What to think of East-Congo

Explaining the existence of armed groups with theory and factors

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'The mind of man is capable of anything'
-Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Introduction

Democratic Republic of the Congo, or DRC. Former colony of Belgium, infamous for its corrupt leaders, rich with natural resources and rife with conflict and rebellions. This part of the world has always held my fascination and that is why this will be the topic of my bachelor thesis. My research will focus on the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Which from here on I will simply call East-Congo. I will use this term to specify the regions that I will investigate and that have been subject to conflict and rebellion, mainly the provinces North-Kivu and South-Kivu. The case of East-Congo is complicated and involves many factors and parties.
During the summer of 2012 there was a major uprising caused by the rebel group: M23.
It was this resurgence of violence combined with my fascination for this region that made me want to try to understand this region. Learn more about its origins and try to understand the present situation the area is currently in.

The social relevance of this research comes from the fact that there has not been a significant improvement since the end of the war. The situation in East-Congo needs to remain an important issue and the debate needs to keep going for this issue to receive the proper attention and energy it is due.
This research will be helpful to people and organisations that want to take a interest in East-Congo. Hopefully it can contribute to the academic debate and help create a understandable case. It also tests several theories in a case study where they show their relevance.

Abstract

To understand and explain the existence of armed groups in East-Congo I have conducted a theoretical research. For confirmation of the results experts knowledgeable of the Great Lakes district and East-Congo were consulted.

I argue that there are several factors that contribute to the existence of armed groups in East-Congo. They amplify each other and are closely related to each other.

It is the absence of state authority and institutions that allows it to happen.

At the foundation there is the grassroots issue of land, social security, economic opportunities, insecurity about one's future and the struggle to secure basic human needs on a daily basis.

Ethnicity has been created into an important issue in East-Congo; it is how they have organised their society and view their world. It is being reproduced on a daily basis and one of the most important propaganda points for mobilisation and recruitment by armed groups.

And finally we need to consider the role of armed groups in society, they provide security up to certain extend, finance traders and control part of the economy. They are ingrained in society after all these years.

These conclusions are based on a theoretical research of literature that tries to explain causes of conflict and specific literature on DRC.

The case of East-Congo is described using articles and books written by experts on DRC and East-Congo and on occasion supported by general theory. Starting with the colonization of DRC by the Belgian Monarch King Leopold and the ruthless way he exploiting the resources of the country. Next came independence and Mobutu, where you can see the beginning of the factor that leads to the failure of state authority and institutions. It also gives an insight in the way ethnicity has been used and how this to a certain extend contributed to the First Congo War. When Rwanda and Uganda supported the rebellion of Kabila and helped him overthrow Mobutu.

Kabila's reliance on Rwanda and Uganda made him look for new allies, combined with Rwanda's decision to replace Kabila with a new puppet led to the Second Congo War. The Second Congo War lasted longer and saw the creation of many armed groups in East-Congo, both self-defense units and state sponsored rebellions. With the 2003 peace agreements the country was officially at peace but during the transition period there were still many incentives for the existence of armed groups.

The theories that try to explain the causes of conflict are divided in the following subjects: conflict analysis, the state, institutions and democratisation, social-economic factors, culture and ethnicity, ethnicity and mobilisation and the role of armed groups in East-Congo.

Out of the general theory the most useful ones were chosen and applied to the East-Congo case. These theories are supported by the expert interviews.

In conflict analysis we use the 'level-of-analysis' framework to explain the regional setting and establish that the ethnic groups should be considered minorities according to Gurr.

State, institutions and democratisation goes deeper on the declining state influence. How the government has failed to provide almost all of the political goods expected of a government and the relationship between rivals to authority and loss of state influence. Furthermore the loss of legitimacy and consequences of democratisation without solid institutions is described, both leading to civil unrest.

In social-economic factors the impact of a economically declining region with little economic opportunity and chance for advancement are described as factors make recruitment for armed groups easier. There is hardly a alternative to earn a living next to joining of an armed group. Land and the use of land are also described as an important issue, which is at the base of the social insecurity in the region.

Culture and ethnicity describes the relation between power, economic advancement ethnicity. It explains how ethnicity became a regulator of society and how the people of East-Congo recreate this on a daily basis.

Ethnicity and mobilisation is closely related to culture and ethnicity and shows how ethnicity is being used to recruit and mobilise new members for the armed groups.

The last subject; the role of armed groups in East-Congo shows how the armed groups have been ingrained in society. How in general armed groups start out as a self-defense unit but later use their power to seize land, mining sites and political power. The pressure on communities to support the armed groups and how they control a large part of the economy through protection, finance and investment. It also explains how the creating of armed groups is being used to create a voice and gain access to the political system. All of this helps to sustain the violent political system.

Contents

1 Research goals and methodology

1.1 Goals and objectives

This will be a theoretical research focusing on causes of conflict and using the East-Congo case. It will contribute to analyses of the present situation in East-Congo and test and apply the available theories on the case. This case of East-Congo is constantly evolving and took a turn for the worse in the spring of 2012 with a new surge of violence and violent uprising of M23.

The results of this research will help policymakers in analyzing the situation. Leading to a better use of resources to bring this troubled region a step closer to a stable peacebuilding situation that will give the people of East-Congo hope for a better future.

The goal of this research is to check and use the current theories on causes of conflict on the East-Congo case. Through a situation analysis of the present conditions, the different theories will be investigated to see how they allow armed groups to keep functioning in the current institutional context. The most relevant theories will be applied to the case. Through this theory the case will be further explained.

There are many ways to look at the causes of conflict and many different academics mix and match the causes and theories when they analyze a case-study. I will test the different views and priority models that have been developed on the East-Congo case. Keeping in mind that a broader societal context creates a frame and view that possibly needs to be taken into consideration to properly test the theories. If possible I will try to simplify the use of the theory and models available.

This research deliberately has a focus on factors, not players. Although it is inevitable that some or more players and their roles will be described when it comes to East-Congo, the goal of this research is to explain the existence of armed groups. With a strong focus on factors that are relevant throughout East-Congo. The focus of this research is also on the factors that allow armed groups to form and sustain their organisations.

1.2 Research question

I have separated a main question and several sub questions to answer the goal of this research. The main question deliberately uses broad terms not to exclude important factors in this research. The sub questions have a more narrow definition and can be answered more specifically.

Main research question:
Which are the main factors that contribute or allow the rising and sustaining of armed groups in East-Congo?

Sub question:
What are the different theories on social factors as a cause of conflict?
What are the theories and the rise and sustainability of militias and rebel groups?
How do the above questions apply to the East-Congo case?

Supporting research question:
Is the institutional and societal context of any consequence on the impact of social factors as a cause of conflict in East-Congo?

1.3 Operationalization

The situation of East-Congo will be put in a case using the information available. The case East-Congo needs to be described as clear as possible. This will be the reference point for the conclusion and used for the expert interviews.
This case will then be tested with the new data and possible change of situation that the M23 had. Theories will applied and tested to the new situation and experts will be interviewed.

It would be ideal if these expert interviews could be complemented with a field study. The available information and case of East-Congo could then be checked and confirmed on site. The implications could be then visually checked and the inhabitants of that area personally interviewed. Unfortunately due to insufficient time and funds this will not be possible.

The case will clearly describe the main subjects: a explanation of the case of East-Congo. And the current theory on causes of conflict and how they influence the functioning of armed groups. Several theories and discourses will be used to cover different angles in the theories on East-Congo. All will be analyzed and reviewed and finally checked to see if they still apply to the current situation.

1.4 Methodology

A case study will be done and set up as a single instrumental case study. The issue: can current theory on causes of conflict explain the rise and sustainability of armed groups, will be tested with a bounded case of East-Congo and used to answer this question. This is based on Creswell's (2007, p.74) description of a case study.
The main question: 'Which are the main factors that contribute or allow the rising and sustaining of armed groups', can be tested in many different cases. However many literature needs to be consulted and to fully understand and test the theories it better to test them on a single case. In the future this could possibly be extended to another case, which has the added benefit that the theories can be cross-checked. However it will be hard to find a case similar to East-Congo and this is best left to future research.

This research will have an in-depth focus, the information and results are solely focused on East-Congo. The narrow focus of this research does not allow the results to be used for other geographical areas. The benefit of this method is the in-depth knowledge of the case and situation that can be achieved. Many different sources can be used to research the case. The following sources are planned to be used: expert interviews, written data and visual data. By using different sources to explain the same case, a source triangulation is created, which increases the reliability of the research results.

The theories that try to explain the causes of conflict or try to find the important factors that contribute to conflict will be reviewed. The most useful theories will be used and applied to the case. The results of the applied theories on the case and its conclusions will be checked with experts. Hopefully the interviews with experts can contribute and confirm the applied theories to the case.

Expert interviews have the benefit that they will know the situation, know the case and can give feedback, their views and opinions on the theories.
By written and visual data I mean the literature that is available on East-Congo in articles, journals, media, documentaries, books, photos and films. The combination of the sources will be added to the theory and conclusions.

The reason for choosing the case study, compared to the narrative research or the ethnography, is that this research will focus not on a social group per se, but a regional problem, with many different social groups and individuals. In this situation the case study seems more appropriate. Due to complexity of the case it will be easier to familiarize yourself with the theories and their effects on the case. This is another benefit of the case study, the in-depth focus and expertise it creates on a single area or case.

2 Terminology and the Congo-case

Figure 1: Democratic Republic of Congo

2.1 Explanation and use of terminology

To create a clear image of the case and meaning of terms used in the research I will explain a few key terms below and how they will be used in the research.

War and conflict, I will use both terms to signify the same situation. To explain the situation I will use Levy's definition of war: which is the coordinated use of violence. Required that the other side fights back and that a certain threshold of violence is crossed (generally this is one-thousand battle related deaths). When viewing the case of East-Congo the area can be regarded as a conflict area. Although there is a official peace-deal in the region since 2006. Violence and battle related deaths since then have continued. For the use of this research I will therefore label this area as a conflict area.

Militias and rebel organisations, Militias and rebel organisations are two different terms that are frequently used to represent the same groups in East-Congo in different articles.
Militias are grassroots organisations that are brought to life to protect a group of people from violence. Militias are by definition armed to counter a armed threat. The shape and size of a militia can take many different forms.

Rebel organisations are organisations that defy state authority and have chosen to oppose the state. Militias are as a rule not rebel organisations, as these are typically formed when the state cannot provide its primary political good: protection against violence for its citizens.

Although some militias turn to rebel organisations when state authority has returned is returning and they refuse to acknowledge the legitimacy of the state. In this case a militia turns in to a rebel organisation. Key in the definition of rebel or no rebel, is defiance of the state as legitimate authority.

Social factors, the most common and recurring social factors in the conflict theories are: religion, ethnicity, economic situation and status, education and political system. These will be the main factors in trying to find explain the case of East-Congo. Theories based on these factors will be examined and used in this research.

Institutional and societal context are used to explain the life world of the East-Congolese. This will be further narrowed down to the specific availability of institutions and state resources.

By *state resources* are meant the political goods a state is meant to provide. I will use the definition of Rotberg (2007, p. 83) which is also used in the failed state index.

The most important political good is security, the state monopoly of violence and human security. Other political goods are effective rule of law, political freedom, economic opportunity. And education, health services, commercial and communication infrastructure, and empowering of civil society (Rotberg, 2007, p. 83).

By *institutions* are meant the established and recognised organisations or foundations that are dedicated to serve society. Institutions are part of the political goods state need to provide according to Rotberg (2007, p. 83). These are the effective rule of law trough a fair justice system. Political freedom, which allows grievances to discussed and is open to all parties and sides.

East-Congo, by this term I mean the geographic location of the North and South-Kivu provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Banyarwanda are Congolese with Rwandan ancestry living in North-Kivu (Autesserre, 2010)
Banyamulenge are Congolese with Rwandan ancestry living in South-Kivu (Autesserre, 2010)

2.2 The Congo-case

Figure 2: the Kivu provinces

To understand East-Congo you need to know its history and its place in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The history that has created present day East-Congo should not be ignored and plays a big part in today's society of East-Congo. It has shaped their image, perspectives, motivations and much more.
Both Pronk and van Leeuwen recognize the importance of history, van Leeuwen goes further and argues that we don't realize how important the legacy of the past is.

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The case of East-Congo will be further elaborated and explained below using theories from several sources. These theories will be used to complement and understand the decisions that have been made and to understand the history that leads to present day East-Congo. Theory and history are interwoven to create a chronological order of events as much as possible.

A brief history of the Congo up to independence
DRC was colonized by the Belgian Monarch King Leopold (Hochschild, 1998) and his claim was acknowledged in 1885 during the conference of Berlin. A historical event where the European powers divided the African continent amongst themselves. King Leopold ran the Congo Free State as his personal fiefdom. The brutalizing and terrorization of King Leopold on the local population led to the now world famous novel: Heart of darkness by Joseph Conrad. Describing the ruthless way the king acquired its riches and resources from the local people, amassing a fortune in the process. Up until 1908. At this time the colony was formerly handed over to the Belgian government after international pressure on the way the Congo Free State was run. The Belgian government ran the colony until its claim of independence which came suddenly on 1960. Political and internal strife led to the dismissal of the its first prime minister in the same year. A period of turmoil followed which lead to the Coup and installation of Mobutu as its dictator from 1965 all the way to 1997.

Congo during the Mobutu-era and the cold war
Mobutu had renamed the country to Zaire in 1971. Became a capitalist ally of the US during the cold war and build a personality culture around his new name and identity Mobutu Sese Seko. Becoming one of Africa's notorious and archetypical dictators. During his rule he systematically ground down the state and its services. Until at the end hardly any services you expect from a state were supplied in DRC. Even the military was worn down to the point that they could no longer combat a rebel organisation supported by the miniature neighboring country Rwanda.

Complete control over one's entire sovereign territory has always been hard for the centralised African states (Thomson, 2010, p. 177). Failed states such as DRC typically only control a capital city or key parts of the country (Rotberg, 2007, p. 86). Corruption is fundamental in failed states (Rotberg, 2007, p. 87). When an independent media and effective rule of law have been overturned, the state loses its accountability to its people. It is a tendency of corrupt state rulers and dictators to surround themselves with family and their ethnic allies more and more. And in the process, forget or neglect their responsibility to their people (Rotberg, 2007, p. 92). These events perfectly describe the gradual loss of influence of president Mobutu. Over the years he increasingly relied on members of his own family and tribe as closest advisors and for his personal security. As can be read in chapter 2.2 Mobutu increasingly relied on client-patron networks which explain his reliance on tribe and family members. And a practical example of the failed state theories.

At the end of the 1970s informal trading network started to expand and decrease state income in response to the predatory state of Zaire (Vlassenroot, 2008).
Increasingly at the country's periphery various rival centres of authority were able to secure local resources and trade, challenging the state (Vlassenroot, 2008, p. 4). Leading to the fact that the Mobutu regime started losing control at the edges of the country which progressed further inwards over the years.
It is when states start to lose control that the warlords move in to take their place. Civil wars take advantage of the losses of legitimacy and underlying security weaknesses of the failed state (Rotberg, 2007, p. 86). As explained above the loss of state influence, which started at the edges of the country and worked its way inwards made room for new agents. This was the case in East-Congo, where the state was replaced by new forms and agents. For example warlords, militias and rebel organisations.

Mobutu had corroded his own state in order to prevent any challengers to his power from arising (Stearns, 2011, p. 126). After the political erosion and corruption destroyed the state and its functions, Mobutu was only able to ward of military challenges using his cold war allies (Stearns, 2011, p. 7).
Levy further elaborated on the end of the Cold war as a cause of conflict (Levy, 2007, p. 31) and the loss of support in this bipolar system. Both sides viewed the Cold War as a zero-sum game, which motivated each side to support as many states as they could. DRC during the Mobutu-era could count on the considerable support of the United States, which firmly held him in power.
With the end of the Cold War, Mobutu lost the support of the US which severely weakened his position. He lost legitimacy as head of state and was no longer able to control the rebellious factions at the outer rims of his empire.
Not only did the US stop supporting the Mobutu regime, but the US and the USSR both stopped funding proxy wars and rebel groups to destabilize the other. With the end of the Cold War, this cause of conflict evaporated (Ayoob, 2007, p. 100). This meant that rebel groups could no longer find support in the opposing superpowers. Where for example Laurent Kabila could formerly count on the support of China, Cuba and the USSR he now had to look for new sponsors. Leaving not only the

Mobutu regime but also several rebel groups without support. Using Levy's power transition theory, this left room for a new power in the region.

Ayoob on the other hand points out that with the end of the Cold War, the fundamental problems that cause conflict have been exposed (Ayoob, 2007, p. 96). No longer able to use the socialist or capitalist ideology, rebel organisations had to create a new message and image to mobilise people. Since early colonial times, the Kivu provinces in East-Congo have served as a refuge for the losers of Rwandan power politics. The uncertain place of Rwandan refugees in East-Congo has made them vulnerable to political manipulation (Fofona, 2009). When Mobutu granted citizenship to a large part of the Banyarwanda, some local authorities denied them this right. Which further separated the Banyarwanda identity in DRC. When Habyarimana, the then president of Rwanda, intervened on behalf of the Hutus in East-Congo, this was supported by Mobutu who send in the army for support. This only widened the gap between the Banyarwanda and the other ethnic groups in East-Congo. A rift that would later be used as a source for mobilisation of different rebellions.

Another leftover from the Cold War, is the large quantity of weapons that are available in weak states. Brought in by the former superpowers to either support a regime or undermine it by supporting rebel factions (Ayoob, 2007). The large availability of small arms made it possible for rebel organisations to grow and arm themselves rapidly.

All of these factors increase the risk of conflict breaking out in region and laid the groundwork for the First Congo War.

The First Congo War (1996 – 1997)
In the First Congo War the rebel organisation of Laurent Kabila was supported by the Rwandan-Ugandan coalition, which invaded Zaire and overthrew the dictator Mobutu.

The regional ethnic instability was further increased with the influx of Rwandan refugees in East-Congo. After the genocide these were mainly Hutus. And with their approximately two million refugees, they suddenly were a majority in the region. They started creating their own space and massacres on both sides led to ethnically homogenous spaces (Reyntjens, 2009, p. 17). After the genocide the Rwandan refugees along with more than 50,000 armed Rwandan Hutus responsible for the massacres, congregated in large refugee camps located near the border in North and South Kivu. The combatants formed enormous armed groups who based their survival on violence and looting, and used the refugee camps as rear bases from which to launch raids on Rwanda (Autesserre, 2010, p. 47). After the genocide, international donors were supporting the Rwandan refugees, which also included genocidaires, in the camps in Zaire. Feeding them and flying in arms. Giving the defeated Rwandan army the chance to rearm and retrain themselves (Stearns, 2011, p. 50).

Local populations reacted to the threat on their security and stability by forming militias named Mai-Mai (Fofona, 2009).

Within a year after coming to power, the then Vice-president of Rwanda; Kagame was planning a attack on the refugee camps across the border. The new policy of support from the US and the international community to the new Rwanda regime gave them the legitimacy to hunt down the genocidaires and Hutu refugees. Not willing to criticise the new regime gave them the room to follow through with their plan (Stearns, 2011, p. 140).

But with the legacy of French, US and Russian power politics in the region Kagame knew he had to move carefully and find allies. Fortunately for Kagame, Mobutu had angered enough governments to form a broad alliance (Stearns, 2011, p. 51).

Autesserre perceives the threats against the Congolese of Rwandan descent as partial motivations of the two Rwandan invasions of DRC in the '90s (Autesserre, 2010, p. 3). These threats were the result

of a longstanding competition between the self-styled indigenous communities of the Kivus and the Congolese population with Rwandan ancestry.
This grassroots conflict escalated into a national issue after the Congo's independence in 1960, because each camp recruited allies beyond the province and sent representatives to Kinshasa to advance its local agenda (Autesserre, 2010, p.3).

Reyntjens explains the motivation of Rwanda's first action in DRC with the threat of Interahamwe across the border. With no response from the international community or Zaire, Rwanda took it upon themselves to solve this problem by actively supporting a Banyamulenge rebellion.
Uganda was facing similar problems with rebels across their borders, combined with a shared ideology and old friendship ties to Rwanda, they decided to join the cause (Reyntjens, 2005, p. 589).

Here is a example of views expressed of the Ugandan president Museveni's on the situation at the bordercamps: 'we told Mobutu to move the camps from the border. He refused. We told the UN to move the camps. They refused. So we told them we would find a solution ourselves' (Stearns, 2011, p. 51). Confident in the tacit support of the US, Uganda and Rwanda took it upon themselves to solve the problem of the refugee camps across the border of Zaire.

Reyntjens gives several examples of outside influences supporting Rwanda during the First Congo War. The fact that the new rebellion was able to advance so rapidly and arrange and direct support troops and equipment is one of these examples. With several sources mentioning communication stations provided by the US to keep communications between the front and Kigali open. Combined with the use of alleged CIA front operations for weapon supply and medical evacuations all point in the direction of military support from the US to Rwanda (Reyntjens, 2009, p. 67-68). Reyntjens concludes the US involvement or at least approval of Rwanda's actions based on several points during the First Congo War. The support through its diplomatic and military branch in Kigali and the awareness of Kagame's plan to attack the refugee camps in Zaire (Reyntjens 2009, p. 78).

The US support of the Rwandan invasion and the well organised and experienced army supporting the rebellion of Kabila made a strong force. This was not the only success factor, the Zairian state army was in poor shape. Mobutu had corroded his own state in order to prevent any challengers to his power from arising. This eventually turned out to be his downfall as the military was unable to oppose the Kabila rebellion in the First Congo War (Stearns, 2011, p. 126).

The AFDL forces (Kabila's rebellion) were welcomed as liberators during the First Congo War by the local population. The local population explain this sentiment by examples and reasoning of the AFDL, who during that period only hunted the Hutu refugees and left the Congolese to their own. They saw it as a Rwandan affair (Stearns, 2011, p. 134). After the genocide in Rwanda, massacres of huge numbers such as 80.000 seemed small in comparison (Stearns, 2011, p. 140). Once again the world was turning a blind eye to the massacres for the same reasons they supported the invasion in the first place.

The First Congo War ended when the AFDL reached Kinshasa and virtually conquered the entire country with help of his regional allies, Rwanda and Uganda. And with the support of Zimbabwe and Angola. Kabila was made president of the newly named country: the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Second Congo War or the Great African War (1998 – 2003)
Insecure about his position and dependency on Rwanda the new president Laurent Kabila recruited the enemies of Rwanda. Hutu militias, ex-FAR (former Rwandan army during the Hutu-led Habyarimana regime) and Interahamwe into his forces. Leading to the Second Congo War, when

Rwanda and Uganda re-invaded the then named country Democratic Republic of Congo. Their second attempt led to a failure due to the fallout between Rwanda and Uganda. And because they did not inform their erstwhile allies Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia. Who turned on Rwanda and Uganda and chose the side president Kabila. Laurent Kabila was assassinated in 2001 and afterwards succeeded by his son Joseph Kabila, the current president of DRC after being re-elected in 2012.

When things calmed down after the First Congo War, the Hutu rebellion started growing with more attacks on Tutsis in Rwanda in '97 and '98. After three years the Rwandan civil war started again in full (Stearns, 2011, p. 182).
While the Tutsi in the Congolese army were busy hunting ex-FAR and Interahamwe, Kabila decided in '98 to start using these forces for his own. In order to get rid of his dependency on Rwanda and Tutsi forces he turned to their enemies (Stearns, 2011, p. 183).

Rwanda's decision to redo the First Congo War and replace president Kabila with a new puppet. The continued violence at its borders provided a cover of domestic security. Basically the same story used for the First Congo War.
Several miscalculations on the side of Rwanda and Uganda would lead to the Second Congo War, also known as the First African World War.
The first point is the misconception that they could easily redo their actions in the First Congo War and replace Kabila the same way as Mobutu. The second mistake was to not inform their erstwhile allies Angola and Zimbabwe. Their reactions were severely underestimated and they would join the side of Kabila and DRC. Thirdly was the quality of the proxies in DRC, which was significantly lower than during the First Congo War. And finally the sentiment of the Congolese was ignored, where previously they were welcomed as saviours from a dictator. The new invasion faced a more hostile sentiment (Reyntjens, 2005, p. 591).

The RCD rebellion (the new proxy force of Rwanda) of 1999 was military successful but politically failed because of a divided leadership and no single goal nor ideology. Outside the Kivu-province they were unable to gain local support as the local population all saw the organisation as another Rwandan proxy (Stearns, 2011, p. 211).
With the fallout of Rwanda and Uganda in 2000 and the battles in Kisangani they could no longer hold up the image of invasion for domestic security. Many saw the fight over Kisangani as a fight over the diamond trade, but the root of the fighting was just as tightly linked to personality and regional politics (Stearns, 2011, p. 237).

During the Second Congo War, in the year 2000 and 2001 the Rwandan profit for Coltan mined in DRC alone was estimated at 150 million dollar. Compared to the annual budget of Rwanda which was about 380 million this was a fair share. President Kagame described the Rwandan involvement as self-sustaining. Official military budget was about 55 million, but estimated expenses by the International institute for security studies estimated this about 135 million (Stearns, 2011, p. 300). Thus the income of the war paid for the war itself and contributed a fair share to the annual budget.

While the First Congo War was about getting rid of the refugee camps and getting rid of Mobutu, the Second Congo War was about business (Stearns, 2011, p. 297). This shift was visible everywhere, which Stearns elaborated from a interview with a Congolese pilot. During the Second Congo War he flew soldiers into mining fields and flew out raw ores (Stearns, 2011, p. 297).
The Kabila government during the Second Congo War financed themselves by selling concession to several parties including Zimbabwe for support. While Kinshasa was selling concessions, so was Kigali. They sold Congolese minerals to fund their struggle (Stearns, 2011, p. 296). The overall

discourse on the first and Second Congo War was that the control of resources across Rwanda's border trough use of proxy militias was a key motivator for invasion.

By 2001 the frontline of the war had stabilised in DRC, but most of the fighting still took place in East-Congo. Local Mai-Mai militias were formed in response to Rwandan occupation. Who together with the Hutu militias were supplied by president Kabila. They were not strong enough to oust Rwanda, but made Rwanda lose its legitimacy. With all the weapons available the region became highly militarized. Discontented and unemployed youth joined militias to gain an income through looting and taxation. Disputes normally settled peacefully were now sometimes solved by violence (Stearns, 2011, p. 250).
To counter the Mai-Mai and Hutu militias Rwanda responded by supporting other militias and rebel organisations in East-Congo. By 2002 Rwanda, Uganda and DRC all had several proxies fighting for them in East-Congo (Stearns, 2011, p. 251).
  The country was divided among the many warring factions and even within ones area of control the competing armed bands held different areas in a ever-changing pattern (Autesserre, 2010, p. 51). There was no coherence between the Mai Mai militias and between the different Rwandan Hutu rebels for example.

The military success of the RCD rebellion led its forces to the outskirts of Kinshasa. But when Rwandan forces were on the doorstep of Kinshasa, it were the foreign armies of Zimbabwe and Angola that saved Kabila's throne (Stearns, 2011, p. 197). The miscalculations mentioned by Reyntjens above would come to cost the Rwandan alliance dearly. After the intervention of Zimbabwe and Angola, the Rwandan proxy RCD would find itself on the losing side. Ultimately leading to the Sun City peace talks.

Aftermath of the Great African War to present day East-Congo
The East-Congo however continues to be a turbulent region. The many rebel organisations and militias that were formed during the First and Second Congo War were not disarmed. Most found sponsors to continue their struggle or that of their sponsor, leading to proxy wars being fought on Congolese soil. There are currently many different militias and rebel organisations active in East-Congo together with MONUSCO. At this moment the largest UN mission in the world (UN, 2013).

During her research Autesserre regarded Belgium, France, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the representatives of the United States as states most involved in the Congolese peace process. Together with the UN and its peacekeeping mission MONUC and later MONUSCO, they and to a lesser extend the EU are seen as key organisations (Autesserre, 2010, p. 34).

With the All-Inclusive Agreement of December 2002, where most parties entered in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), a situation was created that promotes violence (Lemarchand, 2006, p. 13). In this agreement not only were the national armies of the different countries mentioned but also several rebel organisations. Lemarchand refers to the Tull-Mehler thesis that power sharing creates a incentive for violence. Aspiring political leaders need only resort to violence to gain access to the system.
This point is further elaborated with a quote from Tull-Mehler (Lemarchand, 2006, p. 17) when Western powers incorporate effective insurgencies into the national government.
Which then becomes a motivator for other rebel groups to become noticed and part of the power-sharing system.
Others argue that the failure to include possible spoilers, when critically important players where left out, are the cause of violence (Lemarchand, 2006, p. 13).

"Incorporation rather than exclusion is seen as the key to conflict resolution. As exclusion, rather than greed alone, is the key factor behind most African conflicts, it is easy to see why power sharing should comment itself as a recipe for peaceful cohabitation (Lemarchand, 2006, p. 2)".
Basically setting the motivational ground for militias and rebel organisations in East-Congo with political aspirations. If a rebel organisation was not part of the peace deal before, but had political aspirations and power ambitions. The theory of Lemarchand and Tull-Mehler explain that they only need to resort to extreme violence, which would grant them attention and ultimately a set on the negotiating table.

Reyntjens in his 2005 article quote's President Bizimungu of Rwanda who states that if Zaire wants to send back the Banyamulenge to Rwanda it should also give Rwanda back the lands that used to be Rwandan. This statement was supported with maps of 'greater Rwanda' combined with the call for a Berlin II conference by Kagame at the time, fuelled the suspicion of Rwandas territorial ambitions (Reyntjens, 2005, p. 589).
The need for Tusti-Rwanda to protect its ethnic citizens, undermines DRC state authority in East-Congo. Rwanda sees the Kivu provinces as their sphere of influence and feels it needs to protect its people (Fofona, 2009).

At the time of writing, the UN mission is the only military force capable of protecting the population from the Congolese army and various other groups. Humanitarian agencies are the only ones able to respond to epidemics and provide basic health care and drinkable water (Autesserre, 2012, p. 204). State presence is still minimal in East-Congo, this void is filled by both aid organisations as well as militias and rebel organisations mentioned above.

After having done many interviews Autesserre finds two constantly recurring themes: the primary of land and other micro-level issues in causing violence and producing anguish, and the unspeakable horrors perpetrated on the Congolese population (Autesserre, 2010, p. 2).
  Autesserre describes that in recent years there has been a focus on three narratives to try to explain the situation in DRC. To get this forgotten conflict back on the agenda it had to be simplified to these three. Illegal exploitation of primary resources, sexual abuse against women and girls and reconstructing state authority (Autesserre, 2012). This simplification of the problem has helped aid organisations explain the problem and get funding, but this has also helped in overlooking all the other problems.
This simplification has many causes, from the few minutes the problem needs to be explained in the media to the short memos written for briefings. Combined with the fact that the information available on the problems of DRC are usually too narrow (Autesserre, 2012).
Academics and local population point to other sources of income for rebel organisations. Estimates show that conflict minerals only provide about eight percent of in the income. Other sources named are cattle disputes, charcoal, timber, drugs and taxation at checkpoints (Autesserre, 2012, p. 211). While the focus here lies on conflict minerals, there are still a large number of primary resources on this list. Therefore it remains a point of interest.
When in 2010 and 2011 the ban on conflict minerals came into effect in DRC, this only worsened the problem. As this ban was not accompanied with political, economic, military and social reforms there was no incentive for the government to tackle this problem (Autesserre, 2012, p. 213). This only drove the problem further underground and away from the legal circuits that we are able to monitor. The focus on the sexual violence problem in DRC has created a situation where rebel organisations specifically use this form of violence to get attention (Autesserre, 2012, p. 217).
The focus on state building comes for some part on need of diplomats and aid organisations to work with counterparts in DRC. Which they then see as the first need to solve the conflict. This idea is also

supported by NGOs and church structures who have been providing services that the state is responsible of and see this as a good exit strategy (Autesserre, 2012, p. 219).

The problem with this strategy is that the Congolese state remains a predatory structure. A source to accumulate wealth trough and a legal way of looting for state officials. To support and use these security forces is simply removing one group of perpetrators with another (Autesserre, 2012).

Instead of funding programs and providing resources, aid organisations and donors should consider paying state official salaries to prevent looting. Work with a performance based reward system and not use security forces until they are properly trained (Autesserre, 2012, p. 222).

3 Theories

To try to understand and explain the case of East-Congo several theories will be reviewed and applied. Several of these theories are explained below as a starting point for further research. These theories will be further expanded, tested and cross referenced with other available theories on the subject.

3.1 Theory on analysing conflict

There are some general important theories that help analyse a conflict which should not be overlooked. Some of these theories are described below.

Levy introduces a few key concepts when analysing war and conflict. One concept is that there is no constant factor, not a single explanation or ground rule that explains conflict (Levy, 2007, pp. 20,21) . To explain a conflict you therefore have to look for multiple explanations.
The variety and complexity of the typology conflicts suggests that there is no simple single causal explanation (Steward & Brown, 2007, p. 221).

In his research Sawyer finds two main topics in the literature on intrastate conflict. One is on the source of conflicts, the other on conflict resolution. As sources of conflict these are typically classified as: identity conflicts, ethnicity, religion or space motivated, resource conflicts, linked to superpower rivalry or its aftermath and governance failure (Sawyer, 2004, p. 439). But Sawyer finds that these classifications do not always relate a deep understanding of the conflicts, African conflicts typically reveal complex patterns in which issues of identity, greed and consequences of a changed global order may all be interlinked in contexts laden with injustice, predation and repression. The challenge is to sort out these elements and understand their salience in each conflict situation and at any given time (Sawyer, 2004, p. 439).

It is important to remember that it is organisations, not groups, that facilitate action. It is usually a organisation that claims to speak for a group (King, 2007, p. 117).

The 'level-of-analysis' framework of Kenneth Waltz is another concept which can be applied to conflicts. This framework uses a individual, nation-state and international level to analyse a conflict (Levy, 2007, p. 21).
On the international level there are two main realist theories: balance-of-power theory and 'power transition theory' (Levy, 2007, pp. 25,26) who explain the start of a conflict. The balance-of-power theory explains that great powers will always try to create a balance using alliances to prevent a single hegemonic dominance. This theory believes that a concentration of power is most likely to cause conflict. The current world order has the United States as the dominant superpower, according to this theory this will mean that the other great powers will start forming alliances to topple the U.S. as the leading superpower. Possibly leading to conflict at this point.
 The power transition theory has the same foundation, great powers try to find a balance in power. But the power transition theory believes that at equal level of power is most likely to result in conflict. This theory predicts that the dominant power will ultimately decline and fight for it's position when it feels threatened. Most likely when the former power is overtaken by the new leader.

These theories are usually not applied to civil wars, but given the history of DRC and the African Wars which involved several nations, it is of importance to mention these theories. The anarchic nature of state in DRC makes this theory available to apply this to internal power struggles as well. East-Congo is a region where state influence is minimal. The area is rife with militia's, rebel groups and official government troops who act similarly. This makes the situation similar to the world order in a sense that there is no higher authority or construction to arrange these affairs. There is a constant shift of alliances between the government, the U.N. and the militia's.

On a nation-state level of analysis, (Levy, 2007, pp. 28,29) Levy refers to the differences in states that have been created in the 20th century and those created earlier. For example the European states that were created earlier are strong enough to survive, otherwise they would have perished long ago. States created in the 20th century, mainly former colonies lack this survival of the fittest process. These states are not based on resources and political organisation. These conditions have led to state failure in some of the newly created states, which includes DRC. They did not have the chance to build a solid political system and institutions. The borders of DRC and its inhabitants where created by a outside power, in this case Belgium.

King refers to Stathis Kalyvas's argument that "the real drivers of violent conflict lie at the intersection of 'master narratives' about violence and the everyday concern of local elites". But these narratives are not strong enough to mobilise entire groups. It is when these master narratives intersect with local concerns when violence can be sustained (King, 2007, p. 122).
For the master narrative to be successful, the marketing of the narrative is important to attract much needed elites and others to the cause (King, 2007).

Raeymaekers, Menkhaus & Vlassenroot argue that violence is not always and solely equals anarchy and chaos, but that this can also herald a profound process of social change (Raeymaekers, Menkhaus & Vlassenroot, 2008, p. 8). Think of Europe in the 17th century, it is during these violent times that the nation-states we know today were created.
In East-Congo the new non-state actors have sometimes made arrangements with the state regarding management of local security, public services and resources. Even in the midst of crisis and warfare, Africans are trying to cope with their 'messy' environments (Raeymaekers et al., 2008, p. 8). Crisis situations like wars or political turmoil cause massive suffering, but can also potentially contain the germ of new political orders (Raeymaekers et al., 2008, p. 10).

It is King who addresses the relations of power within the several stages of conflict. According to King in different stages in a conflict both sides make decisions based on perception of one's own and the enemies relative power. 'Power' can mean many things, from the number of fighters in the field to the image and support of a party or group (King, 2007, p. 115).
Power of a organisation and the decisions based on this is also related to costs. All organisations have some form of costs to continue their struggle. These costs will influence the decision when decision makers regard past and future costs. It are often the past costs that justify the continuation of a struggle. To make up for past costs, which can come in many forms. From grievances to income loss or death of leaders and friends (King, 2007, p. 120).

The danger of spoils politics is marked in its strong desire to retain power. The loss of power is regarded as zero-sum. With the loss of power, leads to the loss of resources and a threat to wealth and survival. This feeds the willingness to defend ones position in power at all costs (Allen, 1999, p. 381).

After analysing cultural norms and discourse regarding DRC and East-Congo Autesserre concludes that the high amount of violence in East-Congo is regarded as normal. Since it is regarded as normal and not a imminent problem prevention was not a priority (Autesserre, 2010, p. 29).

Diplomats and UN staff members usually interpreted shocking violence as a confirmation of their beliefs that Congolese were violent by nature (Autesserre, 2010, p. 31).

3.2 Theory on state building and state failure

Next follow several theories that help explain the failed state, including a small reference to the failed state index on which DRC currently holds the second position. Can we view the progress and society of East-Congo by simply checking these points? The western model of a failed state can indeed explain much of the troubles that the people of East-Congo face. But as can be read in the theories, shadow governance and grassroots societal structures have been set up to compensate for the loss of state influence. These theories need to be further investigated before a conclusive answer can be given for this case.

The failed state index categorizes nation-states in strong, weak, failing and collapsed states based on the ability to deliver high quality and quantity of political goods. The most important political good is security, expressed in the state monopoly of violence and human security. Other political goods are a effective rule of law, political freedom, and economic opportunity. Together with education, health services, commercial infrastructure and communication infrastructure, and empowering of civil society (Rotberg, 2007, p. 83).
  On the latest failed state index DRC ranks as number two of the world, just below Somalia which is consider the only collapsed state today (ffp.statesindex.org25.05.2013). DRC is unable to provide the political goods mentioned above and has failed to do so for several years.
  Rotberg states that most of the intrastate hostilities are within failed states. And that failed states always lead to civil war. Therefore if state failure could be reduced or eliminated, this would prevent many conflicts (Rotberg, 2007, p. 85). It might be true that state failure will remove a major source of conflict. However many causes of conflict contribute to state failure. State failure is a broad term and need to be used carefully when this is brought up as cause of conflict. Many of the causes of conflict overlap or are intertwined with state failure.

The difference between state making in the First World and Third World is that the First World has had the time and freedom to hammer out their institutions, legitimacy, boundaries, etc. What the First World nations took several centuries, we now expect the Third World to complete in decades (Ayoob, 2007, p. 98). Because the popular demands and state interests are relatively in line in First World states, they can afford to have liberal standards. For Third World nations this is a lot harder, since they did not have had the time to bring state and population to the same shared levels we enjoy in the First World nations (Ayoob, 2007, p. 101).

Weber identifies three pure sources of legitimacy: traditional, charismatic and legal-rational authority. Traditional legitimacy rests on a society's culture and history. Charisma is when individuals choose to follow and obey simply because of the leader's personality or the ideals the leader imparts. Legal-rational is provided by liberal democratic institutions. This is government based on a social contract. Citizens obey the state because state institutions have been specifically constituted to serve their interests (Thomson, 2010, p. 110).

The crisis of accumulation according to Thomson comes about with the failure of the re-investment of the economic surplus, which are key for further development. After independence, capitol was wasted because of erroneous policy choice. African governments concentrated too heavily on overambitious projects to create import-substitutions and expanding institutions of the state. This came at the expense of the development of the agricultural sector (Thomson, 2010, p. 217). This lead to a situation where access to state institutions became the main conduit of power and wealth.

Employment in civil service and parastatals was used as rewards and sometimes one of the few ways of advancement and earning a income (Thomson, 2010, p. 218).

The problem with the one-party state was that, in practice, this system reduced the link between state and civil-society and between governors and governed generally. The main function of a party in a political system is to act as an intermediary. Leaders use party structures in order to channel their demands through to the political elite. Where leaders constantly fail to respond to the demands of society, then legitimacy is lost (Thomson, 2010, p. 114).

This form of government no longer had a legal-rational order, and African leaders had to rely on client-patron networks for legitimacy. The problem during the 80s and 90s was that there were no longer enough resources to sustain these networks (Thomson, 2010, p. 221).

Mobutu's survival strategy caused the disintegration of state authority in East-Congo, which reduced the opportunities to resolve grassroots conflicts. And his changing support of communities to stay in power fuelled existing tensions (Autesserre, 2010, p. 142).

Thomson refers to Naomi Chazan that on a local level, where the state gradually withdrew civil society stepped into the breach. Communities built and ran their own schools, tax collection and militias (Thomson, 2010, p. 223).

These are all survival strategies, in this case on communal level, but on individual level people also take matters into their own hands. Petty crime, banditry and other criminal activity flourish with state failure (Thomson, 2010, p. 224).

In the final throws of predatory states, when warlord politics emerge, rulers abandon the whole idea of administrating a state for collective good. Instead they focus on the institutions that serve the elites private interest and other strategic and economic important areas (Thomson, 2010, p. 230).

It is when groups are threatened by change but still have power that they are compelled to take a inflexible view (Mansfield & Snyder, 2007, p. 170). This tends to happen when states move to democracy. They further argue that it is not authoritarian power but the opposite that leads to war. And further refer to countries such as Great Britain and South Africa as good examples of countries that underwent democratisation successfully based on strong institution.

The most promising sequence for democratisation begins with reforms of the state and the economy, together with limited forms of democratisation (Mansfield & Snyder, 2007, p. 174).

According to Mansfield and Snyder the building of institutions that are needed to make democracy work, should precede elections or else the risk of violence will increase (Mansfield & Snyder, 2007, p. 162). They argue that the effects of democratisation on war will be stronger and more pronounced in countries having less institutional strength and centralisation and refer to their test results to support this theory. They go so far as to claim that democratisation is the initiator of war (Mansfield & Snyder, 2007) in many transiting nations on the way to democracy.

Elections not supported by solid institutions were likely to reignite violence in East-Congo as the supporters of losing candidates would most likely take up arms again (Autesserre, 2010, p. 193). The elections of 2006 in DRC did not give birth to democracy, but competitive autocracy. Which neglected public matters and remained corrupt (Autesserre, 2010, p. 234). The elections did not resolve structural problems which lay at the root of some conflicts (Autesserre, 2010, p. 240).

Raeymaekers et al. start by recognising that the state is one amongst many forces that struggle to maintain the monopoly over the legitimate use of force in East-Congo (Midgal in Raeymaekers et al., 2008, p. 9).

Numerous authors have maintained, violent conflict is often about power and what it represents. Who is the legitimate ruler, who has access to resources and who determines the rules of the game (Raeymaekers et al., 2008, p. 12).

Some of the more obvious transformations of power that have occurred during violent conflict have been the gradual transposition of authority from customary and state agents towards more militarized forms of social control. For example the weakening of traditional authorities who have been replaced by armed and mostly young individuals that have lost out on the advantages of the post-colonial system (Raeymaekers et al., 2008, p. 13).

The situation did not improve after the war in DRC officially ended. Parallel administration and military structures, militias and absence of state authority made the security and justice sector lose all credibility with the population (Autesserre, 2010, p. 71). Autesserre refers to Kalyvas who emphasizes that even with no presence of state authority, social control usually prevents violence (Autesserre, 2010, p. 71).

James Putzel concludes that people find themselves operating in more than one 'rule system', but nonetheless see the reconstruction of a central state as necessary to engage in the difficult task of conflict resolution (Raeymaekers et al., 2008, p. 15).

Extreme cases of exploitive states are sometimes called vampiric states. And for some the only solution to escape this system was to leave its territory. In reality, however only a small minority chose to leave. Obstacles and ties to the local area proved strong, but this did not mean they gave up exit strategies entirely (Thomson, 2010, p. 222).

The relationship between civil war and state weakness is circular. Civil wars tend to break out in weak states, while further reducing the state capacity to provide political goods. The further erosion of the state and loss of security will make ethnic, political or local groups turn to other providers of security. This could very well mean that they turn to warlords or are now forced to support militias (Ayoob, 2007, p. 105). Ayoob mentions Alex de Waal who argues that the loss of state revenue makes it harder for the state to finance and sustain their armies. The state army in return turns to looting and other forms of financing itself. Practically turning to the same sources of income as rebel groups as these are the only available means to finance their operations.

Without an effective rule of law, disputes are settled by violent means. Respect for national and provincial institutions, tolerance of dissent and difference and a independent media represent and control political freedom (Rotberg, 2007, p.86).

3.3 Theory on social factors and causes of conflict

Next follow several theories that cover the social factors that allow a conflict to happen. Not all theories are consistent and most stand on their own. Further investigation and application to the East-Congo case will reveal which ones are useful and how they work together to explain the case.

Collier's theory that civil wars only happen when they are financially viable is based on his research and statistical analysis. Out of which he concludes that economic conditions, not inequality, lack of democracy, etc. affect the risk of civil war (Collier, 2007, p. 197). In a less extreme view, it can be said that the cause of the organisation is irrelevant. What matters is if the organisation is economically viable (Collier, 2007, p. 199).

The factors that influence a countries risk of civil war according to Collier's research are: when a substantial share of GDP comes from primary commodities.

Geography of the territory matters, since rebel organisations need a place to hide and organise. History is important as well, as the risk of civil war is much higher in the years after a conflict ended.

Economic opportunities make it harder for rebel organisations to recruit. Together with population growth and economic decline. Steward and Brown refer to David Keen's explanation of personal reasons why young people join rebellions. It offers them and income and opportunities. This is also the reason why wars tend to last longer in countries with low income and poor employment (Steward & Brown, 2007, p. 224).

Ethnic or religious composition matters, but not in a way you would suspect. Diverse countries have less chance of civil war, when one group dominates the risk rises.

The simple principle to keep recruits as alike as possible helps recruitment in a homogenous society, therefore reducing the chance in a ethnic or religious diverse country (Collier, 2007, p. 207). A common history, language, culture or religion helps rebel organisation mobilise and recruit (Steward & Brown, 2007, p. 225).

On the other hand, the lack of democratic rights seems to have no effect on risk percentage (Collier, 2007).

Where state authority is absent, natural resources can be exploited, trade and crops can be smuggled without constraint. And the parties who benefit from state absence will block negotiations as the income from war for those concerned are higher than the profits from peace (King, 2007).

The main causes that make predatory rebellion profitable are dependency on primary resources. Low average income and slow growth of a country (Collier, 2007, p. 205). Primary resource matter as they are the most lootable of all economic activities. Low average income reduces the taxes a government receives and makes their source of income comparable to a possible rebel group (Collier, 2007, p. 206).

Referring back to Thomson in chapter 3.1, he explains that the choices of re-investing economic surplus came at the expense of the agricultural sector. Which led to a situation where access to state institutions became the main conduit of power and wealth. These choices highly influenced the economical climate in DRC after independence and further established the patronage system in DRC.

Access to land has always been crucial in DRC. It is key to survival and a primary means of gaining social capital (Autesserre, 2010, p. 131). As early as the colonial times land ownership has led to formations of militias (Autesserre, 2010, p. 131).

A magistrate based in the Kivus during the '80s did research on the increasing number of murders, in North Kivu especially. He concluded that the main causes were conflicts over land, followed by the gross injustice of court decisions that the losing side did not accept (Autesserre, 2010, p. 133).

During the Mobutu era, land was rewarded for political loyalty, in the Kivus Banyarwanda were the main beneficiaries. Which led to land sales and overlapping claims based on modern and traditional law. This led to further contestation between indigenous and Banyarwanda communities (Autesserre, 2010, p. 136).

Ethnicity and a basic definition of a ethnic group according to Thomson would be: *a community of people who have the conviction that they have a common identity and common fate based on issues of origin, kinship ties, traditions, cultural uniqueness, a shared history and possibly a shared language.* In this sense, an ethnic group is much like the 'imaged community' of the nation. Ethnicity, however, focuses more on sentiments of origin and descent, rather than the geographical imperative of a nation (Thomson, 2010, p. 61).

A culture is a social object. It is not only inside individuals heads (the focus of psychological approaches), but also embedded in social routines, practices, discourses, technologies, and institutions (Adler in Autesserre, 2010, p. 23).

African 'tribes' are a modern social construction. They have largely been formed in the late 19th century and have actually gained importance over the last 150 years. Ethnicity has not retreated in the face of modernisation and remains an important form of social organisation because it continues to serve social, political and economic needs (Thomson, 2010, p. 63).

If a state cannot extend its hegemony over its total territory and over ethnic groups it can negotiate with them instead. Ethnic groups in return relinquish any overt challenge to the state as long as they feel sufficient resource flow into their region.
Hegemonial exchange hinders the logical execution of public policy. It is simply inefficient for resources to be distributed according to demand, rather than need (Thomson, 2010, p. 66, 67).

Brown states that many leaders will use ethnicity to gain popular support. But it is important to distinguish that these conflicts are primarily driven by political and criminal agendas (Brown, 2007, p. 47).

Within the Banyarwanda communities in East-Congo there was unity between Hutu and Tutsi. Bit in the late '80s they started splitting. New arriving Hutus tried to affirm their power and diminish the Tutsi influence (Autesserre, 2010, p. 138).
   The increasing Hutu-Tutsi antagonism led the Hutu Banyarwanda to seize the opportunity and cast themselves as indigenous, because most had arrived before 1960. While most Tutsi arrived in the '60s and '70s (Autesserre, 2010, p. 141).
This led to violence between indigenous Congolese and Hutu and Tutsi Banyarwanda in '91, '92 and '93. Which was only resolved by heavy intervention of Mobutu's forces. The peace was short-lived. After the '94 refugee influx the tensions between all communities rose. Tutsis feared being targeted by Hutu and the indigenous communities radicalized against all Rwandans, both Hutu and Tutsi. Rivalries over land, resources and political power were main reasons for these tensions (Autesserre, 2010, p. 141).

Local tensions in the Kivus repeatedly prompted outbreaks of violence and fed national and regional conflicts. After the war officially ended in 2003 these local tensions continued and fighting over resources and land claims continued. The Congolese of Rwandan descent also feared revenge killings and loss of economic and political power (Autesserre, 2010, p. 4). Which further fuelled violence against Kinyarwanda-speaking minorities of the Kivus and sustained Rwandan Hutu rebels in Congolese territory (Autesserre, 2010, p. 4).
   One explanation for violence during the transition period in the Kivus was because of hit-and-run raids by the Rwandan army against Rwandan rebels and spoiler groups supported by Rwanda and Uganda. The three main reasons were: security concerns over rebel groups, exploitation of natural resources and a sense of duty towards ethnic kin by Rwanda (Autesserre, 2010, p. 59).

3.4 Theory on mobilisation and motivation
And finally there are theories that try to explain the motivation of people in conflict areas, of its leaders and others. The possibly relevant theories for East-Congo can be found below.

Most communal groups seek material and political gains, but one cannot ignore the cultural or religious identity of groups as a simple by-product (Gurr, 2007, p. 131).
Religious or ethnic presentations of conflict can be a powerful source of mobilisation and unity. But we need to look past the ethnicity or religion to find the causes (Steward & Brown, 2007, p. 222).
When mobilizing a group, the organisations that step into the breach and provide food, security and other goods where governments fail, tend to be more successful.
   The focus on elites instead of more local populations is supported by the theory that it are mostly elites who incite ordinary people to violence. When left alone they would most likely be at peace with one another (Autesserre, 2010, p. 44).
   The four main reasons why culturally distinct groups rebel against the state are: salience of identity, incentive for action, group's capacity for collective action and available opportunities (Gurr, 2007, p.

137). A group's capacity for action depends on its geographic concentration, pre-existing organisation and their ability to overcome internal factions and cleavage. When factionalism is high, the introduction of democracy is more likely to lead to violence than a pathway to peace (Gurr, 2007).

Different kinds of groups choose different strategies. Nationalists usually seek exit, minorities access. In open political systems political leaders usually pursue these goals peacefully. It is when this choice is not available that groups are more likely to resort to violence (Gurr, 2007).
Over the years millions of people have crossed borders for many reasons. While immigrants contribute to economic growth, they also pose security problems and create diasporas (Gurr, 2007, p. 136).
  In the pre-colonial past, if a community wished to escape a certain political authority, it simply took off and left. With the ready availability of land it was easier to escape than to fight, which reduced internal conflict (Thomson, 2010, p. 11).

Mobutu used ethnic tension to sow dissention and stay in power. Furthermore he encouraged his troops to loot the scapegoats instead of paying them (Autesserre, 2010, p. 56).
By supporting the Congolese of Rwandan descent, Mobutu encouraged resentment from the 'indigenous' communities, which he later reversed. With the decision made by the National Sovereign Conference in 1991, which Mobutu had established to consider potential political reform, the Banyarwanda representatives were rejected. Which put indigenous communities in the best political position and made both sides fear for loss of power and control of land. Many indigenous and Banyarwanda communities formed their own tribal militias to protect themselves (Autesserre, 2010, p. 140).

Diasporas are becoming a growing source of support for groups (Gurr, 2007, p. 150).
Diasporas matter as they are capable of funding rebellions without suffering the consequences of war (Collier, 2007, p. 210).
  Ever since Rwandan Hutu militias crossed the border in 1994, they began collaborating with various Congolese armed groups and professed their desire to regain power in Rwanda, by military means if politics failed. Though they were hunted and decimated by the Rwandan army during the war, they still numbered around 7,000 to 10,000 combatants. But only a handful of them had organized and planned the genocide. Most of them arrived in DRC when they were young; they grew up as refugees, and used violence because they had no other means (Autesserre, 2010, p. 60-61).

Both Laurent and Joseph Kabila used ethnicity to gain local support in the Kivus. Calling on the Mai Mai and indigenous communities to slaughter the Rwandan invaders, both Hutu and Tutsi. Which eventually led to the point that Congolese people blamed Rwandans and Congolese with Rwandan ancestry for all the problems in DRC (Autesserre, 2010, p. 145). Igniting further violence against Rwandans and Congolese with Rwandan ancestry.
  In some areas Hutu Banyarwanda were able to ally themselves with local militias, which marginalized and radicalized Tutsis in Congo even further (Autesserre, 2010, p. 163).
Most Tutsis in South Kivu saw a Tutsi military presence as the only way of preventing retaliation and maintaining control over land and politics in their own regions (Autesserre, 2010, p. 167).
  The tensions between communities remained extremely high during the transition, up to a point that for example Hunde militias feared disarming themselves meant reprisals of Hutus could not be prevented. And vice versa should the Hunde militias become more powerful than the Hutus in that region they would immediately take revenge (Autesserre, 2010, p. 163).

By disregarding the popular perception of rebels as protest motivated groups fighting against injustice, Collier views them as a form of organised crime. Using public relations and a cause to style their rebellion (Collier, 2007, p. 198). It is in the rebel organisations best interest to use this created image, as they need this to motivate their soldiers to kill and to attract income and attention to keep the organisation alive.

According to Allen, violence may be the new norm. No longer a means to an end but the goal itself. That violence has become self-reproducing. This is based on the new use of violence in conflict, which is directed largely at civil groups instead of the opposition. Sometimes even leading to a genocide (Allen, 1999, p. 369). Which he describes in his new form of warfare and violence. Whose features are a heightened intensity, ubiquity of violence within states, increased risk of interpersonal violence, changes in community level conflict and a turn to civil war.
For previously marginalized groups such as youth and Pygmies the gained power was a strong incentive to perpetuate the violent situation (Autesserre, 2010, p. 151).

During and after the war, Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundian continued to control many mineral-rich areas in the Kivus, often in collaboration with Mai Mai groups (Autesserre, 2010, p. 64).
The control of illegal mining generated violence in three ways. National and foreign actors, as well as their proxies, competed for control of the sites which erupted in violence. The resources gathered enabled all armed groups to finance their war efforts. And all armed groups used extreme violence to gain control over resource-rich areas (Autesserre, 2010, p. 65).
Many Mai Mai militias relied on foreign rebel groups for support. During the war they provide the foreign groups with a need to stay on Congolese soil. And during the transition a reason to keep controlling land, resources and people (Autesserre, 2010, p. 169).

3.5 Theories on the role of armed groups in East-Congo

Below follow several theories that try to explain the rise and continuation of militias in East-Congo. Using the context and theories on the first and Second Congo Wars as background and for creating a environment in which these militias operate.

The difference between bandit groups and guerrilla movements or insurgencies is that the latter are politically committed. They seek to overthrow or replace the political order (Thomson, 2010, p. 224).
  Collier concludes that rebellions happen when they are financially viable. Rebel organisations create group grievances for military effectiveness and politicise the war. Thus it is war that produces the political conflict and not the political conflict that produces war (Collier, 2007, p. 209).

The presence of Hutu, Tutsi and Mai-Mai militias make East-Congo a politically and ethnically unstable region. With president Kabila using Hutu militias as a safeguard and Rwanda supporting Tutsi militias in return (Fofona, 2009). The loss of state failure can still be seen to this day in East-Congo. The many militias that were formed as a form of self-defence during the war are still active in the region. Some have kept to their mission of protecting its people, but most turned in to violent rebel groups. Preying on the local population and setting itself up as the local, shadow governance. The lack of state influence has made it possible for almost every state service to be privatised, filling the void (Reyntjens, 2005).

The withering state capacity did not lead to a void but rather opened opportunities for other actors. Because the level of violence was so high during the Congolese wars a new type of actors was introduced. Armed rebel groups and militias were brought to life. As they recruited along ethnic lines, they tended to mirror local population.

Some only claimed a monopoly of violence, other however tried to forge local and trans-border alliances to increase their local control and consolidate their political and social power (Vlassenroot, 2008, p. 2). In some cases the ambitions of rebel groups went further than protection. Some reorganised public space and created justice mechanisms (Vlassenroot, 2008, p. 11).

However rebel organisations remain dependent on local entrepreneurs for income and vice versa for protection (Vlassenroot, 2008, p. 8).

All of the grassroots fighters, the Mai Mai militias, Rwandan Hutu rebels, the Congolese government and Rwandan Tutsi rebels originally intended to merely protect their kinsfolk, but quickly started using their military might to abuse their own communities, seize land and mining sites or capture political power (Autesserre, 2010, p. 3).

A reason for some to join armed groups was the gaining of power, which in turn could be used to settle old grievances. Exploited communities took revenge when they became armed (Autesserre, 2010, p. 148).

All armed groups also had a large proportion of young people in their ranks. These combatants claimed they wanted to fight the marginalization affecting them since Mobutu's policies had generated a land crisis, the collapse of the educational system, and the destruction of the country's productive capacities (Autesserre, 2010, p. 148).

For some the armed groups provided a sense of 'normality', stability in a turbulent environment. The militia leaders became the new power brokers in the region and most of the time replaced traditional leaders (Autesserre, 2010, p. 149).

The general sentiment during the wars was a risk analysis of participating and working with rebel groups compared to possible losses in trade and society. The RCD-Goma, a rebel group in East-Congo, for example adapted what Tull calls and 'archipelago' approach. Only focussing on mineral rich areas in the Kivu-provinces (Vlassenroot, 2008, p. 5). Even after the wars rebel groups such as RCD-Goma used their strategies of exploitations, barriers and checkpoints to finance their organisation (Vlassenroot, 2008, p. 8).

Vlassenroot points to claims that the self-financing nature of the Congo wars has led to a mutation in the character of violence. That the control of natural resources has shaped the power strategies and goals of organisations (Vlassenroot, 2008, p. 3).

With the example of RCD given by Lemarchand, he points out that greed is indeed a powerful multiplier effect as a cause of conflict. But that the political ideology of the RCD rebels and their concern with the fate of Banyamulenge must not be forgotten (Lemarchand, 2006, p. 18).

As can be read in chapter 2.2, most of the fighting in 2001 took place in East-Congo. Which produced many Mai-Mai militias. But even with support of president Kabila, where not strong enough to oust Rwanda. Leading to a highly militarized region and increased violence.

During the Second War, the RCD-G for example, would organize the local population in self-defence committees after taking over a area. These were then tasked to attack Rwandan Hutu rebels. The Rwandan army used a similar strategy.

The use of proxies, mainly the different Mai Mai militias and rebel groups was high during both wars by all sides. Mai Mai and Rwandan Hutus worked together because they shared a common enemy, the Rwandan army. As a result, numerous regional, national, and local armed groups, organized in complex and often changing patterns of alliances and counter alliances, plagued East-Congo throughout the war (Autesserre, 2010, p. 143).

Military commercialism, a term created by Dietrich (2001) and described by Reyntjens, can be seen as one of the reasons of the continued existence of the militia's. National militaries are used and outsources in return for financial gains and profits. Deployment and withdrawal of troops is heavily

influenced by economic gain. Reyntjens gives the example of RCD-Goma and other Mai-Mai groups who supposedly where integrated in the national army (FARDC) but refused to obey orders. Their loyalties lie with the profits they could reap from the looting of mineral wealth (Reyntjens, 2005).

  Rebel militias with access to valuable resources can sustain their authority, buy more weapons and local legitimacy if needed. It is not in the interest of a militia in East-Congo to give up revenues of millions of dollars per year compared to the advancement of national reconciliation (Thomson, 2010, p. 227). Combatants, in fact, rarely fought with each other, but rather targeted unarmed civilians (Autesserre, 2010, p. 149).

  The peace agreement relied on power sharing. But behind this façade, each component tried to retain extragovernmental military and administrative structures to maintain its territorial control to the furthest extend possible (Autesserre, 2010, p. 54). If it is financially more viable for a government to buy of a rebel organisation, it will probably be profitable for another group to take its place (Collier, 2007, p. 215).

  The need to find a means for survival, which had pushed many civilians to enrol in armed groups during the war, remained salient during the transition. The lack of economic opportunity meant this was still the most profitable option (Autesserre, 2010, p. 154).

  For Mai Mai chiefs the loss of status or return to regular soldiers upon integration was a strong motivation to disrupt the peace process (Autesserre, 2010, p. 152).
To keep their position they threatened traditional chiefs who tried to return to the area (Autesserre, 2010, p. 152).

Ultimately mobility is the last and only strategy left to people in East-Congo. As they tend to move to regions under control of other armed groups for protection, who sometimes did not share their ethnicity or ideology (Vlassenroot, 2008, p. 13)

4 Theories applied to the East-Congo case

4.1 Conflict analysis in East-Congo

I will take the advice of Sawyer, Levy, Steward and Brown to mind when applying and analysing East-Congo. Their most important message is that a complex case such as East-Congo cannot be explained by a single classification or factor.

  Most of the theories mentioned earlier will be part of the more specific analysis. I will use the theory available to analyse the general setting of East-Congo here.

The 'level-of-analysis' framework (Levy, 2007, p. 21) involves many internal and external factors which are further elaborated in the chapter 3.1 Theory on analysing conflict and is therefore not mentioned in this part of the analysis. As already described in chapter 3.1, I will apply the realist theories normally reserved for the international level on East-Congo. Because of the anarchic environment which is similar to the international order.

  The many rebel and militia-groups in East-Congo are known for their shifting alliances, which is the perfect example of the balance-of-power theory. The constant shifting of alliances in which even the government is a player prevents any organisation from emerging as the dominant power in the region. When a dominant power is emerging, violence tends to break out.

This opportunistic behaviour can for a small part explain the situation of today and the lack of progress since the fall of Mobutu. It kept the region in a arms race and kept the focus on the internal struggles.

Gurr's theory (2007) would label the ethnic groups in East-Congo minorities. These groups are all trying to get access to the system by use of force since the option of peaceful political pursuit is no longer available to them. Even the Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge, who are labelled as Congolese of Rwandan origin seek access to the political system in DRC. And choose this above a claim for a separate space or moving to Rwanda. Although DRC has a history of secessionist claims in the past, for example the Katanga province just after gaining independence. And on occasion at later points in history, these claims are not seriously heard today.

The argument of Raeymaekers, Menkhaus & Vlassenroot (2008) of the statebuilding comparisons of present day East-Congo with Europe of the 17th century falls in line with Levy's argument of nation-state creation and analysis. We are indeed comparing states that had more time to develop their political goods with a state that has only very recently been colonised. And a even briefer period of independence. It is possible that the forces at work in East-Congo are trying to form their society in the absence of government rule. But groups with this goal in mind and who commit themselves as such are more an exception than general rule. As pointed out by Autesserre who has done a elaborate field study in this region.

4.2 The state, institutions and democratisation in East-Congo

Statebuilding and state failure

What Ayoob (2007, p. 98) means by the difference in demands and state interest in countries such as DRC are the needs of the government to create a society that is economically effective, integrated and willing to follow the government rule without protest. First of all the government needs a tax income to pay for the services it needs to provide. Setting up a effective economy is not easy and

sometimes decisions need to be made that do not benefit all members of society. But the empowerment of society and the expectations that the people have of governments do not allow them to make radical decisions which could possibly demand sacrifices of society. These differences and decisions made in the past has created a mistrust between the people of East-Congo and the government. For many generations they have been neglected by their government and little faith remains. This has caused civil disobedience and a disregard for state policy and rule of law. The state influence has decreased over the years and is minimal in this area. New government policy and agents are greeted with distrust. The lack of influence starts with the primary political good: security, which the state cannot provide in East-Congo. This shows in the high number of militias and the U.N. presence who have taken over this role.

This is confirmed by Pronk who refers to the importance of the monopoly of violence by the state and the importance of impartial rules. When you don't control violence and this is not bound by an impartial law, then the army becomes a powerbroker of its own (J. Pronk, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).

The state's influence has never been absolute in DRC. As said by Vlassenroot (2008) the state starting losing control. At the end of the '70s informal trading networks started to extend and rival centers of authority where able to gain a foothold. It is when states start to lose control that the warlords move in to take their place (Rotberg, 2007, p. 86).
Ayoob (2007, p.105) describes the circular relationship between civil war and state weakness. The loss of state influence has created opportunity for warlords and militias to arise. And with the further weakening of the state the people of East-Congo have no choice but to turn to these groups for security. Further eroding the state in providing its most important political good: security, therefore losing legitimacy and trust.

As a colony the economic surplus was invested in Belgium. After independence, as in many other African countries this surplus was wasted as described by Thomson (2010, p. 217). Economic opportunities decreased in Congo and leaders and state lost legitimacy. Mobutu was turning Congo into a vampiric state and relied heavily on his client-patron networks. Public interests and other political goods were forgotten. This created a atmosphere of mutual mistrust in East-Congo along with the decreasing state influence and reliance on other survival strategies for the people of East-Congo.

The lack of state authority and legitimacy has created the government into just one of many groups fighting over the legitimate use of force in East-Congo and who is the legitimate ruler in that area. Society has been transformed by these violent groups who due to the lack of state influence control society. Or on occasion represent it. As concluded by Raeymaekers et al. (2008, p.9) most people find themselves under more than one rule system. For example the influence of multiple groups and possibly the state on a single area, all prescribe different rules and taxes. As supported by Autesserre (2010, p.71), who finds a similar situation of parallel administrations and military structures dominating society.
But most of these people see the restoration of the state as the solution to tackle these problems. Which suggests that the people of East-Congo have not given up all hope in their state, leaders and society. Van Leeuwen supports this argument that militias who fill the void of governance and security are not automatically a legitimate form of government. We should not lose sight of the need off a state authority (M. van Leeuwen, persoonlijke communicatie, 14 mei, 2013).

Institutions

After the Great African War ended society had to be rebuild. Especially in East-Congo which was struck hardest in these times. The U.N. supported the road to democracy in DRC. But perhaps not the entire country was ready for this goal. As advised by Mansfield & Snyder (2007, p.162) and supported by Autesserre (2010, p. 193), elections in East-Congo were likely to risk more violence. As the elections are not supported by institutions that can effectively channel the grievances and questions of society. Without turning to a violent struggle to make their voices heard.

This is also confirmed by Verweijen who sees the political policies and democratization as catalysts for the rising of armed groups. This seems a contradictory conclusion. But in this context it stimulates the fragmentations and ethnicities (J. Verweijen, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).

Of the three sources of legitimacy identified by Weber and described by Thomson (2010, p. 110) traditional legitimacy comes closest in East-Congo. The people of East-Congo have a shared culture and history, which as mentioned above resulted in the label of minorities instead of nationalists. These are currently the strongest ties the people of East-Congo have to their state. Although the U.N. is trying to build institutions to serve their interests and increase the legal-rational legitimacy of the state. This bond between state and society is still weak.

4.3 Social-economic factors in East-Congo

Following Collier's theory (2007, p. 199) we can say that causes are irrelevant. But that it are economic conditions that decide if an organisation can start and be sustained. It can be concluded that DRC scores high on these points. Pushing away a goal and cause as irrelevant might seem a bit extreme. But there is sense in saying that a cause without financial backing is not an organisation yet.

Primary commodities such as mining and agriculture are the main source of income in East-Congo. But since these goods can't be relocated they are the most lootable of all goods, which makes it easy for a rebel organisation to control or steal.

Another motivation for militias, rebel organisations and their sponsors is the financial profits that are gained by the mining industry in East-Congo. As pointed out by Autesserre (2010, p. 4), this helped finance the organisations and was a reason for violence in order to control the mining areas.

As an indication of the economic worth of East-Congo (Stearns, 2011, p. 300) estimates that in in 2000 and 2001 the profit for Coltan mined in DRC by Rwanda was estimated at 150 million dollars. While the official military budget was about 55 million dollars. Both sides sold Congolese minerals to fund their struggle (Stearns, 2011, p. 296).

The second point by Collier of geography and a place to hide are the forests in East-Congo. Where it is hard to travel and track the rebel and militia-members.

East-Congo has been a conflict-zone since the outbreak of the First Congo War and was an uneasy area before that. The people are used to resorting to violence and have weapons at the ready, which makes the point of history as a factor.

The loss of income and power are strong motivations for members of the armed groups not to demobilise. And the initial reason for people to enroll in armed groups is still salient today. There are not many other economic opportunities in the region (Autesserre, 2010, p. 154).

Economic opportunities, population growth and economic decline all add to risk of a violent outbreak in East-Congo.

Van Leeuwen also sees the lack of education and job opportunities as a temptation to return to militias and rebel groups where at least you were provided for. In a sense militias have become a means of survival (M. van Leeuwen, persoonlijke communicatie, 14 mei, 2013).

Verweijen agrees that the social-economic factors are important. In a sense that the extreme poverty makes it easy for armed groups to attract soldiers and recruits. There are not many alternatives and as long as there are no alternatives to earn an income, the armed groups will continue to attract soldiers (J. Verweijen, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).

  With a slightly different angle Pronk also sees economic advancement and scarcity of resources as a important factor. Because most of the power is divided along ethnic lines, this creates cleavages in society. The combination of ethnicity and economic advancement and political power creates a rift in society along ethnic lines. Scarcity of water and land are social-economic factors important to life in East-Congo. To keep all these elements you need to fight, which you do as a group, mostly an ethnic group (J. Pronk, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).

  Of course the poverty and low wages makes bribing in this area extremely easy. The national wages are too low to support a family, which again motivates corruption. The fact that there is no social security and that the entire family helps out with illness or funerals puts a high pressure on people to earn as much income as they can.

  Absence of state authority is one of the main reasons that allow this level of corruption to happen. This is how their current society exists, is reproduced and in which they need to operate to get by. It is all based on family and ethnicity (J. Verweijen, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).

As put forward by Autesserre (2010, p. 131) , land is an important part of life in East-Congo. It gives social security, a way of life and provides sustenance for the family. She concludes that many grassroots conflicts have land ownership at its origin. She later confirmed this with research during the transition period which showed that land issues were a recurring issue that caused violence. Verweijen agrees that on local level, land and land use are important issues (J. Verweijen, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).

 This is an important factor, which Mobutu later combined with ethnicity. Since only ethnic Congolese could make a claim on land ownership, this put the Banyarwanda group in a hard position.

  Van Leeuwen confirms the importance of citizenship and indigenous and its role in land access through traditional leaders. This has played a major role for the Banyamulenge, who had different ancestors and spoke a different language.

  He also thinks that land is one of the issues in which governments obtain legitimacy. That this can be a good base for legitimacy. Land ownership is a important issue for the people in East-Congo, it is their livelihood and their social security (M. van Leeuwen, persoonlijke communicatie, 14 mei, 2013).

For the population of East-Congo, who hardly have any alternatives, they are forced to go with the flow.

Of course many try living a normal life as farmers for example. But they are continuously part of the regional violence. Conflicts tend to last for a long time. Children in these regional conflicts grow up with them. And then you have the grievance or greed, when for example commanders make money. But most importantly there is no alternative. And you take up arms to defend yourself, your family or village. And the best way to cope with this and to protect yourself is to step into the world of violence. And the only way to defend yourself is to attack others, which further escalates the situation (J. Pronk, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).

4.4 Culture and ethnicity

The ending of the Cold War had several consequences for East-Congo. The fundamental problems that cause conflict were exposed (Ayoob, 2007, p. 96). Which meant that rebel organisations had to find new narratives and motivations beyond socialism.

Verweijen concludes that whenever there was a power struggle, ethnicity was used and that is when these tensions rise. It is one of the only ways in which politicians can profile themselves and how power is divided. Ethnicity has always been manipulated, for example by Mobutu who used this to divide and control the country. This was a large part of his survival strategy (J. Verweijen, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).
This was to be the new cause for rebel organisations and armed groups.
Since independence politicians in DRC have used ethnicity to gain votes. Up to this day, ethnicity has been politicised. And now plays a major role in economics, politics and recruitment.
  As explained by Thomson (2010, p. 61), ethnicity continues to serve as a social, political organisation.

Collier's theory (2007, p. 207) on ethnicity has merit that it would be harder for organisations to recruit with many different ethnic groups. East-Congo can roughly be divided in two groups, indigenous Congolese and Congolese of Rwandan descent. The fact that there are only two groups and that ethnicity has played such a big role in East-Congo makes it a factor that it no longer can be ignored.
  Pronk agrees that it is a big challenge in East-Congo where two large groups oppose each other. With one group still seen as a outsider. This makes it easier for a group to dominate the political process. Which in turn leads to grievance in the other group (J. Pronk, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).

The tensions between self-styled indigenous communities and the Congolese of Rwandan descent have been mounting for decades. And on occasion escalated into national issues (Autesserre, 2010, p. 3). Pronk also traces the tensions between these groups back in time. He finds that some of the Banyarwanda have been living in East-Congo for a long time. But the tensions remain, since they are still seen as outsiders. The fact that they mainly hold cattle compared to farmers generates conflict because of the nomadic style. Culture, oppression and political support, all these factors can cause grievance. But also how the tribes were treated in colonial times and how they treated other tribes during that period is still an important factor (J. Pronk, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).

After the Genocide in Rwanda, the huge influx of refugees destabilized East-Congo. They started creating their own spaces and massacres on both sides led to ethnically homogenous spaces (Reyntjens, 2009, p. 17). The refugees brought the ethnic tensions with them to East-Congo, which further divided the population. The indigenous Congolese felt threatened and were desperate to keep their place in society, their lands and their political power. Tensions rose and local populations reacted to the threat by forming militias named Mai-Mai (Fofona, 2009).
  Based on her field research Verweijen sees that the people of Congo don't feel enough Congolese to let ethnicity and tribe go. This is still very much how they organise and how society is arranged. Ethnicity is also important because this is how society, promotions and power are distributed. Everything is done within this system, which is regulated by ethnicity. This system keeps re-inventing itself. Another influence of ethnicity re-creating itself is the national army, which is a essential part of the conflict. They use their influence for economic gain and the groups who are victimized are aggrieved and see this as a ethnic problem. They keep re-creating ethnicity as a problem (J. Verweijen, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).
  After the influx of Hutus from Rwanda, the Banyarwanda community started splitting. Which the Hutus used to cast themselves as indigenous and gave them a better claim to land ownership.
This move had a major impact on the Tutsi Banyarwanda. Who saw their ethnic group grow smaller and felt more threatened by the other ethnic groups. The fear for revenge killings from other ethnic groups became a increasingly important focus point of the Banyarwanda.

When the First Congo War broke out, the AFDL, which was Kabila's rebellion, were welcomed as liberators. They saw the fight between AFDL and the Rwandan refugees as a Rwandan affair (Stearns, 2011, p. 134). The fighting spread out across the country and the pressure of two million refugees in East-Congo was lowered when most of them fled the region. This alleviated some of the tension in the region. The fighting in the region justified the armed groups for a little longer, with the need to protect their own communities.

After Mobutu, both Laurent and Joseph Kabila used ethnicity to gain support. Which kept up the mutual mistrust between communities. Gave the militias legitimacy and officially sanctioned their use of violence. Up to a point that tensions between communities prevented either side from disarming in fear of retaliation (Autesserre, 2010, p. 145).

The difference with the Second Congo War was that the RCD was seen as an invasion force (Reyntjens, 2005, p. 591) which brought a lot more hostility from the local population. Meanwhile Kabila turned to his erstwhile enemies ex-FAR and Interahamwe to get rid of his dependency on Rwanda (Stearns, 2011, p. 83). Once again ethnicity was used for political purposes and to gain allies in a violent region.

4.5 Ethnicity and mobilisation in East-Congo

If looked at by Gurr's theory (2007, p. 137) on reasons for rebellion, we can say that the communities of East-Congo have a strong sense of salience. The communities are different in size but have both geographic location and ethnicity to bind them. They have enough incentive for action, with the loss of state authority, the need for protection, fear sowed by playing ethnic groups against each other and the need for a political voice. Over the years these communities have overcome or created their own factions on which their actions are based. And with the availability of weapons and loss of state authority there is plenty of opportunity to rebel against the state or form militias.

It is clear that that ethnicity is one of the major lines along which the people of East-Congo are mobilised. As said by Stewart & Brown (2007, p. 222), it are the organisations that fill the void of the state that are more successful. Both elements are used to mobilise and create a sense of legitimacy. These elements are used for mobilisation but are not the root causes of the troubles in East-Congo.
  Verweijen finds that there are groups who have a tighter link with society, this does not always mean this is voluntarily. This is often a mix of force, sympathy and pragmatism. Ethnicity is a important part in this.
  Ethnicity is a powerful motivator and catalyst in this region. But this remains a sort of cover for power struggles. The way in which it manifests itself. But ethnicity is such a strong factor in this region that people see nothing else. We know it is a social construct, but they don't see it as such. They see it as a given. And systematically reproduce this. The importance of ethnicity has grown in history.
  Another problem are the demobilised soldiers, who keep their weapons and keep their contacts with the armed groups. They are easy to remobilise. Especially when they remain in the area of their former group, with all the close links between society and the armed groups (J. Verweijen, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).

Mobutu mobilised and gained support by playing ethnic groups against each other. This created a atmosphere of mistrust amongst the communities which is seen today. It is one of the strongest sources of mobilisation in East-Congo.

4.6 The role of armed groups in East-Congo

East-Congo has its fair share of both militias and rebel organisations. They have militias that start as self-defence units but become political, rebel organisations that provide for communities and regular bandit groups, out there for financial gain and even more are a combination of all factors.

During the Second Congo War in 2001 the front had largely stabalised. But most of the fighting still took place in East-Congo as mentioned earlier. Local Mai-Mai were formed and in response to the Rwandan occupation. Who together with the Hutu militias, were supplied by president Kabila. Rwanda in turn supported other militias and rebel organisations, by 2002 Rwanda, Uganda and DRC all had several proxies fighting for them in East-Congo (Stearns, 2011, p. 251). The country was divided between the many warring factions and even within ones area of control the groups held different areas in a ever changing pattern (Autesserre, 2010, p. 51).
  Another consequence of the Cold War was the large amount of small arms in the region, which made it possible for organisations to grow and arm themselves rapidly (Ayoob, 2007).
This also resulted in a highly militarized area, where disputes were solved by violence instead of regular means (Stearns, 2011, p. 250).
Society in East-Congo became ever more violent, with more and more armed groups fighting with and against each other.

The many militias and armed groups formed during the wars are still active. While they started out to protect their community, most have turned violent. Setting up shadow governments and filling the void of the absent state (Reyntjens, 2005). Or they used their power seize land, mining sites and political power (Autesserre, 2010, p. 3).
Verweijen sees the armed groups are part of the social context, they have links with politicians, businessman, chiefs, etc. They are ingrained in society. There is a lot of pressure on the communities to support the armed groups. They need food, shelter and claim taxes. Both the army and armed groups live of the local population. Our image of the armed groups is very negative, but in spite of this they control a large part of the economy. People and politicians are dependent on these groups. But the economy is also militarized. Some regions need the patronage of armed groups simply to survive. If a trader wants to transport groups he pays the armed groups for protection. Another way they are integrated is finance. The armed groups have a lot of cash and they invest in traders. In a way playing the role of banks. They provide starting capital for entrepreneurs and traders (J. Verweijen, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).
  Van Leeuwen thinks that the militias taking over the role of the state, might be a bit too positive. We need to question their motivations. Most of them pacify a specific region for commerce, with a positive spin-off effect for the local population. Compared to a state which has stability and security for everybody as a goal. He questions the fact that providing security is enough to be able to classify yourself as a substitute for state (M. van Leeuwen, persoonlijke communicatie, 14 mei, 2013).

The militia-leaders became the new power-brokers in the region, this attracted marginalized groups who wanted to be part of this process. And there are those who seek a sense of 'normality' in this turbulent region (Autesserre, 2010, p. 149).
  The control of natural resources has shaped the goals and strategies of organisations. In what Tull calls the archipelago approach, organisations only focus on the valuable areas (Vlassenroot, 2008).
  Research by Autesserre during the transition period showed that minerals are but one source of income for armed groups. Access to these resources can sustain their authority and is also a strong motivation not to give up this power. Which is nothing compared to the small pay they might receive after demobilisation (Thomson, 2010, p. 227).

Former militia members might have been more motivated to demobilise or join the army if they could expect regular pay and respectable living conditions on enrolment (Autesserre, 2010, p. 242). Verweijen explains that the national army exists for a large part out of former rebel organisations, who try to stay as close to their region as possible, where they have influence. The soldiers in the army still have loyalties and connections to the armed groups and population (J. Verweijen, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).

With the official ending of the Second Congo War came new incentives for armed groups to create havoc. With the ICD a situation was created for aspiring political leaders to resort to violence in order to get noted and included in the system (Lemarchand, 2006, p. 17).
Van Leeuwen confirms the theory that when it comes to support and politics of militias and rebel groups, they think they need to be a military power to be acknowledged. He thinks that forming a militia is a way of being heard, creating a voice (M. van Leeuwen, persoonlijke communicatie, 14 mei, 2013).
Verweijen also describes that many politicians support armed groups to increase their influence. This is done at every level, at election time there is a huge competition for support from armed groups. And for example if a politician loses they usually try to ally themselves with a armed group to get noted and influence without a political position. All of this helps to sustain the violent political system (J. Verweijen, persoonlijke communicatie, 6 juni, 2013).

Allen's theory (1999, p.369) of violence as the new norm is not useful in finding the root causes of the conflict. But it can be used to explain some of the actions of rebel organisations and militias. As can be read in chapter 2.2 the aftermath of the Great African War, the organisations that are known are brought to the negotiation table. This can be achieved by gaining large support in areas, political voice or by extreme use violence and media attention.

The accomplishments of MONUC decreased elite manipulation of local armed groups, violence diminished, people felt more secure and trade and agriculture started up again (Autesserre, 2010, p. 233).

5 Conclusions

The existence of armed groups in East-Congo can be explained by several factors which will be described below. It is important to recognize that on their own most of these factors are not strong enough to cause this level of corruption, violence and neglect. They all amplify each other and are strengthened by one other; it is the combination of these factors that have created the case of East-Congo.

The first factor is the absence of state authority and institutions. We have seen that the government of DRC has gradually lost influence. The people of East-Congo have been neglected by their government which made them mistrust and lose faith in their government. This lack of authority allowed warlords and armed groups to move in and take their place (Rotberg, 2007, p. 86). Eventually turning the government into just one of many groups fighting over the legitimate use of force in East-Congo (Raeymaekers et al., 2008, p. 8).

  The loss of state authority and institutions does not necessarily cause violence to erupt, but it does allow it to happen. Therefore this is a crucial contribution to the situation of present-day East-Congo.

Secondly we have the social-economic factors and their impact on everyday life. As confirmed by all three experts, the lack of economic opportunities and advancement make for an easy recruitment pool in East-Congo. The lack of alternative ways of living and earning a income makes it very tempting to join an armed group, where at least you are given food and shelter. Another important point is land and the use of land (Autesserre, 2010, p.131). The importance of land to the people of East-Congo should not be overlooked, it is their way of life and a form of social security. This issue is at the base of many grassroots issues and the insecurity about one's future and their land creates tensions in this area.

  The basic human needs of food, shelter and security are the foundation for this second factor. This is also one of the grassroots and most important factor. The lack of better prospects, the insecurity about one's future and constant struggle to survive, creates big tensions in East-Congo.

Next we have ethnicity. Ethnicity has been misused for generations to divide power and stir communities against each other to prevent opposition from rising. It has become a political point and serves as a base for social and political organisations (Thomson, 2010, p. 61). Throughout the years the importance of ethnicity has grown for the people of East-Congo. Their society has been formed on this view, promotion and power are distributed along these lines. This system is reproduced on a daily basis.

  Much has been written on ethnicity and to the people of East-Congo this is one of the defining factors in their lives. It is how they view and organise their world. But it should not be over-estimated. Of course it is a big factor in East-Congo, but also socially created and given weight trough the social insecurity.

The fourth factor is mobilisation which is closely related to the previous two factors. The highly militarized region of East-Congo and mobilisation of soldiers is based on the lack of alternatives and ethnicity. As mentioned above, the lack of alternative ways of living turns joining an armed group into a big temptation. The armed groups themselves use ethnicity as propaganda. They contribute to the recreation of ethnicity as a problem and also use this to recruit new soldiers. It is a powerful motivator and catalyst in this region.

For the fifth factor we need to consider the role armed groups play in society. Most armed groups started out of the need to defend themselves, but later used their power to seize land, mining sites and political power (Autesserre, 2010, p.3) As explained by Verweijen they are ingrained in society and they control a large part of the economy. They support entrepreneurs and invest in traders. Van Leeuwen and Verweijen also see the formation of armed groups as a way of creating a political voice. Since it are the leaders of the armed groups who have access to the political system, this is an incentive to form an armed group, or use violence to be heard.

 The armed groups might be a ingrained part of society in East-Congo, but we should not lose sight of their goals. Who are mainly opportunistic in a sense that they hope to achieve political power and access to the system, financial gain by controlling economic and strategic locations and the social status they gain as power-brokers at the barrel of a gun.

There are a number of small factors that contribute to the existence of armed groups in East-Congo. Which are large amount of weapons and lootable goods in the region. The large amount of weapons has allowed the organisations to arm themselves rapidly, has militarized the area and made people use violence to solve issues (Stearns, 2011, p. 250).

To sum up, all the above mentioned factors contribute to the existence of armed groups in East-Congo. They amplify each other and are closely related to each other.
It is the absence of state authority and institutions that allows it to happen.
At the foundation there is the grassroots issue of land, social security, economic opportunities, insecurity about one's future and the struggle to secure basic human needs on a daily basis.
Ethnicity has been created into an important issue in East-Congo; it is how they have organised their society and view their world. It is being reproduced on a daily basis and one of the most important propaganda points for mobilisation and recruitment by armed groups.
And finally we need to consider the role of armed groups in society, they provide security up to certain extend, finance traders and control part of the economy. They are ingrained in society after all these years.

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Appendix A interview reports

Interview with Mathijs van Leeuwen

Dr. Matthijs van Leeuwen is rural development sociologist, who specialises in conflict and peacebuilding in developing countries. Since 2012 he works as an Assistant Professor at the Centre for International Conflict - Analysis and Management (CICAM), teaching on Conflicts and Governance in Africa. He is also researcher at the African Studies Centre (ASC) at Leiden University.

Van Leeuwen considers himself to be a generalist when it concerns East-Congo. He has done fieldwork in the Great Lakes District which gives him a insight in the situation.

He thinks that citizenship is a important issue and that the neglect of the region and the power games of Mobutu have a impact on present day East-Congo.
Citizenship and indigenous is important in land access through traditional leaders. This has played a major role for the Banyamulenge, they had different ancestors and spoke a different language.
A majority of them came during and after the genocide, but even communities that where relocated by the Belgians to the Kivus were still not accepted as indigenous. Which was a big issue in the '90s.

When it comes to support and politics of militias and rebel groups, they think they need to be a military power to be acknowledged. He thinks that forming a militia is a way of being heard, creating a voice.
To a certain extend the militias are supported by local population, but not in the fact that they prey on them for survival.
As is the current debate, militias that fill the void of governance and security are not automatically a legitimate form of government. We should not lose sight of the need a state authority.
One cannot simply start a militia and claim legitimacy. Providing government services was most likely not the ambition that raised the militia in the first place.

When it comes to motivation of militias and their soldiers, his research in Burundi and a similar research of his colleague in East-Congo was that is simply is not in the benefit of the soldier to demobilise. They have lived a certain life, which is all they know. To suddenly go back to a community that hates and fears you. Adjusting to new values and hard work is not great prospect.
In Burundi the militias retained a certain legitimacy, which made it easier for them to return, but according to his colleague this not a strong point in East-Congo. Who has a more negative view of militias and rebel groups in general. Combined with the fact the previously the (army) provided for them, they now have to become independent which is not easy.

The lack of education and job opportunities makes it tempting to return to militias and rebel groups where at least you were provided for. In a sense militias have become a means of survival.

When asked on his opinion on Collier's theory that rebel organisations are only possible if this economically viable. He thinks this is a extreme case of greed vs grievance. He does believe that it takes more than a idea to start a rebellion.
To understand civil wars you should not focus on root causes but on momentum, the wrong place at the wrong time. Research should focus more on mobilisation of people. On the agency of militia leaders and their followers both.

On statebuilding and democratisation vs institutions, he thinks we don't know enough on the matter. How do states obtain legitimacy and authority is question that needs further research.

He does think that land is one of the issues in which governments obtain legitimacy. That this is a good base for legitimacy. Land ownership is a important issue for the people in East-Congo, it is their livelihood and their social security.

When he considers South-East Uganda he sees that land issues are one of the key moments when the government is involved in people's lives. This could be a start of local state-building. But this is of course a delicate matter of power-games on different levels.

When you look at Charles Tilly and how the military apparatus needed the support of bureaucracy, which eventually led to state-building. There is much debate on how and if we can apply this to countries such as DRC.

The state failure index is a good tool to compare countries. But if a certain factor is important around the globe this does not automatically mean that this is relevant for your specific case. It is a important tool but nothing more, with a few useful indicators of good governance.

On the subject of militias taking over the role of the state, he thinks that we need to question their motivation. Most of them pacify a specific region for commerce, with a positive spin-off effect for the local population. Compared to a state who have stability and security for everybody as a goal.
Is providing security enough to be able to classify yourself as a substitute for state?
But on the other hand, South-Sudan started out with militias taking over the role of state. In the beginning most NGO's found it to risky to deal with them.

But none of this is a guarantee. With a civil society in East-Congo who have such strong ethnic lines. Where civil society is not a check and balance on the government but a way for people to enrich themselves.
When there was room for civil society in the 2006 elections all principles where thrown overboard and they all tried to gain access to state functions. Which ended up as a major drain on civil society as most of them are now in parliament or other state functions.

Coming back to root causes, when comparing Congo, Burundi and Uganda. He feels that the legacy of the past is neglected. This is a very important factor.
Take Congo for example, it never had a proper functioning state. A state that had the true intention to motivate, educate and develop its population. All they know is a government who takes what they can and hardly gives anything back.
Civil society and human rights are just words without meaning for them. They see the government as nothing more than another force who preys on them. Which now has a flavour of democracy with the past elections.

We should also give them some more time. If you compare how long it took for European states to develop then DRC is just in the early stages. Before the Colonial times about 130 years ago, it was all tribal law. With a different kind of legitimacy. Neo-patrimonial with a give and take mentality. Which is seen in todays society, where it is important to stay a big man. Where political support can get you access to the system. This is a system which they are familiar with and know how to use. Even though it does not meet ethical standards, on which they probably agree with us. But how do you change such a system?

Interview with Jan Pronk

Former politician Jan Pronk (1940) has served three terms as Minister for Development Cooperation and one term as Minister of Environment in government cabinets between 1973 and 2002. He also worked as an international civil servant in various capacities in the United Nations and was the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of Mission for the United Nations Mission in Sudan from 2004 until 2006. Presently Pronk is holding a Chair in the Theory and Practice of International Development at the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague.

With the situation in East-Congo, the many regional influences and atmosphere of violence how would you analyse the situation?

We need to start with the fact that Congo is a state that has never really been a proper state. There is no control, no national identity, no structure. Which plays a important role.
   Another important factor is the colonial history. This divided communities and created artificial borders.
   The third factor is the Rwanda, which led to the Interahamwe settling in East-Congo. This led to tribal issues coming to the fore which escalated into violence.
   The last part is socio-economical. There is a lot of money to be made in East-Congo, which many corporations did, who then needed protection.
   All these factors enhance each other, which led to a conflict escalation. And this is hard to control, especially since most of these factors still remain in East-Congo.

For the population of East-Congo, who hardly have any alternatives, they to go with the flow.
Of course many try living a normal life as farmers for example. But they are continuously part of the regional violence. And the best way to cope with this and to protect yourself is to step into the world of violence. And the only way to defend yourself is to attack others.

Then we come to greed vs grievance. But he thinks this does not explain the motivations, this is to black or white. There are too many factors that need to be taken into account.

Conflicts tend to last for a long time. Children in these regional conflicts grow up with them. And then you have the grievance or greed, when for example commanders make money. But most importantly there is no alternative. And you take up arms to defend yourself, your family or village. And you do this by attacking others. Which further escalates the situation. These reasons are all based on security.
   In this way conflicts shape society and its values. The need to survive, sometimes at the expense of others. Which is a global phenomenon. For example the pre-emptive strike policy of the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan.
   This is all part of power and staying in control. And this is the same on micro-level.

Of course the tribal culture of Africa has its own rules. Which shape your norms and values, but which are different between the clans or tribes. There has always been much violence between different tribes. Which is part of self-protection. To keep your cattle, water and land safe. As these are essential to the survival of the community it is your duty to protect them. This duty gives them the right to attack others.
This was previously done with simple weapons. But with globalisations and all the weapons that have been brought in, has caused these conflicts to become more violent than before. Which leads to more victims and grievance. The upwards spiral of violence.

There is a national sentiment and wisdom of the African states when they respected each other's borders. There have not been many wars of independence or regarding borders.
These borders where not very relevant for people, because crossing borders has never been a problem for nomadic people.
  Of course a nation state is more than a border. A common culture, rule of law, systems, acceptation of a regime. And it takes ages to build these sentiments and institutions.

The monopoly of violence by the state, these rules need to be clear. But are different in every society. When you don't control violence and this is not bound by a impartial law. Then the army becomes a powerbroker of its own. This is comparable with European armies in history. Where they need to provide for their own, which happens today in poor countries. When they are opposed by a rebel organisation who have discipline, don't rape and pillage like in Uganda with Museveni. Even Kabila senior started, relatively decent. Which was part of the success of Kabila's rebellion. They radiated a form of trust, which the Congolese army lacked.
  Many insurgencies oppress people, but the smarter ones try a different form of legitimacy.

But we need to give countries the time and opportunity to rebuild their institutions. But this should not solely be done on a national level. Because value their tribe above the nation. Decentralization is a important tool for a bottom-up approach. You need to keep in mind the traditional relations and use this to avoid a duality of national vs local power. But to completely remove national level is not smart either. You need to find a balance.
  But to regain the trust of minorities and others is hard. Which can lead to complex relations between minorities and majorities.
And of course the will of people to hand over power and resources to support this process is difficult to motivate. This is a big challenge in DRC, but also in Kenya. Not so much in Tanzania. Because Tanzania had many small tribes. Compared to a few major ones in DRC and Kenya. Which makes it easier for them to dominate the political process. Which causes grievance in the other tribes.
Sudan for example had many tribes, but they were united against the North. Which led to division.

These conflict can be found in East-Congo as well, indigenous vs Congolese of Rwandan descent. Some of the Banyarwanda have been living in East-Congo for a long time. But the tensions remain, since they are still seen as outsiders. The fact that they mainly hold cattle compared to farmers generates conflict because of the nomadic style. Culture, oppression and political support all these factors can cause grievance. How the tribes were treated in colonial times and how they treated other tribes is still a important factor.

Of course ethnicity is not the only factor. But most of the power is divided along ethnic lines. This creates cleavages in society. The combination of ethnicity and economic advancement and political power creates cleavages in society.
Conflicts are complex, with many dimensions who all amplify each other. Scarcity of water and land. Economic, social and all the other factors. To keep all these elements you need to fight, which you do as a group. Mostly a ethnic group.
  Survival and advancement are all at the base of this. If you don't defend your valuables you will lose and someone else will take them. All of this is scarcity based.
You can share all of this, but this need to be organised, properly. Mostly on a national level.
Of course this can be done at a bottom level as well, but this gets harder.
  Because the population increases, there is more cattle and more weapons. Which means conflicts get deadlier. This puts more pressure on these goods and escalates conflicts faster and are harder to control.

And globalisation adds to this. The new generation sees that there are other ways than tribal and that there are other ways to survive. They don't accept the traditional mechanisms of the past anymore. They seek a new form of legitimacy and authority.

Modernising changes a society. Poverty leads to conflict, the same goes for wealthy societies. But is the change of society from poverty to wealth that causes most of the conflicts. Change means conflict and destabalisation. This transition is violent. Because it changes power structures and influence. Development is therefore automatically conflict-increasing.

To try to contain and control this conflict we need to look at several elements. Simply controlling the violence is not a solution. It is a means, not a end.

Looking at the root causes such as land conflict is more productive, which has priority. For a long-term solution. But you need a certain level of security to start to tackle these problems. You need both and can't solve one without the other.

Root causes has priority, but within a context of violence containment. You need to tackle both. Good governance or only a policing mission is not enough. You need to combine all the elements to solve the conflict.

Interview with Judith Verweijen

Judith Verweijen is a PhD Candidate at the Centre for Conflict Studies at Utrecht University and the Faculty of Military Sciences at the Netherlands Defence Academy. In 2006 she completed a MA in Conflict Studies and Human Rights. During her research in Uganda she developed a keen interest in armed forces and militarization in the Great Lakes Region. From then onwards, she has worked in and on the DR Congo on a regular basis. At this moment she is carrying out sociological research in Kivu for her dissertation on the Congolese military (FARDC) and the factors that influence their interaction with civilians. Furthermore, she is researching on various dimensions of armed group activity in the Kivu region.

Judith's dissertation research is on FRDC, the Congolese army. And their interaction with civilians. She has done her field research in the Kivu provinces, where there are a lot of armed groups. And it is very difficult to understand the FRDC without understanding the entire context of the region. Including the many armed groups.

 For example some communities have close links with particular Mai-Mai and you need to understand this relation in order to understand the interaction of the FRDC and the population.

The armed groups are part of the social context, they have links with politicians, businessman, chiefs. They are ingrained in society. There is a lot of pressure on the communities to support the armed groups. They need food, shelter, claim taxes. Both the army and armed groups live of the local population.

 And of course the national army exists for a large part out of former rebel organisations, who try to stay as close to their region as possible. Where they have influence. The soldiers in the army still have loyalties and connections to the armed groups and population.

Army, armed groups and the population are all intertwined. They are a big part of society.

In a country that has minimal state influence, their role is limited. Which means that these groups take over some of the roles.

 Our image of the armed groups is very negative, but in spite of this they control a large part of the economy. People and politicians are dependent on these groups.

There are currently about 50 to 60 active armed groups in East-Congo, from Katanga all the way up to Province Orientale. This is a large area, which means a lot of diversity. There are many different

groups, from big ones like M23 to very small Mai-Mai who are very local and provide defense for their village. This makes it hard to generalise armed groups.

But there are groups who have a tighter link with society, this does not always mean this is voluntarily. This is often a mix of force, sympathy and pragmatism. Ethnicity is a important part in this. And most groups are organised along these lines. It is both used as propaganda and felt as a real cause. The importance of ethnicity has grown in history.
  Whenever there was a power struggle, ethnicity was used and that is when these tensions rise. It is one of the only ways in which politicians can profile themselves and how power is divided. Ethnicity has always been manipulated, for example by Mobutu who used this to divide and control the country. This was a large part of his survival strategy.
  Kabila does not have absolute power in DRC, who, together with local agents use ethnicity to organise themselves. But not exclusively of course.
There are internal power struggles and between the different groups as well. The armed groups are to diverse to make a general approach on armed groups.
And the people of Congo don't feel enough Congolese to let ethnicity and tribe go. This is still very much how they organise and how society is arranged.
Ethnicity is also important because this is how society, promotions and power are distributed. Everything is done within this system, which is regulated by ethnicity. This system keeps re-inventing itself. The history of violence is not easily forgotten, which re-identifies ethnicity and makes it easier to mobilise the population.

Commonalities between the armed groups are the for example the factors that help them mobilise. In general this can be explained in a national, regional and local dimension. They all play a part and interact. When one level calms down another plays up, this is what makes it so hard to solve this conflict.
  On local level, land and land use are important issues. And the positions of local authorities, who have always used a dual system. The national system and a customary system. The colonial boundaries drawn by the Belgians, right trough different communities with different organisations and laws has made it difficult. They grouped all these tribes and customs together to make it easier for them. Some tribes where left out of this, like the Banyamulenge. Who have always migrated in and out of Congo, but this was to difficult for the Belgians who made them substitute to a tribe. Which leaves them without a chief and land. Without this you always need to pay tribute to tribes for land use. This has always been their political goal and of their armed groups, for example the FRS.
  For a time the RCD-Goma was able to create a territory for the Banyamulenge. Who mainly controlled South-Kivu and large parts of North-Kivu. But this was overruled after the peace accords. Since this land was taken from other communities, who of course where not happy with this. This creates grievance and a motivation for the Mai-Mai to mobilise.
  Another example are the Burundians. Who got land and rights from the colonial rulers in Congo, but this is disputed to this day as they are regarded as outsiders.
And the armed groups and local leaders all try to manipulate this is issue, which turns it into a political issue. It is not the sole reason for the existence of armed groups, but this is heavily used in their propaganda, reason of existence.

The fact that there are still so many uncertain factors and who controls what, makes it a hotbed for mobilisation and conflict. Most of it are local power struggles, combined with neo-traditional authority and state authority. Who sometimes have different verdicts, which complicates things further. And try to keep their influence.
Everything is disputed, village boundaries and much more.

Of course the social-economic factors are important. In a sense that the extreme poverty makes it easy for armed groups to attract soldiers and recruits. There are not many alternatives.

Another problem are the demobilised soldiers, who keep their weapons and keep their contacts with the armed groups. They are easy to remobilise. Especially when they remain in the area of their former group, with all the close links between society and the armed groups.

Many politicians support armed groups to increase their influence. This is done at every level, at election time there is a huge competition for support from armed groups. And for example if a politician loses they usually try to ally themselves with a armed group to get noted and influence without a political position. All of this helps to sustain the violent political system.

Another crucial factor is the army. Demobilizing armed groups into the army is a new motivation for them to take up arms. They use armed groups to get a better negotiating position when demobilised. If they are not satisfied they leave start a new rebellion and try again. Because the negotiations kept going, the option to join the army was always there. There was no pressure to join the army and demobilise.

And there are groups who simply did not demobilise. Like the Mai-Mai, who have influence in their region. But should a Mai-Mai leader be integrated in the army and send to another region, he loses his influence and income. For the small groups there has never really been a good motivation to join the army. Another group spawned from RCD-Goma, had enough trade-networks and income to ignore the demobilisation offers. They had enough revenue on their own.

The fact that some groups stayed in the area, made others make demands for example to stay in their area.

All this means that the army has never really become a single national entity. There are many groups with mixed loyalties and alliances.

This also means that the army is not always a threat to some armed groups, they are mostly busy with generating income. Their salaries are low. And there is not a strong military pressure on the armed groups, who mostly reside in difficult terrain. This makes it easy for a armed group to stay operational. Next to that the army is one of the main suppliers of arms in the region.

These factors made it possible for armed groups to multiply. One of the lowest points was the Goma-conference in 2008. Promises were made to armed groups, they were paid to be there as a motivation. Positions were created. The fact that armed groups were brought to the negotiation table meant that there were more armed groups at the end of the conference than at the start.

This is the logic of the region, opportunism. Military might can be transformed into political influence and military influence. Politicians who are allied to a armed group are taken serious.

It is becoming a new system on its own.

She sees the political policies and democratization as catalysts for the rising of armed groups. This seems a contradictory conclusion. In this context it stimulates the fragmentations and ethnicities.

For a part this is because this is one best ways to gain a income. But the economy is also militarized. Some regions need the patronage of armed groups simply to survive. If a trader wants to transport groups he pays the armed groups for protection. Another way they are integrated is finance. The armed groups have a lot of cash and they invest in traders. In a way playing the role of banks. They provide starting capital for entrepreneurs and traders.

The army behaves exactly in the same way as the armed groups, which makes it very complicating. It should not be seen as a national army, about 75% of the soldiers in Kivu are from that region.

The army is not seen as a neutral force. When the CMDP was demobilised, which consisted for a big part of Tutsis. The brigades were kept intact. This compromised their neutrality.

They are seen as Rwandans or Congolese of Rwandan descent compared to the indigenous population. A Tutsi brigade that is send into a Mai-Mai area, between which there are tensions makes them lose their neutrality.

The national army is a essential part of the conflict. They also use their influence for economic gain. The groups who are victims of this are aggrieved and see this as a ethnic problem. They keep re-creating ethnicity as a problem.

You should rotate the brigades to solve this, but this is not accepted by the brigades and armed groups who feel threatened by their departure. It are all power games.

The regional dimension, for example the M23 and their contacts in Rwanda. Or the FNL who has ties in Burundi. Their soldiers cross borders with ease and join Mai-Mai in DRC. Almost on a mercenary base. A survival strategy and a way to earn a income.

Another example of the weak borders are the armed groups along lake Tanganyika, which is hard to control. Resources are traded for fighters and weapons. These regional networks makes it easy for armed groups to get supplies and stay operational.

Of course the poverty and low wages makes bribing in this area extremely easy. The national wages are too low to support a family, which again motivates corruption. The fact that there is no social security and that the entire family helps out with illness or funerals puts a high pressure on people to earn as much income as they can.

Absence of state authority is one of the main reasons that allow this level of corruption to happen. This is how their current society exists, is reproduced and in which they need to operate to get by. It is all based on family and ethnicity.

Ethnicity is a powerful motivator and catalyst in this region. But this remains a sort of cover for power struggles. The way in which it manifests itself. But ethnicity is such a strong factor in this region that people see nothing else. We know it is a social construct, but they don't see it as such. They see it as a given. And systematically reproduce this.

The leaders of armed groups are not simply fighters but also entrepreneurs, who see a opportunity to get income. It is only to a certain extend that you can negotiate with them. Their political goals are sometimes so irrational that this makes it very hard to negotiate with them.

Without military or political pressure it is hard to deal with the armed groups.

As long as there are no alternatives to earn an income, the armed groups will continue to attract soldiers. Young people or those who have no prospects in the army see the armed groups as the best way to earn a living. For these people there is little incentive to stop this life.

The problem with extremely poor regions such as East-Congo, is that every time you start a program. Or a relief project and invest, it will attract people since they are all desperate for a income. This then creates a new motivator to pretend or start as a armed group.