

# Rwanda in the DRC: Keeping the Pot Boiling?

*An eclectic approach to the study of regionalised  
conflict in Africa*

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# Map of the Democratic Republic of the Congo



## Abbreviations and acronyms:

AFDL	Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo)
AMF	American Mineral Fields
CNDP	Congrès National pour la Défense du peuple (National Congress for People Defense)
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
FAR	Forces Armées Rwandaises (Rwandanese National Army)
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo)
FDLR	Forces Démocratiques de la Libération du Rwanda (Democratic forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)
Gecamines	La Générale des Carrières et des Mines
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MIBA	Société minière de Bakwanga
MONUC	Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo (United Nations mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo)
NRA	New Regionalism Approach
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (Rally for Congolese Democracy)
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front

RSC	Regional Security Complexes
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SASMIP	Service d'Achat des Matières Précieuses
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

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# 1 Introduction

The Great Lakes region matters. It matters because of its vast territorial expanse and the many borders it shares with neighbouring states, and the ever-present danger of violence spilling across boundaries. It matters because the Congo's huge mineral wealth translates into a uniquely favourable potential for economic development. [...] More importantly it matters because of the appalling bloodshed it continues to experience (Lemarchand 2009:iv).

The Great Lakes region has been ravaged by warfare for the last two decades. For a long time, the fighting went on almost unnoticed by the outside world, but for a brief moment, when the region exploded in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, all eyes were on Central Africa. The atrocities of extremist Hutu rebels slaughtering hundreds of thousands fellow Rwandans in the spur of 100 days, was met by apathy and disbelief by the onlookers in the international community, who have been dealing with their inability or unwillingness to stop the genocide ever since. Although the genocide ran out of steam in Rwanda and the perpetrators were removed from power, the killing of Tutsi continued across the border in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This extraterritorial continuation of the Rwandan conflict coincided with a local conflict in the Kivu provinces in eastern DRC, and the region was before long set in flames. In the name of national security, the Rwandan president Paul Kagame invaded the DRC in search for Rwandan Hutu rebels two years after the genocide. After a swift operation where authoritarian Congolese president Mobutu was replaced by someone deemed more suitable to meet Rwandan needs, Rwanda had consolidated its influence in its large neighbour.

However, problems soon emerged in Rwanda's relationship with the newly installed Congolese president Kabila. He failed to live up to Rwandan expectations of a pliant client, and just months after their first invasion of the DRC, Rwanda – together with Uganda and Burundi – went in a second time. This time, however, the Congolese president was able to fend off Rwandan advances with the help of inter alia Angola and Zimbabwe, and the war stalemated until a cease-fire was reached in 2002. Despite

the peace agreement demanding that all foreign forces leave Congolese territory, Rwanda has maintained its presence in eastern DRC.

Rwanda has played a crucial part in the conflict in the DRC for 15 years, and is arguably also a key actor in the conflict's resolution. The links between the two countries were already profound prior to 1994, but the genocide put a magnifying glass to the situation. Millions of refugees poured into the eastern parts of the DRC, making the two countries more interconnected than ever. As the next-door neighbour to the conflict in eastern DRC, Rwanda might be expected to work towards a restoration of peace and stability in the region. Instead, Rwanda has actively supported Tutsi rebel groups across the border and by that prolonged the fighting.

Albeit officially justified as a quest to protect its national security as well as the lives of Tutsi living in Kivu, Rwanda's presence in Kivu has at the same time been interpreted as a means to gain control of the area's abundant natural resources. The dissonance between Rwanda's self-proclaimed national security motivations and the allegations of being motivated by natural resource exploitation, is what first triggered my interest for this topic. Conflict across the border can be a costly affair, as it can result in a need for increased armaments spending, difficult diplomatic environments, and the influx of refugees. But despite the costs from next-door conflict, Rwanda has engaged in behaviour that, instead of paving a path to peace, rather maintains the level of chaos and destruction on its doorstep. Given Rwanda's unwillingness to cease its support for the Congolese rebels fighting its government, it may seem as if Rwanda might have an interest in maintaining the conflict in eastern DRC. Might it be that Rwanda contributes to sustain a level of conflict in eastern DRC in order to wield its influence across the border? Rwanda would not have been able to play the role it does in eastern DRC today had the DRC been in control over the entirety of its territory. By remaining too big, too weak, and too fragmented – does the DRC cater to Rwanda's needs in a way it would not do had it been a centralised and powerful neighbour? It is not possible for me to determine what Rwanda's motivations for maintaining a presence in eastern DRC are, but by analysing the mechanisms enabling its presence, I

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can discuss possible explanations for what I interpret as a reluctance to leave its neighbour alone.

My research question in this thesis is thus as follows:

*How can Rwanda's continued presence in eastern DRC be explained?*

In order to address the above question, I will employ an eclectic model with elements from neo-patrimonialism (Médard 1996), transnationalism (Risse-Kappen 1995), and Regional Security Complexes (Buzan 1991; Buzan and Wæver 2003) – with the New Regionalism Approach as the analysis' backdrop. The reason for using such an eclectic model is the following question: How do we analyse 'internal' conflicts when state borders are porous and artificial and the 'state' offers little explanation value? In the Great Lakes region, national borders are extremely porous and internal conflicts easily spill over into neighbouring countries where they connect with existing animosities or are reinvented. Without any overarching regional norms and institutions, the core states of the Great Lakes region thus face interlocking sources of insecurity and conflict. I therefore believe that traditional state-centric views of international relations can provide only partial explanations for such complex situations. By composing an eclectic model of elements from neo-patrimonialism, transnationalism and Regional Security Complexes – and by having the New Regionalism Approach as the analysis' backdrop – I aim to demonstrate that to grasp the Great Lakes conflict one must look beyond the national level and analyse this case in a regional view. Achieving this would also contribute knowledge to the debate on how regionalised conflicts in the South more accurately can be analysed and explained.

In addition, by analysing *how* Rwanda's continued presence in eastern DRC is made possible, I also aim to shed light on *why* Rwanda is present. As previously noted, it is difficult to determine Rwanda's motivations, but an analysis of the mechanisms enabling Rwanda's presence may ultimately point to a discussion of probable motivations. The underlying question of *why* Rwanda maintains its presence in eastern DRC is touched upon throughout the analysis, while a concluding discussion is

conducted in the final chapter. In short, the aim of this thesis is twofold: firstly, I aim to provide support for the argument that regionalised conflict, particularly in Africa, must be studied from an eclectic, rather than single theory point of departure. Secondly, by analysing the factors that enables Rwanda's presence in the DRC, I aim to provide possible explanations for why the former continues to maintain a presence in the latter.

This thesis, however, is not an attempt at painting a complete picture of the conflict in eastern DRC, much less the Great Lakes region. There are several aspects feeding the animosities in the region which I am not able to tend to sufficiently, notably the issue of land rights and citizen rights in eastern DRC. Internal issues of conflict within eastern DRC have regrettably not been dealt with in an extensive way in this thesis, and this arguably hampers a full understanding of the lines of conflict in the area. Due to the limited scope of this thesis, I have chosen to not go into Rwanda's internal affairs in any detail. For further research, however, it would be valuable to see the conflict from that point of view. Furthermore, this thesis does not intend to present an explanation for, or a solution to, the conflict in the Great Lakes region. Rather, it should be seen as an analysis of the structures and mechanisms present in the region enabling Rwanda's continued presence in the DRC.

## **1.1 Brief background**

According to Mamdani (2001:234), conventional wisdom in the Great Lakes area has it that the Kivu provinces are where losers from Rwanda traditionally end up, and it is from Kivu that they prepare to return to power in Rwanda. The genocide of Rwandan Tutsi and moderate Hutu in the spring of 1994 stands out as one of the most grotesque events of the post-cold war era: within a few months, Hutu militia had slaughtered around 800,000 Rwandans. When the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) came to power, it led to a mass exodus of refugees, among them many Hutu that had participated in the genocide. Over one million people spilled into the DRC, mainly into the Kivu provinces.

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As they crossed the Congo-Rwanda border in mid-1994, the million-plus refugees literally brought the trauma of postgenocide Rwanda to the region of Kivu. Its impact was volcanic and it has yet to ebb (ibid.).

The million or so Hutu refugees that crossed the border to Kivu, relocated to armed refugee camps controlled by the army of the former Hutu regime in Rwanda, the Rwandese National Army (FAR), and the Interahamwe<sup>1</sup>, the Hutu civilian militia force. Mobutu Sese Seko, the Zairian<sup>2</sup> president of the time, did nothing to disarm the militia.

In 1997, Mobutu was ousted by groups supported by Rwanda and Uganda, and Laurent-Désiré Kabila was declared president of the DRC. But relations between the new Congolese president and his Rwandan and Congolese Tutsi supporters soon deteriorated, and in August 1998 there was an attempt to overthrow Kabila. The new president had begun to remove Tutsi from key posts as well as to provide training camps for Hutu. The Rwanda-supported *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD) was formed as a response to deal with the problem. Their goal was to replace Kabila with someone more willing to deal with the armed troops fighting the Rwandan army and threatening Congolese Tutsi from the Congolese side of the border.

Laurent-Désiré Kabila was assassinated in 2001 and succeeded by his son, Joseph Kabila. With the new leadership the situation improved, and a ceasefire was reached in 2002. According to the ceasefire agreement, all foreign forces were to withdraw from DRC territory. However, some Rwandan Hutu forces, such as the Interahamwe, remained in the country. The main Hutu rebel group still active in the area, the *Forces Démocratiques de la Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), is made up of key participants in the Rwandan genocide. Its members are notably from the Interahamwe, and from the

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<sup>1</sup> Interahamwe literally means “those who stand/work together” in the Kinyarwanda language.

<sup>2</sup> As part of an authenticity campaign, Mobutu named the country The Republic of Zaire, forced citizens to adopt African names, and renamed many cities. When Mobutu was removed from power, the name was changed back to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. From here on out I refer to the country as Zaire when discussing the Mobutu era, and as the DRC for events from May 1997 onwards to reflect the renaming of the country.

former Rwandan Hutu army (ex-FAR). They have maintained their goal of exterminating Tutsi, and they remain a threat to Tutsi in the Kivu provinces today. Accordingly, because of the porous borders in the area, they are also seen as a threat to the Tutsi leadership in Rwanda.

### **1.1.1 Natural resources in the DRC**

In 2008, the DRC accounted for about 48 per cent of the world's cobalt reserves, as well as being a major producer of copper, industrial diamonds, and other minerals (USGS 2008). In addition, it is one of the few places where Columbo-tantalite (Coltan) can be extracted, an essential component of mobile phones and laptop computers.

Given the natural resources present in its soil, the DRC could have been a flourishing country. But on the Human development Index (HDI) from 2009 the country ranks almost at the bottom of the list. Aside from a long history of corrupt governing, one of the reasons for the lack of DRC profits from mineral resources is the mass scale looting carried out by neighbouring countries in the last decade. In 2001, a UN panel investigated the exploitation of natural resources in the DRC by foreign powers.<sup>3</sup> The panel found that illegal exploitation by foreigners, aided by the Congolese, began with the First Congo War (UNSC 2001:7). It is further argued that

There are strong indications that, if security and political reasons were the professed roots of the political leaders' motivation to move into the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, some top army officials clearly had a hidden agenda: economic and financial objectives (ibid).

The panel also shows that both Rwanda and Uganda exported substantial amounts of minerals not existing in their own soil after the invasion of the DRC, and that a massive jump in exports of these minerals can be observed in the years after the First Congo War. These revelations point to the fact that Rwanda has benefitted economically from the conflict in the DRC. In chapter three I show that the

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<sup>3</sup> Known as the U.N. Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of Congo; hereafter the UN Panel of Experts, the UN Panel, or simply the Panel.

exploitation of the DRC's resources has continued until today, and in the analysis I discuss the allegations that this is one of the main reasons for Rwanda's reluctance to leave the country.

### **1.1.2 Current situation of the relationship between Rwanda and the DRC**

Rwandan authorities have maintained their right to fight Hutu Power movements in Eastern DRC.<sup>4</sup> The Tutsi government in Rwanda sees it as a security threat to their regime that Hutu organisations such as the FDLR are able to launch attacks towards Rwanda from their bases in the Kivu provinces in eastern DRC. The result of these concerns is that Rwanda has overtly and covertly backed Tutsi rebels within the DRC. One of the groups Rwanda has supported is the *Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple* (CNDP). The organisation was originally led by General Laurent Nkunda, but for the last year he has been sitting in house arrest in Rwanda. This surprising turn of events followed a joint decision by Rwanda and the DRC to cooperate in their struggle to extract the FDLR from DRC territory for good. The CNDP is now loosely integrated into the Congolese army following the improved relationship between the two countries. In March 2010, the Congolese National Army reported that more than 600 Rwandan Hutu rebels had been killed or captured since the start of operation Amani Leo in January (AFP 18.03.10). Amani Leo, meaning 'Peace Now' in Swahili, is an operation that is targeting the FDLR in the two Kivu provinces, and has been followed by several similar operations. The aim of these operations is to repatriate rebels, some of whom took part in the 1994 genocide, and most of whom are also participating in the illegal exploitation of minerals in the area. The current situation is unclear, but there have been signals that yield optimism for a move towards more cooperation in the search for a peaceful solution to the conflict in eastern DRC. There are, however, many issues still to be resolved.

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<sup>4</sup> Hutu Power is a racist, demagogic ideology advocating Hutu supremacy that fueled the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

## 1.2 The African Conflict

When discussing conflict and war in Africa, words like primitive, irrational and backward are often used. African states are considered 'failed' if they do not uphold Western democratic standards, and the West has ever since the era of colonialism had an urge to implement its way of governing on the continent. In Kaplan (2000) there are plentiful examples of this mindset as he describes Africa as a violent and anarchic continent. His article, *The Coming Anarchy* from 1994, and his 'New Barbarism' theory have been widely influential on U.S. foreign policy in Africa (Richards 1996:xv). The tendency to see African conflicts in this light, Ottman (2006:5) explains, has resulted in an image of Africa as the continent where tribalism and barbarism reign, and there is not much to do for Western powers but to observe the savagery.

### 1.2.1 How is war in the Great Lakes region explained?

Although conflict has been a mainstay in the Great Lakes region for decades, it was not really until the Rwandan genocide in 1994 that the world turned its attention to the region. But even then it was too little, too late. With hindsight, the nightmare that was the Rwandan genocide stands as the ultimate low point of UN history. The international community stood motionless and watched as neighbours, colleagues and family members massacred each other, and extremist Hutu set out to eliminate all opponents of their Hutu Power rule.

There are several explanations for the reluctance to do something about the genocide in 1994. Ottman (2006:4) argues that one particular reason was the tendency by journalists, scholars and politicians alike to dismiss African conflicts in the 1990s as 'meaningless' and 'beyond comprehension'. The UN failure in Somalia three years earlier can be seen as another reason. The reality was that the UN force present in Rwanda at the time of the genocide was given an insufficient mandate, leaving them with little other choice than to evacuate Europeans trapped in the conflict zone, and let the Rwandese fight for their own survival. In the aftermath of the genocide, the

world's limelight was once again directed elsewhere, and when extremist Hutu rebels simply continued their killings across the border in the DRC – it went on almost unnoticed.

The conflict that has ravaged the Great Lakes region for almost two decades is often explained by the help of the 'greed' factor of Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) Greed and Grievance theory. According to this theory, the parties to a conflict are either motivated by enriching themselves through warfare, or they fight because of intolerable grievances. The greed argument is supported by the fact that this region, and the DRC in particular, holds large amounts of natural resources. As a response to the claim that participants in the Congo Wars were motivated by personal greed, others have explained that the conflict was sparked by ethnic hatred that had built up since the time of decolonisation.

The topic of ethnic grievances as motivation for civil war has been debated extensively in recent years. In *Modern Hatreds. The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (2001) Kaufman introduces Anthony Smith's definition of an ethnic group. According to Smith, an ethnic group shares five traits: a group name, a believed common descent, common historical memories, elements of shared culture and attachment to a specific territory (Kaufman 2001:16). Kaufman ties these elements together in what he calls a myth-symbol complex, where the myth is a belief held in common by a large group of people that gives events and actions a particular meaning, and a symbol is a short-hand for this myth, something that triggers the group to bring up the myth (ibid.). This myth-symbol complex can then often be used to spark disagreements between ethnic groups, and warfare might follow. The conflict between Hutu and Tutsi in Central Africa is one of the conflicts most often explained by these terms, but this thesis will argue that conclusions based on ethnic conflict theories alone are too simplistic. In accordance with Braathen et. al. (2000), I believe that the important issue is not the notion of ethnicity itself, but rather why and how it is used politically. Nor will this thesis apply such a dualistic view as the Greed and Grievance theory presumes, as I believe the conflict under study cannot be explained in "either-or" terms.

## 1.3 Theory Approach

In chapter two I present several theories and concepts that I consider relevant for addressing Rwanda's continued involvement in the DRC. Aspects of the concepts mentioned below will form the basis of an eclectic model to be outlined at the end of chapter two. As I will argue that a single theoretical approach will only provide a partial explanation for Rwanda's involvement in the DRC, combining elements of several relevant theories will ensure a more holistic understanding of how it is possible for a neighbouring state to interfere in a country's internal affairs in the way Rwanda has done in the DRC in the fifteen years since the genocide.

One of the reasons for why a traditional theoretical approach is insufficient, is that most theories in International Relations that aim to explain war and peace use the state as object of analysis. State security is thus one of the principal issues in these theories. A threat to the state's security legitimises the use of force, as state survival is of utmost concern for all states in the international system. However, Mohammed Ayoob (1998) points out how most members of the international society today are not Western, and thus the old theories of international relations

[...] fail to pass the basic test of adequacy primarily because they do not concern themselves with the behaviour of the large majority of members of the international system (Ayoob 1998:33).

Following this rationale, Ayoob sees it as essential for analysts of the international system to fashion theories that can explain and predict the nature of conflict in the South. The New Regionalism Approach (NRA) urges scholars not to study countries per se, but whole regions at once, and I believe this is highly relevant for a study of the Great Lakes region. The NRA aims to "capture the heterogeneous and multidimensional processes of emerging regions and regionalisations from a historical and interdisciplinary perspective" (Schulz et al. 2001:12). Furthermore, Ottman (2006:7) gives two reasons for focusing on regimes rather than states when dealing with Africa. First, the regimes are strong in terms of their longevity, their *staying* power – rather than their performance power, political power, or popular support. Secondly, the distinction between states and regimes is often blurred, as opposed to the

common western perception of the state being strictly separate from the current regime in power. Thus, due to the nature of the African state, I will apply the concept of regime security rather than the traditional concept of state security when analysing Rwanda's presence in the DRC. Accordingly, when using the terms 'Rwanda' and 'the DRC' – it is the regimes governing the states I refer to.

In order to explain the relationship between internal and regional conflict patterns in the Great Lakes region, it is important to understand how the DRC has been governed by a combination of personalised power and bureaucracy. To this end, I find it constructive to use elements from the theory of neo-patrimonialism. Neo-patrimonialism creates a system that is at the same time stable and in constant change. It is a mixed type of rule, combining both differentiation and lack of separation between private and public spheres. On the one hand the state is functioning in the way that it is able to extract and re-distribute resources, but these processes are privatised.

Bøås and Dokken (2002) explain how in Africa we might say that the states are weak but the regimes are strong. The African state is strong in the sense that its political regimes have shown remarkably longevity and by the fact that its borders have been left almost untouched since decolonisation. But at the same time the state is weak in the sense that it lacks a functioning bureaucracy as well as the effective control over areas beyond its most central areas. The borders of such a state are extremely permeable and the state is not necessarily the highest political authority internally. Oftentimes non-state actors will take on the state's role and be responsible for important state functions such as taxation and security. The fact that the state does not control its territorial borders is important because it affects its security relationship with neighbouring states.

When the government does not have control over the territory this opens up for a high level of transnational activity by militias and paramilitary groups. Keohane and Nye (1972: xi) define transnational relations as “(...) contacts, coalitions, and interactions across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of government”. In this thesis, the concept of transnationalism is used to explain the

effects the porous borders of the Great Lakes has on the security situation in the region. Insurgency groups are able to fight the government in their own countries from abroad, as they can move across the porous border and launch their attacks on their home country. This is the case with the Hutu rebels in eastern DRC. Correspondingly, a neighbouring state can train and support rebel movements across borders, such as evidence suggest has been the relationship between Rwanda and Congolese Tutsi rebels. The phenomenon of weak states with strong regimes and its repercussions will make out an important component of the analysis in this thesis.

To sum up, in the analysis of Rwanda's continued role in the DRC I combine elements from the concepts of neo-patrimonialism and transnationalism to better explain my case, as I believe neither fully explains Rwanda's reluctance to leave the territory of its neighbour on its own. In order to situate the analysis within the security situation in the Great Lakes region, I apply Buzan's (1991) theory of Regional Security Complexes (RSC). The theory holds that there exists a level between the international and the national, which should be analysed in a security perspective. This concurs with my belief that the state in the Great Lakes region offers little explanation value, hence my choice to apply a regionalised approach. To identify a security complex I assess the strength of the security interdependence in the region. Elements of the abovementioned theories and concepts form the basis of the eclectic model I use to analyse the research question posed in this thesis. This eclectic model will be presented in chapter two.

## **1.4 Methodology and Research Design**

How can my research question best be answered? What methods should I use to collect relevant data, and how do I process the information I gain? My thesis is a case study of the conflict in the eastern part of the DRC. My aim of studying this conflict area is to provide more insight into this particular case as well as generate new knowledge about how to analyse regionalised conflicts. The reason why I have chosen to conduct a case study is because I believe it is the best method to generate new knowledge in a developing field. The case study also allows me to get the in-depth

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information I need to analyse the complexity of regionalised conflicts. Braathen et. al. (2000) point out that case studies are better equipped than quantitative approaches to reveal that what appears as 'ethnic conflicts' in reality is much more complex. Such is the reality with the conflict in eastern DRC. On a first note it can seem as a conflict between two ethnic groups, Hutu and Tutsi, but a closer look reveals that the important issue is not the notion of ethnicity, but why and how it is used politically. Ethnicity is an important factor in many civil wars, as in the DRC, but it must be put into its proper political, historical and economic context (ibid.). Furthermore, case studies are useful in areas where there are underdeveloped theories and unclear concepts, and this can be said to be the case with New Regionalism. In fact, the whole area of study of the African state is underdeveloped, as it does not fit our Westphalian idea of a democratic nation-state. This underdevelopment of the field is the reason why I have chosen to construct my own eclectic model rather than base my analysis on established theories. By including some parts of concepts and leaving other parts out, I am left with an explanatory model that is fashioned to analyse what I believe is the unique case of the DRC.

In order to ensure the relevance and credibility of the empirical information collected for the analysis, it is common to use four specific tests to ensure the quality of the research. These are construct validity, internal and external validity and reliability (Adcock and Collier 2001; Hoyle, et al. 2002; Yin 1994). Furthermore, because these methodological criteria must be adapted to the specific research in question, I will pay particular attention to questions of validity and reliability related to case studies.

Yin (1994) stresses the importance of construct validity and external validity. The first deals with the construction of valid measurements of the case, and their relevance to my research question. Throughout my study, I have remained aware of why I have chosen the specific case of eastern DRC, why it is central to the study of regionalised conflicts, and why I have chosen to focus on this case alone rather than to compare it with other cases or to conduct a quantitative study of a large number of civil wars. I chose the case of eastern DRC due to a pre-existing interest for the region. During my earlier studies of the Rwandan genocide and rebel groups in the DRC, the question of

why Rwanda maintained its presence in eastern DRC emerged.<sup>5</sup> Outside this personal interest, I believe the Great Lakes region is an ample case for the study of regionalised conflicts. The combination of weak states and cross cutting ethnic ties have caused internal conflicts to spill over into neighbouring countries, demanding a regional approach to the study of these conflicts. To conduct a comparative study could be interesting, but at the same time within the current framework, the inclusion of another case would not have allowed me to go in depth with either conflict.

External validity is defined as ‘establishing the domain to which a study’s findings can be generalized’ (Yin 1994:33). Although I value the need for judging each case on its own merits, one possible outcome of my analysis may be to highlight mechanisms that may also be present in other cases, so that these can be recognised and dealt with at an earlier stage than what has been the case with eastern DRC. Through carefully documenting my findings and crosschecking them with the findings of other scholars, I believe I have ensured high external validity in my thesis. Although I believe many aspects of the conflict in eastern DRC are unique to this case, the concept of weak states with strong regimes can be applied to similar cases to better explain regionalised conflicts. To create an eclectic model with elements from neo-patrimonialism, transnationalism, and RSC has proven fruitful, and can arguably be done successfully in other cases.

Internal validity concerns whether there is a good match between my observations and the theories I have chosen as the framework for my analysis (Bryman 2008:377). Specifically, it concerns the formation of a causal relationship between factors, as one tries to find out if an event or mechanism *led* to another (Yin 1994:35). If an analysis shows that  $x$  caused  $y$ , it is important to make sure that there is not an unknown factor –  $z$  – that actually caused  $y$ . In this thesis, I ensure high internal validity by operationalising the variables I use in my analysis to make sure I have actually studied

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<sup>5</sup> I have written a term paper on Tutsi rebel group CNDP in PECOS4000 in 2008 and a term paper on the Rwandan genocide in STV4225 in 2009. However, this thesis is based on new and independent research, and none of my conclusions build upon these term papers. Parts of the empirical background may, however, correspond.

what I intended. When discussing potential causal explanations, I must consider whether all the rival explanations have been given sufficient thought.

To minimise errors and biases when conducting the study, it is important that I use sources of information in the best manner possible, stay aware of the potential hidden agenda of the sources, and make sure the methods are sufficiently recorded. This will ensure high reliability of my thesis. One of the research methods used to gain high reliability is triangulation of sources, where the purpose is to ensure that the observations of the study capture the ideas contained in the concepts that I attempt to measure. Triangulation entails using more than one method in the study of social phenomena (Bryman 2008:379). Specifically for this thesis, it means that I will combine different sources of data to check if the information provided by one is reliable. When it comes to validity and reliability, one of the major strengths (and necessities) of case study data collection is the use of multiple sources (Yin 2003: 97). In addition, conducting a case study allows me as a researcher to check facts, go back to primary sources and to look beyond biases that may affect the writers of secondary literature (Gerring 2007: 60) As the topic for my thesis can be considered somewhat controversial, it is especially important not to swallow the information given by one of my sources hook, line, and sinker – but to go back and check records for other versions of the ‘truth’.

### **1.4.1 Methodological challenges**

Firstly, my question of what can explain Rwanda’s continued presence in eastern DRC can yield many different answers, and all of them may be correct in some ways. One of the challenges I have met in my work with this thesis is to provide sufficient evidence for why my conclusion should be considered valid. I set out with an open mind, but had to choose to focus on some specific explanatory factors. My intention is to explain Rwanda’s presence in eastern DRC by the help of the specific theories I have chosen to include in an eclectic model, and in this process I have had to disregard what can seem as other well-founded explanations. Although the amount of new knowledge generated by this thesis might be modest rather than revolutionary, my

belief is that it will be a contribution to the field of study related to the regionalisation of conflicts, while also fitting in with the current academic debate on external forces in the DRC.

Secondly, another difficult aspect of my work with this thesis is that the conflict in eastern DRC is still ongoing, and at times it can be a challenge to keep up with recent events. For example, during the period of writing alliances in the great Lakes region have changed and the presidents of Rwanda and the DRC have opted for a joint effort to defeat Hutu rebels in eastern DRC. Nevertheless, by continuously checking latest events and by including newly issued reports in my source material, I believe I have managed to postpone the expiration date on my findings. Therefore, despite changing dynamics, I will argue that my findings still prove relevant, and show the need for a regionalised approach to the study of conflict in Africa.

Thirdly, in my study I have used a combination of articles and books written on my topic, as well as reports from among others International Crisis Group (ICG), Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the United Nations (UN). It has been important to keep in mind that some these reports, although carried out in a sound scientific way, have caused quite a lot of controversy. For instance, the Panel's naming of companies and individuals participating in the exploitation of natural resources in the DRC was met by criticism. Some governments criticised the Panel for basing its allegations on evidence that were not always solid or well-explained (HRW 2005:119). In addition, the authors I have chosen to use in this thesis may have an agenda I am not aware of, and they may want to steer the reader in a certain direction. Keeping these potential pitfalls in mind, primarily by cross checking information presented by one source with information found elsewhere, I am confident that the findings presented in this thesis are scientifically sound.

Finally, when conducting a case study, it can be very constructive to visit the area of study on a field trip. I have chosen not to do so, and see two main reasons for this decision. First of all, I, together with my supervisor, consider the Kivu provinces too dangerous for an inexperienced master student to visit for the time being. Second, the

excruciatingly detailed evidence provided by the UN Panel of Experts in their series of reports present me with information that I, as an independent master student, would most likely not get hold of. In addition, there are several large NGOs present in the area, notably Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group, which have conducted additional field research supporting the Panel's findings. Although fieldwork could arguably have benefitted my understanding of the conflict, I believe I am able to find sufficient scientific support for my conclusions in the existing literature.

## 1.5 Structure of thesis

The thesis is structured in seven chapters. In *chapter two* I present the theories that are considered relevant to the study of the Great Lakes region. I then proceed to make an eclectic model of the theories I will use in my analysis. *Chapter three* is a presentation of the conflict in the Great Lakes region in general – and in eastern DRC in particular – constituting an introduction to the background to Rwanda's involvement, and to the current situation. I will analyse the findings in three separate chapters. *Chapter four* deals with neo-patrimonialism in the DRC; *chapter five* addresses transnationalism in the border areas between Rwanda and the DRC; and *chapter six* discusses the security situation between Rwanda and the DRC and addresses the existence of a Great Lakes RSC. However, although the analysis is separated into three chapters for the purpose of clarity, it is the analysis seen as a whole that will allow me to answer my research question.<sup>6</sup> The final chapter sums up the findings of the thesis, addresses my previously presented assumption, discusses the theories applied in the analysis, and points the way ahead towards further research.

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<sup>6</sup> The explanation for separating the analysis into three parts is presented in section 2.5

## 2 Theoretical Framework

When we use the concept ‘state’, there is a particular meaning connected to it. The most common definition of what a state is stems from the Weberian notion of the modern nation-state. Max Weber ([1919] 1968) defined the nation-state as the entity that possesses monopoly of legitimate use of force in a defined geographical area, and this understanding of the concept has been pivotal in western social science for the last century. In Africa, the criteria for statehood is often not met, and scholars speak of ‘negative statehood’ as countries are recognised as states on the international arena, but do not, for instance, have the monopoly of force beyond the central areas of its territory (Jackson 1990; Clapham 1998). The DRC is one such state, where the regime in the capital Kinshasa is too weak to secure control over its borders and remote areas. In the Kivu provinces, this enables varying warlords and networks of plunder to control society.

The uniqueness of the African state has spurred numerous attempts at capturing its essence with clever concepts and catchy names. Concepts such as ‘degrees of statehood’, ‘politics of the belly’, ‘quasi-states’, and ‘the transplanted state’, have been presented by leading Africanists (cf. Clapham 1998; Bayart 1993; Jackson 1990; Chabal and Daloz 1999).

Mohammed Ayoob, a scholar of international relations and a specialist on conflict and security in the third world, has made extensive contributions to the field of study of African conflicts. For decades, Ayoob has been aiming to give scholars the analytical tools needed to grasp the main determinants of third world conflict. He criticises mainstream international relations theory for excluding the third world, and proposes alternative explanations of security to better suit the uniqueness of conflicts outside the western sphere. Ayoob’s (1995) ‘Subaltern Realism’ provides analysts with the means and perspectives needed to analyse conflicts in areas of the world where the state as a concept offers little explanation value. Rather than focusing on the Third World’s ‘strangeness’, and how it fails to fit in to the traditional IR mould, Ayoob (1995) sees the mismatch as a weakness of the IR theories. He argues that when the mainstream IR

theories such as neo-realism and neo-liberalism fail to explain ‘the majority of conflicts’ in the global system, they cannot be left unchallenged. Compared to the West, which has had hundreds of years of war making and state making to shape the system it has today, the bulk of Third World countries have had about half a century to make the same progress. In addition, the way African states were carelessly drawn on a map by Europeans and then left to create nations on their own has made the process even more complex.

One of the most influential views on the African state has been Clapham’s (1998) notion of ‘degrees of statehood’. Clapham explores the relationship between the sub-Saharan state and the international system, and maintains that entities should be seen as meeting the criteria of statehood to a greater or lesser degree rather than in dichotomous terms (Clapham 1998:143). For this thesis, Clapham’s (1996) concept of negative and positive sovereignty will be of importance. A state has *negative* sovereignty when it is recognised as a sovereign state by the international system, but cannot meet requirements of statehood such as monopoly of force and extraction of resources, whereas *positive* sovereignty entails having the capacity to exercise power effectively within the state territory and defend oneself from external attacks.

In order to analyse Rwanda’s role in the eastern DRC, we need concepts and analytical frameworks to make sense of the complex subject matter. Although I will construct an eclectic model of several relevant concepts, my overall framework will be New Regionalism. The New Regionalism Approach (NRA) takes into consideration the various actors and the multidimensional forms of integration present in African society, and helps me explore the multifaceted relationship between Rwanda and its neighbour to the west. Having NRA as the backdrop, I will focus on two related concepts, namely neo-patrimonialism and transnationalism. In addition, the theory of Regional Security Complexes will be presented and successively used to analyse the security relationship between the DRC and Rwanda.

## 2.1 New Regionalism Approach

Africa is a profoundly regionalised continent. The arbitrary boundary lines drawn by colonial rulers have proved lasting, but they have never been able to override the numerous ways in which Africans continue to interact through wider transnational networks (Clapham 2003).

The NRA transcends simple state-centric notions of regionalisation and brings transnational actors into the analysis. Scholars advocating NRA suggest that in the context of globalisation, the state is being 'unbundled', with the result that non-state actors are gaining strength contra the governing state powers. By implication, the focus should not be on state actors and formal regionalism, but also on non-state actors and what is broadly referred to as 'informal regionalism' or 'regionalism from below' (Grant and Söderbaum 2003:4).

Schulz et. al.'s (2001:2) point of departure is that the multidimensionality of contemporary regionalisation warrants a new type of analysis, one which "transcends the dominant theories of regional integration, such as neorealism, functionalism, institutionalism [...] and so on". Schulz et. al. emphasise the difference between the 'old' regionalism of the cold war era, and NRA. They explain how the 'new' regionalism is in different ways linked to global structural change, and especially globalisation. Accordingly, "globalism and regionalism stand in a symbiotic relationship to one another, sometimes they are mutually reinforcing, at other times contradictory [...] The important thing is to avoid dichotomizing them" (ibid.). Schulz et. al. highlights the importance of nations and nation-states, and since the Great Lakes region is composed of rather weak states, it is important for the validity of this thesis to bring in alternative explanatory frameworks that focus less on the state as unit of analysis and more on transnational networks and regimes.

## 2.2 The neo-patrimonial state

The concept of patrimonialism stems from Max Weber who characterises the patrimonial system as a system where "the object of obedience is the personal

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authority of the individual which he enjoys by virtue of his traditional status” (Weber [1922] 1968:431). The African state is not a patrimonial state, according to Médard (1996), but a patrimonialised state, and that is why it is better to call it neo-patrimonial (Médard 1996:78). In a patrimonial state there is no distinction between the private and public spheres. In the neo-patrimonial situation, the distinction is made, but rarely internalised, and even when it is, it is not respected. Médard (1996) shows that we can draw two consequences from the definition of neo-patrimonialism as the confusion between the public and private sector. The first is the personalisation of power, as private means personal. The second is the lack of differentiation between what is political and what is economic. Economic and political resources, wealth and political power are directly exchangeable. In a neo-patrimonial state power is personalised instead of being institutionalised, in the sense that no distinction is made between the office and the person in charge of the office. The officer in charge uses the office and the power that comes with it as his private possession, and uses his position to extract resources from the state and from the people. The result of the lack of differentiation between the political and economic is that the search for power, and the search for wealth and prestige turn out to be overlapping. Politics then becomes a kind of business with three main currencies: force, money, and connections (Médard 1996:86ff).

Because of the enduring prevalence of kinship in the African state, the deepest sense of loyalty of the individual is towards their family and their kin. The loyalty towards the state is particularly weak, and this results in a tendency for public servants and politicians to mobilise resources towards their relatives, their people. Ordinary people are treated as an extension of the ‘big man’s’ household, and their rights and privileges are derived from their relations with the ‘big man’. The people are willing to maintain this system, because in return for their loyalty they receive protection and political stability in uncertain environments (Dokken 2008:35).

Ethnicity as a wider notion of the tribe is often a vital part of neo-patrimonialism. The mobilisation of ethnic ties through discrimination combined with the scapegoating of the other ethnic group is one of the current political survival tactics in the African

state. Médard (1996) shows how these conflicts are modern, not traditional, and are made possible because of the existence of the state as the centre of extraction and distribution: The ethnic conflicts are fought for access to the monopoly of resources, and the warring factions fight to keep the 'others' off their soil, their resources (Médard 1996:89).

Bøås and Dokken (2002) demonstrate how the African state can be seen as both strong and weak at the same time. The state is weak in the sense of a lack of a functioning bureaucracy and the lack of effective control beyond the most central areas. At the same time, African regimes have proven to be remarkably robust. The fact that the state lacks effective bureaucracy and control over remote areas makes it easy for rebel groups fighting their own government to establish bases directly outside their home countries.

## **2.3 Transnationalism**

The existence of a weak state and a strong regime will most likely generate informal, transnational relations. The strong regime makes political opposition almost impossible, but at the same time the weak state makes the borders porous and opens up for increased interaction across borders. Risse-Kappen (1995) has defined transnational relations as

[...] regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization (Risse-Kappen 1995:3).

This is the definition that will be used in this thesis because it considers the state as one of the most important actors in transnationalism, but at the same time maintains the significance of non-state actors. Risse-Kappen (1995) makes a typology out of the levels of a state's internal structures. One of the types is referred to as the 'fragile state', and this is the type that is relevant for this study. The fragile state combines fragmented state institutions, a low degree of societal mobilisation, and weak social organisations (Risse-Kappen 1995:24ff).

To be able to influence policies, a transnational actor must overcome two obstacles. The first is to gain access to the political system of the relevant state. Second, they must contribute to or generate a winning policy coalition in order to change decisions in the desired direction (ibid.) Access to the political system is determined by the structure of the state. Fragile states are often easier to permeate than strong states as they rarely have the means to prevent transnational activities. When it comes to generating winning policy coalitions the situation is often stood on its head. It is generally more difficult to influence the politics of a weak state than that of a strong one, because the political institutions are badly organised or fragmented. However, if state institutions are fragmented to the extent that they are impossible to cooperate with, the existence of an informal sector is highly likely. Dokken (2008) shows how the weakness of the state facilitates the growth of informal networks, and that these networks are by nature transnational (Dokken 2008:48). Risse-Kappen's understanding of transnationalism ties in with the theory of neo-patrimonialism. A neo-patrimonial state is not centralised or fragmented, it is centralised when it comes to the regime, a small elite generally situated in the state's capital, but fragmented when it comes to the regime's lack of legitimacy in the bulk of the population. This combination of the centralised and fragmented state facilitates transnational relations (ibid.).

## **2.4 Regional Security Complexes**

Buzan's (1991) theory of regional security complexes addresses the level of analysis between the individual state and the international political system as a whole. The approach takes into account that security is relational and that one cannot understand the national security of a state without regarding the system of security interdependence of which it is a part. Buzan (1991) assumes that there exist regional sub-systems and makes them the object of security analysis. The approach highlights the relative autonomy of regional security relations and views them in relation to the unit and the system level.

All states are linked in a global web of security interdependence, and insecurity is often linked to proximity, as threats are most strongly felt at close range. The notion regional security complexes (RSC) is used to describe a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so intertwined that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another (Buzan & Wæver 2003:44). Security complexes emphasise the interdependence of rivalry as well as that of shared interests. The patterns of enmity and amity that characterises RSCs arise from a variety of issues that could not be predicted from a simple consideration of the distribution of power.

These range from specific things such as border disputes, interests in ethnically related populations, and ideological alignments, to longstanding historical links. By adding the dimension of amity/enmity to the picture, one gets a clearer sense of the relational pattern and character of insecurity than that provided by the raw abstraction of the balance-of-power view (Buzan 1991:190).

The relational pattern of insecurity applied by the theory of RSCs is highly relevant in the Great Lakes region, and this aspect of the theory will be applied to the case analysed in this thesis.

When it comes to analysing security complexes in Africa, the unique makeup of the state system soon becomes an issue. As mentioned above, the continent consists of mainly weak states with negative sovereignty. Buzan & Wæver (2003) explain how an RSC depends on there being significant levels of security interdependence among a group of states or other actors. In much of Africa, and maybe in particular the Great Lakes region, the main lines of security interaction take place either within states or across borders by non-state actors. Because of the region's weak states and border-crossing ethnic alliances, interstate security dynamics are often results of domestic issues spilling over state lines – in particular refugee flows, the expulsion of foreigners, and civil wars. Buzan & Wæver (2003:229) see security interaction in Africa as generated more by weakness than by strength, as when imploding states have a spillover effect onto their neighbours. This again, they argue, makes it difficult to find clearly demarcated patterns of regional security in Africa. The spillover effects can create what might look like regional patterns, but are more often chains of events

rather than coordinated patterns of alliances and rivalry. Buzan & Wæver do notice a change in the region since the mid-1990s, however, and point out how the turmoil in the DRC caused the previously separate lines of conflict to tie together much more closely around a core comprised of the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi. Due to the limitations of this thesis, my focus will mainly be on Rwanda's role in the DRC. Whether or not Rwanda's continued presence in the DRC can be explained by the help of regional security complexes will be assessed in chapter six.

## **2.5 Operationalisation**

In this chapter I have presented the theories and conceptual lenses through which I will analyse my research question. As explained in the previous chapter, I will construct an eclectic model comprised of elements of all the theories presented above. The NRA will create the main backdrop for my model, as it caters to the highly regionalised makeup of the Great Lakes region.

The porous borders of the Great Lakes region open up for uncontrolled movement of goods and people between states, and internal conflicts tend to regionalise. Risse-Kappen's (1995) definition of transnationalism as regular interactions across borders by non-state actor is one of the main traits of this region. In the analysis section of this thesis, I will investigate the level of extensive transnational activity between Rwanda and the DRC, and debate whether that can help me explain Rwanda's presence in the DRC. By transnational activity I mean the movement of people, in particular refugees and armed forces, between the two countries; the presence of informal networks operating on the border between Rwanda and the DRC; and the level of informal economic activity in the eastern DRC made possible by little state control of the area.

The theory of neo-patrimonialism complements Risse-Kappen's theory. A neo-patrimonial state as described by Médard (1996), distinguishes between private and public spheres on paper, but the distinction is rarely manifested in real life. The result is the personalisation of power and the mixing together of economic and political power. Seeing the DRC as a neo-patrimonial state can help me explain transnational

activities between the DRC and Rwanda. According to Risse-Kappen (1995) analysing the state's internal structure, in this case neo-patrimonialism, is beneficial in explaining transnational relations. To be able to measure the presence of neo-patrimonial traits in the DRC empirically, however, the concept must be operationalised. The theoretical definition of neo-patrimonialism used in this thesis is the lack of distinction between private and public sphere; a personification, and lack of institutionalisation, of the state; and weak economic management. Thus, empirically, it will be beneficial to consider whether or not the DRC has a separation of private and public spheres. Is political power mixed with economic power in the DRC? Does for instance public office provide an opportunity for personal enrichment through mineral extraction? There has already been written extensively on the subject of neo-patrimonial traits of the Congolese society (cf. Bayart 1993; Bøås and Dokken 2002; Khadiagala 2006). Between 2001 and 2008 the UN Panel of Experts conducted meticulous research on the ground in Rwanda and the DRC mapping out in detail the links between natural resources and conflict in the Great Lakes region. The Panel's reports will be one of my main sources of information when dealing with the links between private and public spheres in the region, but I will also find support in newspaper articles and reports conducted by scholars and other NGOs.

The final concept to be operationalised for my analysis is RSCs. By seeing the transnational aspects discussed in chapter five in a security perspective, I will determine whether the level of transnationalism on the border between Rwanda and the DRC are threats to the respective regime's security and thereby causes them to be part of a RSC. My aim of doing this is twofold. First, I intend to show that Rwanda and the DRC's security questions cannot be properly analysed apart from one another. Second, by analysing the security situation between Rwanda and the DRC I seek to explain Rwanda's continued presence in eastern DRC, and discuss the assumption that Rwanda possibly has other motivations than security for maintaining its role in the DRC. Seeing the two countries as part of a Great Lakes security complex can help me explain what I have interpreted as Rwanda's reluctance to leave the DRC.

Recognising Yin's (2003: 34ff) criteria for assessing the validity of a thesis, I will argue that the operational measures presented in this section ensure a high level of construct validity for my thesis. In the following chapters I will present a historical background of the conflicts in the Great Lakes region, before embarking on the analysis of my research question. By the help of the eclectic model constructed in this section, the analysis will explain Rwanda's role in the DRC through the lenses of neo-patrimonialism (4) and transnationalism (5), and finally determine if it can be argued that the two countries are part of a regional security complex (6).

Although I have constructed an eclectic model where elements from the theories previously presented are combined, the analysis will be structured in three separate chapters. One of the reasons for doing so is that I believe my object of analysis can be dealt with on three levels, and my separation of the analysis caters to these different levels. In chapter four I will focus on how the ruling regime in the DRC functions internally, and analyse its neo-patrimonial traits. In chapter five I take a step back and move on to the international aspect of the conflict, or rather the *transnational* aspect, when I discuss transnationalism and transnational networks on the border between Rwanda and the DRC. In chapter six I take the analysis further up a level, to the systemic level, discussing whether Rwanda and the DRC can be seen to be part of a Great Lakes regional security complex. However, I will argue that the three levels are intrinsically connected: The neo-patrimonial traits of the Congolese state create a fertile environment for informal transnational activity on the border between Rwanda and the DRC, and the level of transnationalism is seen as a security threat by the regimes in both countries. Thus, the three parts of my analysis are interrelated, but separated for clarity.

## **3 Historical Background**

According to Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002:215) no region in Africa has known as much political strife, loss of life, and social dislocation during the last decades as the Great Lakes region. Formerly outside the international community's limelight, the Great Lakes suddenly made headlines in the early 1990s when civil war and genocide ravaged the region. Though the media for a long time attempted to write it off as tribal warfare, it has become clear that the devastation of Central Africa is much more complex than both ethnic strife and a scramble for resources. The multiple clashes since the early 1990s have all critically destabilised the region. These include the massacres and civil war in Burundi; the beginning of civil war and subsequent genocide in Rwanda in the spring of 1994; the two Congo Wars with the fall of Mobutu and fragmentation of the DRC as results; the remaining conflict in Northern Uganda; and the numerous rebellions and extensive war economy born out of these chaotic circumstances.

The most important variables of the historical background to the conflict in the Great Lakes region are the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and Mobutu's fall from power in 1997, and the immense impact these events had on the stability of the region as a whole (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002:215). The conflicts in the Great Lakes region are tremendously complex, and explanatory factors can be found in various places and on different levels. Because of the limitations of this thesis, I am unable to give a thorough explanation of the region's history of conflict in its entirety. Thus, this chapter will have to focus solely on the incidents and factors that are pertinent to the analysis carried out in the following chapters, notably the Rwandan genocide and the two Congo wars.

### **3.1 Conflicts in the Great Lakes region**

The "Great Lakes" was originally a geographical expression that encompassed a number of freshwater lakes at the heart of tropical Africa. But since the 1990s, the region has gained new currency among policy analysts, who started to regard the area

as an integrated system of regional states with implications for local actors and beyond. Khadiagala (2006:1) explains how in a system of multiple state actors such as the Great Lakes region, geography defines the territorial space for the articulation of vital questions of peace, security, and governance. Because of this interconnectedness of the Great Lakes region, it makes sense to analyse the area as a whole, rather than to break it down in individual states. Doing this will also encompass the fact that originally internal conflicts have spread across the region and made neighbouring states dependent on each other in terms of for instance security and development.

A permanent issue of conflict in this region is between the two ethnic groups Hutu and Tutsi. Regardless of if it is pre-modern tension between the pastoral Tutsi minority and an agricultural Hutu majority, or a result of colonial manipulation and exploitation – bad blood between the two ethnic groups continue to guide the politics of states in the region. Never has this been clearer than when the genocide in Rwanda erupted in 1994, and the aftershocks have yet to calm.

### **3.1.1 Three months of mayhem - the Rwandan genocide**

In hindsight, the nightmare that was the Rwandan genocide stands out as one of the most horrific events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Over the course of about 100 days in the spring of 1994, between 800,000 and one million Tutsi and moderate Hutu were butchered to death in this densely populated country in Central Africa. The international community stood motionless and watched as neighbours, colleagues and family members massacred each other, and extremist Hutu set out to eliminate all opponents of their Hutu Power rule.

When the aircraft of Rwandan president Habyarimana was shot down on April 6 1994, it triggered an until then low-intensity civil war, which supposedly had ended with the Arusha Accords in 1993, to explode into large-scale massacres of anyone favourable to democratisation and national reconciliation. The genocide was spearheaded by elements of the Rwandese National Army (FAR) and the extremist Hutu militia known as Interahamwe. For the *génocidaires*, Tutsi were defined as less than human, as

‘cockroaches’. As outsiders of the ‘Hutu nation’ they needed to be ethnically cleansed from Rwanda (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002:223).

When the genocide ran out of steam without much help from the outside world, the Tutsi-led *Rwandan Patriotic Front* (RPF) took office and the defeated perpetrators of the genocide fled together with over a million people across the border into the DRC. According to Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002:224) they were able to relocate their regime on Congolese soil and use refugee camps in Kivu as bases to raid Rwanda on a regular basis. As a result, members of the former Rwandan army (ex-FAR) and the Interahamwe managed to recover and regroup for the purpose of reconquering Rwanda and complete the genocide. The explanations for the Rwandan genocide are many and multifaceted. However, for the purpose of this thesis, the most significant aspect is how the genocide contributed to a regionalisation of violent conflict in the Great Lakes region.

### **3.1.2 Ridding the region of Mobutu – the First Congo War**

Joseph-Désiré Mobutu<sup>7</sup> started his long spell as head of state with a military coup in 1965, and with the Cold War as backdrop and superpower backing, he managed to become a very rich and powerful president, to the detriment of the vast majority of his people. Mobutu’s regime, which lasted for 32 years, was characterised by patrimonialism, economic and political crises, and exclusion of ethnic groups, particularly in the eastern provinces. Inevitably, the state collapsed with the disintegration of national society and polarisation of ethnic groups as results.

The collapse of the Zairian state gave rise to various movements that sought to “liberate” the country (Baregu 2006). In 1997, after a swift military campaign, the *Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo* (AFDL), toppled Mobutu’s regime. The AFDL was made up of two groups: Congolese Tutsi from South Kivu, the *Banyamulenge*, who had been harassed since Mobutu withdrew their

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph-Désiré Mobutu later changed this name to Mobutu Sese Seko as part of the authenticity campaign.

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citizenships in 1996; and various anti-Mobutu groups led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila. In addition, the campaign was supported by a number of countries, notably Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Angola, Eritrea, and Zimbabwe. After Mobutu was overthrown, Laurent-Désiré Kabila was instated as president and the name of the country was changed from Zaire to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### **3.1.3 If at first you don't succeed... – the Second Congo War**

The alliance that had toppled Mobutu in 1997 soon disintegrated and split into opposing camps and a new war broke out in 1998, less than a year after the first war had ended. The AFDL was never an organised movement with a clear program; rather it was an alliance cast together for the purpose of getting rid of Mobutu. Within a year, Uganda and Rwanda had turned against newly instated Kabila as he proved a disappointing client in Kinshasa. Baregu (2006:62) explains the fallout as a result of two causes. First, there was an internal power struggle over the distribution of positions within the AFDL, in particular between the Banyamulenge supported by Rwanda and Uganda, and the Kabila faction who stressed broader Congolese interests. Second, mutual suspicions emerged between the government in Kinshasa and its former backers in Rwandan capital Kigali because of Rwanda's wariness that Kabila was supporting the Interahamwe and including them in his new national army. Kabila, for his part, was afraid that the Rwandans would facilitate a coup against his government in favour of a Banyamulenge leadership.

Responding to growing public disgruntlement about the dominance of Banyamulenge and foreigners in his government, Kabila tried to distance himself from his former allies by expelling Rwandan officials and stripping the Banyamulenge of their citizenships. This was what in turn prompted Rwanda to invade the DRC, claiming "legitimate security concerns" (ibid.). The war that followed was to last nearly five years, cost three million lives and result in two million internally displaced persons. Dubbed Africa's First World War, the conflict at one point pitted Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi together with Congolese rebel groups against the government of the

DRC, supported by a Southern African Development Community (SADC) allied force of troops from Angola, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Namibia.

The SADC mission contained the conflict by supporting Kabila in restoring order and preventing the takeover of Kinshasa. It also enabled the beginning of a peace process, which eventually led to the Lusaka Peace Accord being signed in July 1999. The key provisions of the Lusaka agreement included inter alia the immediate cessation of hostilities and military disengagement; the cessation of violence against civilians; the withdrawal of foreign troops; and the deployment of a UN force tasked with disarming rebel groups (Baregu 2006:65ff). However, the implementation of the Lusaka Accord proved difficult. For nearly three years, very little happened with regards to the provisions from the agreement. All belligerents accused each other of breaching the agreement, and the former allies Rwanda and Uganda as well as their respective rebel groups in Kivu turned against each other. There were disagreements within Kabila's entourage as well, and he was shot and killed by one of his bodyguards in 2001 after less than four years in power. The assassination has been seen as part of a failed coup attempt, and the circumstances around what really happened and who was involved have been left somewhat unclear. Laurent-Désiré Kabila was succeeded by his son, Joseph, who up until then had been chief of staff of the DRC armed forces (BBC 2002).

With Joseph Kabila installed as president, the peace process started moving forward again. In 2002, Rwanda and the DRC signed a landmark agreement that contributed to the withdrawal of Rwandan troops from DRC territory and the dismantling of ex-FAR and Interahamwe forces (Baregu 2006). Similar agreements were reached for the withdrawal of Ugandan, Angolan, Namibian, and Zimbabwean troops. President Joseph Kabila took the oath of office as head of the transitional administration, and optimistically stated, "the war had lost its purpose, as all pretexts put forward to justify it are void" (Swart 2004). As is evident in this thesis, however, the withdrawal of forces from Congolese territory did not put an end to Rwanda's influence in the DRC. When RPA forces were officially withdrawn, support for Congolese rebels consolidated Rwanda's presence across the border. Furthermore, as we shall see in the

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following section, local strife over citizenships in eastern DRC has become intertwined with the regional conflict, and is continuing to fuel animosities in the area.

### **3.2 Taking care of your own – autochthony in the DRC**

A significant aspect Congolese society is the importance of kinship and the tendency to mobilise resources towards ‘your own kind’. As explained in chapter two, ethnicity can be seen as an extension of the clan, and the mobilisation on the grounds of ethnicity is widespread. Subsequently, questions concerning autochthony in the form of the politics of place, belonging, identity, and contested citizenship is a large part of the discourse in Congolese society.

Autochthony literally means ‘emerging from the soil’ and thus implies local forms of belonging as it refers to someone with a supposedly indisputable historical link to a certain territory (Jackson 2006). The very nature of the discourse on autochthony in the DRC tends to lean towards exclusion rather than inclusion, and leads to a polarisation of Congolese society (Bøås 2009). The central question in the debate on autochthony revolves around who is a citizen and who is not, locking citizenship questions in to an exclusionist language. Although the term refers to a historical link to a certain territory, Bøås (2009:20) argues that “for all practical purposes autochthony is just a word for a certain way of framing political debates”. The narrative of autochthony is especially useful in areas where resources are highly contested, such as the Kivu provinces in eastern DRC. Although the DRC is abundant with resources, the Kivu provinces are seeing intense population pressure. The ability to stake your claim from the position of being ‘son of the soil’ and the counterpart as a newcomer or an immigrant can be an important asset.

In the DRC, these mechanisms are manifested in conflicts between groups claiming the status of autochthony and those defined as ‘strangers’. The conflicts can be observed as the ‘big men’ in control of the government provide security and access to resources for clients belonging to the ‘right’ ethnic groups, often at the expense of

people belonging to the groups that make up the opposition. Mobutu had a history of discriminating against citizens originating from Rwanda in eastern DRC. Correspondingly, the Rwanda- and Uganda-backed rebellion that toppled Mobutu expressed that their main motivation was the security threats the Interahamwe and ex-FAR in the refugee camps posed.

Although the exodus of a million plus refugees exaggerated ethnic strife in eastern DRC, it is arguably not what instigated it. Conflict over nationality, migrants, and citizenship rights already saw tensions rise decades earlier, with the 1972 genocide in Burundi as one highpoint. According to Mamdani (2001), Tutsi of Rwandan descent living in south Kivu have tried to distance themselves from “the explosive world of Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi, [and] instead [seek] to define their place in the ethnic kaleidoscope called Congo” (Mamdani 2001:235-6). One way of doing this was to start calling themselves *Banyamulenge*, the people from the Mulenge hills rather than *Banyarwanda*, the people from Rwanda. The Banyarwanda are, in the simplest terms, the people who speak the Kinyarwanda language. Once these people, or their ancestors, may have lived in what is currently known as Rwanda, but through a series of migratory waves they currently reside in the DRC, Uganda and Tanzania (Bøås 2009:27). When Hutu were massacred in Burundi in 1972, Tutsi became very unpopular in the whole region, and this may be when the term Banyamulenge came into general use (Mamdani 2001:249). But when the Congolese Tutsi attempted to distance themselves from Rwanda and Burundi by changing their group name, people who considered themselves autochthones grew suspicious – why would the immigrants try to hide their ‘real’ identity? Mamdani (2001) shows two crosscutting tensions in eastern DRC prior to the influx of refugees from Rwanda in 1994. The first pitted the ‘indigenous’ majority against the Banyarwanda minority, whether immigrant or not. The second conflict was internal to the Banyarwanda and pit Hutu against Tutsi; as tension between Hutu and Tutsi increased in Rwanda throughout the 1990s, it also did in Kivu. The Congolese Hutu, who had generally lived in the area since the colonial era, claimed indigenous status against the Tutsi, the great majority of whom arrived after 1959 (Mamdani 2001:251). The number of Kinyarwanda-speaking people

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in Kivu exploded with the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, adding to the already volatile autochthony debates in the area. Although an essential component of the conflict picture in eastern DRC, the battle over autochthony in the area is due to the limited scope of this thesis not dealt with extensively. Understanding the importance of questions of belonging in the Great Lakes conflict is, however, crucial.

### **3.3 The perils of plunder: natural resources in the DRC**

The connection between natural resources and conflict has been the focal point of countless studies for quite some time. During the last decade the debate has moved beyond scholarly circles, and the expressions ‘blood diamonds’ and ‘conflict minerals’ have become popular in mainstream media. Of all the ways conflict in the DRC has been explained, the argument most often used is the abundant gold and mineral resources located in DRC soil. The country has been cited as a textbook example of how resources create war, and is a favourite among supporters of the greed and grievance school (cf. de Soysa 2002; Olsson and Fors 2004; Samset 2002).

The DRC holds one of the world’s largest reserves of diamonds and is one of a few places where the mineral Coltan can be found. The DRC’s formal economy is dominated by the mining sector: Minerals account for the vast majority of the DRC’s exports, and represent the single largest source for foreign direct investment in the country. However, because of the level of conflict, corruption, and misguided policy during the last decades, an informal sector controlled by warlords and rebel groups now dominate the economy (U.S. Department of State: 2010).

In June 2000 the UN put together a Panel of Experts to investigate the links between natural resources and war in the DRC. The panel found that countries involved in the war in the DRC, notably Rwanda and Uganda, developed strong economic interests in the country’s mining sector. Diamonds cannot be found in the soils of Uganda and Rwanda, and authorities of both countries confirm that they have no production of the mineral. Yet, by the late 1990s, both countries exported diamonds worth millions of

dollars. In October 2000, Rwanda's export of diamonds had reached a level 90 times higher than a few years earlier (Samset 2002:471). The UN Panel's mandate ended in 2003, but a separate UN Group of Experts continued the work that had been started and released new reports in 2008 and 2009. The Group has documented how armed groups in eastern DRC fund their activities through the exploitation of natural resources, and provides evidence of the support of said groups by Rwandan authorities. The last report released in 2009 states that armed groups in the DRC, in particular the FDLR, continue to engage in illegal exploitation of minerals in order to finance their activities.

The Great Lakes region has been in a total havoc for over a decade. Despite the agreement made in 2002, violence continues to be a mainstay of the region, particularly in the eastern provinces of the DRC. When the Lusaka Accords demanded that all foreign forces were to withdraw from the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda secured their continued presence in the country by supporting rebel groups and thereby controlling mining concessions and revenues from the war economy (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002:237). Networks of drug traffickers, arms merchants, and money launderers are important transnational actors in the Great Lakes region – and in the DRC in particular – due to its vast natural resources (Dokken 2008:65). The regional situation in the Great Lakes remains volatile, mainly due to the persistence of incompatible interests among the various actors. One of the key issues is the continued presence of ex-FAR and Interahamwe forces in the eastern areas, and it may seem as if Rwanda will continue its engagement in the DRC in some way or another until this matter is solved.

The following three chapters are designated to the analysis of my research question. By help of my eclectic model comprised of elements from the concepts of neo-patrimonialism, transnationalism, and regional security complexes, I aim to explain Rwanda's continued role in eastern DRC. As explained in chapter two, the analysis is separated into three parts for clarity, broken apart to cater to the three different levels

presented in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, the chapters should be seen as thoroughly interrelated, and the analysis should be considered as a whole.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See section 2.5

## 4 The DRC: a neo-patrimonial state?

As his people's self-proclaimed guide, or as the personalist embodiment of nationalist leadership during the Cold War, Mobutu deployed the largesse of his American and other Western patrons to enhance his personal wealth, to heighten his stature over his countrymen, and to weave a tightly manipulated web of loyalties across the army and into all aspects of Zairian society. Every proper political and democratic institution was an obstacle to the edifice that he created (Rotberg 2004:12).

Mobutu's Zaire has been cited as the epitome of a neo-patrimonial state. His extensive power was to a large degree made possible by Cold War superpower support and the ability to maintain control throughout the country this support gave him. The present regime does not have the resources to exercise this control, and thus defining it as a neo-patrimonial state is somewhat misleading. Although I will argue that neo-patrimonial traits are still clearly visible in the DRC today, I will emphasise in this chapter that it is more constructive to see the DRC as a weak state with a strong regime (Bøås and Dokken 2002). The state is weak in the sense that it holds only negative sovereignty, and thus lacks the control over its entire territory. At the same time the regime is strong in terms of its staying power and its ability to stifle political opposition. This distinction is made to underline the fact that the present regime is not able to exercise its control extensively in the way Mobutu was, and this lack of control is what to a large extent facilitates the high level of transnationalism in the DRC's eastern areas discussed in the next chapter. Regardless of whether today's DRC is described as a neo-patrimonial state or a weak state with a strong regime, neo-patrimonial traits of Congolese society are crucial to understanding the conflict in the Great Lakes region. Thus, the following chapter is a presentation of neo-patrimonial aspects of the DRC and how these have affected its relationship with Rwanda. I will show that neo-patrimonial traits are still clearly visible in Congolese society, and that these help me explain Rwanda's continued presence in eastern DRC. The analysis will be structured around the operational measures of neo-patrimonialism provided in chapter two, namely (1) a lack of distinction between private and public sphere, (2) a personification, and lack of institutionalisation, of the state, and (3) weak economic management.

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## 4.1 Blurred distinction between private and public spheres

Médard (1996) has made the essential distinction between a patrimonial state and a neo-patrimonial state. In a patrimonial state there is no separation between the public and private sectors, in a neo-patrimonial system the division is there – it is just not respected. This creates a situation where the international community, having legitimised the state through negative sovereignty, is led to believe that the state upholds western democratic principles of separation of power and a functioning bureaucracy, while the reality is that politics and business is tightly tied together. In a neo-patrimonial society, politics is business – access to the state system becomes a way to acquire wealth, and wealth a way to acquire power.

In countries of advanced capitalism, the private sector is the primary area of accumulation, while in many African countries it is the state which serves as both the major source of wealth for the elite and the means of preserving it (Clapham 1985). The DRC fits this description, and the result has been members of the political elite who are desperate to stay in office, and a privatisation of the state and public finances (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002:157ff). The enormous amounts of money spent by the president and other political patrons to ensure their survival have come mainly from the country's mineral resources, and much of this money has never found its way into the state treasury. Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002) illustrates this disappearance of money by pointing out that the annual governmental budget of the DRC, a country fabulously rich in natural resources, was \$300 million in 1996 – less than that of a medium-sized university in the United States (*ibid.*).

Throughout Mobutu's time as president, the country's resources became thoroughly concentrated in his hands. This is a logical consequence of blurring the distinction between public and private, as private also can be interpreted as personal. Reno (1998) shows a long-term shift of government expenditures to the president's office and argues that this reflected Mobutu's personal control of state resources. In 1972, government expenditures amounted to 29.3 per cent for agriculture, 17.5 percent for

social services, and 28.0 per cent for the president. Twenty years later the numbers were 4.0 per cent for agriculture, 0.0 per cent for social services, and 95.0 per cent for the president (Reno 1998:154 Table 5.1). The practice of removing resources from the citizens towards the president has arguably contributed to the growth of an informal economy, as the people could not rely on the government for providing for their survival.

Since the time of independence, economic interests have been inseparable from political interests for the rulers of the DRC (Nest 2006:38ff). To raise money, the Kabila government has adopted two policies: firstly, it has sought to extract more revenue from existing sources by increasing the taxation of its citizens, and secondly, it has sought foreign commercial partners with the investment capital required for the exploitation of natural resources promising a quick return, such as diamonds. In addition to standard mining contracts, the government has also offered foreign governments a direct exchange of public assets in return for military support, such as weapons and troops (*ibid.*). An important way of financing the war for the DRC government has been the direct and indirect uptake of money from both government-owned *La Générale des Carrières et des Mines* (Gecamines) and private companies such as the *Société minière de Bakwanga* (MIBA). According to the Report of the Panel of Experts (2001), as much as three fifths, the equivalent of \$4 million per sale of MIBA's earnings was sent directly to the President's office. This money was used for salaries and bonuses for Congolese soldiers on the battlefield. The contributions from Gecamines were twofold. On the one hand, the government collected one third of the company's profits in 1999 and 2000. On the other, revenues from Gecamines helped finance Zimbabwe's participation in the conflict as DRC's ally (UNSC 2001:33 par. 155). In fact, one way of securing the engagement of allies in the war was the provision of financial incentives by creating business opportunities for them in the DRC's mining sector. It seems highly unlikely that the Kabila government would have been able to gather the support it needed to fight the rebels backed by Rwanda and Uganda, had it not had the mineral riches to reward its helpers.

Although my focus on neo-patrimonial traits in the DRC has been on the last two decades, according to Nest (2006), the factors influencing the Congo War have roots that can be traced back through the Mobutu era to patterns of governance first established under Belgian rule. In particular, officials of the state have used the same strategies to govern – they have distributed land and rights to selected leaders and their ethnically defined communities in order to reduce localised opposition to the state. The DRC state and individual officials have also sought to systematically extract revenues for private and institutional purposes, and in combination with the weak and fragmented Congolese state, this has contributed to the rise of an informal economy that sustains millions of Congolese but also contributes to the further weakening of state capacity and authority.

## **4.2 Personification of the state**

As mentioned above, an important consequence of the lack of distinction between public and private sectors is the privatisation or personalisation of power. During the years of warfare in the DRC, both rulers and rebel leaders alike acted as mere warlords who had to struggle to maintain control over their clients by economic rather than bureaucratic means. This can be seen as a result of the lack of institutionalisation of the Congolese state. The administrative mechanisms to keep the entire territory of the state under the president's control are not present, and loyalty from regional 'big men' is bought by the way of giving them access to resources and power. Because of the weakness of the state and the lack of control beyond the areas closest to Kinshasa, the patron needs to constantly provide the client with reasons to stay loyal. When the stream of wealth and power provided by the patron is reduced to a trickle, clients' loyalty is turned elsewhere (McCalpin 2002). The present ruling regime in Kinshasa is not able to keep its clients, the 'big men' in the outlying provinces happy due to its inability or unwillingness to provide resources and security to these remote areas. The government's lack of control has spurred rebellions such as the CNDP in the Kivu provinces, and keeps the present conflict going as Tutsi living in eastern DRC turn to

foreign powers rather than their own government for protection against extremist Hutu.

The DRC has a long history of personification of political power, and its current problems can be traced back to the decades of exploitation and mismanagement of Mobutu Sese Seko's one-man rule (Dokken 2005). Already in the early stages of his 32 years long rule, it became clear that Mobutu set out to enrich himself and his allies by exploiting the country's resources and maintaining a nation-wide system of patron-client relationships with himself as top dog patron. At the same time, Mobutu functioned as a Cold War-client of several external patrons such as the U.S., France and Belgium who greatly contributed to building his personal billion-dollar fortune (Bøås & Dokken 2002:61). This intricate patron-client relationship based on both internal and external networks was on the one hand successful as it secured Mobutu's power over several decades, but on the other hand it seems likely that it was this very system that not only led to his demise, but eventually to the breakdown of the entire Great Lakes region (ibid.). Towards the end of Mobutu's time as head of state, he had lost the loyalty of most of his clients as they defected and started to challenge his leadership. He was able to fend off the inevitable rebellion momentarily by pitting his clients against each other and instigating ethnic conflict, but when he was finally ousted, his country imploded and threatened to pull the region down with it.<sup>9</sup>

Mobutu used his country's national economy as his personal piggy bank, and Dokken (2005:38) shows that during his period as president he achieved self-enrichment on a scale unsurpassed by any other African leader of the time. During the 1970s it is estimated that one-third of total national revenues were at his disposal, and by the 1980s his personal fortune was estimated at \$5 billion (ibid.). In the 1970s he nationalised large parts of both the mining industry and the agricultural sector and simply handed them over to his partisans (McCalpin 2002:42). Without the know-how to manage these enterprises, the 'acquirers' looted and destroyed the companies with which they were entrusted and soon drove the national economy into steady decline.

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<sup>9</sup> The concept regional implosion will be discussed in chapter six.

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A neo-patrimonial state is recognised *inter alia* by a ‘big man’ ruler who controls his network of minions by being their protector in an unstable political environment. Under Mobutu, there were local strongmen who were powerful in their own right. These ‘big men’ appealed to Mobutu for protection against local rivals although they consolidated virtually autonomous fiefdoms organised around commerce in the country’s natural resources (Reno 1998:148). Mobutu experienced remarkable success at co-opting and balancing rivalling clients, and the competition among these local ‘big men’ stopped them from forming a united front against Mobutu. However, Mobutu’s capacity to function as patron declined when a halt in international support made it harder to reward clients for their loyalty. Local ‘big men’ soon discovered that these changing conditions brought with them new opportunities to profit on their own by defecting from the president’s network (*ibid.*). As Mobutu’s role as patron declined, growing competition between local ‘big men’ spurred questions about who was an “original inhabitant” as this had importance for the control over natural resources. Debates in eastern DRC over who was “authentic Zairian” provoked ethnically based attacks on the Banyamulenge (Reno 1998:149). Mobutu’s unwillingness to protect the Banyamulenge contributed to spurring the ADFL rebellion that was going to end his spell as autocratic president and main ‘big man’ of Zaire.

If anyone expected ADFL leader Kabila to confront the neo-patrimonial legacy of Mobutu, they were to be proved wrong. It soon became evident that Kabila shared Mobutu’s fondness for personalised rule, and was more interested in building a network of key supporters through Mobutuist methods than he was in assuring the economic development of the country (*ibid.*). Even before the end of the war and his formal acquisition of power, Kabila had renewed mining concession to international companies interested in doing business in the country. One of the first major deals he signed was with American Mineral Fields (AMF) where he gave them the opportunity to mine for cobalt, copper and zinc on DRC soil (Taylor 2003:48). After facilitating such contracts with the AMF and other international companies, Kabila had secured finances for further military advances. In addition to new international donors, the complex web of patron-client relationships in the DRC was continued into the Kabila

era. Despite some cosmetic improvements made by Laurent-Désiré Kabila's son and successor, Joseph Kabila, current policies suggest that the primary goal of those in charge still to this day is to enrich themselves at the expense of the Congolese people.

Throughout the last couple of years, Kabila has banned all political party activity, dissolved parliament, and suppressed all provincial and local deliberative bodies (ICG 2006). There were no state budgets between 1998 and 2001, and laws were issued by presidential decree. Neo-patrimonial practices continue to undermine the economy and administration in the DRC today, and the abuse of public office for personal good reaches from minor civil servants to the highest members of parliament:

Political actors regularly interfere in the administration, custom service, army and control of natural resources to embezzle funds. This, in turn, has perpetuated a system of governance that is largely predatory, with the state living off the citizenry and the country's resources without providing even the most rudimentary social services (ICG 2006:4).

Hiring and promotions in the Congolese administration depends on connections and who you know rather than on competence. The president places allies and clients in high places, and members of his entourage often override administrative decisions without consequences. The economic activities of the DRC government, and of individual governmental officials, have to a large extent been carried out through commercial relationships with foreign organisations. For instance, Laurent-Désiré and Joseph Kabila have used a private mining company they founded in the 1970s, COMIEX, to exploit state assets for personal gain – in 2000, a presidential decree was issued awarding diamond concessions to companies attached to COMIEX (Nest 2006:45). The use of office for private gain is visible not only at the presidential level; with wages as low as \$50 a month, civil servants have turned to extorting money from the population to survive. A study conducted along a DRC trade route shows that over 90 per cent of taxes had been arbitrarily created at the local level and were illegal. Only 4 per cent had reached the national treasury (ICG 2006:5).

A fresh report by the ICG (2010) shows that although the basic principles of the Congolese state are declared as democracy with multi-party elections and separation of powers, the reality still is that parallel networks of decision-makers linked to the

presidency control the government, the legislature, and the judiciary. Security matters in particular are dealt with outside the official decision-making structures and are handled by President Kabila's entourage exclusively. Power follows the supporters of Kabila and not the office they may occupy. To obtain power and resources in the DRC today, as before, you have to be loyal to your 'big man' – which in the widest sense is President Joseph Kabila.

### **4.3 Weak economic management**

The third characteristic of a neo-patrimonial state that will be discussed in the case of the DRC is a weak economic management on a national level. A state's economic management is linked to both its resources and its degree of institutionalisation, as neo-patrimonial practices are dependent on public resources to exploit. On the basis of its vast natural resources, the DRC could have been a flourishing African country; the reality is quite the opposite. Due to years of conflict, massive looting and the malfunction of the Congolese state, the DRC ranks towards the very bottom of Human Development Indexes (HDI 2009). After decades of rulers motivated by personal gain, the common Congolese citizen sees little of his country's natural wealth and fights to survive massive human rights breaches on a day-to-day basis.

It has been estimated that over 5 million people have died since the start of the First Congo War (IRC 2008). The majority of these people did not die as a result of military fighting, but of starvation and malnutrition due to the collapse of the Congolese economy. The collapse reduced food production, destroyed what was left of the health system, and severely limited trade and banking (Prunier 2006:103). As much devastation as the war has had on Congolese economy, Prunier shows that the shrinkage of the economy in the period between 1980 and the war was more severe than during the war itself.

President Mobutu had decades to run the state economy into the ditch, and did so through gross corruption and mismanagement of the economy. The result of the poor economic management under Mobutu was the growth of an informal economy that

was a coping mechanism enabling people to survive – and a growing criminalisation of foreign trade (ibid.). The severed economy continued the downward spiral when the war broke out. In 1998, the *Service d'Achat des Matières Précieuses* (SASMIP) was created to centralise and dollarise the trade in gemstones, and it caused a near collapse of the country's diamond export capacity because of increased smuggling. Since the diamond trade is such a vital part of the Congolese economy, the consequences were catastrophic. According to the World Bank, the rate of economic growth, which was already only 0.7 per cent in 1998, became negative, and fell to -10.3 per cent in 1999, and then -11.4 per cent in 2000 (Prunier 2006:105).

The last decade has not seen a massive improvement regarding DRC's national economy. The human costs and destruction of the country's social and economic infrastructure due to years of warfare have been enormous. Despite its natural resources and attempts at restoring confidence in the economic sector, the DRC's per capita income and human development indicators still remain amongst the lowest in Africa. The DRC's total external debt is \$13.1 billion, and debt service amounts to around one-fourth of total expenditure – at the end of 2008 the value of external debt was estimated at 93 per cent of its total GDP (IMF 2010:6).

In this chapter I have pointed to three neo-patrimonial features of the DRC. The first is the lack of distinction between private and public spheres, which is noticeable in the way Congolese 'big men' interfere in commercial enterprises for private gains. There is no real separation between what is political and what is economic in the DRC, public office gives access to economic wealth, and political power can be exchanged into hard cash. The second factor I have looked at is the personification of power. This is a consequence of the confusion between private and public as private means personal. The DRC has a long history of personification of power, and I have shown how the present regime to a large degree has managed to fill Mobutu's huge shoes. The personification of power is evident at all levels of the pecking order, from the local officer setting up arbitrary tolling booths to earn a few dollars from traders passing through the area, all the way up to president Kabila giving his own mining companies beneficial concessions to extract mineral wealth from the state's soil. The

final neo-patrimonial element of Congolese society discussed, is its weak economic management. Despite the enormous wealth present in form of natural resources, the DRC remains a very poor country. Due to years of devastating war, poor economic management, and high levels of corruption, the vast majority of Congolese people has excruciatingly little and must fight for survival with little help from their government. In the remaining part of this chapter I will discuss how the traits presented above have facilitated Rwanda's presence in the DRC.

#### **4.4 Rwanda in neo-patrimonial DRC**

The Congolese regime's lack of control over the territory's remote areas, and the fact that political power is a way to acquire private economic wealth, has opened up for Rwandan forces to pursue commercial enterprises in the DRC. In addition, the DRC's national borders are extremely porous, and goods and people can cross them with hardly any limitations. The porosity of the DRC's national borders and the regime's limited control strengthens the argument for viewing the DRC as a weak state with a strong regime. One can draw the conclusion that Rwanda has been able to exploit the DRC's natural resources because the Congolese society has become fragmented after decades of detrimental neo-patrimonial practices. Had the DRC had a functioning state apparatus providing its citizens with resources and protection, Rwanda would arguably have been unable to play as large a part in the country for the last fifteen years.

The UN Panel of Experts has thoroughly documented that Rwanda has exploited natural resources on the Congolese side of the border, both by extracting minerals themselves and by supporting Congolese rebel groups in their looting and plundering (cf. UNSC 2001; UNSC 2003; UNSC 2008). MacLean (2003) calls the 2001 report particularly revealing, and explains that the report's list of individuals involved in businesses that have profited from the DRC war "reads like a 'Who's Who' of prominent political and military figures in the governments in the region" (MacLean 2003:115). Despite Rwanda's claims of national security threats, The Panel has extensive evidence showing what they see as their real long-term purpose of presence in the DRC: "to secure property" (UNSC 2002:14 par.65). Rwanda has succeeded in

persuading the international community that their presence in the DRC has been necessary in order to maintain its security and protect itself against hostile groups in eastern DRC, who they claim were actively mounting an invasion against them. But contrary to Rwanda's official claims, the Panel has evidence that shows the first vice-president encouraging their army units to maintain good relationships with the Interahamwe and "if necessary let them exploit the sub-soil for their survival" (ibid. par. 66). On the basis of its analysis of considerable documentation, the Panel holds the view that the rationale for Rwanda's presence is to increase the number of Rwandans in the eastern DRC and to encourage those who have settled there to support its exercise of economic control (ibid. par. 69).

Much of Rwanda's mineral extraction in the eastern areas of the DRC has been organised through the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA)<sup>10</sup> Congo Desk, which serves to link the commercial and military activities of the RPA. The Congo Desk, which dealt in various metals including Coltan and gold, kept a completely separate set of books, and its financial dealings did not appear in Rwanda's national budgets. The Panel has sources associated with the Congo Desk that have calculated that income to the Congo Desk provided 80 per cent of all RPA expenditure in 1999, and further calculations put the contributions of the Congo Desk to Rwanda's military expenses in the order of \$320 million. These substantial revenues strongly shape Rwanda's foreign policies and directly influence decision-making in a number of areas, but since they are kept separate from official budgets, they are protected from the scrutiny of international organisations (ibid. par. 71).

The Panel (UNSC 2001:13ff par. 64-84) shows that rebels and Rwandan troops have abused the commerce and trade system in the DRC by harassing local business owners and forcing them to close shop. According to the Panel, the aim of this tactic was to gain control of local commerce, and the result is an unprecedented control of the economy of eastern DRC. Rwanda's illegal exploitation of resources in the DRC has

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<sup>10</sup> After coming to power in 1994, the RPF split into a political wing, which kept the name, and an army; the RPA.

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been facilitated by the administrative structures they have established in the country. Most companies with important activities related to the extraction of natural resources are owned either by the Rwandan government or by individuals very close to the inner circle of President Kagame (ibid.).

Eastern DRC is an area where perpetrators from the Rwandan genocide have been given a free pass by the Congolese government to rebuild capacities and attack Tutsi living in the area, and this has provided Rwanda with an excuse to enter the area with military forces. Whether or not the Tutsi regime in Rwanda is primarily motivated by security reasons or the opportunity to extract natural resources – or a combination of both – continues to render debate. What seems evident though, is that Rwanda's presence in eastern DRC would not have been possible had it not been for the neo-patrimonial traits presented in this chapter.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have analysed neo-patrimonial traits of Congolese society, and have determined that although Mobutu's infamous regime has been replaced, power is personalised and politics is still intertwined with business. As shown in this chapter, a neo-patrimonial patron nurtures the relationships with his loyal clients by providing them with resources in form of wealth and protection. When the Cold War ended, Western countries' financial support diminished, and Mobutu's hold of the country disintegrated – defining the DRC as a neo-patrimonial state became less appropriate. Two wars later, the DRC is now both weak and strong at the same time; the regime is strong in the sense that little political opposition is possible, but at the same time the regime is unable to maintain control over the eastern areas of the DRC and the state's formal borders have become extremely permeable. Because the Kabila government lack the resources to control its entire territory and the local 'big men' in the east, the DRC is arguably not a neo-patrimonial state in the true sense of the word anymore. Thus, I find it more appropriate to use the characterisation from Bøås and Dokken (2002), and see the DRC as a weak state with a strong regime.

The DRC does, however, still hold many of the traits of a neo-patrimonial state; there is a blurred distinction between private and public sector, the president has excessive powers and is ruling through client relationships, and the country's economic management is problematic. In the DRC, power is centralised in the fact that it rests with a small elite, and fragmented in the way of a large gap between this small elite and the rest of the people. In addition, this elite lacks legitimacy and real power in large areas of the country. This paradox provides a breeding ground for transnationalism, and opens up for informal networks operating across borders – these transnational networks will be the topic for the next chapter.

## 5 Transnationalism in the Great Lakes region

[...] what is the State you are talking about, is it Kinshasa, they have nothing to say out here, we never hear them, and why should we; we have others to listen to (quote in Jörgel & Matti 2008:36).

Between 1998 and 2003, the DRC experienced one of the most brutal wars in Africa.<sup>11</sup> In 1998, Rwanda and Uganda, backed by Tutsi rebels from eastern DRC, invaded the country to remove president Kabila who had proved an unsatisfying ally in the struggle against extremist Hutu controlling the border between Rwanda and the DRC. Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania came to Kabila's help, creating what has been labelled Africa's First World War (see chapter three). In 1999 the UN peacekeeping force, *United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo* (MONUC) deployed, but the conflict continued to spiral out of control, and the country was soon split into state- and rebel-held zones. In December 2002 a peace agreement was finally signed, stating inter alia that all foreign parties were to withdraw from the DRC.

The peace agreement and MONUC's efforts together with substantial support from the international community, political pressure, and financial aid have had limited effects in eastern DRC, where the people still face one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world (Jörgel & Matti 2008:33). Due to the limited power of the Congolese state, the citizens of eastern DRC rather turn to a multitude of transnational and informal security networks to fulfil their needs for economic and physical security, as well as welfare and education. The fact that the DRC state is absent in the eastern parts of the country makes it easier for neighbouring Rwanda to play a decisive role in the area, both politically and economically. At the same time Rwanda upholds that its presence in eastern DRC is crucial to ensure its own national security, as Rwandan Hutu rebels

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<sup>11</sup> The Second Congo War officially ended in July 2003 when a transitional government took power. However, conflict still persists in the east, and a survey conducted by the International Rescue Committee shows that of the 5.4 million people killed in the conflict, an estimated 2.1 of the deaths have occurred since the formal ending of the war (IRC 2008).

stemming from the genocide in 1994 are known to launch attacks on their home country from across the border. Rwanda seems to both benefit from and be threatened by the high level of transnationalism on the border. On the one hand, Kigali explains RPF presence in eastern DRC by the threat posed to Rwanda by Hutu rebels. On the other, they have been accused of extending their stay in order to exploit the DRC's natural resources. In the next chapter I will argue that although Rwanda seems to have entered the DRC due to legitimate security threats, the availability of natural resources to exploit seems to greatly contribute to its continued presence.

The analysis in this chapter will be structured around the operational measures of transnationalism presented in chapter two, namely (1) the movement of people, in particular refugees and armed forces, between the DRC and Rwanda; (2) the presence of informal networks operating on the border between the two countries; and (3) the level of informal economic activity in the eastern DRC made possible by little state control of the area. I choose to focus on the presence of rebel groups backed by Rwanda in eastern DRC when analysing informal networks in the region, and discuss the illegal exploitation of natural resources under the final point of informal economy made possible by little state control of the area. Towards the end of this chapter I will draw the connection between a high level of transnationalism and the existence of regional security complexes (RSCs).

In the previous chapter, I described the DRC as a state that can be seen as both weak and strong at the same time. Seeing the DRC as a weak state with a strong regime enables me to more easily recognise the mechanisms that guide the last decade's developments in the Great Lakes region. The DRC holds only negative sovereignty, as it is an entity that is recognised by the international community as a sovereign state, but cannot meet the requirements of statehood; such as monopoly of force and extraction of resources.<sup>12</sup> When a state lacks effective control beyond its most central areas, its borders become extremely porous and this again opens up for a high level of

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<sup>12</sup> See chapter two for a presentation of Clapham's (1996) concept of negative and positive sovereignty.

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transnational activity. In the discussion on transnationalism in the DRC, it is pertinent with a reminder that the NRA creates the backdrop for the eclectic model used in the analysis of my research question. I understand regionalism as “a complex process of change, simultaneously involving state as well as non-state actors, and occurring as a result of global, regional, national and local processes” (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000:457).

## **5.1 Transnationalism as a consequence of negative sovereignty**

As explained in the previous chapter, the ruling regime in Kinshasa cannot be said to be the highest political authority in eastern DRC. As a result, other non-state actors have taken on the state’s role and performs state functions such as taxation and protection. In addition to a range of NGOs present in the Kivu provinces, various rebel groups each control different villages and districts, and fight each other over the access to strategic mineral rich areas. The NGOs, such as the Médecins Sans Frontières, CARE, and the Norwegian Refugee Council, provide shelter and medical support for millions of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who see the Congolese state as more of a threat than a source of protection.

Rebel groups create an unsafe environment for citizens of eastern DRC, but at the same time provide security for ‘their own’ people. Power is determined by access to resources and connections to effective networks, and well-positioned ‘big men’ play a decisive role in the ongoing conflict. For the citizens of Kivu, being connected to a powerful ‘big man’ can be their only hope in an extremely volatile existence.

The national borders of the DRC were drawn by the former European colonists, and as most places on the African continent cater poorly to the reality of ethnic ties and sense of belonging in the region. One consequence of these arbitrary borders is a high level of migration between neighbouring countries in the Great Lakes region. After decades of war and conflict in Burundi, Rwanda and the DRC, the border areas of these countries are packed with massive refugee camps, and refugees and IDPs make up a

large part of the demographics in the border areas. For the current leadership in the DRC, continuation of the existing borders of the state is seen as crucial, and they emphasise the DRC's formal and absolute sovereignty in relations with neighbouring states such as Rwanda. The maintenance of national borders and principle of non-intervention of a state's internal affairs enhances the power of the current regime and its ability to stay in power (Englebert 2003).

For neighbouring countries, the fact that the DRC lacks positive sovereignty is a threat to their security. People, both refugees and rebels, travel unhindered back and forth across the DRC's borders, and the presence of hostile rebels right across the border was Rwanda's expressed reason for invading the DRC twice in the 1990s. The effect porous borders have on the conflict level in the Great Lakes region will be further discussed below. Another consequence of being without positive sovereignty is that the DRC has lost control of natural resource extraction on its territory. The existence of an informal economy dealing in the illegal extraction of natural resources in the DRC will be discussed in section 5.2.3.

## **5.2 Transnational relations between the DRC and Rwanda**

The fact that borders are artificial and porous and power in the DRC is limited to the most central parts of the massive country has had great effects on its neighbour to the east, Rwanda. As explained in the introduction to this chapter, I will look at three types of transnational relations: the movement of refugees and armed forces, the presence of informal networks operating on the border between the two countries, and the level of informal economic activity in eastern DRC made possible by little state control. Throughout the centuries, people have migrated from densely populated Rwanda to the DRC where land is abundant and mineral resources plentiful. The transnational dimension of the conflict in eastern DRC can be traced back to colonial labour migration, but because of the limitations of the scope of this thesis, I will only discuss the most recent traits of transnational activity across the border of Rwanda and the DRC.

### **5.2.1 Fuel to the fire – the movement of refugees and armed groups across the DRC/Rwanda border**

To understand the impact the million-plus<sup>13</sup> refugees who streamed into Kivu from post-genocide Rwanda had on already existing tension in the area, it is important to sketch out the contours of ethnic relations prior to the genocide. According to Turner (2007), the First Congo War came to a Kivu already in flames, and this and the following regional war interacted with an ongoing war in the North Kivu province. As explained in chapter three, different ethnic factions who consider themselves ‘autochthones’ have struggled to control the governorship of Kivu, and have sought support from the Kinshasa government to legitimise their claims. In addition, Rwandan Hutu and Tutsi immigrants living in the province have sought support from abroad, which has accentuated the regional aspect of the war and made it truly transnational, long before the ADFL overthrew Mobutu in 1997 (Turner 2007:118ff).

At the beginning of the 1990s, new administrative policies emphasised the question of nationality in eastern DRC, and leaders claiming to represent each ethnic group fought to have a share of power in the political, economic and social space. Hutu was one of the major ethnic groups in the region, and pushed for regional elections, as they believed their numbers could be translated into electoral victory. Tutsi on the other hand, made up a much smaller part of the population, and were unenthusiastic about elections, as this would mean they would lose existing power and privileges. It can seem as though the people of North Kivu had come to see an election as a kind of ethnic census, designed to determine who constituted the numerical majority and thus had the right to rule (Turner 2007:122ff). The Tutsi, being a minority, feared the result of such elections, and abandoned democratic politics in favour of participating on the RPF side of the war (ibid.).

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<sup>13</sup> The figure used for the total of refugees entering the DRC following the Rwanda genocide varies from around 850,000 to over a million. The number used in this thesis is gathered from Nzungola-Ntalaja (2002).

Following the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, masses of Hutu refugees flooded into Kivu. The arrival of Rwandan Hutu refugees regionalised the already existing conflict in eastern DRC, and obscured the local stakes of the war (ibid.). The massive influx of Rwandan refugees into Kivu prompted the tendencies of many ‘autochthones’ to refuse to distinguish between the newly arrived Rwandans and people who had arrived from Rwanda long before them, such as the Tutsi Banyarwanda. Mamdani (2001:236) explains that the Banyarwanda of the DRC comprised three distinct groups: Nationals, migrants, and refugees. *Nationals* were already resident when the Belgians colonised Congo in the late nineteenth century; *migrants* crossed the border sometime during the colonial era, either voluntarily or by force; *refugees* were a wholly post-independence phenomenon. Before the massive exodus of Hutu refugees from Rwanda in 1994, nationals and migrants far outnumbered the refugees, but after 1994 the situation was reversed (ibid.).

The Hutu refugees set up in large armed camps that were to a large extent under the control of the ex-FAR and the Interahamwe. According to Turner (2007:124), the ex-FAR and Interahamwe brought to Kivu the idea that the ‘solution’ to the many problems of the region was the killing of Tutsi, and they worked hard to convince local Congolese Hutu of this. Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002) sees Western powers as accomplices in the arming of refugee camps in Kivu:

Protected by the French, the *génocidaires* were able to relocate their regime on Congolese soil, with the entire Rwandan state treasury and virtually all of the military arsenal at their disposal. All this allowed them to regroup for purposes of reconquering Rwanda and finishing off their genocidal enterprise (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002:224).

The *génocidaires* used the refugee camps as bases from which they raided Rwanda and organised the killing of Congolese Tutsi in Kivu. Mobutu did nothing to stop their actions; neither did the international community who were more concerned with feeding the refugees than with removing the killers among them (ibid.). Both the UN and many NGOs treated the armed camps exclusively as refugee settlements, and continued to feed what was fast turning into an army.

Confronted with a reality of armed Interahamwe based in nearby refugee camps, more and more Congolese Tutsi decided to cross the border into Rwanda where they were armed and trained by the RPF. The Interahamwe on their side started to cooperate with the Congolese army, and violence escalated in Kivu. In October 1996, the RPF launched a decisive attack on the ex-FAR- and Interahamwe-controlled camps in eastern DRC, and Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002) believes that the success of the ADFL and Kabila in ousting Mobutu would not have been possible without the RPFs drive against the *génocidaires*. He argues that the Banyamulenge and other Congolese Tutsi functioned as a Trojan horse in Rwanda's attack on Rwandan Hutu extremists and their Congolese supporters, and that Ugandan president Museveni and Rwandan president Kagame used Kabila as the rebellion's figure head to legitimise their violation of Congolese national sovereignty (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002:225). Prunier (2009) also discusses how Museveni and Kagame started to look for a "suitable Congolese" to act as local cover after they had decided to invade the DRC, and shows that it was former Tanzanian president Nyerere who eventually suggested the previous guerrilla chief turned ivory and gold trader Laurent-Désiré Kabila. In Prunier's (2009) words, "Kabila soon became, if not the real leader, [...] at least the most visible personality [of the ADFL]" (Prunier 2009:116).

### **5.2.2 Foreign puppet masters – informal networks in eastern DRC**

In the DRC, the existence of informal networks has been thoroughly documented by the UN Panel of Experts in their series of reports from the country. The Panel (UNSC 2001:7 par. 26) describes informal networks that participate in the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the DRC, networks that include both Congolese rebels, foreign companies and representatives of the governments of Uganda and Rwanda. The exploitation of natural resources through informal networks started with the First Congo War and continues to fuel the DRC conflict today. The economic aspect of informal networks in the Great Lakes region will be further discussed in section 5.2.3.

When Kabila turned on Kagame and Museveni in 1998 prompting them to invade the DRC for a second time, a five-year long, devastating war followed. The war was

initially depicted as a Congolese uprising brought about by grievances such as corruption and tribalism against president Kabila. Nzongola-Ntalaja (1998) however, sees the war “above all [as] a manifestation of the desire of [Kabila’s] former allies to substitute for [him] a new leadership team, much more competent and better able to do the dirty work of the Rwandan and Ugandan authorities vis-à-vis the armed groups fighting them from Congolese territory” (Nzongola-Ntalaja 1998 quoted in Turner 2007:6). As explained in chapter three, a peace agreement between the main belligerents was reached in 2002, and foreign forces were to withdraw from DRC territory. Despite the agreement and promises of withdrawal, fighting escalated in eastern DRC, and thousands of people still continue to fall victim to this conflict every passing month. Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002) shows that the decision to try and remove Laurent-Désiré Kabila from the DRC presidency came from Rwanda and Uganda, rather than from a rebellion of Congolese Tutsi: Just as Rwanda had done a year earlier, by first invading the DRC and then setting up the ADFL as a cover to legitimise its actions, Rwanda and Uganda initiated the second war in 1998, prior to the founding of the RCD. This, Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002) sees as a clever attempt to depict the war that erupted as a civil war in which Rwanda was simply providing support to Congolese rebels to ensure the security of their own borders (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002:227-228).

Although Rwandan forces officially backed out of DRC territory, evidence show that Kigali long had a say in the area, both directly through forces patrolling the area, and indirectly through the support of rebels fighting the ex-FAR and Interahamwe and the Congolese army (FARDC) (HRW 2005). I see Rwanda’s overt and covert support for Congolese rebel groups as an expression of transnationalism in the Great Lakes region. Because of the limited scope of this thesis I have chosen to focus on Rwanda’s support for Tutsi rebel group CNDP in order to illustrate this element of transnationalism in the Great Lakes region.

In the Panel’s report from 2008, the connections between the Tutsi dominated CNDP and the Tutsi leadership in Kigali are investigated. The report shows that CNDP has a political and financial support network that is active throughout the Great Lakes

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region. At the time of the issuing of the report, representatives of CNDP were active in Kigali, and met regularly with foreign embassies in Ugandan capital Kampala and Kigali (UNSC 2008:6, par. 23). An example of Rwanda's support for CNDP is the shipment of uniforms with Rwandan flags on the shoulder to the rebels in the DRC. Ex-combatants testifying for the Panel explained that Rwandan flags were removed from the new uniforms by razor, camouflaging their true origin (UNSC 2008:7, par 27-30). According to the report, the Group has learned about the existence of a sophisticated financial network providing CNDP with economic support: Bank accounts controlled by CNDP agents had been opened in Rwanda in order to receive financial donations from Congolese and Rwandan in the diaspora. The money was then transported to the CNDP leadership in eastern DRC by the help of appointed go-betweens (ibid.).

In addition to financial and material support, Rwanda has also helped with the recruitment of soldiers to CNDP. The Panel found evidence that CNDP has operated recruitment networks in Rwanda through which they have recruited soldiers, including children, to fight the ex-FAR and Interahamwe and the FARDC on the Congolese side of the border. CNDP ex-combatants have testified to the Panel stating that they were recruited by former Rwandan army officials in Rwanda, and a 16-year-old former combatant explained that “[they] used to get new recruits from Rwanda, [...] the Rwandan army brought these recruits to the border and then went back” (UNSC 2008:16, par 63).

I will argue that Rwanda's documented support for the CNDP should be seen as a result of the level of transnationalism in the Great Lakes region. Kigali argues that it is the presence of hostile rebels on the Congolese side of the border, and Kinshasa's inability to handle these rogue elements, that forces them to support Tutsi rebels in eastern DRC. The fact that Rwanda has been able to effectively control large areas of Congolese territory through supporting friendly Congolese rebel groups shows that Kabila lacks the effective control of the entire territory of the DRC. This lack of control has enabled Rwanda's continued presence in eastern DRC.

Recent developments have led to an unforeseen improvement in the relationship between Kagame in Rwanda and Kabila in the DRC. Since the peace agreement in 2002, Rwanda-backed rebels such as CNDP has continued to fight Hutu rebels and the FARDC in eastern DRC. However, after years of supporting CNDP's struggle against Kabila's regime, Rwanda arrested renegade CNDP leader, Laurent Nkunda, in January 2009 and put him under house arrest. The arrest came as a result of a decision by Rwanda and the DRC to join forces in the extraction of the FDLR from DRC territory for good. The future of this collaboration is however unclear, as the CNDP maintains parallel military and administrative structures in much of the area it controlled as a rebel force despite being officially militarily and politically integrated into the Congolese army. Whether Rwanda and the DRC will continue to cooperate in the search to an end to the conflict in the eastern DRC seems to depend to a large extent on Kabila's ability to control his porous borders and the threat the FDLR poses to Rwandan security.

Throughout the conflict in the Great Lakes region there has been a never-ending shift in alliances. The most prominent examples are when Kabila turned against his foreign backers from Rwanda and Uganda, prompting the Second Congo War, and when the armies of said Rwanda and Uganda turned against each other in the struggle over natural resources in Kisangani.<sup>14</sup> The history of this conflict shows that alliances change, former allies can become enemies and vice versa. Kabila and Kagame have found it to be in their best interests to maintain a cooperative relationship for the time being. Whether it will be a long relationship will be determined by its usefulness to the parties. Regardless of the new alliance between the two heads of state, the conflict in eastern DRC does not have a quick fix. As I have shown in this thesis, the conflict, although regional in scope, incorporates internal and indeed local struggles that are very important parts of the conflict pattern. Even if Kigali and Kinshasa might have

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<sup>14</sup> Kisangani is a strategic trading city in the Orientale province in the heart of the DRC. The city constitutes an important meeting point for informal trading networks, and the battles here between Rwandan and Ugandan forces were most likely concerned with control over mineral wealth in the area (Economist 2000).

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turned a page and begun a relationship of amity, the local disputes over land and citizenship rights in eastern DRC still need to be resolved.

### **5.2.3 ‘Networks of plunder’ – informal economic activity in the border areas between Rwanda and the DRC**

Another important aspect of transnationalism is the existence of an informal economy operating in the shadows of formal structures. Bøås (2003) explains that in many African countries, large sectors of the population and sometimes the entire state apparatus owe their survival to “semi-official – often illegal flows of trade, capital and services that cross national boundaries” (Bøås 2003:35). Although not unique to Africa, these processes become very significant in African states due to a high level of state fragmentation. The informal economy works as an economic lifeline, and many African countries not only condone the economy on the fringe, they actually encourage it. For many African governments it is easier to let the parallel economy finance a substantial part of their population than to find the funds to do it themselves (ibid.). However, in the DRC, the fruits of the informal economy based in the extraction of natural resources has escaped most of the Congolese population and instead ended up in the hands of foreign powers such as Rwanda.

MacLean (2003) explains that what she calls ‘networks of plunder’ operate on the border between Rwanda and eastern DRC and are involved in trading natural resources for arms. The networks draw together bottom-up and top-down forces from governments, businesses, and civil societies in an informal regionalism that fuels the continuation of conflict in the region. The UN Panel of Experts’ 2001 report documents that Rwanda’s military appeared to be benefitting directly from the Second Congo War, and that there was a substantial integration between the military apparatus, the state bureaucracy, and the business community (UNSC 2001:29, par. 126). The consequence of illegal exploitation of natural resources in the DRC is according to the Panel twofold: first, there has been a massive availability of financial resources for the RPA; second, a network of top military officials and businessmen benefitting from the illegal exploitation has emerged. These two elements form the

basis of the link between the exploitation of resources and the continuation of conflict in the DRC.

The Panel separates the exploitation of resources in the DRC into two phases: mass-scale looting conducted by rebels and foreign soldiers during the first period of war, and the systemic and systematic exploitation by foreign countries ever since (UNSC 2001:3, par. 4-6). For the purpose of this thesis, I will focus on the latter phase. The systemic and systematic exploitation of the DRC's natural resources by Rwanda was made possible by pre-existing structures developed during ADFL's conquest of power in the First War. Rwanda then used these structures to continue the extraction of resources from the DRC after they invaded a second time in 1998. The Panel maps out the administrative structures that facilitated the exploitation of natural resources in the DRC by Rwanda and Uganda. According to the report, Rwandan authorities both secured the strategic appointment of friendly accomplices in powerful provincial positions, and facilitated the transportation of smuggled goods to and from the DRC (UNSC 2001:14, par. 71-72). Evidence the Panel found during their investigation in the DRC showed that Rwanda brought manpower from their own turf for mining in the DRC. In particular, Rwanda utilised prisoners to dig Coltan in exchange for sentence reduction and limited cash to buy food while in the DRC (UNSC 2001:12, par. 60).

The formal structures that enabled Rwanda's exploitation of resources ten years ago when the first report of the Panel was released have not seen much change. Rwanda will arguably continue to benefit from the extraction of resources across the border in one way or another until the DRC makes structural changes that will effectively put an end to this opportunity. In this light, it can be argued that Rwanda will prefer an unstable neighbour from whom it can continue to extract great revenues. However, the price to pay through the existence of rogue elements on the border might prove to be too high. The already discussed collaboration between Kabila and Kagame in fighting Hutu rebels FDLR has greatly changed the dynamics in the region. However, the malfunctioning of the Congolese state continues to enable Rwandan exploitation of natural resources in the DRC. Bøås (2003) sees transnational 'networks of plunder' as clearly involved in the Great Lakes conflict, but argues that more often than not, "their

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emergence in the first place is connected to larger conflictual questions concerning class, ethnicities, ideologies and ideas” (Bøås 2003:39). These questions have been dealt with briefly in this thesis, but as the focus has been on Rwanda’s role in the conflict, have not been explored at great length. I do however, concur with Bøås’s (2003) view that the conflict in eastern DRC is much more than a resource war.

### 5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown the level of transnational relations between Rwanda and the DRC. The three measures I have chosen to use are the movement of refugees and armed forces between the two countries; the presence of informal networks operation across the border; and the existence of an informal economy made possible by little governmental control of the eastern areas of the DRC. As we have seen in these first two parts of the analysis, the DRC can be described as being both weak and strong at the same time. The state is strong in the sense of its regime’s longevity, but weak in the sense that it lacks the effective control over its remote areas. Power and resources in the DRC rest with a small elite residing in the capital, whilst the majority of the population must do without governmental support. When the state is unable or unwilling to provide for its citizens, they turn to informal networks for support.

In this chapter I have focused on explaining how informal networks find fertile ground in states like the DRC where power is centralised in the fact that it rests with a small elite, but fragmented by way of the large gap between this elite and the rest of the population. This paradox of the state being both centralised and fragmented at the same time, leads to extremely porous borders and the growth of an informal economy. I have shown how the porous borders of the DRC affect the relationship between Rwanda and the DRC in two ways. First, the permeability of the border enabled over a million refugees to enter eastern DRC following the 1994 genocide – among the refugees were the *génocidaires*, the perpetrators of the massacre. Partly because of the DRC’s lack of control of its remote eastern areas, the *génocidaires* were able to regroup and launch attacks on Rwanda. The presence of extremist Hutu rebels across the border in the DRC was seen as a threat to Congolese Tutsi and the Tutsi regime in

Kigali alike, and led to Rwanda invading the DRC in 1997 and again in 1998. However, there is also a second aspect of transnationalism presented in this chapter, namely Rwanda's exploitation of natural resources for the enrichment of itself and its allies in the DRC. The very porosity of the borders has facilitated the exploitation by 'networks of plunder', and is arguably one of the main reasons why Rwanda has overstayed its welcome in the DRC.

Both rebels roaming free and the exploitation of resources by a foreign power can be seen as threats to a state's security. Do the porous border and the resulting high level of transnationalism in the areas between Rwanda and the DRC shown in this chapter imply that the two countries are part of a security complex? In the next chapter I will apply the concept of Regional Security Complexes and determine whether it can help me explain Rwanda's continued presence in eastern DRC.

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## 6 The Great Lakes: a regional security complex?

The two countries are still far from seeing eye to eye on security along their common border. Their governments agreed to ask the UN to increase its peacekeepers' patrols there. But the Congolese did so for fear that Rwandan troops are already crossing over into Congo. And as a quid pro quo, the Rwandans once more got the Congolese to promise to hunt down and round up the Rwandan Hutu rebels (Economist 2007).

Questions of security have dominated the conflict in the Great Lakes region for the last fifteen years. With porous borders and a high level of transnationalism, the security of the ruling regimes in Rwanda and the DRC is arguably marked by a high level of interdependence. In this final part of the analysis I will discuss the security situation between Rwanda and the DRC. As explained in chapter two, this last part of the analysis concerns the systemic level, whereas the two previous chapters have dealt with the internal level (chapter four) and the international/transnational level (chapter five). By studying the security situation in the Great Lakes region on a systemic level, I aim to show that the domestic, transnational, and systemic levels are interconnected, and must be analysed together to understand Rwanda's role in eastern DRC. The analysis of Rwanda's and the DRC's security interdependence builds on the analysis in the two previous chapters, and although the analysis is separated in three chapters and on three levels, it should be considered as a whole.

My arguments in this chapter will be supported by elements from Buzan and Wæver's (2003) theory on Regional Security Complexes (RSC), and I will determine if Rwanda and the DRC can be said to be part of a Great Lakes regional security complex. Although Uganda, Burundi and to some extent Angola are arguably intrinsic parts of such a complex, due to the limitations of the scope of this thesis, I will focus on Rwanda and the DRC only. As explained in chapter two, Buzan and Wæver's (2003) concept 'region' in security terms implies a distinct and significant subsystem of security relations between states that are geographically close together and whose security situations cannot be analysed or resolved apart from one another. The basic elements that define regional security are distribution of power and patterns of amity

and enmity (Buzan and Wæver 2003). Amity entails friendship and looking to neighbours for protection, while enmity entails fear and suspicion. Somewhere between these opposites are the positions of neutrality and indifference (Buzan 1991). Buzan and Wæver's (2003) view that there exists a level of security between the domestic and global levels ties in with my NRA approach and helps me analyse the security situation between Rwanda and the DRC.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, the African continent consists of mainly weak states, and non-state actors often play as large a part as the state in questions concerning security. This is particularly visible in the Great Lakes region, where a high level of transnational activity and Kinshasa's lack of control over remote areas has allowed Rwanda to assert its de facto control of the eastern provinces of the DRC. Being aware of the awkwardness of applying the rather state-centric theory of RSC on a case where the 'state' has little explanation value, I will argue that the DRC and Rwanda are indeed part of a Great Lakes RSC and that this can help me explain Rwanda's continued presence in eastern DRC.

Applying the theory of RSC should be seen in relation to transnational networks on the border between Rwanda and the DRC discussed in the previous chapter. I will argue that there is a correlation between the fact that the DRC is a weak state with a strong regime (chapter four), the high level of transnationalism by informal networks between Rwanda and the DRC this fosters (chapter five), and the existence of a Great Lakes RSC. The identification of a correlation is based on the findings in all three levels of analysis.

The neo-patrimonial traits of Congolese society have resulted in a weak state with a strong regime. As the regime only has control over its most central areas, its lack of control has led to the growth of transnational informal networks in eastern DRC. In this chapter I will argue that the informal networks discussed in chapter five provide the basis for security concerns between Rwanda and the DRC. In order to determine whether Rwanda and the DRC are part of an RSC, I will show how the transnational factors discussed in the previous chapter have had an influence on the security

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situation between the two countries. To revise, the three factors used are: (1) the movement of people, in particular refugees and armed forces, between the DRC and Rwanda; (2) the presence of informal networks operating on the border between the two countries; and (3) the level of informal economic activity in eastern DRC made possible by little state control of the area. Through the discussion of these factors in a security perspective, I will show that the two countries' security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another.

## **6.1 African security complexes**

According to Buzan and Wæver (2003), the framework of juridical sovereignty, what I in this thesis have discussed as negative sovereignty (Clapham 1996), protected African states during their early years from the pressures of competition that are supposed to shape states living under anarchy. One consequence of this was that regional security dynamics did not develop as quickly, clearly, or strongly as they did elsewhere. In their search for African security complexes, Buzan and Wæver (2003:223) admit that their approach is too state-centric. In acknowledging the increasing significance of non-state actors, they point to the existence of a 'regional' security in Africa in which much of the imprint of the Westphalian state system fade into the background, bringing into view networks of non-state actors and their systems of security interaction. In understanding post-Cold War security in Africa, they say, this emergent pattern of non-state actors may well hold more of the future than the decaying state system.

When embarking on an analysis of whether Rwanda and the DRC are parts of an RSC, there is a need for a quick reminder. As explained in chapter one, when I discuss Rwanda and the DRC, it is the regimes that hold power in these countries I am discussing, not the countries' citizens. Both countries are governed by regimes that care little for the welfare of their citizens; their concern is their regime's survival and relative power. Thus, when Rwanda speaks of national security, it is important to keep in mind that this concerns the security of the regime and its Tutsi supporters. Rwanda invaded the DRC twice in the 1990s, and its stated justifications have been to

eliminate the threats to Rwandan security posed by Hutu rebels based in the DRC; to protect Congolese Tutsi; and to promote democracy (Longman 2002:130). Dunn (2003) argues that arguments that RPF's involvement in the ADFL rebellion was an attempt to ensure the security of the Rwandan sovereign state are highly misleading. Just as one cannot speak of a Congolese sovereign state, he says, neither can one speak of a Rwandan state. Moreover, the argument goes,

the Kagame regime was not motivated by the protection of the Rwandan population – many of whom were incarcerated or wanted for their role in the 1994 genocide. Rather, the RPF was interested in the preservation of the “Tutsi” community writ large – a community whose boundaries did not correspond to recognized state borders. Protection of “sovereignty” referred not to states but to ethnically defined communities. Tellingly, RPF troops have become known as *soldats sans frontières*, soldiers without borders (Dunn 2003:150).

The argument that the Rwandan regime is concerned with the preservation of the Tutsi community rather than the entire Rwandan population indicates that Rwanda also can be viewed as a weak state with a strong regime where the Tutsi ‘big men’ in the government maintain power by taking care of loyal Tutsi clients. Due to the limited scope of this thesis, the internal structures of Rwanda have been left largely untouched. For further study, this aspect should be taken into consideration.<sup>15</sup> The discussions of whether Kagame is motivated by Rwanda's national security or the survival of Tutsi in the Great Lakes region as a whole, underline the demand for a regionalised approach to the conflicts in the Great Lakes area. Rwanda's self-professed role as protector of Tutsi throughout the region has contributed to massive anti-Tutsi resentments and the view that the RPF is on a quest to create a grand Tutsi kingdom covering the whole of the Great Lakes, a view that was popularly held among the *génocidaires* of 1994. Later in this chapter, I will discuss the effect Rwanda's presence in the DRC has had on the security of Congolese Tutsi, and show that Kagame's qualms of security threats seem to exist alongside the motivation for natural resource enrichment.

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<sup>15</sup> See Reyntjens (2006) Vansina (2004) and Longman (2002) for an analysis of Rwanda's internal structures and its effects on the conflict in the Great Lakes region.

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## **6.2 Transnational threats to security**

Prior to this chapter I have analysed the Congolese state from Mobutu to Kabila, and concluded that while Mobutu had loyal clients throughout his vast country, he never quite managed to fully control all local 'big men' in the outlying provinces. This became apparent on the eve of the Cold War when he no longer was able to reward his clients for their loyalty, and they turned elsewhere for influence and economic wealth. With Kabila as president, Kinshasa's influence is limited to the country's most central areas, and rebels opposed to the government control large areas in the east. I have characterised the DRC as a weak state with a strong regime, and explained that this spurs the existence of informal transnational networks. While a strong regime puts a stop to political opposition and limits the dispersal of resources to a small elite, the weak state's porous borders at the same time open up for increased transnational activity. The president's lack of control over remote areas has spurred the growth of informal networks on the border between Rwanda and the DRC, as shown in chapter five. These networks, in addition to a large number of Hutu refugees and armed groups living in the border areas, have greatly affected the security situation in the Great Lakes region, and this will be discussed below.

### **6.2.1 Refugees and rebels as a threat to security**

There are extensive cross border linkages in the conflicts in the Great Lakes region, and throughout the last twenty years, violence has shifted rapidly from one country to the next. In the last decade however, eastern DRC has been the hub of violence in the region, where local conflicts were exasperated by the influx of over a million refugees following the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Salehyan and Gleditsch (2006) explain that most scholarly literature and public discussion of refugee flows treat population movements as a consequence of conflict rather than as a possible cause. They argue however, that international migration in general, and refugee migration in particular, can have important security consequences, thereby suggesting that refugee flows and population movements can spur the spread of conflict both between and within states:

Refugees can change the ethnic composition of the host state; exacerbate economic competition; bring with them arms, combatants, and ideologies that are conducive to violence; and mobilize opposition directed at their country of origin as well as their host country (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006:338).

Refugee flows and border insecurity have arguably greatly contributed to the level of instability in the Great Lakes region. The porous nature of the borders in the region, and the ease with which rebels and militias move across them, have created long term conflict. As showed in previous chapters, the territory of the DRC has been used to by Rwandan Hutu militia to launch attacks, establish bases for resupply, and as a place to seek refuge during heavy fighting. Borders that cut through rather than follow ethnic divides have complicated the situation and increased the fluidity of movements between states (Field and Ebrahim 2000). When Tutsi-led RPF took Kigali following the genocide, a mass of Hutu refugees poured across the border into eastern DRC. The sheer fact of this massive amount of refugees would have proved a challenge to the security situation in the area, by the constraint it put on the people already living there in terms of pressure on land and resources. Murison (2002) sees the insecurity created by the influx of refugees to eastern DRC as twofold. Firstly, because of the environmental impact the refugees had on the area and the emerging competition between nationals and refugees for local resources. There was also tension arising from the arrival of international humanitarian aid organisations responding to the refugee crisis. But secondly, the most serious threat was that among the refugees were also the perpetrators of the genocide, and they swiftly took control of the refugee camps and started to arm both Rwandan refugees and local Congolese Hutu in the fight against the Tutsi leadership back home. In addition, they launched attacks at the Tutsi community in this area of the DRC, the Banyamulenge, and maintained their goal of exterminating all Tutsi.

The presence of ex-FAR and Interahamwe in refugee camps in eastern DRC is Rwanda's stated justification for invading the country twice in the 1990s, as well as for supporting rebels in the DRC after they were ordered to leave in 2002. When Rwanda admitted RPF involvement in the First Congo War, they justified it as a defensive action, and as many in the international community had long been aware of

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the threat armed elements in the refugee camps posed to Rwanda, the action was hardly contested. According to Longman (2002), many were also willing to overlook the fact that the RPF attacked Hutu without discriminating between combatants and unarmed civilians, as the result of their actions was the end to Mobutu's malfunctioning rule (Longman 2002:133).

Reyntjens (2006) explains the silent complicity of the international community with a 'genocide credit' the new regime in Kigali enjoyed. The genocide has become a source of legitimacy for the RPF, he explains, and is exploited to escape condemnation and used as a "compensation to enjoy complete immunity" (Reyntjens 2006:29). The wars in the DRC can in some aspects be seen as a continuation of the civil war in Rwanda extraterritorially. The ex-FAR and the Interahamwe crossed the border into the DRC and continued their killings of Tutsi, and the RPF followed them in the name of Tutsi protection. In the First Congo War, Rwanda's need for national security corresponded with the greater need of the region to remove Mobutu from power. When the RPF decided to invade a second time - this time to oust the president they had helped put in office months earlier - they played the national security card once more. There had been an escalation of attacks on Tutsi in Rwanda by armed Hutu, and this had raised concerns within the RPF over its ability to maintain control over the majority Hutu population in Rwanda.<sup>16</sup> Longman (2002) sees Rwanda's security concerns as legitimate, and explains that Rwandan Hutu rebels were clearly using the DRC as a base of operations. This time around however, neither the international community nor the Congolese people were as sympathetic to Rwanda's claim of a need for a regime change in Kinshasa. Several countries entered the war on Kabila's side, and what Rwanda might have expected to be a swift takeover was to drag out in years of warfare.

Both Reyntjens (2006) and Longman (2002) see several difficulties with Kigali's use of security as a justification for Rwanda's presence in the DRC. First, while

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<sup>16</sup> The Rwandan population is made up of about 84 per cent Hutu and 15 per cent Tutsi, and less than 1 per cent Twa.

controlling Hutu rebel activity could justify the invasion of the Kivu provinces, it does not explain why the RPF moved west towards the capital. The threat to Tutsi security was real, but limited to the eastern areas of the DRC, and Rwanda's attempt at surrounding the capital thousands of miles away made little sense in the fight against Rwandan Hutu rebels. Second, Rwanda's continued presence in the DRC, and in particular its violent treatment of the Congolese population has exacerbated anti-Rwandan and anti-Tutsi sentiments in the DRC. Reyntjens (2006) sees the Banyamulenge as being used as Kigali's instruments in the war, and believes that singling them out actually led to a reduction in their security. Tellingly, the Mai-Mai, local Congolese militia who were allied with the Rwandan army and the Banyamulenge in the first war, grew tired with Rwanda's continued presence in the DRC as well as with the disproportionate power of the Banyamulenge in the new government. With the second war, more and more Congolese joined Mai-Mai groups, and in some cases they have allied themselves with the Interahamwe. Longman (2002) sees a paradox with the presence of the Rwandan army in eastern DRC, stating that

the RPA clearly does prevent anti-Tutsi violence. Yet their own actions, particularly attacks on civilians and other human rights abuses, increase the public resentment and hatred of Tutsi, thus heightening the need for protection of Tutsi. The RPA, thus, is simultaneously increasing the threat to Tutsi and offering them protection (Longman 2002:133).

If Rwanda's motivation for entering the DRC was the protection of Congolese Tutsi, should they not pull out as their continued presence poses a security risk to the very people they are allegedly there to protect? In light of the detrimental effect RPA presence has on the lives of Congolese Tutsi, Rwanda's reluctance to leave eastern DRC can lead to the interpretation that their motivations to stay have changed from mainly security reasons to economic reasons based in the exploitation of natural resources in the areas of the DRC they control.

### **6.2.2 Rwanda's economic endeavours in the DRC**

The exploitation of DRC's natural resources presented in chapter five undermines Rwanda's claims that they are in the DRC to ensure their own national sovereignty and

the welfare of Congolese Tutsi. The Panel's strong evidence suggests that Rwanda has profited substantially from its involvement in the DRC, and has become a transit point for diamonds and other minerals extracted in the DRC and smuggled out of the country illegally (UNSC 2001). The conflict in the DRC has become a self-financing war, which gave Rwanda few incentives to pull out of Congolese territory. Through setting up the Congo Desk, and using Congolese rebels to extract resources on its behalf, Rwanda has criminalised its presence in the DRC and at the same time made the option to leave unappealing. According to Longman (2002), the evidence of economic benefits taken from the DRC is clearly visible in the level of prosperity in Kigali:

Economic activity in Rwanda today goes far beyond what either the Rwandan economy alone or the current level of international investment could support [...] This prosperity comes despite the high cost of sustaining the war, which one can reasonably assume is being financed by Congo itself (Longman 2002:137).

Rwanda's exploitation of natural resources in the DRC is used to label the war in the Great Lakes region a 'resource war' (cf. Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Berdal and Malone 2000). I believe the greed and grievance perspective is too simplistic, and fails to fully explain Rwanda's role in eastern DRC. I do see, however, Rwanda's motivation to maintain a presence in the DRC as coloured by the incentives presented by natural resources. I showed in chapter four that, according to the Panel, Rwanda's real long-term goal of the engagement in the DRC was not to establish security, but to secure property. The Panel has evidence showing the first vice-president of Rwanda-backed RCD-Goma urging all army units to maintain good relations "with our Interahamwe and Mayi-Mayi brothers" and further, "if necessary to let them exploit the sub-soil for their survival" (UNSC 2002:14, par. 66). The Panel holds the view that the rationale for Rwanda's presence in eastern DRC is to increase the number of Rwandans in the area and to encourage those settled there to act in unison to support its exercise of economic control. Within the framework of RSCs, Rwanda's presence in the DRC and extraction of the DRCs natural resources can be interpreted as a breach of the DRCs sovereignty and thus a threat to its national security. However, as I have shown in this thesis, the DRC lacks the positive sovereignty that entails the ability to effectively

control its territory. With DRCs sovereignty limited to negative, i.e. the formal recognition by other states, its ability to protect its territory and stop Rwanda's exploitation of Congolese natural resources remains restricted. In light of Rwanda's ability to breach the DRCs national sovereignty in a quest for resource riches, I will argue that the DRCs permeable borders pose security risks for both Rwanda and the DRC, and thus adds to the view that the two countries are part of a Great Lakes RSC.

### **6.2.3 Informal networks and their effect on security**

An RSC depends on there being significant levels of security interdependence among a group of states or other actors. Security interdependence, like other types of interdependence requires substantial interaction among the units concerned (Buzan and Wæver 2003:229). Rwanda's role as patron to Congolese rebels was discussed in chapter four; ADFL came to power after the First Congo War with the help of Rwanda, and RCD took over the role as Rwanda's client in the second war. The most recent group to receive Rwanda's support discussed in this thesis is Laurent Nkunda's CNDP. Should Kigali's support for these groups be seen as its way to ensure Tutsi security, or were the groups merely a means to achieve influence and control over natural resources in eastern DRC? I believe this dichotomy is too simplified, and one alternative does not exclude the other. The evidence found by the Panel shows that what might have started out as an invasion to ensure national security, or at least the security of the Tutsi regime, has developed into an engagement so rewarding that it makes it difficult to walk away from. Rwanda's incentives to maintain a war in a neighbouring country will be further discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

When the second war started in August 1998, Rwanda initially denied taking part in the fighting, and claimed it was an entirely internal conflict. It later admitted supporting the RCD, and Rwandan soldiers were seen taking an active part in the warfare on Congolese territory (UNSC 2002; HRW 2005). Rwanda's support for rebels fighting the Congolese government is clearly a threat to Congolese national security. Although by far the largest country in the region in terms of size and population, the DRC has been weak and susceptible to attacks from its much smaller

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neighbours to the east, Rwanda and Uganda. Had not forces from SADC come to its rescue in 1998, it seems likely that Kinshasa would once again have come under the control of Kigali and Kampala. Instead, years of brutal warfare followed, and as Rwanda and Uganda were not able to oust Kabila, fighting was eventually mostly limited to the eastern and north-eastern areas of the DRC, which are outside Kabila's reach. Since 2002, the national armies of foreign countries have officially left the DRC, but continue to support rebel groups within the country.

The unexpected turn of events when Rwanda arrested Laurent Nkunda of CNDP in January 2009 marked the start of a new direction in the relationship between Kinshasa and Kigali. The governing regimes of the two countries have now decided to cooperate in the fight against extremist Hutu rebels, and the expatriation of Rwandan Hutu from eastern DRC is well under way. New alliances will arguably change the existing dynamics of the complex, and new patterns of amity and enmity within the Great Lakes RSC can thus arise. This newfound relationship of amity between Rwanda and the DRC might however receive a serious blow with the leak of a draft of a massive UN report documenting what could be classified as acts of genocide committed by Rwandan forces against Congolese Hutu in the period 1993-2003 (UNHCHR 2010:14, par. 31).

### **6.3 Interlinked security dynamics in the Great Lakes region**

The reason for applying the theory of RSC to the conflict in eastern DRC is that it takes into account the importance of viewing the region, and not the state, as element of analysis. Still, in my opinion, Buzan and Wæver (2003) underestimate the impact of transnational actors. Even though they include other 'units' than the state in their analysis, it seems as if they see transnational actors as less important than the state and thus give them little importance when assessing security interdependence and interaction in regions. In their evaluation of African security politics, I believe they place too much focus on the state and not enough on the transnational informal actors. When taking informal transnational processes into consideration, I will argue that there

undoubtedly is a high degree of security interaction in the Great Lakes region. Rather than state security, it is pertinent that we focus on regime security and transnational actors, and hence both formal and informal processes.

When it comes to security in the Great Lakes region I will argue that conflicts within each country play a large part in the security dynamics of the region, and in this view one can claim that there exists a Great Lakes security complex characterised by a high degree of mutual suspicion and fear among regimes in the region. Correspondingly, this finding supports one of the most important findings of this thesis, namely the need for a regional approach to the study of security in the Great Lakes region. Buzan and Wæver (2003) explain that because Africa's RSCs are still weakly formed and often lack very clear boundaries, the potential for external transformations is quite high. This is particularly obvious in the Great Lakes region where Buzan and Wæver (2003) describe the situation as "fluid" (Buzan and Wæver 2003:256). It is added that given the high degree of political fragmentation shown in chapter four visible throughout the Great Lakes, changes in individual actors may not matter all that much to the essential structures of a Great Lakes RSC (*ibid.*). I will argue that a change in alliances may well change the essential structures of the Great Lakes RSC; if Rwanda and the DRC succeed in their effort to rid eastern DRC of Hutu rebels, the dynamics of the RSC will change. Although the state in the DRC is extremely weak and its borders permeable, a lasting cooperative relationship between Kabila and Kagame will have repercussions throughout the Great Lakes RSC. For the most parts of the two Congo Wars, the DRC could be seen as pitted against Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda. Should, however, Rwanda's security needs be met by the DRC, these alliances can shift and new patterns of amity and enmity might arise.

Buzan (1991) argues that once a state is weak enough, its problems will remain internal to the state. But in the Great Lakes region, I have demonstrated that it is precisely the weak state combined with a strong regime in the DRC that poses a threat to its neighbours. The regime is strong in the sense that it maintains its power and the negative sovereignty of its state year after year, but weak in the sense that it lacks the effective control of its remote areas. This lack of control gives growth to informal

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transnational networks operating in the border areas between the DRC and Rwanda. The high level of transnationalism in these border areas makes Rwanda vulnerable to a collapse of the DRC state, and highlights the fact that the countries' security situation cannot be analysed or resolved apart from one another.

### **6.3.1 Regional implosion**

Bøås and Dokken (2002) introduce the concept 'regional implosion' and define it as "when the regional state structure collapses, and the other states in the region are pulled into the conflict and into the political economy of the state that first collapses" (Bøås and Dokken 2002:145 [my translation]). I see regional implosion as a good way to explain how transnationalism leads to the existence of a Great Lakes security complex. A collapse in a weak state with a strong regime such as the one witnessed in the DRC can lead to regional implosion where the entire region can be seen to descend into a 'black hole' when a central state ceases to function as a sovereign state (Bøås and Dokken 2002:158). When the DRC imploded it threatened to pull the entire region down with it. The regional repercussions of the implosion are so grave due to the high level of transnationalism in the region, which again stems from the DRC being a weak state with a strong regime. Ottman (2006) sees the conflicts in the Great Lakes region as interlocking and closely linked: In this region, the security of one regime cannot be seen in isolation but is relevant to that of other regimes and thus interrelated. Thus, I will argue it is principally the weakness of the state in the Great Lakes region that points to the existence of a Great Lakes RSC.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have shown that the theory of Regional Security Complexes can amply be applied to the Great lakes region, with a few reservations. The theory of RSC places too much emphasis on the state as unit of analysis, and thus disregards the large impact transnational informal networks have on the security situation in the region. In addition, I have focused on regime security rather than state security, as states in the

Great Lakes region are governed by regimes mostly concerned with their own survival.<sup>17</sup>

In the discussion of security between Rwanda and the DRC I have looked at the role refugees and rebels on the border play in each state's security, and determined that Hutu rebels on the border constituted a threat to the security of the Tutsi regime in Rwanda as well as to Tutsi inside the DRC. Bøås (2003:37) explains that the initial goal of Kagame and Museveni, prior to the first intervention, was to gain firm control over their respective border areas with the DRC, but that with hindsight, it seems reasonable to suggest that when they discovered the high level of fragmentation in Mobutu's Zaire, they redefined their objectives and went for an even higher prize: "a re-configuration of the Zairian state that suited the long-term security interests of both regimes" (ibid.). In this part of the analysis I present the extremist Hutu rebels on the border between Rwanda and the DRC as a legitimate threat to both the leadership in Kigali as well as to Tutsi at large in the region and explain that this was the expressed reason for Rwanda interventions. I have, however, shown that economic incentives seem to have come to matter as much, if not more, in the continuation of the conflict. Security may have been a motivation to intervene in the first place, but with time seems to be more of an excuse to stay.

Currently, Kabila and Kagame have joined forces in their fight against the ex-FAR and Interahamwe roaming the countryside of eastern DRC. Does this mean that the relationship between the regimes in Kigali and Kinshasa has gone from that of enmity to one of amity? Buzan and Wæver (2003) explain that security complexes are dynamic, and internal and external factors play important roles in their changing dynamics. Whether Kabila and Kagame will continue to cooperate in the future is unresolved, however as a cautionary note, the history of the Great Lakes region shows us that alliances can shift rapidly, and friends do not necessarily stay friends forever.

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<sup>17</sup> Admittedly, within the present framework, the Rwandan regime's security has been the main focus of analysis. For further research, the security predicaments of the Congolese regime in relations with its neighbours should also be taken into consideration.

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## 7 Concluding remarks

Thirteen years after Mobutu was ousted from power in Zaire eventually spurring Africa's First World War, the Great Lakes region is still one of the most volatile regions on earth. Despite the scale of devastation in the region, the conflict has been dubbed "the forgotten war" by NGOs and scholars alike, as it has failed to garner much attention or resources from the broad international community. Conflict in the eastern areas of the DRC continues as of this writing, resulting in widespread abuses of human rights and massive displacement.

### 7.1 Summing up

Throughout the conflict in the DRC, Rwanda's role has been considerable, and the main focus of this thesis has been on how Rwanda's role in the conflict in eastern DRC can best be explained. Through my analysis, I have shown that in order to properly explain Rwanda's continued presence in eastern DRC, a regional approach is needed. Applying the concept of NRA helped me look beyond state-centric explanations of conflict, and instead take a step back and consider the region as a whole. The point of having the NRA as a backdrop is not to ignore the state per se, but to take in the phenomenon that happens when a state is so weak that an internal conflict threatens other states in the region.

Traditional International Relations theories use the state as element of analysis, but in the Great Lakes region, the 'state' is oftentimes non-existent in all but the name. There are some theoretical concepts that use a regionalised approach to the study of conflict, such as transnationalism and RSC, but applying only one concept would not allow me to fully understand Rwanda's role in the DRC. All the theories presented in chapter two were considered relevant in order to analyse my case, but were not seen to sufficiently make the connections between domestic and regional structures if applied on their own. Thus, an eclectic model with the combination of theories focusing on the domestic level and theories explaining the regional level was applied. By the help of this model I was able to approach my research question on three different levels;

elements from neo-patrimonialism helped me explain domestic structures in the DRC, aspects of transnationalism explained informal networks on the border between Rwanda and the DRC, and Buzan's theory of RSC was applied to discuss the security threats the weakness of the DRC state and a high level of transnationalism in the Great Lakes region yield.

The three levels and the three aspects were shown as interconnected, and the one was seen to logically follow the other. In *chapter four* I determined that decades of neo-patrimonial rule has resulted in a DRC that is now a weak state with a strong regime. I discussed three neo-patrimonial traits of Congolese society, namely a blurred distinction between private and public spheres; a personification of the state; and weak economic management. Although all of these traits are visible in the DRC today, I chose not to characterise the DRC as a neo-patrimonial state. The reason for this is that a neo-patrimonial state is based on intricate patron-client relationships where the patron rewards his clients for their loyalty. Today's DRC is too weak and fragmented for the regime to control it, and the regime's lack of control over the remote areas of the state has opened up for a high level of transnationalism on its borders.

Seeing the DRC not as neo-patrimonial, but as a weak state with a strong regime helped me explain the high level of transnationalism on its borders discussed in *chapter five*. The measurements used were the movement of refugees and rebels across the DRC/Rwanda border; informal networks in the DRC; and informal economic activity in the border areas between Rwanda and the DRC. The analysis showed that the porous borders of the DRC opened up for transnational activity that is both to Rwanda's detriment and advantage. On the one hand, the presence of militarised refugees in eastern DRC continues to pose a security threat to Rwanda, but on the other, the porous borders enables Rwanda's support for friendly rebels and access to natural resources. Using the transnational measurements from the previous chapter, *chapter six* discussed the security situation between the two countries and whether they could be seen as part of a Great Lakes regional security complex. My conclusion after analysing transnational activity in light of security, was that the two countries'

security could not reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another, and thus they could be seen to be part of a security complex.

In the final part of the chapter on RSCs I also introduced the concept of regional implosion, and argued that it adequately illustrates the situation in the Great Lakes region at the time of Rwanda's invasion. I believe viewing the situation in the Great Lakes region in this light shows that staying out of the conflict was not an option for Rwanda. However, the explanation for why a country intervenes in a conflict is often different from the explanation for that country's continued presence in the war zone. In the case of Rwanda's continued role in eastern DRC, I believe my findings show that Rwanda entered the conflict due to security threats, but that the opportunity to profit from the war and consolidate its influence across the border has made Rwanda drag its feet when it comes to leaving.

## **7.2 Keeping the pot boiling?**

The DRC being a weak state with a strong regime enables a high level of transnational informal activity on its borders. Transnational activity in the form of Rwandan Hutu rebels in eastern DRC is seen as a security threat by Rwanda, and is its official justification for continued presence. However, another important consequence of the DRC being a weak state is the fact that Rwanda has been able to take out immense revenues from illegal exploitation of DRC minerals. These revenues have helped Rwanda maintain its presence and continue the support for local rebels, which again prolongs the conflict in eastern DRC. This illegal exploitation of the DRC's natural resources could not continue if the Kabila regime managed to effectively control eastern DRC. I thus asked in the introduction of this thesis if it might be that Rwanda was contributing to maintain a level of conflict in eastern DRC because it had more use of a weak and fragmented DRC than a strong and centralised one. Rwanda could arguably not maintain the present level of influence in eastern DRC if the DRC was to become a strong and centralised state. But does this imply that it is in Rwanda's interest to 'keep the pot boiling' in the DRC? I do not believe the findings in this thesis support such a strong view.

Rather, I have shown that it is due to the weakness of the Congolese state that Rwandan Hutu militia such as the ex-FAR and Interahamwe have been able to launch attacks on their home country from across the border. In addition, the militias have caused unbearable suffering to Congolese Tutsi, and this has been a stated motivation for Rwanda's intervention in the DRC. Rwanda's protection of Congolese Tutsi has, however, come with a price. As shown in chapter six, the presence of Rwandan forces has caused resentment against Tutsi in the DRC, and thus reduced their security. Therefore, I argue that by maintaining a level of conflict next door, Rwanda would both be jeopardising its own security, and facilitating the continuation of attacks on Tutsi in the Kivu provinces. If Rwanda's goal is the protection of Tutsi, maintaining a presence in the DRC does not seem to be the remedy. In short, my findings show that a continued conflict in eastern DRC is more to Rwanda's detriment than to its advantage – and thus, keeping the pot boiling would arguably not be Rwanda's goal.

Furthermore, the malfunctioning of the Congolese state led to its implosion, which in turn has threatened to pull the surrounding countries down with it. I therefore come to the conclusion that the threat of being pulled down with the DRC arguably outweighs the reward Rwanda gets from wielding its influence across the border and exploiting DRC minerals. Thus, I do not find support for the assumption that it is in Rwanda's interest to sustain a level of conflict in eastern DRC. Rwanda's recent decision to join forces with the DRC in the fight against ex-FAR and Interahamwe points in the same direction.

### **7.3 Theoretical reflections and further research**

The combination of aspects from several theories and concepts was fruitful for this thesis. The NRA created the main backdrop of my thesis, but did not have a dominating place in it. However, it was important to set out with a regional approach, and for that the NRA played its part. Although I did not characterise the DRC as a neo-patrimonial state, I did point to neo-patrimonial traits of Congolese society. Doing this made it possible to explain the porosity of Congolese borders and the high level of transnationalism this produces, and I thus concluded that neo-patrimonial features

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enhances transnational activity. Although Risse-Kappen's theory of transnationalism was helpful in analysing the informal transnational activity on the border between Rwanda and the DRC, there were elements of the theory that did not fit my case. Risse-Kappen sees states as either centralised or fragmented, but as the chapter on neo-patrimonialism showed; the DRC is both. The DRC is centralised when it comes to its regime, a small elite residing in the capital Kinshasa, but fragmented when it comes to the regime's lack of legitimacy in the bulk of the population. Thus, the concepts of neo-patrimonialism and transnationalism were complimentary, and together helped me explain how Rwanda is able to maintain its presence in eastern DRC. The theory of RSCs was used in order to understand the security interdependence of the two countries, although the focus was admittedly mainly on Rwanda's security. I acknowledged that the theory places too much emphasis on the state as unit of analysis, and thus proved a bit of an awkward fit in combination with NRA, which emphasises informal actors. However, I still showed that elements from the theory of RSCs were useful in order to examine the security dynamics in the region. Although I indeed point to the existence of a Great Lakes regional security complex, to adequately determine this would depend on a more thorough analysis of all states included in such a complex. This task was considered both too big and somewhat on the side of the current thesis. Nevertheless, studying two main actors should have provided a good starting point.

A major source of conflict in the Great Lakes region is that of land rights and citizenship rights. Regrettably, I was unable to go into this subject matter in detail. Furthermore, as my focus has been on Rwanda's role in the conflict, local conflicts in the Kivu provinces have not been dealt with extensively. For further research, it would be productive to include local conflicts in the analysis to a larger degree. For the purpose of limiting the scope of the thesis, nor has the domestic aspect of Rwanda been discussed. Both these omissions were regarded necessary within the present framework, however, could arguably have contributed constructively to the analysis. Further research on the conflict in the Great Lakes region is clearly warranted; hopefully this thesis has provided a solid base from which to proceed.

As discussed in chapter one, the potential for empirical generalisations from this thesis is perhaps modest due to the complexity and uniqueness of the case under study. However, I will argue that it should be possible to generalise theoretically. The concept of weak states with strong regimes, and the application of an eclectic model with elements from the aforementioned theories could arguably prove useful if applied to other cases.

## **7.4 Recent developments**

As of this writing, the Great Lakes region may see glimmers of some much needed peace and stability, as Kabila and Kagame have embarked on an unprecedented joint military operation to clear eastern DRC of rebels. This newfound relationship of amity is arguably a change for the better – but will it last? Years of suspicion and fighting could be hard to overcome, and in addition, there are other unresolved issues that are continuing to fan the conflict. Throughout the years of conflict in the Great Lakes region, alliances have shifted and deals have been broken. Whether or not the recent alliance will prove lasting still remains unresolved.

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