CONGO’S INTRACTABLE CONFLICT:
HOW LESSONS FROM MOZAMBIQUE AND LIBERIA CAN INFORM A WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the current state of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and provides an analysis of feasible conflict resolution strategies. Methodologically this thesis takes a case-study approach, studying (and proposing) analyses of the successful peace processes in Liberia and Mozambique and translating those analyses into recommendations for the Congo. The broad conclusions of the study are that any peace-making strategy must be multi-pronged, seeking incremental progress on all fronts, and that without established internal political will for peace within the Congo any peace process will inevitably fail. Particular emphasis is placed on the need for attention to economic and political conditions at the local level. While Congo’s conflict is different in character from both Mozambique and Liberia, this thesis shows that important lessons can be drawn from the histories of both conflicts in order to inform a way forward in the Congo.
For Michael James Kroening Diercks
Encourager, editor, and husband extraordinaire

And with immense gratitude to Professor Smaldone
For his patience, guidance, and continued encouragement
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Republic of Congo\(^1\) is a nation besieged by conflict. Like most African nations, perhaps the defining factor of Congo’s post-colonial history has been the struggle to identify and govern itself after decades of Western colonial rule. Unlike many African nations however, Congo has had very limited success in that struggle. Decades of governmental neglect and ineptitude have resulted in a nation in serious crisis. The consequences of this crisis have manifested themselves in civil rebellion, political insurgency, guerilla warfare, proxy wars, international invasion, and for a while, Africa’s own world war complete with the direct involvement of troops or other military intervention from eight other African nations.

The political crisis and ensuing violent conflict that is ongoing in the Congo today is not for lack of effort by the international community to resolve the conflict. In fact, the United Nations is solidly into its second decade of peacekeeping efforts in Congo and the current peacekeeping force, at over 19,000,\(^2\) comprises 20% of all deployed uniformed UN troops worldwide. Large-scale peace accords have been facilitated and multiple peace agreements have been negotiated and even signed. But the negotiations and mediations and thousands of peacekeeping troops have not brought peace to Congo. We are left asking then, what, if anything can end Congo’s conflict? Academic researchers in fields such as Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies have created a vast literature on frameworks and theories for resolving both

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\(^1\) When talking about the present day Democratic Republic of Congo, I will refer to it as DRC, the Congo, or simply, Congo. When I am referring to a point in its earlier history, I will use the official name of the country at that point in time.

international and internal conflicts. In what follows I will briefly address several of these approaches which, as mentioned above and to be shown in more depth later, have largely failed to resolve the conflict in the Congo.

Mediation has long been a tool of conflict resolution, utilized with the assumption that a third-party, neutral mediator may be able to show the affected parties various options for potential conflict resolution and ensure a non-hostile, collaborative environment. Proponents of mediation include political scientists Jacob Bercovitch and the late John Burton among many others. Mediation has been used by the United States on numerous occasions to seek resolution between Israel and Palestine and recently by members of the African Union in Cote I'voire in an attempt to reach a solution over the contested 2010 election. While there continues to be debate within political science on how much influence the international community can and should exert in a conflict situation, foreign nations often feel compelled to increase their presence and pressure in conflict areas in an attempt to manage escalating conflict.

The application of externally imposed sanctions is one example of heightened intervention which the international community can use to pressure belligerent governments or other parties to the conflict to act in a certain way or to cut off particular resources from

3 A very accessible overview of the historical development within the field of Conflict Resolution can be found in I. William Zartman, ed. Peacemaking in International Conflict (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2007).


reaching the area. The use of appropriately targeted sanctions is supported by experts in Peace Studies such as George Lopez\(^7\) and David Cortright.\(^8\) Examples of international sanctions include the United States trade embargo and government asset freeze against Sudan in response to its claim that Sudan supported international terrorism and had committed gross human rights violations.\(^9\)

Further pressure can be applied by the international community through the deployment of peacekeeping troops on the ground, equipped to intervene in violent conflicts. Such troops can be mandated by a regional authority, such as NATO or ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), or by the United Nations. The use of UN forces to monitor cease-fires, patrol buffer zones and supervise troop withdrawals within conflict areas has become a regular occurrence since the organization’s inception almost 70 years ago.

These examples of conflict resolution strategies are by no means exhaustive or comprehensive and are mentioned simply to demonstrate the wide range of tools that are often used in an attempt to manage conflict. These strategies as well as other efforts aimed at conflict resolution have been attempted on numerous occasions in the Congo, as will be detailed in the following chapter. The intent of this thesis is neither to criticize any particular approach or case, nor to analyze why specific attempts to resolve the Congo conflict have failed. Rather, the goal is to take a different perspective on possible ways forward for the


Congo in an attempt to answer the continuing question of what will bring resolution to the conflict.

To address this main question, this thesis will first take up another question, namely, what factor or factors facilitated the end of protracted conflicts faced by other post-colonial African nations? This question is critically important because it defines the approach I will take in this thesis towards conflict resolution in Congo; perhaps the patterns of success and failure in other African nations can shed light on a way forward for Congo. This secondary question will be addressed by considering case studies of resolved conflicts which occurred in the African nations of Liberia and Mozambique. Factors from these case studies which can be shown to have contributed to conflict resolution will then be analyzed in light of their potential ability to end the conflict in Congo.

Answering a question about conflict resolution is necessarily an interdisciplinary task, taking into account aspects of peace studies, conflict studies, political science, cultural anthropology, and sociology. The case study approach adopted in this thesis is driven by a desire to be interdisciplinary in both methodology and field of study. The use of case studies elevates the role of history and historical analysis.

Because the situation in the Congo is so complicated and protracted there are no other cases which can offer an identical scenario. The selection of Liberia and Mozambique for case studies is due both to their respective similarities and differences. The choice to use African nations as the relevant case studies is motivated by the shared cultural understanding and general development timelines of African nations through the 20th century. Some of the similarities between Congo’s situation and the Liberian and Mozambican conflicts are striking. For example, beside the sheer number of rebel factions and guerrilla groups involved in the
fighting in Liberia’s recent conflict, Liberia’s war also spilled over its borders to deeply affect its neighbors as continues to be the case in Congo. Additionally, the use of heavily politicized ethnic relations was a large aspect of Liberia’s war, a consideration that deeply handicaps resolution in the Congo today. Mozambique is another pertinent case because, like Congo, its conflict had deep roots in the country’s colonial history and its parlous condition when the colonizing forces left. Mozambique’s actions and decision-making during its post-colonial conflict were also heavily influenced by other nations which has also been the case in Congo.

In addition to these connections with Congo’s conflict, both cases offer some important differences from one another which allows for a richer view of conflict resolution in this (small) African context. While Mozambique’s conflict ended in an earlier era, its resolution is certain and therefore the relevant factors can confidently be regarded as conflict resolution factors rather than merely possible measures to create a temporary and unstable peace. Liberia’s conflict, on the other hand, was fought in the same era as that of the Congo and therefore shares the same access to and types of weapons, the presence of global media and a similar international attitude toward conflict. However, because Liberia has experienced less than a decade of relative peace since the end of its most recent crisis, the possible resurgence of old political conflicts could raise serious questions about the viability of the methods used to achieve that peace.

An additional reason for the choice of Liberia and Mozambique as cases is that neither conflict had anything to do either with the other case or with the Congo itself. For example, though the conflict in Sierra Leone may have offered relevant insights to African conflict resolution, its strong connection to the conflict in Liberia would render a number of the arguments and conclusions redundant. Additionally, while Rwanda’s contemporary conflict
shares some similarities with Congo, the recent conflict history of the two nations is actually so intertwined that conflict resolution for one could actually adversely affect the other, making for analytical contamination.

When addressing conflict resolution in the Congo, we must necessarily ask ourselves, “Why should we care?” This is not an unimportant question and the truth is that the world is relatively unaware of the horrors that are happening in the Congo. This is despite the fact that the number of Congolese who have died as a result of the war in was estimated in 2007 at over 5 million: if the monthly death toll is extrapolated to the present, that number would be over 7 million.¹⁰ A large proportion of those dead are not combatants, but civilians who were unable to access food, water, or basic healthcare on account of the conflict, so it is difficult to gauge the precise number of those deaths that would not have happened had there been no conflict. Nonetheless, these estimates put the number of causalities resulting from the conflict in the DRC at more than ten times the total number of casualties in the American Civil War. Clearly the human toll of the conflict in the DRC is of historical proportions. The question of how to achieve peace in the Congo is therefore necessarily a question of our values. Do we leave Congo to sort itself out or do we intervene in an attempt to help? While it is it is a tragedy when even one human life is lost, external intervention carries its own set of considerations. In a world of finite resources, nations must necessarily question how much of their resources they can devote to assisting the people of the DRC. Additionally, continued material aid to a conflict region can create dependency instead of empowerment. When intervention escalates to a military capacity, we also have to weigh the possible human cost of the interventionist troops. In view of these questions, it is the position of this thesis that the

extended conflict in the DRC is a crisis of epic proportions, and that the world bears a social obligation to contribute to the peace process there. The above questions certainly merit more discussion, but this is precisely the topic of this thesis.

This thesis will proceed as follows. Chapter 2 lays out a history of the Democratic Republic of Congo from the time of its colonization to the present, identifying significant factors contributing to its crisis and many of the conflict resolution strategies that have been attempted. The first half of Chapter 3 examines the context for Mozambique’s post-colonial conflict and the second portion then addresses the question of how peace was ultimately achieved in Mozambique. Chapter 4 has a similar structure, first examining the political history of Liberia and the conflict that overtook the country at the end of the 20th century and then looking at the factors that can be identified as ultimately leading to its resolution. While there is a small body of literature on both the Liberian and Mozambique conflicts, there is very little direct analysis of what exactly served as the catalyst for their respective conflict resolutions. Thus, the second sections of each chapter are as much analyses of effective conflict resolution strategies in Liberia and Mozambique as they are historical accounts, or reports of existing analyses. Chapter 5 will summarize the analytical conclusions reached from Chapters 3 and 4 and then apply those conclusions to the DRC, looking in depth at what sorts of approaches to conflict resolution have promise for the Congo. Chapter 6 synthesizes the information gleaned from Chapter 5 to present a way forward for Congo and also offers concluding remarks.
CHAPTER 2

CONGO: A NATION CONFLICTED

1. Introduction

After almost a decade of war, on April 2nd, 2003, members of the inter-Congolese dialogue concluded their negotiations by signing “the Final Act,” an agreement accepting dozens of previously negotiated resolutions designed to put Congo on a path to peace. The signing of this “Global and all-Inclusive Agreement” stipulated a transitional government and officially ended what has since become known as Africa’s World War.¹

All-inclusive agreements and official pronouncements aside, it would seem that the Congolese people were somehow not informed that the conflict has ended. An estimated 45,000 people continue to die in the Congo each month² and while the majority of these deaths are attributable to things like untreated illness and general malnutrition, they are still a direct cause of Congo’s current state of conflict. The general lack of security in the country has crippled existing health services and caused an enormous number of internally displaced persons (IDP’s). The massive number of IDP’s makes food security impossible and places an overwhelming strain on the limited health system. There is simply no longer the necessary infrastructure to provide food, shelter and basic medical care for the country’s population. Were the conflict truly over, the Congolese people could begin to rebuild this infrastructure.


But reports of large scale attacks, renewed fighting, mass rape and continued internal refugee problems confirm that there is little security in Congo.³

Tragically, Congo has known very few periods of true security since independence in 1960, and was certainly even worse off under the control of Belgium and King Leopold than it is today. In fact, it would seem that the events of Congo’s painful past not only traumatized the nation but left it with a legacy of violence it cannot shed. This chapter will place the current conflict in the context of its history as well as offer a broad analysis of what stands between the Congolese people and the peace that would enable them to rebuild their country.

2. History of a Tortured Nation

The African nation-state which we now know as the Democratic Republic of Congo (or DRC) has experienced numerous identity crises in the past 125 years. Though the vast area of land which makes up the DRC today has a much longer and richer history than the most recent century, the story of Congo’s journey to statehood begins in the late 19th century with the Belgian King Leopold II.

Leopold became obsessed with the idea of owning a colony even before his father handed him the throne. Because real political power was increasingly moving under the umbrella of the parliament, the position of a monarch became one solely of ceremony.⁴ Thus, Leopold’s visions of owning a colony were not based solely on his desires for great wealth but

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also as a means to greater political power. Enlisting the help of the great explorer Henry Morton Stanley who tricked hundreds of African chiefs into giving away rights to the lands, Leopold became the owner of his own personal colony in the mid 1880’s. Giving his new acquisition the ironic label of “the Congo Free State,” Leopold began systemically and brutally to strip the Congo of its natural resources.\(^5\)

While the material theft that Leopold engineered certainly left behind economic devastation, it was his treatment of his African “subjects” that caused the deepest scar. Belgium’s king claimed (and perhaps even believed) that he was bringing true civilization to the Congo. He asserted that he was not profiting from the colony at all, but rather, that he was there to help the African people and develop a savage land.\(^6\) In reality, Leopold profited greatly. By 1901, he was exporting as much as 6,000 tons of rubber and 300 tons of ivory out of the Congo each year.\(^7\) All of this material gain came on the backs of Leopold’s subjects. In order to achieve total control of the country, the Belgian created a gigantic military arm called the Force Publique which served to ensure, by means of corporal punishment, torture, rape and murder, that the citizens of the Congo Free State (CFS) remained in the constant service of the king.

Reports of the mind-boggling brutality escaped the CFS by way of missionaries or disillusioned colonial workers. In addition to an almost unbelievable number of deaths resulting from starvation, disease and exposure, there were many documented incidents of children being taken from their families and sent to reeducation camps, families held hostage,

\(^5\) Ibid., 42-87.
\(^6\) Ibid., 106.
\(^7\) Michela Wrong, Living on the Brink of Disaster in Mobutu’s Congo: In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001), 50.
tortured and executed if fathers did not bring in enough rubber, and even entire village populations massacred if they failed to bring in the required rubber quotas.\(^8\)

By the time the rest of the world was becoming convinced that the tales of terror coming from the Congo were true, Belgium was sufficiently embarrassed to realize that it would have to intervene to save its reputation. Thus, when Leopold eventually offered to sell the Congo Free State to the government of Belgium, the country felt that they had no choice but to buy it, even at the exorbitant sum Leopold demanded.\(^9\) And so, in 1908 the CFS became the Belgian Congo, no longer the slave state of an evil monarch but now a true colony.

It is estimated that as many as 10 million Congolese died while the country was under the control of Leopold and in the decade following.\(^10\) It is a testament to the complete brutality and inhumanity of Leopold’s rule that one could suggest that the Congolese people were better off under colonial rule. Not surprisingly though, the legacy which Congo was to inherit from Belgium’s rule was also grim. Not only did it take many years for Belgium to change the system from the way Leopold had run it, but the new colonial political system was still one of total control, complete with forced labor, taxes and corporal punishment administered by the colonial army on any Congolese person who did not immediately obey a colonial order.\(^11\) Besides being forced to grow certain exportable crops, Congolese were still sometimes forced

\(^8\) Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*, 226-229.
\(^9\) Ibid., 258.
\(^10\) Ibid., 233.
to work on government sanctioned projects or in mines. They were also conscripted to serve in World War II, fighting with the Belgians in Sudan and Ethiopia.\textsuperscript{12}

Though the mass slaughter of Congolese may have abated when Belgium took over Congo’s rule, it would be difficult to argue that Belgium recognized the humanity of the Congolese any more than Leopold had. Legal racism was practiced through explicit segregation rules.\textsuperscript{13} Africans were limited in their rights to own or sell land, consume liquor or show any disrespect to a European. Belgian colonialists considered Congolese culture and intellect to be inherently inferior and in an effort to bring “development and civilization” to the Congo, Belgians emphasized European customs, dress and the French language while diminishing the value of African customs or languages. African religions were countered by Western missionaries and African art and music was “condemned...as inferior, childish and barbaric.”\textsuperscript{14}

By the end of the Second World War, Belgium decided to begin assimilating some Congolese into their European society. In order to become an honorary European and escape some of the racist laws, Congolese were required to take a Europeanization exam and be recommended by their employer. This exam included a home study to see whether the family ate “properly” and spoke proper French.\textsuperscript{15}

Apart from subjugating the culture and humanity of their subjects, colonial rule seriously limited Congolese access to higher education or any advanced job training. The effect of this was that the Congolese people had no way of knowing how to manage the


\textsuperscript{13} Nzongola-Ntalaja, \textit{The Congo from Leopold to Kabila}, 39.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 38-41.
infrastructure that the Belgians were imposing on the country. Indeed, when Congo was finally granted its freedom, the state was left with a population which had never been permitted to serve in the formal government or manage an army or police force. There were no formally trained medical doctors, lawyers or professors in the Congolese population before 1960. In fact, at the time of independence, out of a population of more than twenty million people, there were only seventeen Congolese who had graduated from university.

Though anti-colonial movements had existed in Congo even before the 20th century, the lack of a significant intellectual class severely handicapped progress on this front. It was not until the 1950’s that a movement of any real strength began to make headway. Large demonstrations and mass protests held in the latter part of the 50’s not only informed the Belgians of Congolese dissatisfaction but reinforced to the Congolese that their actions could cause change. In early 1960 Belgium agreed to grant Congo complete independence.

This new era of independence was heralded by the democratic election of Congo’s first Congolese leader, Patrice Lumumba, one of the leaders in the anti-colonial movement. Unfortunately however, any optimism regarding this newfound independence was quickly dampened. In the words of Jermaine McCalpin, “the absence of a confident and statewide political culture and incipient political elite along with barely suppressed ethnic rivalries, seemed to cloud the horizon of a new and prosperous Congo.” Indeed, the new government entered a state of turmoil within one week of independence when the national army mutinied.

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16 Ibid., 66.
unsure who was really in control. On July 11th the Katanga province declared secession and the nation’s entire economy began to falter after the sudden exodus of tens of thousands of Belgian nationals fleeing the regional instability.\textsuperscript{20}

While Belgium raced to the aid of Katanga in an effort to secure continued involvement in an area in which they maintained an economic interest, Lumumba called on the newly formed United Nations to remove the Belgians and reign the province back in. When the UN seemed unable to achieve quick results, Lumumba determined that he needed additional assistance and approached the Soviet Union. This move spelled the beginning of the end for Lumumba. Western nations such as the United States were already very concerned about where Lumumba’s political interests might take Central Africa and his new alliance with the Soviets confirmed to them that Congo would quickly go the way of communism if something was not done.\textsuperscript{21}

So began the political career of Joseph Desiree Mobutu, Lumumba’s army chief of staff. Whether Mobutu was motivated by concern for the future of his country, fearful of the consequences of Lumumba’s relationship with the Soviet Union as some claim, or was simply power-hungry, wanting a greater share of control in government, will perhaps never be certain. Whatever Mobutu’s motivation though, it is widely believed that with support and pressure from the United States, he was part of a dramatic plot to assassinate Lumumba.\textsuperscript{22}

Though he continued in his role as army chief for a few more years, in 1965 Mobutu staged a

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 38-39.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{22} Wrong, \textit{In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz}, 69.
successful coup, taking over power.\textsuperscript{23} Shortly after, Mobutu changed Congo’s name yet again, from the Republic of Congo to Zaire.\textsuperscript{24} Thus began a new period for Congo, heralded with expectant hope but haunted by the ghost of King Leopold.\textsuperscript{25}

In the manner of the late Belgian monarch, Mobutu treated the Congo as his own personal property with which he could do as he pleased. And what pleased Zaire’s new leader was wealth and the ostentatious display of it. Mobutu used the state treasury as his personal bank account, embarking on lavish and wasteful building projects and ensuring the loyalty of anyone who worked with or near him with large amounts of cash. In addition to draining the treasury through mind-boggling spending on everything from ostentatious presidential villas both in Congo and overseas to private jets and fleets of luxury vehicles,\textsuperscript{26} Mobutu’s government seemed utterly incapable of ensuring that taxes were paid to balance the budget.\textsuperscript{27} Perhaps even more destructive to the national economy was Mobutu’s Zairianization movement. Besides giving the country a less Western sounding name, Mobutu determined that the land itself needed be returned to its rightful Congolese owners. In 1973 Mobutu bought out or kicked out foreigners owning thousands of companies, plantations and farms.\textsuperscript{28} Formerly profitable businesses immediately sank into the red, “managed” by people who had

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 80-84.

\textsuperscript{24} Mobutu also changed the names of many cities, rivers and other landmarks in an effort to remove Western influence and create a more unified African identity. See Michaela Wrong’s \textit{In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz} for further background.

\textsuperscript{25} Taken from Adam Hochschild’s famous title, \textit{King Leopold’s Ghost}.

\textsuperscript{26} Wrong, \textit{In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz}, 99-102.

\textsuperscript{27} Nzongola-Ntalaja, \textit{The Congo from Leopold to Kabila}, 157-160.

\textsuperscript{28} Wrong, \textit{In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz}, 96-98.
had no industry training and in some cases had no interest in even trying to make things work. As could be expected, the entire Zairian economy began to crumble.

By the 1970’s, Zaire was in a state of crisis. Prices were rising astronomically while wages continually fell. Mobutu began to take out huge loans simply to pay back interest on previous loans now coming due.\(^{29}\) When it seemed that the country was completely broke, Mobutu would simply order that more currency be printed. By the early 1990’s inflation had reached an astonishing 9,800%.\(^{30}\) People half-heartedly joked that it was cheaper to use Zairian currency for toilet paper than to actually purchase the product itself.

The destruction happening in Zaire went deeper than just into its infrastructure. Just like Leopold, Mobutu had his own massive military army which he used to forcibly remove his political competition and to keep the Zairian public sufficiently intimidated and convinced of who had the power. When the economy first became shaky, Mobutu became even more paranoid than normal and began to regularly fire or execute military personnel whom he saw as potential threats. Mobutu was not only afraid of military coups but of anyone who even had negative things to say about his rule. He was responsible for numerous bloody massacres of university students and other demonstrators. He eliminated political leaders, forcibly enlisted dissenters into the army and generally neglected the needs of his people.\(^{31}\)

The state of the country’s finances eventually led to a government completely unable to pay its bills or the salaries of those it employed. In the early 1990’s, Mobutu simply stopped paying his army altogether, instead telling them that they would need to take care of

\(^{29}\) McCalpin, *The Origins of the Congo War*, 43.

\(^{30}\) Wrong, *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*, 126.

themselves. Effectively then, Zaire’s president incited its own army against it as the 20,000 troops descended on the population to loot personal property and to steal any available natural resources.32

It is not surprising that this was almost the end of Mobutu’s career as one of the most successful professional thieves in modern history. What is astonishing is that he was allowed to continue in his incredibly abusive role for more than three full decades, from the mid 1960’s through the mid 90’s. This raises a critical socio-political question: Why did the people of Congo not forcibly remove him?

There are probably a number of contributing factors which answer this question. First of all, the Congolese people had been subject to extreme abuse at the hands of authoritarian leadership for approximately 80 years before Mobutu took over power. It is highly likely that many of Congo’s citizens were simply used to a culture of exploitation and had learned that anything other than blind obedience resulted in torture or death. While an anti-colonial presence had indeed sprung up in Congo even in the early part of the 1900’s, in relation to the total population this culture of dissent was a minority. A second reason for Mobutu’s political longevity is that when he came to power in the 60’s, Congo viewed him as an African savior. After decades of exploitation at the hands of foreigners and then five years of post-independence confusion and violence, Mobutu offered the possibility of stability and national unification. Though his Zairianization policies made an economic mess, they were culturally important, reinforcing to the Congolese both the importance of their African identity and their shared culture as Zairians and not merely individual tribes.

32 Ibid., 45.
Mobutu understood the power of perception and took advantage of the image of himself as savior. His regime created and marketed an ideology that presented Mobutu as Zaire’s great “father” who was both wise and also the great caretaker for the country’s “children.” Though it became increasingly clear to Mobutu’s “children” that Zaire’s great “papa” did not have their best interests at heart, Mobutu’s personal security forces were quick to remind people not to complain.

By the time Mobutu let his unpaid security forces loose on the general population in the early 1990’s, there was already considerable opposition to the big man’s rule and he was holding onto office with his fingertips. Zairian culture was making a shift and Mobutu was losing control. We will never know what would have happened to Mobutu had the nation been left to sort out its own issues. Instead, the fragile state of the country left it susceptible to outside influences and Zaire quickly became mired in the tragic circumstances of its neighbors.

Much of the world is aware of the Rwandan genocide which took place in early 1994. Over the course of 3 months the majority Hutu population carried out a systematic massacre of the minority Tutsi population, killing as many as one million Tutsi. What is less well known is what occurred when the killing in Rwanda was finally stopped in mid-1994. Millions of Rwandan Hutus began to flee their country; most were afraid of reparations they might face and some were not yet ready to end their reign of terror against the Tutsi. Although all of Rwanda’s neighbors felt the impact of the sudden influx of refugees, Zaire received not only the lion’s share of refugees at nearly 2 million, but also became host to almost all of the fleeing

33 Ibid., 166.
politicians and military personnel. Many of these same individuals were not only directly complicit in the genocide but actually believed that it should continue, that the Tutsi people should continue to pay.

Suddenly Zaire was home both to its own conflicts and the conflict of its neighbor. Had Zaire been run by a government with the political will and integrity to govern responsibly, it may have been able to maintain control of the refugee camps or even limit who was able to cross its vast border. Instead, Rwanda’s conflict intermingled with the already fragile state of affairs in Congo and contributed to what soon became an all-out war.

The Rwandan refugees created a twofold problem for Zaire. First, because a contingent of the refugees were actually Hutu militia using Zaire as a staging ground to make regular attacks back into Rwanda, they created an internationally dangerous situation where Rwanda ended up viewing Zaire as a security threat. Second, the refugees directly clashed with their new neighbors over resources, land, and deep-seated ethnicity issues. Certainly it is not surprising that a sudden influx of almost 2 million refugees would take a toll on the area in which they were placed. Zairians complained of livestock and food theft, general destruction of the land, the introduction and spread of diseases, and worst of all, direct violence against their persons. While this conflict over resources and land is not difficult to understand, the ethnic issues are a great deal more complicated.

36 Ibid., 53-55.
2.1 Adding Fuel to an Already Burning Fire

Congo’s eastern residents include a large number of Rwandan peoples who had fled or immigrated there as early as the 17th century and as late as the 1960’s and ‘70’s. One such immigration was prompted by a Belgian organization created in the late 1930’s and called the Mission for the Immigration of the Banyarwanda (MIB). Belgium, which was also governing Rwanda at this time, determined that Rwanda was heavily overpopulated and that its people could provide a necessary influx of workers to the plantations and mines in Congo. Over the course of its life, the MIB moved approximately 85,000 Rwandan peoples over to Congo. Largely settling in North and South Kivu, these transplants were not well accepted by their Congolese hosts. For one thing, the Belgian colonists “appointed more people with Rwandan ancestry to the local administration, providing the whole group with better access to political and economic power than the indigenous Congolese received.” Additionally, the Banyarwanda and indigenous Congolese had significant disagreements over land ownership rights, particularly in North Kivu. While the Congolese considered the new arrivals to be receiving more than their due, the Belgians never granted the Banyarwanda immigrants the indigenous status necessary for land entitlement or political representation. To complicate the situation even further, Rwanda’s independence in 1962 sparked a wave of violence which sent another 60,000 Rwandan Tutsi across the border, further igniting the indigenous

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37 Ibid., 48-49.

38 Banyarwanda means “people of Rwanda.”


40 Prunier, Africa’s World War, 49.

41 Autesserre, The Trouble with the Congo, 134.
Congolese versus immigrant Banyarwanda conflict over land, resources, power, and citizenship status.\(^42\)

The early 1990’s brought increased tension to the Kivus. Mobutu was not at all interested (or capable) of intervening in this escalating conflict. He had no affection for the Eastern Zairians, either those native to Congo or the Banyarwanda, considering them hostile to his regime. In fact, not only did Mobutu have no intention of intervening in the situation in the Kivus, he hoped that the situation might put his nation into the spotlight of the international community.\(^43\) A national conference held in 1991 turned into a forum for Kivu representatives to demand the removal of all Banyarwanda. The issue continued to inflame until 1993 when armed Zairians began to attack and ultimately kill thousands of Banyarwanda in North and South Kivu.\(^44\)

Thus, the Rwandan refugees who crossed the border in 1994 were not only entering a conflict zone but because of their shared heritage with the Banyarwanda, they were actually about to exponentially complicate what was happening in the Congo.

2.2 The Conflict Becomes an International War

The other problem that the refugees brought with them to Zaire, while perhaps more straightforward, caused Zaire to become both the battleground and key player in a full-scale war. For more than two years, Hutu militia groups, or Interahamwe, used their Zairian position in the refugee camps to plan and execute repeated attacks into Rwanda, slaughtering Tutsi and then running back to hide in Zaire. Mobutu ignored Rwanda’s urgent pleas to stop the attacks

\(^{42}\) Ibid.


and expel the perpetrators and as a result Rwanda eventually determined that it would have to take care of the problem itself.\textsuperscript{45}

The instability in the Kivu region affected not only Rwanda, but also Uganda which found itself increasingly exposed to various militia groups who were using the unstable region as a rear base to attack Uganda. Thus, Uganda was happy to ally with Rwanda in order to remove Mobutu from power and insert a government that would be more capable of and invested in dealing with such threats.\textsuperscript{46} In order to convince the international community that they were not violating Zaire’s sovereignty, Rwanda and Uganda sought a Zairian face for their actions. They found such a face in Laurent Desiree Kabila, one of the leaders of the AFDL (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire), a group composed largely of exiled or dissident Zairians living outside of the country. With the military and financial backing of Rwanda and Uganda, the AFDL consolidated itself in Eastern Zaire and in late 1996 began an insurgency against Mobutu’s government. Rwanda began simultaneous attacks in the refugee camps in an attempt to remove the Hutu militia members. Meanwhile, Kabila’s AFDL started marching to Kinshasa, Zaire’s capital, located in the southwest of the enormous nation. As the Rwanda/Uganda-backed militia made its way across the large nation, the remains of Mobutu’s army began to flee, looting, raping and killing Zairian civilians who happened to be in their

\textsuperscript{45} Nzongola-Ntalaja, \textit{The Congo from Leopold to Kabila}, 224-225.

path.\(^{47}\) Largely unopposed, Kabila’s army took Kinshasa in May of 1997 and Kabila pronounced himself president of the newly renamed Democratic Republic of Congo.\(^{48}\)

Besides the violence and the government takeover, Congo was still plagued by the increasingly divisive issue of the Banyarwanda peoples and their place in Congolese society. In early October of 1996, the governor of Zaire’s South Kivu region announced that all Banyarwanda peoples were being expelled. This announcement incited many already poorly-treated Banyarwanda to join Kabila’s rebellion in the hopes that he would protect their interests where Mobutu had failed.\(^{49}\)

The reality however, was that though Kabila was happy to ally himself with Rwanda or Uganda in order to get into a position of power, he had no intention of being anyone’s puppet. It quickly became obvious to everyone that this was less of a principled stand than the power-hungry motivations of a lifelong rebel leader. Indeed, Kabila’s government proved controversial from every angle of allegiance. The Banyarwanda quickly discovered that Kabila had no intention of dealing with the question of their mistreatment or their rights to citizenship. The rest of Congo saw Kabila as a Rwandan pawn and grew increasingly suspicious that Kabila’s government was the beginnings of a Rwandan colonial takeover. Indeed, Kabila handed several key Congolese government positions to former high-ranking Rwandan officials. Thousands of soldiers in the new army did not even speak French or Lingala, Congo’s main


\(^{48}\) McCalpin, *The Origins of the Congo War*, 47.

languages. Rwanda expected to be allowed continued access to Eastern Congo in order both to forcibly remove the remaining Hutu militia members and to protect the Banyarwanda.\textsuperscript{50}

Though the concessions Kabila made to Rwanda did initially appear to prove his alliance to his neighbor, the formal relationship between the two was actually quite short-lived. Shortly after his one year anniversary as president, Kabila announced to the world that Rwanda’s support, while appreciated, was no longer necessary and that all troops would now be returning home.\textsuperscript{51} Outwardly Rwanda accepted this announcement as part of a natural and expected progression of events. Privately however, the small country was making plans to continue its activity in Congo. Rwanda had not financially and militarily supported Kabila only to be removed from a place of influence. The country feared continued attacks from the Hutu Interahamwe they had not yet managed to completely eradicate and they also feared the political weight that Kabila was suddenly beginning to throw around.

Thus, only two short years after Kabila’s AFDL began the first of Congo’s modern day wars, another Rwanda-backed rebel group burst onto the scene, ready to repeat history and take over the Congolese government. Much had changed in Congo in those two years however. The escalating ethnic/citizenship issues in North and South Kivu between the primarily Tutsi Congolese Banyarwanda and the indigenous Congolese had not only created a segment of the population intent on protecting itself from a foreign “Tutsi” invasion, it had also created a Congolese Tutsi population that knew it would have to fight to survive. At the same time, though many of Congo’s neighbors had stood back while Mobutu’s regime fell, their tolerance of the previous coup had been largely affected by a long-building resentment of


\textsuperscript{51} Prunier, \textit{Africa’s World War}, 178-179.
Mobutu’s rule and the subsequent regional instability his poorly governed nation caused. So while Rwanda and Uganda had thrust Kabila into power largely to benefit their own selfish motives, Congo’s other neighbors were pleased the Mobutu was gone and were ready to work with Kabila to move the country and the region forward. Thus, when Rwanda and Uganda invaded Eastern DRC in early August 1998 together with the largely Congolese RCD (Rally for Congolese Democracy), many people viewed the attack as a full insurgency rather than as a necessary and internal coup as the events in 1996 had generally been perceived.

2.3 The Actors

Angola was the first of Congo’s neighbors to come to its aid in 1998. Though it is true that Angola was not looking for the type of political control that Rwanda was, it would be inaccurate to suggest that their motives were entirely altruistic. Angola needed access to Congo to fight its own battle with Angolan rebel Jonas Savimbi and his UNITA troops who were using Congo as their fighting base.

One major contributing factor to the violence in Congo was the seemingly endless stream of non-Congolese rebel groups. Groups from neighboring countries had operated out of Congo both because it has unprotected, porous borders and because it was poorly governed and therefore offered little threat of punishment for illegal actions. Groups like UNITA from Angola used Congo as a staging group and were then able to plan and execute attacks against their targets which were usually back in their home countries. This created a number of complicating issues for Congo. First, most of these rebel groups used violence against their Congolese “neighbors,” kidnapping child soldiers from Congo, raping Congolese women,
terrorizing villages and murdering civilians.\textsuperscript{52} Second, because the targets of these rebel groups were largely external, they tended to eventually bring their battles into the Congo. This is the case with Angola, which felt that in order to stop UNITA from attacking it from inside Congo, the nation would need to preemptively attack UNITA in the Congo. Thus, Angola’s continued support for Kabila had less to do with a particular stance on the sanctity of Congo’s sovereignty as much as the need to continue an alliance with a Congolese regime that was favorable to allowing the Angolan government access to the UNITA troops.\textsuperscript{53}

Namibia and Zimbabwe were also quick to come to the aid of their flailing neighbor. Zimbabwe in particular was motivated not so much by allegiance to Kabila himself as to the notion of the sovereign African state. And while Zimbabwe’s president Robert Mugabe considered Rwanda and Uganda’s continued military action a gross violation of Congo’s rights, he was perhaps even more concerned by the secretive Western support behind the invasion.\textsuperscript{54}

When Congo formally petitioned its South African Development Community (SADC) allies to come to its aid, Zimbabwe was happy to assist a neighbor facing what it considered to be Western imperialism. The strength of Zimbabwe’s army together with the Angolan and Namibian forces made for a formidable Congolese ally.

In addition to the six countries most actively involved in Congo’s newest war, a number of Congo’s other neighbors found themselves pulled into the conflict simply by virtue of their


physical proximity or their relationships to other involved parties. Although largely uninterested in the Congo itself, Burundi, Sudan, Libya, the Central African Republic and Chad all had varying degrees of presence in the country. While Burundi had over 1,000 troops inside Congo, their purpose was to protect Burundi from any spillover effects and not to engage in the actual battle for or against Kabila.\(^{55}\) Sudan meanwhile, was equipping various rebel groups, such as the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) which was operating out of North Congo and wreaking havoc not only inside Congo but also across the border in Uganda.\(^{56}\)

Noticeably absent from this large group of interveners was South Africa. Initially unwilling to involve itself in any capacity, South Africa neither condemned the invasion nor sided with Rwanda and Uganda. Though perhaps aiming for a neutral position, South Africa’s lack of response convinced Kabila and some of his allies that the great nation was in favor of the insurgency.\(^{57}\) While South Africa had long maintained the illegality of government overthrows, it actually intervened militarily in Lesotho in response to a coup attempt only months after Rwanda and the RCD began their campaign in Congo. As a key member of the SADC, South Africa’s decision to remain generally aloof from the conflict in Congo split the group ideologically and left Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola siding with Kabila and the other SADC countries choosing to stay out of the crisis. Though South Africa eventually took the role as mediator in multiple attempts to restore peace in the Congo,\(^ {58}\) its determination to avoid

\(^{55}\) Prunier, Africa’s *World War*, 198.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 359. The assistance Sudan offered to the LRA was most likely a retaliatory action against Uganda for supporting the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) which was trying to overthrow the Sudanese president.


\(^{58}\) Ibid.
engagement in the war demonstrated a different political ideology than many of its African neighbors.

Aside from the numerous international armies or troop deployments participating in Congo’s war, there was an ever-growing contingent of rebel and militia groups contributing to the violence as well. As the RCD pushed their way further into Eastern Congo they were met with an interesting mixture of resistance. Because there was no Congolese army to speak of, Kabila was forced to rely on anyone who might volunteer for the task. This included many Eastern Congolese who saw Rwanda’s presence behind the RCD as a colonialist takeover attempt. Large numbers of these “nationalists,” as they saw themselves, banded together to form militia groups known as Mayi-Mayi. While beneficial to Kabila’s government because they fought the insurgent RCD passionately and without pay, these guerrilla fighters were untrained, poorly organized and extremely violent. In seeking to attack not only RCD fighters but often Congolese Tutsi, they ended up terrorizing their own neighbors, creating a culture where people did not know who to trust or who might attack them or loot their homes and property. Additionally, although the Mayi-Mayi were violent, they were not equipped to act as a national defense force. Their attacks on RCD and Rwandan troops only served to create a larger war between the rebels and the general Congolese populace, most of whom were not a part of any fighting force.59

Apart from the Mayi Mayi militias, there was an ever-growing number of externally backed rebel groups. The RCD, for example, started out as a unified contingent of mainly Congolese fighters seeking to oust Kabila. However, due to the nature of the RCD membership,

59 Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 210-211.
severe internal divisions quickly arose. Besides a contingent of former AFDL members, primarily Congolese Banyarwanda, the RCD was composed of former Mobutuists, people who generally felt marginalized or threatened by Kabila, and a group of highly educated intellectuals and professionals. Though these individuals all initially had a common interest in removing Kabila from power and hopefully gaining some political power of their own their shared political interests and ideologies ended there.

Only a few months after the RCD formed in August 1998, it began to splinter. As Rwanda and Uganda began to argue over strategy and their ultimate intentions in the Congo, Uganda determined that it should consolidate its control in Northern Congo. In November 1998, Uganda began to form a new rebel movement that directly rivaled the RCD, the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC). Drawing a wide constituency of Congolese Mobutuists, the MLC was led by Jean-Pierre Bemba, himself a northern Congolese.

Once Uganda removed its support from the RCD, the RCD leader, Wamba dia Wamba, found himself without a backer and was forcibly removed. Wamba responded by taking a contingent of fighters with him and forming a new group which he called RCD-Kisingani (or RCD-Liberation Movement).

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60 The group originally led by Kabila.


62 Ibid., 117-118.

63 Ibid., 118.

64 Afoaku, Congo’s Rebels, 118-120.
even further factioning and three additional, though much smaller, groups emerged: RCD-Original, RCD-National and RCD-Populaire.

While all of the above mentioned rebel or militia groups were directly involved in Congo’s second war, there were also various non-Congolese guerilla groups operating in Congo apart from the war. Though not fighting either for or against Kabila, groups like the Ugandan LRA (Lord’s Resistance Army), Angolan UNITA and Sudanese SPLA all brought their own brand of terror to an already traumatized population and increased both the violence and the complexity of the conflict.

It is within this state of complexity that the war progressed. The Ugandan-backed MLC gained considerable control in North Congo and the original Rwandan-backed RCD took control of much of Eastern Congo. It was mid 1999 by the time Kabila and his allies were able to stop the rebel insurgency from progressing any farther and by then the Congolese government controlled less than half of the nation.

Eventually Kabila and his allies faced a stalemate in their fight against Rwanda, Uganda and the rebel groups. With no further progress being made, most of the various governments involved in the fighting agreed to sign a ceasefire agreement at a peace meeting held in Lusaka in late July of 1999. It was also at this meeting that the UN decided that it would establish and deploy a team of peacekeepers to oversee the ceasefire and help with subsequent troop

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65 Contrary to its name, RCD-Original is not the original RCD.

66 Autesserre, The Trouble with the Congo, 48-49.

67 Turner, Angola’s Role in the Congo War, 26-27.

68 Autesserre, The Trouble with the Congo, 48-49.
Thus began the tenure of MONUC (the UN Mission to Congo), the largest and most expensive United Nations mission in its history.\textsuperscript{69}

Though the ceasefire did afford Congo a measured lull in fighting where the various national militaries were concerned, the numerous rebel and militia groups had neither signed the ceasefire agreement nor had any intention of relinquishing any power. Thus, the rebel-held parts of Congo and most particularly the Eastern provinces did not see a decrease in violence. The media and various aid organizations reported a stream of ongoing massacres, attacks on villages and violent outbreaks of fighting. By January of 2000 even the UN Secretary General was willing to admit that there was no peace in Congo.\textsuperscript{71}

2.4 The “End” of the War

The next few years saw an almost unbelievable level of violence and human suffering, particularly in North and South Kivu and in Orientale province in the north. The United Nations peacekeeping force was ill-equipped on almost every level to be able to handle the scope and complexity of the conflict. As a necessarily neutral organization, the MONUC forces were handicapped in gathering what should have been critical intelligence information.\textsuperscript{72} Although the peacekeeping force eventually grew to be the largest such UN intervention ever attempted, Congo’s massive size made even 20,000 blue helmets seem ineffective.


\textsuperscript{72} A. Walter Dorn, “The Cloak and the Blue Beret: Limitations on Intelligence in UN Peacekeeping,” \textit{International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence} 12, no. 4 (1999).
Additionally, as Autessere Severine points out in her book *The Trouble with Congo*, the UN was almost exclusively focused on trying to stop the violence through a top-down approach, all but ignoring the local issues which ultimately drove the conflict forward.

In January of 2001, President Kabila was assassinated by one of his bodyguards. His son Joseph was quickly put into power and inherited a nation in complete chaos. There were an estimated 2.3 million IDP’s within Congo as well as over a quarter of a million refugees from neighboring countries. There was almost no economy to speak of and because of a decrease in both food imports and domestic agriculture, there was not enough food to feed everyone.\(^{73}\) Kabila Jr. however, was much more politically motivated (if not more successful) than his father had been to bring peace to Congo and he readily and quickly met with other national leaders, agreeing to attend peace talks.

In December 2002 at the South African hosted Sun City talks in Pretoria, diplomacy seemed to be making breakthroughs. Zimbabwe was not only war-weary, but the country had almost bankrupted itself on the war effort and was more than ready to pull back;\(^{74}\) Angola’s defeat of UNITA removed one of its original reasons for intervention\(^{75}\) and the Rwandan backed RCD bowed to political pressure and also agreed to sign the peace agreement. Besides calling for a ceasefire, additional aspects of the agreement included a power sharing agreement in the government and the commitment to hold democratic elections in the near future. Though Joseph Kabila would remain as president, four vice presidents would be added, one from the government, one from the main RCD-G group, one from the MLC and one from

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\(^{73}\) Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 277-278.

\(^{74}\) Rupiya, “Zimbabwe’s involvement in the Second Congo War,” 100-103.

\(^{75}\) Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 273.
In essence then, the years of fighting that RCD-G and the MLC had engaged in had paid off, at least to some extent. Their leadership had fought to gain power and ultimately had been granted it.

The decision to reward, in essence, the very people causing the war could be viewed in a number of ways. First, one could see it as the way of war, where each side naturally has its own agenda and seeks to come out victorious. Certainly it would not be accurate to conclude that the Congolese government, either in the form of Mobutu or Kabila Sr., was committed to the welfare of its people. One could point out the multitude of times in history when a so-called rebel insurgency has ultimately been considered the best advocate for the general population. Thus, perhaps the very terminology of “rebel” is unfair and groups like the RCD should be considered as nationalists or freedom fighters. On the other hand, it is difficult to see a group as nationalist when they are so strongly backed by a foreign country and so abusive towards innocent civilians. In this case, the acquiescence of government power to such a group could certainly be seen as rewarding a bully for their terrible behavior.

Whether this type of reasoning was part of the Sun City agreement is not clear. Perhaps giving a portion of government control to the MLC and RCD was seen as a necessary evil, essential to finally giving the nation some peace. Whatever the case, the international community felt extremely optimistic about the agreement. As countries like Uganda, Angola and Zimbabwe began to complete the removal of their armies from Congo the agreement was declared a success. However, the real reason for the troop removal had little to do with the all-inclusive agreement and a lot to do with the fact that most of the involved nations no longer

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76 Ibid., 269-274, 277.

77 One example of this would be the American Revolutionaries in the USA in the late 1700’s.
had any interest in remaining in Congo. And while their entrance into the conflict had certainly exacerbated the complexity of the situation, their exit was not enough to bring an end to it.

The reason for this was first, that the all-inclusive agreement was not actually all inclusive. In essence, it focused on a single (albeit large) aspect of the conflict, that which had been labeled as Africa’s World War. The peace agreement operated under the assumption that the cause of all the violence was at the national level and could therefore be ended with a national solution. Noticeably absent from the Pretoria meeting were any Mayi Mayi leaders and many of the splinter RCD groups. Even had the Mayi Mayi had representation at the meeting, it is important to note that while many militia groups in Congo called themselves Mayi Mayi, they were not operating as a unified body working together for a particular goal. Indeed, many of them fought with each other on a regular basis. In general, the various militias were not interested in being part of any national peace talks because they had no real interest in peace. Their members had discovered that their position in such militia groups gave them status, power and access to resources and land that they otherwise would not have. Many Mayi Mayi members were young men with no economic prospects aside from their guns. Peace for such groups is not inherently profitable or beneficial.

Additionally, though the Rwandan government had eventually signed the Pretoria agreement, its troop withdrawal was contingent on the UN and Congolese troops’ successful disarmament of the now formalized Hutu militia, calling themselves the Democratic Force for

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80 Autesserre, *The Trouble with Congo*, 151.
the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). In the meantime, the Rwandan army troops remained behind. While it is estimated that over the course of the next two years the FDLR was reduced in numbers by approximately half, that left a remaining 10,000 rebels still operating in Eastern Congo. Whether the FDLR continued to be a significant threat to Rwanda is a debated issue, however, the militia’s presence in the Congo certainly continued to prove a threat to Congo, both from the prolonged presence of a violent rebel group and from the continued Rwandese response. The emergence of yet another armed group in 2004 increased the violence. Former RDC-G fighter Laurent Nkunda formed the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP) under the rally cry of protecting the Tutsi-Banyarwanda peoples from the FDLR. Rwanda was quick to offer its support to the CNDP while Kabila’s troops struggled to maintain any kind of order in the Kivus.

Thus, when the international community had declared Congo’s war “over!” in early 2003, they were seriously discounting the aspects of the conflict caused by the Mayi-Mayi, the continued Banyarwanda-indigenous argument and the FDLR. Some people have gone so far as to suggest that the current state of violence in Congo is a third war, “fundamentally


82 Jason Stearns, "FDLR Continues to Pose a Threat to DRC and Rwandan Stability," Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy 32, no. 11/12 (2004).

83 See Jason Stearns (2004) for arguments for and against the continued FDLR threat.

84 Prunier, Africa's World War, 297-298.


86 Not to mention other rebel groups such as the LRA which had no real political interest in the Congo but continued to commit acts of violence against Congolese.
different...far less structured and [involving] many more, though smaller, military actors.” The reality however, is that the presence of those ‘smaller, military actors” was always a factor in Congo’s conflict; it was simply not one that was given a great deal of attention.

3. Congo Today

In 2006, with extensive support from the international community, Congo conducted its second democratic election and inaugurated Joseph Kabila as the formal president. For all of the assumptions of the international community that the election would be a new beginning little changed on the ground. In 2008 Human Rights Watch published an extensive report of the violent political repression coming from the government and the presidency. The report documents torture, illegal incarcerations, and killings of supporters of Kabila’s main rival, Jean-Pierre Bemba. Also in 2008, the Economist reported that the previous two years were so filled with violence and fighting that 850,000 Congolese had fled their homes. In light of the massive numbers of IDP’S, completely overwhelmed UN peacekeepers and reports of nearby massacres, they quote a Red Cross worker describing the situation as “catastrophic.”

Since that time some of the players have changed but the catastrophe remains. Though Rwanda has finally agreed to work with President Kabila and even arrested the former CNDP leader, this has not stopped the formation of new pro-Tutsi Congolese militia groups.

87 Weiss and Carayannis, “Reconstructing the Congo,” 128.

88 The first democratic election was immediately after independence and resulted in the presidency of Patrice Lumumba.


Additionally, though Kabila has attempted numerous operations against the FDLR, it continues to torment Congolese citizens in the Kivus. The national Congolese army (FARDC) has not only proven itself incapable of stopping the various militia groups, it has contributed to the insecurity itself. Human Rights Watch has documented thousands of cases of killings, rapes and civilians forced into labor or sexual slavery on behalf of the FARDC troops. In some cases, the perpetrators of the violence are former rebel fighters who have been integrated into the national army but are intent on punishing Congolese who have a supposed collaboration with the Hutu militia. Additionally, when Congo and the Rwandan government decided to work together, Kabila invited a contingent of Rwandan soldiers to work as a coalition force with the FARDC against the FDLR. While some of these Rwandan soldiers understand the difference between innocent civilians and FDLR collaborators, some of them are also complicit in the senseless violence against innocents. The fact that Congolese innocents are suffering in the name of Tutsi-protection only serves to further inflame the region.

Resource control has also become a major contributing factor to the insecurity on an individual level as well as institutionally. The constant human displacement often results in individuals returning home to discover that someone else has appropriated their land and property. Poorly protected mining sites have been taken over by rebel groups who then steal the natural resources for themselves. Political power at the local level is also a fought over

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94 Ibid.

commodity, with traditional chiefs coming into opposition with government appointed administration.96 While the Kivus and Orientale Province in the East of Congo are currently experiencing the greatest conflict, the rest of Congo is also troubled. The southwest province of Bas-Congo, has had increasing reports of violent uprisings against the government for both political and economic reasons.97 The reality is that until the economy of Congo can provide viable economic opportunities for the population, fighting over the limited available resources will continue indefinitely, on an individual and local level as well as more nationally. At the same time, until the fighting is brought under control, Congo remains very vulnerable to new conflicts, both internal and imported. As recently as August 2010 a new foreign rebel group has taken up residence in Eastern Congo, this time from Burundi.98 And in March of 2011, Kabila’s government survived a coup attempt that claimed the lives of at least 19 people and has resulted in the arrest (legitimate or otherwise) of at least 126 others.99

November 2011 will herald another round of elections in Congo.100 And while news of democratic elections should be hopeful tidings, this is not necessarily true in Congo’s case. As is discussed in Chapter 6, Kabila’s revisions of the electoral process betray that he is more concerned about staying in power than seeking good governance for his country. In addition, there has been little-to-no progress to resolve any of the issues underlying the conflict in the

96 Ibid., ii.
eastern part of the country. It is in this context that the questions that this thesis addresses are critical - how can a conflict like the Congo's possible be resolved? The next chapters begin the process of answering this question, looking at the successful peace processes of Mozambique and Liberia as models.
CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY OF MOZAMBIQUE’S CONFLICT

The first case study that I will look at is Mozambique’s peace process. After achieving its independence in 1975, Mozambique fell into a civil war that lasted more than a decade. Eventually, after a long, drawn-out peace process, a peace accord was signed in 1992 which kicked off a period of demilitarization and political restructuring which has led to relative peace for 15 years, extending to the present. This chapter first lays out the general history of Mozambique’s independence movement and subsequent civil war, after which it examines the prominent analytical approaches that are taken to explain the success of the peace process.

1. Background to the Conflict

The country we now know as Mozambique was for most of its history not a demarcated nation. Although the Portuguese laid claim to coastal trading forts formerly occupied by Muslim traders at the start of the 16th century, Mozambique was not cordonned off or even officially colonized for another 350 years. The initial Portuguese interest in the area was the opportunity to become a bigger player in the gold trade. While Portuguese influence slowly extended further inland, and ivory became part of the trading inventory followed by slaves, tribal governance was left largely as it had always been. It was not until the late 1800’s that Portugal formalized its control over Mozambique. As European nations rushed to claim every available inch of African land, Portugal realized it would need to demonstrate effective control over the land it had long occupied and began to formalize a colonial administration. By

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1891, Mozambique’s final border lines had been drawn and the colony officially recognized by Europe as belonging to Portugal.³

For several years Portugal worked to force Mozambique under its control, setting up judicial and administrative districts, implementing personal taxes and using traditional village chiefs as community law enforcement.⁴ While slavery had been outlawed over a decade before, Portugal needed a cheap workforce to develop the economy and came up with several ways to ensure a steady supply of low-cost labor. First, though slavery was illegal, forced labor for “vagrants” was not. So Portugal passed a new law that required all native peoples to obtain work.⁵ Though employers were obligated to pay their Mozambican workers, this law ensured that every person between 14 and 60 years of age would be working to advance the colonial economy either by working for pay or as punishment for having failed to fulfill their moral and legal duty to better themselves through work.⁶ A second method of obtaining cheap labor was created by the continued raising of personal taxes. Mozambican nationals were given the choice between paying these exorbitant taxes and working for a settler farmer for six months.⁷

While practices such as this kind of pseudo-slavery certainly demonstrated Portuguese racism towards the black Africans, Portugal maintained a self-righteous belief that it could culturally assimilate the Africans and non-Africans in Mozambique (so long as the Africans

⁴ Ibid., 380-382.
⁵ Ibid., 384.
⁶ Ibid.
were willing to embrace Portuguese customs and civil law). Though colonial Mozambique never achieved any kind of true cultural or social desegregation, Portugal’s racial ideals may have helped insulate the country from some of the extreme and violent racial divisions that existed in South Africa and Rhodesia.

While some resistance to the Portuguese colonists arose in Mozambique throughout the early 1900’s, the rise of a full anti-colonial movement did not come until the middle of the century and was largely a result of the changing political environment in Portugal and in Southern Africa. First, when Oliveira Salazar took power in Lisbon in 1926 he changed the administrative structure in Mozambique. Rather than allowing different companies to control trade and export, Salazar mandated that Mozambique production be used exclusively to build up Portugal. He also began to send over Portuguese citizens who were unable to find work at home. Where in the early 1900’s there had been only a few thousand Portuguese in Mozambique, by the early 1970’s there were almost 200,000. The second political instigator for uprising was born from the apartheid movement in South Africa. When the nationalist South African government came to power in 1948, they began to kick black Africans out of the nations’ universities and inadvertently created a leader in Mozambique’s struggle for independence. Eduardo Mondlane, a Mozambican who had been studying in South Africa, went on to finish his University study and get a PhD in the US. Mondlane then returned to

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8 Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 5-6.

9 Ibid., 5.

Mozambique to unite a group of radicals for independence. In mid 1962 the Mozambique Liberation Front, or FRELIMO\textsuperscript{11}, was born.\textsuperscript{12}

1.1 FRELIMO

FRELIMO’s initial ideologies and goals were vague beyond the removal of the Portuguese. Mozambique’s northern neighbor Tanzania was quick to lend their Chinese-trained army officers and some 100 Chinese advisors to the movement for military and political training. The Soviet Union was also happy to step up and offer its support.\textsuperscript{13} For the first few years of FRELIMO’s movement, their guerrilla war was waged on a small scale, and though the Portuguese put up barriers against particularly threatening attacks, the colonizers’ response to FRELIMO was concerned with international opinion, but was also tempered by an underestimation of FRELIMO’s intentions. In an attempt to counter the revolutionary atmosphere, Portugal began making broad policy changes, repealing forced labor, ramping up educational and health care provisions and passing legislation that ensured legal equality between the settlers and the Africans.\textsuperscript{14}

These actions however, were seen as too-little, too-late by an anti-colonialist movement which was now set on self-governance; the fight for independence grew into a war. FRELIMO’s Mondlane was killed by a bomb in early 1969, allegedly by Portuguese secret police, and Samora Machel, who was formerly in charge of FRELIMO defense, was put in control of the

\textsuperscript{11} FRELIMO is the acronym for the Portuguese name of the group: Frente de Libertação de Moçambique.

\textsuperscript{12} Africa Watch, \textit{Conspicuous Destruction}, 15-16.

\textsuperscript{13} Hall and Young, \textit{Confronting Leviathon}, 13.

\textsuperscript{14} Newitt, \textit{A History of Mozambique}, 527-528.
movement. Machel held the belief that the war for independence was largely a class struggle and that socialism would set the people of Mozambique free.

By 1970 Portugal was providing more than 150,000 troops in an attempt to maintain control. Thousands of those troops were killed in battle and the financial cost of the war effort became extremely high. The Portuguese army chief then began to heavily recruit Africans into his fighting force and soon more than half of the Portuguese troop strength came from black Africans. The end of Portuguese rule in Mozambique came about when it was simply no longer worthwhile for Portugal to continue fighting. Besides the financial and military cost of the war, Portugal’s decision to join the European Economic Community in 1970 meant that it had to open the trade markets of its colonies and allow imports from other nations to reach the Mozambican markets. This made an immediate economic impact on Portuguese businesses in Mozambique which were no longer guaranteed a closed market for their goods. At the same time, two of Portugal’s other African colonies, Angola and Guinea-Bissau, were also waging wars of independence and so when Portugal experienced its own coup d’état in April 1974, it quickly released the last of its grip on Mozambique, surprising FRELIMO with an unconditional governmental handover.

Equally surprising was the mass exodus of Portuguese settlers which followed the government transition. Most of the settlers believed that FRELIMO was anti-white and would cause them serious harm. By mid-1974 the white population in Mozambique had fallen from

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15 Africa Watch, *Conspicuous Destruction*, 17.
16 Hall and Young, *Confronting Leviathan*, 21.
18 Ibid., 533.
over 200,000 to 80,000 and within a few years fell to fewer than 25,000. As the settlers rushed to leave, they went out of their way to destroy the infrastructure, property and resources that they believed were only in Mozambique because of Portugal. “They slaughtered their cattle, burnt machinery and dropped cement down lift shafts of buildings under construction rather than leave Mozambique with anything they had given it.”

While technically the Portuguese were indeed responsible for bringing infrastructure and a market economy to Mozambique, they cannot be so credited with incorporating the African population into the management or operations of running that infrastructure. The Portuguese left behind a population with a 95% illiteracy rate, a single black doctor, a single agronomist and a population completely unprepared to operate the export economy Mozambique had become dependent upon.

This inauspicious beginning was embraced to a certain extent by FRELIMO which, still led by Machel, was optimistic about rebuilding the nation as a socialist state. Throughout the ‘70’s FRELIMO worked to nationalize everything from the nation’s education and healthcare systems to the very land underneath them. Community villages and farms were set up across the country and people were assigned specific locations to live and work. FRELIMO also tried to legislate morality and was quick to send anyone whom they considered to have loose morals

20 Andersson, Mozambique: A War against the People, 13-14.
21 Ibid., 7, 14.
22 Hall and Young, Confronting Leviathan, 49.
23 Ibid., 59.
to formal re-education camps.\textsuperscript{24} Anyone who disagreed with the new government or who had supported the Portuguese during the war was also sent off to be re-educated.\textsuperscript{25}

FRELIMO’s methods of governing created a number of problems. First, FRELIMO was no more capable of running the various aspects of the public sector than the general population was. Thus, their mass nationalization policy merely “deprived private initiative of any reward, retarded community development and concentrated power in the hands of a central government unprepared to exercise it.”\textsuperscript{26} Second, the communal villages which were the center of FRELIMO’s socialization scheme were extremely unpopular as they were filled with people who had been given no choice in the matter and very little resource support to become productive.\textsuperscript{27} Finally, FRELIMO’s policy to shun anything affiliated with the former Portuguese colony created an immediate population of Mozambicans antagonistic to their new government. FRELIMO would not allow soldiers who had fought under the colonial government to join the national army\textsuperscript{28} nor did it create a place for any local tribal leaders who had served as regional authorities under Portuguese rule.\textsuperscript{29} FRELIMO’s attempts to create a society completely loyal to its government resulted instead in a society that was bitter and confused.

\textsuperscript{24} Andersson, \textit{Mozambique: A War against the People}, 27.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 18, 28.


\textsuperscript{27} Africa Watch, \textit{Conspicuous Destruction}, 24.

\textsuperscript{28} William Finnegan, \textit{A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 56.

\textsuperscript{29} Newitt, \textit{A History of Mozambique}, 544.
FRELIMO’s largest opposition, however, initially originated not from within Mozambique but from its neighbors who were dealing with their own political crises. In a movement of solidarity and support for the rising black-power movement in neighboring Rhodesia, FRELIMO’s Machel closed Rhodesia’s access to a key trading route, the Beira corridor. FRELIMO also gave Robert Mugabe’s militant political organization, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), the use of Western Mozambique as a rear base. Rhodesia responded first with retaliatory attacks across the border, and then with the creation of a military intelligence unit inside of Mozambique which would provide intelligence on ZANU and also put pressure on FRELIMO to cease its support.

1.2 RENAMO

RENAMO, or the Mozambican National Resistance as the intelligence force was called, was funded by Rhodesia but populated largely with angry Mozambicans who had had property seized by FRELIMO, had been sent to the re-education camps or had been excluded from serving in the army. RENAMO’s appointed leader was Andre Matsangaissa, a former FRELIMO commander who had been sent to be re-educated after being charged with theft. Due to the fact that RENAMO was made up of disgruntled Mozambicans it appeared in many ways to be an internal anti-FRELIMO, anti-socialist movement. In reality though, it was externally created by a still largely white-ruled southern Africa to be an anti-black-power

30 Hume, Ending Mozambique’s War, 9.
31 Ibid., 9-10.
32 RENAMO is the acronym for the Portuguese name of the group: Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
movement. Soon engaged in a full war with Mozambique, Rhodesia used RENAMO not only to attack ZANU bases but FRELIMO soldiers as well.\(^\text{34}\)

By 1980 however, Rhodesia’s white-power government was forced to admit defeat and Robert Mugabe became president of the newly independent Zimbabwe. At this FRELIMO relaxed, assuming this was to be the end of not only the Rhodesia-Mozambique fighting but also the Rhodesian-sponsored RENAMO. Turnings its focus finally to economic state policy, FRELIMO found itself facing a severe drought and a global recession. In an attempt to bolster Mozambique’s agricultural production, the government forcibly resettled 50,000 unemployed people from its cities to its rural community farms.\(^\text{35}\) Unfortunately, astounding mismanagement of technology and farming strategies resulted in a continued downward spiral of crop output\(^\text{36}\) and in 1983 alone as many as 100,000 people died of drought-related starvation.\(^\text{37}\)

While FRELIMO was right to assume that without Rhodesian support, RENAMO would fundamentally change, what Machel did not take into consideration was the possibility that the movement would find a new backer. Enter South Africa, which was watching white-rule unravel all around it. Not only were Mozambique and Zimbabwe now self-governed by black Africans, but Angola too had rid itself of its white colonizing rulers. To the South Africans, RENAMO presented a ready-made opportunity to show the rest of the world that black-rule would never be a successful governance model.\(^\text{38}\) In 1979 Matsangaissa was killed in battle and

\(^{34}\) Andersson, *Mozambique: A War against the People*, 49-50.


\(^{38}\) Andersson, *Mozambique: A War against the People*, 5.
after a lengthy power struggle within RENAMO Afonso Dhlakama took his place. South Africa quickly stepped in at that point with resource support in order to ensure Dhlakama and ultimately RENAMO’s success.\(^{39}\)

South Africa had additional motivations in supporting RENAMO as well. Early on, FRELIMO had acted to support the various independence movements of its neighbors. Besides standing in solidarity with Mugabe’s ZANU, it had opened its borders to South Africa’s anti-apartheid movement, the ANC (African National Congress).\(^{40}\) Any violence aimed at Mozambique not only weakened FRELIMO but served the dual purpose of undermining the ANC bases. Financial considerations were an additional incentive for South Africa to destabilize Mozambique. As trade routes through Mozambique became compromised by insecurity and damaged by fighting, regional trade was forced to bypass Mozambique and divert through South African ports, boosting the nation’s economy and the dependence that its neighbors would have on maintaining good relations with South Africa.\(^{41}\)

The drought in Mozambique together with the general rising discontent against FRELIMO ensured a steady stream of recruits for RENAMO. RENAMO also bolstered its number by kidnapping both adults and young children\(^{42}\) and by recruiting illegal immigrants into its service on pain of being handed over to the government.\(^{43}\) By 1985 RENAMO consisted of around 12,000 troops\(^{44}\) and had the specific military mandate of “destroying the economy

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 53-54.

\(^{40}\) Newitt, A History of Mozambique, 559-560.

\(^{41}\) Andersson, Mozambique: A War against the People, 55-56.

\(^{42}\) Human Rights Watch, Children in Combat, Children’s Rights Project, no. 8, 1996, 15.

\(^{43}\) Andersson, Mozambique: A War against the People, 57.

\(^{44}\) Hume, Ending Mozambique’s War, 14.
South Africa’s goal with RENAMO was to render Mozambique an economic disaster with a population which would then blame its government for the state it was in.

RENAMO’s campaign of destruction included devastating hundreds of clinics and thousands of schools and murdering and kidnapping health-care workers and teachers. The rebels put corpses into wells to pollute the water and destroyed bridges and roads to prevent ease of movement. And while RENAMO’s primary military tactic may not have been to kill Mozambican civilians, an increasing number of massacres began to occur across the country throughout the 1980’s and into the 90’s.

As intended, FRELIMO was extremely affected by RENAMO’s violence. By the mid ‘80’s Mozambique’s economy was indeed shattered and it had become clear to FRELIMO that they would have to try to mollify South Africa in order to defeat RENAMO. In March of 1984 Samora Machel and the South African Prime Minister signed a non-aggression treaty known as the Nkomati Accord: in exchange for Mozambique kicking the ANC out of the country, South Africa would stop funding RENAMO. While some members of the South African government did indeed support the idea of cutting RENAMO loose, South Africa ultimately did not live up to its

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47 Andersson, *Mozambique: A War against the People*, 86.

48 Hultman, 830.

49 Ibid., 830.
promise and its support for the insurgency did not come to an end, despite its promises to the contrary.\(^{50}\)

Unfortunately then, the next few years only brought heightened violence to Mozambique. Not only did South Africa continue to “arm, train, and provide communication and logistical support to RENAMO,"\(^{51}\) it became clear that South Africa was not the group’s only backer. Support from Portuguese companies and anti-communist groups in the West also bolstered RENAMO’s fighting capacity. Additionally, in an attempt to show South Africa that their fate was not tied to signatures on an accord, RENAMO began to attack targets that affected not only Mozambique but also South Africa. Their continued attacks on a major hydroelectric dam affected electrical output not only to Mozambique but also across the border into South Africa.\(^{52}\)

The Nkomati Accords also served to heighten existing tensions between Mozambique and Malawi. Because Malawi was forced to rely on South Africa’s ports during Mozambique’s war, Malawi had to do what South Africa asked of it. And after signing the non-aggression treaty with Mozambique, what South Africa wanted of Malawi was to serve as the new host to RENAMO’s military bases. Throughout 1985 and 1986 much of RENAMO’s military success in Mozambique was due to the support the insurgency received from Malawi. Machel soon learned of this new development and threatened to close Mozambique’s borders with Malawi completely. Malawi’s response, while immediate, did not produce the outcome FRELIMO had

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\(^{50}\) Finnegan, *A Complicated War*, 34.


\(^{52}\) Ibid., 17.
been anticipating. As many as 12,000 RENAMO rebels, newly expelled from Malawi, staged a full-scale attack against Mozambique with the intent to divide the country in half and secede with the northern portion.\textsuperscript{53} The two years of fighting that ensued before the Mozambican army was able to stop the RENAMO troops and re-take many of the RENAMO-held towns devastated Mozambique and created hundreds of thousands of internally displaced Mozambicans and refugees.

In October 1986, the plane Machel was riding in had a mysterious accident and crashed in South Africa, killing almost everyone on board including Machel. Machel’s successor, Joaquim Chissano began to liberalize the nation, moving it away from its socialist beginnings but as the fighting continued throughout the region so did the economic destruction. By 1990 almost two million Mozambicans needed immediate emergency aid and more than one and half million Mozambicans were living as refugees in neighboring countries.\textsuperscript{54} Neither side was able to make significant military gains and the nation was stuck in a violent state of stalemate.

It was this environment of deadlock that finally convinced FRELIMO and RENAMO to begin negotiating the terms of a peace settlement. With the assistance of many friends and allies the two sides began a long series of negotiations in 1990 and in October 1992 finally signed the General Peace Accords in Rome, Italy. Though only the start of the end of the conflict, the successful negotiation of the accord signaled a new chapter in Mozambique’s history. By the end of 1994 the nation was able to hold successful democratic elections and begin an era of relative peace that has lasted to the present.

\textsuperscript{53} Finnegan, A Complicated War, 142-143.

2. Explaining the Peace Process

A number of explanations have been proposed to account for the success of the peace process in Mozambique. This section looks at the most prominent of these analyses, which together offer a rich perspective on the contributing factors to the resolution of Mozambique’s conflict. The next section considers Cameron Hume’s account of the role of mediation in the peace process; Hume was the US diplomatic representative to the Vatican in Rome, where the mediation of the Mozambican conflict occurred. This is followed by a discussion of Dorina Bekoe’s analysis of mutual vulnerabilities. The final section discusses a wide range of equally critical components of the peace process, considered under the single heading of pressure factors.

It is worthwhile to clarify the motivations behind the inclusion of each of the particular analyses that are discussed in what follows. The discussions of the analyses of Hume and Bekoe occur under their own sub-headings, given that they are the most prominent arguments in favor of singular aspects of the conflict resolution process; Bekoe argues for the importance of mutual vulnerability between the warring parties, and Hume argues for the role of mediation. Beyond these two proposals, while the literature credits additional factors as explaining Mozambique’s successful peace process, none of these factors have been presented as over-arching analytical proposals. Rather, all of these additional factors are presented as complementary components of the peace process that while necessary, are not singularly sufficient conditions for the resolution of the conflict. These are discussed here under a single sub-heading, “Distributed Pressure Factors.”

2.1 The Role of Mediation and Negotiation
Third-party intervention into the conflict of another nation can take many forms; some interventions are invited, others imposed, some are humanitarian in focus, others military incursions. Though intervention is often viewed as an option of last resort by the international community, intervention in the form of mediation during a conflict can be an effective tool to finding non-violent solutions to violent problems. Mediators serve as neutral go betweens for warring parties, “putting them in contact with one another, gaining their trust and confidence, setting agendas, clarifying issues and formulating agreements. They can facilitate meetings by arranging venues, reducing tensions, exploring the interest of the parties and sometimes guiding the parties to unrealized possibilities.”

While mediation can play a valuable role in conflict resolution, it is not always effective in creating long-term peace. In Somalia, for example, over a dozen mediation attempts have failed to produce a resolution to the ongoing conflict. In Mozambique, however, a group of highly committed mediators were successful in helping RENAMO and FRELIMO negotiate the General Peace Agreement. And while mediation did not single-handedly resolve the conflict in Mozambique, it did play a critical role in creating an environment where peace could develop.

Getting both FRELIMO and RENAMO to accept the help of a mediator was not a simple process. In late 1988 RENAMO was being encouraged by its non-military ally, Kenya, to seek talks with FRELIMO. Around that same time, South Africa was pressuring FRELIMO to the same end. The Catholic Church inside Mozambique also took a proactive stance, not only in encouraging both sides to seek mediation, but also working to set up contacts outside of the

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country that might be able to help. At first it seemed that negotiations might organically occur when FRELIMO wrote a position paper for the local church leaders to present to RENAMO letting them know that the government was willing to participate in talks if RENAMO would renounce violence. RENAMO’s responded to this by affirming their desire to end the violence and stating, amongst other things, that the government needed to engage in a full constitutional reform and seek multiparty, democratic elections. Unfortunately RENAMO’s response infuriated FRELIMO’s Chissano who did not consider RENAMO to be a politically “legitimate opposition movement” and therefore without the authority to be bargaining for such political considerations.

This basic issue of political legitimacy resurfaced time and again through the subsequent years of negotiations. While FRELIMO wanted the violence to cease, they did not consider RENAMO to be a group that had the right to request political considerations and took fast offense to anything it considered to be an intrusion on its inherent sovereignty. RENAMO, on the other hand, was essentially demanding political legitimacy above all else and all of its demands were predicated on that assumption.

Eventually the two groups did decide on a mediator, in the form of a Catholic community called Sant’Egidio, which was associated with the Vatican in Italy. Because Sant’Egidio was not a state, its venue and motivations presented no hidden political agenda. After attempting a preliminary meeting that failed to start in Malawi, Sant’Egidio determined

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58 Ibid., 29.
that Rome would be a better location for the talks and planned the first real round of talks to begin in July of 1990.  

The following 27 months saw ten rounds of talks between RENAMO and FRELIMO as well as multiple false-starts, deadlocks and long breaks. But the success of the negotiations was ultimately seen in the completion and mutual signing of the General Peace Accord in October 1992. Cameron Hume, who served as a US advisor during the peace process, credits this ultimate success to the manner in which Sant’Egidio proceeded. Hume says that an effective mediator needs to pay careful attention to “the order in which issues are discussed...commitments are made...[and] the order of implementation.”\(^{60}\) Sant’Egidio was very determined to keep the topics of discussions as broad as the timing demanded and began the first round of negotiations by having both sides agree to abstain from force and focus their demands on things which would unify the country. In addition, Sant’Egidio worked quickly in an attempt to remove the interests that Mozambique’s neighbors had in contributing to the conflict. By negotiating the unfettered path of commerce through Mozambique’s main trade corridors, Zimbabwe’s presence in Mozambique could be limited to the corridors themselves and seen purely as a security force and not as a direct FRELIMO military ally. By working to keep the discussions of RENAMO’s political legitimacy or FRELIMO’s sovereignty on the back-burner as long as possible, Hume suggests that Sant’Egidio was able to move the warring parties forward in their negotiations.

Sant’Egidio also did a lot of mediating outside of the official negotiating venues. When FRELIMO and RENAMO became deadlocked over certain issues or demands from the other

\(^{59}\) Ibid., 32.  
\(^{60}\) Ibid., 51.
party, mediators would meet with the groups separately, trying to soften their language or
determined what issues could be put off for a later time. While the controversial issues did,
of course, have to be discussed eventually, RENAMO was able to form itself into a political
entity as the months and years passed by, and FRELIMO, which became increasingly open to
multiparty, democratic rule, began to view RENAMO not merely as a group of violent rebels
but a legitimate political opponent.

The fact that it took four full years from the time FRELIMO and RENAMO began
considering diplomatic negotiations to the signing of the General Peace Accords could certainly
be viewed as an unsatisfactory timeline. On the other hand, those four years are a testament
to the difficulty Mozambique’s conflict posed to resolution and therefore a testament to the
Sant’Egidio community for their resilience and skill in bringing FRELIMO and RENAMO to the
point of resolution.

2.2 Creating Mutual Vulnerability in Peace Agreements

In her book Implementing Peace Agreements: Lessons from Mozambique, Angola and
Liberia, Dorina Bekoe analyzes the implementation of various peace processes in three African
nations. Her underlying hypothesis is that ‘factions and their leaders continually evaluate their
military or political position with respect to the other factions and will only advance the
implementation process if the level of military or political vulnerability is balanced.” In other
words, she suggests that in order for peace to occur, every party involved in the conflict must
feel that they are not making greater sacrifices or putting themselves in a more vulnerable
position, either militarily or politically, than any other party. Bekoe recognizes the part that

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61 Ibid., 62-74.

62 Dorina A. Bekoe, Implementing Peace Agreements: Lessons from Mozambique, Angola, and
government institutions and the international community play in peace negotiations but she considers that role as simply one of facilitation (or the lack thereof) of the core peace-making mechanism, mutual vulnerability.\textsuperscript{63}

In the case of Mozambique, Bekoe argues that while the work of the UN or mediators and allies may have been important to the peace process, these types of efforts offer a temporary conflict respite at best and do not explain why hostilities between FRELIMO and RENAMO remained in check after the signing of the General Peace Agreement. She suggests that without the continued stake of mutual vulnerability between warring parties, even the most elegantly negotiated peace agreement would eventually become meaningless. In her own words, crediting the success of Mozambique’s peace process to external mediators or interveners, “takes the provisions of the General Peace Agreement for granted and does not assess the degree of mutual political and military vulnerability that characterized the implementation period.”\textsuperscript{64}

The mutual vulnerability that Bekoe refers to here existed between FRELIMO and RENAMO. While FRELIMO’s main goal in the peace negotiations was to get RENAMO to stop their campaign of infrastructure destruction and violence, RENAMO wanted to have a legitimate political voice. To Bekoe then, the negotiated General Peace Agreement was not the conclusion of the peace process but only the first step. Together with establishing the upcoming multiparty elections, it promised to provide resource support to any political party interested in running for the election.\textsuperscript{65} The agreement specifically stated that FRELIMO would

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 12-22.
\item \textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 28.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 30-31.
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seek external financial support for the explicit purpose of helping RENAMO “secure the accommodations and transportation and communications facilities it needs to carry out its political activities in all the provincial capitals and in other locations.” In other words, FRELIMO was putting itself in the very vulnerable position of losing significant political power by actively working to make RENAMO into a legitimate political party with all the legal rights necessary to run for governmental offices. Bekoe argues that RENAMO was also putting itself in a vulnerable position because it had to trust that FRELIMO would honor its commitment not only to obtain the necessary funding to legitimize RENAMO as a political party but also to proceed with a true, democratic election. RENAMO also had to sacrifice the total control that they had previously maintained over their actions and become accountable to the people it wanted to govern and also become much more visible to the rest of the world.

Bekoe also states that the manner in which territorial control was treated helped to further a mutually vulnerable atmosphere between RENAMO and FRELIMO. Because RENAMO had captured and controlled as much as 25% of Mozambican land, it was no small task to determine how those areas would be governed during the nation’s transitional period. Eventually the two sides determined that under the watchful eye of the neutral UN monitoring troops, FRELIMO would regain sovereign control of all areas of Mozambique but RENAMO would be able to assign advisors to every previously RENAMO-held province and would be

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68 Ibid., 33.
given the authority to staff any other governmental position in those provinces. Thus, while RENAMO agreed to open up the areas it controlled to FRELIMO control, in exchange it was given legitimate political authority.

Another milestone in the peace process was the demobilization of RENAMO and FRELIMO fighters. While this had been addressed at length in the General Agreement, actual implementation was slow to begin. Bekoe suggests that the delay in demobilization was because RENAMO was not immediately convinced that its position at the bargaining table was being given its due weight. Originally, RENAMO had stated that it would require at least 65% of the promised UN troop force to be on the ground before it would consider demobilization. However, when six months had passed and the UN troop force had exceeded 65%, demobilization had yet to begin. It was not until March of 1994, 16 months after the General Agreement had been signed, that demobilization began first by FRELIMO and then a week later by RENAMO.

During that 16 month period Bekoe says a number of factors served to bolster RENAMO’s faith that they were not giving more than they were taking. First, as promised, RENAMO’s Dhlakama began to receive large cash infusions in order to effectively operate in the political arena. Second, FRELIMO and RENAMO met and agreed on the composition of the upcoming National Elections Commission, which was responsible for the “organization, direction, coordination, carrying out, conduct and implementation of the electoral registration

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69 Ibid., 37.

70 See Protocol IV, V and VI.

71 Bekoe, Implementing Peace Agreements, 39.
and all activities relating to the electrical process”\textsuperscript{72} and therefore very important to the political fate of each party. Third, demobilization staging areas were set up all across the country, including in formerly RENAMO-held areas. And finally, as mentioned above, FRELIMO made the first move in the actual demobilization process, proving to RENAMO that it was serious about its efforts to create a unified national army.

With the international community providing both pressure and reintegration financing, both Chissano and Dhlakama’s armies were largely reintegrated back into general civil society by the time elections were scheduled in late 1994.\textsuperscript{73} The continued inclusion of RENAMO in the political process and subsequent elections helped to ensure a civil environment and solidify the end of Mozambique’s era of violence and conflict. According to Bekoe, this complete political reform was driven by the sense of mutual vulnerability created and fostered between RENAMO and FRELIMO. She states:

RENAMO was able to obtain access to the political space while at the same time retain options to prevent adverse policy actions against it through financial assistance and by placing advisors in areas it controlled. Similarly, adverse actions against the government by RENAMO were checked by the government’s retention of sovereignty and, eventually, demobilization.\textsuperscript{74}

Bekoe therefore holds that the mutual vulnerability between warring factions in a peace process is the core critical component of the peace process, and she claims that it was the presence of various factors in Mozambique which reinforced the mutual vulnerabilities of RENAMO and FRELIMO that enabled the successful negotiation of peace.

\textit{2.3 Distributed Pressure Factors}

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 43.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 38-41.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 41.
The final set of explanatory factors considered here credits the resolution of conflict in Mozambique to the pressure, support and response of numerous external interveners who were concerned with the situation on the ground in Mozambique. In many respects, this analysis could be considered a continuation of the mediation and negotiation analysis. After all, the primary goal of many of the involved parties was to assist FRELIMO and RENAMO in bringing resolution to the years of violence. However, while this analysis does recognize the weight of the mediation that took place in Mozambique, it emphasizes the importance of factors which both drove FRELIMO and RENAMO to negotiate in the first place and then compelled them to continue returning to the negotiating table time and again. These interventions came in many forms from many places and were certainly at least part of the reason that Mozambique was able to move past its violent post-independence history.

The four primary pressure factors considered in this section are the changing political environment, the UN’s mission to Mozambique (ONUMOZ), the influence of friends and allies to continue working towards peace, and the strong financial commitment from the international community. Though all of these pressure factors help to answer the question of why Mozambique was able to resolve its long-standing conflict, none would have been sufficient alone and are therefore considered here as a single set of influences.

It is impossible to know how long FRELIMO and RENAMO would have continued fighting if the regional and global environment had remained static. It is certain, however, that the events taking place both next door and across the ocean from Mozambique greatly speeded up the decision by FRELIMO and RENAMO to consider sitting down at the negotiating table. For FRELIMO, détente near the end of the cold war spelled the end of its relationship
with the Soviet Union and therefore the loss of Soviet military advisors and equipment.\textsuperscript{75} At the same time, Zimbabwe was putting pressure on FRELIMO to negotiate with RENAMO because of Zimbabwe’s own inability to maintain the level of military support it had been providing. The enormous expense, both financially and in Zimbabwean troop casualties, was not making Mugabe popular at home, particularly since no one really believed that FRELIMO had the power to militarily defeat RENAMO.\textsuperscript{76} RENAMO’s backing was also waning quickly. With the cold war coming to an end, RENAMO’s Western supporters were no longer motivated to support a group they had previously viewed as brave defenders of capitalism.\textsuperscript{77} Most important, however, was the changing South African position. In 1989, the new president of South Africa, F.W. de Klerk, began to dismantle the apartheid system, releasing Nelson Mandela from prison and removing the ban on the ANC.\textsuperscript{78} While RENAMO had taken on an identity and mission apart from South African interests throughout its rebel tenure, the loss of South African support rendered RENAMO even weaker in a battle it was already unable to win.

As both FRELIMO and RENAMO began to realize that a military strategy was not going to win the war, the negotiating table became a more appealing option. While the outcome of the ensuing mediation attempts ultimately resulted in the successfully negotiated General Peace Agreement, the conflict was far from being resolved. Though Chissano had been working to liberalize the policies of FRELIMO for a few years,\textsuperscript{79} freely handing RENAMO the reins of


\textsuperscript{76} Alden, \textit{Mozambique and the Construction of the New African State}, 22.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 23.


government was not part of the original plan. And though RENAMO’s Dhlakama was offered numerous concessions, he remained highly distrustful of FRELIMO. It was this continuing tension that made the UN’s role so crucial in advancing the peace process.

When FRELIMO and RENAMO eventually signed the General Peace Agreement, they gave the UN a primary role in ensuring that both parties stuck to promises they had made in the document. Besides acting as an overall monitoring arm, the UN was tasked with overseeing the ceasefire, assisting with the demobilization and reintegration of FRELIMO and RENAMO soldiers, observing and providing technical support for the upcoming election, and supplying general humanitarian aid to Mozambique’s massive refugee and IDP population.\(^8^0\)

The UN troop presence served multiple purposes. Besides providing the assurance of protection that FRELIMO and RENAMO needed in order to work with each other, the UN force also provided security assurances to nations such as Zimbabwe, which were unwilling to withdraw their own troops without a guarantee that the transportation routes they relied upon would be protected.\(^8^1\) Because one of the conditions set by RENAMO for the demobilization of its own soldiers was the exit of the majority of Zimbabwean troops in Mozambique,\(^8^2\) the UN forces served an important role in assuring all of the involved parties that their security interests would be addressed.\(^8^3\)

The UN also provided valuable assistance throughout the demobilization process. Because the UN mission in Angola had just experienced how quickly violent conflict could be

\(^{80}\) United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 28-29.


\(^{82}\) Ibid., 114.

\(^{83}\) Alden, *Mozambique and the Construction of the New African State*, 11. Troop forces from Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Malawi had been helping the FRELIMO force in its defense against Renamo.
restarted, ONUMOZ determined that in order to prevent the same mistakes from occurring in Mozambique, they would ensure a complete military demobilization process before the election would be held.\textsuperscript{84} While it is again impossible to know for certain what might have taken place in Mozambique under a different plan, there were many times throughout the election process where both FRELIMO and RENAMO held up the process, distrustful of the other side’s motives or unwilling to give up perceived powers. Had Chissano or Dhlakama maintained a contingency of armed troops, it is highly likely that the peace process would have broken down entirely and the violence restarted. As it stood, neither leader had the military backing at that time to have achieved a significant upset. The UN Secretary General and Special Advisor continued to pressure FRELIMO and RENAMO to restart discussions when they stalled and helped establish a formal electoral law.\textsuperscript{85}

Besides the pressure put on Mozambique by the UN was the pressure from other friends and allies of both RENAMO and FRELIMO. Zimbabwe’s motivations for encouraging the end of the violence have already been stated, but Botswana was also eager for the coastal country to reach peace and its trade routes to become safe, so Botswana’s President Masire was also actively engaged in pushing FRELIMO and RENAMO to negotiate.\textsuperscript{86} Despite the fact that the governments of Malawi, Kenya and South Africa had all at one point given support to RENAMO, by the early 90’s each country was involved instead in supporting the peace process.\textsuperscript{87}


\textsuperscript{85} Alden, \textit{Mozambique and the Construction of the New African State}, 62.

\textsuperscript{86} Hall and Young, \textit{Confronting Leviathon}, 210.

\textsuperscript{87} Alden, \textit{Mozambique and the Construction of the New African State}, 17-18.
Beyond the African continent came support from a number of other nations. Italy, Portugal, Britain, France and the United States all began to involve themselves in pushing Mozambique to find a way to reach peace. Apart from their diplomatic involvements, these nations gave large amounts of money to ensure that the peace process was able to progress as smoothly and quickly as possible. The financial contributions from these nations, as well as from individuals and corporations with economic interests in Mozambique are mentioned almost as an afterthought in much of the literature about Mozambique’s peace process. And while it is certainly true that money did not single-handedly end Mozambique’s war, money did play a very large role in keeping the peace process from derailing.

In a short paper published on the website of the UK NGO Conciliation Resources, Alex Vines makes the case for the powerful role financial incentives played in Mozambique. His paper mainly addresses the financial contributions of Italy and of the CEO of a UK-based corporation which owned an oil pipeline running through Mozambique. While the motivations of the CEO, Tiny Rowland, were primarily to protect the security of his company’s investments, Italy was motivated not only by future economic endeavors but also because it was deeply committed to the success of the General Peace Agreement which had been negotiated in Rome. The Italian government had already pumped more than 20 million dollars into the peace process by the time FRELIMO and RENAMO signed the Agreement and was more than happy to continue funding the various demands that RENAMO made throughout the transition period as well as during the stages of demobilization and reintegration. Rowland also contributed millions of dollars and a great many personal favors such as the use of his corporate jet.

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88 Ibid., 18.
Vines quotes a chief RENAMO negotiator as having made the statement: “there is no democracy without money.” Indeed, the financial contributions from the international community and corporations paved the way for RENAMO to transform itself from a guerilla movement to a political party, willing to wage political rather than guerilla warfare. It is also clear that money paved the way for a successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). Not only were large cash payments encouraging Dhlakama to move forward with DDR, extremely generous reintegration packages basically ensured that no one from FRELIMO or RENAMO’s fighting forces would choose to remain a soldier over receiving the package which included:

(1) Six months’ salary (half on demobilization day); (2) transportation with the soldier’s family to any part of Mozambique, where food for three months and a kit of tools and vegetable seeds would be provided and the other half of the six months’ salary would be paid; (3) an additional eighteen months’ salary, based on the ex-soldier’s former rank and payable in two-monthly installments; (4) an information and referral system; (5) occupational training; and (6) a provincial fund to support ex-soldier’s activities in their communities.  

3. Conclusion

While I will wait until Chapter 5 to discuss the full implications of the Mozambique peace process for the conflict in the DRC, it is clear at this point that several observations do stand out. In the same way that a multitude of national, regional and international issues contributed to the civil war in Mozambique, a similar combination of national, regional, and international strategies was critical to implementing the peace process. Mozambique and the DRC have different histories and their conflicts have different political and humanitarian characteristics. However, looking at Congo in conjunction with Mozambique proves useful both.

\footnote{Synge, 66.}
in identifying distinctive characteristics of Congo’s conflict as well as providing strategies for dealing with the characteristics of their conflicts which are similar. In particular, this chapter has shown that a variety of critical components of Mozambique’s peace process, while all necessary, were not sufficient on their own to bring about peace. The concept of distributed pressure factors that I have set forward will prove highly relevant when bringing the discussion back around to Congo in Chapter 5.

Having analyzed the essential dynamics of the Mozambican peace process and extracted some important lessons critical to its success, the following chapter will tackle the second case study of this thesis. Liberia presents itself under very different circumstances, and illuminates different aspects of the conflict in the DRC, but an examination of its path to resolution will likewise reveal attributes applicable to the DRC.
CHAPTER 4
CASE STUDY OF LIBERIA’S CONFLICT

In its 2002 predictions for the state of the world in 2003, the Economist magazine suggested that Liberia would be the worst place in the world to live.\(^1\) While the accuracy of such a prediction may be debatable, the sentiment reflected the effects of more than decade of almost constant civil war on Liberia. In the 2003 UN Security Report on Liberia, the Secretary General reported that an estimated 250,000 people had lost their lives since 1989 and that as many as one out of every ten children in the country had been recruited to fight at some point during the conflict. Approximately one million Liberians, a third of the population, were either refugees in neighboring countries or displaced within their own country. The employment rate at that time was only 15% and the country carried a national debt close to 3 billion US dollars.\(^2\)

The aforementioned UN report was submitted only one month after Liberian President/Warlord Charles Taylor went into voluntary exile in Nigeria. While the world may have hoped that this event would trigger the end to Liberia’s tragic conflict, the Secretary General stated that there existed a “culture of violence”\(^3\) in Liberia that would need to be eliminated in order for the country to find peace. Despite UN pessimism in 2003, however, the Liberia of today is a much more hopeful country. The Mo Ibrahim Foundation, which ranks African countries by quality of governance, has Liberia ranked 39\(^{th}\) out of the 53 African


\(^3\) Ibid.
countries in its 2007-2008 dataset. Compared to 2002-2003 where Liberia was 51\textsuperscript{st} out of 53, this shows a concerted national effort towards political, social and economic development.\footnote{Mo Ibrahim Foundation. “The Ibrahim index, scores and rankings,” \url{http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/en/section/the-ibrahim-index/scores-and-ranking} (accessed September 3, 2010).}

The second case study I will consider in this thesis is the peace process that occurred in Liberia after the country erupted in violent conflict. This chapter will first lay out the historical background behind Liberia’s recent conflict, connecting the events of the past twenty years to the nation’s broader history. Second, it will discuss the different analytical approaches which could be taken to explain the resolution of the conflict. While the broad conflict resolution literature is full of frameworks and analyses that can be applied to a given conflict, Liberia’s conflict resolution process is not well represented in the literature. Thus, the analyses discussed in this chapter represent the existing analytical explanations for Liberia’s peace process as well as a novel analysis trumpeting the role of Liberia’s women.

1. Background to the Conflict

Conflict is not created in a vacuum. Though Liberia is a unique case in Africa, having never been colonized,\footnote{Ethiopia is the only other African country to have no colonial history.} the historical context behind its modern-day civil war reaches back decades before the Scramble for Africa began. In order to fully understand how and why Liberia came to be considered the “worst place in the world,” it is necessary to consider the historical background of the nation.

What is now known as the country of Liberia began as simply another part of the whole of West Africa, home to various tribes with individual chieftains and systems of governance. In the early 1800’s, a newly formed group calling themselves the American Society
for Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States (or ACS) changed all of that. Whether the motives of the ACS were partially humanitarian or merely intended to remove blacks from America, the organization determined that it would be in everyone’s best interests if freed slaves could be repatriated back to Africa. After a few failed attempts at establishing an area for the settlers to live, the ACS succeeded in negotiating their way into an area near modern day Monrovia. In return for what they thought was the sharing of their communal land, the national tribes accepted supplies such as gunpowder and tobacco. The ACS and the freed-slave settlers, on the other hand, considered the land bought and paid for. These different interpretations of land rights essentially paved the way for long-term conflict between the settlers and the native Liberians.

Although they did not have much political or military power, the settlers still wanted the rest of the world to give them the status and respect afforded a legitimate nation-state. Thus, in July of 1847 the settlers declared the territorially ambiguous region of Liberia a free state. In addition to the country not having a clearly defined border, many of the native Liberians refused to recognize the political authority of the settlers. Between 1822 and 1915 the settlers and various Liberian people groups were involved in at least 15 violent conflicts, mainly caused by settler attempts to expand their territorial ownership or limit native access to

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9 Ibid., 93.

10 Ibid., 6.
the coast. This continual warfare tied up an enormous amount of government resources, stunting possible economic development in the region. Eventually realizing the devastating economic impact of continued fighting, the settler-run government began an attempt to foster better relations with the various tribal groups. By 1883 many of the village states had signed treaties with the government, granting it sovereignty over the nation.

Around the time many native Liberians became willing to recognize the settler government as their own, the nation began to experience intense pressure from the territory-hungry colonial powers. Under the auspices of a policy known as “Effective Control,” legalized through the Berlin treaty, superpowers like Great Britain and France were rushing to annex any land that was not being effectively managed by its governing body.  

Though political relations between the native Liberians and the settler government had improved to a degree at this point the settlers felt pressure to demonstrate control of the country and became extremely authoritarian in their rule.

While there were certainly periods in this early history where the settler government worked to create good diplomatic relations with the Liberian populace, there was always a very distinct sociopolitical divide between the settler class and the native population. President Tubman, who was in office from January 1944 until his death in July 1971, put forward a plan to facilitate national unification, which while progressive in lip-service was largely empty in substance. In fact, in keeping with the line of paternalistic settler-elites before him, Tubman became known for creating “the most potent patronage network the country had ever seen.”

11 Ibid., 133.

Tubman’s successor, William Tolbert, was equally committed to the idea, if not the reality, of unification. Tubman died in 1971 and Tolbert, his vice president, took office in a time where an increasingly dissatisfied youth population was realizing what they were *not* being provided for by their government. Tolbert spent much of his political energy ensuring a government that was loyal to himself rather than any particular political reform. Rapidly deteriorating economic conditions and Tolbert’s inability to maintain a professional army left the country open to the consequences of a disillusioned and impoverished populace, still neither united nor fairly represented.

2. The Beginning of the Conflict

While the name Charles Taylor is most commonly associated with Liberia’s civil conflict, it was actually Taylor’s predecessor, Samuel Doe, who set in motion the events of total anarchy. On April 12, 1980, 17 Liberian soldiers stormed the Executive Mansion and executed President Tolbert. Leading the charge was Doe, a disillusioned career soldier in the national army. Doe announced his motivations over the radio later that night, citing “rampant corruption and continuous failure by the government to effectively handle the affairs of the Liberian people.” Installing himself as head of state, Doe began to remake the government, inserting many native Liberians and not only removing the former settler-elite government ministers but publically executing many of them.

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15 Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child Will Be Great*, 93-94.
16 Ibid., 94.
17 Ibid., 102.
Even though Doe’s coup had been unexpected and brutal, the Liberian populace initially had hope that the removal of the settler-dominated government would pave the way for a more fair representation of the general population. Unfortunately, Doe proved very quickly that not only would his rule be repressive but that he would also facilitate an exclusive government instead of one seeking to foster a national identity. Doe dismantled the national army and set up paramilitary groups in its stead, made up almost exclusively of people from his own tribe, the Krahn.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, in many ways, Doe’s Liberia mirrored its 150-year history. While Doe may have constructed a government and military composed of native Liberians instead of settler elites, the paternalistic patronage system was still firmly in place. Doe not only used his own position to amass great wealth from the country’s natural resources, he allowed his associates to do the same, giving them free access to the country’s treasury.\textsuperscript{19}

At this point the Liberian economy was in terrible shape and the United States became concerned about Liberia’s political leanings. For a brief time the US stepped in to ensure that the country remain pro-Western in its politics. Doe received funding to support his military and enormous presidential guard.\textsuperscript{20} Along with their financial support, the US began to put pressure on the Liberian government to move towards democratization. Bowing to the pressure, Doe eventually lifted his previously imposed ban on political activity. He also announced that national elections would occur in January of 1985 and that Liberians would be able to choose their next government. While democratic activity may have seemed to bloom


\textsuperscript{19} Sawyer, \textit{Violent Conflicts and Governance Challenges}, 444.

\textsuperscript{20} Herbert M. Howe, \textit{Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States} (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 133.
around the nation at this time, Doe had no real intention of relinquishing power and managed to ensure that many political parties never even made it to the ballot.\textsuperscript{21}  

Though an election was held in 1985, it was grossly corrupted with ballots ‘mysteriously’ disappearing and poll observers banned from voting places.\textsuperscript{22} Doe’s announced 50.9% majority win was perhaps an effort to make things appear legitimate as he announced himself the official president-elect of Liberia. Not even two weeks after the election, Doe himself became the target of a coup, led by his former army commander, Thomas Quiwonkpa. Doe’s Krahn soldiers not only put down the coup and executed everyone involved, they went on a retaliatory rampage in the area Quiwonkpa was originally from, Nimba county, and brutally murdered an estimated 3,000 Gio and Mano tribespeople.\textsuperscript{23}  

Partially in retaliation for this event, on Christmas Eve 1989 a Liberian group of anti-Doe fighters crossed the border from Cote D’Ivoire into Nimba county. This initially small group, not even 200 strong, was led by Charles Taylor, a former MP in Doe’s government who had fled the country after having been charged with embezzlement.\textsuperscript{24} After learning of the invasion, Doe ordered his army to contain the rebel movement. As the government soldiers made their way north to take on the insurgency, they resumed their brutal treatment against the people living in Nimba county, killing, looting and raping indiscriminately.

In reaction to the brutality of the government troops, many young villagers, particularly those from the Gio and Mano tribes who had been particularly affected, began to

\textsuperscript{21} Johnson Sirleaf, \textit{This Child Will Be Great}, 119-121.  
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 134-135.  
\textsuperscript{24} Adebajo, \textit{Building Peace in West Africa}, 46.
join with Taylor.\textsuperscript{25} Thus, the ranks of Taylor’s small army grew not so much as a response to any ideology Taylor may have held, but rather, as a mechanism for individuals to both protect themselves from government military brutality and to avenge the deaths of family and friends. This growing army of insurgents referred to themselves as the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Throughout the first half of 1990 the NPFL made its way through Liberia, waging violent war not only against the government troops, but also against any Krahn people, whom they associated with Doe’s brutal regime.\textsuperscript{26} By May the NPFL was in control of large parts of the countryside and hundreds of thousands of Liberians had fled northern Liberia.\textsuperscript{27}

By July of 1990, the NPFL was 10,000 strong and close to the capital city. To complicate the situation, an NPFL splinter group calling itself the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) emerged on the scene, led by a former NPFL member, Prince Yormie Johnson.\textsuperscript{28} Monrovia quickly became the battleground not only for the NPFL to take on the government, but for rebel groups to battle each other over power. Even when INPFL troops captured and murdered Doe in September of 1990, the conflict did not abate. By this point security in Liberia was nothing more than a memory. Although the US maintained a political interest in the country, it was unwilling to embroil itself in any direct military involvement. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was opposed to interfering in the sovereign affairs of any African state without a direct invitation and the UN could not attain the required member votes to take any

\textsuperscript{25} Johnson Sirleaf, \textit{This Child Will Be Great}, 172-173.

\textsuperscript{26} Howe, \textit{Ambiguous Order}, 134.

\textsuperscript{27} Johnson Sirleaf, \textit{This Child Will Be Great}, 174.

\textsuperscript{28} Howe, \textit{Ambiguous Order}, 134.
immediate action, as is often the case.\textsuperscript{29} It seemed that Liberia and its increasingly affected neighbors would be on their own.

2.1 Enter ECOWAS/ECOMOG

ECOWAS, or the Economic Community of West African States, was born in the mid 1970’s out of Nigeria’s own civil war experience and the negative consequences the country had faced because of foreign intervention from France. Envisioning the economic and political benefits that could come from creating a unified network of African states, Nigeria worked hard to foster an open trade market in the region.\textsuperscript{30} 15 West African states signed the Treaty of Lagos in May 1976, signifying the region’s common interest in moving forward economically. Two years later the member states signed a mutual non-aggression agreement,\textsuperscript{31} agreeing to refrain from “committing, engaging, or condoning acts of subversion, hostility or aggression against the territorial integrity or political independence of the other Member States.”\textsuperscript{32} Three years later, as a reaction to regional insecurity fears, the non-aggression agreement was ratified to state that acts of hostility aimed at any ECOWAS member would be considered an act of aggression against the entire community.\textsuperscript{33}

As Liberia’s neighbors watched the destruction of a civil war unfold in their backyards they realized that if they did not step in, no one would. Though facing a great deal of internal

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 135-136.

\textsuperscript{30} Adebajo, \textit{Building Peace in West Africa}, 28-29.


\textsuperscript{33} Adibe, \textit{Managing Arms in Peace Processes}, 15.
disagreement between ECOWAS' francophone and anglophone members, a military monitoring arm, ECOMOG (or the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group), was mandated and eventually deployed to Liberia in late 1990. ECOMOG was given a directive to “maintain, enforce and monitor the cease-fire; protect life and property; maintain residential services; provide security to the interim administration in Liberia; observe elections; and conduct normal policing duties.”

With an initial troop deployment of about 3,000 soldiers hailing primarily from Nigeria, ECOMOG deployed from Sierra Leone into Liberia on August 24th, 1990. From the very beginning ECOMOG was handicapped. It had been given a peacekeeping mandate but there was clearly no peace to keep. Less than 3 weeks after ECOMOG entered into the conflict, the INPFL had managed to kidnap, torture, and murder President Doe and 70 of his bodyguards. The national army became suspicious that ECOMOG may have played a role in the event and became unwilling to continue working with the group. Taylor and the NPFL also did not trust the peacekeepers, considering them a Nigerian-led plot to keep Taylor from power.

Despite these difficulties, ECOMOG was eventually able to secure Monrovia and cobble together an interim government. In late November of 1990, Taylor agreed to sign a cease-fire agreement and then retreated to central Liberia. There he proceeded to set up his own government complete with a cabinet, massive tax collections and a separate currency. Taylor also began to systematically strip the country of many of its natural resources including

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34 Howe, Ambiguous Order, 136-137.
36 Howe, Ambiguous Order, 138-139.
lumber, iron ore and diamonds. He then used the profits to buy more weapons for his ever-growing personal army.  

While Taylor built up his individual empire, numerous other warring factions came onto the scene. In May of 1991, a group calling themselves the United Liberation Movement of Liberians for Democracy (ULIMO) formed from Krahn and Mandingo refugees located across the border in Sierra Leone. Two additional groups, the Liberian Peace Council and the Lofa (County) Defense Force emerged in 1993 and a smaller group, the NPFL Central Revolutionary Council broke from Taylor in ‘94 and created further divisions between the combatants. Though the leaders of the various rebel factions may have been attempting to make a grab for political power, their fighting forces were largely “underfed and mostly unpaid...many of them drug-induced children.” It is difficult to imagine that these soldiers had a clear goal beyond perhaps revenge or self-preservation.

In addition to the economic devastation that the rebels caused to Liberia by stealing its natural resources, they committed atrocious human-rights violations. Reports of “indiscriminate killings, torture, rape, destruction of property, and looting of personal effects” were common. Refugees flooded across the border into the various neighboring countries and those who remained behind often had no access to healthcare or to relief

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38 Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child Will Be Great*, 194.
39 Later this group split into two: ULIMO-J led by a Krahn and ULIMO-K led by a Mandingo.
41 Ibid., 47.
42 Ibid.
supplies, which when delivered to Liberia, were often looted by the rebels.\(^{44}\) As the various rebel groups wreaked havoc on the general population, the ECOWAS states (to varying degrees) worked to create peace, bringing the faction leaders together with members of Liberia’s civil society. Between May 1990 and August 1994, the negotiations had resulted in 9 peace agreements, all of which summarily failed.\(^{45}\) Finally, after undergoing years of attacks from the other rebel groups and from ECOMOG, Taylor found himself backed into a corner with a severely weakened power-base and had to seriously consider peace negotiations.\(^{46}\) In August 1996, ECOWAS finally succeeded in the implementation of their 14\(^{th}\) peace agreement attempt. Abuja II, as this agreement was termed, not only set the date for Liberia’s next election, it is also called for the disarming of all of the fighting forces and a sweeping reformation of the country’s security sector.

In anticipation of the upcoming election, at least a dozen people began campaigning to try and win a voter base. Charles Taylor however, was always going to win. Besides having an endless supply of (stolen) money with which to finance his campaign, he also controlled several radio and newspaper stations which he blatantly used for self-promotion.\(^{47}\) When Taylor was announced as the official President of Liberia in July 1997 having taken more than 70% of the vote\(^{48}\) it was not because of electoral fraud or because votes had been miscounted as has been the case with the Doe election. From a purely technical viewpoint, the win was a legitimate representation of what the population wanted. But underlyingly, the true democratic practice

\(^{44}\)Ibid., 8-10.


\(^{46}\) Ibid., 58.


was far beyond questionable. Taylor’s campaign was one of fear-mongering and threats. As he travelled the countryside to garner votes, the campaign song which followed him everywhere went like this: “You kill my ma. You kill my pa. I will vote for you.” In other words: a not thinly veiled threat that unless Taylor was elected President he would take the country straight back into war.

2.2 Post Election

Most of the literature focusing on the conflict in Liberia breaks it down into two separate wars: the first taking place between 1989 and 1997 when Taylor was elected president and the second starting in 1999 and ending with Taylor’s exile into Nigeria in 2003. While there may be many measures used to determine the end of a war, Taylor’s presidential appointment certainly did not bring peace to Liberia. While countries like the US wanted to believe that the 1997 elections proved that Liberia was well on its way to democratic governance, historian Jeremy Levitt wisely points out that “democratic posturing and democratic transition are two very different phenomenon.” Indeed, international relations scholar Adekeye Adebajo concluded that the election did not reform Taylor, but rather offered him the political legitimacy and the legal, military and political means to continue the warlord practices he had begun in the bush.

When Taylor took office in ’97, he flatly ignored a provision of the Abuja II Accord that called for ECOWAS to be involved in the restructuring of Liberia’s armed forces. Instead, as his predecessors had done, he filled the police and military with people who had been loyal to

49 Johnson Sirleaf, This Child Will Be Great, 217.
50 Ibid., 225.
51 Levitt, The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia, 244.
52 Adekeye Adebajo, Liberia’s Civil War (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 231.
himself, in this case, members of the NPFL. Additionally, while ECOMOG made a concerted effort towards disarming the fighters, there was very little money and therefore very little effort put forward for rehabilitating or reintegrating the fighters back into society. Many of the rebels held onto their weapons because they did not trust Taylor and had no intention of leaving themselves without a defense should it become necessary.

Indeed, it seemed that Taylor had no designs whatsoever to encourage peace in Liberia. He was quick to quash freedom in the press and was not afraid to stamp out political opposition either. Taylor is widely believed to have orchestrated the murder of a former NPFL member only a few months after taking office. In addition, his security forces continued their harassment of the Krahn and the Mandingo peoples, creating a continued refugee crisis both inside Liberia and in neighboring Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote D’Ivoire. Furthermore, as former refugees started to return home to Liberia, additional fighting over land rights and resource allocation broke out. Taylor continued to take advantage of Liberia’s natural resources for his own gain and also to financially and militarily assist a burgeoning rebel army across the border in an attempt to gain access to Sierra Leone’s valuable diamond mines. Ethnicized violence continued across the country, albeit now with the Krahns facing the wrath

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54 Ibid., 11-13.


57 Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child Will Be Great*, 225.
of the government. Taylor also used his sham of a legal system to persecute the Krahn and Mandingo, convicting and jailing people at will.\footnote{Kich, 21.}

It could hardly have come as a shock then when a new rebel group calling themselves “Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy” (LURD) and made up primarily of former ULIMO-J and ULIMO-K members began attacking Taylor’s troops in Lofa County in 2000.\footnote{Levitt, The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia, 217-218. There had been cross-border attacks starting even in early 1999 but it was not until 2000 that LURD took responsibility for the violence.} For the next three years Taylor battled the LURD offensive, sometimes calling on external allies as the group managed to push further into the country. Unlike Taylor’s former foes, LURD was receiving a great deal of external backing. The Guinean president was angry at Taylor for offering sanctuary to a former Guinean government minister who had planned a coup against him and thus offered Guinea as a base for LURD,\footnote{William S Reno, "Liberia: The LURDs of the New Church," in African Guerrillas: Raging against the Machine, ed. Morten Boas and Kevin C Dunn (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 76-78.} and supplied the rebel group with arms in exchange for diamonds.\footnote{Levitt, The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia, 218.} Cote D’Ivoire also supported anti-Taylor rebels after charging Taylor with creating cross-border violence. It was clear to West Africa’s leaders that Taylor had not proven to be any more rational in office than out of it and that his lack of control in Liberia could destabilize the entire region. Besides the actions of other West African nations, the International Crisis Group reported “circumstantial evidence that US officials, particularly from the Department of Defense, played an important role in coordinating military and other activity designed to rid Liberia of Charles Taylor.”\footnote{International Crisis Group, Liberia: Security Challenges, Africa Report, no. 71, 2003, 3.} Thus, with considerable assistance, by the
middle of 2003 the LURD forces were in control of most of the country and Taylor was forced to return to negotiations with ECOWAS.  

While Taylor may have felt the considerable pressure presented by the internationally backed LURD, he was soon faced with another enormous pressure, in the form of an arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes committed against humanity. Perhaps realizing that he could no longer hold onto both power and freedom, Taylor accepted voluntary exile into Nigeria on August 11, 2003.  

3. Liberia Today  
Today, under the genuinely democratically-elected President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia is no longer on the Economist’s list of worst places to live. Though not perfect, President Johnson Sirleaf is indeed leading the country towards a better position. In the span of four years she has increased the budget from $80 million to $350 million, convinced the IMF to forgive Liberia’s staggering debt and begun to tackle the nation’s endemic corruption. Johnson Sirleaf is committed to a united Liberia and stands in sharp contrast to the days of patrimonial governance by her predecessors; she actually removed her own brother from his government post after he was accused of embezzlement. An effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program concluded in 2009, after successfully reintegrating the tens of thousands of soldiers (including child-soldiers) back in the general population. Additionally, a

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64 Reno, “Liberia: The LURDS of the New Church,” 49.
truth and reconciliation commission has actively worked to recommend steps the nation must take in order to achieve national reconciliation.\textsuperscript{66}

Liberia is, of course, still in a tenuous position less than a decade after the end of such devastating conflict. It would be impossible to state definitively that the country will not erupt into another disastrous national conflict. However, one can optimistically conclude that at least as long as Liberia continues to be led by people with strong political, democratically motivated will, the nation will continue to move forward. This leads us then to the extremely important question of \textit{why}. Why was this nation able to end a civil war that had lasted for over a decade? What does it take to find lasting peace after so much brutal, destructive war? The next sections of this chapter will consider some scholars’ attempts to answer these ‘why’ questions, in the hopes of gleaning information that might prove relevant to other areas facing long-term insecurity.

4. Explaining the Peace Process

There is simply not a lot of overview analytical work in the general literature that posits underlying explanations for the success of the peace process in Liberia. Dorina Bekoe posits an analysis based on the mutual vulnerabilities of different parties in a conflict, which she applies to the Liberian conflict resolution while Adekeye Adebajo trumpets the role of sub-regional intervention: both of these analyses are considered here, but these are the main works providing overarching frameworks for Liberia. Analytical frameworks can be uncovered in the value that a specific researcher places in the particular histories of participants in the peace process; for example, the film \textit{Pray the Devil back to Hell} and the book \textit{Liberian Women Peacemakers} both give an in depth history of the role of Liberian women in the peace process,

and in doing so present the groundwork for an analytical framework based on those facts: this is the third analysis that is presented in this chapter. While there may be general theories and frameworks that could be applied to the Liberian situation, the works discussed here are those that provide specific analytical explanations of Liberia’s conflict resolution, based on an analysis of the Liberian situation.

4.1 The Role of Mutual Vulnerability

As discussed in the chapter on Mozambique, Dorina Bekoe’s mutual vulnerabilities analysis suggests that the success of any given peace agreement will be determined by the balance of political and military vulnerability between each negotiating party. In Liberia’s case, the numerous peace talks that were held over the life of the conflict were mediated by members of ECOWAS. Bekoe claims that beginning with the Bamako agreement, signed in late 1990, the levels of mutual vulnerability achieved through each peace accord affected the implementation and longevity of the peace. She suggests that when the levels of vulnerability were imbalanced between the various parties, the peace talks would stall or break down entirely, but that when all of the involved parties felt their positions were mutually vulnerable, the talks progressed and ultimately, peace was negotiated.

For example, when Taylor’s attack on Monrovia in 1992 thrust Liberia back into full-blown fighting, Bekoe suggests that the main question was not why the fighting began again, but rather why Taylor had upheld the Bamako ceasefire for so many months. Her answer to this question is that the series of ECOWAS-negotiated peace agreements between November 1990 and April 1992 did not try to strip Taylor of his legitimacy, either by overemphasizing the legitimacy of the new interim government or by removing the NPFL from the negotiation table. Indeed, Bekoe argues that the peace accords actually recognized the NPFL government that
Taylor had set up in the countryside. They also allowed the NPFL to send monitoring troops alongside ECOMOG to a buffer zone between Liberia and Sierra Leone.\(^{67}\)

Bekoe suggests that the mutual vulnerability created through the various peace agreements began to erode in mid 1992. At this point the NPFL began to suspect that ECOMOG was collaborating with one of the other rebel factions, ULIMO. The NPFL’s distrust of ECOMOG became further solidified when ECOWAS, frustrated with the pace of disarmament, threatened to apply sanctions specifically targeting Taylor. When the NPFL did not work any harder to achieve disarmament, ECOWAS went ahead with the sanctions and Taylor restarted the fighting, attacking Monrovia on October 22, 1992.

After doubling the number of ECOMOG troops in Liberia in order to stop the worst of the fighting, ECOWAS went back to the table for further peace negotiations. While some scholars suggest that the next peace accord (called the Cotonou Agreement) was simply another failed attempt, Bekoe argues that it not only moved the Liberian peace process one year forward, it also set the framework for a functioning governance system that would ultimately allow for elections to be held.\(^{68}\)

Bekoe points out the mutual vulnerability offered through the Cotonou Agreement by showing how each specified aim affected each of the involved parties. The negotiations had determined that the interim government put in place in 1990 would be dissolved, along with the personal government which Taylor had created out in the country. In place of these dual(ing) governance systems, the Liberian National Transition Government would be created with a five member Executive Branch including a ULIMO member and an NPFL member. Thus,

\(^{67}\) Bekoe, *Implementing Peace Agreements*, 104-108.

\(^{68}\) Ibid., 112.
although Taylor was agreeing to the dissolution of his personal kingdom, the national government (albeit an interim one) was also agreeing to its own dissolution. In addition, Taylor was being granted free executive access to the new national government. The Cotonou Agreement also not only continued the call for demobilization and disarmament, but made the creation of the new government contingent on that success. Thus, both ULIMO and NPFL would lose their ability to defend against (or attack) each other and would be in the same position of vulnerability. Further, until the disarmament was complete, neither group would have access to the proffered political power. ECOMOG’s promise of peace enforcement further allowed each rebel group the promise of protection if the other group broke the cease-fire.  

Bekoe suggests that the above demonstrated mutual vulnerability is what allowed the peace agreement to move forward, with the various groups (the national government and the faction leaders) beginning the demobilization and disarmament process and determining who would fill the cabinet and the five executive roles. Problems began quickly, however. ULIMO had its sights set on particular ministries within the cabinet and gave up many positions to the NPFL, hoping that in return the NPFL would give the Defense, Justice, Finance and Foreign ministries to ULIMO. When this did not occur, Bekoe suggests, ULIMO’s political position was jeopardized. Around this same time, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, multiple new rebel groups were emerging, some completely new and some splitting off from ULIMO and the NPFL. This greatly affected the security of all of the parties who had signed the peace agreement which essentially ensured that the demobilization/disarmament process would not progress any further.

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69 Ibid., 111.

70 Ibid., 113.
As Bekoe analyzes further peace agreement attempts, she notes that the dramatic increase in rebel groups made the reality of creating a mutually vulnerable environment dramatically more difficult. The next two peace agreement tries were never even able to be implemented. The Abuja I Accord attempted to create a more even distribution of power by expanding the Executive Branch to include six members, to be filled with a leader from each of the rebel groups except interestingly the ULIMO faction group ULIMO-J. Led by Roosevelt Johnson, ULIMO-J was relegated to ministerial posts. Though Abuja I seemed to be off to a successful start, Bekoe attributes its ultimate failure to achieve disarmament/demobilization with ULIMO-J’s unwillingness to further disadvantage its already weak position by giving up its weapons. Additionally, the political and ethnic differences that had led to ULIMO’s initial split continued and ULIMO-K and ULIMO-J clashed repeatedly. By early 1996, ULIMO-J began to feel that ECOMOG and the NPFL were ganging up on them and they began a full-on battle in Monrovia, which completely ended the peace process yet again.71

Although Bekoe concludes her analysis of Liberia by mentioning the Abuja II Accord, responsible for pushing Liberia towards democratic elections, she does not discuss the mutual vulnerability achieved (or not achieved) in the process. It is unclear why ULIMO-J was more pacified by Abuja II than by Abuja I even though no offer for executive power was made. Additionally, while the peace agreement had stipulated that DDR must be complete before the election could occur, it is unclear why this was not enforced. Nevertheless, Abuja II was declared a success and an election date was chosen.

Besides the lack of consideration for the existence of mutual vulnerability within Abuja II, a drawback within Bekoe’s analysis of Liberia’s peace agreements is that she focuses all of

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71 Ibid., 122.
her attention on the time period between 1990 and 1997. There is absolutely no consideration for the time after Taylor took office even though Bekoe’s book was published in 2008. While Bekoe claims that her choice to specifically examine the period of 1990-1997 was because that time period contained plenty of data to show how to establish mutual vulnerability, one is left to question why mutual vulnerability matters if it does not lead to the ending of conflict. On the other hand, if the violence which erupted in 1999 was a second civil war and not truly related to the first conflict, then it could be argued that the various peace agreements reached between 1990 and 1997 did in fact, help to end Liberia’s “first” conflict.

4.2 Sub-Regional Intervention

In his framework for the resolution of African conflicts more generally, Professor Victor Adetula asserts that historically, Security Studies has concentrated “exclusively on the state to the exclusion of the people” and adds that both international intervention and regional intervention have failed the continent with a “record…replete with unsuccessful attempts at collective security [and] wanton breaches of global peace and security.” Adetula argues for an area-focused security approach where more local actors are engaged in peacekeeping.

He notes that civil conflicts in African nations have regularly spilled across their borders, creating violence in neighboring states. African leaders then, have a large stake not only in national security but also in regional stability. Additionally, it is becoming increasingly obvious that economic development in any given nation can be greatly helped or hindered by


73 The UN would be an example of an international intervention force and the African Union (AU) an example of a regional intervention force.

74 Adetula, “The Role of Sub-Regional Integration Schemes,” 11.
regional trade relationships, which cannot occur unless there is peace.  

Adekeye Adebajo also notes that sub-regional intervention carries the enormous advantage of including localized actors who have a much clearer understanding of the culture, language and politics of the area. Additionally, while organizations like the UN and the AU may have multiple political agendas, sub-regional actors may, at least in theory, be able to focus more directly on the actual conflict.

ECOWAS, as previously mentioned, is West Africa’s own sub-regional community and played a large role throughout Liberia’s protracted conflict. ECOWAS and ECOMOG both faced significant challenges throughout their interventionist history in Liberia and many scholars argue that the country may have been better off without their “help.” While it is certainly true that ECOWAS and ECOMOG met with their share of failures in Liberia, they also stepped into a peacekeeping void that no one else was willing to fill. It is perhaps easier to identify failures in peacekeeping than successes, which would most likely be measured by the impossible calculation of the number of lives that were saved. Although it cannot be determined exactly how many lives ECOMOG saved, they were certainly vital in ending various battles throughout Liberia’s conflict and removing innocent civilians from harm’s way.

ECOMOG’s August 1990 deployment was handicapped from the very beginning by a lack of preparation prior to its deployment. Perhaps because of the internal ECOWAS disagreements about what exactly ECOMOG should or should not be doing, the force ended up deploying without having been given a clear mandate. Additionally, since such an intervention

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75 Ibid., 9.
had never been attempted in West Africa before, there was no prior experience to inform the
troop leaders of how they should proceed. Hence, ECOMOG was continually plagued by
“logistical, communication and financial problems that were to hamper its effectiveness
through most of the civil war.”

In light of this, it is not surprising that ECOMOG’s overall performance in Liberia has garnered a significant amount of criticism. One question that has been raised goes to motivations, particularly in the case of Nigeria. Nigeria was not only initially the main proponent of sending a peacekeeping force into Liberia; it was also the main contributor of both troops and funds.

Adebajo asserts that Nigeria had a major power complex and wanted to demonstrate its position of authority to the rest of Western Africa. It has also been suggested that Nigeria was looking for a ways to supplement its income and intended to exploit Liberia’s natural resources.

Another major criticism of ECOMOG goes back to the force’s general lack of preparedness and the problems that this caused. Herb Howe contends that none of the ECOWAS member states truly had an understanding of Charles Taylor’s motivations or abilities and assumed that they could quickly enforce a cease-fire. This combined with a shortage of intelligence capabilities severely handicapped ECOMOG and Howe maintains that this serious lack of foresight ultimately led to the war actually being prolonged.

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79 Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa*, 48. Nigeria provided as many as 80% of the ECOMOG troops and 90% of the funding for much of the war.


82 Ibid., 146-149.
Even so poorly equipped, ECOMOG was still able to achieve some remarkable successes. Though they were generally distrusted by Taylor they still managed to engage both the NPFL and the current government in productive talks. They were also able to oversee the safe evacuation of thousands of stranded Ghanaian citizens and eventually thousands of Liberian refugees to neighboring countries. In addition, ECOMOG provided food and protection to thousands of internally displaced Liberians seeking shelter at their headquarters.\textsuperscript{83}

At the end of 1990, ECOWAS finally issued a clear mandate to ECOMOG, allowing for active peace enforcement instead of merely permitting passive peacekeeping.\textsuperscript{84} In order to facilitate relief efforts for the general Liberal populace, ECOMOG actively battled with the rebel troops to create a safe zone in Monrovia. Not only did ECOMOG’s success at this task save countless lives, it also forced the rebel leaders to see that they could not win the war by guns alone and that they would have to negotiate.\textsuperscript{85} ECOWAS was eventually able to broker a cease-fire with the rebel groups which lasted through late 1992 when Taylor launched Operation Octopus in an attempt to force ECOMOG out of Liberia entirely. ECOMOG moved aggressively against Taylor, recapturing many of the towns which he had taken over and also cutting off his access to strategic ports and other sources of revenue. The compromised position which ECOMOG pushed Taylor into forced him to return to the negotiating tables.\textsuperscript{86} Eventually, at the Abuja II peace accords ECOWAS was able to negotiate what seemed to be a long-term peace solution, complete with scheduled DDR and elections.

\textsuperscript{83} Adebajo, \textit{Liberia’s Civil War}, 77.

\textsuperscript{84} Peacekeeping is simply not useful in an environment where there is no peace to be kept, as was the case at that time in Liberia.


\textsuperscript{86} Howe, \textit{Ambiguous Order}, 143-144.
While scholars of security studies argue that the subsequent DDR process was flawed and underfunded, it gave Liberian citizens a sense of hope. Even before the election process began, many Liberian refugees began returning home. Nigerian army officer E.T. Dowyaro reported that those returning home “composed a song entitled ‘Thank God for ECOMOG’ which was sung in the churches, mosques and markets.”\(^87\) For the upcoming election, ECOMOG was tasked with providing security during political and campaign rally as well as at all of the polling booths. They were also responsible for helping to maintain voter registration lists, monitoring the vote counting and protecting all election materials, such as ballots and ballot boxes.\(^88\)

Once Taylor was elected to office, he refused to allow ECOWAS to participate in the restructuring and training of the national security forces as has been dictated in the Abuja II peace agreement. Under pressure from Taylor, who did not want anyone interfering in how he ran his country, ECOMOG eventually withdrew its peacekeepers in late 1998.\(^89\) International intervention quickly become justifiable again however, when cross-border attacks from Sierra Leone perpetrated by the rebel group LURD began in 1999. ECOWAS stepped back into its earlier role of peace mediator, attempting to facilitate a platform for the rebels and the government to negotiate. Though the peace talks in Accra ended up dragging on for weeks, it is a testament to the individual ECOWAS members’ resolve to help Liberia reach peace that no

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\(^88\) Ibid., 8.

one gave up on the process, even after Taylor’s ICC arrest warrant completely changed the nature of the negotiations.  

The peace agreement which eventually did emerge from the Accra meeting included the deployment of an international peacekeeping force. At this point in the history of Liberia’s war, the larger international community was paying a great deal of attention. Both the UN and the US were ready to support peacekeeping efforts with both troops and financial backing. The US however, was not willing to send any troops into Liberia until Taylor had physically left the country. Taylor however, demanded that peacekeepers be on the ground to “maintain stability” before he would leave.  

So, almost five years after withdrawing the ECOMOG forces from Liberia, ECOWAS created and deployed another force, ECOMIL (or, the ECOWAS mission in Liberia) to stand in the gap between Taylor’s departure and the arrival of a full UN peacekeeping force. The arrival of the more than 3,500 ECOMIL troops hailing from Nigeria, Ghana, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Senegal, Togo and Benin brought quick relief to the embattled Monrovia and gave Taylor what he had demanded in order to leave the country.  

ECOMIL was quickly bolstered by the arrival of over 10,000 UN personnel. Together the forces spread through Liberia to fulfill their mandate of supporting the ceasefire, protecting

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92 Ibid., 6.  

93 Aboagye and Bah, “Liberia at a Crossroads,” 5.
civilians and assisting with security sector reform. Though certainly facing their share of setbacks and failures, the peacekeepers were able to see the peace through to an effective DDR and eventually a national election where Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected the 24th president of Liberia.

There is little doubt that ECOWAS’ first attempt at sub-regional intervention, in the form of ECOMOG, was imperfect at best. It was an unprecedented attempt by a West African regional community to step into a full-scale peacekeeping/peace-enforcing role. But there is certainly a fair amount of documentation that demonstrates that ECOWAS together with ECOMOG played a critical role in humanitarian intervention, military action, and in enabling both negotiations and ultimately a successful peace agreement. While a better funded, better trained and better prepared security force may have been able to get the same job done in a much shorter period of time, the reality of the day was that there was no other interventionist force willing to enter Liberia’s conflict. Ultimately, the international community can learn from both the successes and the failures of Liberia’s sub-regional intervention experience.

4.3 Women as Peacekeepers

The article “Women Waging Peace” begins with this sentence: “Allowing men who plan wars to plan peace is a bad habit.” In relation to Liberia’s conflict, the relevancy of this statement is multi-dimensional; first, many of the people sitting at the peace negotiating tables were the very same people who had instigated, fueled and perpetuated the violence. Second, these people were predominantly men. While there were almost certainly female fighters as

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94 Ibid., 5-6.
well as men who were actively engaged in the pursuit of peace, the overwhelming majority of actors in both the civil conflict and the early failed peace attempts were men.

Another perspective on what motivated the eventual cessation of the conflict in Liberia looks at the many women’s movements which arose both in Liberia and in the larger affected sub-region. Although the women of Liberia made a great many contributions towards ending the violence in their country, their efforts are largely ignored in the literature. And while it cannot be argued that women single-handedly ended the war, neither can it be ignored that without the brave actions of Liberia’s women, the country might still be at war today.

Liberian women’s groups were involved in relief efforts across the country as soon as the needs became evident. Because much of the initial fighting took place in the countryside, many Liberians fled to the capital, seeking shelter. Groups like the Concerned Women’s Organization set up networks and a plan to deliver food into Monrovia, negotiating themselves and their goods across more than 50 rebel checkpoints each trip. Groups such as the Muslim Women’s Federation, Women in Action for Goodwill and the National Women’s Commission of Liberia worked to care for abandoned children and displaced families. Besides working to provide food and shelter, these and other women’s organizations realized the importance of emotional care as well. Trauma counseling and healing and reconciliation workshops not only offered hope for victims of the war, it also provided a platform to continue the fight for peace. In addition to direct humanitarian work, various women’s movements worked to gain an audience with groups of fighters and asked them to consider the human consequences of their actions. In “Women Waging Peace,” Hunt and Posa point out that the traditional

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96 Ibid., 10-12.
97 Ibid., 12-14.
second-class status awarded to women makes them seem unthreatening and thus, perhaps better able to negotiate for peace from a neutral standpoint.98

By 1994, it had become clear to at least some Liberian women that their efforts in relief and advocacy, while important, were not enough. Through a series of meetings, the women of Liberia formed a political arm called the Liberian Women’s Initiative (LWI), a new movement to unite the many different organizations towards specific political action. The movement picketed the ECOWAS embassies, Liberian government offices and rebel headquarters. They wrote about the conflict and its humanitarian effects and sent the information abroad in attempts to pressure ECOWAS and the UN to take further action. In an attempt to stop the flow of guns into Liberia, they pressured neighboring countries to tighten their borders against arms. When the interim government was put into power in 1994 without disarmament having occurred, the women protested strongly, writing directly to the UN and holding a protest march,99 understanding that the creation and signing of a peace agreement did not itself equal peace.

Despite such efforts, women were generally excluded from the formal negotiating tables. On multiple occasions then, they raised the necessary travel monies themselves to ensure that they had representation at the various conferences. When the women were not allowed inside the negotiating rooms, they sat outside the doors and lobbied the conference participants when they would emerge for breaks.100 The women used this method to attend an ECOWAS Heads of State Mediation Committee in Abuja in mid 1995. Armed with a formal

98 Ibid., 193.


100 Ibid., 24.
presentation, the women lobbied for an opportunity to speak. After numerous denials, Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings gave the women the floor and educator Theresa Leigh-Sherman spent thirty minutes describing to the ECOWAS members the brutal effects the war was having on the innocent. One of the recommendations Leigh-Sherman made in the presentation was that the women be formally included in the peace process:

Our lack of representation in the ongoing peace process is equivalent to the denial of one of our fundamental rights; the right to be seen, heard and be counted. This denial also deprives the country access to the opinion of 51% of its human resources in solving the problems.\footnote{Ibid., 27.}

After hearing what the women had to say, ECOWAS suggested that they try to bring all of the rebel leaders together to talk. Using their countrywide network, the various women’s organizations sent delegations to visit each of the rebel leaders and gain their trust. After convincing the leaders that attending a meeting for the sake of negotiation would be beneficial to each of them and would be in a non-threatening environment, the women set up a neutral location, ECOMOG security and continued to reach out to the rebels to ensure that they would actually show up. When the meeting began, all of the factions were represented. One of the rebel representative said of the women’s efforts to facilitate the meeting: “When your mother calls you, you must show up.”\footnote{Ibid., 28.}

This mediation meeting paved the way for the Abuja peace accords. It also clearly demonstrated that Liberia’s women were able to get results when it came to peace. After Taylor took power in 1997, the women of Liberia continued their efforts of peace-building, working to reunited broken communities and offering support to those who needed it, either
physically, emotionally or even legally. Unfortunately however, the ongoing violence and outbreaks of fighting across the country did not present an environment where these types of peace building efforts could serve as anything more than a temporary band aid. When LURD began mobilizing and then attacking Liberia, it quickly became clear that peace had broken down altogether.

As the fighting continued and the women re-mobilized they saw that Taylor considered himself a very religious man, invoking God as the reason he was in power. Uniting for the sake of peace, groups of Christian and Muslim women worked together to pressure their religious leaders to hold Taylor and the rebel leaders accountable for the ongoing violence. They also decided to stage a mass protest. Thousands of women, including those living in refugee camps, met for the rally and then continued meeting every day in a centrally located fish market which Taylor had to pass each day on his commute. As the international community fruitlessly appealed to Taylor to enter peace talks with LURD and the other rebel groups, the women in Liberia wrote their own position paper demanding that Taylor engage in dialogue to seek peace. They presented the signed statement to the Liberian parliament with the understanding that they would not leave their vigil until Taylor agreed to attend peace talks. Less than two weeks later the women were granted an audience at Taylor’s Presidential Mansion.

Leyman Gbowee, the leader of the ever-growing movement, stood before the President on the appointed day and stated:

. . . the women of Liberia, including the IDP’s, we are tired of war. We are tired of running. . . . We are tired of our children being raped. We are now taking this stand to secure the future of our children because we believe as custodians of society, tomorrow our children will ask us, “Mama, what was your role during this crisis?”

103 Ibid., 41-43.

Taylor agreed to attend the peace talks.

Then the women needed to convince the rebels to also attend, so they sent two representatives to Sierra Leone where they had heard the rebel leaders were meeting. Between Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone and Sierra Leonean allies, the women were able to line the streets outside the hotel where the rebels were staying. One of the representatives realized that she had actually gone to school with one of the LURD rebels and so she said to him:

Your mothers have come this far to talk to you. Your sisters have come this far. If you don’t go, don’t you know these people will die in Monrovia? And don’t you think you will be guilty that you are also responsible for their death?105

Though the rebels were initially suspicious that the women were somehow representing Taylor, it was impossible for them to deny that some of the women in front of them were from their own tribes or even towns. So they also agreed to go to the peace talks.106

Since the peace talks were to be held in Ghana, the women began to raise money to send some of their members over to mobilize Liberian refugees and sympathetic or affected nationals. Though the women were not allowed to participate or listen to the talks, they rallied outside the main building each day, serving as constant reminders for those inside of why the talks were so important.107

As the talks in Ghana continued, the violence in Liberia exploded as rebels descended on the capital, let loose by the thought that Taylor’s reign might be ending. Even while the government inside Liberia began to fall, the peace talks back in Ghana disintegrated into

105 Ibid., 34:43-34:52.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid.
arguments over the division of power, government positions and resources.\textsuperscript{108} While the rebels slept in fancy hotels, ate fancy food and pretended to talk peace with ECOWAS and other heads of state during the day, at night they were giving instructions to their troops on the ground back in Liberia.

When almost two months had passed with no headway being made at the peace talks, the women became desperate. Calling together anyone who would listen, they staged a sit-in outside the meeting hall, blocking all of the doors and windows. They informed everyone inside that until they reached a peace agreement, they would be locked inside the meeting room without food or water. Though the signed agreement two weeks later installed many rebel leaders into positions in the transitional government, it also included the understanding that Taylor would go into exile in Nigeria.\textsuperscript{109}

While Taylor’s exile out of Liberia officially marked the end of over a decade of war in Liberia, the women who had worked so hard to that point understood that things could devolve at any moment. So instead of disbanding and returning to their homes around the country, they set out to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement. A UN mission was set up to begin disarmament in later 2003 and although the women attempted to join formally into the process, they were told to leave it to the experts. The “experts” however, failed before they had even begun. Wary of relinquishing their means of power and without having any reason to trust the UN troops, the initial disarmament meeting turned into mass chaos with thousands of rebel fighters becoming increasingly angry and distrustful.\textsuperscript{110}

\begin{thebibliography}{11}
\bibitem{108} Ibid.
\bibitem{109} Ibid. This is the caveat that the US and N demanded in order to send their own peacekeeping troops in to stop the endless fighting in Monrovia.
\bibitem{110} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
At that point the UN became willing to collaborate with the women, who quickly created a public message for radio and print, compelling the fighters that this process was in their own best interest and that they would not only be giving up their guns but would be given care in return and would be reintegrated back into society. When the rebels had calmed down enough to restart the process, the women were there, talking individually with many of the fighters, begging them as mothers and sisters to give up their guns for the sake of peace. Some of the rebels, many of whom were child-soldiers, handed their weapons directly to the women.  

Besides involving themselves in DDR, the women knew that the upcoming election was critical for continued peace. They became heavily involved in voter registration and campaigning, particularly for candidate Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who ultimately won the election in 2005. In her presidential inaugural address, Johnson Sirleaf gave the women of Liberia some of the credit they deserved, stating that “the powerful voice of women from all walks of life must be acknowledged.” She recognized: “It is the women who labored and advocated for peace throughout our region.”

Whether the labor of Liberia’s women was enough in of itself to bring an end to the war probably does not have a quantifiable answer. As Moran and Pitcher note, there were demonstrations and advocacy from the public both before Taylor’s election as well as after and the public will for the war to end was great in 1990 just as in 2003. It is not possible to know what might have taken place had Taylor not had the added pressure of an international arrest

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid., 1:08:22-1:08:27 and 1:08:44-1:08:49.

warrant influencing him to consider leaving the country. In addition, the rebels had already managed to capture a majority of Liberia before the 2003 peace talks had even begun. While there is no denying the human rights violations committed by the rebels groups, one does not know conclusively that they intended to abuse the country once in power, as Taylor had done.

On the other hand, had the women of Liberia not injected themselves into the 2003 DDR, it could have failed just as each one before. And again, while it may not be possible to know the political motivations and character of the presidential candidates running alongside Johnson Sirleaf, the fact that the nation was able to not only experience a legitimate democratic election but also the installment of an upright leader must also be significantly credited to Liberia’s women.

If it cannot be argued that Liberia’s women single-handedly brought an end to more than a decade of fighting, it can be stated definitively that they were an integral part of the process both at a grassroots and humanitarian level as well as at the policy and executive level.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the history of the conflict and the peace process in Liberia, and discussed several analyses for the success of that peace process, including sub-regional intervention, managing mutual vulnerabilities in mediation contexts, and the role of grassroots organizations in the peace process, in particular the women's groups of Liberia. As will become obvious as we turn to a critical response to these analyses, and apply these lessons to the Congo, the many similarities between the conflict in Liberia and the Congo make this a fruitful case study. These similarities include the diverse and dynamic factions of rebel groups that involved in each conflict as well as the lack of specific political ideologies held by the various rebel groups (besides the desire for power more generally). In addition, the ethnicized violence
that was fostered in both regions created a similar character and complicating factor in both conflicts. As will be seen, many important lessons come out of the study of Liberia’s peace process, helping to formulate a way forward for Congo. The next chapter turns to distilling these analytical lessons taken from both Liberia as well as from Mozambique.
CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS FOR RESOLUTION OF CONGO’S CONFLICT

1. Introduction

This chapter returns to the core questions of this thesis. While the last two chapters devoted much space to Liberia and Mozambique, the goal of examining the histories and peace processes in those countries was to glean useful approaches to conflict resolution in the Congo. As noted in the introduction, the circumstances of each African conflict discussed in this thesis are unique, and the analysis of one situation cannot simply be transplanted to explain another – the particular history, political environment, and socio-cultural background to each conflict determine the strategies that can be applied. It is this context that necessitates the comparative and interdisciplinary approach adopted in this thesis. Given this fact, the next section of this chapter will offer a summary and critique of the analytical approaches that have been discussed for the two case studies. The following section offers a critical response to each analysis in light of the circumstances it was originally proposed to explain and then considers its possible role in the resolution of Congo’s own conflict. In general, there are two ways to interpret such analytical approaches with respect to the situation in the DRC, either as relevant to a strategy for conflict resolution in the DRC, or as not relevant, usually due to the fact that the circumstances between the countries’ respective conflicts are critically different in some way. It is important to note that even the case study analyses that prove to be not relevant to the conflict in the DRC are nonetheless integral to understanding a way forward for the Congo. As emerged in the discussion of the history of the conflict of the DRC, the conflict is incredibly (almost hopelessly) complex. Adopting an analytical approach based on case studies of other African conflict resolution experiences provides a framework for understanding some of this
complexity. Specifically, identifying the aspects of the analyses for Liberia and Mozambique that do not apply to the DRC serves to sharpen our understanding of the precise nature of the conflict in the Congo. This is an important step toward clarifying how it can be resolved. Additionally, evaluating an effective strategy serves to delimit it from other ineffective or inapplicable strategies.

After considering the analytical lessons which can be applied to the DRC in this chapter, the final chapter of this thesis will outline a framework for conflict resolution in the DRC. This framework was developed via a bottom-up approach from the histories of other African peace processes, rather than a top-down theoretical approach. That being said, given that the components of the framework were derived from analyses of similar conflicts in similar political and socio-cultural environments, the recommendations take on a particular relevance to the DRC. The core proposals that are set forth are first, that any peace process for the Congo will require a multi-pronged approach that addresses many aspects of the conflict not only at the national level but also more locally, and second, that a necessary precondition for long-lasting peace is the existence of a strong political will, again at both the local and national levels.

2. Summary of Case Study Analyses

This section offers a summary of the analytical approaches that have been taken to explain the success of the peace processes in Mozambique and Liberia. Three major analytical approaches to the peace process in Liberia and Mozambique were discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Analyses focusing on both mediation and mutual vulnerabilities have been set forth to explain the conflict resolution in Mozambique, along with a variety of other contributing factors which I termed “distributed pressure factors.” For Liberia in Chapter 4, I also discussed
an analysis based on mutual vulnerabilities along with significant discussion of both sub-regional intervention and the role of women’s groups in the peace process.

The analysis of the importance of mutual vulnerabilities was put forth by Bekoe, who claims that a peace process can only progress when there is a balance between the political and military vulnerabilities of both sides in a conflict. This analysis centers not on the incentives for a peace deal between multiple parties, but rather on the need for no party to be more vulnerable politically or militarily than another as a peace process progresses. Bekoe applied this analysis to both the Liberian and Mozambican contexts, though with varying degrees of success in the different situations (see the discussion below).

As noted in Chapter 3, Cameron Hume focuses largely on the role that mediation played in the resolution of the Mozambican conflict, noting the importance of having politically neutral mediators who are able to order the topics of the negotiation in such a way that talks do not become sidetracked or deadlocked. The third analysis presented for Mozambique is a collection of factors which I have labeled distributed pressure factors, namely a changing political environment, the UN mission to Mozambique, the influence of friends and allies on working towards peace and the financial support necessary both to make RENAMO a legitimate political entity and to carry out a successful disarmament, and an adequate demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program. Each of these pressure factors played a critical role in Mozambique’s peace process but there is not an overarching analysis in the literature presenting these factors as part of the conflict resolution solution.

In addition to Bekoe’s analysis on mutual vulnerabilities, Chapter 4 discusses the relevance that sub-regional intervention played in ending the Liberian conflict. The important role that sub-regional intervention can play in an African conflict was put forward more
generally by Victor Adetula and described specifically by Adekeye Abebajo with regards to the role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the Liberian conflict. The third analysis presented for Liberia focuses on the role that the nation’s women played in bringing the warring factions together for negotiations, ensuring the continuation of those negotiations, and then being actively involved in both DDR and electoral campaigning.

3. **Critical Response and Application of Analyses to Congo**

This section critically examines the analytical approaches that have been discussed in the preceding chapters and summarized in the preceding section. The responses presented here are not necessarily criticisms of particular analyses’ relative success at explaining the peace processes in Mozambique and Liberia respectively, but rather a discussion of the extent to which these analyses are generalizable beyond those specific situations. This section then performs a meta-analysis, making conclusions about what aspects of these analyses can be useful beyond their particular situations. I will examine the strengths and weaknesses of each case-specific analysis, as well as discuss aspects of the analysis that may be difficult to generalize to other circumstances.

3.1 **Critical Response to Mediation Analysis in Mozambique**

An analysis trumpeting the efficacy of mediation in Mozambique’s conflict resolution rightly recognizes the integral role of the Sant’Egidio community. Because the community had no political or local connections with either side of the conflict, it did not have an agenda and was foremost focused on helping both sides concentrate on their primary goal of achieving peace. It is clear that in the case of Mozambique, the agreements that were reached in the Rome negotiations were critical to the peace process; once the Peace Agreement was signed the disarmament process and the elections proceeded without significant obstruction. The
mediators worked tirelessly not only at the negotiation table but also on an individual level with the two parties anytime the talks stalled in an effort to keep both RENAMO and FRELIMO motivated as well as to reassure them that their interests were being advocated. In many ways, then, it is clear that a mediation analysis captures many important aspects of the Mozambican peace process.

That being said, while mediation played an important role in Mozambique’s conflict resolution, meditation was not enough in itself to create peace. Once the General Peace Agreement was officially signed, the disarmament process, elections, and all of the agreed-upon terms still had to be successfully implemented without the cease-fire falling apart, without either party choosing to stop upholding its end of the bargain, and without the intervention of external interests. Additionally, there were aspects of the peace agreement which occurred in tandem with the negotiations but which cannot be credited directly to successful mediation. For example, in order for RENAMO to become a viable political entity it required a large influx of funding, and such funds were distributed to RENAMO throughout the mediation process, and then throughout the disarmament and recovery process. While Sant’Egidio should be credited both for recognizing the importance of this condition as well as the effort they put into advocating donors for those funds, the funding itself came from the larger international community. Because this funding was a key component in RENAMO’s political transformation and therefore the success of the negotiations, it is clear that while mediation was a part of this process, it was not, in of itself, sufficient to achieve long-term peace.

In addition, there were a number of factors in Mozambique which paved the way for a successful mediation process that would be difficult, if not impossible, to replicate in another
situation. Perhaps most important was the fact that both FRELIMO and RENAMO were fundamentally motivated by a desire for good governance. FRELIMO was aware that its socialist approach was not working, and was already thinking about a more democratic approach to governance. At the same time, RENAMO was not seeking political access purely for the sake of power, but because it believed in the importance of a multiparty system. Because RENAMO’s main point of negotiation was the opportunity to achieve political legitimacy, had FRELIMO been fundamentally opposed to democracy, no amount of mediation could have achieved successful negotiations. However, the economic conditions inside the country and the shifting political winds on an international level were already pushing FRELIMO out of its single-party socialist state.

Furthermore, the fact that there were only two parties at the negotiating table made the mediator’s work a lot simpler. On the one hand, Sant’Egidio was uniquely suited as politically neutral, extremely persistent, and not at all interested in defending its position as ‘sole mediator,’ willingly accepting input from advisors from Kenya, Zimbabwe and the US among others. On the other hand, even the most ideal mediator has its job made exponentially more difficult by the addition of even one more warring party. In Mozambique’s case, the funding that provided RENAMO the opportunity to become a legitimate political party might not have been sufficient if there had been many different parties at the negotiating table. Also, because RENAMO was a large minority group, it was guaranteed that a portion of their fighting force would join the new national army and their electoral base essentially assured them a significant part of the government after elections. In a more fragmented political context, the likelihood that all involved parties would be pleased with their access to governance after the peace process is less likely.
3.2 Application of Mediation Analysis to Congo

There are several lessons that can be learned, then, in considering the application of this mediation analysis of Mozambique’s conflict to Congo’s peace process. First, all sides in the conflict have to trust that the mediators are balancing the interests of all, and not supporting one side over another. Second, mediators must to be invested in the process and willing to stick with the process for the long-haul. The Sant-Egidio community was motivated solely by a desire to help bring peace to Mozambique and were neither politically connected to either party nor interested in anything less than true reconciliation. The mediation that occurred in Mozambique also demonstrated that the structure of the actual negotiations can be critical. Throughout the Rome Accords the Sant-Egidio community focused on building common ground between FRELIMO and RENAMO before broaching the more thorny issues.

While all of these lessons are certainly important when considering the viability of mediation in Congo’s own path towards conflict resolution, successful mediation is built on a critical presupposition: that all of the major players in the conflict are legitimately represented at the negotiation table in the first place. This assumption unfortunately proves problematic in Congo’s case. The Sun City talks in Pretoria offer two illustrations as to how this has posed a serious stumbling block for Congo. First of all, though the largest rebel groups, the RCD-G and the MLC, had delegates in South Africa, neither the factioned RCD groups nor any of the Mayi-Mayi militias were represented at the negotiating table. When the talks concluded and the rest of the world declared the All-Inclusive Agreement a great success, those who had not been invited to the table continued fighting. Additionally, one of the core components of the peace agreement was the creation of four Vice-Presidency posts in the national government to be filled with one member of the existing government, one person from civil society and one
member each of the RCD and MLC. While the new VP’s from the RCD and MLC largely renounced their roles in the conflict, their followers realized that their position was no better than it had been before the talks and many of them returned to fighting once they realized that they had gained nothing.

Thus, while the Sun-City negotiations appeared to have been a success, with motivated mediators and a well-planned structure, Eastern Congo is still beset by violence almost a full decade later and the democratic intentions of its government remain questionable at best. Indeed, for the most part the Eastern portion of DRC exists in a state of anarchy and it is not clear that the Congolese government cares about resolving that conflict, or at the very least is not sufficiently motivated to determine what is happening at the local level in order to take appropriate action steps. A core problem for mediation here is simply an extension of the problem at the Sun City talks – if you want to negotiate peace when there are not large, clearly defined groups of fighters, who do you bring to the negotiating table? And if some groups are excluded, how are they then mollified and controlled as a result of the peace agreement? And of the groups that are included, how is it ensured that the agreements that are reached by the leadership are enforced throughout the ranks?

The mediation framework to conflict resolution assumes that there are leaders to negotiate with, and a small enough set of them that they can productively negotiate with each other. It also assumes that their decisions will actually have an impact on what happens on the ground. Based on both the longer history and the more recent history (since 2002), it is clear that the situation in Congo does not currently fit that model.

That is of course not to say that mediated peace negotiations will play no role in resolving the conflict in the DRC, as it is difficult to conceive of peace being achieved
completely organically and never requiring any formalization. There are also important lessons to be learned from looking at the situation in the Congo based on the mediated agreements in Liberia and Mozambique. First, whoever works to mediate these agreements must necessarily understand the complexity of the situation on the ground, and absolutely cannot ignore it if the agreements are to have any real impact at bringing peace to the region. That is, the mediators must attend to the fact that the core problems are occurring at a local level and not merely on the national stage. Second, the persisting problem of unrecognized parties in the Congo will perpetuate the conflict unless it is addressed, both in terms of externally-funded militias as well as in terms of long-term residents of Congo who are still considered illegitimate (e.g. the Banyarwanda). Ignoring these aspects of the conflict may help peace agreements be reached, but those agreements will have little-to-no impact at the local level. In addition, to the extent that there are people in Eastern Congo who do not have a right to be there (e.g. Hutu militia) the government has to be willing to protect the eastern Congolese peoples. If external threats are not quelled, militias will continue to rise up, if for no other reason than self-preservation.

The question of what concessions can be granted to the rebel groups is a dramatic problem that does not have an obvious solution at present – the leadership of these groups may benefit greatly, but as long as their troops are both armed and without alternative economic options, the conflict will continue. In this way, local economic development, successful and comprehensive DDR, and politically viable concessions are all equally necessary to create an environment where militia members can safely put down their guns.

To summarize the observations made above, in the DRC case a mediator will be successful, and a peace agreement effective, only if: one, all the relevant parties are at the
negotiating table; two, those leaders are capable and interested in enforcing their decisions on their troops; three, the economic development problem is addressed on the local level, and four, all aspects of the security problem are addressed in the implementation of the peace agreement. These are critical lessons, because they help define the scope of the problem in the Congo. It is not simply a matter of convincing people to negotiate for peace, or of achieving a successful negotiation once they do. Instead there are a wide variety of factors that have to be taken into considering at every stage – before starting a negotiation, in coming to an agreement, and the ways that that agreement can be implemented.

Beyond these factors surrounding mediation processes, defining the full range of other factors that will enhance the prospects for successful conflict resolution in DRC, is critically necessary. The discussion that follows of the other aspects of the Mozambican and Liberian conflict resolutions will be very helpful in bringing them to the forefront.

3.3 Critical Response to Sub-Regional Intervention

One of the lessons that can be learned from looking at Liberia’s conflict resolution process and the successful sub-regional intervention of ECOWAS is the role a regional military arm (e.g., ECOMOG) can have in carrying out a full-scale military mission. While ECOWAS and ECOMOG certainly had their share of problems, the end result was a functioning international (sub-regional) troop force that proved integral to the resolution of Liberia’s conflict. Since nations immediately neighboring a conflict zone are the ones most likely to be impacted by violence, and are often parties to it, an analysis of conflict resolution based on sub-regional intervention is an integral part of the peace equation. Additionally, while a larger intervention force such as the UN or AU, from broader international communities, can be stifled and limited in critical ways by bureaucracy and the need for consensus among a large number of members,
a sub-regional community can be more flexible to shifts in the conflict and subsequently, respond more appropriately and quickly.

An additional point made by an analysis promoting the use of sub-regional intervention is that sometimes military intervention is necessary to limit the violent effects of a conflict. While military intervention cannot solve the deeper political issues of a conflict, when the primary concern is to stop widespread hostility it is sometimes necessary to use force. In Liberia’s case there were numerous instances where ECOMOG troops stopped the advance of Taylor’s army or stopped an ongoing rebel battle. While such actions are not solutions for a conflict, they can serve to provide an environment where long-term solutions can be reached. One of ECOMOG’s accomplishments was to create a military deadlock with the previously advancing rebel forces, driving them from the battlefield to the negotiating table. While this military stalemate was not the sole reason that the rebels became willing to engage in negotiations, it was likely a strongly motivating factor for them to stop fighting, at least temporarily.

One of the weaknesses of sub-regional intervention in Africa is that many of the countries in any given region are struggling economically. In Liberia’s case ECOWAS did not have the financial resources to create an economic way forward for the depressed nation and therefore did not have the capacity to incentivize most of the rebel soldiers to give up their guns. The little money that was brought to the table for DDR was from the UN, and the social support for the ultimately demobilized fighters came from the Liberian community and the new government, under the control of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

An additional weakness in the sub-regional intervention analysis is its lack of universality. There were various aspects of the Liberian conflict which made sub-regional
intervention particularly feasible and may therefore not be replicable in another nation or conflict. First, ECOWAS existed before the Liberian conflict broke out and a military arm had been included in the planning (though it had not yet been implemented). Mounting a successful sub-regional intervention would prove prohibitive in an area where there is not a strong pre-established community, or where a military arm is not supported. This is not to say that ECOMOG’s beginnings in Liberia were perfectly smooth as Liberia was its first mission and the ECOMOG mandate was unclear at times. However, the groundwork was laid ahead of time to support the concept of such interventions, which is may not be the case in other areas.

Another major concern for the mobilization of regional intervention forces is the fact that in some region’s neighboring nations are so embroiled in each other’s conflicts that they could not possibly be relied on to make decisions about intervening in the best interest of the nation in conflict. Politically sustainable sub-regional intervention would necessarily have to be perceived as either a humanitarian effort or a regional-community effort (or both), as opposed to a politically-motivated attempt to grab power on the part of the intervening nation(s).

The question has to be asked why ECOWAS was able to successfully manage such an intervention in Liberia, gathering consensus and engaging in legitimate, productive action. While the answer to this question is not necessarily obvious, the extent of the discussion and analysis to this point at least puts us in a place to offer a speculative analysis. One observation we can make goes to the relatively small geographic size of both the ECOWAS region more generally and Liberia specifically. Liberia’s small size first of all provided an intervening force with a realistic opportunity for success. Its size also ensured that its internal conflict directly and swiftly impacted its neighbors. Economic impacts from loss of trade as well as the cross-border spread of both violence and large numbers of refugees quickly affected Guinea, Cote
I’voire and Sierra Leone in particular. The compact geographical area that the ECOWAS states encompass means that the effects of any regional conflict reach much farther than they might otherwise. In Liberia’s case this may have served to heighten the desire of its neighbors to stop the conflict at all costs.

Therefore, as we turn our attention to the Congo, careful consideration must be given to the role of neighboring nations in the conflict, and whether there are communal interests in resolving Congo’s conflict that will not promote the interests of one nation over another.

3.4 Application of Sub-Regional intervention Analysis to Congo

If we use Liberia as a model for sub-regional intervention, we note that the regional community played two roles in the resolution of Liberia’s conflict—ECOWAS served as the main negotiator and ECOMOG, the defense arm, served as the military force necessary to hold back the fighting forces. As Congo is a member of the South African Development Community (SADC), there already exists a community of neighboring nations that could presumably play both of these roles in the resolution of its conflict. The SADC does allow for a defense arm but each SADC member is allowed to determine the manner in which it participates in any defensive collective action, which makes achieving a unified regional intervention a very complicated process. Nonetheless, there is at least potential for a legitimate interventionist force under the proper conditions.

Dr. Laurie Nathan states, however, that the SADC has not had much success in regional conflict resolution and has often even “refrained from critical comment and diplomatic engagement, treating violence and crises in governance as purely domestic affairs.”


suggests that the reason for this is three-fold: first, the SADC nations are concerned with creating strained relations with any other state; second, they do not wish to point out democratic shortcomings in their neighbors, knowing full well that they have their own democratic shortcomings; and third, there is a general cultural belief that regional solidarity should be upheld at all costs.⁴

However, even if this general non-interventionist inertia of the SADC was to be overcome, it does not mean that intervention of the SADC in the Congo is the best path to follow. As noted in Chapter 2, the intervention of particular SADC members in the Congo is not unprecedented: Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia, who were all SADC members, determined that Congo’s state of conflict in 1998 necessitated their intervention. This decision, however, was made without an SADC mandate or the support of the remaining SADC member states,⁴ and was accompanied by self-interested motivations such as Angola’s desire to access and remove the UNITA troops based in the DRC. South Africa, on the other hand, while willing to engage in diplomatic proceedings with the DRC (the Sun City accords were facilitated in Pretoria by Mbeki, among others), has been unwilling to consider military engagements.⁵ Given that South Africa is the strongest SADC member state in terms of both economic and military capacity, this unwillingness to intervene seriously restricts both the extent of what other nations are themselves willing to do, as well as the level of interventionist support available from those who might still be willing to help. Zimbabwe’s lack of finances was a large

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³ Ibid., 611.
⁴ Ibid., 612-613.
⁵ Ibid., 613-614.
contributor to its readiness to exit the conflict in 2002, as the war was costing the country as much as 15 million US dollars each month.\(^6\)

Besides the problematic split in interventionist ideology between the SADC member states, the history of external intervention in the Congo presents in ways that are not entirely conducive to future intervention. Neither the 1998 military intervention by Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia nor the South African-led negotiations in 2002 ended the conflict. Indeed, the military intervention ultimately resulted in a full-scale regional war. To date then, sub-regional intervention in Congo has not only failed to bring peace to Congo, it ultimately served to create an even larger sphere of conflict. If however, countries that have less of a demonstrated self-interest in the conflict in the DRC (e.g. South Africa or Botswana) were to send security forces into the country, they might be understood as legitimate forces that were not simply adding another militia to the mix. This approach could actually be possible, given how the SADC defense arm is loosely structured. Whether these nations will choose to engage themselves militarily in Congo’s mess is another question entirely. Given South Africa’s responses to other regional and national conflict areas, it is highly unlikely that they will offer anything more than diplomatic services to the Congo anytime in the near future.\(^7\)

Congo’s case is also different from Liberia’s in terms of size of both the nation in conflict and the geographic area of the sub-regional community. While Congo’s conflict has undeniably impacted its neighbors, the region which makes up the SADC is much more spread out than the region that makes up ECOWAS. In terms of simple geography then, parts of Congo


\(^7\) A recent article in the Economist highlights South Africa’s flip-flopping foreign policy: “South Africa’s foreign policy: All over the place,” The Economist, March 26, 2011, 56.
and other countries within the SADC are insulated in many ways from the direct consequences of the conflict in Congo. So while the insecurity that spread out of Liberia immediately threatened its neighbors and created a situation where competing priorities of surrounding nations could be reasonably set aside in the quest for peace, the result is not the same in Congo.

Even should nations like South Africa choose to intervene in Congo, there still remains the fact that this sort of intervention will not be able to address the underlying causes of the conflict there. Even if regional forces entered the country and wiped out various militias or militia leaders, the likely result would simply be that new militias would rise up, or new leadership would take over surviving militias. It is not reasonable to simply kill every potential rebel in the country, and as long as there are accessible guns, internal ethnic arguments, shocking economic conditions and continued general insecurity, the conflict cannot and will not be resolved.

The final conclusion, then, is that an SADC military intervention could in principle be useful under the right conditions, but it does not seem to be an avenue worth exploring at present. A unified, mandated and fully-supported SADC intervention back in 1998 could have been very helpful, but given the recent history of the failed interventions in the country, does not promise success at present. Together with this failed interventionist history, the questionable motives of some of the SADC members plus the lack of overall economic means and the lack of political will to intervene in the first place does not present the SADC as a viable option at present. A more likely scenario is one in which a South African or Botswanan troop force serves much the same role in the DRC as the UN played in Mozambique: solely a peacekeeping force.
enforcing an already widely accepted peace agreement, where both the role and mandate of the parties is clear and the scope of their task more realistic.

The question must be asked, then: why did sub-regional intervention prove effective in helping Liberia move towards peace but does not seem like a viable option for Congo? Besides the size of Liberia, which was certainly a contributing factor, there was also a clear enemy there in the form of the joint rebel forces. While some of the rebel groups operating in Congo, such as the LRA and the remaining Hutu militia, are certainly a clear enemy to the Congolese people, many of the rebel and militia groups are small, partner with local civilians and have swiftly changing loyalties. This kind of “rebels confusion” would make it very difficult to give a clear mandate to an interventionist force. Additionally, the Congolese government is not going to permit an interventionist force to intervene militarily with members of its own national army, who are themselves complicit in the ongoing violence. These issues are surely a component of the problems plaguing the current UN mission in Congo.

This discussion is not intended to rule out the possibility of future sub-regional intervention in the Congo. However, it will be part of the conclusion of this thesis that the way forward for the DRC at this present time cannot count on military intervention from neighboring countries or the SADC.

3.5 Critical Response to Mutual Vulnerabilities

Dorina Bekoe’s mutual vulnerabilities analysis is an important step forward in examining the management of conflict resolution negotiations, identifying a major contributing factor to the breakdown of negotiations, and noting that it is not only necessary to consider how each side’s demands are being met, but also how relatively vulnerable they are to each other. As will be discussed in what follows, the success of this analysis varies under different
circumstances. Examining how successful Bekoe’s analysis is when applied to Mozambique and Liberia is very fruitful both for defining its limits and understanding what it tells us about Congo.

In the case of Mozambique, the mutual vulnerabilities analysis lends insight into the power of political legitimacy. Because FRELIMO held all of the governmental control, it would be logical to conclude that they would have the most to lose by opening up the government to a multi-party system of rule. And while FRELIMO was indeed hesitant to do anything that would compromise its own political legitimacy and power monopoly, RENAMO slowed or stalled the negotiation process even more often than FRELIMO did. Bekoe demonstrates that this is because RENAMO did not trust the incumbent government to follow through with power sharing promises or believe that they would be given sufficient access to the government. Thus, while FRELIMO was desperate for the violence and instability to stop, it was RENAMO that believed itself more vulnerable and concerned about not receiving a fair share in the deal. Bekoe’s analysis speaks to the power of political legitimacy and forces us to consider the factors which might make a warring party feel vulnerable. This in turn, reveals critical components of the peace process.

While Bekoe identifies a major potential pitfall for negotiations, her focus is restricted to the successful management of peace negotiations. As revealed by the other analyses discussed for both Mozambique and Liberia, additional factors necessarily contribute to a successful peace process. Furthermore, there are conditions in which even Bekoe recognizes that it is difficult to apply mutual vulnerabilities analysis. For example, when there are multiple parties at the negotiating table, the feasibility of being able to achieve mutual vulnerability is significantly reduced and may be impossible. In these contexts, then, though balancing each
party’s respective vulnerabilities remains an important consideration, achieving it is problematic.

In addition, Bekoe’s analysis does not weigh the moral or practical values behind allowing rebel groups to the negotiating table in the first place or granting them sufficient political concessions in order to make them feel secure. Even if we assume that a given rebel faction has the practical abilities to serve in the government, which cannot be taken for granted, there is still the question of political motivations. While in the case of Mozambique RENAMO did appear to consider the general interests of the people, Liberia is another story entirely. The result of negotiations in the early 1990’s was a transitional government with executive power divided up and parcelled off to various people, including some of the larger rebel group leaders. In essence, the peace negotiations placed the legitimacy of executive office in the hands of rebels who had no interest apart from their own access to power and wealth. The subsequent farce of an election in 1997 saw Taylor’s rise to the presidency. While Bekoe claims that the Liberian peace process was ultimately a success because it resulted in a ceasefire and an election, the result of this rebel-led government was simply more conflict and war, only this time perpetrated from the “legitimate” platform of democratic office. Additionally, because the earlier rebel activity had resulted in the reward of governmental power, new rebel factions were quick to emerge, hoping to achieve the same ends and prolonging the violence.

3.6 Application of Mutual Vulnerabilities Analysis to Congo

Bekoe gives a relatively simply metric that can be adopted in a conflict resolution context: manage each party’s vulnerabilities throughout the process so that no party is more vulnerable than another. This of course is easier in theory than it is in practice, but at the very
least it gives clear guidelines about how a peace process can progress. And while the simple application of the theory is made almost impossibly complex by the broad range of rebel groups involved in Congo’s conflict, there are still very important lessons that can be learned from Bekoe’s analysis that will prove very helpful moving forward.

First, this analysis presupposes that mediators gain an understanding of each party’s vulnerabilities, which may include political, economic, or military vulnerabilities. If the vulnerabilities incentivizing the various rebel groups to fight are never identified, it will be impossible to move forward with any sort of long-term conflict resolution process. Identifying these vulnerabilities, on the other hand, starts to address the core components of the conflict, and addressing them in the peace process can potentially lay the groundwork for peace.

The extended discussion of the history of the DRC conflict in Chapter 2 points towards a number of vulnerabilities that drive the different militias into conflict. Consider the militias defending the Banyarwanda, many of whom were originally part of the RCD but are now mainly smaller and more localized. The lack of political legitimacy for the Banyarwanda peoples, in terms of citizenship and its affiliated rights and governmental representation, will continue to create a situation where the Banyarwanda are forced to defend themselves from other groups that view their presence as illegitimate. The economic insecurity of the region also continues to generate conflict, as many of the existing militias have no way to provide for themselves except through force. This creates a general lack of security where civilians and rebel groups will then often band together to protect themselves from threats. Additional critical issues like land ownership exist too and have been exacerbated by the conflict and will probably prove exceedingly difficult to resolve.
Attempts to manage the various vulnerabilities of all Congo’s rebel factions have not been comprehensive and have only occurred at the top levels. The negotiations in Pretoria took careful consideration of the RCD and MLC, but ignored the Mayi-Mayi and other factions. And while it is questionable whether these smaller groups (and even the RCD and the MLC) should have been given access to governmental power, it was a critical mistake to ignore the smaller, more localized militias. The Sun City peace agreement served to make the leadership of the MLC and the RCD much less vulnerable politically and financially, but it left many sub-groups within those core constituencies both vulnerable and slighted, and by elevating the RCD and the MLC it left the smaller militias ever more vulnerable. Not surprisingly, it is now those smaller militias which continue the conflict. Negotiations with mutual vulnerabilities in mind could (and must) be used on a much more localized level, where the mediators consider the problems at the community and regional levels.

The task to achieve peace, then, necessitates the large and incredibly complex analytical task of identifying the particular vulnerabilities of those perpetuating the violence in Eastern Congo. Bekoe’s analysis is particularly helpful here, as in many ways the conflict is being driven out of pure necessity on the localized level, rather than out of higher aspirations on the part of the soldiers. Therefore it is up to the leaders in Congo to work to determine the specific problems in Eastern Congo. They need to ask questions such as: Who has local power, and who does not but wants it? Who has legal status, and who does not but needs it? Who makes up the Hutu militia, what motivates their continual violence, and what will it take to remove them from Eastern Congo or integrate them society, as the case may be?

Critical to all of this discussion is the reality that peacemaking will only succeed if economic options are offered to those who are contributing to the current conflict. Soldiers
must have obvious and tenable means by which to sustain themselves in order for them to feel safe enough to lay down their arms. And while the continuing insecurity surely confounds the development process as it discourages investment and destroys infrastructure, without a continual economic push, the security problems cannot be resolved and the cycle of violence will perpetuate itself.

3.7 Critical Response to Women as Peacemakers

As was described in the chapter on Liberia, the grassroots movement of women’s groups in Liberia played a major role in resolving the conflict. These women had a unique perspective on the situation because they lived in the midst of it, and as such were able to understand not only the political and economic motivations that might be driving the conflict, but also the social motivations for what might be able to end it. They were able to use their personal connections to make an enormous social impact in a way that an international force would never be able to do. They physically went door to door to garner support, working from the ground up. Nobody was suspicious of their actions because as women and therefore second-class citizens, they had no inherent power in the culture. However, the social positions they held as grandmothers, mothers, daughters and sisters allowed them to walk across enemy lines and appeal to the humanity of all sides without being perceived as having political motivations for doing so.

Liberia’s women also understood that successful negotiation without the actual removal of weapons from the hands of the fighters was not going to be enough. They saw negotiations as a necessary first step but they understood that demobilization and reintegration of the militias was a necessary second step in the actual peace process and not merely a part of nation-rebuilding. They also realized that unless their country was governed
by someone with the political will to lead democratically, things would dissolve immediately, just as they had in the past. Thus, they saw that their efforts had to include mobilizing their country to support and then elect into office a true democratic leader, which they did through voter registration and nationwide campaigning.

For all of the contributions that women made to the peace process, their efforts alone were not sufficient to achieve resolution to the conflict. For one thing, they did not have the political capital to actually serve as negotiators; while they had the social and cultural clout, they could not grant governmental offices for rebels or negotiate power sharing agreements. Additionally, they did not have the economic ability to incentivize the rebels to give up their weapons and reintegrate back into society. Thus, while their contributions were invaluable on many levels, their grassroots efforts were necessarily complementary to other top-down peace-making strategies.

In considering the role of a grassroots movement on conflict resolution, like the women’s groups that were such a critical component of achieving peace in Liberia, the particular circumstances of each conflict become critical to defining the role of grassroots movements. While the success of the women’s movement for peace in Liberia can certainly offer many lessons for future conflict resolution, there are aspects of the Liberian situation which are unique and therefore not replicable. As the women could not have served as formal negotiators in the conflict, they had to rely on an outside group or organization to provide mediation support and negotiators. Because ECOWAS was willing to serve in this capacity, the efforts of the women’s movement were maintained in the negotiation process. Although there are often groups and organizations willing to step into a position of mediation, this condition cannot be taken for granted in any given conflict.
Liberia’s women’s movement was also unique in that it not only arose organically, but it arose out of a large number of already existing women’s groups. Many of these groups were serving in humanitarian capacities throughout the conflict and so there clearly existed a cultural norm that made for community organization in this manner. When these smaller groups realized the influence they could have if their numbers were bigger and their reach wider, they worked to combine forces, turning themselves into something that was politically powerful through protests, rallies, marches, and other forms of activism and advocacy. Thus, while a grassroots movement such as this is certainly possible in another conflict zone, in some ways it is dependent on the internal motivations of those grassroots communities to work for peace without a financial or political incentive. Therefore, intentionally recreating such a movement may be impossible; what is more probable is identifying fledgling movements of a similar character, and supporting them.

One last factor to consider is that these women’s groups in the Liberia conflict actually were able to influence the formal negotiation process. Part of this was because of their tenacity in forcing their way into the proceedings, however, this was only possible because the negotiations were held in neighboring countries rather than overseas (such as in Italy, as in the case of Mozambique). Ultimately though, the ECOWAS community was willing to give these women an occasional voice, even if it was small. In order for such grassroots organizations to have a similar impact in other conflicts, the mediators would have to give such them the legitimacy of voice as well.

3.8 Application of Women as Peacemakers Analysis to Congo

While the previous analyses translate relatively well from post-hoc analytical explanations of a peace process into action steps for a current conflict, the discussion of the
role of women’s groups in Liberia’s conflict resolution does not do so in such a straightforward manner. Liberia’s women’s movement was a grassroots movement that grew out of a desire of the women in the country to achieve peace. Part of the reason that it was so influential in achieving peace was precisely because it was not an externally-imposed operation, but rather a democratic movement from a significant constituency in Liberia that cross-cut a number of other political alliances.

Given the particular nature of those events, then, what lessons can be learned from Liberia’s women peacemakers that can potentially be applied to another peace process? While this sort of grassroots movement cannot be externally created, it is possible for mediators and international organizations to identify women’s groups or movements which are already motivated to make a community impact, and work to create the conditions where their voices may be heard. There were a number of reasons that the women’s movement in Liberia was so successful. First, all of the women were personally affected by the war and therefore had an enormous and deep-seated motivation to see it come to an end. While this kind of motivation cannot be artificially created in another peace process, it can be identified on a smaller-scale and then fostered and harnessed. A second reason for the Liberian women’s success was that they integrated themselves in as many aspects of conflict resolution as possible, building an extensive network that spanned different conflict zones, as well as religious, political and economic boundaries. As a result they were positioned to make a broad societal impact. Networking facilitation is certainly something that could be undertaken in other conflict resolution situations. Something as simple as providing funds for travel could make a large impact on the networking abilities of smaller grassroots groups. And finally, a major reason for the impact that Liberia’s women were able to have was that neither the rebels, the
government, nor the mediators believed that the women had any hidden political agenda or desire to gain anything for themselves. The lesson from this third point is particularly important because it actually de-emphasizes the physical presence and influence of outside organizations on the success of a grassroots women’s organization. It often seems that NGO’s and aid organizations are happy to provide help to conflict areas, but only on their own terms. The success of Liberia’s women in fighting for peace was precisely because they were not affiliated with any ideology, government or policy that might be seen as a threat to any of the warring parties. They were able to get their message across not in spite of being second-class citizens, but because they were second-class citizens.

Various organizations, including the UN, are beginning to recognize the power that women have to make a large societal impact in Congo. To this end, there have been initiatives in the Congo to facilitate involvement by women in the political sphere. UN Women (formerly UNIFEM) has pushed to have the voice of women become more prominent in electoral campaigns and in politics more generally, supporting “women’s participation in the electoral process as voters, candidates, observers and monitors.” Human rights activist Doris Mpoumou reports that there an increasing number of women’s networks developing in the Congo, with Kinshasa alone registering 150 groups in the time period leading up to the Sun City

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Accords.\textsuperscript{10} External organizations such as Women for Women International are also at work in the Congo providing “financial aid, rights awareness classes, job-skills training and emotional support.”\textsuperscript{11}

Congo’s women are certainly just as personally affected by the ongoing conflict as Liberia’s women were, and as in many African cultures, Congo’s women are still largely seen as purveyors of domestic issues such as childbearing and homemaking and are not seen as important as men. While the UN efforts to involve women in politics are commendable, they do not align with the second and third lesson taken from Liberia’s conflict. As one of the reasons behind the success of the Liberian’s women’s peace movement was their wide-reaching network spanning different cross-sections of the population, the emphasis being placed on political involvement may actually serve to limit the impact that a Congolese women’s movement could potentially have. Indeed, a working paper written by Femmes Afrique Solidarité\textsuperscript{12} reports that efforts by Congolese women to engage in the political process during and after the Sun City accords devolved into a struggle over limited access to political positions and states that “[this] is the danger of the attempt to put women in processes that

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\textsuperscript{12} Femmes Afriques Solidarité (FAS) is an international NGO focusing on women’s issues in Africa, particularly relating to conflict resolution.
have not been transformed and then expecting them to be change agents in these processes.\textsuperscript{13}

Not only can such an emphasis on political involvement divide the unity of a growing women’s movement, it also goes against the third reason that the Liberian Women’s Movement was successful, namely that it had no agenda beyond peace and reconciliation and therefore was not seen as threatening by those (the men) who both held all of the political power and were also the main perpetrators of the war and violence. My point in this argument is not at all to suggest that women do not need a political voice. Indeed, in Liberia the women’s voice came through so strongly in the political arena that Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first elected female president in all of Africa. My point is that the Liberian Women’s Peace Movement was able to achieve this only by taking a much less politically confrontational route to begin with and by focusing not on politics specifically, but on the more urgent issue of conflict resolution. Attempts by the Liberian women to enter the formal political arena would have disadvantaged their message demanding peace in a culture that said they were not allowed to have a formal political voice. Likewise, in Congo’s situation, while it is important for organizations such as UN women to stand behind women’s movements, pushing them into a stance of “political-representation above all else” may not in fact be productive for making peace.

The discussion here has hinted at ways to actually implement a peace-making strategy of in the Congo, but has not discussed it in depth. I set aside this task for the final section of

this chapter. Before getting to that point, however, I will discuss the final analytical approach addressed to this point, namely that of “distributed pressure factors.”

3.9 Critical Response to Pressure Factors

The final analysis which I will discuss here is the idea of “distributed pressure factors” that I posited as a cover term for a broad range of necessary but not intrinsically sufficient conditions for the resolution of the conflict in Mozambique. This analysis points to the conclusion that to resolve a conflict as complicated as many of those in the sub-Saharan African region, there is a wide range of distinct conditions that play into making peace feasible, and that the absence of any one of them can significantly slow or stop a peace process. The peace process in Mozambique demonstrates that there may never be a singular methodology for solving a highly complicated conflict, but that instead the conflict resolution strategy must be adaptable, opportunistic, and inherently multi-pronged.

One significant factor discussed in Chapter 2 is the importance of money in producing peace. An essential part of Mozambique’s peace process was the funds that were available in the form of salary, transportation, occupational training, and farming supplies, among other things to incentivize soldiers to give up their arms and reintegrate into society. Because an average person needs to exist in an economically viable context, where their basic human needs of shelter, food, and security are met, they will do whatever is necessary to support themselves if it is not possible to do so through traditional means. In this way, properly channeled monies to support individual militia-members who are disarming can make a very large difference in conflict resolution.

The discussion of pressure factors also reveals one of the catch-22’s that is unavoidable when looking at the resolution of widespread, violent conflict: you need security in order to
achieve security. This is where the importance of an external security force can prove paramount. In Mozambique, the UN force that was deployed after the General Peace Agreement was signed was critical to assuring both FRELIMO and RENAMO that the other party would not violate the cease-fire and assume an offensive position. This security assurance can create an environment where opposing forces feel safe to incrementally disarm, paving the way for further security. Mozambique’s peace process also demonstrated the power of international pressure and diplomatic proceedings on a regional level; the opinions of leaders in neighboring nations played an important role in creating a situation where FRELIMO and RENAMO felt that it was in their favor to make peace rather than keep fighting, and this sort of legitimate pressure from peer nations is invaluable to achieving peace.

In terms of the changing political environment on Mozambique, on the international level the cold war was coming to an end, and on the local level the rise of black power in South Africa together with Zimbabwe’s budget shortfalls led to both nations losing interest in maintaining their involvement in Mozambique’s conflict. All of these factors together created a political environment where peace-making became the most feasible option for both FRELIMO and RENAMO. While important to the resolution of Mozambique’s peace process, this particular political environment which contributed to peace negotiations cannot be purposefully recreated in another situation and is therefore not workable into a framework for conflict resolution. Despite the singularity of these particular historic events, however, the global and regional political environment is constantly changing, and could possibly be manipulated by peacemakers for the advancement of peace.
3.10 Application of Pressure Factors Analysis to Congo

If the specific conditions in Mozambique cannot be replicated directly in the Congo, what can we learn from the distributed pressure factors that can be applied to another area of conflict? One important consideration is that many cultures in Africa place a high value on community and connection; thus, pressure from friends and allies towards peace can serve as a very powerful motivator. In Mozambique, FRELIMO was very influenced by Zimbabwe’s Robert Mugabe and RENAMO eagerly accepted political support and advice from Kenya. While the fragmented nature of the rebel groups driving Congo’s conflict may not have strong alliances with any external government at this point, President Kabila himself could likely be pressured by his peers to work harder at dealing with the current situation in Eastern Congo. While Kabila may not be an abusive dictator like Mobuto Sese Seko, he is not actively putting full government support and resources towards resolving the situation. An African consensus loudly demanding peace in eastern DRC could lead Kabila to devote the necessary energy and resources which his country needs. Besides the input of regional “big men” such as Nelson Mandela or Archbishop Tutu, Western opinion from Europe or the United States could also have a positive impact. While African leaders may not desire to appease every Western wish, international status is important to many African leaders, and if the West were to take a harder-lined stance on Kabila’s willful inaction, it could embarrass him into doing more to deal with the conflict. Wide-scale international condemnation of Rwanda’s support for various rebel groups in the DRC as recently as 2008 resulted in the Rwandan government quickly backing
-away from any appearance of rebel support and their subsequent arrest of rebel leader Laurent Nkunda.  

While regional and international political pressure may transcend different conflicts in Africa, a larger difference that stands out between the conflict resolutions in Mozambique and the Congo is the relative degree of success that the respective UN missions have had in each country. Whereas the UN mission in Mozambique was successful in facilitating DDR and maintaining the ceasefire as the conditions of the peace negotiations progressed, the UN mission in Congo has had little success in 12 years in resolving the conflict. This is hardly surprising, however, when the specific conditions of each mission are considered. In Mozambique the UN forces had a clear and very restricted mandate. They were not being asked to create peace where it did not already exist and were invited into the country at the close of formal negotiations. The mandate of the UN mission in the Congo, in comparison, is constantly changing and the force entered Congo in the midst of the violence. It should be clear to the international community that it is simply not feasible to expect a peacekeeping force to keep a peace that does not exist. Because of the nature of the United Nations, the UN force in Congo cannot gather intelligence and is not able to negotiate with any group or person not having government-sanctioned political legitimacy. In Mozambique’s case, the UN mission strongly pushed for a full and complete DDR before assisting with preparations for the national election. Perhaps having forgotten the lesson that they had learned from the failure to do this in Angola in 1992, DDR has still not been completed in Congo.

All this is not to say that an interventionist force has no part to play in the resolution of Congo’s conflict. As has been shown, interventionist forces played critical roles both in

Mozambique (the UN) and in Liberia (ECOMOG). It is absolutely critical, however, to be
conservative and realistic in the expectations that are placed on an intervention force. Just as
the UN mission in Mozambique was merely one of the pressure factors influencing the end of
that conflict, the UN mission in Congo should not be expected to perform and succeed beyond
the scope of what they really are: peacekeepers.

Economic conditions are another point of pressure which, while never identical in any
two conflicts, can play a critical role in stopping or advancing a conflict resolution process.
Based on the recent course of the history of the DRC’s conflict, it is becoming clear that
without sufficient reintegration packages along the lines of what was implemented in
Mozambique, the militias may never disarm. And while generous reintegration packages may
serve as the necessary motivation for individual fighters to surrender their weapons, the
overall economic situation in Eastern Congo will also need enormous support and attention in
order to provide the long-term environment necessary for sustained peace. Without a means
to support themselves, Congo’s fighters will continue to create one by the only way that is
immediately available in such an underdeveloped nation: taking it by force. Therefore any
strategy for making peace in the Congo must necessarily include both small and large scale
economic considerations.

While there is certainly more that could be said about the application of external
pressure, this discussion is sufficient to set the stage for the conclusion which distills the
arguments, evidence, and analyses discussed to this point, both in this chapter and in
preceding chapters, to outline a path towards peace in the Congo, based on the lessons
learned from the peace process in Mozambique and Rwanda.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: A WAY FORWARD FOR CONGO

In order to frame the core proposals that I suggest as a way forward for the Congo, a brief summation of what has been written up to this point is in order. The second chapter of this thesis looked at the history of the DRC, explaining the current state of the country and how it came to be where it is today; in essence, setting forth the main problem that this thesis is addressing, that of how peace can be reached in the Congo. The third and fourth chapters then addressed case studies of the peace processes in Mozambique and Liberia, exploring both the histories of these conflicts and the subsequent peace processes, as well as analyses that have been proposed to account for the success of these peace processes. Chapter 5 took up the task of looking back at the Congo, in order to articulate what lessons we can learn from the peace processes in Mozambique and Liberia. This final chapter is therefore a distillation of the preceding work. Building on the analyses that have been discussed, and the relationships between the histories of the countries considered here, I will set forward the core proposals that emerge from this research for a way forward for Congo, and discuss how these might be implemented.

1. Core Proposals

There are, at a very general level, two core lessons that can be drawn from the discussion and analyses to this point which any Congolese peace process must take into account in order to be successful. These two lessons are: first, that any conflict resolution strategy must be multi-pronged, utilizing a diverse range of strategies in order to meet a very diverse set of needs across the country. The second lesson is that a precondition to any successful peace process is the existence of political will, both at the national and the local
levels. The impetus for good governance and for peace must arise from inside of the Congo and cannot be imposed by the international community. To a certain extent, if the peoples of Congo want peace, they will have to achieve it themselves. This is not to say that the international community cannot enable this process, but that without a significant political will for peace and development from within the country, external actions for peace will be irrelevant. These core lessons offer only the broadest of generalizations and this section will lay out much more detail about the implementation of these observations.

2. Political Will

On the national level, a prerequisite for long-term peace is the existence of political will on the part of those in government. This has been demonstrated by the peace processes in both Mozambique and Liberia. To put it another way, those in power need to be motivated to both care and to take action about the things which matter to those they govern. For Congo’s leaders then, political will would include a strong desire to solve the myriad of problems facing the Congolese people. While this may seem like an obvious statement, the reality is that many in Congo’s government are motivated not to serve their country, but merely to remain in power. Examples of this are rife but include President Kabila’s recent proposal to eliminate electoral run-offs, allowing a presidential candidate to be voted into office without having received a majority of the votes. ¹ Recent insistence by the government that the UN Mission to Congo, which is typically very involved in electoral proceedings, pull out of the country by May

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2011,² is another example of those in power being more concerned with power than with what is best for their citizenry.

Congo’s leaders also need to demonstrate political will by intensely focusing on fixing the nation’s economy and creating an environment that encourages and supports the Congolese people in being able to provide for themselves and their families. Additionally, corruption within the government and particularly within the national army must be identified and vigorously attacked. While it may be argued that actions such as these do not fall under the domain of conflict resolution and are actually tasks that go into post-conflict nation building, I would argue that while these are tasks for post-conflict nation building, they will also prove essential in the Congo as part of the conflict resolution process. The reality is that Congo’s war was officially declared over almost a decade ago and that it is about to hold its second “post-war” election, but that it is clearly still in a state of conflict. Until the current government begins to take strong steps forward in areas such as economic reconstruction, the conflict will not end.

Political will is not something that should exist only at the national level; the Congolese people also need to be motivated to be concerned and take action about those things which affect them. To this end, determined grassroots movements which demand an end to local and national violence can make a significant difference, as evidenced by the Women’s Peace Movement in Liberia. Grassroots movements are also in the best position to inform the national leadership what is needed on the ground and to pressure local militias to consider alternate action. Community commitment to peace is crucial not only from the perspective of

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trying to bring a stop to the immediate unrest but also because community support for the reintegration of soldiers will be an ongoing consideration for Congo.

Because of the protracted ethnic and political tensions that exist throughout Congo, it is important that any external support given to grassroots movement in the Congo be fundamentally neutral or simply invisible all together. When considering, for example, a woman’s movement for peace, if the social capital that the women hold comes from their lack of status, then the perception of an international supporter can actually weaken their message and their power. If the only thing that women’s peace movement (or other non-politically-motivated grassroots organizations) need is resource support, then there might be no reason for an external supporter to have a visible presence at all.

Internal motivation and drive for peace and democracy in the Congo are the only things that will ensure a nation that is not held hostage by unrest and violence. While the international community can and must support the DRC in order for such motivation to be fully realized, the international community cannot impose this motivation. This has been seen in the failure of the UN Mission to bring peace and in the failure of the multitude of attempted peace talks and even signed peace accords. With that caveat in place, Congo will require the continued support of the international community in order to help with any transition from conflict to peace.

3. International Support and Pressure

There are a number of ways that the international community can contribute to the resolution of Congo’s conflict, in the form of both pressure and of support. International pressure can be applied to those inside of Congo as well as to external actors who may be exacerbating the conflict. As discussed earlier, recent condemnation of Rwanda’s role in the
ongoing conflict in eastern DRC led the country to back away from their rebel support. Increased global attention on Congo’s situation and the current governmental inaction may have some effect on pushing Kabila into good-faith action, particularly if very influential countries are involved, such as South Africa locally, or even the US or China on a more global scale. China, for example, has growing economic interests in the region and would in all likelihood benefit from more stability in the region to make their investments in infrastructure and natural resources less risky. In this way a diplomatic coalition across international alliances might have the power to influence the leadership in the DRC to work harder for peace.

Beyond diplomatic pressure, there may be a role for very limited and very targeted military involvement, as it is not solely local rebel groups that are contributing to the conflict, but also external terrorist groups like the LRA. While sub-regional intervention in Congo has not proven entirely effective in the removal of external rebel groups (Rwanda and the FDLR for example), it seems clear that Congo needs assistance in ridding itself of groups like the LRA, and remaining members of the Hutu militias that are still in Eastern Congo. This is the kind of task that could be given to an international force, so long as they were given a strong and targeted mandate that did not in any way address peacekeeping on a broader scale.

The need for appropriate support from the international community extends to the need for a comprehensive DDR program in Congo. While the UN Mission in Congo continues to report progress in disarming leftover FDLR rebels, the Secretary General’s Report from January 2011 also reports alliances being forged between members of the “FDLR...CNDP deserters,

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Mayi-Mayi and other Congolese armed groups. Until all of these fighters are disarmed and reintegrated back into Congolese society the likelihood of new outbreaks of violence is almost inevitable. Should the UN be forced to leave Congo in May as the Congolese government is currently demanding, it is doubtful that DDR will be completed within the foreseeable future. It is clear from consideration of Mozambique’s conflict resolution process that effective DDR is the only way to ensure a conflict does not reignite. It is equally clear, both from Mozambique’s success in DDR and Congo’s repeated failures at DDR, that this process requires a significant effort and a significant amount of capital. Additionally, in many areas in Congo there is very little to reintegrate into. There is virtually no economy in Eastern Congo and while many members of Congo’s militias already live in extreme poverty, putting down their weapons without any economic alternative simply is not a viable option for them on an individual level.

The lack of governmental control in Eastern Congo has left the country’s natural resources vulnerable to exploitation and many militias are now using the illegal control and mining of these resources to sustain themselves. A UN letter published as recently as November 2010 reports that units from one of the larger former rebel groups have militarily taken “control over most of the strategic areas rich in natural resources in the Kivus.” Recent reports also tie members of Congo’s national army to “illegal taxation and protection rackets as

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5 Foreign troops, such as members of the Rwandese FDLR or Burundian militias, would be disarmed and removed from Congo entirely.

well as indirect commercial control.” Rebel involvement thus seems to offer the best source of income for many people in Congo and therefore the economic incentives to disarm (in conjunction with the economic commitments needed to secure the mines and other natural resources areas) are going to have to be significant enough to create an environment where disarmament is seen as an economically viable option for the fighters. I would therefore recommend that reintegration packages modeled off of those used in Mozambique be offered to disarming militias.

Finally, external actors may play a role in the general economic recovery of the region. One of the similarities seen between Liberia and Congo while looking at their respective conflicts is the general economic situation in each country. Liberia’s economy was in shambles and many times rebels were fighting simply because they had nothing better to do. It is often said that Congo’s war is being fought over economic resources, such as wood, oil and precious metals. This is often put forward as a motivating factor behind the previous involvements of nations like Rwanda and Zimbabwe and it is often claimed at present to be a motivation of the numerous rebel groups and militias. While it is clear that Congo’s numerous resources have been and continue to be exploited, there has never been convincing proof to show that the underlying reason for the conflict is resource-related. Rather, while Congo’s natural resources have been used to fund its state of conflict for decades, the underlying problem is the lagging state of development where a soldier’s best chance to feed himself and his family is not as a civilian. Thus, while an international focus on restricting the use of conflict minerals, for example, may force rebel and militia fighters to seek remuneration elsewhere, it does not in of itself motivate them to lay down their guns. Thus, a broader commitment by the international

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community to support the Congolese government in economic development more generally would serve a more forceful purpose.

4. Conclusions

It must be noted that by its very nature, the multi-pronged approach to conflict resolution presented here is very wide in scope. The danger of such a broad conclusion is that it has the potential to seem unachievable. The reason for this, however, is that there can be no security in the region without economic recovery and there can be no economic recovery in the region without security. While this Catch-22 can appear to be nihilistic, the point is made to emphasize that incremental change on all fronts is necessary. Security cannot be addressed without addressing the economic situation, or else the efforts at peace will ultimately fail. Incremental change, here, is the key and this is precisely why this multi-pronged approach is not merely stating: “fix everything.” The truth of the matter is that the complexity of the conflict in the Congo has resulted in failed peace efforts time and again as there is always an unaddressed aspect of the conflict to derail progress.

There is an additional question to consider which arises from the conclusion that the Congolese people must motivate the conflict resolution internally. This question is: why should the rest of the world, particularly those outside of the region, bother involving themselves in Congo’s crisis in the first place? If peace will not come to the DRC until there is sufficient political will in the country to face these issues head on, should the rest of the world even be involved in Congo in the meantime? At its core this is a question about our values. If our actions are largely driven by the need to try to mend our consciences in one way or another, whether because of our colonialist pasts or simply because we feel guilty for enjoying material comforts while others endure hell, then guilt-ridden aid projects that simply prolong Congolese
dependency could be hurting the country more than helping it. If our actions are truly altruistic and humanitarian, they must be designed for the good of the Congolese people. After all, threatening the sanctity of national sovereignty requires a strong rationale. However, as Nelson Mandela said:

>. . . we should treat the question of peace and stability on our continent as a common challenge. Accordingly, I believe that we must all accept that we cannot abuse the concept of national sovereignty to deny the rest of the continent the right and duty to intervene when, behind those sovereign boundaries, people are being slaughtered to protect tyranny.\(^8\)

This is why coming to clear conclusions about what can be accomplished by those of us external to a conflict, and what cannot, is critical. We are therefore forced to evaluate our own motives, and question ourselves as to the purpose and goal of our involvement in nations like Congo. If the goal is to protect the Congolese people and promote their prosperity, this thesis has proposed that the way forward in this respect may in fact be to limit our involvement in certain ways. This is not to say that the international community cannot be productively involved; indeed, this thesis has discussed many of these ways. Nonetheless, our ambitions for peace must necessarily be tempered by a realistic consideration of how peace will be achieved in the end, and what role we can play in that.

At times a resolution to Congo’s protracted and complicated conflict seems hopeless, but this thesis has looked at other seemingly hopeless situations that have been resolved and we should look to those examples not only to offer suggestions for possible ways forward, but also to give a sense of hope for Congo’s own peace.


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