Local Peace in Civil War

The Case of Butembo in Eastern DRC

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Chapter One: Conceptualizing Peace in the Midst of War

This thesis examines the phenomenon of local peace: communities where, in the midst of war and state collapse, the harmful effects of major cleavages of war are felt less severely than in surrounding areas. I argue that such a zone emerged in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the midst of escalated armed conflict and prolonged insecurity, despite strategic interest from armed actors to mobilize the community.

To make this argument, I examine the case of the eastern Congolese town of Butembo, located near the border between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda in strife-ridden North Kivu Province. I draw on survey data collected by humanitarian organizations, media coverage of the area during the war, and the few academic studies addressing the communities of North Kivu to demonstrate that a relative condition of peace existed within the city, compared to what might have been expected and the experience of surrounding areas.

After demonstrating the singularity of the Butembo experience, I proceed to examine the local processes that distinguished the city from its neighbors and consider the role of local institutions in providing services and constraining violence. This exploration suggests the study of what happens "inside" communities in zones of armed conflict is as important as the study of the mechanisms of armed conflict themselves. Unlike scholars who focus on variables (such as resources, ethnic affiliation, economic indicators) that shape the spread of violence over geographic space, I take the opposite tack, examining
the presence of violence-constraining institutions as a central factor in explaining why zones of relative peace exist in the midst of broader chaos, and finding that the experience of war and relative peace across geographical space are profoundly affected by the strength of local institutions.

**Geographic Differences in War and Peace.**

As civil wars have emerged as the dominant form of organized violence, and have attracted corresponding international attention, there has been growing interest in the dispersion of violence, and recognition of the shortcomings of models that rely exclusively on the country or affected area as a single unit of analysis. There is a growing recognition that the incidence of violent conflict and participation in civil war is spread unevenly across a country, where some regions and social segments are affected far more drastically than others. This area of interest has become particularly emphasized among scholars studying the intersection of economics and violent conflict.

Butler, Gates and Leiby (2005) argue that the traditional approach of studying an entire conflict as one case "aggregate[s] too much information into the broad unit of analysis that is the country-year," and instead argue that a social networks-based approach is better suited to understanding the diverse and shifting coalitions of actors during a civil conflict, both as belligerents and as third parties. The importance of subnational distinctions in predicting conflict has been underscored particularly by scholars who link "horizontal" or "categorical" inequalities with mobilization for armed conflict, such as
Gurr and Moore (1997), Tilly (1999) and Stewart (2001). These inequalities have been used less often to examine patterns of violence once conflict has already emerged, than in predicting and explaining the onset of conflict. Azam (2002) approaches the localized manifestations of violent conflict from the perspective of game theory, linking violence to looting behavior between neighboring communities, during the breakdown of law and order.

Buhaug and Rød (2006), observe that common indicators of civil war proneness, such as ethnic discrimination, income inequality, terrain effects, access to contraband, and cross-border support vary greatly within countries, compromising the use of these indicators to draw overall conclusions on the causes of civil conflict. Using GIS analysis, they map levels of violent conflict across Africa in 100 X 100 km grids, finding profound regional variation in the level of violence within a single conflict, arguing for greater geographic nuance in understanding civil conflict.

A similar, ambitious, project was launched in the Eastern DRC by the Belgian research group International Peace Information Service. The project seeks to create a geographic database of military forces and confrontations throughout the Kivus and Katanga. In North Kivu, IPIS researchers (Spittaels and Hilgert 2008) recently combined the armed group database with data on supposed "motives" of the various armed groups -- the presence of refugee populations (in need of protection), various natural resources, food insecurity (a proxy for poverty) -- in order to test which of these motives corresponded with the geographic dispersal of violence. This innovative approach is promising,
particularly as the database expands, and the spatial component is important in territory as diverse as eastern Congo. However, by focusing exclusively on the actions of the armed groups and their geographic spread, these authors do not consider the role of constraints upon armed groups, assuming that the only factors determining the activities of armed groups is the military balance of power, and the interest of the group in occupying a certain area.

In a comprehensive study of local variations in the levels of violence during war, Kalyvas argues in *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars* that determinants of violence in wartime are often local in nature, the product of community-level micropolitics, and only linked opportunistically to the defining cleavages of the conflict. He observes that frontlines in war are often more peaceful than might be expected, while largescale violence often occurs far from the front lines of a conflict. He argues that violence is a product of large amounts of mobilizable social capital and networks of trust within communities, which are coopted and organized for political violence.

However, despite the growing interest in geographic variation in the mobilization, outbreak, and intensity of violence at the subnational level, the academic literature has been relatively silent on the inverse: the role of local communities in organizing for peace. Whereas Kalyvas, Azam, and Stewart all examine the processes by which communities choose to "opt-in" and mobilize for civil conflict, this examines the inverse: beginning from cases of highly escalated conflict characterized by widespread
mobilization and intercommunal violence, I ask why some communities witness relatively lower incidences of violence.

The creation of "zones of peace" at a community level has received attention from both journalists and practitioners involved in the peacebuilding process, but far less attention in the academic literature. Some of the more systematic presentations of case studies have been developed by scholars and peacebuilding practitioners such as Mitchell (2007) and Anderson (1999 and 2007) drawing on observations from Colombia, the Philippines and humanitarian interventions in Africa to describe local "experiences" and "capacities" for peace in the midst of war.

A related line of inquiry, pursued by authors such as Menkhaus (2002) and Little (2003), underscore the abilities of local institutions to provide services and regulate interactions within and between communities during war. Menkhaus and Little each look at Somalia, bringing the analysis of political order in stateless societies (a literature dating back as early as Evans-Pritchard's work on the Nuer) into the modern context of failed states. However, while these authors focus on the preservation of order in the context of larger state breakdown, they do not frame their examination specifically in the context of relatively lower incidences of manifested violence.

Defining Peace.
Peace remains a contested concept in both scholarly and policy literature, and is particularly challenging when describing subnational units. Within the field of conflict resolution, definitions of peace typically begin from a background concept of either "positive" or "negative" peace. Those within the negative peace typically rely on minimalist definitions of peace -- peace as the absence of violence. The “positive peace” tradition, following Galtung and other progressive thinkers, adopts a maximalist definition, including social factors such as economic equality, inclusive political life, and environmental protection, justifying these as either the absence of "structural violence" or as the necessary components of a prolonged peaceful state.

In between these two extremes, lie scholars who combine the absence of violence with the absence of some set "drivers" of violence, recognizing that this does not require an absence of all contributing factors, but that other features beyond the absence of violence to distinguish peace as a sustainable state. Thus, definitions of peace at a national level form a continuum of escalating thresholds, ranging from minimalists relying on the absence of violence to maximalist definitions based on the presence of other social "goods" alongside the absence of violence.

However, this rough progression of definitional stringency is less useful for the examination of peace at a subnational level, in the context of major conflict. In such cases, local actors exert only relative, rather than absolute control over people and territory. Thresholds defined at the level of an entire conflict system (such as the death tolls used by the Uppsala or Correlates of War datasets), are not easily applied over a
smaller unit of analysis, both for lack of data, as well as lack of information about the 
circumstances of the violence, and the relationship of the participants to the community. 
Unlike a Weberian state that holds a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, the 
legitimacy of violence within a community might view individuals or groups exercising 
legitimate violence in the context of local norms, such as vigilantism, community 
defense, or feuding. Nonetheless, as Kalyvas, Mitchell, Anderson observe, local 
communities can establish conditions that are observably more peaceful than their 
surrounding areas, providing many of the benefits of peace without necessarily 
guaranteeing the minimal threshold of negative peace.

Bounding the concept of peace in the absence of a monopoly on violence represents a 
challenge. Those focused on conflict prevention, or the absence of violence often employ 
the term "zones of peace" but also "experiences of peace" or "capacities for peace," to 
refer, to geographical areas that serve as sanctuaries and are off-limits to combatants 
during war, without attention to other features within that "zone." This definition, 
promulgated by the Zones of Peace Project at George Mason University is based largely 
on the observable effects -- the absence of violence. By focusing only on this single 
dimension, the definition includes not only local communities that resolved to "opt out" 
of the processes of violence, but also externally-imposed demilitarized areas, such as 
were seen during Balkan conflicts.¹

¹ This conceptualization was outlined in a presentation entitled "From Fear to Sanctuary: A Typology of 
Zones of Peace" by Landon Hancock and Pushpa Iyer of ICAR at the 2004 International Studies 
Association Conference, and represents a general outline of ICAR's definition. Available at: 
http://icar.gmu.edu/zopstypology.pdf
Other scholars focus on the resolution of disputes within the community without recourse to violence, where contracts can be enforced, where economic or other forms of life can persist, and other characteristics of "peacetime life" without necessarily assuming a cessation of all violence in the area. This may be termed "order" in the absence of a state, and has typically focused on the role of local leaders and structures continuing to maintain economic exchange, and in-group norms of behavior. This perspective grows from the observations such as those by Menkhaus and Little, discussed above, that institutions continue to function without a state. Anderson extends this into the realm of peace by framing these institutions -- for example, a marketplace left unperturbed by fighting -- in terms of "capacities for peace."

Both of these viewpoints are incomplete. On one hand, a definition of local peace that relies exclusively on the absence of violence does not necessarily capture "peace."

Anderson, for example, recounts a case in Kosovo where violence had dropped precipitously. International staff cited this as an apparent example of peace taking root. Only after weeks of investigation, did the staff discover that the apparent security was due to the increasing strength of a criminal gang in the area who imposed their will through threatened - rather than actual - violence. The drop in violence corresponded with a drop in civilian security. On the other hand, an institution such as a marketplace or a school that continues to function during times of war may provide one element of peacetime life and soften one dimension of the effects of war, but do not necessarily provide civilians protection from violence.

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2 Discussion, October 2007.
In the context of a local community, peace can be understood to represent a Weberian ideal-type. No political society can guarantee absolute security, let alone meet the boundless exigencies of positive peace and social well-being. More useful is the concern with relative peace -- communities where peace is relatively higher than would otherwise be expected. Thus for the purpose of this study, I define peace in two dimensions: the presence of relative security and the presence of social services. In so doing, I extend the definition beyond the preservation of social services and the maintenance of political order, as Menkhaus does, to also consider factors related to the sustainability of the peaceful arrangement including popular participation and economic wellbeing.

To measure "peace," I will use the format of the U.S. Institute of Peace's working group on Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction, which considers progress in four dimensions: governance and participation, security, justice and the rule of law, and social and economic well-being. However, in the absence of well-developed field observations of the legal and justice-oriented functions during periods of instability, and particularly in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where this study focuses, this important, though least-reported, element falls outside the scope of the present work. It is worth emphasizing that as conceived by USIP and used here, represent dimensions of progress toward peace, and do not set a fixed threshold for a binary opposition of peace vs. not-peace.

Note that these are dimensions in which progress should be measured, rather than a checklist of thresholds that must exist for peace to be present. In presenting these
dimensions, I do not attempt to also present a “scale” or relative weighting of dimension, in relation to the others. Progress in, for example, social and economic well-being can be considered progress toward peace; deteriorating security conditions indicates movement away from peace. In a situation where economic well-being is improving, but security is deteriorating, it is as senseless to consider whether progress in one dimension might outweigh the other as to consider whether a patient with tuberculosis and leukemia is getting “healthier” when one condition improves and the other deteriorates. Progress toward peace, like health, is thus defined as progress along at least some of these indicators, without deterioration on any others.

Also note that these dimensions of peace refer to manifestations of peace within the community. They do not consider the contribution of the community to overall peace or conflict resolution, which is outside the scope of this paper. For example, they do not require that the community remains neutral vis-à-vis the major cleavages, be completely free of arms, or refrain from participating in the war economy, but instead focuses on dynamics internal to the community.

**Defining Local Leadership.**

The second definitional challenge surrounds the question of what constitutes "local" peace. Mitchell's study of "Zones of Peace" in Colombia grows out of a European Union-backed program that transferred resources and provided technical advice to communities designating themselves as peace zones. Other examples of direct international
engagement would consist of areas where security is guaranteed by substantial
peacekeeping troop deployment, such as the aforementioned Balkan "zones of peace."
Similarly, communities where progress toward peace was due largely to the initiative of
humanitarian actors, even where assistance is channeled through locally-organized relief
committees should be excluded as non-locally led.

I do not exclude all areas where international agencies are operating. The presence an
international aid presence may itself serve as an indicator of the relative degree of
security in the region, and the role of local authorities in attracting and managing aid
resources speaks to the capacity of local institutions' performance in the fields of
governance and social welfare mentioned above. The central distinction is one of local
vs. international-led processes, and the origin of the peace-generating initiatives.

A second category of non-local processes that must be excluded are those where local
authorities represent an extension of outside administrative structures, whether from
government or quasi-governmental rebel administrations. While this does not exclude
processes led by authorities holding titular formal offices, the focus of the study remains
on the preservation of peace in areas in which the State is not present. Thus, cases where
local authorities are dependent on external sources for financing or personnel (for
example, teachers supplied by the ministry of education, etc) are excluded.

**Research Design.**
Schnabel (2001) argues that a research design in a conflict-prone setting must fulfill two, often contradictory, criteria: it must produce information that is practical, timely, and contextually specific in order to inform high-quality programming in each conflict-affected area. At the same time it must be theory-generating in order to inform prescriptions for future interventions and promote knowledge of best practices more generally. In other words, an ethical study of a contemporary armed conflict must be sensitive to local complexities in accurately describing and capturing circumstances in order to provide insight into a present crisis, it must simultaneously seek universal causal elements in order to contribute to the understanding and prevention of future crises in very different geographic, cultural, and historical contexts. To serve these two aims, I will employ a structured focused-comparison (SFC) research design to highlight the specific circumstances of North Kivu globally and Butembo specifically, while exploring causes of conflict and local peace in generalizable terms.\(^3\)

Originally developed to produce rigorous, policy relevant, research in the field of international relations, this model improves on the traditionally nonsystematic and descriptive approach to case studies of localized peace within peace studies. An SFC model is characterized by generating a systematic (structured) cluster of non-context-specific questions, related to the specific features under examination (focused), and adapted to the data available in the local and global cases.

The strength of this model lies in its adaptability to the wide variations in available data and conditions across cases, ensuring local significance. Although the same “questions” will be asked of both the case of North Kivu globally and the Butembo case specifically, the data collected to answer each question varies according to the availability of data. This approach both allows the researcher to address the local context of each community under study, but avoid the hazard of generating findings so specific to a given context so as to not be useful beyond its immediate scope.

Because the scope of this study is small, the systematized battery of questions is selected in order to promote ideas for theory-generation, to be more comprehensively tested later, and thus should be inherently expandable to other cases. Although this study will focus only on cases from two countries selected at least in part upon their humanitarian and political significance at the moment of writing, the same questions can be asked of similar cases to broaden the generalizability of the claims and allow repeated tests of external validity.

The SFC approach will compare data from the target community with that from the surrounding area. Data from the surrounding area will draw both on case studies of nearby areas, as well as province-wide aggregated data to establish a baseline against which the performance of the target communities can be measured. Through this comparison, I will establish the ways in which the wartime experience within Butembo,
differed from what might be expected based on the events and effects of the war and state collapse on surrounding communities.

Rival Explanations for Peace.

The data provided through this inquiry will allow us to explore a series of hypotheses of how local peace might originate. Each explanation locates the establishment of a zone of peace in a different level of analysis: at the elite, community, or structural level. Below, I lay out the logic behind each of these explanations origins of local peace, and the expected observations that each implies.

One explanation holds that the absence of violence in an area is due to a strategic decision by elites avoid the harmful effects of war. This hypothesis inverts Azam's game-theoretic model of engagement in looting behavior, by focusing on the strategic conditions in which communities seek peace. If this were the case, we would expect to see that such communities were numerically weak, geographically vulnerable, or lacked an opportunity to achieve a likely victory. We might also expect that these areas would seek to benefit from the wartime economy.

A variation of this hypothesis focuses on the production of a valuable, but fragile resource that would easily be compromised by violence. For example, Mary Anderson (1999) observed that during the conflicts in Afghanistan, areas surrounding power plants were left untouched in the fighting, due to a consensus on all sides that they electrical
grid needed to be preserved. John Young reports that a similar consensus was reached made a similar judgment with regard to the Ar-Rosseire dam in Sudan, and it was reported that in the Casamance secession movement in southern Senegal, both sides went to great lengths to ensure that areas vital to the tourist economy were not affected.

A second explanation focuses on local empowerment, and begins from the assumption that civilians are typically more averse to violence than elites. This observation is made by Mitchell, who argues that the peace zones in Colombia were established at the grassroots level by communities who witnessed the horror of war. This notion that the empowerment of community voices reduces the propensity for violence also forms the basis of most peacebuilding interventions centered on building civil society, as highlighted for example, by Mark Bradbury in a Rift Valley Institute "Baseline Study" on local peacemaking in Sudan. This explanation challenges Kalyvas's argument that strong social capital and a history of collective action in a region increases, rather than decreases, the likelihood that violence will take place. If such a “bottom-up,” process took place in this case, we would expect to observe relatively strong civic engagement prior to the outbreak of violence, as well as see improvement in the dimension of civic participation, as discussed above.

A third explanation might be that these communities, while geographically located in a zone of civil conflict were nonetheless remote from the central contentions of the conflict and thus were simply bypassed by armed actors. This argument is put forward by anthropologists Trinidade and Castro, who explain that the 2006 outburst of
ethnoregional violence in East Timor was largely confined to areas surrounding the capital, because even though the central points of contention existed throughout the country, individuals in rural areas did not perceive a relationship between conflict in the capital city and conflict in their regions. Philip Verwimp makes a similar argument with respect to the spread of violence during the Rwandan genocide, noting that primarily middle class regions saw dramatically lower incidences of anti-Tutsi violence than wealthy or poorer regions.

The clearest example of this is regions where rough terrain or other geographical features set these regions apart from the conflict. For example, Buhaug and Røm argue that extremely mountainous sections of regions in conflict have lower levels of violence. This does not necessarily contradict the evidence presented by Fearon and Laitin that mountainous terrain increases the likelihood of conflict at the national level, but suggests that pockets of greater security are more likely to exist in inaccessible areas.

**Empirical Overview.**

The Democratic Republic of Congo represents an important case for such a study of what happens within zones of instability. One major survey of the academic literature on governance in the DRC found that “the central problem of state building is one of political and economic integration in the face of deeply rooted regional and local
identities, networks of power and patterns of patronage. The level of fragmentation—geographic and political—within the DRC provides a window through which to see how local political structures respond to war and state collapse. For the purpose of the present study, Butembo, a moderately-sized town, whose wartime experience differed profoundly from the surrounding area, was selected, due largely to the availability of data. Although it falls outside the scope of this study, a more comprehensive survey of the effect of war on the constellation of local political cultures and systems across the vast country would provide critical and valuable insight into understanding war and peace more generally.

North Kivu, one of the Democratic Republic of Congo's eastern provinces emerged as a flashpoint for instability and violence over the fourteen years since the collapse of the Mobutist state. Rich in fertile land and mining potential, and bordering both Rwanda and Uganda, it was the site of refugee inflows from Rwanda following the genocide in that country, and the site of large-scale fighting during both the 1996 and 1998 Congo wars, pitting local militia against regular army troops and forces backed by both Rwanda and Uganda. Insecurity persists in the region despite the recent elections, and portions of the province remain outside governmental control.

Within North Kivu, often referred to as the “crucible” of the conflict in the DRC, Butembo represents something of a departure from the broader provincial narrative. Prior to the war, the city was merely a "village." However, strong institutional arrangements by town leaders, in negotiation with Ugandan government troops and other armed factions

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allowed the town to pass through the war without allying with government or Uganda-backed rebel forces. Local agents collected taxes, repaired roads and organized local defense forces to provide security, in the absence both of international assistance and the government. Butembo has emerged as a major center of cross border trade during the war, and appears to have economically grown to be a regional hub, with international flights within the region, and reportedly as far away as Dubai.\footnote{Le Monde (Paris). “A Béni en RDC, la prospère entente entre grandes fortunes et rebellions.” 2/20/03}
Chapter Two: Butembo’s Divergence

1. Background

Fall of Mobutu.

In 1996, Mobutu's Zairian government crumbled as the demoralized Forces Armées Zairoises (FAZ) deserted and fled before advancing rebel forces backed by Rwanda and Uganda. Led by Laurent Kabila, the advancing rebels were for the most part greeted with open arms by a population frustrated and disenchanted by the country’s economic stagnation, stalled democratic transition, and increasingly corrupt and erratic rule by the longtime dictator. However, for many parts of the country's east, the toppling of Mobutu’s government only marked the final stage of the evaporation of state authority.

Governing a diverse country with over 700 local languages stretching across a difficult terrain of rainforests and mountains the size of the eastern United States, poses a daunting challenge. It is a challenge that Belgian colonial authorities were uninterested in addressing. Allocated to Belgium in 1885 at the Berlin Conference, the territory became the personal dominion of the Belgian king.

The population movements that began with Belgian colonialism and were furthered under Mobutist nationalism gradually began to erode localized ethnic
identities and create linkages along regional lines and linguistic families present in the Congo -- Lingala, Tshiluba, Kikongo and Swahili. However, due to the greater orientation of the Kivu provinces into East Africa, localized "kingdoms" and traditional structures, organized under a system of Mwamis, or traditional chiefs drawn along both ethnic and geographic lines retained greater political influence than broader social convergence in the South and West of the country.

As a result, Mobutu viewed the east with generalized suspicion. While his kleptocratic government benefited from the extraction of mineral wealth from the Kivu provinces, the main centers of his extractive operations hinged in the diamond producing areas surrounding Mbuji-Mayi, and mineral producing regions of Katanga. During the first 10 years of Mobutu’s rule, which saw great strides toward national integration and development, the Kivus were largely absent from the political scene. Historically integrated eastwards, Kivutian elites did not emerge on the national political scene until the mid-1970s, coinciding with the collapse of the statebuilding project. However, the Zairianization project of the mid-1970s turned much of the white-owned investments in North Kivu over to local elites. Many of the beneficiaries were ethnic Tutsi who had migrated from Rwanda, encouraged by Belgian authorities. This contributed to ethnic tensions within the province, and encouraged the development of a political elite, which earned considerable autonomy over local affairs as the Mobutist state weakened.

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By the end of the 1980s, local leaders had become so prominent within what was then a unified Kivu province, that the province was targeted for the first experiment in decentralization, and was divided into the present configuration of North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema provinces. Within the newly-created North Kivu province, Butembo remained a hinterland, geographically isolated from the new provincial capital in Goma, while rwandaphones retained substantial influence in local affairs. Liberalizing reforms aimed at encouraging public participation at the national level, as well as increasing competition for land, had a profound effect in North Kivu. The former allowed a popular movement against the Rwandaphone community to strip them of their citizenship rights, the latter led the the first outbreak of intercommunal violence, outside the control of the state. The “Masisi war,” described in detail below, demonstrated the impotence of the Zairian state in the region, and set the precedent for the large-scale violence that would engulf the region.

The Congo Wars.

The Masisi war, which lasted between 1991 and 1992 was sparked when rwandaphone communities, after two generations living in the now-DRC began to refuse the "tribute" payments requested by Nande and other "kingdoms" in whose land they resided. In the context of a gradual increase in the population, and influence of the better-educated Rwandaphone community, the refusal of tribute payments sparked a violent reaction from autochthonous communities in the territory of Masisi, within North Kivu. The outbreak of conflict between congolese communities coincided with the increasing activity of
Ugandan rebel groups who had been based in North Kivu since the fall of the Idi Amin dictatorship, and cross-border raids by the Ugandan Army, the Uganda People’s Defense Force (UPDF). The impotence of the unpaid, ill-trained and demoralized Forces Armées Zairoises against this rising insecurity signaled the need for increased self-reliance, and zones of insecurity in Masisi and elsewhere began to isolate the Beni-Butembo region from the provincial capital of Goma.

Intercommunal violence in North Kivu was accentuated with the influx of nearly two million Rwandan refugees into the eastern DRC after the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) ousted the genocidal regime. The influx of refugees, many of whom had close ties to the Hutu extremist government further militarized ethnic identities in the Kivus. Armed groups within the refugee population preyed upon Congolese civilians, particularly targeting those of rwandophone Tutsi origin. The inability and unwillingness of the Mobutu government to address the predation upon Congolese Tutsi, or to confront the rebel groups that sought to overthrow the Rwandan and Ugandan governments ultimately prompted these countries, in 1996, to back anti-Mobutu rebel leader Laurent Kabila, whose Alliances des Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation (AFDL) rebel group quickly swept across the country and ousted the longtime ruler.

After Kabila’s ascension, relations with his Ugandan and Rwandan patrons soured. Kabila made little progress in eliminating the Kivu-based rebel groups that threatened his neighbors. In August of 1998, a second attempt by the Rwandan and Ugandan alliance to topple the Kinshasa government was launched, under the banner of the Rassemblement
Congolais pour la Democratie (RCD). However, unlike the AFDL rebellion, the RCD encountered far stiffer resistance from the Kinshasa-government, which this time received support from its neighbors, most notably Angola and Zimbabwe. In May 1999, the RCD movement splintered, as Uganda- and Rwanda-backed troops clashed over control of the strategic town of Kisangani.

A deadly three-way stalemate ensued, as the country was divided into zones of Ugandan influence in the North, Rwandan influence in the East, and government control in the west and south. Despite the relative stagnation along the frontlines of the conflict, the emergence of rival factions within each zone of control, and nationalist Mai-Mai insurgencies in zones of Rwandan influence led to a humanitarian crisis and high levels of violence and suffering throughout the rebel-controlled regions.

2. Was there "peace" in Butembo relative to the rest of N Kivu/what might have been expected?

| Was there more security in Butembo than what might have been expected? |
|---|---|
| Butembo represented a strategic target for armed factions during the war. | Butembo was continually within the sphere of influence of one or another configuration of armed groups. Some |

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<tr>
<th>Armed Group</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<td>FAZ</td>
<td>Through Nov. 96</td>
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<td>ADF</td>
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<td>AFDL</td>
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<td>UPDF</td>
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<td>RCD &amp; RCD-K/ML</td>
<td>1998- 2005</td>
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<td>Mai-Mai</td>
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<td>FARDC</td>
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group, such as the RCD-K/ML and local Mai Mai enjoyed support from some Butembans, while others such as the Ugandan ADF rebels used the market to finance their activities. While the city did not remain neutral, or entirely free from clashes between belligerent factions, the actions of armed groups within the city were constrained by civilian leaders.

Near the Ugandan border, Butembo straddled a major trading route for commercial goods entering the eastern Congo, and for gold, coltan and other minerals from the interior reaching East African ports and destinations further afield. The Rwenda airfield, outside of town, was a prime objective during the 1996 war, as the best developed between Zaire’s eastern border and the major objective of Kisangani in the interior. As a result, many of the armed groups operating in eastern Congo were interested in controlling the city, and thus controlling over the region’s transportation network -- whether to control tax revenue from trade along the roads or to resupply fighting forces in other areas.

**Armed Groups.**

As a result, multiple armed groups operated in Butembo following the collapse of the Mobutu government. Violence erupted in the early 1990s as unpaid soldiers looted, and Ugandan ADF rebels used rear bases near Butembo to attack that country. The Ugandan Army, known as the Uganda People’s Defense Force (UPDF) and Laurent Kabila’s anti-Mobutu alliance, the AFDL, took Butembo in November 1996, after it was looted and abandoned by retreating FAZ troops. During the 1998 war, it was occupied by troops of
the Rassemblement des Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD), and following the division of RCD, it became, along with neighboring Beni, the seat of the RCD-Kisangani/Movement de Liberation (RCD-K/ML). Led by Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, son of a prominent Nande opposition figure assassinated by the Mobutu government, the RCD-K/ML enjoyed considerable, although not universal, support in the area.

Mai-Mai militia, traditional warriors often lightly armed but believing to possess magic powers, were recruited and mobilized by the AFDL to supplement their regular troops in the region. Undisciplined and possessing a loosely regionalist ideology, the Mai Mai quickly escaped the control of their AFDL colleagues. In March 1998, prior to the Second War, Mai Mai attacked the “foreign” AFDL fighters, most of whom hailed from the southern Katanga province. From 1998 onward, Mai Mai militias formed an unpredictable and increasingly powerful force in the region, existing in uneasy and ever-changing alliances with more regularized armed groups, while ideologically committed to expelling foreigners from the region.

Following the 1998 invasion, the city of Butembo remained under the control of the RCD, then the RCD-K/ML faction, after the RCD split into Rwanda- and Uganda-backed factions during fighting over the central city of Kisangani. Despite threats from other RCD factions, the RCD-K/ML and their UPDF allies were not challenged for control of the city.
However, dissatisfaction with the RCD-K/ML’s close alignment with the UPDF, and conflict between local commanders over “taxation” of the gold trade led to clashes between the RCD-K/ML and Mai Mai groups, the latter of whom were sometimes joined by dissenters within the RCD-K/ML and ADF. Although clashes were more frequent in the rural areas surrounding the city, violence broke out on several occasions within the city itself, and at the nearby Rwenda airstrip, where the UPDF had established their base. A complete list of these clashes appears at right.

The RCD-K/ML enjoyed support from some elements of the city elite, who feared the exactions of undisciplined Mai Mai and renegade UPDF soldiers, many of whom were engaged in private business and extortion. Nonetheless, the RCD-K/ML engaged in many of the practices for which the Congo wars have become notorious, including the widespread recruiting of child soldiers (comprising nearly 25% of their forces, according to one estimate), rape, and human rights violations. The gravest violations occurred in rural areas, and further north, as they sought to retain control of the Ituri region through alliances with ethnic militias.

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7 The Monitor (Kampala). “Shattered Innocence: Children in War.” 2/21/02
Civilian Influence.

However, despite several instances of fighting in Butembo, visitors observed that city residents enjoyed a certain degree of security. The Economist wrote in 2003 that Butembo was “hardly a paradise, but it is peaceful and orderly.” Similar sentiments were echoed by other foreign journalists. In March 2002, just several months after the worst period of violence in the city, Butembo was selected to host a major conference of 1,000 civil society leaders on peace in the DRC, including 350 travelers from Europe. Among the reasons that the organizers cited for moving the conference to Butembo (from RCD-G controlled Bukavu) was the relative security and lack of interference from the authorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Armed Groups</th>
<th>Casualties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 1996</td>
<td>FAZ troops loot and abandon Butembo to the AFDL</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1997</td>
<td>Mai Mai clash with AFDL troops of Tutsi origin</td>
<td>26, mostly civilian and Mai Mai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar-Apr. 1998</td>
<td>Mai Mai and ADFL clash with Katangan AFDL Troops</td>
<td>More than 220 Mai Mai, many unarmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 1999</td>
<td>Mai Mai attack UPDF at airstrip</td>
<td>More than 200, mostly Mai Mai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 2000 - Jan. 2001</td>
<td>Mai Mai and RCD-K/ML clash with UPDF across the city</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 2001</td>
<td>Mai Mai clash with RCD-K/ML</td>
<td>At least five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun.- Jul. 2001</td>
<td>Mai Mai attack airstrip</td>
<td>20, mostly Mai Mai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 2001</td>
<td>Mai Mai clash with RCD-K/ML</td>
<td>50, including key RCD-K/ML leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2002</td>
<td>Mai Mai attack RCD-K/ML and UPDF at airstrip</td>
<td>Many dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 2003</td>
<td>Mai Mai clash with RCD-K/ML</td>
<td>35, including 11 civils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 2005</td>
<td>Mai Mai clash with RCD-K/ML</td>
<td>10 Mai Mai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Civil society groups, led by Catholic Bishops Kateliko and then Paluku, played active roles in reining in insecurity caused by armed groups. In 1994, as the Congolese state began to disintegrate and fighting erupted on the Ugandan border, a delegation of leaders from Butembo, led by Bishop Kateliko and the town Commissioner traveled to the border regions to attempt to mediate a truce.\(^8\) This exercise was repeated in 1997, when ADF rebels kidnapped several Ugandan seminarians, and the Butembo church was called to mediate for their release.\(^9\) In 1999, the mayor of Butembo and civic leaders wrote a remarkable letter to the RCD-K/ML leadership asking that the UPDF be withdrawn from the city, the RCD-K/ML stop harassing suspected sympathizers of other rebel groups, and that the town’s administration be left to local civilian authorities. Former Bishop Kateliko and Bishop Paluku repeated the message that troops must be restrained and respect human rights in a meeting with RCD-K/ML leader Wamba dia Wamba the following year.

The most remarkable attempt to rein in the actions of armed groups in the area came in February and March 2001, in the run-up to the International Civil Society Conference. Bishop Paluku made a series of speeches that were sharply critical of the Mouvement du Liberation Congolais (MLC), a Uganda-backed rebel alliance between troops loyal to businessman Jean-Pierre Bemba and the RCD-K/ML. Paluku cited the heavy-handedness of the MLC forces, and called for Butembo to be “liberated from liberation.” He especially criticized the MLC for militarizing the city, and building garrisons in agricultural regions around the city, which increased the likelihood these regions would

be targeted by local Mai Mai, and thus jeopardize Butembo’s food security.\textsuperscript{10} Bemba responded quickly to the Bishop’s criticism, publicly apologized for the actions of his troops, and withdrew from the offending agricultural areas.

Under pressure from a coalition of civil society groups, the bishop, and traditional leaders, the MLC and the key Mai Mai groups around Butembo agreed to a ceasefire. The peace agreement in the Butembo region between Mai Mai and rebels threatened the broader configuration of warring parties and created a first step a local resolution to the clashes between RCD and Mai Mai throughout the country. Mai Mai signatories were condemned by important leaders of the Mai Mai movement for their “betrayal” of the cause.\textsuperscript{11} It was also sharply criticized by the RCD-G, who were locked in a battle against Mai Mai in South Kivu. Although the agreement did not hold after Ugandan forces began a hasty withdrawal the following month, upsetting the balance of power throughout North Kivu and Ituri, it was among the first agreements to bridge the RCD-Mai Mai gap.

Beyond the clashes of armed groups discussed above, there are indicators that the general level of security within Butembo exceeded that of surrounding areas. One traveler marveled at the town operating as a "city of 400,000 without a police force."\textsuperscript{12} While there was no police force charged with maintaining public order, the town established a Crisis Committee, to oversee the humanitarian and security consequences of the withdrawal of the FAZ in 1996. Self-defense patrols were organized to protect

\textsuperscript{10} BBC Monitoring. “Catholic bishop decries ‘Growing Militarization’ of rebel-run area.” 2/23/01
\textsuperscript{11} IRIN. “Mayi-Mayi leader ‘Unhappy’ with disengagement.” 4/2/01
\textsuperscript{12} Swift, E.M. “A float through hell; a first descent of the Lindi River became a harrowing journey in the heart of the Congo.” Sports Illustrated. 7/1/02.
neighborhoods at night. By contrast, in neighboring Beni, protests erupted when joint military-police patrols were reinstated, with civilians complaining that the official patrols were less effective and more likely to abuse the population than neighborhood patrols.

**Strategic Violence.**

Furthermore, strategic violence, such as political assassinations and grotesque killings were relatively low. During the war, according to media reports, seven key Congolese individuals were assassinated in Butembo: two high-ranking rebel officers, three Mai-Mai leaders, one former Mobutist minister, and one businessman involved in gun and gold smuggling. In addition, one prominent UPDF officer was killed, and several Ugandan ADF commanders. One of these deaths (the former Mobutist minister) was caused by torture, and there were several reported cases of bodies being mutilated or displayed following clashes between Mai Mai and UPDF troops.

Although this level of political assassination might be considered to be high, it is noteworthy that of those targeted for strategic violence, there was little violence against or outspoken civilians, with the exception of one former government minister. Certainly this can count both ways – it might be assumed that civilians are cowed into silence during times of war, and thus less strategic as targets. However, it is worth noting that the assassination of non-military political figures was widespread in other regions of the war-torn East. For example, six humanitarian workers were assassinated in neighboring RCD-K/ML controlled Ituri district, church leaders were targeted for assassination in Bukavu,
and numerous political executions were reported throughout the region. The targeting of civil society members for torture and assassination was well documented by Human Rights Watch\textsuperscript{13} and other watchdog NGOs. Body mutilation and torture of civilian leaders, was similarly widespread, particularly in zones of Mai Mai activity. In Northern Katanga, one of the areas after North Kivu where Mai Mai units were the most active, an IPIS research team documented over 20 traditional chiefs assassinated or tortured.\textsuperscript{14}

In short, while far from peaceful, and the scene of several battles between armed groups, Butembo experienced a greater degree of security than what might be expected. In a number of instances armed groups, particularly the MLC, responded to calls for restraint to ease the impact of the war on civilians. Unlike throughout much of the rest of North Kivu, and other areas where the principal armed groups in Butembo were active (Ituri with the RCD-K/ML and Northern Katanga for the Mai Mai), violence against civilians was observed at a much lower rate.

**Did citizens exert greater influence over governance in Butembo than in the rest of North Kivu?**

Governance in wartime Butembo revolved around three sets of closely intertwined institutions: the Catholic Church, the business community, and the various armed actors in the town. However, as Timothy Raeymaker observes, the armed groups (Mai Mai, \textsuperscript{13} More detailed examples of threats against civil society were recorded by Human Rights watch in the 2000 publication “Eastern Congo Ravaged.” Published online at: http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/drc/Drc005-05.htm 16/05/2000. \textsuperscript{14} A detailed description of this phenomenon appears in Spittaels, S. and Hilgert F. (2007) Mapping Conflict Motives: Katanga. Antwerp, IPIS Research.
RCD-ML, and governmental troops) were the least effective of these institutions. By and large, the RCD-ML and Government authorities “hovered” above local leadership, which was the primary vehicle for organizing the community and population. The Mai Mai, on the other hand, relied on local leaders for arms and guidance, and were closely intertwined with Church and business interests. Although the divorce of the state (and rebel-run “para-states”) from its people had been characteristic of Congolese political life dating to the Belgian colonial period, what is unique about developments in Butembo is the ability of civilian institutions to constrain the actions of armed actors. It should be noted, though, that the civilian elite formed a closed, tightly knit and “oligarchic” system, channeling public participation through a system of patrons. Nonetheless, basic freedoms exceeded those in other parts of the province. Civil society, often backed by the Church and relatively independent media operated throughout the periods of instability.

The Catholic Church, particularly through the role of the Bishops, described in part above played a key role in providing governance within Butembo. The role of the Bishop, both under Kateliko as well as Paluku offered a sort of ecclesiastical "bully pulpit" through which the Catholic Church exerted a moral voice. Although as Reyntjens notes, the Church's influence within the DRC had fragmented along regional and ethnic lines during the war, the Bishops within Butembo served key roles in convening local meetings to discuss social services, such as the schools, but at least equally served as the representative of the community to the outside world. For example, besides criticizing Bemba's troops' proximity to Butembo, Paluku attracted even greater international recognition for his denunciation of alleged war crimes, and accused the MLC and Bemba
of engaging in cannibalism, earning him the nickname "bishop of war." According to Kabamba, who interviewed Paluku, the Bishop's denunciation of Bemba and the cannibalism charges represented a strategic calculation. The Bishop allegedly recognized that the MLC intended to attack Butembo in order to seize much-needed resources to support the rebellion, and that neither the Mai Mai nor the RCD-K/ML would be able to prevent the advance. However, the international attention and condemnation drawn by the cannibalism charges managed to effectively halt the MLC advance.\textsuperscript{15}

In 2003, as RCD-G troops aimed to take advantage of fighting in Ituri and divisions within the RCD-K/ML, the Bishop played a key role in guaranteeing that the attracting outside attention, warning of millions of refugees fleeing Beni and Butembo, and an ensuing humanitarian crisis. Under international pressure, leaders of both RCD factions ultimately came to terms that allowed the RCD-K/ML to retain the city and halted the RCD-G advance.

Alongside the church, the business community played a key role in establishing local governance as well. One observer noted that, due primarily to the trade in gold, coltan and other minerals, Butembo is home to 12 millionaires (in U.S. dollars)\textsuperscript{16}. Benefiting from diaspora networks throughout East Africa and into Asia, Nande families were able to accumulate large amounts of capital by trading in markets as far afield as Jakarta, Hong Kong, and Dubai. Their reinvestment in Asian consumer goods destined for local markets led to a two-way trade that supported the city's economic expansion.

\textsuperscript{15} See the talk delivered by Patience Kabamba entitled “Capital Accumulation and Emergence of New Power Elite in South Africa and the DRC,” on 8/22/07. Video is available at www.wilsoncenter.org/africa
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
However, this trade relied upon two sensitive elements: the maintenance of a favorable trading climate in Butembo itself, and the requisite security to move minerals from the interior to Butembo and across the Ugandan border and to allow goods to be shipped in the other direction. These two motivations required significant investments on the part of the business community, organized under the local chapter of the FEC (Fédération des Entreprises Congolaises), in governance. Their substantial resources allowed the business community to play a dominant role in the organization of local governance. One observer lamented the extreme influence of the business community, complaining that "these traders make the law, they decide who leads the rebellion, who leads the police. Those who go against their wishes will find troubling obstacles."\(^{17}\)

To control movement outside of the city, traders adopted a system known as "prépayage" whereby 20% of the nominal tax was paid directly as taxes in advance to armed groups controlling the roads. For the merchants this both saved considerable amounts of money, and afforded them some degree of political neutrality -- whereas taxes paid in sum to one party would inevitably tie the merchants to that "camp," the criteria of paying along the road made for a greater degree of impartiality in the overall political scene. The adverse effect of the prépayage system, is that by recognizing de-facto control by any armed group, it encouraged fighting over territory between commanders and subcommanders within the RCD-K/ML as different groups jockeyed for control of the road system. This led to both high levels of suffering in rural areas, and greatly weakened the RCD-K/ML

\(^{17}\) Le Monde. “A Béni en RDC, la prospère entente entre grandes fortunes et rebellions.” 2/20/03
For example, in 2006 the FEC "decided to supplement the state" and so constructed 20 bridges throughout the Beni-Butembo area, and renovated many miles of roads. The roads and bridges would be established as toll roads jointly administered with the provincial government. At the time, a local newspaper speculated the primary motivation was the frustration with having their fancy cars ruined by poor road conditions. Whether true or not, this perception shed some light on the ambivalence felt toward the altruism of the major traders.

The third group that played a central role in local governance was the active civil society sector. Drawing on the resources and instigation of the other two groups, civil society in Butembo emerged as a dominant force in the political life of the town. One sign of the influence of civil society was the inclusion of elders and youth associations and women's groups in the talks between the RCD-K/ML and Mai Mai. These organizations served as witnesses to a pledge by RCD-K/ML leader Mbusa Nyamwisi that the rebel group would represent the interests of the community, including the Mai Mai during the Intercongolese Dialogues, a series of national conferences aimed at developing a legal framework to aid the resolution of the Congo war at a national level. Because civil society representatives would be invited as well, they could offer important guarantees about Nyamwisi’s follow-through.

Civil society organizations did, in some cases, work to check the power of other elites. For example, after a teacher was murdered by a police officer, civil society groups lobbied the business community to exert pressure on the police for greater security and
called a general strike. When an official from the taxation agency came to survey the local administration’s collection of taxes and customs duties during the transition process, civil society complained about the mayor’s corruption, particularly in his management of the television station.

The inclusion of all of these groups did not necessarily lead to inclusive governance, instead creating a closed political system. According to one Nande leader from a different region, the city is essentially a "hostage of 10 families; everyone else is a peasant."

Butembo has a reputation for being hostile to outsiders, not only rwandaphones or those other ethnic groups, but also of Nande from other regions. Often described as an "extended village" and as being markedly less cosmopolitan relative to its size and importance. One former U.N. official described the town as a place where people say "we" instead of "I." This high degree of social cohesion facilitated a united front in requesting the withdrawal of the UPDF or denouncing human rights violations, but it also gave rise to what one observer described as a "non-Liberal and socially exclusive political economy." Other Nande groups, as well as other autochthonous North Kivutian ethnic groups may feel excluded from political and cases economic life, but as in much of the rest of the DRC, a strong anti-Tutsi, anti-Banyamulenge sentiment courses throughout public life.

Furthermore, the prépayage system, described above, exempted merchants from paying the taxes that would ordinarily support public services. This did not have a tremendous impact on public services relative to other regions; according to the RCD’s stated policy,

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18 Meeting with former U.N. official, July 2006.
only 20% of all tax receipts were to be returned to communities to provide local services (with the rest going to war expenses, supporting the movement itself) and siphoned into leaders’ personal accounts. After the funds were finally transferred, even this 20% figure was rarely met.19

While the local government collected few taxes, and received virtually no support from the armed groups benefiting from the prépayage system, they received considerable amount of support from the business community itself. FEC directly contributed to the local administration in many ways, some of which are described below, including building offices for the local administration, building and maintaining roads, and providing electricity to schools, hospitals and streetlights. This support could be said to be relatively ad hoc, unaccountable and at the sole discretion of business leaders themselves.

However, the business leaders' investment in social services for the community represented more than simple "handouts" given out as charity, but rather represented a calculated effort to win the support of the community. Kabamba notes that unlike elsewhere in Congo where wealthy business leaders invest outside of their home community (and frequently outside of the country), the reinvestment of the Butembo business community in purchasing land and increasing business in the region has meant that they are dependent on the support of the local population for the security of their investment. As a result, Kabamba talks of the business elite as being "embedded" in the local community, and recognizing that the security of their accumulated wealth relies on

19 BBC Monitoring. “Rebel forces said to be financing war effort with gold, minerals.” 2/16/99
the communities continued support. He says, comparing the wealthy Nande merchants of Butembo with the wealthy Baluba traders in diamond-rich Kasai province:

The difference is that the Baluba invest abroad, while the Nande invest at home. If you find a huge diamond that you can sell in Kasai, you can sell it for money, but it doesn't force you to stay there. But in Butembo you cannot become rich without a web of relations that allows you to extract resources. 20

As a result of their investment in the region, the community exerted influence over the contributions of the business people to broader development. While traders were not held accountable to community members themselves, they were nonetheless held accountable to local elites, such as the Bishop and other leaders, as well as the general desire for esteem. Kabamba notes for example, that when traders traveled on business to Dubai, the Bishop would present them with a list of books to purchase as a gift to the local Catholic university during their travels. These orders were almost always filled by the traders, as a matter of pride.

At the time of Mobutu's fall the independent media was sorely underdeveloped in Butembo, like in much of the eastern DRC following the toppling of Mobutu. However, Butembo was home to one of the few major independent radio stations during the war -- Radio Moto, which was privately owned. Alongside the Catholic Radio Mandeleo in Bukavu, it was one of the only stations in the East not to support any armed group. Some intimidation did occur - for example, the RCD-K/ML-run radio station was attacked and sabotaged on several occasions. However, the sacking of this radio station might be better

20 Extracted from Kabamba, P. “Capital Accumulation and Emergence of New Power Elite in South Africa and the DRC,” on 8/22/07
considered a military, rather than a governance event, given its ties to the rebel movement. Furthermore, while it may be considered a blow against the freedom of the press, given its close relationship to the armed rebel movement, it should not be considered as a major setback to citizen participation.

**Were Butembans better off, socially and economically, than other North Kivutians?**

Perhaps the most remarkable facet of the relative peace established in Butembo, when considering the impact on the lives of Congolese, was the preservation of basic services available in Butembo. The hollowing and collapse of the Congolese state, followed by the successive rebellions had predictably disastrous effects on the nation’s social service delivery systems, both governmental and non-governmental. By the late 1970s, Zaire was considered to have a model healthcare system for developing nations, attaining a 95% vaccination rate against childhood diseases, eradicating smallpox, and employing nearly 500,000 healthcare workers. (Putzell et al: 20) Healthcare coverage collapsed with the rest of the state, leading to crude mortality rates in excess of
2.1 per 1,000 per month -- nearly twice the average of sub-saharan Africa. The chart at right demonstrates the reversal of the dramatic gains made during the period of state collapse and war.\textsuperscript{21}

The collapse of health infrastructure and rising mortality was felt particularly in the eastern provinces, where insecurity and violence led to dramatic increases in mortality. Although violent deaths increased, the most notable effects of the war lay in the spread of treatable disease due to the unavailability of medicine and medical treatment.

Butembo represented an exception to the generalized collapse of healthcare in Congo’s East. The aforementioned \textit{Lancet}/IRC study found that in 2002 the crude mortality rate in Butembo was the lowest of all of the communities surveyed, at just 0.4 per 1000 per month, less than one-third of the average for poor regions of sub-Saharan Africa, and less than one-fifth of the national rate.\textsuperscript{22} Furthermore, the IRC study period coincided with an escalation in violence in and around the city. Although it is recognized that household surveys tend to underestimate mortality rates in conditions of war induced displacement (since households that suffer most typically abandon their homes), similarly war-affected regions were included in the study, and all had rates that were significantly higher, such as Isiro (2.2/1000) and nearby Kayondo (0.9).\textsuperscript{23}


Medical facilities functioned in Butembo throughout the war. A hospital was built in 1994, drawing on community financing and volunteered labor. A locally constructed hydroelectric dam supplied electricity, and it was supported by the FEC during the war.24 The hospital maintained an intensive care unit that treated victims of violence.

The education system suffered similarly to the healthcare system. Whereas the nation attained 92% primary school enrollment in the late 1960s, it had fallen to 54.5% nationally by 1990, and 34.6% by 1998.25 The drop-off was even more severe in North Kivu. In 2004, the provincial schools inspector noted that all of the province’s schools had been looted during the war, and that the only exception to this systematic looting was Butembo and the provincial capital, Goma, where the schools remained intact.26 A later report claimed that at least some schools were looted in Goma, further setting Butembo apart.27

Schools in Butembo maintained their operations through community participation of both parents’ associations and local leaders, including the Church. Although no revenue was allocated to pay for education, parents paid monthly fees of $1 to primary teachers and $2-$3 to secondary teachers in order to retain them.28 Following the incapacity of the transitional government to pay teacher’s salaries after the war, local teachers and parents met in September 2005 to reinstate locally-supported schooling, whereby the community

26 IRIN. “Special Report On War And Peace in the Kivus” 8/6/04
27 Le Potentiel. ESPP, une rentrée scolaire en deux temps. 9/5/06
28 IRIN. “Special Report On War And Peace in the Kivus” 8/6/04
paid teachers’ salaries. Secondary school fees increased from $17 to $22.50 per trimester, beyond the reach of many students. Nonetheless, Butembo was the only location in North Kivu where schools reopened as scheduled for the first academic year following the DRC’s 2006 elections, and was one of the few cities in all of the Eastern DRC to open schools in time for the start of the academic year in September 2006.

A local parents group frustrated with the use of child soldiers established the Let’s Protect Children Center, which aimed serving child soldiers and children affected by war, and opened in 2002, less than one year after the fiercest fighting between Mai Mai and RCD rebels. Central to the continuation of healthcare and education was PROLEKI, a cooperative of businessmen who, in 1999, constructed hydro-electric power station, even as rival rebel factions contested control over the city. The dam had been promised under the Mobutu government, but following its withdrawal from the region in 1996, a group of entrepreneurs, with the facilitation of religious leaders tendered a contract for the dam, and ultimately hired a South African firm to provide the hydroelectric technology. Besides allowing the business community to establish welding shops and electric grinding mills, the dam also provides street lighting and electricity to city residents at a discounted rate of $5 per month.

Taking Stock

29 Peta, B. The Independent (London). “I can’t remember how many I killed, says boy who begs for forgiveness.” 12/14/02

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Can we say that a relative peace existed in Butembo? In light of the horrifying human suffering, active participation of Butembans in the wider war, and grave human rights abuses, it appears naïve to use the term peace to characterize the city's wartime experience. Nonetheless, if we hold in mind, as Lederach does, the recognition that peace is what is "possible" -- the notion that Peace is an abstract ideal-type, we can discuss peace in relative, rather than absolute terms. Returning to our indicators, we must ask whether each of these was fulfilled in Butembo, relative to the surrounding communities.

From the point of view of security, Butembo was far from secure during the war. Mai Mai, RCD-K/ML and UPDF elements all operated in the city, often simultaneously, and periodically clashed. The pattern of violence that generally pitted Mai Mai against RCD units, across the eastern DRC occurred in Butembo, as elsewhere. Similarly, the commission of war crimes, such as the use of child soldiers, violence against civilians, and rape, for which the DRC has become infamous, did take place in Butembo, as elsewhere. However, from a point of view of law and order, a greater degree of security did exist for ordinary Butembans, as violence was largely manifested between armed groups, and acts against civilians were less widespread than in the rest of North Kivu province.

In dimension of social and economic well-being within Butembo, there is a preponderance of evidence that Butembans were better-off than what would be expected from the experience of surrounding communities. The mortality rate, at 0.4 per 1000 per month was dramatically lower than almost anywhere else in the eastern DRC. The
installation of public electricity and streetlighting, and the construction of roads and dozens of bridges also represent a significant departure from elsewhere in North Kivu, which saw physical infrastructure largely fall into disrepair. In terms of education, Butembo was the only city where schools were not looted during the war, and largely remained open.

3. **Was this peace local in origin?**

Unlike other cases cited in literature discussing “zones of peace,” observed in areas featuring large outside interventions, there can be very little question that events within Butembo were locally-driven. Apart from the belligerent Mai Mai, UPDF and RCD-K/ML force, there was no third-party neutral security force present to serve as a military check against abuses of the civilian population or to restrain fighting groups. FARDC regular troops, ostensibly charged with maintaining the security of the civilian population, were not observed in the town until March 2003, and MONUC peacekeeping patrols only began to reach the town in June of that year. The return of MONUC represented the first U.N. presence in the area after the war had forced large-scale evacuations of U.N. Agency staff.

The arrival of U.N. Peacekeepers and FARDC units coincided with a decrease in violence, and were credited for preserving the security and stability of the town after their

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30 The Monitor. “Rwanda Gives UPDF an Ultimatum. 3/15/03
31 Reuters. “MONUC Staff Released, Observer Mission Sent to North Kivu.” 6/23/03
intervention. However, the time sequence reveals that it was the decrease in violence (both in Butembo and nationally) that allowed the troops to enter the region, rather than the entry of the troops that reduced violence. Although it is undeniable that MONUC contributed significantly to maintaining security in Butembo, it nonetheless is clear that its origins were local.

In the economic domain, outsiders also invested in Butembo, particularly following 2003. However, as with the case of MONUC’s arrival, this outside investment should be taken as an indicator of Butembo’s booming economy rather than a cause. For example, major investments in the telecommunications sector by regional giant CelTel Similarly a number of Western NGOs and Agencies were active in Butembo, including International Alert, IFESH, Caritas, German Agro Action, and many others with the support of USAID, the World Bank, and other donors. However, as is the case with MONUC, the relative peace and infrastructure preserved throughout the war attracted outside assistance, building on wartime, locally-driven, improvements.

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32 Le Potentiel. Cinq questions au Général Cammaert. 4/27/05
33 MSI Cellular Investments. “Celtel 'Contributes' to the Peace Process In Bunia.” 5/28/03
Chapter Three: Explaining Butembo’s Divergence

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we demonstrated that a dramatic disjuncture emerged between the wartime experiences of Butembo and other communities within North Kivu province, finding that in the dimensions of internal security and socio-economic well-being, Butembo was dramatically more peaceful than would have been expected. In the dimension of civic participation and governance, we found that participation was marginally better than what might have been expected due to the influence exerted by civilian leaders over armed actors. In this chapter, we will first explore the reasons for this divergence and sources of this relative peace, by examining the local actors and institutions central to Butemban political life; we will also consider some alternate explanations. We will then consider the broader implications of the central finding of this study -- that local institutions shapes the pattern of violence and experience of war over space.

In wartime Butembo, a number of prominent leaders emerged, as discussed in the previous chapter. Bishops, traders, and local government officials all played central roles in mitigating the effect of state collapse in the community. By organizing to provide services, they created a space for business and local political life distinct from the surrounding areas, and characterized by a greater degree of security and relative peace.
However, these groups are present throughout the North Kivu and the DRC more generally. This chapter asks what allowed these individuals to act in concert and exert influence over the major armed groups and organize local governance, while not in other places. Although many of the steps toward peace might be attributable to the actions of individuals and small groups, this chapter focuses on the social characteristics that facilitated the rise of a leadership class capable and committed to providing internal stability and relative peace within the town.

In a monograph on the organization of the wartime trade in and around Butembo, Timothy Raeymakers argues that political and economic order was maintained as the result of an equilibrium between the RCD-K/ML, the local administration the business community and the Church. In the previous chapters, I presented the role the latter two played in providing for relative peace, and the unexpected influence that both exerted, through the vehicle of civil society, over the formal loci of power -- the Kinshasa administration and the armed groups organized as Mai Mai and rebels. As a result of extensive fieldwork and interviews with leaders in Butembo, Patrick Kabamba notes that the Church, the Traders and the Mai Mai to form the “three pillars” of the community in Butembo, while the formal authorities largely serve as figureheads. Both Kabamba and Raeymakers note the reliance of Mai Mai on business and church leaders for resources. Kabamba even suggests that the Mai Mai represented little more than the private militias of individual businessmen.
The strength of these institutions, and even the significant intersection between them, are not unique to Butembo. The Catholic Church, as well as protestant and native Kibanguist churches, hold tremendous influence across the DRC. Similarly, an elite class of Congolese with business interests and substantial capital emerged in many regions often by benefiting from the largess and corruption of the mobutist regime, or through the benefits of the wartime economy. In this section I explore what the uniqueness of these institutions in Butembo, which allowed them to play a larger role during the period of state collapse, and consider what led them to work toward relative peace. Although some degree of social service might be implied in the role and overall mission of the Church, this section adds depth on the motives and incentives of each institution.

From Raeymakers, 136
Indeed, the experience of Butembo underscores the central roles played by elite decision-makers in improving local-level peace. Large roles were played by individual Bishops Kateliko and Paluku, of Kimbala Kisoni and other, less notorious, merchants, renegade Ugandan commander James Kazini, or the politically influential Appollinaire Malu Malu, the priest and political science professor who would go on to chair the national election commission. It could easily be said that the relative peace within Butembo was due primarily to the interests of these groups. After all, the governance system was neither democratic nor formally consultative among key stakeholders, but rather the product of an oligarchic network of individuals taking action, for example, to form the PROLEKI association to construct the dam.

Indeed, many analysts in the greed vs. grievance tradition have tended to focus on dynamics between individual elite leaders as central to explaining conflict, and particularly in the DRC. Since greed is inherently a personal characteristic, it is impossible to attribute “greedy” motivations to an institution or mass movement, and thus leading to a focus on individual elite actors. Furthermore, since much of the reporting and information available on the wartime period in the DRC was conducted with at least one eye towards individual accountability – such as through the sanctions leveled against individuals profiting from the war by various Western governments, or more recently through the ICC process – there is an understandable bias toward focusing on the role of individuals in fomenting the war.
However, overemphasizing the role of individuals in moving Butembo toward relative peace ignores two key elements from the case. First, the individuals that came to the fore did so via their affiliations with Nande traditional patronage networks and the Catholic Church, both of whose roles in substituting for the state had gradually evolved since the implantation of the Belgian colonial state..

Second, the community as a whole appeared to “do well out of war.” There seems to be little conscious choice that led to greater cohesion in Butembo. Unlike the Colombian case described by Mitchell, there was no single incident that encouraged Butembans to organize themselves in a way that would lead to a more cohesive wartime existence. In the remainder of this chapter, we will explore in greater detail the slow evolution of these institutions as a possibly more significant and satisfying explanation for the divergence of wartime Butembo.

2. The Business Community

Growth of a Nande Network Economy.

Putzell et al. (2008), observe that although the Congo was one of Africa’s most industrialized economies following its independence from Belgium “potential sources of wealth for aspiring elites were anchored in a disaggregated economy of separate enclaves with little or no integration between regional sites of wealth, nor between rural and urban systems of production and consumption.” This fractionalization and non-integration, both political and economic, was particularly prevalent in North Kivu. As mentioned in the
previous chapter, the processes of state formation, first under the Belgian colonial system, and later under Mobutu did little to reduce the fractious micro-kingsdoms present throughout the Kivu Provinces. This fractionalization The introduction of Rwandophone immigrants in the 1920s and 1930s into the province laid the groundwork for the emergent "autochthonous" vs "allochthonous" divide. Although the introduction of these elements and tensions between Rwandophone and non-rwandaphone groups came to define the conflicts of the 1990s, rwandophone immigration did little to integrate identities among the other communities. As such, "Nandité" persisted as a self-contained identity group, distinct not only from European and Rwandan settlers, but also from neighboring communities.

Historian Jean-Pierre Chrétien compares Belgian rule in North Kivu to colonial rule in neighboring Rwanda and Burundi. In these countries, colonial system of indirect rule along ethnic lines solidified the political relevance of Hutu and Tutsi identities, at the expense of the more complex pre-colonial clan systems. However, Belgian colonial authorities adopted a strategy of more direct rule in North and South Kivu, since the rich and less-populated agricultural land, and mineral resources attracted European settlers and investment, and thus attention from the colonial administration. Direct rule created a dual effect of both reinforcing divisions among local ethnic groups, while preserving intra-ethnic divisions. On one hand, by shunting all political activity into "ethnic associations," the only forum for political activity in these provinces, the distinction

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between Nande, Hunde and other "autochtonous" groups were reinforced. At the same
time, because little power was transferred to local leaders, there was little impetus to
centralize the clan-based political structures.

Following the independence of the DRC, the national government sought to exert
minimal control over the distant border region. Nande leaders received little
representation at the national level, and there was little investment in the region, which
Janet MacGaffney argues led to greater opportunities for self-governance, economic
activity and locally-driven development unfettered by the State. The marginalization of
the Nande led to resentment against the parasitic Mobutu regime in particular and a more
generalized suspicion of outsiders. In this worldview, outsiders were at best ancillary to
the community’s development, and at worst were parasitic. At the same time, as the
quality of state services collapsed, the self-help systems in place in the region also
became a point of envy. One native to the region writes:

Just as any strategy has its advantages and disadvantages, it eventually came to be
that maintaining a distance from the rest of society encouraged suspicions and
caused others to feel excluded. The Nande generally rejected this accusation but
in turn, while they were not invited into the development of a project or the
management of power (economic, political) they felt excluded themselves. It was
thus necessary that they accept that through this withdrawal from political life that
they design on their own (building a school or a church), execute on their own (a
project), and later they alone take advantage of something desired for everyone,
and the only word is exclusion. Unfortunately, the reaction of others is sometimes
similar and the behavior of grouping, of retrenchment in one's own community
has deep roots in the minds of leaders and people in the Great Lakes Region.35

35 Experted and translated from Simbandula, K. (2004) "Les Nande au Contact avec d'Autres Civilisations:
Lecture de quelques Vécus Indicateurs." in Tegara, Aloys and Onesphore Sematumba, eds. Les Identités
Meurtrières: Faire Face aux Défis Posés par nos Murs Psychologiques et Idéologiques. Goma: Pole
Institute. Page 82
This local self-help system substituted for the state as a result of the substantial wealth and resources injected into traditional support networks through the growth of a powerful business community.

Located among rolling volcanic hills, the region surrounding Butembo, like much of the rest of North Kivu is notable for its agricultural potential, and mineral resources, particularly gold. Raeymaker finds reports that Butembo was an important trading site dating into the pre-colonial period, where salt from East Africa was traded to the surrounding agricultural regions. The trading culture continued to thrive during the colonial period, as the proximity to the border with Uganda and British East Africa allowed cross-border trade to benefit from the differential availability of resources and favorable pricing on opposite sides of the border. Given the complex network of clanic social relations, as well as the lack of formal authority, as described above, the Nande ethnic group came to develop what Raeymaker terms a "networked" economy whereby economic transactions took place via complex webs of social relationships extending throughout Nande society, rather than under a more centralized, governed system.

The arrival of protestant missionaries revolutionized the economy, according to Raeymaker by introducing pigs, connecting and deepening cross-border connections between Butembo and protestant missions in Uganda, and preaching the "Protestant work ethic," a term that has gained widespread currency among Nande authors and the merchant class themselves. With the boom of European-run mining and coffee plantations in the first half of the twentieth century, Butembo grew as a stopover point for
vehicles and people traveling along the roads connecting remote mining and farming centers. While African companies were forbidden from supplying food and other commercial goods to the farmers at mining camp, this exclusion gradually eased in the latter years of Belgian rule before independence and then Zairianization transferred all foreign titles to Congolese.

**Growth and Consolidation.**

The economic crises in the DRC and neighboring Uganda in the 1970s and 1980s created an opportunity for trans-border trade. The tumult in Idi Amin’s Uganda created a strong demand for agricultural produce from North Kivu’s, in exchange for commercial manufactured goods from East Africa, and much of this trade moved through Butembo. In the early 1980s, a series of legal reforms designed to formalize and encourage artisanal and small-scale gold mining led to the opening of mining sites near Butembo. While Butembo had always served as a market for secondary products related to the gold trade, particular foodstuffs destined for mining towns in the interior, and retailed gold extracted further north, the opening of new artisanal sites had three effects: It led to Butembo’s prominence as a primary gold market; Labor-intensive artisanal mining led to a population boom in remote areas dependent on the market in Butembo; and traders began to use gold as a substitute for unstable currencies on either side of the border, protecting

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themselves from the harmful effects of currency shocks that rocked both Uganda and Zaire.\textsuperscript{37}

The increase in trade passing through Butembo throughout this period led to the consolidation of trading networks and the concentration of a handful of large scale trading families, whose networks allowed them to control not only the import of goods from Uganda, but stretched as far as the Kenyan port of Mombasa, bringing goods from Asia and Dubai into east Africa, and across into Butembo and rural markets in the interior of the DRC. By using family “trust networks” to control the shipment of commercial products from sources across East Africa, into the local retail markets, these traders operated with increased efficiency. The element of “trust” and kinship ties within these networks offered a significant competitive advantage in a business climate where contracts were difficult to enforce, and suppliers were unpredictable. However, because of the social connections between the entrepreneurs involved in retail, distribution and transportation, the import business took place without much need for formal contracts and procedures.

**Privatization of Social Investments.**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the trading community relied both on the good will of consumers, as well as their reputation among these extensive networks in order to

\textsuperscript{37} This explanation is forwarded in the doctoral dissertation of Raeymakers, T. (2007) The Power of Protection: Governance and Transborder Trade on the Congo-Uganda Frontier. Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, University of Ghent, which provides the best fieldwork-based account of economic life during Butembo during this period.
successfully pursue their operations. The value of reputation, then, both towards the community at large, as well as among fellow traders led entrepreneurs to engage in substantial reinvestment programs. Apart from the PROLEKI-organized dam, discussed above, the business community constructed dozens of bridges and roads during and after the war. The Kinshasa-based newspaper *Le Potential* wrote about this phenomenon, organized under the Federation des Entrepreneurs Congolais. The paper reported that in the area surrounding Butembo the organization built more than 20 bridges in 2006 alone, and set up a 200 kilometer toll road stretching toward the Ugandan border, in partnership with the provincial government. One leader explained FEC’s role, saying “we have decided to supplement the State.” In an aside, the newspaper speculated that while this was good for business, and facilitated foot traffic for ordinary citizens, the driving motivation may be for the wealthy FEC members to have a road fit to drive their expensive cars.

Raeymakers attributes a more nuanced, though equally self-interested motivation to the entrepreneurs seeking to privatize this social cost, and take it upon themselves. Raeymakers observes that the business community had the most to lose to popular dissatisfaction, or to violence. Thus they were the most important stakeholders in both development and security. He writes:

Because of its stakes in both governance domains (i.e. development and security), the businessmen often took a leading role as promoters and executors of these collective initiatives. During the war, the businessmen financed a number of construction works that regarded both local transportation and other social services. By way of example, they contributed to the construction of a number of bridges in and around Butembo such as Polondo, Katya, Kitulu, and Matadi, as
well as the centrally located ‘Pont de la Paix’, which technically remained a
government undertaking. Besides, it occasionally contributed to the re-
construction of local Catholic hospitals like Matanda, as well as a minor number
of ‘centres de santé’ (health centres). The FEC also financed the construction of a
number of auditoria of the local university UCG (‘Université Catholique du
Graben’), which remained the Church’s main activity and pride. (Raeymakers:
187)

At the same time, by bearing these social costs, they undercut the rebel administration of
the province, to which they did not pay taxes, and from which neither they nor the
population demanded services.

In fact, the RCD-ML administration received a mixed reception from the business
community. The toppling of the parasitic Mobutist state was well-received by a
community tired of being asked to pay taxes and bribes to government officials, while
seeing little results in terms of reinvestment or the improvement of local conditions.
Following the RCD split, the promise of lower tariff rates and spending closer to home
encouraged the business community to embrace the RCD-ML. However, as the rebel
movement struggled against the RCD-Goma, RCD-Nationale and the MLC, and required
additional resources, problems emerged over taxation.

Wherever the RCD-ML attempted to assert its authority and impose taxes, it found them
circumvented by well-placed bribes to local commanders. Because tax payments became
almost voluntary, and given the ties of some merchants to Mai Mai and other security
actors, the rebel administration essentially relied on the goodwill of the merchants, and
served their interests. Raeymaker quotes a former member of the RCD-ML Presidential
Protection Unit:
We were essentially a weak state. We didn’t have any budget, so the money earned from tax duties was immediately used… As an official, you only observed the entry and exit of goods [(in)to] the region. You were a minister only in title, but not in real terms (“vous étiez un ministre de titre, mais pas de faite”). We were obliged to create a favorable climate for the merchants, because they were the only ones which we were left. (Quoted in Raeymakers: 129)

In short, as a result of the self sufficiency that evolved among the Nande business community under Mobutu’s rule, as well as traditional patronage networks, the business community was very close to the population, and rendered services traditionally considered the domain of the government. This had the dual effect of generally improving the quality of life even as the state collapsed, but also created a parallel system whereby the rebel administration was cut off from a population that neither relied upon them for social services, nor was compelled to pay taxes to them. The strength of the business community meant that the rebel administration was poorly situated to either make demands of the population, and needed to respond to the demands of the business community its sole source of revenue.

3. The Catholic Church

**History of the Congolese Catholic Church.**

Although Catholicism arrived relatively late in the DRC, only during the 20th Century, the Church quickly emerged as one of the leading political forces across the country. By 1958, 40% of Congolese were baptized Catholics, and the Belgian Central Africa
accounted for fully 20% of all conversions to Catholicism during the 20th Century. The Church largely enjoyed the support of the Belgian colonial administration, which viewed the Catholic Church as relatively sympathetic ally, and an alternative to Anglophone protestant missionaries who began to make inroads into the area, and who it suspected of attempting to undermine its authority. During the colonial period, the Church acquired over 435,000 acres of prime agricultural land, and ran the entire colonial educational system, both securing its role in Congolese political life as well as closely identifying it with the Belgian authorities. (Prunier: 140)

The Church was targeted as an emblem of colonial control during the chaos of the early 1960s, but supported Mobutu's based on his anti-communist credentials. But although church leaders backed Mobutu's ascent, relations between church and state became uneasy during the "Zairianization" process of the early 1970s, which saw schools nationalized, Christian names replaced with "authentic" names, Christian holidays including Christmas banned, and the abolition of many Church-based associations viewed as potential rivals to state authority, and to the emergent cult surrounding the President himself. In nationalizing the Catholic School system, Mobutu accused the Catholic school system of foreign allegiances and disloyalty, declaring:

The walls of such schools are decorated with photographs of Pope Paul and crosses, while they do not have photographs of the President. Zaire children must first know of the man who sacrifices night and day for their happiness.  


Similar to its cooptation of other institutions viewed as potential sources of disloyalty, the Mobutist regime attempted to minimize the influence of the church through bribery and by appointing loyalist priests to high positions. Nonetheless, a strong dissident voice remained within the Church, and by the early 1990s, Prunier writes that a significant shift had occurred with the generational change in the Church leadership over the course of the 1980s. Whereas Mobutu had accused the Church of foreign-ness and serving as a puppet of European influences, prominent church leaders leveled the same allegations against Mobutu's increasingly corrupt rule, and positioned the Church as an authentic voice for native institutions. The Congolese Conference of Bishops denounced the regime as "a hybrid political system which uses liberalism for the advantages private property brings to a privileged few while borrowing from totalitarianism its methods of exercising power," and railed against foreign interference that supported the regime.40

In an influential letter published in 1975, in response to Zairianization, the Archbishop of Kananga argued that the church must shift tactics and become closer to the people. "Starting from an organization which is directed by clerics we must press for a movement from below, a popular movement. We must de-institutionalize our pastoral work and find the Church on a much smaller scale, that of grass-roots communities."41 This approach posed a radical shift for the church, and laid the foundation for Church opposition to the Mobutist state. Organizing demonstrations and denouncing the regime, the Church

40 See Prunier
cemented its position as both a proponent of democracy in the DRC, and as a nationalist voice for the Congolese against foreign exploiters.

However, the process of integrating the Church into grassroots communities across a diverse nation, and embracing the strong current of Congolese nationalism undermined the Church's unity during the ensuing wars and threatened to divide the church along ethnic and regional lines.

**The Butembo Church.**

Throughout the Kivus, where the Mobutist state was weakest, the Catholic Church served as a main alternative. After the initial school takeovers in the early 1970s, the Church made steady inroads in returning to the public sphere. It resumed operating the largest universities in the two provinces, financed most radio and print journalism, and sponsored youth groups, women's associations, and human rights advocacy groups. Economically, the Church and its land-holdings were one of the few sources of salaried employment, offering both steady income and access to the cash economy. In short, the Church in the Kivus substituted for both the public and private sector. Through its financial, institutional, and political support for civil society and media groups covering virtually all domains of associational life, the Church also came to dominate the so-called “Third Sector.”

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42 See Prunier
The archdiocese of Butembo played a similar economic role to dioceses throughout the Kivus, despite the relatively strong implantation of Protestantism, especially among the merchant community. Writing of the Church in Butembo in the 1980s, Michael Schatzenberg observed that it was indispensible for in sustaining the local economy throughout the gradual erosion of the Mobutist state. He notes that regardless of their own faith, the business community found positive relations with the Diocese to be indispensible for three reasons: The Church was often the sole provider of credit, equipment and technical advice required to start an enterprise, or to manage complex business deals; The Church influenced the purchasing decisions of its flock, putting its detractors at a competitive disadvantage; and the Church's reputation as legitimate and uncorrupted by the Mobutu regime made it a source of neutral advice and dispute resolution.43

However, the Church collaborated and coordinated development projects before the war, drawing on financing from the business community – a relationship that would continue to yield fruit. Bishop Kataliko and one of Butembo’s leading businessmen built the main airstrip in Butembo in the 1980s, before handing it over the national government. At the same time, the Bishop requested and received a road between Butembo and Kyavinyonge, a fishing village on the shores of Lake Edward.44

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The role of the Church as arbiter, as well as its history of proposing and organizing projects laid the groundwork for its role under the framework of the Committee of Sages after the collapse of the state. As described in the previous chapter, this committee was charged with organizing the key development projects that took place in Butembo, and with making local security arrangements, and while the organization and financing evolved from the business community, the Church served as the facilitator of meetings, and of coordinating between the group and the outside world. Because of its high esteem within the community, the Church in Butembo played an important political role as mediator in conflicts prior to the war. In 1994 and 1997, Bishop Kateliko intervened in clashes between the Ugandan Government and the Ugandan rebel ADF, and throughout the 1990s the Church intervened with the local FAZ garrison in order to prevent the looting of the town as soldiers went unpaid.

**Church and the RCD-ML “State” in Butembo.**

Unlike the business community, which established a working relationship with the RCD-ML authorities, the relationship between the RCD-ML and the Church remained uneasy throughout their administration. Mutual suspicions arose for two reasons. First, the leadership of the RCD-ML, particularly under Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi was primarily Protestant. While the Butembo Church retained generally positive relations with the local Protestant community, this did not extend to the rebel groups, particularly as rumors emerged that RCD-ML troops had deliberately sacked Catholic churches during the war.
The second factor driving mutual mistrust derives from the shifting identification of the Church during the 1970s. As the Congolese Church adopted a nationalist position in its opposition to Mobutu, criticizing the regime as a puppet of foreign powers, it found itself in a difficult position when the regime was ultimately toppled by foreign-backed rebels, and particularly following 1998, when Rwanda and Uganda played a more visible role. In the Kivus, the Church fragmented in its position vis-à-vis the rebels, tracing ethnic lines. Timothy Longman discusses this fragmentation, as primarily along ethnic lines. Bishops in Uvira (South Kivu) and Goma, hailing from the Tutsi and related Hema ethnic groups were closely identified with the RCD-Goma, and with the Rwandan authorities. Archbishop Kateliko of Bukavu, promoted from Bishop of Butembo, as well as subsequent bishops of Butembo viewed the invasion as another manifestation of the oppression of Congolese by outside forces.

The identification of the Church in Butembo with the “Congolese” against the foreigners naturally put it at odds with the RCD-ML and its Ugandan allies in Butembo, a position stated both by the bishop, and by Church-backed civil society groups. It also aligned closely with the position of the Mai-Mai, who opposed all forms of “foreign” domination. This rhetorical confluence, and some allegations of more concrete collaboration between Mai-Mai and Church leaders encouraged the RCD-ML to take a dim view of the Church.

Nonetheless, the Church and RCD-ML coexisted, despite their mutual mistrust through the intermediary of the business groups, whose interests lay with both the Church and the Administration. Raeymaker writes that the Church recognized that it risked
marginalization and would see its temporal work obstructed if it charted too aggressive a course against the political authorities:

…the Church hoped to exercise a decisive influence on the administrative power of the rebel leadership through its relationship with the businessmen. It continued to regard the former with extreme suspicion, especially in tandem with their Ugandan patrons (this attitude changed slightly when the RCD-ML chose to shift its patronship to Kinshasa, although a certain animosity still remains between the RCD-ML and local civil society). By linking some of Butembo’s important businessmen to its political “cause”, the Church leaders hoped to counter-balance – and if necessary even overrule – some of the more unpopular decisions of the RCD-ML leadership. (Raeymakers: 140-141)

This yielded a “fragile but effective” collaboration, between the business community and the rebel administration on one hand, and the business community and Church on the other, while the Church retained its freedom to criticize the RCD-ML. This freedom existed because of the autonomy that the Church in Butembo cultivated since before independence from the Belgian. The frosty relationship between Church and State that evolved under Mobutu, and the ability of civil society activists to draw on the financial support of the Church allowed an independent community of watchdog groups to emerge.

3. Beyond Butembo

In the introduction to this thesis, we suggested three possible reasons why Butembo was less affected by the war than might be expected based on the experience of surrounding areas. We suggested that this may have resulted from a decision by local elites to oppose the harmful effects of war, the product of community based mobilization, or the result of
a lack of capacity or interest on the part of belligerents in exerting fuller control over the area.

Of these three hypotheses, we see that only the first, elite-driven, hypothesis offers the kernel of an explanation for the pattern of relative peace observed. It is clear that the third explanation contradicts the fact pattern of the Butembo case. The strategic location of the city, straddling resupply routes, and the high quality of the airstrip made Butembo an important strategic target for the FAZ, the AFDL, and subsequent rebel movements. However, beyond straightforward military objectives, establishing effective and strong control over the area was an essential priority for the RCD-ML, whose movement suffered due to the difficulties in extracting tax revenue from, the territory or profiting from the marketplace. Nonetheless, the rebel military authorities were unable to significantly dislodge civilian governance structures that emerged from the partnership of church and the business community.

At the same time, the structures that contained the violence did not emerge from a popular consensus, as suggested by Mitchell when looking at the experience of communities in Colombia. As Kabamba observed, local participation in political life was essential to sustaining the rise of the Nande business class. However, the elite networks that came to dominate political life initiated activities within the forum of the Committee of Sages and other formal and ad hoc meetings and bodies. While the public addressed their general concerns to the village elders – for example, through the concerns of market women regarding petty thievery in the city market – the matters were taken up. However,
it can hardly be said to have been a popular project. Indeed there was no forum where such a consensus could be developed, since the political life was filtered and shunted through networks of relationships, almost all of which passed through patrons in an elaborate system dating back to the peculiar structure of Nande society since the colonial era.

However, the degree to which civilian elites played a role in the governance and initiation of development projects during war may be surprising in its scale, the general finding that elites shape community experiences is not surprising at all. What is worthwhile and interesting, though, is the means by which a zone of peace emerged in Butembo. By way of conclusion, we can draw three main points.

Some discussions of the establishment of peace focus on the perceptions and actions of individual elite actors, and the drama of individual decision-makers has come to characterize conflict analysis in the DRC by groups such as ICG. However, while not negating the importance of individuals, this study underscores the importance of institutions in creating slow-evolving social relationships. In the case of Butembo, the Congolese Catholic Church’s gradual shift between the mid-70s and mid-80s, from protector of European interests to a nationalist dissenting voice permitted a strong dissenting voice to emerge against rebel abuses. This repositioning, engineered by Bishops in Katanga, Kasai, and Equateur province had profound effects on the response of Kivutian Bishops to the crisis.

45 For one discussion of this approach, see : Wolpe, H. et al. (2004) Rebuilding Peace and State Capacity in War-torn Burundi. The Round Table. 93 (375), July: 457–467
At the same time, the strength of collaboration between the Church and the business community, which formed the backbone of social services in Butembo after 1996 originated in the 1980s, with the growth of the gold mining industry, the support of the Church for the indigenous business community and the collaboration on joint road construction and infrastructure projects. Indeed the model of the business community supplying financing, while the Church providing project management, was first practiced during the construction of the town airstrip, then replicated during the war, for the construction and maintenance of health facilities, the power station, local roads, and the education system.

The business community itself traced its structure to a diversified clan structure that remained unincorporated by the colonial system and later the Mobutist state. The marginalization and exclusion of the Nande ethnic group from formal systems of power allowed the institutionalization of trading networks with their own systems of values, practices, and norms that thrived in the absence of formal rules.

The Butembo case also suggests the merit in exploring the geographical strength of civilian practices and institutions as an alternative explanation to studies of violent patterns during war. Robert Putnam argued that historical practices and institutions held long-lasting influence over attitudes towards governance in contemporary Italy. While this study only looks at one case, it raises the specter that similarly divergent histories, over a relatively confined geographic region, may yield substantial differences in public
resistance to war. This resistance to war – particularly as seen through its manifestations – should add both additional urgency and hope as we increasingly seek to understand governance and politics of places where no monopoly on violence exists – Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and the Sudan-Chad-CAR triangle.

Lastly, the experience of Butembo, and its marked divergence from surrounding areas, suggests new approaches in the study of the effects of war over geographic space. Simply analyzing the spatial dispersion of violence with respect to the presumed targets and strategic objectives of the armed forces, or as indicative of the military balance of power alternately considers armed groups to operate in a vacuum, or only in relationship to each other. By focusing on the functions of civilians during wartime, and their interactions with the armed groups, I hope that this furthers the argument towards the humanitarian community that “local capacities for peace,” as Anderson terms them, not only exist, but vary substantially over space. At the same time, it should reinforce the recent critiques of viewing civil war as a single unit, through the lens of the country-year.
Bibliography


