Authority that is customary: Kitawala, customary chiefs, and the plurality of power in Congolese history

Nicole Eggers
Department of History, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Knoxville, TN, USA

ABSTRACT
This paper uses the history of the religious/healing movement Kitawala in the Democratic Republic of Congo as a lens to explore the relationship between forms of state-sanctioned “customary” authority and alternative nodes of “authority that is customary.” Focusing on three different case studies from different eras of the colonial and post-colonial history of Kitawala, the article explores the history of how the movement became part of the broad field of authority in Congo – at times cutting across, at times transforming, and at times subverting or fracturing the authority of customary chiefs. The article emphasizes not only how state-appointed customary authorities had to negotiate their position between emergent institutions like Kitawala and the colonial state, but also how Kitawalist communities themselves cultivated ideas and institutions of authority, legitimacy, and morality that were often explicitly critical of the state and its institutions and representatives (whether colonial or customary). The article argues that alternative nodes of authority like those cultivated by Kitawalist communities were and are, even in their innovations, rooted in the dynamic history of Central African ideas and institutions of power and must therefore be considered in histories of customary authority in the region.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 29 May 2018
Accepted 16 December 2019

KEYWORDS
Kitawala; DRCongo; customary authority; legitimacy; morality; religious/healing institutions

From 1925 to the time of Independence in 1960, the religious healing movement Kitawala grew to be one of the most significant political and social forces in eastern Congo. Though it had roots in the African Watchtower movement, as it moved across Congo diverse Kitawalis prophets, proselytizers, and practitioners—mostly cut off from broader African Watchtower networks—translated and transformed it to address the needs and concerns of individuals and communities living in a variety cultural and political contexts. At its peak, its influence stretched from Katanga to Orientale to Equateur, and Kitawalists were associated with a number of significant uprisings against colonial authorities. But Kitawalist teachings and activities were never directed solely at Belgian authorities. Everywhere the movement went, it became entangled in local economies of power, both spiritual and political. Often state-appointed customary chiefs found themselves at odds with nascent communities of Kitawalis. In some instances—especially in moments when the movement had grown particularly powerful—these customary chiefs joined the
movement, sometimes willingly and sometimes by coercion. In other instances, they emerged as powerful critics of the movement who were instrumental in the arrest, imprisonment, and relegation of Kitawalist leaders and adherents. Indeed, in many instances Belgians counted on customary chiefs to be a conservative force in their efforts to stop Kitawala, just as many customary chiefs depended on Belgian support to do the same.

In such moments, these state-sanctioned customary chiefs might be considered prime examples of the “decentralized despots” described by Mahmood Mamdani in Citizen and Subject. They were not only enforcing colonial institutional will in suppressing Kitawala, but using the power of the colonial state to secure their own authority in the face of challenges posed by Kitawalist teachings. Yet, as a number of scholars of Africa have pointed out since the publication of Citizen and Subject, such chiefs were never free to be unchecked despots. Rural communities like those where Kitawala became most influential were, as Fred Cooper has observed, “cross-cut by a wide range of connections” and were consistently “sites of debates over moral economy and collective obligations.” Moreover, customary chiefs were often genuinely interested – or at the very least obliged – in serving the interests of their constituents, sometimes in opposition to their own personal interests vis-à-vis their obligations to the colonial state. Indeed, as Reuben Loffman has recently argued, such chiefs, whose tenure was at times quite insecure, often had to go to great lengths to placate their subjects, who “mobilized spiritual as well as secular discourses to hold their chiefs to account.”

But the history of Kitawala offers insight into the history of customary authority beyond interrogating the relative despotism of state-appointed customary chiefs and acknowledging that in many instances such figures did defy the colonial state in their efforts to serve their populations and fulfill their obligation to maintain healthy, physically and spiritually secure communities. The history of Kitawala pushes us to recognize that in the deeper history of the region – in the very language through which the people have articulated ideas about power – authority has always been contentious, and those who have wielded it have had to compose and negotiate it within their communities. As the work of scholars such as Jane Guyer and Samuel Eno Belinga have demonstrated, not only has ensuring health and prosperity historically been a core aspect of the customary duty of authority figures, but the knowledge of how to do so has always been “plural and distributed,” rarely contained in a single individual. Thus, the perceived ability to bring together the right components of knowledge to address a specific situation and ensure physical and spiritual security has always been “intrinsic to power.” Of course, as historical process, such forms of composition were inevitably negotiated, and which possessors of knowledge a chief or local council might call on or support in a given situation would have been a subject of debate that could and did breed dissent and alternative nodes of authority.

In colonial Congo, there existed a myriad of relationships between “customary chiefs” and the populations the Belgian colonial government appointed them to oversee. Some of these positions were created to tie the authority of existent political entities – centralized chiefdoms or kingdoms – into the apparatus of the colonial state. Other chiefdoms (chefferies) were “invented” in the sense that their chiefs were given state-sanctioned authority over segmented populations who were not politically unified under a centralized authority prior Belgian intervention. Moreover, the composition and organization of these chefferies was modified repeatedly over the course of Belgian rule, as the colonial government sought
(with varying success) to control the population and resources of the colony in ever-more efficient ways. But even in the most fabricated of these positions, these appointed chiefs were not free from the moral perceptions and demands of their constituents, which were rooted in discourses of power and authority that were “customary” in the sense that they were historically and contextually constructed. That is, if the kinds of authority envisioned and sanctioned by the colonial state did not always overlap with existent institutions of authority, they nonetheless intersected and created fertile—and often contentious—space for demands and expectations. Faced with such demands, state-appointed customary chiefs sought at times to fulfill obligations historically tied to positions and institutions of authority not recognized by the state, such as spiritual duties of protecting populations against witchcraft, for example. They did this even when (and sometimes because) their claims to legitimacy were tenuous, and built on fictions of the colonial state and the military might that backed them. And their constituents did not always find their individual efforts sufficient.

Thus, it has also historically been the case that these state-appointed chiefs often worked in tandem with, or sometimes in opposition to, other ritual and moral authorities. Moreover, these complementary/competing figures of authority—these priests and proselytizers, these healers and mediums—as possessors of knowledge and power, were not simply benign religious leaders, but often exercised forms of moral authority that at the very least bled into the realm of “instrumental” political power and at times became overtly, and often oppositionally, political. They were what Steve Feierman, John Janzen, and others have called “public healers,” healers of body, spirit, and body politic. They were individuals whose authority was customary—rooted in what David Schoenbrun has called the “durable bundles of meaning and practice” that were and are the building blocks of historically situated interpretations of both “custom” and “authority”—but who were not, institutionally speaking, customary authorities. Indeed, in many instances they were those who dared to imagine and assert ideas of authority and legitimacy that were more diffuse, even overtly critical of the sometimes predatory politics of states and state-making and the power-consolidating forms of authority they produced. Such conceptions of power were often presented in the form of novel institutions, but they were built from the blocks of older paradigms of power and authority no less potent or productive—or customary—than those out of which the customary authority of chiefs and big men emerged.

There is an urgency to understanding the nature of customary authority in Congo and the echoes of colonial violence it resounds. It is deeply entwined in questions of land tenure, rights and obligations, conflict, and citizenship. But the matrices of power and authority in the region that guide the decisions people make about how to engage one another at the level of the individual, the community, and the state are multifaceted and are not now, nor have they ever been, subject to the stewardship of state-sanctioned authorities alone. Alternative forms of authority—such as that of Kitawalist and other religious leaders—have always also been “customary” whether in their complementarity to political authority, their opposition to political authority, or their own inherent political-ness. By conferring state-sanctioned legitimacy on certain forms of authority wielded by chiefs labeled “customary,” colonial governments sought, among other outcomes, to sever secular authority from spiritual authority. As Karen Fields has pointed out, such outcomes were rarely achieved in practice, in part because of the chasm
between colonial rhetoric and the practical constraints of indirect rule. Yet, such institutional initiatives nonetheless have had a profound effect in shaping conversations about customary authority, by placing the role of the customary chief and the nature of his (almost always male) authority at the center and creating a blind spot – a “scotoma,” as Steve Feierman has termed it – around the history of how other forms of authority that are customary have developed and transformed over time.

In what follows, I will explore the nature of the relationship between custom and authority in the history of the Kitawala movement. I will do so with the purpose of highlighting how religious healing movements such as Kitawala have played a significant role in shaping and participating in conversations around authority, custom, and legitimacy in modern Congo, at different moments cutting across, fracturing, and/or reshaping the lines that have defined customary authority. Focusing on Kitawala case studies from three different times and places, I will call attention to the insights that the history of Kitawala and customary authority can give us into the processes of negotiation, competition, and interdependence that characterized relations between customary chiefs, the state, and (often aspiring) religious authorities during the colonial and post-colonial eras of Congolese history. Finally, I will argue that this long and significant history of the relationship between political authority and spiritual authority in Congo continues to shape local politics in many parts of Congo today.

**Kitawala, customary authority, and the morality of power**

Kitawala is part of long history of movements and institutions in Central Africa that have articulated critiques of moral and immoral uses of power and, by extension, political legitimacy. Kitawala was, of course, an innovation in the sense that it was profoundly shaped by the colonial context in which it emerged and incorporated significant aspects of Watchtower Christianity. But the dynamism of Central African institutions – their ability to borrow, merge, and invent, often in ways that were simultaneously innovative and conservative – has long been one of their core characteristics. Thus, if Kitawala was an innovation, it also pivoted on notions of power and legitimacy that are deeply rooted in the region of Central Africa. The authority of chiefs in the region has long carried meanings of spiritual power, and of the ability – and indeed requirement – to wield that power to protect communities. And it has as often been challenged or supplanted by networks of spiritual/healing power and authority – often more diffuse, less tethered to individuals – when such obligations were deemed unfulfilled. Lemba, Nyabingi, or kubandwa are all fitting examples of this process. Kitawalists, in their use of dawas to heal and protect, in their performance of evocations to call on and wield spirits and powers both ancestral and Biblical, sought to alleviate ills in their communities by bringing new vocabulary into this very old language of power and legitimacy. In moments and places where people perceived malady in their lives and communities, where the efficacy and thus authority of customary authorities was in question, Kitawala offered new forms of familiar means to address such ills.

But how that process played out looked different in different places, as it was contingent upon local context. If in Lubutu-Masisi in 1944, it took the form of rebellion against both colonial authorities and any customary authorities who did not join, in other times and regions it played out in fits and starts. Sometimes Kitawalists challenged customary authorities and sometimes they coopted or were coopted by them. Sometimes they built
institutions meant to supplant customary and/or colonial institutions, and sometimes they moved quietly through the secluded spaces of converts’ homes and woodland clearings, with little regard for chiefs and other public authorities. As both ideology and institution – always debated, always in flux, and often situated between doubt and possibility – Kitawala’s paths to influence were multiple and its movement was guided by individuals living in a variety of contexts, addressing a variety of concerns. In the remainder of this section, I present two different case studies from the history of Kitawala that can highlight some of the varied manifestations of that process during the colonial era.

**Tanganyika, 1936**

By 1936, Kitawala was beginning to expand rapidly into northern Katanga. Since 1926, when it crossed over the border with Mwana Lesa from Zambia into the region of Sakania, it had become increasingly influential in southern Katanga, concentrated in the mining regions from Mufumbi, to Elizabethville (Lubumbashi), to Jadotville (Likasi), where it was spread by a network of teachers, preachers, and healers into areas both urban and rural.²⁴ Beginning in the 1930s, the Belgian state, which blamed “subversive sects” like Kitawala for a number of boycotts and labor stoppages in the mining regions of southern Katanga, began to crack down on Kitawalist networks. They did this in part through the use of the newly formed secret police to hunt down and arrest leaders of the movement.²⁵ But such attempts at suppressing Kitawala backfired in a number of ways. First, their dogged pursuit of Kitawalist leaders through the use of secret police only enhanced the reputation of Kitawalists, as rumors spread that Kitawalists were so powerful the Belgians feared them, and that Kitawalists leaders had the power to elude capture, often by “becoming white.”²⁶ Second, as they arrested these Kitawalist leaders and sought to defuse their influence by “relegating” them back to their presumed ancestral territories, they succeeded largely in facilitating the spread of Kitawala into new frontiers.²⁷ Indeed, many of the Kitawalist leaders and adherents who were sentenced to this form of relegation went into it with explicit agendas to missionize the regions to which they were being relegated.²⁸

Such was the case with Kulu Mapenda, who had come to Northern Katanga in early 1936 with an explicit mission from his teacher, Lobati Ngoma (himself an influential Kitawalist leader, a convert of Mwana Lesa) to further spread the movement.²⁹ Just a few months after his arrival in Albertville (Kalemie), however, colonial authorities arrested him and sentenced him to relegation in the village of Luseba, in rural part of the territory of Albertville, under the authority of a young district chief named Benze.³⁰ Upon his arrival in Luseba he found the social climate somewhat unfavorable to the continuation of his mission. In the years preceding, the region from Kalemie to Kongolo had been subject to significant upheaval caused by a different movement called Kibangile, which colonial reports classified as a “hunt for witches” that inspired “abnormal and disquieting” infractions.³¹ The reports about Kibangile are intriguing and share much in common with reports from similar movements geared toward cleansing communities of perceived interpersonal and spiritual malevolence, or witchcraft.³² In 1934, they described groups of diviners identifying sorcerers in villages across the countryside, from Albertville to Kongolo. People accused of witchcraft went before an inquisitorial tribunal of these diviners, who would force them to confess and relinquish their dawas or face corporal torture.³³
According to one report, diviners designated as many as 164 men and 2469 women as sorcerers during the episode.\textsuperscript{34} Given the severity of the movement, colonial police pursued and severely punished those involved, and by the end of 1935 the fervor over Kibangile seemed to have subsided. Still, as a result of Kibangile’s influence, when Kulu Mapenda arrived at the end of 1936, authorities both customary and Belgian in the region remained very mistrustful of any sort of religious innovation.\textsuperscript{35} It is perhaps for this reason, as well as his previous arrest, that in the first months after his arrival in Kalemie, Kulu laid low. He waited until the customary chief, Benze, left town for several weeks in mid-February of 1937 to begin proselytizing in earnest. Free of “the resistance and the opposition of the customary authorities” in Benze’s absence, Kulu declared himself a messenger of God, and began teaching and baptizing people into Kitawala.\textsuperscript{36} He was aided by several associates, themselves convicted Kitawalists who had been relegated to the region.\textsuperscript{37} Within six weeks he amassed nearly 200 followers in the territory of Albertville. By the time Benze returned, Kulu had converted the chiefs of several villages in the district, who facilitated the conversion of nearly all of their constituents. When Benze sent a policeman to arrest Kulu, he was attacked and injured by Kulu’s followers. Apparently convinced that his power rivaled that of Benze, Kulu and went so far as to go to Benze himself and publicly harass him in front of other notables. Kulu had overestimated his position of power, however, and was arrested shortly thereafter. In his home, the authorities found long lists of converts that Kulu had kept, and it was those lists that allowed colonial authorities to truly grasp the breadth of his influence.\textsuperscript{38}

Though Kulu Mapenda was arrested within a couple of months, his efforts at conversion mark an important moment in the beginning of a decades-long history of Kitawalist influence in Northern Katanga. But in this context of thinking about customary authority, the history of Kulu Mapenda’s proselytizing efforts offers some interesting insights. First, it reminds us that the history of Kitawala’s spread across the region did not play out in vacuum, but rather was almost always a continuation of existing conversations about who was wielding power immorally or ineffectively, and how they might be critiqued for doing so. In Northern Katanga, that conversation had begun with Kibangile and Kitawala, which would have also emphasized anti-witchcraft activities and communal healing, was a continuation.\textsuperscript{39} Such conversations – and the violence they were apt to inspire – strongly indicate that people in the region felt spiritually and physically vulnerable. They were prepared to listen to emergent ideas about how such concerns might be addressed.

It is difficult to know the specific ills to which the people converted by Kulu felt vulnerable. With Kibangile, Rueben Loffman has argued convincingly that, at least in the area around Kongolo, there had been an epidemic of sleeping sickness that immediately preceded the movement, and that the unease caused by the epidemic brought the leadership of local territorial chiefs under the scrutiny of their constituents, pressuring them to support the Kibangile movement.\textsuperscript{40} I do not possess evidence for epidemic disease in the regions surrounding Albertville in 1936, but nor do I think it necessary to demonstrate the presence of a specific epidemic or other singular cause to prove that people felt ill at ease. In this region at this time, as in other parts of Congo at the height of the Depression in the mid-1930s, people would have experienced a heightened sense of malady – “a state of not being held well by the seen and the unseen,” to use Stacey Langwick’s definition – as labor markets were tight, state services were minimal, and pressure from the state on chiefs
to perform more with less led to pressure on their constituent populations. Access to material resources and the health they conferred was constricted. Sometimes this meant disease, but sometimes it meant less obvious forms of malady, rooted in both the material and spiritual worlds.

In such situations, the authority of a district chief like Benze, whose legitimacy with his constituents pivoted on his obligation to ensure their well-being, was a target for doubt and critique. Such critique could begin small, with a proselytizer of new ideas, like Kulu Mapenda waiting for an opportune moment to begin building networks of adherents and sowing the seeds of dissent. Such figures might offer visions of a world where customary chiefs like Benze, who were scrutinized for their relationship to an exploitative colonial state and who wielded power in ways deemed unsatisfactory or even detrimental to the community, were no longer in positions of power. That such a vision would have been part of Kulu Mapenda’s message seems highly likely, given both the nature of much of the known Kitawala discourse and the fact that, after Benze’s return, Kulu directly confronted him in public. Eventually, this critique gained significant local support from other marginalized authorities, as evidenced by the fact that Kulu converted and gained the support of multiple village chiefs in the surrounding area. Indeed, Kulu Mapenda’s own assumptions about his power versus that of Benze, indicated by his willingness to confront him publicly, should demonstrate the depths of his perceived support. He clearly felt emboldened by the time Benze returned. That he was ultimately arrested speaks to the relationship between customary chiefs and the colonial state.

On one level, the events of Kulu Mapenda’s story can be read to serve the common narrative of Kitawala as an anti-colonial movement. For indeed, Kitawalists regularly criticized the colonial government and those who served its interests in their teachings and actions. But Benze was not only a target because of his connection to the colonial government – he was a target because his leadership allowed for malady more broadly conceived. Kitawalist visions of the world remade were always more radical than the absence of colonial rule. Their teachings called for a world in which they could be spiritually and physically free from all forms of malicious, self-serving forces and the individuals and institutions who wielded them – free from “physical and spiritual slavery,” to use Kitawalist language. Such charges extended far beyond the colonial government and those who represented it, often to include various other customary institutions – initiation groups and secret societies, for example – whose form and function Kitawala so clearly resembled, but whose power it critiqued.

The history of Kulu Mapenda and Kitawalist leaders like him reveals the extent to which the field of authorities that are customary has always been multiple. Kibangile and Kitawala were not aberrant, they were part of a dynamic process by which people sought guidance from a multitude of individuals and communities who presented themselves as authorities – possessors of knowledge and power – that could address problems that other authorities were either missing, ignoring, or even causing. Their appearance can certainly be understood as the result of particular maladies – specific diseases or economic conditions – but malady is a persistent reality of the human condition. It is an ever-present threat and possibility. Thus, processes that bred alternative authorities like Kulu Mapenda are perhaps more aptly understood as a facet of customary authority that was and is inherent to the matrixes of power in the region. Such authority was often embodied by those with no claim to inherited power, often with no interest in continuing existing
institutions of authority. Such people were nonetheless crucial actors in the field of authority, and are worth considering in conversations about customary authority. A second example highlights this point further, but it also highlights different paths taken by both Kitawalists who in this instance set up alternative state-like institutions, and customary authorities who struggled to reconcile state, communal, and even interpersonal demands on their leadership and loyalty.

Opala, 1948–50

In the years after the Lobutu-Masisi uprising, Kitawala continued to spread into new theaters of influence, particularly to the north in the regions in and around Stanleyville (Kisangani). Ambitious teachers, healers, and prophets facilitated the spread of Kitawala into these regions, and they often initiated whole villages and clans into the movement at prolonged revivals. In April 1949, there was one such mass conversion in the area around Litoko, in the territory of Ponthierville, led by a Walengola man by the name of Malesho Caboboca Lamola, a native of the village of Batiakuanda and a former worker for Cobelmin. The story of Malesho and the community he built among the Bokuma clan is of interest both for what it reveals about the authority of Kitawalist leaders and what it reveals about how one clan chief, a man named Yeni, balanced the competing powers of Kitawala and the Belgian state in his role as a customary authority.

The events began when Melesho sent his son to the village of Batiamanga, near Litoko, to announce that “God” (Malesho) would be arriving soon. He then came to the village accompanied by an entourage of pastors (Walengola as well) and a “crowd of adepts and admirers.” Following this, there was a week-long revival during which Malesho recruited nearly all of the Bokuma clan, including women and children, and saw to the formation of two new Bokuma pastors. At this revival, converts participated in an initiation ceremony that looked similar not only to other colonial accounts of Kitawala conversion, but to a number of different kinds of initiations in the region. According to a report by G.M. Neutens, the initiation consisted of first “rubbing the eyes of the initiate with pili pili (hot pepper)” in order to allow the initiate to “see the ancestors.” The adept then laid on the ground with a baton under their hair and waited until they felt “under the influence” of the pili pili, at which point the pastor applied the juice of sugar cane to their eyes. The pastor then introduced the adept – “barely able to see” – to two “tokoko” (termite hills), which had been covered before the ceremony with an American flag, which was said to have come from their ancestors.

After conversion, adepts were required to follow a number of prescriptions. Neutens offers some examples in his report:

If it rains, you cannot have relations with a woman until the rain stops.
Never laugh at a Sinaili, an adept of Kitawala
If someone is bathing in a river, never look at him twice.
Never eat meat of elephant, or of aardvark
The wife of an adept is called “madame”

At the same time, Malesho told adherents that they must abandon their ancestral customs. In particular, he forbade traditional medicines to members of Kitawala. Instead, he encouraged adherents to use Kitawalist medicines. They used these healing medicines
to “coat their bodies” in order to cure or prevent maladies ranging from a serpent bite to a knife wound. In essence, such medicines rendered Kitawalist converts invulnerable. Examples of Kitawalist medicines reported by Neutens included “the juice of the leaves of an orange tree as well as some other plants (pai-pai, parasoilier, bokosa, matungulu, des herbs, etc).” While many of these materials could also be found in the very medicines that the Kitawalists were forbidding, it is worth remembering, as Steve Feiereman has pointed out, that within many African healing complexes, what people understand to render a medicine effective is not necessarily its biological properties but the ways in which speech has been used to transform it and activate its therapeutic properties. It is thus possible for the same materials to be understood as either traditional or Kitawalist, depending on how they were activated.

Such reports led at least one of Neuten’s subordinates in the region, M. Faelens, to dismiss the revival as a “con” that lacked the anti-Belgian ideas that animated Kitawalist thought in other regions. But Neutens questioned that conclusion, noting that even if it was not a subversive movement against the Belgians specifically, it was undoubtedly against the whites. He reported that Malesho was known to use language that was clearly critical of the authority of the whites. In a message written to his adepts, Malesho wrote of Kitawalist teachings:

Iko maneno mazuli sana ata bachugu banafuga mie. lakini mie siache duku yangu Bazugu balirongofia sie Mikaeli … mie nakwisa kunywa maneno ya bare batu

It is a very good message and even if the whites imprison me, I will not abandon my faith. The whites hid the angel Michael from us and I’m finished listening to (drinking) the words of those people.

Furthermore, Neutens noted, “the adepts are inspired by the absolute conviction that after their death they will become white,” and that the quest to see their ancestors was undertaken with intention of confirming this conviction.

Clearly, Neutens saw such discourse about the duplicitousness of whites and the appropriation of whiteness – and the power that implied – as threatening. But more threatening still were the alternative networks of authority set up by the Kitawalists. Part of what Kitawalist leaders did in the region was to set up an alternative system of leadership, with a hierarchy characterized by different ranks – members, pastors, deacons, judges, clerks, etc. These leaders also organized a system of tithes/taxation to support their immediate communities. Adepts would make small contributions – three francs for men, two for women, and none for children – which were collected and kept within the communities of adepts to serve their needs. Neutens surmised that not only did adepts not find such tithes onerous, but that Malesho probably could have asked them to give ten times that amount “without diminishing the number of adepts.” He reported that they also developed a system of courts, which made decisions regarding any number of issues in the community. Unfortunately, Neutens offered no description of how these courts functioned.

Such appropriation of instrumental power by emergent Kitawalist leaders is not uncommon in the history of Kitawala. There are a multitude of examples of Kitawalists building alternative or parallel institutions of authority throughout both the colonial and post-colonial eras.
heavily from Christian and colonial bureaucratic terminology – pastors, deacons, judges, clerks – the process of creating such alternative positions and networks of authority within religious/healing networks is firmly rooted within the traditions of power in Central African. Indeed, as an institution, the conceptual distance between an organization like Kitawala as it materialized in and around Litoko and one like Nebeli, discussed by Vicky Van Bockhaven in this issue, is not far.57 Certainly they used different language and rooted their notions of legitimacy in interpretations of power that could – at least from the perspective of most Kitawalists (who preached abandonment of “ancestral customs”) – put them at odds with each other. But it is precisely the conceptual proximity of Kitawala to such institutions that made them a target of Kitawalist critique.

The similarities between Kitawala and healing institutions such as Nebeli do not end with their propensity to create alternative or parallel nodes of authority. Such institutions also shared in common a tendency to put state-appointed customary authorities in the position of having to “straddle different fields of power” as they negotiated between the changing demands of their constituent communities and the duties required of them by the colonial state, which included the suppression of “subversive” institutions.58 The story of the Bokuma clan chief Yeni, the state-appointed customary authority in Litoko at the time of Kitawala’s proliferation in the region, highlights very well the processes of negotiation customary authorities engaged in as they struggled to compose their power, revealing a significant facet of the field of authority in the region.

By the beginning of 1948, Yeni seems to have been in contact with Malesho, who was corresponding with him by letter.59 And when Malesho came for the initiations in 1949, Yeni was “by chance or trick” in Opala to remit his annual receipts. That is, he conveniently absented himself from the region. After that, Neutens suspects, “Yeni began to play a double game.” On the one hand, he presented himself publicly as an opponent to Kitawala, sending word to the chiefs of neighboring territories warning that “indigenes of another territory had introduced a bad medicine among the Bokuma.” Meanwhile, he was apparently himself a convert to Kitawala, converted by his wife and father-in-law. And back in his own territory he allowed the pursuits of Malesho and his followers to continue unabated. Beyond this, it seems he used his own authority to coerce (or at the very least allowed for the coercion of) other influential figures in his territory into converting. Indeed, Yeni was ultimately suspected of allowing his sons to use violence and torture to intimidate non-converts.60

In one incident, Yeni’s sons allegedly went to the home of a non-convert – a notable by the name of Masumbuka – and pretended like they had been on a hunt in the forest and had not eaten, obliging Masumbuku to show them hospitality. Masumbuku suspected, however, that the two had other intentions for coming to his home and attempted to escape. They pursued him and in the ensuing fight, Masumbuku injured his leg very badly. Ultimately, they allegedly tied Masumbuku and his brothers to a tree and tortured them. Masumbuku died a few weeks later from the injury to his leg, but first managed to alert territorial authorities in Opala to what had happened and they discovered Yeni’s “game.” Colonial authorities then arrested the leaders of Kitawala in the territory of Opala and sentenced those who were accused of torture to death.61

Meanwhile, the authorities detained Yeni for several months in Ponthierville while they deliberated his fate. After the arrest of the Kitawalist leaders, Yeni denounced his affiliation with Kitawala, saying that the only reason he had joined in the first place was because
everyone else had and because his father-in-law, in particular, had exerted immense pressure on him, demanding that Yeni convert in order to remain married to his daughter. Nonetheless, Yeni managed to maintain an “indisputable prestige” among his constituents, a number of whom migrated to Ponthierville while he was detained there, ostensibly to support him. It is for this reason that colonial authorities were unsure what to do with him. One solution they proposed was to depose him. But if they were to depose him, Neutens argued, he needed to be removed from the territory entirely and sent to a reincorporation camp, as it would be no good having such a popular former territorial chief living in the vicinity of a chief newly appointed by the state. The other solution they proposed was to use him. They could return Yeni’s rank and prestige and then put him under surveillance to guarantee he henceforth used his influence against Kitawala. Such deliberations—about whether “reformed” chiefs could be used to curb Kitawala’s influence—were common among colonial officials charged with addressing “the Kitawala problem.”

It would be easy to read the actions of Yeni, player of the “double game,” as purely pragmatic. Facing pressure—perhaps to the point of coercion—from both his constituents and his family to convert, he relented. But he also understood the danger of appearing to support Kitawala to those outside of his community, particularly the colonial government. So, he praised Kitawala out of one side of his mouth and condemned it out of the other. But such a characterization of his actions, as described by Neutens, is perhaps a bit presumptuous. We know nothing about the sincerity of his conversion aside from what he said when under interrogation by the colonial authorities. One might just as easily imagine that, confronted with a new form of knowledge borne by a charismatic figure like Malesho, Yeni was genuinely interested in this new faith and the potential power it could bring to his clan. It would seem that his people had, in recent years, struggled with famine—according to Neutens, “hunger reigned” in the region—so it is not unreasonable to imagine that he, like his constituents, was open to innovation. It is difficult to know Yeni’s motives, but what seems clear is that he was a well-liked leader who carried “indisputable prestige” in his clan, even after (and perhaps because of) his arrest for involvement in Kitawala. He composed his authority with the tools—spiritual and secular-political—that were at hand, working in tandem with alternative authority figures like Malesho and his pastors to bolster his legitimacy and attend to the health of his community when it made sense and acquiescing to the demands and power of the colonial government when pressed.

Kitawala, customary authority, and the state

The cases of Tanganyika in 1936 and Opala in 1948–50 teach us a lot about processes of negotiation and interdependence between customary authorities and the Belgian state. If customary authorities depended on the might of the Belgian state—in the form of police officers like those who served Benze, for example—in order to resist challenges posed to their authority by Kitawala, the Belgian government was also deeply dependent upon customary authorities to serve as a conservative force in their efforts to curb the spread of Kitawala. Sometimes this interdependent relationship functioned to repress Kitawala in the short term, but in the long term it quite often failed.

There are a number of examples from the history of Kitawala I could use to illustrate this point. In the history of the most famous Kitawalist uprising in Lobutu-Masisi in 1944,
for example, the Belgian government relied on information relayed to them by loyal chiefs to put down the rebellion. Meanwhile, many notables – whose authority the rebels directly challenged – relied on the Belgian state to protect them, which they failed to do in some cases, resulting in the deaths and public humiliation and even torture of more than one notable and, in some cases, their wives. In the years after that revolt, as Kitawala spread into new territories of Orientale, appointed chiefs (Sultanis) in Opienge wrote letters to the Belgian authorities, warning them of the growth of the religion and appealing to them for aid in curbing its influence. Writing to the territorial administrator in Swahili, they complained that their subjects “do not do work anymore like they did before,” and warned that they (the Belgians) “should not be surprised when those people (Kitawalists) begin to kill,” and they “should not say that they (the Sultanis) had not warned them.” In essence their message was this – do something about Kitawala in our district or you will regret it.

Meanwhile, as noted above, a number of Belgian authorities continued to believe that customary authorities could serve as a conservative force that could quell the appetites of convicted Kitawalists for “subversive movements.” In such circumstances, many theorized, adherents could be “forced to submit to the customary powers and discipline.” From such conviction had been borne the policy of natal relegation. There is certainly reason to believe that in many cases, natal relegation was successful at removing individuals from contact with Kitawalist communities and, thus, undermining their ability to continue to build their understanding of and faith in the movement. After all, many hundreds of Kitawalists were relegated in this manner, and nowhere near that many have turned up again in arrest records in their natal districts as Kitawalist leaders. But some did. Kulu Mapenda is a prime example of this, as were the two men he was arrested with, all of whom had been relegated to their “ancestral territories.” Other Kitwalists who had been relegated away from extra-customary areas to Tanganyika territory would turn up again in arrest records relating to the Kitawalist uprising in Manono in 1942. Indeed, such instances must have been more common than even the archives relate. Ultimately, it is the clear failure of these relegation policies that would convince the Belgians in the early 1940s – as they were in the midst of WWII – that they could no longer trust this form of relegation, which by then they had concluded simply resulted in more “contamination” of the population. For this reason, they moved to create a series of internment camps, later known as Colonies Agricoles pour les Relégués Dangereux (CARDs), which were conceived of in part to house the growing numbers of Kitawalist prisoners.

Yet Belgian authorities never really gave up on the idea that certain, preferred customary authorities could be a “good influence” on those who might be tempted by the ideology of Kitawala. The case of Yeni, who was, after his confession, proposed as a potential ally to keep further spread of Kitawala in check, is a good example. In another interesting example, Belgian authorities considered the release of a notable named Kipukupuku who had been relegated to Kasaji CARD in southwestern Katanga for practicing Kitawala. Because he was respectful to authority, had little contact with Kitawalists (even in the camp), was personable and, most importantly, was a notable in his village, they believe he could “be an important adversary to Kitawala in that context.” That was in 1958, just a short two years before independence.
Highlighting this kind of interdependence between customary authorities and colonial authorities, whose forms of power often served to prop each other up, is certainly not a new observation in the study of the colonial state. But it does add an important dimension to the study of a religious movement like Kitawala, which continues to be portrayed as a form of insurgence – therapeutic or otherwise – against the colonial state, rather than as a part of complex history of negotiations over power, morality, and authority that had interpersonal/individual, local/regional and national/state dimensions. Kitawalists never took the colonial state as their sole subject of critique, and were always engaged in communal and individual level conversations about power and vulnerability. Customary authorities like Yeni who found themselves drawn into that conversation had to negotiate their position as just one of several nodes of authority, which included the colonial state, but also Kitawalists, composing and recomposing their power and influence based on the demands and possibilities of interpersonal, communal, and state-level relationships.

**Contemporary Kitawalist enclaves: authority outside the state**

The history of Kitawala did not end with colonialism. Neither did the significance of relationships between spiritual authority, customary authority, and political legitimacy. Nor have state actors ceased to be important in the negotiations of such power dynamics. To illustrate this point, I offer one more, quite recent case from the history of Kitawala, that of Kitawala-Filadelphie. Of course, such diachronic analysis comes with risks. In particular, one risks eliding the many important changes in state and local authority relations that have defined the decades of Congolese history in the interim. However, in ending with the story of Kitawala-Filadelphie, I am not attempting to draw a direct line between the experiences of Kitawalists and other authorities in the colonial era and those of Kitawalists and other authorities today, nor to ignore discontinuities. Rather, I seek to illustrate the point that, as in the past, the field of authority that is customary in Congo today is multiple and there are significant continuities in how various community leaders compose and negotiate their authority via claims and connections to knowledge, power, and protection. Congoles communities look to such individuals for moral authority – for guidance in how to navigate the social, political, physical and spiritual realms of their lives. Such authority, though often not rooted in the state (and explicitly so in the case of many Kitawala enclaves), is significant. To be sure, some forms of authority are weighted by their connections to prestige, wealth, and networks of state patronage and power, but even those on the margins, taken in aggregate, represent an important presence in the field of authority. Moreover, the continued influence of such authorities profoundly shapes the day to day experiences of many people in Congo.

In 2011, the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo decided, with the support of UNICEF, to push for universal vaccination against polio. In some parts of the country, particularly in the province of Tanganyika, government health workers encountered serious pushback from these efforts, as numerous local communities exhibited deep mistrust of their intentions. One such community was known as Kitawala-Filadelphia, a Kitawalist community who live in an exclusively Kitawalist village, just outside of Kabalo, south of Kongolo. It is one of an estimated 350 Kitawalist village-missions that exist in Tanganyika alone. There are also numerous such communities outside of Tanganyika, in other regions where Kitawala has been historically influential. At the time,
one of the regional leaders of the church – a man named PP2 (short for Pastor Paul 2) – led Kitawala-Filadelphie.

UNICEF presented the story of his community and their interactions with health officials dealing with the vaccine in a series of short articles and a video on their website. In it, they present PP2 as the brave but cautious modernizer in a place where the road to universal vaccination is “strewn with magical pitfalls and biblical challenges” and “people act based on tradition and faith.” PP2 is portrayed as UNICEF’s great hope. He “risks permanently weakening his authority or even being thrown out of his role as leader” in the Kitawalist community by agreeing to allow vaccinations to be given to the children of his village at night and to allowing two of his own children to be sent to the UNICEF camp to learn more about the vaccination program so that they could educate their peers, in what UNICEF terms the “Trojan Horse Strategy.” In the story, UNICEF reporters juxtapose PP2 to Kitawala “fundamentalists” who are “more likely to wear clothes made of raffia and to carry bows and arrows” than to modernize like PP2.75

There are a variety of things that are of interest in this story, not least the language used by UNICEF to describe the community, which recalls descriptions of Kitawala frequently given by Belgian state officials in the colonial era.76 But in the context of thinking about customary authority, I’d like to focus on a couple of key points. First, PP2’s story represents an aspect of the history of Kitawala and customary authority I have previously mentioned, but not elaborated on. That is, in many regions Kitawalists ultimately created their own villages and systems of authority, settling in separate cités/quarters or founding entire villages, sometimes deep in the forests. Kitawalists often conceived of these spaces as missions, which they explicitly created to exist beyond the reach of the state and its representatives.77 Indeed, Laurent Ilungambiya, the local coordinator for the UNICEF polio-vaccination campaign in Kabalo who spent significant time working at Kitawala-Filadelphie, explained to me that “the political and customary authorities are not welcome at the missions,” and they are often barred from entering by barricades.78 In these villages the spiritual authorities embody positions of leadership. They serve as both moral authorities and as intermediaries between the community and the state when necessary, as in the case of the vaccination campaign. The result has been a series of dispersed but often interconnected villages whose leadership is derived from religious authorities who, like PP2, exhibit many of the characteristics of other kinds of customary authorities.79

How such authority functions is illustrated quite well by the case of the vaccination campaign. PP2, as the authority figure in the community, had an obligation to protect the moral, spiritual, and physical well-being of his community. It is clear from footage of the negotiations between himself and UNICEF representatives that he took that responsibility quite seriously, thoughtfully weighing the options, though he risked alienating himself from other Kitawalist leaders and potentially losing his position in the community if he authorized compliance. His authority was not absolute, but it was influential. It was not grounded in state authority, but he was also not an island – he answered to other authorities in the region, even if they were not state authorities. But he was also not entirely divorced from the influence of state and customary authorities – rather, he served as a mediator between such authorities and his community. Like the customary authorities that Melissa Graboyles discusses in her study of medical research and consent in East Africa, he served as an “essential gatekeeper” for the community.80 His position was
not to accept or deny the vaccine on the part of his community, who would then be forced to comply, but rather to serve in the position of advisor, whose opinions and decisions his community respected not because they were law, but because as a spiritual expert, they believed he embodied knowledge of the spiritual and social ramifications of accepting the vaccine. It was less that the state – represented by UNICEF – needed his permission to conduct the vaccination campaign in the mission than that they needed his support. Authority of this nature is composed, not appointed. It emerges organically from communities in search of guidance, and is embodied by those who successfully bring together components of knowledge that people deem relevant to understanding and interpreting a given situation. It can be and has been embodied by customary chiefs, but has as often been embodied by individuals like PP2.

Conclusion

In Congo today, figures of authority like PP2 remain crucial in the negotiation between state, local, and individual level politics. Without PP2, there would have been no compliance with vaccination campaign. But PP2 likewise had to negotiate new meanings of health and wellbeing with his peers and followers to make the campaign a success. Today, as in the past, if the state and its representatives – customary and otherwise – wish to function in a meaningful way in such communities, they must navigate and participate in these discourses of power and authority that emphasize the connection between the political, individual and communal health, and spiritual well-being. Today, as in the past, leaders of those communities who embody authority that is customary must navigate the murky waters of the morality of state action, and decide when to innovate and when to insist on continuity, when to resist and when to comply. The legitimacy of their choices has historically been and continues to be subject to the judgement of their communities. Considering such figures and the communities they serve in analyses of customary authority – now and in the past – is crucial to gaining a more robust understanding of the broad field of authority that is customary.

Notes

1. On the transformation of Kitawala in Congo, see: Eggers, “Kitawala in the Congo.” On the Africa Watchtower movement, see: Fields, Revival and Rebellion; and Gordon, Invisible Agents.
2. Eggers, “Mukombozi and the Monganga,” 417–36.
3. Mamdani, Citizen and subject, 18–25.
4. Cooper, “Possibility and Constraint,” 167–96; Leonardi, “Violence, Sacrifice and Chieftainship,” 535–58; Alexander, The Unsettled Land, 5–7.
5. Cooper, “Possibility and Constraint,”171.
6. Loffman, “An Interesting Experiment,” 462.
7. Guyer and Belinga, “Wealth in People,” 102.
8. Gordon, Nachituti’s Gift, 62–85; Mathys, “People on the Move,” 158–78.
9. Loffman “An Interesting Experiment,” 465; Fields, Revival and Rebellion in Central Africa, 61–98.
10. Loffman “An Interesting Experiment,” 471–3.
11. Schoenbrun, A Green Place, 5 and 12–5.
12. Feierman, “Colonizers, Scholars”; and Janzen, “Ideologies and Institutions.”
13. Schoenbrun, “Conjuring the Modern,” 1438.
14. Krug, Fugitive Modernities.
15. Hoffman and Vlassenroot “Armed groups,” 202–20.
16. For a classic work on these debates, see: Spear, Thomas. “Neo-traditionalism.”
17. Fields, Revival and Rebellion, 30–90.
18. Feierman, “Colonizers, Scholars,” 189; Pendle, “Politics, Prophets and Peace.”
19. Van Bockhaven, “Anioto: Leopard Men Killings,” 21–44; and Janzen, “Ideologies and Institutions.”
20. MacGaffey, Kongo Political Culture; and Gordon, Invisible Agents, 63–5.
21. Janzen, “Ideologies and Institutions”; Feierman, “Colonizers, Scholars”; Schoenbrun, “Conjuring the Modern,” 1431–2; and Berger, Religion and Resistance.
22. For examples of Kitawalists discussing dawas, see: “Report on revolt from Walikale” (1944), AIMO 1638, Archives Africaines, Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Brussels (hereafter AA); “Kitawala Interrogations: Ponthierville” (1947), GG 13.939, AA; “Kitawala Interrogations: Stanleyville” (1957) GG 6754, AA; “Account from Yalikombo,” January 1957, GG 17714, AA.
23. Eggers, “Mukombozi and the Monganga.”
24. Fields, Revival and Rebellion, 161–92; and Higginson, “Liberating the Captives,” 55–80.
25. Higginson, “Liberating the Captives,” 66–7.
26. For evidence of such rumors, see: GG17714 (1948), AA; personal interview with Kabanga Kamalondo, the head of the Kitawalist church in Kalemie, 10/19/10; and Eggers, “Kitawala in the Congo,” 105–54.
27. On colonial relegation policies, see, for example: “File 27,” (1959), JUST 15, AA; “Letter to Assistant District Commissioner,” (1951), GG 13.939, AA.
28. “Rapport sur les agisments du nommé Kulu Mapenda,” (1937), Maurice Martin de Ryck Congo Papers (hereafter MMRC), Michigan State University Special Collections.
29. Lobati Ngoma also appears in the records under the alias Lobati Kima. John Higginson also discusses Kulu Mapenda: Higginson, “Liberating the Captives,” 68–70.
30. “Synthèse du Movement Subversif Kitawala,” 1955/56, AI 1621, AA, 149–55. See also, Higginson, “Liberating the Captives,” 69.
31. “Synthèse du Movement Subversif Kitawala,” 146.
32. On Kibangile, see: Loffman, “An Interesting Experiment.” On other witch-finding movements in Central Africa, see Gordon, Invisible Agents, 50–68; Fields, Revival and Rebellion, 163–93.
33. See: “Synthèse du Movement Subversif Kitawala,” 146–7; “Letter Regarding Indigenous Superstitions,” (1936), AIMO 1613, AA.
34. “Synthèse du Movement Subversif Kitawala,” 146.
35. “Rapport sur les assignments …” (1937), MMRC.
36. Ibid.
37. “Synthèse du Movement Subversif Kitawala,” 150; “Rapport sur les assignments …” (1937), MMRC.
38. Ibid., 150
39. Eggers, “Kitawala in the Congo”; Eggers, “Mukombozi and the Monganga”; Gerard, Fondements Syncretique du Kitawala, 85–92; and Fields, Revival and Rebellion, 163–92.
40. Loffman “An Interesting Experiment,” 6–8.
41. Langwick, Bodies, Politics, 17. On economic pressure in Congo at this time, see: Jewsiewicki, “The Great Depression,” 158–62.
42. For a useful (if imperfect) discussion of Kitawalist beliefs vis-à-vis customary authority, see: Gerard, Fondements Syncretique du Kitawala, 93–103.
43. The notion that Kitawala was meant to free people from both physical and spiritual slavery has come up multiple times in interviews with contemporary Kitawalists: Ilunga Wesele Joseph, Interview with Author, Digital Recording, Kitawala Mission approx. 10 km outside of Kalemie, Katanga, 11/11/10; Shindano Masubi Ayubu, Mission Kitawaliste de 75 km (from Kalemie), Katanga, 2010; Elders of Église de Dieu de nos Ancestres au Congo (EDAC), Digital Recording, Interview with the author, Uvira, 9/4/2010.
44. Gerard, *Fondements Syncretique du Kitawala*, 85–92.
45. “Contribution a la étude de Kitawala” (1954), AI 4737, AA; and “Kitawala Report” (1956), AI 4737, AA.
46. "Report of Kitawala in Opala," (1951), GG13.939, AA.
47. Ibid.
48. This is similar to a series of conversions that reported to have happened in Lowa in 1947: “Kitawala Interrogations: Ponthierville” (1947), GG 13.939, AA.
49. "Report of Kitawala in Opala."
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Feierman, “Explanation and Uncertainty,” 324.
53. "Report of Kitawala in Opala."
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. See, for example: Gerard, *Fondements Syncretique du Kitawala*, 67–71.
57. van Bockhaven, “Anioto and Nebeli.”
58. Ibid., 2.
59. "Report of Kitawala in Opala."
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. See, for example: Detheire F. M., “Lettre commissaire de Orientale” (1958), 6 October, GG 17715, AA.
63. "Report of Kitawala in Opala."
64. See: Eggers, “Mukombozi and the Monganga.”
65. Olembo Pierre and Liani “Letter to the Territorial Administrator of Opiege” (1953), GG17714, AA.
66. “Letter to Assistant District Commissioner.”
67. See Annex B in “Synthèse du Movement Subversif Kitawala.”
68. A series of documents relaying these debates among authorities concerned with the “Kitawala problem” can be found in this folder: GG 13.939, AA.
69. “Lettre commissaire de Orientale.”
70. For a recent example, see Hunt, *A Nervous State*.
71. See also: Eggers, “Prophètes, Politiciens,” 73–91.
72. “Filadelphie” is a local rendering to Philadelphia - an homage to Watchtower’s origins in Pennsylvania.
73. Personal Communication, Laurent Ilungambiya, local coordinator for the UNICEF polio-vaccination campaign in Kabalo, 9/18/17. Many of these missions are small, counting perhaps 10–20 people. I visited such a mission 75 km outside of Kalemie in 2010. Some, like the mission located about 10 km outside of Kalemie (which I also visited in 2010), are larger.
74. Lys Alcayna-Stevens has met them in her research in Salonga National Forest (personal communication, 2017). See also: Furuiichi and Thompson, *The Bonobo*, 190–202; and Schatzberg *Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa*, 138.
75. The story of PP2 and the polio vaccination campaign is told in an article and video put out by UNICEF in 2013: Petit and Pittenger, “Part 1” and “Part 2”; and UNICEF polio, “The Owl’s Secret.”
76. Eggers, “Kitawala in the Congo,” 183–209.
77. Schatzberg, *The Dialectics of Oppression*, 130.
78. Personal Communication, Laurent Ilungambiya, local coordinator for the UNICEF polio-vaccination campaign in Kabalo, 9/18/17.
79. Eggers, “Prophètes, Politiciens.”
80. Graboyles, *The Experiment Must Continue*, 111.
Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

Research presented in this paper has been supported by ESRC GCRF grant number ES/P008038/1.

Bibliography

Alexander, Jocelyn. *The Unsettled Land: State Marking and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893–2003*. Oxford: James Currey, 2006.

Berger, Iris. *Religion and Resistance: East African Kingdoms in the Precolonial Period*. Tervuren, Belgique: Musée royal de l’Afrique centrale, 1981.

Cooper, Fred. “Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective.” *The Journal of African History* 49, no. 2 (2008): 167–196.

Eggers, Nicole. “Mukombozi and the Monganga.” *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute* 85, no. 3 (2015): 417–436.

Eggers, Nicole. “Kitawala in the Congo.” PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 2013.

Eggers, Nicole. “Prophètes, politiciens et légitimité politique: Discours locaux du pouvoir et transformation religieuse dans le conflit congoïsl.” *Politique Africaine* 129 (March 2013): 73–91.

Feierman, Steven. “Colonizers, Scholars, and the Creation of Invisible Histories.” In *Beyond the Cultural Turn*, edited by Victoria E. Bonnell, et al., 182–217. Berkley: University of California Press, 1999.

Feierman, Steven. “Explanation and Uncertainty in the Medical World of Ghambo.” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 74, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 317–344.

Fields, Karen. *Revival and Rebellion in Central Africa*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Furuichi, Takeshi, and Jo Myers Thompson. *The Bonobos: Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation*. New York: Springer Science and Media LLC, 2008.

Gerard, Jacques. *Fondements Syncretique du Kitawala*. Brussels: Le Livre Africaine – C.R.I.S.P, 1958.

Gordon, David. *Invisible Agents: Spirits in a Central African History*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012.

Gordon, David. *Nachatuti’s Gift*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.

Graboyles, Melissa. *The Experiment Must Continue*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015.

Guyer, Jane I., and Samuel M. Eno Belinga. “Wealth in People as Wealth in Knowledge.” *The Journal of African History* 36, no. 1 (1995): 91–120.

Higginson, John. “Liberating the Captives: Independent Watchtower as an Avatar of Colonial Revolt in Southern Africa and Katanga, 1908–1941.” *Journal of Social History* 26, no. 1 (Autumn 1992): 55–80.

Hoffman, Kasper and Koen, Vlassenroot. “Armed Groups and the Exercise of Public Authority: the Cases of the Mayi-Mayi and Raya Mutomboki in Kalehe, South Kivu.” *Peacebuilding* 2, no. 2 (2014): 202–220.

Hunt, Nancy. *A Nervous State*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

Janzen, John. “Ideologies and Institutions in Precolonial Western Equatorial African Therapeutics.” In *Social Basis of Health and Healing in Africa*, edited by John Janzen, and Steven Feierman, 195–211. Berkley: University of California Press, 1992.

Jewsiewicki, Bogumil. “The Great Depression and the Making of the Colonial Economic System in the Belgian Congo.” *African Economic History*, no. 4 (Autumn 1977): 153–177.

Krug, Jess. *Fugitive Modernities*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018.

Langwick, Stacey Ann. *Bodies, Politics, and African Healing the Matter of Maladies in Tanzania*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011.
Leonardi, Cherry. “Violence, Sacrifice and Chieftainship in Central Equatoria, Southern Sudan.” *Africa* 77, no. 4 (2007): 535–558.

Loffman, Reuben. “An Interesting Experiment: Kibangile and the Quest for Chiefly Legitimacy in Kongolo, Northern Katanga, 1923–34.” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 50, no. 3 (2018): 461–477.

MacGaffey, Wyatt. *Kongo Political Culture: The Conceptual Challenge of the Particular*. Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University, 2000. David Gordon (2012).

Mamdani, Mahmood. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996, 18–25.

Mathys, Gillian. “People on the Move.” PhD diss., University of Ghent, 2014.

Pendle, Naomi. “Politics, Prophets and Peace: The Customary law and Armed Mobilizations of a Nuer Prophetess.” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 14, no. 1 (2020). doi:10.1080/17531055.2019.1708544.

Petit, V., and J. Pittenger. “Part 2: The Trojan Horses.” Accessed 27 September 2017. https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/drcongo_68046.html.

Petit, V., and J. Pittenger. “Part 1: Meeting the Elephant King.” UNICEF. Accessed 27 September 2017. https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/drcongo_67983.html.

Schatzberg, Michael. *The Dialectics of Oppression*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

Schatzberg, Michael. *Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Schoenbrun, David. “Conjuring the Modern in Africa: Durability and Rupture in Histories of Public Healing between the Great Lakes of Eastern Africa.” *The American Historical Review* 11, no. 5 (December 2006): 1403–1439.

Schoenbrun, David. *A Green Place a Good Place*. Portsmouth, NH: Heineman, 1998.

Spear, Thomas. “Neo-Traditionalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa.” *The Journal of African History* 44, no. 1 (2003): 3–27.

UNICEF polio. “The Owl’s Secret: A Powerful Ally in the Fight to End polio in DRC.” Accessed 27 September 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOXkHzRbt7Y&feature=player_embedded.

Van Bockhaven, Vicky. “Anioto and Nebeli: Local Power Bases and the Negotiation of Customary Chieftaincy in the Belgian Congo (ca. 1930–1950).” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 14, no. 1 (2020). doi:10.1080/17531055.2019.1708544.

Van Bockhaven, Vicky. “Anioto: Leopard Men Killings and Institutional Dynamism in Northeast Congo, c. 1890–1940.” *The Journal of African History* 59, no. 1 (2018): 21–44.