Article:
Hoffmann, K. and Verweijen, J. (2019) Rebel rule: A governmentality perspective. African Affairs, 118 (471). pp. 352-374. ISSN: 0001-9909

https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/ady039

REBEL RULE: A GOVERNMENTALITY PERSPECTIVE

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Published in *African Affairs*, advance access; https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/ady039

ABSTRACT

Much of the recent literature on rebel governance and violent political orders works with 'centred' and instrumental understandings of power. In this view, power is seen as exercised *over* subjects, and as situated in rebel rulers, governance institutions, or ruling networks. Drawing on the study of the armed groups known as 'Mai-Mai' in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, this article instead adopts a governmentality perspective on rebel governance. It demonstrates how Mai-Mai groups rule not only through direct imposition but also, more subtly, by shaping people's subjectivities and self-conduct. We identify four clusters of techniques of Mai-Mai rule that relate respectively to ethnicity and custom; spirituality; 'stateness'; and patronage and protection. We argue that a governmentality perspective, with its focus on rationalities and practices of power, offers a fine-grained understanding of rebel rule that enables moving beyond common binaries such as public vs private, rebel vs state, and coercion vs freedom. By showing its relevance for the analysis of rebel rule in the eastern Congo, our findings further strengthen the case for applying a governmentality perspective to non-Western political orders.

THE EASTERN PART OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO is a veritable rebel kaleidoscope. Well over 120 armed groups operate in the area, in ever-changing alliances and locations.[1] The majority of these groups identify themselves as 'Mai-Mai', a generic label for armed

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[1] Jason Stearns and Christoph Vogel, 'The landscape of armed groups in the eastern Congo. Fragmented, politicised networks.' (Kivu Security Tracker, n.p.,December 2017).

groups drawing on discourses of (community) self-defence and autochthony. While they differ substantially in size and mode of organization, most Mai-Mai groups are relatively small, numbering less than 200 fighters. Furthermore, the majority of these groups have only partial and shifting control over territory and lack elaborate organizational structures, such as courts and administrations, for governing populations. These characteristics raise the question: do Mai-Mai groups actually govern civilians, and if so, how?

Recent literature on rebel governance and wartime political orders considers power to be 'centred'[2] either in rebel rulers, their governance institutions, or the ruling networks of which they are part. These rulers and institutions are seen to exercise power *over* subjects, implying the imposition of their will on others in an instrumental manner.[3] In this contribution, we challenge these perspectives on power and governance. Drawing on Michel Foucault's concept of 'governmentality', we show that Mai-Mai groups rule through a heterogeneous cluster of techniques of power. These include techniques relying on direct imposition and coercion, but to a large extent consist of techniques that work more indirectly, by shaping people's self-conduct. Such techniques are not invented from scratch but instead build upon and alter existing regimes of truth and micro-practices of power. We identify four salient clusters of techniques of Mai-Mai rule. These relate to: ethnicity and custom; spirituality; 'stateness'; and patronage and protection. This approach to rebel rule is innovatory in that it takes techniques and rationalities of power, instead of rulers or governance institutions, as the analytical point of departure. From a governmentality perspective, power is neither institutional nor instrumental: 'it does not act directly and immediately on others'.[4] Rather, it stretches subtly into the very constitution of subjects via their bodily routines and sense of selfhood. To govern, in this sense, 'is to structure the possible field of action of others'.[5] This view of power and rule helps transcend forms of binary thinking (such as state vs non-state, coercion vs freedom) that hamper more fine-grained conceptualizations of rebel rule.

Our analysis draws on 22 months of fieldwork for different research projects conducted periodically between 2005 and 2017 in the city of Bukavu and the areas of Fizi, Uvira, Itombwe, and Kalehe in South Kivu province. These projects aimed to study the constitution and workings of local socio-political orders, including the role of Mai-Mai groups.[6] While the authors conducted field research separately, they used largely similar methods and criteria to select informants. Data were gathered through ethnographic methods, in particular individual and group interviews, informal conversations and observations. Interview data were complemented by the study of written communications and administrative documents, including educational material, political statements, and other political communications from Mai-Mai groups as well as their administrative documents

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[2] For a discussion of 'centred' power (a term coined by Latour), see John Allen, *Lost geographies of power* (Blackwell, Oxford, 2003), pp. 25–28.
[3] Ibid., p.21. Allen relates the instrumental view of power to the conflation of power with domination, see *Lost geographies*, pp. 21, 25–27.
[4] Michel Foucault, 'The subject and power', *Critical Inquiry* 8, 4 (1982), pp. 777–795, p. 789.
[5] Foucault, 'The subject and power', p. 790.
[6] The Mai-Mai groups studied are those of Aoci, Baleke, Fujo, Kapopo, Mushombe, Mulumba, Yakotumba, Bede Rusagara, Nyerere, Simusizi, Karakara, Bwasakala, Mayele, Assani Ngungu, and Padiri.

(e.g. tax receipts, accountancy documents, and situation reports). Informants were selected based on their knowledge of Mai-Mai groups, the fact that they were or had been part of those groups, or lived currently or previously in zones with pervasive Mai-Mai influence. In remote field sites, the availability of informants also played a role, in addition to Mai-Mai groups' own choice of whom they allowed us to talk to. Informants encompassed current and former military Mai-Mai members (98 officers and non-commissioned officers, 58 rank-and-file), Mai-Mai political representatives and civilian administrators (33), and spiritual/religious specialists connected to Mai-Mai groups (8). We also contacted customary and administrative authorities (130), members of state security services (55), and different professional groups (at least 400 farmers, fishermen, artisanal miners, motor-taxi drivers, small-scale traders, cattle-herders, health sector workers, and hotel/bar/restaurant owners and managers). Fieldwork was conducted in over 90 villages and towns and in the headquarters or positions of 7 Mai-Mai groups (Kapopo, Mushombe, Baleke, Yakotumba, Fujo, Mulumba, ex-Padiri), where sometimes several days were spent. The data gathered during the field research were triangulated with relevant academic literature, news articles, and reports of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations (UN) agencies.

The article is structured as follows. We first present our case for applying a governmentality perspective to rebel governance. The next section places today's Mai-Mai groups in historical and social context and discusses their main features. This paves the way for an in-depth analysis of the four clusters of techniques that constitute Mai-Mai rule. We end by reflecting on the implications of our findings for the study of rebel rule and governmentality in non-Western political orders.

Cutting off the warlord's head in the study of rebel rule

In recent years, 'rebel governance' has emerged as an interdisciplinary subfield of study. It is generally defined in broad terms, for instance as 'the organization of civilians within rebel-held territory for a public purpose'.[7] Despite this broad approach, much of the scholarship operates with a specific understanding of governance.[8] It holds that to actually govern civilians, rebels must control territory and create structures and rules through which they can govern and provide public goods.[9] This understanding transposes to rebel governance two key tenets of the classic Weberian model of the state: first, that power is exercised through a set of centrally directed political institutions; second, that these institutions are contained within a bounded territory.[10] As a corollary, the effectiveness of rebel governance is often assessed in terms of rebels' levels of

[7] Nelson Kasfir, 'Rebel governance, constructing a field of enquiry: Definitions, scope, patterns, order, causes', in Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Mampilly (eds), *Rebel governance in civil war* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2015), pp. 21–46, p. 24.
[8] Not all rebel governance literature considers territorial control a prerequisite for rebel governance. See, for instance, Reyko Huang, *The wartime origins of democratization: Civil war, rebel governance, and political regimes* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016), p. 52.
[9] Kasfir, 'Rebel governance', p. 27; Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside rebellion: The politics of insurgent violence* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006), p. 164.
[10] John Agnew, 'The territorial trap: The geographical assumptions of international relations theory', *Review of International Political Economy* 1, 1 (1994), pp. 53–80; Allen, *Lost geographies*, pp. 33–34.

territorial control, institutional development, and public goods provision.[11] The sovereign territorial state is thus taken as a universal form of political organization against which rebel governance is measured.

The rebel governance literature differs from other scholarship on wartime socio-political orders, which emphasizes networks rather than territorialized institutions. For instance, Mark Duffield highlights the centrality in contemporary warfare of multi-scalar political-economic networks that blur conventional boundaries, like the public/private and state/non-state divides.[12] Similarly, the 'governance without government' literature emphasizes how transboundary networks of state and non-state actors govern through complex negotiations and accommodations,[13] leading to what Janet Roitman has described as 'the pluralization of regulatory authority'.[14] William Reno, in turn, foregrounds patronage networks centred around 'warlords', who may be either state rulers or rebels.[15]

These analyses highlight networked and negotiated forms of authority rather than political institutions exercising power over a finite territory. Nevertheless, they also tend to operate with a centred understanding of power insofar as they conceptualize power as concentrated either in political authorities like warlords themselves, or in the wider politico-military and social networks and institutions of which they form part. In addition, by focusing on how authority relates to control over people and resources, these approaches generally reflect an instrumental view of power. Similar conceptualizations of power can be discerned in the recent literature on rebel legitimacy. While also studying societal norms, values, and beliefs, in addition to rulers and governance structures, this literature primarily examines how these elements legitimize rebel rulers' domination, hence their power *over* civilians.[16] Thus, they locate power predominantly in rebel rulers and their administrations, while taking the ruler/ruled axis as analytical point of departure.[17] These conceptualizations of power do not adequately capture how Mai-Mai groups govern people in the eastern Congo. Paraphrasing Foucault's critique of conventional views on power and the state, we suggest we need to 'cut off the warlord's head' in the study of rebel governance.[18] In other

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[11] Ana Arjona, 'Wartime institutions: A research agenda.' *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58, 8 (2014), pp.1360-1389, pp. 1375–1377; Zachariah Mampilly, *Rebel rulers: Insurgent governance and civilian life during war* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY and London, 2012), p. 17.

[12] Mark Duffield, 'War as a network enterprise: The new security terrain and its implications', *Cultural Values* 6,1–2, (2002), pp. 153–165.

[13] Timothy Raeymaekers, Ken Menkhaus, and Koen Vlassenroot, 'State and non-state regulation in African protracted crises: Governance without government?', *Afrika Focus* 21, 2 (2008), pp. 7–21.

[14] Janet Roitman, *Fiscal disobedience: An anthropology of economic regulation in Central Africa* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2005), p. 18.

[15] William Reno, *Warlord politics and African states* (Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, 1999), pp. 1–3.

[16] For example, Till Förster, '*Dialogue direct*: Rebel governance and civil order in northern Côte d'Ivoire', in Arjona *et al*., *Rebel governance,* pp. 203–225, pp. 203–204; Klaus Schlichte and Ulrich Schneckener, 'Armed groups and the politics of legitimacy', *Civil Wars* 17, 4 (2015), pp. 409–424; p. 410; Mampilly, *Rebel rulers,* p. 8.

[17] As Isabelle Duyvesteyn writes, legitimacy 'is a relational concept, which relies on an interactive relationship between a social/political actor and his/her supposed constituents', Isabelle Duyvesteyn, 'Rebels and legitimacy: An introduction', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 28, 4–5 (2017), pp. 669–685, p. 674.

[18] Michel Foucault, *The history of sexuality, Vol. I: An introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley (Pantheon Books, New York, NY, 1978 [1976]), pp. 88–89.

words, to deepen our understanding of how armed groups govern civilians, we need to look beyond political actors, institutions, and networks. The concept of governmentality offers such an alternative perspective.

Through the term governmentality, Foucault proposed a radical critique of centred and instrumental understandings of power. Foucault employs the term governmentality both in a broad sense as an analytic of power relations in general and in a narrow sense as a mode of rule labelled 'government' which emerged in Europe in the early modern era.[19] This mode of rule subsequently gained pre-eminence over forms of power that prevailed in previous periods, in particular 'sovereign' and 'disciplinary' power, although it did not replace them. While 'sovereign' power denotes the sovereign's rule over subjects through law, 'disciplinary' power is exercised over and through the individual, the body, and its forces and capacities.[20] Government, by contrast, implies attending to 'each and all' or caring for and regulating every individual and the health and prosperity of the population as a whole.[21] Such regulation also extends to sociobiological processes, or what Foucault calls 'biopolitics'.[22] Government occurs to a large degree through 'making up'[23] certain kinds of subjects who are capable of governing themselves, in particular by engaging with 'regimes of truth'[24] that produce certain ways of seeing, knowing, and conducting the self, or 'techniques of the self'.[25] Hence government largely takes place through a kind of 'regulated freedom', rather than through direct imposition, as people turn themselves into subjects of power.[26] From a governmentality perspective, then, power is not concentrated in institutions or ruling authorities that govern subjects. Rather, it is 'capillary'[27] and dispersed throughout the social body.

Governmentality's European roots have led to criticism concerning its applicability to non-Western contexts. Some have argued that the emphasis on power through 'regulated freedom' is inappropriate outside of Western liberal democracies, on the ground that such freedom often does not exist there.[28] Like other scholars,[29] however, we contend that the concept can be employed

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[19] Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and rule in modern society* (Sage, Los Angeles, CA, 2010), pp. 24–30.
[20] Michel Foucault, *Security, territory, population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*. Trans. Graham Burchell (Palgrave MacMillan, London, 2007 [2004]), pp. 140–142.
[21] Foucault, *Security, territory, population,* p. 173.
[22] Michel Foucault, *Society must be defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*. Trans. David Macey (New York, NY, Picador, 2003 [1997]), p. 243.
[23] Ian Hacking, 'Making up people', in Thomas C. Heller, Morton Sosna, and David E. Wellbery (eds), *Reconstructing individualism* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1986), pp. 222–236, p. 234.
[24] Michel Foucault, 'The political function of the intellectual', *Radical Philosophy* 17, 13 (1977), pp. 12–14, p. 13.
[25] Michel Foucault, *The use of pleasure. The history of sexuality, Vol. 2.* Trans. Robert Hurley (Vintage Books, New York, NY, 1990 [1984]), p. 11.
[26] Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, 'Political power beyond the state: Problematics of government', *The British Journal of Sociology* 43, 2 (1992), pp.173–205, p.174.
[27] Michel Foucault, 'Prison talk', in Colin Gordon (ed.) *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972–1977* (Pantheon Books, New York, NY, 1980), pp. 37–54, 39.
[28] Jonathan Joseph, 'The limits of governmentality: Social theory and the international', *European Journal of International Relations* 16, 2 (2010), pp. 223–246; see also Jan Selby, 'Engaging Foucault: Discourse, liberal governance and the limits of Foucauldian IR', *International Relations* 21, 3 (2007), pp. 324–345, pp. 331–333.
[29] Rita Abrahamsen, 'African studies and the postcolonial challenge', *African Affairs* 102, 407 (2003), pp.189–210; Carl Death, 'Governmentality at the limits of the international: African politics and Foucauldian theory', *Review of International Studies* 39, 3 (2013), pp. 763–787.

fruitfully in non-European contexts, since the related rationalities and techniques of power have spread around the globe. One of the main vectors of this spread was European colonization. Colonial rule was founded on racial inequality, violence, and disciplinary techniques of power. However, it also operated through biopolitical rationalities and techniques of government, such as statistics, surveys, ethnology and cartography, and through the formation of new subjectivities among colonized populations.[30] The latter were fostered by institutions such as the plantation, the chieftaincy, the mission station, and the hospital, which brought new techniques of the self. These techniques revolved around making the colonized cognizant of the moral work they had to carry out on themselves to become 'civilized', 'modern', 'ethnic', and 'Christian' subjects.[31] However, for Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, colonial states were 'neither monolithic nor omnipotent'.[32] Consequently, the governmentalization of colonial spaces was not a matter of unilateral action by the colonial state. Rather, in a process that Ian Hacking calls 'looping effects',[33] rationalities and techniques of government were diffusely dispersed throughout the colonial world, as colonial subjects in Africa and elsewhere appropriated, reinterpreted, resisted, and instrumentalized them.[34]

Many of the subjectivities and techniques of government that developed during the colonial era have remained salient after independence. At the same time, a plethora of new regimes of truth and practices of government have emerged, part of which revolve around notions developed in Western contexts like modernity, development, democracy,[35] or the environment.[36] However, as in the colonial era, these postcolonial forms of governmentality have not simply been 'imposed' by 'the West'. Rather, they are filtered through existing regimes of truth and mixed with existing techniques of power, while being conditioned by power relations and struggles. Thus, while we use governmentality here in the narrow sense of a distinct mode of rule that attends to 'each and all' and largely operates through 'regulated freedom', we recognize that the shapes assumed by governmentality are historical and contextual.[37] Therefore, within African political orders, they will necessarily differ from the forms that developed in European contexts.

These observations emerge from our study of Mai-Mai groups in the eastern Congo, which showed that these groups both draw upon and reconfigure sedimented subjectivities and engrained

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[30] For a review of the literature on colonial governmentality, see: Stephen Legg, 'Governmentality, congestion, and calculation in colonial Dehli', *Social and Cultural Geography* 7, 5 (2006), pp. 709–729; pp 709–716.
[31] Jean-François Bayart, 'Africa in the world: A history of extraversion', *African Affairs* 99, 395 (2000), pp. 217–267; pp. 246–250; Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of revelation and revolution Volume 1: Christianity, colonialism, and consciousness in South Africa* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1991), pp. 4–5.
[32] Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, 'Between metropole and colony: Rethinking a research agenda', in: Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds), *Tensions of empire: Colonial cultures in a bourgeois world* (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 1997), pp.1–58, p. 6.
[33] Ian Hacking, 'The looping effects of human kinds', in: Dan Sperber, David Premack, and Ann James Premack, *Causal cognition: A multi-disciplinary approach* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995), pp. 351–394.
[34] Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of revelation and revolution*, pp. 17–18.
[35] Roitman, *Fiscal disobedience*, pp. 32–33; Jean-François Bayart, *l'État en Afrique*, p. 88.
[36] Carl Death, *The green state in Africa* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2016), pp. 2, 10–11.
[37] Cf. Stuart Elden, 'Governmentality, calculation, territory', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25, 3 (2007), pp. 562–580, p. 567.

rationalities and techniques of government. Indeed, what we call the *symbolic efficacy*[38] of the Mai-Mai's techniques of rule to a large extent resides in their reproduction of existing ontologies, discourses, and rationalities and techniques of power, including those pertaining to governmentality.[39] However, Mai-Mai groups also creatively recombine and reconfigure these elements, or extend them to new domains. Furthermore, as is characteristic of governmentality, the Mai-Mai's techniques of government combine with more 'disciplinary' and 'sovereign' forms of power.[40] Thus, Mai-Mai rule is double-edged: on the one hand, it operates through civilians' techniques of the self; on the other hand, it works through more coercive and direct ways of rule, including the use of violence.

Situating Mai-Mai groups

'Mai-Mai' is a catch-all label for a heterogeneous set of armed groups that first mobilized in North Kivu towards the end of the 1980s. The First (1996–7) and Second (1998–2003) Congo Wars accelerated the proliferation of such groups throughout the eastern Congo. These groups gradually began to call themselves 'Mai-Mai', a name derived from the Swahili word for water (*mai* or *mayi*). The term refers to a purification ritual in which fighters are sprinkled with specially prepared water to obtain protection on the battlefield.[41]

In 2003, the belligerents of the Second Congo War adopted a peace accord based on political and military power sharing. State functions were partitioned between the signatories, who committed to integrating their armed wings into the newly formed national army, the *Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo* (FARDC, Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Power sharing, however, worked to the disadvantage of most Mai-Mai fighters. Lacking higher-level political connections and clout, their chances of obtaining positions of importance were limited. Combined with ongoing insecurity and communal tensions, this prompted many Mai-Mai to refuse army integration or else withdraw from the process.[42] As a result, a wave of new Mai-Mai groups appeared between 2007 and 2009. Since then, their numbers have continued to grow, as existing groups splintered and new ones emerged.

While diverse, these post-settlement groups share certain traits. First, they draw on discourses of autochthony, which are structured around a dichotomy between 'natives' (the 'original' or 'first'

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[38] Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'L'Efficacité symbolique', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 135, 1 (1949), pp. 5–27.
[39] Our understanding of symbolic efficacy is inspired by Lévi-Strauss's use of the term to explain the effectiveness of shamans' healing techniques. The latter rests not only on beliefs in the effectiveness of the shaman's power, but also on the collective beliefs and expectations of the social group of which shaman and patient are part, which acts as the wider gravitational field within which their relationship is located and defined. Lévi-Strauss, 'L'Efficacité symbolique', pp. 18–20.
[40] Foucault, *Security, territory, population,* pp. 142–143.
[41] Koen Vlassenroot and Frank Van Acker, 'War as exit from exclusion? The formation of Mayi-Mayi militias in eastern Congo', *Afrika Focus* 17, 1–2 (2001), pp. 51–77.
[42] Maria Eriksson Baaz and Judith Verweijen, 'The volatility of a half-cooked bouillabaisse: Rebel–military integration and conflict dynamics in eastern DRC', *African Affairs* 112, 449 (2013), pp. 563–582, p. 566.

inhabitants of an area) and 'foreigners'.[43] Second, current Mai-Mai groups tend to be rooted in particular imagined 'ethnic' communities[44] that they claim to defend.[45] Third, most Mai-Mai groups employ spiritual techniques, drawing on a set of dynamic and syncretic beliefs. Some of these are derived from Judeo-Christian beliefs introduced through colonialism, while others have their origin in beliefs predating colonial penetration.[46] Fourth, many Mai-Mai groups express a profound discontent with the current socio-political order, in particular the incumbent government. They accuse the latter of siding with 'foreigners', and of being illegitimate and corrupt.[47]

Most Mai-Mai groups are part of wider social networks that are established through a variety of overlapping ties, such as those based on ethnicity, patronage, family affiliation, and shared political beliefs. These networks provide crucial access to resources and services. Their members facilitate the Mai-Mai's revenue-generation activities, help procure basic items, arrange logistics, and provide social and medical care. Additionally, they assist with recruiting fighters, gathering intelligence, and maintaining social control, for instance by intimidating civilian detractors.[48] The Mai-Mai commonly also rely on civilian collaborators, often urban-based political supporters, for political mobilization and communication. These supporters have a wide range of jobs, working for NGOs or the UN, as entrepreneurs or as state agents.[49]

Indeed, Mai-Mai sympathizers within the state apparatus – found among local, provincial, and national-level politicians and officials – are numerous. They provide various forms of active and passive assistance, including financial support and political cover.[50] Mai-Mai supporters can also be found in the FARDC, including among circles of ex-Mai-Mai officers who feel marginalized.[51] Such wide-ranging collaboration helps the Mai-Mai to diffuse discourses that shape people's techniques of the self, even in zones where they are not physically present. In the following, we further explore these techniques of government alongside more direct and coercive techniques of

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[43] Judith Verweijen, 'From autochthony to violence? Discursive and coercive social practices of the Mai Mai in Fizi, eastern DR Congo', *African Studies Review* 58, 2 (2015), pp. 157–180; Kasper Hoffmann and Koen Vlassenroot, 'Armed groups and the exercise of public authority: The cases of the Mayi-Mayi and Rayia Mutomboki in Kalehe, South Kivu', *Peacebuilding* 2, 2 (2014), pp. 202–220.

[44] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the spread and origin of nationalism* (Verso, London and New York, NY, 1983).

[45] Judith Verweijen and Koen Vlassenroot, **'**Armed mobilisation and the nexus of territory, identity, and authority: The Banyamulenge's contested territorial aspirations in eastern DR Congo', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 33, 2, (2015), pp.191–212; Christoph Vogel, 'Contested statehood, security dilemmas, and militia politics: The rise and transformation of Raia Mutomboki in eastern DRC' in Marijke Verpoorten, Stef Vandeginste, and Filip Reyntjens (eds), *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs: Annuaire 2013-2014* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 2014), pp. 307–333.

[46] Kasper Hoffmann, 'Myths set in motion: The moral economy of Maï-Maï governance', in Arjona *et al*., *Rebel governance,* pp.158–179; Vogel, 'Contested statehood'.

[47] Judith Verweijen, *Stable instability: Political settlements and armed groups in the Congo* (Rift Valley Institute, London, 2016), pp. 59–61.

[48] Verweijen, *Stable instability*, pp. 46–50.

[49] Verweijen, 'From autochthony to violence'.

[50] *Final report of the group of experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. S/2011/738 (United Nations Security Council, New York, NY), pp. 55–56.

[51] Judith Verweijen, *The ambiguity of militarization. The complex interaction between the Congolese armed forces and civilians in the Kivu provinces, eastern DR Congo* (Utrecht University, unpublished PhD dissertation, 2015), p. 267.

power. For analytical purposes, we have regrouped these different techniques into four broad, partly overlapping clusters.

Ethnic and customary techniques

Within the Kivu provinces, the deeply entangled notions of territory, ethnic identity, and customary authority are constitutive of political subjectivities.[52] This nexus was forged through colonial native policy, which formed and institutionalized territorially fixed *chefferies* (chiefdoms). The latter regrouped 'native populations' ostensibly belonging to the same 'ethnic type', and made them the subjects of customary chiefs. This biopolitical technology of government sought to govern natives at a distance through a set of partly invented customs.[53] The resulting regime of truth fostered the formation of ethno-territorial forms of 'citizenship' that confer rights and duties on subjects of customary chiefs, such as access to communal land and paying customary taxes.[54]

These ethno-territorial 'truths' provided fertile soil for the cultivation of autochthony discourses, which classify groups with 'tribal homelands as 'autochthones', and those without as 'foreigners'. This last status is often attributed to *Rwandophones*, or speakers of Kinyarwanda language (also spoken in Rwanda). During the Congo Wars, when Rwanda-led rebel groups occupied large swathes of the Kivus, autochthony discourses thrived.[55] These discourses also formed important mobilizing narratives for Mai-Mai groups, which portrayed themselves as the defenders of the customs, culture, land, and rights of 'autochthonous communities'. Rwandophones, by contrast, were accused of 'invading' and 'occupying' the autochthones' ancestral lands with the intent to dominate or even exterminate them.[56] The claim that 'foreigners' constitute an existential threat exemplifies a particularly dangerous aspect of biopolitics, namely, the idea that caring for the population of 'ethnic selves' entails the elimination or expulsion of 'ethnic others'.[57]

Ideas of autochthony and foreign threat still resonate in the Kivus today. The reasons for this are fourfold. First, these notions evoke particular ethno-territorial subjectivities that continue to be salient, in part due to the Congolese state's continued reliance on customary authority to govern rural areas. Second, discourses of autochthony tap into memories of massacres and other violence that many people ascribe primarily to Rwanda-backed rebel groups.[58] Third, these discourses resonate with long-established geopolitical narratives on imperialism and the annexationist

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[52] Verweijen and Vlassenroot, 'Armed mobilisation'.
[53] Kasper Hoffmann, *Ethnogovernmentality: The making of ethnic territories and subjects in eastern Congo* (Roskilde University, unpublished PhD dissertation, 2014), pp. 142–143.
[54] Bosco Muchukiwa, *Territoires ethniques et territoires étatiques. Pouvoirs locaux et conflits interethniques au Sud Kivu (R.D.Congo)* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 2006), pp. 4–6.
[55] Stephen Jackson, 'Sons of which soil? The language and politics of autochthony in eastern D.R. Congo', *African Studies Review* 49, 2 (2006), pp. 95–123.
[56] Hoffmann, 'Myths set in motion'; Jackson, 'Sons of which soil?'
[57] Foucault, *History of sexuality*, p. 137.
[58] Verweijen, 'From autochthony to violence?

tendencies of neighbouring countries, which continue to have purchase.[59] Fourth, the autochthon/foreigner dichotomy provides an interpretative grid through which people 'make sense' of the often confusing political-military developments that they face in their everyday lives.[60] The Mai-Mai actively draw upon this grid by framing significant events in the language of autochthony, generally by linking them to 'foreign invasion'.

A clear example of such framing is the Mai-Mai Yakotumba's portrayal of the presence of a transnational gold exploration company in their fief as a form of 'foreign invasion' of the Babembe's ancestral grounds. By diffusing this narrative during public meetings, where they called upon the population to resist the mining company, they contributed to significant protest activism.[61] Similarly, by associating Rwandophone cattle owners with 'foreigners', Mai-Mai ideologues are able to frame transhumance (the seasonal migration of cattle during which they often trample on farmers' fields) as the 'foreign invasion' of autochthones' ancestral lands. This narrative complicates the resolution of transhumance-related conflicts, and fosters sympathy for cattle-looting by the Mai-Mai.[62] In addition to drawing on existing discourses of autochthony, the Mai-Mai also alter them, propagating more radical views on 'foreign threat' than many other Congolese. For instance, while moderates often acknowledge that certain Rwandophone groups arrived in precolonial times, many Mai-Mai consider all Rwandophones recent 'immigrants' and 'refugees'.[63]

Aside from employing autochthony discourses, another technique of Mai-Mai rule that draws on the nexus between territory, ethnicity, and customary authority is collaborating with *bami* (customary chiefs, singular: *mwami*). While chiefly authority has eroded in many parts of the Kivus, *bami* continue to be recognized as governors of particular ethnic communities and custodians of their ancestral lands. Moreover, they are considered the embodiment and guardians of communal identity, customs, and security, which invests them with considerable social and moral status.[64] As a nurse from Bulambika in Kalehe put it:

> As inhabitants of a village, we acknowledge customary power. Why? Because we have received land from our *bami*. The politico-administrative system cannot give us land in the same way. Thus, in a way the customary chief is the person who has granted us our plots where we live and where we

[59] Jackson, 'Sons of which soil?'; Gillian Mathys, 'Bringing history back in: Past, present and conflict in Rwanda and the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo', *The Journal of African History* 58, 3 (2017), pp. 465–487.
[60] Verweijen, 'From autochthony to violence?'
[61] Judith Verweijen, 'Luddites in the Congo? Analyzing violent responses to the expansion of industrial mining amidst militarization', *City* 21, 3–4 (2017), pp. 466–482.
[62] Judith Verweijen and Justine Brabant, 'Cows and guns. Cattle-related conflict and armed violence in South Kivu, DR Congo', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 55,1 (2017), pp. 1–27.
[63] Verweijen and Vlassenroot, 'Armed mobilisation', pp. 16–17.
[64] Paul Romain Namegabe, 'Le pouvoir traditionnel au Sud-Kivu de 1998–2003: Rôle et perspectives', in Filip Reyntjens and Stefaan Marysse (eds), *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs. Annuaire 2004–2005* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 2005), pp. 209–234.

> cultivate. And we owe him respect. Apart from that, he is also someone who defends the traditional values of his people.[65]

The Mai-Mai also profess to respect customary authority. As Mai-Mai leader Amuri Yakotumba phrased it: 'In our culture, the supreme commanders are customary chiefs.'[66] Similar to the forms of indirect rule adopted by the colonial and postcolonial state, the Mai-Mai's support of chiefs is inscribed in biopolitical rationalities of government, in particular assuring the well-being and productivity of populations.[67] By working with chiefs, for instance demanding that they collect taxes, Mai-Mai groups show that they respect local values of authority. Moreover, they evoke in this way a deeply entrenched subjectivity, namely, being subject to (ethno-territorially defined) customary authority. A former member of the Mai-Mai group of General Padiri, the largest coalition of Mai-Mai forces operating in South Kivu during the Second Congo War, explained:

> Wherever the movement made headway, we approached the *bami* …. The *mwami* plays a major role because he has the authority: if he himself opposes us, then everybody is going to refuse to collaborate because the people pay heed to the word of the *mwami* … Every time Padiri organized ceremonies, he invited the *bami* and emphasized their power because it was they who mobilized the population to supply the soldiers with provisions and to integrate the youths into the movement.[68]

To conclude, entwined techniques of power relating to autochthony, ethnic territoriality, and customary authority are constitutive of Mai-Mai rule. Territory is therefore significant, but not only as an object to be directly controlled, as conceived in much of the rebel governance literature.[69] Rather, territory also figures as a 'political technology'[70] in the form of ideas of ancestral lands and 'ethnic homelands' that appeal to people's subjectivities. By evoking notions of ethnicized territory and citizenship, Mai-Mai groups mobilize civilian support for defending ancestral lands and the state's territory against the 'foreign enemy'. This ethno-territorial technique of government is symbolically efficacious, because it draws on existing discourses and techniques of ordering space.

Spiritual techniques

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[65] Interview, nurse, Bulambika, 25 September 2011.
[66] Interview, Amuri Yakotumba, Sebele, 15 December 2011.
[67] Hoffmann, *Ethnogovernmentality*, pp. 267–272.
[68] Interview, ex-territorial administrator of Mai-Mai Padiri, Bukavu, 21 March 2005.
[69] Kasfir, 'Rebel governance', p. 12; Mampilly, *Rebel rulers,* pp. 3–4.
[70] Stuart Elden, *The birth of territory* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 2013), pp. 16–17; for a discussion of the myth of autochthony as political technology, see pp. 25–26.

In tracing the historical evolution of governmentality, Foucault located its roots in the Christian pastorate. He thus showed that spiritual beliefs and techniques of power blended with secular 'modern' forms of power in the constitution of governmentalities.[71] Spiritual notions – derived from a mixture of ever-evolving Judeo-Christian and other beliefs – are also constitutive of Mai-Mai rule. Mai-Mai beliefs reflect a cosmological worldview that emphasizes spiritual interdependence, order, and harmony.[72] As in Christianity, the figure of God is central to this worldview, but Mai-Mai groups may insist on their specifically African way of worshipping the Supreme Being. A former member of Padiri's group put it as follows:

> We as Africans we have our own way of believing, adoring, praying; we believe in the ancestors; we believe in the truth of dreams. The Mai-Mai movement is not really a Christian movement but rather a non-clerical spiritual movement with purely African beliefs, which is wider than European spiritual culture. However, we do believe in God, because there is only one God.[73]

The centrality of the figure of God also shines through in Mai-Mai groups' tendency to frame the liberation of the Congolese nation from foreign domination in eschatological terms, as a divine mission to carry out the will of God. This linking of autochthony, war, and the divine is specific to the Mai-Mai's cosmological worldview. It shows that the Mai-Mai not only draw upon existing discourses and beliefs, but also reconfigure and reinterpret them.[74]

The Mai-Mai's cosmological worldview inspires a wide range of practices, often enacted by *docteurs* (spiritual specialists) or *aumôniers* (army chaplains). These spiritual leaders provide guidance to soldiers, and sometimes also to civilians. For instance, the Mai-Mai Yakotumba nominated a *pasteur* (vicar) as so-called 'S5', which is a general staff function charged with civil–military relations.[75] *Docteurs* and *pasteurs* carry out various spiritual techniques, like prayers and rituals, both among themselves and among civilians. Rituals are often practised during initiation as part of the protective system of *dawa* (medicine). This system consists of a set of techniques of purification that are believed to empower and protect initiates from harm, provided an ethical regimen is adhered to. Although this regimen differs per group and per *dawa*, it commonly includes the following techniques of the self: sexual abstinence, not consuming certain foodstuffs like leaves, restrictions on washing body parts, not stealing from civilians, and sometimes simply respecting the Ten Commandments.[76] The symbolic efficacy of this regimen is partly predicated on the belief that disregarding the 'conditions' of the *dawa* will result in fatal misfortune.

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[71] Foucault, *Security, territory, population*, pp. 198–199, p. 239.
[72] Hoffmann, 'Myths set in motion'.
[73] Interview, ex-Mai-Mai officer, Kisangani, 30 April 2005. Note that other groups, like Yakotumba's, do profile themselves explicitly as 'Christian'.
[74] See also Fraternel Divin Amuri Misako, *La symbolique de la légitimation de la violence milicienne en Afrique: Continuités et réinventions du messianisme nationaliste chez les maï maï du Maniema au Congo-Kinshasa* (Éditions universitaires européennes, Saarbrücken, 2012).
[75] Interviews, Mai-Mai members, Ubwari, 24 and 25 February 2011.
[76] Hoffmann, 'Myths set in motion'; Interviews, Mai-Mai Kapopo members, Lubumba, 20 November 2011.

Despite occasionally exchanging ideas, formulas, and techniques, Mai-Mai groups generally keep the origins and workings of their *dawa* secret. In this way, they show that they have access to sacred, secret, and salutary spiritual knowledge and powers, which allows them to appear as miracle makers.[77] In the course of the insurgency that toppled Mobutu in 1997, the mere belief in these spiritual powers, including the Mai-Mai's ability to become invisible or invulnerable to bullets, often caused the government forces to flee in panic.[78] Today, some army soldiers still fear fighting the Mai-Mai for the same reason.[79] Belief in the Mai-Mai's spiritual powers is also widespread among civilians. Moreover, the reputed spiritual potency of the Mai-Mai constitutes a source of attraction to these groups, in particular in situations of upheaval and insecurity. For instance, in Kalehe in 2011, a Mai-Mai group named Rayia Mutomboki began a campaign against a Rwandan rebel movement that was perceived as very powerful. Rumours spread that the Rayia possessed a new powerful *dawa* formula made by Barega *docteurs* originating from Shabunda territory. Beliefs in the power of this *dawa,* and thereby in the Rayia's capacity to protect the community against the threat posed by the Rwandan rebels, helped mobilize massive civilian support for this group.[80]

However, civilians also fear the Mai-Mai's spiritual power, believing it can be used to harm them if they disobey. As a civil society activist explained: 'When you refuse [Mai-Mai demands] something bad might happen to you one day. We cannot always know how … you know, the Mai-Mai have their *fêticheurs* (spiritual specialists).'[81] And in certain villages in the Ruzizi Plain people told us that through the use of *dawa*, the Mai-Mai are able to identify witches.[82] These beliefs are further reinforced by the involvement of some Mai-Mai groups, like Simusizi's, in the targeted killing of suspected witches.[83] Such killings are partly perceived as a way to purify or cleanse the social body from harmful and polluting elements in order to restore harmony and order – constituting, in effect, a biopolitical technique of community 'security'.[84] Hence, while the spiritual power/knowledge techniques employed by the Mai-Mai to a large extent work by speaking to the ways in which people in the Kivus are 'made up' as spiritual subjects, they also involve threats, repression, and violence.

Techniques of 'stateness'

Another important cluster of techniques of Mai-Mai rule is their enactment of 'languages of stateness'. Coined by Thomas Hansen and Finn Stepputat, this term refers to the symbols,

[77] Emma Wild-Wood, ' "Is it witchcraft? Is it Satan? It is a miracle?". Mai-Mai soldiers and Christian concepts of evil in North-East Congo', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28, 4 (1998), pp. 450–467.
[78] Wild-Wood, 'Is it witchcraft?', pp. 453–454.
[79] Interviews with FARDC officers, *inter alia*, Lulimba, 29 February 2011 and Mukera, 16 February 2011.
[80] Hoffmann and Vlassenroot, 'Armed groups'.
[81] Interview, civil society activist, Mukera, 19 February 2012.
[82] For example, interviews, residents, Nyakabere II and Bwegera, 19 February 2017.
[83] Similar beliefs surround unarmed vigilante groups that use *dawa*, see Judith Verweijen, 'The disconcerting popularity of popular in/justice in Fizi/Uvira, eastern DR Congo', *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 22, 3 (2015), pp. 335–359.
[84] Verweijen, 'Disconcerting popularity'; cf. Tim Allen and Kyla Reid, 'Justice at the margins: Witches, poisoners, and social accountability in Northern Uganda', *Medical Anthropology* 34, 2 (2014), pp. 106–123.

discourses, and practices associated with the state as a sovereign and territorially bounded entity, which were dispersed across the globe by colonization.[85] Despite widespread discontent with state authorities, languages of stateness remain firmly implanted in Congolese citizens' understandings of political order. Stateness evokes a particular discourse of power, which is associated with officiality, bureaucracy, sovereignty, bounded territory, the law, and what it means to be Congolese in terms of citizens' rights and obligations vis-à-vis the state and the nation.[86] For instance, when asked to list the tasks of the military – an institution strongly associated with stateness – citizens in the Kivus highlight the following aspects: 'protecting citizens/civilians and their goods' (Swahili: *ku chunga (ba)raia na mali yao/yake*), and 'defending territorial integrity' (Swahili: *ku kinga mipaka ya inchi*). Hence, in relation to the military, stateness is associated with territorial sovereignty and with the provision of public goods, namely, security.[87]

Mai-Mai groups draw upon similar interpretations of discourses of stateness as Congolese citizens. A clear example is the fact that their military organization tends to mimic that of the Congolese army. They have a similar rank system (general, colonel, major, etc.), unit organization (brigade, battalion, company etc.), and command structures, consisting of an *état-major* (general staff) composed of five *bureaux* (departments) linked to different staff functions (like personnel, intelligence, operations). These organizational structures, however, may be adapted to Mai-Mai groups' own situations and needs. For instance, while the Mai-Mai Aoci suppressed *bureau 1* (personnel affairs), since the group had 'no salaries to pay to their troops',[88] Padiri's group added a *bureau 6*, which was responsible for administering *dawa*.[89]

Being *jeshi* (soldier/army) is also a technique of the self for Mai-Mai combatants. As a soldier from the Mai-Mai Mushombe said: 'Our work is the same [as the national army]. It is to protect citizens and their goods and to defend territorial integrity.'[90] This formulation is identical to how both civilians and government soldiers describe the FARDC's mandate and role.[91] The mimicry of certain body movements (e.g. goose stepping) and the wearing of uniforms that resemble those of the FARDC further embolden Mai-Mai combatants' sense of being *jeshi*. At the same time, these features show to civilians that they are 'real soldiers' and not rag-tag bands of brigands. Hence, wearing an army uniform is a technique of power that evokes languages of stateness. By the same token, Mai-Mai groups create stamps that resemble those of state authorities, using them both for internal administration and for external communication. Since a document without a stamp is

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[85] Thomas B. Hansen and Finn Stepputat (eds), *States of imagination. Ethnographic explorations of the postcolonial state* (Duke University Press, Durham, NC and London, 2001), pp. 5–7.
[86] Theodore Trefon, 'Public service provision in a failed state. Looking beyond predation in the Democratic Republic of Congo', *Review of African Political Economy* 36, 119 (2009), pp. 9–21; Pierre Englebert, *Why Congo persists: Sovereignty, globalization and the violent reproduction of a weak state*. Queen Elizabeth House Working Paper 95 (University of Oxford, Oxford, 2003).
[87] Verweijen, *Ambiguity of militarization*, p. 111.
[88] Mai-Mai Aoci, untitled (unpublished manuscript, accessed in Minembwe in December 2010), n.p.
[89] Hoffmann, 'Myths set in motion', p. 166.
[90] Interview, Mai-Mai soldier, Masango, 12 November 2011.
[91] Verweijen, *Ambiguity of militarization*, pp. 111, 120–121.

commonly believed to be invalid in the Congo, using a stamp is a technique of truth-making which authorizes Mai-Mai rule through 'officialization'.[92]

The Mai-Mai also enact long-standing micro-practices of stateness related to extracting resources from civilians, often by mimicking government agencies. A striking example is a form of taxation imposed on shops and local organizations named *effort de guerre* (war effort). The colonial authorities introduced this tax during the Second World War, when rural populations had to provide a prescribed quota of agricultural products like rice, cotton, and rubber.[93] During the Congo Wars, various rebel movements similarly used the term *effort de guerre* to justify the extraction of resources from civilians. The term has continued to be employed by both state and rebel forces since, with the aim of transforming contributions into a civic duty.[94] For their part, the Mai-Mai justify the *effort de guerre* as necessary for the defence of both the (autochthon) population/nation and the Congo's territorial integrity against the continued threat of 'foreign invasion'.

Civilians are also called upon as state subjects when Mai-Mai groups criticize the Congolese government for maintaining a state that is not 'state-like' enough, as it cannot ensure basic state functions. Congolese state institutions are notoriously incapable of living up to citizens' expectations to protect and care for them, being primarily known for their extractive and abusive practices.[95] As a young man commented: 'In the Congo, the population is the field of the state, and all they do is harvest.'[96] Echoing these popular sentiments, Mai-Mai groups accuse state officials of having abandoned their duties vis-à-vis the population. To give an example, in the preamble to its 'project of society', the political wing of the Mai-Mai Yakotumba tells us that 'the state has stopped being the guarantor of public security, justice, peace in all its aspects and respect for its internal and external engagements'.[97] The Mai-Mai claim to fill the resulting void, and thus paradoxically pose as the guarantors of the state-based order. For instance, the Mai-Mai Kapopo, who used to be based in the isolated Itombwe forest, professed to partly replace the state by maintaining order and providing security in an area devoid of state security forces or any other state agents.[98]

Articulating criticism against the state taps into widespread feelings of disillusionment with the current government. While many Congolese denounce the Mai-Mai for behaving as disgracefully as state agents, to some they also symbolize resistance to the current regime and a refusal to accept the status quo.[99] Indeed, Mai-Mai groups appeal to Congolese citizens' sense of duty vis-à-vis the nation by asking them to hold the government to account, for instance during elections. For instance, during the 2011 presidential elections, the Mai-Mai Yakotumba called upon the population

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[92] Cf. Trefon, 'Public service provision', p. 12.
[93] Osumaka Likala, *Rural society and cotton in colonial Zaire* (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, WI, 1997), pp. 40–41, 98.
[94] Verweijen, *Ambiguity of militarization*, p. 136; Koen Vlassenroot, Éméry Mudinga, and Kasper Hoffmann, 'Contesting authority: Armed rebellion and military fragmentation in Walikale and Kalehe, North and South Kivu' (Rift Valley Institute, London, 2016), p. 69.
[95] Trefon, 'Public service provision'.
[96] Interview, hotel receptionist, Butembo, 28 April 2010.
[97] PARC, *Projet de la société* (project of society), unpublished document, 2007, p. 2.
[98] Interview Kapopo Alunda, Bukavu, 27 March 2011.
[99] Verweijen, 'Stable instability', pp. 59–61.

of Fizi to vote for an opposition candidate (Etienne Tshisekedi) and not for the incumbent, Joseph Kabila. While not the only factor, these appeals contributed to Tshisekedi's 75.15 percent of the vote in Fizi, versus 13.62 for Kabila.[100] Similar notions of rebellious citizenship are evoked by the Mai-Mai groups that call themselves Rayia Mutomboki. This name reflects an emphasis on the notion of citizen (*rayia*) and, by invoking anger (*mutomboki*), their opposition to the current political order.[101]

In sum, Mai-Mai groups enact numerous practices of stateness, including attempts to build territorialized state-like institutions. However, in contrast to the rebel governance literature, we do not see such attempts as universal or necessary features of rebel rule. Rather, we interpret them as looping effects of existing, historically contingent languages of stateness, or more succinctly, as looping effects of the 'state effect', or the perception that the state exists as an intrinsic object separate from and above society.[102]

Techniques of patronage and protection

Like those of Congolese state agents, the Mai-Mai's techniques of stateness merge, complement, and alternate with techniques of patronage and protection. Patron–client ties revolve around the exchange of loyalty for (access to) material and symbolic resources and certain forms of protection against political, physical, and socio-economic insecurity.[103] These ties give rise to asymmetric power relations that are described and perceived in familial and paternal metaphors, constituting a moral grid that is woven into rationalities of government.[104] Within this moral grid, the father/patron is expected to provide for the well-being and security of his dependants/clients, as symbolized in his ability to 'give'. However, fatherly authority also expresses an unequal status, as the stern father is authorized to take decisions and to punish and control his 'children'. The latter assume client subjectivity, implying that they see themselves as belonging and being subordinate to the patron, who represents collective well-being and pride.[105] There is a clear parallel between such forms of patronage and what Foucault calls 'pastoral power'. Within pastoral power relations, it is the duty of the pastor to care for the collective of the flock – the antecedent of the modern biopolitical notion of the population – but, at the same time, in an individualizing and controlling manner, for each member of the flock. Pastoral power, therefore, is simultaneously caring, controlling, and coercive.[106]

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[100] Verweijen, 'From autochtony to violence?', p. 171.
[101] Vogel, 'Contested statehood', p. 307.
[102] Timothy Mitchell, 'Society, economy, and the state effect', in Sharma Aradhana and Akhil Gupta (eds), *The anthropology of the state: A reader* (Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2006), pp. 169–185, pp.180–181.
[103] Marshall D. Sahlins, 'Poor man, rich man, big-man, chief: Political types in Melanesia and Polynesia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5, 3 (1963), pp. 285–303; Jean-François Bayart, *L'État en Afrique,* pp. 280–288.
[104] Michael Schatzberg, *The dialectics of oppression in Zaire* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN, 1988), pp. 71–98.
[105] Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz. *Africa works. Disorder as political instrument* (James Currey, Oxford, and Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN 1999), pp. 37–39; 53–55.
[106] Foucault, *Security, territory, population*, pp.169–174; 235–239.

The prominence of techniques of patronage among Mai-Mai groups is reflected in Mai-Mai commanders' tendency to identify with the role of father of the family. Said an ex-Mai-Mai female officer: 'As a commander I considered myself like a father, because I had to nourish and protect my guard.'[107] Civilians also speak about Mai-Mai leaders in fatherly or pastoral metaphors, in particular when they are from the (ethnic) community the Mai-Mai claim to defend. At the start of his career as a Mai-Mai leader, Yakotumba used to be called *commandant-pasteur* (pastor-commander) due to his correct behaviour and care for civilians.[108] This 'familiarization' of power relations is further promoted by the fact that many combatants originate from the villages where they operate. As such, the rank and file are commonly referred to as *batoto ya mungini* (children from the village).[109]

Intimate relations increase civilians' trust in Mai-Mai officers. Consequently, depending on local power configurations, they often solicit protection from them, rather than from the state security forces.[110] Such protection generally revolves around ensuring political, physical, and socio-economic security. For example, Mai-Mai officers may safeguard clients' property by escorting their convoys, or protect illegal business activities by persuading or pressurizing state agents not to interfere. Mai-Mai groups also frequently support clients involved in disputes, intimidating or even punishing the opposing camp.[111] However, reflecting the blurred boundary between rebel and state rule, in order to provide protection, Mai-Mai leaders themselves also need patronage, in particular from high-ranking politicians and officials. Such high-level protectors, commonly called *parapluies* (umbrellas), can apply pressure on local political actors to foster their clients' interests – a widespread technique of patronage/protection known as *traffic d'influence* (influence peddling). A Mai-Mai leader reported to frequently employ this technique – in conjunction with direct intimidation like sending threatening text messages by phone – was Bede Rusagara, who used to operate in the Ruzizi Plain in Uvira territory. By mobilizing his *parapluies* in Bukavu and Kinshasa, Bede was able to shape decision-making processes in the local administration. In this way, he helped his clients obtain plots of land and jobs, or exoneration from judicial persecution.[112]

The example of Bede shows that while techniques of patronage/protection work in part through 'regulated freedom'– in particular by making people cognizant of their status as clients who are indebted to their patrons – they also involve forms of direct coercion. This applies particularly where protection services (like shielding illegal practices or settling private scores) are provided against the payment of protection fees.[113] While protection in exchange for direct payment is sometimes solicited on a voluntary basis, it is often imposed, if necessary through violence. In such cases, 'protection' becomes less a pastoral technique of government, and more an instance of direct

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[107] Interview, ex-Mai-Mai officer, Kisangani, 1 May 2005.
[108] Interviews, civil society members, Baraka, 12 December 2011 and Fizi *centre*, 11 December 2011.
[109] Interview, inhabitants, Lubondja, 29 December 2011.
[110] Carla Suarez, '"Living between two lions": Civilian protection strategies during armed violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo'. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 12, 3 (2017), pp. 54–67.
[111] Hoffmann and Vlassenroot, 'Armed groups', p. 217.
[112] Judith Verweijen, 'A microcosm of militarization: Conflict, governance and armed mobilization in Uvira' (Rift Valley Institute, London, 2016), pp. 28–29.
[113] See also Timothy Raeymaekers, *Violent capitalism and hybrid identity in the eastern Congo: Power to the margins* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014), pp. 88–89; 102–106.

coercion. For instance, in the Ruzizi Plain, cattle owners pay protection fees to the Fuliiru Mai-Mai groups of Simusizi and Karakara in order to prevent their cattle from being looted by these groups. Similarly, mini-bus operators crossing the Plain donate to the Mai-Mai to avoid being ambushed. At the same time, these Fuliiru Mai-Mai groups try to legitimize the imposed contributions by pointing to their role as protectors of the Fuliiru community and its customary right to rule the Ruzizi Plain in the face of threats from 'foreigners'.[114] This intertwining of techniques of patronage/protection with ethnic and customary techniques of government illustrates how within Mai-Mai rule, direct and indirect, coercive and less coercive techniques of power interact and mutually reinforce each other.

Conclusion

Existing literature on rebel governance situates power mostly in rebel rulers themselves, and in the territorialized political institutions and networks of which they form part.[115] This literature tends to reflect a substantive and instrumental view of power, implying it is seen as something that is held and wielded by rulers, in this case rebels, over subjects. From this perspective, Mai-Mai groups in the eastern Congo could hardly be said to govern. They rarely control territory durably or create elaborate and stable political institutions to rule civilians. Similarly, focusing on the networks in which the Mai-Mai are embedded or their negotiations with other political actors, which is common in the literature on governance in violent orders,[116] would have missed many of the ways in which Mai-Mai groups shape civilians' fields of possible action.

From the perspective of governmentality, by contrast, the Mai-Mai could be said to govern civilians. By focusing on micro-practices, discourses, and rationalities of power, rather than on institutions, actors, or networks, a governmentality perspective has allowed us to uncover a much wider array of techniques through which the Mai-Mai rule civilians. In particular, it has drawn attention to how rebel rule may shape people's subjectivities and self-conduct. We have identified four salient clusters of techniques of Mai-Mai rule, relating to ethnicity and custom, spirituality, stateness, and patronage and protection, respectively. These techniques draw upon and evoke existing regimes of truth and practices of power, which they creatively adapt, recast, and combine. Following Nikolas Rose, we therefore suggest that Mai-Mai rule is 'assembled' from a variety of regimes of truth and techniques of power.[117] In this manner, Mai-Mai rule both shapes and is shaped by the socio-political order in which these groups are situated.

Based on our analysis of Mai-Mai groups, we contend that the analytic of power offered by governmentality, specifically the relational understanding of power, the focus on micro-practices, and the acknowledgment of a plurality of rationalities of power, can help transcend some of the

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[114] Verweijen, 'Microcosm', pp. 31–33.
[115] E.g.Kasfir, 'Rebel governance'; Arjona, 'Wartime institutions'; Weinstein, *Inside rebellion;* Mampilly, *Rebel rulers*.
[116] E.g. Raeymaekers et al. 'State and non-state governance'; Reno, *Warlord politics.*
[117] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of freedom: Reframing political thought* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999), pp. 17–18.

limits of conventional thinking on political order in zones of violent conflict.[118] In particular, this analytic overcomes thinking in binaries, including public vs private; rebel vs state; and secular vs religious. Certainly, as discussed above, the literature on networked and negotiated governance in violent orders has already moved beyond these dichotomies. However, a governmentality perspective goes even further in this direction by focusing primarily on actual practices and rationalities of power. Moreover, this perspective allows for a more nuanced understanding of the role of and interplay between coercion and freedom. As we have seen, many of the Mai-Mai's techniques of power rely on 'regulated freedom', or making people cognizant of their moral and citizenly duties, for instance towards their ethnic communities, God, their chiefs, their patrons, or their families. Although the importance of morality and community is acknowledged by that part of the rebel governance literature examining societal norms, beliefs, and values, this literature ultimately focuses on how these elements shape rebels' legitimacy – seen as an attribute or property of rebel rulers – rather than subjects' techniques of the self.[119] A governmentality perspective instead analyses how norms, beliefs, and values shape modes of knowing, being, and conducting the self, considering these modes in turn to be constitutive of emergent rationalities and techniques of power. From a governmentality perspective, then, rebel governance refers not so much to a set of specific social and political institutions as to a cluster of techniques of power that draw upon and transform existing regimes of truth and practices and rationalities of power that are (re)produced throughout the social body as a whole.

By showing the pertinence of a governmentality perspective for the study of Mai-Mai rule in the eastern Congo, this article contributes to a growing body of governmentality studies focusing on Africa.[120] Much of this literature examines international interventions and their effects *in situ*, including how they foster new subjectivities and techniques of government.[121] In this article, by contrast, we have focused on forms of governmentality that are not directly related to international interventions. As such, we demonstrate that current forms of governmentality in non-Western settings do not necessarily spring from the techniques of government of certified Western 'experts' and resourceful organizations. The knowledge, rationalities, and techniques of power shaping governmentalities in these settings cannot be traced to clearly identifiable 'centres'. Rather, they spread contingently throughout societies in successive waves of looping effects that produce historically contingent forms of governmentality. It is the study of the workings and effects of these forms of knowledge, rationalities, and techniques of power – regardless of their origins – that

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[118] See Death, 'Governmentality at the limits of the international'.
[119] See Duyvesteyn, 'Rebels and legitimacy', pp. 672–674.
[120] For example, Jan Bachmann, 'Governmentality and counterterrorism: Appropriating international security projects in Kenya', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 6, 1 (2012), pp. 41–56; Jana Hönke, *Transnational companies and security governance: Hybrid practices in a postcolonial world* (Routledge, New York, NY, and London, 2013); Vinh-Kim Nguyen, 'Government-by-exception: Enrolment and experimentality in mass HIV treatment programmes in Africa'. *Social Theory and Health* 7, 3 (2009), pp. 196–217.
[121] Not all studies of governmentality in Africa focus primarily on external interventions, see, for example, Achille Mbembe, *On the postcolony* (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 2001); Roitman, *Fiscal disobedience.*

allows the analyst to develop a fine-grained understanding of how power operates in a given social order, including in zones of violent conflict and in respect of rebel rule.