

THE AMBIGUITY OF MILITARIZATION

The complex interaction between the Congolese armed forces
and civilians in the Kivu provinces, eastern DR Congo



Judith Verweijen

The Ambiguity of Militarization. The complex interaction between the Congolese armed forces and civilians in the Kivu provinces, eastern DR Congo

De ambiguïteit van militarisering. De complexe interactie tussen de Congolese strijdkrachten en burgers in de Kivu provincies, oost DR Congo
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

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ACRONYMS

AFDL	<i>Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo-Zaïre</i>
AGRIPEL	<i>Ministère de l'agriculture, de la pêche et de l'élevage</i>
ANC	<i>Armée nationale congolaise</i>
ANR	<i>Agence nationale de renseignements</i>
CBC	<i>Chef de bureau comptable</i>
CBR	<i>Centre de brassage et de recyclage</i>
CNDP	<i>Congrès national pour la défense du peuple</i>
Col.	<i>Colonel</i>
COPEVI	<i>Coopérative des pêcheurs de Virunga</i>
DC	<i>District Commissioner</i>
DEMIAP	<i>Détection militaire des activités anti-patrie</i>
DGDA	<i>Direction générale des douanes et accises</i>
DGM	<i>Direction générale de migration</i>
DSF	<i>Département de la sécurité des frontières</i>
DSP	<i>Division spéciale présidentielle</i>
EFO	<i>École de formation des officiers</i>
EM	<i>État-major</i>
EMRM	<i>État-major des renseignements militaires</i>
EUSEC	<i>Mission de conseil et d'assistance de l'Union Européenne en matière de la réforme du secteur de la sécurité en RDC</i>
FAR	<i>Forces armées rwandaises</i>
FARDC	<i>Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo</i>
FAZ	<i>Forces armées zairoises</i>
FC	<i>Franc congolais</i>
FDLR	<i>Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda</i>
FEC	<i>Fédération des entreprises du Congo</i>
FP	<i>Force publique</i>
FRF	<i>Forces républicaines fédéralistes</i>
GDP	<i>Gross Domestic Product</i>
Gen.	<i>General</i>
GNP	<i>Gross National Product</i>
GR	<i>Garde républicaine</i>
HUNI	<i>Homme en uniforme non-autrement identifié</i>
HQ	<i>Headquarters</i>
IB	<i>Integrated Brigade</i>
ICC	<i>International Criminal Court</i>
ICCN	<i>Institut congolais pour la conservation de la nature</i>
ICRC	<i>International Committee of the Red Cross</i>
ICT	<i>Information and Communications Technology</i>

INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
MLC	<i>Mouvement de libération du Congo</i>
MONUC	<i>Mission de l'organisation des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo</i>
MONUSCO	<i>Mission de l'organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République Démocratique du Congo</i>
MPR	<i>Mouvement populaire de la révolution</i>
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIC	National Intelligence Center
NK	North Kivu
OCC	<i>Office congolais de contrôle</i>
OG	<i>Ordre général</i>
OMED	<i>Officier médicale</i>
PDG	<i>Président-directeur général</i>
PM	<i>Prévôté militaire</i>
PMF	<i>Personnel militaire féminin</i>
PNC	<i>Police nationale congolaise</i>
PRP	<i>Parti de la révolution populaire</i>
PV	<i>Procès-verbal</i>
RCA	<i>Ration convertie en argent</i>
RCD	<i>Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie</i>
RCD/K-ML	<i>Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie/Kisangani-mouvement de libération</i>
RDF	Rwanda Defence Force
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SK	South Kivu
SOPELTA/Fizi	<i>Solidarité des pêcheurs du Lac Tanganyika/Territoire de Fizi</i>
UN	United Nations
USD	United States Dollar

GLOSSARY

<i>administrateur du territoire</i>	administrator of <i>territoire</i> (subdivision of province)
<i>adminlog</i>	commander charged with administration and logistics
<i>auditorat</i>	military prosecutor's office
<i>bami</i>	plural of <i>mwami</i>
<i>bon de logement</i>	accommodation voucher (issued by military hierarchy)
<i>brassage</i>	military integration process
<i>bureau</i>	department of general staff (military)
<i>cadastre</i>	land registry
<i>centre de santé</i>	health care center
<i>charges-phone</i>	booth providing cell phone battery charging services
<i>chef de cité</i>	town administrator
<i>chef de groupement</i>	chief of <i>groupement</i> (subdivision <i>secteur</i> or <i>chefferie</i>)
<i>chef de localité</i>	chief of <i>localité</i> (subdivision <i>groupement</i>)
<i>chef de poste</i>	local administrator, detached from <i>administrateur du territoire</i>
<i>chef de quartier</i>	chief of quarter (subdivision <i>cité</i>)
<i>chef de secteur</i>	chief of <i>secteur</i> (non-customary subdivision of <i>territoire</i>)
<i>chef de section</i>	chief of section, army unit of ca. dozen troops
<i>chef EM</i>	head of <i>état-major</i> (general staff)
<i>chefferie</i>	customary chiefdom (subdivision of <i>territoire</i>)
<i>ciné-video</i>	video cinema
<i>cité</i>	town
<i>commandant titulaire</i>	first commander
<i>commanditeur</i>	instigator (but not executor) of violent and illegal acts
<i>concasseur</i>	stone crushing machine
<i>coupeurs de route</i>	those engaged in <i>coupures de route</i>
<i>coupure de route</i>	rapid ambush/road robbery
<i>creuseur</i>	artisanal miner
<i>débrouillardise</i>	fending-for-one-self-ism
<i>déclarant</i>	customs intermediary
<i>divers</i>	various household/personal use items (merchandise)
<i>efforts de guerre</i>	contributions (in money or in kind) for 'war effort'
<i>en dispo</i>	without function (in military)
<i>étalage</i>	display (for merchandise) at market
<i>état-major</i>	general staff (of military divisions and units)
<i>feuille de route</i>	travel authorization (issued by military hierarchy)
<i>groupement</i>	(customary) subdivision of <i>secteur</i> or <i>chefferie</i>
<i>groupement naval</i>	naval military region
<i>inspecteur</i>	inspector of military prosecutor's office
<i>kadogo</i>	young soldier, recruited for AFDL insurgency

<i>kapita</i>	village chief
<i>localité</i>	(customary) subdivision of <i>groupement</i>
<i>maison militaire</i>	presidential military office
<i>maquis</i>	insurgency
<i>mixage</i>	integration process of CNDP troops into FARDC in 2007
<i>motard</i>	driver of <i>taxi-moto</i> (motorcycle taxi-driver)
<i>motorola</i>	two-way radio, named after brand
<i>muzungu</i>	white person
<i>mwami</i>	customary chief
<i>mzee</i>	appellation for wise, old man
<i>opération retour</i>	embezzlement scheme
<i>opsrens</i>	commander charged with operations and intelligence
<i>parade</i>	periodic gathering of all troops by commander
<i>parking</i>	parking lot/point of departure transport services
<i>phonie</i>	radiotelephonic system
<i>présidence</i>	presidential clique
<i>radio trottoir</i>	rumors machine
<i>rapportage</i>	system of upward channeling of imposed contributions within state agencies
<i>région militaire</i>	military region
<i>règlement militaire</i>	military code of conduct in Mobutu era
<i>salongo</i>	compulsory labor
<i>secteur</i>	(non-customary) subdivision of <i>territoire</i>
<i>sous-officier</i>	non-commissioned officer
<i>S1</i>	staff officer charged with personnel
<i>S2</i>	staff officer charged with intelligence
<i>S3</i>	staff officer charged with operations
<i>S4</i>	staff officer charged with logistics
<i>S5</i>	staff officer charged with social affairs
<i>système-D</i>	institutionalized fending-for-one-self-ism
<i>taxe d'étalage</i>	display tax (at market)
<i>taxi-moto</i>	motorcycle taxi
<i>territoire</i>	(non-customary) subdivision of province
<i>thuraya</i>	satellite phone, named after brand
<i>vieux-sages</i>	(village) elders
<i>ville morte</i>	general strike
<i>zimano</i>	hospitality gift to guest
<i>zone ops</i>	operational zone (during Amani Leo operations)

Overview of case study areas



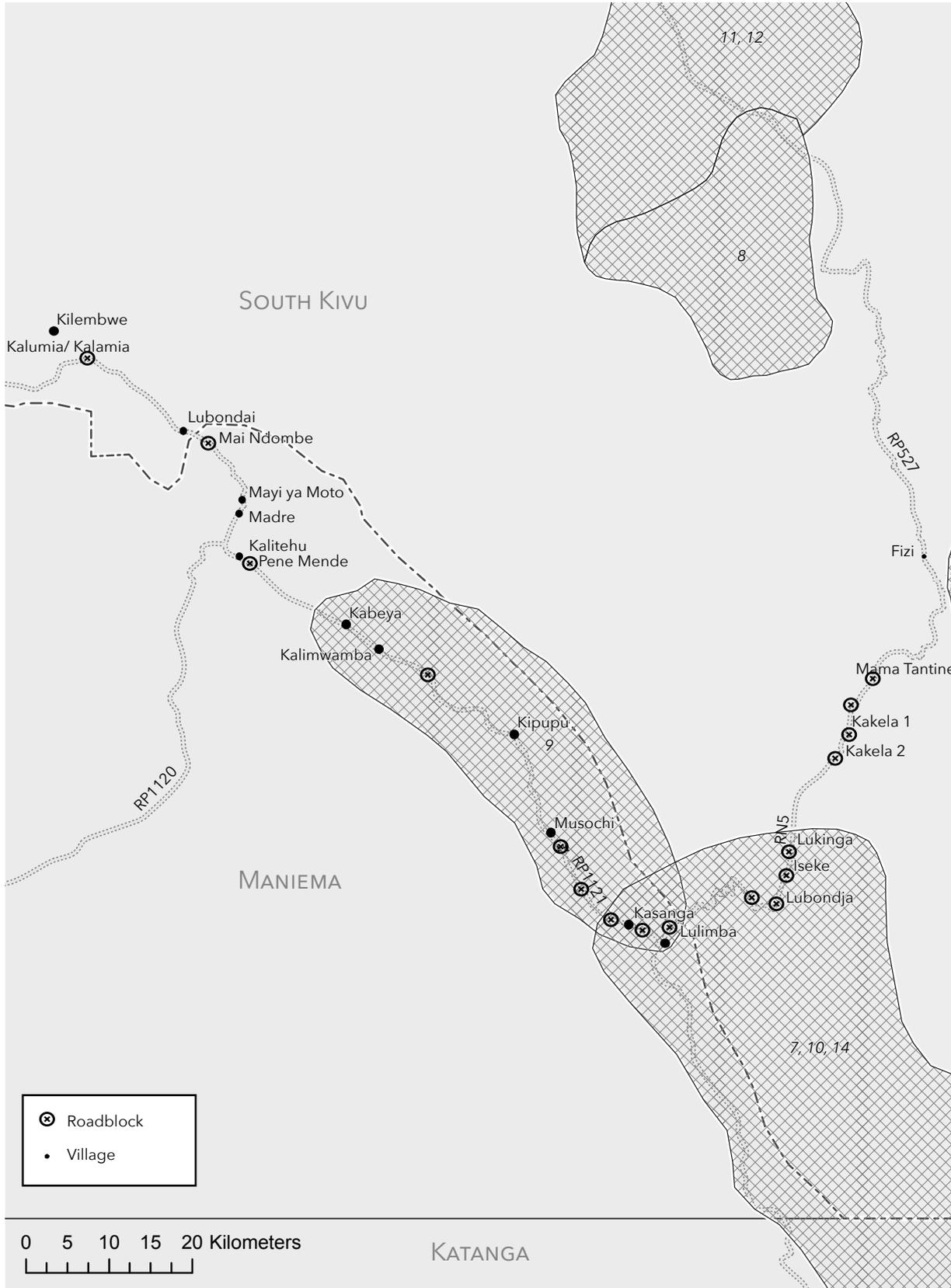
Research sites North Kivu



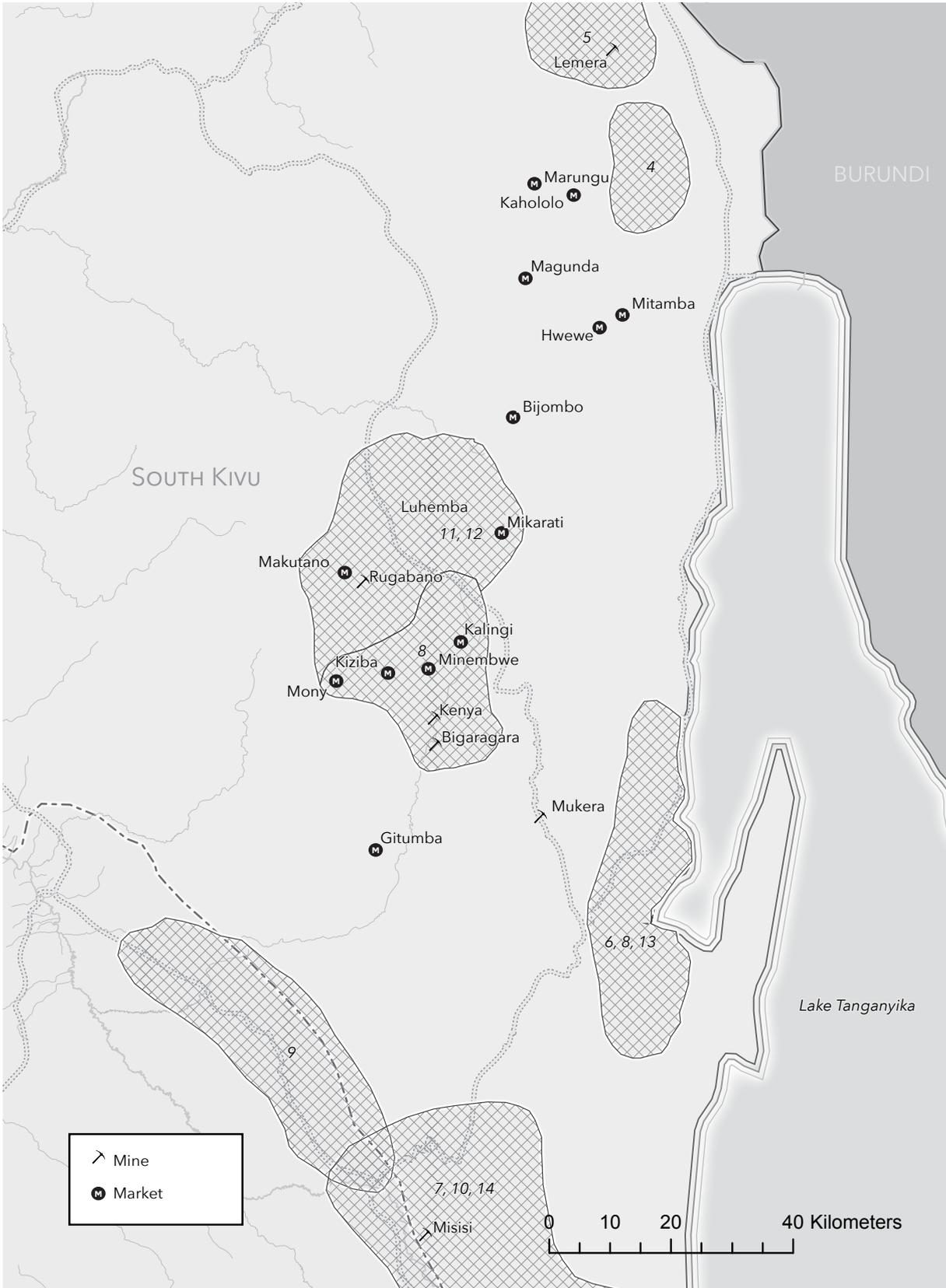
Research sites South Kivu



Roadblocks Fizi-Lulimba-Kilembwe axis



Mining sites and markets



INTRODUCTION

IN RECENT YEARS, representations of the *Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC, Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo) have become a focal point of historical Western imaginings of the Congo as the epitome of savagery, irrationality and backwardness (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2008; 2013a). There is no better incarnation of the '(New) Barbarian',¹ it seems, than the raping, looting and pillaging FARDC soldier that is omnipresent in the knowledge and imagery productions of the aid industry/news/social media complex (cf. Benthall, 1993; Verweijen, forthcoming a). The dominant narratives that script these productions, in particular sexual violence and so called 'conflict minerals' (Autesserre, 2012), have proven fertile ground for the recycling of decades-old racial stereotypes (Dunn, 2003). Thus, the Congolese soldier's supposed untamable lust and greed are implicitly or explicitly depicted as innate, biological or deeply rooted cultural features. In an opinion piece in *The Guardian*, women's rights activist Eve Ensler describes the FARDC as 'these hungry soldiers, thrown together from various militias and led by war criminals and rapists'. She goes on to note that 'as this ragtag group of starving soldiers spreads out into the forests and villages of South Kivu (...), the massacres have already begun'.²

Echoes of these scripts also permeate the policy-prescriptive writings of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) genre, which are steeped in the 'development discourses' so meticulously dissected by Escobar (1994). These discourses do not only construct 'the Third World' as a space of 'underdevelopment', but also open it up for 'expert intervention' by cataloguing bodies of professional knowledge and techniques of 'betterment'. Similarly, SSR discourses construct a dichotomy between on the one hand, ideal-typical rational-legally institutionalized militaries, and on the other hand, their counterparts in the 'underdeveloped' world, invariably portrayed as 'dysfunctional' and therefore 'in need of reform'. For example, a recent report by the policy-oriented think-tank the Clingendael Institute notes that 'the DRC's security and justice apparatus has always been, and remains today, highly dysfunctional' (Boshoff et al., 2010: i). The causes of this observed 'dysfunctionality' are often located in 'organizational culture', which would also explain ill conduct by security staff: 'the high incidence of serious crime and the impunity for perpetrators – particularly in the senior ranks – suggest an acceptance, and even normalisation of human rights violations within the organisational culture of the security system' (Davis, 2009:19). In the absence of a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of the workings of the security apparatus and the factors explaining the conduct of its staff, such a diagnosis amounts to singling out the rotten morals of Congolese army personnel as the ultimate cause of the FARDC's 'aberrations'.

Academia has not been immune to these problematic representations of the Congolese armed forces. One reason for this is the relative scarcity and limited focus of academic research on militaries in Sub-Saharan Africa (henceforth simply 'Africa') (Herbst, 2004: 358, see also Debois and Glasman, 2012), which appears to have lowered the threshold for drawing on knowledge produced by either the policy-prescriptive genre or mainstream media, whether old or new. Stereotypes of the FARDC therefore cut across the academic, media, and aid domains, although they find their own particular articulation in each of these spheres. These reductionist representations inform and are informed by three core narratives that provide 'explanations' for the FARDC's 'dysfunctions', in particular its predatory and abusive behavior towards civilians. These narratives focus respectively on 'greed/conflict minerals', 'poverty/neglect' and 'state failure/predation'.

The first narrative, relating to greed/conflict minerals, is inspired by certain rational-choice based approaches to violent conflict that gained currency in the 1990s. In a simplified form, these approaches stipulate that people, as rational, maximizing social agents, will

1 'New Barbarism' is a term coined by Richards (1996: xiii) to describe a strand of analysis that marries environmental determinism to cultural essentialism and ethnic primordialism in the explanation of violent conflict, as epitomized by Robert D. Kaplan's (1994) influential *Atlantic Monthly* essay 'The coming anarchy'. Although refuted in academia, New Barbarism was highly influential in media and policymaking circles in the 1990s.

2 Eve Ensler, 'An apathetic, greedy west has abandoned war-torn Congo', *The Guardian*, 18 June 2009.

engage in violent conflict if the anticipated (mostly material) benefits outweigh the costs. From this perspective, contexts characterized by an abundance of easily extractable natural resources are prone to the outbreak of violence (e.g., Collier, 2000; see Cramer 2002 for a critique). Stripped of its neoclassical economic underpinnings, this narrative strongly chimes with tropes of barbarism, since it singles out the inherently greedy nature of those going to war as a cause of violence. In relation to the FARDC, this line of reasoning is expressed in portrayals of the military as primarily driven by a desire to obtain natural resources and generate revenue, hence 'greed'. For example, in a recent article in *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Robinson (2012: 475) observes that: 'The sad truth is that the Congo/Zaire has never had any military tradition of its soldiers behaving properly, because its ethos has always been one of exploitation, not protection (...) Today, the political purposes of the armed forces in the DRC reflect that historical pattern. A key reason for their current structure and deployment is to facilitate the extraction, export, and sale of valuable resources, particularly in the east.'

However, greed is predominantly believed to explain the conduct of higher-ranking officers. When it comes to the FARDC rank and file, greed gives way to poverty/neglect as the main explanatory frame. Echoing theories of corruption in state bureaucracies that emphasize civil servants' wage incentives (e.g., Besley and McLaren, 1993), the poverty/neglect narrative qualifies soldiers' misconduct as the 'logical consequence' of their non- or underpayment (for a critique, see Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2010). Analyzing various forms of state predation in the Congo, Rackley (2006: 425) notes that 'military discipline is unlikely when soldiers are not provided with salaries or benefits. "Even if you punished every soldier in this town by cutting off their right hand", an (...) ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] representative observed, "they would still have to find a way to feed themselves". Unable to meet the economic needs of their soldiers, military commanders routinely inform them that "your gun is your salary" (...) Civilian abuse in the form of violence, coercion and deprivation is thus primarily a response to persistent material lack and the pressures of daily survival among the Congolese military (...)'. Yet, one can wonder to what extent rape, massacres and large-scale looting are directly related to mere survival, and whether there are no hidden assumptions about the violent nature of Congolese soldiers that render this direct link plausible.

The third omnipresent narrative on the FARDC ascribes its 'dysfunctions' to it being part of the Congolese state apparatus. In this storyline, the FARDC is but a particularly powerful illustration of the disorder, corruption, institutional weakness and predation that characterize the Congolese state as a whole. Following this perspective, Autesserre (2012: 18) observes that 'the Congolese state remains a predatory structure, as it has been during most of the Congo's history (...) State officials, including members of the army, the police, and the administration, continue to be responsible for the largest part of all human rights violations.' She concludes that 'unfortunately, extending the authority of a predatory state merely results in replacing one group of perpetrators (foreign and Congolese rebel groups) with another (state authorities and state security forces)' (idem: 19). This shows how the 'state failure/predation' narrative is constructed upon an absolute dichotomy between 'state' and 'society', which is made to neatly correspond to a normative evil/good divide. This narrative ignores that the practices of state actors are crucially shaped by the societal context in which they operate, thereby locating the causes for their ill conduct primarily in a supposedly self-contained 'state' sphere.

A novel approach to researching the Congolese armed forces and civilian-military interaction

The three narratives on the FARDC's 'dysfunctionality' explored in the previous are more the product of certain theoretical orientations fused with popular tropes and normatively laden representations than the result of analysis grounded in empirical research. As mentioned, this is partly the result of the paucity and narrow thematic focus of the scholarly output on African government forces, including their interaction with civilians. While there is a prolific literature on African insurgencies that is both empirically and theoretically rich (e.g., Bøås and Dunn, 2007; Clapham, 1998; Reno, 1998), and an important body of work on combatants in and after violent conflict (e.g., Utas, 2003; Vigh, 2006), scholarly attention to African government forces has lagged behind.³ Furthermore, the majority of the literature on African militaries, especially that written before the 2000s, focuses on a limited set of issues, notably formal organizational aspects and the influence of the military on the (mostly official) political sphere (Luckham, 1994). Additionally, most studies have been conducted at the level of countries or militaries as a whole (e.g., Howe, 2001), and not at the meso and micro levels. This also applies to studies of civilian-military relations, which have often focused on political and military elites in capital cities, and not on the everyday interactions between soldiers and the people they encounter in their site of deployment. Hence, it appears that the research agenda of the microdynamics of violent conflict, as pursued by amongst others Kalyvas (2006), has thus far made few inroads into the study of militaries in Africa.

Another important omission of the literature on African government forces is that it rarely draws on the subfield of military sociology. To date, the pioneering study of the Nigerian military's officer corps conducted by Luckham (1971) in the 1960s remains one of the notable exceptions. However, military sociology provides an elaborate conceptual toolkit for analyzing and explaining military conduct, focusing on issues like the cohesion of combat units, the practice of commanding, the social identification and worldviews of military staff, and their socio-economic and educational background (Caforio, 2006). Unfortunately, this toolkit is rarely fully applied to the study of African militaries, which is possibly in part a result of military sociology's origins in the study of western armed forces. Yet, even while significant diversity exists, armed forces across the world also display remarkable similarities. Furthermore, analytical insights from military

³ Recent exceptions are Debos (2011; 2013); Dwyer (2015); Jowell (2014); Tendi (2013). Furthermore, there is an extensive literature on the South African military, including military-sociological studies, by scholars like Heinecken (e.g., 1998; 2002).

sociology do not need to be employed in a mechanistic manner. Sensitizing concepts can be approached as describing broadly similar phenomena, while allowing for variation and contingent outcomes. Therefore, drawing stronger on military-sociological research offers substantial scope for analytical improvement in the study of militaries and civilian-military interaction in Africa.

The study of the FARDC has suffered from similar shortcomings as that of African militaries in general, although due to the pioneering work of Eriksson Baaz and Stern (e.g., 2008; 2009; 2010), the scholarly understanding of the Congolese military is arguably more advanced than that of some of their counterparts in other countries. Eriksson Baaz and Stern have extensively explored forms of identification, representations and narratives among FARDC staff, with a focus on sexual violence. While their work provides crucial insights into some of the processes that shape how the FARDC operates and behaves towards civilians, it leaves several elements little explored, especially in relation to the FARDC's everyday interactions with its civilian environment. However, studying these interactions and the processes that shape them is crucial for understanding the workings and practices of the military. As argued by adherents of the 'real governance' school (Olivier de Sardan, 2008; Blundo et al., 2006), given that 'the state', as an abstraction, is not a monolithic actor (Bourdieu, 1994), it is necessary to analyze the full range of everyday practices and social roles enacted by state actors at the micro level to get a grip on how the state apparatus works and projects power. Furthermore, since 'the state' is produced by, rather than stands apart from, 'society' (Mitchell, 1991), it is only by studying the interaction between state and non-state actors that we can get an insight into what 'the state' is, does and means within a specific time-space context (e.g., Gupta, 1995). These insights also apply to the part of the state apparatus known as 'the military', which is no less of an abstraction (Mitchell, 1991). An understanding of how this abstraction works and takes shape in everyday life does not only require an analysis of the social and discursive practices of military staff at the micro level, but also of how these practices are shaped, read and interpreted by civilians. The ways in which the armed forces operate, including their practices towards civilians, are not purely driven by factors internal to the military or the state apparatus, as the dominant narratives outlined above presume. Rather, these factors must also be located in the military's deployment environment.

Up to present, the role of civilian agency in shaping civilian-military interaction and the workings of the Congolese military more generally has remained undertheorized. This is partly a result of the strong focus on the FARDC's involvement in human rights abuses and the uncritical projection of the victim/victimizer dichotomy onto the civilian/military divide (cf. Kalyvas, 2003: 482), causing civilians to be represented as stripped of agency vis-à-vis armed actors. However, even in the face of significant power asymmetries, where webs of interdependencies exist between civilians and the military, the first do influence the latter's practices, as this dissertation amply demonstrates. Indeed, civilians regularly and sometimes successfully resist the FARDC's power, although they may also contribute to reinforcing it, for example when instrumentalizing the military's capacity to wield force for furthering their own interests (Verweijen, 2013). This draws attention to a second source of the downplaying of civilian agency in explanations for the military's practices: the obscuring of the fact that the roles and relations of civilians and military are variegated. Since neither of these identity categories are homogeneous groups, the unequal distribution of power and resources is found both within and across them. Furthermore, contrary to dominant narratives, civilian-military interactions are not only abusive and predatory in nature. Therefore, to paraphrase Trefon (2009), there is a need to 'look beyond predation' in the study of the Congolese military. One cannot a priori assume that persuasion plays no role in civilian-military relations, or that the military does not provide services that are in demand among civilians, even when in the realm of the nonofficial. In this respect, there is also a need to 'look beyond security'. In policy-prescriptive analyses, the Congolese military is commonly framed as primarily a 'security institution', whose sole legitimate sphere of social practice is a putatively well-delineated 'public security' domain. Activities in other domains, like revenue generation or civilian governance, are seen as aberrations, and are usually framed in the discourse of the 'criminalization' and the 'privatization' of the African state (Bayart et al., 1999). However, not only do 'security forces' often produce as much insecurity as security, which has informed the decision to refer to them as 'in/security' agencies or forces herein,⁴ what are commonly seen as their 'extra-military activities' tend to be a crucial part of their everyday workings. Moreover, military and extra-military activities are generally inextricably intertwined, making it difficult to analyze them in a compartmentalized fashion.

The FARDC's involvement in extra-military activities tends to be particularly strong where there are important interdependencies between soldiers and civilians, such as in zones where the military has a pronounced presence, but limited infrastructure and resources at its disposal. Within the Congo, such strong interdependencies are most clearly manifested in the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu, which harbor the largest concentration of military presence on Congolese soil. In the course of 2009 and 2010, roughly half of the Congolese military (on paper 65,000 of the then between 130,000–150,000 troops)⁵ was deployed in the Kivus. One of the reasons for this pronounced presence is that the Kivus, which have been plagued by virulent communal conflicts and ongoing violence since the 1990s, host dozens of Congolese and foreign armed groups, while also facing rampant banditry. Due to deficiencies in military infrastructure and equipment, including barracks and tents, and the need to be flexibly deployed in operational zones, the far-out majority of FARDC

4 The term 'security services' is loaded with normative connotations, in particular the idea that these agencies generally contribute to bringing security. In order to acknowledge that the same institutions invariably also foster insecurity, the choice was made to refer to them as 'in/security' agencies, services or forces herein, considered to be more accurate as a descriptive term.

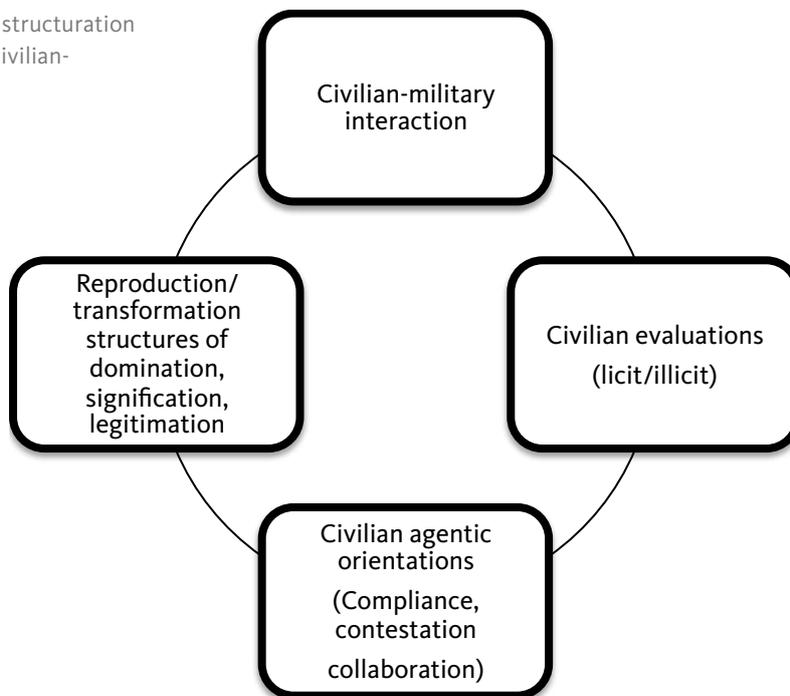
5 The number of 130,000 in 2009 (International Crisis Group, 2010b: 15) spiked to 150,000 in 2011, (Xinhua, 'RDC : les effectifs des FARDC évalués à environ 150.000 éléments', 18 February 2011). However, the real number of troops in the field during this period was estimated to be much lower, mainly due to the phenomenon of 'ghost soldiers', who only exist on the payroll. See pp. 243-246.

troops in the Kivus live in civilian homes or makeshift camps in or near urban quarters or villages, causing them to frequently interact with civilians. Another factor fostering such interactions is the FARDC's widespread involvement in revenue-generating activities, as documented for example by the reports of the United Nations (UN) Group of Experts (e.g., UNSC, 2010; 2011). Aside from the familiar practices of extortion and illicit taxation, this involvement includes economic activities like small and large-scale trade, investments in real estate, and charcoal production. What also promotes regular encounters between soldiers and civilians is that an estimated half of the military staff deployed to the Kivus originate from the provinces themselves.⁶ For these various reasons, civilians and the military in the Kivus share to a large extent the same living and socio-economic space, causing everyday interactions to be frequent and variegated. These interactions surpass mere abuses, although human rights violations committed by the FARDC certainly occur at a large scale (e.g., Amnesty International, 2007; Human Rights Watch, 2009a;2009b). However, levels and types of abuses appear to vary per zone, per period and per military unit (Dixon, 2012; Search for Common Ground, 2010). This variation in civilian-military interaction renders the Kivus an adequate site for research on the broad spectrum of interlinkages between the military and civilians, allowing for an exploration of both the more and the less coercive dimensions of this interaction, and for finding explanations for this variety. Furthermore, the context of the Kivus promises to offer insights into how civilian-military interaction is affected by and affects an environment of ongoing conflicts and violence and longer-term processes of militarization.

Studying the structuration of civilian-military interaction as shaped by the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection

In the previous, it has been explained that in order to understand civilian-military interaction, it is needed to study the entire spectrum of day-to-day interactions at the micro level. This will provide important insights into both civilian and military agency, and the processes that shape it. Yet, merely studying everyday encounters will not suffice to fully comprehend these processes, for agency can only be comprehensively understood when analyzed in conjunction with social structures. As posited by Giddens (1984: 28–34), the social structures that make up social systems consist of an interlacing of resources (which are constitutive of power relations) and rules, specifically interpretative schemes (or discourses) and norms. In their iterative, everyday practices, social agents draw upon these rules and resources, also called structures of signification (discourses), legitimation (norms) and domination (power relations), thereby ‘instantiating’ them in their actions. As such, everyday practices ensure the (re)production of social structures, a process Giddens has termed ‘structuration’ (1984: 28–33). While social practices are thus informed by social structures, they are not *determined* by them: how and in how far social agents draw upon structures is ultimately a product of their *agency*. This implies that their practices can, cumulatively, also contribute to *transforming* social structures. This mutual influence between the structural features of social orders and the everyday practices of social agents indicates that an understanding of civilian-military interaction at the micro level requires in-depth knowledge of the social order in which this interaction takes place.

Figure 1: Feedback loop of the structuration of civilian agency in civilian-military interaction



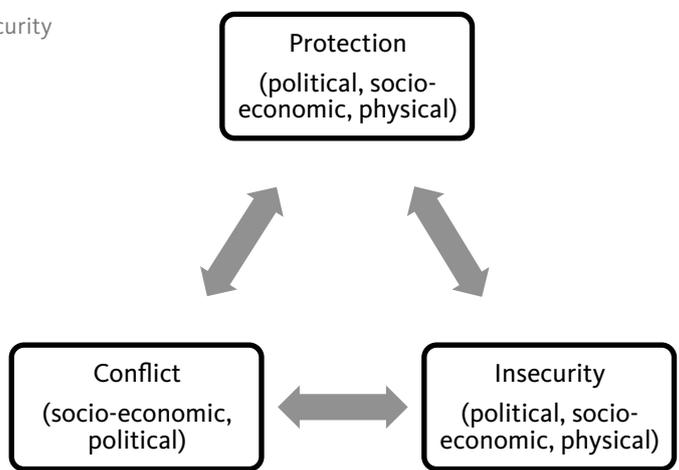
⁶ According to confidential sources within the United Nations Mission in the DR Congo (MONUC), contacted in 2010, and as corroborated by personal observations of military units.

An important way in which social structures shape agency is via the *social roles* that social agents enact, which provide scripts and norms that guide their actions. Such roles are partly a product of *representations*, which are constituted by structures of legitimation and signification that are formed over the *longue durée*. Social roles are influenced by and influence the way in which social agents *discursively frame* the practices they enact. This does not only apply to those enacting a particular role, but also to the persons with whom they interact, who hold certain expectations of the interaction based on the social role that is invoked. These expectations in turn influence *evaluations* of social practices. For example, where the practices of a certain FARDC commander are seen to violate the social role of ‘military commander’, civilians might evaluate them as ‘illicit’. Evaluations shape again *agentic orientations*, hence social practices. For example, where the military’s practices, such as asking for food contributions, are seen as licit, civilians may sooner comply with them. Practices evaluated as illicit, by contrast, may sooner elicit refusal. At the long term and in a cumulative manner, these agentic orientations contribute to challenging or (re)producing the structures of domination that underpin the FARDC’s power (see Figure 1).

Armed forces are commonly considered to be ‘total institutions’ (Goffman, 1961), or relatively closed social orders where all aspects of social life take place in co-presence and are determined by hierarchies (Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1978: 152). Therefore, militaries have idiosyncratic social norms, discourses and power configurations. This implies that in order to understand everyday military practices, it is necessary to analyze the structures of domination, signification and legitimation internal to the armed forces. However, similar to other militaries, the FARDC is not an undifferentiated organization, but divided into various divisions and agencies, such as the land forces, navy, and military intelligence services. These are again divided into units and subunits (regiments, battalions, companies, etc.), each of which has its own particular sets of norms, discourses and power relations. A fine-grained understanding of military agency therefore requires an analysis of social structures both at the level of the military organization as a whole and at the level of individual units.

An adequate understanding of military agency also necessitates an analysis of *cohesion* within both the organization as a whole and its various components. The notion of cohesion has two main dimensions: while *horizontal cohesion* refers to bonding between military staff operating at the same level of the hierarchy, *vertical cohesion* designates the bonding between superiors and subordinates, as well as between units located at various levels of the hierarchy (Siebold, 2007). By influencing collective action and norm enforcement, cohesion affects the extent to which structures of legitimation and signification shape military practices. Additionally, vertical cohesion shapes and is shaped by structures of domination. Therefore, the study of cohesion promises to offer important insights into both the ensemble of social structures that inform military agency and the mechanisms by which this influenced is transmitted. Yet, following the premise that military agency is not shaped by factors internal to the military alone, this study must be complemented with an analysis of the military’s interaction with its context of deployment. Military units develop projects and embark upon pathways to realize these projects in constant interaction with civilians and other armed actors, which offers both constraints and opportunities.

Figure 2: Dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection



When navigating these constraints and opportunities, social agents do not solely draw upon relatively solid social structures that have developed and are (re)produced over a long timespan. Their agency is also informed by shorter-term dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, which are especially salient in a volatile context like the Kivus. These dynamics overlap to a large extent with what Schatzberg (1988) has described as ‘the dialectics of oppression’, as further analyzed below.⁷ Social agents in the Kivus are strongly exposed to physical, socio-economic and political insecurity, whether resulting from ongoing violence and banditry, poverty and the erratic and unpredictable workings of state services, or elite competition and other disputes. Conflicts are rife both between and within groups, and stem for example from disputes over land and resources, commercial and political competition, and family or personal issues. Conflicts may also result from competition for power and scarce resources between state agents, which often brings them into

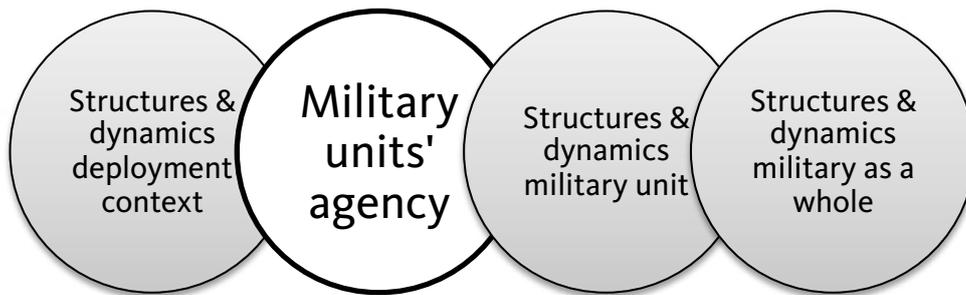
⁷ Schatzberg’s concept of the dialectics of oppression will be further explained in Chapter 2, p. 42.

conflict with the citizens from whom they extract resources. Taken together, these various forms of insecurity and conflict drive people, either on an individual basis or as a group, to search physical, political and socio-economic protection from powerful figures who can mobilize coercion and have influence on the state apparatus, in exchange for loyalty, (access to) resources and other favors. Yet, the resulting system of protection also generates considerable conflicts and insecurity itself, as it nourishes fierce competition among both providers and solicitors of protection. Furthermore, protection providers thrive in insecure environments, which at once foster a demand for protection and keep their followers dependent on them, making that they have limited incentives to eradicate insecurity. In brief, a complex mixture of various forms of conflict and insecurity, as well as the mechanisms developed to cope with these, notably protection, generate interlocking dynamics (see Figure 2) that strongly shape civilian-military interaction in the Kivus.

An important engine of the entwined dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection in the Kivus are the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection as they play out within the state apparatus, including the military (cf. Schatzberg, 1988: 136). The state apparatus in the Congo is ill resourced, which renders its reproduction to a large extent dependent on the extraction of resources from citizens. Neither soldiers nor other state servants have an official income that allows them to make ends meet. Furthermore, the state hardly provides social services, like pensions or health care, which reinforces state agents' tendency to use their position to accumulate resources. This drive for accumulation is not only informed by a concern for their own welfare: state agents are commonly bound into social networks that have a dimension of protection, implying they are expected to distribute resources or opportunities to generate those to others. Yet in order to gain access to resources and opportunities, state agents themselves are dependent on protection as provided by 'big-men' or patrons that are higher up in formal and informal hierarchies. For example, for being assigned tasks or get appointed to positions that allow for revenue generation, soldiers need the protection of superior officers. The latter can withdraw their support any moment, or be forced to do so due to competition, which would make their clients lose their income and position. This ever-present possibility of a sudden loss of protection generates considerable insecurity among military staff, causing those in the right position to accumulate as many resources as fast as possible. This commonly brings them into conflict with other state agents, while also creating insecurity among the civilians from whom they extract resources. These mechanisms generate a strong interplay between on the one hand, the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that play out within the military, and on the other hand, those unfolding within the Kivus at large.

From the previous, it emerges that similar to other social agents, the practices of military actors are shaped by at once structures of domination, signification and legitimation and more fluid dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, as located both within the military and within the military's deployment context. In relation to the structures and dynamics internal to the military, there are variations between those at play at the level of the military organization as a whole and those within its subdivisions and units, which each have their own distinct configuration of structures and dynamics (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: The factors shaping military units' agency



Similar variety can be found in relation to the structures and dynamics within the military's deployment context: each context has different features, and therefore produces variegated effects on the projects that military units pursue and the pathways (or modes of navigation) they embark upon to realize these. These features are in part layered. For Giddens (1984: 164–165), each 'societal totality' is constituted of various subsystems (called social suborders herein)⁸ that again interconnect with other suborders located at various scales. For example, the Kivus is a suborder of the Congo's social order as a whole. Since it concerns a geographically delimited entity, this suborder is of a *socio-spatial* nature. Yet, the Kivu provinces are not a homogeneous socio-spatial suborder: they are again constituted by a multitude of socio-spatial orders (or places) at lower scales. As the social orders in each of these places differ in their socio-economic and political makeup, and have their own history and customs, they each have their own specific varieties and combinations of social structures and dynamics. This influences the practices of the social agents operating in these contexts, hence patterns of civilian-military

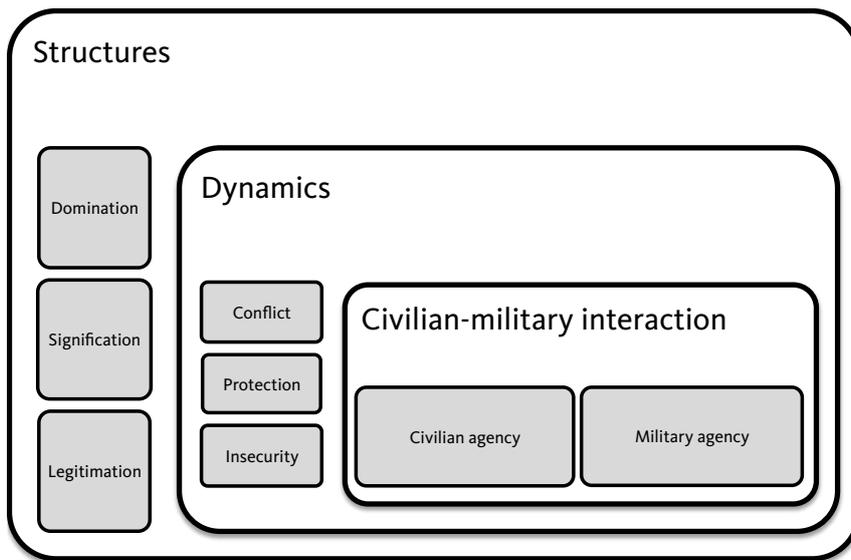
⁸ The term 'social order' has been preferred to that of 'social system' herein, to avoid the connotations that the word 'system' bears in functionalist thinking.

interaction. Consequently, in order to understand variations in civilian-military interaction, it is necessary to analyze place-specific variations in structures and dynamics and how these shape both civilian and military agency.

Since the structural features of social orders develop over the *longue durée*, studying the past helps understand the present. Therefore, analyzing present-day civilian-military interaction is facilitated by tracing the history of the Congolese armed forces and that of the Kivus. As will be elaborated below, years of poverty, conflict, violence and decline in public service delivery have led to significant transformations in structures of legitimation, signification and domination. A part of these processes can be described as ‘militarization’, relating to the increasing normalization of militarized rationalities and practices, a routinization of interactions with armed actors, and a dominant position for armed actors in crucial facets of social life. Obviously, processes of militarization have important consequences for civilian-military interaction, as they profoundly impact the power relations, norms and discursive framings surrounding armed actors. Yet, since such processes have unfolded differently in different places in the Kivus, this impact is assumed to vary across contexts. One reason for this are militarization’s diverse effects on the dynamics of conflict, protection and insecurity. However, differences in these dynamics are not only the result of structural features: they can also be ascribed to more circumstantial factors, like the amount and type of armed groups active in a particular area, their levels of control, and their relations to civilian actors and the FARDC.

As mentioned, the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection strongly shape the agency of both civilians and the military, forging conflicts between them, but also collaboration, including relations of protection. This influence is not unilateral, for the outcomes of civilian-military interaction have again important effects on processes of conflict, insecurity and protection, in part directly, and in part indirectly, as these outcomes contribute to either the reproduction or transformation of the social structures that shape these dynamics. As such, the structuration of civilian-military interaction should be conceived of as a chain of dialogical processes (see Figure 4), consisting of on the one hand, shorter-term processes unfolding between social agents and the immediate social fields they are navigating (which in this case are heavily imprinted by the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection), and on the other hand, longer-term processes of interaction between these relatively fluid fields and durable social structures.

Figure 4: The structuration of civilian-military interaction in a volatile context



Introducing the main research question and subquestions

As should be clear from the preceding, this dissertation aims to analyze everyday interactions between civilians and the Congolese military in the Kivu provinces by looking at both the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection and the structures of domination, signification and legitimation that mark the social orders in which these interactions take place. It intends to study not only how these structures and dynamics shape civilian-military interaction *in general* but also how differences in these structures and dynamics, both in relation to *military units* and *socio-spatial suborders* (places) in the Kivus, cause *variations* in civilian-military interaction. At the same time, it tries to gauge the effects of this interaction on both the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection and longer-term processes of structural transformation relating to militarization. In sum, the central question of this research is: **How is everyday civilian-military interaction in the eastern DR Congo’s Kivu provinces shaped by and shapes the structures of domination, signification and legitimation and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection of the social orders in which this interaction unfolds?**

In order to answer this question, it is imperative to comprehensively explore the *forms* that day-to-day civilian-military interaction assumes, and the ways in which this interaction is *discursively framed*, as informed by the *social roles* enacted by military and civilian social

agents. Furthermore, both in relation to the Kivus and the FARDC in the Kivus, it must be analyzed *what dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection* and *what structures of domination, signification and legitimation* shape this interaction and how. Such an analysis can be partly accomplished by tracing the historical development of the Kivus' social order and that of the armed forces. This historical analysis will also elucidate the effects of the past on present-day *mutual representations* held by the military and civilians, which offer an insight into the general associations and expectations that these two social groups mutually evoke.

The next major analytical task is to explore by what mechanisms and how the identified structures and dynamics shape civilian and military agency. On the civilian side, this implies looking at how *social roles* and *discursive framings* influence *evaluations* of civilian-military interactions. Furthermore, it must be identified how, in combination with other factors, these evaluations shape civilians' *agentic orientations* towards the military, the main forms of which are collaboration, compliance and contestation. In relation to the military, tracing the mechanisms and processes that shape the conduct of its units requires a detailed analysis of the present-day organization and workings of the FARDC, and how these impact *horizontal and vertical cohesion*, both within field-based units and within the FARDC in the Kivus as a whole.

However, the practices of military units strongly differ, which is an important cause of *variations in civilian-military interaction* per time-space context. These variations are the product of both the internal features of military units, and their interaction with the deployment context, which jointly shape their projects and modes of navigation. Units' interaction with the deployment context is again shaped by both *place-specific structures of domination, signification and legitimation* and *place-specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection*, which inform the agency of both military units and civilians.

Finally, in order to study the full cycle of structuration, it is not only necessary to analyze the processes informing civilian-military interaction, but also to study the effects that this interaction has on both the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection and the (re)production of social structures. In particular, it should be identified to what extent current practices of civilian-military interaction contribute to the reproduction or transformation of the structures underpinning the military's position of dominance in the Kivus, which provides again an insight into the mechanics of militarization.

From the above, it follows that in order to answer the main research question, the following subquestions must be answered:

1. *What structures of domination, legitimation and signification and what dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection shape civilian-military interaction, both in relation to the Kivus and the armed forces in the Kivus?*
2. *What forms do everyday civilian-military interactions in the Kivus assume and how are they discursively framed, as informed by the enactment of social roles?*
3. *How are civilian practices towards the military shaped?*
4. *How are the FARDC's practices towards civilians shaped?*
5. *What are the main causes of variations in civilian-military interaction in the Kivus?*
6. *What are the effects of civilian-military interactions on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection and the (re)production of (militarized) social structures?*

The order in which these subquestions are answered is not entirely linear, with certain research questions being answered in more than one chapter. An important criterion for structuring the dissertation has been respect for narrative flow and the sequencing of information for readers unfamiliar with the research context. Based on these considerations, the following order has emerged (see Figure 5): The remainder of this introductory part discusses research methods and methodology, and then addresses the main theoretical concepts that this study draws upon. Part I is dedicated to identifying the main structures and dynamics shaping civilian-military interaction at a general level, as partly deduced from the study of the historical development of both the Congolese armed forces and the Kivus. It then looks at a part of the weight of this legacy by exploring soldiers' and civilians' mutual representations, as inscribed in structures of signification and legitimation formed over the *longue durée*. As such, it mostly, but not entirely, answers subquestion 1 (an additional share of which is discussed in Part III).

Part II starts out with addressing subquestion 2, exploring comprehensively the main forms that civilian-military interaction in the Kivus assumes, including the ways in which this interaction is discursively framed and the social roles that are enacted during these various types of interaction. This exploration takes place in two chapters. While the first chapter focuses on political-economic interactions, the second discusses other dimensions of local governance, including those related to security provision and dispute processing. Both these chapters also analyze civilians' evaluations of the described practices. The last chapter of Part II looks at how these evaluations, amongst other factors, shape civilians' agentic orientations, while also exploring these orientations themselves, describing practices

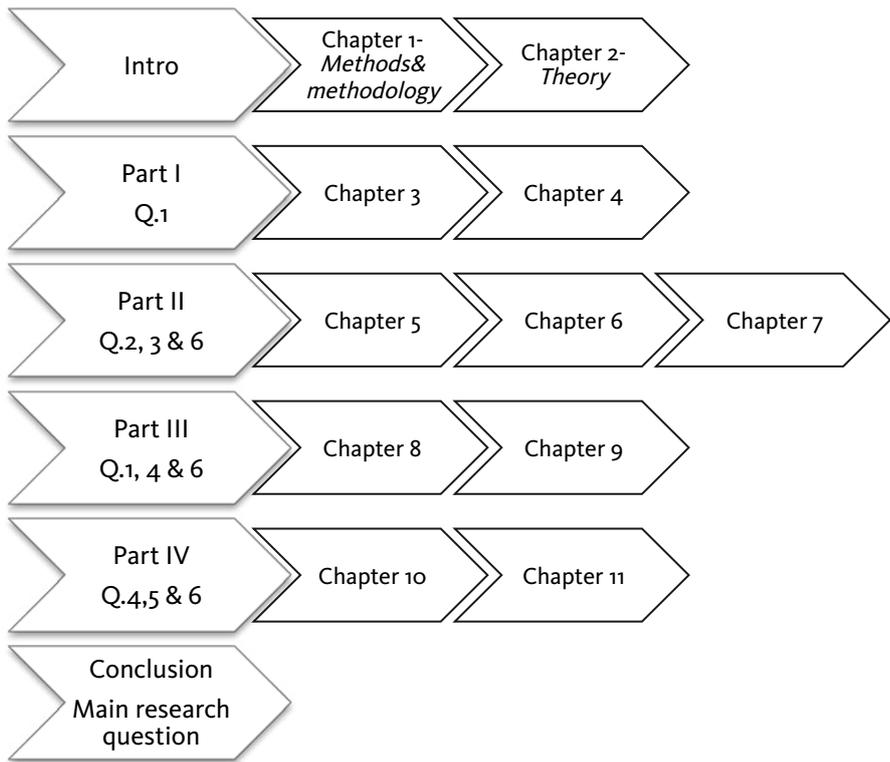
of contestation, collaboration and compliance. As such, it provides an answer to subquestion 3. Finally, by exploring the main factors that promote compliance and collaboration and that impede contestation and the effectiveness thereof, the chapter partly answers the question of the effects of civilian-military interaction on the (re)production of social structures, hence addresses subquestion 6.

Part III focuses on the structures and dynamics within the FARDC itself, and how these shape military agency. It sets out by exploring the workings of the FARDC in general and how it is managed by the political center in Kinshasa, and then analyzes how this management affects the structures and dynamics of the FARDC in the Kivus. The following chapter explores norms, discourses and power structures at the level of field units, as manifested in and influenced by horizontal and vertical cohesion. Together, these two parts answer subquestions 1 and 4. Additionally, they provide some insights into the effects of the agency of military actors on social structures and dynamics, both those within the military and in the Kivus, and therefore provide a part of the answers to subquestion 6.

The central theme of Part IV are variations in civilian-military interaction and the factors that cause these variations. Hence this part primarily answers subquestion 5. However, the first chapter also provides further insights into subquestion 4, by looking at military units' projects and modes of navigation, and how these are shaped by both internal factors and interactions with the civilians. The next chapter looks at place-specific structures of legitimation, signification and domination and place-specific dynamics of conflict, protection and insecurity, and how these shape civilian-military interaction. As such, it further answers subquestion 5. It also provides insights into the reverse process, namely how civilian-military interaction again impacts place-specific dynamics and the (re)production of social structures, and therefore also discusses subquestion 6.

The concluding part answers the main research question, by briefly summarizing the answers to the various subquestions. The remainder of the conclusion discusses the implications of the findings of this study both for future research and for the formulation of policy.

Figure 5: Structure of dissertation



Relevance of the research

The primary aim of this study is to generate new theoretical insights on the processes shaping civilian-military interaction in the Kivu provinces, in particular by looking at how civilians' and the military's agency is affected by and affects social structures and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, both within and outside of the military. Since the study of military agency includes violent practices, the dissertation also provides a better understanding of the factors producing military violence against civilians. Additionally, it sheds light on the phenomenon of militarization and how it is (re)produced over time, and the wider effects it has on the levels of violence and conflictuality in the Kivus' social order. While the main focus is on the Kivu provinces, the analytical approach elaborated herein is (partly) applicable to other zones within the Congo with roughly similar features in terms of militarization and dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. For example, fieldwork conducted in 2013 on the relations between fishermen and the FARDC naval forces around Lake Albert

(Province Orientale) for a follow-up research project, showed that many of the mechanisms and processes of civilian-military interaction observed in the Kivus were at work in that region as well, pointing to a wider applicability of the research findings. Additionally, studies of the Central African Republic and Chad (e.g., Roitman, 2005; Debos, 2013) seem to suggest that the conceptual tools employed in this dissertation for conducting a micro-and military-sociological analysis of civilian-military interaction could also be applied to other militarized areas with weakly institutionalized and ill resourced armed forces in Africa.

The findings of this dissertation can also be drawn upon to further the understanding of the practices of non-state armed groups and their relations to civilians. As indicated by my research on armed groups in the Kivus (Verweijen, forthcoming b; Hoffmann and Verweijen, 2013), which was partly conducted in parallel to this dissertation, there are important similarities between the ways in which soldiers of state and non-stated forces interact with civilians, notably in respect of protection relations and the grounds for civilians' agentic orientations. Such similarities can also be found in relation to the ways in which other parts of the state apparatus relate to citizens. For example, citizens' evaluations of the practices of other state actors follow the same mechanisms and are impacted by the same discursive framings as civilians' evaluations of the activities of the FARDC. Therefore, certain of this study's findings may also elucidate the workings of other parts of the Congolese state apparatus, notably how their modes of operation are co-produced by non-state actors, which provides insights into state-society relations more generally.

Since knowledge of the processes shaping civilian-military interaction and the ongoing militarization of the Kivus can inform policies on defense reform, stabilization and civilian protection, this study is of obvious interest to both Congolese and international policymakers. This is all the more so since the (perceived) stakes and expectations of defense reform in the Congo are sky-high, although it has rarely figured on top of policymakers' priority lists. As a recent report states: 'the establishment of an effective security sector is the fundamental step to meeting all other objectives, from ending the humanitarian crisis, preventing human rights abuses, encouraging investment and growth, stopping the trade in conflict minerals and preventing regional tensions from escalating' (ASADHO et al., 2012: 8). Thus, defense reform is seen as a precondition for attaining a host of other policy objectives. But while there is consensus on its importance, opinions strongly differ on the way forward. Although this dissertation does not provide detailed policy recommendations, as these have already been laid down in a number of policy-oriented publications that have issued out of this research (Van Damme and Verweijen, 2012; Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013a; forthcoming; Stearns et al., 2013), it does offer valuable inputs for policy discussions. In particular, it provides an elaborate insight into the workings of the military at a level that is commonly omitted from these discussions, that of military units directly deployed at the frontlines. Furthermore, it presents a plethora of voices of those directly concerned by defense reform policies, namely FARDC soldiers and the civilians that live and interact with them on a day-to-day basis. As such, and by also drawing attention to how the civilian environment affects military practices, this dissertation provides an impetus for 'out of the box' thinking in the domains of defense reform and stabilization.

What this dissertation does not seek to do is to justify the FARDC's behavior. Integrating (structural) context into analysis is not the same as saying that perpetrators are really 'victims of the system'. To those having a penchant for the personification of evil, co-locating the causes for human conduct, including violence and abuses, in the structural features of social orders may appear counterintuitive. The same applies to acknowledging the crucial role of civilians' agency in shaping military practices, including abuses. As observed by Kalyvas (2003; 2006: 36), accounts of violent conflict commonly turn a blind eye to the issue of civilians' instigation of and collaboration with the execution of acts of violence. This also applies to accounts of violence in the Congo. As a result, the insight that civilians' practices can contribute to the (re)production of violence and the militarization of the Kivus' social order might appear profoundly unsettling. However, pointing to the involvement of civilians in the (co)production of violence does not imply exonerating military perpetrators.

A second disclaimer concerns the scope of the analysis. Since the terrain covered herein is already vast, not all dimensions of civilian-military interaction and the processes shaping it could be treated in an equally detailed manner. For example, due to its strong focus on the micro level, this dissertation does not pay nearly as much attention to the international and regional political economy as the analysis of a military in an extraverted political order would warrant. Furthermore, it largely neglects the role of gender in civilian-military interaction. While it was found that masculine and feminine forms of identification indeed impact civilians' and the military's agency, these differences were not observed to produce very strong effects on the specific social phenomena that occupy center stage herein. For example, few differences were found between civilians with a masculine and feminine identity orientation in relation to when and why they contest, comply, or collaborate with the military. Similarly, soldiers with masculine and feminine identity orientation were observed to engage in largely the same practices towards civilians. Moreover, there were few differences in their representations of civilians (cf. Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013b). One reason for the limited explanatory value of gender in this study is that while it partly focuses on the micro level, it does not go deeply into differences between individual social agents, rather analyzing generic features of their practices and the processes driving these. Consequently, neither the category of civilians nor that of the military strongly differentiates between social agents with masculine and those with feminine identity-orientations.

Methods and methodology: choices and challenges

DUE TO THE INTENT to generate theory on a topic on which there has been little prior theorization, this enquiry is exploratory in nature. Together with its focus on structuration, which implies combining micro- and macro-level analysis into one framework, this made the development of a research design challenging. Furthermore, before going into the field, it was difficult to estimate what type of data could be gathered and how, in particular in relation to the internal workings of the military. As a result, the design of this research was developed incrementally, reflecting the retroductive nature of the overall research process. This chapter reviews how the research design was developed and implemented. It first explains how the research unfolded phase by phase, and then analyzes the research design and the issues of data collection and analysis in more detail. Subsequently, it discusses the main research methods that were used, as well as the challenges encountered in relation to data collection in the field. This paves the way for a discussion of efforts to ensure the validity and reliability of the research.

1.1 *The research process phase by phase*

This study aims to develop a better understanding of a micro-level social process, namely the everyday interaction between the FARDC and civilians in the Kivu provinces, and how this is shaped by and shapes both social structures and more fluid dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. Since social structures and social praxis influence each other in 'diffuse and convoluted ways' (Giddens, 1984: 310), it has been difficult to draw (analytical) boundaries between the phenomenon under study and the social context. In order to study both context and process, two analytical angles were adopted: first, a focus on the micro-level practices constituting civilian-military interaction, in particular on what Giddens (1984: 288) calls 'strategic action' or 'the modes in which actors draw upon structural properties in the constitution of social relations'. Second, 'institutional analysis', described by Giddens as the study of the structural properties of social orders and their inter-relations (*ibidem*), including their relations to the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection.

In the context of this study, analyzing strategic action implied exploring the practices of on the one hand, various groups of military actors, in particular different military units, and on the other hand, various sets of civilian actors, such as local authorities and economic operators, in designated socio-spatial suborders or places. Institutional analysis consisted primarily of the analysis of the structural features of the Kivus' social order and suborders, including that of the military in the Kivus, but also of the military organization at the level of the Congo as a whole. Knowledge of these features was partly obtained through an in-depth literature study, including works that could provide an insight into the historical development of present-day structures. This initial literature study did not only provide insights into the features of social structures and dynamics, but also into what elements thereof most shape civilian-military interaction. These 'a priori constructs' (Eisenhardt, 1989: 536) served as general sensitizing notions, or guiding principles that helped develop the research and interpret the empirical findings, without specifying the exact nature of the observed phenomena or their relationships. As stated by Burawoy (1998: 11): 'we come to the field with presuppositions, questions, and frameworks but (...) they are more like prisms than templates and they are emergent rather than fixed'. The emergent nature of the employed a priori constructs points to the pronounced retroductive character of this research, implying there was a constant dialogue between evidence and ideas (cf. Kelle, 2005). This retroductive character is also evidenced by the fact that not all sensitizing concepts were directly deduced from the literature: many were developed in a mostly inductive manner, although they were always analyzed in relation to the literature in order to assess their quality.

The inductive component of the research was based on the premise that in order to detect what structures and dynamics shape and are shaped by civilian-military interaction and how, this interaction must be studied in-depth in a variety of settings. Thus, as is suitable for research on phenomena that are difficult to distinguish from their social context, a number of *cases* were selected, or specific instances of the broader phenomenon ‘civilian-military interaction’, which served as individual units of study (Gerring, 2007: 20). These cases relate to civilian-military interaction unfolding in different *places* or socio-spatial suborders and involving staff from different *military units*. Hence, a *multiple-case study* is an important component of the research design, with cases relating to variations of the phenomenon under study (civilian-military interaction) on two dimensions: first, *social agents* (including military units) and second, *place*. This implies that each case consists of an instance of civilian-military interaction involving a different combination of a particular military unit and a specific deployment context (place), with each place having a different set of civilian actors. A change in any of these two dimensions, for instance if the same military unit were rotated and deployed to a different area, would imply a new case.

First phase: Initial literature study and exploratory fieldwork

The research started out with a review of the literature on the Congo and the Kivus, focusing on their history and state and non-state armed forces. The work of Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers formed the main source of inspiration at this stage. Their analyses of social transformations in the eastern Congo and the social embedding of rebel groups provided important ideas on the social structures that inform civilian-military interaction. In particular Raeymaekers’ emphasis on ‘protection’ as a key notion structuring relations between civilians and armed actors (2007: 119–129) became an important foundation of the research. The literature on the workings of the state and the unrecorded economy in the Zaire era, especially works by Schatzberg (1988) and MacGaffey (1991), also provided key insights. Another body of literature that was drawn upon was that of military sociology, notably works pointing to the importance of command structures and vertical and horizontal cohesion in norm enforcement (e.g., Siebold, 2007). Furthermore, in relation to the Congolese military, Eriksson Baaz and Stern’s publications (2008; 2009) on professional discourses and identities in the FARDC offered a point of departure for theorizing and data collection. The various a priori constructs derived from these bodies of literature importantly shaped the first fieldwork phase, which was effectuated between January and May 2010.

The first field research phase aimed to study a wide range of manifestations of everyday civilian-military interaction in the Kivus and the structures and dynamics that inform them. One of its main objectives was to catalogue forms of civilian-military interaction, which was seen as a precondition for understanding the underlying processes and rationalities. Thus, different forms of civilian-military interaction were studied, such as the relations between local civilian authorities and the military, cohabitation in areas where soldiers live in civilian homes, and practices of extortion and illegal taxation. Furthermore, efforts were made to consult many different types of civilian actors, such as civil society activists, customary chiefs, and politico-administrative authorities. Similarly, it was attempted to talk to FARDC staff from different backgrounds, notably those having always served in the government forces and those coming from rebel groups. Contacting a variety of social agents was also needed for achieving the second core objective of the field research, which was to explore soldiers’ and civilians’ mutual representations and evaluations of their interactions, and to identify the reasons for possible variations therein.

Given that this initial fieldwork phase was mostly exploratory, it relied heavily on interviewing key informants, who could provide general insights into mutual representations, forms of interaction, and how these are evaluated. Both individual and group interviews were conducted, which mostly took place in French and occasionally, through translators, in Swahili.¹ Aside from the type of social agents mentioned above, another category of key informants contacted in this phase were persons working on stabilization and human rights issues for International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), as well as foreign military staff of the *Mission de l’organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République Démocratique du Congo* (MONUSCO, United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of the DR Congo)² and the *Mission de conseil et d’assistance de l’Union Européenne en matière de la réforme du secteur de la sécurité en RDC* (EUSEC RD Congo, European Union Advisory and Assistance Mission for Security Sector Reform in the DR Congo, henceforth EUSEC), who work with the FARDC. Some time was spent with the Training Task Force of MONUSCO in Sange, who used to conduct trainings with the FARDC at the military base of Luberizi.

In order to explore similarities and differences across contexts, the choice was made to visit a wide variety of places in the Kivus, selected according to broad criteria of contextual and actor variation, as well as considerations of feasibility and accessibility. The places visited included burgeoning urban quarters and isolated rural zones; areas depending on different socio-economic activities (e.g., gold mining, fishing and trans-border trade); zones with different local power and social configurations (e.g., variations in ethnic makeup, authority structures) and finally, zones with varying dynamics of conflict and insecurity (e.g., active operational zones with many armed groups, areas with high levels of banditry, zones with pronounced inter-community conflicts, relatively calm areas). Additionally, it was attempted to identify and study military units displaying differences in their conduct towards civilians, by looking for those with a good and those with a bad reputation among civilians. Military units were mostly contacted at the level of the *état-major* (EM, general staff) of regions,

¹ All interview quotes presented in this dissertation were translated into English by the author.

² Up to July 2010, MONUSCO was known as MONUC, since ‘stabilisation’ was not a part of its name. For the sake of simplicity, this dissertation will only use the name MONUSCO to refer to the UN mission in the DR Congo, even before July 2010.

zones, sectors or brigades. Where non-general staff members were contacted, for example during group interviews, this commonly occurred at the site of headquarters. Data collection in rural areas was facilitated by members of civil society organizations, often human rights monitors, whom I had encountered in towns close to the rural zone in question. The main way of travelling to and in isolated areas was by motorcycle, and occasionally, by boat and on foot.

Aside from the towns of Goma and Bukavu, home to the headquarters of respectively the 8th and 10th Military Region,³ the following areas were visited (see Map 1 and Appendix A)⁴:

- The southern area of South Kivu encompassing the territories of Fizi and Uvira also known as *le Sud/Sud*, including the towns of Uvira and Baraka; the isolated Ubwari peninsula in Lake Tanganyika (visited per boat); the *Hauts Plateaux* (higher-range mountains) of Fizi, the *Moyens Plateaux* (middle-range mountains) of Uvira, in particular Katobo and Lamera (in the *chefferie* or chiefdom of the *Bafuliiru*); a small part of adjacent Walungu (Kamanyola); and the military base of Luberizi in the Ruzizi Plain
- A part of the *territoire* (territory, sub-provincial administrative unit)⁵ of Rutshuru, notably the town of Kanyabayonga, and within the *chefferie* of Bwisha, the towns of Kiwanja, Rutshuru and the *groupement* (sub-territorial administrative unit) of Binza, including the Ishasha border post; the fishing village of Vitshumbi on the shores of Lake Edward and the military base of Rumangabo
- The northern area of North Kivu, also known as *le Grand Nord*, which encompasses the territories of Beni and Lubero, including the towns of Beni and Butembo; a part of the Ruwenzori sector; the border town Kasindi; the fishing village of Kyavinyonge on the northern shore of Lake Edward; and in the area of Lubero, the towns of Lubero and Kirumba, and villages towards the interior, up to Lufofo

While data were gathered in a large number of sites and on different military units, the quality of these data varied. For example, where it had been possible to contact many members of the same military unit (like when the unit was deployed to many of the villages visited, or when I stayed for a long time or several times in one place), and informants provided in-depth information, a more comprehensive picture of the unit in question could be developed than where the number of informants had been limited or were contacted only once. Relatively in-depth knowledge was for instance gathered among the 20th Integrated Brigade deployed in the *Grand Nord*, the 223rd brigade in Rutshuru and the 433rd and 432nd in the *Moyens Plateaux* of Uvira.⁶ The same variations in the quality were observed in relation to the data that were collected on certain deployment contexts. Where numerous informants were encountered who provided rich information, like in the towns of Beni and Butembo and Rutshuru and surroundings, a better feel for the place and more detailed insights into its structures and dynamics could be developed than in relation to other contexts.

During the data analysis phase after the fieldwork, interview transcripts and field notes were coded and categorized. Several themes and analytical issues emerged, such as ambiguity, civilians' instrumentalization of the military for score settling, protection relations, the role of the military's security performance in shaping civilian-military interaction, and the importance of the mission/objectives of FARDC units in shaping their conduct. Based on the analysis of the data, an overview was drawn up of the main factors shaping civilian-military interaction. These were initially divided into macro, meso and micro factors relating to on the one hand, the political economy and on the other hand, norms, discourses and identification. While reflecting on these categorizations, inspiration was drawn from the work of Roitman (2005), in particular her emphasis on readings of economic practices, and the extent to which these are seen as 'licit'. This drew attention to how norms shape civilians' evaluations of military practices, in particular in relation to wealth extraction and forms of protection facilitating income generation, and the importance of studying these norms and the economic dimension of civilian-military interaction for understanding civilians' agency. Furthermore, it was found that the work of Kalyvas (2006) corroborated the initial findings on the civilian instrumentalization of military actors for resolving local and personal conflicts. However, this work also invited to conduct further research on the processes underlying these practices and their effects on civilian-military relations. Another knowledge gap that was identified in this stage related to the internal workings of military units. Much of the data obtained on the military during the first fieldwork phase were of a general nature, and therefore failed to provide detailed insight into processes internal to the military. Recognizing the overall need for more in-depth research, this phase was also dedicated to learning Swahili by means of taking a basic three month course.

Second phase: In-depth fieldwork and initial writing

The second round of field research had to address the gaps identified after analyzing the data gathered during the first round. Due to the need for more in-depth analysis, it was decided to study civilian-military interaction in a profound manner in a limited number of

3 End 2014, the designation and boundaries of the military regions were changed. North Kivu is now part of the 34th and South Kivu of the 33rd Military Region.

4 All maps can be found at the start of the dissertation, on pp. xi-xv.

5 See figure 8 on p.61 for an overview of the organization of the local administration in the Kivus.

6 As will be further explained below, the numbers of all operational sectors and units have been changed to prevent the identification of military staff.

places and in relation to a limited number of military units. When selecting the case study sites, it was decided to seize upon a rather unique research opportunity that had emerged naturally. During the first fieldwork phase, research had been conducted in two adjacent operational sectors in Fizi territory (the 64th and the 65th sector of the Amani Leo operations), which displayed pronounced differences in relation to the conduct and practices of the brigades deployed within them. While the brigades of the 64th sector were reported to behave relatively well, those of the 65th sector were accused of systematic extortion and abuses, including looting, theft, and robbery. Furthermore, from conversations with military staff and civilian key informants, it emerged that there were differences in the two sectors' modes of organization and operation (e.g., style of sector command and the internal workings of the brigades). Thus, it was decided to select two brigades from each of these operational sectors (64th and 65th), namely the 641st, 642nd, 651st and 652nd, and study these in-depth.

Aside from the fact that comparing these two sectors promised to yield important insights into the factors shaping military conduct towards civilians, the area of Fizi appeared a good site of research since it is composed of a number of zones that are heterogeneous in terms of combinations of structural features and dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. It includes areas (previously) controlled by non-state armed groups, like the Mai Mai group of commander Yakotumba, the *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* (FDLR)⁷ and the *Forces républicaines fédéralistes* (FRF);⁸ zones with inter-community conflicts framed in ethnic terms (e.g., between the Babembe, the majority group in Fizi, and the Banyamulenge); areas depending on different types of economic activity (e.g., artisanal gold mining in the Misisi and Mukera areas, fishing in the zones adjacent to Lake Tanganyika, small-scale agriculture in most other zones); and finally, both urban areas that are relatively accessible (e.g., Baraka) and vast isolated rural zones with limited presence of state actors (e.g., the coastal strip of Lake Tanganyika and the *Hauts Plateaux* mountains, located at the intersection of Fizi, Uvira and Mwenga territory) (see Map 2). Since a single brigade often covered a variety of these zones, it could be investigated whether and how such contextual variety impacted its conduct and civilian-military interaction. Moreover, several of the brigades under study were unexpectedly rotated in the course of the fieldwork, which helped gauge the relative weight of the deployment environment vs. that of the internal features of military units in explaining variations in civilian-military interaction.

In addition to three sectors of Fizi territory (Mutambala, Ngandja and Lulenge), which include a part of the *Hauts Plateaux* that runs into Mwenga territory (Itombwe), research was conducted in a number of sites in the territory of Uvira bordering Fizi, mainly from the point of view of contacting specific types of economic operators. Furthermore, as the headquarters of the operational zone under which the two sectors in Fizi fell were located in the town of Uvira, spending time there was a precondition for developing a better insight into the higher layers of the hierarchy and for verifying information about the units under study. Limited research was also conducted in Bukavu, with the aim of looking into particular types of economic interactions and to consult staff from the 10th Military Region and certain key informants, like EUSEC personnel. To summarize, research during the second round of the fieldwork, which took place between October 2010 and April 2011, was conducted in the following sites (see also Appendix A):

- the *secteur* (sector, administrative unit below territory) of Ngandja in Fizi (including the villages of Kazimia and Yungu, and the mining sites of Misisi and Mukera)
- the Lulenge sector of Fizi
- the Mutambala sector of Fizi (especially the town of Baraka)
- the *Hauts Plateaux* of Fizi (around Minembwe) and adjacent parts of Mwenga (Itombwe)
- the towns of Uvira and Bukavu
- a part of the *Hauts Plateaux* of Uvira (Bijombo)

As mentioned, the second period of field research had as principal objectives to deepen an understanding of the internal dynamics of military units and of the economic and protection dimensions of civilian-military interaction. Since many of the issues related to these spheres of praxis are not easily spoken about openly, a shift in data collection took place from formal interviews to (participant) observation and informal conversations. This also implied that note-taking shifted from transcribing entire interviews to writing down key remarks and key observations on core themes and issues. Another shift in data collection was induced by the focus on the economic dimension of civilian-military interaction, leading to the sampling of different types of economic operators and economic sites. Thus, research was conducted in several artisanal gold mining sites in Fizi territory, on beaches (to talk to fishermen and study taxation practices of the navy), in harbors and at a number of markets, mainly in the *Hauts Plateaux* area, with as main objective to analyze variations in military taxation

7 The FDLR are a Rwandan Hutu-led armed group the core of whose leadership is formed by former members of the (pre-1994) Rwandan armed forces and militias, a part of whom were implicated in the 1994 genocide (Rafti, 2006a).

8 The FRF was an armed group composed of Banyamulenge, a Tutsi community from the *Hauts Plateaux* area. It laid down arms and integrated into the FARDC in January 2011, but continues to exist as a political party.

practices and the division of taxes per market. In order to understand taxation practices at roadblocks, research was also conducted on two road axes, namely the Fizi-Lulimba and Lulimba-Kilembwe axes (see Map 5), and on one trade route in the *Hauts Plateaux* of Uvira.

On the Uvira-Minembwe trade route, I accompanied a group of ambulant traders walking from market to market while carrying their merchandise mostly on their head. Following these traders did not only allow for observing their entire itinerary, but also for attending the various markets on the way and study military practices there, including taxation. However, markets, as the main meeting place in isolated rural zones, also provided a wealth of information on security and conflict dynamics in the wider area. This information was obtained via interviews with small groups of petty traders, butchers, ambulant traders and male and female cultivators. This last category could only be contacted at markets, as they were commonly absent in villages during daytime visits due to cultivation duties. These group interviews at markets focused on the security situation and military presence and practices in the interlocutors' area of origin, on their way to the market and at the market itself. In addition, one-on-one interviews were held with key informants like the market authorities, tax collectors, local notables and customary chiefs. This type of research was carried out at nine different markets on the *Hauts Plateaux* (see Map 4) and at three markets in other areas. However, data on taxation practices were also collected for other markets on the *Plateaux* via key informants. Aside from at markets, research on economic interactions was carried out among hotels, health care structures, *ciné-videos* (video cinemas), small-scale shops and *motards* (motorcycle taxi drivers), including in Bukavu and Uvira. One of the aims of this research was to look at the military's use of services from civilian economic operators either without paying or at reduced tariffs, a form of extraction that is sometimes overlooked due to a focus on more visible monetary or in-kind contributions.

For each site in Fizi where research was conducted, it was attempted to map its structural features and dynamics, in order to see how these factors influence civilian-military interaction. This was accomplished by studying its history, local power and socio-economic relations, and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, including the presence of armed groups and their relations to both populations and the FARDC. Subsequently, an in-depth study was made of the forms of civilian-military interaction taking place within each site, and the social roles and discursive registers drawn upon by the protagonists, as well as the ways in which they evaluated their interactions. This was achieved by conducting interviews and having conversations with key informants like territorial authorities, provincial assembly members, customary chiefs and elders, local administrators, schoolteachers, religious authorities, members of civil society organizations, local journalists, and staff of health care centers. Additionally, a number of rebel groups that played a key part in the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection were contacted, based on the consideration that since they had close ties to the population, they were likely to influence the latter's interaction with the FARDC. For the specific issues of military abuses and the involvement of the military in dispute processing, the main groups contacted were human rights defenders, military justice personnel, military from the zone command in Uvira, and other in/security services like the *Direction générale de migration* (DGM, Directorate-General of Migration) and the *Agence nationale de renseignements* (ANR, National Intelligence Service). Furthermore, an incidents database was consulted from a human rights organization whose monitors had regularly provided assistance in the field. This database gave a good insight into the patterns of abuse of the different military units and sectors under study, as it tables all recorded incidents in their areas of operation and indicates the (suspected) perpetrators and reasons for the abuse. Within rural zones, people were contacted during fieldtrips ranging from a few days to about two weeks in the course of which I travelled from one place to the next mostly by motorcycle or on foot. The fact that I often slept over in villages during such trips turned out to be fruitful for data collection, for the customary chief in charge would often gather the *vieux-sages* (village elders, literally: old wise men) in the evening, leading to interesting group discussions on security matters, conflict dynamics and the history of the area.

The second component of this round of fieldwork, the in-depth study of a number of military units, had two dimensions. The first related to exploring units' internal workings, with a focus on cohesion, power relations, norms, norm enforcement and revenue flows. A second set of questions concerned units' interaction with their civilian environment, in particular in relation to the following issues: revenue generation and economic control, involvement in and effects on local governance, security provision, and types and levels of coercion and abuses. The collection of data on units' internal dynamics was quite challenging, given the sensitive nature of the required information. Fortunately, I managed to build up close relations with a number of key informants in various military units, who also became a point of entry for contacting other military staff through snowball sampling. In order to get acquainted with military staff and observe their practices, I tried to 'hang out' with them as much as possible. This implied staying in the same villages and hotels, drinking in the same bars, sharing transport (especially motorcycles), and occasionally, in isolated areas, walking the same trajectories. While relying mostly on snowballing, I still made efforts to contact military staff from different backgrounds (e.g., government forces and various rebel groups), and both rank and file and officers. In general, the emphasis was on higher-rank (e.g., major, captain) officers, but not the highest ranked (e.g., lieutenant-colonel or colonel) nor those with the most important positions (brigade or sector commanders). Officers with relatively high ranks but no principal command function, it was found, generally spoke more openly about power relations within their units and the command chain's way of operating. Furthermore, they appeared better observers of the dynamics in lower segments of their units, or were more willing to speak about them.

Interviews in the second fieldwork phase were carried out both in French and Swahili. In the last case, this again involved translators/assistants. Similar to the first fieldwork phase, I often collaborated with human rights monitors deployed to the specific area where the research was conducted, who were commonly well acquainted with the environment. Most of these human rights defenders belonged to the same organization, which had extensively trained them in human rights monitoring, including in techniques of the verification of

information and working with sensitive matters. Due to this experience, these monitors were of great help in carrying out research on sensitive topics like military abuses. While collaboration was frequent, it remained ad-hoc and on an individual basis, and was therefore not regulated by the organization of which they formed part. The choice not to engage in a formal partnership was made mainly from the point of view of staying as neutral as possible, and to avoid becoming seen as a human rights actor rather than a researcher.

During this round of fieldwork, I also engaged in a limited manner in data analysis, as writing down field notes went along with more elaborate reflections. Moreover, topic guides for interviews were constantly adapted to refine analytical notions and prioritize research topics, based on how the research evolved. However, truly in-depth data analysis was only engaged in after leaving the field, and after having corroborated and complemented the gathered data with literature, (I)NGO and UN reports and news items. This ushered in the regrouping of the gathered data into broad categories and subcategories. Additionally, an overview was drawn up of key observations made per case (relating to civilian-military interaction involving both different military units and unfolding in different places) for the purposes of comparison. It was also decided to add civilian-military interaction involving certain military units and places studied during the first phase of the research as additional cases, namely the 20th Integrated Brigade in Butembo, the 433rd and 432nd brigade in the *Moyens Plateaux* of Uvira and the 223rd in parts of Rutshuru. The choice for these cases was made on the basis of both the quality of the data that had been gathered and methodological considerations, as further outlined below.

Based on the categorization of the data and the comparisons made between cases, a number of propositions were developed. These were compared to the existing academic literature, which sometimes led to new or more refined insights, or highlighted remaining gaps in the data. For example, the awareness emerged that the issue of to what extent practices are evaluated as licit or illicit had to be coupled to the wider question of the legitimation of power, thereby drawing on the work of Beetham (1991). Furthermore, it was found that approaches to the state highlighting the role of discourses and performativity in its (re)production (e.g., Gupta, 1995) were useful for conceptualizing how the legitimation of power is influenced by the performance of authority, including the enactment of the social role of state agent. Other work that was drawn upon in relation to power was that of Scott (1990), which corroborated some of the analyses made concerning the ways and circumstances in which civilians contest military power. Analytical refinement also took place in the course of writing the first draft of the dissertation, which allowed for formulating and ordering the propositions arrived at, even though certain propositions were still tentative and would need further corroboration by the last period of fieldwork. The first draft also included a historical section based on literature research, which enabled making an analysis of (dis)continuities in relevant social structures over the long term. Writing this draft allowed for identifying the main remaining data gaps and issues in need of verification, which guided the design of the third phase of fieldwork.

One of the most important puzzles that had to be resolved during the last period of data collection in the field was how to reconcile the widespread occurrence of certain practices, for example certain forms of influence peddling and tax evasion taking place under military protection, with their widespread condemnation in public discourse. If everyone almost unanimously believes that certain types of behavior are bad and should not happen, how is it possible that such practices are still engaged in at such a large scale? An answer to this question appeared to partly lie in the notion of 'practical norms' as elaborated by, amongst others, Olivier de Sardan (2008). However, this proposition had to be further substantiated by new field data. Another remaining knowledge gap related to the workings of lower level military units (section, platoon, company). The previous field research phases had focused mostly on military staff connected to the general staff of military regions, operational zones, sectors, brigades and battalions. However, in order to understand how power relations, command and control and the diffusion of norms and discourses shape military practices, it is necessary to also look at lower levels of the command chain (King, 2013: 17–19). Furthermore, it had been observed during previous fieldwork that there are considerable differences in the living conditions of on the one hand, military staff working at the general staff and on the other hand, those in the field-based units stationed in the most remote and insecure areas. Moreover, personnel from the latter category are moved around more often, and tend to receive the least in terms of rations and funds. For these reasons, it was deemed essential to gather complementary data on lower-level units deployed to far-flung areas.

Third phase: Verification, repetition, fine-tuning and rewriting

The last longer-term phase of field research was conducted from mid-October 2011 to mid-February 2012, and had as general aims to verify and refine propositions, and to fill gaps in and verify data. Research was conducted in most of the sites that had previously been designated as components of cases, notably

- parts of Rutshuru (northern part of the *chefferie* of Bwisha and Vitshumbi)
- the Lemera part of the *Moyens Plateaux* of Uvira
- the Ngandja sector of Fizi (including the mining sites of Misisi and Mukera)

- the Mutambala sector of Fizi (especially the town of Baraka and surroundings)
- the *Hauts Plateaux* of Fizi and Mwenga

Visiting the same areas allowed for following how certain phenomena had evolved over the mid-term, introducing a diachronic element to the case studies. Furthermore, in many sites, the deployed military units had been changed in the meanwhile, which facilitated developing insights into the extent to which the presence of different units leads to different patterns of civilian-military interaction. For example, the gold mining area of Misisi was visited for the third time. Due to rapid military rotations, it had each time been under the control of a different army unit, making it possible to analyze differences in the levels and style of military involvement in the minerals sector.

Rotations were not the only dimension of change in the military landscape. At the start of 2011, a major military reorganization process was launched in the Kivus, leading to the breakup of all operational brigades. After a brief training period, troops from these brigades were merged into regiments, which are a different type of military unit, with technically fewer troops than a brigade.⁹ Fortunately, the regiments in Fizi were largely composed of the same staff as the brigades that had been deployed in the area before, although they had a different composition and were placed under different command. This facilitated data collection, as it allowed for contacting the same persons with whom good relations had already been built up. In combination with the general criteria for case study selection employed by this study, as further outlined below, it was therefore decided to select civilian-military interaction involving two of these regiments (the 712th and 714th) as two additional cases. An advantage of this was that military staff turned out to be much more open to talk about their former than about their current unit, especially the command chain. Therefore, aside from collecting data on these new cases, interviewing staff from the regiments also allowed for the (re)verification, complementation and refinement of data gathered on their previous units. Such refinement was also achieved by contacting key actors of several of the other units that had been selected as components of cases, such as the commanders of the 642nd, 432nd and 433rd brigades and the naval base in Vitshumbi. Additionally, data were collected on a number of lower-level units, mostly platoons, by means of group interviews with the rank and file and lower-level officers, as well as interviews and informal talks with their commanders. Re-verification and deepening were also achieved for the data collected on the interaction between the military and their local deployment area. Here too, rotations proved to facilitate data collection, as people were less hesitant to speak about military units after the latter had moved to another area.

The additional and (re)verified data gathered during the last fieldwork phase served primarily to corroborate and fine-tune the developed categories and propositions, but also generated a number of new insights. It was attempted to validate these insights, and the propositions developed prior to the third phase of the field research, by means of contacting key observers and analysts, mostly located in Bukavu and Goma. This also allowed for drawing comparisons with areas where no research had been conducted, but on which these experts were knowledgeable. Key observers and analysts included foreign military staff, which had to ensure that the findings would not overlook certain dimensions that might be less visible to those lacking military expertise. Certain insights were also shared with members of armed groups, on whom further research was conducted as a separate research project. Several leaders and officers of these groups had previously served in the FARDC, and were therefore well placed to comment on my analyses, although extra attention had to be paid to their positionality, since many had clashed with the FARDC.

During the third phase of the field research, more of the conversations took place in Swahili, which facilitated the research in various ways. First, even when interpreters were sometimes needed to understand a part of the answers, asking questions in Swahili eased making contact and creating a good atmosphere, in particular among less-educated people, who generally do not speak French. Furthermore, speaking Swahili appeared to make people more willing to help with practical matters, like finding transport possibilities at the *parking* (parking lot where cars, minibuses and trucks providing transport services gather) or bargaining down prices. Importantly, being able to understand Swahili also allowed me to capture more of the unofficial, the implicit, and sometimes even the secret. For example, during conversations with higher placed FARDC commanders, who tend to be solicited around the clock, it would regularly happen that phone calls or visits caused lengthy interruptions. Many commanders did not bother to have these conversations elsewhere, or to send me away, even if they knew I understand Swahili. Even when not able to make notes on them due to the absence of explicit consent, overhearing these exchanges led to many precious insights on the internal workings of the military and the way it interacts with civilians.

After the third phase of the fieldwork was completed, and the collected data were analyzed and further categorized, a period of deeper reflection started, during which a number of articles, book chapters and policy reports were written. The analysis carried out for these other works led to the insight that the strong focus on macro-level structures in the earlier draft did not do justice to the multitude of data gathered on micro-level dimensions. Drawing better on that material would need to be reflected in the study's theoretical elaboration, which prompted me to explore literature both on agency in general (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998), and on agency in turbulent environments (Vigh, 2006). Further reflections on the processes underlying the observed forms of agency of civilians also prompted a recoding of that agency in the terms of Levi's (1997) theory on citizens' compliance, consent and dissent with state authority. This analytical phase was

⁹ However, due to the large number of ghost soldiers (those existing only on the payroll, but cannot be found on the ground) in the Amani Leo brigades, the regiments are in reality sometimes more numerous than these previous brigades.

also marked by the emergence of the insight that the links between the researched macro-level structures and micro-level civilian-military practices were under-theorized. To fill this theoretical void, it was decided to stronger phrase the work in the structuration theory of Giddens, leading to the reframing of militarization as a process of structuration and a renewed focus on how agency (re)produces and transforms social structures. The work of Giddens also drew attention to the notions of routinization and practical consciousness, which chimed with the earlier focus on practical norms. However, in the course of rewriting the draft, which was quite radically restructured, and when further reflecting on the work of Vigh (2006), it was found that the focus on structures did not fully capture the observed forms of agency. Due to the constantly changing political-military landscape and socio-economic environment, as well as ongoing developments in relation to conflicts, agency in the Kivus is strongly influenced by shorter-term considerations. To capture this fluidity, the decision was made to re-elaborate the notion of the dialectics of oppression as coined by Schatzberg (1988), leading to the concept of the ‘dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection’, which became a crucial pillar of the study. Another analytical development in this phase followed from the insight that I had not sufficiently capitalized upon the comparative nature of the research design. Therefore, it was decided to engage in a more systematic comparison of the instances of civilian-military interaction defined as ‘cases’ (see Table 1). This necessitated a sharper delineation of the factors shaping civilian-military interaction, as these had to serve as bases of comparison. Thus, for each of the cases, an overview was composed of the main findings, in order to explore a number of propositions concerning the (combinations of) factors that cause differences in civilian-military interaction. Given the large number of cases (14) and the large number of identified factors, it was concluded that analysis would be facilitated by drawing up a table in which all relevant factors were listed, and assigned a value of either 1 or 0 for presence or absence. This simplification was justified by the fact this comparison served as no more than a tool for corroborating conclusions arrived at on the basis of the in-depth study of each case. The main ‘outcome’ of each case was coded as well, namely whether civilians evaluated interaction with the unit in question as either good (assigned 0) or bad (assigned 1). This helped corroborate propositions as to under which conditions military units behave either good or bad towards civilians.

Table 1: Overview of cases

Cases	Unit	Place
#1	ex-20 th Integrated Brigade (IB)	Butembo
#2	223 rd brigade	Northern Bwisha (Rutshuru)
#3	Naval Forces/Vitshumbi base	Lake Edward
#4	433 rd (ex-234 th)	Katobo (Moyens Plateaux Uvira)
#5	432 nd	Lemera (Moyens Plateaux Uvira)
#6	29 th IB	Mutambala sector (Fizi)
#7	641 st (ex-29 th IB)	Southern Ngandja sector (Fizi)
#8	112 th	Minembwe area (Hauts Plateaux of Fizi)
#9	642 nd (ex-112 th)	Lulenge/western Ngandja sectors (Fizi)
#10	651 st	Southern Ngandja sector (Fizi)
#11	651 st	Hauts Plateaux of Fizi/Mwenga
#12	652 nd	Hauts Plateaux of Fizi/Mwenga
#13	712 th regiment	Mutambala sector (Fizi)
#14	714 th regiment	Southern Ngandja sector (Fizi)

The theoretical and analytical refinements outlined above implied a recoding of the gathered data, and led to the development of new propositions. These were verified during field research conducted for a follow-up project on economic interactions between the Congolese armed forces and civilians, on which I started to work in mid-2013. For this new project, I conducted several brief periods of field research in 2013 and 2014. In November 2013, following a short trip to Kinshasa, I carried out field research on the interactions between the navy and fishermen on and around Lake Albert in Province Orientale. As this area is not located in the Kivu provinces, this research provided valuable insights regarding the applicability of the research findings beyond the Kivus. Furthermore, in March and April 2014, research was conducted in Goma, Bukavu and Uvira territory, and in June, October and November 2014 in Uvira and Fizi territory. This allowed me to look into developments over the mid term, such as the level of cohesion of the regiments that had been formed in 2011. Since focusing on the same broad research questions, these trips also helped judge the accuracy of the theoretical re-framings made in the course of the writing process. Additionally, they allowed for analyzing the effects of a number of important developments that had occurred during the reflection and writing phase following the third fieldwork period. In 2012, one month after I had left the field, a major mutiny broke out among troops located in some of the fieldwork sites in Fizi and Uvira. This event confirmed the observed importance of separate command chains and distinct forms of identification among members of certain ex-rebel groups that had formed part of these units, which were at the root of low cohesion. Certain units in North Kivu equally experienced a wave of desertions sparked by a mutiny that later morphed into a rebellion, which had far-reaching effects on the FARDC. As many of these developments corroborated key findings of the research, it was decided to incorporate them into the dissertation. During fieldtrips to Kinshasa, Goma and Bukavu made during 2013 and 2014, key informants from the FARDC, EUSEC and the UN were contacted to help ensure that these broader developments and their effects were adequately interpreted. Aside from by renewed fieldwork, the new theoretical concepts developed in the third phase of the

research were also corroborated by consulting the extensive archive of news articles and reports on the FARDC that had been built up during work on this dissertation. Between mid-2009 and end 2014, I systematically monitored Congolese and international media as well as (I)NGO and UN reports on events and analyses pertaining to the FARDC. The resulting archive did not only allow for corroborating data gathered during the fieldwork, but also to supplement the analysis with data on zones in the Kivus where no fieldwork had been conducted, which has increased the generalizability of the findings.

1.2 *Research design, data collection and data analysis*

As can be concluded from the above description of the various phases of the research, the research design was incrementally developed, rather than fixed from the outset, reflecting the retroductive nature of the research. This emphasis on retroduction can be explained by a range of factors, including the study's exploratory character; the lack of knowledge on the possibilities for data collection prior to going to the field, in particular on the military and insecure zones; and the fact that data collection on the military remained partly subject to chance encounters. Building up the confidential contacts needed for gaining insight into the internal dynamics of military units was not self-evident, and was in some cases met with more success than in others. For these various reasons, and in spite of the fact that the idea of a case study was adopted at an early stage of the research, it was initially not clear what cases should be selected and how many. Consequently, not all data were collected in areas or on military units designated as components of cases. Research sites were initially selected according to criteria of both accessibility and broad variation in social structures and dynamics, implying research was conducted in rural and urban settings, in areas with different types of dominant economic activities, and in areas with and without armed groups, violence and communal conflicts. Data collection in the first phases, which were largely exploratory, was also deliberately flexible, as I tried to seize upon unanticipated opportunities and sometimes engaged in activities that only later turned out to yield valuable data. For example, I once ran unexpectedly into a public hearing of a military tribunal, or was invited to visit a prison by human rights defenders, which offered a sudden opportunity to speak with incarcerated soldiers. It also regularly occurred that I gained insights on civilian-military interaction in the course of activities that were not directly related to research, like when attending soccer matches or church services, or going to restaurants or bars. Another reason why data collection also took place in other sites and on other military units than those eventually selected as cases was that in order to understand certain general mechanisms of political-economic civilian-military interaction, the research 'sampled' or selected as its units of study (Gerring, 2012: 75) particular categories of economic operators and economic sites. While the first included shop owners, boat operators, hotel staff, and motor-taxi drivers, the latter encompassed markets, mining sites and border posts. Although most of these sites and operators were located within the research areas progressively designated as components of 'cases', some were not.

Case study design

Most cases that were eventually selected were drawn from the zones and units on which research had been conducted during the first fieldwork phase. The exception to this are the two regiments that were formed in 2011, which nevertheless consisted of staff from the same units that research had been conducted upon during earlier fieldwork. The main criterion of case selection, apart from the quality of the gathered data, was that cases needed to represent diversity both in relation to the factors shaping civilian-military interaction (hence the internal features of military units, and relevant social structures and dynamics pertaining to the deployment context) and in relation to the characteristics of this interaction, in particular what might be termed its 'outcomes', defined as the extent to which civilians evaluate it as good or bad. The need for variation in terms of conditions and outcomes was given in by the overarching objective of this study to uncover *causal mechanisms* in relation to how civilian-military interaction is produced. Following George and Bennett (2005: 145), causal mechanisms are viewed herein not as deterministic, but as operating 'only under certain conditions', while 'their effects depend on interactions with other mechanisms that make up these contexts'. By implication, causal mechanisms tend to be necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for explanation.

Due to the diversity of the features of both the socio-spatial suborders (places) constituting the Kivus and the military units operating within them, the 'distribution of useful variation' in this study was rather large. In other words, there was a large 'variation (temporal or spatial) on relevant parameters that might yield clues about a causal relationship' (Gerring, 2007: 56). By comparing cases with different characteristics, for example those involving military units under responsible command and those guided by bad commanders, or those involving areas where there is a multitude of competing armed actors and those where such actors are absent, it is possible to detect what factors most shape civilian-military interaction, and to explain variations in this interaction. In sum, the differences encountered in terms of (combinations of) places and military units favored a 'diverse case method' design, in which case selection was guided by the objective to achieve a maximum of variety along relevant dimensions (idem: 97-98). The logic of case selection here is 'typological', since informed by the search for certain 'types' or configurations of variables that cause particular outcomes (George and Bennett, 2005: 235). These 'types' were only progressively defined, as the fieldwork offered increasingly better-tuned insights into what types of structures and dynamics were relevant and why. This reflects the overlapping nature of case selection and case analysis that characterizes much case study research (Gerring, 2007: 150). In relation to the outcomes, or the characteristics of civilian-military interaction, the most important variation considered was concerning how civilians evaluate their interactions with a certain military unit in terms of 'good' or 'bad'. Thus,

cases were selected where civilian-military interaction was seen as relatively unproblematic, and others in which it was seen as highly problematic. As explained, these contrasting appreciations were among the main considerations to conduct research in the 64th and 65th sector in Fizi, the brigades of which displayed radically divergent behavior towards civilians.

In relation to the conditions shaping civilian-military interaction, variation in 'types' related to on the one hand, the characteristics of military units, and on the other hand, those of the contexts in which civilian-military interaction unfolds, both in terms of social structures (e.g., areas with different socio-economic profiles and power relations) and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection (e.g., areas of contested control, areas with inter-community conflicts). In respect of military units, the selection criteria related to variations in trajectory and composition, unit command, and a unit's practices. Consequently, units were selected that had stayed for a relatively long time in the same composition and/or in the same deployment area (e.g., certain ex-Integrated Brigades) and others of which the composition had recently changed, notably due to the accelerated integration of large amounts of former rebels, and/or which had experienced rapid rotations. Furthermore, units were selected with commanding officers that displayed the intent to control and discipline their subordinates and those with commanders who demonstrated to have other priorities or norms. Other criteria for selection were divergences in relation to a unit's engagement in violent practices towards civilians, its involvement in revenue-generation activities, and efforts to provide security to civilians or assist civilian authorities. Concerning variations in the deployment context, the parameters on which selection was based included the level of isolation (leading to the selection of both urban and far-flung rural areas); power configurations (areas with strong or weak customary chiefs and/or politico-administrative authorities, areas with or without a powerful business community, areas with or without the presence of armed groups and other armed actors); the structure of the local economy (areas with or without natural resources, border zones); and social configurations (the occurrence and nature of communal conflicts). However, variation in these features was not the sole criterion for case selection. As mentioned, some cases encompass the same place, but combine with a different military unit. Hence comparability also weighed in on the choice, as it was considered that studying the same areas but with different units could help identify the relative effects of the deployment context vs. those of unit-related factors.

Within this study, any causal mechanisms to be identified were likely going to be contingent on a wide variety of confluent circumstances, pointing to small and inconsistent effects. Not only is the array of potentially relevant structures and dynamics on both the civilian and the military side vast, there are documented to be substantial differences in these features both within the Kivus and among the different military units deployed there. Therefore, it was estimated that it would be difficult to find sufficient similar configurations of structures and dynamics producing similar effects to draw strong causal inferences. Where causal effects are contingent and complex, a cross-case design (involving a larger number of cases) is warranted (Gerring, 2007: 53–55). For that reason, the research intended not to focus on two or three, but a modest variety of cases, with eventually 14 cases being studied. These cases were not only studied in themselves (within-case analysis), but were also used for making comparisons (cross-case analysis). This comparative dimension was warranted by the research's explicit aim to explain variations in civilian-military interactions. As argued by Ragin (1994: 111), one of the distinct features of comparative research is 'its explicit focus on the causes of diversity, and its emphasis on the systematic analysis of similarities and differences in the effort to specify how diversity is patterned'. Another advantage of selecting a variety of cases was that it enhanced the external validity of the research, or the certainty that the selected units of research indeed tell something about the general research population (Gerring, 2012: 84–86). Since the diversity within the selected cases both in terms of the outcomes of civilian-military interaction and the features of the places and military units involved is found throughout the Kivu provinces, the research findings are generalizable up to this level.

From the above, it follows that one of the main objectives of this research was to identify a number of recurring configurations of factors (certain combinations of social structures and dynamics) and to specify how and under what conditions these produce certain types of civilian-military interaction (in particular how it is evaluated by civilians). Therefore, the general mode of inquiry of this study can be characterized as 'typological theorizing' (George and Bennett, 2005: 235), relating to the formulation of theoretical propositions about under what conditions and how certain configurations of variables (theoretical types or subtypes) might produce particular effects on specified dependent variables. These complex, contingent generalizations yield middle-range theories, which are situated between the micro-level of individual causal mechanisms and the macro-level of general theories. The causal mechanisms identified in this type of theorizing are generally not of the 'necessary condition' type, but are 'contributing causes'. This is partly the result of their complex character, as they relate to combinations (or configurations) of multiple variables. To give an example, the research found that when military units are deployed for a long period of time in the same civilian environment, they have incentives to develop less coercive forms of revenue generation. However, whether they act upon such incentives depends also on other factors, such as the injunctions that they receive from the hierarchy and their internal norms. Hence, long-term deployment is not a necessary or sufficient condition in order for the outcome (less coercive forms of revenue generation) to materialize; rather it is a contributing cause, which produces this outcome in combination with certain other factors.

The advantage of typological theorizing is that the formulated types or subtypes have a high degree of explanatory richness. As such, typological theorizing is well placed to study complex phenomena, analyze interaction effects, provide an inventory of all possible types of cases (typologies), and serve as a basis for cross-case comparisons (George and Bennett, 2005: 233). Crucially, typological theorizing can include 'within a single typological framework hypotheses on mechanisms leading from agents to structures and those leading from structures to agents' (idem: 245). Therefore, it is a useful analytical tool for the study of processes of structuration. Furthermore,

typological theorizing does not require the full specification of the formulated theories, or the detailing of all possible combinations of variables and their corresponding effects. Such full specification was not carried out in this study, which did not have as objective to exhaustively map all (combinations of) factors shaping civilian-military interaction and formulate detailed hypotheses about their causal weight. Rather, the aim was to identify the most recurrent combinations of the most important factors that, under specific conditions, lead to certain types of civilian-military interaction.

Table 2: Total number of places visited

Sector / Territory	Places	Total
Fizi-Mutambala sector	Baraka, Katalakulu, Sebele, Dine/Mizimu, Kimino, Buma, Katenga	7
Fizi-Ngandja sector	Fizi <i>centre</i> , Mama Tantine, Kakela 1, Lubondja, Lulimba, Misisi, Ngalula, Kikonde, Kazimia, Yungu, Kakone, Mukera, Bwala, Nalubwe, Kasakala, Kananda, Lusuku, Nakiele	18
Hauts Plateaux Fizi & Itombwe	Minembwe, Kalingi I, Kalingi II, Masha, Kenya, Mulisa, Bigaragara, Mibunda, Ghawera, Tulambo, Mikalati, Rugabano, Luhemba, Mikenke, Antenne, Kabare, Kamombo, Lubumba, Nabombe, Marunde	20
Fizi-Lulenge sector	Mabumba, Kasanga, Musochi, Kabeya (part of Maniema province), Lwiko, Mayi ya Moto, Kilembwe, Kagembe, Pene Mende	9
Uvira-Moyens Plateaux (Bafuliiru chefferie) & part of Walungu (Kamanyola)	Katobo, Mugaja, Mulenge, Lemera, Kamanyola, Kisanga	6
Uvira-Moyens & Hauts Plateaux (Bavira chefferie)	Kirungu, Kitundu, Hwehwe, Bijombo-Ishenge, Marungu, Masango (Mushale), Muranvya, Irango, Kajembwe, Kagogo, Magunda	11
Rutshuru territory	Kiwanja, Nyongera, Rutshuru ville, Katwiguru, Kisharo, Nyamilima, Ishasha, Vitshumbi, Kanyabayonga, Rugarama, Bunagana	11
Beni territory	Beni, Butembo, Eringeti, Oicha, Mutwanga, Bulango, Mutsora, Kasindi	8
Lubero territory	Lubero, Kirumba, Kashege, Luofu, Kamandi, Kyavinyonge	6
Towns	Uvira, Bukavu, Goma	3
Military bases	Luberizi, Rumangabo, Sange (UN base)	3
Total number of places visited		102

Data collection

The collection of data had as main purpose to study what social structures and dynamics most shape civilian-military interaction and how. Where this fell within the case study component of the research, this involved exploring in detail the structures and dynamics specific to certain places and military units. Where this was not directly connected to the case study component, it entailed a focus on specific dimensions of structures and dynamics and their impact on the individual agency of certain types of social agents. The main ways to collect data were ethnographic field research, especially interviews and participant (observation) (see below), complemented by the study of news and NGO reports and other documents. Data collection took place over 14 months between 2010 and 2012 (with verification and limited additions during three months of fieldwork conducted in 2013 and 2014) and was facilitated by having lived and worked in the Congo in 2006 and 2008, albeit in the western part. With an eye to exploring diversity, avoiding ‘urban bias’ and being well informed of all corners of the case study sites, I engaged in extensive travel in rural areas. Research was conducted in in total 102 villages and towns, including those with military bases (see Table 2, Map 1 and Appendix A).

In part due to this mobility, and the relatively extensive period of time spent in the field, I encountered hundreds of people, including military staff. The nature and quality of the conversations I had with these interlocutors highly varied. Some persons became key informants, with whom I exchanged on a regular basis, including during the evenings and outside of formal interview settings. In other cases, conversations were limited to a brief formal interview, which sometimes yielded few insights. Furthermore, during group interviews, it could occur that one of the participants made only one comment during the entire session. Due to these differences in the nature and quality of interactions in the field, listing the number of persons contacted appears to a certain extent misleading. While transcripts and/or notes were made of conversations with 400 persons and 150 military staff, many more persons were spoken to. At the same time, some of the most crucial insights arrived at were derived from conversations with a significantly lower number of persons.

Table 3: Numbers and categories of economic operators contacted

Category	Number	Places & dates
Health care structures	30	Uvira (25.01 & 20.03.2011), Misisi (10.03.2011), Bukavu (28.03.2011), Minembwe (18.12.2010), Lulimba (11.03.2011), Luberizi (07.11.2011), Fizi <i>centre</i> (19.02.2011), Lemera (07.11.2011)
Hotels	19	Bukavu (28.03.2011), Uvira (21.03.2011), Baraka (16 & 17.03.2011), Misisi (11.03.2011)
Small-scale shops	20	Fizi <i>centre</i> (01.12.2010, 19 & 20.02.11), Kilembwe (24.12.2011), Misisi (20.12.2011), Minembwe (10.12.2010), Baraka (26.11.2010)
Fishermen	18	Kyavinyonge (25 & 26.04.2010), Vitshumbi (05.04.2010 & 26.01.2012), Baraka (15.03.2011), Uvira (20.03.2011), Kazimia (20.11.2010)
<i>Motards</i>	30	Misisi (04.03.2011), Baraka (21.02.2011), Fizi <i>centre</i> (28.11.2010), Uvira (14 & 15.11.2010)
<i>Ciné-videos</i>	20	Misisi (20.12.2011), Baraka (05.01.2012), Uvira (10.01.2012)
<i>Charges-phone</i>	12	Baraka (17.03.2011), Uvira (08.01.2012)
Boat operators	5	Bukavu (20 & 21.01.2012), Uvira (14.01.2012)
Presidents of various associations/experts	9	Fizi <i>centre</i> (18.02.2011), Baraka (15 & 17.03.2011), Bukavu (24 & 25.03.2011), Uvira (20.03.2011), Misisi (09.03.2011)

The method for selecting interviewees differed, depending on whether it concerned key informants or not, in what type of environment the interview took place, and the nature of the solicited information. In some cases, interlocutors were selected in a rather spontaneous manner. Given that the research studied the interaction between the military and civilians in general, in principle any person could provide an insight into the object of study. This also applied to categories of economic operators. For example when trying to understand the interactions between fishermen and the navy, any fisherman could be contacted. This was one of the reasons why economic operators were not selected beforehand, but approached *in situ*. This way of working was preferred to contacting the president of an association of certain economic operators and ask them to select the interviewees. In the Congo, most economic operators have their own association, like that of *taxi-moto* (motorcycle taxi) owners and drivers, or owners of *ciné-videos*. These associations are again regrouped under the umbrella organization for economic operators, the *Fédération des entreprises du Congo* (FEC, Federation of Congolese Enterprises). Having lived and worked in the Congo before, I knew from experience that going through formal organizational channels has certain drawbacks.

In particular, it opens up the risk that one is presented with the most educated and well-spoken persons, who represent the ‘official line’ of the organization in question and tend to be from the client networks of the organization’s president. Additionally, working through formal organizational channels takes a lot of time, as one either has to organize the interview in advance, or wait until all the invited persons have gathered. In areas without phone network coverage and with limited transport possibilities, advance organization is either impossible or a very lengthy procedure. At the same time, pressures on the time schedule are high, especially in insecure areas where one cannot travel after dusk. Therefore, both from a methodological and a practical point of view, the preferred method for selecting economic operators was to approach them on site. Eventually, around 15–30 persons of each category were contacted (see Table 3). This number was decided upon in the course of data collection, when patterns in the obtained information were discovered and data saturation was achieved. The data gathered in such a manner were usually complemented by contacting the president of a certain association of economic operators as well as the FEC. Furthermore, where quite specific information was sought on certain economic practices, for example on the regulatory frameworks of the logging or real estate sectors, experts within the domain in question were contacted, like officials from the ministry of the environment or the real estate department.

Table 4: Overview of research conducted at economic sites

Category	Place and date	Persons contacted	Objectives
Trade trajectories & road axes	Uvira-Minembwe (26-29.01.2011) Fizi <i>centre</i> -Lulimba (28.02, 12.03, 18 & 29.12.2011) Lulimba-Kilembwe (05 & 06.03, 23.12.2011)	(Ambulant) traders, other travellers, inhabitants of villages along the road, in/security personnel	Understanding practices & evaluations of road block taxation
Border posts	Kasindi (19 & 20.04.2010) Ishasha (03.04.2010) Bunagana (29.01.2012) Bukavu (Ruzizi II) (25.03.2011)	Civil society members, customs & other state agents, <i>déclarants</i> (customs intermediaries), local authorities	Understanding dynamics generated by presence of multitude of state agencies & military involvement in trans-border trade
Mining sites	Misisi (24-26.02.10; 04, 08-11.03, 19-23, 28.12.2011) Mukera (29.11 & 27.12.2010; 15-17.02.2011 ; 19.02.2012) Kenya & Bigaragara (4.12.2010 & 07.02.2011) Rugabano (15.12.2010) Luhemba (29.01.2011) Lemera (18-19.03, 13-15.05.2010)	<i>Creuseurs, négociants</i> (intermediaries), traders, local authorities, in/security staff, civil society members	Understanding forms of military involvement in mining sector
Markets	<i>Hauts Plateaux:</i> Kalingi (8.12.2010) Bigaragara (7.02.2011) Kiziba (3.12.2010) Minembwe (19.12.2010) Mikalati (29.01.2011) Makutano (13.12.2010) Bijombo (28.01.2011) Hwehwe (27.01.2011) Magunda (23.11.2011) <i>Other areas:</i> Lulimba (07.03.2011) Kavimvira (20.03.2011) Mwemezi (15.03.2011)	Market tax-collectors & authorities, market-goers, esp. buyers & sellers of agricultural products, livestock, meat & <i>divers</i> (various merchandise)	Understanding taxation practices, security situation to and at markets (including roadblocks & protection practices), military practices at markets Data on taxation at the markets of Mony, Kahololo, Marungu, Mitamba & Kitumba were collected indirectly
Beaches	Kavimvira (20.03.2011) Tala (Baraka) (17.03.2011)	Fishermen, security staff, local authorities	Studying taxation practices & other interactions between navy & fishermen
Harbors	Bukavu (20 & 21.01.2011)	Staff of boat operators, police	Understanding the military’s use of free boat transportation and general conduct

The contacting of economic operators at their site of work had as additional advantage that it allowed for observing their practices, including interaction with (military) clients and other economic operators. This was also one of the main reasons why certain economic sites figured as object of research in themselves, including border posts, mining sites, harbors and markets. The followed research approach in relation to these sites was to observe and contact a variety of economic operators, civil society activists, state agencies and security staff, in order to obtain a detailed insight into their social practices, notably in relation to civilian-military interaction (see Table 4). The persons contacted were a mixture of key informants, for example the president of the *creuseurs* (artisanal miners), or *négociants* (customs intermediaries), and ‘ordinary’ economic actors, such as market-goers and traders.

When collecting data in villages, the selection of interlocutors varied, depending on whether it concerned key informants with a specific position, such as local authorities, or other inhabitants. After having contacted the customary chief to announce my visit and demand permission for conducting research in their jurisdiction, I would usually first speak to a number of key persons like the *vieux-sages*, clergy or schoolteachers. These persons were partly selected from the point of view of balancing sources in order to ensure triangulation. For example, in zones with communal conflicts, I tried to contact members of all conflicting parties, as well as persons not originating from the area, such as staff from health care centers and civil servants. The latter are less likely to be affected in a similar manner as natives by certain local conflicts, especially those with an ethnic dimension. Furthermore, I usually attempted to contact various state services (since these are often in competition), and both the authorities and civil society activists. Where an event-oriented approach was followed, implying I conducted research on particular (developments in) conflicts or security incidents as an entry point to collecting data on more abstract research questions, I often tried to speak to those directly involved, like relatives of victims or witnesses, or those who for professional reasons were charged with investigating the incident or event, such as the police or the intelligence services. In some villages, I would also organize group interviews with people not selected for having a specific social or professional function, in order to get an understanding of the thoughts and opinions of broad layers of the population (see Table 5). Selecting interlocutors for such interviews commonly entailed approaching a group of persons that happened to have already gathered at some place in the village, sometimes asking them to invite additional people. This spontaneous approach gave the group discussions in villages a less formal character, and it regularly occurred that in the course of the conversation, new people would join and others would walk out. As in mixed groups, sometimes only men answered the questions, I tried to occasionally organize separate group discussions with women.

Table 5: Overview of group interviews in villages

Nr	Village	Date	Participants
1	Kimino (Ubwari, Fizi)	20.02.2010	ca. 6 women
2	Baraka (Fizi)	02.03.2010	ca. 5 men & women
3	Mugaja (Uvira)	16.03.2010	ca. 7 men & women
4	Kamanyola (Walungu)	23.03.2010	ca. 5 men
5	Kyavinyonge (Lubero)	26.04.2010	ca. 6 men
6	Kirumba (Lubero)	02.05.2010	ca. 7 men & women
7	Yungu (Fizi)	23.11.2010	ca. 15 men & women
8	Sebele (Fizi)	25.11.2010	ca. 6 women
9	Bwala (Fizi)	30.11.2010	ca. 12 men & women
10	Nalubwe (Fizi)	30.11.2010	ca. 8 men & women
11	Minembwe (Fizi)	03.12.2010	ca. 11 men & women
12	Mibunda (Mwenga)	14.12.2010	ca. 7 men
13	Antenne (Mwenga)	21.12.2010	ca. 5 men & women
14	Kabare (Fizi)	22.12.2010	ca. 5 men
15	Mukera (Fizi)	16.02.2011	ca. 9 men & women
16	Musochi (Fizi)	05.03.2011	ca. 7 men & women
17	Kabeya (Maniema)	05.03.2011	ca. 5 men
18	Kasanga (Fizi)	06.03.2011	ca. 6 women
19	Lwiko (Fizi)	06.03.2011	ca. 7 men & women
20	Lemera (Uvira)	30.10.2011	ca. 6 men & women
Total			145

Regarding the selection of military staff, techniques varied according to the research objectives and situation. At first, it was attempted to organize group discussions with staff at military bases or via the general staff of military units. In such cases, it were mostly commanders who selected the participants. As this introduced biases and had other drawbacks, as will be further explained below, this approach was soon abandoned, and was in later stages only employed for contacting lower-level units, like companies and platoons (see Table 6).

Table 6: Overview of group interviews with military staff

Place	Date	Number
Rumangabo	31.03.2010	ca.4
Nyongera	01.04.2010	ca.6
Beni	15.04.2010	ca.4
Butembo	27.04.2010	ca.4
Kirumba (Kasando)	01.05.2010	ca.5
Nyongera	07.05.2010	ca.6
Goma	09.05.2010	ca.4
Bukavu (Kavumu)	13.01.2011	ca.5
Bukavu (port)	18.01.2011	ca.4
Marungu	11.11.2011	ca.6
Muranvya	13.11.2011	ca.5 & ca.6
Kikonde	14.12.2011	ca.5 & ca.4
Pene Mende	27.12.2011	ca.6
Total		74

Most in-depth data on the military were collected via individual interviews (sometimes with two or three persons) and informal conversations with at least 80 military staff, who were encountered in a variety of ways. While some staff were met with during formal interviews, sometimes followed by informal contacts, others were encountered spontaneously, for example in hotels or during travel. With yet others I was brought into contact via snowball sampling. This technique was chosen as soldiers generally spoke more openly when I was introduced to them by a colleague (other than their superiors) than when I would approach them on my own. The military staff selected for interviews were mostly chosen on the basis of criteria of functional differentiation and variations in background. To ensure functional differentiation, I contacted for example staff of the military justice apparatus, intelligence personnel, army chaplains, and commanders. Speaking to personnel of the military justice apparatus (notably magistrates and staff of the prosecutor's office) was not only motivated by the intention to develop an understanding of the workings of military justice, but also as by the consideration that they are well placed to provide an insight into when and why soldiers break the rules. Army chaplains were contacted to get an idea of soldiers' spiritual life and of the moral messages to which they are exposed, which was part of the general exploration of norms and norm-enforcement mechanisms in the military. Since developing an understanding of command structures, projects and practices was an important objective of this study, another category of military personnel that was targeted were unit commanders at various levels (zone, sector, brigade, battalion, company, platoon). Obviously, this was necessary to demand permission for the research in the first place, and was therefore often done upon initiating contacts with a certain unit. Personnel of the various *bureaux* (departments of the general staff of military units, which can be found at each level of the command chain)¹⁰ also figured among the prioritized categories. This especially concerned staff of *Bureau 2* (responsible for intelligence) and *Bureau 5* (responsible for soldiers' social life, including civilian-military relations). Contacting officers of Bureau 2 was crucial not only as they are charged with investigating breaches of discipline and abuses committed by soldiers within their units, but also as they are generally involved in processing disputes between civilians, either on their own initiative or on behalf of civilians. To get a sense of the living and working conditions of soldiers, I also contacted personnel of Bureau 1 (responsible for personnel issues) and Bureau 4 (logistics). Additionally, I visited two military health care structures, namely military *centre de santé* (health care center) Kimanga, popularly called SIKEBE, in Uvira, and the military hospital in Bukavu. Data on health care in the military was also obtained by contacting the OMEDs (*officier médicale*, medical officer) of various units, who form part of the health care service attached to the general staff.

Concerning the sampling of military staff based on variations in background, it was attempted to find a balance between soldiers from the 'ex-government' camp and those from the various rebel movements that were integrated into the FARDC, but also between those from the eastern and the western part of the Congo, and those with various ranks. Of the 150 staff on whom notes were made, around 18 per cent were soldiers, 22 per cent *sous-officiers* (NCOs, Non-Commissioned Officers, who are officers with lower ranks)¹¹ and 60 per cent officers. This distribution reflects both the emphasis on key informants and the FARDC's lopsided structure, with in late 2009, only 38.5 per cent being soldiers, 37 per cent *sous-officiers* and 24.5 per cent officers (International Crisis Group, 2010a: 15). To get a full understanding of military life, it was also deemed necessary to contact spouses of FARDC staff, who tend to follow their husband on deployment and therefore form an integral part of military units. While a number of army wives were encountered when visiting military units, at markets, or spontaneously, especially during travel, I also organized group interviews with military spouses on two occasions (see

¹⁰ See p. 121 for an overview of command and staff functions.

¹¹ *Sous-officiers* (sub-officers) are officers of lower rank, normally sergent (sergeant) and adjudant (warrant officer/sergeant-major). They are the primary link between commissioned officers (those appointed by the authorities by commission) and the rank and file, and are commonly recognized as the backbone of the army (e.g., Fisher, 1994).

Table 7). The first group interview took place at the military base of Luberizi in Uvira, and was organized by the head of the association of military spouses, who selected the participants. However, due to the overwhelming interest, more and more women joined, causing the group interview to eventually transform into a public gathering with more than 30 women attending. The second location where group interviews were held was the gold mining site of Misisi. The participants of these interviews, who were not more than three to four spouses per interview, were selected by approaching women selling items along the street in a quarter of town where many military families live, and of whom the person facilitating my research knew were military spouses.

Table 7: Overview of military spouses contacted

Type of interview	Place	Date	Total no. interviewees
Big group interview	Luberizi	08.11.2011	ca. 12
Smaller group interviews	Misisi	22.12.2011	11
Individual/informal conversations	Road Butembo-Goma	22.04.2010	1
	Uvira	27.10.2011	3
	Fizi <i>centre</i>	26.02.2011	3
	Marungu	10.11.2011	2
	Minembwe	02.12.2011	3
Total interviewees			35

As mentioned, data collection also involved observations, including of events that provided good insights into various facets of civilian-military interaction. These included national holiday celebrations and other important festivities, military justice trials and local security meetings (see Table 8). In most cases, these events were not deliberately selected, but encountered haphazardly. This did not imply that they were not carefully and systematically observed. For example, I engaged several times in road travel over long distances during rotations of military units, prompting me to conduct research on the rotation process by looking into how the rotation was organized, and the military's and civilians' practices during the process. Thus, I would ask soldiers encountered on the road a number of questions, try to detect forced labor, or stop in villages to enquire about stolen items or the requisitioning of means of transport.

Table 8: Overview of observations of analytically relevant events

Event type	Place	Dates
Military justice trials	Beni	13.04.2010
	Baraka	20.02.2011/
		21.02.2011
Local security council meetings	Kirumba	03.05.2010
	Kazimia	24.11.2010
	Minembwe	30.11.2011
National holidays & official celebrations	8 <i>Mars</i> celebration Minembwe,	08.03.2010
	8 <i>Mars</i> celebration Misisi	08.03.2011
	Wedding of notables Mibunda	14.12.2010
Prison visits	Butembo prison	28.04.2010
	Uvira	25.01.2011
Military rotations (on roads)	Road from Lulimba to Fizi during rotation of 65 th and 64 th sectors	28-29.02.2010
	Road Fizi town-Minembwe during rotation of 65 nd and 65 st brigade	01.12.2010
	Road between Baraka and Nemba during withdrawal of the 65 nd to Fizi	25.02.2011
Total number of events		13

Data analysis

The main analytical methods employed in this study, geared towards operationalizing typological theorizing, were ‘process tracing’ and case study research. In the definition of George and Bennett (2005: 138, 147), process tracing is ‘an operational procedure’ used for identifying and verifying the intervening variables and observable (empirically substantiated) implications of causal mechanisms. Hence, it entails identifying (whether in a more deductive or inductive manner) and corroborating via empirical evidence all the different steps in causal chains, a method of analysis that is well suited for complex and contingent processes. Process tracing allows for example for identifying different causal pathways that lead to the same outcomes in different cases, or complex interaction effects among causal factors (idem: 212, 215). As applied in this research, process tracing had both more deductive and more inductive dimensions: while a part of the formulated propositions concerning causal mechanisms were largely deducted from the literature, others were predominately formulated on the basis of the fieldwork data. The latter also served to verify the assumptions derived from the literature, allowing these to be progressively fine-tuned, in a constant interplay between data collection and analysis.

Where propositions were inductively arrived at, they were partly elaborated with the use of coding methods originally developed in grounded theory research (e.g., Corbin and Strauss, 1990). This implies that data (whether interview segments, field notes on observations and informal conversations, or news articles) were transformed into concepts, awarded conceptual labels, and regrouped into categories (figuring as ‘types’). Investigations of how these categories related to each other were the basis for the development of theoretical assumptions, which were verified in later phases of fieldwork. An example of a conceptual label that emerged predominantly in an inductive manner and evolved into a set of propositions was that of ‘military involvement in dispute processing’. This concept was transformed into four (partly overlapping) types, based on the main projects driving this practice, namely security/order concerns, revenue generation, protection relations, and political-economic control. Subsequently, several propositions were formulated about the conditions in which these categories may be manifested. An example is the proposition that: ‘involvement in dispute processing for protection-related obligations is more frequent where military staff are profoundly familiar with civilians, either by originating from the area of deployment or by having been deployed there for a long time’. The validity of these propositions was again verified in the field, not only through the observation of new cases of military interventions in civilian disputes in different zones, but also by consulting key informants, such as human rights monitors and civilian in/security staff. While the described process of coding was applied throughout the different stages of the research, rendering it an important pathway to process tracing, it was not employed to the same extent and in the same manner for the analysis of all data. Reflecting the exploratory nature of the research, some conceptual labels were created when key analytical insights emerged during writing or the consultation of literature in between fieldwork phases, leading to the renewed analysis and sometimes recoding or re-categorizing of the collected data. Furthermore, the nature and precision of conceptual labels diverged considerably, causing them to range from broad categories like different types of revenue generation to more fine-grained labels such as ‘anonymity of perpetrators’ or ‘collaboration accusations’.

1.3 Research methods

As might have already become clear, the research methods employed by this study are both ethnographic research and literature study. The choice for ethnography was primarily based on the consideration that in order to answer the main research question, it was needed to observe civilian-military interaction in a real-life context. According to Giddens (1984: 289), the analysis of micro-level practices requires a rich description of ‘agents’ knowledgeable; a sophisticated account of motivation, and an interpretation of the dialectic of control’.¹² Such knowledgeable and motivation are not always discursively expressed. Social agents cannot verbally mention all the reasons for their conduct, which is partly shaped by ‘practical consciousness’¹³ as well as by motivations arising from the unconscious (idem: 4–5). Furthermore, social agents may not be fully aware of the wider conditions that structure their practices (idem: 179–180), for example as certain social structures appear as ‘natural’ rather than socially produced (idem: 91). It follows that any study of micro-level practices must cover both discursive and nondiscursive dimensions. As argued by Burawoy (1998: 15), ‘if the discursive dimension of social interaction, what we may call narrative, can be reached through interview, the nondiscursive, that is the unexplicated, unacknowledged, or tacit knowledge, sometimes referred to as practical consciousness, which underlies all social interaction, calls for more’. This ‘more’ consists of the extensive observation of the staging of everyday life in the research context, which is best accomplished by ethnography. With the aim of capturing both discursive and social practices, the following ethnographic research methods were adopted: (participant) observation, semi-structured interviews, which were conducted both in groups and with individuals, and lastly, informal conversations. Data collection through these various methods was strongly influenced by the work of Goffman.

Goffman (1959) proposes to conceive of everyday encounters as performances in the course of which the performers try to influence the audience’s definition of the situation and their perceptions of the performer. Consequently, discourses differ according to the region and situation in which they are articulated. In this respect, Goffman makes a distinction between ‘front regions’, or the settings where performances are given (1959: 109–110), and ‘back regions’ or places ‘relative to a given performance, where the impression

¹² The dialectic of control refers to the invocation, enactment and resistance to structures of domination.

¹³ The notion of practical consciousness is further explained on pp. 37–38.

fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted (...)’(idem:114). While the front region/back region distinction characterizes all performances given in everyday life, its impact on discursive practices was found to be particularly pronounced among military actors. There were salient differences between on the one hand, military discourses articulated during formal interviews, specifically in settings like headquarters or military camps, and on the other hand, ‘backstage talk’ uttered in the course of informal conversations. It is plausible that these differences are related to the military’s character as a ‘total institution’ with official discourses that its members are systematically socialized into, while their formal performances are monitored and regulated by a hierarchy. Indeed, the observed differences were most profound where discussions concerned topics on which well-articulated official military discourses and norms exist. A good example is ethnicity. Official military discourses in the FARDC emphasize that everyone in the military is equal, and that ethnicity plays no role. In the course of an interview, an interlocutor even claimed that ‘ethnicity does not exist in the armed forces’.¹⁴ However, in back regions, this front was dropped and narratives of widespread ethnic-based discrimination and ethno-regional animosities emerged, whether directed against ‘Tutsi’, ‘Nilotics’ or ‘Basemangala’ (Lingala-speakers from the western part of the Congo). In a similar vein, female military staff could be portrayed as ‘respected colleagues of equal value’ in front regions, in order to transform into worthless ‘whores of the commander’ in back areas.

Differences in front and back region performances overlapped and intersected with discrepancies between discursive and social practices. For example, while civilians were always ready to condemn the military and complain about its behavior, few were those who openly admitted that they instrumentalized the FARDC for obtaining economic advantages, eliminating adversaries, solving their conflicts or boosting their own power position. This veil of secrecy also applied to civilians’ interactions with armed groups. Customary chiefs and other civilian authorities who boldly declared their antipathy to these groups during interviews were sometimes later found to be supporters and collaborators. This hidden information made it necessary to always combine the analysis of people’s narratives with investigations into their social practices, while drawing on a variety of sources and different data collection methods.

Individual and group interviews

The weight of the front region was felt particularly strongly during group interviews with the military. In some cases, commanders tried to monitor the proceedings either directly or by placing informants in the group, inserting a considerable risk of bias in the research data. Depending on the situation, this was dealt with by asking commanders to leave, stopping the research, or continuing while discussing non-sensitive issues only. Furthermore, soldiers in groups sometimes stuck to the hierarchy, implying that if a soldier of a certain rank had given an answer, those from lower ranks were reluctant to complement, let alone contradict, as the ‘final verdict’ on the issue had already been given. On two occasions, soldiers even asked those higher in rank whether they were allowed to speak. Consequently, the quality of the data yielded by these formal group discussions was generally limited, causing this approach to be only sparingly applied. The bulk of the data on the FARDC were obtained through one-on-one interviews or informal individual and group talks, in particular with key informants with whom ongoing contacts were maintained.

In respect to civilians, group interviews were experienced to have certain drawbacks as well, as there were always a few people dominating the conversation. Group interviews with civilians were conducted either in small groups of three to four people or in larger groups of more than six persons. They mostly took place with inhabitants of villages, or with certain groups of economic operators. As was the case with military staff, group interviews turned out to be little suited for obtaining in-depth data on certain sensitive matters. However, for developing knowledge on other dimensions, like the history of an area, or collective assessments of the security situation or the conduct of certain military units, group interviews could be quite useful. Furthermore, the collective nature of the discussion made that people complemented and sometimes contradicted each other, which provided an insight into what accounts of the facts and what perceptions were consensual, and where divergences of opinion existed. While individual interviews lacked a similar guarantee that the shared insights, accounts and perceptions were not idiosyncratic, thus necessitating verification with additional sources, they could provide crucial insights into phenomena not easily spoken about in public settings, like military involvement in tax evasion schemes or collaboration between customary chiefs and armed groups.

One of the key techniques applied during interviews was probing, that is, stirring or structuring the conversation with the aim of obtaining specific types of information. Probing could assume various forms, depending on the interlocutor, the setting, and the way in which the conversation unfolded. While in some cases pausing would be effective, in others, sharing a personal observation or anecdote worked better. Both in individual and collective interviews I often employed enquiries about recent events that had happened within villages or military units as an entry point for wider discussions, or as a way to gather information on abstract or general categories on which it was difficult to ask direct questions. Initial information on these events was derived in numerous ways, including through chance encounters, interviews, and overhearing conversations, like in government offices or hotels. Such information was not only brought up as a lead for the conversation, but sometimes also for the purposes of verification. The use of leads fit into the overall flexible approach adopted to interviewing, with questions and topics being adapted to the setting and the interlocutor, but always following and relating back to the central conceptual categories and notions as contained in the topic guide. These central themes and concepts, such as ‘protection

¹⁴ Interview with sous-officier, Nyongera, 01.04.2010.

mechanisms' or 'military revenue-generation activities', were progressively fine-tuned through data analysis and coding, and then served again as guides for further data collection. Together with the change of focus in data collection per research phase, this led to the regular adjustment of the employed topic guides (for two examples, see Appendix B).

None of the interviews were audio-recorded. Instead, handwritten transcripts and notes were made in notebooks, which were eventually written up on a computer. It could sometimes take up to two weeks before I was able to digitalize the notes, as I tended not to bring my computer on extended trips to rural areas with a dubious security situation and scarce electricity, especially when moving around on foot or by motorcycle in areas with dilapidated road infrastructure. Moreover, moving around in that manner entailed extra risks during the rainy season. In two cases, the impressive amounts of mud I had to wade through and massive downpours caused my notebooks to become wet, making the notes partly unreadable. Furthermore, it sometimes occurred that the security situation necessitated moving on when I had planned to spend time on note-taking, or that writing down observations was hampered during the evenings as the *vieux-sages* of a village were informed of my stay and came to visit me. Due to the long time spent in the field and the fact that the same areas were often visited more than once, such incidents have generally not negatively affected overall data collection.

The choice not to audio-record was made on the basis of several considerations, in particular fear that the recording equipment could get stolen, especially when travelling in insecure areas. I also estimated the risk of being accused of spying when hanging out at or around military camps and bases with recording equipment to be considerable. Furthermore, I was afraid that equipment would be taken away during controls by state in/security services, in particular in more isolated areas, which could bring informants into danger. Additionally, I believed that people would be hesitant to talk about such sensitive issues as military abuses if they knew that what they said was audio-recorded. This also applied to military staff, expected to be reluctant to speak freely about issues like the conduct of their superiors when knowing their words were recorded. These expectations were confirmed by the effects of making hand-written notes during conversations, which often provoked extreme suspicion among military staff or negatively affected the conversation as people begun to dictate sentences for me to literally transcribe or started to stare at my hands. Such problematic reactions prompted a growing emphasis on informal conversations, notes on which were commonly made after the encounter, although not of literal quotes.

Informal conversations and (participant) observation

With informal conversations I understand talks not taking the shape of a clearly defined interviewer-interviewee format. It is important to clarify that this did not imply that interlocutors were unaware of my status as a researcher and that the conversation served for the collection of data for a particular research project. As will be explained below, I generally tried to stick to informed consent principles, although their application was not always straightforward. Informal conversations came in three kinds. The first type were unplanned, spontaneous encounters, for example in hotels, during travel, or in settings where friends of the people I was spending time with came along and joined the conversation, or were present in their house. The second type were more or less planned informal conversations, for example when certain military staff asked me if I wanted to have a drink with them in the evening. The third form were informal conversations that unfolded after formal interviews, which often generated interesting insights into the ways in which discourses are affected by the setting. After the notebook was stored and my formal role as interviewer had ended, it often occurred that conversations with the same persons continued and obtained a very different dynamic. The time dimension was sometimes also of importance. Where interviews unfolded during a prolonged period of time, which was not unexceptional, it often happened that more personal dimensions were touched upon, or that interlocutors started to pose many questions to me, generating a more dialogical process that caused the interview to morph into an informal conversation.

While often starting spontaneously, informal conversations did not unfold in an unstructured or random manner. Similar to formal interviews, when engaging in informal conversations I was often guided by 'mental topic guides' with key concepts and questions. Where informal conversations were planned upon, implying they were targeted at specific persons, I sometimes wrote such topic guides down in advance, tailoring them to the interlocutor in question. For example, if I knew a certain officer was a commander, I would try to find out more about his¹⁵ style of command and relations to his subordinates, or if I knew a person was a staff officer in the intelligence department, I would try to obtain information about civilians approaching him or her to intervene in conflicts. Due to the importance of informal conversations for data gathering, and the fact that the key issues to be explored during such talks were similar to those prioritized in formal interviews, I gradually built up a large mental stock of core themes and analytical concepts that was readily drawn upon even during unexpected encounters. Furthermore, I regularly adjusted the topics and mechanisms to be focused on during informal conversations, by constantly reflecting upon deficiencies in my understanding and knowledge. Informal conversations were also used for verifying information that had been obtained via formal interviews or vice versa, implying there was ongoing communication between these two forms of data collection.

¹⁵ While the FARDC has female officers, the fieldwork findings showed that they generally do not occupy command positions. Only one female was encountered who led a unit, namely a *chef de section* (chief of section, which is the smallest unit in the FARDC, consisting of 10–12 troops). However, the term *commandant* (commander) is only employed for leaders of units from the company level onwards, which have a separate administration. Therefore, 'commander' is referred to in the masculine throughout this dissertation.

A similar interaction took place between conversations and observations, which partly overlapped. As argued by Goffman, certain dimensions of impression management are not verbal, but involve 'expressive equipment', such as the setting in which encounters take place and 'personal front' items, like clothing and facial expressions (1959: 14, 32–34). The analysis of these non-verbal elements, and their interplay with verbal expressions, is crucial for a proper understanding of the context. Therefore, it was deemed of importance to directly observe everyday performances of civilian-military interaction in their original settings, such as at markets, on roads, in shops, restaurants, town quarters, villages and in and around military camps. In order to study how certain of such performances are shaped by discursive registers and expressive equipment of 'officiality', civilian-military interaction was also observed in more formal settings, like military court hearings, official celebrations and official security meetings.

Similar to formal interviews and informal conversations, the observed performances were heavily affected by my presence. As elsewhere, the presence of a *muzungu* (white person) has strong power and discursive effects in the Congo. Dealing with these effects requires 'hyper self-reflexivity' (Kapoor, 2004) on the part of the researcher, who constantly has to monitor what her presence 'does' in the research context and how it affects the discursive and social practices of those 'being researched upon' and herself. For example, where socio-economic life revolves around 'having connections', perceptions of the *muzungu* as a direct or potential source of contacts, advantages and (access to) revenue-generation opportunities are likely to be salient. This influences the more general mechanism that those being interviewed tailor their discourses to their understanding of the interview situation and the characteristics and expectations of the interviewer (Hyman et.al., 1954). Observational situations are similar in the sense that participants adapt their performances to the presence of the *muzungu*. Yet, the manner in and extent to which they do differs per context, depending on such factors as the prominence of the *muzungu's* presence, the amount of participants, and the setting and nature of the event in question. For example, observing at a distance and while intermingling with the crowd how soldiers demand a contribution to every passerby at a large market creates different effects than standing next to a roadblock in an isolated area while watching how two soldiers demand a single person for a fee.

Gauging the effects of my presence was an arduous, but crucial task from the perspective of assessing the quality of the gathered data. In my efforts to deal with this challenge, I benefited from my earlier experiences in the Congo, in the course of which I had played a variety of social and professional roles (intern, student, election observer, member of a civil society organization, policy expert). Increasing experience further facilitated the task, as making more observations in more situations offered the opportunity to compare the circumstances and processes surrounding the effects of my presence. Learning Swahili also helped, as it allowed me to capture more of the verbal reactions that people had to my presence, often in the presumption that I would not understand them. In the Congo, it is common for people to comment loudly on a *muzungu's* presence and practices, and such comments provide insights into their readings and evaluations of the white person. What also eased the task was that my research associates sometimes alerted me to the effects of my status as a white researcher. They would for example tell me after an interview that they believed the interviewee had been lying, was scared, or had exaggerated, and for what reasons. Outside the research context, sharing experiences with researchers who had operated in similar circumstances and encountered similar problems proved helpful for developing a better general understanding of the *muzungu* effect. These various coping methods allowed for an increasingly fine-tuned understanding of how I affected the research situation, although gauging the impact of my presence remained an ongoing challenge.

A crucial insight that emerged from dealing with this challenge was that the way in which I presented myself and operated as a researcher was an important element in shaping the effects of my presence on my interlocutors' performances. For example, the fact that I did not move around by car nor was connected to an NGO or the UN was puzzling to many, especially in the most isolated areas, as it disturbed the widespread assumption that I was a humanitarian aid worker or a human rights investigator. At the same time, it made it more credible that I was a *mwanafunzi* (student), which was the primary social role that I strove to perform. In the Congo, the social role of *mwanafunzi* evokes the same associations as in many other places in the world: a student is believed to be young, a bit naive, still learning about life, and, importantly, is seen to have little money, influence, or positions of importance. Emphasizing this form of social identification appeared to evoke sympathy and interest, and is likely to have helped me getting close to the military and rebel groups with relative ease. Possibly my being female, and in certain cases my unmarried status, which was frequently enquired about, further contributed to this.

Challenges in studying social and discursive practices

While the research intended to study performances in their totality, covering both discursive and non-discursive dimensions, it focused on specific processes and phenomena. For example, specific attention was paid to how social agents draw upon and resist structures of domination. As stated by Goffman (1959: 234): 'power of any kind must be clothed in effective means of displaying it, and will have different effects depending on how it is dramatized'. Since one of the central premises of the research was that social structures shape agency by means of social agents' enactment of specific social roles, an important focus of the field research was to understand how authority is performed by means of studying the discourses and gestures of figures of authority. Particular attention was paid to the discursive registers of 'stateness' and 'officiality' and how these registers were drawn upon in the performances of FARDC staff and impacted readings of these performances by civilians. Furthermore, it was studied how these readings and evaluations informed civilians' agentic orientations towards the military, which were progressively categorized as 'collaboration', 'compliance' and 'contestation'. Yet the

bases on which these agentic orientations were developed were not always easy to identify. As pointed out by Scott (1990), practices of compliance and contestation may in and of themselves say little about the projects and attitudes informing them. Compliance may for example not stem from consent, but rather be induced by coercion or derive from utilitarian considerations. Discursive practices may be equally treacherous when it comes to elucidating attitudes towards domination. Since it may be too dangerous for subordinate groups to openly and directly defy the powerful, they may code their resistance, for example through the use of euphemisms or metaphors, or by altering the object of contestation (Scott, 1990: 136–138). Furthermore, verbal expressions are commonly shaped according to the topic and the setting of the conversation, including the particular interlocutors and audience that are present (Goffman, 1959). Consequently, the same person may express resentment with certain powerful actors in one situation, but create a semblance of basic approval in another (Scott, 1990: 120). It was therefore necessary to constantly relate the study of discursive and social practices surrounding power to the analysis of place-specific structural features and dynamics.

Similar to structures of domination, it could be challenging to identify structures of legitimation. Norms cannot be deduced from practices in a straightforward manner. The fact that people engage in certain acts does not necessarily imply that they consider them to be ‘licit’, as they might undertake them for pragmatic reasons, or are coerced into it. Yet, when certain practices framed as undesirable in public discourse become routinized, and are engaged in at a large scale and over a long period of time by broad layers of the population, they may become eventually and implicitly seen as relatively ‘licit’ (cf. Roitman, 2005: 29). Such an implicit licitness indicates that practices are ‘taken for granted’ and are seen as ‘making sense’ at the level of practical consciousness, even though they might not be explicitly approved of in discursive reflections, hence when people are directly asked about them. A good example is civilians’ tendency to solicit the military to intervene in personal disputes. As was observed during the fieldwork, people generally condemn this practice, showing awareness that it is not appropriate or how ‘things should be’ (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2014). However, soliciting the military for interventions in disputes occurs at a massive scale, and while interlocutors rarely admitted to have engaged in this practice themselves, they often gave numerous concrete examples of others who had. This points to a phenomenon that approximates what has been described as attitude-behavior inconsistency or gaps (or intention-behavior inconsistency/gaps) in social-psychology, indicating discrepancies between on the one hand, professed beliefs and intentions, and on the other hand, actual practices (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2005).

As has been established for corruption, such discrepancies could indicate that practices are less illicit than would appear from public discourse, since they are acceptable according to ‘tacit codes and practical norms’ (Blundo et al., 2006: 5). Another or complementary possibility is that incentive structures are skewed against refraining from such practices, as not engaging in them would only lead to disadvantages while others would continue to benefit, pointing to a collective action problem (Persson et al., 2013). Corroborating these hypotheses is challenging, and requires in-depth investigations of a host of elements. These include the frequency with which certain practices occur; the circumstances in which they are enacted, including the personal situation and features of the performer; the ways in which the act is retold and evaluated in both front region and back region settings by various social groups; and finally, whether and when there are expressions of approval or disapproval. In sum, similar to how Blundo et al. (2006) have researched corruption, the study of the widespread illicit practices associated with militarization requires looking at ‘the *action logics* of the actors involved, the description of (...) *processes* and the associated techniques, the analysis of the popular *representations* and forms of *justification* and condemnation...’ (idem: 11–12, emphasis in original).

Similar careful research techniques, including the juxtaposition of social and discursive practices and of narratives and context, were needed to establish how events had actually unfolded. Zones ridden by violent conflict are generally characterized by a high level of uncertainty and confusion regarding what Nordstrom (1997: 43) has called the ‘factx’: ‘in the context of war, something is always wrong with the facts one is given. The facts of war emerge as “essentially contested” figures and representations everyone agrees are important, and no one agrees on’. A similar data conundrum exists in the Kivus, where *radio trottoir* (pavement radio) or the rumors machine plays a crucial role in the diffusion of knowledge. As observed by Jackson (2003: 195): ‘where certainty is in short supply, but desperately craved, meaning is manufactured, resulting in an “economy of truth-making” in Kivu’. In such circumstances, people often cling to versions of ‘reality’ that confirm their worldviews and forms of (collective) identification, while conflicting information is ignored, twisted or rationalized. Regardless of the ‘truth’ these versions of the facts are ‘real’ to people and inform their actions (cf. Simmons, 1995). Studying the different accounts of ‘reality’ that circulate in a particular context is an important way of exploring discourses and how these shape and are shaped by forms of identification and social practices. Furthermore, comparing these accounts may provide progressively better insights into what versions of the ‘truth’ are most widely shared and why, and how these correspond to the researcher’s own interpretation of the ‘factx’.

One situation in which applying these techniques of analysis was pertinent was where violent acts abounded, but the perpetrators could not be identified. In many research sites, the authors of a large part of the violence remained unknown, at least in the accounts of the authorities and human rights organizations. This created space for and reflected the circulation of widely diverging interpretations of the factx, leading to ‘blame games’ in which different groups pointed the finger at each other. For instance, in a certain fieldwork site, civilians affirmed with conviction that the recurrent ambushes and robberies were the work of FARDC soldiers dressed up as FDLR rebels. The FARDC and other state officials told with equal persuasion that in reality, the majority of these acts were committed by Mai Mai fighters.¹⁶ However, so they alleged, the population was reluctant to admit this, as the Mai are their own sons and daughters. At the same time, official

¹⁶ The term ‘Mai Mai’ is a generic label for smaller-scale armed groups in the eastern Congo that employ discourses of communal self-defense and autochthony.

accounts stated that the majority of the perpetrators were so called *hommes en uniforme non-autrement identifiés* (HUNI, unidentified men in uniform). These ambiguities handicapped an assessment of the conduct of FARDC troops and the state of civilian-military relations in the area: was the military terribly misbehaving, or did the population try to cover the Mai Mai? The only way forward in such situations was to carefully dissect the positions, projects and discourses of the various parties involved, and to reflect upon questions like: to what extent are certain accounts of 'reality' shared; what are the forms of identification, worldviews and social, political and economic position of those diffusing them; and what are the logics and effects of these narratives, in particular on power relations?

As pointed out by Jackson (2003: 229–231), rumors in the Kivus play multiple roles: they can be forms of counterhegemonic discourse, a safety-valve for dissent, a sense-making mechanism in times of uncertainty, a vehicle for spreading terror and projecting power, or a means of constructing or reproducing antagonistic forms of identification. Especially ethnic identification turned out to be a powerful marker of interpretations of the factx, leading to strongly divergent framings of the events per group. In an area populated by Babembe, who tend to define themselves antagonistically towards 'Rwandophones' (speakers of Kinyarwanda language encompassing both Hutu and Tutsi), a lucid sector commander of Zimba origins (an ethnicity considered to be close to Bembe) once confided me, in an almost desperate manner, that his Rwandophone troops were accused of 'all and nothing' by a prejudiced population. Indeed, it was far from certain that FARDC soldiers were the only authors of banditry in the area: several sources stated that demobilized, Mai Mai combatants, non-Rwandophone FARDC soldiers and local bandits were also responsible for a share of the abuses. However, the majority of the population put the blame uniquely on Rwandophone FARDC troops. This resonated with the propaganda of a local Mai Mai group that tried to discredit the government's policy of integrating Rwandophone rebels into the army, indicating that these accounts were partly politicized. Such conflicting interpretations of 'reality' made it of crucial importance to struggle against my initial impulse to distrust everything the military said and lent more credibility to civilians' versions of the factx. This impulse was strongly shaped by dominant narratives of the perpetrator/victim dichotomy as neatly fitting the military/civilian divide, which had influenced my grids of intelligibility (Verweijen, forthcoming a). Yet, as I soon came to learn, there is little reason to assume a priori that civilians' accounts are more reliable or 'true' than those of the military.

When uncertainty about the unfolding or interpretation of certain key events persisted, I generally attempted to revisit the settings where they had occurred in a later phase of the fieldwork, in order to re-verify information and see whether developments over time could offer more insight. Such revisiting and repetition, also achieved by contacting the same persons multiple times, made me understand that dealing with the x-factor in the factx cannot be but an incremental process, and always remains imperfect. It was only by gradually developing a better understanding of the research context, as well as the effects of my own presence on that context, that I started to feel slightly more confident in assessing people's narratives and identifying the factors and processes influencing them. However, it regularly occurred that doubts concerning certain events remained. Far from being a burden, the constant reflections on my interlocutors' and my own positionality that such doubts elicited proved an avenue towards new theoretical insights.

Ethical guidelines

Conducting research in what Kovats-Bernat (2002) has labeled 'dangerous fields' commonly entails a strong dependency on local networks for data collection, but also for guarding one's safety and that of one's interlocutors. This necessitates developing a 'localized ethic' (idem: 214) that entails ongoing dialogue and shared responsibility between the researcher, the research participants and, where present, research associates. Indeed, for making decisions on where to go, how best to travel through insecure areas, or approach armed actors of different kinds, in sum, for building up the know-how needed for obtaining data on highly sensitive matters without bringing myself and others into danger, I relied almost entirely on the savvy of the population, key informants within and outside of the FARDC, and research associates. Certainly, this did not exonerate me in any sense from the responsibility to 'do no harm' nor could it prevent me from running occasionally into trouble. For instance, when in Kasindi (a town on the border with Uganda), the ANR (intelligence services) forbade me in an intimidating manner to continue my research and sent me back to Goma, hundreds of kilometers away. While inconvenient, such problems could also be useful in that they allowed me to further my knowledge of the research context. In the case of the Kasindi incident, the harassment by the ANR improved my understanding of the anxieties that people experience in relation to the unpredictability of state services in the Congo, which foster a reflex towards soliciting protection.

To avoid endangering people and ensure accountability, I stuck to a number of guiding principles. Importantly, I tried to be answerable to my informants by giving them or someone they knew¹⁷ my contact details, including my Dutch phone number, should they wish so. There were serious drawbacks to this, as it led to frequent phone calls at the most untimely hours in either the Congo or the Netherlands. However, I considered that these disadvantages did not weigh up against the alternative of not giving my contact details, which also would have been against the explicit wish of many of my interlocutors. Furthermore, I tried to ensure that all people contacted, including during informal conversations, were always fully aware of my status as a researcher and the subject matter of my research, and that their opinions and thoughts could be used for research purposes. Where no explicit prior consent was given, I refrained from writing down literal phrases, although I sometimes did write down observations on these conversations. Similar to other ethnographers (e.g., Bourgois,

¹⁷ For example, when having conducted group interviews in a village, I sometimes left my contact details with only one person of the group.

1990; Kovats-Bernat, 2002), I found that the principle of informed consent is in certain circumstances difficult to apply. Immersing oneself in a research context implies that data collection cannot be separated from merely living. My *modus operandi* encompassed techniques such as: frequent travel, especially in isolated zones where I often went from village to village; building up of networks of key informants that were encountered on a regular basis; and hanging out in public spaces like hotel courtyards and restaurants. Consequently, I encountered hundreds of people outside of formal research settings. Moving around on foot, by motorcycle, by minibus or occasionally by truck inevitably results in a multitude of chance encounters, for instance when seeking shelter for a downpour during the rainy season, when the police stops the minibus in order to systematically check all the luggage, or when one gets stuck in the mud and the motorcycle needs to be pushed out. The same applies to sleeping over in villages: inevitably, the news of my stay would rapidly spread, causing many people to drop by out of curiosity. Similarly, in many of the cheaper hotels or lodges that I stayed in, where one generally avoids remaining inside one's room due to the lack of light and/or air, I ended up having lengthy conversations with hotel staff and other guests, including military staff. In such circumstances, it appeared awkward or was impracticable to ask for prior consent to participating in research, especially if it was not clear in what direction the conversation was going. When having random talks with, for example, the hotel receptionist, the staff of the health care center where I was forced to spend the night after a motorcycle breakdown, or fellow passengers with whom I had to wait along the roadside, interlocutors could talk about the weather, their children, or their house; however, they could also comment upon the security situation, complain about roadblocks, or discuss rumors related to local politicians or conflicts, all of which constitute data of relevance to this research. In such situations, strict informed consent was difficult to achieve, although it was always possible to ensure that people were aware of my role as a researcher and my research topic. In many cases, questions about my identity and mission came up very early in conversations, while in other contexts, I conveyed this information at my own initiative.

Aside from respect for the norms of informed consent and accountability, another guiding principle was to guarantee the anonymity of all informants and of the collected data. I never wrote down individual names, and if I did, very often at the insistence of the persons interviewed, I kept these data separate from the information they had provided. Furthermore, I made it a habit to burn my notebooks after having written down and stored the data digitally. Consequently, I never had more than three weeks of collected data material on me. Anonymity is also to a large extent guaranteed in the data presented in this dissertation, as informants are not named, but described by their position. Furthermore, the formal designations of military sectors and units (brigades and regiments) have been changed, as well as the names of all commanders and officers below the level of the military region. In a difficult tradeoff with making the analysis verifiable, and due to the focus on the structural features of certain places, the sites where observations were made or people were contacted have generally not been changed, unless when not doing so was anticipated to entail serious risks. The names of officers at the level of the military region or above, like the general staff of the FARDC in Kinshasa, were not changed either. The main reason was that most information on these persons was gathered via secondary sources like newspaper articles. Furthermore, they are so well known that they would be recognized immediately, not least as their position (e.g., commander of the 10th Military Region) is unique.

A final ethical principle that was followed was not to pay my informants, including military staff and rebel fighters. However, when someone had been exceptionally kind, or when it was considered worthwhile maintaining good relations with them, I occasionally offered my interlocutors a drink or gave them a note of 500 *Francs congolais* (FC) (approximately \$0.45), or 100 *unités* (units or phone credits, with a value of \$1) after the conversation. The decision not to promise payment was based on the consideration that this would render the obtained information less reliable, and that it would undermine the principle of informed consent. In a context of severe poverty, people might participate in the research primarily for the money, without agreeing with or taking the effort to understand the research objectives. There is also a risk that paying informants will fuel local tensions, as one group feels disadvantaged over the other. Finally, it was considered that paying informants might lead to perceptions of the researcher as being a rich person, which can negatively affect people's narratives. In my case, it would have also undermined the credibility of my performance of the social role of *mwanafunzi* (student), which was a key element of my mode of navigating the dangerous field of the Kivus.

1.4 *The quality of the research*

After discussing the research design, research methods, data collection and data analysis, the question can now be addressed in how far the research upheld general standards of quality as employed in the social sciences. To make this assessment, I have drawn upon the approach of Gerring (2012: 81), who distinguishes four criteria of quality, relating to accuracy, sampling, cumulation and theoretical fit, respectively. Since sampling has already been discussed, this section only focuses on the other three factors.

Accuracy

The notion of accuracy relates to both validity, or the extent to which the research results are free from systematic bias and therefore approximate 'reality', and precision, or whether (hypothetical) repeated application of the same research design would yield consistent results. Validity has two dimensions: internal validity, or the extent to which findings are adequate for the sample upon which research has been conducted, and external validity, referring to the extent to which the findings are generalizable to a broader population (hence including units not directly researched) (Gerring, 2012: 82–84). In the context of this research, the most obvious factor that could

potentially undermine validity was systematic bias resulting from a heavy imprint of the personal beliefs of the researcher on data collection and interpretation. An important way to avoid such bias is 'reflexive self-awareness', implying that researchers constantly explore and acknowledge their own values and outlook, while also making these explicit (Gasson, 2004: 90–91). In this research, the challenge of self-reflexivity was addressed by extensively spelling out the pre-fieldwork analytical framework. This did not only make it possible to trace intellectual influences at an early stage, but also to determine what propositions emerged predominantly from the fieldwork and what propositions were developed in a more deductive manner.

Another strategy to ensure that the research findings were accurate was the application of various forms of triangulation, or 'the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question (...)' (Bryman, 2004: 1142). Diversifying the research approach is particularly important for enhancing precision, as it allows for identifying whether the use of various instruments and sources yields similar results. Denzin (1970, quoted from Bryman, *ibidem*) identifies four forms of triangulation:

1. Data triangulation, which involves gathering data through multiple sampling strategies to ensure that data are obtained at different times, in various social situations and from different persons
2. Investigator triangulation, which relates to the use of more than one researcher to collect and interpret data
3. Theoretical triangulation, indicating the use of more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of the data
4. Methodological triangulation, or the use of more than one method to gather data

In this research, three forms of triangulation were applied. First, data triangulation was achieved by collecting data from a wide variety of persons and settings, as outlined in the above description of the research process. Second, the research employed both between-method triangulation, or the use of contrasting research methods, and within-method triangulation, involving varieties of the same method (Denzin, 1970, from Bryman, *ibidem*). For instance, both ethnography and documentation, such as UN and (I)NGO reports, were used to study the same events (between-method). This is reflected in the dissertation, which contains numerous references to reports and news articles that corroborate the field research findings. Furthermore, different variants of interviewing were applied (within-method), such as semi-structured group interviews, individual interviews and informal conversations. The third form of triangulation that was practiced is theoretical triangulation. Theoretical triangulation was mostly applied when it was analyzed how concepts would fit into categories, when propositions were developed from categories, and when these propositions were verified against new data (cf. Corbin and Strauss, 1990: 14–15). Furthermore, propositions corroborated by the data were subjected to a type of 'counter-theoretical analysis' drawing on conflicting literature, with the aim of assessing whether other propositions could explain the data in an equally or more convincing manner (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989: 544).

The only form of triangulation that was not applied was investigator triangulation, as the research concerned an individual PhD project. However, some of the benefits of investigator triangulation were obtained via discussions with other researchers. Maintaining a dialogue with a segment of the larger community of researchers is not only a safeguard against personal biases, it can also lead to the development of new insights and sharpen theoretical sensitivity (Corbin and Strauss, 1990: 11). Therefore, scrutiny and input by other researchers and practitioners, both Congolese and foreign, and both civilian and military, was actively solicited. Importantly, the findings of the research were shared with one of the few scholars having conducted extensive academic research on the FARDC, Maria Eriksson Baaz. While having conducted research on the Congolese military in the framework of different research projects, and partly in different areas, many of our findings converge, which also enhances the external validity of the research findings. Other recent research on or touching upon the FARDC also corroborates several of the findings of this study (e.g., Van Damme, 2013; Kets and de Vries, 2014; Niehuus, 2013). This equally reinforces the certitude that the findings have not been strongly shaped by the biases of the researcher.

As mentioned in the previous,¹⁸ external validity was also ensured through the choice of the research population and the manner of data collection, which was guided by the objective to uncover variety both in terms of constellations of factors and the conditions under which these produce certain effects. Additionally, it was attempted to reach a considerable level of abstraction in the analytical process. The more abstract the core categories around which the research is built, the larger its potential transferability (Corbin and Strauss, 1990: 15). Examples of such relatively abstract core categories with potential wider applicability are the various forms of civilian-military economic interaction that were identified (extraction, protection, collaboration/transactions), and the categorization of civilians' agentic orientations towards the military (collaboration, contestations, compliance). External validity was further enhanced through the consultation of news articles and UN and NGO reports containing data on similar phenomena but in other zones, which are sometimes alluded to in the dissertation. Furthermore, certain of the key informants contacted to verify the findings had also worked in other zones of the Kivus than where data collection had taken place, which has further increased the likelihood that the findings are applicable to those zones as well.

¹⁸ It was already explained on p. 19 that the case study component of the research follows a diverse case method design and that the diversity in the selected cases can be found throughout the Kivus, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the research findings.

Cumulation

For Gerring (2012: 91–95), cumulation relates to the methodological fit of the research with extant work, as achieved by the standardization and transparency of procedures, and the replicability of the results. In this case, the standardization of procedures, or taking existing approaches as one's point of departure, could only partly be achieved, due to the limited availability of research of a similar nature. While certain studies on the military or civilian-military relations were relevant, most of these had not been conducted in comparable circumstances, for example a situation of ongoing violent conflict. The most similar research available were studies on rebel groups in the Congo (e.g., Hoffmann, 2006; Raeymaekers, 2007), but these did not cover all of the dimensions and phenomena deemed of relevance in this study. Therefore, the procedures employed in these studies could be drawn upon only to a limited extent, although some of the conceptual language and analytical categories did prove useful. Employing these concepts and categories does not only place the dissertation in wider academic debates, but also contributes to replication, which is another important dimension of cumulation. As mentioned, initial replication (at the start of a research) was achieved by taking a number of existing propositions, developed in other research, as a point of departure (Gerring, 2012: 93–94). These initial propositions were documented in order to enhance the transparency of the analytical process. This was repeated in later stages of the research. For example, theoretical memos and network diagrams, which graphically depict the relations between various (sub)categories and their properties (Gasson, 2004: 94–95) were elaborated at various stages of the research to give an insight into the development of the analytical process (see Appendix C for an early example).

Theoretical fit

A key dimension of a study's theoretical fit is construct validity, or the adequacy of the research design for generating or testing theory. In the first case, this implies that the various parts of the theory fit with each other and appear to explain the data (Gerring, 2012: 95–96). In this study, it was attempted to achieve theoretical fit by frequently testing the developed propositions against negative or qualifying evidence. This testing took the criterion of partition into consideration, or the extent to which testing a theory is separated from its formulation, both in time and as regards the employed data (idem: 101). Especially the research carried out from the end of 2013 onwards was of importance in this respect, as it allowed for testing parts of the developed propositions against new data and at a later stage of the research.

Another way in which theoretical fit was achieved was by means of developing conceptually dense categories and subcategories, which entails the identification of a multitude of properties and dimensions. To give an example, the category of 'extraction', which emerged as an important form of civilian-military political-economic interaction, was identified as containing a variety of subcategories that specify different conditions and objectives (e.g., routinized public taxation, violent extraction, extraction through non-payment). This helped developing propositions about the causes and effects of these subtypes, for instance in relation to how framings in discourses of stateness give taxation a 'public' character and how this affects the ways in which this practice is evaluated. Additionally, I tried to develop consistent conceptual linkages between different (sub)categories, so as to enhance the explanatory power of the developed propositions (cf. Gasson, 2003: 95–97). For instance, in the course of the research process, the category of 'a multitude of competing in/security agencies' emerged. When pondering about the causes of rampant insecurity, this category became linked to those of 'local power conflicts' and 'civilian instrumentalization of military power'. In this manner, the proposition was developed that armed actors and in/security agencies seek to manipulate local disputes to reinforce their power position and enhance their opportunities for revenue generation. This shows that the identified conceptual linkages were made dense. This density further enhanced the generalizability of the research results, since contributing to identifying the conditions in which the described causal mechanisms may be manifested.

Concepts and theory

THIS STUDY DRAWS on several bodies of literature from different academic (sub)disciplines. It employs a variety of general theoretical ideas and notions drawn from this literature to formulate its main propositions concerning what social structures and dynamics shape and are shaped by civilian-military interaction in the Kivus and how. Chapter 2 explores the most important theoretical concepts employed, starting with notions that are at the core of structuration theory, namely structures, agency, routinization and social roles. It then analyzes the concept of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection as manifested in the Kivus, paying specific attention to the performance of authority by big men. Subsequently, the chapter discusses conceptualizations of place and place-specific dynamics and social structures, to end with an analysis of militarization.

2.1 Agency, structures and structuration

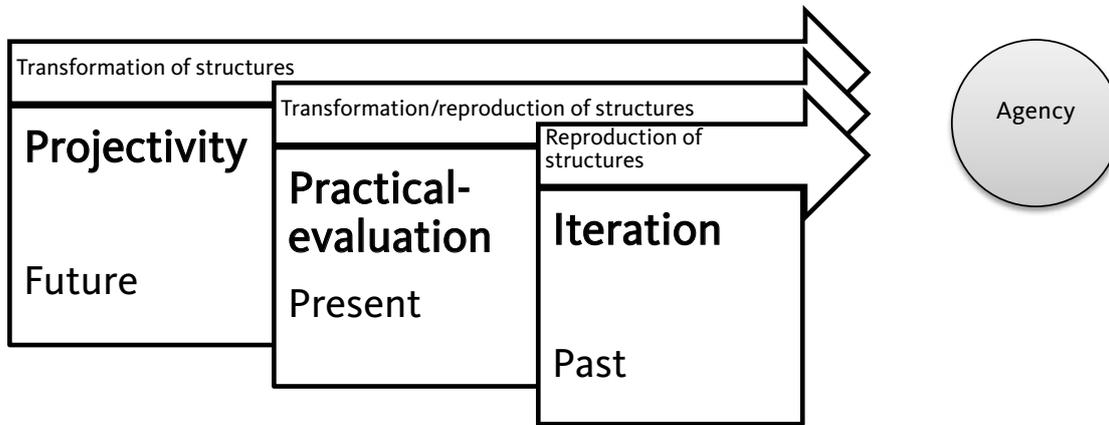
Giddens's theory of structuration intends to bridge the ontological gap between on the one hand, subjectivism, which takes the (meaning of) purposeful actions of individuals as the primary locus of explanations for social life, and on the other hand objectivism, which conceives of human behavior as determined by social structures that are external to the human agent. It tries to overcome this dualism of agency and structure by stipulating the 'duality of structure', or the notion that social practice and social structures are not ontologically separate, but mutually constitutive (Giddens, 1984: xix-xxi). Structures are produced and reproduced, intentionally and unintentionally, through the everyday practices of knowledgeable, situated agents. Through reflexive knowledgeability, social agents draw upon recursively organized sets of rules and resources, or structures, within their day-to-day practices. By enacting reiterative practices, they 'instantiate' these structures, thereby contributing to their (re)production. It follows that structures are both the medium and outcome of social practices (idem: 2–3, 24–25). Thus, structuration draws attention to the interface between the institutionalized features of social orders that stretch into time and space (implying they exist over the *longue durée* and have a broad geographical scope), and the day-to-day actions of individuals that take place in smaller strips of time-space (idem: 35–36).

2.1.1 Agency

While structures inform human conduct, they do not *determine* it. Rather, sets of rules and resources shape social practices by both enabling and constraining certain paths of action (Giddens, 1984: 169). However, what path is eventually followed is ultimately also the result of *agency*, which shapes the ways in and extent to which agents draw upon structures in their day-to-day conduct (idem: 14–16, 171). Following Emirbayer and Mische (1998: 970), agency is defined herein as 'the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments—the temporal-relational contexts of action—which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations'. Emirbayer and Mische see agency as constituted by a chordal triad with three dimensions corresponding to three different temporal orientations (past, future, present), which have a differentiated impact on the reproduction of structures (see Figure 6). While these three temporal orientations are always simultaneously present, one of them tends to dominate in any given situation. The first dimension is *iteration*, or 'the selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, as routinely incorporated in practical activity' (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 971). This often contributes to the reproduction of social structures. The second dimension is *projectivity*, denoting 'the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors' hopes, fears, and desires for the future' (ibidem). As this quote indicates,

projectivity is likely to contribute to the transformation of social structures. The third dimension is *practical-evaluation*, which refers to ‘the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations’ (ibidem). This may contribute either to the reproduction or the transformation of extant structures.

Figure 6: The chordal triad of agency (based on Emirbayer and Mische 1998)



Projectivity

Following Emirbayer and Mische (1998: 967–968), who draw their inspiration from pragmatist thinkers, the approach to projectivity adopted herein rejects the false dichotomy between (material) interests and (transcendental) values that is at the heart of utilitarian models of action grounded in means/ends rationality. Rather, its point of departure is that *projects*, as the possible future end-states and corresponding trajectories of action imagined by social agents reflecting their aspirations, dreams and fears, are always constructed out of complex blends of discourses, norms and interests. Furthermore, as Emirbayer and Mische insist, projects should not be conceived of as ‘pre-established ends that are developed abstracted from concrete situations’, and separate from the trajectories of action that agents devise in order to realize them. Rather, ‘ends and means develop conterminously within contexts that are themselves ever changing and thus always subject to reevaluation and reconstruction on the part of reflective intelligence’ (idem: 967–968). Due to their emergent character, projects and the charting of the trajectories to realize them need not be fully discursively articulated. Decisions can be highly unstable and sometimes only gain clarity through ex-post facto reflection. Furthermore, the development of projects is sometimes founded on processes that have a tacit dimension, like hypothesization (idem: 984). Thus, while in some cases pursuing projects entails a ‘highly discrete or circumscribed choice’ that can be articulated in explicit reasoning, in other cases, it blends ‘indiscriminately into the flow of practical activity’, and draws more upon practical consciousness (see below) and tacit knowledge (idem: 999). A final dimension of importance in relation to projectivity, as explained by Ortner (2006: 153), is that the ‘disposition towards the enactment of a project’ is but one dimension of agents’ capability to ‘make a difference’. The extent to which they can put this disposition into practice also depends on power. Given that the distribution of agency-as-power is not equal, as it is shaped by structures of domination, the capability to ‘make a difference’ varies widely per individual and per context (Giddens, 1981: 49–52).

Iteration

A key mechanism of iteration are *routines* or reiterative, habitual and often taken-for-granted actions. Routines are related to agents’ desire to sustain a sense of ontological security, since regularized, predictable practices minimize anxiety and allow for the development of trust (Giddens, 1984: 50). Routine actions, as well as the seriality of daily encounters, enable social structures to be chronically produced and reproduced. Hence, they give social life a ‘recursive character’, ensuring continuities across time and space. An example of a routine practice is that of a farmer giving a fixed part of his or her produce to FARDC soldiers present at the entrance of the weekly market. At certain markets, this practice has become institutionalized over the years, and is therefore taken for granted. Farmers know exactly how much they have to contribute, and that if they comply, they can enter the market without problems. This creates a sense of predictability and basic security. However, where the basic rules constituting this routinization are no longer respected, for example as a soldier suddenly asks twice the usual contribution, anxiety will ensue.

At the heart of routinization stands the notion of *practical consciousness*. According to Giddens, agents are ‘knowledgeable’ in that they know the rules of social life and reflexively monitor its ongoing flow and the contexts in which it takes place. Agents are also ‘purposive’ as their actions are informed by certain motives. An important element of reflexive monitoring is the ‘rationalization of action’, or human

agents' own understanding of the reasons for their conduct (1984: 3–4). Agents can partly elaborate on this understanding discursively, when they express the motivations for their actions in text and talk, drawing on 'discursive consciousness' (idem: 5–6). However, social agents are not able to verbally express all the reasons for their day-to-day conduct, as a part of that conduct is not directly motivated, but draws upon institutionalized rules and knowledge that is taken for granted. This taken-for-granted knowledge is what Giddens calls 'practical consciousness', or 'tacit knowledge that is skillfully applied in the enactment of courses of conduct, but which the actor is not able to formulate discursively' (Giddens, 1979: 57). It is precisely such knowledge that is drawn upon in routines, hence which enables the reproduction of structures.

Practical evaluation

Due to the volatility of the political-military landscape of the Kivus, social agents constantly have to adapt to the changing circumstances. At the same time, the direction in which events unfold is often difficult to predict. As a result, agency tends to be strongly shaped by practical-evaluation. This is captured in Vigh's (2006) notion of 'social navigation', referring to agency in terrains with shifting, convoluted and troublesome political and social circumstances. The idea behind navigation is that similar to vessels at sea, both agents themselves and the very social environment in which they are situated are on the move. Hence, navigation 'highlights motion within motion; it is the act of moving in an environment that is wavering and unsettled' (Vigh, 2009: 420). This results in significant interactivity between agents and the social formations in which they are situated.

Contrary to Vigh, I do not conceive of navigation as 'tactics'. Drawing on De Certeau (1988), Vigh defines strategy, in an ideal-typical fashion, as 'the process of demarcating and constituting space, and tactics the process of navigating it' (2009: 424). Due to its military origins,¹ the terminology of 'strategy' and 'tactics' bears connotations of means-end rationality and consciously developed, preconceived paths of action. However, the emergent and semi-conscious nature of the development of projects and trajectories of action renders a clear-cut distinction between strategy and tactics unwarranted, in particular in relation to agency in a situation of permanent volatility. For these reasons, 'navigation' is not defined herein as 'tactics', but seen as a form of agency in which the practical-evaluative chord dominates. Of particular importance in this form of agency is the 'retrospective-prospective process of *identification*, in which possible trajectories are located against a backdrop of prior typifications from experience, and relationships to the present through *experimentation*, in which alternative courses of action are tentatively enacted in response to currently emerging situations' (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 988, emphasis in original). While this process may involve drawing on means-end reasoning, the latter cannot a priori be presumed to be the only or predominant form of deliberation.

Similar to projectivity, the processes comprising navigation are intersubjective and strongly relational. Practical evaluation implies a dialogue with both the unfolding situation and with other actors (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 969), giving navigation a strong dimension of *negotiation* (cf. idem: 984). It is partly this negotiated character that causes the effects of navigation on the reproduction of social structures to be variable. Since processes of negotiation are to a large extent shaped by power relations, the outcomes often end up contributing to reproducing rather than transforming structures of domination. However, when engaged in by determined social agents who have mobilized a mass of people and/or coalitions of key actors to exert pressure, negotiation processes can also lead to the transformation of structures of domination. As will be further explained below, the intense dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that characterize the Kivus often prevent such determined concerted action from taking place, causing navigation to commonly contribute to the reproduction rather than the transformation of social structures.

2.1.2 *Social structures, social identification and evaluations*

Social structures

For Giddens (1984: 28–31), the structured properties (or institutional features) of societies take the form of both rules and resources. Rules have two dimensions, which are only separable analytically. The first dimension is constitutive of *signification*, and relates to the symbolic orders and interpretative schemes (discourses) that actors draw upon to produce meaning. As they enable communication by offering stocks of shared knowledge, these interpretative schemes are crucial for facilitating interaction. The second dimension of rules is constitutive of *legitimation* and relates to the norms that render some forms of behavior acceptable and others not, but also to the sanctions that have to ensure the enforcement of these norms. Norms are either formal, when enshrined in laws or formal codes of conduct, or informal.

Both dimensions of social rules (signification and legitimation) shape and are shaped by structures of *domination*, which are constituted

¹ The distinction between strategy and tactics goes back to the military theorist Von Clausewitz, who states that: 'tactics teaches the use of armed forces in the engagement; strategy, the use of engagements for the object of the war' (1989: 128).

by the asymmetric distribution of two types of resources. *Allocative resources* relate to capabilities generating command (or transformative capacity) over material resources, including goods, the material features of the environment, and the means of production and reproduction. *Authoritative resources* relate to command over persons, and concern the organization of social time-space, life chances and the production and reproduction of the body (Giddens, 1984: 33, 258). For Giddens, power, as simultaneously a constraining and an enabling force (idem: 14–16) is ‘generated in and through the reproduction of structures of domination’ (idem: 258), and is anchored in all dimensions of a social order, which implies that it characterizes all action (idem: 31–32). Consequently, structures of domination, signification and legitimation are indivisible.

One implication of the indivisibility of structures of domination, signification and legitimation is that the very identification of acts (signification) has a normative component (legitimation), for descriptive categories are not value-neutral (Giddens, 1984: 28). Processes of identification and labeling are in turn strongly shaped by power relations, which influence what discourses are dominant. For instance, the FARDC may call a financial contribution that it imposes on shops *efforts de guerre* (war efforts), reflecting the (stated) justification as needed for conducting military operations against armed groups. This speech act shows how ‘structures of signification are mobilized to legitimate the sectional interests of hegemonic groups’ (Giddens, 1979: 188). However, the shop-owners on whom such contributions are imposed may rather label them ‘illegal taxation’, seeing them primarily as a means for commanders to enrich themselves. By casting doubt on the legitimacy of the FARDC’s demands, this counter-discourse may come to inform acts that challenge the military’s position of power, such as a refusal to pay, or an irreconcilable attitude in processes of bargaining to lower the amount. This illustrates how structures of legitimation shape social practice.

Social roles and social identification

An important way in which structures shape agency is through social positions, which are structurally constituted as ‘specific intersections of signification, domination and legitimation which relates to the typification of agents’ (Giddens, 1984: 83). Social positions give rise to social categories, like that of ‘FARDC commander’ or ‘customary chief’. Giddens’s notion of social categories appears to correspond in broad lines to what Goffman (1959: 27) has called *social roles*, a term that emphasizes performativity and situatedness. It therefore adequately captures the ill-delineated and shifting boundaries between various social positions and social agents’ flexibility in performing the related typifications, which are a hallmark of agency in complex and unstable terrains (cf. Utas, 2005; Vigh, 2006). Consequently, it has been decided to primarily use the notion ‘social role’ where agency and performativity, hence social practice, dominate, and the term ‘category’ in relation to general and relatively stable identity categories that people ascribe to others, referring primarily to discursive practice. For example, while an FARDC commander is commonly placed within the general identity category of ‘military staff’, the social roles that he enacts may be that of businessperson, big-man, or commander. Both social categories and social roles are surrounded by predefined meanings and (normative) expectations concerning obligations, prerogatives and other practices, which influence not only social agents’ power and practices but also their modes of identification (Giddens, 1984: 83–89, 282).

Following Brubaker and Cooper (2000: 14–19), I consider the term ‘identity’, which designates a more or less stable condition, to have analytically imprecise meanings and reifying effects. Therefore, this dissertation primarily employs the processual term ‘(modes of) identification’, designating both self-identification and external identification. Drawing on Somers (1994: 614, 618, 635), social identification is understood herein as relating to narrative accounts of the self, which are produced through agents’ location in repertoires of causally emplotted stories (e.g., about family, community and society). These narratives of the self are constructed through and embedded in networks of relationships, implying that a sense of self is processual and relational, hence temporally and spatially constituted. The forms of social identification resulting from these processes can be seen as a type of ‘markers’ in social orders that are associated with ‘position-practice’ relations (Giddens, 1984: 282). Such markers are deeply shaped by symbolic and normative orders that are inscribed in the *longue durée* of institutions (idem: 85). This also applies to the forms of identification associated with the social categories of ‘civilians’ and ‘the military’. The representations or narratives that the military holds of civilians and vice versa are informed by structures of signification and legitimation that have been formed over the *longue durée*. Therefore, analyzing the ways in which civilians used to be depicted and conceptualized in the FARDC’s predecessor forces fosters an understanding of how civilians are represented by the military today.

Since social agents are embedded in multiple networks, they always enact a variety of social roles, and therefore identify themselves in numerous, shifting and overlapping ways. For example, FARDC soldiers do not identify themselves exclusively in terms of their status as military. As Nordstrom (1997: 48–49) points out: ‘Everyone enacts multiple roles in life. A “soldier” is in fact a person standing on the horizon of a virtually limitless expanse of roles and relationships. A soldier is a member of a fighting group, and as well a member of an ethnic, language, gender, cultural community and family group. All these alliances variously cross-cut the alliances of the fighting group.’ This has important consequences for civilian-military interaction, since it implies that on many occasions, civilians and military do not encounter each other as ‘civilian’ or ‘military’, but in different capacities marked by different modes of identification.

Social roles are an important mediating factor between social structures and agency. In relation to structures of domination, this is manifested in the social roles surrounding figures of authority, which both enable and constrain the projection of power. Importantly, the ways in which a person enacts the social role of figure of authority shapes *evaluations* of their practices, in particular the extent to which these are seen as 'licit' or 'illicit', respectively. While *representations* relate to generic, abstract categorizations, *evaluations* have a more concrete reference object, designating assessments of determinate (groups of) actors and/or their practices in a specific time-space context as grounded in direct observations and lived experiences of interaction. Evaluations of social practices are shaped by a variety of inter-related factors, such as the extent to which the enacted practices correspond to the expectations and norms surrounding the social roles of those enacting them, the way in which they are discursively framed, respect for the practical norms that guide them, and the relative legitimacy of those enacting them.

Evaluations of practices enacted by figures of authority, notably the extent to which these practices are seen as licit or illicit, shape and are shaped by the relative legitimacy of these figures' power position. Where the dominant are experienced to systematically engage in practices considered illicit, their power position may decrease in legitimacy. This, in turn, may influence the agentic orientations of the dominated, in particular whether they will comply, contest, or collaborate with the dominant. As noted by Weber (1921/1922: 28), rulers cannot maintain control by means of coercion alone. In order to ensure a degree of voluntary compliance from the side of the dominated, their power needs to be underpinned by structures of legitimation. According to Beetham (1991: 16) the legitimation of power rests on three elements: first, its conformity to established formal and informal rules; second, the justifiability of these rules in terms of shared beliefs (by both dominant and subordinated groups) about the (common) interests that power should support; and third, subordinates' public practices of compliance, considered to have declaratory power and to create mutual normative commitments. This last dimension, however, is not considered as a determining factor of legitimation herein. As pointed out by Scott (1990: 77–85), it is doubtful whether compliance alone can contribute to legitimizing power, especially when it is the product of coercion. Yet, I argue that ritualistic public compliance can contribute to *routinization*, as it normalizes certain practices and inscribes them in practical consciousness. Thereby, it may foster what Levi (1997: 17–30) in her study of citizens' compliance and consent to demands of the state has called 'habitual obedience'. Thus, while perhaps not directly contributing to legitimizing power, public compliance does facilitate its exercise.

The claims to power of the dominant are continually contested by the dominated as part of what Giddens calls a 'dialectic of control', with control referring to the capability of (groups of) actors to influence 'the circumstances of action of others' (1984: 283). This dialectic results from the fact that power relations, or relations of dependence and autonomy, are a two-way street. However asymmetric the distribution of resources, those in subordinate positions always retain a measure of agency to challenge the dominant (Giddens, 1979: 149). One way of doing so is to cast doubt upon the legitimacy of the power of the dominant and extant structures of domination. This makes legitimation an ongoing process, the outcome of which-legitimacy-reflects only a temporary state (Moore, 1988). How temporary this state is depends in part on the intensity and forms of the underlying power competition, but is also influenced by the level of institutionalization and homogeneity of the rules, beliefs and social roles that shape legitimation. Thus, in a situation of normative and institutional pluralism, where power relations are diffuse and constantly contested, legitimacy may be relatively fluid. This fluidity renders it analytically more fruitful to focus on legitimizing practices, or enactments of claims to legitimacy linked to social role performance, than on 'legitimacy' as a fixed, absolute property (Sikor and Lund, 2009). An important source of fluidity in the Kivus is that figures of authority tend to perform partly overlapping, partly conflicting social roles, being for example simultaneously big-men within patron-client networks (see below) and 'officials/state agents' in a bureaucratic-administrative system. Given that the norms and expectations surrounding each of these roles diverge, the same practices might violate certain social roles, while being in conformity with others. This generates a profound ambiguity that complicates the development of evaluations among the subordinated, and that causes variations in evaluations per social group, depending on how its members are related to the figure of authority in question.

Another source of fluctuations in evaluations are variations in the level of institutionalization of the structures of legitimation (norms) that inform them. Evaluations are shaped by a variety of overlapping structures of legitimation, some of which exist in relatively wide time-space spans, like social orders as a whole, while others are manifested only in particular places, or pertain only to certain social roles or spheres of practice. Some of these norms are more stable than others, while they also differ in their level and mode of codification. They can for example be anchored in text (laws, codes of conduct), be informal but part of public discourse, or be predominantly latent, implying they are inscribed in practical consciousness. The latter category includes what Olivier de Sardan (2008) has labeled 'practical norms', defined herein as usually non-codified rules guiding everyday practices that draw upon institutionalized forms of (practical) knowledge and reasoning. These norms are commonly latent, implying they exist at the level of practical consciousness and are (re) produced through routinization (idem: 14). Practical norms do generally not govern an ensemble of practices, or a generic category of praxis like 'military taxation', but relate to narrowly circumscribed micro-practices, such as 'the collection of foodstuffs by the military at the entrance of the market'. As such, they are crucial for understanding everyday civilian-military interaction.

2.1.3 *The reproduction and transformation of social orders*

A core idea of structuration is that social structures are (re)produced via their instantiation in everyday social practices. For instance, a casual encounter between an individual farmer and an individual soldier demanding a contribution in kind at the market entrance takes place in a limited stretch of time-space. However, when it unfolds according to a routinized script and respects engrained norms and social roles, it contributes to reproducing the structural features of Kivutian society. In this particular case, the soldier's claim to foodstuffs from the farmer is underpinned by structures of domination. Furthermore, the act of asking for a contribution at the market is governed by a set of practical norms (relating to structures of legitimation), which regulate for example the amount of rice, beans or tomatoes to be given and the procedures and accompanying discourses. When the transaction unfolds as a routine practice following the practical norms, and the farmer complies with the demands placed upon him or her by the military, these structures of domination and legitimation are instantiated and reproduced. Importantly, the effectuated material transfer sustains the military's position of power, therefore contributing to its reproduction. Furthermore, the transaction confirms the informal norm that codes the FARDC's demanding of foodstuffs at the market as a 'normal practice', even when farmers contribute more out of routine than out of the belief that this practice is justified. In fact, when asked about it, hence when appealing to discursive consciousness, farmers are likely to verbally express disapproval of having to contribute. Yet, based on practical consciousness, they comply. When doing so, and refraining from resistance or public disapproval, they contribute to the reproduction of existing structures of domination, even when this occurs largely unintentionally (cf. Giddens, 1984: 332).

The example given above singles out one of the three main agentic positions that civilians assume vis-à-vis the military, namely *compliance*. However, civilians can also *contest* or *collaborate* with the military. Each of these agentic positions has different effects on the reproduction of social structures, in particular the structures of domination underpinning the FARDC's power position. While compliance often contributes to the reproduction of extant structures of domination, contestation has the potential to transform them. Collaboration, by contrast, is likely to further entrench them. How agentic orientations impact social structures partly depends on the foundations upon which these orientations rest. Drawing loosely on Levi (1997), these foundations have been distinguished as habitual, utilitarian, legitimacy-based² and contingent (a composite category).³ While some of these categories entail discursively expressed approval or disapproval (notably those grounded in beliefs, like legitimacy-based and contingent consent or dissent), in others, the projects and reasoning behind them are not publicly expressed. This may either be a result of the fact that they rest predominantly upon practical consciousness, like habitual (dis)obedience, or that they entail norm or social role violations, which may be the case with utilitarian considerations. As highlighted by Scott (1985, 1990), these differences in the foundations of agency and corresponding discursive expressions compound readings of practices of contestation. Resistance may for example be manifested in everyday, mundane activities that are not explicitly framed as 'resistance', but it can also assume more overt and active forms, such as street protests, strikes, or mob justice, involving publicly articulated criticism.

In many cases, the foundations of agency are not explicitly reflected upon, nor are social agents always aware of how they contribute to the reproduction or transformation of social structures. One reason is that individuals can often not fully detect the consequences of their practices, especially when these materialize only at the long term and are unintended. For example, a civilian living next door to an FARDC soldier may make systematic use of the soldier's offer to have the battery of his or her cell phone charged for free at a charging booth, which is a common practice in the Kivus due to the scarcity of electricity. While this is in principle a payable service, soldiers generally refuse to pay for charging their phone batteries, judging to be entitled to free charging services. The main reason is that they consider communication a basic requirement for the exercise of their professional duties, and the military does not meet any costs of cell phone use, although soldiers' salaries are minimal. By accepting to make use of the soldier's (self-attributed) privileges of not paying for battery charging, the civilian (unintentionally) contributes to the reproduction of the informal norms underpinning the military's status of exception, and the structures of dominance enabling FARDC soldiers to extract services from civilian economic operators without paying.

Under certain circumstances, unintended consequences may become the unacknowledged conditions of future action (Giddens, 1984: 11–14). In the example given above, the civilian's short-term advantage of a freely charged cell phone battery has effects on future instances of civilian-military interaction. The civilian's decision to make use of the offer, likely in the awareness that the soldier obtains the service for free, as this is common knowledge, signals that the practice of extracting services from civilians without paying is somehow acceptable. Ultimately, this renders it more difficult for operators of charging booths to contest this form of military imposition. Furthermore, the civilian's condoning attitude may contribute to validating the way the military frames free charging services, namely as necessary for the execution of its professional tasks. In this manner, the civilian helps reproducing the complex of power, discourses and norms that bestows a position of exceptionality upon armed actors in the Kivus.

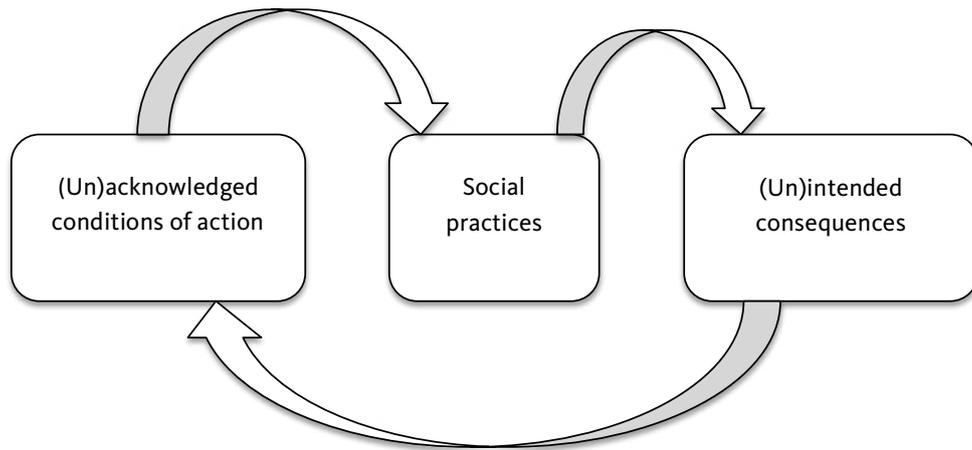
The above example of the effects of unintended consequences highlights the existence of 'non-reflexive' causal loops between the

2 As a basis for compliance and collaboration, legitimacy concerns both the legitimacy of the power of authorities and of the common goods-related projects they pursue, as shaped by values and beliefs.

3 Contingent consent is a compound form encompassing various types of evaluations and reasoning. It has two core dimensions: first, evaluations of the trustworthiness of the authority demanding compliance, and second, ethical reciprocity with other citizens placed under the same authority. See pp. 194-195.

conditions for and consequences of human action, which lead to the non-reflexive transformation or reproduction of the structures of a social order (Giddens, 1984: 11–14). Yet the reproduction or transformation of social orders can also be ‘reflexive’, implying it is a product of the practices of actors who seek to consciously influence social structures (idem: 27–28, see Figure 7). In the example given above, the FARDC’s position of dominance and the informal norms sanctioning the military’s refusal to pay for certain services could have also been reproduced through the conscious actions of an FARDC commander. For instance, the latter could have decided to call a public meeting with the owners of phone-charging booths in his area of responsibility, informing them of the right of all soldiers in his unit to charge the batteries of their cell phones for free. Where this would have resulted in pre-empting protests, the commander’s action would have had the intended consequences. These would have then become the acknowledged conditions of action of the soldiers in his unit, who would have proceeded with soliciting charging services for free, believing to act in accordance with the (informal) norms as propagated by their commander.

Figure 7: Reflexive and unreflexive system reproduction, adapted from Giddens (1984: 4)



2.2 Militarization and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection

Having explored structures and agency in a general sense, it will now be discussed what the characteristics of these notions are in the context of the Kivus. This first requires the reviewing of a social phenomenon that plays a key role in shaping agency in the Kivus, namely the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. Subsequently, attention is paid to processes of structural transformation defined as ‘militarization’. It is then analyzed how the nature and forms of both militarization and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection differ per socio-spatial order or place. This analysis also explains what is understood by ‘place’ and how it relates to militarization.

2.2.1 The dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection

In his pioneering work on the micro-dynamics of the political economy of Zaire, Schatzberg (1980: 184–185) highlights what he sees as a dialectical relation between on the one hand, rampant insecurity, including among state agents never certain of how long they will be able to hold on to their position, and on the other hand ‘the overwhelming condition of economic scarcity’, which generates incentives to accumulate as many resources as rapidly as possible by extracting them ‘from those in contextually inferior positions in the hierarchy’ (idem: 184). The practices resulting from this dialectical relation constitute new sources of scarcity and insecurity, especially to those from whom resources are extracted. Therefore, ‘insecurity and scarcity are the twin motors powering a dialectic of oppression’ (Schatzberg, 1988: 135). This dialectic overlaps and interacts with a ‘dialectical struggle for political, social, and economic space’ (idem: 134) between the citizenry and the state, but also between the center of the state and its own agencies in the periphery. This struggle for space is at the root of the omnipresence of coercion, in part as the state is not able to control its own coercive arms (idem: 138). In this manner, insecurity and scarcity are both the engines and outcomes of ongoing struggles for power and resources within and between ‘state’ and ‘society’, which (re)produce and are (re)produced by oppression and coercion. The state’s coercive arms, including the military, play a crucial role in these intertwined dialectics. Driven by their own insecurity and a struggle for space within them, they are core producers of coercion, insecurity and scarcity, not only among the citizenry but also among other parts of the state apparatus (idem: 135–139).

While it was preferred not to use the term 'dialectics' herein,⁴ the interacting mechanisms described by Schatzberg adequately capture an important part of social dynamics in the Kivus and the role of the military played therein. The insecurity of office and scarcity of resources faced by the military, which are fed by and feed into internal power struggles, fuel a drive to rapidly accumulate resources. As this drive is often satisfied by extracting resources from civilians, it generates further scarcity and (economic) insecurity in society. Yet the state apparatus is not the only source of insecurity in the Kivus. Insecurity also stems from the high number of armed factions that are present, rampant violent banditry, such as armed robbery and ambushes, and a high level of inter-and intra community conflicts, which feed into armed mobilization. Another key source of insecurity, which paradoxically stems from the very mechanisms developed to cope with it, is *protection*. Schatzberg acknowledges this dynamic, but does not name it explicitly as an element of the dialectics of oppression. However, in this dissertation, it is identified as a crucial factor of social dynamics in the Kivus.

Protection

Protection is seen herein to refer to the provision of security (defined in at once political, socio-economic and physical terms) and other services, like influence peddling and dispute processing, predominantly as excludable goods, implying that only certain people or groups of people can enjoy the benefits (Samuelson, 1954).⁵ In the Kivus, protection, in particular when provided by actors that are able to mobilize violence, has two main forms: First, it can be mostly a *commodity*, implying its provision has the character of a *transaction* involving a well-delineated, often monetary return. An example is that of a trader paying the FARDC to physically protect the transport of his or her goods. Second, protection may be a dimension of a *social relation* that is predominantly *patronage-based*, but usually also partly rests on other social ties. *Patronage* refers to asymmetric but reciprocal patron-client relations that commonly overlap with social ties formed on other bases, like ethnic, clan, professional, religious or geographical background. Patron-client relations have two overlapping dimensions: The first consists of a dyadic, personal relationship between a patron and a client, which involves the granting of protection and other services by a patron in exchange for (political) support, loyalty, information and certain services from a client. The second dimension concerns a hierarchical relationship between on the one hand a patron and on the other hand a network of clients, and involves the exchange of collective goods, including symbolic ones, for (political) support (Erdmann and Engel, 2006: 20–21). These collective goods include 'representation', related to the embodiment of collective forms of identification and the furthering of collective interests (Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 41–43).

Where patrons rise to prominence and become politically and socially influential players, they are best qualified as *big-men* (which may also be women) or socio-political entrepreneurs that are the center of gravity of big-man networks. The latter are intricate webs of both horizontal and vertical social relations that (re)produce a big-man's authority (Bayart, 2006 [1989]: 268–273, see also Utas, 2012: 12–14). The notion of big-man was first elaborated in research on political orders in Melanesia, notably by Sahlins (1963). According to Sahlins, 'the indicative quality of big-man authority is everywhere the same: it is personal power. Big-men do not come to office; they do not succeed to, nor are they installed in, existing positions of leadership over political groups. The attainment of big-man status is rather the outcome of a series of acts that elevate a person above the common herd and attract about him a coterie of loyal, lesser men. It is not accurate to speak of "big-man" as a political title, for it is but an acknowledged standing in inter-personal relations' (1963: 289). As described by locals in Melanesia, for the in-group, a big-man is like the *banyan* (biggest and tallest tree in the forest): 'just because it exceeds all others, the banyan gives support to more lianas and creepers, provides more food for the birds, and gives better protection against sun and rain' (Hogbin, 1944: 258, quoted in Sahlins, 1963: 290). This shows the centrality of the notion of protection within big-man networks, and the importance of reciprocity and the distribution of (access to) resources.

For Sahlins, the power position of big-men rests upon their creation of a followership, which occurs through 'calculated generosity, by placing others in gratitude and obligation through helping them in some big way' (1963: 292). These generosity consist either of offering 'informal private assistance' or 'great public giveaways', which have to create renown (idem: 291). This renown is again essential for offering protection to followers. As Sahlins states: 'Not merely his own status, but the standing and perhaps the military security of his people depend on the big-man's achievements in public distribution' (idem: 293). Such external distribution is commonly achieved by mobilizing the means of followers, over whom big-men have 'true command ability' (idem: 290), including 'leverage on others' production and the ability to siphon off an excess product' (idem: 292). This points to a fundamental contradiction in the big-man system: while for obtaining a following, big-men have to ensure reciprocity, for creating a wider sphere of influence, they have to extract resources from their own followers. Therefore, initial reciprocity is often gradually replaced by an emphasis on extraction. This especially occurs where big-men are in competition with other big-men: success in such competition 'undermines internal-factional reciprocities', as it leads

4 Schatzberg's use of the term 'dialectics' remains under-theorized in that he does not explicitly identify the inherent (structural) contradictions that are a defining feature of dialectics (Swyngedouw, 2009: 140). While he convincingly shows how the interplay between multiple inter-related conflicts generates ongoing dynamics of oppression, it is not clear to what extent these conflicts result from systemic contradictions.

5 Note however that the boundaries between protection, especially security provision, as an excludable and a non-excludable good are not always easy to draw. For example, reinforced military presence as induced by a protection arrangement between the military and civilian leaders may be to the benefit of all persons living or travelling in the area, and therefore appear non-excludable. However, due to the scarcity of military resources in the Kivus, the deployment of the military in one area commonly implies that other zones are left unsecured, causing the fruits of protection to still be limited to particular groups, hence to be excludable.

to increasing pressure on the big-man 'to extract goods from his followers, to delay reciprocities owing them, and to deflect incoming goods back into external circulation' (idem: 293). Such an increase in extraction opens up the risk that followers will become discontent and sever their links to the big-man (idem: 292). This shows that the 'personal quality of subordination' is one of the main weaknesses of the factional structure of the big-man system, introducing 'comparative instability' (idem: 292)⁶. As Sahlins explains: 'shifting dispositions and magnetisms of ambitious men in a region may induce fluctuations in factions, perhaps some overlapping of them, and fluctuations also in the extent of different renowns' (idem: 292).

In broad lines, the big-man system as described by Sahlins, or at least salient features of it, can be found in many political orders, regardless their overarching authority structure. In fact, it would seem that big-man networks play some role in the production and modus operandi of authority in most polities, although the degree to and ways in which highly differ from one context to the next (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1979). Importantly, there tends to be a relation between the strength and salience of big-man networks on the one hand, and the strength, salience and workings of state institutions on the other (Utas, 2013).⁷ Where state institutions engage only weakly in public service provision and are a source of insecurity, people have incentives to solicit protection from big-men. At the same time, where big-man networks are relatively important channels and sources of authority, public service provision and state predictability are often undermined. State servants in the higher echelons, who tend to double as big-men, will face strong pressures to fulfill their big-man obligations, which will impair their performance as state servants. They may, for instance, use public resources or the influence derived from their official position to enlarge their network of followers rather than for public service provision. In such political orders, the state assumes, in the words of Bayart (2006 [1989]: 270) a 'rhizomic' character, in the sense that the visible, formal, structures of the state strongly feed into and are fed by multiple 'subterranean' networks cutting through state/society and formal/informal divides.

Contemporary political orders where bureaucratic state institutions are permeated by and strongly interact with big-man networks are sometimes qualified as 'neopatrimonial' (Eisenstadt, 1973). This qualification draws upon Weber's famous ideal-types of domination. These encompass, respectively: charismatic domination, implying that legitimacy is entirely based upon personal qualities; legal (also called legal-rational bureaucratic) domination, when legitimacy is rooted in rulers' respect for the impersonal laws investing them with power; and lastly, traditional domination (of which patrimonialism is a subtype), implying that legitimacy is vested in a person, but not as much in their personal characteristics as in their position as sanctioned by tradition (Weber, 1921/1922: 124). For Weber, patrimonial authority, which rests upon reciprocal patron-client ties, does not preclude the existence of a bureaucracy, although the latter's rationalities and modes of operating differ from those of bureaucracies in legal-rational orders (Weber, 1921/1922: 134).⁸ Within neopatrimonial polities, 'traditional' patrimonial authority is to such an extent cross-fertilized and fused with legal-rational authority that new rationalities and *modi operandi* of authority ensue, which are neither purely patrimonial nor purely legal-rational, but *sui generis* (Erdmann and Engel, 2006: 18). In the classic definition of Clapham (1985: 48), a neopatrimonial order is 'a form of organisation in which relationships of a broadly patrimonial type pervade a political and administrative system which is formally constructed on rational-legal lines. Officials hold positions in bureaucratic organisations with powers which are formally defined, but exercise those powers, so far as they can, as a form not of public service but of private property.'

The cross-fertilization with patrimonial rationalities does not imply that in neopatrimonial orders, legal-rational institutions are merely a 'façade', as some analysts contend (e.g., Médard, 1982: 180–181). For Erdmann and Engel (2006: 17): 'an understanding of politics in Africa which depicts *all* official relations as privatized or the *modus operandi* as being *essentially* informal does not reflect African realities. (...) It is a daily experience that *not all* political and administrative decisions are taken according to the informal rules determined by private or personal gusto' (emphasis in original). The same observation can be made in relation to political and administrative practices enacted in orders that are characterized as 'legal-rational bureaucratic': not all of these are a hundred per cent informed by legal-bureaucratic rationalities. For that reason, the labeling of neopatrimonial orders as 'hybrid regimes' (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997: 62), since combining two types of the legitimation of domination, seems unwarranted. Moreover, Weber (1921/1922: 153–154) never claimed that his ideal-types existed in a pure form in any polity, rendering all political orders in a sense 'hybrid'. Bratton and Van de Walle (1994: 459) try to find a way out of this conundrum by stating that 'while neopatrimonial practice is present in all polities, it is a *core* feature of politics in Africa'. This immediately evokes the question of how they *know* that this is the case, and whether in the face of the significant diversity both between and within African polities, this is not an unsubstantiated *a priori* assumption.

Since neopatrimonialism is compatible with a wide range of regime types, economies and social orders (Pitcher et al., 2009), and the

6 Note, however, that at the long term, factional struggles between big-man networks sometimes ensure the reproduction, hence stability, of the political order as a whole, although they do introduce volatility at the short term (Bayart, 2006 [1989]: 277).

7 However, I do not fully agree with Utas' (2013: 8) analysis that 'Big Manity is a response to a lack of formal state structures', rather believing there are constant, multidimensional interactions between these two phenomena. For example, where big-man networks are salient, the incentives to strengthen state structures may diminish (Chabal and Daloz, 1999).

8 In contrast to a legal-rational bureaucracy, the bureaucracy of traditional domination lacks: '(a) a clearly defined sphere of competence subject to impersonal rules (b) rationally established hierarchy [of superiority and inferiority] (c) a regular system of appointment on the basis of free contract, and orderly promotion, (d) technical training as a regular requirement, (e) (frequently) fixed [and regularly paid] salaries [...] [more often] paid in money' (Weber, 1921/1922: 134, translation based on Erdmann and Engel, 2006: 25).

relative importance and workings of big-man networks do not only differ per polity and per societal domain, but also fluctuate over time, its causal weight can never be merely assumed, but must always be proven (Theobald, 1982). However, many analyses employing the terms 'patrimonialism' and 'neopatrimonialism' have failed to systematically substantiate their claims in this regard. Furthermore, neither of these terms have been consistently defined and operationalized across studies, prompting Erdmann and Engel (2006) to conclude that neopatrimonialism has become something of a 'catch-all concept'. This indicates that not much progress has been made since Theobald's (1982) complaints about this concept's limited analytical precision and utility more than two decades earlier. Therefore, although the Congo's political order is commonly qualified as 'patrimonial' (e.g., Willame, 1972) or 'neopatrimonial' (e.g., Englebert, 2003: 13), it was decided not to employ these terms as analytical notions. While it was assumed that big-man networks play an important role as 'authoritative resources' (or command over persons) in structures of domination, it was judged that only the empirical study of the practices of figures of authority at the micro-level, and evaluations thereof by the dominated, would allow for identifying the operating logics of authority and the bases of its legitimation. This predominantly inductive approach does not depart from the *a priori* assumption that processes of legitimation rest upon any (combinations) of the three outlined Weberian ideal-types of domination. Following Beetham (1991), the concept of the legitimation of power was studied in a flexible manner, based on the idea that legitimation is grounded in shared beliefs and values, as well as in common rules surrounding the exercise of power, but without presumptions about the content of these rules, beliefs and values.

The findings yielded by this approach led to the conclusion that although big-man networks are crucial for understanding both the workings of the military and civilian-military interaction in the Kivus, their relative importance highly varies per military unit and per place. Moreover, there are substantial differences in the bases on which these networks are formed and the ways in which they operate. Importantly, it was found that FARDC officers performing the social role of big-man commonly have a network of followers both within the military and outside of it. Inversely, soldiers and officers are often tied into the networks of civilian big-men, like powerful politicians and economic operators. Hence, big-man networks may straddle both civilian/military and state/non-state boundaries. Furthermore, it was observed that patron-client ties are never exclusive. Rather, both soldiers and civilians are part of a multiplicity of social networks that may have more or less pronounced protection dimensions. Indeed, big-man networks in the Kivus tend to be heterogeneous in nature, encompassing ties formed on varying bases, while diverging in strength, cohesion, scale, scope and the nature of the social interaction that they regulate. This interaction may be more affective or more instrumental, as partly related to the relative importance of shared forms of identification. Consequently, the connotations and salience of the notion of 'representation' strongly diverge per big-man network. For instance, the patron-client ties that FARDC officers from the western Congo may develop in their area of deployment in the Kivus are likely to differ from the social ties that FARDC officers from the Kivus maintain when deployed in their area of origins. While in the first case, the notion of 'representation' might center more on advancing certain political-economic interests, in the second, it might be stronger oriented towards forms of collective identification. This points to differences in the contents of the social role of big-man, hence the expectations that followers hold vis-à-vis big-men and their practices.

The expectations and norms that followers have vis-à-vis big-men shape their evaluations of the latter's practices, which again impact the legitimacy of big-men's power. Where big-men do not fulfill the expectations of their followers or transgress the norms, their practices are more likely to be evaluated as 'illicit', which might cause clients to sever the ties. One common source of big-men's failure to live up to the expectations is that they tend to play a variety of social roles simultaneously, causing their practices to be at cross-purposes to one role or the other. In the Kivus, big-men are often state agents. However, the expectations that people hold vis-à-vis state agents, for example that they do not embezzle money or engage in favoritism, differ from the expectations they hold of big-men, expected to distribute (access to) resources among their followers and to represent their interests. Thus, big-men-cum-officials have to balance the divergent expectations placed upon them, which may cause them to unsuccessfully perform one social role or the other. This also applies to big-men within the FARDC, who combine the social roles of, amongst others, military commander, state agent/official, and businessperson. Consequently, their practices are versatile, since informed by various overlapping and sometimes contradictory projects and rationalities. This creates ambiguities that generate unpredictability and compound civilians' readings of FARDC staff's practices, and therefore the formulation of evaluations thereof. These ambiguities are reinforced by the fact that the boundaries between the various social roles enacted by the FARDC are blurred, not least as they use the legitimacy, resources, knowledge and relations from one role to act out another. A similar blurring can be observed in relation to the social roles enacted by other state actors-cum-big-men. This is for example manifested in unlawful arrests, the sudden annulment of permits or licenses, or the unexpected imposition of informal taxes. The resulting unpredictability in state agents' behavior fosters considerable insecurity among the citizenry, although it also opens up possibilities for the manipulation of the administration to their own benefit.

Insecurity and conflicts

Insecurity, whether of a political, socio-economic or physical nature, is at the heart of big-man relations, being both their product and a driving force behind their generation (Erdmann and Engel, 2006: 19). It is the insecurity stemming from the vagaries of the workings of the state apparatus and the economy, the general condition of poverty, as well as the omnipresence of violence and conflicts, that drive people in the Kivus to seek protection from big-men. The latter can for example offer access to and influence over the state apparatus, shield one against the state's arbitrary and coercive practices, facilitate access to (conditions for) revenue generation, like credit, reinforce

one's position in conflicts or enforce 'solutions' to disputes in one's favor. With an eye to the widespread occurrence of violence, Kivutians often solicit big-men who have the capacity to wield force, hoping that these patrons will protect their lives, families, goods and business activities, whether against bandits, armed groups, state in/security agencies or opponents who similarly mobilize armed actors through protection arrangements. However, in a militarized social order, protection arrangements with violent actors may have strong enkindling effects on insecurity. Not only do such arrangements generate an elevated risk that people will solicit armed actors to violently intervene in personal or local conflicts (Kalyvas, 2006: 383), the existence of multiple militarized big-man networks may elicit violent competition between factions (Gambetta, 1993: 40–42). Furthermore, where those providing protection are armed, protection relations may readily assume a more coercive nature, with big-men offering protection against the insecurity that they themselves are the primary producers of (Tilly, 1985: 171).

Even when big-man networks are not militarized, protection relations still generate insecurity. One of the drivers of this insecurity is the practice of rotation that is a primary mechanism to distribute the fruits of protection, including access to office and lucrative tasks. In order to foster dependence and therefore loyalty among their followers, big-men generally grant privileges on a temporary basis only, withdrawing them after a certain time to the benefit of other clients (Callaghy, 1984: 180, 189). This often occurs in an unexpected and erratic manner, making followers live in constant fear of losing their privileges. In a situation of widespread poverty, such a sudden loss of income generation can have devastating consequences. Therefore, the uncertainty resulting from the imperative of rotation fuels a drive for rapid revenue generation, and fosters conflicts between followers, who all vie for a favored status with the big-man heading their network. Hence, the big-man system fuels competition both within and between big-man networks, which feeds various forms of insecurity. This does not always lead to overall instability. Factional struggles and rotations also ensure that all players maintain a stake in the system (Bayart, 2006[1989]: 20). However, in a militarized environment, the dynamics enkindled by big-man competition may easily spiral out of control and spark violence, especially where big-man networks incorporate or maintain links to opposed armed factions.

Big-man competition within the military, whether among followers of the same big-man, between big-men, or between their wider networks, has a similar conflict-igniting potential. An important manifestation of such competition are frequent rotations of office and deployment positions, which make that military staff are never certain how long they will maintain their current position and related level of access to revenue-generation opportunities. This creates incentives to reap the benefits of one's position as rapidly as possible, causing military staff to become a source of insecurity for civilians, including civilian authorities vying for the same scarce resources. Insecurity among civilians also results when factional struggles between big-man networks in the military spark violent incidents, leading for example two army units to clash. Moreover, if these competing military factions have close links to civilians, there may be wider spin-off effects on conflict dynamics in the Kivus. But the salience of big-man networks in the FARDC also contributes to fostering insecurity in the Kivus in a more indirect manner. Military staff at all layers of the military hierarchy depend on big-man protection for many dimensions of their professional and social life, since formal rules and regulations are erratically applied in the FARDC. Where the big-man networks that soldiers are embedded in do not encompass many other members of their unit, their orientation towards these networks may undermine unit cohesion. This again, will harm norm enforcement, and may therefore feed into ill conduct towards civilians.

It can be concluded that there is a strong interplay between on the one hand, the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that play out within the military, and on the other hand, those dynamics within the Kivus at large. As will be further explained below, these interacting dynamics strongly impact the agency of both civilians and the military, thus being a crucial element in shaping civilian-military interaction. Importantly, the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection foster short-term orientations marked by utilitarian considerations, and impact mutual expectations accordingly. While on the civilian side, this leads to opportunistic forms of collaboration with the military and impedes concerted action to contest military power, on the military side, it works against the FARDC's institutional strengthening and creates incentives to engage in illicit forms of revenue generation and influence peddling. This shows how the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection lead both civilians and the military to engage in practices that contribute to the reproduction of the entwined structures of domination, legitimation and signification that underpin the military's current position of dominance. It is the reproduction and reinforcement of that position that is at the heart of the social processes understood herein as 'militarization'.

2.2.2 *Militarization*

What position armed actors have within a particular social order depends on their command over allocative and authoritative resources (structures of domination); the norms and ideas shaping the legitimacy of their power position and practices (structures of legitimation); and finally, the discourses that define and confer meaning upon these actors and their practices, including acts of violence (structures of signification). When military institutions and actors are powerful and their power position has a certain degree of legitimacy; when armed actors exert strong influence over various arenas of society (e.g., politics, economy, local governance); and when violence and its wielders occupy a prominent place in symbolic orders and strongly affect modes of social identification, a social order can be called 'militarized'. This conceptualization of militarization broadly draws upon Thee's (1980: 15) understanding of what he labels 'militarism', relating to the 'extension of military influence to civilian spheres, including economic and socio-political life'. This generic understanding appears to be one of the more analytically useful conceptualizations among the plethora of existing definitions of 'militarization' and 'militarism', terms that have been at the heart of scholarly and societal debates for well over a century and a half.

The word 'militarism' first appeared in 1816/1818, and became institutionalized in the 1860s in both France and Central Europe, being employed either to characterize Napoleonic France, as a general tendency to glorify war, or to analyze the military aspects of contemporary regimes, including the financial burden of modern armies (Berghahn, 1981: 7). This reflects the diversity of meaning that the term would continue to have over the next decades, being employed among scholars, political analysts, and activists alike. Amongst others conceptualizations, militarism referred to civil-military relations, the mentalities and beliefs of the military, or the role of the military within national or global political economies (idem: 1-2). Within certain strands of the literature, 'militarism' gradually started to be employed in conjunction with the term 'militarization', becoming increasingly defined as the set of ideas, values, ideologies or discourses driving and resulting from processes of militarization (Luckham, 1994: 24). Given that militarization is primarily approached as a process herein, namely of structuration, it was deemed most appropriate to employ the term 'militarization'. This also chimes with contemporary academic usage, which highlights militarization's processual character vs. that of militarism as a set of beliefs (e.g., Bernazolli and Flint, 2009; Woodward, 2014).

Approaching militarization from a structurationist perspective was inspired by Jabri's (1996: 114) argument that violence is situated in and constitutive of structures of domination, signification and legitimation, therefore being (re)produced by processes of structuration. Similarly, militarization is conceptualized herein as a process of structural transformation that touches at once upon power relations, discourses and norms, and that enables a dominant position for armed actors and militarized rationalities within social orders. While this process may lead to war and high levels of violence, or can be the result of war and violence, this does not need to be the case. It may for example also be *perceived* threats of war and violence that fuel or result from processes of militarization. When seen through the lens of structuration, militarization becomes a process that is not uniquely driven by (violent) elites, but also results from the everyday, routine practices of non-elite civilians. As stated by Bernazolli and Flint (2009: 379), processes of militarization are 'constituted in large part by the activities of people in everyday settings' which 'work to make militarism a taken-for-granted, or "natural" facet of many societies'. These processes, so they argue, are place-specific, and depend on the nature of the military presence and the characteristics of the civilian communities and settings involved (idem: 404). These insights draw inspiration from Woodward's (2005: 721) geographic approach to militarism and militarization, which focuses on 'the shaping of civilian space and social relations by military objectives, rationales and structures'.

Due to the context-specific nature of militarization, there are significant differences in its manifestations, for example in the content of the set of beliefs, norms and narratives constituting its discursive dimensions (or militarism). This context-dependency renders projects to formulate universally valid specifications of the contents of militarism inadequate (e.g., Enloe, 2004: 219). Furthermore, it causes variations in militarization's most salient dimensions, often related to in what spheres of society and through what practices military actors and rationalities gain dominance. Within the Kivus, I have identified three inter-related elements as constituting the core of militarization. The first is an important role for armed actors in governance, implying they have a strong power position vis-à-vis civilian authorities. The second dimension is the normalization and legitimation of the forging of protection arrangements with armed actors, including for the provision of services based on or facilitated by coercion. This includes practices related to revenue generation, the processing of disputes, whether involving antagonistically defined groups as a whole or personal enemies, and influence trafficking. The third dimension of militarization in the Kivus is the routinization of interaction with armed actors as a result of the population's long-term living together and profound intermingling with militias and armed forces. This routinization has fostered habitual obedience with certain practices and demands of armed actors, including those related to taxation or other forms of the extraction of resources.

The normalization and legitimation of soliciting protection from armed actors should be seen in conjunction with the general importance of big-man networks and the erratic workings of the state apparatus. However, such normalization also stems from the relative weakness of civilian authorities and rampant insecurity, which push civilians to enter into protection arrangements with armed actors. These arrangements are often embedded in other social ties, such as family and ethnic relations. In this respect, it is important to highlight that many armed groups consist predominantly of local recruits, while an important part of FARDC staff in the Kivus also originate from the provinces. This facilitates the development of social networks that cut across civilian/military boundaries, which enable interventions of military actors in various spheres of life. An important form of such interventions are efforts to regulate disputes between civilians. Due to the inaccessibility, ineffectiveness and unattractiveness of dispute-resolution mechanisms managed by civilian authorities, civilians in conflict often appeal to armed actors for settling disputes, especially when bound to them by protection relations. This sometimes involves demanding them to impose a 'solution' by force. Given that the Kivus have very high levels of a wide range of conflicts, for instance stemming from or being framed in terms of inter-community, political faction, clan, family, or inter-personal tensions, the demand for such dispute-processing services is substantial.

When intervening in disputes, the FARDC and other armed actors provide services that are seen to be useful. This contributes to legitimizing their overall power position, and therefore the reproduction of militarized structures of domination. As a result of processes of militarization, people's expectations surrounding figures of authority, notably what (more or less public) goods they should provide and in what manner, have been transformed in the Kivus. Importantly, expectations vis-à-vis authorities have come to emphasize their capacity to mobilize force, in particular from the point of view of providing physical protection, but also in relation to the enforcement of decisions, exerting influence over the state apparatus, and granting access to rapid and illicit forms of revenue generation. Consequently, civilian authorities lacking similar possibilities to mobilize force have a comparative disadvantage. Not able to provide services that are in

equally high demand, the legitimacy of their claims to power is undermined. The resulting weakening of civilian power reinforces again the tendency among citizens to consider regulatory arrangements with violent actors, at least in certain domains, as 'the most logical or "true" engagements' (Roitman, 2005: 177). As argued by Roitman (2005: 179) in relation to the Chad Basin, this especially applies to 'those who find themselves outside the bounds of national welfare and security'. Such persons can 'come to judge prestations [sic] associated with unofficial regulators as justifiable and even rightful, since they grant access to possibilities for accumulation, protection, and services that are not secured through the state or public services.'

These observations also apply to unofficial arrangements with the FARDC and the services it provides in the framework of protection, hence that are not part of its formal mandate. While 'unofficial', these practices are not necessarily seen as 'illicit', and may in certain circles even considered to be relatively 'licit'. To clarify, the distinction between licit and illicit relates to social conventions on proper, permissible and acceptable behavior. It does not touch upon legality, although the latter notion may influence whether activities are seen as licit or illicit. As with evaluations more generally, the qualifications 'licit' and 'illicit' are regarded as contextual, implying that practices seen as 'licit' within a certain time-space context may be perceived as 'illicit' in another. In relation to violent interventions in conflicts, the fact that these are sometimes seen as 'licit' is often related to the high emotional stakes surrounding the conflict in question, for instance when framed in ethno-regional forms of identification. Furthermore, decades of violence and rampant banditry have created numerous intensely felt grudges and grievances, with people harboring animosities against those having harmed them, their family or their property in the past. Such feelings of revenge can come to inform evaluations of violent practices, making them sooner appear as 'licit'.

Similar processes of legitimation have touched upon violent and illegal practices of appropriation. The contraction of the 'official economy' from the mid-1970s onwards led to a sharp rise in economic activities commonly defined as 'non-official', 'non-formal' or 'unrecorded' (MacGaffey, 1991a;b). Growing poverty also contributed to legitimizing the more illicit and violent practices of this 'non-official' economy, which due to its interdependencies with the 'official sphere' became an integral part of the economy as a whole (cf. Roitman, 1998). For Roitman (2005), evaluations of practices of violent appropriation as relatively licit modes of wealth production do not emerge from, draw upon or (re)produce a 'moral economy' that is based on 'stable moral precepts' (2005: 189). Rather, practices of both self and other are read and interpreted in relation to institutionalized forms of reasoning pertaining to certain social roles, spheres of praxis or places, like the market, 'the bush', or highways (idem: 188–192). When violent and illegal practices correspond to these institutionalized rationalities, they can come to be seen as intelligible and as 'making sense' within a certain setting. As Roitman observes in relation to what she describes as the 'code of trafficking': 'this code may be illegal since it departs from the codes and regulations of official law, but it is neither illicit nor illegible. It must be understood from within its own script (...)' (idem: 188). Such scripts governing illegal and violent practices also render protection by armed actors 'logical'. For example, for those engaging in illegal poaching or banditry, soliciting protection from the FARDC makes sense, as the military ensures that they will not get persecuted, and in some cases also provides active assistance, like lending arms, commonly in exchange for a part of the profits.

In the Kivus, relatively broad layers of the population are involved in income-generation practices that are technically illegal, such as trafficking, smuggling, fiscal fraud and unauthorized logging, fishing and cultivation (for example within the boundaries of national parks). Additionally, given the scale at which banditry occurs, its benefits constitute a direct or indirect source of income to considerable groups. This large-scale involvement in illegal practices is not only an outcome, but also a cause of the described normative shifts, since it has legitimizing effects in itself. Where broad layers of the population, including state agents, engage in a certain practice, one easily gets the feeling that it is somehow 'normal', hence tolerated and therefore licit. As one of Roitman's (2005: 29) informants states: 'The petrol trade is not clandestine anymore not only because the gendarmes and customs officials are all involved, but also because it has been democratized; anyone can do it, and everyone does.' But the described normative shifts should also be seen in the light of the continuing high intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. In a situation of decades of pressing poverty, coercive and illegal practices that promise to offer rapid access to income and social mobility may sooner come to be seen as 'making sense' and as 'taken for granted'. One mechanism through which this occurs is routinization, both of such practices themselves and of the soliciting of protection from armed actors to facilitate them.

Prolonged, multiform and intense interaction with armed actors has led to the development of engrained scripts for many types of encounters between civilians and the military in the Kivus. Thus, these encounters have become 'rationalized' in the understanding of Giddens (1984: 4), implying they have become 'a routine characteristic of human conduct, carried on in a "taken-for-granted fashion" (ibidem)', while drawing upon stocks of non-discursively articulated, practical knowledge. Such rationalized practices are seen as the 'normal' course of conduct, being guided by practical norms. While routinization is manifest in many dimensions of civilian-military interaction, of particular importance in this dissertation are the forms of normalization surrounding certain forms of military resources extraction from civilians. Examples are demanding free transport services from civilian economic operators, particular forms of roadblock taxation, or imposing a contribution in kind at certain markets. The routinized nature of these practices contributes to fostering 'habitual obedience' among civilians, at least when encounters unfold according to the engrained script, and the practical norms are respected. Such obedience allows again for the (re)production of the structures of domination that underpin the military's power position, thus perpetuating processes of militarization.

In sum, militarization as defined herein relates to changes in structures of legitimation, signification and domination that contribute to the

routinization of civilian-military interaction and that render protection relations with armed actors, including for soliciting or enabling coercion-based practices, a normal, logical and 'justified' engagement to relatively broad layers of the population. These changes are often related to other processes of societal transformation that foster and are fostered by militarization, like pauperization, war, and the erosion of the regulatory capabilities and legitimacy of civilian authorities. Furthermore, militarization drives and is driven by the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and conflict, in part because these dynamics provide incentives to social agents to engage in practices that reproduce or reinforce the structures of domination underpinning armed actors' power position. However, neither militarization nor the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection play out in a uniform manner throughout the Kivus: rather, they are informed by and inform place-specific social structures, which again lead to place-specific social dynamics.

2.2.3 *Place-specific and contradictory structures and dynamics*

Like other social practices, micro-level civilian-military interaction always takes place within particular settings demarcated in time-space. While Giddens calls these *locales* (1984: 118–119), this notion has been criticized in circles of human geographers, as it highlights only a specific dimension of place (Agnew, 1987: 26). In line with this criticism, I have decided to stick to *place* as a more comprehensive and consensual designation. Following Agnew (1987), place is considered to have three main dimensions. The first is *locale*, or 'the settings for everyday, routine social interaction provided in a place', constituting its 'structured microsociological content' (1987: 5). The second is *location*, which refers to the embedding of locales within both physical settings, or geographical coordinates in a reference system (e.g., longitude and latitude), and the macro social order that produces relations within such a reference system, which are mutually constitutive (Agnew, 1987: 27, see Harvey, 2006: 117–148 on the continuing relevance of such a notion of 'relative space'). Hence, location relates to the ways in which the reproduction and transformation of social relations at the micro level is shaped by and shapes both the appropriation and transformation of nature and the interrelated reproduction and transformation of society (Pred, 1984: 279). The third dimension is *sense of place*, or the subjective orientation toward place that is engendered through everyday practices, including the place of place in self and social identification (Agnew, 1987: 6, 27). Together, these three dimensions constitute an understanding of place that is based on a structurationist approach, which draws attention to the continual interplay between physical setting, and micro and macro-sociological processes, highlighting that place is, in the words of Pred (1984), 'an historically contingent process'.

Each place has different characteristics, including in relation to the physical environment and structures of domination, legitimation and signification. As the properties of the settings in which social interaction takes place are drawn upon in the constitution of (the meanings of) day-to-day encounters, these (structural) properties shape and are (re)produced by routine practices (Pred, 1984). Therefore, place-based variations in physical environment and social structures cause place-based differences in civilian-military interaction. For example, civilian-military interaction may unfold differently in urban and isolated rural areas due to differences in factors like the possibilities for effective command and control, access to authorities who can contest military practices and the overall security situation. Furthermore both civilians' and the military's agency is shaped by the political and socio-economic features of a place, as relating for example to the composition, social organization and cohesion of the population, the production and distribution of wealth and power, and the relations of local elites to the political center. Local discourses and norms, often strongly shaped by the history of a place, also shape agency, thereby contributing to differentiated patterns of civilian-military interaction. Certainly, these place-specific social structures are not wholly idiosyncratic as they are influenced by the structural features of the wider socio-spatial orders that they are part of (e.g., that of the Kivus or the Congo as a whole). However, the extent of this influence is variable, depending on the degree of *integration* of a place.

The notion of *integration* refers to the level of reciprocity (in terms of autonomy and dependence) between actors or collectivities (Giddens, 1984: 28). Integration is not an absolute property, but comes in degrees, leading to different levels of what Giddens calls 'systemness' (1979: 76). Social orders may be either more open or more closed, depending on the level of interdependence of their constituents and the way in which these intersect with other social orders, whether internal or external (Giddens, 1984: 164–165). For example, within the Kivus, the social suborder of the FARDC is relatively open, as the military has substantial interdependencies with the larger social orders that it forms part of. Furthermore, within the FARDC, certain networks and units operate relatively independently from the official hierarchy, thus displaying a low level of integration. This undermines the cohesion of the military organization as a whole. Such variegated patterns of integration can also be found in other parts of the Kivus, certain regions of which are closely connected due to high political-economic and socio-cultural interdependencies and similarities. This applies for example to the *Sud/Sud*, which is constituted by the territories of Fizi and Uvira in South Kivu or the *Grand Nord*, encompassing the territories of Beni and Lubero in the North of North Kivu. Not only do these regions have broadly similar social structures, their dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection are highly interwoven. This implies that for example FARDC operations or other interventions in one place tend to have repercussions throughout these regions, including by affecting civilian-military interactions. Relations of dependence and autonomy also shape civilian-military interaction by influencing to what extent the structural features of (geographically) larger social orders shape certain social suborders. For example, within the FARDC, low levels of integration between different parts of the military organization imply that discourses and norms may substantially differ per unit or network, and diverge from those propagated by the military organization at large. Similarly, the patterns of civilian-military interaction in a region that has a relatively high degree of autonomy from the political center, like the Grand Nord (Vwakyanakazi, 1991), may diverge from those found within the Congo's social order as a whole, in part as they are shaped by different configurations of structures of legitimation, domination and signification.

Another way in which relations of autonomy and dependence cause differences in civilian-military interaction is related to the condition of scarcity, which causes the accumulation of resources within one social suborder to entail their extraction from another. While such a zero-sum game nature is not apparent across the board, it does characterize at least certain dimensions of wealth accumulation and transfer among social orders in the Kivus. For example, due to systematic underfunding and the asymmetric distribution of resources within the military, lower-rank soldiers have to extract goods and services from civilians in order to be able to operate, hence to ensure the military's reproduction. Thus, accumulation in the military sphere goes to the detriment of accumulation in the civilian sphere. This is particularly the case where the military seeks rents, or 'politically mediated opportunities for obtaining wealth through non-productive economic activity' (Boone, 1990: 427). It is precisely the non-productive nature of certain economic practices, implying they add limited economic value, that renders them susceptible to zero-sum competition. This shows how the features and workings of the political economy of the Congo make that in certain contexts and in certain dimensions, the relations between the FARDC and civilians assume a contradictory character. As explained by Giddens, a social contradiction is an '*opposition or disjunction of structural principles of social systems, where those principles operate in terms of each other but at the same time, contravene one another*' (1979: 141, emphasis in original). Yet while in certain social orders at certain moments, the relations between the military and civilians in the Kivus have contradictory qualities, they may be collaborative or non-contradictory in other time-space contexts, making it difficult to speak of systemic contradictions. Due to the relative openness and strong intersections of the social orders in which civilian and military actors are situated, and the multitude of social roles and corresponding modes of social identification that both these categories assume, they often do not stand in a contradictory relation to each other. Nevertheless, even while of a non- or semi-systemic character, contradictions between the military and civilians do exist and give rise to conflicts both between and among these groups, who are all involved in a struggle for scarce resources. This often has wider effects on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that are an engine of the militarization of the Kivus.

The evolution and legacy of the social structures shaping civilian-military interaction

PART I TRACES THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT of the social structures shaping present-day civilian-military interaction in the Kivus, looking at structures of domination, signification and legitimation both within the military, approached herein as a distinct social order, and within the Kivus. This analysis provides important insights into the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that these structures set in motion, and which have again strong effects on civilians' and the military's agency. But before embarking upon this historical study, it is important to clarify *what* social structures have been identified, both through fieldwork and literature study, as being of most importance in shaping civilian-military interaction in past and present.

Based on Giddens's (1984) approach to social structures, an analytical distinction is made between structures of domination, signification and legitimation. It is assumed that these three intertwined structures shape and are shaped by the organization and modus operandi of state institutions, including the armed forces. One channel through which this mutual influence is transmitted is the agency of rulers (cf. Levi, 1989). Social structures create constraints to and opportunities for the exercise of power, but also shape the norms and discourses that affect rulers' modes of governing. Following Herbst (2000) and Boone (2003), it is posited that the historical development of the Congo's state institutions has been importantly influenced by on the one hand, the features of the physical environment and the political economy, including 'micro level political economies of property relations, personal dependency and social control' (Boone, 2003: 12), and on the other hand, the nature of the international system, including external military threats. These elements, which relate most directly to structures of domination, have impacted rulers' ways of establishing and maintaining territorial and social control, and of ensuring the extraction of resources. Moreover, they have influenced the development and relative weight of the coercive apparatus, administrative and transport infrastructure, and social networks based on personal ties to rulers, as shaped by and shaping the specific blend of persuasion and coercion characterizing their rule (cf. Schouten, 2014).

Similar observations apply to the armed forces: the ways in which rulers have organized and exercised control over these forces, and the role that the latter have played within their modes of governing, have been strongly shaped by the nature of the Congo's political economy and the international system. In interaction with other factors, such as discourses and norms surrounding the use of force, these elements have influenced rulers' possibilities, but also preferences, for developing administrative, coercive, and personal ties-based apparatuses of rule. They have, for example, impacted in how far it is necessary to have armed forces with strong fighting capabilities, the extent to and ways in which these forces have been deployed to maintain domestic order, the manner in which the military is linked to political-economic elites, and the level of public resources invested in the military apparatus. Each of these elements has again had effects on civilian-military interaction, for instance on the extent to which the armed forces rely on the extraction of resources from civilians for their reproduction, or engage in deterrence rather than systematic surveillance for maintaining control.

The impact of the highlighted political-economic factors on the ways in which rulers have organized and deployed the armed forces has not been mechanistic. First, structures of domination always interact with structures of signification and legitimation. For instance, extant political institutions do not only restrict rulers' available options, they also influence their beliefs about what forms of political action and organization are desirable and appropriate (Mahoney, 2000). Furthermore, social structures never shape agency in a deterministic manner,¹ implying that for instance the personal characteristics of rulers matter as well in mediating the effects of these structures on the development of the armed forces. Additionally, the influence between on the one hand, the shape and modus operandi of the armed forces, and on the other hand, the features of the social order in which they are deployed, is mutual. Hence, the armed forces are not

¹ The entwinement of social structures and the importance of agency in shaping social practices were discussed on pp. 36-39.

only shaped by but also impact the development of political institutions and the political economy (cf. Janowitz, 1977: 23). For instance, where rulers have no comprehensive administrative and coercive apparatus with a high level of territorial coverage and penetration, they may be sooner inclined to deploy brutally operating in/security forces to suppress perceived threats to their rule, since having few alternative means to prevent, timely detect and neutralize these threats. When addressing threats in such a manner has proven to be effective in the past, rulers may have limited incentives to devise alternative ways of maintaining control, especially where this would require important investments in infrastructure, and resources are scarce. The same applies to rulers' modes of management of the armed forces: for instance, where limited investments of public resources in these forces can be compensated for by allowing them to extract wealth from civilians, rulers might not only have few incentives to alter the status quo (which would be costly), but may also start considering this a 'normal' state of affairs, especially if inherited from preceding regimes.

Similar processes of institutionalization, whereby established forms of social organization become anchored in entwined structures of domination, signification and legitimation, also take place *within* the armed forces, and interact with rulers' decisions. An important channel of processes of institutionalization are the practices of military leaders. The way in which the military is organized and deployed influences and is influenced by military leaders' interests in certain forms of organization and practices, and their beliefs about how a military should operate and what it should do. For instance, if a country's rulers do not invest sufficient resources to guarantee the rank and file decent service and social conditions, military elites may come to consider it desirable that their subordinates engage in the extraction of wealth from civilians, especially if they are given a share themselves. This applies even stronger where granting access to revenue-generation opportunities becomes a tool whereby superiors can reinforce their grip over their subordinates. The military staff charged with extracting wealth from civilians may equally come to consider this a normal practice, not only because they directly benefit from it, but also as such extraction may be authorized by certain *discourses* of civilians and *norms* surrounding civilian-military interaction. Once having entered the military, staff become acquainted with dominant structures of legitimation and signification, which subsequently start influencing their everyday practices. As long as military leaders have limited incentives to work towards their transformation, these structures are likely to be reproduced, and military staff will continue to be socialized into them. This may for instance occur where leaders continue to benefit from their subordinates' extractive practices, and do not develop new ideas in relation to what constitute desirable modes of military organization and forms of civilian-military interaction.

In these various manners, and through the practices of at once rulers, military leaders and rank and file staff, the military's organization and modus operandi become institutionalized, leading to significant continuities over time. These continuities are however not predetermined: when rulers or military leaders change their insights and priorities, and therefore their modes of military management, the social structures internal to the military might be transformed. One could imagine, for example, that when leaders would ensure that troops are sufficiently paid, and simultaneously crack down on certain forms of large-scale wealth extraction from civilians, the structures of legitimation authorizing such practices would start to be transformed, rendering such forms of extraction increasingly illicit. Structural transformations are also likely when military staff would systematically start resisting the actions of their superiors, for instance by refusing to engage in certain types of wealth extraction from civilians. Where such collective practices of resistance are large-scale, they could potentially lead to transformations of the military's structures of domination. Any of these changes in the military's internal structures will again produce effects on civilian-military interaction, although some changes will have a much more profound impact than others.

But it are not only changes in the social structures of the military that may come to alter civilian-military interaction: such transformations may also result from changes in civilians' agency and the social structures that shape it. As will be further demonstrated in Part II, important elements of these structures relate to the Kivus' political economy, in particular the workings of the state apparatus, the relative importance of big-man networks and armed actors in local governance, and the structure of the economy. These factors, which most directly pertain to structures of domination, influence for instance to what extent civilians count on the armed forces for providing security or solicit them for more particularistic forms of protection, or use the military to facilitate livelihood generation, including through influence peddling. However, these forms of civilian agency vis-à-vis the military are also shaped by what are analytically categorized as structures of signification and legitimation herein, such as civilians' representations of the military and the norms surrounding the use of coercion and protection arrangements with armed actors. Obviously, where civilians have come to consider it 'normal' to approach the military to intervene in their conflicts, they are more likely to engage in this practice. However, where due to shifting norms, civilians would come to consider military interventions in civilian disputes undesirable, this practice is likely to diminish. In relation to structures of legitimation and signification, and how these shape civilians' agency vis-à-vis the military, it is also of importance to analyze dominant conflict narratives, including accounts of past instances of violence. In the Kivus, such narratives are strongly colored by discourses of ethnicity. This does not only affect representations of military staff from certain ethnic backgrounds, but also those of the military as a whole. Consequently, tracing the history of conflicts in the Kivus helps understand what the military signifies to civilians today, which again has effects on their agentic orientations, hence civilian-military interaction.

From the above, it follows that studying the history of the social structures of the armed forces and the Kivus is important for two reasons: First, due to processes of institutionalization, there is significant continuity in these structures, hence in the organization and modus operandi of the armed forces. Second, past developments, like episodes of war and processes of militarization, help understand the current social structures that shape civilian-military interaction. Chapter 3 is dedicated to this historical study, paying specific

attention to how the Congo's past rulers, as influenced by the social orders in which they were situated, shaped the organization, modus operandi and deployment of the armed forces, and how this has affected the development of social structures within the military itself. In relation to the Kivus, Chapter 3 analyzes the evolution of the main social structures, as relating to key political and socio-economic developments, that shape present-day civilians' representations, expectations and norms surrounding the military. In particular, it looks at conflict narratives, the rise of the non-official economy, the evolution of the state apparatus and authority structures, and the processes constitutive of militarization. It also studies these developments in the various case study areas, tracing the historical development of their social structures and how these structures shape contemporary dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. This again, is crucial for understanding how civilian-military interaction unfolds in these areas today.

The next chapter, which is the fourth of the dissertation, explores the weight of the past on one particular dimension of the social structures shaping present-day civilian-military interaction, namely the discourses that inform soldiers' and civilians' *mutual representations*; that is, their mutual conceptualizations and associated connotations at a high level of abstraction (e.g., 'the military in general', 'civilians in general'). Mutual representations, as inscribed in structures of signification formed over the *longue durée*, differ from *evaluations*, which relate to assessments of determinate groups of civilians or military located in a well delineated time-space context, as grounded in concrete experiences. In order to illustrate the difference between representations and evaluations, and provide a comprehensive and nuanced insight into the ways in which soldiers and civilians see and experience each other in the Kivus, Chapter 4 also briefly discusses evaluations. This latter notion will be analyzed in a more profound manner in Part II, which describes how evaluations are formed and how they affect civilians' agency vis-à-vis the military.

A brief history of the Congolese armed forces and the Kivus

THIS CHAPTER PAINTS A HISTORICAL PORTRAIT of the Congolese armed forces and the Kivu provinces, with the aim of providing an insight into the development of their structural features over the *longue durée*. This painting has assumed the form of a triptych covering three broad historical eras: the colonial period (up to 1960), the postcolonial period up to the start of the First Congo War (1960–1996), and the era of the Congo Wars (1996–present). The chapter does not intend to provide a comprehensive and detailed historical overview or offer new historiographical insights: rather, it synthesizes existing knowledge and goes in brushstrokes through decades of history, focusing only on those elements deemed of most relevance for understanding contemporary civilian-military interaction and the social structures that shape it. The last part of the chapter zooms in on the case study areas, analyzing how the social structures specific to these places have historically evolved, and how they shape present-day dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection.

3.1 From Free State to independence (1885–1960)

Neither warfare nor armed forces were alien to the territory of the present-day Congo before the era leading up to the creation of the *État indépendant du Congo* (Congo Free State) in 1885, which was de facto private property of Belgian King Léopold II. For many of the bigger political entities that developed from the end of the 14th or 15th century onwards, notably the Kongo, Luba and Lunda kingdoms, warfare was an important mode of expansion, although patterns of trade and government were also crucial to their rise (Vansina, 1968). As argued by Herbst (2000: 38–41), the specificities of the precolonial political economy, in particular scattered and relatively mobile populations, low value land due to extensive agriculture, and the weak development of the factors of production, made it difficult for rulers to establish control and extract resources far from where they were established. Therefore, rather than constructing extensive administrative apparatuses, the rulers of larger, relatively centralized polities projected power through limited administration in core areas, dense networks of allies and tributaries in the immediate periphery, and raiding and razzias in the uncontrolled predation zones (Vansina, 1962: 329–330). This last practice led to uneven development, for the violent extraction of wealth by the center contributed to the underdevelopment of productive forces in the peripheries, a process that Reyna (1990: 166) has coined ‘predatory accumulation’.

When becoming the de facto sovereign of the Congo, King Léopold faced the same environmental, demographic and socio-economic challenges to the broadcasting of power over large distances as his precolonial predecessors (Gann and Duignan, 1979: 52). While these challenges could in principle be overcome by establishing direct administrative control, the colonial regime’s willingness and capabilities to invest in the construction of the necessary infrastructure were only limited. Especially in its initial years, the Congo Free State had a relatively small capital base, while the resources needed to establish control over this vast territory were massive. Moreover, Léopold intended to finance his costly imperial projects primarily through local taxation, hoping that eventually, the colony would yield rather than cost money (Vangroenweghe, 2010 [1985]: 78–83). For Roes (2010: 653), ‘such economizing had far-reaching consequences for the make-up of the state. The colonial infrastructure, transport links and medical services remained rudimentary. The underdeveloped central administration and embryonic judicial system were only able to exercise minimal control over the interior, leading to a climate of impunity.’

The same financial considerations caused Leopold to minimize investments in the development of the colony’s security apparatus. Consequently, while the armed forces were crucial for the establishment and reproduction of colonial rule in the Congo, they were kept relatively limited in size: throughout most of its existence, the colonial army was constituted of only between 13,000 and a little over

20,000 troops. However, not only was it aided by significant numbers of auxiliaries during large field campaigns,² colonial rule was also secured by a substantial number of *sentinelles* (sentries) employed by the private companies that administered large tracts of the colony's territory. While this allowed the colonial force to remain limited in size, it still constituted a huge financial burden on the Free State, hovering between 34 and 58 per cent of its budget in the period between 1891 and 1898 (De Boeck, 1987: 59). This prompted the colonizers to keep the force in a very basic state, which had important effects on its *modus operandi*.

Similar to other colonial forces, the effectiveness of colonial Congo's military was located more in its technological superiority and its 'showing of force' than in its capacity for systematic surveillance and suppression (Killingray, 1999). As stated by Roes (2010: 654), 'the impossibility of establishing direct control over the movements and activities of its African subjects limited the arsenal of disciplinary methods the state had at its disposal', causing it to resort to 'hostage taking, raids, the stationing of sentries in villages and the threat of corporal punishment'. Hence, the colonial army operated primarily through deterrence effectuated by bouts of brutal, often reactive violence, as epitomized by the practice of 'punitive expeditions' (e.g., Burrows, 1903: 26). Herbst (2000: 91) notes in this respect that 'pervasive violence and control should not be confused. The extent of violence was, in many ways, not an indication of control, but the result of the very limited presence of administrative structures in many areas outside the major cities. When the colonialists wanted to get something done they had to use force rather than the regular sinews of government'.

The brutal behavior of the Free State's armed forces was one of the main reasons why the colonial state infamously came to be called *Bula Matari* (crusher of rocks) among its subjects (Burrows, 1903: 85). However, this designation should by no means taken to imply that the colonial state was all-pervasive and had effective control (Berman, 1997). Furthermore, the Free State did not uniquely resort to brutal violence to project power, although this aspect has generally received most attention in historiography. Like other colonial states, it used mixtures of more and less coercive instruments that highly varied per area and over time, as also shaped by the individual state agents in charge. Moreover, the use of coercion was not always part of centrally planned, well-defined strategies. The colonial state had a relatively weak grip over both its lower echelons and its coercive arm, causing violence to be often initiated and executed without clear directions from the central level, although this certainly did occur (Roes, 2010: 640, 650). Furthermore, as Roes points out, violence in the Congo Free State was not only produced by 'the state as a singular, normative agent' (2010: 638), but was a 'multicausal, broadly based and deeply engrained social phenomenon' (*ibidem*), that should also be seen in the light of what 'Christian Gerlach has labeled an "extremely violent society" in which various individuals and social groups within and outside of the state committed violent acts for multiple reasons' (*idem*: 636). Indeed, there was also violence between the various groups living on the Free State's territory, who were often involved in strong competition. Moreover, groups in conflict often tried to harness the colonial state in order to reinforce their position vis-à-vis other groups. For instance, several local leaders participated in field campaigns of the colonial armed forces not as much to help the colonizers, but as this allowed them to weaken their opponents (Vellut, 1984). In a sense, this resembles how competing groups attempt to harness the FARDC for their own ends today, causing its violence to be not uniquely the result of a repressive state, but to be co-produced by a 'violent society'.

3.1.1 *The Force publique: a decentralized gendarmerie under civilian operational control*

Even before the establishment of the Congo Free State in 1885, when the Léopold II-initiated *Association internationale du Congo* (International Association of the Congo) and preceding committees tried to explore and control this vast space, plans to create a military were already in circulation (Vellut, 1984: 675). In fact, most of the staff of these exploration bodies were military personnel, which facilitated the development of what was eventually named *la Force publique* (FP) (Flament, 1952:16). The creation of the force was formalized in 1888, when two decrees were issued that specified its organization and mission (Flament, 1952: 35–44). Ironically, the notion of *force publique* (public force) as enshrined in contemporary European law stipulated a clear separation between civilian and military control over coercive means, as well as between external defense and internal policing. However, neither of those two principles was respected in the organization of the colonial force. According to Shaw (1984: 11), the legal notion of *force publique* was fundamentally incompatible with the colonial project, which collapsed the distinction between internal and external security, as well as between civilian administrator and military commander. The result was a 'compression' of the spectrum of force, which blurred the distinctions between administration and repression, and between enemies and dissidents (*idem*: 42–43).

The power effects of the Force publique

In the first years of its existence, the FP primarily engaged in military operations and expeditions aimed at exploring and gradually occupying all corners of the Free State. The most important operations were the so-called Arab campaigns (1892–1895), which targeted

² In 1897, the colonial army grew to 14,000 troops (Young, 1965: 441), then fell to slightly over 13,000 in 1907, in order to attain a peak of 20,365 troops in 1952 (Shaw, 1984:92). As noted by De Boeck (1987:41, 48), these figures exclude the 'indigenous auxiliaries' that accompanied the army during field campaigns, which were sent by allied chiefs and had a separate organization.

the Afro-Arab rulers-cum-traders who had established large zones of control, including in parts of the present-day Kivu,³ where they fostered the spread of Swahili language and culture. The primary objective of military expeditions, which often also entailed fighting, was the establishment of garrisons and *postes* (administrative/trading stations), signing treaties with local leaders, and delineating the boundaries with territories occupied by surrounding colonial powers (Flament, 1952: 167–168). Initially, the FP did not only contribute to creating administrative/trading posts, it also manned these, thus blurring civilian and military power. Such blurring was further promoted by the fact that commanders of successful campaigns were often rewarded with a civilian position, like that of district commissioner (DC). Moreover, after leaving military service, many European military personnel entered the private enterprises that operated in the Congo. Therefore, in the early years of the Free State, most functions in all sectors were occupied by largely Belgian (ex-)military personnel, some of whom also occupied higher posts like vice-governor general (De Boeck, 1987:38; Vellut, 1984: 694). This might explain why an auto-historiography of the FP's early years states that 'the colonization of the Congo is largely due to the work of Belgian military staff' (Flament, 1952: 46).

With the gradual rolling out of the local administration, the FP's role shifted toward protecting the administration and facilitating its tasks of control and extraction. Consequently, FP staff became a type of auxiliaries of the administrators, in particular the DCs, whom they assisted with the collection of taxes, the recruitment of labor, the organization of the administration, and the carrying out of inspection tours (Shaw, 1984: 16). Due to the limited size of the bureaucracy, the exercise of authority depended to a large extent on the direct physical presence of state agents on the ground, leading to a type of 'roving' or 'itinerant' administration (Von Trotha, 1994: 117f, quoted in Tull, 2005: 67). The FP was crucial for enabling such tours, and also played its own part in 'showing the flag' in the form of the *promenades militaires* or military movements intended to demonstrate presence. In the words of a 1924 policy directive, these movements had 'to greatly impress the native and give him a good idea of our power' (quoted in Young, 1965: 462). In addition to such preventive practices, the FP also engaged in fighting and repression, primarily targeted at 'internal enemies'. The latter included dissident local rulers and populations resisting tax collection, forced labor and other duties imposed by the colonial state.

Aside from facilitating local administrators' governance tasks, the FP also assisted them with more private matters, such as securing their personal property and running their households. Thus, FP soldiers came to double as domestics, messengers, masons, farmers, tailors, carpenters and blacksmiths (Shaw, 1984: 28–33, 125–126). They also provided such labor to their European officers, being for instance obliged to contribute to the construction and maintenance of their dwellings inside military camps (Vanderstraeten, 1985: 70). More importantly, the FP played a crucial role in facilitating the private revenue-generation schemes of administrators and officers, which were intimately connected to the tax system. Both civilian administrators and military personnel obtained a percentage of the taxes they collected, generating high incentives to increase extraction by putting the population under pressure (Vangroenweghe, 2010[1985]: 78). This was especially the case in the areas where taxation, which was initially imposed in kind, took the form of the notorious rubber quota. In combination with some colonial officials' penchant for cruelty, and the low levels of command and control in the FP, this caused atrocities to become a regular feature of tax collection in these zones (Burrows, 1903). FP soldiers held persons for ransom, raped, executed and tortured them, including with the *chicotte*, a whip of rhinoceros hide also used by plantation owners (Canisius, 1903: 75), burned entire villages to the ground, and occasionally chopped off people's hands. This last practice was only allowed on corpses, to account for the use of bullets to superiors, but was occasionally also applied to the living, including those presumed dead (Vangroenweghe (2010[1985]: 64–67).⁴ Aside from rubber collection, other revenue-generation practices also went along with substantial violence. In the Pedicle, a small Congolese enclave in Northern Rhodesia, FP soldiers terrorized travelers by impounding loads of merchandise, seizing mailbags, and engaging in arbitrary arrests, beatings and extortion. Travelers were also arrested and fined at the border post, including for the tiniest of offenses, 'such as allowing a child to cry, spitting of saliva, throwing away a banana skin, or wearing a hat in the presence of a soldier' (Musambachime, 1990: 662–663).

In addition to facilitating tax collection and the more private revenue-generating schemes of state servants, the FP was crucial to enabling the economic activities of the private sector. Vast areas of colonial Congo were not directly controlled by the colonial administration, but administered and exploited by concession companies. The boards of these companies were often filled by colonial administrators (including ex-military), who not rarely doubled as shareholders (Vellut, 1982: 314; Harms, 1975: 81). The FP provided important services to these companies, including by contributing to the protection of the transport and administrative infrastructure that was essential to their activities, deploying for example a special company to secure the construction of various railway trajectories (Flament, 1952: 92). Furthermore, while many companies had their own security forces (the sentry system), in the case of major threats, like large-scale unrest provoked by resistance against exploitation, they would call upon the FP for reinforcement (e.g., Harms, 1975: 85). This highlights the 'confusion between the exercise of public authority and resources extraction' that was a key characteristic of the colonial system (Bayart, 2006[1989]: 99, see also Morel, 1904), and which rendered the name '*Force publique*' highly ironic.

3 'Kivu' only became a district and then a province under Belgian colonial rule (hence after 1908), designating the area of present-day North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema. Shortly after independence, in 1963, the province was split into three parts (Kivu Central, Nord Kivu and Maniema) (Young, 1965: 548), to be merged again in 1966. In 1972, Kivu was renamed a *région*. In 1988, this region was divided into its current parts of North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema (Turner, 1994: 230–232). The singular 'Kivu' is used herein to designate the province/region up to 1988, and the plural 'Kivus' for indicating the present-day provinces of North and South Kivu formed after that date.

4 As observed by Vellut (1984: 701), such practices of mutilation also existed in certain areas before the arrival of the FP.

The atrocities committed by the FP in relation to tax collection figured prominently in an international advocacy campaign against 'red rubber' (Morel, 1920[1906])⁵ that generated strong international pressure. Although not the sole reason, this campaign did contribute to Léopold II's abdication, which was followed by the takeover of the colony by the Belgian government in 1908 (Vangroenweghe, 2010[1985]: 196). The new colonial regime tried to distance itself from the Leopoldian approach, putting more policy emphasis on the 'civilizing mission' that had been the primary discursive frame of the colonial enterprise from the start. Furthermore, it invested significantly in extending the bureaucratic apparatus and transport infrastructure, in collaboration with private enterprise. These investments were to an important extent geared to stimulating the mining and agro-commercial sectors, which were the centers of gravity of the Belgian colony's economy (Peemans, 1975). Consequently, infrastructural development proceeded in a highly uneven manner, creating a dichotomy between on the one hand, outlying, poor, and little strategic areas, which remained relatively unconnected and unpenetrated by the central state apparatus, and on the other hand, economic and political core areas, like major cities, the import/export grid, and plantation and extractive enclaves, which became hubs of administrative and transport infrastructure (Schouten, 2014: 68–70).

In both central and peripheral areas, the economy depended to a large extent on (semi)forced and migrant labor, including forced cultivation intended to keep agricultural prices low. These impositions intensified during the First and the Second World Wars, to which the colony made important contributions. Rural communities had to produce prescribed quota of agricultural products, like rice, groundnuts and rubber, which were collected in the name of the *effort de guerre* (war effort) (Van Reybrouck, 2011: 211–213). Together with changes in tax measures, now levied monetarily rather than in kind, and increasingly elaborate measures of population control, these agricultural policies led to a drastic rise in the population's level of exposure to the state (Jewsiwiecki, 1977: 179; Young, 1965: 10–12). Taken together, these developments indicate that the transition to Belgian colonial rule led to substantial changes in the exercise of state power. The thickening of the infrastructural and administrative grids, and the fact that the most intense stages of internal conquest had come to an end, reduced the overall importance of large-scale overt violence. Yet, the colonizers continued to rely on systematic coercion and repression (e.g., Dembour, 1992; Roes, 2010: 642–643), as evidenced by significant continuities in the deployment and modus operandi of the FP.

Within the Belgian colony, the FP was instrumental to enabling growing state penetration and control. It played a crucial role in the enforcement of the increasingly detailed laws and regulations and in controlling the vast number of customary authorities that were the backbone of the system of indirect rule. The in/security forces were particularly important for enforcing the colonial regime's taxation and labor policies, having to quell the regularly surfacing resistance against the related measures (Thomas, 2012: 317–318). For example, in a case study of the cotton sector, Likaka (1997: 110–111) describes how the FP was deployed in Ubangi district at the end of the 1930s to dismantle the *villages camouflés* (camouflaged villages) that harbored those trying to escape from cotton cultivation. In this campaign of intimidation, they benefited from the increasingly dense road connections between the rural areas and the colonial centers of power, which allowed them to move more often and more rapidly. For Likaka (1997: 111), this demonstrates that while the state moved away from the more crude forms of open violence, it 'often strengthened control through repression to substantially reduce peasants' free social spaces', thereby benefiting from the thickening of the infrastructural grid.

Yet, it does not appear that in the Belgian era, the FP developed the enhanced capacity for surveillance and rapid reaction needed for preventive and timely interventions. Rather, its mode of operating remained predominantly reactive and punitive. For Thomas (2012: 307), FP detachments in the Belgian Congo 'served as punitive columns in unsettled areas rather than preventing escalation of the original disorder'. A telling example is the ruthless suppression of the Kwango revolt (in present-day Bandundu province) in 1931–2, which was provoked by a combination of worsening labor and living conditions and anti-colonial resistance driven by a religious movement calling on people not to pay taxes. This unrest culminated in the killing of a Belgian administrator, which provoked a punitive expedition that caused the death of at least 344 villagers, some of whom were whipped to death with the *chicotte* (Thomas, 2012: 301–312). Similar excessive force was used to put down the revolt of the Kitawala in Masisi (present-day North Kivu) in 1944, a religious movement with a strong anti-colonial bent that encouraged its followers to stop paying taxes and refuse forced labor (Lovens, 1974). These examples indicate that while the transition from Leopoldian to Belgian colonial rule led to changes in the exercise of state power, it did not occasion a drastic transformation of the FPs' modes of operating (Barron, 2013: 108).⁶ Arguably, this relative continuity can be explained by both limited changes in the discourses legitimizing violence, such as its racist underpinnings and the rationalization of violence as needed for 'progress' (Dembour, 1992), and continuities in the political economy of coercion, notably the ongoing reliance on force to shore up state power in the face of limited resources and a vast territory with uneven infrastructural development. These last factors contributed again to significant continuities in the FP's internal organization, especially its decentralized and fragmented nature, which hampered control and undermined discipline and operational effectiveness.

5 Note that there is an interesting parallel between the role of representations of the FP in the red rubber campaign and that of representations of the FARDC in present-day international advocacy campaigns against sexual violence, in which the Congolese armed forces equally figure as a symbol of evil.

6 Continuities in the military's modes of operating during Belgian colonial rule are for example well documented in Musambachime's (1990) study of forms of violence enacted by the FP in the Pedicle, which shows the persistence of these practices even into the post-independence era.

With the exception of the period of ‘internal conquest’ and the two World Wars, the FP functioned more as an auxiliary constabulary force to local administrators than as an autonomous defense organization. This was reflected in its institutional development, which enshrined the principle of administrators’ operational command and control up to the lowest levels. Company commanders were placed under the orders of district commissioners (DCs), having to report to their military superiors only on administrative matters. Furthermore, DCs and their subordinates had the right to apportion 50–66 per cent of the soldiers from the company deployed in their district to outlying posts, while command of the detached troops was effectively in the hands of the territorial authorities (Flament, 1952: 68; Shaw, 1984: 14–18). Initially, the latter consisted in majority of (ex)military, leading a Free State official to note in 1908 that: ‘the *chef de poste* (head of administrative post) is a *sous-officier*⁷ of the Belgian army who only does not participate in fire-training due to a lack of time’ (Flament, 1952: 69). Although territorial administrators were increasingly replaced by civilian staff, the accumulation of civilian and military functions remained unchanged. In combination with deficient control and accountability mechanisms, this caused administrators to often transform into local tyrants who abused the FP for furthering their personal projects (De Boeck, 1987: 38). However, administrators did not always have full control over the colonial force, whose commanders at all levels equally tended to pursue their own agendas. Moreover, non-European FP commanders (below platoon level) could easily set up the population against the white administrators, who heavily depended on the knowledge and local contacts of the FP for fulfilling their administrative duties (Vangroenweghe, 2010[1985]: 205–207).

Due to its functioning as a constabulary force under the territorial administration’s control, most of the FP was scattered throughout the colony’s vast territory, constituting a set of disconnected groups without a centralized command chain. The military hierarchy had only limited organizational and operational control over troops in outlying areas, which was aggravated by weakly developed systems of communications.⁸ Control was further hampered by the FP’s small ratio of officers to soldiers, which was much lower than in the British or German colonial forces. This was a result of both the constant need for economization and the fact that many officers ended up in the civilian administration (Gann and Duignan, 1979: 66). Such a weak officers to troops ratio was especially grave in the light of the limited training received by troops enlisted for less than four years, who were not sent to training camps, but directly absorbed in units in their region of origins (Burrows, 1903: 30). Furthermore, the FP’s European officers and *sous-officiers*, who heavily depended on interpreters, were sometimes duped by their own troops, who would for instance steal from civilians behind their superiors’ backs. Yet, as De Boeck (1987: 40) warns, the hypothesis that the FP’s cruel conduct was primarily the responsibility of black troops in the absence of their white superiors, as propagated by the FP itself (Flament, 1952: 68), cannot be substantiated. Abuses were also committed in units where white officers exercised active command. This is evidenced by the big military *colonnes* (columns) of the Free State’s initial years, which operated as ‘plundering machines as well as conquering armies’ (Roes, 2010: 637), and were commanded by European officers operating like *condottieri* (Vellut, 1984: 679).

Regardless the quality of command, the FP’s institutional set-up and scattered deployment, which reflected its primary task of maintaining domestic order, inevitably undermined overall cohesion and operational effectiveness (Shaw, 1984: 33). This problematic blurring of military and police functions was further fostered by the recruitment policies of the slowly developing police forces, which drew the majority of their staff from the FP. In the 1890s, various administrative centers (zone and district capitals) created distinct police forces, a situation that was regularized by a decree issued in 1908, which stipulated that these forces were to be recruited from the FP staff deployed in the area in question. In 1909, a part of FP companies were in certain regions transformed into *troupes de police* or *corps de police territoriaux*, which remained part of the FP (Flament, 1952: 92–93). This further entrenched the blurring of domestic order and defense functions, and aggravated the ensuing problems of discipline and command. In 1919, efforts were made to address this situation, possibly as the First World War had reminded the administration again of the need for an operationally effective defense force, and as it was estimated that the troops returning from battle had to be placed under reinforced command and control. Thus, a decree was adopted that divided the FP into *troupes campées* (garrisoned military units under military command) and *troupes en service territoriale* (troops under civilian command fulfilling mainly police duties, rebaptized *gendarmérie* in 1959) (Shaw, 1984: 70–71, 85–86). Additionally, in 1926 a separate police body was created called *police territoriale*, which consisted of locally recruited and less well-armed staff commanded by European officers. The latter were placed under provincial authority and answered directly to the territorial authorities (Young, 1965: 463). Theoretically, the *troupes campées* could only be called upon by territorial administrators in case of emergency, which had to ensure that they remained primarily under military control and would retain military professionalism (Shaw, 1984: 85–86). However, the civilian authorities continued to appeal to the combat-oriented *troupes campées*, in part due to the weak performance of the *troupes en service territoriale* and the police, which remained very small in size⁹ and was mostly deployed to secure urban areas. This development was reinforced with the onset of economic crisis in the 1930s, when laid-off workers were seen as a growing security problem (Thomas, 2012: 319). What also blurred the boundaries between the two branches of the FP was that troops were frequently rotated between them, which

7 For an explanation of *sous-officiers*, see footnote 11 on p.25.

8 As De Boeck (1987: 65–66) notes, the FP’s systems of communications were strongly inferior to those of the populations in whose midst they operated, who utilized techniques like the tam-tam to communicate over long distances.

9 At the end of the Belgian colonial period, in December 1958, the territorial police stood at around one third of the FP, numbering 5,975 Congolese and 223 European staff, against 20,527 Congolese and 921 European FP personnel (Vanderstraeten, 1985: 61, 67, 496).

had an overall detrimental impact on discipline and cohesion (Shaw, 1984: 97–98). In particular the *troupes en service territoriale*, to a large extent charged with extra-military tasks for the territorial administration, were notorious for indiscipline and extortion. In 1933, the commander of the FP qualified command over these troops as ‘more often a fiction than a reality’, while judging them utterly incapable of conducting effective operations (idem: 94). In sum, even after the post-World War I reforms, the FP largely continued to function as a decentralized gendarmerie plagued by severe problems with discipline and military professionalism.

One of the sources of these problems was the FP’s relatively small budget, forcing it to be partly self-sufficient. The FP had no centralized system of logistics, including food supplies, nor did it dispose of a separate labor force for camp construction and maintenance, although these tasks were sometimes delegated to soldiers deemed physically unfit, called *travailleurs militaires* (military workers) (De Boeck, 1987: 45). In principle, soldiers had to take care of these extra-military tasks themselves, causing them to spend a good deal of their service time searching for food, clearing land, digging wells, making bricks, and gathering wood, rocks and grass (Flament, 1952: 77–79; Shaw, 1984: 301–302). Especially the hunt for food, aggravated by soldiers’ low wages, took up a considerable chunk of time. A partial solution to this was found in encouraging the presence of soldiers’ wives and other women in the camps, where they commonly lived with their children. These women were charged with cooking for their husbands and other soldiers, and were expected to work either on the larger military plantations surrounding the camps or the garden-plots allocated to military families. Soldiers themselves, especially those in the training camps, also worked the land, in addition to engaging in hunting and fishing (Flament, 1952: 62). However, military agricultural labor ultimately solved only a small part of the FP’s food problem, forcing it to procure locally through the imposition of a tax in kind and purchases, often in the form of exchange against cloth and trinkets that were systematically overvalued (Shaw, 1984: 286, 289, 293–295; De Boeck, 1987: 67). Soldiers also excelled in extorting foodstuffs, livestock and beer from the local population, commonly named *réquisition* or *confiscation*. Especially during field campaigns, ‘living off the land’ was the rule rather than the exception (De Boeck, 1987: 67; Vellut, 1984: 679).

Aside from contributing to food production in the camps, women importantly facilitated the FP’s field campaigns by serving as porters and spies, making them essentially a type of ‘commissary and supply corps’ (Shaw, 1984: 277; see also De Boeck, 1987: 45–46). But these logistical contributions were not the only reason that their presence was encouraged by the FP command. The latter also believed that including spouses would make recruitment more attractive and keep troops loyal and well disciplined (Flament, 1952: 81–83). In order to ensure a large female presence, the military administration accepted women with various types of relations to soldiers to live in the camps, including *femmes régulières* (‘regular’ women, for whom an allowance was paid), *concubines rationnées* (concubines who received only a food ration), and ordinary *concubines*, who were only allowed to reside in the camps, but received no rations or allowances. Furthermore, to encourage marriage among its soldiers, the FP paid a part of the dowry when needed. Additionally, it facilitated the primary education of soldiers’ children by creating schools in all the bigger military camps (Vanderstraeten, 1985: 69–70).

Despite the efforts to accommodate family life, the FP remained a relatively unattractive employer. Consisting initially mostly of troops from various African countries, it was soon decided that the FP’s lower-ranking staff had to be progressively ‘Congolized’ (Gann and Duignan, 1979: 73). However, the colonial force had the greatest difficulties to attract physically fit rank and file, which was in part a result of the mediocre service conditions and low pay, with average wages for local recruits being only one third of what was paid to government and railway employees (Musimbachime, 1990: 647). Due to the unattractiveness of military service, the FP did not manage to fill its ranks through voluntary recruitment. Consequently, it resorted, at least indirectly, to forced labor. In 1891, the colonial authorities introduced a policy of forced recruitment for what eventually became a seven-year period of service, making customary chiefs and territorial administrators responsible for filling the imposed quota. Given the unpopularity of the FP, recruitment was generally seen as an excellent occasion to dispose of personal enemies, troublemakers, criminals, marginalized, (ex)slaves, prisoners of war, and those deemed physically or mentally unfit, such as the elderly and children (Flament, 1952: 50–51). Although the statutory age for recruitment was 14 up to 1919, the pressure to fill the quota made that even children below the age of 11 were enrolled. Hence, far from leading to the selection of those apt for military service, recruitment was used and seen as a form of punishment and intimidation (Shaw, 1984: 198–211).

The FP also struggled to attract and retain educated recruits for specialized functions, as the growing number of better educated among the population generally found the private sector a more attractive employer. Skilled recruits were destined to serve as *gradés (sous-officiers)*, and could be either *gradés comptables* (clerks and accountants), *gradés armuriers* (assistant-armorers) or serve as instructors and commanders of *sections* (squads)¹⁰ (Flament, 1952: 86–88; Shaw, 1984: 249–250). The impossibility to advance beyond the level of *sous-officier*, which reflected the Belgian colonizers’ general policy of restricting the access of the ‘natives’ to higher education and higher positions, further reduced the attractiveness of military service. Officer ranks were uniquely filled by Europeans, in majority Belgians, and an important part of *sous-officiers* were Europeans as well. It was only in the 1950s that an ‘Africanization’¹¹ plan was established with the objective of creating a Congolese officer corps. However, the plan was calculated to unfold over generations, and it was not before May 1960, under pressure of the changing political climate, that a first group of 14 Congolese were sent to Belgium to prepare for entry at the *École royale militaire* (Royal Military Academy) in Brussels (Young, 1965: 444–447).

¹⁰ The section/squad, which consists of around ten-twelve troops, is the lowest unit within the Congolese command chain.

¹¹ The term ‘Africanization’ is misleading in the sense that it concerned the recruitment of Congolese only, not ‘Africans’ in general.

Understandably, the limited prospects for mobility and the resulting feelings of unequal treatment created resentment against the FP's European officers. This was aggravated by the penchant of certain of these officers for brutality and harshness. The resulting dislike towards commanders lowered the latter's grip over their troops, and contributed to sparking major mutinies, like in 1897, among the field campaign of Baron Dhanis. This last mutiny, which became known as the 'Batetela revolt', named after the (flexibly defined) 'ethnic group'¹² to which the soldiers seen to have initiated the revolt belonged, morphed into a rebellion that lasted several years and also swept the Kivu area (De Boeck, 1987). Although unusual in its scope and duration, the Dhanis mutiny was no isolated incident: mutinies occurred throughout the colonial era,¹³ and were often attributed to a specific 'tribe' believed to have instigated the unrest. This generated fear for units dominated by a single ethnic group, leading to recruitment policies that ensured diversity. While initially, many recruits came from groups seen as 'martial races', like the 'Bangala',¹⁴ recruitment gradually became more balanced. Furthermore, the FP carefully scrutinized the composition of military units, mixing soldiers from different backgrounds (Flament, 1952: 61, 68). According to Young, this contributed to the development of a type of 'national Congolese identity', rendering the FP 'the first major avenue to modernity for the Congolese' (1965: 440).

However, FP staff's feelings of national identification could not prevent the force from disintegrating shortly after the Congo's independence in 1960, when it turned into a collection of 'armed gangs of renegades whose loyalties were to local strongmen, ethnic groups or regions, rather than to the national government' (Glickson and Sinai, 1994: 286). Additionally, while fostering cohesion in the force, the FP's separate forms of identification widened the distance with the population. Promoting such a distance was a conscious policy of the military hierarchy, who tried to instill a sense of superiority among the troops. As stated by an article in the 1954 *Bulletin militaire*, which was published by the FP's general staff: 'the best remedy for subversion and corruption in the army is the isolation of troops by inculcating a positive zealotry towards their craft and mobility of military ideals [by teaching them] to despise the masses who lack military discipline' (quoted in Musambachime, 1990: 648). Thus, soldiers came to see themselves as an elite and civilians as 'savages', which led to strained civil-military relations (Musambachime, 1990: 649). As further elaborated upon below, these representations would prove a lasting heritage.

3.1.2 *The colonial era in Kivu*

The Kivu region was considered to be one of the more unruly corners of the Free State. Due to the Arab campaigns, the rebellion of the mutineers of Dhanis, and boundary disputes with colonial powers in neighboring areas, its initial occupation stayed for a long time predominantly military. Nevertheless, the colonizers gradually started to organize the local administration by means of investing local chiefs and regrouping people and villages into territorial administrative units. This process proceeded unevenly, depending on existing forms of social and political organization, which highly varied from one area and group to the next. While in some zones, politics existed with a relatively centralized organization, like the Bashi kingdoms (in present-day South Kivu), in other areas, groups were organized in a more decentralized fashion, constituting small, poly-segmentary societies where lineage chiefs were the main source of authority and engaged in shared decision-making (Biebuyck, 1973: 46–50; Newbury, 1991: 43–64). Furthermore, while certain groups were relatively sedentary, others were more mobile, like a group of semi-nomadic pastoralists living in present-day South Kivu, who would later come to be known as *Banyamulenge* (Depelchin, 1974: 65). Together with their uncooperative attitude towards the colonial authorities, the mobility and small size of this group, who had migrated in various waves from the territories of what are now Rwanda and Burundi, would prompt the administration to deny them an administrative entity of their own.

To the colonial authorities, the socio-political heterogeneity and fluidity of Kivu constituted an obstacle to efficient governance via indirect rule. Seeking to build unitary and stable intermediary authority structures, they set out to organize the population as much as possible into homogeneously administered, hierarchically organized, territorially contained units dominated by a single group defined as 'ethnic'. The creation of these 'tribal homelands' (Mamdani, 2011: 31) entailed significant social engineering. Existing larger chiefdoms were split up, chiefs whose loyalty was doubted were replaced, and where no centralized politics existed, various sub-or lineage chiefs were displaced and regrouped into larger structures (Muchukiwa, 2006: 4–7,70; Matabaro, 1997: 58–59). The administrative units created in this manner, which were called *chefferies* (chiefdoms), housed groups that were labeled 'ethnic', even while not all of them had previously conceived of themselves as constituting separate groups identified in an 'ethnic' manner. *Chefferies* were commonly placed under one paramount ruler (*mwami*, plural *bami*), who was invested by the colonial administrators. This process of administrative organization, which entailed drastic socio-political transformations and was therefore sometimes met with resistance, was effectuated by a mix of persuasive and coercive strategies. FP staff played an important role in both. Not only were decisions on administrative reforms often

12 As further explained below, the development of ethnic identification was strongly influenced by colonial policies. For the case of the 'Batetela', see Turner, 1993.

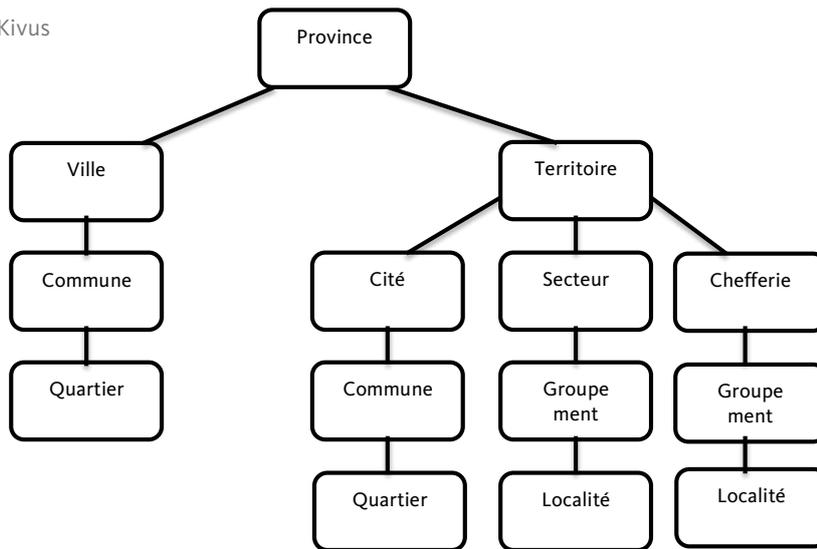
13 For example, in 1895, the Batetela of the Luluabourg garrison mutinied, and in 1900, those stationed in Boma. In 1944, the Luluabourg garrison was the scene of another major mutiny (Young 1984: 441–442).

14 The strong presence of Bangala was one of the reasons why the official language of the army became Lingala, although the administrative and command language was French. According to Musambachime (1990: 648), Lingala, which was employed as a *lingua franca* by traders along the Congo river, was also selected to instill pride in the troops, and give them a feeling of being elevated above the masses. De Boeck (1987: 56) provides an additional explanation, highlighting the effects of the large participation of Swahiliphone troops in the Batetela revolt, causing the authorities to rely heavier on Lingalaphones who were judged as more reliable.

partly made on the basis of soldiers' reconnaissance reports, which extensively studied the history and customs of the population, the FP was also charged with enforcing decisions, for instance assisting with the deportation of reluctant chiefs (e.g., Muchukiwa, 2006: 13, 76; Shaw, 1984: 148).

As the artificiality and small size of some of the *chefferies* created or recognized during the first phase of administrative organization hampered efficient governance, the Belgian colonial authorities engaged in a reorganization process that was formalized by a decree issued in 1933. Where no centralized chiefdoms had been consolidated, like in Fizi territory (South Kivu), *chefferies* were abolished and merged into *secteurs* (sectors), to be headed by government-appointed administrators rather than customary chiefs. Where large chiefdoms did exist, these were recognized as *chefferies agrandies* under a *mwami* (paramount customary ruler), in principle a hereditary position. The 1933 decree also created *territoires* (territories), headed by European officials appointed by the colonial administrators, which were larger administrative units that encompassed both *secteurs* and *chefferies*. Earlier, in 1931, a decree had been issued that recognized larger urban agglomerations as *centres extra-coutumiers* (extra-customary centers), which had a separate administration (Dumont, 1943). In this manner, a system of local administration was created that is essentially still in place today (see Figure 8), and that distinguishes between three types of local entities: first, *chefferies* led by a *mwami* (customary chief); second, *secteurs* headed by an appointed (hence non-customary) *chef de secteur*; and third, towns and cities, which have their own non-customary administration. At present, both *chefferies* and *secteurs* are subdivided into *groupements*, the chiefs of which are designated according to custom, usually implying selection by the local notability following hereditary principles. This also applies to *localités* (localities), which are subunits of *groupements*, and the villages within a *localité*, which are headed by a *kapita*. Within the *groupements*, these customary authorities used to be complemented by representatives of the *administrateur du territoire*, the so-called *chefs de poste d'encadrement* or simply *chefs de poste*.¹⁵ The designation, boundaries and attributes of the structures above the level of *territoires* have somewhat differed in various epochs (Callaghy, 1984: 337–340). Today one finds *provinces* headed by a *gouverneur* (governor) who is elected by the provincial assembly.

Figure 8: System of local administration in the Kivus



In sum, the colonial authorities developed a comprehensive and relatively dense local administrative framework, the core of which still exists today. However, the extensive social engineering involved in creating this framework generated directly and indirectly a large number of conflicts surrounding local authority, like disagreement over administrative boundaries or the status of lower-level entities (e.g., Muchukiwa, 2006; Callaghy, 1984: 378). As many of the underlying mechanisms have not substantially been transformed, local governance continues to be a source of ongoing conflicts in the Kivus today. One of the sources of these frictions, then and now, is the legal and administrative duality between the politico-administrative sphere and what came to be defined as the 'native' domain of customary authority. Customary chiefs had an ambivalent position vis-à-vis the colonial authorities and state apparatus. On the one hand, their power base was relatively autonomous, since the recognition of their authority among their subjects was grounded in customary rules, and therefore did not depend on the state. On the other hand, chiefs' position ultimately depended on the colonial administration, who invested and controlled them, and who needed them for the collection of taxes, the control over and recruitment of labor, and the implementation of administrative regulations. In exchange for these services, the colonial administration granted chiefs the right to levy taxes and recognized their jurisdiction over a wide range of communal and family affairs, including inheritance, marriage, successions of subordinate chiefs, land distribution, minor infractions and conflicts (MacGaffey, 1982). While seemingly reinforcing their powers,

¹⁵ The function of *chef de poste* was formally suppressed in February 2015 in the framework of the decentralization process that is enshrined in the 2006 constitution. Radio Okapi, 'RDC: suppression des entités administratives déconcentrées', *Radio Okapi*, 21 February 2015.

this double position also contributed to a gradual decline of chiefs' legitimacy, as their dependency on the colonial state weakened accountability towards their subjects.

One domain in which this weakening accountability was very visible was that of land governance (Mararo, 1997: 511). Among many groups, customary chiefs were considered the custodians of what was seen as communally owned land, which was governed by clientelistic, but socially inclusive, systems of land governance. In the colonial era, these traditional systems came under pressure due to, amongst other factors, the fabrication and territorial fixing of ethnically defined governance units; the introduction of private land ownership; and the appropriation of vast tracts of land by the colonial rulers. These developments also reduced the amount of vacant land, which undermined its social functions as a means of social mobility, a safety net for those stricken by disaster, and an instrument for the integration of 'strangers' (Van Acker, 2005). The tensions resulting from these socio-economic transformations, in particular the ensuing erosion of social cohesion and solidarity, hardened the boundaries between groups having a 'tribal homeland' (separate customary and ethnically defined administrative unit) and those who did not. The latter category included tens of thousands of labor migrants from Rwanda (then part of the Belgian colony of Ruanda-Urundi), who had been encouraged by the colonial government to establish themselves in what would later become North Kivu. It also encompassed groups that had 'missed out' on a *chefferie agrandie* in the formative stages of the local administration, like the Banyamulenge in present-day South Kivu. As these groups lacked access to land of their own, they had to pay tribute to the *bami* (customary chiefs) of other communities (Muchukiwa, 2006: 93–97).¹⁶ The fact that these customary authorities, defined as representatives of ethnic 'communities', monopolized at once access to land and political authority strongly contributed to rendering ethnic identification the defining principle of socio-political organization in Kivu. In conjunction with processes of reification driven by a series of complex socio-political developments, this caused groups excluded from a 'tribal homeland' to be gradually denied the status of 'autochthons' or 'sons/daughters of the soil' (the original inhabitants of a certain area), becoming labeled 'foreigners', 'strangers' or 'immigrants' instead (Jackson, 2006b). These developments sowed the seeds for a potentially explosive in-group/out-group distinction (Sumner, 1908: 12) that would harden under the influence of political competition and socio-economic pressures, specifically the dwindling availability of land (Mamdani, 1998).

The in-group/out-group dichotomy thus fostered, which mostly took shape in the postcolonial era, came to be primarily defined along autochthon/Rwandophone lines. Both the colonial labor immigrants in North Kivu and the Banyamulenge in South Kivu were 'Rwandophones', or speakers of *Kinyarwanda* language, which encompass Hutu and Tutsi. Other Rwandophone groups, who had not been excluded from a *chefferie* by the colonial authorities, like the Bwisha in Rutshuru (North Kivu) or the Barundi in Uvira (South Kivu), who speak *Kirundi*,¹⁷ were gradually assimilated to the groups missing a 'tribal homeland', causing them to be equally portrayed as 'foreigners' and 'outsiders'. This led to the construction of a superordinate identity category of *Banyarwanda* that regrouped all Hutu and Tutsi in Kivu, regardless their origins, and that would later come to be labeled 'Rwandophones' (speakers of *Kinyarwanda* language), defined as an ethnic rather than a linguistic category. An important catalyst of these processes of boundary drawing were elections and administrative reforms, which commonly brought the matter of citizenship and voting rights into the limelight, especially where *Banyarwanda* formed a demographic majority. This was clearly manifested on the eve of and just after the Congo's independence in 1960, when the political status of this group became a major stake in electoral and decentralization processes.¹⁸

3.2 From independence to war (1960–1996)

Similar to many other countries on the continent, the Congolese postcolonial state is deeply rooted in its colonial predecessor, although the latter was appropriated and reinvented in ways that have produced important discontinuities (cf. Bayart, 2006[1989]). One of the elements guaranteeing continuity were the unchanged challenges of power projection. Like in the colonial era, the investments needed for developing and maintaining comprehensive administrative, transport and communications infrastructure were immense, while the available resources were modest (Herbst, 2000: 133–134). Consequently, patterns of power broadcasting continued to be characterized by colonialism's 'archipelago' logic of concentrating direct administrative intervention and infrastructure around islands of importance surrounded by a more weakly penetrated sea of marginality (Tull, 2005: 39).¹⁹ Furthermore, depending on bargaining processes shaped

¹⁶ Groups whose *petites chefferies* were later transformed into a *secteur*, like the Babembe in Fizi, would only have *chefs de groupements* (since the *secteur* is headed by an appointed official), yet would still be recognized as having customary ownership of their entities. Furthermore, the groups that were denied a customary administrative entity altogether were often still granted control over *localités* (below *groupement* level) by the chiefs on whose lands they lived, especially where localities consisted predominantly of members of their own community (e.g., Muchukiwa, 2006: 123, 126).

¹⁷ Speakers of *Kirundi*, a language closely affiliated to *Kinyarwanda*, like the Barundi in Uvira territory (present-day South Kivu), are commonly also defined as 'Rwandophones'.

¹⁸ The term *Banyarwanda* will not be used herein to designate the Tutsi population of South Kivu. In the course of the 1970s, this group would become known as *Banyamulenge*, a name that is still in use today. In order to distinguish this group from the North Kivu Tutsi population, it was decided to employ only the name Banyamulenge, even if anachronistic before the 1970s.

¹⁹ The metaphor of the 'archipelago' to describe the differentiated nature of Congo/Zaire's political economy and state system was first coined by Reno (1998a: 149), who states that 'the country's vastness and its archipelago of resources leave broad stretches of *Afrique inutile* that physically separate some political groups'. It was then used by Callaghy (2001: 109) to describe the state in Zaire as 'a group of islands of control and extraction which kept the stumbling system alive by focusing

by local elites' modes of wealth accumulation and insertion into social structures, local authorities often continued to enjoy substantial autonomy from the political center, resisting encroachment upon their spheres of influence (cf. Boone, 2003: 35–36). The resulting difficulties to reinforce central state control were an important factor in prompting rulers to rely heavily on more personalized modes of power projection, in particular via the sinews of big-man networks straddling the administration (Bayart, 2006[1989]: 268; Verweijen and Van Meeteren, 2015).

Like in the colonial era, this configuration of structures of domination had important effects on the shape and modus operandi of the in/security forces. Although postcolonial rulers invested significantly in expanding the civilian in/security apparatus, the armed forces continued to be deployed primarily for domestic security and order purposes. This situation was enabled by both the internal security situation and the external strategic environment. After an initial period of turbulence and strife, the Congo's postcolonial rulers faced only minor military threats, with the notable exception of the two Shaba wars (see below). The charter of the Organization of African Unity, created in 1963, enshrined the principle of territorial inviolability, which diminished the likelihood of invasion and secession. Together with the protection offered to client regimes by Cold War superpowers or former colonizers, this reduced the importance of developing a defense establishment with strong fighting capabilities (Herbst, 2000: 104–105; Howe, 2001: 47–49). Consequently, and as further motivated by a limited state budget, the armed forces were kept relatively small in size, roughly numbering between 50,000–70,000 troops up to the beginning of the 1990s.²⁰ However, despite the limited size, and significant foreign military assistance, the military constituted a considerable drain on resources, with defense standing at 10–11 per cent of the national budget during most of the 1970s (Young and Turner, 1985: 259).

But it were not only strategic and resources constraints that prompted the Congo's postcolonial rulers to keep the armed forces of modest proportions; fear for military interference in politics was an important consideration as well. Wary of officers' praetorian tendencies, the rulers invested heavily in keeping military elites loyal by co-opting them into their personal networks and granting them access to revenue-generation opportunities. In this manner, military elites became an integral part of the political-commercial establishment (cf. Luckham, 1994: 26,43; Rosenblum, 1990: 214) and the 'reciprocal assimilation of elites' (Bayart, 2006[1989]: 208) producing it. This process entailed the fusion of elites from different social, educational, professional and ethno-regional backgrounds into new governing networks that cut across state/non-state, political/economic and civilian/military divides. Consequently, officers balanced loyalty to the armed forces as an institution with allegiances to personal and business networks. Together with other efforts by rulers to maintain control over the in/security apparatus, like ethnic recruitment and frequent rotations of office, this had highly detrimental effects on operational effectiveness, cohesion, discipline and bureaucratic institutionalization (Howe, 2001: 28–47).

Similar processes of personalization and commercial orientation could be detected in the administration and the civilian in/security apparatus. While postcolonial rulers made significant efforts to reinforce and expand the administration and other state agencies, a combination of limited resources and increasing reliance on personalized modes of control undermined the effectiveness of these initiatives (Callaghy, 1984). Consequently, the postcolonial state institutions never attained the capacity for effective public service provision and policy enforcement, and for systematic and comprehensive surveillance and control. This did not only reinforce the relative importance of coercion for state and elite power projection, it also caused the exercise of coercion, by civilian and military institutions alike, to remain guided by the principles of deterrence and post-hoc brutal reaction, rather than prevention and immediate and proportionate intervention (Tull, 2005: 68–69). What further contributed to such a reactive and brutal mode of operating was the strong legacy of the colonial army, whose personnel and institutional framework were at the core of the new force. This led to significant continuities in the military's internal structures of domination, signification and legitimation, and therefore its modus operandi (Young and Turner, 1985: 260–261). These continuities rendered it in turn more difficult for the new rulers to significantly change the military's makeup and internal workings, not least as their expectations and norms vis-à-vis the armed forces had been influenced by the colonial force. This reflects how, similar to its predecessor force, the organization, deployment and modus operandi of the postcolonial military were shaped by a complex interplay between social structures internal and external to the military, as strongly guided by the agency of rulers and military elites.

3.2.1 *Forces armées zairoises: a 'free-floating source of insecurity'*²¹

On 24 November 1965, Gen. (General) Mobutu, Chief of Staff of the *Armée nationale congolaise* (ANC, Congolese National Army) as the first military of post-independence Congo was called, staged a relatively peaceful *coup d'état*. This *coup* did not entail a military takeover, for after assuming the country's presidency, Mobutu built a civilian government, while trying to eliminate the military from the sphere of politics. Nevertheless, fear for a military *coup* would continue to haunt Mobutu throughout his reign, causing him to engage in continuous

on the most easily profitable forms and locations of resource pillage'. It is unclear to what extent this use of the term archipelago is inspired by Braudel's (1984 [1979]: 30) concept of an 'archipelago of towns', which he borrowed from Richard Häpke to similarly describe patterns of uneven political-economic development.

²⁰ Young and Turner (1985: 267) document 55,000 troops for 1971 and 70,000 for 1976, while Glickson and Sinai (1994: 277) give the number of 49,100 including the gendarmerie, for 1993. This number would steadily drop in the 1990s, for Reno (1998a: 159), referring to a paper by Kisangani from 1996, reports only 20,000 troops for the mid-1990s.

²¹ This quote is derived from Schatzberg 1988: 70 and will be further discussed below.

efforts to retain the loyalty of key parts of the armed forces. This concern for loyalty must also be seen in the light of the tumultuous history of the ANC, which completely disintegrated in the first months of its existence due to major mutinies, political factionalism, secessionist efforts, and the destabilizing effects of producing overnight a uniquely Congolese officer corps, despite the lack of education and preparation (Vanderstraeten, 1985).²² While attempts to reunite the army were eventually successful, as facilitated by rises in salary²³ and investments in education, the operational effectiveness and discipline of the ANC remained poor throughout its existence (Young, 1964: 455–461).

Immediately after his power takeover in 1965, Mobutu set out to reinforce the ANC's fighting capabilities with the help of numerous foreign partners. Yet, to the dismay of the president, improvement in performance was not proportional to the invested resources. Thus, when enumerating the 'ten scourges' plaguing the country in 1974, he listed 'a costly and unproductive army' as the seventh scourge (Young and Turner, 1985: 248). What was rebaptized the *Forces armées zairoises* (FAZ, Zairian Armed Forces) in 1971, reflecting the country's change in name from Congo to *Zaire*, would always remain a weak force with limited operational capabilities. This was dramatically illustrated by the two Shaba Wars in 1977 and 1978, when the province of Shaba (ex-Katanga) was invaded by former secessionists who had regrouped in Angola. Due to the FAZ's abysmal combat performance, Mobutu's regime could only be rescued by mercenaries and foreign troops, including the French Foreign Legion, which was sent in the context of Cold War-era 'solidarity'. Renewed efforts to reinforce the military after this humiliating episode once again failed to produce the desired effects. However, since the support of befriended regimes appeared unwavering, this did not constitute a major problem. Mobutu's main priority was to keep the army sufficiently loyal to ensure his political survival (Young and Turner, 1985: 255–259), not to keep it operationally effective for defense purposes.

Big-man military management

In order to ensure control over the military, Mobutu adopted a highly personalized style of military management, intervening directly in key decision-making processes. As supreme commander and from 1965 onwards also minister of defense, Mobutu and his *maison militaire* (military house), as the military staff attached to the presidency was called, controlled much of the core general staff and ministry of defense functions. This included procurement, logistics, operational command, and control over the presidential guard, an elite unit filled with loyalists that was from 1986 onwards known as the *Division spéciale présidentielle* (DSP, Special Presidential Division) (Young and Turner, 1985: 264). Personal intervention in military management also implied direct presidential control over key appointments, leading to the prioritization of loyalty over competence. Thus, Mobutu came to fill the most important positions in the army with his most trusted client base, in particular members of his own group, the Ngbandi, and other communities from his home area in *Équateur* province. By 1980, this client circle constituted 90 per cent of the personnel of the ministry of defense (Callaghy, 1984: 209), and by the 1990s, half of the FAZ's 62 generals. Officers from other areas and ethnic groups, including Kivu, seen as brewing with rebels and troublemakers, were systematically sidelined (Stearns, 2011: 115–116).

The unbalanced composition of the officer and *sous-officier* corps had a highly detrimental impact on public perceptions of the army. Already seen as an instrument of repression, the preponderance of members of Mobutu's home area further highlighted the army's role as a defender of particular rather than national interests. Especially in regions that were weakly represented among its recruits and officers, like Kivu, the military was often perceived to be a tool of occupation. Aside from straining civil-military relations, recruitment based on ethno-regional criteria and other forms of favoritism also heightened tensions within the FAZ. This was especially the case when appointments of loyalists had been preceded by mass purges of officers from regions or groups not in the president's favor, which was a recurrent phenomenon. In 1975, and again in 1978, a large number of officers were arrested, and some executed, under the (concocted) pretext of plotting against the head of state. Those eliminated were mostly members of the newer generation of well-educated, sometimes foreign-trained officers, causing these purges to further undermine military professionalism and capabilities (Young and Turner, 1985: 265–266, 274).

Another key characteristic of Mobutu's style of military management were his efforts to ensure constant rotations of office, as is common in political orders where big-man rationalities prevail.²⁴ While it is difficult to certify to what extent such rotations were part of a conscious strategy of Mobutu to maximize his power, it is clear that the *effects* worked in that direction. Frequent rotations prevented military office-holders from building up an autonomous power position, thus keeping them dependent, hence loyal. Moreover, the resulting flux fostered ongoing competition between different power networks, and therefore contributed to keeping the military divided, hence weak

22 Brand new Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba replaced Belgian FP commander Janssens by Victor Lundula, who had only served 30 months in the military during World War II, in a nursing function. At the same time, he made Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, who had worked for six years as an accountant in the FP, his chief of staff. In spite of their limited military experience and the fact that they had formerly only held the rank of sergeant, the two received the rank of general and colonel, respectively (Van Reybrouck, 2011: 306; Young, 1965: 448).

23 These pay rises caused the ANC to become a heavy burden for the national budget. In 1962, its salaries constituted 20 per cent of the total national payroll, which represented almost 90 per cent of overall public expenditure. In 1964, the military budget was nearly a third of total government expenditure (Young, 1965: 471).

24 The importance of rotations to the functioning of big-man systems was explained on p. 46.

(Schatzberg, 1988: 3–4). Constant reorganizations of the military by creating new units and agencies or reforming existing ones had similar effects (Young and Turner, 1985: 266). New agencies were usually given separate command chains and overlapping mandates, creating institutional confusion and constant power competition. In the words of a high-level official, such agencies behaved like ‘the jealous wives of a polygamous man’ (quoted in Rosenblum, 1990: 208). For instance, in 1972, the National Police was transformed into the *Gendarmerie nationale* (National Gendarmerie), and supervision was transferred from the ministry of the interior to the ministry of defense. In 1984, a new civilian police force was created, the *Garde civile* (Civil Guard), but without dissolving the gendarmerie or clearly defining the relations between the two agencies (Rosenblum, 1990: 209–211). Similar to rotations, it is difficult to establish to what extent these frequent organizations were part of consciously engineered divide-and-rule strategies, especially since policy-making in Zaire was generally characterized by *ad hocery* (Schatzberg, 1982). Yet the effect of the ambiguities and power competition that these measures created was to reinforce the incumbents’ position, causing them to have little incentives to change their modes of military management.

Aside from by the proliferation of agencies with overlapping mandates, divisions in the army were also created by the contracting of a wide variety of sources of foreign assistance. The FAZ received military assistance from a range of countries, including North Korea, Israel, the USA, Belgium, China and France, each of which provided training in different military styles and doctrines. The result was a kaleidoscope of differently trained and operating units, which undermined overall cohesion and interoperability. However, such a buffet of military assistance was beneficial to Mobutu, enabling him to reduce dependence on a single donor (Glickson and Sinai, 1994: 290). Foreign military assistance also allowed Mobutu to create a number of elite units, which constituted the backbone of his security system. These included the largely Israeli-trained DSP²⁵ and the French-trained, supervised, and partly commanded 31st Airborne Brigade. Some of these units had a few European NCOs in their ranks known as ‘godfathers’, who had to ensure that troops were paid and fed. Foreign advisers were also crucial for ensuring the maintenance of these units’ equipment, which was generally much more advanced than that of other parts of the armed forces (Callaghy, 1984: 209; Glickson and Sinai, 1994: 196–297).²⁶

The FAZ’s elite units stood in an increasingly stark contrast to the less privileged rest of the military, creating jealousy and tensions. Ordinary troops received insufficient and irregular pay and rations, as these were commonly partly pocketed by their superiors. Furthermore, they were badly clothed, equipped and resourced, lacking transport and basic facilities, such as health care. Especially troops deployed to non-strategic hinterlands were largely left to themselves, receiving little supplies while escaping from systematic supervision. The result was that they started to prey on the population for survival and enrichment (Schatzberg, 1988: 62–63). Expectedly, this led to increasingly tense civil-military relations. Furthermore, the progressive clochardization of the FAZ diminished the prestige and attractiveness of the military profession, especially in relation to the foot soldier. Consequently, the ranks were increasingly filled with school dropouts, petty thieves, and ‘difficult children’. According to Gould (1980: 502), the majority of lower-rank FAZ recruits were illiterate and ‘brought into the army from what would have been a “lumpenproletariat” existence’. By contrast, the educational level officers and *sous-officiers* tended to be relatively high, in part due to the FAZ’s well-developed system of military education (Glickson and Sinai, 1994: 307–308). However, the salience of big-man rationalities in appointments made that educated officers often missed out on positions of importance. Moreover, education did not automatically translate into enhanced combat performance or better conduct towards civilians (cf. Frésard, 2004: 101–104). One reason was that regardless their educational background, officers’ practices were heavily shaped by the pressures of the big-man system, while resources and infrastructural constraints further circumscribed their action, including by limiting the level of de facto control they had over their units. Furthermore, education was no guarantee that certain norms and discourses that were deeply engrained in the Congolese armed forces, such as negative representations of civilians, would no longer inform officers’ practices.

Officers of all stripes were also heavily involved in income-generation activities, although these highly varied in nature and scope. Following the precepts of bigmanity, the manipulation of access to income-generation opportunities was a key manner for Mobutu to maintain grip over the military (Callaghy, 1984: 73). Not only did it contribute to guaranteeing loyalty, it also kept the military busy with other than political activities. Thus, top-officers were granted tax-breaks and exemptions from rules and regulations, and often had privileged access to foreign exchange and state tenders. Furthermore, their protégés were given lucrative jobs in the administration, the *Mouvement populaire de la révolution* (MPR, Popular Movement for the Revolution, the country’s unique political party), or parastatals, allowing their patrons to reinforce their standing and influence (e.g., Reno, 1998a: 154, 160–161). Mobutu also turned a blind eye to blatant power abuse, such as kickbacks for procurement deals and the private appropriation or use of military funds and resources. These included soldiers’ salaries, labor and rations, foreign military funds, transport, fuel, and spare parts (Yambuya, 1991). The tolerance for involvement in revenue generation among the FAZ was such that even the most unscrupulous forms were practiced quietly openly. For instance, officers charged with combating a small insurgency in Fizi (now South Kivu) had no qualms about concluding lucrative commercial deals with the rebels, exchanging ivory and gold for arms and ammunition (Cosma, 1997: 115–118). This lax attitude towards commercialism allowed top officers in the right position and with the right connections to become a veritable elite possessing the most expensive villas, cars, and other luxury consumption goods (Schatzberg, 1988: 59–60). The resulting jealousy and appetite to emulate among lower ranks further undermined the military’s cohesion and operational effectiveness.

25 The DSP was technically not a part of the FAZ.

26 Units no longer under foreign tutelage generally rapidly lost operational capacity due to unusable equipment (Glickson and Sinai, 1994: 296–297). Zaire’s air force depended even completely on outside support for ground maintenance services, which were initially provided by a front organization of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Young and Turner, 1985: 269).

The various modes of military management described in the previous had important effects on the organization and modus operandi of the FAZ. Enrichment in the higher echelons of the FAZ encouraged rapacious revenue generation lower down the command chain, not only as it set an example, but also as it led to the withholding of salaries and other funds destined for the rank and file. Furthermore, superiors commonly forced their subordinates to give them a part of the wealth they had accumulated, usually through extortion from the population or illicit activities like smuggling and poaching. Each commander was in turn obliged to transmit a part of the money collected from his subordinates to his own superiors. In many cases, commanders also carefully orchestrated their troops' revenue-generating practices, like ordering them to man roadblocks. This system of channeling revenues up the hierarchy through imposed contributions was called *rapportage* (from the French *rapport*: gain, return, profit), and was also omnipresent in the civilian administration and in/security services. Not obeying the imperative of giving *rapport* was potentially costly, as it could lead to a loss of income either through dismissal or by transfer to other, less lucrative jobs or areas. Following the same logic, predation was tolerated as long as the spoils were shared with one's superiors, a principle that was succinctly described as *manger à la chaîne* (eating on a row) (Wa Nkera and Grundfest Schoepf, 1991: 76) or as 'I eat, you eat', where the second component is a necessary condition for the first (cf. Trefon, 2009: 19).²⁷ Thus, there was a direct link between enrichment at the top and petty soldiers' extraction of resources from the population at the bottom, indicating that economic practices in various layers of the military hierarchy were at least partly interdependent.

From the mid-1970s onwards, the economic situation of Zaire rapidly deteriorated, leading to the progressive erosion of standards of living, including among state servants, and increasingly harsh struggles over dwindling resources (MacGaffey, 1991: 13, 28). Economic decline also had a strong impact on the military. Under the pressure of structural adjustment programs, defense spending dropped from 4.9 per cent of the Gross National Product (GNP) in 1975 to 1.2 per cent in 1985 (Kisangani, 2000: 210), although these figures are difficult to substantiate due to significant off-budget military spending and the general unreliability of aggregate economic statistics in the Congo (Marivoet and De Herdt, 2014). Not only did the amount of resources flowing through the defense sector sharply diminish, the purchasing power of military salaries also drastically dropped. Consequently, military involvement in revenue generation reached new heights. Allegedly, this was sanctioned by the supreme commander of the FAZ, Field Marshal Mobutu, himself, who is widely believed to have declared in a speech to the army 'I already gave you a gun, so what do you need a salary for?'²⁸

The military was not the only part of the state apparatus to go into business and extortion in order to supplement its increasingly meager wages. Aware that he had less and less resources to offer to state servants, Mobutu encouraged them to creatively 'fend for themselves' (*se débrouiller*), whether by means of pilferage, extortion or other forms of power abuse and predation. With an eye to multiplying revenue-generation opportunities, Kinshasa created myriad rules and regulations that prescribed authorizations, permits, and fees for even the most insignificant activities. Civil servants were allowed significant leeway in the interpretation of these rules, as well as in the invention of new ones. However, as evidenced by Mobutu's infamous dictum *yiba, kasi mingi te* (steal, but not too much) (Bilakila, 2004: 22), what became known as *Système-D* or *la débrouillardise* (from *se débrouiller*) was no boundless plunder, but regulated by intricate sets of informal norms, making its exercise subject to endless processes of negotiation. The impact of this sanctioned predation on the state apparatus was nonetheless severe, causing it to transform into a gigantic, asphyxiating, exploitative, bureaucratic web. The workings of this machinery became highly erratic and unpredictable, leading it to become a key source of insecurity and resources loss for citizens (Schatzberg, 1988: 3–4). President Mobutu was profoundly aware of this rot, which was also known under the name of *le mal zairois* (the Zairian evil). In a speech held in 1977, he acknowledged that '(...) everything is for sale, everything is bought in our country. And in this traffic, holding any slice of public power constitutes a veritable exchange instrument, convertible into illicit acquisition of money or other goods, or the evasion of all sorts of obligations' (cited in Callaghy, 1984: 190). Starting from the state apparatus, eventually Zairian society as a whole became permeated with the ethos of *Système-D*, with people getting by through 'hustling and peddling, wheeling and dealing, whoring and pimping, swapping and smuggling, trafficking and stealing, brokering and facilitating, in short, making the most of whatever opportunities arise (...)' (Lemarchand, 2002: 395).

While engaging in *la débrouillardise* was generalized, the FAZ excelled in its application, especially the more coercive and illicit varieties. At the end of the 1980s, soldiers were estimated to derive as much as 90 per cent of their income from other sources than their salary (Rosenblum, 1990: 217). In Katanga, military staff ran pharmacies selling medicine that was stolen from the hospital of the state mining company *Générale des carrières et des mines* (Gécamines). Soldiers also trafficked the fuel stolen from the heavy machines and vehicles stationed on the compounds of yet other mining companies (Dia Mwembu, 2002: 54–56; Wa Nkera and Grundfest Schoepf, 1991: 87). Furthermore, FAZ personnel rented themselves out as private guards to companies or individuals, with the complicity of their superiors. Meanwhile, the Air Force was turned into a commercial company that transported passengers and merchandise *hors service* (outside of service time) for lower tariffs than commercial companies. Air Force personnel also trafficked embezzled kerosene, and obtained a

27 Although Trefon speaks of this principle as 'we eat', the majority of my interlocutors described it as 'I eat, you eat'. This formula corresponds to similar expressions used elsewhere, such as the 'I chop, you chop' used in Nigeria (Bayart, 2006[1989]: 288).

28 While this anecdote was told by many ex-FAZ and civilians in the course of the fieldwork, none of my interlocutors could pin down the exact date or occasion on which this speech was pronounced.

monopoly in the trade in malachite extracted from the *Gécamines* mines in Kolwezi. Additionally, they sold airplane spare parts far below the market price, turning Zaire into the world's cheapest spare parts market in the 1980s. This led to the systematic dismantling of the air fleet, which eventually had to be grounded for a lack of airworthiness, after numerous crashes (Yambuya, 1991: 24–29). But it were not only airplanes that were dismantled, theft and pilfering also led to the gradual 'undressing' of barracks and other military infrastructure. Even arms and ammunition were appropriated for commercial purposes, being sold to hunters straight from the barracks (Wa Nkera and Grundfest Schoepf, 1991: 88). In sum, the erosion of living conditions and the legitimization of illicit forms of revenue generation prompted the military to gradually 'cannibalize' itself (cf. Bayart, 2006[1989]: 292), leading to its progressive disintegration.

However, the majority of revenue accumulated by military staff did not stem from the armed forces, but was extracted from civilians. Techniques of wealth extraction were sheer endless and included illegal taxation (e.g., at roadblocks and artisanal mining sites), the invention of infractions for purposes of fining and unlawful arrests, extortion during nighttime patrols, looting in the course of or after military operations, robbery and theft, food collections in villages and urban quarters, extortion at markets, and the pillaging of crops, fruits, and small livestock in the countryside (Schatzberg, 1988: 56–59). The FAZ was also known for demanding pieces of meat from butchers at markets or in villages, earning them the nickname *katanyama* (meat cutters in both Lingala and Swahili) (Stearns, 2011: 117).

Furthermore, similar to civil servants, FAZ staff instrumentalized their official duties for extractive purposes. Each time they intervened to maintain order, were on patrol, or had to carry out inspections or controls, they would use the occasion to demand fees, fines, and bribes. A good example are the notorious *ratissage* operations, carried out on demand of the civilian authorities. These 'encirclement and drag-net maneuvers' (Callaghy, 1984: 286) were intended to allow the in/security forces to carry out systematic house-to-house searches to check whether people had their identity cards and had paid their taxes.²⁹ Such operations were a lucrative activity for the FAZ, as it received a percentage of the revenues produced by the sale of identity cards, the collection of various unpaid taxes and the imposition of fines (idem: 287–290). Aside from through manipulating their official duties, FAZ staff also earned money from civilians by providing private services on demand. Military staff would for instance hire themselves out as 'private guns' or 'enforcers-for-hire' in local disputes, implying that people in conflict would approach soldiers to settle their scores and harm or intimidate their opponents (Schatzberg, 1988: 62). Such interventions were especially solicited in the case of contract violations and debtor default, sometimes on behalf of 'barons' of the regime, who tried to harness the military for furthering their personal or business interests (Rosenblum, 1990: 219–220). This shows that coercion and the soliciting of protection from the military became increasingly widespread modes of dispute processing and (the facilitation of) income generation even before the outbreak of violent conflict in the east, indicating that the genesis of processes of militarization should be located before that time.

As can be expected, substantial engagement in rapacious forms of revenue generation contributed to a further degeneration of already ill conduct towards civilians. Observers of Zaire have generally not hesitated to describe the FAZ's abusive nature in superlatives, calling it for instance 'one of the most notoriously undisciplined and brutal armies in the world' (Kabwit, 1979: 393–394), or an 'occupation force that lives on the backs of the people' (Callaghy, 1984: 294). Mistreatment of the population appears to have been a standard trait of the FAZ, especially in the rural areas, where the force constituted a 'free-floating source of insecurity' (Schatzberg, 1988: 70).³⁰ In many cases, abuses related directly to revenue generation or 'order maintenance,' although they could also result from uncontrolled and agitated troops, sometimes excessively drunk or drugged. This behavior strongly affected civilians' representations of the military, which was commonly seen as a group of troublemakers that imposed themselves on the population. The resulting hostility towards the FAZ fed again into the military's low esteem for civilians, whom soldiers generally portrayed as 'backwards' and 'savages', or as *muntu pamba* (beings of nothing, worthless people) (Van Damme and Verweijen, 2012). In fact, FAZ soldiers regarded civilians primarily as a 'field to harvest from', as evidenced by their motto *civil azali bilanga ya militaire* (civilians are the field of the military) (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2008: 65).

Similar feelings of mutual hostility existed between the FAZ and local civilian authorities, although the latter's position towards the military tended to be more ambivalent than that of the average citizen. In general, civilian authorities needed the in/security forces for a variety of tasks and services, including their own protection, carrying out administrative duties, and 'showing the power of the state', a type of display of uniformed presence that worked as a mild form of deterrence and helped with the enforcement of decisions (Schatzberg, 1988: 64). In many areas of Zaire, banditry and other forms of crime were rampant, and the in/security forces were the only actors that could tackle these problems, not least as they were often among the main authors. Civilian authorities therefore depended on these forces for assuring their own safety. They also needed the FAZ for assistance with a host of administrative or supporting security tasks, like guarding houses and offices, controlling land disputes, maintaining order in local courts, enforcing administrative decisions, helping with tax collection, providing security to foreign guests, transporting prisoners, protecting infrastructure suspected to be under threat, and curbing smuggling. However, in many cases the military did not perform the solicited tasks in an adequate manner, being more engaged in pursuing private interests or pleasure (Callaghy, 1984: 283–286, 298). Invariably, FAZ staff tried to capitalize upon the

29 Zaire had a strict legislation in relation to identity cards, which citizens were obliged to carry at all times, and also invested heavily in population control. All state agents, including the armed forces, were charged with monitoring and enforcing these measures, which opened the door to abuses (Callaghy, 1984: 285–286).

30 Interestingly, despite its well-documented ill conduct, many of my interlocutors believed that the FAZ behaved better than the FARDC, as will be further discussed on pp. 106–107.

opportunities for revenue generation associated with such tasks, thereby undermining their execution. Aside from for immediate gain, the FAZ also provided assistance to civilian administrators as this helped foster or was related to longer-term profitable or useful relations, which often had a pronounced patronage dimension. Such relations allowed the FAZ for example to instrumentalize the program of *salongo* or *corvée* civic labor that was initiated in 1973, but that drew on a long tradition of forced labor, proposing works on the barracks and other army buildings (Callaghy, 1984: 299–302).

Although the FAZ's assistance to the territorial administration somewhat resembles the FP's role during the colonial period, the Zairian military appears to have acted in a much more autonomous manner from the administration than the armed forces in the colonial era. Unit commanders commonly imposed themselves on the civilian administrators operating in their areas of deployment, establishing themselves as 'petty tyrants' or 'local warlords' (Schatzberg, 1988: 57). Furthermore, like other big-men, superior officers had the tendency to intervene in local political and administrative affairs in their home area. Especially in far-flung rural areas, and when lacking higher-level political connections, civilian administrators' possibilities to change this state of affairs were only limited. This was in part related to the FAZ's deployment pattern, which somewhat resembled that of the FP. While troops in economic, political or military core areas, like Kinshasa and the mineral-rich province of Katanga,³¹ stayed in larger units, those deployed to the non-strategic hinterlands were generally scattered, causing them to have little contact with their superiors. Given that only the military hierarchy and the military justice system could correct lower-level commanders, the latter were effectively given free rein (Schatzberg, 1988: 63). Furthermore, similar to the FP, the FAZ had only a weakly developed central system of command and control, leaving a great deal of autonomy to unit commanders. As Schatzberg concludes (1988: 69): 'thus, ostensible centralization is coupled with effective lack of control, particularly over daily and routine tasks'.

The power effects of the FAZ: the paradox of force

While the de facto decentralization of the FAZ went hand in hand with limited control, this did not imply that the center was unaware of the military's rapacious behavior. According to Schatzberg (1988: 69), the national authorities are likely to have been informed of the military's bad practices through the communications of the civilian intelligence services, who reported directly to Kinshasa. Why then, did these authorities make little efforts to improve the behavior of the military? And how is it possible that despite its weaknesses and abysmal performance, the FAZ was still a pillar of the regime? Young and Turner (1985: 248) refer to this puzzle as the 'paradox of force', observing that 'the hegemony and power of the state rest upon the force it controls, but that force is unreliable in times of crisis, its depredations undermine the credibility of the state, and its capricious actions may threaten the state itself'. When seeking answers to this puzzle, it is important to consider that the FAZ played a relatively limited, albeit crucial role in the Zairian state's overall apparatus of domination and extraction, which was based on a complex mix of utilitarian, coercive and normative instruments (Callaghy, 1984: 318). Realizing that the military would bring him neither legitimacy nor comprehensive control, Mobutu strongly invested in the expansion and centralization of the territorial administration (idem: 233). Furthermore, in 1967, he created a single party, the MPR, which became an important propaganda machine that diffused populist and quasi-revolutionary legitimizing slogans up to the village level (Callaghy, 1984: 7–9, 318–330). To a certain extent, the FAZ saw the MPR, which established party cells in the military in 1972, as a competing structure (Young and Turner, 1985: 262–263, 274). This perception was reinforced by the fact that the disciplinary brigade of the party's youth wing, the *Jeunesse du MPR* (JMPPR, Youth of the MPR) mimicked the FAZ by wearing uniforms (Kisangani, 2000: 312) and by carrying out similar tasks of order maintenance, with similar levels of abuse (Schatzberg, 1988: 64). Furthermore, the FAZ was by no means the only in/security agency. For information gathering and political repression, the regime relied heavily on the feared civilian intelligence services, although military intelligence agencies generally also played their part in smothering political opposition (Schatzberg, 1988: 39, 41; Rosenblum, 1990: 215–217).

Despite the fact that the FAZ was thus only one instrument of coercion among the many, it did have a special role in that it retained superior capacity for the exercise of violence and had a high degree of (informal) influence in the non-official economy and among layers of the administration. As such, it importantly underpinned the political and economic power of national and local elites and, by extension, the state apparatus that the latter's networks controlled (Lemarchand, 1979: 240–241). It did so in both direct and indirect manners, and via actions located on a wide coercion-persuasion spectrum, ranging from influence trafficking, including through more and less covert menaces, to the brutal suppression of unrest and protests. Riots, unauthorized manifestations and forms of civil disobedience constituted an open defiance of Mobutu's authority, and therefore, in the eyes of the incumbents, needed to be ruthlessly quelled. This shows how, reflecting the blurred boundaries between the state and incumbent rulers, 'the maintenance of order' commonly overlapped with (political) repression (Rosenblum, 1990: 214–215). Especially in the early 1990s, during the 'transition to multiparty democracy' that had been announced but that never materialized, the political role of the in/security services became very pronounced, as Mobutu tried to instrumentalize the most loyal units to derail the nascent political reform process and stay in power. Thus, the presidential guard (DSP) was charged with ransacking the offices of opposition organizations and media, hindering the functioning of the transitional government, torturing (suspected) political opponents, and suppressing protests with a heavy hand (Glickson and Sinai, 1994: 297–302).

³¹ The majority of FAZ troops were deployed around Kinshasa, in or near other major urban centers, and, after the 1977 and 1978 invasions, in Shaba, where Mobutu stationed one of his best units, the Kamanyola Division (Glickson and Sinai, 1994: 293–294).

During this period, the DSP was not only charged with controlling the civilian opposition, but also other parts of the military, by then on the verge of disintegration due to months of payment arrears. In September 1991, unpaid paratroopers went on a rampage in Kinshasa, urging civilians to join them, and embarking upon a campaign of violent destruction that partly targeted the symbols of the regime. Another bout of destructive military frenzy followed in 1993, when economic operators refused to accept the new 5 million zaire notes that had been used for paying the military, the legal status of which was debatable (de Villers and Omasombo, 2004: 142, 147). The chaos was so big that an intervention of the DSP at this point the only part of the military still regularly paid, was needed for restoring basic order. The same applied to the major ethnic clashes that rocked several territories of North Kivu in 1993, which were eventually mastered by the DSP, again deployed as a type of firefighter of the last resort (Glickson and Sinai, 1994: 233, 297–302). However, the DSP was a firefighter that tended to leave smoldering ashes in its wake due to its ruthless actions, thereby undermining stability at the longer term.

As the example of the DSP shows, that elite military units played a key role in Mobutu's political survival is obvious. However, this is less evident for the ill-equipped, ill-disciplined and badly controlled troops in the hinterland. Apparently, Kinshasa was not bothered by the ragtag state and limited fighting capacities of these rural-based troops, as long as they could be called upon to put down serious unrest. As noted by Lemarchand (1979: 240), the ever-present threat of the indiscriminate and arbitrary exercise of violence was a 'key ingredient of rural stability'. Where no escalation occurred, low-level repression and the mere visibility of force, the same rationales that informed the FP's *promenades militaires*, were sufficient to keep the population under control. None of these tasks-deterrence, low-level repression and the display of the potential for force-requires a well-institutionalized, well-functioning army. As Schatzberg observes (1988: 68): 'from the vantage point of the village and towns, even a ragtag, underpaid, poorly disciplined and utterly corrupt platoon of Zairian soldiers represents a truly awesome power'. In other words, as long as local populations *perceived* the FAZ to be strong, it could perform its main tasks of controlling the population and suppressing dissent (Schatzberg, 1988: 68–69). Hence, it did not matter to Mobutu that these forces were abusive or inefficient, or did not operate under centralized command. What mattered was that they were loyal and feared. This seems to have been the case, for as Callaghy (1984: 294) states, the two main characteristics of the FAZ were 'rapaciousness and relative loyalty to Mobutu'. Furthermore, in order to maximize the contribution of its control and order tasks to maintaining regime security and state power projection, it was crucial that the FAZ was identified by the population as representing state/incumbent power. This condition appears to have been fulfilled as well, for as Schatzberg notes, despite the military's high level of decentralization, 'for the most part, the citizenry assumes the soldiers and gendarmes who regularly oppress them are, in fact, acting at the behest of the centralized power' (1988: 69).

Not only was an ill-resourced and rapacious military in these various manners still useful to the incumbents as a force of deterrence and control, it fulfilled these tasks at relatively low cost. Due to its extensive engagement in extractive activities, the FAZ's repression was partly self-financing. At the same time, extractive practices kept it loyal to the regime, despite abysmal service conditions. In the words of Tull (2005: 68): 'keeping the military on a long leash by permitting it to prey on the population served the important function of a safety valve'. Hence, a ragtag abusive army was a cost-effective solution to maintaining a relatively loyal reservoir of force in the countryside that worked as a deterrent and was on the standby in case of emergencies. This allowed Mobutu to retain coercive supremacy without pursuing the costly project of developing a comprehensive and effective security apparatus that could prevent threats and penetrate all corners of Zaire's territory (Tull, 2005: 68).

In sum, Young and Turner's 'paradox of force' can be explained by looking at rulers' constraints and opportunities as arising from the social order in which they were situated, and the fact that 'the state' was difficult to disaggregate from the power networks controlling it. Additionally, this paradox can be understood by looking not only at the military's practices, but also at the citizenry's *perceptions* of the armed forces, which were crucial for its effects of deterrence and its contribution to projecting central state power. It also has to be considered that access to revenue generation was a precondition for loyalty, and that loyalty was ultimately of more importance than operational effectiveness, in particular since the main threats to the regime were not of a military nature. When serious military challenges did materialize, the arrangements on which the paradox of force was based offered no solution. Consequently, when in the wake of the Cold War, the superpowers were no longer willing to militarily intervene to shore up Mobutu's power, his fate was sealed. In 1996, a coalition of rebel forces launched an insurgency that managed to conquer the entire country in only seven months. The FAZ, at that point a disorganized collection of badly controlled bands, simply crumbled, having no motivation to fight. Once an important pillar of Mobutu's regime, the military now facilitated the avalanche that led to his downfall. Perhaps not surprisingly given the tense relations between Mobutu and Kivu, this avalanche started in the east.

3.2.2 *The Mobutu era in Kivu*

Far from bringing the expected boon, the Congo's accession to independence in 1960 resulted in years of upheaval and violence in Kivu. In what would later become North Kivu, electoral processes sparked tensions, pitting Rwandophone immigrants against self-styled autochthon groups (Mararo, 1997). Other parts of Kivu were rocked by a major insurgency that started in Uvira territory, where bands of youths led by an ambitious politician revolted against the *ancien régime*. Due to the involvement of a wider revolutionary organization, these initial protests transformed into the Simba rebellion, which managed to capture the city of Uvira in May 1964, and then rapidly spread to other parts of the eastern Congo (Verhaegen, 1966). While by 1967, the rebellion was largely under control due to the extensive

help of foreign mercenaries and regimes, in an isolated corner of Fizi territory (South Kivu), a small pocket of resistance remained. Led by a certain Laurent-Désiré Kabila, a rebel leader-cum-businessman with a professed marxist-leninist orientation, a group of revolutionaries would continue their struggle under the banner of the *Parti de la révolution populaire* (PRP) until the start of the 1980s. Another insurgency that defied the Mobutu regime was the *Parti de libération congolaise* (PLC), which operated in the second half of the 1980s in the Rwenzori mountains in Beni territory (North Kivu). Although none of these small pockets of rebellion constituted an existential threat to the regime, they did exemplify the strained relations between Kinshasa and Kivu. Furthermore, they prompted Mobutu to engage in constant efforts to get a better grip on this region. Ironically, many of these efforts enkindled or laid the foundations for intense conflicts that would ultimately thwart his attempts to reinforce control.

Local authority, land and citizenship

In 1973, in line with his intention to reinforce the central state administration, Mobutu set out to undermine customary power by transforming *chefferies* into purely administrative units headed by appointed administrators. Due to widespread resistance, the implementation of this policy largely failed. Consequently, the power of the *bami* (customary chiefs) remained unbroken throughout the Mobutu era (Callaghy, 1984: 401–404). In fact, Mobutu's policies, in particular changes in land legislation that were enacted at the beginning of the 1970s, eventually reinforced, rather than weakened, the position of the chiefs. A law adopted in 1972 rendered all land on the national territory, regardless its occupation, exclusive property of the state, to be privately obtained through the registration of individual land titles at the land registry. At the same time, it stipulated that customarily owned land occupied by communities was to be governed through an additional decree, which still required elaboration. However, this decree was never promulgated, leaving considerable legal ambiguity. As chiefs' jurisdiction over communal land remained de facto recognized, a legal dualism was created that worked to the advantage of the chiefs, as it allowed them to commercialize the land under their control (Matabaro, 2008: 387–392). In this manner, customary chiefs were co-opted into the state and presidential patronage networks, exchanging loyalty for access to the revenue-generation opportunities offered by the commercialization of land. By exploiting these opportunities in an often blatantly opportunistic manner, chiefs started to lose popular legitimacy, rendering them more dependent on state and presidential patronage to shore up their power (Tull, 2005: 80).

The land reforms of the 1970s had profound consequences for the socio-economic structure of the countryside, facilitating the rise of an elite of entrepreneurs and state agents, including military officers, who obtained sizeable stretches of land. This process also had political ramifications, as access to land increasingly depended on having connections in the administration and presidential patronage network. Consequently, land was transformed from a social resource that underpinned the cohesion, power relations and social security systems of rural communities into at once an economic and a political asset within a system of state-led patronage. These transformations led to considerable social polarization in rural areas, which was exacerbated by customary chiefs' opportunistic approach to their role as custodians of communal lands (Van Acker, 2005). By resorting to such tactics as offering more uncertain land contracts, falsely declaring land vacant, or even arbitrarily evicting people, the chiefs made land tenure increasingly insecure. The result was a drastic increase in the number of land conflicts. Ironically, the latter were often treated by customary chiefs themselves, acting in the capacity of president of the customary court. This reflects how the structure of local governance entrenched the power of the chiefs, regardless their level of legitimacy (Van Acker, 1999).

Due to the strong connection between land and ethnic identification, as fostered by colonial-era processes of the territorialization of ethnicity,³² the growing tensions around land were often framed in ethnic terms. This was reinforced by the emergence of Banyarwanda elites as rural entrepreneurs, some of whom managed to obtain gigantic landholdings in the densely populated territories of Masisi and Rutshuru (North Kivu). Previously denied land of their own, these elites were now able to buy and privately own land without having to pay tribute to the chiefs of other communities (Mararo, 1997: 528–529). The result was that both class antagonisms and individual conflicts were increasingly defined as having an ethnic character (Van Acker, 2005: 94). The growing salience of ethnicity was also reflected in the multitude of community organizations that sprung up in reaction to the drop in the quantity and quality of already poor public service provision. Many of these, like the *mutuelles*, a type of social insurance and self-help groups, were organized on an ethnic basis. Through these various developments, ethnicity became the chief organizing principle in many dimensions of socio-economic life (Van Acker, 1999: 22–24).

The growing salience of ethnic identification intensified the second catalyst of tensions in Kivu, which centered on the right to citizenship of both the Banyarwanda and the Banyamulenge. With the Banyarwanda being the second biggest population group in what is now North Kivu, after the Banande, and constituting a demographic majority in various areas, the electoral stakes surrounding the citizenship issue were high. The first constitution of independent Congo, promulgated in 1964, denied citizenship to the majority of both Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge, leaving them in considerable uncertainty regarding their legal and political status. Together with their limited demographic weight at the national level, this rendered them a perfect candidate for presidential patronage. On the one hand, Mobutu offered Rwandophone elites, in particular Tutsi, important positions in the administration and the MPR, thus trying to coopt their elites.

32 The roots and process of the territorialization of ethnicity were described on pp. 60–62.

On the other hand, he denied them a secure legal and political position, in this way rendering them dependent on his favors, hence loyal. The advantage of this policy was that it fostered jealousy among the 'autochthones', prompting the latter to project their dissatisfaction onto Rwandophones, rather than the government (Willame, 1997: 52–53). Understandably, Rwandophone elites did not acquiesce in their situation of legal uncertainty, starting to lobby for a new citizenship law that would grant them Zairian nationality. While such a law was adopted in 1972, it was repealed in 1981, when renewed doubts on the Banyarwanda's and Banyamulenge's rights to citizenship started to be used to block their access to administrative and elected office (Willame, 1997: 53–59). This highlights the creeping ethnicization of politics in Zaire, a process that was mirrored in the economic domain.

The rise of the non-official economy and Système-D

As observed by Van Acker (2005: 34), the new land legislation and other economic reforms introduced under Mobutu opened up new markets and fostered new relations of exchange by commercializing land and liberalizing certain parts of the regulatory framework. While these transformations introduced *de jure* capitalist relations, the state did not create the conditions to turn these into a reality. It did not enforce the new rules and regulations, guarantee property rights, or ensure the predictability of the administration and the equality before the law needed for market-based exchange to take full effect. By contrast, the closed system of state-led patronage and the arbitrary manner in which the regulatory framework was implemented created an environment of insecurity that made economic operators rely on protection relations for entrepreneurial activity and social mobility. Family, kinship and ethnic ties became crucial for gaining access to revenue-generation opportunities, both those regulated by state agents in a more or less official manner, and those organized with little regard to official rules and regulations. Such ties determined for instance entrance to smuggling networks, the possibilities of finding scarce transport possibilities, and access to highly coveted but scarce issues like foreign exchange, imported goods and low-interest loans. Furthermore, in many cases, these ties, as part of protection relations, provided more predictability and accountability than the official regulatory practices of state agents (MacGaffey, 1991b: 32).

In the course of the 1980s, when the centralizing moment in Mobutu's rule had long passed, the presidential and state patronage networks progressively fragmented under the pressure of steady economic decline. The drying up of resources from the top, whether channeled through official or non-official channels, diminished the gravitational pull and capacities of control of the center, fostering the development of centers of economic accumulation outside the networks of state and presidential patronage. This opened up new opportunities for social mobility to those lacking the political connections needed for penetrating the increasingly closed networks that dominated the official economic sphere (Reno, 1998a: 147–149). As the economic activities of these newly developing networks thrived on the evasion or violation of official rules and regulations, they are commonly described as 'informal', 'non-official' or 'unrecorded'. This contrasts to 'official' economic activities, which are (at least partly) state-controlled and recorded. Yet, state agents were fully involved in non-official activities, which strongly depended on the resources, assets, labor, knowledge, information and infrastructure of the official economy. The latter, in turn, increasingly came to depend on non-official practices, for instance to gain access to foreign exchange or transport (MacGaffey, 1991b: 38). The interdependencies that were fostered in this manner cast doubt on the analytical usefulness of conceptualizing 'the informal/non-official/unrecorded' and 'the formal/official/recorded' as two separate economic spheres. In the words of Roitman (1990: 685), 'the formal and informal constitute an entire system of production, distribution, and exchange (and not two separate spheres)(...)'. In many cases, the extent to which economic activities complied with existing regulation, hence fell more on the official or the non-official side of the spectrum, was largely a matter of negotiation (cf. Rubbers, 2007).

One sector in which the interdependencies between the official and the non-official were very visible was the Kivu's trans-border trade. This sector experienced a rapid growth in the course of the 1980s, diminishing the region's economic orientation towards other parts of Zaire. Most of this trade went unrecorded, in part to avoid the immensely lengthy and complicated official import and export procedures. Yet, traders commonly maintained mutually profitable relations with the bureaucratic apparatus, in particular with customs officials and in/security agents. Customs officials could, for instance, under-declare goods, issue false papers, make direct arrangements with traders to lower tariffs and share fees, or carry out selective inspections of loads. Other state agents facilitated the trade in stolen cars by issuing and backdating certificates of registration, insurances and license plates. The FAZ also played an important role in illicit cross-border traffic, reflecting its strong involvement in the illegal and less state-regulated spectrum of the economy (Callaghy, 1984: 266; Wa Nkera and Grundfest Schoepf, 1991: 77–78). Being deployed at commercially strategic sites like border posts, harbors and along important roads, and using their influence within state patronage networks as well as their abilities for coercion, the military often entered into partnerships with civilian economic operators, extending protection to those operating at the margins of the law.

Given that state agents profited widely from less official economic activities, the impact of the decline of central state regulation on 'state power' was ambivalent (cf. Roitman, 2005: 20–22). Yet ultimately, the redefinition and pluralization of regulatory authority undermined the political center's capacities for control. By unleashing centrifugal tendencies, these processes fostered the emergence of semi-autonomous economic networks and a nascent middleclass that did not directly depend on presidential patronage (MacGaffey, 1991a: 37–38). This went along with a decline in the administrative and regulatory capacity of the state apparatus, notably its possibilities for policy implementation and enforcing decisions, and a loss of control over its lower echelons. The latter capitalized upon their enhanced autonomy by commercializing public service provision and by becoming increasingly flexible in the application of procedures

and policies. This intensified the 'negotiated' character of governance, with almost anything that was directly or indirectly related to the administration becoming subject to lengthy processes of haggling, the outcome of which was generally strongly shaped by the deployment of financial and political capital. Those lacking resources and connections had to rely primarily on their own wit and ingenuity, or that of intermediaries, to deal with the rapacious state apparatus (Trefon, 2009).

The imperative of negotiations and bargaining, and the importance of connections and intermediaries, wit and cunning, did not only characterize the interaction between state agents and citizens, but marked socio-economic life in Zaire more generally. For almost every transaction, whether arranging a place on the public transport, buying a sack of charcoal or evading taxation, brokerage was required or desired. For many people, the small commission derived from such intermediary services was their main source of income. As economic conditions deteriorated, a mentality of living from day to day took over and people had to be ever more ingenuous to make ends meet. This gave rise to the popular expression *nous vivons mystérieusement* (we live mysteriously) (MacGaffey, 1987: 116), which reflected the resilience and inventiveness displayed by citizens to go on in spite of increasingly adverse conditions. In this context of despair, the norms guiding the convoluted universe of brokerage, influence trafficking and the creative interpretation of rules started to shift. Pressing poverty and the desire to cling to or improve previous standards of living pushed people to engage in more opportunistic and illicit forms of behavior. As a result, *Système-D*, or fending-for-one-self-ism, became strongly characterized by dishonesty, coercion, and cunning. While moneychangers on the black market tried to cheat by leaving out a few notes in the vast stacks of zaires exchanged for dollars, traders strategically withheld information about price changes, or imposed monopoly positions by means of force. Furthermore, prostitution, counterfeiting, pilfering, smuggling, the falsification of papers, theft and robbery, became widespread means of livelihood generation (Bilakila, 2004). The impact of these developments on social relations was profound: while youth displayed growing disobedience towards parents no longer able to pay their school fees or feed them, parents encouraged their daughters to prostitute themselves or sent their children begging on the streets. Furthermore, all sorts of services that people previously rendered out of sociability now became payable, or were seen as a longer-term investment that would pay off in the future (Pashi, 2002: 131–134). Bilakila (2004: 23) calls this form of sociability 'despair solidarity', referring to a pragmatic system of exchange in which people predominantly extend help in a calculating manner, always expecting to get something in return.

Rural areas were not spared from these processes of pauperization and the erosion of social cohesion, being strongly affected by growing pressures on land and the collapse of the road network. In 1985, only 15 per cent of the network inherited from colonial rule was still passable (Reno, 1998a: 154). The resulting disconnect between the hinterland and the cities reinforced unequal terms of exchange for rural populations. As farmers' access to markets and cities was limited, they were dependent on commercial middlemen for selling their produce and buying manufactured goods. However, these middlemen often had a monopoly or oligopoly position, allowing them to impose unfavorable prices (cf. Mavambu ye Beda, 1991: 116–117). Predatory state administrators and customary chiefs further aggravated farmers' predicament by imposing exaggerated taxation and forced labor. The resulting poverty, in combination with a greater reliance on the market for buying and selling food, put a strain on agricultural communities and households, and fostered strong gender-related and inter-generational conflicts (Fairhead, 1992).

Many conflicts falling into this last category were directly or indirectly related to land. In the Kivus, having (the right to use) a piece of land of one's own is more than an economic necessity for young men: it is a crucial yardstick of maturity, signaling their capacity to maintain a family, hence their right to get married and be seen as a full member of society. Consequently, the increasing scarcity of land produced a class of landless young men with a low income and a low social status, being stuck between adolescence and adulthood. Many of these youngsters became migrant agricultural laborers, entered the illicit side of the economic spectrum by taking up smuggling, poaching or banditry, or moved to the burgeoning artisanal mining sites, where they worked as diggers or traders. These livelihoods strategies fostered a growing distance to and independence from their families and communities of origins, which loosened the grip of traditional sources of (moral) authority, like customary chiefs, elders and parents. These changes in patterns of authority and norm enforcement enabled a shift to more opportunistic forms of behavior, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of resorting to coercion as a means of social mobility and regulation. This was evidenced at the beginning of the 1990s, when rural militias started to multiply, and their ranks rapidly filled up with youth (Van Acker, 2005: 93).

Toward violence

The attempted transition to multiparty democracy in the 1990s was accompanied by the ethnicization of the political debate at both the national and the subnational level, as political entrepreneurs fed off and aggravated inter-community tensions. While envisaged as apolitical bodies, the *mutalités* became strongly politicized. Some even started to encourage or organize violence framed in ethnic terms, fostering the proliferation of rural-based militias, in particular in North Kivu. Often mobilized or instrumentalized by local authorities, politicians and businesspersons, these groups became strongly involved in communal conflicts, which in many cases played out along Rwandophone/autochthon fault lines. The result was ongoing low intensity violence, which was often aggravated by FAZ interventions, especially where these took place at the instigation of local elites. As military staff took sides according to available political and economic opportunities, elites tried to instrumentalize the military's interventions for the settling of scores. However, these interventions tended to be so brutal that they often provoked retaliations, and therefore only intensified tensions (e.g., Mararo, 1997: 532, 535). Furthermore,

the military's targeting of civilians, frequently under the pretext of having supported militias, became an additional motivation for many youngsters to actually join these groups, leading to further escalation (UNOHCHR, 2010: 60–64; Willame, 1997: 96).

In 1993, large-scale violence broke out in Walikale (North Kivu), and then rapidly spread to Masisi and parts of Rutshuru inhabited by Rwandan immigrants (UNOHCHR, 2010: 58–60). While the DSP eventually managed to restore order, developments in neighboring Rwanda would cause this newfound calm to be only short-lived. In 1990, the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) movement had launched a guerrilla struggle against the Hutu-dominated Habyarimana regime in Kigali, unleashing a civil war that would culminate in the 1994 genocide. The subsequent power takeover by the RPF triggered an exodus of Hutu, around 1.2 million of whom arrived in the Kivus. This stream of refugees included members of the Hutu-dominated former Rwandan government army, the *Forces armées rwandaises* (FAR, Rwandan Armed Forces), and militiamen of the allied *interahamwe*, both of which had participated in the genocide. This massive influx did not only upset the demographic balance in certain areas, it also renewed violence and radicalized rhetoric, as Hutu hardliners started to diffuse both ideas and arms. Profiting from the humanitarian aid distributed in the camps, the corruption of the FAZ, and the benediction of Mobutu, the former Rwandan combatants were able to regroup and reorganize in the refugee camps. From there, they started to commit attacks both within the Kivus, where they linked up with Congolese Hutu groups, and on Rwandan territory.

From the moment it had set up a government, the RPF launched efforts to get rid of the refugee camps just across the border, which presented a growing security threat. Partly due to a lack of international action, it eventually concocted a solution that involved military intervention in order to forcibly shut down the camps. But Kigali's ambitions to get militarily involved in Zaire were not limited to neutralizing the threat of the ex-FAR/interahamwe. Under the leadership of Paul Kagame, the Rwandan government started to seek regional allies to form a coalition to topple Mobutu. Conscious that foreign military intervention aiming at regime change would be difficult to sell in international circles, Kigali also recruited a Congolese façade for the project, an insurgent movement baptized *Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo-Zaïre* (AFDL, Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire). Their preferred leadership candidates were two eminent Tutsi politicians (from North and South Kivu respectively) and two commanders of marginal (ex)rebel groups in the Kivus, the PRP in Fizi territory, which had been led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila, and a group in the Rwenzori mountains. When launching the insurgency in 1996, which heralded the start of the First Congo War (1996–1997), the backbone of the military wing of the insurgent coalition were staff of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), joined by Congolese Tutsi forces having served in the RPF insurgency at the start of the 1990s (Stearns, 2011: 51–54, 86–90). For both the Banyarwanda in North Kivu and the Banyamulenge in South Kivu, the AFDL insurgency offered hope for regime change, which would end their precarious position and allow them to realize their political demands, notably full citizenship, access to land of their own, positions of local authority and national political representation. In this manner, long-standing tensions in the Kivus importantly contributed to insurgent activity against Kinshasa, although it were eventually regional forces that gave the AFDL its strength.

3.3 The Congo Wars (1996–present)

On 17 May 1997, after an only seven-month insurgency campaign launched from the east, the AFDL toppled the regime of what was at that point one of Africa's longest reigning autocrats, Field Marshal Mobutu. Shortly after this power takeover, Laurent-Désiré Kabila, the spokesperson of the AFDL, appointed himself president and changed the name of the country from Zaire to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Once in power, Kabila started to steer a more autonomous course, which was perceived to harm the interests of the regional powers that had heavily backed the insurgency, in particular Rwanda. This turned these friends rapidly into foes. On 2 August 1998, erstwhile backers Uganda and Rwanda launched a new insurgency through a proxy group with the intent of removing Kabila from power, a move that set off the Second Congo War (1998–2003).

The First and Second Congo Wars unleashed and were the product of extremely complex dynamics at the local, national, regional and international levels. They drew in a large number of African states and domestic and foreign armed forces, being at once civil wars, regional wars and a 'regional conflict complex', referring to the existence of significant links between internal conflicts in various countries (Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 1998: 623). At the core of this multilayered conflict constellation were a number of competing, but at times also cooperating, trans-border militarized political-economic networks, which were again linked to more localized 'complexes of profit, power and protection' (Vlassenroot, 2004: 23, paraphrasing Keen, 2000: 19). These militarized power complexes drove and were increasingly driven by the development of a 'war economy' that revolved around plunder and coercive exploitation and trade practices, which were to a large extent, but by no means exclusively, related to natural resources. For instance, political-military elites in neighboring countries bent on expanding their public and private revenue base liaised with officers of their national armed forces present in the Congo to develop extensive business operations. The result was a type of 'military mercantilism' (Howe, 2001: 5) that found its apex during the Second Congo War (Dietrich, 2001).

While the new power configurations that developed in the course of the wars strongly built upon existing local and regional political-economic networks, the growing emphasis on violence occasioned transformations of these social configurations. This was manifested in the emergence of a new breed of violent entrepreneurs, who evolved out of or allied with established political-economic elites (Vlassenroot, 2004: 20–23). The various exploitation and trade practices of these militarized networks, including their procurement of

military equipment, arms and ammunition, were facilitated by connections to international economic circuits, sometimes with a profound underground character. This illustrates the multilayeredness of the dynamics of conflict and violence that drove the Congo Wars, with developments at the local, national, regional and international levels constantly interacting (UNSC, 2002).

Despite the pronounced regional and local dimensions of the wars, the prescribed solution to these violent conflicts, as manifested in the 2002 negotiated settlement that formally ended the Second Congo War, was the reinstatement of a national state framework (Jackson, 2006a). This had to be achieved through a power-sharing agreement that gave former rebel groups access to positions in the government and the state institutions, including the army. Yet this power-sharing exercise did not run very smoothly. Some of the rebel forces that had to be integrated in the national army were strongly embedded in semi-autonomous local and regional networks. Therefore, they had little incentives to fully integrate into the national state apparatus, especially where the patronage networks of the incumbents did not control access to vital revenue-generation opportunities (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers, 2008). What further compounded integration were ethno-regional and political cleavages, which fostered distrust between ex-belligerents and caused the new national institutions to be seen as tilted towards the interests of particular groups or regions (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c). As further demonstrated below, both these factors had a substantial impact on the process of military integration and the workings of the newly integrated force.

3.3.1 *Fighting the Congo Wars*

The core of the AFDL first entered Zaire in Uvira and Fizi territory in South Kivu, where a vanguard of Banyamulenge soldiers formerly serving in the RPF had already prepared the ground. However, they met with fierce resistance, organized by local militias that were hastily recruited from self-styled autochthonous groups (notably the Babembe, Bafuliiru, and Bavira), who saw the AFDL as a Tutsi-led foreign invasion force. These militias partly evolved from armed bands that had been engaged in killings of members of the Banyamulenge community, which had provoked a cycle of tit-for-tat massacres on the eve of the insurgency. Similar to militias in North Kivu with an 'autochthon' identity-orientation, these groups came to be designated by the term 'Mai Mai', which became a generic name for armed groups employing discourses of community self-defense and autochthony. The term was derived from their engagement in spiritual practices, which involved purification with water (*mai* in Swahili) to obtain battlefield strength (Hoffmann, 2006). While most Mai Mai groups were initially hostile to the AFDL, some eventually gave up their resistance, sympathizing with the project of freeing the country from a hated autocrat. Others continued to fight, harboring an insurmountable distrust toward a Tutsi-led and foreign-backed force (Vlassenroot, 2002b: 129–130).

Badly in need of fresh troops who could rapidly be deployed in the liberation struggle, the swiftly advancing AFDL launched massive recruitment drives. It was not too picky in selecting recruits, welcoming vagabonds, illiterates, the unemployed, criminals, and youngsters from around ten years onwards, sometimes also recruited by force. But this mass of *kadogo* (small ones), as these young soldiers would become known, also included university and high school students who lacked the funds to continue their studies or who were no longer able to attend school due to rising insecurity. These youngsters joined the AFDL in the pursuit of highly variable combinations of projects, ranging from the more pragmatic to the more ideological.³³ While some were primarily enticed by the promises of financial compensation, 'being somebody' and the camaraderie of becoming part of a group, others mostly wanted to chase Mobutu away and change the regime they held responsible for ruining the country. Yet other youth enrolled more out of personal feelings of hatred or resentment, seeing enrolment as an opportunity to take revenge, for example when their village had suffered from predatory FAZ soldiers.³⁴

Whatever their initial motivation, these young recruits would soon be taught why they fought through education in the revolutionary doctrines of the AFDL. Many of the insurgency's mostly Rwandan military instructors were products of liberation movements,³⁵ and therefore insisted on including ideological education in the curriculum of the harsh four-month boot camp that was organized for new recruits (Stearns, 2011: 149). However, as emerged from interviews, ex-*kadogo* generally remember more vividly the cruelty of their instructors and the military training than the contents of the ideological teachings. Frequent floggings and the physical hardship of the program made that the AFDL's first training camp, established near the village of Kidote in South Kivu, became nicknamed *kiwanja la*

33 As Kalyvas (2006: 95–96) notes: 'Both joining a rebel army and collaborating with it result from variable and complex sets of heterogeneous and interacting motivations, which are affected by preferences over outcomes, beliefs about outcomes, the behavior of others and the networks in which people are embedded, and security considerations in an environment where chance and contingency cannot be underestimated. Of course, many fighters are conscripted or abducted. Additional factors include curiosity and the prospect of excitement and adventure, the lure of danger, the acquisition of a new and more rewarding individual identity or moral worldview, the pleasure of acting as one's own agent, and purely criminal motives'.

34 These observations are based on interviews with ex-*kadogo* in the FARDC, many of whom emphasized they had enrolled out of ideological motives. This contrasts with the findings of a UNICEF survey carried out in 1997 among fresh recruits, which found that most *kadogo* mentioned pragmatic reasons for joining the AFDL (Vlassenroot and Van Acker, 2001: 57). It therefore seems that their narratives were affected by 'the ex-post facto ideological bias' commonly encountered among combatants discussing their reasons to enrol (Kalyvas, 2006: 46).

35 Instructors in the AFDL had not only been versed in the ideology of the RPF, but also in that of Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM), which heavily emphasized ideological education. During their time in exile in Uganda, many RPF soldiers had fought in the NRM (Stearns, 2011: 237).

damu (field of blood) (Badjoko and Clarens, 2005). This brutality served a clear purpose: the creation of a loyal, fearless and militarily effective corps of young soldiers ready to fight their way hundreds of kilometers through the jungle to Kinshasa.

Aside from by the *kadogo*, AFDL troops were reinforced by a force of around 2,000 Katangan Tigers, many of whom were offspring of the Katangan Gendarmes that had gone into exile in Angola in the course of the 1960s, after the failed Katangan secession project and a botched attempt to reintegrate into the ANC. This further diversified the AFDL insurgency, now composed of the following elements: around 15,000 newly recruited *kadogo*; Congolese Tutsi troops led by those seasoned in the Rwandan RPF, but also including new recruits; foreign, mostly Rwandan and Ugandan troops; and finally, the Tigers, who were fighting in separate contingents (Lanotte, 2003: 58–59). Most of the Congolese troops in the AFDL were commanded by Rwandan officers, as the RPA was the driving force in the insurgency. This did not fundamentally change after the insurgency's power takeover in Kinshasa in May 1997. Rwandan officers held key positions in the presidential guard and the newly constituted national armed forces, the *Force armées congolaises* (FAC, Congolese Armed Forces), which had been formed by mixing Congolese AFDL troops with remaining ex-Mobutu military (FAZ). Consequently, Kabila depended on Rwanda both for his personal security and that of his rule (International Crisis Group, 1999: 8–9), a situation he felt increasingly uncomfortable with.

Despite the strong Rwandan influence, it was the brand-new president who tried to determine the outlines of the new military, knowing that any attempt to become more autonomous from his foreign backers would require him to build up an independent power base in the armed forces.³⁶ Furthermore, having received political and military training in China, and having been in revolutionary movements and environments for the greater part of his life (Martens, 2004), Kabila recognized the importance of a well-disciplined and ideologically conscious army for spearheading societal transformation. For these reasons, he invested substantially in building up the FAC, inviting officers from different countries as instructors and advisers, while sending the FAC's own officers to military academies in befriended countries like Zimbabwe, Tanzania, China and Sudan. His son Joseph was for example sent to the People's Liberation Army National Defense University in Beijing in 1997, becoming deputy chief of staff of the FAC upon his return. Kabila also tried to improve service conditions in the FAC, raising the monthly salary to \$100, which was an enormous amount for that time. Furthermore, Kabila continued the strict zero tolerance policy for misbehavior that had been implemented in the AFDL. This policy involved heavy corporal punishments, in particular floggings, and in severe cases, summary executions. Additionally, in line with his background, Kabila made civic education and revolutionary teachings an important part of the military's curriculum. Fully aware of the rotten morals of the FAZ, with whom he had traded arms when directing his *maquis* in Fizi, he came to the conclusion that the remaining ex-FAZ had to be rigorously 'reeducated', regrouping them in the military bases of Kitona, Kapalata, Kamina and Kotakoli. Upon arrival, officers were humiliatingly stripped of their ranks and had to swear allegiance to the new regime. Subsequently, they were put under an extremely harsh regime, receiving very little food, having no access to medical care, and being regularly subjected to corporal punishments. In some of these 'concentration camps', the conditions were so bad that the mortality rate was 7–12 deaths a day (Garretón, 1998: §40). To make matters worse, large numbers of women and daughters from FAZ staff were raped in the military camps of CETA, Tshatshi and Kokolo in Kinshasa, just after their husbands had departed for 'reeducation' (UNOHCHR, 2010: 149).

Despite his efforts, Kabila's grand vision for military renewal was never realized. The new war that erupted in August 1998 made that the military was soon engaged in ongoing large-scale fighting, which hampered reforms. Furthermore, the Second Congo War was an immense drain on ever-decreasing state resources, reducing the available means for non-operational tasks like training. Although training and education of troops and officers did continue, cycles were drastically shortened. For instance, the reserve brigades gathered in Mura and Kitona that were to become elite units of the FAC³⁷ received only around nine months of training. Dwindling resources also led to sharp cuts in salaries, which dropped to below \$15 a month for ordinary soldiers and were paid with increasing irregularity. Another major obstacle to improving the FAC was its overall lack of cohesion. An amalgam of heterogeneous groups, it was plagued by continual power struggles, reflecting wider tensions in the Kabila regime. In particular the dominance of Rwandans in the command structures, and RPA troops' better service conditions and higher pay, were widely resented. Congolese Tutsi troops, who were closely associated with the RPA, were seen to be equally privileged, leading to strong anti-Tutsi feelings. However, Congolese and Rwandan Tutsi staff constituted far from a homogenous bloc. Especially the Banyamulenge troops from South Kivu, who formed separate units in the FAC, felt growing resentment towards their Rwandan superiors, whom they accused of denying them positions of importance. However, given the general climate of distrust against Tutsi that reigned in the FAC, the Banyamulenge troops felt they had little options but to obey their Rwandan protectors, who initially allowed them to stay close to their home area in South Kivu. However, in February 1998, rumors circulated that Rwandan FAC Chief of Staff James Kabarebe planned to disperse the Banyamulenge troops over garrisons throughout the country. This sparked a mutiny, as the Banyamulenge troops were reluctant to rotate, fearing both for their own safety and that of their community, which continued to be threatened by Mai Mai groups (Lanotte, 2003: 77; Willame, 1999: 148). These fears would soon be vindicated.

In July 1998, Kabila publicly announced the return of all foreign troops to their countries of origin, thanking them for their service to the liberation struggle. While the Rwandan troops led by Kabarebe obeyed this order and withdrew, they would soon return in the guise of

³⁶ This paragraph and the next are based upon interviews with ex-*kadogo* and ex-FAC recruits now part of the FARDC, but also draw upon International Crisis Group (1999: 16–20) and de Villers and Willame (1998: 170–171).

³⁷ These FAC elite units include the so-called *Réquins* (sharks) (see p.302) and what is called the 234th brigade herein, which is part of case #4.

a new rebellion, the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (RCD, Congolese Rally for Democracy), officially launched on 2 August 1998. In the meantime, they tried to rally a part of the FAC to their cause, in particular those who had up to then been their closest allies, the Congolese Tutsi troops. While the latter were hesitant to join given that they felt dominated and instrumentalized by the Rwandans, most eventually heeded the RCD's call, not only as they feared for their safety and that of their communities, but also as they hoped for important positions in the new rebellion. For many, their decision to join the RCD was partly informed by the witch-hunt against Tutsi that was launched at the outbreak of the war, when the government in Kinshasa resorted to hate propaganda for the purposes of popular mobilization. In a public speech, President Kabila implored the population to take up 'spears and arrows' to avoid becoming 'the slaves of the Tutsi' (Lanotte, 2003: 104–105). Another government official compared Tutsi to a 'virus, a mosquito and filth that must be crushed with determination and resolve' (UNOHCHR, 2010: 155). This strong anti-Tutsi atmosphere provoked numerous massacres of civilians and also infected the army, leading scores of FAC troops of Tutsi origins to be killed by their colleagues, for example at the *École de formation des officiers* (EFO, School for Officer Education) in Kananga and the Kamina base in Katanga (UNOHCHR, 2010: 161, 163, for other massacres of Tutsi, see idem: 155–164).

Aside from targeting Congolese Tutsi troops, Rwandan officers also tried to recruit for the RCD among the other networks they had built up within the FAC. For instance, the elite 10th brigade stationed in Goma under Col. Ondekane, one of the strongest and best-equipped FAC units, mutinied in August 1998 and then rallied to the RCD. Other disgruntled FAC troops joined the RCD as well, including soldiers from units deployed in the zones that were occupied by the rebellion, preferring survival to fighting (International Crisis Group, 1999: 17). Soldiers from the government forces also did not hesitate to join another important rebel movement operating during the Second Congo War, the *Mouvement de libération du Congo* (MLC, Movement for the Liberation of the Congo), which opened a new front in north-western *Équateur*, the home area of its leader Jean-Pierre Bemba. This rebellion would be joined by large numbers of ex-FAZ from *Équateur* province, who felt a stronger allegiance to their constituency in this part of the Congo than the Kabila regime in Kinshasa (Belaid, 2007: 31–34).

The disintegration of the FAC in the initial stages of the Second Congo War illustrates the weak loyalty that Kabila commended among his troops, as well as the military's overall lack of cohesion. This predicament would only marginally improve over the course of the next years. Kabila's modes of military management strongly resembled those of Mobutu, as he equally resorted to power projection through personal networks, purges, structural manipulation by means of the multiplication of in/security agencies and units, and finally, the creation of a dichotomy between trusted elite units like the presidential guard and the marginalized rest of the military. Like in the FAZ, this strongly undermined cohesion, morale and combat capacity (International Crisis Group, 2000: 50–52). Were it not for substantial support of in particular Angolan and Zimbabwean troops, it is doubtful whether the around 60,000 strong FAC would have managed to prevent the fall of the Kabila regime.³⁸

However, the insurgent forces had their weaknesses too. The Rwandan-led military wing of the RCD,³⁹ the most sizeable of the insurgent forces (17,000–20,000 troops), was ultimately not reliable in battle due to structural flaws. It exercised only limited control outside of the main axes and urban centers, being severely challenged by a plethora of Mai Mai groups (in total ca. 20,000–30,000 combatants) that were used as proxies by the Kinshasa government. Furthermore, as a result of its reputation as a Rwandan/Tutsi-dominated occupation force, and the abysmal performance of its administration, the RCD never managed to obtain legitimacy among the population (Tull, 2005: 127–159). Despite its image as being dominated by Tutsi, the recruits of the RCD's armed wing were mixed, and also came to include substantial numbers of Hutu. Hoping to avoid that Congolese Hutu would join their Rwandan counterparts of the ex-FAR/interahamwe, the RCD embarked upon a policy of emphasizing the unity of Congolese Hutu and Tutsi under the banner of *Rwandophonie*. (International Crisis Group, 2003: 20). After the AFDL/RPA had brutally destroyed the Rwandan refugee camps during the First Congo War and had hunted down those who fled, massacring tens of thousands of Rwandan Hutu, the latter had decided to reinitiate armed activity, rallying to the side of the Congolese government (see UNOHCHR, 2010: 71–151). During the Second Congo War, this group of Rwandan Hutu combatants, estimated to number 30,000–40,000 troops, was divided into two parts. While one group fought in the ranks of the FAC, another group, from 2000 onwards known under the name *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* (FDLR, Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) waged a counterinsurgency campaign against the RCD/RPA in the east (Rafti, 2006a: 60–61). They often collaborated with Mai Mai forces, providing them with training and operational support.⁴⁰

Contrary to the RCD, the MLC did enjoy a measure of popularity among parts of the population, at least in its heartland in *Équateur*. Its around 10,000 strong armed wing functioned as a conventional military force, and had core competence due to the inclusion of numerous ex-FAZ officers and support from the Ugandan military, who provided basic military training and logistical support (Belaid, 2007: 51–52, 60). However, the MLC never built up sufficient military strength to push southwards towards Kinshasa, while its efforts to expand in the direction of the east also yielded mixed results. The other Uganda-backed rebel groups, the RCD splinter factions *RCD-National* (RCD-N,

38 The numbers of the various fighting forces given in this paragraph are drawn from International Crisis Group (2000: 4 and 2006a: 14–15). The estimated number of Mai Mai is based on Willame (2007: 97) and that of the Ituri fighters draws on Bouta (2005: 7).

39 After the split within the RCD, the main Rwandan-supported wing continued under the name RCD. However, during the peace talks and subsequent transition, it was sometimes designated as 'RCD-Goma' to distinguish it from the other RCD branches.

40 Mai Mai groups in South Kivu also liaised with Burundian insurgent groups, who assisted with training, supplies and operational support (Bilali, 2005: 16–17).

RCD-National) and *RCD/Kisangani-Mouvement de libération* (RCD/K-ML, RCD/Kisangani-Liberation Movement) were much smaller, with the RCD/K-ML numbering 3,000–5,000 troops and the RCD-N having only several hundreds of fighters, consisting mostly of local recruits. The around five to six armed groups active in Ituri, some of which had received rapid military training by Ugandan instructors, were also relatively small, and were estimated to total 15,000 fighters. This complex and constantly shifting rebel kaleidoscope was at the root of an extremely volatile dynamics of conflict and violence, which contributed to the hardening of warfare, and resulted in numerous atrocities that often had an ethnic dimension.

3.3.2 *The transition and the birth of a new military*

The bewildering array of actors involved in the Second Congo War, also known as 'Africa's First World War', severely complicated peace negotiations. Initial talks led to the signing of a ceasefire agreement in 1999 and the establishment of a UN force to monitor it, the *Mission des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo* (MONUC, UN Mission in the DR Congo). However, the ceasefire was not respected by any of the signatories. The peace process was also hampered by Kabila's resistance to the idea of power-sharing, which was strongly promoted by the international facilitators (Lanotte, 2003: 130–133). A breakthrough could therefore only be reached after an unexpected change of power in Kinshasa. On 16 January 2001, President Kabila was assassinated by one of his bodyguards, for motives that have never become entirely clear (Stearns, 2011: 282–283). He would soon be replaced by his son Joseph, then chief of staff of the FAC land forces. Joseph Kabila appeared more diplomatic and pro-Western than his father, and came to the conclusion that playing along the game of negotiations would ultimately be in his interest (idem: 312–313). This change in attitude from Kinshasa enabled the development of fragile consensus during a series of peace talks in South Africa that regrouped a wide range of Congolese stakeholders. These talks culminated in the signing of a comprehensive peace accord in December 2002, which was theatrically named the 'Global and All-Inclusive Agreement'.

The final peace accord hammered out a political and military power-sharing arrangement between the signatories, which encompassed the following actors: the main warring factions (government, MLC, RCD, RCD/K-ML, RCD-N and the heterogeneous group of 'Mai Mai'); the rather nebulous category of 'civil society'; and what was called the 'non-armed opposition', comprised of 28 different political parties. The accord provided for the establishment of a Transitional Government (TG) headed by a presidency composed of one president and four vice-presidents, drawn from the three main warring parties (government, RCD, MLC) and the political opposition. This formula, which became known as '1+4' came to symbolize the fragile balancing act of a transition based on power-sharing (Willame, 2007: 80–84). The transition unleashed permanent power struggles both between and within the ex-belligerent movements, most of which transformed into political parties. These different factions and their wider networks were all vying for a part of the 'national cake', trying to gain access to (potentially) lucrative positions in the new state framework.

The outcome of this complex exercise, which ended with Kabila's victory in the presidential and legislative elections in 2006, was the resurrection of a political order that displayed important continuities with its pre-war predecessor, although it also diverged in a number of respects. Crucially, power continued to be largely projected through the sinews of big-man networks, while the reach of the administration remained uneven and subject to negotiation processes with local elites. Another continuity resided in the workings of the state apparatus, which was still more geared towards revenue generation than public service provision, and remained characterized by ineffectiveness and a weak grip over its lower echelons (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers, 2008: 49–50). This shows that while the 2003–2006 period was labeled a 'transition', it was a 'transition without transformation' (paraphrasing Raeymaekers, 2007: 155, drawing on Parker, 2004), leading to the reestablishment of a political order that profoundly resembled that of the later stages of Mobutu's reign.⁴¹ These similarities included a relatively weak political center, strong centrifugal tendencies and a high degree of political-economic fragmentation (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers, 2008). The transition also failed to end violence in the eastern part of the country, rendering the 'post-conflict' label that was optimistically applied by international actors highly inadequate.

The birth of the FARDC

Under the terms of the peace agreement, the Transitional Government was charged with the formation of a restructured and integrated national and republican army, which was eventually baptized *Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC, Armed Forces of the DR Congo). However, the agreement contained few details on the new military or the military integration process, as no consensus on these issues had been reached during the peace talks. While this had enabled immediate progress with the talks in spite of opposing views, it made that every aspect of the military integration process had to be discussed in later phases. Since the transition was characterized by a climate of distrust and ongoing power struggles between and within the various factions, these discussions were often difficult. The absence of a clear policy framework and timeline for military integration further compounded the task. Additionally, factions started to hijack the integration process as a means of reinforcing their position at the negotiating table. Such manipulation

⁴¹ Given the intransitive character of the period between 2003 and 2006, the word transition is used herein only to indicate that timespan, and should not be taken to describe the nature of the processes taking place within in.

was often related to the ongoing fighting in the east, creating a close interaction between the political process in Kinshasa and military developments in the Kivu provinces (Verweijen, 2014). Consequently, the integration process was primarily driven by short-term political and security considerations, at the expense of the development of a longer-term comprehensive vision on the role and shape of the armed forces (Kibasomba, 2005: 4–5). The lack of a firm policy and regulatory framework also made it easier for the *maison militaire*, the presidential military office, to keep direct control over the process, enabling it to gradually marginalize the transitional structures charged with defense and security (International Crisis Group, 2006a: 4–5).

One of the more problematic issues in the military integration process was the distribution of positions in the new national and regional command structures. The regional commands cover eleven *régions militaires* (military regions) that are congruent with the Congo's provinces, as well as five *groupements navals* (naval regions) that follow a different geographical division.⁴² Whereas consensus was found on the distribution key of the command positions, which was based on the various factions' declared troop numbers, disagreement remained as to what faction would obtain what positions. For instance, the RCD insisted on being allocated the command of the 8th Military Region (North Kivu), which was its main political and military stronghold. That this demand was eventually honored constituted an important setback for the establishment of a unified and coherent military, as it allowed the RCD to maintain parallel command chains within its heartland (Wolters, 2004b: 2).

The recognition of ranks was an equally conflict-generating process. A ranks commission was convened in Kinshasa, to which the different factions had to submit lists with their officers. In 2004, this commission proclaimed an *ordre général* (general order, a decree) that nominated the officers of the new integrated army. In general, it had applied a policy of generosity, causing most of the ranks of the factions with considerable military and political weight to be recognized. The result was an entirely lopsided military structure, with a disproportionate amount of superior officers.⁴³ However, smaller factions lacking military significance and national-level political influence, such as the majority of the Mai Mai groups, did not see all of their proposed ranks recognized. Predictably, this caused resentment, and reduced the incentives to continue participation in the integration process (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013a: 10–11). The attribution of high ranks to officers with little conventional military education provoked further tensions. Many officers from the former government forces, specifically the ex-FAZ,⁴⁴ had obtained their ranks under a system where promotion was a gradual process and a minimum of educational and merit-based criteria were at least partly respected, in spite of the heavy influence of patronage politics. In their eyes, attributing ranks in an accelerated manner was unwarranted, causing them to have great difficulties to muster respect for the less educated officers who now commanded them. In this manner, military integration led to a general deflation of ranks and diminished respect for superior officers, which negatively impacted command and control (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2010: 22–23).⁴⁵

Another bone of contention in the military integration process was the presidential guard. Having little trust in the FAC, Joseph Kabila had followed his predecessors' example, relying on a presidential guard that was closely controlled by the *maison militaire* for protecting his personal safety and power. He expanded this elite unit, from 2006 onwards called *Garde républicaine* (GR, Republican Guard), to 12,000–15,000 troops, filling the ranks of this partly Angolan-trained in/security service largely with soldiers from his father's home area in northern Katanga (International Crisis Group, 2006a: 3). As the guard was not placed under the integrated command structures, the other factions in the transition insisted on opening it up for integration, while also proposing to drastically reduce its size. However, the *Loi portant organisation générale de la défense et des forces armées* (Law on the General Organization of Defense and the Armed Forces) that was adopted in 2004 remained silent on the size and role of the guard, leaving a legal vacuum (Amnesty International, 2007: 59–60). This prompted some of the vice-presidents, notably Jean-Pierre Bemba, to also maintain a sizeable personal guard, since they felt intimidated by what was essentially an instrument of presidential power that could be used for political repression (International Crisis Group, 2006c: 3).

The 2004 law also failed to mention the size of the future army, which was another hotly debated issue during the transition. While the payroll of the army listed 240,000 troops, based on the ex-belligerents' declared troop numbers, observers believed that the real figure was about half that size. This led to the loss of an estimated 4 million USD a month on salaries of so-called 'ghost soldiers', who only exist on the payroll (International Crisis Group, 2006a: 15–16). The reasons for these inflated figures are obvious. Each faction's claim to political power depended on (pretended) military strength, which determined the key to the division of posts in the transitional institutions. Furthermore, sizeable fighting forces translated directly into financial benefits for the military leadership, as they allowed for the embezzling of the salaries of both ghost and real soldiers. Similar considerations made factions reluctant to agree on the future downsizing of the army. The 2005 *Plan stratégique national pour l'intégration des forces armées* (National Strategic Plan for the Integration of the Armed Forces) set the number of troops at 125,000, a figure that was heavily criticized by foreign observers from the perspective

42 Note that the delimitations of the regional commands were changed in 2014 due to a restructuration effort, as further discussed on pp. 221–222.

43 This imbalance continued after later waves of integration. A biometric audit carried out in late 2009 found for 130,000 active FARDC troops 50,000 soldiers (38.46%), 48,000 non-commissioned officers (36.92%) and 32,000 officers (24.62%) (International Crisis Group, 2010a: 15).

44 The terms ex-FAZ and ex-FAC are employed herein to designate those who started their military career in the FAZ or the FAC, respectively. Technically, most ex-FAZ are also ex-FAC.

45 The effects of the military integration process on perceptions of superiors and the workings of the military are further discussed in Chapter 9.

of both military effectiveness and financial sustainability (ibidem).⁴⁶ However, the official, fluctuating, number of FARDC troops would continue to exceed that figure, in part due to the ongoing absorption of rebel fighters.

Brassage: brewing with difficulties⁴⁷

While the command of the military regions had been nominated in January 2004, troop deployment on the ground only changed to a limited extent, with existing rebel units simply becoming absorbed in FARDC brigades, sometimes after a slight regrouping and mixing. However, many of these brigades did not obey the orders of the integrated regional commands, leading to a series of clashes between FARDC units in the course of 2004 (Wolters, 2004a). This prompted a number of donors (South Africa, Belgium, Angola) to support an emergency plan aimed at jumpstarting the mixing of ex-belligerents' troops. This was to occur through what was called a *brassage* (brewing) process, which consisted of the mixing of combatants on an individual basis into new units, the *brigades intégrées* (Integrated Brigades, IBs), according to faction quota.⁴⁸ *Brassage* was not only open to the signatories of the peace agreement, for the 2004 defense law stipulated that ex-FAZ and Katangan Tigers in exile, the Ituri armed groups and all other armed groups willing to join were also eligible. A rudimentary, 45-day training in a *Centre de brassage et de recyclage* (CBR, Brassage and Retraining Center), had to foster basic cohesion among the amalgamated troops by breaking down old loyalties and command chains (Amnesty International, 2007: 11, 37–38).

These objectives were only partially achieved. The *brassage* process was plagued by technical and financial difficulties, mismanagement, and widespread attempts at manipulation by the ex-belligerents (Amnesty International, 2007; Boshoff, 2005; Onana and Taylor, 2008). Consequently, it proceeded much slower than foreseen, with the last IB, the 18th, finishing the process only in 2008. In the meanwhile, non-integrated units continued to exist, especially in the east. Some of these eventually refused integration altogether and continued as armed groups, while others were accepted as non-integrated units in the FARDC. In combination with the manipulation of troop deployment, this caused the principle of the balanced geographical spreading of fighters to be flouted. Many combatants in the Kivus ended up going to a CBR near their old strongholds and were subsequently deployed within the Kivu provinces. Such selective redeployment facilitated the establishment of parallel chains of command, while also allowing integrated groups to maintain close contacts with the wider political-economic networks of which they had been part during the wars (Wolters and Boshoff, 2006; Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013a: 11–12).

While the CBRs that were assisted by foreign donors and trainers worked reasonably well, where foreign support was lacking, the quality of the provided training was relatively low, not least as there were hardly any training materials. In many of such unassisted CBRs, appalling living conditions further undermined the effectiveness of the training. Basic sanitation was lacking and troops were deprived of rations, often as a result of embezzlement schemes. Allegedly, the commanders of certain CBRs sold rations destined for soldiers to shops in the neighborhood. Others struck deals with suppliers to deliver less food than foreseen, but bill the same amount and then share the profits, a classic example of what in the Congolese army is generally called an *opération retour* scheme.⁴⁹ Hungry and frustrated, scores of combatants deserted from the CBRs, while those who still awaited *brassage* were discouraged from participating (Amnesty International, 2007: 45–46). The relative attractiveness of demobilization packages further lowered incentives to enroll in the FARDC. While those choosing demobilization received an initial cash payment of \$110, to be followed by an additional \$25 a month during the subsequent year, army recruits received a meager \$10 a month and almost no additional social benefits (International Crisis Group, 2006a: 22).

The reluctance to sign up for the FARDC caused enormous problems to the leadership of the various factions, who had agreed to a quota system based on inflated numbers. This prompted them to resort to coercion in order to fill up the ranks (Amnesty International, 2007: 48). Another strategy was fresh recruitment, causing scores of civilians to enter the CBRs. As faction leadership had refused the individual identification of combatants prior to the integration process, since this would have revealed their real numbers, it was relatively easy for non-combatants to enter the army. The pressure to fill up the allocated quota also contributed to the failure to impose admission criteria. Although the established legislative framework barred those deemed physically or morally 'inapt' from entering the integration process, no mechanisms were established to implement these principles. Physical tests only took place in the CBRs and were largely symbolic. Furthermore, no upper age limit was retained, leading to the incorporation of thousands of soldiers who were ripe for retirement.⁵⁰ The pressure to fill the quota also worked against the safeguarding of human rights standards, as no vetting mechanisms were created to filter

46 International experts recommended a size of 60,000–70,000 troops for the FARDC, just slightly over that of the FAZ, which was seen as more sustainable (International Crisis Group, 2006a: 16).

47 Where not referenced, insights in this paragraph stem from the field research. The *brassage* process was one of the standard discussion topics with military staff.

48 The overall faction quota for the IBs were: FAC (35%), MLC (17%), RCD-Goma (28%), Mai Mai (8%), other groups (12%). However, due to manipulation and the lack of transport possibilities, the eventual composition varied per brigade, and could significantly deviate from the prescribed quota (International Crisis Group, 2006a: 17).

49 Interview with higher-ranking FARDC officers, Baraka, 04.03.2010.

50 The admission of elderly soldiers should also be seen in the light of the absence of pensions and welfare systems, rendering it difficult to lay off long-serving, aged, handicapped or ill soldiers. For the same reasons, widows and orphans of deceased soldiers were sometimes allowed to be put on the pay roll.

out suspected war criminals and other offenders. In some cases, even prisoners suspected of or sentenced for serious crimes were allowed to enter the new army (Amnesty International, 2007: 43–48). In sum, recruitment for the FARDC perpetuated a long tradition in the Congolese army to fill its ranks with the uneducated, those with little other prospects, and people with a dubious behavioral track record. The immense heterogeneity of the elements out of which the new army was to be brewed posed a challenge to the creation of cohesive units. Not only did levels and types of military training and combat experience immensely differ, recruits also had varying geographical, ethnic and social backgrounds, and had been socialized into diverging worldviews and modes of operating within their respective combat organizations.⁵¹ Perhaps surprisingly given the bloodshed and atrocities that had taken place during the Congo Wars, hatred and vengeance did not play a very pronounced role during *brassage*. Many combatants had simply been recruited, either forced or voluntarily, into the faction that controlled the zone where they happened to be at the outbreak of the hostilities. Furthermore, most of the warring factions had not been mobilized on the basis of well delineated and strongly opposed ideological lines. Additionally, collusion and frequently changing alliances had made the boundaries between belligerents sometimes fluid (Verweijen, 2014: 147–148). However, several groups, specifically the Mai Mai and some of the Ituri militias, had highlighted antagonistic forms of identification to mobilize recruits, rally support and foster cohesion. This had hardened identities, and connected them to memories of bloodshed. Such polarized forms of identification did not instantly soften when troops entered the FARDC. Especially anti-Rwandophone/Tutsi sentiment continued to be virulent, as many held the Tutsi responsible for the outbreak of the wars and some of the worst massacres that had taken place.

This was shockingly evidenced by the killing of a number of Tutsi soldiers in the Kitona CBR in Bas-Congo in February 2006. Although this was an isolated incident, it reinforced fear among Rwandophone soldiers to participate in *brassage* and leave the Kivus (Amnesty International, 2007: 34–36). However, no efforts were made to deal with these smoldering ethnic-based tensions in the military. *Brassage* was approached as a purely technical process, being little more than the physical mixing of former belligerent troops. Consequently, there was little attention to the ideological and identity-based aspects of building a new army. As an ex-FAZ officer concluded: '*Brassage* was not an education, it was only the juxtaposition of units. Afterwards, a lot of distrust of an ethnic character has remained. We have not done any reconciliation and everyone came with their weapon. They [the troops] need real education now, especially from specialists in morals, ideology and ethics, in order to let them acquire deeper knowledge'.⁵²

Tensions of an ethnic character were also fuelled by the distribution of command and staff positions in the new IBs. The stakes of this process were even higher than those surrounding the distribution of ranks, given that in the FARDC, it are positions, not ranks, that determine access to (informal) revenue-generating opportunities. With the salary of even superior officers being negligible,⁵³ a good position is crucial for maintaining a certain standard of living and level of influence. In the IBs, appointments were in principle based on both competence and the repartition formula that had been established for all transitional institutions, implying that each commander had to be assisted by two deputy-commanders from two different factions. After the training period, CBR commanders and instructors proposed a list of candidates, which served as a guideline for the commission at the general staff in Kinshasa that made the final decisions. While competence, assessed on the basis of performance during the training period and prior experience and knowledge, was generally taken into consideration in formulating the proposal, the level of influence that factions and candidates could exercise on the commission in Kinshasa was often determining. Therefore, groups with little weight in the FARDC, and with weak connections at the national level, tended to lose out in the nomination process (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c: 566).

Apart from limited national-level influence, factions' lack of qualified candidates sometimes also played a role in their failure to obtain positions of importance. Especially among certain Mai Mai groups, many officers had low levels of education and had never followed conventional military training, being mostly versed in guerrilla techniques and in operating with small-scale, locally recruited groups. Rather than diagnosing their difficult access to higher positions as stemming from their lack of political and military weight and qualifications, these groups saw their marginalization as clear evidence of a deliberate policy of the discrimination of autochthones by the perceived Tutsi/Rwandophone-dominated command of the new army. This experienced discrimination lowered the enthusiasm for joining the integration process, while for those who did integrate, it sometimes formed a reason to desert and return to the bush (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013a: 10–13). Many of those refusing integration never entered a formal demobilization program, but rather 'auto-demobilized', implying that they retained their arms. These auto-demobilized had generally as many chances to obtain a livelihood as those who had been officially demobilized, since the benefits accruing from demobilization and reintegration packages were limited and short-lived, if they materialized at all. In this manner, the military integration process produced a large mass of quasi-demobilized and jobless ex-fighters, constituting a rich reservoir of bandits and future armed group recruits (Lamb et al., 2012: 24–27).

Divergent strategies of dealing with military integration

One of the main reasons why the military integration process unfolded in such an erratic manner was its direct relation to the power struggles between but also among the ex-belligerent factions. As power at the negotiation table was ultimately based on military strength, many factions were reluctant to entirely dismantle their military structures, especially if unable to compensate for the ensuing loss of

⁵¹ The heterogeneity of FARDC soldiers' backgrounds is further described in Chapter 9, pp. 262–267.

⁵² Interview with mid-ranking FARDC officer, Baraka, 17.03.2011.

⁵³ FARDC salaries are further discussed in footnote 115, p.160.

influence through political strategies. Therefore, manipulating military integration was of specific importance for parties facing bleak electoral prospects, like the RCD (Wolters, 2004b: 4–5) or factions that had only local spheres of influence. For the latter category, any redeployment of their troops implied a decoupling from their wider political-economic networks, which guaranteed them influence and income, and was therefore undesirable. Indeed, when deprived of national level political influence, keeping military structures intact was crucial for allowing factions to hold on to the forms of territorial and economic control that enabled the coercive and illicit revenue-generation practices that were at the core of their modes of accumulation. In sum, military integration was an unattractive option for groups whose power and resources base were strongly locally rooted, and who were not likely to obtain positions of importance within the military or the politico-administrative apparatus (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c: 566–567).

Additionally, many factions saw retaining autonomous control over military means as a precondition for maintaining the capacity to protect their civilian constituencies. Especially groups that had been mobilized along ethnic lines often considered themselves to be the guarantors of the physical safety of the communities out of which they had issued. Protecting these communities was seen to require continued military presence for a number of reasons. First, where armed groups connected to communities framed as ‘hostile’ continued their activities, participating in *brassage* was considered to be dangerous, as it would expose people to these enemy groups. Thus, certain factions’ refusal to go to *brassage* became a reason for others to refuse army integration too, creating what roughly resembles a set of local security dilemmas (cf. Herz, 1950).⁵⁴ The birth of these dilemmas is closely related to the second reason why factions refused to send their troops away for community security reasons, namely distrust toward the newly formed military. As the process of military integration proceeded only gradually, there was no militarily effective army that could be appealed to in the case of existential threats. Moreover, many groups, whether ‘autochthones’ or ‘Rwandophones’, saw the military as partial and therefore unreliable. Distrust in the FARDC’s capabilities and willingness to protect were also at the root of the third reason to resist *brassage* from a security perspective, namely the continued presence of foreign armed groups like the Rwandan FDLR. While in many areas, the FDLR cohabitated relatively peacefully with the population, they did impose themselves by force, and occasionally engaged in exactions and abuses. In sum, threats of a varying nature demotivated armed groups to leave the communities they claimed to defend. However, they sometimes inflated these threats as a pretext to refuse military integration and continue to control their strongholds. Furthermore, their own presence sometimes equally harmed the very communities they purported to protect (Amnesty International, 2007: 30–36; Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013a: 13).

While reluctance to dismantle military structures and give up territorial and economic control could be found across the board, the former warring factions had different ways of dealing with the pressures of national integration. These differences were related to the immense heterogeneity of the former warring parties, who were dissimilar in terms of size, makeup, political organization and orientation, military capabilities and forms of resources mobilization. For example, some factions were better equipped than others to participate in the formal political arena. This was especially the case with groups having a previously established political branch, a degree of internal coherence, a well-delineated constituency, and career politicians with know-how, resources and national-level contacts. Such groups were more likely to successfully transform into a political party, allowing them to diminish their engagement in military activities. For their part, groups that had already been fragmented during the war, like certain Mai Mai networks, were likely to disintegrate in the course of the transition, following the pressures of the struggle for scarce positions and resources. Differences in post-settlement trajectories also stemmed from variations in strategies of resource mobilization. For example, groups that operated in border regions and/or had strong regional networks, like the Banande trading networks in the Grand Nord, were less likely to succumb to the newly unleashed centripetal tendencies than others (Raeymaekers, 2007: 168–171). However, while some of these groups traded dissolving their military structures for maintaining relatively autonomous political-economic control, others judged that holding on to separate spheres of influence required guarding their military capacities intact. This was especially the case with those having strained relations to the presidential circle and direct sources of outside support, like the Rwanda-backed RCD (Wolters, 2004b: 4–7).

In sum, factions’ differing dispositions caused variations in their transitional trajectories, including the ways in which they handled the military integration process. Three approaches to *brassage* dominated. The first was outright refusal, a strategy that was often adopted by Mai Mai groups for whom local control guaranteed more influence than becoming absorbed in the national army. Another faction that followed this strategy was a Tutsi-led group of dissidents in the RCD who maintained strong links to elements in Kigali. In 2006, these dissidents would officially launch a new rebel group under the leadership of General Laurent Nkunda, named *Congrès national pour la défense du peuple* (CNDD, National Congress for the Defense of the People) (Stearns, 2008). A second approach to military integration was to fully participate, hence to largely give up autonomous military power, and to switch to political maneuvering as the main strategy to retain influence. This could occur for example by siding with the government camp (the case of the RCD-N) and/or by trying to maintain a local sphere of influence through retaining autonomous control over important administrative agencies, like the customs and migration offices (the case of the RCD/K-ML, see Raeymaekers, 2007: 168–169). This second strategy did not necessarily imply that groups turned to entirely non-violent ways of power competition, as in many cases they maintained some influence over their former officers now

54 In the classic definition of Herz (1950: 147), a security dilemma is formed by a constellation of disconnected groups that are concerned about ‘their security from being attacked, subjected, dominated, or annihilated by other groups and individuals. Striving to attain security from such attacks, they are driven to acquire more and more power in order to escape the impact of the power of others. This, in turn, renders the others more insecure and compels them to prepare for the worst. Since none can ever feel entirely secure in such a world of competing units, power competition ensues, and the vicious circle of security and power accumulation is on’.

serving in the FARDC, or guarded links with local militias or foreign rebel groups. Hence, while such factions played primarily a political game, they were careful to retain a minimum capacity for military mobilization. This partly served as an insurance against becoming politically marginalized, which was a continued risk for those not able to manipulate a reservoir of force (Verweijen, forthcoming c). A third approach to military integration was to participate, but heavily manipulate the process by creating parallel command structures and keeping key officers and a share of troops close to factions' former strongholds. This pathway was often adopted by factions who did not strongly count on the political arena for exercising influence, but retained primarily a military orientation, therefore trying to build up an autonomous power base within the FARDC. In some cases, like that of the 112th brigade in Minembwe (Fizi, South Kivu) (case #8), or the 85th in Walikale (North Kivu), this entailed preventing entire units from being sent to *brassage*, a strategy that could only be applied by groups with sufficient high-level patronage protection in the FARDC. Some of these factions even maintained parallel systems of the procurement, stockpiling and distribution of arms and ammunition within the FARDC, often withholding parts of their arms caches upon integration (UNSC, 2005: 10,12). This had the twin advantages of guaranteeing a measure of independent military capacity and capitalizing commercially on the trade in arms, which became an important source of income for the new military.

The various strategies developed by the ex-belligerents to maintain separate spheres of influence both within and outside of the FARDC strongly impacted the newly created military. Importantly, they reinforced historical patterns of weak cohesion and parallel command chains. Formally, the integrated military stayed largely intact, and most of the 18 Integrated Brigades (IBs) eventually became reasonably cohesive units, although there were substantial differences per brigade. Moreover, power competition within the military did not continue entirely along old faction lines as many of the integrated networks transformed, whether by splitting, merging or dissolving. For example, the ex-MLC or ex-RCD/K-ML eventually did not survive as parallel power networks within the FARDC, although the forms of belonging and social relations surrounding these groups have not become irrelevant.⁵⁵ Other integrated networks, by contrast, did manage to carve out strong separate spheres of influence within the military, although this rarely occurred entirely along war-era faction lines. The existence of such semi-autonomous networks undermined control over the military by both the general staff in Kinshasa and the presidential power circle. Consequently, the *maison militaire* never managed to build up full and systematic control over the 'semi-integrated' or 'half-brewed' military that resulted from the *brassage* process. It could only establish a number of islands of control in the FARDC through loyal elite units and personal client networks.⁵⁶ Within this patchwork of spheres of influence, several factions remained strongly embedded in the local and trans-border political-economic networks from which they had issued, causing the army to be subject to strong centrifugal tendencies.

Paradoxically, it was precisely the half-baked nature of the military integration process that allowed the transition to stay on track. By enabling the ex-belligerents to maintain a degree of military autonomy and influence over economic fiefdoms, it granted them sufficient levels of economic, physical and political security to stay committed to the transitional project (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013a: 13). This project was also attractive in itself, in that it offered tremendous opportunities for self-enrichment. The signatories to the final peace agreement strongly profited from their new-won positions in the state apparatus, whether in its administrative or military branch. They attributed themselves generous salaries, engaged in widespread embezzlement and influence peddling, and manipulated the management of state tenders, public enterprises and mining contracts (International Crisis Group, 2006b). In essence, the transition offered the ex-belligerents the opportunity to connect parts of the networks of the war economy to the state system, creating interdependencies between and partially merging these two spheres (De Goede, 2007). As a consequence, the focus during the transition was on short-term enrichment, which reinforced the importance of power projection through big-man networks. The (re)building of state institutions, including the military, proved challenging in this context, which had detrimental effects on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection in the Kivus.

Never-ending rebel integration and armed group proliferation

The problematic army integration process negatively impacted stability in the Kivus in a variety of ways. Importantly, it allowed semi-autonomous networks in the military to liaise with local political leaders and businesspersons, causing the conflicts in which these figures were mired to become or remain militarized. Furthermore, the 'open door policy' that was pursued towards military dissidents reinforced, rather than diminished, incentives for desertion and rebellion. Instead of formulating a clear end date for the process of military integration, the government allowed those refusing *brassage* to still integrate whenever they wished. At the same time, due to policy preferences and a lack of alternative options, which was partly a result of the new military's limited operational effectiveness, little military pressure was applied to what were euphemistically labeled *réfractaires au brassage* (*brassage dodgers*). The government generally preferred to negotiate with and coopt such groups and their leaders, promising them high ranks and good positions in the FARDC (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c: 569). However, many *brassage dodgers* reconstituted themselves as armed groups, in part as the threshold for a return to the bush was low. Most groups had no difficulties to find access to arms, having not handed over their arms caches while the circulation of arms remained high. Furthermore, armed groups generally had sufficient opportunities to wield influence and obtain resources, given that local economies and governance remained militarized. Therefore, entrepreneurs and politicians continued to seek

55 How and why the social identification and relations of such ex-belligerent networks have survived is further described on pp. 266-267.

56 The political center's control over the FARDC is further discussed in Chapter 8.1, pp. 219-231.

alliances with armed factions to maintain or reinforce their levels of income and influence. Groups could also easily attract recruits. Socio-economic conditions hardly improved during the transition, and many fighters had only quasi-demobilized. Furthermore, the mobilizing potential of ethnic discourse did not diminish, ensuring both recruits and a degree of popular support.

While for these various reasons, *brassage* dodgers often returned to the bush, this was in many cases only temporary. Dissident groups generally tried to reintegrate into the military, but with better ranks and positions than when they had left. When this would not succeed, they would often (threaten to) simply withdraw again (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c: 572), essentially applying a form of blackmail. Where this did succeed, an example was created for other groups, as these learned that deserting and producing violence would inflate their significance and guarantee them a better negotiation position in the next round of (attempted) integration (cf. Tull and Mehler, 2005: 391). Therefore, rather than punishing dissidents and deserters for their disobedience, the Congolese government essentially rewarded them for it, allowing them to translate such behavior into enhanced political and military influence (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers, 2009: 476). The result of this 'many-carrots-and-few-sticks' policy was that some (parts of) groups alternately deserted and reintegrated, each time trying to obtain more benefits and putting more conditions on their integration. Aside from negatively affecting the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection in the Kivus, these processes had detrimental effects on internal dynamics in the army. The continuous integration of dissident groups and commanders fuelled power competition and stimulated the (re)production of parallel command structures. Furthermore, it weakened the boundaries between the army and extra-military networks, as many of the frequently (dis)integrating groups stayed closely connected to their local civilian constituencies and non-integrated armed remnants (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c: 575–576).

The negative effects of continuing military (dis)integration are most powerfully demonstrated by the trajectory of the CNDP. However, due to its strong military capabilities, high level of organization, and the generous support it received from elements in the Rwandan government, this group should be considered as somewhat of a special case. Hence, although some of the underlying mechanisms are the same, the trajectory of the CNDP is not similar to that of dissident Mai Mai groups, and is therefore not representative for other cases of 'revolving door' military integration. Nevertheless, given that it is crucial for understanding key developments within the FARDC and how these shaped civilian-military interaction in the Kivus during the fieldwork period (2010–2014), the history of CNDP integration merits detailed attention.

During the transition, the already little cohesive RCD, which faced bleak electoral prospects, further fragmented. In 2003, three of its officers, all of Tutsi origins, refused to take up their posts in the integrated command structures in Kinshasa, remaining in the 8th Military Region (North Kivu) instead. Under the leadership of Laurent Nkunda, this group, which was supported by several other ex-RCD hardliners who were hostile to the transition, gradually built up a parallel military structure comprised of around 10,000 troops. Initially, these were mainly from the ex-RCD, but they included a growing number of new recruits. In this manner, Nkunda managed to establish an autonomous sphere of control within North Kivu, in particular in central Masisi.

The dissidence of this group stemmed from various factors. Importantly, its leadership and wider support networks were reluctant to lose the considerable political and economic influence they had built up during the wars. Furthermore, reflecting the widespread feeling that Tutsi might become victim of ethnic violence and discrimination instigated by the Kinshasa government, they feared for their personal safety as well as that of the Tutsi community as a whole. Such fears were further fanned by the continuing presence of the FDLR, the Rwandan Hutu-dominated rebel group of which certain elements had been involved in widespread killings of Tutsi during the Rwandan genocide. Having fought on the side of the Congolese government during the war, this group continued its struggle against the Kigali government in the post-settlement era, occupying vast zones of the Kivus. While not claiming to have a specific agenda against Congolese Tutsi, memories of past violence between Hutu and Tutsi in North Kivu, and the linkages between parts of the Tutsi community and the FDLR's archenemy, the Tutsi-dominated RPF government in Kigali, produced mutual fears and tensions. Political-military entrepreneurs tried to capitalize on these feelings to reinforce their position and justify their refusal to integrate into the national army. Consequently, they did not hesitate to exaggerate the threats faced by Tutsi, for instance readily portraying these as 'intended genocide'. This would not only legitimize military action, but also justify the close involvement of the Rwandan government, who acted as self-styled guardian of its primary power base in the Kivus, the Congolese Tutsi community (Stearns, 2008). Kigali strongly supported Nkunda, not only encouraging him to refuse army integration, but also facilitating the creation and development of the CNDP. Thus, they provided Nkunda with arms, ammunition, and logistical support, while also allowing the CNDP to recruit in Congolese refugee camps on its territory (UNSC, 2008: 15–18).

Building on a well-established network of businesspersons, administrators, and skilled officers often trained in the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), and benefiting from the personal charisma and organizational skills of Nkunda, the CNDP rapidly became one of the strongest and most cohesive armed groups in the Congo (Stearns, 2008: 256–263). This was confirmed when the government launched a large-scale offensive against the group in 2006, which ended in a humiliating defeat for the FARDC. With a military solution out of reach, Kinshasa opted for the familiar strategy of cooptation by means of military integration. In early 2007, it was agreed upon that the CNDP would be absorbed into the FARDC through a process called *mixage* (mixing). In contrast to *brassage*, which consisted of integrating fighters on an individual basis and then retraining them, the *mixage* procedure broke the integrated troops down to the battalion level only and did not foresee any training. Nkunda's declared 3,500 (but estimated 2,300) soldiers were directly mixed with three

un-integrated government brigades, and deployed to Masisi and Rutshuru, hence in and close to their former fief (Stearns, 2008: 257). This procedure allowed Nkunda to retain effective command over his troops, which was a key factor in the failure of *mixage*. Rather than weakening his position, as the government had hoped, *mixage* allowed Nkunda to increase the number of troops under his command and extend his zone of control, as several of the mixed brigades were deployed outside of the CNDP's heartland.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the process enabled him to expand his sources of income by siphoning off the money destined for his soldiers' salaries and other official funds from the military hierarchy, while also benefiting from the new uniforms and equipment that had been provided to his troops (Wolters, 2007; Stearns, 2008: 253–254). It would not take long before these counterproductive effects were manifested. Soon after their formation, Nkunda's brigades initiated military operations against the FDLR that were neither planned nor controlled by the hierarchy, clearly showing that they operated as an autonomous network. Failing to regain grip, the government eventually halted support and the mixed brigades disintegrated. While the CNDP located the causes for the breakdown of *mixage* at the logistical and organizational level, the government claimed that it was an orchestrated failure, arguing that Nkunda never intended to integrate his troops into the army. With hindsight, it is difficult to see how the modalities of *mixage*, boiling down to the integration of the government army into the rebel forces rather than vice versa, could have worked in the first place (Wolters, 2007: 6–8).

After the mixed brigades were disbanded, the situation deteriorated and a year of fighting alternated by talks ensued. This period saw another failed government offensive, in December 2007, followed by a fragile ceasefire agreement signed during a major peace conference in Goma in January 2008. The ceasefire would however soon collapse, inaugurating a new round of fighting in the course of which the FARDC again performed poorly, highlighting its weaknesses in terms of logistics, command and control, cohesion and morale. These weaknesses prompted the hierarchy to allow the FARDC to collaborate with non-state armed groups in the fight against the CNDP, in particular the FDLR and the Mai Mai of the *Coalition des patriotes résistants congolais* (PARECO, Coalition of Congolese Resistant Patriots). Yet, this collaboration was no guarantee for success. In autumn 2008, the crisis escalated again as the CNDP rapidly advanced towards Goma. Nkunda, bolstered by his military success, now also raised the stakes rhetorically, no longer only talking about defending the rights of Congolese Tutsi, but proclaiming the liberation of the Congo as a whole (Hoebeke et al., 2008).

Faced with the weak performance of the FARDC and failing to get external military support, Kabila was pushed into negotiations with the CNDP and its patron, Rwanda. Kagame, for his part, was under pressure after a UN Group of Experts report had revealed support from elements in the Rwandan government to the CNDP (UNSC, 2008: 15–18). The convergence of these interests led to a surprising rapprochement. On 5 December 2008, the governments of the Congo and Rwanda announced that they would launch joint FARDC-Rwanda Defence Force (RDF, the successor to the RPA) operations against the FDLR, and that direct negotiations would be opened between the CNDP and Kinshasa. In the course of a series of meetings behind closed doors, it was agreed upon that the CNDP would integrate into the FARDC. Furthermore, at the start of January 2009, it became clear that Nkunda had been removed from the CNDP's command, being replaced by his chief of staff, Gen. Bosco Ntaganda. While this created resentment among substantial parts of the CNDP, who felt strong loyalties towards Nkunda, the discontent troops were put under pressure by Kigali to still integrate into the FARDC. At the end of January 2009, an integration ceremony took place at the Rumangabo military base in Rutshuru, in the course of which CNDP soldiers symbolically changed their uniform for that of the FARDC. The peace deal between the government and the CNDP was formalized in an agreement signed on 23 March 2009 (Stearns, 2012: 33–35).

After the joint RDF-FARDC operations against the FDLR, larger, Kivus-wide FARDC operations were announced under the name of 'Kimia II' (rebaptized 'Amani Leo' in January 2010). These operations, which primarily targeted the FDLR, but also other armed groups, were managed by newly created command structures that operated in parallel to the command of the 8th (North Kivu) and 10th (South Kivu) Military Regions. Once again, a fast-track military integration process was initiated, which targeted about 5,500–6,000 CNDP troops and an equal number of troops from smaller armed groups,⁵⁸ in particular the Hutu-wing of PARECO (which had previously collaborated with the FARDC in operations against the CNDP). These troops were mixed with FARDC soldiers into new brigades after having been broken down to the company-level. The new brigades were placed under the command of the newly established operational structures, giving the military regions henceforth mostly an administrative function. Similar to *mixage*, the process did not foresee any vetting or training of the newly integrated troops (International Crisis Group, 2010b: 5).

As the government had embarked upon negotiations with the CNDP from a position of weakness, it had to make significant concessions, allowing the CNDP to dictate the terms of its integration. Consequently, the CNDP came to dominate the command of the Kimia II/Amani Leo structures,⁵⁹ while also obtaining the leadership of many of the new brigades. Some of these were composed for 50–75 per cent out

57 At the end of 2007, Nkunda controlled between 3,000–5,000 troops, almost twice the amount he had before *mixage* (Stearns, 2008: 258).

58 The real number of rapidly integrated troops has remained unclear. Some sources state that in total 18,000 troops were integrated in 2009, based on a biometric census carried out by EUSEC (International Crisis Group, 2010b: 5). However, in the course of the fieldwork, many sources expressed doubts about this number, explaining that there had been manipulation with the biometrical census in order to inflate the numbers. Furthermore, it was believed that many integrated troops had deserted, including fighters from Mai Mai groups and Rwandan recruits in the CNDP. Therefore, an estimation of 12,000 integrated troops might be more realistic. This also became clear during a new biometrical census conducted during the regimentation process in 2011, which caused the overall number of troops in the Kivus to be drastically lowered.

59 In order to simplify, this dissertation will speak henceforth of 'Amani Leo' operations only, including for the period during which they were officially named

of ex-CNDP troops, signaling the unbalanced nature of integration and the lack of geographical spreading. Moreover, the ex-CNDP was granted privileged access to lucrative areas of deployment, like those rich in natural resources or border-crossings. This enabled them to extend their influence far beyond their traditional stronghold in central Masisi, where they kept substantial arms caches and a number of non-integrated units that were not under control of the regional command structures. Furthermore, at least initially, they maintained parallel systems of taxation, administration and policing in this area (UNSC, 2009: 45–57; UNSC, 2010: 42–46). Similar to *mixage*, the CNDP's newfound dominance fostered the impression that the FARDC had integrated into the CNDP rather than the other way around, and contributed to the rapid subversion of the integration process. This outcome was not only the result of the CNDP's strength upon integration, but was also related to the dynamics surrounding the integration process. As explained by an FARDC officer quoted by Stearns (2012: 36): 'It was part appeasement, part disorganization, part greed. Kinshasa didn't want to offend the CNDP, that was sure. But we were also disorganized, we didn't follow up... And then I have to say that some made a fortune with the CNDP in some of these areas. Why complain if you are all making money?'

The overnight integration of the ex-CNDP and other groups in a rather royal manner created enormous tensions both within the military and between the military and civilians in the zones where the troops of the ex-CNDP (led by Tutsi) and the ex-PARECO (dominated by Hutu) were deployed. Given the strong Rwandophone presence among the leadership and rank and file of these groups, these tensions came to be seen predominantly through an ethnic lens, reinforcing often long-standing antagonisms between autochthones and Rwandophones. However, the core dynamic underlying these frictions was competition between previously established and newly dominant power networks, both within and outside of the military (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c: 573–574). In areas controlled by armed groups, specifically the FDLR, this power competition partly took the form of clashes under the banner of the Amani Leo operations. These operations dislodged the FDLR from numerous of their former strongholds, which triggered considerable instability. In several cases, the resulting upheaval and new space of movement for armed groups, in combination with the rise in anti-Rwandophone sentiment provoked by CNDP-integration, were capitalized upon by local political-military entrepreneurs, in particular Mai Mai leaders (International Crisis Group, 2010b: 8, 12). This had further enkindling effects on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection in large parts of the Kivus.

The resulting instability only increased when in April 2012, a part of the ex-CNDP troops integrated in the FARDC mutinied and then launched a new rebellion called *Mouvement du 23 mars* (M23, Movement of 23 March), named after the agreement signed between the government and the CNDP on 23 March 2009. While the group claimed to have initiated the rebellion in response to the government's violations of the 23 March accord, other factors played an important role too. These include renewed pressure from Kinshasa to weaken the ex-CNDP's power and deploy its troops outside of the Kivus, and internal tensions within the movement (Stearns, 2012: 39–40). Within a few months' time, and with substantial Rwandan backing, the M23 grew out to a major military threat, capturing the city of Goma in November 2012. While the movement agreed to leave Goma to start peace talks, the city's fall was a severe humiliation for the FARDC, which had proven once more unreliable and weak in battle. Furthermore, as the M23 tried to reach out to various armed groups in the eastern Congo, the government felt pressed to counterbalance the rebels' efforts by similarly trying to coopt armed groups (UNSC, 2012: 6–26). This contributed to the further fragmentation of the Kivus' rebel kaleidoscope, adding to volatility that had already intensified through the fighting between the FARDC and the M23. However, in October 2013, after the M23 had been weakened due to internal splits and diminishing Rwandan support, the FARDC managed to militarily defeat the rebellion with substantial support by a newly created Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) that operated under the UN flag. The first important military victory of the FARDC since its creation, the defeat of the M23 and the measures taken in the run-up to the final offensive raised hopes about progress in the FARDC's organization and mode of operation.⁶⁰ Yet, in the course of 2014, this optimism started to wane, pointing to the difficulties of transforming the interlocking social structures of both the FARDC and the Kivus.

3.3.3 *Post-settlement developments in the Kivus*

Years of violence and the profound fragmentation of the political-military landscape have contributed to numerous transformations of the Kivus' social order, often drawing upon developments that originated in the Mobutu era. This section analyzes how these transformations affect the Kivus' post-settlement social order, including their impact on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. This prepares the ground for the next section, which studies processes of militarization and their effects on these same dynamics within the various case study sites, which have important consequences for civilian-military interaction.

Militarization during the Congo Wars

In the course of the Congo Wars, a growing amount of youth in the Kivus served in armed forces, whether in the military of the AFDL, the FAC or the RCD, Mai Mai groups, other small-scale forces, or the Local Defense system set up by the RCD to undercut the Mai Mai. While

⁶⁰ 'Kimia II' (in 2009). Similarly, the units into which the FARDC was organized during this period (2009–2011) are called 'Amani Leo brigades'.

⁶⁰ The measures taken to reinforce the FARDC in the wake of the fall of Goma are described on pp. 226–227.

most smaller-scale forces were initially closely tied to the communities out of whose midst they were recruited, this would change in the course of the wars. One reason was that these groups became an integral part of the networks of the war economy, often controlling the exploitation and trade of natural resources and other economic activities in their spheres of influence. In order to market the extracted products, have access to financial and transport services, and obtain imported goods and military supplies, they generally linked up with networks operating at supra-local scales. Some of them, in particular Mai Mai groups, also grew links to Kinshasa, which provided them with limited supplies and organizational support as part of a proxy strategy. This was symbolically reflected in Kabila's decision to appoint the main Mai Mai leaders as superior officers in the FAC, although the latter was not operating directly in the Kivus. These growing supra-local links made that Mai Mai groups became increasingly detached from their local environment. As a result, relations with customary authorities, who had often played a pivotal role in initial mobilization, deteriorated. This was aggravated by Mai Mai groups' increasing influence over local governance, which undermined chiefs' authority (Vlassenroot and Van Acker, 2001).

Additionally, by becoming socialized into a militarized universe, as symbolized by initiation rites that partly cut them off from their previous civilian life, armed group recruits developed a new sense of identification. They also discovered that arms were a shortcut to social mobility, status and power, and started to lose respect for established figures of authority in the community and at the household level, such as the village elders and their parents (Jourdan, 2004). Similar shifts in authority, which benefited political-military entrepreneurs and strongmen, could be observed in the RCD-held areas, which were mostly in and around the urban centers and main axes. While the RCD was constituted as a politico-military movement, the military branch was more powerful than the political branch, leading military rationalities to heavily shape the RCD's overall approach to governance. One way in which this was expressed was its short-term focus on revenue generation, both in order to serve the war effort and a desire for enrichment among some of its leaders, causing it to engage only minimally in public service provision (Tull, 2005: 132–133).

The political-economic transformations described in the previous drove and were driven by wider social changes. Crucially, the mobilization of armed groups along ethnic lines further reinforced the salience of ethnic identification. Since these groups exercised economic control and provided a measure of protection, they became crucial gateways to survival and social mobility. As observed by Vlassenroot (2004: 20–21): 'this growing interconnection between ethnicity and economic survival by local armed groups has not only led to a strong demarcation of (physical and "imagined") boundaries between previously coexisting communities, the allegiance to this violent enterprise has also become an important element in the definition of one's individual political and social position.' This highlights that the war era did not only lead to changes in the social relations between communities, but also fostered social transformations *within* them. These developments contributed to the emergence of a generalized 'crisis of authority' (Vlassenroot, 2004: 53), which was to a large extent the result of the disintegration of established mechanisms of economic, political and social regulation and cohesion. In many cases, violence emerged as the alternative, drawing upon shifts towards more coercive and opportunistic forms of revenue generation and social interaction that had already been introduced by *Système-D* in the Mobutu era. As this dissertation demonstrates, these processes of militarization have not been turned back in the post-settlement era, but have become enduring features of social life in the Kivus, which has profound consequences for civilian-military interaction.

The militarization of local governance

During the transition, local administrative structures, the majority of which had persisted during the wars, but had functioned under rebel rule, were technically reinserted into the central state fold. While in some cases, incumbent administrators were replaced by government appointees, in others, local power networks continued to determine appointments. This highlights the mixed successes of the efforts to reinstate central control over the local administration, including over its extractive functions. As observed by Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2008: 49), the independent revenue base that militarized political-economic complexes had developed in the course of the wars inhibited encroachment on what were essentially partly autonomous social suborders. In the absence of strong, centrally controlled instruments of coercion, and under the influence of engrained rationalities of power projection, Kinshasa mostly resorted to accommodating and coopting the local elites that governed these suborders, who were often closely linked to parallel networks within the army. In this manner, patterns of intermediary rule that had characterized government since the colonial era were largely reproduced (Raeymaekers, 2007: 171–172).

There were also discontinuities with the pre-war situation, notably the extent to which local power struggles became militarized (Vlassenroot and Romkema, 2007: 10). In certain areas, the confrontation between existing power networks and new administrators prompted disputants to seek coalitions with wielders of force. This could be non-integrated remnants of war-era rebel structures, but given the gradual expansion of FARDC deployment, were increasingly regular army units. Some of these units maintained or developed close ties to competing civilian factions in their areas of deployment. This often worked against the extension of central state authority, as it allowed semi-autonomous local power networks to instrumentalize the FARDC to reinforce their position (Raeymaekers, 2007: 163). This dynamic was particularly pronounced in border zones such as the Grand Nord, but could also be found in areas that had historically been weakly controlled by the political center. These included certain *chefferies* and far-flung rural zones with a high degree of de facto autonomy, like the *Hauts Plateaux* mountains. Areas occupied by domestic or foreign rebel groups also largely escaped from central state control, although local authorities and army commanders often developed intricate patterns of accommodation and de facto power-

sharing with these non-state wielders of force. Such rebel-dominated power complexes emerged for instance in central Masisi (North Kivu), firmly controlled by the CNDP, or the *chefferie* of the Bafuliru in Lemera (South Kivu), partly under the control of the FDLR. In other areas, civilian authorities with close links to power networks in Kinshasa did manage to reinforce their influence, usually as an (sometimes temporary) result of power struggles that involved the deployment of new FARDC units (Vlassenroot, 2008: 14). In general, the outcomes of the various local power struggles unleashed by the transition were highly uneven across the Kivus, due to both the fragmented nature of the political-military environment and the heterogeneity of the involved power complexes. This heterogeneity and fragmentation also made that the outcomes of these initial power struggles failed to crystallize, reflecting the intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection.

Amongst other reasons, the resulting fluidity and volatility have hampered the reinforcement of the capacities and reach of the administration. Especially in far-flung rural areas, the degree of penetration of state agencies has remained weak. Lower-level customary authorities (*chefs de localit , chefs de groupement*)⁶¹ are the main sources of civilian governance in such zones, although where present, the *chef de poste* may also be an important authority. While certain *bami* (customary chiefs) lost in power during the wars to the advantage of military strongmen, and some comprised their position by collaborating with the RCD, overall, their power and legitimacy have remained significant. Many *bami* have built up strong business networks and fostered links to Kinshasa, and these supra-local networks reinforce their local position of power. In a context of rapidly fluctuating power relations and rotating politico-administrative officials, both higher and lower-level customary chiefs remain a constant and relatively predictable source of governance. Furthermore, as symbols of their community, seen to incarnate and guard collective modes of identification and wellbeing, their status has remained high, specifically in the context of ethnic tensions. Therefore, even if certain chiefs rule in an arbitrary, erratic and sometimes despotic manner, engaging in abusive practices like imposing illegal fines and forced labor, their legitimacy is commonly still higher than that of most politico-administrative authorities (Namegabe, 2005).

Many chiefs also exercise justice and order functions that go beyond what is legally authorized. One reason for this is that police presence continues to be scarce and relatively ineffective, as the police do not have sufficient personnel and resources to properly carry out their work, lacking arms, means of transportation, and communication equipment. Furthermore, similar to other state agents, the police often prioritize revenue generation to the adequate execution of professional duties, both as a result of negligible wages and the pressures of the *rapportage* system (Eriksson Baaz and Olsson, 2011; International Crisis Group, 2006b: 5–6). The state-led justice system is equally ill-resourced and ineffective, its workings being similarly strongly shaped by the rationalities of protection and revenue generation. Furthermore, state-led justice is little accessible, not only in the sense of physical proximity (at least in the rural areas), but also as a result of the elevated costs, the difficulty of the procedures, especially for the lower educated, uncertain outcomes due to interference and corruption, and the length of the process. Furthermore, the legitimacy of the justice apparatus is uneven, as its image has been tainted by a long history of power abuse and the instrumentalization of justice for particularistic interests. Consequently, people often avoid state-led justice, addressing customary chiefs with matters not falling under customary jurisdiction. The latter is formally limited to smaller-scale land disputes, small infractions like non repaid debts, and disputes surrounding family issues such as inheritance, dowry and divorce (Amnesty International, 2011; Vlassenroot and Romkema, 2007: 25–27; Rubbers and Gallez, 2012). In other cases, as will be further explained below,⁶² disputants may address the military or other armed actors to ‘resolve’ conflicts, which contributes to the militarization of local governance.

The militarization of local governance is also fostered by constant competition between local authorities, who are generally caught in a maelstrom of conflicts related to the boundaries of their authority and competition for revenue-generation opportunities, although status and professional identification often also play a role. Combined with the problems of low official salaries, limited funding for day-to-day tasks, and the pressures of the *rapportage* system, such competition feeds into practices characterized by arbitrariness and power abuse. As a result, the levying of illegal taxes and fines, extortion, unlawful arrests and intimidation are omnipresent practices among local authorities (Vlassenroot and Romkema, 2007: 17–22). What facilitates such behavior is the extent to which the administration has remained de facto decentralized. Control from the center is tenuous, not only due to resistance against its power, but also because mechanisms of monitoring and disciplining are weak, as hampered by deficient infrastructure and communications. This causes local authorities to have considerable leeway in the exercise of their functions, which lowers the threshold for power abuse and involvement in illicit economic activities. The latter often occurs under the protection of armed actors, reflecting the militarization of the economy.

The militarization of the economy

During the wars, rampant insecurity in the rural areas and the large-scale destruction of economic assets and infrastructure altered livelihood strategies. While already strongly diminished manufacturing capacity largely disappeared, the rural population, largely cut off from the cities, increasingly engaged in (semi)subsistence farming and artisanal mining. However, the profits of mining accrued predominantly to militarized political-economic networks, which controlled large parts of the economy, although in highly uneven

61 For the composition of the system of local administration see Figure 8 on p. 61.

62 Military interventions in the processing of disputes between civilians are analyzed in Chapter 6, pp. 179-182.

manners (Vlassenroot, 2004: 54–55). Both state and non-state armed actors continue to play an important role in the Kivus' post-settlement economic landscape, although in many cases, their involvement is indirect rather than direct. This implies that it runs via protection mechanisms, influence peddling and covert forms of coercion, rather than open violence. At the same time, such forms of coercion are often exercised in collaboration with and on behalf of civilian actors. Indeed, a substantial part of politicians, administrators, customary chiefs and economic operators solicit armed actors to facilitate coercive and illicit revenue-generation methods.

One mechanism through which this occurs is authorities' involvement in managing and supporting rebel groups, militias, or gangs.⁶³ It is not uncommon for members of parliament and *bami* to sponsor armed groups and local defense forces, while *chefs de quartier* (lower level urban authorities) may have a couple of men at their service who police the area, collect (illegal) fees on their behalf and rough up adversaries. A member of a civil society organization in Uvira explained it as follows: 'Everyone uses militias here. The MPs, the ministers, the customary chiefs, even the *chef de quartier*. They collect taxes here in the quarter, and we know he stores arms in his house. And he collaborates to keep the *maison de tolerance* [brothel]'.⁶⁴ In a village in the *groupement* of Binza (Rutshuru), a journalist working for a local radio station commented: 'The local authorities authorize these people [militia members]. They are their machines for harassing the population [*machines de travail pour tracasser la population civile*]. The notables, the *chef de localité*, the *chefs de quartier*, they all have their militia. When these people pillage they always give the profits [*rapport*] to their boss'.⁶⁵ However, civilian authorities also resort to extortion without the direct involvement of armed actors. For instance, the *mwami* of the Bavira puts up roadblocks in his *chefferie* jointly with the ANR (civilian intelligence services), which are not manned by armed actors.⁶⁶ Furthermore, for those knowing how to manipulate it, the administrative apparatus can be a more effective tool of coercion than militias. The invention of infractions, the invalidation of licenses, the denial of permits, endless delays in administrative decisions, the refusal to issue crucial documents: all of this forms a major source of coercive power (and income) for officials, and by implication for those having ties to public servants, allowing them to instrumentalize these relations to put their adversaries under pressure.

Coercion, both for economic and other purposes, is not only employed by elite actors. The worryingly high levels of both urban and rural banditry in the Kivus, a large part of which is believed to be committed by gangs operating independently from, but often being protected by the in/security services and armed groups, indicate that strategies of violent accumulation are initiated and executed by a broad spectrum of social agents. Especially among marginalized youth, the un- and underemployed and sometimes the demobilized, for whom alternative channels of revenue generation and social mobility may be difficult to access, violent appropriation has become an important means of gaining income, status, and access to the symbols of consumer society (cf. Jourdan, 2004). As a member of the *comité des sages* (committee of the wise) in Uvira explained concerning the perpetrators of banditry: 'these are youngsters who want to enrich themselves fast. It is a lifestyle. They have shops and cars. They are *coupeurs de route* [those engaging in flash ambushes/highway robbery] (...). This is a new form of insecurity that is difficult to master, because it are not organized groups. There is sometimes also the complicity of the military (...). The new generation respects neither the authorities nor the notables, but they want to belong to those who have succeeded'.⁶⁷ A member of a youth organization in Rutshuru had a similar analysis: 'The mentality of people has changed because of the war. Everyone was armed here in Rutshuru and the schools were destroyed. Now it is difficult to change the mentality of the youth. Everyone here can transform into an FDLR'.⁶⁸ They want money but they don't want to work for it.⁶⁹ While such statements should be carefully read, in particular in relation to the ascribed reasons for youth to become involved in violent activities, they do indicate that engagement in violent forms of accumulation is not limited to the FARDC and armed groups. Nevertheless, even when not directly initiating them, the FARDC often plays a crucial role in such activities by protecting or facilitating them, which reinforces its position of dominance in the Kivus' social order.

3.3.4 Militarization and civilian-military interaction in the case study areas

Having described the general features of militarization in the post-settlement era, it will now be analyzed how these processes have played out in the areas that are part of the cases selected for this study, in particular their impact on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. Specific attention will be paid to the effects of the 2009–2011 Amani Leo operations, as these had far-reaching consequences

63 For example, a 2011 Group of Experts report lists the territorial administrator of Walikale as supporting the Mai Mai Cheka/Nduma Defence for Congo (UNSC, 2011: 64); a national deputy as being involved in supporting the Mai Mai Yakotumba (idem: 56); and a provincial deputy of the North Kivu assembly as closely linked to the Mai Mai Muhamba in Lubero (idem: 76).

64 Interview with civil society member, Uvira, 13.03.2010.

65 Interview with journalist of community radio station, *groupement* of Binza, 02.04.2010.

66 The *mwami* of the Bavira and the ANR (intelligence service) jointly put up roadblocks around the town of Uvira. On 26.01.2011, I passed the one at Kigaja, on the Uvira-Hwewe axis running into the *Moyens Plateaux* (Kirungu trajectory), while traders encountered in Hwewe reported there to be a second roadblock on the Kafinda trajectory.

67 Interview with member of *comité des sages* of Uvira, 15.11.2010.

68 It was observed in Rutshuru (at least in the *groupements* of Binza and Busanza), that 'FDLR' is used as a generic term for armed actors of Hutu origins (with the majority of the population and armed group members in this area being Hutu), regardless the group they belong to.

69 Interview with member of youth organization, Nyamilima, 27.01.2012.

for civilian-military interaction as it unfolded at the time of the fieldwork. Understanding these consequences does not only require in-depth knowledge of the case study areas, but also of the involved military units. Consequently, this section also provides insights into the basic features of the studied military units. Since the presented analysis rests upon a synthesis of many different sources contacted during the fieldwork, the information is not attributed to individual interlocutors, unless it was obtained from other sources than the fieldwork.

Fizi territory: Deeply rooted, but differentiated discourses of autochthony and autodéfense

Several of the cases selected for this study are located in parts of the territory of Fizi (see Map 3), including the sector of Mutambala (around Baraka), the southern part of Ngandja sector (around the goldmines of Misisi), and a part of Lulenge sector (between Lulimba and Kilembwe). Due to a range of historical developments, negative representations of government troops have become deeply inscribed in Fizi's structures of signification. When government forces start behaving badly, as occurred with the Amani Leo operations, such negative representations come to inform and are activated by negative evaluations.⁷⁰ This mechanism is reinforced where antagonistic forms of ethnic identification are simultaneously at play. An example are the mutually negative representations held by the Babembe (the majority group in Fizi who define themselves as 'autochthones') and the Banyamulenge (a Tutsi, hence Rwandophone group that is numerically smaller in Fizi, and lives in the *Hauts* and a part of the *Moyens Plateaux*, at the intersection of Fizi, Mwenga and Uvira territories). The interplay between negative representations of both government troops and ethnically defined out-groups is one of the main reasons why the arrival of ill-behaving Rwandophone FARDC troops in 2009 (including the 651st and 652nd brigades which are part of case studies #10, #11 and #12), had such strong effects on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, and was seized upon by political-military entrepreneurs linked to the Mai Mai to reinforce their support.

Shortly after independence in 1960, both Uvira and Fizi were rocked by revolutionary fervor, being the cradle of the Simba rebellion that swept the eastern Congo. While the insurgency was framed in discourses of nationalism and anti-imperialism, when arriving at the *Hauts Plateaux*, rebel activity became increasingly informed by local conflicts. The rebels' strategy to supply themselves with the Banyamulenge's cattle prompted Banyamulenge militias to rally to the side of the government army, fighting against insurgents of mostly Bafuliiru, Babembe and Bavira origins (Vlassenroot, 2002a). These and other local agendas contributed to the rebellion's rapidly losing momentum in the face of foreign-supported counter-insurgency efforts that heavily drew on mercenary deployment. By the end of 1966, and despite the temporary support of a small group of Cuban revolutionaries led by Che Guevara based in Kibamba (Fizi), the Simba insurgency had lost control over most of Fizi and Uvira. Disappointed with the turn of events, some of the rebellion's leaders, including a certain Laurent-Désiré Kabila, attempted to revive the rebellion, returning to Fizi from exile in Tanzania in 1967.⁷¹ When arriving in the Lulenge sector of Fizi, Kabila developed his own *maquis*, the pillars of which were the *Parti de la révolution populaire* (PRP, Party of the Popular Revolution) and its armed branch. This revolutionary organization would stay headquartered in Hewa Bora (Lulenge sector) up to 1984 (Cosma, 1997).

Nearly two decades of armed struggle by Kabila's PRP left an indelible mark on Fizi, leading to the total militarization of the zone. In need of popular support, Kabila mobilized and politically educated a large part of the population, causing an estimated 60–65 percent to receive at least basic military training. Furthermore, the massive deployment of the Zairian military around the area controlled by Kabila, the so-called *Zone rouge* (Red Zone), led political-administrative authorities and civil law in Fizi to become de facto subordinated to military power and law. The economy became to a certain extent militarized too, as many people got involved in the trade in ivory and gold that sustained Kabila's *maquis* and gave it access to arms and ammunitions, which were traded with FAZ officers (Cosma, 1997: 115–118). The interactions with the FAZ around the *Zone rouge* shaped representations of the government forces as deeply corrupt and brutal. This fed into the discourses of resistance against the central government employed by the PRP *maquis*, which had been pioneered by the Simba rebellion. These discourses resonated with and reinforced self-perceptions of the Babembe as a people that has always resisted domination, whether from the Arab-Swahili traders in the 19th century, the Belgian colonizers, or the Congolese government in distant Kinshasa (Verweijen, forthcoming b). Thus, even while the PRP did not hesitate to cooperate commercially with the FAZ, Kabila justified his violent activities by pointing to the rotten nature of the Zairian government. That this hostility was perceived to be mutual is well captured by the still widely circulating story that Mobutu once made the statement that 'Zaire minus Fizi equals Zaire', which many Babembe recount today as evidence for the marginal status of their territory during the Second Republic.⁷² In the eyes of some, this marginalization has continued in the current political order, which would justify taking up arms against the government. This is one of the reasons for the significant, albeit fluctuating and unevenly spread popular support for the main Mai Mai group operating in Fizi today, the Mai Mai Yakotumba. This group frames their struggle as one against both 'Rwandophone invaders' and the government in Kinshasa.

⁷⁰ The difference between on the one hand, representations, inscribed in relatively stable discourses and on the other hand, evaluations, as context-based assessments, was explained in Chapter 2, p. 40.

⁷¹ Kabila's *maquis* in Fizi was mentioned earlier on pp. 69–70.

⁷² The source of this statement could not be determined with certitude. However, regardless whether and when it was pronounced, the fact that this story widely circulates in Fizi is highly significant, illustrating how strongly discourses of resistance against the government have become inscribed in local structures of signification.

Representations of the Babembe as a brave people taking up arms to defend their land and freedom whenever needed were further reinforced during the two Congo Wars, which saw a significant mobilization of Mai Mai in Fizi. One of the key tropes in the Mai Mai's mobilizing discourses was the notion of *autodéfense* (self-defense), which strongly resonates with ideas of *autoprise en charge* (taking-care-of-oneself) undergirding the social phenomenon of *débrouillardise* that emerged in the Mobutu era (Verweijen, forthcoming b). *Autoprise en charge* reflects the general idea that where the state fails to cater for its citizens, the latter have to provide for and take responsibility themselves. This logic stimulated self-organization in many domains of public service provision, like healthcare and education, where church and community-based organizations increasingly filled the void left by the state (de Villers et al., 2002). The notion of *autodéfense* projected these ideas onto the domain of security, reflecting the conviction that when the state cannot or does not want to secure its citizens, communities are entitled to develop their own mechanisms of defense. However self-defense by the Mai Mai generally meant communal defense on an ethnic basis, reflecting how *autodéfense* merged with discourses of autochthony.⁷³ This came to aggravate conflicts with the Banyamulenge, who saw the 'self-defense' militias of the Babembe as having primarily offensive purposes. During both the First and the Second Congo War, the Banyamulenge fought on the side of the Rwanda-backed insurgent forces that most Mai Mai resisted, in particular the AFDL and the RCD. In the eyes of the Babembe, this proved what they had claimed for a long time: that the Banyamulenge were not Congolese citizens but immigrants from Rwanda who had no rights to Congolese citizenship, and tried to forcefully occupy their ancestral lands. The resulting distrust was exacerbated by multiple ethnically targeted massacres that took place during the (run up to the) wars. One of the worst atrocities was the killing of around 800 mostly Bembe civilians between 30 December 1998 and 2 January 1999 in the village of Makobola, the main perpetrators of which were Tutsi-dominated RCD and Rwandan army troops.⁷⁴

Distrust and animosities towards the Banyamulenge and the government fostered reluctance among the Mai Mai to participate in the *brassage* process (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013a). The departure of Mai Mai groups, so it was feared, would pave the way for the Banyamulenge to impose themselves on the Babembe. The fact that certain Banyamulenge armed factions also refused to send their troops to *brassage* (as further explained below) and the Mai Mai's conviction that the FARDC was strongly dominated by Rwandophones, only reinforced these fears. The idea that there was an ongoing need for *autodéfense* was further corroborated by the ill behavior of the new military and its uneven territorial coverage, leaving vast zones with only sparse deployment. These feelings of fear were capitalized upon by political-military elites, including Dunia Lwendama Dewilo, the main commander of the Fizi Mai Mai during the Second Congo War. Dunia believed that both the Mai Mai and he himself stood little to gain from participating in the military integration process. This attitude was widely shared, and led eventually to the formation of the Mai Mai Yakotumba in 2007, a group that has its core base of support in the Ngandja and Mutambala sectors of Fizi.⁷⁵

While the Mai Mai Yakotumba heavily draw upon anti-Banyamulenge and anti-government discourses, their creation was also the result of a growing schism between the political-military elite from the Lulenge sector and that of Ngandja and Mutambala. When coming to power with the AFDL in 1997, Laurent-Désiré Kabila appointed a number of his old *maquis* comrades to important positions in the in/security apparatus, including the Generals Madoamadoa, Lwetcha and Sikatenda, all natives of Lulenge, where Hewa Bora is located. These contacts helped Babembe from Lulenge to gain political prominence in the post-settlement era. The *Patriotes résistants Mai-Mai* (PRM, Resistant Patriots Mai Mai) political party, which was founded at the start of the transition to represent the Fizi and other Mai Mai groups, was dominated by politicians from Lulenge. The latter came to occupy all high-level national political positions granted to the PRM, including a ministerial post. This unequal access was mirrored in the military domain. While generals like Madoamadoa obtained important positions, Dunia was not appointed to an active function in the FARDC. This reinforced historically rooted rifts between the different sectors of Fizi, which are reflected in divergent socio-economic conditions and levels of political representation.⁷⁶ These differences have also caused local variations in the salience of autochthony discourses. Given that Babembe in the Lulenge sector supported the pro-government PRM, and were not favorably disposed towards the new Mai Mai mobilization, they did not draw as strongly on anti-Banyamulenge discourses for rallying political support as politico-military entrepreneurs in Ngandja and Mutambala.

Strong sympathies for the Mai Mai in these two sectors caused the first integrated troops of the FARDC that were deployed to Fizi, the 29th Integrated Brigade (IB) (case #6), to be ill received and distrusted upon their arrival in 2007. However, years of positive interactions made that the 29th IB eventually came to be evaluated in a positive manner. This was largely a result of its relatively good conduct and peaceful cohabitation with the Mai Mai, which also translated into economic collaboration.⁷⁷ Moreover, the staff of this brigade came predominantly from the west of the Congo, having an unambiguous status as 'autochthones' in an environment rife with anti-

73 The origins and signification of autochthony in the Kivus were described on pp. 60-62.

74 The worst massacres of Babembe are described in UNOHCHR, 2010: 135, 177-180, 183.

75 The Mai Mai Yakotumba also have significant support in the Tanganyika sector, but the main commander there (up to 2015 Bwasakala) used to operate in a quasi-autonomous manner. Furthermore, most of the recruits are from the Tanganyika sector, causing the group to be heavily shaped by dynamics specific to this area. Therefore, it differs from the core group of the Mai Mai Yakotumba, with whom it nevertheless closely cooperates.

76 The differences between the various sectors of Fizi partly result from unequal access to the socio-economic opportunities created by the colonizers and missionary-initiated education, causing the inhabitants of certain parts to gain the reputation of 'intellectuals', and those in other areas, like Ngandja, more of 'warriors'. Interview with civil society activist, Uvira, 10.04.2014.

77 The local socio-economic embedding of the 29th IB in Fizi is further analyzed on pp. 296-297.

Rwandophone discourse. However, at the end of 2009, the relative stability enabled by the deployment of the 29th IB was disrupted, when fighting broke out with the Mai Mai. Despite these tensions, the 29th, which was now placed under the command of the 64th sector of the Amani Leo operations, would continue to display relatively good conduct towards civilians. Important reasons for this were the quality of the command of the 64th sector, and the fact that the troops of the 29th IB had been strongly socialized into behaving well towards the population, having developed norms and discourses that did not change overnight. This was further evidenced when the brigade was deployed to the Misisi goldmines in the Ngandja sector of Fizi (case #7) at the start of 2010, where it continued to be evaluated in relatively positive terms by the population, despite its growing involvement in business activities.

The evaluations of the 29th sharply contrast with those of the Amani Leo troops that arrived in Fizi in 2009, which were dominated by Rwandophones (e.g., 651st and 652nd brigade). The second biggest armed group that integrated into the FARDC in 2009 after the CNDP was the Hutu-wing of PARECO, which had in part been formed to fight the CNDP (Stearns, 2013a: 26–27). A part of the ex-PARECO troops, most of whom originated from North Kivu (Masisi and Rutshuru territories), were sent to the 65th sector in Fizi, where they dominated both the sector command and the three brigades that it encompassed. These troops were charged with conducting military operations against all armed groups in Fizi, including the Mai Mai Yakotumba. This did not only form a direct threat to this group, but also its wider civilian constituency. In response, pro-Mai Mai political-military entrepreneurs started to foment antagonism towards the newly arrived FARDC troops among the population, drawing on discourses of autochthony and resistance against the government.⁷⁸ For example, in their political communications, the Mai Mai agitated against ‘the recognition of foreign troops in the FARDC instead of Congolese troops’ leading them to recommend that ‘the foreign troops camouflaged in the FARDC (CNDP, FDLR)... return to their Country of origin’ (Mai Mai Reformé/Groupe Alleluia/Yakotumba, 2011). The abysmal conduct of some of these brigades, in particular the 651st when deployed in the gold mining area of Misisi (case #10), only reinforced these negative attitudes, confirming existing prejudices towards Rwandophones.

The hostile sentiments towards Rwandophones in the FARDC also came to affect the Babembe’s attitudes towards the Banyamulenge, although the latter had no prior links to the newly deployed troops, who were predominantly Hutu from North Kivu. However, by placing them in the same negatively framed out-group category of the ‘Rwandophone Other’, the suspicion was fostered that the Banyamulenge tried to manipulate their ‘Rwandophone brothers’ in the FARDC for their own interests. In this manner, the local conflict between Babembe and Banyamulenge became inscribed in wider national and regional conflict narratives centering on the cleavages between Kinshasa and the CNDP and Kinshasa and Kigali. The resulting belief in the close links between on the one hand, Rwandophone FARDC troops, and on the other hand, the Banyamulenge, colored readings of the FARDC’s practices, including its interventions in local governance and disputes, which were seen to systematically favor the Banyamulenge. This perceived lack of neutrality became an enkindling factor in local conflict dynamics, and set in motion a spiral of mutual distrust and negative interactions between the Bembe population and Rwandophone FARDC troops. The result was a steady deterioration of the conduct of FARDC staff, who came to see in every civilian a Mai Mai fighter or collaborator.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, the dynamics in the Lulenge sector, where the Mai Mai Yakotumba have only a limited support base, were very different. About a year after the arrival of new Amani Leo brigades in 2009, the eastern part of this area came under the control of the 642nd brigade (case #9). This brigade was composed of the ex-112th brigade, which consisted predominantly of Banyamulenge troops previously deployed on the *Hauts Plateaux*, mixed with a handful of members of a Banyamulenge rebel group and local Fuliiru and Nyindu Mai Mai, who had integrated the FARDC in 2009 (see the next section). Despite the strong Rwandophone presence, anti-Rwandophone framings played a less pronounced role in evaluations of these FARDC troops than in those of the Amani Leo brigades in other parts of Fizi. Important reasons for this are the overall less important role of anti-Banyamulenge discourses among Babembe in the Lulenge sector and the fact that this brigade was deployed also in parts inhabited by other groups than the Babembe.⁸⁰ Furthermore, the general conduct of the 642nd was comparatively better than that of the brigades in the 65th sector, which shows that negative representations (in this case of Rwandophones) tend to be more salient when linked to direct negative experiences with the FARDC.

In 2011, civilian-military dynamics in Fizi would substantially change as a result of a restructuring process that entailed the breaking up of the Amani Leo brigades and their mixing into new, 1200-strong units, called regiments.⁸¹ The 642nd brigade was to a large extent versed into the 714th regiment, which was initially deployed to the Misisi goldmines (case #14). Its conduct there, including its involvement in the gold sector, displayed significant differences to that of its predecessor units (the ex-29th IB, case #7 and the 651st, case #10). In contrast to those other brigades, the unit tried to reduce rather than reinforce its involvement in the gold sector, which was strongly appreciated by civilians. Therefore, despite the significant presence of Rwandophones, overall evaluations were not negative.

The final case study in Fizi, the 712th regiment deployed to the Baraka area (case #13), shows an opposite picture. This regiment was

78 The ‘Rwandan infiltration hypothesis’ concerns the belief that the Congolese military is infiltrated by Rwandan troops. See also p. 114.

79 How this downward spiral culminated in large-scale abuses is described on pp. 306–307.

80 The 642nd brigade also operated in a part of Ngandja inhabited mostly by Bafuliiru and in the small stretch of Maniema (Kabeya) between Ngandja and Lulenge that is inhabited by the Babuyu, who have no history of frictions with the Banyamulenge.

81 The regimentation process is further analyzed on pp. 225–226.

created by a merger of on the one hand, the well-behaved 29th IB that had controlled this area between 2007 and 2010 (case #7) and on the other hand, an ill-behaving Amani Leo brigade of the 65th sector that had been deployed to various parts of Fizi (including on the *Hauts Plateaux*, as case #12) for the Amani Leo operations. These two components became involved in an internal power struggle that was increasingly framed in the terms of the autochthon/Rwandophone cleavage. This strongly affected its relations to civilians, both as it led to a deterioration of its conduct and as pro-Mai Mai circles in the Mutambala sector came to ascribe this degeneration to the 'Rwandophone domination' of the regiment, thereby mirroring the discourses employed by the opposing faction in the regiment itself.

To conclude, the various case studies in Fizi vividly illustrate how place-specific social structures that have evolved over the *longue durée* shape civilian-military interaction, including by setting the parameters for the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. In Fizi, structures of signification that inform discourses of *autodéfense*, autochthony, and resistance towards the central government have become intertwined with militarized structures of domination underpinning the power of political-economic networks that encompass the Mai Mai. This configuration of structures shapes the role of the government forces in locally specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, including their interaction with civilians. This would seem evidenced by the fact that local variations in these structures (notably differences between Lulenge, Ngandja and Mutambala sectors) generally coincide with differences in civilian-military interaction, as partly caused by the diverging salience of autochthony discourses. However, the case studies in Fizi also show that the influence of these discourses, as part of structures of signification, is by no means linear, as they always produce effects in interaction with other factors, in particular the specific features and practices of the military units involved. For example, it was not only the Rwandophone status of troops in the 65th sector that caused them to be negatively evaluated by the population of Fizi, but also their ill conduct and the threat that they posed to dominant power networks. These interaction effects highlight the need for careful analysis in the quest for gaining an understanding of civilian-military interaction, urging skepticism towards explanations that ascribe too much causal weight to forms of ethnic identification as a stand-alone factor.

The Hauts Plateaux: distrust towards the government and internal strife

As the example of Fizi shows, the representations of and social roles surrounding the military in a specific place, which shape civilian-military interaction, are a product of place-specific histories. The effects of such histories are also evident in the *Hauts Plateaux* area, which encompasses parts of Fizi, Uvira, and Mwenga territory. This isolated zone is inhabited in majority by Banyamulenge, but also by Bafuliuru, Banyindu, Babembe, Barega and Batwa. Since colonial times, it has largely been governed in a semi-autonomous manner, with a limited presence of politico-administrative authorities and in/security agencies from outside the area. Rather, public authority has predominantly been exercised by customary chiefs and councils of notables and elders, in the post-independence era increasingly complemented by religious leaders and educated elites. These authority structures have been relatively fragmented, as distances on the *Plateaux* are substantial and there is no road network, causing each area to have its own power configuration. Furthermore, the Banyamulenge have never had a paramount ruler, and political leaders able to unite the community, like the national parliamentarian Frédéric Muhoza Gisaro in the 1970s, have been rare. The Congo Wars did not introduce a fundamental break in these patterns of authority, although a new breed of political-military entrepreneurs became increasingly influential, to the detriment of customary authorities and elders (Vlassenroot, 2002a; 2013).

During the First Congo War, the Banyamulenge threw their full weight behind the AFDL insurgency, lured by the prospects of emancipation, social mobility and an unambiguous recognition of their rights to Congolese citizenship (Vlassenroot, 2002a). However, a substantial number of Banyamulenge became dissatisfied with Rwanda's ongoing meddling in the regime that issued from the AFDL insurgency, while also feeling belittled by its refusal to grant them positions of responsibility. It was in this context that the *Forces républicaines fédéralistes* (FRF, Federalist Republican Forces) were founded in 1998 as an underground political party that advocated an independent course from Kigali. The FRF soon became the foremost platform for Banyamulenge resistance against the RCD, the Rwanda-dominated rebellion that broke out in the same year. In 2002, the FRF also became a military movement, when it supported Pacifique Masunzu, a dissident Banyamulenge commander serving previously in the armed branch of the RCD, in his struggle against the RCD and the Rwandan military. At the start of the transition (2003), this anti-RCD group started to fall apart into a faction that rallied around Masunzu, who was closely linked to the presidential circle, and a group of dissidents, who would later found a new version of the FRF constituted as a politico-military movement. This split was caused by a variety of factors, including the personal ambitions of political-military leaders, clan-politics and divergent political visions (Verweijen and Vlassenroot, 2015).

However, initially, the *Plateaux* came under the exclusive control of Masunzu's troops, an all-Banyamulenge brigade that in 2003/2004 was designated the 112th brigade of the FARDC (case #8). At the same time, political leaders linked to Masunzu were appointed to the most important administrative positions in the area.⁸² In part due to his good connections with the presidential circle, Masunzu obtained the rank of general in 2005, and was made ad interim commander of the 10th Military Region (South Kivu) in 2007. This allowed him

⁸² The civilian authorities alleged to have been handpicked by Masunzu include the *chef de poste* of Minembwe, the highest administrative authority in this zone, and the chief of the ANR (intelligence service). The most powerful customary chief in the Minembwe area at the time of the fieldwork, the *chef de localité* of Kivumu, was also said to be loyal to Masunzu.

to continue to exercise significant political and military influence over his stronghold on the *Plateaux*. The latter remained under the control of the 112th, which never went to *brassage*, and therefore continued to exist entirely out of locally recruited Banyamulenge troops. While the stated reason for the 112th's refusal to participate in *brassage* was their ongoing struggle against the dissident factions that would come to form the restyled FRF in 2007, what also played a role was that Masunzu wished to keep this brigade as a personal tool for consolidating his power on the *Plateaux*. The 112th did not only exercise military control, but also backed the power of the pro-Masunzu civilian authorities. Together, these groups formed a type of political-military ruling elite that had significant influence over the local economy, including the artisanal gold mines located on the *Plateaux*. However, this elite's control became increasingly restricted to the Minembwe area, as other parts of the *Plateaux* evolved into strongholds of the FRF. Partly as a means of rallying support, this rebel group adopted an increasingly political profile, pursuing the creation of a *territoire* on the *Plateaux* as primary political goal. Such an administrative unit would relieve the Banyamulenge from the duty to pay tribute to the chiefs of other communities, which was a result of them having been denied a *chefferie* of their own in the colonial era. Furthermore, it would reinforce their participation in local governance, and enhance their chances for provincial and national political representation, since a *territoire* is also an electoral circumscription (Verweijen and Vlassenroot, 2015).

In October 2007, after a period of intense fighting between the FRF and the 112th brigade, President Kabila sent Munyamulenge Gen. Mustafa Kayoyo, then commander of the Kitona base in Bas Congo, as a special emissary to mediate between the two factions. Threading a careful diplomatic path, Mustafa managed to convince the belligerents to sign a ceasefire agreement, which included an arrangement on the division of forces. Consequently, the 112th was confined to the Minembwe area, while the FRF was given control of the sectors of Kamombo and Mibunda, with a tampon zone of 10–15 kilometers separating the two forces.⁸³ While occasionally disrupted, this agreement held for approximately two years, until the start of the Amani Leo operations at the end of 2009. This period of relative stability allowed the FRF to reinforce its position and establish significant political, economic and military control within its sphere of influence, as reflected in the introduction of an elaborate system of market, mining and road taxes. While its control was partly based on coercion, the FRF gradually obtained a degree of legitimacy among relatively wide layers of the Banyamulenge population in its stronghold. One of the factors contributing to this outcome was that it managed to capitalize upon the growing resentment among the Banyamulenge towards the Kabila government, perceived to deliberately perpetuate the underdevelopment of the *Plateaux* and the political exclusion of the Banyamulenge.

In July 2009, the FARDC hierarchy initiated an awareness raising campaign among the FRF and some of the Fuliiru and Nyindu Mai Mai forces operating in the area close to Minembwe, trying to convince them to come out of the bush. This mission was relatively successful, leading a group of around 385⁸⁴ Mai Mai and approximately 58 FRF elements to integrate into the FARDC. Most of these combatants were mixed together with the 112th brigade into a newly formed Amani Leo brigade, the 642nd, which was headquartered in Minembwe (figuring in case #9, after their displacement in 2010 to the eastern part of Lulenge). On 24 November 2009, this brigade attacked the FRF at Kamombo, which ended in failure. An important reason for this disappointing performance were the close relations between the Banyamulenge in the government forces and those in the FRF, leading to leaks of information and a marked reluctance to kill family members, friends and ex-colleagues. Another reason were the difficulties of managing the rapid integration of the different Banyamulenge elements and the Mai Mai. Not only were these forces used to different operational styles, there were also inexperienced combatants among them, in particular among the Mai Mai. Furthermore, there had been clashes between the 112th and some of these Mai Mai groups in the past, fostering initial distrust (Brabant and Nzweve, 2013: 89–90).

The limited effects of the 642nd brigade's efforts against the FRF were sharply exposed in December 2009, when the rebels launched a major attack on the house of the brigade commander (see also UNSC, 2010: 21), leading to the loss of important quantities of arms and ammunitions. In response, the FARDC hierarchy tried to convince the brigade to redeploy elsewhere. Initially, the Banyamulenge members of this unit strongly resisted redeployment, as they wished to stay close to their families. However, most of them eventually accepted to leave, in part due to pressure from the local elders, although some soldiers simply deserted to avoid departure.⁸⁵ In March 2010, the brigade moved to their new deployment location on the intersection of the Lulenge and Ngandja sectors with headquarters in Lwiko, still only about one to two days of walking from Minembwe. This location bordered the ex-Mai Mai's former zone of action in the Milimba hills, indicating that the entire brigade was deployed in or close to their area of origins.

After the departure of the 642nd brigade, the Minembwe area came under the control of troops that had arrived end 2009 as reinforcement in the operations against the FRF, namely the 652nd brigade commanded by Col. Sekanabo, according to most observers a commander of mixed Hutu-Tutsi descent (case #12). Composed for two thirds out of ex-PARECO troops, who were in majority Hutu from North Kivu⁸⁶,

83 The Uvira zone of the *Plateaux* came under control of other FARDC troops, although the FRF did have influence there due to popular support for the movement among its inhabitants, in particular in the *groupement* of Bijombo, located in the Bavira *chefferie*.

84 According to the command of the 64th sector and the 642nd brigade, less than 200 Mai Mai elements eventually stayed in the unit.

85 Many officers of the ex-112th were reported to return on a very regular basis to Minembwe, apparently not always with a *feuille de route* (official travel authorization issued by military hierarchy). Allegedly, these officers continued with influence peddling in local civilian governance, and with interventions in community and family disputes. As explained on p. 295, this conduct seems typical for locally recruited troops.

86 The 652nd brigade also consisted of ex-*Réquins* (ex-FAC reserve brigade trained in Kitona) and members of the non-integrated ex-85th Mai Mai brigade formerly

the brigade was little cohesive, and had many inexperienced and little educated officers. Although not the sole reason, the low quality of the command importantly contributed to the unit's brutal behavior. During a large-scale offensive against the FRF in January 2010, the brigade engaged in widespread looting, pillage, torture, occasional rape, and killings of both civilians and cows (CEADHO, 2010). Trying to avoid a large-scale confrontation, the FRF withdrew into the Bijabo forest, leading its former strongholds to now become occupied by the 652nd. Reasoning that the 'enemy was within the population',⁸⁷ the brigade embarked upon a campaign of the systematic harassment, extortion, intimidation and unlawful arrest of anyone suspected to be an FRF supporter. They specifically targeted young men and boys, but also traditional chiefs and religious authorities believed to have links with the FRF. The terror sown by Sekanabo's brigade took on such proportions that a considerable number of Banyamulenge, especially the male population, fled the *Plateaux* to cities nearby (Uvira, Bukavu) or neighboring countries (notably Burundi and Rwanda, which have a substantial Banyamulenge diaspora). For the men and boys who stayed, it became increasingly appealing to join the ranks of the FRF, as a form of both protection and protest against FARDC harassment. These civilian-military tensions show that there was no 'natural alliance' between the Rwandophone Banyamulenge population and the Rwandophone FARDC troops from North Kivu, contrary to what 'autochthonous' groups in other parts of Fizi presumed, as explained in the previous section.

The growing tensions between the population and the 652nd brigade caused the FRF to increasingly frame their struggle as a legitimate fight against the 'occupation' of the *Plateaux* by evil government troops, and by extension, as a struggle against the ill-intentioned government in Kinshasa. These framings drew on the Banyamulenge's deep-seated distrust towards the central state and the government, including the national armed forces. This distrust should partly be seen in the light of a history of grave abuses committed by government troops against Tutsi, and the regular employment of anti-Tutsi rhetoric by Kinshasa.⁸⁸ The resulting fear has generally been of an existential nature, not least due to the echoes of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, which reverberated throughout the Great Lakes Region. Playing into these widely shared hostile representations of the government, the FRF carried out a series of fierce attacks on the FARDC in the course of 2010. At the same time, due to the hostility of the population, the 652nd brigade resorted increasingly to force as a means of obtaining resources and information from civilians, which only further reinforced the FRF's popularity. Eventually, the situation of the 652nd became so dire that the FARDC hierarchy decided to rotate the unit with the 651st brigade under Col. Mahoro, which was similarly dominated by ex-PARECO Hutu troops from North Kivu (case #11). However, the behavior of 651st radically differed from its predecessors. The unit treated the population of the *Plateaux* well and therefore managed to foster good relations. This paved the way for negotiations with the FRF, which culminated in the group's integration into the FARDC in January 2011.

To conclude, similar to other parts of Fizi, the post-settlement history of the *Plateaux* illustrates the extent to which civilian-military interaction in the Kivus is shaped by place-specific power relations and discourses. The latter include notions of communal defense and distrust towards the government, which are often capitalized upon by armed groups to reinforce their position. Thus, the FRF drew upon existing distrust among the Banyamulenge towards Kinshasa, including negative representations of government forces, to gain popular support for their struggle against non-Banyamulenge FARDC troops. However, the progressive delegitimation of these troops, in particular the 652nd brigade, was also a result of their own poor conduct, which created a vicious cycle of negative interactions and negative evaluations. That conduct is crucial for shaping evaluations is strongly evidenced by the ways in which the brigade that replaced the 652nd was received. In contrast to its predecessor, and in spite of being equally a brigade composed of non-Banyamulenge troops, the 651st did manage to develop good relations with the population, as facilitated by the fact that it tried to negotiate with, rather than fight the relatively popular FRF. This highlights once more how existing representations (in this case of the government) always interact with concrete experiences in shaping how civilians assess the FARDC.

The Moyens Plateaux of Lemera: local defense forces and differential security provision

As illustrated in the previous, the trope of *autodéfense* occupies a prominent place within the discourses employed by armed groups in the Kivus, being informed by notions of communal defense and the perceived insufficiencies of security provision by the state. In a number of places, the same ideas have given rise not as much to armed groups with an anti-government agenda, but to village-based militias claiming to be complementary to the FARDC and civilian in/security services. In certain areas of the Kivus, such groups have a long lineage, resurfacing each time that insecurity mounts. One such period were the 2009–2011 Amani Leo operations, which provoked reprisal attacks by the FDLR that the FARDC often failed to protect the population against, especially in isolated areas (Verweijen, 2012). This occurred for example in the *chefferie* of the Bafuliiru, which is located in the *Moyens* and *Hauts Plateaux* of Uvira, and has as its capital Lemera (in the *Moyens Plateaux*). Before the Amani Leo operations, the FDLR exercised important influence over parts of this area, where they established themselves with their families, and also married local women. The high level of control built up by the FDLR both

deployed in Walikale. For a description of this brigade, see Garrett et al., 2009.

87 In the words of a battalion commander of the 652nd, contacted on 16.02.2011 in Mukera.

88 For example, in the run up to the AFDL insurgency, in September and October 1996, (FAZ) government troops massacred several hundred Banyamulenge civilians in Bukavu, mostly in the Panzi quarter (UNOHCHR, 2010: 73–76). The massacres of Tutsi troops at the start of the RCD rebellion were already mentioned on p. 76.

reflected and enabled their importance as an economic player, engaging in extensive agricultural production and the trade in cannabis and consumer goods, and having significant investments in the town of Uvira (Rafti, 2006b).

Mid-2009, newly arrived Amani Leo troops of what would eventually be named the 432nd brigade (case #5) launched a major offensive in the Bafuliiru *chefferie*, pushing the FDLR largely into the Itombwe forest in Mwenga. However, the rebels continued to operate in parts of the *chefferie* located in the *Hauts Plateaux* in order to obtain resources, and in some cases also to take revenge on those whom they felt had betrayed them by collaborating with the FARDC. The FARDC could not protect the population against these exactions and revenge actions, being thinly stretched in the vast mountain range that was unknown terrain to them, and being hampered by deficient logistics. Furthermore, the ex-CNDP dominance in the brigade created serious internal problems, undermining its operational effectiveness and fostering ill discipline among a part of the troops. Constituting a parallel power network in the FARDC, ex-CNDP troops took no orders from ex-government troops. As an officer from the 432nd brigade explained: “There are problems between superiors and subordinates. A major can give orders, but he who is from the CNDP, even a *petit capitaine* [just a captain] can refuse.”⁸⁹ The fact that the brigade was continually deployed to very demanding operations in the mountains further contributed to its ill conduct, especially since it is precisely during military operations that cohesion between command and troops becomes of paramount importance.⁹⁰ Aside from its mediocre behavior, the brigade was unpopular due to the massive Tutsi presence among its troops, which instilled distrust among the population. The latter had bad memories of a series of massacres carried out by Tutsi troops on the eve of and during the AFDL and RCD insurgencies, like the infamous carnage at the hospital of Lemera in October 1996.⁹¹

The insecurity resulting from both the FDLR’s and the FARDC’s practices provoked the massive displacement of the population. However, since most households in this area live primarily off small-scale agriculture, they were pressed to return to their fields. As insecurity was still rampant, especially in the *Hauts Plateaux*, a number of former (demobilized) Mai Mai combatants took the initiative to provide basic protection to the returnees and others who had stayed behind. In October 2009, the then *mwami* of the Bafuliiru, Ndare Simba, formalized this initiative by creating a militia called *Local Defenses*, a name that was later changed into *Forces d’autodéfenses locales et légitimes* (FALL, Local and Legitimate Self-defense Forces). The organization of this militia was entirely in the hands of representatives of the *mwami*, presided over by his security adviser Mutulanyi Molière, a former officer in the Mai Mai brigade of Col. Kayamba during the Second Congo War, and a former captain in the FARDC, from which he had deserted. Yet, unofficially, it was the *mwami* who took most of the important decisions, being de facto the FALL’s supreme commander until his death in December 2012.

When touring his *chefferie* to distribute arms and set up the militia, Ndare Simba was accompanied by the two chief commanders of the 432nd brigade, to demonstrate to the population that his initiative was accepted by the military. Indeed, the *mwami* had concluded an agreement with the 432nd that stipulated that the Local Defense forces would assist the FARDC with providing security. In particular, the militia would maintain a presence in the areas that the army could not cover, carry out night patrols, provide intelligence, and assist with military operations when needed.⁹² In exchange, the FARDC would provide ammunitions, sell uniforms and arms at favorable prices, allow the militia to share in contributions collected at the market, and refrain from interfering with the *mwami*’s administration. Such non-interference included a tacit agreement not to encroach upon Ndare Simba’s privileges in the cassiterite mining sites, which are the main source of income of the *chefferie*. This appeared to be an effective manner to limit FARDC interference in the minerals sector, as during fieldwork, it was reported that the locally deployed FARDC units did not tax, or exercise other major forms of influence over the extraction and trade in minerals. While some officers were alleged to have a digging team and to profit indirectly from the sector by interfering in conflicts among economic operators, the FARDC’s overall level of influence on mining activities was said to be modest. Another indication that the FARDC had accepted to limit its interventions in local government and extractive practices was that it had not monopolized market taxation. Both the market tax revenues and the foodstuffs collected at the markets were shared between the Local Defenses and the FARDC.

The FARDC’s quite moderate position vis-à-vis the local authorities (not to be confounded with its attitude towards the local population) can be explained by a number of factors. Importantly, the brigade commander was not only relatively responsible, it emerged from interviews that he had realized that he was incapable of securing his area of responsibility without the help of the Local Defenses. Due to the militia’s large presence, including in remote areas, and its excellent knowledge of the environment, including of the FDLR with whom they had lived together for a long time, the group was indispensable for securing the area. The FARDC’s respect for the local authorities and the position of the Local Defenses was also a result of the firm grip of the *mwami* over his entity. Ndare Simba was a powerful figure, doubling as provincial Member of Parliament and businessman. Like many other *bami*, he was a political and economic actor whose influence stretched far beyond his jurisdiction. After years of cohabitation with the FDLR in his entity, which had undermined his influence, he hoped to seize upon the power shifts triggered by the Amani Leo operations to reinforce his control. Therefore, he wanted prevent the FARDC from becoming too powerful and infringing on the cassiterite business. Aside from through his local and

89 Interview with higher-ranking officer of the 432nd brigade, Lemera, March 2010.

90 The importance of the quality of command in shaping units’ behavior is further discussed on pp. 300-301.

91 On 6 October 1996, Tutsi units massacred over 50 people in Kidote, close to Lemera, and around 37 people in the hospital of Lemera, including hospital staff and patients (UNOHCHR, 2010: 134, 266).

92 For instance, Local Defenses assisted the FARDC in operations against the FDLR in Kageregere and Kahololo on 21.09.2010.

provincial political and economic clout, this project was facilitated by his control over the Local Defenses. The latter were run by a support committee that consisted of the most important *chefs de groupement* and *chefs de localités*, who are traditionally invested by the *mwami*.⁹³ Furthermore, the daily activities of the militia were largely managed by the *chefs de localité* and the notables of their entities. This strong local embedding, as well as the fact the militia was seen to fill a security void and therefore render a real service, made that the Local Defenses had a relatively high degree of legitimacy, at least in the first two years of their existence. This did not only reinforce support for the *mwami*, it also affected evaluations of the 432nd brigade, seen to compare unfavorably, as partly caused by its ill conduct and the general distrust towards Tutsi troops in the Lemera area.

The negative images of the 432nd contrasted sharply with the evaluations of a brigade that was deployed to another part of the Bafuliiru *chefferie*, the 433rd (ex-234th) (case #4), which was headquartered in Katobo, in the *groupement* of Kigoma. This area has structures of domination, legitimation and signification that are distinct from those of the *Moyens Plateaux* of the Lemera *groupement*. One reason for these differences is that the area is not only inhabited by Bafuliiru, but also by Banyamulenge.⁹⁴ These two groups have historically lived together relatively well, causing tensions between them to be limited. Both these groups used to be under the influence of the FDLR, which was previously an important player in the area, imposing itself, although not in an overly violent manner. According to several Fuliiru *vieux-sages*, the FDLR were afraid to bother the Banyamulenge too strongly, as this could provoke reactions from the FRE. However, the Banyamulenge in this part of the *Plateaux* did not strongly support this rebel group, which enabled them to maintain good relations with the Bafuliiru. Similar to the Banyamulenge, this latter group was also not disturbed too much by the FDLR, to whom some Fuliiru women were married. However, after the Amani Leo operations pushed them out of the *Moyens Plateaux*, these ties prompted the FDLR to take revenge, leading to a strong upsurge in insecurity.

The 433rd brigade, which arrived after the FDLR had already withdrawn from the area, was widely seen as contributing importantly to diminishing insecurity, at least in the area around Katobo, where they protected the population against FDLR reprisals. This positive security contribution caused them to be relatively well received by civilians. This warm welcome was also related to that fact that the Local Defenses in this area were not as strong as in other *groupements*, like in Lemera, which made that the brigade was perceived to fill a void. What further contributed to the unit's relative popularity was its overall good conduct, although its soldiers were reported to engage in the pillage of agricultural fields and small livestock, and to set up occasional roadblocks. Nevertheless, practices of wealth extraction were moderate in comparison to some other FARDC brigades. This generally good behavior should partly be seen in the light of this brigade's origins and trajectory. In contrast to the hastily assembled 432nd (case #5), which was created in 2009 after the integration of the CNDP, most of the 433rd had been together since 2002, having been trained in Katanga as an elite brigade of the FAC that contained many ex or potential university students. Consequently, it had well educated and well trained troops and officers that formed a closely-knit group.

Similar to the case studies in Fizi and the *Hauts Plateaux*, those in the Fuliiru *chefferie* (case #4 and #5) thus highlight that where the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection are volatile, security provision and the conduct of other armed forces become important factors in shaping the interaction between the FARDC and civilians. In both cases, the Amani Leo operations led to a strong upsurge in insecurity due to the FDLR struggling to retain influence over the zones that it was pushed out of. Yet, the willingness and capability of the FARDC to deal with this insecurity diverged considerably. In combination with differences in the capabilities of Local Defense forces, and the distrust towards the ex-CNDP in one brigade, which was linked to them being predominantly seen as 'Tutsi', this led to divergent evaluations of the involved brigades by civilians: while the 432nd was not seen in positive terms, the 433rd was highly appreciated. The developments in the Fuliiru *chefferie* in the period under consideration are also significant in that they show that processes of militarization do not always reinforce the power position of the FARDC, but may also be to the benefit of other armed actors. Furthermore, they highlight that paradoxically, such processes may not only contribute to strengthening the position of armed actors, but also of civilians who know how to mobilize and manipulate these actors. By creating a self-defense militia and then instrumentalizing it to entrench his own position and that of his networks, the *mwami* ensured that the militarization of his own *chefferie* worked to his advantage. This led to the development of a power configuration that would considerably constrain the influence of the FARDC.

Northern part of Bwisha (Rutshuru): a multitude of competing armed factions engaged in complex protection arrangements

Another context where civilian-military interaction was strongly shaped by locally specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection marked by the presence of multiple armed forces was the territory of Rutshuru in North Kivu, especially the *groupements* of Binza, Busanza and Bukoma, located in the northern part of the *chefferie* of Bwisha, which borders the Virunga National Park (see Map 2). Aside from the presence a multitude of competing armed groups, this area suffers from high levels of banditry. In interaction with ill-behaving

⁹³ The support committee was dominated by the two most powerful *chefs de groupement* of the *chefferie*, namely those of Itara and Lemera. It should be noted that the Local Defenses do not operate in all five *groupements* of the Bafuliiru chiefdom, but only in Itara, Kigoma and Lemera.

⁹⁴ Banyamulenge do live in the *Hauts Plateaux* of the *groupement* of Lemera, but that area was outside of the case study site (which was limited to the *Moyens Plateaux*).

FARDC troops engaged in the Amani Leo operations, this generated a profound instability, which again contributed to the reproduction of the militarization of the area.

The majority of the population in the Bwisha *chefferie* are Hutu, but there is also a sizeable Tutsi community, most of whom live in the southern part (*groupement* of Jomba). Furthermore, the *chefferie* is inhabited by a large group of Banande, who arrived during the colonial era from neighboring Lubero territory. Since there was a shortage of labor to work on the coffee plantations, this population movement was encouraged by the colonial authorities (Fairhead, 2005). At present, most Banande live in the town of Kiwanja, the villages of Nyamilima, Ruberizi and Rubare, and the fishermen's town of Vitshumbi on the shores of Lake Edward, which is home to a naval base of the *groupement naval* headquartered in Goma. During the colonial era, the Banande, who are known as an entrepreneurial people, became involved in the semi-industrial fishing cooperative that was established in Vitshumbi, which was a considerable economic engine in the region.

The Banande, Hutu and Tutsi in Rutshuru have a complex history of fluctuating inter-relations, characterized by changing alliances and animosities. While the Hutu and Tutsi population of Bwisha accuse the Banande of being non-native to the territory, the Banande in turn occasionally play the 'Rwandophone' card, accusing the Hutu and Tutsi of being 'non-autochthonous populations' alien to Congolese soil. However, the Bwisha area has a long history of Rwandophone presence. When the colonizers arrived at the start of the 20th century, they found small principalities paying tribute to Rwandan King that had evolved over centuries (Fairhead, 2005). The allegations of the Banande should therefore also be seen in the light of the provincial-level competition between the Banande, the most numerous group in North Kivu (who are concentrated in the Grand Nord area), and the Banyarwanda (relating to both Hutu and Tutsi in North Kivu, and including a large wave of colonial-era labor migrants). Furthermore, they are informed by the events during the Congo Wars, which created tensions between the three communities. During the First Congo War, Banande and Hutu put up resistance against the Tutsi-dominated rebellion of the AFDL. In 1996–1997, AFDL troops commanded by Tutsi, often officers of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), committed a number of massacres that specifically targeted Rwandan, but sometimes also Congolese Hutu (UNOHCR, 2010: 92–95, 120–124). This fostered a coalition between Congolese Hutu and the Rwandan Hutu combatants and civilians that had massively entered the country in the wake of the 1994 genocide.⁹⁵ However, during the Second Congo War (1998–2002), relations between Rwandan and Congolese Hutu became strained, as the RCD tried to coopt Rutshuru's Hutu population to prevent them from forming a common front with the Rwandan Hutu combatants (Mararo, 2004). This side switching prompted the Banande, who had first collaborated with Congolese Hutu forces against the Tutsi-led rebellion of the RCD, to now take up arms against this group, in collaboration with Rwandan Hutu. In order to defend against attacks by this Nande-Hutu coalition, and to avoid that local Hutu would join forces with the FDLR, Eugène Serufuli, then governor of North Kivu, reinforced Local Defense Forces throughout Rutshuru. These forces recruited young men in every village and provided them with arms and a brief military training, causing already high levels of arms possession to soar (International Crisis Group, 2005). The presence of this multitude of armed forces, often mobilized along ethnic lines, reflected and resulted in strong inter-community tensions.

In the course of the transition, these tensions somewhat abated, as most Hutu leaders in the RCD rallied to Kinshasa, which facilitated an improvement of relations with both the Banande and the FDLR. The relations between these groups were further reinforced at the end of the transition, when a new common enemy emerged in the form of the CNDP, which was constituted around a group of Tutsi dissidents who rejected the transition. In 2007, during the short-lived *mixage* experiment,⁹⁶ the CNDP-dominated mixed Bravo brigade occupied parts of northern Bwisha, kidnapping and killing civilians suspected of collaboration with the FDLR. The latter, in turn, took revenge on communities that came under the control of the mixed troops, accusing them of collaboration with the CNDP/FARDC. Even worse atrocities took place in November 2008, when the CNDP, which by then had stepped out of the FARDC, occupied the town of Kiwanja and killed around 150 civilians (Human Rights Watch, 2008; see also UNJHRO, 2009b). This massacre fomented resistance against the CNDP among Rutshuru's Hutu and Nande population, which intensified collaboration between these two communities and between armed groups and civilians. These ties were only strengthened after the return of what were now ex-CNDP troops serving in the FARDC, following the rapid integration of the ex-CNDP into the military at the start of 2009.⁹⁷ Since many of these troops had been involved in the atrocities that the CNDP had committed in this area only a few months earlier, their arrival was not particularly welcomed by the population. As a woman in Kiwanja explained: 'we see the same troops who committed the massacre working here. And we think: has the rebellion continued? This severs the collaboration between the military and the population (...) There is no trust'.⁹⁸

What fed further tensions was that the newly integrated troops were deployed to Rutshuru with the mission of conducting operations against the FDLR and breakaway factions of the FDLR,⁹⁹ while substantial layers of the population had developed close ties to these armed

95 These Rwandan Hutu combatants would later constitute the FDLR.

96 *Mixage* was an attempt to integrate CNDP troops into the FARDC in 2007, as described on pp. 83-84.

97 What was officially called the 'rapid and accelerated integration' of the CNDP into the FARDC at the start of 2009 was discussed on pp. 84-85.

98 Interview with woman from church-based organization, Kiwanja, 07.05.2010.

99 There are two FDLR off-shoots in Bwisha: First, the *Ralliement pour l'unité et la démocratie* (RUD)-Urunana, a splinter faction of the FDLR that broke off in 2004 and is active in northern Rutshuru and southern Lubero territories (UNSC, 2011: 45–46). Second, the group of Soki (Sangano Musohoke), a Rwandan Hutu who deserted from RUD and used to lead a group consisting mostly of Congolese combatants (idem: 46). Although Soki died in July 2013, his group continues to be active.

groups. Through local recruitment, intermarriages with local women, a profound involvement in economic activities, and occasional collaboration against common enemies, certain armed groups have become an integral part of the social order of Bwisha. Furthermore, in the face of ongoing inter-community tensions and a lack of confidence that the Congolese state will protect civilians against atrocities, armed groups, which are often recruited along ethnic lines, are partly seen as a type of safeguard and last resort in case inter-community relations deteriorate or renewed occupations by armed groups from outside the area occur. These fears and feelings are capitalized upon by local elites, who try to manipulate armed groups to reinforce their own position, and sometimes maintain smaller-scale militias for similar purposes.¹⁰⁰

One of the reasons that elites forge ties with armed groups in Bwisha is that the latter have built up an important position in the local economy. This applies in particular to the FDLR, which has certain advantages as an economic network. It has for example large sums of cash and capital for investment at its disposal, which guarantees significant influence in an environment lacking banking infrastructure. Furthermore, the FDLR has a dense network of contacts that facilitate trade, including of a trans-border nature. Additionally, it has the possibility to impose favorable terms of exchange and protect illegal activities through the (threat of the) use of force (cf. Life & Peace Institute, 2007). These various features have made that the FDLR (and splinter groups) have developed multiple economic arrangements with civilians, like intricate systems of trade pre-financing (e.g., of the trade in salted fish from Lake Edward, which is sold in Goma), franchise-type agreements for operating small boutiques and motorcycle taxis, notably in the town of Kiwanja; money lending; and the protection of various types of economic activities (e.g., illegal fishing on Lake Edward, poaching and cultivation in the Virunga Park, or transport on the road between Kiwanja and Ishasha, located on the border with Uganda). Such protection arrangements are however not always stable, as various armed actors compete to offer them. Occasionally, this competition elicits the use of violence, not only to deter opponents but also to advertise oneself as the most powerful party in the area.¹⁰¹ These dynamics have for example been visible around Lake Edward in relation to the protection of illegal fishing, whereby clandestine fishermen pay armed actors in order to go fishing on the lake. The FARDC navy headquartered in Vitshumbi (case #3) is a key player in this protection market, which has led them to occasionally clash with competitors, including the FARDC infantry. For the navy, the stakes of maintaining their share in the protection market are very high, not only as this market constitutes a crucial source of income to them, but also as they are obliged to channel a part of the revenues up to their hierarchy in Goma, in accordance with the infamous *rapportage* system.¹⁰² At the same time, the existence of this protection market is a precondition for certain civilians' livelihood generation, notably that of clandestine fishermen and their families. This introduces a quite specific dynamic in their relations with the FARDC, on whom they depend for survival.

The close socio-economic ties between armed actors (whether state or non-state forces) and civilians in Bwisha had highly destabilizing effects during the Amani Leo operations, prompting those wishing to maintain their spheres of influence to employ violence. Generally, where shifts in control occur, economic operators may change their calculations as regard to with what armed force to collaborate. However, armed actors do not readily accept that those they previously collaborated with change sides, not only out of fear for losing income and influence, but also they suspect their contacts to divulge information to opponents. Similar to what was described for the FDLR in the Bafuliiru *chefferie*, armed groups in Rutshuru therefore started to take revenge on the civilians whom they felt had betrayed them, hoping in this way to deter others from engaging in a similar move. Furthermore, in order to compensate for their loss of income, some groups also reinforced their involvement in criminal activities, such as ambushes and kidnappings. This further inflated already high levels of crime, which is commonly perpetrated by varying combinations of local gangs, armed groups, army deserters, members of the in/security forces, demobilized and youngsters.

The FARDC did little to master this rising insecurity. In fact, it only reinforced it, both by failing to intervene in time and through its own ill conduct. Many of the troops deployed to Bwisha, including the 223rd brigade Amani Leo headquartered in Nyongera (case #2) were from the rapidly assembled ex-25th Integrated Brigade, which had finished *brassage* only in 2008. These elements had been mixed with ex-CNDP troops, including relatively new recruits, into Amani Leo brigades, without any training or other measures to smoothen the integration process. Riddled by parallel command chains, these units lacked cohesion, which aggravated accountability problems. This was manifested in their strong orientation towards revenue generation, including involvement in the cross-border trade in Ishasha, and the protection of illegal fishing. Additionally, it was rumored that some elements were engaged in extortion from civilians and other forms of harassment, or protected criminal activities, implying they ensured that bandits were not caught and arrested in exchange for a part of the booty. In combination with the distrust people had towards the ex-CNDP troops in this brigade, this contributed to tense civilian-military relations.

In sum, the effects of the Amani Leo operations on the northern part of the *chefferie* of Bwisha show how processes of militarization over the longer term structure shorter-term dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, and how these dynamics affect civilian-military

See Radio Okapi, 'Nord-Kivu: les Mai-Mai fidèles à Soki continuent à percevoir des taxes illégales, après sa mort', *Radio Okapi*, 13 July 2013.

100 Examples include the *chef de groupement* of Binza, widely reported to maintain his own militia, as well as the former and present *chefs de groupement* of Busanza, who are involved in a power dispute and maintain links with armed groups to reinforce their position. See also Joska Kaninda Nkole, 'Rutshuru: les populations victimes des affres causés par des FARDC', *Le Millénaire*, 20 October 2010.

101 The dynamics of protection in contexts with a multitude of armed actors are further described on pp. 333-334.

102 For an explanation of the *rapportage* system, see pp. 66 and 232.

interaction. In particular, they demonstrate that the presence of a multitude of armed actors with strong socio-economic ties to civilians can have destabilizing effects in a context of changing patterns of control, since unleashing a spiral of revenge and deterrence. These dynamics also drew in the FARDC infantry and navy, and had detrimental effects on their conduct towards civilians. This highlights once more that in order to understand civilian-military interaction in the Kivu provinces, it is crucial to analyze the entire constellation of armed factions and their relations to the population, since these crucially shape how civilians see and act towards the FARDC.

The Grand Nord: factionalism, economic competition and protection

Another field research site characterized by factional struggles and links between armed actors and economic operators was the *Grand Nord* area in North Kivu, which consists of the territories of Beni and Lubero. This area is predominantly inhabited by the Banande, a group that is marked by strong internal divisions along regional, clan, and political and commercial faction lines. The Banande have earned a reputation as businesspersons, notably in the cross-border trade, including the long-distance trade to the Far East. This economic sector experienced rapid growth in the second part of the Mobutu era, and developed to a large extent outside of the presidential patronage network, giving the Banande a relatively autonomous position. The Second Congo War would further entrench this autonomy. Due to a complex mixture of power struggles, differences in political vision and varying strategic preferences, the RCD rebel movement fragmented into a Uganda and a Rwanda supported branch. While the southern part of North Kivu remained under the control of the Rwandan-allied branch, the *Grand Nord* came within the sphere of influence of the Uganda-supported faction, which would eventually morph into the RCD/K-ML. In October 2000, the presidency of this movement was taken over by the Nande politician Mbusa Nyamwisi (International Crisis Group, 2000), who eventually established the headquarters of the movement in Beni, an important trade center close to the Ugandan border. Through a combination of coercion and persuasion, including a favorable tax climate for the influential Nande business community, the RCD/K-ML managed to establish a reasonable degree of influence in the *Grand Nord*. However, reflecting the divided nature of the Banande, its dominance was strongly contested by players like the influential Catholic Church. Another source of resistance were the Mai Mai militias that mushroomed in the countryside, which were often instrumentalized by local leaders hoping in this way to reinforce their position (Raeymaekers, 2007).

The manipulation of armed actors for political and economic purposes was not new to the *Grand Nord*. Already in the second half of the 1980s, competing economic operators tried to instrumentalize the Zairian army to gain advantages over their opponents. The FAZ, for its part, manipulated competition and conflicts in the area as a form of divide-and-rule politics. The same mechanisms were visible in relation to the armed groups that emerged in the late Zaire era, in particular the Bangilima, whose appearance at the end of the 1980s spearheaded the large-scale militia formation in North Kivu that started in 1993 (Vlassenroot and Van Acker, 2001). Hence, the links that were forged during the Second Congo War between on the one hand, local authorities and economic operators and on the other hand, the RCD/K-ML or Mai-Mai groups, were not an entirely new phenomenon, but constituted an intensification of existing processes of militarization.

Even before the final peace accord was signed in December 2002, the RCD/K-ML rallied to the government in the hope of maximizing the benefits from the upcoming power-sharing arrangement. During the transition, it tried to capitalize upon its position as close ally of the government by exchanging loyalty for continuing control over the *Grand Nord*, in particular the customs, border control and intelligence agencies at the border post of Kasindi. Initially, the movement also tried to retain a semi-autonomous military position: throughout the transition, the *Grand Nord* was controlled by the 88th and 89th brigades, which were predominantly composed of troops of the former armed branch of the RCD/K-ML. It was only after the 2006 elections that these troops departed for army integration and were replaced by those of the FARDC Integrated Brigades. In order to perpetuate the beneficial tax regime that was crucial to the Banande's business success, economic operators now sought to forge agreements with the incoming FARDC brigades (Raeymaekers, 2007: 163). This indicates that the rationality of harnessing armed actors to reinforce one's political or economic position did not diminish at the end of the war. In fact, the war seems to have created only more incentives to rely on armed actors for protection, having strongly reinforced distrust and divisions, and having increased the number of disputes.

Such disputes are particularly numerous in the commercial centers of Beni and Butembo, where insecurity is rampant despite significant FARDC and police presence. Assassinations, cases of robbery and burglary and other violent incidents occur on a daily basis in these cities. This was also the case at the time of deployment of the 20th Integrated Brigade (case #1) in 2010, which was headquartered in Butembo. While this unit was not seen as one of the worst that had been deployed to the area, it was strongly regretted that it did not manage to reduce insecurity. Moreover, like in Bwisha, it was generally believed that certain elements of the brigade were complicit with particular illicit activities. Despite this, the image of the brigade did not become overly negative, and it was seen to compare favorably to other Amani Leo brigades, in particular since it did not contain any ex-CNDP troops. Elsewhere in the *Grand Nord*, notably in Lubero, the arrival of Amani Leo brigades with a large share of ex-CNDP troops was met with hostility, as the Banande saw this as an attempt by Rwandophones to extend their influence over the *Grand Nord*. This highlights once more how civilians' evaluations of FARDC brigades are shaped by complex mixtures of factors, including considerations related to security provision, and forms of identification that are inscribed in structures of signification. The following chapter will further discuss certain dimensions of these structures of signification, namely civilians' and the military's *mutual representations*, which have taken shape over the *longue durée*.

Civilians on the military/ the military on civilians

ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS that the first-time visitor to the Kivus may notice is the seeming omnipresence of the FARDC. Both in urban and rural settings, the sight of its camouflage fatigues is inescapable. Circulating in vehicles in town, loitering in streets and at markets, riding overcrowded trucks and minibuses, eating in front of make-shift camps in the countryside, and walking the roads toward their next site of deployment: the FARDC is everywhere, and whether in the bush or in urban quarters, its soldiers are almost always uniformed and armed. For the observer not familiar with militarized public space, this conspicuous military presence is a constant reminder of the permanent state of war in which most of the Kivu provinces have been mired for nearly two decades. Is this the same for their inhabitants? Do Kivutians continue to notice the strong imprint of the military on the public sphere or have they come to take it for granted? Have they become accustomed to living with the military, whose staff buy in the same shops and markets, frequent the same bars and restaurants, and live in the same quarters or houses? Or do they continue to take the time when the military was a more distant and rare phenomenon as their point of reference, seeing the present military omnipresence as deviant? Certainly, only the older generations have memories of pre-militarized times, for today's youth have grown up in a world where armed actors abound. As long as they can remember, they see soldiers in their village, on their way to school, at the markets where they sell produce, or in the quarters where they peddle goods. What do these youths think, each time they encounter an FARDC soldier? What does the military signify to the population of the Kivus? Is it associated with predation or peace, with the government or particularistic interests, partiality or impartiality, with trouble or with opportunities? Does it evoke fear or hope, a sense of security or insecurity, resentment or sympathy?

And how does this ostensibly omnipresent military live and think? The soldiers sleeping in make-shift camps in the bush or in overcrowded and equally primitive accommodation in town, the guys and girls in uniform roaming the markets and the streets, and walking immense distances carrying their belongings on their head. What are their thoughts and feelings? Are they aware of the rag-tag state of their military, and does this awareness affect their perceptions of the military profession? How do they see civilians? Do they feel humiliated when demanding civilians for food or do they think it is their right to do so, perhaps as they feel superior or because they find civilians mean and hostile? In their everyday struggles for survival, do soldiers experience civilians to be helpful or a nuisance? Are civilians neighbors from whom to borrow kitchen utensils or who watch your children when needed, or rather traders raising prices whenever they see a soldier, or shopkeepers refusing to let you buy on credit? And how do FARDC soldiers feel about civilians in areas where armed groups have close ties to populations, being their brothers, sons, neighbors, former schoolmates or family-in-law? Can soldiers deployed in such a context come to trust civilians or do see them as potential spies, who may sign their death warrant by passing on crucial information to the rebels? And in case of rebel attacks, do soldiers see civilians in such communities as people to protect or traitors to be punished?

Obviously, there are no clear-cut answers to these questions, which touch upon many and varying dimensions of civilian-military interactions and perceptions, and concern heterogeneous groups that encounter each other in widely varying situations. Both 'the military' and 'civilians' are multilayered constructs with multiple meanings that are embedded in different discourses and located at different levels of abstraction. This impedes coarse generalizations of their mutual representations. Moreover, evaluations of particular military units or groups of civilians may considerably diverge from general representations, adding complexity to the way in which civilians and the military think and speak about each other. In order to provide an insight into these complexities, the discussion of mutual representations that follows will be complemented by a discussion of mutual evaluations. However, evaluations will not be treated in detail, which is one of the central objectives of Part II. Furthermore, before proceeding to the analysis of civilians' and the military's mutual representations, it is crucial to first highlight a specific dimension of the context in which these are (re)produced, which has important effects on their contents, namely the ways in which FARDC soldiers live and work.

4.1 Civilians as logistics and infrastructure of the military

One of the main reasons why civilians in the Kivus regularly encounter the military in many facets of their everyday lives is that the FARDC does not constitute a strongly closed, self-organizing social order with its own facilities, logistics, and communications, a model that some militaries elsewhere approximate. Rather, the FARDC is an ill-resourced and ill-equipped force, with weakly developed logistics and little infrastructure of its own. Consequently, for basic necessities like housing, transport, food, and medical care, it depends to a large extent on the available civilian resources in its areas of deployment. Furthermore, as will be explained in Part III, due to various factors such as poor salaries and the exigencies of big-man politics, the FARDC is heavily involved in revenue-generation activities, for which it depends to a large extent on civilians. As a result of this shared living and socio-economic space, the military and civilians do not constitute two well-delineated separate social spheres, but have become strongly intermingled and interdependent.

Living conditions: 'kama wakimbizi'

There are only few barracks in the Kivus, and most of these are either training bases, like Luberizi, Nyaleke and Rumangabo, or are located in the urban centers, like Goma (e.g., Camp Katindo) and Bukavu (e.g., Camp Saio). These barracks therefore offer no solution to the troops deployed in the rural zones, who moreover commonly have to make do without tents. Frequently on the move due to ongoing military operations and rapid rotations, these troops commonly either build their own makeshift camps, occupy those constructed by their predecessors, or simply move into civilian homes. Such self-built camps can be very spartan, with huts (called *manyata*) built from bamboo sticks and banana leaves, often without plastic sheeting to provide protection against the frequent downpours in the rainy season. Referring to the sheeting that internally displaced persons get from the UN refugee agency and other humanitarian organizations, a corporal stated: 'A soldier is almost like a refugee. We live like refugees [*kama wakimbizi*], we move around like refugees. The only difference is that refugees are supported by the international community, and we are not'.¹ Furthermore, soldiers are not provided with the tools needed for constructing camps, including shovels for digging communication trenches and making fortifications, and machetes for cutting grass and leaves needed for fabricating roofs. They often borrow these tools from civilians living in the area, sometimes also forcing their owners or other local inhabitants to help with constructing or maintaining camps. This sometimes occurs under the banner of *salongo*, or forced labor,² with customary chiefs being asked by the military to mobilize the population to carry out works for them.

Aside from dwelling in extremely poor accommodation, FARDC rank and file lack basic necessities,³ like sleeping bags, mattresses, rain coats, containers for fetching water, water purification, medicine, soap, charcoal and cooking utensils. They are expected to buy these items themselves from the meager \$80–85 a month that the lower ranks receive, commonly in an irregular manner, as payment arrears are standard. Furthermore, soldiers have to take care of household chores themselves, including fetching water, gathering firewood and washing their clothes. Getting water and firewood can be a headache, especially when water wells are far away from the camp, or when there is no charcoal, and no time to let the firewood dry. Where this is the case, it may occur that so much smoke comes off the wood that soldiers constantly have sore eyes if they try to warm their hut, boil water or cook. A soldier succinctly described these poor living conditions as: '*Tunaishi kama nguruwe* [we live like pigs]'.⁴ The insufficiency of communal meals, and food rations in general, forces soldiers to buy additional food and charcoal for cooking. In principle, between \$1–\$2 is available for food per soldier per day (the so called *fonds de ménage*, household funds). However, in reality, embezzlement impedes a substantial part of this money or the rations to arrive at the units in the field. In several of the platoons visited, soldiers received only one meal a day, consisting often of *ugali* (a type of porridge made from either maize or cassava flour, or a mixture of the two) with a sauce made of *sombe* (cassava leaves) or *lenga-lenga* (a leafy vegetable), or in other cases *wali* (rice) with *maharagi* (beans). Elsewhere, soldiers had more luck, as they were provided with an additional meal a day, like breakfast of cooked plantains, or an extra bimonthly ration of *mafuta* (cooking oil), *chumvi* (salt), beans and *bunga* (flour for making the *ugali*). Fish, meat, or sugar, which are considered luxury products, are rarely provided, and if so, only on national holidays. As a consequence, rank and file soldiers with little means, especially when deployed in isolated zones, are frequently hungry and often long for meat. Many prefer to stem this hunger by smoking cannabis (commonly called *ganja*, *bangi*, or *kaya*) and drinking cheap local brews like *kanyanga* (made of maize and cassava waste) or *kasiks* (banana beer) or small plastic bags with strong liquor such as *B.T.* or *Furaha* (meaning 'joy' in Swahili).

What brings some relief is that many soldiers do not have to manage the hardships of daily life alone, as they bring their spouses⁵ and

1 Interview with FARDC *sous-officier*, Rutshuru territory, 06.04.2010.

2 *Salongo* has traditionally been imposed by customary chiefs, but has also been official state policy both in the colonial era and under Mobutu.

3 With the regimentation process in 2011, when the Amani Leo brigades were transformed into regiments (see p. 225), soldiers received some basic items like a sleeping bag and a poncho against the rain. However, this was a one-time gift.

4 Interview with FARDC *sous-officier*, Muranyva, Uvira territory, 14.11.2011.

5 The women living together with FARDC soldiers are commonly called 'spouses' (*épouses militaires* or *bibi wa jeshi*), although they are not always married to them. In fact, these women may have a wide range of statuses, including official first (or second or more) spouse, unofficial first (or second or more) spouse, concubine or temporary girlfriend. Nevertheless, it was decided to follow the designation as used in the research context and call them 'spouses', regardless their status.

children⁶ along on deployment, even to operational zones where enemy attacks may occur any moment. This phenomenon of ‘family deployment’ can be explained by a variety of factors. Crucially, partners wish to stick together in order to better cope with the challenges of poverty and military life. In the face of low wages and the absence of social benefits for military families, it often occurs that soldiers do not have any money to send home. Therefore, if a spouse would not follow her husband, she would need to seek other sources of income. Furthermore, it is usually difficult for FARDC soldiers to visit their family, due to the limited possibilities for travel resulting from both infrastructural constraints and the difficulties of obtaining leave. Superiors tend to be extremely reluctant to grant their soldiers leave, which is seen as a favor rather than a right, and is generally considered inappropriate in times of military operations. Additionally, the vast distances and bad state of the roads in the Congo, where overland travel from one side of the country to the other is practically impossible, cause travel to be a lengthy and expensive undertaking. As a consequence, for soldiers with little means, it becomes very difficult to go home when home is far away. Hence, many end up being separated for extended periods of time from their families, a situation soldiers commonly describe as ‘forced divorce [*divorce forcée*]’, prompting some to take a new partner elsewhere. This provides an additional reason for spouses of lower-ranking soldiers to follow their husbands on deployment, despite the hardships and dangers.

While the FARDC’s official policy is *mouvement sans famille* (movement without family), many commanders tolerate the presence of women, although practices and opinions on this were found to be mixed. One reason for this acceptance is that female presence is judged to be useful. Not only is it assumed that troops behave better in the presence of their family, and will therefore be more obedient towards commanders, women help with all the basic chores that their husbands are obliged to take care of, such as washing clothes, fetching water and firewood, and the construction of housing. Furthermore, they assist with carrying their partners’ belongings on rotations and with revenue generation to supplement the meager household income. In this manner, and similar to the *Force publique*, women are an essential part of the FARDC’s system of logistics, and fulfill crucial support functions. This has important consequences for civilian-military interaction, for military spouses are often the part of the FARDC that is most present and visible in civilian communities, especially in rural areas or quarters of town with high concentrations of military. Wives of FARDC soldiers tend to be in frequent contact with local community members, in particular women, for example at the water wells, at the market, or in local health care centers, but often also in their homes, having close contact with their neighbors.

Perhaps not surprisingly, officers generally live in much better conditions than the troops, in particular when they are part of the *état-major* (general staff) of units, sectors or military regions. The headquarters (HQ) of larger units (battalions, brigades, regiments) are commonly established in urban zones or in the larger population centers in the rural areas. Higher-ranking officers generally prefer to rent a house or a room in a private house in such (semi) urban environments, while staying for shorter term visits often in hotels. In rural zones, officers commonly also stay in civilian homes, just like soldiers, at least if the latter can spare the money to pay the monthly rent. In contrast to the lower ranks, the spouses of officers generally do not follow their husbands to such remote areas, although this differs per context, and also depends on the rank and position of the officers involved. While superior officers with important positions tend to leave their families in the provincial capitals of Goma and Bukavu, especially when originating from the Kivus, mid and lower-ranking officers, or those with secondary positions, frequently house them in the smaller urban centers close to their deployment location. This was for instance observed in the towns of Kirumba (Lubero territory), Beni (Beni territory) and Baraka (Fizi territory). When their wives are present, many officers prefer to live in the comfort and privacy of civilian houses, even when there is a military camp nearby. For example, while Camp Kasando is next to Kirumba, many officers still lived in town. Such dispersed living patterns foster frequent interactions with civilians.

Staying in civilian houses is also common when military staff are on operations or rotations, and therefore have no time to construct a camp. While such forms of homestay might bring extra income to house-owners, not all military staff renting houses or rooms fully pay for it. They usually try to negotiate reduced rents, appealing to their low income, the importance of their job, and the sacrifices they make for guaranteeing the safety of the population. It may also occur that house or hotel owners voluntarily offer accommodation at a reduced price, as they are keen on maintaining good relations with military staff, hoping for return favors or to benefit from the enhanced security that military presence may bring. However, in other cases, the military occupies (parts of) homes or hotels through imposition or by treachery, as when they promise to pay, but subsequently fail to honor their commitments. In sum, the military’s staying in civilian homes follows a wide range of scenarios, and civilians can both gain and lose from it.

Travelling without transport

Civilians and the military in the Kivus do not only live in proximity, they also tend to move around together. Most regiments have only around three vehicles,⁷ which are at the disposition of the regiment and the battalion commanders. However, most commanders use their vehicles predominantly for their own movements or business activities, and not for transporting troops. The same applies to the vehicles belonging to the military sectors and regions, which are mainly used for superior officers’ professional and private transport,

6 On deployments in rural areas, FARDC spouses tend to take along only smaller children (up to around six to eight years), leaving those of primary school age at family members’. In (semi)urban areas, they may also bring older children.

7 Note that three vehicles per regiment is an improvement from the transport situation of the operational (Amani Leo) brigades formed in 2009, many of which did not even have a single vehicle.

or for delicate tasks such as transporting money. Due to the limited availability of vehicles, transport is a permanent problem for most soldiers and lower-ranking officers, specifically when units are redeployed far away. Those lacking the money for employing commercial transport services operated by civilians (e.g., *taxi-motos*, vehicles, trucks, minibuses or boats) or not having the connections and favored status to be granted one of the free places commonly allocated to the military on such transport,⁸ simply have to go on foot. Especially for soldiers' spouses, such long journeys can be true crusades, reason why they go at great lengths to avoid having to go all the way by foot. Many sell their pots, cooking pans and sometimes a part of their clothes in order to buy a ticket, causing frequent rotations to exact a heavy toll on military families' livelihoods.

Military rotations usually also weigh heavily on civilians. Large-scale displacements of troops can be surprisingly ill organized, although there are important differences per unit.⁹ Soldiers are sometimes simply asked to move from point A to point B on foot without a fixed time-line and without much supervision. In combination with the absence of rations and transport for their belongings, this opens the door to abuses. A particularly widespread abuse is forced portage, in some places called 'operation *bebesha*' (to make carry), when civilians are made to carry soldiers' personal belongings or military supplies over sometimes immense distances. For example, in an isolated zone in Fizi, it was observed how a 12-year-old boy was forced to carry a dead goat for an FARDC officer over a distance of 120 kilometers. But forced labor may also take the form of what may be called forced *éclairage* (path finding) or having to show soldiers the way in what is for them unknown territory. Other abuses that are frequent during rotations are the imposition of free rides on commercially operated bicycles, motorcycles, or boats, or the temporary confiscation of means of transport from civilians. Even humanitarian organizations risk being instrumentalized, at least in remote areas, as drivers of their vehicles may be put under pressure to transport soldiers or military supplies.

Sickness without healthcare

Another domain in which civilians and the military frequently encounter each other, again due to deficient military infrastructure and resources, is that of healthcare. Since soldiering in the varying climatic conditions of the Kivus and the harsh circumstances of the FARDC is physically demanding, soldiers fall ill on a regular basis. Moreover, they generally have a low resistance due to a bad and monotonous diet, the lack of water purification, which is especially grave when there is no time to boil water, and the constant switching from one climatic zone to another,¹⁰ like cold mountainous areas and dry hot savannahs. In spite of frequent illnesses, and the obvious importance of healthcare for the functioning of the military, the provision of medical care in the FARDC is extremely poor.¹¹ For instance, in 2011, there was only one military hospital in the whole of South Kivu, in the provincial capital of Bukavu. Outside of Bukavu, there were not more than four *centres de santé* (health care centers providing basic care) and only one *poste de secours* (emergency station), in Walungu.¹² While medical care in these facilities is provided to the military for free or almost for free, the quality is said to be extremely low, as medicine and medical equipment are scarce. Moreover, there are not many specialists, not even in the military hospital in Bukavu. Therefore, the hospital can only provide very basic care, having to refer patients in need of more complicated operations or treatment to the *hôpital général de référence* (general hospital). Medical care for military staff in the field is even more deficient: most of the Amani Leo brigades did not meet the bare minimum of one qualified doctor per battalion, with nurses occupying the place of doctors. Additionally, medical personnel in these brigades generally had no facilities, equipment or medicine, and could therefore do little more than providing minimum care and referring patients to civilian medical structures. The field doctors contacted for this research reported to receive only twice or three times a year some medicine from the hierarchy, but this consisted largely of *paracetamol* (a painkiller), while they most needed antibiotics and antimalarials. Due to these deficiencies, soldiers are forced to turn to civilian hospitals, health care centers and dispensaries for treatment and medication. This highlights the extent to which the military's lack of infrastructure and resources renders it dependent on civilians.

(Making a) living together apart

The military's intermingling with civilians renders contacts in all dimensions of social life frequent and variegated. As a consequence, soldiers are no alien or distant appearances, but can be the next-door neighbor whom you borrow a box of matches from late in the evening, the person you are having a chat with in a *nganda* (bar), or the spectator who sits next to you in the *ciné-video*. Since both

8 Allocations of free places to the military on civilian transport services are further discussed in Chapter 5, pp. 144-145.

9 These conclusions are partly based on direct observations made during extensive road travel during ongoing rotations, see Table 8 on p. 26.

10 For example, in December 2010, the 65th brigade arrived in the Minembwe area of the *Hauts Plateaux*, where the climate is cool. Since they had previously been deployed in the area around Baraka next to Lake Tanganyika, which is very hot, many soldiers fell ill. When this brigade descended back to Baraka a few months later, they took along a number of soldiers from the FRF rebel group that had meanwhile been integrated into their ranks. Upon arrival in the Baraka zone, these soldiers immediately got malaria, a disease that does not exist on the *Plateaux*.

11 Information on medical care in the military was gathered in the course of visits to military healthcare structures, see p. 25.

12 There are military *centres de santé* in the following places in South Kivu: Luberizi, Uvira, Baraka and Kamituga. The Bukavu area has four of them, aside from the hospital, which are located in Camp Saio, Bagira, Nyangezi, and Nyangugu. Furthermore, military staff in Bukavu often frequent the police hospital 'Mama Olive'.

soldiers and civilians are involved in the permanent struggle to make ends meet, everyday interactions concern in many cases (potential) economic transactions, whether buying, selling, lending, borrowing, brokerage, bargaining on behalf of third persons, investment, pre-financing, transport, information provision, influence-peddling, the exercise of extra-economic coercion, or (illegal) taxation and the levying of fees. For many civilians, a soldier is the person you sell your tomatoes to at the market, or the one who asks you to buy a pocket light on credit as their salary is in arrears; it is the husband of the woman from whom you buy your *ndazi* (fried dough balls) on your way to school, or the person who owns the *moto* (motorbike) that you drive for transport services. It is also the person who allows you to poach in exchange for a part of the animal, or to operate a brothel without being bothered by the authorities, or from whom you can buy cannabis. Above all, a soldier is the person demanding a part of your firewood or harvest at a roadblock or at the market, or a certain amount of sand from the goldmine where you dig, or a part of the catch when you arrive at the beach after a night of fishing at the lake. To an important extent, then, civilian-military interaction revolves around the generation and distribution of wealth, pointing to the centrality of economic (in)security in the shaping of this interaction and its evaluations.

As highlighted in the previous, there are no well-delineated separate 'civilian' and 'military' spaces, since the FARDC is much less of a 'total institution' than militaries having their own facilities and parallel structures of accommodation, transport, and leisure. The FARDC is fully interwoven into the fabric of Kivutian society. Yet this does not imply that soldiers and their families do not constitute distinct social groups with strong separate forms of identification, discourses and lifestyles. Although living among civilians, military staff and their families are close-knit communities with their own beliefs and routines. They strongly perceive themselves and are perceived to be different from civilians, which is also the reason why the FARDC has been conceptualized as a separate social order herein, albeit one that is relatively open. Importantly, the distinct character of the FARDC is visually marked by soldiers' wearing of uniforms and bearing of arms, which constantly remind people of their military status.

Given that there are no comprehensive rules for FARDC staff in relation to circulating in uniform and with arms, and the existing rules are neither respected nor enforced, one can see uniformed and armed soldiers everywhere at any time in public space, even when there does not appear to be a clear security rationale.¹³ At the same time, officers are frequently found in civilian clothes, even while ostensibly at work. This makes it difficult to tell whether military staff are on-duty or off-duty, whether soldiers are patrolling or loitering, whether commanders are socializing or working. This ambiguity is a central characteristic of civilian-military interaction more generally, with military being a part of society yet apart, and enacting both more 'civilian' and more 'military' roles, while constantly switching from non-coercive to more coercive modes of interaction. The feelings that this elicits among civilians are equally characterized by ambiguity, hovering between familiarity and distrust, sympathy and fear, anticipated advantages and disadvantages, which reflects how the military is at once proximate and distant.

4.2 *Civilian representations of the military*

In the Kivus, 'the military' has multiple meanings that are embedded in different discourses, which are located at varying levels of abstraction. Hence, there are important differences between the abstract concept of 'the military in general' and the military seen as the particular soldiers deployed in a specific place at a specific time. Yet, even 'the military in general' is conceptualized in different ways, corresponding to different rungs of the ladder of abstraction. At the top, we find the general *idea/ideal* of the army, almost in the Platonic sense of 'idea', hence as an ideal-type that existing forms of life can only approximate. One rung lower stands the conceptualization of the military as a particular institution, that is, the FARDC thought of as the whole of the military organization. Below that, hence more towards the concrete end of the spectrum, we find the conceptualization of the military as a collection of soldiers and their spouses, implying a vision of the military primarily in terms of its staff, rather than its tasks, workings and practices as an institution. Far from being neatly delineated, these various conceptualizations of the military are most of the times overlapping. Therefore, within their everyday discourses, and even within the same conversation or sentence, people may easily slide from one conceptualization to the next. This causes statements on 'the military' to often appear contradictory. For instance, many Kivutians widely denounce the FARDC's ill behavior, yet still consider the military to provide basic forms of security, therefore demanding more, rather than less deployment. Such seemingly opposing statements can be clarified by unpacking the notion of 'the military', and carefully analyze what conceptualizations are employed in what contexts.

Despite the difficulties to compartmentalize the various meanings of 'the military', this section presents them separately for analytical purposes. It first explores representations of the military as a collection of soldiers, also looking at images of female soldiers and the spouses of FARDC soldiers, commonly seen as a part of the military by civilians. Subsequently, it analyzes representations of the military conceptualized as an *idea/ideal* and as a general institution, specifically in relation to in how far it is seen to bring peace and to be

¹³ In many situations, like in bars or when circulating by day in relatively safe urban areas, gun possession does not appear to have a direct military function other than general deterrence. I once attended a seminar at the *Université catholique de Bukavu* (Catholic University of Bukavu), where one of the speakers was an FARDC officer. He entered the auditorium with a large following of soldiers who were all armed, prompting the dean of the university to intervene and ask whether they could leave the room or put their arms outside. Furthermore, I once observed how a fully armed soldier entered a hospital to visit a sick family member, which shocked some of the patients in the same ward.

'impartial'. The last part focuses on *evaluations*, hence the normative assessments of specific military units and commanders deployed in civilians' immediate environment, as based on concrete experiences of interaction.

4.2.1 *Civilian representations of military staff*

This section discusses civilian representations of the FARDC conceptualized as a group of soldiers, sometimes including their spouses. It pays specific attention to how the FARDC compares to the military in the Mobutu era in terms of proximity and distance to the population, as well as in relation to its conduct vis-à-vis civilians. It also explores civilians' narratives on the main drivers of this conduct. Subsequently, it looks at how civilians view 'the military in general' from the perspective of fear, trust and reliability, in order to end with a brief discussion of representations of female FARDC soldiers and soldiers' spouses.

Proximity and distance

To many middle-aged civilians in the Kivus, who experienced the Mobutu era, the militarization propelled by the wars has significantly changed the position of the national armed forces in society. In their memories, the military used to be not only much less visible and present, it was also more distant, both physically and socially. As a collaborator of an NGO in Lubero explained: 'In the time of Mobutu, it was rare to see military in town, and impossible to see so many along the roadside as today'.¹⁴ The increased presence of the military in towns and villages is seen to have implications for its interactions with civilians. Importantly, it has opened up new possibilities for friendship: 'Back in the past, one could not have a friend who was a soldier. Now, we are used to it. They are like locals, who are someone's friends. They are easier to approach'.¹⁵ What is likely to have fostered this perceived increase in proximity is not only the more numerous military deployment, but also changes in the composition of the military. As we have seen, the FAZ had very few recruits from the Kivus. Today, an estimated half of the FARDC deployed in the Kivus originate from the provinces themselves.¹⁶ Therefore, many people have a son, brother, sister, uncle, cousin, neighbor or fellow villager serving in the military. Furthermore, many women maintain intimate relations with soldiers, whether as spouses, concubines or temporary girlfriends. This too has increased overall familiarity with the military.

Another development that has generated the idea that the military is closer to the population than in the past is that nowadays, one can see higher-ranking officers everywhere. A civilian authority in Kananda (Fizi) explained: 'Back in the days, it were those with lesser ranks whom we saw, but now, there are colonels everywhere in the village, even generals arrive in the village (...). When a colonel would arrive, he used to be received with great considerations [*grandes considérations*], and a lot of protocol, as this was very special. But now it has become normal. The *grandes considérations* have considerably diminished'.¹⁷ Whereas previously, the sight of a higher officer was exceedingly rare, today, civilians feel that they can encounter a colonel on every corner of the street. And it is not only the quantity of officers that has changed: there is a general feeling that their quality has also been transformed. Today, it is not exceptional for superior officers to be illiterate or poor. An employee of a civil society organization in Uvira stated: 'I have even seen colonels who have no means of transport, but who go on foot. [They have] not even a bicycle! They even come and ask for money from civil society'.¹⁸ In the words of a cultivator in Lemera: 'Nowadays anyone can get the rank of general'.¹⁹ This drop in the overall quality of officers is generally ascribed to the policy of rebel-military integration, which has led to the distribution of ranks and positions without regard to merit and educational criteria. Several informants told stories about friends or family who became officers overnight, when some armed group integrated into the FARDC and needed to inflate its ranks. A *motard* (motor-taxi driver) in Beni testified: 'My friend used to be a *motard* too. One day he called me and said he had become a major. I thought he was kidding (...). He never finished primary school, like me'.²⁰

In sum, it appears that the military has not only become 'closer', but also 'lower' in the eyes of civilians, demystified in a sense. An officer is no longer that arrogant person from Équateur province but someone who could yesterday have been a cow-herder in Masisi or a *motard* in Bukavu. Furthermore, present-day soldiers are described as *mendiants* (beggars), always asking for food and money. In the words of an employee of a civil society organization in Kiwanja: 'In the past they were not so much beggars like today. They would only ask now and then for a *chimboke* [cigarette] (...). The military also used to be more structured back then, more organized. Now it is a chaos'.²¹ This illustrates how both the quality of the personnel and the institution as a whole is seen to have deteriorated. The idea of progressive degeneration is also expressed in the feeling that today, 'there is no longer a real army', as the FARDC is only a façade of an army (*une*

14 Interview with employee of civil society organization, Kiwanja, 07.05.2010.

15 Interview with trader in *divers* (various personal use items), Misisi, 24.02.2010.

16 See footnote 6 on p. 4.

17 Interview with civilian authority, Kananda, 30.11.2010.

18 Interview with employee civil society organization, Uvira, 13.03.2010.

19 Interview with cultivator, Lemera, 14.05.2010.

20 Interview with motor taxi-driver, Butembo, 30.04.2010.

21 Interview with employee civil society organization, Kiwanja, 07.05.2010.

semblance d'une armée). It is an open question in how far these representations are based on a contrast with an idealized past. As we have seen, respect for the military was already quite low during the Mobutu era, and the practices of the FAZ, certainly towards the end of Mobutu's rule, show strong similarities to those of the FARDC. Whether or not there have been profound changes, it is clear that the military profession has at present a very low status in civilians' eyes. This is further evidenced by the disappointing results of a massive recruitment campaign that was launched in August 2012 with the objective to rejuvenate the army. While the campaign had to draw 40,000–60,000 new recruits of between 18 and 25 years (Berghezan, 2014), the response to the call to service the nation was generally disappointing. In July 2013, there were only 10,500 new recruits in the training camps (EUSEC DR Congo, 2013). Analysts ascribed these disappointing results to the bad image of military service, stemming to a large extent from the deplorable social and service conditions of soldiers.²²

Narratives on military (mis)conduct and its causes

The idea that 'there is no longer a real army' is strongly fed by the feeling that the FARDC's efforts to provide security are highly insufficient. Many civilians do not see a substantial impact of the FARDC on their security, or see it as negative, although when it comes to evaluations (hence assessments of specific units in specific contexts), judgments of the FARDC's security performance are more heterogeneous. Especially in insecure operational zones, civilians told that they felt abandoned by the military. As a civilian administrator in Eringeti put it: 'Protection [by the FARDC] is not concrete: it merely rests at the theoretical level but in practice, there is nothing'.²³ Some had little trust that the FARDC would ever ensure their safety: 'We only rely on God for our protection, that is all (...) We are not protected by the army. The military does not think of us, they do not care about us.'²⁴ Others concluded that providing safety to civilians simply does not belong to the military's priorities, for example observing that the soldiers in their village were mostly playing cards, drinking *kanyanga*, or were sleeping when on guard, instead of patrolling or being on the alert to guard against attacks. Indeed, in many areas, patrols, especially at night, were judged to be insufficient and inadequate. In some towns, like Beni, they were even described as being at the root of insecurity, since raising the opportunities for military involvement in nighttime crime. Additionally, the FARDC's reactions to rebel or bandit attacks were reported to be often extremely slow, with the FARDC arriving well after the fact, too late to protect the population or to pursue the assailants. In certain areas, this lack of protection efforts by the FARDC had contributed to the formation of local self-defense groups, consisting mostly of (young) men from the village, sometimes including demobilized Mai Mai.²⁵ In other zones, the presence of the FARDC was denounced by civilians as a burden or even a nightmare, causing the population to rather see the military leave. On the Ubwari peninsula in Lake Tanganyika, where the population suffers from extortion by the navy, a woman professed to believe that 'without soldiers there would be more security',²⁶ stating it would be better to remove all soldiers and policemen and remain with the customary chief only.

While there is consensus that the FARDC's security performance is inadequate, civilians in the Kivus have mixed opinions on the FARDC's overall conduct. This is evidenced by diverging views as to whether the current military behaves better or worse than the *Forces armées zairoises* (FAZ). In areas where the population terribly suffered from FAZ abuses, like certain villages in the Rwenzori district of Beni territory, the FARDC seems generally more appreciated than the FAZ, although this also depends on personal experiences. For instance, in Mutwanga (Beni), a victim of a massive looting spree by the FAZ that had made him lose all his savings, said: 'Morally, they are better today. They treat civilians like their brothers, but their education is not good. They do not have proper military behavior.'²⁷ However, in areas where there was previously little military deployment, or where the military never committed memorable abuses, it is often believed that the FARDC behaves worse. A driver in Bukavu said: 'Even if the FAZ were looters [*pillards*] they were not criminals. They fended for themselves [*ils se débrouillaient*] and they often demanded *madeso ya bana* [lit. "beans for the children": bribes, extortion fees] and they used harsh language [*langage dur*], but it was rare for them to kill someone, and if they did, it was not really accepted. This is a big difference with today. The FAZ were specialists in torture, and experts in pillage, but killings were rare.'²⁸

The feeling that human life has somehow been devalued for today's military, as manifested in its engagement in wanton killings, is widely shared. A *boutique* (large shop)²⁹ owner in Fizi explained: 'With the AFDL,³⁰ the culture of crime has started to implement itself in the military. War crimes were committed and this culture reigns up to today. It has become normal that people are slaughtered by the

22 Peggy Bruguière, 'Intégrer l'armée congolaise : "fierté" ou "désolation"?' , *France 24*, 30 August 2012; Kléber Kungu, 'Recrutement dans les FARDC : La méfiance et la réticence restent de mise chez certains jeunes', *KongoTimes!*, 17 September 2012.

23 Interview with civilian administrator, Eringeti, 17.04.2010.

24 Interview with high school student, Kamanyola, 23.03.2010.

25 These include the Local Defenses around Lemera (Uvira), which were described on pp. 95-96.

26 Interview with female cultivator, Buma, 20.02.2010.

27 Interview with primary school teacher, Mutwanga, 19.04.2010.

28 Interview with driver of civil society organization, Bukavu, 12.05.2010.

29 There are three categories of shops in the Kivus: *boutiques* (larger-scale shops with a wide assortment of merchandise, including relatively expensive items), *kiosques* (smaller scale shops with a limited assortment) and *zemboules* (booths often made of planks where a limited amount of products is sold, e.g., phone credits).

30 The AFDL was the insurgent coalition that toppled Mobutu in 1997 during the First Congo War (1996–1997). See pp. 73-75.

military'.³¹ Many people emphasize that this devaluation of human life is not limited to the military, but has penetrated society as a whole, being at the root of high levels of violent crime. Aside from a more pronounced involvement in killings, the FARDC is also believed to commit rape at a much larger scale than its predecessor forces. This too, is seen to be a legacy of the AFDL era, and is often framed in ethnic terms. In such readings, the genesis of a 'culture of rape' is ascribed to foreign (Rwandan and Ugandan) soldiers, in particular Tutsi. In the words of a woman from a women's organization in Baraka: 'The AFDL were soldiers directed by the Tutsi who started to kill and rape the population. This is the reason for the sexual violence, this is when it started'.³² A local staff member of the MONUSCO confirmed this belief, saying that 'they [Tutsi in the AFDL] encouraged pillage and rape, which since then have become normalized'.³³ These quotes highlight the extent to which representations of the armed forces are colored by ethnic discourses, as will be further explored below. They also reflect the belief, informed by discourses of autochthony, in the exogeneity of evil, which locates the causes for the Congo's troubles uniquely in 'outside forces'.

Although sometimes seen as a contributing factor, ethnicity rarely figures as the predominant or sole cause for the FARDC's ill conduct in civilians' narratives. Rather, bad military behavior is primarily ascribed to the bad living conditions and negligible wages in the armed forces. A primary school principal in Kazimia (Fizi) explained: 'If you don't give food to a child, but ask him to go eat at the neighbors' or out of the thrash can, what will become of that child?'³⁴ What is also seen to play a role is the low quality of recruits, specifically their lack of education. The rank and file are commonly portrayed as a collection of school dropouts, jobless, beggars, liars, criminals, and 'difficult children' who were sent into the military by their parents in order to get rid of them. This has given rise to the idea that military service is a career of the 'last resort' for people who have no other options and who failed in life. Hence, the military is often portrayed in derisory terms as a 'trashcan', a *dépôt des malfaiteurs* (depot of crooks), or a 'refuge for delinquents', who hope to escape persecution by enrolling. Due to the absence of proper training in the armed forces, generally identified as another major cause of the FARDC's bad conduct, the chances that this 'rabble' will improve are believed to be slim. But it are not only 'difficult children' who stay in the armed forces as a last resort. The FARDC is also a refuge for the elderly who should have been retired long ago. There are an estimated 58,000 elderly soldiers in the FARDC, some of whom are physically unfit for military service.³⁵ A female petty trader in Baraka said: 'I saw a *vieux papa* [old guy] on patrol, and I was afraid he would fall down any moment. And I wondered: "are these the people that have to protect us?"'³⁶ Aside from constituting a 'last resort', another reason why people enroll in the FARDC, so it is commonly believed, is the desire to settle personal scores, take revenge or resolve family or community disputes. A female cultivator in Kamanyola (Walungu) explained: 'If a family is in conflict they send one son into the armed forces so they can use him to solve their problem.'³⁷ Civilians are generally convinced that enrolment out of such personalized motives triggers further violence, as it leads to cycles of revenge. A secondary school teacher in the same village described it as follows: 'They join the military after losing their family members. Then they start killing themselves once they are in uniform. In this manner, revenge begets revenge and the killing never stops'.³⁸

In sum, civilians identify a host of factors as being at the root of the FARDC's ill behavior, ranging from motives for enrolment to a lack of education and bad living conditions. When it comes to officers, this list is further extended with low morality. Officers in the FARDC are generally portrayed as uneducated, greedy and power-hungry businessmen and politicians, men with *gros ventres* (big bellies) acting primarily out of self-interest rather than that of the citizens and the fatherland they are supposed to defend. A baker in Bukavu commented: 'The military is transformed into a military of businessmen. They do business, they are always busy enriching themselves'.³⁹ Similarly, a human rights defender in Kanyabayonga said: 'They left the military in the hands of people who do not have a military vocation, but who are primarily businessmen. They are more into business [*affaires*] than into military business [*affaires militaires*]'.⁴⁰ In the light of these negative representations, it is not surprising that civilians generally lack trust in the military.

*Fear and trust: 'Moto asimbi mandoki batunaka mbula na ye te'*⁴¹

Arguably, the proximity of the military and the resulting normalization of frequent interaction have reduced immediate fear for soldiers. While civilians are certainly suspicious of soldiers and their motives, they do not make the impression of becoming automatically engulfed by fear whenever they see one, especially when it concerns a familiar face. A female cultivator from Mulenge explained: 'We do not fear

31 Interview with *boutique* owner, Fizi *centre*, 20.05.2010.

32 Interview with woman from local women's organization, Baraka, 15.02.2010.

33 Interview with national staff member MONUSCO base, Nyamilima, 03.04.2010.

34 Interview with primary school principal, Kazimia, 20.11.2010.

35 Interview with EUSEC staff member, Kinshasa, 02.11.2013.

36 Interview with female petty trader, Baraka, 18.11.2010.

37 Interview with female cultivator, Kamanyola, 23.03.2010.

38 Interview with secondary school teacher, Kamanyola, 23.03.2010.

39 Interview with owner of bakery, Bukavu, 17.01.2011.

40 Interview with human rights defender, Kanyabayonga, 09.04.2010.

41 Those who carry a gun, one cannot ask their age (see below for an explanation of the origin of this phrase).

them. We know they are thieves, they steal at night, but we do not fear them'.⁴² At a market in Kalingi (Fizi territory), a group of female cultivators explained: 'We can arrive at the market without problems. The soldiers do not bother us on the way to the market (...) We do not like them but we are not afraid for them. We only fear them at night.'⁴³ However, almost all civilians conveyed the feeling that while the military can become close, and is perhaps not immediately to fear, soldiers are ultimately unreliable. They remain strangers, belonging to a different world. Furthermore, when something happens, for example when one gets into a dispute with a soldier, they might change face and suddenly turn violent. Therefore, one cannot ask too many questions or be too critical towards a soldier, as this may suddenly provoke them. As many of my interlocutors said, referring to the lyrics of a song by Koffi Olomide (a famous Congolese singer): '*Moto asimbi mandoki batunaka mbula na ye te* [those who carry a gun, one cannot ask their age]'.⁴⁴

Indeed, many civilians conveyed the belief that soldiers can transform their behavior in a sudden and radical manner, introducing an element of unpredictability. As a primary school teacher in Fizi stated: 'They are pastors during the day, but carnivores at night'.⁴⁵ Soldiers may behave disciplined, quiet and polite at one moment, but turn into thieves, robbers, looters, murderers and rapists in the next. In the words of a *chef de cité* (local urban authority): 'They are always on the move [en vagabondage], they circulate in the streets with arms, saying that they can be attacked any moment. But these are pretexts. Even they themselves, they can transform into bandits any moment'.⁴⁶ These (imagined) military metamorphoses are often linked to a combat/non-combat distinction, reflecting a strong awareness among civilians that there are fundamental differences between the nature of soldiers in everyday settings, especially when encountered on an individual basis, and the military's behavior in situations of combat or other upheaval, especially when in groups. An old man in Bwala village explained: 'You see, when soldiers fight, they become different. They become like wild animals [wanyama kali] and they start destroying everything in their way. Once they see him [the enemy], they change. You better go and hide.'⁴⁷ Metamorphoses are sometimes also believed to result from excessive alcohol or drugs consumption. In this respect, a woman in Lubero commented: 'They don't know how to hold back, they are there for life or for death. They go all the way [jusqu'au bout] in all respects.'⁴⁸ Concerning the navy, similar drastic transformations were reported the moment they set out on the water. As a fisherman in Kyavinyonge said: 'Here in town they are all right. But once they are on the lake they change their nature and they become worse than rebels'.⁴⁹

Although the ever present possibility of a metamorphosis generates strong distrust, this latter feeling appears to remain in the background most of the time, creating a lingering unease that only becomes salient in certain circumstances. However, this latent distrust makes that civilians at times feel that their proximity to soldiers is somehow treacherous. For example, a word that regularly popped up in relation to the military was 'hypocrisy'. What seems to strongly reinforce distrust towards soldiers are the military's frequent redeployments, generating the idea that relations with them are not stable. A shopkeeper in Fizi *centre* explained: 'I might give him [the soldier] credit but tomorrow he can be gone'.⁵⁰ Likewise, a female petty trader in Kirumba said: 'They stay in your house but the next day they are gone. And they still owe you'.⁵¹ Another element that nourishes distrust, but also annoyance, is the awareness that soldiers constantly claim a special status, and impose themselves on civilians. This would testify to a specific 'mentality' among soldiers that can best be described as one of superiority, exceptionality and of being untouchable, leading to evasions or violations of the formal and informal rules that apply to all other members of society. Hence, soldiers are believed to 'always place themselves above the law' and 'always impose themselves on civilians'. Furthermore, they constantly claim privileged treatment, whether in relatively insignificant everyday situations or in relation to more important matters. Thus, they refuse to wait in line, always ask for a place in the minibus where they can stretch their legs, claim exemptions from taxation or ignore court orders. This exceptionalism is also manifested in the belief that soldiers hardly ever apologize to civilians, or admit that they have committed an error in the first place.

Distrust towards the military is also fed by the FARDC's perceived lack of transparency. Civilians in the Kivus commonly convey the feeling that no matter how well you know a soldier, they will always have some secrets. A waitress in Uvira said: 'We, as civilians, can't know all their secrets (...) So we cannot know all their reasons.'⁵² A man in Kamandi similarly stated: 'They sometimes pass by, but we don't know what they are doing. They do not tell. This is their secret.'⁵³ In many cases, the military's lack of transparency is linked to an experienced deficiency in information provision. In almost all research sites, complaints were heard that the military do not inform civilians about its

42 Interview with female cultivator from Mulenge at Katobo market, 15.03.2010.

43 Interview with group of female cultivators, Kalingi market, 08.12.2010.

44 The narrow meaning of this expression, which figured in a song written shortly after Kinshasa was engulfed by the *kadogo* of the AFDL, refers to child soldiers pretending to be adults. However, my interlocutors used it in a wider sense, as conveying the message that one should not ask too many questions to the military, but rather accept the way things are, lest soldiers get provoked.

45 Interview with primary school teacher, Fizi *centre*, 01.12.2010.

46 Interview with *chef de cité* of a town in Rutshuru territory, 04.02.2012.

47 Interview with *vieux-sage*, Bwala, 30.11.2010.

48 Interview with woman from local women's organization, Lubero, 29.04.2010.

49 Interview with fisherman, Kyavinyonge, 25.04.2010.

50 Interview with shop owner, Fizi *centre*, 18.02.2011.

51 Interview with female petty trader, Kirumba, 03.05.2010.

52 Interview with waitress, Uvira, 20.03.2011.

53 Interview with cultivator, Kamandi, 04.05.2010.

activities, as partly reflected in frequent references to ‘military secrets’. Another dimension of the lack of transparency surrounding the military are the difficulties to identify those in uniform. One common complaint, presented as a big difference with the Zaire era, is that nowadays, there are so many different armed groups and actors, that it has become difficult to tell them apart. As a schoolteacher in Mutwanga explained: ‘It was easy to recognize the military of Mobutu. Today, there is the presence of several groups of wrongdoers [*des inciviques*] and political factions. There is total confusion [*C’est la confusion totale*]’.⁵⁴

While the information given to civilians is generally seen as insufficient, there is also deep skepticism about the information that the military does relay, especially concerning security matters. For instance, a civil society activist in Uvira expressed strong doubts about the veracity of the FARDC’s declarations on the numbers of captured and killed FDLR⁵⁵ rebels: ‘The population does not believe in the given statistics, even regarding the photos they [FARDC] have presented. Are these images not fabricated and are these numbers reliable? There is a lot of mistrust, there are lots of questions’.⁵⁶ This skepticism is the product of multiple factors, including a fevered war zone atmosphere in which security information is manipulated by belligerents as a strategy of warring, the difficulties of crosschecking information provided by the military, and a long tradition of distrust towards information relayed by the authorities, partly as a result of decades of state propaganda under Mobutu. The general doubts about the veracity of official information open up space on *radio trottoir*⁵⁷ for more outlandish conspiracy theories and beliefs, which tend to further erode trust in the state institutions. For example, the skepticism surrounding the Amani Leo operations was so big that stories circulated that the FARDC dressed up corpses in FDLR uniforms in order to present evidence of military successes. Other rumors had it that the operations were simply a cover for an invasion of the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF). As will be illustrated in more detail below, the experienced lack of accurate information on military matters and the strong circulation of rumors create an atmosphere of generalized uncertainty surrounding ‘the truth’, including in relation to the identity of the perpetrators of abuses. This fosters further ambiguity in civilian-military interaction, since civilians do not know whether the same military professing to protect them on the front stage might plot ambushes and robberies behind their back.

FARDC soldiers, then, appear to have two faces: on the one hand, they seem relatively close, accessible, and low, ‘just soldiers’. On the other hand, they make the impression of being distant, unreliable, secretive, and potentially dangerous. This mixture of sometimes contradictory representations elicits a profound ambiguity among civilians, as is evidenced by expressions like ‘we collaborate closely, but with a lot of caution [*avec beaucoup de reserves*]’⁵⁸ or ‘the relations [between civilians and the military] are ambiguous’.⁵⁹ With regard to the rank and file, civilians appear torn between despise and pity. Many blame the government or the military hierarchy for the miserable conditions in which soldiers live, rather than the soldiers themselves. ‘We feel sorry for them, they are used as marionettes’⁶⁰ remarked a woman from a civil society organization. Hence, a measure of sympathy for the lower ranks, often ushering in the feeling that one has the duty to help them, is not uncommon. An elderly woman in Katobo (Uvira territory) said: ‘They come and ask for food. They are hungry, I can see. They don’t give them any food. What can I do? They are also human beings, we cannot let them starve. So I give some food.’⁶¹ Yet, this sympathy often gets overshadowed by enduring annoyance about the military’s self-attributed privileges, including ‘the right’ to all sorts of exemptions, including violations of the rules. These characteristics are also associated with soldiers’ spouses.

Dangerous women: female soldiers and spouses of soldiers

There appear to be few differences between civilian representations of male soldiers and those of *Personnel militaire féminin* (PMF, female military personnel), except for the fact that representations of PMF are stronger sexualized and gendered (see also Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013: 16–17). PMF are generally depicted as women of ‘loose morals’ who drink and smoke, which is regarded as behavior typical of prostitutes. Furthermore, they are irresponsible as they neglect their children and family, and therefore fail to live up to their duties as mothers and spouses. Indeed, PMF often take their babies and small children with them on deployment, as they have no other place to leave them, and the military does not offer childcare facilities. Other images surrounding PMF are that they are coarse, badly educated and dangerous, in particular as they are perceived to seduce civilian men and then harass them. Moreover, they are often perceived to threaten the women who are related to the men whom they fancy, given their alleged extremely jealous nature. A man in Lubero commented: ‘Civilian boys take these women in order to engage in debauchery with them [*faire la débauche*], but then afterwards they [PMF] start harassing them.’⁶² Similarly, a female human rights defender in Butembo said: ‘Men are afraid for them, they are not stable. They have no harmony in their family life. Their children are often in the streets (....) They are irresponsible’.⁶³

54 Interview with primary school teacher, Mutwanga, 19.04.2010.

55 The FDLR is a Rwandan Hutu-led rebel group. See p. 76.

56 Interview with employee of civil society organization, Uvira, 15.11.2010.

57 Literally ‘pavement radio’, referring to the rumors machine, as explained on p. 31.

58 Interview with *vieux-sage*, Mutwanga, 19.04.2010.

59 Interview with civil society activist, Uvira, 15.11.2010.

60 Interview with female employee of civil society organization, Bukavu, 11.02.2010.

61 Interview with female cultivator, Katobo market, 15.03.2010.

62 Interview with secretary of civilian authority, Lubero, 10.04.2010.

63 Interview with female employee of civil society organization, Butembo, 24.04.2010.

Due to their bad reputation, PMF are generally distrusted by civilian women, who feel an unbridgeable distance to them. Some stated that this distance is felt even stronger precisely because they are all women, creating the false expectation that PMF should somehow be closer to them than male soldiers. In the words of the mentioned human rights activist from Butembo: ‘This should be an occasion for us, women, to contact the armed forces, but remarkably, it’s the opposite. They are even meaner than the male soldiers.’⁶⁴ Other women shared this analysis, saying they found it very difficult to approach PMF, and that they were afraid for them. In the village of Kashege (Lubero), a young woman stated: ‘The male soldiers always salute us. But they [PMF] do not even salute us if they pass by. So how can we approach them?’⁶⁵

Similar to images of the military, a distinction appeared between on the one hand, abstract representations of PMF inscribed in general discourses, and on the other hand, evaluations based on concrete experiences, which could be both more and less negative than representations. In many cases, evaluations appeared to be partly shaped by representations concerning whether female soldiers are a desirable phenomenon in general. For instance, a religious leader in Kyavinyonge, who had just stated that female soldiers were against the teachings of the church, said: ‘The population here also has a bad opinion of PMF. Last time, one [PMF] shot dead a civilian near the office of the DEMIAP⁶⁶ [military intelligence agency]. She was harassing the population and then she shot. Since then, we don’t want them [PMF] here anymore’.⁶⁷

The spouses of FARDC soldiers, in particular those of the lower-ranked, are represented in an equally negative manner. Similar to PMF, these women are seen as of low standing, being uneducated types from the lower strata of society. Furthermore, they are believed to have ‘loose morals’, being girls from the street who prefer easy money but had little other options than to follow a soldier around. Some are also thought to have chosen for a military husband as they were in trouble. Having a partner in the military, so they are believed to have reasoned, would help them ‘solve’ their problems, since allowing them to threaten their opponents with force. In the perception of civilians, these troubled personal backgrounds explain to a large extent why spouses of FARDC soldiers have adopted the same mentality and display the same characteristics as their husbands. Similar to FARDC soldiers, they always claim special treatment and violate the law and social norms, for instance by not paying taxes, by stealing from civilians or by helping their husbands with executing criminal activities, like by carrying and selling looted goods. In Kirumba, a member of the local butchers’ association told: ‘These women place themselves above the law. They refuse to slaughter their livestock at the slaughterhouse, and they do not pay taxes. Then they sell the meat under the price of \$3/kilo at the low-price market [*marché de moindre prix*]. This is a danger to health, we cannot control the quality of that meat’.⁶⁸ Another butcher added that these women were selling under the standard price as the meat came from stolen livestock. Such allegations of involvement in the sale of stolen or illegal products circulate widely in the Kivus. In several research sites, spouses of FARDC soldiers were believed to sell produce at the market that they or their husbands had obtained by uprooting the fields and garden plots of civilians at night, or by cutting down bunches of bananas from their trees. Furthermore, women of FARDC soldiers were reported to be involved in the trade in hemp, illegal fish, and in some places, ammunition (see also Laudati, 2013: 41; UNSC, 2011: 38, 42).

Concerning evaluations of spouses, or assessments based on concrete experiences with particular groups of women, these were in many cases as negative as the representations described above. An important reason for this are the various everyday conflicts between these women and those from local communities, in particular around the water wells. In many areas in the Kivus, there is a scarcity of water points, implying that women often have to queue and wait their turn. However, spouses of the FARDC are said to often not respect the ‘first come first serve’ principle, but to jump the line and fetch water first, pushing other women aside. This leads to arguments and tensions. In some cases, like in Baraka, it was said to occasionally even result in fighting. While arguments between women around the water wells are common, and also occur when no military spouses are involved, the latter are said to aggravate conflicts. In particular, if things get out of hand, they threaten to get their husband, making the atmosphere very grim. Furthermore, as the wives of FARDC soldiers tend to stick closely together, they appear like a closed community that is difficult to get access to, and that can become very threatening when rallying collectively behind the cause of one of their members.

However, evaluations of specific groups of FARDC spouses were occasionally also found to be more positive than general representations. For example, in communities where these women were not perceived to compete with local economic operators on unequal terms, like when refusing to pay taxes or when selling stolen products, the image was more often positive (see also Van Damme and Verweijen, 2012; Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, forthcoming). This seemed especially the case where economic interdependencies existed, for instance where women of FARDC soldiers were selling cheap charcoal in communities that do not depend on charcoal production for generating livelihoods, or where they worked as temporary agricultural laborers in a context of labor shortage, like at harvest time. Where few

64 Interview with female employee of civil society organization, Butembo, 24.04.2010.

65 Interview with female cultivator, Kashege, 03.05.2010.

66 The *Détection militaire des activités anti-patrie* (DEMIAP, Military Detection of Anti-Patriotic Activities) was the main military intelligence service under Laurent-Désiré Kabila. Although the present military intelligence services are called *État-major des renseignements militaires* (EMRM, General Staff of Military Intelligence) and many functions of the DEMIAP are nowadays executed by the *Département de la sécurité des frontières* (DSF, Department of Border Security), the name DEMIAP continues to be in popular use.

67 Interview with religious leader, Kyavinyonge, 26.04.2010.

68 Interview with butcher, Kirumba, 02.05.2010.

economic interdependencies existed, and there was little contact, but also little economic competition, spouses of FARDC soldiers were more often described in primarily ethno-regional terms, with local women for example highlighting that they spoke a different language or had different customs. This illustrates the complex interaction between the multitude of factors shaping civilian evaluations of the military, in particular the fact that the salience and effects of modes of identification often depend on interactions with other elements.⁶⁹

4.2.2 *Civilian representations of the military as institution and idea(l)*

At the start of this chapter, it was explained that 'the military' at a high level of abstraction can be either conceptualized as the abstract *idea* or ideal-type of the military, or, somewhat more concretely, as the FARDC seen as an official institution. Since these two senses of the military are closely related and sometimes overlap, they are jointly discussed in this section. For instance, in both of these conceptualizations, the military is closely associated with notions like 'constitutional mandate', 'government' and 'nation'. These connotations are also invoked when contrasting the military, as government forces, with 'rebels' in a general sense (rather than as referring to specific rebel groups). When speaking of the military in relation to non-state armed actors, civilians' descriptions tend to strongly verge towards the *idea/ideal* of the military. By contrast, when discussing whether the military is partial or impartial, civilians appear to have mostly the specific institution of the FARDC in mind. This shows that although the notions of the military as an official institution and the military as an idea/ideal sometimes overlap, different discursive contexts might cause them to diverge.

The military as state/government forces

The fieldwork showed that populations all over the Kivus readily associate the FARDC with the notion of 'government', as evidenced by two facts. First, the FARDC is popularly called *jeshi ya serikali* (military of the government) or simply *serikali* (government), (in French: *les gouvernementaux/forces gouvernementales*). This designation is in part used for distinguishing them from non-state armed groups, often referred to simply as *jeshi* (army) (or when it are Mai Mai *jeshi ya Mai Mai*) or *barebelles* and sometimes *bajambazi*. Second, in continuity to the FAZ,⁷⁰ there is a strong belief that the government in Kinshasa has a direct impact on the way the military behaves and operates. Most of my interlocutors appeared to believe that the military is directly controlled by the central government, which guides and is responsible for its practices. A woman working for a development NGO in Beni stated: 'Nowadays, they are military during the day, and thieves and assassins at night. This is a system created by the authorities; it is the will of the authorities. Everything is blocked at the level of the central government'.⁷¹ Similarly, a hotel receptionist commented that 'the FARDC is an army of the government, not of the people'.⁷²

The FARDC, as 'government forces', are strongly associated with the notions of 'country', 'nation' and 'state', as became clear when discussing the main tasks of the military. Almost all of my interlocutors stated that the military's two principal tasks⁷³ are 'protecting citizens/civilians⁷⁴ and their goods' (Swahili: *ku chungu (ba)raia na mali yake/yao*, French: *protéger la population et leurs biens*) and 'defending territorial integrity' (*défendre l'intégrité territoriale*), in Swahili often expressed as 'protecting the borders of the country' (*ku kinga mipaka ya inchi*).⁷⁵ The strong association of the military with territorial integrity is important given that this last notion is a fundamental pillar of Congolese nationalism (Englebert, 2003). This must partly be seen in the light of representations of past wars as imperialist attempts to 'balkanize' or dismember the country. From this perspective, the military is a bulwark against imperialist-driven efforts at the annexation of certain parts of the Congo. In particular, it has to prevent the annexation of the Kivus by a future 'Hima/Tutsi empire' led by Rwanda, a conspiracy theory that has widespread currency in the Kivus (Jackson, 2006b: 108). The resulting close imagined connection between the FARDC and territorial integrity partly explains why the military, at least the *idea* of the military, has an important place in Congolese discourses on nationalism and patriotism.

As pointed out by Englebert (2003), the idea of the state, if not its actual embodiment, continues to be highly valued in Congolese society. Englebert identifies a number of reasons for this remarkable tenacity of predilection for the state. The three most important of these are: first, the state's continuing function as an extremely important conduit of resources; second, the fact that the juridical sovereign nation-state is still the sole type of political entity considered to be legitimate⁷⁶ in the international arena, and therefore a necessity in a context

69 The ways in which civilian evaluations of military practices are shaped is further detailed in the next part, in particular pp. 129-131.

70 Popular perceptions of the relations between the FAZ and the political center were discussed on p. 69.

71 Interview with employee civil society organization, Beni, 14.04.2010.

72 Interview with hotel receptionist, Butembo, 26.04.2010.

73 As will be explained below, a third task that is generally ascribed to the military is that of 'bringing peace'.

74 In French, people spoke about *la population*, but in (Congolese) Swahili *baraa*, which means both 'citizens' and 'civilians' when contrasted with 'military'.

75 This interpretation of the military's tasks reflects in part the FARDC's constitutional mandate, which is 'the defense of the integrity of the national territory and the borders'. Additionally, 'under conditions determined by the law' the armed forces 'participate, in times of peace, in economic, social and cultural development as well as in the protection of the population and their goods' (Constitution de la République Démocratique du Congo, 2006, article 187, *author's translation*). Note that according to the constitution, 'securing the population and their goods' is the primary mandate of the police (article 182).

76 The legitimacy of the state as derived from juridical sovereignty should not be confused with the legitimacy of state actors in everyday settings and relations,

of dependence on foreign resources; and third, perceptions of the state as a perennial structure, in part because of the international legitimacy granted by statehood. In an extremely volatile environment like that of the Kivus, in which the fortunes of those in power are uncertain and power configurations are continually in flux, the existence of the state, no matter its level of actual penetration or performance, is one of the few certainties left. The idea that there is a Congolese state today and there will likely be one tomorrow is a source of psychological security in an otherwise chaotic and unpredictable world. It gives a minimum of certitude about the nature of the political order and sources of authority, while also constituting a framework of signification. The idea of the state helps making sense of the world, framing and ordering it, for example by distinguishing armed actors connected to state forces from those defined as rebels.

Similar observations apply to the idea of the military, which was found to have great attraction among Kivutians. In all research sites, people professed to have high expectations of the military, singling it out as crucial for bringing security and peace, in spite of rather disappointing experiences with the armed forces up to now. Roughly two-thirds of the informants contacted during the first round of fieldwork stated to believe that the FARDC (occasionally) contributes to their protection. This is corroborated by research conducted by Oxfam in 2012, which found that a similar share (two-thirds) of the communities they contacted believed that the FARDC contributes to enhancing their security, albeit irregularly and imperfectly (Van Damme, 2012: 12, see also Cooper, 2014: 16). An important reason for these relatively positive assessments and elevated expectations might be that the idea of the military is directly associated with the idea of 'the state'. Consequently, the same connotations, hopes and expectations surrounding 'the state' are projected onto the military. This includes associations with juridical sovereignty and international legitimacy, which are actively fostered by the military's conspicuous role in parades on national holidays. Furthermore, similar to other parts of the state apparatus, the military is expected to be a relatively stable conduit of resources, having more or less guaranteed access to both the official and the non-official resources that are channeled through the state. Additionally, and again similar to the idea of the state in general, the idea of the military is attractive as it serves as a tool of sense-making, allowing people for instance to comprehend acts of violence as 'military operations against rebel groups'. These various associations make that the idea of the military, as a frame of reference that is associated with a perennial and internationally recognized structure, is ultimately a source of psychological security. Therefore, despite the mediocre performance of the FARDC, the idea of the military continues to be held in high esteem. This may appear counter-intuitive, as it contradicts representations of the FARDC as unpredictable and predatory. Yet, it should be kept in mind that the primary conceptualization of the military that is activated here is the *idea(l)* of the military, which differs from the actual institution of the FARDC. Consequently, the mentioned psychological security is of a different nature than the everyday security or insecurity generated by the FARDC's practices. Such differences in conceptualization are also at play when civilians compare the FARDC to non-state armed forces, highlighting the need to always analyze discourses in relation to the context in which they have been expressed.

The FARDC: just another rebel force?

In popular and academic circles alike, it is often contended that for the population of the Kivus, there is almost no difference between the FARDC and rebel forces (e.g., Autesserre, 2012: 13). However, the findings of this research contradict these assertions, showing that Kivutians clearly distinguish between these two sets of actors. From the field data, it did not only emerge that rebels and government forces are represented in different manners, evoking different associations, there also appears to be a general preference for the presence of the FARDC over that of the rebels, in particular at the level of abstract representations. However, at the level of evaluations, hence when speaking of specific rebel groups and specific FARDC units, a more mixed picture appears.

For example, in some parts of Fizi, the arrival of the strongly disliked Amani Leo brigades in 2009 led to a surge in popular approval for the Mai Mai group of Yakotumba. In the gold mining area of Misisi (in Fizi), a boutique owner commented: 'The population is now discovering that it is better to remain with the Mai Mai than with the government forces'.⁷⁷ Fieldwork on the *Hauts Plateaux* in December 2010, just after the strongly disliked 652nd brigade withdrew, revealed that the majority of people from the Banyamulenge community preferred to remain under the wings of the rebels of the FRC. By contrast, in some areas of Lubero, for example around Luofu visited in April 2010, interviewees expressed a strong appreciation for FARDC presence. This appeared to be related to both the recent arrival of a quite popular battalion and terrible abuses committed by the FDLR in previous months. Yet in other areas nearby, where unpopular and ill-disciplined FARDC units were deployed, people stated to see 'no differences between the FARDC and the rebel forces'.⁷⁸ Similar to evaluations of FARDC units, it emerged that situational assessments of rebel groups are shaped by a wide confluence of factors, including socio-economic, security and ethnic identity-based considerations. For instance, armed groups seen to express what is framed as the collective identity of communities, or to have established relative security and stability, may be evaluated in a more positive manner relative to FARDC units than those who are perceived to lack these features.

As opposed to evaluations, representations of rebels were found to be less diverse. When speaking about rebel groups at a general level,

although the notions are not unrelated. Being affiliated to the state enhances political actors' standing, in part as it increases their (perceived) access to state resources, hence their potential for the redistribution of goods, services and favors.

⁷⁷ Interview with boutique owner, Misisi, 25.02.2010.

⁷⁸ Interview with notable, Kashege, 03.05.2010.

my interlocutors presented them in much more negative terms than the national armed forces. The reasons they gave for their stated preference for the FARDC corroborate the idea that the military is thought of as somehow a more stable structure (e.g., 'you never know with these armed groups, they come and go'⁷⁹). This image of stability is related to the awareness that the FARDC has a hierarchy with officially recognized and publicly known leaders that can be approached ('you know, we don't really know the leaders of the rebels, we cannot easily approach them'⁸⁰). These traits cause the military to be perceived as overall more accountable ('if something happens, in case of the army we can go to the government, but in case of the rebels, there is nowhere we can go'⁸¹). This last representation contradicts the widely circulating image of the FARDC that highlights its impunity for abuses. Again, different conceptualizations are at the root of these contradicting representations, for the impunity image relates mostly to the military seen as an institution, and not as an idea(I), which is the dominant frame that is invoked when the military is compared to rebel forces. Added up, these various associations make that the FARDC emerges as 'a more certain source of in/security' than non-state armed groups.

An additional explanation for the articulated preference for the military over armed groups might lie in the fact that the military functions as a focal point of hope for peace. When enquiring about the tasks of the military [*kazi ya jeshi*], informants referred primarily to its responsibilities as 'protector of the people' and 'defender of the country', but often also highlighted its role as 'bringer of peace'.⁸² Even in zones that had terribly suffered from military abuses, strong hopes were expressed that the government forces would eventually establish peace. These hopes made the impression of being a sort of psychological survival mechanism: after the many different armed factions and militias that Kivutians have seen come and go, and that have wreaked havoc upon the population, people simply want to believe (almost against reason) that the national armed forces are somehow different and will eventually establish peace. This somewhat resembles the high expectations that the Congolese continue to have of the state in general, regardless its actual performance past and present (Trefon, 2009).

The process of 'bringing peace' (*ku leta amani*, which is different from 'peace' as a general state), at least when evoked in the context of armed forces,⁸³ is generally perceived as requiring both political and military efforts, initiated at the level of the government. In the views of most people contacted, bringing peace entails an end to armed group activity, as well as addressing the underlying causes of violence. Thus, strong associative links are established between bringing peace and ending armed group activity, and inversely, between war (*vita*) and armed groups. This, in turn, gives rise to the binary (idealized) opposites of armed groups/war vs. the national military/peace.⁸⁴ An end to armed group activity was generally also mentioned as a prerequisite for 'bringing security' (*kuleta usalama*), which was commonly seen to require quite concrete changes, like an end to banditry, armed group activity and extortion, as well as the improvement of socio-economic conditions. Hence, 'security' and 'insecurity' were commonly framed as everyday notions, produced by factors in the immediate environment, whereas 'peace', especially when contrasted with 'war' and spoken about in the context of armed forces, appeared as a relatively abstract state. In sum, peace/war on the one hand and security/insecurity on the other, are notions that, at least in certain contexts, are located at different levels of abstraction, and therefore connected to different registers of meaning. This renders it possible that the FARDC is seen as a (potential) bringer of peace and protection at one level, and as a source of everyday insecurity at another. Such seeming contradictions also imbue representations of the (im)partiality of the military.

Military (im)partiality: Muguu ulioumwa na nyoka ugopa muzuzi

Chapter 3 described the emergence of a polarized in-group/out-group distinction in the Kivus between on the one hand 'Rwandophones/Tutsi' and on the other hand, self-styled 'autochthones', which has become politicized and instrumentalized for violent mobilization in different historical epochs. Furthermore, it was explained how the integration into a single military of rebel factions perceived to be mobilized along antagonistic identity lines (notably the RCD, framed as Rwandophone-dominated, and Mai Mai groups, portrayed as defending the rights of autochthones), has contributed to fostering the impression that the new military is not impartial. It was also described how the images of partiality that emerged from the *brassage* process were reinforced by the 2009 integration of a large

79 Interview with young man, Kamandi, 04.05.2010.

80 Interview with petty trader, Lulimba, 10.03.2011. It should be noted that this person possibly had the FDLR in mind, and spoke in a context where this rebel force had largely withdrawn to the bush due to the Amani Leo operations. In other situations, however, for example where Mai Mai groups are largely recruited from and live close to the local population, rebel leaders can be relatively accessible.

81 Interview with woman from Mutarule, contacted in Uvira 23.03.2010.

82 As we shall see on pp. 117-118, these three roles correspond to the idealized notions of soldiering held by soldiers themselves.

83 The term *amani* is also used in everyday situations as relating to notions of harmony and order, with an expression like *tunakosa amani* (we lack peace) referring to social perturbations of different kinds. What is intended here is the notion of 'peace' when contrasted with 'war', as explicitly relating to armed conflict.

84 A population-based survey in the eastern Congo carried out by the International Centre for Transitional Justice (Vinck et al., 2008) roughly confirms these findings. When asked who could bring peace, an overwhelming majority of the respondents (85.6%) said this was the task of the government (idem: 37), an institution the FARDC is strongly associated with. The survey also confirms the strong association between war and non-state armed groups. To the question who should be held accountable for war crimes, the most frequent answer was militia leaders (56%) and militias in general (44%), while the government forces were mentioned only by 13% (idem: 41-42). Although accountability for crimes is a different question than responsibility for war, this finding does confirm that war and violence, as general notions, are predominantly associated with armed groups, and not with the idea(I) of the national armed forces.

number of Rwandophone troops from the CNDP and to a lesser extent PARECO, who came to dominate the command chain in the Kivus. The fieldwork indicated that these developments also strongly impacted civilian representations of the armed forces. For example, a prominent idea held by the more educated strata of self-styled autochthonous groups was that there is not one, but two militaries in the Congo: one pertaining to the Congolese government and a Rwandophone/Rwandan/Tutsi military. This fits into a teleological narrative about the increasing 'Rwandophonization' of the armed forces, which strongly draws upon the 'foreign invasion' trope that is a hallmark of the autochthony discourse as employed in the Kivus (Jackson, 2006b).⁸⁵ In this ethno-military imaginary, the 'infiltration' of the military by 'Rwandans' is a crucial phase in a wider plan for the invasion and annexation of the eastern Congo by Rwanda and its imperialist backers, notably the USA. This narrative is based on the assumption that there used to be a 'pure' Congolese military under Mobutu, which was subsequently 'infiltrated' or 'invaded' through the incorporation of Tutsi troops under Kabila *père* (Laurent-Désiré Kabila). This brought a different 'culture', 'mentality' and 'morality' into the military, introducing and normalizing the practices of rape and killings. The next phase of this foreign infiltration scheme unfolded in the post-settlement era, with the creation of the FARDC. Since the ex-RCD, considered a 'Rwandan puppet', managed to obtain most of the important command positions in the east, Rwandophone/Rwandan domination became entrenched. The 2009 integration of the CNDP (and to a lesser extent PARECO) was but the logical next step in the Rwandan 'colonization' of the Congolese military. This specific interpretation of CNDP integration appeared to be relatively widespread, as evidenced by the currency of the old joke that FARDC stands for *Forces armées rwandaises en DR Congo* (Rwandan Armed Forces in the DR Congo) at the time of the fieldwork (see also Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c: 574).

However, such radical interpretations were not shared across the board. Large sections of the 'autochthons' contacted had more moderate interpretations and assessments of the Rwandophone presence within the military, even though these were generally also negative. At the background of this plays that many Kivutians have traumatic memories of massacres and other forms of violence framed as having an explicitly ethnic character. For example, in the regions of Fizi, Uvira and Mwenga, people hold Tutsi troops responsible for a number of spectacular massacres that occurred during the First and Second Congo Wars (e.g., in Lusenda, Makobola and Kasika, see UNOHCHR, 2010: 174–186). This past violence continues to affect representations of Tutsi troops today, even when these are now in the government forces. As one of my interlocutors stated: 'Each time I see a soldier with that morphology [i.e., Tutsi], I have to think of the one who cut off the head of my little brother and threw it into the water.'⁸⁶ Former Mai Mai sympathizers have vivid memories of how they were discriminated and despised by the RCD leadership: 'They [RCD soldiers] would approach you and say "do you want to become the neighbor of God?" (...) They also said: "I have bought this bullet for 20 dollars but I can give it to you for free".'⁸⁷ As can be expected, a military believed to be dominated by the same leadership is strongly distrusted. Bad memories become especially painful when the very troops who committed atrocities are redeployed in the same area, this time wearing an FARDC uniform. This was for instance the case with ex-CNDP troops deployed as part of the FARDC to Kiwanja (Rutshuru territory) in 2009, where they had committed a massacre only a few months earlier.⁸⁸

After the accelerated integration of the ex-CNDP and the ex-PARECO in 2009, existing negative representations of Rwandophone soldiers came to be reinforced by negative evaluations, based on bad experiences related to some of these troops' unruly behavior. Since both groups had tried to artificially inflate their numbers, a substantial number of ex-CNDP and ex-PARECO troops consisted of new or hardly trained recruits. These were immediately sent out on military operations. Like was the case with its predecessor forces, operations conducted by the FARDC often involve grave harm inflicted upon civilians,⁸⁹ and the 2009–2011 Amani Leo operations were no exception to this (Human Rights Watch, 2009a; 2009b). What is likely to have aggravated this misconduct is that the ex-CNDP formed a parallel force within the FARDC. Since it was integrated from a position of strength, its leadership had the idea of being outside of the ordinary bounds of control, even placing itself above the law. The resulting feeling of being untouchable was reinforced by the high level of influence and economic control that this group managed to establish over large zones in the Kivus, including where their presence had hitherto hardly been felt. The losers of these power shifts often tried to foster antipathy against the winners by defining and interpreting the latter's newfound dominance in well-known ethnic terms. Ex-CNDP presence gave such political-military entrepreneurs an easy target, for it allowed them to criticize at once Rwandophones and the government, seen as complicit with 'Rwanda'. Since the government was responsible for CNDP integration, each abuse 'proved' not only the evil of the Tutsi, but also the failures of the government. This mode of reasoning was strongly drawn upon in pro-Mai Mai circles, who tried to capitalize upon the deployment of Rwandophone troops for mobilizing popular support (International Crisis Group, 2010b). These processes could clearly be detected in Fizi at the time of the fieldwork, where the Mai Mai Yakotumba tried to foment hostility against the 65th sector, the troops and command of which consisted for an estimated 60–65 per cent of staff of the ex-PARECO, ex-RCD, or ex-CNDP.

Similar interactions between negative evaluations and representations of the government forces can be found among Rwandophone, in

85 The various versions of this conspiracy theory and related imagery, metaphors and style have been extensively described by Jackson in his analysis of the rumor economy in the Kivus during the Second Congo War (2003: 193–232). Present-day rumors have largely the same structure, components and style, pointing to important continuities in the representations of Rwandophones/Tutsi.

86 Interview with inhabitant of Uvira who lived in the Makobola zone during the massacre, 10.01.2012.

87 Interview with former Mai Mai, Kikonde, 14.12.2011.

88 The Kiwanja massacre was described on p. 97.

89 The reasons why military operations often involve abuses against civilians are further explored on p. 311.

particular Tutsi, populations. The latter equally hold traumatic memories of ethnically targeted bloodshed and abuses by both state and non-state armed forces, carried out both on the eve of and during the Congo Wars (e.g., UNOHCHR, 2010: 71–76, 159). The effects of these memories on representations and evaluations of the FARDC have already been illustrated with the example of the reception of the 652nd brigade on the *Hauts Plateaux* (case #12).⁹⁰ The ill conduct of this unit was seized upon by the rebel group FRF to foment and justify resistance against the government, thereby drawing on long-standing distrust among the Banyamulenge vis-à-vis the government forces. Banyamulenge populations in Fizi regard especially ex-Mai Mai in the FARDC with distrust, even when it concerns ex-Mai Mai from North Kivu. In November 2011, a mini-civil war raged in the isolated area of Itombwe (Mwenga territory), where a series of tit-for-tat massacres took place between Banyamulenge and Babembe. Banyamulenge leaders strongly believed that the FARDC was distributing ammunition to the Babembe, as their battalion commander was an ex-Mai Mai officer from Walikale (North Kivu). A *vieux-sage* commented: ‘They [Mai Mai] are all the same. We will never trust them as we know what they have done to us during the war.’⁹¹

In sum, traumatic memories can be found among all groups, and in all cases inform representations of the FARDC as dominated by and working in the interest of former ‘enemies’ or those to be distrusted. Several informants stated in this respect that *muguu ulioumwa na nyoka ugopa muzuzi* (the leg that has been bitten by a snake will fear the lizard), highlighting the impact of the past on the present. This shows that the FARDC is generally not seen as ‘impartial’. When conceptualized as an institution, many people believe that the military is biased due to its leadership being dominated by certain ethnic groups. When seen as a collection of soldiers, large concentrations of out-group members create distrust. This seems especially the case with large groups of Rwandophones. As stated by a small-scale trader in Kananda, commenting on accountability: ‘When the commander is a Congolese, there is some follow-up, but when the commander is a Rwandan, they do not care about the death of a Mufuliiru or a Mubembe’.⁹² It is only when moving to the more concrete level of evaluations of specific military units or commanders that nuances begin to appear. For example, when asked who they believed was a good commander, several non-Rwandophone informants in Kamanyola mentioned the Munyamulenge commander of the 22nd Integrated Brigade (IB).⁹³ Furthermore, it was observed that where troops were seen to contribute to enhancing people’s security, the ‘ethnic factor’ was generally less important. A striking example of this is the special battalion of the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) that was secretly deployed in the *groupement* of Binza (Rutshuru territory, North Kivu) in 2011–2012 (UNSC, 2011: 42). One would think that the implantation of a unit of the Rwandan army (which is strongly associated with the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front government) without any formal authorization by the parliament, and amongst a Hutu and Nande population who had badly suffered from the CNDP insurgency, would be rejected and interpreted as clear evidence of Rwandan invasion schemes. However, due to this unit’s good conduct, and the fact that after its arrival, ambushes and banditry on the Ishasha-Nyamilima axis substantially decreased, the inhabitants of Binza quickly came to accept and even appreciate its presence. In the course of fieldwork in this area in January 2012,⁹⁴ many inhabitants of Nyamilima stated to regret the displacement of this unit’s headquarters to a village nearby, fearing their security would deteriorate. This example does not only show the complex interactions between evaluations, based on concrete experiences, and representations, as inscribed in structures of signification formed over the *longue durée*, but also that evaluations tend to be produced by a wide array of factors, of which ethnic modes of identification are but one.

4.2.3 *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: differing experiences with FARDC units*

While representations of the military at higher levels of abstraction appear fairly homogeneous, civilians’ evaluations of the particular FARDC units they interact with on a daily basis are quite diverse. Civilians generally recognize that each army unit has a different identity and elicits different feelings, associations, and memories. One way in which this is manifested is that populations tend to develop nicknames or designations for the units deployed in their area, which reflect (perceived) unit behavior. For example, when deployed in Rutshuru, the 23rd IB was called ‘Panzamboma’,⁹⁵ from the Lingala verb for ‘to distribute fruits’. Since in military circles this implies the dispersion of ammunition, it may not come as a surprise that they earned this nickname due to their trigger-happiness. In the same area, the population also has vivid memories of the 18th brigade of the RCD (during the Second Congo War), which was known as ‘Ndakurasa’, derived from the word for ‘I want to shoot you’ in Kinyarwanda, and reflecting their warrior-like mentality. In Beni, the 24th IB was also known as ‘Kisanola’, from the verb ‘to comb’ (*kosanola*) in Lingala,⁹⁶ indicating their penchant for pillaging or to ‘comb’ the population.⁹⁷ The same nickname for that brigade was also found in Lubero and Rutshuru, where it was first deployed, which shows that the reputation

90 The involvement of civilians’ interactions with and evaluations of the 652nd brigade were described on pp. 93–94.

91 Interview with *vieux-sage*, Marunde, 28.11.2011.

92 Interview with small-scale trader, Kananda, 30.11.2010.

93 Interviews in Kamanyola, 22 and 23.03.2010.

94 Interviews conducted in Nyamilima, Kisharo and Katwiguru, 27.01.2012.

95 Group discussion with members of youth organization, Nyamilima (Rutshuru), 27.01.2012.

96 This term was popularized all over the Kivus due to a song by Werrason, which also described a dance, later recycled by Koffi Olomide. As a result, the word *kisanola* also gained a different sense, namely ‘fixing yourself up/making yourself so attractive or powerful that you make a strong impression, or disturb/destroy/‘mentally kill’ people by your appearance/power (in Lingala *koboma batu na elengi*)’. This is likely to have played an additional role in naming the brigade. I kindly thank Maria Eriksson Baaz for pointing this out.

97 Interview with police commander, Beni, 14.04.2010.

and nickname of a brigade might travel along with it. In Fizi, the 652nd brigade of Amani Leo (case #12) was known as 'Fyekafyeka', from the Swahili verb *ku-fyeka* (to cut away bush or grass), referring to clear-felling or the systematic cutting down of trees and plants. This reflected their reputation for looting, stealing and pillaging, systematically 'clearing' their area of deployment, as it were.

More positive nicknames were found as well. For example, the 27th IB, when deployed in Bunyakiri in 2010, used to have a well-reputed military choir that regularly performed in local churches, especially in the Protestant church of the 8th CEPAC. As a consequence, this brigade started to be called 'military from the 8th CEPAC', reflecting the belief that these soldiers were good Christians (Search for Common Ground, 2010). In certain parts of Fizi, the 29th IB was called 'MONUC', after the UN peacekeeping mission, as they were seen to behave professionally. This was for example observed on the coastal strip of Lake Tanganyika, where the 29th (then 641st brigade Amani Leo, case #7) was deployed end 2010 in the wake of highly destabilizing military operations conducted by another FARDC brigade.⁹⁸ The fact that all the brigades with positive nicknames were IBs is no coincidence: nearly all civilians contacted said to perceive a sharp contrast between *les intégrés* (soldiers from the integrated brigades), and *les non-intégrés* (soldiers from the new Amani Leo brigades), therefore longing for a return of the *intégrés*. For instance, in Kamanyola, informants told that they were still speaking with members of the 27th IB on the phone, but also with those of the 22nd IB, which had been deployed there previously. Soon after the Amani Leo units arrived, some called their contacts in these IBs to ask them to come back, as they highly disliked the new brigades, perceived to misbehave.⁹⁹ However, opinions on *les intégrés* in the research sites in South Kivu were generally much more positive than those in North Kivu, although people there also found that the Amani Leo brigades behaved generally worse.

Being context-specific and grounded in concrete experiences, civilians' evaluations and therefore designations of particular FARDC units can change over time. For instance, when the 29th arrived in the Baraka area (Mutambala sector) in Fizi in 2007 (case #6), they were at first called *les forces de Bemba* (forces of Bemba), as the unit contained many ex-FAZ who had joined the MLC insurgency during the Second Congo War, which was led by Jean-Pierre Bemba. Over time, the brigade became very popular in Fizi, as was observed during fieldwork in the area in 2010. People referred to this unit as a 'model brigade [*brigade modèle*]', an 'exceptional brigade' and a 'brigade of intellectuals', due to the high number of relatively well-educated elements, mostly ex-FAZ. Several interlocutors told that one officer even taught English classes at a local secondary school, seeing this as evidence for the brigade's high level of education. Furthermore, civilians recounted that the 29th had contributed to road rehabilitation, and, in contrast to previous brigades, did not carry their arms everywhere when circulating in the town of Baraka. Additionally, the brigade was described as being close to the population. Several informants said there was 'friendship' between the military and civilians, and that 'they were eating together', generally seen as an indication of good relations. The civilian authorities similarly stated to have good relations with this brigade, reporting them to 'respect the symbols of authority'.¹⁰⁰ An important reason for this unit's good reputation appears to have been the popularity of the brigade commander, Col. Djumapili, widely described in superlatives. A member of a civil society organization in Baraka explained: 'There is an exemplary command [*commandement modèle*] here. The number one, Djumapili, is a man with a good heart and good morals'.¹⁰¹ This popularity might not have only been the result of his behavior, for some informants lauded Djumapili especially for his background in the Mai Mai, which allegedly proved he was a good 'patriot'. In this respect, it should be recalled that Fizi is an environment with a long history of Mai Mai activity, where substantial parts of the population continue to have a measure of sympathy for these groups.¹⁰²

Variations in the appreciation of brigades are especially strongly felt whenever there is a rotation, for people tend to partially judge incoming FARDC units by the standards set by their predecessors, making constant comparisons between various units. For example, the units replacing the 29th IB in large parts of Fizi in 2009 and 2010, which were the brigades of the 65th sector Amani Leo, were seen in a very negative light, perhaps partly because their predecessors had been extraordinarily popular. Indeed, the behavior of its troops and commanding officers fell far below the standards of the 29th. When deployed in the gold mining area of Misisi, the 651st brigade (case #10) became known as *les Malewa*, named after a popular song by Werrason that was in most cell phones at the time. The story behind this name is that soldiers from this brigade, reported to excel in theft, robbery and extortion, were known for stealing phones from the population by saying '*Leta telephone ya malewa* (give your *malewa* phone)'. The command of this brigade was not seen in more favorable terms, being depicted as rude, uneducated, impolite, greedy, arrogant and unpolished. Most of the intellectuals among my informants, like members of civil society organizations and local authorities, highlighted that the brigade commander even did not speak French, which is generally seen as a minimum requirement for qualifying as an educated person. He was also referred to as badly communicating with the population, not mastering and disciplining his troops, and accepting extortion and theft by his soldiers, which he was believed to profit from by taking a part of the booty. After this brigade's departure, bad memories about its practices continued to circulate widely, indicating that bad experiences with certain units can become deeply engraved in collective consciousness.¹⁰³

98 Observations made on 22 and 23.11.2010 in Yungu (Fizi territory).

99 Interviews in Kamanyola, 22 and 23.03.2010.

100 Interview with civilian authority, Baraka, 17.11.2010.

101 Interview with employee of civil society organization, Baraka, 23.02.2010.

102 The history of insurgent activity in Fizi was explained in Chapter 3, pp. 89–90.

103 Research for a follow-up project conducted in Misisi in June 2014 indicated that the 651st continues to be memorized as one of the worst units ever deployed there.

It can be concluded that Kivutians experience significant differences between various military units and their commanders. These evaluations are shaped by a wide array of factors (see Figure 11 on p.131), the relative weight of which might differ per context. This makes it often difficult to pinpoint the most important causes for a unit's popularity or unpopularity, especially as multiple elements might interact. For instance, the 19th IB under Col. Furaha, a former Mai Mai commander from Walikale, was very popular when deployed in Rutshuru and Lubero during the transition. Several informants mentioned as primary reason for this brigade's popularity that it mastered the security situation very well. 'They were exemplary, even vehicles were circulating at night when they were deployed here, you could walk anywhere anytime back then (...) It was a worthy brigade [*brigade digne*],'¹⁰⁴ a member of a civil society organization in Lubero reminisced. But other observers highlighted that it was also Furaha's tough stance against RCD remnants refusing integration, and his status as defender of the rights of 'autochthones' against Tutsi military domination, that had made him so popular. It is not to be excluded that this specific background and political position also influenced perceptions of his security performance, highlighting the importance of interaction effects among the factors shaping evaluations.

Having explored the main dimensions of the multifaceted issue of civilian representations, and to a lesser extent evaluations, of the FARDC, it is now time to look at the military side. What representations do FARDC staff hold of civilians in general, as shaped by structures of signification that have evolved over the *longue durée*? And how do these representations compare to evaluations of the specific groups of civilians that soldiers interact with in their deployment sites?

4.3 Military representations of civilians

Similar to what 'the military' signifies to civilians, the notion of 'civilians' is complex and polyvalent to soldiers, as caused by its embedding in different discourses that are located at different scales of abstraction. Here too, a distinction can be made between on the one hand, representations inscribed in structures of signification, and on the other hand, evaluations of concrete groups of civilians in specific deployment contexts, which are partly based on experiences of day-to-day encounters. Furthermore, like the category of 'the military in general', that of 'civilians in general' is not homogeneous, but encompasses a variety of overlapping conceptualizations. There are two main ways in which 'civilians in general' are conceptualized by the FARDC. The first relates to the *idea* of civilians, which is located at a high level of abstraction, presenting civilians primarily as a technical concept in professional military discourses. The second refers to the somewhat more concrete notion of civilians seen as a general, hence anonymous, group of people. The below discussion of military representations of 'civilians in general' further elucidates these distinctions.

4.3.1 Military representations of 'civilians in general'

The representations connected to civilians as an abstract idea and those surrounding the somewhat more concrete notion of civilians as a group of people diverge considerably. Whereas in the first case, 'civilians' are associated with predominantly positive values, in the second, civilians emerge in an outspokenly negative manner. One reason for this marked divergence is that these two conceptualizations of civilians are embedded in discourses that are employed in different situations: while the *idea* of civilians figures almost exclusively in professional discourses used in military trainings and education, the discourses emphasizing civilians as a general group of people circulate primarily in unofficial situations.

Representations of civilians in general: 'Muntu pamba'

In Chapter 3, it was explained that FAZ soldiers, often being from a different part of the country than the population in their area of deployment, generally looked down upon civilians. They commonly saw them as 'backwards villagers', but also as a gateway to resources, as epitomized by the motto *civil azali bilanga ya militaire* (civilians are the field of the military).¹⁰⁵ According to soldiers who served in the FAZ, this legacy continues to make itself felt in the FARDC. As an ex-FAZ officer explained in relation to the Mobutu era: 'These were the times we had the mentality of *tosha yote!* [give everything!], and *kata nyama!* [cut the meat!, used for demanding pieces of meat from butchers and civilians].'¹⁰⁶ Another complemented: 'We [FAZ] said a civilian is a *muntu pamba*, a worthless person. So, I as a soldier, I have more worth, I can impose myself. But this has not completely changed, this feeling still exists.'¹⁰⁷ Indeed, it was observed that feelings of superiority towards and contempt for civilians are strongly present in the FARDC. Military staff generally associate civilians with a host of negative values, including weakness, disorderliness, greed, self-interestedness and improper behavior. This became particularly clear when asking FARDC soldiers explicitly how they, as soldiers, differ from civilians. In their answers, which were remarkably similar across contexts, two main themes emerged. First, soldiers tended to highlight that they are state servants, who are charged with an 'official

¹⁰⁴ Interview with employee of civil society organization, Lubero, 10.04.2010.

¹⁰⁵ Representations of civilians among the FAZ were discussed on pp. 67 and 117.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with mid-ranking officer, Baraka, 16.02.2010.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with low-ranking officer, Baraka, 16.02.2010.

mission' by the government, as they have to defend the fatherland and protect the nation, and therefore work in the public interest. This distinguishes them from civilians, who merely work to further their private interests and who have no official position. As one soldier explained: 'We are charged by the government with guarding territorial integrity and securing the population and their goods. We act in name of the government, while civilians follow their own interests'.¹⁰⁸ Second, soldiers perceive themselves to differ from civilians as their life is organized in a radically different manner. In military staff's perspective, the life of soldiers is ordered and completely regulated: they cannot just do whatever they want, since they have to obey the orders of their superiors and maintain discipline at all times. This type of life represents 'order' as opposed to civilian life, which is often depicted, in a negative manner, as 'libertinism'. A lieutenant expressed it as follows: 'In civilian life you are free, you can move around freely, but in the military, you always need an authorization for movement. Civilians can dress themselves like they want, but we have to wear a uniform. We even eat on orders. In the military everything is planned from A to Z, even your rations (...) In civilian life, there is total freedom. Civilian life equals libertinism, but military life is order.'¹⁰⁹ This civilian 'libertinism' is often associated with stubbornness, a refusal to respect rules and norms, and anti-social behavior more generally. In a number of situations, it was observed how military staff made statements that civilians were 'in need of correction', which was sometimes presented as justifying harsh treatment (see also Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2010: 28). For instance, an S2 (intelligence officer) of a battalion deployed in Fizi said: 'The Congolese will never change their mentality if we do not correct them. It is even in the Bible that beating is sometimes good.'¹¹⁰

The above discussion shows that FARDC soldiers' representations of 'civilians in general' are predominantly negative, especially when civilians are contrasted to military staff. This highlights how military in-group identification is in part constructed upon a negative distinction with civilians as an out-group. This is corroborated by findings by Eriksson Baaz and Stern, who note that 'soldiers' depiction of their role as one guided by discipline and order was often formulated in opposition to the civilian Other as signifying disorder, disrespect, cowardice and lack of discipline' (2008: 73). That the erection of civilian/military identity boundaries ushers in negative representations of civilians is little surprising. In militaries around the world, the construction of military forms of identification involves the (attempted) erasure of civilian status, including the norms, values and modes of thinking associated with the civilian sphere. These are replaced by new moral and behavioral codes as well as new forms of institutional and group identification. These socialization processes rest upon the explicit fostering of group cohesion and team spirit and the drawing of boundaries with the civilian world (Yarmolinsky, 1971: 379). According to Social Identity Theory, in-group favoritism generally leads to limited inter-group discrimination, which implies that the out-group tends to be evaluated in less favorable terms (Tajfel et al., 1971). While this does not imply that out-groups are automatically seen in a negative light, the dynamics of inter-group comparisons, may, in certain circumstances and in combination with other factors, contribute to such an outcome (Brewer, 1999; 2001). Military socialization processes are susceptible to this mechanism, causing in-group favoritism to often lead to the development of negative representations of civilians. As these socialization processes have to achieve a very specific set of objectives, including habituation to hierarchies, orientation towards the group, and initiation into the use of controlled violence, they usually entail intensive drills and the subjecting of recruits to a period of hardship, distress and humiliation, sometimes effectuated through hazing rituals (Frésard, 2004: 51–54). This hardens the boundaries with the world of civilians, commonly portrayed as characterized by weakness.

The military identity that is constructed in this manner is a distinctly masculine one that emphasizes a 'heroic warrior ethos' (Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1978), although the types of masculinity found within the military are generally diverse (Higate, 2003). This also applies to the FARDC, where Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2008) identified different male gender ideals. One of these is strongly associated with (physical and emotional) strength, emphasizing toughness, being able to fight and to kill, cold-bloodedness, and being capable of enduring beatings and the hardships of the battlefield. The forms of military identification informed by this particular ideal of masculinity are 'constructed in opposition to different (feminized) Others: civilians, women and the inept/physically weak' (2008: 67). This provides further evidence that professional military identification in the FARDC is partly based upon the drawing of boundaries with out-groups that are attributed (negative) values associated with civilians, such as weakness, a lack of perseverance and cowardice. Yet, as Eriksson Baaz and Stern emphasize, this 'beef and brawn' type of masculinity represents only one strand of (gendered) military professional identities among the FARDC. It co-exists with 'modern' ideals of manhood connected to money and material wealth (2008: 70–71), which inform definitions of soldiering that emphasize education and administrative work. These other notions of masculinity and soldiering, however, still appear to foster negative representations of civilians. In particular, they highlight that while such forms of success are accessible to civilians, they are unattainable for the military. In the words of Eriksson Baaz and Stern: 'The ideal of a respected position, which signified success and education and which reflected the ultimate manly ideal, remained decidedly out of reach. Instead of serving as an attainable goal, it figured as a counterpoint in contrast to the positions the soldiers actually held.' (2008: 71). This 'counterpoint' accentuates differences with civilians, commonly believed to be able to achieve the ideals of manly success that are unattainable for soldiers. This is for instance strongly expressed in the constant fears among military staff that well-endowed civilian men will run away with their wives. Furthermore, soldiers often suspect that civilians, measuring success in terms of material wealth, office jobs, and luxury, may judge them on the same standards, which leads to a lack of respect for the military. In this manner, the various notions of good soldiering in the FARDC, as connected to different models of masculinity, all work to construct and confirm civilians as an out-group category seen in a negative light.

108 Interview with *sous-officier*, Katobo, 15.03.2010.

109 Interview with low-ranking officer, Nyongera, 01.04.2010.

110 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Kazimia, 24.11.2010.

Derision and disrespect

In soldiers' narratives, their everyday encounters with civilians constantly confirm the idea that the latter have a strong contempt for the FARDC. Many of my interlocutors told that they feel disrespected and distrusted by civilians (cf. Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2008: 65–66, 74–75; 2010: 26–28), describing how civilians call them names or spit at them when they pass by. Others narrated how they had even been menaced and threatened with death. A soldier in Nyongera stated: 'When soldiers pass by, they are menaced. There have even been assassinations. When you ask a driver to help you with transport, you are denigrated and intimidated (...) The military are derided by the population (...) I have been beaten by a *motard* who had bad memories of another soldier and who was mistaken.'¹¹¹ This shows how soldiers' negative feelings towards civilians are fed by a profound sense of being disrespected by this group. What reinforces these feelings is civilians' perceived lack of acknowledgement and appreciation for the work that the military does in the service of the nation (cf. Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2010: 28). In their own perspective, soldiers sacrifice themselves in order to accomplish their three main tasks: defending the country (which they often relate to territorial integrity), bringing peace (through the defeat of rebel groups) and protecting the population (by securing civilians and their goods). These important tasks are the basis of their claims for social status and respect from civilians. This respect, so they believe, should even be bigger in the light of the difficult circumstances in which they live. Moreover, they run a serious risk of having to make the supreme sacrifice. A corporal explained: 'Being a soldier is to sacrifice oneself. It is a work of sacrifice [*boulot du sacrifice*]. You die because of persons that you do not know. But civilians have an easy life. Despite the deaths, the population doesn't accept you, doesn't appreciate you. And if you quit, the population doesn't accept you either. We will always be seen like wrongdoers [*malfaiteurs*]'.¹¹²

Aside from showing a lack of respect and recognition for soldiers, FARDC staff believe that civilians also discriminate and stigmatize them. For instance, soldiers generally complain that civilians raise the prices whenever they see a soldier, especially when they know it has just been payday.¹¹³ Furthermore, they report how civilians suspect them *a priori* of not being willing to pay, especially for transport services. As a soldier explained: 'They always think we will not pay. When you get into a vehicle they shout: "eeeh soldat, *utalipa* [you will pay]"'.¹¹⁴ Others relayed the feeling that they are automatically the primary suspects of crime and are always assumed to have bad intentions, regardless their behavior. In the words of a corporal: 'if you wear the uniform you are already suspected. The uniform is already tainted [*buchafu*]. They [civilians] accuse us of all types of bad behavior.'¹¹⁵

Many long-serving military staff stated to believe that there has been a significant loss in the social status of and esteem for the military over time, and that being a soldier is no longer an honorable profession: 'I attended a military academy but today, my children are chased away from school. Back in the days, civilians respected us. An officer was received with consideration [*égards*]. Now we are treated like worthless people. They deride us. We have been reduced to beggars [*mendiants*]'.¹¹⁶ A lower ranking officer placed this development in an even longer time perspective: 'The Belgians said "Mosenzi", that means *mon signe* [my monkey] to designate the natives, but the military were nobles. But now the military have become the natives. That creates complexes, that creates tensions between us and the population.'¹¹⁷ Soldiers identify three main reasons for the experienced lowering of respect from civilians: First, the deterioration in living conditions, which has reduced them to beggars in the eyes of civilians; second, the policy of military integration, which has brought lower-educated and ill-behaving elements into the armed forces, causing an overall degeneration in the performance and status of the military; and third, the abuses that some of their colleagues have committed, tainting the reputation of the military as a whole.

Concerning the deterioration in living conditions, material resources are generally seen as a precondition for respect from and good relations with civilians. The current situation of (experienced) dependence on civilians and their resources is felt to be profoundly humiliating (cf. Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2008: 74). A naval officer said: 'In the past, civilians went to the military to ask them for food, and now it is the military who go to civilians, so it is the opposite. Now, you are like a beggar. Because it is you who will demand, there is no respect. We are forced to harass [*tracasser*]'.¹¹⁸ Another reason why the improvement of living conditions is seen as the single most important condition for improving civil-military relations is that poverty is believed to be an important source of misconduct. FARDC soldiers commonly acknowledge that the military commits abuses, even though they will rarely admit they were responsible themselves or identify perpetrators among their colleagues. They tend to see these abuses as an important source of disrespect from the side of civilians. A soldier stated: 'Some of them treat the population badly. They steal, and they rape. They have no discipline, these are elements that are not trained. They have nothing in their head [*rien dans la tête*]. But when a civilian sees us, they have bad memories and we all

111 Interview with *sous-officier*, Nyongera, 01.04.2010.

112 Interview with low-ranking officer, Muranvya, 14.11.2011.

113 Vendors do not only raise the prices after the payday of the FARDC: This practice was reported to occur wherever there is a large concentration of employees who are known to be getting their salary.

114 Interview with soldier, Marungu, 11.11.2011.

115 Interview with *sous-officier*, Pene Mende, 27.12.2011.

116 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Baraka, 16.02.2010.

117 Interview with low-ranking officer, Luberizi, 07.11.2011.

118 Interview with mid-ranking naval officer, Mizimu, 19.02.2010.

get a bad name.¹¹⁹ To many, the fact that there are untrained and ill-disciplined elements in the army is directly related to the policy of rebel-military integration.¹²⁰ A major commented: 'At present there are people who create their own disorder and mutinies and it becomes very difficult to correct them and end this logic. Our military has become a military of scandals. And some civilians are traumatized by that'.¹²¹ Another dimension of military integration policies thought to have lowered respect from the side of civilians is the promotion of lower educated and sometimes even illiterate persons to the rank of superior officers. As a captain stated: 'So if a civilian sees this person who calls himself a colonel and he [the colonel] cannot even spell his own name. How can he respect the armed forces?'¹²²

In sum, FARDC staff experience generalized disrespect from civilians, which they ascribe to their own situation of poverty, the bad behavior of a part of FARDC soldiers, and the low quality of officers. This experienced lack of respect, which is both the product of and (re)produces negative representations of civilians in general, feeds into and is fed by negative everyday experiences. These experiences are not similar across regions. Many military staff, in particular those originating from the west, perceive hostility towards the military to be bigger among civilians in the eastern part of the country: 'Here in the east, soldiers have no importance to civilians [*hawana maana*], they [civilians] sabotage soldiers a lot. For example, if you get into a car, civilians start to shout "*toka pale* [go away]", and with all that, you will feel shame, and you have to get out [of the car].'¹²³ Another soldier from the western Congo complemented: 'In other provinces, they help soldiers, but here in the east, it is nothing. They do not know the value of the military, they do not give anything to eat. In North and South Kivu, *c'est fini* [it's over], the military is not respected.'¹²⁴

Such negative perceptions of civilians in the east were sometimes strongly colored by ethnic framings, especially where the majority of the inhabitants in a deployment location were either of the Rwandophone or the autochthon category and the 'opposite' group dominated the FARDC unit in question. Ethnic framings were observed to become even more salient where civilians are linked to armed groups seen to defend the interests of particular (ethnic) communities. Many armed groups in the Kivus, in particular the command, are predominantly recruited from a single community, even when employing universalist anti-government discourses or claiming to represent the interests of larger groups (Hoffmann and Verweijen, 2013). Such groups are commonly closely related to the communities they draw their recruits from, having multiple family and socio-economic ties. Not only do they often maintain protection relations to local authorities and elites, they also depend on populations for food, shelter, information, and medicine, received either through imposition by force or via relatively voluntary contributions (e.g., Morvan, 2005; Verweijen, forthcoming b). Even where an armed group is not recruited from among a particular community, when it lives for a long time in the same area, it is likely to become strongly locally embedded, as was the case for example with certain armed groups in the *groupement* of Binza in Rutshuru.¹²⁵ These real or presumed connections to armed groups strongly color the FARDC's representations of civilians in the east. In particular, there is a deep-seated feeling among soldiers that armed groups incite the population to turn against the FARDC. A former *kadogo* explained: 'in the time of *Mzee* [appellation for wise man, generally applied to Laurent-Désiré Kabila], people really liked soldiers, the population was content with the military, but today this is no longer the case. There are armed groups who intoxicate the population to not like the military. The enemy is within [the population]'.¹²⁶ Consequently, in zones with armed groups, the FARDC tends to be highly distrustful towards the population, commonly assuming that in principle anyone is a collaborator until the contrary has been proved. This leads military staff to depict civilians as treacherous and hypocritical, believing that they pretend to collaborate in your face, but help armed groups behind your back. In the words of an *adjutant* deployed in an area of Fizi that is home to several Mai Mai groups: 'Armed groups, that is the population. Today it is a civilian, tomorrow it is an enemy [*leo iko raia, kesho iko adui*]'.¹²⁷

The idea of civilians

The idea that one of the military's main tasks is to protect civilians and their goods plays an important role within FARDC soldiers' professional identities. The imperative of civilian protection is also anchored in official discourses, for instance being mentioned in the constitution,¹²⁸ the *Règlement militaire* (the military code of conduct inherited from predecessor armies), and the new military code of conduct issued in 2009.¹²⁹ Official discourses on civilian protection are also taught to soldiers via education, through commanders'

119 Interview with low-ranking officer, Luberizi, 07.11.2011.

120 Military staff's perceptions of the impact of rebel-military integration on the armed forces will be further discussed in Chapter 9, pp. 67 and 117.

121 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Minembwe, 23.12.2011.

122 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Lemera, 18.03.2010.

123 Interview with low-ranking officer, Muranvya, 14.11.2011.

124 Interview with *sous-officier*, Muranvya, 14.11.2011.

125 The local embedding of armed groups in northern Rutshuru was discussed on pp. 97-98.

126 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Nyongera, 01.04.2010.

127 Interview with *sous-officier*, Fizi centre, 18.11.2010.

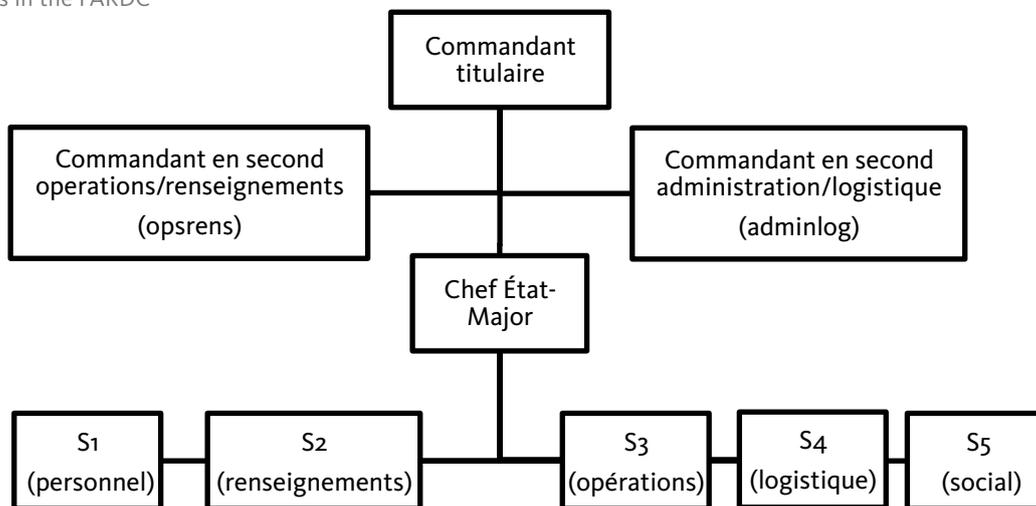
128 The constitutional provisions as regards the FARDC's mission were described in footnote 75 on p. 111.

129 The new FARDC code of conduct was published in December 2009 by the *Service d'éducation civique et patriotique* (SECP, Civic and Patriotic Education Service) of the Ministry of Defense. It regroups relevant texts of national and international human rights, humanitarian and military law. However, at the time of the fieldwork, most soldiers still referred to the *Règlement militaire* as the primary point of reference for behavioral guidelines, as the new code was only diffused in large numbers in 2012.

speeches at *parades* (regular gatherings of all soldiers in a unit during which the commander addresses the troops),¹³⁰ and via moral talks and church services held by army chaplains. Furthermore, they are inculcated by means of CIMIC (Civil-Military Cooperation) trainings or human rights and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) training and awareness raising sessions, which are usually sponsored and organized by donors, UN agencies and INGOs.

Within the official discourses surrounding the military’s professional duty to protect civilians, there are two strands, which differ as to the nature of the justification of this effort. While the first is a moral discourse emphasizing the intrinsic worth of civilians, the second is a utilitarian discourse, which highlights the strategic and tactical benefits of civilian protection. The moral justification for protecting civilians is often connected to human rights and humanitarian discourses, but is sometimes also expressed in religious terms: ‘The *Règlement militaire*, that is respect for each person, each human being. You have to respect human beings, because they have been created by God, you have the right and the obligation to protect them.’¹³¹ The utilitarian justification, which is less common in the FARDC, reflects general discourses on counter-insurgency that emphasize the instrumentality of winning the support of the population for winning the war, in part due the military’s dependence on civilian intelligence and collaboration for carrying out effective operations (e.g., Galula, 1964; Thompson, 1966). This line of reasoning is mostly adopted by intelligence officers (S2s), those responsible for operations (S3s) and those charged with civil-military relations and social conditions (S5s) (see Figure 9).¹³²

Figure 9: Command and staff functions in the FARDC



As an S5 explained: ‘Without the population, we will not succeed. You can have well-trained soldiers but without the population, we will not win. This is the secret of warfare.’¹³³ In a similar vein, an S2 remarked: ‘In a tactical manner, the intelligence service needs the population. The population has to collaborate in tracing the FDLR. She has to actively participate, because she knows and recognizes the FDLR, even in civil dress. So we have to treat her well.’¹³⁴

As these quotes illustrate, the utilitarian discourse on civilian protection is less about civilians themselves than about military strategy, tactics and operations. However, such a weak connection to civilians themselves can also be observed in relation to discourses highlighting the moral imperative to protect civilians. These discourses tend to remain at a high level of abstraction, with the *idea* of civilians, as opposed to civilians themselves as actual beings of flesh and blood, occupying center stage. At times, it even appeared that the phrase *ku chungu (ba)raia na mali yake/yao* or *protéger la population et leurs biens* (protecting civilians and their goods) was predominantly formulaic, an oft-repeated and worn-out formulation that was not directly connected to other parts of soldiers’ narratives that described real events, actual practices and concrete experiences, being like an island in discourse. This containerization and sterility of the discourse of civilian protection might be one of the reasons why it seems to do little to counter the negative connotations that dominate in the more concrete conceptualizations of ‘civilians in general’ held by military staff, which portray civilians primarily as a group of real people.

130 Most of the HQ of brigades and battalions visited organized daily parades in the morning, and enlarged general parades on a biweekly basis. In companies and platoons, there is a morning parade but not always a biweekly enlarged parade, as troops may be scattered.

131 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Rumangabo, 31.03.2010.

132 Staff functions have a ‘T’ at the level of military regions and zones, and an ‘S’ in field-based units.

133 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Katobo, 16.03.2010.

134 Interview with S2, Lemera, 18.03.2010.

4.3.2 Positive and negative spirals of interaction

Similar to civilians' evaluations of the military, soldiers' assessments of the groups of civilians they encounter in their immediate environment are mixed. One important research finding was that where soldiers' evaluations of civilians were positive, civilians expressed appreciation for soldiers too. This was for instance the case with the former 234th brigade (then the 433rd brigade Amani Leo), when deployed in the *Moyens Plateaux* of Uvira, around Katabo (case #3). The majority of civilian interlocutors expressed satisfaction with the presence of this unit, specifically in light of the rather bad conduct of its predecessors.¹³⁵ People told for instance that after the military operations conducted by this unit, which had managed to reduce the threat of the FDLR, they were able to sleep again in their own houses. A village elder said: 'The situation has improved. In the past, the population spent the night in the bush, for fear of extortion by the FDLR. But now there is peace here with the military [i.e. the deployment of this unit], we are a bit good now.'¹³⁶ In a mirror image, soldiers of this unit viewed the civilians in this area mostly in positive terms. A female soldier stated: 'We are very good with the population here. We have been deployed for a long time in Uvira, the population knows us here. There are no problems.'¹³⁷

Another unit where positive stories about civilians dominated was the 29th IB when headquartered in Baraka: 'Civilians here trust us, they even sell us on credit. We have friends among civilians, we eat together. And if we have difficulties they help us.'¹³⁸ Such stories about civilian assistance as a sign of recognition are not exceptional. For instance, when the 27th IB was deployed in Bunyakiri, soldiers said to regularly receive assistance from the population, which contributed to positive evaluations. This was especially the case when one of the troops died, prompting civilians to bring the military planks for making the coffin and help organize the funeral (Search for Common Ground, 2010). This points to how evaluations of civilians among the military shape and are shaped by (perceived) levels of civilians' appreciation and assistance. Where such evaluations are positive, they may lead to improved behavior of the military towards civilians, generating self-enforcing cycles. Given that the military treats them well, the population may in such cases show increasing respect for and provide more assistance to the military. This will contribute to improved evaluations of civilians among the military, which may then again come to inform the military's practices.

Within such spirals, the provision of security information to the military often plays an important role. Similar to militaries engaged in counter-insurgency elsewhere (Nagl, 2002: 28–30), the FARDC depends to a large extent on civilians for situational awareness and intelligence. However, the extent to which civilians voluntarily come forward with information is highly variable. Not only does it depend on the relations between communities and armed groups, but also on levels of trust between (groups in) the population and military units. Where people fear the FARDC, they are reluctant to directly approach them and provide security information, for example as they believe they might get arrested. As someone from a civil society organization in Kazimia (Fizi) told: 'We do not give voluntarily any information to the FARDC out of fear for being mistreated. For example, in Lulenge there was a *papa* [man] who had heard that there were FDLR. They went to warn the FARDC but when they came, they started to harass him. The military came but when they did not find the FDLR, they started to pillage his goats (...) Another example: Yesterday, the military received their salary and after that they drink a lot. One of the elements left his weapon. A pastor found it and went to the *chef de poste*, but the military came and they imposed a tax of 31 dollar on the *poste*. They said because it was him who found the weapon, it was him who had hidden it. So in such circumstances, people do not dare to go to the military (...) It is a great difference with *les intégrés* [military from Integrated Brigades], who knew better how to collaborate. When the population went to inform them, they were always received well.'¹³⁹

However, even relatively friendly relations between an FARDC unit and the population are no guarantee that the latter will provide security information. Long-standing ties to armed group members, who may be family or with whom people have developed close socio-economic relations due to years of cohabitation, might prevent civilians from providing information to the military, partly out of fear for reprisals. A good example is the ex-29th IB (then 641st brigade Amani Leo) when deployed to the coastal village of Yungu (Fizi) in the wake of clashes between the Mai Mai Yakotumba and another FARDC brigade at the start of November 2011 (case #7). Although the population welcomed this brigade, which they called 'MONUC' due to its good and polite behavior, and provided them with food, they remained tight-lipped about the Mai Mai. According to the S3 (operations officer) of the brigade, they had detected movements of wounded combatants at night who had been evacuated by boat over Lake Tanganyika with the help of civilians. Furthermore, some evidence had been found of a food collection for the Mai Mai among the population.¹⁴⁰ Hence, there were good reasons to believe that the inhabitants of Yungu withheld important information to the FARDC, despite having no overly hostile relations with a unit that treated them relatively well.

The above story of the 641st in Yungu illustrates that the extent to which civilians and the military collaborate in the production of security is highly variable per context, and partly depends on the specific relations between a military unit and the population. Where

135 Conclusions based on fieldwork in Katabo and surroundings, 15–17.03.2010. See also Chapter 3, p. 96, for a description of this unit and its relations to civilians.

136 Interview with village elder, Mugaja, 16.03.2010.

137 Interview with soldier, surroundings of Katabo, 16.03.2010.

138 Interview with low-ranking officer, Baraka, 16.02.2010.

139 Interview with employee of civil society organization, Kazimia, 21.11.2010.

140 Interviews conducted in Yungu and Kakone, 22 and 23.11.2010.

these relations are good, the chances are higher that civilians provide information and assistance to the military, which enables the latter to better provide security. The result are positive evaluations that set in motion an upward spiral. Inversely, bad relations may generate a downward spiral of ongoing insecurity, a lack of communication, and mutual distrust. This was for example observed in operational zones where soldiers were surrounded by a population they believed to be hostile and dangerous. In such contexts, evaluations of civilians could be extremely negative. This was especially the case where communities were suspected to collude with armed groups, where civilian arms possession was high, for example where there was a high percentage of (auto) demobilized, or where communities were believed to shield bandits. In these areas, the climate between the military and civilians could become utterly poisoned, especially in the wake of clashes or rebel ambushes that had made victims among soldiers. Such a tense atmosphere would often cause civilians to not readily come forward with information on the security situation, prompting the military to become increasingly guided by fears rather than adequate assessments. The result was commonly deteriorating behavior towards civilians, suspected of collaborating with ‘the enemy’.

One context where these dynamics were strongly at play was the 65th sector of the Amani Leo operations established in Fizi from 2009–2011. Just after a deadly ambush laid by the Mai Mai Yakotumba, who are mostly of Bembe origins, some soldiers of the sector HQ said: ‘All the soldiers are angry at the Babembe. They are very difficult. 99 per cent of the population here supports the Mai Mai, everyone is Mai Mai here’.¹⁴¹ Certainly, such radical statements should partly be seen in the light of the emotions caused by the loss of colleagues and friends, whose deaths were ascribed to a population seen as guilty by association. From mostly informal conversations after deadly rebel attacks, it became clear that soldiers often believe there is clear evidence that civilian informers were involved in reporting on military movements, or withheld crucial information that could have helped the military avoid falling into an ambush or be targeted by an attack. For instance, soldiers from the 652nd brigade deployed on the *Hauts Plateaux* of Fizi (case #12) professed to believe that the population actively collaborated with the rebels of the FRF: ‘The low esteem of civilians for the military is because all civilians have arms here: they pretend that they herd cows, but they are armed. They hide the guns behind their cows and they shoot from behind the cow’.¹⁴² In such situations, ‘civilians’ dissolve as a discursive category: they become traitors, or combatants, or members of an out-group community (Ferme and Hoffman, 2002: 41–47; Slim, 2008: 182–183). This leads Slim (2008: 186–204) to conclude that the category of ‘civilians’ is extremely ambiguous. Since civilians fulfill multiple social roles and have multiple identities, the military may in certain circumstances develop doubts as to their status of ‘civilians’. This can lower the threshold for abuses, thus setting in motion a downward spiral of negative interactions and evaluations.

4.3.3 FARDC spouses’ representations of civilians

Similar to the representations of civilians held by their husbands, military spouses painted a quite bleak picture of civilians, which seems equally nourished by the perceived hostility projected towards them by the civilian environment. Thus, military spouses described being despised and distrusted by civilians, leading to discrimination and stigmatization. These attitudes were said to exacerbate the difficulties they face in making a living and running a household in primitive circumstances and constantly changing environments. During a focus group at the military base of Luberizi,¹⁴³ several women explained how their hardship was compounded by civilians: ‘There is discrimination by the local population, they call us *watokambali* [those who come from far]. They do not give us land to cultivate, and they ask higher prices.’ Another participant confirmed: ‘the women in the local community do not like us. And they start speaking the local languages to cheat us at the market, so they can raise the price and talk behind our backs. They don’t like *bakujakuja* [newcomers].’ Other women’s stories also reflected awareness of having a low status and a bad reputation in civilians’ eyes: ‘We have a very bad reputation. We are badly seen and treated. If we arrive at the hospital, they know we cannot pay so we get bad treatment. If we go on transport, for example by boat, they put us in the open air, in the sun, because we pay less’.

Aside from to their status as outsiders and insolvents, the wives of FARDC soldiers ascribed civilians’ lack of respect to the widely held belief that army wives are *femmes légères* (women of loose morals) or even *bamayala* or *ndumba* (prostitutes in respectively Swahili and Lingala). Some reported that they were approached as prostitutes or were offered such work: ‘There is little work we can do. If we cannot rent land or work as day laborer, we cannot cultivate. If our husbands get no salary, we cannot trade or make *ndazi* (beignets). So if we have no work sometimes civilians approach us and propose the work of prostitutes.’ Another source of civilians’ negative images, so military spouses believed, is that the bad reputation of the FARDC is projected onto soldiers’ wives, in particular those of the lower ranks. As one woman explained: ‘We are treated like soldiers. Civilians think we behave the same as soldiers’. This indeed corresponds to the representations of the spouses of FARDC soldiers held by civilians. As we have seen in the previous¹⁴⁴, civilians generally attribute these women some of the same characteristics as soldiers in general, in particular aggressive, arrogant and criminal behavior.

While representations of civilians among soldiers’ wives were overwhelmingly negative, their evaluations of local communities based on concrete interactions and everyday experiences showed a greater diversity. Similar to what was observed for the military, where

¹⁴¹ Interview with soldiers, Fizi centre, 18.11.2010.

¹⁴² Interview with mid-ranking officer, Mikenke, 28.11.2011.

¹⁴³ All quotes in this paragraph are from a focus group organized at the military base of Luberizi on 08.11.2011.

¹⁴⁴ Civilians’ representations of military spouses were described on pp. 110–111.

evaluations were relatively positive, there was often reciprocity, in that the civilians in the area in question would also speak well about these women. This further corroborates the assumption of a constant interplay between everyday interactions and mutual evaluations between the military (and/or their spouses) and civilians, which may usher in either positive or negative self-reinforcing spirals. The clearest example of an upwards-moving spiral was found in relation to the spouses of the 29th IB when deployed in Baraka (case #6). These women had organized themselves into an association through which they actively participated in community life. For instance, they were heavily involved in the annual march organized on International Women's Day (March 8), which is a national holiday in the Congo. When contacting one of them after the redeployment of the brigade to Misisi, she explained: 'When we were in Baraka we were very active. We were invited for the workshops of NGOs. And some of us were in committees of the church. We had a stable existence there, and the population was content with us'.¹⁴⁵ As we have seen, this did not only apply to soldiers' spouses but to the 29th IB as a whole, which was strongly appreciated by the population of Baraka. This indicates that there is a relation between civilians' evaluations of particular military units, and their evaluations of the latter's spouses, who are often closely associated with their husbands.

Mutually positive evaluations were also observed where the women of FARDC soldiers had economic interdependencies with the population, or were at least not seen as threatening the latter's livelihoods. For instance, in the gold mining area of Misisi, spouses of FARDC soldiers were reported to run bars and engage in petty trade, similar to many civilian women. However, this did not appear to lead to frictions or economic crowding-out, although there were some complaints that these women did not have all of the required permits or refused to pay taxes. The relatively positive civilian evaluations of military spouses in Misisi coincided with military spouses' mild appreciations of the population, whom they did not see as particularly hostile.¹⁴⁶ What is likely to have played a role in this is that Misisi is an artisanal mining area, implying that a substantial part of the population are outsiders and that there is significant volatility in its composition, as people come and go. The position of military spouses is therefore less exceptional than in relatively homogeneous rural communities where a large part of the population is native to the area. In general, it appears that people not from the area tend to view soldiers' spouses differently, and often better, than those born and raised locally, perhaps as they are all seen as *bakujakuja* (outsiders). For example, in Minembwe, migrant populations (mostly Bashi working as ambulant traders and miners) told that if it were not for FARDC spouses, they would not be able to eat *ndazi* (beignets), which they very much like to do, as they already had a hard time finding *ugali* made of cassava flour.¹⁴⁷ Soldiers' spouses, in turn, spoke more positively about the Bashi than about the local Banyamulenge population, perhaps precisely because the Bashi constituted their primary customer base, implying they interacted more frequently with them.¹⁴⁸

The positive effects of frequent economic interactions when not perceived to threaten local livelihoods could also be observed elsewhere. Where soldiers' wives engaged in productive activities, such as crop cultivation, and were not seen to be merely selling goods stolen from civilians, they appeared to have better relations with civilians.¹⁴⁹ For instance, in a zone in the *Grand Nord* where a new military unit had arrived that engaged less in stealing than the previous unit, a woman commented: 'Before, we considered a soldier and his wife as enemies. In the past, these women sold fruits which they could never have harvested themselves. They rather sold the bananas that their husbands had stolen from us. Now, they can't live off their husband's extortions, so they have to work themselves. And they need us to work together. We now sell charcoal and fruits side by side. This was never the case before' (quoted in Van Damme and Verweijen, 2012: 14). Such positive interactions reflect upon mutual evaluations, setting in motion a spiral of improving appreciations and relations.

Yet, the existence of such spirals seems to have little sustainable effects on civilians' and military spouses' mutual *representations*. When speaking of 'civilians in general' or 'military spouses' as abstract categories, the invoked imagery and connotations often continued to be imbued with negative values. This shows that there is no straightforward influence between on the one hand, evaluations and on the other hand, representations. Rather, this influence is non-linear, indirect, and cumulative. One reason for this is that the notions of 'civilians' and 'military (spouses)' are superordinate identity categories, which are not always salient in everyday situations. 'Civilians' and 'military' enact many social roles, and when they encounter each other, they might not primarily see and define each other in these respective capacities. Rather, they may identify themselves and their interlocutors principally as relatives, neighbors, suppliers, clients, lovers, protectors, co-religionists, business partners, traitors, or ethnic in-or out-group members. In such situations, the representations connected to the specific identity categories of 'military' and 'civilians' play a less important role in informing perceptions and practices. This again, might reduce the feedback influence of evaluations of interactions on structures of signification (see Figure 10). Where evaluations do not pertain to social agents defined primarily as 'civilians' or 'military', their effects on the representations surrounding these categories will be limited. Interestingly enough, the obliteration of the identity categories of 'civilians' and 'military' appears more pronounced where interactions are evaluated in positive terms, making that social agents forget, as it were, that they are civilians and military. Yet, where irritations and tensions surface, the chances are higher that the mentioned categories become salient, precisely because representations are commonly negative. Hence, where a civilian buys a motorcycle from a soldier for a good price, he or she

145 Interview with spouse of FARDC captain, Misisi, 09.03.2011.

146 Conclusions based on group interviews among military spouses conducted on 22.12.2011 in Misisi.

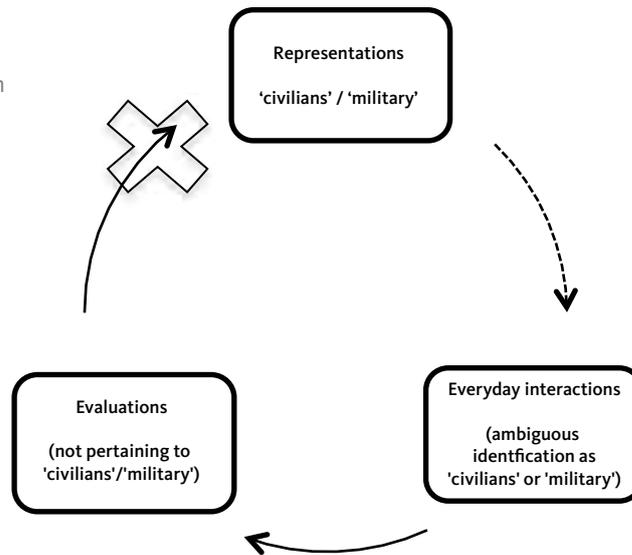
147 Since the *Hauts Plateaux* are above cassava altitude, the population is accustomed to eating *ugali* made of maize flour. Informal talks with Bashi in Minembwe, 04.12.2010.

148 Conclusions based on informal conversations with military spouses, Minembwe, 02.12.2011.

149 The positive impacts of engagement in non-predatory forms of revenue generation are also detected for soldiers, see e.g., Désiré Bigega, 'Nord Kivu : les militaires se nourrissent dans leurs propres champs', *Syfia Grands Lacs*, 6 April 2012.

might see the soldier primarily as a seller. However, when the buyer is duped, he or she might readily ascribe this to the seller's status as a 'soldier'. Consequently, the feedback loop appears more often erratic where evaluations are positive.

Figure 10: Erratic feedback loop of evaluations due to ambiguous identification



Concluding, summarizing and final reflections Part I

Part I has looked at the past and its links with the present. Chapter 3 explored the evolution of the social order of the Congo and the Congolese armed forces over the timespan of more than a century, revealing important continuities both in the social structures shaping rulers' organization, management and deployment of the armed forces and in those constitutive of the armed forces themselves. In their quest for control, the Congo's rulers have faced a set of challenges that have remained remarkably similar over time. The difficult terrain and peculiarities of the political economy, including vast distances, immense areas with low population densities, and the presence of numerous relatively autonomous polities, have made it difficult to establish comprehensive control and ensure direct administrative intervention and wealth extraction on the whole of the national territory. This has fostered the archipelago nature of Congolese statehood, relating to the concentration of infrastructural development, direct administrative intervention, and effective security governance in the most strategic sites. State power projection and governance in the less important hinterlands, by contrast, have been characterized by the cooptation of local power networks, the presence of ill-controlled and little effective in/security forces, and limited investments in the development of transport and administrative infrastructure. Although various rulers at various times have intended and managed to significantly reinforce central state control, including the Belgian colonizers and Mobutu in the first decade of his rule, the penetration of administrative and in/security apparatuses has remained highly uneven, both geographically and over time. This is at once a cause and an outcome of rulers' turn to power broadcasting via (coopted) intermediaries and personal networks, rather than via direct administrative intervention. However, while personalized, these forms of power projection have partly played out through the administration, which has usually been dominated by the networks of the incumbents. One of the hallmarks of such governance through big-man networks has been the manipulation of (access to) revenue-generating opportunities, which from the mid-1970s onwards were increasingly located in the non-official economic sphere.

Aside from these domestic factors, another important influence on rulers' deployment and management of the armed forces has been the nature of the external (threat) environment, which has been fluctuating. While the early colonial era was marked by border disputes, the later colonial and most of the post-independence period up to the mid-1990s were not characterized by major external security threats. In case existential threats did materialize in the post-independence era, Mobutu had guaranteed backing from friendly foreign powers. This took away the need for developing armed forces with strong fighting capabilities, and further reinforced the orientation of the military towards domestic deployment. These effects highlight how specific configurations of social structures, as shaped by the political economy and the external threat environment, create incentives for rulers to deploy and manage the armed forces in particular ways, which again has an impact on the social order in which rulers are situated.

Concerning the ways in which the Congo's rulers have employed the armed forces in the past, these have been importantly influenced by both the overall role of coercion within their arsenal of instruments of rule, and the existence of other apparatuses of coercion. While coercion has generally played a key role in power projection and governance in the Congo, it has often been complemented by less overly coercive modes and instruments of rule, like cooptation by providing pay-offs. Furthermore, coercion has not been exclusively

exercised by the armed forces. Agencies like the civilian intelligence services, and in the Mobutu era, the youth wing of the MPR, have also crucially contributed to suppression, repression and oppression. Yet, for quelling (perceived) existential threats to the regime and/or the incumbents, but also for establishing and maintaining order, rulers have to an important extent relied on the armed forces. The latter have proceeded mostly in a reactive manner, by suppressing resistance and public 'disorder', although they have also been engaged in deterrence through mere presence, via the 'display of force'. For the most effective interventions and the protection of strategic areas, rulers have predominantly relied on a number of elite military units, including the presidential guard. However, for maintaining order in the non-strategic hinterlands, the Congo's rulers have generally employed militarily less effective, under-resourced, and often little controlled units. This should partly be seen in the light of the limited presence of police forces, which is both a cause and an effect of the armed forces' exercise of domestic security functions, especially in the rural areas. Additionally, the deployment of ragtag and often ill-controlled units has ultimately been a cost-effective solution to maintaining order in far-flung areas. Rural-based units have generally been partly self-financing by 'harvesting' resources from civilians, often in a harsh manner. As a result of this brutality, civilians have commonly experienced the military to be a powerful actor, despite its limited fighting capabilities. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that troops have generally been ill-controlled by the hierarchy, civilians have perceived them to be operating under the direct guidance of the government and military leaders in Kinshasa. Therefore, even while having limited operational capacity and a high level of de facto decentralization, the overall effects of the presence of extractive and oppressive armed forces has been to shore up the power of the incumbents. Arguably, this has diminished the incentives for rulers to invest in a well-disciplined, well-resourced and well-organized military.

In conjunction with the overall role of the armed forces in ensuring the reproduction of the regime and the power of the incumbents, the Congo's social structures have also generated incentives for rulers' specific modes of military management, which have again affected the development of the structures of legitimation, signification and domination that characterize the armed forces. In the postcolonial period, rulers' management of the armed forces has been strongly informed by big-man rationalities and divide-and-rule politics. This has led to a fragmented in/security apparatus consisting of numerous agencies with overlapping mandates and parallel commands, and an emphasis on the cooptation of military elites via the manipulation of appointments and access to possibilities for revenue generation. As a result, power projection within the military has become inextricably intertwined with the diffusion of revenue flows and the granting and withholding of access to revenue-generation opportunities. A crucial manifestation of this are *rapportage* systems, or vertical upward flows of revenues that are often largely extracted from the population. The workings of these systems are enabled by particular structures of legitimation and signification within the military, notably negative representations of civilians that depict them as 'the field of the military' and norms surrounding civilian-military interaction that authorize wealth extraction from civilians. But military involvement in revenue generation has been more variegated than simple extraction from civilians. Certain superior officers in the Mobutu era were true business tycoons, using the influence, contacts and resources derived from their official position in the military for business activities, while capitalizing upon a permissive climate geared towards keeping them out of politics. At the lower side of the hierarchical pyramid, soldiers have also structurally engaged in revenue generation, often seizing upon the opportunities opened up by the exercise of domestic order tasks and the rapid growth of the non-official economy. Systematic involvement in economic activities has multiplied soldiers' links to the civilian environment, creating business and protection relations that allow civilians to use contacts in the military to obtain certain economic advantages, like access to smuggling networks, transport or imported goods.

In sum, the nature of the Congo's political economy, characterized by archipelago statehood, indirect rule, and in the postcolonial period, governance through big-man networks and the importance of the non-official economy, has in interaction with other factors, notably the nature of the external security environment, importantly shaped rulers' management, organization and deployment of the armed forces. This has contributed to the development of a decentralized and little coherent force that is heavily involved in revenue-generation activities and in which big-man networks play a crucial role. These structural characteristics generate a particular dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the military, causing staff to always be uncertain of their position and related access to income, while constantly competing for favors and appointments. These effects cause the military to fuel a similar dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within its deployment environment, being in competition with other state services and itself, in particular for the extraction of wealth from civilians. As will be further explained in Part III, the FARDC demonstrates many of the same characteristics, which is partly a result of the fact that there have been numerous continuities in the social structures shaping the rulers' organization and deployment of the military, and in the social structures of the military itself.

Similar to the social structures of the Congo as a whole, there have been continuities in the structures of domination, signification and legitimation of the Kivus, including those most shaping civilians' agency towards the military. However, processes of militarization have generated numerous transformations, which has had important effects on civilian-military interaction. From the colonial era onwards, the area of the present-day Kivus has had tense relations with the central authorities, which have struggled to maintain a grip over this zone. One reason for this is that power complexes in the Kivus have stayed relatively autonomous, although patterns have been variegated both geographically and over time. This has caused Kinshasa to mostly rule over the Kivus in an indirect manner, using local strongmen and elites, including customary chiefs, as intermediaries. The autonomy of local social orders has been reinforced by the strong cross-border orientation of the Kivus' economy, which has created centrifugal tendencies that have been both a cause and effect of weak infrastructural linkages to Kinshasa, although there have been important differences in this over time.

At certain historical conjunctures, notably in the context of heightened political and electoral competition, the Kivus have been a hotbed

of armed activity. Examples are the Simba rebellion in the 1960s and the attempted transition to multiparty democracy in the first half of the 1990s. While this violent activity has often been framed in general discourses of resistance against the government, 'imperialism' and 'foreign invasion', it has generally been strongly informed by more locally grounded conflict dynamics. The latter are mostly driven by struggles between and within communities for access to land and other resources, positions of local authority, and political representation at the provincial and national level. These dynamics of conflict have often been framed in discourses of ethnicity and autochthony, the latter being based on a flexibly defined dichotomy between on the one hand, 'Rwandophones' and on the other hand, 'autochthons'. The salience of these discourses in fuelling conflict is partly an outgrowth of the legacy of certain processes induced by colonial policies, in particular the territorialization of ethnicity and the dualism between customary and non-customary forms of authority. However, it has also been fostered by postcolonial policies promoting changes in the management and distribution of land, and in citizenship legislation. What has furthered played a role is the economic, administrative and infrastructural decline that set in from the early 1970s onwards, which has rendered protection by social networks formed along ethnic lines of paramount importance for social mobility and security.

Ongoing economic and state decline have also contributed to other social transformations, in particular the erosion of social cohesion and established forms of authority. Furthermore, they have promoted changes in norms relating to coercion and protection relations with armed actors, which are a part of processes of militarization. These transformations have again informed and been informed by changes in patterns of revenue generation triggered by the rise of the non-official economy and the growing attractiveness and acceptability of more opportunistic and short-term survival and enrichment-oriented economic activities, which often involve substantial degrees of coercion and/or concern illegal practices like smuggling. Since the military and other in/security services often play an important part in facilitating and protecting such activities, these developments have reinforced their position in the non-official economy. The state services, including the armed forces, spearheaded the development of what came to be known as *Système-D*, which transformed the state apparatus into an asphyxiating web of agencies and authorities that mutually compete for influence and wealth accumulation. This has further eroded local authorities' capabilities and legitimacy, thus reducing their possibilities to regulate the Kivus' many local conflicts in a non-violent manner. As a consequence, appeals to armed actors for the provision of dispute-processing services have become an increasingly commonsensical practice.

These various developments were already under way in the 1980s, implying that processes of militarization started well before the outbreak of the First Congo War in 1996. As we have seen, important dimensions of militarization are the spread of discourses and norms that justify and rationalize the use of coercion, the routinization of interaction with armed actors, and the normalization of the forging of protection arrangements with such actors. In the Kivus, the justifications and rationalizations for the use of coercion have not only been related to the imperative of revenue generation, but have also been strongly linked to tensions framed in ethnic terms. This has been an important factor in the proliferation of militias in the 1990s, many recruits of which were marginalized youth. The two Congo Wars strongly intensified processes of militarization, while also triggering other social transformations that have rendered the interlocking dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection even more volatile. The development of a war economy rendered millions of people directly or indirectly dependent on armed actors for generating a livelihood, but also for forms of physical protection. At the same time, politics was largely reduced to armed struggle, while armed actors became key actors in both formal and informal structures of local governance.

The post-settlement era (from 2003 onwards) has done little to diminish the salience of these militarized rationalities, as evidenced by the fact that armed actors continue to be crucial for guaranteeing political, physical and economic security in the face of ongoing conflicts and violence. Perversely, the pressures of the military integration process and Kinshasa's efforts to reinforce control became new sources of conflicts and insecurity, in part due to the close links between on the one hand, factions within the military or armed groups, and on the other hand, the political-economic elites and wider networks that drive ongoing conflicts and violence in the Kivus. These links, and the ensuing interventions of armed actors in local conflicts, politics and business, have also reinforced negative mutual representations between the military and civilians. While among the military, framings of civilians as armed group members in disguise have become increasingly salient, to civilians, the military has lost its impartiality, being increasingly represented in antagonistic ethnic-identity based terms.

Chapter 4 further explored these mutual representations, and how these are shaped by the legacies of the past, including traumatic memories of massacres seen as ethnically targeted. It also highlighted the multidimensionality and polyvalence of the notions of 'civilians' and 'the military', which are conceptualized in varying manners, and embedded in differing but overlapping discourses located at various levels of abstraction. In relation to civilians' representations of the military, it was described how Kivutians see the armed forces as being closer to civilians than in the past. The military has become omnipresent, as soldiers live intermingled with civilians in villages and urban quarters, which has normalized and routinized interaction. While this close interaction opens up possibilities for friendship, it has not taken away dominant representations of the military as ultimately unreliable and unpredictable. Civilians generally believe that soldiers may suddenly change their behavior and resort to force, or that they may unexpectedly disappear due to rotations, and therefore not respect made commitments. Furthermore, the military's dealings are seen to be secretive and informed by ungraspable logics. The resulting image of opacity is compounded by the presence of multiple armed factions, which creates confusion in relation to uniformed persons. Taken together, these developments have made that despite overall increased familiarity, soldiers continue to be represented as *bakujakuja* (strangers), and as belonging to a different world. This fosters the idea that civilians and military are ultimately 'living

together apart'. What reinforces this distance and distrust are representations of the military as dominated by certain out-groups framed as 'hostile', highlighting that civilian-military interaction is not exempted from the ethnicized rationalities that are an important feature of conflict dynamics in the Kivus.

Civilians' mixed and undetermined feelings about the military can succinctly be described as 'ambiguity'. An important source of this ambiguity are the tensions that exist between and within various representations of the military, as well between these representations and evaluations. Importantly, civilians continue to highly value the *idea* of the military, holding elevated expectations of the FARDC's contribution to peace and security. Furthermore, they may have positive experiences with some of the units and commanders that have been deployed in their area of living. Yet, it appears that neither positive representations of the military as an ideal-type nor positive context-based evaluations touch directly upon the negative representations of military staff and the military in general that are inscribed in the *longue durée*. Consequently, simultaneously held representations and evaluations of the military can be highly contradictory, which elicits ambiguity.

This ambiguity is mirrored in the ways in which FARDC soldiers see civilians. To military staff, the notion of 'civilians' has multiple meanings, and is part of varying discourses that evoke divergent and seemingly opposed connotations. Most FARDC soldiers struggle to make sense of their position in society and their attitude towards civilians. This is in part related to the divergences between and within representations and evaluations of civilians. Soldiers are painfully aware of their low status in civilian eyes and their dependence on civilian resources and infrastructure, which fosters the feeling that they are reduced to 'beggars'. At the same time, they continue to feel superior to civilians, a feeling that is informed by representations of civilians as weak, unorganized, and selfish. These representations are partly the product of processes of the construction of military forms of identification infused with negative representations of civilians that have a long lineage in the Congolese armed forces. Among the military in the Kivus, there is also a more recent source for these negative representations, namely the close connections between civilians and armed groups. In zones with rebel presence, soldiers feel that every civilian is a potential traitor, an idea that chimes with representations of civilians as self-interested and opportunistic. The resulting feelings of distrust may be reinforced by discourses of ethnicity, when civilians are perceived to belong to a hostile ethnically defined out-group. This shows how general conflict dynamics in the Kivus also affect the military's readings and assessments of its civilian environment, evidencing the relative 'openness' of the FARDC as a separate social order.

Similar to what has been observed for civilians, the mutual influences between the various representations and evaluations of civilians that exist among the military are far from straightforward. For example, the strand within professional military discourses that represents civilians as intrinsically worthy of protection does not seem to directly influence representations of civilians at lower levels of abstraction. However, these professional discourses, which emphasize civilian protection, do feed into soldiers' forms of professional military identification, forming the basis on which they formulate claims to respect from civilians. The experienced denial of that respect creates dissonances that contribute to reproducing and reinforcing negative representations of civilians. These negative representations are partly validated and partly negated by everyday interactions. On the one hand, daily practices like calling soldiers names or refusals to sell them on credit make that soldiers experience disrespect, hostility and a lack of gratitude from the side of civilians. On the other hand, in certain deployment contexts, everyday interactions are experienced to be positive, like when civilians provide assistance to the military, for example in relation to funerals or selling on credit. Yet, since in these everyday situations, 'civilian' and 'military' forms of identification might not predominate, these positive evaluations do not always contribute to altering representations.

Civilian-military interaction and civilian agency

PART I PROVIDED AN EXTENSIVE OVERVIEW of the historical development of the social structures that shape present-day civilian-military interaction in the Kivus. It also zoomed in on one dimension of the legacy of this historical evolution, describing how discourses formed over the *longue durée* inform soldiers' and civilians' mutual *representations*. Furthermore, it explained how representations differ from *evaluations*, which are grounded in and comment on concrete experiences of social interactions. Part II further explores civilians' evaluations of the military's practices and power, in particular the mechanisms and factors that shape these evaluations, and how the latter influence *civilians' agency towards the military*. This necessitates a comprehensive analysis of the factors shaping civilians' agentic orientations vis-à-vis the armed forces, which explores the impact of at once the Kivus' social structures and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. Additionally, it requires the cataloguing of the most important *forms of civilian-military interaction* and their underlying mechanisms and rationalities.

One factor of particular importance in shaping civilians' evaluations of the military and its practices are *social roles*. These were earlier described¹ as relating to the typification of agents, being intersections of structures of domination, legitimation and signification that generate predefined meanings and (normative) expectations concerning obligations, prerogatives and practices (Giddens, 1984: 83–89, 282). The expectations that citizens have of those enacting the social role of figure of authority, including military commanders, have two dimensions: First, they relate to the (*common*) *projects* that authorities should support. For example, it is inscribed in the social role of military commanders that they provide (public) security, implying this is an important criterion on the basis of which civilians assess their practices. Second, expectations of figures of authority relate to the *qualities* that these figures need to possess in order to instill confidence among citizens in their capabilities and willingness to realize common projects. In the case of military commanders, this entails for example 'knowing the law', being well educated, and showing respect for civilians and civilian authorities. Where these various expectations are not fulfilled, authorities' commitment to governing in an adequate manner will likely be perceived as lacking credibility, causing their power position to be susceptible to processes of delegitimation. A common way in which expectations are frustrated is when the *outcomes* of social role performances (including who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged, such as via the effects on livelihoods) do not match the initial beliefs regarding their impact.

One of the most important dimensions of the evaluations of the practices of figures of authority, including the military, is the extent to which these are perceived to be *licit* or *illicit*. Such evaluations are partly shaped by the way in which those enacting a particular social role *discursively frame* their practices, in particular in terms of being of a more 'public' or a more 'private' nature. In relation to the military, it appears that when it comes to the extraction of wealth from civilians, 'private' practices are more often seen as illicit, while those framed as 'public' are more likely to be seen as 'licit', although this also depends on whether the audiences to these social role performances *read* the latter in a similar way as they are presented by the military. For example, when claiming resources from civilians, FARDC soldiers might enact the social role of 'public security provider', thereby employing the discursive registers of 'public security/officiality'. This would for instance entail that they demand resources in the name of their professional, official duty to ensure security, while highlighting that the demanded contribution will enable them to better enact that duty. Yet, framing the demand for a contribution in the discourse of public security is no guarantee that audiences will read these practices accordingly. Civilians might reject the framings projected by the military and rather see the formulated demand as an act of private enrichment, rendering it illicit.

The credibility of social role performances is also shaped by the *social position* and *social identification* of the actors involved, which

¹ The notion of social roles was explained on p. 39.

have strong effects on evaluations. One way in which social position matters is the extent to which the power position of those being evaluated is seen as *legitimate*. Where social agents' power is perceived to have a high degree of legitimacy, their practices will sooner be evaluated as licit. As we have seen, for Beetham (1991: 16), the legitimacy of power is to a large extent grounded in evaluations of whether power conforms to established formal and informal rules, and the justifiability of these rules in terms of beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinated groups about the (common) projects that power should support.² This definition shows how the legitimation of power is related to *social roles*, which provide an articulation of both the (common) projects that power should support and of the rules surrounding the exercise of power. Beetham also distinguishes a third dimension of legitimacy, namely subordinates' public practices of compliance with authority, considered to have declaratory power and to create mutual normative commitments. However, the extent to which public compliance can contribute to the legitimation of power is contested. Scott (1990: 77–85) refutes this possibility, especially when compliance is the product of coercion. Yet, Scott does not seem to take fully into consideration that public compliance also produces other effects on subordinates' agency, as it contributes to *routinization* and to what Levi (1997: 24) calls *ethical reciprocity*, or the principle that people will comply with the demands of authorities as long as others do. At the same time, public compliance hampers the contestation of power by affecting *collective action*, notably by creating informational problems in relation to who resists certain dominant actors and who does not. As such, it importantly influences the agency of the subordinated vis-à-vis the dominant.

Another dimension of relevance in relation to how social position and identification affect evaluations is whether the figure of authority in question is (seen to be) a state agent or not. State agents commonly have an edge in projecting readings of their practices as 'public', which, depending on the context, often contributes to making these practices appear more licit. What also matters with regard to social positions, in particular of state officials, is whether they belong to the upper or lower echelons of the professional and social hierarchy. This is clearly manifested in evaluations of the FARDC. Certain practices that are deemed relatively licit for the rank and file, commonly seen as very poor and duped by their hierarchy, appear illicit when enacted by superior officers. In addition to profession and location in professional and social hierarchies, another element of social position and identification that affects evaluations is (perceived) belonging to in-groups or antagonistically framed out-groups. Expectedly, the power position of actors seen to belong to an out-group framed as hostile is sooner considered to be illegitimate by those defining themselves as in-group members. This also reflects upon evaluations of the practices of such out-group members, highlighting how these are influenced by conflict dynamics. For example, evaluations of military units' practices are partly shaped by the background of soldiers and commanders, in particular whether they are 'Rwandophones' or 'autochthones', locals or outsiders, and whether they are seen as partial or impartial.

The effects of modes of social identification on evaluations draw attention to the two-sided nature of the evaluation process. Obviously, how the features of a social agent are assessed depends on the positionality of those making the assessment, in particular how they are related to the persons they evaluate. For example, the clients of a certain big-man will see the latter's practices differently than those not belonging to the big-man's network of followers. Evaluations are also impacted by the evaluator's profession and related forms of knowledge and identification. Where social agents have a high level of technical knowledge of rules and regulations, they are more susceptible to seeing violations thereof as manifestly illicit. For instance, violations of environmental legislation are sooner seen to be illicit by officials of the ministry of the environment than parts of the population who depend on such violations for generating a livelihood, reason why the first group is likely to condemn the military's logging practices stronger than the second.

A final factor that shapes evaluations are norms that are not directly derived from social roles, but that are primarily related to *procedures* and *practices*. Assessments of procedures are especially of importance where authorities intend to implement certain measures or policies. Take the example of a financial contribution imposed by a military commander on shopkeepers. To what extent this measure is perceived to be fair largely depends on whether it is discriminatorily enforced or not, hence whether all shopkeepers are affected or certain are spared due to having a favored status. A second set of relevant norms concern those governing primarily the social practices that are under evaluation themselves. These *practical norms*³ regulate the mode of enactment of a certain practice, for example the appropriate time, place, style, the types and levels of coercion that are involved and the surrounding discursive registers. The higher the *level of routinization*, hence institutionalization of certain practices, the more elaborate the practical norms, and the more salient that respect for these norms will be within evaluations.

In general, norms related to procedures and forms of social praxis play a more important role in shaping civilians' evaluations of military practices than elaborately articulated ideological and moral notions that are valid across wide time-space contexts. As Roitman (2005: 188–192) has noted in relation to evaluations of unregulated and sometimes unlawful economic practices in the Chad Basin, these assessments do not emerge from and produce a 'moral economy' that is based on absolute notions of 'good' and 'bad'. Rather, practices of both self and other are read and interpreted in relation to codified forms of reasoning that define and guide certain spheres and spaces of human life, like the practices and procedures of governments and in/security forces, the market, 'the bush', or highways. Hence, when people evaluate the practices of the FARDC and their own relation to those practices, they may draw more upon the specific codes or precepts pertaining to particular spheres of praxis and situations (hence practical norms) than on absolute moral notions and principles. In conjunction with social roles and social identification, practical norms are also crucial in shaping audiences' readings of the ways in

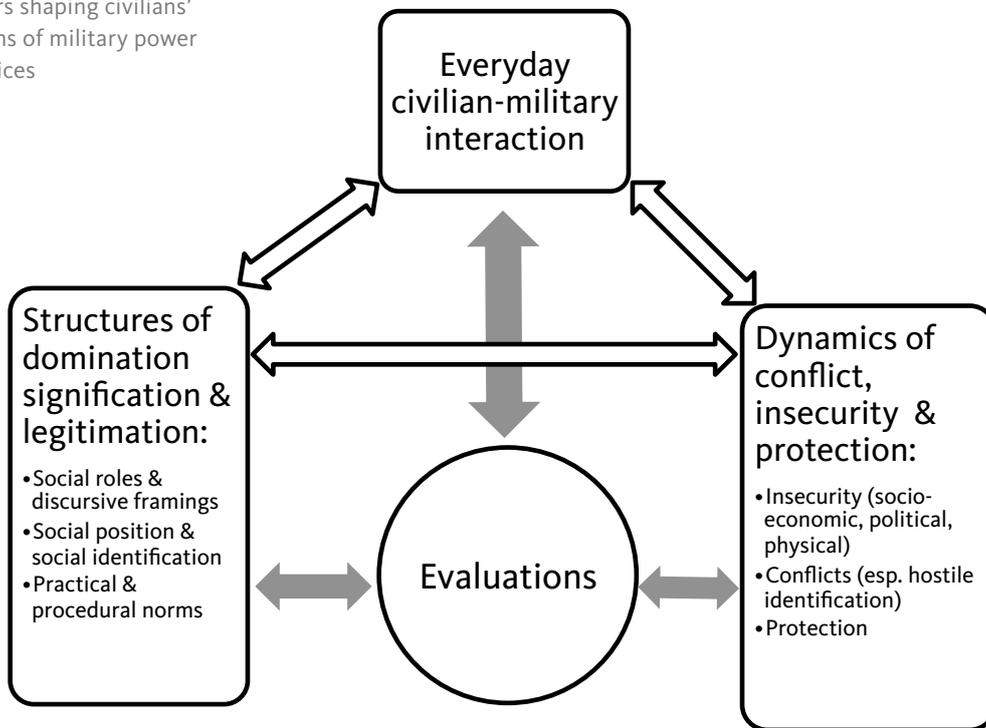
² Beetham's approach to the legitimacy of power was discussed on p. 40.

³ For an explanation of the notion of practical norms, see p. 40.

which social practices are discursively framed. As mentioned, when performing a particular social role, social agents discursively frame their practices accordingly, in particular in terms of being of a ‘public’ or a ‘private’ nature. Whether audiences find these framings credible partly depends on whether the enacted practices respect the practical norms. Practices that are seen to strongly violate these norms, for example as they involve inappropriate types of coercion, are more difficult to project as ‘public’. This is especially the case where it concerns practices habitually enacted by state servants, like certain forms of taxation. For example, while particular types of roadblock taxation are commonly seen as ‘public’ practices, this might change when a soldier imposes several times the usual fee, making it appear like ‘private’ enrichment. What also impacts the extent to which audiences share the projections of the performer is the overall credibility of the latter’s performance, as shaped by the ensemble of discursive framings and the employed non-verbal cues and props.

To sum up, social structures shape evaluations of social practices in three main ways (see Figure 11): First, via social roles, including the discursive registers invoked during role performances and the outcomes of these performances; second, via the social position and forms of identification of those involved, notably their relative legitimacy, profession, position in the hierarchy, and belonging to an in-or-out-group; and third, via the norms surrounding the procedures and social practices in question. Yet the ways in and extent to which these social structures-related factors shape evaluations also depend on their interaction with the dynamics of conflict, insecurity, and protection as they play out in the context in which social agents are situated (see also Figure 11). The nature and intensity of these dynamics strongly influence what expectations surrounding figures of authority predominate, and therefore how their position of power and practices are considered. For example, in a context where there are strong tensions between self-styled autochthones and Rwandophones, an FARDC commander’s ethnic origins may become a salient element in the development of evaluations. In other situations, by contrast, commanders’ forms of ethnic identification might hardly be of any relevance. Furthermore, where there is extreme insecurity of various kinds, for example as a result of poverty and banditry, practices that guarantee people safety and protection, or allow them to earn a livelihood, will sooner be seen as ‘licit’. The same applies to contexts marked by multiple inter-or intra-community conflicts. In such a situation, having a protector who can reinforce one’s side by intervening in the processing of disputes becomes of paramount importance. When protectors live up to these expectations and successfully intervene in conflicts, their practices might sooner be seen as ‘licit’, even when not fully respecting the norms governing the practices in question and the procedures for their implementation. In sum, the nature and intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection impact evaluations by shaping the contents of people’s expectations surrounding social roles and the relative importance of the outcomes of performances of these roles.

Figure 11: The factors shaping civilians’ evaluations of military power and practices



Evaluations produce both direct and indirect effects on *social practices*. For instance, where civilians see the practices of a certain FARDC unit in a negative manner, the chances that they will contest rather than comply with its demands are higher. This shows how civilians’ evaluations of military actors and practices shape their *agentic orientations*, notably whether they will contest, comply or collaborate with the military, as is further elaborated upon in Chapter 7. By shaping agency, evaluations may also (cumulatively and indirectly) contribute to the *transformation of social structures*, which will again produce effects on the social practices that these structures inform. For example, when evaluations, which are based on concrete experiences of everyday civilian-military interaction, systematically diverge from

representations, they may ultimately lead to a transformation of the structures of signification underpinning these representations. Yet, as explained in the previous chapter, the fact that 'civilians' and 'military' are superordinate identity categories renders this a convoluted process.

Evaluations also influence social structures by affecting the interplay of structures of legitimation and domination. Where the practices of the dominant are systematically evaluated as licit, their position of power may ultimately come to be seen as relatively legitimate. Inversely, where social practices are continually evaluated as illicit, for instance as they bring insecurity and undermine livelihoods, the position of power of those enacting them will be progressively delegitimized. This mechanism plays out at various time-space scales. It can for example pertain to the position of a single FARDC commander within a relatively limited time-space context, or, when it involves a multitude of FARDC commanders acting at different places, affect the legitimacy of the FARDC as a whole over a wider time-space span. While in the first situation, processes of (de)legitimation may unfold at a relatively high speed due to the volatility of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, in the last case, the legitimacy of the military may wax and wane at a much lower pace, relating to developments that play out over decades.

From the previous, it follows that in order to understand civilians' evaluations of their interactions with the military, it is necessary to comprehend the micro-dynamics of these practices. This again, requires an analysis of the forms that civilian-military interactions assume and the ways in which they are performed, including the involved social roles, discursive registers and procedural and practical norms. There are broadly speaking three spheres of social praxis that bring the military and civilians into contact with each other: First, the production and distribution of wealth (e.g., business activities and practices involving wealth extraction, like taxation); second, the production and distribution of power and authority (e.g., local governance practices like dispute processing and the elaboration and implementation of administrative decisions); and third, the production and distribution of security and insecurity (e.g., the military's performance of security duties and military misbehavior). These spheres are to a large extent overlapping. As they are inherently political, economic practices cannot be seen in isolation from power relations. This is all the more so when they are enmeshed with the rationalities of protection, since the granting and withholding of access to revenue generation is a crucial tool of power projection within big-man networks (Bayart, 2006[1989]). Militarization makes that this wealth-power nexus is also closely intertwined with the production of in/security, as it causes armed actors to strongly intervene in all spheres of local governance, including administrative decision-making, dispute processing, 'justice' and policing. Furthermore, for many people in the Kivus, security is to a large extent defined in socio-economic terms. When asked about 'security', female cultivators would highlight the importance of being able to go to their fields and fetch water and firewood in safety; petty traders would mention road safety and market access, and fishermen would speak of the security conditions on the lake. 'Insecurity' was generally associated with non-harvested crops, rising prices due to the diminished availability of produce and goods, and ambushes on the road to the market. While recognizing the indivisibility of the spheres of power, wealth and security, practices of civilian-military interaction have been regrouped in this chapter in two partly overlapping categories, for the purposes of analysis: First, the political-economic domain, which is discussed in Chapter 5, and which focuses on extractive and business practices; and second, the domain of local (security) governance, which is addressed in Chapter 6, and analyzes elements of governance that are not primarily related to wealth extraction and distribution, such as security provision and dispute processing.

Civilian-military interaction in the political-economic domain

THIS CHAPTER DISCUSSES THE MOST important forms of civilian-military interaction in the political-economic domain. It first briefly introduces these forms, which have been regrouped in the categories of extraction, protection and collaboration/transactions, and then further elucidates them by presenting extensive examples that are mostly drawn from the fieldwork. These empirical descriptions focus on the ways in which these practices are enacted, in particular the social roles and corresponding discursive registers that are invoked, and how this shapes civilian evaluations. But before presenting and empirically illustrating the main forms of civilian-military political-economic interaction, it is necessary to further theorize the mechanisms underlying the ways in which these social practices are discursively framed in terms of ‘public’ or ‘private’, and the effects of these framings on evaluations.

‘Public’ and ‘private’ framings

Like all evaluations of practices of civilian-military interaction, those in the political-economic domain are shaped by the particular social roles that are invoked, as partly constituted by the employed discursive registers. Where this interaction concerns the extraction of goods and services from civilians by the military, for example through taxation or forced labor, the extent to which practices are framed as ‘public’ or ‘private’ becomes a particularly important element in shaping evaluations. As mentioned in the introduction to Part II, ‘public’ practices of wealth extraction sooner verge towards the licit end of the spectrum, while ‘private’ accumulation is sooner evaluated as ‘illicit’. Whether practices are read as ‘public’ or ‘private’ depends on a host of factors, including the social position and modes of social identification of those enacting them (e.g., in particular whether it concerns state actors or not, and their position in the hierarchy); the social role that they are performing (e.g., whether they are acting as officials or not); how this role is performed, including the discourses and non-verbal cues employed as part of the performance; and the outcomes of the enacted practices, notably the effects on livelihoods. What also matters is the extent to which the enactment of practices respects the procedural and practical norms, as egregious violations of these norms will render it more difficult to credibly frame certain practices as ‘public’.

In the light of their status as ‘officials’, public servants have an edge in projecting an interpretation of their practices as ‘public’ and ‘official’. This advantage also applies to FARDC soldiers, whom civilians identify very strongly as ‘state agents’.⁴ Moreover, soldiers often go to great lengths to frame their practices of wealth extraction as ‘public’, implying they explicitly present them as falling within the public (security) domain. For example, they might emphasize that these practices are organized by and carried out in name of the military as an official institution, with the aim of enabling it to (better) execute its official security duties. Public security framings also tend to entail the employment of discourses of exceptionalism, leading military staff to claim privileges based on their (special) status as public security provider, or to invoke security emergencies like military operations to justify claims to resources. Yet, as we have seen, such claims to ‘officiality’ are not always validated by the civilian audiences to these performances. The latter might read performances in a different way than they are staged by the performers, for example rejecting their ‘officiality’ and dismissing them as a veneer for private acts of extortion that are not sanctioned by the wider military organization nor serve a clear security purpose.

But the distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ is not as simple as it seems from the above description. For example, state agents’ non-official or ‘private’ practices may also have a ‘public’ dimension in the sense of being enacted and visible in the public sphere, or benefiting wider groups of people. When an FARDC commander acts in public space on a personal title, he does not cease to be identified as an

⁴ For the stateness dimension in civilians’ representations of the FARDC, see pp. 111–113.

FARDC commander, even if that is not the primary capacity in which he operates in that particular context. The continuing identification as an 'official' may affect evaluations of the non-official practices he engages in, causing these to be sooner identified as either 'licit' or 'illicit', depending on the context. Furthermore, since it is inscribed in the expectations surrounding the social role of public servants that they obey the law and serve the state, their open engagement in illegal practices that are not sanctioned by higher authorities sends a signal that these practices are somehow tolerated. For example, when customs officials are massively involved in import/export fraud, the impression is conveyed that these activities are more or less accepted, making them appear less illicit (cf. Roitman, 2005: 29).

Another complexity resides in the fact that 'public' practices are not the preserve of those acting in the capacity of state agents. Big-men are generally seen to represent certain communities or networks and to defend their collective interests. Consequently, their practices may also come to be read as 'public', even though they are not necessarily 'official' or related to the state apparatus. Furthermore, many big-men are simultaneously state servants, causing their public practices to be informed by complex, overlapping rationalities that oscillate between on the one hand, fulfilling the big-man-oriented expectations of their client-constituencies, and on the other hand, servicing the public-service related expectations of citizens. There are inherent tensions to such a balancing exercise, leading to intricate amalgams of discursive framings, social practices and rationalities that oscillate on wide official/non-official, public/private, and patronage/rational-legality spectra. This complicates the readings, hence evaluations of the practices enacted by big-men-cum-officials. As mentioned, where social agents' enactment of a particular social role conforms to the expectations surrounding that role, their practices are more likely to be evaluated as 'licit'. In the case of the social role of 'big-man', these expectations are defined by the notions of reciprocity that are inherent to patron-client ties, which center to an important extent on (symbolic) redistribution and representation (Erdmann and Engel, 2006). For example, when big-men use the revenues of certain economic activities for fulfilling expectations of redistribution and representation, these activities are more likely to be seen as licit, at least by the client networks who benefit from them, even when involving coercion or being illegal (Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 79). Yet, where big-men are simultaneously state agents, it might well be that the same revenue-generation activities seen as licit by their client constituencies are seen as illicit by other groups of citizens, since enacting them runs counter to the expectations surrounding officials. These tensions between different social role performances are also apparent in the case of FARDC commanders, who commonly enact a variety of social roles simultaneously, including that of 'big-man', 'military commander', and 'public authority/state actor'. However, these roles cannot be easily reconciled, and the enactment of the one sometimes entails violating the norms and expectations surrounding another.

Categories of civilian-military economic practices

The public/private framings discussed in the previous are not of equal importance in all categories of political-economic civilian-military interaction. They are especially salient where the military makes claims on civilians' resources, influencing the ways in which these claims are assessed. Claims on resources generally fall in the category of 'extraction', which is distinguished herein from the categories of 'protection' and 'economic collaboration/transactions'. These categories, which are briefly introduced below, should not be seen as well delineated or mutually exclusive. Many forms of civilian-military interaction involving the production or transfer of wealth bear elements of more than one of these categories. Rather, this division reflects an effort to come to a broad analytical categorization based on the most salient underlying rationalities, which are not always exclusive.

Extraction

Extraction, whether of labor or of resources, describes the one-sided transfer of economic value (in this case always from civilians to the military) without the person from whom the wealth is extracted perceiving to get a return, or if they do, on a non-excludable basis. Goods are non-excludable if it is not possible to exclude persons from their use or benefits (Samuelson, 1954). An example of a situation of no perceived return would be that of an FARDC unit whose presence leads to an increase in both insecurity and extraction, for example as the unit is ill-disciplined and steals from civilians at night. There is wealth transfer but civilians get nothing in return. An example of a situation where there would be a perceived return (on a non-excludable basis) is when extraction involves an FARDC unit which levies taxes at the market, but whose presence also holds certain ill-behaving rebel groups at bay, thus reinforcing security. There is wealth transfer, and there is a return service in the form of the provision of security as a common good (since nobody can be excluded from the benefits of the reduced presence of abusive armed groups). This distinction is important, for whether the FARDC is seen to provide a return service or not is a crucial element in shaping evaluations of practices of extraction, in particular the extent to which these are seen as licit or illicit.

Protection

In Chapter 2, it was explained that protection assumes two principal forms, which sometimes overlap.⁵ First, protection can be a

⁵ The notion of protection was discussed on p. 43.

commodity implying its provision takes place as a *transaction* involving service provision on an excludable basis (meaning that only certain groups of people are allowed to enjoy the benefits), against a well-defined, often monetary return. Second, it can be a dimension of a wider *social relation*, which is predominantly *patronage-based* but may also rest on other bases. This implies there is not always a direct, well-circumscribed return. Return services may also materialize in a later stage, as part of the reciprocities on which patron-client ties rest.

The services provided by the FARDC in the framework of protection mostly concern different forms of security (political, economic and physical), and include interventions in dispute processing and influence peddling. An example of a security-related protection service provided by the FARDC is the provision of security to the ambulant traders walking from market to market on the *Hauts Plateaux* of Fizi, Uvira and Mwenga. On the most insecure trajectories of their journey, these traders are accompanied by the FARDC to whom they pay between 400 and 800FC (\$0.5-0.75) depending on the axis.⁶ Since the FARDC does not provide protection to the other people walking to the market, hence it concerns the provision of security on an excludable basis, and the traders pay a fee to the military, this practice qualifies as a form of protection as a commodity. An example of protection services provided by the FARDC in the framework of wider protection relations would be the pressure put by a military commander on mining officials in order to lower the taxes imposed on a befriended civilian businessperson, without the latter necessarily directly paying the commander in return, providing perhaps a future return in the form of business advantages.

Economic collaboration and transactions

Economic collaboration describes a situation in which civilians and the military undertake joint economic activities on a longer-term basis, such as being partners in the same enterprise, or manager/owner or manager/investor constructions. Collaboration does not exclude substantial power asymmetries, including those underpinning patron-client ties. In fact, collaboration often takes place in the framework of protection relations, especially when it concerns illegal practices or markets. However, in other cases, the underlying relations are predominantly commercial. While collaboration points to a longer-term relation, economic exchanges between the military and civilians may also occur in the form of one-off or regular individual transactions, without this forming part of wider relations of collaboration, such as buying, selling, renting, and lending.

5.1 Extraction

As may not be surprising for a military that partly depends on civilian resources, the FARDC has developed a vast and varied repertoire of forms of wealth extraction from civilians. Contrary to what is assumed in mainstream narratives, which draw upon the iconic image of the soldier extorting at gunpoint, extractive practices do not always entail a high degree of overt violence (see also Verweijen, 2013). In fact, types and levels of coercion differ significantly, which has an important impact on civilians' evaluations, in particular concerning where practices fall on the licit/illicit spectrum. The importance of coercion is also a result of the level of routinization of the involved practices. In the Kivus, certain forms of military extraction have occurred so often over such a long periods of time that they have become institutionalized, causing them to be firmly guided by practical norms. As a consequence, people have developed well-defined expectations in relation to these practices, for instance in respect of their frequency, mode of enactment (place, time, style, sequencing, type and level of coercion involved, the amount demanded) and the surrounding discursive registers. Where these engrained scripts and rules are respected, civilians are likely to comply on the basis of habit, as given in by practical consciousness, thus reducing the relative importance of coercion.

The following section further analyzes military practices of civilian resources extraction, dividing these into three categories, which differ in respect of practices' level of routinization, the emphasis in terms of public/private framings, and lastly, the involved degree of coercion. The first category concerns generalized (in the sense of targeting the population as a whole) and routinized forms of extraction that are commonly framed as 'public'. The second relates to irregular and violent forms of extraction, which can be either generalized or target only specific persons or groups, and which are often seen as 'private' and 'illicit'. The third category encompasses the extraction of services and goods through non-payment, such as by means of leaving debts or imposing free services. This form only targets the specific economic operators from whom goods or services are consumed. The practices relating to this form have varying degrees of routinization, and oscillate widely on both the public/private and licit/illicit spectra.

5.1.1 Routinized, generalized 'public' extraction

Generalized and routinized forms of extraction, which are often quite well organized, are commonly framed as falling within the public security domain. Such forms of extraction are carried out overtly and officially, hence in the name of the military organization, and commonly target the population (or certain categories of economic operators) as a whole. Furthermore, they are usually sanctioned by

⁶ This information is based on observations made during the trajectory of the ambulant traders from Uvira to Mikalati from 26–29.01.2011.

the (immediate) hierarchy, who considers them to be part of the 'normal' work of the military. These forms of extraction can be either regular (e.g., fixed market fees) or more incidental (e.g., imposition of special contributions). In general, routinized 'public' forms of extraction sooner verge towards the licit end of the spectrum, especially when involving little direct violence. However, due to the host of other factors involved in shaping evaluations, this is not always the case.

Food collections in rural areas

In rural zones throughout the Kivus, food collections and other contributions to the military in money or in kind have become institutionalized. This is not strange if one realizes that such collections are one of the principal means by which the FARDC lives off the population's back. However, these collections were not initiated by the FARDC. Many informants stated that this practice started in the war era, having originated in areas controlled by locally recruited armed groups. According to a widespread narrative, these groups first had a high level of popular support, making people donate to them mostly in a voluntary manner. Consequently, these contributions were primarily perceived as a favor, to thank these groups for the protection provided to the population and their fight against 'foreign aggressors'. However, what started as a favor gradually transformed in to a 'right' [*haki*], causing armed groups to take these contributions for granted. When the unpopular RCD rebels took control over large parts of the Kivus from 1998 onwards, they appropriated this 'right', and partly formalized it. The FARDC is now seen to have inherited this 'right' to contributions, defined within the overly wide limits set by the RCD. They make use of this right in two manners: first, by demanding food collections and second, by imposing *efforts de guerre* or 'war efforts' contributions. *Efforts de guerre* is a term that was employed by the RCD (and its offshoots) to label a part of its system of taxation, but draws on a much older tradition of the naming of imposed contributions initiated by the Belgian colonial authorities during the Second World War.⁷

In many villages in isolated zones, where soldiers have little access to food due to deficient supplies, there is a periodic (often weekly) collection of foodstuffs for the military, organized through the *kapita* or village chief. The chief decrees for example that every household has to donate two roots of manioc, or one plate of flour, or one bottle of palm oil. Chiefs are also expected to contribute small livestock, mostly chickens and occasionally a goat, which they tend to collect from inhabitants of their village. The views on these food collections diverge. While civilians are generally of the opinion that the government should take care of its soldiers, and not the impoverished population, there is a widespread feeling that the military will continue to live off the population's back for some time to come. From this perspective, organized food collections appear a lesser evil in comparison to other mechanisms of extraction. Without regular food collections or roadblocks,⁸ it is feared, the military will start taking foodstuffs at night. A local chief on the *Hauts Plateaux*, commenting on why he did not mind food collections by the military that much, explained that otherwise 'they [the FARDC] will uproot our fields at night or come into our houses and steal'.⁹

Indeed, one of the most widespread types of military abuses against civilians are small-scale property violations, often without physical violence. These mostly take the form of the pillaging of small livestock, or of crops and fruits from fields or stocks, usually at night. In all rural field research sites, it was a near-universal complaint from civilians that soldiers (or their spouses) had uprooted their fields by pulling out cassava roots or potatoes, had cut the leaves of cassava plants (*sombe*) or those of sweet potatoes (*matembele*), or had taken bunches of bananas (*ndizi*) from the trees. Another often-heard accusation was that soldiers had stolen chickens or goats, or demolished fences made of branches and wooden sticks to use them as firewood. Such seemingly minor losses are strongly felt by impoverished families for whom every root of cassava counts, and are a major source of irritation and resentment. In the light of this widespread theft, it is understandable that civilians prefer regularized food collections, a preference that is strongly given in by a pragmatism that ultimately leads to resignation. Consequently, provided the imposed amounts are seen as reasonable and the collection is organized by their own village chief, many people do not strongly object to food collections by the military, hoping to prevent more violent, disorganized and disproportional forms of extraction in this way.

Aside from regular, periodic, contributions, there are also exceptional food collections. These are mostly organized whenever an important military commander pays a visit to a certain village, implying special efforts have to be made to receive him and his troops in an appropriate manner. This is not done purely out of fear or because it is imposed, for village chiefs customarily have the obligation to receive important guests in a hospitable manner. Such duties of hospitality include offering the guest a welcome gift, which in parts of Fizi and Uvira is commonly called *zimano*.¹⁰ The *zimano* often boils down to slaughtering a chicken, or even a goat, depending on the importance of the guest. Hospitality duties for visiting commanders also include providing them with a bottled drink (beer or soda), which is considered a great luxury in the more isolated zones, where such drinks are very expensive due to the high transportation costs.

7 The colonial *efforts de guerre* system was mentioned on p. 57.

8 In one case (the Lulimba-Kilembwe axis visited in March 2011), the local population believed that there were no food collections in the villages because there were many roadblocks. This could indicate that there are interdependencies between various forms of extraction, implying that when units engage in the one form they forego the other.

9 Interview with *kapita*, Kalingi 1, 07.12.2010.

10 Such guests include foreign researchers, as evidenced by the frequency with which chickens were slaughtered in my honor whenever I stayed in a village.

This shows that the *zimano*, seen as the 'right' of every guest, including military and rebel commanders, is clearly governed by practical norms. These mostly informal norms determine what is seen as a 'fair' amount to provide, which depends to a large extent on the status of the guest, but also on the prosperity of the chief and the community in question, and the relations between host and guest. Due to these institutionalized modes of assessment, village chiefs immediately sense when commanders exaggerate their 'rights' as a guest, for example by demanding too much beer and goats.

Where the practical norms surrounding the *zimano* threaten to become violated, chiefs usually try to bargain to arrive at what they think is a more reasonable or fair amount, even when the room for negotiation is limited. This occurred for example in Mukera (Fizi), where the possibilities of the *chef de localité* to engage in negotiation were heavily circumscribed due to his tense relations with the FARDC. In December 2009, his predecessor had gone into hiding after being accused of complicity with the Mai Mai. As the new chief was a family member of the chief that had fled, the military found him highly suspect, leading them to treat him harshly and to closely follow his movements. Consequently, when the commander of the 651st brigade asked for an exaggerated amount of beer, goats, and food on his way from Baraka to Minembwe end November 2011, the chief did not dare to outright refuse. However, despite the intimidations he faced, he still rejected the commander's demand to impose 200FC (a little under \$0.20) on each household, proposing instead to collect only a small amount of *bunga* (flour) per house.¹¹ This shows that even when it concerns high-profile commanders and chiefs have limited room for maneuver, they will still try to bargain if they sense that a proposed arrangement violates the practical norms and is therefore unfair. Should they have no opportunities to openly contest, for instance as it is deemed too risky, chiefs might still try not to comply with the military's demands, by means of evasion or trickery. For instance, in a small village in the *Moyens Plateaux* of Uvira, the chief judged the demands for 'hospitality' made by a visiting platoon commander to be unjust. Consequently, he told the commander that he happened not to have any beer in his house, meanwhile ordering one of his wives to hide the bottles. One of the main reasons for this act of dissidence was that he suspected soldiers from the same platoon to have stolen chickens the previous week, making him reluctant to receive the commander in a too royal manner.¹²

'Efforts de guerre'

Aside from food collections, another type of contribution that the military frequently imposes upon civilians are so called *efforts de guerre* (war efforts) contributions. This designation is a quintessential example of the framing of extractive practices in the discourses of both public security and exceptionalism, through the connotation of a security emergency. Indeed, the military often pretends that the collected money or goods contribute to military operations that are urgent in the light of the supposed strength of and threat posed by 'the enemy'. As mentioned, *efforts de guerre* were part of the official repertoire of taxation of the RCD and its offshoots. However, as it is imposed by the FARDC, *efforts de guerre* are much less formal and systematic, consisting of payments in cash or in kind imposed on individual economic operators (e.g., boutiques, restaurants) or associations of economic operators (e.g., the fishermen's committee or the boat operators' association), normally at the initiative of individual unit commanders, rather than the hierarchy. In relation to in kind contributions, *efforts de guerre* mostly concern goods needed by the military, like fuel and batteries. For example, in September 2011, the navy in Uvira demanded a contribution of one *fût* (barrel) of fuel (200 liters, which at the time had a value of ca. \$340) per *armateur* (boat operator) for operations against the Mai Mai, who had stepped up piracy activities on Lake Tanganyika.¹³

In general, *efforts de guerre* collections are seen in a much more negative light than food collections, and in many cases, they are evaluated as illicit. For example, in November 2011, the *chef de poste* of the small fishermen's town of Kazimia (Fizi), located on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, imposed an *efforts de guerre* contribution of around 10,000 FC (a little over \$10) on various businesses and associations, not sparing churches.¹⁴ The chief also tasked the churches to sensitize their members about the necessity of the collection, which fuelled rumors about his personal interests in the matter. Indeed, according to certain informants, there were strong indications that the chief had not handed over all of the collected money to the military. The collection caused further resentment as the amounts were deemed unreasonably high, and this at a time that economic operators had been hardly hit by the rampant insecurity triggered by the Amani Leo operations. Furthermore, there was generalized skepticism about the use of the money. The battalion then in control of the area (of the 651st brigade, which figures in case # 10 and #11) was widely seen as bringing more insecurity than security, having a penchant for stealing and extortion. Furthermore, its operations against the Mai Mai, not unpopular in this environment, were seen as ineffective and needlessly harmful to the population. Failing to see the purpose of these operations, people were reluctant to contribute. Perhaps this was also one of the reasons why the *chef de poste* had to mobilize the churches for applying social pressure. Thus, the case of the *efforts de guerre* contribution in Kazimia highlights the importance of perceived return services, in particular security provision, in the shaping of civilians' evaluations of military claims to their resources.

11 Conclusions based on fieldwork in Mukera on 27.12.2010 and 15-17.02.2011.

12 Interview with members local community association, village in Uvira, 13.02.2012.

13 This was a considerable sum, since at the time, there twelve boat operators active in Uvira harbor (*Maisons*: Rafiki, KM, Buhuga, Safina, Ulindi, Kako, Tchikoma, Gloire à Dieu, Dieu Merci, MV Neema, MV Jenki and Kabambare), making for a total contribution of fuel worth \$4,080.

14 The information in this paragraph was obtained during fieldwork in Kazimia on 20, 21 and 24.11.2010.

Roadblock taxation

Roadblocks¹⁵ inscribe military might into the landscape. Signs and instruments of control and extraction, they are important settings for everyday encounters with the armed forces. In far-flung rural zones, roadblocks may be the only form of state presence that is directly noticeable, charging the performances that are enacted in these settings with a specific discursive load. As was observed during frequent travel in rural areas, there is an extreme density of roadblocks on certain roads, creating a particular rhythm in the trajectory of the traveller, who is made to stop at intervals for an almost ritualistic exchange of phrases and money or goods. Sometimes, the process of extraction is made to be humiliating, like when the foot-soldiers manning the roadblock try to get the most out of the crumb of power that has been thrown into their lap: it is only here, at the roadblock, that they are somebody, that they can make their importance felt. In such situations, soldiers may shout at passersby who do not get their money fast enough or may become angry when their request for an additional cigarette is denied. However, transactions at roadblocks can also be rapid and calm, when neither party transgresses the practical norms of roadblock taxation: the passerby pays the demanded fee promptly and without contestation, while the soldiers on guard do not overcharge, play it cruel or transform unexpectedly into robbers. In yet other cases, the experience might even be pleasurable or useful, like when jokes and news are exchanged at the roadblock and the latest gossip from town is traded for an update on reported rebel movements.

At most roadblocks, there is a fixed fee (varying widely per place), like \$10 and 3 liters of fuel for vehicles,¹⁶ 500FC per motorcycle, and 200FC per pedestrian. These amounts are usually known to people, which facilitates the transaction and reduces mental perturbation. When played by the rules, roadblock taxation is predictable extortion, and causes little distress. However, when the demanded amount suddenly changes, the process may appear random and unpredictable, and is likely to create anxiety. This can for instance occur when soldiers try to raise their personal income behind the back of their superiors, to whom they usually have to submit a fixed share or amount of roadblock revenues in the framework of *rapportage*. In rare cases, roadblock taxation transforms into outright robbery, and the line with blatantly illicit extraction is irreversibly crossed. For instance, in villages on the road between Bwala and Kilitcha in Fizi, it was reported that roadblocks had multiplied after the introduction of a ban on mining-related activities, which had been pronounced by the president in September 2010. As this road leads to the goldmines in Misisi, the roadblocks put up there had to facilitate checks on the transport of gold. However, these supposed routine controls were seized upon as a license for extortion, with people being subjected to humiliating body and luggage checks in the course of which certain of their valuables would be seized, like cell phones with double SIM-card holders or radios. When the military would find gold, they would requisition all of a person's belongings under the pretext of violations of the mining ban.¹⁷ However, such rogue roadblock extortion appears quite rare, and it was the regular type, with fixed amounts and little additional coercion, that was found to dominate.

Although regularized extraction at roadblocks produces less anxiety than irregular and violent forms, it is not always seen as more licit. As mentioned, evaluations of extractive practices depend on many factors, such as security conditions (shaping the perceived return), the relative legitimacy of the military unit that demands the contribution, and the outcomes, notably the effects on livelihoods. The effects of these factors can be further illustrated with the example of roadblock taxation on the road between Fizi *centre* and Lulimba (a village in South Fizi close to the Misisi goldmines located on the road to the Lulenge sector, at 90 kilometers distance from Fizi town). This road runs through a highly insecure stretch of forest of 17 kilometers, commonly called *la Forêt de la 17* (the forest of 17), which is plagued by frequent ambushes (see Map 4). At a certain moment in the course of 2011, there was very little FARDC presence in this area, due to the restructuring of army units into regiments. It was only after the deployment of a new unit that troops re-appeared in the forest, putting up a roadblock right in the middle. Some of the people regularly travelling this axis, including traders, *motards* and the staff of the hospital in Lulimba, told that they felt so relieved by the renewed military presence in the forest that they did not mind paying the 500FC demanded at the roadblock. Indeed, after travelling for kilometers in the silent and dense forest, expecting an ambush after every bend in the road, the sight of the FARDC on what was considered to be the most dangerous spot of the forest felt as a relief, as this author and her *motard* directly experienced when travelling the road.

However, a few months later, it became clear that there were limits to people's willingness to pay for a sense of security. At the end of 2011, after yet another rotation, a new battalion arrived which put up their HQ in the forest, at a place called Mama Tantine. This unit multiplied the amount of roadblocks in the forest in an effort to stamp out banditry, which had reached new heights. The stretch of road in *la 17* now counted five barriers, making a total of nine between Fizi town and Lulimba.¹⁸ At each of these roadblocks, the military charged \$5–7.5 for a car, 500FC for a motorcycle, and 200FC–500FC for pedestrians and cyclists. From conversations with travellers, it

¹⁵ The term 'roadblock' is somewhat misleading, as in many cases, there is no physical barring of the road, or the barrier is improvised or ramshackle, consisting for example of a couple of branches dumped on the road or a piece of rope suspended between two trees or objects. On pathways, existing narrowings may be used for blocking the road, such as bridges or bends.

¹⁶ This was for example the situation in 2010–2011 in two towns (Fizi and Lulimba), then the location of the HQ of a military sector.

¹⁷ Abuses were reported to be especially grave at the roadblock in Nalubwe (information collected during group interviews in villages on this road on 30.11.2010).

¹⁸ These roadblocks were located at: Mama Tantine, in the middle of the 17 Forest, Kakela 1, Kakela 2, Lukinga (all in the forest). After the forest, there were roadblocks at Iseke, Lubondja, Deux Restos, and just in front of Lulimba.

emerged that this amount of roadblocks was by all means seen as exaggerated, creating an immense financial strain.¹⁹ Therefore, even if the reinforced military presence in this dangerous area was generally welcomed, roadblock taxation was now clearly seen as illicit.

That the impact on livelihoods generally plays a significant role in how civilians evaluate roadblocks was also found in other situations. For example, on the stretch of road between Lulimba and Kilembwe in Fizi (in total 115 kilometers, see Map 4), no less than nine military roadblocks were observed at the time of deployment of the 642nd brigade Amani Leo in 2011 (case #9).²⁰ In addition, there was one other barrier, jointly manned by the DGM (the migration service) and the sector of Kabeya, on the border between the provinces of South Kivu and Maniema. In order to go to the market in nearby Misisi (at 12 kilometers from Lulimba), one had to pass even more barriers, namely those of the *roulage* or traffic police (officially called *Police de la circulation routière*, Road Traffic Police), the TRANSCOM (an agency of the *Ministère des transports et voies de communication*, Ministry of Transport and Communications), and the *Commission nationale de prévention routière* (CNPR, National Committee for Road Safety), a branch of the TRANSCOM. At the military barriers between Kilembwe and Lulimba, a unitary tariff was levied of 500FC for bicycles and motorcycles, causing a round trip to cost around \$10 in road taxes. This is a huge amount, especially for the small-scale cultivators from the Kabambare and Kilembwe zones who used to travel this road to sell their produce at the market of Misisi, commonly going on foot while pushing overloaded bicycles. A small sample taken on this road indicates that these cultivators would lose on average almost 40 per cent of their 'profit' (*faida*)²¹ on the various fees paid on the road, the far out majority of which went to the military (see Table 9).²²

Table 9: Livelihoods impact roadblock taxation Kabambare-Misisi axis (2011)

Trajectory	Goods	Avg. gross profit	FARDC taxes	Other taxes	Avg. net profit	Taxes as % of profit
Kagembe-Misisi (2 days, 2 days return, 100 kms)	One sack of 350 <i>kigoze</i> (milkpowder cans) of maize flour	21,500	7,000	2,000	12,500	41.86%
Kabambare-Misisi (4 days, 4 days return, 166 kms)	One sack of 500 <i>kilahuri</i> (glasses) of groundnuts	32,500	10,000	2,500	20,000	38.46%
Kilembwe-Misisi (2 days, 2 days return, 127 kms)	One big sack of maize flour	31,000	9,000	2,000	20,000	35.48%

Currency amounts in *Franc Congolais* (FC). Only road taxes are included, not market taxes. Data on the Lulimba-Kilembwe road were gathered on 28.12.2011, on Lulimba market on 07.03.2011. The 15 cultivators contacted reported an average loss of 37.50% of their profits to road taxes.

¹⁹ Interviews and observations on 29 and 30.12.2011 on the road to and in the 17 Forest, including in Lubondja, Kakela 1, and Fizi town.

²⁰ Interviews were conducted in villages along the road up to Kabeya on 05 and 06.03.11. The entire road was travelled twice on 23 and 24 and 27 and 28.12.2011. Barriers were located at the following places: just before Kasanga, just after Kasanga, two between Kasanga and Musochi, at Musochi, Kipupu, the river Lwiko, Kabeya, Pene Mende, Mai Ndombe, Kalumia (just before Kilembwe).

²¹ What my interlocutors called *faida* (profit) was calculated after deduction of all travel costs, including food and drinks consumed on the way. However, labor costs (mostly for cultivation and travel) were often excluded, since unpaid, usually family labor. The 'real' profits are therefore difficult to estimate, also as cultivators did not seem to register all expenses incurred during the whole production chain, but only those that were monetized.

²² The sample was taken when a new unit was deployed. However, given that the road counted the exact same amount of roadblocks where the exact same fees were levied, the average amount paid during one trip is not likely to have changed. As food prices had been more or less stable (the great spike having occurred in 2009, after the Amani Leo operations disrupted the food supply chain to Misisi previously managed by the FDLR), the average weight on incomes is also likely to have stayed the same. Note that the travel situation on this axis was substantially altered in the course of 2013, when the road was drastically improved due to investments by the mining company BANRO, which started exploitation at the gold mining site of Salamabila in Kabambare.

For cultivators and traders at the market of Lulimba, mostly coming from Baraka and the Kilitcha and Milimba zones, the situation was as bad or worse as for those travelling the Kilembwe-Lulimba axis. This was not only related to the described roadblocks on Fizi *centre*-Lulimba axis, but also to those located on the parallel road via Kilitcha, and the axis Milimba-Lulimba. In fact, all access roads to the market seemed littered with roadblocks, which pressed heavily on people's livelihoods. In fact, some farmers contacted at the market reported to lose over half of their 'profit' to road taxes (see Table 10). Furthermore, according to several informants, the presence of a multitude of roadblocks did not only have direct effects on individual livelihoods, but had also driven up the prices at the Misisi and Lulimba markets,²³ thus contributing to impoverishment in a more indirect manner as well.

Table 10: Livelihoods impact roadblock taxation around Lulimba market (2011)

Trajectory	Goods traded	Turnover time	Gross profit	Taxes	Net profit	Taxes as % of profit
Baraka-Lulimba by bicycle (2 days, 2 days return, 122kms)	Box of soap	1,5 weeks	17,000	8,000 (FARDC) 2000 (PNR)	7,000	58.82%
Baraka-Lulimba by bicycle (2 days, 2 days return)	<i>Daga</i> (small fish from Tanganyika Lake)	1 week	11,000	5,000	6,000	45.45%
Baraka-Lulimba by bicycle	Sack of sugar	2 weeks	20,000	8,000 (FARDC) 2000 (PNR)	10,000	50%
Kilitcha-Lulimba on foot (30 kms)	Tomatoes (self-cultivated)	Unknown	7,500	5 military barriers (2,500 one way, 5,000 return)	7,500	100%

Currency in Francs Congolais. The 10 persons contacted reported an average loss of 57.6% of their profit on road taxes. Small-scale farmers selling their own produce lost relatively the most, over 60%. One woman (selling self-cultivated tomatoes) reported to have lost 100% of her earnings on roadblock taxes and therefore had to buy salt on credit.

While the livelihoods impacts of the barriers on the Lulimba-Kilembwe road were very heavy, their security merits were perceived to be only limited, as ambushes continued at a stone's throw of the roadblocks. This was in part believed to be the result of connivance between the 642nd brigade and the FDLR. Both the Banyamulenge of the ex-112th brigade and the Fuliiru and Nyindu Mai Mai who had been mixed into the 642nd had always maintained good relations with the FDLR on the *Plateaux*. It was therefore assumed that they deliberately made not too many efforts to intervene in case of pillage.²⁴ As a result, the barriers on the Lulimba-Kilembwe axis were unanimously denounced as useless and unfair. In the course of 2011, the security situation on this road drastically improved due to the combined effects of the withdrawal of the FDLR into the Itombwe forest and the deployment of a new military unit. Despite the improvement, all barriers remained. Consequently, people continued to judge the security rationale for the barriers as unconvincing, but this time as the security situation was so good that there was no obvious need for so many checkpoints. This shows once more that the (perceived) security contribution of the military's practices plays an important role in civilians' evaluations of these practices.

²³ However, the rise in food prices was also believed to be related to the deterioration of the security situation in general, the disruption of the supply chains previously run by the FDLR, the inflation of the *Franc congolais* and detrimental weather conditions. Therefore, military roadblocks were but one amongst the various causes of the spike in food prices.

²⁴ The suspicion of an FDLR-friendly attitude was also fed by the fact that on the second half of the road axis, after Kabeya, which was controlled by another brigade, the frequency of FDLR ambushes was much lower (observations made during field work on the Lulimba-Kabeya axis on 05 and 06.03.2011).

The importance of the security effects was also manifested in frequently expressed annoyance about the location and management of certain roadblocks. Some of my informants pointed out that many roadblocks are only erected on market days, when it is certain that there will be lots of traffic and many people will transport goods and foodstuffs. According to them, this would demonstrate that revenue generation, rather than security provision, is the primary motive for putting up the barriers.²⁵ A similar analysis was offered by inhabitants of villages located on the Kilembwe-Lulimba axis, where continual road robbery was reported at the start of 2011. The security function of the roadblocks on this axis, so they explained, was seriously hampered by their immobility and therefore predictability. When roadblocks are fixed, bandits will know their location and might still attack, especially if there are no liaison patrols (in between the checkpoints). The very collection of money at roadblocks further reduces the security effects, as it immobilizes soldiers and makes them focus on levying fees, to the detriment of paying attention to the environment, collecting security information, moving up and down the road, or effectively controlling passersby. Another indication of the limited weight of security motives, according to my interlocutors, was that rotating units simply maintained existing patterns of roadblocks, copying the exact locations and the existing tariff system from their predecessors. One of the reasons for this might be that such continuity eases extraction, as the population is already used to these roadblocks, and predictability in the tariffs and locations reduces the chances of eliciting resistance. As a result of this copycat behavior, roadblocks often become hereditary and get inscribed in the landscape, becoming properties not as much of military units as of places.

Table 11: In kind taxation at markets on *Hauts Plateaux* of Fizi and Uvira

Product sold	Quantity taken	Approx. value (FC)
<i>Chumvi</i> (salt)	1 <i>kilahuri</i> (glass)	150-300
<i>Sukari</i> (sugar)	1 <i>kilahuri</i> (glass)	200-450
<i>Sabuni</i> (soap)	1 piece	250-300
<i>Mafuta</i> (oil, mostly palm)	1 <i>koroboye</i> (small tomato paste can) or 1 <i>chupa</i> (bottle)	350 800-1,500
<i>Bunga ya mihindi</i> (maize flour)	2 or 3 <i>kigozes</i> (milkpowder can)	1,000-1,100 1,500-1,650
<i>Maharagi</i> (beans)	1 <i>kopo</i> (cup)	300-400
<i>Viazi</i> (potatoes)	1 quantity (6-8 potatoes)	100-200
<i>Samaki</i> (fish)	1 quantity	500
<i>Mihindi</i> (maize)	3-6 cobs	450
Crate of <i>pombe</i> (beer)	1 <i>chupa</i> (bottle)	2,500
	(market value in remote areas)	

Currency in FC. Prices reflect the range encountered at five markets. The amount of tax levied depends on the amount of produce that will be sold. For dry products (e.g., flour, sugar), it is calculated per sack (of 30-50 kg), but it is rare that the whole sack is sold during one market day.

Market taxes

Aside from food collections, *efforts de guerre* contributions and roadblock taxes, another common form of military extraction, at least in the rural areas,²⁶ is market taxation. This practice is said to have originated in the Mobutu era, when the FAZ started to attack markets and people on their way to the market. In order to avoid incidents, market committees in many areas decided to give a part of the foodstuffs that are commonly collected at the market (and which are distributed among customary chiefs and other local authorities) to the military. However, military market taxation does not appear to be universal. For instance, while it is a common practice in rural areas in Fizi and Uvira, it was said to be unusual in parts of Rutshuru. Like with roadblocks, these variations can be partly explained by processes of institutionalization. While in some areas it has become relatively normal that armed actors, including rebels, tax at the market, in others this appears exceptional. In the latter case, it would be exceedingly difficult for the FARDC to start enforcing such contributions, since people are not used to this practice and would therefore outright refuse.

²⁵ However, when asked about the reasons for putting up roadblocks on market days only, FARDC staff pointed out that security risks tend to be more elevated on these days, especially in areas where armed groups carry out raids on markets, like Kitumba and Kahololo on the *Hauts Plateaux*. In other areas, as confirmed by in/security staff such as the police, there is an elevated risk for banditry on market days.

²⁶ In certain urban areas, like the town of Uvira, the collection of foodstuffs at the market is the prerogative of the police. Information obtained from the territorial market authorities of Uvira interviewed in Uvira on 21.03.2011.

General market taxation comes in several kinds. First, there is the so-called *taxe d'étalage* (display tax) for salespersons of non-food items, which is usually around 500FC per person.²⁷ The majority of the revenues of this tax are officially destined for the administrative level of the *secteur*. Then there are various taxes for the sale of large and small livestock as well as for butchers, the revenues of which go to the provincial agriculture division and the local office of the veterinarian division. Furthermore, for produce, there is a *taxe de transfert* (transfer tax), when the foodstuffs bought at the market are being transported to another *secteur*. For those selling small quantities of produce, there is also a tax in kind (locally framed as 'contribution' rather than 'tax'). Upon arrival at the market, sellers have to leave a certain amount of foodstuffs at the entrance, for example a *kilahuri* (glass) of sugar, salt or rice, a *kopo* (cup) of beans, a *chupa* (bottle) of palm oil, or a *kigoze* (measure of a milkpowder can, contains four *kilahuri*) of flour (for examples see Table 11).

Sellers of bottled beer (usually of the brand *Primus*, the most widely consumed beer in much of the Kivus) sometimes need to contribute a bottle. The collected foodstuffs are subsequently distributed among customary chiefs, the local market committee and a variety of in/security services. Butchers do not pay at the entrance, but have to contribute a piece of meat (sometimes called *mboga ya mkubwa* or 'the treat of the chief') that is collected at their display. This fee can take the form of either one piece per butcher, for example of around 1,500-2,000FC, or a collective donation of around 1 kg of meat for each category of stakeholder. For instance, at Lulimba market,²⁸ the four butchers who usually have an étalage there gave collectively one chunk of meat with a value of around 3000FC to each of the following persons: the FARDC battalion commander, the FARDC sector commander, the *chef de groupement*, the president of the *Fédération des entreprises du Congo* (FEC, Federation of Enterprises of Congo), the president of the butchers' committee, the president of the herders' committee, and the *chef de secteur*. This boiled down to a little over \$5 per butcher per market day. What is remarkable about in-kind market taxation is the high level of routinization. When observing the collection of foodstuffs at the market entrance, it appeared that each seller who arrived knew exactly how much to give, and efforts by soldiers to ask for even a tiny bit more, for example an extra bunch of *lenga-lenga*, or a few tomatoes, were generally refused, pointing to strongly institutionalized practical norms.

The exploration of various forms of military extraction in the previous, including food collections, *efforts de guerre*, roadblock contributions and market taxation, learns that although all these forms of extraction are explicitly framed in the discourse of public security, evaluations of these practices are variable. In particular, it seems that framing these practices as 'public', hence as demanded officially in the name of the military and as needed for its functioning, augments the relative importance of a unit's security performance in shaping evaluations. This is especially the case with *efforts de guerre*, the very name of which generates elevated expectations surrounding the use of the levied funds, namely as contributing to military operations that will ultimately enhance the population's safety. Where this security contribution is doubted, as is for instance the case with 'hereditary' roadblocks, practices of extraction are sooner seen as illicit, especially if their negative impact on livelihoods is substantial. However, when routinized, which applies especially to food collections and roadblock and market taxation, and respecting the practical norms, practices of extraction tend to be relatively 'taken for granted'. As will be explained in Chapter 7, this may cause people to comply without reflecting explicitly upon these practices' security contribution, since appealing primarily to practical consciousness.²⁹

5.1.2 Irregular, violent extraction

As we have seen with the example of 'rogue roadblock extortion', forms of extraction that are irregular and entail norm violations cause substantial distress, especially when these violations pertain to types and levels of coercion. Most forms of irregular and violent practices of extraction are neither framed in the discourse of public security nor enacted in the name of the military as an official institution. Rather, they tend to be executed in secret (e.g., stealing at night) or discreetly, as they do not belong to the 'normal' work of the military. When they do come in the open, the military tends to either deny responsibility, for example by putting the blame on 'bandits' or 'rebels',³⁰ or frame them as 'accidental' and 'private' (the work of a few undisciplined elements acting on their own behalf). However, these acts may covertly still be ordered or tolerated by (immediate) commanders, usually in exchange for a part of the revenues. This may even be the case with robbery, burglary, theft and ambushes. Such violent forms of extraction may partly overlap with practices geared towards score settling or dispute processing (as will be discussed in Chapter 6), implying that revenue generation is not the sole motive. Where violent extraction does take place in the open, for example in the case of looting sprees or raids on markets, the military might still try to frame it in the discourse of public security, for instance by presenting it as 'collateral damage' related to combat operations.

While all practices of violent extraction inflict psychological harm, in addition to economic and sometimes physical damage, they seem particularly difficult to deal with when the perpetrators, or the unit they belong, continue to simultaneously engage in other, more regular, forms of extraction. Not only does this create severe distrust toward the soldiers of the unit in question, anticipated to transform their behavior any time, it also makes that the regular forms of extraction that the same soldiers engage in are strongly felt to be illicit, even if

27 Some informants stated this tax is calculated per *étalage* (display) rather than per person, with one *étalage* sometimes being shared by two or three tradespersons who each sell a small amount of goods. However, others said they still ended up being individually charged, even when sharing an *étalage*.

28 Data obtained through interviews with butchers at Lulimba market on 07.03.2011.

29 The forms of reasoning surrounding routine practices are further discussed on p. 193.

30 Such blame games are further discussed in the section on *hommes en uniforme non-autrement identifiés* on pp. 187–188.

they respect the practical norms. Furthermore, it compounds civilian-military interaction by sowing confusion about the social roles and discursive registers that are invoked. These various effects will be further illustrated with an example from the fieldwork, which relates to the alternate non-violent taxation and violent extortion of fishermen by the FARDC naval forces.

Violent extortion from fishermen

Being a fisherman in the Kivus is a tough profession. Fishermen work mostly at night and have to engage in hard physical labor, specifically when using non-motorized boats. The work is also dangerous. Most pirogues lie not too stable in the water, and accidents resulting in drowning are frequent. But the profession of fisherman also entails other uncertainties: since the catch varies from day to day, there is no guaranteed income. Additionally, there is always the risk of encountering marines on the water, which frequently results in being extorted, even if most fishermen already make contributions before setting out on the water and upon return from the lake. It may therefore be little surprising that most fishermen have bad relations with the navy. A fisherman living on the isolated Ubwari peninsula in Lake Tanganyika, which is two days of walking or an expensive boat trip from Baraka, the biggest town nearby, described the navy's behavior as follows: "They ask at least five liters of fuel and fish every day, but how much depends on their mood. They can ask random amounts (...) There are no means to defend yourself because they have arms and you find yourself alone in a small pirogue on the lake. It is a dangerous profession, fishing."³¹ One of his colleagues in Buma, equally on the Ubwari peninsula, explained bitterly that once fishermen want new fuel, they have to buy it from the navy, as the latter holds a monopoly position on fuel sales on Ubwari, 'so you end up buying back the fuel that they have stolen from you.'³² There was little these fishermen believed they could do about this: since Ubwari is far and only half of the peninsula is covered by a (Burundian) phone network, that moreover takes half a day of hiking in the hills to reach, they do not know where to complain. A woman in Buma explained: "There is no place we can go when they threaten us. We cannot call, the network is too far. And the civil authorities here don't do anything. There is nothing we can do against people with arms."³³

According to the association of fishermen in Fizi, the *Solidarité des pêcheurs du Lac Tanganyika/Territoire de Fizi* (SOPELTA/Fizi, Solidarity of Fishermen of Lake Tanganyika /Fizi Territory),³⁴ every motorized pirogue is obliged to pay at least five liters of fuel to the navy (which is worth around \$10) before it sets out on the water.³⁵ The fishermen stay on the lake until the moon has reached a certain point called *denga*, and then return to the beach. Upon arrival, they have to hand in a fixed share of their catch with the following division key: one part for the *comité de pêche* (fishing committee), one part for the navy, and one for other state services (the provincial ministry of agriculture and fishing and the provincial ministry of the environment). At some beaches, like Mwemezi near Baraka, which is close to positions of the FARDC infantry, the latter imposes an additional share. For that reason, SOPELTA has forbidden its members to go ashore there. This strategy of evasion is practiced more widely, since some fishermen told they try to avoid taxation by going ashore at non-official beaches, where there is no presence of the navy or other state services.³⁶

The usual amount of daily tax in kind is two *sahani* ('plates', worth 1,500FC–2,000FC, depending on the type of fish) per two basins (with a value of between 10,000FC–25,000FC each). Although these amounts may appear little (\$1.6 per day for the collective catch of the smallest-scale fishing unit), they are considerable if one takes the low income of fishermen into consideration. For example, while the *marins* (sailors) who manage the motorized pirogues fishing for *daga* make around \$10.5 a week, the *matelots* (ordinary sailors) who work on board pulling the nets only earn a little over \$3 a week. Those fishing in non-motorized boats usually catch only one basin a day with five persons, the value of which is 10,000FC. After subtracting the costs and the taxes, only 1,300FC (\$1.44) of profit per person per day remains. Hence, the tax in kind (of 300FC per person) still represents 23 per cent of these fishermen's total profits. In Uvira, taxes were said to be even higher (at 2,500FC per basin) as fishermen have to pay an additional share to the *police lacustre* (lake police) and the FARDC infantry. Fishermen there told their earnings were only 1,000FC a day, a little over a dollar.³⁷

While these daily contributions are a heavy financial burden, they cause little additional anxiety since they are routinized: fishermen always pay the same amount at the same beaches, knowing what to expect the moment they arrive at the beach. However, the navy also engages in more unpredictable forms of extortion. Since the navy on Lake Tanganyika hardly has any boats of its own, marines are only able to move around by taking the boats of civilians. They do not rent these or ask permission to borrow these well in advance: when the need arises, they simply requisition a boat with a captain for the entire day. This does not only make the whole fishing team that depends on that boat forego income, it also entails the loss of a great amount of fuel, the value of which may be as much as \$40 when the boat is

31 Interview with fisherman on Lake Tanganyika (during boat trip), 20.02.2010.

32 Interview with fisherman, Buma, 20.02.2010.

33 Interview with female inhabitant, Buma, 20.02.2010.

34 Information in this paragraph is based on discussions with six SOPELTA members in Baraka on 15.03.2011.

35 According to SOPELTA/Fizi, contacted in Baraka on 15.03.2011, there are 1,200 fishermen who use motorized boats in the territory of Fizi. Every motorized pirogue is obliged to pay at least 5 liters of fuel, which have a value of around \$10, before setting out on the water. When managing to tax all pirogues, this would generate a daily income of around \$10,000 for the navy (taking into account that not each pirogue goes out seven days a week).

36 Interview with fisherman, Kazimia, 21.11.2010.

37 Group discussion with five fishermen, Kavimvira beach (Uvira), 20.03.2011.

used the entire day. Furthermore, the navy regularly arrests fishermen on the water and subsequently takes in their fishing nets or boats. Fishermen are then only able to get these back after paying hefty fines, usually around \$50–100. To make matters worse, such forms of extraction are often accompanied by overly violent behavior. Both in the Lake Tanganyika and Lake Edward areas, fishermen described the navy as ruling the waters like their kingdom, doing whatever they please. Reportedly, acts like shooting in the air, beating up and arresting fishermen, and even throwing them into the water, are not uncommon.

Obviously, these bad experiences generate negative evaluations of the navy's security contributions. The navy's deficient execution of its mandated security duties further feeds into this. Both on Lake Edward and Lake Tanganyika, the navy was reported to patrol only sporadically, failing to stem cross-border incursions of fishermen and bandits from neighboring countries.³⁸ On the Ubwari peninsula, civilians even said the navy did not play any security role, believing they would do better without. 'They even do not have boats,' a person commented during a group discussion in Kimino, 'so we wonder, are they a navy or a ground force?'³⁹ Another person added that the navy itself was the biggest security threat on Lake Tanganyika, as evidenced by the fact that the Burundian navy had recently caught them in the act when committing armed robberies. Similar evaluations of the navy's security contributions were heard in the fishermen's village of Kyavinyonge, on the northern shore of Lake Edward (Beni territory, within the deployment zone of the naval forces based in Vitshumbi, hence case #3): 'They cannot even swim! What navy is that!'.⁴⁰ A member of the *Coopérative des pêcheurs de Virunga* (COPEVI, Cooperative of Fishermen of Virunga) added: 'There is a regional conflict here with our Ugandan neighbors. Fishermen come illegally with arms in order to steal our production. The soldiers from the navy do almost nothing (...) We do not see the importance of this service. We do not know their mission here. It are military from the government but we do not know whether they have been trained or not (...) And during their patrols they use our pirogues.'⁴¹ Similar to the population of Ubwari, several fishermen were of the opinion they would better do without the navy. As the director of COPEVI advised: 'They should demilitarize the lake. We can protect it without the navy. So many soldiers, so many problems [*Autant des militaires, autant des problèmes*].'⁴²

5.1.3 Extraction through non-payment

A less obvious form of military wealth extraction from civilians, but one that has a considerable impact on livelihoods nonetheless, is the imposition of services or consumption either for free, whether by arrangement or by non-respected promises of payment, or at heavily reduced tariffs, via bargaining. This practice, which is particularly widespread in the hotel, transport and medical sectors, is neither unique to the military nor a novel phenomenon. Reportedly, demanding free or cheaper goods or services has been part of the (self-attributed) prerogatives of state agents at least since the Mobutu era. Hence, it concerns an institutionalized practice that is informed by the discourses and norms surrounding the social role of 'state agent' in the Congo, in particular their privileged status. It is commonly believed that these discourses and norms show considerable continuity over the last decades, although the war era has triggered a number of transformations, specifically in relation to military actors. In popular memory, the rebels of the RCD adopted a victors' mentality, leading their administrators and officers to demand greater privileges than state agents previously did. These privileges were in part formalized, as the RCD signed conventions with for example civilian boat operators and the aerial and ground transport sectors for the free transport of soldiers. However, another part of service extraction and unpaid consumption by the RCD was unregulated, leaving many hospitals and hotels with enormous war-era debts.

The FARDC is widely believed to have copied some of the forms and styles of extraction through non-payment employed by the RCD, although it engages in these practices in an overall less systematic and coercive manner. Furthermore, it operates without formal agreements with the economic sectors involved, although there are a number of informal conventions that give certain practices a quasi-official character. Consequently, these practices are de facto recognized by economic operators and regulated by the military hierarchy, as manifested in formal authorizations for military staff in the form of written documents. Reflecting their quasi-official nature, such forms of extraction tend to be evaluated as relatively licit, in part as they are regulated and sanctioned by the military hierarchy. Yet, when the soldiers enacting these practices violate the practical norms, for instance by commercializing the arrangement, demanding additional services not authorized by the hierarchy, or when using intimidation when such unauthorized impositions are protested against, they will generally be evaluated as illicit. This also applies to practices that are not regulated by conventions with the hierarchy, hence are seen as non-official, and that involve severe transgressions of norms and violations of trust, such as not honoring debts despite made promises, or simply leaving a place without paying for the services or beverages consumed. In the hotel, bar and restaurant sector, this practice is called *la grivèlerie* (chiselling leading to non-payment for consumptions, meals, and accommodation).

While there are substantial differences in the rationalities underlying quasi-official extraction authorized by the military hierarchy and those informing non-authorized forms, the discursive framings of both types are often the same. Even when having no authorization,

38 The border with Burundi runs through Lake Tanganyika, and that with Uganda through Lake Edward.

39 Interview with inhabitant, Kimino, 20.02.2010.

40 Interview with employee of civil society organization, Kyavinyonge, 25.04.2010.

41 Interview with member of fishermen cooperative (COPEVI), Kyavinyonge, 25.04.2010.

42 Interview with director of COPEVI, Kyavinyonge, 26.04.2010.

soldiers try to justify their claims to free services by referring to their roles as 'public security provider' and 'state actor', for example by highlighting their 'sacrifices for the fatherland', their 'efforts to protect civilians', or their poverty for want of the state taking care of them. These framings, which heavily draw upon discourses of exceptionalism, often create a certain ambiguity about the status of the practices concerned, in particular the extent to which these are 'public' or 'private'. Such ambiguity also results from violations of the norms surrounding quasi-official practices, which introduce 'private' dimensions (e.g., personal advantages) into practices otherwise seen as 'public', pushing them towards the illicit side of the spectrum. Similar evaluations of illicitness are evoked when framings in the discourses of public security and exceptionalism are accompanied by the display of a sense of superiority and derision towards civilians. This attitude is an enduring source of annoyance to civilian economic operators, who often appear to be bothered as much by the military's mentality and claims to a special status as by non-payment for consumption or provided services. Such everyday negative encounters contribute to the (re)production of deeply rooted civilian representations of the military as predatory. The following description of some of the most common practices of extraction through non-payment pays specific attention to these displays of arrogance, which relate to the *style* in which extractive practices are enacted. Furthermore, it looks at the ambiguities surrounding public/private framings, and how these shape the development of evaluations.

Free boat rides

Many soldiers originating from North Kivu work in South Kivu and vice versa, and redeployments within the Kivus are frequent. Therefore, there is a permanent stream of military traffic between Goma and Bukavu, the provincial capitals. Since the road between these two cities is in a bad shape and dangerous, much of this traffic passes Lake Kivu.⁴³ However, the FARDC has no boats of its own to transport its staff. Consequently, with the exception of the most important superior officers,⁴⁴ military staff travel on big, commercially operated ships that transport cargo and passengers. Each trip, on average five out of a total of 50 passengers are either military staff or related to military staff, and do not pay. This practice is quasi-official, as it is based on an informal convention between boat operators and the FARDC, and guided by a set of rules and practical norms that are clear to all parties involved. For example, boat operators only accept soldiers with a valid *feuille de route* (travel authorization document issued by the military hierarchy, for an example see Appendix D) that is signed by the command as well as by the *Bureau mouvement* (movement bureau, a department of the military region⁴⁵ located in the harbor). The *Bureau mouvement* allocates soldiers to the various ship operators and contacts the latter to inquire about available space. Military families need a separate document called *réquisitoire* (see Appendix E for an example), which lists their names and has to be signed by the *Bureau mouvement*. This document is issued by the logistics department of military units, also known as *Bureau 4*.

Despite the paperwork listing their names, soldiers often try to commercialize the free places they have been allocated by selling them for half the regular price to civilians.⁴⁶ In many cases, this concerns the places reserved for military families, leading soldiers to tamper with the *réquisitoire*, for instance by effacing the names and putting others instead. Yet it also occurs that travellers just pretend to be the persons listed on the document, or that the soldier accompanying the passengers intimidates the ship staff so they turn a blind eye. Such fraud is facilitated by the fact that many people in the Congo have no identity documents, as they have not registered as voters or lost or sold their voter card, which is the most common piece of identity. This also applies to military spouses, who often do not register as voters due to their nomadic existence. Furthermore, the documents issued by the military are allegedly easy to forge, given that each military agency uses its own formats (see Appendix D and E), making it sometimes difficult to verify whether documents are authentic.

When fraud is discovered, ship staff typically try to make the profiting civilian pay the full price, since every soldier or military family member travelling for free implies foregone earnings. The price for a ticket (at least of the category in which the military is destined to travel) is around \$12.5 a trip, implying a ship operator has a foregone income of approximately $5 \times \$12.5 = \62.5 per trip, amounting to \$1,500 a month.⁴⁷ This excludes the foregone earnings from the members of other state agencies that are also entitled to free transport over the lake, like the police, the DGM (migration service) and the ANR (intelligence service). In some cases, the amount of foregone revenue is even higher, as it regularly occurs that FARDC staff occupy places in a more expensive category of seating than they have been allocated, while also demanding such places for their family or bodyguards. Especially officers tend to demand preferential treatment, appealing to their rank as justification for the claimed privileges. At times, officers even occupy seats in the first class for which civilians have already paid. Expectedly, this provokes considerable tensions between angry passengers, dissatisfied ship crew and imposing military.

43 Conclusions in this section are based on fieldwork conducted in the harbor of Bukavu among the four biggest *établissements* (establishments) who operate boats on Lake Kivu (Akwonkwa, Salimu, El Mai Rafiki and Biega) on 20 and 21.01.2011.

44 Superior officers tend to travel with so called *canots rapides* (small high-speed boats), usually paying for their ticket like other passengers.

45 The *Bureau mouvement* is typically composed of members of the Bureau 1 (personnel affairs), Bureau 2 (intelligence) and Bureau 4 (logistics) of the military region. For an overview of command and staff positions in the FARDC, see Figure 9, on p. 121.

46 Similar practices were reported by ship operators in the harbor of Uvira, on whose ships the FARDC travels to Kalemie via Lake Tanganyika. According to the president of the association of ship operators in Uvira, contacted on 14.01.2012, there is substantial manipulation with the 10–15 free places allocated to the military on each trip, as soldiers sell these at low cost or grant them to civilians for free.

47 One ship makes six trips a week.

Such tensions also result from violations of other rules that boat-operators have set for military staff, including not being allowed to carry firearms on board, having to obey the orders of the captain during the trip, and not being allowed to smoke cannabis on board.

Taken together, the fraud with the places, the frequent violations of the agreed upon rules of conduct, and the arrogance and manipulations of the military, which come on top of substantial foregone earnings, make ship operators and crew strongly resent the quasi-official arrangement with the FARDC. This resentment is further nourished by bad behavior of other military staff in the harbor, in particular occasional shooting incidents and practices of extortion. Reportedly, soldiers of both the navy and the infantry carry out luggage checks in the harbor, just to be able to demand a fee from those wanting to avoid such controls. To make matters worse, the dissatisfaction resulting from the hindrance caused by the military cannot be freely expressed. As one ship crewmember argued: 'We can't seek a showdown with the military [*On ne peut pas faire le bras de fer avec les militaires*]. We can't refuse (...) It's rare to see a Congolese officer pay for his ticket'.⁴⁸ Yet it appears that ship crew have adopted a pragmatic type of resignation as a way of coping with these frustrations, perhaps precisely because it concerns practices of a quasi-official nature that are difficult to contest.

Table 12: Losses related to military non-payment for medical care

Institution	Description	Estimated loss/month	Loss as % of profit or clients
General Hospital of Fizi	The 65 ^a sector left a debt of \$75 over 6 months	\$125	No data on total revenues/patients provided
General Hospital of Minembwe	The 652 ^a brigade left a debt of \$620.5 over 9 months (for the treatment of 503 soldiers and their families)	\$69	No data on total revenues/patients provided
Hospital of Lulimba	The debt of the 65 ^a sector was \$333.35 over 7 months, while the 64 ^a left \$277.78 over 10 months	\$35.9	Loss is 17% of yearly profits
Health care center Luberizi	Around 30 soldiers and 20 military family members (of which 10 children) a month ask for treatment. Around 10 pay.	\$115	50% of patients are military, 80% of whom pay
Health care center Kilomoni (Uvira)	An estimated 10 soldiers a month do not pay, and treatment is \$10 (for children \$5)	\$100	Loss is 20% of total monthly profits
Health care center Bien Heureux Eugenio Picco (Uvira)	From the 100 visiting soldiers and family members a month, 20% pay, 40% a part (around one third of the bill) and 40% do not pay at all	\$150	Around 30% of patients are military (40% of whom do not pay)
Dispensary Mfaraji Mwema (Misisi)	Around 50% of the military do not pay, these are 5 soldiers a month	\$50	Loss is an estimated 38% of total monthly profits

Currency in USD. Prices of treatment vary strongly per healthcare structure.

Free health care

Due to the deficient provision of medical care within the FARDC, most soldiers and their family members turn to civilian hospitals, health care centers and dispensaries.⁴⁹ When treated by civilian medical structures, military staff in principle have to bear either all or a part of the costs themselves. However, many cannot or are not willing to pay, as they believe it is a basic right for soldiers to have free health care, and are reluctant to make up for what are seen as failures of the government and the military hierarchy. In a sense, then, non-payment

48 Interview with employee of ship operator, harbor of Bukavu, 21.01.2011.

49 For an overview of the dates and locations of the 30 health care structures visited, see Table 3 on p. 22.

can be seen as a form of protest against bad service conditions, at least among the lower ranks. Of course, this does not alter the negative effects that non-payment has on civilian health care structures, which are left with enormous debts, pushing some of them to the edge of bankruptcy (see Table 12 for some examples).⁵⁰ Many of the health care structures visited are fully self-financed and struggle to survive in a situation of generalized deep poverty, where soldiers are not the only patients that are insolvent. For some 'public' hospitals, to which the state only provides the building, water, electricity and minimal salaries for a small amount of staff,⁵¹ debts from the FARDC come on top of those left by RCD military, creating further resentment towards military actors. For example, in the General Hospital of Uvira, the RCD left a debt of around \$108,042.⁵² From 2008 up to mid-2010, the FARDC added an amount of \$5,204 to this debt, leading the direction to write several letters to Kinshasa, to which they never received a reply. The General Hospital of Bukavu, which recorded a military debt of \$344,206 over the period 1995–November 2010,⁵³ has also written many letters to Kinshasa, all of which have remained unanswered.

The smaller hospitals and health care centers in rural areas also suffer from military debts. These were reported to have strongly augmented during the Amani Leo operations, due to an increase in military patients and a rise in complicated treatments, like bullet wounds. This was especially the case in areas with a high concentration of military, like Misisi (the location of a brigade HQ) and Luberizi (the location of a military base). In the urban areas of Uvira, Bukavu and Baraka, smaller health care structures appeared less stricken by non-paying military than their counterparts in rural areas. This might be related to the presence of alternative providers of medical care, such as the general hospital and military health care centers (in Uvira and Bukavu), or a hospital run by a humanitarian INGO providing free care (in Baraka).

Aside from losses in income, military visits to civilian health care structures also pose other problems. Health care professionals reported to be very bothered by the attitude of military patients, who tend to claim special favors, like immediate or faster treatment, even though it is not likely they will (fully) pay. Furthermore, some soldiers make false promises of payment. A staff member of a dispensary in Misisi said: 'Sometimes they trick you, they say that they will pay when they get their bonus, but they never come back'.⁵⁴ Another source of irritation is that some of the non-paying military are superior officers. Whereas there is considerable sympathy for the rank and file, seen as victims of their own hierarchy, there is no such understanding for superior officers, whose refusal to pay is seen to stem from a greed-driven close-fistedness. A staff member of a hospital denounced: 'Two months ago, a colonel was staying here in the hospital during three days, and he did not pay anything. A colonel!'⁵⁵ This highlights how differentiated representations of officers and foot soldiers inform varying evaluations of the military's extractive practices.

Medical staff has developed a variety of ways to deal with non-paying soldiers, including preventing high debts by lowering the costs or refusing treatment; protection mechanisms; lobbying and negotiations to get a part of the debt reimbursed; the signing of formal conventions; and finally, trickery. As it remains uncertain whether they will pay, soldiers and their families are usually given low quality treatment that is provided as rapidly as possible. As an employee of a health care center in Uvira commented: 'As soon as they display the first signs of recovery, they are being chased out of the bed'.⁵⁶ However, others told that military patients also leave prematurely out of themselves, in order to avoid being charged. Another way to deal with military debts is avoiding that they are made in the first place, by refusing the treatment of soldiers altogether. Both in Uvira and Bukavu, healthcare centers were found that said to always send military staff straight to the general hospital. Protection relations emerged as another option to avoid military debts. In Misisi, a town where many health structures complained about non-paying military, one private health care center claimed that military patients always paid. When trying to unravel this mystery, it was found that the owner, who runs several other businesses in Misisi, is a well-known and important figure that is protected by a number of superior officers. This does not only allow him to mobilize these in case of non-payment, it also seems to have a self-censuring effect, in that military staff are aware that they will appear in a negative light in the eyes of their superiors if they do not pay. Where prevention and protection are not possible or not effective, careful lobbying and negotiations can be a viable option to reduce military debts. For example, when debts mounted due to the Amani Leo operations, the director of a healthcare center in Misisi went to see the commander of the locally deployed unit to complain. However, this sorted little effect, as the commander just asked him to lower the tariffs for treatment. Subsequently, the health care center started to register military staff as *population spéciale* (special population), reflecting the enduring status of exception surrounding the military in the Kivu.⁵⁷

50 This was for instance the case with health care center *Bien Heureux Eugenio Picco* in Kalundu (Uvira), which reported a large influx of military end 2004, when a new brigade was deployed, causing them to be visited by over 3,000 military patients up to end 2005.

51 For example, from the 285 personnel working at the General Hospital of Bukavu, only 41 receive a salary from the state. Interview with staff member, Bukavu, 28.03.2011.

52 Letter number 25.416/014/HGR-UV/003/2002 of 14 January 2002 mentions \$86,547.26 from 1998–2001 and letter number 25.416/334/HGR-UV/003/2004 of 3 August 2004 lists a debt of \$21,491.91 and 2,279.85FC.

53 For instance, letter N/ref/25.402/400/K.E.FIN/MD/HPGR/BKV/09 asks the government to repay all military debts incurred since 1995.

54 Interview with staff member of dispensary, Misisi, 11.03.2011.

55 Interview with doctor of rural-based hospital in Fizi territory, March 2011.

56 Interview with staff member of health care center, Uvira, 20.03.2011.

57 Interview with staff member of health care center, Misisi, 11.03.2011.

What appears an overall more effective strategy than the various informal mechanisms mentioned above is formal regulation, by means of the signing of a convention between a medical structure and the command of a military unit. One such an agreement, concluded by a small hospital in South Kivu, stipulated that soldiers first had to go through the *officier médicale* (OMED, medical officer) of their regiment, who would diagnose the patient and then draw up a *bon de référence* (document of referral). In the hospital, only soldiers with a referral from the OMED were treated, and the referral number was noted on the bills. At the end of the month, the hospital would send the bills to the HQ of the regiment, which was then supposed to pay. However, when this unit was redeployed, they still left a debt of over \$300, indicating that this system does not always fully work. In response, the doctor running the hospital opted for lobbying the regiment commander to recover the outstanding debt, but in a very careful manner: 'I am going to ask the colonel [to pay the bill], but with caution. I travel regularly in the mountains, so one day, something can happen to me. At a given moment, the military can take it out on me and say that it was the FDLR. We can exercise pressure, but only with a lot of wisdom [*sagesse*].'⁵⁸ The commander of the incoming regiment promised to continue the system that had been put in place, but, to the annoyance of the doctor, asked for a reduction of 30 per cent on all medical bills. Not willing to budge, the doctor confided that he would just try to add 30 per cent to the tariffs, highlighting the importance of trickery for dealing with military extraction.

The above discussion of military payment for civilian health care indicates that there are considerable differences in the way military units deal with this issue. While some units sign conventions to regulate the treatment of their staff, others do not bother and have no qualms about leaving considerable debts. For example, in the town of Uvira, the 33rd rapid reaction battalion was said to have put in place a system of payment similar to the one described above, with the command deducting the costs directly from soldiers' salaries. By contrast, the subsequent battalions deployed to town refused such an arrangement. A research carried out by Oxfam in 2012 in Lubero found a similar diversity. Some units were reported to have concluded agreements with civilian health care structures, whereas others just left enormous debts (Van Damme and Verweijen, 2012: 24–25). As regard to debts, significant divergences were observed in respect of the order of magnitude. For instance, in Fizi it was reported that while the 65th sector never paid any of their medical bills, the 64th paid regularly, although not a 100 per cent. This illustrates how different units engage differently with their civilian environment, pointing to variations in units' internal norms.⁵⁹

Free accommodation

FARDC staff do not only make use of transport and health care for free or at lower tariffs: research among hotels in Bukavu, Uvira, Baraka and Misisi learnt that they also lodge without paying.⁶⁰ Like other state officials,⁶¹ military staff who travel and need temporary accommodation are often issued a *bon de logement* (accommodation voucher) by their hierarchy (see Appendix F for an example). This document, which is signed by the military region, the *zone ops* (operational zone at the time of the Amani Leo operations), or the *secteur*, gives military staff, mostly officers, the right to stay at a certain hotel for a specified number of days. However, it does not grant the hotel owner the right to reclaim a part of the incurred costs, and is therefore merely a way to facilitate free accommodation for military staff. As the *bon de logement* is signed by the military authorities, usually the T4 (logistics bureau), hotel owners believe they cannot refuse officers arriving with such a document, even when they deeply resent this state of affairs. Military staff with such a voucher are usually hosted in the one room that hotels are obliged to reserve for state servants, commonly called the *chambre de l'état* (room of the state). The name 'room of the state' is highly significant, as it reflects the extent to which the practice of demanding free accommodation is discursively 'officialized', and associated with the privileges connected to 'the state'.

Due to it having become an engrained practice, the arrival of officers demanding free accommodation is little frowned upon, and often evaluated as relatively licit. Yet, violations of the practical norms surrounding this form of extraction make that the pendulum may rapidly swing to the illicit side. It is for example a common practice that military staff do not stick to the prescribed dates as indicated on the document, but overstay their term. Such an extension may even amount to two or three months. One hotel in Bukavu provided an even more extreme example, saying that a soldier with a *bon de logement* for a week ended up living in the hotel for three years. However, such excesses are rare, and were mostly reported for staff of the ANR (intelligence agency), who in certain hotels were alleged to have occupied the *chambre de l'état* for years. Aside from overstaying, there are other misuses of the *bon de logement*. Among the most frequent of these is claiming additional rooms for bodyguards, without this being indicated on the document. In such situations, there is little hotel owners believe they can do, especially if officers adopt a mentality of superiority. One hotel staff member told that some officers came in demanding additional rooms 'like we live under military occupation', or as one receptionist put it 'like the RCD'.⁶² Yet, hotel owners do not appear to be willing to accept an unlimited amount of officers to stay for free. For example, in Bukavu, some hotels said that if they judge too many military staff with a *bon de logement* to arrive, they simply turn them down.

58 Interview with doctor of rural hospital in Fizi/Uvira, end 2011.

59 Differences in the internal norms of military units are further discussed in Chapters 9 and 10.

60 This section is based on information obtained from research among 19 hotels as detailed in Table 3 on p. 22.

61 Other state services reported to stay for free in hotels include: OCC, ANR, DGI, DGM and personnel from the *mairie* (Mayor's Office) and the *gouvernorat* (Governor's Office).

62 Interview with hotel receptionist, Uvira, 21.03.2011.

While accommodation without paying is authorized when military staff have a *bon de logement*, it regularly occurs that military who stay on their own account, hence without being in possession of a *bon*, do not pay either, especially in Misisi and Uvira. By contrast, in Bukavu, hotel staff reported that since the end of the war, this practice had considerably diminished. One hotel owner believed that that this was partly due to assertive action from the 10th Military Region, since they had contacted hotels throughout town to encourage them to report cases of non-paying military staff to the hierarchy. However, in Uvira and Baraka, military debts were still recurrent, while staff who did pay were said to always try to negotiate heavy reductions on the price. It should be noted that this practice is by no means limited to the military, as it is common for guests to try to reduce the price of hotel rooms with 25–30 per cent. However, the military is usually granted more substantial reductions, in the range of up to 40–50 per cent of the original price. Furthermore, in some hotels, the owner was said to have a special agreement with certain superior officers who regularly stay there at reduced tariffs, and sometimes even for free. This was also reported for a certain hotel in Uvira that is owned by the brother of the deputy commander of the 10th Military Region. Various colleagues of this commander allegedly stay regularly in the hotel for free, showing that the rationalities of protection permeate military extraction practices in all domains.

The case of the hotel sector highlights the thin and shifting boundaries between licitness/illicitness. While free accommodation for officers with a *bon de logement* is generally seen as a licit practice by hotel staff, since it is authorized by the military hierarchy, it becomes illicit when the practical norms surrounding this practice are violated. These norms do not only relate to violations of the terms as indicated on the *bon* per se, but also to the margin of violations: while overstaying two or three days is generally seen as acceptable, in part because people in the Kivus usually have to adapt the length of their stay to available transportation options and the weather, overstaying becomes problematic if it exceeds a week. The hotel sector also shows once more the importance of manners and mentality for civilians' evaluations of military practices of extraction: whether soldiers politely ask or brutally impose generates differences in the ways civilians comprehend, experience and respond to such practices.

Charging phones and attending ciné-videos

Aside from the transport, hotel and medical sectors, military extraction through the non-payment of goods and services also occurs in the domain of small-scale service provision, like that of the charging of cell phone batteries, which commonly occurs in a booth called *charges-phone*.⁶³ According to an employee of such a booth, soldiers often claim that it is indispensable for their work to be able to communicate and therefore judge it unnecessary to pay the between 100 and 200FC⁶⁴ fee that is usually charged for this service.⁶⁵ Interestingly enough, some of the economic operators contacted for the research did not make the impression of being greatly bothered by this form of extraction, possibly because the amount that is at stake is very low, and it entails little extra investments or effort. However, others did state to regret the foregone income, in particular those located close to military bases or high concentrations of soldiers, who said to receive many military staff per day, causing the foregone revenues to be substantial.

Similar annoyance was expressed by operators of *ciné-videos*, or places where videos are projected on big screen, usually with surprisingly loud sound. Staff of 20 such businesses contacted in Baraka, Misisi and Uvira reported that on average between 2–5 soldiers a day (approximately less than 5 per cent of total customers) enter the *ciné* without paying the 50–100FC fee. On average, an estimated 50–60 per cent of the soldiers attending the *ciné* do pay, pointing to differences in personal norms.⁶⁶ However, the amount of non-paying military staff significantly rises when there are screenings of popular soccer matches, like those involving T.P. Mazembe (the Congo's most popular soccer team), which generally lead to a doubling of the entrance fee to 200FC.

Although *ciné-video* operators widely denounce non-payment, as it is a source of foregone revenue in a situation where every *Franc congolais* counts, what appeared to bother my interlocutors even more was the mentality of the soldiers who enter without paying, including their claims to a special status. As an owner of a *ciné-video* explained: "There are two types of military: those who enroll to serve the country and those who enroll because they had no other options. The latter take you as an object of intimidation: "I am a soldier so I do not pay". So they enter the *ciné* for free. And if we ask them for money, they say "go and ask Kabila". They are just there to intimidate people (...). Among those who pay, there are those who pay every month, in spite of their meager wages, but they make efforts to pay an advance, and then they come every day. Others pay every day, others pay half or nothing saying "I am a soldier, I work for the nation".⁶⁷ A colleague in Misisi had graver complaints: "They enter with violence, they take their arms inside and they misbehave (...). They drink

63 Interviews with 12 employees of such booths were held on 17.03.2011 in Baraka and 08.01.2012 in Uvira. Additional information on this practice was obtained through participant observation, when spending time with the military.

64 In more isolated areas, the price for charging phones is higher, which is related to the fact that fuel for the generator is more expensive due to higher transportation costs.

65 Interview with employee of phone charging booth, Baraka, 17.03.2011.

66 The following *cinés* were contacted on 20.12.2011 in Misisi, on 05.01.2012 in Baraka and 10.01.2012 in Uvira: la Baleine, Emmanuel, MM, Zenith, Watu Kibao, Don de Dieu, Hewa Bora Matata, B52, Ici on Travaille, Titanique, Cinesta, Parking DVD, One by One, MG, Star, The Rocks, DVD Kasenga, Kt Unit, Red Star, Kavimvira.

67 Interview with *ciné-video* operator, Uvira, 10.01.2012.

too much and then afterwards they start bothering the people by asking them for cigarettes and money. Soldiers here in the *ciné* can be difficult, but what can we do?⁶⁸

In the same town, the president of the association of *ciné-video* operators told true horror stories about the days when Misisi was under control of the 65th sector, in particular the 651st brigade (case #10). In those days, if operators would try to protest against soldiers who entered without paying, the latter would just hold a gun against their chest. Yet, the biggest loss of income in that period did not result from non-paying soldiers, but from the dwindling amount of customers, as people had simply become too afraid to come to the *ciné*, especially at night. The reason was that the military would wait at the exit, and then grab the audience's phones and other valuables after the show was over.⁶⁹ In response, the manager of the *ciné* devised a system where customers were offered the possibility to leave their phones and valuables in the *ciné*, which remained safely stored there until the owners would come to pick up their belongings the next day. Even money was deposited, as people did no longer dare to move around at night with any cash on them, causing the *ciné* to be transformed 'into a type of savings bank'.⁷⁰ Fortunately, when the 641st brigade arrived at the start of 2010 (case #7), security was soon restored and people could again move around at night freely. While some soldiers of this brigade also had the bad habit of not paying for the *ciné*, the overall amount of free-riders was believed to be comparatively lower. Crucially, these soldiers were also experienced to be much more polite, thus making the practice of non-payment somehow more palatable.⁷¹ This shows once more how in evaluations of military practices, it is not only the *what* that matters but also the *how*: for *ciné-video* operators, there is a clear difference between soldiers not paying with a joke and a smile and those not paying while putting a gun against your chest.

Unpaid debts from sales on credit

Whether soldiers are allowed to buy on credit is generally seen as one of the most important indicators of mutual trust between the military and civilians, by military staff and civilians alike (see also Search for Common Ground, 2010). Three quarters of the 20 small-scale shop-owners contacted on this subject in Fizi territory⁷² told that they only allow soldiers to buy on credit if they know them personally and are regular customers. Some explained their willingness to sell on credit by referring to soldiers' difficult situation, considering it not military staff's fault when their salary is in arrears, but that of the military hierarchy. A few of the shop personnel contacted conveyed that they let other dimensions of the social status and personal circumstances of their clients also weigh in on their decision to sell on credit or not (cf. Roitman's observations on 'just' or 'true' price, 2005: 77, 79–81). For example, a female shop manager told that a soldier once came and asked to buy certain items on credit that he badly needed, because his wife had just given birth. Even when not knowing this soldier very well, she agreed as she understood his needs, having been in a similar situation herself. Three weeks later the soldier came back with his wife in order to pay the items, showing her the newborn child.⁷³

While this story has a happy ending, other economic operators have been less lucky when selling on credit to the military. In many cases, such unpaid debts were related to a situation of rotation. When units receive orders to quit the scene, which usually occurs quite unexpectedly and with little advance planning, they often do not bother or are not able to pay their outstanding debts, especially when they have not yet received their salary before embarking upon the journey.⁷⁴ For example, in the village of Lwiko, on the Lulimba-Kilembwe axis in Fizi, it was reported that the staff of the HQ of the 642nd brigade (case #8), when moving to a village further down the road, had left a debt of around \$850–1,100 with local restaurants, boutiques, beer sellers and *mamans commerçants* (female petty traders).⁷⁵ Similarly, in the village of Kananda,⁷⁶ visited the day after the HQ of a battalion of the 462nd brigade had left due to a rotation, a rapid survey revealed that debts had been left in various boutiques, restaurants, and at traders'. Most of these concerned beer and other alcoholic drinks (banana beer and palm wine), with the majority ranging between \$10–15, a substantial amount for small-scale economic operators. One trader in *divers* (various household/personal items), who had lost around \$12, said: 'It's always the same. You first refuse as you do not know them [soldiers]. Then you know them and you give on credit. And then they pay. But one day they are gone, and you are left with the debt (...) What can I do? The military buy the most here'.⁷⁷

This quote reflects the dilemma that many economic operators face when it comes to selling to the military on credit. On the one hand, soldiers are often among their biggest customers, especially in the rural areas. Since reputation is crucial in an environment where

68 Interview with *ciné-video* operator, Misisi, 20.12.2011.

69 As a reminder, the 651st was the brigade that earned the nickname *Malewa*, due to their large-scale stealing of cell phones containing that song, see p. 116 and pp. 291–293.

70 Interview with *ciné-video* operator, Misisi, 20.12.2011.

71 Interview with *ciné-video* operator, Misisi, 20.12.2011.

72 20 small-scale shop owners were contacted as detailed in Table 4, p. 22.

73 Interview with shop manager, Fizi centre, 19.02.2011.

74 In one situation, it was observed how a soldier embarking on a movement of 150 kilometers preferred to buy a transport ticket for his wife who had just given birth, rather than repay his debts to local operators.

75 The information on the debts in Lwiko was obtained during interviews there on 06.03.2011.

76 Fieldwork in Kananda was conducted on 30.11.2010.

77 Interview with petty trader, Kananda, 30.11.2010.

personal relations strongly shape the workings of the economy, operators want to avoid being seen as ‘military-unfriendly’, for this may lead to a loss of clients. On the other hand, the risks of selling to the military on credit are substantial, and stories of unpaid military debts are omnipresent in the Kivus. Such stories strongly contribute to the (re)production of negative representations of the military as unreliable. Bad experiences with one military client reflect upon the military as a whole. A shop-owner commented: ‘Maybe this one says he will pay. But how can I know? Last year I lost an expensive *wax* [waxprint fabric]. Now I do not want that again, so I refuse all of them.’⁷⁸

Aware of the reputational damage that unpaid debts can do to the military as a whole, some commanders take strict measures to prevent their troops from engaging in this abusive practice. For instance, the commander of a military unit based in the town of Mwenga had devised a special arrangement between shopkeepers, soldiers and the S2 (intelligence officer). The latter had to sign off on credits extended to soldiers, allowing him to deduct these amounts from their salaries, thus ensuring direct repayment of debts whenever salaries would arrive. The S2 would even announce upcoming rotations to shopkeepers so they could collect any outstanding debts (Van Damme and Verweijen, 2012: 35). While such arrangements appear to be rare, the case of Mwenga is important in that it shows the differences in norms between military units and commanders in respect of the treatment of civilians and concern for their livelihoods.

Concluding remarks

This section has explored a variety of the FARDC’s practices of extraction, defined as the transfer of wealth either without (perceived) return, or with a return in the form of services provided on a non-excludable basis. These practices assume a wide range of forms, being either more or less institutionalized and routinized, more or less generalized, more or less coercive, and more or less official and ‘public’. However, clear boundaries between these properties cannot always be drawn, while identifiable boundaries may rapidly shift. For example, when military staff violate the practical norms of a certain practice, like by trying to obtain private gain out of what are otherwise (quasi)-official practices, ‘public’ practices may become more ‘private’, creating ambiguity as to their status. Such ambiguity hinders the formulation of evaluations of these practices, which may therefore become in-between licit and illicit. However, since evaluations are also shaped by elements that are generally less ambiguous, like military actors’ security contribution and the effects of extraction on people’s livelihoods, they often clearly fall on either the licit or the illicit side, without their location on the licit-illicit spectrum being necessarily stable. Since the security and livelihoods effects of practices rapidly change as a result of the intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, evaluations may be relatively fluid. This is all the more so since the *perceptions* of practices’ security and livelihoods effects may rapidly shift as well, for example when certain in-group/out-group distinctions become salient due to an intensification of conflict dynamics, thus causing further fluidity. Such shifting readings and evaluations also apply to services provided in the framework of protection, as assessments thereof are equally susceptible to fluctuations in the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection.

5.2 *Protection*

Due to a drive for protection that ‘the state’ is ill suited to provide, big-man networks and other providers of protection play a crucial role in civilians’ modes of the navigation of everyday life. High levels of violence, the militarization of the economy, and deficient public service provision by civilian authorities all make that this protection is often solicited from armed actors, including the FARDC. What further feeds into this is the legacy of *Système-D*,⁷⁹ which has normalized calculating and unscrupulous modes of social and economic praxis. These various processes have also caused protection to often center around the shielding of illegal revenue-generating practices, forms of illicit influence peddling like tax evasion, and coercive modes of dispute processing, in particular the settling of personal scores. As a result, practices that would in the past be looked upon as ‘illicit’ (for instance as they are illegal) are increasingly seen as ‘logical’ and ‘as making sense’. As observed by Roitman (2005: 179) in relation to the Chad Basin, ‘those who find themselves outside the bounds of national welfare and security come to judge prestations associated with unofficial regulators as justifiable and even rightful, since they grant access to possibilities for accumulation, protection, and services that are not secured through the state or public services.’ This development is reinforced by the ‘demise of specific metaphors and historical institutions that once regulated communities (e.g., economic development, national progress, social welfare)’ (idem: 36–37), which has in turn led to a ‘disagreement over the intelligibility of regulatory power’ by state institutions (idem: 8). This loss in efficacy of representations of the state as guarantor of economic development and social mobility has eroded certain historical understandings of ‘licit wealth’ and particular forms of reciprocity within established modes of social exchange (idem: 9). Similar processes have been at work in the Kivus, and have contributed to rendering soliciting protection from the FARDC, including for shielding previously illicit and unlawful practices, in some cases ‘the most logical or “true” engagements’ (idem: 177), especially where this protection is seen to provide services that are otherwise difficult to access.

As we have seen, protection as defined herein has two main, partly overlapping forms, referring at once to a *commodity* (relating to the

⁷⁸ Interview with shop owner, Fizi *centre*, 01.12.2010.

⁷⁹ The birth and features of *Système-D* were explained on pp. 71–72.

provision of services on a predominantly excludable basis against a clearly defined, often monetary return), and a dimension of a wider *social relation* imbued with the rationalities of patronage (implying there might not be an immediate and well specified return). The extent to which protection assumes more the characteristics of the one form or the other depends on the relations between protection provider and protected, for example whether they involve ties based on family, kinship, clan, or ethnic, professional or geographical affiliations, which leads to variations in the intensity and type of reciprocity. The blurring of protection-as-commodity and protection-as-patronage should partly be seen in the light of the variety of social roles enacted by the FARDC, being at once big-men, public security providers, officials/authorities, and economic operators. It is to large extent also this versatility in social role enactment that provides the FARDC with its capacities as a protection provider, which are hence not solely derived from its capabilities to mobilize force. When acting out different social roles, FARDC staff draw upon legitimacy, resources, knowledge and relations from various social domains, operating at once as powerbrokers who make connections between these domains and different social groups, and as gatekeepers who guard access to the information, resources, contacts and opportunities contained within various spheres. For instance, certain FARDC officers move between and connect the domains of the military, non-state armed groups, the administration, official and non-official markets. Being able to access these various spheres simultaneously allows them to have discretion over revenue-generation opportunities, intervene effectively in disputes, and protect illegal activities, which are all quintessential services for protection providers in the Kivus.

As observed by scholars of protection, those providing it may at the same time be the very source of the dangers against which they offer a shield (Tilly, 1985: 170–171). This compounds drawing a line between genuine protection and extortion. In the words of Gambetta (1993: 29), this renders protection an ‘ambiguous’ commodity. An important reason for this ambiguity lies in protection’s positive and negative externalities. Take the example of traders who need to transport their goods through a highly insecure area, and who might consider entering into a protection arrangement with the FARDC. Those who initially refuse such an arrangement run a comparatively higher risk of getting attacked (a negative externality), and therefore have an incentive to ultimately solicit the military’s protection too. Now that the dangers to the unprotected have become more serious due to the protection arrangement in place, the pendulum on the extortion/genuine protection spectrum swings towards the latter end. A positive externality occurs when the provided protection also benefits others who do not pay (e.g., the provision of security as a non-excludable good). This is for instance the case when the FARDC would not protect only the vehicles of a specific trader, but would put up positions and initiate patrols along the entire road, improving the security of all road-users. In that scenario, protection would appear more like extortion for those who have paid protection money, given that there appears no real threat to be protected against (cf. Gambetta, 1993: 29–30). In sum, civilians’ evaluations of protection, like that of other practices of the FARDC, are strongly shaped by perceptions of the military’s security performance, include the type of security (e.g., real, bogus, non-excludable, excludable) it is seen to provide.

Although protection is often negatively associated with extortion, people may actually find it in their own interest to solicit it, and therefore become willing customers (Gambetta, 1993: 20). For instance, most of the traders and porters contacted on the *Hauts Plateaux* said to agree to paying a fee to the FARDC, as they found the amount reasonable and saw a clear return service (although there was also an element of coercion, as will be further explained below). Protection also has a useful function where trust is fragile and transactions are unstable, like in situations of a plurality of normative and regulatory frameworks. In such contexts, protection works as a ‘lubricant of economic exchange’ (idem: 2), facilitating transactions where one party lacks the confidence that the other will comply with the agreed upon rules. The protector does not only give guarantees for enforcement, but might also settle disputes, which is especially important in a situation where no formal rules apply or are applied, and access to alternative mechanisms of dispute processing is restricted (idem: 17, 24). This lubricating mechanism works even stronger in the context of illegal markets. Aside from the obvious absence of official regulatory frameworks, in such situations, trust in enforcement tends to be low and the risks of involvement high, in part as property rights are ill defined. This stimulates a demand for protection, with protectors providing a series of crucial services such as arranging the sale of stolen or illegal goods, ensuring the agreed upon distribution of profits and providing logistics (idem: 226, 191).

The strong connection between protection and illegal markets gives rise to two general mechanisms. First, the more legal restrictions imposed on markets and commodities, the higher the demand for protection (Gambetta, 1993: 3). Applied to the context of the Kivus, this implies that where activities are partly or wholly penalized, such as temporary fishing or mining prohibitions, or become more heavily regulated, there will be more economic operators soliciting protection. Increased opportunities for the provision of protection are often seized upon by the FARDC, who authorizes illegal activities in exchange for payment. Second, the greater the offer of protection, the greater the incentives to engage in illegal activities, since it becomes at once less risky and easier (idem: 32). This implies that where FARDC presence increases, one may observe a growth in illegal activities, since the offer of protection will augment. Similarly, where the amount of illegal practices increases and wider layers of the population get involved, the demand for protection from the FARDC (or other armed actors) will be higher, allowing the military (or these other actors) to reinforce their power position. This shows that the involvement of the FARDC in the protection of illegal activities is driven by both offer and demand, although the ‘demand’ is sometimes partly artificially created through coercion.

Similar to the mafia, protection relations between the FARDC and civilians develop in varying conditions of coercion: sometimes people choose to put themselves under the umbrella of certain elements in the military in a relatively free manner, whereas in other cases, they were forced to do so. Once forged, protection relations tend to oscillate between non-coercion and various shades of coercion, reflecting in part the extent to which they are embedded in relations of patronage and the nature of these patronage relations. The

coercive extent of protection is also the outcome of complex processes of negotiation that are shaped by sometimes rapidly changing power constellations. The mentioned case of the ambulant traders on the *Hauts Plateaux* provides a good insight into the negotiated nature of protection arrangements. Although most traders said not to object to paying a fee, it appeared that there was also a dimension of coercion to this practice. Responding to the question whether it would be possible to refuse to contribute to the FARDC, one trader exclaimed: 'Refusing to pay?... It is impossible!' [*kukatala kulipa?...haiwezekane!*].⁸⁰ However, the coerced nature of the contribution did not imply there was no room for negotiation at all, since the traders as a collective appeared to have some influence on the set price. End January 2011 (following the integration of the FRF into the military)⁸¹ control over the *Plateaux* was temporarily taken over by the newly created 66th sector of Amani Leo, the command of which attempted to raise the price of protection services on the Kalingi-Kitumba trajectory from 800FC to 1,500FC. However, in the course of the ensuing negotiations between the FARDC and representatives of the association of ambulant traders, which were directly observed at Bigaragara market, the latter rejected the proposed price increase, leading eventually to a price rise of 200FC only.⁸² This outcome was shaped by on the one hand, the increased power of the FARDC, which was now dominated by a former rebel group from the area (the FRF) who had been given control over the 66th sector; and on the other hand, the collective bargaining power of the ambulant traders. What also seems to have played a role are the practical norms surrounding the routinized practice of paying for military protection on trajectories of the *Hauts Plateaux* market circuit: these norms have established a 'fair price' for each trajectory, based on its length, difficulty (e.g. involving steep ascends/descends) and danger (presence of armed groups, bandits).⁸³ The proposed near doubling of the fee was not in accordance with these institutionalized notions of a 'just price', leading the traders to reject it.

While the case of the traders on the *Hauts Plateaux* constitutes an example of a protection arrangement revolving around the provision of physical security, protection services provided by the FARDC also assume a range of other forms, such as dispute processing (e.g., intervening in conflicts to settle them on behalf of one of the involved parties), score settling (e.g., disadvantaging one party in an often personal dispute, on behalf of the adversaries), enforcement (e.g., collecting debts), and influence peddling in the administrative sphere (e.g., exert pressure to obtain preferential treatment to lower or waive taxes, be exempted from judicial persecution, or get licenses and concessions). In respect of illegal activities, the FARDC often does not only protect the perpetrators in the sense of preventing that they get apprehended or fined, but also facilitates the activities by organizing logistics and equipment (e.g., transporting goods obtained by ambushes or robbery, providing arms), by providing investment capital (e.g., money for chainsaws for illegal logging) or by intervening in disputes related to the illegal activities (e.g., in relation to the division of profits). In the following, some of these practices will be analyzed in relation to two types of sectors. The first are legal sectors, understood as sectors in which the economic activities are in themselves legal, which however does not exclude that certain illegal practices like fraud take place. The second are illegal sectors, implying that the involved economic practices are in themselves illegal, such as the trade in cannabis.

5.2.1 Protection arrangements in legal sectors

Military protection practices in sectors that are in principle legal often relate to less legal or illicit activities, since they facilitate the violation or evasion of official rules and regulations, including controls, tax payments and registration. Yet, in certain cases, like in the import/export trade, such violations of the official rules are widespread, and may even be evaluated as relatively licit, due to the difficulties of complying with the official rules.

The artisanal mining sector

The sector in which protection arrangements involving the FARDC have probably been best documented is that of artisanal mining. While protection in this sector assumes a wide range of forms, this section focuses only on one dimension, namely interventions in the case of disputes about the rights of exploitation to a certain mine. A well-known example of military intervention in a dispute around a mining concession is that of the Bisie cassiterite mine in Walikale (North Kivu), which was up to 2009 under the control of the 85th brigade of the FARDC. This unit did not operate under the regular command of the 8th Military Region or the general staff in Kinshasa, but was under the direct (personal) control of the Deputy Commander of the 8th Military Region and the Chief of Staff of the FARDC, Gen. Gabriel Amisi (Garrett et al., 2009). Under Amisi's guidance, the 85th brigade had forged a protection arrangement with the exploitation company *Groupe minier Bangandula* (GMB), which was involved in a struggle for the rights to the mine with the Goma-based *comptoir* (minerals trade counter) Mining and Processing Congo (MPC). These two companies were linked to different families, who both claimed customary control over the mine, interlacing commercial with customary conflict. Eventually, GMB and the 85th brigade emerged victorious out of this struggle, leading them to establish a highly exploitative, although relatively stable control over the Bisie mine, in collaboration with

80 Conversation with ambulant trader near bridge over the river Lwelila, 28.01.2011.

81 The origins and evolution of the FRF were explained on pp. 92-94.

82 These negotiations were witnessed at the market of Bigaragara on 07.02.2011.

83 Based on these criteria, the amounts per trajectory were the following: 400FC Kalingi-Kitumba, 500FC Mikalati-Minembwe, 1,000FC Lusuku-Minembwe, 800FC Kamombo-Kalingi, 800FC Kalingi-Kitumba. See Map 4.

certain civilian authorities, like the administrator of Walikale territory (Garrett, 2008: 25–28).

The Bisie case illustrates that protection arrangements are often not merely dyadic, that is, consisting of a single relation between a protector (FARDC) and a protected (civilian), but assume the form of wider coalitions (networks) involving FARDC officers, economic operators, and customary and politico-administrative authorities, including the civilian in/security services. Such coalitions sometimes also involve actors from non-state armed groups, who may serve as business partners or be coopted so they are neutralized as a security threat (e.g., UNSC, 2010: 61). These protection coalitions often compete with other such coalitions, equally composed of various combinations of authorities and armed actors (but from opposed networks and groups). The competition between these coalitions does not merely take place in a 'horizontal' manner, that is, between the actors directly operating within a specific context, it commonly also has a very strong 'vertical' component, in that many of these actors operate under the protection of figures higher in the hierarchy, whether provincial or national ministers, governors, generals or directors. Therefore, local protection dynamics generally draw in actors at various levels of big-man networks and professional hierarchies, causing local competition to have wider spin-off effects or to be triggered or reinforced by power disputes at supra-local levels. In combination with the involvement of different armed factions, which may also be competing army units, this can be a significant source of instability.

A good example is the case of two foreign-run and partly foreign-owned companies (Krall Metal Congo and Somikivu)⁸⁴ that are involved in a fierce struggle for the rights to the pyrochlore⁸⁵ mine in Lueshe (Rutshuru). In order to bolster their position, each of these companies solicited protection from a different FARDC unit and various national and provincial level authorities, causing the pyrochlore concession to change hands several times in the course of 2011. Each time, a different FARDC unit occupied the site, sometimes with force, which on one occasion triggered skirmishes (UNSC, 2011: 117–119). Another notorious case of militarized protection dynamics in the mining sector are the disputes surrounding the gold mine of Mukungwe in Walungu territory (South Kivu), where in August 2011, fighting between different FARDC units broke out. The mine has been the object of a dispute since the discovery of gold in the 1970s, pitting the owner of the land, the Chunu family, against the customary authorities of the Kurhengahumuzima family. This conflict became militarized during the wars, when a militia linked to one of the parties, Mudundu 40, occupied the mining site. Militarization continued after the wars, as one party solicited the protection from certain circles in the 10th Military Region, while the other tried to mobilize competing factions in the in/security services, leading to clashes in 2008.⁸⁶ With the 10th Military Region having established firm control over the mine, the rise of the ex-CNDP within the FARDC in 2009 offered new opportunities for the party that had been marginalized in the previous stand-off. Allegedly directly approaching Gen. Ntaganda, the leader of the ex-CNDP network within the FARDC (UNSC, 2011: 132), the Chunu family solicited the intervention of this powerful group, which at the time dominated the Amani Leo structures that were established in parallel to the 10th Military Region. This led to a new round of violent clashes in 2011 (Geenen and Claessens, 2012).⁸⁷ What is interesting about the Mukungwe case is that it illustrates how disputes that became militarized during the wars have often continued to figure the involvement of armed actors in the post-settlement era, pointing to the possibility of a certain path-dependency in processes of militarization. Furthermore, like the example of Lueshe, it shows the interdependencies between the dynamics of conflict, protection and insecurity within the FARDC and those within Kivus' social order at large, with conflicts between civilian parties fuelling conflicts within the military and vice versa.

Import/export trade

Cross-border trade,⁸⁸ in both its large-scale and smaller-scale varieties, has been an important part of the Kivutian economy since the drawing of international boundaries.⁸⁹ Protection mechanisms and fraud are generalized in this sector, and few traders comply with all the formal rules, regulations, and taxation obligations (Tegera and Johnson, 2007). One reason for this is that respecting the entire formal regulatory framework would be an exceedingly complicated, expensive and time-consuming affair, and involve the negotiation of a bewildering array of less and more official fees and taxes with a large number of different state services.⁹⁰ For instance, if one would try to

84 Krall Metal Congo is registered in the Congo, but presided over by an Austrian national, Michael Krall. *Société minière du Kivu* (Somikivu) is owned for 70 % by the German company *Gesellschaft für Elektrometallurgie*, for 20 % by the Congolese state and for 10 % by the Russian Kluchevsky Ferroalloys Plant (UNSC, 2011: 117).

85 Pyrochlore is an ore from which niobium is extracted.

86 Radio Okapi, 'Mukungwe: affrontements FARDC-police des mines, plusieurs blessés parmi les civils', *Radio Okapi*, 21 April 2008.

87 Radio Okapi, 'Des tirs entendus dans le carré minier de Mukungwe', *Radio Okapi*, 24 August 2011.

88 Research on military involvement in the import/export trade was carried out at the border posts of Kasindi, Ishasha, and Bunagana with other data stemming from Bukavu (Ruzizi). See Table 4, p. 23.

89 Following trade patterns established by the Afro-Arab rulers, local leaders in the Kivus continued to pursue the trade in ivory and rubber to east Africa without authorization from the colonial state. For example, in 1912, an extensive campaign was launched against the local strongman and ivory trader Maboko, who was based in the mountains west of Lake Edward and escaped the control of the colonial state (Shaw, 1984: 147–149).

90 For years, the Congo has been among the bottom five in the World Bank's annual 'Doing Business' report, which measures (perceptions of) the business climate in various countries. In the 2013 report, it scored 181 out of 185 on cross-border trade. The report documents that the import of a container of goods to the Congo takes on average 62 days and costs \$7,709 (against an average of \$2,567 in Sub-Saharan Africa), while the export of the same container takes 50 days and requires \$3,818 (against an average of \$1,990 in Sub-Saharan Africa) (World Bank, 2013: 75–81).

pay all the official taxes without mobilizing 'connections', administrative harassment would make the procedures extremely lengthy and costly, due to delays, the inflation of the demanded amounts (the nomenclature of which is often far from certain as officials improvise additions on the spot), and imposed penalties for infractions that are usually sought or fabricated in a creative manner, like by invoking seemingly obscure pieces of legislation. Furthermore, the official tax regime in the Congo is very high, specifically in comparison to that of surrounding countries. This makes that traders in the Kivus often prefer to export their goods unofficially to Rwanda and Uganda and then re-export officially from there. For example, in 2007, taxes and levies on coffee exports from the Congo totaled seven per cent of the exported value, against only one per cent in Rwanda and Uganda, which have policies of export promotion (Tegeera and Johnson, 2007: 60). Re-exporting has the added advantage of bypassing Congolese banks, which are distrusted and sometimes lack hard currency. Hence, protection arrangements in the import-export sector are not unilaterally imposed by protectors seeking revenue: they are clearly also driven by demand from the side of economic operators seeking to navigate a complex institutional environment that has grown over decades. Furthermore, protection mechanisms in the import/export trade are not the preserve of the FARDC: they are offered by a wide range of state actors, including customs and migrations officials and influential figures in the entourage of the president. These arrangements, and military involvement in them, are also by no means new. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the FAZ was already strongly implicated in the import/export trade, for instance in Southeast Shaba (now Katanga province), where it was involved in the trade with Zambia (Wa Nkera and Grundfest Schoepf, 1991: 77). As soon as the FARDC was formed, it resumed this tradition.

The FARDC's involvement in cross-border trade assumes various forms. For example, Raeymaekers (2007: 169–170) describes how at the start of the transition, the FARDC in the Butembo area struck a deal with a number of prominent businesspersons who own the city's most important petrol stations. This allowed them to import fuel from Kenya and Uganda through the border post of Kasindi without declaring this to the relevant state services, as is legally prescribed. By labeling the fuel a 'military good', duty-and control free imports were guaranteed, while the military was able to pocket a nice percentage of the profits in return. In Kasindi, the military was reported to escort certain trucks that entirely bypassed the civilian border authorities. Hence, these trucks were not controlled, registered and taxed by the *Office congolais de contrôle* (OCC, Congolese Office for Control), the customs agency *Direction générale des douanes et accises* (DGDA, Directorate-General of Customs and Duties) and other state services. However, such blatant and overt violations were said to be rare. Allegedly, a more widespread practice is that the *déclarant*, who arranges the customs clearance on behalf of an economic operator, simply registers the goods on the name of a certain military protector, which will make the state agencies processing the case more 'lenient'. When this does not occur, or not to the expected degree, the protector in question may call the various state agencies involved during the negotiations on tariffs and procedures, or arrange one of the soldiers in his client networks deployed in that area to pass by in order to exert pressure. As an informant who used to work as *déclarant* at the border posts of Bukavu (Ruzizi I and II) explained: 'The cars that pass via Dar es Salaam, they put four or five on the name of a colonel and then you only pay 20–30 per cent of taxes'. According to him, the import tariff of a car is usually between \$1,200–1,500 for a second hand car and \$3,000 for a Landcruiser. But if a Landcruiser is imported under military protection, one can import them for \$1,200 only. However, another *déclarant* warned that the possibilities for reduction strongly depend on the status of the military officers involved, saying that when it concerned officers of lesser importance, he could only lower the price with around \$500.⁹¹

5.2.2 Protection arrangements in illegal sectors

While protection arrangements in illegal sectors resemble to a large extent those in legal sectors, involving for instance also protection services like dispute processing, enforcement, and the facilitation of the evasion of official rules and regulations, the dynamics are often slightly different. Importantly, the asymmetry between protector and protected tends to be higher, since those engaging in manifestly illegal activities are commonly in a vulnerable position. Moreover, the FARDC, as a state agent, can always bust the parties involved, should it be discontent with a certain arrangement. It often also occurs that due to the Kivus' political-military fragmentation, and the volatility of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, the FARDC cannot follow through on its protection obligations, for instance as armed groups or bandits render it impossible for them provide the solicited services. What is also important to take into consideration is that protection dynamics are not the same in all illegal sectors, since they are importantly shaped by the nature of the revenue-generation activities that are at stake. It matters for example whether these are evaluated as licit or illicit, and the extent to which people depend on them for generating a livelihood. For example, violent banditry is generally condemned (even though such condemnations may go hand in hand with a certain tolerance when it comes to distributing the fruits),⁹² causing protection practices in this domain to be seen as clearly illicit. However, certain technically illegal forms of the exploitation of natural resources, like unauthorized fishing, logging and poaching, are generally seen as relatively licit, not least as substantial amounts of people depend on them for making a living. This also affects evaluations of protection practices and protectors, who tend to be seen in a more favorable light in such a situation, since enabling people to earn a livelihood. Understandably, the officials tasked with implementing legislation, and people sympathizing with nature conservation, often see these protection practices very differently, highlighting their illegal nature and destructive environmental effects. One sector in which such divergent assessments are clearly manifested is the illegal fishing business.

⁹¹ Interviews with two *déclarants*, Bukavu, 25.03.2011.

⁹² The issue of social norms and norm enforcement in relation to banditry is further discussed on p. 329.

Illegal fishing

Fishing in the Kivus is a relatively well-regulated activity, at least on paper. In some areas, only those officially registered and having a permit are allowed to fish, while elsewhere there is a (sometimes additional) periodic closure of the lake to combat overfishing. Furthermore, even in waters where one is authorized to fish, fishing in the breeding grounds is generally forbidden. There are also regulations concerning the nets and techniques to be used. For example, fishing with the most fine-meshed dragnets (also called *ngurura*, seine fishing), mosquito nets, synthetic nets with toxic substance, and electrical nets is outlawed. Yet, all of these regulations are violated in the ongoing battle over fishing that rages between and within groups of impoverished citizens, civilian state services, like the provincial ministries of agriculture and the environment, and different armed actors, including the FARDC navy and infantry, non-state armed groups and in some areas, the park rangers of the *Institut congolais pour la conservation de la nature* (ICCN, Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation). Within this struggle, there is a clear interplay between prohibition and protection. Each time it is attempted to better regulate and control fishing practices, armed actors seize the opportunity to extend protection to those violating the regulations, thus reinforcing their grip over the sector.

An informative example of the interplay between prohibition and protection are the attempts to cut down on illegal fishing on Lake Edward.⁹³ The tensions generated by these efforts, and the role of the military therein, are by no means new: they date back to the very first attempts to regulate fishing in the colonial era. One of the first general prohibitions to fish on the lake stems from 1934, following earlier suppressions of fisheries in 1929, and the forced evacuation of riverine populations in relation to sleeping disease by the *Force publique* (Vikanza, 2011: 167–168).⁹⁴ Eventually, a cooperative for larger-scale, semi-industrial fishing was created in 1949,⁹⁵ in order to balance a sound exploitation of the lake with the socio-economic needs of the surrounding communities and European business interests. However, the progressive deterioration of the cooperative in the 1960s and 1970s transformed it into an enterprise that commercialized its prerogatives by contracting them out in an uncontrolled manner. This brought it into competition with park rangers infiltrating the sector and protecting their own groups of individual fishermen. At the beginning of the 1980s, the FAZ and a host of other state agencies entered the scene, each protecting their own groups of fishermen—often regardless the fishing methods used (Vikanza, 2011: 173–177). But it was not until the war era that the fishing sector became truly disorganized and militarized, as large numbers of displaced persons gathered in the zones around Lake Edward, having little other livelihood options than fishing. This drove them into the arms of the various rebel outfits active in the Virunga National Park, who had built up extensive control over the fishing sector. This militarized grip continued well into the transition, when the extension of central state control to former rebel-held areas led to renewed attention to the regulation of fishing, reinforcing the need among illegal fishermen to solicit protection. Although it is not clear at what point in time the FARDC became involved, it appears that the newly constituted army and its navy started to interfere in the illegal fishing business soon after obtaining control over the area in 2004–5. Since then, the commander of the naval base in Vitshumbi (case #3) has never been changed, causing the navy to have many vested interests in the illegal fishing sector. This short history shows that both the protection of illegal fishing and the involvement of armed actors have become institutionalized practices in this area, inscribing it in its structures of domination, signification and legitimation.

During fieldwork in the Virunga National Park in Rutshuru in April 2010, it was observed how the protection of the illegal fishing business triggered and was fed by tensions between a host of military and civilian actors, not least the infantry and navy, who were in fierce competition for control over the sector.⁹⁶ The dominant actor at that point was alleged to be the commander of the First Zone of the Amani Leo operations, who was believed to channel a part of the revenues all the way up to the chief of staff of the ground forces in Kinshasa. These protection practices took place in various areas. An important hub was the zone around the village of Nyakakoma on the southeastern shore of the lake, where the leaders of the main illegal fishing rings paid protection money to the FARDC on a weekly basis. Another hotspot was the area controlled by the brigade headquartered in Katanda, more towards the southwestern part of the lake. The price of protection money was reported to vary, depending on the method of fishing, its location, and the type of boat used. While owners of a *dingué* or small pirogue had to pay \$10 a week, bigger pirogues were charged \$25. Larger-scale operators with finely meshed nets, or those fishing in the breeding grounds reportedly paid up to \$350–500 a week (see also UNSC, 2010: 70–72). According to local sources, the military also organized the transport and trade of fish, allowing for intrusive control over the entire production chain. The scale of this business was substantial: in 2010, there were estimated to be around 10,000 fishermen operating on Lake Edward, 85 per cent of whom in a clandestine manner.⁹⁷ The FARDC was believed to protect 5,000 of these fishermen, and 1,500 pirogues (UNSC, 2010: 72). Due to the scale of the business, the impact of clandestine fishing on fish stocks has been devastating, leading to the deepening poverty of riverine populations and the soaring of fish prices.⁹⁸ While before the wars, the daily catch of one boat was around 700 kg, in 2010, it had

93 This section is based on interviews with representatives of the fishing cooperative COPEVI, the *Comité des pêcheurs individuels*, ICCN, civil society, FARDC navy and infantry, politico-administrative authorities, police and individual fishermen and inhabitants in Vitshumbi (05.04.2010 and 26.01.2012) and Kyavinyonge (25 and 26.04.2010).

94 It concerns *Ordinance No.25/AGRI* of 18 February 1934 of the Governor General.

95 This cooperative was called *Coopérative des pêcheries indigènes du Lac Edouard* (COPILE, Cooperative of Indigenous Fisheries of Lake Edward).

96 The tensions between navy and infantry in this area will be further explored on pp. 237–239.

97 Mamadou Bineta, 'Protégée par les militaires, la pêche illégale ruine Vitshumbi', *Syfia Grands Lacs*, 14 January 2010.

98 Radio Okapi, 'Lac Edouard : la pêche illicite à la base de la baisse de production des poissons', *Radio Okapi*, 18 November 2009.

dropped to 10 kg a day. Meanwhile, prices of tilapia, one of the most important breeds of fish, quadrupled from 50 to 200FC wholesale, and from 100 to 400FC retail.⁹⁹ This indicates that the livelihood stakes of illegal fishing are very high, making military protection both crucial for the immediate survival of thousands of illegal fishermen but also causing poverty at the longer term through the accelerated depletion of fish stocks.

In order to tackle the problem of overfishing, the province of North Kivu created a committee for the rational exploitation of Lake Edward, which launched surveillance missions on the lake in 2009, building on earlier initiatives. These were carried out jointly by the FARDC navy, the park rangers of the ICCN and sometimes representatives of the *Comité des pêcheurs individuels* (Committee of Individual Fishermen), the COPEVI (Cooperative of Fishermen of Virunga) and the *Ministère de l'agriculture, de la pêche et de l'élevage* (AGRIPEL, Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and Breeding). However, the effects of the inclusion of the FARDC in these renewed efforts at control and regulation were ambiguous: while on the one hand, its inclusion was indispensable for making progress with combating illegal fishing, on the other hand, it gave the military new opportunities for providing protection. Importantly, the navy's participation in joint patrols on the lake allowed them to exercise influence on the time schedules and routes. They advocated for these features to be kept fairly constant, in this way hoping to avoid surprise patrols that could run into the clandestine fishermen they protected. Moreover, in case of deviations of the route or schedule, they tried to warn their protégés in advance, while withholding information about such changes from those protected by their adversaries, such as the infantry and sometimes the ICCN.

A similar ambiguous effect was observed in relation to the joint ICCN-FARDC (infantry) military operations against pirate fisheries that were initiated at the end of March 2010. After four days of operations, three pirate fisheries had been destroyed, including the huts in which illegal fishermen and their families lived. Furthermore, more than a 100 fishermen had been arrested, most of whom were robbed of their personal belongings and money. Soon after the operations, the brigade headquarters in Katana encouraged the fishermen to return to the pirate fisheries in order to restart fishing activity. Hence, rather than reducing illegal fishing, the operations ended up reproducing it, while reinforcing the dependency of the fishermen on the military's protection. These events also escalated the tensions between the infantry and the navy, since the navy felt the infantry was trying to seize upon the operations to enlarge their market share in the protection business. This competition became even worse when the ICCN got more actively involved in cracking down on illegal fishing and reinforced its presence in the area, leading to clashes and killings in April and May 2010 (UNSC, 2010: 72). These events highlight the difficulties of suppressing illegal activities in markets where protection mechanisms have become institutionalized, specifically if there are competing (armed) protection providers and the livelihood stakes are high. The case of illegal fishing on Lake Edward also illustrates the interplay between prohibition and protection, demonstrating how new restrictions or controls intensify this interplay by creating at once an increased demand for protection and enhancing the possibilities for offering it.

Illegal goods and services: prostitution and prohibited alcoholic drinks

Protection mechanisms in illegal markets in the Kivus can also be found in certain sectors that are concentrated in (semi-)urban areas, like prostitution in brothels and the production of certain prohibited alcoholic drinks. In numerous towns, the FARDC is involved in these markets as a protection provider, and sometimes also as an entrepreneur. For example, in Beni, a woman from a local women's rights organization told that in December 2009, a number of *maisons de tolerance* (brothels) had been closed down, and that some of the women running these businesses had been arrested.¹⁰⁰ However, after just one week, these women were released, allegedly as they had good relations with certain higher placed FARDC officers and policemen. Reportedly, one of the officers involved had commented on the release of the suspects as follows: 'Where should the military otherwise drink their beer?'¹⁰¹ In Masisi, the deputy commander of the military sector of Katale was accused of having created a red light district in a quarter of Lushebere village popularly named *Vodo*, after the behind of a woman in Swahili slang.¹⁰² However, it appears that the police is sometimes more heavily involved in protecting the sex business than the military, as was reported for both Uvira and Bukavu.¹⁰³

Another sector where military protection is common is the illegal alcohol business. In the *Grand Nord*, the FARDC used to provide protection to the trade in both imported and locally brewed illegal alcohol. Imported illegal alcohol mostly comes in the form of little plastic bags that contain very strong liquor (40–80 per cent), like *Chief* and *Furaha*, which are produced in Uganda. The FARDC both protects and organizes the import and sale of such alcohol. For instance, in Kyavinyonge, the commander of the navy was reported to have a boutique that sells *Chief*, which was allegedly smuggled via Lake Edward.¹⁰⁴ Locally produced and bottled alcohol in urban areas

99 Patient Ndoole Mambo, 'La pêche illégale épuise le lac Edouard', *InfoSud*, 25 March 2008.

100 Interview with woman from women's rights organization, Beni, 16.04.2010.

101 Interview with woman from women's rights organization, Beni, 16.04.2010.

102 Radio Okapi, 'Masisi: un officier accusé de parrainer le proxénétisme à Lushebere', *Radio Okapi*, 29 July 2010.

103 Interview with employee of civil society organization, Bukavu, 25.03.2011. In Bukavu, only the brothels in Kadutu and Munyola were reported to be protected by the military.

104 This was confirmed by various sources contacted in Kyavinyonge on 25.04.2010.

predominantly concerns wines and liquors such as *mbandule*, which frequently contain ethanol.¹⁰⁵ These drinks are commonly produced and bottled at the edge of town, and then distributed to shops in the center, sometimes with labels that are copied from Ugandan brands.¹⁰⁶ In Butembo, the urban authorities pronounced a ban on these drinks in the course of 2011 for health reasons. This allowed the commander of the FARDC battalion deployed in town to become the principal provider of this alcohol, selling the loads that had been seized in efforts to enforce the ban.¹⁰⁷ Harassing other sellers in order to obtain a monopoly position, the military left the producers of these drinks untouched, according to some as a result of protection mechanisms.¹⁰⁸

Banditry

Military protection of illegal activities, often blending into collaboration, also takes place in the sphere of banditry, mostly relating to practices of violent appropriation via armed robberies and rapid ambushes or *coupeurs de route*. In several field research sites, it was believed that a part of the local banditry was committed by coalitions of perpetrators sometimes described as *associations des malfaiteurs* (associations of wrongdoers), involving various combinations of roving military deserters, active-duty FARDC elements (with or without approval from their hierarchy), armed group combatants, deserters, local youth and professional criminals. A member of a civil society organization in Fizi said: 'Often, there are coalitions of *coupeurs de route*. The FARDC provides the arms, and after that, the sponsors are going to look for guys to commit the acts. They let others do that, so they are not suspected (...) They play a game, even in town, there are armed robberies, but this is always in complicity with soldiers.'¹⁰⁹ In Kamanyola (Walungu), significant collaboration in crime was reported between the over 300 demobilized from the Second Congo War and the military. While these demobilized had already been a significant source of trouble in the past, the arrival of what was said to be an ill-disciplined army brigade (the 432nd, case #5) fostered further engagement in banditry. At the root of this were the new opportunities for violent appropriation that collaboration with elements from this unit offered.¹¹⁰ This presents a clear example of the principle that an increased supply of protection services (in this case resulting from the arrival of the 432nd brigade) raises the incentives to carry out illegal activities, and may therefore lead to a rise in crime.

While it is difficult to determine the underlying considerations with exactitude, due to the reluctance of those engaged in banditry to talk about their activities, there appear to be a variety of reasons that make protection arrangements in the domain of violent appropriation attractive to military protectors and civilian protected alike. Elements within the FARDC shield these criminal activities against interference by the authorities and render the perpetrators untouchable, including by exerting pressure on civilian in/security services and interfering in judicial procedures. In many cases, they also provide arms, ammunition, and sometimes technical advice, or help with the transport and sale of the stolen goods. In return, they get a labor force that carries out the dirty work, thus helping them to mask their own involvement. This labor force also possesses essential knowledge of the local environment, for example concerning who might transport valuables on what routes and at what times, which wealthy persons live where, or the location of hiding places and escape routes. Although the summary data collected on this do not allow for drawing definite conclusions, there are some indications that the degree of active involvement of the FARDC in violent appropriation depends in part on how well local bandits are organized and what other protectors they have among the local in/security services and authorities. Thus, pre-existing banditry networks with well-established distribution channels and access to other protectors than the FARDC operate more autonomously than groups that were initiated or are heavily organized by the military itself, rendering the degree of active military involvement lower.

Lower-rank protection: similar rationalities, smaller stakes

Since this section has mostly focused on elite actors and bigger businesspersons, with the exception of the part on clandestine fishermen, it is important to highlight that protection mechanisms may also cover relatively everyday affairs, such as petty tax evasion, involving lower-ranking military staff and small-scale economic operators. For instance, in the gold mining town of Misisi, it was observed that many women have *étalages* (displays for merchandise) in the residential quarters, although these are officially only allowed at the market and along the main road. According to the local authorities, many of these *étalages* are from spouses of FARDC soldiers, who commonly ignore rules and regulations, especially concerning taxation and permits, in order to obtain commercial advantages. However, other civilian women also engage in this practice, thus hoping to avoid paying the *taxe d'étalage*. Furthermore, having their displays in the quarter allows them to sell their products from a better location, with less competition, while enabling them to show their goods in a more comprehensive fashion. Allegedly, these women can get away with this as they are protected by certain FARDC soldiers, often the fruit of longstanding protection and business ties, sometimes fostered via friendship with their spouses. The provision of such small favors and services to civilians by soldiers and lower-level officers seems relatively widespread. Other examples observed during the fieldwork

105 In rural areas, there is a large production of other types of alcohol like *kanyanga*, *kasiks* and *mungazi*, see p. 101

106 Jacques Kikuni Kokonyange, 'Beni : des liqueurs de mort envahissent le marché', *Syfia Grands Lacs*, 24 June 2011.

107 Kakule Muso, 'La vraie face du commandant Fardc de la ville de Butembo, colonel Donat', *Butembo 11*, 1 January 2011.

108 Phone conversation with human rights activist based in Butembo, 23.07.2011.

109 Interview with employee of civil society organization, Baraka, 19.11.2010.

110 Interviews with PNC (police), human rights defenders, and local authorities, Kamanyola, 22 and 23.03.2010.

are: arranging free or cheap transport through fraud with the free places allocated to the military (as described above for transport by ship, but as can also be found for transportation on trucks); organizing exemptions or lower tariffs in relation to small-scale taxes, like the market tax; offering free services such as the charging of mobile phones, commonly by means of extraction from civilian operators; and finally, helping with the recovery of debts from third persons. Furthermore, and similar to protection among higher social strata, lower-level military staff may intervene in the processing of disputes of all kinds and the settling of personal scores (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2014). This shows that while the services and favors that soldiers and lower-rank officers provide to civilians in the framework of protection differ in magnitude from those provided at higher levels, the underlying mechanisms and rationalities are largely the same.

To conclude, protection by the FARDC, whether provided mostly as a commodity or in the framework of a social relation, takes place in a range of economic sectors, and covers a wide variety of activities, which may be more or less coercive, legal and licit. The FARDC is often a lynchpin in the dynamics of protection, and their interaction with those of conflict and insecurity, for example by contributing to the militarization of dispute settlement by means of providing protection to one of the conflict parties, or by fostering a rise in banditry and therefore insecurity through the protection of the perpetrators. The spin-off effects of FARDC protection on insecurity and conflict dynamics are particularly pronounced where competing armed factions get involved, whether other military units or armed groups. Yet, protection by the military does not always foster violence, in particular when it concerns everyday practices or involves covert and more subtle forms of coercion.¹¹¹

5.3 Collaboration/transactions

As we have seen, economic collaboration is defined herein as relating to a longer-term situation in which civilians and the military undertake joint business activities as economic partners in various capacities; hence a *social relation* centered on economic activity. Transactions refer to one-off economic exchanges that may or may not be part of collaboration, like when civilians buy charcoal produced by the military, or when spouses from FARDC soldiers rent kitchenware from civilian women,¹¹² or provide services as day laborers. Collaboration is often a part of protection relations, especially when it concerns illegal practices or markets. Yet in other cases, the underlying relations are primarily related to business, as was observed for certain FARDC officers who rent out their motorcycle to *motards* in cities where they have limited civilian networks. Economic collaboration and transactions differ from extraction, in that the involved economic activities commonly add economic value or lead to return payments for civilians. Extractive activities, by contrast, imply a unilateral transfer of wealth without a form of economic return, although there may be a perceived return in terms of (non-excludable) security provision.

For civilian economic operators, collaboration with the military may be interesting for a number of reasons. Aside from being a military force, the FARDC constitutes an economic network with a number of attractive features: it has its own labor force; wide geographical coverage; access to important information flows; a legitimacy edge deriving from its status as a state actor (enabling it to more credibly enact 'official' social roles); and access to various arenas, spheres and markets. Furthermore, the FARDC has its own communications and transport systems (even when based largely on civilian resources), which facilitate the circulation of goods, people and information. Certain officers also have substantial investment capital and cash at their disposition, sometimes obtained through the embezzlement of soldiers' salaries or other military funds. Both of these are highly coveted in an environment where banking infrastructure is rudimentary and access to credit exceedingly restricted, specifically in the rural areas (Isern et al., 2007). Additionally, the military has manifold connections with political-economic elites, which provides them with access to political capital and influence on decision-making processes, as well as other benefits like a *de facto* position of tax exemption. These connections, in conjunction with their capacity to mobilize coercion, allow the military to reduce the interference of other state services with their economic activities, in particular illegal ones. The capacity for coercion also enables the FARDC to physically protect transport, goods, and assets in insecure areas, as well as to exercise coercion-based influence over political and economic competitors and engage in dispute processing. In sum, the FARDC has many qualities that render it an attractive business partner, although these same qualities simultaneously make it a dangerous one.

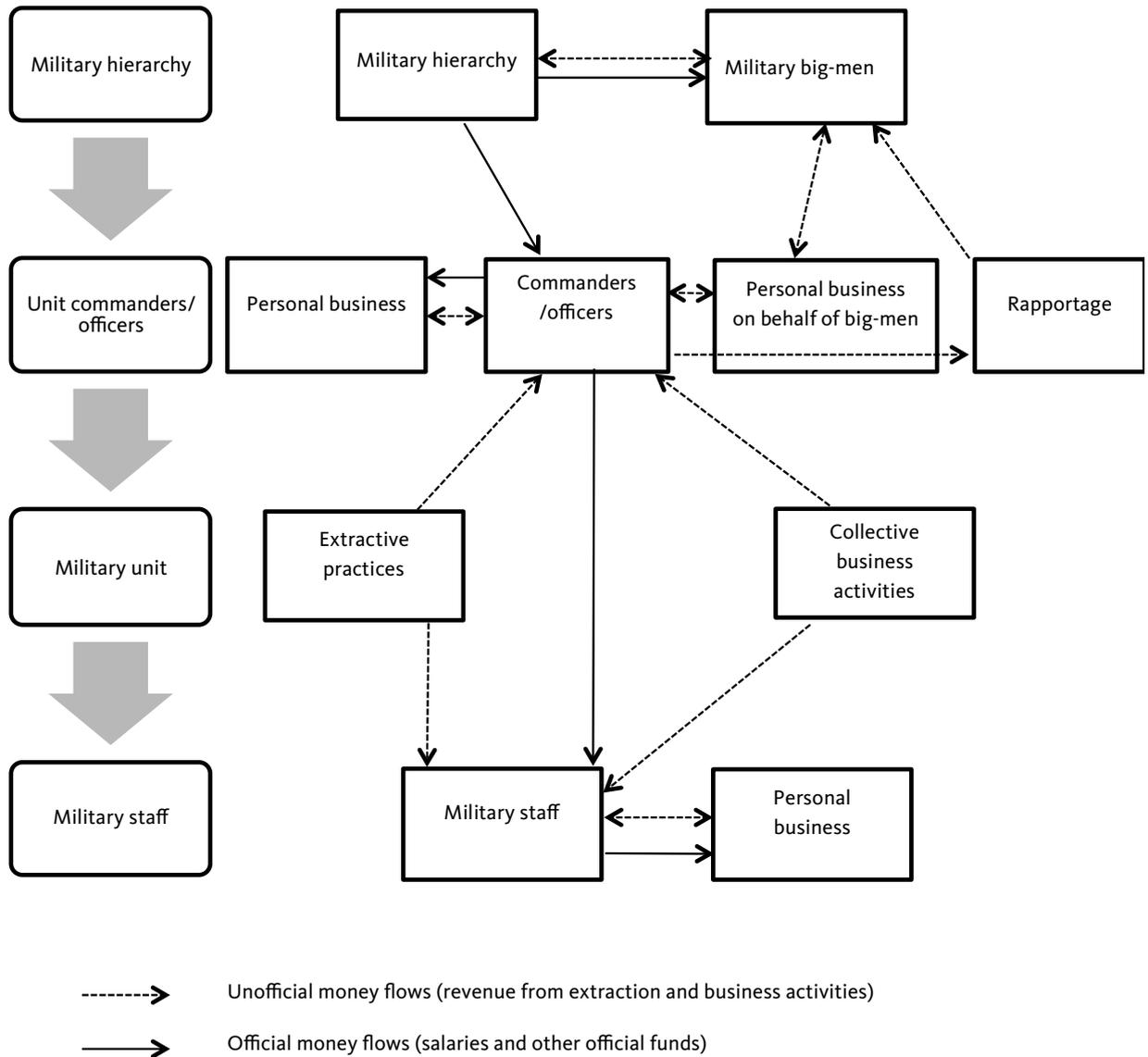
The FARDC, for its part, needs civilians to do business, for example as retailers, providers, customers, tenants, transporters, investors, middlepersons, creditors, managers, or employees. FARDC staff sometimes also prefer to run certain businesses or register property under a civilian name, as there are legal restrictions on military involvement in economic activities, and this helps avoid scrutiny. However, in many cases, collaboration/transactions concern 'regular' economic activities that are in themselves mostly licit (although they might have illicit dimensions), such as agriculture, the hotel and restaurant sector, or the transport business. The need to collaborate and interact with civilians applies to economic activities engaged in by staff both at the higher and the lower end of the military hierarchy, which substantially differ in nature. At the higher end, superior officers run true business empires, being involved in activities as diverse as real estate, importing fuel, trade in arms and ammunition, running soccer clubs, flour production, the hotel business, and the exploitation and

¹¹¹ The subtlety of much of the coercion exercised by the FARDC is further discussed on pp. 198 and 212.

¹¹² Due to frequent rotations, but also limited means, FARDC spouses often have a minimum of tools and cooking utensils like pans, leading them to occasionally rent these from civilian women.

trade of natural resources. This has been well-documented for infamous generals like Gabriel Amisi aka Tango Four,¹¹³ chief of staff of the land forces up to November 2012 and in 2014 reappointed as commander of the First Defense Zone (UNSC, 2012: 36; UNSC, 2011: 116, 120–121, 129–130).¹¹⁴ Another example is Bosco Ntaganda (UNSC, 2011: 149–151), the ex-CNDP head of the Amani Leo operations in the Kivus until his desertion in April 2012. At the lower end of the hierarchy, soldiers try to supplement their meager income in ways that are largely similar to that of the Congolese survival economy at large (see e.g., de Villers et al., 2002).¹¹⁵ This implies that they engage in activities with low profit margins that require little initial capital, such as petty trade in cigarettes, charcoal and palm oil production. While there is thus a substantial difference in the types of revenue-generation activities that military staff engage in at the higher and lower end of the military hierarchy, in all cases, these activities bring them in extensive contact with civilians.

Figure 12: Official and non-official revenue flows in the FARDC



113 The name Tango Four is derived from his position as T4, head of logistics, in the RCD rebel faction. See Jason Stearns, 'Congo army chief caught in gold deal', *Congo Siasa*, 10 November 2010.

114 Amisi was suspended from his position in November 2012 after a UN Group of Experts report uncovered his involvement in a trafficking network selling arms and ammunitions to certain rebel groups in the east. See Johnny Hogg, 'DR Congo general sold arms to rebel groups: U.N. report.' *Reuters*, 21 November 2012; Radio Okapi, 'RDC: les Fonus exigent l'arrestation du général Amisi Kumba, chef des forces terrestres suspendu', *Radio Okapi*, 25 November 2012. In 2014, he was re-appointed as commander of the First Defense Zone. Jean-Jacques Wondo Omanyundu, 'Restructuration des FARDC et retour en force du Général Amisi', *DESC*, 19 September 2014.

115 As of mid-2014, the RCA (monthly wages) of FARDC staff ranged from 77,000FC (\$85.5) for the lowest ranks to 91,200FC (\$101) for a colonel full. Generals earn only slightly more. Information obtained via personal correspondence with EUSEC staff member, 15.06.2015.

A salient feature of this interaction are the military's frequent claims to and de facto occupation of a special status, framed in the discourses of both 'public security' and 'exceptionalism'. This strongly impacts civilians' evaluations of the military's business activities. What further shapes these evaluations is that business activities can be undertaken both by military units as a whole, in which case they are partly (unofficially) regulated by the hierarchy to whom the revenues flow as part of *rapportage* systems,¹¹⁶ or can be engaged in by military staff on an individual basis, mostly through the mobilization of personal networks. This causes ambiguity in respect of public/private framings, which compounds the development of evaluations. Such ambiguities may also result from the fact that the same military units that are collectively involved in business activities (e.g., charcoal production) might simultaneously engage in extractive practices, for example taxation, and use the resources and labor obtained via extraction (e.g., forced labor) for their business activities. A similar blurring of public/private registers can be observed in relation to business activities engaged in by military staff on an individual basis. Where such 'private' forms of entrepreneurialism concern large-scale activities that require substantial investments, they tend to be undertaken by superior officers with good positions and connections, often unit or sector commanders. Such commanders-cum-businesspersons usually partly work with civilians for executing their business schemes, drawing on (extended) family and other social networks. These civilian caretakers, managers and business associates generally enjoy all the privileges that come with high level military connections, for example the possibility to negotiate exemptions from administrative regulations or to enforce the recovery of debts by means of threats with force. Aside from civilians, military entrepreneurs often also use trusted military personnel for facilitating their business activities, such as bodyguards and soldiers in their big-man networks. They may for example order these soldiers to protect transport or to run errands, thus introducing a 'public' element into their 'private' business. This does not only relate to soldiers' labor, but also their salaries or other funds, are sometimes appropriated and used for commanders' personal investments and pre-financing, causing irregularities in disbursement (see also UNSC, 2010: 48). Furthermore, not all profits of 'private' business activities may go to the commander-cum-businessperson himself, as parts may have to be channeled up the big-man chain in order to maintain a favorable status. This is also the case where officers undertake business activities not primarily for themselves, but mainly act as business representatives of certain officers higher up in the hierarchy, who may include the chief of staff in Kinshasa or commanders in the military region. These same big-men often also receive resources in the framework of *rapportage*. This simultaneous tapping into various revenues flows implies that the knowledge, networks, influence, labor and positions derived from one sphere (e.g., collective extraction via taxation, sometimes framed as 'public' and destined for *rapportage*) may be used for enabling activities in another (e.g., the 'private' business of an individual officer), leading to a complex blurring and interaction between more and less 'official', and more and less 'public' revenue flows (see Figure 12).

As Figure 12 shows, unit commanders tend to obtain resources through a variety of channels. These include siphoning off 'official' funds destined for their unit, like salaries and operational funds, taking a part of the revenues generated collectively by the unit through extraction or collective business activities destined for *rapportage*, and occasionally, skimming off some of the profits of business activities engaged in on behalf of patrons in the military hierarchy. In many cases, commanders invest this money, which has been partly obtained by public means (soldiers' labor time) and in the framework of extractive activities framed as 'public', in personal business activities, thus blurring public/private distinctions. Similarly, lower-rank soldiers and their spouses invest a part of military salaries in small-scale personal business activities, just as the little that they skim off from the revenues collectively generated by their unit for *rapportage*. However, there is a difference with the higher ranks in that they mostly invest the salary that they have lawfully earned, not funds that they have embezzled, even though they may also use some of the money obtained via activities for *rapportage*, which is usually not that much for the rank and file.¹¹⁷ There are also other differences between the business engagements of the higher and the lower-ranking, as further discussed below.

5.3.1 Higher-end military business

Both the nature of officers' moneymaking schemes and their mode of doing business differ substantially according to their rank, position in the hierarchy and in protection networks, and lastly, their personal norms. For instance, only those in command positions can mobilize a fair amount of soldiers as labor force for their personal business, a practice that some commanders may however refrain from as it cannot be reconciled with their personal norms. Furthermore, only commanders having already amassed a certain amount of wealth, or having the necessary connections and therefore weight in the politico-administrative apparatus, can engage in activities requiring high investments (e.g., building a hotel) or a high level of de facto impunity (e.g., import of stolen cars). Officers with lesser ranks, positions, connections and importance are often not capable of mobilizing large amounts of 'public' resources (e.g., soldiers' labor, embezzled funds) for 'private' business nor do they have sufficient protection to engage in manifestly illegal business on a large scale.

¹¹⁶ *Rapportage* was described in Chapter 3, p. 66 as the system by which revenues generated by military units (mostly through extraction, but sometimes also via business activities) are channelled up the (big-man) hierarchy through imposed, fixed, contributions.

¹¹⁷ For example, a part of the money gained via roadblock taxation is redistributed in the lower-level unit collecting it, although the majority is transmitted to the hierarchy.

The blurring of different forms of extractive and entrepreneurial activities, and of individual and collective 'public' and 'private' revenue-generation practices, is perhaps nowhere as evident as in the artisanal mining sector (see e.g., UNSC, 2010: 48–49). Many military units are involved in collectively organized extraction at mining sites as part of the *rapportage* system, usually through taxation of *creuseurs* (artisanal diggers), pits, or draining and washing stations, or of traders in minerals and merchandise, commonly imposed via roadblocks on access roads. Such taxation does not prohibit certain high-ranking officers from the same units to also be involved in the minerals business as entrepreneurs, for instance by pre-financing a digging team or mining shaft or by having their own *commissionnaires* (commissioning agents) who buy up minerals. Officers may also run a wide range of other businesses in the same mining area, like trading in merchandise, food and beer, or owning bars and restaurants. Bars and restaurants are not only good investments in themselves, but also facilitate business by serving as a cover for other activities and as social venues, where business plans and deals are forged. A good example is the *Princesse de Zamunda* in Kamituga (Mwenga, South Kivu), a bar that used to be owned by a brigade commander but was ran by his younger brother. This bar was not only used to stock gold and other ore (UNSC, 2010: 59), it also allowed for combining the supply of the bar with the smuggling of minerals, as the trucks delivering beer from Bukavu would return with minerals hidden under the piles of empty crates.¹¹⁸ In the gold mining town of Misisi, officers also appeared to run many bars, often leaving the management to their wives. According to civilian authorities, most of these women lacked the required permits, including a \$100 license to sell alcohol.¹¹⁹

Aside from undertaking business activities on a personal basis, many officers in mining areas act as the business representatives of certain big-men, who may be deployed either in the area (like brigade/regiment, sector or zone commanders) or work at the level of the provincial or national hierarchy. For example, the Bureau 2 (intelligence) of the military region usually has antennas (representatives) deployed to mining sites and other commercial hubs, who look after the (private) investments of their bosses and levy taxes for the hierarchy. Such caretakers and managers, who may also be civilians, sometimes continue to be deployed after an officer is rotated to another area, and his or her running investments still need management and supervision. Thanks to such business representatives, senior officers usually derive income from multiple mining sites or other businesses, which can be seen as a form of risk spreading by diversifying investments. This strategy of diversification also causes one mining site to often be the 'hunting ground' of a variety of networks within the FARDC (see also UNSC, 2010: 51–67), which constitutes a source of (potential) internal tensions within the military. Furthermore, the presence of multiple military networks augments the possibilities and incentives for civilian entrepreneurs and authorities to solicit military protection. This may further militarize economic competition and conflict, as the cases of the Mukungwe and Lueshe mines discussed in the previous clearly illustrate.¹²⁰

The same mechanisms of military entrepreneurialism described for the minerals sector can be found in relation to the exploitation of and trade in other natural resources, such as timber, charcoal, bush meat and cannabis (UNSC, 2010: 68–72; UNSC, 2011: 37–38). Wherever there is a forest in the Kivus, the FARDC are intensively involved in the exploitation of all of its resources, including wood and wildlife. Consequently, the military leaves a trail of deforestation, soil erosion and wildlife depletion. As one official in Rutshuru put it: '*Les militaires sont les grands destructeurs de l'environnement* [the military are the great destructors of the environment]'.¹²¹ While poverty and custom drive many people in the Kivus to exploit forest resources illegally, the sheer scale of the FARDC's involvement and the fact that soldiers are often outsiders to the area cause their contribution to environmental degradation to be more visible, prompting strong denunciations. Resentment is further fed by the military's frequent employment of illicit means to advance their business schemes, like (threats of) the use of force and the imposition of monopolies. However, since a part of local elites are usually coopted and therefore profit from arrangements with the military, such denunciations might have little impact.

One place in which this was visible was the Ngandja forest in Fizi, where the military is involved in logging at a massive scale. Certain officers that used to be deployed to this area owned chainsaws and operated sawmills, transporting a part of the logs and planks to Uvira in military vehicles. According to officials from the ministry of the environment in South Kivu, all logging operators need an official permit for large-scale logging (over a 100 trees), but this regulation is generally ignored, certainly by the military. For instance, for the whole of Fizi territory, which is an important producer of wood and charcoal due to its large forest cover, only three to five logging permits were issued in the period up to 2011. While the ministry has launched various initiatives to better regulate the sector, its officials professed to have limited hopes for rapid progress, since the military accounts for 90 per cent of logging activity in Fizi,¹²² and they found this the

118 Interview with MONUSCO staff member, Bukavu, 20.01.2011.

119 Other taxes that are often not or not fully paid by military-owned bars include a patent of \$33, a tax called 'PMA' and a certain percentage of the profit destined for the *Fonds de promotion du tourisme* (Fund for the Promotion of Tourism). Interviews with civilian authorities, Misisi, 09.03.2011.

120 Military involvement in the disputes around the mines of Mukungwe and Lueshe was discussed on p. 154.

121 Interview with local authority, Rutshuru, 01.04.2010.

122 According to Fizi-based officials from the ministry of the environment, interviewed in Baraka on 05.01.2012, the total annual production in Fizi in 2009 was (conservatively) estimated at 984.75 m³ of plank and 57,280 tons of charcoal. Since 1m³ yields 21 planks, and one plank is sold for \$6–8 depending on the quality, this gives an annual revenue of around \$144,758. The production of charcoal was estimated to be between 400–800 sacks a month in 2010. When taking a rough estimate of \$10 per sack of 50kg, this yields \$4,000–8,000 a month. Since 90% of both plank and charcoal production are in the hands of the military, the military in Fizi earns at least \$130,282 + \$72,000 = \$202.282 per year from forest exploitation. However, this is likely to be a lot more, since according to the officials of the ministry, their

most difficult group to persuade to comply with legislation. What further complicates matters is that customary chiefs are often complicit with the military and allow them to log on their lands without a permit. This makes it even more difficult for the politico-administrative authorities to intervene, especially since customary authorities tend to reap considerable profits from such deals with the military.¹²³

Logging and charcoal production by the military also take place in protected reserves and national parks, like the western sector of the Virunga Park, to which the park rangers of the ICCN used to have difficult access. The FARDC previously controlled charcoal production there in a centralized manner, implying it was managed by the commander of the military sector under which the area fell. The latter also organized the transport and the distribution of the revenues, causing the military to have a firm grip on the entire commodity chain (UNSC, 2010: 69). Reportedly, the FARDC sometimes also resorted to forced labor for the production of the charcoal, forcing civilians to transport logs or to assist with the burning process in the kilns, the piles of wood and earth under which tree branches are burnt at high temperatures.¹²⁴ This illustrates the observation made earlier, namely that the military's business activities are often partly based on coercive extraction, which introduces illicit dimensions in what would otherwise be relatively licit activities.

Transport and real estate

While the FARDC's business involvement in the natural resources sector has received most international attention, FARDC officers also engage in revenue-generation activities in a wide range of other sectors, including transport, real estate, the hotel and restaurant business, large-scale agriculture and the import/export trade in for instance vehicles, fuel, and alcohol. Only two of these sectors will be discussed here: transport and real estate.

In a sense, FARDC involvement in the commercial transport sector is ironic. Officers lack vehicles or motorcycles for their professional activities, but have numerous means of transport in the private-commercial sphere, owning trucks, minibuses, boats, cars and motorcycles. While cars and minibuses are expensive, and therefore only owned by officers with top positions, motorcycles are also within the reach of those with lesser ranks and positions.¹²⁵ In Uvira, informants told that new motorcycles can be purchased for around \$1,200, and that renting them out to civilian *motards* for taxi services yields \$140/month, at least for military owners. This makes that the initial investment is earned back within nine months, after which profits are made. The profits made by motorcycles owned by the military are comparatively higher than those operated by civilians. The reason is that FARDC staff commonly refuse to pay taxes, which amount to \$152 a year plus \$20 startup costs.¹²⁶ However, military staff are not alone in tax evasion. According to representatives of the *Association des propriétaires et motocyclistes transporteurs du Sud Kivu* (APROMOTESKI, Association of Owners and Motorcycle Driver Transporters of South Kivu), 50 per cent of motor owners refuse to pay all or most of the taxes. Since the traffic cops charged with checking the papers (the *roulages*) usually do not carry out substantial controls, but simply ask for money or can be bribed in case they do control, one easily gets away with tax evasion (cf. Eriksson Baaz and Olsson, 2011: 17). Reportedly, when motors are owned by higher-placed officers, the traffic police might even refrain from checking the papers altogether, as they do not feel like getting into a conflict with important figures in the military. These advantages of military protection make that civilians with connections sometimes resort to putting their motorcycle on the name of certain officers, thus being better protected against controls and interference from state services.¹²⁷

Another sector where military entrepreneurialism is commonplace is that of real estate. Top officers generally own numerous houses, often located in Goma and Bukavu, although those from other parts of the country may also have houses there.¹²⁸ During the war years, a bustling expat industry emerged in Goma, which triggered a real estate boom that continues up to this day (Büscher and Vlassenroot, 2010). FARDC officers have capitalized upon this boom, making fortunes by constructing houses and renting them out for on average \$1,500–2,500 per month, largely to expatriate staff of the UN and INGOs. Since one officer may have several houses, they can make thousands of dollars a month from this business alone. In the real estate sector too, military involvement is characterized by what is perceived to be more-than-average tax evasion, including the non-registration of plots at the *cadastre* (land registry).¹²⁹ While also a

figures are conservative estimates.

123 Interview with official of ministry of the environment of South Kivu, Bukavu, 29.03.2011.

124 Interview with employee environmental NGO, Rutshuru, 01.04.2010.

125 The information in this paragraph was obtained through interviews with members of the motor owners' and drivers' association (APROMOTESKI), Bukavu, 25.03.2011 and Misisi, 09.03.2011.

126 These taxes reportedly include: authorisation for the transport of goods and people (\$15/year), insurance (\$110/year), certificate of technical control (\$15/year), public road tax (provincial) (\$12/year), membership of the Congolese drivers' association *Association des chauffeurs du Congo* (ACCO, Association of Drivers of Congo) (\$10–\$15/once) and a number plate (\$5/once).

127 It are not only officers who profit from the *taxi-moto* business: in Goma, lower-level soldiers are said to make money by working as *motards* themselves, especially at night, when others deem it too dangerous to operate. Alain Wandimoyi, 'Rien ne va plus à Goma', *Syfia Grands Lacs*, 19 October 2012.

128 See also Colette Braeckman, 'Le cycle de la guerre n'est pas rompu au Nord Kivu'. *Le Soir. Le Carnet de Colette Braeckman*, 22 January 2010.

129 According to an official from the *Service de l'urbanisme et de l'habitat* (Department of Urbanism and Habitat) contacted in Baraka on 17.03.2011, the taxes for obtaining a plot and constructing a house include: \$20 for introducing a formal demand at the land affairs department, \$20 for boundary-marking and land-measuring at the cadastre, then an authorization to build from the urbanism department which, depending on the category of house, is 250–500 *Francs fiscaux* (fiscal

common practice among civilians, the military was said to refuse registration and taxes at a much larger scale than other actors.¹³⁰ According to an official of the *cadastre* in Baraka, only 10 per cent of the military, who own around 40–45 plots in this town, pay any taxes, and those who do usually pay heavily reduced tariffs. For justifying their non-payment, he explained, military staff often appeal to their status as state actors and invoke the sacrifices they make for the country. Where these arguments do not convince, they simply resort to intimidation.¹³¹

Aside from widespread tax evasion, there were other problems reported with military involvement in the real estate business. Sometimes officers obtain plots in an illegal manner, for example by appropriating state-owned land or occupying space between state-owned plots, as has occurred in Bukavu.¹³² In other cases, military staff were alleged to have forced those owning private plots to sell these at a low price, or to have occupied abandoned plots, or redrawn the boundaries of an existing plot, in this way confiscating part of the terrain of the neighbors. According to a member of a civil society organization in Uvira: 'If an officer comes, he wants to lay claim on the plots, he can even force the department of real estate titles [*service des titres immobiliers*]. The problem is that many plots are not registered, but even if they are registered, you can still be intimidated by the military.'¹³³ Officers were also reported to engage in these practices not for themselves but on behalf of protégés, in particular when these were involved in disputes concerning the ownership and boundaries of plots. A striking case is that of Camp Dumez in Goma, which is occupied by the *Régie des voies aériennes* (RVA, Air Transportation Board). In March 2011, FARDC military from the former CNDP occupied the camp and threw all RVA agents and their families out of their houses, allegedly at the request of the Ngezayo family. Since the Mobutu era, the ownership of this terrain has been the object of a struggle between the RVA and the Safari Lodge company owned by the Ngezayo Group. Allegedly, the latter had used their personal contacts with the president to obtain the concession in an irregular manner, and then manipulated various authorities in order to keep hold of it.¹³⁴ It was only after a decision of the provincial council of North Kivu, presided over by the governor, that the FARDC, first ignoring orders of the 8th Military Region, withdrew.¹³⁵

The Camp Dumez dispute, which stems from the 1970s, shows the longevity of the conflicts around certain plots for which the military is mobilized today. Many of such disputes are also a legacy of the First and Second Congo Wars, especially the RCD years. In this period, many houses were occupied by politicians and officers linked to the rebellion, as well as opportunists trying to profit from flight and displacement. Since many former RCD officers currently serve in the military in the Kivus, these disputes continue to draw in the FARDC. Furthermore, certain officers are reported to have tried to launder wartime or other illicit acquisitions by registering the title at the *cadastre* under the name of a civilian relative. But registration has not prevented these plots and houses from continuing to be disputed. Where people feel to have been disadvantaged by practices seen as illicit, or when conflicts have been 'resolved' by force, the resulting feelings of injustice may remain for years, even decades, sometimes prompting the disadvantaged party to solicit armed actors for seeking redress.

5.3.2 Lower-rank revenue generation

Similar to officers, the rank and file and their wives undertake a range of personal business activities in order to make ends meet. Having only their meager military wages and the crumbs that remain from *rapportage*-related practices organized by the hierarchy, these activities are usually small-scale and require little initial investment, while having low profit margins. Furthermore, they are generally adapted to the nomadic existence of soldiers and their wives, and therefore concern activities that either yield fast returns on investment or are relatively mobile.

Small-scale agricultural activities and natural resources exploitation

While the charcoal business in the Virunga Park is centrally directed by the command of the units deployed there, elsewhere, charcoal production was observed to be an individual entrepreneurial activity of military staff. For example in Uvira and Fizi, soldiers go logging at their own discretion, being often assisted by their wives in the production of charcoal and its sale at local markets. The profit margins of such small-scale production are quite low. For example, in Fizi charcoal yields only 7,000–8,000FC per sack (of 50kg), and one household can only produce three to four sacks a month. However, in larger towns like Uvira, a sack can be sold for 15,000FC or more, prompting officers engaged in larger-scale production to sell the charcoal there. Such officers, who are usually mid-ranking, may also pre-finance civilians for producing a few sacks, for which they subsequently arrange transport to Uvira. This demonstrates that, similar to what was

francs, one 1 FF is \$1) per m², with additional payments for gates, swimming pools, etc.

130 According to an official of the *Service de l'urbanisme et de l'habitat*, interviewed in Uvira on 15.11.2010, 80% of plots in Uvira are not (yet) registered.

131 Interview with official from *cadastre*, Baraka, 17.03.2011.

132 Interview with official from *cadastre*, Bukavu, 24.03.2011 and interviews with employees of civil society organizations, Bukavu, 25.03.2011 and 05.04.2011.

133 Interview with employee civil society organization, Uvira, 15.11.2010.

134 Sakaz, 'Le C.N.D.P. occupe le Camp RVA à Goma', *Le Phare*, 28.03.2011.

135 Célestin Sibomana, 'Les militaires ont évacué le "camp Dumez" à Goma'. *Portail officiel du province du Nord Kivu*, 25 March 2011.

described for superior officers, lower-ranking officers and soldiers may also engage in more 'private' business activities, which come in addition to their engagement in the collective revenue-generation activities carried out in the framework of *rapportage* systems (see Figure 12 above). For example, the same soldiers manning a roadblock may also produce charcoal with their spouses in non-service time.

Another source of income for military families is agriculture. Whenever the length of deployment allows for it, soldiers' partners, and sometimes soldiers themselves, cultivate crops. Among military wives, it is especially popular to grow garden (leafy) vegetables, like amaranths, as these grow very fast, taking only around three weeks. Therefore, they can be harvested even on short-term deployments and yield income relatively soon, which is of great importance in a situation of limited cash flows and financial reserves. However, it is generally difficult for soldiers and their wives to gain access to land. Therefore, soldiers' wives often work the land of civilians as day laborers, commonly against very modest remuneration. For example, in the Ruzizi Plain, military spouses earn only 1,500–2,000FC for a whole day of work. Another agricultural activity allowing military families to supplement their incomes is small-scale livestock breeding. Many military camps, or the grounds around the buildings where soldiers live, are swarming with chickens, ducks and goats. These are often not as much a dietary supplement but sold at the market by military spouses. However, in a number of field research sites, like Kanyabayonga and Kirumba in Lubero, it was alleged that a part of the military's livestock was stolen from civilians, causing soldiers' spouses to sell the meat below the regular price. Furthermore, these women were said to ignore the hygiene regulations by not using the slaughterhouse, a practice that was strongly condemned by local butchers.¹³⁶ What the latter appeared to resent even more was that civilians bought meat from military spouses at these low prices, 'knowing that it comes from the livestock stolen by their husbands'.¹³⁷ This indicates that certain civilians do not hesitate to buy at the lowest price, regardless the origins of the product, causing them to contribute to the perpetuation of illicit income-generation practices by the military.

Petty trade and the production and vending of food and beverage

Other popular revenue-generation activities that soldiers' spouses engage in are the production of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks and foodstuffs. Many women prepare *kanyanga* (a brew) or make *tangawizi* (a ginger drink), *ndazi* (beignets) or *chikwange*, a type of manioc bread that is predominantly consumed in the western parts of the Congo, and therefore mostly sold to soldiers and migrants from that area. The profit margins of such activities are very low, while the investment in labor time is high, especially since selling the products on the roadside and at the market takes a long time. According to military spouses, the production of *kanyanga* yields only 6,000FC (\$6.5)¹³⁸ of profit a week, *ndazi* around \$7-9,¹³⁹ *chikwange* \$3.3 and *tangawizi* \$5.5.¹⁴⁰

Spouses of FARDC staff, and sometimes their husbands, commonly also try to supplement their income through petty trade, which appears to be one of the main business activities engaged in. Army wives tend to use their husbands' wages as investment capital, therefore being blocked from further trading activities if there are delays in the disbursement of military salaries. Among the items that these women were observed to trade are fish (both fresh and dried), fruits, palm oil, beans, vegetables, beer, cigarettes, sugar, peanuts and cassava flour. Furthermore, in the city of Goma, military spouses run an illicit market in second-hand items called 'Koweit', selling televisions, radios and second-hand clothes.¹⁴¹ The profit margins of these trade activities are said to be low. For example in Misisi, trade in salted fish was reported to yield a profit of only \$3.35 per week (including time for transport and selling), and cassava flour \$5.5.¹⁴² Yet soldiers' wives have as advantage that they do not lose out as much on roadblocks, given that soldiers often do not charge the wives of colleagues. Furthermore, the spouses of FARDC soldiers generally pay less taxes. While people trading in foodstuffs normally have to pay a hygiene tax of \$10/year, and sellers at the market are made to pay the *taxe d'étalage* of 500FC per market, most wives of FARDC soldiers refuse to pay any of these. A market authority in Uvira explained: 'They do not pay at any of the markets in Uvira [territory]. They say "We are the wives of the military, our husband is not paid, so we do not have to pay"'. A tax collector working at the market of Mwemezi (Baraka) added: 'When we ask them [wives of FARDC] to pay the taxes, they respond with a lot of nervousness. In general, it are types who are very nervous. But they do not earn a lot of money, mostly like \$2–3 a day.'¹⁴³

This quote reflects the mixed feelings that the military's business activities typically elicit among civilians. On the one hand, there is severe resentment that FARDC staff always place themselves above the law and claim privileges by appealing to their special status as military. This feeds into the feeling that military staff engage in business on unfair terms, as they may impose themselves with force, refuse to

136 Interviews with butchers Kanyabayonga 08.04.2010 and Kirumba 02.05.2010, see also p. 110.

137 Interview with butcher, Kanyabayonga, 08.04.2010.

138 The initial investment for *kanyanga* was reported to be 18,000FC (one basin of maize waste of 9,000FC, cassava waste of 5,000FC, the renting of utensils like pans 2,500FC, and firewood 1,500FC). This leads to the production of 24 bottles of *kanyanga* which are sold for 1,000FC each, and usually sell within a week.

139 The problem with the production of beignets was said to be the high initial investment, which is ca. \$53, spent on flour (\$26), vegetable oil (\$10), sugar (\$4), charcoal (\$10), plastic bags (\$2.7) and bicarbonate (baking soda) (\$0.3). Many households cannot gather such an amount and therefore have to pool resources.

140 All calculations are based on interviews in Luberozi conducted on 08.11.2011 and in Misisi on 22.12.2011.

141 Passy Mubalama, 'Goma : la grande misère des familles de militaires', *Syfia Grands Lacs*, 9 December 2011.

142 Interviews with spouses of FARDC soldiers, Misisi, 22.12.2011.

143 Interview with market authority, Mwemezi (Baraka), 15.03.2011.

comply with regulations, make illicit use of military resources, and manipulate the administration by means of influence peddling. On the other hand, there appears to be a basic understanding for soldiers' drive for revenue generation in the light of their low salaries, a problem that moreover all public servants in the Kivus face. Such an understanding is also apparent when civilians directly profit from the military's economic activities themselves, like by being able to buy products at a lower price, even when these might have been obtained in an illicit manner. Naturally, those who are duped by illicit practices display much less enthusiasm for such forms of military revenue generation, reflecting how civilians' situatedness, in particular their specific relations to military staff, shapes their evaluations of the military's practices.

Concluding remarks

To summarize, the military's revenue-generating activities are often an amalgam of overlapping extractive, protection, and business practices that are located differently on the public/private and coercion/non-coercion spectra. Consequently, various stages of the same commodity chain or various practices carried out by the same military unit may involve varying degrees of force and have varying degrees of 'publicness', which compounds evaluations in civilians' eyes. For example, while civilians may be keen on buying charcoal at lower prices, they may not approve of the forced labor that has been used to produce it. The formulation of evaluations is further compounded by the divergent ways in which revenue-generation practices are framed and read by both the FARDC and civilians. These practices may for example be presented or interpreted as forms of illicit private enrichment, licit privileges related to the military's security duties, or 'rightful' revenue generation justified by the military's underpayment. Yet readings and related evaluations may vary per group of civilians, depending in part on their social relations and how their own livelihoods and personal security are affected, but also on (professional) discourses, practical norms and routines. For example, state servants with technical knowledge of rules and regulations, which usually forms an important part of their professional identification, may view certain violations of legislation as manifestly 'illicit', like the officials from the ministry of the environment or the *cadastre* presented above. However civilians who ignore the legislation on logging or cadastral registration, or deem it impracticable or undesirable to comply with it, may see practices entailing violations of these laws as less problematic, or even as relatively 'licit', specifically when they occur at a massive scale. These variations in evaluations add further complexity to civilian-military interaction in the political-economic domain. Such complexity also results from other factors, including fluctuations in how the military's political-economic practices are staged and framed, which partly reflect the intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection; the overlapping and intertwined nature of extraction, protection and enterprising; and lastly, the complex blending of public and private, coercive and non-coercive registers, which all produce variegated effects on evaluations in terms of licit and illicit. Taken together, these phenomena make that civilian-military interaction in the sphere of wealth production and transfer is characterized by a profound ambiguity. This also applies to civilian-military interaction taking place in other domains, such as security governance and dispute processing.

Civilian-military interaction in local (security/conflict) governance

GIVEN THAT TAXATION AND ECONOMIC REGULATION ARE part of local governance, many of the mechanisms and rationalities discussed in relation to civilian-military interaction in the political-economic sphere figure again in this chapter. In particular the described oscillation between various social roles and rationalities and related discursive registers ('public/private') are important for understanding how the FARDC projects and attempts to legitimize power. Efforts to legitimize power often entail the discursive framing of practices in the idioms of 'the state', 'public interest' and 'officiality', which corresponds to soldiers' self-perceptions as 'state actors'. Such self-perceptions, in turn, inform and justify practices related to what can be labeled the production of 'public authority', like the enforcement of legislation or the provision of public goods, which do not always fall within the mandate of the military. However, efforts at legitimation may also take the form of attempts to act out the role of big-man, hence fulfill the expectations surrounding redistribution and representation that are connected to that particular role. As mentioned, the simultaneous enactment of several social roles entails considerable tensions for the person performing them, who is faced with varying, sometimes contradictory, expectations. At the same time, it complicates readings of role performances by audiences, who observe discursive and social practices that seemingly transcend role boundaries.

Another element of importance for understanding practices and relations of local authority and governance involving the FARDC is the interplay between coercion and persuasion, as shaped by imposition by the military and demands from civilians. This interplay affects and is informed by processes of legitimation, as coercion tends to be lower where legitimacy is higher, and the use of forms of coercion seen as illicit often undermines legitimacy. As explained in the previous,¹ although legitimacy is shaped by structures of signification and legitimation inscribed in the *longue durée*, it is not an absolute and stable property, but ebbs and flows, in part as it is influenced by evaluations of social practices and expectations of authorities that change under the influence of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. The intensity of these dynamics affects for example the relative importance of the provision of certain goods, like security, access to income generation and dispute processing, within the overall expectations that the subordinated hold vis-à-vis the dominant. However, these same dynamics make that the extent to which the dominant can satisfy these expectations highly varies, causing further fluidity in processes of legitimation.

Within the Kivus, there are multiple poles of authority, leading to pluralistic regulatory arrangements that highly differ from one place to the next. The FARDC usually plays an important role in such arrangements, being engaged in continual processes of conflict, negotiation and accommodation with both other rulers and the ruled. This chapter analyzes some of the mechanisms through which these processes play out at the local level. It first looks at how the FARDC impacts the production and distribution of authority through its interaction with civilian authorities, in particular civilian in/security agencies and local politico-administrative and customary authorities. Subsequently, it discusses how FARDC officers, notably unit commanders, strive to produce (legitimate) authority by acting out the various social roles surrounding figures of authority, notably that of 'state actor/official' and 'big-man'. Lastly, it looks at the importance of the provision of dispute-processing services in shaping civilian-military interaction and evaluations thereof, as influenced by the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, and how the provision of these services again impacts these dynamics.

¹ The notion of legitimacy and processes of legitimation were discussed on p. 40.

6.1 Reinforcing and weakening civilian authority

Similar to what has been described for the era of Zaire,² the relations between the FARDC and local civilian authorities, including in/security agencies, are marked by a fundamental ambivalence. This is a result of the constant interplay and tensions between on the one hand, dependence and instrumentalization and on the other hand, competition and contestation. Civilian authorities in the Kivus need the FARDC for the provision of security, the maintenance of order, and the enforcement of decisions, but also for maintaining and reinforcing their own power position and sources of income. At the same time, the FARDC poses a significant threat to civilian authorities: the military may interfere in a wide range of political and administrative affairs and establish far-reaching economic control, including by usurping tax revenues. Furthermore, the military's presence may increase insecurity and banditry, and even directly threaten civilian authorities' physical safety. In sum, the FARDC may both reinforce and undermine these authorities' security, power and income. In the following, this ambivalence will be further analyzed, first by exploring the relations between the FARDC and the police, and then those between the FARDC and other local government actors.

6.1.1 Policing and interaction with the 'wives of the military'

In continuity with its predecessor forces, a large part of the FARDC's public security-related activities (understood herein as practices that are commonly seen as pertaining to the military's security tasks, whether part of their official mandate or not) fall into the domain of policing. These activities include law enforcement, public order maintenance, crowd control, and the bodyguarding of important personalities. This continuation of historical patterns is partly a result of the institutionalization of a particular division of labor between police and military, implying it has become inscribed in structures of domination, legitimation and signification, as manifested in the professional identities and mutual representations of military and police. The military's long history of domestic deployment has fostered the development of certain representations of the police that justify and normalize the military's involvement in policing. The essence of these representations is adequately captured by the FARDC's unofficial adage: *les policiers sont les femmes des militaires* (the police are the wives of the military). It also shines through in the military's explicit identification of the police as 'civilians'. By associating the *Police nationale congolaise* (PNC, Congolese National Police) with the notions of 'women' and 'civilians', the FARDC attributes them a weakness that stands in sharp contrast to the bravery of the military, seen to be doing the 'real' security work. In this way, the binary opposites male/female and military/civilian, with associated contrasting values like strong/weak and courageous/cowardly, are projected onto the distinction military/police.³ These representations and forms of identification inform everyday practices, notably the military's execution of police tasks, including by normalizing encroachments upon the PNC's mandate.

Aside from historically grown structures, certain contemporary conditions also contribute to the (re)production of a specific pattern of relations and task divisions between the military and the police. Both military and civilian actors regard ongoing armed group activity and rampant banditry in the Kivus as necessitating extensive military intervention in the domestic security domain. Groups of bandits often operate in the same areas as armed groups, which commonly also commit acts of banditry, thereby blurring the boundaries between 'violent crime' and 'rebel activity'. Furthermore, police, especially in rural zones, have to control vast areas that are sometimes highly insecure and lack an adequate road network and cell phone coverage, while having a minimum of staff and little or no means of transport and communication at their disposition, sometimes even lacking arms. These various elements impede a clear division of labor between the military and the police. Especially where it concerns zones characterized by rampant insecurity, the military are sometimes the only actors with sufficient coercive power and personnel to intervene. Another factor that explains the FARDC's policing role is the quest for scarce resources. The execution of police tasks, like patrolling in non-operational zones, combatting criminality, and certain forms of dispute processing, offers significant opportunities for revenue generation. Examples are imposing fines on perpetrators, levying unofficial fees for services, and demanding considerable sums to release suspects from custody. Expectedly, when the military appropriates the right to enact such practices, strong frictions with the police result, as the latter see a part of what they consider to be their rightful revenues vanish through military interference. Aside from considerations of revenue generation, the FARDC may also be pushed to execute or interfere with policing tasks due to protection obligations. For example, where a civilian expresses a preference for an FARDC officer to whom he or she maintains patronage ties to apprehend an opponent, the military may do so under the pretext of conducting policing tasks, like by accusing the person of crime or perturbations of the public order.

In combination with representations of the police as inferior, the competition for power and resources may foster a hostile attitude towards the PNC among FARDC staff. In several fieldwork sites, it was observed how the FARDC tried to demarcate its sphere of influence vis-à-vis the police through intimidation, mistreatment and even assassinations.⁴ The exercise of terror was especially common in remote

² The relations between the FAZ and local civilian authorities were discussed on pp. 67–68.

³ See p. 118 for a discussion of the role of masculine values and the portrayal of civilians as an out-group in the construction of military professional identity in the FARDC.

⁴ Radio Okapi, 'Bukavu: des militaires FARDC tuent un policier et un détenu à Kamituga', *Radio Okapi*, 16 October 2011.

operational zones,⁵ where the military may become *les seuls maîtres du terrain* (the sole masters of the field), as a policeman in Lufofo (Lubero) put it.⁶ In such situations, the military may come to de facto replace the PNC, for example by arresting civilians and not handing them over to the police, or by restricting the police in their movements, like through prohibitions to visit certain zones or by the imposition of an evening curfew.⁷ Where the FARDC do allow the PNC to continue their work, they may heavily interfere with it, for instance by preventing the apprehension of certain individuals, liberating detainees from PNC custody,⁸ or confiscating police dossiers that are to be transferred to the judicial authorities. As a policeman in Fizi town recounted: 'There are many criminal dossiers here that they [the military] treat themselves, if their friends are implicated. Me, a policeman, I wanted to arrest a woman who had stolen 25 sacks of flour, but because she was the mother-in-law of a soldier, they came to liberate her here without a mandate of the prosecutor, without even telling me anything.'⁹

Despite these tensions, there are also instances of collaboration between PNC and FARDC, both formally and informally. Informally, relations between police and military may be characterized by protection, implying FARDC staff may for instance shield police officers' illicit revenue-generation activities in exchange for a share of the profits. At the formal level, which is that of the 'official public security sphere', collaboration commonly centers on the maintenance of public order, specifically in isolated and insecure areas. However, the FARDC executes these tasks for a large part on its own account, without consulting or being authorized by the police. In some cases, the military does act explicitly at the demand of the police, who may ask them for example to search and arrest suspects in remote areas or to accompany suspects that have to be transferred. Furthermore, the military is regularly called upon to carry out joint night-patrols and what are called 'crowd control' tasks, which the police sometimes cannot fulfill due to its weakness in numbers and coercive capacity. A pertinent case is that of mob justice, in which populations take 'justice' into their own hands by collectively killing someone who is believed to have inflicted harm upon others, for instance by means of burning the suspected evil-doer alive, lynching them, or beating or stoning them to death (Verweijen, 2015).¹⁰ Mob justice is often difficult to stem, given the concentration of force in an angry mob. Furthermore, it constitutes a direct attack on the state-controlled order, since it entails a usurpation of state actors' (appropriated) prerogative to judge and to kill. Together with the motivation to save people's lives and create an effect of deterrence, this might explain why the in/security services sometimes engage in brutal action to prevent mobs from accomplishing their deadly mission. The FARDC is commonly the only service that is willing to intervene in cases of mob justice, and that may be able to prevent the killing, although this sometimes entails disproportionate human rights violations, such as firing bullets on the crowd.¹¹

Another example of a public order task that the military engages in is guarding security during soccer matches. For example, in the town of Kirumba (Lubero), it was observed how FARDC soldiers were posted both at the entrance to the match area and at regular intervals around the badly demarcated playing field. Equipped with whistles, sticks and chains, they had to prevent the audience from stepping onto the field.¹² Interestingly, neither the audience nor the local authorities appeared to find it remarkable that soldiers in full uniform guard a local soccer match on a Sunday afternoon. When asked why the military was in charge of securing the match, the local authorities explained that there was simply not enough police available, especially during the weekends. Furthermore, they emphasized that military presence was necessary, being of the opinion that alternatives, like letting the soccer clubs organize a security system themselves, were less preferable. The large crowds, as well as the hot-tempered nature of some soccer supporters, so they argued, necessitated a robust security mechanism. Therefore, they highly appreciated the military's voluntary efforts to secure sports games during the weekends. This appreciation was also found among other civilian authorities that the military had assisted with maintaining order during public events, indicating that the FARDC's execution of policing duties is not always evaluated in a negative manner.

6.1.2 Relations between the FARDC and local government actors

Especially in highly insecure areas, the FARDC's capacities for security provision may be crucial for enabling local authorities to enact their professional duties. For example, in such contexts, the FARDC assists civilian in/security agencies like the ANR (civilian intel) and DGM (migration) with the execution of dangerous but essential tasks, like searching for and transferring suspects. The military may also help local authorities like the *chef de poste* or the customary chief with the enforcement of decisions that would otherwise be difficult

5 Some examples obtained by the fieldwork in Fizi are: in May 2010, soldiers shot at a policeman in Mukera. On the 14th of the same month, policemen near Fizi centre were beaten up by FARDC soldiers. The month before, the police office there had been emptied by the military in the course of a looting spree. In Ngalula, near Misisi, the military mounted an intimidation campaign against the police and civilian authorities in late 2009, looting their houses.

6 Interview with policeman, Lufofo, 05.05.2010.

7 An imposed curfew was observed in Ngalula, Fizi territory, visited on 25.02.2010. Restricted movement was found mostly with respect to mining police, often barred from visiting the pits, like in the Misisi area (visited 24–27.02.2010, when it fell under the 65th sector). Restricted movement was also observed near border crossings, for example in Ishasha (visited on 03 and 04.04.2010).

8 For an example, see Radio Okapi, 'Kalehe: attaque d'un cachot de la police à Minova, trois détenus s'évadent', *Radio Okapi*, 26 December 2010.

9 Interview with policeman, Fizi centre, 18.11.2010.

10 See pp. 205–206 for an analysis of mob justice specifically targeted at FARDC soldiers.

11 Such an instance of the bloody suppression of attempted mob justice occurred for example in Misisi, as described on p. 202.

12 Observations made in Kirumba on 02.05.2010.

to implement, for example due to resistance of persons that might mobilize armed actors. However, the inverse also holds true: local civilian authorities often help the FARDC with the execution of its security tasks, for instance by providing valuable information on the security situation. The authorities usually communicate such information to the military in the course of *conseils de sécurité* (security councils), which constitute the most important formal channel of collaboration between civilian and military authorities for security-related issues. *Conseils de sécurité* are periodic gatherings, convened weekly, biweekly, monthly or in case of need, which regroup the local representatives of the main in/security agencies as well as the politico-administrative and customary authorities. Participants include the *chef de poste*, the *mwami*, the FARDC, PNC (police), ANR (civilian intelligence) and DGM (migration).¹³ These meetings were generally described as crucial platforms for information exchange and dispute resolution between civilians and the military, constituting not only an occasion for civilian authorities to direct the FARDC's security interventions, but also a welcome space to voice grievances.¹⁴ For example, in Lubero, it was observed how the FARDC went to patrol in a certain area after the civilian authorities had drawn the military's attention to the precarious situation there during a security meeting. Similarly, in Rutshuru, the FARDC was said to have preventively reinforced deployment in a certain area after being informed during a security meeting about rumors of a pending rebel attack. However, responsiveness of the military to the suggestions of civilian authorities is not guaranteed. By far the most often heard complaint from civilian authorities in relation to the security meetings was that the decisions made or the recommendations given to the FARDC were not executed, making it more a platform for the exchange of good intentions than an effective decision-making tool. As a customary chief in Fizi explained: '*Il n'y pas de suivi* [there is no follow-up]. The security meetings are not effective. They [FARDC] take all the decisions. So sometimes we wonder: why do we organize those meetings? They never listen to us.'¹⁵

The FARDC do not only interact with civilian authorities for carrying out public security tasks: they may collaborate with them or intervene unilaterally in all dimensions of local governance. For example, in a situation where civilian authorities have little power and/or legitimacy, and compliance with their decisions is tenuous, assistance of the FARDC with the enforcement of policy, legislation and administrative rules can be crucial. The FARDC may for instance help with the evacuation of buildings or plots, the imposition of *salongo*, the halting of illegal economic activities, such as unlicensed logging, fishing or mining,¹⁶ the summoning of subordinate authorities, or the imposition of safety measures, like curfews. The FARDC can also reinforce public authority through direct participation in the execution of public works co-organized with civilian authorities, such as road maintenance, the repairing of bridges and the cleaning up of dirt. Such participation demonstrates the military's collaboration with and support to the civilian authorities, and enhances the latter's capacity to provide 'public goods', thereby potentially also impacting processes of legitimation.¹⁷

Aside from assisting civilian authorities with the performance of 'public authority' via formal channels, the FARDC may (selectively) reinforce authorities' power and sources of income through protection arrangements, which often revolve to a large extent around revenue generation. Whether politico-administrative or customary, civilian authorities are generally deeply involved in various types of revenue-generating activities, in part as they face the same problems as the FARDC: low official wages, patronage pressures to redistribute, and, at least for politico-administrative authorities, *rappontage* obligations to the hierarchy (Trefon, 2009). Within their business and extraction schemes, civilian authorities may benefit from the protection of the FARDC. The military may for instance help with organizing or protecting the transport of goods, enable import/export at reduced tariffs, guard land, houses or mining pits, intimidate economic competitors, and collect debts and taxes. Furthermore, military protection may facilitate civilian authorities' involvement in illegal activities, both by preventing interference from other authorities and by intervening in case of police or judicial action. Such guarantees of impunity do not only apply to revenue-generation activities. For example, in the town of Kirumba (Lubero), it was alleged that the commander of what was then the 11th sector Amani Leo had liberated the *chef de cité*, who was suspected of rape, from police custody.¹⁸

Certainly, these protection relations are mutually profitable, since they usually allow the FARDC to consolidate its power base and facilitate its work, whether the execution of military duties or revenue-generation activities. Civilian authorities can for example collect *efforts de guerre* impositions and food contributions more effectively than the military itself, as they know where people are located and resistance may be lower as people know the civilian authorities better.¹⁹ They can also provide the FARDC with crucial knowledge of the local environment, including information on who collaborates with armed groups, who is involved in banditry, and on local business opportunities. Additionally, like other economic operators, the FARDC needs the permission of customary chiefs for obtaining land or for

13 As specified in Table 8 on p. 26, three *conseils de sécurité* were directly observed.

14 The ways in which civilian authorities contest military power are further discussed in Chapter 7, pp. 207–208.

15 Interview with customary chief, Kananda, 30.11.2010.

16 This was for instance witnessed in Misisi, where FARDC soldiers were charged with the implementation of an administrative measure stipulating the removal of *concasseurs* (stone crushing machines) from the mountain slopes to another area. Civilian authorities in this area had also ordered the military to remove *creuseurs* (artisanal miners) from certain sites where a gold exploration company was to start its prospection work.

17 Commitment to the provision of 'public goods' is sometimes primarily informed by the military's pursuance of its own projects. For example, the clearing of grass along the roads is often aimed at preventing the laying of ambushes to which the military might fall victim, just as road repairs sometimes mainly have to facilitate military movements, including those of commanders who are in the possession of vehicles, which are commonly heavily used for (private) business purposes.

18 This information was confirmed by several sources during fieldwork in Kirumba on 01 and 02.05.2010.

19 See the example of the village of Kazimia on p. 137, where the military collaborated with the *chef de poste* to collect *efforts de guerre* contributions.

exploiting natural resources located on land of which chiefs are the custodians. Furthermore, the wider protection networks into which local authorities are tied, which often include figures in their formal hierarchy, may facilitate influence peddling at higher administrative levels, for example in relation to the issuing of licenses and permits. Hence, collaboration with local authorities is also useful to the FARDC in that it can be a point of entry into wider power networks.

Due to the close entwinement of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, the military's protection of civilian authorities usually has strong effects on the power competition and processes of dispute processing that play out in the latter's jurisdictions. Importantly, military protection often prompts authorities to instrumentalize the FARDC for settling the disputes that are flash points of local power struggles, which are sometimes framed in the terms of the autochthon/Rwandophone divide. Examples are conflicts around the boundaries of administrative entities, disputes surrounding appointments and succession, and conflicts between customary and politico-administrative authorities. In such cases, the FARDC might become an integral part of local power competition. The latter is commonly strongly imprinted by the rationalities of protection and coalition building, implying that the conflict parties try to forge alliances to various local elites and armed factions and to mobilize big-man connections at supra-local levels. For instance, in some parts of Fizi, customary chiefs with strong ties to Mai Mai groups compete with politico-administrative authorities that have the backing of the FARDC.²⁰ Yet in other contexts, the FARDC was observed to be more closely linked to the *mwami*, who may be in competition with certain politico-administrative authorities or armed groups.²¹ The consequences of military involvement in local power competition are often that whenever another military faction takes over control, whether a competing armed group or another army unit, new power competition is unleashed. Those previously marginalized try to regain their influence, while dominant players have to find new alliances in order to maintain their current position. In this manner, the dynamics of protection come to strongly feed into the dynamics of insecurity.²²

While military protection may reinforce the power position of certain authorities, this generally concerns their power vis-à-vis other civilian authorities and the population. Due to the interplay between coercion and persuasion and the asymmetric reciprocity that are inherent to protection relations, putting oneself under the protection of military actors often entails enhancing one's dependency on them, leading to a deterioration of one's negotiation position. However, to what extent such deterioration occurs depends on the wider structures of domination that inform the relations between protectors and protected, as well as the specifics of the power competition that unfolds in the context in which they are situated, including how claims to power and legitimacy are staked out and evaluated. Of particular importance in this respect is the degree to which power competition is militarized, hence involves armed groups, gangs, bandits, militias and the use of coercion more generally. Since structures of domination and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection differ per place, as will be further explained in Chapter 11, the nature of the protection relations between the military and civilian authorities may substantially vary. Where civilian authorities have limited resources and lack supra-local connections, and are not able to mobilize other armed actors, protection by the FARDC might significantly weaken their power vis-à-vis the military. By contrast, where civilian authorities are relatively strong, they may guard a high level of autonomy, merely instrumentalizing military protection for their own purposes. One situation in which this can be observed is when civilian authorities simultaneously maintain ties with non-state armed groups. This provides them with leverage in their dealings with the FARDC, as it gives them a tool to apply pressure.²³ Another situation in which the manipulation of military actors occurs is when competing civilian networks with a strong power base, which have for instance important connections at the supra-local level and/or relatively autonomous sources of revenue, manage to play two competing factions within the FARDC off against one another.²⁴

Hence, depending on the context and the specific mix of coercion and persuasion that is employed, military protection can leave significant space for civilian agency. This space is much more reduced when there are no protection relations and the military resorts predominantly to coercion in order to project power. Such a scenario is frequent in operational zones where the military usurps civilian power under the pretext of the dire security situation, often invoking a state of exception, and where civilian authorities have the FARDC little to offer. This may for instance be the case in zones where there are no opportunities for revenue generation, or where collaboration with the authorities will yield little benefits in terms of gaining access to needed information. In such contexts, civilian authorities might experience great difficulties in doing their job, being intimidated and sometimes even maltreated by the military. For example, the deputy administrator of a territory engulfed by Amani Leo troops complained: "The military behave like little kings here [*comme des petits rois*]. They have no respect for the civilian authorities. They interfere with our work all the time."²⁵ Such stories of repression and interference with civilian

20 An example is the competition pitting the *chef de secteur* of Ngandja, generally supported by the FARDC, against the *chef de groupement* of Basikasulu, who has close links to the Mai Mai Yakotumba.

21 For instance, the FARDC strongly supports the customary chief of the Babwari (ruling over the Ubwari peninsula), who is a longstanding enemy of the Mai Mai Yakotumba.

22 The enkindling effects of military protection on the overall dynamics of conflict, protection and insecurity within a particular context are further described on pp. 335–337.

23 Two examples given in this dissertation are that of customary authorities maintaining links to the FRF on the *Hauts Plateaux* (see pp. 92–93) and the *mwami* of the Bafuliuru's deployment of a self-defense militia in Lemera, described on p. 95.

24 The disputes around the pyrochlor mine in Lueshe and the gold mines of Mukungwe, as described on p.154, provide good examples of competing civilian networks trying to play factions within the FARDC off against one another.

25 Interview with deputy administrator of territory, South Kivu, 01.12.2010.

affairs were most widespread in isolated areas and among lower-level authorities (like *kapitas*, *chefs de localité* and *chefs de poste*). The following quote of a *kapita* on the *Hauts Plateaux* is telling in this respect: ‘We have nothing to say here. It is like we live under occupation. They [the military] decide everything. Force is above the law [*Ngufu iko yulu ya sheria*].’²⁶

As reflected in these words, one recurrent complaint of civilian authorities about the military is that it encroaches upon their authority by carrying out tasks that officially fall within their mandate. Such usurpation of authority is certainly not limited to the FARDC. In fact, most authorities in the Kivus vie for intervening in all spheres of local governance, whether it concerns taxation, regulating economic activities, processing disputes, or handling infractions. As one *chef de secteur* described it: ‘*hapa, kila mutu iko na mandevu* [literally: “here, every person has a beard”, meaning every person considers herself chief]. Nobody respects the limits [of their power].’²⁷ Despite involving violations of official mandates and spheres of authority, the concerned authorities generally believe that their interventions are wholly justified, or frame them discursively as such. This also applies to the military’s interference in civilian affairs, which they commonly present as part of their professional duties. For instance, one FARDC sector commander described himself systematically as *mwami-sans-frontières* (customary chief without borders), due to the wide range of local government tasks he fulfilled within his area of responsibility, making him believe that he performed more or less the same role as a customary chief.²⁸ These tasks included resolving all types of problems and disputes, such as a conflict between the *chef de secteur* and the *chef de groupement*, disputes about the non-payment of dowries and the division of tax revenues, and a conflict between farmers and cattle-herders related to the devastation of farmers’ fields during transhumance (the seasonal migration of cows).²⁹ Not all of these interventions were purely the result of unilateral military interference. In many cases, as was stated by the commander and as was observed during the fieldwork, it were civilians themselves who solicited the intervention of the *mwami-sans-frontières* in a certain dispute. This reveals the constant interplay between persuasion and coercion, civilian demand and military imposition that characterizes protection arrangements, as shaped by place-specific social structures and dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. In the following, this interplay will be further illustrated with an example from the *Hauts Plateaux* of Minembwe.

Military protection and power competition on the Hauts Plateaux of Minembwe

As we have seen,³⁰ from 2003 onwards, the *Hauts Plateaux* of Minembwe were exclusively controlled by the all-Banyamulenge 112th brigade (case #8) under the leadership of Gen. Masunzu. The officers of the 112th closely collaborated with civilian authorities loyal to Masunzu, notably the *chef de poste*, the chief of the ANR (intelligence service) and one of the most powerful customary chiefs in the Minembwe area, that of Kivumu. In March 2010, the 112th brigade made way for the 652nd brigade Amani Leo commanded by Col. Sekanabo (case #12), a commander of Rwandophone origins from North Kivu. As the power of the *chef de poste* of Minembwe had previously been underpinned by the 112th brigade, he now had to look for a different reservoir of force to back up his position. This was all the more important given that the power of the Masunzu-linked elite to whom he belonged was increasingly contested, partly as a result of their dwindling legitimacy linked to growing discontent about their manner of rule and their failure to bring development to the isolated *Plateaux*. At the time of the fieldwork, this mountainous area had no phone network,³¹ was barely accessible by road, and had few economic activities apart from cattle-keeping, small-scale agriculture and limited artisanal gold mining, causing a large part of its population to live in relative poverty and isolation.

Aside from being plagued by legitimacy problems, the position of a key member of Minembwe’s ruling elite, the customary chief of Kivumu, had also become precarious due to a succession dispute. Chief Ndahinda, the younger brother of the previous chief Karojo, had taken over power in 2002, after the incumbent fled the hostilities related to Masunzu’s struggle against the RCD/RPA (Rwandan army). However, in 2009, the reigning family demanded Karojo’s grandson Mutegetsi Kiruhura Karojo III to accede to the throne, in order to respect custom. Similar to many other communities in the Kivus, among the Banyamulenge, the position of *mwami* is traditionally passed on to the first-born son of the incumbent, and not to their brothers. However, Ndahinda refused to cede power, continuing his resistance even after the authorities of Fizi territory issued a letter in June 2010 in which they recognized Mutegetsi as the customary chief.³² Having officially lost his position, and having little support from higher-level civilian authorities,³³ Ndahinda decided to solicit the protection from Col. Sekanabo to try to cling to power. At that point, Sekanabo had already entered into a protection arrangement with both the

26 Interview with customary chief, Mibunda, 14.12.2010.

27 Interview with *chef de secteur*, Fizi, 10.03.2011.

28 Interviews with FARDC sector commander, Fizi territory, 26 and 27.02.2011 and 12.03.2011.

29 Transhumance takes place during the dry season starting in June, when the grass on the *Hauts Plateaux* no longer contains sufficient nutrition for cattle, prompting movements towards pastures in the Lulenge and Ngandja sectors of Fizi (Brabant and Nzweve, 2013: 16).

30 A brief history of political-military developments on the *Plateaux* was given in Chapter 3, pp. 92–94.

31 Since two Vodacom antennas were installed on the *Hauts Plateaux* in 2014, large areas have phone network coverage at present.

32 It concerns letter No. 5072/2006/K.323/12/TF/2010 of 2 June 2010.

33 Ndahinda did make efforts to mobilize support among higher-placed authorities, but mostly at the level of the *territoire*, which is not very powerful. In October 2010, he approached the deputy administrator of Fizi territory, trying to play him off against the administrator. While this effort was successful, the deputy administrator had too little weight in order for this to make a difference.

chef de poste of Minembwe and the chief of the ANR, forming a power coalition that launched a reign of intimidation and extortion in the Minembwe area. The *chef de poste*, for his part, handily exploited the presence of the 652nd by playing a type of double game. On the one hand, he presented the ill-disciplined nature of this brigade as an explanation for the increase in extortion and insecurity in his jurisdiction, thus washing his hands off the matter. On the other hand, he continued to maintain excellent relations with the brigade commander, who granted him a share of the revenues of his extortion schemes. As a return favor, he raised the tax in kind at the weekly market of Minembwe to enlarge the military's allocations.

Market tax was only a small part of the revenues generated by the 652nd brigade on the *Plateaux*. It obtained most of its income through taxation at newly erected barriers, continuous unlawful arrests, sometimes in collaboration with the ANR, and the manipulation of the ban on mining activities that was pronounced in September 2010.³⁴ In exchange for allowing the exploitation and trade in minerals to continue in spite of the ban, Sekanabo demanded a lump sum of \$1,000 and additional periodic arbitrary amounts from the *Coopérative minière des creuseurs artisanaux de Minembwe* (COMCAN, Mining Cooperative of Artisanal Miners of Minembwe), which manages several of the gold mines around Minembwe. Furthermore, during his short stay on the *Plateaux* as primary military commander, which was from March 2010, after the definite departure of the 112th, until the end of November 2010, Sekanabo managed to collect no less than a 100 cows. He obtained these either through extortion, by buying at (imposed) reduced tariffs, or by receiving them as gifts from notables eager to maintain good relations with the new big-man in town, a manifestation of the 'bovine diplomacy' commonly practiced on the *Plateaux*.

Sekanabo's rule over the Minembwe area was not only felt through the significant increase in extortion, he also intervened in the ongoing conflict between Ndahinda and Mutegetsi. In March 2010, shots were fired in the house of Ndahinda, who subsequently accused Mutegetsi of an assassination attempt. However, ballistics research by the S2 (intelligence officer) of Sekanabo's brigade, an ex-FAZ not on particularly good terms with his commander, proved that this alleged assassination had been mounted in order to discredit Mutegetsi. This led the chief of the ANR to issue an arrest warrant for his ally Ndahinda, which, it was widely believed, he never intended to execute. In October 2010, the deputy administrator of Fizi territory issued a letter that recognized Ndahinda as the customary chief of Kivumu, without the formal consent of his boss, the *administrateur du territoire*.³⁵ Fearing that this would impair his claim to the throne, Mutegetsi rapidly decided to organize an official ceremony of ascension, which took place on 23 October 2010. However, the ascension proceedings were wildly disturbed by soldiers sent by Sekanabo, who fired bullets at the crowd. This incident was generally recognized as an attempt if not to kill Mutegetsi, at least to frighten him sufficiently to give up his rights to the throne. However, he categorically refused to give up, although he was forced to go into hiding, allowing Ndahinda to remain the *de facto* chief.

A month after this incident, which had caused considerable commotion in Minembwe, the 652nd brigade was redeployed to Baraka, being rotated with the 651st under Col. Mahoro (case #11). On the day of Mahoro's arrival in Minembwe, Ndahinda immediately offered him a cow as a welcome gift, eager as he was to forge a new protection arrangement in order to stay in power. However, Mahoro decided to proceed in a more balanced manner and refused to openly take sides, while covertly trying to maintain good relations with both pretenders. This allowed Mutegetsi to formally assume his functions, and Ndahinda to continue to exercise significant influence behind the scenes, relying on his established contacts and considerable wealth. At the same time, the relief resulting from the arrival of the new brigade, which behaved much better than its predecessors, reinforced the circulation of discontent with the ruling elite's reign, revealing how their collaboration with the widely disliked Sekanabo had further undermined their legitimacy. This loss in legitimacy temporarily reinforced popular support for the rebels of the FRF in the Minembwe area, traditionally the stronghold of their competitor Masunzu. Furthermore, when this area came under FRF control after they integrated into the FARDC in January 2011, the ex-rebels exercised pressure to make the *chef de poste* of Minembwe abdicate, including by lobbying in Bukavu. However, although the provincial authorities initially agreed to replace him, the FRF's efforts eventually failed to change the situation on the ground, largely due to countervailing lobbying efforts by the Masunzu camp.³⁶

To conclude, the case of military protection dynamics on the *Hauts Plateaux* of Minembwe does not only illustrate how FARDC involvement might alter local balances of power, but also that the resulting power equilibriums may be quite unstable due to frequent military rotations. While the arrival of the 652nd allowed a certain coalition of local authorities to reinforce their position, at least at the short term, the departure of this unit heralded substantial changes, including an official end to the reign of a customary chief. However, in the longer term, the protection arrangement between the 652nd and dominant civilian authorities undermined the latter's power, as their military protectors were resented and resorted to practices seen as illicit, which contributed to the delegitimation of their position. This shows that protection by the FARDC does not only impact the relations between authorities, but also has a strong influence on the relations between the rulers and the ruled, including the processes of (de) legitimation that structure them. As will be shown in the following, the

34 Other brigades also tried to capitalize upon the mining ban, for example the 651st, who employed it for intensifying and brutalizing checkpoint controls, (see p. 138) and the 641st who used it as a pretext for imposing free hours in the mining pits of Misisi, see p. 302.

35 It concerns letter No. 5072/404/TF/2010 of 14 October 2010. This letter was repealed by the administrator of Fizi territory by means of another letter issued shortly after the violent incidents in Minembwe (letter No. 5072/429/F.21/TF/2010 of 28 October 2010).

36 It was only after the departure of Masunzu as commander of the 10th Military Region at the end of 2014 that sufficient political space was created to change the *chef de poste*, which occurred mid-2015.

latter are strongly shaped by the various social roles that define figures of authority in the Kivus and the ways in which they are seen to enact these roles.

6.2 *Performing authority*

When FARDC officers intend to legitimize their power and practices of governance, they make efforts to enact various of the social roles surrounding figures of authority in the Kivus in a manner consistent with the expectations related to these roles. There are three main roles that FARDC officers draw upon when performing authority. The first two relate to their status as 'state actor' and concern the roles of 'military authority/public security actor' and 'public servant/official', respectively. The role of public security actor/military authority emphasizes the military's duties and capacities to provide security, and is linked to discursive framings characterized by appeals to military rationalities and expert knowledge on security. This role partly overlaps with the second state actor role that officers may enact, which highlights the FARDC's general contribution to '(public) authority/local governance', rather than the specific (public) security dimensions of its position and tasks. The enactment of this generic role of 'public servant/official', who similar to civilian authorities upholds the state-dominated order and the law, commonly entails the framing of practices in the discourses of stateness, public service provision and 'public order'. Yet when performing public authority, the FARDC may also choose to enact another role, namely that of 'big-man'. This entails discursive framings that relate to protection and the representation of the groups that form the big-man's main constituency. Such framings may highlight shared forms of identification, brandish the symbols of that identity, or emphasize the defense of a group's interests, including by supporting their side in a conflict. While in a sense still 'public', as relating to the representation of larger social groups, the role of big-man is thus profoundly informed by particularistic rationalities (Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 37–39).

From the above, it follows that each of the three social roles enacted by FARDC officers when intending to perform authority, whether that of 'military authority/public security actor', 'public servant/official', or 'big-man', is constituted by different, yet overlapping, discursive registers, which are informed by different rationalities and beliefs. Furthermore, each role is surrounded by different norms and expectations from the audiences among whom it is enacted. For example, 'public servants/officials' are expected to provide 'public services', including interventions in disputes and the regulation of administrative matters like permits. They are also expected to act according to legal-rationalities, hence to follow official procedures, rules and regulations (at least to a certain extent), implying their practices have a degree of predictability. This emphasis on legal-rationality is also reflected in expectations of their discursive practices, having to refer to laws and other codified norms, and to emphasize notions of public service provision. At the same time, and paradoxically, officials in the Kivus are expected to be flexible with the rules, to instrumentalize their connections 'higher up' for influencing (in an informal manner) administrative and political processes, and to facilitate access to revenue-generation opportunities. Thus, there is profound ambivalence in people's expectations of state actors, which is partly a result of the fact that the very attributes that define a state actor (access to resources, but also being connected to a wider politico-administrative hierarchy) feed expectations of (particularistic) protection. This is both a cause and an outcome of the fact that the role of state actor partly overlaps with that of big-man. As we have seen, the latter is surrounded by specific expectations of reciprocity, the fulfillment of which generally undermines public servants' execution of their official duties. Thus, public servants commonly face contradictory expectations, implying evaluations of their performances will oscillate, depending on what expectations predominate among a specific audience.

Kivutians hold similar ambivalent expectations of the FARDC: its very capacity to provide security, hence wield force, may come to inform expectations surrounding the use of force that center on more particularistic rationalities. For example, groups in conflict may want the FARDC to bring security only to their own community, and not that of the population in general, or economic operators having a dispute may expect the FARDC to use force to settle it in their favor, rather than to adjudicate in a neutral manner. One reason for this ambivalence is the weight of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, which affects the contours and contents of the social roles surrounding figures of authority. In a context of rampant insecurity, the omnipresence of conflicts, massive poverty and volatility, where the daily focus for a large amount of people is on surviving and time-horizons are short, considerations of immediate economic and physical security come to bear a significant imprint on expectations, hence evaluations, of figures of authority and their practices. This contributes to a blurring of the boundaries between state and non-state social roles and associated 'public' and 'particularistic' rationalities. The resulting conflicting expectations contribute to FARDC officers' constant oscillation between the enactment of various social roles, causing them to flexibly employ various discourses, with the emphasis depending on the situation, the relations between the involved actors, and the nature of the practices at hand. This is not always a conscious process, but is partly given in by practical knowledge and routines. While in official, non-military settings like ceremonies FARDC staff will sooner adopt the role of 'official/public servant', they will feel strong pressures to act as big-men whenever operating in their area of origins.

The FARDC's efforts to enact particular social roles are not always met with success, which has significant consequences for processes of legitimation. While social roles may facilitate claims to legitimacy by making the practices of the dominant resonate with institutionalized imaginaries and meanings of authority, they may also undermine these aspirations if the enacted practices strongly diverge from the expectations, norms and beliefs related to the specific role they try to perform. Hence, social roles are a double-edged sword, at once reinforcing and undermining legitimation. This has already been demonstrated for the FARDC's role of 'public security actor'. Where the FARDC is seen to bring security, this role constitutes an important source of legitimacy, as was for example the case with the commander

of the 29th IB when deployed in the Baraka area.³⁷ Furthermore, satisfactory performances of the ‘public security’ actor role can render certain practices of extraction, like food contributions and market taxes, more licit. The reason is that they enhance the credibility of framings of these practices in the discourses of public security, namely as contributing to reinforcing security, causing these claims to correspond to lived experiences. At the same time, the expectations surrounding the role of ‘public security actor’ make that insecurity has the potential to strongly undermine military actors’ legitimacy, also rendering appeals to public security as a justification for extraction incredible. An example is the ill-behaving *Malewa* brigade’s imposition of an *efforts de guerre* contribution in Kazimia, which was generally frowned upon due to the limited expected security contribution.³⁸ However, as the example of this brigade also shows, in particular when deployed in the Misisi gold mines (case # 10), a loss of legitimacy may not necessarily translate into an immediate loss of power, since military actors may resort to other means in order to ensure continued compliance. Legitimacy is but one factor in shaping power relations, and is not a necessary condition for control, since compliance with power may also have other bases such as coercion, routine and utilitarian considerations.³⁹

Regardless the social role they try to enact, the FARDC officers’ exercise of power strongly hinges on personal relations. In particular unit commanders constitute crucial nodes within the flows of information, resources and power linking military units to their civilian environment. Whether enacting the role of big-man or state actor (in both its military authority and state servant/official varieties), these commanders must engage in face-to-face contact for control, decision-making and alliance building. One reason for this is that power projection is strongly personalized in the Congo, in part as comprehensive administrative apparatuses are lacking. Furthermore, in an environment characterized by institutional uncertainties and normative and regulatory pluralism, trust, as grounded in personal relations, is crucial for social exchange. The importance of the physical presence of the commander, which is even bigger in the many areas in the Kivus that lack phone networks coverage, is manifested in the constant swarms of both civilian and military actors that unit commanders are surrounded by, who tirelessly solicit their attention, intervention, resources, information and advice. Furthermore, it is expressed in the regular (symbolic) display of their authority through physical presence, for example by attending important events and going regularly on tour in their areas of deployment, a practice that the military has engaged in since the colonial era.⁴⁰ Such tours, which also allow commanders to inspect their troops and gather information, enable them to cement personal ties with civilians, especially local authorities, and to adjudicate and intervene where deemed necessary. It is only through such personal presence and relations that FARDC commanders can construct and consolidate a power base, establish control and legitimize their power.

6.2.1 The FARDC as ‘public servants/officials’

When enacting governance practices commonly seen as falling within the domain of ‘public authority’, FARDC staff position themselves as ‘public servants/officials’, as manifested in their performances, including the props and idioms they employ. On such occasions, they portray themselves as guardians of the law and the state-dominated order, not only directly, by enforcing legislation and other regulations, by also indirectly, by assisting civilian authorities. The enactment of such a role should not be seen as merely acting: military staff’s self-perceptions as guardians of the state and the nation are an integral part of their professional military identification,⁴¹ and strongly shine through in their discourses, including self-attributed motives for practices. While self-attributions rarely capture the complex jumble of sometimes contradictory and often partly unconscious projects, feelings, ideas and impulses that guide social agents’ practices (Nisbett and Wilson, 1977), it seems that such strongly articulated self-perceptions may on occasion be at least one ingredient of that jumble. Evidence for this was for example found in the events surrounding a conflict between fishermen and the navy in the town of Vitshumbi (case #3).⁴²

In January 2012, the village of Vitshumbi, which is located on the shores of Lake Edward in Rutshuru, was rocked by a number of violent incidents. These were triggered by the resistance of fishermen against the navy’s decision to ruthlessly enforce an administrative directive stipulating that all boats on the lake should be equipped with life vests. This directive had been issued by the provincial ministry for transport and communications, following a number of deadly incidents on the lake. While having been promulgated already a year earlier, the measure had up to that point remained a dead letter, in part due to widespread resistance. In order to facilitate its implementation, the navy had co-organized several meetings with the *commissariat lacustre*, a department for lake-related affairs linked to the provincial ministry for transport and communications. In the course of these meetings, they had announced to all stakeholders, including representatives of the fishermen, that it was henceforth compulsory to have safety equipment on board. However, most fishermen had resisted implementation of the measure on the grounds that the requirement to have three life vests on board was exaggerated, and that it was too expensive for them to comply. Furthermore, they were of the opinion that the measure principally applied to operators of passenger and freight boats, and not to fishermen. The initiative of the navy and the *commissariat* to solicit a befriended businessman

37 Evaluations of the commander of the 29th IB when headquartered in Baraka were discussed on p. 116.

38 The *efforts de guerre* contribution imposed by the 65th brigade in Kazimia was discussed on p.137.

39 The bases of compliance are further explained in Chapter 7, pp. 192–195.

40 As explained in Chapter 3, the *Force publique* assisted civilian authorities with going on tour and also made *promenades militaires* itself, see p. 56.

41 The importance of ‘stateness’ and ‘officiality’ within professional military identification among the FARDC was discussed on pp. 117–118.

42 This paragraph is based on interviews with the navy, local civil authorities, the fishermen’s committee and civil society in Vitshumbi on 26.01.2012.

from Goma to come and sell life vests in Vitshumbi added fuel to the fire, as it fostered the impression that the navy merely tried to impose the measure in order to profit from it financially.

The navy, by contrast, had a quite different reading of the events. According to them, they were forced to implement the measure due to pressure from their hierarchy, the *état-major* of the 5th *Groupement naval* (military naval region) based in Goma, which had regularly issued orders that they should enforce the measure. This pressure increased in the wake of a tragic accident near Lunyasenge late 2011, prompting the navy to take bold action in January 2012. Thus, they started to control all boats setting out on the lake, sending back those having no life vests on board. Allegedly, the manner in which they conducted these controls and blocked access to the lake was rather brutal, and some fishermen reported to have been beaten up. However, as emerged from interviews with the navy, their decision to be harsh resulted in part from the frustration generated by over a year of botched attempts to impose the mentioned directive. Furthermore, they argued that it was their duty to enforce the measure. As the commander of the naval base in Vitshumbi explained: ‘Someone has to impose order. These were decisions taken by the provincial government, you see. We represent the government. And here the population can be very stubborn, they will not listen. So sometimes we have to call them to order (...) there have been many incidents on the lake, but they continue to refuse. The Congolese can be very difficult.’⁴³ This quote clearly reflects the efforts of the navy to manifest itself as public servants/officials charged with enforcing the law and guarding public safety, discursively framing and justifying their practices accordingly. To brush these discourses off as merely pretexts would seem unwarranted, as they emerge from deeply engrained forms of professional identification. Yet, a desire to uphold the law does not exclude that the navy also tried to profit from the implementation of the life vest measure financially: practices can be informed by varying and sometimes contradictory projects, although this is rarely reflected in discursive framings, which tend to highlight one dominant project. Furthermore, even when not fully reflecting all of the underlying projects, self-attributions are important in that they shape the readings and interpretations of others. This was clearly the case with the interpretation of the events related to the life vest affair projected by the navy. Several of the civilian authorities contacted gave a reading of the events that corresponded to that of the navy, emphasizing the latter was right in trying to enforce the law. This highlights how other social agents reinforce the FARDC’s self-image as public servant/officials.

Another striking case of how the FARDC presents and perceives itself as pillars and guardians of state authority was observed in the village of Kikonde, in Fizi territory. As is usual for authorities in the Congo, the customary chief of this village has erected a flagpole to wave the Congolese flag next to his residence-cum-office, symbolically underlining his status as state authority. Sitting under the *paillotte* (small, open, straw-thatched hut) of the customary chief, I witnessed one morning how a number of FARDC officers arrested a civilian walking by the moment the flag was raised. The stated reason was that this person had not respected the obligation to halt all movement when the Congolese flag is raised, which allegedly bore testimony to his lack of respect for the Congolese state.⁴⁴ A similar incident came to the knowledge of a human rights defender in Uvira, who was informed that a woman in Kagando cultivating her field had been arrested and beaten on 8 March (International Women’s Day, a national holiday in the Congo). Allegedly, the FARDC platoon commander had ordered all women in his zone of responsibility to participate in the annual women’s parade ‘out of respect for the country’, and had instigated patrols to enforce this order.⁴⁵ Even if the woman was arrested primarily for the purposes of extortion, as the human rights defender believed, this does not exclude that the involved FARDC officer’s self-perception as defender of the Congolese state and nation did not *also* play some role in guiding his actions. Forms of professional military identification and views on the military’s role in society inform what the FARDC considers to be legitimate spheres of intervention and modes of praxis. Furthermore, framings of practices in the idioms of stateness, which draw upon representations of the military as the embodiment of the state, influence readings and interpretations of the events by audiences. Therefore, the arrests made in Kikonde and Kagambo are likely to have contributed to the (re)production of the structures of signification that associate the military with the state and the nation.

Representations of the military as public servant/official are also strongly (re)produced through specific performances enacted by the military on official occasions like national holiday celebrations, when it carries out (ceremonial) tasks laden with symbolism.⁴⁶ In most of the bigger localities with significant military presence, such as the *état-major* of a battalion or brigade, there is a military march on 30 June, Independence Day, albeit sometimes only of modest proportions. The symbolism surrounding such ceremonies, which, following Mbembe (1992: 17) might be called ‘liturgies’ of the state, is unambiguous: the parading around of the Congolese flag by the military on the day the country gained its independence clearly underlines its role as defender of the state and the nation. Military staff and their spouses usually also participate in the International Women’s Day celebrations on 8 March, which sends yet another symbolic message. Where there are high concentrations of people, the Women’s Day festivities tend to take up the whole day, with as highlight the marches featuring women from various professional and community-based organizations. This includes female soldiers and spouses of soldiers, which demonstrates that they are an integral part of society and shows the ‘human face’ of the armed forces. Aside from the parade, and speeches, theatre plays, receptions, songs and dances, Women’s Day celebrations may feature a female soccer tournament, which

43 Interview with commander of naval base, Vitshumbi, 26.01.2012.

44 Observations made in Kikonde on 15.12.11. Eventually, the man was liberated after the intervention of the customary chief and the payment of a fine of 3,000FC (around \$4.5).

45 This incident took place on 08.03.2010 in Kagando, near the city of Uvira, and was retold by human rights defenders on 18.05.2010 in Uvira.

46 This section is based on the observation of several national holiday celebrations and other public events in rural areas, as specified in Table 8 on p. 26.

commonly pits female police against PMF (female military staff) and spouses of the FARDC. This too, presents an image of the FARDC as a vital part of the nation.

In most other public celebrations, whether large or small scale, the FARDC similarly tends to play a significant role, thereby (re)producing, through acts, symbols, and discourse, the association of the military with public authority. At most important public events, like weddings of authorities, there is a 'VIP tribune' for notables. Depending on the setting, this may be no more than a row of plastic chairs set apart from the other seats or the area where people stand. FARDC commanders commonly occupy a prominent place on this 'tribune', together with the local politico-administrative and customary authorities, such as the *chef de poste*, the *mwami*, the commander of the PNC (police), and the head of the ANR (intelligence service). According to Congolese custom and sense of decorum, every person holding a speech at an official event must address all notables who are present individually, resulting in an endless recitation of positions, which becomes almost like an incantation: '*Excellence monsieur le chef de poste d'encadrement administratif, excellence monsieur le commandant battalion des FARDC, excellence monsieur le chef de l'ANR...*' Such incantations of state authorities (re)produce the image of the FARDC as an integral part of the state apparatus and a 'public authority' that stands on the same footing as civilians fulfilling that role.

Aside from at ceremonies and official gatherings, the image of the military as a state actor is also strongly projected during military court trials held in public.⁴⁷ In a number of towns, trials of the military court are organized in relatively accessible public spaces, attracting large crowds interested in watching the spectacle. This is commonly also the case during *audience foraines* or mobile court sessions. The conspicuous display of the Congolese flag and the portrait of the president that characterize such occasions, as well the rituals carried out by court officials in military uniform, like the salutation made at the official opening of the hearing, or the immediate clipping off of rank insignia from the uniforms of those having been sentenced, constitute a highly theatrical performance. The judge, equally in uniform, presides over the drama like a stage director, being simultaneously the main protagonist. Such public military-judicial performances strongly relay the idea that the military, as upholder of the rule of law and the constitution, is the foundation and guarantor of the state-dominated order, while also drawing upon the law to regulate itself. This is not only achieved through the particular arrangement and sequencing of (ritual) practices, symbols, and other imagery, but also through the invoked discursive registers, which are marked by appeals to the law, legal procedures, and the public interest. Certainly, these discourses may have little impact on the unfolding of the judicial procedures, which may be more informed by the rationalities of protection. Yet the overall performance of the trial projects an image of the military in which its status as state actor/public servant is conspicuously displayed. As such, it contributes to the (re) production of the structures of signification that identify the military with the state and public authority. These structures, in turn, bolster the military's claims to stateness, hence legitimacy, in everyday situations, when the props and symbols of stateness may be largely or entirely lacking.

However, the effects of the FARDC's performances of the role of public servant/official on the processes surrounding the legitimization of power are variable. As mentioned, these effects depend on whether the practices it enacts are perceived to correspond to the heterogeneous set of norms, notions, beliefs and rationalities that define the social role of 'state actor/public servant' in the Kivus. Such perceptions are in turn shaped by what 'the state' signifies in a particular time-space context, which is a product of both local structures of domination, signification and legitimization, and place-specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. For instance, where populations have strong ties to armed groups that are seen as relatively legitimate,⁴⁸ or where inter-community conflicts are strong, causing polarized identities to be a prime criterion of evaluations, the role of stateness in legitimizing processes might differ from that in contexts where the FARDC fights non-state armed groups seen as entirely illegitimate, or where antagonistic forms of communal identification are less salient. Hence the relative weight of 'stateness' in processes of legitimization is variable, just as the outcomes of its deployment. Moreover, it is usually not a stand-alone factor but reinforces or mitigates other elements, with which it constantly interacts. For example, where rebels are seen as illegitimate, their non-state status might bear more weight in evaluations than in situations where rebel groups have a degree of legitimacy.⁴⁹ Despite these place-based variations, the FARDC generally manages to capitalize upon its status as a state actor, not least because the state continues to be the paramount framework of reference in thinking on authority in the Congo.⁵⁰

Like all social roles, that of 'public servant/official' does not only facilitate, but can also hamper the FARDC's quest for legitimizing its power, when its practices violate the expectations commonly held of 'state actors'. This is evidenced by the fact that civilians often justify contestations of military power by invoking the military's violations of its duties as a state actor, for example non-respect for constitutional obligations, the law or its mandate, or the following of what according to the official rules are unjust procedures, like influence peddling or the use of force. However, such publicly expressed condemnations are but one dimension of civilians' evaluations of the FARDC's

47 This section is based on the direct observation of (parts) of two military justice trials, as specified in Table 8 on p. 26.

48 Examples of areas where armed groups had substantial legitimacy were the parts the *Hauts Plateaux* where the FRF used to have a certain popularity, and parts of the Ngandja sector of Fizi, where the Mai Mai Yakotumba have an important base of popular support.

49 For example, in evaluations of the Mai Mai Mulumba in the Lulenge sector of Fizi, who have little popular support, their non-state status figured prominently, and they were consistently depicted as 'bandits'. This was much less the case for the Mai Mai Kapopo in the Itombwe forest, who used to have a degree of legitimacy. While their non-state status was also highlighted in evaluations, it was less salient and less connected to negative connotations. Conclusions based on fieldwork in Kilembwe and Kagembe (24–26.12.2011) and Magunda and Lubumba (18–22.11.2011).

50 The continuing importance of the idea of the state in thinking on authority was explained on pp. 111–112.

performance as public authority. Especially when focusing on dimensions of state actor performance that overlap with those connected to the role of big-man, such as the granting of access to resources, evaluations may not be fully discursively expressed or specified. For example, while civilian authorities readily criticize the FARDC's failure to protect civilians, few are those who openly denounce an FARDC commander for not being willing to share a larger part of the revenues of illegal taxation with them. Although little visible in public scripts, such protection-related expectations commonly do weigh in on evaluations of 'state actors', in particular where the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection are fierce.

6.2.2 *The FARDC as 'big-men'*

Being important authorities in a context where power relations are to a large extent personal and shaped by the rationalities and dynamics of protection, it may not be surprising that FARDC officers regularly enact the role of big-man. The specific contents of this role depend on the particular relations that officers maintain with the civilian context in which they operate, as partly shaped by the social structures and dynamics specific to those contexts. For example, when commanders are deployed in an area where a part of the population is from the same ethnic group or category (e.g., autochthon/Rwandophone), the expectations related to the role of big-man might be strongly oriented towards collective representation and the defense of collective interests. Such expectations of representation are especially strong in officers' home areas, regardless whether they are deployed in those areas or not. Even when having no formal military authority over their zone of origin, officers often continue to wield significant influence there via representatives and intermediaries. This is a common phenomenon in the Kivus, where elites usually remain strongly connected to their home areas via family and business connections, having property and sometimes businesses there.

An example of an officer maintaining extensive client and business networks in his wider area of origin is Gen. Gabriel Amisi, the former FARDC Chief of Staff of the Land Forces, currently commander of the First Defense Zone. An important manner in which Amisi maintains influence and ensures (some) redistribution in his native Maniema province is by running elaborate business operations, especially via the commercial complex 'Maniema Union', headquartered in the provincial capital of Kindu. This complex includes a soccer club and a transport company owning and chartering whaleboats, lorries, and aircrafts, but also buying and transporting minerals, especially gold (Matthysen and Nimpagaritse, 2010: 33).⁵¹ While Amisi has been widely denounced for his unethical business practices,⁵² within Maniema, some see his role less negatively, believing he has invested in the province and rendered it less isolated. For example, via Maniema Union, he launched a relatively affordable ship service from Kindu to Ubundu.⁵³ According to a student from Kindu, when they organized a students' debate at university concerning the role of Tango Four in Maniema, weighing systematically the advantages and the disadvantages, they came to the conclusion that he was a 'necessary evil' for Maniema.⁵⁴ Another example of a commander maintaining some ties to his region of origin, although to a much lesser extent, is that of the Munyamulenge Gen. Moustapha Mukiza, commander of the Kitona base in Bas Congo. On the *Hauts Plateaux*, he was widely lauded for having distributed *bikwembe* (in French *pagne*, the cloth worn by women) and donated money to a number of schools in 2007. This occurred exactly at the time that he was involved in negotiations with the FRF rebel group, showing that efforts to live up to patronage obligations are sometimes instrumental and fluctuate according to the political circumstances.

When officers are deployed to areas to which they are outsiders, civilians' expectations surrounding their performance as big-men might center more on the provision of favors and services than on identity-based and representational considerations. Rather than having to embody a certain community or group's wellbeing and values, it becomes of greater importance in such a situation to provide dispute-processing or influence-peddling services, or grant access to revenue-generation opportunities. Yet, it was observed that even where FARDC officers are outsiders, they are expected to demonstrate largesse, perhaps not as much for identity-related representational purposes, but in order to show power and importance more generally. Displays of largesse can assume various forms, such as making donations for the construction of a church, financing the local soccer club or driving around in expensive cars with a large entourage of bodyguards, and frequenting expensive restaurants and clubs. Expectations of demonstrating largesse seem to grow in importance when commanders have been deployed for a long time in the same environment, allowing them to construct elaborate client networks and become economic players of importance. Such contexts might give rise to a self-enforcing dynamic of protection and power projection. Where FARDC officers manage to successfully enact the big-man role, including by demonstrating largesse, they will be able to build up substantial client networks. This, in turn, will provide them with more power and resources, therefore allowing them to better act as big-men, which will again attract more followers. For example, when deployed in Kiomvu (Mwenga, South Kivu) in 2010, the commander of a certain Amani Leo brigade, who had evolved into an important businessman, heavily sponsored the KSMS (Kasmes) soccer club of Kamituga. Such a demonstration of largesse advertised his power and contributed to enhancing his popularity, which facilitated the many

51 Christophe Boisbouvier, 'Les raisons d'une défaite', *Jeune Afrique*, 17 November 2008.

52 Thomas Fessy, 'Congo general "profits from blood gold."' *BBC News*, 10 November 2010; Radio Okapi, 'RDC: les Fonus exigent l'arrestation du général Amisi Kumba, chef des forces terrestres suspendu', *Radio Okapi*, 26 November 2012.

53 Interview civil society member from Maniema, Uvira, 27.10.2011.

54 Conversation with former student at the university of Kindu, now working as *maloué* (independent mining operator) in the Misisi mines, 21.06.2014.

business operations he was running in the area. These included activities in the gold mining sector, logging and cattle breeding.⁵⁵ The resources gained through these business activities, in turn, allowed him again to better fulfill the expectations placed upon him by his client networks.

As with all social roles surrounding figures of authority, the role of big-man may also undermine claims to legitimacy, namely when authorities' practices are perceived to deviate from the scripts connected to this role. This is especially the case where big-men are seen not to (re)distribute sufficient (access to) resources; to no longer guarantee the representation and defend the interests of their constituencies, which may for example occur when they have become marginalized in national circuits of power; or to grossly violate particular norms, like when engaging in brutal forms of intimidation. Importantly, such negative evaluations of big-man performance sometimes have strong ethnic-based underpinnings that reflect the significance of the Rwandophone/autochthon divide. For instance, autochthon commanders might become more easily discredited in the eyes of autochthones if they are seen to favor the interests of Rwandophones, like in conflicts surrounding transhumance (the seasonal migration of cows). Inversely, where a Rwandophone commander is believed to support the autochthon side, for example in a land conflict, his legitimacy is likely to be negatively affected in the eyes of Rwandophones. Although social identification rarely operates a stand-alone factor in shaping protection relations and evaluations thereof, depending on the circumstances and in interaction with other elements, it may have substantial influence.

Where big-men lose legitimacy, followers might seek new patrons who do live up to the expectations, a specific form of accountability that is inherent to patron-client ties (Sahlins, 1963: 292). However, the loss of legitimacy may not necessarily translate into an immediate loss of power. For example, fieldwork in the Minembwe area of the *Hauts Plateaux*, the fief of Gen. Masunzu, indicated that although he had steadily lost in legitimacy in his home area, he was still very powerful. Complaints that Masunzu had 'forgotten' the *Plateaux* were frequent, and many people pointed out that he had failed to foster development, engage in charity, or lobby for the cause of the Banyamulenge within provincial and national circles of power. Despite this criticism, it was widely reported that Masunzu continued to exercise substantial influence over the area. His position as commander of the 10th Military Region, his extensive business imperium and considerable wealth, his elaborate client network in the province of South Kivu, and his favorable status in the presidential circle all made that he continued to be a factor to be reckoned with, even while evaluations of his power were mixed. Another example of an FARDC officer who continued to be powerful despite decreasing legitimacy is the commander of the 64th sector headquartered in Lulimba, in the Misisi area. This commander had initially gained much popularity in Fizi by bringing security, being reputed for strictly controlling and disciplining his troops, for listening well to the civilian authorities and for being generous. However, over time, he gradually turned to employing more unscrupulous methods in his business dealings, thereby violating trust and obligations of (re)distribution, causing his popularity to plummet. Furthermore, his business orientation generated the feeling that he neglected his responsibilities as a commander, since becoming too absorbed by economic activities. This did not only negatively affect his task to secure the population but also his representational and ceremonial duties, as evidenced by his absence from the International Women Day's celebration in Misisi, which was widely seen as a sign that he did not care for the population.⁵⁶ At the same time, it was precisely through his economic activities that he managed to continue to be an important player in the area, in spite of dwindling legitimacy.

The case of the commander of the 64th sector illustrates that evaluations of the big-man performance of FARDC officers are intimately connected to evaluations of their performance of other, overlapping roles, like that of public servant/official or public security provider. The composite nature of the position of 'figure of authority', combining a variety of social roles, causes gains and losses in legitimacy to rarely derive from evaluations of the performance of a single social role. However, different roles tend to carry different weight within overall evaluations, depending both on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection and on the specific relations between an authority and particular groups of subjects. For instance, where there are high levels of insecurity and a commander has limited client networks, the social role of state actor, in particular public security provider, may be more important in shaping overall evaluations than the role of big-man. These variations in the dominant criteria of evaluations are often more a matter of emphasis and degree than of nature, since expectations vis-à-vis figures of authority show a certain similarity across different social groups and contexts. Due to the prevalence of insecurity of all kinds, many Kivutians primarily expect from FARDC officers that they ensure their physical, economic and political security. This last dimension, ensuring political security, includes the provision of dispute-processing services, which due to the omnipresence of inter-personal and inter-group conflicts is to many in the Kivus a pressing need.

6.3 *The demand and provision of dispute-processing services*

In the previous, it was shown how FARDC staff, in particular officers, perform various, overlapping social roles, and how this affects processes of (de)legitimation. It was also explained that in interaction with structures of signification and legitimation, the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection strongly impact the expectations and evaluations that people have of figures of authority and their practices. Due to the existence of multiple disputes of all kinds in the Kivus, whether personal, familial or communal, and whether related to more 'public' or more 'private' issues, the demand for interventions in conflicts is very high. Consequently, the processing of disputes

⁵⁵ Interview with MONUSCO official, Bukavu, 24.10.2011.

⁵⁶ Conclusions based on fieldwork conducted in Misisi on 08.03.2011.

has become a particularly important component of the expectations, and therefore evaluations, relating to figures of authority, being inscribed in the social roles of both 'state actor' and 'big-man'. Yet, only few authorities mandated to do so appear to be willing or able to process disputes in what is experienced to be an accessible, affordable and satisfactory manner. As a consequence, dispute processing has become an exceedingly problematic affair in the Kivus. This is one of the reasons why citizens freely solicit interventions in disputes from the authorities that they hope to obtain most positive results from, regardless the latter's jurisdiction and mandate. Von Benda-Beckmann has labeled this phenomenon 'forum shopping' (1981: 117), comparing citizens to consumers who go 'shopping' in the forum (that is, authority) supermarket, choosing the actor they expect to help them best. At the same time, authorities intervene in all sorts of disputes that do not fall under their formal authority, a mechanism that Von Benda-Beckmann has labeled 'shopping forums' (1981: 117), reflecting how authorities 'shop around' for disputes, trying to arbitrate and manipulate these for political or economic advantage, but also in order to fulfill protection duties.

While the two metaphors of 'forum shopping' and 'shopping forums' help make sense of the practices of both the FARDC and civilians when it comes to dispute processing, they should be used with caution, as the dynamics of conflict, insecurity, and protection seriously distort the principle of 'shopping'. In relation to 'forum shopping', it is important to note that the extent to which 'consumers' have a free choice, or can enter 'the supermarket' in the first place, is highly variable, both per context and per social group. For instance, poor farmers living in an area with little road infrastructure, no phone network and rampant insecurity, who are preoccupied most of the time with cultivation duties in order to survive, might lack the time, resources and possibilities to 'shop' around. The social pressures related to protection relations may also undermine the possibilities for a choice, since often leading to either direct big-man interference or to a type of self-censorship, thus influencing the formulation of preferences for a particular forum. These same factors might hamper the extent to which authorities can 'shop' for conflicts. For instance, where a certain authority with high connections in a powerful big-man network has already claimed to deal with a particular dispute, other authorities might refrain from intervention. There are also distinct limits to 'shopping' in areas of contested control between various armed groups or factions, or those that are rocked by tensions framed in identity-based terms. In such contexts, soliciting a forum that is connected to the 'wrong' armed actor or an opposing group may cost dearly, since it may be seen as a sign of collaboration or betrayal that might provoke retaliation. Similar dangers exist when forums interfere in a conflict where one of the parties is linked to armed actors, which may also strongly circumscribe their possibilities for manipulating disputes.

Despite these limitations, the basic rationalities of 'forum shopping' and 'shopping forums' do at least partly shape practices in the domain of dispute processing. Within their quest for regulation in general, and dispute processing in particular, citizens tend to flock to authorities who are trusted, accessible, affordable, and promise to deliver the solicited services effectively and in a manner seen as appropriate and respecting relevant norms (cf. Baker, 2008: 36–37). The evaluations of these qualities are to a large extent grounded in earlier personal experiences, existing big-man and other social ties, modes of identification, and social and personal norms and beliefs, including regarding the desirability and permissibility of the use of coercion. Many of these elements, in particular assessments of the appropriateness of the use of coercion, are strongly affected by the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, and are therefore relatively fluid. For instance, where inter-community tensions flare up that are framed in identity-based terms, the use of coercion to intervene in disputes involving out-group members may sooner become seen as a desirable path of action. Which authorities are addressed also depends on the issue at hand: while for some affairs one might prefer 'forums' who have an influence within specific layers of the administration, in other cases, it might be more expedient to mobilize actors with the capacity to wield force. The wide variety of factors shaping the choice for a dispute-processor imply that this choice does not only highly differ per time-space context, but also per social group, depending in part on the nature of their relations to various authorities. Yet despite these variations, the FARDC appears a relatively popular 'forum' across groups and contexts.

6.3.1 Understanding 'forum shopping'

In Chapter 3, it was described how both the competence and legitimacy of local civilian authorities have eroded over the last decades, which has led to a general crisis of authority (Vlassenroot, 2004: 53).⁵⁷ This crisis is strongly felt in the domains of dispute processing and justice, and has further blurred the distinction between customary, civil and criminal law (Scheye, 2011; Vlassenroot and Romkema, 2007). In many isolated zones, lower-level customary chiefs (especially *chefs de localité*, since *kapitas* are only solicited for minor issues) are the most accessible source of adjudication, since they are present at the village level, hence generally within walking distance.⁵⁸ Yet their services are not free, their judgments are often perceived to be heavily biased, and they are not authorized to judge more severe cases. Higher-level customary chiefs (*chefs de groupement*, *chefs de chefferie*) are better placed to deal with more serious conflicts, but cannot always enforce their judgments or proposed solutions, as those who are powerful try to ignore or alter them. Furthermore, they are less accessible, and in some cases seen as more partial, given that they commonly have more vested interests than lower-level customary authorities. Additionally, no matter at what level of authority, customary chiefs are seen as legitimate authorities primarily by

57 For a description of processes of the militarization of local governance, see pp. 85–88.

58 In very isolated areas with difficult terrain, like in dense forests, people may still not be able to reach the *chef de localité* in one day. Furthermore, insecurity sometimes limits the possibilities for movement.

their own ethnic group, complicating the adjudication of conflicts involving persons from different communities, specifically where these are antagonistically defined.

In addition to customary chiefs, politico-administrative authorities like the *chef de poste* can also play an important role in dispute processing, although this often falls outside of their mandate. Furthermore, they may have a limited presence in isolated rural zones. This also applies to in/security services like the police, whose services are moreover perceived to be expensive. In Kamandi (Lubero), a young man from a community association said: 'Approaching the police is very expensive. You first have to pay *makolo ya l'état*, [lit. "the feet of the state"], which are the transportation costs of the policeman. 10 dollar! Only for them to arrive. Then you proceed to the PV [*procès-verbal* or charge sheet], which is also 25 dollar. Then after the judgment, it may happen that you have to pay again a fine of 100 dollar. So not many people go to the police.'⁵⁹ Similarly, in Kimino (Ubwari pensinsula) women told during a group discussion that they have to pay ten dollar to the police before the latter even treats a dossier.⁶⁰ But that is only the start, so they explained, for they have to pay more in order for the policeman to actually carry out the task at hand, with the amount depending on both the nature of the case and the outcomes of complex negotiation processes. However, according to the participants in the group discussion, giving money is no guarantee for a satisfactory result: the police can just arrest any of the people involved, including those bringing the case, and liberate them only after the payment of a hefty and usually illegal fine. If people have no money to pay the fine, they either have to carry out forced labor, usually on the private residence of the police commander, or remain in jail until family members have collected sufficient money. These stories indicate that aside from being expensive, dispute-processing services offered by the police are also seen to suffer from a number of other flaws, including taking a long period of time and having uncertain outcomes. This is especially the case when they lead to the initiation of formal justice procedures, which are susceptible to manipulation due to bribery.

Given people's limited access to adjudication by civilian authorities, and the drawbacks that this involves, the practice of soliciting both state and non-state military actors for dispute processing has become widespread. This corroborates observations by Gambetta (1993: 170) that where courts are slow, people might turn to private protectors for litigation. Indeed, in most field research sites, including urban areas where civilian authorities are easier to access, it was a common practice for civilians to approach the military for adjudication or interventions in disputes of a diverse nature. A policeman in Mukera, for whom this often implies military trespassing upon his own sphere of influence, explained: 'Civilians often address the military with their problems, like debts, even family conflicts (...) Civilians incite the military to commit acts against the law. For example, there was a certain mister Jean here, who had lent a sum of 15,000FC with a short lease. After the term had expired he went to the military to accuse the indebted. They arrested him, but Major John soon liberated him.' He went on to explain: 'The reason for soliciting this interference are people's bad intentions. They believe that at the level of the military they can have a fast solution. They want to accelerate the course [*précipiter l'étape*] because justice normally takes time (...) It are often also the women who sell alcohol who appeal to the military when they have customers who do not pay.'⁶¹ A policeman in Lubero equally highlighted the aspect of time and a solution involving coercion as reasons why civilians regularly approach the military for 'resolving' their conflicts: 'The law takes time and is uncertain. Violence is fast and easy. You pay the FARDC and you get what you want. And many people want to punish their wrongdoers [*malfaiteurs*].'⁶²

Whether people will solicit the FARDC for dispute processing depends on a number of factors, like their norms and beliefs, their relations to the military staff in question, and the latter's perceived qualities in matters of dispute resolution relative to the other authorities that are present in the context (see Figure 13 below). A crucial factor in shaping civilians' choices is the way in which military units are inserted in their civilian environment, which is partly a product of a unit's length of deployment and composition. Of particular importance in this respect is the share of troops deployed in or close to their area of origin, as well as their belonging to a salient in-group or out-group category. In several field research sites, people believed that civilians sooner mobilize the FARDC for resolving private and family-related disputes if they have family members or acquaintances in the military. For example, the all-Banyamulenge 112th brigade that used to be deployed on the *Hauts Plateaux*, its zone of origins (case #8), was widely reported to act like '*chefs coutumiers*' (customary chiefs), and to interfere in all sorts of petty disputes, often on demand of their family members.⁶³ Similar mechanisms could be detected in areas where the same unit had been deployed for a long time, like the 29th Integrated Brigade (IB) in Fizi (case #6).⁶⁴ It appears that in both cases, trust and existing relations enhanced the attractiveness of soliciting the FARDC for dispute processing. These existing relations probably also made that FARDC staff felt more pressure to provide these services as an essential part of protection obligations. By contrast, in areas where troops were deployed only for a short period of time and had few pre-existing ties to the population, the overall involvement in dispute processing was often reported to be lower, in particular where troops were distrusted and feared. For instance, people living in the area under the control of the 651st brigade in Fizi explained that they simply feared the military too much in order to approach them for dispute processing, as this would invite them to harass the persons soliciting the intervention. As a shop-owner explained: 'The Amani

59 Interview with member of community association, Kamandi, 04.05.2010.

60 Group discussion with women, Kimino, 20.02.2010.

61 Interview with policeman, Mukera, 29.11.2010.

62 Interview with policeman, Lufofo, 05.05.2010.

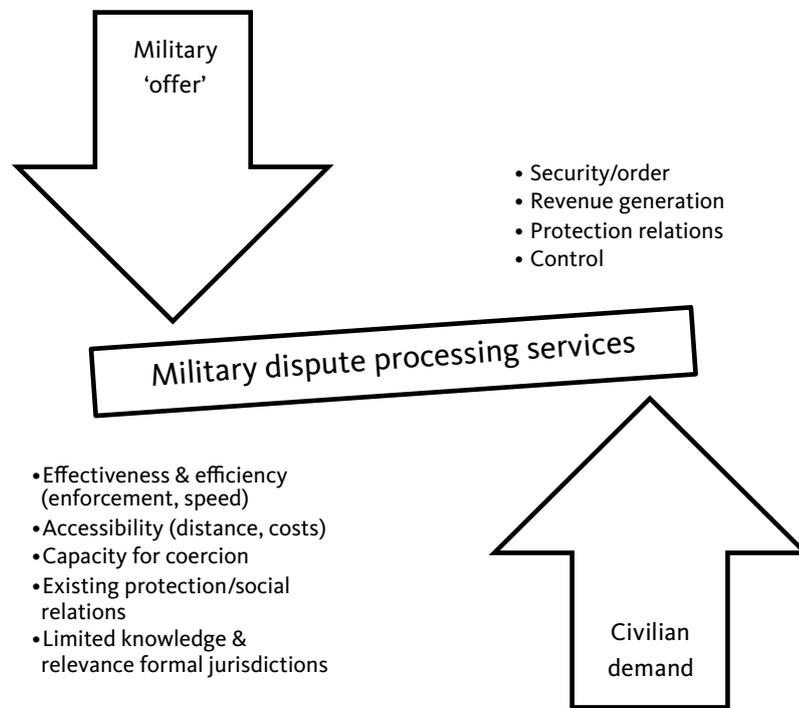
63 The 112th's interventions in local conflicts are discussed on p. 299.

64 The socio-economic embedding of the 29th IB is further described on pp. 296–297.

Leo troops do not interfere a lot in conflicts about land or power, but just as the opportunity presents itself, as source of income. It seems as if the population hesitates to approach them because they can turn against them'.⁶⁵

Other elements that determine the extent to which the FARDC is solicited for dispute processing are considerations of effectiveness and risk: where the FARDC is firmly in control of a certain area, people are more likely to solicit dispute-processing services from them than for example from a rebel group in the surroundings with little direct influence, even if they sympathize with or have direct relations with the rebels. The reasons are twofold: not only is the FARDC more likely to be able to enforce the solicited 'solution', for example by chasing away the other party from a contested plot of land, people might also fear that if they solicit other armed actors, they will be seen as complicit with them, which could provoke retaliations from the FARDC. The fact that it is more attractive to solicit services from those who have firm control might set in motion a self-enforcing dynamic (Kalyvas, 2006: 129): as they can provide effective dispute-processing services and forms of protection, people flock to those who are in control. By providing the solicited services and forging protection relations, the power position of those in control is again further reinforced, allowing for yet firmer control. A similar self-enforcing dynamic can be unleashed by protection: those who do not enjoy it commonly perceive to be at a comparative disadvantage, therefore being motivated to solicit protection as well (Gambetta, 1993: 30). This is particularly the case in the domain of dispute processing: when one party to a dispute asks the FARDC to intervene, the other side might feel prompted to seek backing from a competing military faction (whether inside or outside the FARDC), being otherwise at a potentially dangerous disadvantage. The (threatened) use of violence further reinforces this mechanism, as it creates incentives to solicit protection from armed actors in order to either prevent violence or take revenge in its wake.

Figure 13: The factors shaping offer and demand of military dispute processing services



The blurred boundaries between 'private' and 'public' dispute processing

On the basis of extensive conversations with human rights defenders, S2s (intelligence officers, who are usually among the first to be approached by civilians for dispute processing)⁶⁶ and local civilian authorities, it was identified for what kind of disputes people solicit the intervention of the FARDC and what they want that intervention to be. The cases encountered reveal a staggering variety, as the following examples show: the family-in-law of a young man accused his wife of having committed an abortion, and therefore asked the military to arrest this woman; a wealthy cattle-owner suspected his cow-herder to have killed some of his cows and therefore denounced him to the FARDC as a Rwandan national,⁶⁷ asking the military to bring him to the MONUSCO as an FDLR combatant who had to be repatriated to

65 Interview with shopkeeper, Sebele, 25.11.2010.

66 While military interference in dispute processing is generalized, certain categories of military staff are particularly prone to get involved due to their mandate, and as it has become inscribed in their social role. Two such categories are *inspecteurs* of the *auditorat* (field-based inspectors of the military prosecutor's office) and intelligence officers, like S2s and T2s or representatives of the *Département de la sécurité des frontières* (DSF, Department of Border Security).

67 On the *Hauts Plateaux* of Minembwe, it is relatively common to find Burundian or Rwandan nationals working temporarily as cattle herder.

Rwanda; a man whose bicycle had been stolen asked the military to beat up the perpetrator, who was a demobilized from the community; the inhabitant of a large village having a conflict with his neighbor about the boundaries of his plot approached the FARDC to denounce his competitor as a Mai Mai collaborator; a woman not able to repay her debt in time tried to use her good relations with the company commander, a family member, to ask her creditors to postpone the repayment of the debt; a woman who discovered that her husband had a mistress offered the local platoon commander a crate of beer in order to inflict damage upon that woman's house; an economic operator wanting to have the only *ciné-video* in the quarter was rumored to have used connections in the military to intimidate his competitor to withdraw, and when the latter did not listen, his video equipment was stolen; a family ravaged by a dispute about the inheritance of a piece of land approached the FARDC to throw one of the parties off the land and intimidate him in such a manner that he would not seek redress; a shop owner who had seen a part of his merchandise confiscated by the ANR approached the battalion commander to put pressure on the ANR to return him his goods; and finally, a trader accusing his supplier of having delivered goods of inferior quality approached his uncle, a lieutenant-colonel in the FARDC, to put pressure on the supplier to retake the goods.

These examples show that FARDC involvement in dispute processing is sometimes violent on demand: civilians may ask the FARDC to harass and intimidate opponents and rivals, to detain them, demolish their property, beat them up, and in some cases even kill them, like contract killers.⁶⁸ This may occur either in the context of protection relations, or on a purely transactional basis, when civilians pay the FARDC to do the job, or the job itself gives access to revenue-generation opportunities (cf. in relation to the PNC, Eriksson Baaz and Olsson, 2011: 13–14). Certainly, the FARDC often takes liberties in the interpretation and execution of the tasks it is solicited for, and may be more violent than the civilian instigator had in mind. Yet, in many cases, violence is explicitly demanded by the party soliciting the military's services, and may in fact be one of the main reasons why they address the FARDC in the first place. This shows that a part of the acts of violence committed by the FARDC have a 'joint character' in the sense that they are the product of the agency of both civilians and the military (cf. Kalyvas, 2006: 14). This phenomenon is far from new: Schatzberg (1988: 60) already observed in the 1970s how the Zairian military would turn into 'private guns' and 'enforcers-for-hire', 'regulating' disputes and settling scores in a violent manner on demand. However, in the perceptions of Kivutians, this phenomenon occurs at present on a much larger scale than in the past. Furthermore, it now also involves armed groups, thereby increasing the risk of violent spin-off effects. It is plausible that this increase is related to both the rise in the number of armed actors and factions that operate in the Kivus, which makes it easier for people to solicit them, and a growing demand for violent dispute processing. This last phenomenon can be ascribed to ongoing inter-and intra-community conflicts, the ineffectiveness and inaccessibility of non-violent channels of dispute processing, and a shift in thinking on desirable and effective modes of addressing conflicts under the influence of years of warfare, rampant poverty and problematic public service provision. Various of these developments, which can partly be described as militarization, have also fostered a further blurring of already porous boundaries between various types of disputes, which promotes the intervention of armed actors in both cases of score-settling relating to personal issues and in conflicts with a more public character.

As the examples given at the start of this section reveal, the disputes for which the intervention of the FARDC is solicited are of a varying nature, encompassing cases relating to crimes (falling within the scope of the state-led justice apparatus, relating to criminal law), infractions and commercial and professional disputes (which either fall under civil law or are commonly addressed through administrative/professional arbitration), disputes surrounding family affairs like marriage, inheritance and children (in the Kivus the domain of customary law), and finally, conflicts related to personal rivalries, grudges, revenge and retribution (which could be seen as 'private' matters). This indicates that both in their conceptualization of 'disputes' and in choosing the appropriate channels to address these, citizens might not always clearly differentiate between 'public' and 'private' issues, or find this difference simply irrelevant. Individuals who feel harmed generally try to seek redress primarily in ways that correspond to their own notions of what is appropriate, proportionate, and 'just', as shaped by formal and informal norms, and not necessarily by following legislation and respecting formal jurisdictions and spheres of authority. Furthermore, citizens tend to be predominantly guided by their own definitions of their grievances, which might not necessarily be based on the categorizations of 'crime', 'personal score settling', 'customary issues' and 'economic/civil disputes'. The tendency of citizens to solicit interventions based on their own interpretations of their grievances and their own insights on the best means to address these is reinforced by low levels of legal literacy, causing many people to have little knowledge on the boundaries between customary, civil and penal affairs (Amnesty International, 2011: 32–33). What also plays a role is the 'shopping forums' phenomenon, since this creates confusion surrounding authorities' mandates in citizens' eyes, who see various authorities intervening in all types of affairs, including more 'private' ones. This also applies to the FARDC, which was observed to impose itself in disputes that could be seen as purely 'private', often largely for reasons of expected financial gain, for example by detaining persons involved in an argument around dowry payments or household conflicts.⁶⁹ In short, 'shopping forums' encourage 'forum shopping', and the blurring of the (socially constructed) boundaries between the penal, customary, civil law and private spheres.

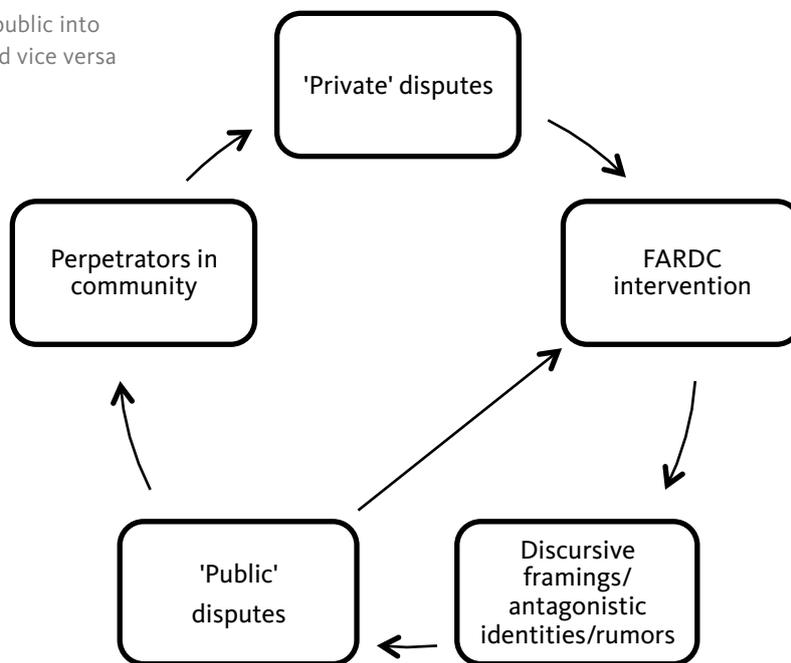
The blurring between these spheres is also a result of discrepancies between on the one hand, the underlying projects, and on the other hand, the discursive framings of practices of dispute processing. In many cases, the framing of interventions in 'private affairs', such as score settling and personal rivalries, draws on public discursive registers, specifically discourses on public security. Take the example of

68 The practice of killings on demand appears more widespread in cities and bigger towns than in rural areas, and was for example reported by members of civil society organizations in Bukavu (interviews, 05.04.2011, 24.10.2011), in Baraka (interviews on 23.02.2011) and Butembo (interviews on 27 and 28.04.2010).

69 Examples of FARDC interventions in private conflicts are given in the section on unlawful arrests below, on p. 185.

someone having a grudge against a person who sold him or her a car that soon broke down, and who denounces the seller to the FARDC as a Mai Mai collaborator. This alleged collaboration becomes subsequently the official reason why this person is arrested in the discourses spread by the FARDC in the public sphere, for instance in its explanations of the arrest to the civilian authorities. In certain cases, this public explanation is the only official account of the events that circulates, since the involvement of the *commanditeur* (the instigator who denounced the other party to the FARDC) is kept hidden. Certainly, this may not prevent unofficial versions identifying the *commanditeur* from circulating on *radio trottoir*. Civilians are often keenly aware of existing disputes between clans, families, authorities, economic operators and other persons, and therefore readily suspect the involvement of *commanditeurs* and their identity. Yet even when the official version of the events is widely doubted, it still produces effects. In the case of the mentioned grudge related to a bad car sale, a community member was arrested by the military, performing its official role as a public security actor, on the suspicion of collaborating with the Mai Mai. This account of the events was publicly communicated, while the case also drew in the local civilian authorities, since the family members of the detainee approached them for help. These authorities then discussed the matter during a meeting. Furthermore, a human rights defender visited the FARDC headquarters to plead for the liberation of the detainee. These various events caused the arrest to be widely talked about in the village, prompting many people to embrace one of the various interpretations that circulated, always comparing these to the version given by the FARDC. This shows how due to the intervention of the FARDC, a case of ‘private’ score settling was converted into a ‘public security’ event (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: The conversion of public into private disputes and vice versa



A similar conversion may occur where disputes concern members of antagonistically defined groups. In such situations, perceived unjust adjudications and interventions by the military may trigger communal tensions, as the disadvantaged party mobilizes in-group members by drawing on anti-out-group discourses. This occurred for example in Fizi territory, in a conflict over debt involving two individuals from groups with longstanding hostile relations (a Mubembe and a Munyamulenge).⁷⁰ The Mubembe individual felt disadvantaged by the FARDC’s attempt to collect a debt from him, particularly since the officer in question was a Rwandophone who was seen to favor the Banyamulenge. This prompted the Mubembe to threaten to mobilize a local (Bembe) Mai Mai group in order to take revenge, creating tensions that also affected the surrounding villages.

This example illustrates how the military’s interventions in interpersonal conflicts can have spin-off effects in the public sphere. A key mechanism that produces such effects are rumors and speculations about the *commanditeurs* of acts of violent score settling or dispute processing. Understandably, in a situation of intense intra-and inter-community conflicts, opposed groups readily suspect the ‘enemy’ side of being the instigators, almost regardless the evidence. For example, the family of a house that was looted when they had fled during a military offensive was convinced that the looting was the responsibility of their neighbors, with whom they were involved in a longstanding land dispute. However, according to the customary chief, it had been FARDC soldiers who had committed the looting.⁷¹ Reluctant to change their opinion, the family retorted that while the perpetrators might have indeed been FARDC soldiers, they had acted at the instigation of their neighbors.

70 Conclusions based on fieldwork conducted in the Nakiele area on 18.02.2012.

71 Conclusions based on fieldwork conducted in Kamombo, 22.12.2010.

While private conflicts are in this manner turned into public ones, the inverse may also occur, when violent conflict and crime (which can be seen as ‘public’) lead to private grudges and feuds. This may for instance occur when criminals or former combatants responsible for abuses go unpunished, whilst continuing to reside in the same communities where they have transgressed. The war era has left many of these lingering conflicts, in part because there have been few initiatives for transitional justice, whether by communities or the state. These various conversion mechanisms (see Figure 14) further illustrate the porousness of the (discursively constructed) boundaries between different types of conflict and their ‘public’ or ‘private’ nature, which is a driver of both the ‘shopping forums’ and the ‘forum shopping’ phenomenon.

6.3.2 *Understanding ‘shopping forums’*

Similar to why civilians solicit the military for dispute processing, there are multiple projects, often partly overlapping, partly conflicting, which drive the FARDC to intervene in civilian disputes. As we have seen,⁷² the term ‘project’ is used herein to reflect the complex nature of agency, which is not always primarily guided by narrow means-end rationality, but is also shaped by non-utilitarian considerations. Due to the component of practical-evaluation, agency is strongly shaped by the unfolding situation, which it also helps produce, causing means and ends to be constantly reformulated and reconstructed (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 967–968). These reconstructions are not always a fully conscious process, for they sometimes draw more upon practical consciousness and tacit knowledge than explicit reasoning (idem: 999).

In order to detect the various projects driving military intervention in civilian disputes, an analysis was conducted of cases of the unlawful arrest of civilians by the military that were justified by appeals to disputes. This analysis was partly based on studying a database of a human rights organization active in one of the sites of the field research,⁷³ which presented a plethora of examples (literal quotes, author’s translation):

- For a conflict over debt who opposed him/her to a private individual, on xx/11/10 around 14h, the victim was arrested by the presumed author during 24 hours.
- In village X, around 18h, the victim was arrested by soldiers at the orders of their S2 for a household conflict that opposed him to his wife.
- Around 16h, on x/11/10, the victim became the object of arrest by an FARDC element under the pretext that his/her brother had stolen the goods of a person in X.
- On x/11/10 around 14h in X, the victim was arrested by the presumed author for having contracted a debt of 8,500FC with his/her brother.
- On x/11/10 around 14h, the victim was arrested on the grounds of having committed adultery with the wife of a soldier abandoned by her husband.
- On x/x/10 at 14h36 at x, the author arrested the victim because his three wives were having a dispute that had alerted the population.
- On x/09/10, at X, in the evening, the presumed author was arrested because he is the brother of the girl that the author wanted to marry and she refused.

Together with the study of other cases encountered in the course of the fieldwork, the analysis of the database allowed for the identification of roughly four main, sometimes partly overlapping, projects that drive military interventions in civilian disputes: security/order concerns, revenue generation, protection obligations, and control (see Figure 13 above). ‘Security/order’ concerns for intervening in disputes between civilians were mostly observed in relation to the following situations: disturbances of the public order (e.g., people who are engaged in a fight in public space); disputes causing perturbations of local government (e.g., between civilian authorities); conflicts involving acts against what are defined as ‘good morals’ (e.g., disputes related to adultery); those involving accusations of crimes (including arms possession or trafficking); and disputes that are judged to have a risk of escalating into open violence (e.g., between members of antagonistically defined groups). Such interventions may be primarily informed by a sense of duty, since processing disputes is inscribed in the expectations surrounding the social role of ‘state actor’, and FARDC staff generally see the prevention or stopping of violence as part of their mandate to ‘protect the population and their goods’. For example, in one case observed, an FARDC sector

72 For a more detailed discussion of agency and the notion of ‘project’, see pp. 36–37.

73 For security reasons, the name of the organization and the area are withheld. The database, which is on file with the author, lists hundreds of human rights incidents for the year of 2010, describing victim, suspected perpetrator(s) and incident. The data in the file were collected by a network of field-based human rights monitors, many of whom were encountered during the fieldwork.

commander convinced a *chef de groupement* to abide by a particular decision of the *administrateur du territoire*, without any apparent direct financial compensation or previously existing protection relations, thereby addressing a conflict that had seriously divided the community. According to the commander in question, he had intervened to guard the security of the population, since he feared that the tense situation could spark violence.⁷⁴ This example indicates that where the FARDC is guided by security/order concerns, they may attempt to find a solution to a conflict that is accepted by both parties. When they are primarily driven by other projects, by contrast, they often unilaterally disadvantage one side, thereby prohibiting the resolution of the dispute.

Certainly, it is often difficult to determine whether there is a genuine (perceived) security/order concern, or whether it is invented or inflated, and the main project is for example revenue generation. As illustrated in the previous, the military often frames its practices in the discourse of 'public security' in order to justify various types of extraction, which complicates efforts to identify the projects informing the practices in question. This also makes that civilians are often wary of the stated objectives, perceiving there to be hidden agendas. Indeed, military interventions in civilian disputes may be primarily motivated by revenue generation, which is the second main project identified as driving this practice. Dispute processing yields revenues in a variety of ways. When the dispute concerns recovering a debt or arranging an economic conflict on behalf of third persons, the military often gets a percentage of the amount that is at stake. In other cases, military staff is simply paid by civilians to intervene, implying that such interventions are essentially commercial services (or protection as a commodity). Where dispute processing involves arrests, revenues can be earned by making the release of detainees conditional upon the payment of a fine. Other money is extorted during the period of detention, for example to grant access to visitors. The amounts demanded for fines and 'favors' are sometimes staggering. For instance, intelligence officers of the 652nd brigade were reported to charge as much as \$250 for liberation from detention, although most of the times, detainees ultimately paid much less, even up to a tenth of the original amount imposed, depending on the outcomes of lengthy processes of negotiation (cf. Eriksson Baaz and Olsson, 2011: 14–15). But even when negotiable, the amounts generally remain substantial, constituting an enormous burden for the poor, who are often forced to appeal to family and community members in order to gather the needed sums. As a consequence, unlawful arrests and other forms of military intervention in dispute processing involving extortion do not only harm the detained individuals, but may also undermine the livelihoods of their wider social networks.

The third project prompting the military to intervene in civilian disputes is the intention to live up to the expectations of reciprocity that characterize protection relations. As mentioned, civilians are sooner inclined to approach military staff for score-settling and dispute-processing services when they know them well, and have constructed protection relations. It is one of the duties of big-men/protectors to guard their clients, including by defending them in cases of conflict, as inscribed in the expectations surrounding the social role of big-man. Hence, not responding to demands for intervention carries the risk of disappointing clients, thus leading to the delegitimation of a big-man's power position, which may again lead to a loss of followers, hence power. Furthermore, where protection concerns shielding illegal revenue-generating activities, whether banditry, poaching or unauthorized fishing, intervening in disputes is often part of the overall protection package, not least because there are no clear regulatory frameworks or other suitable authorities to address.

The fourth and final project driving military interventions in civilian disputes is the desire to manifest power and to establish or maintain control. While establishing control often facilitates revenue generation, it still differs from this latter category, since it concerns influencing the *conditions for revenue generation* rather than revenue generation itself. In principle all forms of intervention in disputes have the potential to reinforce the military's control, since communicating the message that the FARDC is in charge and has the (self-attributed) right to intervene. However, in some cases establishing control is an explicit objective, like when interventions in conflicts specifically target local authorities, such as customary chiefs or policemen. It may also occur that conflicts are seized upon in order to disadvantage persons who have contested the military's power or are suspected of planning to do so, thus being used to teach (potential) dissenters a lesson. Such interventions can be harsh, since they sometimes bear an element of deterrence, having to set an example for others.

In sum, military interventions in conflicts between civilians are the result of a variety of projects, which may be at play simultaneously. For example, FARDC officers might become involved in a dispute because they are asked to do so by a civilian with whom they stand in a protection relationship, but at the same time, hope to profit from it financially, while also seizing upon the opportunity to reinforce control, by showing they have the right and capacity to intervene to groups they suspect of disobedience. However, not all of the mentioned projects can be reconciled, as they entail different approaches. For instance, interventions in disputes aiming at maintaining public order might entail an approach that is geared towards finding a solution that both parties accept. Yet, this generally runs counter to the particularistic rationalities of protection, which imply favoring one side over another, hence imposing an outcome on, rather than resolving a conflict.

These conflicting imperatives are also at the root of the variegated evaluations of military dispute-processing practices. The latter are strongly shaped by the primary social role that the intervening military staff are perceived to perform (e.g., whether more of the 'state actor' or 'big-man' kind) and whether the civilian audiences to the performance are on the side of the advantaged or disadvantaged party to the dispute. Such evaluations are highly consequential for conflict dynamics: where the involved parties and their wider social networks feel that the imposed adjudication has been 'unjust', they are likely to contest the status quo whenever the opportunity presents

74 Observations made in Fizi territory, November 2011.

itself. This scenario is even more likely when the imposition was accompanied by coercion, and has therefore become an additional source of grievances, thus aggravating the dispute. Where this becomes a reason for the disadvantaged party to solicit other armed actors to intervene, the risk of spirals of revenge is substantial.

6.3.3 *The HUNI and the demand and offer of violent dispute-processing services*

Where dispute processing, including the settling of private scores, becomes overly violent, both those enacting these violent practices and the civilian *commanditeurs* co-producing them benefit from anonymity. Therefore, violent dispute processing and score settling tend to augment where there are high levels of violence of which the perpetrators remain unidentified, which is usually the case in contexts where a multitude of different armed actors operate. The plethora of state and non-state armed actors present in the Kivus are not only engaged in similar types of abuses, such as theft, robbery, and extortion, they often also wear the same uniforms and have similar types of arms. In several of the zones where field research was conducted, like in the northern part of the *chefferie* of Bwisha in Rutshuru, the majority of recorded abuses (that is, recorded by human rights organizations, local civilian authorities and the police) were ascribed to *hommes en uniformes non-autrement identifiés* (HUNI, men/people in uniform not otherwise identified, sometimes also called *non-autrement identifiés* or NAI, not otherwise identified). It was precisely in those environments that violent dispute processing was reported to thrive.

As was observed in these areas, the impossibility to identify perpetrators significantly increases the sense of insecurity that already results from the violent acts themselves, generating a generalized distrust. Additionally, it may aggravate existing conflicts of all kinds, since acts of crime are readily interpreted as signs of score settling, with existing enemies being held responsible for acts that may also be committed for no other reason than revenue generation. Not knowing who commits violent acts and who is dangerous also makes it difficult for people to adjust their behavior in order to protect themselves. For instance, if violence is committed by a group of bandits active in the neighborhood, you may rather stay indoors after dusk. If the authors of the abuses are FARDC soldiers deployed in the area, you better avoid any dealings with them, for they are unreliable. If it are the demobilized living in your own quarter, you may have to be more careful not to leave your house unattended, etc. Yet if the perpetrators remain unknown, you simply do not know what to do in order to reduce the risk of falling victim. Furthermore, not being able to identify the authors of abuse makes it impossible to hold anyone accountable, which feeds a general sense of powerlessness that may ultimately result in resignation. For these reasons, the HUNI is more than a statistical problem: not only does it reflect the deep crisis of accountability in the Kivus, it also fuels the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, which are an engine of militarization. In the following, the main dimensions of the HUNI will be analyzed and illustrated with an example from the cities of Beni and Butembo, which sheds light on how this phenomenon nourishes and is nourished by violent dispute processing.

An important factor enabling the HUNI is the uncontrolled circulation of arms, uniforms, and armed actors throughout the Kivus, which is in part the product of the disorganization and commercial spirit of the FARDC. The latter sells arms and uniforms to whoever is interested in buying them (e.g., UNSC, 2009: 9–12), while individual officers may donate military equipment to befriended armed groups (e.g., UNSC, 2010: 21–22). As a result, and given that army deserters and demobilized tend to keep their uniforms, many armed actors wear the same fatigues as the FARDC. Hence, there is no certainty about the identity of persons wearing an FARDC uniform. The fact that these uniforms do not have nametags further complicates efforts at identification. End 2010, a new camouflage uniform was introduced that had to replace the previous, olive-green one, which circulated widely amongst armed groups. However, it did not take long before the new FARDC uniforms were spotted among rebel forces, some of whom managed to obtain them even earlier than certain FARDC units. Another way in which the disorganization of the FARDC creates an enabling climate for the HUNI is that the control exercised over military staff and their movements is relatively limited, especially in relation to staff living amongst civilians.⁷⁵ This has led to a situation in which certain quarters of towns and cities are densely populated by persons in uniform, while neither civilian nor military authorities are fully aware of the identity of these residents. At the root of this are inadequate registration, identification and control procedures, as well as frequent desertions and the presence of not-so-demobilized demobilized. Such places can become havens for deserters and criminals, causing crime rates in and around these quarters to soar.⁷⁶ In such situations, it often occurs that even when it can be determined that the perpetrators were from the FARDC, it might still not be possible to identify them individually, due to superiors' lax controls on the whereabouts of their elements.

Aside from by wearing similar uniforms, living in the same spaces, and displaying similar behavior, the blurring of the boundaries between different categories of armed actors is also a result of the real or perceived manipulation of identities. It is widely believed that the FARDC and other violent actors may temporarily change their identity in order to sow confusion, usually by means of a change in attire. The

⁷⁵ The reasons for the deficient control over military staff and their movements are elaborated upon in Chapter 8, pp. 247–248.

⁷⁶ For instance, in September 2010, the head of the police of South Kivu called upon the *chefs de quartier* (lower level urban authorities) of Bukavu to identify all uniformed persons residing in their quarter, in order to detect deserters and determine under what military or police structure these residents fell. This measure was intended to stem the tide of rising insecurity resulting from the presence of not identified and little controlled persons in uniform. Radio Okapi, 'Bukavu: les chefs des quartiers appelés à identifier les hommes en uniforme', *Radio Okapi*, 20 September 2010.

stories of FARDC soldiers dressing up as rebels, or rebels or civilians as FARDC soldiers, or military as police, police as military, or bandits as rebels, and so forth, circulate widely throughout the Kivus.⁷⁷ These rumors show how armed actors, whether military or civilian, try to capitalize upon the HUNI phenomenon to mask their responsibility for acts of banditry and violence and shift the blame to others. For example, many FARDC staff contacted emphasized that demobilized and bandits often don an FARDC uniform when committing crimes in order to taint the reputation of the military, allegations that are generally difficult to verify. The FARDC would also create ambiguity about the status of suspects in other ways, like by denying involvement in acts of violence through asserting that the perpetrators were army deserters over whom they no longer exercised control at the moment of abuse.

In some cases, perpetrators described as HUNI are actually known among civilians, but it is preferred to keep their identity hidden, whether out of fear for retaliation, social pressure, expediency, or as it allows for political instrumentalization. For example, when a violent act has been carried out or ordered by family or community members, denouncing the perpetrator or instigator can trigger conflicts. It may also happen that armed groups put populations directly or indirectly under pressure to ascribe certain acts to their enemies, whether the FARDC or other armed groups.⁷⁸ Such more politically motivated efforts to shape the 'facts' may also lead to the formulation of accusations despite evidence being ultra-thin. However, the tendency to attribute responsibility even in the absence of conclusive evidence may also result from the strongly felt need to give meaning to events and to search for reasons, explanations, and plausible narratives. Such sense-making processes are shaped by preconceived ideas and existing frameworks of reference, which influence both what is perceived to constitute 'evidence' and evaluations of its quality. Consequently, gaps in 'the truth' are filled with conjectures grounded in existing (conflict) narratives and representations, leading for example 'autochthonous' populations to sooner put the blame on Hutu or Tutsi soldiers from the FARDC than on Mai Mai from their own community, or the FARDC to suspect more readily the FDLR than youthful bandits from the village. In a sense, the HUNI is a screen on which each social agent can project the face of any perpetrator and any script of the events. In this manner, dis, mis and non-information importantly contribute to the (re)production of the antagonistic forms of identification that are an important driver of conflict dynamics in the Kivus.

Beni and Butembo : urban spaces filled with anonymous violence

A striking example of the workings and effects of the HUNI phenomenon was found in the cities of Beni and Butembo in the *Grand Nord* (partly case #1),⁷⁹ both of which have a large presence of military from different units. For example at the time of the field research, Beni counted the presence of a regular infantry battalion that fell under the Amani Leo operational structures, the air force at the airport, military from the central logistics base,⁸⁰ representatives of various military intelligence services like the T2 (intelligence department) of the 8th Military Region, the DSF (border intelligence agency), the National Intelligence Center (NIC),⁸¹ and personnel from the *auditorat* (military prosecutor's office), and occasionally the *Garde républicaine*. All of these services had different lines of command, and the fact that there was no overarching authority structure fostered competition and ill discipline. Not only did the lack of central command and control make units feel unsupervised, it also generated the impression that the risks of being identified as perpetrators were relatively low, as the blame could be shifted to other units. The resulting confusion was compounded by the circulation of 'free floating' military elements, or staff who are no longer attached to a unit. Important causes of this phenomenon are rapid and badly supervised rotations as well as lax controls on military movements in general, enabling the undetected presence of deserters and soldiers on medical leave or family visits who overstay their term. For example, in Beni, there had been five rotations of units from different brigades within a timespan of 1.5 years (between end 2008 and start 2010), and it was reported to happen regularly that soldiers of a rotated unit stayed behind.⁸² Both Beni and Butembo are important commercial centers that are full of revenue-generating opportunities, turning it into an attractive environment for members of the in/security services. Sometimes individual soldiers do not stay behind on their own initiative, but are acting on the orders of their commanders, who assign someone to take care of their business after having been redeployed. This also occurs in relation to officers who originate from the area, and who deploy personal assistants from within the military to look after

77 Stories of the dressing up of armed actors are also reported in the press. See for example, Radio Okapi, 'Shabunda: un militaire FARDC déguisé en FDLR accusé d'extorsions,' *Radio Okapi*, 26 July 2010; ACP/MCN, 'Sud-Kivu: Quelques militaires indisciplinés de FARDC déguisés en éléments des FDLR', *ACP/MCN*, 8 February 2012.

78 How armed groups and their supporters influence the circulation of narratives that discredit the government forces is described in relation to the Mai Mai in Fizi on p. 202.

79 This section is based on observations made during field research in Beni from 12–16.04.2010 and in Butembo from 27–30.04.2010. The insecurity in both these towns is also well documented by the bimonthly monitoring reports of the human rights organization *Groupe d'associations de défense de droits de l'homme et de la paix* (GADHOP) based in Butembo. See e.g., GADHOP (2009; 2010). For an overview of assassinations in the town of Butembo from January to July 2010, the perpetrators of which are in majority unidentified men in military uniform or FARDC soldiers, see Yotama and Somo Mwaka (2010).

80 According to an officer contacted on 15.04.2010 in Beni, the Central Logistics Base is a technical service of an estimated 2,000 personnel that falls directly under the general staff in Kinshasa. The military regions have limited authority over this service.

81 The NIC is further described on pp. 239–240.

82 The phenomenon of soldiers staying behind after rotations was also reported for Butembo. For instance, after being rotated in 2011, the former commander of the FARDC battalion deployed to the city left elements behind with the aim of taking care of his business. See Beni-Lubero Online, 'Maquillage des bandits. Fardc arrêtés au Quartier Kihinga/Butembo', *Beni-Lubero Online*, 19 February 2011.

their houses and businesses, or to gather intelligence. In addition to staff from various military units and other state in/security services like the police, a host of other armed actors were reported to be active in Beni and Butembo. In Beni, it was rumored that ex-officers from the *Armée patriotique du Congo* (APC, Patriotic Army of the Congo) the armed wing of the RCD/K-ML rebellion that controlled the area during the Second Congo War, had guarded some of their arms and uniforms.⁸³ Furthermore, in both cities, there appeared to be active and demobilized Mai Mai elements, some of whom allegedly had (guarded) the same uniforms as the FARDC. Finally, there were said to be substantial numbers of 'ordinary' armed bandits, who are not connected to armed forces, but operate in gangs or on an individual basis.

The presence of this hodgepodge of armed actors was believed to be one of the main reasons for the rampant insecurity that plagues Beni and Butembo. In both cities, armed robbery, assassinations, mistreatment, theft, pillage and extortion, an important share of which is alleged to be related to dispute processing, are the order of the day (and night). Since much of the violence is carried out at night, many people stay indoors after sunset. The in/security services were said to do little to stem this insecurity, or believed to actually make it worse. For instance, while night patrolling by the in/security services is regular, it was said to only worsen nighttime insecurity due to the misbehavior of the patrolling elements.⁸⁴ A policeman explained the situation as follows: 'Beni is a border and strategic town. There are many soldiers in town, it's an operational town. The military has profited from this place by sending many elements. No matter what military structure, it is present in Beni (...). But the multitude of units is confounding, there are many units who do not perform their mission as specialized units, they have no precise mission in the field. With non-established structures like logistics, they start to bother the population. Because they are there, they have to fend for themselves [*se débrouiller*]. This creates a situation of insecurity. The military, they are not controlled on the ground.'⁸⁵

In order to curb this insecurity, the mayor of Beni had initiated a number of measures in April 2009, such as the identification of all military staff and their dependents living in town, the obligation of commanders to check the *feuilles de routes* (official travel permission) of soldiers in transit or on leave, cantonnement of the military out of the city center, and finally, joint FARDC-PNC patrols.⁸⁶ The idea behind these patrols was that the different in/security agencies involved would exercise mutual control, creating a less permissive climate for abuses. However, in April 2010, at the time of the fieldwork, it appeared that these various measures had met with limited success, to the frustration of the civilian authorities. Military had not been cantoned out of town and controls had not been substantially reinforced.⁸⁷ Although the proposed joint police-military patrols had been initiated, they were said to have little effects. Policemen and soldiers continued to engage in crime and extortion in the course of patrolling duties, but now in collaboration. The only change was that an easy scapegoat had now been found, as the military had started to lay all the blame on the police. The PNC's main reaction to these accusations were counter-accusations, blaming bandits, 'free-floating' military elements, demobilized Mai Mai, or deserters, and sometimes alleging that the military deliberately dressed up in police uniforms in order to sow confusion. Due to the general lack of evidence, these counter-accusations had as little impact on identifying the perpetrators and stemming the insecurity as the FARDC's accusations. Thus, despite the risk of getting falsely accused, the generalized anonymity of perpetrators in Beni was ultimately useful to all armed actors involved. Not only did it lower the risks of being caught, the insecurity stemming from the resulting abuses and crime fuelled a demand for protection services, which granted armed actors the opportunity to reinforce their position.

The HUNI phenomenon is thus an important factor contributing to the insecurity in Beni and Butembo. However, it does not appear to be a sufficient explanation. In other cities, like Bukavu, there is also a large amount of different armed actors, including FARDC staff from various units, yet violence ascribed to HUNI, although certainly present, does not seem to reach the same elevated levels. So what explains its salience in Beni and Butembo? The presence of a hodgepodge of different armed actors and the advantages offered to them by the HUNI phenomenon (in particular the lower risks of getting caught) can be seen as an explanation on the 'supply side' of violent labor. However, since these advantages are similar in all contexts characterized by the presence of multiple different armed actors, there must be additional factors. It is my contention that these lie in the 'demand side' for violent labor. Beni and Butembo are important economic centers, with a high number of competing economic actors and commercial disputes, which are significant drivers of insecurity

83 Although relayed by various sources, the story of the ex-APC guarding arms and uniforms was difficult to verify, in particular the allegation that they were protected by the politician Mbusa Nyamwisi, supposedly keen on keeping his own 'reserve army'. In May 2012, a number of ex-APC were arrested in Beni on the accusation of committing crimes in town in collaboration with Mai Mai groups. This provides some, albeit by no means conclusive, evidence for the stories relayed during the fieldwork in 2010. See Radio Okapi, 'Affaire des ex-APC arrêtés à Beni: un député RCD-KML parle de manipulation', *Radio Okapi*, 3 June 2012.

84 This shows continuity with the Zaire era, when the in/security services similarly profited from their night time duties (Schatzberg, 1988: 58).

85 Interview with police commander, Beni, 14.04.2010.

86 Interview with mayor of Beni, 14.04.2010. See also Radio Okapi, 'Beni-Butembo : des patrouilles mixtes Police nationale FARDC et MONUC pour enrayer l'insécurité grandissante', *Radio Okapi*, 19 April 2009.

87 The disappointing results of efforts to reinforce control over the military prompted the military hierarchy a few months later to announce the demilitarization of both Beni and Butembo. All soldiers were to be redeployed out of town, leaving only the police to secure the cities, with a PM (Military Police) unit checking on military movements. See Radio Okapi, 'Le commandant d'Amani Leo annonce la démantèlement de Beni et Butembo,' *Radio Okapi*, 12 November 2010. This change was accompanied by the replacement of the units then in charge by well-identified units designated to carry out military operations (Operation Rwenzori), constituting an implicit recognition that the military authorities had lost track of the identity of military elements. See La République, 'Lutte contre les armes irrégulières: Les militaires FARDC de "Rwenzori" contrôlent Beni', *La République*, 18 November 2010.

(for Butembo, see Geenen, 2010). Due to the diminishing effectiveness of established civilian arbitration and enforcement mechanisms, in part as a result of increasing divisions and decreasing trust fostered by the wars (Raeymaekers, 2007: 128) and political changes in the post-settlement era (Verweijen, forthcoming c), it has become common for political-economic actors in this area to solicit the services of protection providers, including elements of the armed forces and other in/security services. That this takes on such elevated proportions in the *Grand Nord* might not only be the result of the mere existence of a large number of commercial disputes and political conflicts. Possibly, it also plays a role that violent enforcement and dispute processing have become institutionalized in this region, due to a long history of the violent regulation of commercial and other power conflicts. According to Vlassenroot and Van Acker (2001: 59), protection mechanisms involving armed actors were already widespread in Beni territory in the second half of the 1980s, when the FAZ manipulated communal conflicts in order to reinforce its economic grip. The Bangilima militias that would spring up shortly after also maintained ties to competing economic operators, who used them to reinforce their power position. Furthermore, in the 1990s, Banande business persons tried to strike deals with the disintegrating Zairian security forces in order to prevent them from turning to the massive looting that had occurred in a number of other cities in this era (Raeymaekers, 2007: 82–83). This long tradition of protection mechanisms involving armed actors has likely affected the structures of domination, signification and legitimation that are specific to the area of the *Grand Nord*, being at the root of the gradual institutionalization of coercion-based modes of channeling political, economic and personal competition and conflicts.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has explored civilian-military interaction in the domain of local (security and conflict) governance. This interaction either takes place between the FARDC and civilian authorities, or between the FARDC and other civilians. Both these sets of relations are commonly heavily imprinted by protection dynamics and oscillate between persuasion and coercion. Thus, civilian authorities can be both weakened and strengthened by the FARDC, depending on their relations to the military, to other authorities and big-men, and to their subjects. On the one hand, civilian authorities often suffer from imposition and encroachments upon their authority by the military. On the other hand, they may benefit from the FARDC's presence, by having their decisions enforced, enjoying enhanced security or by being able to further their own projects. Other civilians have a similar ambivalent relationship to the military: while they may suffer at the hands of 'shopping forums', like when the FARDC imposes itself on their disputes, when they go 'shopping' for forums themselves, they often address the FARDC for the processing of their conflicts. In some cases, this entails an explicit demand that this processing be violent. This practice creates ambiguities surrounding the motives for and sources of violence, since the involvement of civilian *commanditeurs* or instigators of the violence often remains unknown. This secrecy further contributes to the continual blurring between 'public' and 'private' that characterizes dispute processing in the Kivus, and that is a major source of ambiguity in civilian-military interactions. The effects of this blurring are ambivalent. On the one hand, it enhances civilians' possibilities for soliciting interventions in disputes, since various authorities will treat cases not within their jurisdiction or mandate, like private score settling. On the other hand, it facilitates the interference in and manipulation of all types of conflict by these same authorities, including the FARDC. The latter generally also uses the ambiguous distinction between 'public' and 'private' for justifying its practices, as part of wider efforts to obtain legitimacy by enacting and switching between social roles that are informed by either more public or more particularistic rationalities. This switching between various roles and corresponding norms, rationalities, and discourses is both an asset and a liability in processes of legitimation: while it extends the range of legitimizing resources that the FARDC can draw upon, it also makes its practices seem inconsistent, thus fostering the perception that they have not met with the expectations surrounding particular social roles. This again impacts civilians' evaluations of military practices, notably to what extent these are seen as licit or illicit. Such evaluations importantly shape civilians' agentic orientations vis-à-vis the military, in particular whether they will comply with its demands, contest them or rather seek collaboration.

Civilians' agentic orientations towards the military

IT IS A CENTRAL PREMISE OF THIS STUDY that civilians are not merely passive victims of the military, but are actively involved in shaping civilian-military interaction. This chapter analyzes civilians' agency vis-à-vis the military, studying its main forms and bases. It first distinguishes and describes the three main agentic orientations that civilians adopt towards the military, namely compliance, contestation and collaboration, and then discusses the four main foundations of each of these agentic positions, which are habituation, legitimacy (of projects and power), utilitarian considerations, and contingent consent/dissent, a compound form. Subsequently, the chapter zooms in on the form of agency that has thus far received the least attention, that of civilians' contestation of the military's power and practices. This allows for drawing conclusions on the most common bases of civilians' agency vis-à-vis the military, including the relative importance of coercion.

7.1 *Types and bases of civilians' agentic orientations vis-à-vis the military*

Civilians' agentic orientations towards the military are to an important extent shaped by evaluations of the military's practices and position of power, as informed by social structures and dynamics. For example, when civilians judge certain practices of the military to be illicit, the chances are higher that they will *not comply* with demands related to those practices, or *contest* the military in other ways. Where there is a serious threat of coercion, civilians might still *comply* with military demands considered illicit, but without consenting. Furthermore, in case civilians find the power of the military legitimate, they are more likely not only to comply with demands made by military staff, but also to actively *collaborate* with them. This may also occur when the military is not seen as legitimate, but collaboration appears useful, which is often the case where the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection are intense. In such situations, shorter-term time horizons and a disposition towards protection generally have important weight in shaping the ways in which civilians approach the military. As a result, civilians often prioritize access to revenue generation and dispute processing. Yet, considerations of a more *utilitarian* nature are rarely alone in shaping civilians' agency, for they commonly interact with other factors stemming from structures of legitimation, signification and domination, including (practical) norms. Consequently, in many cases, the projects, rationalities and evaluations informing civilians' agency are of a compound nature, encompassing factors like: evaluations of the trustworthiness of authorities, as based on their legitimacy and the credibility of their social role performances; the extent to which other civilians comply with the military's demands (ethical reciprocity); and more utilitarian considerations. However, occasionally a single project dominates, causing for example the legitimacy of an authority to take the upper hand in informing civilians' practices. Such dominance of a single factor is often found in forms of agency guided by routine practices. Routines imply that civilians comply with the military or not on the basis of *habituation*, thereby drawing primarily on practical consciousness. In the following, these various bases of civilians' agentic orientations towards the military, as well as these orientations themselves, will be discussed in more detail.

A typology of civilians' agentic orientations: compliance, collaboration and contestation

Compliance

Compliance is defined herein as a form of behavior that implies fulfilling a demand, in this case a demand placed upon civilians by the military. Compliance occurs for example when civilians pay the amounts demanded by soldiers at a roadblock, when they accept

that soldiers live in their house or hotel at reduced tariffs, or when they provide military staff with the requested information. As these examples make clear, compliance constitutes a process of short duration in which one party (the military) formulates a demand, and the other (civilians) honors it. However, while in itself of limited duration, compliance can take place repeatedly, and be the start of or embedded in other forms of interaction. Compliance generally contributes to the reproduction of the power position of the military, hence structures of domination, although the extent to which it does depends on its bases, or the projects, rationalities and evaluations informing it. Non-compliance is understood as the opposite of compliance, hence entailing the refusal of civilians to comply with demands made by the military, like not paying a contribution in kind when entering the market, refusing to lodge an officer with an expired *bon de logement*, or not indicating to a soldier in what direction the rebels went, despite his or her enquiry. Due to the risks involved in refusing to honor military demands, the agentic position of non-compliance is considered herein to fall under *contestation*.

Collaboration

In contrast to compliance, which is a response to a unilateral demand, collaboration is understood as a more interactive process in which civilians might (also) place demands on the military in order to further their projects, or which concerns jointly developed and/or executed projects in which civilians actively participate, or active assistance from civilians to the military. As a consequence, collaboration generally reinforces the military's position of power. Since commonly entailing repeated interactions, collaboration tends to be of a more durable nature than compliance, pointing sometimes (but not always) to a social relation. Collaboration is often informed by the rationalities of protection, in which case it has a more particularistic character. While compliance is usually generalized, concerning for example all road-users who pass a certain roadblock, it are generally only selective groups and individuals that actively collaborate with the FARDC. These may for example be parties to a dispute soliciting the military's intervention, a civilian who voluntarily alerts the military to a certain detour that people take in order to avoid passing a roadblock, or the social network of a particular civilian big-man who is involved in the production of charcoal together with the military.

Contestation

Contestation is defined herein as an agentic position that either relates to non-compliance, or the non-obedience of civilians with demands made by the military, or that involves more active efforts at resistance, implying that civilians take the initiative to protest against certain of the military's practices or certain units or figures within the military. Contestation may either be short term and consist of a one-time action, which is often, but not exclusively, the case with non-compliance, or be more durable and relate to repeated efforts, which points to more comprehensive and fundamental resistance. An example of relatively short-term contestation is a spontaneous protest of civilians in front of a military camp after a civilian has been shot down. More durable contestation would be a concerted campaign by the territorial administration, civil society and provincial members of parliament to have a certain brigade rotated, involving repeated lobbying at the provincial and perhaps national level. Yet such instances of long-term and consistent resistance are relatively scarce. As will be further explained below, in the context of the Kivus, contestation is rarely an absolute and permanent state, and the same social agents often alternate practices of contestation with those of compliance and collaboration. For that reason, the effects of practices of contestation on altering the military's position of power tend to be mitigated.

The bases of civilians' agentic orientations towards the military

In order to understand why and when citizens comply with the demands placed upon them by the government, Levi (1997) distinguishes four ideal-typical forms of citizen compliance, based on their underlying mechanisms and rationalities. These forms should not be seen as mutually exclusive, as they may overlap. In fact, as tends to be the case with ideal-types, these are stylized representations that are rarely found in a pure form in everyday life. In Chapter 2, it was explained that human agency is an inherently complex phenomenon that has three strands, respectively iteration, practical-evaluation and projectivity, which are always manifested simultaneously, although one dimension might dominate.¹ Similarly, the modes of reasoning and projects that form the bases of citizens' agency towards authorities are not mutually exclusive, but may be at play simultaneously, although one form may dominate over the others. This complexity is not entirely captured by Levi's typology, which has been slightly modified to make it compatible both with the conceptualization of agency that is employed herein, and the analysis of civilians' evaluations of the military's practices as grounded in the fieldwork findings. Levi (1997: 17–30) distinguishes the following bases of compliance: 1) habitual obedience, 2) ideological consent, 3) opportunistic obedience, and 4) contingent consent. As emerges from this categorization, some forms of compliance imply *consent*, or an evaluation that indicates agreement, whereas others are based on *obedience*, which points to compliance without consent. In the following, these categories, approached here as the bases for agentic orientations in general (hence not only for compliance), are further elucidated (see also Table 13 below).

¹ The chordal triad of agency was discussed on pp. 36–38.

Habituation

Habitual obedience refers to routine forms of compliance that are predominantly grounded in practical consciousness, and that are regulated by practical norms.² Hence this type of compliance does not induce evaluations of the imposing authority or the underlying policy that are grounded in discursive consciousness. Rather, it is primarily based on habituation to certain forms of social praxis, therefore drawing predominantly on the iterative dimension of agency. A good example is that of a cultivator of sweet potatoes who is used to leaving four sweet potatoes to soldiers at the entrance of the weekly market each time he or she attends it. Where this is an institutionalized practice, and a concrete instance of this practice does not deviate from the engrained script, it is likely to provoke little explicit reflexivity concerning whether the authority demanding the contribution is legitimate or what purpose the contribution serves. For instance, at markets where contributions in kind are levied alternately by rebels and FARDC soldiers, which sometimes occurs in zones of contested control, the identity of the person demanding the contribution may ultimately be of less relevance to the market-goer than the mode and style of taxation. When the latter correspond to custom, the seller in question will hand over the contribution simply because he or she is used to it, engaging each week in exactly the same practice.

The chance that there is an absence of reflexivity grounded in discursive consciousness, such as a comprehensive inquiry into what purpose the contribution serves, is generally higher where all those attending the market systematically pay the demanded contribution, without fundamental contestation. Such large-scale, ritualistic public compliance is not only a manifestation of, but also at the root of habitual obedience: it routinizes certain practices and inscribes them in practical consciousness, while their public nature causes them to have demonstration effects and to foster a sense of 'ethical reciprocity' (referring to the principle that citizens comply as long as others do so too, in this case also generating the idea that the burden is equally distributed since all market-goers have to pay). If all persons pay the contribution in kind, an individual farmer or trader will be less inclined to call the practice into doubt, but may consider it 'normal' and take it for granted.

Legitimacy-based consent or dissent

The second basis of compliance distinguished by Levi is ideological consent, defined as agreement based on ideological or moral principles and values, often referring to the nature of the collective good that an authority provides or the nature of the authority itself (Levi, 1997: 29). Hence this type of consent refers to an important extent to the legitimacy of power, especially the second dimension distinguished by Beetham (1991), that of beliefs about the common projects that power should support.³ Since the term 'ideology' was judged not to be an analytically useful concept in this context, the name for this type of agency has been changed into *legitimacy-based consent or dissent*, with legitimacy referring at once to common projects and power. Common projects, as relating to common goods, differ from particularistic projects, which are only to the benefit of some, although the boundaries between these two categories are as porous and shifting as the public/private distinction in general. In the case of the FARDC, common projects relate for example to the defense of the national territory, as manifested in the idea that the FARDC serves as a bulwark against foreign rebel groups, or to the fostering of peace and security for all. As described in Chapter 4, these notions occupy an important position in civilians' representations and expectations of the FARDC's mission.⁴ Yet, in a social order in which big-man networks are of great importance, what are seen as 'common goods' may also relate to particular communities as a whole, such as ethnically defined groups or an entire client-network. Furthermore, it often occurs that the general beliefs and principles defining the common projects that power should support mix and interact with more pragmatic considerations relating to one's personal situation. For example, a shop-owner may pay an *efforts de guerre* contribution both as he or she supports the FARDC's struggle to defend the fatherland and as this immediately reinforces his or her own security. In such cases, the line with utilitarian obedience (which refers to personal considerations of advantages and disadvantages) becomes thin.

Due to the focus on the status of authorities and common projects, legitimacy-based consent or dissent usually entails relatively explicit reflexivity that is grounded in discursive consciousness. As such, it often largely draws on the projective chord of agency. Furthermore, the importance of values and beliefs in the types of reasoning underpinning this form of agency makes that collective, public compliance is commonly of less importance, given that social agents prioritize their own commitment to the authority and project in question. However, given that collective compliance might convey the impression that a large amount of people find a certain authority or project legitimate, it indirectly influences the assessments of the individual social agent.

² As Levi (1997: 29) notes, where customary (habitual) obedience responds to a norm, hence a rule that is enforced by means of sanctions, it starts to overlap with 'opportunistic obedience' (herein called utilitarian obedience), since refusal entails risks. However, I believe that customary and utilitarian obedience can still be distinguished as they relate to two different modes of reasoning: while the first refers predominantly to practical norms, which are grounded in practical consciousness, the second relates to norms (and sanctions of violations thereof) connected to principles and values that are more strongly articulated in discursive consciousness.

³ Beetham's (1991) theory of the legitimation of power was discussed on p.40.

⁴ For expectations of the FARDC in relation to common goods such as territorial integrity and bringing peace, see pp. 111–113.

Utilitarian considerations

What Levi calls opportunistic obedience, which is labeled *utilitarian obedience* herein (cf. Etzioni 1975 [1961]: 23), is based on individual considerations of the advantages and disadvantages of compliance (or non-compliance). These notions should not be seen in exclusively material terms, but as concerning all the advantages and disadvantages that actors perceive certain courses of actions to have, including impacts on their social status and wellbeing. Utilitarian obedience is often the product of certain incentives created by possibilities for gain and the presence of mechanisms of monitoring or enforcement, such as social pressure by peers or threats of coercion by the authority demanding compliance. This implies that the decision to comply or not is generally not as much based on a reflexive evaluation of the legitimacy of the authority in question or the projects they pursue, but on expectations of how compliance will benefit or harm oneself and a small group of significant others (Levi, 1997: 18, 28, 30). While such reflexivity also includes considerations of future opportunities and threats, it is often strongly focused on the here and now, implying that the practical-evaluative chord of agency tends to dominate. Furthermore, the strong attention to personal advantages and benefits makes that collective, public compliance is generally of less importance, unless there is strong social pressure. Utilitarian obedience is for example manifested when house-owners accept the demand of an FARDC officer to reside in their house without paying since they anticipate using this officer to settle a personal dispute with their next-door neighbor. There would also be utilitarian obedience if the house-owner accepted the demand because the officer arrived with a following of heavily armed bodyguards who entered the house by demolishing the door, leaving no doubts about what would happen in the case of refusal.

Contingent consent or dissent

According to Levi (1997: 21–23), contingent consent is a compound form of obedience encompassing various types of evaluations and rationalities. It has three dimensions: first, evaluations of the trustworthiness of the authority demanding compliance; second, ethical reciprocity with other citizens placed under the same authority; and third, a notion of personal cost/benefit calculation that is similar to the reasoning that dominates in utilitarian obedience. Due to this combination of different types of reasoning and evaluations, contingent consent/dissent tends to strongly draw on both the projective and practical-evaluative chords of agency.

The first dimension, that of the trustworthiness of authorities, is to a large extent an outcome of the *credibility of authorities' commitments*.⁵ This credibility is considered herein to be largely shaped by both the *legitimacy* of authorities' power position and the credibility of their *social role performances*, as largely judged by the *outcomes* (including effects on security and livelihoods). The equity of the outcomes influences again evaluations of the *fairness of policymaking and implementation*, which is another important component of the credibility of commitment. Such evaluations of fairness are to a large extent shaped by assessments of respect for procedural and practical norms, notably concerning the enforcement of policy, and whether it is discriminatorily enforced or not. Certainly, the three components of the credibility of commitment (legitimacy, social role performance and fairness of policymaking and implementation) mutually interact and may therefore be mutually reinforcing. For instance, where figures of authority are seen to be legitimate and their policies are perceived to promote a crucial project, it is sooner believed that the implementation of their policies is fair. Inversely, where policies are seen to have been elaborated and implemented in an unfair manner, the authorities having developed them will sooner be seen as illegitimate. The second dimension of contingent consent, ethical reciprocity, was earlier described as the principle that individuals in a given population are more likely to comply with the demands of certain authorities as long as others do so too. By contrast, the chances that people comply will diminish whenever the amount of dissenters grows. Due to the specific nature of the production and diffusion of information in the Congo, as well as the types of information that circulate, there are limited possibilities to know with a certain level of certitude whether other citizens comply if this does not occur in public. Therefore, 'ethical reciprocity' is primarily understood herein as relating to public, collective compliance. The third dimension of contingent consent, a notion of personal cost/benefit calculation, has already been discussed in relation to utilitarian obedience. Such calculations become especially important when the costs of compliance are so high that they trump other considerations. For example, even if a civilian would find the demand of an FARDC officer to provide him or her with crucial security information legitimate, and has faith that the officer will use the information for directing military operations against a harmful rebel group, he or she would possibly refrain from complying if providing the information would bear a high risk of provoking potentially lethal retaliations from the side of the rebels.

An example of contingent compliance is when civilians would pay an *efforts de guerre* contribution to the FARDC in the following circumstances: first, the civilians (e.g., shopkeepers) feel that the collected money will contribute to reinforcing collective security (credibility of commitment, based on the legitimacy of the authorities and evaluations of their social role performance); second, the way of collecting money (the implementation of the policy) is believed to be fair (the burden is distributed equitably, and no shopkeepers are exempted) and complies with practical norms (e.g., the fee is demanded politely and not brutally); third, a critical mass of other civilians complies (ethical reciprocity, in this case implying all shopkeepers comply), and finally, compliance does not entail unbearably high

⁵ For Levi (1997: 21–23), the credibility of commitments is a function of institutions, in particular sanctions and reputational mechanisms, the effectiveness of which is conditional upon the availability of credible information. In the context of the Kivus, these institutions were seen to mostly relate to social roles, which imply reputational mechanisms based on role performance.

costs to the individual (e.g., when the amount would be so high that it would drive a shopkeeper out of business). If any of these factors would differ (e.g., only a few shopkeepers would comply, the individual costs would be high, the procedure would be judged unfair, the commitment of the authorities would not be seen as credible, and the common good to be attained would be seen as irrelevant), contingent dissent could have resulted. In sum, contingent consent or dissent bears elements of most of the other forms compliance, except for habituation. In the light of the complexity of human agency, which is rarely shaped by a single factor or rationality, this makes it a frequent basis of agency.

Table 13: The bases of civilians' agency vis-à-vis the FARDC (drawing on Levi 1997)

Habituation	Legitimacy-based consent/dissent	Utilitarian considerations	Contingent consent/dissent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical consciousness • Routine practices • Respect for practical norms • Iterative chord agency • Public collective compliance reinforcing factor, not crucial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discursive reflexivity on values/beliefs • Legitimacy authority & common projects • Projective chord agency • Public collective compliance indirect importance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discursive reflexivity on personal (dis) advantages • Threats of coercion important • Practical-evaluative chord agency • Public collective compliance important where social pressure exists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discursive reflexivity • Trustworthiness authorities (legitimacy, fairness procedures) • Personal (dis)advantages • Practical-evaluative & projective chords of agency • Public collective compliance important (but less for collaboration)

The multiplicity and fluidity of the bases of agency

Although agency often rests on various bases and therefore has a compound character, not all compliance or non-compliance is informed by contingent consent/dissent. There is an important difference with agency grounded in habituation, which is primarily induced by routines and draws upon practical consciousness. Contingent consent/dissent also clearly differs from legitimacy-based agency, where appreciation for authorities and/or the common projects they pursue trump all other considerations, implying that an assessment of for instance the fairness of procedures or personal risks plays almost no role. This is however exceedingly rare in the Kivus, an environment characterized by rampant poverty and insecurity, where distrust towards authorities is institutionalized and conflicts create an elevated awareness of the fairness of policies and their implementation. There are also clear differences between contingent consent/dissent and agency grounded in utilitarian considerations, since in the latter case concern for one's personal position trumps other rationalities and evaluations. Hence, within utilitarian-based agency, reasoning on the legitimacy of the involved authority, what purposes the policy serves, or how it is implemented are second-order concerns.

The bases of civilians' agency towards the military are not necessarily stable, for one form can change into another. For instance, frequent and large-scale utilitarian compliance may ultimately become habitual obedience that is engrained in practical consciousness; or compliance that started out of consent can become utilitarian when this consent is withdrawn and the risks of non-compliance rise due to threats of coercion. The bases of agency may also shift under the weight of changes in the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. As we have seen in relation to evaluations, these dynamics tend to reinforce the relative importance of utilitarian considerations, often to the detriment of those related to the legitimacy of authorities' power and projects. In sum, agency is commonly a product of multiple factors, which are shaped by at once social structures and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. The analysis having thus far mostly focused on compliance, which occupies center stage in Levi's theory, the two other agentic orientations, namely collaboration and contestation, will now briefly be discussed.

For Kalyvas (2006: 101), civilian collaboration with armed actors is the outcome of 'a dynamic, shifting, fluid and often inconsistent confluence of multiple and varying preferences and constraints', with commitments resulting from 'varying combinations of persuasion and coercion'. This corroborates the conclusion, made on the basis of the fieldwork, that civilians' collaboration with the FARDC rests predominantly on either contingent consent or utilitarian considerations. This implies that habituation as grounded in practical consciousness has little explanatory value: the active contribution that collaboration entails makes that it generally rests on deliberative decisions that are grounded in discursive consciousness. Evaluations concerning the credibility of authorities' commitments or the fairness of decision-making and implementation procedures, and utilitarian cost/benefit analyses all require extensive and explicit reflections. Furthermore, in contrast to compliance based on contingent consent, for collaboration resting on the same basis, the component of ethical

reciprocity (whether other civilians collaborate or not) is not always of importance, since collaboration may also take place on a more particularistic basis. That said, where collaboration takes place in public, it may have demonstration effects. For instance, in a situation where an important part of the population has close ties to a rebel group that is increasingly resented, the decision of a local leader to openly collaborate with the FARDC may send a strong signal and convince others to collaborate too. However, in many cases, collaboration does not take place in the open. This is for example the case where it primarily concerns business matters or where information of collaboration with the FARDC might provoke retaliations by competing armed actors. This shows that similar to (non)compliance based on contingent consent/dissent, when the risks are very high, the 'utilitarian' component of contingently grounded collaboration tends to become salient, which is often the case where the dynamics of conflict, protection and insecurity are particularly intense.

Utilitarian considerations may also be pronounced where collaboration primarily concerns protection relations. When civilians are linked to military staff through protection ties, the risks of non-collaboration may be considerable, as it can be seen as a violation of the reciprocity on which protection relations rest. This may even provoke military staff to take revenge on those not honoring their obligations, highlighting that collaboration may also take place under coercion. Moreover, once collaborative ties with the military have been established, it becomes increasingly difficult for civilians to withdraw, in part since collaboration allows civilians to develop substantial knowledge of the military, and divulging this to opposing factions is potentially dangerous. Thus, there is often an element of path-dependency in collaboration that undermines the voluntary nature of initial collaboration. Protection-related pressures to collaborate may also arise not from military patrons or clients but from civilian networks: for instance, where a civilian big-man opts for collaboration with certain military actors, the members of his or her network may be obliged to follow out of loyalty.

In relation to contestation, the bases for this agentic orientation tend to differ depending on whether it concerns non-compliance or more elaborate resistance. Non-compliance often draws strongly on practical consciousness, for example when a civilian refuses a demand made by the military primarily because the action does not respect the practical norms. However, other forms of contestation commonly stem from intense reflexive evaluation as grounded in discursive consciousness. In such cases, contestation often implies a lack of agreement (hence dissent), although it may also have primarily utilitarian grounds. When involving dissent, the bases of contestation are commonly heterogeneous: it may for example stem from a perceived lack of credibility of the FARDC's commitments, as related to a lack of legitimacy of its power and disappointing outcomes of its social role performances, or stem more from the perceived unfairness of the implementation of its measures, for example when these are seen to be selectively enforced. Utilitarian grounds of contestation often center on the effects on individual livelihoods and security. For example, where the military tries to establish a monopoly on poaching, local poachers may protest, as this entails a major threat to their main source of income. Furthermore, contestations of the FARDC may be provoked where there are direct threats to people's security, for instance as a result of strong pressures from armed groups. However, considerations related to protection relations may also play a role in informing utilitarian-based contestation. For instance, civilians may contest a certain military unit primarily because that unit has disadvantaged the big-man to which they are linked and they feel pressure to demonstrate their loyalty.

Following Scott (1985: 289–303), it is argued that individual, unorganized acts that some would label 'self-interested' since centering on immediate material gain or the avoidance of material loss, may also qualify as acts of contestation, at least if they occur at a large scale. Scott's observations on peasant resistance are insightful in this respect, and partly apply to both the rural and the urban poor in the Kivu: 'We need assume no more than an understandable desire on the part of the peasant household to survive-to ensure its physical safety, to ensure its food supply, to ensure its necessary cash income-to identify the source of its resistance to the claims of press gangs, tax collectors, landlords, and employers. To ignore the self-interested element in peasant resistance is to ignore the determinate context not only of peasant politics, but of most lower-class politics' (idem: 295). It follows that 'self-interested' material needs are often at the heart of struggles with dominant groups, which commonly revolve around the appropriation of labor, property, and production. This applies no less to the struggles between the FARDC and civilians. Civilians may for example challenge the FARDC's power by refusing to carry luggage over long distances, or by haggling about the price for a motor-taxi ride or the quality of the flour to be donated. Certainly, these everyday forms of contestation are not part of an organized, conscious, collective plan 'to overthrow the system of domination'. Rather, much of civilians' efforts are geared towards, to paraphrase Hobsbawm (1973: 11), 'working the system to their minimum disadvantage', and often blend with forms of compliance, or are interspersed with moments of collaboration. Yet in as much as efforts at 'working the system' show disagreement with the military's claims and undercut its material base, although usually only in a cumulative and limited manner, these practices qualify as forms of contestation.

From the above discussion, it follows that similar to collaboration, the bases of contestation are often either contingent, implying that various rationalities and projects interact, or primarily utilitarian. Where contestation is contingent, the dimension of ethical reciprocity (the practices of other civilians) often plays an important role. Massive, open contestation has demonstration effects and impacts norm enforcement, for if everyone takes part of contentious action, the social pressure on those staying behind will rise. Furthermore, it affects utilitarian considerations since the risks for each participant individually become smaller. Massive participation may therefore contribute to a shift in the bases of contestation, making these more utilitarian. Such shifts in grounding may again impact the effects that practices of contestation produce on the FARDC's power position, notably the structures of domination underpinning this position: where contestation is primary driven by utilitarian considerations, the cumulative effects on the transformation of structures of domination may be less than when contestation stems from fundamental (legitimacy-based) dissent.

In sum, civilians can assume a range of agentic orientations vis-à-vis the military, which are either related to shorter-term interactions or longer-term social relations. Most of the times, these orientations are of a complex, contingent nature, as they draw on various types of reasoning, projects and evaluations. This has already been illustrated in the previous two chapters, which discussed practices of compliance and collaboration in the political-economic domain and other spheres of local governance, including collaboration taking place in the framework of protection relations. It was for instance explained how the FARDC intervenes in dispute processing upon civilians' request, which is a form of collaboration, or how certain civilian authorities maintain elaborate protection relations with the FARDC, as illustrated with the case of the 652nd brigade and certain civilian authorities in Minembwe.⁶ In respect of compliance, we have seen many examples in relation to extractive practices, for instance how civilians comply with food collections, roadblock taxation or the demand for free transport services or accommodation.⁷ These examples highlighted the various elements that shape the ways in which civilians evaluate these interactions with the military, including habituation (routinization), respect for (practical and procedural) norms, the legitimacy of the involved military staff, and the fulfillment of expectations related to social roles. Consequently, the rationalities, evaluations and projects informing civilians' compliance and collaboration with the FARDC have been amply illustrated. This is much less the case for contestation, in particular comprehensive resistance. Up to now, only a few cases illustrative of this agentic orientation have been described and analyzed in detail, and most of these focused on non-compliance, like refusals of hospital and hotel staff to accept military clients.⁸ Therefore, further attention to civilians' contentious practices is warranted.

An additional reason for further analyzing contestation is that this will not only provide more insight into the modes of reasoning and projects involved in this form of agency, but will also foster a better understanding of the whole spectrum of civilians' agentic orientations towards the military and their bases, in particular the role of coercion therein. The frequency and nature of contestation, for instance whether it is more or less public and whether it concerns more or less visible everyday practices, may indicate the level of dissent harbored by civilians and how much space there is for its public expression (cf. Scott, 1990: 195–197). This may again provide insight into the extent to which compliance stems from coercion, hence is primarily based on utilitarian considerations of risk-avoidance. Where there is space for the open manifestation of dissent, there may be less coercive pressure on people to comply with the demands of the dominant. The study of contestation is especially illuminating when juxtaposed to the analysis of other agentic orientations. When practices of contestation occur in the same area or are enacted by the same group as practices of collaboration, there are some indications that overall levels of coercion could be relatively low and that collaboration might therefore occur on a relatively voluntary basis. For example, when many civilians try to enlist the military for settling personal conflicts, but this practice is strongly and openly condemned and refused by other actors in the same context, there are signs that utilitarian considerations may be a primary driver of this form of collaboration. Hence, an inventory of civilians' repertoires of contestation will not only provide insight into the grounds for and mechanisms leading up to contestation, but also shine further light on collaboration and compliance.

7.2 *Repertoires of the civilian contestation of military power*

Although two decades of militarization have normalized the presence of armed actors in the Kivus, their position and practices continue to be strongly contested (see also Iñiguez de Heredia, 2013: 257–260). Civilians from all layers of the population formulate strong criticism on the FARDC, sometimes surprisingly open. Understandably, this criticism focuses first and foremost on blatant acts of abuse, like murder, rape and forms of violent extraction. However, civilians' comments also reflect a clear awareness that 'things are not as they should be' in respect of other dimensions of the FARDC's practices. Throughout the Kivus, civilian authorities complain about the military's recurring interference with their work, economic operators widely denounce the FARDC's irregular involvement in business activities, and administrative services lament the military's refusal to pay taxes, obtain licenses or comply with other legislation. This indicates that aside from condemnations of individual acts of abuse (e.g., a certain case of murder or rape), people also cast doubt on the principles and mechanisms underlying specific military practices, including the legitimacy of its position of dominance. In some cases, these doubts are voiced in ethnic terms, like when people deny certain groups within the FARDC legitimacy based on their Rwandophone origins.⁹ Such identity-based considerations may be an important factor prompting civilians to engage in contestation, especially when they are linked to armed groups who appeal to anti-Rwandophone/Tutsi discourses to justify their armed activity. These framings influence the grids of intelligibility of the civilian support networks of these groups, who may therefore come to formulate similar criticism on the FARDC. Furthermore, due to their links with armed actors, they may also feel bolstered to translate this opposition into acts of resistance.

In general, contestation does not remain limited to discursive practices: acts of resistance against military power and claims abound among all layers of the population. These acts assume very different forms: they may be individual or collective, official or non-official, 'public' (e.g., manifestations) or 'private' (e.g., striking an informal deal), legal or illegal, violent or non-violent, everyday (e.g., bargaining) or incidental (e.g., mob justice) (cf. Scott, 1985: 299; Iñiguez de Heredia, 2013). The following exploration of repertoires of civilians' contestation of the FARDC's power discusses the most frequent categories of discursive and social practices of contestation. It starts

6 The collaboration of the Minembwe authorities and the 652nd brigade was described on pp. 172–173.

7 Many of these examples of compliance relate to the extractive practices presented in Chapter 5.

8 Examples of non-compliance were for instance given on p. 147 and p. 148.

9 Ethnic framings of the FARDC by civilians were discussed on pp. 113–115.

with a discussion of forms of contestation implicating relatively large groups and broad layers of the population. This concerns both everyday resistance, including non-compliance, which often takes place on an individual basis, and collective popular protests, like manifestations, boycotts and violent mob action. Subsequently, it looks at more targeted protests by specific groups, like local authorities, civil society organizations, and professional associations like the FEC (Federation of Congolese Enterprises). Lastly, it is discussed why much contestation takes place informally rather than via official channels, which paves the way for a more comprehensive analysis of civilians' agency towards the military.

7.2.1 *Everyday contestation*

As Foucault remarked, resistance is at the heart of power: 'Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' (Foucault, 1978: 95). Hence, contestation is inherent to the exercise of power, implying that everyday civilian-military interaction always bears traces of civilians' efforts to challenge the FARDC's position and projection of power, although in some cases these efforts are more pronounced than in others. As part of everyday interaction, micro-practices of contestation, which take place on an individual basis and are often fine-grained, should be distinguished from those that involve collective action specifically targeted at protest. Although less spectacular, such everyday practices are not necessarily less effective, as they are engaged in at a massive scale. Yet their effects on structures of domination are often little visible, since gradual and cumulative.

Negotiations and bargaining

Bargaining and negotiations are essential features of almost all dimensions of social, economic and political processes in the Congo (Englebert and Tull, 2013). Whether it concerns national-level policymaking, dispute processing at the village level, or the distribution of an inheritance or land within families, the involved parties will do their utmost to influence the outcomes via bargaining and negotiations. 'Bargaining' is understood herein as haggling, or the continuous play of offers/arguments and counter-offers/arguments that takes place in face-to-face encounters. 'Negotiations' relate to a broader and more fundamental process of conflictual consensus-making, which commonly surpasses one-time face-to-face encounters, although these tend to be a key part of the negotiation process. While bargaining and negotiations have assumed an almost ritualistic character in the Congo, this does not imply that they are token activities, of which the outcomes are determined in advance. Even in the face of significant power asymmetries, there is commonly still an often fleeting margin of potential influence on the subordinate side. This also applies to processes of negotiations and bargaining that take place between citizens and state services, which often revolve around the total costs of service fees and taxes to be paid, the issuing of permits, licenses and concessions, or (the implementation of) policy decisions and judgments (Rubbers and Gallez, 2012; Trefon, 2009). Civilians' interactions with the military are no exception to this, and many of the demands the FARDC places upon civilians, whether in relation to fees, contributions, labor duties or services, are met with efforts to lower the demanded amounts or alter the conditions, through both bargaining and negotiations.

Depending on the circumstances and the individual, it was observed that civilians can be surprisingly tenacious vis-à-vis the military in the course of bargaining processes. This was for example seen among *motards*, many of whom are young men mired in the culture of machismo that characterizes this profession. *Motards* generally adopt an assertive attitude towards the military, for example refusing to make a trip if military staff do not pay for the fuel in advance. Furthermore, they regularly engage in bold and risky actions of contestation. For instance, one *motard* explained how he had once refused to take a soldier on the return trip, leaving him behind at the destination of the outward journey, since the soldier turned out to lack the money to pay for half of the fuel halfway, as they had convened.¹⁰ Corrective action when the outcomes of initial bargaining are not respected was also observed in other cases, indicating that civilians see non-respect of the agreed upon terms of exchange as a clear violation of the norms surrounding economic and social transactions. Such 'bargaining from below' may circumscribe the military's room for maneuver, depending on the practices concerned, the scale at which it occurs and civilians' power position, but also their tenacity and talent for bargaining.

One of the factors that strongly influences civilians' bargaining performance – including what propositions and counterpropositions they make, how much they contest and what arguments and rhetorical style they use – are their estimations of how dangerous or useful a certain soldier, officer or unit may be in the future. Conform the imperatives of social navigation (as was explained in Chapter 2),¹¹ civilians' dealings with the military are strongly influenced by concerns not only to seize upon opportunities and minimize risk in the here and now, but also to manage relations and situations with an eye to the future. This often implies taking a cautious line during bargaining processes, while striving to keep as many options open as possible: you never know who you will need in what capacity in some future situation, or what potential dangers might cross your path. The importance of anticipating future risks and benefits was evidenced by

¹⁰ Informal conversation with *motard*, Fizi centre, February 2012.

¹¹ The notion of social navigation was explained on p. 38.

often-heard statements like ‘the military never forgets’, ‘once I will meet this soldier on an isolated stretch of road, I will get an accident’,¹² or ‘the military can always return to take revenge one day’. This indicates that even when there are no immediate threats, the fear for consequences in the long term strongly shapes civilians’ practices of contestation. This does not only apply to potential hazards, but also to anticipated opportunities. For example, when explaining why he accepted to transport one more soldier for free, even though the usual maximum had already been reached, a truck driver at the parking of Kirumba said: ‘You never know, maybe you once end up in a situation where this soldier is the only one to help you’.¹³ This relative flexibility was also found among other persons who regularly frequent dangerous and isolated zones: aware that in case of trouble, the military might be the only actor who can provide assistance, and that the military often engages in banditry itself, they are disposed towards maintaining good relations with the FARDC, which impacts the extent to and ways in which they engage in contestation.

The quotes presented above demonstrate that Kivutians tend to apply a subtle type of self-censorship when negotiating or bargaining with the military, for reasons of both fear and expediency. While this limits their possibilities for exercising influence in the present, it often increases future opportunities, since enabling civilians to expand their range of contacts. Such self-censorship is also useful for FARDC staff in that it allows them to forego explicit and direct threats; instead, they can play into the representations and expectations that civilians have of the military, as well as civilians’ capabilities for imagining future courses of action and their susceptibility to utilitarian modes of reasoning. Consequently, when intimidation occurs –especially in the course of bargaining– it may be covert and very subtle. In many cases, intimidation does not hinge as much on verbal expressions of threat as on ambiguities, signs conveyed by gestures, and words unspoken. Surely, this does not mean that blatant, overt and direct threats by the military never occur: after all, FARDC staff usually have a gun at hand, and only need to display it conspicuously to send a message of intimidation that potentially stifles contestation. To a certain extent, such direct forms of intimidation enable the more covert forms, as they serve as a reminder of what *could* happen, should civilians not accept the courses of action proposed by the military. However, explicit and crude forms of intimidation appear to be less frequent than the more subtle varieties, which tend to leave a somewhat wider margin for civilian influence.

Non-compliance

In some cases, civilians refuse to negotiate in the first place, outright rejecting military demands, and thus engaging in non-compliance. For instance, it was once observed at the Major Vangu roundabout in Bukavu, where a part of the minibuses to Uvira leave, how a clerk of a minibus company refused to accept a soldier as passenger since he lacked 900FC (less than \$1, and just under a sixth of the total amount of a ticket).¹⁴ A lengthy discussion of over 45 minutes followed, but the ticket seller did not yield, perhaps because the initial tone of the soldier was more begging than menacing. When explaining he lacked the full amount, he had asked for pity since he had travelled to Bukavu to visit a sick family member and now lacked the money to return to his unit.¹⁵ Another case of outright refusal was observed in a restaurant in a rural area, where the owner rejected the demand of a soldier to give him a small amount of salt. Although explaining he was on his way to a very isolated location and had forgotten to bring it from town, the owner felt no pity.¹⁶ Such instances of non-compliance do not seem isolated events. In the course of the fieldwork, it was for instance observed how determined civilian women refused soldiers a free *ndazi* (beignet); how elderly men in a village denied soldiers passing by some of their *mungazi* (palm wine); how young men refused to carry a heavy bunch of bananas, as demanded by a platoon commander, and how a female owner of a house rejected a demand from officers to move in there. While in several of these cases, the military’s demands were more that of daring foot soldiers just trying their luck, in others, it involved officers who tried to apply pressure.

Although the widely varying circumstances in which the described cases of non-compliance occurred do not allow for drawing definite conclusions, they do provide some indications that there is no all-pervasive fear for the military nor unequivocal and immediate repression of all forms of dissent. That said, outright refusal is certainly not without risks. While bargaining indicates an-albeit sometimes minimal-willingness to comply, outright rejection communicates a stronger message of dissent, since it casts doubt on the very legitimacy of the claims that are made. It can therefore arrive as a slap in soldiers’ face, and, especially among those who are hot-tempered or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, provoke a fierce reaction. This may include the detention, torture, and in rare cases, death of the

12 Aside from the doctor who tried to protest against the unpaid medical bill mentioned on p. 148, another striking case in which anticipated dangers were invoked concerned a driver of a truck with humanitarian aid. On his way back from the interior, he was asked to transport a large amount of soldiers, since his truck was empty and the FARDC was about to embark on a rotation. While he could have called his headquarters (from a Western NGO) and ask them to apply pressure from above on the military, he preferred to comply, stating that he would need to travel again through this (isolated) zone, allowing the unit deployed there to easily take revenge in the case of refusal.

13 Interview with truck driver, Kirumba, 06.05.2010.

14 Observations made at *Place Major Vangu* on 21.01.2011.

15 Eventually the problem was solved by my offer to pay the missing 900FC. While it is possible that the ticket-seller anticipated this reaction, I was absent during a large part of the discussion, waiting outside next to the minibus. It is therefore not certain whether it was my presence that induced the persistence of his refusal.

16 Observations made in Sebele on 15.12.2011.

recalcitrant. To give an indication, the human rights database consulted for this research¹⁷ lists the following incidents related to non-compliance (authors' translation from French):

- On 06/04/10, around 8am at X, at the level of the roadblock, the victim was detained by soldiers of the 651st brigade for not having given money to the soldiers there
- On 03/06/10, around 6am locally at X, the victim was detained by soldiers of the 651st brigade for having refused to remove the grass in the military camp (position)
- On 16/07/10, at 10am, the victim was tortured by FARDC of the 214th battalion for not having accepted to give them the ration in terms of the forced collection of foodstuffs
- Around 7am, at X, this 04/02/10, the victim was tortured because he or she resisted the extortion of his ducks by not otherwise identified soldiers of the 86th brigade

These examples show that the outright refusal to comply carries elevated risks for civilians. From this perspective, it is understandable that when contesting military claims, many therefore rather opt for evasion, avoidance, dodging, trickery or deceit.

Trickery, hiding and avoidance

The resourcefulness, inventiveness and discursive flexibility displayed by the Congolese in their daily struggles for survival and social mobility have astonished many an observer (e.g., de Villers et al., 2002; Trefon, 2004). In complex and ever-shifting social terrains like the Kivus, wit and ingenuity play a central role within social navigation, for the dominant and dominated alike (cf. Vigh, 2006). Especially for those facing enemies that are too strong to be confronted directly, cunning and cleverness are crucial tools in the resistance kit. It may therefore be little surprising that many popular stories on civilians who have resisted or evaded claims of the FARDC are characterized by a celebration of guile and wit, resembling the trickster tales found in popular cultures around the world.¹⁸ Mastering the arts of pretending, dodging, dissimulation, and creative manipulation, the trickster tries to seize upon his or her opponents' weaknesses to outwit or outmaneuver them. Similarly, civilians in the Kivus narrate- often not without considerable pride- stories of how they tricked or dodged the FARDC. For example, a manager of a field base of a humanitarian organization proudly told how he had dodged the forced transportation of ammunition in one of the organization's vehicles. When officers asked him for assistance with the transportation of materiel, he had felt a strong distress. On the one hand, he did not want to violate the humanitarian principles he had been taught by the organization, which prohibit the facilitation of any kind of armed activity. On the other hand, he wanted to maintain good relations with the FARDC brigade in his area of operations, since his NGO was working on a road rehabilitation project in an isolated and insecure area. Therefore, he initially accepted to transport the ammunition, soon afterwards pretending that the engine of his car broke down. He even put up a whole performance of subsequently trying to fix it and then finally asking some young men to push the car back to the NGO base.¹⁹ Another telling anecdote was retold by smugglers working independently from the military (hence without their protection). They explained that in certain areas they would move in pairs of a man and a woman, so that if they would encounter an FARDC soldier in the bush, they could pretend making love, in this manner preventing suspicion.²⁰

Aside from feigning or telling untruths, civilians' stories of tricking the military often feature the hiding of objects.²¹ One of the most commonplace situations in which civilians resort to hiding is in the course of road travel: due to rampant insecurity and omnipresent banditry and extortion, Kivutians have developed elaborate systems of hiding valuables during travel, including transporting jewelry and gold in orifices. This helps reduce losses in the case of ambushes or other forms of highway robbery, as well as when confronted with 'rogue roadblock extortion' by the FARDC.²² Preventive hiding also seems widespread ahead of rotations of military units with a bad reputation. When informed of an upcoming rotation, civilians try to carefully hide their belongings within their house, or sometimes in the surrounding bush, lest some item catches the eye of a soldier passing by. In villages in Fizi along an important road, it was observed how a rotation led mothers to order their children to catch all chickens and put them in the house, and the owners of bicycles to hide these in the bush, hoping to avoid that they would be seized by soldiers tired of walking.

17 See footnote 73 on p. 185 for more information on this database.

18 Contrary to Bayart, who sees the prominence of trickster tales as revelatory of certain 'African characteristics' (2006[1989]: 298–299, 310–311), I assume with Scott (1990: 162–163) that it concerns a remarkably cross-cultural phenomenon that finds great resonance among subordinate groups around the globe.

19 Interview with employee of humanitarian NGO, Fizi territory, December 2010.

20 Interview with smugglers, Rutshuru territory, January 2012.

21 One such case of hiding has already been presented, namely the anecdote of the customary chief who hid bottles of beer in his house in order to avoid giving one to a visiting officer. See p. 137.

22 The phenomenon of 'rogue roadblock extortion', involving military staff abusing their position by demanding disproportional amounts and following deviant procedures, was described on p. 138.

Hiding may also concern persons, rather than things. In Baraka, a high-ranking wounded Mai Mai officer (a colonel) was encountered in a private house close to the center of town, at a stone's throw from a road leading to an FARDC camp. Indeed, a movement like the Mai Mai Yakotumba in Fizi can only exist due to widespread collaboration from civilians. The latter provide assistance in numerous ways, including by giving food, shelter, information, medicine, batteries, and phone credits to combatants, and by helping them to move around unnoticed in FARDC controlled territory (Verweijen, forthcoming b). This assistance, which does not preclude certain forms of collaboration with the FARDC,²³ also includes withholding crucial information about Mai Mai movements, telling lies to the FARDC if necessary, and hiding people and objects. This elaborate system of collective dissimulation made it for instance possible that the *état-major* of the Mai Mai Yakotumba, which tends to be mobile, was camping for weeks on a row at less than two hours of walking from an FARDC position, as was discovered during a visit to the leadership of this group. The presence of such a comprehensive hidden network within FARDC-controlled terrain powerfully illustrates the erraticism of the FARDC's systems of monitoring, surveillance, and intelligence, as will be further discussed in Part III. These same weaknesses also enable civilians to organize and engage in contestation, or to simply avoid contact with the FARDC, including by using detours not known to non-locals.

Knowing the local environment generally much better than soldiers, at least when the latter are not from the area, civilians use a variety of methods to avoid encountering the military. For example, women in Fizi territory told how they would wade through the river in order not to have to cross the bridge where an FARDC checkpoint is located.²⁴ Similarly, high school students on the *Hauts Plateaux* explained how they went to school passing a different hill than usual, since an FARDC position had been erected on the standard route, and they expected trouble when passing it.²⁵ When making detours is not possible, or seen as an insufficient guarantee, and the risks of encountering soldiers are estimated to be elevated, civilians might reduce their movements, or avoid them altogether. Risky trips to towns or markets are minimized, circulation after dusk is avoided, and women no longer move around alone, going to their fields or collecting firewood in small groups. In extreme cases, people even stop cultivating entirely, not only due to the risks of movements, but also as they fear the harvest will be stolen from their fields. The short and long-term livelihoods impacts of such practices of avoidance are devastating. Reduced food production sets in motion a downward spiral, since it leads to higher prices for agricultural products, less market activity, a slowing down in the circulation of money, and a reduction in the trade of non-food products. Therefore, such measures of avoidance only tend to be taken when the dynamics of conflict and security reach extreme intensity.

Irony

Discourse is an important site of contestation, allowing for such practices as ridiculing the powerful, desecrating them by means of gossip, undoing official rhetoric, conveying covert messages through euphemisms, fomenting dissent by spreading rumors, or symbolically inverting power relations or values through tales and allegories (Scott, 1990: 138–172). Civilians in the Kivus use the full range of this discursive repertoire to comment on, cope with, and contest the oppressive weight of military extraction and abuses (Iñiguez de Heredia, 2013: 168–191). As we have seen, civilians give nicknames to badly behaving brigades, like *Kisanola* and *Fyekafyeka*,²⁶ allowing them to express collective disapproval. This type of nicknaming reflects a lowering of respect, while the comic or ironic element eases some of the frustration caused by the abuses to which people are subjected. Nicknames are also created for individuals and smaller units. In a mining site in Lugushwa (Mwenga), the team of the T2 of the 10th Military Region, who engaged in the large-scale collection of illegal taxes, was locally called the 'harassment unit' instead of the 'intelligence unit' (UNSC, 2010: 60). Similarly, in Buma, on the Ubwari peninsula, the population called a certain local policeman *cents dollars*, as all he did was arresting people and then the first thing he would say was 'cents dollars'.²⁷ In Misisi, human rights defenders called the *inspecteur de l'auditorat* (inspector of the military prosecutor's office), the *tracasseur de l'auditorat* (harasser of the military prosecutor's office), reflecting what was said to be his primary occupation.

Plays with names can also relate to the official designations of military operations, constituting a commentary on their effects or perceived purposes. For example, the Kimia II operations (with 'Kimia' meaning 'silence' in Swahili) were widely interpreted as being intended to 'shut up' the population, or to admonish them to 'keep quiet' about the committed abuses. The 'Amani Leo' (peace today) operations were generally called 'Amani Kesho' (peace tomorrow), as they were seen as failing to bring peace (see also Iñiguez de Heredia, 2013: 188). For many people, these operations were also viewed as part of a wider 'Rwandan invasion scheme' linked to the plot to 'balkanize' the Congo. This led to the increased circulation of the long-standing joke of calling the FARDC '*Forces armées Rwandaises en RDC* (Rwandan armed forces in the DRC)'. A similar resurgence was detected for the joke of stating that the abbreviation of the president's political party PPRD (*Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et la démocratie*) signifies *Petit à petit le Rwanda domine* (little by little Rwanda dominates). Aside from such ethnically tinged wordplays, jokes in relation to the FARDC also refer to its weaknesses and abysmal functioning, as powerfully expressed in twisting the abbreviation 'FARDC' to *phare décès* (French for 'dead beacon'), as seems common in the western Congo (Van Reybrouck, 2011: 494).

23 On p. 336 it is further explained how civilians may simultaneously collaborate with nominally opposed armed forces.

24 Informal conversation with women in Bashikalangwa, 19.02.2012.

25 Conversation with students of *Institut Wanainchi*, Kagogo, 17.11.2011.

26 The nicknaming of brigades was discussed in Chapter 4, pp. 115–116.

27 Group interview, Buma, 20.02.2010.

The omnipresence of the HUNI, the general ambiguities surrounding information, and the prominence of *radio trottoir* in the Kivus all facilitate the circulation of rumors that ascribe the responsibility for certain acts of abuse to the FARDC. Regardless the colorings and deformations of 'the truth' that these narratives sometimes entail, they tend to be embraced as convincing accounts of 'reality' by the various social agents involved in weaving the collective tapestry of rumor. As such, they produce important effects on civilian-military interaction, both at the short and the long term. While rumors implicating the FARDC sometimes originate as deliberate fabrications by groups of instigators, who may be linked to armed groups, for many others, retelling these stories is a form of resistance akin to everyday contestation, or is simply done because they are believed to reflect 'the truth'. Rumors are often based on events that did take place, but of which the accounts get incrementally twisted when they are told and retold. This process of transmission allows those having antipathies towards the FARDC to exaggerate certain facts, such as the level of violence that was involved or the amount of victims, to add new details, like indications that the perpetrators must have been from the military, or to leave out certain pieces of information, for example that there had been civilian instigators. Therefore, while in some cases rumors are the fruit of an engineered project, in others, their diffusion is only partly and unevenly driven by explicit intentions of contestation.

These different dimensions of rumors-as-contestation could clearly be observed in the 65th sector in Fizi, where the Mai Mai Yakotumba and their support networks had a stake in blackening the Amani Leo troops due to their Rwandophone background and status as government forces.²⁸ Here, criticism by pro-Mai Mai circles served at once to stoke up ethnic antagonisms and to demonstrate the weaknesses and bad intentions of the Kinshasa government. However, the reasons for the strong accusations made against the FARDC in the 65th sector were not purely political, since the units in this sector were documented to indeed be involved in serious human rights abuses. Nevertheless, reports on these units' practices also served as vehicles for more politically motivated messages of contestation. A good example are the narratives about the events that took place in Misisi on 29 November 2009, when an angry mob composed in majority of *motards* gathered in front of the camp of the 651st brigade (case #10). Their main demand was that the military hand over the suspected perpetrator of the murder of one of their colleagues, with the purpose of killing him out of revenge. This atmosphere of mob justice had prompted the military earlier to transfer the suspect from police custody to the military camp, since it was feared that the angry crowd would break into the police station. Now gathered in front of the camp, the mob repeatedly refused to obey the orders of the FARDC to evacuate the premises. Then, all of a sudden, the military opened fire. According to local civilian authorities, four people were killed on the spot and 17 others were wounded, at least one of whom was said to have died afterwards.²⁹ Civil society organizations registered five deaths, although some believed it could have been a dozen.³⁰ However, in the course of a visit two years after the event, stories of a putative large-scale massacre with dozens of victims who had allegedly been buried in mass graves next to the military camp circulated widely in the area. As it seems, the blood bath had become a symbol for the Amani Leo period and the abuses committed by the 651st brigade. This symbolic function rendered it a useful instrument for political propaganda to the Mai Mai Yakotumba. On 5 February 2011, this group issued a *cahier de charges* (list of political demands), in which they denounced the many atrocities committed by the Amani Leo troops, alluding to the '60 deaths' of the 'massacre of Misisi' (Mai Mai Reformé/ Groupe Alleluia/Yakotumba, 2011). This illustrates that Mai Mai groups do not only capitalize upon existing stories about abuses committed by the FARDC, but also contribute to their inflation. However, in the case of the Misisi killings, there are few indications that the mounting of the body count was purely due to Mai Mai manipulation: the lack of popularity of the involved troops was very palpable among broad layers of the population. Nevertheless, the Misisi episode does show how widely circulating negative stories about the FARDC can become instrumentalized by forces with a more explicit agenda of contestation.

Another case of contestation involving stories featuring possibly inflated numbers of victims concerns the rapes committed in the villages of Abala and Nakiele in June 2011. In mid-2011, most of the FARDC troops from the 65th sector had withdrawn to Kananda, a village close to Fizi *centre*, for the regimentation process. This included the former commander of the 65th sector, Lieutenant-Colonel Ndayambaye Franco, who was hoping to obtain the position of regiment commander. However, since the behavior of the units in the 65th sector had been problematic, and Col. Franco had a very low level of both general and military education, he stood little chance to obtain the nomination. Yet in his own perspective, he had a 'right' to the position of regiment commander, which already constituted demotion in his eyes, since he was previously at the helm of an entire sector. Hence, when rumors surfaced that he would not obtain the post, Franco became furious and deserted with around 200 of his troops. Allegedly, his decision to desert was also informed by the communication of orders that all the armament Franco and his troops had brought down to Fizi from North Kivu had to be stockpiled. The colonel considered this equipment to belong to the ex-PARECO rebel group, and by implication, to himself as the representative of this group. A similar sense of belonging to PARECO and its representative Col. Franco, and by association, the Hutu community, was manifested by the

28 The situation in Fizi and the reception of the Rwandophone Amani Leo troops were earlier discussed on pp. 88–91.

29 These authorities include the *chef de poste* and the *administrateur du territoire* of Fizi, contacted respectively on 08.03.2011 and 12.03.2011. What strongly fuelled the rumors about mass graves, it should be noted, was the refusal of the command of the 651st brigade to grant the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) access and let them bury the bodies. However, this might have been as much related to fear for being held responsible by international organizations (pointing to a misunderstanding of the ICRC's mandate) as to a desire to hide corpses. It is certainly possible that there were more victims than the registered four or five, but when comparing the various accounts of all the different sources, it does not seem plausible that these would have reached 60.

30 Interviews with employees of civil society organizations, Misisi, 24.02.2010; 10.03.2011 and 21.12.2011.

troops who decided to follow Franco when deserting. The continued salience of these forms of identification reveals to what extent this ex-rebel group had remained a separate network within the 65th sector.³¹

After leaving the regimentation center, Franco went on in the direction of the *Hauts Plateaux*, which he intended to cross in order to arrive in North Kivu. On the nights of 10 and 11 June, his troops plundered, looted and raped in two villages close to the *Plateaux*, which are in majority inhabited by Babembe. Shortly after the group withdrew, 31 women reported to the local health care center as rape victims. On 22 June, more than ten days after the event, a medical team of *Médecins sans frontières* (MSF, Doctors without Borders) arrived in the area, and 80 more women went to register as rape victims. However, it has remained unclear in how far the number of self-declared victims corresponds to the actual amount, since some of the testimonies made the impression of being remarkably similar, casting doubt on their veracity.³² The local human rights defenders who carried out the initial investigations estimated the number of rape victims to be between 25 and 30, which corroborates these doubts.³³

It seems then, that more women registered as rape victims than were actually raped. The motives for doing so have remained unclear. It is plausible that women in this remote community expected to receive free medical treatment from MSF, and that the presence of international actors raised the hope of receiving reparations. In the Kivus, it is widely known that rape gives access to resources, since sexual violence has become one of the main funding priorities of international aid donors (Douma and Hillhorst, 2012). Another hypothesis regarding the possible inflation of the number of rape victims is that this was a way to protest the widely disliked FARDC troops from the Amani Leo operations, in part because of their Rwandophone origins. The fact that both Abala and Nakiele are located within the sphere of influence of the Mai Mai Yakotumba renders it possible that the motivation for engaging in such contestation was partly connected to sympathies for the Mai Mai. A similar reading of the events was forwarded by circles within the FARDC, who pointed to the ethnic character of the allegations. From this perspective, the accusations, presented as 'false', stemmed from the Babembe's hatred towards Rwandophones and a desire for revenge after all that the Rwandophone troops of the 65th sector had done in Fizi.³⁴ Neither of these hypotheses can be confirmed or refuted, and it is also plausible that both of these projects were at play simultaneously.³⁵

Regardless the grounds for the exaggeration of the number of victims, what is interesting about the Franco desertion case is that the military authorities tried to capitalize upon the supposed ethnic character of the allegations in order to deny that any rapes had occurred at all. Franco was under the protection of ex-CNDP circles, who wanted him to reintegrate into the FARDC and be appointed commander of another regiment. An open admission of abuse would have endangered this project. Hence, it appears that the twisting of the facts was not only an act of popular resistance, but also allowed the FARDC to capitalize upon ethnic prejudices to deny responsibility for the abuses. Thus, the Nakiele/Abala case shows how the spreading of rumors may backfire, highlighting the dangers of contestation in an unsettled and unsettling environment. Under the influence of the volatility of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, the course and content of rumor can drastically alter, both as a product of and producing unexpected turns of events, rendering it an ultimately ambiguous tool of contestation.

7.2.2 *Collective popular protest*

Aside from everyday contestations, which often take place on an individual basis and are therefore not always very visible, civilians in the Kivus also engage in collective protest in public space. Such forms of popular protest include demonstrations, protest marches and general strikes. These more conspicuous forms of contestation are certainly not without risk in an environment where the in/security services are ill trained and hardly equipped for crowd-control tasks. While happening on a more occasional basis than the everyday forms of contestation described above, the message sent by these collective protests is very powerful, especially since they have a public character. Yet, the effects in terms of altering the FARDC's practices or holding the military accountable are often limited, which demotivates civilians from pursuing further protest.

Demonstrations and spontaneous popular protests

Based on the frequency with which forms of civilian collective protest against the military occur, one gets the impression that they are if

31 Franco's desertion demonstrates that two years after their integration into the FARDC, ex-PARECO troops continued to view themselves as a separate group, while also regarding the arms in their possession as 'theirs' rather than as belonging to the government forces. This transpired from declarations made by these troops upon leaving the regimentation, as overheard by the instructors of the Kananda regimentation center (interviewed in Luberizi, on 07.11.2011).

32 Jason Stearns, 'Mass rape reveals the fragility of rebel integration process', *Congo Siasa*, 28 June 2011.

33 Interviews conducted in Baraka, Uvira and Fizi *centre*, November 2011.

34 Stearns, 'Mass rape reveals the fragility of rebel integration process'.

35 There are also other cases of suspected inflations of numbers of rape victims by communities. See e.g., Laura Heaton, 'What happened in Luvungi? On rape and truth in Congo', *Foreign Policy*, 4 March 2013. However, similar to Nakiele and Abala, establishing 'the truth' has proved difficult in the Luvungi case, as conclusive evidence for one or the other version of the events is lacking.

not tolerated, at least difficult to repress and control. In the course of the fieldwork, numerous stories were heard of infuriated citizens who no longer accepted the misdeeds of the military, and decided to take radical action to express their disapproval and anger. In most cases, such action was prompted by particular incidents, like assassinations or arrests, and was instigated either by families or colleagues of the victim, or by professional or civil society associations. In the latter case, protests tended to be more organized, and were often accompanied by clear demands to the authorities, for example the immediate withdrawal of the military unit responsible for the abuses, the punishment of the perpetrators or an end to unpopular practices, like night-patrolling.

One striking example of rather spontaneous popular action occurred on the *Hauts Plateaux* close to Minembwe. In November 2010, at the time of the deployment of the very unpopular 652nd brigade of Col. Sekanabo (case #12),³⁶ a group of women decided to protest against the detention of their sons by the battalion stationed in Masha. Col. Sekanabo's brigade had made it a standard practice to detain young men and boys on the *Plateaux*, sometimes even arresting them on their way to school, under the pretext of being supporters of the FRF. For women in the area, the arrest of a boy in Rutigita as young as 13, alleged to be a bodyguard of an FRF officer, became the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. Outraged, 14 women, mostly mothers of the detained young men, entered the premises of the *état-major* of the battalion, stating that if the military started to arrest their children, they were ready to get killed. This sudden invasion of furious women was met with violence, and they were beaten up until they left the camp.³⁷

Two groups that are particularly susceptible to resorting to radical action are high school students and *motards*. For example, in October 2011, a teacher of the *Institut Masoka* in Baraka was murdered by two persons, one of whom was said to be wearing military pants. The day after the murder, the students revolted against the FARDC, barricading the roads to Baraka and shouting at the military 'you have killed our teacher'. They then departed to pick up the corpse and depose it in front of the office of the civilian authorities. In Baraka, it is generally believed that this incident is one of the factors that contributed to the decision of the commander of the 712th regiment (case #13) to remove all military from the town center and create a camp at the edge of town. This story indicates that in certain circumstances, popular protests do immediately affect decisions or conduct of the military, although this seems to be rare.³⁸

The act of parading around corpses and putting them in front of those authorities held responsible for their death, sometimes complemented by asking them to pay the funeral costs, is a recurrent element in popular protests against the military.³⁹ This practice has a strong symbolic dimension, not only as it renders the military's atrocious acts visible to all and exposes human suffering, but also as it explicitly lays the blame on the authorities and holds them to account. Such symbolism may also be expressed in other ways. A clear example is the chanting of the *Zairoise*, the national anthem of Zaire, during protest actions, which signifies a clear refutation of the current order, while also communicating the message that nothing has changed since the Zaire era.⁴⁰ Another example is the blocking of roads, with the paralysis of the traffic mirroring and expressing the paralysis of the population. However, this form of action may also have more practical purposes, as it sometimes involves erecting a barrier where a contribution is demanded for the funeral costs of the victim. In two cases observed while travelling in Lubero, it was not a barrier but *motards* who were blocking the road, sometimes making a lot of noise by honking and chanting to express their disapproval and grief.⁴¹

Such loud popular protests do not always stay peaceful. Where a crowd gets fired up, it may engage in acts of destruction, venting its anger towards the authorities by demolishing or burning down public buildings or the homes of officials, or manifesting dissatisfaction by means of destroying *kiosques* or smashing windows. In Kyavinyonge, it was told that in December 2008, just after two assassinations believed to be authored by FARDC soldiers, the population's anger led to the plunder and burning down of the office of the *chef de poste*.⁴² In Bulongo, a mob was reported to have destroyed the office of the *chef de cité* and wounded the deputy administrator in the course of a manifestation aimed at demanding the immediate departure of all soldiers from town.⁴³ These examples show that anger towards the military may also be projected onto the civilian authorities, leading to physical harm or the destruction of administrative buildings. The reasons for this are twofold. Not only are civilian authorities sometimes seen as complicit or passive, the risks of attacking military infrastructure may be deemed too high, since it is likely to provoke an immediate violent reaction by the FARDC.

Indeed, the responses that popular protests elicit from the in/security services can be harsh, specifically when angry mobs use or threaten to use violence, or when protests are deemed undesirable by the authorities, like when conveying an inconvenient message. In addition

36 The 652nd brigade and its practices of extraction and abuse were discussed on pp. 93-94 and p. 173.

37 This story was told by the inhabitants of Masha during fieldwork conducted in December 2010 and was confirmed by various sources in Minembwe.

38 However, while some sources mentioned the protests as an important factor in the decision of the regiment commander to no longer allow military to live in the town center, others downplayed this cause, stating that the decision was more related to his desire to maximize control over his troops and fear that his Rwandophone troops might get attacked by Mai Mai supporters. The 712th regiment is further discussed on pp. 304-306.

39 See e.g., Radio Okapi, 'Nord-Kivu : le meurtre d'une jeune fille crée une tension entre population et militaires à Kyavinyonge', *Radio Okapi*, 12 September 2012.

40 See e.g., Kennedy Wema, 'Butembo: "justice populaire", une manière de pointer du doigt les forces de l'ordre comme acteur principal de l'insécurité?', *Pole Institute*, 1 October 2010. The practice of chanting the *Zairoise* is also common within prisons in the Kivus, as I was told during a visit to Butembo prison on 28.04.2010.

41 One incident was observed in front of Kayna on 22.04.2010, and the other near Kanyabayonga on 08.04.2010.

42 Fieldwork in Kyavinyonge was conducted on 25 and 26.04.2010.

43 See e.g., Radio Okapi, 'Bulongo: retour au calme après une manifestation violente de la population', *Radio Okapi*, 18 October 2010.

to the intention to set an example, the harsh repression of manifestations can also be attributed to the military's lack of training in crowd-control tasks, which is formally the domain of the police. Thus, shooting in the air to disperse a crowd may turn into shooting at the crowd, or the breaking up of a manifestation or blockade may end in widespread torture. In many cases, crowds fight back, for example by throwing stones at the in/security forces or by trying to beat them with sticks. Where civilians are armed, which is not rare in the Kivus, protests may degenerate into shootouts, and it is not exceptional that such incidents provoke casualties among both the population and the in/security forces.⁴⁴ However, open contestation does not need to turn into a bloody affair. Not all popular protests against the military end in violence or are immediately suppressed. Even where radical demands are made, or inconvenient truths are ventilated, such as allegations that the FARDC rather than the FDLR is responsible for most of the acts of banditry in a certain zone, a crackdown does not necessarily ensue.⁴⁵ This is especially the case where protests take the form of organized strikes rather than mob action or street protests, which bear a substantial risk of spiraling out of control.

Strikes: the 'ville morte'

Strikes to protest the military come in different types and sizes. They may either cover one sphere of activity or one social group, or be generalized. Furthermore, they can be either brief actions or last a substantial period of time. For example, in the village of Ngalula, there had been a market strike the day before my visit to protest military extortion of people on their way to the market.⁴⁶ This strike did not only entail a loss of income for the military, but also for economic operators, indicating that the latter were willing to make a significant sacrifice to communicate their discontent. Where dissatisfaction runs high and is widespread, a community may opt for organizing a general strike, which is usually called *ville morte* (dead city). During such strikes, shops do not open, no markets are held, *motards* and other transport operators do not move, civil society organizations do not open the doors of their offices, and in some cases, schools and administrative offices close as well, depending on the disposition of those in charge.

In the town of Kasindi, the platform of local civil society organizations organized a *ville morte* in the first week of March 2010 to denounce continuous harassment by the multitude of competing in/security services present in this border town.⁴⁷ One of the protestors' principal demands was the withdrawal and rotation of all the representatives of the various in/security services, some of whom had been deployed in Kasindi for over ten years, and had become masters in organized extortion and other forms of harassment. However, according to the organizers and participants, the strike had disappointingly little impact. While some vague promises were made about rotations, and some services had been temporarily less visible, soon after the strike, extortion continued at more or less the same level as before, and was authored by the same personnel. A *ville morte* organized in the town of Oicha in January 2012 after the assassination of an economic operator seems to have had equally little impact. In this case, it was the FEC (Federation of Congolese Enterprises) in collaboration with civil society organizations who initiated the strike.⁴⁸ In order to maximize the effects, the organizing committee addressed a list of detailed demands to the local authorities, like the removal of the personnel of the civilian and military intelligence services, and the release of several persons unlawfully held in detention. However, since the local civilian authorities to whom these demands were presented had no authority to decide on these matters, and their hierarchies took little action afterwards, the protests failed to bring about change.

This highlights a phenomenon found throughout the Kivus: protest actions and popular pressure often have only limited and very temporary effects, and in some cases bring no change at all, as the demands made by the population are simply ignored, or prompt only token acts. The reasons for this largely lie in the overall limited effects of civilians' contestation of military power, as will be further elaborated upon in the last section of this chapter. What also matters specifically for collective protest actions is that these tend to be of limited duration, lasting at most a few days. The majority of Kivutians simply cannot afford to be involved in demonstrations that take up weeks or months and that paralyze economic life. Cultivators have to work their fields and sell their produce; day laborers and petty traders can barely survive when missing more than one day of income; and people cannot stop providing for basic necessities, in particular often time-consuming duties like fetching water and firewood. These limited possibilities for sustained engagement further reduce the effectiveness of organized protests, as authorities anticipate these to be of limited duration. Understandably, this discourages people from engaging in active and open contestation, and may ultimately push them towards resignation or make them adopt more violent courses of action.

Mob justice

Mob justice is a form of action whereby civilians collectively harm, and in most cases kill, alleged perpetrators of crime or witchcraft 'in the name of justice'. In the Kivus, the forms that such killings take are varied (Verweijen, 2015). They may be effectuated for example

44 See e.g., Radio Okapi, 'Bukavu: plusieurs blessés dans des tensions entre civils et militaires à Katana', *Radio Okapi*, 18 October 2010

45 For an example of such a protest see Irène Nyenyeli, 'RDC: la population de l'est du Congo exprime son ras-le-bol', *Jambonews.net*, 31 August 2011.

46 Fieldwork in Ngalula was conducted on 25.02.2010.

47 The problematic presence of a multitude of in/security services and other state agents in Kasindi is described on pp. 240–241.

48 Radio Okapi, 'Oicha : journées "ville morte" pour protester contre l'insécurité', *Radio Okapi*, 13 January 2012.

through beating or stoning people to death or by burning them alive. In some cases, the corpse is mutilated after the killing and/or put on display. While there are no precise statistics on this phenomenon, as on many other matters in the Congo, it is the impression among civil society organizations that what is commonly called *justice populaire* (popular justice) is on the rise in both urban and rural areas in the Kivus, although there seem to be fluctuations over time and per place. For example, the NGO CIRESKI reports that in Uvira territory, 31 persons were killed by mob justice in 2012, while in 2013, the number of victims was 57 (CIRESKI, 2013).⁴⁹ The human rights organization *La Voix de Sans Voix* documented no less than 30 cases in the city of Butembo and surroundings for the month of July 2011 only.⁵⁰ In the territories of Lubero and Rutshuru, NGOs also reported a growing amount of cases in the course of 2011.⁵¹

It regularly occurs that mob killings target FARDC soldiers. From the cursory data collected during the fieldwork and an analysis of cases reported in Congolese media, it appears that mob justice directed against FARDC staff often takes place where civilian-military relations are extremely tense, for example when the military is believed to be involved in widespread banditry. To give an example, in May 2011, a sergeant of the former 20th IB suspected of having committed several armed robberies and murder was stoned to death in Oicha. He confessed to be responsible for a number of these crimes just before he died, while also citing an FARDC officer as running the banditry ring that he was part of.⁵² This indicates he was made to confess his crimes, giving the scene the overtones of a popular trial. It is plausible that this incident of mob justice is related to the drastic deterioration of security that was manifested in and around Oicha in the wake of the launch of military operations mid-2010.⁵³ Many people blamed this spike in insecurity on the military, leading to a crisis in civilian-military relations, which created a fertile climate for mob justice.

A similar situation of civilian-military tensions could be detected in the town of Kirumba.⁵⁴ For instance on 8 July 2011, an FARDC soldier found on the terrain of a private house in the Birere quarter with the clear intention of burglary was spontaneously decapitated by the quarter's inhabitants. That was the ninth incident of mob justice against an FARDC soldier in the territory of Lubero in just one month, and followed on the heels of the lynching of the *chef de cité* of Kirumba on 5 June 2011.⁵⁵ This last incident was partly a result of the fact that the chief had provoked a popular outcry by publicly stating that most of the acts of banditry in town were committed by local youth, rather than by FARDC soldiers, eliciting suspicions that he tried to protect Rwandophone soldiers.⁵⁶ On 23 September 2011, yet another incident of mob justice took place in Kirumba. The inhabitants of a certain quarter of town recognized a soldier who had committed an armed robbery there one month earlier, and then stoned him to death.⁵⁷ The climate in which these events occurred was one marked by growing discontent with the rampant insecurity in town, which had been exacerbated by the arrival of a large amount of FARDC troops for the Amani Leo operations in 2009. These troops were dominated by Tutsi from the ex-CNDP, a group that has generally been unpopular among the Banande, who form a majority in Kirumba. Although no direct causal relationship can be established, these antipathies are likely to have contributed to creating a propitious climate for mob justice.

Drawing on the findings of Godoy (2004) in relation to mob lynching in Latin America, it is proposed that mob justice in the Kivus should in part be seen as an 'agentive moment' (Godoy, 2004: 623) that allows marginalized groups subject to pervasive insecurity and uncertainty to collectively reassert themselves as agents (Verweijen, 2015). For the cases analyzed by Godoy, such a course of action is to an important extent driven by high levels of crime in a situation where state justice institutions are little accessible and legitimate. However, she argues that mob justice should also be seen as the product of a broader set of socio-economic factors, including a heavy legacy of state violence, the erosion of established social structures and cohesion, and the widening of political space due to the crumbling of autocratic institutions. In Godoy's perspective, the aim of mob justice is not only to punish and deter acts of crime, but also to restore values, to criticize the authorities, to claim agency and to comment on the distribution of power and resources. This leads her to conclude that mob justice is essentially a form of 'perverse political empowerment' (Godoy, 2004: 637). These observations also apply to the cases of mob justice against the FARDC presented here, the political and emancipatory character of which are apparent, not least due to the invoked symbols and the explicit accusations and demands addressed to the military and sometimes also the civilian authorities. Hence, rather than seeing mob justice targeting the FARDC as mere outbursts of anger of uncontrolled crowds, they should be conceptualized as politically loaded acts of the contestation of military power.

49 Interview with members of CIRESKI, Uvira, 02.11.2014.

50 Radio Okapi, 'Nord-Kivu: la Voix des sans voix dénonce la justice populaire à Butembo', *Radio Okapi*, 23 June 2011.

51 Radio Okapi, 'Justice populaire au Nord-Kivu: la société civile dénonce la silence des autorités', *Radio Okapi*, 23 June 2011; 'L'ONG Racid dénonce la justice populaire à Rutshuru', *Radio Okapi*, 13 July 2011.

52 Obède Bahati, 'Oïcha : un collabo du Fardc EWOLO lapidé à mort est muté à Luofu', *Beni-Lubero Online*, 3 May 2011.

53 Obède Bahati, 'Bilan des Opérations Ruwenzori : 100 000 déplacés Congolais', *Beni-Lubero Online*, 22 July 2010.

54 The insecurity in Kirumba is further described below on pp. 207-208.

55 Beni-Lubero Online, 'Justice populaire: 1 Fardc décapité à Kirumba au Sud de Lubero', *Beni-Lubero Online*, 15 July 2011.

56 Kakule Mathe, 'Sud-Lubero: trois Fardc lapidés à mort et lynchage du Chef de Cité de Kirumba', *Beni-Lubero Online*, 14 June 2011.

57 Tembos Yotama, 'Beni-Lubero : 7 assassinats dont 1 Fardc tué par la population de Kirumba', *Beni-Lubero Online*, 26 September 2011.

7.2.3 Professional practices of contestation

In addition to forms of contestation engaged in by broad layers of the population, which may take place both on a collective or on an individual basis, the FARDC's practices and power are also resisted through contentious action by professional groups, without these mobilizing a wider part of the population, as is the case with *villes mortes*. Such groups, who often frame engaging in contestation as being a part of their professional duties, include civilian authorities, civil society organizations, the media and (associations of) economic operators. From *chef de localité* up to governor, and from the local association of shopkeepers to the provincial FEC, civilian actors of all kinds and at all levels push for changes in military conduct in their professional capacity. For example, they may strive for reductions in the compulsory contribution of foodstuffs, the dismantling of roadblocks, the removal of certain commanders or units, or demand apologies, reparations, or the punishment of perpetrators. The ways in which such sensitive issues are brought up with the military are highly varied, and encompass both formal and informal channels. Representatives of professional organizations may for example complain in the course of collective meetings such as the *conseils de sécurité* (security councils),⁵⁸ or when they fear a direct confrontation with the FARDC or believe this will be ineffective or counterproductive, write reports or letters to their superiors, asking these to address the military authorities at a higher level. This section first discusses the more formal contentious practices of several groups of professionals, namely civilian authorities, civil society activists and journalists, and then explains why these professionals often prefer informal to formal channels when contesting the military.

Civilian authorities

Local civilian authorities, whether customary or political-administrative, often engage in persistent and valiant efforts to change military conduct, although this may partly be informed by the desire to protect their own privileges. A telling example was encountered in the village of Kazimia, on the coast of Lake Tanganyika in Fizi territory.⁵⁹ Kazimia was blessed with a rather assertive *chef de poste*, seen as one of the more powerful figures of the village. Whenever the military committed abuses against civilians, the *chef* did not hesitate to confront the FARDC battalion that was headquartered in his entity, often directly contacting the commander. Even though he himself tended to interfere with and profit from treating all sorts of criminal cases falling under the jurisdiction of the police,⁶⁰ he generally strove to protect the population against gross abuses, in particular unlawful detention and torture by the military.

On 23 November 2011, the bodyguard of one of the battalion's staff officers was sent out on a mission to the house of a civilian, despite being very drunk. Not able to locate the house, he started to intimidate a group of civilians in the quarter, losing self-control and then firing his gun. Stray bullets accidentally hit a five-year old girl in the leg, provoking the outrage of the population and the *chef de poste*. The latter convened a special meeting of the security committee, where the intelligence and operations officers of the battalion (the S2 and S3) represented the FARDC side, and the father of the girl and an uncle the victim's side. The family of the victim had introduced a written complaint, outlining their grievances and listing the compensation demanded, to which the military formulated an official reply with their counter-offer. Eventually, agreement was reached that the military would foot all medical bills, pay 50,000 FC (about \$55) for the victim's school fees, and offer the family a *mbuzi ya damu* (blood goat) to appease and reconcile with them. This agreement was formalized in written and signed, and the goat was handed over to the family with all those present at the security meeting as witnesses. Meanwhile, the perpetrator had been sent to the *cachot* (prison) of the brigade headquarters, where the command would further decide on his fate.

These events indicate that assertive action from lower-level civilian authorities can make a difference. That said, this case concerned a mistake of an individual (a bodyguard) who had little importance and enjoyed little protection at the higher level, causing the stakes for the military to be relatively low. For the unit command, handling this case was just a matter of apologizing, punishing the perpetrator and paying limited amounts of money, none of which had wider ramifications. However, in cases where civilian authorities try to address matters that touch directly upon the vested interests of officers, resistance tends to be much higher. A good example are the events observed in the town of Kirumba,⁶¹ where the civilian authorities were involved in an ongoing struggle to remove the military from the residential quarters. At the start of the Amani Leo operations in 2009, the FARDC had established the *état-major* of an operational sector in Camp Kasando, at the edge of Kirumba, leading to a large influx of military staff. Since most officers and *sous-officiers* refused to live in the camp, the civilian quarters quickly filled up with FARDC personnel. This contributed to a spike in robberies, burglary, assassinations and other forms of violent score settling, in majority ascribed to HUNI. Much of the smaller-scale extortion took the form of a technique locally called *opération fenêtre* (operation window), consisting of soldiers putting their gun through the window of private homes or small shops and then asking for money or goods, like cigarettes (see also Human Rights Watch, 2009b: 111). Together with a rise in score settling, the omnipresence of such violent, non-routinized forms of extraction fostered a widespread sense of insecurity, which was further exacerbated by the impossibility to identify the perpetrators. These identification problems were partly the result of the loose control

58 The *conseils de sécurité* were described on p. 170.

59 Conclusions based on fieldwork in Kazimia conducted on 20.21, 24 and 25.11.2010.

60 Thus, the *chef de poste* of Kazimia constitutes a clear example of a 'shopping forum' as defined on pp. 185–186.

61 Observations made during a field visit to Kirumba from 02–05.05.2010.

that the hierarchy exercised over the military living in town, as superiors did not monitor whom of their subordinates lived where. What further complicated the identification of perpetrators was the large amount of military staff passing through. Since Kirumba is located on the main road from Goma to Butembo (*Route nationale*, national road, no.2) all military personnel travelling in this region pass through the town.

Hard-pressed to tackle the insecurity, the local politico-administrative authorities put pressure on the military leadership to take urgent measures. In May 2009, in the course of a security meeting, they demanded that all military staff be removed from town and relocated to Camp Kasando. In order to accelerate the implementation of this measure, they ordered the *chefs de quartier* to draw up lists of all the military staff living in their quarter, which would simultaneously allow for a better identification of the perpetrators of crime.⁶² While the lower-level urban authorities promptly launched efforts to comply with this order, in the face of constant flux, it proved difficult to compose and maintain complete and up-to-date lists, as soldiers and their families were continuously arriving, leaving and moving house. More importantly, the military did not respect their part of the agreement and refused to withdraw from town. In the course of a security meeting one year later, which was observed during the fieldwork,⁶³ the politico-administrative authorities reiterated their demands for the demilitarization of town and the identification of resident military, indicating that little progress had been made on these issues. The climate during the meeting was very tense, and the *chef de cité* made no efforts to hide his hostility towards the FARDC. At the end of the deliberations, representatives of the military promised again to remove all military staff from town and to institute a system of permits for all those wanting to visit their partner or lover living in town. However, these promises were once again not followed by deeds. In June 2011, it was reported that a radio journalist was assassinated by the FARDC for having made a broadcast about the over-militarization of Kirumba and the resistance of certain officers to vacate the civilian houses they had forcibly occupied.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the level of insecurity in town continued to be high throughout 2011, which is likely to have contributed to the spike in mob justice against FARDC soldiers described above.

In contrast to Kazimia, valiant action and pressure by lower-level civilian authorities in Kirumba failed to produce results. The reason is that in the latter case, the stakes were much higher for the military leadership. Officers were obviously against relocating to the military camp, as this measure would directly impact their own living situation. It is not inconceivable that several of them also benefited from the insecurity in town, for it regularly occurs that superiors are complicit with the practices of violent extraction carried out by their subordinates, and share in the booty. The example of Kirumba also shows how the fluidity of the FARDC often undermines the effectiveness of contentious action. The efforts of Kirumba's authorities to better control military staff suffered serious setbacks due to the FARDC's rapid rotations and movements, which rendered it difficult to keep track of the soldiers and officers living in town. Additionally, the FARDC's flux impeded the application of sustained pressure, since the military would often send different representatives to the security meetings, to whom the civilian authorities then again and again had to explain the promises made by their predecessors. Similar problems were detected elsewhere, as evidenced by universal complaints by local authorities about how rapid rotations of FARDC units complicated their efforts to improve the military's behavior. A *chef de poste* said for instance: 'Military deployment is like a game of fortune [*jeu de hasard*]. If you have good luck, they send you intellectuals. If you have bad luck, they send you bandits, and you have perpetual confrontations. But each time they change, you have to start from zero.'⁶⁵

While some local civilian authorities manage to influence the military's practices through their own initiatives and talent, as was the case in Kazimia, it is often only via pressure from higher up that changes ensue. For instance, the rotation of the 65th and 64th sector in Fizi that took place in 2010 was the result of multi-level pressure. While on leave, the *chef de poste* of Misisi took the initiative to write a letter to the ministry of defense in Kinshasa to complain about the unacceptable behavior of the 65th sector, denouncing in particular the November 2009 shootings in Misisi by the 651st brigade (case # 10).⁶⁶ Meanwhile, the *administrateur du territoire* of Fizi convened several extended security meetings, involving the most important *chefs de secteurs* and *chef de groupements* as well as representatives of the in/security services from all over the territory. The results of these meetings were transmitted to the governor of South Kivu, with the explicit demand for urgent intervention by means of addressing the military authorities at the provincial level. Reportedly, the province subsequently exercised pressure on the FARDC in Bukavu to take measures, a process that culminated in the rotation of the 65th and 64th sectors in February 2010. This indicates that pressure is more effective when it comes simultaneously from actors on the ground and higher levels of authority. Civilian authorities' efforts are also more likely to lead to changes if action is taken by a broad coalition of actors, for example if civilian authorities act in concert with civil society organizations and economic operators. However, such broad-based collaborations seem quite rare, in part as there is often competition between big-man networks that cut across not only these various groups, but also civilian-military boundaries. As a consequence, it regularly occurs that civilian authorities consider it more in their interest to liaise with the FARDC in order to defeat competing civilian actors than to collaborate with fellow civilian authorities to push back the influence of the military.

62 Radio Okapi, 'Kirumba: identifier des militaires vivant parmi les civils pour lutter contre l'insécurité', *Radio Okapi*, 13 May 2009.

63 Observation of security meeting in Kirumba on 03.05.2010.

64 Edgar Mateso, 'Assassinat de Kambale Misonia Jackson (28 ans)', *Beni-Lubero Online*, 22 June 2011.

65 Interview with *chef de poste* of a certain town in Fizi territory, December 2012.

66 The Misisi killings by the 651st were discussed on p. 201.

In the Congo, the label ‘civil society’ designates the ensemble of officially recognized not-for-profit and non-governmental organizations, including faith-and community-based associations. Within donor discourses drawing on a long lineage of thinking on ‘civil society’ in Western societies, these organizations are generally conceptualized as a ‘counterweight to the state’, and supposed to contribute to controlling and holding political leaders and state actors to account. However, the fact that civil society organizations are tied into the same big-man networks as politicians and officials and partly depend on ‘the state’ for access to power and resources render these expectations often inflated (Gouzou, 2012). Being strongly inscribed in local power relations and politics, civil society organizations may reproduce, rather than challenge, existing structures of domination and dynamics of conflict, depending on how they are situated in the power landscape (Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 18–22). Nevertheless, local civil society organizations in the Kivus do actively engage in efforts to document and denounce abuses by the FARDC as well as in advocacy and lobbying initiatives that target the military. Furthermore, they educate populations about the law and human rights, inviting them to contest certain military practices or to avoid appealing to the military for dispute resolution or private justice.

The proactive role of certain civil society organizations, and the effects that this may have on curbing military abuses, are powerfully illustrated by yet another story from the village of Kazimia, where a local human rights monitor excelled in addressing military abuses and sensitizing civilians. Whenever Eugène⁶⁷ heard of a civilian having been arrested by the FARDC, he would promptly depart to the état-major of the battalion deployed in the area to inquire about the grounds for the arrest and plead for liberation, usually bringing along a booklet with essential human rights legislation. Aside from being well known and well connected locally, including by having the backing of the powerful *chef de poste*, with whom he often acted in concert, it were these appeals to legislation, as part of his overwhelming advocacy performance, that seemed to make his efforts surprisingly effective. Having only a limited understanding of legal issues, the rather ignorant and badly educated military personnel deployed to Kazimia would become rather nervous in the course of his visits, being afraid to act against the law, and believing that this could cause them to run into trouble. Eugène’s frequent allusions to the HQ of his organization in the town of Uvira, as well as the collaboration of this NGO with the UN mission and other international organizations, played no small role in nourishing these fears.⁶⁸ With the legal ground for arrests usually missing, as Eugène would never tire to point out, the military did not dare to detain civilians for a very long time, although they did not refrain from demanding a hefty fee before their release. Thus, as confirmed by many inhabitants of Kazimia, Eugène’s efforts made a considerable contribution to keeping the unlawful detention of civilians by the military at a relatively low level. This was proven by the fact that whenever he was absent, the number of arrests would immediately rise. Indeed, when I arrived in Kazimia for fieldwork, Eugène had been absent for over a week, and during this period, the military had immediately arrested three civilians. Upon his return to the village, the first thing he did was to go to the état-major of the battalion to try to liberate them.

While the case of Eugène is a good example of how local human rights activism can make a difference, elsewhere, human rights and other civil society activists faced more obstacles. In certain remote areas, like in the *groupement* of Binza in Rutshuru (under the 223rd, case #2), human rights defenders told that they had been actively discouraged from pursuing their activities. This made them very afraid to be seen talking to a white researcher, reason why they would only meet in private homes. One of them, a woman working in a highly insecure area, explained: ‘Human rights defenders are considered here like a stratum of opposition. The major [the intelligence officer of the battalion] said: “You have to leave the military free once the operations start. We do not like to get disturbed.” We are muzzled here, we have fear (...) Even the authorities do not know the role of human rights. When you present yourself in front of the military, we are badly regarded.’⁶⁹ Aside from facing immediate intimidations, many human rights defenders anticipate threats at a later stage, fearing in particular that perpetrators who have been sentenced due to their efforts will take revenge on those who helped getting them behind bars. Such fears are well founded in the light of the porosity of prisons in the Congo, where detainees easily escape either through prison breaks or corruption. Therefore, even when direct intimidations are limited, civil society activists may impose heavy self-censorship.

Similar observations were made in relation to local journalists, the majority of whom based in rural areas work at community radio stations. These media professionals’ degree of freedom to criticize the military appeared to highly differ from place to the next. In certain areas, journalists said they were able to address security matters in their programs, including the conduct of the FARDC, without running immediate risks. For example, in Fizi, community radio stations had aired reportages about issues like the multitude of military roadblocks that citizens face on their way to the market, the lack of efforts of the in/security services to address the reigning insecurity, and the practice of the unlawful detention of civilians. Yet, in other areas, journalists told they had to apply heavy self-censorship and therefore refrained from discussing security issues in their broadcasts. In the *groupement* of Binza in Rutshuru, where the military was generally hostile towards critical civilian actors, a journalist from a community radio station told: ‘We made a radio broadcast about soldiers who cut bunches of bananas from the trees and then force civilians to transport these to their camp. After that, they [the military] followed that journalist [who made the program] and threatened him with death. We are now very careful in discussing security issues

67 Eugène is not his real name, which was withheld for security reasons.

68 These conclusions are partly based on the direct observation of one such advocacy performance at the battalion HQ, and the reactions of the military staff involved, on 21.11.2010.

69 Interview with female human rights defender, Binza *groupement*, April 2010.

in our programs'.⁷⁰ This shows that there are substantial variations in how much space civil society activists and journalists have for reporting on and denouncing military abuses.

Most of the factors explaining these differences relate to place-specific social structures and dynamics and the specific features of the deployed military units, as will be further discussed in Part IV. These unit-internal features include the quality of command, as partly shaped by the personal characteristics of unit commanders. In some areas, commanders were found to collaborate relatively well with human rights defenders, for example granting them access to military detention facilities for monitoring detained civilians. In one case (the 433rd brigade deployed to Katobo, case #4), it was even observed how a commander would call a local human rights defender on his own initiative to let him check on captured FDLR combatants, so he could verify their numbers and state of health. Although this willingness to collaborate was mostly encountered among brigades with relatively well-educated officers, it was also observed among some of the little educated newly integrated commanders of the Amani Leo brigades. In a few cases, commanders of these units would even ask human rights defenders for advice on how to handle certain matters in accordance with the law, prompting these activists to provide a type of informal legal education to the military. However, in other contexts, the picture was much bleaker and commanders would be reluctant to receive human rights defenders, let alone grant them access to military detention facilities or even provide them with information.

Aside from by the attitudes of commanders, as informed by their vision on military professionalism and the importance of respect for the law and human rights, civil society activists' room for maneuver is also shaped by personal relations. Many human rights defenders told that they use personal contacts within the military in order to get things done, like the release of detained civilians or the arrest of certain perpetrators. One activist explained that he mostly worked with a particular ex-Mai Mai officer whom he knew well, and who served as an intermediary to the general staff of the brigade. Being a 'son of the area', this officer was said to be sympathetic to the plight of the population. Another human rights activist revealed that his point of entry into the military was a staff member connected to his wife's family, who was again close to the intelligence officer of the brigade. A third human rights defender had worked for a long time as a monitor in the same territory, allowing him to build up extensive personal relations with officers of various of the units deployed there. Especially in some of the more remote corners, he would often spend time with these officers in the evenings, since highly educated non-locals tended to flock together in these localities. When units or officers were rotated, often within the same territory, he would continue to use these contacts for influencing the FARDC. In general, many human rights defenders stated to believe that these personal networks and relations within the military allowed them to do their work more effectively and to address more sensitive issues than would be the case if they would resort only to formal channels.

Formal vs. informal forms of contestation

As emerged from the previous, representatives of professional groups may contest the military either via more formal or more informal channels. This choice was observed to strongly differ per situation and per social agent, although most groups appeared to employ a range of both more and less formal tools simultaneously. These differences in the preferred channel of contestation can be explained by variations in power relations, such as relations to the military and dominant big-man networks, and fluctuations in the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, like the level of competition between armed factions, which may make it dangerous to openly contest one side. In order to understand how these factors affect preferences for modes of contestation, it is needed to analyze the advantages and the disadvantages of both formal and informal contentious action.

Among the main advantages of using informal channels of contestation is that personalized relations give civilians more leverage and room to raise sensitive issues. By not accusing the military publicly, informal channels are less confrontational, which lowers the risks of creating a backlash among the FARDC. Clearly, in highly insecure environments, where civilians depend on the FARDC for security, embarking on a collision course is hazardous, and reduces one's future options by creating lasting antagonisms. Another advantage of arranging things behind the screens is that this allows civilians to avoid publicly defining their position, which would reduce their freedom of action or create seeming inconsistencies in their behavior. For example, protest by a certain economic operator against customs fraud protected by the military would seem little appropriate and credible if the same operator were involved in the evasion of other taxes due to military protection. Furthermore, informal channels based on personal relations allow for the use of issues that should remain under the table as bargaining chips. One could imagine for example a situation where a civilian authority would demand an officer to comply with the request to withdraw troops from the entry to a mining site in exchange for not revealing the officer's implication in a certain assassination. Personal contacts also offer leverage where they are part of patron-client relations. Since the latter are ultimately reciprocal and based on forms of accountability, civilians can try to wrest favors from military actors that are part of the same big-man networks. Such networks also allow civilians to enhance their leverage by mobilizing figures higher up in the network to put pressure on the specific military actors that they try to contest. The result is that power struggles and conflicts rarely remain confined to the context in which they started, as they draw in actors operating at the supra-local level. This enhances the potential for both conflict resolution and escalation.

70 Interview with local radio journalist, Binza *groupement*, April 2010.

To summarize, contestation via informal channels offers more freedom of action and better possibilities to promote one's own projects, and sometimes promises to be more effective. However, employing informal channels of contestation also has many drawbacks. Importantly, informal channels have less of a signaling function, in that the dissent remains hidden to a wider audience. For example, a formal, public denunciation of military roadblocks through a communiqué of the FEC sends a strong signal that certain norms have been violated and therefore puts additional pressure on the FARDC, delegitimizing its practices. A complaint of the president of the FEC addressed to the commander of a military region during a private meeting fails to have such wider communicative effects. Although not necessarily less effective, such more atomized initiatives do forego the building of coalitions of pressure and other forms of collective action. If, for example, a powerful player like the FEC would publicly denounce certain practices by the military, civil society organizations and civilian authorities could be sooner enticed to similarly protest. This is especially the case where individual action would be deemed dangerous, since singling out a particular group. Hence, as highlighted by the importance of 'ethical reciprocity' in shaping agentic orientations and their effects,⁷¹ public contestation helps overcome the informational dimensions of collective action problems, while also lowering the risks of contentious action.

Aside from lacking a broader signaling function, informal forms of contestation may also tempt social agents to act as individuals, rather than as representatives of collectives who defend collective interests. For instance, when discussing privately with commanders, economic operators may abstain from advocacy in the name of their professional group as a whole, instead trying to strike deals that are only favorable to themselves and their own client networks. In this respect, it is important to note that civilian authorities, economic operators and civil society organizations in the Kivus do not always form 'communities of interest' along professional lines. One reason is that professional identities may be weak relative to other forms of identification, like ethnic or geographical ones. Another reason is that the many conflicts within Kivutian society, such as between families, villages and clans, cause divisions within professional groups. Furthermore, the imperative to make (immediate) profits may trump solidarity, which is all the more likely in an environment of rampant economic, political and physical insecurity, where time horizons tend to be short. Such a climate is not propitious to practices that entail the foregoing of individual revenue at the short term to obtain longer-term (but due to volatility often far from guaranteed) collective benefits. Rather, it provides incentives for opportunistic forms of collaboration with the military that yield immediate advantages. In this manner, the intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection in the Kivus may aggravate collective action problems that thwart civilians' contestation of military power.

The same applies to the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the FARDC, which will be analyzed in detail in Part IV. On the one hand, the convoluted workings of the military, characterized by multiple intersecting, overlapping and conflicting power networks, enable civilians to exploit or even manipulate its internal divisions, which might facilitate the contestation of particular military units or actors. The scope for effectuating changes in military practices or deployment is significantly increased where civilian projects of contestation converge with those of allied power networks within the military. On the other hand, liaising with networks in the military opens up the risk that civilians' efforts at contestation are seized upon by these networks to further their own agendas. Within their endless power struggles, contesting factions in the military do not hesitate to instrumentalize civilians' complaints about rival groups. Civilians' accusations may for instance serve as a justification to redeploy certain units elsewhere, so that a particular big-man's own protégés can be sent to the vacated area, or to demote officers to lesser positions. While such measures may help civilians to get rid of unwanted units or officers, they do little to alter the military's structural power position, in particular as they reinforce the competing military side. Moreover, when aware of the usefulness of manipulating internal divisions within the military, civilians may start to focus on immediate conditions and temporary power equilibriums within the armed forces to the detriment of attention to structural conditions and durable transformations. Consequently, rather than challenging the power position of the military as a whole, the emphasis is on contesting the (temporary) dominance of certain factions, units or commanders. In this manner, the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the military, in interaction with those that are at play in the Kivus' social order as a whole, undermine the effectiveness of civilians' contestation of the military.

7.3 *Explaining civilians' agency towards the military*

What does this overview of practices of contestation tell us about civilians' agency vis-à-vis the military, specifically when juxtaposed with the two other main agentic orientations, that of compliance and collaboration? Furthermore, what does the analysis of these orientations say about the role of structures of domination, signification and legitimation, and that of the dynamics of conflict, protection and insecurity in shaping civilians' agency? For one thing, it appears that civilians' agentic orientations towards the military are fluid and fractured: it is not uncommon that the same social agents alternately engage in practices of collaboration, compliance and contestation, indicating that agentic positions are often ad-hoc, partial, fleeting and ambiguous. This section explores the reasons for this heterogeneity and fluidity, while also shining a light on the effects on social structures and dynamics.

71 The importance of ethical reciprocity for both compliance and contestation was explained on pp. 193–196.

The main bases of civilians' agency vis-à-vis the military

As shown in the previous, processes of militarization have normalized interactions with armed actors in many dimensions of everyday life, and have given increasing legitimacy to the forging of protection relations with such actors. They have also influenced civilians' expectations surrounding the social roles that the FARDC performs, and the practices that soldiers engage in. In certain parts of the Kivus, donating food to the military, paying a fee at roadblocks, having soldiers stay over in one's house or hotel, or sharing one's transport with them, have become to a large extent routine practices. Provided they do not violate the practical norms, civilians tend to comply with such practices, since these are embedded in routines that are navigated by appeals to practical consciousness. Hence civilians obey in such cases not because they explicitly agree with the practice or the actor in question, or hope to gain something out of it, or purely out of fear, but simply because they are used to it. They pass the same roadblock every morning, they give the same quantities of fish to the navy every day, and they always pay the same fee upon entering the mining site. Hence, on their way to the market, civilians may not actively reflect upon whether having to pay at the roadblock is good or bad, or whether the soldier levying the fee is allowed to do so. They may simply pay as usual, hoping to get safe to the market and to sell their goods at a good price. However, when explicitly asked about such routine practices, hence when appealing to discursive consciousness, civilians might not agree with paying or providing a certain service to the military: in fact, they are quite likely to denounce these practices and describe them as illicit, depending on the multitude of factors that shape evaluations, such as the common projects that the contribution would support and the social role and position of those placing the demand.⁷² However, when navigating on the basis of practical consciousness, these forms of reasoning are not manifest, and habituation is the main guiding compass. In some cases, awareness of this dimension of habituation is expressed in discursive reflexivity, often being connected to a feeling of acceptance/resignation. An expression that was frequently heard in relation to military practices was *tumeshazoea* ('we are already used to it'), expressing the idea that 'this is simply how it is', there is not much we can do about it. In the course of conversations, it often occurred that civilians first denounced certain practices, to subsequently state in the same sentence '*tumeshazoea*', this is simply the way things go in the Kivus, whether we like it or not. This attitude reflects the type of acceptance that is at play in habituation, which was found to be an important ground of civilian agency towards the military.

Concerning the relative importance of the other bases of civilians' agentic orientations towards the FARDC, it was already noted that pure legitimacy-based agency is rare. Due to the pressures caused by economic, physical and political insecurity, including as a result of omnipresent conflicts and the big-man system, there is a strong orientation towards short-term goals like immediate revenue generation and resolving pressing conflicts. This also reflects upon expectations of figures of authority, which partly as an outcome of processes of militarization, have strongly shifted towards more utilitarian orientations. As a consequence, such considerations commonly play an important role in shaping Kivutians' agency vis-à-vis authorities, although their relative weight may strongly differ per context. This is also manifested in agentic orientations towards the FARDC, which are deeply informed by evaluations of the military's role performance centering on the effects on livelihoods and the provision of security and dispute processing services. Utilitarian considerations also tend to heavily imprint agency where threats of coercion and death are strong. However, even though the FARDC regularly resorts to life-threatening forms of violence and severe intimidation, situations of extreme threat are ultimately not very frequent, in part because intimidation of the more subtle kind seems comparatively more widespread. Therefore, collaboration and compliance with the FARDC are not always primarily driven by coercion, although the latter usually constitutes a second-order concern that induces forms of self-censorship.

The mixed importance of coercion is also evidenced by the inventory of contentious practices presented in the previous, which has shown that civilians in the Kivus have a relatively large space for contesting the military. An important reason is that coercion by the FARDC is erratic, unsystematic and unequally distributed. This is to a large extent a result of its weak institutionalization, in particular its limited capacities for systematic surveillance and monitoring, erratic systems of information gathering and diffusion, and reduced capabilities for rapid intervention, as will be further described in Part III. These features make that the FARDC often lacks the information and reaction capacity for the exercise of effective, targeted coercion. Another explanation for the FARDC's erratic exercise of coercion lies in the interaction between on the one hand, the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection internal to the military and on the other, these same dynamics as they play out in the social order of the Kivus as a whole. These latter dynamics are driven by the presence of a confusing amount of political-military factions, which both collaborate and compete. On the one hand, the FARDC benefits from this fluidity and fragmentation, which provide it with a following of protection-seekers, and allow it to play crucial roles as gatekeeper, powerbroker and sometimes arbiter. On the other hand, these volatile dynamics limit its room for control and coercion: the multitude of factions and the fleeting nature of alliances prohibit absolute hegemonies. The fact that the FARDC itself is also subject to fragmentation and power competition further undermines its possibilities for control, and widens civilians' space for maneuver, allowing them to instrumentalize internal divisions in the military. For these various reasons, the dimension of coercion, hence anticipated harm, does not always predominate in guiding civilians' practices, implying that utilitarian considerations often focus stronger on anticipated benefits.

While generally of importance, utilitarian considerations almost always interact with other forms of reasoning and projects in shaping civilians' agency. Even when bent on short-term advantages, civilians still value factors like the credibility of authorities' commitments and the fairness of their practices and procedures. This implies that much of their agency is ultimately grounded in contingent consent

72 For an overview of the factors shaping civilians' evaluations of the military's power and practices, see Figure 11 on p. 131.

or dissent, combining various evaluations, projects and modes of reasoning. These include evaluations of legitimacy and social role performance, notably the fairness of procedures and outcomes, ethical reciprocity and utilitarian considerations. Agency informed by contingent consent or dissent is susceptible to the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. In particular evaluations of credibility and fairness are strongly shaped by dynamics of conflict and protection. For example, assessments of whether measures are discriminatorily enforced or not tend to be influenced by the (perceived) impacts on out-groups (or competing big-man networks), and on whether the enforcing party belongs to an in-or out-group. As soon as civilians suspect that the implementation of a certain measure by the FARDC has favored those with whom they are in an intense conflict, like by granting them exemptions from prohibitions or reductions in the contributions to be paid, the propensity to comply will considerably diminish, and the incentives to revolt increase.

To summarize, civilian agentic orientations fluctuate between compliance, collaboration and contestation. When analyzing the various bases of these orientations, the paramount factors are: first, habituation, as influenced by processes of militarization having routinized certain forms of interaction with armed actors; second, contingent consent and dissent, as shaped by the interaction between evaluations of credibility and fairness and utilitarian considerations; and third, utilitarian considerations as a stand-alone factor, which relate to on the one hand, anticipated advantages (often deriving from protection) such as access to revenue-generation opportunities and dispute-processing services, and on the other hand, expected disadvantages, as mostly stemming from coercion. While coercion plays an important role in shaping civilians' agentic orientations toward the military, as evidenced by the substantial 'self-censorship' that civilians impose, its unsystematic character makes that in many cases, utilitarian considerations center predominantly on potential advantages. However, the balance between advantages and disadvantages, as well as the overall importance of utilitarian considerations, strongly vary per situation and place. The main reason is the importance of place-specific social structures and dynamics of conflict, security and protection. Civilians' priorities and choices differ for example in contexts with ongoing clashes between the FARDC and rebel groups, or where two big-man networks are involved in fierce power competition, or where due to bad harvests and displacement there is rampant food insecurity.

The predominance of utilitarian considerations within civilians' agency hampers the contestation of military power for a variety of reasons. Importantly, the general orientation towards short-term advantages, like immediate revenue generation or direct interventions in conflicts, can cause contradictions in civilians' behavior. For instance, a *chef de poste* may at one moment denounce the involvement of the military in the minerals sector, and write letters of complaint to the provincial governor, but at another ask a locally deployed FARDC commander to transport the gold that his intermediaries have bought, since he judges the road too unsafe. In the face of such occasional collaboration, contestation assumes a more temporary and partial character than would be the case if military power were consistently resisted across dimensions and time. Furthermore, the salience of utilitarian reasoning fosters collective action problems. As long as civilians guided by utilitarian considerations suspect that their competitors will continue to engage in and benefit from illicit practices involving the military, even when they themselves refrain from them, they will have few incentives to resist such practices, as it puts them at a comparative disadvantage.

The effects of fluidity, conviviality and heterogeneity

While the basic elements shaping agency in general are similar across contexts, the specific forms they assume, such as the contents of beliefs, often exhibit substantial variations per social order. Beliefs that are crucial for shaping agency include conceptions of agentic possibilities, or the extent to which social agents believe that they can influence the world, which is again influenced by temporal orientations, or how people see their relationship to the past, present and future (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 973). One factor that influences such temporal orientations is the relative fluidity of social structures and constellations. Both very solid and hyper-fluid social constellations might negatively impact beliefs in agentic possibilities, since there is little visible impact of change. Indeed, in the Kivus, there appears to be a negative relation between the volatility of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection and beliefs in imminent changes in the military's practices, fostering a type of resignation that undermines contestation. For example, most civilian authorities and civil society activists contacted complained about the limited impact of their lobbying and advocacy efforts. As one human rights defender in Lubero territory commented: 'Today I can follow up on this case [of illegal detention] and liberate him [the detainee]. But tomorrow they arrest someone else, and we have to start all over. Today they can remove this roadblock. Tomorrow a new unit comes in and they put up again this roadblock. This discourages us.'⁷³ Civilian authorities striving towards the improvement of military behavior similarly depicted it as 'Sisyphus labor', with the stone either not moving at all or rolling each time back. Such feelings of powerlessness and resignation seem to have taken hold among civilians more generally, and are also fed by desperation about the poor performance of the state and continuing physical and economic insecurity. As one woman at a market in Kamanyola commented: 'We have no choice. We have to accept. We have to live with the military despite all.' A hotel receptionist in Butembo explained: 'In the Congo, the population is the field of the state, and all they do is harvest. We cannot easily change this.'⁷⁴ Such feelings of powerlessness are especially strong in highly insecure areas, in particular those plagued by HUNI, but also in zones of contested control: when areas frequently change hands, civilians have to negotiate and cope each time with different armed actors. Although this also offers hope for change, in many cases it

73 Interview with human rights defender Kirumba, 03.05.2010.

74 Interview with hotel receptionist, Butembo, 28.04.2010.

creates the feeling of having to restart from zero. This shows how the volatility of the Kivus' dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection nourishes beliefs about the limited possibilities for civilians to make a difference, thus lowering their appetite for contestation.

The Kivus' volatility also affects social agents' time-horizons, leading to a strong focus on the here and now, and the assessment of immediate dangers and opportunities, since the moment to grasp or address these is fleeting. This does not imply that civilians are entirely consumed by immediate needs and orientations. Volatility also directs civilians' attention to envisioning the near and distant future, not only to anticipate the effects of present actions and to identify future opportunities and hazards, but also to imagine a better existence, as a source of hope. However, when formulating and imagining future paths, the uncertainty, unsettledness, and sometimes indefinability of both present and future make that Kivutians rarely approach these as set in stone. This also applies to immediate action. The instability of the social environment causes agency and its actualizations to be made and unmade at a relatively high pace. Such fluid agency requires an elevated 'imaginative capacity of the "I" to move between multiple situationally variable "me's"' (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 988), and to rapidly switch between social roles, discursive registers and social networks. This flexibility renders the connotations of stability evoked by commonplace designations of categories and identities at times misleading. While labels like public/private, military/civilian, victim/perpetrator may generate the impression of referring to clear-cut and stable phenomena and forms of identification, in many cases, they only capture a fleeting and limited part of complex and constantly evolving processes.

The fact that the social roles played by both the military and civilians are multiple and their interactions multidimensional strongly impacts agentic orientations. As explained in Chapter 4, 'civilians' and 'military' are superordinate identity categories that are only activated in certain circumstances.⁷⁵ Consequently, civilians and military define and approach each other not only as 'military' and 'civilians', but also as relatives, neighbors, suppliers, tenants, clients, lovers, protectors, co-religionists, business partners, in-or out-group members, etc. Given that civilians' different forms of identification are connected to different representations of the military, and lead to different evaluations of its power and practices, they influence civilians' interactions with the military, generating fluctuations in agentic orientations. For example, if in a certain context forms of ethnic identification are more salient than professional identification, a civil society activist may relate differently to an abusive soldier with the same ethnic background than in a context where professional identification would predominate. This also explains why the weakness of the umbrella category of 'civilians' hampers the development of well-delineated and coherent collective opposition to military power: people only define themselves occasionally as 'civilians' with common interests vis-à-vis 'the military'. In sum, since there are no sharply delineated civil and military spheres, there are no stable spaces of resistance against the military. The development of coherent collective contestation is further hampered by the multiple fault lines within the Kivus, where inter- and intra-community conflicts abound. Some of the forms of social identification that individual social agents assume have become antagonistically defined identity categories, which hampers the forging of broad-based civilian coalitions against the military.

The development of stable positions of contestation is further undermined by the high level of interweaving of civilians' and soldiers' lives. Civilians and military in the Kivus are entangled in social webs that span all dimensions of life, rendering them interdependent in highly heterogeneous, fragmented and often asymmetric manners. The resulting intimacy of interaction calls into mind Mbembe's (1992: 10) notion of 'conviviality', which he uses for characterizing the relations between dominant and dominated in what he calls, in a rather gross generalization, 'the African postcolony'.⁷⁶ According to Mbembe, binary opposites, such as resistance vs. passivity, state vs. civil society, or autonomy vs. subjection are ill suited to capture power relations in this imagined space. At the background of this plays that the relative proximity of dominant and dominated, who do not live in separate spheres, causes power relations to be defined by domesticity and intimacy. For Mbembe, there are no clearly delineated 'public' and 'private' spheres, or one single public space: rather, the social order of the postcolony consists of different intersecting spaces which all have their own rules and rationalities. This renders absolute domination difficult, since it allows the dominated to fracture their identities and relations and draw simultaneously upon multiple registers and networks, thus enhancing their leverage (idem: 4–5). These observations also apply to the relations between the military and civilians in the Kivus, which are equally characterized by proximity, conviviality and complex forms of interweaving that cut across public and private spheres. Importantly, since power relations are to a large extent personalized, intimate connections with the military allow civilians to increase their influence and to be shielded against the harassment of other state services, including the military itself. Such forms of influence are relatively accessible: due to the heterogeneity and multiplicity of the networks that people are tied into, there is always a chance that a friend of your neighbor's uncle, or the brother of the head of a local church, or the sister-in-law of the younger brother of the customary chief, might serve in the military or have connections there, who might in turn have relations to those higher up in the hierarchy.

However, conviviality and the interweaving of the lives and spaces of the more and less powerful also render it more difficult to challenge the dominant. The high degree of interdependence between the military and civilians, as well as the multidimensionality of civilian-military interaction, hamper the challenging of military power. To give an example, contesting the soldier that rents a room in your house

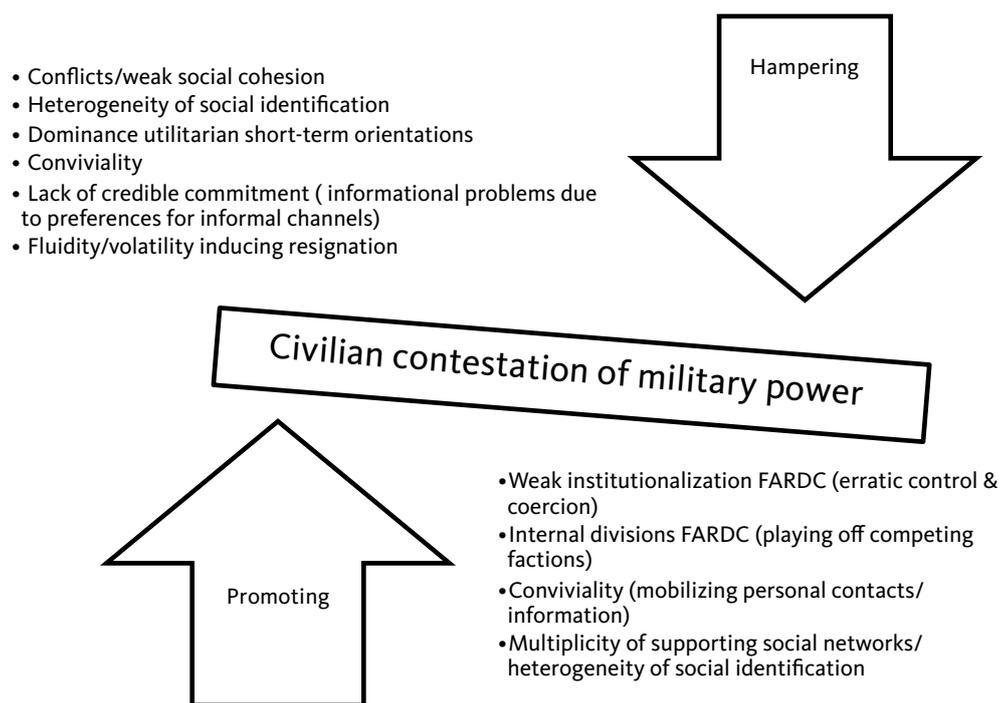
75 The superordinate character of the identity categories of 'civilians' and 'military' was explained on p. 124.

76 While it indeed seems that many of the mechanisms and phenomena Mbembe describes can also be found in other countries than where he gathered most of his primary empirical data (Cameroon), he demonstrates neither analytically nor empirically why it is warranted to speak of 'the African postcolony', simply approaching this concept as a given.

for his or her failure to pay might enable one to recover one's money at the short term, but may spoil the chance to obtain protection for illegal practices in the future, such as the possibility to violently 'settle' a dispute with a neighbor. Furthermore, antagonizing one soldier might cause a deterioration of relations with the wider networks in which he or she is embedded, which may intersect with one's life-path in manners one is not able to anticipate. Especially in a context where trust and reputation are crucial assets, and where 'keeping as many options open as possible' is key to social navigation, the longer-term detrimental consequences of bad relations with military actors may be substantial. Additionally, due to the fluid lines between public and private spheres, contestation in one area may also affect practices in another, as when disputes around love affairs start influencing those related to business deals and vice versa.⁷⁷ Moreover, intimacy implies knowledge of private spheres, which can be used for extending one's power but also be used against one by opponents.

To summarize, civilians' agentic orientations towards the military are strongly shaped by first, the fluidity of social fields, as stemming from the accelerated dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection; second, the heterogeneity of social networks and forms of identification that surround social agents in the Kivus; and third, the phenomenon of conviviality, or the intimacy between dominant and dominated. On the one hand, these various factors, or fluidity, heterogeneity and conviviality, enhance the effectiveness of certain practices of contestation, in particular by enlarging the social networks that can be drawn upon, and by enabling the flexible use of informal and personalized channels, including the manipulation of intimate knowledge. On the other hand, they hamper contestation by foregoing the forging of coalitions, by creating fears for closing down on future opportunities and for creating reputational damage, and by undermining beliefs in the possibilities for sustainable change. This comes in addition to the other factors mentioned as hampering contestation, which all center on collective action problems, including weak social cohesion due to multiple conflicts, a strong orientation towards utilitarian considerations creating fear for comparative disadvantages, and finally, informational problems stemming from a preference for non-public, informal forms of contestation. When adding these various factors up, and analyzing them in relation to the factors that facilitate or promote contestation, it would seem that the balance is tilted towards the side of contestation-hampering factors (see Figure 15), which provides an important part of the explanation for the ongoing militarization of the Kivus.

Figure 15: The factors promoting and hampering civilians' contestation of military power



Concluding, summarizing and final reflections Part II

Part II analyzed civilian-military interaction in a number of domains, including practices relating to the production and distribution of wealth, which were typified as extraction, protection and collaboration/transactions. Furthermore, it studied practices relating to other forms of local governance, in particular security and conflict regulation, focusing both on the relations between the FARDC and civilian authorities, and those between the FARDC and civilians. With regard to practices of extraction and dispute processing, specific attention was paid to how the military frames these practices discursively in terms of 'public' or 'private', as shaped by the particular social

⁷⁷ The transformation of 'public' into 'private' practices and vice versa was described earlier for the domain of dispute processing, as was discussed on pp.183–184.

roles that they enact. Furthermore, it was analyzed how these social role performances impact readings and evaluations by civilians, especially where practices fall on the licit/illicit spectrum. Due to processes of militarization and other forms of social transformation, the expectations of Kivutians vis-à-vis the military, and figures of authority in general, have come to strongly center on the provision of security, livelihoods and dispute processing services, often considered in a more utilitarian manner, namely as how they impact one's personal situation. This affects evaluations of the FARDC's practices, sooner seen as 'licit' when yielding personal advantages, therefore being inscribed in particularistic rationalities of protection. Expected protection services from the FARDC include the shielding of illicit forms of revenue generation and influence peddling, and coercion-based and sometimes violent interventions in dispute processing and score settling. This has caused some of the violence in the Kivus to have a joint, civilian-military character, which demonstrates the impact of the normative shifts triggered by militarization.

However, the relative importance of utilitarian considerations is not similar across time and space, as it strongly depends on the intensity of place-specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, causing the relative legitimacy of the FARDC and the licitness of its practices to fluctuate across and within contexts. Furthermore, the importance of utilitarian considerations in relation to the provision of security, dispute processing services and livelihoods does not imply that interpretations of the same notions as 'public goods' are not also of relevance within civilians' expectations of the military. The social roles of 'state actor' and 'big-man' partly overlap, causing contradictions in respect of what civilians expect from figures of authority. This places a strain on authorities and complicates readings and evaluations of their power and practices, which tend to be informed by multiple, overlapping and sometimes contradicting rationalities, discourses and norms. This also applies to FARDC officers, who commonly act alternately or simultaneously as public security actor, public servant/official, big-man, and businessperson. Consequently, 'private' and 'public' registers, and protection-related, entrepreneurial and state rationalities intermingle, overlap and conflict. While an asset for the FARDC in that it extends the range of legitimizing resources it can draw upon, this switching between various roles, rationalities, and discourses is also a liability as it undermines the predictability of its practices and compounds readings and evaluations thereof.

Civilians' evaluations of military actors and practices are important for understanding civilian-military interaction, as they strongly shape civilians' agentic orientations towards the military, distinguished here as compliance, collaboration and contestation. The bases of these agentic orientations consist of habituation, the legitimacy of power and projects, utilitarian considerations, and finally, contingent consent or dissent. The latter notion is shaped by a combination of evaluations of legitimacy and social role performance, including the fairness of procedures and outcomes, ethical reciprocity and utilitarian considerations. Based on an extensive analysis of civilian-military interactions, it was argued that much of civilians' compliance with military demands stems from habitual obedience, highlighting the high level of routinization of interaction with armed actors due to processes of militarization. Yet civilians' agency is also strongly shaped by contingent consent/dissent, which has a utilitarian component, and occasionally, by utilitarian considerations alone. The salience of this utilitarian dimension is not only due to elevated expectations of protection services (expected advantages), but also stems from fear induced by coercion (expected disadvantages), although this last dimension tends to be weaker due to the FARDC's erratic exercise of control and limited capacities for systematic coercion.

The same factors that foster a prominent role for utilitarian considerations within civilians' agency hamper civilians' disposition towards contestation. While contestation is widespread, whether in the form of everyday discursive and social practices, more occasional spontaneous or organized collective protests, or efforts by professional groups like civil society organizations, it is neither systematic nor stable, and its effects tend to be limited. A host of factors were identified for this, ranging from the heterogeneity of social identification to conviviality to a multi-faceted collective action problem, relating at once to limited social cohesion, informational problems and comparative disadvantages. At the background of this plays that what are assets in the successful navigation of the shifting sands of the political-military landscape of the Kivus in the short term tend to undermine the coherence and effectiveness of agentic orientations in the long term. For instance, a focus on the changing fortunes of power networks within the FARDC in order to harness the right faction at the right time hampers contestations of the military as a whole. Hence, many navigational tools employed by civilians in the Kivus are double-edged swords, both facilitating and undermining their projects in different time frames. To give another example, while forum shopping facilitates dispute processing for civilians, it also stimulates shopping forums, or authorities who treat disputes that are outside of the bounds of their jurisdictions and mandates, which may cause the military to impose itself unilaterally on disputes between civilians. Furthermore, while personalized networks and informal contacts may facilitate addressing sensitive issues with the military, they also hamper building broader coalitions between civilians by keeping contestation hidden. This reflects how informal (protection) practices create ambiguities about civilians' agentic orientations, making it unclear when and why they collaborate or contest. The same applies to the soliciting of violent interventions by civilians, which causes the instigators of acts of violence to remain unknown. In the case of the HUNI, the perpetrators of acts of violence remain unknown as well, leading to considerable ambiguities surrounding the projects behind and sources of violence. Importantly, these ambiguities complicate the readings and interpretations of practices of violence, leading people to hark back to sedimented representations and narratives as main grids of intelligibility, which often relate to discourses of ethnicity and autochthony. In this manner, civilians' practices importantly contribute to fuelling the very dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that cause their practices to contribute to the reproduction of militarized structures, including the structures of domination underpinning the FARDC's position of power. As will be analyzed in the following, this is also the case with the practices of the military, which are equally strongly shaped by and shape the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection both within the military and within the Kivus as a whole.

The military's social order in the Kivus

HAVING EXTENSIVELY DESCRIBED AND ANALYZED civilians' agency towards the military and the mechanisms shaping it, it is now time to turn to the military side of civilian-military interaction. Similar to civilians, the agency of the military is a product of on the one hand, structures of domination, legitimation and signification and on the other hand, dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. These structures and dynamics are primarily located within the military, but interact with those of the social orders in which the military is situated. As mentioned, the particular configuration of social structures in the FARDC creates internal dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that are a key driver of these same dynamics within the Kivus. The main driving forces of these processes are competition for scarce resources and big-man rationalities, which are at the root of pervasive uncertainty among FARDC staff at all levels of the hierarchy. While foot soldiers are uncertain when and how much of their salary will arrive, and whether they will be able to generate extra revenue to allow their children to go to school, officers live in the constant fear of losing their position and associated access to income-generating opportunities, for example by being attributed a lower function or by being deployed to another zone. This pervasive (socio-economic and political) insecurity generates and is generated by at once intensive conflicts and a drive for protection. Importantly, it fosters competition between persons and power networks for access to positions and opportunities, the distribution of which follows a distinct logic of patronage. As a result, military staff depend on big-men for obtaining and maintaining positions and other benefits, but also for being shielded against the arbitrariness that power competition sometimes entails. In order to discredit competitors, and assure rotations and redeployments, it is not rare that military actors resort to manipulation, for instance by provoking the arrest of military staff on trumped up charges, or by false accusations of embezzlement or mistreatment. In such cases, protection is crucial to avoid unjust condemnations and other forms of disciplining, which are commonplace in the FARDC. In combination with the absence of any form of social benefits or pensions in the military, and strong pressures on staff to assist members of (extended) family and client networks in their quest for survival and social mobility, the elevated risks of being marginalized or targeted cause the stakes of conflict and protection in the FARDC to be exceedingly high.

Part III analyzes these various dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection in the military, as well as the social structures that set them in motion, at the level of the military as a whole, the military in the Kivus, and that of individual field-based units, respectively. At the same time, by presenting the voices of soldiers, it offers an insight into how FARDC staff feel and think about military life, their colleagues and superiors, and their organization. Chapter 8 starts out by discussing the ways in which the political center, in particular the president and his entourage, manages the armed forces, in collaboration with the military leadership. It then analyzes the effects of these policies, which shape and are shaped by the military's internal social structures, on the workings of the FARDC at the level of the Kivus, focusing on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that these policies and structures enkindle. Special attention is paid to big-man relations and *rapportage*, the never-ending restructuring of the military organization, the existence of a multitude of agencies and units with overlapping mandates, and lastly, weak bureaucratic institutionalization.

Chapter 9 shifts the focus to field-based military units, and looks at unit-level structures and dynamics by exploring the various factors that impact *cohesion* or bonding within and between primary groups (squads, platoons) and secondary groups (companies, battalions, brigades/regiments, the military organization as a whole). Cohesion relates to both the ties between soldiers at the same level of the hierarchy (horizontal bonding) and between soldiers and their superiors (vertical cohesion). The factors that shape cohesion include the extent to which soldiers and their commanders share the same beliefs and forms of identification, as influenced by the relative salience of ethno-regional, linguistic, (military) educational and ideological differences; and whether their living, working and training conditions promote close ties. Together with other factors, like the perceived neutrality of the distribution of punishments and rewards, these elements also influence the extent to which commanders are seen to live up to the expectations and norms surrounding the social

role of 'FARDC commander' as defined by military staff. Assessments of how this social role is performed have a crucial influence on vertical cohesion. Taken together, the various factors shaping horizontal and vertical cohesion provide an in-depth insight into structures of domination, signification and legitimation in the FARDC, while also illustrating the impact of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection on the workings of the military at the unit level. Understanding these structures and dynamics, and how they interact, is again crucial for understanding military units' practices towards civilians, which are further explored in Chapter 10.

Core features of a kaleidoscopic military

THIS CHAPTER DESCRIBES THE MAIN FEATURES of the organization and workings of the FARDC, focusing first on how it is managed by the political leadership and the top of the military hierarchy in Kinshasa. It subsequently analyzes how these forms of military management, in interaction with the social structures and dynamics specific to the military, impact the military's workings and modus operandi in the Kivus. Since the main concern of this study is to understand the military's practices towards civilians, only features are discussed that were found to have important explanatory value in this regard. These are: first, big-man relations and *rapportage*, which are at the root of pervasive (socio-economic) insecurity and pressures for revenue generation within the military; second, never-ending restructuring, which in the Kivus has been an important instrument for the accommodation of rebel integration, and a powerful engine of power competition; third, the existence of a multitude of agencies and units with overlapping mandates, which fuels the dynamics of conflict within the military; and fourth, the military's weak bureaucratic institutionalization, as manifested in haphazard and deficient administration and information flows. The latter promote weak supervision and control over military staff's movements and practices, which is an important factor in explaining abusive behavior towards civilians. In sum, Chapter 8 describes how, being fragmented, weakly organized, and in constant flux, the FARDC resembles a kaleidoscope with differently colored pieces that are constantly shifted around to form new patterns, sometimes in unexpected manners.

8.1 The political center's military management

Cobbled together from heterogeneous parties allying mostly for pragmatic reasons, the post-transitional (2006–present) ruling coalitions¹ that President Joseph Kabila has presided over mirror the power dynamics in the country at large: a permanent balancing act aimed at maintaining a fragile equilibrium between a multiplicity of nodes of power driven by diverging visions and projects. At the nerve of this complex power constellation stands the inner circle of advisors surrounding Kabila, a mixed and fluctuating lot from various political and geographical backgrounds, but generally dominated by, and divided between, North-Katangans, South-Katangans, and (Grand) Kivutians, in majority those from Maniema. Comprised of both those holding official positions and persons operating *dans les coulisses* (behind the scenes), like members of the president's family, *la Présidence*, as this power center is known, forms part of and presides over never-ending power competition at the national level and between on the one hand, the political center and on the other, the provinces and (sub) provincial elites. This competition is driven by a multitude of power networks, often formed on an ethno-regional basis, which include the following cast of characters: at times marginalized big shots from Kabila *père's* cabal, ex-Mobutists, the former protagonists of the transitional power-sharing arrangement (2003–2006), who have often reinvented themselves as either regime stalwarts or insurgents, and newcomers and aspirants. In order to navigate this fragmented system, and prevent the ongoing power struggles from threatening its own power position, the presidential power circle is engaged in near-permanent cooptation, cajoling, ruthlessly repression, mediation, and negotiation. Ultimately, it is through these efforts, and its relative strength, that *la Présidence*, functioning as a type of parallel government, is able to guarantee regime stability.²

¹ The term 'ruling coalition' is defined herein as relating to both *la Présidence* and the government, which is dominated by an alliance of political parties loyal to Kabila that used to be called *Alliance pour la majorité présidentielle* (AMP, Alliance for the Presidential Majority), but changed its name to *Majorité présidentielle* (Presidential Majority) before the 2011 general elections.

² Colette Braeckman, 'Quelques questions sur le système Kabila', *Le Soir. Le Carnet de Colette Braeckman*, 10 April 2010; Marianne Meunier, 'La méthode Kabila: le premier cercle', *Jeune Afrique*, 25 May 2009; Philippe Perdrix, 'RDC : Joseph Kabila peut-il changer?', *Jeune Afrique*, 3 May 2012.

While the presidential power center exerts strong influence over the government and key parts of the administration (International Crisis Group, 2010a), it does not systematically and comprehensively control the state apparatus. Kabila's power appears more diffuse, more negotiated and confronted with stronger centrifugal tendencies than that of Mobutu, at least in his heydays, up to the end of the 1970s (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers, 2008). While Kabila and his entourage are undeniably in charge, their influence strongly differs per policy domain, geographical area, and state agency, depending on ongoing processes of negotiation. Since the end of the transition, a period characterized by caution not to derail the fledging transitional process and return to full-scale violence, the presidency has attempted to reinforce its grip over the state apparatus, mostly via patronage-based and authoritarian means (Matti, 2010). While these efforts have met with some success, they have not translated into significant improvements of policy elaboration and implementation, partly as progress with reinforcing the underfunded and decayed administration has been slow (International Crisis Group, 2010a). This also applies to efforts to improve the military, which have been erratic, and have produced varying effects.

8.1.1 Islands of informal control over a fragmented force

Like with other parts of the state apparatus, the political center's control over the armed forces is variegated and fluctuating, which hampers the elaboration and implementation of policies, since diverting attention and resources to managing the unfolding power dynamics and imminent crises (Kets and De Vries, 2014). While the presidential military office, the *maison militaire*, is undeniably the most powerful network within the heterogeneous collection of big-man networks that permeate the FARDC, its control is only partial. It maintains this control through a mixture of parallel structures, loyal units and personal client networks, and by promoting continual rotations of office and organizational flux, which sets in motion intense dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection.

The presidential military office, the *maison militaire*, is a key tool of presidential control over the military apparatus. It operates like a parallel power structure within the FARDC, working partly through, and partly outside of and in conflict with the general staff and the *ministère de la défense nationale et des anciens combattants* (ministry of national defense and former combatants, henceforth ministry of defense). It has predominant control over a number of crucial agencies, including the *Garde républicaine* (GR, Presidential Guard) and the *État-major des renseignements militaires* (EMRM, general military intelligence staff), which regroups the military intelligence services, except for those of the GR, which are a separate structure. Due to the strong influence of the presidential circle, the general staff has only limited independent control over key areas of decision-making such as procurement, logistics, intelligence, and negotiations surrounding the integration of rebel groups. The influence of the ministry of defense in these domains is even more limited, and is strongly undermined by its deficient communication and at times conflicting relations with the general staff. Both the ministry's and the general staff's grip are further weakened by the FARDC's limited administration, characterized by a minimum of record keeping and a fledgling digitalization, and deficient communications between Kinshasa and the regional commands, which strongly reduce their knowledge of what is happening on the ground.³

Similar to the president's power network in general, Katangans and (grand) Kivutians play an important role in the circle that has preponderant influence over the military. They can be found among the commanders of key agencies like the GR (up to end 2014 Gen. Dieudonné Banze Lubunji, then Gen. Ilunga Kampete) and the EMRM (up to end 2014, Gen. Jean-Claude Yav), in the crucial function of Chief of Staff of the Land Forces (up to 2012, Gen. Gabriel Amisi, then Gen. François Olenga Tete, since end 2014, Gen. Banze Lubunji),⁴ as minister of defense (since 2007, all Katangans, namely Chikez Diemu, Mwando Simba, Luba Tambo and Ngoi Mukena) as well as among the president's closest military advisors, like the head of the *maison militaire* (up to end 2014, Gen. Célestin Mbala Musense, then Gen. Olenga). In certain cases, the formal functions of such key figures are of less importance than their position in the presidential entourage. A telling example is Gen. John Numbi, whose trajectory provides a good insight into the nature of de facto decision-making in the defense domain. Numbi rose in the ranks of the army under Kabila père, being equally a Muluba from northern Katanga. Appointed chief of staff of the air force during the transition, Numbi, who has followed only limited military education, has been a key figure in negotiating the integration deals with the rebels of the CNDP. As discussed, the first attempt to integrate the CNDP, the so-called *mixage* deal in 2007, soon unraveled as it gave disproportionate advantages to the CNDP. This led to accusations that Numbi was operating as a maverick (Wolters, 2007: 7). Although appointed inspector-general of the PNC (police) soon after, he continued to be one of the president's closest military advisers.⁵ This became particularly clear at the end of 2008, when Numbi was again involved in negotiating an integration deal with the CNDP, this time with the involvement of the Rwandan government. This deal encompassed joint military operations with the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) against the FDLR, which were launched in January 2009 under the name *Umoja Wetu*.⁶ While this clearly concerned major decisions of a strategic nature with far-reaching consequences for the FARDC, Numbi did not consult with the FARDC chief of staff, nor did he hold a formal position in the military at the time of the negotiations. Moreover, the FARDC chief of staff was notified of the

3 Interview with former EUSEC staff member, Breda, 02.07.2009.

4 Jean-Jacques Wondo Omanyundu, 'Décryptage: Comment interpréter le jeu des chaises musicales à la tête des FARDC?', *DESC*, 26 September 2014.

5 Allegedly, one of the reasons why Numbi was made to quit his functions in 2007 was his decision to bar all airplanes at Ndjili airport in Kinshasa access to refuelling, after the fuel-storage company Sep Congo had refused to supply him with petrol. On Numbi, see M.K. Tshitenge Lubabu, 'John Numbi, le bras armé de Kabila', *Jeune Afrique*, 9 March 2009; Clément Boursin, 'RDC: John Numbi, portrait d'un homme de l'ombre', *Afrikarabia*, 21 June 2013.

6 For a discussion of both *mixage* and the rapid integration of the CNDP in 2009, see pp. 84–85.

joint operations with the RDF only a few days before the start. The parliament had not been consulted about the entry of foreign troops either, in violation of article 213 of the constitution (International Crisis Group, 2010b: 2–3; FIDH et al, 2009: 11–12).

A figure like Numbi clearly thanks his influence to loyalty rather than competence. In fact, numerous Kabila loyalists in key positions in the armed forces, like Olenga and previously Numbi, have no or only a limited professional military background.⁷ While crucial for maintaining a grip over the military, such networks of loyalists by no means allow *la Présidence* to exert comprehensive and systematic influence. Rather, within the vast ocean of power networks that constitute the FARDC, Kabila and his entourage have established only a number of shifting islands of control in the form of loyal units and client networks, their foothold over the rest being variable and fluctuating. An important sphere of presidential influence is constituted by a number of loyal light infantry units (commonly called ‘rapid reaction’ units in the Congo) that have been trained under bilateral defense cooperation agreements since 2009, like the Belgian-trained 321st and 322nd battalions. These units are commonly deployed to solve major crises of a potentially regime-threatening nature. For example, in 2010, the 321st was sent out to Dongo in *Équateur* to combat the Enyele insurgency. This uprising was considered to be a serious threat given its proximity to Kinshasa and the alleged support that it drew from ex-FAZ soldiers in exile in Congo Brazzaville and former members of the MLC rebellion.⁸ In 2011, the battalion was deployed to Kinshasa to secure the elections, where, according to some sources, Kabila used it ‘more as his personal guard to halt a presumed coup than the rapid reaction function it was supposed to fill’ (Wilén, 2013: 59). These units, which also include the South-African trained 41st, 42nd and 43rd battalions, and the US-trained 391st, are often better equipped than others, thus reproducing the historical pattern of a ‘two-speed’ military that crystallized in the Mobutu era, characterized by a dichotomy between elite and ‘ordinary’ units.

Within non-elite agencies, structures and units of the FARDC, presidential power rests primarily upon personal contacts with key figures. For example, the *maison militaire* has loyalists in the command of the military regions, but also lower down the chain, among field commanders. The latter are commonly deployed to areas of strategic importance, or are local strongmen presiding over semi-autonomous power networks, who have been coopted into the presidential power circle. These personalized networks bypass the formal hierarchy and command structures, implying for instance that orders can be given to figures in the military region of which the general staff in Kinshasa is not aware, or that the *maison militaire* arranges matters directly with commanders in the field, without going through the military regions first (International Crisis Group, 2006a: 14–15; Robinson, 2012: 492). Yet, especially in the Kivus, where important parts of the military are part of semi-autonomous spheres of influence, this renders the control of *la Présidence* only fragmentary. Such a power situation tends to be manifested where commanders have local fiefs, are embedded in relatively autonomous networks of accumulation, and can mobilize extra-military sources of power, like political elites and non-state armed groups. Although most of these quasi-autonomous power networks do not have the potential to directly challenge the incumbents, they do undermine the political center’s grip over the military. Furthermore, through varying coalitions and the fluctuating nature of power constellations, these networks constantly threaten to grow more powerful. These uncertain dynamics necessitate permanent efforts from the presidential circle to master this fragmented power landscape, whether by means of cooptation, intimidation, accommodation, or manipulation. However, as explained in the following, the effects of these efforts are highly varying, depending on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection both within the FARDC and within the social orders in which it is situated.

Like in the Mobutu era, the granting and withholding of access to positions is an important way in which *la Présidence* tries to maintain control over the military, as this binds top officers into a relation of dependence. The effectiveness of this practice crucially hinges on regular rotations, which allow for the cooptation of some clients and the discarding of others. One way to ensure rotations, as indicated by the career trajectory of Numbi, are accusations either based on trumped up charges or grounded in real events that are manipulated in a politically expedient manner. In 2010, Numbi was suspended from his function as police chief, officially for his alleged involvement in the murder of the human rights activist Floribert Chebeya.⁹ This both reflected and intensified the process of his falling out of grace with the presidential circle, leading him eventually to be removed from his position in December 2013. It is widely believed that the officially presented reason, his suspected involvement in the mentioned murder, was only one of the reasons for his departure, which was essentially driven by power politics.¹⁰ This shows that in contrast to the Mobutu years, some of the more heavy-handed measures to ensure rotations, like purges, are no longer applied.

Another way to ensure rotations of office are regular restructuring efforts, leading to the creation and disappearance of positions, as well as new appointments. As is further explained below, the presidential circle has applied this policy in particular to the Kivus, where the creation of the Amani Leo operational structures was an important vehicle to provide payoffs to the newly integrated CNDP. A crucial dimension of the 2009 overhaul was the proliferation of command positions by creating not only new operational structures at provincial level, but also operational zones and sectors, and a multitude of brigades. The restructuring of the FARDC command that was announced in September 2014 seems imbued with a similar rationality. Following the new command structures as laid out in the 2011 Defense Law

7 A 2003 US embassy cable describes Numbi and Olenga as ‘hardliners’ and ‘political appointees with no professional military background’. US Embassy in Kinshasa, ‘New breed of hardliners influences Kabila’, Cable 03KINSHASA477, 27 February 2003, *Wikileaks*.

8 Jason Stearns, ‘The mystery of Dongo’, *Congo Siasa*, 6 January 2010.

9 Boursin, ‘RDC: John Numbi’.

10 Marc Hoogsteyns, ‘Some thoughts and facts about the ongoing crisis in the DRC. Part I’, *Kongomani*, 7 February 2014.

(see below), the 2014 overhaul led to the creation of a new layer of command between the general staff in Kinshasa and the regional commands. Henceforth, the country has three *zones de défense* (defense zones) and in total ten *régions militaires* (military regions, 2–4 per defense zone), which do no longer necessarily correspond to the boundaries of the provinces, like the previous military regions. Additionally, new operational command structures have been created, the *secteurs opérationnels d'action* (operational action sectors), which are located within the defense zones.¹¹ As a result, the number of higher command positions has increased, which has augmented possibilities for cooptation, hence for the presidential circle to reinforce its grip. At the same time, the creation of these structures bears significant potential for reducing the effectiveness of official command chains, which now contain extra layers, and for fostering power competition. This power competition must again be managed to prevent it from spiraling out of control, which is likely to occur through the same means, drawing heavily upon big-man rationalities, and which might therefore have the same enkindling effects on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection.

Aside from granting (and withholding) access to positions, including via restructuring efforts, another mode of ensuring the loyalty of key figures in the military is to grant them considerable leeway in their moneymaking schemes, testifying to the continued centrality of manipulating access to revenue generation for power projection. In order to buy the loyalty of the military top brass, the incumbents close their eyes to superior officers' engagement in revenue generation, including the more illicit forms such as those based on fraud, influence peddling, embezzlement or *opération retour* schemes.¹² A business-friendly climate does only keep superior officers 'out of politics', since it causes them to be preoccupied with commercial schemes, it also gives the incumbents the discretionary power to reveal and denounce these forms of revenue generation whenever it suits them, which comes in handy when needing to justify rotations or demotions (cf. Callaghy, 1984: 180). This is clearly illustrated by the career path of former FARDC Chief of Staff of the Ground Forces Gen. Amisi. In addition to his position in the military, Amisi manages a diverse business portfolio, which encompasses investments in the commercial complex Maniema Union in his native Maniema province,¹³ and in several mining sites in the Kivus, like previously the gold mines at Omate, in Walikale territory (North Kivu). At the beginning of 2010, Amisi intervened in a dispute over the rights to the Omate mines, striking a deal with one of the parties to the conflict, in exchange for a fixed percentage of the revenues. Since neither of the parties had the formal right to exploit the mines, military protection was a clear asset. Amisi then made an arrangement with the commander of the 8th Military Region and his deputy to divide control over the mines and share the revenues. FARDC soldiers were ordered to guarantee the protected mining company freedom of operations, which entailed blocking competitors' access, and suppressing a demonstration against the company organized by the local population in March 2010. Since all of the various military stakeholders involved in this opaque deal sent their representatives to Omate to maintain a presence and claim a part of the revenues, the mines became heavily militarized, with over a 100 soldiers present in an area previously covered by only 15 troops. After complaints about this militarization, the then Minister of Defense Charles Mwando Simba ordered the military prosecutor's office to start an investigation into the dispute. Yet, exploitation under the direct supervision of the FARDC continued, including during the time of the mining ban, from September 2010 onwards (UNSC, 2010: 55–56). Soon after investigations commenced, the mining company in charge was evicted, and its manager arrested, allegedly as he had not respected his arrangement with Amisi.¹⁴ While the latter was put under pressure to withdraw from Omate, perhaps in part as the story aired on the BBC, efforts to investigate the case were eventually blocked.

Allegations against Amisi in relation to his involvement in a trafficking network of hunting ammunitions and arms deliveries to certain rebel groups initially seemed to fare better. These accusations, which were documented in a report of the UN Group of Experts (UNSC, 2012: 33, 36), were cited in the decision to suspend him from his functions in November 2012. However, it seems that they formed more a convenient excuse for his dismissal than the principal ground, which seems to have been his detrimental impact on the efforts to combat the M23, as further explained below. On 1 August 2014, the superior defense council announced that Amisi would be reinstated, as he was cleared from the allegations 'due to a lack of evidence'. This paved the way for his reappointment, in September 2014, as commander of the First Defense Zone, following the major structural overhaul of the FARDC that was announced that month.¹⁵ However, his acquittal had not been based on any investigations, since the military prosecutor's office has no magistrates of equal rank, and could therefore not interrogate him.¹⁶ Thus, the case of Amisi shows how violations of the law by key figures in the military hierarchy are mostly denounced when it is politically expedient. Furthermore, the same political motivations leading up to accusations make that the latter can be rapidly retracted whenever needed. This demonstrates that while coopting key figures like Amisi strengthens the incumbents, it weakens the regulatory power of the state, by sanctioning the ignoring or contravening of laws and official rules and procedures.

In sum, the political center mostly tries to assert control over the military through informal channels, implementing measures that are imbued with big-man rationalities, such as regular rotations of office, repeated restructuring efforts and the manipulation of access to revenue-generation opportunities. It are not only key figures in the upper echelons at the national level that the political center tries to

11 Wondo Omanyundu, 'Décryptage'.

12 As explained on p. 79, *opération retour* schemes are dishonest deals based on inflated costs or under-spending, with the surplus being divided between the parties involved.

13 Amisi's business operations, including his investments in his native Maniema province, were discussed on p. 178.

14 Thomas Fessy, 'Congo general "profits from blood gold"', *BBC News*, 10 November 2010.

15 Jean-Jacques Wondo Omanyundu, 'Restructuration des FARDC et retour en force du Général Amisi', *DESC*, 19 September 2014.

16 Radio Okapi, 'RDC : la Monusco "prend note" de la réhabilitation du général Gabriel Amisi', *Radio Okapi*, 6 August 2014.

coopt in this manner. *La Présidence* also heavily invests in maintaining the loyalty of FARDC officers in the east who have leverage over the armed groups that operate there, whether through social or commercial ties. As one informant explained: ‘Kabila likes to be surrounded by *sapeurs-pompier*s [fire-fighters]’.¹⁷ The reason is that the incumbents hope to avoid in this way that the armed groups these officers are linked to grow out to be a real threat to their power, which would also turn their allies within the military into a menace to their position. Moreover, such officers constitute a relatively cost-effective way for dealing with armed groups, being used as intermediaries, including in efforts to avoid that these groups liaise with powerful external actors or to convince them to lay down arms. Due to the limited availability of alternative ways of dealing with armed groups that are equally attractive and efficient, Kinshasa depends to a large extent on the local connections and power of such officers to reign in armed groups. This dependence often translates into granting them important positions in the FARDC regardless their competence. Aware that their position (both in the FARDC and in the presidential patronage network) depends in part on their capacity to influence armed groups, such officers tend to play this card to the maximum, for example by threatening to derail negotiations or integration processes if their demands are not honored, thereby essentially holding the FARDC hierarchy hostage. Thus, a paradoxical situation has emerged in which certain FARDC officers in the Kivus derive a part of their power from their very capacity to manipulate armed groups, therefore having a stake in the continued existence of these groups.

A telling example of such a gatekeeper to armed group networks is Gen. Baudouin Nakabaka, up to 2014 deputy commander *adminlog* (charged with administration and logistics) of the 10th Military Region (South Kivu) and one of the most important Mai Mai leaders in Uvira territory during the Second Congo War.¹⁸ Nakabaka gained his position in the FARDC mostly on the basis of his assumed capacity to convince Mai Mai groups to participate in *brassage* and to contain the influence of the RCD in the Uvira region during the transition. After the transition, he continued to maintain contacts with and support the plethora of Mai Mai and certain other armed groups active in this region, including through arms deliveries (UNSC, 2009: 10–12). Because of these contacts, he was regularly employed for negotiations with the Mai Mai in Uvira, over which he was believed to continue to exert a degree of influence. He was also tasked with coordinating the contribution of these groups to joint operations with the FARDC against the Burundian rebel group *Forces nationales de libération* (FNL, National Liberation Forces) in the course of 2012 and 2013. In addition to his leverage over armed groups, Nakabaka used to have considerable political influence in the Uvira region. In 2004, heavy fighting between ex-RCD and other FARDC units prompted the RCD-affiliated authorities in Uvira to massively flee to Burundi. Nakabaka capitalized upon this exodus to (informally) appoint new administrators, who subsequently remained loyal to him. Additionally, using his position in the command of the 10th Military Region, he managed to gradually build up significant economic influence throughout the province of South Kivu, running business operations in the minerals trade at various sites. Due to this combined political and economic power, and his capability to influence armed groups, Nakabaka was maintained for years as deputy commander *adminlog* of the 10th Military Region, despite his limited military and general education.¹⁹

The case of Nakabaka, then, constitutes a clear example of how the incumbents try to coopt key figures in the military with leverage over armed groups in order to confine these to acceptable boundaries. While this approach has clear benefits at the short term, as it diminishes the pressure to deal with armed groups in other ways, for example through costly and risky counter-insurgency operations, it has significant drawbacks in the long run. Being of a crosscutting nature, the networks that these figures are embedded in, which encompass non-state armed groups and civilian political and economic elites, always threaten to grow more powerful, which creates centrifugal tendencies in the military and undermines its functionality.²⁰ The effects of this policy of cooptation are therefore ambiguous: while helping the incumbents to contain the threat of armed groups and related networks in the FARDC, it may also undermine their power both over the FARDC and the Kivus, by reinforcing dependencies on the semi-autonomous power networks that are key drivers of armed mobilization in the Kivus.

8.1.2 Plans, policies and laws: cacophony, perverse effects and selected effectiveness

The presidential circle’s diffuse power over the military and the permanent threat that certain networks will grow more autonomous elicit a strong orientation towards managing short-term power dynamics, which goes to the detriment of developing and implementing policies grounded in a long-term, comprehensive vision on the defense sector. Kabila’s style of government further exacerbates this *ad hocery*: often avoiding clear, immediate decisions, and preventing or reversing commitments to well-defined, longer-term plans, he tends to adopt

17 Interview with employee civil society organization, Uvira, 09.04.2014.

18 The observations in this section are based both on the 2009 Final Report of the UN Group of Experts (UNSC, 2009) and fieldwork conducted in the Uvira region, both between 2010–2011 and in the course of 2014 (see Appendix A for more details).

19 Nakabaka was among the officers being called to Kinshasa after the fall of Goma end 2012 (see below). Despite being promoted general in 2013, he became increasingly marginalized in the course of 2013 and 2014, and mid-2014, there were strong rumors in Uvira that he would leave the FARDC. Interviews in Uvira, 25–28.06.2014. However, in September 2014, when the major restructuring of the FARDC was implemented, he was appointed deputy commander *adminlog* of the 13th Military Region (*Équateur* province).

20 Another example of such a network is that surrounding the Hutu politician Eugène Serufuli, the former governor of North Kivu who used to maintain close contacts with the Hutu branch of the rebel group PARECO, together with Hutu officers in the FARDC like David Rugayi. The latter supplied arms and ammunitions to this group, which fought on the side of the FARDC against the CNDP (Stearns, 2013a: 22, 25, 31).

a ‘wait and see attitude’, deferring decisions or leaving them to his advisors.²¹ While this style of government is characterized by opacity, foot-dragging, evasion tactics, and indecisiveness, it has granted Kabila the flexibility to adapt his strategies to the evolving volatile situation in the east, the changing regional dynamics (in particular relations with Kigali), and the ebb and flow of donor engagement. Furthermore, it has allowed him to proceed by means of ‘silent encroachment’ rather than direct confrontation where vested interests are high (Koddenbrock, 2014). Nonetheless, covert manipulation appears to have been equally characterized by adhocery, causing the efforts of Kabila and his cabal to reinforce the institutionalization and professionalism of the armed forces to have been overall incoherent and erratic, with commitment in certain areas greater than in others. At the same time, effects of these efforts have been highly uneven, often partly depending on the persons in charge of execution (Kets and De Vries, 2014; Stearns et al., 2013). This dependence on persons, rather than policies, has also led to frequent changes in the nature of defense policies, with many proposals never having been implemented and others reversed.²² One area in which this has clearly been manifested is the domain of formal defense reform plans and legislation.

A cacophony of defense reform plans and legislation

From the moment of the FARDC’s creation in 2003, progress with strengthening the military has been hampered by the absence of a clear and detailed vision on how the armed forces should be organized and what tasks they should perform, and a realistic reform plan with a feasible budget and timelines. Although the training of the First Integrated Brigade had already begun in 2004, it was not before August 2005 that a *Plan stratégique nationale pour l’intégration des forces armées* (National Strategic Plan for the Integration of the Armed Forces) was adopted (Boshoff, 2005). This plan was the first in a series of reform plans that have not or only partially been implemented, due to the fact that each time a new minister of defense or chief of staff takes over, or the competition between the ministry of defense and the FARDC general staff takes new turns, new plans are introduced, or existing ones reformed (Stearns et al., 2013: 66).

The first reform plan, which was abandoned in July 2007, fell victim to Minister of Defense Chikez Diemu’s ambitions to create a vast ‘developmental army’ involved in food production and infrastructure rehabilitation. Despite drawing strong criticism, including from FARDC Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Kayembe Mbandakulu, who preferred a much smaller army than proposed,²³ Chikez’s ideas were formalized in February 2008 in the *Plan directeur global de la réforme de l’armée* (Global Directive for Army Reform). However, due to the plan’s ambitious scope and the limited possibilities to obtain the required funding, the new minister of defense and chief of staff that arrived at the end of 2008 chose to elaborate a *Plan révisé de la réforme de l’armée* (Revised Army Reform Plan). The new plan was based on the principle of self-financing military reform, although it retained a target of 145,000 personnel, despite uncertainties about how such a vast military could be financed (Stearns et al., 2013: 68–69). While designed as more realistic than the previous plan, although not based on a detailed threats and capacity assessment, to date, its implementation has been erratic and has remained incomplete.

One of the reasons for the slow implementation of the reform plan is the slow pace of the elaboration, adoption and implementation of defense legislation required for its application. This is a wider problem that has plagued the development of the FARDC from the start. While the integrated command chain of the FARDC was created in 2003, it was only in November 2004 that a law concerning the organization of the armed forces was promulgated.²⁴ This law was replaced in August 2011 by *Loi organique n°11/012 du 11 août 2011 portant organisation et fonctionnement des forces armées* (Law no. 11/012 of 11 August 2011 on the Organization and Functioning of the Armed Forces), which laid the basis for the implementation of the 2008 reform plan. Yet, the implementation of this law required the adoption of numerous decrees (implementing laws), which was only completed in June 2013.²⁵ Furthermore, it was not until September 2014 that the commanders of the new defense zones and military regions were appointed, and the process of implementing the new command structures as envisaged in the law was started. The same delays were observed in the elaboration and adoption of another key piece of legislation, the *Loi portant statut du militaire des FARDC* (Law on the Statute of FARDC Staff). This law, which was eventually adopted in January 2013,²⁶ foresees many improvements in service and social conditions for military staff and their families, notably officers and *sous-officiers*. For instance, it introduces family, housing, transport, and funeral allowances, the regulation of leave, and the right to pensions and invalidity stipends. However, like the 2011 law, its implementation requires the adoption of a large amount of decrees, as well as the allocation of a significant (and as yet uncalculated and unbudgeted) amount of funding. As of mid-2015, no implementing laws had yet been adopted nor any budgetary adjustments been made. Another key piece of legislation needed for

21 Colette Braeckman, ‘Quelques questions sur le système Kabila’, *Le Soir. Le Carnet de Colette Braeckman*, 10 April 2010.

22 For example, in 2007, a reform proposal circulated in Kinshasa signed by Land Forces Commander Gabriel Amisi, which proposed the redeployment of the Integrated Brigades, and their renaming as Integrated Infantry Brigades (IIB). Neither the redeployment nor the renaming occurred, possibly because this plan had been elaborated without consultation of the ministry of defense. US Embassy in Kinshasa, ‘Congolese military proposes redeployment, renaming of Integrated Brigades’, cable #07KINSHASA452, 19 April 2007, *Wikileaks*.

23 A cable of the US embassy in Kinshasa of July 2008 reports on a meeting with the minister of defense: ‘Note: Chikez clearly took pleasure in having prevailed over Kayembe, with a plan for a much larger military than that proposed by the Chief of Staff. End note’. US Embassy in Kinshasa, ‘Storm clouds gather around Amani process; will fighting resume?’, Cable 08KINSHASA625_a, 31 July 2008, *Wikileaks*.

24 It concerns *Loi organique n° 04/023 du 12 novembre 2004 portant organisation générale et fonctionnement de la défense et des forces armées*.

25 Radio Okapi, ‘RDC: Joseph Kabila signe des ordonnances sur la nouvelle organisation des FARDC’, *Radio Okapi*, 19 June 2013.

26 It concerns *Loi n° 13/005 du 15 janvier 2013 portant statut du militaire des FARDC*.

implementing the 2008 reform plan, the *Loi de programmation militaire* (Military Programming Law), which regulates the management of materiel and other assets, had end 2014 still not been drafted, thus further delaying progress with reform (Berghezan, 2014: 12).

Ad hoc initiatives and counter-productive effects

Aside from the slow elaboration of the legislative framework, another reason why military reform has lagged behind are recurrent restructuring initiatives driven by efforts to master the militarized power competition in the east, which have often no clear relation to reform policies, or hamper their implementation. A good example is the creation of the Kimia II/Amani Leo structures in 2009. This initiative was not part of any reform or stabilization plan, but primarily initiated to accommodate the integration of the CNDP. In fact, it created so much administrative chaos and power competition that it led to the deterioration of the organization and modus operandi of the FARDC in the Kivus. The 2011 regimentation effort was partly an attempt to undo this chaos, although it did not produce the desired effects. It envisaged the transformation of the Amani Leo brigades into regiments, with in total 14 regiments to be deployed in North Kivu and 13 in South Kivu. Regiments are officially composed of 1,200 troops, which is less than the (on paper) between 2,000–4,000 of the Integrated Brigades²⁷ and the (again on paper) around 2,500 of the Amani Leo brigades.²⁸ The regimentation process, which was launched rather unexpectedly, appears to have had three purposes. First, it had to reduce the number of ghost soldiers in the Amani Leo brigades, some of which counted only between 500–800 troops.²⁹ Second, regimentation had to better integrate and train the thousands of troops that had been versed overnight into the FARDC in 2009, by providing each regiment with three months of training before being redeployed. Third, and most importantly, regimentation was intended to dilute the influence of the ex-CNDP, in particular weakening their parallel command structures (UNSC, 2011: 81–82).

When coopting the ex-CNDP in 2009 by offering it to integrate into the FARDC with significant payoffs, the presidential circle's ultimate aim was to gradually weaken its power, in part by capitalizing upon internal divisions (Stearns, 2012: 39). When this strategy failed, and the ex-CNDP became increasingly autonomous as a result of its newly acquired spheres of influence and sources of income, Kinshasa felt an urge to turn the tide. As mentioned,³⁰ the CNDP had benefited from their integration into the FARDC by building up a position of dominance within the Amani Leo structures and by extending and entrenching their influence throughout the Kivus, including in a number of strategic economic areas (UNSC, 2009: 49–57; UNSC, 2010: 45–46). In the course of 2010, criticism on this state of affairs started to mount, not only since it was seen as a capitulation of the Congolese government to Rwandan interests, but also since many elites in the Kivus felt disadvantaged and marginalized. Furthermore, the population and the economy had enormously suffered from the Amani Leo operations, which had triggered rampant insecurity and massive displacement (International Crisis Group, 2010b: 8–10). Propelled by intensifying criticism and a desire to regain grip on the military apparatus in the Kivus, the government took a number of measures to weaken the ex-CNDP's influence. It first attempted to redeploy a share of ex-CNDP troops and a number of key officers to other provinces. This provoked a fierce counter-reaction. On 23 September 2010, ex-CNDP officers in the FARDC issued a memorandum in which they stated to refuse any redeployment of their troops as long as the agreements they had signed with the government on 23 March 2009 were not fully respected (UNSC, 2010: 45; 128–130). This declaration of disobedience painfully exposed Kinshasa's weaknesses, and reconfirmed the ex-CNDP's status of exception. Although FARDC Chief of Staff Didier Etumba made some muscled declarations in the media soon after the ex-CNDP had circulated the communiqué,³¹ this ultimately had little impact, and the far-out majority of ex-CNDP troops remained deployed in the Kivus. The regimentation process initiated at the start of 2011 should be seen against the background of these events, constituting a renewed effort by the presidential circle to water down the influence of the ex-CNDP.

However, the effects of regimentation were mixed. On a positive note, it enabled the general staff to reinforce its administrative grip, as regiment staff passed through a renewed biometric census, leading to the elimination of thousands of ghost soldiers. More negatively, it allowed the ex-CNDP to perpetuate its military and political-economic dominance in large areas of the Kivus (UNSC, 2011: 82). These overall disappointing results can be ascribed to a number of factors. To start with, the announcement of the transformation of brigades into regiments came totally unexpected for all those not in the inner circles of power. The plan had not been widely discussed, nor was it inscribed in any of the various defense reform plans that had circulated, or in existing defense legislation, which recognizes only brigades.³² Due to the last minute announcement and the rather tight schedule, there was little time for preparation, for example to

27 These data were valid for 2006–2007 and in relation to the first 14 Integrated Brigades. Data obtained through personal communication with Colin Robinson in Ghent on 11.08.2013, based on an interview between Colin Robinson and a confidential source in Brussels, 27.09.2007. According to Robinson, as of early 2007, *tableau organique* (establishment table) 720 provided for a strength of (on paper) 3500 for the IBs.

28 According to some FARDC staff, the Amani Leo brigades counted officially 2610 troops, but the exact number could not be verified with other sources. Interview with staff officer of 6th Zone Ops, Uvira, 21.03.2011.

29 Conclusions based on observations made during the first phase of the regimentation process at the start of 2011. For instance, the 652nd brigade was disbanded after having contributed just enough troops for one battalion of a regiment.

30 The conditions and effects of CNDP integration were discussed on pp. 84–85.

31 Le Potentiel, 'Permutations dans les rangs des FARDC : aller jusqu'au bout', *Le Potentiel*, 30 September 2010.

32 Neither the 2004 Defense Law nor the *Loi organique n° 11/012* adopted in August 2011 recognize 'regiments' as basic units of the FARDC, speaking only of 'brigades' (Berghezan, 2014: 11).

develop and harmonize the curricula of the three-month training in the regimentation centers or to arrange transport allowing for a better geographical spreading of troops. Undoubtedly more important than bad preparations and organization was resistance by the ex-CNDP, whose leader Bosco Ntaganda hijacked the process by influencing appointments to key positions in many regiments, while also having a strong say in their deployment locations. This thwarted the announced intention to take merit-based criteria stronger into consideration, thus missing the opportunity to improve the quality of command. Another reason why regimentation was largely counterproductive was that it created serious instability both within and outside of the FARDC. Within the military, it fuelled already strong power competition, leading to the desertion of numerous discontent staff, some of whom rallied to armed groups. Additionally, the massive withdrawal of troops from the interior to the regimentation centers increased the space of movement for numerous armed groups, triggering a surge in rebel activity and violence. In sum, instead of reinforcing its grip, the political center's efforts to manipulate power dynamics through regimentation ended up weakening its power. Renewed efforts to dilute the ex-CNDP's power at the beginning of 2012 initially had similar perverse effects, leading one part of this power network to mutiny, desert and form a new rebel group, the M23 (Stearns, 2012: 39–43). This shows how the volatile dynamics in the east and the centrifugal forces within the FARDC do not only hamper the implementation of policy measures, but also increase the risk of counterproductive effects by unleashing dynamics that are difficult to control.

Unexpected effectiveness in the face of existential threats

While the above description conveys an image of elevated adhocery and inefficiency in defense policies and management, Kinshasa occasionally does take and implement measures with relative effectiveness, in particular when it concerns addressing what the presidential circle perceives as existential threats. This is well illustrated by the efforts to reinforce the military's fighting capabilities after the losses against the M23. In June 2012, Gen. Bahuma Ambamba was appointed Commander of the 8th Military Region. According to a defense analyst: 'In less than 12 months, Maj. Gen. Ambamba has transformed the forces under his control, cracking down on ill-discipline, improving training especially for combined operations, raising morale and earning a good reputation both amongst his soldiers and the MONUSCO forces in North Kivu.'³³ Shortly after the M23's humiliating occupation of Goma in November 2012, FARDC Chief of Staff of the Land Forces Gabriel Amisi was replaced by Gen. François Olenga, equally from Maniema. This was probably not only related to the allegations of Amisi's involvement in arms trafficking mentioned above, but also to his ambiguous position vis-à-vis Rwandan influence related to his ex-RCD background, which compromised the efforts to fight the Rwanda-backed M23. Issuing from the entourage of Laurent-Désiré Kabila, Olenga was seen as more of a 'patriot' than Amisi due to his distinctly anti-Rwandan outlook.³⁴ As soon as he assumed his functions, he took a series of initiatives to improve morale among the troops deployed in North Kivu, descending regularly into field to hold patriotic speeches. More importantly, he made serious efforts to improve logistics, ensuring that troops at the frontlines were regularly paid and fed. The arrival of Olenga therefore had the effect of, at least temporarily, a fresh wind blowing through the FARDC, even if his limited formal military education was a source of great resentment among senior staff. Additionally, his background and networks inspired little confidence as to his willingness to improve transparency and accountability, in particular the extensive contacts in eastern Europe he had concluded opaque deals with when responsible for military procurement, and his performance during his previous post as inspector-general of the FARDC.³⁵

Another important measure taken by Kabila and his entourage in the wake of the fall of Goma was to streamline command chains in the 8th Military Region, allowing Gen. Bahuma to be more firmly in the driver's seat. In order to accomplish this, over a 100 of the most senior officers, mostly from the Kivus, were called to Kinshasa, under the pretext of a strategic workshop on defense reform and a pending reshuffle of the high command.³⁶ This removal greatly simplified command chains, while also contributing to the erosion of these officers' power position. It was only at the end of 2014 that new appointments were made in the framework of the major restructuring effort leading to the creation of the defense zones. However, up to that time, most officers lingered in Kinshasa without a position and therefore without sufficient income to maintain their business networks, hence influence, at the same level as before. The simplification of the command chain had as an additional advantage that it facilitated collaboration between the FARDC and MONUSCO troops, resulting in a net improvement of the FARDC's operational effectiveness. This was demonstrated by the military's relatively good performance in a series of offensives against the M23 that culminated in the defeat of the insurgency end October 2013, although this defeat should also be ascribed to other factors than improved FARDC performance.³⁷

The M23 episode provides a number of important insights into the political center's agency in the defense domain. On the one hand,

33 Darren Olivier, 'How M23 was rolled back', *African Defence Review*, 30 October 2013.

34 Le Potentiel, 'Le général Olenga dans le collimateur de l'armée rwandaise', *Le Potentiel*, 18 January 2013.

35 Olenga lacked any form of military education when starting his military career in the AFDL-era, when he was appointed to increasingly important positions by his protector Kabila père. The latter's son Joseph similarly took great confidence in Olenga, appointing him inspector-general of the FARDC in 2005, and head of the *maison militaire* in 2014. Jason Stearns, 'Who is General Francois Olenga?', *Congo Siasa*, 24 November 2012; M.K. Tshitenge Lubabu, 'RDC : François Olenga, chef, oui chef !', *Jeune Afrique*, 11 December 2012; Wondo Omanyundu, 'Décryptage'.

36 Jason Stearns, 'As the M23 nears defeat more answers than questions', *Congo Siasa*, 30 October 2013.

37 The defeat of the M23 was also a result of the contribution of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) operating under the MONUSCO flag, internal rifts in the M23 (Stearns, 2013b), and the withdrawal of support to the M23 by Rwanda. Stearns, 'As the M23 nears defeat'; Olivier, 'How M23 was rolled back'.

it showed that the presidential circle does have the clout to effectuate change. On the other hand, it exposed a numbers of structural constraints to its agency. The suppression of parallel command chains in North Kivu would have been unthinkable without the prior breaking of the ex-CNDP's grip over the military, which was facilitated by the mass desertion of ex-CNDP troops and officers leading eventually to the M23 rebellion. However, the ex-CNDP's waning influence was also the result of Rwanda's diminishing support to the ex-CNDP networks that did remain in the FARDC, highlighting how strongly regional spheres of influence have limited *la Présidence's* control over the military.³⁸ Furthermore, the reinforcement of the FARDC's capabilities would have been difficult without the investment of additional resources, the relative lack of which has been an important structural constraint to military reform. At the start of January 2013, President Kabila sent the proposal for the 2013 budget back to parliament, asking for an increase in the defense budget of around \$90 million, which then came to total \$247 million.³⁹ Under the influence of the war against the M23, this increase was readily granted, although it opened up the danger that defense expenditure would exceed 2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP),⁴⁰ which is the threshold that donors generally promote for low-income countries with limited capacity to raise revenues. Aside from reinforcing military capabilities, the increase in defense spending also strengthened the political center's grip over the military by allowing it to buy loyalty and influence, reflecting the general importance of the manipulation of revenue flows for the exercise of power. In sum, the M23 episode highlights how the political center's control over the military has been hampered by both the complex and fragmented power landscape of the FARDC in the Kivus and budgetary constraints. Yet when faced with existential threats, the president and his entourage have generally been able to muster sufficient resources and influence over the armed forces to effectively implement the measures required to ensure survival, even if the effects have sometimes been only short-lived.

8.1.3 Explaining (dis)continuities in military management

In Chapter 3, it was explained how Mobutu's modes of military management were geared towards maintaining control over key parts of the armed forces, and had either deliberate or less intended divide-and-rule effects. These modes of management included favoritism leading to ethnic recruitment; buying off loyalty by turning a blind eye to military commercialism; and the use of military office as a currency in power games, promoting frequent rotations of office via constant reappointments, and in extreme cases, via purges. The resulting organizational flux was further fanned by regular reorganizations of the armed forces, leading to the creation of multiple agencies with overlapping mandates and parallel commands. Mobutu's military management also contributed to the creation of a dichotomy between often foreign-trained and supported elite units and the peripheralized rest of the military, which was subject to increasingly bad service conditions due to a drying up of formal revenue flows. While not all these measures were calculated to have divide-and-rule effects, since policymaking in the defense domain was often characterized by ad hoc initiatives with unpredictable consequences, Mobutu generally managed to manipulate the resulting internal divisions to his advantage, thereby limiting the threat that the military posed to his own power position.

The picture of present-day military management that has been painted thus far indicates that there are substantial continuities with the pre-war situation. As we have seen, policies like favoritism, the creation of elite units, and cooptation by tolerating military commercialism are also employed by *la Présidence*. Yet, there have also been a number of transformations, as analyzed in the following section, which reviews (dis)continuities in military management. It also provides explanations for the observed trends by looking at the development of the social structures that were earlier identified as shaping rulers' ways of organizing and deploying the armed forces.

Continuities

Similar to Mobutu, Kabila and his inner circle try to maintain control over the FARDC predominantly via personal networks and cooptation, which entails granting access to positions and fostering a permissive climate for often illicit revenue-generation schemes. At the same time, they try to prevent key figures in the military from building up an autonomous power base by promoting frequent rotations of office, although more extreme ways to accomplish such rotations, like purges, are no longer employed. Another continuity resides in the importance of frequent restructuring, although this now has partly taken the form of accommodating rebel-military integration, which has also become an important way of coopting competing military networks constituted outside of the armed forces. Furthermore, there continues to be a dichotomy between on the one hand, better trained and equipped units like the GR and the foreign-trained battalions, and on the other hand, the bulk of the army, consisting of units that are generally ill-trained and ill-equipped, and have limited operational effectiveness.

38 An additional factor in the waning influence of the ex-CNDP over the FARDC were Kinshasa's efforts to neutralize the remainder of the ex-CNDP officers by co-opting them and inviting them to Kinshasa (Stearns, 2012: 42).

39 Radio Okapi, 'Le président Kabila promulgue le budget 2013', *Radio Okapi*, 5 February 2013.

40 In 2009, official defense spending was 1.1% of the Congo's GDP (Stockholm Institute of Peace Research, 2014), while in 2011, it was 1.37%. Yet, these figures might not reflect real defense spending. Like many other countries, the Congo is suspected to have significant off-budget military spending (cf. Hendrickson and Ball, 2002).

As explained in Chapter 3, rulers' management, organization and deployment of the armed forces is importantly shaped by on the hand, the nature of the Congo's political economy, characterized by archipelago statehood, indirect rule, and governance through big-man networks, and on the other hand, the external security environment.⁴¹ Therefore, continuities in modes of military management point to continuities in the structures of domination, signification and legitimation of the Congo. Crucially, in the absence of a comprehensive, well-institutionalized administrative apparatus under firm central state control, the political center continues to project power primarily via personal networks, including by coopting local power complexes, and via the deployment of disproportional force geared to have effects of deterrence.⁴² State penetration and incumbent power are still geographically uneven, following archipelago patterns of concentration around economic and strategic core areas, and reflecting outcomes of ongoing power struggles with local elites (Verweijen and van Meeteren, 2015). Provided threats emanating from semi-autonomous power centers can be contained, this pattern of uneven and indirect rule does not endanger the survival of the regime. This diminishes incentives to extend and reinforce administrative capabilities, and to institutionally strengthen the military, which is a precondition for reinforcing central state penetration in zones in the Kivus that are currently occupied by armed groups.

Aside from continuities in the political center's principal ways of maintaining control and projecting power, the military's role therein has also remained fairly constant. Similar to their predecessors, for the exercise of coercion, the incumbents rely to a large extent on civilian in/security agencies like the ANR (intelligence service) or certain branches of the police such as the *Légion nationale d'intervention* (LENI, National Intervention Legion) and the police intelligence service *Direction des renseignements généraux et services spéciaux* (DRGS, Directorate of General Intelligence and Special Services) (FIDH et al., 2009; UNJHRO, 2011). However, for quelling the most severe and direct threats, the rulers depend primarily on the military. The latter is also an important force of deterrence, both through mere presence and through the occasional display of brutal force. Furthermore, the military may shore up the power of civilian governance actors, both via professional support and protection arrangements.⁴³ Where this allows state agents loyal to the political center and the presidential circle to reinforce their position, it contributes to reinforcing the power of the incumbents. Yet, in the complex power constellation of the Kivus, the military's support to certain elites may also render semi-autonomous power networks more autonomous from the center. Therefore, protection arrangements between the military and civilian elites may also have counterproductive effects and end up weakening rather than strengthening the political center. This also applies where these semi-independent power networks maintain close links to non-state armed actors. By reinforcing these networks, including by providing arms and ammunition to non-state armed groups, factions within the FARDC undermine the power of the incumbents, even if the majority of non-state armed groups does pose an existential threat to the regime. Yet, the military also serves as a channel to manage non-state armed groups and keep them within bounds, both by absorbing them and by coopting officers serving as intermediaries to these groups, as was illustrated with the case of Gen. Nakabaka. This goes to show that the effects of the FARDC on the power of the incumbents are uneven, both reinforcing and undermining it in different dimensions and at different levels.

Despite these uneven effects, cumulatively and within the Congo as a whole, the armed forces seem to contribute more to strengthening the power of the incumbents than to undermining it. This is evidenced by the fact that Kabila has stayed uninterruptedly in power since 2001. Moreover, the FARDC and GR, however erratic and imperfect their performance, have warded off important (perceived) threats, whether through political repression, often involving extra-judicial killings, or battlefield action, as in the fight against the M23. Additionally, regardless of their high level of de facto decentralization, the FARDC are strongly seen by civilians as being directed by the government and as projecting state power.⁴⁴ This associative nexus of military-state-rulers is consciously fostered by Kinshasa, which conspicuously displays the military as a symbol of the state and the nation in national ceremonies, like the independence celebrations of 30 June.⁴⁵ Furthermore, similar to the FAZ, the FARDC's limited combat capabilities do not prevent it from being seen as powerful by the population, to whom it constitutes a source of oppression. This also allows it to work as a deterrent: regular egregious human violations, including those not related to political repression but stemming from the 'collateral damage' of combat operations or unscrupulous revenue-generation activities, are a permanent reminder of the military's capacity to harm civilians. Additionally, even while ill trained and ill resourced, the FARDC is still able to intervene in the case of large-scale popular dissent in a manner that is reassuring to the incumbents. Furthermore, the military is able to maintain a presence in areas plagued by high levels of violence, whether produced by armed groups or bandits, thus contributing to the impression that these areas are controlled by 'the state'. Moreover, the presence of the military often allows the civilian authorities to continue to operate, albeit under heavy pressure of armed actors. In this manner, in spite of limited

41 See in particular the concluding, summarizing and final reflections of Part II, on pp. 216–216.

42 While it falls beyond the scope of this study to detail the ways in which the in/security apparatus is used for repression and deterrence, there are numerous well-documented examples like the suppression of the Bunda Dia Kongo movement in Bas-Congo in 2007 and 2008 (MONUC Human Rights Division and OHCHR, 2008), or the suppression of supporters of the movement of 'prophet' Mukungubila in Katanga end 2013/start 2014 (ACBG et al., 2014; Ligue des Électeurs, 2014). For the use of the in/security forces, including the GR, for lower intensity political repression, see UNJHRO, 2011.

43 The ways in which the FARDC both weakens and reinforces civilian authorities was extensively discussed in Chapter 6, on pp. 168–172.

44 The associative nexus of armed forces, government and state was described on pp. 111–112.

45 In 2010, which marked the *cinquantenaire* or half a century of independence, the annual military parade was turned into a big display of force featuring around 15,000 soldiers and the newest and most advanced equipment, including combat helicopters, airplanes, the cavalry of the GR, and 400 tanks and trucks, some of which mounted with anti-aircraft artillery. It appears that this had to send a clear message about the Congo's sovereignty and the strength of Kabila's rule. FNC, 'Cinquantenaire d'indépendance: la RDC étale sa force', *Fédération nationale des cadres*, 6 July 2010.

operational effectiveness, the FARDC displays and partly reinforces the power of the incumbents and 'the state', especially in the non-strategic hinterlands. This might explain why, similar to his predecessors, Kabila eventually has only limited incentives to institutionally strengthen the military. Furthermore, it could be one of the explanations for the presidential circle's preference for maintaining sizeable armed forces, with presence being of more importance than performance, at least in peripheral zones.

Another reason why Kabila's appetite for reforming the military is only limited are resource constraints. Institutionally strengthening the military, including by guaranteeing troops better service conditions, would be extremely costly, in particular for a 150,000 strong force. At present, the armed forces rely to a large extent on extraction from civilians in elementary domains of military organization, like accommodation, transport, food provision, and healthcare. Wealth extraction from civilians also serves to finance basic necessities (e.g., medicine, pocket lights, blankets), and items needed for conducting professional tasks (e.g., phone credit), which soldiers in many other militaries would receive from the organization. Providing for these goods and services would require the FARDC to develop its own systems of healthcare, transport and accommodation, which would demand considerable investments. From this perspective, the current modus operandi of the military is a cost-effective solution to maintaining sizeable armed forces. But there are also other reasons why maintaining an ill-resourced military is attractive to the incumbents: since power projection crucially hinges upon the granting and withholding of access to revenue-generation opportunities, resource scarcity crucially underpins the political center's control (Kets and De Vries, 2014). As long as access to revenue generation and social benefits is not guaranteed, but conditional upon having connections, military staff will depend on, hence be loyal to, big-men. Involvement in revenue-generation activities also underpins the military's influence over civilians, reflecting how its relations to its civilian environment are equally imbued with the rationalities of protection. As we have seen, the FARDC's exercise of power over civilians partly depends on its capabilities to grant them access to revenue-generation opportunities, dispute-processing services and influence over the administration. Yet in order to be able to provide such services, military staff need to be tied into business and political networks, which equips them with the necessary resources, connections and levers. Thus, allowing the military to be involved in economic activities and protection arrangements is eventually also a cost-effective solution to enabling it to maintain control over civilians, which would otherwise need comprehensive mechanisms of monitoring and surveillance.

Aside from continuities in structures of domination, as related to the political economy, the relative resilience of the incumbents' modes of military management can also be ascribed to continuities in inter-related structures of legitimation and signification. The ways in which rulers manage the military is shaped by norms and beliefs about what tasks the armed forces can and should fulfill, how they should be organized, and in what ways they should operate and behave. These norms and discourses are a product of historically grown structures of signification and legitimation, and influenced by the history and current state of the armed forces, which set the parameters for thinking on what is possible and desirable. This is especially the case where rulers have themselves served in the armed forces, like Joseph Kabila who used to be the chief of staff of the FAC. Since this latter force displayed significant continuities with its predecessor force the FAZ, it can be assumed that Kabila was socialized into the norms and discourses that dominated in that force. As emerges from Chapters 4 and 5, certain of these norms and discourses, like representations of civilians, or norms surrounding revenue generation, have been relatively stable over time. Since many of the president's closest military advisors have also operated in the FARDC's predecessor forces, they have been socialized into the same structures, which therefore shape their agency. While this certainly does not preclude change, it is likely to contribute at least to a degree of continuity.

The structures within the armed forces also co-evolve with the communications and transport infrastructural environment in the deployment context. As further explained below, limited infrastructure and a lack of means of transport and information and communications technology (ICT) hamper administration, information flows and control. This promotes continuity in certain social practices, such as weak reporting duties, limited written administration and high levels of discretion for lower-level commanders. Yet, it is only in interaction with other elements, such as norms and discourses, that the infrastructural and resources environment produces effects on the FARDC's modes of organization and operation, and contributes to continuities.

Discontinuities

While current modes of military management display several similarities to the ways in which the FARDC's predecessor forces were governed, there are also a number of discontinuities. These are to a large extent caused by changes in the political order and the nature of the military in the east, including: the comparatively more limited strength and diminished centripetal power of the presidential power network; a growth in armed group activity; and differences in the composition and modus operandi of the armed forces in the Kivus. In contrast to the Mobutu years, the majority of military staff in the Kivus come from the provinces themselves, or if they originate from elsewhere, have over the last decade or so only been rotated within the Kivus. Consequently, they have become strongly embedded in often quasi-autonomous local and regionally oriented political-economic networks that often have close connections to non-state armed groups (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013b: 52). Some of these rebel groups and allied parallel power networks in the FARDC (potentially) threaten the power of the incumbents, for example as they are militarily strong, have autonomous sources of revenue, and are strongly inscribed in regional networks.

This overall more heterogeneous power situation undermines the divide-and-rule effects that Mobutu's modes of military management

used to have, strongly diminishing the possibilities to contain power competition within instrumentally profitable boundaries. Consequently, certain ways of ensuring control, like creating parallel structures or inducing rotations of office, bear nowadays much more risks. Power competition within the FARDC constantly threatens to draw in extra-military networks, or to make integrated factions desert and reconstitute themselves as armed groups, thus rendering the outcomes of this competition uncertain. Hence, instead of leading to a (temporary) equilibrium over which the center presides as an arbiter, fierce power competition can trigger dynamics that acquire a momentum of their own, becoming increasingly uncontrollable. Therefore, the current rulers have stronger incentives to maintain at least some operationally effective units than in the past. In the present situation of hyper-fragmentation, extreme instability in the east would seem a dangerous gamble, since it could spiral out of control, drawing in or reinforcing hostile domestic and foreign poles of power, including within the military.

In comparison to the Mobutu era, the external threat environment has changed as well. Today, the Congo is surrounded by not always friendly neighbors with relatively strong military forces, like Rwanda and Uganda. Some of these have not hesitated to support Congolese rebel groups, tolerate the operations of cross-boundary political-economic networks that allow these groups to reproduce themselves, or occasionally send their own military into the Congo. In particular Rwanda has been active in this regard, supporting first the CNDP and then the M23, including by providing direct military support in combat, facilitating recruitment and supplying arms, uniforms and ammunitions (UNSC, 2012; UNSC, 2008: 7, 15–18). However, these forms of meddling have been sanctioned by international donors, some of whom suspended aid in the wake of the revelations of Rwandan support to the CNDP and later the M23, while others tried to put diplomatic pressure on Rwandan president Kagame.⁴⁶ Such pressure has made overt forms of intervention relatively costly, as it is likely to provoke strong reactions from bilateral aid donors and multilateral institutions, and give countries bad publicity, which might ultimately have detrimental effects on their political and economic status. The presence of the UN peacekeeping mission in the Congo is a further deterrent, as most countries are keen on avoiding direct clashes with a UN body.

The complex geopolitical balance of the wider Great Lakes Region further diminishes the appetite for military invasion in the Congo among neighboring powers. Current patterns of formal and informal alliances and frictions create a high likelihood that invasions would trigger a chain of reactions that generate a regional conflagration, which many of the countries involved probably would want to avoid. For these reasons, there seems at present no immediate threat of massive foreign invasion and occupation, although this does not exclude more covert forms of manipulation. The absence of imminent major external threats also emerges from the FARDC's patterns of deployment and operations, which are not primarily geared towards securing the country's vast borders. Rather, they are oriented towards ensuring military and political-economic control in the interior, while deployment at borders serves to a large extent political-economic, rather than military purposes.⁴⁷ Concerning the plethora of foreign rebel groups active on Congolese soil, these do not pose a direct threat to the power of the incumbents, often having as primary aim to overthrow the governments of neighboring countries. However, due to their collaboration with Congolese armed groups, their control over local economies and the shadow they cast over external relations, including with aid donors, the presence of such groups has not always been convenient to the incumbents, although they have sometimes harnessed these groups to fight domestic insurgents.⁴⁸ Consequently, they have occasionally launched military operations against such groups, although commitment has often been mixed, and the results have generally been mitigated.

Aside from concern for maintaining good diplomatic relations, domestic considerations have often also played a role in the decision to conduct operations against foreign rebel groups. The presence of these groups, which are commonly not seen in a favorable light, painfully exposes the weaknesses of the current government, in particular its incapacity to control its entire territory and secure the population. This also applies to domestic armed groups. Especially where such groups commit abuses against civilians, their presence may undermine the legitimacy of the incumbents. In comparison to the Mobutu era, popularity has become more important in post-transitional Congo, which has an electoral system (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c: 579). When President Kabila's popularity turned out to have plummeted during the 2011 electoral campaign, the presidential circle had to resort to manipulation in order to win the elections, a strategy that was eventually costly in terms of both international and domestic legitimacy (Carter Center, 2011). The incumbent's dwindling popularity was also visible in the Kivus. While in 2006, he won 94.6 per cent of the vote in South Kivu and 77.8 per cent in North Kivu (and in the runoff 98 and 96 per cent respectively), in the 2011 elections, which had only one round, this was 44.74 per cent (in South Kivu) and 38.78 per cent (in North Kivu) (CENI, 2011). Given that during the fieldwork, many Kivutians highlighted the dire security situation as one of the main reasons for their discontent with the incumbent, it is not implausible that the instability caused by the Amani Leo operations, and perhaps discontent about the newfound dominance of the ex-CNDP, played a part in these electoral outcomes. This illustrates how the conduct of the military, clearly seen as a symbol of state and incumbent power, reflects upon evaluations of the incumbents' legitimacy, creating some incentives for the latter to better organize and manage the armed forces.

46 Armin Rosen, 'After the fall of Goma: the M23 conflict's western front', *The Atlantic*, 20 November 2012 ; Jason Stearns, 'Defining a negative-when will donors unfreeze aid to Rwanda?', *Congo Siasa*, 14 August 2012.

47 The presence and practices of the FARDC in border areas are further analyzed on pp. 240–242.

48 For instance, the FDLR have regularly been used in operations against the CNDP, and more recently the M23 (DRC Affinity Group, 2014).

From the previous, it follows that the incumbents face contradictory pressures in relation to the armed forces. On the one hand, they have incentives to institutionally strengthen the military, in particular for ensuring regime survival and their own power position. On the other hand, they have incentives to maintain the status quo of weakly performing, ill organized and ill behaving forces. These anti-reform forces do not only emanate from certain social structures, like engrained patterns of big-man rule, but also from the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection in the east. These dynamics hamper reforms by directing most attention to short-term crisis management, and are at the root of the ineffectiveness or unintended consequences of reform measures that do get implemented. Paradoxically, such measures may therefore come to reproduce or reinforce the very structures that give rise to the incentives working against bureaucratic institutionalization, as was for example the case with the regimentation process. Since these consequences are often unintended, such forms of social structures reproduction are partly non-reflexive, implying they are not consciously planned and engineered by the rulers. Furthermore, since similar to all social agents, the agency of rulers is partly shaped by routines and practical consciousness, not all of their decisions stem from strategic calculations drawing on discursive consciousness.⁴⁹ Hence, limited progress with the institutionalization of the armed forces is not purely the result of conscious decisions to block or derail reforms, but also stems from certain routinized ways of seeing and managing the armed forces, which the rulers have come to see as 'normal'.

The reproduction of the very social structures that disincentivize reforms is also fostered by a certain path dependency. For example, the absence of an operationally effective military limits the possibilities to establish direct rule over unstable zones, as the development of the administrative and transport infrastructure needed for more comprehensive intervention would require a modicum of stability. Obviously, it is difficult to construct roads and administrative buildings and deploy public servants to zones with ongoing high levels of violence. This renders it more attractive to govern these zones by coopting the local power complexes dominating them, for example by granting their military elites important positions in the FARDC. A classic example is Gen. Masunzu, who was coopted by the presidential circle to ensure the loyalty of the Banyamulenge to Kinshasa, rather than Kigali, and to reduce anti-government activity on the *Hauts Plateaux*.⁵⁰ Instead of governing through direct administrative intervention, the political center granted the civilian leaders connected to Masunzu much leeway to rule on the *Plateaux*, provided they did not engage in potentially harmful activities. Where such a strategy of cooptation succeeds, the rulers have few incentives to extend direct rule over the area. This also reduces the need for deploying an operationally effective military to such zones, at least as long as local rulers manage to keep instability and threats to the center within reasonable bounds.

In sum, continuities in the structures of both the Congo and the armed forces have contributed to considerable continuities in the political center's modes of military management, which continue to be characterized by personalized control and the manipulation of power dynamics via rotations and restructuring. However, there are also a number of discontinuities in current rulers' management of the armed forces and/or the effectiveness thereof. These are partly a result of transformations in social structures, notably in the east, and in the composition and social embedding of the armed forces. In contrast to the past, manipulations of power dynamics through restructuring efforts might not always end up reinforcing the incumbents' grip over the armed forces. The main reasons for this are the volatility of the political-military landscape of the Kivus, and intensified connections between factions in the military and political-economic networks outside of it, which sometimes encompass non-state armed actors. These connections also intensify the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the FARDC, which are the main focus of analysis in the rest of this chapter.

8.2 *The dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection in the FARDC in the Kivus*

Similar to civilians, the agency of the military is shaped by both social structures and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. In order to understand how these dynamics affect everyday military practices, it is imperative to study their sources and the ways in which they play out in the military. This section analyzes four main engines of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the FARDC, focusing on their workings and effects in the specific context of the Kivus: first, protection relations, including *rapportage* systems; second, restructuring efforts; third, the existence of multiple agencies with overlapping mandates; and fourth, weak bureaucratic organization. Both restructuring efforts and protection relations, which go hand in hand with permanent redeployments and reappointments of units and staff, generate the feeling among FARDC staff that they can lose their position or deployment location any moment. This prompts them to reap the benefits of their position as long as it lasts, fostering an orientation toward short-term revenue generation (cf. Bayart 2006[1989]: 287; Schatzberg 1988: 3). A short-term orientation may also be induced by intense power competition, which is often related to the existence of a multitude of military agencies, units and positions with overlapping and/or not clearly delineated mandates. Both organizational flux and internal competition foster and are fostered by weak bureaucratic institutionalization. While weak bureaucratic organization has many dimensions, the two domains focused on here are deficient administration and erratic communications/information. In respect of weak administration, there is an important relation with organizational flux, which hampers efforts at administrative improvement, such as maintaining an updated database of personnel. A weak administration, in turn, is a

49 This dimension of agency as well as the non-reflexive reproduction of social structures were discussed on pp. 37–38 and pp.41–42, respectively.

50 Masunzu's trajectory was described on pp. 92–93 and p. 179.

precondition for reaping the full benefits of reorganizations, for example by manipulating the payrolls of newly created units. The second dimension of weak bureaucratic institutionalization that is discussed are deficient communications and information flows. These have a quite direct impact on civilian-military interaction, as they hamper the exercise of control over the activities and movements of military staff, thus feeding into the HUNI phenomenon. Limited control over military staff and their movements is also fostered by a badly organized military administration, as this allows for the falsification of papers and declarations. This shows how the various elements that are at the root of the FARDC's limited bureaucratic institutionalization, and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection more generally, are mutually reinforcing.

8.2.1 *Big-man relations and rattachement systems*

The so-called *rattachement* system was earlier described as a complex of practices whereby troops engage in revenue-generation activities on the orders of their commander, who channels a part of the revenues upwards to the hierarchy, with officers at each level of the pyramid withholding a share.⁵¹ Similar to the police and the administration (Eriksson Baaz and Olsson, 2011: 228–229; Trefon, 2009: 16), *rattachement* importantly influences appointments and deployments in the FARDC, allowing deployment to spots with significant revenue-generation opportunities, like mining areas, border posts or zones with important commercial routes, to serve as a currency in power competition. Key figures within the presidential power circle, the general staff, the regional commands, and the operational sectors fight for the right to determine which units and commanders get deployed to the most lucrative zones. Once successful, they demand a share of the generated revenue to their protégés/clients, which is subsequently channeled to them via a chain of intermediaries. Since at each link, a certain percentage of the money is withheld, multiple players develop a stake in particular deployment arrangements, causing rotations to have wide spinoff effects. As these stakes are substantial, the highly competitive *rattachement* system fuels permanent strife both among field commanders vying for deployment to lucrative locations and among big-men in the hierarchy competing to appoint their protégés. Together with other factors related to big-man rationalities, this causes *rattachement* to promote frequent redeployments.

Rattachement-related reappointments and redeployments

While big-men usually choose their favorites, often their most loyal followers, for deployment to lucrative areas, allocation decisions are sometimes also shaped by the amounts that a client offers in return. Several FARDC officers told that some deployment positions are partly auctioned off, implying that officers make upfront payments to powerful figures in the hierarchy in order to obtain command over a desired zone or a particular unit deployed there.⁵² But while favoritism and upfront payments may determine initial appointments, they do not guarantee ongoing deployment. Once a position has been obtained, a commander must perform well (that is, 'harvest' sufficient resources) to be able to maintain it. Those who do not deliver as expected inevitably lose their privileged position and are redeployed to 'colder' zones, mostly by being reappointed individually, and in some cases through the rotation of the whole of their unit (cf. Eriksson Baaz and Olsson, 2011: 229).

Aside from rewarding or punishing 'harvesting' performance, another incentive for frequent redeployments within the *rattachement* system is the necessity to keep clients dependent and loyal. When commanders stay too long in a good position or zone, they may start building up an autonomous sphere of influence, to the detriment of the big-men who arranged their original deployment or appointment. Additionally, regular rotations will ultimately allow more clients to have access to lucrative positions, albeit temporarily, enabling big-men to build up and retain a larger following. Rapid changes also raise the hopes among those currently excluded to gain access to desirable positions in the next wave of reappointments. Given that expectations of (ultimately) granting rewards are inscribed in the social role of big-man, and a lack of reasonable prospects for social mobility can render clients disloyal, maintaining these hopes among followers is crucial for big-men to retain their power (cf. Bayart, 2006[1989]: 276–277; Callaghy, 1984: 180, 189). Furthermore, expectations of being eventually reinserted give followers a stake in the system. In this way, although having disruptive effects at the short term, organizational flux guarantees a measure of stability in the longer term, therefore contributing to the reproduction of the extant social order (Bayart, 2006 [1989]: 277).

Another way in which the *rattachement* system fosters rotations are the changing fortunes of the big-men who influence deployment decisions. When a top commander in a military region is rotated, or falls out of grace in the presidential circle, the field commanders he used to protect might be redeployed to lesser locations, at least if they do not manage to gain a favorable status with the new big-man in charge. Similarly, when a certain network gains in influence, like was the case with the ex-CNDP when they integrated into the FARDC in 2009, they will try to deploy their own protégés to the most lucrative zones, regardless of whether these are under the control of competing networks in the FARDC. This shows how power struggles in the higher echelons translate into rapid rotations, which may again come to feed into renewed power competition.

⁵¹ *Rattachement* was discussed earlier on pp. 66, 126 and 161.

⁵² Since this information was conveyed confidentially by FARDC staff, no further details of the informants are revealed.

The integration of the CNDP in 2009 profoundly upset the power balance within the FARDC, which contributed to an acceleration of rotations of both units and commanders, in particular in the first phase of the integration process. This was not only related to competition for revenue-generation opportunities, but also resulted from other dimensions of protection relations and parallel command chains, including their impact on systems of accountability. The accountability dimension of protection relations is closely intertwined with the revenue-generation component. Field commanders deployed under the protection of certain big-men do not only channel money to these figures, but may come under their influence more generally, in particular in relation to matters that influence their capacity for revenue generation. This may include primarily military issues, like dealing with non-state armed groups in their area of deployment. Therefore, the *rapportage* system does not only shape units' engagement in revenue generation, but has effects on a wide spectrum of military practices. This is well illustrated by the story of a brigade commander who was under the protection of the deputy commander of the Amani Leo operations in South Kivu. The deputy commander, who had arranged the brigade commander's deployment and therefore received *rapport* from him, was rumored to have ordered the latter to strike a deal with the rebels of the FDLR in his area of responsibility, in order to facilitate covert economic collaboration. Allegedly, this led him to thwart orders from the commander-in-chief of the Amani Leo operations to attack this group. He did so by means of launching 'theatrical operations',⁵³ or military movements and activities that create a semblance of combat operations, but without having the intention to harm 'the enemy'.

According to various testimonies, including from armed group combatants, theatrical operations occur regularly, although it is not always clear whether the FARDC units engaged in this practice are in collusion with 'the enemy', simply lack the motivation to fight, or suffer from tactical incompetence. As a former combatant of the rebel group FRF explained: 'FARDC operations are not effective, because they [FARDC] arrive and then they shoot at large range, in order to inform the enemy of their presence. Then it is up to the enemy to either withdraw or respond with fire. They don't dare to really attack. We were in the Bijabo forest, but they do not have the capacity to do operations for more than three days there (...) The first day they arrived, they shoot one day and the third day they withdraw. We simply go deeper into the forest and then we return.'⁵⁴ Whatever the primary reason for 'theatrical operations', blatant non-performance in combat missions may become a ground for units or commanders to be rotated. This highlights the extent to which protection-related parallel hierarchies put unit commanders under pressure, in particular where their limited commitment to combat is the result of orders from big-men, but goes against the wish of the formal hierarchy.

The fact that units or commanders are redeployed when they collude with armed groups against the explicit orders of the hierarchy indicates how rotations can be induced by accountability mechanisms. This may occur in a variety of ways, as demonstrated by the Amani Leo operations. The first phase of the operations in 2009 (when they were still called Kimia II), was characterized by hyper-rapid rotations of units, constant changes in the designations of command divisions and units (in particular the numbers given to zones, sectors and brigades), and frequent reappointments of commanders. According to foreign military experts,⁵⁵ this flux could have only partly been related to the flexibility of deployment that is needed when facing a highly mobile enemy, as is common in counter-insurgency operations. In fact, they believed that the frequent changes in deployment and command actually undermined the effectiveness of the operations. It prevented the development of situational awareness, and the unity of command and trust from civilians needed to carry out counter-insurgency operations in difficult terrain. It therefore appears that this fluidity was not part of military strategy or tactics.

Rather, the multiple rotations in the first phase of the operations make the impression of having been driven to a large extent by the power struggles unleashed by CNDP integration, in particular disputes about the responsibility to carry out operations against armed groups located in (potentially) lucrative zones. But what also played a role were efforts to avoid troops from being held accountable for abuses. The organizational flux that marked the initial stages of the Amani Leo operations hampered the monitoring of the location and identity of the military elements involved in the operations, rendering it more difficult to establish command responsibility. As reported by local authorities and civil society organizations, when military units stay longer in an area, the population is better able to distinguish and identify the commander and other members, making it easier to ascribe responsibility for abuses. Consequently, certain human rights organizations wondered whether the hyper-rapid rotations and other frequent changes in command in the first phase of the operations, which was marked by massive human rights abuses, were not part of a strategy to hamper control and accountability (Human Rights Watch, 2009b: 113). While it is difficult to establish whether it indeed concerned a consciously adopted strategy by the command, it is certainly possible that the mentioned difficulties of identifying commanders and units provided (additional) incentives for accelerated redeployments and reappointments, as well as for changes in the designation of sectors and units.

The large amount of abuses committed during the operations is likely to have also been a reason for the frequent rotations in itself. Human rights defenders contacted across the Kivus reported that misbehaving commanders and units are often removed from the scene

53 The phrase 'theatrical operations' was coined by Steve Hege, then Coordinator of the UN Group of Experts on the DRC, in a presentation on the FARDC given in Nairobi on 03.11.2011.

54 Interview with former FRF combatant, Bijombo, 11.01.2012.

55 Interviews with MONUSCO and EUSEC staff, Goma, 28.03.2010 and 09.05.2010.

of abuse and redeployed elsewhere.⁵⁶ They generally believed that this is a policy to prevent abusive soldiers and commanders from being prosecuted, since merely being shifted around rather than being sent to the military prosecutor's office. While this observation holds true, informants from the FARDC explained that this does not necessarily entail total impunity, since those who misbehave are sometimes being redeployed to less attractive zones by the big-men who arranged their initial deployment, thus losing their favorable status and a part of the associated protection benefits (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013b).⁵⁷ This indicates that deployments influenced by big-man rationalities do not uniquely revolve around revenue-generation considerations, but that wider considerations of accountability within the framework of protection may also be at stake. Clearly, big-men do not always consider it to be in their interest or appropriate if their clients misbehave towards civilians, which may prompt them to campaign for these officers' redeployment or reappointment. Furthermore, where a rotation or de facto demotion already seemed opportune, abuses can provide a welcome additional reason or pretext.

That commanders' overall conduct, including the behavior of their unit towards civilians, matters for their position in big-man hierarchies and the related politics of deployment is clearly illustrated by the story of the commander of the 641st brigade deployed to Misisi (case #7).⁵⁸ While this commander allegedly had obtained his position by paying for it, he was removed rather rapidly from the command of the brigade, reportedly as his predatory ways of generating revenue created too much antagonism both among his troops and among the civilian authorities in his deployment location. Ironically, while he had obtained his position by promising to channel sufficient resources to his protectors, the ways in which he tried to obtain these resources became the ground for his dismissal. This shows that protection rationalities often merge with other considerations in shaping military management, including rotation decisions. In this case, a certain commander, whose appointment had largely been the product of the *rapportage* system, was removed primarily due to his blunt and coercive ways of operating, hence his violation of certain (formal) norms of military professionalism. Paradoxically, the way in which he was removed was predominantly informed by big-man and *rapportage* rationalities. Rather than being disciplined in a formal manner via the military justice system, the commander was put *en dispo* (from *disponibilité*, that is, sent on extended leave without function), then offered another position with lesser revenue-generation opportunities, which he allegedly refused. This illustrates a second important point: that protection relations do not uniquely serve to shield perpetrators from punishment, but may also be mobilized to discipline FARDC staff, by depriving them of the advantages related to protection (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013b: 61). Since these advantages often concern being deployed to certain locations or being appointed to certain positions, efforts to punish clients informally are an additional source of organizational flux.

The previous discussion of *rapportage* and accountability shows that command chains in the FARDC are erratic, as informal hierarchies shaped by protection relations intersect and overlap with the formal organizational structures and hierarchy. However, it also demonstrates that formal structures and power relations are not ineffectual: where unit commanders are seen to go against the orders of the formal hierarchy, for instance by carrying out theatrical operations in an unauthorized manner, they do get disciplined. Formal positions and procedures guide in fact a large part of the everyday workings of the army, albeit in convoluted manners. Furthermore, they constitute a crucial frame of reference for military staff and civilians alike. Informal practices continue to be framed in official discourses, like when violations of official rules are invoked to channel struggles between competing big-man networks. It does not appear that such invocations always merely serve as pretexts, for grave violations of rules of conduct are in many cases genuinely experienced as problematic. Furthermore, several projects may inform the same practices simultaneously. Therefore, the same actions can be guided by at once protection related considerations and those relating to official rules and regulations. This highlights how 'rational-legal bureaucratic' discourses and practices and those informed by the particularistic rationalities of protection are simultaneously at play in the FARDC, shaping its internal workings in constant interaction, conflicting, overlapping, and sometimes co-existing.

8.2.2 Never-ending restructuring

Having similar effects as redeployments in terms of fuelling and channeling power competition, but being more drastic in scope and impact, are overhauls of the structure of the military organization. Aside from the creation of defense zones and new military regions in 2014, the two most far-reaching forms of military restructuring in the Kivus over the past years were the creation of the Amani Leo operational structures in 2009, and the regimentation process in 2011. In contrast to the 2014 process, which affected the FARDC as a whole, these two restructuring efforts only took place in the Kivus, with the exception of the creation of a number of regiments in Ituri. Both these restructuring attempts created significant instability within the FARDC, not least because the vigorous power competition they unleashed was partly viewed through an ethnic lens (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c). Furthermore, the ensuing overhaul in the composition of units fostered uncertainty among troops, who lost an important part of their long-term colleagues and superiors, and weakened unit cohesion.⁵⁹ Additionally, it complicated the implementation of wider military reforms elaborated at the level of Kinshasa. All of this had detrimental effects on the military's practices towards civilians.

56 E.g., interview with human rights defender, Kirumba, 02.05.2010 and interview with human rights defender, Uvira, 14.11.2010.

57 E.g., interview with mid-ranking officer, Baraka, 26.11.2010.

58 The change in command of the 641st brigade in Misisi (case #7) is further discussed on pp. 301-302.

59 The impact of frequent restructuring on unit cohesion is further described in Chapter 9, pp. 258-260 and 272-274.

The scramble unleashed by the creation of the Amani Leo structures

The creation of new brigades under the Amani Leo structures came just at a time when many of the Integrated Brigades (IBs) that were the product of the *brassage* process had reached a modicum of stability. Through relative continuity in leadership, composition and sometimes also deployment location, power hierarchies in many of these units had relatively crystallized, staff, and their families, had become thoroughly acquainted with each other, primary units had developed their own routines, and commanders had come to profoundly know their subordinates and vice versa.⁶⁰ This stability had created in some IBs a degree of cohesion and a level of predictability for staff, as fostered by the routinization of daily practices. Some of these relatively cohesive IBs had also developed internal structures that allowed them to better cope with the bad service conditions and absence of facilities in the FARDC. For instance, they had a guaranteed amount of medical personnel and army chaplains, and had built up various groups and associations, like choirs, soccer teams, and associations for military spouses. These forms of organization and the concomitant basic social services had fostered among many soldiers a feeling of attachment to their IB, leading to the development of a quite strong specific 'IB identity' in which they took real pride.⁶¹ While by no means guaranteeing good behavior vis-à-vis civilians, the stability, routinization and institutionalized sociability developed in these brigades do seem to have contributed to relatively good relations between a number of IBs and the populations amongst whom they operated. This is for instance evidenced by the fact that after the deployment of the Amani Leo brigades, in several field research sites, like in Misisi and Kamanyola, the population demanded the return of the *intégrés*.⁶²

With the accelerated integration of 2009, most IBs were broken up and mixed with the newly integrated troops into Amani Leo brigades. This sometimes occurred in a highly unbalanced manner, leading over half of the troops and most of the command chain in a single brigade to be ex-CNDP or ex-PARECO. Predictably, this fostered a strong discontent among what were now called the 'ex-government' components of these brigades, who experienced to be marginalized. Moreover, many felt insulted by becoming directed by what they perceived to be incompetent officers.⁶³ The Amani Leo brigades were placed under new operational command structures that were created in addition to the military regions, which lost a substantial part of their influence and income, being transformed into primarily administrative structures. Before Amani Leo, deployments and operations were to a large extent controlled by the regional commands, which had allowed them to develop their own spheres of influence and mechanisms of revenue generation. The latter were predominantly managed through the *rapportage* system and the instrumentalization of military staff, such as the antenna (representative) of the intelligence bureau of the military region, the T2,⁶⁴ often deployed to economic hubs to guard the interests of certain commanders. However, after the creation of the operational structures, deployment decisions became the prerogative of the Amani Leo command, allowing them rather than the regional commands to reap most of the benefits of *rapportage*.

Another major loss of income for the military regions was the rechanneling of most official funds through the Amani Leo structures. These included the *fonds ops* (operational funds, at the time ca. \$13.5/soldier/month), the *fonds de ménage ops* (funds for provisioning during operations, ca. \$11–18/soldier/month), and the so-called *prime de commandement* (bonus for the command, ca. \$500–600/month for a brigade commander, \$300 for a battalion commander, \$120–150 for a company commander, and \$50 per platoon commander).⁶⁵ The regions also missed out on the possibility to skim off the operating costs for units, including the *fonds spéciaux des renseignements* (FSR, Special Intelligence Funds, for the operations of Bureau 2), the funds for conducting operations (for Bureau 3), and those for healthcare and funerals (part of the budget of the Bureau 1 and 5).⁶⁶ Only the salaries or RCA (*ration convertie en argent*, Ration Converted in Money) and the ordinary *fonds de ménage* (funds for provisioning, ca. \$6/soldier month) were still distributed via the regional commands. Given that at each stage of the command chain, a part of these various funds is embezzled, the rechanneling of money flows entailed significant losses not only for the top brass of the regional commands, but their entire networks.

In addition to fuelling struggles over scarce resources, the creation of the Amani Leo structures fostered vigorous competition for positions both in the general command and in the newly created brigades. The most coveted position at each level of the FARDC hierarchy (e.g., zone, brigade/regiment, battalion) is that of *commandant titulaire* (first commander). Not only is the first commander in charge of both official and non-official money flows, he generally has much more discretionary power, entitlements, status and income than officers

60 As the composition and trajectories of the IBs markedly differed, these observations do not apply across the board. For instance, one of the IBs deployed to the Kivus never developed cohesion since the dominance of a certain ex-RCD faction created internal divisions and provoked resentment among other components (Human Rights Watch, 2009a: 24–26).

61 See the discussion on unit cohesion in Chapter 9, pp. 272–273.

62 Civilians' differing evaluations of Amani Leo and Integrated Brigades, as manifested in their nicknames and the strong demand for the return of the *intégrés*, were described on p. 116.

63 The discontent among FARDC staff with rebel-military integration is further analyzed in the next chapter, especially on pp. 271–272.

64 As explained in footnote 132 on p. 121, the staff functions connected to the *Bureaux* 1 till 5 have the letter 'T' at the level of military regions, zones and sectors, and the letter 'S' in field-based units (regiments/brigades and lower).

65 Data on these amounts are based on interviews with FARDC officers in Bukavu on 12.11.2010. The amounts are approximate, as different sources would give slightly different figures, and are valid for 2010 only. They are likely to have changed in subsequent years due to annual inflation correction, and possible policy changes.

66 For the signification of the *bureaux*, see Figure 9 on p.121.

in other command and general staff positions. An important reason for this is the de facto decentralized nature of the FARDC, causing field commanders, in particular of brigades/regiments and battalions, to have a relatively high level of autonomy (Human Rights Watch, 2009a: 26). Therefore, the position of deputy commander, whether responsible for administration and logistics (*adminlog*), or charged with operations and intelligence (*opsrens*), or the function of staff officer in the *Bureaux* 1 till 5, is much less attractive. This even applies to deputy-command and staff positions at higher levels: the position of *commandant titulaire* of a battalion is more attractive than a position in the general staff of a brigade (e.g., S3 or S5) or even a sector (e.g., T1 or T4).⁶⁷ However, the coveted position of *commandant titulaire* is scarce, raising the stakes of competition, and the intensity of the frustration when missing out. This frustration becomes all the more bitter where appointments are seen not to follow merit-based criteria but to stem from big-man rationalities, in particular when framed in ethnic terms. These processes were strongly at play in the power competition generated by the creation of the Amani Leo structures, aggravating a tendency that had already been set in motion with the *brassage* process.⁶⁸ Since the ex-CNDP, and in certain sectors the ex-PARECO, which were both dominated by Rwandophones, came to control much of the new Amani Leo structures, fears of the discrimination of autochthones were strongly revived, especially among 'ex-government' and ex-Mai Mai troops (UNSC, 2011: 89–90; Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c). The 2011 regimentation process only further reinforced these fears.

Enhanced ethnically framed competition through regimentation

At the start of 2011, after less than two years of existence, the Amani Leo operational structures were disbanded, following yet another major organizational overhaul, the regimentation process. As mentioned in the previous section, the ex-CNDP hijacked this process, as Gen. Bosco Ntaganda managed to influence the appointments in and deployments of a good deal of regiments, allowing him to perpetuate the dominance of the ex-CNDP in parts of the Kivus. Due to the ex-CNDP's strong branding as a Tutsi group, and that of the ex-PARECO, parts of which had meanwhile allied themselves with the CNDP, as being dominated by Hutu, the regimentation process did not only fuel power competition within the FARDC, it also strengthened already salient ethnic framings of this competition. This was evidenced by the controversy stirred by the initial proposal for command appointments in the first wave of regimentation in South Kivu. In the eyes of many officers in Bukavu, Hutu and Tutsi were seen to have been systematically favored, prompting them to draw up a 'Memorandum of FARDC military officers who are victim of discrimination'. This document strongly denounced the alleged Rwandophone takeover of the FARDC, stating that the distribution of command positions in the new structures followed 'discriminatory and tribal-ethnic criteria' (UNSC, 2011: 89, 262). However, regimentation also triggered tensions between Tutsi and Hutu, in particular the parts of ex-PARECO that had not come under the protection of the ex-CNDP. For example, when in June 2011, a Hutu ex-PARECO commander was replaced as head of a regiment in Kalehe (South Kivu), he deserted from his unit with a number of elements who later formed an armed group. This dissidence was propelled both by frustration concerning Tutsi dominance in the army and a long-standing land dispute between Hutu and Tutsi in the Kalehe area (APC, 2011).

The Kalehe incident was not an isolated case of desertion. As we have seen, a similar phenomenon occurred in Fizi, where the commander of the 65th sector deserted with around 200 troops to protest his perceived marginalization in the regimentation process.⁶⁹ Desertion induced by regimentation also took place in North Kivu. For example, in August 2011, a recently integrated ex-Mai Mai Kifuafua officer left the regimentation center in Walikale with around 10 troops. Dissatisfied with the position he had been allocated in the new regiment, he announced that he would return to the bush.⁷⁰ These incidents of desertion, sometimes followed by renewed armed group mobilization, demonstrate that in a context where parts of the military are closely linked to extra-military networks, the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the military become closely linked to those same dynamics as they unfold within the social order at large. Where internal power competition is viewed through an ethnic lens, it becomes attractive for competing power networks to link up with extra-military networks of the same ethnic background, including non-state armed groups. At the same time, it is partly through ongoing contacts with networks external to the military that forms of ethnic identification are activated and remain salient within the military. Additionally, where civilians perceive power competition within the military to play out along ethnic lines, they may lose faith in the military's impartiality. Indeed, as explained in Chapter 4, the FARDC is commonly seen as skewed towards one side or another, and such perceptions of bias grow stronger when internal power competition is fierce and flows over to the civilian context.⁷¹ By creating local security dilemmas and a drive for protection, often solicited along ethnic lines and sometimes from armed groups, competition framed in ethnic terms generates a self-reinforcing cycle of conflict dynamics within and outside the military that is at the basis of ongoing insecurity in the Kivus. Another factor that fuels these dynamics is the proliferation of military agencies with ill-delineated mandates, leading to power competition that creates tensions both within the military and within its deployment context.

67 Interview with battalion commander, Minembwe, 05.12.2011.

68 The ethnicized interpretations of power competition during the *brassage* process were described on pp. 80–81.

69 The desertion of the commander of the 65th sector from the Kananda regimentation center was described on pp. 202–203.

70 Radio Okapi, 'Nord-Kivu: désertion d'un officier des FARDC à Walikale', *Radio Okapi*, 26 August 2011.

71 Ethnically colored representations of the FARDC among civilians were described on pp. 113–115.

8.2.3 *A multitude of agencies with overlapping mandates*

The various partly conflicting, partly overlapping webs of power that permeate the FARDC have tentacles in a variety of military agencies and units, causing power competition to take place across, between, but also within different parts of the military. Competition between agencies or units often occurs when they are entirely absorbed in a particular faction, which may be the case when the 'color' of the commander determines the position of the unit as a whole. However, struggles are also fought out between agencies and units simply because the formal organizational framework remains an important channel for power distribution and projection in the FARDC. These inter-unit or interagency power struggles are promoted by a variety of factors, including the existence of a multitude of agencies and positions with unclear or (often self-attributed) overlapping mandates; the omnipresence of parallel command structures; and the scarcity of both official military resources and non-official revenue-generation opportunities in the face of intense pressures stemming from protection relations both within and outside of the military.

At the level of the Kivus, the fiercest interagency competition between 2009–2012 was related to the power disputes between the regional commands and the Amani Leo structures, which reached deep into the field. In Misisi, it was for example observed how the S2 of a brigade deployed under Amani Leo arrested and detained an antenna (representative) of the T2 of the 10th Military Region. This led to a fierce discussion about whether the S2 had the formal authority to do so, since there was no official regulatory framework defining the relations between the Amani Leo structures and the military regions.⁷² Furthermore, there is ongoing competition between infantry units falling under the regional command structures and those placed directly under the command of Kinshasa, like those of the elite GR, the central logistics base or the air force. Given that regionally and nationally directed units have different lines of command, they often refuse to take orders from and coordinate with each other. For instance, in the town of Beni, it was observed that the commander of the logistics base allowed his elements to bear arms in town, while the commander of the infantry battalion charged with securing the town had decreed that only his troops had the right to do so.⁷³ Strong frictions were also observed between on the one hand, intelligence services falling under the EMRM (intelligence branch of the general staff) in Kinshasa, like the DSF (Directorate of Border Security), and on the other hand, those belonging to the regional commands and the units operating under their authority. Similarly, the navy, which does not fall under the command of the military regions, but has its own command structure in the form of the *groupement naval*,⁷⁴ was seen to be at odds with the infantry in most fieldwork sites, as further illustrated below.

But competition is not limited to agencies and units falling under different command structures. Almost all military actors operating in the same area are involved in power struggles, which usually also draw in members of the military justice apparatus, the civilian in/security services and other civilian authorities. More often than not, this competition is primarily related to political-economic control and revenue-generating opportunities, including those provided by the execution of potentially lucrative tasks like dispute processing, nighttime patrolling in urban areas and 'maintaining order'. However, rivalries are also fed by and expressed in diverging forms of professional identification, worldviews and norms, as was already described for the relations between the military and the police.⁷⁵ Where power struggles are fierce, they often generate a climate of insecurity for civilians, as the practices of the involved actors become decreasingly predictable and increasingly predatory. Especially where such competition focuses primarily on obtaining scarce resources, it may come to fuel a spiral of extortion, since in/security agencies will attempt to compensate for a missed opportunity to extract resources from one group of citizens by extorting another. Where the stakes are high and many different armed services and units are involved, such intense competition can even spark open violence. This highlights once more the close interconnections between the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the military and those unfolding within its deployment contexts. In order to further illustrate these dynamics, the following section presents a number of examples of intra-military competition drawn from the field research, focusing on the rivalry between navy and infantry in Rutshuru, and the competition between various intelligence and investigative services in strategic economic zones.

Navy-infantry rivalry in Rutshuru: fishing in the same (murky) waters

The Amani Leo operations launched in 2009 led to a significant reinforcement of infantry presence in the Virunga National Park (including of the 223rd brigade, case #2), in particular on the southern shores of Lake Edward in Rutshuru (see Map 1).⁷⁶ This triggered strong competition over the protection of illegal fishing and poaching with the navy, which has a base in the fishing village of Vitshumbi (case #3). These struggles also drew in the park rangers of the *Institut congolais pour la conservation de la nature* (ICCN, Congolese Institute

72 This story is based on observations made in Misisi on 26.02.2010, including discussions with the S2 and T2 representative in question, who almost got into a physical fight.

73 Observations made during field research in Beni from 12–16.04.2010.

74 At the time of the fieldwork, there were five naval regions, according to naval officers in Bukavu contacted on 19.10.2011. After the 2014 overhaul of military structures, this has been reduced to four, in accordance with article 112 of the Law no. 11/012 of 11 August 2011 on the Organization and Functioning of the Armed Forces of the DRC.

75 FARDC-PNC (police) relations were discussed on pp. 168–169.

76 Most information in this section was obtained in Vitshumbi on 05.04.2010 and 26.01.2012, in Rwindi on 27.01.2012 and Rumangabo on 02.02.2012.

for Nature Conservation), a paramilitary service that used to be an important player in the poaching/fishing/logging protection market. Due to changes in the management of the park, which became a public-private partnership in 2008 that receives significant amounts of donor funding, the ICCN has gradually shifted towards exercising more effective control over illegal activities, although this development is uneven and a part of the staff have continued some of their old habits. Despite these irregularities, the new management structure of the park has led to significant shifts in park rangers' way of operating. However, by becoming caught up in and fuelling internal rivalries in the FARDC, the ICCN's efforts to reinforce control became a source of tensions.

Frictions between the various (para)military agencies in the park came to a head at the start of 2010, when the ICCN reinforced its presence around the southern shores of the lake, being deployed from its headquarters (HQ) in Rwindi. The subsequent intensification of patrolling activities, in part through joint patrols with the navy, created important frictions with the FARDC infantry, in this area largely controlled by the ex-CNDP. The infantry tried to sabotage the joint ICCN-navy patrols either by shooting in the air for the purposes of intimidation or by shooting directly at patrol boats, in some cases even with rocket launchers.⁷⁷ They also took to liberating by force the clandestine fishermen arrested during the navy-ICCN patrols, while hampering the movements of the park guards and the (legal) fishermen's associations on the lake, where it kept its own boats. In April 2010, in the wake of massive operations against clandestine fishermen, the infantry ventured to liberate all those captured, in spite of the fact that they had been involved in the operations themselves, pointing to double-dealings. This triggered armed confrontations with the ICCN, who subsequently started a lobby at the ministry of defense in Kinshasa to have the infantry positions removed from the park (UNSC, 2010: 71–72).

Due to these pressures, the ministries of defense and the environment eventually made an arrangement that entailed the immediate redeployment of a number of the most recalcitrant officers out of the park. Furthermore, all FARDC positions were to be evacuated from the park, and FARDC deployment would be replaced by mixed ICCN-FARDC units under the operational command of the ICCN conservator based in Rwindi. The FARDC seems to have agreed to these measures because it was put under pressure by Kinshasa, but also as it was offered a generous benefits package for the soldiers deployed in the mixed units, who would operate on the same service conditions as the park guards, implying a fee of between \$60–\$250 a month, three meals a day, free health care, better transport and accommodation, and a bonus transferred to their family. Furthermore, the commander of the First Zone Ops, who benefited from the redeployment of what were mostly ex-CNDP officers with whom he was involved in an ongoing power struggle, was reported to receive at least 800 liters of fuel and an unknown amount of dollars (with figures cited in the hundreds) a month. While earmarked for professional functioning, several sources were convinced he also benefited from these contributions personally. The campaign of what was called the 'demilitarization' of the Virunga Park was not launched before August 2010,⁷⁸ after the resistance from ex-CNDP elements in the two infantry brigades in control of this part of the park had subsided. In July 2010, this resistance had led to a standoff with park rangers, culminating in the looting of the ICCN camp in Vitshumbi (UNSC, 2010: 71). This incident generated increased pressure on the recalcitrant brigades to withdraw, leading eventually to their departure. This paved the way for the deployment of a mixed battalion of initially around 250 FARDC troops and 195 park rangers. Placed under a new command, and having improved living and working conditions, the FARDC staff in the mixed units largely refrained from the protection of or direct involvement in illegal activities—at least incrementally⁷⁹—and started to crack down on them.

This shift in infantry deployment caused enormous frictions with the navy in Vitshumbi, which was denied the additional fees and better service conditions that the infantry in this area now enjoyed. Furthermore, it feared that the intensified controls would undermine its main source of income, the protection of illegal fishing. The navy was involved in this business especially at the western shores of the lake (around Kamandi Lac and in the Bay of Mwiga in Lubero) and at the southern side (the Bay of Chondo in Rutshuru). In order to reinforce its position against increased pressure from the ICCN and FARDC infantry, the navy was alleged to have stepped up collaboration with some of the armed groups active in these areas, while also providing clandestine fishermen with arms and ammunitions. On 24 September 2011, the ICCN/FARDC infantry decided to carry out a patrol to the Bay of Chondo area, despite repeated efforts by the navy to discourage them from entering that zone. When this patrol discovered a group of illegal fishermen accompanied by armed men, they opened fire, wounding a person who later turned out to be a marine. One day after, when the navy learned that their colleague had died from his wounds, they organized an attack on the ICCN/infantry camp in Vitshumbi, burning down one of the buildings and emptying the depot, stocked with rations, a pirogue and two engines. This caused considerable tensions in the wider Vitshumbi area, and nourished fears that the armed groups there would somehow be drawn into the conflict. Thus, the rivalry between infantry and navy at the southern shores of Lake Edward provides a good example of the mutually destabilizing influence between the dynamics of conflict, protection and insecurity within the FARDC and those within the Kivus, as nourished by links between armed groups and competing factions within the military.

77 See also Mamadou Bineta, 'Protégée par les militaires, la pêche illégale ruine Vitshumbi', *Syfia Grands Lacs*, 14 January 2010.

78 See also Radio Okapi, 'L'ICCN et les FARDC lancent l'opération "démilitarisation" du parc des Virunga', *Radio Okapi*, 10 August 2010.

79 Some sources alleged that the commander of the First Zone Ops Amani Leo initially tried to play a double game, ostensibly complying with the demilitarization measures, but meanwhile sending a special company to the demilitarized area, which continued to protect illegal fishing. However, this company was eventually withdrawn, causing the FARDC to be mostly collaborative.

While the competition between navy and infantry in Rutshuru primarily centered on spheres of influence and sources of income, there were also symbolic stakes. Both for the navy and the infantry, the collaboration with the ICCN represented a manner to enhance their significance and act out their role as 'state actor', both in its 'public security provider' and 'public servant/official' variants.⁸⁰ Certainly, this collaboration was also attractive as it provided (potential) access to the resources provided by international nature conservation organizations, which pay the fuel for the joint patrols. Nevertheless, in the course of interviews, the parties involved highlighted their motivation to execute their (perceived) professional duties, and flagged this as an important source of tensions with the other side, which was said to either encroach upon or undermine their tasks. For example, the navy stated to experience the infantry's activities as a usurpation of its authority, believing they were the primary military agency responsible for regulating fishing, and not the infantry. The latter, by contrast, argued that the shores of the lake were still 'land', and therefore fell under the authority of the land forces, giving them the main responsibility for overseeing fishing, since illegal fisheries are based in the coastal areas. The conviction with which both sides brought their arguments could indicate that deeply felt interpretations of their respective professional duties might have played a role beyond merely serving as a discursive smokescreen for resources competition. Moreover, differences in opinion on the boundaries of their respective spheres of authority interacted with beliefs regarding the profound differences in character between the navy and the infantry. Such experienced contrasts in professional forms of identification between land and naval forces are not unique to the FARDC, but can be found in armed forces around the world (e.g., Soeters et al., 2006: 239). The FARDC navy professed that they had much higher standards of discipline than the infantry, and were much tougher, since doing the 'real' work on the lake, including stemming incursions from Ugandan bandits. The infantry, so they believed, was merely leading an easy existence on the shores. The infantry, from their side, declared that marines were uneducated and rough in comparison to the infantry, and lacked any sense of respect for human rights. They also stated that the navy was largely useless and not capable of fulfilling its security mandate due to being untrained and ill equipped. Accordingly, it was the infantry having to do the 'real' security work, including by fighting the numerous armed groups in the Virunga Park. These profound differences in representations of self and other within different parts of the armed forces are both a product of and inform ongoing rivalries, highlighting that while resources and power are paramount, symbolic and identity-based stakes also matter. This also applies to the competition between intelligence and investigative officers, although the strong similarities in the mandates and tasks of these agents make distinctions in respect of professional identification often less salient.

Intelligence officer proliferation in resource-rich zones: an 'excess of statehood practice'⁸¹

In the discussion on 'shopping forums',⁸² it was explained that within the FARDC, this phenomenon mostly draws in officers with an intelligence, investigative and monitoring mandate, including personnel from the *auditorat*, the military prosecutor's office. These various officials act as *officiers de la police judiciaire* (OPJ, judicial police officers), therefore being charged with conducting investigations, making arrests and drawing up charge sheets. When analyzing the everyday activities of these officers, they appear to allocate a larger share of their time to interfering in disputes between civilians and seizing other revenue-generation opportunities than to gathering military intelligence or carrying out investigations relating to cases falling under the jurisdiction of military justice. Expectedly, this is particularly the case in areas with substantial opportunities for raising income, like sites of mineral exploitation and border crossings. In such zones, there is a proliferation of intelligence/investigative officers from different agencies and units, enkindling ongoing competition with exceedingly high stakes. The fact that each agency or unit prefers to send its own autonomously operating officers to such areas rather than coordinate with and rely on the intelligence gathered by other services testifies to the importance of revenue-generating considerations in such deployments. It is also indicative of the FARDC's high degree of fragmentation, and the strong mutual distrust between its constituent parts.

The gold mining area of Misisi provides a good example of how zones of economic interest might attract an overwhelming presence of intelligence/investigative services. A particularly interesting feature in this regard was the presence of a five person strong team of an intelligence service with a rather remarkable setup, and which is not widely known in the Kivus, including among FARDC staff in the military regions. The National Intelligence Center (locally known under the abbreviation NIC, with a French pronunciation), the only part of the Congolese state apparatus encountered with an English name, is an intelligence service that works directly under the cabinet of the EMRM (military intelligence directorate) in Kinshasa.⁸³ Hence, it is not a branch of the EMRM, like the DSF, but deployed directly under its leadership. The NIC was created in 2007 and is regulated by what appears to be an internal decree of the EMRM's *Département d'appui technique* (DAT, Department of Technical Assistance), namely OM no.35/04 FR no. 227/DAT/07.⁸⁴ While it claims to be a countrywide intelligence service that is specialized in the analysis of armed groups, the NIC is only deployed in a few areas in the Congo, the majority of which are in South Kivu. These deployment sites appear to be predominantly zones of strategic economic interest, and do not cover all areas with significant armed group activity. Within South Kivu, the NIC, which has its HQ in Uvira, is deployed in Shabunda, Walungu, Fizi

80 An analysis of the various social roles that FARDC staff enact was provided on pp. 147–149.

81 This quote is derived from Aretxaga (2003: 396), as is further explained below.

82 'Shopping forums' were analyzed on pp. 185–186.

83 Information on the NIC was gathered by contacting its staff in February 2012 in Uvira and in June 2014 in Misisi.

84 The *Département d'appui technique* is a subdivision of the EMRM, like the *Département intérieur*, *Département extérieur*, the DSF and the OPS (operations) branch.

(Kilembwe and Misisi), and Kalehe (one element in Minova). Outside of South Kivu, it only has a presence in the towns of Kalemie (North Katanga), Beni (North Kivu), and Lukolela (*Équateur*). This is a very limited and erratic coverage for a national service specializing in the study of armed groups. Furthermore, some of the other military intelligence agencies present in Misisi stated not to understand the NIC's added value in terms of intelligence, indicating its agents were mostly engaged in extortion and the monitoring of the mining business. Certainly, such allegations must be carefully read, and seen in the context of the ongoing competition between different intelligence agencies. These commonly mutually accuse each other of extortion, the manipulation of disputes for gain, and the neglect of professional duties. Yet taken together, the accusations made against the NIC appeared to indicate that the intelligence performance of this service was not more effective than that of other agencies, calling into doubt its narratives of being a special service filling a void in terms of intelligence and analysis.

While competition between various intelligence agencies was fierce in a mining site like Misisi, it appeared to be even worse at border crossings, where state agencies truly mushroom.⁸⁵ For example in Kasindi (in Beni territory, on the border with Uganda, see Map 1), which is the second most important border crossing in North Kivu, a host of military elements with an explicit or implicit intelligence and/or investigative or monitoring mandate were observed (see Table 14). In addition, there was a plethora of civilian and paramilitary in/security services, such as the police, the ANR (intelligence), and the DGM (migration). Regardless their formal authority and mandates, these different in/security agents were involved in near-permanent disputes surrounding who had the authority to arrest whom, who could intervene in what disputes, who had the right to execute what potentially lucrative tasks, and importantly, who controlled access to revenues derived from import/export fraud.

Table 14: Military with intel/investigative/
monitoring mandate in Kasindi (2010)

Military personnel
Representative T2 Military Region
Representative T2 1st Zone Ops Amani Leo
Representative T2 Sector Ops Amani Leo
Representative S2 brigade
S2 company (of brigade)
Officer of DSF (Department of Border Security)
Inspector of Military Prosecutor's Office
Elements of GR (Republican Guard)
Elements of PM (Military Police) of brigade

One of the more salient disputes surrounding the execution of formal security tasks were the quarrels about the right to carry out night patrols in Kasindi. According to local human rights defenders, night patrolling is very popular among in/security agencies, since it allows for significant extortion, and offers the opportunity to execute or protect forms of illegal and violent appropriation or score settling. Therefore, even the military of the *auditorat* and the DSF were involved in the competition for night patrols, although neither of them has a mandate to conduct these. Another reason why night patrolling was said to be popular is that it allows competing military actors to control each other, which gives them leverage within power struggles. The phenomenon of military staff catching other military staff in the act is not rare in Kasindi. For instance, members of several civil society organizations related how a night patrol of the infantry once caught a soldier of the *auditorat* in the act when the latter tried to climb over the fence of a private house, allegedly with the intention of burglary. This ended in an exchange of fire in the course of which one soldier was killed. The same sources also told that in the course of 2009, there had been a notable increase in *coupures de route* (flash ambushes/highway robbery) on the road between Beni and Kasindi, an artery for export/import via Uganda. In May that year, a truck transporting wood was ambushed in Katiliti (near Bulongo). One of the passengers was the wife of an FARDC officer, who was accompanied by two bodyguards. The latter managed to shoot down one of the attackers, who was subsequently identified as an FARDC officer (see also Société Civile du Nord Kivu/Coordination Territoriale de Beni, 2009). Such incidents are not only a major source of tensions between various agencies and units, they also reveal the limited mutual awareness they have of each other's activities and movements, pointing to the low levels of coordination and information exchange within the FARDC.

Another source of disputes in Kasindi was the detention of civilians. To the annoyance of the other in/security agencies, the DSF consistently detained civilians, even though it was said not have the formal authority for this, as it should hand civilians immediately over to the police. However, other military agencies were also reported to unlawfully detain civilians, without this provoking the same level of resentment. This indicates there might have been additional grounds for the generalized antipathy towards the DSF. According to several observers, these laid in the DSF's systematic refusal to share any information or revenue, thus placing themselves above the other agencies. Furthermore, the DSF generally reports directly to Kinshasa, including on the behavior and activities of the other military

⁸⁵ This information is based on visits to the border crossings of Kasindi, Ishasha, and Bunagana, as specified in Table 4 on p. 23.

units and personnel deployed in their area of responsibility, who consequently feel spied upon and therefore distrust the DSF.⁸⁶ The only agency in Kasindi that was reported to collaborate well with the DSF was the locally very powerful civilian intelligence service, the ANR. This service was said to occasionally even hand over civilians to the DSF for detention, in contravention of the law. This configuration of competing services shows once more how power struggles between big-man networks are informed by the logic of coalition-building, which prompts different civilian and military elites and factions to ally in crosscutting networks that compete with other such networks. Where state services abound and the (economic) stakes are high, such coalitions are dense, and their competition intense, as corroborated by observations made at other border crossings.

Table 15: State services at Bunagana border post (2012)

No	Service	Translation/description
1	T2 Ops Amani Leo Nord Kivu	Rep. Bureau 2 Ops Amani Leo North Kivu
2	T2 Secteur Amani Leo	Rep. Bureau 2 Amani Leo Operational Sector
3	S2 régiment	S2 of the regiment
4	S2 battalion	S2 of the battalion
5	T2 8ème Région militaire	Rep. Bureau 2 8 th Military Region (North Kivu)
6	DSF-Département de la sécurité des frontières	Department of Border Security
7	DGM-Direction générale de migration	Directorate-General of Migration
8	Police des frontières	Border Police
9	Police territoriale	Territorial Police
10	ANR-Agence nationale de renseignements	National Intelligence Agency
11	Brigade judiciaire	Judiciary Brigade
12	Poste d'état (chef de poste d'encadrement administratif)	Office of the Territorial Administration
13	Bureau de chefferie-Entité administrative décentralisée (EAD)	Office of the Chiefdom (Decentralized Administrative Entity)
14	DGRAD-Direction générale des recettes administratives, judiciaires, domaniales et de participations	Directorate-General of Administrative, Judicial, State and Participation-related Revenue
15	DGDA-Direction générale des douanes et accises	Directorate-General of Customs and Excise Duties
16	OCC- Office congolais de contrôle	Congolese Office for Control
17	PNHF-Programme national d'hygiène aux frontières	National Program of Border Hygiene
18	SQAV-Service de quarantaine animale et végétale	Animal and Plant Quarantine Service
19	OGEFREM-Office de gestion du fret multimodal	Office of Multimodal Freight Management
20	DGI-Direction générale des impôts	Directorate-General of Taxation
21	FPI-Fonds de promotion de l'industrie	Fund for Industry Promotion
22	Inspection générale des finances	Inspectorate-General of Finances
23	Commerce extérieur national	External Trade-national office
24	Commerce extérieur provincial	External Trade-provincial office
25	Ministère (provincial) des transports et voies de communication	Ministry of Transport and Communications (provincial)
26	Ministère de l'économie nationale et du commerce	Ministry of National Economy and Trade (national)
27	Ministère (provincial) de l'environnement, conservation de la nature, eaux et forêts	Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation, Waters and Forests (provincial)

When visiting the border post of Bunagana in January 2012, this town counted no less than 21 different public authorities and state services, in addition to representatives of six different FARDC intelligence units (see Table 15 for an overview).⁸⁷ The presence of such

⁸⁶ The DSF also collects economic intelligence, reporting for example on trade flows and mineral exploitation in their jurisdictions. Interview with DSF officer in Kirumba, 02.05.2010.

⁸⁷ The massive state presence in Bunagana clearly contravenes *ordre opérationnel* (operational order) no. 234/2010 of 27 December 2010, which stipulates that in addition to the in/security services, only the DGDA/OFIDA, DGM, OCC, and *Hygiène publique* are allowed to be present at border posts. Adelin Makpolo, 'Le Chef de

a large number of state agents, who were all competing for influence and the extraction of wealth, generated an accelerated dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. This caused many citizens to become caught up in a dizzying carousel of harassment in which official regulatory frameworks failed to offer a grip, and protection was the main lifebuoy to keep afloat. Such a situation resembles what Aretxaga (2003: 396) has described as 'an excess of statehood practices' with 'too many actors competing to perform as state', as has also been observed in relation to the Congo by Schouten (2013: 569). The involvement of numerous different military units and agencies only aggravates this insecurity, as it militarizes disputes between civilian state services and contributes to perpetrator anonymity, or the phenomenon of the *homme en uniforme non-autrement identifié* (HUNI).⁸⁸ This does not appear to be unique to the Kivus, or the Congo, but has also been observed for border crossings elsewhere. For example, a customs official in Kousseri, Cameroon, quoted in Roitman (2005: 162), stated: 'The problem is that there is a sort of amalgam, and one does not know who does what. The multiplicity, the incoherence, the mix of uniforms brings on confusion. It seems that we're dealing with a blurring that is voluntarily maintained because it is part of a logic of accumulation created and maintained by the security forces who round up their monthly pay in this way'.

8.2.4 Weak bureaucratic institutionalization

The organizational multiplicity, fluidity and ambiguity described in the previous, which are both a cause and a consequence of the dynamics of conflict, protection and insecurity, feed into and are fed by the FARDC's weak bureaucratic institutionalization, which is manifested in its minimalistic administration and erratic and deficient communication and information flows. These factors importantly undermine control over human resources both at the level of the military organization as a whole and at lower levels of the command chain. Within the FARDC as a whole, weak administration and deficient information produces are manifested in, amongst other factors, the 'uncountability' of troops, or the difficulties to establish the exact number of FARDC staff. At lower levels of the command chain, administrative and informational weaknesses translate into a lack of control over troops' movements, which leads to a lack of accountability, and provides a fertile ground for the HUNI.

Deficient communications and minimalistic administration

For a large and complex organization like a military, the FARDC has surprisingly rudimentary systems of communications, leading to erratic and slow information flows, which moreover often follow personal, rather than institutionalized channels. Field-based units depend to large extent on the available road and ICT infrastructure in their areas of deployment, which is often highly deficient. In isolated rural areas without mobile phone network coverage, which concerns relatively large parts of the Kivus, the FARDC chiefly relies on portable two-way radios (locally called *motorolas*, after the brand name) for communications. However, in many zones, *motorolas* have only a limited reach, due to the atmospheric conditions and a lack of relay stations. Furthermore, in many units, such equipment is allocated up to the company level only, and limited to the commander and a few key staff officers (S2 and S3). For long distance communications, there are satellite phones (called *thurayas*, after the brand name), but these are only in the possession of brigade/regiment commanders, and therefore principally serve for communication between commanders and the hierarchy, and not within field-based units. Moreover, given that credits for *thurayas* are exceedingly expensive, their use appears to be limited, although this was observed to vary from one brigade/regiment commander to the next. Similarly, the presence of *phonie* or radiotelephonic systems, mainly used for communication between HQs, is restricted to the *état-major* of zones, sectors and sometimes brigades/regiments, where it is operated by the *service de transmission*. It is also used in the urban centers where there is civilian *phonie* operated on a commercial basis.⁸⁹

Due to the limitations in infrastructure and equipment, vertical information chains, specifically between field-based units and the *états-majors* of military regions, zones and sectors, but also within field-based units, between command and subordinates, are lengthy and slow. This is especially the case in zones without phone network coverage where troops are deployed in a scattered manner. In such areas, aside from during the *parades* or regular gatherings, everyday communications between lower level units occur mostly through messengers. A *chef de section* (commander of the lowest unit or squad) told that he saw his platoon commander only twice a week, due to the vast distances.⁹⁰ His platoon chief similarly stated to see his company commander only twice a week, at the *parade* organized at the *état-major* of the company, which is followed by a meeting with all platoon chiefs. The company commanders of this unit, for their part, reported to see their own immediate commanders, of the battalion, at most two times a week, depending on the distance of deployment. This implies that in areas without phone network coverage, the chain of communications from a brigade commander to a section leader in the field becomes very slow, especially where company commanders have no *motorolas* or scattered deployment, limited relay stations, and atmospheric conditions do not allow for communication per such a device. This causes delays in the diffusion, hence the execution, of orders as well as in the transmission of information about incidents. Such delays facilitate the hiding or reframing of

l'État instruit le gouvernement de limiter les services habilités à opérer aux postes frontières du pays', *Le Potentiel* 29 December 2010.

88 The HUNI phenomenon was described on pp. 187-188.

89 *Phonie* was for example used in Fizi, Minembwe, Baraka and Uvira. Where the military made use of civilian-operated *phonie*, they were alleged to not always pay. Interviews with *phonie* operators in Minembwe and Uvira on 26.12.2010 and 04.01.2011.

90 Interview with section and platoon commander, Fizi territory, 14.12.2011.

inconvenient information and therefore reduce the possibility for the hierarchy to address issues in a timely manner. In this manner, deficient information gathering and diffusion, as partly a result of feeble systems of communications, foster inadequate supervision and control, contributing to considerable autonomy for lower-level commanders.

The possibilities for control are further limited by the FARDC's minimalistic administration. Most orders and decisions are diffused only orally, and obligations for reporting and recordkeeping are few, both within the military regions and lower down the command chain. For instance, it seems that the Amani Leo brigades only had to produce an annual report describing the main events, like operations and incidents, in a general manner.⁹¹ While there is growing computer use, the extent to which information is transmitted digitally continues to strongly depend on the individual preferences of commanders, since computers have not been distributed systematically and are therefore in most cases personal property. Furthermore, in isolated rural areas, when there is no phone network coverage, there is no internet connection either, rendering it impossible to diffuse information digitally. The transmission of written orders and reports on paper tends to be equally problematic in such zones, due to the bad state of the roads. Additionally, primitive accommodation and frequent rotations without sufficient means of transport create incentives to keep as little paperwork as possible. One S2 explained that he only keeps the most crucial records and PVs (*procès-verbaux*, or charge sheets), since he is responsible for paying for the transport of the suitcase in which they are stored himself.⁹² In another case, it was observed how the documents of the S1 of a battalion had become unreadable since the wind had ripped off a part of the roof of his hut during a downpour.⁹³

In the light of rough living conditions and the expenses related to buying a computer, it is not strange that the use of computers below the level of the battalion command is rare. The professional, official use of computers among the FARDC in the Kivus is at present limited to the military regions and the *états-majors* of sectors, regiments and battalions, where they are used by a few designated payment officials, the so-called *chefs de bureau comptable* (CBCs, Chief Accountants). The latter have been trained in (financial) administration and computer use, and are equipped with a computer provided by EUSEC DR Congo. This EU mission has been working to improve the administration of the military, including by creating a biometric personnel database, developing a new payment system, and setting up ICT systems. Due to the CBCs, regiments are able to maintain a more professional financial administration, especially in comparison to the Amani Leo brigades, where financial administration was mostly recorded by hand in private notebooks of commanders and other officers. However, as can be expected, CBCs record only the official incomes and expenditures, leaving the vast amount of other revenue streams unrecorded.⁹⁴ Furthermore, there are doubts about the sustainability of the efforts at digitalization. EUSEC had already distributed computers to the IBs formed between 2004–2008, but many of those had broken down⁹⁵ or had disappeared when the Amani Leo brigades were formed.⁹⁶ While new computers were distributed after regiment formation,⁹⁷ and further officers have been educated in the use of ICT, budgetary allocations for equipment maintenance are not guaranteed.⁹⁸ The EUSEC-initiated efforts to digitalize the administration thus highlight how organizational flux, in this case the breaking up of the IBs, negatively affects efforts to strengthen the bureaucratic institutionalization of the military. The fate of policies to keep track of the exact numbers and identities of FARDC staff, equally driven by EUSEC, further corroborates this observation.

The uncountability of the FARDC

Similar to its predecessor forces,⁹⁹ information on human resources in the FARDC, notably the exact number of troops, is notoriously inadequate, although important advances have been made over the last years. These information deficiencies are by no means unique to the FARDC, but reflect a wider problem of the insufficiency and inaccuracy of statistics on the Congo, where the exact number of inhabitants has been unknown since the last official census in 1984 (Trefon et al., 2002: 384). For a variety of reasons, in particular the eradication of ghost soldiers and related embezzlement of salaries, aid donors have strongly encouraged the government to end the uncertainties surrounding the number of FARDC troops by means of biometrical identification. Moreover, mastering the 'countability' of troops is seen as a first step towards reinforcing the accountability of the military, as the identification of soldiers will not only enhance

91 Note that only two annual reports of Amani Leo brigades were analyzed in the course of the fieldwork. It is therefore unclear whether other brigades produced more elaborate reports, nor is it certain whether the same observations apply to the regiments.

92 Conversation with S2, Minembwe, 26.12.2010.

93 Observations among battalion in Kamombo, 22.12.2010.

94 See Figure 12 on p.160 for an overview of these revenue flows.

95 An evaluation of donor interventions in peace-building observed in the course of a mission conducted in 2009–2010 that around 20% of the laptops distributed by EUSEC to payment officials had broken down (Channel Research, 2011: 136).

96 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Uvira, 28.02.2012.

97 In April 2014, EUSEC reported to have distributed 400 computers in Kinshasa and 400 in other parts of the country (EUSEC DR Congo, 2014).

98 Interview with high-ranking officer, Bukavu, 18.01.2012. Like with other funds of the FARDC's operating budget, the amounts allocated to computer maintenance seem to depend to a large extent on unit commanders' personal discretion. Therefore, the closure of the EUSEC mission in 2015 might hamper the consolidation of the efforts to modernize and professionalize the FARDC's administration.

99 The FAZ already blocked efforts to develop a central administration, removing military salaries from centralized computer listings in order to grant individual commanders more leeway (Schatzberg, 1988: 60).

the transparency of the administration, but also facilitate the identification of perpetrators. The first effort to count FARDC troops was made by South Africa in 2004, with the aim of verifying the FARDC's first payroll, which was based on ex-belligerents' self-declared troop numbers, suspected to be heavily inflated.¹⁰⁰ The results of this census suggested that between 30 and 55 per cent of the registered combatants were fictitious. However, the wide dispersion of troops, and the fact that many had never passed a *brassage* center at that point, made accurate counting difficult, and the team ran into logistical and technical difficulties in the east. Furthermore, the results were rejected by the Transitional Government, which subsequently ordered the FARDC high command to conduct its own census, the outcomes of which established the rate of ghost soldiers at 30 per cent (Boshoff, 2005: 5; Amnesty International, 2007: 7).

Table 16: Unrest among FARDC troops ascribed to erratic payment (2009)

Date	Location	Description	Source
June 2009	Ngora, 13 kms from Walikale centre (NK)	An angry FARDC unit started to shoot and refused to be redeployed as they had not received their salary for over 5 months	'Rutshuru : les FARDC en colère sèment la panique à Ngora', <i>Radio Okapi</i> , 17.06.2009
June 2009	A UN base 100 kms from Goma (NK)	A number of soldiers fired at a UN base to protest against not receiving salary for over 6 months. 9 other incidents related to salary arrears were reported the same week in North Kivu	'Mutinous Congo troops fire at UN', BBC News, 17.06.2009
August 2009	Kamanyola, Walungu (SK)	4 FARDC soldiers organized a mutiny reclaiming 4 months of unpaid salaries, protesting payment differences between ex-armed group and other staff	'Retour au calme, après la mutinerie des FARDC à Kamanyola', <i>Radio Okapi</i> , 27.08.2009
September 2009	Goma (NK)	367 soldiers from former armed groups gathered at the 8 th Military Region to denounce non-payment of salaries or delays in disbursement	'Lubero : soulèvement des militaires après détournement de leur solde', <i>Radio Okapi</i> , 02.10.2009
October 2009	Kanyabayonga, Lubero (NK)	30 troops from the 122 nd brigade fired in the air at night to protest the non-payment of salaries for over 4 months, after a captain charged with payment disappeared with \$20,000	'Lubero : soulèvement des militaires après détournement de leur solde', <i>Radio Okapi</i> , 02.10.2009
October 2009	Chivanga, Kabare (SK)	Soldiers started to fire in the air out of anger about the non-payment of the salaries of a part of the brigade	'Kimia 2 : des soldats FARDC se fâchent et tirent en l'air à Chivanga', <i>Radio Okapi</i> , 18.10.2009
October 2009	Kashughu, Lubero (NK)	FARDC military of the 112 th brigade fired in the air and looted shops and houses denouncing 3 months of salary arrears	Olivier Diosso, <i>Le Potentiel</i> , 27.10.2009
December 2009	Nyabiondo, Masisi (NK)	The population of Nyabiondo and 6 neighboring villages fled after unruly behavior of FARDC troops resenting the non-payment of their salaries, killing 1 civilian	'Masisi, calme précaire à Nyabiondo ce mardi', <i>Radio Okapi</i> , 29.12.2009

In 2005, EUSEC announced a project to individually identify troops by means of a biometrical census that was to be partly conducted in the CBRs (*brassage* centers). The census had to enable the creation of a reliable database of all military personnel, which would serve as the basis for a payment system that was separate from the chain of command. This system would ensure that salaries were no longer distributed via the command chain, but through independent payment officials (the CBCs), linked to the ministry of defense in Kinshasa, which would importantly reduce the opportunities for the embezzlement of the RCA (salaries). But the road towards establishing a comprehensive and accurate database proved to be full of obstacles, causing the implementation of the project to proceed at a snail's pace. While the completion of the first phase in 2008 allowed for the establishment of a system of pay that assured the regular payment

¹⁰⁰ The issue of the inflation of troop numbers at the start of the transition was discussed on pp. 78–79.

of troops, a certain manipulation remained. For example, in Bukavu, it was rumored that the commander of the 10th Military Region still managed to withhold \$1 on all monthly salaries. Additionally, soldiers in remote areas continued to be paid via their commanders, since the payment officials only reached the HQs of brigades. While they formally had to hand over the money to the S1 of each brigade, who would subsequently distribute it to the S1s of the battalions, military staff told that in reality, the money continued to pass unit commanders first. However, overall, the system worked reasonably well, and informants from former IBs reported that the regularity of payment had significantly improved. Unfortunately, this did not last very long, for the overhaul of military structures and units related to the accelerated integration in 2009 led to a drastic degeneration in the regularity and transparency of pay.

Even before the accelerated integration, the regular influx of rebel fighters and frequent desertions had already complicated the efforts to establish a definite personnel database and correct lists of pay per unit, in particular in the Kivus. However, the 2009 rapid integration process created such an administrative chaos that the system of payment per CBC had to be suspended. Not only did all newly integrated troops have to be biometrically identified first, the breakup of existing units and the rapid rotations and reappointments during the Amani Leo operations (as described above) made it difficult to trace which troops had moved where, in particular since the integration process had taken place in a hurried manner. Consequently, it was not possible to establish adequate lists of personnel, hence payrolls, per Amani Leo brigade, which significantly enlarged the margins for ghost soldiers and concomitant embezzlement. Even after all newly integrated soldiers had been biometricized, their names initially did not appear on the payrolls, causing in some cases their salaries not to be paid for months. Additionally, the ranks of the newly integrated staff were not immediately recognized, since these could only become official upon the promulgation of an *ordre général* (nomination decree). However, the ranks commission that convened at the general staff in Kinshasa proceeded very slowly and finalized its work only in the course of 2011. The discontent and frustration resulting from these delays in pay and the recognition of ranks contributed to strong tensions within the Amani Leo brigades, which occasionally degenerated into mutinies or shooting incidents (see Table 16). In several cases, incidents were triggered by the fact that only salaries for the ex-government components arrived, and not for the newly integrated troops, which fostered the idea that they were discriminated against. This illustrates the extent to which restructuring in a context of minimal administrative capacities and investments may not only exacerbate internal tensions in the FARDC, but can also turn the military into a source of insecurity for its external environment.

Some foreign military personnel suggested that the manner in which rapid integration was handled, in particular the administrative chaos it entailed, had been a deliberate strategy by the military command to provide payoffs to officers, knowing that this chaos would allow for the embezzlement of salaries. Supposedly, this was to the benefit of both the newly integrated groups and other military personnel, who were at risk of becoming marginalized due to the new-won dominance of the ex-CNDP.¹⁰¹ While it is difficult to prove that it indeed concerned an engineered strategy, it is clear that the administrative disorder created by the accelerated integration allowed many officers to enrich themselves. This disorder also allowed armed groups to inflate their numbers upon integration into the FARDC, thus creating new ghost soldiers and new opportunities for embezzlement. One recurrent strategy to achieve such inflation, according to informants in the FARDC, was last-minute recruitment. This often occurred through the handing out of arms and uniforms to civilians, in many cases family or community members of combatants, just before biometrical identification would take place. Unsurprisingly, many of these new 'troops' did not last long in the integration centers or in the units to which they were deployed. Desertion could also be observed among integrated combatants of smaller-scale and locally rooted armed groups, many of whom decided to leave the military when deployed far away from their home area.¹⁰² Since the amount of allocated pay is based on the amount of registered troops, neither the military regions nor the Amani Leo brigades had a strong interest in correcting the numbers to account for these desertions. For the same reason, it also occurred that the military regions took the initiative to inflate the numbers of newly integrated armed group combatants themselves. For example, when in January 2011, two rebel groups were integrated into the FARDC in South Kivu (the FRF and the Mai Mai Kapopo), the 10th Military Region added 2,000 new soldiers to the pay lists, although the real number of integrated troops was less than 500.¹⁰³

Unit commanders had similar incentives to mask discrepancies between the amount of soldiers registered officially on the payroll of their unit and those deployed in the field. Consequently, many failed to report desertions and deaths to the hierarchy, although in some cases the decision not to report the deceased was also made to ensure that a part of the RCA was channeled to the widows, who often remain with the unit. For similar reasons, commanders did not always inform the hierarchy about detachments of staff from their brigade to other units, in some cases also because there was no formal authorization for these transfers in the first place. This often concerned the bodyguards of officers, some of whom see these more as their personal servants than as general military personnel, especially where bodyguards are from the same area of origins, ethnic group, clan, and/or former armed group. Moreover, some officers believed to have the 'right' to take as many bodyguards as they wished when changing from one unit to the next, in spite of official limits on the amount of authorized bodyguards per rank, and the requirement of formal authorization for such transfers.

But even when commanders would notify the hierarchy of changes in the composition of units, it would take a long time before these were digested administratively in the central personnel database at the ministry of defense in Kinshasa, hence would appear on the payrolls. Furthermore, due to delays and possibly also errors in registrations, many soldiers who had been biometricized did not appear

101 Interviews with MONUSCO and EUSEC staff, Goma, 28.03.2010 and 09.05.2010 and Bukavu, 25.10.2011.

102 Interviews with staff from the Mai Mai Mushombe in Marungu on 11.11.2011 and in Masango on 12.11.2011.

103 Interviews with mid-ranking officers, Fizi centre, 30.12.2011.

on the pay lists, the so-called *omis* (omitted). Others who at first did appear on the payroll later saw their name mysteriously disappear from the lists. This provoked strong rumors among FARDC staff about the manipulation of the database by the department in Kinshasa responsible for updating it, supposedly called *Recup bios*. This department was alleged to have made an agreement with the ministry of defense not to remove the names of soldiers who had died or deserted, enabling their salaries to be embezzled. While it remains unclear to what extent these rumors are true, since they could neither be confirmed nor refuted, they are important in that they illustrate the lack of confidence that FARDC soldiers have in the administrative capacities and integrity of their hierarchy, especially when it comes to pay. This strongly contributed to provoking the type of mutinies and unrest described in Table 16.¹⁰⁴

At the time of Amani Leo, discrepancies between the personnel lists as registered in the central database in Kinshasa and the actual composition of units on the ground were also caused by non-official recruitment. Some brigade commanders, often from former armed groups, made use of minors, temporarily hiding them at the time of biometrical identification.¹⁰⁵ Such evasion of biometricization could also be observed among foreign nationals in brigades composed in majority of ex-CNDP troops, a part of whom refused to be identified biometrically.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, certain former armed group commanders allowed non-registered family or other members from their personal networks to work in their unit, providing them with a circle of highly loyal and trusted personnel. In the case of the ex-CNDP, such non-official recruitment took on massive proportions, allowing them to maintain a number of battalions that were not recognized by the FARDC hierarchy, but that operated under the CNDP's private command (Human Rights Watch, 2010; UNSC, 2010: 42).¹⁰⁷ A final mode of non-official recruitment, as observed during the fieldwork, was the spontaneous integration into FARDC units of captured or surrendered armed group combatants.¹⁰⁸ This practice appears to bear substantial risks as it occasionally occurred that such combatants later deserted, which leads to leaks of intelligence.

Obviously, the described forms of manipulation with recruitment and identification strongly undermined efforts to establish better administrative control over the FARDC and its human resources. The scale of the resulting mess became clear in the course of the regimentation process in 2011, when some Amani Leo brigades ceased to exist after having gathered the troops for just over one battalion of a regiment (500 troops). For example in South Kivu, the first wave of regimentation in 2011 reduced the number of registered troops from around 35,000 to 27,000, a number that was further diminished to 15,600 after the next wave.¹⁰⁹ Regimentation also allowed for the restoration of the system of payment via CBCs as initiated by EUSEC, causing incidents of the non-payment of troops to diminish. However, the process only marginally improved control over other funds than the RCA. A few months after the formation of the first regiments and sectors (which became the only intermediaries between field-based units and the military regions after the suppression of the *zones ops*), parts of the operating budget of regiments and sectors, including funds for military operations, intelligence, funerals and health care, started to be withheld or to arrive irregularly.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, since the integration of armed group combatants continued,¹¹¹ although more on an individual than a collective basis, and new recruitment took place in 2012 and 2013,¹¹² regimentation still did not allow for the establishment of a 'definite' database of personnel, although it importantly cleaned up the existing one.

Another dimension in which regimentation fell short of its objectives was in allowing for a better identification of FARDC staff by civilians. The more accurate personnel database established during the regimentation process had to facilitate the introduction of nametags on the new camouflage uniforms that replaced the FARDC's olive green fatigues at the end of 2010. New uniforms were in part introduced to better distinguish FARDC soldiers from armed group fighters, the majority of whom had the same uniforms as the government forces. However, most non-state armed groups managed to rapidly obtain the new uniform (e.g., UNSC, 2011: 54), undermining the intention to make FARDC staff better distinguishable. The introduction of nametags, which had to make FARDC soldiers individually identifiable by outsiders, similarly met with failure. The distribution of the new uniforms proceeded in a chaotic manner, causing the initial idea to make individual identification a prerequisite for receiving a new uniform to be abandoned. Resistance among ex-CNDP troops further

104 The low confidence of soldiers in the military organization is further described in the section on secondary vertical cohesion in Chapter 9, on pp. 278–281.

105 Child protection actors said that despite their presence during biometric identification, they would still regularly encounter child soldiers in FARDC brigades in the field. Interview with director of civil society organization, Bukavu, 12.05.2010. See also Colette Braeckman, 'L'exfiltration de mineurs au sein d'un groupe armé, une entreprise délicate', *Le Soir. Le carnet de Colette Braeckman*, 26 August 2013. However, it seems that with the creation of the regiments, and the end to massive, collective armed group integration, this practice has largely disappeared, and child soldiers in the FARDC have become exceedingly rare, if not practically non-existent. Radio Okapi, 'RDC: zéro enfant au sein des FARDC au premier semestre 2015', *Radio Okapi*, 22 July 2015.

106 A substantial part of CNDP troops were Rwandan nationals (UNSC, 2008: 15–16).

107 In 2010, the UN Group of Experts identified three such battalions (one at Kitchanga, one in the Ngungu area and one in Nyange and Bibwe) (UNSC, 2010: 42). With the formation of the regiments in 2011, most of these troops were formally integrated and registered. Interview with foreign military expert, Goma, 06.02.2012.

108 In the course of the fieldwork, two units were encountered where such spontaneous integration of rebel combatants had taken place, in both cases ending with desertion: one in Rutshuru, where the combatant was reported to have handed in his weapon to a cash-for-arms program, and one in Minembwe, where an ex-Mai Mai Aoci soldier disappeared while working as a bodyguard for an S2.

109 Interview with EUSEC staff, Bukavu, 24.10.2011 and Brussels, 05.05.2012.

110 Interview with CBC, Goma, 06.02.2012 and with mid-ranking officer, Bukavu, 18.01.2012.

111 For example in 2013, a large number of troops from the Nyatura militias were regrouped at the military base of Nyamunyuni in South Kivu for their integration into the FARDC. See Braeckman, 'L'exfiltration de mineurs'.

112 The 2012–2013 recruitment campaign was discussed on p. 106.

aborted these plans.¹¹³ As a result of these and other difficulties, it was eventually decided to not to allocate nametags to all troops. For that reason, the majority of FARDC staff can still not be easily identified by outsiders, although some have simply written their name on the space designated for the nametag.

What has also not been fully mastered yet is the payment of soldiers' salaries, although regimentation heralded an improvement in comparison to the Amani Leo era. At the end of 2012, it was decided to pay FARDC staff henceforth directly into individual bank accounts, as part of a wider initiative by the government-Matata Ponyo (formed after the 2011 elections) to pay all state agents by bank transfer, a process called *bancarisation*. The implementation of this decision, aimed at further reducing the margins for embezzlement and ghost soldiers, started with the payment of officers in Kinshasa, and was then gradually extended to other parts of the country. However, this system was difficult to implement in isolated rural areas without banks, causing many units in such areas to continue to be paid as before, namely in cash distributed by the CBC, often via their S1 or commander. In certain zones, it was attempted to introduce a system of paying military staff via mobile phone, which however still requires soldiers to go to a bank or cashpoint to obtain the money, and therefore causes delays and difficulties in isolated areas. Furthermore, salary payment via mobile banking does not always run smoothly, as it occasionally occurs that staff are omitted from payment or do not receive the codes.¹¹⁴ In sum, neither the old nor the new way of paying have proven a guarantee for regular salary payment, and delays in disbursement continue to be frequent. For example, while in January 2014, a regiment deployed in Uvira territory had not received their salary for over four months,¹¹⁵ in November that year, five regiments in North Kivu experienced similar payment delays.¹¹⁶

It can be concluded that while enhancing both the countability of FARDC troops and the transparency and regularity of salary payment have made significant progress over the last years, this progress has been erratic and fluctuating, depending in part on the intensity of organizational flux. Furthermore, these improvements have yet to translate into a significant overall strengthening of accountability in terms of finances and responsibility for abuse. The distribution of other funds than the RCA remains highly opaque, and it continues to be exceedingly difficult to identify soldiers individually, and therefore perpetrators of abuses. Hence, the Kivus remain a context where the HUNI reigns supreme. These difficulties are compounded by deficiencies in supervision and control over troops' movements.

'Free-floating military': inadequate control over troops' movements

The administrative disorganization and erratic information flows described in the previous are at the root of a lack of knowledge among HQs on soldiers' whereabouts. Lax supervision and control mechanisms by commanders and the lack of barracks further feed into this, causing troops of some units to live scattered while having limited reporting duties, enabling them to roam around in an uncontrolled manner. What further compounds the exercise of effective control over military staff's movements is the widespread practice of the falsification of papers, which is again enabled by weaknesses in the administration. For example, when moving around, soldiers need in principle a *feuille de route* (travel authorization). Given the difficulties to obtain leave and permission to travel, there is reported to be a large circulation of falsified *feuilles de route* in the FARDC. Allegedly, copies of such documents, signed by the command of the military region, can be bought for around \$10–15 apiece. These authorizations should have a unique registration number, but outside of the HQ of the military regions, it is difficult to verify whether this is the case, since there is only one (non-digitalized) register. Therefore, whenever military in the field have to check the papers of a travelling soldier, they would need to make a lot of efforts, including paying phone credits which they do not get reimbursed, to check whether the registration number is correct. Undoubtedly, this is an important reason why such checks are rarely, if ever, carried out.

Aside from falsified *feuilles de route*, it is rumored that there are fabricated and wrongly attributed authorizations for leave, mostly for reasons of family visits or *soins traditionnels* (traditional health care treatment). Such invalid documents are often employed by military staff as a pretext for not having to be present at the location where they are assigned, allowing them to stay within their home area or a zone with revenue-generating opportunities, without formally deserting. This practice is especially widespread among officers who have not been granted a position, hence are *en dispo* (without function), which commonly implies they have trouble earning a living. Local sources reported three such officers to dwell in the gold mining area of Misisi, including one ex-Mai Mai officer having stayed there for over two years for supposed traditional treatment. As informants from the FARDC told, such manipulations of leave commonly occur with the complicity of figures in the hierarchy of the military region, who arrange that the granted permission for leave is extended ad infinitum against the payment of regular sums. Commanders of the units deployed to areas where FARDC staff on extended medical leave reside are usually not informed of the presence of such free-floating elements. This prohibits the monitoring of their activities, for example control on whether they are still armed, which was reported to be the case for two of the three officers present in Misisi. A similar veil of mystery surrounds the activities of the bodyguards of generals, who often guard the house and other property of their boss in the latter's

113 See also Radio Okapi, 'FARDC: la distribution de nouveaux uniformes en difficulté au Nord-Kivu', *Radio Okapi*, 7 December 2010.

114 Radio Okapi, 'Nord-Kivu: des militaires impayés accusent Vodacom et Rawbank de bloquer leurs soldes', *Radio Okapi*, 31 May 2013.

115 Héritiers de la Justice, 'Des soldats du 111^{ème} régiment FARDC réclament 4 mois d'arriérés de soldes à Kabunambo dans la Plaine de la Ruzizi: le pire est à craindre dans l'avenir', *Héritiers de la Justice*, 13 January 2014.

116 Radio Okapi, 'Nord-Kivu: difficultés de payer les militaires engagés au front', *Radio Okapi*, 12 November 2014.

home area, while also gathering intelligence and arranging business or political affairs. Being privately deployed, these bodyguards usually failed to report to the commanders of the FARDC units present in the area, fostering suspicion.¹¹⁷ Such a lack of awareness among military staff about each other's activities strongly feeds into the generalized opacity surrounding the identity and movements of persons in uniform.

The use of falsified documents in the FARDC is strongly facilitated by the corruption and unprofessionalism of the *Police militaire* (PM, Military Police), who bear responsibility for checking on military movements and general behavior of military staff. PM are deployed both around the HQs of battalions, brigades/regiments, sectors and regions, and in and around major transport hubs, like harbors and parking areas, where they have to verify soldiers' travel authorizations. In the course of extensive travel during the fieldwork, it was observed that PM were indeed present at all the main *parkings* located at the access roads to cities and big towns, and near external and internal¹¹⁸ border crossings. While they were usually checking on military in transit as prescribed, such controls were reported to be not very effective. Within the FARDC, it was rumored that it is not difficult to bribe the PM, making it easy to travel with falsified documents or without travel authorization, which also facilitates desertion while guarding arms and uniforms. Aside from being corruptible, the PM was alleged to be easy to fool since many are not fully aware of the formal rules and regulations. According to a PM officer who obtained his diploma at the *École de prévôté militaire* (Military Police School) in the Zaire era, the majority of present-day PM staff have not followed special Military Police education, as the school has ceased to exist. Within his platoon of 45 PM, he was the only one to have such a diploma. This lack of education, he believed, undermines the work of the PM, especially since duties like drawing up a PV, verifying the validity of official documents, and investigations into the misconduct of soldiers require special knowledge.¹¹⁹ This shows that limited control and supervision of military staff and their movements are not uniquely the result of the agency of individual commanders, but are also the product of management decisions at the top, like the policy not to invest in Military Police education. Furthermore, it is a result of the interplay between on the one hand, the difficult infrastructural environment in which the military operates and its lack of means of transport and ICT, and on the other hand, the ensemble of structures of signification, legitimation and domination within the military, which have generated certain norms and routines of command that foster lax controls on subordinates. In the following chapter, this ensemble of social structures will be further explored from the perspective of the notion of cohesion.

117 The habit not to report to FARDC deployed in the area was observed in relation to both the bodyguards of Gen. Dunia in Baraka and those of Gen. Masunzu in Minembwe.

118 Movements between provinces and sometimes territories are checked upon by agencies such as the DGM and the ANR, who have established internal border posts. This was for example observed in Kanyabayonga (between the territories of Lubero and Rutshuru), and in Kabeya (between South Kivu and Maniema province).

119 Interview with PM commander, Lusuku, 09.12.2011.

Power, norms and discourses in FARDC units

THE STRUCTURES OF DOMINATION, signification and legitimation that constitute the FARDC as a social order permeate all of its constituent parts, including field-based units (brigades/regiments and lower). However, these units also each have their own specific configurations of power relations, norms and discourses, which may both reproduce and challenge those of the military organization at large. These structural variations cause differences in the specific dynamics of protection, insecurity and conflict that are at play within field-based units, and therefore in these units' agency, including their interaction with civilians. In order to understand how these structures and dynamics shape everyday military practices, it was deemed important to look at *cohesion*. Within the sub-field of military sociology, cohesion, which describes a relationship structure between military staff, has been identified as a key factor in understanding military behavior. By providing an insight into the relations between peers, and between soldiers and commanders, studying cohesion yields knowledge of mechanisms of norm enforcement and socialization. Therefore, it helps explain to what extent and how norms and discourses inform troops' practices. Certainly, a full understanding of these processes also requires looking at *what* norms and discourses are dominant and enforced. This provides in turn an insight into structures of domination, for power relations influence what norms and discourses prevail. Studying the relations between soldiers and their commanders yields further knowledge of these structures, including the ways in which these are constituted by both the formal hierarchy and other social relations, such as those of protection. In sum, cohesion is a useful analytical lens for exploring structures of signification, domination and legitimation within the FARDC, as studying it requires gaining insight into troops' discourses, forms of identification and norms, and their relations to their commanders located at various levels of the military organization. Chapter 9 explores cohesion within FARDC units in the Kivus, starting with a brief theoretical discussion of this notion and explaining its four main forms. It then zooms in on the specific ways in which cohesion in the FARDC is impacted by the dynamics of conflict, protection, and insecurity. Subsequently, it describes to what extent the four identified forms of cohesion can be found within FARDC units in the Kivus, thereby providing in-depth knowledge of norms, power relations and discourses. This helps understand military units' agency, which is further analyzed in Chapter 10.

9.1 *Researching cohesion in armed forces*

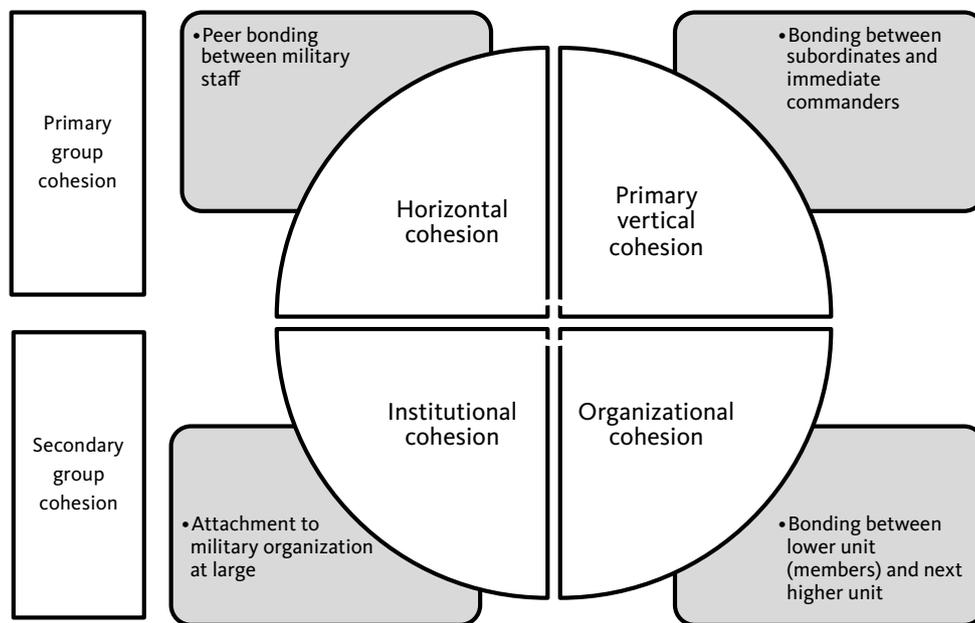
The notion of 'cohesion' has been conceptualized in a variety of manners both in military-sociological and other social sciences research. Views differ on how it is generated and measured, as well as on its effects on military practices (Bartone et. al., 2002; Cota et al., 1995; Siebold, 1999; 2011). Importantly, some scholars make a distinction between on the one hand *social cohesion*, defined as whether group members like each other (hence relating to the nature and quality of emotional bonds of friendship, as based on personal characteristics), and on the other hand *task cohesion*, referring to commitment to a common mission that requires collective action to accomplish (Carron, 1982; MacCoun, 1993). Others have emphasized that cohesion has three components: interpersonal attraction, interdependence (or functional integration) and similarity of values (normative integration) (Wesbrook, 1980: 251–252, drawing on theories on social cohesion in non-military contexts). These distinctions are regarded to be of importance since interpersonal attraction does not automatically translate into commitment to assigned group tasks. In fact, social solidarity might be prioritized over the execution of professional duties, causing primary groups to develop objectives that deviate from those of the organization at large (Henderson, 1985: 6; MacCoun, 1993). However, commitment to realizing those deviant objectives, or in the terminology preferred in this dissertation *projects*, could still be conceptualized as a form of task cohesion, when 'tasks' are seen not to uniquely relate to assigned professional duties.

Attempting to synthesize the various approaches to cohesion into a broad general framework, Siebold (2007) proposes a 'standard model

of military group cohesion'.¹ For Siebold, cohesion relates to a relationship structure with both affective and instrumental dimensions that establishes mutual trust and loyalty and that impacts military conduct and motivation by facilitating collective action as well as adhesion to group norms (2007: 287–288). This relationship structure is (re)produced by both formal and informal social interaction, which may be interpersonal or collective.² Given the importance of both affective and instrumental dimensions, which constantly interact, and the continual interplay between social practice and social relations, Siebold (2011: 463) judges the distinction between social and task cohesion of limited relevance.

In Siebold's model, cohesion in military organizations consists of four interrelated and interacting components (see Figure 16). The first form is *horizontal or peer bonding*, which refers to ties between soldiers at the same level of the military hierarchy. The second form is (*primary*) *vertical or leader bonding*, which concerns relations between subordinates and their immediate commanders. These two types of bonding take place within a small group, such as a squad or platoon, and together constitute *primary group cohesion*. The third form of cohesion is *organizational bonding*, which concerns the relations between personnel and their next larger unit of organization (e.g., company, battalion, brigade). The fourth and final form of cohesion is *institutional bonding*, which refers to relations between soldiers and their overall organizational branch (e.g., the air force, or the armed forces in general). These last two forms of bonding, organizational and institutional, jointly constitute *secondary group cohesion*. They are considered herein as forms of *vertical cohesion*.

Figure 16: Standard model of military group cohesion, based on Siebold (2007)



The various dimensions and components of cohesion described above constantly interact (Cota et al., 1995). For instance, where the norms, discourses and projects of primary groups diverge from those of the organization at large, strong primary group cohesion can undermine identification with and loyalty to the organization at large, hence secondary cohesion (Wesbrook, 1980: 257–258; Shils and Janowitz, 1948: 296). However, where the primary group identifies with the organization at large, and group projects overlap with professional duties, strong primary cohesion may lead to institutional cohesion. Both horizontal and vertical cohesion are crucial for social control, hence norm enforcement, while also shaping the salience of shared discourses among military staff. Whether cohesion promotes good or bad conduct towards civilians depends on the *contents* of dominant norms and discourses, which highlights that cohesion is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, where shared norms and discourses celebrate certain forms of violence, the group conformity and obedience stemming from cohesion can push individuals to commit atrocities they would have never committed on their own (Grossman, 2009: 146). On the other hand, where dominant norms and discourses strongly disapprove of needless harm, effective peer pressure and leadership, as grounded in cohesion, can put a brake on abusive behavior, through mutual correction and disciplining (Henderson, 1985: 23–24).

1 The assumptions on which Siebold's 'standard model' rest are not wholly uncontested (e.g., King, 2007; Siebold, 2011), confirming the observation that there is 'no single definition or model that is accepted by a majority of researchers interested in this construct [cohesion]' (Cota et al., 1995: 575).

2 There are differences of opinion on whether cohesion only concerns commitment to the group and group relations or also relates to interpersonal ties, and how these two components interact. For example, while Shils and Janowitz (1948) emphasize that small groups like the squad and the platoon are at the heart of cohesion, Little (1964) takes two-person relationships as the basic unit.

Since primary groups are relatively closed networks, which revolve around intimate, holistic, face-to-face contacts that establish trust, group members feel a responsibility for each other's wellbeing and for the success of the group as a whole. In such a context, social control, as related to horizontal cohesion, proceeds through mechanisms of sanctioning and encouragement based on solidarity, mutual respect, concern for one's standing in the group and personal pride (Siebold, 2007: 288–289). These control mechanisms are most effective when there are well-developed systems of communication and shared structures of signification, which allow for both the rapid circulation of information and for common interpretations of that information (King, 2006). Concerning the mechanisms of social control relating to vertical cohesion, scholars of (military) leadership have proposed that the influence that leaders exercise on their subordinates' practices, norms, and beliefs passes through a variety of mechanisms. Drawing on Kelman (1958), Yukl (1999: 287) distinguishes identification, internalization and compliance. When troops consider their commanders to be representative of them, or see them as a role model, norms and discourses will be largely transmitted through personal identification. Where commanders invest significantly in instruction and training, internalization may be the paramount mechanism of the transmission of norms and discourses. When there is no transmission of norms and discourses, the predominant mechanism through which subordinates' conduct is influenced may be compliance with commanders on the basis of instrumentality or fear. This occurs for instance when non-compliance is risky since sanctions are severe, or when it is expected that obeying commanders will yield certain benefits. Where vertical cohesion is strong, identification is likely to be the dominant mechanism, and the effects of commanders' explicit efforts at socialization, hence the degree of internalization, high.

Vertical cohesion generally acts in tandem with horizontal cohesion in shaping troops' practices. Where mutual bonding among soldiers is strong, they may easily form a common front when judging commanders' injunctions to be erroneous, therefore reducing the latter's influence on their practices. What also matters for the ways in which commanders affect their subordinates are their personal norms, discourses, projects and other personal qualities, for these shape what norms they enforce among their troops and how. What norms commanders enforce and what projects they pursue is again shaped by the formal and informal hierarchies into which they are embedded, relating to both their official superiors and big-men. These hierarchies regulate lower-level commanders' practices by influencing the discourses and norms that guide their practices, and by enforcing these norms through mechanisms of punishment and reward (cf. Weinstein, 2006: 13). How and in how far hierarchies control the conduct of commanders at the lower levels is in part the product of their strength and legitimacy (Wesbrook, 1980: 274; Wood, 2009: 137). These features also influence the practices of the rank and file in a more direct manner, for they determine to what extent troops trust the military organization and feel there is a supportive climate, which are important features of secondary cohesion. Aside from by the military organization, whether the official hierarchy or big-man networks within the military, commanders' agency is also influenced by their interactions with their deployment environment (Hannah et al., 2010; Yammarino et al., 2010). This dimension is very pertinent in the FARDC, since commanders are an integral part of social networks crosscutting military/civilian boundaries that are salient in their everyday lives. In sum, commanders' practices, which shape vertical cohesion, are the product of a variety of interacting factors, such as their personal characteristics and their position within various social arenas, notably their units, the military hierarchy, and big-man networks both within and outside of the military (cf. Mastroianni, 2011).

The factors shaping cohesion

Military sociologists have identified a wide array of factors that shape cohesion, although views on the most relevant dimensions somewhat diverge (Bartone et al., 2002; Siebold, 1999). Based on an analysis of the Wehrmacht during World War II, two of the first contemporary Western scholars³ who systematically studied cohesion in military units, Shils and Janowitz (1948), identify a variety of factors that are at the root of what they found to be the remarkable cohesion of the Wehrmacht's primary units. These include what they call 'community of experience', referring to homogeneity in both an ethnic and a national sense, and the length of service time together. Furthermore, cohesion in the Wehrmacht was fostered by the presence of role models embodying collective values, including hyper-masculinity (Shils and Janowitz, 1948: 286–287). An additional factor was the relative weakness of civilian primary group ties. Where psychological and emotional reliance on the family or the civilian community are high, commitment and orientation towards the military group diminish. This is especially the case when concerns about the safety of the primary civilian group are pressing, or where this group is crucial for the satisfaction of basic needs like healthcare, food and clothing. By contrast, when it is the military unit that is crucial for physical survival and the satisfaction of basic needs, group solidarity is promoted, rather than undermined (idem: 290–291). Shils and Janowitz also point to the importance of morality for fostering cohesion, in particular the internalization of shared explicit and implicit 'codes of honor' that regulate military staff's behavior and that facilitate interaction (idem: 293). Whether such codes are respected depends in part on primary group commanders, who are physically most proximate to troops and therefore best placed to exercise social control. Yet their actual impact is conditioned by whether they are trusted and seen as competent and caring for the wellbeing of their troops, in particular by avoiding unnecessary deaths. Furthermore, commanders must be perceived as disciplining their troops when needed, thus displaying a combination of fatherly benevolence and sternness. This benevolence includes tolerance for certain transgressions of 'civil ethics', like aggressive behavior towards civilians, or having women in the barracks (idem: 298–299).

³ Western scholarship on cohesion in combat organizations dates back to ancient Greece (Siebold, 1999). However, the study of cohesion in armed forces is much older. The great military strategists of ancient China, inspired by Sun Tzu, already highlighted the harmonization of people as part of the 'Tao of military operations' (Sun Tzu, transl. Cleary, 1988: 12).

The importance of many factors from this quite comprehensive range has been confirmed by subsequent research on cohesion, although scholars have often put different emphases or provided different explanations for the underlying mechanisms. Importantly, Shils and Janowitz were not explicit about the cohesion-fostering potential that exposure to shared external threats may have under certain conditions (Coser, 1956; Stein, 1976). This is closely related to a second factor they did not explicitly mention, namely the effects of going together through stressful events like combat (Wesbrook, 1980: 251; Henderson, 1985: 14). Where engagement in combat is successful, the effects on cohesion are even bigger. Similar cohesion-enhancing effects result from the successful execution of certain tasks or the achievement of common objectives more generally. Even when not in conditions of stress or danger, a sense of success and achievement promotes adhesion to the primary group. This partly explains the effectiveness of training as a means of fostering cohesion (Cockerham, 1978; MacCoun et al., 2006). Another reason is that by carrying out common tasks, training allows groups to develop shared systems of communication and collective objectives. Furthermore, training involves repetition, which creates 'automated responses', and 'muscle memory', leading to immediate obedience to orders. Much of military training is geared towards socializing troops into simplified command systems, in which standard words or phrases trigger almost automatically a series of complicated actions. Together with mechanisms of control, it is through such inculcated command procedures that standardized and predictable behavior is fostered, which is essential for discipline. Furthermore, in order for training to have an effect on real-life combat situations, it is necessary that units repeatedly train in exactly the same composition as they will be deployed in the field. This allows them to get accustomed to the same words of command, to build up shared routines, and to develop a sense of solidarity (King, 2006).

In relation to vertical cohesion, some scholars have emphasized that aside from commanders' competence, their demonstrated commitment to group projects and values, and their concern for the wellbeing of subordinates, which are factors highlighted by Shils and Janowitz, what also matters are evaluations of the legitimacy of commanders' appointment (Wesbrook, 1980: 261–265). For instance, where commanders are seen to have been appointed primarily due to being of a certain ethnic group or political faction rather than as a result of having the required qualifications, vertical cohesion is impaired. Additionally, commanders' legitimacy is shaped by the extent to which their systems of rewards and punishments are seen as 'neutral', that is, grounded in fair assessments of actual conduct rather than favoritism. Where the meting out of punishments and rewards is perceived to follow unjust criteria, leaders' legitimacy is sharply undermined (Weinstein, 2006: 137). Similar to the processes of legitimation surrounding rulers in the civilian domain, the various factors shaping the legitimacy of commanders can largely be subsumed under evaluations of social role performance. Soldiers have deeply engrained beliefs about what a good commander should be and do, hence have expectations regarding the social role of 'military commander' and use these as a yardstick to evaluate their superiors. This implies that assessments of the latter's legitimacy are largely shaped by the extent to which they are experienced to live up to the expectations surrounding the social role of 'commander'.

Another set of factors that scholars have identified as lacking or being under-emphasized in Shils and Janowitz's pioneering work are elements that in Siebold's (2007) model pertain to 'secondary cohesion'. These include the quality of secondary group command, in particular pertaining to the level of brigades/regiments, which has a strong influence on the general climate in which soldiers live and operate. What also matters for secondary cohesion are service conditions, including training opportunities and arrangements for career progression. Together with perceptions of the top leadership, these elements shape how soldiers feel about the military organization as a whole. Where higher-level command and service conditions are seen to be favorable, they help give a sense of purpose and meaningfulness to soldiers, thus enhancing their commitment to the military organization, its mission and its norms (Siebold, 2007: 289–290). Such commitment may also be reinforced where militaries actively invest in socializing their members into their professional discourses and norms, and in promoting identification with and allegiance to the organization, like by making them swear an oath upon enlistment.

Certain scholars have also emphasized that Shils and Janowitz's focus on the primary group led them to downplay the importance of the values and beliefs of the wider social orders of which soldiers are part. Such beliefs, which include political ideology, are crucial for fostering the commitment of the primary group to the projects, norms and values of the military organization at large (Wesbrook, 1980: 274; Moskos, 1970: 146–152). As pointed out by Moskos (1970: 146–148), ideology does not always have to be manifest, that is, discursively articulated in a set of seemingly stable and well-delineated ideological principles, like 'liberal market democracy'. It may also be 'latent', when referring to a general feeling of adherence to a certain group or idea that one is ready to fight for.⁴ Concerning the values of wider social orders, it has been emphasized that in order for soldiers to remain committed to their profession and peers, the military organization and society at large have to demonstrate sufficient recognition of their service, in the form of material and symbolic rewards (Henderson, 1985: 17; Wesbrook, 1980: 262). Furthermore, society and the political leadership must hold military leaders in high esteem, as this influences soldiers' own perceptions of the legitimacy of the military top and therefore how they relate to the organization at large. The political leadership also impacts institutional bonding and motivation in its own right, since it can elicit dedication to serve (Wesbrook, 1985: 264).

Taken together, the work of Janowitz and Shils and other (military) sociologists and social psychologists provides a host of elements that allow for the study of cohesion in the FARDC. In relation to primary group cohesion, these elements have been regrouped into two

⁴ Moskos (1970: 147) defines 'latent ideology' as 'the social and cultural sources of those beliefs manifest in the attitudes toward the war', which 'though not overtly political, nor even necessarily substantively political, nevertheless have concrete consequences for combat motivation'.

clusters: first, what is called here *community of experience*,⁵ as shaped by the length and characteristics of troops' living, training and operating together. This includes exposure to common threats and shared hardships, (the success of) carrying out common tasks, and the extent to which troops need each other for survival and the provision of basic needs. The second component for studying primary cohesion is *commonality of identification and beliefs*,⁶ which relates to the (perceived) salience of homogeneity in terms of (ethno-regional) origins, language and (political-ideological) beliefs, as partly shaped by the relative strength of pre-existing civilian and military forms of identification and levels of (military) education. In this context, 'pre-existing' implies before entering the FARDC, and therefore includes the identities related to the previous armed force that soldiers served in, whether a state or a non-state force. '(Perceived) salience' relates to the extent to which similarities and differences in relation to language, beliefs, and origins are seen to make a difference within both formal (professional) and informal interaction.

Table 17: Specification of factors shaping primary group cohesion in military

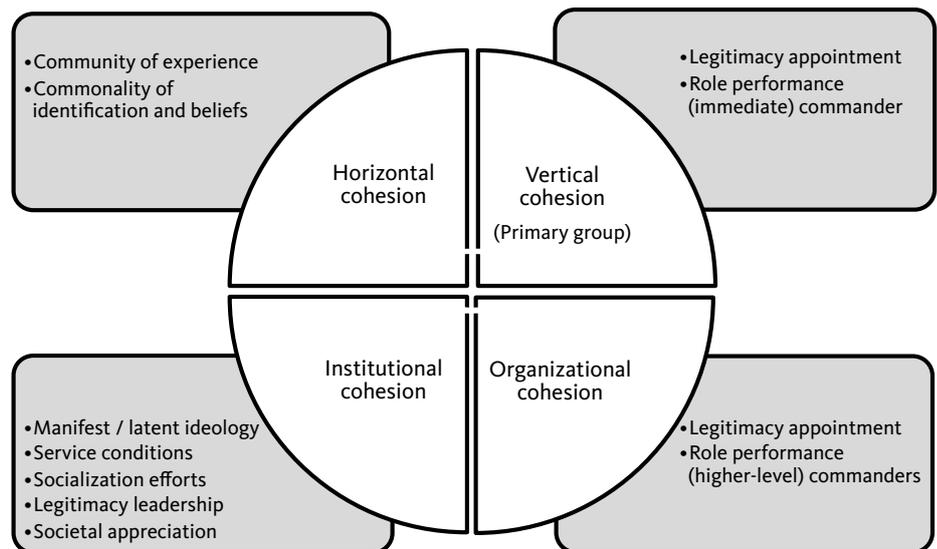
Community of experience	Commonality of identification & beliefs	Vertical cohesion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living, training & operating together, esp: • Shared hardship • Exposure to common threats • Mutual dependence for basic needs provision • (Successful) carrying out joint tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived salience of common beliefs & social identification, esp: • Ethno-regional background • Language • Political-ideological orientation • Level of (military) education • Pre-FARDC military identities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legitimacy of appointment • Fulfilling social role requirements, esp: • Competence • Commitment to unit & projects • Protective qualities (basic needs provision troops) • Fairness of mechanisms disciplining & rewards

Community of experience and commonality of beliefs and identification shape both horizontal cohesion (bonding between troops) and vertical cohesion (between subordinates and commanders) in primary groups (see Figure 17 below). In relation to vertical cohesion, including of secondary groups, they impact the ways in which commanders' practices are evaluated, in particular in relation to fulfilling the specific expectations surrounding the social role of 'FARDC commander'. These expectations largely center on the following factors (see Table 17): commitment to the group and its projects; competence; the perceived fairness of mechanisms of punishment and reward; and lastly, protective qualities, including the extent to which commanders assure their subordinates' primary needs. In how far commanders are seen to meet these role requirements depends on their practices and the ways in which these are evaluated. These practices are not only a product of commanders' personal qualities, but are strongly shaped by the ways in which they are situated in their units, in the military hierarchy, and in big-man networks both within and outside of the military. Another factor of importance in relation to vertical cohesion is in how far commanders' appointment is seen as legitimate, which may be partly shaped by the extent to which they are seen to meet social role requirements. Since in secondary groups, evaluations of unit leadership and its performance have preponderant influence on how soldiers relate to their larger unit, these elements (when relating to secondary group leadership) can be also be seen as constitutive of organizational cohesion. Concerning the second component of secondary cohesion, institutional bonding, this is considered to be shaped by both manifest and latent ideology, service conditions, including training opportunities and career progression, efforts of the military organization to socialize its members into professional discourses and norms, perceptions of the legitimacy of the political and military top leadership, and finally, broader (societal) appreciation for the armed forces.

5 While Shils and Janowitz include homogeneity of origins in the category 'community of experience', it was decided to disaggregate this dimension and turn it into a separate category, since 'experience' refers explicitly to interaction. Although identification is strongly shaped by interaction, it cannot be equated by it.

6 Henderson (1985: 26) speaks of 'commonality of values' to refer to commonalities in ethnic background, gender, socio-economic standing, and other features. However, this description points more to forms of social identification than to values per se, while 'values' was found to be a somewhat narrow concept, as it does not capture dimensions like political-ideological orientation. For these reasons, it was decided to create a category that regroups social identification and 'beliefs', defined as encompassing worldviews, norms, values, and modes of reasoning.

Figure 17: Main factors shaping military group cohesion



The effects of the dynamics of protection, conflict and insecurity on cohesion

As might be gauged from the discussion of cohesion and of the FARDC thus far, the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection have important effects on cohesion in this military. FARDC soldiers are exposed to rampant insecurity, including in relation to the provision of basic needs, which causes them to turn to others for survival and assistance. For instance, poverty and bad living conditions make soldiers appeal to colleagues serving in the same unit for assistance with basic needs provision, such as constructing shelter, which fosters cohesion. Yet if soldiers have comprehensive protection from big-man networks in the FARDC that ensure additional income and provide for other pressing needs, they might be stronger oriented towards these networks than to their primary group. This is especially the case where these big-man networks are formed along salient identity-based lines, which may have effects on how soldiers define themselves and others. Furthermore, due to the fact that the FARDC is a relative open social order, military staff are also strongly embedded in non-military social networks, for instance in their deployment environment or area of origins. The salience of such networks and associated forms of identification also has effects on soldiers' mutual relations.

The manifold sources of insecurity in the FARDC, such as organizational flux, internal competition, and the erratic application of formal rules and regulations, and the ways soldiers devise for coping with these, do not only impact peer bonding, but also shape the relations between commanders and subordinates. In the absence of (knowledge of) formally enshrined service conditions,⁷ and clear criteria for appointments, promotions and the assignment of positions and tasks, nearly all dimensions of service in the FARDC have to be negotiated with commanders and/or the wider hierarchy. This includes issues like leave, whether for medical or social reasons, transport during rotations, the quality of accommodation, the nature and mode of execution of professional duties, promotions, advances on one's (often delayed) salary and access to (informal) revenue-generation opportunities. The high level of discretion that commanders enjoy in the granting and withholding of such 'favours', which in many other militaries would be defined as 'rights', enables commanders to employ them as bargaining chips in the relations with their subordinates. In fact, for FARDC commanders, the manipulation of service-related aspects is a crucial way of maintaining a grip on their subordinates. The resulting negotiability of the modalities of soldiering introduces a strong dimension of protection (as relating to patronage) into standard commander-subordinate relations, and renders these relations more asymmetric. This adds to the levels of insecurity faced by soldiers, since 'favours' are not always granted and withheld according to predictable criteria of performance and compliance, but are distributed on the basis of commanders' personal considerations, as shaped by their position within their unit, their hierarchy and big-man networks. The only manner for subordinates to be shielded against the arbitrariness of their immediate commanders is to seek the protection of big-men outside of their unit, who can influence the decision-making processes of their unit commanders and at other levels of the hierarchy.

The fact that FARDC staff are simultaneously part of a unit and tied into other big-man/social networks that are highly salient for their professional and social life implies that they have to engage in the permanent balancing of sometimes contradictory obligations and loyalties towards different networks. But multiple embedding also has advantages, in that it gives soldiers access to a variety of sources of social capital that can help with the provision of basic needs and/or the exercise of influence on superiors' decisions, while also enabling risk spreading and the diversification of opportunities for revenue generation. However, depending on their strength and power, not all networks offer the same level of benefits. While powerful networks can obviously provide their members with significant advantages,

⁷ The Law on the Statute of FARDC Staff adopted in January 2013, which regulates service and social conditions (see p. 224) has not yet been operationalized, nor are its contents known among military staff.

they are generally difficult to access. This leads to conspicuous differences in soldiers' living and working conditions. The ex-CNDP, a rather exclusive group that became very powerful after integrating into the FARDC at the start of 2009, strongly illustrates the effects of such differential access to protection. Constituting a quasi-autonomous power network with its own systems of intelligence, logistics, administration, armament, and command, the ex-CNDP offered high levels of protection to its members. This allowed them to have determining influence on appointments, deployment decisions, military operations and military justice, thereby systematically favoring their own members. By contrast, less powerful networks in the FARDC, who are not able to influence core areas of decision-making, commonly offer much lower levels of protection. These networks assume more the character of loose webs of social relations spun among persons sharing a certain background, forms of belonging and loyalty than parallel power structures with quasi-autonomous chains of command. An example of such 'weak big-man networks' are integrated armed groups or former units of the government forces whose influence has dissipated, like the ex-MLC. Despite such networks' loss of influence, they sometimes continue to constitute a source of allegiance, trust and certain entitlements to their (former) members, who may still strongly identify with them. Hence, these weak big-man networks are primarily structures of meaning, belonging and sociability that can be mobilized in times of need, but provide only limited professional favors and support.

One reason why these networks survive, even when no longer connected to powerful structures, is the importance of personal relations for facilitating social exchange in the FARDC. Since former armed group or army unit members know each other's histories and secrets, and have sometimes guarded vestiges of the strong forms of bonding that can be found among soldiers in primary combat groups, in particular when continuing to be deployed in the same (primary or secondary) unit, they may maintain high levels of mutual trust and loyalty. Furthermore, where it concerns members of groups who experienced their 'golden era' during the war years, but who are currently marginalized in the FARDC, it seems as if former group members also stick together as they remind each other of a shared and glorious past, the memorizing of which alleviates the suffering in the present. However, even when former armed group or unit affiliations sometimes leave powerful traces, forms of identification and allegiances do generally transform in the course of time. The changing fortunes of big-man networks, as well as soldiers' evolving careers, make that the composition and salience of the social networks they are embedded in regularly shift. In order to illustrate this, and obtain a better understanding of the ways in which the rationalities of protection impact cohesion in the FARDC, the life paths of a number of military staff are presented in detail.⁸

The first life history concerns an ex-MLC (and ex-FAZ) officer from Bafwasende, *Province Orientale*, who integrated into the FARDC in 2004 through the *brassage* process, and obtained a position as intelligence officer (S2) in one of the Integrated Brigades (IBs). He went to *brassage* twice, as the first time, he did not obtain a position of importance. In his own analysis, this failure was the result of his lack of connections that could influence the command of the CBR (*brassage* center) and the commission at the general staff in Kinshasa making the appointments. The CBR command was responsible for proposing a shortlist for nominations of command and staff positions to the commission in Kinshasa, although the latter did not always take its recommendations into consideration. Having no connections of importance that could lobby for him, he failed to be shortlisted and selected. Therefore, he decided to try his luck again with another IB, going to a different CBR. This time, he managed to find the right intermediary with influence in Kinshasa, in part through his former MLC affiliation, allowing him to obtain a position as S2 of the brigade.

While serving in this IB, he gradually built up a strong relationship with an ex-RCD Hutu officer from Rutshuru, with whom he closely collaborated in the fight against the CNDP in 2007. During an offensive, they were shot down shortly after one another, which deepened their bond. When the Kimia II operations started in 2009, this Hutu officer was promoted to brigade commander, and offered his friend a position as S2 in his brigade. This brigade consisted for an estimated 60–70 per cent of Hutu ex-PARECO troops, who strongly stuck together, leading to a divide between on the one hand these 'Rwandophone' troops, and on the other hand, the largely 'autochthon' so-called 'ex-government' troops. Although a client of the brigade commander of Hutu origins, the S2 developed close ties to the other ex-government soldiers in the brigade. The latter felt discriminated against since the Hutu troops were attributed the best positions. Moreover, in their perspective, these troops were not disciplined in the same manner when committing abuses. This sense of discrimination strengthened the solidarity between ex-government soldiers. For example, the S2 once lent money to a deputy S1 (responsible for personnel), an ex-FAC from Katanga, so the latter could invest in a small-scale trade business. Furthermore, when an ex-FAZ officer from the same ethnic group from Bafwasende got suspended due to his involvement in an extortion scam, he made many efforts to end the suspension, lobbying all his higher-level contacts. Aside from maintaining relations within his brigade, the S2 also continued to be embedded in networks outside of it. For example, when having to arrange some private affairs in his home region in *Orientale* related to the land he owns there, he appealed to an ex-MLC officer who is very influential in that area. This shows how this officer's social relations and agency were shaped by at once his ex-FAZ and ex-MLC affiliations, his origins (relating to both his ethnic background and his status as 'autochthon') and his client relationship to a certain Hutu officer, which was partly developed by serving at the frontlines in the same unit.

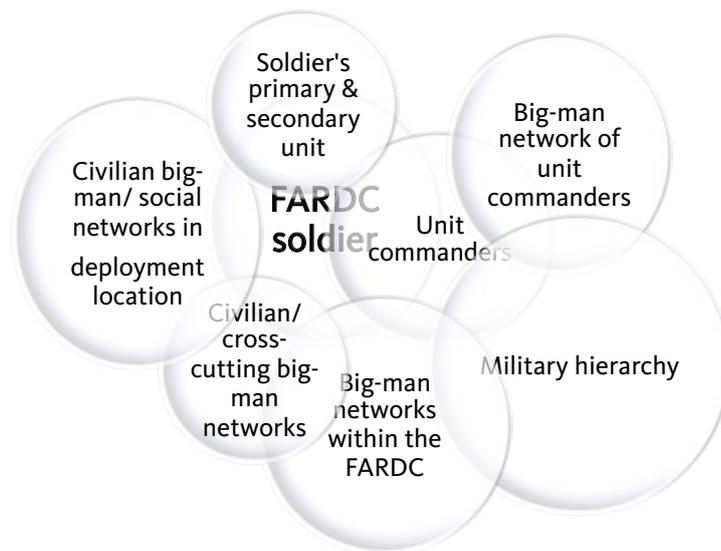
A second example of how protection and other social relations shape and are shaped by life and professional trajectories concerns a foot soldier from a Mai Mai group in South Kivu, who was deployed to Province Orientale after integrating into the FARDC in 2009. Since his former officers refused to be deployed far from their stronghold, and not many troops integrated, he was very isolated there. Cut off from

⁸ The data of this section were obtained through interviews and informal conversations with the described FARDC staff, the details of which are withheld to guarantee anonymity. Moreover, some place names have been changed to avoid identification.

his former leaders, his community and his family, he had no basic social safety net or connections that could help him. Moreover, none of his former armed group officers had substantial influence in the military, and many eventually returned to the bush. Consequently, he had no *paraplui* ('umbrella', designating protection) to help him find opportunities to gain extra revenue, causing him to be permanently hungry. In fact, he felt so miserable that he contemplated deserting, had it not been for a platoon commander who gave him the job of cutting trees in exchange for a small fee. According to the soldier, this platoon commander 'understood him' as he was an ex-Mai Mai himself, although from a group in North Kivu. In his perspective, the fact that he had been given the job was related to solidarity between the Mai Mai, whom he described as 'one and the same' since all Mai Mai are 'brothers', no matter where they come from. However, when the platoon commander was changed for having disobeyed orders, the new commander gave the tree-cutting job to someone from his own ethnic group, making the ex-Mai Mai soldier lose his income. It was at this point that he decided to desert and return to South Kivu where he was now thinking what to do: building up a life as a demobilized soldier or going back to the bush.

The third and last example is that of a lower-ranking ex-armed group officer who stayed relatively close to his former zone of action after his integration into the FARDC. Given that most members of his rebel group were locally recruited, this was also his zone of origins. He was absorbed into a brigade where he obtained a position as deputy S4 (logistics) of a battalion. One of the superior officers of his former rebel group, who used to be his brigade commander, had obtained a position as deputy commander *adminlog* of the operational zone in which his unit was deployed, and continued to be influential in the region. Aside from having to obey the orders from his own battalion commander, the deputy S4 continued to be under the influence of his former armed group commander, for example having to report to him what happened in his area of deployment and in his unit. He also had to take care of some of the business of this officer, including by helping with the organization of the trade in cannabis, which his former armed group had engaged in as a source of revenue. Aside from these loyalties within the military, the deputy S4 continued to be strongly tied into the web of responsibilities and affection related to his community of origins. Members of his community regularly appealed to him for different types of protection services, like intervening in conflicts with other community members or forms of influence peddling. At the same time, they provided him with assistance, for example by using their contacts to help arrange transport for the business he had to facilitate, or by collecting money when one of his children needed an expensive operation in hospital.

Figure 18: FARDC soldiers' social embedding



These examples show how FARDC soldiers are simultaneously tied into a variety of sometimes overlapping and sometimes competing networks both within, outside of and cross-cutting the military (see Figure 18). These networks are formed on different bases, have different levels of coherence and influence, and differing connections to local and national networks of power. In some cases, soldiers rely more on such networks for satisfying crucial material and immaterial needs than on the peers and leaders in their primary group. This was strongly the case in some of the Amani Leo brigades, which became divided between a minority of 'ex-government' soldiers and a majority of newly integrated troops with strong separate forms of identification based on pre-existing ties. The high salience of non-primary unit networks may also be found where soldiers are deployed close to or in their zone of origins, or have been deployed to the same environment for a long period of time, and are therefore strongly tied into local extra-military networks. Obviously, where troops are less dependent both materially and emotionally on their peers and immediate commanders, commitment to the collective projects of the primary unit is undermined. This highlights that both horizontal and vertical cohesion are importantly shaped by units' composition and deployment location and trajectory.

The field data revealed that there is an important difference in levels of professed comradeship and solidarity between on the one hand, high- and mid-ranking officers (here considered from the rank of captain onwards), and on the other hand, lower-ranking officers, *sous-officiers* (NCOs) and the rank and file. This latter group often minimized the differences between FARDC staff, emphasizing they were all 'brothers' and 'Congolese', who live, eat, work and die together. Such a display of solidarity was virtually absent at the level of higher-ranking officers, whose narratives tended to reflect polarizing forms of identification and hostile mutual representations. When describing the contacts with their colleagues, these officers mostly spoke about the detrimental effects of unequal treatment, such as unmerited appointments and salary differences, which caused frictions between them.

These divergences in professed comradeship per rank category were strongly manifested in evaluations of the accelerated integration of 2009. While superior officers highlighted the problematic nature of the integration with an eye to cohesion and military functioning, the rank and file saw it as less of a problem, although many strongly regretted that their former units had been broken up. When explaining why the rapid integration had not been very difficult, soldiers generally invoked two reasons: First, they emphasized that all soldiers live, eat and fight together. Second, they highlighted that they are all soldiers. As a *sous-officier* explained, referring to the newly integrated troops: 'The *Règlement militaire*⁹ is for everyone. It applies to each and all, we do not take tribes or languages into account. And at the social level, it's ok. We walk together, we eat together, we create a good atmosphere together'.¹⁰ This corresponded to the narratives of newly integrated lower-rank staff themselves, who indicated they were content with the social side of the integration process. An ex-CNDP soldier commented: 'The integration is good for us: we have made new friends, we have learned new things and we are learning new languages now, like Lingala'.¹¹ Some also said that discrimination (of Rwandophones) from the side of the population was a bigger problem than discrimination within the military.

Similar differences between higher and lower ranks emerged when speaking about the *brassage* process and its impacts.¹² Most of the lower-ranked officers and soldiers depicted *brassage* as an overall good experience in the course of which there had been little interpersonal problems, emphasizing that a spirit of reconciliation had reigned from the start. A lieutenant expressed it as follows: 'We were divided but we found each other back in the same family'.¹³ Other staff used similar family-related imagery, stating they were all 'brothers' and 'sons of the same nation', while due to the training in the CBR they 'all spoke the same language'. Some believed that this comradeship had been partly fostered by the tough circumstances in the CBRs: 'We have had a *brassage* training of six months in Nyaleke. Despite some difficulties, people always manage. There were great instructors. People suffered, but that did not disturb the education. This is *l'endurance militaire* [military endurance] (...) It has contributed to developing *esprit d'équipe* [team spirit]'.¹⁴

Superior officers, by contrast, stressed that there had been continuing divisions both during and after *brassage*, which several called an '*échec total*' (total failure). According to them, military staff from different factions clung together and there was constant infighting over power, positions and money. While some attributed this to the relative lack of attention to ideology and morals during *brassage*, the majority saw it as the product of the high level of politicization of the military integration process. In particular the distribution of ranks and positions not on the basis of experience or merit but via political manipulation was seen as an important cause of tensions. Frictions were exacerbated by the sheer overload of higher officers, causing a mismatch between ranks and positions, with for example *colonels full* being appointed battalion commanders.¹⁵ The accelerated integration of 2009 and the regimentation of 2011 were generally seen to have only exacerbated these tensions. This was evidenced by the fact that some officers painted a picture of the FARDC as a chaotic hodgepodge of disparate elements that lacks any cohesion. In the words of a major of the heavily divided 432nd brigade (when deployed in Lemera, case #5), which was composed in majority out of ex-CNDP troops: 'At present, there are carrots, unions, and potatoes, the FARDC is a true bouillabaisse'.¹⁶ The metaphor of the bouillabaisse strongly contrasts with the imagery of 'brothers' and 'one family' as found among the lower ranks. In the following, these contrasting evaluations are explained by looking at the two clusters of factors shaping horizontal cohesion: first, 'community of experience', relating to living, working and training together; and second, 'commonality of identification and beliefs', referring to the perceived salience of troops' homogeneity in terms of origins, identification and beliefs.

9 As explained on p. 120, the *Règlement militaire* is the military code of conduct employed in the FAZ era, which continues to be the main reference for guidelines on behavior, although it is gradually replaced by the new *code de conduite* (code of conduct) that was developed with the assistance of EUSEC.

10 Interview with low-ranking officer, Kiwanja, 01.04.2010.

11 Interview with ex-CNDP *sous-officier*, Nyongera, 01.04.2010.

12 The *brassage* process was described on pp. 79–80.

13 Interview with low-ranking officer, Katobo, 16.03.2010.

14 Interview with *sous-officier*, Beni, 15.04.2010.

15 As explained on p. 78, the FARDC has a lopsided structure with an unusually high percentage of officers compared to rank and file.

16 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Lemera, 19.03.2010.

9.2.1 Community of experience

Despite the general differences between higher- and mid-ranking officers and other ranks concerning experienced levels of solidarity, staff from both categories manifested stronger degrees of comradeship and unit identification when having served together for a long period of time in the same unit. This was particularly the case for staff from the IBs, but could also be observed among staff of certain non-integrated units that have existed for a relatively long time, like the 112th (part of case #8) and the 234th (part of case #4) in South Kivu, and the 104th and 85th in North Kivu.¹⁷ By contrast, the hastily assembled Amani Leo brigades, which lasted for only about two years, displayed low levels of cohesion, just as the regiments, at least within the first years of their formation. This would indicate that living and operating together indeed have an important impact on the development of bonds between soldiers.

Living together

Based on military staff's own narratives, it appears that differences in living and service conditions are an important explanation for divergent levels of horizontal cohesion. Many of the lower-ranked highlighted that living together, implying going together through all the hardships of service in the FARDC, was a crucial glue binding soldiers. The cohesion-fostering effects of living together can be understood by the fact that foot soldiers (and their wives) are to a large extent preoccupied with providing for basic needs, both for themselves and their families, including searching for and preparing food, fetching water and firewood, building and maintaining shelter, and washing clothes.¹⁸ In the face of poverty and primitive living circumstances, such basic tasks consume a considerable amount of time. Having few other people to help, except perhaps for civilian neighbors, soldiers and their spouses tend to collaborate intensively in carrying out everyday tasks. Common engagement in small-scale revenue-generation activities fosters further collaboration, such as helping each other with arranging transport, or finding clients, or sharing utensils. In one unit it was observed how soldiers not having a wife with them on deployment were eating meals prepared by the wives of others, in exchange for transporting the charcoal the latter produced to the market. This confirms the observations of Shils and Janowitz (1948: 291) that bonding between troops intensifies when troops depend on each other for the provision of basic needs and survival.

Spouses of FARDC soldiers also collaborate intensively, often dividing tasks like fetching water, selling goods or foodstuffs, and looking after each other's children. Furthermore, especially within military camps, they frequently share kitchen utensils, pans, and plastic basins (for washing themselves and clothes). Such forms of assistance between families are particularly intense where it concerns pregnant women, families with newborn babies and those stricken by illness or death. It was for example once witnessed how a soldier donated \$5 from his meager wages to his friend in the same platoon whose newborn son had fallen terribly ill and had to go to hospital. These examples of solidarity show that the presence of military families impacts patterns of interaction between soldiers, and therefore influences cohesion. This influence is both negative and positive. On the one hand, the presence of families causes soldiers to be strongly oriented towards their kin, including by being preoccupied with the latter's wellbeing and survival in turbulent times (cf. Shils and Janowitz, 1948: 290). This clearly lessens soldiers' orientation and commitment towards their peers, including the duty to protect them in the case of attacks. On the other hand, the relations between soldiers may be promoted by the collaborative atmosphere among military spouses, which is a result of the spirit of *débrouillardise* (fending for oneself) that they are animated by, and the strong bonds between these women. Yet, the solidarity between these women is sometimes undermined by vicious jealousy, and should also be seen as having more instrumental dimensions.

The hardships of everyday life in the FARDC and in the Kivus more generally give rise to both more affective and more instrumental forms of bonding. While lower-ranking staff expressed relatively strong feelings of solidarity, and often stated that their unit members were their '(best) friends' (*benzangu*) or comrades (*ndugu*), the bonds between them also displayed the features of what was earlier described as 'despair solidarity'¹⁹ (Bilakila, 2004: 23), or pragmatically and practically oriented forms of solidarity that revolve around mutual assistance in the struggle for survival. This confirms the observations of Moskos (1970: 145) on the importance of the instrumental dimensions of solidarity, which according to him is partly an outcome of self-interest in the need for survival. These instrumental dimensions are however profoundly intertwined with, and translate into, more affective ties, making these types of sociability difficult to separate.

Furthermore, it was observed that friendships based on sharing the hardships of daily life did not always increase the cohesion of units as a whole, given that they were sometimes primarily interpersonally oriented. Soldiers tend to spend a lot of time with those living in their proximity, chatting, borrowing items, playing cards, sharing cigarettes, and drinking alcohol together. However, especially when soldiers reside in civilian houses in urban quarters or villages, their neighbors are not always soldiers from their own squads. For instance in the Amani Leo brigades, where existing units were mixed with new troops, soldiers often preferred to live close to those with whom they had served in previous units. Similarly, where possible, newly integrated soldiers often stayed close to colleagues from the same area of

17 On the 112th brigade, see pp. 92–93. On the 234th, see pp. 297–299. The 104th (or *Réquins*, sharks) was formed as an elite unit in the FAC, as further discussed on p. 302. For the 85th brigade, see p.153.

18 Soldiers' living and service conditions were extensively discussed in Chapter 4, on pp. 101–103.

19 'Despair solidarity' was described in the part on the Zaire era, on p. 72.

origins or the same ex-rebel-group. This shows that while living together may increase forms of bonding, this is not always to the benefit of primary unit cohesion, as soldiers prefer to live in the vicinity of those they already know, regardless the latter's primary unit affiliation. However, depending on the type of unit, the deployment environment and the commander, troops cannot always choose next to whom they live. For example, units deployed to far-flung areas, in particular platoons and lower, usually stay in small groups in makeshift camps. Living only with their unit, they are not strongly oriented towards their deployment environment. This commonly contributes to fostering a type of solidarity within the unit as a whole, if not necessarily at the squad level. This contrasts to the living situation of staff who are attached to the *états-majors* of sectors, brigades/regiments and battalions, who often work in the *unités rattachées*.²⁰ *États-majors* are usually stationed in (semi-)urban environments, where the majority of staff tend to reside in the civilian quarters, and are often relatively free to choose where to live. This facilitates contact between soldiers with pre-existing ties, but who are not from the same (primary) unit.

That living patterns are important for shaping cohesion is evidenced by levels of cohesion among higher-ranking officers. The latter lead quite a different life than the rank and file, not being exposed to similar degrees of hardship. Furthermore, they do not share the difficulties of military life to a similar extent as the lower ranks, having a more individualistic lifestyle. For instance, for mundane tasks like cooking and washing, higher-ranking officers do not collaborate with fellow officers, but rely on their bodyguards. Moreover, they often live on their own or in small groups, sharing a house or an empty building. Like with soldiers, there are differences in the living situation of officers serving in the *états-majors* of bigger units (e.g., of zones, sectors, or brigades/regiments), which regroup considerable amounts of officers, and those serving in the command of battalions and companies deployed to far-flung zones. In the latter case, higher-ranking officers tend to strongly stick together, being a small group that shares the responsibility for the unit as a whole, and often having little choice where to live. Officers in larger *états-majors*, by contrast, who may have more possibilities to choose their accommodation, often prefer to live together with or close to their friends. Within one brigade, it was for example observed that two close friends, an S2 and a deputy S1, were living in the same building or house at three successive deployment locations. Yet, this interpersonal relationship did not seem to foster attachment to the unit as a whole. By contrast, these ex-FAZ officers were observed to extensively complain about their ex-rebel colleagues, who dominated the general staff.

Similar to troops, officers also collaborate with each other for realizing their private revenue-generation schemes, for example by borrowing and lending money, and helping each other with contacts to suppliers, customers, transporters, or other key persons within their networks. Such forms of collaboration may be either informed by the rationalities of protection, when officers in the same unit are also tied into the same big-man network, or be based on more horizontal forms of reciprocity. Yet, while business collaboration and assistance are both an expression of and foster bonding, they also have the capacity to fuel considerable strife. Quarrels about debts are a recurrent ground for frictions between officers, as well as situations where business deals or contacts did not yield the expected advantages or profits. In one case, it was observed how the failure of a plan to produce charcoal on the Ubwari peninsula and sell it in the city of Uvira caused tensions between two officers, who each blamed the other for the lack of profits. Aside from disagreements over business, conflicts between officers may also stem from protection relations, which generally fuel competition. For example, where officers are part of the same big-man network, they may vie for the favors of the same patron/commander. However, frictions can also occur when officers are tied into different big-man networks, causing them to receive differential treatment based on their position in and the strength of their respective networks. This shows that the effects that living together produces on unit cohesion are often mediated via other social ties (such as protection relations or other interpersonal ties), which is one of the reasons why these effects differ. Similar differences can be detected in respect of the effects of working together, as shaped by the nature of the tasks to be executed as well as the specific features of the involved unit, and the environment to which it is deployed.

Working together

Working together, whether manning roadblocks, foot patrolling, fighting, going on rotation, or collecting taxes, appears to foster both cohesion and frictions within primary unit groups and sub-groups. It was for instance observed how two soldiers deployed at a road block would play the game of 'guessing who is the next passerby', which seemed to promote strong bonding, making them joke about it even after duty. However, stories were also relayed about how roadblock taxation had been at the root of tensions, for example when soldiers accused each other of having embezzled a part of the money, or were in disagreement on whether they could drink hard liquor when on roadblock duty. While small frictions need not translate into permanent animosities, and soldiers first in disagreement may later be found drinking together as comrades, serious disputes do have the potential to lead to longer-lasting antipathies that undermine cohesion. This is especially the case when the stakes are high, like when it concerns the execution of combat-related or other duties in hazardous circumstances. At the same time, intense experiences such as combat also have significant potential to foster friendship, especially where soldiers had saved the lives of others, or were wounded at the same time, like the S2 and the brigade commander mentioned above. Furthermore, operations are often a source of collective pride for units, especially when entailing hardship or success. For example, at the end of 2010, a unit from the 641st brigade, at the time deployed in Misisi, was ordered to cross the impenetrable Ngandja forest to arrive at the coast of Lake Tanganyika for operations against the Mai Mai Yakotumba. The soldiers encountered on the shores of the lake

²⁰ There are several *unités rattachées* in the FARDC, which are regrouped in the *État-major services* (EMSV), which consists of a platoon of military police, and health services, logistics and transmission units, and the *Espie* (SP), which has units of artillery, reconnaissance and engineering.

described in detail the experience of cutting themselves a way through the forest and running out of supplies, stories that were still vividly recounted when the same soldiers were met with a year later in the Misisi area.²¹ Furthermore, from the narratives of soldiers of the 652nd brigade it could be gleaned that they were very proud of having carried out operations in the extremely cold Bijabo forest in the *Hauts Plateaux*, where they expected to be attacked any moment by the rebels of the FRE.²² Aside from by fostering collective pride through what they perceived to be their own brave performance, the operation in the Bijabo forest possibly also nourished comradeship as the participating soldiers appeared to profoundly dislike ‘the enemy’, in this case defined in ethnic terms (as Banyamulenge). Furthermore, they believed that the FRF were strongly supported by the population, giving them the feeling of being surrounded by a hostile mass. This made the soldiers of this unit feel isolated from their surroundings, and exposed to a common external threat, which intensified mutual bonding.

Similar mechanisms appear to explain the cohesion-fostering effects of the operations against the CNDP in 2007–2008. Many military staff highlighted these as the most intense fighting they had experienced in their career in the FARDC, and consequently as an element that had strongly marked their bonding to their colleagues. Two factors might explain this. First, the large scale and the intensity of the operations, which were related to the CNDP’s significant fighting capabilities and the massive number of deployed FARDC troops. Second, the intensity of the aversion against the CNDP, which was to a large extent related to its image as a Tutsi-dominated organization and a vehicle for Rwandan interests. Moreover, the CNDP was seen as a major threat to the territorial integrity of the Congo, the defense of which is at the core of soldiers’ sense of military professionalism. For these various reasons, it appears that the stakes of the fighting against the CNDP were perceived to be high, as informed by at once professional, national and ethnic identification, and the nature of the military threat.

Yet, in the FARDC, it is not guaranteed that fighting a common enemy will foster cohesion. Military operations can also be a source of frictions and animosities, especially if they end in failure and existing levels of trust between soldiers are already low. Where soldiers distrust each other, mistakes and a (perceived) lack of efforts immediately evoke the suspicion of being deliberate manipulations, generating feelings of backstabbing and betrayal. For example, one soldier related how his unit had lost the way during an offensive against a Mai Mai group due to the mistake of an intelligence officer who was a former Mai Mai (albeit from another armed group), eliciting the suspicion he was in connivance.²³ The flames of distrust are particularly strongly fanned where operations have lethal consequences, which is quite frequent in the FARDC. High casualty rates can largely be explained by the described weaknesses in command and control, the erratic systems of intelligence and communication, and inadequate training and preparation for combat.²⁴ The same deficiencies make that combat is often an immensely frustrating experience for soldiers, putting an enormous strain on them. It is not unusual that FARDC soldiers end up at the frontlines without adequate intelligence and detailed orders, while lacking sufficient food and ammunitions and having no possibilities to treat or evacuate the wounded (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013a: 9). This creates an explosive climate that may accentuate existing group divisions, or create new antagonisms. These problems are exacerbated by a lack of training, making troops ill-prepared to operate together on the battlefield, which requires high levels of trust and coordination (King, 2006). Furthermore, combat sharply exposes differences in levels of knowledge and capabilities, thus highlighting the lack of meritocracy in the FARDC. For these various reasons, combat may fosters divisions rather than cohesion.

It has to be mentioned that no systematic data were collected on whether the collective performance of human rights abuses in the course of or after operations had cohesion-enhancing effects. This was in part because it was difficult to find soldiers willing to speak in detail about concrete incidents. What did emerge from informal conversations was that committed abuses, which rarely implicate primary units a whole, could be an important source of tensions, for example by causing disagreement on the division of revenues and by provoking the disapproval of unit members excluded from the action. The latter generally feared that the unit as a whole would be held responsible and put in a bad light. Moreover, it was often believed that abuses were informed by narrower ethnic or other particularistic interests. It appeared that abuses also fostered divisions by putting the non-neutrality and selectivity of sanctions systems sharply into the limelight, exposing differences in the ways the hierarchy dealt with these cases.²⁵

From the previous, it follows that the effects of carrying out collective tasks on horizontal cohesion appear highly mixed, depending partly on prior cohesion and (the equality of) service conditions. This is evidenced by the trajectory of the Amani Leo brigades, most of which were deployed intermittently on operations for almost two years (2009–2011). When gathered in Fizi in February 2011 for the first wave of regiment building, officers from some of these units expressed a rather strong desire to be placed in a different unit and get new colleagues and superiors.²⁶ The narratives among the rank and file were more mixed, with differences between on the one hand ‘ex-government soldiers’, some of whom were quite eager to change their unit (preferably together with their closest peers), and on the other hand, those who had rapidly integrated in 2009, many of whom said not to mind staying with their current unit members, the majority

21 Interviews and informal conversations, Yungu, 22 and 23.11.2010, and Misisi, 20–22.12.2011.

22 Interviews and informal conversations, Minembwe, 01–08.12.2011.

23 Interviews and informal conversations, Mibunda, 14.12.2010.

24 Interviews with foreign military experts, Goma, 23.01.2012.

25 Evaluations of systems of rewards and punishment are further discussed below, on pp. 275–278.

26 Interviews and informal conversations with soldiers gathered for the first wave of regimentation, Fizi, 26–28.02.2011.

of whom were from the same ex-armed group. Taken together, these narratives indicate that levels of cohesion had remained low in the Amani Leo brigades, despite these units having carried out extensive operations together for nearly two years. This also provides further evidence for the observation that engagement in human rights violations does not necessarily foster group cohesion: the Amani Leo operations led to spike in military abuses against civilians, including collectively committed violence (Human Rights Watch, 2009b), but apparently, this did not translate into more cohesive units.

Training together

When analyzing the impact of training on cohesion in the FARDC, several dimensions must be taken into consideration, including the frequency and contents of training programs. Training in the FARDC has been minimal and rudimentary, and only those newly recruited after 2012 will go through a full cycle of instruction.²⁷ The bulk of the troops currently deployed in the Kivus only underwent two training periods within the FARDC: first, the relatively brief period of training and instruction during *brassage* (which was on average between three and six months); and second, the training and instruction provided in the regimentation centers in 2011, which in principle lasted only 45 days, although it was sometimes extended. Therefore, a fair amount of soldiers have received much more training in the FARDC's predecessor forces (FAC and FAZ) or in rebel groups than in the FARDC, leading to heterogeneous knowledge and practices. This heterogeneity is further reinforced by the fact that there are few standardized curricula and training and educational materials in the FARDC, although in recent years, this has somewhat improved. Many training and educational materials hail from foreign armed forces, and have therefore not been specifically designed for the situation of the FARDC. Moreover, these materials tend to be used in a flexible manner, depending on the preferences of the instructors, who sometimes primarily use the curricula they were schooled in themselves in yet other foreign armed forces. Thus *de facto* training and instruction are little standardized, as instructors employ their own methods and sometimes materials, which are shaped by the doctrines and command styles of the armed forces for which they were developed.²⁸

Given that the sources of foreign military assistance in past and present have been diverse, training and education bear a wide spectrum of influences. While the FAZ was trained by, amongst others, North Korea, China, Belgium, France, the USA and Israel, the FAC received training from countries like Tanzania, Angola and Zimbabwe. During the First and Second Congo Wars, various rebel forces were trained by Ugandan, Rwandan and Burundian state and non-state armed forces, while numerous Tutsi troops have been trained by the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) from the early 1990s onwards.²⁹ Non-specialized FARDC infantry have been trained by, amongst others, the Angolan, Belgian, South-African, Pakistani and Indian military (the latter two under UN auspices),³⁰ while the USA, China, Belgium, and South Africa have trained a limited number of rapid reaction or light infantry forces (ASADHO et.al., 2012; International Crisis Group, 2006a).³¹ Since neither foreign providers of military assistance nor the FARDC have attempted to harmonize training efforts (International Crisis Group, 2006a: 27), these trainings have been heterogeneous, following the models of their foreign sponsors. The organization and doctrines of the involved foreign armed forces differ in numerous respects, including in the level of the centralization of command. For example, the British system (followed by e.g., the Rwandan and Ugandan army) gives more autonomy to lower-level commanders than the Belgian and French systems, which is also reflected in training exercises. Furthermore, militaries tend to have their own style of command and movements, as is manifested for example in the way of marching and greeting.³² Given that one of the most important objectives of training is to inculcate automated responses to the same words of command, the heterogeneity of training approaches and the diversity of doctrines and command styles have undermined its potential to foster cohesion within the FARDC as a whole. This is all the more so since standard operating procedures in the FARDC are minimal, allowing each commander to get by in his own style.³³

However, the cohesion of units that have remained intact since their training, like the light infantry forces, has not been negatively affected by the heterogeneity of training approaches, although it has harmed their interoperability with other units. Furthermore, the differences in background and training in the FARDC are partly smoothed by military staff's high degree of flexibility and capability for *bricolage* (improvising), making them able to swiftly adopt, blend, switch between and adapt to different command styles, languages, vocabulary, and modes of organization. In this respect, interaction in the FARDC resembles the way in which people in the Congo communicate with

27 It was only well after the transition that a plan for reviving education in the FARDC was adopted, and that key educational institutions were reopened, often with donor support (Stearns et al., 2013: 82).

28 Conclusions reached by discussions with four instructors, of whom the details are withheld to avoid identification.

29 Many ex-RCD, ex-CNDP and ex-FRF officers started their military career in the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) (Stearns, 2012: 13–14), while Rwanda also provided training to Congolese recruits from different armed groups during the First and Second Congo Wars (Stearns, 2011: 149; International Crisis Group, 2000: 16). Additionally, the former Rwandan military (ex-FAR), which later became the FDLR, trained many Mai Mai groups throughout the Kivus (Vlassenroot, 2002b: 144–145). The Ugandan military, for its part, trained the MLC (Belaid, 2007: 51–52, 60) and several Ituri armed groups (International Crisis Group, 2000: 33), while Burundian insurgent forces gave instruction to Mai Mai groups in South Kivu (Vlassenroot, 2002b: 144–145).

30 Between 2007 and 2008, MONUC provided basic training for around 11 battalions (UN Secretary-General, 2008: 9) This program had foreseen the training of in total 20 battalions, but was suspended after the start of the Kimia II operations (UN Secretary-General, 2009: 17).

31 Thomas Hubert and Davis Lewis, 'Factbox- International efforts at military reform in Congo', *Reuters*, 23 December 2009.

32 Interviews with FARDC officers, Bukavu, 14.01.2011 and 24.10.2011.

33 Interviews with FARDC officers, Rumangabo, 02.02.2012 and Uvira, 28.02.2012.

each other in general, learning and blending several languages, while flexibly applying grammatical rules and vocabularies. Furthermore, much of the day-to-day functioning of the armed forces is more shaped by a combination of informal norms, routines and available resources and infrastructure than by doctrines and other formal rules. For example, no matter what the rules are concerning the level of autonomy of lower-level commanders, when the latter are deployed to a far-flung area without phone network coverage and satellite phone, they are bound to operate in a relatively independent manner.³⁴

Another dimension that is important to analyze when assessing the extent to which training in the FARDC has contributed to fostering cohesion is the composition of units during the training period. As indicated by the field research findings, units are not always deployed in exactly the same composition as they have received training. This is a result of both organizational flux and the fact that some training, like in the CBRs during *brassage*, was organized before unit commanders had been appointed. Yet, even when the composition of the command is determined before the start of the training, the latter might not always foster cohesion. In some of the regiments, pre-training appointments starkly exposed the lack of competence and knowledge of some of the appointed officers, highlighting that big-man rationalities had predominated over other criteria in the nominations.³⁵ The resulting frustrations undermined the contribution of the training to promoting mutual bonding. One unit where these dynamics were strongly at play was the 712th regiment (case #13, when deployed in Mutambala in Fizi), formed at the start of 2011 from troops of the former 29th IB (part of cases #6 and #7) mixed with those from the 652nd brigade Amani Leo (part of case #12). As further explained below, in the course of 2011, tensions between staff from these two ex-units reached a climax, causing several soldiers from the ex-29th to desert.³⁶ These problems are a clear sign that the brief training in the regimentation center that this unit had received had done little to promote bonding among its staff.

It can be concluded that training plays only a limited role in fostering cohesion in primary units within the FARDC. However, in the IBs and the battalions trained by foreign military staff, at least those that had remained intact in the course of the various restructuring processes, staff did display an elevated awareness of a separate unit identity and expressed pride in that identity in terms of the supposed superiority of their training. For example, members from the former 24th IB explained that the training they had received from Angolan instructors allowed their brigade to perform much better than other IBs. According to these soldiers, the specific identity of their unit was reflected in its slogan *discipline, patrie, victoire* (discipline, fatherland, victory), which they cited as a source of inspiration.³⁷ This example indicates that training also has the potential to foster secondary cohesion (identification with and commitment to a larger unit), provided that the unit stays intact afterwards. However, it remains unclear in how far the detected secondary cohesion in these brigades was the result of foreign training or of living and working together for an extended period of time. This doubt is evoked by the fact that similar forms of relatively strong (secondary) unit identification, as expressed in slogans and the visible display of (self-fabricated) insignia,³⁸ were detected in IBs that had not received foreign military training or that did not link their unit identity explicitly to such training, like the 20th IB (part of case #1) and the 29th IB (parts of cases #6 and #7). As one soldier from the 20th explained: 'The soldiers in this brigade are all my friends. Since 2005 we have been together! We know each other-we went to *brassage* in Luberizi then we were sent to Ituri and then to Rutshuru. All the time on foot. And we have been fighting together against the CNDP. We are a unity, and we are strong (...) Our brigade is the best.'³⁹ Furthermore, there appeared to be little differences between soldiers from foreign and non-foreign trained IBs in respect of the resentment they expressed about their brigades having been broken up at the start of the Amani Leo operations. In all cases, troops continued to wear the *brassard* (colored shoulder band) of their former brigade, hoping that after the Amani Leo operations, they would be reunified with their former unit. Although in this case relating to secondary units, this would seem to provide further evidence that living and working together over a long period of time indeed promotes bonding.

9.2.2 Commonality of identification and beliefs

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, commonality of identification and beliefs relates to the extent to which divergent forms of identification, background, worldviews, and values are seen to be of relevance in shaping informal and professional interaction. In relation to divergent civilian forms of belonging, the most relevant factors are forms of ethnic identification and linguistic, geographical, and educational background. In respect of military identities, salient factors are military-educational background and what soldiers themselves call 'ideological' differences, which are seen to strongly impact military professionalism.

34 The difficulties of communication in isolated areas were explained on pp. 242–243.

35 Interviews with FARDC staff e.g., Lusuku, 09.12.2011, Kikonde, 14.12.2011 and Mama Tantine, 29.12.2011. It has not been established in how many regiments appointments were made before the start of the training and whether this was also the case in North Kivu.

36 Conclusions based on interviews with officers and *sous-officiers* of the ex-29th IB in Kikonde between 14–15.12.2011 and in Baraka between 04–06.01.2012. The tensions in the 712th regiment are further discussed on pp. 304–305.

37 Interview with officers from former 24th IB, Lufofo, 05.05.2010.

38 Units within the FARDC have no visible markers of distinction. While the IBs used to wear a simple colored shoulder band (*brassard*) to distinguish themselves from other brigades, the Amani Leo brigades did not engage in this practice. The regiments have not developed unit markers either.

39 Interview with soldier from ex-20th IB, Butembo, 27.04.2010.

Ethnic belonging

In official military discourses, ethnic identification plays no role whatsoever within the FARDC. In the course of the interviews, some staff even stated that ethnicity simply does not exist in the armed forces. Reflecting formal professional ethics, soldiers would emphasize that they are first and foremost Congolese citizens who fight for their fatherland and who do not identify themselves ethnically. As one soldier put it: 'There is no discrimination in the armed forces, we wear the same uniform, we are one family [*tunavala uniforme moya, tuko jamaa moya*].'⁴⁰ Similarly, another said: 'The army does not know tribes, it is unity. Soldiers are one [*Armée nationale hakukuwana tribus, ni moya tu. Soldat iko moya tu*].'⁴¹ Furthermore, FARDC staff were unanimous that those who fight only for the protection of their own constituency or particularistic interests should not serve in the national armed forces. However, in less formal settings, substantial shifts in discourse took place, and soldiers would articulate strong ethnically colored language, highlighting that the FARDC is rife with tribalism. For example, an ex-FAZ officer declared: 'I would no longer call this an army. Everything is negotiable. Openly, there is no tribalism, but *sous coulisses* [behind the scenes], it is very strong'.⁴² A sergeant commenting on the regimentation process said: 'There is discrimination [*ubagusi*] in the army. All these people from North Kivu, they only put their brothers in the units. People from their tribes, not those from *Équateur* or other regions. There is tribalism.'⁴³

It has already been mentioned that this perceived discrimination largely follows the divide between on the one hand 'autochthones' and on the other hand 'Rwandophones'.⁴⁴ These are however ill-delineated categories, the boundaries of which are constantly shifting, since they are contextually drawn according to varying (combinations) of racial, geographical, linguistic and other criteria of belonging (Jackson, 2006b). For instance, Lingalaphones and others from the western Congo would sometimes put themselves in the same category as the autochthones from the east, notably when defining themselves in opposition to Rwandophones. However, in other cases they would complain that 'all people from the east are difficult', and dismiss them as the root of all trouble, clearly dissociating themselves from this group. Furthermore, the Rwandophones/Rwandans category was observed to cover at one moment only the 'Nilotic' Tutsi, but to also include the 'Bantu' Hutu in the next. As pointed out by Jackson (2003: 65) the three principal dichotomous ethno-nationalist framings in the Kivus, that of autochthon vs. Rwandophone, Bantu vs. Nilotic, and Congolese vs. Rwandan, overlap and blur. The resulting ambiguity of categorization is a political resource, since it allows for the employment of the most effective identity-based cleavage per context. This is also evident in the FARDC. For example, the ex-PARECO Hutu were at times lumped together with the ex-CNDP as 'Rwandophones', like in the 6th Zone Ops Amani Leo in Uvira between 2009–2011, but in other contexts clearly distinguished from them along a Hutu/Tutsi fault line.

The reasons for the pronounced autochthon/Rwandophone divide in the FARDC are multiple, and lie to a large extent in power competition combined with human resources management. Given that FARDC soldiers in the Kivus are in majority recruited from the provinces themselves, and are strongly embedded in local social networks, it is little surprising that the discourses of belonging circulating in the FARDC reflect those of Kivutian society at large. This implies that stereotyped representations and ethnically colored narratives and tropes, including the 'balkanization plot' and the 'Rwandan military infiltration hypothesis',⁴⁵ also find traction within the military. Moreover, similar to what occurs among civilians, prejudices and conspiracy theories are often 'corroborated' by appeals to past events such as massacres. However, in the FARDC, they also become connected to alleged deficiencies in military professionalism. For example, self-styled autochthones usually contrast their own 'patriotism', seen as a core military value, to Rwandophones' dubious loyalties to the Congolese government and nation. Doubtful commitment to the fatherland is portrayed not only as the product of Rwandophones' primary concern for their own community, but also of their status as pawns or fifth-columnists of Rwanda. This suspect loyalty, which is supposedly evidenced by Tutsi soldiers' refusal to be deployed outside of the Kivus, is further fed by stereotypical portrayals of Tutsi as treacherous, secretive, and closed (Jackson, 2003: 63–64). For example, some informants told that Tutsi soldiers 'always efface their traces' (and therefore kill in the wake of committing crimes), 'never show you what's in their heart', 'do things behind your back', and 'never tell you the truth'. Other prejudices that were articulated among FARDC staff portrayed Tutsi as cunning, fearless, vengeful, arrogant, and cold, a people that is never willing to forgive and forget. Moreover, Tutsi were ascribed an inherent 'will to dominate'. A *sous-lieutenant* said for instance: 'The Banyamulenge officers always want to dominate the Bantu. They impose themselves, they always want to be the chief. This is why there are conflicts here in the east.'⁴⁶ Furthermore, Rwandophones/Tutsi are strongly believed to have their own 'ideology' and 'mentality',⁴⁷ which deviate from those of autochthon soldiers, making them unsuitable to serve in the national armed forces. This 'mentality' is commonly seen as being related to their status as pastoralists. In the autochthony discourse, pastoralism is strongly associated with 'foreignness', and is represented as standing in opposition to agriculture, coded as more 'indigenous' (Jackson,

40 Interview with low-ranking officer, Pene Mende, 27.12.2011.

41 Interview with *sous-officier*, Muranvya, 13.11.2011.

42 Interview with low-ranking officer, Minembwe, 18.12.2010.

43 Interview with *sous-officier*, Luberizi, 07.11.2011.

44 The salience of autochthon/Rwandophone framings within the FARDC was earlier discussed on p. 80, p. 84 and pp. 235–236.

45 The 'Rwandan infiltration hypothesis' was explained on p. 114.

46 Interview with *sous-officier*, Luberizi, 08.11.2011.

47 The terms 'ideology' and 'mentality' are used in an emic sense herein, hence reflecting soldiers' own narratives.

2003: 62).⁴⁸ An ex-FAZ officer expressed this ‘mentality’ as follows: ‘I herd my cows with my rocket launcher.’⁴⁹ Others emphasized that Rwandophones/Tutsi do not have the ‘right spirit’ for being soldiers in the national armed forces: ‘Military are equipped with certain notions of routine and discipline, but the soldiers from CNDP and PARECO do not have this routine. They are *bachungaji* [cow herders], not military. Go work the land! Go herd your cows.’⁵⁰

As in the Kivus at large, differences framed in ethnic terms overlap and are interlaced with complex socio-economic and political cleavages, causing frictions framed as ethnic to be often primarily driven by power competition. This was strongly visible in the dynamics unleashed by the 2009 accelerated integration process and the 2011 regimentation exercise. Both these reforms made ex-government and ex-‘autochthon’ armed group staff feel strongly discriminated against in the distribution of positions, deployment locations and overall treatment.⁵¹ For example, an ex-Mai Mai officer serving as *chef EM* (head of the *état-major*) of a sector dominated by Rwandophone officers explained: ‘I am just sitting out my time here. Now they [Tutsi] are in charge. You see, they took over power here. Each day, they call with their friends in Rwanda on their *thuraya* [satellite phone]. But things can’t go on like this. It is going to explode. One day the autochthones will revolt. There is a big fire that will burn (...) Then we will get back power over the military.’⁵² Similarly, an intelligence officer said: ‘The president has his private militia, it is the CNDP. For us, it is frustration. I have had the education of the special investigative forces, and I am responsible for the intelligence of the whole brigade, but I have no means. I have no transport, no means of communication, no *motorola* [two-way radio]. I do not even have phone credits! But then you see a battalion commander and he has everything, *motorola*, even a *thuraya*. The Tutsi, they are favored.’⁵³ This clearly reflects how ethnic-based antagonisms are to a large extent fed by perceived unequal treatment and power differentials.

Military staff with a Tutsi background, for their part, strongly distrust their ‘autochthon’ colleagues and fear for their safety, especially should they be deployed outside of the Kivus. This fear is nourished by representations of ‘autochthones’ as bloodthirsty, unreliable, crude, and selfish. A former FARDC officer of Tutsi origins (now in an armed group) stated: ‘We are never safe in the military. Today they [FARDC soldiers] are your colleagues, but when something happens tomorrow, we are the first to get killed. We have seen this in 1998 in Kamina, in Kalemie, in Uvira, everywhere (...) and it can always happen again.’⁵⁴ A colleague still serving in the FARDC explained how his dietary restrictions as a Munyamulenge brought him into trouble: ‘I refuse to eat in the collective kitchen, since they prepare dishes there that we [Banyamulenge] cannot eat. They even eat escargots and frogs in the bush. But then they thought that I refused to eat with the others since I am too proud. So they wanted to teach me a lesson. And they came up to me and said: “One day we will force you to eat escargots and to make love to pygmies”. That will teach you a lesson.’⁵⁵ While many Tutsi military staff would highlight the dangers of being deployed outside of the Kivus in the light of rampant discrimination and anti-Tutsi animosities, others believed these dangers were exaggerated, pointing to the example of several high-profile Tutsi officers who serve in the western Congo without problems.⁵⁶ According to them, Tutsi soldiers’ fear to be deployed elsewhere is manipulated by their commanders, since it serves the latter’s own interests to keep them close to their political and economic strongholds. Indeed, from the narratives of some Tutsi *sous-officiers* and soldiers, it could be gleaned that their resistance to being deployed outside of the Kivus was less pronounced than among superior officers. For example, an ex-CNDP *sous-lieutenant* explained he would actually prefer to be deployed elsewhere: ‘It is not good to work in your home area, but at the moment we work under military orders, so we are forced to work here without really wanting to do so (...) It is preferable to go elsewhere. In order to have more knowledge, more experiences and a change of mentality, you have to go elsewhere.’⁵⁷

While ethnically colored forms of identification are of importance in the FARDC, in particular those linked to the autochthon/Rwandophone cleavage, the ways in which they shape social relations differ per unit and over time, depending on units’ composition, trajectory, social dynamics and the relative strength of the big-man networks connected to particular forms of identification. For example, in some units that have existed for a relatively long time, with only a few Rwandophone soldiers, it was observed that the Rwandophone/autochthon cleavage hardly mattered. This was for instance the case with the 433rd (ex-234th) brigade or the ex-20th IB (part of case #4 and case #1). Importantly, the Rwandophone soldiers encountered in these units did not appear to strongly depend on big-man networks in which

48 Jackson (2003: 62) posits that agriculturalism, through the signifier of ‘working the soil’, is strongly associated with autochthony, the core idea of which is being a ‘son of the soil’.

49 Interview with high-ranking officer, Kirumba, 01.05.2010.

50 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Lemera, 18.03.2010.

51 Ethnic framings of the power struggles unleashed by the 2009 rapid integration and 2011 regimentation processes were already described on pp. 235–236.

52 Interview with high-ranking officer, Fizi, 19.02.2011.

53 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Uvira territory, March 2010.

54 Interview with former FARDC officer, then part of the armed group of Col. Tawimbi, Bijombo, 11.01.2012. He refers to the massacres of Tutsi soldiers committed at the outbreak of the RCD war, as described on p. 75. For a brief explanation of the Tawimbi group, see pp. 279–280.

55 Interview with high-ranking officer, Goma, 30.03.2010.

56 Examples of Tutsi commanders serving in the western Congo that were commonly presented during the fieldwork include General Obed Rwibasira (up to end 2014, commander of the 5th Military Region, *Kasai-Occidental*, then chef EM *adminlog* of the land forces), General Mustapha Mukiza (up to end 2014, commander of the military base of Kitona in *Bas-Congo*, then chef EM of the 2nd Defense Zone) and General Malik Kijenge (deputy inspector-general of the FARDC, previously G4, hence charged with logistics, at the *état-major* in Kinshasa).

57 Interview with ex-CNDP *sous-officier*, Nyongera, 01.04.2010.

being Rwandophone was a common denominator; many were ex-FAC who had fought against the RCD during the Second Congo War, and had always stayed in the government camp. However, ethnic identification was found to be highly salient both in longer-existing units where it was connected to intense power struggles, and in most of the newly assembled Amani Leo brigades or regiments where Rwandophones constituted a majority and/or dominated the leadership. An extreme case is the company of the 713th regiment deployed to Kamanyola. In the course of December 2011, tensions between autochthon and Rwandophone troops became so strong in this unit that Rwandophone soldiers established a separate camp on a hilltop.⁵⁸ However, this move was triggered by disagreement on the division of unit revenues, highlighting once more how ethnically framed antagonisms feed into and are crucially fed by socio-economic conflicts and other power struggles.

Other salient pre-existing forms of civilian identification

Intersecting and overlapping with ethnically defined cleavages are multiple other identity-related divides, including differences in mother tongue, geographical origins, and general educational background. These other forms of identification structure patterns of social interaction within units, although similar to forms of ethnic belonging, their effects on cohesion differ per unit. Concerning language, it was observed that there is a rather salient Lingalaphone/Swahiliphone distinction in the FARDC, which partly overlaps with a broader east/west divide, in terms of region of origins.⁵⁹ Lingala has been the official language of the armed forces from the colonial era onwards, but its dominance diminished after the power takeover by the AFDL in 1997, when Swahiliphones from the east came to constitute an important share of the troops and officer corps. In the FARDC, both Lingala and Swahili have an official status (next to French as the administrative language, like in the Congo in general), although not everyone masters both languages equally well, and most formal communication continues to take place in Lingala. Many ex-FAZ or newer recruits from the west speak only a very basic Swahili, and some refuse to give orders in that language, as they are of the opinion that the primary language of command continues to be Lingala. By contrast, many easterners, especially the newer recruits from rebel groups, do not speak Lingala very well, and mainly stick to Swahili, although they do tend to learn Lingala rather fast once in the FARDC. However, even when mastering Lingala as a professional language, it was observed that in their informal social interaction, they continue to have a strong preference for Swahili. This also applies to Lingalaphones, seen to often hang out with other Lingalaphones in off-duty time. These social orientations somewhat undermine primary unit cohesion. This is especially the case where the networks in which different language groups are embedded overlap with networks involved in power competition, as could be observed in the course of the regimentation process in 2011. This process made Lingalaphone 'ex-government' components feel marginalized, and in some of the new units even stigmatized by 'easterners'. As one lieutenant complained: 'The soldiers [from the west] have now such a bad reputation that they [soldiers from the east] say "*Lingala ni lugha ya bavoyoux*" [Lingala is the language of thieves]. They have turned against the *basemalingala* [those who speak Lingala]'.⁶⁰

However, in most cases, the relations between speakers of Lingala and Swahili were not antagonistic, but were characterized by at most a relatively mild social distance. Such distance appeared to be much stronger between on the one hand, Swahiliphones and Lingalaphones, and on the other hand, speakers of Kinyarwanda, especially since the category of 'Rwandophones' has strong ethnic connotations and overlaps with powerful networks in the FARDC. Although Kinyarwanda (and varieties)⁶¹ is not an official language in the FARDC, it was observed to be widely used in communications between Rwandophone staff during the time of the Amani Leo operations, not only for informal conversations but also for reporting and discussions of professional relevance. Expectedly, this was especially the case in brigades where Rwandophones made up the majority. Since the majority of non-Rwandophones in the FARDC do not understand Kinyarwanda, this practice created strong frustrations and divisions. For example, some soldiers stated that when their unit members only spoke Kinyarwanda, they felt that they were being talked about behind their backs. Consequently, they spent most of their time with soldiers speaking other languages than Kinyarwanda.⁶² Similar social divisions along linguistic lines were manifested in the interaction among military spouses. In several brigades, like those of the 65th sector, it was observed that Rwandophone spouses formed an almost separate group and interacted little with spouses from other backgrounds. Given that patterns of interaction between spouses affect the relations between soldiers, this reduced the amount of informal interaction between troops of different language groups.

Linguistic cleavages do not only overlap with forms of ethnic identification, but also with differences in educational background and generational divides. Most of the Lingalaphones are older ex-FAZ recruits from the western provinces, who have enjoyed relatively high levels of both military and general education.⁶³ This shapes their worldview and preferences, and causes them to have difficulties to interact with less educated and often younger Swahiliphone and Rwandophone colleagues from the east, specifically those 'coming

58 Interviews with employees civil society organizations, Uvira, 08.01.2012.

59 Note that Lingala is not the only language spoken in the western Congo, also home to speakers of Kikongo and Chiluba, two of the Congo's four official languages (excluding the administrative language French). Additionally, like in the eastern Congo, dozens of other native tongues can be found in the west.

60 Interview with low-ranking officer, Luberizi, 07.11.2011.

61 The Banyamulenge call their language Kinyamulenge, and see it as a variety of Kinyarwanda.

62 Interview with soldier, Minembwe, 25.12.2010.

63 The FAZ had a relatively well-developed system of military schools and academies, and the possibilities for officers to follow military education abroad were substantial.

from the bush', that is, those previously serving in a rebel group. Being often among the highest educated staff, ex-FAZ are commonly seen as 'the great intellectuals' of the FARDC, both within the military and by their civilian environment. Many of these officers have a perfect knowledge of French, which some also like to speak in their free time, have polished manners, and have often travelled abroad. This shared history and outlook, in addition to their feeling of being collectively marginalized in the FARDC, make ex-FAZ feel to a certain extent connected, much more so than in the Mobutu era when internal divisions led to permanent infighting. A similar outlook can be detected among some ex-FAC,⁶⁴ especially those who served in the FAC's elite units and are well educated. Higher educated from both ex-FAZ and ex-FAC generally stick together when off-duty, often listening collectively to the radio and discussing national political developments and world news. This preference for spending time with officers with the same outlook and level of education certainly impacts cohesion, specifically as complaining about lower educated colleagues was observed to be an important pastime for this group. But in many cases, a lack of education was not the sole ground for their derision: most of the lower-educated are former rebel soldiers, and in the eyes of ex-government staff, 'coming from the bush' also bears other connotations of inferiority.

Differences in 'ideology' and military professional identities

Both ex-FAC and ex-FAZ see important differences in what they call the 'ideology' and 'mentality' of on the one hand, soldiers who have always stayed in the loyalist camp, and on the other the hand, those coming from the rebellion.⁶⁵ From their own perspective, 'ex-government' soldiers are master patriots who have never failed to loyally serve the country, resisting the opportunism that drove others into the arms of insurgencies. Ex-rebels, by contrast, are driven by narrower community or self-interests, being greedy opportunists who lack higher ideals and values. As an ex-FAZ officer explained: 'The soldiers who came from armed groups are soldiers who followed individuals. They have been brought along by individuals. They did not enroll for defending their country, out of love for their country: they are not soldiers of the government (...) Their motivation is different: it's herding the cows of their parents, or their lands, or their concessions. (...) We all wear the same uniform, but in our behavior there are many differences. And these people are motivated by rancor, by vengeance, by land conflicts, by tribalism'.⁶⁶ Another often-heard complaint within the ex-government camp was that the integration of rebel groups has caused the military to become heavily politicized, turning it into a tool for power politics and self-enrichment: 'Nowadays, there is no longer a military, it has become a collection of political parties. There are no longer soldiers in the military, there are only politicians'.⁶⁷ Or: 'They have left the military in the hands of those who do not have the vocation to be an officer, but who are first and foremost businesspersons'.⁶⁸ This feeling of a loss of morality is also expressed in the idea that the present-day military lacks a strong ideology, a feeling that is especially strong among *ex-kadogo* (the young soldiers recruited for the AFDL) or other ex-FAC, many of whom were exposed to extensive civic education and revolutionary teachings.⁶⁹ One officer expressed this feeling as follows: 'There is no clear ideology for the moment, there is only a vague idea of an army'.⁷⁰ According to some, an important indication of this lack of ideology and morality is that in the present-day military, soldiers no longer sing patriotic songs. A lieutenant testifies: 'We used to sing like this [stands up and chants loudly]: *Makila nabiso. Mpona ekolo. Pona peuple. Oyo ekoya eya! Oyo ekoya eya! Oyo ekoya eya, eya eyaaa!!!* So we were singing that our blood is for the country of Zaire and the Zairian people, and that comes whatever may come. But nowadays they only sing dirty songs. This leads to bad behavior.'⁷¹

However, those 'coming from the bush', in particular the ex-CNDP and ex-PARECO, highlight their ideological similarities to the government forces, stating that they see little differences between their former rebel group and the FARDC in terms of beliefs and behavior. According to them, the rebellion did not only have similar objectives as the government forces, like advancing peace and defending the population, but also similar rules regarding conduct, including the treatment of civilians. Many ex-rebels would emphasize that even in the rebellion, they fought first and foremost for the fatherland, which proves that they too are patriots. Only some ex-Mai Mai officers stated to see clear ideological differences between their former group and the FARDC, considering the Mai Mai to be more an emanation from civilian society than a purely military force. In their perception, the Mai Mai had as core values the defense of the community they hailed from, their land and the rights of 'autochthones', therefore being closely supported by and in contact with civilians. The FARDC is inferior in terms of ideology, since self-enrichment, plunder and political manipulation are the norm, but also since the military is 'infected' by Rwandophones/Tutsi. Like other factions, ex-Mai Mai staff would equally claim to be the most patriotic of all, dismissing former government soldiers as corrupt to the bone, and the Rwandophones as fifth columnists for Kigali. This shows how FARDC soldiers of all

64 Some elite units of the FAC drew many university students and graduates, like those formed in Mura (e.g., what would become the 234th and then the 433rd brigade Amani Leo deployed in Uvira, case #4) and in Kitona (e.g., the *Réquins* or sharks, see p. 302).

65 Since the military of the AFDL became the government forces after the insurgency took over power in Kinshasa, former FAC troops who started in the AFDL also perceive themselves as having always stayed in the loyalist camp.

66 Interview with high-ranking ex-FAZ officer, Goma, 30.03.2010.

67 Interview with mid-ranking ex-FAZ officer, Bukavu, 21.01.2010.

68 Interview with ex-FAZ *sous-officier*, Baraka, 16.02.2010.

69 However, what ex-FAC call 'ideology' is ill defined, and their discourses do not bear much reference to the revolutionary teachings they have been exposed to. See also footnote 34 on p. 74.

70 Interview with ex-FAC *sous-officier*, Fizi centre, 17.02.2010.

71 Interview with low-ranking officer, Nyongera, 07.05.2010.

stripes compete in terms of their dedication to ‘defending the fatherland’, corroborating the centrality of patriotism in Congolese soldiers’ forms of professional identification.⁷² Ironically, patriotism therefore appears to be at once a ‘latent ideology’ that influences soldiers’ motivations to serve and a factor of divisiveness, since serving as a prism for looking at fault lines. Groups of different backgrounds deny each other the status of ‘patriots’ or claim superiority in this domain, both expressing and nourishing frictions.

Similar to the other elements that shape commonality of identification and beliefs, the salience of forms of belonging related to military background strongly diverges, depending on a variety of factors. The case of ex-Mai Mai identification is illustrative in this respect. Although the awareness of ‘being Mai Mai’ was highlighted by the majority of ex-Mai Mai military staff encountered, it seemed much more pronounced among those who had not obtained positions of importance within the FARDC. This was evidenced by interviews with ex-Mai Mai officers in the *Grand Nord*, who were convinced that their Mai Mai affiliation was the main ground for being systematically discriminated against in the military. As an ex-Mai Mai Vurundo commander stated: ‘We have not had any functions of importance so we are ready to return to the bush. Because we are Mai Mai, it is very difficult for us to obtain a post. We are dissatisfied. If our leader tells us to do so, we are ready to return to the bush. Even myself (...) The rights of the Mai Mai are not respected. We have made a lot of efforts, but we are not recognized.’⁷³ This quote illustrates how ex-Mai Mai officers appealed to their Mai Mai identity for staking out claims and articulating dissatisfaction about their position in the military, and the (post)transitional order more widely.

Given the politicization of ex-Mai Mai identity, it may not come as a surprise that officers underscored their background as Mai Mai much more strongly than the rank and file. Most ex-Mai Mai soldiers professed to see almost no differences with the other soldiers in the FARDC, highlighting the similarities between fighting in a Mai Mai group and serving in the national armed forces. Moreover, they emphasized that they worked and were treated like everyone else. Only a few complained about discrimination. For instance, one ex-Mai Mai soldier told that his colleagues called him at times ‘an armed civilian’, while another stated that the soldiers in his unit made jokes about the Mai Mai’s spiritual practices.⁷⁴ Similar differences in identification between on the one hand ex-Mai Mai rank and file, and on the other hand, ex-Mai Mai officers, emerged from the narratives of ex-government FARDC officers. The latter told that there were generally few problems with the integration of ex-Mai Mai soldiers, as they adapted fast to life in the FARDC, and behaved just like the other soldiers.⁷⁵ Only some complained that these troops were ‘psychologically more like civilians’⁷⁶ in their behavior. Mai-Mai officers, by contrast, were often depicted as deviant due to their low levels of education and reliance on *gris-gris* (amulets),⁷⁷ and were accused of claiming privileges like remaining close to their fiefs, which would prove they were unfit for serving in the national armed forces.

Aside from by their current position in the army, differences in the salience of ex-Mai Mai identity appeared to be influenced by the proximity of staff to their former zone of operations. Those who had remained close to their fiefs, usually also their zone of origins, seemed to highlight their status as ex-Mai Mai more strongly than for example soldiers from the south of South Kivu deployed deep into North Kivu. Undoubtedly, this is a consequence of local troops’ continuing contacts with their communities of origin, and sometimes their ex-rebel colleagues. One ex-Mai Mai officer explained that he continued to maintain relations with other Mai Mai from his group who had remained in or returned to the bush: ‘Here in town they [the integrated Mai Mai] are FARDC, but in the bush they are still Mai Mai. They have discovered that they have more influence when they are in the FARDC. They wear the uniform of the FARDC but they work on behalf of the Mai Mai.’⁷⁸ This statement reflects how for some groups in the FARDC, (ex-)Mai Mai identity is of more importance than the identity of ‘government soldier’. However, other ex-Mai Mai have pushed their Mai Mai past strongly into the background. For example, an ex-Mai Mai battalion commander from Walikale (North Kivu) encountered in Fizi, hence quite far from his zone of origins, did not readily emphasize his Mai Mai background. Rather, he identified himself as first and foremost an FARDC officer. It was only when speaking of his military trajectory that it became clear that he had previously served in the Mai Mai.⁷⁹

This analysis of ex-Mai Mai identity in the FARDC reveals the mutual influences between the salience of pre-existing (in particular ex-armed group) identification, the relative importance of positions both in the FARDC (hierarchy) and in big-man networks, and staff’s deployment location and its impact on ties to civilian and armed group networks. It also confirms that primary unit cohesion tends to be stronger among lower-ranking FARDC staff than among officers, as emerged from the difference in narratives between on the one hand, ex-Mai Mai soldiers, who emphasized smooth integration, and on the other hand, ex-Mai Mai officers, who highlighted discrimination and marginalization. This further corroborates that living together in bad service conditions is an important mechanism of fostering

72 For a discussion of FARDC soldiers’ professional identification, see pp. 117–118.

73 Interview with high-ranking ex-Mai Mai officer, Butembo, 27.04.2010.

74 Interview with ex-Mai Mai *sous-officier*, Misisi, 24.02.2010.

75 Limited problems with Mai Mai integration were for example reported in the ex-20th IB in the *Grand Nord* (case #1), into which a large number of ex-Mai Mai were integrated in 2009. Interview with officers from the 20th IB, Butembo, 27.04.2010. Similar observations were made by ex-government officers from the 642nd brigade (case # 9), which was partly constituted out of ex-Mai Mai Assani Ngungu. Interviews conducted in Kasanga, 05.03.2011.

76 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Katobo, 16.03.2010.

77 Although the practice of using *gris-gris* was ridiculed in relation to ex-Mai Mai, officers from other backgrounds were also alleged to (covertly) employ such forms of spiritual protection.

78 Interview with demobilized ex-Mai Mai officer, Butembo, 26.04.2010.

79 Interviews with ex-Mai Mai battalion commander, Mukera, 15 and 16.02.2011.

cohesion among FARDC soldiers, while the divisionary impacts of big-man politics are felt stronger among officers. However, although sub-standard service and living conditions may promote bonding between soldiers, they strongly weaken the ties to their commanders, perceived as living off their subordinates' backs.

9.3 Primary and secondary vertical cohesion

Vertical cohesion is seen herein as encompassing the bond between subordinates and their immediate commanders (primary vertical cohesion), between these two categories and secondary unit commanders (organizational cohesion), and between military staff and the military organization as a whole (institutional cohesion) (see Figure 16). Vertical cohesion in both primary and secondary groups is importantly shaped by evaluations of the legitimacy of commanders' appointment and the extent to which commanders are seen to meet the expectations surrounding the social role of 'FARDC commander'. These evaluations center on the following dimensions (see also Table 17): assessments of commanders' competence; the neutrality of their systems of rewards and punishment; a demonstrated commitment to group goals; and lastly, care for the wellbeing of subordinates, which is importantly influenced by the level of asymmetry of wealth distribution between commanders and troops. Whether commanders are seen to meet these social role requirements depends on their practices, which are a product of both their personal qualities and the ways in which they are situated within their units, the military hierarchy, and big-man networks both within and outside of the military. Evaluations of these practices are again shaped by first, commonality of identification and beliefs between commanders and subordinates, and second, community of experience, or the ways in which commanders and subordinates live, work and train together.

9.3.1 Idealized notions and lived realities of commanding

In order to understand how soldiers in the FARDC evaluate their superiors, it is crucial to gain an insight into their expectations surrounding the social role of 'FARDC commander'. The approach followed to exploring these expectations was to ask military staff about their notions of the 'good commander', followed by an inquiry into how far actual commanders were seen to live up to this idealized image. This last question was however also explored in other ways, notably through informal conversations, in the course of which staff would generally speak more openly about their superiors.

Idealized notions of commanders

FARDC soldiers' answers to the question what qualities they believe a good commander needs to possess were remarkably similar across units. Furthermore, there were little differences in expectations vis-à-vis immediate (squad, platoon, company) vs. higher-level (battalion, brigade, sector) commanders. Three themes predominated in the presented idealized notions of commanding: first, morality and role modeling; second, father-like and provider qualities; and third, education and competence. Starting with morality, nearly all of my interlocutors were of the opinion that since commanders have exemplary functions and serve as educators, they need to have impeccable morals. A corporal stated: 'Being a good commander is like being a pastor, he is first a model for his troops'.⁸⁰ Morality was seen to imply in particular that commanders would not embezzle salaries or other funds destined for their subordinates. Another (moral) quality that was generally highlighted was that a good commander must treat civilians well, which was often described as a precondition for fulfilling the military's constitutional mandate. A few soldiers listed as additional criteria that a good commander should be a good Christian, which one soldier saw as exemplified by a certain commander who had made a donation of \$900 to a church in a military camp for buying a synthesizer. This could indicate that at least among some, religious piety is also seen as an important quality of military leaders.

Morality also figured prominently in the second theme that was central to soldiers' descriptions of good commanders, namely the father-like qualities of caring for and protecting troops and their families. This was most often described in paternal metaphors, highlighting the commander's role as a *bon père de famille* (good head of the household). For some soldiers, being a good protector was only seen as possible when a commander is married, for his responsibilities start at home. The logic behind this is, to paraphrase an *adjudant-chef* (chief warrant officer), that 'if he can't take care of his family, he can't take care of his unit'.⁸¹ A good commander looks well after his troops, knows them individually and is aware of and understands their social and family situation. This means that they take into consideration when someone's wife has just given birth, show generosity when a soldier marries by giving them an appropriate gift, are lenient in granting leave, like when a subordinate's relatives die, and show flexibility when a soldier is faced with adversity, for example when one of his or her children falls very ill. But the caring aspect was only one dimension in descriptions of commanders' father-like qualities: another element that was highlighted was their correcting and disciplining side. Commanders were generally described as having the duty to guide and educate their troops, thus keeping them on the right track. This was seen as justifying quite severe punishment, including of a corporal nature, provided it was meted out when merited. Hence, a good commander is a stern, but fair father, and corrects his troops

80 Interview with low-ranking officer, Nyongera, 06.04.2010.

81 Interview with *sous-officier*, Beni, 15.04.2010.

without belittling them. This fear for belittlement and disproportional punishment seemed particularly pronounced among those having served in the FAC/AFDL, which had a very strict system of discipline with summary executions and a military court doling out severe punishment after extremely rapid trials. Whereas some lauded this system as effective for instilling discipline, others found it denigrating and devaluing. 'In that era, they [commanders] did not joke around with soldiers. If you would steal or they would hold you responsible for the disappearance of ammunitions you would be killed. They would shoot you on the spot (...) They treated soldiers like babies. Now it is better.'⁸² Hence, a good commander is strict, but not needlessly cruel, and guides his troops, but without micromanaging or over-paternalizing.

A final element that was commonly emphasized in idealized notions of commanding was the need for commanders to be well educated. However, here some differences were found between groups from different backgrounds, as those having had extensive military education appeared to attach more value to this than others. For example, an ex-FAC officer said: 'A commander must be educated. It is like in medicine, you first have to master the theory before you can do the practice. On the basis of practice alone you cannot make a diagnosis. Practicing without having studied is *bricolage* [improvising]. You have to know what you are doing.'⁸³ Others also highlighted the importance for a commander to know the law and judicial procedures, but these were often officers working in this domain themselves, like PM (military police), S2s (intelligence officers) and military justice personnel. By contrast, those with limited education often said to value practical experience more than knowledge from the books, advocating a type of 'learning by doing' logic. These less educated officers would for example emphasize that attending a foreign military academy will not make one understand the realities of the field in the Congo. As one commander put it: 'What we do here is guerilla...you can study for years abroad, but this will not help you fight here. Only experience on the ground matters (...) You see these ex-FAZ officers and they boast around because they went to France or the USA, or wherever, to the big military academies. But then.....when one shot is fired they flee! They know nothing of the bush! They get killed in the first ambush!'⁸⁴ Despite these differences in emphasis on the importance of education, all groups agreed that a good commander must be competent, in the sense of knowing what he is doing, especially in combat situations. This was at the same time seen as a precondition for guarding his troops well and avoiding unnecessary casualties, thus also being connected to commanders' father-like qualities.

Lived realities of commanding

The good commander outlined in the previous turned out to be largely a hypothetical figure. Most soldiers stated to experience profound discrepancies between their general expectations of military commanders and the qualities and practices of actual commanders in the FARDC. However, there were often differences between on the one hand, representations of 'commanders in general' and the top brass (hence representations located at a relatively high level of abstraction), and on the other hand, evaluations of soldiers' own unit commanders, whether of their brigade/regiment or of immediate superiors (hence referring to concrete persons). While representations were negative across the board, evaluations were more often positive, depending on commanders' personal traits and the composition and trajectory of the unit they headed. Yet, evaluations often differed per subgroup within a particular unit, in particular where horizontal cohesion was low. For example, ex-armed group combatants serving under their previous commanders, who were sometimes also from the same ethnic group, stood in a different relation to their leaders than for example ex-FAZ within the same unit. Consequently, while in some cases, military staff's identification with their commanders was substantial, in others it was very low, feeding into serious tensions.

Representations of commanders in general highlighted their shortcomings in all three domains of good commanding described above. FARDC commanders were generally depicted as anything but moral, self-interested, not caring for their troops, uneducated and incompetent. In fact, FARDC staff's descriptions of the shortcomings of their commanders resemble what has been described as 'toxic leadership' in military organizations (Reed, 2004: 67): a lack of concern for the wellbeing of subordinates, a conviction by subordinates that the superior is motivated primarily by self-interest, and negative personal traits, in the FARDC commonly ascribed to ethnic identity or rebel background. These negative representations point to a strong generalized crisis of leadership in the FARDC. It is telling in this respect that when asked whom they identified as one of the greatest military heroes of the moment, or other present-day military staff seen as an example or source of inspiration, no soldier could give an answer.⁸⁵ Instead, the majority came up with names of (no longer serving) generals from the Mobutu era, such as Lundula, Mayele, Bolongo and Likulia.⁸⁶ Ex-FAC staff would also name certain

82 Interview with ex-FAC *sous-officier*, Bukavu, 24.10.2011.

83 Interview with low-ranking ex-FAC officer, Nyongera, 07.05.2010.

84 Interview with high-ranking officer from ex-Ituri armed group, Lemera, 14.05.2010.

85 Most of the fieldwork on leadership was conducted before 2012. However, the fight against the M23 that started that year would produce a new military hero: Colonel Mamadou Ndala, commander of the 41st rapid reaction battalion then deployed in North Kivu. Ndala, who was strongly appreciated both by civilians and the military, was killed in December 2013. Many in the FARDC saw this as an assassination orchestrated from within the military, therefore believing that being an example of excellence in the FARDC bears considerable risks. See Yves Kongolo, 'Année de la libération. Le départ du M23 à l'est marque la fin du régime de Kigali en RDC', *KongoTimes!*, 29 August 2013; Huffington Post Québec, 'RDC : le colonel Ndala, un "héros" qui faisait des jaloux', *Le Huffington Post Québec*, 4 January 2014.

86 It is interesting to note that Likulia, the author of the *Code pénal militaire* (military penal code) is widely appreciated among ex-FAZ for his intellectual capacities. When asked why Likulia was a great military leader, many interviewees pointed out he was at some point professor at a university in Europe. This corroborates the findings of Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2008: 70) on the relatively low emphasis on warrior values in professional military identification in the FARDC.

commanders of the AFDL rebellion, like Anselme Masasu Nindaga.⁸⁷ Interestingly enough, there was little difference in the answers of those always having served in the loyalist camp and ex-armed group members who did not serve in the government forces when the mentioned military leaders were the helmsmen. Furthermore, similar to ‘ex-government’ troops, former armed group members would propagate the idea that the era of the respected and honorable Great Generals is past. Another relatively widely shared opinion was that one of the last great commanders in the Congo was Mbuza Mabe,⁸⁸ and that ever since, there are no longer true patriots in the military top leadership, but only businessmen and opportunists. Mabe is credited with having defended Bukavu during the crisis in 2004 that broke out shortly after he was appointed commander of the 10th Military Region, when FARDC units dominated by the ex-RCD clashed with other government troops. Therefore, he is seen to have contributed to the breaking of the power of the disliked ex-RCD in South Kivu. It is therefore little surprising Mabe was most often mentioned by ‘autochthon’ troops, who would consider his greatness to partly reside in his distinctly anti-Tutsi mentality.⁸⁹ Yet, such ethnic-identity based framings did not always play a role in representations of the top brass. For example, nearly all informants, regardless their background, were negative about certain generals that were highly influential at the time of the fieldwork, like Gabriel Amisi and John Numbi,⁹⁰ primarily because these were seen as enriching themselves to the detriment of the ordinary soldier.

These negative opinions on leadership were articulated at all levels of the military organization, and quite openly, which is indicative of the overall low levels of respect felt towards the hierarchy. Similar to, and possibly influenced by civilians, long-serving FARDC staff would describe officers as having become somehow ‘closer’ but also ‘lower’.⁹¹ An officer described it as follows: ‘The FARDC are still very hierarchical, ranks continue to be of influence, but they do no longer automatically give a certain respect’.⁹² A lieutenant ascribed this to the increasing blurring between the higher and the lower ranks: ‘Back in the days it was very difficult for a bodyguard to enter the room of the chief, but now they can easily enter, this has become normal (...) And we used to eat in the collective kitchen, there was a *cantine* (canteen) for the troops and a *mess* (officer’s canteen) for the officers, starting with *adjutant*. The other *sous-officiers* used to eat in the *cantine* for troops. Nowadays, everyone eats like the troops. There is no longer a *mess*, there is no longer distinction. There is no longer a distinction per rank in the order, who arrives first, eats first. We eat with the troops, we even prepare together! The discipline is not visible [*La discipline ne se manifeste pas*]. This leads to indiscipline (...) The respect and the responsibility have diminished.’⁹³ This chimes with the narratives of another officer, who equally attributed diminished discipline to a deterioration of leadership, in particular commanders’ failure to control and correct their troops: ‘Back in the days, when they gave the order at 12 o’clock sharp, everyone was prompt at the *parade* or the kitchen. Today, it is very different. The order is given, but it is not promptly executed [*l’ordre est là, mais l’exécution prompte n’est pas là*]. In the time of Mobutu, the command was hydraulic, more flexible, but today it has become mechanic. For example, the *parade* used to be three times a day, now it is perhaps two times a week, Monday and Friday (...). There has been a total change, the military is no longer controlled as it should. The military is not structured anymore’.⁹⁴ Although these quotes should be carefully read, given the general tendency among those who have served in the military for a long time to paint a picture of a Golden Military Era in the Mobutu period that probably never existed, they do capture the general feeling that regard for officers and the quality of commanding have sharply diminished in the FARDC. The reasons for these experienced deficiencies in leadership, which point to low levels of vertical cohesion are manifold (see also Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013: 75–77), as further explained in the following.

9.3.2 Explaining weak vertical cohesion in the FARDC

This section explores the main factors that are at the root of weak vertical cohesion in the FARDC, starting with what military personnel themselves identified as the primary cause for bad leadership in the FARDC: rebel-military integration and its effects on meritocracy. Since rebel-military integration is seen to affect ‘ideology’, and the surrounding power dynamics feed into and are fed by schisms framed in ethnic terms, this discussion will also focus on ‘commonality of identification and beliefs’, and how this impacts evaluations of competence, commitment to group goals and the wellbeing of subordinates. These evaluations are also shaped by the cluster of factors relating to ‘community of experience’, or living, working and training together, as explained in the subsequent part. The section ends

87 Ex-FAC staff also named André Kisasi Ngandu, another leader of the AFDL, although Masasu Nindaga, considered to be the commander of the *kadogo* (Stearns, 2011: 280) was mentioned more often.

88 The popularity of Mbuza Mabe, which was mirrored among civilians, is also evidenced by the fact that newfound military hero Col. Mamadou Ndala (see footnote 85 of this chapter) was nicknamed ‘Mbuza Mabe junior’. See Kongolo, ‘Année de la libération’.

89 For the mutiny of ex-RCD troops in Bukavu see Wolters, 2004a and b. Highlighting how representations of military heroism are influenced by discourses of ethnicity, some informants also lauded Mabe for his participation in a FAZ campaign to Rwanda in the 1990s with the aim of aiding Rwandan Hutu president and Mobutu ally Habyarimana in the fight against the Tutsi-led RPF rebellion.

90 Generals Gabriel Amisi and John Numbi were discussed on pp. 221-222.

91 As described in Chapter 4, on pp. 105–106, civilians experience the status of officers to have been significantly lowered over the years. Since, according to Westbrook (1980: 264), the general standing of officers in society influences how they are seen by their subordinates, it is likely that the lowering of civilian respect for officers contributes to their further downgrading in soldiers’ eyes.

92 Interview with high-ranking ex-FAZ officer, Goma, 23.04.2010.

93 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Kiwanja, 01.04.2010.

94 Interview with low-ranking ex-FAZ officer, Rumangabo, 31.03.2010.

with a discussion of the final elements of importance in vertical cohesion, namely the perceived neutrality of systems of rewards and punishment, and how this is influenced by command practices as heavily shaped by commanders' position within their own unit, and in wider formal and informal hierarchies. Since encompassing punishment for abuses against civilians, this is an important element for understanding civilian-military interaction.

Rebel-military integration and its impact on 'commonality of identification and beliefs'

In FARDC soldiers' narratives, the paramount reasons for the experienced deficiencies of commanders are unambiguously located in the politicization, tribalism and other forms of favoritism that accompany the politics of rebel integration. Especially the rapid promotion of scores of former armed group leaders, described as having led to the total destruction of meritocracy, hence the illegitimacy of appointments, and a radical 'rank deflation', is singled out as undermining leadership in the FARDC (see also Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2010: 22–23). Moreover, as further elaborated below, rebel-military integration is said to have led to the unjustified distribution of punishments and rewards for behavior more generally, creating skewed incentive structures. However, these narratives should be nuanced and placed in context by comparing these with an analysis of the workings of the FAZ. Promotions and disciplining in the FAZ were already importantly shaped by rationalities of protection, which demonstrates that rebel-military integration is not the sole reason for deficient meritocracy.⁹⁵ Yet, the feeling among ex-FAZ and ex-FAC is that at present, meritocratic principles are flouted at a much larger scale than ever before. Many of those 'coming from the rebellion' experience this lack of meritocracy too, in particular those who consider themselves to be marginalized, like ex-Mai Mai.

Resentment and even despise towards uneducated officers is felt most intensely by those who are better educated and have served much longer in the armed forces than their current superiors. Being placed under the command of sometimes illiterate and less experienced young officers is generally experienced as a deep insult: 'I am very dissatisfied. I have had a good education, because I went to the EFO,⁹⁶ I know the *Règlement militaire*, but my superiors have not had any education. They don't know anything, absolutely nothing. Even if I greet them, I feel a pain somewhere in my heart'.⁹⁷ A superior officer equally complained: 'We call them *les profanes* [the uninitiated], since they haven't had military education. They are simply civilians.'⁹⁸ An ex-FAZ officer explained: 'When you are in front of an officer, everywhere in the world, you sense it, since you speak the same language. But when you find yourself in front of the officers coming from the rebellion, you do not have that impression [that they are officers]'.⁹⁹

That officers from the rebellion often enjoy little respect from their subordinates is confirmed by the narratives of these officers themselves. Many of the ex-Mai Mai officers interviewed complained that they were looked down upon by those coming from conventional military forces, due to their image as uncivilized and uneducated 'bush fighters' who engage in spiritual practices to obtain battlefield victory. As one ex-PARECO officer explained: 'PARECO are patriots, and there are well-educated persons in the movement. Once they leave the bush they are often more disciplined than the former [government] soldiers. But there is one problem, there is contempt. The government does not respect our officers, saying that they do not have education and experience. The problem is also that there is contempt between officers: they do not respect the orders given by someone coming from the bush (...) So sometimes they simply do not listen to us'.¹⁰⁰

Another way in which rebel-military integration is believed to have negatively affected leadership is by bringing *anti-valeurs* (anti-values) into the military due to the dubious morality and loyalties of ex-rebel officers. This is manifested in the widely circulating expression *baleli grade ba teki mboka* (those who most need ranks have sold out the country), which reflects that the rapidly promoted officers from the rebellion are seen to lack patriotism. Such officers are also ascribed ill conduct more generally. A *sous-lieutenant* (sub-lieutenant) remarked about the new commanders he was placed under after the accelerated integration: '*Nous les appelons offi-chiens, car ils ne savent rien qu'attaquer*'.¹⁰¹ Another officer told that among colleagues, they used the unofficial expression '*grades brusques, commandement brutal* (abrupt ranks, brutal command)' for describing the coarseness of ex-rebel commanders.¹⁰² The fact that these commanders used to be in the bush supposedly testifies to their 'insurrectional mentality' (*esprit insurrectionnel*), which they now bring into the military. One way in which this *esprit* is manifested is that whenever their demands are not satisfied, they resort to blackmail and manipulation, including by threatening with desertion. This would further prove that they have only enrolled in the military to promote narrow self-

95 How favoritism undermined meritocracy in the FAZ was discussed on pp. 64-65.

96 The *École de formation des officiers* (EFO) in Kananga offered the main basic training course for officers in the Mobutu era.

97 Interview with ex-FAZ soldier, Beni, 15.04.2010.

98 Interview with high-ranking officer, Uvira, 27.02.2012.

99 Interview with mid-ranking ex-FAZ officer, Nyongera, 01.04.2010.

100 Interview with high-ranking ex-PARECO officer, Butembo, 27.04.2010.

101 Conversation with *sous-officier*, Butembo, 24.04.2010. This pun is difficult to translate, playing on the replacement of *offi-cier* (officer) with *offi-chien* (*chien* meaning dog), making this sentence something like 'we call them offi-DOGS [instead of offi-CERS], because the only thing they know is to attack'.

102 In another version encountered as *grades gratuits* (free ranks) *commandement brutal*.

103 Interview with high-ranking officer, Uvira, 27.02.2012.

interests, and not to defend the population or the fatherland. Such self-interest is also visible in these officers' alleged greed and their tendency to embezzle funds, which testify to their lack of commitment to group goals and the wellbeing of their subordinates.

Given the salience of ethnic framings in 'making sense' of the erratic power dynamics related to rebel-military integration and big-man politics, as described in the previous, it may not come as a surprise that these framings also strongly impact vertical cohesion and (perceptions of) leadership. Numerous informants told that they deeply distrust their (ex-rebel) superiors as they suspect them to be pawns of Rwandan interests or simply Rwandan nationals. This was especially the case where commanders employed Kinyarwanda among non-Rwandophone subordinates. One soldier told for instance that his platoon commander sometimes gave orders in Kinyarwanda only to the Rwandophone deputy commander and other Rwandophones in his unit, who then translated it for the troops. This strongly undermined trust among non-Rwandophones, as it was feared the deputy-commander was giving different orders and information to them than to the Rwandophone soldiers, fuelling the suspicion that they were plotting to embezzle a part of the unit funds.¹⁰⁴ That Rwandophone commanders were disliked and distrusted by some also emerged from the fact that subordinates would sometimes evaluate the same command practices in a radically different manner, depending on whether they were enacted by Rwandophone or 'autochthon' commanders. For example, a number of informants denounced the fact that their Rwandophone brigade commander was always surrounded by many bodyguards, ascribing this to his status as 'foreigners'. One battalion commander expressed this as follows: 'The real Congolese have less bodyguards. I am at home here in Congo. Who can kill me here? I have nothing to fear. But those who have a lot of bodyguards are especially those who work with the Rwandans. So they fear for their lives.'¹⁰⁵ However, for the 'autochthon' sector commander that this officer was placed under, who also surrounded himself with higher-than-average numbers of bodyguards, this practice was seen as legitimate and justified with an eye to the security situation. However, it seems that security could have only been a part of the explanation, since his predecessor had much less bodyguards, despite the fact that the security situation was largely similar during that period. It appears then that these evaluations of commanders' use of bodyguards were influenced by ethnic discourses, as also emerged from the widespread perception that Rwandophone commanders would uniquely employ Rwandophone bodyguards.

For their part, Rwandophone commanders, especially Tutsi, would emphasize how their ethnic origins caused them at times to have a difficult relationship to their 'autochthon' subordinates. A former FARDC company commander (now serving in an armed group) testified: 'When you get into trouble with your subordinates, it suddenly matters that you are a Tutsi. I was closely monitoring my soldiers. They were engaging in all sorts of illicit business like extortion and cheating, putting up barriers and producing alcohol. I sat down and was just watching them and noted down everything they were doing (...) One evening I called them to explain they should change their behavior but they got angry. The next days they were whispering behind my back. Then one evening three of them came up to me saying: "if you do not tone down, you Tutsi, we will shoot you"'. How can I serve in such a military?¹⁰⁶

This story does not only highlight the effects of ethnically framed antagonisms on vertical cohesion but also illustrates how weak vertical cohesion may limit commanders' leeway for disciplining their troops. Indeed, as also noted by other scholars (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013: 76), it appears as if FARDC commanders sometimes hardly dare to punish their troops lest they provoke rebellion. This is all the more so where commanders are resented due to their incompetence or when troops are deeply frustrated about their service conditions, and project this onto their immediate commanders. The amount of mutinies and shooting incidents that have taken place over the past years in relation to the anger of unpaid troops shows that this threat is not merely hypothetical.¹⁰⁷ This threat also has self-censoring effects in that commanders in units with weak vertical cohesion are more inclined to tolerate abusive behavior by their soldiers. They may for example allow their soldiers to extort from civilians when their salary is in arrears to avoid that their frustration turns against them. In this manner, weak vertical cohesion can be at the basis of a permissive climate for abuses against civilians.¹⁰⁸

'Community of experience': living, working and training together

The effects of the various dimensions of 'community of experience' on vertical cohesion are partly similar to, partly different from the effects on horizontal cohesion. As is the case for horizontal cohesion, organizational flux, leading troops to regularly face different commanders, highly undermines vertical cohesion. Both commanders and rank and file believed that the dismantling of the IBs had had profoundly destabilizing effects on vertical bonding. They explained that within the IBs, they had developed their own routines, and that soldiers and commanders had gotten used to each other. In the Amani Leo brigades, by contrast, they did not have the time to develop a similar level of routine, since commanders rapidly changed and the units were disbanded after less than two years. Given the large variations in styles of command, adjusting to a new commander is a painful process for troops. In the words of a sergeant: 'All the time changes is not good, because we are not stable. A *chef* knows the behavior of his soldiers and the soldiers know their *chef* and that eases

104 Interview with *sous-officier*, Fizi, 17.02.2011.

105 Interview with battalion commander, Fizi territory, February 2011.

106 Interview with ex-FARDC officer, now part of the armed group of Col. Tawimbi, Bijombo, 24.11.2011.

107 For examples of unrest related to problems with salary payments, see Table 16 on p. 244.

108 How weak vertical cohesion impacts violence against civilians is further discussed on pp. 309–311.

the work (...). There are many changes but one commander is soft, the other one is strict, so we do not know how to adapt ourselves.¹⁰⁹ That troops value stability in command was corroborated by the narratives of soldiers of one of the IBs (the ex-20th, part of case #1) that had remained intact after the start of the Amani Leo operations. They emphasized that their commanders had not changed over the years, and that this had strongly improved the organization and *modus operandi* of the brigade. As a *sous-officier* stated: 'We are really proud of our brigade. We are living well here. And our command has remained the same since we left the CBR [*brassage centre*]!'.¹¹⁰ In this case, pride in the brigade command was connected to pride in the brigade as a whole, and seems to have been fostered by continuity in leadership and the resulting prolonged interaction between superiors and subordinates. Similar mechanisms were detected in other units that had remained intact for a long time and that had popular brigade commanders, like the ex-29th under Col. Djumapili (part of case #6) and the ex-234th under Col. Mfaume (case #4).¹¹¹ Such high levels of appreciation for brigade commanders, pointing to strong identification with the secondary group, were not found in any of the newly assembled Amani Leo brigades or regiments.¹¹² None of these rapidly formed units seemed to have a strong separate unit identity or culture, as manifested in the absence of initiation rites, unit insignia and pride in the unit's history. This lack of collective rituals and symbols may be partly explained by the high levels of organizational flux that characterized the Amani Leo era. Anticipating that units would not last long, soldiers had limited incentives to foster strong attachment to them (cf. Henderson, 1985: 10).

As with horizontal cohesion, the limited training provided by the FARDC hardly contributes to fostering bonding between subordinates and their immediate commanders, in part because training in teams in exactly the same composition as they will be deployed on missions is rare. This only occurred in some of the regimentation centers, where commanders had been appointed ahead of the training. Yet, as we have seen,¹¹³ in many regiments, this undermined rather than fostered cohesion. Appointments below the level of battalions (hence of platoon and company commanders) were largely determined by regiment and battalion commanders, who tended to favor soldiers from within their own big-man networks. In one regiment, soldiers complained that nearly all platoon and company commanders were from the same villages in Masisi.¹¹⁴ The training during regimentation starkly exposed the extent to which these appointments had been political. According to some soldiers, their freshly appointed commanders turned out not to know the right procedures and words of command, nor to have knowledge of how to master troops, or any idea of tactics to start with.¹¹⁵ The resulting frustration and lowering of respect seem to have pre-empted rather than promoted the development of vertical cohesion, although the training may have contributed to making commanders and soldiers somewhat better accustomed to each other's ways.

Concerning living together, the differences in living and service conditions between commanders and troops cause this to generally undermine, rather than reinforce vertical cohesion (see also Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013: 76). However, there are substantial differences between higher and lower-level commanders in relation to the wealth gap with their subordinates. As we have seen, superior officers in key big-man positions may belong to the super rich, receiving substantial amounts of money from private business schemes, *rapportage* systems and embezzlement, allowing them to have multiple houses and drive around in expensive cars. Some have even developed such a big belly that they are believed to be no longer able to move around on the frontlines, drawing soldiers' ridicule. Similar asymmetries exist between foot soldiers and unit commanders up to battalion level. As a lieutenant stated: 'The wife of the deputy commander lives next to the wife of the colonel, because she has nothing to eat. And when he, who has a big house, gives orders, do you think that he who has nothing is going to obey? (...) The distances between the high-ranking and the low-ranking are simply too big (...) They cheat us. We have nothing, absolutely nothing (...) I have a bad cough but not even enough money to get medicine. They will not even give you a *parecetamol* [pain killer] when you are sick. No nothing, not even a single *Franc congolais*! They do not care if we die (...)'.¹¹⁶ This quote makes clear that differences in wealth perceived as unjust may lead to subordination, since troops have little motivation to obey orders when in circumstances of abject poverty. This is even the stronger the case where commanders are seen to be directly involved in the embezzlement of unit funds, which adds a dimension of anger to the frustration.

In contrast to higher-level commanders, the living conditions of those directing lower-level units are not much better than those of their troops, especially in platoons and squads deployed to far-flung rural areas. Consequently, lower-level commanders draw much less resentment grounded in socio-economic inequality. In such units, commanders share in many of the hardships of daily life with their troops, which in some cases seems to reinforce vertical cohesion. However, living in the same primitive circumstances cannot compensate for commanders' lack of competence. Especially when coupled to negative experiences on the frontlines, deficits in command capabilities foster immense frustrations. For example, despite two years of living and operating together in hardship during operations, several

109 Interview with *sous-officier*, Kikonde, 14.12.2011.

110 Interview with *sous-officier* from ex-20th IB, Butembo, 27.04.2010.

111 Note that Mfaume was commander of the 234th only up to June 2007, when a traffic accident forced him to abandon his position. Interview Col. Mfaume, Bukavu, 26.03.2011. However, his troops, contacted in Katobo in March 2010, continued to speak highly of him.

112 It is however possible that in certain ex-CNDP dominated Amani Leo brigades, where troops served under their previous commanders, similar high levels of appreciation for commanders could be found, but among the ex-rebel components only.

113 Training during regimentation was discussed above on pp. 225–226 and p. 261.

114 Interviews with *sous-officiers* from 725th regiment, Lamera, 31.10.2011.

115 Interview with FARDC staff e.g., Lusuku, 09.12.2011, Kikonde, 14.12.2011 and Mama Tantine, 29.12.2011.

116 Interview with low-ranking officer, Fizi *centre*, 11.12.2011.

soldiers from Amani Leo brigades encountered just before regimentation were extremely negative about their immediate commanders, highlighting their lack of skills and knowledge.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, shared living conditions cannot fully correct for profound divergences in outlook resulting from differences in the general level of education. Subordinates who are better educated than their superiors sometimes continue to feel a lack of respect towards their commanders, even when living together with them for a long time.

Aside from the units' short lifespan, another reason why vertical cohesion in the Amani Leo brigades might have remained so low are the negative experiences of combat. Where vertical cohesion is low combat becomes problematic as subordinates lack the trust in their commanders that is required for being sufficiently motivated to engage in potentially lethal action (Sweeney, 2010). Furthermore, subordinates may fail to obey orders seen as ill conceived and potentially endangering their lives. In the FARDC, distrust towards commanders in combat situations was found to be nourished by two main elements: first, commanders' perceived lack of competence, making troops reluctant to put their life into their superiors' hands; second, profound suspicion about commanders' motivations and loyalties. The divisions in the FARDC stemming from power competition, which sometimes overlap with ethnically framed cleavages, make troops wary of their commanders' intentions. Consequently, it is not rare to find troops who believe that their superiors are in connivance with the enemy and manipulate orders and intelligence in order to orchestrate defeat. Indeed, stories about leaks of military intelligence circulate widely in the FARDC, and several of the FARDC staff contacted relayed the idea that they were always fighting an enemy already warned in advance (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c).¹¹⁸

Existing distrust vis-à-vis commanders is reinforced by concrete negative battlefield experiences, following interaction models of trust that stipulate that trust is built up or undermined through cycles of interactions (Zand, 1972). Due to enhanced vulnerability and dependency in combat, troops tend to evaluate their leaders before starting combat operations, thus having an elevated awareness of levels of trust (Sweeney, 2010). Depending on their experiences on the battlefield, this initial level of trust will either be reinforced or diminish, since the development of trust in superiors depends to a large extent on the latter's ability to demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to meet social role requirements (Sweeney et al., 2009). As we have seen, competence and the (tactical) skills to avoid unnecessary deaths among troops are defining features of the social role of 'FARDC commander'. Given that combat operations by the FARDC are characterized by high casualty rates among soldiers, non-conclusive outcomes or defeat, and extreme hardship for soldiers on the frontlines, it can be assumed that combat often fuels distrust towards superiors. Catastrophic battlefield action does not only confirm existing assessments of superiors' lack of competence, but also fuels suspicion of their bad intentions. The resulting lack of trust contributes to acts of insubordination, and it regularly occurs that units simply disintegrate or flee in the face of the enemy, as was for example the case in the battle for Goma in November 2012.¹¹⁹ One former FARDC *sous-officier* (now serving in an armed group) explained how such acts of insubordination, as fed by frustration about superiors, may also lead to abuses against civilians: 'It is extremely difficult to carry out badly given orders for professional military. We say: "a badly given order might not be executed", especially when it causes many deaths. For example, if you fight against Rwandans [FDLR], you will know that at some point they will outflank: therefore you need to send two sections to the sides. However, if the commanding officer does not know, he will send all troops straight ahead but they will be encircled by the enemy. We know this from experience, but our commander went ahead and then many troops died. When this happened we rebelled against him and withdrew (...) So since we were angry some wanted to avenge the death of their comrades (...) When on the run they plundered this village, emptying all the houses. They were outraged, outraged by this senseless combat. So you see, if troops misbehave it is sometimes not all their fault, but that of the commander.'¹²⁰ Together with weak battlefield performance, such massive breakdowns of discipline during or after combat, which seem regular in the FARDC (see also UNJHRO, 2009a; 2013), further testify to low levels of vertical cohesion.

The battlefield story described above reflects a widely circulating discourse in the FARDC that ascribes the misconduct of troops primarily to bad leadership. This idea is epitomized by the popular expression: 'there are no bad troops, there are only bad commanders' (*il n'y a pas de mauvaises troupes, il n'y a que de mauvais chefs*), which was heard time and time again during the fieldwork. The ways in which bad leadership is perceived to influence troops' conduct is seen to take three pathways: first, leaders at the top set an example for those lower down in the hierarchy through their own behavior (see also Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2008: 76–77). In this respect, some mentioned the bad example provided by the unofficial appointment of the leader of the ex-CNDP, Gen. Bosco Ntaganda, as the coordinator of the Amani Leo operations in North Kivu. Given that the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant against Bosco in 2006, they believed that this appointment sent a signal to other troops that committing abuses is ultimately rewarded. Second, it is alleged that some commanders directly incite their troops to commit acts against the law, for example by stealing at night from civilians or laying ambushes. In one unit where this was the case, a *sous-officier* commented on this as follows: 'Troops here are the "hunting dogs" [*chiens de chasse*] of the commander. They organize these ambushes here on the road between Butembo and Kanyabayonga (...) These commanders are bandits, they have no morals.'¹²¹ Third, commanders are seen to foster misconduct among their troops by not sufficiently disciplining

117 Interviews with soldiers gathered for the first wave of regimentation, Fizi, 26–27.02.2011.

118 Mélanie Gouby, 'Congo-Kinshasa: Will Kinshasa go easy on M23 rebels?', *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 15 November 2012.

119 Flory Mumena, 'Goma-incompréhension et colère des soldats Congolais' *Syfia Grands Lacs*, 24 november 2012.

120 Interview with ex-FARDC officer, now part of armed group of Col. Tawimbi, Bijombo, 25.11.2011.

121 Interview with *sous-officier*, Kirumba, 03.05.2010.

them in case of abuses, or by meting out unjust punishment. As further explained in the following, is widely believed in the FARDC that disciplining occurs very selectively, thereby creating skewed incentives for behavior.

Systems of rewards and punishments in the FARDC

The protection dimensions of regular commander-soldier relations, and the influence of big-man networks on the workings of the FARDC more generally, cause the distribution of punishments and rewards to be strongly influenced by protection relations and concomitant favoritism. For instance, when troops are tied into powerful big-man networks that their own immediate commanders do not form part of, big-men from outside the unit may apply pressure on these commanders to avoid that their protégés get disciplined or to soften the punishment. An officer in an ex-PARECO dominated brigade related how his platoon commander had once been told off by his (ex-PARECO) battalion commander for disciplining one of his elements, since this soldier was from the same village of origins as the battalion commander. When enquiring about the incident, the platoon commander complained that ‘all these Rwandans are backing each other’ and that in the face of that tribalism he could not do his work as a commander.¹²² Troops experience the erratic practices of punishment resulting from such big-man interventions as violations of the role of the stern but just father that is central to idealized representations of commanders, implying these practices undermine vertical cohesion. Furthermore, when behavior that violates group norms goes unpunished, troops might interpret this as signaling the limited commitment of their leaders to upholding group objectives. Additionally, non-neutral systems of punishment and rewards affect horizontal cohesion, since those seen as receiving a favored treatment by the commander are likely to be less respected by their peers. Indeed, within the mentioned platoon, the commanders’ (imposed) hesitation to discipline certain elements sowed divisions between the ex-PARECO and ex-government troops.

Due to the salience of big-man networks, perceptions of unequal treatment and selective punishment are widespread among FARDC staff. This is manifested in the impression that good behavior is never rewarded. As a soldier explained: ‘There are no good soldiers in the FARDC. Because when you behave better than others, there is nothing. You can even get into trouble. There are no rewards for good behavior.’¹²³ This quote conveys the idea that soldiers have little incentives to go beyond the lowest common denominator, as good conduct is generally not rewarded. Rather, as is widely believed, rewards are distributed on the basis of patronage, hence to soldiers who have a favored position with their commanders or with patrons outside the primary unit. These rewards usually take the form of the favors that are an essential part of protection ties in the FARDC, such as (access to) revenue-generation opportunities and privileges related to lodging, transport and leave. Understandably, these forms of preferential treatment and favoritism by commanders provoke resentment and weaken vertical cohesion. This resentment may even be bigger when behavior is rewarded that undermines the collective projects and norms of a unit. The following story, told by a sergeant, illustrates this well. The commander of the sergeant’s platoon had given orders to a soldier to extort money from a *kapita* (village chief) in exchange for a small part of the collected sum (hence constituting a favor). However, this spoiled the relations between the unit and that particular village. The sergeant was convinced that this was one of the reasons why its inhabitants withheld information on enemy movements, which culminated in attack in which several members of the platoon got severely wounded.¹²⁴ This event created resentment not only against the commander, but also against those who had collaborated with his extortion scheme, seen as having betrayed the interests of the group as a whole. Thus, favoritism may at once undermine vertical and horizontal cohesion, as those seen as the favorites of the commander are less accepted by other members of the primary group, especially when engaging in practices seen to be damaging to the unit as a whole.

Similar to rewards, the meting out of punishments is commonly seen as heavily influenced by favoritism grounded in protection relations, although soldiers do recognize that punishments are occasionally targeted at actual bad behavior, albeit often in a non-proportional manner. As emerged from the fieldwork, commanders may punish their soldiers on the following grounds (see also Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013b: 58–65): disobedience (e.g., not executing an order), breaches of trust and confidence (e.g., having lied to a commander, having disclosed one of the commander’s secrets), embezzlement and financial dishonesty (e.g., having withheld a share of the roadblock revenue), violations of professional duties and codes of conduct (e.g., absence at the *parade*, not respecting curfews, sleeping outside the camp, losing a weapon, unauthorized movements), misbehavior towards other soldiers (e.g., physical abuse, having tried to seduce another soldier’s wife), and abuses against civilians and their property (e.g., stealing, rape, extortion, torture). But a commander may also punish a soldier for no other reason than dislike and his own mood. Furthermore, it regularly occurs that commanders use soldiers as scapegoats, punishing them for indiscipline or abuses of which the perpetrators could not be identified. This often happens when crimes are committed during the night or in the context of upheaval, such as in the course of or in the wake of fighting. In such situations, despite the perpetrator(s) being unknown, commanders may still feel an urge to punish in order to set an example to the rest of the unit and reestablish their authority. The (unauthorized) misbehavior of troops constitutes a loss of control and therefore also a loss of face for commanders, a situation that needs to be redressed to deter future dissidence.

Commanders might also punish their soldiers in order to appease civilian victims or angered civilian authorities, or to obey the hierarchy.

122 Interview with platoon commander, Fizi territory, December 2010.

123 Interview with low-ranking officer, Kikonde, 14.12.2011.

124 Interview with *sous-officier*, *Hauts Plateaux*, December 2010.

This may also lead to scapegoating. When conclusive evidence for establishing guilt is lacking, external (from civilians) or internal (from the hierarchy) pressure often leads commanders to simply punish the soldiers they suspect, fear or dislike the most. This is illustrated by the following story told by a soldier in Sange: ‘There was trouble in my platoon, they broke in a house at night, but shot down the woman [in the house]. The commander sent the S2 but they could not find anything. Then he got angry as that woman was from the family of the *mwami* [customary chief]. So the platoon commander had to present someone and he took a soldier who likes to drink *Simba* [strong liquor in plastic bags] at the roadblock, saying he was a troublemaker. But I know it was not him who broke into that house.’¹²⁵ Scapegoating may also occur when the actual perpetrator is known, but enjoys protection either by the unit commander or by another big-man. In the latter case, the perpetrator may be shielded against punishment from the command and/or military justice, causing the blame to be shifted towards another soldier. This does not always lead to total impunity, as patrons might apply various forms of sanctioning themselves, like lowering their protection and withdrawing favors.¹²⁶ However, since such protection-related punishments are often not very visible, they do little to diminish the frustration among troops that inevitably results from seeing innocent comrades punished. Therefore, scapegoating usually diminishes respect for and bonding with commanders, and undermines the credibility of systems of rewards and punishment.

When commanders do choose to punish, they have a wide range of tools at their disposition, and a relatively large freedom to choose between them (see also Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013b: 58–61). This applies in particular to brigade/regiment commanders, who decide on the more severe cases that occur in their unit, with battalion and sometimes company commanders handling those deemed less grave. An important way to punish soldiers, as mentioned in the previous, is to withhold or withdraw granted favors, like access to revenue-generation opportunities or advantages in accommodation or task distribution. Another widespread form of disciplining is flogging, which often takes place in front of other troops, and tends to be combined with various forms of incarceration (usually in the *cachot* or place of detention of the battalion, brigade, sector or military region). While a punishment in itself, detention is usually made extra harsh by entailing the withholding of salaries and sometimes also the imposition of a fine for liberation, which comes on top of the foregone revenue related to not being able to engage in income-generation activities. Soldiers generally also have to pay when punishment involves material compensation to civilian victims, which are commonly deducted from perpetrators’ salaries. Where civilians have been victimized, sanctions sometimes also entail the public humiliation of the culprit, who is for instance made to visibly carry out hard labor barefoot in the community where the offense was committed.

A final option for commanders to punish soldiers is to initiate military justice procedures, which may also occur without their initiative, when the prosecutor’s office decides to launch an investigation, or when the military hierarchy exerts pressure for a case to be transferred to the military justice apparatus. While in theory, the military justice system is independent, in practice, the FARDC command has a high level of influence on whether military justice procedures are initiated or not. This is not only the result of the limited power of the military justice apparatus vis-à-vis the FARDC, but also of its severe underfunding, understaffing and lack of means of transport in a context of deficient infrastructure (Wetsh’okonda Koso, 2009). Due to these deficiencies, the military justice apparatus can handle only a limited amount of cases, and can barely conduct investigations in far-flung rural areas, where a significant amount of the abuses occur. For instance, it was reported that in 2011, there were only six field-based *inspecteurs* (investigators of the prosecutor’s office) in the whole of the province of South Kivu.¹²⁷ Furthermore, for the entire jurisdiction of South Kivu (which excludes Bukavu, as this is a separate jurisdiction), there are only one judge and two magistrates to handle all cases up to the rank of captain.¹²⁸ Due to the limited clout, presence and capacity of the military justice system, it is ultimately the military hierarchy which decides for the majority of abuses whether the case will be referred to the military justice system or not.¹²⁹ For example, during the Amani Leo operations, suspects in Fizi and Uvira territory were usually first sent to the *cachot* of the 6th Zone Ops in Uvira, where the zone command decided after consultations with the hierarchy in Bukavu whether to transfer the case to the *auditorat* or not.¹³⁰

In the case of infractions considered less grave, the decision whether to transfer cases to the military justice system is commonly already made at a lower level of the hierarchy, predominantly that of brigade/regiments. Due to the FARDC’s high level of de facto decentralization, brigade commanders have considerable leeway in determining if and how cases are reported to the hierarchy, especially when their units are deployed to isolated areas. Many commanders prefer not to report to the hierarchy or the military justice system, rather punishing soldiers themselves. There are a variety of reasons for this. First, there are practical and financial obstacles to sending suspects to the prison of the *auditorat*, since commanders have to arrange and pay for the transport of suspects themselves. For units deployed to far-

125 Interview with soldier, Sange, 20.03.2010.

126 How protection relations can also work to sanction perpetrators was explained on p. 234.

127 The six investigators of the *auditorat* were deployed in: Misisi, Kamituga, Lugushwa, Shabunda, and Uvira (2 *inspecteurs*). Interview with staff of *auditorat* (prosecutor’s office) of Uvira, 28.10.2011.

128 From the rank of captain onwards, cases are handled by the *cour militaire* (military court) in Bukavu. Interview with staff members of *auditorat* of Uvira, 14.02.2011. See also Kajemba, 2009: 98–99.

129 The prosecutor’s office can also launch investigations independently, which often occurs after civilian parties file a complaint, usually with the assistance of human rights NGOs. The far-out majority of such cases is related to sexual violence and initiated by donor-funded NGOs, who often have funds earmarked for following up on incidents of sexual violence only (Douma and Hilhorst, 2012; Lake, 2014).

130 Interview with lawyer working for human rights organization, Uvira, 25.01.2011.

flung, little accessible and highly insecure areas, who lack sufficient means of transport, this significantly lowers the incentives to refer cases to the military justice system. Second, there are reasons related to the authority and reputation of commanders. When a case is sent to military justice it will receive the attention of the hierarchy, which may damage commanders' reputation. Furthermore, commanders tend to feel that giving a case out of hands somehow constitutes an infringement on their own authority, as it implies that they lose control over a case. A third set of reasons relates to beliefs concerning the utility and effects of prolonged incarceration versus other forms of punishment. Some commanders are of the opinion that detained soldiers are useless soldiers, since they cannot carry out any work while in jail. Others are also concerned that soldiers will become worse rather than better human beings when in prison, due to the inhumane conditions of incarceration in the Congo (MONUSCO-OHCHR, 2013). As a brigade commander explained: 'Why would I send my soldiers to the *auditorat*? We can punish them here [at the brigade HQ] much harder. In prison, they are useless. And they become morally rotten (...) It's useless. Here we can teach them how to behave better. I know my soldiers. I keep them in detention and punish them here. We withhold their salaries. Then they are being sent back into their unit, but with a warning. And sometimes I give them lesser positions.'¹³¹ Finally, there are often heavy weighing reasons related to big-man politics, when certain suspects enjoy protection by either their commander or other big-men, who might shield their clients against being transferred to military justice. In the Amani Leo brigades, this was a recurrent problem for non-CNDP commanders with a large share of ex-CNDP troops in their unit. As the commander of the 432nd brigade (case #5) explained: 'When I want to discipline them [ex-CNDP troops] I first need to contact their old commanders. I cannot do anything without their approval; otherwise I will run into trouble.'¹³²

Interference in military justice procedures is not limited to the decision to refer a case to the military justice system or not, but may also occur at later stages of the justice trajectory. Such interference can take for example the form of attempts to liberate suspects from detention facilities or during transport to prison,¹³³ pressure on the prosecutor's office to drop a case, or when it does get to a trial, efforts to bribe the judge (Amnesty International, 2011: 38–41). Obviously, those who do not have high-level protection or money lack the possibilities to exercise influence on the judicial process in such manners. Furthermore, they are often assigned little experienced and little motivated pro-bono defense lawyers,¹³⁴ therefore having little possibilities to successfully appeal against the erratic manner in which formal rules are applied and verdicts are pronounced. In the Congolese justice system, violations of fair trial procedures are common and evidentiary standards are extremely low (Douma and Hilhorst, 2012: 55–60; Amnesty International, 2011: 42–44), making it possible that the innocent are readily convicted. Expectedly, this has fostered the impression among soldiers that the military justice system is unfair and arbitrary, and that one can be accused and condemned regardless one's acts (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013b: 68).

It is widely believed that rebel integration has further aggravated these biases in the military justice system. Interference in judicial processes from the side of the ex-CNDP was reported to be the rule rather than the exception (see also Amnesty International, 2011: 38), guaranteeing its members virtual freedom from prosecution, unless marginalized or side-lined within their own network. It appears that this fostered a sense of guaranteed impunity among ex-CNDP officers that was diffused lower down the command/big-man chain, both as commanders' own conduct set an example and as they protected their troops against prosecution. The feeling of being above the law was likely one of the factors underlying the rather unruly conduct of ex-CNDP dominated units in the course of the joint operations with Rwanda in 2009 and the subsequent Amani Leo operations (Human Rights Watch, 2009b). Both this ill behavior and the related seeming impunity caused deep frustrations among non-ex-CNDP troops, who were not only angered by the perceived unequal treatment, but also feared that the bad behavior of their new colleagues would put the FARDC as a whole in a bad light. Given the CNDP's image as a Tutsi dominated organization, the profound sense of discrimination that resulted from these skewed systems of rewards and punishment was often expressed in ethnic terms. As a lieutenant commented: 'A Rwandopone can kill, assassinate, rape, do no matter what, but if it were me, a Congolese, Moreno Ocampo [Prosecutor of the ICC], would be informed the same day.'¹³⁵ This illustrates how ethnically framed divides can come to nourish the profound sense of injustice resulting from non-neutral systems of rewards and punishments. An important mechanism through which this occurs is that existing divides influence the readings and evaluations of these systems, causing the interventions of commanders seen as linked to a particular ethnic group to be sooner perceived as biased.

It can be concluded that soldiers in the FARDC generally feel that systems of rewards and punishments, whether within their primary unit, their brigade/regiment or the military organization as a whole, are erratic, arbitrary, and unfair, and heavily influenced by big-man politics and related forms of favoritism and tribalism. What feeds these evaluations is that rewards, but especially punishments, are meted out for at once protection-related (e.g., violations of reciprocity), formal-disciplinary (e.g., violations of laws and codes of conduct)

131 Interview with FARDC commander, Fizi territory, 24.12.2010.

132 Interview with FARDC commander, Uvira territory, May 2010.

133 An example of interference encountered in the course of the fieldwork is that of the *audience foraine* (mobile court hearing) organized in Kamanyola at the end of 2009. After the trial, the vehicle transporting one of the convicted and a lieutenant who had misbehaved during the proceedings was stopped by members of their brigade with the intention of liberating them, allegedly on the orders of the brigade commander. Due to pressure from the military hierarchy in Bukavu contacted by the military justice personnel on board the vehicle, the brigade commander could eventually be convinced to let them go. Interviews with NGOs and personnel of the *auditorat* in Uvira, May 2010. See also Vivere, 2010: 35–36.

134 According to justice personnel, an important part of pro-bono defense lawyers are law students in apprenticeship. Interview with defense lawyer, Butembo, 28.04.2010 and with lawyer working for human rights organization, Uvira, 25.01.2011.

135 Interview with low-ranking officer, Luberizi, 07.11.2011.

and authority/control-related reasons (e.g., when commanders punish a scapegoat to save face). Furthermore, regardless the grounds, commanders employ both more formal (e.g., military justice) and more informal (e.g., withdrawal of favors) mechanisms of punishment, sometimes simultaneously. This blurring of rationalities and methods creates ambiguity surrounding (the meanings of) sanctioning practices, for example as the stated, formal reasons for punishment might differ from the informal grounds, or as informal punishment might not be visible or recognized as such. This may for instance occur when a soldier is redeployed to a different zone or unit, giving the impression that he or she is being left in freedom and therefore granted impunity, while in reality suffering a significant lowering in income and status. The resulting ambiguities strongly reinforce beliefs in the unfairness of mechanisms of punishment. In the words of one soldier: "Those having a *parapluie* [umbrella] are untouchable [*intouchable*], but we can be trampled upon any moment."¹³⁶

Despite these general negative representations, the effects of the non-neutrality of systems of rewards and punishment on soldiers' personal situation are mixed, depending on their changing position in big-man networks. On the one hand, skewed disciplining systems make that soldiers run the risk of getting punished regardless their conduct, or in a disproportionate manner. On the other hand, when they do transgress, the negotiability of disciplining may shield them against the harsher types of punishment. Thus, for those having the connections and wherewithal to play the system, the flexibility of the rules may ultimately also work in their advantage. Yet, given that access to these advantages is distributed in an uneven and fluctuating manner, the system is seen as unjust across the board. As mentioned, these feelings strongly undermine vertical and sometime also horizontal cohesion. Yet this influence is mutual, since these two forms of cohesion again impact (perceptions of) the degree of neutrality of systems of rewards and punishment. This is not only because the practices of commanders already seen as hostile are sooner experienced to be biased, but also because cohesion shapes commanders' room for agency, including in relation to disciplining. As the examples in this section have shown, commanders' scope for disciplining their troops can be heavily circumscribed, specifically when the majority of soldiers in their unit are tied into powerful big-man networks that they themselves are not part of. In such a situation, vertical cohesion is usually already weak, since troops will be primarily oriented towards these big-man networks. The biased distribution of punishments and rewards resulting from interferences by these powerful networks might further weaken vertical cohesion, but among the soldiers who do not form part of them. Seeing that their colleagues are constantly favored and granted impunity, these soldiers are likely to ascribe the responsibility for this state of affairs to the commander. Hence in units that are divided based on big-man orientation, commanders' practices commonly end up being seen as biased by one group or another, depending on how commanders and troops are situated in the various power networks that shape their agency.

Aside from by being undermined by powerful big-man networks, unit commanders' position can also be weakened in units with strong horizontal cohesion where soldiers are antagonistic towards the commander and do not identify with him. In such cases, commanders have to be very careful when meting out punishments, since these will be framed as unfair, and can therefore provoke the dissent of the unit as a whole. The story of the Munyamulenge commander described above provides a clear example of this: his troops strongly bonded together and shared a dislike for their commander (presented as based on his ethnic origins), sending them into dissent when he attempted to discipline them. This highlights the difficult position of commanders in the FARDC, who are engaged in a constant balancing act due to their simultaneous commitments to their hierarchy, big-man networks, their troops, but also their deployment context. As will be shown in the Chapter 10, not all commanders deal with this balancing act in the same manner, in part depending on personal norms and qualities.

9.3.3 *Institutional cohesion: soldiers without a military*

When discussing the factors shaping cohesion, it was mentioned that the bonds between soldiers and their overall institutional framework (the military at large) are influenced by the following factors: both manifest and latent ideology, service conditions, including training opportunities and career progression, socialization efforts by the military organization, perceptions of the legitimacy of political and military top leadership, and finally, broader (societal) appreciation for military service. In light of what has already been said about these elements, it might not come as a surprise that soldiers' identification with and commitment to the military organization as a whole and its leadership were found to be meager across the board. Many soldiers are extremely negative about the FARDC, the top brass and the political leadership that directs the military.

An important cause of weak institutional bonding in the FARDC are service conditions, which are at the heart of discrepancies between idealized notions of soldiering and the lived experiences of serving in the FARDC. Representations of 'good soldiering' relate to the ways in which soldiers imagine an ideal military to function, and deeply inform professional identities and the expectations that soldiers have of the profession and the military organization. Similar to findings by Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2008; 2009; 2010), it was found that notions of good soldiering in the FARDC heavily revolve around order and discipline. Soldiers perceive these virtues to be expressed in two manners. First, by respect for the hierarchy, achieved by obeying superiors and executing orders promptly and well. This is well captured in the widespread expression: *La discipline est la mère des armées* (discipline is the mother of armies). Second, through knowledge and the implementation of the *Règlement militaire*. This emphasis on knowledge reflects the high value that FARDC staff attach to education and training as preconditions for order and discipline. As several informants underlined, one needs to have knowledge of the rules and

¹³⁶ Interview with soldier, Kirumba, 03.05.2010.

regulations before one can implement them. Both the notion of order and that of discipline are seen to be intimately related to material conditions: nearly all military staff contacted stated that good living conditions and living in barracks are essential for guaranteeing discipline. Poverty and living scattered among civilians have brought chaos and disorder, and are seen to create a fertile ground for misbehavior. As we have seen in the discussion on soldiers' forms of professional identification¹³⁷ material conditions are not only central to thinking on order and discipline, but also occupy an important place in soldiers' definition of 'success', at least when it concerns their own career.¹³⁸ A successful soldier is someone who can take care of his or her family, and who is respected by society. However, a successful soldier is also a good soldier, in the sense of having 'morality', as expressed in the values of loyalty, patriotism, and good conduct towards civilians. The value of patriotism is generally connected to the idea that the good soldier is someone who believes that the military is a true vocation rather than a platform for self-enrichment or politics. In sum, the general picture that FARDC staff paint of good soldiering is one in which discipline, order, dignity, education, good living conditions and high moral standards occupy center stage.

This idealized image of soldiering is almost diametrically opposed to the circumstances that soldiers are confronted with on the ground (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2008: 72,75). In everyday life, soldiers experience to belong to the poorest segments of society, to operate in disorganization and with mediocre discipline, to have no access to training and education, little prospects of social mobility, and to serve in an organization where parochial interests rather than self-sacrifice for the fatherland dominate. As many FARDC staff stated: *Nous avons des militaires, mais pas d'armée* (we have soldiers but no military). These discrepancies between soldiering as it is and soldiering as it should be are a source of deep frustration and disappointment. Most soldiers stated to have high expectations when joining the military, emphasizing that they hoped it would offer them opportunities for education and social mobility. Furthermore, those who enrolled after the Second Congo War expected that the newly created military would develop into a modern, strong, republican army that would bring peace and would therefore be appreciated by society. However, none of these expectations have materialized. As a result, FARDC staff from all backgrounds feel disappointed, disillusioned, neglected, and disrespected, both by the military organization and by society in general.

An important way in which this disillusionment is manifested is that a substantial part of the soldiers and officers contacted during the fieldwork indicated they would rather leave military service and search for another job, provided they had the possibility and means. However, they stated that it is difficult to be officially dismissed from the FARDC. Furthermore, without substantial capital and other skills than soldiering, surviving outside the military is a true challenge. In the absence of pensions, this also keeps those ripe for retirement within the military, being essentially forced to continue to serve.¹³⁹ A 60-year-old ex-FAZ soldier explained: 'The Congolese military is like a *corvée* [forced labor] and one is forced to stay there until death, because there are no predispositions for pensions'.¹⁴⁰ Yet, although the desire to leave the military is strong among many FARDC staff, desertion is generally seen as an undesirable option, even though the risk of prosecution is negligible.¹⁴¹ There is a widespread belief that life for deserters is tough, as together with the demobilized, they are a favored object of harassment by the in/security services, getting blamed for all the crimes committed within their area of living. A *sous-officier* in Rumangabo explained: 'If you want to quit you become a deserter and that's very bad (...) I don't have a bank account, I have nothing, but without means you can't leave the military. But as deserter or demobilized you are the privileged target of the security services. No, that [leaving the military] comes at a high price'.¹⁴²

In spite of the alleged difficulties to leave the military, desertion rates appear to be very high,¹⁴³ especially among former armed group soldiers from the Kivus who integrated into the FARDC after the Second Congo War. These high rates of desertion are not only an indication of low institutional cohesion, but also point to low bonding with the primary and secondary group (Henderson, 1985: 16–17). In many cases, ex-armed group fighters desert in (small) groups, often under their former commanders. This happened for example with Col. Mayele, an ex-Mai Mai officer from Fizi who deserted in July 2011 from the FARDC with an estimated 15–20 elements, all former Mai Mai from the same area (Tanganyika sector) who had served under Mayele during the war.¹⁴⁴ Another example is the large group of ex-FRF soldiers who deserted from the Kananda regimentation center in July 2011 to follow ex-FRF Col. Richard Tawimbi, who had been detained in Bujumbura when the FRF integrated into the FARDC in January 2011.¹⁴⁵ Upon his return to the Congo on 27 March,

137 Professional military identities were discussed on pp. 117–118.

138 As described above, the pursuit of material wealth is seen in a negative manner when it concerns commanders or colleagues.

139 According to several informants, (e.g., interviews with FARDC officers in Bukavu on 23.10.2011, Fizi on 26.02.2011 and Baraka on 21.05.2010) long-serving soldiers who retire from the military do get a certain sum. However this is believed to be insufficient to make a living over a longer period of time. While the Law on the Statute of FARDC Staff, which was promulgated in January 2013 (see p. 224) contains provisions on pensions, this law has yet to be implemented.

140 Interview with ex-FAZ *sous-officier*, Fizi centre, 17.02.2010.

141 According to military justice personnel, it is extremely rare that soldiers are prosecuted for desertion alone. It is usually only when deserters commit abuses that judicial action is taken. Interview with military justice personnel, Bukavu, 15.01.2012.

142 Interview with *sous-officier*, Rumangabo, 31.03.2010.

143 Although no official statistics are known, from interviews with S1s and T1s (responsible for personnel) and media reporting, it could be inferred that desertion takes place at a large scale. Most of the times, it concerns former armed group members from the Kivus. This was also confirmed by interviews with armed group members carried out in parallel to the dissertation research, many of whom had previously served in the FARDC.

144 Interviews with members of civil society organizations, Uvira, 28.10.2011.

145 For a background on the FRF and its integration into the FARDC, see pp. 92–94.

Tawimbi re-launched insurgent activity, eventually convincing dozens of ex-FRF troops to desert from the FARDC, emphasizing that the FRF had not achieved the goals it had been fighting for (UNSC, 2011: 79–80). These incidents indicate that for these deserting troops, identification with and loyalties towards their former armed group (commander) had remained more important than the bonds with the FARDC units in which they served, and their loyalty towards the military organization as a whole. The mass desertion of hundreds of ex-CNDP and dozens of ex-PARECO soldiers in April and May 2012 further confirm this observation, demonstrating that after having served for over three years in the FARDC, their loyalty towards the military had remained very thin.

Aside from in widespread desire to leave the military, as articulated in discourse and sometimes put into practice, weak institutional cohesion among FARDC staff is expressed in anger towards the military hierarchy and the political leadership in Kinshasa. This is evidenced by widely circulating expressions like *bakonzi basi bateki mboka na bango, bolingi biso tosala nini* (the leadership has sold out the country, what can we, subordinates, do?). Military staff expressed the feeling that the armed forces are instrumentalized by both the military top and the political rulers, who are strongly believed to have an interest in fostering war for the purpose of self-enrichment and to entrench their power. From this perspective, soldiers have to pay the price for the sinister power games of elites, indicating that military staff perceive their own projects not to align with those of the leadership of the military organization. Similarly, the political leadership is seen to have betrayed them, creating a deep hostility vis-à-vis the incumbents. This was for example evidenced by the fact that some FARDC staff were fantasizing about overthrowing the government: ‘The current government is a disaster. We have to replace the current president. That cannot be too difficult. Me, I am ready. It takes nothing to take Bukavu. Some rocket launchers, a bit of light artillery, and some disciplined troops. That’s all. I could take Bukavu in a couple of hours. But I do not have the means. That’s the problem.’¹⁴⁶ Dislike for the current government was also strongly articulated during the 2011 electoral period. Although some officers stuck to the official ‘military is apolitical’ discourse, others were so fed up with the Kabila government that they ignored the professional prescription not to talk about politics and openly declared to be in favor of one of Kabila’s main opponents in the presidential elections, Étienne Tshisekedi. The strong aversion against the incumbent was also expressed in the widely circulating narratives that ‘Kabila has destroyed the military’ and ‘Kabila knows nothing of military affairs’.

The above discussion of FARDC staff’s representations of the military organization and top leadership shows that while (latent) ideology, in this case expressed as patriotism, might be a factor in sustaining individual motivation to serve, it does not translate automatically into institutional cohesion. The military organization is seen to act partly at cross-purposes with the set of beliefs that are inherent to the (latent) ideology that soldiers adhere to, largely due to bad leadership by both the political and the military top brass. This feeds into a severe feeling of alienation, as soldiers do not feel respected and supported by the very organization that dominates their lives. Such feelings are aggravated by deficient rotation and leave policies, which cause soldiers in the Kivus to serve non-stop on the frontlines. Some soldiers told that they have been fighting in the Kivus since 2004, without rotations to other parts of the country where there is less insurgent activity. Others have even been deployed in combat since 1996, when the First Congo War broke out, and are no longer able to imagine a life without war. It is likely that this prolonged exposure to war conditions and the near-permanent involvement in fighting have caused many FARDC staff to suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, further deepening feelings of alienation (Stearns et al., 2013: 79). Taken together, the experienced abandonment and estrangement nourish what Westbrook (1980: 263) has described as ‘war-related isolation’, which is manifested in ‘expressions that “nobody gives a damn about us”, that the soldier is a mere cog in a machine, and that nothing really matters’. Furthermore, such isolation enkindles war-related feelings of exploitation, expressed in ‘the soldier’s belief that he is being manipulated by a capricious and arbitrary hierarchy, that he has done his fair share, that he is expendable, and that he is being sacrificed for someone else’s benefit’ (ibidem).

Discontent and limited identification with the wider military organization are further reinforced by soldiers’ feeling that their efforts and sacrifices are not recognized and appreciated, not only by the military leadership, but also by Congolese society at large. Such perceived non-recognition has generally been identified as undermining commitment to serve (Henderson, 1985: 17). Since the FARDC’s creation in 2003, there has not been any distribution of medals and honors, although these are important means for maintaining pride in the profession and fostering military professional values. Moreover, medals and honors are a crucial expression of recognition from the side of the military organization and society as a whole. Before the FARDC’s military victory over the M23 in November 2013, there were also few other official manifestations of gratitude for the FARDC’s contribution to the nation. The exception to this was the national holiday of 17 May, Liberation Day, which commemorates the power takeover of the AFDL, but is also dedicated to honoring the armed forces. However, ceremonies and festivities on this day are limited to the bigger urban centers. For the foot soldier on the frontlines, there is usually not much to rejoice on ‘FARDC Day’ or other national holidays like 30 June (Independence Day), since most of the festivities fee destined for troops fails to reach the soldier on the ground.¹⁴⁷

While 2012 and 2013 saw an upsurge in expressions of support for and gratitude towards the FARDC due to the operations against the M23, for the majority of soldiers, this failed to translate into any benefits, although it did offer moral comfort and reinforced pride in the

¹⁴⁶ Interview with mid-ranking officer, Uvira territory, March 2010.

¹⁴⁷ Soldiers are supposed to receive a festivities fee on 30 June and 17 May and in some units, a cow is slaughtered, allowing them get some meat. However, if and how much soldiers receive appears to depend on the personal norms of their commanders, for many complained about the recurrent embezzlement of a part or the entirety of their festivities fee.

profession. Being framed as a patriotic struggle, the fight against the M23 unleashed an unprecedented fervor for the national armed forces, with civil society organizations, the provincial assembly and government of North Kivu and the national parliament all making voluntary contributions to the FARDC.¹⁴⁸ This support was also manifested in marches for the FARDC held in Kinshasa, ceremonies of commemoration for fallen FARDC soldiers,¹⁴⁹ and words of gratitude and encouragement in presidential speeches on national television.¹⁵⁰ In the wake of the victory against M23 in November 2013, even billboards in the capital and T-shirts celebrating the FARDC appeared.¹⁵¹ Aside from the fact that this outburst of enthusiasm was circumstantial and therefore temporary, soldiers deployed in other theaters than where the fight against M23 had unfolded noticed little change. While they did feel emboldened by the rise in appreciation for the FARDC and were proud of its victory, they experienced little concrete benefits in terms of improvements of their service and social conditions. Others lamented that it seemed as if the sacrifices they had made in the struggle against Mai Mai groups, which had entailed substantial losses, were not appreciated in the same manner as the work of their colleagues fighting the M23.¹⁵² It therefore appears that the effects of the M23-induced fervor for the FARDC had overall relatively limited effects on improving institutional bonding.

Another source of limited institutional cohesion, which appears quite specific to the FARDC, are the limited efforts by the military to socialize its members into its professional discourses and norms and to promote allegiance to the organization. The FARDC does little to reduce the chasm between the troops deployed deep in the field and the higher levels of the hierarchy. A soldier in the Kivus, specifically when deployed in far-flung operational zones, may have little exposure to the wider military organization. Staff from non-elite units are rarely deployed to other provinces, especially those coming from armed groups, and may have never seen much more of the FARDC than a *brassage* and regimentation center, aside from occasional passage through zone or region HQs. Ordinary soldiers receive little additional training or education, and there are few other channels through which they get into contact with FARDC staff outside of their units. This reduces their exposure to the official norms and discourses propagated in the FARDC. It was for example only in the course of 2012 that the new code of conduct elaborated in 2009 reached the rank and file in all corners of the Kivus (EUSEC DR Congo, 2012). Up to that time, the FARDC had worked with the Mobutu-era *Règlement militaire* which was educated mostly from memory.¹⁵³ This indicates that the military organization invests little in socializing its troops into formal professional discourses, which undermines soldiers' identification with the organization at large. Other evidence for such limited socialization is that FARDC soldiers have never had to affirm an oath of enlistment, and many officers have not sworn an oath of office, which has important symbolic value.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, in the course of the fieldwork, it was found that no soldier knew whether the FARDC had an official motto. By contrast, all ex-FAZ remembered their former military's adage *mourir pour la patrie* (dying for the fatherland), while those having been educated at the EFO (military academy) in Kananga still knew the slogan of the academy, which is *honneur et fidélité* (honor and loyalty). This relative lack of efforts to create and inculcate a distinct set of beliefs, norms and values has contributed to the widespread feeling that the FARDC has no strong ideology, implying its professional activities are only to the benefit of a self-serving elite.

In sum, soldiers in the FARDC have little commitment to the military organization at large, feeding into a widespread desire to demobilize. Both the military and the political top leadership are seen in a very negative light, which fosters a sense of purposelessness. The main reasons for such weak institutional bonding are poor service conditions, the lack of prospects for social mobility, the fact that the objectives of the organization are seen to be at cross-purposes with soldiers' ideology, and the lack of recognition by the leadership and society at large. A final element of importance is that the FARDC invests little in binding soldiers and socializing them into professional military discourses. Socialization is further hindered by the limited exposure that troops in the field have to the military organization at large. These last factors create considerable space for divergences in dominant norms and discourses per military unit, which is reinforced by the FARDC's high level of de facto decentralization. As will be further explained in the next chapter, this heterogeneity is an important cause of differences in military units' practices, including their conduct vis-à-vis civilians.

Concluding, summarizing and final reflections Part III

Part III explored the structures of domination, signification and legitimation and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection internal to the military, both in the FARDC as a whole and the military in the Kivus, including in field-based units. As demonstrated in Chapter 8, there is significant continuity in the social structures internal to the military, and in the dynamics that these structures set in motion. An important reason for this are continuities in the political center's modes of management, organization and deployment of

148 Radio Okapi, 'Nord-Kivu : la société civile collecte des fonds en faveur des FARDC', *Radio Okapi*, 23 September 2013; C.L./MMC/ACP, 'Nord-Kivu: Julien Paluku assiste des soldats blessés de guerre internés de l'hôpital militaire de Katindo-Goma', *Digitalcongo.net*, 20 July 2013; Angelo Mobateli, 'Nord-Kivu : retenues mensuelles sur les émoluments des députés en soutien aux FARDC au front', *Le Potentiel*, 2 July 2013; Yves Buya, '1000 USD par député pour les FARDC', *CongoNews*, 20 November 2013.

149 Radio Okapi, 'RDC : hommage aux militaires morts aux combats contre le M23', *Radio Okapi*, 9 November 2013.

150 Radio Okapi, 'Joseph Kabila: le succès militaire n'annule pas les efforts politiques et diplomatiques', *Radio Okapi*, 30 October 2013.

151 France 24, 'À Kinshasa, des affiches glorifient "la très puissante" armée congolaise', *France 24*, 5 November 2013.

152 Interviews with FARDC officers deployed in Uvira territory, April 2014.

153 In none of the Amani Leo brigades visited in the Fizi/Uvira area, staff disposed of a copy of the *Règlement militaire*.

154 Only the commanders of the Integrated Brigades were made to swear on the constitution upon completing *brassage*.

the armed forces, which are to a large extent a product of continuities in the structural features of the Congo's social order. These mostly relate to archipelago statehood, governance through indirect rule and the importance of big-man networks for power projection. These structures limit rulers' incentives to institutionally strengthen the armed forces, instead stimulating them to perpetuate historic modes of military management. At the core of this management are a number of policies that generate a strong dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, including: frequent reappointments and redeployments, which are largely driven by the *rapportage* system and rationalities of protection; regular restructuring, in part via rebel-military integration; the creation of a multitude of agencies and units with overlapping and ill-delineated mandates; and finally, perpetuating weak bureaucratic institutionalization, as manifested in little standardized and deficient systems of administration, communications and information diffusion. While these modes of military management have served to assure control over the armed forces since the Mobutu era, their present-day effects in the Kivus are somewhat ambiguous. Due to fragmentation of the political-military landscape, the existence of semi-autonomous power complexes and the strong links between military and extra-military networks, the possibilities to contain power competition within what are for the political center instrumentally profitable boundaries have become strongly circumscribed.

Continuities in the political center's management and deployment of the military have produced important continuities in the structures of domination, signification and legitimation within the armed forces themselves. These structures have coevolved with the infrastructural environment of the Congo, and the availability of means of transport and ICT, creating certain organizational customs and routines that are not propitious to bureaucratic institutionalization, like minimalistic administration and reporting duties. However, in themselves, deficient infrastructure and limited means of transport and ICT cannot fully account for the FARDC's weak administration, deficient information flows and the feeble control and supervision of troops. It is for example possible to keep and transmit detailed reports and records without a computer, or to instruct troops to report three times a day to their immediate commander, even when they are not living in barracks. Furthermore, available ICT and means of transport in the FARDC are often simply not employed for reinforcing supervision. Many commanders use their vehicle not as much for visiting and inspecting troops in far-away locations but for personal revenue-generation activities. Hence, while the difficult infrastructural environment and the limited availability of equipment importantly contribute to the FARDC's relative disorganization, they constitute only one dimension amongst a complex set of interacting factors, which also feature rationalities of protection and the imperatives of revenue generation.

Weak administration and communications systems offer military actors across the board a relatively large freedom to act, including in respect of economic activities. This freedom reduces their incentives to work towards more effective and better institutionalized practices of administration, information diffusion, control and supervision, which would importantly enhance transparency and accountability. For example, some unit commanders have a stake in exercising limited control over the wanderings of their troops since they receive a percentage of the revenue that the latter manage to generate, sometimes via stealing and extortion. The superiors of these unit commanders, for their part, may also have little to gain from stronger supervision and imposing stricter reporting and administrative obligations on their subordinates, given that minimalistic administration reduces the risks of exposing traces of the vast non-official money flows that permeate the FARDC. This is particularly important from the point of view of the operationalization of the reciprocity inherent to patron-client relations, in particular the doling out of favors. Hence, weak bureaucratic institutionalization and a high level of de facto decentralization are in the obvious interest of officers-cum-big-men at various levels of hierarchy. However, these features are also a major source of insecurity to them, and even more so to their subordinates. Diffuse decision making, deficient information flows, and a lack of paper trails and standardized procedures make it difficult to decipher and appeal against decisions. This enables such decisions to be strongly informed by big-man rationalities, therefore appearing erratic from the point of view of legislation and formal regulations.

The insecurity resulting from this seeming arbitrariness is further fuelled by bad and negotiable social and service conditions, the absence of merit-based promotions and deployments, and erratic systems of rewards and punishments. In order to be shielded against and cope with these various sources of insecurity, and ensure survival and social mobility, FARDC staff at all levels are prompted to seek protection from and harness big-men to work the system to their advantage. By entering into protection relations, they provide these big-men with a following, hence power. This in turn, contributes to the reproduction of existing structures of domination within the military, which are at the root of the very dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that create a high level of anxiety and uncertainty among staff. Perversely, given that big-man networks are crucial for the provision of basic needs, even those who are most disadvantaged by the current configuration of power relations, the rank and file, have incentives to solicit protection, thereby ultimately contributing to the reproduction of extant structures of domination.

Obviously, the incentives to maintain the status quo are the highest among the military and political top leadership (cf. Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 14–15). Yet, this does not imply that the top brass consciously foster disorder. First, the existence of particular incentive structures does not predetermine behavior, as social agents might not always act upon these incentives. Second, similar to other social agents, the agency of elites is shaped in complex manners, and may be informed by a variety of considerations, as well as by practical consciousness and routines. Consequently, practices like fostering power struggles between factions are often not purely driven by the strategic calculations of individual agents (hence grounded in utilitarian considerations), but may also be informed by sedimented modes of action (routines) and engrained discourses, norms and beliefs concerning how armed forces should be organized and operate. Hence, the limited bureaucratic institutionalization of the FARDC cannot be entirely attributed to the ill will of elites plotting to block

improvements for personal gain, although utilitarian considerations certainly inform their agency. Rather, it should also be seen as stemming from a combination of continuities in the social structures informing everyday practices and a lack of incentives for altering these practices. This lack of incentives is again partly a result of the intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity, and protection in both the FARDC and the Kivus. These dynamics cause much attention to be directed towards short-term crisis management, and are also at the root of the ineffectiveness or unintended consequences of reform measures that do get implemented.

While both political and military leaders thus have limited motivation to invest in the bureaucratic institutionalization of the military, the political leadership also faces incentives in the other direction, namely to implement reforms that ensure the operation of at least a number of better organized units with strong fighting capabilities that can keep insecurity in the Kivus somewhat under control. The reason is that the incumbents need to be able to ward off existential threats and therefore have to master the centrifugal tendencies resulting especially from (militarized) political-economic networks with a strong regional orientation, such as previously those linked to the CNDP. The Congo is surrounded by not so friendly neighbors with relatively strong armed forces. While generally careful to avoid large-scale invasion or occupation, these powers do not hesitate to engage in covert manipulation. Furthermore, since the Congo has an electoral system, keeping insecurity within the Kivus within certain bounds, including by avoiding outrageous behavior by the military, prevents the government from becoming too unpopular in the electorate's eyes, although this consideration plays ultimately only a modest role. For these various reasons, the incumbents seem to face somewhat more incentives to strengthen the military than Mobutu and his entourage did.

The FARDC's social structures and dynamics, as outlined in Chapter 8, strongly shape the various elements that constitute cohesion in primary and secondary units in the FARDC, which was discussed in Chapter 9. In particular big-man networks have crucial effects on cohesion both in field-based units and in the organization at large, impacting both 'commonality of identification and beliefs' (or the relative salience of homogeneity in terms of forms of belonging and beliefs) and 'community of experience' (or living, working and training together). Where soldiers are strongly oriented towards extra-unit big-man networks for protection, including the provision of basic needs like access to revenue-generation opportunities and social mobility, they tend to identify with and be loyal towards such networks. Where the latter have salient forms of shared identification, such as ethnic origins or former armed group identification, these forms of social identification are likely to be pertinent among its members, which might weaken the collective forms of identification developed by soldiers in the same primary group. This is especially the case where big-man networks are powerful and provide high levels of protection, implying they will command strong loyalty.

But even where big-man networks are not powerful and provide low levels of protection, being more vehicles of solidarity and sociability, the shared forms of identification on which they are based might still be of relevance to military staff. This is for instance the case with ex-armed group networks that are no longer very powerful today, such as the ex-MLC, or with former elite agencies or units of the government forces. Especially where the members of such networks feel marginalized, they might use the identity connected to their previous group as a vehicle to express grievances and articulate claims. This shows how the salience of differences in forms of identification and discourses intensifies where there is sharp power competition, which is a key driver of the dynamics of conflict, protection and insecurity. Yet even in the absence of strong power competition, the sheer heterogeneity of the FARDC, likened by some of its staff to a *bouillabaisse*, implies there are significant ethno-regional, linguistic, (military) educational, and ideological differences among staff. Soldiers and officers from very different (military and non-military) backgrounds and with very different life paths have been thrown together in the FARDC, without much investment in homogenizing the soup, causing many of them to have guarded a bit of their own flavor. However, as evidenced by the differences in experienced cohesion between higher- and lower-ranking staff, it is only when connected to intense power competition or other conflicts with elevated stakes, such as around appointments and access to revenue generation opportunities, that this leads to antagonisms.

That different forms of identification have remained salient among FARDC staff, although this depends on the unit, is also a result of the limited contribution of 'community of experience' to fostering cohesion. Aside from the minimal amounts of training organized for non-specialized units deployed in the Kivus, community of experience has been strongly hindered by organizational flux. The constant breakups of units and changes in command have caused soldiers to frequently face new colleagues and unfamiliar commanders. This has also limited the time troops spend sharing the hardships of daily life together, which generally creates forms of 'despair solidarity' among soldiers, *sous-officiers* and their families. Yet, even where troops do spend significant time living and working together, the beneficial impact on cohesion is far from guaranteed. In many cases, the effects of big-man politics and the lack of meritocracy, as partly stemming from rebel-military integration, prevent that prolonged interactions lead to bonding. Conducting military operations with commanders and colleagues seen as incompetent and unreliable does little to foster mutual attachment. By contrast, especially in the case of defeat or failures leading to high casualty rates, it may even generate important animosities, often causing severe suspicion of superiors' loyalty and motivations, which may lead to subordination.

Aside from demonstrated incompetence, another factor that strongly undermines vertical cohesion are systems of rewards and punishment seen as non-neutral. Within the FARDC, disciplining and rewarding are commonly believed to be heavily biased, working to the advantage of those having an 'umbrella', or powerful protection from big-man networks. These beliefs impact troops' practices, for where soldiers feel protected, they might be less hesitant to commit abuses, estimating that the chances that they will be gravely punished are small. At

the same time, the perceived absence of rewards based on meritocracy reduces incentives for soldiers to excel in their work and display exemplary behavior. In addition to undermining vertical cohesion, differential rewards and punishments for similar practices also weaken horizontal cohesion, as those seen as unjustly favored are generally disliked by their colleagues. However, the influence between cohesion and systems of reward and punishment is mutual, for weak cohesion affects commanders' possibilities to enforce norms and hold troops to account. For instance, where troops dislike and disrespect their superiors, strongly cracking down on misconduct might provoke rebellion, especially where troops are frustrated about bad living conditions and the asymmetries in wealth distribution. This provides incentives for commanders to create a 'permissive climate' for abuses, tolerating some forms of norm violation to allow troops to 'let off steam'. In these various ways, weak unit cohesion in the FARDC has important detrimental effects on civilian-military interaction.

The reduced agency faced by commanders in units with limited cohesion illustrates how it are not only the personal qualities of commanders that shape their practices, but also their position in various social arenas. Commanders do not only have obligations towards their troops, but also towards the hierarchy and the various big-man and other social networks they are tied into. Balancing these different obligations and loyalties is an arduous task, since the projects and visions of these various groups might be at cross-purposes. For example, rapid revenue generation to fulfill *rapportage* obligations for big-men is not always in the interest of a unit's troops, especially where they gain little from it and it provokes hostility among populations with close links to armed groups. Furthermore, if soldiers are tied into different big-man networks than their commanders, these networks might interfere in command practices to arrange favors for their clients and shield them against punishment. This generates the idea that commanders engages in favoritism and are therefore not committed to the group as a whole, which obviously weakens vertical cohesion.

In sum, big-man networks importantly undermine cohesion in the FARDC, both in primary units, brigades/regiments and the organization as a whole. However, there are important differences in the levels of cohesion of units having served for a long time together, like certain IBs and non-integrated brigades, and recently formed units, like previously the Amani Leo brigades and then the regiments. Furthermore, there are differences between higher and lower ranks. Horizontal and sometimes vertical cohesion among field-based primary groups, concerning lower-ranking staff, tend to be stronger than horizontal and vertical cohesion among higher-ranking staff, especially those serving in the *états-majors* of regions, zones, sectors and brigades/regiments. Much less variation can be detected in relation to institutional bonding, which seems weak across the board. This low level of commitment to the military organization can be explained by a variety of factors, including perceptions of the military and the political leadership as having betrayed the FARDC due to their opportunistic and corrupt behavior; limited societal appreciation for the armed forces; and difficult living and service conditions, including a lack of prospects for social mobility. All of this has fostered strong discrepancies between idealized notions and lived experiences of soldiering, which nourishes feelings of senselessness that may foster ill conduct.

What also plays a role in the limited commitment that soldiers feel towards the military organization as a whole is the FARDC's lack of investment in socializing soldiers into professional military norms and discourses. Troops receive little training and education and those deployed on the frontlines may have limited contact with other parts of the military organization. This creates relatively wide margins for variations in (sub)unit-specific discourses, norms and forms of identification. Understandably, where soldiers have more interactions with their peers and their civilian environment, they might become stronger attuned to the discourses and norms of these actors than to those propagated by the military organization. The fact that unit commanders have substantial autonomy in the FARDC further widens the space for such unit-based variations, not least as it grants them significant leeway in what discourses and norms they promote and how. This leads to important differences in social and discursive practices per commander and per unit, generating variations in units' conduct vis-à-vis civilians.

Explaining variations in civilian-military interaction

THROUGHOUT THIS DISSERTATION, it has been highlighted that there are differences in the nature and forms of civilian-military interaction. Practices related to this interaction take place in different domains, are located differently on the spectrum between persuasion and coercion, and are informed by different rationalities (e.g., more particularistic or more public). Such differences shape civilians' evaluations of the military's practices, which may be seen as either more or less licit. Many of the factors producing differences in civilian-military interaction have already been implicitly mentioned or discussed. For instance, Part III highlighted the importance of unit command and cohesion in shaping soldiers' practices, and indicated that the qualities of these two factors may differ per military unit. It was also mentioned that both these factors are influenced by the various social networks in which FARDC staff are embedded, including those related to the environment in which they are deployed. The importance of the deployment context for shaping military practices towards civilians was also discussed in relation to the interaction between the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the military and these same dynamics within the Kivus, as evidenced for example by the impact of armed group presence or the existence of conflicts between civilians. It follows that explanations for variations in civilian-military interaction must be located both within the military and within the environment to which it is deployed.

Chapter 10 identifies and analyzes the factors internal to the military that are at the root of differences in military units' practices towards civilians. In particular, it describes how these features affect military units' projects and the ways in which they try to realize these, or their modes of navigation. Furthermore, it studies how both these dimensions, projects and pathways, affect violence against civilians. In Chapter 11, the focus shifts to the deployment context, and it is discussed how, by influencing both civilians' and the military's agency, this context shapes civilian-military interaction. The chapter looks in particular at variations in *physical setting*, such as whether zones are isolated or not, and at *place-specific structures of domination, signification and legitimation*, like local power configurations and the structure of the local economy. Furthermore, it analyzes the impact of *place-specific dynamics of conflict, protection and insecurity*, which are shaped by factors like armed group presence and conflicts between civilians. It also looks at how this ensemble of deployment context-related factors affects the likelihood that military units will employ violence against civilians. The chapter ends with concluding reflections on how place-specific structures and dynamics interrelate, including from the point of view of the regionalization of social contradictions, and the ways in which this affects and is affected by militarization, seen as a process of structuration.

In both chapters, evidence for claims about the causal influence of certain factors is drawn from the case studies. Given the relatively large number of cases (14) and the vast number of identified factors, it was decided to facilitate analysis by drawing up a table where all the relevant factors are listed and where it is indicated per case whether these factors are present or absent. In order to keep this overview simple, since intended to serve as no more than an additional tool for corroborating conclusions arrived at on the basis of in-depth study, a value of either 1 or 0 was assigned for the presence or absence of a specific factor. Furthermore, to assess claims about causal influence, it was necessary to define an *outcome* or to identify to *what* variations in civilian-military interaction the presence (or absence) of the factors in question contributes. The most important 'outcome' of civilian-military interaction, it was judged, is the extent to which civilians in military units' deployment context evaluate this interaction as relatively good or bad. Based on the fieldwork findings, the outcome of each case was assigned a value, namely 1 where evaluations of civilian-military interaction were mostly negative, and 0 where they were overall relatively positive. Certainly, such dichotomous coding entails a severe simplification. There are many shades in which civilian-military interaction is seen as good or bad and evaluations commonly differ per group of civilians and per domain of praxis, and may also differentiate per (sub)group of military staff. However, sufficient consensus was found per case on *overall* evaluations, hence the general impression left by a certain brigade or battalion as a whole, in order to allow for determining a value. Additionally, these evaluations were generally sufficiently outspoken in either the positive or negative sense to qualify them as either 'good' or 'bad'.

Military units' agency

THIS CHAPTER EXPLORES the formal and informal projects that FARDC units and their commanders pursue, and the pathways they devise and tread to realize these. After discussing in a general manner how military units' agency is constituted, explaining the notions of projectivity and navigation, it introduces the factors that most impact this agency, illustrating these with detailed examples from the fieldwork. Lastly, it analyzes how projects and modes of navigation impact the military's enactment of violent practices towards civilians, which partly explains why some military units behave in a more abusive manner than others.

10.1 *Military units' projects and modes of navigation*

In Chapter 2, agency was described as having three dimensions: reiteration, projectivity and practical-evaluation (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).¹ This also applies to the agency of FARDC commanders and units, which is informed by at once structures of domination, legitimation and signification (relating primarily to the reiterative chord); the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection (mostly relating to the practical-evaluative chord), and the specific projects that units and commanders pursue (relating predominantly to the projective chord). Following Emirbayer and Mische (1998: 967–968), projects or the possible future end-states imagined by social agents reflecting their aspirations, dreams and fears, are seen herein as constructed out of complex blends of discourses, norms and interests. Furthermore, rather than being preconceived, fixed, ends that are developed in isolation from the paths towards their realization, projects always evolve in interaction with the trajectories charted to realize them. Moreover, both ends and means develop conterminously with the evolving context, and are therefore constantly adjusted, giving them an emergent character. Due to this emergent nature, and the fact that their formulation partly draws upon practical knowledge (idem: 984, 999), projects are not always fully discursively articulated, becoming in some cases only fully manifested after the practices informed by them have already been enacted. As was explained, the emergent dimension of agency is very pronounced in the Kivus, where the volatility of the political-military landscape and the related intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection prompt actors to constantly adapt to the changing circumstances, while events often evolve in fundamentally unpredictable directions. Consequently, agents' charting and treading of the pathways towards the realization of their projects is best described by Vigh's (2006) concept of 'social navigation'. This notion highlights the double movement of and interaction between agents and the social formations in which they are situated, which includes a high level of interaction with the other social agents present in those formations (Vigh, 2009: 420). A similar elevated level of relationality and dynamism characterizes the agency of military groups in unsettled environments. As proposed by Utas and Jörgel (2008), this agency is therefore well captured by the concept of 'military navigation'.

'Military navigation' was also judged to be an appropriate term to describe the agency of FARDC units. The projects that these units pursue within the contexts in which they are deployed, and the pathways they chart for realizing them, are emergent and not always explicit. Furthermore, these projects and pathways are relationally constructed, and therefore shaped by the various networks in which commanders and units are embedded, including the military hierarchy, big-man structures, and the deployment environment. Like other militaries, the FARDC is a hierarchically structured organization, implying that units' missions and practices are importantly influenced by orders from the military hierarchy. However, due to the importance of big-men networks in shaping the FARDC's functioning, expectations and injunctions from big-men in the higher echelons also have an important impact on units' practices. Through client-commanders, big-men influence for example the extent to and ways in which units engage in revenue generation, in particular for the *rapportage* system,

¹ The notion of agency was discussed on pp. 36–38.

and the impact this has for their relations to rebel groups in the environment.² The influence of formal and informal hierarchies is not always channeled via explicit orders and strategic directions: due to the de facto decentralized nature of the FARDC, field commanders are often granted considerable leeway in attaining the missions and objectives they are required to achieve. The volatility of the Kivus' political-military situation further reinforces this decentralizing tendency. In the absence of possibilities to predict in detail how events will unfold over time, the hierarchy has little incentives to engage in elaborate and detailed advance planning. The result is not only that navigation is strongly shaped by *in situ* dynamics, but also that the FARDC's actions tend to have a pronounced reactive character, which contributes to rendering them erratic and unpredictable to civilians.

Another reason for the irregular nature of the FARDC's courses of action is that commanders and units commonly pursue a multitude of projects, some of which may be at cross-purposes. Indeed, there is often a dichotomy between on the one hand, the projects of commanders, and on the other hand, those of troops. A good example is *rapportage*. Although the intermediate links in the *rapportage* chain are allowed to keep a certain percentage for themselves, and often try to raise the amount by cheating, the system does not work equally to everyone's benefit. Importantly, where the pressure for extraction becomes high, troops may have to resort to more coercive methods. At the same time, they will have to bear the brunt of the hostile reactions from civilians that will likely follow as a result. Projects within units may also diverge when there are divisions within the leadership of a unit, for example where commanders and deputy commanders are tied into different big-man networks. This was often the case with the Amani Leo brigades, where ex-CNDP and ex-PARECO officers pursued projects that diverged from the parts of the *état-major* that were not linked to those networks. But it is not only the leadership of units that tends to be divided when it comes to projects: within units, such divergences exist as well. As we have seen in Chapter 9, the level of horizontal cohesion within units may differ, and tends to be weak where troops are strongly oriented towards divergent big-man and other social networks. This may occur for instance when some soldiers are deployed in their zone of origin and others not, or when some soldiers used to be part of a certain (ex-)rebel group and others not. These differing orientations are likely to reinforce the importance of particularistic projects among soldiers, hence those that are not related to the unit as a whole. Finally, all soldiers have their individual projects, such as obtaining promotion, enrichment, and status, which intersect, overlap and may conflict with the collective projects they and their colleagues pursue, whether related to their unit or other social networks.

The multiplicity and changing character of the projects and corresponding modes of navigation pursued by military staff render it difficult to impute a clear and single rationality to the paths of action of a single FARDC unit. The fact that the same practices may be informed by various projects simultaneously, including those that are at cross-purposes, only exacerbates this difficulty (cf. Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 999). Nevertheless, it appears that most of the times, one or a few overarching, dominant projects materialize within a unit, which results in general, broad pathways of action. These common projects and corresponding pathways create incentives structures that make the occurrence of some types of practices more likely than others. Therefore, differences in overarching projects are an important source of variations in behavior between FARDC units. Furthermore, they explain why the same unit may show different conduct in another area of deployment or at a different point in time. However, projects are not a stand-alone factor in shaping unit conduct: they always interact with other factors, like unit command and time horizon, in the development of modes of navigation and the ways in which these impact a unit's practices.

An analysis of the practices and discourses of FARDC units showed that the general projects they pursue within their areas of deployment fall into three broad categories: first, public security provision; second, revenue generation; and third, control, seen in primarily a political-economic sense, but also entailing forms of military control. Starting with public security-related projects, some of these focus on armed groups. This category encompasses efforts to enable or conduct negotiations to convince armed groups to lay down arms, and military pressure through offensive operations with the objective of neutralizing and/or dislocating armed groups, often aimed at cutting them off from their main sources of income. However, military pressure is often only temporary and may be alternated with other approaches to armed groups, like cohabitation or collaboration. A final public security-related project of relevance is securing the population, for instance against revenge attacks by rebel groups or banditry. This may be an important project in itself, or be engaged in to facilitate other projects, like (political-economic) control.

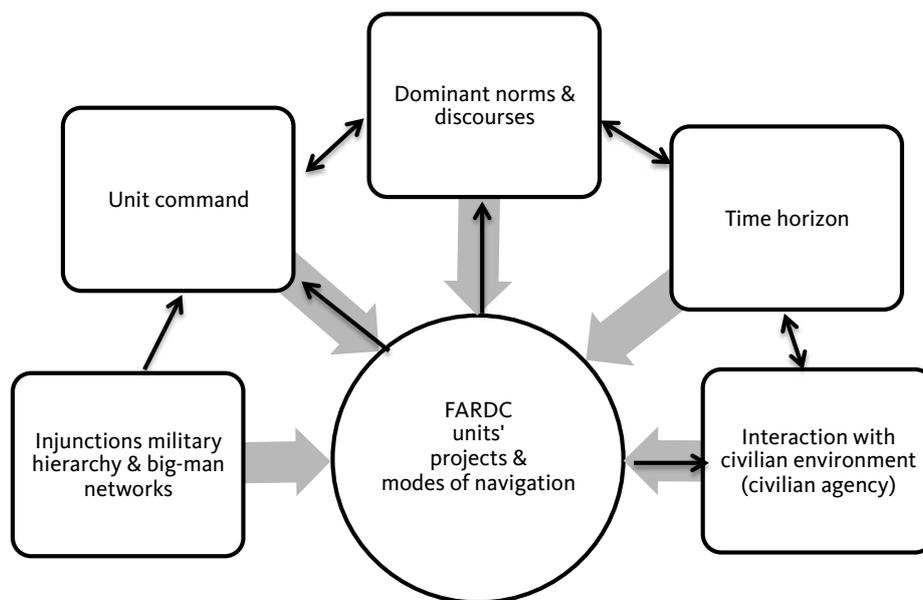
The second category of projects, those centering on revenue generation, is also heterogeneous. As demonstrated in Part II, military revenue generation practices either take on the form of the unilateral extraction of money, goods and services from civilians, or concern more productive economic activities, which may nevertheless involve significant coercion. Aside from differences in the modes, the intensity of revenue generation tends to vary as well, depending on the expectations of a units' hierarchy and the big-man networks into which commanders are embedded, but also on the projects that the unit leadership prioritizes itself. While all FARDC units engage in revenue-generation activities, among some, it has much more emphasis than among others, therefore becoming a core project. Such more intensive revenue generation can be either rapid, implying a unit strives to accumulate as much wealth as soon as possible, or be more gradual. In the last case, revenue generation has priority, but does not necessarily have to be immediate, implying it may for instance entail longer-term investments. The absence of pressures to generate revenue at the short term enables the FARDC to engage in different types of revenue generation activities than when wealth has to materialize immediately, for instance activities that require the building up of trust. In both cases, the project of revenue generation may overlap with that of control.

2 For the effects of big-man influence on commanders' and units' practices, both in relation to revenue generation and other domains, see also Chapter 8, pp. 232–234.

For military units, establishing and maintaining (political-economic) control generally implies integrating in or building up big-man networks in their area of deployment. This commonly entails the development of protection arrangements with civilians, who then provide loyalty and support in exchange for protection services provided by the FARDC, including influence trafficking, dispute processing and favored access to revenue-generation opportunities. The provision of these services, in turn, requires the military to have a measure of political-economic control, that is, influence over the conditions for revenue generation and over local governance, in particular over the administration and other state services. Broadly speaking, the project of control can assume two forms. The first concerns ‘basic control’, which describes a situation where an FARDC unit has a modest level of influence, trying to maintain stability rather than drastically change the status quo, while nevertheless ensuring a certain level of income and influence for itself. Basic control usually implies that units strive to avoid direct confrontations with powerful civilian actors and rebel groups, instead pursuing cohabitation, cooptation, negotiations and a measure of power-sharing. This forms a contrast to the second form of control, which is comprehensive, referring to a situation where an FARDC unit has profound influence on local governance and the economy, often arrived at by marginalizing dominant power networks. Where such networks are linked to armed groups, it is not uncommon that establishing comprehensive control goes hand in hand with military operations, in which case there is an overlap with the category of public security-related projects.

As further explained below, four projects were identified as being pursued most often by FARDC units, sometimes simultaneously. These were: *basic control*, *military operations*, *comprehensive control*, and *revenue generation*. The effects of these projects on units’ practices were not similar, given that the pathways units developed to achieve them greatly diverged. Five main elements were identified as explaining this heterogeneity in modes of navigation: first, injunctions from the hierarchy and big-man networks; second, the time horizon of deployment; third, unit command; fourth; the content and salience of dominant norms and discourses; and fifth, interaction with the deployment context, as shaped by the social structures and dynamics specific to the place where a unit is deployed (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: The main factors shaping military units’ projects and modes of navigation



Due to the emergent and relational nature of agency in volatile settings, many of these elements do not only shape units’ modes of navigation, but also affect their projects, while in turn being influenced by projects and navigation, creating two-way influences. This is especially the case with dominant norms and discourses, which tend to shift under the influence of evolving projects and modes of navigation, for instance when an ‘the end justifies the means’ logic takes hold. Additionally, units’ projects and navigation develop in constant interaction with the deployment environment, as reflected in the very idea of navigation itself (Vigh, 2009). These multiple interactions are reflected in the empirical examples described below, which discuss all but the fifth factor, relating to the interaction with the deployment environment, which takes center stage in Chapter 11. Furthermore, when discussing the effects of the various identified factors on units’ practices, notably how they shape behavior towards civilians as identified by civilians themselves, it will also be indicated how often these effects were found in the case studies, thereby making use of the overview presented in Table 19 (below). This table shows both the values (indicating presence or absence) assigned to each factor per case, as well as the identified outcome (an overall evaluation of a unit’s conduct as good or bad). The justification for these values is detailed in Appendix H.

Table 18 explains how the various unit-related factors shaping units’ conduct were coded. To start with, it indicates which among the four

main identified projects (basic political-economic control, military operations, comprehensive political-economic control, and revenue generation) a unit pursues in each case, by assigning the value of 1 when present, and 0 when absent. From the four military-internal factors shaping units' modes of navigation mentioned in the previous, only three were coded, namely unit command, time horizon and discourses, in particular discursive framings of civilians. One factor, that of injunctions from the hierarchy and big-man networks, was left out. The reason was that an important part of the effects of injunctions from the hierarchy and big-men are already reflected in the main projects that a unit pursues. For example, where the hierarchy exerts pressure to receive wealth generated by a unit in the framework of *rapportage*, this will translate into this unit having revenue generation as one of its core projects. Similarly, military operations are commonly ordered by the hierarchy.

Table 18: Explanation for coding of unit-related factors

Unit-related factor	Coding 1	Coding 0
Revenue generation	Revenue generation is core project	Revenue generation is no core project (but may occur)
Basic control	Basic control is core project	Basic control is no core project
Comprehensive control	Comprehensive control is core project	Comprehensive control is no core project
Military operations	Military operations are core project	Military operations are no core project (but may occur)
Good unit command	Command is willing AND able to control troops	Command is not willing and/or not able to control troops
Short time horizon	Short time horizon	Long time horizon
Hostile discourses	Salient hostile discourses on civilians	No salient hostile discourses on civilians
Outcome	Negative civilian evaluations	Positive civilian evaluations

The factor unit command can be summarized as whether commanders are *willing AND able* to ensure discipline among and the good conduct of their troops towards civilians. Where this was the case, hence the command was considered to be good, the assigned value was 1. By contrast, where unit command was bad, implying leaders were unwilling and/or unable to control their troops, the assigned value was 0. This assessment was made by analyzing commanders' practices of control, supervision, socialization and the regulation of civilian-military interaction, as well as the effectiveness of these practices. Both command practices and their effectiveness were identified to be shaped by three elements: first, commanders' personal norms, projects and capabilities; second, levels of vertical cohesion; and third, commanders' position in formal and informal hierarchies. The next factor, time horizon, relates to both the length of deployment and the composition of troops. Where troops are deployed to their area of origins, their time horizon can be considered as long, regardless the actual length of their deployment. The coding for time horizon was 1 for a short time horizon and 0 for a long time horizon. In relation to the final unit-related factor, dominant discourses and norms, what obviously matters most for civilian-military interaction are the content and salience of a unit's common discourses and norms surrounding civilians. This salience is largely a product of horizontal cohesion, but also of unit command, which can allow or inhibit the use of certain discourses. Expectedly, where civilians are represented as a hostile out-group, the chances are higher that units will develop modes of navigation that tolerate or encourage harmful action against them. Such negative framings might portray civilians as intimately linked to armed groups, as hailing from a specific ethnic group labeled as antagonistic, or simply as worthless and recalcitrant beings not deserving of respect. Negative discourses on civilians feed into and are fed by norms authorizing the use of coercion and sometimes even violence, against civilians. Given that the internal norms of units are difficult to establish with precision, and are assumed to be intimately entwined with discourses due to the indivisibility of structures of signification and legitimation, it was chosen to only code a unit's discourses on civilians. Where hostile framings of civilians were salient, the assigned value was 1, and where such framings were absent or not salient, a 0 was attributed. When assigning all these values, an overview emerged which is presented in Table 19, which also lists the outcomes of each case. In some cases, no value was assigned as it was judged that not enough data had been gathered to make a sound judgment.

10.1.1 Projects, navigation and injunctions from (in)formal hierarchies

As can be expected in a military organization where big-man relations are salient, the injunctions of both formal and informal (related to big-men networks) hierarchies are key factors in shaping units' projects and modes of navigation. The influences of these hierarchies run to a large extent via unit commanders: it is the commander who receives orders from his superiors in the official hierarchy, in particular for security-related projects such as military operations, and it are often also unit commanders who have to meet *rapportage* obligations.

This translates into the actions they plan with their units, for commanders play a key role in developing the modes of navigation that units will follow in order to realize the projects imposed upon them. Yet, projects do not only affect the actions directly required to realize them, but may shape the behavior of a unit as a whole, including their behavior towards civilians. For example, when a commander plans to conduct counterinsurgency operations and tries to win the support of the population to facilitate the task, he may decide to reinforce control and supervision over his troops, doing the utmost to avoid abuses against civilians. By contrast, when he decides to resort to terror tactics in order to scare the population out of supporting the enemy, he may create a permissive climate for abuses, for example by not strictly and promptly punishing abuses. This shows how a unit's projects and corresponding modes of navigation create incentives for commanders to adapt their practices of control, supervision and the regulation of interaction with civilians. Yet, due to the existence of parallel command chains in the FARDC, it may occur that a unit's overarching projects are shaped to a larger degree by other hierarchies than by those of which the unit commander is part. This occurred for example in Amani Leo brigades where the commander was not from the ex-CNDP, but an important part of the general staff and troops were, like in case #4. Hence, while the influence of the hierarchy and big-man networks on units' projects and modes of navigation often largely plays out via the practices of the *commandant titulaire* (first commander), it may also be transmitted via deputy commanders or other members of the *état-major*.

Table 19: Overview of values assigned to unit-related factors per case

Case #nr	Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)							Outcome
	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	
#1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
#2	0	0	1	1	0	1	x	1
#3	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
#4	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
#5	0	0	0	1	0	1	x	1
#6	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
#7	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
#8	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
#9	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
#10	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
#11	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
#12	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
#13	0	1	1	1	0	x	1	1
#14	1	0	0	0	1	0	x	0

The effects of projects on behavior towards civilians

As mentioned, of the various possible projects units can pursue, four types dominated among the studied cases, namely basic control, military operations, comprehensive control, and revenue generation. From the fieldwork findings, it emerged that basic control generally implied that a unit was engaged in maintaining stability, providing basic security to civilians and medium to low intensity revenue generation (either gradual as in case #1, #6 and #7, or not as a significant project, like in case #4, #9, #11 and #14). Furthermore, while units maintaining basic control could occasionally conduct limited military operations, this would not dominate their practices and relations to the deployment environment, and was therefore never a core project. In relation to the effects on outcome, it was found that the project of basic control was likely to coincide with positively evaluated civil-military interaction. When comparing the case studies, it emerged that from the seven cases where basic control was identified as one of the main projects, six had positively evaluated civilian-military interaction (see Table 19). Various reasons explain this. First, basic control does not entail a major threat to the dominant actors in the deployment context, including when these are linked to armed groups. Consequently, these actors and their wider networks are more likely to evaluate the unit in positive terms. Second, basic control does not entail military operations, which usually unleash significant instability and insecurity. The absence of operations also reduces the chances that civilians are seen as aiding hostile armed groups, which can be an important source of distrust that leads to spirals of negative interactions. Third, since basic control does not imply fundamental changes to the structure of the local economy, it is not likely to be a major threat to people's livelihoods. Since livelihoods impact is a key factor in shaping civilians' evaluations of the military, as was explained in Chapter 5, this makes it more likely that a unit will be evaluated in positive terms.³

The project of comprehensive control generally implied that a unit made significant efforts to establish political-administrative and economic influence, which was in turn conditional upon a certain level of military control. Comprehensive control was usually accompanied

³ See pp. 129 and 138–140 for a discussion of the importance of livelihoods impact in shaping civilians' evaluations of military practices.

by medium to high intensity engagement in revenue generation (hence combined with revenue generation as a core project), such as in cases #3 and #10. Where this occurred in an area where economic activities were largely controlled by competing militarized networks, units often pursued military operations as an additional project, like in cases #8, #12 and #13. The project of comprehensive control usually coincided with negative evaluations of civilian-military interaction. In fact, from the five cases where comprehensive control was identified as the main project, four had civilian-military interaction seen in negative terms (see Table 19). The reason is that comprehensive control commonly entails a major threat to vested interests, leading to discontent among (factions of) elites. Furthermore, it tends to unleash fierce power struggles, which commonly create insecurity for wide layers of the population. The exception to this pattern was case #8, encompassing the all-Banyamulenge 112th brigade in Minembwe. As a purely locally recruited brigade in control of the same area since 2003, comprehensive control was something that it had already achieved in the past, implying that at present, it did not threaten, but shored up the interests of dominant civilian elites, at least in the Minembwe part of the *Plateaux*.

While comprehensive control was often accompanied by military operations, in some cases, military units pursued operations as the primary project, without engaging in much effort to exercise far-reaching political-administrative or economic influence or to generate revenue. This occurred with certain Amani Leo brigades (such as case #5), especially when deployed for a short time in environments where rapid revenue generation was difficult, for instance as it was blocked by vested interests. However, in many other cases, military operations tended to combine with revenue generation as one of the core projects (e.g., case #2). But regardless what other projects were additionally pursued, military operations nearly always coincided with negative evaluations. In fact, in four out of the five cases where significant military operations took place, evaluations of civilian-military interaction were negative (see Table 19). Due to insufficient training and preparedness, considerable logistical challenges, and low levels of command competence and vertical cohesion, military operations by the FARDC often lead to violence against civilians, which sets in motion and/or is nourished by negative spirals of interaction. Furthermore, the close social embedding of certain armed groups renders it likely that military operations threaten the interests of local authorities and other elites, or evoke the dislike of populations sympathizing with these groups. The only case where military operations did not coincide with negatively evaluated civilian-military interaction was case #8, relating to the 112th brigade in Minembwe. However, this case represents a quite specific situation, as the population around Minembwe supported the 112th in its struggle against the rebels of FRF, which were located in a different part of the *Plateaux*. Furthermore, much of the fighting, at least in 2009–10, did not take place directly in the Minembwe zone (or had very specific, limited targets)⁴ but in the stronghold of the FRF, therefore not leading to severe damage in the case study area.

In respect of the project of revenue generation, as explained above, there are many forms and degrees, causing variations in its impact on civilian-military interaction. Moreover, this impact partly depends on interaction effects with other factors such as time horizon. As will be further explained below, where revenue generation activities depend on trust, a unit has incentives to behave well towards civilians, increasing the chances that civilian-military interaction will be seen in a positive light. However, in most other cases where a unit prioritizes revenue generation, this likely causes frictions with civilians, as it unleashes competition for scarce resources. Furthermore, where units are to a large extent preoccupied with revenue generation, they are less likely to adequately carry out their public security-related tasks, which will harm civilians' appreciation for the unit.⁵ When looking at the case studies (see Table 19), we see that of the nine cases where revenue generation was identified as an important project, six coincide with negatively evaluated civilian-military interaction. This indicates that the effects of this factor are not very strong in a stand-alone fashion. However, in interaction with other elements, the project of revenue generation may have significant influence on units' practices. This also applies to the absence of revenue generation as a core project, which tends to facilitate good relations with civilians. Of the five cases where units did not display an important drive to generate income, four coincided with positively evaluated civilian-military interaction (see Table 19). One of these cases (#11) relates to a brigade that when deployed in its previous location (case #10) did engage in significant revenue generation, and was evaluated in an exceedingly negative manner there. In the following, the trajectory of this brigade is further analyzed, which provides important insights into how strongly units' projects shape overall unit conduct, while also showing how deeply these projects are influenced by injunctions from the hierarchy.

Hierarchy-induced shifts in projects: the remarkable trajectory of the 651st brigade (cases #10 and #11)

The 651st brigade has appeared already several times in this dissertation. It was for example explained that their nickname, the *Malewa*, referred to the music in the mobile phones they used to rob and extort when deployed in Fizi. Indeed, this unit was widely reported to be engaged in violent practices of extraction and other abuses, like theft, burglary, looting, rape, and the seizure of belongings at roadblocks. Their deployment to the gold mining area of Misisi (in the Ngandja sector of Fizi, case #10) in 2009 caused great anxiety, distress, and poverty in this zone. A part of the population and *creuseurs* (artisanal miners) fled, which contributed to a decline in economic activity. Due to insecurity, people stopped cultivating, and the nightlife, an important sector of the local economy, came to a standstill. Additionally, many people lost livestock, agricultural tools and household items, which was a direct outcome of this unit's engagement

4 Neither the FRF's attack on the house of the commander of the 642nd (ex-112th) brigade in December 2009 nor its looting of the installations of the mineral exploration company TransAfrika in May 2010, both of which occurred in the Minembwe area, caused much collateral damage. See also UNSC, 2010: 21.

5 How security performance shapes civilians' evaluations of military units was earlier discussed on pp. 134–135 and 140–141.

in systematic pillage and stealing. But the biggest factor in sparking economic crisis was the downturn of the gold sector, which is the economic motor of the wider Misisi area, as reflected in the fact that gold is the main currency in this zone.

The decline of the gold sector had various reasons. Not only had many *creuseurs* left the area, those who had stayed had started to work less hours, as they no longer dared to circulate after dawn, fearing that their belongings and sand (which contains the gold) would be stolen by soldiers. *Creuseurs* were also forced to pay arbitrary amounts to soldiers controlling the entrance to the mining areas, often involving heavy intimidation. The owners/managers of underground mining pits, commonly called PDG (from *président-directeur général* or Chief Executive Officer), suffered as well.⁶ After investing in excavating the underground shaft, PDGs rent out a certain square of the pit per hour to a *maloué* or manager of a digging team. The price of these work hours is determined by the estimated amount of gold that will be found, as based on a sample of the sand taken from the square where digging will take place. In Misisi, it has been a common practice since the Mobutu era for the military and other state services to run their own digging teams and impose so-called 'free hours' on pit-owners, or overstay the time allocated to their teams. For example, whenever an accident happens in an underground pit, the prosecutor's office usually proposes free hours in order to prevent the case from being investigated. FARDC officers engage in similar practices, either imposing free hours or reduced tariffs, or ordering their digging teams to widely overstay the allocated time. In other cases, military staff simply impose a sum in cash on PDGs that is equivalent to a number of exploitation hours, which qualifies as illegal taxation. Like all routine practices, this form of extortion is governed by informal norms. Consequently evaluations of this practice differ, ranging from somewhat to extremely illicit. This was evidenced by the fact that although an institutionalized practice, the commander of the 651st brigade was generally seen as having strongly exaggerated the exercise of his 'privileges', being reported to impose many more free hours than previous commanders. PDGs contacted in February 2010 told they 'lived under a reign of terror', and some were alleged to have suspended exploitation altogether since only 'friends of the military' could operate smoothly those days.

What explains the ill conduct of the 651st brigade in the Misisi area? As may not be surprising in the light of the complexity of military units' agency as emphasized in the previous, there is not a single explanatory factor, but a host of interacting elements. Importantly, a large part of the ex-PARECO troops in this brigade were new recruits from North Kivu, who had enrolled only after the rapid integration of 2009, given that PARECO had inflated its numbers to obtain better positions in the FARDC. Others had only been given rudimentary training within PARECO or the militias preceding it, which were generally not very professional forces. But it were not only the troops who lacked training and education. As we have seen, within the Amani Leo brigades, big-man considerations predominated in the distribution of command positions, causing incompetent commanders to be appointed throughout the command chain. This also applied to the brigades of the 65th sector deployed to Fizi, who generally had a low quality of command. Upon arrival in Fizi, these hastily assembled, badly trained, ill-prepared and weakly commanded units were immediately sent on operations against first the FDLR, which used to have important headquarters in Lulimba (close to Misisi), and later the Mai Mai Yakotumba. In these circumstances, it may not come as a surprise that these operations entailed considerable collateral damage to civilians. Furthermore, the shifts in military control resulting from the operations provoked serious instability. Some armed groups, notably the FDLR, were pushed out of their strongholds, but continued to contest the control of the FARDC at the fringes, or started to engage in extortion, theft and looting to compensate for lost sources of income. Due to a combination of FDLR withdrawal and the erratic deployment patterns of the FARDC, other armed groups were given more space of movement, which sometimes provoked an increase in exactions by these groups. Not able and/or willing to stem this rise in insecurity, people blamed the FARDC, sometimes believed to deliberately try to destabilize the area. These last framings were partly a result of the discursive practices of local political-military entrepreneurs, including the Mai Mai of the group of Yakotumba and their wider networks.⁷ These locally powerful actors tried to seize upon the deployment of the Amani Leo brigades to mobilize popular support for their own anti-government and anti-Rwandophone agendas, thus reinforcing their grip over the population. Consequently, they framed the upsurge in insecurity resulting from the deployment of the 651st brigade in ethnic terms, brandishing anti-Rwandophone propaganda to discredit its Hutu troops. The ill-disciplined nature of the brigade only confirmed the prejudices towards Rwandophones harbored by the Babembe, thus setting in motion a negative spiral of ethnically framed antagonisms, distrust, and misconduct. This mutual hostility provides a further explanation for the brigade's abysmal behavior, as its dislike for the 'autochthonous' Babembe population came to feed into justifications of violence against civilians. A final reason for the 651st brigade's ill behavior were the pressures of the *rapportage* system. Since the Misisi gold mining area is a coveted deployment site, the brigade commander was obliged to regularly deliver revenue to his superiors/protectors in order to maintain his position. However, sources within the brigade believed that *rapportage* pressures alone could not fully explain his alleged penchant for tolerating, if not outright encouraging, rapid and ruthless wealth extraction. According to these informants, the ways in which the brigade commander stirred his unit's navigation was also related to his drive for self-enrichment.⁸ This was for example reflected in his approach to the mining sector in Misisi, which was clearly aimed

6 There are various types of mining activities in Misisi. First, there are miners digging in the open air in and around the river Kimbi or in the hills. Second, exploitation takes place in underground mining pits that are managed by PDGs who rent them out to teams of miners. Sand from both these activities goes through sand-crushing machines called *concasseurs*. From 2013 onwards, there is also semi-industrial mining activity (via cyanidation), which treats the sand left from the *concasseurs* with cyanide in order to extract more gold.

7 The history and position of the Mai Mai in Fizi were discussed on pp. 89–91.

8 Members of the brigade's *état-major* and the sector and zone command that the brigade fell under stated that in particular the brigade commander and one of the deputy commanders were persons 'loving money' (*qui aiment l'argent*). When the brigade commander became the head of a regiment deployed in Uvira in the course of 2012, he displayed the same behavior, which further corroborates this reading of his agency.

at accumulating as much wealth as rapidly as possible, with little concern for the longer-term negative consequences.⁹ Furthermore, the brigade leadership appeared to tolerate that its troops engaged in stealing and even looting, since these acts were not systematically punished.

In February 2010, the 651st brigade was rotated to the Baraka area (Mutambala sector of Fizi), exchanging its deployment location with the 641st (the former 29th Integrated Brigade which had been deployed to the Baraka area since 2007, case #6). In its new environment, the brigade largely exhibited similar behavior, although its conduct in and around the town of Baraka was said to be somewhat better due to the large presence of international NGOs, UN agencies, vocal Congolese civil society organizations, which had a self-censoring effect. However, in the more isolated corners of its new deployment area, especially along Lake Tanganyika, stealing, burglary, brutal roadblock extortion and other forms of misconduct continued unabated.¹⁰ This behavior was aggravated by military operations conducted against the Mai Mai Yakotumba, which did not only create widespread insecurity, but also reinforced hostility among the parts of the population sympathetic towards this rebel group.

In November 2010, the 651st was given orders to exchange places with the 652nd brigade, then deployed on the *Hauts Plateaux* in operations against the rebels of the FRF (case #12). The 652nd or *Fyekafyeka* was mentioned earlier in relation to the protection arrangement that its commander had forged with the local authorities in Minembwe.¹¹ This brigade had built up an exceedingly bad reputation on the *Plateaux*, where it practiced various forms of violent extraction and intimidation against a population they accused of massively supporting the FRF.¹² This ill behavior was to a large extent the result of bad leadership, as Col. Sekanabo and others in the *état-major* seemed to prioritize rapid revenue generation over providing security to civilians. In part as a reaction to this behavior, the FRF mercilessly attacked one of the battalions of the 652nd near Mibunda on 8 November 2010.¹³ The attack, which had been preceded by a number of others, ended in carnage for the FARDC, with at least ten officers and soldiers killed. This defeat heavily demoralized the brigade and fostered further paranoia among its commander, Col. Sekanabo, whom the FRF had threatened to personally attack. That this threat was not to be taken lightly had been illustrated by the fate of his predecessor, who had been targeted by the FRF in a surprise attack in December 2009 with the intention of eliminating him.¹⁴ Aside from demoralizing the 652nd, the events in Mibunda demonstrated that the military operations against the FRF had not significantly reduced this group's military capabilities, even though they had limited its space of movement. Worse still, the operations appeared to have reinforced popular support for the rebel group, since the population had been antagonized by the abusive practices of Sekanabo's brigade, which had eroded their trust in the government. Realizing that the presence of the 652nd would not further contribute to neutralizing the FRF, and that the brigade needed room to breathe and recover, the military hierarchy decided to rotate them with the 651st and to reopen negotiations with the rebels.

When Col. Mahoro, the commander of the 651st brigade, arrived on the *Plateaux* at the end of November 2010 (case #11), he had been explicitly ordered by the hierarchy to facilitate negotiations with the FRF. Since this group was closely linked to the population, at least in the Kamombo and Mibunda areas, this implied serious efforts had to be made not to antagonize civilians, including the authorities. Mahoro appears to have been receptive to these instructions for two reasons. First, if the mission of negotiations with the FRF would succeed, he could positively distinguish himself and earn recognition from the hierarchy. The trouble that his troops had caused earlier, specifically in the Misisi area, had not gone unnoticed by his superiors,¹⁵ and this special mission offered him the opportunity to redress his reputation. Second, Mahoro quickly understood that mistreating the population would be dangerous, since it could provoke vicious attacks by the FRF, or even cost him his life. This shows that he had strong personal motivations to pursue the project he was ordered to execute by the hierarchy. Undoubtedly, this was an important factor in his bringing about a quite remarkable transformation in the conduct of his troops. During its brief deployment on the *Plateaux*, specifically in the initial phase, the conduct of the 651st was impeccable. On Mahoro's orders, all roadblocks were suppressed and the previous division of market taxes, which had been altered by

9 Another illustration of the brigade leadership's penchant for tolerating ruthless revenue generation was the impunity granted to a battalion commander who was involved in the large-scale looting of Fizi *centre* in April 2010, in spite of what according to several brigade members was clear evidence he had instigated the crimes.

10 The ill behavior of the 651st brigade in the Mutambala sector and adjacent parts of Ngandja is further illustrated by the shooting incident in Kazimia, as described on p. 207 and the rogue roadblock extortion at the time of the mining ban, as described on p. 138.

11 The protection arrangement between the 652nd brigade and the civilian authorities in Minembwe was discussed in Chapter 6 on pp. 172–173.

12 How the Amani Leo operations affected the relations between the FRF and civilians was earlier described on pp. 93–94.

13 One of the motivations for the attack, as voiced by the rebels, was the FARDC's mistreatment of the population, an interpretation of the events that was widely shared among civilians in the Kamombo and Mibunda sectors of the *Plateaux*. This conclusion is based on interviews with the FRF in December 2010, including with members of the political leadership (near Kamombo) and with the FRF's force commander, 'General' Michel 'Makanika' Rukunda (near Kabara).

14 On 9 December 2009, the FRF attacked the commander of the 642nd brigade then in control of the *Plateaux*, with the explicit aim of killing him. Interview with commander of 642nd brigade, Bukavu, 18.01.2011. See also UNSC, 2010: 21.

15 That the ill behavior of the 651st was known by the hierarchy emerged for example from conversations with members of the staff of the 6th Zone Ops in January 2011 in Uvira, who told that Mahoro had once been called to Bukavu by the hierarchy, where they gave him a strong warning. Furthermore, the MONUSCO human rights office in Uvira reported to have undertaken two missions with the military prosecutor's office to the 65th sector to investigate abuses and exert pressure. Additionally, the civil affairs department had organized a workshop in Fizi to improve civil-military relations, sending a clear signal to the 651st that their conduct was a matter of concern. Interview with MONUSCO human rights section, Uvira, 20.03.2011.

the preceding brigade to allow them to usurp all the revenues, was restored.¹⁶ Furthermore, Mahoro ensured that his troops were not stealing, looting, raping or extorting. During the month of December 2010, human rights actors and local authorities recorded only one serious incident implicating his brigade. In the meanwhile, Mahoro approached the FRF to convince them to engage in negotiations. These efforts were largely successful and on 18 January 2011, an FARDC delegation from Bukavu started talks with the group on the *Plateaux*. These negotiations were eventually successful, culminating in the integration of the FRF into the FARDC that same month, and the creation of a new operational sector (the 66th) on the *Plateaux*, the command of which was dominated by the ex-FRF. Hence, Mahoro managed to accomplish his mission successfully, a feat that had been facilitated by the excellent conduct of his troops vis-à-vis civilians at a crucial moment.

The noticeable behavioral change in the 651st brigade provides strong evidence for the weight of projects and injunctions from the hierarchy in shaping the conduct of military units towards civilians. Mahoro's main project on the *Plateaux* was to facilitate talks with the FRF, and the path chosen to arrive there was to seek an overture by means of non-provocative behavior that had to instill trust. Following this path was no doubt eased by the fact that the deployment of the 651st to the *Plateaux* ultimately lasted only a brief period of time (around two months), making it easier to guard discipline among troops in the harsh circumstances of this isolated and cold environment. Where command and control are weak, the mountainous area of the *Plateaux* is conducive to misbehavior as soldiers feel isolated there due to the absence of phone network coverage,¹⁷ and easily get bored with village life. In combination with the harsh climatic circumstances, this may incrementally foster a type of recklessness and carelessness that lowers the threshold for ill conduct. Even though being exposed only briefly to these difficult circumstances, in the light of the brigade's earlier rapacious behavior, the 651st's performance on the *Plateaux* was a remarkable achievement nonetheless.

10.1.2 *Time horizon and local embedding*

In their approach to agency, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) emphasize its temporal embedding, highlighting how actors' varying relations to and conceptions of time shape their agentic orientation. This also applies to the ways in which FARDC units are temporally inserted in their deployment context: both the (anticipated) length of stay of a unit and troops' local origins may importantly impact the development of their projects and modes of navigation. However, this does not occur in a deterministic manner. Rather, time horizon interacts with other factors, merely making the occurrence of certain practices more or less likely by changing incentive structures. Since individual agents are not always fully aware of these incentive structures, the impact of time horizon on projects and navigation does not necessarily run via conscious ex-ante decision-making. Furthermore, like with all project elaboration and navigation, the impact of time horizon is shaped by social agents' constant adaptation to the evolving situation, based on ongoing practical-evaluation and monitoring, including of the consequences of previous practices.

The effects of time horizon on the practices of armed actors calls into mind Olson's (1993: 568) famous distinction between stationary and roving bandits. For Olson, roving bandits obtain resources by plunder in the passing, while stationary bandits generate revenue by imposing and monopolizing regular taxation. This prevents them from extracting so much wealth or employing so much violence that the production capacity of the population is destroyed, or what Reyna (1990: 151–164) calls 'predatory accumulation'. An assured stream of income through regular taxation will enable and motivate the stationary bandit to provide some form of public goods, provided this increases taxable income. This rationality applies to protection providers more generally. As argued by Gambetta (1993: 33), protection providers' time horizon crucially shapes in how far their protection activities are predatory in nature: as it shortens, protectors are more tempted to prey. Not only will uncertainty prompt them to maximize present over future revenues, customers will be more hesitant to buy protection, knowing that protectors' 'life expectancy' is only limited. As a consequence, the incentives faced by protectors to resort to more coercive modes of income generation intensify. Inversely, a longer time horizon gives protection providers incentives to provide real rather than bogus protection. The business of protection crucially hinges upon personalized relations and protectors' reputation. Consequently, the provision of bogus protection is harmful at the long term, as people who have the feeling of being extorted will get dissatisfied and will ultimately turn to competitors. However, if relations are stable and satisfactory, and unfold with a degree of predictability, clients gain trust in their protectors. The resulting stability will allow them to make greater investments, including in business activities that will only yield profits in the future. In the long term, the resulting intensification of economic activities may also be to the benefit of protection providers, allowing them to enlarge their own income and influence.

Roughly similar mechanisms may, in differing forms and degrees, also be at work when the FARDC is deployed for a long period of time in the same context and/or where a large share of its troops are deployed in their area of origins (here called 'local troops'). The longer a unit stays in a particular area, the more familiar it becomes with the civilian environment, allowing it to build up extensive social ties, including protection arrangements. This might cause a shift in the bases of civilians' agency, who are likely to comply and collaborate less because they are forced to do so, and more as they hope to gain something from it or because they have started to get used to it, pointing to nascent routines. Furthermore, long-term stay allows units to develop different economic activities, especially those requiring higher

¹⁶ Changes in the division of market taxes on the *Plateaux* are further discussed on pp. 323–324.

¹⁷ Since 2014, large areas of the *Plateaux* have phone network coverage, hence troops are nowadays somewhat less isolated.

initial investments and taking a longer period of time before being profitable (since there is less risk that the initial investment will not be earned back), which includes activities that demand high levels of predictability and trust (e.g., activities involving pre-financing, buying on credit or the development of a fixed network of customers or suppliers). The revenues yielded by such more productive activities (hence which add economic value) will diminish the urge to unilaterally extract wealth from civilians, like through taxation and non-payment for services.

Furthermore, both the construction of big-man networks and longer-term economic investments reduce the incentives to extract wealth by utilizing brutal force or to engage in other forms of violence. One reason for this is that when having protection relations with officers, civilians can hold the military to a certain extent to account, implying that when abuses occur that affect themselves or their wider networks, they might approach military staff (via informal channels) to seek redress. This may even occur when the abuses were not committed by military staff directly linked to or part of protectors' own networks, since civilians may also approach the latter to exert pressure on other military staff to take appropriate measures. Another reason why incentives to engage in or tolerate violence will diminish when troops have a longer time horizon is that the resulting insecurity or plummeting of trust may harm revenue-generation activities. For example, where military staff own bars, they have a stake in keeping levels of nighttime insecurity low (unless they are involved in banditry rings themselves), since their venue will attract less customers when it is highly dangerous to circulate at night. Military staff owning boutiques might equally have incentives to keep insecurity within certain bounds, as this commonly leads to a drop in the sales of non-food items due to the reduced circulation of money. Similarly, when military staff or their spouses are involved in forms of trade that depend on road travel, they may have incentives to guard road safety. However, to what extent and how military staff will act upon such incentives largely depends on their superiors as well as their other revenue flows. Obviously, where activities requiring security or good relations with civilians yield only a limited shared of military staff's overall income, the incentives to ensure the right climate might considerably diminish.

In sum, long-term deployment of FARDC units in the same context impacts the construction of their projects and pathways by changing the nature of their webs of relations to the civilian environment, and by affecting their possibilities for revenue generation. When units have a long time horizon, projects and pathways are more likely to become oriented towards maintaining a measure of security and stability. Crucially, long-term protection relations and business ties raise the costs of abusive behavior, creating incentives for commanders to confine it within certain boundaries and avoid that it is indiscriminate, lest it targets client constituencies. At the same time, when having a long time horizon, units' practices become stronger anchored in protection relations and other socio-economic ties, implying they can elicit compliance and collaboration from civilians on other bases than coercion. Furthermore, where military staff engage in productive economic activities, the drive to extract wealth from civilians might become smaller.

However, there are also certain drawbacks to a long time horizon. Long term and local deployment lead the projects and forms of identification of individual military staff to become more 'localized' and 'privatized', especially where troops live scattered among the population. Troops that stay for a long time in the same environment do not only intensify interaction with civilians, the nature of that interaction shifts as well. As protection ties grow, military staff become susceptible to manipulation by civilians trying to capitalize upon their contacts in the military for furthering their own projects. This commonly takes the form of appealing to the FARDC to intervene in the processing of all sorts of local and private disputes, score settling and influence peddling.¹⁸ As explained, these interventions often have a coercive dimension. However, where troops have a long time horizon, this coercion is less likely to take the form of brutal violence, rather assuming more subtle manifestations, like covert intimidation or mild repression. Aside from by being solicited by forum-shopping civilians, military staff with a long time horizon are inclined to transform into 'shopping forums' and intervene in local conflicts on their own initiative. Not only have they built up vested interests that need to be safeguarded, due to their local embedding, they also have better knowledge of the occurrence and stakes of such conflicts. This may lead staff to become more and more oriented towards the civilian environment, therefore displaying diminishing commitment to the collective projects of their unit, including military tasks. Such changing orientations may prompt them to decreasingly identify with their colleagues, who may equally become stronger oriented towards extra-unit networks, which negatively affects unit cohesion. Similar processes can be detected among local troops, who tend to share salient forms of belonging with the extra-military social networks in their deployment context, often linked to family, village, (sub) clan and ethnic groups. Moreover, where these troops are from a part of the population that is in a vicious conflict with another part, there is not only a risk that they will be drawn into that particular conflict, but also that they may resort to violent interventions. This is particularly the case where competing groups are framed in antagonistic identity-based terms, as when hailing from an ethnic out-group, or are linked to armed groups that are targeted by FARDC operations.

Another disadvantage of a long time horizon is that for troops who are highly familiar with the local environment, it is easier to engage in or protect banditry. Certainly, this does not imply they will necessarily engage in such practices, as this also depends on a host of other factors, including their personal norms and projects and those of the unit of which they form part. However, in several research sites, informants such as staff of the military prosecutor's office and human rights defenders stated to believe that local or long-deployed troops are more prone to involvement in banditry due to their extensive local knowledge and dense social networks. For instance, informants from the territories of Fizi and Uvira reported that acts of banditry by FARDC soldiers were often committed or protected by troops from

¹⁸ Military interventions in civilian dispute processing were extensively analyzed on pp. 179–186.

the area, although those having stayed in the area for a long time were also cited as being more often involved than others. The alleged reason was that soldiers from the area are more likely to have accurate information on local mobility and economic activity patterns, the location of important property, and who has money in their possession at what point in time. They are also more likely to have the contacts that are needed to easily hide, transport and sell booty, to move around undetected by hiding among relatives and friends, and to avoid being apprehended. At the same time, due to their elaborate local knowledge and extensive social networks, local troops, at least when in the minority in their units, appear to more easily escape the control of their commanders, which gives them the space to be directly or indirectly involved in banditry. While for these various reasons, the threshold for troops with a long time horizon to engage in illegal revenue-generation activities may be lower, they do not necessarily follow that path. In fact, local troops only appeared to display higher intensity involvement in banditry where they were not in the majority. Furthermore, and similar to long-term deployed staff, to what extent they engaged in banditry still highly depended on the individual. Therefore, it seems that the effects of a long time horizon on involvement in banditry are relatively individualized and overall limited.

From the above, it follows that a long time horizon generates partly contradictory incentives for military staff: while on the one hand, it may prompt them to foster relative security and stability, on the other hand, it might lead them to intensify certain forms of coercion, notably in relation to dispute processing, influence peddling, and sometimes banditry. However, this coercion tends to be exercised very selectively, implying it targets only a limited amount of persons, and, except for when relating to banditry, may be relatively discreet. Furthermore, an enhanced involvement in banditry does not materialize in all situations. Since the incentives for troops with a long time horizon to crack down on other forms of coercion, notably indiscriminate and wholesale violence, seem relatively strong, the net impact of a long time horizon is often to foster civilian-military interaction that is experienced to be good. When looking at the case studies, a long time horizon indeed often coincides with positively evaluated civilian-military interaction: this applies to five out of the six cases where the time horizon was long (see Table 19). The exception was case #3, the naval forces in Vitshumbi. This is likely related to the strong dependence of this unit on coercion-based protection schemes (namely the protection of illegal fishing) in an environment with many competing armed actors. As will be discussed in Chapter 11, the presence of competing armed actors often pushes a unit towards ill conduct, in particular where there is competition for providing protection. Analyzing the cases where time horizon was short, we see that from the seven cases, five coincide with negative evaluations (see Table 19). One of the exceptions to this was case #10 or the 651st on the *Plateaux*, which was extensively discussed in the previous section. As we have seen, this unit was ordered to facilitate negotiations with the FRF, a mission that created a particular set of incentives to behave in a good manner. The second exception was case #7, the 641st (ex-29th IB) when deployed to the Misisi gold mining area. As will be further explained in the following, this concerned a relatively well-educated and cohesive unit. Possibly, this counter-balanced the incentives towards more coercive practices that are typically manifested in cases of a short time horizon, showing that time horizon importantly interacts with other unit-related features. Additionally, as will be further discussed in Chapter 11, the impact of time horizon may also be mitigated or altered due to the features of the deployment context, notably the nature of revenue-generation activities. As highlighted by research on the Congo Wars, military forces do not enter a void, but partly depend on existing economic networks, resources and activities, some of which are easier to tax, control or take over by outside armed actors than others (Vlassenroot and Romkema, 2002). For example, where economic activities are strongly controlled by armed groups and associated civilian elites, it will be more difficult for the FARDC to extract revenues from these activities, especially when it has not received orders to conduct military operations. This will also be the case when control over an area is contested by various armed factions, rendering certain forms of taxation or economic activities requiring long-term investments little feasible. Hence, various factors both internal and external to military units may alter the effects of time horizon, implying that the mechanisms described in this section do not mechanistically apply.

Expanding time horizons: How the 29th IB in Mutambala became 'chefs coutumiers' (case #6)

It was already explained how the reputation of the ex-29th IB (later 641st brigade Amani Leo) evolved in Fizi, as it transformed from the 'Forces of Bemba' (referring to the high share of ex-MLC soldiers in its ranks) when it first arrived in 2007 to a 'model brigade' that in some areas was called 'MONUC', after the UN peacekeeping force.¹⁹ They earned this reputation through their relatively good conduct vis-à-vis civilians, characterized by predictable behavior and extractive practices seen as moderate and regular, which fostered a sense of trust. Furthermore, their stay was marked by an overall climate of relative stability in Fizi, at least until the end of 2009. These positive evaluations stem to a large extent from the ways in which the brigade was socio-economically inserted in its environment. The 29th became an integral part of social life in its deployment area, in particular in the Mutambala sector in and around the town of Baraka, the location of its *état-major*. They lived intermingled with civilians throughout town, where some officers even acquired plots and houses. Furthermore, their spouses were actively engaged in community life, having organized themselves into various associations and being active in local churches and NGOs. The resulting intense familiarity between the 29th and the population of Mutambala was evidenced by the fact that numerous civilians in Baraka stated to have 'friends' among the 29th and frequently referred to 'friendship' for describing their relations to this brigade. Crucially, long-term deployment enabled the staff of this brigade and their spouses to develop a host of non-violent and non-extractive modes of revenue generation, like charcoal production, furniture making, the trade in weed, *taxi-moto* services, petty trade, soap-making, and running *buvettes* (bars) and boutiques. Furthermore, the spouses of the 29th undertook collective

¹⁹ For the history and characteristics of the ex-29th IB, see pp. 90 and 116.

agricultural projects, creating the association *Panda Mboga!* (Cultivate Greens!), which reactivated the cultivation of amaranths, cabbage, onions, garlic and tomatoes in this part of Fizi.²⁰ This extensive repertoire of revenue-generation practices reduced the unit's dependence on extraction from civilians, although the brigade did continue to impose various types of illegal taxes, including by putting up roadblocks on market days. However, roadblock extraction was highly routinized, with fixed roadblocks on fixed locations, while the demanded contribution rarely changed, making that people knew what to expect, and was seen as relatively moderate.

But time horizon is not the only factor that explains the 29th's good conduct and reputation. The internal characteristics of the brigade also play a role. As its composition had stayed almost unchanged since leaving the Kamina *brassage* center in 2006, the brigade had developed quite strong primary and secondary cohesion. This was facilitated by troops' shared linguistic and professional background, which resulted from the presence of substantial numbers of ex-FAZ and Lingalaphones from the western Congo, many of whom had also served together in the MLC. A large share of these troops had had extensive general and military education, which contributed to the brigade's functioning in a relatively organized and orderly manner. The general staff had established offices for the different *bureaux*, had instituted a morning call with bugles, and had developed quite elaborate systems of health care and spiritual support, including through active army chaplains who regularly organized moral talks and activities. Additionally, the brigade had a good and responsible command that was widely respected. The brigade commander, Col. Djumapili, and the other members of the *état-major* were generally reported to be competent, educated and of high morality.²¹

Aside from these internal characteristics, further explanations for the 29th IB's popularity in Mutambala are located in the projects and modes of navigation that the military hierarchy had prescribed for this unit, in particular its policy towards armed groups. By the end of the transition in 2006, there were still many Mai Mai forces in Fizi who had been regrouped in non-integrated brigades that were formally part of the FARDC. These units were under increasing pressure to send their soldiers to *brassage*, which some of them were reluctant to do. In January 2007, a part of these dissident forces deserted and reconstituted themselves as a rebel group, the *Mai Mai réformé* (reformed Mai Mai), popularly known as the Mai Mai Yakotumba.²² Over the next two years, efforts were made to convince this group to still join the FARDC predominantly by means of negotiations. Consequently, it was decided not to apply military pressure, implying the 29th was mainly engaged in maintaining basic control. This led to a type of cohabitation with the Mai Mai that enabled a relatively high degree of stability in Fizi. This cohabitation was further fostered by forms of economic collaboration between the two forces and their wider networks, for example in the cannabis trade. This approach reflected the brigade's overall shift in emphasis towards protection arrangements and productive activities, rather than coercion and extraction, for ensuring control and revenue generation.

While fostering stability and making the 29th popular among the population, the brigade's presence as 'stationary bandits' also had drawbacks. Key informants in Baraka described the unit as having entirely lost a sense of military mission and identity. Allegedly, its staff had started to act more like civilians, dedicating much of their time to personal business activities and to their families. Other sources described them as 'customary chiefs', referring to their extensive involvement in all sorts of private score settling, local conflict 'resolution' and influence peddling. A civilian administrator in Fizi explained it as follows: 'Contacts [between civilians and military] become friendship and the civilian population starts using their military friends for arranging their business. When they [the military] stay too long, it's not good. At a certain moment they will even start to lack efficiency. They become traders and they are no longer military.'²³ This became very clear when operations against the Mai Mai Yakotumba were launched at the end 2009, after the umpteenth attempt to integrate this group into the FARDC had failed. The 29th was not only described as lacking effectiveness in fighting, it was generally believed that their previous close ties to the Mai Mai prohibited them from taking effective action, and there were strong suspicions of continuing collusion. For these reasons, the rotation with the 651st end February 2010, which was deployed at the time in Misisi (case # 10), seemed opportune at several levels: while the Misisi area could use a well-disciplined brigade to relieve the population and restore security and confidence, the Baraka zone could use a unit that was less familiar with the Mai Mai.

The effects of growing local embedding: the ex-234th in Uvira (case #4)

The ex-234th (433rd brigade Amani Leo) in Uvira shows similarities to the 29th IB in terms of the effects of time horizon. The 234th was an elite brigade of the FAC formed at the end of Second Congo War in Mura (Katanga), after a rapid nine-month training by mostly Korean instructors. After serving in Shinkolobwe and Fungurume in Katanga, the brigade was deployed to Uvira in 2004, at a time that fighting had broken out in Bukavu between ex-RCD controlled troops led by Col. Jules Mutebutsi and other FARDC units (Wolters, 2004a). Wary that Mutebutsi's rebellion would spread further into South Kivu, the 234th was deployed to stop the advance of the dissenting ex-RCD troops, who had meanwhile occupied Kamanyola, south of Bukavu. Due to the strong dislike for the RCD among large parts of the population in Uvira, which was even more openly expressed after most RCD loyalists fled to Burundi in the wake of Mutebutsi's defeat,

20 The spouses of the 29th were assisted in these agricultural projects by seeds and tools donated by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Radio Okapi, 'Journée mondiale de l'alimentation: les épouses des militaires des FARDC engagées dans la production agricole à Baraka', *Radio Okapi*, 16 October 2010.

21 For evaluations of the leadership of the 29th IB see also p. 116.

22 The genesis of the Mai-Mai Yakotumba was explained on pp. 89–90.

23 Interview with civilian administrator, Fizi *centre*, 17.02.2010.

this intervention earned the brigade recognition among the population. However, there were initially some tensions with the Mai Mai forces of Nakabaka, who experienced the brigade as a (potential) threat to their power. This could not prevent the brigade from slowly gaining in popularity, both due to its relatively good behavior and the background and outlook of the brigade commander, Col. Mfaume. A Mubembe from Lulenge (Fizi sector) who had grown up in the Kabila *maquis* in Hewa Bora,²⁴ hence a true 'son of the soil', he did little to hide his sympathies for the Mai Mai forces in the region.

This relative popularity both among the population and among the Mai Mai, who controlled much of Uvira at the start of the transition, decreased incentives for Kinshasa to put pressure on the brigade to go to *brassage*. In particular, it was hoped that the brigade commander could convince recalcitrant Mai Mai forces in the area to integrate into the FARDC. Furthermore, Kinshasa judged the presence of the 234th necessary to ward off the dangers of renewed RCD/Rwandan influence. In 2005, dissident Banyamulenge armed factions appeared on the *Plateaux*, including the group of Venant Bisogo, which regrouped RCD stalwarts from Mutebutsi's brigade returning from Rwanda, where they had fled in the wake of defeat.²⁵ In this turbulent context, and given the 234th's unquestionable anti-RCD position and relatively elevated military capabilities, Kinshasa was wary to send this bastion against RCD influence to *brassage*. The position of the brigade command on *brassage* aligned with that of the political and military leadership, as they had little motivation to break up their unit. When the brigade was formed in Mura in 2002, it drew many relatively well-educated youngsters from Katanga as recruits, including (potential) university students, and appointments had generally respected basic criteria of merit. Furthermore, a large share of the core command and staff positions had remained occupied by the same officers since leaving Mura, including in the lower-level units. Having operated together for several years, and having received a special training, troops displayed deep attachment to their colleagues, the unit as a whole and its command, including the brigade commander Col. Mfaume. This relatively strong cohesion nourished resistance against efforts to be broken up. Furthermore, the brigade command was aware that this would lead inevitably to more politicized and non-merit-based appointments, which would be a deterioration compared to current standards. The brigade commander also had more personal reasons for resisting *brassage*. Due to his autochthon outlook, Mfaume seems to have had a special motivation to contain the threat of the ex-RCD in the Uvira region, seeing the presence of his unit as a necessary counterbalance. For the same reasons, the idea to be mixed with ex-RCD troops did not appear appealing to him. But more utilitarian considerations played a role in his limited enthusiasm for *brassage* as well. The brigade gradually became involved in considerable revenue-generation activities, including by building up influence in the port of Uvira. The city of Uvira on Lake Tanganyika is a commercial hub, and offers significant opportunities for income generation, making it a favorable deployment position. Due to this alignment of political, military and economic interests at various levels of the command chain, the brigade was never sent to *brassage* nor redeployed, staying uninterrupted in the Uvira area since 2004/2005.²⁶

This 234th's continuous stay in the Uvira region allowed the unit to become involved in numerous revenue-generation activities with a longer-term orientation. Furthermore, its staff started to buy and construct houses in the town of Uvira, where officers incrementally brought their spouses and families. The strong local socio-economic ties that were developed in this manner contributed to keeping the conduct of the brigade relatively well, although occasional human rights violations did occur. Yet, similar to what was observed for the 29th IB in Baraka, this strong local embedding also had drawbacks. The disparate living in the town of Uvira and the heavy involvement in revenue generation fostered a pronounced orientation towards the civilian environment, constituting centrifugal forces. The cohesion of the brigade was also somewhat undermined by the versing into the brigade of many Mai Mai troops, and the temporary attachment of a Banyamulenge battalion that largely operated independently. Another factor that undermined the brigade's overall professional attitude were the brigade commander's local origins and outspoken autochthon worldview. Not only did he systematically favor members of his ethnic group, the Babembe, who are a sizeable community in the town of Uvira, he was regularly involved in discriminatory practices towards Banyamulenge, tolerating unlawful arrests and even torture. While this sharply undermined evaluations of the brigade in the eyes of the Banyamulenge community, it possibly only enhanced its popularity among some of the other groups living in Uvira. It was therefore no coincidence that when the brigade commander was severely injured by a traffic incident in 2007, he was at first replaced by an ex-Mai Mai officer that was also from the Lulenge sector of Fizi.

However, neither of these two ex-Mai Mai commanders managed to convince the remaining Mai Mai forces in Uvira to integrate into the FARDC. In 2008, many of these fighters, such as the brigade of Zabuloni, continued to resist *brassage*. As mentioned in respect of the 29th IB and their relations to the Mai Mai Yakotumba, the main policy of Kinshasa up to 2009 was to try to convince *brassage* dissidents to still integrate via negotiations and cooptation, rather than via military pressure. The resulting peaceful cohabitation with the Mai Mai fostered relative stability (in comparison with previous and later times), which further enhanced the popularity of the 234th. However, similar to the ex-29th IB, the policy of limited military operations, together with the brigade's growing orientation towards revenue generation, undermined its combat readiness and military effectiveness. This was strongly manifested during the Amani Leo operations, when the unit was redeployed as the 433rd brigade Amani Leo into the Uvira mountains to attack the FDLR, but displayed limited effectiveness in offensive operations (case #4). However, the brigade was relatively successful in preventing retaliatory rebel attacks on the population,

24 The rebellion of Laurent-Désiré Kabila in Hewa Bora (Lulenge sector) was mentioned on p. 89.

25 The Bisogo faction would merge in 2007 with the other dissident Banyamulenge group led by Michel 'Makanika' Rukunda, to form a restyled FRF, which was in competition with Masunzu's networks, as was explained on pp. 92-93.

26 When the brigade was deployed from Katanga to stop Mutebutsi in 2004, some battalions stayed behind in Fungurume, which were later sent to join the brigade in Uvira.

indicating it had retained at least some of its professionalism. Furthermore, it continued to behave generally well towards the population, in particular in comparison with other Amani Leo units deployed in Uvira. As a result, the brigade remained relatively popular,²⁷ providing further evidence that longer-term deployment often creates a climate that is propitious to good civilian-military relations.

Local troops in the national armed forces

Similar mechanisms that may materialize in the case of longer-term deployment are often at work where military staff are deployed in their area of origins, regardless the length of deployment. As described in the section on the FARDC as big-men,²⁸ senior officers tend to retain a strong connection to their area of origins, even when not physically present. However, such solid connections take place at the individual level and are only found among higher-ranking staff with important positions, since troops have much more limited possibilities and means for maintaining contacts with and making investments in their home area, especially when deployed far away. But whether it concerns officers at a distance or troops that are locally deployed, both tend to be strongly socially embedded, implying they have significant responsibilities towards local constituencies, who hold equally high expectations of them. While this may mitigate violence against in-group members and military staff's own networks, it may enhance brutal conduct towards out-group members, as further demonstrated in the section on discourses and framing processes below. Indeed, an important difference between natives and long-term deployed non-natives is that the first are more susceptible to letting their agency be strongly guided by certain non-military forms of social identification, such as ethnicity and family ties. An example is the Mubembe commander of the ex-234th in Uvira discussed in the previous. The influence of such local forms of identification tends to be especially visible in interventions in civilian disputes and power struggles, creating an elevated risk of fuelling inter-community tensions. A case where this could clearly be observed were the ex-CNDP units deployed in their heartland of Masisi during the Amani Leo operations. Officers from these units were heavily involved in processing local disputes, displaying a strong penchant for the defense of narrower patronage and community interests. Ex-CNDP staff took for example sides in a number of land conflicts pitting larger-scale landholders of Tutsi origins against tenant farmers who were in many cases from different ethnic groups (UNSC, 2010: 73–74). Aside from land conflicts, the ex-CNDP also intervened in disputes surrounding positions of local authority. A good example is the support of ex-CNDP officers to Hutu chief Erasto Ntubaturana in northern Masisi, who is involved in a power conflict with *mwami* Bashali, a Hunde customary chief (UNSC, 2011: 74). Expectedly, such interventions created an image of partiality and, as they were seen through the lens of the autochthony discourse, reinforced antagonistically coded Rwandophone/Tutsi vs. autochthon dichotomies. As a result, they strongly enkindled local conflict dynamics.

Another difference between local troops and non-local troops with a long time horizon is that although in both cases their relations are informed by rationalities of protection, the type of reciprocity somewhat differs. Importantly, among local troops, protection arrangements are deeply enmeshed with other social ties, such as (extended) family, clan, and local community affiliations, which impacts civilian-military interaction. For example, the threshold to approach relatives in the military is commonly lower than that to solicit friends, especially since non-relatives may eventually expect comparatively higher return services. As a consequence, local troops tend to be solicited at a larger scale for dispute-processing services than non-local troops, including for the tiniest household disputes. One case where this was very visible was the all-Banyamulenge (non-integrated) 112th brigade in the Minembwe area, their zone of origins (case #8). Generally described as 'customary chiefs', its troops were said to be involved in a staggeringly wide range of local and private conflicts, mostly as a result of family members soliciting their intervention. This was seen to negatively impact their work and identification as military staff, and many informants mockingly called them 'civilians in uniform'. The pressure to intervene in local disputes was so high that when this unit had been reconstituted as the 642nd brigade Amani Leo and was redeployed to the adjacent Lulenge sector and parts of Ngandja (case #9),²⁹ they continued to intervene in conflicts in Minembwe, sometimes returning for a few days from their new location specifically to arrange local matters. Furthermore, in their new deployment area, they strongly defended the interests of their Banyamulenge community members, which undermined their perceived neutrality. Parts of the Lulenge zone are an important site for the transhumance (seasonal migration) of cows from the Minembwe zone, since it contains many suitable pastures. However, due to the presence of Mai Mai groups keen on stealing and imposing taxation on the transiting cows, transhumance is a dangerous enterprise. Therefore, when the 642nd was redeployed, it started to heavily invest in securing the Banyamulenge's cattle, in particular that belonging to themselves or relatives (see also Brabant and Nzweve, 2013: 65). As an informant in the Lulenge zone said: 'This is more a private militia to protect cows than the national army'.³⁰

While troops that are deployed for a long time in the same environment generally build up substantial knowledge of the context, this rarely matches the knowledge of someone born and raised in the area. Thus local troops generally know the environment better and have more extensive networks of local contacts. This allows them to provide a different type and quality of protection services to civilian clients than non-locals, including in relation to the protection of banditry activities. At the same time, where they are mixed with non-locals troops, it allows them to partly escape the control of their unit commanders. This could clearly be observed in the mixed brigades

27 Examples of appreciation for the 234th brigade were given on p.122.

28 Higher-ranking officers' big-man connections to their area of origins were described on p. 178.

29 For the reconstitution and redeployment of the 112th brigade as the 642nd, see p 93.

30 Interview with human rights defender, Lwiko, 06.03.2011.

on the *Plateaux* that were formed after the *in situ* integration of the FRF in January 2011. Commanders from these units complained that the newly integrated Banyamulenge troops behaved as they pleased, even departing to family members without asking formal permission for leave. Such close connections to civilian populations are also likely to contribute to keeping other than military forms of identification salient, especially when troops receive little training and education, and are therefore not strongly socialized into official military discourses. The salience of such other forms of identification and social ties affects both vertical and horizontal cohesion, and also produces effects on the formulation of projects and modes of navigation. Logically, these effects largely depend on the share of local troops within a certain unit: it obviously makes a difference whether (almost) the whole of a unit, half, or only a few troops are deployed in their zone of origins. Furthermore, the effects also depend on the quality of unit command, for the latter has an important influence on what discourses and norms are salient among unit, and regulates to what extent local troops are allowed to interact with their deployment environment, through practices of control and supervision.

10.1.3 Unit command

The effects of unit command on a unit's practices are shaped by three categories of elements: first, commanders' personal norms, projects and other personal qualities, such as professional knowledge and experience; second, levels of vertical cohesion, and third; commanders' position in formal and informal hierarchies (big-man networks). In interaction, these elements influence both commanders' practices and how these shape troops' behavior. On the one hand, low levels of vertical cohesion and the strong influence of big-man networks tend to strongly circumscribe FARDC commanders' agency and influence over their troops. For example, where vertical cohesion is weak, commanders might be hesitant to discipline troops, as this can provoke rebellion, and might have more difficulties to transmit norms, as they generally do not serve as a role model. On the other hand, due to the FARDC's high level of de facto decentralization, unit commanders have significant leeway in shaping the organization and *modus operandi* of their units. Various of the causes for this high level of decentralization have already been discussed, in particular the co-evolution of structures of domination and the military's infrastructural and resources environment, feeding erratic systems of communications and information diffusion.³¹ What should be added to this are weakly developed standard operating procedures for a number of crucial dimensions of the military's work. This includes those concerning or influencing interaction with the civilian environment, such as the military's use of civilian health care structures, circulation with arms when off-duty, and the organization of security meetings with civilian authorities. An important reason for the absence of standard operating procedures for some of these practices is that the majority of the existing formal rules as inculcated via training and education concern military tasks as narrowly defined, such as operations. Therefore, there are few clear guidelines or protocols for many of the everyday tasks that units have to execute, especially those relating to day-to-day interaction with the local civilian environment. Furthermore, where rules do exist, they are often little known due to the scarcity of training and education, or they are simply not enforced. But the paucity of formal guidelines should also be seen in light of the fact that a large part of the FARDC's everyday practices are non-official. On paper, FARDC staff should not sleep in civilian homes; their family should not live at the frontlines, they should have transport and healthcare of their own, and they should have sufficient food and rations during rotations. Consequently, there are no official rules for how commanders should deal with issues like arranging food collections in villages or accommodation in civilian homes. In combination with the other causes of the FARDC's pronounced de facto decentralization, this relative lack of (knowledge of) formal guidelines leaves a large degree of autonomy to commanders, especially of brigades/regiments and battalions. Consequently, there are important differences in command styles and practices, which again affects units' projects and modes of navigation, and therefore civilian-military interaction.

In particular command practices in the domain of the control, supervision and socialization of troops were found to have important consequences for civilian-military interaction. During fieldwork, it was observed that some commanders made much more efforts to be well aware of and steer their subordinates' practices than others. For example, commanders trying to assure the good behavior of their troops generally elaborated mechanisms of rewards and punishment that were strict, but seen as relatively fair. They also took comprehensive measures to prevent ill conduct, for example by ordering frequent PM (Military Police) patrols, by imposing evening curfews, by prohibiting elements that are off-duty from walking around with arms where the security situation allows for it, by ensuring that troop movements during rotations are well organized, by communicating regularly with lower-level commanders, by systematically visiting their units in the field, and by imposing strict and frequent reporting obligations. Such commanders would also invest significant efforts in education and other forms of socializing troops, for example by organizing regular *parades*, including to teach the code of conduct, by giving frequent *causeries morales* (moral talks) and by trying to prevent hostile framings of civilians from circulating in their units. Furthermore, as observed in a number of units headquartered in towns, certain commanders prohibited their troops from living amongst civilians. This was for example the case with the commander of the 712th regiment in the town of Baraka in 2011 (case #13), who built a camp next to town in order to remove his troops from the town center. He also imposed strict curfews, and forbade his elements to circulate with arms when not on patrolling duty. Although some of the potentially positive effects of these measures were undermined by other antagonisms created by this commander, as will be further explained below, this case does provide an example of what steps commanders can take when being serious about controlling their troops. Other commanders, by contrast, were seen to allow

³¹ The causes of the FARDC's high level of de facto decentralization were discussed on pp. 242-243 and 247-248.

their troops to live dispersed in town, like in Kirumba,³² and to circulate with arms in all circumstances and at any hour of the day. Such commanders were also more likely to exercise overall loose control over and weakly supervise and monitor their troops, failing to impose strict reporting duties, to often visit lower-level troops, and to adequately discipline elements acting counter to norms or orders. In many cases, these commanders also organized less *parades*, did not invest much in teaching the code of conduct and holding *causeries morales*, and tolerated the circulation of negative framings of civilians in their unit, sometimes even employing these themselves.

Similar differences in command style and practices were observed in relation to commanders' efforts to regulate the interaction of their unit with the civilian environment, in particular in respect of addressing abuses and extortion, settling conflicts, providing information, collaborating with civilian authorities, ensuring the security of civilians, and avoiding a negative impact on livelihoods. For instance, some commanders were seen to actively inform and consult civilians, including the authorities, like by calling popular meetings or by actively participating in the security committees. However in other cases, civilians complained that they were rarely informed by commanders and that the latter were not keen on collaboration. Important differences were also detected in respect of commanders' efforts to secure civilians. While some commanders actively deployed troops to secure roads and markets, enhancing the frequency and intensity of patrols, including at night, when the security situation deteriorated, others invested much less efforts in providing security to civilians, as evidenced for example by their refusal to carry out night patrols (for concrete examples of most of these practices, see Van Damme and Verweijen, 2012). Furthermore, it was observed that certain commanders showed much more accountability towards civilians in the case of abuses committed by their troops than others. Such commanders would give reparations or make other arrangements, like the return of stolen goods, compensation for stolen or damaged items, the repair of damaged property, the payment of medical bills to hospitalized victims, and gifts of appeasement (e.g., goats, pigs) (see also Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013b: 58–59). Another visible difference in command practices directly affecting civilian-military interaction, as has already been touched upon in Part II, relates to consideration for the impact of units' presence on civilian livelihoods. For example, some commanders entered into arrangements with local health care centers to ensure the payment of medical bills, or put in place mechanisms to monitor the debts left by their troops. Yet, in other units, such practices could not be detected or took on much smaller proportions.

That the quality of unit command indeed generally has quite strong effects on units' practices is evidenced by the case studies, for instance when looking at the effects of command on troops that are deployed to an isolated environment. As will be further discussed below, an isolated environment generally contributes to making troops more difficult to control, amongst other reasons as they get bored and demotivated and communications are deficient due to the absence of phone network coverage. This increases the importance of the quality of command for mastering troops and avoiding that their conduct degenerates. An analysis of the case studies shows (see Table 19 above and Table 22 below), that in five of the six cases where command was identified as bad and the environment was isolated, negative civilian-military interaction was observed. Inversely, in five of the five cases where command was judged to be good and the environment was isolated, civilian-military interaction was positively evaluated. Another domain where the quality of command was observed to make a difference was the nature of the dominant discourses within a unit: in ten of the eleven cases where discourses were sufficiently studied to assign them a value (see Table 19), good command did not coincide with negative framings of civilians or bad command with non-hostile framings. There was only one case (#7, the 641st/ ex-29th IB in Ngandja) that showed a deviant pattern, namely relatively bad command that did not coincide with negative framings of civilians. The reasons for this deviance will be elucidated by an elaborate analysis of this case.

The impact of leadership changes: the downward course of the 641st in Misisi (case #7)

End February 2010, the quite popular 29th IB, by then relabeled the 641st brigade under the Amani Leo operations, was redeployed from Baraka (Mutambala sector of Fizi) to the gold mining area of Misisi (southern Ngandja sector of Fizi). What were locally referred to as *les intégrés*, to contrast them with the rapidly integrated troops of the 651st brigade (the *Malewa*), were received very well, almost like liberators. Their status as 'autochthones' may have played no small part in this, given the strong anti-Rwandophone discourses circulating in this part of Ngandja, where the Mai Mai Yakotumba are very influential. Furthermore, soon after the brigade's arrival, security improved, allowing most of the population that had fled to return and the local economy to recover. The exploitation, trade and circulation of gold intensified, agricultural activities were re-launched, and nighttime movement resumed. However, after this positive start, the brigade slowly started to transform, as it became more and more involved in the gold sector and other business, although not in a manner similar to the 651st. While it also imposed illegal taxes on the *creuseurs* working in the hills and near the river, the overall amounts demanded were reported to be lower, and the manner in which the tax was collected more regular and less coercive, therefore producing less anxiety. Moreover, rather than focusing only on the immediate extraction of wealth, several officers made longer-term investments by buying *concasseurs* (stone-crushing machines), which were imported from Tanzania. The *concasseurs*, which allow for getting to the gold much faster than when crushing stones by hand, were a new phenomenon in Misisi that emerged in mid-2010, and initially yielded immense profits. This is likely to have influenced the decision of the commander of the 641st to allow the *concasseurs* to continue to work when all mining activities in the Kivus were suspended in September 2010-albeit hidden in the forest and against the

32 The problems with military staff residing in the town of Kirumba were extensively described on pp. 207–208.

payment of 60,000FC (ca. \$66.5) a day.³³ However, the machines owned by the military, or by clients of the military, were exempted from this protection fee.

The commander who allowed the *concasseurs* to operate in defiance of the mining ban was not Col. Djumapili. Although the reasons for his departure are subject to speculation, it is probable that Djumapili lacked the higher-level connections needed to sustain a position at the head of a brigade deployed in such a lucrative environment as Misisi. This is corroborated by the fact that he was replaced by a commander believed to be well-connected, Col. Mponga. It seems to have been exactly these higher connections that made Mponga leave after only three months, since he obtained an even more favorable position elsewhere. He was replaced by a young ambitious commander, Col. Ilunga, who was rumored to have paid considerable sums (some believed around \$12,000) to obtain the position of brigade commander in Misisi. However, other sources denied that Ilunga had paid, saying he just had good connections and lobbying techniques. Whether true or not, fact is that he launched himself aggressively into Misisi's minerals sector, clearly pursuing the project of quickly accumulating important amounts of wealth. The mining suspension pronounced by the president in September 2010 proved a boon in this regard.

Throughout the Kivus, the mining ban offered extensive opportunities to the FARDC to reinforce its grip over the minerals sector through protection mechanisms, allowing what were now illegal mining activities to continue against the payment of enormous sums. In Misisi, the PDGs of mining pits were forced to cede 80 per cent of the production of their pits, while taxation imposed upon the *creuseurs* in open-air pits also intensified. The resulting military stranglehold over the now temporarily illegal mining sector was locally described as *Opération njoo wakati huu* or 'Operation "now is the moment!"' (see also UNSC, 2010: 128), which seems to have adequately captured Col. Ilunga's attitude that the moment for self-enrichment was now. While initially, civilian authorities, mining officials, and the president of the association of *creuseurs* protested against this state of affairs, they were silenced through heavy intimidation, prompting all staff of mining regulatory agencies to flee the area. Unlawful arrests of *creuseurs* and PDGs also multiplied, which clearly indicated that intimidation was the preferred way for the new brigade commander to suppress resistance and maintain control. Although the brigade continued to be seen as infinitely better than its predecessors, these practices did cause its relations with the population of the Misisi area to deteriorate. What further undermined its popularity were the brigade's feeble efforts to maintain security and address the threat of rebel groups. Strongly oriented towards revenue generation, their appetite for operations to deter the remaining FDLR, Mai Mai and bandits operating on the fringes of the Misisi area diminished, which fostered the impression that the unit did not care much about the population's safety.

The progressive degradation of the conduct of the 641st was both by sources in the brigade and civilian observers primarily ascribed to changes in the command. The arrival of Col. Ilunga was believed to have strongly impacted the unit, not only due to his 'now is the moment' mentality, but also as a result of his educational background. The majority of the ex-FAZ in the 641st had completed cycles of at least three or four years of education, and many had attended military academies abroad. Ilunga lacked such in-depth military schooling, causing other officers to regard him as not capable of assuming the position of brigade commander. Ilunga used to be part of the *Réquins* (sharks), which was previously one of the reserve brigades of the FAC created under *Mzee* Kabila in the middle of the Second Congo War. Given that during the war, only limited resources and time were available for non-combat tasks, the brigade received an accelerated education of around nine months at the Kitona base in Bas-Congo. It was there that they developed the nickname *Réquins*, referring to their character as fast and aggressive when attacking. However, this name later came to be seen as reflecting their ruthless way of operating more generally. The well-educated ex-FAZ elements of the 641st considered Ilunga to typify a new breed of quickly educated, arrogant young officers who do not know in detail all the principles and procedures of the military profession, or are all too willing to sacrifice these for opportunistic purposes. The resulting frictions were aggravated by Ilunga's refusal to take orders from the 64th sector, which was headquartered in nearby Lulimba. Since his appointment had resulted from the efforts of figures in the provincial military hierarchy and the networks of his previous brigade, Ilunga felt more loyalty towards these powerful protectors than to the 64th sector. Obviously, this reduced the sector command's capacity to hold him to account. It also caused frictions within the brigade's *état-major*, since in contrast to Ilunga, a part of the latter did cooperate closely with the sector commander, with whom they were alleged to do business in the gold trade. In this way, conflicting loyalties and business interests created tensions throughout the command chain.

Ironically, the (partial) lack of vertical cohesion resulting from the hostile attitudes towards the new brigade commander also had an advantage: not respecting their new boss, parts of the *état-major* and lower-level unit commanders tried to insulate their practices from his influence, sticking to existing standards of military professionalism. As was demonstrated when the brigade was deployed in the Baraka area (when they were still called 29th IB), these were geared towards ensuring relatively good conduct towards civilians. Furthermore, since apart from the commander, the rest of the brigade and *état-major* had remained intact, the unit continued to have the same high levels of both horizontal and vertical primary group cohesion, while lower-level commanders still strongly respected their superiors in the general staff. Therefore, extant routines, norms and discourses could easily be perpetuated. Consequently, even though there was low vertical cohesion between the commander and the rest of the brigade, a drastic deterioration of the brigade's conduct could be prevented. Yet, the overall conduct of the brigade did worsen. Aside from by the change in brigade commander, this deterioration was promoted by the unit's deployment to a mineral-rich area, since many staff became heavily involved in the mining business, which

33 The mining ban promulgated in 2010 was earlier discussed on p. 138 and p. 222.

deflected attention from security duties. However, this does not imply that deployment to mineral-rich areas always leads to ill conduct. The story of the successor unit to the 641st in Misisi, the 714th regiment led by Col. Biryasi, is telling in this regard.

Not cursed by resources: the 714th regiment in Misisi (case #14)

At the start of 2011, the 641st brigade was withdrawn from Misisi to participate in the regimentation process. It was eventually replaced by the newly formed 714th regiment, which consisted of a mixture of troops from three units: First, the ex-642nd (case #9), a brigade that combined the Masunzu-controlled all-Banyamulenge 112th (case #8), former Fuliiru and Nyindu Mai Mai from Fizi, and some ex-FRF troops;³⁴ second, the ex-643rd brigade (which included many ex-Mai Mai from Lulenge);³⁵ and third, troops from the 64th sector. This merger did not go without frictions. While Masunzu continued to exercise strong influence over 'his' elements, the regiment commander was a protégé of Col. Delphin Kahimbi, the number two of the Amani Leo operations in South Kivu, who had tense relations with Masunzu. Furthermore, the majority of troops were from Fizi territory, which led to divisions with non-locals. Nevertheless, under Biryasi's command, these frictions were gradually smoothed, reflecting his efforts to be a good commander.

These efforts were also visible in the way in which Col. Biryasi approached interaction with civilians, in particular in the minerals sector. In order to avoid the mistakes of his predecessors and make a good start in Misisi, Biryasi decided to crack down on military involvement in mining. After the mining ban had been repealed in March 2011, this involvement had continued, although not in the same extreme manner as before. In September that year, shortly after the new regiment had arrived, the *chef de secteur* of Ngandja organized a security meeting in which he explained that the civilian authorities had decided that all the *concasseurs* stationed in the mountains should descend and be placed in town. The reasons for this were twofold. First, space had to be created for the activities of the mineral exploration company CASA Mining. Second, placing the machines in town would enable more control, which was an urgent necessity in the light of regular serious and even lethal incidents. Moreover, it would allow for taxation by the state agencies in charge of regulating the minerals sector. Biryasi fully collaborated with the execution of this measure, ordering his soldiers to monitor the removal of the *concasseurs* and seeing to it that those owned or protected by military would not be exempted. However, this zero tolerance policy proved unsustainable, as it generated resistance among powerful military players. A key figure in this resistance was an influential retired general living in nearby Kilembwe, who had many interests in the Misisi mining business. Coming under strong pressure, Biryasi quickly gave way, accepting that eventually around fifteen *concasseurs* owned by officers would return to the mountain slopes, against the payment of 40,000FC (ca. \$44.50) per *concasseur* per week. His efforts to reduce military interference in the activities of the civilian authorities followed a similar trajectory. While initially he managed to significantly diminish influence peddling, certain forms of this phenomenon gradually resurfaced under the pressure of powerful vested interests, including those of Gen. Masunzu, often employing 'his' officers in the regiment as intermediaries. The only measure that had more permanent effects was Biryasi's initiative to curb the military's imposition of free hours on the PDGs, causing this practice to reach historically low levels.

The example of Col. Biryasi and the 714th regiment, then, powerfully illustrates that deployment to a mining area does not need to entail aggressive military involvement in revenue generation activities, especially when commanders are responsible, do not pursue comprehensive control or wealth accumulation at the short term, and are sufficiently powerful to control their troops. However, the example of the 714th also shows the limits of unit commanders' agency. Leading a regiment that came freshly out of a three-month training period, and being a responsible commander who favors cooperation with the civilian authorities and values following the correct procedures, Biryasi had both the motivation and the possibility to address military involvement in the minerals sector. Possibly, he also faced somewhat less pressure in terms of *rapportage*, since one layer of command structures (the zone ops) had been removed after the formation of the regiments. Moreover, the shuffling of the sector command had temporarily reduced the amount of officers with vested interests in Misisi in the immediate hierarchy. However, other officers, both within and outside of the regiment's command chain, had maintained interests in the gold sector, and their resistance quickly reversed some of the gains that Biryasi made. Most of this resistance came from certain (former) zone and sector commanders, the 10th Military Region, figures in the provincial Amani Leo command, and the retired general in Kilembwe. This resistance sharply reduced Biryasi's room for manoeuvre, and forced him to turn back a number of the measures that he had initiated.

It is unclear whether the conduct of Biryasi and his regiment would have further deteriorated, had they stayed longer in Misisi. Some months after the deployment of the 714th in the wake of regimentation, it was decided to rotate the unit with another regiment, headed by the former commander of the non-integrated 85th Mai Mai brigade, who was a protégé of Tango Four (Gen. Gabriel Amisi, then chief of staff of the land forces). As the 85th had always been deployed to the cassiterite mining area of Bisie in Walikale (North Kivu), this commander was well versed in handling mining matters. However, countervailing forces, in particular Col. Delphin Kahimbi, tried to

³⁴ For the creation of the 642nd brigade, see p. 93.

³⁵ During the Second Congo War, the Kilembwe area was controlled by Mai Mai forces that eventually came under the control of Col. Ngomania. At the end of the war, these were regrouped as the 115th brigade FARDC. A part of the brigade remained in the Kilembwe area up to end 2009, when they were fused with a newly deployed Amani Leo brigade composed of ex-PARECO troops, and former elements of the *Réquins* and the 85th brigade (Walikale). This fusion became the 643rd brigade, which was sent mid-2011 to the Kilombwe regimentation center.

block the 714th regiment's redeployment from the Misisi area, ordering them to stay. This led to a stalemate, causing both regiments to be deployed in the same area for over a month, not knowing who would have to leave. Eventually the 714th had to give way, being redeployed to the *Hauts Plateaux*. This episode highlights the elevated stakes of deployment to Misisi, which is a focal point of big-men competition. In the light of these contestations, it is likely that Biryasi would eventually have had to tolerate more military interference and participation in revenue-generation activities, to pacify vested interests and yield sufficient revenue for the *rapportage* system. In this way, the case of the 714th regiment powerfully illustrates how the agency of individual unit commanders is shaped by wider structures of domination in the military. The impact of these structures on the agency of commanders may even be more pronounced when intertwined with structures of signification that give rise to antagonistic forms of social identification, as evidenced by the trajectory of the 712th regiment when headquartered in Mutambala (Fizi).

Command and cohesion: the 712th regiment in Mutambala (case #13)

The 712th regiment offers an interesting example of how unit command interacts with cohesion, as influenced by antagonistic social identification, in shaping units' practices. The unit was formed during the first wave of regimentation in 2011, when one battalion of the 641st (ex-29th IB) was mixed with the ex-652nd brigade of Col. Sekanabo in the Kananda regimentation center in Fizi. The 712th regiment, which was headquartered in Baraka and had battalions on the Ubwari peninsula and in Minembwe (and later in Mboko, in the Tanganyika sector), became subject to serious internal tensions due to divergences in the background and outlook of its members. These tensions were strongly fuelled by what were seen as the discriminatory practices of the regiment commander, which created a polarization along Rwandophone/non-Rwandophone lines that infected the entire command chain.

As we have seen, the 29th IB was composed mostly out of ex-FAZ from the western Congo, and developed a reputation as 'model brigade' in the Baraka area, where they stayed for many years. This long-term stay fostered the unit's deep socio-economic embedding, including in networks encompassing the Mai Mai Yakotumba, and caused it to become increasingly involved in revenue-generation activities and local affairs, to the detriment of military effectiveness. During their stay in the Misisi area (as the 641st Amani Leo), the brigade's involvement in revenue-generation activities intensified, in part due to the new brigade leadership. Yet, the unit retained basic professionalism and relatively good conduct towards civilians. Since the unit had stayed in almost unchanged composition since ending *brassage* in 2006, it had developed a high degree of cohesion, as facilitated by shared linguistic and professional backgrounds (ex-FAZ, sometimes also ex-MLC, well-educated and Lingalaphone). Given this strong sense of unity, many brigade members heavily resented the breakup of their unit for the regimentation process and their blending with the 652nd brigade, most components of which were ex-PARECO. These elements came from an entirely different geographical (Masisi and Rutshuru), linguistic (Kinyarwanda and Swahili) and military professional (little conventional military education) background. Furthermore, the distribution of command and staff positions in the 712th regiment (up to *chef de section* level) was based on the logic of *composantes* (the balancing of factions), rather than merit. Together with the skewed ranks structure of the regiment, which contained a disproportionate amount of superior officers, this further aggravated resentment among the ex-IB component. It led to a situation where seasoned and well-educated military staff, usually with rather low ranks, were commanded by inexperienced, young and uneducated officers, who had rapidly obtained high ranks due to political manipulation.³⁶

This state of affairs troubled the first commander of the 712th, Col. Mponga, himself an ex-FAZ from *Équateur* province, who therefore tried to counterbalance the ex-PARECO dominance by favoring ex-government elements, including by being tolerant towards their business activities. Since these elements prioritized maintaining good contacts with their local socio-economic networks over cracking down on the Mai Mai, who were sometimes part of these same networks, this approach strongly undermined the regiment's efforts to weaken the Mai Mai. Furthermore, the Rwandophone components interpreted the attitude of the regiment commander as discrimination, and started to appeal to their protectors to intervene, in particular those from the powerful ex-CNDP networks around Bosco Ntaganda. As a result, Col. Mponga was accused of being soft on and even supporting the Mai Mai, allegedly having proclaimed that 'there will be no war of Congolese against Congolese'. While these allegations could not be verified, it is clear that his operations against the Mai Mai were little effective, which enhanced the credibility of the accusations made by his opponents. It also bothered the rest of the military hierarchy, who had decided to hit the Mai Mai Yakotumba hard after the group had committed a massacre on 4 October 2011, killing seven Banayamulenge humanitarian aid workers in an ambush (Human Rights Watch, 2012).

Suspicious of Mponga's collaboration with the Mai Mai as well as his (perceived) biased treatment of Rwandophones prompted the military hierarchy to replace both him and the commander of the first battalion, who enjoyed great popularity among ex-29th IB members, with Rwandophone officers. This provoked resentment among non-Rwandophones, feeding suspicions of a 'coup', as some phrased it, or a power takeover of the regiment by Rwandophones.³⁷ Resentment was aggravated by the alleged brutal way of operating of the new regiment commander, Col. Niyibizi, and the measures he took to 'remilitarize' the elements of the ex-29th and reinforce control over them.

³⁶ For a further discussion of the effects of non-merit based appointments, see pp. 271–272.

³⁷ Shortly after the replacement of the regiment commander, the deputy commander *opsrens* died after being ambushed by the Mai Mai. He was replaced by a Hutu, which further nourished suspicions of a creeping 'Rwandophonization' of the regiment.

These measures included the relocation of all military staff from the center of Baraka to a newly constructed military camp on the edge of town, and the imposition of an evening curfew starting at 21.00 for soldiers and at 22.00 for officers. An important reason for these measures was that many staff of the ex-29th owned or rented houses in town, living intermingled with the population and circulating freely in the quarters, including at night, to enjoy Baraka's lively nightlife. These uncontrolled movements had provoked the suspicion that they were involved in armed robbery and burglary, which take on elevated proportions in Baraka. According to some, Niyibizi also decided to dislocate his unit to protect the Rwandophone elements-including himself-against possible attacks from the numerous Mai Mai (sympathizers) in Baraka, who viewed him and his anti-Mai Mai mandate in a negative light. Not surprisingly, the troops of the ex-29th were infuriated by the new measures, which prohibited them from spending time with their families and managing their economic activities. In combination with the strong line taken against the Mai Mai, these measures also constituted a direct threat to their livelihoods, causing many to disobey Niyibizi's orders. In reaction, the latter strongly reinforced PM patrolling, ordering this body to intercept all military staff staying in town without explicit permission. Despite these threats, many elements of the ex-29th continued to defy this measure, which created in addition to a social, also a physical separation between Rwandophone and non-Rwandophone staff.

Although the efforts of the regiment commander to reinforce control over his troops appear on first sight positive and were initially appreciated by civilians, their effectiveness was greatly undermined by the perception that they specifically targeted non-Rwandophones, thereby provoking tensions and resistance. For example, when punishing non-Rwandophones, Niyibizi, who was reported to have a preference for harsh corporal punishment, in particular flogging, would allegedly exaggerate. One *sous-officier* of the ex-29th IB told he had been beaten so severely that he needed to go to the hospital for medical care.³⁸ Other non-Rwandophones felt they had been punished without reason, interpreting this as pure intimidation. For example, a mid-ranking officer related how he had once been arrested on the orders of Nyibizi, although the latter was at the time on leave in Goma. He was detained overnight in an overcrowded detention facility, and liberated after two days. According to this officer, there had not been a clear reason for his arrest, as evidenced by the fact that he had not been charged with any missteps. He could therefore find no other explanation than that 'anyone who speaks Lingala becomes immediately an enemy (...)'.³⁹ As a consequence, he felt deeply insecure, which had prompted him to ask the hierarchy to be rotated to another unit.

The commander's biases were also (perceived to be) manifested in his treatment of Rwandophones and his own engagement in revenue generation, which did not give off the impression that his primary concern was to improve conduct across the board. For instance, to the dismay of the civilian authorities, he did nothing to rein in his S2, a little educated ex-PARECO officer who made numerous unlawful arrests in the town of Baraka. Furthermore, he encouraged soldiers in his own network to heavily extort in the Makama gold mine close to Baraka, a newly discovered site where exploitation had started at the beginning of 2011. The soldiers deployed to Makama had been ordered to impose \$100 per week on the *comité des creuseurs*, while also making a fortune by arresting people on the accusation of being Mai Mai collaborators (SVH, 2012).⁴⁰ Additionally, Niyibizi built up growing influence at Mushimbake port (close to Baraka), becoming involved in the trade over Lake Tanganyika. In sum, the regiment commander's control measures were applied in a selective manner, being primarily geared towards reinforcing his own position and that of his networks. This did not only trigger power shifts within, but also outside of his regiment, which led him to be increasingly negatively evaluated among civilians. His uncooperative attitude towards civil society, including human rights organizations, only aggravated these negative perceptions, being seen as testifying to 'Rwandophone arrogance' in an environment where sympathies for the Mai Mai have traditionally been strong.

Over time, as the relations between Niyibizi and his non-Rwandophone subordinates entered a downward spiral, the 712th became increasingly unmanageable, leading its conduct to further deteriorate. While the regiment commander tried to keep a grip over his unruly subordinates by force, this led to diminishing respect and growing recalcitrance, making it ever harder for him to maintain control. Dissatisfaction among non-Rwandophones ran so high that some elements even deserted or tried to go on extended leave under the pretext of illness, often returning to the Misisi area, where they had built up interests in the gold sector. Others were suspected of reinforcing their collaboration with the Mai Mai, feeling such an animosity towards the commander and Rwandophone troops that they rather befriended their enemy's enemy. In reaction, Rwandophone troops felt increasing distrust towards their colleagues, becoming reluctant to carry out operations against the Mai Mai out of fear for betrayal. This only intensified parallel command chains, causing orders to be ignored and information to be withheld. The strength of these parallel networks was revealed in April 2012, when the 712th regiment disintegrated after significant numbers of Rwandophone troops mutinied under the leadership of Col. Niyibizi. This action was part of a wider plan spearheaded by Gen. Bosco Ntaganda to organize a general uprising of ex-CNDP and allied networks (in this case parts of ex-PARECO) in the FARDC, an effort that eventually ushered in the creation of the M23 rebellion (CIRESKI, 2012).⁴¹ Nyibizi's willingness to participate in this dissidence, and the fact that many elements in his regiment followed, clearly indicate that his loyalty to the Congolese military and his regiment had remained rather weak, having been undermined by his orientation towards ex-PARECO and ex-CNDP networks.

38 Interview with *sous-officier*, Baraka, 26.02.2012.

39 Interview with mid-ranking officer, Baraka, 26.02.2012.

40 See also the letter of the *Comité de creuseurs de mine de Makama/Kilomo* of 28 December 2011, 'Cris d'alarme sur les multiples tracasseries militaires au niveau de la carrière de Makama/Kilomo à Nembra (taxes illégales)'.

41 The processes leading up to the creation of the M23 were earlier described on pp. 84-85.

In sum, the case of the 712th regiment illustrates at once the strong effects of the quality of command on a unit's practices, and the ways in which these effects are shaped by unit cohesion. In this case, both vertical and horizontal cohesion were weak, which was both a cause and an effect of power competition framed in antagonistic identity-based terms. These antagonistic identities, in turn, fed into differing orientations towards the external environment, with a part of the regiment seeing the Mai Mai and their civilian networks and supporters as enemies and another part feeling no such hostility, having numerous socio-economic ties with these networks. This highlights the importance of the inter-linkages between forms of identification, framings of civilians, and unit behavior.

10.1.4 Framing processes and the content and salience of norms and discourses

The norms and discourses of both unit commanders and members, which are shaped by the military hierarchy and the various big-man and other social networks of which they form part, play a crucial role in the development of units' projects and modes of navigation. This relation is not unidirectional, for discourses and norms shift in dialogue with the unfolding situation, although within certain bounds (cf. Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 1012–1013). For example, in the case of violent conflict, the norms surrounding the use of violence may be altered under the influence of the rationality that 'the end justifies all means', which often gains salience where threats are perceived to be existential (Frésard, 2004: 72). An important way in which norms and discourses shape projects and navigation is via processes of *framing* or the construction of an understanding of the situation, including the way actors and events are defined and represented.⁴² For example, where civilians are portrayed in a negative way, or not as civilians but as armed group collaborators or members of an ethnic group framed as hostile, units may develop projects or modes of navigation that promote violence against civilians, whether by actively encouraging it or creating a permissive climate. This is particularly likely where civilians are seen to be in connivance with 'the enemy' and the latter inflicts harm upon soldiers (cf. Frésard, 2004). Framing processes can however not be seen as a direct cause of violence in themselves, for it is only in interaction with a host of other factors that they come to feed into social practices.

A clear example of how framing processes created a fertile climate for violence against civilians is provided by the 65th sector in Fizi. As we have seen, troops in this sector often framed the population as 'Mai Mai' rather than 'civilians', whether it concerned actual combatants or not. Furthermore, they fiercely complained about the hostile attitudes of the population, seen to be massively collaborating with the Mai Mai, including in planning and executing attacks on the FARDC.⁴³ The label 'Mai Mai' is highly value-laden, in particular among government troops, bearing connotations of militancy and hostility, and therefore implying a dissolution of the status of 'civilian'. Furthermore, the wider interpretative grids of which these framings were part provided comprehensive and convincing explanations for the hardships to which soldiers in the 65th sector were exposed, including regular losses of comrades and an uncooperative attitude among civilians. Another factor that rendered these framings salient was that they were also employed among officers, including commanders. This was likely a result of the sector command's minimal professional training, their own norms, and their Rwandophone background. In particular the fact that, under the influence of certain politico-military entrepreneurs, the population of Fizi consistently branded these officers as 'Rwandophones' might have contributed to them seeing the population primarily as 'autochthon' Mai Mai, since it activated ethnic-based elements in mutual evaluations.⁴⁴ This shows that there is an interplay between the discursive practices of the population and those of the military. There was a similar interplay between their social practices. Framings of civilians as 'Mai Mai' among the FARDC contributed to the justification of coercive practices, like arresting, interrogating and conducting body checks on young men on the pretext of being Mai Mai members, but without reasonable grounds of suspicion. This again fed further hostility among the population, which was translated in practices like reluctance to sell the FARDC on credit, thus setting in motion the negative spirals of interactions and evaluations that were described in Chapter 4.⁴⁵ As relations between the 65th sector and the population of Fizi deteriorated, hostile framings came to justify ever more coercive practices by the FARDC, eventually feeding into violence.

In April 2010, the town of Fizi *centre* was systematically ransacked by troops incited by recent hostilities (LDGL, 2010). The same troops went again on a rampage in Fizi on 1 January 2011, this time in reaction to a case of mob justice resulting in the death of a soldier. Incensed by the incident, and allegedly drunk, the deputy sector commander, who was at the time the acting commander due to the absence of his boss, ordered his troops to take revenge on the population. Since the relations between the soldiers of this sector and civilians were already hostile, these orders did not fall on deaf ears, and a massive spree of looting, property destruction and rape followed. To justify and motivate his troops for this punitive course of action, the deputy commander, an ex-FAZ officer, told his troops that 'we, in the era of the FAZ, when a soldier was killed by civilians, we took 50 square meters and would ravage all. For one soldier killed, at least 100 civilians had to pay'.⁴⁶ By framing the situation in this manner, the deputy commander activated the negative representations of civilians that were dominant among the military in the Mobutu era. Furthermore, he appealed to a logic of collective punishment that resonated among his soldiers as they had already come to represent the Babembe as a whole in a negative manner, holding them collectively responsible for

42 This section draws upon the notion of framing as developed in relation to contentious collective action (e.g., Snow et al., 1986; Snow and Benford, 1988), which has also been applied to sense-making processes among security personnel in dangerous contexts (e.g., Baran and Scott, 2010).

43 Representations of civilians among staff of the 65th sector, notably how they were framed as 'Mai Mai', were discussed on p. 123.

44 How the population of Fizi framed the troops of the 65th sector was discussed on pp. 91 and 202.

45 Positive and negative spirals of interaction and evaluations between the military and civilians were described on pp. 122–123.

46 Cour militaire du Sud-Kivu, 'Pro-justitia arrêt. RP 043/RMP 1337/MTL/11. Audience publique du 21 février 2011'.

the death of numerous colleagues during ambushes and on the battlefield. Consequently, a punitive expedition seemed to ‘make sense’ to them, appearing as a more appealing course of action than for example identifying and punishing only the individuals who had been responsible for the mob justice. Together with the lure of booty, this explains why the troops of the 65th, although acting on the orders of the deputy commander, displayed considerable enthusiasm in executing their mission of revenge.

The example of the 65th sector thus illustrates how unit command influences framing processes, and how this may come to feed into violence. Unit command can inhibit or encourage certain discourses through a range of socialization and enforcement mechanisms. For instance where unit commanders strive to maintain good relations with the population, they will not allow the use of derogatory labels for civilians (Mastroianni, 2011: 10), and may actively try socialize their troops into discourses of civilian protection, for example by frequently convening *parades* and giving moral talks. By contrast, where commanders are not too concerned about relations with the population, or see civilians themselves as a hostile crowd that needs to be kept in check, they may not systematically intervene when troops ridicule or deride civilians, nor be very motivated to inculcate positive discourses on civilians through instruction and motivational and moral talks. The case of the 65th sector also shows how discourses, in particular on civilians, influence practices by legitimizing some forms of action, while delegitimizing others. By holding the population collectively responsible for the practices of the Mai Mai, harming civilians came to equal fighting the enemy or was seen as a deserved punishment. The case studies provide further evidence for this link between discursive and social practice. From the eleven cases where discourses were sufficiently studied to assign them a value, four concerned units where negative discourses of civilians were salient, and all these four coincided with negatively evaluated civilian-military interaction (see Table 19). In the seven cases where negative discourses were absent, only one case coincided with negative evaluations (case #1). These findings seem to confirm that discourses on civilians indeed impact military units’ interaction with civilians.

However, commanders’ influence on framing processes is circumscribed by both vertical cohesion and the relative salience of existing discourses. Where troops do not identify with, trust and respect their superiors, they are less likely to be influenced by the latter’s definitions of the situation. Furthermore, not any type of discourse has an equal potential to shape practices. Although commanders can influence the level of salience of discourses, when the related framings are not appealing, intelligible, logical and motivating, their potential to inform social practices is strongly reduced. Within theories on framing, this would be described as an absence of ‘frame resonance’ (Snow et al., 1986: 477). Frames will resonate if they appeal to discourses that social agents are familiar with and/or that strike a deep chord. In the FARDC, resonance depends on factors like the military educational background of troops (which influences the amount of exposure they have had to formal military discourses and codified norms) and horizontal cohesion (which influences the strength of common discourses), as shaped by the salience of the big-man and other social networks that troops are tied into. For example, where troops have had only limited general and military education, abstract juridical discourses of human rights might find less resonance than among highly educated troops who are strongly socialized into professional military and legal language.⁴⁷ Furthermore, where troops are deployed in their area of origins and are strongly tied into local networks grounded in shared forms of identification, they are more susceptible to adopting framings of civilians in locally dominant ways, such as those based on geographical, ethnic, clan, or socio-economic identity markers. This could for example be observed among the ex-CNDP Tutsi troops from Masisi that continued to be deployed in their fief after the 2009 rapid integration process.

The discursive and social practices of ex-CNDP units in Masisi

The CNDP was founded by predominantly Tutsi political-military leaders, who strongly framed the group’s actions in ethnic discourses. In fact, the very creation of the group, which was formalized in 2006, was justified by references to the precarious position of Tutsi in the Kivu (Stearns, 2008). For the CNDP’s leader, Gen. Laurent Nkunda, the threat to the Tutsi came from various corners, including the Hutu dominated FDLR, ‘autochthon’ local militias, and the national armed forces linked to a government seen as profoundly anti-Tutsi. In his public discourses, Nkunda did not hesitate to use a word like ‘genocide’ for describing the hazards faced by the Tutsi community, invoking this term for instance to justify his intervention in the 2004 Bukavu crisis. However, while a number of Banyamulenge civilians had indeed been killed during these events, there was limited evidence of planned, systematic and large-scale targeted killings (Wolters, 2004a: 2). Furthermore, Tutsi identity was an anchor point for the formulation of the movement’s political demands, such as the return of (mostly Tutsi) refugees from neighboring countries (Umutoni, 2014). Despite this emphasis on securing the position of the Tutsi community, the CNDP’s projects were much broader and the group had a wider appeal. The rank and file of the movement were from mixed ethnic backgrounds, and the CNDP had a comprehensive political agenda that was designed to speak to wide layers of the population. However, Tutsi did dominate the heavily divided officer corps, which was torn between various factions based on differences in clan background and interests (Stearns, 2012: 67). In this context of serious strife, Tutsi identity appeared to serve as a type of glue fostering cohesion, an uncontroversial common denominator that provided a sense of common interest. Tutsi identity also served as a discourse for recruitment and the mobilization of political and financial support among elites, including those in Kigali, whether linked to the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan government or the Congolese Tutsi diaspora.

47 The limited appeal of formal human rights discourses is further illustrated by the discussion on abstract representations of ‘civilians in general’ on pp. 120–121. In combination with the low levels of education among parts of the FARDC, it also explains why certain NGOs employ tools like comic books and participatory theater rather than legislative texts for human rights education among the FARDC. See e.g., Search for Common Ground, no date.

When integrating into the FARDC at the start of 2009, the CNDP maintained this pronounced ethnic character, both as the movement continued to be framed in ethnic terms by others and as they chose to perpetuate these framings themselves. Separate identity helped to keep the group intact as a parallel power network, including by ensuring the loyalty of the lower-ranking officers and troops now serving in mixed units, who were partly deployed outside the movement's former strongholds. However, an emphasis on common ethnic identification also contributed to maintaining the unity of the CNDP's leadership. After the removal of Gen. Nkunda at the end of 2008, the leadership of the group had become even more divided than it had already been, as a serious cleavage between a pro-Nkunda and a pro-Bosco wing opened up (Stearns, 2012: 68). In the face of this rift, clinging to a common form of identification was an important fashion to maintain cohesion and strength. Like before its integration into the FARDC, this emphasis on identification as a common denominator was visible in the groups' political and military demands. For example, the refusal of ex-CNDP troops to be redeployed outside of the Kivus was implicitly justified by fears for the persecution and discrimination of Tutsi. After Kinshasa mounted the pressure for their redeployment in the course of 2010, ex-CNDP officers composed a memorandum that listed five points of denunciation. The last of these was a condemnation of 'the tribalism and ethnicism within the FARDC' (UNSC, 2010: 45,128–130), which hinted at the discrimination of Tutsi.

The continuing salience of the ex-CNDP's separate identity, as partly anchored in ethnicity, impacted the practices of its commanders and troops. One mechanism through which this occurred were framings of combat situations and associated representations of civilians. There are strong indications that in a number of military operations carried out by ex-CNDP-dominated brigades placed under overall ex-CNDP command, violence against civilians followed ethnic lines. For example, between March and September 2009, FARDC units operating under ex-CNDP command killed around 270 civilians on the Nyabiondo-Pinga axis in North Kivu, attacks that many observers believed to specifically target the Hunde population (UNSC, 2009: 85). According to research by Human Rights Watch (2009b: 97), inhabitants of these areas held the belief that the systematic killings were aimed at preparing the way for the return of Congolese Tutsi refugees living in Rwanda, or were related to long-standing local disputes over land and access to natural resources. Furthermore, in April 2009, 129 civilians were deliberately killed in Shalio, Masisi territory, in the course of an FARDC offensive conducted by an ex-CNDP dominated unit commanded by an ex-CNDP officer of Tutsi origin. Most of the victims were women and children said to be Rwandan Hutu refugees, including dependents of the FDLR (UNSC, 2009: 84–85). The attack therefore appears to have been tailored at harming Hutu civilians in an area where relations between Hutu and Tutsi have historically been tense, and fighting between armed groups mobilized along ethnic lines (e.g., FDLR, PARECO, CNDP) has been recurrent. In sum, in both the massacre at the Nyabiondo-Pinga axis and in Shalio, identity-based discourses seem to have played an important role in shaping units' projects and pathways of action, authorizing violence against civilians no longer seen as 'civilians', but defined as members of particular ethnic communities.

Framing processes among ex-FRF troops in Bijombo

A case somewhat comparable to that of the ex-CNDP troops conducting operations in their former stronghold Masisi, although involving much less violence, is that of the operations conducted by the ex-FRF in Bijombo. In March 2011, a battalion dominated by the all Banyamulenge ex-FRF, which had recently integrated into the FARDC,⁴⁸ launched an offensive against Mai Mai groups in Bijombo (Bavira *chefferie*), which is located within their former zone of influence. Since ex-FRF troops had integrated the FARDC while staying in their zone of origins and without any form of training or instruction provided by the national armed forces, their identification as Banyamulenge continued to be salient. This was manifested in the course of operations against the Mai Mai Makuba near Kikozi (in Bijombo), where a battalion commanded by an ex-FRF officer and consisting in majority out of ex-FRF troops committed numerous human rights violations, including the rape of nine Bafuliiru and Banyindu women (see also UNSC, 2011: 158–159). There are long-standing frictions between Banyamulenge, Banyindu and Bafuliiru in this part of the *Plateaux* (Verweijen and Vlassenroot, 2015), and the Mai Mai Makuba were recruited on an ethnic basis, presenting itself as a Bafuliiru and Banyindu group. It is plausible that these tensions lowered the threshold for human rights violations by Banyamulenge troops, since the latter saw the population not primarily as 'civilians', but in ethnic terms. This hypothesis seems corroborated by the fact that two of the officers who played a prominent role in the abuses were natives of the *groupement* of Bijombo, making it likely that they tried to seize upon the opportunity offered by the operations to settle local scores. Like the example of the ex-CNDP, then, that of the ex-FRF in Bijombo highlights the risks that are opened up by sending local troops on military operations in a situation of inter-community conflict, demonstrating how in such situations framing processes are likely to become influenced by pre-existing antagonistic forms of identification. This raises the broader question of the circumstances in FARDC units commit violence against civilians, and how this is affected by units' projects and modes of navigation.

10.2 *Unit-related factors and violence against civilians*

Undoubtedly, physical violence against civilians is one of the most conspicuous dimensions of the FARDC's interactions with civilians, and it strongly shapes evaluations of civilian-military interaction. Physical violence committed by the FARDC, which should be distinguished from *coercion*, which encompasses it, comes in multiple shapes and degrees, ranging from the beating up of a passerby at a roadblock to mass

48 For the integration of the FRF, see pp.94 and 293–294.

rape and massacres. The pathways leading up to violence are equally diverse, with a host of motivational forces and rationalities at work. For Kalyvas (2006: 23), military abuses against civilians commonly have 'multiple, overlapping and sometimes mutually contradictory goals', including 'intimidation, demoralization, polarization, demonstration, radicalization of the public, publicity, the improvement of group morale, the enforcement or disruption of control, the mobilization of forces or resources, financing, the elimination of opposing forces, the sanction of cooperation with the enemy, and the provocation of countermeasures and repression' (idem: 24). Similar to the *goals*, the *motives* driving combatants to commit abuses against civilians are multiple, overlapping and sometimes fluctuating and contradictory (Kalyvas, 2006: 24–25). Common motives are a desire for revenge, a sense of duty, hope for gains or promotion, honor, obedience or peer pressure. This shows that violence against civilians is not always instrumental, in the sense of directly contributing to realizing military, political or socio-economic projects, but may also be 'expressive', implying it is either aimed at inflicting pain on hated enemies for the sake of it, or has symbolic or ritualistic dimensions, for instance when intended to destroy a hated symbol (Kalyvas, 2006: 24–25). Such non-instrumental violence often occurs when combatants are under the influence of strong emotions, like the desire for revenge, or are intoxicated by alcohol or drugs (Frésard, 2004: 26).

Although the approach to agency followed herein does not distinguish sharply between motives and objectives, or means/end rationality and 'non-utilitarian' motivations (cf. Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 999), Kalyvas's discussion of violence does provide useful insights into the general complexities surrounding violence committed by military forces and the processes leading up to it. The same complexities characterize abuses against civilians committed by the FARDC. These assume all three forms distinguished by Osiel (1999: 173, 187), namely 'atrocities from above', referring to violence that is explicitly ordered by commanders, 'atrocities from below', or abuses resulting from soldiers' own volition, and 'atrocities by connivance', referring to the situation where the hierarchy has not given explicit orders for violent acts, but signals, by means of 'winks and nods of acquiescence' (idem: 188), that certain acts of abuse will not be punished. Furthermore, violence against civilians committed by the FARDC occurs both in 'hot' and in 'cold' situations. The term 'hot' commonly refers to contexts of combat (e.g., Soeters et al., 2006). However, situations characterized by other forms of major upheaval, like banditry attacks, riots, mass panic and mutinies, can also be characterized as 'hot'. Furthermore, hot situations do not need to involve fighting forces, but can also relate to clashes between civilians in which the military gets caught up, or situations of mob justice. While such situations do not qualify as 'combat' in a strict sense, among the FARDC, they often provoke similar patterns of abuse against civilians, committed either during the upheaval or shortly after. These abuses tend to be of a grave nature, encompassing acts of violence like rape and killings, but also looting and property destruction, such as arson (e.g., Human Rights Watch, 2009b; UNJHRO, 2009a; 2013). The gravity of these abuses is in part related to the specific qualities of hot situations, which generally provoke intense emotions. Moreover, where vertical cohesion is weak, they bear an elevated risk of diminished grip by superiors and breakdowns of the command chain. While abuses committed in hot situations thus tend to be of the worst kind, it appears that a larger share of the violent incidents committed by the FARDC occurs in 'cold' contexts, or everyday situations not characterized by mass upheaval. Such abuses encompass violence committed during robbery, burglary and arrests (sometimes with prolonged detention), violence related to score settling and dispute processing, and rape enacted in 'everyday' settings.

In order to understand why and how the FARDC commits violence against civilians, patterns of abuse were studied among a part of the units featuring in the case studies in Fizi (cases #6 till #12). This research benefited from the knowledge of human rights monitors deployed in these areas, who were charged with systematically documenting and investigating all incidents in their area of responsibility. While this allowed for detecting general trends, it should be emphasized that it remains uncertain to what extent the observations emerging from the Fizi case studies can be extrapolated to other FARDC units in other areas. The reason is that no systematic research is conducted on patterns of violence committed by the FARDC, or violence in general, in the eastern Congo. To start with, there are no reliable statistics on violent incidents in the Congo (van der Windt and Humphreys, 2014). Furthermore, even where incidents are registered, there is not always reliable information available on how they unfolded and the conditions in which they occurred (in particular the projects informing them, and sometimes also the identity of the perpetrators). Moreover, whether concerning eyewitness reports or secondary sources, reporting on violent incidents, including by the media, is generally marked by numerous biases (Kalyvas, 2006). It is therefore only through in-depth research and triangulation with numerous sources that valid conclusions can be drawn concerning how and why incidents occurred. For these reasons, the observations presented herein, which are based on data collected among five FARDC units (relating to seven cases) in Fizi, cannot be extrapolated to the FARDC in the Kivus as a whole.

In general, 'atrocities from above' often relate to strategy or tactics, or are driven by a punitive logic, sometimes coupled to a desire to 'set an example' and serve as deterrence. They may also be informed by hostile identity-based framings, which provide justifications to harm certain groups. In relation to the studied units in Fizi, little indications were found that abuses against civilians were systematically part of military strategy or tactics, although there were some instances where this could have been the case. As mentioned, the FARDC often operates with a loose set of directives, including for combat operations. This gives lower-level commanders a high level of autonomy in designing tactical action, especially where it concerns smaller-scale operations that are mostly carried out within their own area of responsibility. However, lower-level FARDC units may invest little time and resources in monitoring armed groups' activities and gathering intelligence, causing them to have limited situational awareness, which leads to bad tactical planning. Bad tactics may also result from commanders' limited competence or reluctance to heed the advice of those knowing the enemy and the environment well, including for

reasons of personal animosity and pride.⁴⁹ Military operations are further hampered by a lack of training and battle drills, fostering fear and panic when something unexpected happens. Knowing what to do and having trained those actions before is key for avoiding the paralysis of panic during combat (King, 2013: 223–224). The FARDC often seems taken over by events, operating more in a reactive than in a proactive manner, while taking decisions out of impulse rather than guided by reflection and careful analysis.⁵⁰ These same factors are at the root of limited preparedness when hostilities have not been specifically planned for, like in the case of ambushes and surprise attacks on military camps. In combination with scattered living patterns, the large amount of time spent on non-security related duties, and troops' lack of transport and sophisticated communications, this unpreparedness causes the FARDC to be often slow in its reaction. This largely ad-hoc and reactive mode of operating provides indications that violence against civilians during or after hostilities may often not be planned in advance. If there is no well thought-out, well-defined, comprehensive plan in general, it would seem implausible that abuses against civilians would be carefully prepared in advance, although it is not to be excluded that there are exceptions to this. Indeed, from the case studies, it emerged that where 'atrocities from above' took place, they occurred rather spontaneously, and appeared to be primarily informed by a punitive logic, like the revenge actions ordered by the deputy commander of the 65th sector in Fizi *centre* described above. Yet the enactment of the abuses in Fizi *centre* was facilitated by frame resonance and a long, downward spiral of hostile mutual interactions and evaluations between troops and civilians, which made that at least a part of the soldiers responded to the orders with considerable enthusiasm. This shows that the boundaries between atrocities 'from above', 'from below' and 'by connivance' should not be conceptualized in absolute terms, but may be relatively fluid. In fact, atrocities from 'above' and 'from below' seem to often overlap with 'atrocities by connivance', which result from an interplay between troops' volition and the hierarchy's acquiescence.

Many of the abuses committed by the studied units seemed to stem from a 'permissive climate', and could therefore be seen as falling within the category of 'atrocities by connivance', although the extent to which direct signs of tolerance were given off by commanders in the course of the action was difficult to establish. Abuses 'by connivance' seem to be located on a wide spectrum where the determining agency falls either more on troops' or more on the hierarchy's side, with the exact location varying per incident, and being often difficult to establish. However, what could be identified with certitude was that a 'permissive climate' generally resulted from the failure of commanders to prevent and punish abuses, through the ensemble of command practices relating to supervision, monitoring, socialization and disciplining described above. One of the reasons why unit commanders appeared to tolerate abuses relates to weak vertical cohesion: wary to provoke rebellion among troops that are antagonistic towards them, commanders give them free rein and the opportunity for gratification and rewards. A second reason seems to be that certain abuses facilitated the realization of commanders' or units' projects, such as rapid revenue generation or establishing comprehensive control, indicating that a permissive climate may partly be a result of the incentive structures deriving from units' projects and corresponding modes of navigation.

However, among the studied cases, there were also instances of abuse that seemed unrelated to units' projects and related incentive structures, and that occurred despite commanders' explicit efforts to prevent them, and without their direct or indirect authorization. These 'atrocities from below' appeared to be either the result of group dynamics, like when a part of a *section* of the 651st brigade looted a village when on a mission without their commander, or were more related to individual projects and dispositions, for instance when soldiers initiated violent acts for purely personal revenue-generation purposes, or were involved in private disputes. From the case studies, it emerged that violence enacted by FARDC staff for personal projects is frequently related to score settling and dispute processing, whether for soldiers themselves or on behalf of clients. As has amply been described in the previous,⁵¹ violent interventions in disputes and score settling often take place at the request of civilians, either in the framework of protection relations or on a purely transactional basis, in which case violence by the FARDC is 'co-produced' by civilians. Where soldiers commit such acts on their own behalf, it often concerns disputes related to economic collaboration or transactions. When civilian economic collaborators are seen to not honor their obligations, for example by not paying back debts, cutting a deal with a competitor, or not delivering commanded goods with the desired quality, military actors may use violence to punish those perceived to have violated the terms of exchange. Another common situation in which soldiers harm civilians for personal reasons is revenge in relation to love affairs, whereby soldiers accuse civilians of maintaining intimate relations with their lovers or spouses.⁵²

Indeed, 'atrocities from below' are often provoked by extreme emotions, such as personal feelings of revenge and jealousy, inculcated hatred for the enemy, euphoria over battlefield victories, or frustrations about losses, sometimes aggravated by the effects of alcohol or drug use (Kalyvas, 2006: 24–25). This is especially the case with 'atrocities from below' occurring in 'hot' situations. In certain of the studied units, these seemed to be the result of a situational dynamic leading up to the frenzied state that Collins (2008: 83) has called 'forward panic', referring to a sudden release of prolonged, built-up tensions. For Collins (2008: 92), the composite mood of a forward panic comes from 'the transformation of tension/fear into aggressive frenzy, usually centered on rage'. The resulting state of high arousal leads to an unstoppable momentum of aggression directed against what is perceived to be the source of threat, which is attacked in a

49 At least one case was encountered where a company commander was alleged to have ignored the advice of his deputy due to personal animosities, leading a squad to fall into an ambush. Informal conversation with *sous-officier*, Minembwe, 04.12.2011.

50 A good example of this reactive and unorganized mode of operating was the reaction of soldiers to the assassination of Col. Mamadou Ndala, well captured on video. See Voice of Congo Television, 2014.

51 How violence committed by the FARDC can be co-produced by civilians was discussed on p. 183.

52 Love-related disputes are also widespread between military staff, and regularly lead to violence and even killings between troops, as was reported in several units.

rhythmic mode, often through repeated acts of abuse (idem: 93). Forward panic is a purely situational dynamic that leads to violence that is neither ordered nor furthers predefined projects, although ex-ante conditions (e.g., processes of Othering, battlefield conditions) do play a role in the buildup of tensions and the construction of the perception of threat. Furthermore, forward panic may merge with impulses derived from other causal chains that lead up to atrocities during combat, such as military strategy, like scorched earth policies or deterrence, or the desire for annihilation of what are framed as foreign Others (idem: 99–100).

It has already been explained that military operations tend to be arduous for FARDC troops, as deficiencies in logistics, transport, equipment, training, leadership and intelligence make themselves all the stronger felt on the battlefield.⁵³ These hardships exacerbate frustrations among troops that stem from abominable service conditions and pronounced asymmetries in the distribution of resources, especially where they run out of supplies. Furthermore, when direct and overall military leaders are perceived to be incompetent, hence not able to avoid unnecessary casualties, and are believed to be motivated by narrower self-interests or ulterior motives, frustrations may be complemented with anger. Especially where bad tactical decisions of commanders lead to unnecessary deaths, soldiers develop the feeling that they are needlessly sacrificed as cannon fodder, as captured by the notion of ‘war-related isolation’ that was invoked earlier.⁵⁴ This feeling has been aggravated by the policy of rebel-military integration. The idea that the enemy of today can tomorrow be one’s commander fosters the idea that fighting has no purpose, and that troops are being sacrificed for political games (Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013c: 567–577). This idea of senselessness is also nourished by the general lack of rewards for combat performance, since combat does little to earn soldiers status, respect, promotion or material rewards.

Where the frustrations and related pent-up tensions induced by service in the FARDC merge with the hardships and extreme fears resulting from being ill prepared in a life-threatening situation, a dangerous situation results. In the absence of manners to mitigate and manage fear and stress that are organized and sanctioned by the military organization, FARDC soldiers often resort to alcohol or drugs to overcome their fears and boost their morale (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013: 83). This greatly enhances the risk of forward panic and disintegration, which appear to occur on a regular basis in the FARDC (see also Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013: 81–83). As a T2 (intelligence officer) from an operational sector in Fizi explained, when asked about the high level of abuse: ‘Soldiers do not master their arms. They do not shoot to kill, but they shoot out of anger, they are overwhelmed by anger [*ils sont débordés par la colère*]. Often they are not even aware what they are doing. They say: “It is Satan who pushed me”. They did not want to kill people, but they realize afterwards that they have done something terrible.’⁵⁵ The risks of abuses become even higher where relations with civilians turn sour. Within counter-insurgency operations, it is quite common that troops become deeply suspicious of civilians’ loyalty, fearing that they provide cover and intelligence to insurgent forces (Collins, 2008: 88; Slim, 2008: 168–188). In the FARDC, hostile attitudes towards civilians are further fed by long-standing negative representations of civilians, which occasionally merge with tensions framed in ethnic discourses, as was explained for the ex-PARECO troops in the 65th sector in Fizi. Such antagonisms enhance the risk that a forward panic will take the form of abuses committed against civilians. As argued by Collins, the moment of detonation or explosion in a forward panic often takes place when there is a sudden confrontation with weakness, with a passive, paralyzed side which then becomes the focal point for the unleashing of pent-up frustration (Collins, 2008: 102–104). While this mostly occurs when ‘the enemy’ disintegrates, it may also be triggered by a confrontation with civilians, who may be seen as part of ‘the enemy’.

While forward panic is a dynamic that plays out ‘from below’, whether and how many abuses troops commit when engulfed by this frenzy is still partly shaped by the reaction of commanders. Although only piecemeal evidence could be collected on this, it appears that in the FARDC, commanders often fail to intervene when troops are in a forward panic. This can to a large extent be explained by low levels of vertical cohesion, making commanders afraid that their troops might mutiny and turn against them if they try to stem the abuses. But aside from the direct risks, there might also be other reasons why commanders are reluctant to intervene. Abuses committed during or in the wake of operations constitute a way for troops to ‘let off steam’ and to obtain a form of gratification that neither commanders nor the military organization as a whole provide to them. By allowing troops to occasionally have their share of excitement and rewards, commanders hope that their subordinates’ frustration will remain the rest of the time within manageable bounds, and not lead to outbursts directed against them or the military organization (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2013: 76).

In sum, occasional breakdowns of discipline and abuses against civilians, in particular those involving material rewards like looting sprees, help troops endure the difficulties they face in their everyday lives. In this manner, a certain level of abuse ultimately ensures the continued operation of the FARDC in the face of substandard service conditions, a lack of meritocracy, and weak command. Hence, even where abuses stem from purely situational dynamics or individual projects, their occurrence is still influenced by the features of the units that they are part of, and of the wider military organization. This points again to the blurred boundaries between abuses ‘from below’ and abuses ‘by connivance’ stemming from a permissive climate. Obviously, where collective discourses in the military frame civilians in a negative manner, the chances are higher that soldiers’ anger will be directed towards them. Similarly, where commanders exercise lax control on troops’ movements, soldiers may engage more easily in violent score settling. In the following, it will be further explored how such unit-related factors affect the likelihood that violence against civilians occurs.

53 The general difficulties of conducting military operations were discussed on pp. 260 and 274.

54 For the notion of war-related isolation, see Chapter 9, p. 280.

55 Interview with T2 (intelligence officer), Uvira, 23.01.2011.

How unit-related factors shape the likelihood for violence against civilians

As explained in the previous, the behavior of military units towards civilians is deeply shaped by both the projects that units pursue and the pathways they chart to realize them. Projects, pathways and the various factors that shape these also impact the likelihood that violence against civilians occurs. To repeat, these factors concern: first, injunctions from the hierarchy and big-man networks; second, units' time horizon; third, unit command; fourth; common norms and discourses; and fifth, interaction with the deployment context, as shaped by place-specific structures and dynamics, a dimension that will be discussed in the next chapter. In the following, it will be

Table 20: Overview of unit-related factors affecting the likelihood of violence against civilians

Effect on likelihood violence	Type of unit-related factors				
	Projects	Injunctions hierarchies	Time horizon	Unit command	Norms & discourses
Increase	Military operations Revenue generation (rapportage)	Unfair/erratic mechanisms of rewards & punishment commanders	Short time horizon : • limited accountability • coercive revenue generation	Commander unable and/or unwilling to control, discipline & socialize troops	Framings of civilians as out-group/hostile Justifications use of violence
		No socialization violence inhibiting discourses	Long time horizon: • score settling • antagonistic identification • banditry	Weak or strong vertical cohesion	Weak or strong horizontal cohesion
Decrease	Basic control Public security provision	Fair/strict mechanisms of rewards & punishment commanders	Long time horizon : • stronger accountability • trust-based revenue generation	Commander able and willing to control, discipline & socialize troops	Discourses of civilian protection Norms prohibitive of violence
		Socialization violence-inhibiting discourses		Weak or strong vertical cohesion	Weak or strong horizontal cohesion

briefly discussed how the first four elements impact the likelihood that violence against civilians committed by FARDC troops occurs, as presented in Table 20. This analysis does not sharply distinguish between different *types of violence*, and is therefore rather crude, only providing an overview of general patterns.

Concerning projects, it was already mentioned that in particular military operations open up a high risk for violence. Even when the hierarchy has not given explicit orders to employ violence against civilians, military operations by the FARDC often entail abuses, due to both the nature of hot situations and the characteristics of the FARDC, such as weak vertical cohesion, bad preparations and training, and non-qualified commanders. This combination of factors may give rise to breakdowns of discipline and disintegration. The risks of violence are also higher where units strive to establish comprehensive control in the face of strong resistance by dominant networks, in particular when these are linked to armed actors. Depending on instructions from above, a unit's time horizon and unit commanders' own norms, such a situation may create incentives to 'show force' as a way to weaken the countervailing civilian forces, and to deter them from collaborating with competing armed factions.⁵⁶ Another type of projects that increases the likelihood that violence will occur is revenue generation, in particular when aimed at accumulating as much wealth as rapidly as possible. This was for instance one of the reasons why the 651st brigade when deployed to the Misisi goldmines (case #10) resorted to highly coercive modes of navigation. Such a drive for rapid revenue generation may stem both from commanders' and staff's own volition, but is often also partly the result of intense pressures related to the *rapportage* system. Especially where commanders believe they need to transmit revenues to avoid being redeployed or lose their position, or when they judge this inevitable and therefore want to create some 'reserves', they might tolerate violence to rapidly accumulate wealth. Other projects, by contrast, diminish the likelihood that violence will be tolerated or deployed. This is particularly the case with basic control, which commonly implies a non-confrontational approach, including towards armed groups and their wider networks. Violence generally does not further the project of basic control, which is neither aimed at quick and intense revenue generation

⁵⁶ The effects of countervailing forces on units' practices are further discussed on pp. 322–323 and 341.

nor at exercising profound political-economic influence. Moreover, it often combines with the project of public security provision, like for the 651st when deployed on the *Plateaux* (case #11), which tried to facilitate negotiations with the FRF, or the 433rd when deployed in the *Moyens Plateaux* of Katobo (case #5), which made efforts to protect the population against revenge attacks by the FDLR.

While injunctions from formal and informal hierarchies are already partly captured in the category of projects, since they heavily shape what formal and informal missions units pursue, there are also other ways in which they influence the likelihood that units engage in violence against civilians, notably via their impact on the practices of unit commanders. Both the formal hierarchy and big-men can shape units' modes of navigation through direct instructions to commanders, for instance ordering them that they should conduct military operations while avoiding antagonizing the population, or by contrast, implicitly encouraging them to take a hard line, for instance by telling them to 'show the population that one cannot joke with the military'.⁵⁷ Formal and informal hierarchies also influence unit commanders' practices through the inculcation of norms and discourses. A good example is the commander of the 64nd sector, who would emphasize in conversations with *état-major* members of the brigades in his sector that they had to do the utmost to uphold human rights standards.⁵⁸ The promotion of violence-inhibiting discourses among unit commanders, such as discourses on civilian protection, may of course also occur via formal training and instruction. However, as we have seen, these tend to be relatively limited in the FARDC, although this is partly compensated for by trainings on human rights issues organized by NGOs and UN agencies. Lastly, formal and informal hierarchies exercise influence on units' propensity to engage in violence through mechanisms of rewards and punishment aimed at unit commanders. Where units create a lot of trouble, both the formal hierarchy and big-men in the higher echelons may take disciplining measures, such as punishing the commander by sending him to zones with lesser revenue-generation opportunities or putting him under pressure to send certain elements to the military justice apparatus. The effects of these mechanisms on correcting unit commanders' behavior depend to a large extent on their strictness and perceived fairness. Similar to what was described for troops, where unit commanders feel that they have an 'umbrella', or that disciplining is so erratic they might have a chance to get a way with ill conduct, or by contrast, run the risk of getting punished regardless their efforts, their incentives to adapt their command practices will considerably diminish.

In relation to the next factor, time horizon, it was explained that depending on a unit's projects and other elements, like common norms and discourse, a short time horizon may generate incentives to employ or tolerate violence, in particular where revenue generation is among the priorities. Inversely, when a unit has a long time horizon, it is likely to construct protection relations that imply a measure of reciprocity and accountability, and to develop revenue-generation activities that depend more on trust and collaboration than on coercion-based extraction. This also applies to troops that are deployed in their zone of origins, who may be less inclined to use violence against (extended) family members and their wider networks. However, strong local embedding also opens up risks of coercive interventions in local and private conflicts, although when it concerns inter-personal or family disputes, such violence tends to be targeted and relatively circumscribed. However, in a situation of inter-community conflicts, local embedding creates an elevated risk of more intense forms of violence, since being informed by strongly felt forms of local identification or a drive for settling old scores. One of the examples provided to illustrate this point were the operations of the ex-FRF in Bijombo, seized upon as an occasion to punish members of the Bafuliuru and Banyindu communities. Additionally, troops with a long time horizon, whether deployed in their zone of origins or having been deployed in the same area for a long time, may be sooner engaged in violent banditry due to their extensive local knowledge and contacts. This shows that while a long time horizon and strong local embedding make certain forms of violence less likely, they increase the likelihood of others.

Concerning unit command, it was explained that there are three factors that shape both commanders' practices and how these influence the behavior of their subordinates: first, commanders' personal norms, projects and capabilities; second, vertical cohesion; and third, commanders' position in the hierarchy and big-man networks. All of these influence whether commanders are able and willing to ensure the good conduct of their troops, via practices of supervision, control, disciplining and socialization into norms and discourses. Expectedly, where commanders' personal norms and projects cause them to have a preference for brutal modes of operating, or for projects that are difficult to accomplish without the use of force, like rapid revenue generation in an area with little wealth, they are more likely to foster a permissive climate for violent practices, for instance by exercising weak supervision and control. In certain cases, they might even directly order and sometimes organize violent practices. This was for example observed with certain officers from the 652nd brigade deployed on the *Plateaux* (case #12), who sent their bodyguards to go steal at night or at the market. However, it may also occur that commanders exercise weak supervision and control not because they do not want to, but as they are not capable of doing so, for instance due to the interference of powerful big-man networks and weak vertical cohesion. This was clearly observed for the 432nd brigade deployed in the *Moyens Plateaux* of Lemera (case #5), where the commander struggled with interference from ex-CNDP networks. However, depending on the contents of both commanders' and units' projects and norms, weak vertical cohesion can also reduce the likelihood of violence. A good example is the 641st (ex-29th IB) in Misisi (case #7), which continued to behave quite professionally in spite of having a commander who encouraged ruthless behavior, precisely because this commander was little respected and disliked. Strong vertical cohesion generally

57 Allegedly, this was what a battalion commander had heard from his regiment commander when deployed on the *Plateaux*. Informal conversation with battalion commander, Fizi territory, 30.11.2011.

58 Part of such a meeting between the sector commander and officers from the brigades deployed in his sector (then headquartered in Lulimba) was observed in Fizi centre on 27.02.2011.

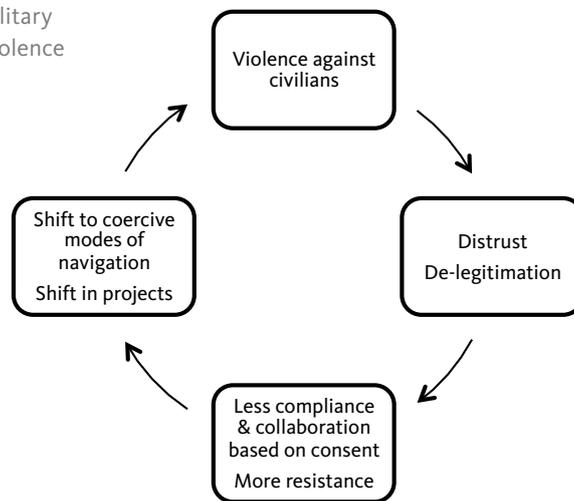
enhances the effectiveness of commanders' efforts at norm enforcement and socialization, whether by serving as a role model, through formal and informal instruction or via mechanisms of rewards and punishments. Therefore, where commanders have norms and tolerate discourses that authorize violence, weak cohesion might prevent this from affecting troops' practices and rendering these more violent. By contrast, where commanders propagate norms and discourses prohibitive of violence and vertical cohesion is weak, the effects may be the opposite, depending on troops' own norms and discourses.

In relation to the contents and salience of common norms and discourses within a unit, it was already explained in detail how these increase or decrease the likelihood of abuses against civilians by impacting the way in which civilians and violence against them are framed and evaluated. Where civilians are portrayed as a hostile ethnic out-group or as armed group collaborators, or as a group of troublemakers deserving of punishment, and such discourses are shared by and salient among troops, abuses are more likely to occur. Inversely, where civilians are primarily identified as 'civilians' whom the military has a constitutional duty to protect, and such discourses are prominent and widely shared, the chances that violence occurs will diminish. The same applies to norms surrounding the use of violence against civilians more generally. Obviously, in a unit where violence against civilians is seen as acceptable or justified, for example for achieving the unit's common projects, the chances of violence are higher than where it is unambiguously defined as an intolerable transgression of professional ethics. The relative salience of both norms and discourses, and their effects on social practices, depend again on units' level of horizontal cohesion: where horizontal cohesion is strong, common norms and discourses will be more salient and have a greater imprint on troops' practices than where it is weak, through such mechanisms as peer pressure and concern for one's standing in the group. Therefore, similar to vertical cohesion, horizontal cohesion may both increase or decrease the likelihood of violence against civilians, depending on the contents of units' common discourses and norms.

Concluding and final remarks : violence, projects and navigation

To conclude, an analysis of patterns of abuse against civilians committed by FARDC units in Fizi learnt that a large share of violent incidents stemmed from a 'permissive climate' as importantly shaped by the quality of unit command. By not exercising strict control and supervision, by not promptly intervening whenever abuses occur, and by not consistently and strictly punishing troops after the facts, commanders generate a situation in which the threshold for engaging in abuses is lowered. Commanders also play an important indirect role in abuses by not cracking down on negative discourses on civilians that circulate among their troops, and by being passive in inculcating norms and values prohibitive of violence, such as through moral talks. One of the reasons why commanders allow a

Figure 20: Downward spiral of civilian-military interaction set in motion by violence



permissive climate for abuses to develop is that they lack incentives to be more strict, both as the wider formal and informal hierarchies of which they form part fail to stir them in that direction and due to the specific projects that they and their units pursue, and the modes of navigation adopted to realize these. Yet, even where commanders engage in efforts to prevent abuses, the latter may still occur, either as their efforts are little effective due to weak vertical cohesion, or due to dynamics 'from below' that push troops to err, such as personal projects related to revenue generation, revenge or anger.

Regardless the dynamics leading up to abuses, and whether these are directly or indirectly related to incentive structures stemming from units' projects and navigation, where abuses against civilians have occurred, they might set in motion downward spirals of decreasing trust and legitimacy, and increasing hostility, which affect the development of units' future projects and navigational trajectories (see Figure 20). In the wake of abuses, civilians are likely to develop negative feelings towards the military, whose legitimacy will be undermined.

This might prompt a shift in civilians' agentic orientations and the bases thereof, leading to reluctance to collaborate and comply, and reinforcing the importance of utilitarian rather than legitimacy-based grounds for doing so. At the same time, the propensity among civilians to contest the military's practices might increase. This creates incentives for the military to rely increasingly on coercion to elicit compliance and suppress contestation, which will further erode trust and legitimacy.

Additionally, where soldiers have committed abuses for non-obvious reasons, like forward panic, those involved might seek to rationalize the events post hoc, for instance by saying that the harmed civilians were in reality armed group collaborators and deserved to be punished. These framings might again come to shape future social practice, leading to potentially more coercive modes of action. The same downward spiral is set in motion where violence was an important element of navigational pathways from the start, highlighting that coercion may have a certain path-dependent element. Where trust has disappeared, violence may become an increasingly attractive mode of eliciting compliance and collaboration, and restoring trust is a more difficult and time-consuming project than destroying it. Furthermore, violence often generates new incentives for violence, since nourishing a thirst for revenge. In sum, whatever the pathway leading up to initial acts of violence, the situational dynamics that unfold after violence has been committed might ultimately lead to a readjustment of projects and modes of navigation in a manner that renewed violence against civilians becomes more likely.

Place-specific social structures and dynamics

AT THE START OF PART IV, IT WAS EXPLAINED that variations in civilian-military interaction can to a large extent be explained by FARDC units' divergent projects and modes of navigation, as shaped by five elements (see also Figure 19). The first four of these relate to factors internal to military units, such as the quality of command and units' time horizon, and were discussed in Chapter 10. The fifth factor, units' interaction with their deployment environment, is the central object of inquiry of Chapter 11. A unit's interaction with its deployment environment relates to its interaction with both the civilians and the armed actors situated in that environment. The agency of these social agents vis-à-vis the military, and that of the military vis-à-vis these agents, is shaped by at once the social structures and the social dynamics pertaining to the place where their interaction unfolds. At the same time, this interaction produces effects on both the dynamics and the social structures that are specific to the place where it occurs, via processes of structuration. In order to understand these mutual influences between place and agency, it is briefly repeated what was said about place in Chapter 2.¹

Following Pred (1984), places are approached herein as 'historically contingent processes'. In the definition of Agnew (1987: 28), these 'processes' are constituted by *locales* (settings for microsociological interaction), *locations* (geographical positions on the earth's surface relating to a socially defined reference system), and *sense of place* (the feelings people have about a specific place which are inscribed in structures of signification, cf. Castree, 2003: 167). This structurationist approach to place highlights that the elements constitutive of place, which ultimately relate to the physical setting and structures of legitimation, domination and signification, shape and are shaped by routine social practices enacted by social agents (Pred, 1984: 282).

For Bernazzolli and Flint (2009), these observations also apply to the structuration of militarized places. They argue that 'the social construction of place and the social processes of militarization are entwined; militarism is given meaning and maintained, or challenged, within everyday processes of making and re-making places' (2009: 395). Since everyday civilian-military interaction concerns routine social practices, it is structured by and structures the various elements involved in the structuration of place, implying it both produces and is produced by place. Consequently, how much power the FARDC exercises in a given place, to what extent and how it ensures economic control; whether and how it forges protection arrangements with local elites; or what it represents and is associated with: all these dimensions are shaped by the elements constitutive of place. These include the following: a place's physical characteristics, which together with its location, population densities and transport and ICT infrastructure shape its level of isolation; structures of domination, which are manifested in local power constellations and are productive of and produced by extra-local power relations and local economies; structures of legitimation, or the ensemble of norms governing social practice, the effects of which on agency are mediated by the social fabric of local societies; and finally, structures of signification, in particular local discourses, 'sense of place', and collective memory, which affect representations of the military.

Concerning (extra-local) power relations, Pred (1984: 291) notes that the manner in which these are involved in place-making depends on 'the extent to which local institutions and their symbol systems are based upon nonlocal control and interactions'. This draws attention to the *integration* of places in wider social orders, or the relations of dependence and autonomy between a place and the wider socio-spatial order in which it is situated (Giddens, 1984: 28). These relations influence the extent to which place-based routine social practices shape and are shaped by the structural features of wider socio-spatial orders, which include central state institutions. For Agnew (1987: 40), central state institutions structure and are structured by places, leading to place-specific variations in their forms and functioning, their degrees of domination, as well as in state-society relations and political behavior more generally (idem: 44). Hence, political mobilization

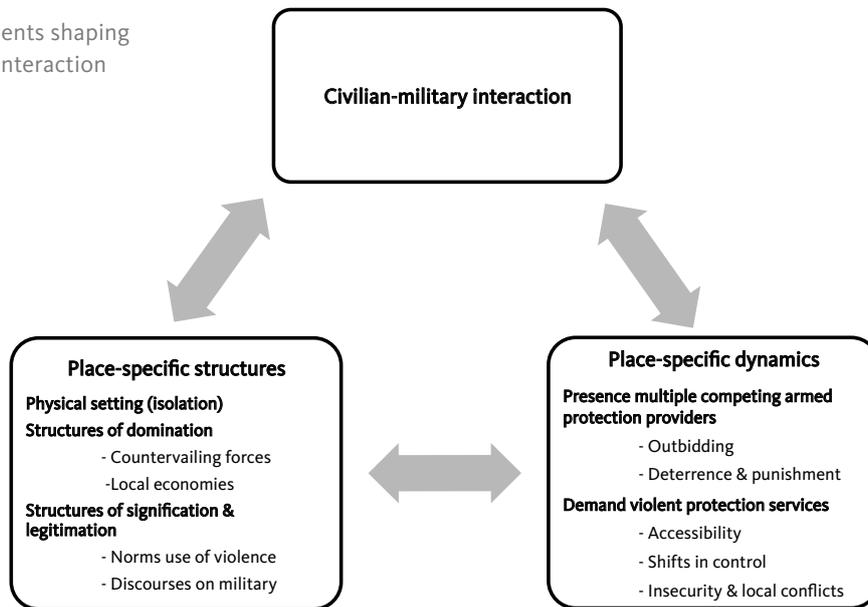
¹ The notion of place was introduced on p. 49.

'is place-specific, reflecting the history of integration into the national political system [...], local organizational capacity, and other facets of group formation' (idem: 59). This produces locally differentiated political outcomes, not only concerning the relative influence of state institutions, but also in relation to their meanings, which are imprinted by and imprint upon 'sense of place'. These observations also apply to the military, which is similarly a central state institution, implying its form, functioning, influence and meanings differ per place.

The elements constitutive of place are the product of past processes of structuration (Pred, 1984: 282). In the Kivus, this implies that they are deeply imprinted by the processes of militarization and other social transformations that have taken place since the 1980s, as described in Chapter 3.² These transformations have been occasioned by and are manifested in phenomena like the hardening of boundaries between ethnic groups, massive armed group mobilization, growing poverty, the rise of the non-official economy, the increasing dominance of political-military entrepreneurs, and the diminishing power and legitimacy of civilian authorities (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers, 2004). However, the nature and effects of these processes of transformation strongly diverge from one place to the next, which is related to the Kivus' impressive diversity in terms of local power complexes, social formations, economies and histories. Furthermore, in part as a result of this diversity, the violence in the 1990s and during the Congo Wars took on very different forms and had varying effects per place.

Place-specific differences in social structures, as well as in the characteristics of the physical environment, also impact civilian-military interaction. Importantly, these differences have an influence on civilians' agentic dispositions vis-à-vis the FARDC, which relate to compliance, collaboration and contestation, and the bases for these dispositions (habituation, legitimacy, utilitarianism or contingent consent or dissent).³ Yet, social structures do not shape civilian agency in a straightforward manner. Amongst other factors, their effects on agency are partly a product of the characteristics of the social networks that social agents form part of. Similar to military units, the social cohesion of civilian communities influences the salience of shared norms and discourses and the extent to and ways in which these inform social practice. Aside from shaping civilian agency, place-specific structures of domination, signification and legitimation also impact the agency of the military. For example, where local civilian elites are well connected with powerful national elites and have a high level of economic control, it will be more difficult for the FARDC to gain dominance within a particular context. Depending on other factors, this may create incentives for a unit to resort to coercion to establish more influence, or by contrast, to refrain from exercising more profound influence and content itself with maintaining basic control.

Figure 21: Place-based elements shaping civilian-military interaction



Social structures also inform the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that play out in a certain context, which is another element that causes differences in civilian-military interaction. In Chapter 2, it was explained that structures of domination, signification and legitimation formed over the *longue durée* interact and partly overlap with more fluid dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection.⁴ Furthermore, in Chapter 7, it was shown how these dynamics influence civilians' agency towards the military, for instance by fostering compliance and collaboration on more utilitarian grounds. But the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection also produce effects on the military side, affecting units' projects and modes of navigation, and therefore their interaction with civilians. For example, where

2 How processes of militarization originated and unfolded in tandem with other social transformations was described on pp. 66–68 and 71–73.
 3 For an explanation of the types and bases of civilians' agentic orientations towards the military, see pp. 191–195.
 4 How the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection shape civilians' agency was described on pp. 212–215.

the dynamics of conflict and insecurity are intense, civilian demand for protection services from the military is likely to be high, causing the military to intervene at a larger scale in civilian conflicts than if such demand were low. The dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection also shape the military's practices by determining its relations to other armed protection providers. Each place in the Kivus has its own complex security landscape, with varying combinations of state and non-state in/security actors, including armed groups, bandits and vigilantes, who cooperate, conflict and cohabitate in often rapidly shifting ways. The resulting fluctuating patterns of military control impact the 'supply side' of protection, which relates to the agency of the various armed protection providers involved. For example, intense competition may provoke a dynamic of outbidding, causing armed factions to demonstrate force in order to attract their opponents' clients by showing they are more powerful, hence better protectors. However, the dynamics of conflict and insecurity also impact the 'demand side' of protection, or the agency of the civilians who solicit protection services from armed actors. For instance, when there is fear that military interventions in dispute processing will provoke retaliations by one side or the other, the demand for such services will diminish. Other factors that influence the demand for (violent) protection services relate to the intensity of local conflicts and insecurity, the accessibility of such services, which is partly related to the number of armed actors that are present, and the extent to which soliciting protection services from armed actors is seen as legitimate, which is related to local structures of signification, but also more fluid dynamics of conflict shaping the salience of conflict narratives.

In sum, place-based differences in physical setting, (the elements mediating) structures of domination, signification and legitimation, and the nature and intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, cause variations in the ways in which civilians and the military interact (see Figure 21). This chapter analyzes the mechanisms by which these interacting elements create differences in patterns of civilian-military interaction, and reflects on how they affect military units' propensity to engage in violence against civilians. It does so in a manner similar to the previous chapter, implying that it systematically discusses the causal effects of the structural elements and dynamics found to be of most relevance, illustrating these with elaborate examples from the fieldwork. In order to corroborate the presented findings, the analysis also draws upon an overview of the case studies which indicates per case whether the main causal elements discussed are present or absent, by assigning them either an 1 or a 0 (see Table 21). This overview also displays the outcome of each case, which was earlier defined as relating to whether civilian-military interaction was evaluated by civilians in a positive (coded 0) or in a negative (coded 1) manner. The rest of this introductory part briefly explains what elements relating to units' deployment context were identified as most shaping civilian-military interaction and how, which is discussed in a more in-depth manner in the rest of the chapter.

Table 21: Explanation for coding of factors related to deployment context

Context-related factor	Coding 1	Coding 0
Isolation	Isolated environment	Non-isolated environment
Countervailing forces	Countervailing forces present	Countervailing forces absent
Revenue generation opportunities	Abundance revenue generation opportunities	Scarcity revenue generation opportunities
Accessibility revenue generation	Revenue generation opportunities accessible	Revenue generation opportunities not accessible
Trust-based revenue generation	Trust-based revenue generation activities present	Trust-based revenue generation activities absent
Hostile discourses	Hostile discourses (parts of) military present	Hostile discourses (parts of) military absent
High demand violent protection services	High demand violent protection services	Low demand violent protection services
Multitude competing armed actors	Presence multitude competing armed actors	No presence multitude competing armed actors
Outcome	Negative civilian evaluations	Positive civilian evaluations

Concerning the physical features of the environment, the main factor explaining variations in civilian-military interaction is whether an area is isolated (coded 1) or not (coded 0). Isolation, which is constituted by location, population densities and available transport and ICT infrastructure, matters both for the behavior of troops, who are more difficult to control when commanders are further away and in irregular contact, and for the agency of civilians, who have less possibilities to contest the military. With regard to structures of domination, one of the key factors is the presence of civilian countervailing forces to the military (coded 1), in the form of strong and cohesive local actors. This concerns in particular civilian elites who can mobilize powerful supra-local actors, for instance via protection relations, or armed groups that can put pressure on the FARDC. Since the presence of countervailing forces potentially reins in the FARDC's conduct and aspirations for control, it is more likely to coincide with positively evaluated civilian-military relations. The exception to this is where the FARDC seeks comprehensive control, in which case the presence of countervailing forces can provoke strong frictions that will lead to negative evaluations. The absence of countervailing forces (coded 0) was considered to relate to two scenarios. In the first, local civilian actors are weak, implying they cannot mobilize powerful supra-local contacts or armed groups. In the second, local actors are strong but

divided, which opens up the risk that one of the parties enters into a protection arrangement with the FARDC to reinforce its position. The absence of countervailing forces is assumed to contribute to negatively evaluated civilian-military interaction, since it either leaves the FARDC unchecked, or where the military's intervention is solicited by a conflict party, enkindles the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, leaving civilians in insecurity, fear and sometimes anger. A second factor of importance in relation to structures of domination is the structure of local economies, in particular the abundance (coded 1) or scarcity (coded 0) of revenue-generation opportunities, like natural resources or commercial activity. Due to the structure of the Kivus' economy and the systematic underfunding of state servants, areas where significant income is earned are likely to attract a multitude of competing state services and economic operators, leading to conflicts that commonly negatively affect civilian-military interaction.⁵ Furthermore, in such situations, *rapportage* obligations are generally high, putting military units under pressure to accumulate significant wealth, which occurs most often through extraction from civilians. Another dimension of importance in relation to local economies is the level of accessibility of revenue-generation opportunities. Some economic activities are difficult for the FARDC to break into or gain revenue from (coded 0), whether due to power relations, the features of the commodity chain (e.g., whether it involves illegal economic activities, and their obstructability and detectability), or both. Where this is the case, the military is more likely to resort to coercion than where revenue-generation activities are easy to access (coded 1), although this also depends on other factors like the military's time horizon. The exception to this is where trust is the main barrier to access (coded 1), since this may reduce, rather than enhance, incentives to employ coercion, in particular where time horizons are long. Where trust is not an important condition for revenue generation (coded 0), *ceteris paribus*, similar incentives for good behavior will not be manifested.

In relation to structures of legitimation and signification, two factors were identified as having most weight in shaping civilian-military interaction. The first is the presence (coded 1) or absence (coded 0) of antagonistic discourses on the military or certain groups in the military, notably ethnically colored out-group framings. As we have seen, in an environment like Fizi, the presence of Rwandophone FARDC troops was portrayed in a negative manner, partly under the influence of local political-military entrepreneurs such as the Mai Mai. Obviously, these negative framings are in themselves already an indication that civilian-military interaction is evaluated in negative terms, but this may also depend on other factors, such as to what extent the out-group framed as hostile is seen to dominate the unit in question and to influence its practices. A second factor of importance relating to structures of signification and legitimation is the presence or absence of relatively widely shared local norms authorizing protection arrangements with armed actors and overly coercive protection practices like violent score settling and dispute resolution. The presence of such norms is likely to lead to a high demand for violent interventions by the FARDC in local or private disputes, or for other coercive protection services. Where demand for such protection services is elevated (coded 1 and 0 for where it is low), the chances are higher that civilian-military interaction will be evaluated negatively. The reason is that those disadvantaged by the military's interventions will probably develop negative evaluations, in particular when interventions involved violence and were seen as unjust and unfair. Furthermore, violent dispute resolution tends to create a general climate of insecurity. Since neither the instigators nor the reasons for the employed violence might be known, or rumors circulate which attribute the responsibility to out-groups framed as hostile, people might develop the feeling that they can fall victim too, or fear that those disadvantaged will seek redress by violent means. Certainly, those who have directly benefited from the FARDC's protection are likely to evaluate the military in a more positive manner, but this group is commonly relatively small, certainly in comparison to the amount of actors affected by the degeneration of the security climate.

A high demand for violent protection services from the FARDC is not only related to local structures of legitimation but may also be a manifestation of temporarily intensified dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. This may be the result of various mechanisms. To start with, growing insecurity and conflicts contribute to the increased salience of conflict narratives, which might reinforce norms authorizing the use of violence, for instance when aimed at out-groups seen as hostile. Furthermore, growing insecurity may imply that more people have fallen victim to violence and therefore find violent manners to seek redress or revenge (temporarily) more legitimate. Additionally, where the presence of the number of armed protection providers rises, for instance due to reinforced FARDC deployment, violent protection services become more accessible, which may cause the demand for them to increase. Aside from the demand for violent protection services, another key factor in relation to the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection is the presence of multiple (more than two) competing armed protection providers (coded 1, and 0 for absence), whether armed groups, local gangs or military units. This situation, which differs from that of the presence of two competing armed factions, or the presence of multiple armed factions that are not in strong competition (for instance as they collude), often fosters violent conduct towards civilians. The reason for this is that the various competing factions generally have incentives to employ force, for instance to punish defectors or deter people from defecting. Such incentives are particularly pronounced where shifts in control take place, since this shakes up the entire constellation of power and allegiances, prompting those previously disadvantaged or marginalized to seize the opportunity to try to change the status quo by soliciting protection from the newly dominant forces, while those previously dominant will try to do the same to remain in power.

Based on in-depth research in the case study areas, these various features of the places where the studied military units were deployed were assigned values (for a detailed justification of the coding, see Appendix H). Where factors could not be coded as it was considered that not sufficient data had been gathered to make a sound assessment, they were attributed an 'x'. This led to the overview presented in Table 22, which shows per case both the presence and absence of the relevant deployment context-related factors and the outcome,

5 The effects of the presence of competing military and other state services in resources-rich zones were discussed on pp. 239–242.

hence whether civilian-military interaction was evaluated in a positive (coded 0) or in a negative (coded 1) manner by civilians in the area in question.

Table 22: Overview of values assigned to factors related to deployment context per case

Case #nr	Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)								
	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
#2	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
#3	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
#4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
#5	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
#6	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
#7	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
#8	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
#9	1	0	0	x	x	0	x	0	0
#10	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
#11	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
#12	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
#13	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
#14	1	1	1	1	0	1	x	1	0

11.1 The features of the deployment context

In the following, the various features of military units' deployment context mentioned in the previous, and how these shape civilian-military interaction, will be analyzed more in-depth. This analysis first focuses on the physical characteristics of place, and then on the structures of domination, signification and legitimation with which these characteristics interact. In relation to local structures of domination, specific attention will be paid to local economies and supra-local power relations. The part on structures of signification and legitimation discusses both civilians' discourses on the military and local norms surrounding the soliciting of violent protection services. This discussion also focuses on how these discourses and norms affect civilian agency via the fabric of local society, in particular levels of social cohesion. Lastly, it is analyzed how the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection affect civilian-military interaction, looking at both the demand side and the supply side of violent protection services, as partly shaped by the presence and relations between various armed protection providers.

11.1.1 The physical features of place

Numerous aspects of the organization and modus operandi of the military are affected by the physical features of the place to which it is deployed. These relate for instance to where it is located relative to other places, and whether it concerns an area in the mountains or with dense forests that are difficult to penetrate. Together with available road and ICT infrastructure and population densities, these physical features shape the accessibility or the level of isolation of a particular place. Isolation has effects on civilian-military interaction both via the military's and civilians' agency. Concerning the effects on the military, these are partly related to the FARDC's deficient systems of logistics and communications, marked by the limited availability of vehicles and advanced communications equipment. Especially where phone network coverage is absent and troops are deployed in a scattered manner over vast areas with difficult terrain, commanders' possibilities to directly supervise and control their troops will be heavily circumscribed. Aware of this reduced capacity for monitoring and control among their superiors, troops may start to engage in behavior that violates the boundaries of the permissible, like smoking cannabis before going on duty, talking in a derogatory manner about civilians, or extorting them.

But the difficulties of control constitute only one part of the explanation for why troops in isolated areas might sooner engage in ill conduct. As such rough areas tend to be hideouts of insurgent groups, deployment is often very demanding for military staff, who constantly have to be on the alert. Furthermore, deployment to areas with deficient infrastructure generally entails strong dependence on local markets and civilian contributions for food, most often leading to insufficient food and a monotonous diet. These various factors have a detrimental effect on soldiers' mood and mentality. This is aggravated by the hardships of providing for basic needs in primitive circumstances, the boredom resulting from limited possibilities for spending one's free time, the feeling of isolation related to the prolonged absence of spouses and family and the impossibility to contact them by phone, and for certain officers, the frustration of being surrounded by people with little education and what they perceive to be a 'village mentality': all of this makes that deployment

to isolated areas undermines FARDC staff's morale, which might negatively affect discipline and lower the threshold for certain types of ill conduct. This is particularly the case where commanders do little to correct and control their troops. Indeed, as was illustrated in the previous,⁶ in isolated areas, the quality of command is a crucial factor in shaping troops' conduct, as it depends to a large extent on the characteristics and practices of commanders whether the general negative tendencies among troops outlined above can be countered or prevented.

In combination with other factors, the level of isolation of a certain place also produces effects on civilians' agentic orientations towards the military. For instance, inhabitants of a small village on the *Plateaux* or on the Ubwari peninsula have fewer options to protest against military misbehavior than city dwellers, in particular if there are almost no state agents present in the vicinity, if there is no phone network coverage, and if road infrastructure is dilapidated. This is not merely a matter of a lack of physical access to those who can provide redress or exert pressure, such as civilian and military authorities. It is also a result of the lack of possibilities to mobilize a critical mass of people, which in some cases can work as a break on abusive behavior. Where civilians unite to collectively monitor, document and denounce abuses, they may be able to exercise more influence, and with lower risks, than when living scattered and only being able to undertake risky action in small groups. As the inhabitant of a small village on the *Plateaux* explained: 'They [military] could just kill me here and hide my body. Who would know? Nobody will have seen anything.'⁷ This quote illustrates that the physical environment does not only affect agentic orientations by shaping the practical conditions for action, but also via fostering certain beliefs and attitudes, including about the risks and possibilities of undertaking efforts to protest abuses and effectuate change. Among those living in isolated areas, the feeling of being 'cut off from the world' or 'forgotten' was very palpable, contributing to the idea that efforts to contest the military were either futile or too dangerous. This clearly affected social practices, leading to a type of self-censorship or (partial) resignation.

While the physical features of the environment thus influence social practices, this influence is by no means straightforward. This is evidenced when looking at the case studies. Of the eleven cases involving an isolated area, five have negatively evaluated civilian-military interaction. Furthermore, of the three cases of non-isolation, two coincide with negative evaluations (see Table 22). Indeed, both civilians' and the military's agency is shaped by a wide range of contingently interacting factors. Therefore, units deployed to isolated areas do not always behave badly, as was illustrated by the 651st brigade under Col. Mahoro on the *Plateaux* (case #11). Furthermore, as we have seen in relation to the cities of Beni and Butembo (including case #1), the military does not necessarily behave well in urban environments. Although in both these cities, there are powerful local civilian actors, including from the business community and civil society, and there is a significant presence of civilian authorities and police, the FARDC was still reported to misbehave. It was earlier explained that such military misbehavior is the result of a variety of factors including the anonymity offered by the presence of a multitude of different armed actors, the fact that military staff live and move around in an ill-controlled manner in the residential quarters, the high level of demand for violent protection services, and significant economic competition.⁸ As further evidenced by the case of Kirumba, this implies that non-isolated environments might in certain respects also hamper holding the military to account, and therefore contribute to ill conduct.⁹

Just as the physical characteristics of place shape social (re)production, social (re)production contributes to transformations of the physical environment (Pred, 1984). This also applies to the reproduction of the military. The large-scale presence of the military in a certain area profoundly impacts its physical characteristics, affecting patterns of land use, the landscape, and the environment. For example, where military presence is sizeable and sustained, it may contribute to forms of urbanization. As demonstrated by Woodward (2004), the presence of a military base, camp or position, however small, does not only affect the lands on which it is established, but also the surroundings. One reason for this is that it generates changes in the structure of the local economy and sometimes infrastructure, as the demand for certain types of foodstuffs, products and services rises. In the case of the FARDC, such changes also result from the fact that soldiers and their families engage in revenue-generation activities. For instance in Fizi, the FARDC has created vast plantations of cannabis near *Point Zero*, a landmark close to the Fizi-Minembwe axis, which has significantly altered the environment.¹⁰ Another common development in areas with large-scale and prolonged military presence is rapid deforestation, mostly for the production of charcoal and in some cases planks. Especially when occurring at a vast scale, which is not rare, deforestation may have drastic effects on the livelihoods of inhabitants, leading for instance to climatic perturbations, problems with water provision, and a loss of access to firewood, wild animals and traditional medicine. But military transformations of the landscape do not only affect the physical characteristics of places, they also change their meanings, or the 'sense of place'. In general, military presence inscribes structures of domination into the landscape, with military bases and roadblocks becoming markers of military control. This highlights how the ways in which military presence relates to the physical features of place are shaped by and shape structures of domination.

6 On p. 301, it was explained that in five of the six cases where command was identified as bad and the environment was isolated, negative civilian-military interaction was observed. Inversely, in five of the five cases where command was judged to be good and the environment was isolated, civilian-military interaction was positively evaluated.

7 Interview with inhabitant, Antenne, 22.12.2010.

8 The reasons for the elevated insecurity in Beni and Butembo, including the HUNI phenomenon, were analyzed on pp. 188–190.

9 Insecurity in the town of Kirumba was discussed on pp. 207–208.

10 Informal conversations with traders, Lusuku, 09.12.2011.

Within the Kivus, structures of domination highly differ per place, as manifested in variations in local power constellations, which are shaped by the distribution of power between different groups and actors, their mutual relations, and the ways in which the dominant relate to the dominated. These differences have deep historical roots, going back to the forms of socio-political order that existed in the pre-colonial era, and transformations in local power complexes in respectively the colonial and post-colonial eras, including during the wars. As described in Chapter 3,¹¹ the colonial period led to deep changes in local socio-political orders, as the colonial authorities engaged in large-scale social engineering, forging new polities and authority structures, while territorializing and ethnicizing them. Although the colonizers tried to impose a roughly similar model in all the *chefferies* and *secteurs* that they created, recognized or reorganized, the outcomes of their interventions were quite different in each place, as shaped by existing modes of socio-political organization and contingent events. While in certain areas, *bami* (customary chiefs) were or became very powerful, in others, their power remained much more circumscribed, as decision-making continued to be organized in a more horizontal manner (Newbury, 1978). Transformations continued in the Mobutu era, under the influence of changing modes of power projection from the political center (e.g., a growing reliance on big-man networks and the creation of the unique party), certain socio-economic processes (e.g., the rise of the non-official economy) and changes in policies of land management and local administration.¹² Again, the outcomes of these changes were uneven. For example, while in some places, they undermined the legitimacy and authority of the *bami*, in others, the position of the customary chiefs was reinforced. Furthermore, while in certain areas a new group of powerful rural entrepreneurs emerged that amassed large land-holdings, others continued to be dominated by smallholder farming. The relative significance and social position of the *mutuelles* (self-help/social insurance groups), churches and civil society organizations, which compensated for the state's crumbling public service provision, also differed per place. The same uneven effects can be detected in relation to processes of militarization and the war, which caused further changes in local structures of domination. In some places, local strongmen and violent entrepreneurs gained more prominence than in others, depending on factors like processes of local militia formation, changing alliances between civilian and armed actors, inter-and intra-community conflicts, and the flight and displacement of certain authorities (Namegabe, 2005). That such transformations were often not merely temporary but affected the structural features of places became visible in the post-settlement period, when Kinshasa struggled to reduce the influence of semi-autonomous militarized networks, which caused in certain contexts yet further shifts in local structures of domination (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers, 2008).

These historically grown variations in constantly evolving structures of domination contribute to differences in patterns of civilian-military interaction, notably by determining to what extent the military encounters countervailing forces. As was discussed in Chapter 7, there are multiple ways in which civilians try to resist the FARDC's power, including protest actions, formal complaints, and pressure behind the screens.¹³ The effects of these efforts at contestation are shaped by various factors, including the relative strength of civilian actors and their level of cohesion, which affects their capability for engaging in collective action, hence to exert concerted pressure. Where relatively powerful and stable coalitions of actors resisting the FARDC materialize, for instance uniting economic operators, political elites and civilian authorities who have important connections at supra-local levels, the FARDC will have more difficulties to establish control than where these various actors would all pursue their own agendas, and for example liaise with the FARDC to reinforce their position vis-à-vis their competitors. What also matters for determining the effects of contestation is the relative power of other armed actors and their links to civilians. In certain places, armed actors have built up a structural position of dominance, generally causing the FARDC's space for maneuver to become reduced. This is particularly the case where armed groups enjoy a relatively high level of legitimacy among the population, are closely linked to political-military elites and have strong military capabilities. In such situations, FARDC units' projects make a crucial difference for civilian-military interaction. Where the military strives to establish no more than basic control and finds a *modus vivendi* with dominant networks, relative stability may ensue. A good example is the 29th IB in the Baraka area (case #6), which did not try to aggressively reduce the influence of the Mai Mai and their wider networks, instead adopting a policy of cohabitation and occasional collusion. By contrast, where the FARDC would try to establish comprehensive control, hence to contest the position of powerful armed actors and allied civilian elites, the chances are high that these efforts would provoke fierce resistance, which is likely to lead a deterioration of the military's conduct.

Looking at the case studies (see Table 22), we indeed see that in the four cases where comprehensive control was an important project *and* there were countervailing forces, three coincided with negatively evaluated civilian-military interaction. The deviant case (#8, the 112th brigade in Minembwe) is quite specific, for the countervailing forces (the rebels of the FRF) were not present in the case study area, which was delimited to Minembwe and surroundings, the main zone of deployment of the 112th. Furthermore, due to this brigade's long period of deployment in the Minembwe area, which it had controlled since 2003, earlier efforts at contesting its power there had already subsided, pointing to the effects of the length of deployment. While power struggles provoke an intensified dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection at the short term, where the FARDC gains the upper hand and becomes dominant, instability may ultimately diminish. However, such a relatively stable order may still be highly coercive and exploitative. The title of an article on the 85th brigade deployed in Walikale, which established a type of lasting hegemony there, captures this outcome well, describing it as 'negotiated peace

¹¹ The impact of the colonial era on local authority structures was described on pp. 60–62.

¹² For a succinct overview of transformations in local socio-political orders in the Kivus in the Mobutu era, see Tull, 2005: 58–93.

¹³ The factors shaping the relative effectiveness of practices of contestation were discussed on pp. 210–215.

for extortion' (Garrett et al., 2009). This highlights the ways in which local power configurations shape, in interaction with military units' internal features, the FARDC's practices of revenue generation, including the extraction of wealth from civilians. This is further evidenced by the variations in the FARDC's taxation practices at markets located in different subareas of the *Hauts Plateaux*. Despite these areas being relatively close to one another, rather pronounced differences were found in the distribution of tax revenues per market, indicating how in the Kivus power configurations may substantially differ even at the very micro level.

Power configurations and extractive practices: market taxation on the Hauts Plateaux

Different subareas of the *Hauts Plateaux* each have their own structures of domination and power configurations, being controlled by varying combinations of political and military actors, who are inserted differentially in the socio-political order. That this impacts civilian-military interaction is manifested in differences and shifts in the de facto distribution of the revenues of market taxation. As emerged from an analysis of fourteen markets in the *Plateaux* area (see Map 5),¹⁴ the manner in which tax revenues are divided among different stakeholders is shaped by local power relations, norms and routines, as well as the projects and modes of navigation of FARDC units. This leads to significant differences per area, or even per market. At some markets, the FARDC usurped the majority of the *taxe d'étalage* (display tax, usually around 500FC per display) and the tax in kind (a part of the foodstuffs to be traded).¹⁵ This is a quite unusual situation that was only found on the *Plateaux*, for in other areas in Fizi and Uvira, the military did not touch upon the *taxe d'étalage*, which is destined for the civilian authorities. The markets where this occurred were often located in far-flung areas, and were relatively insignificant in terms of total revenue, indicating there were limited vested interests at stake. An exception to this was the market of Mikalati, previously the biggest on the *Plateaux*, which used to be taxed by the FRF, who shared the revenues with customary chiefs. When the 652nd brigade of the FARDC took control over this part of the *Plateaux* in March 2010 (case #12), it appropriated 100 per cent of the tax revenues, to the detriment of the customary chiefs. Bolstered by the rebel group's withdrawal into the Bijabo forest, the brigade, which rapidly built up a bad reputation, preferred maximizing tax revenues to maintaining good relations with the local authorities. Furthermore, it seems that usurping all market taxes fit into this unit's intentions to make its authority vis-à-vis customary chiefs and local notables strongly felt, suspecting them to all support the FRF. Indeed, local authorities perceived the brigade's appropriation of the market revenues to be a punishment for their alleged support to the rebels. This provoked further antagonisms towards the FARDC, leading to only more sympathy for the FRF.

A second scenario of market tax division consisted of the FARDC sharing all taxes (both in kind and in cash) with other stakeholders, as was for example the case at the relatively important markets of Hwewhe and Bijombo-Ishenge, both located in Uvira territory (*chefferie* of the Bavira). At both these markets, half of the revenues of the *taxe d'étalage* went to the *chefferie* and the other half to the FARDC. However, the division of the tax in kind at the two markets differed. While in Hwewhe, the FARDC shared it with customary chiefs, who were granted 20 per cent against 80 for the military, in Bijombo, it was shared between the FARDC and two armed groups, namely the Mai Mai Mushombe and the group of Tawimbi, a Banyamulenge armed group formed in the course of 2011 from remnants of the FRF. Again, this distribution key clearly reflects local power relations. The *mwami* of the Bavira is a powerful figure and has strong economic influence, being for example heavily supported by the FEC (Federation of Congolese Businesses) of Uvira, which is an important commercial hub. In order not to antagonize the *mwami*, the FARDC could not afford to usurp all taxes at the markets in the Bavira *chefferie*. In all likelihood, the mentioned partition arrangement reflected pragmatic thinking on the part of the *mwami*. By allowing the FARDC half of the revenue, he did not endanger his relations with the military. At the same time, he continued to receive a substantial share of the revenue, while being able to continue to assert his influence in the area. In relation to the mentioned armed groups, the fact that the FARDC shared the tax in kind with them was largely an outcome of a policy of cohabitation authorized by the hierarchy. At the time of data collection, the provincial Amani Leo command was in negotiations with the Mai Mai Mushombe regarding their possible integration into the FARDC, therefore tolerating their presence. The group of Tawimbi was also more or less tolerated by the FARDC at that point, as the emphasis in efforts to get the group out of the bush was on negotiations rather than military pressure.

A third division key of market tax revenues on the *Plateaux* was that the FARDC shared the tax in kind with the civilian authorities, usually receiving about a third, but did not get any of the *taxe d'étalage*. This was for example the case at Kiziba and Minembwe markets, and at those in the area around Minembwe (Mony and Kalingi). This modest military share can be ascribed to the fact that conventionally, most of the taxes of these markets go to the powerful *chef de poste* of Minembwe. As the military unit deployed in the Minembwe area at the time of the research (the 652nd) had concluded a protection arrangement with this authority, they were not likely to go against this institutionalized division key.¹⁶ In fact, the arrangement between the two parties consisted in part of the *chef de poste* tolerating or facilitating certain forms of military extortion in exchange for maintaining his existing prerogatives in relation to the market taxes. At several markets in Bijombo (Uvira territory) a variant of this division key was encountered, consisting of the *taxe d'étalage* going to the

14 As detailed in Table 4 on p. 23, tax collection and division patterns were analyzed for fourteen markets on the *Plateaux*, nine of which were visited, while data on five other markets were collected indirectly.

15 For a general discussion of market taxation in the Kivus, see pp. 141–142.

16 The protection arrangement between the commander of the 652nd and the *chef de poste* of Minembwe and certain other civilian authorities was described on pp. 172–173.

civilian authorities and the tax in kind being shared between the FARDC and armed groups, which collected taxes there simultaneously. This was for instance reported for Marungu and Kahololo market (Uvira territory), where the FARDC shared taxes with the Mai Mai Mushombe, and at Mitamba market (Uvira territory), where a part was granted to the group of Tawimbi. In areas where the market was located in a zone in which the FARDC was either absent or had limited control, all taxation was left to armed groups, with the FARDC not even being present at the market. An example is the market of Magunda (between Uvira and Mwenga), at the edge of the Itombwe forest, where 40 per cent of the *taxe d'étalage* and most of the collected foodstuffs were reported to go to the Mai Mai Kapopo.

In addition to revealing the impact of local power constellations on the military's leeway for extraction, the study of the division of market taxes on the *Plateaux* uncovers how units' practices of extraction are shaped by their internal features, in particular their projects. As mentioned, the military unit deployed in a large part of this area at the start of 2010, the 652nd brigade (case #12), appropriated at some markets almost 100 per cent of the taxes, partly as a means of establishing control in the wake of military operations. Aside from depriving the customary chiefs of their share, this caused serious trouble for local policemen deployed near one of these markets, that of Kalingi. The police at Kalingi used to receive around a third of the foodstuffs collected at the market, which had become a crucial part of their livelihood. Despite repeated protests by the police staff, who were growing hungry, the 652nd continued its intransigent attitude. This seemed part of a wider policy of intimidation and humiliation, as also manifested in the brigade's temporary detention of the head of the Kalingi PNC detachment.¹⁷ When the 652nd was rotated with the 651st brigade (case # 11) at the end of 2010, which had received orders to behave well in order to facilitate negotiations with the FRF, the old division key of tax revenues was restored both at Kalingi and Mikalati market, thus returning policemen and customary chiefs their share. This fostered confidence among the local authorities, which facilitated the task of preparing the ground for negotiations with the rebels. As we have seen, these negotiations were eventually successful and in January 2011, the FRF integrated into the FARDC, leading to the creation of a new military sector in Minembwe (the 66th).¹⁸ The ex-FRF, which occupied the majority of the command and staff positions in the 66th sector, immediately seized upon its new-won dominance by trying to change the distribution key of the tax revenues at a number of markets, to the benefit of the military. Having long considered the *chef de poste* of Minembwe as one of its archenemies, being a crony of Masunzu and collaborating with the hated brigade of Col. Sekanabo (case #12), they tried to assert their authority in the Minembwe area by reducing his share of tax revenues. Possibly, this had to communicate the message that from now on, it was the ex-FRF that was in charge. Previously barred from this part of the *Plateaux*, which was under the control of their adversaries of the 112th brigade, their visible exercise of claims to wealth at the market had to seal their status as new authorities. However, extant structures of domination, including those underpinning the power position of the *chef de poste*, still backed by Gen. Masunzu, in combination with the routines surrounding taxation practices and rapidly growing internal divides, strongly circumscribed the ex-FRF's scope for implementing changes. This was evidenced by the fact that they eventually did not manage to usurp a part of the taxes from the *chef de poste*. Their efforts to raise the protection fee for accompanying ambulant traders on the Kalingi-Kitumba trajectory were only moderately more successful, provoking resistance from the side of the traders, who experienced this as a violation of the practical norms.¹⁹ It remains unclear what the ultimate outcomes of the FRF's drive for more control on the *Plateaux* would have been, since its newfound hegemony was curtailed after just under three months, when its troops were summoned by the FARDC hierarchy to descend from the mountains in order to participate in the regimentation process.

To conclude, the analysis of the FARDC's practices of market taxation on the *Plateaux* illustrates how place-specific structures of domination and the power constellations that they shape set the parameters for the military's agency. It also shows how efforts by FARDC units to change these parameters as a means of extending their control may ultimately have only limited effects. This was for example the case with the ex-FRF dominated 66th sector, which failed to bring about substantial changes in taxation practices in the Minembwe area. While the 652nd brigade did manage to radically alter taxation practices, this ultimately backfired, as it created growing antagonisms, which culminated in a series of FRF attacks at the end of 2010.²⁰ Both these outcomes were importantly shaped by the balance of power on the ground, whereby civilian actors backed by powerful armed players, whether the FRF in Mibunda and Kamombo or Gen. Masunzu in Minembwe, had an advantage in guarding their position. This shows how the relative strength of local actors vis-à-vis the FARDC is partly a product of their ties to more powerful players, including armed actors and supra-local connections.

How supra-local networks shape local civilian-military interaction: the Banande in Vitshumbi

In the Kivus, there are important variations in the nature and strength of the links between on the one hand, national and provincial political centers, and on the other hand, local social orders, as related to the uneven level of central and provincial state penetration and local elites' different ways and degrees of embedding in the presidential and provincial-level patronage networks. For instance, certain *bami* in the Kivus are known to have connections in the inner circles of the presidential big-man network, which significantly enhances their clout, including in power competition with the FARDC deployed to their entities. The same applies to those having connections with

17 For a more elaborate analysis of the relations between the FARDC and the PNC (police), see pp. 168-169.

18 For the integration of the FRF and the creation of the 66th sector, see pp. 94 and 293-294.

19 The ex-FRF's efforts to raise the protection fee on the Kalingi-Kitumba trajectory, and the resistance this provoked, were earlier discussed on p. 153.

20 The most deadly of these FRF attacks was that on a battalion of the 652nd in Mibunda, as described on p.293.

political actors who are influential at the provincial level, such as governors and provincial ministers. Such contacts can be mobilized to put pressure on local FARDC commanders, forcing them to adjust their course of action.

The events in the fishing village of Vitshumbi at the shores of Lake Edward, the headquarters of the naval forces (case #3), provide a clear example of how connections to provincially influential figures shape the conditions for and effects of local civilian agency vis-à-vis the military. As described earlier, Vitshumbi was heavily affected by a battle that raged between the FARDC navy and fishermen, which was triggered by disagreement concerning a directive stipulating that all boats had to be equipped with life vests.²¹ On 5 January 2012, the navy decided to enforce this directive, preventing by force all boats having no life vests on board from entering the lake. Outraged, the opponents of the measure and those denouncing the way it was implemented organized a protest march the following day. One of the initiators of this march was the Munande president of civil society of Vitshumbi, who was allegedly a member of the *Patriotes résistants Mai-Mai* (PRM), a political party which has its origins in Mai Mai groups active during the Second Congo War.²² The PRM has strong support among the minority Banande population in Rutshuru, and is rumored to be backed by certain influential members of the Kyaghandanda, the powerful socio-cultural association or *barza* of the Banande.²³

Although the protest march started out peacefully, it turned violent when one group of participants set out to destroy the office of the *comité des pêcheurs* (fishermen committee) and another blocked the road with a concrete slab they had removed from a drainage system by force. On 7 January 2012, the PNC (police) arrested the person suspected of having removed the concrete slab, who was a local representative of the PRM. This provoked widespread indignation among the Banande in Vitshumbi, who believed that the person had been arrested on the suspicion of being a Mai Mai, and experienced the arrest as specifically targeting the Nande community, who had been actively involved in the manifestation. In an effort to liberate the detainee, a number of sympathizers orchestrated an attack on the police station of Vitshumbi, led by a PRM representative who had come over from nearby Kiwanja. When a captain of the navy tried to stop the group, they attacked him and his bodyguard, taking their *motorolas* and weapons away, and then shooting at them. This provoked a skirmish leading several people to be wounded.

The following day, during a house-to-house search, around six suspects were arrested and transferred to the headquarters of the infantry regiment based in Rubare. Given the gravity of the accusations, including trying to liberate a suspect and violently taking away arms from two soldiers and subsequently shooting at them, the expectation was that they would be severely punished. However, within a week, all suspects were released, and no charges were brought against them. As retold by sources within the FARDC, soon after the suspects' arrest and detention, the commander of the naval base in Vitshumbi and that of the regiment in Rubare started to receive phone calls and text messages from influential members of the Kyaghandanda from Butembo. The Kyaghandanda also issued a statement (see Appendix G) that denounced the life vest directive and demanded the immediate liberation of the detained persons, whose 'method of claiming and protesting (...) are [sic] derived from Yira²⁴ culture from which they are issued and are to be encouraged.' This framing made clear that the Kyaghandanda threw in its full weight to obtain the liberation of the suspects, considering their detention an issue that touched directly upon the Banande as a community. Given the importance of the Butembo Kyaghandanda, which is under the direct influence of big Banande businesspersons, it was apparently difficult for the FARDC to resist. The power of the Kyaghandanda was further manifested in the reaction of the government of North Kivu, where the Banande exercise important influence due to their demographic and political-economic weight, including by having a governor of their community. On 9 January 2012, the provincial ministry of agriculture, fishing and cattle-breeding (AGRIPEL) addressed a letter to the naval base in Vitshumbi (see Appendix G) which informed them that the life vest measure had primarily been intended for the fluvial transport sector, and that it was not within the mandate of the navy to enforce it. For fishermen, the measure would only be introduced after significant awareness raising efforts by the ministry, implying the navy had no role to play in that domain either.

In sum, the events surrounding the contested life vest measure show that while the Nande community in Vitshumbi is in itself a small group, their agency vis-à-vis the navy was significantly enhanced by their capacity to mobilize powerful groups at higher levels, with clear consequences for the military's room for manoeuvre. Yet, the case of Vitshumbi also draws attention to the ways in which social agents' power position is shaped by their command over material resources, which is a crucial dimension of structures of domination (Giddens, 1984: 33). The Kyaghandanda derives its power to a large extent from the economic weight of the Nande business community, which has a relatively autonomous position vis-à-vis the political center. This semi-autonomous position partly rests on the independence of their main economic networks and therefore bases of income from Kinshasa. These trust-based networks are difficult to break into by outsiders, including the military, which has structurally hindered the latter's possibilities to tap into the Banande's wealth (Raeymaekers, 2007).

21 The Vitshumbi life vest affair was discussed earlier on pp. 175–176.

22 Vitshumbi is one of the places in Bwisha (Rutshuru) where the Banande form a sizeable community, having moved there in the colonial era in part because of the economic opportunities offered by the presence of the fishing cooperative.

23 While the Kyaghandanda explicitly labels itself as a socio-cultural, and not a political organization, its members do get involved in matters of a more political nature. For example, during a visit to the private house of the president of the Kyaghandanda in Goma on 05.04.2014, it was observed how a PRM flag was conspicuously displayed in the salon, revealing that certain influential members of the Kyaghandanda in Goma indeed support the PRM.

24 Bayira is another designation for the ethnic group that consists of what are called the Banande in the Congo and the Bakonjo on the other side of the border in Uganda.

This highlights how the power position of the FARDC in a given area is shaped by the extent to which it can access wealth and establish control over the local economy.

Local economies

There is an important literature on how the structure of local economies influences military behavior, which focuses to a large extent on the effects of the availability of lootable and obstructable natural resources on the motivations and conduct of insurgent groups (e.g., Weinstein, 2006: 48). While much of this literature lacks nuance, since based on reductionist approaches to human agency (Guichaoua, 2012), it does point to an important basic insight. Crucially, it draws attention to the fact that the nature of the local economy may influence military practices and therefore civilian-military interaction, in particular where military groups strongly depend on local resources. However, this influence is mediated by many interacting factors such as the abundance or scarcity of revenue-generation opportunities; units' projects (in particular whether they pursue significant wealth accumulation or not); their time horizon and other internal features (norms, command); and lastly, both the accessibility of revenue-generation opportunities and the nature of this accessibility, in particular whether trust-based ties are a requirement for entry.

While the direct effects of the abundance or scarcity of revenue-generation opportunities on military units' conduct are likely to be limited, the availability of these opportunities does shape several factors that importantly influence the military's practices, like units' projects, expectations of formal and informal hierarchies, and the presence of competing armed factions. As we have seen, environments rich in resources and revenue-generation opportunities, such as mining areas and border crossings, tend to attract large numbers of both military staff and other officials from different state agencies and departments, which generates a particular dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection.²⁵ The stakes of deployment to such zones are high, leading to competition at various levels of formal and informal hierarchies and creating high *rapportage* obligations for commanders and other officials. Hence, the abundance of revenue-generation opportunities generally impacts deployment patterns and units' projects in a manner that ill conduct becomes more likely. Yet, this is by no means a foregone conclusion, as evidenced by the 714th regiment in Misisi (case #14), which behaved well and only moderately interfered with the gold sector. Furthermore, the inverse, the scarcity of revenue-generation opportunities, corresponding to lower *rapportage* obligations and the likelihood that revenue generation is not a core project, does not always coincide with better conduct. For one, such scarcity is often manifested in isolated rural zones where people mostly live off small-scale agricultural activities, while units generally behave worse in isolated areas, at least when under bad command.²⁶ For another, when the FARDC still pursues income generation as a core project in such zones, it is more likely to resort to violent modes of extraction such as looting, stealing and extortion, since wealth is otherwise little accessible. An example is the 651st brigade when deployed in the isolated sectors of Mutambala, where it engaged in stealing, extortion and arbitrary arrests in order to accumulate wealth.

How a unit's drive for revenue generation affects its conduct does not only depend on the mere abundance or scarcity of revenue-generation opportunities within a specific context; it also depends on whether these opportunities, or wealth deriving from them, are accessible and how. Certain types of economic activity are *ceteris paribus* easier to tax, control or take over by the FARDC, and the degree of dependency or autonomy this creates between civilian and military actors impacts their interactions. This level of accessibility depends both on the nature of the commodity and the commodity chain, and the ensemble of power and other social relations by which local economies are constructed and regulated. Even if economic activities are in themselves relatively easy to control, tax or take over, the FARDC can only profit from them if no powerful interests are at stake, like when it are only relatively marginalized groups who derive income from them. A clear example is illegal fishing on Lake Tanganyika and Lake Edward. In the areas not contested by armed groups, the FARDC navy generally manages to establish a high degree of control over this activity. Fishing activity on the lake is difficult to hide, and a non-motorized pirogue cannot easily flee a patrol, causing fishermen to be in a vulnerable position. Clandestine fishermen are even more vulnerable since the activity they engage in is illegal, widening the asymmetry of their relations with the military. The navy readily exploits this asymmetry, for instance by seizing fishing equipment and then demanding arbitrary amounts for its release.²⁷ Furthermore, most clandestine fishermen are from marginalized groups with little resources or access to powerful networks, except perhaps where ties with armed groups exist. This renders it difficult for them to exert or mobilize pressure in case of maltreatment. In sum, various factors explain the relative ease with which the FARDC naval forces can control the illegal fishing business, relating to both the nature of the activity and the social position of the economic actors involved.

A somewhat comparable case is illegal logging, certain types of which are difficult to hide. In areas that are not under the control of rebel groups, and where the forest is not too impenetrable, large-scale logging is easily noticed. Sizeable quantities of logs cannot be hidden very well, since even after being treated in a sawmill, logs are bulky, in particular when it concerns high-value species. Therefore, they are generally transported by vehicle, rendering them susceptible to being detected by military staff controlling the road. While this

25 The competition between and among civilian and military agencies and units in zones with significant revenue-generation opportunities was described on pp. 293–242.

26 For the effects of deployment in isolated areas under bad command, see p. 301.

27 The specific dynamics of protection in illegal sectors were earlier analyzed on pp. 155–158.

facilitates military control over illegal logging, the actual level of influence that the FARDC manages to exercise ultimately also depends on power relations. For example, when logging activity takes place in relatively isolated zones where there is little presence of other state services or armed groups, there are no countervailing forces, which makes it easier for the military to establish preponderant control. However, where there is strong deployment of the park guards of the ICCN or armed groups, or the sector is controlled by local elites with connections in the presidential patronage circle, it might be much more difficult for the FARDC to engage in logging or tap into its revenues otherwise.

Another illegal activity that is difficult to hide is the cultivation and trade in cannabis. In most parts of the Kivus, the military controls at least one part of the commodity chain, while soldiers' wives often work as middlepersons and retailers. Undoubtedly, the fact that the FARDC is among the principal consumers of cannabis in the Kivus is an important reason for the military's strong involvement in this sector. This also makes it difficult for economic operators not to sell to them, which would imply foregoing an important customer. The illegal nature of the commodity further facilitates military involvement. Selling cannabis to the military implies making oneself known as a trader or cultivator, and sometimes revealing the location of the plantation. Since vast cannabis plantations are easy to detect, maintaining this secrecy is not easy to start with. In several of the field research sites, it turned out to be common knowledge where cannabis is cultivated, including among the FARDC. Therefore, the military can easily impose itself on the sector, seizing upon the illegal status of the commodity as a pretext for seemingly arbitrary interventions. Thus, in a number of sites, it was reported that the FARDC had repeatedly burnt down cannabis fields, allegedly because the cultivators had not paid what the military saw as sufficient protection money.²⁸

The above examples show that the ease with which the military can extract wealth from, become engaged in or establish control over economic activities depends to a large extent on a combination of power relations and the characteristics of the commodity chain, in particular how production/extraction and distribution are organized, where they are located, as well as the nature of the commodity (legal or illegal) and market conditions. Depending on what actors are involved and their power position, economic control or wealth extraction may be easier to accomplish where commodities can be physically obstructed (for example by controlling access to mining sites, harbors, markets, air strips), where economic activity is immobile and concentrated (shops, restaurants, hotels), and where activities are illegal, in particular when they are easy to detect by the military. Furthermore, when it concerns making profit through direct investments, this is easier to accomplish for the military in markets without high entry barriers, like when specialized knowledge is needed. An example of a relatively accessible market, certainly for higher-placed officers, is real estate. For those having the means and influence, which is a precondition for avoiding or overcoming obstacles created by state services, it is quite easy to obtain a plot and construct, sell or rent out houses, in particular where there are high concentrations of expats, like in Goma and Bukavu.²⁹ The same applies to the hotel and restaurant sector: with the right connections, one can open a hotel relatively easily, reason why this is an attractive investment for FARDC officers. The military can also establish economic control or make profits with comparative ease in sectors where it has unique advantages over civilian economic operators. For example, certain forms of trade are facilitated by the military's capacity to import goods qualified as 'military', which are exempted from import tariffs. The military also has a comparative advantage in trade or other economic activities in areas deemed too insecure for civilian operators. Moreover, it can more easily legitimize extractive practices in such areas by discursively framing them as required for bringing security. Additionally, insecure zones allow the military to establish control by selectively granting or withholding physical protection, which is obviously in high demand in such zones.

Expectedly, economic sectors where extraction, entry or control by the military is difficult have the opposite qualities. It concerns for example sectors with commodities that are difficult to obstruct, like the trade in gold, which is easy to store and transport on the sly, at least far from its place of extraction. However, in and around gold mining sites, the military generally has less problems to establish a degree of control, as illustrated by the various case studies in Misisi. Other sectors that are ceteris paribus relatively difficult to break into by the military are those with significant entry barriers like highly specialized knowledge or large amounts of investment capital that the military cannot easily mobilize, like certain types of manufacturing. Yet, it is not to be excluded that the military can still extract wealth from such activities through taxation or extortion. The military may also have difficulties accessing economic sectors that are strongly connected to international markets where scrutiny exists and (outlawed) military ownership, control or involvement would cause buyers and economic partners to withdraw. This applies to a certain extent to the exploitation and trade of minerals like cassiterite and tantalum, for which certification initiatives have been developed in recent years. However, although international scrutiny does somewhat compound control and direct involvement by the FARDC, the military is generally able to hide its participation by working through civilian intermediaries (Global Witness, 2013).

The FARDC also struggles to gain profits or extract revenue in sectors that are generally difficult to break into due to trust-based interpersonal connections being an important requirement for access. A clear example is the far-distance trade in the *Grand Nord*, where access to investment capital, loans, and suppliers in regional and international networks is mediated by 'trust networks'.³⁰ As argued by

28 The repeated burning down of cannabis plantations was for example reported to have occurred in Lubondja. Interview with inhabitant of Lubondja, Misisi, 20.06.2014.

29 The military's involvement in real estate was discussed on pp. 163–164.

30 Drawing on Tilly (2005: 12), Raeymaekers (2007: 3) defines a trust network as 'a ramified social network, consisting mainly of strong ties, within which people

Raeymaekers (2007: 84), the relations of Nande traders to suppliers in the Far East have historically been an important source of their relatively autonomous position vis-à-vis state and armed actors in the Congo. They developed these relations in the second half of the 1980s, setting up offices in Dubai, Jakarta and Hong Kong, which facilitated occasional face-to-face interaction with suppliers. These contacts did not only give them access to particular goods at low prices, but in the course of time, also allowed them to do business on better conditions. As Raeymaekers concludes: 'their constant mobility and ability to "jump" scales (...) has given them leeway over other, less mobile (state) agents, such as customs control or Zairian army soldiers, in the effectuation of their transborder enterprise' (2007: 87). Since developing relations to distant suppliers takes time and requires (occasional) physical presence, and is commonly facilitated by being able to draw upon existing contacts, the military cannot easily break into the long-distance trade. Another factor hampering the military's access to this sector as it developed in the *Grand Nord* was that entry to crucial networks was reserved to members of the Nande community (idem: 13). This emerging socio-economic structure was in part a response to the problem of the protection of property rights that resulted from the peculiar workings of the Zairian state apparatus and the rise of the nonofficial economy. By channeling economic activity through relatively closed networks built on trust, which lowered the risks of investment, Nande traders could maintain partial autonomy vis-à-vis state and armed actors, thus rendering it difficult for the latter to tap into their wealth. These trust-based personal relations included connections with reliable family members willing to work without (much) remuneration, a practice that for many enterprises in the Kivus is crucial for ensuring or enlarging their profit margins. With an eye to reducing the costs, it is a common practice to mobilize family members, for example for picking up goods from suppliers, managing shops, organizing deliveries, and handling finances (e.g., Raeymaekers, 2007: 54–55). In order to be competitive in such sectors, military staff would need to mobilize the same amount of low-cost labor, which may be difficult when they are not from the area and when it concerns activities that cannot be executed by soldiers. Other trust-based economic activities that may be difficult to enter for the military, depending on how the sector in question is structured, are those featuring financial transactions with large sums of cash, and forms of trade involving high levels of pre-financing or high value products, which might entice the involved actors to run off with the money or valuables. In the Kivus, it regularly occurs that a seller is robbed just after completing a transaction involving a large sum of cash, since the buyer has tipped off bandits, which may include FARDC staff. Certainly, it is this same insecurity for economic operators and the lack of enforcement of property rights that generates a demand for protection, from which the military ultimately takes advantage.

The development of trust-based ties in economic networks is a highly complex and often time-consuming process (Murphy, 2006), for which the FARDC is ill positioned. Due to the burden of negative representations and the fact that the military is armed, initial levels of distrust towards the FARDC tend to be high. Furthermore, (expectations of) frequent rotations tend to hamper the construction longer-term ties. As we have seen, the possibilities for the FARDC to build up trust partly depend on FARDC units' time horizon. In general, long-term stays facilitate the overcoming of initial distrust, while troops' local origins may cause this distrust to be relatively limited to start with, at least depending on how FARDC staff is inserted in its local environment. For example, strong inter-community tensions will put constraints on the agency of military staff originating from one of the communities in conflict. But where such dynamics are not present, local military staff might more easily construct trust-based economic ties. This has important consequences for interaction with civilians, as it generally reduces the inclination to employ coercion and sow insecurity, which would violate trust and therefore harm revenue generation.³¹

In sum, both the relative abundance or scarcity of revenue-generation opportunities and the relative accessibility of these opportunities matter in shaping military units' conduct towards civilians. However, the effects of accessibility differ, depending on the nature of the main barriers involved. Where trust is the principal obstacle, and units have a long time horizon, they generally have incentives to behave well towards civilians. By contrast, where inaccessibility is caused by other factors, like the nature of the commodity chain and power relations, the likelihood that a unit will resort to coercion might increase. This is corroborated by the case studies (see Table 19 and Table 22). In the four cases where revenue generation was among a unit's main projects and wealth was little accessible (but not due to trust being the main obstacle *and* units having a long time horizon) civilian-military interaction was evaluated negatively. There are only two cases where revenue generation was a main project, time horizon was long *and* trust-based revenue generation opportunities were present (cases #6 and #8), which both had positively evaluated civilian-military interaction. While these are not many cases, the same pattern was found among certain of the studied units outside the areas designated as cases. For example the 234th brigade (which figures in case #4, when deployed in Katobo), when stationed in Uvira from 2004–2010, developed significant involvement in trust-based revenue-generation activities, like certain types of trade, which is likely to have contributed to its overall relatively good behavior.³² However, as mentioned, positive evaluations of this brigade were also partly a result of its 'autochthon' status in an area where Mai-Mai networks are influential. This draws attention to the importance of local structures of legitimation and signification for shaping civilian-military interaction.

set valued, consequential, long-term resources and enterprises at risk to the malfeasance, mistakes, or failures of others.'

31 The interaction between time horizon, economic activities and military practices towards civilians was explained on pp. 294–296.

32 For a more detailed description of the 234th's evolution in Uvira, see pp. 297–299.

11.1.3 Structures of and mediating legitimation and signification

As mentioned, the extent to and ways in which structures of signification and legitimation shape social practice is mediated by social cohesion, which affects collective action and norm-enforcement. This has already been touched upon in Chapter 7, when it was explained that the heterogeneity of civilians' forms of identification and the multitude of conflicts in the Kivus negatively impact their contestation of military power, by undermining collective action.³³ By contrast, where social cohesion and common forms of identification are strong, dominant discourses on and attitudes towards the military might be widely shared, which facilitates a common agentic position. For instance, where negative representations of the military are salient among most of a community, and the latter is cohesive and perceives to have common interests that oppose them to the military, an act of military abuse might sooner elicit collective contestation than in strongly fragmented social orders (cf. Scott, 1990: 134).³⁴ An important reason for this is that in cohesive societies, there will be social pressure on those refusing to participate in contestation, as they will be seen as acting contrary to group interests and violating group norms. By contrast, in divided societies, especially where there are strong inter- and intra-community conflicts, social pressure and sanctioning mechanisms are likely to be less effective, making it more difficult to correct those deviating from dominant norms, and to prevent people from stirring their own course.

A clear example of the effects of social cohesion on agentic orientations is the (perceived) diminishing grip of the *vieux-sages* over youth. In several villages, the elders strongly denounced the involvement of local youth in violent crime, in some cases allegedly carried out in collaboration with the FARDC. This strong disapproval did not seem to have much impact on these youths' practices, pointing to inter-generational cleavages that undermine the elders' (moral) authority over youngsters (see also Verweijen, 2015). But the problem of the limited societal correction of youth involved in banditry seems to be wider than the diminishing grip of the elders. Inhabitants from certain villages next to the *Forêt de la 17*, the ambush-rich forest in Fizi, told that it was more or less known which youngsters facilitate ambushes by providing information, monitoring road movements and sometimes helping with the evacuation, transport or hiding of looted goods.³⁵ These collaborators, who were mostly un- or underemployed youth, would brandish new sports shoes shortly after an ambush, or their household would suddenly have a new radio, even when the harvest had been bad. While knowledge of who were responsible seems to have been widespread, and all my interlocutors stated to strongly disapprove of the practice of facilitating banditry, it appeared that the families and groups among whom the collaborators lived either did little to stem the latter's involvement, perhaps because they benefitted from it, or simply had little influence over them, most likely as they feared them or did not have enough authority to provoke a change of conduct. While not sufficient data have been collected in other places to assess the representativeness of the situation around the *Forêt de la 17*, it is plausible that in other rural areas too, the facilitators or perpetrators of banditry and their families are in some cases known. In small-scale village communities, people know each other intimately and even tiny changes in behavior or belongings are easily noticed. However, where the villages and the wider communities to which the beneficiaries of banditry belong are divided, for instance where it concerns youth and there are inter-generational cleavages, there may be little social pressure on this group to change their ways. This implies that they face little openly expressed or covertly conveyed disapproval or other negative consequences, which enhances the attractiveness of engaging in or profiting from this form of illicit revenue generation. In sum, illicit practices among civilians like collaboration with the FARDC for the purposes of violent extraction are more difficult to counter where societies are little cohesive, whether through generational or other social cleavages.

Similar observations can be made concerning soliciting the FARDC for purposes of violent score settling and dispute processing, a practice that is generally condemned as illicit in public discourses. In many cases, in the wake of incidents, there are indications who solicited the military for such interventions, since it is common knowledge who has personal and professional rivalries and who is involved in local conflicts and why. However whether and how communities react to this information and what the effects are on future social practice depend both on local norms and the level of social cohesion. In little cohesive and heterogeneous social orders, it is possible that various groups appreciate military interventions in dispute processing differently, both as their ideas diverge regarding this practice in general and, in respect of specific cases, as their relations to the conflict parties and the involved military staff differ. Clearly, such divisions might weaken the overall social pressure exerted on those engaging in this practice. While weak social cohesion may thus facilitate the mobilization of the military for dispute processing and score settling on an individual basis, where it concerns protection arrangements involving or benefiting groups as a whole, it might be the very social cohesion of a (sub)group that contributes to rendering protection agreements with the military acceptable. This evidenced by the way protection arrangements institutionalized in the *Grand Nord*, a largely ethnically homogeneous and relatively horizontal setting that is however riven by strong economic competition and political factionalism.

In the discussion of the HUNI,³⁶ it was explained that the rampant insecurity in Beni and Butembo is in part nourished by a high demand

33 The factors hampering collective contentious action were discussed on pp. 213–215.

34 Drawing on a body of studies on the working class in the west, Scott (1990: 134) argues that the strength of opposition and level of militancy among subordinate groups in part reflect their level of social cohesion.

35 Interviews in villages next to *Forêt de la 17* and Fizi *centre*, 29 and 30.12.2011. Note that at the time of the field research, the ambushes in the 17 were not believed to be committed principally by the FARDC, but rather by the FDLR, local bandits, and the Mai Mai. However, a share of the ambushes was said to be executed under the protection of elements in the FARDC.

36 For an analysis of the HUNI (unidentified uniformed person), see pp. 187–188.

for score settling and intra-ethnic competition related to conflicts of various kinds. An important source of the multiple disputes plaguing this area are the petty conflicts and rivalries that derive from dense social networks and frequent interactions, in particular since family and business networks in the *Grand Nord* tend to overlap, especially in Butembo. However, there are also larger-scale conflicts related to power competition between and among economic operators, customary chiefs, political factions including ex-rebel networks, (local representatives of) state agencies, whether strongly linked to the political center or more locally embedded, and influential institutions like the Catholic Church. The competing networks regrouping these various actors have regularly resorted to soliciting protection from armed factions, including networks within the national armed forces and Mai Mai and other armed groups in the rural areas. As we have seen, this practice dates back to the 1980s and has gradually become institutionalized, transforming structures of signification and legitimation so as to render military protection a ‘commonsensical’ social practice. The relative cohesion of sub-groups within the Banande community has only promoted this institutionalization. As Raeymaekers notes in relation to protection rackets: ‘These could become acceptable for large segments of the local business community. The way in which this was made acceptable was mainly through communal pressure: once a considerable group of people was convinced of the righteousness of this protection arrangement, it would become easier to effectuate the punishment of potential free-riders’ (2007: 121). In sum, it seems that within the various sub-groups and factions within Nande society, there is relatively strong cohesion, which promotes entering into protection arrangements with armed actors, although it reinforces the cleavages with the *Grand Nord’s* social order as a whole.

The transformation of structures of legitimation in the direction of normalizing protection arrangements with armed actors is sometimes set in motion through the self-perpetuating dynamics unleashed by protection practices. As outlined by Gambetta (1993), there are mechanisms inherent to widespread protection, in particular in relation to illegal revenue-generating activities, which render it a self-perpetuating practice. The main mechanism through which this occurs is the entrenchment of distrust. When being protected by armed actors, people have incentives to cut dishonest deals, as they know that those disadvantaged will be wary of seeking redress. Thus, they might sooner sell goods of lesser quality, tip off bandits to rob suppliers or buyers, or not pay back debts. A high amount of dishonest deals in a given place will cause the (potentially) disadvantaged to also solicit protection from armed actors, which creates incentives for them to similarly start engaging in dishonest practices. As a result, distrust becomes self-perpetuating, or in Gambetta’s words ‘endogenous’ (1993: 27), causing incentive structures to become skewed against honesty. This essentially turns militarized protection schemes into a collective action problem (cf. Persson et al., 2013), implying that the practice occurs at such a large scale that even if people disapprove of it, the temptation to engage in it is very high. This is not only because those not participating are at a comparative disadvantage, but also since they risk becoming duped if they refuse. In this manner, protection from armed actors becomes entrenched, as there is no critical mass of people for whom fighting it is a priority. If such a situation persists over the long term, this type of practice becomes institutionalized, implying it becomes inscribed in place-specific structures of domination, signification and legitimation.

Such processes of institutionalization affect the practices of the FARDC units deployed to these contexts, since their projects and modes of navigation are always developed in interaction with their deployment environment. An important vector of this interaction are the templates of the social roles surrounding military actors that predominate in a certain place, which define the expectations and norms surrounding those enacting this role.³⁷ Thus, military practices that are acceptable in one place might violate local structures of signification and legitimation in another. In certain places, locally specific expectations and norms surrounding the military have partly been shaped by past actions of non-state armed actors. An example is the extraction of certain types of services, like boat rides and medical care, that were initiated by rebel forces during the Congo Wars, but that the FARDC has copied.³⁸ Furthermore, in areas of contested control, which are dominated by varying combinations of state and non-state armed forces, there seems to be a certain merging of the expectations vis-à-vis state and rebel forces, at least in relation to everyday, routine practices. This was for example observed at particular markets on the *Hauts Plateaux*, where taxation is carried out by fluctuating combinations of state and non-state armed forces. While these forces are occasionally in competition over access to the revenues of market taxation, ultimately, they all benefit from the fact that militarized taxation has become institutionalized at these markets, causing resistance against this practice among civilians to be generally low. While civilians commonly distinguish between state and non-state armed actors,³⁹ certain highly institutionalized and routinized practices inscribed in practical consciousness provoke not much explicit reflection on the type of armed actor that is involved, as long as they unfold according to engrained scripts and respect practical norms, in particular in respect of the stipulated amounts and frequency.⁴⁰ Consequently, processes of militarization that have been set in motion or are co-reproduced by non-state armed forces may also affect the expectations and norms surrounding the FARDC, as they have altered the structures of signification and legitimation relating to armed actors and their practices more generally.

Newly incoming FARDC units get socialized into such local norms, often through processes of trial and error. This discovery process tends to be turbulent, not least as it is part of the wider power struggles and mutual adjustment between military and civilian groups that characterize the period of what one interlocutor called the *décalage* (interval)⁴¹ immediately after a rotation. Both military units and

37 How social roles mediate the ways in which social structures shape agency was explained on pp. 39–40.

38 In Chapter 5, it was mentioned that certain extractive practices of the RCD are commonly seen to have been copied by the FARDC, see pp. 136–137 and 144.

39 Civilians’ representations of the FARDC vs. non-state armed forces were extensively discussed in Chapter 4, on pp. 112–113.

40 For a detailed explanation of agency based on habituation, see pp. 193 and 212.

41 Interview with *chef de poste* in Fizi territory, 20.11.2010. Probably, he also referred to *en décalage* (out of step, disharmonious).

civilians test and try during this period, discovering, negotiating, and determining the rules of their interaction. For FARDC units, this process is facilitated by the copying of their predecessors' practices, including their systems of revenue generation, such as roadblocks. In this manner, units are rapidly socialized into the norms surrounding civilian-military interaction that dominate in a certain place. This may induce both good and bad behavior among the FARDC, depending on the contents of these structures of signification. In contexts where norms vis-à-vis armed actors are little permissive, socialization into place-specific structures might limit the FARDC's engagement in coercion-based extractive and protection practices. For example, whereas in certain areas the military's imposition of a tax in kind at the market has become an institutionalized practice, in other zones, this form of taxation is not part of local customs. Consequently, an incoming FARDC unit is not likely to be able to smoothly impose such a contribution, as resistance will be high. The same applies to attempts by newly arrived FARDC units to raise the amounts or alter the frequency or mode of taxation in a certain context, which are commonly regulated by deeply engrained practical norms. This was clearly illustrated by the failed efforts of the ex-FRF dominated 66th sector to raise the amounts of market taxation and the protection fee for ambulant traders in the Minembwe area.

By contrast, where the norms surrounding the military's involvement in coercive and extractive practices are cast wider, the FARDC's socialization into local structures of signification and legitimation might stimulate its involvement in such practices. For example, local actors are likely to solicit newly arrived FARDC staff to intervene in their conflicts if they had similar protection arrangements with their predecessors. The towns of Beni and Butembo provide another interesting example in this respect. In spite of the many rotations of FARDC units that took place in the course of 2010–2011, sometimes ostensibly to remove ill-behaving units, the conduct of the military as well as levels of insecurity were reported to remain more or less the same. Even while in some cases, an improvement of the security situation was observed after a rotation, this was usually only short-lived, indicating that the incoming military staff were rapidly socialized into local structures of legitimation and signification. In this particular context, one can imagine for example that newly arrived FARDC officers were approached by a civilian for score-settling services or asked by a policeman to protect an extortion scheme in exchange for a part of the revenue. FARDC staff might have also simply copied the operating mode of soldiers and officers connected to other units that had been longer in the area. In general, staff from the freshly rotated military units, in particular officers, are likely to have felt pressure to live up to locally salient expectations surrounding the military. Arguably, in certain parts of the *Grand Nord*, it has become inscribed in the social role of armed actors that they intervene in disputes and power struggles between civilians through protection arrangements. This implies that civilian actors evaluate the military partly on the basis of its performance in this domain, providing strong incentives for staff to act accordingly, especially where it suits their own projects as well.

However, even when inscribed in the expectations surrounding armed actors, where demanded protection services are overly violent, the overall effects on civilian-military interaction are likely to be negative. It has been mentioned before that interventions by the military in civilian disputes and score settling assume different shades of coercion. Obviously, where they have a very violent character, for example involving killings, the negative effects on perceptions of the military among civilians are much stronger than where they are moderately coercive, involving for example covert intimidation. Furthermore, the indignation provoked by violent interventions will not be limited to the disadvantaged party, but also spread to their wider networks. Additionally, as civilians might not always be aware that the military acted on behalf of instigators, a strong general distrust towards the military will result. It may also occur that the perpetrators remain unknown, which is common in environments where the HUNI reigns. In such cases, where conflicts are strong, suspicions are readily provoked that one's enemies were behind the act for reasons of revenge. Where violent incidents are regular, such suspicions might also surface where it concerned acts that were predominantly motivated by revenue generation, which might provoke or create fears for revenge actions. In areas where the FARDC is solicited for violent protection services, this commonly includes the protection of banditry, leading to a rise in violent incidents for revenue-generation purposes. Where these are interpreted as rather being linked to revenge, conflict dynamics are starkly enkindled. Through these various mechanisms, a strong engagement of the FARDC in violent protection services will intensify the dynamics of conflict and insecurity, contributing to a general degeneration of the security climate. Given that the military continues to be expected to provide public security, even if civilians simultaneously want it to settle their personal conflicts and scores, the FARDC is likely to be held responsible for this insecurity, leading to negative evaluations. This is also because the positive image of the military that might be held by those having benefited from its violent protection services generally has a lesser grade of diffusion, not least since some of the instigators might want to keep it a secret that they mobilized the military, and will therefore be hesitant to spread the word among their networks. The same applies where the military is mobilized for the protection of violent revenue generation, like banditry. In sum, the overall effects of the provision of violent protection services by the military on civilian-military interaction are likely to be negative. This is borne out by the case studies (see Table 22). From the five cases where the demand for violent protection services from the FARDC was high, which is assumed to lead in most cases to a high level of the provision of such services by the military, four coincide with negatively evaluated civilian-military interaction. The one exception (case #7, the ex-29th IB or 641st in Misisi) concerns a brigade that had quite strong internal norms inhibiting violence against civilians, which is likely to have caused them to not or only partially respond to the high demand for violent protection services. From the seven cases where there was no high demand for violent protection services, five coincide with positively evaluated civilian-military interaction.

As mentioned, differences in the social roles surrounding the military are informed by local variations in the general representations of and meanings ascribed to the armed forces. These are influenced by past experiences with government forces (whether traumatic or

more positive)⁴² and overall relations to the state/government, including local histories of armed mobilization against the government (forces) and accompanying discourses of resistance. For example, in areas where Mai Mai groups with a relatively large popular base have historically drawn upon anti-government discourses for mobilization, evaluations of the government forces may become informed by such discourses, especially when troops are experienced to misbehave. This is sometimes deliberately fostered by local political-military entrepreneurs, who draw upon local structures of signification to propagate hostile framings of the FARDC in order to rally support for their own projects. Aside from employing anti-government language, such entrepreneurs tend to strongly draw upon discourses centering on ethnic identification and autochthony, which seem to have even more mobilizing power. Such discourses often overlap or merge with those of resistance against the government, for example when the latter is portrayed as being ‘infiltrated’ or ‘manipulated’ by ‘Rwanda’.

Fizi provides a clear example of how such discursive configurations affect civilian-military interaction.⁴³ Structures of signification in this area are heavily imprinted by the notions of autochthony and *autodéfense*, while also being shaped by traditions of armed resistance developed during the Simba rebellion and Kabila’s Hewa Bora *maquis* in the Mobutu era. These locally powerful discourses came to inform evaluations of the Rwandophone government forces that arrived in the framework of the Amani Leo operations, causing these to be primarily framed as ‘Rwandophones’. The Mai Mai Yakotumba and their wider civilian networks played a crucial role in this development, trying to capitalize upon and reinforce existing antagonisms towards Rwandophones, notably the frictions between the Babembe and the Banyamulenge. The resulting negative attitudes towards the FARDC, which were reinforced by the abominable behavior of the troops of the 65th sector, set in motion negative spirals of interaction and mutual evaluations. This led to the growing salience of ethnic-identity based framings in civilian-military interaction, which also came to affect discourses on civilians among the Rwandophone troops in the FARDC, who started to frame civilians primarily as hostile Bembe ‘Mai Mai’. These developments show that where civilians frame FARDC troops in a hostile manner, in particular as an out-group defined in ethnic terms, identification among these troops in terms of that identity (but in this case as in-group) is also likely to become more salient, prompting them to frame civilians as the corresponding (ethnic) out-group. In the 65th sector, such negative framings were reinforced by troops’ feeling of being disrespected by civilians and by suspicions of the latter’s involvement in deadly Mai Mai attacks against the FARDC.

An analysis of the case studies (see Table 19 and Table 22) somewhat corroborates this observed interaction effect between mutual hostile discourses among the military and civilians. There are 11 cases where both civilians’ discourses on the military and the military’s discourses on civilians could be coded. Of these, there are only two cases where civilians framed (groups in) the military as antagonistically defined (ethnic) out-groups, and military discourses could also be coded. In both cases, the military’s discourses on civilians were negative as well. In seven out of the nine other cases, hence where civilians did not frame certain groups in the FARDC in a negative manner, the military had not developed specific negative discourses on civilians either. This corroborates that there is a correspondence between the nature of discourses on civilians within the military and that of discourses on the military among civilians. Not surprisingly, in the two cases where civilians and the military framed each other in mutually antagonistic terms, civilian-military interaction was negatively evaluated. Where neither the military nor civilians had adopted such hostile framings, which is in seven cases, six coincide with positively evaluated civilian-military interaction.

11.1.4 Place-specific dynamics of conflict, protection and insecurity

Aside from by place-specific differences in social structures, variations in patterns of civilian-military interaction are also produced by place-specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, which are partly generated by social structures. As we have seen in the previous, the demand for protection services from armed actors, including violent dispute processing, is generally influenced by locally specific processes of militarization, which inscribe the provision of such services in the specific content of the social roles surrounding the military. Yet, there are also more circumstantial factors that impact the demand for violent protection services from the side of civilians, such as a sudden increase in the number of armed actors, shifts in (armed actor) control and a (temporary) rise in the legitimization of violence as prompted by growing insecurity, increased victimization and the enhanced salience of conflict narratives. Changes in the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, may also result from the agency of armed actors (the ‘supply side’ of protection), as shaped by the presence of multiple competing armed protection providers. Whether driven by the military’s or civilians’ agency, these context-specific fluctuations in the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection affect their interaction. This section analyzes the various mechanisms underlying this influence, and how the resulting practices in turn influence the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, fuelling what seems the almost self-perpetuating volatility of the Kivu’ social order. It first discusses these mechanisms in a general manner, and then illustrates them with an example drawn from the fieldwork.

The ‘supply side’ of protection: inter-armed faction dynamics

42 This is also illustrated by how experiences with the FAZ influence representations of the FARDC, as discussed on p. 106.

43 The evolution of structures of signification and legitimation in Fizi, in particular in relation to representations of the government (forces), was described on pp. 89-91. Representations of the (Rwandophone) staff of the 65th sector Amani Leo were discussed on pp. 114 and 116.

Due to the complexity and fragmentation of the Kivus' political-military landscape, characterized by pluralistic and often militarized regulatory arrangements, FARDC units generally face competition from other armed actors, including competing military units or agencies, other state armed actors, like the ICCN and the PNC, and a host of non-state armed actors, including rebel groups, local defense forces, and banditry rings. This plethora of armed actors, and the wider networks of which they form part, compete, collude, and clash either in relatively stable configurations, but more often in rapidly shifting ways. This diversity reflects variations in both the nature and the intensity of competition, which may play out in different domains and involve different levels of violence. In particular where it concerns the FARDC and non-state armed actors, struggles might center primarily on territorial-military control, hence what force physically occupies a certain zone. This situation is often manifested in areas where the FARDC conducts military operations, which is the primary means to establish territorial control over rebel-held areas. However, in many cases, military operations lead to a situation of what Kalyvas (2006: 132) calls 'contested control'. This implies either that the FARDC and other armed forces alternately occupy the area, or that each of the contesting armed forces has a physical presence, and can threaten credible sanctions against defectors. While both these situations are recurrent in the Kivus, in particular the latter is widespread. Even where the FARDC has obvious dominance in terms of physical presence, and armed groups operate only at the fringes or in the underground, these groups are still able to exercise significant influence. Many armed groups in the Kivus have become strongly interwoven in the tissue of local societies, therefore having numerous civilian collaborators who help them with logistics, provide information and assist with monitoring and intimidating (potential) opponents. Consequently, even without direct physical presence, armed groups commonly manage to have a degree of control, implying that zones with FARDC preponderance might still be 'contested'. In such contested yet FARDC-dominated areas, which include major towns and strategic axes, competition between different armed factions is often not primarily manifested in direct clashes. Many smaller armed groups do not have the ambition to take over territorial control in urban zones or over large stretches of territory, aware that they are too weak to hold ground. Rather, competition in these areas often centers primarily on the exercise of political-economic influence, via networks of civilians. This might also be the case where competition does not involve non-state armed actors, but plays out between different state actors, which may include competing FARDC units and agencies. Obviously, the nature of such competition somewhat differs, as none of the parties is involved in what are framed as subversive activities. But whether concerning state or non-state actors, due to the general importance of protection relations for exercising power and gaining access to revenue-generation in the Kivus, both are likely to focus on the construction of protection arrangements with civilians, including local authorities and businesspersons. Consequently, inter-armed faction competition often comes to partly revolve around courting or deterring followers from competitors. Such deterrence might include the use of violence, depending on the nature and the intensity of the competition, as well as the repertoires of violence of the involved armed actors, as shaped by their projects, norms and discourses.

Armed actors operating in the same context commonly influence each other's practices, including the nature and frequency of acts of violence. This may be a result of various mechanisms, such as chains of action-reaction and mimicking (Wood, 2009: 136). In the specific context of the Kivus, the HUNI phenomenon sometimes also plays a role. Where a multitude of armed actors is present, the perpetrators of violent acts can sometimes not be identified. Armed factions benefit from this anonymity, as they can deny involvement and shift the blame to others. This lowers the threshold for engaging in certain forms of violence. Yet in other situations, the authors of violence are meant to be known. This is especially the case where violence has a strong 'communicative function' (Kalyvas, 2006: 26), implying it has to demonstrate the weaknesses of the opponent. For example, rebel violence is sometimes intended to show that the government and its forces are not capable of protecting the population, both to local populations and wider national and international audiences. The communicative dimension of violence tends to be particularly pronounced when control over an area is disputed by various armed forces, and the latter resort to violence to punish individuals or groups suspected of collaboration with 'the enemy', or to deter them from doing so. In certain conditions, this may trigger an 'outbidding of violence' (Kalyvas, 2006: 231), implying that violence and counter-violence become a means of demonstrating superior capacity for protection and enforcement to civilian audiences, and of retaliating against those soliciting protection from opponents. Such a dynamic is especially strongly manifested in environments with a multitude of competing armed factions, since the availability of more protection providers will enlarge followers' choice of whom to solicit protection from, implying the involved parties will need to advertise themselves more. As argued by Gambetta (1993), those offering protection must have the ability to inflict punishment, as this is crucial for having credibility as a guarantor and for being able to enforce the settlement of disputes: 'Protectors compete in terms of toughness: he who fights hardest not only eliminates his vanquished competitors but also advertises himself to customers as a reliably tough character' (1993: 40). Since one's capacity to protect is measured by one's capacity to wield force, clients tend to seek protection from the most violent actors. This is particularly the case in situations of extreme insecurity (cf. Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 80), which are again more likely where there is a multitude of competing armed factions. For Gambetta (1993: 40), this shows that violence sparked by competition between protection providers is a product of the 'logic of the commodity of protection', which centers on the credibility of providers to wield force. This logic influences the workings of the entire 'protection market', for it invites new entries to demonstrate superior force. Additionally, 'even if violence were no longer strictly required by the business of the guarantor, it would still be overproduced as a consequence of the inertial effects of the competition to which the protection market had been subject since its inception' (idem: 41).

There are indications that FARDC units' projects and navigational pathways are similarly influenced by the nature of the competition unfolding between different armed protection providers within a specific context, and their repertoires of violence. For example, in areas where armed groups have significant influence and threaten civilians with sanctions, the FARDC seems at times tempted to similarly resort to intimidation in order to sever the ties between armed groups and their civilian support base. Indeed, it was observed that especially

where armed groups are locally recruited or have been present for a long time, leading to dense socio-economic ties, the FARDC may massively accuse civilians of collaborating with so-called 'negative forces' (*forces négatives*). Two examples are the 652nd on the *Plateaux*, which suspected all Banyamulenge in certain areas to be FRF members (case #12), and the 65th sector in Fizi, believing each Mubembe to be a Mai Mai (collaborator).⁴⁴ In both cases, collaboration accusations went hand in hand with significant abuses against civilians, such as unlawful arrests, torture, and property seizure. This appeared not to be purely the result of a punitive or deterrence logic. Collaboration accusations are often informed by a variety of projects, including revenue generation. Furthermore, they form a convenient discursive frame for military interventions in local and private conflicts, including those driven by civilians who solicit such interventions. For example, when a person wants to take revenge on a personal adversary and asks the FARDC to take care of this project, the military may accuse this adversary of collaborating with enemy forces in order to justify harmful action, like arrests and beatings. As was pointed out earlier, this is a core mechanism by which private conflicts assume a more public dimension.⁴⁵ Despite this variety of underlying projects, where collaboration accusations occur at a large scale in areas of contested control, at least a part tend to be informed by navigational pathways aiming at reinforcing the FARDC's control. Most often, this concerns the establishment of comprehensive control by reducing the influence of armed groups and their wider civilian networks, which is generally accompanied by military operations. This reflects how in certain circumstances, the FARDC may have stronger incentives to resort to sticks than to carrots to convince civilians to stop supporting enemy forces.

Classic counter-insurgency theorizing rests on the presumption that where the enemy depends to a large extent on civilians, including for intelligence and resources, maintaining good relations with the population and being seen as a legitimate force are essential for weakening their links to the opposing side, and for gaining access to crucial information and support (e.g., Galula, 1964; Thompson, 1966). However, in certain circumstances, such a strategy may be unattractive or impracticable for the FARDC. While civilians will indeed more readily come forward with information on the enemy when they trust, respect and appreciate the government forces, building such ties takes time and generally implies foregoing immediate revenue-generating opportunities. The negative representations that civilians have of the Congolese armed forces foster a high degree of initial distrust that takes repeated positive interactions over a substantial period of time to overcome. Therefore, where military units have a limited time horizon, they may opt for a different navigational pathway to sever the links between armed groups and populations than by building up trust. Incentives to foster good relations with civilians will even be lower where armed groups resort to terror in order to control the population. Depending on their confidence in the military's ability and willingness to protect them against retaliatory attacks, this will make civilians generally extremely afraid to maintain close ties to the FARDC, (cf. Kalyvas, 2006: 12–13). Given that civilians' confidence in the FARDC's protective efforts is overall low, due to a combination of deeply engrained negative representations of the military, the fact that the FARDC often has other priorities than civilian protection, and its proven limited abilities for rapid reaction, fear inhibiting collaboration with the FARDC is a likely scenario in such a case. As a consequence, the military would need to invest significantly in gaining the trust from the population, which would seem unfeasible to accomplish in a short period of time. This is especially the case in situations of heavily contested territorial control, where neither civilians nor the FARDC itself anticipate the military's dominance to last long. Knowing that when a competitor takes over control, they run a high risk of getting punished for divulging information, civilians will in such circumstances be even more wary to liaise with the FARDC.

In sum, depending on factors like military units' time horizon and the nature of their relations with civilians, but also the modus operandi of the armed factions they are competing with and the ties between these groups and civilians, the military may have incentives to resort to intimidation and retaliation to weaken armed groups' civilian support networks, rather than to try to win their 'hearts and minds'. Similar incentives to employ violence are manifested where competition between armed factions is primarily informed by the distinct logic of the protection market, which may prompt factions to resort to force to advertise themselves as more competent protectors than competitors. However, both the strength of these incentives and the extent to which the FARDC will act upon them, depend on other features than the nature of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection alone, including a unit's projects, its internal norms and the quality of command. Given that the FARDC plays a variety of social roles and has a variety of sources of income, its role as a 'protection provider', and the resources it gains from the 'protection business' are not always of paramount importance. Obviously, this will reduce its motivation to employ force in order to be on top of the protection market. Similarly, where significantly reducing the influence of armed group-related networks is not among a unit's priorities, for instance as a unit pursues basic, rather than comprehensive control, the incentives to employ violence to sever the ties between armed groups and populations might not be very strong. Yet, where units do pursue more comprehensive forms of control, and try to be important players on the protection market, the presence of a multitude of (armed) protection providers employing violence to exercise control over civilians does create strong incentives for the FARDC to similarly adopt coercive modes of navigation. Depending on units' norms and the nature of their command, they might act upon these incentives and embark upon more violent paths, which is likely to sour their relations with civilians. The case study findings corroborate these observations (see Table 22). In total six cases were identified where a multitude of competing armed protection providers was present, and FARDC units did not pursue basic control. Of these six, five coincide with negatively evaluated civilian-military interaction. Furthermore, of the five cases where no multitude of competing armed actors was detected, four coincide with positively evaluated civilian-military interaction, and all four of these involved basic control. This shows that the presence of a multitude of competing armed

44 For the dynamics in the 65th sector in Fizi, see pp. 91 and 123; for the practices of the 652nd on the *Plateaux*, see pp. 93–94 and 172–173.

45 How private disputes are converted into more public conflicts was explained on pp. 183–185.

actors significantly enhances the chances for bad behavior by the FARDC, due to the specific nature of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that such a presence might generate.

The 'demand side' of protection: control shifts and an intensification of conflict and insecurity

The presence of and competition between multiple armed protection providers does not only affect the practices of protectors but also those of the civilians demanding protection. This is especially the case where there are shifts in the amount and degrees of control of armed protection providers, for example as a result of military operations. The effects of the Amani Leo operations provide numerous examples of this. In large parts of the Kivus, the massive deployment of troops and concomitant operations had an enkindling effect on the demand for violent protection services, in particular dispute processing, as a result of various and sometimes overlapping mechanisms. Aside from shifts in control and a rise in the number of armed actors, these mechanisms related to growing insecurity and an intensification of conflicts. This section systematically reviews these factors, starting with the effects of the increased presence of armed actors.

In many areas, the Amani Leo operations led to a reinforced presence of armed actors, most often FARDC soldiers, but sometimes also local defense forces or rebel troops. Such a rise in the number of armed actors often enkindles the demand for violent protection services. As the supply of violent labor increases, violent protection services become more accessible, thus facilitating the translation of conflicts into violence. As Kalyvas (2006: 383) notes: 'Political actors external to the community play a critical role in the conversion of local and private conflicts into violence because they provide incentives without which local actors would be unable or unwilling to undertake violence.' The more accessible the 'labor force' for violent action, as occurs for example in situations of large-scale FARDC deployment, the more incentives people have for soliciting its interference in conflicts. This accessibility is even more pronounced where armed protection providers have pre-existing ties to the population, as the threshold to solicit a brother-in-law, neighbor or aunt serving in the armed forces is generally low. However, as we have seen, where there are pre-existing ties with the population, armed actors also face strong countervailing pressures to not engage in abuses. Consequently, to what extent an augmentation of the number of armed protection providers enkindles the demand for violent protection services partly depends on the nature of their links to protection seekers. Moreover, it is shaped by the extent to which it is accompanied by shifts in control.

In many areas, the Amani Leo operations led to changes in territorial control, following various scenarios. While in some places, the FARDC pushed back and partly replaced the FDLR or other armed groups, elsewhere, it was the FDLR that took over control from other armed groups or vice versa. Furthermore, due to CNDP integration, many FARDC controlled areas came in the hands of different power networks within the military. These various changes in (military-territorial) control, hence in the constellation of protection providers, prompted both local elites keen on retaining their dominance and previously marginalized actors wanting to regain influence to try to forge alliances with the newly dominant faction. Understandably, those who had lost out in previous power struggles tried to seize upon the opportunity offered by the shifting power constellation to (re)establish dominance. Moreover, where such actors felt aggrieved as their opponents had liaised with previously dominant armed factions to impose forceful 'solutions' to their disputes, the change in power offered the possibility to take revenge and settle old scores. This shows how rather than truly resolving conflicts, arrangements imposed by violence often merely temporarily freeze or suppress tensions. As the disadvantaged party views neither the 'arbiter' nor the procedure as legitimate, it will contest the outcome once the opportunity presents itself, which is when major power shifts occur. One mechanism that civilians employ to harness the newly dominant armed faction for their personal projects is to accuse their opponents of continuing collaboration with the now marginalized enemy faction. Such denouncement may be an effective manner to obtain a favorable status with the newly dominant armed players, as it creates the impression of being on their side and of being a person of confidence. Hence, collaboration accusations do not only serve as an instrument to harm others and settle scores, but also to forge new relations and alliances. The effectiveness of this instrument partly lies in the fact that in situations of shifts in control, it is simply quite plausible that powerful civilian actors used to collaborate with the previously dominant armed faction. Furthermore, when the military group now in charge consists of outsiders, which is often the case when it concerns an FARDC unit, they might have limited means to verify the accusations. But even where evidence is shaky, the FARDC may follow up on such accusations as it fits their own projects of revenue generation and demonstrating and establishing authority. Such low standards of evidence lower again the threshold for civilians to harness the military for personal projects, which further contributes to a surge in collaboration accusations.

However, not all contexts of shifting control lead to similar intensifications in the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. It has already been explained that protection comes in different shapes, ranging from being a service on a transactional basis to constituting a dimension within long-standing social relations formed on various bases, like kinship, ethnicity or a shared professional background.⁴⁶ Due to variations in the types and intensity of protection, and the heterogeneity of the social ties of which protection forms a part, the effects of shifts in control on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection and the impact of these dynamics on civilian-military interaction diverge per context. As we have seen, civilians solicit protection based on the perceived qualities of protection providers and their services (accessibility, reliability, affordability, legitimacy, acceptability of conduct). The evaluations of these qualities are strongly

46 For an analysis of the nature of protection, see pp. 43-44.

shaped by existing relations, like a shared ethnic and geographical background, and previous interactions.⁴⁷ However, existing relations also create allegiances and social pressures that may prompt protection seekers to choose certain protection providers over others for reasons other than the quality of the solicited service, for instance family connections, sympathy for 'the cause', or the concern to maintain access to certain economic activities or networks. Therefore, the effects of shifts in control partly depend on the nature of the protection providers involved, for instance whether newly dominant armed factions contain troops from the area or soldiers who have been deployed there previously, or feature out-groups that are framed in hostile terms and that are distrusted. For example, where a newly dominant FARDC unit is deeply feared, the demand for protection services might not rise or even drop. This could clearly be observed in Fizi, where efforts to harness the Amani Leo troops of the 65th sector for projects of personal vengeance and conflicts were relatively limited. People were generally afraid to go to the military to denounce opponents as they believed this could backfire, given that those bringing the accusations sometimes became subject to abuses by the military themselves. Aside from by the nature of the protection providers and their ties to civilians, the effects of shifts in control on the demand for protection services also depend on the overall fluidity of the power landscape. As mentioned, where shifts in control are frequent, people might be wary to change allegiances, lest they get punished when a new faction becomes dominant. By contrast, where a new power equilibrium crystallizes, the initially intensified demand for violent protection services may slowly subside, especially where one armed faction becomes hegemonic. The reason is that the intense search for new protection arrangements will have ended, and the newly dominant actors will have arranged conflicts in a manner expedient to them, while challenging these outcomes becomes increasingly difficult.

However, in many cases, no clear hegemony materializes, and areas remain subject to contested control. This might lead to either a drop in the demand for protection services from the FARDC, as civilians fear for retaliatory actions from the competing armed faction side, or not induce significant changes. As Kalyvas notes, two common strategies adopted by civilians in situations of contested control are: first, 'fence sitting' (2006: 226), that is, trying to avoid becoming allied to one side or another; and second, 'hedging' (idem: 228), or having dealings with various sides simultaneously. Due to the exigencies of navigation in a turbulent environment, this latter response appears frequent in the Kivus, where people tend to maintain ties of a varying nature with a range of different networks, sometimes including nominally opposed armed actors. Different protection ties and services entail different levels of trust, commitment, and secrecy. This enables civilians to simultaneously maintain relations-of a heterogeneous nature- to competing protection providers, whose opposition to each other is moreover often only relative and fluctuating.⁴⁸ Thus, supporting armed groups does not prevent civilians from engaging in certain basic protection schemes with the FARDC, such as paying protection fees to go logging or fishing, although they would have difficulties to maintain more comprehensive ties with the military that would evoke the suspicion of providing intelligence. Hence, one may have a brother in the Mai Mai, and still demand an officer from a locally deployed FARDC company to collect a debt, but refrain from collaborating with this officer in more elaborate business schemes. Obviously, the simultaneous embedding in various militarized networks is a risky mode of navigation for civilians, not least since the constantly changing fortunes and alliances of these networks require continual repositioning. A good example of the precariousness of this balancing act is the trajectory of the (former) customary chief of the locality of Misisi. This locality, which is very rich due to the presence of numerous gold mines, is located in the zone of influence of the Mai Mai Yakotumba, who have supporters among various important businesspersons and authorities. At the same time, Misisi is a site of competition for different power networks within the FARDC and other parts of the state apparatus. In order to navigate this complex situation, the locality chief tried to maintain good contacts with a wide range of networks. These included the following: the Mai Mai, whom he used to give a part of the revenues of customary taxes on mining activities; local FARDC brigade commanders, whom he often tried to instrumentalize for transport services; various officers higher up in the hierarchy, including in the 10th Military Region, who had representatives deployed to Misisi and for whom he facilitated certain business activities; and finally, a retired general based in the Lulenge sector of Fizi nearby, who has significant investments and influence in Misisi. While playing this strategy of multiple embedding quite well, in 2014 a part of Katombo's family became discontent with his leadership, and convinced the Mai Mai to attack him. Together with pressure from the retired general, who had also turned against him, this ultimately led to his replacement.⁴⁹ This illustrates the pitfalls of hedging in the volatile political-military landscape of the Kivus, where shifts in the complex constellations of protection providers create waves that the hedger is not always able to surf.

Aside from shifts in control, other changes in the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection also impact civilians' demand for protection services. These include a rise in insecurity, and the intensification of conflicts, including through the growing salience of antagonistic forms of identification and conflict narratives. These various, often mutually reinforcing, mechanisms were manifested in numerous areas affected by the Amani Leo operations. Not only did these operations create a generalized rise in insecurity, due to both clashes and an increase in banditry, they also exacerbated existing and created new local conflicts (International Crisis Group, 2010b). As a result, many people solicited intensified protection in order to shield themselves against acts of banditry and revenge. This set in motion the self-enforcing spiral of protection discussed earlier, whereby those who do not enjoy protection perceive to be at a comparative

47 The factors shaping the choice for a protection provider in the domain of dispute processing were extensively described in the section on 'forum shopping' on pp. 180-182.

48 Note that this is an important difference with the nature of Mafia protection, which according to Gambetta (1993:40) has a 'zero-sum-game' character, making the protection market often monopolistic.

49 This information was obtained during various interviews (with civil society organizations, civilian authorities and FARDC intelligence officers) in Misisi, 17-20.06.2014.

disadvantage, in particular when they are disadvantaged in a conflict or otherwise threatened with violence, and therefore start soliciting protection too (Gambetta, 1993: 30). Furthermore, growing insecurity caused those directly victimized to mobilize protection providers to seek redress and take revenge. People whose house has been burnt down, whose livestock has been looted or whose harvest has been destroyed may find it justified to solicit violent interventions to punish the wrong-doers. Moreover, they may find it sooner acceptable to obtain resources through violent methods in order to compensate for lost or damaged property or simply for survival, especially when their main sources of income have been destroyed. Other actors may again profit from this climate of more tolerance and opportunities for violence for more self-interested reasons, leading to a rise in violent crime. This further augments the number of people that is victimized, which again further fuels the demand for protection.

In some cases, the rise in insecurity also enkindled and was enkindled by the reinforced salience of antagonistic discourses and forms of identification. In times of uncertainty, insecurity and economic hardship, people tend to draw more intensively on their most trusted social networks, which often consist of in-group members. This reinforces the tendency to rely on us/them binaries to make sense of the increasingly confusing situation, especially if such interpretative schemes are cultivated by elites striving to reinforce their grip over the population. Such elites often seize upon the overarching discourse in which conflicts and military operations are framed, or what Kalyvas (2006: 364–365) calls the ‘master narrative’ of a conflict, employing this as the lens through which to view more locally rooted dynamics of conflict. As we have seen, this mechanism prompted many ‘autochthon’ political-military entrepreneurs in Fizi, who interpreted the integration of the CNDP into the FARDC as the next stage in the realization of the infamous Tutsi-driven ‘balkanization plot’, to project this narrative on the (Tutsi) Banyamulenge. By placing them in the same out-group category as the ex-CNDP and their supposed Rwandan masters, existing antagonisms towards the Banyamulenge intensified.⁵⁰

Aside from by efforts of local political-military entrepreneurs, an intensification of local antagonisms may also be the result of Kivutians’ tendency to ascribe any incident to the agency of ‘the enemy’, even when evidence of involvement or deliberation is lacking, like when the perpetrators are HUNI. In the discussion of dispute processing in Chapter 6, the example was given of a family whose house had been pillaged by FARDC soldiers, but who suspected their neighbors of being the *commanditeurs*, having instigated the pillage by manipulating the FARDC.⁵¹ This case is by no means unique. In fact, partly as a result of the vibrancy of *radio trottoir*, unfounded allegations were observed to abound in all fieldwork sites, whether directed against Rwandophone or autochthon FARDC troops, antagonistically framed ethnic groups, competing clans, political factions, or big-men networks, or simply relatives, lovers or neighbors seen as hostile. In such a climate, especially when government troops are not perceived to be ‘neutral’, which is often the case with the FARDC,⁵² an upsurge in insecurity might intensify and lead to the recoding of existing conflicts, as people believe that their opponents have manipulated the military or other armed actors to harm them. Those having lost relatives, belongings, and income tend to interpret their misfortunes through the grid of dominant discourses and associated antagonistic forms of identification, which reinforces existing conflicts. The fluid boundaries between inter-group and inter-personal conflicts facilitate and aggravate such dynamics, as the anger towards one person may become projected onto a social group as a whole, or as motives are attributed to individual social agents solely on the basis of their (ascribed) social identity.⁵³

However, rising insecurity and conflicts do not always translate into increased incentives to forge protection arrangements with armed actors. Similar to what was mentioned in relation to the effects of shifts of control, the nature of the involved protection providers (e.g., in how far they are trusted), might prevent such a development from occurring. Furthermore, where local structures of signification and legitimation work against employing violence to harm opponents, a significant rise in the demand for violent protection services might not materialize either. Additionally, when insecurity is rampant, for example due to banditry, people generally do not only solicit particularistic forms of protection, but also expect the better provision of ‘public security’. Obviously, such expectations are especially strong where the FARDC is the dominant armed faction, given that its formal role as ‘public security provider’ continues to be the primary frame through which it is viewed by the population. Even while simultaneously having other, partly contradictory expectations related to protection, civilians always expect the FARDC to also or primarily engage in the provision of public security. How the FARDC manages these contradictory expectations, and how its ensuing simultaneous enactment of different social roles impacts evaluations of its power position and practices, strongly differs per context, as shaped by military units’ own projects and other internal characteristics.

To summarize, place-specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection may impact civilian-military interaction in a variety of manners. On the side of military units, one of the elements that most affects their agency is the presence of competing armed protection providers. In areas of contested military-territorial control, or where competition between protection providers is fierce, the FARDC may have incentives to turn to more violent modes of navigation that target civilians, especially where trust is low, time horizons are short and opponents resort to violence against civilians too. But variations in the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection also impact civilian-military interaction via the agency of civilians, shaping the level and nature of their demand for protection services. Where power shifts take place, local conflicts intensify or multiply, insecurity is rampant, and the presence of armed actors augments, the demand for

50 The effects of the Amani Leo operations on conflict dynamics in Fizi were discussed on p. 91.

51 This incident was described on p. 184.

52 For an analysis of the FARDC’s perceived lack of impartiality, see pp. 113–115.

53 The conversion of private into public conflicts and vice versa was described on pp. 183–185.

violent protection services often rises. In particular where conflict narratives and accompanying hostile framings of 'the enemy' become more salient, such services may include violent dispute processing and violent score settling. In such contexts, private conflicts are sooner converted into violence, while the norms surrounding the use of violence temporarily shift towards more tolerance for the use of violence. Yet, such shifts are not a foregone conclusion. Whether and to what extent they occur partly depends on the contents and strength of local structures of signification and legitimation, and the relations between armed actors and the civilians who solicit protection. One context where these factors were not propitious to avoiding an intensification of violence during the Amani Leo operations was the northern part of the Bwisha *chefferie* in Rutshuru territory, where several of the discussed effects of place-specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection on civilian-military interaction could clearly be observed.

The effects of the Amani Leo operations on northern Bwisha

The northern part of Bwisha, especially the *groupements* of Binza, Busunza and Bukoma, has a long history of violence, armed mobilization along ethnic lines (Banande, Hutu, Tutsi) and cohabitation and economic collaboration between armed groups and civilians.⁵⁴ These developments have thoroughly militarized its social structures, as evidenced by the important position of armed groups in local power relations and the economy, and the institutionalization of the mobilization of armed actors for dispute processing and score settling. Furthermore, the area is characterized by rampant armed banditry, which is one of the main sources of everyday insecurity. This militarization is partly a result of the legacy of the Congo Wars, which led to high levels of arms possession and the military training of a large share of the population, in part due to the creation of Local Defense Forces based in every village. These militarized social structures strongly shaped the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection as they unfolded after the Amani Leo operations in 2009. The transformations in these dynamics had profound effects on the demand for and offer of violent protection services, due to a combination of shifts in control, an intensification in the competition between multiple armed protection providers, and a rise in insecurity and conflicts.

The Amani Leo operations, which were carried out by a number of ex-CNDP dominated units, including the 223rd (case #2), pushed many armed groups deeper into the bush, away from the strategic axes and towns. While these groups were deeply interwoven in the socio-economic tissue of society, some civilians still started to change their alliances to armed actors, trying to switch sides or to hedge. Importantly, shifts in territorial control, notably increased FARDC control over main trade routes and commercial hubs, changed the outcome of utilitarian calculations. For instance, traders who had made arrangements with certain armed groups to protect the transport of their goods now also had to make deals with the FARDC. Furthermore, some economic operators saw in the Amani Leo operations an occasion to try to obtain more favorable terms of exchange within existing arrangements with armed groups, like by reducing the percentage of interest on loans. At the same time, armed groups were faced with a reduced capacity for monitoring and enforcing arrangements with civilians, having restrained space of movement and therefore shrinking opportunities for surveillance and information gathering among civilians. Among some civilians, this created incentives to no longer honor their obligations towards these groups, for example by not repaying debts, or by not handing over all of the profits of economic activity under pre-financing deals.

This change in patterns of socio-economic collaboration triggered violent reactions from certain armed groups, who felt betrayed and tried to maintain their influence by force. Having limited alternative instruments of enforcement, targeted violence became an increasingly important way to ensure control. The objectives of this violence were twofold: to punish (suspected) defectors and to deter people from defecting.⁵⁵ It was therefore no coincidence that a large amount of the violent incidents took place in and around the town of Kiwanja, which is a commercial center where armed groups have considerable investments, owning boutiques, *taxi-motos*, pharmacies and bars.⁵⁶ Violence also had to serve as a warning to local figures of authority not to start cooperation with the FARDC. Due to armed groups' deep socio-economic embedding in northern Bwisha, local authorities at all levels maintain close contacts with these groups, causing them to be in the possession of crucial intelligence for the FARDC. In order to prevent them from transmitting this information, or punish them for allegedly doing so, part of the violence committed by armed groups specifically targeted customary and politico-administrative authorities, several of whom were kidnapped or assassinated.⁵⁷ Additionally, since the operations cut off armed groups from a part of their sources of revenue, certain groups intensified criminal income-generation practices, in particular kidnappings for ransom. These violent reactions, and civilians' continued stakes in and preferences for collaborating with armed groups, not only made that the FARDC struggled to establish control over the area, but also that it similarly started to rely on violence.

The FARDC's engagement in violence was also promoted by the internal features of the deployed units. Brigades like the 223rd (case #2)

54 The Bwisha area was earlier discussed on pp. 96–99.

55 For example, to deter him from failing to honor his obligations, armed groups kidnapped the president of the FEC of Nyamilima in the summer of 2011. Allegedly, he had an outstanding debt of an estimated \$10,000 with certain of these groups, which he had invested in his boutiques in Nyamilima and the neighboring village of Katwiguru. Conclusions based on fieldwork in Nyamilima, 27.01.2012.

56 See also Radio Okapi, 'Insécurité: la population de Rutshuru s'en prend aux casques bleus et aux militaires des FARDC', *Radio Okapi*, 30 May 2011.

57 One of the targeted authorities was the *chef de groupement* of Busanza, who was kidnapped by a coalition of armed groups in December 2010. Radio Okapi, 'Rutshuru: les FARDC délivrent trois otages des FDLR', *Radio Okapi*, 23 December 2010.

were little cohesive, as they were torn between ex-CNDP and non-ex-CNDP networks. Furthermore, the heavy presence of ex-CNDP troops in an area where the CNDP had committed a terrible massacre only a few months earlier instilled a deep distrust. This made civilians wary to collaborate, although utilitarian considerations sometimes pushed them in that direction.⁵⁸ The unruly behavior of the 223rd, including its involvement in the protection of banditry activities, only reinforced the propensity among civilians to keep their distance. In combination with the unit's short time horizon as induced by the rapid rotations characteristic of the Amani Leo operations, this created incentives to rely on coercion rather than persuasion to sever the ties between armed groups and civilians. One domain in which this was visible was the FARDC's treatment of the victims of kidnappings, which were especially numerous in the village of Nyamilima and surroundings, an area characterized by contested control between the FARDC and various armed groups. During fieldwork, victims of kidnappings in this area told that after they had been released, the FARDC came to arrest them, arguing that since their family had paid a ransom for their release, they had supported the rebels financially, and that it was therefore now time for them to support the army. Others reported to have been mistreated when the FARDC had sought to extract information from them on the armed group they had been kidnapped by, or had accused them of being an armed group collaborator. At the same time, these victims and their families were put under pressure by armed groups, many of which continued to operate in the environment, not to divulge information about them and to continue their support. For example, in the village of Katwiguru, people explained that certain armed groups, especially RUD,⁵⁹ came at night to demand food and medicine. Since the FARDC did little to secure the population at night, conducting patrols only by day, they did not dare to turn these requests down. However, observing that rebel groups persisted in the vicinity, the FARDC accused the population of this village of collaborating with the rebels, arresting a number of inhabitants on that count. Such arrests by the FARDC provoked in turn suspicions from the side of the rebels, who feared that those arrested would talk too much.⁶⁰ This created a vicious circle of collaboration accusations, provoking the feeling among civilians of being in between two fires, which created profound feelings of fear and uncertainty, and of not knowing what to do. This ambiguity is well captured in the following two widely circulating phrases, which were also frequently heard in other parts of the Kivus marked by contested control: *on ne sait plus à quel saint se vouer* (we no longer know which saint to worship) and *on se trouve entre le marteau et l'enclume* (we are between hammer and anvil).

A second reason for these feelings of deep insecurity and ambiguity was that a large part of the violent incidents in northern Bwisha were committed by *hommes en uniforme non-autrement identifiés* (HUNI). These were suspected to include elements from armed groups, FARDC deserters and currently serving soldiers, criminal gangs, demobilized, and bands of socially and economically marginalized local youngsters, often operating under the protection of or in collaboration with the FARDC or armed groups.⁶¹ The simultaneous activity of this heterogeneous group of armed actors made it exceedingly difficult to identify the perpetrators of individual acts of violence. Consequently, the human rights activists and local authorities contacted on this matter reported the single largest category of perpetrators of violent incidents in Rutshuru to be HUNI. While some of the various groups and actors constituting HUNI were in competition, they ultimately also benefited from each other's presence. Aside from helping each other to stay anonymous, hence to operate with quasi-impunity, some were reported to exchange arms and ammunitions or to engage in other forms of trade. Furthermore, all factions benefited from the rampant insecurity unleashed by the Amani Leo operations and their own activities, since this generated a growing demand for protection. Additionally, it enabled armed groups and gangs to increase their membership, as the ranks of the aggrieved and angered un- and underemployed, constituting their primary recruitment pool, swelled (UFAREP/Kiwanja, 2010). Some groups also tried to capitalize on the sharpening of social antagonisms, drawing on conflict narratives that had gained in salience with the start of the Amani Leo operations. For example Soki, a Rwandan Hutu, recruited among local Hutu youth by playing upon anti-Tutsi sentiment, which had been revived with the arrival of FARDC troops dominated by the ex-CNDP. This favorable climate for armed activity, which was also fostered by the plethora of opportunities for illegal resources exploitation offered by the neighboring Virunga Park, lured in new groups and facilitated split-offs of existing ones, leading to the emergence of a range of new armed factions in and around northern Bwisha in 2009 and 2010.⁶² It was only in the course of 2011 that the security situation in this area somewhat improved, after the regimentation process brought in new units, and the deployment of a mixed FARDC-RDF (Rwandan army) battalion headquartered in Kiseguru (close to Kiwanja) (UNSC, 2011: 42). However, in April 2012, Rutshuru was ran over by the M23, which led to the massive deployment of initially rather ill organized FARDC troops and the emergence of a host of new armed groups.⁶³ Since many of these were mobilized along

58 The Kiwanja massacre and resulting distrust towards ex-CNDP troops were discussed on p. 97.

59 *Ralliement pour l'unité et la démocratie-Urunana*, see footnote 99 on p. 97.

60 See also Évariste Mahamba, 'Rutshuru : des villageois vivent dans la terreur des enlèvements', *Syfia Grands Lacs*, 22 April 2010.

61 A notorious gang active in the *groupement* of Busanza was that of Mafuko, which collaborated with the FDLR. Its leader was killed by mob justice in April 2011. Prosper Hamuli-Birali, 'Territoire de Rutshuru : l'armée se réorganise, l'insécurité aussi !!', *Pole Institute*, 18 March 2011.

62 These groups include the *Forces patriotiques pour la libération du Congo*, a multi-ethnic group founded end 2009 and initially led by Ngabo Gadi, until his arrest in Kampala in June 2010 (UNSC, 2010: 18–19). In the course of 2010, this group was reinforced by ex-CNDP Nkunda loyalists deserting from the FARDC, notably Col. Emmanuel Nsengiyumva, and later a group of FARDC deserters led by Major Patient Akilimali. This movement started to taper off when Nsengiyumva was killed in February 2011, and Akilimali surrendered to the FARDC in April 2011 with 39 elements, being integrated into an ex-CNDP dominated FARDC regiment (UNSC, 2011: 70). Another group briefly operating in the Binza area was a RUD-Urunana break-away faction led by Norbert 'Gaheza' Ndererimana, called the *Front nationaliste pour la démocratie et la réconciliation au Rwanda-L'armée du roi*. This movement had only 20 troops, and disappeared after Gaheza's arrest in Kigali in June 2011 (UNSC, 2011: 44).

63 These groups include the Mai Mai of Col. Muhimu Shetani (*Forces populaires pour la démocratie*), the *Mouvement populaire d'autodéfense*, and the *Force de défense des intérêts du peuple Congolais*, see Enough Project, 2013.

ethnic lines, their appearance fed growing distrust between communities, which became an additional source of tensions and insecurity.⁶⁴ Benefiting from the favorable climate for armed groups sketched above, these groups continued their activities even after the M23 had disappeared, illustrating how militarization feeds ongoing armed mobilization.⁶⁵

To conclude, the effects of the Amani Leo operations on northern Bwisha, notably on its dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, were strongly shaped by place-specific militarized structures. A history of tense inter-community relations and massive armed mobilization, the institutionalization of soliciting armed actors for dispute processing, score settling and the protection of banditry, and the strong socio-economic embedding of armed groups: all these elements impacted the dynamics that unfolded in the wake of the operations. These dynamics produced effects on both the military's and civilians' agency. Certain civilians started to collaborate with the FARDC for utilitarian reasons, while simultaneously maintaining ties with and trying to avoid reprisals from armed groups. Furthermore, many intensified their demand for violent protection services, with the aim of shielding themselves against the rising insecurity or to take revenge in the wake of victimization. The FARDC, for its part, adopted violent pathways to manage the chaotic situation, trying to force civilians out of collaborating with armed groups in areas of contested control. However, the FARDC also capitalized upon the growing demand for violent protection services, which allowed them to reinforce their grip and enhance their income. In pursuing these projects, they were importantly aided by the climate of anonymity created by the presence of a multitude of different armed actors, enabling them to hide their involvement. Thus, the case of northern Bwisha shows that place-specific factors, in particular the nature and intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, have significant effects on the FARDC's propensity to engage in violence against civilians.

Table 23: Overview of deployment-context related factors affecting the likelihood of violence against civilians

Effect on likelihood violence	Type of deployment context-related factors				
	Physical setting	Countervailing forces	Local economy	Norms & discourses	Dynamics conflict, insecurity & protection
Increase	Isolated location	Weak civilian actors	Abundance revenue-generation opportunities	Salient norms authorizing violent protection services	Presence multiple competing armed protection providers
		Strong but divided civilian actors	Inaccessibility revenue-generation opportunities	Salient negative discourses (parts of) military	Increasing demand violent protection services
		Strong and cohesive civilian actors	Trust unimportant for revenue generation		
Decrease	Non-isolated location	Strong and cohesive civilian actors	Accessibility revenue-generation opportunities	Salient norms inhibitive of violent protection services	No contested control
		Weak civilian actors	Trust important for revenue generation	Salient positive discourses (parts of) military	Diminishing demand violent protection services

11.2 Deployment context-related factors and violence against civilians

Having discussed the various place-specific structural elements and dimensions of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that cause variations in civilian-military interaction, it can now be summarized how these factors affect the production of violence against civilians by the FARDC (see Table 23). Again, a disclaimer needs to be made that these findings are based on the study of a limited number of units.⁶⁶ Furthermore, it only concerns a description of broad trends, and no efforts have been made to distinguish between various types of violence. Additionally, not all deployment context-related factors appear to be equally important in shaping military units' propensity to engage in violence, and some have more an indirect than a direct impact. Of most direct influence are the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, in particular their effects on the demand for violent protection services by civilians and the nature of the competition between different armed factions. However, the extent to which these factors increase the incentives for the FARDC to employ violence, and the FARDC acts upon these incentives, is importantly shaped by the projects that FARDC units pursue, notably whether they strive to establish basic or comprehensive control, but also by their internal norms and discourses. This highlights

64 Radio Okapi, 'Nord-Kivu : 4 personnes tuées dans les affrontements entre deux milices à Kisharo', *Radio Okapi*, 23 January 2013.

65 Radio Okapi, 'Nord-Kivu: des groupes armés gèrent des zones entières à Rutshuru, selon la société civile', *Radio Okapi*, 8 June 2014.

66 As explained on p. 309, violence was only systematically studied for five units deployed to Fizi, covering seven of the cases.

how deployment-context related factors mostly produce effects on FARDC units' agency, including the likelihood that they will employ violence, in interaction with unit-related factors.

Such interaction effects are particularly important when it comes to the level of isolation of a deployment area, as determined by the nature of the terrain (mountains, forest, i.e., locale), population densities, and infrastructure (roads, phone network), which shape relative distance to urban centers (i.e., location). As we have seen, it is especially in combination with the quality of command that the level of isolation of a place affects FARDC units' agency, including their interaction with civilians.⁶⁷ Where commanders are not able and/or willing to master their troops, the likelihood that deployment to an isolated environment will involve abusive behavior is higher. On the one hand, troops are exposed to hardships, boredom and isolation, while being and feeling less well supervised and controlled. On the other hand, inhabitants, including lower-level authorities, have less possibilities and incentives to hold the military to account, due to factors like longer distances to higher-level authorities, self-censorship induced by fear, and the difficulties to harness a critical mass of contestants. But the fact that some of the worst abuses (like massacres or massive looting) often occur in the more isolated sites is also related to the fact they take place in 'hot' situations, and the majority of combat operations is conducted in rural areas. While a combination of bad command and deployment to isolated areas thus increases the chances that FARDC troops will employ violence against civilians, the same applies when troops under bad command are deployed to non-isolated areas. In urban environments, there tends to be a higher demand for violent dispute processing and score settling, given that there is more commercial activity, and simply more people. Furthermore, the scattering of troops over residential quarters compounds supervision and control, although proactive commanders can compensate for this through such measures as regular reporting duties and curfews. Additionally, the relative accessibility of authorities, international and civil society organizations, and the presence of a mass of people that can be mobilized to protest, provide some checks and balances from the civilian side. Consequently, the abuses that troops engage in in urban environments do not tend to be of the worst kind, and often take place on a more individualized basis. This shows that the effects of isolation on the military's propensity to engage in abuses are somewhat ambiguous, in part because different environments create incentives for different types of abuses. Hence, while the chances for bad behavior are generally higher when units under bad command are deployed to isolated environments, units in urban zones under bad command are only slightly more likely to behave well, although they might engage in abuses of a comparatively less grave nature.

In relation to structures of domination, it was explained how the presence, strength and cohesion of countervailing forces influence the FARDC's agency, notably by shaping the extent to which its drive for control is resisted, or by correcting its behavior through the mobilization of pressure from armed actors or from above. Where civilian elites are strong, in particular when they enjoy protection from powerful actors at supra-local levels and are cohesive, they might be relatively successful in stemming the level of violence employed by the FARDC. This also applies to civilian elites that are closely linked to armed actors who can put pressure on the FARDC. However, the presence of powerful civilian actors is not a guarantee that the FARDC will act in a less coercive manner, as this also depends on the particular projects that it pursues. For example, where the FARDC seeks to establish comprehensive control, and strong civilian actors do not want it to encroach upon their power and privileges, the military might be tempted to resort to intimidation in order to stake out its claims. This is especially the case where the dominant actors are closely linked to armed groups, which might therefore be drawn into the power competition. What also plays a role in such situations is the military's time horizon, for where the latter is short, it is less likely to be able to win over civilians by conviction and building up trust. In such cases, it is the very strength of countervailing forces that enhances, rather than reduces the likelihood for violence. This also applies where powerful actors are present, but heavily divided and involved in conflicts and competition. In such a case, dominant factions might not form a common front against the FARDC, but try to instrumentalize the FARDC to reinforce their own position. Where the FARDC subsequently becomes linked to one of the conflict parties, there is a risk that the latter will exert pressure on them to employ violence to weaken their opponents. In this way, the presence of powerful but divided actors increases the likelihood for violence. The effects of the absence of powerful actors, in turn, hence situations where there are no (civilian) countervailing forces, are somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, where the FARDC intends to establish comprehensive control and civilian actors are weak and put up little resistance, the chances that the military resorts to violence are lower. On the other hand, weakness implies that civilians will have little possibilities to hold the FARDC to account and mobilize pressure in case violence does occur. Hence in such situations, much depends on unit-related factors like projects and internal norms.

The military's propensity to use violence is also influenced by the level of availability and accessibility of income-generation activities, as well as the nature of that accessibility, again mostly in combination with unit-related features, like projects and time horizon. The presence of abundant revenue-generation opportunities commonly attracts numerous state actors, including in/security services, which may generate fierce competition that leads to abusive behavior towards civilians. For the FARDC, this is all the more so since whenever units are deployed to an area with numerous revenue-generation opportunities, *rapportage* obligations tend to be elevated, while the risks of rapidly losing one's lucrative position are substantial. The likelihood of violence against civilians will also rise where revenue-generation activities are difficult to access, control or tax by the military, whether as a result of power relations and/or the characteristics of the commodity chain and market. Obviously, this is especially the case when units have revenue generation as a significant project. Depending on the nature of the barriers to wealth accumulation, such a situation might prompt them to employ coercion to realize their mission. For instance, where power relations are the determining factor, the effects are the same as with other cases where countervailing

67 The combined effects of isolation and command on unit behavior were discussed on pp. 320–321.

forces are present, implying that violence can become an attractive option to break fierce resistance. Where it concerns the protection of illegal activities and the obstacle is competing protection providers, employing violence might be a way to break into the market, due to the logic of the commodity of protection, which invites for the demonstration of force as a form of advertisement. In both cases, time horizon plays an important role as well, for where units are under pressure to rapidly accumulate wealth, violence may be a shortcut to resources otherwise difficult to access. However, where units have a longer time horizon, the picture may change, depending on the structure of the local economy. Where trust is a condition for accessing revenue-generation opportunities, which is often the case with certain commercial activities requiring a fixed base of customers or suppliers, or that involve pre-financing, loans, highly valuable items or large sums of cash, military staff engaging in such activities have incentives to limit abuses in order to ensure that their economic partners and clients maintain trust. Yet, where it concerns troops deployed in their area of origins, who equally have a long time horizon, such trust may not or only partly materialize if there are strong local conflicts and the troops in question are from an out-group that is a priori distrusted by one of the conflict parties.

This draws attention to how place-specific structures of signification and legitimation affect civilian-military interaction and the FARDC's likelihood to engage in violence. Two factors are of importance here: First, local norms defining the acceptability of soliciting the military for violent protection services, such as dispute processing, score settling and the protection of violent revenue-generation activities. Second, locally salient discourses on the military and certain groups within the military, in particular those defined in ethnic terms. Concerning local norms surrounding violent protection arrangements, it is obvious that where these norms are permissive, the demand for such services addressed to the FARDC is more likely to be high, which will in turn increase the chances that the military will engage in abusive acts. However, even where norms are permissive, there might not always be a high demand for violent protection services, as this will also depend on how an area is controlled. For example, where control is contested and all armed factions involved can threaten with sanctions, civilians might judge it too risky to solicit the military for violent protection services, since this might provoke retaliations from the competing side. Furthermore, in relation to collective, rather than more individual protection arrangements, for instance where an entire big-man or economic network engages in structural collaboration with a certain armed faction, the level of social cohesion within the sub-group in question matters as well. Obviously, where this cohesion is weak, certain members may disagree with the use of violence to further collective ends, even where norms are overall permissive, which may lower the demand. Social cohesion matters as well for the ways in which norms prohibitive of violent protection services affect the demand for such services. Where violent dispute processing, score settling and revenue generation are seen as unacceptable practices, and there is strong social cohesion, those soliciting these services may face strong disapproval and be put under social pressure, which will lower the demand. However, where social cohesion is weak, various civilian groups might seek protection arrangements with the FARDC even when this is negatively regarded, as common norms are not enforced. Furthermore, the very presence of conflicts will enhance the demand for violent protection services in the form of interventions in dispute processing. The presence of conflicts also points to the salience of antagonistic forms of social identification and conflict narratives. Similar to structures of legitimation, such local structures of signification may affect the military's likelihood to engage in violence, although this influence is quite indirect. Where civilians frame military units or parts of military units in an overly negative manner, this may come to influence the military's framings of civilians, which may again affect its practices. This is especially the case where these civilian framings are expressed in ethnic identity-based terms, for this is likely to be reciprocated by the ethnic groups in the military that are targeted by these framings, prompting them to define civilians in the terms of the corresponding (ethnic) out-group. In interaction with other factors, this increases the likelihood that the military will employ violence, in particular where mutually negative framings feed into cycles of negative interactions and mutual evaluations.

The final context-related element of importance in shaping the likelihood that the FARDC enacts violent practices against civilians relates to the nature and intensity of locally specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. Of the various ways in which these dynamics impact the military's likelihood to engage in violence, two factors stand out. The first is the presence of a multitude of competing armed protection providers. As we have seen, this may create a dynamic of outbidding whereby violence is demonstrated in order to attract followers, or it may prompt factions to employ violence to punish civilians for or deter them from collaborating with opponents. Furthermore, in certain contexts, the presence of a multitude of armed actors creates a climate of anonymity, as the perpetrators of individual violent acts can no longer be identified. This lowers the risks of engaging in violence, and therefore the threshold to embark upon such a path. The second factor is a (temporary) rise in civilians' demand for violent protection services from the FARDC, which may be induced in various ways, including shifts in control, the higher accessibility of protection services through an increase in the number of FARDC troops, intensifying insecurity, and the (temporary) growth in legitimacy of the use of violence either as a result of increased victimization or the increased salience of conflict narratives. The opposite of these two factors, namely the absence of competing armed protection providers and a low demand for violent protection services from the side of civilians, reduce incentives among the FARDC to engage in violence.

In sum, there is a multitude of place-specific factors that shape civilian-military interaction, including the violent content thereof, relating to both structures of domination, signification and legitimation and the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. This adds up to variations in the factors internal to military units that shape their projects and modes of navigation, which strongly influence how they interact with civilians. This ensemble of interacting factors makes that each case selected for this study, relating to a different combination of a military unit and a place, has a distinct combination of factors that shape civilian-military interaction. Despite this heterogeneity, it was found that across cases there are recurrent combinations of factors that coincide with similar outcomes in terms of whether civilian-

military interaction is evaluated in a positive or in a negative manner by civilians. These patterns have allowed for drawing a set of conclusions on what explains the conspicuous variations in civilian-military interaction observed in the Kivus, as presented in Chapter 9 and 10, respectively. In the final reflections to this part, these observations will be put in the wider perspective of how this heterogeneity affects the reproduction of the Kivus' social order.

Concluding, summarizing and final reflections Part IV

Part IV has looked at the causes of variations in civilian-military interaction, locating these both within the specific features of military units and the environments to which these units are deployed. This analysis revealed the complexity of civilian-military interaction, which is shaped by numerous interacting factors, causing the practices of each military unit in each of its deployment environments, and those of civilians towards each military unit, to be shaped by different combinations of factors. Under the pressure of *rapprochement* obligations, military operations, inter-armed faction competition and time horizon, units that behaved well in one context may misbehave in another. Similarly, local civilian elites that collaborated with and appreciated one FARDC unit may resist another, for example as it encroaches too profoundly on their influence, or attacks the armed groups they maintain connections with. These fluctuations in military practices, which are partly induced by frequent rotations and military operations, perpetuate the state of ambiguity that characterizes civilian-military interaction in the Kivus, causing both the military and civilians to frequently have to adapt to new conditions for and modes of interaction. This state of ambiguity and flux is also one of the main engines of the reproduction of the (militarized) social structures underlying civilian-military interaction. Positive experiences with the military or civilians are continually alternated with negative ones, thus prohibiting the transformation of representations formed over the *longue durée*; military units adapting to local norms prohibitive of violence in one context are solicited to violently intervene in another; and frequent rotations of FARDC units and shifts in control induced by military operations create a fluidity of power constellations that invites civilian actors to instrumentalize the military to reinforce their position towards civilian competitors, rather than to forge a common front to resist military power. This draws attention to the limited extent to which the latent conflict resulting from the contradictions between the military and civilians is transformed into manifest conflict.

As was explained in Chapter 2, a contradiction is understood herein as an 'opposition or disjunction of structural principles' (Giddens, 1979: 141).⁶⁸ The various social suborders that constitute the Kivus (which include the military) have different relations of autonomy and dependence both to each other and to the social order of the Kivus and the Congo as a whole. At the root of this are contradictory relations generated by a political economy characterized by deep poverty, rent-seeking by elites, and limited productive (value-added) activities, with a strong focus on natural resources extraction and (cross-border) trade. The accumulation of resources within one social order or by one group often occurs at the expense of another order or group, creating struggles for resources with a zero-sum character. The social order formed by the FARDC is no exception to this, as accumulation by the military often implies either appropriating resources from civilians, or reducing their opportunities for revenue generation. The resulting struggle for resources causes the relations between the military and civilians in the Kivus, at least in certain place-time contexts, to assume contradictory qualities. This is especially the case where the military primarily accumulates wealth by extracting it from civilians, rather than by engaging in value-added economic activities like trade, charcoal production or transport services. However, even in the latter case, competition may still be of a zero-sum nature when involving finite natural resources or limited markets (e.g., of goods with a non-elastic demand).

While the military and civilians thus have relations that can be qualified as contradictory, the relative openness and strong intersections of the social orders in which they are situated make it difficult to speak of permanent contradictions of a systemic nature. Military and civilians are often part of the same big-man networks, in which (access to) wealth is redistributed, even if this redistribution is often only limited. Additionally, where the military protects illegal civilian revenue-generation activities like unauthorized fishing, poaching, or banditry, a part of the generated or accumulated wealth is shared, which temporarily dissolves contradictions. Furthermore, the granting of access to revenue-generation opportunities or the redistribution of wealth is only one form of the reciprocity inherent to protection arrangements, which also includes services like physical protection, interventions in disputes and influence peddling. Additionally, the military performs tasks as a public security provider, which also leads to the provision of return services to civilians, although not of a material nature. While not resolving the contradiction in material terms, since not changing the fact that wealth appropriated by the military can no longer be appropriated by civilians, such return services may diminish the (perception of) *conflict* that results from this *contradiction*.

For Giddens (1984: 318), there are three sets of circumstances that shape the extent to which contradictions (implying latent conflict) give rise to manifest conflict: first, the *opacity* of action, or the degree of insight that actors have of the contradictory nature of the system; second, the prevalence of *direct repression*; and third, the *dispersal of contradictions*. Starting with the second condition, that of direct repression, it was explained in Chapter 7, which discussed the forms and bases of civilians' agentic orientations towards the military, that while repression certainly occurs, it is too erratic and unsystematic to disable contestation.⁶⁹ Therefore, direct repression can only

68 The notion of contradiction was explained on p. 50.

69 The fluctuating and erratic nature of coercion by the military was discussed on p. 201 and 212-213.

partly explain why contradictions between the military and civilians do not always translate into manifest conflict. The first condition, opacity, provides an additional share of the explanation: due to their superordinate nature, the identity categories of 'civilians' and 'military' capture only a small and fleeting dimension of the forms of social identification surrounding members of these two groups.⁷⁰ Consequently, in many situations, civilians and military do not experience to be in conflict, hence are not aware of their contradictions, simply because they do not see each other as 'civilians' or 'military'. As mentioned, in other cases, the perception of conflict is not manifested either as civilians perceive to benefit from the military's public and private services. However, while the diversification of forms of social identification and the military's provision of services sometimes make contradictions less visible or less felt, civilians in the Kivus clearly recognize that collectively, their interests are opposed to those of the military when it comes to the distribution of wealth. Frequently captured remarks during the fieldwork like 'the population is the field of the state, and all they do is harvest',⁷¹ or 'the military lives off the back of the population' (*sur le dos de la population*), clearly indicate that civilians in the Kivus are generally aware of being collectively involved in zero-sum struggles for resources with the military. It is especially at the individual level that these contradictions are not always strongly experienced. One reason for this is that while the military's engagement in public security provision is commonly evaluated as highly deficient, its provision of protection services, which often provide a more satisfactory return, plays out at the level of individuals or specific groups. What creates further opacity in relation to contradictions is that civilians sometimes have limited awareness of what their own practices do at an aggregate level. This is particularly the case when people act out of routine, implying they draw upon practical, rather than discursive consciousness, which inhibits reflections on the longer-term consequences on social orders as a whole. The ambiguity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection further complicate gauging the effects of one's practices. Because of the volatility of these dynamics and the uncertainties surrounding 'the truth', including the motives for and identity of the perpetrators of violence, events may be difficult to read and interpret for civilians. This further impairs their ability to see the longer-term consequences of their own practices, including how these relate to the reproduction of the FARDC's structural position of dominance. For instance, civilians might not realize that when they accept to host a soldier in their house for free, they contribute to the reproduction of an entire system of the structural underfunding of the military's basic infrastructure that is based on the extraction of goods and services from civilians. Similarly, they might not be aware that when instrumentalizing a soldier to get an outstanding dowry payment, thereby bypassing the customary chief, they contribute to reinforcing the power of the military to the detriment of the civilian authorities. Certainly, in some cases, this awareness might be present but is simply not enacted upon, since the exigencies of individual-level navigation at the short term are prioritized over actions with a longer time horizon that further collective interests. For these various reasons, the awareness of the structural contradictions between civilian groups and the military that is expressed in public discourses is not always manifested in everyday civilian-military interaction, or when present, not acted upon.

The third condition shaping the translation of contradictions into manifest conflict, the dispersal of contradictions, refers to regionalization as produced by place-based differences in social structures as well as the level of integration between places, between the social agents situated in these places, and between places and the social orders they are part of (Giddens, 1984: 119). Certain forms of regionalization produce a 'segmentation of contradictions' (idem: 319), which causes the conflicts related to these contradictions to be 'fragmented and cross-cutting, so that the outcomes of some struggles will cancel out those of others' (ibidem). To a certain extent, such segmentation also occurs with the contradictions between the military and civilians in the Kivus. Wealth transfers between social (sub)orders are commonly spatially articulated. The wealth accumulated by the military in rural zones generally does not flow back to the place where it has been extracted or earned, but is largely invested or spent in urban settings, like Kinshasa, Goma and Bukavu. Since the most powerful civilian actors reside in those places, and tend to benefit from the wealth concentrated there, they perceive less to be in conflict with the military than the inhabitants of peripheral areas who suffer most from the asymmetries in the regional distribution of wealth. These regional asymmetries are further accentuated by the fact that certain forms of natural resources exploitation, like illegal logging and fishing, have such devastating effects on the environment that they lead to the destruction of the means of production, therefore qualifying as forms of predatory accumulation. Military operations, which are concentrated in rural areas, have similar destructive effects on the means of production, being often accompanied by looting and property destruction, such as arson. These phenomena reinforce the general pattern that the wealth flowing to the state apparatus, to elites and to urban zones is accumulated at the expense of non-elite populations in rural areas, and only partly reinvested in economic activities with significant redistributive effects. Yet, the contradictions that drive these conflicts are intersected by other contradictions, for example those pitting networks encompassing various state and non-state actors from the same socio-spatial (sub)order against each other, which are often framed in ethnic terms. These intersecting struggles create a dispersal of contradictions, rendering the latter more opaque, since the consequences are manifested in other social orders. For example, while in some places, certain civilian groups may succeed in reducing the military's power, leading to a type of stabilization of their contradictory projects in terms of resources distribution, this might stimulate the FARDC to reinforce resources extraction elsewhere, so as to compensate for the diminished flow of income. Similarly, while in some places wealth is difficult to accumulate for the military as they are controlled by non-collaborative non-state armed groups, and military operations fail to change this state of affairs, the FARDC might intensify operations in other areas. Such a dispersal of contradictions is also visible at the level of the Congo's social order as a whole. The military's harvesting of resources from civilians in the Kivus, where approximately half of its troops are deployed, allows the rulers in Kinshasa to continue to under-invest in the military and to appropriate a part of the available resources for particularistic projects. In this

70 For the heterogeneity of civilians' and the military's forms of identification, see p. 124.

71 This quote was mentioned earlier on p. 213.

manner, the contradictions between on the one hand, civilian and military ruling elites in Kinshasa and on the other hand, the military rank and file, are dispersed, generating in turn conflicts between the rank and file and civilians in the Kivus.

This shows how the segmentation and dispersal of the contradictory relations between the military and civilians contribute to the reproduction of at once the regime, the FARDC as a whole, and the military's position of dominance in the Kivus. At the same time, they perpetuate the existing imbalances in wealth that they are preconditioned upon, namely between places in the Kivus, between elites and non-elites, between those with access to the state apparatus and those who lack this access, and between armed and non-armed actors. Such reproduction is further promoted by the fact that the fragmented and crosscutting nature of conflicts resulting from the segmentation of contradictions enhances the volatility of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection in the Kivus. It is this very volatility that causes civilians to refrain from translating their contradictions to the FARDC into manifest conflict, or that causes these contradictions to temporarily dissolve. For instance, where groups of civilians are involved in internecine conflict, the FARDC might appear an ally rather than an opponent when it promises to reinforce one faction's position in the conflict. Similarly, collaborating with the FARDC to assure privileged access to suppliers or economic assets, providing one group of businesspersons with clear advantages over their competitors in the short term, might be preferable to collectively trying to reduce the structural influence of the FARDC on the economy, even if this would ultimately be to the benefit of all civilian economic operators. In sum, the intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection prompts civilians to engage in practices that have unintended consequences in the long term, leading to non-reflexive forms of the reproduction of the Kivus' (militarized) social order. As such, militarization should be seen as a process driven by practices that make sense to individual social agents, but that have collectively unfavorable outcomes (cf. Giddens, 1984: 13).

The ambiguity of militarization

THIS DISSERTATION HAS PROVIDED AN UNDERSTANDING, both in the sense of theoretical explanation and insight into lifeworlds, of the complexities of civilian-military interaction in the eastern Congo's conflict-ridden Kivu provinces. This final section summarizes the main findings and conclusions and reflects on their theoretical and policy significance. It first answers the principal research question by answering the six subquestions of the research. Subsequently, it outlines the most important empirical, conceptual, and theoretical contributions of the research, in order to end with reflections on the implications of these contributions for policy and future research.

Answering the main research questions

While intending not to minimize the abuses committed by the Congolese armed forces, this study has unsettled dominant narratives that portray civilian-military interaction in the Kivus as consisting uniquely of human rights violations committed by the military against civilians. It has uncovered the multidimensionality, reciprocity and complexities of this interaction, which are at the heart of its fundamentally ambiguous nature to the military and civilians alike. By shaping civilians' and the military's practices, this ambiguity importantly contributes to the reproduction of the militarization of the Kivus' social order. Militarization, referring to structural transformations generating a dominant position for armed actors and normalizing their involvement in social, economic and political processes, including by means of protection arrangements, has blurred the social roles and forms of identification surrounding armed actors. This again, has affected the expectations of and norms governing their practices, including those involving coercion. The boundaries between military/civilian, coercion/persuasion, victim/perpetrator, public authority/private protector, licit/illicit are porous and constantly shifting, which complicates efforts to make sense of events and chart navigational pathways. The volatility of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection set in motion by militarized structures further compound this, rendering it difficult to read and interpret the situation at hand. An important component of this ambiguity are uncertainties surrounding the motives for and the identity of the perpetrators of violence, as epitomized by the phenomenon of the *homme en uniforme non-autrement identifié*. Together with the weakness of civilian authority and rampant physical, political and economic insecurity, these uncertainties intensify the reflex to solicit protection from armed actors, which reinforces their position. Such protection often includes harnessing armed actors for coercion-based interventions, in particular in dispute processing or revenue-generation activities. The result is a diffusion of and confusion surrounding the responsibility for violence, since civilians and armed actors are jointly involved in its production.

For civilians, the military is ambiguous as it is at once proximate and distant, an integral part of everyday life, yet somehow distinct, a source of potential benefits, but also of potential danger. For the military, civilians in the Kivus are simultaneously friends and adversaries who elicit contradictory feelings. While on the one hand, military staff long for respect from the side of civilians, whose protection is one of their main professional concerns, on the other hand, they strongly deride civilians' weaknesses, and fundamentally distrust them when believed to be in connivance with armed groups. Indeed, for the FARDC in the Kivus, the status of 'civilian' appears at times deeply ambiguous, given the close connections between parts of the population and armed groups. What fosters further ambiguity in civilian-military interactions is that 'civilians' and 'military' are multi-layered notions that are embedded in discourses located at various levels of abstraction. These discourses contain divergent representations of these two identity categories, which hold partly overlapping, partly contradictory connotations. While civilians highly value 'the military' as an abstract idea(l) and (potential) bringer of security, their representations of the actual Congolese armed forces are profoundly negative, in continuity with representations of the military in the pre-war era. Similarly, within the FARDC, representations of civilians as a 'field to harvest from', which have a long lineage in the Congolese armed forces, exist next to highly abstract professional discourses on human rights and civilian protection. From concrete,

everyday interactions, yet other images of civilians arise. These context-based evaluations partly validate, partly negate representations, and sometimes have little bearing on them. ‘Civilians’ and ‘military’ are abstract, superordinate identity categories. However, both civilians and military play many different social roles, being simultaneously relatives, neighbors, clients, business partners, lovers or members of certain ethnic groups. In the course of everyday interactions, civilian and military actors might see each other primarily in terms of those roles rather than as ‘civilians’ or ‘military’. This contributes to the further diversification of the repertoire of civilian-military interactions and the blurring between social roles, which again reinforces ambiguity in civilian-military encounters.

Ambiguity, then, is at the core of civilian-military interaction in the Kivus. This is largely a result of processes of militarization that have affected structures of domination, signification and legitimation formed over the *longue durée*, and the more fluid dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection that these structures set in motion. When analyzing the evolution of the structures and dynamics that most shape civilian-military interaction, which was central to answering **research subquestion 1**, it appears that there is significant continuity in the structures of the Congo, the Kivus and the armed forces over time. The way in which the military is managed and deployed by the rulers is importantly impacted by the structural features of the Congo’s social order, notably the nature of the political economy and the external threat environment. Given that there have been limited transformations in certain core features of this order over time, the political center’s management and deployment of the armed forces have not profoundly changed. Like in the past, rulers’ approach to the armed forces is shaped by political-economic factors such as archipelagic statehood, governance characterized by indirect rule and big-man networks, and the importance of the nonofficial economy. Archipelago statehood is both a cause and an effect of the heterogeneity of local political-economic orders and rulers’ limited capabilities and willingness to invest in the development of comprehensive transport, ICT and administrative infrastructure. The result are differentiated apparatuses of rule: while the governance of core areas, which have high concentrations of infrastructure, is characterized by direct administrative intervention and effective security governance, modes of governing peripheral areas with limited infrastructure take the form of indirect rule and entail the deployment of relatively ineffective in/security services. Indirect rule also characterizes power projection over semi-autonomous local orders, which rests upon the cooptation into the presidential big-man network of local elites, including political-military entrepreneurs, rather than direct administrative intervention. Local elite cooptation is also an important way in which the political center tries to maintain a grip over the Kivus, where quasi-autonomous militarized power complexes abound. Due to the fragmentation and fluidity of the Kivus’ political-military landscape, and the centrifugal forces resulting from both the cross-border orientation of its political economy and the presence of numerous non-state armed forces, maintaining this grip requires continual efforts. This detracts from policy elaboration and implementation, including in relation to strengthening the military through bureaucratic institutionalization and other reforms.

The incentives for strengthening the military that arise from the structural conditions sketched above do not point in the same direction. On the one hand, the presidential circle needs a number of operationally effective and loyal units to ward off potentially existential security threats, in particular from regionally embedded and militarily capable rebel groups and their wider networks. Furthermore, the incumbents need to keep insecurity within certain bounds, in order to prevent their popularity from plummeting so much that electoral loss becomes inevitable. On the other hand, the archipelago nature of Congolese statehood allows for security governance in the peripheral areas to be left in the hands of less effective, ill-resourced and badly controlled military units that can nevertheless maintain basic order and suppress major (political) threats in case of need. Acting on these differentiated incentives, and influenced by existing institutional arrangements, the incumbents have perpetuated a system of a two-speed military that has deep historical roots. Thus, a number of elite units, including the *Garde républicaine* and foreign-trained rapid reaction/light infantry battalions assure basic regime and incumbent security, while the bulk of the military consists of less well-equipped and supplied units that have only limited operational effectiveness and that are not strongly controlled by the military hierarchy in Kinshasa. However, regardless de facto levels of centralized command and control and operational capacity, civilians generally *perceive* the armed forces to be both powerful and to emanate from the political center. Therefore, even units with limited fighting capabilities that are not fully controlled by the central hierarchy ultimately contribute to shoring up the incumbents’ power. This explains why the rulers have little incentives to transform the current two-speed military into a force that is well controlled, well resourced and well organized across the board.

Aside from being characterized by limited operational effectiveness and high levels of de facto decentralization, the armed forces are also fragmented, consisting of a multitude of agencies and units with overlapping and ill-delineated mandates and parallel commands, reflecting the nature and workings of the Congolese state apparatus as a whole. An important way in which the presidential big-man network tries to maintain a grip over this fragmented force is by means of the cooptation of military elites. Such cooptation entails turning a blind eye to military commercialism, and creating loyalty and dependency through the manipulation of military office. This has important effects on the military organization as a whole, fostering the institutionalization of revenue generation in all layers of the hierarchy as well as frequent rotations of office and constant restructuring efforts. Moreover, the salience of big-man rationalities and networks within the military has caused power projection to become inextricably entwined with the granting and withholding of access to revenue-generation opportunities. These are largely located in the non-official economy, where the military has come to play an important role, in part through the protection of illicit activities and influence trafficking. One manifestation of this entwinement of power projection and wealth distribution are *rapportage* systems, or vertical upward flows of imposed contributions that are largely extracted from the population, which create significant competition for deployment to lucrative zones at various levels of the hierarchy. *Rapportage* is facilitated by and reinforces certain structures of legitimation and signification within the military, notably representations

of civilians as a 'field to harvest from' and norms authorizing the extraction of resources from civilians, both of which have a long lineage in the Congolese armed forces.

In sum, rulers' management and deployment of the armed forces are crucially shaped by the structural features of the Congo's social order, notably archipelago statehood, governance through big-man networks and indirect rule, and the importance of the non-official economy. Continuities in these features have significantly contributed to continuities in the social structures internal to the armed forces, which shape the ways in which they interact with civilians. The main features of these internal structures are the significance of big-man networks and the manipulation of (access to) revenue-generating activities, and certain representations of civilians and norms relating to civilian-military interaction. An important manner in which these structures shape the military's agency towards civilians is that they set in motion an intense dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the military. Big-man systems lead to considerable pressures on military staff to generate resources, while also raising the stakes of power competition by promoting frequent rotations of office and deployment positions. Consequently, military staff live in perpetual uncertainty about how long they will be able to maintain their current position and level of access to revenue-generation opportunities, generating incentives to rapidly reap the benefits of their position as long as it lasts. This again causes military staff to become a source of insecurity within their deployment context. The drive for rapid revenue generation fosters competition for resources and power among military units, agencies and staff, but also between military actors and other parts of the state apparatus. Such fierce competition often prompts the involved actors to engage in revenue-generation practices that create insecurity for civilians, like unlawful arrests, the imposition of fines and other forms of extortion. Furthermore, the struggle for resources stimulates the forging of protection relations with civilians, which often draws the military into local conflicts, causing these to become militarized. This shows that there is a close interaction between on the one hand, the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the military and on the other hand, these same dynamics as they unfold in the places where the FARDC is deployed.

The dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection in the FARDC's deployment contexts are also crucially driven by the agency of civilians, including their agentic orientations vis-à-vis the military. These orientations are importantly shaped by certain structural features of the Kivus' social order, in particular the salience of big-man networks and protection relations; particular discourses relating to conflict narratives and civilians' representations of the military; and the norms surrounding the use of coercion and protection arrangements with armed actors, including for facilitating illicit revenue-generation activities and dispute processing. Testifying to the indivisibility of structures of signification and legitimation, these norms are influenced by conflict narratives, which are a product of and produce struggles between and within communities for access to land and other resources, positions of local authority and political representation. In the Kivus, these narratives have become strongly colored by discourses of ethnicity and autochthony, which work in tandem to create a flexibly defined dichotomy between on the one hand, 'Rwandophones' and on the other hand 'autochthons'. By framing soldiers and military practices in the terms of these antagonistic identity categories, such discourses also come to shape civilian-military interactions.

The salience of conflict narratives in the Kivus is both a cause and a result of militarization. At the root of this latter phenomenon are processes of economic, administrative and infrastructural decline that set in in the early 1970s and that intensified, in conjunction with the rise of the nonofficial economy, the importance of protection relations for survival, social mobility and security. Due to the growth of forms of revenue generation involving illicit activities and substantial degrees of coercion, and a drastic rise in insecurity and conflicts, it became increasingly attractive to solicit protection from armed actors, including the military. These actors did not only come to play an important role in shielding and facilitating illicit and coercive forms of revenue generation, but also started to serve as 'private guns', intervening in conflicts and taking revenge on people's opponents on demand, often against payment. The war era intensified these developments, which were further driven by the steady erosion of the capabilities and legitimacy of local civilian authorities, whose possibilities to regulate conflicts in a non-violent manner became limited as military leaders emerged as new figures of authority. Given that the economy and political processes were to a large extent controlled by armed actors, who also became crucial for providing physical protection in a context of rampant insecurity, appeals to armed actors for interventions in all sorts of civilian affairs became a commonsensical practice. Furthermore, the large-scale presence of armed actors normalized and ultimately routinized certain forms of interaction, such as roadblock and market taxation, food contributions and free transport services, causing these practices to become governed by practical norms. Such normalization and routinization continue to shape interactions between civilians and the FARDC and importantly underpin the military's current position of dominance within the Kivus. Provided the established scripts and practical norms are respected, people do not strongly contest requests by the FARDC for contributions and free services, as they navigate these demands through appeals to practical consciousness.

Other dimensions of militarization equally shore up the FARDC's power position in the Kivus, in particular the effects of militarization on the social roles surrounding the military. Social roles, which are nexuses of structures of domination, signification and legitimation that generate certain expectations and norms vis-à-vis those enacting them, are one of the main mechanisms by which social structures shape civilian-military interaction. The expectations inscribed in the social roles surrounding FARDC staff are strongly oriented towards the provision of physical security and the facilitation of revenue generation, but also interventions in dispute processing and influence peddling, sometimes of a coercive nature. Where the military lives up to these expectations and acts as desired, its legitimacy may be reinforced, although when it meets demands to violently intervene, new forms of insecurity will result, which might contribute to processes of delegitimation. Civilians' demand for protection services from the military is however not equally high in each time-space context, and may not always concern explicitly coercive services. The level and nature of this demand differ per place and over time, as

partly shaped by local norms and the intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. Where such dynamics are intense, utilitarian considerations as well as those informed by conflict narratives commonly start to strongly inform civilians' expectations of the military. For instance, where there is profound economic insecurity induced by high levels of violence, civilians who have become victim of property rights violations may find it more acceptable to solicit the military to protect or enact forms of revenue generation involving coercion. Similarly, where conflicts are intense, people might try to instrumentalize the FARDC to harm out-groups or take revenge.

The social roles surrounding the military affect both the *forms* that civilian-military interaction assumes and the *discursive framings* thereof. Exploring these two dimensions was **research subquestion 2**. Concerning forms of civilian-military interaction, these were broadly divided into political-economic interactions, relating in particular to military revenue-generation practices, and governance practices, notably those dealing with security governance and interventions in dispute processing. However, this latter form also relates to the military's trying to influence the practices of civilian authorities and in/security actors, including via protection arrangements or assistance with the execution of governance tasks. Political-economic interactions were subdivided into three categories, which are not mutually exclusive, but may overlap. The first is extraction, describing the one-sided transfer of economic value, whether in the form of labor or of resources, from civilians to the military, either without the person from whom the wealth is extracted perceiving to get a return, or if they do, on a non-excludable basis. The second type is protection, which assumes two, sometimes overlapping forms. The first is protection as a *commodity*, implying it takes places as a *transaction* involving service provision on an excludable basis against a well-defined, often monetary return. However, protection may also be a dimension of a wider *social relation* that is predominantly *patronage-based* but can also rest on other bases, such as family or ethnic ties, implying it does not always involve a direct, well-circumscribed return. The third category of political-economic interaction is economic collaboration and transactions. While collaboration refers to a situation in which civilians and the military undertake joint economic activities on a long-term basis, transactions are one-off or regular encounters that do not form part of wider relations of collaboration. Examples are buying, selling, renting, and lending.

When enacting the social practices falling under these various categories, the FARDC performs different social roles, which inform the discursive framings of the practices in question. FARDC officers alternately or simultaneously figure as commander, big-man, public servant/official and businessperson, and will discursively present their practices accordingly. This leads to oscillations in the employed discursive registers, accentuating either the 'public' or the more particularistic nature of practices. For example, efforts by the military to legitimize its power and forms of wealth extraction from civilians often entail the discursive framing of its practices in the idioms of 'the state', 'public interest' and 'officiality', which correspond to soldiers' self-perceptions as 'state actors'. Such self-perceptions in turn inform and justify practices related to the production of 'public authority' in a broad sense. These include practices that do not concern public security provision, such as the enforcement of administrative measures, in which case military actors perform a more generic role of 'public servant/official'. However, the military's efforts at legitimation may also entail attempts to act out the role of 'big-man' and comply with the expectations surrounding redistribution, protection and representation that are connected to that role, which may translate into the adoption of discourses emphasizing the collective interests or forms of identification of particular groups.

Public/private framings impact civilians' evaluations of the practices enacted by the military. Military practices of wealth extraction presented and read as 'public', for instance as contributing to the military's execution of its public security tasks, tend to sooner verge towards the licit end of the spectrum. By contrast, extractive practices seen as 'private' accumulation, like when believed to be to the personal benefit of certain officers, are more likely to be evaluated as 'illicit'. Due to the effects on civilians' evaluations, FARDC staff often try to manipulate the public/private distinction, invoking public security/order reasons to justify practices enacted for particularistic projects. This public/private blurring is especially visible in the domain of military interventions in the processing of disputes between civilians. When framing interventions in 'private affairs', such as score settling and personal rivalries, military actors often draw on public discursive registers, like accusations of collaborating with 'the enemy'. This causes personal disputes between civilians to obtain a public dimension. Furthermore, where disputes concern members of antagonistically defined social categories, adjudications and interventions by the military perceived as unjust may trigger communal tensions, as the disadvantaged party mobilizes in-group members by drawing on anti-out-group discourses. This shows how oscillations between public/private discursive registers have an enkindling effect on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection.

Another effect of the oscillations in discourse, and the switching between social roles that inform them, is that they cause the FARDC to lack predictability in civilians' eyes, which affects processes of legitimation. On the one hand, the enactment of multiple social roles is an asset for the FARDC, in that it extends the range of legitimizing resources it can draw upon, providing for instance both more public and more private services. On the other hand, the military's simultaneous enactment of several social roles complicates readings of its role performances by civilian audiences, who observe discursive and social practices that seemingly transcend role boundaries. Furthermore, simultaneously enacting various social roles entails considerable tensions for the performer, who is faced with varying, often contradictory, expectations. This especially applies to FARDC unit commanders, who are involved in a complex balancing act trying to meet the expectations of at once their hierarchy, their unit, big-man networks both within and outside of the military, and various civilian constituencies in their deployment context.

Civilians' evaluations of the practices and position of power of the FARDC importantly shape their agency towards the military, the analysis of which was **research subquestion 3**. Such evaluations are the product of a host of factors: first, social roles, including the discursive

registers that are invoked during the performance of these roles and the outcomes of these performances, notably whether they live up to the expectations; second, the forms of identification and the social position of the involved social agents, in particular their relative legitimacy, profession, and position in the hierarchy; and third, the extent to which the (practical) norms surrounding the procedures and social practices in question are respected. In general, where FARDC staff act in accordance with the norms and expectations placed upon them, their practices are sooner seen as 'licit', which cumulatively contributes to rendering their power position more legitimate. Inversely, violations of the boundaries and norms surrounding social roles, for instance by neglecting the obligations of reciprocity inherent to patron-client ties, will lead to negative evaluations. Such perceived role violations are a common phenomenon. One reason for this is that due to the transformations in the social roles surrounding the military induced by processes of militarization, civilians' expectations of the military, as well as of state agents more generally, have become increasingly contradictory. On the one hand, civilians expect the military to act as a public security provider, which continues to be the main frame of reference surrounding the FARDC, and also corresponds to a deeply felt need. On the other hand, civilians want the military to provide forms of particularistic protection, soliciting it for interventions in all sorts of conflicts, forms of influence peddling and the shielding of illicit revenue generation, sometimes with violent dimensions. Furthermore, there are significant differences in the expectations that civilians hold of the military per place and over time, as influenced by the nature and intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. These influence what social role content surrounding the military predominates, and therefore how its position of power and practices are considered. Where such dynamics are intense, civilians' expectations vis-à-vis the FARDC often obtain a shorter-term and more utilitarian orientation, revolving around immediate safety, direct access to revenues, or prompt advantages in disputes with others. Furthermore, in such situations, expectations of the military may become strongly colored by conflict narratives, leading to the legitimation of coercive practices against groups seen as hostile.

The extent to which the FARDC and its practices are seen as legitimate or illegitimate, as importantly shaped by social role performances, influences how civilians relate to the military. Where the military is seen as legitimate, civilians might sooner comply with its demands. At the same time, a lack of legitimacy might sooner provoke resistance. This draws attention to the forms and bases of civilians' agency towards the FARDC. In their interactions with the military, civilians adopt three main agentic orientations, namely contestation, compliance and collaboration. These orientations rest upon varying bases, being grounded either primarily in habituation, in utilitarian considerations (anticipated advantages and disadvantages), in legitimation, or in contingent consent or dissent. This last basis of agency is a compound form that is shaped by the interaction between the perceived trustworthiness of authorities, ethical reciprocity and utilitarian considerations. Due to the complexity of human agency, civilians' orientations towards the military generally have multiple driving forces, causing most practices to be grounded in contingent consent or dissent. However, as a result of processes of militarization, habitual obedience also accounts for an important part of civilians' practices towards the military, notably their compliance with particular demands made by the military. The presence of a multitude of military factions and actors in the Kivus since the mid-1990s has contributed to the routinization of certain interactions between civilians and armed actors. People have for example become used to donating food, paying a fee at a roadblock, having soldiers stay over in one's house or hotel, or sharing one's transport with them. Given that demands for such services and contributions follow engrained scripts that are navigated by appeals to practical consciousness, civilians tend to comply with them, provided their enactment does not violate the practical norms, which would for example occur when the military would ask exaggerated amounts. Hence, where practices are routinized, civilians generally comply, not as they explicitly agree with the practice or actor in question, or hope to gain something out of it, or out of fear, but simply because they are used to it.

Where practices do not take place on a routine basis, they are more strongly shaped by conscious reflections, or appeals to discursive consciousness. These often involve a weighing of personal advantages and disadvantages, reflecting the general importance of utilitarian considerations in shaping agency. Yet the relative weight of these considerations may strongly differ per context and per social agent, depending on the situation and the intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. One situation in which utilitarian considerations are likely to predominate is when there are imminent threats of violence, since this will cause avoiding harm and surviving to trump all other concerns. Such threats may stem both from the FARDC and from competing armed actors, who may take revenge on civilians when the latter collaborate with the FARDC. Yet, ultimately, direct threats of severe violence by the FARDC are relatively limited, since the military tends to exercise coercion not as much in an overt manner, but through forms of covert intimidation that induce 'self-censorship'. Furthermore, due to the FARDC's incoherence and lack of capabilities and prioritization of systematic surveillance, monitoring, information gathering and rapid mobilization, coercion tends to be ad-hoc and erratic. This generally leaves significant room to civilians for evasion and contestation. The FARDC's capabilities for effective control and coercion are further circumscribed by the interaction between its internal divisions and the volatile dynamics of the Kivus. Not only does the presence of a multitude of power factions engaged in near-constant competition prohibit lasting and absolute hegemonies, the intense factionalism within the military offers civilians the opportunity to play competing actors or networks within the FARDC off against one another, thereby limiting the possibilities for monolithic repression.

Yet the same volatility that circumscribes military coercion undermines both the engagement in and the effectiveness of contestations of the FARDC's power. For one, it causes the effects of contestation to often be only temporary, therefore generating a certain resignation among civilians. For another, volatility elicits a general orientation towards short-term gains, like immediate revenue generation or immediate interventions in conflicts. This may lead to contradictions in civilians' behavior, causing them to collaborate with the military at one point and contest it at another, giving contestation a temporary and partial character. Similarly, it may prompt civilians to contest only certain

factions or actors within the military while collaborating with others, which undermines structural transformations of the armed forces as a whole. Weak social cohesion further reinforces this utilitarian orientation, as it prompts civilians to harness the military to reinforce their position in the fight against civilian competitors, rather than to unite to collectively resist the military's power. Limited cohesion and the salience of utilitarian reasoning also create other collective action problems. As long as civilians suspect their competitors to continue to solicit the military for certain illicit practices that work to their benefit, they have little incentives to refrain from soliciting the military themselves, as this will put them at a comparative disadvantage. But collective action problems hampering contentious action also stem from civilians' general preference for non-public, informal forms of contestation, as this leads to informational deficits concerning other people's agentic position vis-à-vis the military. When civilians do not know who else is against certain military actors or practices, contestation may not only appear a risky business, but also as having little prospects of success. Despite these drawbacks, personalized forms of contestation continue to be preferred in many situations. This should largely be seen in the light of the particularities of navigation in a context of volatility and personalized power relations, where trust and reputation are crucial assets, and social agents try to retain a maximum of possibilities and flexibility. By publicly declaring to be against certain factions, one forgoes future opportunities for collaboration. Furthermore, given that it often concerns sensitive matters, like the military's involvement in illegal activities, putting the military out in public is dangerous and might backfire. The importance of the personal dimension is also a result of conviviality, or the intimacy of contacts between the military and civilians, as shaped by the close interweaving of both more 'public' and more 'private' spheres of life. However, the effects of conviviality on civilian-military relations are ambivalent. On the one hand, personalized relations with the military provide civilians with a certain protection, and allow them to harness these contacts for contestation via informal channels. On the other hand, intimacy may cause forms of contestation to have unanticipated effects or to be used against one, like when personal information is seized upon for the purpose of blackmailing. For these various reasons, civilians' contestation of the military's power is generally partial and temporary, while the effects tend to be limited and of limited duration. Although civilians contest the military regularly and sometimes at a large scale, cumulatively, this contentious action does not allow for a transformation of the Kivus' militarized structures of domination.

The reproduction of these militarized structures is also a result of the agency of the military, the analysis of which was **research subquestion 4**. The FARDC's agency is shaped by the structures and dynamics within the FARDC as a whole, within the FARDC in the Kivus, within its various subdivisions and units, and finally, within its deployment context. As mentioned, the social structures internal to the military produce a strong dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the armed forces. These dynamics are largely driven by big-man networks, *rapportage* systems, constant restructuring efforts and redeployments, the existence of multiple agencies with overlapping mandates, and weak bureaucratic organization, in particular deficient administration and erratic information flows. The insecurity among military staff resulting from these features fosters a strong orientation towards short-term revenue generation and managing one's position in ongoing power competition, which distracts from executing professional duties. Furthermore, these features undermine the exercise of control over the activities and movements of military staff, thus enabling military engagement in abuses and the HUNI phenomenon, which are important drivers of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the Kivus.

While the norms, discourses and power relations within field-based units are strongly shaped by those that permeate the military organization as a whole, the social structures within units have a distinct character, as influenced by factors like units' composition, trajectory and command. Units' structures are also shaped by the relative importance of the big-man networks of which unit commanders and members are part, which strongly affects power relations and horizontal and vertical cohesion. For example, when soldiers are heavily oriented towards extra-unit big-man networks for protection, including the provision of basic needs like access to revenue-generation opportunities, they may be strongly influenced by the shared forms of identification that characterize these networks, like ethnic or ex-rebel background. Where other parts of units are not tied into the same networks, horizontal cohesion is likely to be weak. The same applies to the relations between commanders and their subordinates. When commanders are oriented towards different big-man networks than their subordinates, vertical cohesion will be undermined. This is particularly the case when commanders' big-man networks are based on forms of identification seen in an antagonistic manner by the networks of their subordinates, which often occurs when this division corresponds to the autochthon/Rwandophone categorization. Especially where such forms of social categorization overlap with power struggles, differences in social identification will be salient, pointing to weak 'commonality of identification and beliefs', which may feed into fierce conflict within military units.

Since power competition is most intense among higher-and mid-ranking officers, the effects of antagonistic forms of identification are manifested most strongly in the higher echelons. Among the lower ranks, where power competition is less fierce, hostile identity-based discourses are generally less salient. An important reason for this is that troops share the hardships of daily life together, which generates forms of 'despair solidarity' that reinforce horizontal cohesion. As a consequence, even while the development of horizontal cohesion is hampered by other features of the FARDC that work against building up 'community of experience', such as the constant breakup of units and limited training, it is in some (primary) units substantial. Moreover, it generally tends to be stronger than forms of vertical cohesion. Aside from being hampered by the same factors promoting limited commonality of identification and beliefs and weak community of experience, vertical cohesion in the FARDC is undermined by the specific factors that shape the relations between commanders and subordinates. These relate in particular to the legitimacy of commanders' appointment and the extent to which they are seen to live up to soldiers' expectations surrounding the social role of 'FARDC commander'. The main features of this social role relate to commanders' competence, their demonstrated commitment to the wellbeing of their troops and a unit's common projects, and the relative fairness

of mechanisms of rewards and punishment. Within the FARDC, commanders' capabilities to fulfill these role expectations are generally limited, which is to a large extent an effect of the salience of big-man networks. The strong pressures from and obligations towards such networks cause FARDC unit commanders to often prioritize revenue generation over guaranteeing the wellbeing and safety of their troops. Furthermore, the general importance of big-man rationalities leads to favoritism, including in the distribution of rewards and punishments. The same applies to the FARDC as a whole, where big-man influences cause principles of meritocracy in appointments to be flouted, leading many subordinates to cast doubt upon the legitimacy of their superiors' appointment. Rebel-military integration and the related rapid promotions and appointments based on political considerations have further accentuated this, generating among many soldiers the feeling that they are placed under incompetent, uneducated and immoral commanders, whose intentions and loyalties they profoundly distrust. Big-man rationalities also weaken vertical cohesion by negatively impacting the perceived neutrality of systems of rewards and punishment. Big-men related systems of accountability often impair those emanating from the formal hierarchy, although they may also overlap with or complement them, generating irregularities in rewards and punishments, like when patrons intervene to avoid that their clients are being sent to the military prosecutor's office. Despite the general tense relations between commanders and subordinates, which are further fed by important asymmetries in wealth distribution, a number of units were found where commanders were generally respected. This often concerned commanders of brigades that had served for a long time together, and who had followed significant military education, while seemingly having personal norms not inducing them to engage in unscrupulous behavior.

While levels of cohesion within field-based FARDC units are thus varying, reflecting their composition, trajectory, the quality of command, and embedding in formal and informal hierarchies, binding towards the military organization as a whole seems weak across the board. An important cause of this weak institutional cohesion are generalized perceptions of the military and political top leadership as having betrayed the FARDC due to opportunistic and corrupt behavior, and as sacrificing soldiers as cannon fodder for sinister power games. This is seen to undermine the military's mission of defending the fatherland and protecting civilians, which is deeply inscribed in soldiers' professional identities, therefore giving rise to feelings of senselessness. Difficult living and service conditions in the FARDC bring the discrepancy between idealized notions and lived experiences of soldiering further into the limelight, which strongly undermines morale and loyalty. What also plays a role in FARDC staff's limited commitment towards the military organization as a whole is the military's minimal investment in socializing soldiers into professional military norms and discourses. Troops receive little training and education and those deployed at the frontlines may rarely get into contact with other parts of the military organization. Aside from undermining institutional cohesion, this creates relatively wide margins for variations in (sub)unit-specific discourses, norms and forms of identification. Understandably, where soldiers have more interactions with their peers and their civilian environment than with the rest of the military organization, they may become stronger attuned to the discourses and norms of these other social agents than those propagated by the armed forces.

The fact that unit commanders have a relatively large degree of autonomy in the FARDC, which is a product of at once structural features, deficient means of ICT and transport, and the challenging infrastructural environment of the Kivus, further widens the space for unit- and context-specific norms and discourses. The reason for this is that de facto decentralization grants commanders much leeway in choosing what norms they inculcate and enforce among their troops and how, as well as what discourses they tolerate, actively promote or prohibit. This leads to important differences in social and discursive practices per commander and per unit, contributing to variations in troops' conduct vis-à-vis civilians. In order to understand these variations, which was **research subquestion 5**, it is important to look at the specific projects that military units pursue, and the pathways they chart to realize these, as shaped by factors internal to military units and those related to their deployment context. There are five factors that most influence units' projects and modes of navigation: first, injunctions from the hierarchy and big-men networks; second, units' time horizon, as shaped by the length of deployment and troops' origins; third, unit command; fourth the content and salience of dominant norms and discourses; and fifth, interaction with the deployment context. This last factor relates to interaction with both civilians and other armed actors, as shaped by place-specific social structures, the features of the physical environment, in particular the level of isolation of a place, and the nature and intensity of locally specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. Due to the many differences both in relation to units and deployment contexts, civilian-military interaction is in each place shaped by different factors. Yet, there are general patterns, or combinations of factors that make certain outcomes more or less likely, in particular to what extent civilian-military interaction is evaluated positively or negatively by civilians, which is importantly shaped by the FARDC's engagement in violence against civilians.

Starting with the first factor, injunctions from the hierarchy and big-man networks, these do not only relate to the assigning of certain tasks to units, and direct and indirect instructions for how to carry these out, but also to mechanisms of rewards and punishment targeting unit commanders. However, what projects units pursue is not only related to the tasks they are assigned by formal and informal hierarchies, but is also influenced by unit commanders and, to a lesser extent, unit members. Regardless how they are developed, projects and related modes of navigation generally have a pronounced effect on how FARDC troops behave and relate to civilians within a certain context. For instance, where an FARDC unit is charged with conducting military operations, there are significant chances of collateral damage, in particular among units with bad command, which will lead to a deterioration of relations with civilians. Negatively evaluated civilian-military interaction is also more likely where military units pursue revenue generation as an important project, or intend to establish comprehensive control, as this threatens the power and resources base of local political-economic elites. By contrast, where the FARDC pursues basic control as its main project, existing power relations and livelihoods are not put under much pressure, which increases the chances that civilian-military interaction will be evaluated in a positive manner.

The second factor is the time horizon of deployment, relating to both the length of troops' deployment within the same context and whether troops are deployed in their area of origins. Depending on a unit's projects and other elements, a short time horizon may generate incentives to employ or tolerate coercion, in particular where revenue generation is among the priorities. Inversely, when a unit has a long time horizon, it commonly constructs protection relations that entail a measure of reciprocity and accountability, which puts a brake on abusive behavior. Similarly, troops that are deployed in their zone of origins may be less inclined to use violence against (extended) family members and their wider networks. Furthermore, where time horizons are long, troops may develop revenue-generation activities that depend more on trust and collaboration than on coercion-based extraction. However, there are also certain drawbacks to strong local embedding, as this generally increases the risk of military interference in local and private conflicts, given that people start soliciting their contacts in the FARDC to intervene to their advantage. Such interventions may have a coercive character, although due to the manifold ties staff have likely constructed in the context in question, such coercion tends to be targeted and relatively circumscribed. Another risk with troops that are strongly locally embedded is that they tend to be sooner engaged in banditry activities, although this mostly applies to local troops that are in a minority within their unit. Hence in general, troops with a long time horizon behave better than those anticipating leaving their deployment context soon. The foremost exception to this is where local troops get drawn into long-standing local conflicts that have turned violent in the past, especially those with a strong ethnic identity-based dimension. In such cases, there is an elevated risk that troops become guided by hostile discourses and revenge. In particular during military operations, this may usher in violence against civilians, framed as out-group members.

In relation to the third factor, unit command, the way in which this influences unit behavior is shaped by three elements: first, commanders' personal projects, norms and capacities; second, vertical cohesion; and third, commanders' position in formal and informal hierarchies. These factors influence the nature and relative effectiveness of commanders' practices of control, supervision, socialization and the regulation of civilian-military interaction, or whether commanders are willing and able to ensure the good conduct of their troops. Depending on the mentioned factors, commanders can foster a permissive climate for violent practices, for instance by not strictly punishing abuses, or by contrast, put conditions in place that minimize the chances that their troops engage in unauthorized abuses. This would for instance entail inculcating certain norms and discourses prohibitive of violence against civilians, imposing strict controls on troops' whereabouts, and implementing mechanisms of rewards and punishment seen as relatively fair.

As emerges from the above discussion, the quality of command importantly influences the fourth factor, the contents and salience of dominant norms and discourses within a unit, in particular those relating to (interaction with) civilians. Where civilians are portrayed as a hostile out-group deserving punishment, and such discourses are shared by and salient among troops, which is partly a function of horizontal and vertical cohesion, abuses against civilians are more likely to occur. Inversely, where civilians are primarily identified as 'civilians' whom the military has a constitutional duty to protect, the chances of violence will diminish. The same applies to norms surrounding violence against civilians more generally. Obviously, in a unit where ill treatment of civilians is seen as acceptable or justified, for example for achieving the unit's common project, the chances of violence are higher than where it is seen as an unambiguous transgression of professional ethics. What norms and discourses surrounding civilians dominate in a certain unit is not only a product of its internal features, but also depends on interaction with the deployment environment. There tends to be an interplay between the development of negative framings of civilians within military units and the development of negative framings of the military within the civilian environment, especially where these framings contribute to or follow from bad experiences. This may set in motion cycles of growing distrust, increasingly hostile conduct, and ever more negative framings and evaluations. Obviously, after abuses have occurred, civilians develop hostile feelings towards the military, leading to reluctance to collaborate and comply, and reinforcing contestation. This creates incentives for the military to rely on coercion in order to elicit compliance and suppress resistance. In this way, the situational dynamics that unfold after violence has been committed may lead to a readjustment of FARDC units' projects and modes of navigation in a manner that makes renewed violence against civilians more likely.

Such negative cycles may also be set in motion where initial violence was not related to negative framings or other internal features of units, in particular their projects and modes of navigation, but a result of disintegration and the breakdown of discipline related to 'forward panic' during combat operations (Collins, 2008). In the FARDC, the occurrence of such breakdowns is the combined result of ill preparation for combat, including a lack of training, and the hardships that troops already frustrated by bad service conditions face at the frontlines due to deficiencies in logistics, equipment, intelligence, and leadership. Where the resulting pent-up frustrations merge with the stress and extreme fears related to being in a life-threatening situation, the risk of disintegration is greatly enhanced. Once troops are engulfed by forward panic, there is often little that commanders can or dare to do, anxious as they are that their subordinates harbor anger towards them, which might explode once they try to intervene. Furthermore, especially where cohesion is weak, commanders sometimes simply allow troops to 'let off steam' and get instant access to rewards like booty, hoping that in this way, frustration will remain the rest of the time within manageable bounds. This shows how occasional abuses against civilians help troops endure the difficulties they experience in their everyday lives, and therefore ultimately contribute to the reproduction of the FARDC in the face of substandard service conditions and weak command.

The negative cycles of interaction described above already give insight into some dimensions of the fifth factor that shapes units' projects and modes of navigation, namely interactions with the deployment context. These interactions, which pertain to both civilians and other armed actors, are shaped by the features of the deployment context. These relate to the physical environment, place-specific social

structures, and place-specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, respectively. Concerning the physical features of places, the most important element was found to be their level of isolation as determined by location, the nature of the terrain (mountains, forest), population densities, and infrastructure (roads, phone network). In interaction with unit command, isolation significantly enhances the chances for bad behavior among troops. There are various reasons for this. In far-away corners, troops are exposed to hardships, boredom and isolation, while being and feeling less well supervised and controlled. Furthermore, inhabitants of such areas, including lower-level authorities, have less possibilities and incentives to hold the military to account. While deployment of units under bad command to isolated zones thus risks fostering bad behavior, the likelihood that units under bad command deployed to non-isolated environments behave badly is also relatively substantial, although the committed abuses may be of a less grave nature.

Concerning structures of domination, the main factor influencing civilian-military interaction is the presence, strength and cohesion of civilian countervailing forces. However, this factor has an ambiguous effect, depending on whether and how FARDC units try to control local civilian elites. On the one hand, counterforces may reduce the FARDC's leeway, and diminish its incentives and possibilities to engage in abusive practices. Where civilian elites are cohesive and strong, in particular when they enjoy protection from powerful actors at the national or regional level or have close ties to armed groups, they might be more successful in stemming the level of coercion employed by the FARDC than where they lack such connections. On the other hand, the presence of powerful civilian actors may prompt the FARDC to act in a coercive manner, especially when these actors try to resist FARDC encroachment upon their power and privileges. This scenario may for example occur when the FARDC pursues comprehensive control or rapid revenue generation, and therefore forms a threat to vested interests. In such situations, the risks for coercive behavior towards civilians are even higher where local elites are linked to armed groups that are targeted by military operations. Another situation with high risks for violence is where civilian actors are strong but divided, which opens up the possibility that one faction will solicit the military to reinforce its position vis-à-vis their competitors, which may lead to a militarization of the conflict.

Another dimension of structures of domination is the level of availability and accessibility of income-generation activities, as well as the nature of that accessibility. Again, these features mostly produce effects on civilian-military interaction in combination with unit-related features, like projects and time horizon. The presence of abundant revenue-generation opportunities commonly attracts numerous state actors, including in/security services, which may generate fierce competition that leads to abusive behavior towards civilians. The likelihood of bad behavior against civilians will also rise where revenue-generation activities are difficult to access, control or tax by the military, whether as a result of power relations and/or the characteristics of the commodity, the commodity chain or the market. However, this is only the case when revenue generation is an important project for the FARDC. Time horizon plays a role as well. Where units are under pressure to rapidly accumulate wealth, violence may be a shortcut to resources otherwise difficult to access. However, where units have a longer time horizon, they are more likely to develop economic activities that do not solely depend on extraction from civilians, but are more productive and collaborative. This is especially the case where trust is a condition for accessing revenue-generation opportunities, which creates incentives for units to behave well in order to retain the confidence of customers, investors, and suppliers.

In relation to place-specific structures of signification and legitimation, there are various ways in which these may affect civilian-military interaction, in particular the FARDC's propensity to engage in abuses against civilians. Where civilians generally consider violent interventions in dispute processing as an unacceptable practice, and there is strong social cohesion, implying that this norm is salient and enforced, the demand for violent protection services provided by the FARDC is likely to be low. However, where social cohesion is weak, various civilian groups might solicit the FARDC for violent protection services, even when this is negatively regarded, as common norms are not enforced, and the presence of conflicts creates a need for dispute processing. A high demand for violent protection services is also likely where soliciting armed actors to intervene in conflicts is seen as a relatively acceptable practice, and social cohesion is strong, either in general or among sub-groups. However, the actual level of demand will also depend on the constellation of control within a particular context, for where competing armed factions can threaten with sanctions, civilians may be wary to engage in protection arrangements with the FARDC. Another way in which place-specific structures of signification and legitimation shape civilian-military interaction is via the effects of locally specific discourses on the military or specific groups in the military. Where such discourses are overly negative, like when troops are associated with past massacres due to the specific ex-rebel or ethnic group to which they belong (e.g., when troops are ex-RCD Rwandophones or ex-Mai Mai autochthons), practices of contestation can be presumed to occur at a larger scale than where discourses on (groups in) the FARDC are more positive. Furthermore, negative framings among civilians may foster similar negative framings among FARDC troops, which increases the chances of ill behavior.

The final deployment context-related element of importance in shaping civilian-military interaction are the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. Of the various ways in which these impact civilian-military interaction, two dimensions stand out. The first relates to the 'supply side' of protection services, and concerns the presence (or absence) of a multitude of competing armed protection providers. Such competition may lead to an outbidding of violence, as it invites for demonstrating a superior capacity for enforcement to potential clients. Furthermore, a context of inter-armed faction competition may push factions to employ violence to punish civilians for or deter them from collaborating with opponents, in particular in situations of contested control. This may lead to a diminished demand for violent protection services from the side of civilians, as they fear retaliations from one side or the other. This points to the second dimension of place-specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, which relates to the 'demand side' of protection services. Where the demand for violent protection services is high, the FARDC is more likely to engage in abuses against civilians. A temporary growth in this demand may

result from various mechanisms. To start with, an increased presence of the FARDC in a certain context commonly intensifies incentives to convert local and private conflicts into violence, due to the enhanced accessibility of violent protection services. Such incentives will also augment where there are shifts in control leading the FARDC to become the dominant faction, as this provides an opportunity for previously disadvantaged actors to take revenge or alter the status quo. At the same time, the previously advantaged will face pressure to cling to their current privileges, and are therefore similarly motivated to forge protection arrangements with the newly dominant armed faction. However, where new power relations crystallize, and the FARDC establishes longer-term dominance, the demand for violent protection services may again diminish. A final set of circumstances that may prompt an increase in the demand for violent protection services is a (temporary) growth in the legitimacy of the use of violence. This is often a result of increased victimization, with people who have fallen victim to abuse having an appetite for revenge or condoning the use of violence to compensate for lost sources of income or destroyed means of production. In other cases, an intensification of conflict dynamics enhances the salience of conflict narratives and hostile framings of out-groups, which may cause violent courses of action to be seen as more legitimate.

In sum, there is a multitude of deployment context-related factors that shape civilian-military interaction, relating mostly to place-specific structures of domination, signification and domination and place-specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. This adds up to variations in the factors internal to military units that shape their projects and modes of navigation, and therefore cause differences in their practices towards civilians. Consequently, civilian-military interaction is shaped in each time-space context by a distinct combination of factors, leading to widely varying outcomes in terms of how it is evaluated by civilians. Despite this heterogeneity, the effects of civilian-military interaction on the reproduction of social structures are in many contexts similar, and where context-specific differences exist, they cancel each other out at the level of the Kivus as a whole, as further explained in the following.

Exploring how civilian-military interaction affects the reproduction of social structures, including via their impact on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, was **research subquestion 6**. The practices of civilian-military interaction in the Kivus studied in this dissertation cumulatively reproduce rather than transform the social structures that inform this interaction. This also applies to practices of the military and civilians, both in the Kivus and at the national level, that do not directly relate to their interaction, but that strongly influence it. On the civilian side, this starts with the incumbents' modes of military management. Far from constituting an existential threat, the FARDC's current state of seeming disorder ultimately reinforces their grip over the armed forces by allowing them to maintain personalized control via big-man networks and the manipulation of appointments and access to revenue-generation opportunities. The smooth operation of big-man systems depends to a large extent on low levels of bureaucratic institutionalization and weak organization, allowing the incumbents to have a high degree of discretion in appointments, restructuring decisions, and the management of financial flows. Furthermore, both rule via personalized relations and the current bifurcated state of the military, relating to its division into elite and peripheralized units that are differentially resourced and controlled, are relatively cost-effective solutions for maintaining a sizeable military that can ensure incumbent and regime security, including by suppressing existential threats and exercising basic control in substantial parts of the hinterlands. By allowing units in the interior to extract wealth from civilians, and to depend on civilians for accommodation, transport, and healthcare, the military can operate with limited resources and underdeveloped infrastructure and systems of logistics. In combination with financial constraints stemming both from the Congo's small state budget and the need to allow for a certain degree of embezzlement in order to coopt military elites, this self-sustaining dimension reduces the incentives to drastically transform the military's current organization and mode of operation, which would require massive investments of resources. Disincentives to address these weaknesses also stem from the necessity to manage the volatile dynamics of conflict and violence in the east. The presence of non-state armed groups that always threaten to grow more powerful and potentially constitute an existential threat, in particular when having regional connections, requires permanent attention and crisis management, as well as complex diplomatic strategies for navigating regional geopolitics. Such continuous crisis management undermines the systematic implementation of policies and reform plans, absorbing attention and scarce resources, and sometimes leads to the introduction of measures that partly set back earlier reform efforts.

An important manner in which the political center attempts to maintain a grip both over the military and the volatile environment of the Kivus is the cooptation of local strongmen stemming from or having links to armed groups and army networks. One way in which such cooptation has occurred, especially up to 2013, is the wholesale integration of rebel groups into the armed forces. Rebel integration has generally been accompanied by the provision of pay offs to the newly integrated faction, such as high ranks and deployment to lucrative sites. However, the imperative of payoffs has often promoted restructuring efforts that have been at cross-purposes with processes of bureaucratic institutionalization and the implementation of reforms. A clear example is the creation of the Kimia II/Amani Leo operational structures in 2009, which created a huge administrative chaos and reinforced parallel command chains. Other attempts at managing rebel integration, and maintaining control over the military more generally, have often similarly had unintended consequences, thereby contributing to the reproduction of the very structures that give rise to incentives that work against army reform. In a military characterized by strong internal dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, parallel command chains, and a high salience of big-man networks cutting across civilian/military boundaries, organizational overhauls or large-scale rotations of office, like the 2011 regimentation process, bear the risk of making discontent factions desert and reconstitute themselves as armed groups, or resort to manipulating armed groups to reinforce their position. Managing these centrifugal forces, and the continual factional struggles in the military more generally, undermines the elaboration and implementation of reforms. Furthermore, certain of the ways to deal with these volatile power dynamics have a path-dependent element to them. For instance, cooptation requires the constant provision of payoffs,

which again contributes to weakening the military's organization and strength. This again, makes cooptation a more effective option for dealing with dissident factions and maintaining control.

It are not only the practices and policies of the incumbents that contribute to the (re)production of extant social structures within the military. While there are important differences in the scope for and effects of their agency, FARDC staff at all levels ultimately contribute to reproducing the system in place. This is to a large extent a result of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the military. Together with bad, ill-codified and negotiable service conditions, and limited commitment to the military organization as a whole, these dynamics cause staff to be to primarily preoccupied with safeguarding their own position and projects. The latter generally revolve around revenue generation and being protected against the arbitrary and unpredictable ways in which the military works. Due to frequent rotations and continual restructuring, those that are currently marginalized hope to be reinserted in the system in the future, while those that are at dominant at present try to hedge against the inevitable future loss of their position. Consequently, military staff are generally less concerned with reforming the military as a whole than with maintaining or improving their own position within it. Since safeguarding one's position and ensuring access to revenues are only possible by having protection from powerful big-men, staff at all levels solicit such protection, thereby reproducing existing structures of domination. This also applies to those benefiting least from the current structures of domination in the military, the rank and file, who are clearly duped by the miserable service and social conditions. However, as long as official salaries remain low, there are no social benefits and pensions, and promotions and deployments do not primarily take place on the basis of merit, lower-ranking staff will have incentives to remain loyal to big men in the military, even if these belong to the very echelons that engage in minimal efforts to improve their conditions. Soldiers also have limited possibilities and incentives to refuse to participate in other activities that sustain the reproduction of the military's current social structures, such as the vast system of the extraction of resources and services from civilians. For example, even while receiving a negligible part of the income of *rapportage*, this will still form a motivation for cash-strapped soldiers to engage in this practice. Furthermore, soldiers have limited possibilities to ignore orders or engage in collective action to press for changes, in particular since unionization in the FARDC is prohibited. Collective action by military staff is further undermined by conflicts, competition and weak cohesion, which result to a large extent from the workings of the big-man system. This induces a short-term focus on one's individual position or that of one's faction within conflicts and networks, rather than on structural, long-term changes. In sum, the dynamics of protection, conflict and insecurity push military staff at all levels to engage in practices that contribute to the reproduction of existing structures of domination, legitimation and signification within the military, which also shape its position of dominance within the Kivus' social order at large.

The same can be observed in relation to civilians: their practices ultimately largely reproduce, rather than transform, the social structures underpinning the military's position of dominance. The reasons for this mostly lie in the intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection in the Kivus, which fosters a short-term focus on one's individual position and prohibits effective collective action. Since it are largely processes of militarization that structure these dynamics, militarization seems to have become almost self-sustaining. While civilians certainly contest the military, this contestation is relatively ineffective. The reasons for this, which were already mentioned above, include the multiple fault lines within Kivutian society, the preponderance of utilitarian considerations causing contestation to be ad-hoc, temporary and partial, the fact that 'civilians' and 'military' are superordinate identity categories, conviviality, and a preference for contestation via informal channels. Some of these factors, in particular limited social cohesion, do not only undermine contestation and its effects, but also the effectiveness of norm-enforcement mechanisms. Consequently, those collaborating with the FARDC in a manner deemed inappropriate or detrimental are often not corrected. Aside from the ineffectiveness of practices of contestation, other reasons why civilians' practices ultimately largely contribute to the reproduction of the military's position of dominance relate to processes of militarization. A crucial component of militarization is the routinization of interaction with armed actors. Since routinization fosters compliance, in particular with the military's extraction of resources and services, it importantly contributes to sustaining the FARDC's position of power. This also applies to another component of militarization: the normalization of engaging in protection arrangements with armed actors. Protection relations between civilians and the military allow the military to increase its legitimacy and power by offering a wide range of particularistic services that are in high demand among civilians, such as dispute processing and influence trafficking. Where such protection arrangements are engaged in at a large scale, this development becomes difficult to turn back, since setting in motion self-enforcing dynamics. Importantly, where everyone solicits protection from armed actors, those refraining from doing so are at a comparative disadvantage and risk becoming duped. In this manner, militarized protection schemes become entrenched and are turned into a collective action problem. This implies that the practice occurs at such a large scale, that even if people disapprove of it, they will still be tempted to engage in it. Furthermore, the institutionalization of militarized protection agreements, implying their inscription in structures of domination, signification and legitimation, affects the future development of these structures: for instance, when dispute processing services are systematically solicited from armed actors rather than from civilian authorities, in part because the latter are deemed too weak to implement decisions, civilian authorities will have little possibilities to reassert their power, and will therefore continue to be bypassed in the future. The weakening of civilian authority is also the result of the changing social roles surrounding the military, with certain interventions and services previously expected from civilian authorities now becoming part of the expectations vis-à-vis armed actors. However, to what extent and how this transformation of social role content has occurred differs per socio-spatial suborder in the Kivus, reflecting the place-specific nature of processes of militarization. While in certain places, particular protection services from armed actors, notably those involving coercion, are frowned upon, in others they are seen as relatively acceptable, taken for granted practices. When after rotations, new units arrive in places with a permissive climate for military involvement in civilian affairs,

they are likely to reproduce the social structures underlying this climate, as civilians will expect them to intervene in their affairs and military staff will generally not refrain from fulfilling these expectations, not least as this suits their own projects.

This draws attention to how the frequent rotations of FARDC units, in combination with the differentiation in social structures and dynamics per place, undermine the transformation of militarized structures in the Kivus as a whole. Crucially, place-based differences and rotations lead to a regional dispersal and segmentation of the contradictions between civilians and the military that result from the zero-sum game nature of competition for resources. The latter is mostly a result of a political economy characterized by limited value-added economic activities, deep poverty and rent-seeking by elites, causing wealth accumulation to often be based on appropriating resources from others. By following uneven regional patterns, and due to civilians' and the military's embedding in big-man networks of a crosscutting civilian-military nature, the contradictions between civilians and military are segmented and not manifested in all socio-spatial suborders. Additionally, the segmentation and regionalization of contradictions leads to the dispersal of the conflicts relating to these contradictions, or prevents them from becoming manifest. For example, the wealth extracted from non-elite, non-state related populations in the rural areas often flows to elites and state agents based in urban zones, implying these actors might not experience as much to be in conflict with the armed forces as rural populations. Similarly, where the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, which are partly enkindled by the mentioned contradictions, are intense, contradictions may temporarily dissolve, as civilians are prompted to liaise with armed actors, rather than to contest them. The dispersal of contradictions is also visible at the level of the Congo's social order as a whole. The military's harvesting of resources from civilians in the Kivus enables the political center in Kinshasa to continue to invest limited resources in the military and to appropriate a part of the invested resources for particularistic projects. This reduces the incentives among national and provincial elites tied into the presidential big-man network to alter the status quo. In this manner, the conflicts stemming from the contradictions between on the one hand, civilian and military elites and on the other hand, the military rank and file, are dispersed, generating in turn conflicts between the rank and file and civilians in the Kivus.

To conclude, processes of structuration in the Kivus largely contribute to reproducing rather than transforming the militarized structures of domination, legitimation and signification that underpin the FARDC's position of dominance. A crucial factor in the reproduction of militarization are the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection both within the military and within the Kivus' social order as a whole, as these push the military and civilians to engage in practices that sustain the military's dominance. Yet, the military's and civilians' contribution to militarization cannot fully be ascribed to the conscious actions of individual social agents: the reproduction of the current social order largely occurs in a non-reflexive manner. Civilians are not always aware that at an aggregate level, their individual practices contribute to the reproduction of militarization. This lack of consciousness is sometimes a result of the routinization of certain forms of civilian-military interaction, causing civilians not to appeal to discursive reflexivity in their efforts at navigation, hence to explicitly reflect on the conditions for and consequences of their practices. Soldiers too, do not always consciously engage in practices that cumulatively entrench existing power structures within the military, thereby impairing its reform. Often preoccupied by survival, conflict or coping with other forms of insecurity, they do not always reflect upon the longer-term consequences of their practices, let alone have insight into these consequences, due to the general opacity of the workings of the military. Even civilian and military elites, whose practices have the most direct impact on the reproduction of the military's position of dominance, do not consciously tailor all of their practices towards preempting transformations. Like all social agents, the agency of elites is shaped by existing social structures, and it are partly these structures that cause them to have limited incentives to reform the military's current organization and modus operandi. Furthermore, elites also act out of routine, engaging in forms of military management that they have come to see as 'normal' and as 'making sense', without appealing to discursive consciousness. Additionally, efforts at reform sometimes produce unintended consequences or get sidetracked by urgent crises in the east. Hence, while elite actors certainly play a crucial role in the reproduction of the Kivus' militarized social structures, this is not purely the result of conscious efforts. It can be concluded that although for elite actors, the picture is more complex, for non-elite actors, their contribution to the (re)production of the Kivus' militarized social order is mostly unintended. This reflects how militarization is a process that is driven by practices that make sense to individual social agents, but that have outcomes that are unfavorable at the collective level.

The main contributions of the research

Drawing on extensive field research, this study has provided a wealth of insights into micro-and meso-level civilian-military interactions and the workings of the military at the level of field units in the Kivus. An important dimension of these insights relates to the ways in which the military and civilians see and assess each other. The study has extensively explored the military's and civilians' mutual representations, and has provided explanations for seeming contradictions in these representations. It has also outlined how these representations differ from evaluations, and elaborated a theory for how these evaluations are formed among civilians. This represents a significant advance in understanding how civilians see, experience and reflect upon the military and its practices. Another contribution of this dissertation is that it has extensively documented how civilians and the military interact, uncovering a range of practices that have up to now received only limited attention due to the general focus on the military's involvement in human rights abuses and illicit natural resources exploitation. Thus, it has analyzed a wealth of civilian protection arrangements with the military, the FARDC's relations to civilian authorities and in/security services, and its engagement in dispute processing and influence peddling. It has also explored a broad spectrum of military revenue-generation activities and civilians' role therein, which varies from object of extraction to active collaborator.

An important general finding of this analysis is that a part of the violence enacted by the military is co-produced by civilians, who may be instigators and solicit violent interventions by the military.

Aside from documenting practices of civilian-military interaction, this study has also attempted to explain them. It has provided new insights into civilians' agentic orientations towards the military, notably when, why and how they engage in contestation, compliance, or collaboration. Similar in-depth explanations have been provided for the agency of the military, in particular at the level of field-based units. In order to elucidate the military's practices, this dissertation has provided the first comprehensive military-sociological analysis of the FARDC to date. Not only has it explored the drivers and effects of military management by the political center and the higher echelons, it has also extensively analyzed horizontal and vertical cohesion in the FARDC, including in lower-level units. This entailed the in-depth study of a variety of dimensions, such as forms of professional identification and commitment to the military organization, the relative importance of other forms of identification like ethnicity, idealized notions and lived experiences of commanding, and the effects of soldiers' living and service conditions on the workings of the military. Importantly, the study has analyzed a level of the FARDC that has up to now been neglected, namely that of field-based units (brigade/regiments and lower), looking at their features and the internal and external factors that shape their practices, including when and why these turn violent. Even though the conclusions on violence were largely preliminary since based on the study of a limited number of units, they make an important contribution to the debate on violence committed by the FARDC, which remains understudied. Aside from the work of Eriksson Baaz and Stern on sexual violence (e.g., 2008; 2013), there are few other studies focusing on the FARDC's practices of violence, in particular the broad range of forms that they assume and the circumstances in which they occur. Therefore, even though the findings are preliminary, this study does offer a starting point for further research. This also applies to the provided explanations for variations in civilian-military interaction. On the one hand, the study has elucidated the complexities of this interaction and the wide range of factors that shape it. On the other hand, it has uncovered general patterns that allow for a measure of theorizing. Furthermore, the research has revealed the importance of factors that up to now have largely been overlooked in analyses of the FARDC, such as the internal discourses and norms of units, the quality of command, the effects of big-man networks, units' time horizon, and the features of the deployment context, like the presence of other armed actors and the structure of local power constellations and economies.

As already emerges from the above, aside from providing a host of new empirical insights, this dissertation has contributed to considerable conceptual and theoretical advances. Importantly, it has applied the notion of militarization as a process of structuration to the context of the Kivus, while emphasizing that the forms that this process assumes differ per time-space context. Conceptualizing militarization as structuration is not an original contribution, since existing studies have already adopted this approach (e.g., Bernazolli and Flint, 2009). However, these studies have mostly focused on militarization in Western and/or non-war settings. At the same time, the literature on zones with ongoing violence generally works with the interpretative framework of 'war' or 'violent conflict'. However, these notions are not the same as militarization, and seem not well placed for explaining how violent conflict becomes protracted and is reproduced by everyday practices. Aside from applying the notion of militarization to an African conflict zone, thereby opening up the possibility to draw upon and make comparisons with the broader literature on militarization in non-war and non-African settings, this study has highlighted two dimensions of militarization that have hitherto remained under-theorized: first, the importance of the routinization of interaction with armed actors; and second, the normalization of protection relations between civilians and armed actors. These insights are likely to have relevance for understanding processes of militarization in other areas characterized by the large-scale and long-term presence of armed actors and an important role for big-man networks and other protection providers.

Another innovation of this research is the elaboration of the analytical notion of the 'dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection'. Building on Schatzberg's (1988) 'dialectics of oppression', the notion of the 'dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection' integrates more explicitly the workings of big-man networks, placing these in the conceptual category of 'protection'. This category is seen to encompass forms of protection defined more in the sense of the private protection provided by the Mafia, as described by Gambetta (1993). Thus, this study has collapsed what is commonly defined as 'patronage' and what is generally understood as 'private protection' into one concept, arguing that when it concerns the FARDC, these two notions partly overlap, and their effects are to a large extent similar, in particular in relation to the dynamics of conflict and insecurity. The notion of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection elaborated in this way provides considerable insights into how agency is shaped in volatile contexts, in conjunction with Vigh's (2006; 2009) concept of 'social navigation'. Yet, this study has also moved beyond Vigh by highlighting that not all social fields are equally fluid, and that volatile settings are still shaped by less plastic social structures formed over the *longue durée*, which they in turn shape. As such, it has proposed to conceptualize structuration as a chain of dialogical processes between individual social agents, more fluid social fields as shaped by the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, and less fluid social structures.

The distinction between more and less fluid notions can also be found in the study's conceptualization of 'representations' and 'evaluations', corresponding to on the one hand, structures of signification formed over the *longue durée*, and on the other hand, context-based perceptions grounded in concrete experiences. While the concept of evaluations draws upon the work of Roitman (2004), the identification of the factors shaping it, including social role performance and practical norms, has been an original contribution of the research that has been arrived at predominantly in an inductive manner. Furthermore, the angle of social role performance and concomitant discursive registers, notably public/private framings, has not been earlier adopted to analyze the practices of the Congolese military or other state servants, and presents an important departure from defining the variegated extra-military practices that the FARDC engages in as 'power abuse',

'corruption', or 'criminality'. Such framings obscure that not all of these practices are always seen as illicit, and may even contribute to the military's legitimation. Indeed, the followed approach has uncovered that while the military's performance of its role as 'public security provider' importantly influences how it is evaluated by civilians, this does not provide a full picture. In order to understand how military staff, notably officers, relate to and are evaluated by their civilian environment, one must also analyze their performances as 'big-men/protectors', 'public servants/officials' and 'businesspersons'. A similar emphasis on integrating heterogeneity into the analysis is reflected in the study's categorization of civilian-military political-economic interactions, which distinguishes between extraction, protection and collaboration/transactions, as partly grounded in the notion of the divisibility of services and goods. This categorization has contributed to a more fine-grained understanding of the FARDC's revenue-generation practices and claims to wealth, and how these are evaluated by civilians.

Another important theoretical contribution of the research is that it has further developed Levi's (1997) theory of citizens' compliance with state authority. It has connected this theory more strongly to routinization as defined by Giddens (1984), while also drawing a sharper distinction between practical consciousness and discursive reflexivity. Additionally, it has replaced the notion of 'ideology' with 'legitimacy' and redefined the concept of 'contingent consent' by linking the 'credibility of commitment' to social role performance. Furthermore, it has extended the theory of compliance to the other agentic orientations that civilians adopt vis-à-vis the military, namely collaboration and contestation. Lastly, it has made the distinguished bases of agency compatible with the more sophisticated understanding of agency as elaborated by Emirbayer and Mische (1998). Similar to advancing the study of citizen compliance, this dissertation has proposed an improvement in Beetham's (1991) theory of legitimacy by qualifying the third dimension of legitimacy that it identifies, relating to the role of public compliance. In particular, it has argued that this factor does not contribute to legitimation in a direct manner, but only indirectly, both via contributing to routinization and to what Levi (1997: 24) calls ethical reciprocity. Furthermore, public compliance, or rather non-compliance, may affect legitimation by impacting collective action via its informational dimension, as it reveals who is opposed to certain actors or practices.

In relation to civilians' agency vis-à-vis the FARDC, the study has also highlighted other dimensions that have hitherto been under-theorized. These include the importance of conviviality (Mbembe, 1992), the effects of the status of 'civilians' and 'military' as superordinate identity categories, the precepts of social navigation in volatile settings, and the general preference for personalized and informal contacts. Furthermore, by emphasizing how protection arrangements with the military have become a collective action problem, similar to how Persson et al. (2013) approach corruption, it has provided an explanation for the sometimes puzzling discrepancies between on the one hand, civilians' public denouncement of certain military practices, and on the other hand, their widespread compliance with or solicitation of these same practices.

Similar advances in the study of civilians' agency towards the military have been made in relation to the agency of the Congo's rulers. Importantly, the study has demonstrated that the ways in which the incumbents manage the armed forces should be analyzed in the light of the structural features of the social order in which they are situated. While this approach is often adopted for explaining how rulers shape political institutions, especially in 'institutional choice' type of approaches (e.g., Levi, 1998), it has not always been systematically applied to analyzing how rulers manage and deploy the armed forces. When providing explanations for how the rulers approach the FARDC, studies have primarily emphasized the incumbents' political security, notably their enduring fear for a *coup d'état* (Ebenga and N'landu, 2005) or financial constraints (Wondo Omanyundu, 2013). However, in order to understand how rulers' agency in military matters is shaped, a more comprehensive range of factors needs to be taken into consideration, including the nature of the political economy, center-periphery relations, and sedimented modes of governance, like the importance of big-man networks and indirect rule via cooptation. It should be emphasized that such factors do figure prominently in studies on pre-war Congo/Zaire, from which this dissertation has taken its inspiration.

In addition to providing a more nuanced theoretical understanding of the agency of civilians, whether citizens in the Kivus or the Congo's rulers, this dissertation has offered an analytical way forward in relation to the study of the agency of the military. In particular, it has demonstrated that the conceptual tools elaborated by the sub-discipline of military sociology can significantly advance the analysis of the FARDC. On the one hand, the Congolese armed forces have particular features that cannot be found to the same extent in most 'Western' militaries, such as low levels of bureaucratic institutionalization; the importance of big-man networks; significant rebel-military integration; parallel command structures; extremely bad service conditions; large-scale involvement in revenue generation; and a strong embedding in civilian environments. On the other hand, notions like horizontal and vertical cohesion, including organizational and institutional bonding, are ultimately shaped by the same factors as in other militaries (e.g., training, working and living together). However, while these factors are similar at the conceptual level, the forms that they assume in the FARDC often differ, and therefore produce different effects. Aside from demonstrating the usefulness of applying the notion of cohesion to the study of the FARDC, this dissertation has also made a conceptual contribution to the debates on this notion. Taking Siebold's (2007) standard model as a point of departure, it has regrouped factors disparately presented in the extensive literature on cohesion into the conceptual categories of 'community of experience' and 'commonality of identification/beliefs'. At the same time, it has linked vertical cohesion to the notion of the social role of 'military commander', and the outcomes of performances of that role as evaluated by subordinates. Due to the bewildering array of conceptualizations of 'cohesion', as well the divergent approaches to the study of this notion, it appears that any application of the concept that does not copy the exact same approach of another study entails making a contribution to the debate on cohesion.

An additional contribution of this study in relation to identifying and conceptualizing the processes shaping the military's practices is that it has demonstrated the usefulness of analyzing the agency of field-based military units from the point of view of 'military navigation' as elaborated by Utas and Jörgel (2008). This implies studying how military units are embedded in and interact with their civilian and military environment, and identifying the various factors that shape the ways in which they navigate this environment. The study has located these factors both in the internal features of military units and those of the context to which they are deployed, highlighting the importance of the continual interplay between the two. Furthermore, in line with its approach to agency as grounded in Emirbayer and Mische (1998), it has proposed to conceptualize the end-states that units imagine and pursue as 'projects'. In the light of the fluidity and volatility of the Kivus, and the FARDC's ad-hoc, reactive and decentralized modes of operating, the notions of projects and navigation seem a more adequate conceptual language for describing FARDC units' agency than that of 'mission', 'strategy' and 'tactics'. Not only does the FARDC engage extensively in extra-military, unarticulated, and often non-official activities, which are not directly associated with 'missions', the notion of 'project' recognizes the emergent character of what units strive to achieve, and the close entwinement with the ways to achieve these end-states, hence modes of navigation. The study's emphasis on the role of the deployment context in shaping military conduct, as reflected in the notion of navigation, presents an important departure from studies focusing predominantly on features internal to the military. As further highlighted below, this insight also has important consequences for policy, as it implies that potential changes in the behavior of the military cannot be effectuated by reforms of the armed forces alone.

Adequacy and generalizability

Having outlined the theoretical and conceptual contributions of this research, two inter-related questions arise: first, to what extent are these findings adequate and second, to what extent can they be applied to other contexts? Both these questions relate to the quality of the research. Concerning internal validity, or the extent to which the findings are adequate for the sample upon which research has been conducted, the adopted research method, consisting of one researcher conducting in-depth ethnographic fieldwork, including by engaging in informal conversations, has introduced a substantial risk of bias and has undermined replicability. However, numerous measures were taken to address these challenges, as outlined in the section on methods and methodology. Extensive use was made of NGO reports and media reporting to triangulate data; a fair number of sites were visited more than once, many informants were contacted several times, findings were shared with other researchers working on similar topics, and extensive background information was gathered on each research context, in order to ensure that data were interpreted correctly. These efforts to enhance internal validity also explain the length of this dissertation: in order to substantiate the main findings, it was deemed important to provide extensive contextual information and multiple examples of the phenomena under analysis.

Additional efforts were made to ensure the external validity of the findings, or the extent to which these are generalizable to a broader population, in this case, the Kivu provinces as a whole. An important way in which external validity was enhanced was by developing relatively abstract conceptual categories, which render them transferable to other contexts. Furthermore, the developed categories and subcategories were made conceptually dense, implying they have numerous different properties and dimensions. For example, when explaining how civilian evaluations of the military are developed, on what bases civilians' agency rests, or how military units' projects and modes of navigation are shaped, a host of different factors were identified. Due to this abstractness and density, the described categories and mechanisms can also be employed to explain similar phenomena in other contexts in the Kivus. This is tentatively corroborated by the data that were gathered on zones in the Kivus where no research was conducted, including through the news media, UN and NGO reports, and key informants. The fact that these data have also informed the development of conceptual categories and the findings on how these categories interrelate has further enhanced the latter's external validity.

Aside from being valid for the Kivus as a whole, fieldwork conducted in other areas of the eastern Congo indicated that the findings might be applicable to other contexts as well. At the end of 2013, I studied the relations between fishermen and the FARDC navy around Lake Albert (*Province Orientale*). This research showed that many of the mechanisms and processes of civilian-military interaction observed in the Kivus were also at work in that region. For instance, the navy on Lake Albert was seen to protect forms of illegal fishing that were practiced at a very large scale, causing its position of power to be underpinned by a similar interplay between prohibition and protection as that of the navy on Lake Edward. Additionally, the presence of certain rebel groups, which occasionally made incursions into villages close to the lake, created similarities in the military's discursive framings of its claims to resources from civilians, namely as needed for guaranteeing security and conducting operations against rebels. These framings also produced similar effects on the ways in which these claims were evaluated by civilians, as they appeared to consider the military's demands to be relatively justified in the light of the dire security situation. Other dimensions of civilians' evaluations of the military's power and practices showed similarities as well, such as the importance of the military's security performance. For example, the navy's legitimacy appeared to be strongly undermined by complaints about it not making efforts to stem incursions from Ugandan bandits and in/security services. These various observations show that in broad lines, certain of the findings of this study may also shed light on civilian-military interaction in other militarized areas in the eastern Congo, in particular those characterized by high levels of military deployment and armed group activity.

Aside from for the study of other militarized areas in the eastern Congo, the analytical tools elaborated in this dissertation can be employed for research on civilian-military interaction in regions beyond the Congo. This would seem especially pertinent for settings

with broadly similar characteristics, such as a situation of protracted violent conflict, the presence of a multitude of different armed actors, governance characterized by pluralistic regulatory arrangements in which non-state and armed actors play important roles, high levels of deployment of less bureaucratically institutionalized armed forces, and finally, processes of militarization. Certain parts of the Central African Republic, Chad and South Sudan appear to have, in different forms and degrees, some of these characteristics. Therefore, studying the national armed forces and civilian-military interaction in these countries through similar analytical lenses promises to yield substantial insights not only into the military and its interaction with civilians but also into the wider processes of militarization affecting these regions and how these relate to protracted violent conflict.

Even in areas where there is no ongoing violent conflict, parts of the conceptual and analytical framework developed in this study could be employed for a military-sociological study of everyday civilian-military interaction. The dearth of studies on African government forces at the sub-national level, including on micro-and meso-level civilian-military interaction and the workings of field-based units, makes that there is little solid conceptual ground for scholars interested in studying these dimensions. In a general sense, the structures, dynamics and processes identified as shaping civilian-military interaction in this study are likely to be of relevance in other contexts as well, although these factors will not be of the same nature nor be present in the same combinations. Yet that does not imply that the general mechanisms and causal pathways underlying the studied phenomena are not similar at the conceptual level. For instance, the processes that were described as shaping civilians' evaluations can be analyzed in similar terms in other contexts. The same applies to civilians' agentic orientations and their various bases, which were described in generic analytical terms, and grounded in theories on citizen compliance with state authority with a wider applicability. Similarly, the factors identified as impacting the workings of the FARDC, like the importance of big-man networks and the way these affect horizontal and vertical cohesion at the unit level, might also explain the workings and therefore practices of armed forces with broadly similar features elsewhere. This also applies to the characteristics of the military's immediate deployment environment. Even when these features differ, the general place-specific elements identified in this dissertation provide a starting point for enquiry into how the deployment environment affects civilian-military interaction. In sum, the conceptual and analytical framework laid out in this dissertation can also be applied to the study of everyday civilian-military interactions in other contexts, in particular those that are highly militarized. Of course, only further study can establish the actual relevance of these analytical tools for research in other contexts.

Future research will also be necessary to consolidate the findings of this study, since newly developed theory can never be tested against the same data that yielded the theoretical insights (Gerring, 2012: 101). This would seem especially pertinent for the findings on the FARDC's engagement in violence, which were comparatively less well corroborated. It would seem pertinent to not only conduct such future research in the Kivus, but also in other areas in the Congo, both those with high levels of militarization and armed group presence and those without these features. While this study was intended to be an inquiry into civilian-military interaction in areas with strong armed group presence and high concentrations of government troops, comparisons with areas in the Congo without these characteristics will allow for studying the relative impact of these factors on civilian-military interaction. For example, the absence of armed groups might make framings in discourses of public security less efficacious for legitimizing claims to wealth from civilians, and might lead to an overall lower demand for physical protection services. Similarly, a less pronounced presence of armed actors, both in the past and in the present, might cause differences in the social roles surrounding armed actors, hence the expectations and norms governing their practices. Obviously, it is only by making comparisons with non-militarized areas in the Congo that the full impact of militarization on civilian-military interaction can be explored.

The same applies to establishing the relative importance of the 'state factor' in explaining the workings of the FARDC and its interactions with civilians: it is only by comparing these with interactions between non-state armed groups and civilians that it can be discovered to what extent the FARDC's status as a state actor makes a difference. Research on armed groups that I have conducted for other projects (e.g., Verweijen, forthcoming b) indicates there are significant similarities in the ways certain armed groups and the FARDC interact with civilians, in particular in relation to the importance of protection arrangements, the processes underlying civilians' evaluations of interactions, and the factors explaining the conduct of military units. Future study could help identify the causes of these similarities, which promises to yield further insights into processes of militarization in the Kivus. Another avenue for future research is to compare the findings of this research with studies on other parts of the Congolese state apparatus. The Congolese armed forces display many similarities to other state agencies, including concerning the ways in which these interact with citizens. Parallel and competing units and actors, *rapportage* systems, the importance of big-man networks, the large-scale extraction of wealth from citizens, the seemingly arbitrary implementation of rules and regulations: all these features can be found throughout the Congolese state machinery. For this reason, studying parallels between civilian-military interaction and interaction between citizens and other state services, like the police, the intelligence services, or the administration, would seem pertinent and could reveal to what extent the FARDC's practices can be explained by it being part of the Congolese state. At the same time, such research would allow for making comparisons with state-society relations in other contexts, which could help identify what, if anything, is specific about the workings of the Congolese state and why.

Policy implications

A final domain to be explored is what the implications of this study are for policy, in particular in relation to defense reform and the

protection of civilians. As mentioned, this dissertation does not aim to provide detailed policy recommendations, which have already been presented in a number of policy-oriented publications (Van Damme and Verweijen, 2012; Eriksson Baaz and Verweijen, 2013a; forthcoming; Stearns et al., 2013). Yet, its main findings do give food for thought for policy. Importantly, they cast doubt upon the possibility to influence the FARDC's practices in the Kivus by focusing solely on internal military reforms. As this study demonstrates, the military is strongly influenced by its deployment context, in particular its interaction with civilians. The latter have developed certain expectations vis-à-vis the military that include substantial extra-military tasks, like interventions in disputes, influence peddling, providing economic advantages, and protecting illegal revenue-generation activities. Certainly, military staff engage in these practices not only on civilians' demand, but also on their own initiative, as it offers them influence and income. Furthermore, these practices would not take place at the same scale if internal norms and discourses within the armed forces would firmly prohibit them, and the control and accountability mechanisms would be in place to enforce these norms. However, civilians' demand does play an important role in promoting these practices, implying that a lowering of this demand would be a necessary, if by no means sufficient, condition for reducing the military's engagement in them. Among the main drivers of this demand are civilians' exposure to intense dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection, and the weakness and erraticism of civilian authority and the state apparatus. Feeling that their lives, property and sources of income are highly insecure, and having no confidence that civilian state services can remedy this, civilians have incentives to solicit forms of private protection from military actors. Hence, putting an end to the military's interference in civilian affairs will ultimately require the demilitarization of the Kivus' social order as a whole, which can only be achieved when civilians feel diminished incentives to solicit protection from the military. This, in turn, is unlikely to happen without a significant reinforcement of civilian authority, in particular its level of public service provision.

Another potentially policy relevant insight that emerges from this research is the centrality of revenue generation both for the internal workings of the military and its interaction with civilians. Civilians and the military are involved in a continual quest for resources, and for lower-ranking soldiers and the majority of civilians in the Kivus, this is predominantly a matter of providing for basic needs. As long as the salaries of FARDC soldiers are insufficient for maintaining a family, and soldiers do not receive proper health care, paid leave, pensions and other social benefits, military staff will continue to have incentives to engage in revenue-generation activities. However, this also applies to officers that are somewhat better off: as long as they remain uncertain of their position, and are under pressure to generate resources for the *rapportage* system or for distribution in their networks, they are likely to continue to engage in revenue generation. In this respect, it is important to recognize the multi-faceted drivers of FARDC staff's involvement in revenue generation. These drivers are not only related to low and irregular salaries, as is sometimes mistakenly assumed, but lie in the structural underfunding of the military's operating costs across the board, forcing military staff to use their meager salaries for basic services and goods that elsewhere would be provided for by the military organization. For instance, FARDC soldiers have to pay matters like health care, housing, rain coats, pocket lights and phone credits needed for professional duties themselves. Another cluster of factors prompting military staff to engage in revenue generation relates to the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection both within and outside of the military: as mentioned, fears that one can lose one's position anytime, in combination with the pressures of *rapportage*, fuel an intense drive for wealth accumulation. Additionally, FARDC staff are faced with pressures from the wider social networks into which they are embedded. Soldiers' (extended) family members all get married, have healthcare and funeral costs, have children that need to go to school, and are in need of jobs. Due to the erratic workings of the state apparatus and the economy, it are primarily (extended) family networks that are expected to contribute to providing for these needs. Therefore, even if FARDC officers have a considerable income, the demands placed upon them will still exceed what they can and are willing to provide.

For these various reasons, ensuring regular and a rise in salaries is in itself not likely to end revenue generation by the FARDC. Preventing the military from engaging in economic activities would also require changes like: an improvement in overall service and social conditions in the military, less pressures from the big-man system, a reduction in the arbitrariness of the workings of the military through bureaucratic institutionalization, and a lessening of the expectations placed upon military staff by extended family and wider social networks. Given that some of these changes are unlikely to materialize, certainly at the short term, the question arises whether it would not be better to take the military's engagement in revenue generation as a point of departure rather than an 'aberration'. In donor discourses on defense reform, any form of extra-military activity is framed as a deviance that must be eradicated in order to work towards a professional military. However, engagement in revenue generation is a structural feature of the FARDC, and the complex processes driving it are not likely to experience significant transformations at the short term. Therefore, acknowledging the need for FARDC staff to engage in revenue generation-within certain bounds- could be a better way of dealing with this phenomenon than denouncing it. Importantly, tolerating revenue generation opens up the possibility for a measure of regulation, which could help curb the most excessive, coercive and destructive practices. Such regulation should also take the wives of FARDC soldiers into account, who play crucial roles in facilitating and managing their husbands' businesses, while also supplementing the household income through revenue-generation activities of their own.

An improvement of the situation of military families would also require acknowledging the presence of military spouses at deployment locations. The present official policy of *mouvement sans famille* (movement without family) does not correspond to the realities of deployment nor does it seem feasible to enforce as long as soldiers do not get regular leave nor are paid the travel costs to visit their family, which is sometimes located hundreds of kilometers away. For these reasons, it would seem better to create a dense network of family duty stations, which should be located in relatively safe areas close to deployment zones. Such family stations could form a basis

for tolerated revenue-generation activities, for instance on agricultural fields and small garden plots in the surroundings. Military families could also be allowed to engage in small-scale trade of (legal) consumer goods, and undertake activities like running *boutiques* and *ngandas* (bars), or be engaged in the transport sector (for instance by having *taxi-motos*), as long as they would comply with legislation. Arguably, this could help to crackdown on the more illegal and violent modes of revenue generation, such as extortion and stealing, although this would require also a host of other changes, like stricter control and supervision by commanders.

As this study has shown, despite the numerous limitations that commanders face, their individual qualities and practices often have significant influence on troops' behavior. This does not only apply to commanders of secondary units (brigades/regiments, battalions), but also to those at lower levels (company, platoon, section), who are most directly in contact with the rank and file and therefore have substantial capacity to shape troops' conduct. However, in defense reform efforts and donor-sponsored trainings, there has been little attention to this group. To start with, initiatives to strengthen accountability have up to now been heavily oriented towards reinforcing the military justice system rather than improving the quality of command. Certainly, provided justice reforms pay sufficient attention to guaranteeing the quality of justice, which has not always been the case due to a strong focus on quantifiable output in terms of numbers convicted (e.g., Douma and Hilhorst, 2012), they have the potential to contribute changes in troops' behavior. However, strengthening military justice will not suffice for bringing about significant transformations in the FARDC's modes of operating and practices towards civilians. Efforts to punish bad conduct post factum must be complemented by efforts to prevent ill conduct, through reinforcing accountability mechanisms within the army and by creating incentives for good behavior. For both these dimensions, the role of commanders is crucial. Yet, there are very little efforts to train, educate and monitor current unit commanders, in particular those at lower levels of the command chain. Most of the military academies that have recently restarted activity train future officers, not those currently commanding units. Furthermore, with a few notable exceptions, many of the numerous awareness raising seminars and short-term trainings sponsored by donors, such as on human rights and sexual violence, primarily target officers that are concentrated in the big cities like Goma and Bukavu, not all of whom rotate to the frontlines. Hence, lower level commanders deployed in far-flung operational zones, who most directly supervise troops, are largely left out of such initiatives. In fact, from conversations with company and platoon commanders in remote rural areas, it emerged that they were rarely given permission to leave their units. Troops currently deployed on the frontlines are equally largely excluded from such awareness-raising sessions, nor are there specific trainings for this group. For example, some of the troops who integrated during the last wave of massive armed group integration in 2009 were new recruits or came from armed groups that provided only very rudimentary training to their troops. Within the FARDC, these soldiers have had only one three-month training period during the regimentation phase in 2011, being deployed in ongoing operations. While training in a stand-alone fashion is no guarantee for improvements in behavior, in combination with other factors, it has at least the potential to contribute to changes. Training can reinforce cohesion, prepare troops better for combat, which might make it less stressful and therefore reduce the risk of panic, and socialize troops into discourses on civilian protection. Hence, as part of broader efforts to reinforce accountability, it appears important to significantly invest in training troops currently deployed in operational zones in the Kivus.

Aside from efforts to improve accountability systems within the military, it would seem pertinent to also reinforce civilian authorities in their efforts to hold the military to account. As this dissertation has shown, pressures by countervailing civilian forces may have an impact on the military's conduct, although this is often temporary and does not necessarily scale up. Yet, if proactive civilian authorities across the Kivus would systematically exert pressure, cumulatively, this could lead to structural change. Local authorities could, for instance, establish regulations that prohibit soldiers from circulating with arms in certain sites; put policies in place to identify and register military staff living in civilian areas; introduce compulsory agreements with local health care centers to regulate the payment of soldiers' medical care; and convene security committees on a biweekly basis. Where such regulations are carried by a broad range of local actors, including local authorities, civil society, and the business community, the chances are higher that even when the first unit that accepted these measures rotates, an incoming unit will get socialized into the same local customs and norms, and might therefore at least partially comply. Such chances are further increased if higher-level civilian authorities, like members of parliament and those working at ministries or the governor's cabinet, would actively monitor what occurs in their home constituencies, and reinforce lower-level authorities' efforts to hold the military to account. Unfortunately, the intensity of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection in the Kivus often prohibits such effective civilian collective action from taking place, whether horizontally, within FARDC units' sites of deployment, or vertically, between higher-and lower-level authorities. However, in the absence of structural changes within the armed forces, it is only through changes within Kivutian society that the structures underpinning the FARDC's position of dominance can be transformed, and the Kivus' social order durably demilitarized.

Fieldwork trajectories

First fieldwork trip

Date	Place	Date	Place
2010		2010	
16.01–13.02	Bukavu	06.04–07.04	Nyongera, Rutshuru
14.02–16.02	Baraka	08.04–09.04	Kanyabayonga
17.02	Fizi <i>centre</i>	10.04–11.04	Lubero, Butembo
17.02–18.02	Baraka	12.04–16.04	Beni
19.02–21.02	Baraka-Dine/Mizimu	17.04	Eringeti
20.02	Kimino, Buma	18.04	Beni
20.02–21.02	Kazimia	19.04	Mutwanga, Bulango, Mutsora
21.02–22.02	Baraka	19.04–20.04	Kasindi
23.02–24.02	Lulimba, Misisi	21.04	Beni
25.02	Ngalula, Misisi	22.04–24.04	Butembo-Goma-Butembo
26.02–27.02	Misisi, Lulimba	25.04–26.04	Kyavinyonge, Butembo
28.02–29.02	Lulimba, Fizi <i>centre</i>	27.04–28.04	Butembo
29.02–05.03	Baraka	29.04	Lubero
06.03–09.03	Baraka, Minembwe	30.04	Butembo
10.03	Baraka	01-02.05	Kirumba
11.03–14.03	Uvira	03.05	Kirumba, Kashege
15.03–16.03	Katobo, Mugaja	04.05	Kamandi
17.03	Mulenge	05.05	Luofu
18.03–19.03	Lemera	06.05	Kirumba, Kiwanja
20.03–21.03	Sange, Luberizi	07.05	Kiwanja, Nyongera
22.03–23.03	Kamanyola, Uvira	08.05–10.05	Goma
24.03	Uvira	11.05–13.05	Bukavu
24.03–27.03	Bukavu	13.05–15.05	Lemera
28.03–30.03	Goma	16.05–18.05	Uvira
31.03	Rumangabo	19.05	Baraka
31.03–01.04	Kiwanja (Nyongera, Rutshuru)	20.05	Fizi <i>centre</i>
02.04–03.04	Katwiguru, Kisharo, Nyamilima	21.05	Baraka, Uvira
03.04–04.04	Ishasha	22.05	Uvira
05.04	Vitshumbi		

Second fieldwork trip

Date	Place	Date	Place
2010		2011	
03.11–13.11	Bukavu	02.01–05.01	Uvira
14.11–16.11	Uvira	06.01–21.01	Bukavu
17.11	Baraka	22.01–25.01	Uvira
17.11–18.11	Fizi <i>centre</i> , Baraka	26.01	Uvira-Kirungu
19.11	Baraka	27.01	Hwewhe
20.11–21.11	Kazimia	28.01	Bijombo-Ishenge

22.11–23.11	Kakone, Yungu	29.01	Mikalati, Luhemba
24.11	Kazimia	30.01–05.02	Minembwe
25.11	Kazimia, Sebele	06.02	Mulisa
25.11–27.11	Baraka	07.02	Kenya, Bigaragara
28.11	Fizi <i>centre</i>	08.02–14.02	Minembwe
29.11	Mukera	15.02–17.02	Mukera
30.11	Bwala, Nalubwe, Kasakala, Kananda	18.02–20.02	Fizi <i>centre</i> , Baraka
01.12	Fizi <i>centre</i>	21.02–23.02	Baraka
02.12–03.12	Minembwe, Kiziba	24.02–25.02	Ubwari (Katenga)
04.12	Kenya, Bigaragara, Minembwe	25.02–28.02	Fizi <i>centre</i>
05.12–06.12	Minembwe, Masha	28.02–05.03	Lulimba, Misisi
07.12–08.12	Kalingi I & II	05.03	Mabumba, Kasanga, Musochi, Kabeya
09.12–12.12	Minembwe	06.03	Lwiko, Kasanga
13.12	Ghawera, Makutano, Tulambo	07.03–11.03	Lulimba, Misisi
14.12	Mibunda, Mikalati	12.03	Fizi <i>centre</i>
15.12	Rugabano	14.03–18.03	Baraka
16.12–19.12	Minembwe	19.03–21.03	Uvira
20.12	Mikenke	21.03–22.03	Luberizi
21.12	Mikenke, Antenne	23.03–06.04	Bukavu
22.12	Kamombo, Kabare	06.04–08.04	Goma
23.12–26.12	Minembwe		
27.12	Lusuku, Mukera		
28.12.2010–02.01.2011	Baraka		

Third fieldwork trip

Date	Place	Date	Place
2011		2012	
17.10.2011	Uvira	31.12.2011–06.01.2012	Baraka
18.10–25.10	Bukavu	07.01–11.01	Uvira
26.10–01.11	Uvira	11.01–12.01	Bijombo
30.10–31.10	Lemera, Sange	13.01–14.01	Uvira
01.11–05.11	Break (workshop in Nairobi)	15.01–21.01	Bukavu
06.11–07.11	Lemera	22.01–24.01	Goma
07.11–08.11	Luberizi	24.01–25.01	Kiwanja
9.11	Uvira	26.01	Vitshumbi
10.11–11.11	Marungu	27.01	Nyamilima, Kisharo, Katwiguru
12.11	Masango, Mushale	28.01	Rugarama
13.11	Muranvya	29.01	Bunagana
14.11	Muranvya, Irango, Bijombo-Ishenge	30.01–31.01	Kiwanja
15.11	Kajembwe	02.02	Rumangabo
16.11–17.11	Bijombo-Ishenge, Kagogo	03.01–04.02	Kiwanja
18.11–19.11	Magunda	05.02–07.02	Goma
20.11–21.11	Lubumba	08.02–10.02	Bukavu
22.11–23.11	Nabombe, Magunda	10.02–11.02	Uvira
24.11–25.11	Kajembwe	12.02–13.02	Kisanga, Uvira
26.11	Kamombo	14.02–15.02	Kitundu
27.11–28.11	Marunde, Mikenke	16.02–17.02	Kajembwe
29.11–08.12	Minembwe	18.02	Nakiele
09.12	Lusuku	19.02	Mukera

10.12–12.12	Fizi <i>centre</i>	20.02–23.02	Kikonde
12.12–13.12	Baraka	24.02–26.02	Baraka
14.12–15.12	Kikonde, Sebele	27.02–28.02	Uvira
16.12–17.12	Katalakulu, Baraka		
18.12	Fizi, Lulimba		
19.12–23.12	Misisi		
23.12–25.12	Mayi ya Moto, Kilembwe		
26.12	Kagembe		
27.12–28.12	Pene Mende, Kasanga, Misisi		
29.12	Lubondja, Kakela 1, Mama Tantine		
30.12	Fizi <i>centre</i>		

Field research for related research projects

Date	Place	Date	Place
2013		2014	
01.11–03.11	Kinshasa, Maluku	26.03–21.04	Bukavu, Goma, Uvira territory
08.11–22.11	Ituri (along Lake Albert)	15.06–28.06	Uvira, Fizi territory
		12.10–09.11	Uvira territory

Two topic guides

1. Questionnaire for group interviews with civilians

1. Usalama (sécurité)

1. Nani analinda ao kuchunga usalama hapa ? Namna gani ?
Qui assure la sécurité ici ? Comment ?

2. Wakati kuko ukosefu wa usalama ni juu ya nini ? Nani ndiyo iko mosingi wa ukosefu wa usalama hapa ?
Si il y un manque de sécurité ici, c'est pourquoi ? Qui est à la base de l'insécurité ici ?

3. Kwa leo hiyi kuna patikana kikosi gani cha jeshi la serikali hapa ku kijiji ? Na biko pale kutoka wakati gani ?
En ce moment, il y a quelle unité de l'armée nationale dans ce village, et ils sont là depuis quand ?

4. Kutoka kile kikosi cha jeshi kimefika, namna gani hali ya usalama inaendeka ? Kuko mabadiliko? Mabadiliko gani ? Na ni kwa sababu gani ?
Depuis l'arrivée de cette unité militaire, comment la situation sécuritaire a évolué ? Il y a eu des changements? Lesquels ? Pourquoi ?

5. Kiisha ku weko kwa waaskari wa serikali hawa muandsha kwa huraisi shuruli zenu :
Depuis l'arrivée de ces militaires, pouvez-vous facilement:

- kutembea mangaribi ao usiku (circuler le soir ou la nuit)
- kuenda kushota maji (aller puiser de l'eau)
- kuenda ku shamba (aller au champ)
- kuenda ku soko (aller au marché)
- kuenda ku pori ya karibukaribu (aller au brousse environnante)

6. Kutoka bale baaskari balifika, kulikuwa na mabadiliko juu ya:
Depuis l'arrivée de ces militaires, est-ce qu'il y a eu changement par rapport au :

- Matatizo njiani (tracasseries routières)
- Kutumikashana kwa kinguvu (travaux forcés)
- Uwizi (vols)
- Kungoa mashamba (déraciner les champs)
- Kufungwa (arrestations)
- Kutozwa (taxation)
- Kukongoa chakula kinguvu (collecte forcée des vivres)
- Mauwaji (meurtre)
- Ubakaji (viol)
- Kubebwa ao kuondoshwa (enlèvement)
- Uharibifu wa vitu (destruction des biens)

II. Uchumi (économie)

1. *Kazi gani watu wa hapa wanafanya?*
Quelles sont les principales activités économiques ici?
2. *Matatizo gani watu wa hapa wanakuwa nayo katika kazi zao ?*
Les gens ici sont confrontés aux quels problèmes dans leur travail ?
3. *Munaenda ku soko gani ? Ni saa ngapi kwa miguu ? Unaweza kuenda ku soko bila matatizo njiani ?*
Vous fréquentez quel marché ? Pour y aller à pied, ça prend combien de temps ? Vous pouvez y aller sans problèmes sur la route ?
4. *Kwa kawaida munalipa taxes gani, kwa nani, na ni ngapi ?*
Normalement, vous payez quelles taxes, à qui et combien ?

III. Muusiano wa mamlaka (relations de pouvoir)

1. *Wakubwa gani wapo na mamlaka sana hapa, ni wanani ? Tena kuko watu wengine wanasikika na kuheshemika sana hapa?*
Qui sont les autorités les plus puissantes ici ? Il y a des autres personnes influentes ici ?
2. *Nani mu watu wa hapa iko na mali mingi ?*
Qui sont parmi les personnes les plus riches ici ?
3. *Nani anaweza kubadirisha (kuboresha) matendo ao tabia ya jeshi la serikali ?*
Qui peut faire changer (améliorer) le comportement des FARDC?
4. *Wakubwa wa baraa wanaweza kijikaza kwa kubadirisha matendo (ao tabiya) ya jeshi la serikali ? Namna gani ?*
Est-ce que les autorités civiles ici sont capables d'exercer de l'influence sur le comportement de l'armée ? De quelle façon ?
5. *Wakati baraa au bakubwa wa baraa wanabeba malamiko yao kwa mkubwa wa jeshi, anawasikia ? Anaweza kubadilisha tabia ya baaskari, kwa mfano kutosha barrières njiani ? Unaweza kuleta mfano moja?*
Quand les autorités civiles ou les civils font le plaidoyer auprès du commandant des FARDC, peut-il les écouter ? Peut-il changer le comportement des militaires, par exemple faire quitter les barrières ? Vous pouvez donner un exemple ?

IV. Jeshi (armée)

1. *Kazi gani jeshi inafanya zaidi hapa ?*
Quelles sont les activités principales des FARDC ici ?

-Kupiganisha vikundi vyenye kupigana na silaha (traque des groupes armés/milices)
-Kukinga baraa (protection de la population)
-Banafanya kazi, kwa mfano (ils font des activités économiques, par exemple) : uchuruzi (commerce), kutengeneza makala (production des braises), kuwinda (chasse), kupora mali na vitu (extortion), ingine (other)
2. *Namna gani waaskari wanafanya kwa kula hapa? Banauza chakula ku soko, banaomba ao kutoza ku baraa, banapokea chakula kutoka wakubwa wao, ao banalima ?*
Comment les FARDC s'approvisionnent ici en vivres? Ils achètent la nourriture sur le marché, ils demandent aux civils, ils reçoivent des rations de leur hiérarchie, ils cultivent ?
3. *Unaweza kukubali kama baraa wanasaidiya wa jeshi kwa chakula ? Wakati gani ? Kwa kawaida, munawapatia ngapi ?*
Est-ce vous pouvez accepter que la population aide les militaires en vivres ? Dans quelles circonstances ? Et combien vous les donnez normalement ?
4. *Namna gani waaskari wanapata habari ya raia? (kupitiya wakubwa wa raia, waraia wenyewe, waanalipaka wasaidizi ao wengine ?)*
Comment les militaires obtiennent-ils des informations des civils ? (à partir des autorités civiles, des civils eux-mêmes, ils paient des collaborateurs ou autres ?)

5. *Waaskari wa hapa wanajingiza ndani ya mambo wa wakubwa wa raia? Wanaingia namna gani ?*
Est-ce que les militaires ici s'ingèrent dans les affaires des autorités locales? Cette ingérence prend quelle forme?
6. *Kuko tofauti kati ya tabia ya baaskari ya serikali na wale wa wapiganaji wa vikundi vyenye kupigana na silaha (ao Mai Mai)? Tofauti gani?*
Il y a des différences en comportement entre les militaires des FARDC et les militaires des milices ? Quelles différences ?
7. *Ndani ya jeshi ya serikali, kuko watu wa kabila gani ? Kuko umbalimbali kati ya tabia ya askari ya kabila fulanifulani ? Tofauti gani?*
Il y a des gens de quelles ethnies au sein de l'armée? Il y a des différences en comportement entre les militaires des différentes ethnies? Lesquelles?
8. *Ndani ya iki kikosi ya hapa, kuko batoto (ao waaskari wazaliwa) wa hapa ? Tabia yabo ni gani? Kuko tofauti na askari wenye wanatokea mbali (wazaliwa wa ma jimbo zingine)? Namna gani? Wanajingiza ku mizozo yenye wandungu wao wapo ndani?*
Est-ce dans l'unité FARDC ici, il y a des militaires qui sont nés ici? Comment ils se comportent ? Est-ce qu'ils se comportent différemment des autres militaires qui viennent de loin? Comment ? Ils s'ingèrent dans des conflits de leurs camarades?
9. *Kuko jamaa zenye watoto wabo wako ndani ya jeshi? Tabia zabo ni gani ku jamaa zingini?*
Est-ce que il y a des familles ici qui ont un enfant dans l'armée? Ils se comportent différemment par rapport aux autres familles?

V *Kutatua mizozo (résolution des conflits)*

1. *Nini zaidi ni msingi ya mzozo hapa?*
Quelles sont les principales sources des conflits ici?
2. *Wajeshi banajingiza ndani ya mizozo ya waraia? Mizozo gani?*
Est-ce les militaires ici s'ingèrent dans les conflits des civils ? Quels conflits ?
-deni (dettes)
-udongo (terre, parcelles)
-ya jamaa (de famille) : mali (dote) ya urisi (heritage) ya bibi (conflits conjugaux)
3. *Banajingiza katika mizozo namna gani?*
Comment ils s'ingèrent dans les conflits?
- banafungwa watu bila sababu (arrestations arbitraires)
- banaomba pesa (amendes forfaitaires)
- katika masikilizano ya kirafiki (implication dans les arrangements à l'amiable)
- banakombo (ao kufungulisha) watu ku gereza ya polisi (libération des personnes du cachot de la police)
-banapiga watu na kuwa tendeya ujeuri (torture)
- kutisha na kuogopesha (intimidation)
4. *Waraia, wanaomba baaskari kuingilia ndani kwa kutatua shida zao? Mizozo gani? Unaweza kuleta mfano moja tu?*
Est-ce que les civils ici font appel aux militaires pour résoudre leurs différends? Quels conflits? Vous pouvez donner un exemple?
5. *Juu ya nini, baraia banaomba jeshi kuingilia kwa kutatua mizozo yao?*
Pourquoi les civils font appel aux militaires pour régler leurs différends?
-Habajue sheria (ils ne connaissent pas la loi)
-Hakuna njia ingine (ils n'ont pas d'autres possibilités)
-Kulomba polisi ao viongozi wengine inafaa kulipa nyingi (demander à la police/autres autorités est cher)
-Kuenda kwa vyongozi wengine inachukua muda mrefu kuliko waaskari (demander aux autres autorités prend plus de temps que demander les militaires)
-Banataka suluisho ya kutumikisha ngufu na kutendeya wengine mabaya (ils veulent une solution violente/ils veulent faire du mal à leurs adversaires)

6. *Baraia banaomba waaskari wa vikundi vyenye kupigana na silaha (Mai Mai) kuingilia kati ya mizozo yabo? Namna gani? Unaweza kuleta mfano moja?*
Les gens ici demandent aussi aux milices de s'ingérer dans leurs conflits. De quelle façon? Vous pouvez donner un exemple?
7. *Kuweko kwa jeshi inaongeza au inapunguza mizozo? Juu ya nini?*
Est-ce que le déploiement des FARDC fait augmenter ou diminuer les conflits? Pourquoi?

2. Questionnaire for group interviews with military staff

Introduction

- Informations personnelles : origine, trajectoire de vie, formation, grade et fonction militaire actuelles
- Motivations pour rejoindre l'armée?
- Dans quelle mesure les expériences dans l'armée ont répondu aux attentes?

L'identité militaire professionnelle

- Il y a quelle différence entre la vie militaire et la vie civile?
- Quelles sont les valeurs militaires les plus importantes?
- Quelles sont les qualités d'un bon soldat?
- Qui sont des (leaders) militaires exemplaires (dans l'armée du passé ou d'aujourd'hui)?
- Quelles sont les tâches principales de l'armée ? Lequel est son rôle dans la société et ses relations avec l'État?
- Actuellement, quels sont les dangers de sécurité les plus élevés au Congo et comment est-ce que l'armée congolaise en fait face?

Organisation militaire

- Comment est-ce que l'armée congolaise est organisée ? Quelle est l'unité d'organisation la plus importante?
- Votre unité est composée comment? Est-ce qu'il y a beaucoup de militaires originaires de la même région ou des mêmes anciens groupes armés ? Si oui, lesquels ?
- Est-ce qu'il y a des différences de comportement entre les militaires qui viennent d'ailleurs et ceux qui sont du Kivu, déployés dans leur zone d'origine?
- Est-ce que il est mieux pour les soldats d'opérer en dehors ou dans leur région d'origine ?
- Est-ce qu'il y a des différences entre les ex-rebelles et les militaires qui viennent du gouvernement?
- Comment évaluez-vous la collaboration entre militaires des origines différentes (géographiquement ou militairement) ?
- Vous parlez quelle langue entre vous pendant le travail ? Et après le travail ? Il y a ceux qui parlent une autre langue entre eux ? Est-ce que ça a un impact sur la vie sociale ?
- Qui sont vos meilleurs amis dans l'armée?

Formation militaire

- Vous avez eu quelle formation militaire? (Quand et pendant combien de temps)?
- Comment évaluez-vous votre formation militaire?
- Est-ce que les supérieurs ont été très durs?
- Est-ce que vous faites régulièrement de l'entraînement?
- Est-ce que vous avez fait de l'entraînement avec votre unité actuelle? Si oui, est-ce que il y a eu une meilleure collaboration dans votre unité après la formation?
- Est-ce que vous avez suivi de la formation sur les relations avec des civils ? Qu'est-ce que vous avez appris dans ce domaine?

Commandement et control

- Quelles sont les qualités d'un bon commandant militaire?

- Est-ce qu'il y a une différence entre les qualités d'un bon commandant des unités de base (de section, peloton) et de grandes unités (bataillon, brigade)?
- Comment évaluez-vous la haute hiérarchie de l'armée congolaise?
- Qu'est-ce que votre commandant fait quand un militaire se comporte mal? Est-ce qu'il intervient toujours comme il faut?
- Quels types de mauvais comportement sont punis le plus sévèrement?
- Pour quel type de désobéissances ou abus est-ce que les militaires sont envoyés à l'auditorat militaire? Il y a eu des cas récents dans cette unité?
- Est-ce tous militaires sont punis de la même façon ou il y a des différences? Que peut-en être la cause?

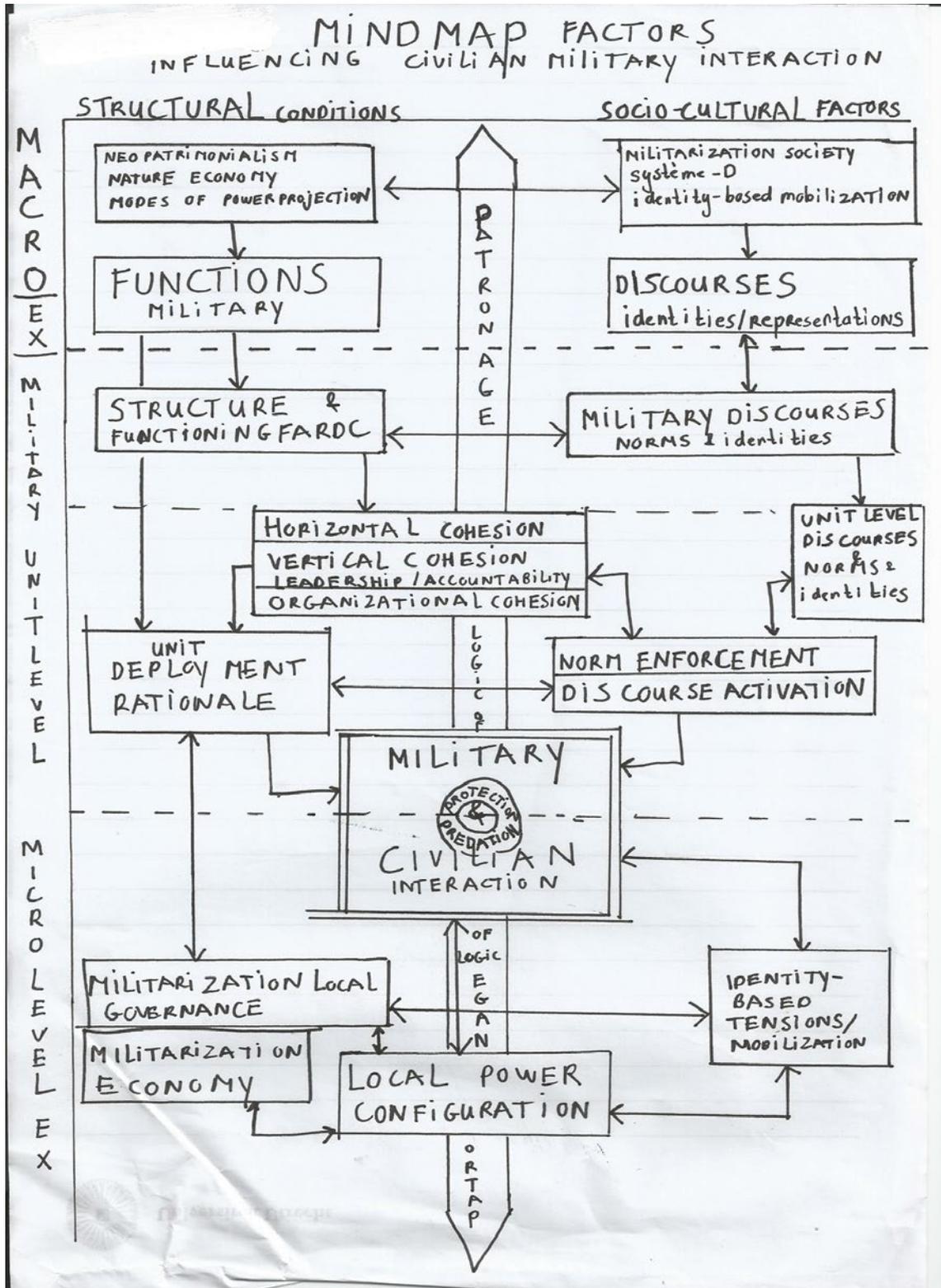
Représentations et relations avec des civils

- En général, qu'est-ce que les civils au Congo pensent de l'armée congolaise?
- Et qu'est-ce que l'armée pense des civils?
- Dans cette zone, est-ce que les civils collaborent bien avec l'armée ? Pourquoi (pas)?
- Quelles formes de coopération existent-il?
- Y'a-t-il aussi des tensions? À cause de quoi?
- Comment est-ce que votre unité obtient de la nourriture ici?
- Quand le salaire n'arrive pas, est-ce que les opérateurs économiques donnent facilement au crédit?
- Est-ce que la population vous donne des informations sur la position des rebelles ou est-ce qu'elle cache des choses?
- Avez-vous des contacts avec les autorités civiles? Comment?
- Il y a eu des militaires dans cette unité qui ont commis des abus envers des civils?
- Quels types d'abus et quand?
- Ont-ils été punis? De quelle manière?
- Il y a eu d'autres cas dans le passé? Lesquels?
- Pourquoi cela se passe, que les militaires commettent des abus envers les civils?
- Est-ce que l'armée d'aujourd'hui commet plus d'abus que l'armée d'avant les guerres? Pourquoi?

Réforme de l'armée

- Comment peut-on améliorer l'organisation et le fonctionnement de l'armée?
- Comment l'armée peut améliorer ses relations avec les civils?

Theoretical network diagram (2010)



AUDITORAT Nord-Kivu 2

REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO
JUSTICE MILITAIRE

RRM Art 623, 123



Model « M »

AUDITORAT MILITAIRE PRES
Le Tribunal Militaire Garnison
de Goma

Imputation budgétaire :

FEUILLE DE ROUTE N° 003.../AMG/GOM/2011

Monsieur (Grade) FAMILLE Lt Inspecteur Judiciaire
Nom : Post Noms :
N° Matricule : Unité : Auditorat Militaire
Est autorisé (e) de se rendre de : GOMA BUKAVU/KAMITUGA GOMA
Nature de déplacement :
VISITE FAMILIALE
Durée du déplacement : 15 JOURS
Date de départ le :/...../ JAN / 20 11
Date de retour le :/...../ 20 11
Moyen de transport : Véhicule – Auto Mobile – Train – Avion – Bateau (2)

Fait à Goma, le 07 / 01 / 2011

Vu au départ

Jean NGWERE
CAPT ADM
MAG
Aud. Goma



Nom MABIALA WA MABIALA Joséph
Grade Capt Adm
Fonction Dir. Div Aud Mil Goma
Signature *[Signature]*

MEMBRE DE FAMILLE AUTORISÉS A PARTICIPER AU VOYAGE

Epouse :	Clémentine	Age	Ad	Sexe	F
Enfant :					
4. : <u>DEMBI</u>		Age	<u>06ANS</u>	Sexe	<u>F</u>
2. : <u>JUSTIN</u>		Age	<u>03ANS</u>	Sexe	<u>M</u>
3. : <u>GISEL</u>		Age	<u>01ANS</u>	Sexe	<u>F</u>
4. : <u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	Age	<u>X</u>	Sexe <u>X</u>
5. : <u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	Age	<u>X</u>	Sexe <u>X</u>
6. : <u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	Age	<u>X</u>	Sexe <u>X</u>
7. : <u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	Age	<u>X</u>	Sexe <u>X</u>
8. : <u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	Age	<u>X</u>	Sexe <u>X</u>
9. : <u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	Age	<u>X</u>	Sexe <u>X</u>
10. :			Age		Sexe
11. : <u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	Age	<u>X</u>	Sexe <u>X</u>
12. : <u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	Age	<u>X</u>	Sexe <u>X</u>

(1) Le model « M » est à remplir pour les raisons de service, déplacement pour santé et congé
(2) Barrer la ou mention unitiles.

Examples of *réquisitoires*

REPUBLICQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO
FORCES ARMÉES
FORCE NAVALE
CINQUIEME GROUPEMENT NAVAL
BASE NAVALE BUKAVU

BUKAVU, le

Requisitoire Base navale BUKAVU

SECTION 4

FAMILLE (MTR) [REDACTED]
.....02 Personne (s)

REQUISITOIRE N° 077 / EN BNav BUKAVU N°4 /011

EMMANANT DE L'ETAT MAJOR BNAV BUKAVU ADRESSE A LA SOCIETE DE TRANSPORT :

GEN MULLAMBA , BAC , ALLELUA , KARISIMBI , SAFINA ,IKO , SALAMA , CHASI , SODIVIA ,MAPENDO , RAFIKI , FELEKENI , Miss RAFIKI , BIEGA , YESU NJIBU , AKONKWA , EMMANUEL.

TYPE DE TRANSPORT :LACUSTRE OU ROUTIER

NOM (S) DE (S) VOYAGEUR (S)

1. **KITUMAJI** [REDACTED]
2. **MUJIRI**
3.
4.

ENDROIT DE PRISE EN CHARGE : **BUKAVU**
DESTINATION : **GOMA**
MOTIF DE VOYAGE : **Assister au Mariage**

NB : Le billet est à facturer au frais de l'Etat.
D'où nous vous prions de bien vouloir accorder un ticket de votre Agence.

Fait à BUKAVU, le
[Signature]
HANGI KUBUYA VALENTIN
EDV
Chef N°4 BNav BUKAVU ai

02 NOV 2017
KAYUMBA MWEPE BITSTAN
LT. COL (CPT) BEM
COMD BASE NAVALE /BNV
02/11/17

To accordé deux personnes
6 03 /08 /2017
[Signature]



REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO
 FORCES ARMEES
 8^{ME} REGION MILITAIRE
 ETAT-MAJOR
 T4

M.V. SAFINA

8^e Région
 Force Terrestre

REQUISITOIRE N° 014 /EM 8Rgn Mil/T4/2012

EMMANANT DE : ETAT-MAJOR T4
 ADRESSE A LA SOCIETE DE TRANSPORT : LACUSTRE
 TYPE DE TRANSPORT : BATEAU
 NOM DU BENEFICIAIRE : ~~SLt~~
 ACCOMPAGNE DE L'EPOUSE :

ENFANT OU MEMBRE DE FAMILLE

N°	Age	Sexe
01	x	F
02	x	
03	x	
04	x	
05	x	
06	x	
07	x	
08	x	
09	x	
10	x	
11	x	

ENDROIT DE PRISE EN CHARGE : GOMA
 DESTINATION : BUKAVU
 MOTIF DE DEPLACEMENT : SOINS MEDICAUX

Ref No Cert Med de Transfert No 04/EM OPS SA-
 FISMA/C/MC/ 1F/2011

- N.B : (1) LE PRIX DE BILLET EST A FACTURE AUX FRAIS GENEREAUX OU A CHARGE DE L'ETAT.
 (2) LE REQUISITOIRE QUI CONTIENT DES RATURES OU SURCHARGES NE SERA PRIS EN CONSIDERATION.
 (3) BARRER LA OU LES MENTIONS INUTILES.

Fait à GOMA, Le 9 JAN 2012

Nom : NZUZI KIAKU
 Grade : LtCol
 Fonction : Chef T4 8Rgn Mil

Signature: *[Signature]*

*ok pour avoir
 K. Nzepe
 me persad
 31/1/12*



Examples of *bons de logement*

REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO
FORCES ARMÉES
ETAT MAJOR GENERAL
COORDINATION DES OPERATIONS
OPERATION AMANI LEO S/K
NEUVIEME SECTEUR
ETAT MAJOR
T5

BON DE LOGEMENT N° 186 /EM9 Sec6/T5/2011

Le nommé(e) : [redacted] Grade : *Sous-Lieutenant*
Fonction : *Adjoint SI Bn P.M.* Unité : *EM 10 Rgn Mil*
Matricule : [redacted]
Est autorisé à loger à l'hôtel : *(KILIZA HOTEL)*
Durée de logement est de : *03 JOURS*
Motif de logement : *MISSION DE SERVICE*

Fait à : *UNIRA* le *07/08/2011*


NYOLOLO WATUTANKUBI
LECOI
Chef T5 9 Sect Ops

REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO
FORCES ARMÉES
ETAT MAJOR GENERAL
COORDINATION DES OPERATIONS
OPERATION AMANI LEO S/K
4 ZONE OPERATIONNELLE
ETAT MAJOR
T5

BON DE LOGEMENT N° 0148 /EM4ZOPS/T5/2011

Le nommé(e) : [redacted] Grade : *Major*
Fonction : *Adjt. Z.* Unité : *4 Zops AMANI LEO*
Matricule : [redacted]
Est autorisé de loger à l'hôtel : *KILIZA HOTEL*
Durée de logement est de : *03 JOURS (TROIS JOURS)*
Motif de logement : *MISSION DE SERVICE*

Fait à : *UNIRA* le *11/08/2011*


NYOLOLO WATUTANKUBI
LECOI
Chef T5 4ZOPS AMANI-LEO

Letters Vitshumbi life vest affair

1. Letter of Kyaghanda in defense of protestors

 **Association Culturelle Kyaghanda a.s.b.l.**
Obughuma bw'aba YIRA

Conseil Culturel
Le Bureau du Conseil

APPEL DE LA COMMUNAUTE YIRA/NANDE SUR LE DOSSIER DE PROTESTATION DES PECHEURS DU LAC EDOUARD CONTRE LA DECISION DE PORT OBLIGATOIRE DES GILETS DE SAUVETAGE CE SAMEDI 07 JANVIER 2012 A VITSHUMBI.

La Communauté Yira/Nande est saisie et préoccupée par la situation qui prévaut à Vitshumbi sur le port obligatoire du gilet de sauvetage et qui s'est envenimée ce samedi 07 janvier 2012. Elle reste de cœur avec toutes les autorités ainsi que les autres Communautés et forces en présence pour voir le lac Edouard continuer à jouer son rôle nourricier pour la Communauté, le Nord-Kivu et toute la Sous-région. Elle présente ses regrets pour la situation ainsi que ses condoléances pour les familles éprouvées. Elle reste encore une fois disponible pour offrir ses bons offices et contribuer à un aboutissement heureux du dossier dans l'intérêt de chaque citoyen.

A. Les Faits

Ce samedi 07 janvier 2012, les pêcheurs du lac Edouard, à Vitshumbi, Territoire de Rutshuru, dans la province du Nord Kivu ont vivement protesté contre la décision de port obligatoire du gilet de sauvetage par les pêcheurs, marins et passagers sur toutes les pirogues qui naviguent sur ledit lac. Cette protestation a causé des dégâts humains et matériels énormes tandis que des présumés responsables ont été arrêtés et conduits manu militari dans des cachots de fortunes, connus des seuls détracteurs pour seulement y être torturés et forcé de céder.

B. Historique des faits

L'an 2011, un fournisseur de gilets de sauvetage, le Comité des pêcheurs du lac Edouard, basé à Vitshumbi ainsi que les autorités administratives, s'arrangent pour commercialiser le gilet de sauvetage en l'imposant aux pêcheurs. Le contrat est mis en exécution et une période de 6 mois est donnée aux pêcheurs pour les voir s'en procurer pour toutes les catégories de passagers (pêcheurs, matelots et voyageurs) dans chaque pirogue. Le chiffre d'affaire est tellement importante que les partenaires ne sont pas prêts à lâcher prise malgré l'avis contraire des concernés.

C. Analyse des faits

1. Le port du gilet de sauvetage est une mesure sécuritaire saluée par toute personne qui se préoccupe de la vie de chaque citoyen qui emprunte les voies maritimes, fluviales et lacustres. L'initiative est donc à saluer.
2. La mise en application d'un plan sécuritaire comme celui-là devrait par contre relever d'une mesure globale, pour la province si elle est provinciale, pour le pays tout entier si elle est nationale et pour les pays qui l'ont ratifiée si elle est internationale. Il s'avère pourtant qu'il n'en est rien et que c'est plutôt un arrangement d'une clique pour des intérêts inavoués.

Acte Notarial Ville de Beni (RDC) n° 522/09 du 02 septembre 2009.
 Tél. +243 997694193, 815538938 ; Mails : kyaghanda_kikulu@yahoo.fr, conseilculturel@yahoo.fr.



Association Culturelle Kyaghanda a.s.b.l.

Obughuma bw'aba YIRA

Conseil Culturel Le Bureau du Conseil

3. Dans une telle opération, certains des partenaires s'attachent à leurs profits, leurs gains. Les autres sont par contre tracassés par les charges supplémentaires qu'elle occasionne, c'est-à-dire en soi des pertes, le cas des pêcheurs ici. En conséquence, les perdants 'en tiennent à des négociations, les gagnants s'accrochent à leur décision. Et la situation s'enlise pour déboucher à l'explosion comme celle-là.
4. Une décision de masse comme cette mesure implique des préalables, notamment l'accord et l'adhésion préalables de la masse, une période de sensibilisation et une phase d'essai. Peut-on justifier que ce sont les mêmes personnes qui auraient manifesté leur accord et adhésion préalables qui par la suite ont manifesté contre leur propre volonté ?
5. Dans le contexte négatif de l'assertion ci-dessus, la mesure du port du gilet est discriminatoire « seulement pour le lac Edouard », sauf si ce lac présente des dangers particuliers au Nord-Kivu, en RDC ou dans le monde. Ce port aurait donc été facultatif. Et ce qui a irrité et continue d'irriter la masse, c'est cette discrimination observée et appliquée toujours dans le milieu. En effet, beaucoup de lois socio-économiques que nous ne citons pas ici sont toujours discriminatoires quant à ce qui concerne cette partie de la RDC.
6. Les méthodes populaires de revendication telles qu'utilisées, dénotent d'un refus catégorique des détracteurs à renoncer à leur besogne.
7. Les personnes arrêtées sont plutôt celles qui se sont exprimées par la bouche auprès de l'autorité et des forces de l'ordre. Ce sont ces méthodes pacifiques que l'Association Culturelle Kyaghanda « a.s.b.l. « Obughuma bw'aba Yira » prône pour toute personne de culture Yira. Malheureusement, tout laisse croire que, pour le pouvoir congolais, provincial ou local, il est légal et recommandé de manifester en pillant ou cassant, sous-peine d'être arrêté et torturé lorsqu'on paraît pacifique là où tout le monde casse. Par ailleurs, les cachots de fortunes utilisés semblent avalisés par le Gouvernement tant National que Provincial.

D. Responsabilités

1. Pour avoir imposé ou cherché à imposer une mesure discriminatoire, toutes les autorités impliquées dans ce dossier sont coupables de discrimination, de corruption et de trafic d'influence et coresponsables de tous les dommages.
2. Les opérateurs économiques fournisseurs de ces gilets sont aussi coupables de corruptions et portent la responsabilité des dégâts humains et matériels occasionnés qu'ils sont sommés de réparer.



Association Culturelle Kyaghanda a.s.b.l.

Obughuma bw'aba YIRA

Conseil Culturel Le Bureau du Conseil

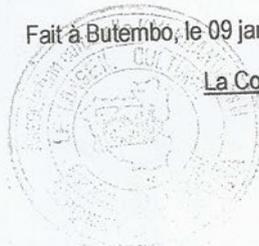
3. Les membres du comité des pêcheurs, pour s'être impliqués et avoir cautionné cette salle opération, devrait démissionner et être entendu afin que ses responsabilités soient établies.
4. Quant aux personnes arrêtées pour leur revendication et protestation verbales auprès des autorités et forces de l'ordre, elles devraient être libérées sans condition avec réparation et constituer, au vu de leur sagesse et courage, le noyau pour la mise en œuvre d'un système de sécurité des pêcheurs du lac Edouard.

E. En conclusion.

1. Bien que le port du gilet de sauvetage soit salutaire et conseillé, la mesure d'imposition de ce gilet seulement sur le lac Edouard est illégale, discriminatoire, incorrecte et relève d'une magouille politico - administrative, d'une corruption et d'un trafic d'influence. Ces actes rendent totalement responsables de la situation et des dégâts, à la fois les autorités et opérateurs économiques impliqués ainsi que le Comité de Pêcheurs.
2. Les personnes arrêtées doivent être libérées sans condition. Leur méthode de revendication et de protestation qui consiste à aller s'exprimer auprès du partenaire ou des forces de l'ordre au lieu de casser relèvent de la culture Yira dont ils sont essentiellement tributaires et sont à encourager.
3. Quant à ces pêcheurs dont la survie est liée à ce lac depuis des générations, ils n'ont pour souci que de voir chacun ménager ses opportunités pour voir leur quiétude et leur survie se pérenniser. C'est sous cet angle que leurs problèmes et leurs actions doivent être circonscrits.
4. Si les gilets de sauvetage constituent une mesure de sécurité, leur mise en application doit être instituée par une loi ou une mesure non discriminatoire et négociée entre partenaires sur toute l'étendue de la République. Par ailleurs, les cachots de fortune, si pas de torture ne doivent plus exister dans un Etat qui se veut de droit.

Fait à Butembo, le 09 janvier 2012.

La Communauté



2. Letter of provincial ministry of agriculture to naval forces in Vitshumbi



Explanation for coding of case studies

Case #1: The ex-20th IB in Butembo¹

The ex-20th IB was one of the few Integrated Brigades that had not been broken up with the creation of the Amani Leo structures in 2009, being simply assigned a new brigade number and absorbing a limited number of ex-Mai Mai troops. Having been integrated in 2005 in the CBR Luberizi, this unit had stayed together for a long time and appeared relatively cohesive. It had operated first in Ituri and then in Rutshuru, where it conducted operations against the FDLR, arriving in the *Grand Nord* at the start of the Amani Leo operations in 2009. Due to the general flux in these operations, it seems to have had a short time horizon, which was therefore coded with '1'. While the brigade commander had once or twice been changed, most of the *état-major* and deputy commanders had remained the same since the unit had left the CBR. This leadership, including the current brigade commander, was appreciated among the troops. Furthermore, it was reported to be relatively responsible and to have a degree of control. Therefore, command was coded with '1'. Interviews with members of the *état-major* and some rank and file learnt that the brigade did not frame civilians in its area of deployment primarily in terms of an hostile out-group, prompting a coding of 'hostile discourses' with '0'.

While the brigade was involved in significant revenue-generation activities (coding of '1'), it did not make the impression of being geared towards establishing profound economic control, having to tread carefully due to the vested interests of the Butembo business community. Therefore, its main projects within the case study area, which was Butembo and surroundings (which represented only a part of the deployment zone of the ex-20th), were considered to be 'revenue generation' and 'basic control' (both coded '1'). The brigade did not carry out significant military operations in that area, leading to a coding of '0'. Although having been involved in quite serious human rights violations in its previous deployment locations in Ituri and Rutshuru, within Butembo and surroundings, the behavior of the ex-20th was experienced to be neither very bad nor very good. Civilians reported this unit to behave generally reasonable, but to engage in occasional misconduct. The biggest complaint about the brigade was its failure to end the rampant insecurity in Butembo. The resulting discontent led to evaluations that were overall quite negative, although they were mixed, causing the outcome to be coded '1'.

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1

Concerning deployment context-related factors, the city of Butembo and surroundings is obviously not an isolated area, prompting a coding of '0' for isolation. In relation to countervailing forces, the *Grand Nord* is characterized by the presence of a strong and semi-autonomous political-commercial elite. Although heavily internally divided, in the past, this elite has proven to be able to form a common front whenever they deem their common interests to be threatened by 'outsiders', such as the political center. Therefore, countervailing forces were coded '1'. Given that Butembo is a commercial hub, there are many opportunities for revenue generation, prompting a coding of '1'. However, a part of these opportunities is difficult to access, due to entrenched interests and high levels of required trust. This particular applies to the long-distance trade, which is the engine of the local economy, but largely restricted to certain Nande networks. Consequently, accessibility of revenue-generation opportunities was coded '0', and trust-based revenue generation '1'.

Due to a long history of protection arrangements with armed actors, violent protection services have become institutionalized in the *Grand Nord*. In combination with a high level of local conflicts, this causes the demand for such services to be elevated, leading to a coding of '1'. The normalization of protection arrangements with armed actors has contributed to and is reproduced by the presence of a host of competing armed protection providers (hence a coding of '1' for this factor), as evidenced by the omnipresence of HUNI. Concerning hostile discourses of (parts of) the military by civilians, these were not very pronounced in relation to the ex-20th IB. At the time of the fieldwork, many interlocutors in the *Grand Nord* stated to be discontent with the accelerated integration of the ex-CNDP, as it had reinforced the presence of Rwandophone troops in the area, in particular in the south of Lubero. However, there were no ex-CNDP

¹ The *Grand Nord* and the ex-20th IB were discussed on pp. 99; 188–190; 262; 273; 327–328; 330; 331.

troops in the ex-20th IB, making this unit look good by comparison. Since there was also no pronounced presence of other troops of a certain ethnic background framed in antagonistic terms, ‘hostile discourses’ was coded ‘0’.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1

Case #2: The 223rd brigade in northern Bwisha (Rutshuru)²

The 223rd brigade Amani Leo, headquartered in Nyongera close to Kiwanja, was a mixture of the very last IB, which had finished its training only in 2008, and many rapidly integrated ex-CNDP troops. As only limited efforts were made to forge a whole out of these two components, which was in part a result of the brigade being riddled with parallel command chains, the 223rd was little cohesive. Command and control was further compounded by the ex-CNDP’s unwillingness to allow its troops to be punished by non ex-CNDP commanders or to have them sent to military justice. Therefore, control over troops was patchwork and heavily negotiated, leading to a coding of command with ‘0’. The time horizon of this unit was short (coding of ‘1’), like that of most Amani Leo brigades, as it likely anticipated the rapid rotations characteristic of this period. Concerning this unit’s projects, both the ex-CNDP and the non-ex CNDP leadership had revenue generation high on their agenda (coding of ‘1’). Additionally, the unit was engaged in numerous operations against the FDLR and other groups, prompting a coding of ‘1’ for ‘military operations’. Due to the volatility of the environment, it appeared to be primarily occupied with maintaining territorial/military control, therefore not striving for comprehensive influence over a broader range of governance domains (hence ‘control’ was not coded). In relation to the discourses on civilians that dominated in the brigade, not sufficient data could be gathered to properly assess this factor, causing it to be left open (marked as ‘x’).

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#2	0	0	1	1	0	1	x	1

In relation to the features of the deployment context of the 223rd brigade (the northern part of the Bwisha *chefferie*), the majority of this setting is relatively isolated (hence coded as ‘1’), although the towns of Kiwanja and Rutshuru are quite accessible from Goma. Concerning the presence of countervailing forces, there are a number of influential Hutu politicians originating from this area, and the customary chief (*mwami* Ndeze) has some-albeit quite limited-power. Furthermore, the Banande in Rutshuru can mobilize powerful political actors from their ethnic group that are based in the *Grand Nord* and Goma. While powerful countervailing forces thus potentially exist, the political factionalism and economic competition within and between the different communities in Bwisha often prevent them from forging of a common front. Nevertheless, on occasion, broad coalitions of actors have been mobilized for resistance, as evidenced by the events during the AFDL and CNDP occupations. Therefore, it was considered that the potential for opposition is present, leading to a coding of ‘1’ for countervailing forces. In relation to the local economy, there are multiple opportunities for revenue generation in this part of Bwisha (hence a coding of ‘1’), in part due to the border post of Ishasha and the presence of the Virunga Park nearby. However, many revenue-generation opportunities relate to the protection of illegal economic activities, such as clandestine fishing, charcoal production and poaching, which is typically provided by armed actors. Therefore, they are difficult to access without the use of force, leading to a coding of ‘0’ for accessibility. Since many of these activities are more force-based than trust-based, trust-based revenue-generation activities were not considered to be significant in this environment (coding of ‘0’).

Concerning the demand for violent protection services, it was explained that protection arrangements with violent actors have become institutionalized in this part of Rutshuru, including soliciting armed actors for settling conflicts in a violent manner. Since there are many conflicts in Binza, Busanza and Bukoma, the demand for violent interventions is high (coding of ‘1’). This has contributed to the presence of a multitude of competing armed protection providers (coded ‘1’), which include different foreign and domestic armed groups, local gangs, deserters, and army units. In relation to the last factor, hostile discourses on (parts of) the FARDC among civilians, these were very palpable in relation to the ex-CNDP component (coding of ‘1’). This was largely a result of the CNDP’s involvement in several massacres in this area when operating as a rebel group and during the time of *mixage*. These discourses fed into negative evaluations, which were however also a result of the extreme insecurity that people were exposed to under this brigade. Not only was the behavior of the unit

2 For a background on the 223rd and the Bwisha area, see pp. 96–98; 209; 237–239; 338–340.

itself a source of insecurity, the military operations it conducted triggered intense upheaval due to the ensuing power struggles and shifts in control, and it did not appear to be able to manage this insecurity and protect civilians against retaliations by armed groups. Therefore, the outcome of case #2 was coded '1'.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#2	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1

Case #3: The naval forces on Lake Edward³

Similar to the naval forces on Lake Tanganyika, those based in Vitshumbi made the impression of having revenue generation as their primary project, as evidenced by their minimal investment in public security-related activities. Neither force was equipped with sufficient boats nor was granted the fuel to conduct patrols on the water, implying that most of their movements were dedicated to revenue generation. The naval unit in Vitshumbi was also reported to be under strong pressure from its headquarters in Goma to generate revenue under the *rapportage* system. This seems to have contributed to its willingness to protect extremely environmentally destructive techniques of illegal fishing, and to collaborate with armed groups in order to safeguard its share of the protection market. The unit also tried to establish wider influence, for instance by determining the patrolling schedules and routes of mixed patrols with the ICCN and by interfering in civilian affairs, such as administrative regulations relating to maritime traffic. It was therefore decided that in addition to revenue generation, comprehensive control was a second important project (causing both to be coded '1'). Given that the naval forces on Lake Edward, including the commander, had arrived in the area in 2004 and had never been redeployed, their time horizon was clearly long, hence coded '0'. Concerning the quality of the command, the colonel heading this unit seemed to condone violence employed by his troops to extort fishermen and to maintain a hold over the very competitive protection market for illegal fishing. Therefore, command was coded '0'. Within the discourses employed by the staff, quite negative framings of civilians were detected, which portrayed civilians as 'recalcitrant' and 'in need of a lesson'. Consequently, a coding of hostile discourses with '1' seemed warranted.

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#3	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1

In relation to the features of the deployment environment, most factors are the same as for the adjacent part of northern Bwisha (hence case #2). Vitshumbi and the wider Lake Edward area are undoubtedly isolated ('1'), not least due to the insecurity on the access road to this village. While there are some countervailing forces, notably through the Banande's links to powerful political-economic actors in the *Grand Nord* and Goma, they were considered to be overall quite weak ('0'). It should be mentioned that counterweight is also provided by the ICCN, but as this is a paramilitary service, it was considered an armed actor, rather than a civilian force. Concerning the structure of the local economy, there are significant revenue-generation opportunities due to the presence of the lake and the Virunga Park (coded '1'). However, these consist mostly of illegal activities or the protection thereof by competing armed actors, causing the use of force to be a requirement for gaining access (and accessibility therefore to be coded '0'). At the same time, trust is of lesser importance, hence coded '0'.

The long history of protection arrangements with armed actors in this militarized area has caused these arrangements to become institutionalized, in particular among clandestine fishermen. As many people in the area depend on such arrangements for their livelihoods, the demand for violent protection services is high (coding of '1'). This has promoted the presence of a multitude of armed actors competing for the spoils of protection (hence 'competing armed actors' was coded '1'). In contrast to case #2, it did not appear that civilians' evaluations of the navy in Vitshumbi were shaped by particular hostile discourses drawing on antagonistic forms of ethnic identification, leading to a coding of discourse with '0'. This did not prevent civilians from evaluating interaction with this unit negatively, although important differences in evaluations were found per group. While fishermen and actors connected to the ICCN were extremely negative about the naval forces, some other groups in Vitshumbi painted a less dark picture. Nevertheless, due to the importance of fishing in this area, the opinion of fishermen was judged to weigh heavily in shaping overall attitudes, leading to a coding of the outcome with '1'.

³ The naval forces on Lake Edward were discussed on pp. 156–157; 175–176; 237–239; 324–325; 326.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#3	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1

Case #4: The 433rd brigade Amani Leo in Katobo (Moyens Plateaux of Uvira)⁴

In 2009, at the start of the Amani Leo operations, the 433rd (ex-234th) brigade, which had arrived in the Uvira area in 2004, was deployed to Sange (in the Ruzizi Plain) and parts of *Moyens* and *Hauts Plateaux* of Uvira, eventually setting up its headquarters in Katobo, in the *groupement* of Kigoma (*chefferie* of the Bafuliiru). Given that research was only conducted in one part of its vast zone of deployment, case #4 is limited to the Katobo area (*Moyens Plateaux*). With other units already having struck the FDLR in this area before the arrival of the 433rd, at the time of the fieldwork, the main project of the brigade was to protect the population against retaliations and exactions by the FDLR, and to maintain basic control (coded '1'). The FDLR had withdrawn higher up in the mountains, but continued to operate on the fringes of the *Moyens Plateaux*, causing people who had fled to return only gradually. It is important to note that the 433rd brigade had its main revenue-generation activities in the town of Uvira and immediate surroundings, where it had been stationed since 2004. When deployed in the Katobo area, which is relatively close to Uvira, staff continued their economic activities in town, often with the help of their spouses residing there. The *groupement* of Kigoma does not offer many opportunities for income generation, since the majority of the population lives off small-scale agriculture, and there are few other economic activities. Therefore, as enabled by its ongoing economic activities in Uvira, revenue generation in the *Moyens Plateaux* did not appear to be a priority for the ex-234th (hence is coded '0'), although soldiers were reported to pillage agricultural fields and small livestock, and the brigade did set up roadblocks.

The command of the 234th brigade used to be relatively responsible and professional, with the exception of the somewhat polarizing first Mubembe brigade commander, who left in 2007. The commander heading the unit at the time of the fieldwork, who was not from the ex-234th, was similarly slightly controversial. Although exercising basic control over his subordinates, he was reported to strongly focus on making money. However, many of the officers in the *état-major* had remained the same since the creation of the 234th, which somewhat counterbalanced the negative influence of the brigade commander. These officers were reported to be relatively responsible, and were respected by their subordinates, pointing to considerable vertical cohesion. For these reasons, command has been coded '1'. That the brigade's leadership was generally responsible also emerged from the fact that no traces of overly negative framings of civilians could be detected among the brigade staff at the time of the fieldwork (prompting a coding with '0' for hostile discourses). Concerning time horizon, coding poses some difficulties. While the troops deployed in Katobo did not expect to remain there very long, given the fluidity of Amani Leo deployment, they probably did anticipate continuing to stay in the wider Uvira region, where many had built up dense networks of socio-economic contacts since their arrival in 2004. As they continued to be in contact with these networks, time horizon was coded as long term ('0').

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#4	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

In relation to the deployment environment, despite Katobo not being very far from Uvira, the Kigoma *groupement* itself is a quite isolated setting ('1'), and many areas are only accessible by foot. It is part of the *chefferie* of the Bafuliiru, which had at the moment of the fieldwork a relatively powerful customary chief, who was backed by self-defense forces. These also operated in Kigoma, and were similarly commanded by local customary authorities. However, the power of the chief and lower-level customary authorities was less strong in Kigoma than in Lemera, and the Local Defenses were considered weaker in this *groupement* as well. Since there were also no powerful economic operators, countervailing forces were considered to be absent, hence coded '0'. With respect to the local economy, it was already mentioned that there were not many revenue-generation opportunities ('0'), implying also a coding of '0' for accessibility and for trust-based revenue generation.

The demand for violent protection services from the FARDC was found to be low ('0') in this part of the *Moyens Plateaux*. While long-term cohabitation with the FDLR had routinized interactions with armed actors, making it likely they were also appealed to for furthering particularistic and private projects, this was not reported to have assumed excessive forms. Furthermore, in comparison to other parts of the *chefferie*, there were not many intense local conflicts in the Katobo area. For instance, Bafuliiru and Banyamulenge have always lived together relatively well in this area, causing tensions between these groups to be limited. At the time of the fieldwork, there were no

4 On the (ex-)234th/433rd brigade and the context of the *Moyens Plateaux* of Uvira, see pp. 94–96; 122; 273; 297–299.

competing armed actors, prompting this factor to be coded as absent (hence '0'). While the FDLR was largely pushed to the higher parts of the mountains, the Local Defenses in Kigoma generally collaborated rather than competed with the FARDC. In relation to civilians' discourses on this brigade, no framings of the unit or its members as a particular hostile out-group were detected, leading to a coding of discourse with '0'. Concerning the outcome, the population in and around Katobo was quite content with the presence of the 433rd, in particular in comparison to its predecessors, and was therefore coded '0'. However, it has to be emphasized that this coding does not concern the brigade's deployment in the *Hauts Plateaux* area. Both the second battalion based in Bijombo (Bavira *chefferie*) and the third battalion stationed in the *groupement* of Muhungu, which consisted in majority of non-ex-234th staff having been attached to the brigade, were reported to misbehave. Furthermore, the 433rd engaged regularly in forced portering, using civilians to carry items into the hills. Hence, like in the other cases, a coding of '0' does not imply that there were no problems with the unit in question, only that these were considered to be overall relatively modest.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Case #5: The 432nd brigade Amani Leo in Lemera (*Moyens Plateaux of Uvira*)⁵

The 432nd brigade was composed for an estimated two thirds of ex-CNDP troops. It was placed under a commander who had no background in the CNDP, although he was close to some ex-CNDP figures that he knew from his time as a militia commander in Ituri, where he had served during the Second Congo War. The brigade had received as specific mission to attack the FDLR, and conducted several offensives to dislodge the group. Since its members did not engage extensively in revenue generation nor interfered deeply in civilian affairs, it was concluded that military operations were its sole project (coded as '1'). Concerning leadership, the commander struggled to control his troops due to parallel command chains, leading to a coding of '0', even if he himself was quite committed to maintaining discipline. The time horizon of this unit was short (hence coded '1'), as the brigade had been sent only for the initial operations that had to push the FDLR out of the area. In respect of the discourses on civilians employed by the brigade, not sufficient in-depth interviews were conducted to be able to properly assess this dimension, which is therefore not coded.

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#5	0	0	0	1	0	1	x	1

As for the characteristics of the deployment environment, in order to arrive in the Lemera area, one has to go quite far into the *Moyens Plateaux*, causing the area to be relatively isolated (therefore coded '1'). Due to the presence of a quite powerful *mwami*, who was backed by Local Defense forces, there were countervailing forces, reason why this factor was coded '1'. Given the grip of the customary authorities and associated (Bafuliiru) networks over the local economy, in particular the cassiterite mining sector, revenue generation was relatively inaccessible to outsiders. Therefore, while revenue-generation opportunities were present (hence coded '1'), accessibility was coded '0'. Since the Bafuliiru networks close to the *mwami* did manage to operate in Lemera, it appears that the economy was partly driven by trust networks, causing trust-based revenue generation to be coded '1'.

Due to the relative distrust towards the FARDC, and the presence of more trusted Local Defense forces, the demand for violent protection services from the FARDC appeared to be low ('0').⁶ Another reason for this could be that at the time of deployment of the 432nd, there were relatively few conflicts in this part of the *chefferie*, although the Bafuliiru there are regularly involved in major power competition, the intensity of which fluctuates.⁷ Concerning hostile framings of FARDC troops, these were salient due to the large-scale presence of ex-CNDP Tutsi troops (hence coded '1'), and the bad memories people held of the massacres carried out by Tutsi troops in this part of

5 The 432nd was discussed on pp. 94–96; 158; 257; 277.

6 It is important to note that the demand for violent protection services from the 432nd was reported to be higher in Kamanyola (Walungu). However, this area fell outside of the case study zone, which only concerned the *Moyens Plateaux* of Lemera.

7 In 2011, a major power conflict would break out in the *groupement* of Luvungi and in 2012, after the death of the *mwami*, in the *chefferie* as a whole. The appearance of an M23-linked Mai Mai group and a power conflict erupting in the Ruzizi Plain that same year would further aggravate these tensions. However, between 2010 and the start of 2011, there were comparatively few conflicts, as the *mwami* had a firm grip on his *chefferie* and there was a common enemy in the form of the FDLR.

the *Moyens Plateaux* in the run-up to the AFDL rebellion and during the Second Congo War. Competing armed protection providers were considered to be present (and therefore coded '1') in the form of the Local Defenses, who simultaneously collaborated and competed with the FARDC. Furthermore, the FDLR, which was still influential in parts of the *Hauts Plateaux*, made regular incursions into the *Moyens Plateaux*. In relation to the outcome, the 432nd was very obviously not appreciated by the population (prompting a coding with '1'). Despite some efforts by the brigade commander to prevent abuse, the staff of this brigade were involved in numerous human rights violations. Furthermore, the population had no confidence in its capacities and willingness to protect them, which was partly related to the intense distrust they felt towards the ex-CNDP troops, and the brigade's limited possibilities to control the vast mountainous terrain of the *Plateaux*.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#5	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1

Case #6: The 29th IB in the Mutambala sector (Fizi)⁸

During the long period that the 29th IB stayed in Baraka and surroundings (causing time horizon to be coded '0'), it primarily engaged in maintaining basic control, although revenue generation was also an important project (prompting both to be coded '1'). The brigade commander and *état-major* were both willing and able to control their troops, which explains why command was coded '1'. The staff of this brigade, most of whom had had extensive military education, did not employ discourses that portrayed civilians as a hostile out-group (hence a coding of '0' for discourse).

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#6	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0

Parts of Mutambala are isolated, but the town of Baraka is relatively accessible, and also has a substantial presence of international NGOs and UN agencies. Therefore, it was coded as non-isolated ('0'). There were considered to be countervailing forces in Mutambala in the form of the Babembe political-military elite linked to the Mai Mai of Yakotumba and to Gen. Dunia, whose networks are key players in the area. However, during the deployment of the 29th, the unit avoided a standoff with local elites and the Mai Mai, leading to peaceful cohabitation and collaboration. Concerning the local economy, there are significant possibilities to gain revenue in this part of Fizi (coding of '1'), for instance in the local and regional trade (across Lake Tanganyika) in products like dried fish, hemp, *divers*, and minerals, but also in charcoal production, shopkeeping, furniture production and the transport sector. While those with vested interests will always try to defend their turf and block competition, there are overall relatively few obstacles to gaining revenue in Mutambala, hence accessibility was coded '1'. However, a share of the economic activities, like trade over Lake Tanganyika with Katanga and Tanzania, are controlled by relatively closed Bembe-dominated networks. Another part, such as running shops and bars, is facilitated by having fixed networks of customers and suppliers. Therefore, it was considered that trust-based ties were quite important for accessing revenue generation (coding of '1'), even though not an equally big necessity in all sectors of the local economy.

The demand for violent protection services from the FARDC was considered to be low, prompting a coding of '0'. While the multiple protection arrangements that the 29th IB developed in the Mutambala area caused the demand for protection services, in particular dispute processing, to be high, this did not necessarily concern overly violent interventions. Furthermore, during the period of deployment of the 29th, up to November 2009, there were no important competing armed protection providers, as there was a policy of collaborating with the Mai Mai of Yakotumba and some of the troops that were still controlled by Gen Dunia. The coding has therefore been '0', even if there were occasional tensions between Gen. Dunia and Yakotumba.⁹ Concerning hostile framings of the troops of the 29th, these could not be detected among the population of Mutambala, which was related to this unit's good behavior and the non-Rwandophone origins of most of the staff, including the commander (leading to a coding of '0'). As regards the outcome, the ex-29th IB was the brigade described in the most positive terms of all the units studied, therefore clearly meriting a coding of '0'.

⁸ The 29th IB and the context of Fizi were discussed on pp. 89–91; 116; 122; 124; 296–297.

⁹ Déo Namujimbo, 'À Fizi, les anciens mai-mai continuent de faire la loi', *Syfia Grands Lacs*, 4 May 2007.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#6	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0

Case #7: The 641st (ex-29th IB) in southern Ngandja (Fizi)¹⁰

When redeployed to the Misisi area (in the southern part of the Ngandja sector), the ex-29th IB, by then renamed 641st brigade Amani Leo, started to focus increasingly on revenue generation, and on influencing the conditions for revenue generation, although it did continue to provide some security to civilians. It also carried out military operations against the Mai Mai, but these were relatively limited and did not primarily take place in the Misisi area, but on the coastal strip of Lake Tanganyika. Therefore, the main projects of this brigade were identified as revenue generation and basic control (both coded '1'). During the mining ban, the ambitions of the, then newly appointed, brigade commander led him to strive for more comprehensive forms of control, which the brigade as a whole however did not participate in. Concerning unit command, for most part of the unit's deployment period in Misisi and surroundings, the (new) brigade commander was not predisposed towards maintaining strict control over and discipline among his troops (leading to a coding with '0'). However, the negative effects of his agency were partly, but not entirely, compensated by the efforts of other *état-major* members, who maintained their previous standards of military professionalism. Therefore, the '0' coding should be seen as a '0 light'. Given that under the Amani Leo operations rotations were frequent, the time horizon of this unit was short ('1'). Concerning discourses on civilians, while many in the brigade had started to adopt somewhat negative framings of the Babembe, in particular after the clashes with Yakutomba in November 2009 in Baraka, discourses remained comparatively moderate, and were therefore coded '0'.

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#7	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0

In respect of the deployment environment, southern Ngandja used to be an isolated environment (certainly up to the improvement of the main road by Banro Corporation from end 2012 onwards), hence the setting is coded '1'. Since Ngandja is the heartland of the Mai Mai Yakutomba, and many influential customary chiefs, including the *chef de localité* of Misisi, are closely linked to that group, countervailing forces were considered to be present ('1'). The local economy is dominated by the gold sector, and offers many revenue-generation opportunities ('1'). These seemed relatively accessible to the FARDC ('1'), in particular at the time of the mining ban. The mining ban also further lowered the importance of trust for engaging in revenue generation, prompting a coding of '0'. In general, trust-based ties do not seem crucial for operating in Misisi, as a large share of the local economy rather depends on protection by armed actors. A part of the demand for this protection is directed towards the FARDC and involves violence, causing 'demand for violent protection services' to be coded '1'. For instance, the FARDC tends to protect the sale of cannabis, prohibited alcohol, and falsified gold, which sometimes entails violent interventions in disputes and to ward off other state services. Furthermore, the FARDC was observed to intervene in local conflicts between and among customary and politico-administrative authorities. It was for instance involved in the conflict between the *chef de secteur* of Ngandja and the *chef de groupement* of Basikasilu, in which one side had appealed to the Mai Mai, and the other had solicited protection from the FARDC. This already indicates that the FARDC were not the only armed protection providers. Indeed, protection was also provided by demobilized Mai Mai elements, (representatives of) Gen. Sekatenda, a small group of (ex-)FDLR present in the Ngandja hills and a variety of competing FARDC agencies. Since these were often in competition, 'competing armed protection providers' was coded '1'. There were no hostile discourses on the troops of the 641st among the population of this part of Ngandja ('0'), which was received with open arms after the departure of the despised ex-PARECO dominated 651st, seen as 'infiltrated' by Rwandophones. Although the image of the brigade progressively deteriorated, it remained sufficiently good to warrant a coding of the outcome with '0'.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#7	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0

¹⁰ The 641st brigade was discussed on pp. 116; 122; 150; 259–260; 301–302.

Case #8: The 112th brigade in the Minembwe area (Hauts Plateaux of Fizi)¹¹

The 112th, a brigade controlled by Gen. Masunzu that never went to *brassage* and had dominated the *Plateaux* since 2002/3, (causing time horizon to be coded as long, hence ‘0’), pursued as one of its primary projects the establishment of comprehensive control (coded ‘1’) on the *Plateaux*. This included ensuring the continuing dominance of the Masunzu-linked civilian authorities in the Minembwe area, such as the *chef de poste*. The brigade was also charged with holding ground against and attacking the dissident groups of Bisogo and Makanika, which later merged into the FRF, causing military operations to be coded ‘1’. Furthermore, the 112th, at least the leadership, engaged in significant revenue-generation activities (coded ‘1’), in particular in the gold trade and cattle. While accused of unscrupulous methods of maintaining control, including torturing opponents (for instance the leader of the Twigwaneho militia, see also Brabant and Nzweve, 2013: 93), the brigade’s leadership did try to control its troops and maintain basic standards of conduct. In this respect, it is important to consider that it primarily operated amongst (extended) family members with close social ties. In relation to command, it is also pertinent to note that due to the common background of the 112th, most members of which had fought together against the Rwandan army in 2002 and sometimes before (in the RPF, AFDL or RCD), it had reasonable levels of vertical (in addition to horizontal) cohesion. Therefore, command was coded ‘1’. The 112th did not employ specific hostile discourses on civilians, although it did not refrain from depicting the FRF and its supporters in rather bleak terms. Yet, the latter were not framed as much as a hostile out-group deserving to be harmed, but more as those having made the wrong political choice. Therefore, hostile discourses were coded ‘0’.

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#8	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0

The Minembwe area is by all means isolated (‘1’), and a relatively poor area, where the majority of the population lives off small-scale cultivation and cattle. However, it has a number of smaller gold mining sites, which are largely managed and exploited by Bashi, while some Banyamulenge are involved in the trade. The Bashi dominate the mining cooperative *Coopérative minière des creuseurs artisanaux de Minembwe* (COMCAN), which manages most sites in the mining sectors of Minembwe and Rugezi, and some in Kitumba. Due to the presence of these mines, there were considered to be some revenue-generation opportunities (‘1’), although these are limited as a result of the small scale of exploitation. While the strong hold of established economic actors makes it difficult for outsiders to participate in the artisanal mining sector, since requiring connections within relatively closed (trust) networks (hence a coding of trust-based revenue generation with ‘1’), it is exactly the Masunzu-linked elite (including the officers of the 112th) that has built up this hold, prompting accessibility to be coded ‘1’. Concerning countervailing forces, although the Minembwe area was strongly under the control of the 112th, a part of the population had sympathies for and covertly supported the FRF. Old divisions stemming from the RCD era also continued to be felt, and a number of ex-RCD stalwarts had significant influence in Kinshasa. Therefore, countervailing forces were considered to be present (‘1’). Competing armed actors were equally considered to be present (‘1’), given that the FRF had (limited) access to the Minembwe area, and there were occasional incursions from the Nyindu and Fuliiru Mai Mai groups based in the surroundings. More important still was the Banyamulenge militia that operated between 2008–2010 in the Minembwe area to protect cattle (the Twigwaneho, see Brabant and Nzweve, 2013: 84–95), which collaborated, but also competed with the 112th.

As explained in the previous, the mutual negative framings of pro-Masunzu and pro-FRF supporters were more grounded in political factionalism than in identities believed to be immutable. Therefore, while the pro-Masunzu majority saw the brigade as belonging to ‘their’ camp, even among the pro-FRF minority in Minembwe, hostile discourses were considered to be absent (coded ‘0’). In relation to the demand for violent protection services, it was described that it was commonplace for inhabitants of the Minembwe area to appeal to their relatives in the 112th. While these appeals were sometimes for violent interventions, it generally concerned lesser forms of coercion, such as intimidations, prompting a coding of ‘0’. When trying to gauge how the 112th was evaluated, it emerged that due to the pronounced factionalism among the Banyamulenge, there were diametrically opposed evaluations of this unit along pro/anti-FRF fault lines. Yet given that the case study is limited to the Minembwe area of the *Plateaux*, where the highest concentration of Masunzu supporters was found, it was coded ‘0’. Although many civilians in this area identified problems with the brigade, like its penchant to intervene in family conflicts and their ineffectiveness in military terms, its conduct was described as overall reasonably well. This was also evidenced by the fact that when the brigade was replaced by ill behaving Amani Leo troops, many people in the Minembwe area stated to rather see them return.

¹¹ For a background on the 112th and the *Hauts Plateaux*, see pp. 92–94; 172; 181; 291; 299; 323–324.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#8	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0

Case #9: The 642nd (ex-112th) brigade in Lulenge and western Ngandja (Fizi)¹²

In 2009, the 112th became the 642nd brigade Amani Leo, after being mixed with over 300 Fuliiru and Nyindu Mai Mai and a few dozen FRF troops. In March 2010, this unit was redeployed to a zone at the intersection between Lulenge, western Ngandja and a small part of Kabambare (Maniema territory), setting up its headquarters in Lwiko, bordering the Minembwe area. Its main project in the new deployment site was to maintain basic control (coded with '1'). While parts of the brigade do seem to have been involved in revenue-generation activities, in particular some of the Fuliiru and Nyindu Mai Mai who continued to have influence in certain of the smaller gold mines in the Kitumba area, most reports qualified their involvement as relatively limited. Furthermore, although the 642nd was formally charged with conducting operations against the FDLR, it was generally seen as making little efforts to attack this group, which had largely withdrawn into the Itombwe forest. One reason for this might be that both the Banyamulenge and the Fuliiru and Nyindu ex-Mai Mai troops in the brigade knew the FDLR very well, having maintained friendly relations with them in the past.

The command of the 642nd brigade was considered to have and exercise reasonable control over its troops, although the ex-Mai Mai and Banyamulenge components each continued to pursue their own projects. Yet, the brigade commander (the Munyamulenge commander of the ex-112th) and the most important deputy commander (a Mufuliiru, previously deputy commander of the Mai Mai Assani Ngungu) both controlled their own group. Moreover, there was no major hostility or competition between the two, causing command to be relatively effective in relation to guarding discipline (hence coded with '1'). The leadership also did not seem to encourage or tolerate hostile framings of civilians, and these were not found to be prevalent among troops ('0'). In terms of time horizon, the coding is challenging. The Mai Mai part of the brigade were largely deployed in or close to their former stronghold in the Milimba hills, while the Banyamulenge also stayed close to their zone of origins. Moreover, they controlled areas where their cattle often transit, hence where they have vested interests. For these reasons, it was chosen to code time horizon as long term, hence '0'.

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#9	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

The deployment environment of the 642nd brigade was undoubtedly isolated, since it was only in 2012 that the Lulimba-Kilembwe road was improved, leading to a coding of '1'. Concerning revenue-generation opportunities, the gold mines in the Kitumba area are small, and most were not located in the area of control of the 642nd. It was therefore decided to code revenue-generation opportunities as scarce ('0'). Since not enough detailed information could be gathered on how mining activities were organized there, in particular at the sites not controlled by the mining cooperative COMCAN, it was decided not to code access to revenue-generation opportunities, and therefore also not to what extent these required trust-based relations to access. In respect of countervailing forces, these were considered to be absent (hence coded '0'). Neither the Ngandja part of the deployment area (including the Bafulliru/Banyindu inhabited zone) nor the Lulenge part had a presence of powerful actors that could form a (potential) counterweight to the FARDC. While certain Bembe politicians in the Lulenge sector linked to the *Patriotes résistants Mai-Mai* (PRM) party used to be relatively well connected in Kinshasa, their zone of influence was concentrated around Kilembwe, which fell outside of the 642nd's area of control. Furthermore, their influence had started to wane in this period, as evidenced by the results of the 2011 elections, in which the PRM gained meager results. While Gen. Sekatanda, who equally has his fief in Kilembwe, is certainly a powerful force in the region, he was considered a military, rather than a civilian actor, in part as his numerous bodyguards function like a private militia. Furthermore, his influence at the time of deployment of the 642nd (March 2010–March 2011) was still limited, and he only emerged as a truly powerful force in mid-2011, after building up his revenue-generation activities in the area. As there were few other armed actors, it was therefore considered that there were no competing armed protection providers in the area (coded '0'). Additionally, while the FDLR made occasional incursions, it did not appear to be in competition with the 642nd, which seemed to tolerate its presence.

The demand for violent protection services from the 642nd was difficult to assess, hence code, in part because no data on this were gathered for the small area around Milimba where some former Mai Mai were deployed. In general, the brigade was said to occasionally interfere

¹² The 642nd brigade was discussed on pp. 91–92; 139–140; 150; 299.

in civilian affairs, in particular by arresting people at the request of their opponents and then detain them at the *état-major*. However, this was reported to occur at a limited scale. What took on larger proportions were interventions by Banyamulenge officers in the Minembwe area, where they continued to be solicited for protection services by (extended) family members. These services included interference in cattle-related affairs in Lulenge, but this was considered to differ from the provision of protection services at the request of the population of that area. While the demand for violent protection services thus appeared low, it was eventually decided not to code this element, as not sufficient certainty on this could be obtained. In respect to civilians' discourses on this brigade, more solid data were gathered, and it could be certified that these were not strongly shaped by hostile ethnically colored framings (hence a coding of '0'). The reasons for this include the lesser salience of anti-Banyamulenge discourses both among the Babembe in the Lulenge part of Fizi and among the Babuyu, who live in the area around Kabeya (the part of Maniema that penetrates into Lulenge). Furthermore, neither of these groups appeared to have strong anti-Fuliiru feelings, although occasional tensions between Babembe and Bafiliiru are reported in various parts of Fizi. In respect of the outcome, evaluations of the 642nd were seen as overall relatively positive, promoting a coding of '0'. Although it was widely regretted that the brigade failed to bring security, in particular on the crucial Lulimba-Kilembwe axis, it was generally not seen in overly negative terms, or cited as being involved in systematic abuses themselves. As with all FARDC units, occasional incidents were certainly reported, but the proportions that they were seen to take on were relatively modest.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#9	1	0	0	x	x	0	x	0	0

*Case #10: The 651st in southern Ngandja (Fizi)*³

The 651st in the Misisi gold mining area (southern Ngandja sector) undoubtedly had revenue generation as a priority. The factors feeding into this include its expected short time horizon ('1'), the priorities of the brigade commander, and *rapportage* pressures. However, the brigade also attempted to exercise further-reaching influence, executing police duties, interfering in conflicts of all kind, and imposing itself on the local authorities. While engaging in military operations, these were not numerous, given that the FDLR had mostly withdrawn from the area and clashes between the FARDC and the Mai Mai of Yakotumba in this period primarily took place in other areas of Fizi. In part due to its drive for revenue generation, the leadership of the 651st made little efforts to strictly control its troops and avoid misbehavior against civilians, causing command to be coded '0'. Furthermore, as with most troops in the 65th sector, the discourses employed by the brigade framed civilians in negative terms, as primarily (Bembe) Mai Mai (supporters) that were hostile towards the FARDC. This has prompted a coding of discourse with '1'.

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#10	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1

The coding for the Ngandja sector has already been discussed for case #7 (the 641st brigade), and remains largely the same, including in respect of the demand for violent protection services. The latter continued to be high due to the massive upsurge in insecurity after the arrival of the 651st, and the ongoing importance of illegal activities like the sale of cannabis and forbidden liquor. Furthermore, the need for trust-based ties to engage in revenue generation was still considered to be limited, given that the climate of insecurity caused force, rather than trust to be a more important determinant of access to economic activities. The only factor that changed in comparison to case #7 is the coding for 'hostile discourses'. Given the Rwandophone dominance within the 651st, the fact that this brigade was widely seen to misbehave, and the strong influence of the Mai Mai in Ngandja, negative ethnic identity-based framings of this unit became salient among civilians (prompting a coding with '1'). The unit's widely denounced ill behavior, including the shooting down of several civilians during what came to be known as the 'Misisi massacre', warrants a coding of the outcome as negative (hence '1').

³ For the 651st brigade and the deployment context of southern Ngandja, see pp. 89–91; 116; 137; 169; 202; 208; 291–293.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#10	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1

Case #11: The 651st on the Hauts Plateaux of Fizi/Mwenga¹⁴

When the 651st was redeployed to the *Plateaux* in December 2010, its behavior drastically changed. This was to a large extent related to its changing projects, which now primarily consisted of guarding the security of the population and constructing good ties with local authorities to facilitate negotiations with the FRF. Therefore, basic control was considered to be the main (and sole) project of this unit (hence coded '1'). Since the leadership was committed to achieving this objective and made serious efforts to control its troops, command was coded '1'. Furthermore, it appears that the brigade's commanders did not foster or tolerate discourses featuring negative framings of civilians, leading discourse to be coded '0'. The time horizon of this unit was short ('1'), with the brigade leaving after only three months for regimentation.

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#11	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0

The deployment context-related factors are partly similar to those of case #8, since concerning the same deployment area (Minembwe), although the deployment zone of the 651st covered a larger part of the *Plateaux* area, as it included the former FRF-held zones. This also implies there were countervailing forces in the form of the customary chiefs and other authorities who were part of the civilian support networks of the FRF. Furthermore, in the Minembwe area, the political actors linked to Masunzu continued to be dominant, thereby circumscribing this unit's actions. Another similarity with case #8 resides in the demand for violent protection services from the FARDC, which continued to be low (hence is coded '0'). The command of the 651st was not too keen on getting heavily involved in local conflicts as it tried to retain a position of neutrality. Furthermore, many people continued to appeal to their relatives in the 642nd (ex-112th) brigade deployed nearby for resolving their personal and other conflicts.

What differed from case #8 was the accessibility of revenue-generation opportunities. In contrast to the 112th, whose staff were from the area and part of the dominant political-economic networks, these opportunities were little accessible to outsiders (causing accessibility to be coded '0'). Another factor that differed from case #8 was the presence of competing armed actors. While under the 112th, there had been a host of competing armed actors in the form of the FRF, the Twigwaneho militia and Mai Mai groups, during the deployment period of the 651st, the only armed actor of significance was the FRF. However, there was no strong competition between the two forces as the FARDC tried to reach out to this group. During the deployment period of the 651st, the Twigwaneho were no longer very active, while the remaining Mai Mai forces in the surroundings (notably the groups of Aoci and Mulumba) were contained to relatively isolated areas in the forest. Therefore, the factor 'competing armed actors' was coded '0'. In relation to the outcome of this case, evaluations of the 651st were overwhelmingly positive, prompting a coding of '0'. In part due to its good behavior, it succeeded in its mission of facilitating the negotiation process that made the FRF lay down arms in January 2011. This caused a wave of joy on the *Plateaux*, as people were hoping to see an end to years of internecine fighting and insecurity, which strongly fed into positive evaluations of the 651st.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#11	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0

¹⁴ The 651st on the *Plateaux* was discussed on pp. 94; 173; 293-294; 324.

Case #12: The 652nd on the Hauts Plateaux of Fizi/Mwenga¹⁵

The primary projects of the 652nd on the *Plateaux* were: first, to attack and contain the FRF, hence military operations (coded '1'); second, to try to establish comprehensive control (coded '1') by reducing the influence of FRF-allied civilian networks and entering into a protection arrangement with powerful civilian actors in the Minembwe area; and third, to engage in revenue-generation activities (coded '1'). Not only did they 652nd earn significant income by capitalizing upon the mining ban and its close relations with certain local authorities, it also engaged extensively in stealing, including through violent techniques like raids on markets. Such bad behavior was partly a result of the bad leadership (causing command to be coded '0'), which seemed willing to accept ill behavior by its troops in exchange for a part of the revenues. Given that it was deployed under the Amani Leo operations, the time horizon of the unit remained short ('1'). In respect of the discourses employed by the 652nd, it was found that negative framings of civilians circulated widely among its troops (being therefore coded '1'), as they represented the Banyamulenge as a recalcitrant people who in certain zones of the *Plateaux* were all FRF supporters.

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#12	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1

The deployment environment-related factors are coded mostly in a similar manner as in the previous case (#11), with two notable exceptions. Under the 652nd, the demand for violent protection services from the FARDC was considered to be relatively high (therefore coded '1'). The 652nd was deployed at the height of the customary power conflict between Mutegetsi and Ndahinda, prompting one of the parties to solicit the FARDC and use violence against his opponent. Furthermore, the fresh departure of the 642nd(ex-112th) forced the Masunzu-appointed civilian authorities to search for new armed protectors to back up their position and facilitate extortion schemes. What also differed was that under the 652nd, there were competing armed protection providers, prompting a coding of '1'. For one, the Twigwaneho displayed renewed activity in this period. As people did not fully trust the newly arrived government forces, having been for years under the exclusive military control of Banyamulenge troops, support for local self-defense forces grew. For another, Mai Mai forces were more active in this period, although they operated only on the margins. Furthermore, the FRF continued to exercise strong influence in its former fief, including via an elaborate network of local supporters. It used this influence to foment antagonism towards the 652nd, thereby drawing on anti-government discourses. However, the FRF and wider networks refrained from framing the 652nd as a particular out-group defined in ethnic terms, causing discourse to still be coded '0'. Concerning the outcome of this case, this unit was extremely unpopular (justifying a coding of '1'), as reflected in the fact that the FRF put forward as one of its demands for laying down arms that a judicial investigation be conducted into what it alleged were the unit's war crimes.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#12	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1

Case #13: The 712th regiment in Mutambala (Fizi)¹⁶

The 712th regiment was formed during the first wave of regimentation in 2011, when one battalion and a part of the *état-major* of the 641st (ex-29th IB) were mixed with the ex-652nd brigade of Col. Sekanabo. This regiment, which was headquartered in Baraka and initially also had a battalion deployed to the *Hauts Plateaux*, became subject to serious internal tensions. This was a result of power struggles accentuated by divergences in background and outlook among its members, which created a polarization along Rwandophone/non-Rwandophone lines. The main projects of the unit also differed along this divide. The (largely ex-PARECO) networks linked to the (second) regiment commander, Col. Niyibizi, were committed to revenue generation, attacking the Mai Mai, and reducing the influence of networks linked to the Mai Mai. However, the ex-29th IB members were primarily preoccupied with continuing their prior revenue-generation activities in this area and maintaining basic security. Although they were naturally also involved in the military operations against the Mai Mai, they demonstrated limited commitment to that project. Taken together, military operations, comprehensive control and revenue generation appeared to be the three defining projects, and are therefore all coded '1'.

15 The practices and perceptions of the 652nd on the *Plateaux* were described on pp. 93–94; 112; 116; 123; 172–173; 186; 204; 260; 293; 323–324.

16 On the 712th regiment, see pp. 91–92; 204; 262; 300; 304–306.

The leadership of Niyibizi was highly problematic, as he exercised control over his troops in a selective manner, accepting the bad behavior of his own network, while treating other troops ruthlessly. Consequently, command was coded '0'. Time horizon was difficult to code since half of the unit had been deployed in the area since 2007 and had become strongly socio-economically embedded, while the other half were relative newcomers, having stayed previously only a few months in the Mutambala sector. It was therefore decided not to code this factor. Concerning discourse, there was a divide between the ex-IB and the ex-PARECO troops. The latter had retained some of the negative discourses towards the Babembe that had strongly circulated in the 65th sector, which also somewhat influenced the ex-IB part, generally less predisposed towards employing negative framings of civilians. Even though not circulating in an equal manner in the entire regiment, these framings still strongly shaped the regiment's interaction with civilians. Consequently, the factor 'hostile discourses' was coded with '1'.

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#13	0	1	1	1	0	x	1	1

In relation to the characteristics of the deployment environment, most factors for the Mutambala sector are coded in the same manner as in the other case involving this area (case #6), except for the fact that the Rwandophone troops in the 712th regiment were portrayed among civilians as a hostile out-group, prompting a coding of '1' for hostile discourses. While the demand for protection services continued to be relatively high, due to the presence of staff from the ex-29th IB and the manifold networks they had built up in this area, it still did not concern overly violent services. At the same time, few people approached the ex-PARECO troops for protection, as these were strongly distrusted. Therefore, the demand for violent protection services was seen to be low (hence coded '0'). In respect of competing armed actors, while the Mai Mai of Yakotumba were certainly a competing force, they were the only faction that was present, hence there was no multitude. In relation to the outcome, evaluations of the 712th regiment were unambiguously negative (hence the outcome was coded '1'), due to the growing antagonisms towards Nyibizi, as fed by his uncooperative attitude and the misconduct of his troops.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#13	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1

Case #14: The 714th regiment in southern Ngandja (Fizi)¹⁷

The 714th regiment was formed during the first wave of regimentation at the start of 2011 from parts of the 642nd brigade (which included the ex-112th) mixed with elements of the 653rd brigade (consisting largely of ex-Mai Mai from Lulenge) and some troops of the 64th sector, including former Mai Mai Yakotumba. Like other units deployed to the Misisi area, the 714th, which had its *état-major* in Lulimba (adjacent to Misisi), engaged in revenue generation. However, its commander managed to significantly reduce the involvement of the military in the mining sector. Therefore, it was decided not to consider revenue generation to be among the unit's primary projects (coding of '0'). While the 714th regiment engaged in some military operations against the Mai Mai Yakotumba, notably those launched in the wake of a massacre that this group had committed in October 2011, these did not dominate their activities. Consequently, the main and sole project of the 714th was considered to be basic control (coded '1').

The relatively good conduct of this unit in the mining sector, where it was not involved in heavy extortion, was largely a result of the efforts of the commander, Col. Biryasi, to master his troops, leading to a coding of command with '1'. In respect of the time horizon of the 714th, coding was difficult, given that many elements were from the Fizi region, although slightly different parts (*Hauts* and *Moyens Plateaux*, Lulenge). However, the proximity of these areas to Misisi led to a coding as long term (hence '0'), a judgment that seems justified in the light of interventions of elements of this unit in local civilian affairs to defend vested interests. For instance, the Banyamulenge troops in this unit regularly interfered in cattle-related conflicts that involved their family members (see also Brabant and Nzweve, 2013: 67–68). Regarding the discourses on civilians that dominated in the unit, not sufficient data could be gathered to code this factor in an accurate manner.

¹⁷ The 714th regiment was discussed on pp. 91; 303–304.

Unit-related factors (1=present, 0=absent x=no data)								
Case nr	Basic control	Comprehensive control	Revenue generation	Military operations	Good unit command	Short time horizon	Hostile discourses	Outcome
#14	1	0	0	0	1	0	x	0

The coding for the different factors of the context of southern Ngandja remains largely the same as in case #10. This includes the coding for hostile discourses, as the Banyamulenge troops in this unit were framed in a hostile manner. In respect of the demand for violent protection services, it could not be well established whether it remained at the same level. This is likely to have been the case, as the need for the protection of all sorts of illegal practices, like the cannabis trade, continued to be high. However, due to the lack of sufficient data to provide certitude, a cautious line was taken and this factor was not coded. As a result of its overall relatively good conduct, notably in the gold sector, the 714th regiment was generally evaluated in a positive manner, leading to a coding of the outcome with '0'.

Deployment context-related factors (1=present, 0=absent, x=no data)									
Case nr	Isolation	Countervailing forces	Revenue generation	Accessibility revenue	Trust-based revenue	Hostile discourses	Demand violent protection	Competing armed actors	Outcome
#14	1	1	1	1	0	1	x	1	0

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SUMMARY

DRAWING ON EXTENSIVE ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELD RESEARCH, this dissertation explores the interaction between the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) and civilians in the eastern DR Congo's conflict-ridden Kivu provinces. It uncovers the multidimensionality, reciprocity and complexities of this interaction, which arise from and give rise to its fundamentally ambiguous character. This ambiguity is both an outcome and an engine of processes of militarization, which entail structural transformations that generate a dominant position for armed actors and lead to the normalization of their involvement in non-military spheres of social life. Militarization has profoundly blurred the social roles and forms of identification surrounding armed actors in the Kivus, causing the boundaries between categories like military/civilian, coercion/persuasion, victim/perpetrator, public authority/private protector, licit/illicit to be porous and constantly shifting.

Adopting the perspective of structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), this study identifies the main social structures, and the dynamics set in motion by these structures, that shape the agency of both soldiers and civilians in their day-to-day encounters. It demonstrates how this agency is informed by on the one hand, structures of domination, signification and legitimation, or discourses, norms and power relations formed over the *longue durée*, and on the other hand, more fluid dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. The latter relate to the interplay between three factors: first, forms of political, socio-economic and physical insecurity; second, the drive to solicit protection from so called 'big-men' (or socio-political entrepreneurs acting as patrons who head networks of followers), which may include armed actors; and third, intense conflicts mostly relating to struggles for power and resources, a part of which is framed in discourses of ethnicity and autochthony. There is a close interaction between on the one hand, the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the state apparatus, including the armed forces, and on the other hand, these dynamics as they play out within the Kivus' social order at large. For instance, competition for resources within the military produces insecurity among civilians, who then seek protection from armed actors, including the FARDC, to shield themselves against this insecurity. Such protection arrangements with civilians, in turn, may fuel tensions within the armed forces, like when two competing civilian factions liaise with different networks in the military.

One dimension of social structures that shapes civilian-military interaction are civilians' and the military's mutual representations, which concern relatively abstract generalizations that are inscribed in structures of signification formed over the *longue durée*. Exploring these representations, the dissertation shows that 'civilians' and 'military' are multilayered notions that are embedded in discourses located at various levels of abstraction. These discourses contain divergent representations of respectively 'the military' and 'civilians', which hold partly overlapping, partly contradictory connotations. From experiences of concrete, everyday civilian-military interactions, yet other mutual images arise. Such context-based evaluations partly validate, partly negate more abstract representations, and sometimes have little bearing on them. 'Civilians' and 'military' are superordinate identity categories, implying these groups play also many other social roles. In addition to being 'civilians' and 'military', social actors from these categories are relatives, neighbors, clients, business partners, lovers or members of certain ethnic groups. In the course of everyday interactions, they might define each other primarily in terms of those roles rather than as 'civilians' or 'military'. This contributes to the diversification of the repertoire of civilian-military interaction and reinforces the latter's ambiguous nature.

Concerning forms of civilian-military interaction, the study shows how these cover a broad spectrum. This spectrum encompasses both political-economic interactions, in particular military revenue-generation activities, and governance practices, notably those relating to security governance and military interventions in civilian disputes. Such governance practices are importantly shaped by protection arrangements between on the one hand, the military and on the other hand, local civilian authorities and in/security services.¹ Political-

¹ In order to acknowledge that security services in the Congo invariably also foster insecurity, the choice was made to refer to them as 'in/security' agencies,

economic interactions were subdivided into three categories. The first is extraction, describing the one-sided transfer of economic value, whether in the form of labor or of resources, from the military to civilians, either without the persons from whom the wealth is extracted perceiving to get a return, or if they do, on a non-excludable basis (implying third persons can benefit from it as well). The second category is protection, which can assume two forms. In the first, protection is mostly a commodity. This implies that it takes place as a transaction involving service provision on an excludable basis against a well-defined, often monetary return. In the second form, it is primarily a dimension of a wider social relation that is predominantly patronage-based, but can also rest on other bases, such as family or ethnic ties. The third category of political-economic interaction encompasses economic collaboration, referring to a situation in which civilians and the military undertake joint economic activities on a long-term basis, and transactions, relating to one-off or regular encounters such as buying, selling, renting, and lending.

When enacting the social practices falling under these various categories, FARDC staff perform different social roles. FARDC officers alternately or simultaneously figure as commander, big-man, public servant/official and businessperson. This leads to oscillations in the discursive registers they employ. These registers either accentuate the public nature of their practices, for instance by appealing to notions of 'the state', 'public interest' and 'officiality', or put an emphasis on their particularistic character, like by referring to the collective interests or forms of identification of particular groups. Such discursive registers influence civilians' evaluations of the military's power and practices, in particular where these are located on the licit/illicit spectrum. In relation to military practices of the extraction of wealth from civilians, it was observed that when these are read as 'public', for instance as contributing to public service provision, they tend to sooner verge towards the licit end of the spectrum. By contrast, extractive practices seen as 'private', for example as serving primarily for officers' self-enrichment, are more likely to be evaluated as 'illicit'. Due to the effects on civilians' evaluations, FARDC staff commonly try to manipulate the public/private distinction, invoking public security/order reasons to justify practices enacted for personal or particularistic projects. This often has an enkindling effect on the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. For instance, when the military arrests a person for settling personal scores, but justifies the arrest by accusing him or her of collaboration with a certain armed group, wider social conflicts may be nourished between the civilians that are in favor and those that are against the group in question.

The described oscillations in discursive registers, and the switching between social roles by which they are informed, do not only affect evaluations of the individual social practices of military staff, but also impact the processes of legitimation surrounding the FARDC as a whole. On the one hand, the enactment of multiple social roles is an asset for the FARDC, in that it extends the range of services it is able to provide and the legitimizing resources that it can draw upon. On the other hand, the military's simultaneous enactment of several social roles complicates readings of its role performances by civilian audiences and creates unpredictability, being therefore at the root of ambiguity. Yet such ambiguity is also fed by changes in civilians' expectations and norms vis-à-vis the military as induced by processes of militarization. The latter have caused these expectations to become strongly oriented towards the provision of protection services like the facilitation of revenue generation, interventions in dispute processing and forms of influence peddling. At the same time, the military continues to be seen and evaluated in terms of its role as a public security provider. This indicates that civilians hold contradictory expectations of the FARDC, which compounds evaluations. However, civilians' expectations of the military are not equally contradictory in each time-space context. The level and nature of civilians' demand for protection services from the military fluctuate, which is to a large extent a result of the varying intensity and nature of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. Where such dynamics are intense, utilitarian considerations and reasoning informed by conflict narratives generally strongly inform civilians' expectations of the military. This often fuels a demand for protection services that involve violence, such as score settling or the facilitation of violent appropriation.

The extent to which the military lives up to civilians' expectations importantly shapes how the latter evaluate its position of power and practices. Such evaluations are the product of three clusters of factors: first, social role performances, notably their modalities and outcomes; second, the forms of identification and the social position of the involved social agents, in particular their relative legitimacy, profession, and position in the hierarchy; and third, the extent to which the 'practical norms' (Olivier de Sardan, 2008) surrounding the enacted social practices and followed procedures are respected. In general, where FARDC staff act in accordance with the norms and the expectations placed upon them, their practices are sooner seen as 'licit'. This cumulatively contributes to rendering their power position more legitimate. The relative legitimacy of the FARDC's power position influences again whether civilians contest, collaborate or comply with the military and on what bases. Drawing on Levi (1997), four bases of civilians' agentic orientations towards the military were distinguished, namely habituation, utilitarian considerations (anticipated advantages and disadvantages), legitimation, and contingent consent or dissent. The latter is a compound form that is shaped by the interaction between various elements, namely the perceived trustworthiness of authorities, ethical reciprocity (whether other citizens also comply) and utilitarian considerations.

Due to the complexity of human agency, civilians' practices towards the military generally have multiple driving forces. Consequently, an important part of these practices are grounded in contingent consent or dissent. However, as a result of processes of militarization, habituation is also a crucial basis of civilians' agency towards the military. The long-term presence of numerous armed actors in the Kivus has contributed to the routinization of certain forms of civilian-military interaction, in particular the military's demands for certain contributions and services from civilians. Given that such demands follow engrained scripts that are navigated by appeals to practical consciousness, civilians tend to comply with them, provided their enactment does not violate the practical norms. In addition to routinization,

services or forces herein.

another important driver of civilians' agency towards the military are utilitarian considerations, mostly as part of contingent consent/dissent, and sometimes as a stand-alone factor. Such considerations concern both expected advantages and anticipated disadvantages, including coercion exercised by the FARDC. However, ultimately, direct threats of severe violence by the FARDC are relatively scarce, although they certainly occur. A larger share of the coercion exercised by the military takes place not as much in an overt manner, but through forms of covert intimidation that induce self-censorship among civilians. Furthermore, due to the FARDC's incoherence and lack of capabilities for and prioritization of systematic surveillance, monitoring, information gathering and rapid mobilization, the forms of coercion that it exercises tend to be ad-hoc and erratic. This creates significant room for civilians to evade and resist the military.

Civilians in the Kivus contest the military's power and practices at a large scale. Such contestation assumes various forms, including everyday practices that take place on an individual basis, collective popular protests, like strikes and manifestations, or lobbying and pressure by particular professional groups, such as civilian authorities and human rights defenders. Yet numerous factors undermine both civilians' engagement in and the effectiveness of their contestation of the FARDC. To start with, the volatility of the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection elicits a general orientation towards the short term and immediate gains. This may lead to contradictions in civilians' behavior, causing them to collaborate with the military at one point and contest it at another, which gives contestation a temporary and partial character. The same volatility causes the effects of contestation to be often only temporary, which may foster resignation among civilians, thus demotivating them to engage in further resistance. Contestation is also undermined by weak social cohesion, as this prompts civilians to harness the military to reinforce their position in the fight against civilian competitors, rather than to unite to collectively resist the military's power. Limited cohesion and the salience of utilitarian reasoning also create other collective action problems. As long as civilians suspect their competitors to continue to solicit the military for certain illicit practices that yield advantages even if they would refrain from it themselves, they have little incentives to stop doing this, as it will put them at a comparative disadvantage. Collective action problems hampering contentious action also stem from civilians' general preference for non-public, informal forms of contestation. Such non-public practices lead to informational deficits concerning other people's agentic position, rendering it unclear who contests the military and who not. The importance of informal, personal channels for contestation is partly a result of what Mbembe (1992) has called 'conviviality'. This term refers to the intimacy of contacts between the military and civilians, as shaped by the close interweaving of both more 'public' and more 'private' spheres of social life. Intimacy further hampers contestation, although its effects are ambivalent. On the one hand, close personal ties lower the threshold for engaging in certain forms of contestation, notably via informal channels. On the other hand, they may cause contentious action to have unanticipated effects or to be used against one, therefore inducing self-censorship. For these various reasons, civilians' contestation of the military's power and practices is generally partial and temporary, while the effects tend to be of limited duration.

In relation to the military side, the dissertation analyzes how the military's practices vis-à-vis civilians are shaped by social structures distinct to the military. Additionally, it studies how the evolution of these structures has been influenced by the agency of the Congo's rulers over time. To that end, it presents a brief history of the Congolese armed forces and the ways in which the political center has managed and deployed these for the purposes of power projection. This allows for the identification of both continuities and discontinuities. Historically, rulers' approaches to the armed forces have to a large extent been shaped by on the one hand, the external threat environment, and on the other hand, the specific features of the Congo's political economy. The rulers in the post-settlement era (2003–present) form no exception to this. Similar to the Mobutu period, the political center's current modes of military management and deployment are strongly shaped by the Congo's archipelagic form of statehood, governance characterized by indirect rule and big-man networks and the importance of the nonofficial economy. However, in a departure from the Zaire era, the present rulers' military policies are also heavily impacted by the fragmentation and fluidity of the Kivus' political-military landscape, and the centrifugal forces resulting from both the cross-border orientation of its political economy and the presence of numerous non-state armed forces. This volatility forces the political center to engage in constant efforts at defusing (potential) crises, which undermines the implementation of defense policies. At the same time, it causes the policy measures that it does manage to implement to often have unintended and unanticipated consequences.

The incentives for military management that arise from these structural conditions are ambivalent. On the one hand, the presidential circle needs a number of operationally effective and loyal units to ward off (potentially) existential threats to its power and the regime, including the loss of control over economic core areas. On the other hand, the archipelago nature of Congolese statehood allows for security governance in the peripheral areas to be left in the hands of less effective, ill-resourced and badly controlled military units that can nevertheless maintain basic order and suppress major (political) threats in case of need. Acting on these differentiated incentives, the incumbents have perpetuated a system of a two-speed military that has deep historical roots. Thus, a number of elite units assure regime and incumbent security, while the bulk of the military consists of less well-equipped and supplied units that have limited operational effectiveness and are not strongly controlled by the military hierarchy in Kinshasa. However, regardless de facto levels of centralized command and control and operational capacity, civilians generally perceive the armed forces to be both powerful and to emanate from the political center. Therefore, even units with limited fighting capabilities that are not fully controlled by the central hierarchy ultimately contribute to shoring up the incumbents' power. This is one of the reasons why the rulers have little incentives to transform the current two-speed military into a force that is well controlled, well resourced and well organized across the board.

One of the causes of the armed forces' limited operational effectiveness is weak bureaucratic organization, in particular deficient

administration and information management. Furthermore, the military is plagued by strong internal competition, which largely stems from the existence of a multitude of agencies and units with overlapping and ill-delineated mandates and parallel commands. An important way in which the presidential big-man network tries to maintain a grip over this fragmented force is by the cooptation of military elites. Such cooptation generally involves turning a blind eye to military commercialism, and creating loyalty and dependency through the manipulation of military office. This has important effects on the military organization as a whole, fostering frequent rotations of office and constant restructuring efforts. Moreover, the salience of big-man rationalities within the military has caused power projection to become inextricably entwined with the granting and withholding of access to revenue-generation opportunities. One manifestation of this are so-called *rapportage* systems, or upward flows of financial contributions that are imposed by commanders on those lower down in the command chain. Due to the involved financial benefits, the *rapportage* system creates competition for deployment to lucrative zones at various levels of the hierarchy. Furthermore, as it largely drives on wealth that is extracted from civilians, *rapportage* reinforces, and is enabled by, certain structures of legitimation and signification within the military. This concerns in particular representations of civilians as a 'field to harvest from' and norms authorizing such 'harvesting', both of which have a long lineage in the Congolese armed forces.

The military's internal social structures as described above set in motion intense dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. These dynamics foster a strong orientation among military staff towards short-term revenue generation and managing one's position in ongoing power competition. This does not only occur within the military as a whole, but also in field-based units. The dissertation extensively studies the social structures and dynamics within these units, especially at the level of brigades/regiments and battalions. It also analyzes the mechanisms by which these unit-specific structures and dynamics affect military units' agency, drawing on military-sociological theories on cohesion. Thus, it studies how military staff relate to other staff of approximately the same rank (horizontal cohesion), to their superiors at various levels of the military hierarchy (vertical, including organizational cohesion), and to the organization as a whole (institutional cohesion). These various forms of cohesion are strongly affected by the salience of big-man networks. When soldiers or commanders are heavily oriented towards extra-unit big-man networks, which are sometimes formed by ex-rebel groups and/or on an ethnic basis, they may be strongly influenced by the shared forms of identification that characterize these networks. Where other parts of units are not tied into the same networks, cohesion is undermined, in particular where groups highlighting different forms of social identification are involved in intense power struggles. In such cases, so called 'commonality of identification and beliefs', which was identified as an important category of the factors shaping cohesion, is weak. This implies that military personnel will experience to have different forms of identification and beliefs, and that such differences are salient in everyday interactions.

Since power competition is most intense among higher-and mid-ranking officers, antagonistic forms of identification are manifested more strongly in the higher echelons. Furthermore, these echelons do not share the hardships of daily life together to the same extent as the lower ranks. This is an important form of 'community of experience', which was identified as the second major category of the factors shaping cohesion. However, not all forms of community of experience, or living, working and training together, reinforce cohesion. For instance, conducting combat operations under commanders seen as incompetent and therefore as endangering one's life might undermine, rather than reinforce (vertical) cohesion. Vertical cohesion in the FARDC is further weakened by generalized doubts about the legitimacy of commanders' appointment, since often based on political considerations rather than merit. The politics of rebel-military integration and accompanying rapid promotions have strongly reinforced such doubts. Perceptions of a lack of legitimacy are often strengthened by the feeling that commanders do not live up to the expectations surrounding the social role of 'FARDC commander', which further undermines vertical cohesion. The main features of this role relate to commanders' competence, their demonstrated commitment to ensuring the wellbeing of their troops and their unit's common projects, and the relative fairness of mechanisms of rewards and punishment. The extent to which FARDC commanders are able to fulfill these role expectations is negatively affected by the workings of big-man networks. These generate an orientation towards revenue generation and lead to arbitrariness and favoritism, including in the distribution of rewards and punishments. Taken together, these factors have created the feeling among staff that they are placed under incompetent, uneducated and immoral commanders, whose intentions and loyalties they profoundly distrust. This greatly enhances the risk of breakdowns of discipline in combat situations.

Drawing on the study of 14 cases consisting of combinations of military units and particular deployment contexts, the dissertation also provides explanations for differences in civilian-military interaction, notably why in certain contexts civilians evaluate civilian-military interaction as relatively good and in other cases as bad. It locates the causes for these variations both in military units' internal features and those of the context in which units are deployed. In relation to internal features, it identifies the following four factors as causing variations in civilian-military interaction: first, injunctions from formal and informal hierarchies, which inform the main projects that units pursue; second, the quality of command, in particular whether commanders are willing and able to assure good conduct by their troops; third, time horizon, relating to how long troops have been deployed to a certain area and whether they are deployed in their zone of origins; and fourth, the content and salience of discourses on civilians, in particular to what extent civilians are framed as an antagonistic out-group and these framings are shared among troops.

Concerning deployment environment-related factors, the elements that were identified as being of most importance in shaping civilian-military interaction are: the level of isolation of the deployment context; the presence and relative cohesion of civilian countervailing forces; the structure of the local economy, notably the presence and accessibility of revenue-generation opportunities and the nature of that accessibility; local norms, especially concerning soliciting (violent) protection services from armed actors; and local discourses, which

may come to influence framings of (groups in) the military as a hostile out-group, sometimes defined in ethnic terms. A final element of importance are place-specific dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection. These impact civilian-military interaction both via the 'supply' and the 'demand' side of protection services. On the supply side, the main factor is the presence of a multitude of competing armed protection providers, which may lead to an outbidding of violence to attract clients or to the use of violence for punishing or deterring defection. On the 'demand side', the most important factor is the demand for violent protection services, which may temporarily rise due to various dynamics. These include: an increased presence of the FARDC; shifts in control leading the FARDC to become the dominant armed faction; and a (temporary) growth in the legitimacy of the use of violence due to increased victimization or the enhanced salience of conflict narratives.

In sum, there is a multitude of factors related to both FARDC units and the environment to which they are deployed that shape civilian-military interaction, including the coercive content thereof. Consequently, civilian-military interaction is shaped in each time-space context by a distinct combination of factors, leading to widely varying outcomes in terms of how it is evaluated by civilians. Despite this heterogeneity, certain patterns can be detected, consisting of recurrent combinations of factors that lead to similar outcomes. Furthermore, the effects of civilian-military interaction on the reproduction of (militarized) social structures are relatively similar across contexts. Moreover, where context-specific differences in relation to these effects exist, they largely cancel each other out at the level of the Kivus as a whole. One reason for this is that in combination with frequent rotations of FARDC units, the differentiation in social structures and dynamics per place (socio-spatial suborder) reinforces the segmentation of the contradictions between civilians and the military that result from the zero-sum game nature of the competition for resources. This segmentation is further strengthened by the military's and civilians' embedding in big-man networks of a crosscutting civilian-military nature. By leading to the dispersal of the conflicts relating to these contradictions, or by preventing them from becoming manifest, the segmentation and regionalization of contradictions importantly contribute to the reproduction of the military's overall position of dominance.

The continuing dominance of the FARDC in the Kivus is the cumulative result of civilians' and the military's practices, which reproduce the militarized structures of domination, legitimation and signification that underpin the FARDC's position of power. An important cause of this lack of transformation are the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection both within the military and within the Kivus' social order as a whole. These dynamics generate a short-term focus that pushes civilians to engage in practices that sustain the military's dominance in the long term. Another important element in the reproduction of militarization is the routinization of certain forms of civilian-military interaction. As routine actions draw upon 'practical consciousness', routinization hampers the development of awareness among civilians of the effects of their individual practices at an aggregate level, notably on how they affect the militarized social order as a whole. Soldiers too, largely engage in a non-conscious manner in practices that reproduce extant structures of domination, including within the armed forces. Often preoccupied by survival, conflict or coping with other forms of insecurity, soldiers do not always reflect upon nor have an insight into the longer-term consequences of their practices. Paradoxically, to shield themselves against the insecurity and arbitrariness resulting from the dynamics of conflict, insecurity and protection within the military, FARDC staff commonly seek protection from big-men, thereby further fuelling these dynamics. Even civilian and military elites, whose practices have the most direct impact on the reproduction of the military's position of dominance, do not consciously tailor all of their actions towards preempting transformations. Their practices are also shaped by the incentives arising from the Congo's social order and the routinization of certain forms of military management. Additionally, efforts at reform sometimes produce unintended consequences or get sidetracked by managing urgent crises in the east. Hence, while elite actors play a crucial role in the reproduction of the Kivus' militarized social structures, this is not purely the result of conscious efforts. It can be concluded that although for elite actors, the picture is more complex, non-elite actors largely contribute to the (re)production of the Kivus' militarized social order in a non-reflexive manner. This reflects how militarization is a process that is driven by practices that make sense to individual social agents, but that have outcomes that are unfavorable at the collective level.

DEZE STUDIE BESCHRIJFT, op basis van uitgebreid etnografisch veldonderzoek, de interactie tussen de Congolese strijdkrachten (FARDC) en burgers in de door conflict geteisterde Kivu provincies in het oosten van de Democratische Republiek Congo (DR Congo). Het legt de multi-dimensionaliteit, wederkerigheid en complexiteit van deze interactie bloot, die zowel oorzaak als gevolg zijn van haar fundamenteel ambigue karakter. Deze ambiguïteit drijft op, en wordt gedreven door, processen van militarisering. Zulke processen behelzen structurele transformaties van de samenleving die leiden tot een dominante positie voor gewapende actoren en de normalisering van hun interventies in niet-militaire maatschappelijke domeinen. Militarisering heeft de vormen van identificatie en sociale rollen van gewapende actoren in de Kivu provincies sterk vervaagd. Hierdoor zijn de grenzen tussen sociale categorieën zoals militair/civiel, dwang/overreding, slachtoffer/dader, publieke autoriteit/private protector, liciet/illiciet, poreus en fluïde.

Vanuit het perspectief van de 'structuratietheorie' van Giddens (1984) identificeert deze studie de belangrijkste factoren die de 'agency'¹ van burgers en soldaten in hun dagelijkse ontmoetingen vormgeven. Het laat zien hoe deze 'agency' beïnvloed wordt door twee elementen. Het eerste element behelst over de lange termijn (*longue durée*) gevormde structuren van dominantie, significantie en legitimatie, oftewel discoursen, normen en machtsrelaties. Het tweede element zijn meer fluïde dynamieken van conflict, onveiligheid/onzekerheid² en protectie,³ die door deze lange-termijn structuren in beweging gezet worden. Deze fluïde dynamieken komen voort uit de wisselwerking tussen drie factoren: ten eerste, vormen van politieke, sociaaleconomische en fysieke onveiligheid; ten tweede, de aandrang om bescherming te zoeken bij 'big-men' (sociaal-politieke entrepreneurs die als patroonheren of vrouwen fungeren voor een cliënteel netwerk), inclusief gewapende actoren; en ten derde, intense conflicten, die veelal gerelateerd zijn aan de strijd om macht en middelen, maar vaak gekaderd worden in discoursen van etniciteit en autochtoniteit. Deze dynamieken spelen zich of zowel binnen het staatsapparaat, de strijdkrachten inbegrepen, en de samenleving in haar geheel, in een constante interactie. De competitie om middelen binnen het leger leidt bijvoorbeeld tot onveiligheid voor burgers, die vervolgens bescherming zoeken bij gewapende actoren, inclusief het leger, om zich tegen deze onveiligheid te beschermen. Zulke protectie-arrangementen met burgers leiden op hun beurt weer tot spanningen binnen het leger, bijvoorbeeld wanneer twee concurrerende civiele facties verbonden zijn aan twee verschillende netwerken binnen het leger.

Een belangrijke element in civiel-militaire interactie zijn de beelden die burgers en militairen van elkaar hebben, die deel uitmaken van zogeheten 'structuren van significantie'. Een analyse van deze wederzijdse beeldvorming laat zien dat 'burgers' en 'militairen' noties zijn met meerdere lagen van betekenis, die ingebed zijn in discoursen die zich op verschillende abstractieniveaus bevinden. De identiteitscategorieën 'burgers' en 'militairen', hebben hierdoor gedeeltelijk overlappende, gedeeltelijk tegengestelde connotaties. Op basis van concrete, dagelijkse interacties komen weer andere wederzijdse percepties tot stand dan de beelden gelieerd aan deze identiteitscategorieën. Deze contextuele evaluaties deels bevestigen, deels ontkrachten deze abstracte beelden en hebben er soms weinig betrekking op. 'Burgers' en 'militairen' zijn overkoepelende identiteitscategorieën. Leden van beide groepen spelen tegelijkertijd ook verschillende andere sociale rollen. 'Burgers' en 'militairen' zijn tevens familieleden, burens, klanten, zakenpartners, geliefden, of leden van een etnische groep. Tijdens dagelijkse ontmoetingen zien militaire en civiele actoren elkaar soms primair in de hoedanigheid van deze andere sociale rollen, en niet als 'burgers' of 'militairen'. Dit draagt bij aan de diversificatie van het repertoire van civiel-militaire interactie en voedt het ambigue karakter van deze interactie.

1 'Agency' verwijst zowel naar handelingsperspectief en handelingsruimte en is hierdoor moeilijk te vertalen.

2 Het betreft hier een vertaling van 'insecurity', wat in deze context zowel naar onzekerheid als naar onveiligheid verwijst.

3 Het betreft hier een vertaling van 'protection', wat in het Engels zowel connotaties van bescherming als van afpersing gerelateerd aan Mafia-praktijken heeft.

De studie beschrijft een waaier aan praktijken van civiel-militaire interactie. Een deel daarvan betreft politiek-economische interacties, grotendeels gerelateerd aan inkomensgeneratie door het leger. Een ander deel heeft betrekking op interacties gerelateerd aan vormen van bestuur, in het bijzonder op het gebied van veiligheid en interventies in conflicten tussen burgers. Zulke bestuurlijke handelingen komen vaak voort uit protectierelaties tussen enerzijds het leger, en anderzijds lokale civiele autoriteiten en 'on/veiligheidsdiensten'.⁴ De studie onderscheidt drie categorieën van politiek-economische interacties. De eerste daarvan is extractie. Dit verwijst naar de eenzijdige overdracht van economische waarde, in de vorm van zowel goederen als diensten, van burgers naar het leger, ofwel zonder dat de persoon die de waarde afstaat er iets voor terug denkt te krijgen, of als dat wel het geval is, op een niet-uitsluitbare basis (wat inhoudt dat ook derden ervan kunnen profiteren). De tweede categorie is protectie, wat twee vormen aan kan nemen. In de eerste vorm is protectie voornamelijk een verhandelbare dienst. Dit betekent dat het primair plaatsvindt als dienstverlening tegen een duidelijk omschreven wederdienst of vergoeding, gelijk een transactie. In de tweede vorm is protectie een dimensie van een sociale relatie, die voornamelijk gebaseerd is op patronage, maar ook andere bases kan hebben, zoals familie of etnische banden. De derde categorie van politiek-economische interactie bestaat eveneens uit twee vormen. Allereerst economische samenwerking, wat refereert aan een situatie waarin burgers en militairen samenwerken over de lange termijn in activiteiten die inkomen genereren. Daarnaast zijn er transacties, of incidentele of meer geroutineerde handelingen die betrekking hebben op economische uitruil, zoals verkoop, aankoop, verhuur en lenen.

Wanneer personeel van het Congolese staatsleger (FARDC) de handelingen uitvoert die onder deze categorieën vallen, vertolken zij verschillende sociale rollen, wat beïnvloedt hoe zij deze handelingen discursief kaderen. Officieren van de FARDC figureren afwisselend of tegelijkertijd als commandant, big-man, staatsdienaar/ambtenaar en ondernemer. Dit leidt tot fluctuaties in de discursieve kaders die ze hanteren. Enerzijds kunnen deze kaders het meer publieke karakter van de handelingen in kwestie benadrukken, bijvoorbeeld door het appelleren aan 'de staat', het 'publiek belang' of 'officiële autoriteit'. Anderzijds kunnen zij focussen op de particuliere aard van handelingen, bijvoorbeeld door de collectieve belangen en gemeenschappelijk identiteit van een bepaalde sociale groep te belichten. Deze discursieve registers beïnvloeden hoe burgers de machtspositie en praktijken van het leger evalueren, met name waar deze geplaatst worden op het spectrum tussen 'liciet' en 'illiciet'. Politiek-economische praktijken van het leger die als 'publiek' gezien worden, bijvoorbeeld omdat ze bijdragen aan publieke veiligheidsvoorziening, neigen eerder naar de liciete kant van het spectrum. Praktijken van extractie die gezien worden als 'privé' daarentegen, bijvoorbeeld als dienende voor de zelfverrijking van officieren, worden eerder geëvalueerd als 'illiciet'. Gezien het belang van het onderscheid tussen privaat en publiek voor de evaluaties van burgers probeert FARDC personeel dit onderscheid soms te manipuleren. Zij doen dit bijvoorbeeld door 'publieke orde / veiligheidsredenen' aan te roepen om praktijken te rechtvaardigen die gedreven worden door particuliere projecten. Dit wakkert vaak dynamieken van conflict, onveiligheid/onzekerheid en protectie aan. Een voorbeeld is wanneer een arrestatie van een burger gerelateerd aan persoonlijke wrok wordt gerechtvaardigd door de vermeende samenwerking van deze persoon met een zekere gewapende groep, wat antagonisme kan voeden tussen burgers die voor en zij die tegen de gewapende groep in kwestie zijn.

De beschreven wisselingen in discursieve registers, en het schakelen tussen sociale rollen waar deze wisselingen uit voortkomen, beïnvloeden niet alleen de evaluatie door burgers van bepaalde sociale handelingen van militair personeel maar ook de legitimatie van de FARDC in zijn geheel. Enerzijds biedt het spelen van verschillende sociale rollen het leger een voordeel, aangezien dit het spectrum van diensten dat het kan verlenen en van middelen die legitimiteit kunnen verschaffen verruimt. Anderzijds bemoeilijkt de vertolking van verscheidene sociale rollen door de FARDC de receptie van deze vertolkingen door het publiek waarvoor zij opgevoerd worden. Het wisselen tussen rollen leidt tot onvoorspelbaarheid, wat een bron vormt van ambiguïteit. Deze ambiguïteit wordt verder versterkt door de veranderende verwachtingen en normen die burgers hebben ten aanzien van het leger ten gevolge van processen van militarisering. Militarisering heeft ertoe geleid dat de verwachtingen die burgers koesteren ten aanzien van het leger sterker gericht zijn op protectie diensten, zoals het vergemakkelijken van inkomensverwerving, interventies van het leger in particuliere conflicten en oneigenlijke beïnvloeding van autoriteiten door middel van machtsmisbruik. Tegelijkertijd wordt het leger nog altijd gezien als een verschafter van publieke veiligheid, en beoordeeld op het uitvoeren van die rol. Dit laat zien dat burgers tegenstrijdige verwachtingen hebben van het leger. Deze verwachtingen zijn echter niet even tegengesteld in iedere tijd-ruimte context: zowel de aard als de omvang van de vraag voor protectie diensten van het leger fluctueren, wat gedeeltelijk een gevolg is van dynamieken van conflict, onveiligheid/onzekerheid en protectie. Waar deze dynamieken intens zijn, worden de verwachtingen van burgers ten aanzien van het leger doorgaans sterk beïnvloed door utilitaire overwegingen en conflict narratieven. Dit kan leiden tot een verhoogde vraag naar gewelddadige protectie diensten.

In hoeverre het leger de verwachtingen van burgers waarmaakt beïnvloedt hoe burgers zijn machtspositie en praktijken evalueren. Deze evaluaties zijn het product van een scala aan factoren. Ten eerste, de vertolking van sociale rollen, met name de modaliteiten en uitkomsten van die vertolkingen; ten tweede, de vormen van identificatie en de sociale positie van de betrokkenen, in het bijzonder hun relatieve legitimiteit, professie, en positie in de hiërarchie; en ten derde, de mate waarin de 'praktische normen' (Oliver de Sardan, 2008) gerelateerd aan de procedures en handelingen in kwestie gerespecteerd worden. Wanneer FARDC personeel handelt in overeenstemming met de normen en verwachtingen van burgers, zullen de praktijken van het leger over het algemeen eerder als 'liciet' beoordeeld worden. Cumulatief draagt dit bij aan de legitimering van de machtspositie van het leger. Op haar beurt beïnvloedt deze relatieve legitimiteit hoe burgers zich tot het leger verhouden: namelijk of zij het leger betwisten, ermee samenwerken of er aan gehoorzamen, en op welke basis. Gebaseerd op Levi (1997) werden er vier bases van de handelingsoriëntatie van burgers ten aanzien van het leger geïdentificeerd:

4 Ten einde aan te geven dat 'veiligheidsdiensten' in Congo doorgaans ook een bron van onveiligheid zijn spreekt de dissertatie over on/veiligheidsdiensten.

gewoonte, utilitaire overwegingen (geanticiperde voor-en nadelen), legitimatie en 'contingente goed-of afkeuring'. Dit laatste is een samengestelde vorm die betrekking heeft op de interactie tussen drie factoren, namelijk de betrouwbaarheid van autoriteiten, 'ethische reciprociteit' (of andere burgers ook gehoorzamen) en utilitaire overwegingen.

De handelingsoriëntering van burgers ten aanzien van het leger heeft over het algemeen meerdere drijvende krachten. De meeste handelingen zijn daarom gebaseerd op contingente goed-of afkeuring. Echter, ten gevolge van processen van militarisering speelt handelen op basis van gewoonte ook een grote rol in de agency van burgers ten aanzien van het leger. Er is reeds gedurende lange tijd een keur van gewapende actoren actief in de Kivu provincies. Hierdoor is er een zekere routinisering van bepaalde vormen van civiel-militaire interactie ontstaan, met name verzoeken tot bijdragen en diensten die het leger tot burgers richt. Aangezien zulke verzoeken vaste scenario's volgen die burgers navigeren door een beroep te doen op 'praktisch bewustzijn' worden zij doorgaans gehonoreerd, mits zij de 'praktische normen' niet overschrijden. Naast routinisering spelen ook utilitaire overwegingen een belangrijke rol in de agency van burgers ten aanzien van het leger. Deze overwegingen hebben betrekking op zowel verwachte voordelen en geanticiperde nadelen. Zulke nadelen behelzen ook (dreigingen met) dwang door de FARDC. Echter, directe dreigingen met bruto geweld zijn relatief schaars, hoewel ze zeker voorkomen. Een groot deel van de dwang die uitgeoefend wordt door het leger vindt niet plaats op een openlijke manier maar via onderhuidse vormen van intimidatie die leiden tot zelfcensuur onder burgers. Door de incoherentie van de FARDC en zijn geringe capaciteit voor en interesse in systematische surveillance, monitoring, het verzamelen van informatie en snelle mobilisering, is dwang doorgaans ad-hoc en onregelmatig. Dit schept substantiële mogelijkheden voor burgers om aan het leger te ontkomen of zijn praktijken te betwisten.

Burgers in Kivu verzetten zich op grote schaal tegen de macht en praktijken van het leger. Zulk verzet kan de vorm aannemen van individuele contestatie, collectieve publieke protesten zoals stakingen en demonstraties, of lobbyen en druk door professionele groepen zoals civiele autoriteiten en mensenrechtenverdedigers. Er zijn echter vele factoren die zowel de deelname aan als de effectiviteit van contestatie ondermijnen. De volatiliteit van dynamieken van conflict, onveiligheid/onzekerheid en protectie leidt tot een algehele oriëntering op de korte termijn en het behalen van directe voordelen. Dit roept tegenstrijdigheden op in het gedrag van burgers. Het zorgt ervoor dat zij het ene moment samenwerken met het leger, maar op het volgende moment zich ertegen verzetten. Hierdoor krijgt verzet tegen het leger een tijdelijk en gedeeltelijk karakter. Volatiliteit leidt er ook toe dat de effecten van verzet vaak slechts tijdelijk zijn. Dit veroorzaakt op haar beurt een zekere berusting onder burgers, wat hen demotiveert om zich verder te verzetten tegen het leger. Contestatie wordt ook ondermijnd door zwakke sociale cohesie binnen de samenleving. Dit zet burgers ertoe aan het leger te mobiliseren om hun eigen positie te versterken in conflicten met medeburgers, in plaats van zich te verenigen om collectief de macht van het leger te weerstaan.

Beperkte sociale cohesie en het belang van utilitaire overwegingen leiden ook tot andere collectieve actie problemen. Zolang burgers anderen ervan verdenken door te gaan met het instrumentaliseren van het leger voor bepaalde illiciete praktijken zelfs als zij hier zelf van afzien, hebben ze weinig stimulansen om hiermee op te houden, gezien hen dit een comparatief nadeel oplevert. Collectieve actie problemen die verzet tegen het leger belemmeren zijn ook het gevolg van de algehele voorkeur onder burgers voor niet-publieke, informele vormen van weerstand. Dergelijke informele vormen leiden tot informatie-asymmetrie aangaande de handelingsoriëntering van medeburgers. Hierdoor is het onduidelijk wie zich verzet en wie niet. Het belang van informele, persoonlijke kanalen voor het betwisten van het leger is gedeeltelijk een resultaat van wat Mbembe (1992) 'convivialiteit' genoemd heeft. Convivialiteit verwijst naar de intimiteit van de contacten tussen het leger en burgers. Deze intieme verbanden worden vormgegeven door de nauwe verwevenheid tussen meer publieke en meer private dimensies van het sociale leven. Enerzijds verlagen zulke intieme banden de drempel om bepaalde vormen van verzet te ondernemen, met name via informele kanalen. Anderzijds zorgen ze er voor dat contestatie vaak onverwachte gevolgen heeft of tegen iemand gebruikt kan worden, wat tot zelfcensuur leidt. Door al deze genoemde factoren is contestatie vaak gedeeltelijk en tijdelijk, en zijn de effecten ervan van beperkte duur.

Met betrekking tot de strijdkrachten analyseert de dissertatie hoe acties van het leger naar burgers toe geïnformeerd worden door sociale structuren binnen het leger. Ook wordt beschreven hoe deze sociale structuren vorm gekregen hebben door de agency van de heersers van de Congo door de tijd heen. Hiertoe schetst de studie een korte geschiedenis van het Congolese leger en de manier waarop de heersers het leger bestuurd en ingezet hebben om macht uit te oefenen. Deze historische analyse legt zowel continuïteiten als discontinuïteiten bloot. De wijze waarop heersers het leger benaderd hebben is altijd voor een groot deel vormgegeven door de externe dreigingsomgeving enerzijds en de kenmerken van de politieke economie van de Congo anderzijds. Dit geldt ook voor de heersers in het tijdperk van na het vredesakkoord (van 2003 tot heden). Net zoals in de periode van Mobutu wordt de manier waarop het huidige politieke centrum de strijdkrachten aanstuurt en inzet sterk beïnvloed door het archipel-achtige karakter van de Congolese staat, bestuur via indirecte heerschappij en big-man netwerken en het belang van de officieuze economie. Echter, er zijn ook discontinuïteiten zichtbaar. Zo wordt het hedendaagse militaire beleid sterk beïnvloed door de fragmentatie en fluiditeit van het politiek-militaire landschap van Kivu. Met name van belang zijn de centrifugale krachten die het gevolg zijn van de grensoverschrijdende oriëntering van zijn politieke economie en de aanwezigheid van niet-statelijke gewapende actoren. Deze factoren leiden ertoe dat de heersers voortdurend maatregelen moeten nemen om (potentiële) crises voor te zijn of te controleren. Verder heeft de genoemde fragmentatie als gevolg dat de maatregelen die de heersers in Kinshasa nemen vaak onbedoelde en onverwachte gevolgen hebben.

De prikkels voor militair management die voortvloeien uit deze structurele condities zijn tweeledig. Aan de ene kant heeft de presidentiële machtskring een aantal operationeel effectieve en loyale eenheden nodig om potentieel existentiële dreigingen te bestrijden, inclusief het verlies van controle over economische kerngebieden. Aan de andere kant zorgt het archipel-achtige karakter van de Congolese staat ervoor dat veiligheidsmanagement in perifere gebieden in handen kan blijven van minder effectieve, slecht uitgeruste en slecht gecontroleerde militaire eenheden, die desalniettemin elementaire controle kunnen uitoefenen en majeure (politieke) dreigingen kunnen onderdrukken wanneer dat nodig is. Op basis van deze tegengestelde imperatieven hebben de huidige machtshebbers het systeem van een 'leger van twee snelheden' voortgezet, dat een lange traditie kent in Congo. Dientengevolge zijn er een aantal elite eenheden die de veiligheid van het regime en de machtshebbers waarborgen, terwijl het gros van het leger bestaat uit minder goed geëquipeerde en gefinancierde eenheden die slechts een beperkte operationele effectiviteit hebben en niet volledig onder controle staan van de militaire hiërarchie in Kinshasa. Echter, ongeacht het reële niveau van de centralisatie van de bevelsstructuur en van de operationele capaciteit van het leger zien burgers de FARDC doorgaans als machtig en als aangestuurd door het politieke centrum. Om die reden versterken uiteindelijk zelfs legereenheden met beperkte vechtcapaciteit die niet volledig gecontroleerd worden door het politieke centrum de macht van de huidige heersers. Dit verklaart waarom deze weinig prikkels hebben om het hedendaagse leger van twee snelheden te transformeren in een leger dat goed gecontroleerd, goed uitgerust en goed georganiseerd in al zijn dimensies.

Behalve door beperkte operationele effectiviteit worden de Congolese strijdkrachten ook gekenmerkt door een zwakke bureaucratische organisatie, met name een gebrekkige administratie en slecht informatiemanagement. Verder kent het leger een sterke interne competitie, die aangedreven wordt door de aanwezigheid van een veelvoud aan agentschappen en eenheden met overlappende en slecht afgebakende mandaten en parallelle bevelsstructuren. Een belangrijke manier waarop het presidentiële big-man netwerk grip probeert te behouden over deze gefragmenteerde macht is door middel van de coöptatie van militaire elites. Zulke coöptatie brengt het gedogen van commerciële activiteiten met zich mee, en het creëren van loyaliteit en afhankelijkheid door middel van het arbitrair toekennen en ontzeggen van posten in het leger. Dit heeft belangrijke effecten op de strijdkrachten in het algemeen, aangezien het leidt tot regelmatige wisselingen in het bekleden van posten en constante herstructureringen van de militaire organisatie. Het belang van big-man rationaliteiten in de strijdkrachten zorgt er ook voor dat machtsuitoefening onlosmakelijk verbonden is met het toekennen en onthouden van toegang tot inkomens genererende activiteiten. Een belangrijke uiting van deze vervlechting zijn zogeheten 'rapportage systemen'. Dit betreft opwaartse stromen van financiële bijdragen die commandanten opleggen aan zij die lager in de bevelsstructuur staan. Door de financiële belangen die op het spel staan creëert het rapportagesysteem aanzienlijke competitie op verschillende niveaus van de hiërarchie om uitgezonden te worden naar lucratieve gebieden. Verder versterkt het bepaalde structuren van legitimatie en significantie binnen het leger, gezien de bijdragen waarop rapportage drijft veelal uit de bevolking geëxtraheerd worden. Dit betreft vooral de beeldvorming van burgers als een 'veld om van te oogsten' en de normen die zulk 'oogsten' vergemakkelijken, die beide een lange traditie hebben binnen de Congolese strijdkrachten.

De beschreven interne sociale structuren zetten intense dynamieken van conflict, onveiligheid/onzekerheid en protectie in gang binnen het leger. Dit leidt tot een korte termijn focus onder militair personeel op inkomensgeneratie en het waarborgen van de eigen positie binnen voortdurende interne machtsstrijd. Zulke dynamieken vinden niet alleen plaats in het leger als geheel maar ook binnen legereenheden die uitgezonden zijn in operationele gebieden. De sociale structuren en dynamieken binnen deze eenheden worden uitgebreid bestudeerd in de dissertatie, met name op het niveau van brigades/regimenten en bataljons. Verder bestudeert de dissertatie ook hoe deze sociale factoren de agency van militaire actoren beïnvloeden, met behulp van militair-sociologische theorieën rondom cohesie. Zo wordt onderzocht hoe militair personeel zich verhoudt tot ander personeel met min of meer dezelfde rang (horizontale cohesie); tot hun superieuren op verschillende niveaus van de militaire hiërarchie (verticale en organisatie cohesie) en tot de militaire organisatie in haar geheel (institutionele cohesie).

Deze verschillende vormen van cohesie worden sterk beïnvloed door het belang van big-man netwerken voor het functioneren van het leger. Wanneer soldaten of commandanten sterk georiënteerd zijn op big-man netwerken buiten hun eenheid, die soms gevormd worden door voormalige rebellengroepen en/of op een etnische basis, staan ze bloot aan de gemeenschappelijke vormen van identificatie die dominant zijn binnen deze netwerken. Als andere leden van de eenheid niet deel uitmaken van deze netwerken is cohesie naar alle waarschijnlijkheid zwak. Dit is met name het geval waar de groepen die zich op verschillende wijze identificeren verwickeld zijn in onderlinge machtsstrijd. In zulke situaties is er een zwakke 'gemeenschappelijkheid van identificatie en overtuigingen', wat een belangrijke categorie van factoren is die cohesievorming beïnvloeden. Dit houdt in dat de leden van een eenheid ervaren dat zij uiteenlopende identiteiten en meningen hebben en dat deze verschillen ertoe doen in hun dagelijkse interacties.

Omdat interne machtsstrijd het hevigst is onder hogere- en middenkader officieren zijn de effecten van antagonistische vormen van identificatie daar het meest zichtbaar. Deze rangen delen, in tegenstelling tot voetsoldaten, ook niet de ontberingen van het dagelijks leven. Zulke ontberingen zijn een belangrijke vorm van 'gemeenschap van ervaring', wat geïdentificeerd werd als de tweede categorie van factoren die cohesie bevorderen. Echter, niet alle vormen van 'gemeenschap van ervaring', ofwel samen leven, werken en trainen, leiden tot cohesie. Bijvoorbeeld het uitvoeren van gevechtsoperaties onder bevelhebbers die gezien worden als incompetent, en daardoor als potentieel levensbedreigend, kan (verticale) cohesie verzwakken in plaats van versterken. Verticale cohesie wordt ondermijnd door percepties dat commandanten niet legitiem benoemd zijn, gezien zij geselecteerd zijn uit politieke overwegingen, en niet op basis van verdienste. Zulke percepties zijn sterk gevoed door de integratie van ex-rebellen in het leger, wat geleid heeft tot snelle promoties. Het

idee dat benoemingen niet legitiem zijn wordt verder versterkt door het gevoel dat superieuren niet voldoen aan de verwachtingen die hun ondergeschikten hebben aangaande de sociale rol van 'FARDC commandant'. De belangrijkste kenmerken van deze rol zijn de volgende: de competentie van bevelhebbers, hun bewezen toewijding aan het waarborgen van het welzijn van hun troepen en de gemeenschappelijke projecten van hun eenheid, en de relatieve eerlijkheid van de toedeling van beloning en bestraffing. De mate waarin FARDC commandanten aan deze verwachtingen kunnen voldoen wordt sterk verzwakt door big-man netwerken, die leiden tot een focus op inkomensgeneratie en favoritisme, inclusief met betrekking tot bestraffing en beloning. Dit voedt onder soldaten het idee dat ze onder het bevel staan van incompetente, onopgeleide en immorele commandanten, wiens intenties en loyaliteiten zij sterk wantrouwen. Zulke gevoelens vergroten de kans op een ineenstorting van discipline in gevechtssituaties.

Binnen het onderzoek werden 14 casussen geïdentificeerd bestaande uit combinaties van militaire eenheden en uitzendingsomgevingen. Op basis van deze casussen poogt de studie variaties in civiel-militaire interacties te verklaren, met name waarom in bepaalde contexten burgers civiel-militaire interacties als positief en in andere als negatief beoordelen. De oorzaken voor deze verschillen werden gezocht in de kenmerken van zowel militaire eenheden als van de context waarin deze eenheden opereren. In relatie tot de interne kenmerken van legereenheden werden de volgende vier factoren geïdentificeerd: ten eerste, aanwijzingen van formele en informele hiërarchieën, die voor een groot deel bepalen wat de belangrijkste projecten zijn die eenheden nastreven; ten tweede, de kwaliteit van bevelvoering, met name of commandanten bereid en in staat zijn om het goede gedrag van hun ondergeschikten te waarborgen; ten derde, tijdshorizon, wat betrekking heeft op de lengte van de periode dat troepen in een bepaalde context uitgezonden zijn en of ze in hun gebied van origine opereren; en ten vierde, de inhoud en prominentie van discoursen over burgers, met name in hoeverre deze als een vijandelijke uit-groep geportretteerd worden en hoe sterk deze beeldvorming gedeeld wordt onder troepen.

De belangrijkste factoren in relatie tot de uitzendingsomgeving zijn de volgende: hoe geïsoleerd het uitzendingsgebied is; de aanwezigheid en relatieve cohesie van civiele tegenkrachten; en de structuur van de lokale economie, met name de aanwezigheid en toegankelijkheid van inkomens genererende activiteiten en de aard van die toegankelijkheid. Wat ook van belang is zijn lokale normen, vooral met betrekking tot het solliciteren van (gewelddadige) protectiediensten van gewapende actoren, en de aanwezigheid van discoursen die kunnen leiden tot kaderingen van het leger als een vijandelijke uit-groep, inclusief in etnische termen. Een laatste element van belang zijn plaats-specifieke dynamieken van conflict, onveiligheid/onzekerheid en protectie. Deze beïnvloeden civiel-militaire interactie zowel via de 'aanbod' als de 'vraagzijde' van protectiediensten. Aan de aanbod zijde is de voornaamste factor de aanwezigheid van een veelvoud aan concurrerende gewapende protectieverschaffers. Deze kunnen tegen elkaar opbieden in het gebruik van geweld om cliënten aan te trekken, of geweld aanwenden om verraad door burgers te bestraffen of af te schrikken. Aan de vraagzijde is de belangrijkste factor de omvang van de vraag naar gewelddadige protectiediensten. Deze kan tijdelijk stijgen door bijvoorbeeld grotere FARDC aanwezigheid in een bepaald gebied of verschuivingen in militaire controle die ervoor zorgen dat de FARDC de dominante gewapende factie wordt. Wat ook een rol kan spelen is een (tijdelijke) toename van de legitimiteit van het gebruik van geweld door een groei in het aantal geweldsincidenten en een prominenter aanwezigheid van conflict narratieven.

Samengevat, er is een scala aan factoren gerelateerd aan zowel FARDC eenheden als hun uitzendingsomgeving die civiel-militaire interactie beïnvloeden, inclusief de hoeveelheid geweld die daarbij komt kijken. Dientengevolge wordt civiel-militaire interactie in iedere tijd-ruimte context vormgegeven door een specifieke combinatie van factoren. Dit leidt tot een grote variatie in hoe deze interactie wordt geëvalueerd door burgers. Ondanks deze heterogeniteit kunnen er toch terugkerende combinaties van factoren geïdentificeerd worden die tot dezelfde uitkomsten leiden. Verder zijn, ondanks context-specifieke verschillen, de effecten van civiel-militaire interactie op de reproductie van sociale structuren in vele contexten gelijk. Bovendien, waar zulke effecten verschillen, worden deze verschillen grotendeels opgeheven op het niveau van de Kivu provincies in hun geheel. Tezamen met de regelmatige heruitzendingen van FARDC eenheden versterken de verschillen in sociale structuren en dynamieken per plaats (sociaal-spatiale sub-orde) de segmentatie van de contradicties tussen leger en burgers. Deze contradicties zijn het gevolg van het nul-som karakter van de competitie voor middelen. Dergelijke segmentatie wordt verder versterkt door de inbedding van burgers en militairen in netwerken die de civiel/militaire dichotomie overschrijden. Een belangrijke gevolg van de segmentering en regionalisering van contradicties is dat zij leiden tot de regionale dispersie van de conflicten die voortvloeien uit deze contradicties, of ervoor zorgen dat deze conflicten niet manifest worden. Dit draagt in belangrijke mate bij aan de reproductie van de structuren van dominantie, significantie en legitimatie waarop de machtsbasis van de FARDC rust.

Een andere cruciale oorzaak van de reproductie van militarisering, die het resultaat is van de cumulatieve effecten van de handelingen van burgers en militairen, zijn dynamieken van conflict, onveiligheid/onzekerheid en protectie, zowel binnen het leger als in de samenleving van Kivu in haar geheel. Deze dynamieken leiden tot een focus op de korte termijn die burgers ertoe brengt om acties te ondernemen die de machtspositie van het leger in stand houden op de lange termijn. Een ander element van belang is de routinisering van bepaalde vormen van civiel-militaire interactie. Routinematige handelingen vinden plaats door een beroep te doen op 'praktisch bewustzijn'. Dit belemmert het ontwikkelen van inzichten onder burgers over de effecten van hun individuele handelingen op de samenleving als geheel, met name hoe deze bijdragen aan de reproductie van militarisering. Ook soldaten nemen grotendeels onbewust deel aan handelingen die cumulatief de huidige machtsstructuren verankeren, inclusief in de strijdkrachten. Zij zijn vaak primair bezig met overleven en het hoofd bieden aan conflicten en andere vormen van onzekerheid/onveiligheid. Hierdoor reflecteren zij niet altijd op de gevolgen van hun handelingen op de langere termijn, waar ze vaak ook weinig inzicht in hebben. Paradoxaal genoeg, om zich te beschermen tegen

de willekeur en onzekerheid die het gevolg zijn van dynamieken van conflict, onzekerheid/onveiligheid en protectie, zoeken zij vaak de bescherming van big-men. Hierdoor dragen ze bij aan het verder aanwakkeren van precies die dynamieken.

Zelfs civiele en militaire elites, wiens handelingen het meest direct de reproductie van de machtspositie van het leger beïnvloeden, geven niet bewust al hun acties vorm om transformaties tegen te gaan. Hun handelingen worden ook beïnvloed door stimulansen die voortkomen uit de sociale orde van de Congo en bepaalde routinematige vormen van militair management. Verder hebben hun pogingen tot hervorming van het leger soms onverwachte effecten of worden ze op een zijspoor gezet door het managen van urgente crises in het oosten van Congo. Dit toont aan dat hoewel elite actoren een cruciale rol spelen in de reproductie van de gemilitariseerde sociale structuren van Kivu, dit niet volledig het resultaat is van bewust handelen. Er kan geconcludeerd worden dat hoewel voor elite actoren het beeld meer complex is, niet-elite actoren grotendeels bijdragen aan de (re)productie van de gemilitariseerde sociale orde van de Kivu provincies op een niet-reflexieve manier. Dit weerspiegelt hoe militarisering een proces is dat gedreven wordt door handelingen die logisch lijken voor individuen, maar die ongunstige gevolgen hebben voor de samenleving als geheel.

