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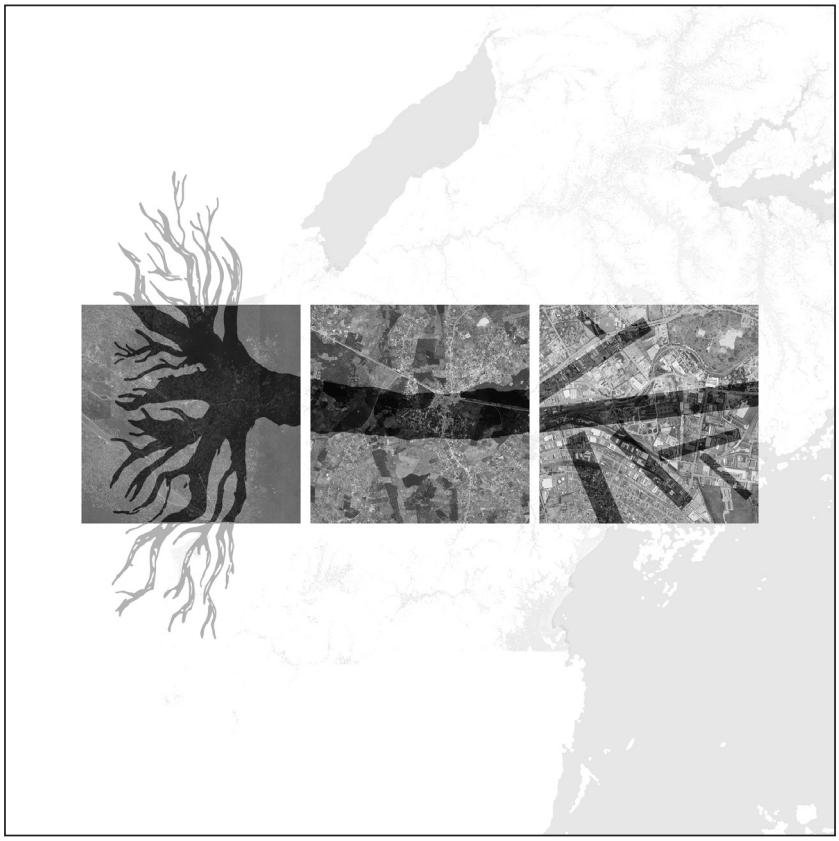
storytelling otherwise for a just forestry economy in Kampala's city region



Shinnosuke Albert Wasswa

[re] framing the narrative

storytelling otherwise for a just forestry economy in Kampala's city region

Masters Thesis report
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Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment,
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Our dearest parents, sisters and brothers; for their unwavering support and confidence in me throughout the journey. My dream would have remained a dream without you.

“Until the story of the hunt is told by the lion,
the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter”

Ewe-Mina proverb (Achebe, 1958)

to the lands,
to the people

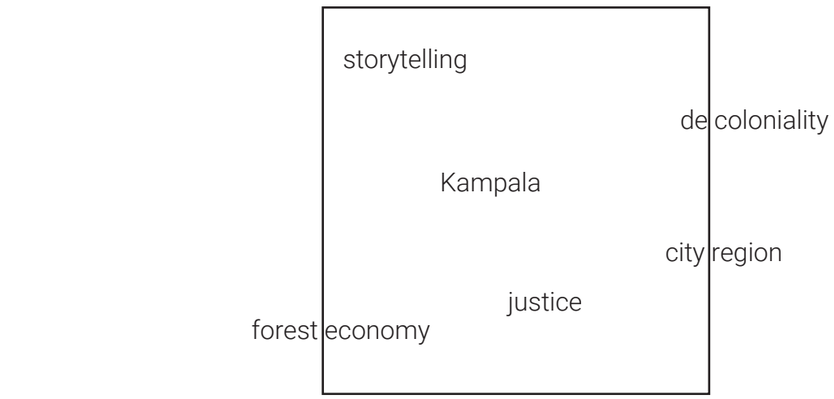

Figure 1: Key words arranged in/around the common frame of knowledge (Source: Author)

abstract

Kampala is the heartbeat of Uganda's economy and has driven rural-urban migration over the years as people travel in search of better opportunities (Namwanje, 2022). This has led to rapid urbanisation and unprecedented growth of the informal sector that extends beyond the geographical confines of the city.

Rural areas, acting as spatial extensions of the city, have served as productive landscapes, supporting Kampala's bustling informal economy and the livelihoods of city dwellers. Over the years, large expanses of uncultivated land in rural areas and natural forests in some cases, have been replaced with monocultural commercial forests causing socio-ecological degradation in Kampala's city region.

While studying past and current trends in Uganda's forest governance, as well as the socio-cultural relations between people and forests, the study brings to light the social and epistemic injustices of past and current exclusionary forestry policies and practices. Storytelling is used not only as an investigative tool to understand the lives of the Batwa indigenous forest peoples, but also as an approach to document local knowledges and envision an alternative future outside the realm of western technocratic approaches. Counter-storytelling operates as activism, transcending oppression while fostering emanicipation and transformation of the Batwa people. In so doing, the project seeks to achieve self-determination for a just forest economy in Kampala's city region.

Key words: storytelling, Kampala, forest economy, city region, indigenous knowledge, decoloniality, justice

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acronyms

CFR	Central Forest Reserve
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
GKMA	Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area
ICCs	Indigenous Cultural Communities
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
KCCA	Kampala Capital City Authority
LFR	Local Forest Reserve
MLHUD	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
MoWE	Ministry of Water and Environment
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NEMA	National Environmental Management Authority
NFA	National Forestry Authority
NP	National Park
NWA	National Wildlife Authority
TAU	Tree Adoption Uganda
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UOBDU	United Organisation for Batwa Development in Uganda
UN	United Nations
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
WLR	Wild Life Reserve
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

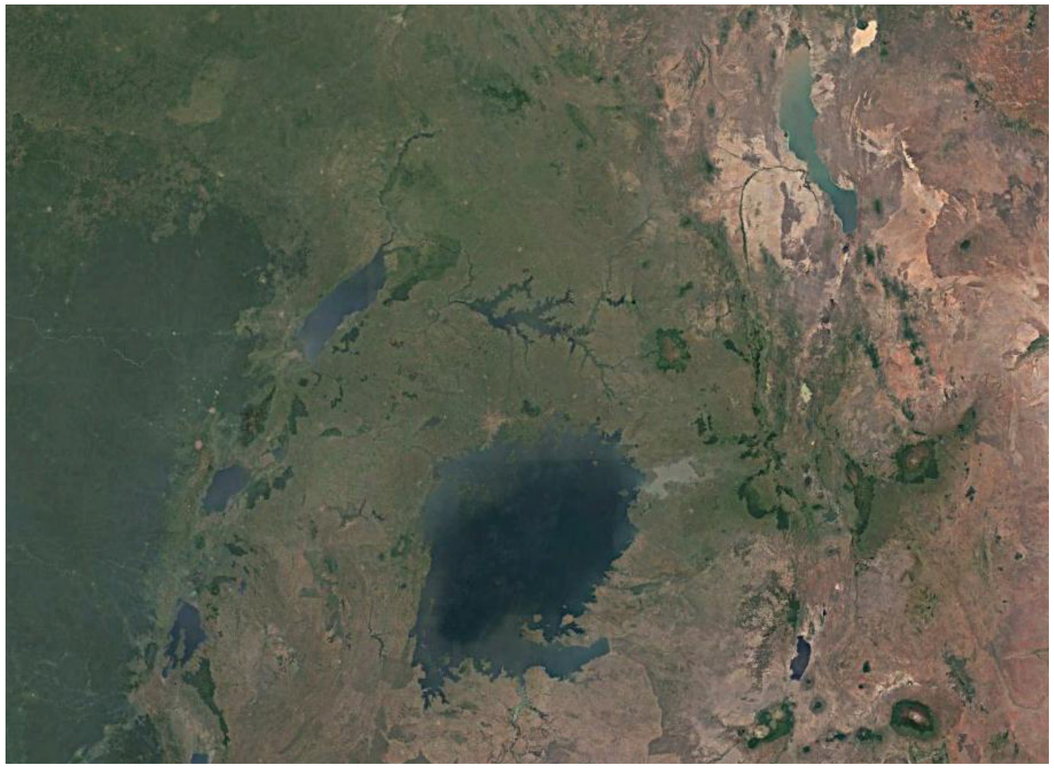


Figure 2: Map of the interlacustrine region (Source: Google earth)

notes

The interlacustrine region

For purposes of this study, the national borders created during the colonisation of Africa have been ignored to view the regional landscape as a contiguous natural and spatial entity. The focus will be on the interlacustrine region - the geographical territory between Lakes Albert, Victoria and Kyoga. Not emphasising the national borders is not in anyway a political statement by the author.

Alternative ways of thinking

'Knowledge' as we know it is generated in formal institutions through rigorous research and review processes. This modern approach often overlooks other ways of knowing and doing, many of which existed for centuries, if they still do. I hope to explore informality and localised knowledge as sources of other ways through which we can develop socially and environmentally just solutions to the challenges of modern forestry practices.

Nature - man duality

In traditional Buganda, like many other non-western contexts, man is considered a part of nature - a higher power associated with gods and worships - rather than a steward who sees nature as incapable of taking care of itself. In an age of weather manipulation and other attempts by man to tame nature, I hope to challenge the common 'habits of thought' that make nature and humans distinct (Cronon, 1992, p.8).

Definition of development

Development is universally accepted as a process that the 'under-developed' states should strive towards. However, development in its contemporary sense focuses on economic growth, which is exponential. This prioritises profit above people and planet, thus encouraging exploitation of both for endless growth. The current capitalistic model is therefore flawed and I hope to overcome its unquestioned norms.

Figure 3: Half human, half planet (Source: Google earth)

Part 1

Understanding the context

global pressures, local externalities

“Wanga gushaka ihene hakibona, bwakwira ugahebeba nkayo”

- Rufumbira proverb

Translation: You refuse to look for the goat early, and later you cry like it.

Figure 4: Expansion of Kampala over the past 20 years. Left: 2000, Right: 2022 (Source: Google earth)

Figure 5: Kampala is the melting pot of people, tribes and cultures from the region (Source: Adengo architecture)

Problem field

As cities grow, they inevitably transform the landscapes on which they sit and those around them. To situate the study in its place and time, the trends driving Kampala's urbanisation and the ensuing patterns/changes in the city's peripheries are brought to light. The ubiquitous plantation patchwork, a spatial manifestation of these shifts, is revealed as a symptom of deep-lying planning challenges. A dive into the history of human, forests and the eucalyptus plantation in central Uganda unravels the genesis of the socio-environmental injustice in the wood value chain.

Trends driving Kampala's urbanisation

Regionality

At 5%, the East African region holds the world's fastest urbanising rate (UN-Habitat, 2014). Kampala, Uganda's capital and largest city by far, is one of Africa's fastest growing cities with annual growth rates of 5.6% (Vermeiren et al., 2012). Owing to its location within the East African Community (EAC), it is a central hub and regional conduit that links the upcoming economies of South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the hinterland, with the global market through neighbouring Kenya and Tanzania.

Demographic growth

Hosting nearly a third of the country's total urban population, Kampala is substantially larger than any other city in Uganda (KCCA, 2012). Originally planned for 150,000 inhabitants, its current resident population is 1.75 million with a daily work force of about 4.5 million (Ngoga, 2018). With the urban population expected to surpass 7 million by 2035 (United Nations, 2019), the burgeoning population and ensuing haphazard urbanisation is expected to aggravate the pervasion of scattered unplanned settlements (Ngoga, 2018).

In addition to a high national fertility rate of 4.7 children per woman (World Bank, 2020), this growth can be attributed to rampant rural-urban migration as people move in search of jobs and economic opportunities. The city is thus endowed with a rich cultural mix, composed of people originating from diverse rural landscapes and representing various tribes across the country and beyond. As the majority of city dwellers can be traced back to ancestral land in the countryside, the demography can be seen as a display of Kampala's broad territorial reach.

Figure 6: Bustling business in Kikuubo, Kampala where informal businesses thrive (Source: istockphoto.com)

Figure 7: Timber trade is largely informal with dealers mainly selling sawn timber and poles (Source: Daily monitor)

Informality

Because the city has failed to provide adequate services including housing, utilities and jobs for its soaring population (KCCA, 2012), the informal sector has played a crucial role in filling this void. Although informality is most visible in the housing sector with informal settlements housing over 60% of the city's residents (UN-Habitat, 2007), Kampala's economy is also dominated by the informal sector (KCCA, 2016). This is particularly so in retail and wholesale which account for more than half of the city's workforce (Les Ateliers, 2019) and over 1.5 million jobs (KCCA, 2019). Many city dwellers' livelihoods are dependent on value chains of food and other commodities produced in rural areas.

Booming construction industry

There has been a spike in the real estate sector as more and more houses are built to meet the demands of the soaring population. Currently, there is a housing deficit of one million houses (KCCA,) with the gap expected to rise in the near future. Materials including sand, aggregates and cheaper timber are sourced within outside the city while steel, aluminium, cement, glass and others are imported from the rest of the world. The construction material value chains has far-reaching impacts on the environment and the trade is lucrative business.

Lucrative wood trade

Burgeoning demographics has led to a surging demand for woodfuel, construction timber and other wood products, as well as tree seedlings. However, a large market share of the wood trade is informal, with about 80% of sawn wood in Kampala's market coming from 'illegal' sources (Kambugu et al., 2021). With the expected urbanisation and population increase in the coming years, the demand for wood will only continue to rise, fuelling even more illegal trade.

Aspirations for the 'modern' city

For over 100 years, and despite important transitions (especially the end of colonialism), a modernist vision for African cities has held sway and indeed, that increasing numbers of urban residents have bought into this vision. Reinforced by the legacy of colonial ideas of European supremacy and the influence of global culture and telecommunications, it continues to be the vision to which all African countries and most residents of African cities aspire (Rakodi, 2006).

Climate geopolitics

The natural environment including forests is largely politicised (Robbins, 2019). A number of renown multinational companies including IKEA, Kitkat and Boeing have funded largescale tree plantation projects in a bid to offset their greenhouse gas emissions. This ongoing greenification has resulted in socio-environmental externalities severely affecting local communities and ecosystems.

Figure 8: Clearing of 'bush' and uncultivated land to pave way for plantations (Source: East African Agri news)

Figure 9: Wildlife including endangered pangolins have been displaced in the process (Source: savepangolins.org)

Trends outside Kampala

Proliferation of production landscapes

Plantations outside the city have increased tremendously to meet the increasing demands for food and other commodities. These include banana, coffee and tea among others, which are both consumed locally and exported. Recently, 5,000 acres of Bugoma forest was deforested to pave way for sugarcane plantations. The result is man-made landscapes that is not reflective of its people or natural environment, machines of replication (Tsing, 2016). Consequently, rural landscapes have been reduced to continuous scenaries of monocultures.

Biodiversity loss

As natural forests are razed and uncultivated 'bushes' are cleared to pave way for infrastructure and expansive monocultures, wildlife are driven further away from human activity, loosing their habitat in the process. The countryside has traditionally been home to wildlife ranging from leopards, mangabees and pangolins, which are now endangered. The large scale singular growth of exotic plant species has destabilised ecosystems, exhausting the soils, draining water tables and also eradicating naturally occurring plants that previously flourished.

Livelihood loss

In traditional Buganda, trees were not only symbolic of higher spiritual deities but were also a source of livelihood - food, medicine, cloth, fuel and shelter, for rural communities. The 'meaning of the tree' once diverse, has been reduced to a tradable commodity, only as valuable as its price on the timber market. The Batwa, the last remaining indigenous tribe, were relocated out the Gahinga forests in 1991 and now seek a 'normal life' with a brick-walled structure for a house. Deforestation, land clearing and the subsequent emergence of production landscapes has deprived local communities of access to once a communal natural resource and eroded their cultural heritage.

Climate change seasonal variation

As the world grapples with increasing temperatures and sea levels, the interlacustrines region's seasonal patterns have also changed in recent years. Annual dry and rain seasons have become inconsistent and unpredictable compromising farmers' agricultural yields. While unprecedented heavy rainfall has triggered landslides in eastern Uganda, rains have become less frequent in Jinja as a result of encroachment on Mabira's primary forest. Destruction of natural vegetative cover has and will continue to destabilise natural geological cycles, impacting people's lives in devastating ways.

Figure 10: Improved road infrastructure has expedited extraction of forest resources (Source: cirad.fr)

Infrastructure development

The expansion of the road network, power and water grids has been made possible with financial aid from organisations including the World Bank, European Union and foreign governments. Whereas improved road infrastructure has eased mobility within the country, it has made natural resource extraction and transportation easier, thus expediting its depletion. At the same time, extensive power supply has made sawmilling and wood processing in remote locations possible with lower energy costs, enabling upscaling of mechanisation of the wood industry and further exploitation of forests.

Industrialisation and growth of towns

The emergence of industries in rural areas has in turn created jobs for local residents, earning them capital to re-invest by starting businesses and real estate in the locality, consequently boosting local economy. For example, the Chinese plywood manufacturing plant along Hoima road has led to growth of Kabongo town and in the evenings, long queues of people can be seen marching out of the factory towards the town. Although such industries have created new livelihoods for town residents, they have replaced natural landscapes, polluting the air, land and waters.

Capitalistic attitudes

The wood value chain supports the livelihoods of many people in rural areas as it is their primary source of income. With the commodification of trees, farmers for instance have resorted to planting primarily fast-growing and fast-selling tree species and in extreme cases, the sale of their ancestral land. The tendency to seek profit over everything else has also fuelled illegal trade in hardwoods and deforestation of forest reserves in both Uganda and the DRC. Without doubt, the prioritisation of financial gain at the expense of forest ecology and people's livelihoods will have catastrophic impacts in the long term.

Changing societal values

Consequently, the shift to 'modern' economic models and political systems has led to the financialisation of natural resources including land and forests, which has inturn led to privatisation of land that was once communal. Individual landowners have a degree of freedom to develop their land as they wish and to 'protect' it from outsiders. This detachment from the traditional value of collectivism has also manifested in a highly individualistic society especially in the cities, where everyone is only concerned with their wellbeing and indifferent to their traditional roots and identity.

Figure 11: Pilgrims at the Ekyabagabe tree shrine in Ntungamo District (Source: theeastafrican.co.ke)

Spatial outcome - *Proliferation of eucalyptus plantations*

The urbanisation of Kampala has fuelled the pervasion of eucalyptus monocultures that have devastated the aesthetics, ecologies and people's livelihoods in distant rural landscapes. Urban growth, coupled with a surge in population, has led to an increased demand for charcoal, construction timber and other wood products in the city. To meet this demand, there has been extensive land clearing and deforestation to pave way for monocultural tree plantations. The environmental tragedy has been aggravated by improved road infrastructure and rural industrialisation, which have enabled large scale wood extraction and processing. Ecological systems and the livelihoods of local communities have both been ravaged by these mushrooming production landscapes.

But how did we get into this vicious cycle? To understand the genesis of plantation forestry, we need to analyse the history of forestry practices in the interlacustrine region.

Figure 12: Mubende town surrounded by a patchwork of eucalyptus monocultures (Source: Google earth)

Source: https://batwaexperience.org/?attachment_id=400

Source: https://imperialismhistoryuganda.weebly.com/during-imperialism.html

Source: https://eagle.co.ug/2019/09/16/57th-independence-day-anniversary-synopsis-key-achievements-outlined.html

Source:Watchdog Uganda

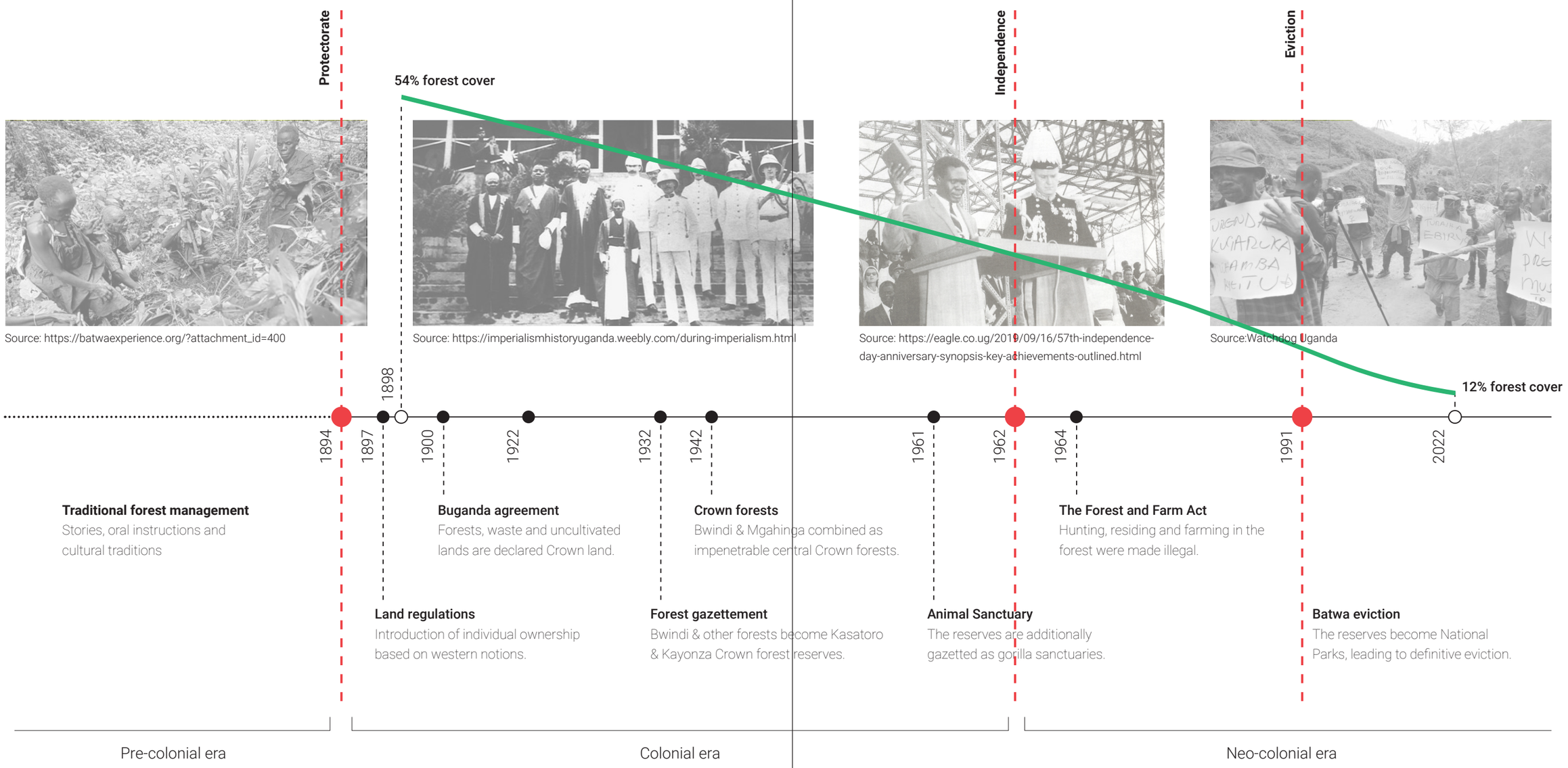


Figure 13: Timeline of forests, plantations and forestry policy (Sources: Author, based on data from Statista, UN,)

A history of forest governance in Uganda

In pre-colonial times, forests were governed by myths, taboos and other customary laws that prevented over exploitation or abuse of forest resources. A key turning point was the signing of the 1900 Buganda agreement which declared all forests, wasteland and uncultivated lands as crown land, under the Queen of England. The 1942 policy gazetted Bwindi and Mgahinga as Crown forests with further gazettement of the forests as gorilla sanctuaries in 1961. It was the declaration of the forests as National Parks in 1991 that served the final blow to the Batwa, who were since forcefully evicted without any compensation or resettlement plans.

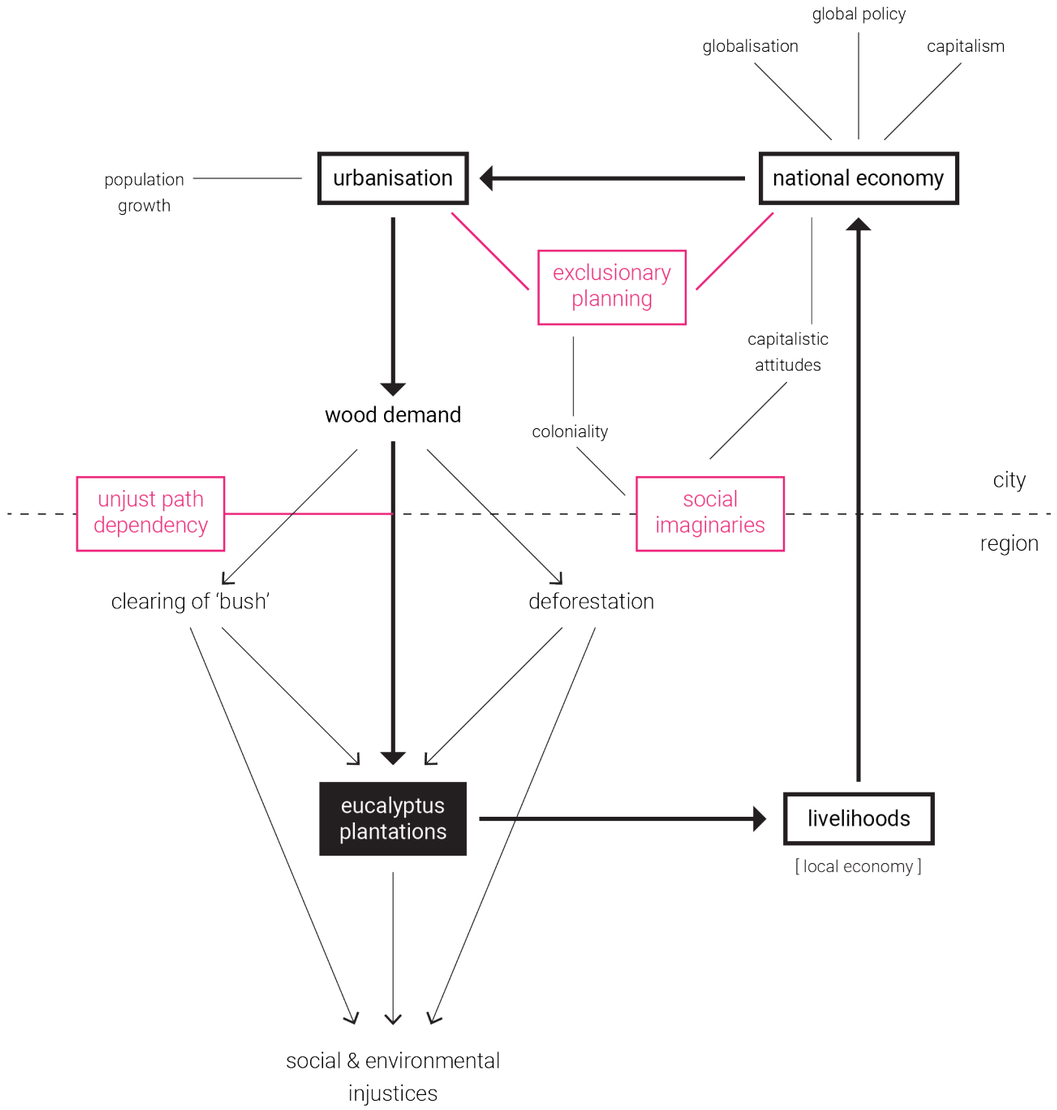


Figure 14: Problem summary showing the cyclic nature of the problem (Source: Author)

Conclusion of problem field & historical analysis

The historical analysis reveals the key issues behind the interlacustrine region's forest management challenges as exclusionary planning processes, conflicts between local and western knowledge/value systems and ingrained path dependencies.

Social imaginaries that perpetuate growth (Thinking)
The modern value system prioritises profit and economic growth above everything else across territories and the associated social fabric. As citizens strive for a 'better life', unfortunately this happens at the cost of the natural environment and the livelihoods of other people. Traditional values such as communalism and interdependence are quickly fading and being replaced by individualism in pursuit of 'modernity'. The Batwa people, now in their second generation outside the Gahinga forests, have completely lost touch with their old ways of life and become estranged.

Exclusionary planning processes (Process)
From the inception of commercial tree plantations in Uganda, local knowledge systems or ways of life in relation to forests were not consulted. This exclusion of people of the place has continued to date with modern conservation law that denies indigenous tribes of their rights to the land, cordoning it off for 'conservation' and conseuqently stripping them of their livelihoods as was the case with the Masai. Non-involvement of essential human and non-human actors, prevents their voices from being heard, resulting in actions that violate their rights.

Locked-in path (Outcome)
There is a long-established dependence on wood fuel and construction timber sourced from forest reserves and tree plantations. Worsestill, the wood trade is largely informal, combining both legal and illegal practices. This cycle is bound to continue repeating itself until the land becomes neither productive nor habitable.

For the purpose of this research, the triad of 'thinking', process and outcome will be used to explore the challenges and solutions.

Figure 15: Map showing the anthropogenic transformation of tree biomass across landscapes from Kampala to the DRC rain forest (Source: Author)

Problem statement

Social imaginaries [thinking]
Although eucalyptus tree plantations attempt to meet the ever-increasing demand for wood in Kampala, they have detrimental socio-cultural and environmental impacts which prevalent societal attitudes do not prioritise.

Exclusionary planning [process]
Plantation forestry is not grounded in the local context or traditional society, and is therefore bound to destroy them. Colonial policies established to exploit resources while ignoring local communities still persist to date.

Unjust path dependency [outcome]
The lock-in will potentially result in the perpetuation of injustices including the irreparable decimation of biodiversity, unwarranted loss of livelihoods and estrangement of people from their culture.

Planning needs to take into account ‘other ways of knowing’ and indigenous value systems to ensure socially and environmentally just outcomes of the region’s wood value chain.

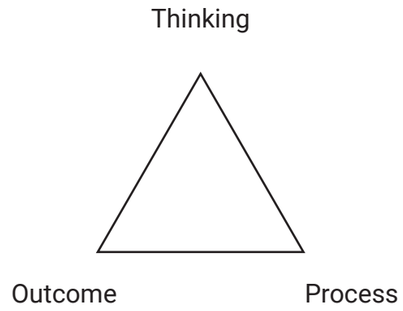


Figure 16: Triad of thinking, process and outcome (Source: Author)

method

RQ 1 - How have the socio-cultural relations between the Batwa people and forests evolved over time?

product

RQ 2 - What are the socio-cultural impacts of the current wood value chain in Kampala's city region?

How can a local narrative based on storytelling and knowing otherwise, be leveraged to envision a just forest economy in Kampala's city region?

goal

RQ 3 - How can a just forest economy that is rooted in its socio-cultural and epistemic locality be realised?

Figure 17: Research questions illustrated (Source: Author)

Research questions

Main question
How can a local narrative based on storytelling and knowing otherwise, be leveraged to envision a just forest economy in Kampala's city region?

Sub-question 1
How have the socio-cultural relations between the Batwa people and forests evolved over time?

Sub-question 2
What are the socio-cultural impacts of the current wood value chain in Kampala's city region?

Sub-question 3
How can a just forest economy that is rooted in its socio-cultural and epistemic locality be realised?

Aim and outcome

This research aims to develop an alternative way that is grounded in its local context to frame, analyse and address socio and epistemic injustices in the current forest economy. The intent is to explore storytelling and 'other ways of knowing' as methods to challenge hegemonic technocratic solutions, potentially envisioning futures that incorporate local knowledge and value systems.

The intended outcome is for the research to transcend academia by initiating change in Uganda's society and forestry sector, raising awareness of the current dire situation, emphasising the urgency for change and proposing alternative pathways in the forest economy.

The following chapter elaborates on these methods and intended outcomes.

Part 2

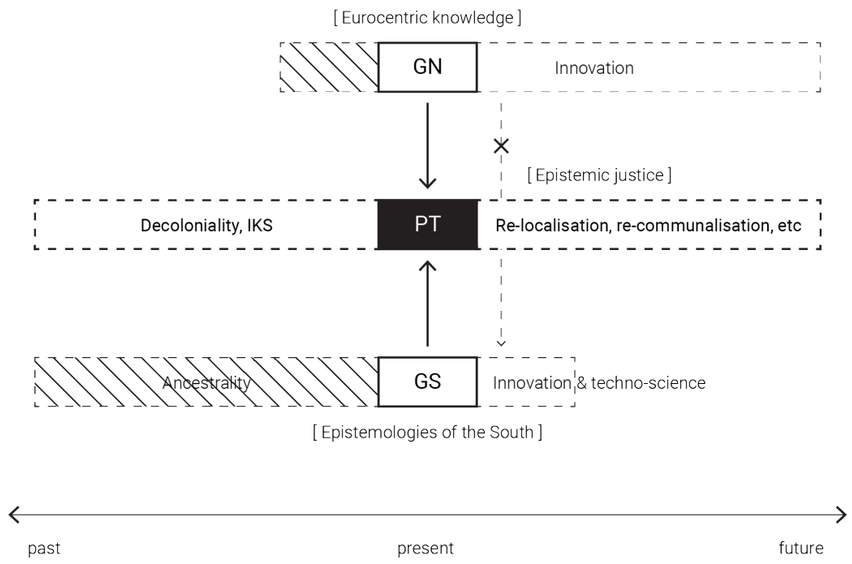
Knowing ‘otherwise’

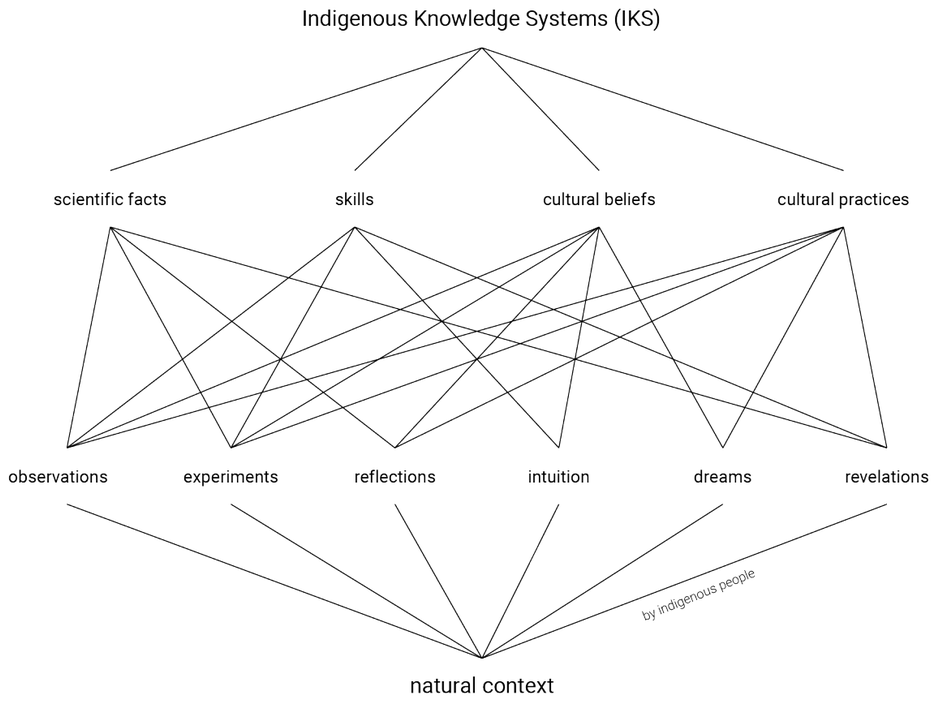
other ways of thinking and knowing

“Utazibwenge ashimwe uloge”

- Rufumbira proverb

Translation: A fool prides in what he thinks he knows.





Knowing otherwise

Pluriversal Thinking (PT) (Thinking)

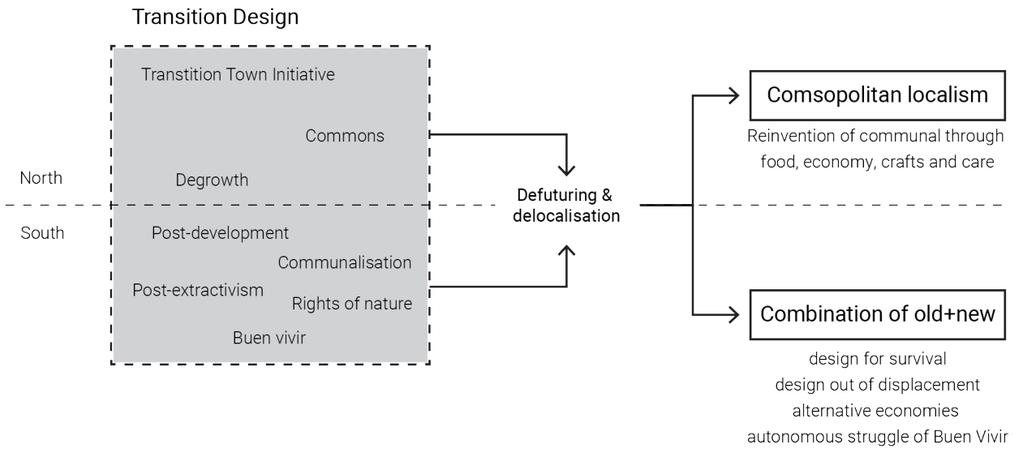
Epistemologies of the South - (Escobar, 2020)
The generation of knowledge - ways of knowing, thinking and therefore being, has long been dominated by the global North. Given that western hegemony has driven globalisation and led us into the anthropogenic predicament we face today, it is high time we considered alternative ways of thinking, especially when addressing challenges in the global South. Epistemologies of the South (ES) outlines pathways for thinking 'otherwise', carving out a space for itself that enables thought to re-engage with life and attentively walk along the diverse forms of knowledge held by those whose experiences can no longer be rendered legible by Eurocentric knowledge in the academia (Escobar, 2020). ES is essential in ensuring epistemic justice (Fricker, 2007) for all.

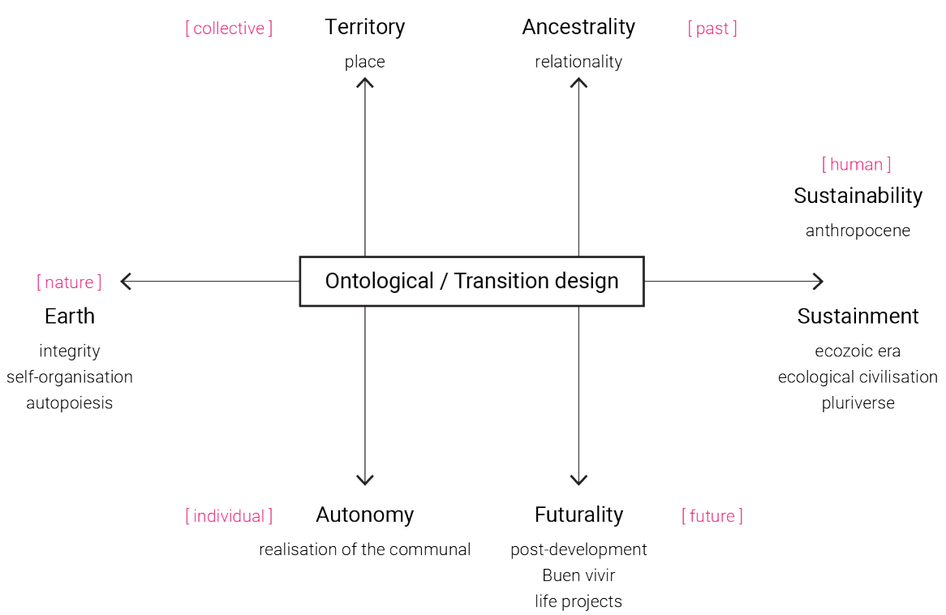
Figure 18: Pluriversal thinking as a way to overcome epistemological injustice caused by imposition of Eurocentric knwoledge on the Global South.(Source: Author)

Transition (re)design principles - (Escobar, 2018)
While recognising the existence and agency of other knowledges, pluriversal thinking proposes a shift from exogenous to endogenous growth (Stimson & Stough, 2008). To achieve this, Escobar (2020) highlights three (re)design principles including the recommunalisation of social life as a foundation for human action from the perspective of interdependence, the relocalisation of activities to resist delocalising tendencies of capitalist globalisation and the strengthening of collective autonomies and direct forms of democracy as a way to reduce dependence on norms established by experts and the state. In following these principles, autonomous planning can be encouraged.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems - (Breidlid, 2009) (Eyong, 2007)
Indigenous knowledge is defined in several ways, and is often interchangeably referred to as local knowledge, traditional knowledge (Njiraine et al, 2009). Osman (n.d.) refers to Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) as the relational and holistic nature of the knowledge, encompassing all dimensions of life and the environment (Breidlid, 2009). Populations who have lived experience in the environments concerned, offer knowledge and alternative perspectives, regarding the specificities of local conditions, such as sustainable resource use and balanced development (Agrawal 1995) or indigenous governance (Eyong, 2007). Now more than ever, it is pertinent that IKS is adopted to avoid the problematic uncritical transfer of 'scientific' knowledge from the global North to South (Briggs and Sharp, 2004).

Figure 19: Diagram showing how IKS are embedded in their natural contexts and enabled by indigenous people (Source: Author, adapted from Eyong (2007))





Just transitions (Process)

Transition discourse - (Escobar, 2018)
The argument for a transition imaginaries has been ongoing for several decades, only intensifying in the past decade. Although bridges between them are being built, Transition Discourses (TDs) are differentiated geopolitically, between those produced in the Global North and South (Escobar, 2018). While the future is described in the North as being postgrowth, postmaterialist, postcapitalist, and posthuman, for the South it is expressed as being postdevelopment, nonliberal, postcapitalist/noncapitalist and postextractivist (Escobar, 2018). It is important to make this distinction to situate projects in global discourse.

Figure 20: Dominant transition design narratives in the global North and South may differ but they are both aimed towards defuturing and delocalisation (Source: Author, adapted from Escobar (2018))

Transitions as stories - (Escobar, 2018)
Thomas Berry aptly describes the search for transitions using the metaphor of stories. He suggests that humanity is in between stories, the old story that is no longer effective and new story(ies) to reinvent the human (Escobar, 2018).

Designs for transitions - (Escobar, 2018)
Escobar (2018) stresses the importance of changing the way we think of change. He explains that transitions depend on a mix of interacting dynamic processes - both self- and other-organised, making them emergent rather than design. He adds that the phenomenon of emergence occurs on the basis of a multiplicity of local actions that create a new integrated whole through their mostly unplanned interaction. The emergent and plural trait of transitions thus makes them an ideal tool for inquiring into possible futures.

The Transition design framework at CMU - (Escobar, 2018)
A transition framework developed by Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) and presented by Escobar (2018) as one of the two already well-structured ones, it is premised on the need for societal transitions to more sustainable futures and the agency of design in transitions (Irwin, Tonkinwise & Kossoff 2015, 2). It is a radical re-orienting of design and situating it and transitions in the natural world as a context.

Figure 21: Re-interpretation of Ontological/ Transition design's dimensions in three axes - nature-man, past-future and individual-collective (Source: Author, adapted from Escobar (2018))

Multi-level Perspective (MLP) - (Newton, 2021)
In thinking of transitions, it is important to consider time and place in their terms and scales respectively. The MLP highlights how urban experiment at the niche level can influence change at the regime level in the long run while they are limited in driving shifts at the landscape level (Newton, 2021). Thus, planning experiments facilitate mutual learning and knowledge exchange by bringing together niche and regime actors.

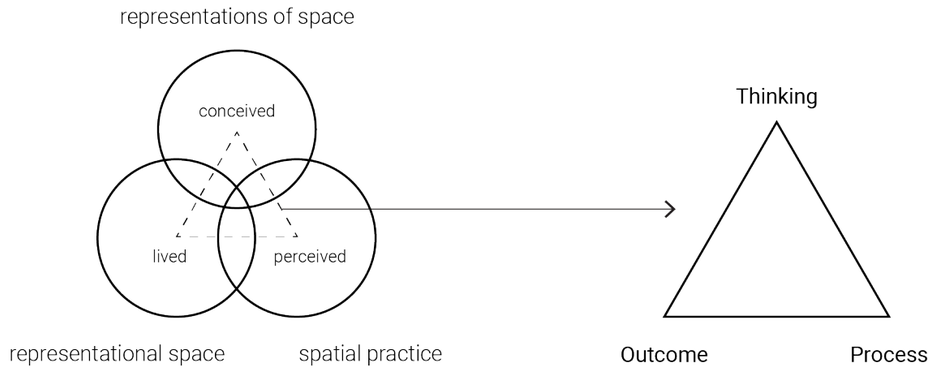


Figure 23: Translation of Lefebvre's triad to the author's representation of space as a construct of thinking-process-outcome (Source: Author, adapted from Lefebvre (1991))

Space as a social construct (Outcome)

Social production of space - (Lefebvre, 1991)
Entire cities, but also rural areas, are produced by the movements and interactions of people in space. As Lefebvre (1991) posits, space manifests in three forms - perceived, conceived and lived space. This reinforces the author's triad which suggests that interactions between thinking, processes and outcomes create space. Rakodi (2006) adds that an understanding of cities as both social and physical constructs requires insights from various disciplines and African scholars, in as well as new conceptual frameworks to replace the dualistic ones used to advance and justify the 'modernist' vision.

Social construction of African cities - (Rakodi, 2006)
The contemporary African city, exception for a few, is a creation of the colonial period, representing and embodying the visions of the politically and economically powerful (Rakodi, 2006). Unfortunately, analytical work on African cities has focused on the extent to which they meet the visions of the powerful, rather than how social and economic systems function to accommodate growing demographics and residents' livelihoods (Rakodi, 2006). In most cases, it is the social organisations and networks often tagged as 'informal', that has ensured sustenance of city dwellers amid the failure of the state to provide proper services.

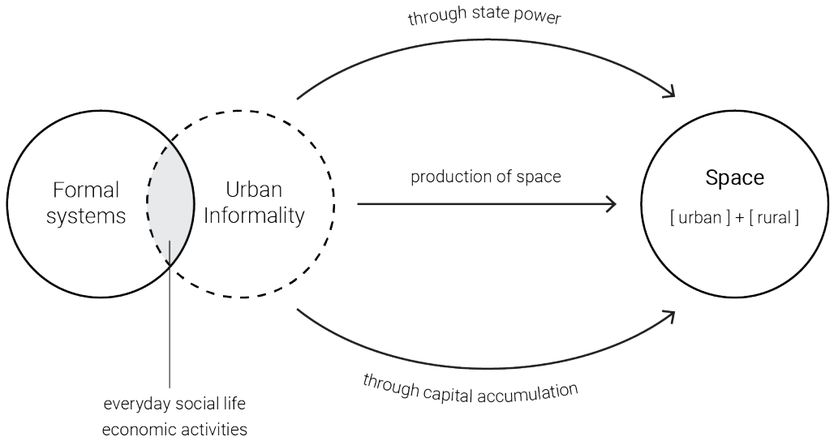


Figure 24: Urban informality as a producer of space in rural and urban areas (Source: Author, adapted from Escobar (2006))

Urban informality - (Rakodi, 2006)
Informality, often seen as the nemesis to formal systems, can also be viewed as the 'other' productive social and economic interactions that generate spatial and aspatial networks in cities. Given the failure of the modernist urban project to realise its vision and the limited efficacy and reach of its formal instruments, it is possible that the everyday construction of social lives, economic activities and urban places is a potential source of alternative visions for the city (Rakodi, 2006). She adds that there needs to be an analytical focus on local agency, which does not privilege state visions and ways of doing things.

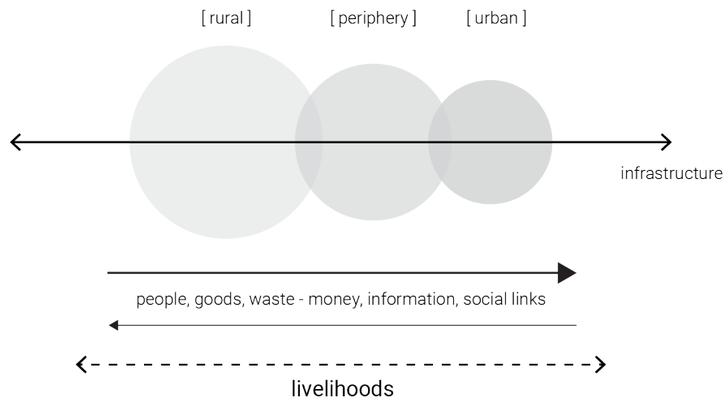


Figure 22: Rural-urban linkages facilitate the flow of resources and support people's livelihoods across territories (Source: Author, adapted from Tacoli (1998))

Rural-urban linkages - (Tacoli, 1998)
Territorial interdependencies are manifestations of social and economic processes that shape people's lives. Livelihoods of rural and urban households rely on both rural-based and urban-based resources, and on exchanges between rural and urban areas (Bah et al., 2003). Tacoli (1998) adds that flows of people, goods and wastes, in addition to related monetary and information flows, act as linkages across space between cities and countryside. These connections, taking the form of infrastructure, ancestrality and operationalised landscapes among other manifestations, can be analysed to better understand how the wood value chain is shaped by livelihoods.

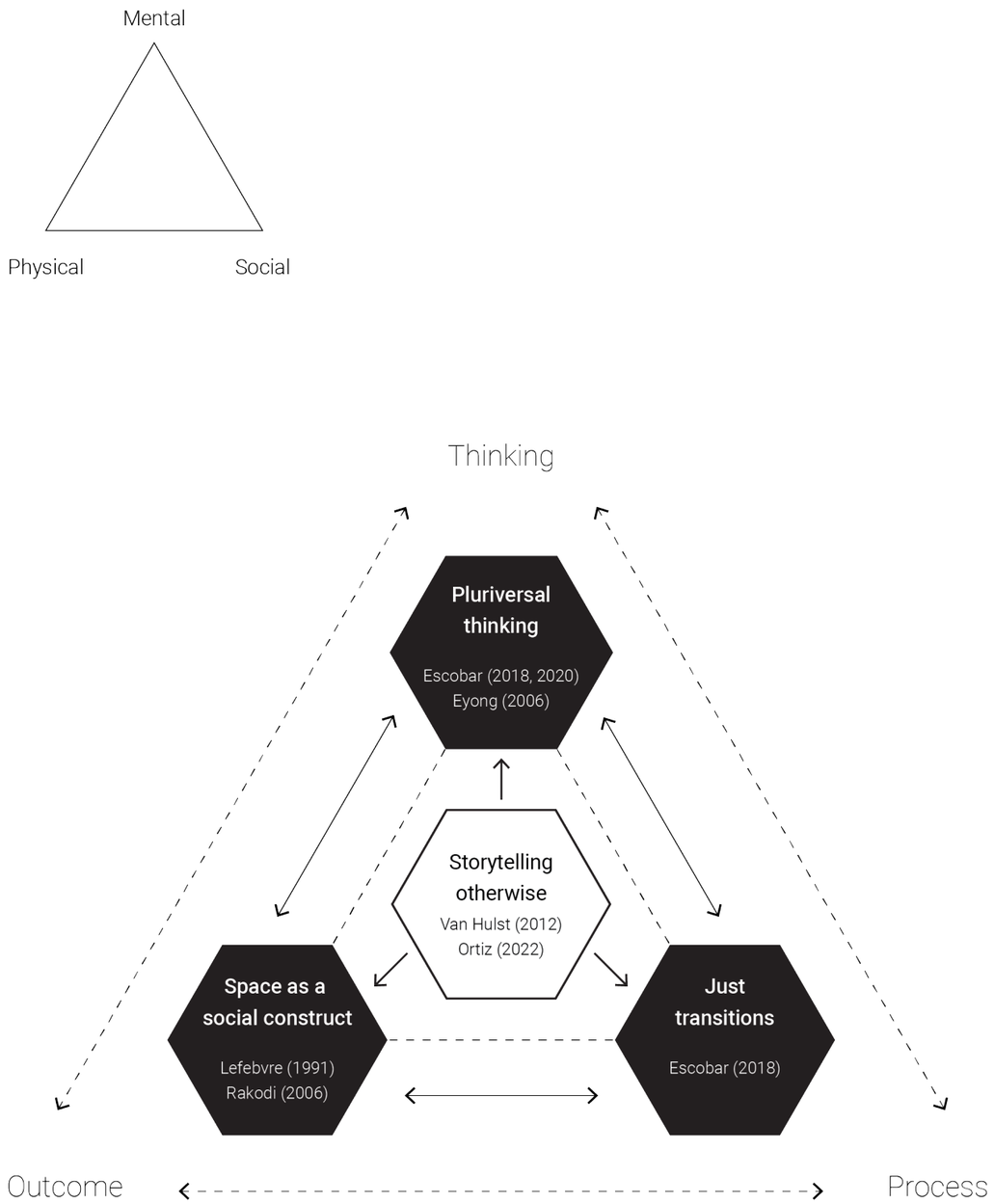


Figure 25: Theoretical framework showing a triad of the three main planning theories which reinforce each other (Source: Author)

Theoretical framework

The underlying question for the research is how ‘other ways’ of seeing, thinking and doing, can be used to find alternatives to hegemonic technocratic solutions that are not locally grounded. To achieve this, the study uses ‘storytelling otherwise’ as both a tool for inquiry and for carving an other than usual pathway that focuses on thinking, designing and living otherwise.

If we are to follow Roy’s (2009) suggestion that theories have to be produced in place, then one obvious practical tactic is to focus on the research of scholars in the global South to look for an intuitive understanding of the historical and contemporary urban dynamics of their respective regions.

Rather than develop two parallel theories; one for the North and the other for the South, the study aims to expand the pool of planning theory knowledge (Watson, 2009).

Part 3

Storytelling as a method

storywork as research

“Inyanga kunva yanva irihabi”

- Rufumbira proverb

Translation: If you are told and do not listen, you may listen when it is too late and it will not help you.

Figure 26: African storytelling (Source: https://www.varsityscope.com/2022/05/the-joys-of-african-storytelling.html)

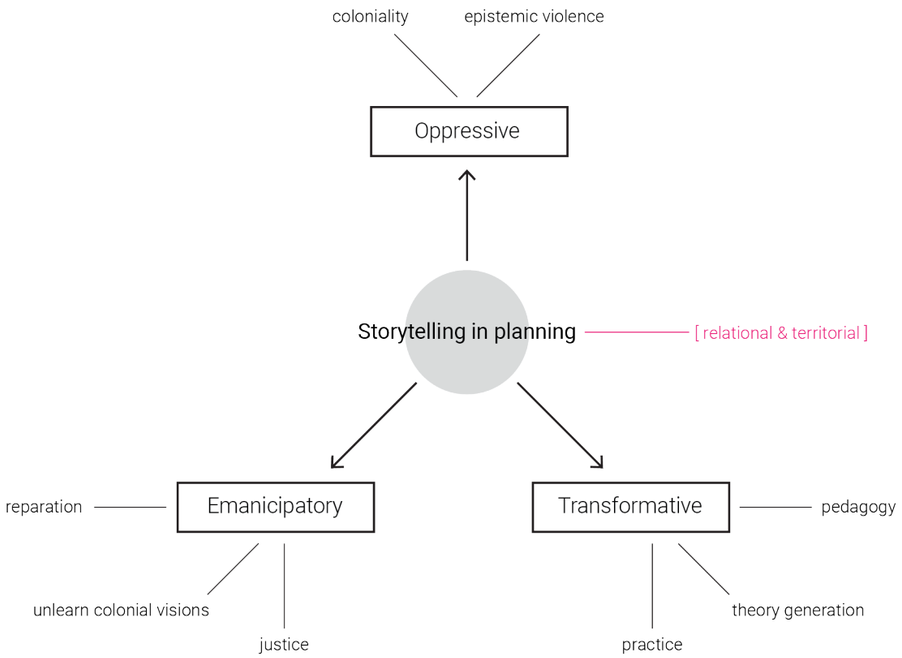


Figure 27: Applications of storytelling in planning (Source: Author, based on Ortiz (2022))

Storytelling otherwise

Why storytelling? (Carroll, 2008)
Storytelling is a long established way of passing down knowledge from generation to generation. The African oral tradition of storytelling is a genre of thought and knowledge created out of experience rooted in the cultural image and interest of the people of African descent. The basis of this tradition is grounded in an African worldview (Carroll 2008). Stories are very locally specific.

Storytelling in planning (Ortiz, 2022)
For urban planners and designers, storytelling - consciously or otherwise, is a part of everyday practice. With more critical thought, Ortiz (2022) suggests that it can become part of a broader repertoire of planning tools for emancipatory and transformational practice, theory and pedagogy. She adds that storytelling otherwise not only serves as an method for unlearning colonial visions, but also reimagining how to decolonise planning with reparative stories that can realise just cities. Through storytelling otherwise, people can open up their minds to other than usual perspective and hence think of other than usual approaches.

Theory generation as counter-storytelling (Ortiz, 2022)
Storytelling otherwise is essential in realising decolonial thinking, epistemic and restorative justice. Though we have learned about the power and capaciousness of using storytelling to shape the planning field, still few efforts have explicitly acknowledged the linkages between storytelling with coloniality, the epistemic violence it entails and the healing power of stories (Ortiz, 2022). She further suggests a change in perspective - viewing theory generation as a counter-storytelling project, and discussions on how this project can bring about a new configuration of the myriad territorial inscriptions of urban stories.

Decolonial turn (Ortiz, 2022)
Learning from the decolonial turn in social sciences, the role of storytelling in planning theory and practice needs to be rethought (Ortiz, 2022). The decolonial turn necessitates the imagination and acknowledgement of alternative ways of knowing, sensing and being, bearing in mind the multiple intellectual origins dependent on the territory. Decolonial planning has laid emphasis on individual ethics and indigenous rights (Ugarte, 2014) and the ethical accountability of planning (Watson, 2003; Roy, 2008; Rankin, 2010), to leverage the epistemic privilege of the planner by including other ways of knowing (Ortiz, 2022). This study brings to light and documents such alternative knowledges, using them to develop alternative place-based solutions.

Limitations on storytelling in planning

Storytelling can be biased or skewed depending on the person telling the story. Sandercock (2003) advocates for examining the planners' positionality, urging that the truth of our own and others' stories be questioned and that attention should be paid to how power shapes which stories get told, get heard, and carry weight. At the same time, even in the most coherent and consistent narrative, there always remains a set of untold or unheard stories, hidden stories that could have become important but instead are ignored (Ortiz, 2022). This could be counteracted by clearly stating the omissions and reasons for them, to both the audience and storyteller(s).

There is a danger of romanticising storytelling (Van Hulst, 2012). He argues that the particular kind of storytelling that can claim its value compared to other forms of knowing, is one in which different backgrounds, perspectives, values and interests converge and engage one another in the search for a way to deal with differences or harmoniously coexist. For this reason, the study will take a narrative approach taking into consideration a multitude of stories (embedded narratives) that make one whole.

Storytelling has winners whose stories are told and losers whose are not. Like planning, storytelling has the potential for becoming oppressive or emancipatory, bringing strategies for translating multiple knowledges into action, but also can be used as a strategy of domination (Ortiz, 2022). Critical and deliberate thought needs to be given when selecting which stories or parts of stories will be omitted as this might inevitably result in the domination of some stories over others.

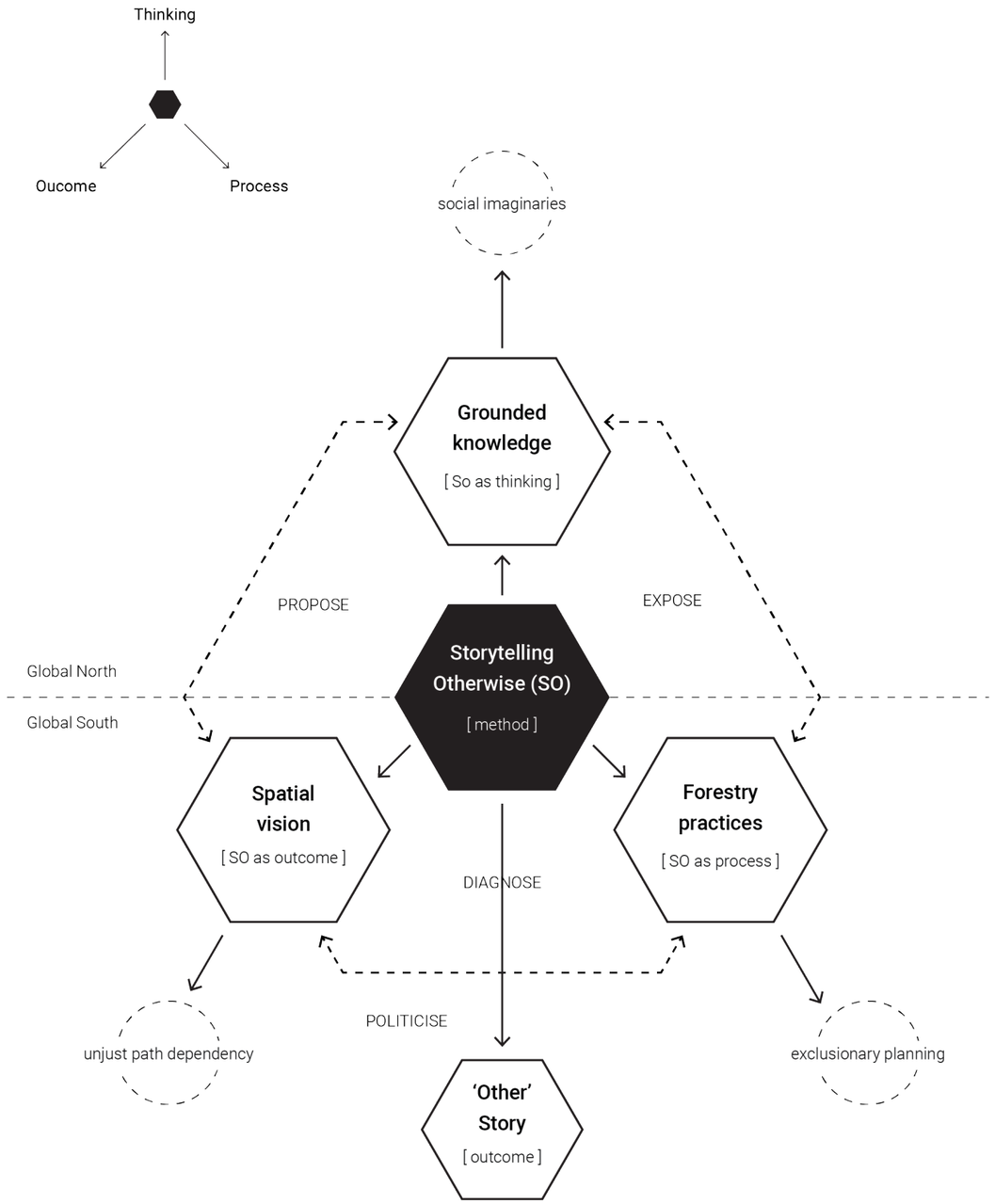


Figure 28: Conceptual framework operationalising storytelling to address the three problem fields (Source: Author)

Conceptual framework

Storytelling for this research

The use of storytelling in this study follows Van Hulst's (2012) two positions on storytelling as a model 'for' and model 'of' planning. Storytelling therefore, has been interpreted for the purposes of this research as both an invesitagitve tool (the planning process) and an outcome (the plan and the story it tells).

Storytelling as a tool

Sandercock (2003, Forester; 1999; Throgmorton, 2003) did not just claim that planning is done through storytelling, but that storytelling should be used explicitly to improve planning practice. Stories are therefore used to bring change, shaping the imagination of new alternatives (Sandercock, 2003, p.9). In addition, storytelling is used as an investigative tool in this study to learn about the wood value chains based on the everyday lives of multiple actors/storytellers.

Storytelling as an outcome

Throgmorton (1996; Sandercock, 2003, p.26) argue that the planning processes and practice of planning is similar to telling stories. Since storytelling is a fundamental element of planning, the outcomes - planning documents and plans themselves, also tell stories (Van Hulst, 2012). This study will collect and document multiple stories, translating them into one cohesive story of the current, while leveraging the same stories to shape a narrative for the future wood value chain.

Methodological framework

problem field

Trends in city

Regionality
Demographic growth
Informality
Construction industry
Wood trade
Social imaginaries

Trends in region

Production landscapes
Biodiversity loss
Livelihood loss
Seasonal variations
Infrastructure
Social imaginaties

History in region

Migration
Colonialism
Plantations
Lock-in

Spatial outcome

Monoscapes

main question

Exclusionary planning processes & social imaginaries have cemented and perpetuated the unjust forestry economy in the city region.

problem statement

Exclusionary planning processes & social imaginaries have cemented and perpetuated the ~~unjust for~~estry economy in the city region.

research questions

past

RQ 1

How have the socio-cultural relations between indigenous tribes (Baganda and Batwa) and forests evolved over time?

present

RQ 2

How have socio-cultural processes shaped the forest economy in Kampala's city region?

future

RQ 3

How can a just forest economy that is rooted in its socio-cultural and ecological locality be realised?

methods

interviews
literature review
cartography
observation
scenario-building

reflection

narratives

past

chronology

account of traditional forestry practices and ways of life

present

inventory

inventory of current forestry practices, ways of life and their externalities

future

aspiration

different trend scenarios pointing at possible futures

products

thinking

theory

documentation of different ways of knowing, thinking and therefore being

process

practices

a set of forestry practices based on other knowledges and local context

outcome

vision

spatial vision of desirable future, synergies, practices

Figure 29: The methodological framework will constantly evolve based on intermittent reflections (Source: Author)

Methods

Literature review
To gain a deeper understanding of relevant planning theories and discourses for the research, a wide range of books, articles, policies and other written material is being reviewed. A historical analysis of the interlacustrine region will also be conducted with this method.

Interviews
Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a range of people, in both the formal and informal sectors, involved in the wood value chain. These will provide insights into individual stories, as well as their complex web of interactions that form a multi-layered narrative.

Observation & transect walks
Through a field survey, some of the respondents will be observed with the aim of understanding their roles in the wood value chain.

Cartography
Mapping will be used to analyse current conditions and correlations that cannot be done on ground. Comparisons will be drawn with historical maps to understand the changes in the spatial conditions over time.

Actor-network analysis
An analysis of human and nonhuman actors in the wood value chain will be performed to understand the current structures but also carve out a future pathway in which the voices of unheard actors are valued.

Multi-media review
Films, documentaries, photographs and other media will be analysed to gain a better understanding of suitable methods and technical equipment for storytelling in the selected context.

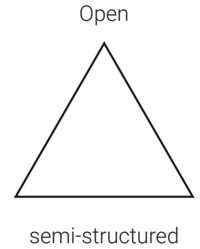


Figure 32: Funnelling interview strategy (Source: Author)

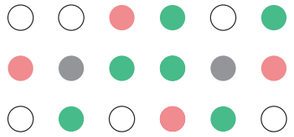


Figure 33: Snowballing method to recruit respondents (Source: Author)

Figure 34: A flyer for the workshop to be attended by the author during the trip to Uganda this month (Source: Gatsby Africa)

Fieldwork as storywork

Route

The initial analysis shows that most of the eucalyptus timber comes from Fort Portal and Hoima in Western Uganda with a number of forest reserves, small private forests and wood processing plants along the way. Furthermore, the last remaining indigenous tribe that resided in the forests lived in the Kisoro area which is accessible from there. For these reasons, the A101 road which runs from Kampala through all the above locations of interest, has been selected as the road to 'follow the wood'. Respondents have been identified along this route. This field survey will be done on road and foot. It is estimated to take a period of three weeks.

Interviews

Respondents include people involved in the wood supply chain across the rural-urban territories - from Kampala to Fort Portal (Kambugu et al, 2017). These include consumers, wood product manufacturers, wood processing businesses, timber and charcoal traders, truck drivers, brokers, land owners, farmers, local residents, Batwa indigenous tribe, activists, regulators, consultants and NGO. The respondents will be categorised under formal and informal insitutions, with the questionnaires framed differently.

Observation & Transect walk

The different landscapes, processes in the wood value chain and livelihoods of respondents will be observed during the field survey. The observations will be documented through sketches, a journal, audio recordings (of the environment), photographs and videos. A transect walk will be conduct in certain areas to follow the routes of respondents and gain a deeper understanding of local geographies.

Workshop

One of the experts shared information about a workshop planned on 21 and 22 February 2023 on value addition in wood processing with multiple stakeholders. I plan to attend the workshop to broaden my network and learn more about ongoing discourses initiatives in this sector.

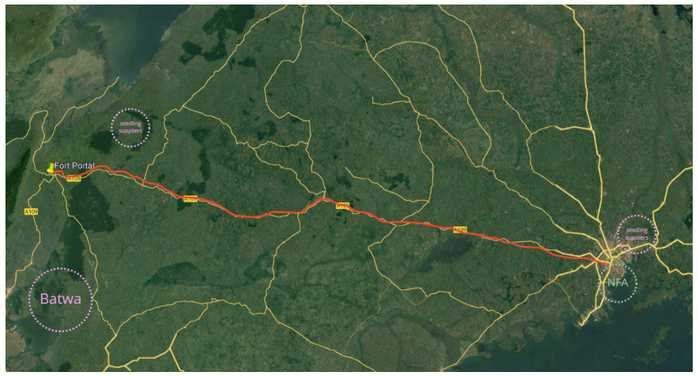


Figure 36: Map of A101 highway to be explored during field work (Source: Author)

Situating the study

Route

The initial analysis shows that most of the eucalyptus timber comes from Fort Portal and Hoima in Western Uganda with a number of forest reserves, small private forests and wood processing plants along the way. Furthermore, the last remaining indigenous tribe that resided in the forests lived in the Kisoro area which is accessible from there. For these reasons, the A101 road which runs from Kampala through all the above locations of interest, has been selected as the road to 'follow the wood'. Respondents have been identified along this route. This field survey will be done on road and foot. It is estimated to take a period of three weeks.

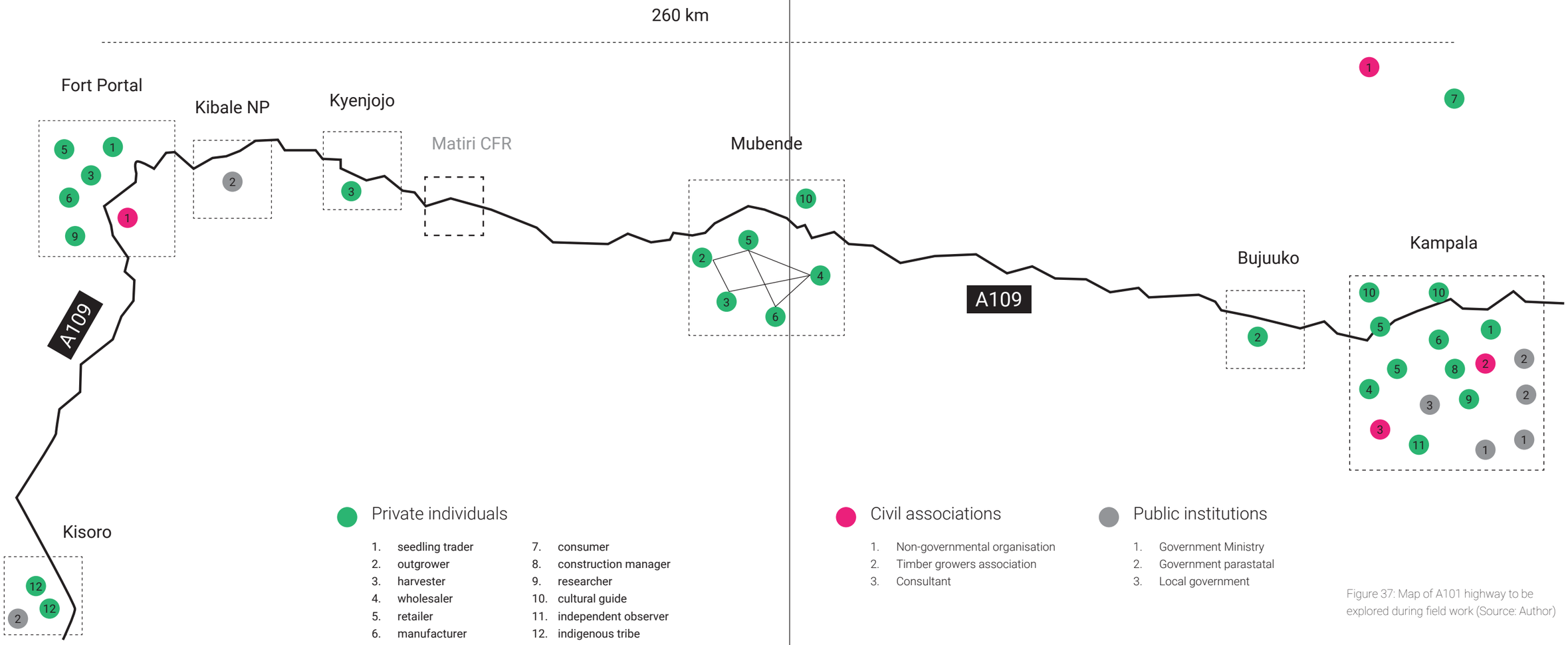


Figure 37: Map of A101 highway to be explored during field work (Source: Author)

Analysing the data

Inductive analysis
The analysis will involve the use of raw data to derive concepts, themes or a model through interpretations, that is an inductive rather than deductive method.

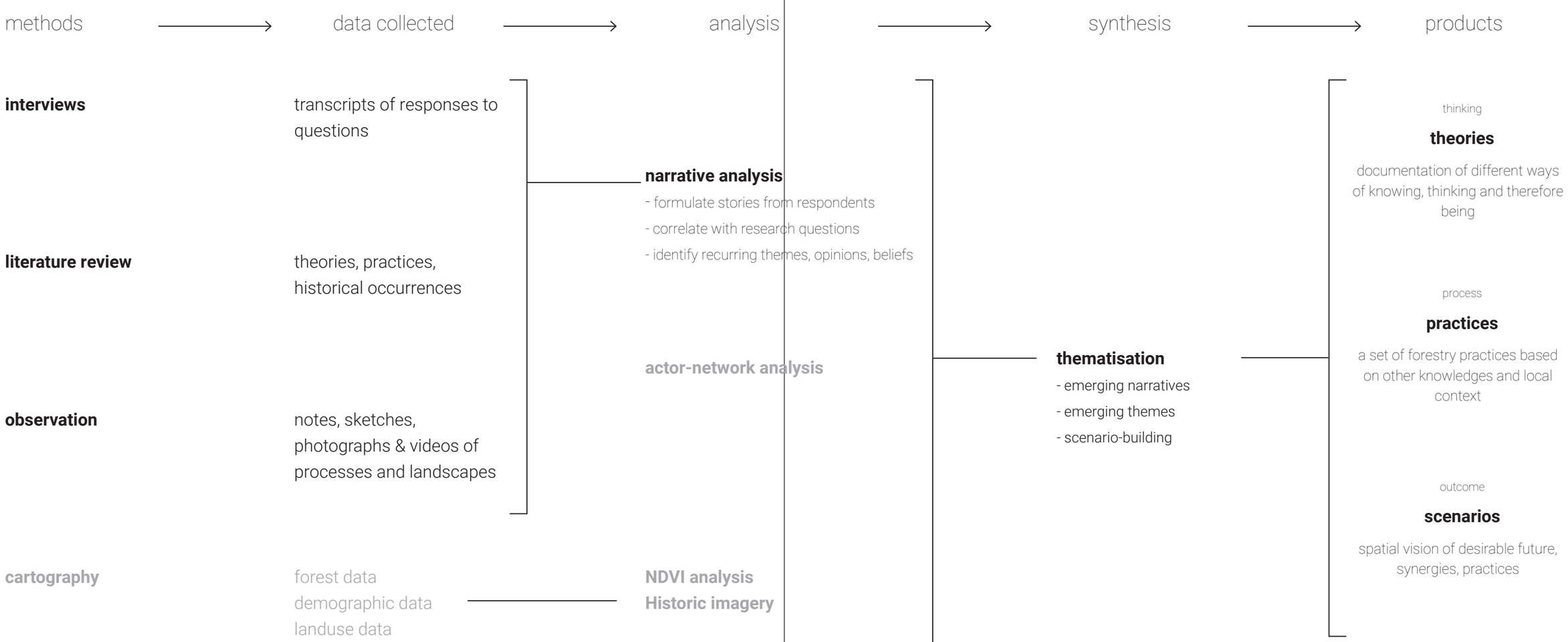


Figure 38: Map of A101 highway to be explored during field work (Source: Author)

Figure 39: Poster for 'Stop filming us', a documentary about misrepresentation, racism and the white saviour mentality (Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5oClrkUUvFQ)

Interviews

Given my clear research aims, I am aware that the questions I will ask are skewed. I will therefore not purport to be impartial.

Actor-network analysis

Validity of informal institutions

Although more than 80% of sawn wood in Kampala's market is from 'illegal' sources (Kambugu et al, 2018), forestry regulators and policies continue to dismiss the role of the informal sector in the wood value chain tagging certain actors and processes as illegal while ignoring their voices. However, these same institutions tax wood products which are somehow formalised and thus 'legalised' at the consumer end of the supply chain. Regardless, I plan to objectively listen to the stories of the unheard and understand their roles in the functioning of the value chain.

Documentary (in local languages)

Omission of certain content

Respondents will be informed of the aims and methods of the research from the onset. Omissions of recorded content will explained where asked and a demo film will be shared viewed by all featured respondents to seek their approval. To avert stigma towards the camera, a smartphone will be used for all film shooting and photography.

Ethical considerations

Literature review

Non-western epistemology

Pursuing this study from a highly scientific university in Europe, I acknowledge my dependence on western epistemology which may not recognise other knowledges and practices, thus biasing my approach and inevitably the outcomes of the research. While I am also aware that a considerable amount of local knowledge in Uganda is undocumented or difficult to find, I intend to conduct interviews with various respondents to fill these knowledge gaps. Epistemologies of the South, not limited to Africa, have also been reviewed to develop a theoretical understanding based on recent trends in Southern planning.

Representativeness of data

Most documentation pertaining to forestry and the wood trade has been produced by public institutions and interstatal organisations such as the European Union and World Bank, with an apparent inclination towards 'economic development' and therefore needs to be verified by triangulation of data. While recognising the role of the informal sector in Uganda's wood value chain, the study will seek input from often unheard voices. However, the representativeness of the findings will be influenced by the sample space of the respondents as not all can be interviewed.

Geopolitical influences

A fair part of global policy is politically motivated and is blindly adopted by governments in the global South, despite creating and perpetuating inequalities in the distribution of costs and benefits of resource exploitation. As much as I cannot influence or change these policies, I must be aware of the singular narratives they carry and I attempt to question their implications.

Observation

(non)Experiential bias

In selecting a context that I am highly familiar with, I am aware of personal biases from my lived experiences. It will be especially important in the way I interact with the respondents of the planned interviews, as well as how I curate and present the overall narrative. On the other hand, as much as I have lived in Uganda, it is only one 'truth' from my singular perspective. Consequently I acknowledge my ignorance of many traditional socio-cultural norms, informal practices, historic and current occurrences. I therefore undertake this research with an open mind and a willingness to learn.

Part 4

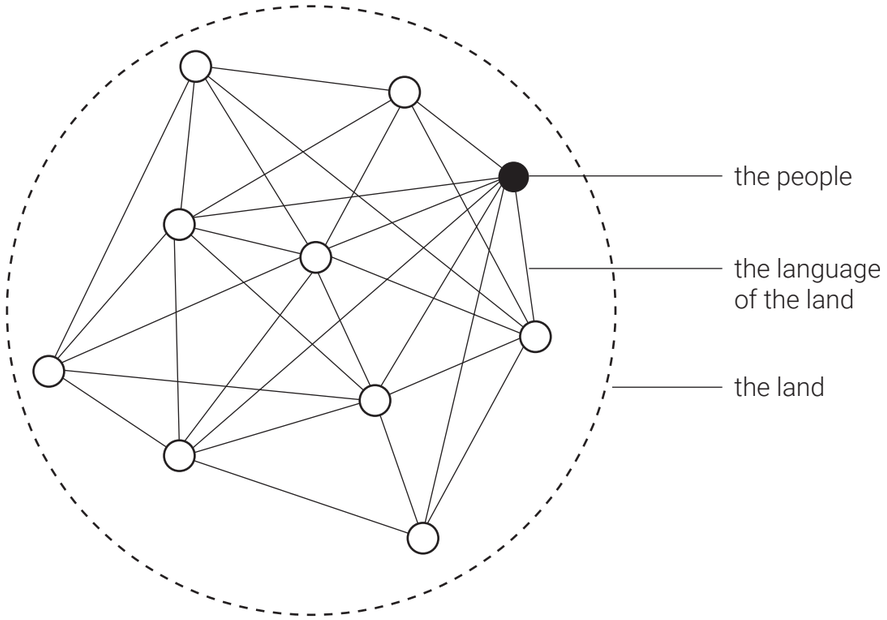
A study of forest cultures

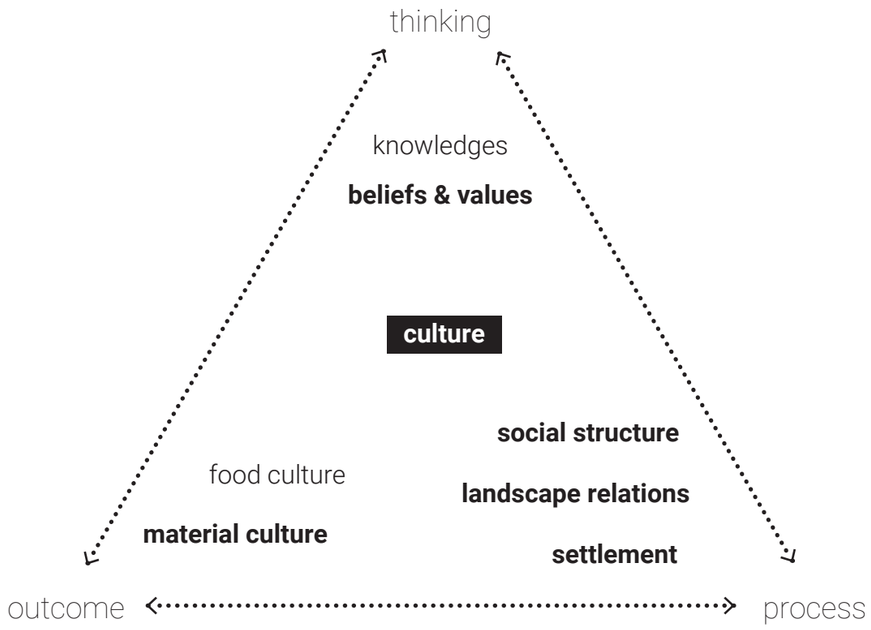
Forests as cultural constructs

"Icyukunda ntugihorana"

- Rufumbira proverb

Translation: What you have, you may not have forever.





defining culture

Culture, whether material and immaterial, is specific to the land. The land speaks a language that defines the people. The people too, speak the language of the land.

The land

The land is physical and visible as in geology, hydrology and botany, but also unfathomable and invisible as in forest spirits, the folklore and the winds. The land has no extents, except for those defined by the beings that live within.

The people

The people of the land can read the land and understand it. They are a part of the land in body and spirit. They have deep reverence for it and do not test it. They build their beliefs, knowledges, societies, settlements and materials from the land. When they die, they go back to the land.

The language of the land

The beings of the land - plants, animals, people, air, soils - interact constantly with each other, giving birth to the language of the land. Each knows the other, how to speak and how not to speak with another. The rules are written in the air.

Culture as the language of the land

For this study, culture has been analysed in categories namely belief systems, social structure, landscape relations, settlement and material culture. These aspects will be analysed in traditional Batwa and modern societies, in this chapter.

Figure 40: Illustration of the relationship between the land, language of the land and the people.

Figure 41: Illustration of the aspects of culture analysed in this research, in relation to the triad of thinking, process and outcome.

the children of the forest

the people

Hunter-gatherers
The Echuya Batwa lived in the mountains of Bwindi Impenetrable forest until 1992 when it was made a conservation site for the endangered mountain gorilla, after which they were displaced into settlements. Traditionally, they lived as hunter-gatherers residing in temporary huts and caves, deriving sustenance from forest resources like honey, wild fruits, mushrooms, tubers and vegetables (Namara, 2019).

Minority Indigenous group
The Batwa or Abatwa are Bantu ethnic group native to the East African great lakes region. Current populations are found in Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and DRC. A census in 2000 estimated that there 80,000 Batwa people, making them a minority group in these countries (AFRICA | 101 Last Tribes - Twa Grat Lakes People, n.d.).

Other Twa groups
There are other Twa populations further west of the Congo rain forest, as well as south in the swamps and deserts of Zambia, where there has never been forest. Upon the arrival of the Hutu and later Tutsi people, the Batwa became the bottom constituent of the three-caste society (AFRICA | 101 Last Tribes - Twa Grat Lakes People, n.d.). In 2014, the UBOS estimated 6,700 people in Uganda, comprising 0.2% of the country's population.

Figure 42: A surviving Mutwa in Mgahinga National Park (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)

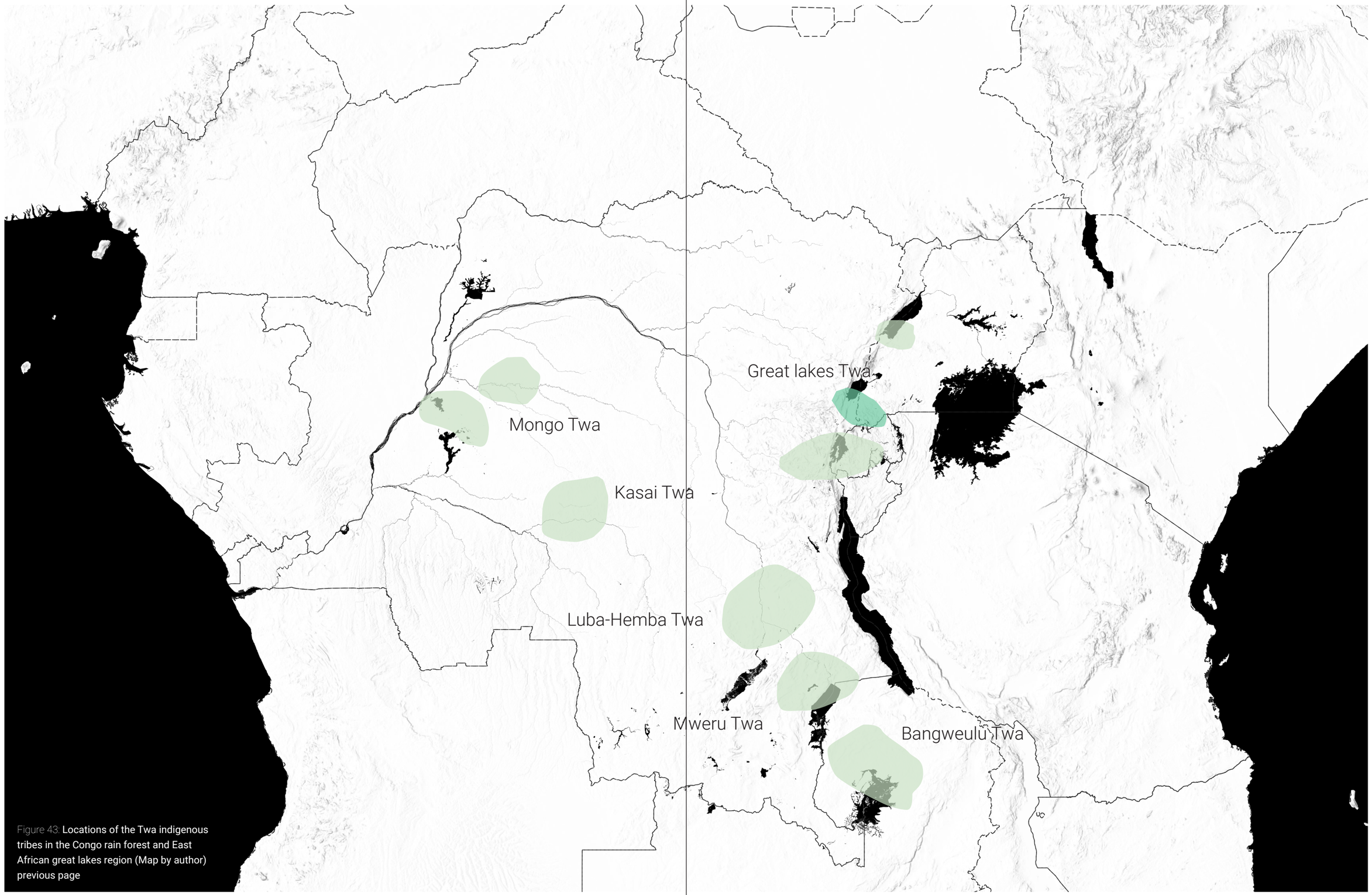


Figure 43: Locations of the Twa indigenous tribes in the Congo rain forest and East African great lakes region (Map by author) previous page

Figure 44: A rural area in Kabale where eucalyptus is being planted (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)

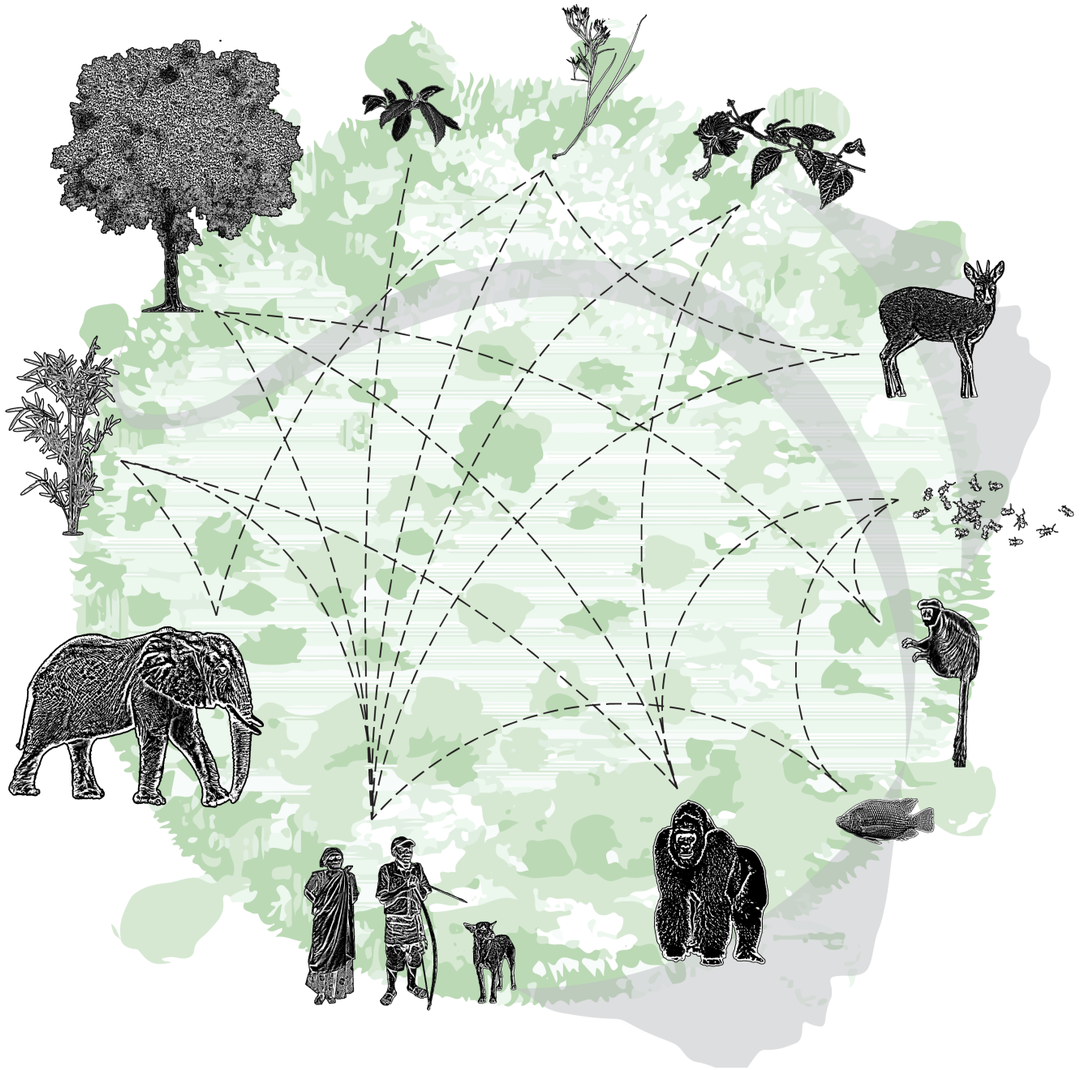


Figure 45: The landscape relations in Mgahinga before colonial administration.

the lands

Mountainous forest

It is often supposed that the pygmies were the original inhabitants of the forests before the advent of the Bantu (Francis, 2007). The Batwa in Mgahinga lived in the mountaneous forest landscape of Gahinga and Muhavura volcanoes. Streams running down the ranges supplied fresh water and fish.

Fauna

Wildlife ranging from the big apes, rare monkeys, forest elephants, a plethora of birds and insects lived in harmony with the Batwa. While they hunted duikers and wild pigs for meat with the help of their companion, a dog, they did not kill other animals. One of the interview respondents mentioned that gorillas were seen as their ‘relatives’ in local tradition.

Flora

The fertile volcanic soils supported the growth of a range vegetation including, african brown mahogany, fruit trees and shrubs. In addition to food and shelter, these were a source of medicine to both the Batwa and animals. The gorillas and monkeys for example, fed on tree and stumps bark when they were ill according to Mukode.

Figure 46: An elephant in Kigezi Game Reserve (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)
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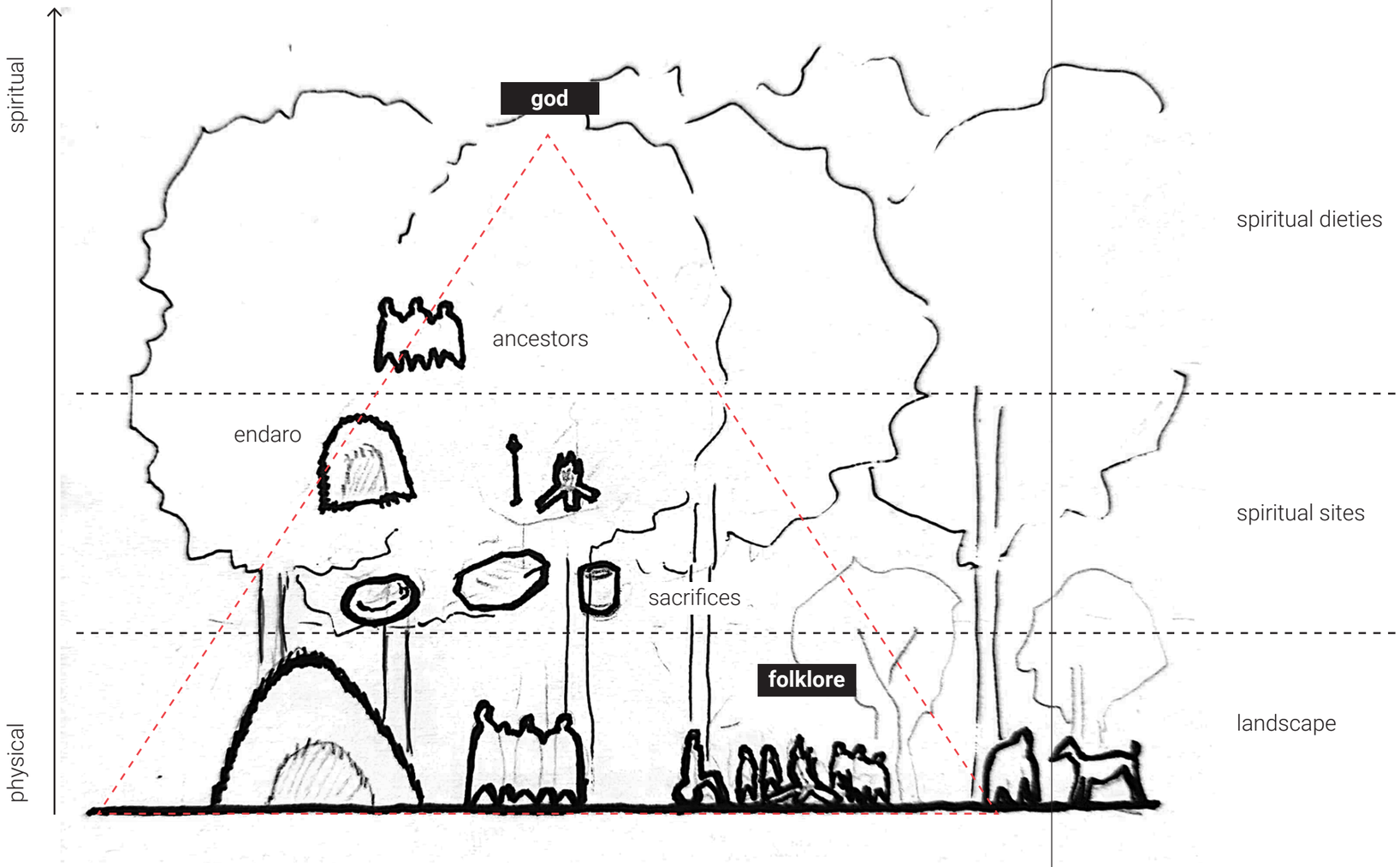


Figure 47: A cross-section showing the Batwa belief system with a god at the top.

belief system

god & ancestrality

Spirituality played an important role in guiding the lives of the Batwa. According to Tumusiime & Mushabe (2016), they viewed the forest as a sacred place where their god lived, believing it was their obligation to live in harmony with the environment and avoid offending her/him. Praying to god and their ancestors in times of hardship was a source of comfort and hope for the Batwa.

Spiritual sites

Special places were created for spiritual purposes. The endaro for example was their sacrificial shelter where they offered meat, honey and local brew to their god after a successful day of hunting (Namara, 2018, p.37). Mukode and his clansmen demonstrated how the men always prayed to their god before and upon returning from hunting. Physical spaces (also scenic places) were used as a medium to reach aphysical dieties, some of which are still maintained today in Mgahinga and Bwindi national parks.

Legends & folklore

Storytelling through legends and folklore among other media, was used to teach young ones about their history and values of their society. For example, Mukode told the legend of the three sons Gahutu, Gatutsi and Gatwa who were given different responsibilities by their father Kihanga. Out of greed, the former two would go on to encroach on the forest that Gatwa (ancestor of the Batwa) was given by their father. Stories played a role in passing communal history, values and knowledge from one generation to another.

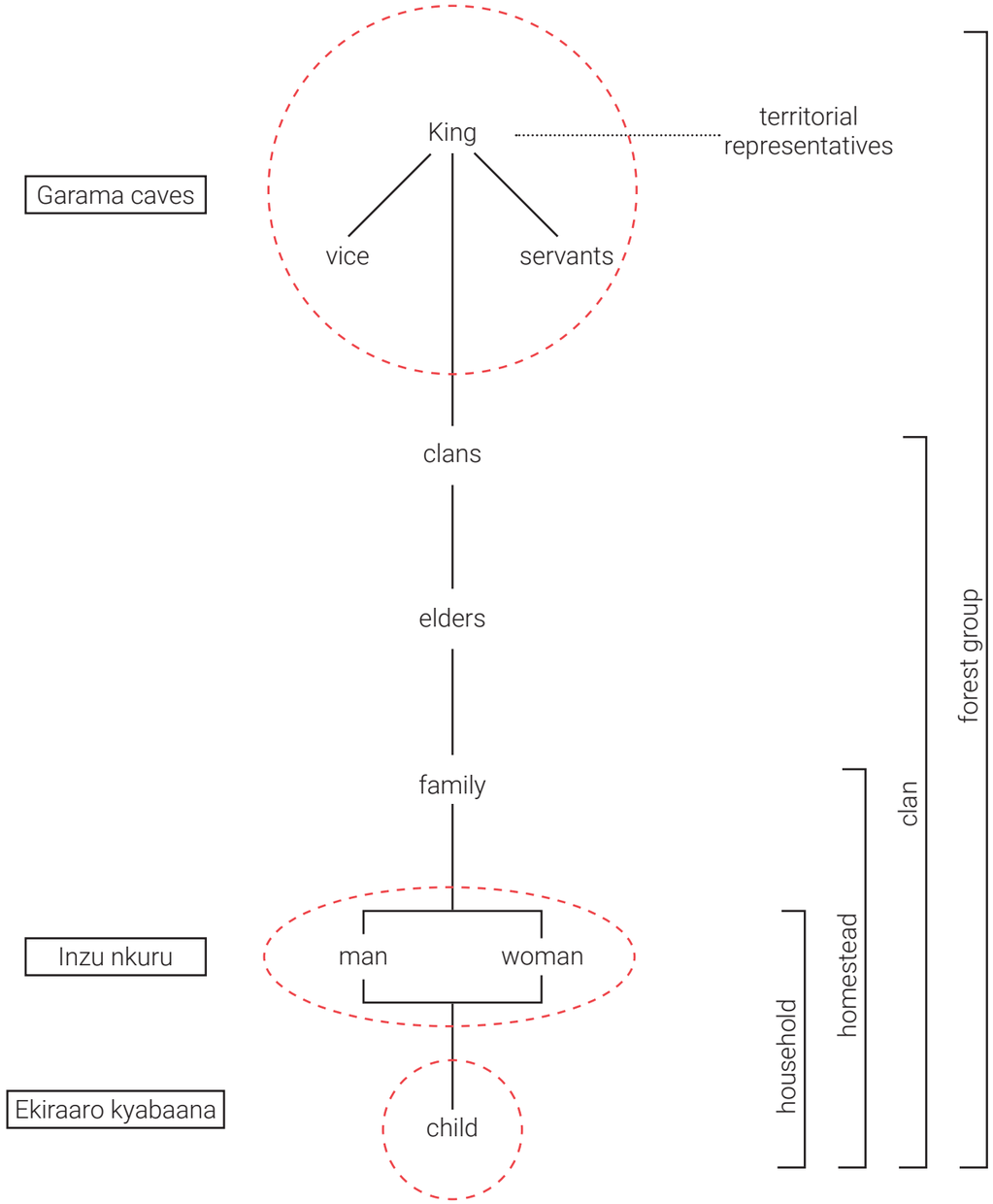


Figure 48: A social structure unique to the Batwa in Mgahinga who have a King, unlike other Batwa groups.

social structure

Kingship

There is contention as to whether the Batwa as Forest People had a king. According to Namara (2018, p.44) however, they had a sovereign ruler called “Gihanga”, who lived in Garama cave, the most permanent dwelling with his Vice and other servants. Ruling all Batwa from DRC, Rwanda and Uganda, he had representatives from all the territories and assigned them roles including collecting honey, raiding neighbouring farming communities.

Clanship

The Batwa practised social norms and customs associated with clanship similar to other tribes in East and Central Africa. For example, intermarriages among blood relatives or family members was prohibited (Gorillatrekking, 2022). In addition, each clan collectively owned an area of the forest from which they derived food and herbal medicine for their sustenance, as well as raw materials for their handiwork (Nasser, 2011).

Family structure

A typical family was comprised of a man, woman and their children. Being patriachical in nature, it was led by the man who lived with his wife in the main house, proportionately tall and large in size. Grown children lived in smaller houses which they participated in the construction of.

Storytelling

Through various modes of storytelling such as tongue-twisters, poems, riddles, folklore, songs and dance, knowledge was transferred across generations. For example, boys would sit around the fire place with their father and listen to him as he narrated the names of plants, animals and places they had encountered while hunting (Fauna & Flora International, 2013, p.9). Elders were seen as retainers of knowledge, assuming key roles in imparting it to the younger generations.

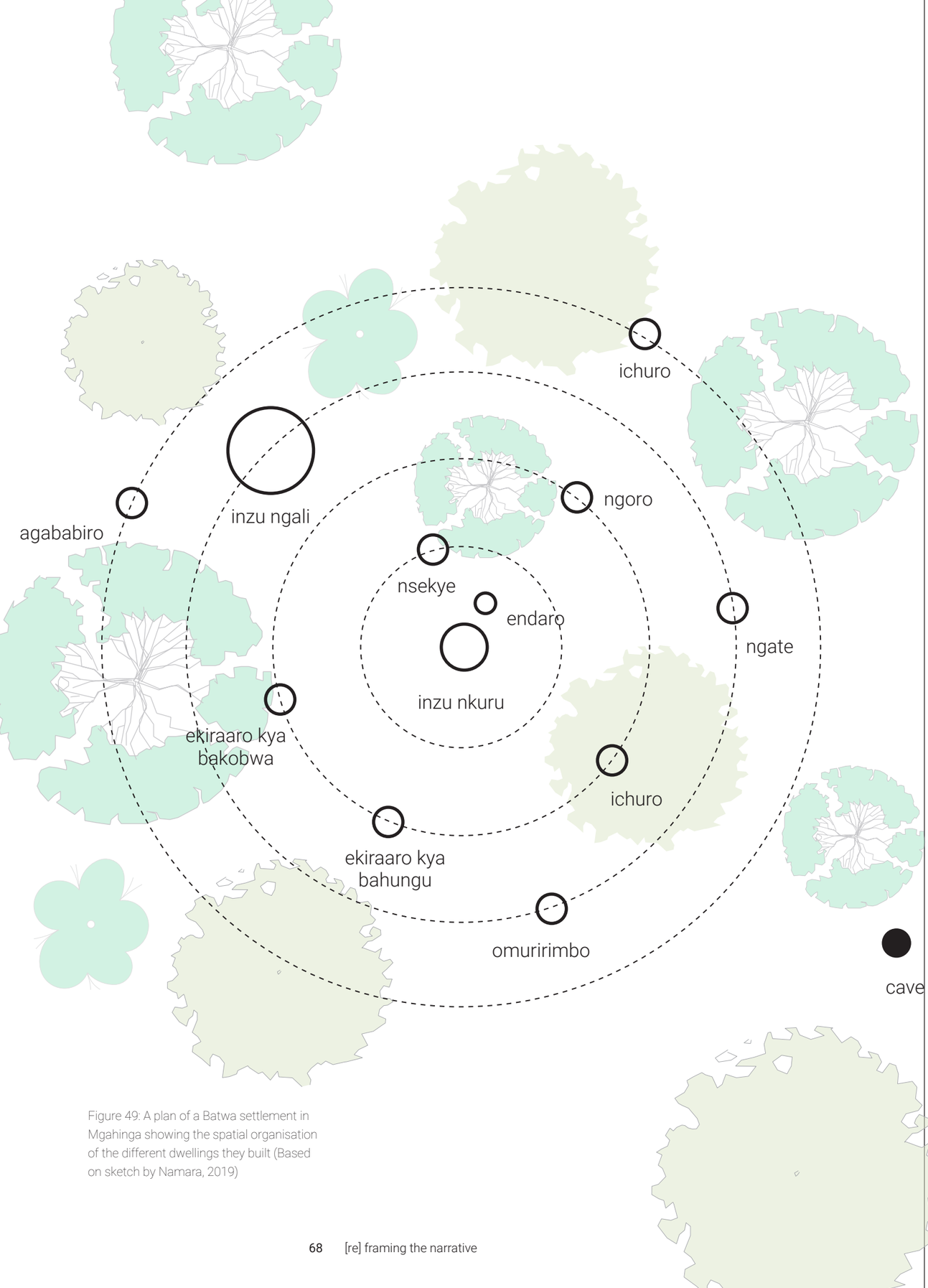


Figure 49: A plan of a Batwa settlement in Mgahinga showing the spatial organisation of the different dwellings they built (Based on sketch by Namara, 2019)

settlement patterns

Decision to settle

The presence of wild animals in the vicinity was a major consideration for the Batwa before they decided to settle in an area and commence construction of any kind. Animals were a source of food and clothing, key to their livelihood. Other determinants included the presence of huge trees with buttresses and caves which were a reliable source of fresh water and protection from harsh weather and animal attacks.

Building types

The Batwa built different types of structures to serve specific functions. Namara (2018, p. 32-42) identifies under five types including the inzu nkuru (main house), ichuro (house of refuge), endaro (worship house), inzu ngali (recreation house) and cave. He further posits that the main house was usually surrounded by omuririmbo for a newly-wed first born and ekiraaro kyabaana for children while a house of refuge took the form of a children's nest or hunting nest. Structures were typically built as and when the need arose. Though temporary, in some cases they lasted over 20 years provided there were no hazards (Namara, 2018, p.51).

Construction as a social activity

Every family member was involved in the building process. While men cut tree branches and collected poles, women cut grass which the children carried to the site. Older children would erect structural poles and tie horizontal members with their father. Women and young children would apply thatch to the house and weave beddings with thatch.

Figure 50: Roof plans and elevations of selected Batwa dwelling typologies, each built with a specific purpose..

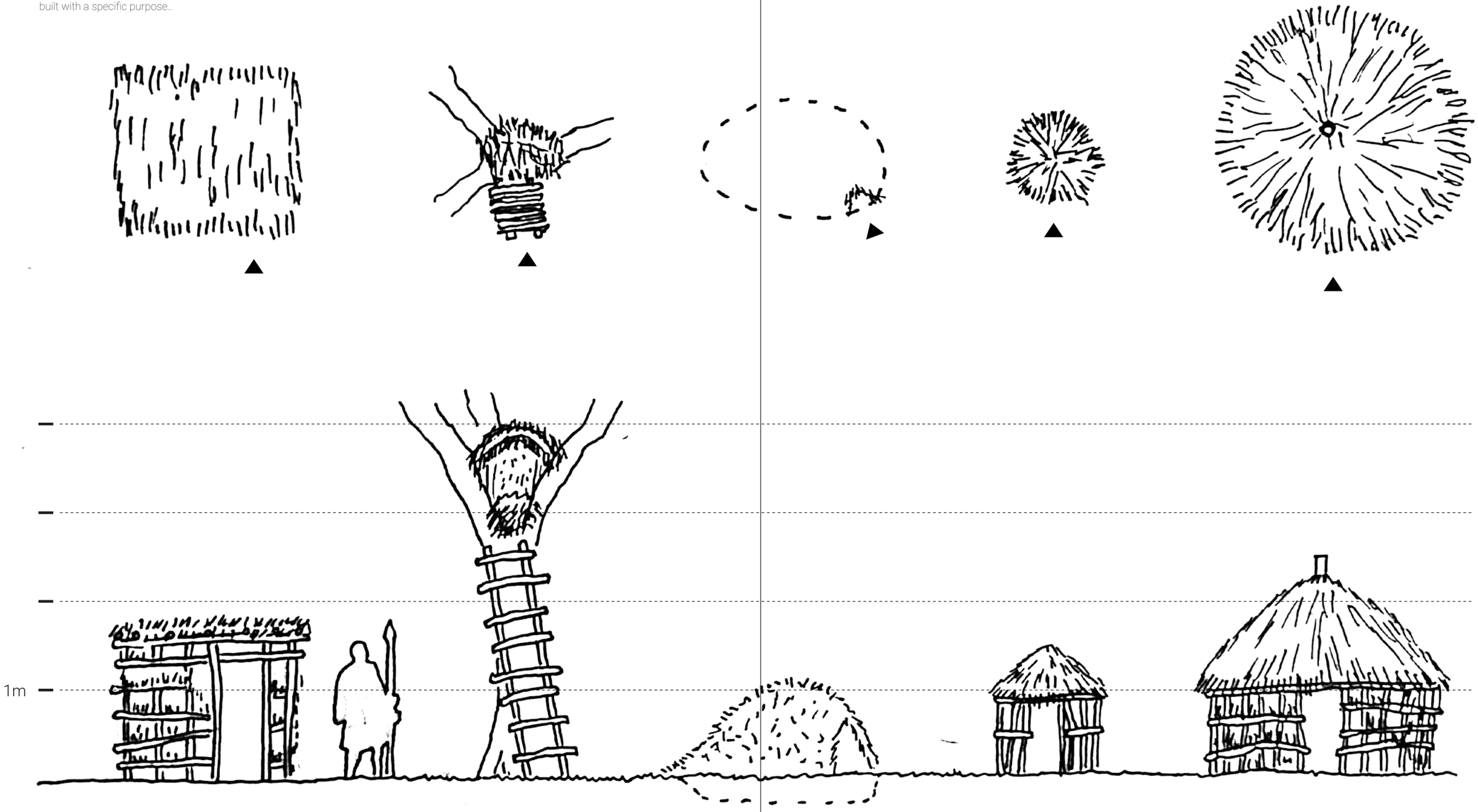


Figure 51: 'Inzu nkuru' - main house for the Batwa parents (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)

Figure 52: A Mutwa fetching water from a stream and storing it in a bamboo culm (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)

material culture

The Batwa largely depended on forest resources for food, medicine, basketry materials, woodfuel, construction materials, hunting tools, household items, rituals and recreation.

Hunting
Owing to their hunter-gatherer life, the Batwa used hunting tools on a daily basis to kill their prey mostly duikers. Spears for example had a body of wood from the buliyoti and heads made of iron traded with neighbouring smelting groups. Similarly, bows, arrows, dog rattles and animal traps were made using materials available within the forest.

Building
Building materials, in the form of tree stems, leaves, grass and earth were all sourced within the lands. The method of construction required limited technology and was less sophisticated as the houses were temporary. However, with the correct choice of tree species, some of the structure would last nearly twenty years provided there were no hazards like wildfires or rain storms (Namara, 2019, p.51).

Everyday consumables and household items
The Batwa relied on the forest as a source of food, medicine, household items and fuel. In addition to meat, common foods included wild yams, wild berries and honey among others. The hibiscus plant was used to make fire, while plants like omushengeshe were widely used as medicine to reverse food poisoning (Namara, 2019, p.51). However they did not engage in the production of these forest resources.

Pottery and rockpainting
The Great Lakes Batwa made pots to store drinking water and food, using clay acquired in swamps. Rockpainting, mostly finger-painting, was prominent often showcasing distorted animal forms with rows of finger dots (Batwa Rock Art, n.d.). As most of the history has been passed from generation to generation through oral traditions, these represent the few documentations of stories from the past.

construction materials
grass thatch
poles
infills

household items

hunting tools

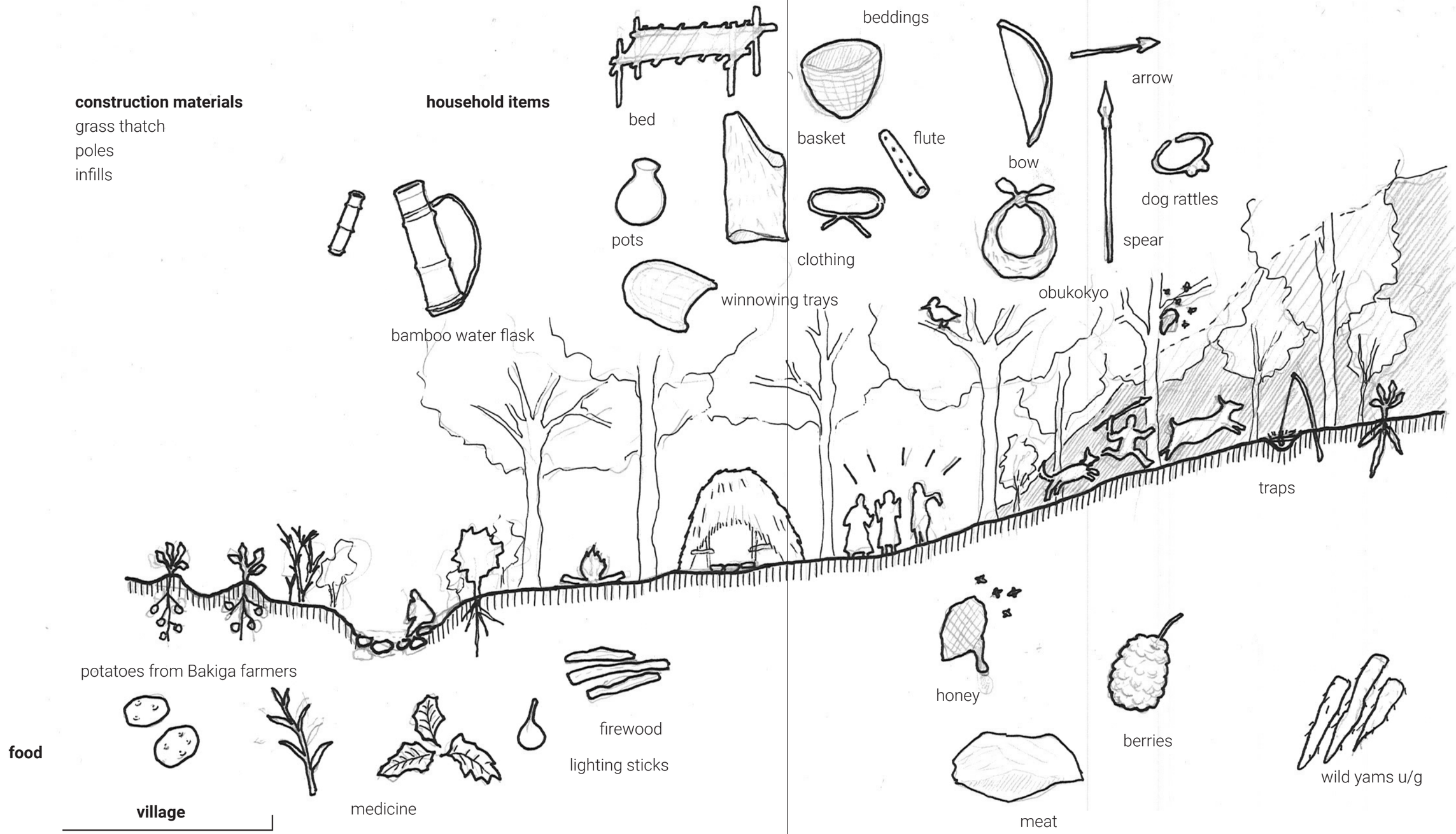
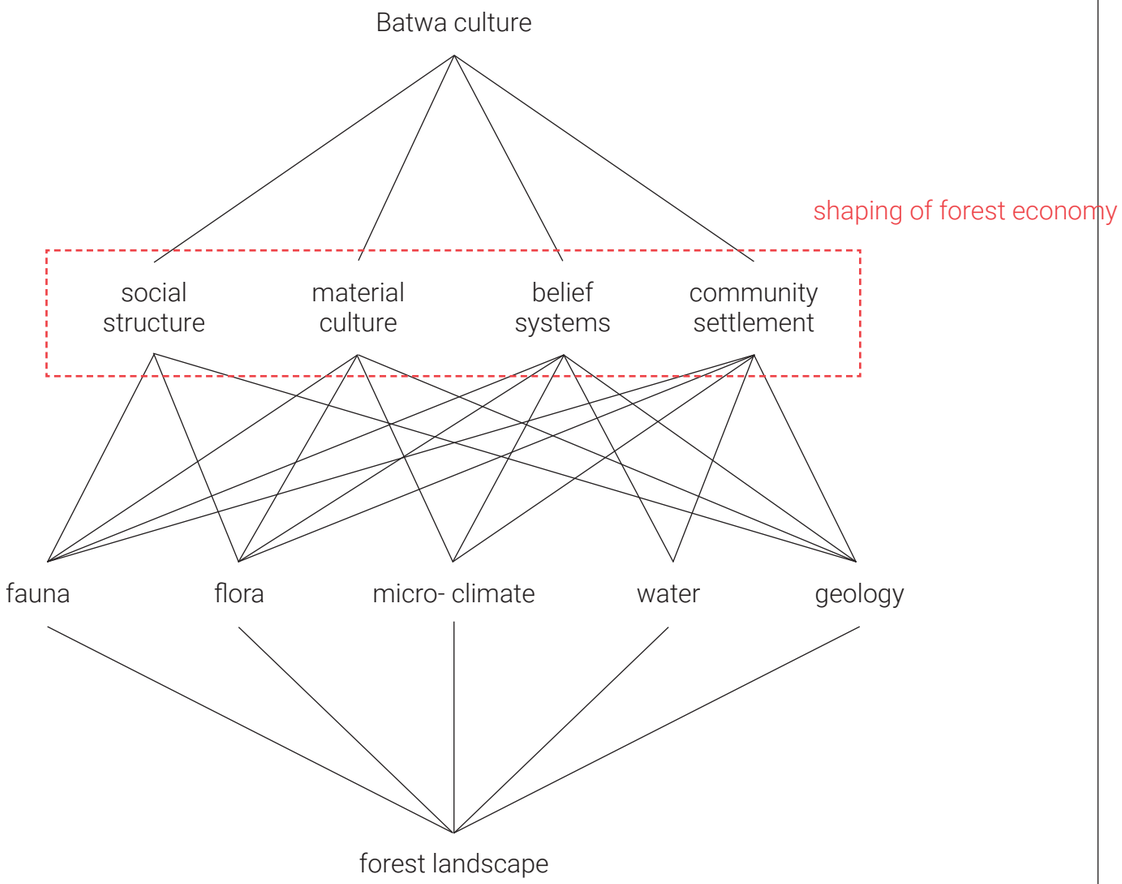


Figure 53: A section through the Mgahinga landscape in relation to the food, materials and tools derived used by the Batwa.

Figure 54: The making of fire using hibiscus branches (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)



conclusion

Self-determination of the Batwa

Strong cultural identity
The Batwa are proud to identify as ‘the children of the forest’ and live a dignified life. They have a deep understanding of their ancestral lands and are free to lead their way of life without external socio-political influences. Their culture, inherited over generations, is strongly rooted in the forest landscapes.

Self-sustaining material culture
The people are self-sufficient, producing and consuming resources within the confines of their forest habitat. Household items used on daily basis such as utensils are made with locally available materials and inherited crafting skills. Goods not locally produced are obtained through barter trade. They do not overly exploit forest resources as they live a life free of the ‘economy’.

Collective self-governance
With the absence of a centralised authority, the Batwa community functions as an autonomous self-determining commune. There are no established structures to govern the forest or its resources per se but in living their lives in reverence with other beings, the forest economy is shaped.

Freedom to settle and move on
Due to the endogeniety of the forest culture, the Batwa have full access and rights to the land they inhabit. They have the freedom to abandon homesteads when one of them dies or when they face hardships obtaining food. Although they live within the confines of unwritten natural laws, they are free to determine their future as peoples in their ancestral lands.

Figure 55: Diagram illustrating how Batwa culture is rooted in the forest landscape.

Figure 56: Batwa group of men in Mgahinga NP (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)

the children of the city

the people
The forest economy now transcending territories involves a multitude of people in Fort Portal, lands in-between and Kampala, where production, extraction and consumption take place.

People in Fort Portal
Although exotic trees, especially eucalyptus are grown in Fort Portal, it is not on a large scale. Mainly producers, retailers, nursery owners can be found in the city. The people here are mainly Batoro, one of the Bantu tribes.

People In-between
Towns like Mubende are pre-dominantly production and extraction landscapes covered with largescale plantations of eucalyptus and pine. For example, a farm covering over 1,200 acres was visited, also comprising wood processing and manufacturing facilities. Those employed in this facility were a mix of people from different regions, telling from their names.

People in Kampala
With the shortage of land in the city, Kampala is a processing and consumption area in the forest economy. During the field trip, a number of workshops, construction sites, timber markets and nurseries were visited. The demographic composition is highly mixed with people from different tribes, regions and sometimes nationalities.

Figure 57: A collage of people involved in the current forest economy (Photos by Busingye Kagonyera)

Figure 58: A collage of the rural, intermediate and city landscapes from left to right (Photos by Busingye Kagonyera, Google)

Figure 59: A rural area in Kabale where eucalyptus is being planted (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)

Figure 60: A pine tree plantation in Mubende covering an area of over 1,000 hectares (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)

Figure 61: A timber market in Senga!
(Source: Google)

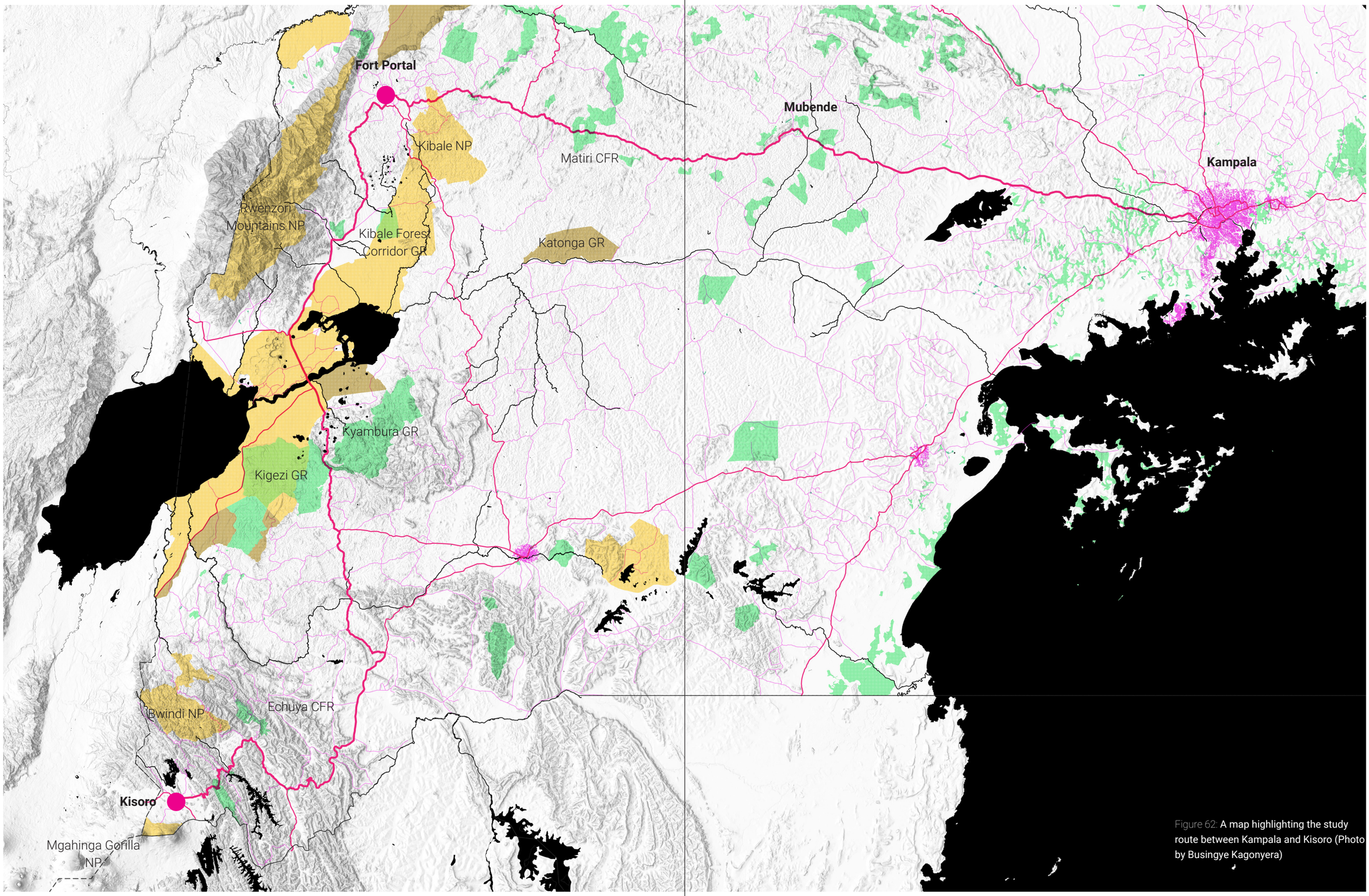


Figure 62: **A map highlighting the study route between Kampala and Kisoro (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)**

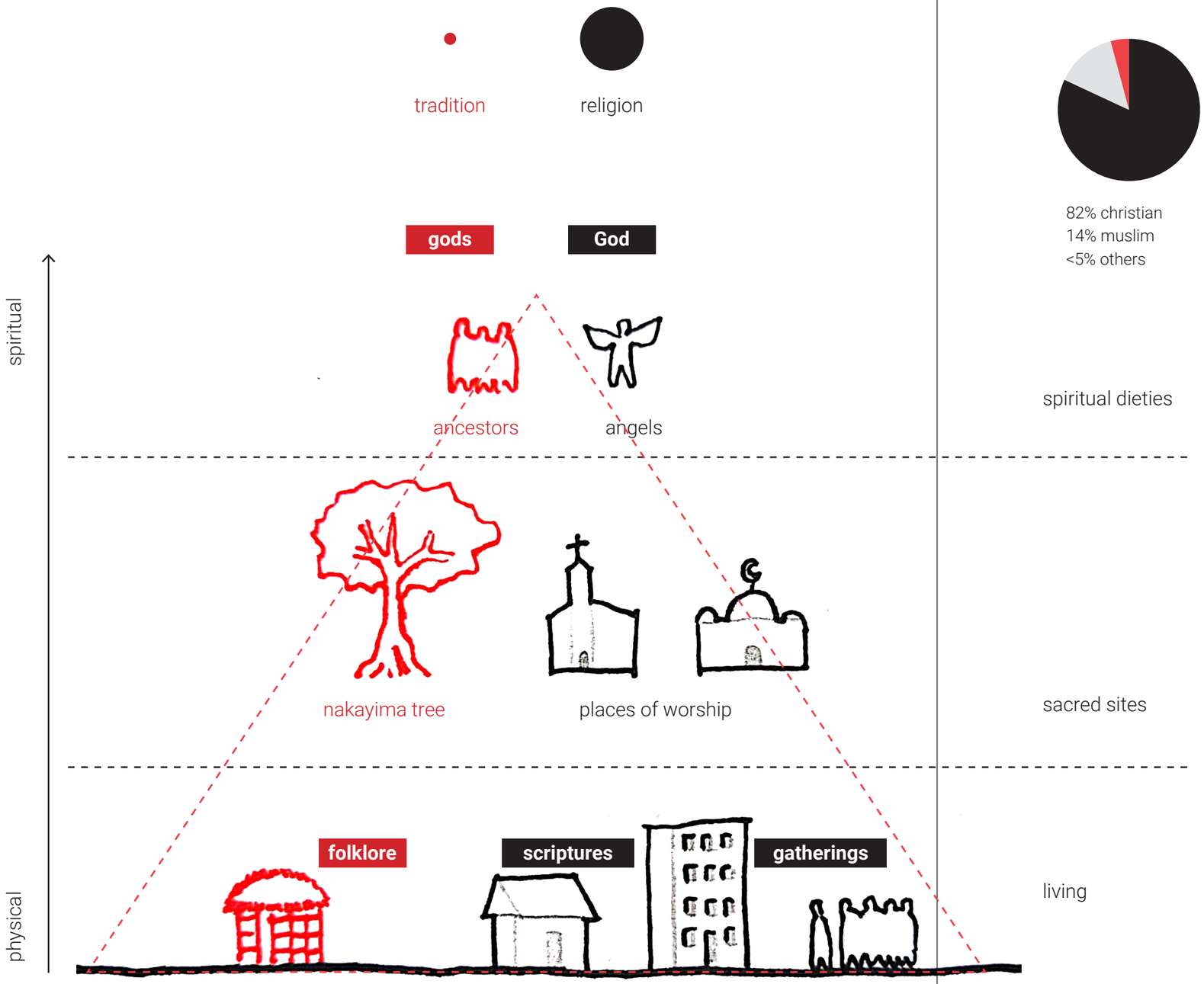


Figure 63: A section showing the belief systems in modern society in their spiritual and physical forms.

82% christian
14% muslim
<5% others

belief system

Highly religious society

Most people across the territories are affiliated to a religion rather than traditional belief system. A census conducted in 2022 reveals that 82% of the population is christian, and14% muslim with other religious groups constituting less than 5% (The United States Department of State, 2022). A minute part of the population still carries indigenous beliefs, while majority follow exotic imported institutions.

Fading indigenous beliefs

Traditional beliefs that were an inherent part of society for centuries before colonisation have lost their place in society, since the introduction of religion and modern law. Ekyogero, for example, is no longer practised by the Baganda because it is seen as backward (Harriet). Traditional beliefs, folkore, legends and spiritual sites are slowly dying out and they risk disappearing into oblivion.

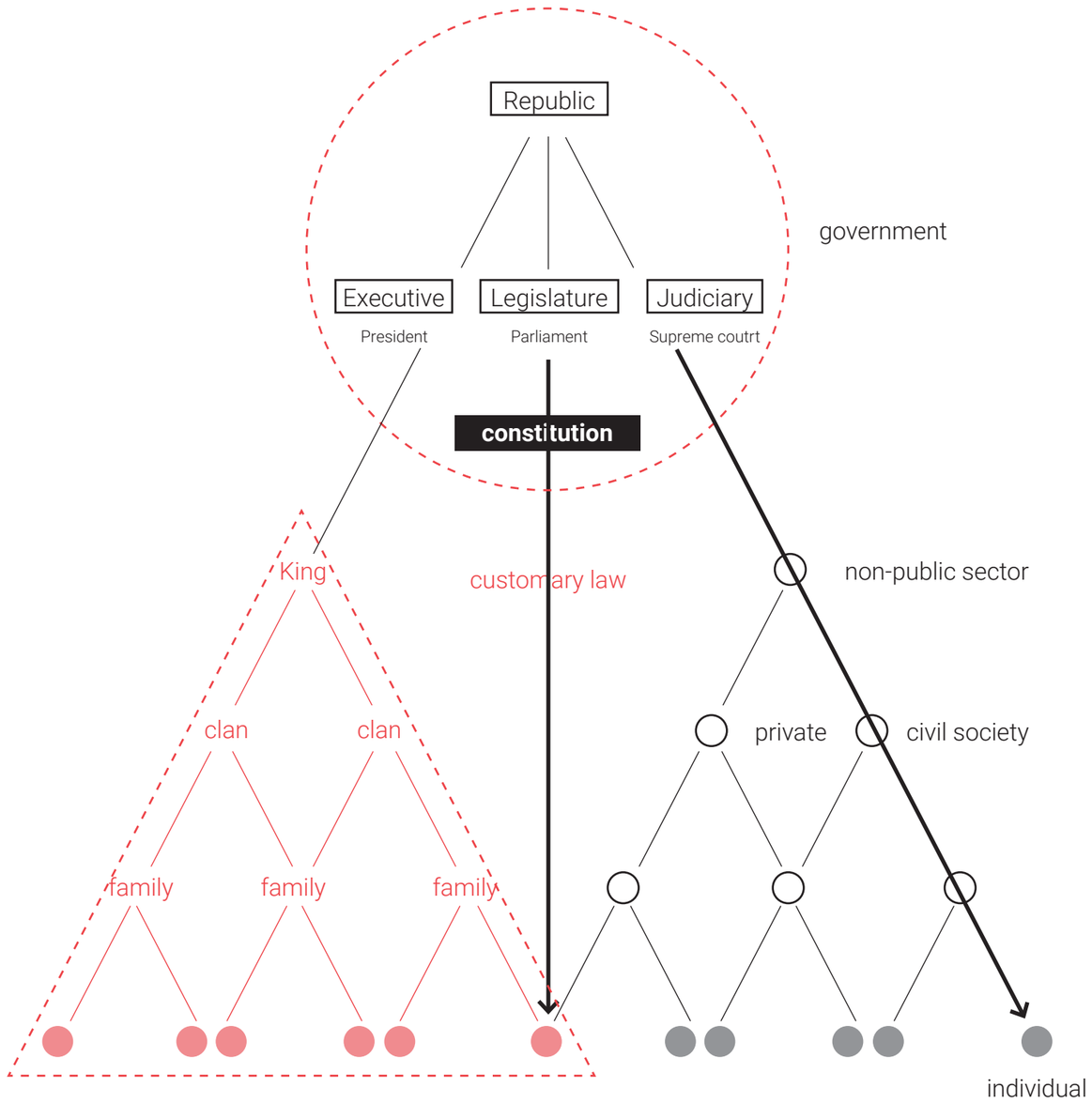
religion versus traditional beliefs

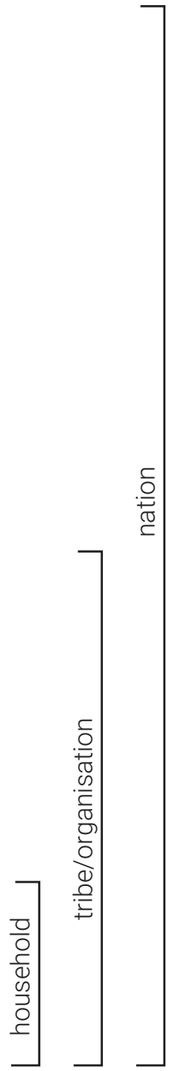
Religion has not only reshaped people's value systems but also the way people live and the physical environment they live in. For example, churches and mosques have been built all over the country and are visited by believers on specific days of the week, and also some people are more inclined to work in organisations that subscribe to certain religious beliefs. Meanwhile, traditional practices have taken more ceremonial roles for example the kukyala and kwanjula.

Modern societal beliefs are imported and therefore not grounded in the people (also ancestors), their historical way of life (culture) or place (natural landscape). Rather, they are embodiments of the institutionalisation of spirituality and will cause an estrangement of the people from their indigenous identity.

Figure 64: Pilgrims at the Nakayima tree shrine in Mubende

Figure 65: A diagram illustrating the dominance of government and formal institutions in the functioning of modern Ugandan society





social structure

Ceremonial tribal identity
Tribe and clans give people a sense of belonging but do not necessarily impact their ways of life.
Society especially in the city has become more and more heterogeneous with migration and intermingling of different tribes. Although traditional family structures are still in place, tribal traditions and norms no longer play a key role in the organisation of modern society.

Institutionalisation of society & knowledge
Modern society is built around centralised institutions, each serving a designated purpose, that are not rooted in tradition.
The knowledge institutions and courts of law for example are based on British colonial education, promulgating the importance of science rather than tradition. It aims to prepare people to be employable in the job market.

Meritocracy and social hierarchies
The colonial law introduced meritocracy and disempowered kingdoms, together with the traditional rule of law.
Although kingdoms were abolished in 1967 (Wikipedia contributors, 2023a) and later reinstated in 1993 (Wikipedia contributors, 2023c), their role in the governing of society became non-existent, relegating them to mere cultural symbols. However, certain social hierarchies related to tribal culture still persist in modern society for example, the high regard for elders.

Positive law over natural law
Society is governed by the constitution and its derivative laws, largely ignoring laws of the place or people. The abrogation of natural laws from human societies and their replacement by conventional laws is the fundamental danger that threatens freedom (Qaddafi, 1977, p.28). This therefore causes conflict within society but also within individuals as to what is naturally acceptable.

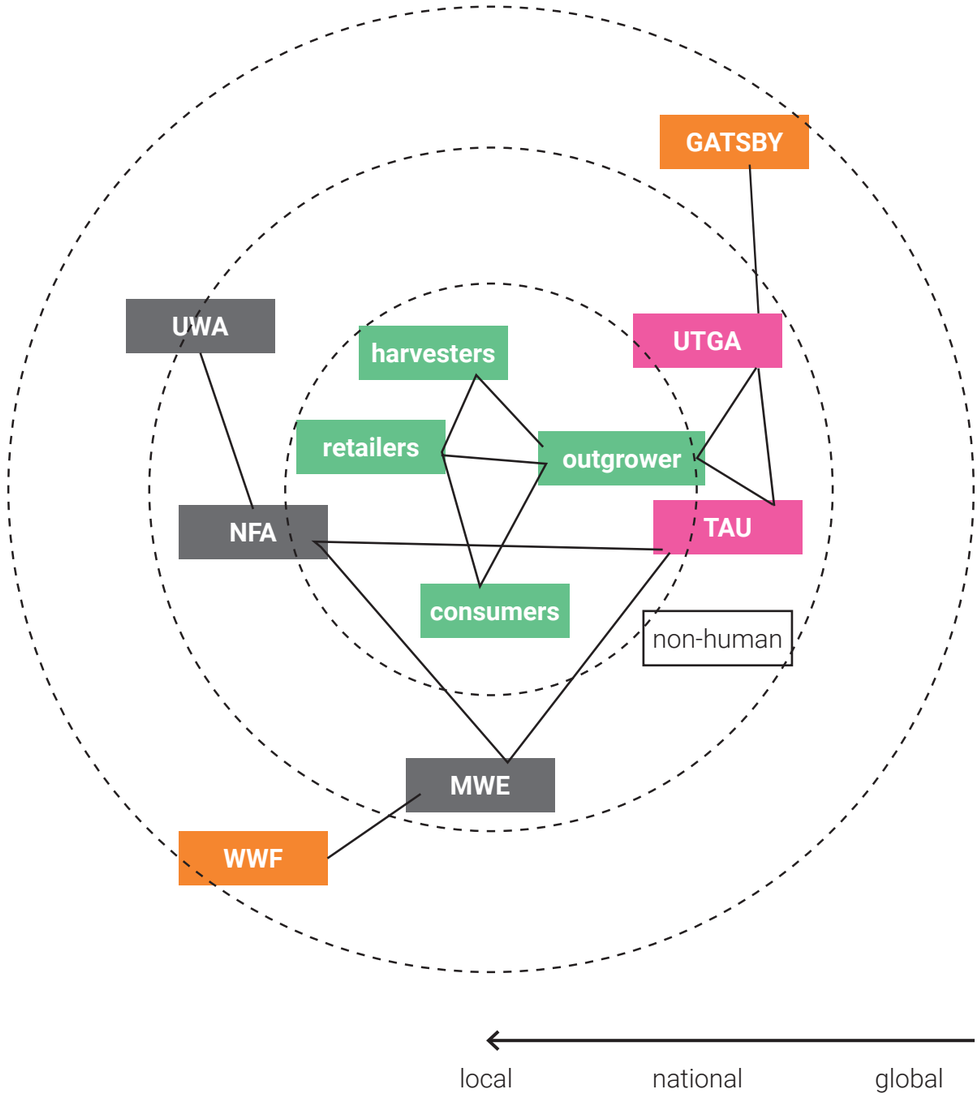


Figure 66: Illustration of private, civil and public actors in the forest economy, from the local to global scale.

Figure 67: A map and flow chart below show the distrbution and relations between actors across the territories. Next page

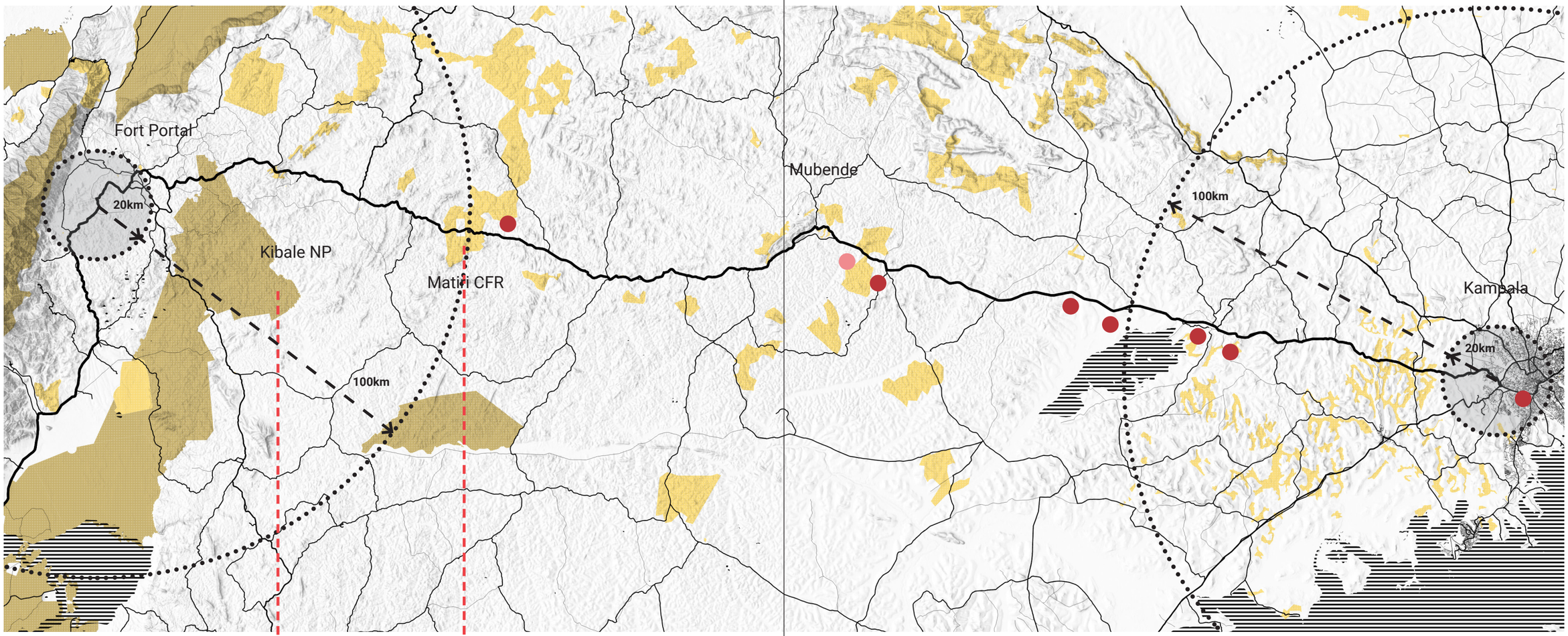
forest economy actors

Privatisation of forest economy
The production, extraction and consumption of forest resources is largely privatised with actors scattered over the city and its region. NFA leased degraded forest land to private individuals to start commercial tree plantations (SAPP,20..). With the NFA lacking capacity to even regulate CFRs, natural forests are under threat.

Export-oriented market trends
Although Uganda's wood market has been locally-focused, it will likely become export oriented in the coming years. This was evident in the workshop where the potential market for eucalyptus products in Egypt was emphasised following a ban on imports from Russia due to the ongoing war. Foreign-based NGO's are partnering with local associations like UTGA to secure this demand and improve the quality of wood products for the new market.

Civil organisations are channels of knowledge and networks as they link the private sector with public institutions and global organisations including GATSBY, WWF and FSC among others.

Indigenous & non-human involvement
Neither the indigenous people and their knowledge have been incorporated in the current forest economy. Non-human actors (biotic) have been relegated to nature reserves where they are conserved and their role in shaping forests is controlled.


Fort Portal
20km
Kibale NP
Matiri CFR
100km
Mubende
100km
Kampala
20km
Vocational school
Plyboard factories
National Parks
Forest Reserves

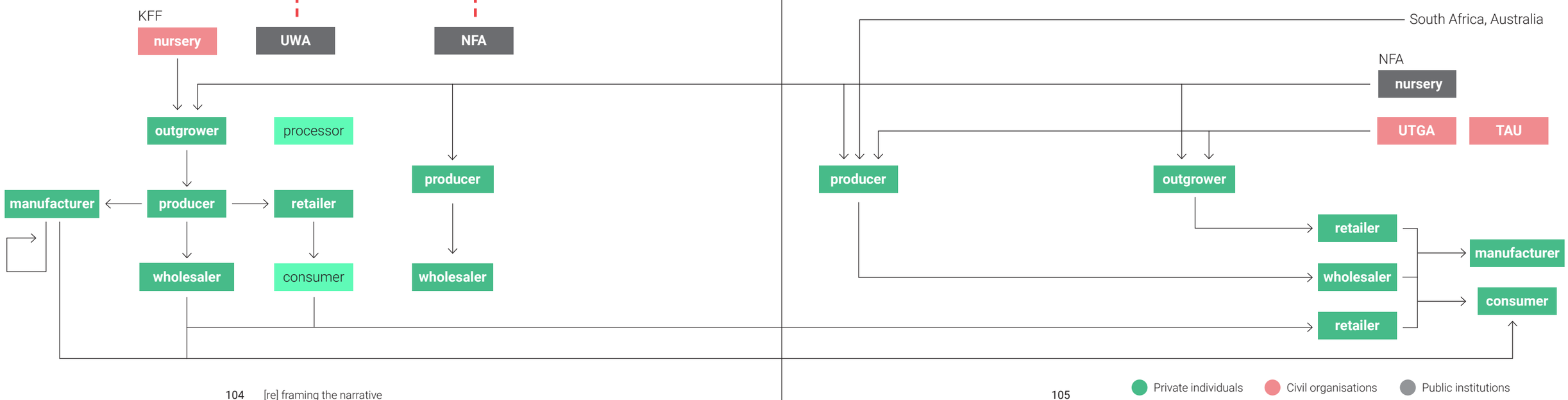
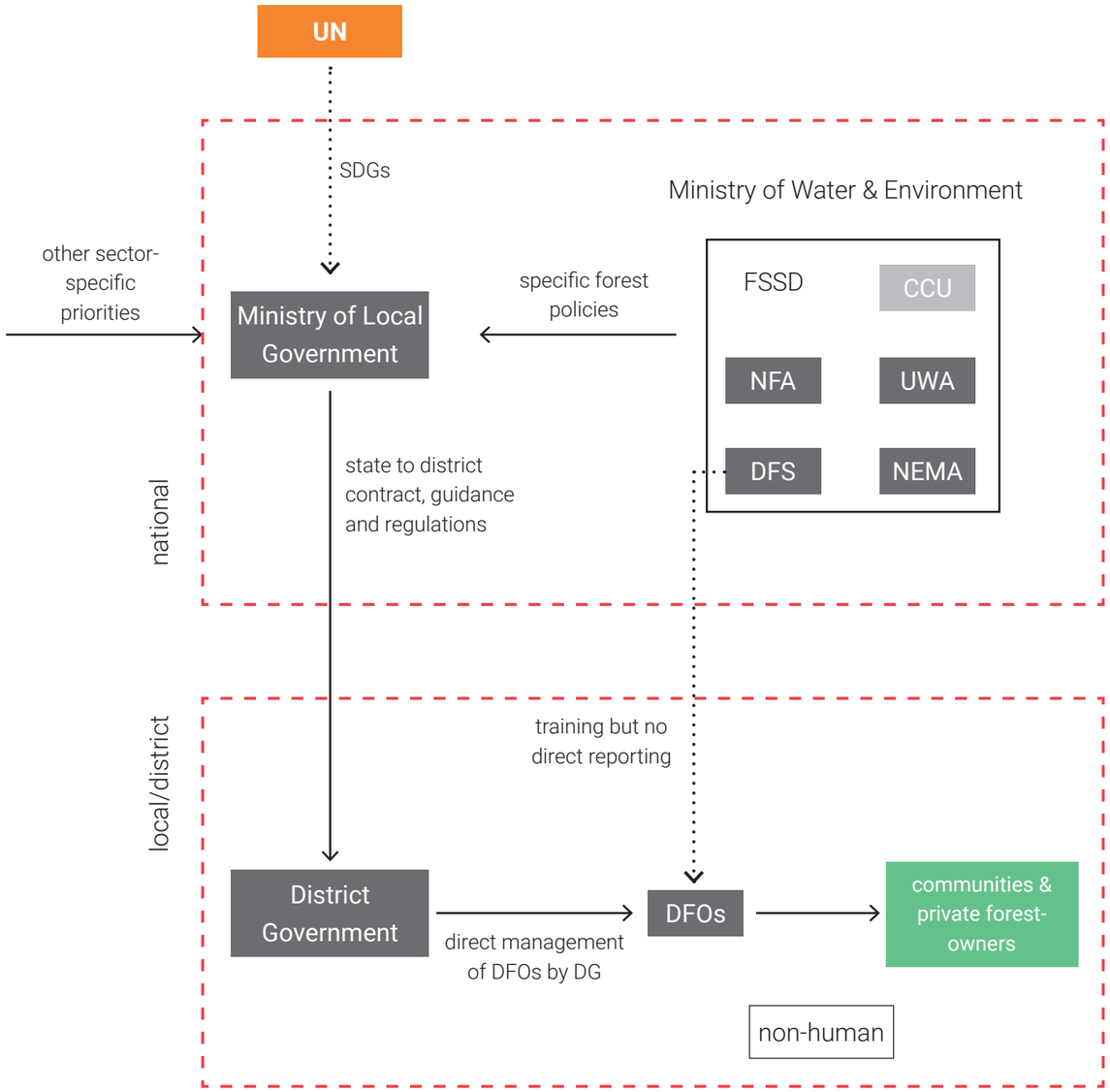

KFF
nursery
UWA
NFA
outgrower
processor
producer
manufacturer
producer
retailer
wholesaler
consumer
wholesaler
South Africa, Australia
NFA
nursery
UTGA
TAU
producer
outgrower
retailer
wholesaler
retailer
manufacturer
consumer
Private individuals
Civil organisations
Public institutions

Figure 68: Aerial view of a new plyboard factory in Kiserwa, along the study route (Source: Googlemaps)



Based on (Brickell et al., 2012)

CCU	Climate Change Unit
DFO	District Forest Officer
DFS	District Forest Service
DG	District Government
FSSD	Forest Support Sector Department
NFA	National Forestry Authority
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority

forest governance

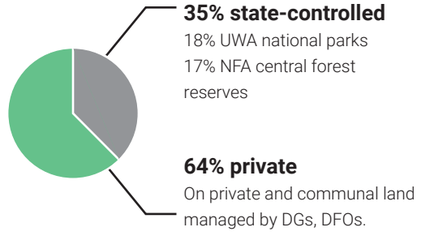


Figure 69: Pie chart of forest ownership in Uganda (Source: ...)

Ineffective forest management

Only a small portion of forests in the country are effectively monitored and managed due to the lack of capacity of public institutions. Only the National Parks which make 18% of total forest cover are well managed (...,20..). Although the management structures are in place, they are not implemented and therefore perpetuate illegal deforestation and heavily exploitative commercial forestry.

Exogenous policies

Starting with the first National Forestry Policy in 1929 (Omoding et al., 2020) which led to the centralisation of forest management and gazettement of reserves, forest policy has not been based on the values or traditions of the people they most affect. Furthermore, they do not incorporate indigenous knowledges or methods of forest management. Consequently, efforts to implement the policies are experienced as hinderances or disruptions by local communities who were not involved in their formulation.

Communal forest management programs

The CFM run by the NFA take a top-down approach as they do not grant communities rights over the use of forest resources. According to one of the respondents from NFA, some forests are managed together with the community giving them restricted access to forest resources especially firewood on a regulated basis. Still, local communities and indigenous tribes do not have a say on the management of resources as they remain at the mercy of authorities.

Since the government neither has the resources nor manpower to manage forests on its own, it needs the support of local communities. Forest management practices should be based on local tradition and value systems, as part of people's everyday lives, for them to be sustained over time.

Figure 70: Forest management structure (Source: MoWE website, 2023)

NFA
National Forestry Authority

NATIONAL TREE SEED CENTRE

P. O. BOX 70863 KAMPALA-UGANDA
TEL: 256 - 414 - 286049, FAX: 256 - 414 - 230369
E-mail:info@nfa.org.ug
Website:www.nfa.org.ug

NAMANVE SEEDS

HOME OF QUALITY SEED AND SEEDLINGS

For your tree planting

NFA
National Forestry Authority

Make Money
Plant Trees

Figure 71: A sticker of the NFA highlighting the commercial outlook on trees.

Figure 72: Sunset National Housing Estate in Naalya, Kampala. (Source: The Independent)

Figure 73: Satellite image of a settlement in Mityana town, along the study route. (Source: Googlemaps)

settlement

Neoliberal ‘planning’ - design & planning process

The modern practice of planning and design is driven by governing authorities and ‘experts’, all of whom are not stationed in the places they plan and design. One of the respondents in the construction sector mentioned the building approval processes that are mandatory for all new developments and how he mainly works with consultants. Because the people who plan human settlements both in rural and urban areas are separate from those who build them and again not the same people who will live in these communities, the outcomes of modern planning are not locally motivated.

Settlement as an asocial practice - building process

Kampala’s real estate sector is privately-driven and therefore largely based on capitalist culture. The process of building a house involves hiring building consultants, private construction companies and government approval. Eventually an entire community is built up in the form of individual houses on private plots, many times residents not knowing their neighbours. The practice of community building and settling on a landscape is not socially-driven in the traditional sense.

Contextual insensivity of building types - materiality

Building types are no longer sensitive to locally available materials and micro-climate as they are based on the available capital resource of the ‘developer’. Building materials, equipment, knowledge and whole typologies are all imported, replicated and reproduced based on local and global precedences. Planning across all scales is based on modern ‘best practices’ that are founded in capitalism, rather than traditional culture, climate or landscape.

The basis and process of settlement has nothing to do with the landscape except for its technical and economic charateristics.

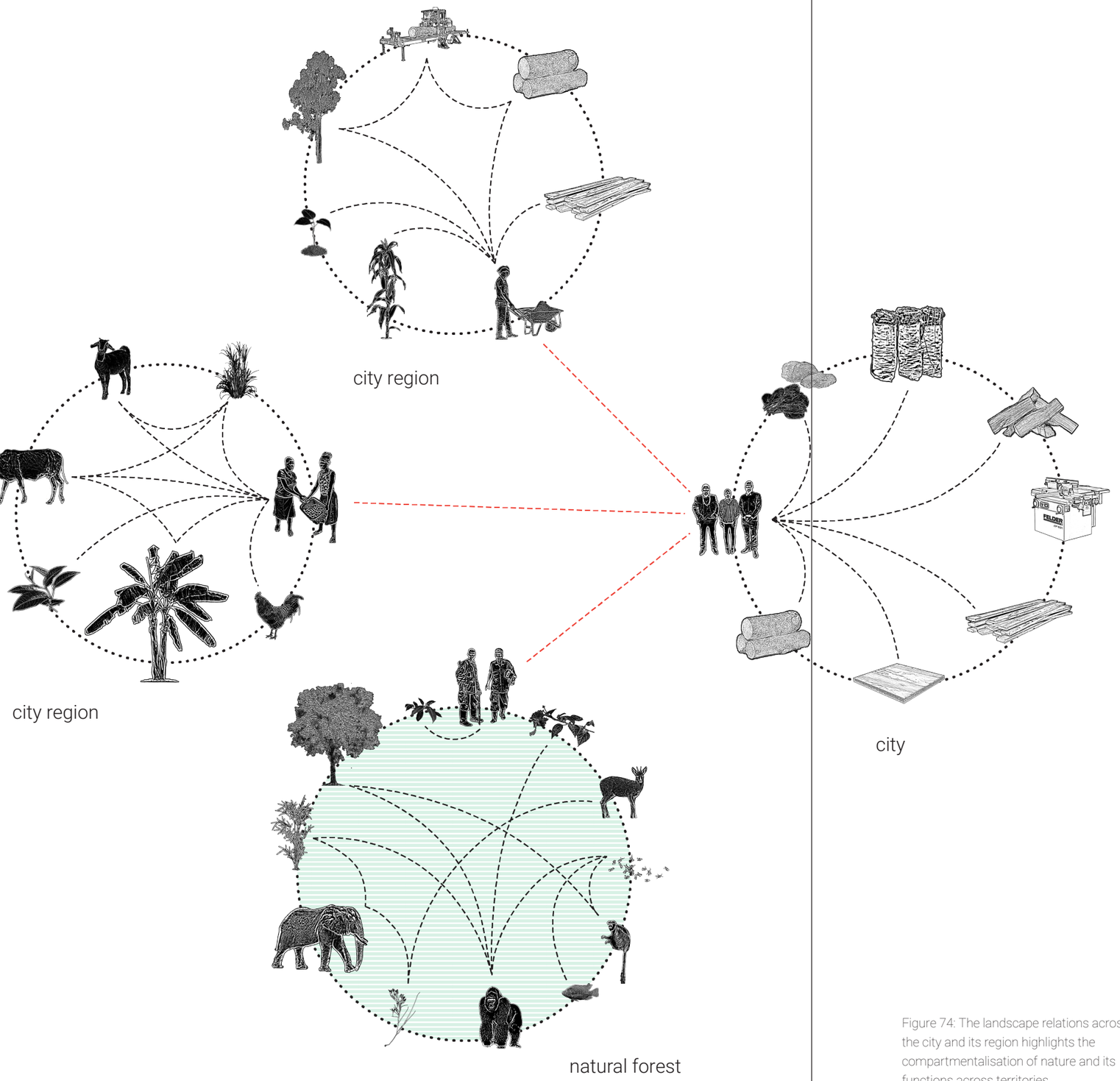


Figure 74: The landscape relations across the city and its region highlights the compartmentalisation of nature and its functions across territories.

landscape relations

fragmented landscape
The forest landscape has become territorialised and compartmentalised with the urban and rural landscapes taking on opposing functions. The latter has taken the role of production and extraction of forest resources while the former facilitates mainly consumption.

city region
The city region has taken the role of production and extraction of forest resources. In addition to cash crops and food crops, eucalyptus and pine plantations have filled the landscapes of Bujuuko, Mubende, Fort Portal and beyond. Production facilities especially plywood processing factories also been developed mainlly by Chinese investors along major highways. Although resources are also consumed locally, a bulk of them are transported to the city for processing or sale.

city
The city is the hub of forest resource consumption and trade. The two largest timber markets, Bwaise and Ndeeba are located in city, as well as a bulk of the nation's urban population. As the city's built area and inhabitants grow, the demand for forest resources especially wood fuel and construction timber is bound to rise and put more pressure on the city region. In terms of biodiversity, Kampala has very low vegetation cover and wildlife populations due to it's human-centred planning. People in the city interact with processed materials, not living organisms.

As much as people continue to interact with the organisms in the city, it is mostly in their processed/non-living form. Human interaction with machines increasing and less with other living beings.

material culture

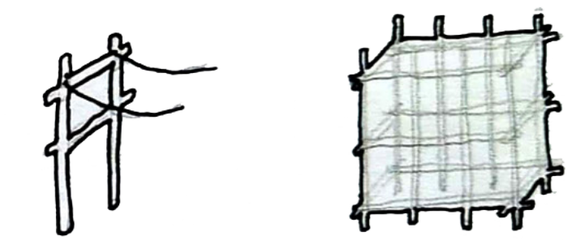
Territorialisation & modern life

In modern society, urban dwellers are consumers rather than producers. Inevitably production and extraction of forest resources happens in territories outside the city. As TAU suggests, the economy also plays are role in this as land in city is scarce and of high value, dictating the location of production landscapes in the city region. As a result, citizens are separated physically but also relationally, from the origins of the products they consume.

Mechanisation and generalisation

Extraction, production and consumption of forest resources has been largely mechanised and territorialised. The materials used by people are not specific to the context or culture but is now generalised and the same across all regions. This means people, especially in the city, need money to purchase woodfuel, construction materials and household items that are mass manufactured, because they do not produce them.

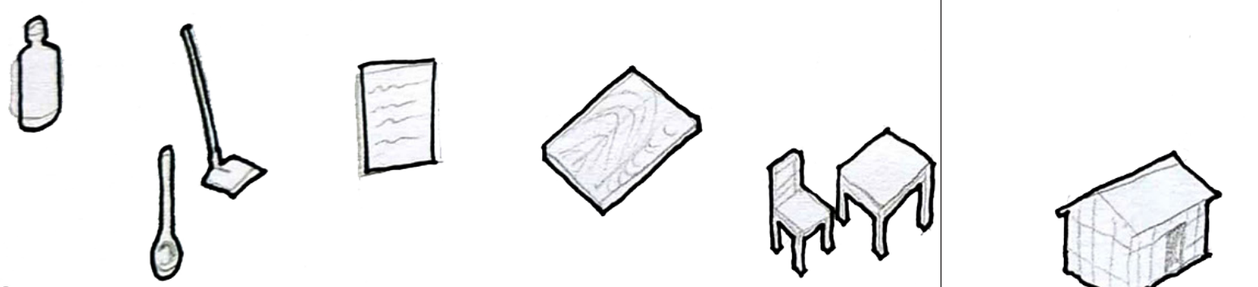
woodfuel



seeds

household tools

construction materials



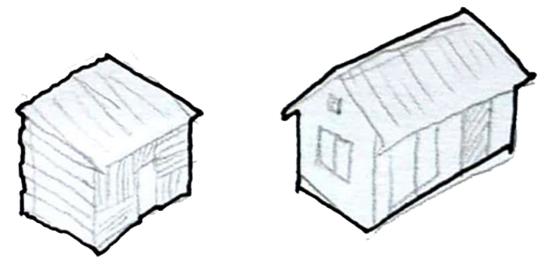


Figure 75: A section across the city and its region in relation to the different forms the tree takes across the territories.

1881

1909

1902

1950's

1850

1881

1850

Figure 76: Map showing the origins and migration of the eucalyptus tree species (Source: Author, adapted from Wood urbanism)

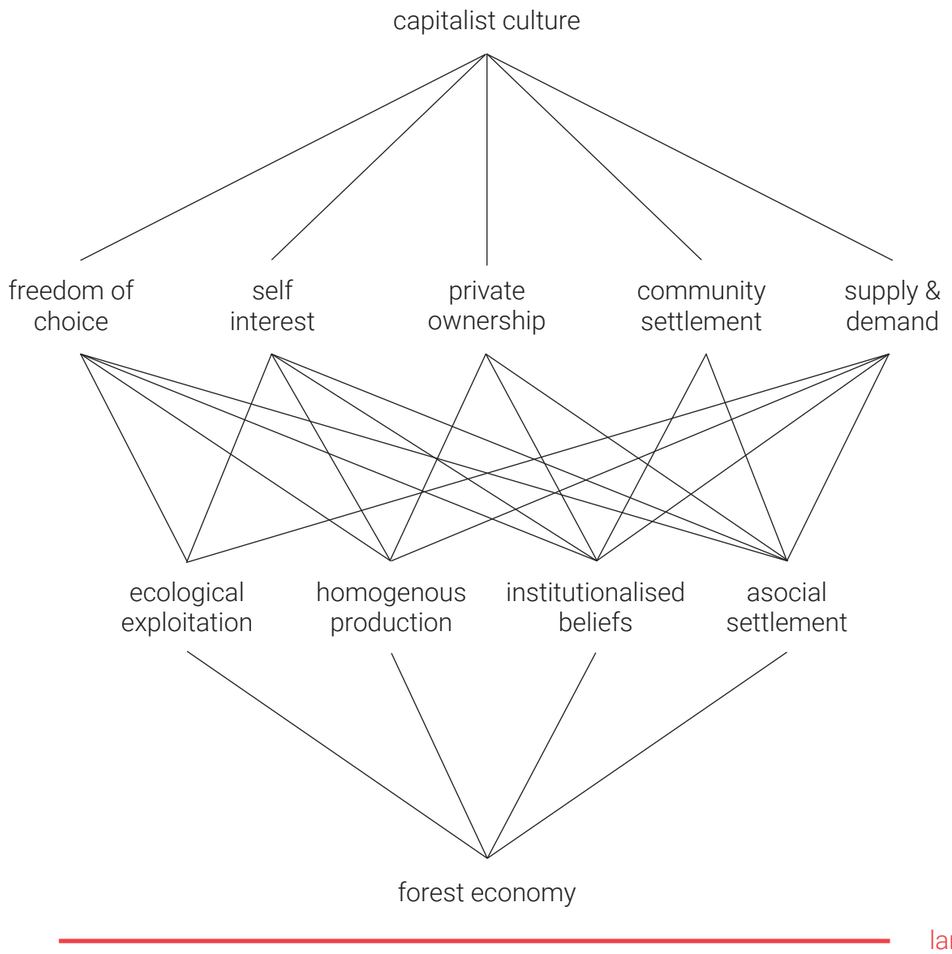


Figure 77: A diagram showing how the current forest economy is rooted in capitalist culture.

conclusion

Institutionalisation of society & forestry

Since the replacement of traditional systems with British colonial rule, society became increasing institutionalised and so has the practice of forestry. Even after independence, the same systems of control have been inherited and continue to shape the forest economy. The REDD program for example led to the planting of over 8,000 hectares of pine forest and the current government TREE program promotes this. In a setting where the bulk of forestry is privatised, efforts are directed towards financial gain through maximisation rather than humanity.

Unquestioned imminent devastation

As everyone carries out their business in the name of survival and financial gain without questioning the impacts of this culture, it is apparent that it will be devastating in the long term. For example, the respondent from UWA bluntly points out that forests will be no more in the coming years. This is also evident in the workshop which revealed the likely importation of foreign technology in the wood value chain which will only exacerbate the spread of tree plantations. Non-humanisation of the forest economy characterised by the increased role of technology and machinery in exploiting land and forest resources, is a ticking time bomb.

Forest economy as a capitalist construct

The modern forest economy is based on the culture of capitalist extraction, production and consumption that is dirven by profit. For example, National Parks and Reserves even in their most natural state, are maintained for the revenue they generate from tourism. Forestry practices and governance, and the larger forest economy are therefore not derived from or embeded in the landscape, which has been reduce to land as an asset that carries them and is exploited for the production of more forest resources.

Figure 78: Aerial view of a pine tree plantation in Mubende, along the study route (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)

Figure 79: Plantation works convert the logs into timber using a portable sawmill (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)

Figure 80: Traces of charcoal making and harvesting of eucalytpus in Kabale (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera)

Figure 81: Batwa trail guides in Mgahinga National Park (Photo by Busingye Kagonyera).

Figure 82: Temporary house outside Mgahinga National Park (Source: http://www.face-music.ch/fotosuganda/batwapeople2/batwakisoro.html)

Figure 83: A woman weaving baskets (Source: theugandatrips.com)

Batwa life today

So, what is the life of the Batwa like in the modern forest economy?

Except for those who work as guides in the Batwa trail, the Batwa people do not have access to the forests. Many of them work on farms around the forest, others have resorted to begging and singing on the streets of Kisoro for money.

Some still live in settlement camps where they have built temporary structures. With the government not invested in resttling them, they rely on external support to build housing for them.

In terms of material culture, craftmaking has been widely adopted as a source of income, mainly targeting toursits. Traditional handcrafts and tools are not used much domestically.

In conclusion, the Batwa way of life today has little to do with the forest landscape. They have been forced to rely on external support for survival as they have lost all agency to determine their future as peoples.

Part 5

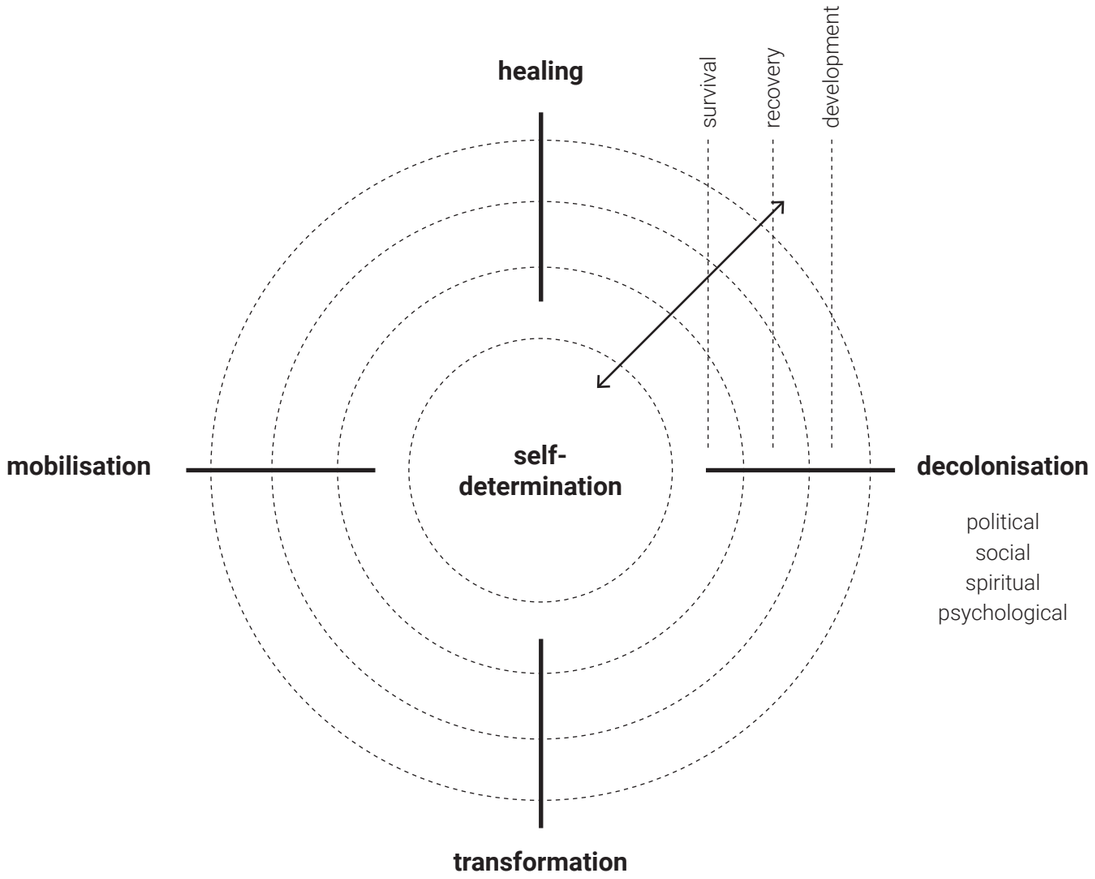
Stories of change

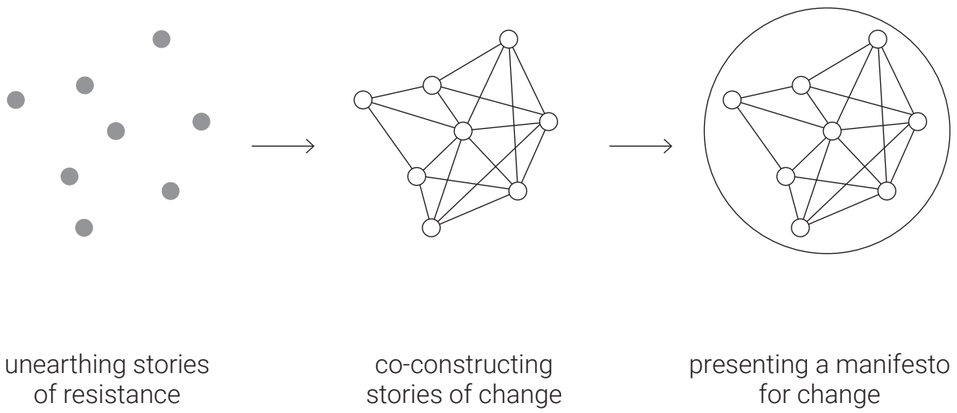
A manifesto for the self-determination of the Batwa

'Ijororibara uwalilaye'

- Lutwa proverb

Translation: The one that spends the whole night awake is the one who can say what happened.





Decolonising forest culture

Forestry as project of culture

In examining the indigenous forest ecology and modern forest economy, it becomes evident that forestry is indeed a construct of human culture. The way people think (their belief, value and knowledge systems) are foundational to this culture that shapes their social structures, settlement patterns and interactions in the landscape. The dominant societal culture determines whether forestry is founded in the wellbeing of the people or in their oppression.

A forest culture rooted in self-determination

The study suggests the decolonisation of the current exogenous forest economy by shifting the focus towards the self-determination of the Batwa people. Smith (2021, p.133) affirms that the Indigenous Research Agenda (IRA) upholds on self-determination to achieve social justice in four directions; decolonisation, healing, mobilisation and transformation. Stories from the aggrieved Batwa people are used to initiate the desired change.

Figure 84: The Indigenous Research Agenda (Adapted from Smith (2021, p.133)

Storywork as a driver for change

In the following section, storytelling based on a local narrative is used to initiate change. First, Batwa stories of resistance are brought to the surface through extracts from interviews, documentaries and literature. This is followed by co-construction of narratives for change through a short semantic analysis of resistance texts. Finally, people's stories are used to develop a demand for change supported by concrete actions in the form of a manifesto. A vision for a decolonised forest culture, in which the Batwa have become a self-determining commune, is also presented.

Figure 85: Illustration of storywork as a driver for change

'What happened was that the government came to chase us away. We were chased from the forest, so we ran and many were lost. [...] The ill-fated ones died and the lucky ones survived. [...] We are aggrieved. So if they can't give our forest back, they should compensate us for the damages'

Batwa elder

'We used to live in the forest, they have taken away our gorillas, our forest. We were pulled out of it and we are settled on new shores. We are lost here.'

Batwa song

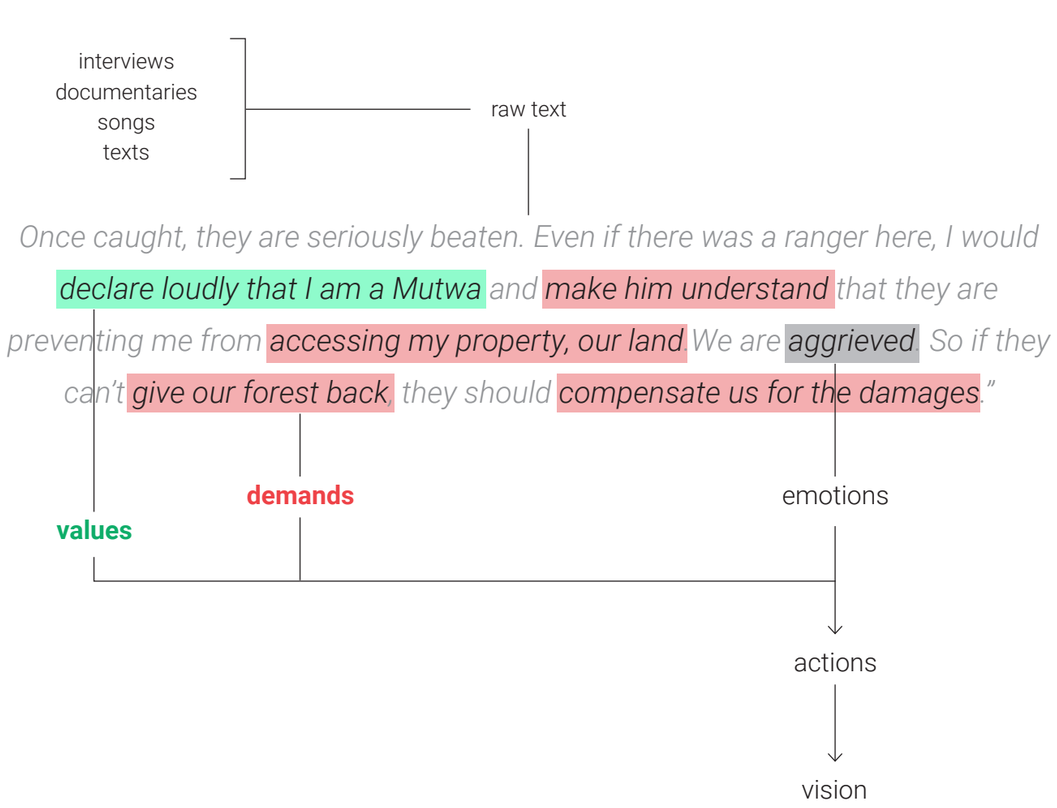


Figure 86: Extracts of text from interviews, documentaries and songs.

Figure 87: Semantic analysis process leading to a vision for change.

Co-constructing stories

Collecting local narratives

The lived experiences of a number of Batwa people were gathered through interviews, literature, documentary and song reviews. These stories express a mix of emotions concerning the current situation of the Batwa peoples and possible remedies. For example, one of the elders is filled with despair that the situation cannot be saved and he has lived long enough to realise that the forest will not be returned to them. On the other hand, his daughter is hopeful that surrounding communities have welcomed and accepted them as people. This section focuses on distilling what these stories mean for the future of the Batwa.

Revealing 'resistant texts'

To unravel underlying echoes of resistance and desires for change, the collected narratives deconstructed. The emerging 'resistant texts' offer powerful insights into endogenous ways of knowing, being and acting, and can be viewed as endogenous systems of knowledge production Winkler (2018). In the following section, resistant texts are examined using semantic analysis to offer an alternate perspective on possible remedies to the injustices faced by the Batwa people.

Semantic analysis

The 'resistant texts' are examined using semantic analysis, which in simple terms is the process of drawing meaning from text. By analysing the stories of the Batwa peoples, their emotions, demands and values are derived. These deconstructions are then re-assembled and used to formulate actions for the desired change.

our way home

Our demands

Apologise & let us grieve
The colonial administration and government have caused immeasurable loss and pain to the Batwa people for more than a century. They should publicly acknowledge their wrong doings and apologise for all the injustices inflicted upon the people. Our stories of suffering should be known and we should be allowed to grieve publicly.

Restore our livelihoods
Since being evicted from the forest, we have struggled to survive in an unfamiliar environment. We demand the restoration of our lives in the forest where we could hunt animals, harvest honey and pick wild fruits when we needed to eat. We never bought food.

Return our dignity
We have lost our dignity due to the loss of our livelihood in the forest. Outside our land, we are discriminated, abused and mistreated by other people. We want to live a dignified life. We want our dignity back.

Freedom to exercise our culture
We are lost here. Outside the forest, we cannot build the houses we used and we cannot use our spears. We demand that we can be ourselves again and continue to practice the traditions our ancestors passed down to us.

Rights over ancestral lands
We are the children of the forest and the forest belongs to us. We demand the return of our land which our ancestors took care of for thousands of years and handed down to us. We were safe there and that was the best life we have known.

Right to self-determination
We shall not die working for other people. Return our freedom and rights to determine our present and future. We can decide where we want to go as peoples by ourselves. Our ancestors and our elders will guide us on the path we should take.

Figure 88: Illustration of demands of the Batwa people.

Our values

Like the demands listed previously, the values that the Batwa peoples uphold in living their lives have been distilled from 'resistance texts'. Because the Batwa belong to the Bantu group of people, the Ubunut philosophy was also used to ground these values in traditional values.

Respect & humility [Individual level]
We are humble, embrace compassion and understanding of other people and living beings. We treat fellow tribesmen, 'others' with understanding, compassion and respect.

Familial connectedness [Family level]
We value family. We respect our elders. We are guided and protected by our ancestors.

Communality [Community level]
We can depend on each another. We build houses and live together. We hunt together. We sing and dance together.

Dignity and identity [Tribal level]
We are proud to be Batwa, the children of the forest. We know the forest and her ways. That is where we can live a dignified life with the freedom to decide where want to go as people.

Sacrality [Territorial level]
We view the forest as a sacred place where our god and ancestors live. We have deep reverence for the forest and all her living beings. We view the gorillas as our brothers, not a commodity for generating income.

Figure 89: Illustration of the values of the Batwa people.

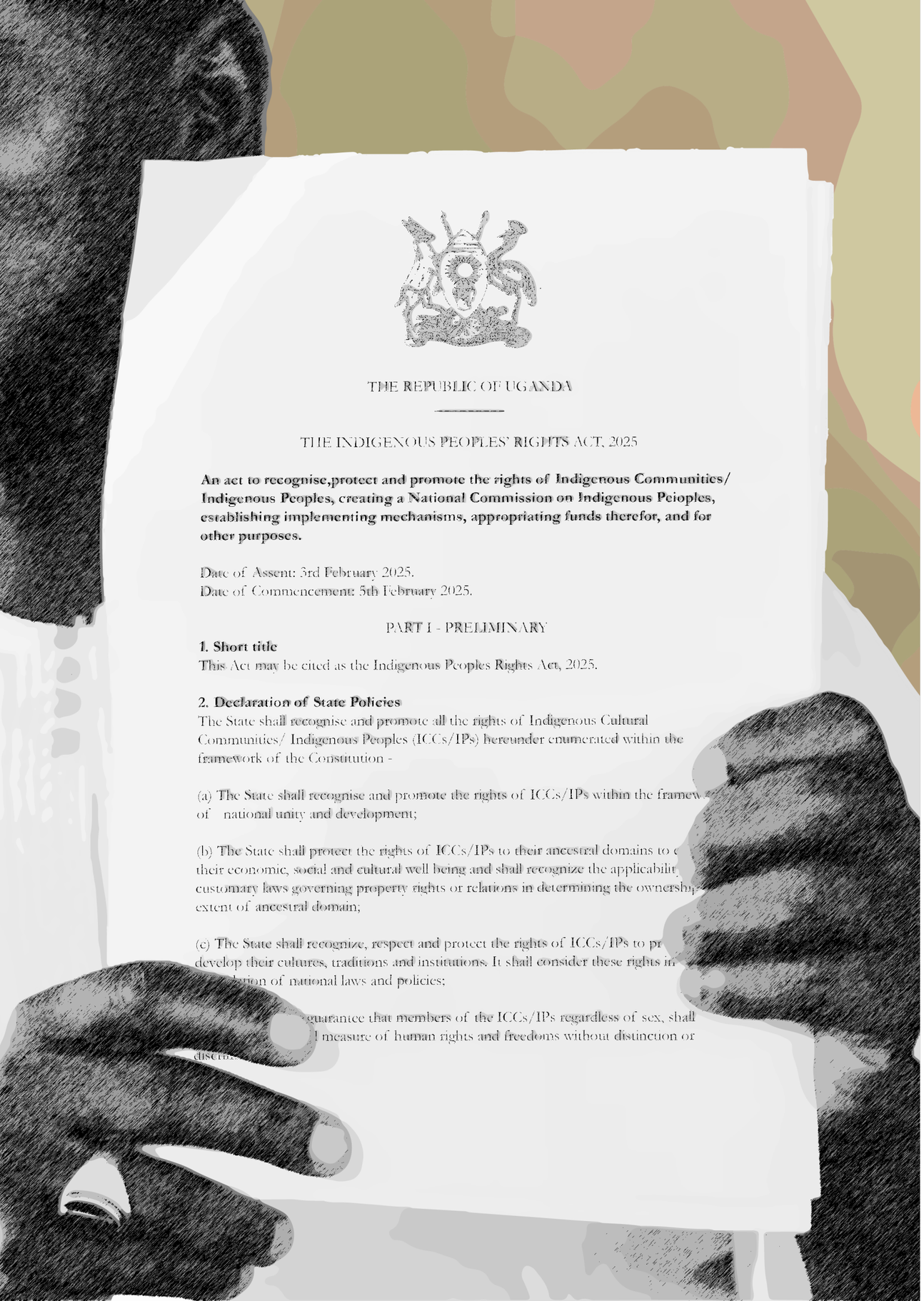


Figure 90: Illustration of calls to action.

Call to action

1. Recognition of Indigenous Peoples

Endorse the UN Declaration
The government of Uganda should publicly endorse the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007, ratify the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 1989 (No. 169) and develop a national policy to implement Indigenous Peoples free, prior and informed consent (Cultural Survival et al., 2021). They should also create an action plan to implement the Outcome Document of the World Conference on IPs.

Recognise IPs and their rights
The Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development (in the absence of a Ministry of IPs) should enact a national statute that promotes and recognises these rights as autonomous peoples, as in the Philippines (Van Der Muur, 2023). The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act will recognise, protect and promote the rights of IPs, creating a National Commission on IPs, establishing implementing mechanisms and appropriating funds therefor. In consultation with IPs, the Constitution should be amended to clearly define who IPs are in line with the African Commission's Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities.

Recognise and protect land rights
The MoLHUD should formulate a new Land Policy to redress historical injustices experienced by IPs and be interpreted in line with international law (UOBDU et al., 2015). Ancestral land rights for the Batwa as custodians of forest lands for centuries should be recognised, granting them free access to the forests and cultural sites. Land and land use rights should be mapped and registered in together with communities.

Recognise rights of forest
The line Ministry should enact the Mgahinga, Bwindi and Echuya (MBE) Act to recognise the rights of the forest as an ancestral entity, similar to New Zealand which has upheld the Maori cosmological view of nature as an ancestor and devised a legal framework for better protecting its interests. Among other things, the Act will describe Mgahinga based on Batwa storytelling, why it is important to the people and remove its previous status as a National Park.

Document Batwa customary law
Customary or traditional law broadly refers to laws, practices and customs of ICCs (Mujuzi, 2020). This law should be documented for each tribe and made publicly available. It is currently difficult for people to know what exactly it entails because it not codified. The law should be documented in the respective local languages in consultation with tribal representatives and members.

Figure 91: Illustration of calls to action.

2. Reparations and healing

Acknowledge and apologise for injustices
The colonial administration and Government of Uganda should apologise for the social and epistemic injustices that the Batwa have been subjected to since colonisation. A 'National Sorry day' (Carlson, 2022), similar to Australia should be marked to commemorate the Batwa and other IPs who were forcibly removed from the forests and other ancestral lands under government policies over the past century.

Compensate us for suffering
A compensation treaty should be signed between the Batwa and the Government of Uganda. This should be followed by a just and fair compensation to the Batwa for the suffering caused since eviction in 1991 (Cultural Survival et al., 2021). Although the verdit on a court case filed by the UN on behalf of the Batwa against UWA and NFA is pending, it is hoped that the Batwa will receive some financial compensation and access to the forest lands in the coming years.

Grief and healing
The Batwa should be given the support to openly grieve over their losses and heal from their suffering. Erfan (2017) advocates for a therapeutic approach to planning that prioritises healing of collective traumas, suggesting the use of meetings as 'healing circles' and conversations as interweaved collective stories. Furthermore the Government and CSOs should allocate resources to establish with the Batwa people the pressing issues they are facing and solutions needed to provide a more harmonised social protection system (Cultural Survival et al., 2021).

Return of ancestral land
The Government should return the conservation land taken without the free, prior and informed consent of the Batwa. Where this is not possible, they should take immediate steps to provide restitution for such land acquisition, including just and fair compensation (Cultural Survival et al., 2021). Akin to the Philippines, this process will necessitate the mapping and registration of land use rights with the Batwa people to create a unified land register and clarify tenure rights in forest landscapes.

Awareness campaigns
Although the Batwa people need to be made aware of their rights, other tribal communities should be sensitised to avert discrimination against the Batwa. CSOs like UOBDU should design and implement legal awareness raising activities, giving local community representatives a voice as has been done in Laos (Van Der Muur, 2023). UOBDU is also essential in enhancing the Batwa people's access to legal information.

3. Self-governance

Institute National Commission for IPs
The enactment of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act will recognise, protect and promote the rights of IPs, creating a National Commission for all IPs in Uganda. It could also result in the establishment of a dedicated Ministry of Indigenous Peoples and the National Council of Peoples for all tribal groups in Uganda, as was proposed in Chile in 2016 (UNESCO, 2021).

Legalise UOBDU Board
The enactment of the Mgahinga, Bwindi & Echuya (MBE) Act will declare the forest its own legal entity with 'all rights, powers, duties and liabilities of a legal person' holding a land title to itself where that land is inalienable (Magallanes, 2015). Rather than create a new Board, the current UOBDU will now be legally recognised. The Board will constitute four members appointed by the Batwa trustees and four appointed by the Government. After three years, the former will increase to six and the latter to three, allowing the development of Batwa governance capacity. The Act will specify the powers and obligations of the Board including formulating by-laws and granting activity permits within the forests. The law is rooted in the indigenous concept that nature can be protected in conjunction with human use if managed properly (Magallanes, 2015). This borrows from the Te Urewera Act (2014) replacing NFA's Collaborative Forest Management programme which has not resolved many of these issues due to its top-down nature.

Autonomous governance
By legally recognising the UOBDU Board, the MBE Act will spearhead the right of self-determination of Batwa communities. Similar to Chile, the Batwa will be recognised as autonomous communities governing their forest territories and resources, handling matters related to their local affairs and ways of financing their independent operations. They will have more sway over their lands, than Native American communities for example, where the federal government holds indigenous land in trust (Mega, 2022). By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (UN, 2007, Article 3).

Figure 92: Illustration of calls to action.

4. Institutionalisation of Indigenous Knowledge (IK)

Include Batwa IK and language in curriculum
Lutwa history, language and belief systems should be taught to Batwa children in their early years of primary school. The NCDC should review the Primary School Abridged Curriculum for Uganda in consultation with UOBDU to place less emphasis on other dominant languages such as Rukiga and religions especially Christianity and Islam. A solid foundation for Batwa children should be built in their formative years enabling them to first appreciate their culture before they learn others. By institutionalising Batwa traditions, cultural continuity will be reinforced.

Encourage 'other ways' of learning
Community-led education, in line with tradition, should be recognised and encouraged in lieu of formal education methods that focus on grades rather than learning. The current Universal Primary Education system is plagued with a shortage of teachers, schools and reading material especially in areas like Kisoro which a far from Kampala. Instead, a communal approach that harnesses outdoor spaces and experienced persons notably elders, would go far in imparting children with local knowledge for example tree species and their traditional uses.

Develop an opensource cultural archive
The UOBDU database should be developed into a Batwa peoples archive that conserves culture through documentation of material and immaterial traditions and stories. A public call will be made seeking contributions of all kinds of information, enabling the collection and free viewing of all scattered data in one place. Through the UOBDU, support can be sought for the establishment of community-based cultural centres (Cultural Survival et al., 2021), museums and other institutions that preserve and promote the Batwa cultural heritage.

Localise design and planning practice
Design and planning projects in Batwa territory should be rooted in their traditional understandings and current needs. Many 'professionals' in Uganda have been trained in the traditional form which sees them as 'all-knowing' with a singular modernist worldview (Rocco & Newton, 2021). It is increasingly necessary for designers and planners to collaborate in multi-disciplinary teams including sociologists, environmentalists, engineers and other trained people, but more importantly to work in partnership with the Batwa people with their best interests at heart.

Figure 93: Illustration of calls to action.

5. Endogenisation of forest economy

A fair share of tourism proceeds
All activities within the park will require a grant permit issued by the newly instituted Board only if the activities are consistent with a management plan, borrowing from the Te Urewera stipulations (Magallanes, 2015). Wildlife tourism will be regulated at the discretion of the Board and the proceeds should be used for the benefit of the Batwa community contrary to the current situation where they do not get a penny.

Cultural practice at our terms
Commercialisation of Batwa culture should be revisited. Rather than perform the Batwa trail, a quasi performance of their traditional forest life, or make crafts not for their domestic use but for tourists to buy, the Batwa should have the freewill to practise their forest culture in their day-to-day life. Cultural experiences and crafts have become a 'product' for external consumption and only benefit the locals in monetary terms. With the Constitutional amendment and new Act in place, they will no longer have to put up these extractive economically-driven performances in the long term.

Re-indigenisation of lands
Planting of exotic tree species and intensive agriculture in degraded forest areas should be halted and indigenous trees planted instead. Local communities and IPs including the Batwa should be consulted and actively involved in the ongoing Running Out of Trees (ROOTS) national campaign by the MWE, to ensure that plant species of cultural significance that are native to specific regions, are planted. Degraded areas may also be re-wildered rather than re-planted, harnessing the regenerating power of the lands.

Figure 94: Illustration of calls to action.

Roadmap

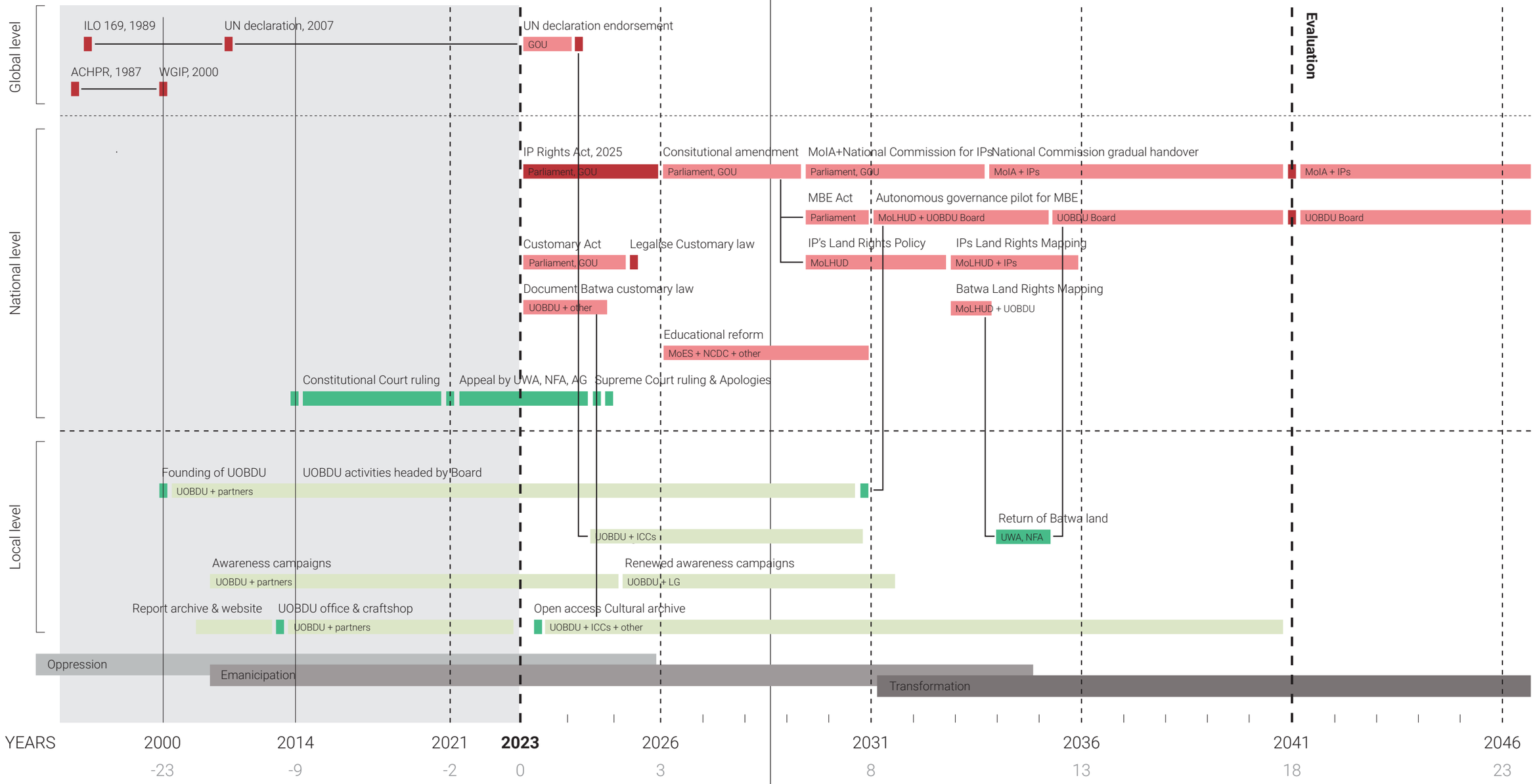


Figure 95: Roadmap of change showing the key strategic actions at each level of governance.

A graphical story as a vision
The Vision for the Mgahinga National Park and Kisoro town is told in the form of a graphical novel evolving around three main characters. By using this visual illustration and narrative of people's everyday lives, it is hoped that the vision can be made more relatable for the 'common' person, in contrast with the contemporary spatial 'master plan'. The graphical story acts as a starting point for the Batwa to re-imagine a future in which they have become a self-determining community.

Future or romanticised past
In terms of spatial quality in contemporary urban design, the vision may appear to be a return to the past. However through the lived lives of the Batwa people, this is not the case. It is envisioned that by 2046, the Batwa will have attained full rights over their lands, with the choice to return to the forest or to settle in the current townships. In addition, they form majority constituent of the Board that manages the Mgahinga forest (not a National Park anymore). National apology day is also celebrated annually in comemoration of a public apology that was made by the Government of Uganda and the United Kingdom for the losses and suffering caused. The real change is in how the Batwa lead a dignified life, with full rights over their ancestral forests. One of justice...

Vision - 2046

Just another day in Gahinga - a story of three friends

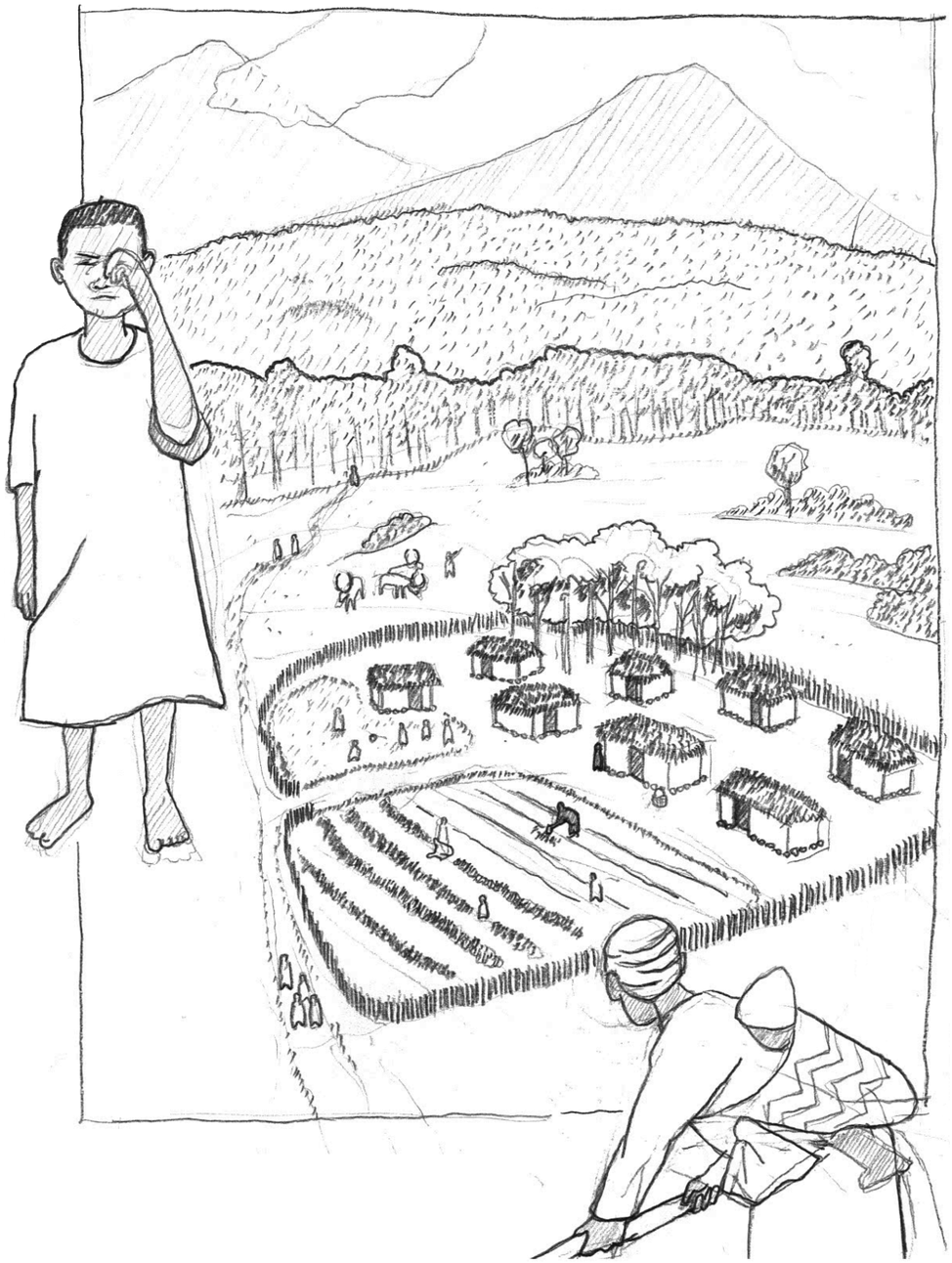
Living just outside the forest
Nyamihanda wakes up and turns. Her mother, father and little brother are gone. She steps out of the house and her mother yells at her, reminding her to take the basket with potatoes for her friend Kagote. 'Your father has gone for a meeting and you'll probably find Kiryabihingi there so go with him!' she adds.

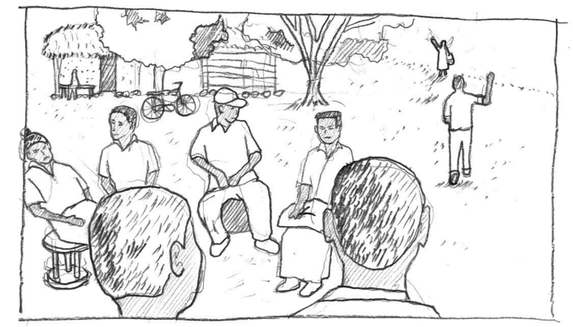
Bypassing an elders meeting
The silence in the streets remind her that today is National apology day - a special day for her fellow Batwa people. As she walks towards the community centre, Kirya waves at her. She tries to show her presence to no avail. As the two walk into the forest, Kirya tells Nyamihanda that the Board was discussing when they should re-open tourism. Food in the forest has been scarce for the past six months.

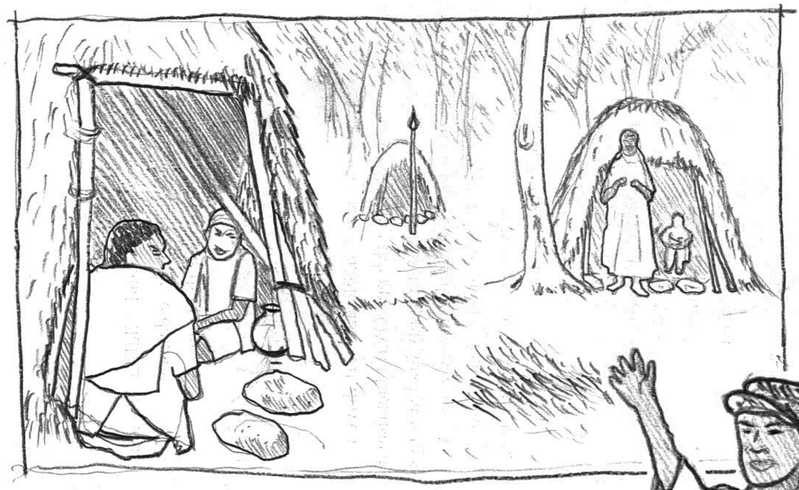
Cheering up Kagote
Moving through thick shrubs and bushes, they finally arrive at Kagote homestead. His mother welcomes them and receives the potatoes which she quickly takes to the endaro and they have gift thanks to the ancestors. Kagote has been sulking because he wasn't taken for hunting... again. His friends comfort him.
'It's only three more years and you can go with the other hunters', they say.
He feels a little better and shows them the pot he made with his mother last week.

Getting out through the new forest
After several hours of chatting, Kagote says he'll show his friends out. 'I'll take you through the 'new forest' because elephants and buffaloes don't roam that side.' His friends are buffled.
As they arrive, Kagote explains that the trees there are only 20 years old and the place is still in the process of rewildering.

They bid farewell and Kagote screams, 'See you after 6 sunsets'.







Part 6

Conclusion

Looking back, moving forward

“If you do not know where you come from, you cannot know where you are going. If you do not know where you are going, any road will take you there.“

African saying (Ntuli, 2002)

answering the main question

How can a local narrative based on storytelling and knowing otherwise be leveraged to envision a just forest economy in Kampala's city region?

Developing a local narrative through storytelling
Storytelling is used to give a voice to often overlooked actors in Uganda's forestry sector. Upon exposing the long history of exclusionary planning as the main contributor to the social and environmental injustices in the current forest economy, a story is developed and told from the perspective of the local. By developing a narrative based on a history of the lands and the peoples as the protagonists, it addresses the underlying issue of culture in shaping people's thinking, ways of life and ultimately forest ecologies and economies.

Envisioning a just forest economy
The study bases on two cultures - the traditional Batwa and modern capitalist culture - to develop possible scenarios for the future of the forest economy in Kampala's city region. A radical indigenist scenario that is rooted in traditional belief systems, social structure, landscape relations, settlement patterns and material culture is contrasted with a technologically-driven scenario. These narratives are in turn based on the stories collected through historical analyses, interviews and observations in the field trip. In envisioning these futures, the study aims to emphasise the importance of justice and initiate debate towards change.

Towards change
Rather than propose a plan that is to be implemented, this study aims to change the way we understand the world and the way we live, thereby initiating societal transformation. Decoloniality, like that of colonisation, is a life-time project and thus cannot be addressed in this study. However, it is supposed that fundamental change starts with the people, then the community (institutions) and eventually the landscape.

Re-connecting with cultural identity
At an individual level, we need to question taken-for-granted modern societal norms and relate them back to our traditions before they are lost. For this, the stories of people who have seen structural changes in society over their lifetimes,especially elders, are crucial. By recovering, documenting, practising and sharing culture at an individual level, there is a possiblity that the way we think, live and be will also re-connect with our lands.

Communal and collective governance
Fundamental change in governance, replacing the centralised structure with a polycentric one, needs to take place. By empowering 'community', now composed of culturally grounded people, to manage land and forest resources in their locality, governance will take a bottom-up structure. In such a setting, people are more likely to prioritise their collective needs rather than personal gains. The autonomous communities will produce and consume their own resources with inclusion and participation of community members, without relying on external aid.

Short- and long-term landscape transformation
With the fundamental re-rooting of culture at an individual level and structural changes in governance, the way people shape their landscapes will exude reverence for the lands. However we do not have to wait for radical societal change before the landscape transforms. Although re-indigenising landscape is a long term process, projects to remove or stop planting exotic tree species, reforest degraded areas and reduce the export of forest resources, can already be implemented through the structures already in place.

Potential challenges
Urgent societal needs
Drawing from the interviews with many people earning a living from the forest economy, it is apparent that their livelihoods are threatened without it. Although the envisioned self-sustaining autonomous settlements could provide other forms of livelihood, they will take time to be realised. The concerns of many people in the value chain are immediate and urgent, so they are less inclined to be in favour of change that does not have immediate solutions.

Political and geopolitical influences
The proposed changes threaten established power structures that have created and perpetuate the current forest economy. It is therefore unlikely that societal transformation which threatens these very powers will be entertained. 'The master's tools of colonization will not work to decolonize what the master built. Our challenge is to fashion new tools for the purpose of decolonizing and Indigenous tools that can revitalize Indigenous knowledge' (Smith, 2021).

Recommendations for further research
As the study investigate the cross-territorial forest economy, it did not focus on the social injustices the Batwa have faced before and after eviction from the forests. Further studies can build on this and Kidd (1997) to pursue strageties to deliver their communities justice.

reflection

On the relationship between research and design

Research as critical investigation
In this study, ethnographic research was conducted to investigate the root cause of the current unjust forest economy from a local perspective. Rather than take positivist and post-positivist views that focus on establishing one fixed truth, critical theory was used to hold reality as being more fluid (Wilson, 2008, p.36). Research takes the form of a critical investigation into another way of viewing and understanding the issue at hand.

Design as explorative storywork
The role design took in this project was not one of solving a problem, instead exploring narratives. Design has been used as a channel to express my opinion on the current forest economy, possibly impacting people's perceptions and initiating action or activism towards fundamental change (Bieling, 2019). Scenarios act as storywork, highlighting the imminent impacts of the status quo, at the same time illustrating the possibility of an alternate future. In this way, the urbanist becomes a storyteller rather than an 'expert'.

Research-based design as investigative storywork
The research thus takes the form of investigative storywork - explorative design underpinned by critical investigation. The critical investigation dives into the history of the relationship between forest landscape and the Batwa people, as well as the stories of various actors behind Kampala's regional forest economy. On the other hand, the exploration envisions possible future narratives based on the investigation. The investigative storywork thus forms a powerful chronological story.

'[...]The first step for mobilising the public consists of drawing attention to a topic. For this, and for every other step, images are needed since [...] pictorial representations are able to draw people's gaze and to 'set a scene' where there are complex circumstances, so they can be grasped at a glance.' (Heissenbuttel, 2014, p.474) in (Bieling, 2019).

On the relationship between my topic, studio and program

Although the research topic has continually evolved over the course of the study, it remains grounded in addressing the issues of social justice, which is the primary focus of the Planning Complex Cities studio. This is evident in the non-technocratic approach which probes the root causes of social and epistemic injustices towards Ugandans especially indigenous tribes, through a deep dive into pre-colonial relations between the people and the land. This approach touches upon aspects of how colonial planning and capitalist culture have systematically shaped the urbanisation processes in Kampala's city region. The study adds a different dimension to the urbanism track which focuses on technological innovation and the future, not so much the past.

On storywork as research

Storytelling as an approach and product
In addressing the socio-cultural injustices of the current forest economy, a qualitative approach was chosen to understand the challenge from a local viewpoint. As a researcher, I thought it best to undertake the study acknowledging that I am not an 'expert' and the people on ground were more informed than I was. A field trip and interviews were thus conducted to gain practical insights while literature reviews were used to triangulate the findings. The research naturally took an ethnographic approach as it focused on understanding the workings of the forest economy through people's lived experiences - their stories. Consequently, the collection of local narratives becomes an approach and also a product.

Storywork as activism, as social justice
The power of the local narrative developed through storywork is twofold. On the one hand, it enables the visualisation of possible futures based on current trends and people's stories. On the other hand, it initiates societal transformation by communicating seemingly complex phenomena to the wider public, linking disjointed narratives and fostering understanding in debate. Storytelling, like design, can interfere with common definitions and understandings, creating effective outrage through critical alternative thoughts and concepts (Bieling, 2019).
The social and political dimension of storytelling makes it an effective frontier for pursuing social justice.

Scientific relevance of the study
Contrary to most research in the forestry sector which focuses on sustainable value chains based on quantitative data, this study explores the socio-cultural dimension. As seen in previous chapters, issues of

belief systems, knowledge systems and social structure among others touch upon disciplines outside of the graduation studio including sociology, geography and anthropology. Urbanism has been viewed as a multi-disciplinary inquiry that goes beyond architecture and the built environment. This study therefore exemplifies the importance of addressing non-technocratic aspects of society if we are to address issues of social and environmental justice.

By exploring 'storytelling otherwise' as a planning tool to frame, analyse and address socio-cultural and environmental issues, the study also tests the potential of narrative research as an alternative approach that is grounded in its local context. In doing so, it challenges the hegemonic technocratic approaches that have been blindly applied in the global South, causing dualistic challenges that frame and disregard the 'informal'.

On the relationship between the project and the wider social, professional and scientific framework

Building on the decolonial turn (Ortiz, 2022)
The study expounds on the issue of decoloniality that has been explored by several writers including Smith (2021) and (Xiiem et al., 2019) among others. This is achieved by developing an understanding of pre-colonial Bantu societies, establishing the fundamental changes brought about by British colonisation by the British and analysing how they manifest today. At the same time, indigenous cultures that have survived in one way or another have been studied. In synthesis all this, a decolonial approach is developed and used to envision an alternative future that is embeded in the landscape.

Building on ES (Escobar, 2018)
The body of knowledge documented by this study also contributes to the Epistemologies of the South (Escobar, 2018) which is mainly focused on South America. This has beeb achieved by documenting history of the Batwa people and the knowledge systems they depended on to live in the Mgahinga forests. This knowledge, though not directly transferrable, not only archives critical cultural heritage but also represents them in ways that have not previously been done.

On transferability of the results
This research will potentially result in a novelle spatial planning approach that can be adopted by other countries in the global South, for example the Democratic Republic of Congo or Cameroon, facing similar socio-environmental challenges in the forestry sector. The project does not aim to create solutions that can be replicated, rather to deduce principles

of framing and approaching challenges that may be used to address similar issues elsewhere.

On ethical issues and dilemmas encountered in:

(i) doing the research,
In undertaking the research, I have been confronted by personal biases arising from lived experience in Kampala. For example, having previously worked in the formal sector for the larger part, I had the view of the 'informal' sector as unlawful. However, upon talking to correspondents and reading extensively, I realised that the construct of 'informality' is framed by colonial laws but it actually is a form of resistance by local practices that have endured the times. Reframing my view on things I take for granted has indeed been a challenge but more importantly, a learning.

As a person who has undergone formal education based on western academic systems, I realised my dependence on western epistemology. This was especially challenging when deciding on the research methods and developing the theoretical framework. Non-western epistemologies are not the default, especially in a technical university like Delft. However, this predicament led me to the discovery of a world I previously did not know existed. The realms of decoloniality and indigenous cultures.

(ii) elaborating the design
As a designer, I was conflicted by the tools at my disposal. The ethnographic and multi-layered nature of my study made me realise that conventional design was not a solution. Design, along with science and technology seemed to me as tools that are made by and perpetuate modern capitalist culture. I therefore chose to view design as storytelling. This entailed envisioning possible futures based on collected narratives. I now think as urbanists and planners, it is more a matter of how we use the tools we have.

(iii) potential application of the results in practice.
The proposals on the decolonisation of the forest economy can potentially be implemented. However their realisation will be challenged by the hegemonic economic and political systems, both local and global, that are threatened by them. In addition, because they challenge dominant societal norms and belief systems, I view them as a multi-generational projects that will take decades if not centuries akin to the project of colonisation. For now, I believe emphasis can be placed on the first stages of the indigenous research agenda (Smith, 2021) of decolonising and healing. The urgency lies in recovering and documenting surviving lands, peoples and cultures.

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all the readings

“Uwavutse niwe upfa”

- Lutwa proverb

Translation: One who is born is one who dies.

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Appendices

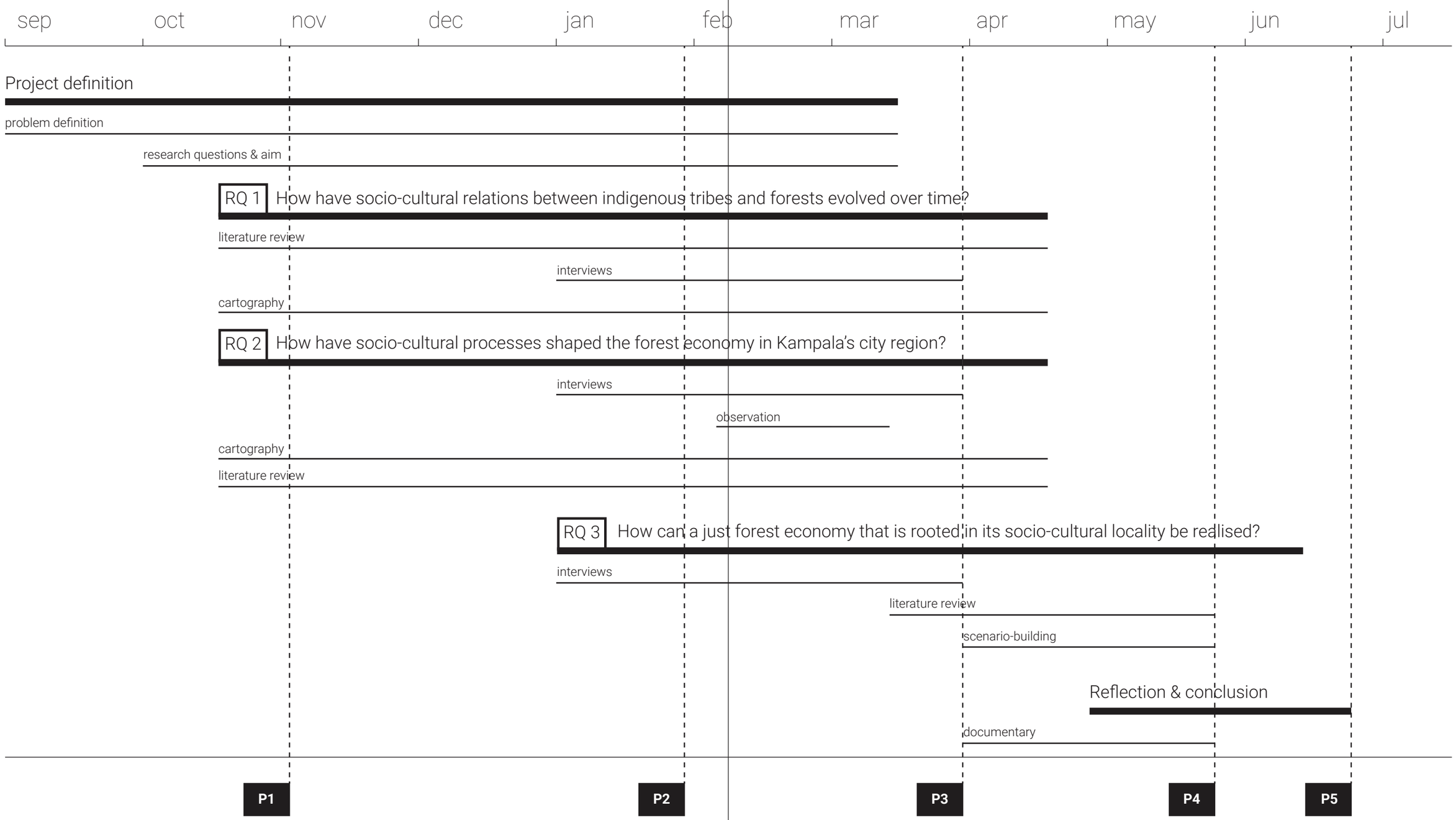
the other things

“Linda kigweyo, afumita mukila”

- Luganda proverb (Etemesi, 2021)

Translation: To kill an animal, you don’t wait to see the tail before you strike.

Appendix 1 - Thesis plan



TU Delft

22 February 2023

P.O. Box 5, 2600AA Delft,
The Netherlands

Interview Information

Overview
You have been invited to participate in a research study titled *'(re)framing narratives'*, conducted by Shinnosuke Albert Wasswa (corresponding Researcher), for his master's thesis at the Delft University of Technology. The purpose of the study is to explore a local narrative, based on storytelling and knowing otherwise, as a means to envision a just wood value chain in Kampala's city region.

Research design
The research explores the wood value chain across Kampala and Fort Portal through the stories of people whose livelihoods depend on it. These range from tree plantation growers, timber traders and consumers, to civil organisations and public institutions. About 20 interview respondents will be recruited on referral basis and interviewed about their personal stories and experiences working in the value chain.

Objectives
1. To document how the historical socio-cultural relations between indigenous tribes (Baganda and Batwa) and forests have evolved over time.
2. To establish the socio-cultural and environmental externalities of the current wood trade.
3. To envision a just wood value chain, rooted in its socio-cultural and ecological context.

Interview content
In this interview, you will be asked to share your personal experiences and views as an actor in Uganda's forestry sector and/or wood trade. The data you provide will be used to gain an understanding of the past and current situations, as well as future aspirations, resulting in an academic publication. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes.

Data management
All Personal Identifiable Information (PII) collected and outputs from the interviews, will be stored in a secure project storage at the Delft University of Technology. Only the Corresponding and Responsible researchers will be able to access this data.

Contact details
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Consent Form

Please tick the appropriate boxes	Yes	No
1. Information concerning the study has been read to me and I have understood it. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.	☐	☐
2. I understand that by partaking in this study, there is a risk that I may:	☐	☐
- Unintentionally reveal commercially or professionally sensitive, or confidential information. - Be re-identified in case of a data security breach or overly detailed description.		
3. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.	☐	☐
4. I understand that taking part in the study involves:	☐	☐
- Observations recorded by photography, sketches and written notes. - An audio-recording which will be transcribed as text and deleted afterwards. - A video-recording which will be used for the purposes of a documentary film.		
5. I agree that my responses, views or other output can be quoted anonymously in research outputs.	☐	☐
6. I agree that my real name can be used for quotes in research outputs.	☐	☐

Signatures

_____ _____ _____
Name of participant Signature Date

I, as the researcher, have accurately read out the information to the participant and, to the best of my ability, ensured that the participant understands to what they are freely consenting.

_____ _____ _____
Name of researcher Signature Date

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Interview questions

For Individuals

On the present

1. How did you start this work?
2. What is your typical day like?
3. Which other people/places in the wood trade do you interact with/go to?
4. What challenges do you face in your work?
5. How does your work impact the environment, local communities and culture? If there are negative impacts, how can they be addressed?

On the past

1. What traditions or folktales related to trees and forests did you hear growing up?
2. Did your parents and grandparents depend on trees and forests for a living? If so, how?
3. How has this relationship between people and forests changed over your lifetime?

On the future

1. What do you think will happen to the environment, local communities and culture if the current wood trade continues?
2. Is change necessary? If so, what needs to change?
3. Is it necessary to apply traditional knowledge, values and experience in your work? If so, how?
4. What is the desirable future of your work? How can it be realised? Who else do you need to work with?

Interview questions

For Institutions

On the present

1. What is the role of your institution in the current wood value chain?
2. Which other actors/places do you interface with/go to in carrying out your work?
3. What is the impact of the current wood trade and forestry practices on local communities and culture? How can this be addressed?
4. What is the impact of the current wood trade and forestry practices on the environment? How can this be addressed?

On the future

1. What do you think will happen if the status quo of forestry practices and the wood value chain continues?
2. Is change necessary? If so, what needs to change?
3. Is it necessary to apply local/traditional knowledge, values and experience in your work? If so, how?
4. What is your vision for the future of forestry and the wood value chain in Kampala's city region (in the next 20 years)?
5. How can it be realised? What is the role of other parties in achieving this vision?

Interview questions

For Indigenous tribes

On the present

1. What do you currently do for a living?
2. What is your typical day like?
3. Which other people do you interact with and which other places do you go to?
4. How do you use traditional knowledge in your day-to-day life?

On the past

1. What traditions or folktales related to trees and forests did you hear growing up?
2. Did your parents and grandparents depend on trees and forests for a living? If so, how?
3. How has this relationship between people and forests changed over your lifetime?

On the future

1. What do you think will happen to the environment, local communities and culture if the current changes continue?
2. Is change necessary? If so, what needs to change?
3. Is it necessary to apply traditional knowledge, values and experience in your life? If so, how?
4. What is the desirable future of your life? How can it be realised? Who else do you need to work with?

List of respondents

Private individuals

No.	**Designation**	**Location**	**Interview structure**
01	Consumer	Kampala	Open
02	Manufacturer	Kampala	Semi-structured
03	Construction manager	Kampala	Semi-structured
04	Retailer	Kampala	Semi-structured
05	Wholesaler, retailer, outgrower	Kampala	Semi-structured
06	Retailer	Kampala	Semi-structured
07	Cultural enthusiast	Kampala	Semi-structured
08	Cultural guide	Kampala	Semi-structured
09	Nursery owner	Kampala	Open
10	Timber grower	Bujuuko	Semi-structured
11	Cultural guide	Mubende	Open
12	Briquette manufacturer	Mubende	Open
13	Harvester	Mubende	Open
14	Harvester	Kyenjojo	Semi-structured
15	Retailer	Fort Portal	Semi-structured
16	Manufacturer	Fort Portal	Semi-structured
17	Harvester	Fort Portal	Semi-structured
18	Researcher	Fort Portal	Open
19	Indigenous tribe	Kisoro	Semi-structured
20	Indigenous tribe	Kisoro	Semi-structured
21	Researcher	Kampala	Open
22	Independent Observer	Kampala	Semi-structured
23	Consultant	Nairobi	Open
24	Architect	Kampala	Open

Civil Organisations

	Designation	Location	Interview structure
25	Kijani forestry	Gulu	Semi-structured
26	Uganda Timber Growers Association	Kampala	Semi-structured
27	Tree Adoption Uganda	Kampala	Semi-structured

Public Institutions

	Designation	Location	Method
28	National Forestry Authority	Kampala	Semi-structured
29	National Forestry Authority	Kampala	Semi-structured
30	Uganda Wildlife Authority	Kampala	Semi-structured
31	Ministry of Water & Environment	Kampala	Semi-structured
32	Kampala Capital City Authority	Kampala	Semi-structured
33	National Government	Kampala	Semi-structured

[re]framing the narrative: storytelling otherwise for a just forestry economy in Kampala's city region

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