker Kwaro] itself is going to create this arrangement,...[but] it will create a lot of tensions among the chiefs and what is more, tribal rivalry from within the clans, because we are already seeing a situation where people are saying, "no, that is not the chief, we want this one to be our chief" and these two ones in Lamogi have changes chiefs.

> And I think it is starting from that background work, it [Ker Kwaro] has become a very useful business, where you gain social status, economically you have backup and now with the homes...The chief did not do it [build their new house] because of his capacity over others; that's simply because they are being aided to do that. And the experts have their own subjects, so I think everything is turning upside down.

Oywa recalls that during the revival 'ACORD were really dynamic' and that today 'they should be turning up with another programme...to see that actually if what we envisioned at that time, at the clan level' has taken place. I asked about ACORD's involvement in the revival of traditional authorities since 2000 and Oywa said that since she left in 2003 she did not know what is happening. Oywa saw a potential problem in that the 'dreamers' who were at ACORD at that time have now all left and now those that work there are 'young people who don't even know what happened' and 'don't even have the slightest idea apart from reading in the documents [about] how this process' of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival occurred. Oywa thought that by 2006 all the staff she had known at ACORD had probably left, which she thought had probably changed the organisation.

'Have we overdone something by creating it?' Oywa reflected. 'All of a sudden' she continued, 'we are reverting to a kingship...like in Buganda'. I asked if installing a Paramount Chief had contributed to creating, what she saw as, the problem of being a kingship like Buganda, at which Oywa replied that

> it wouldn't have been a problem if they looked at him as a spokesperson...He [the Paramount Chief] should go on our behalf and say that this is what the Acholi have agreed on. That is the role we wanted, so it wouldn't be his thinking, it would come from the people, people would have agreed on something and his role is just to say it out, and that is the role of a spokesperson.

Oywa seemed to suggest that Paramount Chief Acana was not acting in this way, but was rather getting involved in controlling chiefs, which she believed could result in people rejecting *Rwot* Acana II as the Paramount Chief. Oywa also observed that amongst her clan members, the Payira, people were changing their minds and wanting *Rwot* Acana II to stay in the post of Paramount Chief, rather than change after five years. She said she was asking people, 'Why is he still there? Why is there no debate to have another Paramount Chief elected?' At which she said that she had 'heard from other chiefs that there is a lot of political influence meddling in those affairs;' mentioning both the RDC of Gulu, Walter Ochora, and the RDC of Kitgum, who 'both happened to be Payira', Oywa added. Oywa saw that such key people wanting Acana to be in the Paramount Chief post, and not another person, was 'very dangerous', that put Acana 'at risk' and was 'just drawing hatred from all other clans'. What will Payira become, she rhetorically asked, 'in a situation where fifty three clans are combined' against us?

> Yes, we are the dominant ethnic group, tribe, within Acholi clan because we are the majority, it is true, but we have not misused that number to subdue other people... I respect Acana as my cultural chief, yes he is the Paramount Chief, but I know that term should be temporary.

Asking Oywa at the end of the interview if there was anything else she wanted to add, anything that might be useful, she said that research needed to be undertaken 'to understand the impact of what has happened, the amorphous thing that has happened'. Happened with Ker Kwaro? I asked, 'Yes, with the Ker Kwaro itself, what does it mean?'

RWODI INEQUALITIES

KAKA, KAL AND LOBONG

As I introduced in chapter two, Acholi are related to one another through lineages known as *kaka*, which are usually of agnatic descent, but are sometimes a maternal line. At least since the mid-nineteenth century a number of *kaka* lineages have been recognised amongst Acholi as royal lineages acting as overseers and rulers of subordinate *kaka* who pay allegiance through tribute to the royal lineage head in return for protection from the threats of famine and warfare.[67] Spatially these associations were constituted by villages (*gang*) that were either *kal*, consisting of households of the royal lineages, or *lobong*, consisting of households of the commoner lineages who paid allegiance and were subordinate to the royal lineage. Particular areas of surrounding land for agriculture and hunting was governed by the head of the royal lineage, and this land together with the *kal* and *lobong* villages formed an area that is most commonly referred to using the Anglo term 'chiefdom', as there was no specific Acholi name for this political group.[68] The royal lineage head, who governed the chiefdom, was known as *Rwot* and the heads of the other *kal* and *lobong* villages within the chiefdom were known most commonly as *ladit kaka* (elder of the lineage; plural *lodito kaka*).[69]

Although the initial vision in the late 1990s was to revive the whole of the traditional structure in Acholi, as Oywa recalled in our interview, the narrative that has been

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[67] Research undertaken by the History of Uganda project in the later 1960s and early 1970s, presented in Atkinson's book R.R. Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda before 1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994)., dates the early formation of Acholi chiefdoms to a period between 1675 and 1725, which I discuss in chapter two.

[68] F.K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960), 8-9. Girling referred to this political grouping as a 'domain', preferring it over state, kingdom or principality after considering their high number in relation to the scale of the society.

[69] In addition to this generic term Atkinson has added that *Ladit pa Rwot* (elder of the *Rwodi*) was commonly used in Western Acholi and *Lakwena* (messenger) was reported in many Eastern Acholi texts, R.R. Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda before 1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 86. Girling, however, used *Rwot* and *Ladit* interchangeably to refer to lineage heads of commoner villages, in F.K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960), 8-9.

pursued by Ker Kwaro during its emergence has focused primarily on reviving *Rwodi*, the royal lineage heads, on the basis that they used to play this role in pre-colonial Acholiland. However, the list of 'Chiefs' in the 2009 Strategic Plan shows that they are constituted by both royal and commoner lineage heads; by *Rwodi* and *ludito kaka*. The Strategic Plan indicates that at least seven 'Chiefs' are heads of lineages associated, and subordinate to, a royal lineage.[70]

In the list, the royal lineage is bracketed next to the commoner lineage, suggesting that, contrary to the impression that all the 'Chiefs' of Ker Kwaro are equal, these distinctions remain important, at least to the leadership of Ker Kwaro Acholi. Paramount Chief Acana agreed that he also had in mind to create a clear distinction between *Rwodi* of a royal lineage and *Rwodi* of a commoner lineage.[71] From Paramount Chief Acana's perspective in 2011, the demand coming from 'sub-clans', seeking recognition from Ker Kwaro Acholi, was causing tension; people were 'forgetting that this is a royal institution'.[72] The problem in part, seems to stem from when commoner lineage heads were seeking to be revived and recognised by Ker Kwaro Acholi, and Paramount Chief Acana, as he recalled, did not want to cause conflict by rejecting those coming forward claiming to be *Rwodi*. Paramount Chief Acana told me,

> we allowed them to come out because of the situation that we were in...we said that "if you want to end the conflict then we don't want to create more conflict within ourselves", so if someone is coming up and saying "look I am also a *Rwot*, I want to be on board, or on this rescue mission", fine let's go with it. That is how we accepted them.

Over more recent years Paramount Chief Acana has become frustrated with commoner lineage heads, or 'sub-clan heads' as he called them, seeking to claim an equal status with *Rwodi*. In a discussion about the increasing number of '*Rwodi*' in Ker Kwaro, Paramount Chief Acana said,

> I keep on telling them, "no we are not equal". I look at the twenty eight [*Rwodi*] and they can say "we are equal" but then I look at the sub ones and

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[70] The chiefs are listed as follows, with the royal lineage in brackets, following the commoner lineage of the chief: Ojuka Dison of Pajimo (Pagen), Omal Alfred of Madi Kiloc (Padibe), Joseph Oywak Ywakamoi of Koyo (Pajule), Samuel Anywar of Pagol (Pajule), Denoch Oweka Ajao of Paibwore (Pajule), Celestino Opobo of Ngekidi (Pajule), Edward Omal of Ogole (Pajule).
[71] Interview with D.O. Acana, Birmingham, 20 June 2011.
[72] Ibid.

yes let them be there...[but] me being *Rwot* of Payira I do not see under any circumstances a sub-clan chief is going to be my chairman, sitting up there and coordinating the meeting that I'm in, because I am the *Rwot* of Payira...so that is how it has to be always you know, so this is creating a lot of discomfort with the institution. People don't want to talk about it openly.[73]

Where Ker Kwaro Acholi draws the line with incorporating lineage heads into Ker Kwaro Acholi is unclear. In the current context of relative peace in Acholiland, where people are resettling according to village and lineage groupings, there is growing demand from lineage heads to be recognised and incorporated into the Council of Chiefs. Recognising them all would push the number of chiefs in Ker Kwaro into the hundreds.

Another potential points of tension may be that, despite the dominant image, a number of royal lineage heads are not recognised by Ker Kwaro Acholi. In the case of the Bwobo lineage, thought to be one of the earliest royal lineages in Acholi, dating back to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century,[74] although it was recognised in 2005, was not recognised and listed in the 2009 Strategic Plan. I was told on a number of occasions that it is the Paramount Chief who ultimately decides on which *Rwodi* can become part of Ker Kwaro, although he would seek the guidance and advise of other *Rwodi* and elders around him. As the following two sections continue to illustrate, the image of Ker Kwaro as constituted by a homogenous group of chiefs or *Rwodi*, who were revived and recognized by Ker Kwaro through an unproblematic process, is challenged by less visible discourses.

EVIDENT COMPLEXITIES

Incorporated into the dominant image of Ker Kwaro Acholi as a traditional institutional authority is the presentation of the 'chiefs' or *Rwodi* as a homogenous group of equally placed traditional authorities who form the Council of Chiefs. However, such dominant images and understandings of *Rwodi* in Ker Kwaro Acholi flatten out and obscure current power relations between the various 'traditional' leaders in Ker Kwaro and in

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[73] Ibid.

[74] R.R. Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda before 1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 86.

Acholiland more generally. A comparison of the two Strategic Plans shows there was an increase in the number of 'chiefs' of Ker Kwaro Acholi between 2005 and 2009 from fifty to fifty four. No explanation or additional information is given about how or why the number of 'chiefs' increases, and at first glance seems to be a small increase due to a few more 'chiefs' identified or coming forward to be recognised by Ker Kwaro Acholi. However, a more labour intensive study of the Strategic Plans and interviews with twenty one *Rwodi* of Ker Kwaro Acholi in 2010, revealed a more complex picture, which is effectively hidden in dominant self-presentations of Ker Kwaro Acholi.

It became clear that what seemed to be a small increase in the number of *Rwodi* at Ker Kwaro Acholi was not this at all. Rather, despite the number of *Rwodi* in Ker Kwaro only seeming to increase by four, I noted that in 2009 the Strategic Plan listed fifteen new 'chiefdoms' and twelve new 'chiefs.' Breaking this down further it amounted to eleven new 'chiefdoms' with new chiefs;[75] three new 'chiefdoms' related in a more complicated way to three chiefs, two of which were already recognised as members of Ker Kwaro[76]; and eight chiefs, along with their chiefdoms from the 2005 Strategic Plan, not listed in 2009 at all.[77]

It is also interesting to note that Ker Kwaro adopts the anglicised terminology of Chiefs and Chiefdoms in the second Strategic Plan to describe traditional authorities and their areas of jurisdiction, unlike the first plan, where the terms *Rwodi* and kaka were used. This may have been to increase Ker Kwaro's legibility to those unfamiliar with

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[75] Baptist Latim of Pawel, Ojuka Dison of Pajimo, Omal Alfred of Madi Kiloc, Joseph Oywak Ywakamoi of Koyo, Samuel Anywar of Pagol, Orik Luromoi of Kal, Thomas Ocen Lakidi of Taa, George Owiny of Painata, Denoch Oweka Ajao of Paibwore, Celestino Opobo of Ngekidi and Edward Omal of Ogole.

[76] One of these complications involved the inclusion of Lwo pa Omot as a 'chiefdom' (or kaka) in 2009 and the appointment of Faustino Owor Kiwel as the 'Chief'; although having previously been stated as *Rwot* of Adilang in 2005. Filling the newly created gap, *Rwot* Linus Odwar became *Rwot* of Adilang, having previously been listed as *Rwot* of Akwee in 2005. In 2009, a new chief, Richard Lamal, was appointed over Akwee.

[77] The eight chiefs listed in the 2005 Plan but not in 2009 were: Okello Vinancio of Bwobo, Owiny Angelo of Lapono, Lakoo of Omiya Pachwa, Logella Ario of Kal Puruma, Ocen Marino of Pukor, Okello Ludii Valerano of Pader, Ayere Justin of Paluo and Ongiya Oroko Lwiji also of Paluo.

Acholiland, but it also has the effect of further flattening out the diversity present amongst traditional authorities in Ker Kwaro.[78]

Two other differences noted between the lists in the Strategic Plans, was that Jackson Okongo and Poppy Paul Arop were listed next to Paluga and Labongo, respectively, in 2005, but next to Palagoya kal and Pagen in 2009. It seems that in the 2005 Plan some of the *Rwodi* were listed next to sub-counties, as in these cases, despite appearing under the heading of 'Clan or Chiefdom'. In 2009, it seems that for these two cases the sub-county was replaced by the chiefdoms that most likely share a similar area, as sub-counties were more or less superimposed over chiefdoms in the colonial period.[79]

John Odoki Obol is also listed next to a different chiefdom in 2009, but whereas the previous two seemed to be alterations from sub-counties to chiefdoms, in John Odoki Obol's case he is reallocated from Pamot to Padibe, from the commoner lineage of Pamot to the royal lineage of Padibe.[80]

Although these preliminary observations do not provide explanations for the fluctuations amongst chiefs and the areas they were said to hold authority by Ker Kwaro, they do flag up the underlying complexities constituting what is presented in dominant discourses of Ker Kwaro Acholi as a straight forward revival of *Rwodi* who are a fixed and known group, and who have undisputed authority throughout Acholiland.

Besides the discrepancies evident between the lists of chiefs in Ker Kwaro, other complexities also shaped the process of reviving and installing traditional leaders in Acholi, which should come as no surprise considering historical accounts of how lineage heads have been appointed in the past. Ker Kwaro Acholi's narrative of *Rwodi* revivals,

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[78] Where I refer to '*Rwodi*' in this chapter, I do so because this is how they referred to themselves. I am not therefore, given the contestations between royal and commoner lineage heads and disputes over the 'real' traditional lineage heads, using the term in a normative capacity.

[79] Alternatively, in Jackson Okongo's case, Paluga (or Paloga) is also the name of a chiefdom that formed in the eighteenth century and Palagoya could be a contemporary modification of the name Paluga.

[80] It is thought that in the eighteenth century Pamot was the strongest commoner lineage within the Padibe chiefdom, see R.R. Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda before 1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 86. Also, given the contentious past between Payira and Padibe it would be interesting to follow up on this change that goes almost unnoticed in dominant discourses of Ker Kwaro Acholi.

in contrast, suggest that no such complications exist and that reviving *Rwodi* has been a straight forward affair. The revival and anointing of Arop Paul, *Rwot* of Pagen, is one story that illustrates the sort of complexities surrounding traditional authority revival in Acholiland.

When it comes to appointing a new *Rwot* it is thought ideal that this position is succeeded by the first son of the *Rwot* and his wife (*daker*) who he married as part of his anointing ceremony. However, if the eldest son of the *Rwot* and daker is unsuitable, for example, shows poor leadership qualities, then other male family members or even those in the wider clan, would be considered. The anointing of Arop Paul as *Rwot* of Pagen is one such contemporary example. [81] The *Rwot* before him, Ocen Valentino died in a motor accident but his son did not inherit the post because he was deaf. *Rwot* Arop Paul was the great nephew of Ocen Valentino and through a family discussion was asked to succeed. In the case of Joseph Oyenga the former *Rwot* of Palabek; he had returned from the bush with the LRA in 2000 and was reinstated as *Rwot* through ACORD funding in 2002. However, a brother had taken *Rwot* Oyenga's wife as his own whilst *Rwot* Oyenga had been away from home with the LRA. In 2005 *Rwot* Oyenga murdered his brother when he was drunk and was subsequently arrested. The current *Rwot* of Palabek, Kinyera Vincent, brother of Joseph Oyenga, told me that this was when the elders sat down and decided that he should become *Rwot*. This decision was based on two things, firstly, that even though Oyenga has now returned to Palabek, the community has rejected him because as a *Rwot* it is thought he is not supposed to have blood on his hands, and secondly, Kinyera Vincent had been the secretary to his brother when he was *Rwot* and had shown desirable qualities for leadership. *Rwot* Kinyera Vincent awaits his installment and is currently seeking to raise the funds he estimates at UGX 1 million.[82]

The discrepancies and complexities I have identified, which arouse the need for further analysis in this area, challenges a framing of rwotship often re-produced by Ker Kwaro, as a natural state, removed from the choice of the individual to claim, accept or reject the post. As a section later in this section of the chapter continues to confirm, the

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[81] Interview with R.P.P. Arop, Pagen, Kitgum, 17 July 2010.
[82] Interview with R.K. Vincent, Kitgum, 30 April 2010.

meaning and notion of *Rwot* is under increasing contestation in the current post-conflict context in Acholiland.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND IDENTIFYING *RWODI*

The involvement of local politicians for mobilising support for the revival of *Rwodi* mo has been largely edited out of Ker Kwaro Acholi's official account of the institutions 'revival'. As I discussed in chapter two the Acholi Parliamentary Group and particular politicians such as M.P Owiny Dollo, LCV of Kitgum Nahaman Ojwe, and RDC of Gulu Peter Odok, were enthusiastic about a 'revival' of *Rwodi* mo, and for *Rwot* Acana II to be recognised as the senior *Rwot* of Acholi.[83] In chapter three, however, where I critiqued the emerging identity of Ker Kwaro Acholi as a traditional authority in Acholiland, there was little trace and acknowledgment of government involvement in the process.

Interviews with *Rwodi* of Ker Kwaro Acholi revealed a different picture where two influential politicians in Acholiland, Mr John Bosco Oryem and Lt. Santo Okot Lapolo, were repeatedly mentioned. Between 2002 and 2006 Mr Oryem was the District Chairman of the Local Council (LCV) in Kitgum and Lt. Lapolo was the Resident District Commissioner in Kitgum.[84] According to one *Rwot* from Kitgum district, LCV Oryem was involved in installing people claiming Rwotship despite their fathers not necessarily being *Rwodi*.[85] One instance recounted to me by *Rwot* Dison of Pajimo was the creation of *Rwot* Lugwar, who appointed himself and created a clan in the 1990s,[86] and was later recognised as a *Rwot* because of political involvement. *Rwot* Dison recounted that Lugwar had been a parish, claimed 'clan status' and 'put a *Rwot* in place'. 'The politicians recruited many,' *Rwot* Dison recalled, 'if your place was a parish then it might be made

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[83] D. Pain, "'The Bending of Spears': Producing Consensus for Peace and Development in Northern Uganda," (London: International Alert, in partnership with Kacoke Madit, 1997), 17-18.

[84] Lapolo was moved to Pader as RDC in June 2006 and another RDC reshuffle moved Lt. Santo Lapolo back as RDC Kitgum, where he has since been accused of corruption and influencing presidential, parliamentary and LCV elections. D. Olaka, "Kitgum Councillors Want New Rdc Transferred," *Uganda Radio Network*, 2 March 2011.

[85] Interview with R.J. Obita, Kitgum, 30 April 2010.

[86] Interview with R.O. Dison, Kitgum, 17 June 2010.

into a clan...but according to history there was no Lugwar and no *Rwot*'. According to *Rwot* Dison, the community have not accepted the self-appointed *Rwot* Lugwor, even if Ker Kwaro Acholi have acknowledged him, and is currently also acting as treasurer to *Rwot* Dison.[87]

LCV Oryem was accused by *Rwot* Arop of using intimidation, especially in Pader, because he wanted chiefs installed who were in support of him.[88] *Rwot* Arop described LCV Oryem as one of the ones who was spearheading the search for the royal families, and that it 'involved politics'. Although he thought that in Kitgum 'they had tried to do it better', he was sceptical about how the process had been conducted in Pader. Particularly because in Pader, *Rwot* Arop said, you can 'find that in a Parish there are two cultural leaders, which is impossible...they have done something wrong there...some clans don't know how to go about this cultural leadership and the rest of it, some don't know who the traditional leaders are and some people are putting themselves forward because of the benefits that *Rwodi* are getting'.

Rwot George Lugai, one of the deputies to Paramount Chief Acana II, and chairman of *Rwodi* in Pader district, and *Rwot* Celestino Opobo of Ngekidi also in Pader, confirm that indeed LCV Oryem had been influential in the process of identifying and installing *Rwodi*, particularly *Rwot* Opobo said, with regards to 'cutting the numbers.' *Rwot* Lugai recalled that some chiefs were left out in the initial revival and, problematically, are coming out now, one by one. Part of the problem for *Rwot* Lugai is that 'originally' there were only twenty eight *Rwodi* in 2000 and at 'first kept quiet but now they are seeing the houses and are wanting to be chief'.[89]

Rwot Celestino mentioned that the 'district officials wanted their *Rwodi* moo to be empowered', not only it seems to potentially gain political power but because there had been an announcement on the radio that the *Rwodi* were being promised new houses

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[87] It is thought that Lugwar was incorporated as a lobong lineage into Pajimo kal in the eighteenth century. R.R. Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda before 1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 192.
[88] Interview with R.P.P. Arop, Pagen, Kitgum, 17 July 2010.
[89] Interview with R.G. Lugai, Pader, 27 April 2010.

and to be paid UGX 4 million per month.[90] The involvement of politicians has also been affecting, according to *Rwot* Obita, the installing ceremonies of some of the 'genuine chiefs'. Whilst other *Rwodi* who have conducted their installing ceremonies are still awaiting money that they feel is owed to them to cover the costs of their instalments.[91] *Rwot* Arop, as well as *Rwot* Obita, wanted to reassure me in our interviews, however, that 'here in Kitgum we are all the real *Rwodi* with no problems', 'we don't have problems, we don't have any chiefs now whose father was not a chief...those who were installed by the politicians have been removed, [although] some few are still causing problems, particularly like those in Lamogi.'[92] In 2010 the Rwotship of Lamogi was under fierce debate and *Rwot* Martin Otto Yai had been ousted from his deputy Paramount Chief position. From *Rwot* Otto Yai's perspective MP's had been getting involved in the selection of Lamogi chiefs and siding with his uncle who is now vying to be *Rwot*, despite, as *Rwot* Otto Yai told me, his uncle having been the organising chairman of *Rwot* Otto Yai's anointing ceremony in 2000. 'How do politicians benefit?', I asked, *Rwot* Otto Yai responded, 'they know when I'm not around they will get a lot of votes, they are after votes...for me I am neutral, he [the uncle] is their agent, my uncle is moving together with the politicians, advocating for FDC'. Probing further I asked if this was a common problem. 'Yes' *Rwot* Otto Yai said, 'I didn't do anything, they are using politics on culture, but it cannot happen in Acholi because it's the blood'. This statement refers to a previous remark *Rwot* Otto Yai made earlier in the interview, that 'there could be no selection of cultural chiefs because it's about blood'.[93]

In contrast to the critical views held by *Rwodi* east of the river Aswa, three *Rwodi* from the west, from Amuru and Gulu districts, recalled that the involvement of local politicians was not direct, but was in the form of 'making official' the records that ACORD collected on the *Rwodi*; a process which according to *Rwot* Lawot of

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[90] Interview with R.C. Opobo, Pader, 6 May 2010. Although the *Rwodi* have been receiving the materials to build new brick houses from the Government, the stipend of UGX 5 million per month is only for the traditional and cultural heads, and not for all the revived traditional leaders under the head.

[91] Interview with R.J. Obita, Kitgum, 30 April 2010.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Interview with R.M.O. Yai, Gulu, 11 June 2010.

Bwobomanam did not change anything.[94] The involvement of politicians such as Col. Walter Bosco LCV Gulu and LCV Oryem was, in contrast, regarded in a positive light, as a response to 'central government wanting to unite people together', as *Rwot* Akileo of Parabongo put it, or as *Rwot* Lagony of Koch said, they wanted the revival of *Rwodi* because they saw 'a missing link' and a lack of moral authority in Acholiland.[95]

Even though the numbers of *Rwodi* in Ker Kwaro Acholi have fluctuated due to local complexities and political involvement, some *Rwodi* such as *Rwot* Jeremiah Muttu of Patiko insisted that those who are *Rwodi* are known by everyone in Acholi and that the ones that are in Ker Kwaro Acholi are the ones from the 'big chiefdoms'. However, he also commented that 'originally' there were no more than thirty *Rwodi* from the 'big chiefdoms' in Acholi and so if the number of *Rwodi* in Ker Kwaro Acholi is to change then it should go down.[96] It seems that whilst *Rwot* Muttu tried to maintain the integrity of the Council of *Rwodi*, as a council for *Rwodi* understood as royal lineage heads, he also acknowledged and was concerned about the inherent contradiction that the Council of *Rwodi* was in fact also constituted by non-royal lineage heads, who by being regarded as *Rwodi* hoped to gain equal status to those who hailed from royal families.

According to one of Ker Kwaro Acholi's project officers, Humphrey Ojok, the revival of Ker Kwaro Acholi was sabotaged by government as a way to ensure Ker Kwaro Acholi was not too strong, because if the revival had been done in the right way, for example, as an independent process with no government interference and with the 'correct' *Rwodi* being installed, then 'Ker Kwaro would have been more powerful.' He noted that the involvement of government officials weakened things by provoking people's suspicions about motivations behind the revivals. *Rwot* Acana II, Ojok told me, avoids the issue of disputes about correct *Rwodi* because 'it brings up the issue about how Ker Kwaro isn't a traditional institution', but 'if the *Rwodi* come together then you can hear people saying "you are not a chief."' Ojok then poignantly stated, 'you can get *Rwodi* together to talk about gender based violence but not themselves'. They do not want to talk about themselves, Ojok, said, 'because of donor money', implying that funds from

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[94] Interview with R.M. Lawot, Gulu, 9 June 2010.

[95] Interview with R.O. Akileo, Gulu, 8 June 2010, Interview with R.F. Lagony, Kampala, 23 June 2010.

[96] Interview with R.J. Muttu, Gulu, 7 June 2010.

donors would be at risk if donors became aware of Ker Kwaro Acholi's disputable claims of being a traditional authority.

RDC Lapolo recalled too that there had been problems with two people fighting over the Pajule Rwotship, which he thought remained unresolved.[97] And RDC Ochora remembered that Pagak had also had some problems, where the person who was anointed died after three days in suspicious circumstances. Ochora recalled that this was when he realised 'this cultural thing can be very serious'.[98]

LOCAL RECOGNITION

Ker Kwaro Acholi's recognition as the traditional cultural institution is underpinned by an idea of the chiefs being a legitmate council of *Rwodi*. The legitimacy of *Rwodi* is presented as being dependent upon to being able to trace the line of authority to the pre-colonial period, which also distinguishes them from the appointed, and thus corrupted, *Rwodi*-kalam of the colonial period. As RDC Ochola made clear to me, during the process of identifying *Rwodi* in the late 1990s and since, he and the other facilitators of the re-installing ceremonies were only interested in reviving *Rwodi mo*, those who were from an inherited line and who had not been appointed by colonial authorities. Pain's report in 1997 had also given great emphasis to the distinction between *Rwodi*-mo and *Rwodi*-kalam, and similarly valorised a romantic idea that *Rwodi* had not been corrupted by virtue of being from a pre-colonial line of *Rwodi*-mo.

The legitimacy of traditional, anointed, *Rwodi*-mo and the traditional roles as mediators of conflict they played in the past, have been used to anchor claims that Ker Kwaro Acholi is well placed to act in a governance capacity, at least in "cultural matters",[99] and be a central actors in the development of Acholi sub-region. However, whilst money has been sourced and donated towards rendering Ker Kwaro Acholi recognisable as a traditional cultural institution, with the effect also of centralising Ker Kwaro in Gulu, at

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[97] Interview with S. Lapolo, Pader, 28 April 2010.
[98] Interview with W. Ochora, Gulu, 23 April 2010.
[99] See chapter four.

the Palace of the Paramount Chief, relatively little funding has gone towards facilitating the empowerment of *Rwodi* beyond their anointing ceremonies.

Being recognised and respected amongst 'subjects' was the most significant concern and frustration I heard *Rwodi* raise during interviews and at workshops/meetings I attended in 2010';[100] contrary to the dominant impression that, once revived, *Rwodi* would automatically receive local recognition and hold legitimacy. Although the weakened state of *Rwodi* has been emphasised in order to secure funding for their revivals, the extent that *Rwodi* have been struggling to garner respect is not evident in the dominant discourse of Ker Kwaro Acholi.

At the *Retreat for Capacity Building Rwodi*, organised by the secretariat and attended by Paramount Chief Acana, *Rwodi* expressed frustrations about the lack of respect they felt they were accorded by the public. After a presentation given by one of the Ministers of Ker Kwaro Acholi on land issues where the *Rwodi* were informed their role was to get to know the Land Act and to ensure that the land system being used is in line with the customs of their various clans, *Rwot* Odong Lira made the point that 'the most important thing that needs to be taken seriously before talking about land issues is the capacity building and empowerment of *Rwodi*...there is no difference between *Rwodi* and people...do you think the government is going to accept the things we are trying to say?'[101]

Often when it was acknowledged that the *Rwodi* were struggling to garner respect and thus legitimacy from those who identified with their clan or chiefdom, the primary reasons given were threefold. Firstly, the lack of recognition and respect accorded to *Rwodi* was thought to be due to people's ignorance of culture and tradition and the specific role of *Rwodi* in Acholi society, secondly, it was also thought that even if people knew of the *Rwodi* they could not distinguish them in the crowds because they looked like everyone else; there was no paraphernalia to mark them out. And finally it was shared that even if people knew the *Rwodi* and could recognise them, their lack of capacity and resources to assist their subjects would ultimately undermine their

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[100] One meeting in particular where I heard these views was the *Retreat for Capacity Building for Rwodi* at Kitgum Boma Hotel, 28th-30th April 2010.
[101] *Rwot* Lira, Retreat for Capacity Building for *Rwodi*, 28th – 30th April 2010, Boma Hotel, Kitgum.

legitimacy as *Rwodi*. The extent of the problem did not instigate a re-evaluation of the relevance of *Rwodi*, which remained taken as given, but rather discussions resulted in a series of solutions, such as sensitising the Acholi on the relevance, authority and roles of the *Rwot*, as if *Rwodi* legitimacy was something that lay dormant and needed to be reignited or revealed through shedding the scales of ignorance from the eyes of blind Acholi. According to one of the previous Programme Managers of Ker Kwaro Acholi, Mark Avola, Ker Kwaro Acholi needs to 'bring back the people's understanding of the value of chiefs and their roles', because many people were brought up in IDP camps or lived outside of Acholi and thus 'may not even know who the chiefs are'.[102] The other proposed solution from amongst *Rwodi* was to empower the *Rwodi* in such a way that they could first of all be visually distinctive from ordinary people, and so be seen as men in authority who possessed wealth and resources.

From most *Rwodi* perspectives, a lack of respect from the community was because of a lack of knowledge about Acholi tradition and the specific tradition of the *Rwodi* structure, brought about by the destruction of symbolic paraphernalia and cultural structures over recent decades. Although sometimes the drum and spear were referred to as practical objects to communicate with clan subjects and protect them from outside hostilities, they were largely regarded as symbols that identify the *Rwot*.

According to *Rwot* Ajao bringing back some of the 'traditional designs that got destroyed, like the skin of the lion and leopard', is very important because these are 'the sign[s] that you are the *Rwot* moo'.[103] *Rwot* Lawot emphasised the drum as a crucial sign of being the *Rwot* of a royal family or ker lineage. In addition the *tong ker* (royal spear), *kwot* (shield), *odor ker* (royal walking stick or staff), *mala ogul* (braclet) and *tok tok* (stool)[104] were identified by *Rwot* Lawot as symbols of a *Rwotship*. *Rwot* Lawot proudly told me he had these items, although only had one leopard skin when in his opinion he should have two; one on top of the stool and the other with the drum.

Rwot Otto Yai used a reference to the drum, spear and chair of Lamogi being in his possession as something that legitimates his contested claim as *Rwot* of Lamogi. *Rwot*

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[102] Interview with M. Avola, Gulu, 15 April 2010.
[103] Interview with R.O. Ajao, Pader, 27 April 2010.
[104] Although this is how *Rwot* Lawot referred to stool in our interview, the common Luo word for the royal stool is *kom ker*.

Latim also had a story about his drum that had caused problems in the process of his coronation.[105] 'The royal equipment like the drum,...the stool and royal cloth' at Padibe, *Rwot* Okidi told me, were given to his grandfather *Rwot* Ogwok by Queen Victoria and these paraphernalia, particularly the drum, are symbols that show visitors 'the palace of the *Rwot* is of a certain clan and is powerful'.[106] Possessing royal regalia also, according to *Rwot* Arop, determined not only that you were a royal *Rwot*, but also that you could be a *Rwot* of Ker Kwaro Acholi.

Many of the *Rwodi* interviewed said they did not have their royal regalia or paraphernalia, which could be an indication they are not from a royal lineage, but the reasons cited were the abolition of traditional authorities in the late 1960s, the recent conflict and displacement. They also said they had not been able to restore or acquire such items because of the cost; 'to buy a leopard skin' *Rwot* Obita told me, 'can cost about two million Ugandan shillings and we can't afford it'. A *Rwot* also commented that there was a need to revive traditional clothing of *Rwodi*, remarking that if a visitor saw them in their meeting they would not realise it was a meeting of the *Rwodi*. Another type of clothing that can show you are someone big, the *Rwot* continued, would be something like a shawl, that you can put on and look smart.[107]

Rwot Latyet had a different view when talking about *Rwodi* empowerment, which focused less on *Rwodi* possessing traditional symbols of power, and more on empowerment through financial resources:

> One of the things that is very important for *Rwodi* to have power is first of all capital, income, resources...but when they are still disempowered and lack those things, people just keep on insulting and say "this is a lousy *Rwot*", so the most important thing is to be empowered financially with some resources...You need to have some resources or something that you can use to make people know that you really can help. For instance if you have a

[105] Unfortunately the story is rather obscure, perhaps through translation, but this is what *Rwot* Latim said: 'We have the drum which the chief from the other side used, but it got burnt in the house. The elders wanted the new drum to be a reflection of the other one, which means we must get soil from the other house that was burnt and put it into this drum so it is the same drum. But in my grandfathers time they mishandled the drum, there was a killing connected to it, and so now the drum is a corrupted thing'. Interview with R.B. Latim, Gulu, 19 June 2010.
[106] Interview with R. Okidi, Kitgum, 30 April 2010.
[107] Unknown *Rwot* at *Retreat for Capacity Building for Rwodi*, in Kitgum Boma Hotel, 28 - 30 April 2010.

house like this then someone else can point and say "that is the house of really somebody"…unless *Rwodi* are empowered they cannot reach the community and the community may not look at them, so the empowerment of the community first starts with the *Rwodi* and goes out. [108]

The houses that began to built for the *Rwodi* of Ker Kwaro Acholi have been the most significant material benefit they have received for being a 'traditional authority' and most *Rwodi* are hopeful these smart, red brick, four bed roomed houses will effectively distinguish them from ordinary people. Not all *Rwodi*, however, are content with the Government's gesture and feel they are being bought-off. Those who are less sceptical prefer to frame the venture as something that Ker Kwaro Acholi, and more specifically Paramount Chief Acana, has attained through negotiation with the President of Uganda.

Three explanations may account for the lack of respect *Rwodi* are experiencing. The first may be due to a collective social memory about the elders, particularly from Payira, giving a blessing to rebels in the late 1980s.[109] Although there is great contestation over whether this 'critical event'[110] occurred, and those accused of taking part in the warfare blessing and curse deny involvement, the escalation of violence that followed was proof to many of Finnstrom's informants 'that some kind of fundamental imbalance has been haunting the Acholi surroundings of the living and the dead' since. In addition, rumoured attempts of Payira elders to retract the blessing given to rebel groups after the Corner Kilak battles, without a rebel high commander present, are thought to have increased mistrust amongst rebels of elders as impartial mediators of peace and angered the rebel high command, and thus for many Acholi contributed to explaining the phenomenon of social unrest and gross violence.[111]

Secondly, the lack of respect towards *Rwodi* can be understood as part of a broader disappointment, particularly amongst young people, with senior politicians and older generations 'who encouraged young people to join the war against Museveni'. In 2000,

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[108] Interview with R. Latyet, Kilak Corner, Pader District, 27 April 2010.

[109] See S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 211-219.

[110] Finnström draws on V. Das, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on contemporary India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), to discuss the blessing and the curse as a 'critical event'; as an event that forces people to rethink and reconceptualise life, relations, politics, and cultural belonging on a daily basis'.

[111] S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 217-218.

one of Finnstrom's young informants from Gulu said that 'elders capture power all the time and they make use of youth in many ways, but all the time not for positive aspects; all the time for something that causes friction in society, social friction in society'.[112] More recently, Branch has commented that 'tensions between male lineage-based authorities and armed young men have been one of the roots of the wars that have plagued northern Uganda for over two decades' and on this premise questions the possibility of elders and clan authorities as effective mediators in the reintegration process, particularly of ex-LRA.[113]

Finally, an unpopularity towards revived traditional leadership, such as *Rwodi,* may be due to the disciplinary approach some are taking in attempts to 'correct the corruption introduced in Acholi society during displacement'.[114] 'In the most extreme versions', Branch has written, 'elders explained how they saw themselves as taking a dominant and all-encompassing role in social regulation in the post-conflict period...through imposing discipline at the family and clan levels through warnings, fines, corporal punishment, and, if all else fails, expulsion from the clan and curses'.[115] The concern, Branch emphasised, was that

> Independent or assertive women or youth, those with unclear ancestry, those with foreign connections or relations, or simply those deemed undesirable or vulnerable could be disciplined or excluded through accusations of contravening 'Acholi tradition' or 'Acholi laws...Indeed, among men, the re-establishment of 'traditional authority' was often framed explicitly in terms of undoing the power gained by women and youth in the camps and imposing the power of men and elders over these punitively formerly subservient groups.

Prime Minister Oketta shared a similar view to those that Branch heard amongst the male elders he interviewed. Ker Kwaro Acholi has, Oketta told me, a disciplinary role to play, through questioning those who go outside of the 'Acholi way of doing things' and making sure that misdeeds and misbehaving is exposed in public meetings. Ker Kwaro Acholi is to 'revive those traditions of Acholi which are good...we are there to say what is

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[112] Ibid., 215.

[113] A. Branch, "Gulu Town in War...And Peace? Displacement, Humanitarianism and Post-War Crisis," in *Crisis States Research Centre Working Papers* (London: LSE, 2008), 19.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid.

the tradition of the Acholi, the one which is good'.[116] The Programme Manager, Okema, also said in our interview that 'Ker Kwaro is here to educate people to adjust to the norms and values of the Acholi people'.[117]

KER KWARO *PAYIRA*

A PAYIRA PARAMOUNT CHIEF

The emergence of Ker Kwaro Acholi has been presented as the revival of an institution constituted by a Council of Chiefs and headed by a Paramount Chief, dating back to 1400AD. As discussed in chapter two, the Payira seem to naturally occupy the position of Paramount Chief in Acholi. The silence in Ker Kwaro's public narratives over the agreement made in the late 1990s amongst the *Rwodi*, that the post of Paramount Chief would rotate, perpetuates the impression that the Payira holding this post is traditionally accurate and a natural state of affairs in Acholiland. However, there are a variety of views on this subject, ranging from those who argue that *Rwot* Acana II is the rightful Paramount Chief because he has inherited the post from his grandfather, *Rwot* Awich, whose paramountcy in Acholi was recognised by the British in the late nineteenth century. Other views do not believe Payira can make a legitimate claim to traditionally holding a position of paramount chief, either because the Acholi have never had a paramount chief position, or because other chiefdoms make similar cases that their lineage has held this position in the past, and were too recognised by early explorers and colonial rulers. Most *Rwodi*, representing these different views, expect that once people have returned and resettled in their villages from the displacement camps, then an election amongst the *Rwodi* will take place for the paramount chief post.

I asked Paramount Chief Acana, during an interview in 2011, if he felt that the position of a paramount chief was new in Acholi or whether he believed he was continuing a precedent. He replied,

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[116] Interview with K. Oketta, Gulu, 19 June 2010.
[117] Interview with S. Okema, Gulu, 6 April 2010.

> This is not a new position as such, depending on what people call it. They call it a paramount chief, they call it the King, definitely it is a *Rwot* and if you translate *Rwot,* it's not just the chief; *Rwot* is Lord, which is King and...in my case I take it back to the 1400. I know that it has been on for a long time and that is something that I am building on, just like the people before me and for Acholi, yes, I am also carrying on because my great grandfather, *Rwot* Awich was in that position. Although it was not officially declared, that is where almost the rest of Acholi used to turn to Payira for guidance [and] leadership,...[for] refuge during wars and famine, and assistance in war and all that. And that is why the explorers, Samuel Baker and other people, they called him the King of Acholi, because of the way he was being treated by the other *Rwodi*, and my father (Godfrey Acana), although he was not officially put in that place, he was also like the chairman of the *Rwodi*.

Whilst stating that the Paramount Chief position is not new, *Rwot* Acana II acknowledged it is an ambiguous issue that can be viewed differently, depending on how people see the position and, as he says, what people call it. As far as Paramount Chief Acana was concerned, he was continuing a tradition of Payira leadership amongst the *Rwodi* that goes back to his great grandfather, *Rwot* Awich, in the late 19th century, and that was carried on by his father who was, as also mentioned in chapter three, the Chairman of the *Rwodi*-mo Councillors in the late 1990s. Although both *Rwot* Awich and *Rwot* Godfrey Acana, did hold positions of leadership amongst other *Rwodi*, it is unlikely the body of *Rwodi* incorporated *Rwodi* across today's Acholiland. Rather, it is likely the support they received came from the numerous village lineages associated to Payira through the ancestral/*kal* line or as commoner/*lobong* lineages. As Girling wrote about the *Rwot* of Payira in 1960, he 'could more accurately be described as the leading Acholi chief, than the chief of all the Acholi...[and] groups in the East and South of the Acholi area were least responsive to the authority of Payera'.[118]

When I asked Paramount Chief Acana if he thought the paramount position should remain with Payira, he made reference to the Lawirwodi and Laloyo maber posts of the 1950s and 1960s. He pointed to these positions as examples that heads of Acholi have come from other clans and therefore the position does not naturally belong to Payira. However, in contradiction to his previous response that *Rwot* Awich had been the first Paramount Chief of Acholi, Acana said

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[118] F.K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960), 156.

If you look at the first paramount chief or king of Acholi, [he] didn't come from Payira, he came from somewhere in Kitgum, Padibe or, not Padibe, urm, urm, he is called Mateo Lamot, I forget where he comes from, but that was the first one and then there was Philip Adonga from Pajule...then after Philip Adonga it stayed on. But I would say that those positions were political, in that the government was involved.

Whilst Paramount Chief Acana used these examples to seemingly suggest that other clans are able to, and in the past have, held the Paramount Chief position, he then dismisses these as political, which has the effect of framing *Rwot* Awich and *Rwot* Godfrey Acana, as the only non-political, and therefore the first and only 'proper' leading chiefs of Acholi. This narrative, however, ignored the fact that his grandfather *Rwot* Yona Odida, as discussed in chapter three, was at the centre of the fierce rivalry over the leadership positions in the 1950s and 1960s, and although missed out in the Lawirwodi and Laloyo Maber posts, was appointed chief judge (langolkop madit), and put in charge of the district courts.

Returning to the question of whether the Paramount Chief position will rotate, *Rwot* Acana II said that it was 'up to the people of Acholi', but he was also clearly very sceptical of the idea, adding

that this would depend on the kind of dignity they [Acholi] want for themselves, because with the kingship or royalty, the more you move it around the more it gathers dust of conflict and that is when it is likely to become political, if you don't set the rules right, like the rules of succession. If it is open then people will start campaigning...an election would not be good, it would tend to take people into campaigning and it will become political.

To mitigate against the risks of the Paramount Chief post becoming open to political interests, *Rwot* Acana II envisioned the best future for Ker Kwaro Acholi lay in the Paramount Chief position 'coming from one clan, with the distributions of the other positions to the other clans.' Any alternative to this would, Paramount Chief Acana thought, go against the nature of Ker Kwaro Acholi as a royal institution and be an 'insane' pursuit.[119] Oywa was also concerned about the politicisation of the Paramount Chief position, but unlike Paramount Chief, believed the most likely hope for avoiding

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[119] Interview with D.O. Acana, Birmingham, 20 June 2011.

future conflict amongst clans and of power becoming too centralised with Payira, was to make sure the position did rotate.[120]

Rwot John Odoki Obol of Padibe, grandson of the influential *Rwot* Ogwok, also thought and expected the post of Paramount Chief to rotate, so that 'all the *Rwodi* remain at the same level'.[121] Being eighty, *Rwot* Obol regarded himself too old for the post, but he hoped that his child would be Paramount Chief of Acholi one day and, although he sees it as the role of the community and elders to elect, he has a particular child in mind who is a grade five teacher and who he regards as a good candidate for the position. The only reason, he said, that *Rwot* Acana II has remained as Paramount Chief, is because of the insurgency; but, once people have resettled he expects there will be another election to decide who will be the next Paramount Chief. When asked if he thought district politics would influence an election for the Paramount Chief, as it had done in the late colonial period, he replied that at the moment, because of the situation of war, the election would not be affected by the issue of districts, but after people have settled then divisions could emerge, with district officials seeking to centralise power in their own districts.

Rwot George Lugai of Pajule, son of Philip Adonga who had been the *Laloyo Maber*, had a different view towards the rotation of the Paramount Chief post, saying that, although there had been an agreement at first that the Paramount Chief post should rotate every five years, Paramount Chief Acana is now 'the clear governor of the Acholi people'.[122] However, *Rwot* Lugai did not consider that *Rwot* Acana II had inherited the Paramount Chief post, but that 'the chiefs of Acholi had put him there'. Despite *Rwot* Lugai's positive view of Paramount Chief Acana, he also admitted that 'people have mixed feelings' towards *Rwot* Acana II as Paramount Chief, particularly because there are now fifty four *Rwodi* and so the post is likely not to remain within one lineage.

It is interesting to note that the majority of new *Rwodi* in Ker Kwaro Acholi, as listed in 2009, are heads of *kaka* attached to *Rwot* Lugai's Pajule kal lineage, which may indicate that *Rwot* Lugai, together with influential government officials, have actively advocated

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[120] Interview with R. Oywa, Gulu, 20 April 2010.
[121] Interview with R.J. Obol, Kitgum, 30 April 2010.
[122] Interview with R.G. Lugai, Pader, 27 April 2010.

for more Pajule lineages located in Pader district to be recognised by Ker Kwaro Acholi, at least since 2005. This, it may be hoped, would have the effect of either balancing power against the majority of Payira lineage heads in the instance that the Paramountcy remains with Payira, or should an election occur, it increases the chances of *Rwot* Pajule becoming Paramount Chief Acholi.

Kenneth Oketta, on the other hand, did not see that an election would challenge Payira's occupancy of the Paramount Chief post because 'more than half of the *Rwodi* are Payira'.[123] Although Oketta claimed he did not think that the Paramountcy should de facto remain with Payira, he also said that it 'has to be because of the number...If they [*Rwodi*] go for voting then they will be outnumbered.'[124] I then asked Oketta: 'so an election is always going to be in favour of Payira?' Oketta replied: 'Yeah...the Payira say this has been our throne.' I followed up with asking if he thought rotation will ever happen and Oketta was clear when he state that 'rotation will not happen', and went on to cite reasons for why people are becoming 'agitated' about the rotation issue. As far as Oketta saw it, *Rwodi* were advocating for rotation because 'there's goodies, there's status, there's pounds', but thought that by allowing the rotation of the post could result in chaos, 'like Busoga'.[125] Oketta's position was that the paramount chief should serve until he passes away, and then an election should follow, 'so that people [*Rwodi*] can be given a chance to elect', but was confident the paramountcy would always be occupied by Payira.

The 'goodies, status and pounds' that, as Oketta described it, have accompanied *Rwot* Acana II's experience as the Paramount Chief, have unsurprisingly created an obvious wealth gap and inequality between Paramount Chief Acana and the other *Rwodi*. It is a gap predominantly created by the UGX 5 million Government stipend provided to all the recognised traditional/cultural authorities in Uganda, and perpetuated by his every day performance. For example at the workshop mentioned earlier, to build the capacity of

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[123] Interview with K. Oketta, Gulu, 19 June 2010.

[124] Ibid.

[125] The Busoga Kingdom have attempted to rotate the Kyabazinga post, but this has caused great tensions and rivalries amongst the eleven royal princes, with two in 2009 being elected as Kyabazinga amidst controversy. A. Kirunda, "Busoga Royal Chiefs Face Sack If New Kyabazinga Is Not Elected," *Daily Monitor*, 15 December 2009, A. Kirunda, "Kyabazinga Poll for January," *Daily Monitor*, 18 December 2009.

the *Rwodi*, he remained aloof from the other *Rwodi*; eating separately and staying in the most expensive hotel in town, whilst the other *Rwodi* stayed in more modest accommodation.

Tensions and agitation over the question of whether the position will rotate is understandably of concern to a host of lineage heads who, like the majority of Acholi, have become impoverished over the past two decades of insecurity and violence in northern Uganda. Whilst there seemed to be a pride amongst the *Rwodi* that Acholi had a Government recognised Paramount Chief, and thus wanted the Paramount Chief to drive a smart car, dress well and represent Ker Kwaro and the Acholi in a favourable light in meetings with President Museveni and the other Kings and traditional leaders in Uganda, the relatively significant wealth he was amassing caused ambivalent feelings.

PAYIRA EMPLOYEES

Amongst the secretariat I also found that most employees were Payira, including the Programme Coordinator, Santo Okema, who was also Paramount Chief Acana's brother. The Administrative Assistant, Soloman Maractho, was Paramount Chief Acana's cousin, and the two drivers were also related to the Paramount Chief. The two project officers complained of being treated differently on the grounds that they were not Payira. In disputing that Ker Kwaro Acholi is upholding its 'core value' of 'equality', one Project Officer, Sarah Achiro, said, 'I don't see it, [equality], because we are not from the Payira clan...we are the ones, we the "strangers"... so they look at us like we are thieves, we are not part of them'.[126] Achiro went on to say that the Administrative Assistant, Maractho, could arrive late or be absent for three days without explanation, and no one would complain, but if she or the other Project Officer, Mike Ocaka, was late or out of the office for just one day, then they would receive a warning letter. Ocaka, who seemed constantly frustrated working at Ker Kwaro Acholi, also complained that everyone in the secretariat 'is related to one another', and said that he felt 'Acana's family members were always checking up on him and acting as if they have the right to inspect his life',

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[126] Interview with S. Achiro, Gulu, 7 April 2010.

and that only Achiro and he had been employed on merit.[127] Achiro also commented that Ker Kwaro Acholi do 'not really employ people, they don't advertise, they just pick the relatives'.

One development practitioner of a large donor who had experience working with Ker Kwaro Acholi, and who I shall call Miller as they wanted to remain anonymous on particular views they gave in the interview, said that he had been encouraging Ker Kwaro Acholi to install policies and procedures for hiring as a way for Ker Kwaro to be more transparent, and so that it would not just be Paramount Chief Acana's cousin or bother being employed just because they needed a job. Miller had become particularly concerned about this nepotistic practice within Ker Kwaro Acholi's secretariat because the appointment of the Programme Coordinator, thought to have been on the basis of his familial ties to the Paramount Chief, was hindering the success of the project they were working on. 'Okema is just awful', Miller lamented, unlike Mark Avola who had preceded Okema and was praised by various members of the secretariat, as well as Miller, for the experience he had working in development and in civil society and his efficiency at Ker Kwaro.

According to Avola, it seemed inevitable that at the beginning, when Paramount Chief Acana and Prime Minster were trying to set up a secretariat without funding, there would be 'hand-picking', because people were needed to help our here and there. [128] Today, he pointed out, there are a few people at Ker Kwaro Acholi who have been employed on merit and who are 'total foreigners and not even from the royal blood.' The professionalism of Ker Kwaro was something that Avola still felt Ker Kwaro needed to work on. The main problem he identified of employing relations was that they will be people 'who you may not be able to reprimand'. 'I worked for many years around the world', Avola said, 'and I've never looked at getting my own close relatives to work close to me; I've looked at competences of other people'.

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[127] Interview with M. Ocaka, Gulu, 14 March 2010.
[128] Interview with M. Avola, Gulu, 15 April 2010.

The Secretariat

Lining Pockets and Unfinished Business

The establishment and 'beefing up' of the secretariat, as discussed in chapter five, was presented as a means to improve efficiency and lessen the involvement of the Paramount Chief and *Rwodi* from the everyday administrative workings of Ker Kwaro. However, Avola recalls that as the first programme Manager of Ker Kwaro, he was involved in bringing accountability to an institution that had its own way of doing things that were

> within the culture, that [did] not...match some of the [professional] requirements, to do things that warrant accountability...The chiefdoms were used to wanting, things would flow towards them that didn't need any accountability, so they were not prepared to do accountability...It was something they were not acquainted to, they were not used to it, it was not in their pattern of ways of doing things.[129]

The two Project Officers at Ker Kwaro in 2010, Ocaka and Achiro, spoke highly of Avola and always in relation to his high standards of transparency and demands for accountability from Ker Kwaro, but, Avola was not employed with Ker Kwaro for long, and whilst Achiro and Ocaka worked there, they found practices of unaccountability incredibly frustrating. Commenting on the Core Values Ker Kwaro sets out in its 2009 Strategic Plan, Achiro said

> Transparency and accountability, no, they're not transparent, they're not accountable. Right now I am going through a crisis, I am just mad...You know they're used to doing things and not accounting for it. They want to just use money for their personal interests.

They were both implicated into practices of 'eating money', as they commonly phrased it. Although technically employed by Ker Kwaro, Achiro and Ocaka's salaries were paid by the donor who was funding a particular project with Ker Kwaro, and it was the responsibility of Achiro and Ocaka to provide receipts of expenditure for the projects they coordinated. There were occasions, they recalled, when they were asked to fake receipts to cover up for money being siphoned off for personal use.

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[129] Ibid.

Achiro went on to give me an example that had occurred in relation to the Gender Based Violence project she was coordinating on behalf of Ker Kwaro Acholi in partnership with, and employed by, UNIFEM. She recalled that after the launch of the project the employees at the Secretariat were called together and told that money 'left over' from the pilot project would be distributed to them for work well done. Achiro protested, as she 'had planned everything according to the budget,' and it would mean as the programme officer she would have to give permission for the release of the money. It was being proposed that the two project officers, the accountant, the programme coordinator and the prime minister would receive UGX 500,000 and the two drivers and the office assistant would receive UGX 300,000. The Paramount Chief was to receive UGX 1 million. In reply to Achiro's protests she was simply told that 'this is the culture,' indeed she commented later that she felt like she was often 'fighting the culture of the organisation'. After returning from a trip to Kampala a week later, she found that Okema or Oketta had by-passed her authority as the project officer for the UNIFEM project and ordered Richard Komakech, the accountant, to withdraw the money from the bank account. Although in the end, each received the reduced amount of UGX 140,000, and even less for the drivers and office assistant, with the exception of Paramount Chief Acana who supposedly still received UGX 1 million, Achiro was not able to receive her salary at the end of the month. Achiro did not seem to think, however, that Paramount Chief Acana was participating in 'eating money' in this way. Although she was not sure if Paramount Chief Acana was just effectively 'trying to keep his image' by showing surprise when money was not accounted for, or whether 'these other guys are using his name to get funds'.[130]

When Achiro told Okema that she was going to photocopy the bank slips she submitted to UNIFEM to ensure accountability, which would have exposed to UNIFEM Okema's practice of 'eating money', he responded by telling Achiro to 'create an activity, to show that maybe you've gone to the community and joined a women's group'. Unsurprisingly, Achiro said that she would not work at Ker Kwaro Acholi after her contract finished and Ocaka too was finding the secretariat of Ker Kwaro Acholi a difficult place to work. 'Ker Kwaro Acholi works in a crooked way' he said, 'I believe in transparency and have never

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[130] Interview with S. Achiro, Gulu, 7 April 2010.

worked in such a place, this is going to tarnish me'.[131] Both Achiro and Ocaka made reference to money received in December 2009 from the US Embassy for a 'Cultural Preservation' project, but said that these funds were being used for 'private business', with few activities actually being implemented. Achiro said,

> All you get is sitting allowances and travels of the Paramount Chief. They just sit and cook an activity. I'm telling you, that in a whole big file like this, there's nothing. They have not gone to the cultural site, they have not done anything...and when you try and tell the truth, you're fighting them, you're being subordinated.

According to Oketta, Ker Kwaro had finished identifying the cultural sites for preservation, and were entering data into databases. 'Soon we shall get the next money for surveying', he said, and then we will upload the images to google earth, 'that is the aim of the project, so that the cultural side of Acholi can be associated through the web'.[132] I asked if there were plans to renovate and repair any of the cultural sites, such as Patiko Fort, but Oketta said that their intention was to preserve cultural sites but not to carry out repairs.

Avola, who was Programme Manager when Ker Kwaro secured the funding from the US Ambassador for the Cultural Preservation project, evaded answering my question about the success of the project - only agreeing that it had been successful at the beginning, in the initial stages when he was involved in the procurement of resources and had made an agreement with the Uganda Museum, but then seemed to say that after the initial stage the project had not continued to realise its objectives. According to Ocaka, 'Ker Kwaro Acholi were supposed to carry out many projects, such as the restoration of Patiko Fort, but the money was eaten.'[133]

As the project officer of the USAID funded SPRING project, Ocaka, similarly to Achiro, reported that he was pressurised to sign permission for money to be released from the SPRING budget, from both Okema, who at one time wanted the money to pay his own salary, and from *Rwodi*, which he said left him 'with the burden of trying to account for it to the donors'.[134] The USAID Director of the SPRING programme, Jessica Huber, was

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[131] Interview with M. Ocaka, Gulu, 14 March 2010.
[132] Interview with K. Oketta, Gulu, 19 June 2010.
[133] Interview with M. Ocaka, Gulu, 14 March 2010.
[134] Ibid.

aware of the unaccountability prevalent within Ker Kwaro Acholi, and although found this aspect of working with Ker Kwaro Acholi frustrating, took the view that Ker Kwaro Acholi simply needed support to 'battle that kind of work...the corruption challenges.'[135] She thought that good leadership that is not voluntary, but paid, would have a positive impact on the way people worked in Ker Kwaro. Both Okema and Oketta were appointed with Ker Kwaro Acholi on a voluntary basis, although it seemed not without expectations they would be paid one way or another. Miller's suggestion, although recognising that the 'Prime Minister doesn't practice what he preaches', thought that Oketta should apply for a salary as a full time consultant at Ker Kwaro Acholi because 'this would get funding very quickly'.[136]

Talking to Okema about the short term contracts and salaries at the Secretariat, and with specific reference to Achiro and Ocaka's projects that were soon coming to an end, he was insistent that even when a project comes to an end and the salaries for the project officers stop, then they

> can [still] stay, sometimes on half salaries until another donor is got. We don't lose staff anyhow, we are not going to lose our staff, even if there is no funding for a month or two you can stay and do the work.

Okema's commitment and expectations of working at Ker Kwaro Acholi were clearly different from Huber's, who thought that working voluntarily was part of the root cause of corrupt practices. Achiro and Ocaka, also had different ideas and left Ker Kwaro after their contracts ended, uncomfortable continuing to stay on a 'half salary'.

RWODI – SECRETARIAT DISCONNECTION

With the secretariat operating to the effect of lining the pockets of its Payira members, it comes as little surprise that many *Rwodi* had alternative views of Ker Kwaro Acholi, and the secretariat in particular, as less of a traditional structure with a 'government' to support their empowerment, but more as something increasingly disconnected from them. Although the 2009 Strategic Plan includes a Strategic Objective that all 'chiefdom

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[135] Interview with J. Huber, Gulu, 21 April 2010.
[136] Interview with Miller, an anonymous donor employee, northern Uganda, 2010.

bases should be functional', and proposes to identify 'various areas of investment...as a means and way of building up [a] resource base', the Plan also proposes that 'the local people' should provide for each 'Chiefdoms administration and houses for the Chiefs', based on a vague reference to a cultural commitment people have towards their traditional institution.[137]

Given that the Secretariat was created on the premise of providing support to enable *Rwodi* to fulfil their 'traditional' duties I asked a number of *Rwodi* from across Acholiland whether they felt they were being supported by the Secretariat and leadership of Ker Kwaro Acholi. Where *Rwodi* felt they were being supported by the offices of Ker Kwaro Acholi in Gulu it was usually because they were happy to have received bicycles and houses, and believed that being part of Ker Kwaro Acholi was bettering their situations. However, there were also *Rwodi* who, although grateful for the benefits they had received through Ker Kwaro Acholi, such as the bicycles, were also aware that Ker Kwaro Acholi had received substantial financial assistance that had not filtered to them or assisted them. Some commented on feeling a sense of disconnection or distance from what is happening at Ker Kwaro Acholi, with one *Rwot* from Pader saying that he did not even know the people working at Ker Kwaro Acholi, they had not been introduced.[138] *Rwot* Martin Otto Yai of Lamogi complained that

> Ker Kwaro has nothing to give *Rwodi*, money is only for projects and not for helping chiefs...Our people come for help and we can't help them. It's only a name, a cultural chief...Projects of Ker Kwaro are not about reviving chiefs. We got some [money] for burying bones, but the chiefs don't get the money. There is no project concerned about assisting the chiefs. Development in the villages is why the projects come.

Although the Rwotship of Martin Otto Yai was under debate in 2010, his view is representative of the concerns I heard from *Rwodi* across Acholiland. *Rwot* Baptist Latim of Pawel, an educated *Rwot* with his own 'Plan for a Peaceful Community 2010-2011', complained that Ker Kwaro Acholi's approach to planning was wrong because they

> do it from their office and haven't involved the *Rwodi*. There has been no meeting with *Rwodi*, only a few have been selected. They didn't bring the planning for approval from *Rwodi*, only brought us in at the launch of the

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[137] Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Strategic Plan, 2009-2014,* (Gulu: Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2009), 5-6.
[138] Interview with R.O. Ajao, Pader, 27 April 2010.

plan 2009-2014. The Ker Kwaro institution is ignoring the *Rwodi* and relying on people in the Secretariat rather than using the *Rwodi*'.[139]

As is evident here *Rwot* Latim also imagined Ker Kwaro Acholi as functioning in at least three separate parts, as an 'the Ker Kwaro institution', the *Rwodi* and the secretariat, and complains that 'the institution' are engaging with the secretariat more than they are with the *Rwodi*; particularly in processes of planning Ker Kwaro Acholi's strategic objectives and the activities it proposes to implement over the coming years.

Humphrey Ojok, a project officer at Ker Kwaro Acholi in 2009, had an optimistic view of Ker Kwaro Acholi's potential as an institution to foster peace and reconciliation, as referred to in chapter five, but was also critical of how he saw *Rwodi* relating to the secretariat.[140] Ojok wanted the *Rwodi* to fit into the 'mainstream of Ker Kwaro the institution' and so got the *Rwodi* 'to look at themselves and how they fit into Ker Kwaro', rather than thinking about how the institution can benefit them. The idea that the *Rwodi* do not 'fit into' Ker Kwaro, sits juxtaposed next to the dominant image of Ker Kwaro Acholi as the traditional cultural institution constituted by the 54 traditional leaders of Acholi. The following section, further illustrates the tensions and contradictions that have arisen from Ker Kwaro negotiating multiple images.

AN NGO

Contrary to the dominant images produced by Ker Kwaro that the secretariat acts as administrative support to the traditional leaders of Ker Kwaro, the offices in Gulu where the secretariat is based operates as the central hub of Ker Kwaro, and is the primary interface for visitors and potential donors, with most *Rwodi* in the peripheral vision of those engaging with the institution. As the majority of work the secretariat is engaged with on an everyday basis relates to the partnerships it has or hopes to have with donors, and thus project reports, audits and project proposals, one might imagine Ker Kwaro Acholi seems more like a development NGO than a structure of traditional leaders.

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[139] Interview with R.B. Latim, Gulu, 19 June 2010.
[140] Interview with H. Ojok, Gulu, 11 June 2010.

Whilst Ker Kwaro Acholi's image as a traditional authority, recognised by the Government, and with organisational capacity to partner on development initiatives, has been crucial for attracting and securing donor funding, Ker Kwaro's engagement with donors has arguably shifted focus away from empowering *Rwodi*. Ker Kwaro's everyday practices revolve, instead, around implementing development programmes.

Huber, Director of the USAID funded SPRING project commented that 'part of the growing pains' of Ker Kwaro Acholi 'is because it is expected to function like an NGO but is also expected to be its own governance structure.'[141] She went on to say that Ker Kwaro Acholi would improve its response to the community if it shifts more towards being an NGO,' although after a hesitation she qualified her statement, seemingly uncomfortable with the idea that Ker Kwaro Acholi might be viewed in such terms and said, 'well I don't know...I [just] think it would benefit from other structures of civil society organisations.' Huber was not the only person I interviewed who was seemingly uncomfortable with likening Ker Kwaro Acholi to a development NGO, but like her others also admitted that Ker Kwaro Acholi does indeed look like an NGO. A project officer of Ker Kwaro Acholi, Ojok Humphrey, said it is 48% like an NGO, which he saw as problematic because,

> with an NGO people become a subject of study and you start to lump their problems together and start to act on it. Rather than people identifying a problem and then you advocate it. As an NGO you are writing proposals to sell, which is a different thing...Ker Kwaro's role as the voice of the Acholi is being compromised by being an NGO.[142]

A similar concern was expressed by a number of my Acholi informants, from University Students to Catholic Priests and Acholi development practitioners. Their concerns rested with an understanding that donors work through conditionality and, therefore, Ker Kwaro Acholi, will become bound to the agendas of development organisations and not act in the interests of their clans. There is a risk, they said, that if the *Rwodi* of Ker

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[141] Interview with J. Huber, Gulu, 21 April 2010.
[142] Interview with H. Ojok, Gulu, 11 June 2010.

Kwaro continue to work ever closer with donors, then this could threaten the relationship many *Rwodi* are seeking to restore with their clans.[143]

One way many *Rwodi* thought Ker Kwaro Acholi could help, was by putting in place a constitution and set of policies that make clear the roles and responsibilities of those within Ker Kwaro. For *Rwot* Kinyera Vincent, the lack of a constitution was contributing to the difficulties *Rwodi* experienced in exercising authority. Other *Rwodi* said that having a constitution would help them to do their work in the community, particularly with regards to issues of justice and reconciliation. Some *Rwodi* contended that a constitution would enable *Rwodi* to make recommendations of compensation payments in the mato oput process, which could lead to their decision becoming legally binding. *Rwot* Lawot accused the District Council of hindering the process of producing an approved and official Ker Kwaro Acholi constitution.[144]

Although the issue of producing a constitution for Ker Kwaro Acholi was an important matter for many *Rwodi*, Prime Minister Oketta did not share the same view, for a number of reasons. One was that he thought a constitution meant Ker Kwaro Acholi would become a nationally registered cultural institution or NGO; it would make Ker Kwaro like the Langi, who have a constitution and 'now it's the Lango Cultural Trust' and then there is the Teso Cultural Foundation, 'but ours is unique', Oketta said of Ker Kwaro. A constitution would make Ker Kwaro Acholi 'become like an NGO' and then Government will 'want to register us...and when you are registered, you are

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[143] Ceremonies to re-bury bones of people killed in the late 1980s, which were protruding through the ground where people lived, are one such example of, what Oywa worryingly saw as, donors contributing to eroding the responsibilities traditional leaders and clans should play on such occasions. At a re-burying of bones ceremony I attended on the 27th April 2010, those from the clans affected, and who attended, were chastised by Ker Kwaro and NUTI, who were funding the event, for not encouraging more people to be there. They said it was not worth facilitating the ceremony if people did not come to witness it. For more on these ceremonies and their significance in Acholi, see S. Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), and E. Baines, *Roco Wat I Acholi, Restoring Relationships in Acholi-Land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2005).
[144] Interview with R.M. Lawot, Gulu, 9 June 2010.

regulated'.[145] 'Regulated by external auditors?' I asked. 'Not only auditors', Oketta replied,

> but external government. They cancel your certificate. Now they cannot cancel our certificate. That is how you see Buganda is having problems with the Government...so we are also trying to reinvent ourselves in that aspect, so we remain relevant without conflicting with other government organs, like local government and central government. So, being relevant is like having something like this (Oketta holds up the Strategic Plans) and declaring them.[146]

Ker Kwaro's draft constitution, Oketta claimed, is just an 'institutional document for operations...like an NGO constitution, based on [a] preamble and objectives and memorandum of associations, spelling out a few duties.'[147]

A prominent elder of Ker Kwaro Acholi believed that Ker Kwaro Acholi did not have a constitution or policies in place because they would make Ker Kwaro accountable to government.[148] An ex-Project Officer of the secretariat, Humphrey Ojok, recalled he had worked on a draft constitution for Ker Kwaro, which had been initially developed by a consultant, but said the document was never finalised or approved by the leadership of Ker Kwaro, because of a lack of will.[149] The problem, as far as Ojok saw, was that 'a constitution binds you to behave in a certain way and some people don't want restrictions put on them'.[150] Whilst the elder of Ker Kwaro, quoted above, saw the lack of a constitution, and therefore accountability to government as negative for Ker Kwaro, Oketta saw that without a constitution Ker Kwaro's independence from central Government was ensured, and this was preferable for Ker Kwaro. With reference to the Buganda Kingdom, Oketta commented that Ker Kwaro should not become like them. However, despite Oketta here, and elsewhere, drawing up distinctions between the Buganda Kingdom and Ker Kwaro Acholi, there is also evidence that Ker Kwaro has been actively positioning itself to engage with Government in a way that will give Ker

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[145] Interview with K. Oketta, Gulu, 19 June 2010.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Interview, anonymous Elder associated with Ker Kwaro Acholi, Gulu, 2010.

[149] Interview with H. Ojok, Gulu, 11 June 2010.

[150] Ibid.

Kwaro more governing powers in Acholi sub-region, as the final section of the chapter will continue to discuss.

A POLITICAL INSTITUTION?

REGIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Re-structuring Ker Kwaro Acholi in 2006, to incorporate a government structure, as discussed in chapter four, was supposed to bring clarification on the roles and responsibilities of those in Ker Kwaro. However, as mentioned above, many *Rwodi* felt this had not taken place and requested Ker Kwaro Acholi to develop a constitution to clarify their roles and give their authority legal traction. But, Oketta was also sceptical about a constitution for Ker Kwaro because he did not want Acholi to respect the decisions of *Rwodi* because they were able to apply a constitution and enforce their decisions.[151] Oketta wanted the *Rwodi* to 'be unique, so in the mediation process they will accept the *Rwodi* decision. If someone wants legality', he continued, 'they can go to the LC courts'. With regards to the functioning of the Ker Kwaro, Oketta believed that 'legal rights will bring rivalry, people could interpret the constitution'. If a constitution was drafted, he said, it would need a 'sincere group of people to administer [it], not chiefs themselves, otherwise the constitution can come to be in someone's interest. Chiefs don't understand those things'. Whilst Oketta's concerns that a constitution could be potentially abused or written according to political interests may be well founded, I was struck by the problem Oketta identified in relation to demands for a constitution:

> We operate in a democratic and competitive environment and... people are demanding a constitution because they are thinking in terms of democracy and things. It is also people outside Ker Kwaro who are asking for a constitution, but it's just because of the environment we are living in. People are even asking about the position of the Prime Minister, where did he come from and when is he ending?

Oketta's evident disapproval of democracy sits in tension with Ker Kwaro's attempts to become an agent of development, aligned to national and international agendas,

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[151] Interview with K. Oketta, Gulu, 19 June 2010.

concepts and norms, as discussed in chapter five. While Oketta disapproved that democratic principles should be demanded and encouraged within Ker Kwaro; and indeed the Strategic Plans do not claim Ker Kwaro to be, or aspires to be, an institution underpinned by democratic principles; the second Plan does propose to promote democratic practices within Acholiland, to strengthen civil society, and hold Government to account. Its strategic objective for promoting 'inclusive governance' proposes to 'raise awareness on the right[s] of people and the responsibilities of Government', cooperate with 'other organisations on rights issues at the local level', and act as a 'platform' so that vulnerable people can become members of civil society and be involved in decision making.[152] Should Ker Kwaro Acholi be incorporated more substantially into a Ugandan state structure in the future, such as a regional tier of government, it may find itself at the receiving end of the demands it seeks to inculcate amongst Acholi. As I will now discuss, Ker Kwaro does seem to be preparing for a more central role in the governance of Acholi sub-region.

As discussed in chapter four, evidently Ker Kwaro Acholi saw that creating and incorporating a structure with expertise and presented as a government structure, would strengthen the institution in the context of the terms within which the NRM was proposing to incorporate traditional authorities into the state. However, although Ker Kwaro Acholi may have wished to look like and indeed become a strong institution through incorporating expert advisors into the cultural institution, in order to position itself more advantageously, this does not satisfactorily account for its use of explicitly governmental language and for presenting its experts as ministers of a government.

In reference to the same developments the Buganda Kingdom were pursuing, following the failed debates over federalism in 1995, mentioned in chapter two, Englebert described the process as 'essentially a strategy of relative disengagement from the state whose purpose is to become more autonomous, develop a record of public administration, and improve its bargaining position for a hypothetical new round of constitutional negotiations in the post-Museveni future'.[153] In the event that a new political dispensation becomes open for negotiation in the future, 'monarchists want to

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[152] Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Strategic Plan, 2009-2014*, (Gulu: Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2009), 10-11.
[153] P. Englebert, "Born Again Buganda and the Limits of Traditional Resurgence in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, no. 3 (2002): 364.

be ready', Englebert wrote, 'to make a credible claim for autonomous local self-government in a federal system'.

There is little evidence to suggest that in 2006, and still today, Ker Kwaro Acholi's government structure is part of a greater vision of disengaging from the state in preparation for future local self-government.[154] In fact, the public image they projected, examined in chapter four, was quite the opposite. In the government structure concept paper and in the second Strategic Plan, Ker Kwaro emphasised their wish to cooperate and work together in partnerships with local and central government. In conversations, Paramount Chief Acana and Prime Minister Oketta, also repeatedly sought to distance themselves from the Buganda Kingdom.

Although at pains to give the impression Ker Kwaro Acholi was a neutral traditional authority, unlike Buganda, interested only in 'cultural matters', and making use of the vagueness attached to this term in government discourses, Paramount Chief Acana anticipated that Ker Kwaro may need to 'deal with government' on 'really, really controversial issues', which is why, he said, he had a vision to 'make Ker Kwaro mighty' and wanted to appoint experts with brains to be part of Ker Kwaro.[155]

In a speech I heard at the launch of Ker Kwaro's Gender Based Violence campaign in 2010, Paramount Chief Acana addressed the other 'kings' affected by the insurgency and said that 'if we work together we can form a big block from Teso to West Nile and we can do anything with it'.[156] Campaigning together on development issues is a potential site for consolidating relationships and alliances with other cultural institutions in northern Uganda, which, as Acana said, might be used for a myriad of purposes and agendas. A few months later Paramount Chief Acana was reported to have suggested that 'the kingdoms of West Nile, Acholi, Lango and Teso sub-regions should unite to demand operational funds from the central government', adding that, 'we have a forum of kings in Uganda, but we should also have a regional cooperation of the Alur, Acholi,

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[154] Although not specifically related to Acholi, it was reported in 1994 there were 'some areas of northern Uganda' proposing 'the formation of a state within the state of Uganda...in order to acquire a status comparable to that of Buganda when negotiating with central government'. New Vision, 14th January 1994, quoted in M. Doornbos, *The Ankole Kingship Controversy: Regalia Galore Revisited* (Kampala: Fountain, 2001), 94.

[155] Interview with D.O. Acana, Birmingham, 20 June 2011.

[156] Personal notes from Launch day of Gender Based Violence project between Ker Kwaro Acholi, UNIFEM and DFID. 15th March 2010.

Madi, Lango and Teso kingdoms to influence certain decisions that are desirable by our people'.[157]

Similarly to Ker Kwaro Acholi, younger Buganda elite regarded Article 178 more favourably than the conservative members of Buganda, who had their eyes set on full federal status. Englebert observed that

> Buganda's most educated elite and its civil servants were more favourable to the charter option, which would have better allowed them to continue straddling positions in both systems. So were younger Mengo officials for whom the purity of Buganda's rebirth matters less than the opportunities it may provide them as political entrepreneurs.[158]

Could similar aspirations be held by the 'non-traditional' members and counterparts of Ker Kwaro Acholi?

Being incorporated into a regional tier of government may support Ker Kwaro's efforts to gain an influential and legal position in matters of land: a highly controversial issue in Uganda and particularly in Acholiland as people resettle in villages. At least since 2005, Ker Kwaro Acholi has been seeking an influential position in land matters in Acholi. For example, on behalf of Ker Kwaro Acholi Fabius Okumu-Alya, who was Attorney General of Ker Kwaro Acholi by 2010, wrote a concept paper for a consultative meeting of stakeholders on land in Acholi, which included a proposal to produce a policy document on land and an Acholi Central Land Registry, 'under the direct supervision and authority of the Acholi Paramount Chief, which would 'serve as trustees of customary land rights for all the people of Acholi'.[159] The policy document that resulted was recently rejected legal status by the District Council on the grounds that the people of Acholi had not been consulted in the process.[160]

Interestingly, Ker Kwaro only mentions land twice in its second strategic plan, and only to mention that part of the causes of poverty in Acholiland are land conflicts and that

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[157] C. Ocowan, "Acholi Chiefs Want Kingdoms to Unite," *New Vision*, 4 August 2010.
[158] P. Englebert, "Born Again Buganda and the Limits of Traditional Resurgence in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, no. 3 (2002): 363.
[159] F. Okumu-Alya, "Concept Paper, Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on Land in Acholi: An Initiative of Ker Kwaro Acholi, December 2005," (Gulu: Gulu District Archive, 2005).
[160] Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Cik me loyo ki kit me tic ki ngom Kwaro I Acholi: Principles and Practices of Customary Tenure in Acholiland*, (Gulu:Ker Kwaro Acholi, June 2008), funded with support from the Refugee Council and the EU.

one of its strategic objectives is to inform people on a number of issues, one of which is 'access to land'. Another of Ker Kwaro's objectives is to improve households income and food security and under this objective proposes to 'provide support to vulnerable people in Acholi sub region as a means of strengthening their capacity to sustain themselves, including revitalization of its age-long *Rwot Okoro* and *Rwot Kweri* for effective communal work'.[161] Under this objective Ker Kwaro proposes to pursue links with 'District Community Development Services, Production Departments and other institutions interested in agricultural development as a delivery mechanism'. However, contrary to the public image it projects as a facilitator of accurate information on land and capacity builder of those wanting to organise communal work groups, it is clear Ker Kwaro Acholi seeks to situate itself more centrally and with legal powers on land matters in Acholiland.

Branch has noted that the manoeuvring of Ker Kwaro Acholi in relation to land issues has stirred criticism that there 'are chiefs serving as the middlemen for unpopular large land purchases by investors' and that 'foreign sponsorship of traditional authority has provided supposed chiefs with the opportunity to grab land and enrich themselves with the protection of Ker Kwaro Acholi'.[162]

MULTIPLE KER KWARO

The emergence of Ker Kwaro has inspired other *Rwodi* to strengthen the structures of their particular clans in a similar way, which has the potential to counter balance an over-centralisation of power with Ker Kwaro Acholi and in the towns where Ker Kwaro has offices.[163]

Three *Rwodi* told me how they were making progress in establishing their own Ker Kwaro's (royal institutions). *Rwot* Arop of Pagen told me he had been encouraging *Rwodi* to, like him, create councils with 'a strong cabinet' and a 'development

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[161] Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Strategic Plan, 2009-2014*, (Gulu: Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2009), 12.
[162] A. Branch, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 159, 176.
[163] Gulu is the location of Ker Kwaro's Palace and main offices, but there is also a Ker Kwaro Acholi office in Kitgum, although in 2010 it did not seem to function in any significant capacity.

association' to 'bring in money and resources to cater for development activities', such a paying children's school fees, funeral costs and strengthening the *Rwot*.[164] *Rwot* Muttu of Patiko and *Rwot* Latim of Pawel both showed me their progress in attempting to strengthen their clan structures. *Rwot* Muttu produced a diagram of his 'Administrative Structure of Ker Kwaro Patiko', which included a Prime Minister (Katikiro), a Council of Elders as well as a Council of the *Rwot*, a Cabinet, and a Board of Trustees who play an 'advisory role on cultural/traditional issues'. *Rwot* Latim gave me a bound booklet detailing a 'Plan for a Peaceful Community' by 'Ker Kal-Kwaro Pawel'. At the back were the contact details of the post already established: the Chairman of the K.K Pawel Council, a Prime Minister, an Administrative Secretary and a Minister of Finance. Interestingly *Rwot* Latim regards his cultural institution as mandated not only through the Ugandan constitution, but also by international agencies such as UNESCO. No historical background of the Pawel clan or *Rwodi* lineage is offered in the booklet, but rather *Rwot* Latim seeks justification for empowering his cultural institution based on the mandates, real or perceived, from outside actors, before proceeding to set out, in much the same way as Ker Kwaro Acholi's Strategic Plan's, the problems Pawel clan face and the intentions of the cultural institution to find redress with the support from 'well-wishers'.

Although I have framed these examples as something subversive to how Ker Kwaro Acholi is being imagined and instantiated by its leadership, they are also in line with Paramount Chief Acana's vision for Ker Kwaro Acholi, where the *Rwodi* of Ker Kwaro Acholi and himself, he told me, resume more authentically their traditional roles as 'Kings' who 'always used to have people to do things before it reached the *Rwot*'.[165] With reference to the office work *Rwodi* have been doing recently Paramount Chief Acana said that

> Those [*Rwodi*] who are working now are going against the rules, because [they] are kings. Who else does a King serve a cup of tea to? It doesn't happen; the King has to be served in order to be able to serve other people in other ways. When you work you are being ordered here [and there] by your boss, to do this, do that, which is not really appropriate for a king.

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[164] Interview with R.P.P. Arop, Pagen, Kitgum, 17 July 2010.
[165] Interview with D.O. Acana, Birmingham, 20 June 2011.

> There are people who should be doing those things, you know in the office, I don't expect any *Rwot* to be sitting there from morning until evening, just waiting for people, they should be at their home...I am trying to empower them...uplifting them up to be on their own feet.

> I keep on telling them "get good people around you, one or two good people, they will advise you, they will support you in every way they can, those who are passionate about the institution, those who respect you, and respect the values...you don't need to get the whole clan, just two or three people, work with them and then you drive the rest.

Paramount Chief Acana's advice echoes in an uncanny way the process he has experienced over the past decade, since he found himself as a young and shy man at the turn of the century being installed not only as *Rwot* of the largest lineage in Acholi, but also as the Paramount Chief of what was being envisioned by some as a newly emerging 'Acholi chiefdom'. As my study has been illustrating, Paramount Chief Acana has been, like his advice to other *Rwodi* reflects, at the centre of driving forward the emergence of an institution, built to uphold his authority as *Rwot* and Paramount Chief, with the help of a few people around him.

CONCLUSION

My analytical reflections in this chapter have drawn out less visible ways of knowing and thinking about Ker Kwaro Acholi, that were expressed, contrary to what one may expect, as much as from within the institution, as from without. The chapter has revealed, often stark, disjuncture's between the dominant images explored in the previous chapters of the thesis, and the less visible discourses examined here.

Following Oywa's interview, I began the chapter with noting the fluctuations of the *Rwodi* who are recognised by the leadership of Ker Kwaro Acholi as part of the institution and drew attention to the diversity that exists within the Council of *Rwodi*, contrary to dominant images of Ker Kwaro Acholi as constituted by a homogenous council of *Rwodi*, each hailing unproblematically from a pre-colonial lineage. Part of the reason for the inconsistencies and fluctuations of *Rwodi* in Ker Kwaro Acholi, as I discussed, was attributed to the involvement of local government in the process of reviving *Rwodi*. Rather than a simple process of identifying and reviving known *Rwodi*

across Acholiland, the process was affected by political motivations to re-install *Rwodi*, who would potentially serve political interests. However, the interest and engagement of local politicians in the process of re-installing *Rwodi* of Ker Kwaro Acholi threatens the possibilities of *Rwodi* gaining local legitimacy if they are associated to the unfavourably viewed, NRM controlled, local government structure.

The assumption that has underpinned and driven donor support for the revival of Ker Kwaro Acholi is that the *Rwodi* are a respected traditional authority in Acholiland with particular skills of dispute settlement and facilitating reconciliation rituals. However, as I illustrated in the chapter, many *Rwodi* of Ker Kwaro Acholi have been struggling to garner local support and respect. Contrary to dominant views within Ker Kwaro Acholi that the problem lays with the populations lack of knowledge on their traditional structure of governance; an inability to distinguish *Rwodi* from ordinary people; or in the lack of capacity *Rwodi* have to materially benefit their subjects, many *Rwodi* felt they struggled to garner respect because Ker Kwaro Acholi did not have a constitution to which they could refer. A constitution, some *Rwodi* said, would bolster their authority by making their decisions more binding.

The third section of the chapter illustrated that Ker Kwaro Acholi seems to be functioning more as a Ker Kwaro Payira than a Ker Kwaro Acholi. The Paramount Chief post looks to remain with *Rwot* Acana II until he passes away, an election amongst *Rwodi* for the post looks likely to favour Payira, and at present the employees and ministers of Ker Kwaro are significantly pooled from Payira. Aspirations of holding the Paramount Chief post one day, or at least their sons, can be heard amongst *Rwodi* and thus this position carries the likely potential to fuel future clan rivalry.

The secretariat of Ker Kwaro Acholi has undoubtedly cast the institution in a more favourable light for donors, who require administrative and technical capacity from the local organisations they partner with. Providing funds for the salaries of project officers who they engage with directly has brought experienced development practitioners to Ker Kwaro Acholi. However, with everyday practices of the secretariat, and by implication many of the *Rwodi* and the Paramount Chief, revolving around donor programmes and their agendas, Ker Kwaro Acholi seems to many people to function more in the likeness of a development NGO, which sparks concerns over the

possibilities for Ker Kwaro Acholi to be responsive to the needs of the clans and not be tied to the conditionalities and agendas of international donors.

Amongst some of the *Rwodi* there were ambivalent feelings towards the secretariat. Although recognising the seeming necessity of a secretariat to secure financial support for their empowerment, many *Rwodi* felt disconnected and marginalised, and sceptical about where the considerable funds were being spent. With no substantial evidence that Ker Kwaro Acholi was achieving any of the strategic objectives it had set since 2005 and with reports of unaccountability and "eating money", dominant images of Ker Kwaro as a vital agent of sustainable development in northern Uganda are undermined.

Politically, Ker Kwaro Acholi reflects in many ways the path of revival undertaken by its significantly more powerful counterpart; the Buganda Kingdom, although Ker Kwaro seeks to avoid such a distinction being drawn. And whilst the dominant image of Ker Kwaro Acholi as a government structure has been carefully and strategically tied to Government discourses that require traditional authorities to be purely *cultural* institutions, I argue that Ker Kwaro Acholi is seeking to position itself advantageously in response to current and anticipated power relations vis-a-vis the Ugandan state and vis-a-vis other 'cultural institutions' across Uganda. The creation and strengthening of multiple Ker Kwaro's across Acholiland may serve to limit Payira dominance, not only in Acholiland, but regionally in northern Uganda, although on the other hand they may seek to function independently and tap into lucrative sources directly, rather than feeding into Ker Kwaro Acholi.

To summarise, my study of dominant and less visible images and discourses of Ker Kwaro Acholi has offered a different account of the institutions so-called revival. I have illustrated that what set out as a revival of Acholi traditional authorities, became a revival of *Rwodi* and the establishment of a Paramount Chief, which soon evolved into the emergence of an institution that, whilst projecting images of being a traditional institution, is actually a new form of power base in northern Uganda.

I do not argue that there has a been a mastermind behind the way Ker Kwaro Acholi has emerged, but rather, whilst pointing to key actors and agents who have acted

strategically, Ker Kwaro is predominately the product of a series of multiple discourses and contingent events that combined to make it possible for a particular clan to set up as Paramount Chief of the whole of Acholiland and to tap into resources available at state and international levels.

Further research is needed to gauge how Ker Kwaro Acholi is viewed by Acholi, because whilst there may exist support for the idea of reviving *Rwodi*, and whilst people may support the idea of a Paramount Chief able to act as spokesperson for Acholi, these views should not be taken to represent widespread support for Ker Kwaro Acholi. As two of Ker Kwaro's ex-employees of the secretariat put it, 'Ker Kwaro Acholi is far away from Acholi people recognising and feeling any kind of ownership towards the institution', and 'most people do not see the need to bring back Ker Kwaro institution, most don't know about Ker Kwaro.'[166]

It is striking that Oywa, one of the few people in Acholi who have been part of Ker Kwaro's emergence since the 1990s and regularly engages with it today, should describe the institution as 'amorphous'. And whilst I have sought to analyse Ker Kwaro's revival, and offer insights that make sense of its complexities, I have also found the institution profoundly amorphous. However, I disagree with Oywa that Ker Kwaro's amorphous nature renders the institution 'unhelpful for anybody'. Rather, I would argue that it is the formless and nebulous nature of Ker Kwaro Acholi, functioning as it does through images as much as through its substance, that renders Ker Kwaro conveniently helpful for a multitude of actors, from donors to government officials, 'traditional' authorities to entrepreneurs.

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[166] Interview with M. Avola, Gulu, 15 April 2010, Interview with H. Ojok, Gulu, 11 June 2010.

CONCLUSION

'If the chief remains the focal head and is not surrounded by people who can plan and interpret things of the time, then I can see many people being left behind'.

Programme Manager, Ker Kwaro Acholi[167]

In my thesis I have attempted to answer the question: What is Ker Kwaro Acholi? I have done this by analysing the *process* of Ker Kwaro's emergence, and illustrated how Ker Kwaro Acholi cannot be reduced to being defined as a 'Council of Chiefs' or a 'traditional authority', but rather is constituted by multiple discourses and contingent events, and incorporates an array of actors from chiefs to ministers, and elders to project officers. I argue that Ker Kwaro Acholi is, therefore, more a product of present day relations of power that constitutes a new form of power base in Acholiland, rather than the continuation of a pre-colonial traditional authority.

A summary of my thesis will illustrate how I have come to draw such a conclusion about Ker Kwaro Acholi, and act as a reminder of both the points I have argued and questions I have further posed along the way.

In part one, I discussed broader debates and literatures on traditional authority revivals in sub-Saharan Africa, and turned to the more specific contexts and literatures related to traditional authority in Uganda and Acholiland. In chapter one I examined literature on traditional authority revivals across sub-Saharan Africa, teasing out insights and potential conceptual frameworks, and exploring thinking about traditional authorities from the colonial era through to the era of 'development'. The purpose of chapter one was not only to give an overview of the broader literature, to which my thesis contributes, but also to examine the question of the encounter between traditional authorities and various exogenous discourses over a longer time period and broader geographical range than my study of Ker Kwaro Acholi offers. I began by examining literature that has taken a primarily top-down and state-centric approach when

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[167] Interview with M. Avola, Gulu, 15 April 2010.

studying traditional authorities, and have held as a central research question: are traditional authorities compatible with effective state-building in Africa? I highlighted that within this literature moral arguments have been constructed for recognising and incorporating traditional authorities into state-building enterprises in Africa, firstly by framing their existence as a natural part of Africa rural society, and thus expected to exist by the rural population, and secondly by viewing 'local mechanisms' that prevent 'so-called pretenders holding office'[168] as examples of an African form of democracy.

I then examined discourses that seem to have enabled the recent revivals of traditional authorities in sub-Saharan Africa. I looked at how discourses such as democratisation have reconfigured power relations across the continent in ways that have opened space for aspiring representatives of groups of people who seek a return to traditional communities or wish to imagine new ones.[169] Within this section I drew attention to the increasing interest international development organisations have shown towards working with traditional authorities and identified the emerging view that the encounter between development and traditional authorities is facilitating the rise in reviving traditional institutions.

In the final section of chapter one I unpacked this view further by examining cases where discourses of development were shaping traditional authority revivals. I shed light on instances in Kwazulu Natal, the western province of Zambia, Malawi, and Ghana where discourses of development have been appropriated by traditional authorities, in attempts to attract development projects and donor funding, and, most interestingly, to reflect re-imagined conceptualisations of traditional authorities held within communities. The example I pointed to in Ghana, where the *Okyenhene* established a secretariat, which soon became furnished with office equipment, and became involved in sensitisation workshops and training programs to modernise the chieftaincy, reflects the way Ker Kwaro Acholi has revived, and of traditional authority revival more broadly across Uganda.

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[168] R. Sklar, "The Premise of Mixed Government in African Political Studies," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 19-20.

[169] P. Englebert, "Back to the Future? Resurgent Indigenous Structures and the Reconfiguration of Power in Africa," in *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa*, ed. O. Vaughan (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 47.

I explored the revivals of traditional authorities in Uganda in chapter two, and in particular ideas of traditional authority in Acholi, from precolonial, through colonial to postcolonial times, and up to the recent conflict. In the first section, I gave an account of how governing authorities are thought to have existed prior to colonialism, and wanted to draw attention to the contestation over Payira supremacy amongst the clans of Acholiland that existed in some of the earliest written accounts on Acholi. I then examined developments in the late colonial period in Acholiland where tensions amongst clans, including Payira, played out in the arena of emerging party politics, along a politicised religious cleavage and in the creation of a constitutional head for Acholi district. Whilst Acholi, and other similarly organised areas like Langi and Teso, sought to establish a ceremonial leader who, it was hoped, could act on an equal footing to the *Kabaka*, amongst the other Kingdoms and aspiring Kingdoms of Uganda there were desperate attempts to salvage declining monarchies, as in Ankole, or invent them, as in Busoga.

My examination of traditional authorities in Uganda in the postcolonial period, in the final section of chapter two, began with a discussion of their abolition under President Milton Obote. I then drew attention to the pleas made to Idi Amin in 1971 from Baganda to restore the Monarchy, and the protest by elders in Kigezi and Ankole protesting against such a move. It was not until Museveni came into power, however, that the Buganda Kingdom, and thus traditional authority across Uganda, was restored to the constitution. As I began to argue in this chapter, and developed further throughout the thesis, state recognition of traditional authorities under Museveni's government has been directly determined by the relationship between the Buganda Kingdom and NRM, and in particular through the Government's relationship with the conservative, monarchist factions of the Buganda Kingdom.

Having navigated through contemporary debates on traditional authority revivals in sub-Saharan Africa and given a summary examination of traditional authorities in Uganda and Acholiland over the long term, I turned to analyse Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival. I chose to delineate the process of how Ker Kwaro Acholi has revived into three phases, to reflect the production of three dominant images of the institution. In each chapter I sought to identify and illustrate links between the strategic practices of Ker Kwaro Acholi, sometimes pointing to the agency of particular actors within Ker Kwaro

Acholi, and the discourses that shaped these practices. In chapter three, I analysed the first phase of Ker Kwaro Acholi's 'revival', whereby a dominant image emerged that cast Ker Kwaro Acholi as the traditional authority of a newly imagined Chiefdom of Acholi. I highlighted how the devastation wrought in Acholiland since the late 1980s became an enabling and supportive environment for ideas to revive Acholi traditional authorities; a project which became the foundation upon which Ker Kwaro Acholi has anchored itself. Drawing on contemporary literature on northern Uganda, I discussed dominant ways the conflict has been understood, and the dominant responses to the identified problems. In this section I highlighted the tendency to view the conflict in northern Uganda as an internal Acholi issue, where a real and perceived breakdown of moral and social norms was often regarded as both the effect of conflict and the cause of its prolongation. Within this milieu of discourses, a revival of Acholi traditional authorities was supported and advocated by government and international actors. Traditional authority was, however, being re-imagined almost solely in terms of their potential roles in ritual cleansing and as neutral brokers of peace in conflict resolution.

I discussin in chapter three how at the dawn of the new century, a host of *Rwodi* were re-installed, a new post of Paramount Chief was created, and *Rwot* Payira appointed to fill the Paramountcy. Although the newly revived *Rwodi* received relatively little attention following the ceremony, Paramount Chief David Onen Acana received sponsorship to undertake courses in conflict resolution in the US and Europe. I illustrated in this chapter how, after Paramount Chief Acana's return from his excursion in 2002, he actively seeks to increase Ker Kwaro Acholi's visibility as a traditional authority, in the eyes of government officials and the numerous donors who were flooding the region. Working together with his close associates; Kenneth Oketta and Francis Lagony; Paramount Chief Acana initiated a series of public events that rendered Ker Kwaro Acholi recognisable as a traditional authority to their target audience. As I detailed in the chapter, these consisted of a coronation ceremony for Paramount Chief Acana, an inauguration ceremony for the re-installed *Rwodi*, the writing of a Strategic Plan and its launch, which was accompanied by a handing over ceremony of a new house built for Paramount Chief Acana with funding from the EU. I argued that, in addition to the spectacle and parade of 'tradition' performed at the public ceremonies, the narrative of the Strategic Plan has been crucial for consolidating an image of Ker

Kwaro Acholi as a traditional authority. In my analysis of the Strategic Plan I drew attention to statements and that dated the institution to the fifteenth century, referred to Acholiland as a single chiefdom, and presented the chiefs of Ker Kwaro Acholi as neutral heirs of original chiefs, resuming the roles they would be playing had colonial and post-colonial rule not suppressed traditional authorities. I then pointed to how this invented past, written to cast Ker Kwaro as the traditional authority of Acholi, was taken up by organisations working in the field of traditional justice because, as Branch has identified, Acholi traditional leaders were being viewed as central for reviving the traditional justice mechanisms believed crucial for restoring war-torn relationships in Acholiland.[170]

In chapter four I explored how Ker Kwaro Acholi was further imagined as a government structure, arguing that this phase of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival was shaped by central Government discourses on traditional authorities and a strategy within Ker Kwaro Acholi to position itself advantageously should traditional authorities be incorporated into the state structure more formally, through regional tier or a federal system. To support my argument I first closely examined a document written by Ker Kwaro Acholi for district authorities, which presented a proposal to set up a 'government structure' for Ker Kwaro. My analysis of this concept paper highlighted how Ker Kwaro Acholi was being re-imagined by central actors of the institution and how they wanted Ker Kwaro Acholi to be known by district level government. It was evident that Ker Kwaro Acholi wanted to make itself known as a traditional authority with technical, expert capacity to potentially form a cultural standing committee in a regional tier structure of government. Ker Kwaro did so by appropriating Government rhetoric for the new positions they were creating in the institution and by making explicit reference to Government proposed provisions for incorporating traditional authorities into the state structure. I then turned to examine national politics, pointing to the concentration of NRM power at the district level,[171] despite decentralisation policies implemented by Museveni's Government, and the politics associated with the creation of new districts. I gave attention to these political developments because they are, not least, reflections of

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[170] A. Branch, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 154-178.
[171] E. Green, "Decentralisation and Conflict in Uganda," *Security and Development* 8, no. 4 (2008).

Museveni's struggle to gain control at the local level. Government discourses on traditional authorities are closely tied to Museveni's struggle to hold onto power, and as I discussed in the chapter, are a direct response to its worsening relationship with the politically threatening Buganda Kingdom. At the core of Government discourses on traditional authorities in Uganda is the idea and constitutional requirement for Kings and clan heads alike to exist as *cultural* institutions, concerned only with 'cultural matters' and thus as non-political actors. I finally discuss in the chapter how Ker Kwaro Acholi embraces and appropriates government rhetoric as a cultural institution, expresses intentions to partner with local and central government for the 'holistic development' of Acholi, and embeds the objectives of its second Strategic Plan within the Government's Peace, Recovery and Development Programme.

The dual projections from Ker Kwaro Acholi of what seem to be contradictory images; of the institution as a government structure and a non-political cultural institution: a potential contender to state power and a partner of Government, remains a paradox I do not attempt to completely resolve in the chapter. Instead, I aimed to highlight the duality and presence of an inherent contradiction that exists as a constituent part of Ker Kwaro Acholi.

In chapter five, I examined the third phase of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival where the institution became known as an agent of sustainable development. I traced the way images of Ker Kwaro Acholi as a traditional cultural institution were utilised as a foundation for casting Ker Kwaro as a 'vital supplement' for development in an emerging post-conflict Acholiland. I returned once again to Ker Kwaro Acholi's first Strategic Plan and analysed the way the form, language and concepts adopted within the text, echoed and reflected discourses of development and had the effect of aligning Ker Kwaro Acholi to international development agendas. At the same time as positioning Ker Kwaro Acholi as a like-minded institution to international institutions such as UNESCO, and with the potential to partner on development programmes, for example, to fight gender based violence, the authors of the Plan also sought to maintain Ker Kwaro's credentials as a traditional authority. I then examined Ker Kwaro Acholi's encounter with The World Bank's Northern Uganda Social Action Fund to illustrate how preconceived ideas, assumptions and images of traditional authorities held by NUSAF, were met and bolstered by the images Ker Kwaro Acholi was projecting of itself. I

pointed out that NUSAF's engagement with Ker Kwaro Acholi, with the effect of bolstering Ker Kwaro's profile amongst NGOs and donors, was based on little evidence that Ker Kwaro could mobilise communities and identify the most appropriate people as facilitators of NUSAF sub-projects. In the final part of chapter five I argued that the establishment and bolstering of a Ker Kwaro Acholi secretariat and the writing and launch of the second Strategic Plan, all facilitated through donor support, served to significantly consolidate images of Ker Kwaro Acholi as an agent of development with the administrative and technical capacity to partner with NGOs and donors.

In chapter six, part three of the thesis, I shifted from discussing Ker Kwaro Acholi in terms of the dominant images that have constituted the institutions revival and turned to examine a more complex picture of Ker Kwaro Acholi, which focused on less visible discourses. The main objective of this chapter was to draw attention to the disjuncture's between how Ker Kwaro Acholi has predominantly come to be known and imagined to be (as discussed in part two), and how Ker Kwaro Acholi functions in practice and is also understood within less visible discourses. I began the chapter with recourse to my interview with Rosalba Oywa, who has worked closely with Ker Kwaro Acholi, yet struggled to pin down what Ker Kwaro Acholi has been evolving into, and called for further research to understand, in reference to Ker Kwaro Acholi, 'the amorphous thing that has happened'. The portion of my interview with Oywa that I discussed in chapter six introduced ways of understanding Ker Kwaro Acholi that challenged and undermined the dominant ways Ker Kwaro has sought to be known. Having expressed surprise that Ker Kwaro was not developing as she had expected or imagined it to, Oywa went on to describe Ker Kwaro Acholi, with great concern, as a process that is creating tensions amongst the *Rwodi* and clans; that poses a danger of becoming a Payira dominated institution; that has become commercialised where social status has become more important than serving the community; and that is mimicking a kingship like Buganda.

Drawing predominantly on interviews conducted in northern Uganda in 2010[172], which ranged from interviews with *Rwodi* of Ker Kwaro Acholi, members of Ker Kwaro's

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[172] N.B. I was unable to interview Paramount Chief Acana until 2011 when he was living in the U.K, studying at a university in Birmingham. I have also had email correspondence with Paramount Chief Acana, Prime Minister Oketta and Rwot Francis Lagony since my fieldwork.

secretariat and government structure, to development practitioners who had worked with Ker Kwaro and government officials (see Appendix A), the following sections of chapter six reflected and supported how Oywa had described Ker Kwaro. These less visible discourses on Ker Kwaro Acholi served to undermine the dominant images through which Ker Kwaro Acholi has negotiated its revival. The disjuncture between dominant images of Ker Kwaro Acholi and the alternative ways of seeing Ker Kwaro Acholi, the latter being more accurate reflections of how the institution functions in practice, provokes the important questions: Whose interests are being served by this disjuncture? And how does this effect reconfigurations of power within northern Uganda and Uganda more widely? While the remit of the thesis has not demanded these questions be directly addressed, I have drawn the conclusion that Ker Kwaro Acholi is a new form of power base in Acholiland, which has been borne from my primary argument that Ker Kwaro Acholi has emerged through the negotiation of dominant images that are significantly removed from the how the institution functions in practice.

One of the lessons that could be drawn from my study of Ker Kwaro Acholi's revival are that the development-traditional authority encounter is a complex one, with changing discursive economies on both sides and an encounter that is not one of domination but of negotiation and indeed dissimulation, with both sides pursuing their own 'political' objectives.

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    Maria Kyed, 209-232. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

APPENDIX A

Name	Title/Job	Date	Place of Interview
Geoffrey Ochora	Parish Chief Okidi	02.03.10	Atiak
James Benon	Lecturer Gulu University	05.04.10	Gulu
Mike Ocaka	Project Officer Ker Kwaro Acholi	06.04.10	Gulu
Santo Okema	Programme Coordinator	06.04.10	Gulu
Sarah Achiro	Project Officer Ker Kwaro Acholi	07.04.10	Gulu
Mike Ocaka	Project Officer Ker Kwaro Acholi	10.04.10	Kampala
Dr Wilfred Ochan	Ass. Representative at UNPF	11.04.10	Kampala
Kenneth Oketta	Prime Minister Ker Kwaro Acholi	12.04.10	Kampala
Wade Snowdon	Information Research and Documentation Officer, ARLPI	14.04.10	Gulu
Mark Avola	Former Programme Manager, Ker Kwaro Acholi	15.04.10	Gulu
Wilfred Opobo	Director of Programmes, ACORD, Gulu	16.04 10	Gulu
Florence Okio	Programme Officer, Gender Justice, ACORD, Gulu	14.04.10 and 16.04.10	Gulu
Richard Komakech	Accountant, Ker Kwaro Acholi	19.04.10	Gulu
Rosalba Oywa	Former Programme Coordinator, ACORD, Gulu	20.04.10	Gulu
Rosetta Lanyero Obon	Head Teacher, St Mauritz, Gulu	20.04.10	Gulu
Jessica Huber	Director of the Peace and Justice Programme, SPRING, USAID	21.04.10	Gulu
Retired Col. Walter Ochora	Resident District Commissioner, Gulu	23.04.10	Gulu
Santo Lapolo	Resident District Commissioner, Pader	26.04.10	Pader
George Odong	Coordinator, NGO Forum, Pader	26.04.10	Pader
George Lugai	Rwot Pajule palwo	27.04.10	Pader
Oyak Ywakamoi	Rwot Kolo	27.04.10	Pader
Ajao Oweka Denous	Rwot Paibwore	27.04.10	Pader
Okot Francis Latyet	Rwot Kabala	27.04.10	Kilak Corner
Omony Ogaba	Resident District Commissioner, Kitgum	28.04.10	Kitgum
Andrew Obol	Branch Coordinator, Caritas, Kitgum	28.04.10	Kitgum
Esther Luk	Elder	28.04.10	Kitgum

Owor Faustino Kiwel	Rwot Lwo Pa Omot	29.04.10	Kitgum
Odong Lira	Rwot Lira Palwo Omor Acer	29.04.10	Kitgum
Unknown	Rwot, from Pader District	29.04.10	Kitgum
Kinyera Vincent	Rwot Palabek	30.04.10	Kitgum
Obol John Odoki	Rwot Padibe	30.04.10	Kitgum
Justo Obita	Rwot Koch Kal, and Minister of Culture, Ker Kwaro Acholi	30.04.10	Kitgum
George Pele	Coordinator, NGO Forum, Kitgum	01.05.10	Gulu
Mark Okot Bernard	Project Officer in Social Services Department, Caritas, Pader	01.05.10	Gulu
Gladys Ocangora	Coordinator, Kitgum Women's Peace Initiative	05.05.10	Kitgum
Carol Exile Apio	Associate Programme Development Officer, NUTI, Kitgum	05.05.10	Kitgum
Stephen Komakech	Legal Officer, Norwegian Refugee Council, Kitgum	05.05.10	Kitgum
Matthew Otto	Minister for Gender, Youth and Special Interest Groups and Minister for Culture and Land Officer, Ker Kwaro Acholi	05.05.10 and 16.06.10	Kitgum
Henry Komakech	Project Assistant, Youth Association (YSA), Kitgum	05.05.10	Kitgum
Macleord Baker Ochola II	Retired Bishop of Kitgum Diocese, Core member of Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, Chairman of Acholi Education Initiative	06.05.10	Kitgum
Jeremiah Muttu	Rwot Patiko	07.06.10	Gulu
Ojara Akileo	Rwot Parabongo	08.06.10	Gulu
Peter Lawot	Rwot Bwobomanam	09.06.10	Gulu
Q.B Kitara Mcmot	Vice District Chairman, acting District Chairman at time of interview	09.06.10	Gulu
Martin Otinga Otto Yai	Rwot Lamogi	11.06.10	Gulu
Ojok Humphrey	Project Officer, Ker Kwaro Acholi	11.06.10	Gulu
Lawrence Opio	Project Officer, Ker Kwaro Acholi	14.06.10	Gulu
Ogigi Peter	Rwot Alokolum and Deputy Paramount Chief, Ker Kwaro Acholi	14.06.10	Gulu
Garrison Latim	Speaker, Ker Kwaro Acholi	14.06.10	Gulu
Ochola Bosco	Deputy Local District Councillor V, Kitgum	17.06.10	Kitgum
Ojok Dison	Rwot Pajimo	17.06.10	Kitgum

Arop Poppy Paul	Rwot Pagen	17.06.10	Kitgum
Lino Owor Ogora	Research and Advocacy Team Leader, Justice and Reconciliation Project	18.06.10	Gulu
Baptist Latim	Rwot Pawel	19.06.10	Gulu
Kenneth Oketta	Prime Minister, Ker Kwaro Acholi.	19.06.10	Gulu
Randy Harris	Development practitioner, USAID	23.06.10	Kampala
Francis Oryang	Rwot Koch	23.06.10	Kampala
Paul Lubana	Project Officer in Social Services Department, Caritas, Gulu	01.07.10	Gulu
Janet Lakor	Elder, Ker Kwaro Acholi	01.07.10	Gulu
Rocky Menya Oyoo	Manager for Gender Based Violence Capacity Building, American Refugee Council	01.07.10	Gulu
James Latigo	Researcher	01.07.10	Gulu
Joseph Okumu	Catholic Priest, and Minister of Culture, Ker Kwaro Acholi	06.07.10	Kampala
David Onen Acana	Rwot Payira and Paramount Chief, Ker Kwaro Acholi	20.06.11	Birmingham, UK

APPENDIX B

Paramount Chief's House/Palace

THIS FOUNDATION STONE WAS
LAID BY H.E.Y.K.MUSEVENI
THE PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
ON THE 15TH JAN.2005

FUNDED BY
EUROPEAN UNION

Foundation Stone for Paramount Chief's House/Palace

**Council of Chiefs meeting place, Ker Kwaro Acholi, Gulu**

Prime Ministers desk

Flag showing Ker Kwaro Acholi emblem

Engravings on desk at Ker Kwaro Acholi of donors initials

Invitation to the launch of Ker Kwaro Acholi's Strategic Plan 2005-2007 and the hand over of the Paramount Chief's House, 2005

Ker Kwaro Acholi's Strategic Plan 2005-2007.

The photo of Paramount Chief Acana on the back cover of Ker Kwaro Acholi's Strategic Plan, 2005-2007.
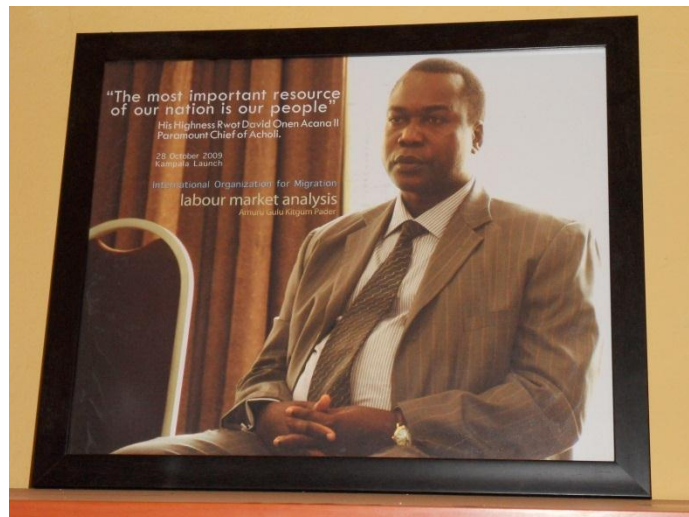
Comemoration of the Paramount Chief's particpation at a launch organised by the International Organisation for Migration, 2009