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Ethnogovernmentality: The making of ethnic territories and subjects in Eastern DR Congo

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ABSTRACT

In this article I investigate colonial constructions of ethnicity and territory and their effects in the post-independence period in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The core argument of the article is that the constructions of ethnicity and territory that are set in motion in struggles over political space in the Congolese conflicts are conditioned by what I call “ethnogovernmentality”, which denotes a heterogeneous ensemble of biopolitical and territorial rationalities and practices of power concerned with the conduct of ethnic populations. Through ethnogovernmentality colonial authorities sought to impose ordered scientific visions of ethnicity, custom, culture, space, territory, and geography, upon ambivalent cultures and spaces. I show that while ethnogovernmentality failed to produce the stability and order the colonial authorities sought, its ethno-territorial regime of truth and practice has had durable effects on people’s sense of self and on struggles over political space.

1. A dotted red line

During fieldwork in eastern Congo in 2005 I showed a faded copy of a BA thesis submitted at a local university to one of my interlocutors. The title was “*Essai d’histoire politique de Batembo*” (Essay on the political history of the Batembo). The interlocutor was a former administrator in a Congolese armed group, known as the *Mai-Mai* (water-water in Kiswahili), which had fought against a Rwandan-backed rebel group. As he leafed through the thesis he paused early on at a page containing a barely visible map of his home district, Kalehe Territory. Then he began to restore the map. He retraced the boundaries; color-coded the administrative entities, added important toponyms, and retouched various other details until it looked like a map from a school atlas. He explained to me that the internal borders of Kalehe did not correspond to the real ethnic borders of the area. Instead, he claimed they had been imposed by the colonial administration and subsequently by the Congolese state. He then added a new dotted red line and labeled it: “The likely boundary between Bunyakiri and Kalehe”. He explained to me that the territory of Kalehe should be divided into two different territories: Bunyakiri and Kalehe, because it contained two different ethnic groups: the Batembo and the Bahavu. He explained further that today Kalehe Territory is ruled by the Bahavu, and that the Batembo are marginalized and denied their right to ethnic autonomy, together with the benefits that would flow from this (see [Map 1](#)).

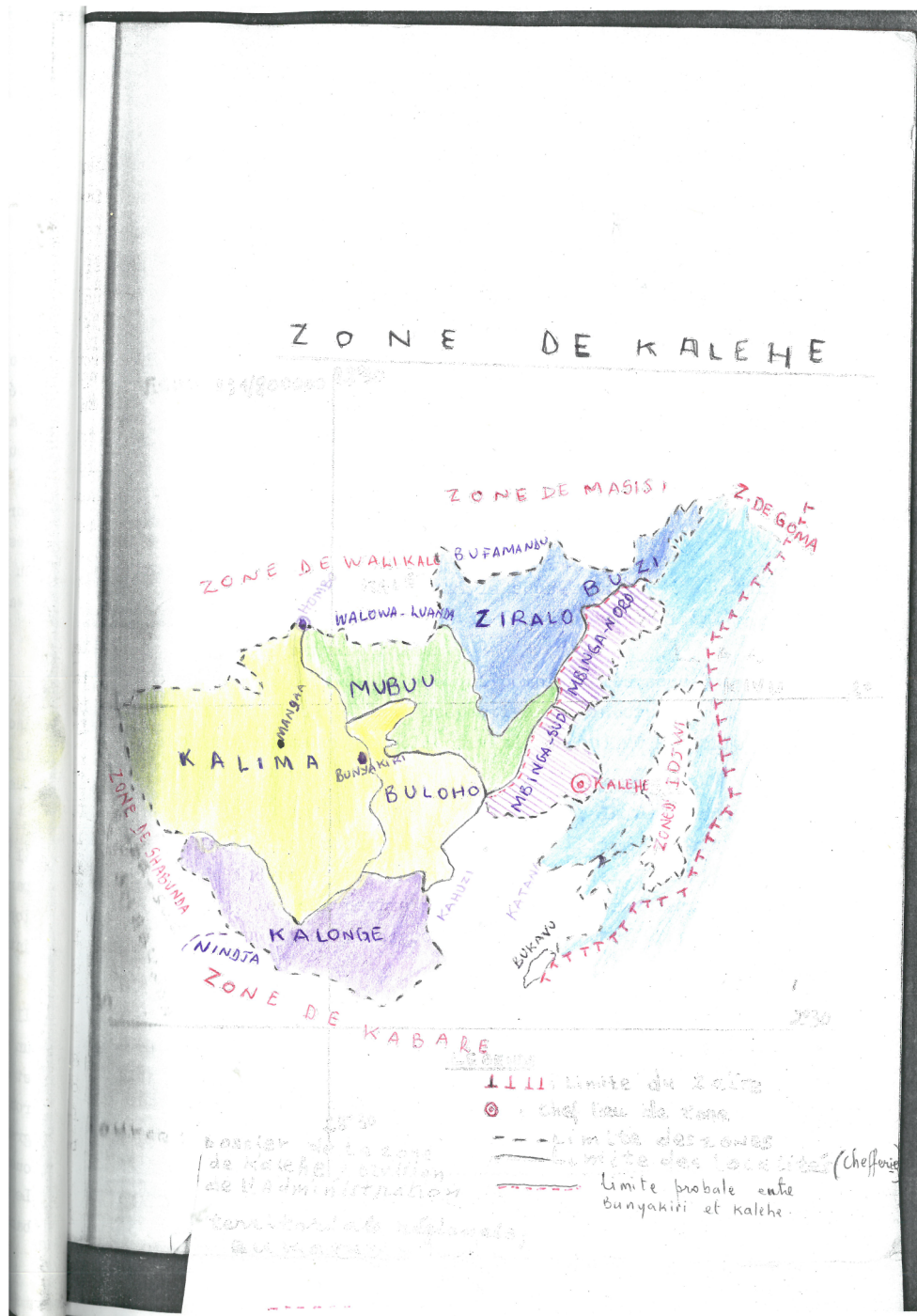
Administrative maps are often objects of intense political struggles, especially in post-colonial context where they have been imposed on ambiguous and highly heterogeneous cultural and political landscapes. As the example above indicates issues related to ethnic territories and boundaries are highly contentious in the eastern parts of Democratic Republic of the Congo (henceforth: the Congo). Indeed, the issues of territory and ethnicity are at the crux of eastern Congo’s protracted violent conflicts as they intertwine with fundamental issues of citizenship rights and authority over territory, populations, and resources ([Huggins, 2010](#); [Mamdani, 2001](#); [Mararo, 1997](#); [Mathieu and Tsongo, 1998](#); [Willame, 1997](#); [Muchukiwa, 2006](#); [Vlassenroot, 2002](#); [Hoffmann et al., 2016](#)). For instance, drawing on research on the conflict surrounding the creation of the Minembwe Territory, an ethnic territory for the Tutsi people known as the Banyamulenge, Judith Verweijen and Koen Vlassenroot have shown that conflicts over territory, identity and authority interact in complex ways with patterns of mobilization, militarization and violence ([Verweijen and Vlassenroot, 2015](#)). However, the issues of ethnicity and territory are also salient in national politics in the Congo. Following two regional wars (1996–1997; 1998–2003), a new constitution was adopted in 2006. It contained the framework of a decentralized state. By and large this model was a political compromise between actors seeking a federal state model, and those, especially political actors from eastern Congo, which during the wars had been occupied by rebel groups supported by Rwanda and

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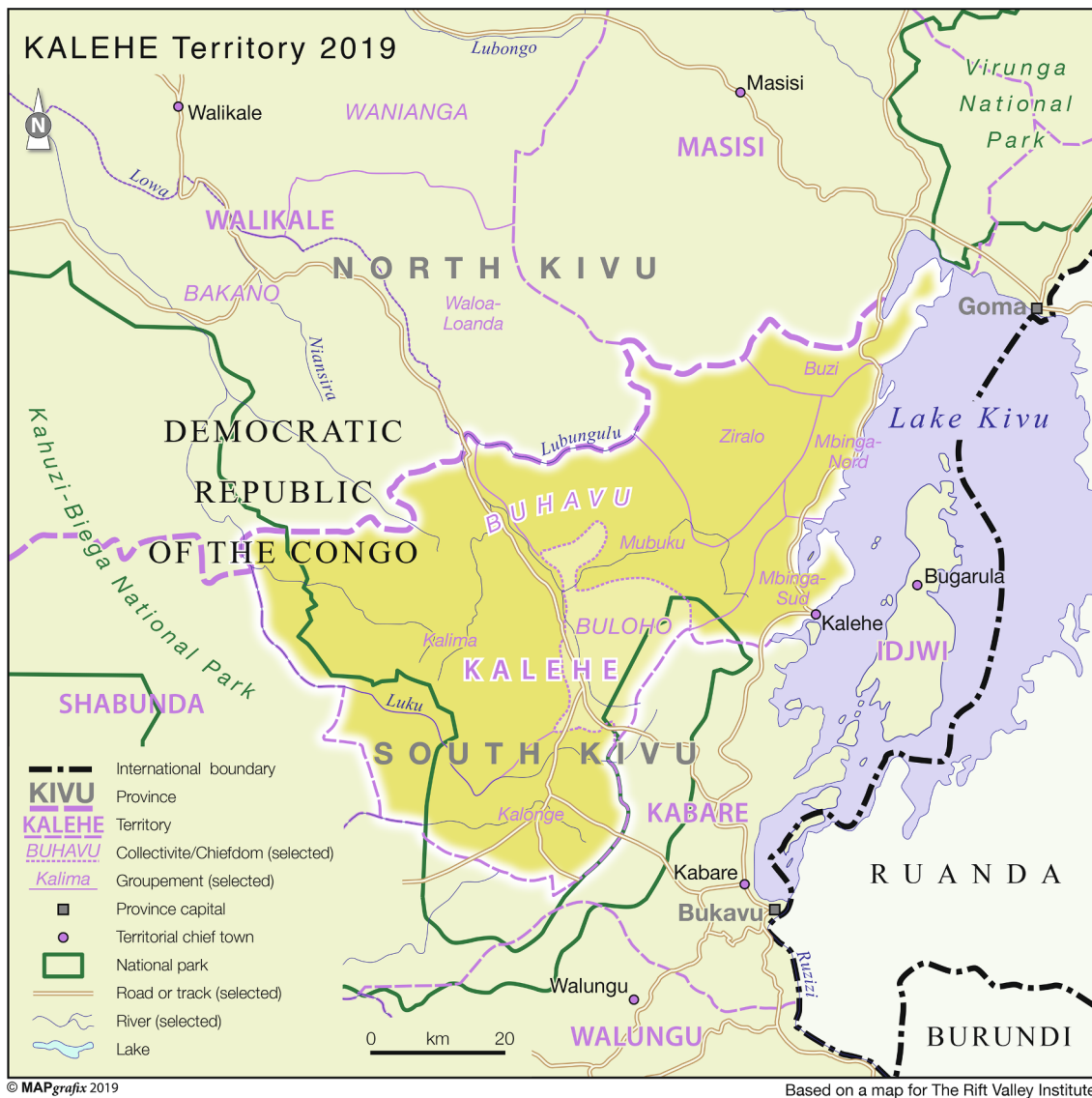
Map 1. Retouched map of Kalehe Territory.

Uganda, who were concerned that federalism could lead to a balkanization of the country (Tull, 2010, p. 654). Decentralization entailed the 'découpage' (cutting up) of the country's 11 provinces into 21 new ones, bringing the total up to 26. The constitution welded ethnicity to 'découpage' through the concept of "représentativité" (representativeness). This principle requires a degree of proportional ethnic or regional representation at different levels of government and administration to prevent a monopolization of state positions by specific groups (Englebert et al., 2018). The interlinking of ethnicity and territory in the Congo's political order is also embedded in rural areas. For instance, a 2008 law on decentralization recognized the institution of the chiefdom, which is defined as culturally homogeneous, as the

basic territorial unit of local government in rural areas. Hence, issues of territory, ethnicity and authority are at the core of the Congolese political order at multiple levels.

In this article I examine the making of ethnic territories and its effects in Kalehe and surrounding areas in a historical perspective (see Map 2). The study is based on long-term ethnographic field research in South Kivu and historical research in colonial archives in Belgium undertaken between 2005 and 2011.

Recently Gillian Mathys has argued that scholars should pay more attention to the way the past is connected to the present in today's conflicts in eastern Congo, because we cannot understand the processes propelling violence if we only study them in a limited timeframe (2017,



Map 2. Kalehe Territory. A contemporary administrative map of Kalehe Territory and surrounding areas.

466). I agree, but I also argue that in order to understand how constructions of ethnicity and territory became prominent in contemporary politics and conflicts in eastern Congo, it is necessary to ‘decontextualize them’. By this I mean that they should also be situated in the wider regimes of truth and practices that underpin them (Fabian, 1995; Hulme, 1992; Thornton, 1988).

Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, my core argument is that the constructions of ethnicity and territory that are set in motion in struggles over political space in the Congo are conditioned by what I call “ethnogovernmentality”. For Foucault, governmentality concerns the supplementing of older forms of disciplinary and sovereign power with scientific, calculative, and liberal ways of conducting populations at a distance, which he termed bio-politics. The aim of governmentality was to secure the welfare of the population, improvements to their condition, and the augmentation of their wealth, health and longevity (Foucault, 2007, 108–9). While Foucault somewhat downplayed the importance of territory in his account of modern governmentalities, subsequent scholarship shows that the same scientific calculative measures as those Foucault looks at in relation to population, were simultaneously brought to bear on territory, with respect to its mapping, ordering, measuring, and demarcation (e.g. Elden, 2007; Braun, 2000; Hannah, 2000). In this sense ethnogovernmentality can be described as

a combination of *bio-power* and what Géaroid Ó Thuathail calls *geo-power* (1996, 6–7). Geo-power refers to an ensemble of technologies of power, that are concerned with the governmental production of territory. These governmental practices seek to impose ordered vision of space, territory, and geography upon ambivalent, terrains, and cultures. As Nikolas Rose has suggested, in order to render space governable “governmental thought territorializes itself” (1999, 34).

In this article, ethnogovernmentality denotes a heterogeneous ensemble of biopolitical, disciplinary, sovereign, and territorial rationalities and practices of power specifically concerned with the government of ethnic populations, which was introduced in the Congo during the colonial era, but which are continuously re-activated in new forms in the present. I show that a key component of ethnogovernmentality in the Congo during the colonial period was the “invention” of ethnic territories, known as *chefferies* (chiefdoms) (Amselle, 1990; Jewsiewicki 1989; Mamdani 1996; Ranger, 1983; Vail, 1989). Chiefdoms were ethnic spatial fixes (Anthias and Radcliffe 2015; Moore, 2005); that is, mutually exclusive ethnically discrete territories ruled by a single customary chief governing through customary law (Watts, 2004, 66). Through the making of chiefdoms the colonial authorities aimed to govern indigenous people at a distance, not as individuals, but as “tribes”, or “races”, in their natural environment, through their own

customs and political institutions. Though reinforced by direct, disciplinary, and coercive techniques of power, this practice was known as *administration indirecte* (indirect rule). Moreover, while the chiefdom was conceived as a semi-self-governing entity, it was also the object of totalising bio-political and territorial techniques of government – such as censuses, ethnography, taxation, internment, control of population movement, infrastructural projects, map-making, and demographics (Bianga, 1978, Jewsiewicki, 1972, Lyons, 1992, Schouten, 2019). However, as I show, indigenous populations were not simply passive receptacles of colonial governmentality. On the ground ethnogovernmentality fragmented into multiple fields of struggles in which various indigenous and colonial actors were engaged, and which, therefore, decisively diffracted *politique indigène* (native policy) (Berry, 1992; Cooper and Stoler, 1997; Pels, 1997; Spear, 2003; Moore, 2005). At stake in these struggles was the construction of a new ethno-territorial order, and the privileges, rights and benefits that would accrue to it. Moreover, I show that after independence local elites recast and redeployed constructions of ethnicity and territory that issued out of ethnogovernmentality's discourses and practices. While local elites drew on colonial understandings of ethnicity and territory, they produced their own ethnic subjectivities, which contested colonial ethnic boundaries and entailed claims to new ethnic territories.

Hence, I show that ethnogovernmentality is not the preserve of governments or other institutions of authority, but is instead appropriated, reactualized and deployed by 'ethnic subjects' themselves, to contest institutions' bio-political and territorial technologies of government. In this regard, the article contributes to the growing body of governmentality literature that focuses on technologies of the self, which can be defined as the conduct that an individual exercises upon himself in order to obtain a certain state of being (happy, wealthy, pure, clean, wise, etc.) (Foucault, 1997, 223). The latter have been relatively neglected compared to the study of the government of others, although they are crucial to understanding the effects of governmentality (Agrawal, 2005; Howell, 2007; Legg and Brown, 2013; Holloway et al., 2018; Cadman, 2010; Legg, 2016; Nepomuceno et al., 2019).

The article begins by sketching out the basic features of Belgian colonial *politique indigène* (native policy) in the Congo in Section 2. In Section 3 I analyse the relationship between anthropological knowledge production and colonial governmentality in the Congo. In Sections 4–7, I focus on the politics of knowledge production, ethnogovernmentality and resistance in eastern Congo, and in particular in the Kalehe area. In Sections 8–10, I analyse the politics of territory and ethnicity in the Kalehe area in the post-independence period. In Section 11, I discuss the effects of ethnogovernmentality on people's subjectivities and understandings of politics and conflict in eastern Congo today.

2. *Politique Indigène* and the making of governable indigenous spaces

Both the Congo Free State (1885–1908) and later also the Belgian Congo (1908–1960) were divided into two distinct political juridical domains: a tribal indigenous domain and a civilized European domain (Mamdani, 1996; Jewsiewicki, 1979, 40–1). This racialized division was also reflected in the territorial organization of the state, which was divided into two distinct categories: *terres indigènes* (indigenous lands) and *terres vacantes* (vacant lands). Whereas 'vacant' land was assigned to the state for exploitation, 'indigenous' land was defined by a decree of 14 September 1886 as land inhabited, cultivated, and exploited by the indigenes (Mugangu Matabaro, 1997). Already in May that year the colonial government had recognised the rights of customary chiefs to rule indigenous lands in accordance with the principles of general law and customs (Gille, 1951, 719; Vanderlinden, 2004, 369). Hence, from its earliest beginnings the colonial government in the Congo sought to govern through indigenous customs and political institutions. The institution of the "chiefdom" was created by royal decree on 6 October 1891. The decree formulated the basic premises of future legislations on

chiefdoms. It stipulated that when a chief was recognized by the state, the report must contain a map "showing the position of the villages of the recognized chief and their borders,"¹ and that chiefs should exercise their authority in conformance with the customs and habits of communities, provided that they are not contrary to public order.² Hence, the recognition of a given chief was coterminous with the birth of the chiefdom as a cartographic and customary positivity (see Map 3).

The recognition of chiefs' right to rule in accordance with custom was a political rationality of government concerned with "the right disposition of things arranged so as to lead to a convenient end" (Foucault, 2007, 96). The colonial authorities believed that it was the most efficient way to capture the productive forces of the indigenous populations and ensure that the new colonial state would become economically and politically viable, which was by no means certain in the first decade (Stengers, 1957, 29). Indeed, the 1891 decree stipulated that a chief's recognition was dependent on his capacity to "obtain from his subjects the demands of the State".³ Therefore, the colonial authorities often recognized "chiefs", willing to collaborate in the extraction of resources, primarily rubber, through *corvée* labour, and taxes (*préstations*) (Bustin, 1975; Vansina, 2010). Often these chiefs were former soldiers of the colonial army or freed slaves, rather than the indigenes' own chiefs (Northrup, 1988). The emphasis on profit led to the emergence of an exceedingly violent system of resource extraction during the Congo Free State. Rape, torture, whipping, hostage taking, mutilation, surprise raids, and summary executions underpinned the *préstations* system (Harms, 1983; Ngbwapkwa, 1993; Roes, 2010; Vellut, 1984).

In 1904, the atrocities of the rubber extraction regime were revealed, which sparked widespread international condemnation. This led the Congo Free State to reform its native policy. On 3 June 1906 the new policy was promulgated. It stipulated that every indigene must belong to a chiefdom and that the borders of all chiefdoms must be fixed in conformity with the boundaries of the tribes.⁴ In this regard, it reinforced the territorialization of ethnicity. Yet, it also sought to reign in the violence of the existing system of resource extraction and labour. One attempted reform was to recognise only *chefs coutumiers* (customary chiefs) – as opposed to the many 'artificial chiefs' appointed – earlier in the belief that 'the natives show them a lot of respect and affection' and that they therefore would constitute a 'very useful class' capable of maintaining order.⁵

The legislation on chiefdoms underwent revisions in 1910, 1920, 1926, 1933 and 1957 (De Clerck, 2006). With these successive reforms the chiefdom became increasingly governmentalized as more and more duties and powers were devolved to indigenous chiefs, including helping with population censuses; delivering *passports de mutation* (mobility passports); collecting taxes; the recruitment of soldiers for the colonial army; law enforcement; assisting with the implementation of measures of hygiene and public health; ensuring the implementation of public works and compulsory crop growing; and the management of the chiefdom's treasury.

3. Anthropology and governmentality in the Congo

Anthropological knowledge production was integral to ethnogovernmentality in the Congo. In colonial discourse the Congo was framed as a 'blank spot' on the world map populated by dark savages (Dunn,

¹ African Archives. Affaires Indigènes et Main d'oeuvre. 1640–9205. "Commentaire du Décret du 6 octobre 1891 – Investiture des Chefs", art. 4.

² Bulletin officiel. 1891, nr. 10, 259, 'Chefs indigènes – Investiture', art 1 (1).

³ African Archives. Affaires indigènes et main d'oeuvre. 1640–9205: "Commentaire du Décret du 6 octobre 1891 – Investiture des Chefs indigènes", art 6 (1).

⁴ Bulletin Officiel, 1906, nr. 6, 246. "Chefferies indigènes", t I, art 4 (2); Bulletin Officiel, 1906, nr. 6, p. 199, "Rapport au Roi-Souverain".

⁵ Bulletin Officiel, 1906, nr. 6, 169–225, "Rapport au Roi-Souverain".



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Map 3. Mukiasa chiefdom. This map is based on a simple hand-drawn sketch of Mukiasa chiefdom situated in the Cataractes District (see Map 5). It is an early example of the territorialization of ethnicity.

2003, Chapter 2; Thomas, 1994, 80–1). As such the indigenous populations in the Congo came to embody the racial ‘other’ of the bourgeois European self. While the former were framed as prehistoric primitive beings, the latter was framed as a universal knowing subject capable of, and obligated to mastering and exploiting savage territories and populations for the good of mankind as a whole *through science*.⁶ Science was simultaneously a subjectivity and a way of governing others. As such it was part and parcel of the racial “*codage*”⁷ (coding) that underwrote efforts to governmentalize the colonial territory in the Congo. Colonial governmentality was a machine of objectification and subjectification, which produced knowledge about almost everything ranging from human and animal populations, over plants, to soil types, minerals and terrains, in order to govern these rationally, mainly from a political economic point of view. A vast amount of anthropological knowledge about the indigenous populations in the Congo was produced before and during the colonial period (Couttenier, 2005, Poncelet, 2008). With the birth of the Congo Free State, race became

the primary object of social classification and understanding, much as caste had been in colonial India from the late nineteenth century onwards (Dirks, 2001, 43). The scientific objectification of the indigenes in the Congo drew on several epistemological strands within modern anthropology, such as ethnology, diffusionism, geo-anthropology, physical anthropology, sociocultural evolutionism, and ethnography. Despite their differences these strands shared the core belief of modern anthropology that mankind could be divided into a hierarchy of mutually exclusive races (Stocking, 1987).

In its genesis, the production of this knowledge coincided with the violent conquest and exploration of the territory. The main thrust of anthropological research revolved around the issue of determining human variability through anatomical measurements with a view to producing a taxonomy of the ‘ethnic types’ in the Congo. *Force Publique* (“Public Force”) officers, such as Alphonse Vangele and Émile Storms, brought back skulls of indigenes that they had either killed or traded for, and filled out questionnaires for physical anthropologists like Émile Houzé. Based on these specimens Houzé attempted to determine which ethnic type the Congolese belonged to concluding that there existed two races in the Congo: ‘a victorious dolichocephalic race and a defeated and absorbed brachycephalic race’ (Houzé and Vangele, 1885, 75). However, around the turn of the century there was a shift towards the study of material and intellectual culture in the Congo (Couttenier, 2005, 167–72). A new Congo Museum was created in 1898, which became the locus of an encyclopaedic effort to classify and map

⁶ According to Foucault the modern age involved a fundamental reordering of reality. Even the notion ‘man’ is a particularity of modern thought. In the *Order of Things*, Foucault argued, “‘Man’ does not exist as a pre-given entity; he is at the most “a wrinkle in our knowledge” (Foucault, 1966, 15), a mode of self-objectification that has become possible during the last two centuries.

⁷ See, Stoler (1995) and Foucault (2003).

Congolese peoples and cultures. Its curators - among them Théodore Masui, Émile Coart, and Joseph Maes - were inspired by British evolutionism and German diffusionism, and their attendant core themes of 'struggle for existence', 'survival of the fittest', and 'culture contact'. They believed that the organization of the indigenous tribes should respect their natural environment and borders. Masui, for instance, believed that it would increase the welfare of the natives if the borders of chiefdoms respected indigenous culture (Masui and Liebrechts, 1897, 45–6). Maes argued that ethnic groups that shared similar environmental conditions developed similar manners and customs, which were then passed on from generation to generation. On this basis he divided the indigenous populations of the Congo into "cultural zones" (Maes, 1923). Maes was a proponent of the so-called "Hamitic hypothesis"; an influential myth built around Judaic and Christian stories of biblical and medieval vintage. According to this myth "Hamites" – descendants of Noah's son Ham – had founded the great civilizations of Egypt and Phoenicia and brought civilization to central Africa.⁸ Hence, according to Maes, the majority of the advanced technologies and tools employed by indigenes in Central Africa had their origins in Egypt and, he believed, had travelled there via the pastoralist Hamitic races of Abyssinia and the Sudanese. In 1925, Maes also created the first map showing the distribution of the four major "ethnic types" of the Congo: the Pygmies, the Bantu, the Sudanese and the Hamites (Couttenier, 2005, 296–8). While one should be careful not to overestimate the direct impact of anthropological theories on colonial policy, it must be noted that they operated implicitly within colonial governmentalities (Leclerc, 1972).

For the colonizers the challenge was to govern the indigenous populations in such a way that the territory and the material resources deposited there could be exploited and profits made. This required ethnographic knowledge of the inhabitants alongside statistics and other forms of knowledge. For, instance, a circular, which interpreted the 1906 native policy, stated that:

It is through the research of customs (...) that we will become able to establish the chief's rights with regard to his sub-chiefs and other chiefs in the region. It is also the customs that will establish the exercise of authority by the chief (...). Thus the decree definitively consecrates the existence of customary law (...). The importance that we ascribe to it provides us with renewed interest in the knowledge of tradition, and the study of it should be pursued more actively than has been the case hitherto. (quoted in Gille, 1951, 713)

Similarly Édouard de Jonghe, a renowned colonial scholar, argued that a truly scientific native policy would handle the indigenes as a farmer handles the soil: as 'things' with real properties. Without knowledge of indigenous customs, he argued, there would be 'innumerable vexations, misunderstandings and even bloody conflicts between colonized peoples and colonizers' (1908, 284). These ethnographic studies should cover the entire colony and study 'each tribe, one by one in and for itself' (de Jonghe, 1908, 304). In the same vein, another important colonial figure, Georges Van der Kerken, argued that while native policy had to pursue the objectives of the conquerors, it also had to 'take into account the native mores, customs and institutions, as well as the milieu in which the native lives and their psychology, or run the risk of spreading all the dangers of colonization' (1924, 692). In order to find the right balance, he argued, one must study and compare all the factors, 'notably, psychological factors, sociological factors and economic factors' (1924, 692). Thus, in the making of the Congolese territory ethnographic rationales supported and complemented military, economic, administrative, territorial and political ones.

⁸ See, Chrétien (2003), Eltringham (2006), MacGaffey (2005), Mamdani (2002), Sanders (1969).

4. Taming the Kivu frontier

The official principles of native policy were only loosely applied in eastern Congo, especially in the early years of colonial presence, when colonial authority was strenuous. The Kivu region was the last to be explored and conquered by the colonizers. When they arrived there in 1894 it was a frontier zone where power relations were in flux: old institutional orders were being undermined or erased and new ones being forged. Colonial penetration became entangled with the existing frontier dynamics (Kopytoff, 1987; Newbury, 1987; Njangu, 1973; Rasmussen and Lund, 2018; Mathys, 2014). Crucially, the region also marked the Congo Free State's eastern borders to German East Africa and the British Protectorate of Uganda. In this area the three imperial governments disputed the positioning of the borders. In order to avoid a military conflict the parties agreed to temporarily fix the zone's status as "contested" (Louis, 1963, 3). Due to this imperial rivalry the Belgians were mainly preoccupied with protecting the state's border to the east and claiming "effective occupation". They therefore limited their settlements to a series of forts erected on the border. Moreover, in 1902, they created the "Ruzizi-Kivu District" zone, a vast area between Beni and Kalembelembe, which was subjected to military rule (Louis, 1963; Vandewoude, 1959, 10) (see Maps 4 and 5).

The present-day territory of Kalehe was situated in the Ruzizi-Kivu District, in the 'Bobandana sector' (Maps 6 and 7). This region was inhabited by heterogeneous populations living in an assortment of interconnected polities that straddled two vast cultural areas. To the west were the forest cultures of the Congo Basin, such as the Batembo, Banyanga, and Bakano, who lived in small, independent, but highly interactive polities scattered through the forest in villages of 75–100 residents, and, to the east, the more centralized highland states of the inter-lacustrine cultures, such as the Bahavu (Biebuyck, 1957; Newbury, 1991: 43–7, 2009: 2–3). Two Bahavu chiefs, Lushombo and Biglimani, ruled the area around the colonial fort at Bobandana. The colonisers considered their entities as 'feudal' chiefdoms governed by strict customs. Lushombo and Biglimani provided supplies to the colonizers and in return achieved official recognition from the colonial authorities (Shanyungu, 1976, 51–2).⁹ By contrast, the colonial authorities had little contact with the people living in the hilly and forested regions further west, to the colonial gaze a 'blank spot on the map'¹⁰. The first encounter with the populations of these regions occurred in the context of the colonizers "pacification" missions. The first was in 1901 against Lukundula, a Mukusu warrior associated with Zanzibari traders who raided for slaves and ivory (Pindo, 1977, 76) and then again in 1911–12 against Njiko Kigumwa, a rebellious Nyungu prince from Buhunde in the northern part of the sector, which resulted in the deaths of at least 270 indigenes.¹¹ The resistance of the indigenes earned them a reputation as especially savage. As the head of the Kivu zone, Derche, noted after the campaign: "All these races are the most backward of the Kivu zone. Cruel and bloodthirsty, and they are all cannibals to the highest degree; prisoners of war are ALWAYS eaten."¹²

However, illustrating the blending of ethnographic and economic rationales typical of ethnogovernmentality, Derche still believed that the area could make significant contributions to the economy of the

⁹ African Archives. Force Publique. 800. Letter nr. 2222 to the Minister of Colonies 12 July 1912. "Mission Inspecteur d'Etat de Meulemeester. Inspection Bobandana, Goma et Rutshuru", from the governor-general Félix Fuchs.

¹⁰ African Archives. Force Publique. 800. Letter nr. 1789 to the Minister of Colonies, 24 April 1912. Annex 4. "Rapport d'inspection du poste de Masisi" 25 March 1912. Signed by Derche, the head of the Kivu zone.

¹¹ African Archives. Force Publique. 800. "Zone du Kivu. Opération contre Djiko et consorts". Annex 4. S.P. 35./R. "Le rapport succinct des opérations effectués jusqu'à ce jours contre le chef Djiko".

¹² African Archives. Force Publique. 800. Letter nr. 1789 to the Minister of Colonies 24 April 1912. Annex 4. "Rapport d'inspection du poste de Masisi" 25 March 1912, by the Head of the Kivu zone, Derche.



Map 4. Map of Ruzizi-Kivu Territories, 1907. The details are extracted from a map drawn by a *Force Publique* agent.

state once censuses were taken and a money economy established, but only if the ‘races, the power of the chiefs, the spirit of devotion and wishes of the natives’ were taken into account.¹³

After the “pacification” campaign, four Batembo chiefdoms were created. They were named after their chiefs: Misati, Ndalemwa,

Mwendula and Musikami. However, the colonial authorities still had almost no knowledge of, or authority over these chiefdoms, and did not officially recognize their chiefs (Shanyungu 1988a, 92). A report from 1916 reveals that the Batembo chiefs refused to present themselves to the authorities as required, and that the authorities had very little knowledge of the area since no reports were produced. ‘It is impossible for me to talk about them [the Batembo chiefdoms]... I have never received a report on this subject. I can only relate what the rumours tell me’.¹⁴ During the First World War, the colonizers foisted further demands for porters and food products upon indigenous populations for their military campaign against German East Africa. Many Batembo lost their lives, mainly to disease, when carrying food to the frontline. However, the Batembo were not easily mobilised for this, which resulted in severe colonial repression. As a result chiefs and populations adopted a strategy of evasion vis-à-vis the colonial authorities.

5. One tribe, one chiefdom

In 1920 a new native policy was formulated in the Congo. It sought to simultaneously to unite economically unsustainable chiefdoms into larger ones and to strengthen customary authority by concentrating power in the hands of the chiefs in particular by tightening their control over customary law. The new native policy provided the colonial administration of the Kivu District with an opportunity to quell resistance in the Batembo areas and on Ijwi Island by reinforcing and extending the power of chief Lushombo, the Havu chief of Mpinga. Hence, in 1921 they created the Buhavu chiefdom, which included several hitherto independent chiefdoms. The chiefdoms included were those headed by Nakalonge (Kalonge), Biglimani (Bobandana), Mihigo (Ijwi), Mukuku (Mpinga Nord), and Kitchwa-Molefu (Buzi) (Pindo, 1977, 107–17; Shanyungu, 1988a, 92, Newbury and Newbury 1982, 230). This new arrangement was justified in the following manner: ‘the organisation of the *chefferie-secteur* was facilitated by the fact that it existed historically. All that had to be done was to repair the breaches which had been made within tradition’.¹⁵ Within this structure the chiefs remained independent and retained their recognition by the state. However, after chief Lushombo died in May 1927, the colonial authorities abolished the chiefdoms of Nakalonge, Biglimani, Mihigo and Mubuku, and demoted them to *sous-chefferies* (sub-chiefdoms), later called *groupements* (groupings) of Bahavu chiefdom, and their chiefs into sub-chiefs of Lushombo’s heir, Bahole (Pindo 1977, 113–5; Shanyungu, 1988b, 5). After the creation of Bahavu chiefdom in 1929, the colonial ministry declared that: “The reorganization of the populations on the basis of custom is a fact. The authority of the chiefs is well established and several among them have become precious collaborators of our civilizing work” (quoted in Shanyungu, 1988b, 5). However, it was first and foremost a strategy to reinforce the authority of their collaborator chief Bahole, and to quell the continued resistance of certain chiefs (see Maps 8 and 9).

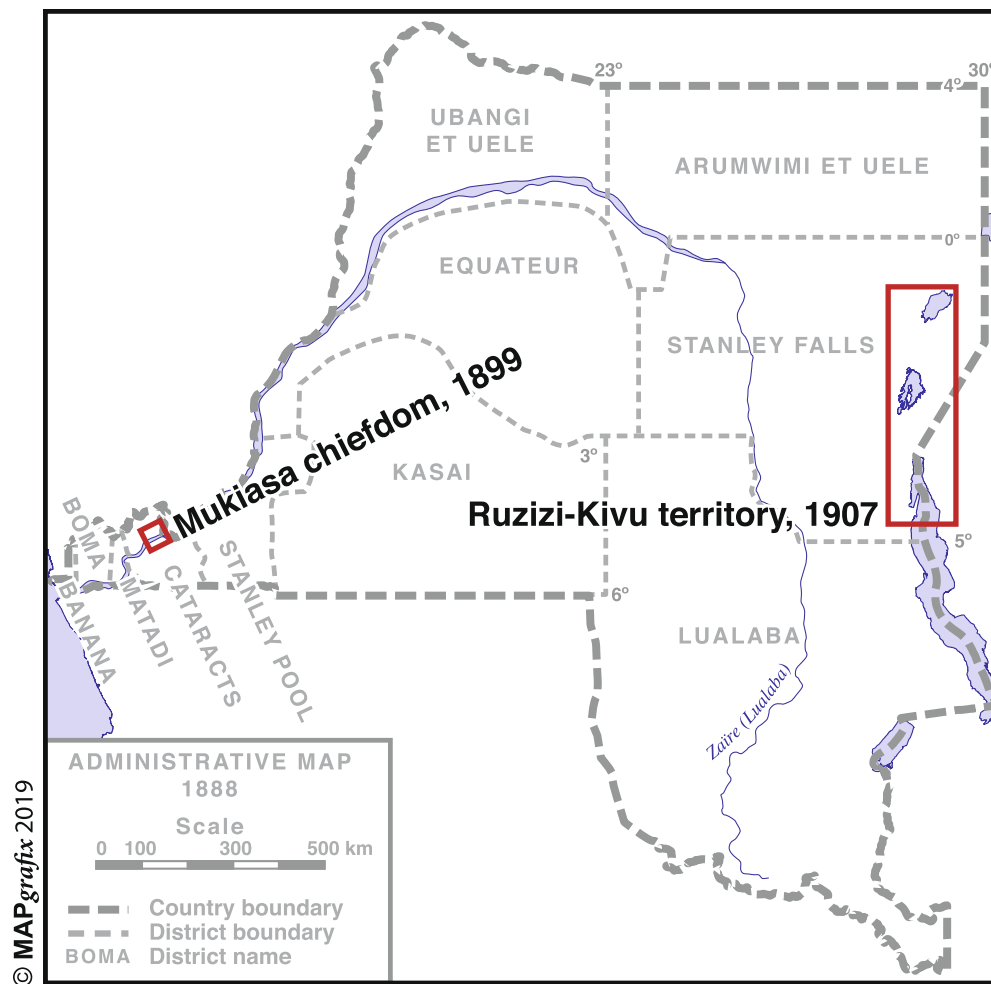
6. Race, class, and rule in Kivu

The creation of Buhavu chiefdom was justified through the ethnography of the societies of the Kivu District, which in turn drew on the ethnography of the centralized and hierarchical Rwandan monarchy, much admired in colonial circles. This ethnography became the blueprint for the reorganization of the indigenous societies of the Kivu region in the interwar years. It cast these societies as racially stratified

¹⁴ African Archives. Gouvernement Générale. 5789. 31 October 1916, “Rapport sur la période de la guerre” Territoire de Kitofu. Signed by Territorial Administrator Dargent.

¹⁵ Section Ethnographiques. Royal Museum for Central Africa. “Rapports Speciaux sur l’état d’organisation des secteurs et juridictions indigènes”. 1923. District du Kivu, Province Orientale.

¹³ Ibid.



Map 5. Administrative map of the Congo Free State, 1888. It shows the position of Mukiasa chiefdom and the Ruzizi-Kivu territories.

entities ruled by a class of aristocratic ‘hamitic’ *bami* (kings, s. mwami) (Newbury, 1978, p. 132). A famous example is Alfred Moeller de Ladersous’, author of *Les grandes lignes de migration des Bantous de la Province Orientale du Congo Belge* (1936) and the governor of Orientale Province between 1926 and 1933.¹⁶ In *Les grandes lignes*, he argued that many of the races of the Kivu, such as the Bahavu, Banande, Banyanga, Bahutu, Bahavu, Bashi and the Bafulero, originated from Bunyoro in Uganda and had migrated to Kivu (Moeller, 1936, 8). Drawing on the hamitic myth, he claimed that a ruling class of ‘hamitic’ chiefs had led them. Specifically, concerning the Bahavu, he argued that their chiefs were descendants of the hamitic ‘Banyamwocha’ clan, and that the founder of the first Bahavu dynasty, Muhande, had arrived in Buhavu where encountering numerous small Barega clans and Batwa, he either conquered or drove them off and thus created his own kingdom. By contrast, he claimed that the term Batembo referred to an area rather than a tribe. Moreover, according to Moeller, the Batembo consisted of a conglomerate of various ethnic elements spread out over the territories of other tribes. He also argued that the chiefs of these populations were descendants of the Bahavu other hamitic dynasties (Moeller, 1936, 131). However, other ethnographic reports raise doubts about Moeller’s version. For instance, the administrator of Kalehe territory, Verdonck claimed that the Batembo have their own eponymous ancestor called ‘Katembo’. According to Verdonck, Katembo was a

¹⁶ Moeller based the book on data collected by colonial administrators during his tenure there.

Muhunde prince who had conquered the areas of Ziralo, Mubuku and Walowa-Loanda, thus creating his own ‘principality’.¹⁷ Verdonck’s version, however, was dismissed by Moeller as a ‘legend’ (1936, 132n1). Meanwhile the administrator of Masisi territory, Dubuisson, claimed that at least some Batembo ‘clans’ had developed a separate culture and he suggested uniting them “under a single sceptre”, given that such a chiefdom would be based on shared kinship and be economically viable. However, Dubuisson’s version was not incorporated into Moeller’s *Grands lignes*.

It is important to note that the colonial authorities did not produce the ethno-histories of the Batembo and the Bahavu from scratch. Instead, they coproduced them with the indigenous elites who served as their interlocutors. For instance, Dubuisson’s report was based on an interview with Misati, a young Batembo ‘notable’ from Bufumandu.¹⁸ Therefore, the construction of ethnic histories and territories that took place during the colonial period drew not only on colonial ethnography, but also on indigenous royal histories and traditions (Newbury, 1978, 141). This is not to argue that they were therefore more “authentic”. Rather, it is to say that the construction of ethnic territories was a dynamic process, which “reconstituted the past to meet the needs of the present” (Spear 2003, 25), in which both colonizers and indigenous elites took part. In this respect the creation of Buhavu chiefdom, was a

¹⁷ Verdonck. “Rapport d’enquête et résumé de l’histoire du Buhavu”.

¹⁸ Section Ethnographiques. Royal Museum for Central Africa. Dubuisson, “Légende sur l’origine des Watembo”.



Map 6. Map of Bobandana sector, 1910. It is notable that only the “Bahavu people” are represented on the map. The area and populations further west were not yet mapped or subdued.

projection of both royal and colonial political ambitions (Map 10).

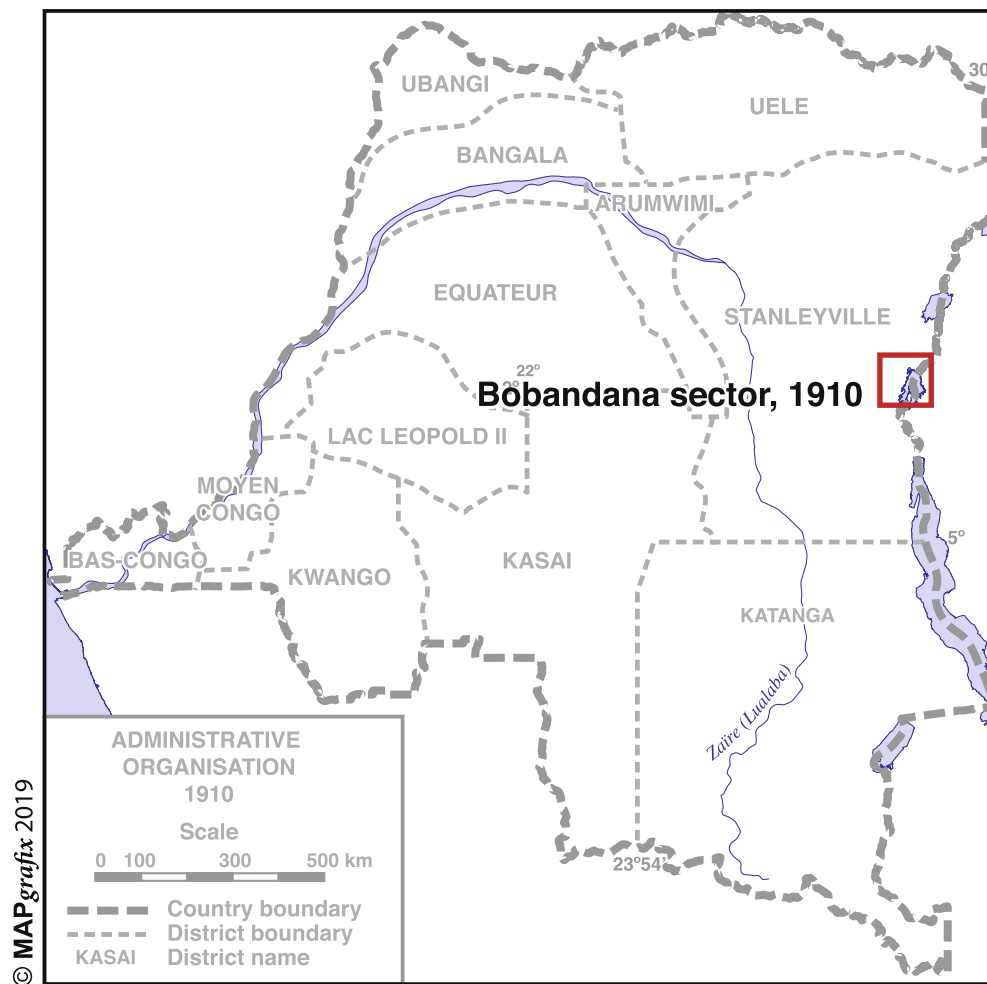
7. The resistance of Batembo chiefs to colonial and Bahavu rule

The creation of Bahavu Chiefdom implied that Lushombo, and later his son Bahole, had the right and responsibility to assist in the multitude of tasks of colonial ethnogovernmentality in the sub-chiefdoms (see Section 2). However, the centralization of authority in Bahavu did not lead to a more efficient administration or reinforce the authority of Bahole. Instead, several chiefs refused to recognize his authority. They displayed their dissatisfaction by boycotting the orders of the colonial authorities, which meant that some of them were suspended on several occasions. This is attested by the administrative reports of the territory.

The following is an extract from a note on Kalima groupement by territorial administrator Braun:

The populations do not accept any other authority than the mubutu chief [the chief of Kalima]. The influence and prestige of the chief of the musibura [Bahole] is almost nil; tribute was brought to him for the first time in 1934, after an energetic and direct pressure by the European administration. The emissaries that the Mwami have sent to this province have been very badly received.¹⁹

¹⁹ J.M. Derscheid Collection. University of Florida Digital Collections. “Bahavu. Province du Karima (Kalima des documents administratifs). Notes A. Brain. January 1935. <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00002627/00001?search=>



Map 7. Administrative map of the Belgian Congo, 1910. It shows the position of the Bobandana sector.

The annual report of Kalehe territory from 1948 describes the attitude of Musikami of Kalima *groupement* and Ndalemwa of Mubuku *groupement* as ‘indolent’ and ‘apathetic’.²⁰ However, in spite of the resistance of certain Batembo populations and chiefs, colonial reports indicate that from the 1930s onwards censuses were carried out, taxes paid, and labour conscripted; native courts were created, money was introduced, villages were regrouped (often hard going), roads and buildings were constructed, etcetera.²¹ In this respect colonial biopolitics was beginning to make its mark, even in the Batembo areas.

In sum, colonial intervention transformed the relations between peoples and spaces in the areas west of Lake Kivu. Ethnogovernmentality, however, was not simply the imposition of a new political order from above. Instead, what seems to have happened was that certain indigenous elites and colonial authorities collaborated in the making of ethnic territories and the forging of more hierarchical power relations. For the colonizers, the driving rationality behind these strategies was the creation of a stable political order to facilitate the entrenchment of a civilising process that would permit the productive capacity of the populations to be captured.

However, ethnogovernmentality was based on an overly optimistic

(footnote continued)
karima.

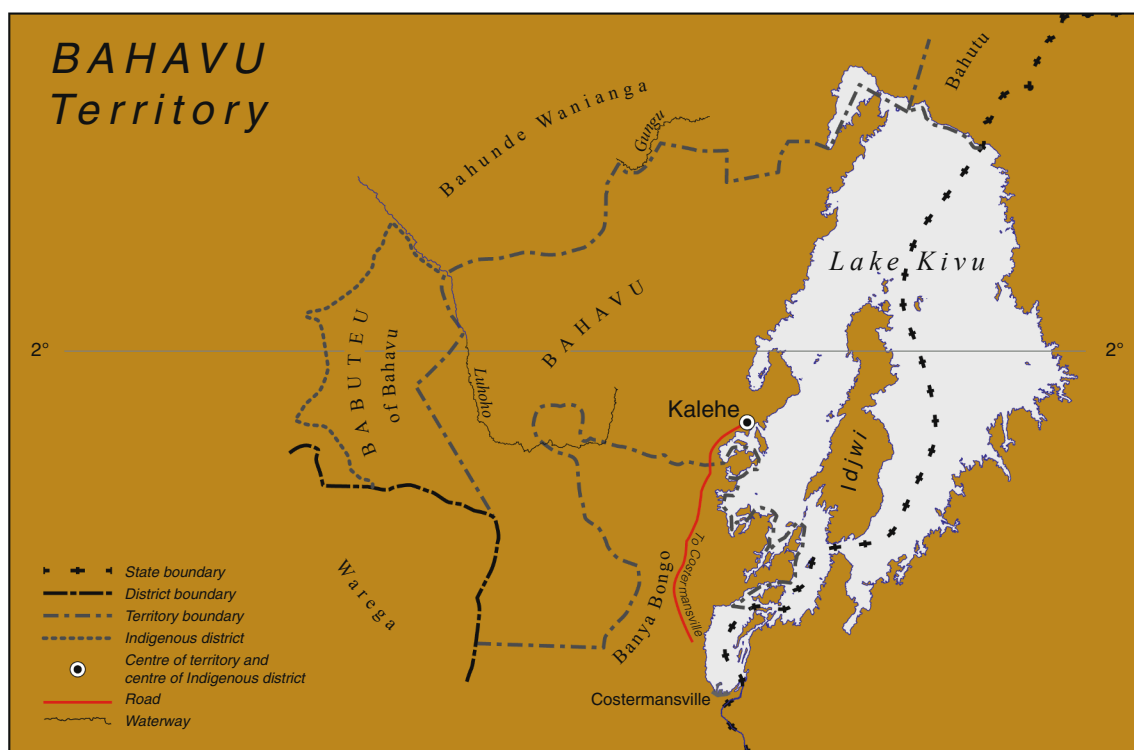
²⁰ African Archives. Rapport annuel/Affaires indigènes et main d’oeuvre. 103. “Rapport Annuel. Territoire de Kalehe. 1948”, 14.

²¹ See the folders: African Archives. Rapport annuel. Affaires indigènes et main d’oeuvre. 99; Rapport annuel. Affaires indigènes et main d’oeuvre. 103; Rapport annuel. Affaires indigènes et main d’oeuvre. 113.

faith in rationalism as a method and justification of rule, because the knowledge that it generated was arbitrary and inherently political. Ethnic territories, or chiefdoms, were never *a priori* objects that could be discovered and governed, instead, they were political technologies of power. Their creation, therefore, produced conflict and resistance.

8. Independence and the creation of a Batembo chiefdom

The Congo gained independence from Belgian colonial rule on 30 June 1960 and was immediately plunged into political turmoil, which led to rebellion and secession. The terminal colonial period and the turmoil of the immediate post-independence brought many subjacent conflicts to the surface. Ethnicity was nearly always present in these conflicts in the perception of the political actors and their audiences (Verhaegen, 1966, 265–73; Weiss, 1967; Young, 1965, 240). The politics of ethnicity was entangled with the politics of territory in this phase of the Congo’s history. The Congo’s national independence movement was largely made up of a fragile alliance of ethno-regional political parties, which not only sought independence, but also, to various degrees, ethno-territorial autonomy. These include the *Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga* (CONAKAT), and the *Alliance des Bakongo* (ABAKO). For instance, the leadership of the ABAKO, a party that first and foremost promoted the interests of the Bakongo, agitated for the creation of an independent federal state based on ethnic self-rule. In its second manifesto (1956) ABAKO’s leaders wrote: ‘it is a pure utopia to want to rally all Congolese to the same opinion ... Starting from the principle of Rousseau that “all that is not in nature has its disadvantages”, [the] evolution in the direction of democratic progress



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Map 8. Map of Bahavu Territory, ca. 1928-29. It presents the area as a discrete mono-ethnic territory, in sharp contrast to its cultural and political diversity. There is no mention of the Batembo, or any of the other groups living in the area, apart from the the Bahavu. The only other group figuring on the map is the “Babutetu”, the ruling clan of Kalima. However, it is specifically written that it is part of the Bahavu.

must begin first on the basis of what exists’ (quoted in Verhaegen and Tshimanga, 2003, 160). Eventually, on 19 May 1960, a temporary constitution, the *Loi Fondamentale*, was adopted in preparation for independence. It led to a moderate federal model, which recast the provinces from administrative into political structures, with provincial assemblies and universal suffrage (Young, 1965, 533).

In Kivu Central Province, the provincial assembly was hijacked by ethno-politics in the immediate post-independence period (Verhaegen 1966; Willame 1964). For instance, seeking to escape Bashi and Bakusu dominance, a Barea political party l’UNERGA (*Union des Enfants du peuple Lega*) demanded the creation of an independent Barea province, called “Elila”. On a smaller scale, a group of Batembo leaders demanded the creation of a Batembo chiefdom that would unite all the Batembo from different territories, an idea already proposed to the colonial authorities in 1945.²² This early demand may indicate the birth of a Batembo political subjectivity. It is probably not coincidental that in the same year the territory of Kalehe was recreated after being part of Kabare territory since 1934 (see Maps 11 and 12).

Another sign of the emergence of a Batembo collective political subjectivity was the creation of the ‘ethnic’ associations: *Union d’Entreaide Batembo* in 1956. Since the colonizers did not permit political parties, such ethnic associations became the focal point of indigenous political mobilization. They proliferated across the country as the colonial state organized elections to urban councils in 1957 and 1958. These associations evoked relatively newly constructed ethnic self-identifications, which had emerged in the urban contexts (Lemarchand 1964, 175–84).

After independence, on 28 September 1960, Antoine Kayumba, a Mutembo delegate at the provincial assembly, proposed the creation of an autonomous Batembo chiefdom. The provincial authorities,

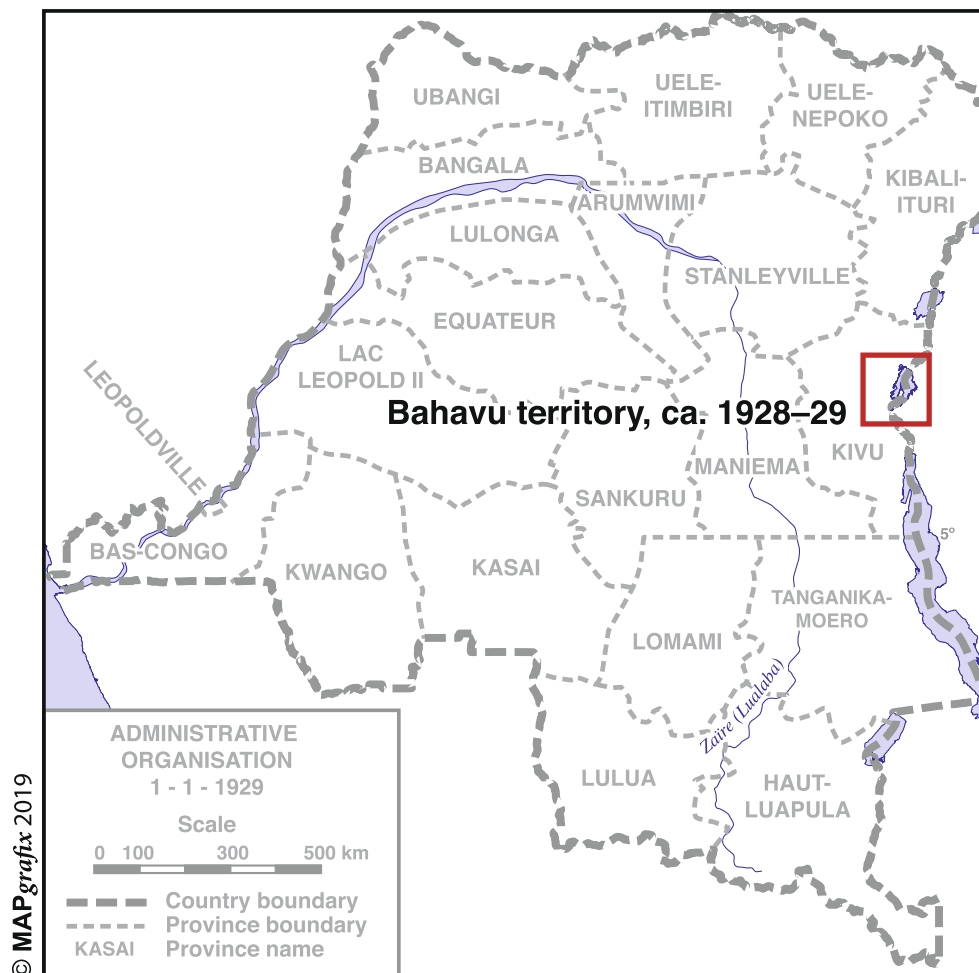
however, rejected the proposal. In response to the rejection, forty-nine Batembo chiefs defiantly refused to pay any taxes to Kalehe territory.²³ Kayumba then proposed the creation of a Batembo territorial entity at the provincial assembly on 18 April 1961:

My proposition to create a municipality in Bunyakiri, regrouping all the Batembo, is legitimate [...]. The indigenes of this land have already requested this many times [...] it deserves a chiefdom. It is unfortunate that this population does not have a chiefdom in spite of the high number of 20,000 inhabitants. [...] Considering that these populations belong to the same ethnic group, possess the same customs, and speak the same language (Kitembo), and that these elements can facilitate the cultural, economic and even the patriotic development of a unique entity, the creation of this district should not be a cause of concern (Kayumba, quoted in Pindo, 1977, 138).

Kayumba’s address to the Provincial Assembly shows that the political project of creating an independent Batembo chiefdom was framed in the language and rationalities of ethnogovernmentality. The themes of ethnic homogeneity, development, and economic sustainability are all in line with colonial ethnogovernmentality. In this respect, colonial ethnogovernmentality provided a blueprint for the political struggles over territory that took place in Kalehe in the early independence era, at least in the public realm. Within ethnogovernmentality ethnicity and territory were co-extensive and sanctioned ethnic rule by native chiefs over that territory. In the new political context, the Batembo leaders used the same model to claim their own ethnic territory. Eventually, on 14 November 1961, after consultation with the Batembo chiefs concerned, and having noted that the “Batembo constitute a viable number (20,000 tax payers)”, the provincial assembly created a rural Batembo territory (Pindo, 1977, 141; Shanyungu, 1988b, 26).

²² Interview, village chief, 28 September 2011, Bulambika; Interview, Councillor to the Provincial Assembly of South Kivu, November 2012, Bukavu.

²³ Letter of 4 February 1961 to Territorial Administrator of Masisi: “Doléances Watembo” signed by 49 Batembo chiefs.



Map 9. Administrative map of the Belgian Congo from 1929, showing the position of Bahavu territory.

9. The fracturing and abrogation of the Batembo chiefdom

The creation of the new Batembo chiefdom was primarily legitimated on the ground that the Batembo constituted an independent ethnic group with different customs, and that it was fiscally viable, given that it would contain 20,000 taxpayers. However, the way in which the Batembo chiefdom was envisioned resembled the colonial model, as it amalgamated a highly heterogeneous population into a single ethnic territory. In the context of the political turmoil of the independence period, this model proved unsustainable. Instead of ethnic and territorial unity, the creation of the Batembo chiefdom produced a series of conflicts between rival factions. The major source of the fragmentation was the competition over who should hold the title of paramount chief, or ‘Katembo’, of the Batembo chiefdom.

The edict of 14 November 1961, which created the Batembo chiefdom, stipulated that the *groupement* chiefs themselves should elect the new chief of the chiefdom. These elections were organized in 1962. Bakondjo Musikami (chief of Kalima) and Shebirongo (chief of Walowa-Loanda) were the two candidates for the position of ‘Katembo’. Shebirongo won the election, but he was highly unpopular in Kalima where the royal court and the administration of the chiefdom were situated, and in 1964 Bakondjo Musikami’s followers chased him from Kalima. Provincial ethno-politics also interfered in the struggle over who had the right to rule the Batembo chiefdom. After decolonization, a part of Kivu Central province separated to become North Kivu Province. The newly appointed authorities from North Kivu moved to recognize Shebirongo from Walowa-Loanda as the legitimate ruler of the Batembo

chiefdom. Meanwhile, Bakondjo Musikami sought recognition from the authorities of Kivu Central (Pindo, 1977, 150; Willame, 1964). The authorities from North Kivu countered by trying to arrest the chiefs of Musikami’s faction. The fragmentation of the Batembo chiefdom continued as other chiefs rejoined their former chiefdoms. By 1964 the Batembo chiefdom was reduced from the initial ten *groupements* to four: Kalima, Mubuku, Ziralo, and Bufumandu (Pindo, 1977, 151).

The larger question here is what caused the Batembo project to create a united Batembo chiefdom to crash? Decolonization made it possible to create a Batembo chiefdom ruled and governed by a single Batembo chief. It essentially corresponded to the ethno-territorial chiefdoms introduced during colonization. It seems that the attempt to unite the Batembo based on this model set in motion a centrifugal winner-takes-all politics among the different political factions among the Batembo chiefs, which ripped the vision of a common Batembo ‘cause’ to pieces.

The situation in Kalehe changed when Mobutu Sese Seko staged his second *coup d’état* on 25 November 1965. As part of the regime’s campaign to suppress political activity, it returned to office all chiefs who had been deposed for political reasons. Similarly almost all ‘ethnic’ boundaries reverted to their 1960 positions. As a result the Buhavu chiefdom created during the colonial period was reconstituted (Pindo 1977, 154; Shanyungu, 1988b, 37). The Batembo leaders did not give up their project. In 1974 there were two new attempts to create a Batembo territory, but in the end these attempts were turned down as well. A similar fate befell an attempt launched in 1991, when the Mobutu regime started a nominal democratization process the so-called *Conférence nationale souveraine* (CNS).



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Map 10. Bahavu Chiefdom, 1935. The map is based on a map from Joseph Maes' and Olga Boonen's work: *Les Peuplades du Congo Belge* (1935, 61). As in previous maps it portrays the area as a mono-ethnic territory, which reflects colonial policy in the area.

10. Aftermath: ethnic selves and others

During the Congo Wars, Kalehe became a battleground involving a variety of military actors, including locally based militia groups, Rwandan Hutu insurgents, Rwandan-backed rebel groups, like the Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo-Zaïre (AFDL, Allied Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaïre) and the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Goma (Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma, RCD-G), and units from the Rwandan army. The Batembo areas of Kalehe became a stronghold for the Mai-Mai group of General Padiri Bulenda, the biggest and strongest Mai-Mai group to evolve during the wars. Padiri's group consisted mostly of Batembo. It fought against the AFDL and the RCD-G in eastern Congo between 1996 and 2003. Its political discourse was suffused with colonial ethnic objectifications and its basic meaning was expressed in the dichotomy between "autochthons" and "foreigners," often represented by the opposition between "Bantu" and "Nilo-Hamitic," or "Tutsi", derived from colonial discourse (Hoffmann, 2015). However, with this narrative the group's Batembo leaders also wanted to capitalize on their military strength to create a Batembo territory. As a leading member of the group explained: "before the war the Batembo claimed they should be granted a territory of their own, so when the war broke out Kabila promised that he would recognize Bunyakiri as a territory. That is why we all went to the *maquis*; we told ourselves that Bunyakiri must become a territory now."²⁴ However, the RCD-G, which was deeply unpopular in the Batembo areas, employed its own version of ethnogovernmentality in Bunyakiri by creating a Batembo territory in Kalehe,

²⁴ Interview, ex-Mai-Mai Administrator of Bunyakiri Territory, 11 July 2010. Bukavu.

which it called "*Territoire de Bunyakiri*" in 1999.²⁵ Moreover, it also converted the Batembo *groupements* of Kalima, Mubugu, and Ziralu into independent chiefdoms in 2003.²⁶ To justify the territorializations, the RCD-G authorities evoked an ethnic discourse, claiming that in order to end the border conflicts between the Batembo and the Bahavu 'brother peoples' it was necessary to restore the old pre-colonial borders.²⁷ At the same time, the RCD-G created "*Territoire de Minembwe*", at the intersection of the territories of Uvira, Fizi, and Mwenga in South Kivu, to garner support among the Tutsi people known as the 'Banyamulenge'. However, Minembwe Territory provoked fierce resistance among self-styled 'autochthonous' Mai-Mai groups in that area, for whom the Banyamulenge were recent Rwandan immigrants who tried to usurp Congolese citizenship by appropriating their lands by force (Verweijen and Vlassenroot, 2015).

After the war, however, the Congolese government overturned the RCD-G's decision to create Bunyakiri territory in 2008.²⁸ It took this step in spite of the recommendations of the government's own commission in 2005, which it had created to prepare for decentralization. According to this commission, Bunyakiri had 'fulfilled the generally admitted population criteria'. Further, it had considered its 'economic potential' and its 'sociocultural infrastructures' as 'viable'.²⁹ The government was now concerned that the recognition of Bunyakiri Territory would create a precedent that could set in motion a series of ethnically based claims to territorial autonomy by community leaders across the country, and fuel conflict, especially with regards to Minembwe Territory.³⁰

The customary authorities of Buhavu welcomed the move. Like Moeller before them, they claimed that the Batembo chiefs descended from the same bloodline as the Bahavu chiefs; that they speak the same language and have similar customs: "There is no difference between a Muhavu and a Mutembo. Bunyakiri is also Buhavu".³¹ In this way they denied that the Batembo had a legitimate claim as an independent territory on ethnic and cultural grounds. As the manager of Buhavu chiefdom explained:

At the linguistic level the Batembo and the Bahavu, they are almost the same. If a Mutembo speaks I understand almost everything. And if you tell me we have to create a *groupement* for the Banyarwanda, well then we also have to create one for the pygmies, because they are here too. The chiefdom is linked to its origins. However, the chiefs of Kalima, Kalongo and so on, they are from the same family. We have reports, genealogical trees and documents.³²

Such reports and documents are often of colonial vintage. In conflicts over ethnicity and territory protagonists use documents from the colonial era to verify their claims. Unsurprisingly, the revocation of Bunyakiri territory created frustrations among the Batembo:

We, the population, we are confronted by tribalism from the other side of the territory of Kalehe. It is the Bahavu who are in charge of

²⁵ Arrêté départemental Nr. 001/MJ/DAT/MB/ROUTE/1999 du 9 septembre 1999.

²⁶ Arrêté Départemental nr. RCD/014/DATSR/BK/2003 du 27/02/2003.

²⁷ Letter of 30 January 2001 to the Territorial Administrators of Kalehe and Bunyakiri Territories. "Délimitations des Territoires de Kalehe et de Bunyakiri". Signed by the Governor of South Kivu Province Norber Bazengezi Katintima.

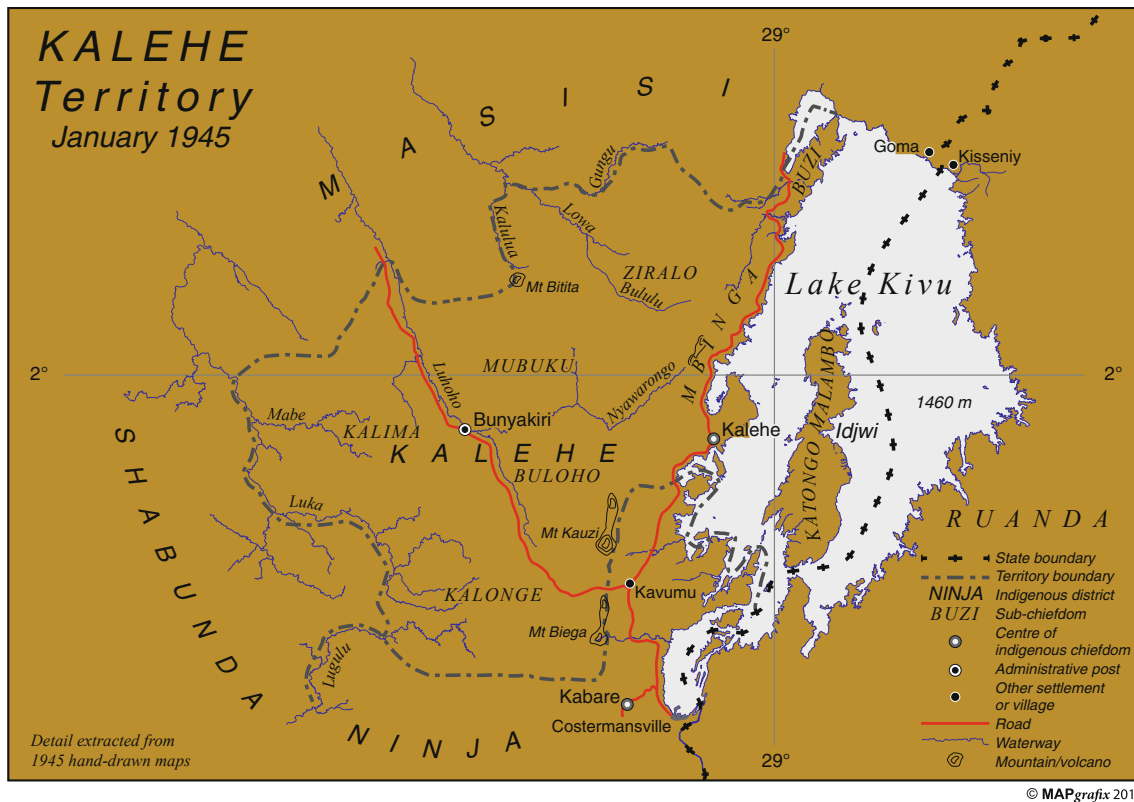
²⁸ Interview, ex-Mai-Mai Administrator of Bunyakiri Territory, 11 July 2010, Bukavu.

²⁹ "Rapport de la commission chargée d'examiner les actes de création des entités territoriales pendant la guerre dans la province du Sud-Kivu". République Démocratique du Congo, Ministère de L'Intérieur, Décentralisation et Sécurité, Kinshasa, 5 December 2005.

³⁰ Interview, Head of Office, *Division de l'intérieur*, South Kivu Province, 20 July 2010.

³¹ Interview, employee Buhavu chiefdom, April 2012, Kalehe centre.

³² Interview, Manager of Buhavu chiefdom, 13 August 2010, Kalehe centre.



Map 11. Administrative map of Kalehe Territory after it was created again in 1945. It stayed this way until the end of the colonial period.

the territory. There are no personnel from our Batembo tribe. They speak Kihavu, not the official language. So if you are not Muhavu you are not recognized as a citizen of Kalehe territory.

But even though my Batembo interlocutors consider themselves marginalized, ethnicized competition was considered normal and natural:

Tribalism is a phenomenon, which has existed since the world was created. Even in Europe there were tribes, or families, or peoples. Here a tribe is defined by language, but it is especially with respect to interests, if a certain tribe sees that its interests are not protected; that it is being scorned, it can produce a war. There has always been war between peoples.³³

This statement highlights two aspects of ethnic subjectivity in eastern Congo. First they indicate that being Batembo is considered an ontological condition. Secondly they indicate that being Batembo is also a tactical position in a game of power, between the Batembo and other tribes. In this game of power and truth being Batembo becomes a form of ontological advocacy where the Batembo claim the same rights and privileges as the other tribes by virtue of being a different version of the same as them: *a different tribe*. This ontological advocacy based on ethnicity constitutes a commitment to a power struggle revolving around the ethnicity-territory-authority nexus. In this regard they reactualize ethnogovernmentality's ethnic and territorial understanding of culture and political space, but they also echo the belligerence of colonial anthropological discourse according to which survival and power are achieved through the appropriation of territory and through the domination of ethnic adversaries.

³³ Interview, ex-Mai-Mai administrator of Bunyakiri Territory, 11 July 2010, Bukavu.

11. Conclusion: ethnicity, territory and power relations

In this article I have analysed ethnogovernmentality – a heterogeneous ensemble of biopolitical, disciplinary, sovereign, and territorial technologies of power, specifically concerned with the government of ethnic populations – in eastern Congo in a long-term perspective.

The analysis of colonial ethnogovernmentality in the area west of Lake Kivu shows that ethnic subjectivities and territories were not simply imposed from above by the colonial state. Rather, it was a dynamic process in which certain native elites and colonial authorities collaborated. In the Bobandana sector, the Bahavu chiefs Lushombo and Biglimani and the colonial authorities were able to develop a mutually beneficial relationship. By contrast, certain Batembo chiefs and populations, which lived further inland, refused to recognize colonial overrule. Only through severe measures of repression were they forced into submission. In the 1920s, the colonial authorities included hitherto independent Batembo chiefdoms into the Buhavu chiefdom in order to render the governable. The Bahavu chiefdom was an ethnic special fix and “a violent act of exclusion and inclusion” (Elden, 2009, xxx). Its creation erased the area's existing cultural heterogeneity, silenced subaltern and rebellious voices, and concentrated authority in the Bahavu chief.

Ethnogovernmentality transformed the configuration between people, place, and power, so that it came to appear more as a modern configuration of ethnicity, territory and sovereignty. In this regard colonial native policy was very much conceived along the lines of the “territorial trap” (Agnew, 1994). The ethno-territorial grid introduced during the colonial era had structuring effects on the political power struggles, which emerged in the aftermath of decolonization. However, decolonization also allowed a new set of actors including the Batembo leaders, to refigure the ethnic territories created during the colonial period. Drawing on the key principles of ethnogovernmentality (ethnic homogeneity, development and economic sustainability) they claimed the right to an independent ethnic territory. This points to the ‘limits of



Map 12. Administrative map of the Belgian Congo in 1960, showing the position of Kalehe Territory.

decolonization' through claims to contiguous ethnic territories (Anthias, 2018). However, their claim was not merely a reproduction of colonial discourse. Instead, by insisting that the Batembo were ethnically different from the Bahavu and other ethnic groups, the leaders produced their own ethnic subjectivity. Thus, while their claim to an ethnic territory drew on the norms of ethnogovernmentality, it also challenged the colonial ethno-territorial order.

My aim has been to show that ethnogovernmentality has produced and dispersed a productive "imaginative geography" of ethnic territories in the Congo (Saïd, 1995, 54–5), which has generated socio-spatial boundaries between ethnic selves and ethnic others. In this regard ethnogovernmentality has contributed to the formation of ethno-territorial subjectivities. Moreover, to the extent that it has produced the nexus between ethnicity, territory, and authority, it has structured the stakes of the political order itself. In this regard, even though the dynamics of militarization and armed group mobilization in eastern Congo have distinct logics, these logics also interact with conflicts over ethnicity, territory, and authority in complex ways (Verweijen and Vlassenroot, 2015). In this way, ethnogovernmentality has also had a structuring effect on violent conflict.

An overarching point of this article is that ethnogovernmentality is seldom simply an instrument in service of elites. Rather, it is immanent to the social body as a whole and its technologies of power can be harnessed to destabilize existing hierarchies. Its reproduction is assured through a generalized belief in its validity and in the widespread participation in the games of truth and power that it has established. Hence, in order to understand how ethnic territories are produced, and the effects thereof, it is necessary to analyse not only ethno-territorial

technologies of power targeting populations and others, but also the modalities of resistance that they produce, and the technologies of self that they induce.

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