

**Draft Discussion Paper II:
Origin, Structure, and Dynamics of the Regional Conflict Formation in the
Great Lakes Region of Central Africa**

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Introduction

This paper attempts to expand on the conceptual framework outlined in Working Paper I (a general analysis of regional conflict formations or RCFs), through an analysis of the origins, structure, and dynamics of the RCF in the Great Lakes (GL) region. For the purpose of this discussion, the RCF-GL is defined as the mutually reinforcing conflicts in Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as well as the links to domestic conflict or destabilization processes within surrounding countries, namely Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Sudan, among others. The RCF-GL is sustained by both a regional and global context – the networks that are important here extend beyond mere geographic proximity to include forces such as competing great power interests, extractive industries and arms traffickers, to name a few.

The focus of this paper is the processes by which conflict, whether it is local (as in the Kivu provinces) or national (as in Rwanda), becomes regionalized. To this end, we will not examine in depth the origins of conflict within the countries in the GL, except in instances where such a discussion will illuminate the mechanisms of linkage and mutual reinforcement in the RCF-GL. Rather than adding to the already substantial debate about the origins of conflict(s) in specific countries, we attempt here to provide a framework for understanding how conflicts become linked through local, national, regional and global networks. Within this framework we also recognize the historic origins of unresolved sources of conflict in the region. Our purpose is to explore the impact of the existing linkages and networks on the formation of the RCF-GL, in order to identify possibilities for a comprehensive regionally focused conflict management strategy. Working Paper III addresses and builds upon this last point, by focusing on the ways in which regional and global linkages and networks, can also provide resources for peace building.

Working Paper I applies the concepts of the field of conflict prevention and resolution to a regional level of analysis. Conflict analysis generally distinguishes structural factors from escalation factors, a distinction which is somewhat artificial, but useful for analytic purposes. In this paper we draw upon this conceptual framework to disaggregate the varying, but, in many instances, overlapping processes that reinforce the RCF-GL. These processes occur within particular a historical and global context, which we also address. Rather than focusing on “vertical” escalation of conflict or increased intensity of violence, we are interested in the dynamic of “horizontal” escalation, or the expansion in the set of actors, territories, or issues at stake. However, even this distinction is arbitrary, as escalation of conflict tends to intensify the structural factors that may in turn lead to the reemergence or exacerbation of conflict.

Historical Context

The state system in Africa was created as part of the geopolitical strategy of the European imperial powers at the Berlin Conference of 1885-1886. It has been hypothesized that the problem of African states is a result of arbitrary and imposed borders. From this emerges a second and almost foregone conclusion that post-independence leaders in

Africa fail to maintain the integrity of state borders and the authority of state institutions, leading to the collapse of the state. Congo is a case in point.¹ An alternate hypothesis is that an understanding of the crisis of the African state would have to first consider the trajectory of the organization of power from the colonial to post-colonial period. To study modern African dilemmas such as state collapse and conflict without the context of the colonial genealogy “misses the link between the current problem of African politics and the bifurcated nature of the African states – a phenomenon forged in the colonial period.”² This claim suggests that the state that was inherited by the leaders in the post-colonial period was not designed for rule as an unified entity from within, as the indirect rule of late European colonialism separated each “tribe” into separate and distinct Native Authorities – precluding the inclusion or representation of any group that was not defined as indigenous.

Regardless where one stands in this debate, it is clear that the origins of contemporary problems in Africa are not simply or even primarily the arbitrary location of the imposed borders, but the authoritarian and exploitative structures of colonial administration that were not designed with self-government in mind. In Congo/Zaire, as elsewhere in Africa, the challenge of independence was further complicated by Cold War realities, and the proxy wars that played out between the democratic governments of the west, and the communist governments of the east. The United States, Mobutu’s primary benefactor, provided him with substantial economic and military assistance in return for his support of their policies in Angola. The repercussions – continuing authoritarian rule, the emergence of mercenaries in the region, contagion of violence, etc., were, in large part, born during this period.

Without getting into an extended discussion about the history of Western interference in Africa, from these periods (colonialism and the Cold War) two large themes can be extracted which give context to many of the factors discussed below:

- ◆ The structural factors that are important in the RCF-GL have roots which predate the emergence of conflict – most fundamental being the problem of inclusion/exclusion of transborder identity groups, especially at the local level where competition for limited resources is most acute,³
- ◆ Flows of people and armed groups, which are defined as escalatory factors below, predate the formation of the RCF. In the first instance, instigating labor migrations was a common colonial practice,⁴ and in the second, armed groups and

¹ See I. William Zartman. “Posing the Problem of State Collapse” in I. William Zartman (ed). *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1995) p.2.

² See Mahmood Mamdani. “Preliminary Thoughts on the Congo Crisis.” *Social Text*, 17:3, 1999, p. 53

³ See J.P. Nzeza Kabu Zex-Kongo. « Du Zaïre au Congo : la question agraire au Nord-Kivu. » *L’Afrique Politique*. 1999, pp. 201-211

⁴ See Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja. “Anatomy and History of the Zaire-Congo Crises.” USAfrica Online: http://www.usafricaonline.com/news/n_crises.html

mercenaries in the region may be directly linked to the proxy wars and the continuing geopolitical strategies of western governments.⁵

Consequently, a regional approach to conflict management of the RCF-GL will have to take into account not only the conflict itself, but the interplay between the various institutions at the local, national, regional and global levels which sustain them.⁶

Structural Mechanisms

Inclusion/Exclusion of transborder identity groups; Weak states/predatory regimes

Many of the explanations of conflict in Africa have focused on the ethnic dimension of conflict, and in the context of the Great Lakes, the struggle for comprehension is most often centered on the enduring Hutu-Tutsi struggle for control of the states of Rwanda and Burundi. To this end, much intellectual capital has been spent on the question of the origin and relevance of “Hutu” and “Tutsi” – whether they are primordial, or colonial constructions, and whether they constitute ethnic, racial or political identities. For our purposes we consider the construction and/or modification of identity during and after the colonial period in the context of transborder identities and their relevance to the region. We concede that these identities have political relevance to the extent that they structure access to resources and privilege, both within Rwanda and Burundi, as well as within the other countries in the region in which they reside.

While DRC is the theater in which the current conflict in the Great Lakes plays out,⁷ Rwanda is seen as the epicenter of the conflict due to the fact that the Banyarwanda (persons of Rwandan decent) conflict within the borders of Rwanda had led to the displacement of both civilians (refugees) and armed groups, exporting conflict to the surrounding countries. The trajectory of the Rwandan state exemplifies the role of violence and exclusion in post-colonial polities. While the Social Revolution of 1959 empowered Hutu, who bore the brunt of colonial oppression under the Belgians, it did so at the cost of the possibility of creating an inclusive polity by excluding from political life Tutsi, who were constructed as foreigners. The expulsion of Tutsi during the First Republic in Rwanda gave rise to populations in the region of Banyarwanda, who became important factors in the domestic power calculus of the states in which they resided.⁸

Additionally, the varying degrees of dominance or suppression of Banyarwanda groups within the region links the conflict of this particular group to the region as a whole.

⁵ See Arthur C. Helton. “Forced Displacement, Humanitarian Intervention, and Sovereignty.” *SAIS Review*, Vol. 20 No, 1 2000, pp. 61-86

⁶ For a variety of perspectives, see Mwesiga Baregu. *The Crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. (Harare: SAPES Books, 1999) and Ibbo Mandaza. *Reflections on the Crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. (Harare: SAPES Books, 1999).

⁷ For an interesting perspective, see Ernest Wamba dia Wamba. “Mobutisme Après Mobutu: Reflections on the Current Situation in former Zaire.” Paper written for the conference on “Peace and Human Rights in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: Prospects for the New Millennium. 11-12 December 1997, Kampala, Uganda

⁸ See Musifiky Mwanasali. “Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” *IPA Policy Briefing Series*, April 1998.

Lacking the capacity to resolve these issues, leaders of countries who find themselves faced with a domestic crisis at the core of which is the issue of nationality have found it difficult to rise to the challenge. Our focus is on how, and in what context ethnic identities within a diaspora spark violent conflict – considering that there is a long history of migration in the region and that the identities themselves do not cause clashes. For example, populations of Banyarwanda settled in the Kivu provinces before, during and after the colonial period, generating varying degrees of local acceptance or hostility. The shift of self-identification of Banyamulenge (Rwandan Tutsi) in South Kivu and Banyarwanda (of both Hutu and Tutsi origin) in North Kivu from a general identification with Rwanda, to ethnic-oriented identities is an issue that bears consideration in the context of the regional conflict. Further, it is necessary to explore further the shifts in significance of these identities at the local and national level of the host countries. This has been a concern in Congo-Zaire, where Kinshasa is too far removed in geographic and social terms from the local reality to sustain public dialogue on nationality and citizen rights.

The issue surrounding the inclusion of groups who are not considered indigenous to the countries in which they reside plays out in the citizenship struggles in the region.⁹ One explanation of the conflict of the Banyamulenge in Zaire is that they were perceived to accumulate resources such as land and water, consequently constraining the access of “native” Zairians. The inclusion of ethnic Tutsi (considered as “foreign”) within the governments of Mobutu and Kabila further decreased the legitimacy of their regimes. By giving citizenship rights to all persons present in Congo/Zaire at the time of independence, and nationalizing the land so that anyone with the resources could purchase lands that had previously been in control of the Native Authorities, Mobutu in the 1970s laid the groundwork for the belief in the Kivu provinces that the Banyarwanda economically and politically dominated the native populations.¹⁰ This hostility was exacerbated by the perception that the loyalty of the Banyarwanda was linked to Rwanda.¹¹

The question of inclusion links the political, social and economic issues that are salient both in national and regional conflicts. It finds at its core the problem of the domestic weakness of states. In some cases, this weakness is manifest in the inability or unwillingness to incorporate populations, leading to crises of citizenship, as is illustrated in the example of the Banyarwanda. The relationship among identities, states, and access

⁹ Clashes between groups within Congo-Zaire has not been limited to the problem of the Banyarwanda in the Eastern provinces. For a discussion of one example of ethnic cleansing under Mobutu, see «L'épuration ethnique au Katanga et l'ethnique du redressement des torts du passé »

¹⁰ See Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja. Conflict in Eastern Zaire. APIC Online: www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/1243/Nzongola.txt

¹¹ Several authors have explored the crisis of the state in Africa with a specific focus on the Great Lakes, including: ¹¹ René Lemarchand. “Patterns of State Collapse and Reconstruction in Central Africa: Reflections on the Crisis in the Great Lakes.” International Political Science Association, 1997. Online: <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v1/3/2.htm>; Crawford Young and Thomas Turner. *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); William Reno. “Sovereignty and Personal Rule in Zaire.” Online: www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v1/3/4.htm; William Reno. *Warlord Politics and African States*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999) ; Janet MacGaffey and Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga. *Congo-Paris: Transitional Traders on the Margins of the Law*. (Oxford: The International African Institute, 2000).

to resources in the region includes several historical layers, which have structured regional relations differently. The colonial administrations that became independent states are in tension with other forms of social and political relations, especially those at the local level, which may be considered more legitimate. Within this context, much of the population may regulate social relations outside the institutional structure of the state, especially where the state is primarily a vehicle for personal accumulation, rendering irrelevant populations who are not a part that process.¹²

Furthermore the presence in the region of one or more states extremely vulnerable to disintegration can produce ripple effects on states that are otherwise more stable, or create incentives for neighboring weak states to export their domestic instability to the vulnerable state (Uganda, Zimbabwe). For example, it has been argued that President Yoweri Museveni can ill afford to withdraw Ugandan advisors and military from the DRC because it would further destabilize an already precarious domestic situation. Tanzania provides an interesting example of the case that did not happen – further consideration should be given to the institutions that made it possible for Tanzania to insulate itself from the contagion of violent conflict, despite large and long-standing refugee populations.

Location and availability of taxable and lootable resources; transborder trade networks

In regions with weak and/or illegitimate states without viable and inclusive economies, informal economies develop as part of the survival strategy of civilian populations. These informal economies can become structural factors of conflict when the mechanisms by which they operate are utilized in the perpetuation of violence.¹³ In this region there exist both Banyarwanda and Swahili-language trading networks, linking the towns of the interior (Kivus, northern Congo, Lubumbashi) to neighboring markets (Kampala, Kigali, Bujumbura, Kalemie, Kapiri Mposhi in Zambia) and then the Indian Ocean coast (Dar es Salaam, Mombassa),¹⁴ which then linked to the smuggling/trading center of Dubai, circuits of trade around the Indian Ocean, and the world market more generally. These networks, put in place for the trade in agricultural and/or manufactured goods, are manipulated by actors who are able to develop linkages to regional and global markets both for the exportation of local resources, and the importation of fuel, arms and other tools that have to be imported for the continuation of war. Such networks are sources of economic and social capital, to the extent that armed groups are able to limit use to goods that are able to garner the greatest return in taxes, which are levied on those who wish to utilize the networks.

¹² See Sabakinu Kivilu. « Pauvreté et misère : Eléments pour une économie politiques des pillages », *Revue Canadienne des Etudes Africaines*. 33 :2 et 3, 1999 and Crawford Young and Thomas Turner. *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

¹³ See Sam Kallungia. COMESA Secretariat “Impact of Cross-Border Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa.” Online: <http://www.comesa.int/home1024.asp>

¹⁴ For a more extensive exploration of the trade networks in the Great Lakes, see Musifiky Mwanasali. “The View from Below” (in Mats Berdal and David Malone (eds) *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

The vast assortment of resources within DRC, which range from timber to coltan to diamonds, create a scenario where the stakes of control of the resource-rich provinces can motivate or sustain violence. The location of valuable resources within isolated or landlocked areas such as the eastern and northern provinces of DRC links the trade of these goods to networks in the region that are more accessible geographically. In addition to the presence of informal trade networks, the easily extractable nature of the resources in the DRC increases vulnerability to looting. While oil extraction requires a relationship between a recognized government and multinational corporations, extraction of diamonds or coltan does not. Hence the location of easily lootable resources creates opportunities for multiple, regional violent contenders, regardless of whether they seek resources to fund political-military activities or are motivated solely by greed.

Operational Mechanisms

Regime transformation and the stakes of inclusion; Strategies of regional leaders

In the late 1950s the stakes of inclusion and the question of citizenship were transformed by the pending independence – an issue apparent in the question of citizenship, which is played out to varying degrees in re-occurring conflicts in the region. It is at the moment of regime transformation, whether internally or externally generated, that political space is created or constrained, determining which groups are included or excluded from participation in the political, social and economic infrastructure of the state. The move in the 1990s towards multiparty democracy in a region that has not resolved issues of ethnicity and nationality has affected the rights of groups such as the Tutsi in Rwanda and the Banyarwanda in Zaire. It is currently raising questions in Tanzania about the level of access and acceptance that is feasible for migrant and/or refugee populations, who have in some instances been resident in the country for a number of years. The shifts are what bear the most relevance here – the movements from relatively open to increasingly xenophobic societies. Paradoxically, efforts to define citizenship, as for voting, create incentives not only for inclusion, but also for exclusion.

Here we can bring in the strategies of regional leaders, which are apparent at almost every level of analysis of the RCF-GL.¹⁵ The perception that domestic concerns may be exacerbated by political transformations in neighboring states provides an incentive for leaders in the region to manipulate the process. The involvement of Mobutu, Museveni and Buyoya during the Arusha Accords for Rwanda (1991-1993), all of whom had domestic interests in the repatriation of Rwandan refugees, impacted (both positively and negatively) the civil war in Rwanda, the genocide and the ensuing regime transformation

¹⁵ Among others, see Richard A. Griggs. “Geostrategies in the Great Lakes Conflict and Spatial Designs for Peace.” Center for World Indigenous Studies. 1999. Online: http://www.cwis.org/hutu3_1.html; Musambayi Katumanga. “Uganda and Rwanda’s Involvement in DRC: The Pursuit of National Interests,” *L’Afrique Politique*, 2000. p. 89-103; and William Reno. “Uganda’s Politics of War and Debt Relief,” sent via email: reno@northwestern.edu, date unknown.

within Rwanda after the Rwandan Patriotic Front took Kigali.¹⁶ Similarly, the strategies of leaders have shaped the conflict in the DRC as well as the current peace and democratization processes underway in Burundi¹⁷ and DRC. Non-state armed groups also have a stake in the manner in which regimes are renegotiated during peace processes – which in many instances (in the case of both state and non-state actors), may increase rather than mitigate violence. These political agendas and alliances are not static, as the shift in relationship between the governments of Rwanda and Uganda illustrates. Nor are they limited to the immediate region – the actors with security or economic stakes in regime transformations exist at all levels, from the local to international level.

Flows of refugees; Diaspora communities

Refugee flows resulting from the domestic conflicts of the states in the region interact in various ways with the structural factors above, in particular with citizenship crises and transborder groups and trading networks.¹⁸ The most obvious cases in this region are the flows of Rwandan Tutsi refugees after 1959 and in early 1994, of Burundian Hutu refugees after 1972 and 1993, of Rwandan Hutu refugees after mid-1994, and of various Congolese groups after 1996 and 1998. There are many others, such as the exodus of Katangans to Angola, or Sudanese to Uganda. These refugees had very different impacts on and interactions with the main receiving countries, interacting as well with the situation of internally displaced populations. They become political and economic actors in their countries of refuge, linking up with sympathetic states and guerrilla movements, and perhaps also with transborder trading networks. In some cases, refugee flows transform and/or reinforce the transborder character of identity groups and strengthen informal trading networks (such as in the Kivu provinces and Uganda, where the inflow of refugees may account for the shift into Hutu/Tutsi identities of the largely Banyarwandan identity of the migrants who arrived in earlier periods).

A subject about which we have less information, but are interested in exploring further, is the role of international diasporas or exiles in the developed countries in the RCF-GL. It has been hypothesized that the conflicts in Ethiopia and Sudan, for example, are supported economically and ideologically by highly politicized diasporas, located primarily in Western Europe and North America.

Extractive industries and looting; Effects of conflict on economy;

¹⁶ On the involvement of Uganda, DRC and Burundi in the events in Rwanda (1990-1994) see Mahmood Mamdani. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001)

¹⁷ See Léonce Ndikumana. "Towards a Solution to Violence in Burundi: A Case for Political and Economic Liberalisation." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 38, 3 (2000), pp. 431-459 or Floribert Ngaruko and Janvier Nkurunziza. "An Economic Interpretation of Conflict in Burundi." *Journal of African Economies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 370-409.

¹⁸ For instance, see Tony Waters. "The Coming Rwandan Demographic Crisis, or Why Current Repatriation Policies Will Not Solve Tanzania's (or Zaire's) Refugee Problems." *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*. 3 June 2000. Online: <http://www.jha.ac/articles/a013.htm> or James Schneider. "The Refugee Crisis in Southern and Central Africa." *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*. 6 June 2000. Online: <http://www.jha.ac/articles/a050.htm>

Blowback effects of conflict

The location within the DRC of valuable natural resources and the precarious nature of the state creates incentives for leaders and other actors to exploit opportunities to loot and profiteer during armed conflict, either to finance the conflict or for personal profit. The manipulation of existing regional and global linkages, as well as the creation of new relationships, fosters interest in prolonging the conflict through the process of extraction, export, and financial transactions. The *Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*,¹⁹ submitted to the United Nations Security Council in April 2001, documented much of the looting activities of Rwanda and Uganda, though its examination of the extra-regional and global dimension of the system of resource exploitation was less systematic. How are regional and global linkages that facilitate this process of extraction and exportation facilitated by the traffic of looted resources? It is well documented that Laurent Kabila made deals with international mining companies while he was still a rebel – a phenomenon that continues with the rebel leaders currently controlling the resource-rich areas in the DRC. To what extent are the activities of mining companies and dealers in minerals an incentive for armed conflict, and what are the agendas of these companies – are they initiators or opportunists?

The destruction of subsistence economies, disruption of some trading networks (to the benefit of others), as well as killing, rape, pillage, and disease have disrupted or destroyed people's survival strategies. The dollarization of the economy as a result of the influx of humanitarian agencies in the Kivu provinces after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and other economic transformations have created demands for cash and incentives for participation in "illicit" trade such as extraction, smuggling, illegal drugs (where possible), and so on. These new demands interact with pre-existing informal trading networks as well as with looting activities by armies, etc. to reinforce growth of a predatory regional war economy as well as labor migrations that are hard to distinguish from refugee flows.

States that intervene in neighboring countries also risk economic blowback. In this region, for instance, the collapse in Zimbabwe was partly precipitated by the fiscal and economic crisis and partly due to the expenditures on the war in the DRC. It appears that, unlike Rwanda, the looting income from Zimbabwe's participation in the DRC war is not going to the Treasury to cover the military expenses but to individuals close to the president (as in Uganda) so that involvement in the foreign war becomes an indirect way for leaders to profit by bankrupting their own government. The bankruptcy of Zimbabwe is also destabilizing the South African banking system.

Migrations and alliances of armed groups; Arms trafficking

Weak states are unable, and predatory regimes are sometimes unwilling, to disarm militias that cross into their territories. There are numerous examples in the GL of instances in which leaders manipulate and/or support such militia to further their

¹⁹ <http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/drcongo.htm>

domestic or regional strategies. This phenomenon has been well documented in the GL, and can be useful for comparative purposes in order to bring out the importance of transnational armed groups in regions where they are less obvious and prominent than here. There is a great deal of speculation, for example, about the security imperatives behind Joseph Kabila's continuing support of the Interahamwe, who moved into the northwestern provinces of Rwanda this summer. It has also been hypothesized that a military defeat in DRC would lead to the collapse of the current regime in Rwanda, who continues its involvement by proxy in the current conflict – a scenario which neither Uganda nor Burundi can tolerate. There also exist linkages between rebel groups in Congo-Brazzaville, Sudan, Angola, etc. with those in DRC. For our purposes we need further analysis of the relations of these armed groups to various conflicts, and to other structural elements of the RCF, such as the trading and looting networks, ethnic diasporas, and so on. A plethora of information exists on military alliances, however we have less information on the covert alliances that exist, both between groups and between states and groups in the region.

Arms trafficking forms part of the transformed transborder trade that we have highlighted above. These networks, of course, are global as well as regional, official as well as unofficial, though governments like to focus on the latter. Rather than rehearse the already well documented links of governments and armed groups to states and companies involved in the arms trade, we need to investigate further regional networks of arms trade, whether groups have formed regional alliances of any sort for interacting with the arms trade, are arms flowing from one conflict zone to another as people are demobilized – or might they do so – etc. Research on the military dynamic of the RCF is still in progress, and will continued to be fleshed out in later drafts of this paper.

The role of information and rumor

People who learn about violence in neighboring states may interpret it as relevant to their own situation.²⁰ It may encourage them to be more aggressive or make them feel insecure. The effect is not limited to the purposeful statements of propagandists or “hate radios.” Mutual (mis-)perception of events in Rwanda, Burundi, and the Kivus promoted the process of linkage. Local, national, and global media, as well as informal networks for exchange of information (gossip etc.) play a role in this process. An exploration of the RCF-GL at the local level may shed more light on people's main sources of information.

Systemic Mechanisms

Regional strategies of external powers; Role of international financial institutions and donor governments; International Corporations; International Regulation Regimes

²⁰ See Stephen Jackson. ““Our Riches are Being Looted!”: War Economies and Rumours of Crime in the Kivus, D.R. Congo.” Forthcoming in *Politique Africaine*

The structural factors and escalatory processes that give rise to RCFs occur within a global context. Competition among world powers, which was played out in the form of proxy wars between the East and the West during the Cold War, remains a continuing reality for Africa, though the contemporary struggles for political influence are driven more by economics than ideology, contributing to the formation of region-wide alliance structures. The relationship of the French to the Habyarimana government, or the United States to the Kagame government (both largely in the form of military support),²¹ could be conceived as escalatory factors – the former was the 1994 genocide and the latter for the more recent invasion of the DRC by Rwanda. Within Africa, the competition between Zimbabwe and South Africa for control of the southern African region explains in part the self-destructive decision of Zimbabwe to expend domestic resources on the war in DRC.

International financial institutions and donor governments have shaped countries that are on the receiving end of development funds and programs such as structural adjustment.²² The fall in the world price of coffee in the mid-1980s affected several countries in the region, leading to structural adjustment programs that may have had an effect on regional conflict, as networks of people living from coffee production and trade were affected by both the fall in prices and the attempts to restructure coffee marketing. We would be interested in further discussion of how people adjusted their survival strategies in light of the new economic pressures wrought by structural adjustment, as well as the relationship between these challenges and the struggle over resources such as land and water. To what extent should we focus on the presence on the ground of international development agencies, or do international intervention efforts become more relevant in the aftermath of conflict?

Another area that should be considered further is profitability and accountability – does the presence, or lack thereof, of international corporations provide another angle for considering how to limit incentives for exploitation of resources?²³ Finally, what international regulatory regimes apply in this case? Are there restrictions in place that enforce accountability procedures on the coltan industry, for example?

Conclusion

This paper summarizes our current conceptualization of the origins and structures of the RCF-GL, but it is a working document, to be both criticized and reformulated over the

²¹ Hartung, William D. and Moix, Bridget. “Deadly Legacy: U.S. Arms to Africa and the Congo War.” World Policy Institute. January 2000. Online: <http://www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports.html> and Hartung, William D. and Montague, Dena. “Deadly Legacy Update: U.S. Arms and Training Programs in Africa.” World Policy Institute. March 22, 2000. Online: <http://www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports.html>

²² For a perspective on the relationship between cross-border networks and development, see Mark Duffield. “Social Reconstruction and the Radicalisation of Development: Aid as a Relation of Global Governance.” *Development and Change*, Forthcoming, 2001

²³ See Pierre Baracyetse. “The Geopolitical Stakes of the International Mining Companies in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Ex-Zaire).” Online: <http://www.africa2000.com/UGANDA/mineralseng.html>

course of this project. Many questions still remain, and it is our hope that the regional conference will shed light on the questions and issues that are presented here, as well as those that we have overlooked or neglected. For example, our methodology is informed by academic research, which to a large extent focuses on the national and international dynamics of the conflict. What we are lacking is the local dynamic,²⁴ which is often best obtained by field research and/or personal affiliations.

As our focus here is on factors that create regional linkages of conflict, the framework we've used fits rather awkwardly in cases where the processes are overlapping or difficult to define. Larger concepts, such as the issue of human rights, are only included in this paper to the extent that violations of human rights create regional linkages when they are transformed into messages (flows of information) or lead to migrations (refugee flows). These categories may themselves constrain a substantive discussion of local realities in the formation of the RCF-GL, as the region is our unit of analysis. Additionally, as we have focused on the most visible networks and processes, our discussion is limited regarding the role of women in the daily reality within the region. Further examination of the survival strategies of families in the context of the RCF is a first step towards a comprehensive management approach with fewer negative externalities. That said, how could we incorporate these admitted lapses (and others that we have not accounted for) within this framework?

While our analysis focuses on the processes of the RCF-GL, we are not satisfied that we have sufficiently illustrated the dynamics of the RCF. In other words, how do these factors interact over time and space? Further, how can we focus on the mechanisms that have contributed to the creation of the RCF in the Great Lakes while also integrating the historical realities of both the region as a whole and the individual states within the region? How should we conceive of an RCF in general and the RCF in the GL in particular as a process, as well as a phenomenon?

²⁴ See Musifiky Mwanasali. "Politics and Security in Central Africa." *African Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 4 No. 2 December 1999, pp. 89-105.