

Diamonds and Warlords: The Geography of War in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone

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ABSTRACT

The article offers a model of the dynamics of an internal war. The model is based on various views on military crises in developing countries and it offers a synthesis of the produce of the geography of war and conflict studies. The model describes several possible push and pull factors of war. It aims at constituting a new footstep for theorizing the dynamics of an internal war. Factors are surely numerous and all of them have not been elaborated here. Some factors can even simultaneously both push and pull countries into war. As the first elaboration of its kind, the model is hoped to paint a general picture on the dynamics of an internal war. (Ed.)

Keywords: internal war, conflict

INTRODUCTION

The wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone are complex and multidimensional tangles of problems. Warring parties are many, and the allies and enemies change. Several outside nations are involved in the wars, both on the battling governments' and the rebels' side. Even the former allies may have become enemies.

The mass media paint a simplistic picture of the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Commonly, fighting is conceived of as a mere ethnic clash or a new deal of the raw materials. This impression is, nevertheless, seriously distorted, largely even false. The warring parties have multiple motives to be involved. Political history, economic and political inequalities, and quest for security are explanations for some countries' involvement. For the others, the reasons may include the nations' own internal problems that their governments want to sweep under the carpet. Personal relationships, friendship and loyalties are also the key factors to analyze the motives for the war. For the Congolese rebel movements, land ownership emerges as a potential factor. In addition to the abovementioned reasons, the much-heralded ethno-cultural misunderstandings and the vast reserves of natural resources in Congo play a role in the war.

In the case of Sierra Leone, on the contrary, the mass media avoid to present the war as a mere ethnic confrontation. However, the media give the impression of a one-country civil war despite the fact that three to four outside parties combat on the Sierra Leonean soil. Ethnicity is not indeed among the chief reasons for the war (Pratt 1999), neither are political or ideological differences, economic inequality or the neighboring countries' security gaps. The war in Sierra Leone seems to be, rather, a combination of extreme voracity, run for the control over the country's crucial natural riches and interpresidential loyalty and friendship.

Peace research defines *a conflict* as “a conflict of interests between two or more parties in which — in the spirit of the Realist tradition — the constellation of game is of a zero sum nature” (Käkönen 1988: 128–129). Hence, a conflict can be an unarmed serious political, diplomatic or economic confrontation between countries or groups (see also Falk & Kim 1980: 7; Wright 1980: 317–322). A *war* is, in turn, “a prolonged or organized armed clash” (Käkönen 1988: 128–129). A war is commonly also characterized by at least 1,000 deaths. A war is, therefore, a part of the more comprehensive concept of a conflict. According to this definition, the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone are wars.

The Congo and Sierra Leone wars are neither mere *civil wars*, nor typical *international* or *external wars* either. The Congo war could be described as a civil war due to the fact that the battles have remained within the national borders of Congo and the “main warring parties” are Congolese groups. The impression of a civil war becomes vague, notwithstanding, because the warring parties have been supplemented by foreign troops. Especially, when considering the rebel groups, it is difficult to unambiguously determine whether the rebels or their foreign allies are the “main” fighters. The foreign troops are not solely mercenaries who often intervene in civil wars but troops officially sent by other countries as well as foreign rebel armies. The foreign battalions, which had also been allied in this very same war, have been clashing heavily with each other in the Congolese area.

In Sierra Leone, the conflict can also be described as a civil war owing to the fact that the absolute majority of fighting is between Sierra Leonean parties. Notwithstanding, this war resembles also an international war since the battles have been devastating also beyond the Sierra Leonean borders. Moreover, the representation of international peacekeeping forces is considerable. Although both the Congo and Sierra Leone wars meet the criteria of an international or external war (Kende 1971: 10; Most & Starr 1983: 138–142; Otterbein 1980: 204–205), the both wars still sow the seeds of death within their national borders to a massive extent. According to Kende's (1971: 10) and Otterbein's (1980: 204–205) typologies, the wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone belong to a wider category than a civil war, i.e. that of an *internal war*.

What are these wars all about? How can the geography of war help us to interpret the situation? This article aims at analyzing the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone from the geography of war perspective. A

conceptual model, deriving from various sub-disciplines of the geography of war, will be constructed here. The model will put the relevant geography of war concepts in use in the empirical analysis of the Congo and Sierra Leone wars. Moreover, this text targets to describe the history and dynamics of the wars, the fighting parties and their interests as deeply as possible.

1. THE GEOGRAPHY OF INTERNAL WARS

The geography of war or geography of conflict is a multidisciplinary field of research that combines geopolitics, political geography, historic and human geography, social geography and conflict studies. The geography of war delves into, for example, the superpowers' geopolitical and geostrategic constellations (Ives 1985; O'Sullivan 1985; Rusi 1997), propaganda cartography (Burnett 1985), the collapse of colonialism (van der Wusten 1985), conflicts in developing countries (ibid.), the dynamics of guerrilla wars (O'Sullivan 1983), the spatial expansion of peace movements (Brunn 1985) and arms (Ives 1985) and speculates on a destruction of a nuclear war (Elsom 1985; Openshaw & Steadman 1985).

Traditionally, the geography of war has borne a close resemblance to societal conflict studies. Especially, the works focusing on the internal wars of developing countries can be conceived of as pure conflict research with minor spatial contribution (see e.g. Falk & Kim 1980; Fisher 1980; Galtung 1969 for conflict research). The spatial geography of war explains the outbreak and duration of a war, parties, severity, victories and defeats with the help of e.g. distances, accessibility and natural conditions (van der Wusten 1985: 14; see also Glassner & de Blij 1989: 243 for the nonspatiality of the geography of war). Political geography seeks to include the areas with marked natural geographical importance or substantial natural resources in the analysis of war (Taylor 1948: 133).

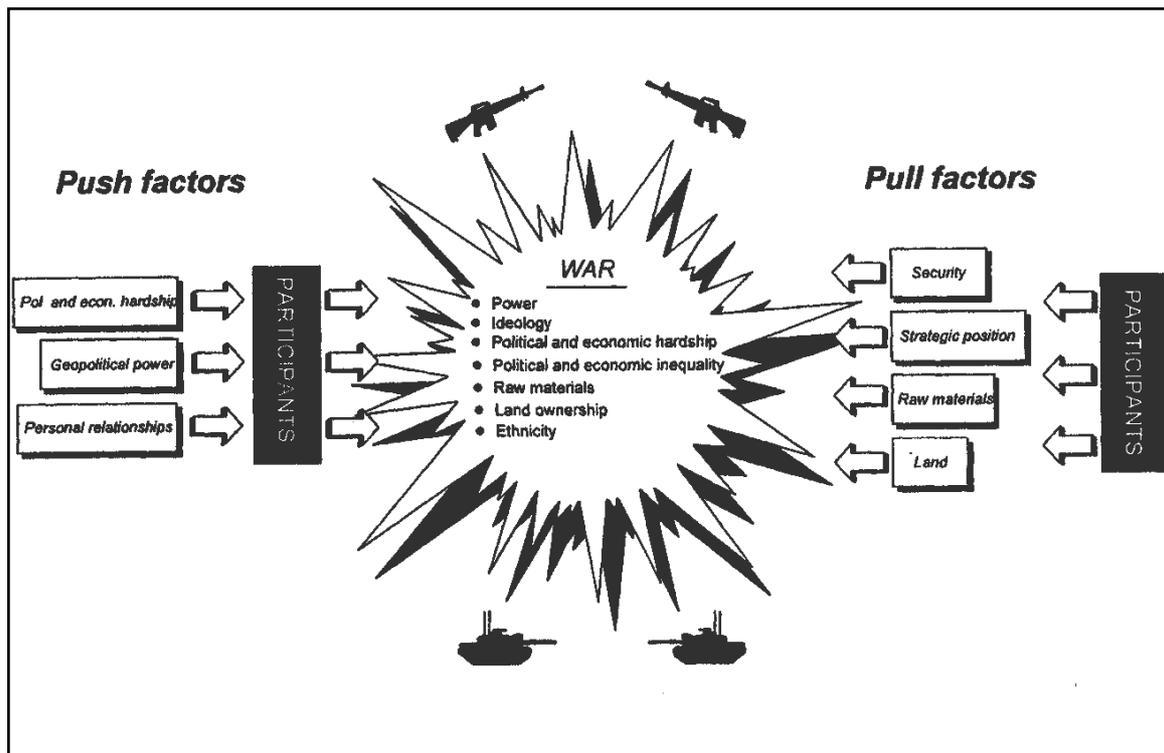
A handful of countries are blessed with such enormous reserves of natural resources as rendering the world economic giants essentially dependent thereof. For instance, manganese, nickel, chromium, tungsten, tin, aluminum, antimony, mercury and platinum are generally considered so-called strategic minerals for the United States during wartime (Behre Jr. 1940: 677). The first five of these are found in rich deposits in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Natural resources allure also rebel groups in search of economic benefit. According to a recent World Bank publication, developing countries with rich deposits of natural resources are at a particular risk of a civil war (Collier 2000; see also Käkönen 1988: 93–96). In a similar vein, the latest UN report on Congo puts natural wealth at the forefront in provoking cruelties in the country (UN 2001). A counter-example is, in turn, diamond-rich Botswana that has managed to maintain societal stability during her entire 35-year independence (**African Business** 2000).

The military advance of a rebel movement challenging the status quo depends on multiple strategic and spatial factors. Patrick O'Sullivan's (1983) study on 16 post-WWII civil wars asserts that the rebels were the more successful, the more fragmented the geographical theatre of war was, the more inaccessible the terrain was, the more mobile the guerrillas were and the more welcomed the rebels were by the local people. Although the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo is neither a pure guerrilla war, nor a mere civil war, the O'Sullivan approach can prove useful also in the Congo case. Neither party seems to be able to force the war into a rapid end. The government and its allies have found it extremely difficult to fight the dispersed rebel groups. Dense jungle and dilapidated infrastructure have strikingly decelerated the advance of both sides. The local population gives no support to the rebels, unlike when Mobutu was ousted, which has weakened the rebels' success. Overall, the present constellation of the Congo war promises no immediate peace. The war has rather developed into a multipolar conflict with ingredients into even a larger sub-continental clash.

In Sierra Leone, the power balance between the warring parties has experienced a major shift since early 1998. At that point of time, the antigovernment rebel movement RUF had already invaded capital Freetown and overthrown President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah who fled the country. The victorious march of RUF continued undisturbed until the West African ECOMOG forces and the British paratroops intervened militarily in the war. The rebels were forced back inland. Contemporarily, fierce fighting over small towns indicates that neither the government with its international support nor RUF are able to reach a victory within a very short period of time. In this respect, the war in Sierra Leone bears a crucial resemblance with the war in Congo: the current unstable situation can be expected to prevail long. Terrain is also difficult for all parties in Sierra Leone although the distances are significantly shorter than those in Congo. If either party could rapidly mobilize significant military reserves, it could in principle march from town to town and subject the whole of Sierra Leone to its own control at an accelerated pace. On the other hand, the forest areas offer protection for the defeated for a prolonged time. The local people are afraid of RUF, which forces the rebels to exploit its vast military power without civilian assistance.

The following model (Figure 1) describes the dynamics of an internal war from the geography of war vantage point. A war can break out as a consequence of, for instance, some political, ethnic or religious group's aspiration for power. Greed for power is present in most wars albeit not necessarily constituting the single most important reason for the war. Ideological differences can also act as a catalyst for the war although they are, almost without an exception, tightly linked to aspiration for power. Political and economic hardships, as well as striking inequalities, also expose the country to wars. A particularly alarming situation emerges if these two prevail simultaneously — a phenomenon Ted Gurr (1980: 254–262) calls *relative deprivation*. Natural resources attract, in

Figure 1. Dynamics of an internal war.



turn, groups in search of economic benefits. Local land ownership and controversies over land exploitation can jointly with other factors result in a more devastating clash. In addition, ethnic prejudices can play a role here. More often than not, however, ethnicity in itself constitutes no direct cause for the war but rather reflects other outcomes of societal, economic or historic injustice.

Foreign powers can also intervene in an internal war. *Push factors* drive and *pull factors* attract foreign countries into the war. The clearest difference between the push and pull factors lies in how freely the involved country can choose between peace and war. In terms of the push factors, the degree of freedom of the involved nation is lesser whereas, in terms of the pull factors, the leadership's degree of freedom of opting for peace may be significant. Therefore, the push factors could be characterized as a "duty" or "compulsion" to be involved in the war while the pull factors rather "entice a country into the war". The distinction between the push and pull factors is, nonetheless, very fine and situation-specific.

The key push factors include political and economic hardship in a country involved in the internal war. Through war adventure, the political leadership wishes to wipe the internal problems under the carpet. An external threat — no matter how an unlikely one — helps the leadership to turn the population's attention away from the country's own internal misery. The world superpowers often intervene in conflicts with a view to enhancing geopolitical power. This is especially the case on the global level, but the analogy goes well also on the

continental or regional level. In addition, long-duration and politically important personal relationships drive countries to fight on foreign ground.

The chief pull factors read as a quest for increasing the country's own external security and improving its strategic status. The political leadership can seek for increased security by occupying geographically important areas from its neighbors. It can also destroy rebel bases located on the neighboring soil. A landlocked country may be inspired by a potential connection to the sea. Raw materials play also a crucial role in the dynamics of an internal war. Finally, a foreign power may be after additional land for mere eagerness to expand.

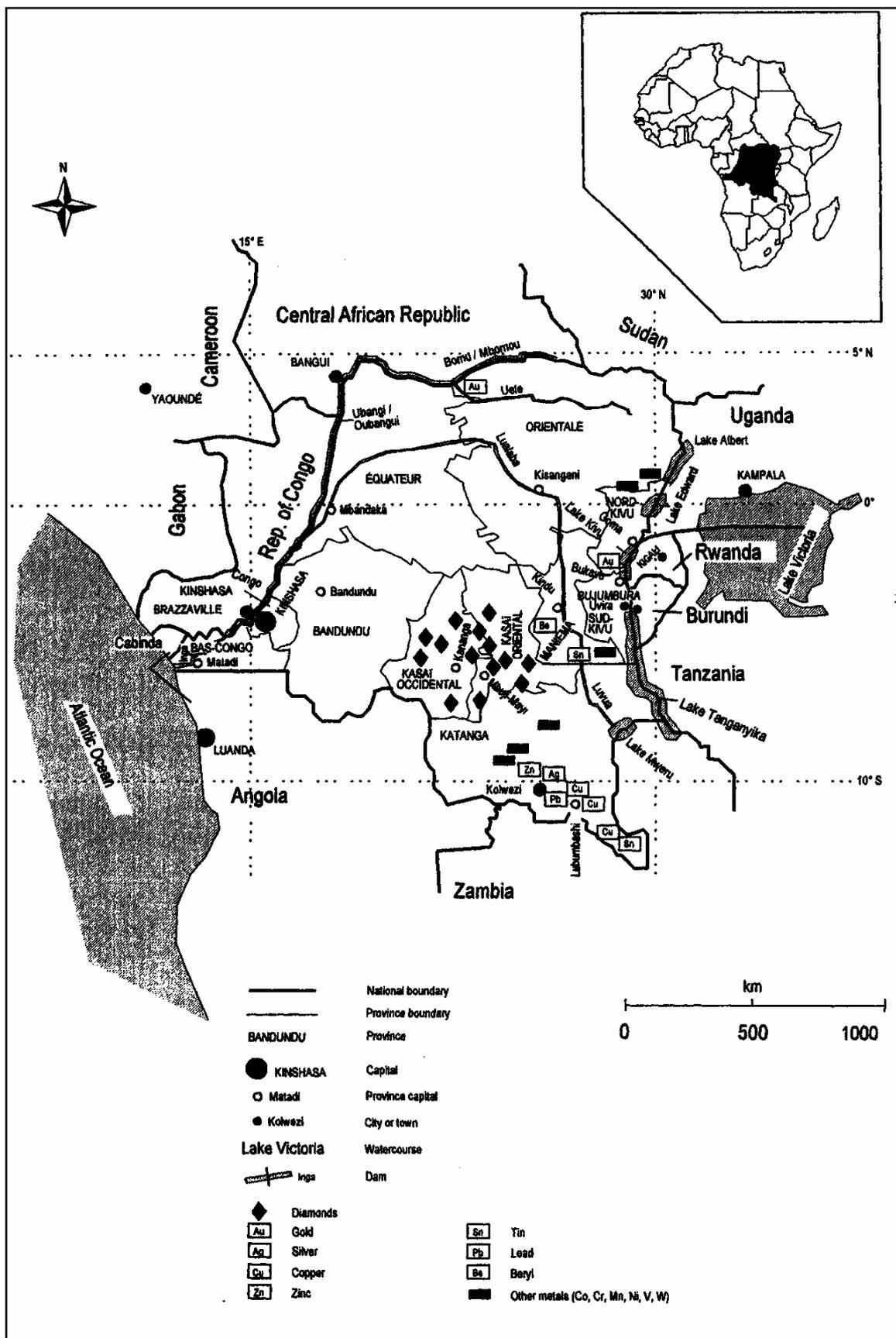
2. FROM THE ZAIRE OF MOBUTU TO KABILA'S CRUSADE

The Democratic Republic of Congo became independent in 1960 from the Belgian rule. During the dawn of independence, Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba governed the country during five years. In 1965, Lumumba was assassinated and Joseph Désiré Mobutu took power. Mobutu adopted an African name, Mobutu Sésé Seko, and renamed Congo into Zaire. The names of the provinces, cities, town, rivers, mountains and even the national currency were Africanized. Mobutu's authoritarian rule lasted for 32 years during which time society drifted onto the edge of collapse.

Zaire's reserves of natural resources are among the world's richest — the ground hides i.a. a plenty of diamonds, gold, copper, zinc, uranium, cobalt, chromium, manganese and nickel (Figure 2). Despite richness, the Zairian economy drifted into deepening misery. Mobutu was nepotistic, corruption blossomed and the informal economy formed, in practice, the only resort for most Zairians. The Mobutuists were advantaged. They discriminated against other ethnic groups and robbed natural resources from the remote provinces. Ethnic prejudices were drastically exacerbated during Mobutu's generation-long rule of "*divide et impera*" (Misser 1996b). Although Zaire, favored by the Western countries, proclaimed capitalism, Mobutu with his dictatorial touch oppressed the political rights of the opposition and built up a centralized regime. Dictatorship and centralism resulted in an aggravating vicious cycle of violence and political crises. The wealthiest provinces, such as Kasai and Katanga (former Shaba) even threatened to detach themselves from Zaire (Braeckman 1997: 136).

The situation changed dramatically in 1996. In the eastern parts of Zaire, an ethnic uprising emerged against the tyrannous Mobutu regime with the help of the Rwandan army. Mobutu had threatened to expel the Banyamulenge Tutsi subpopulation in close proximity to the Rwandan and Burundian borders from Nord- and Sud-Kivu. The Mobutu administration held the Banyamulenge Tutsis for foreigners and refused to acknowledge their rights to land (Misser 1996a: 12; 1997a: 9). The Banyamulenges have inhabited the Kivu region for generations and belong to the same ethnocultural family as the Tutsis in the neighboring countries.

Figure 2. Natural resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The locations of the natural resources are from source **Oxford economic atlas of the world (1972: 40–50).**



The Tutsi-dominated governments of the neighboring countries, Rwanda in the forefront, sent troops into Zaire in assistance of the Banyamulenges to oust Mobutu. Rwanda set the Banyamulenges at strife with Rwandan Hutu refugees on the camps of Goma, Bukavu and Uvira. The Rwandan refugees, who had received support from Mobutu, formed a serious security threat for the Rwandan Tutsi government (Braeckman 1996: 12; Nzongola-Ntalaja 1996). A majority of the 2.4 million Hutus who fled Rwanda amidst of the genocide in 1994 lived on the camps. The Rwandan government was afraid of the armed Hutus to return to the country.

The genocide in Rwanda exploded in April 1994 when the airplane carrying President Juvenal Habyarimana was shot down. The Hutus accounted for 85% of the Rwandan population, but the Tutsi minority was strictly in power. The ruling *Rwanda Patriotic Front's* (RPF) share in Habyarimana's death has been rumored to be decisive (Gombya 2000). Aggressive Hutu extremists, who were called *Interahamwe*, started to ruthlessly massacre Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Bloodbath, which was one of the most intensive wars in history, turned, however, soon to the Tutsis' victory. Approximately 2.4 million Hutus, numerous war criminals among them, fled to neighboring Zaire and some to Burundi, Uganda and Tanzania.

The politico-military uprising of the Banyamulenges, supported and armed by Rwanda, quickly grew into a nationwide movement. The rally was baptized as the *Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire* (ADFL) led by Marxist-inspired, anti-Mobutuist former guerrilla chief Laurent Désiré Kabila. Kabila himself originated from the Luba of the Bantus. Masses of enthusiastic supporters across ethnic and ideological boundaries as well as Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers joined ADFL (Misser 1997b: 11). Mobutu's troops surrendered without firing a bullet and part of them joined the victorious march. Kabila overthrew Mobutu in May 1997 and assumed Presidency. He renamed the country as the Democratic Republic of Congo and returned the former colonial names on the map.

Hope for peace died soon. Kabila was confronted by the international community because he did not allow the United Nations to investigate the human rights violations in the country. The UN refugee organization UNHCR (*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*) had also difficulties with assisting the Hutu refugees (UNHCR 1997). A common Congolese man was disappointed at the new Head of State. Kabila continued the build up the dictatorship from Mobutu's remains. Political opposition was still unwelcome; neither gave the economy any positive signals.

3. WAR IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

In early 1998, in Kivu, in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the situation became tense again. Kabila received messages from the field that his former allies, Rwanda, Uganda and the Banyamulenges, were after Tutsi domination. Both the Rwandan and Ugandan military forces had stayed in the country albeit Mobutu was already overthrown. The Banyamulenges who had helped Kabila to assume power during 1996–97 now abandoned him. A new uprising emerged, constituted by the Tutsis, soldiers of the former Mobutu army, dissatisfied politicians, even Kabila's own ministers, and troops from Rwanda and Uganda. The anti-Kabila rebel movement was first named as the *Congolese Democratic Coalition* (CDC) formally headed by Congolese history professor Ernest Wamba dia Wamba living in exile in Tanzania (CDM 1998a). The movement's military leaders used, however, the real power. Later, the Coalition was retitled as the *Congolese Democracy Movement* (CDM) (CDM 1998b) and particularly the *Congolese Rally for Democracy* (CRD).

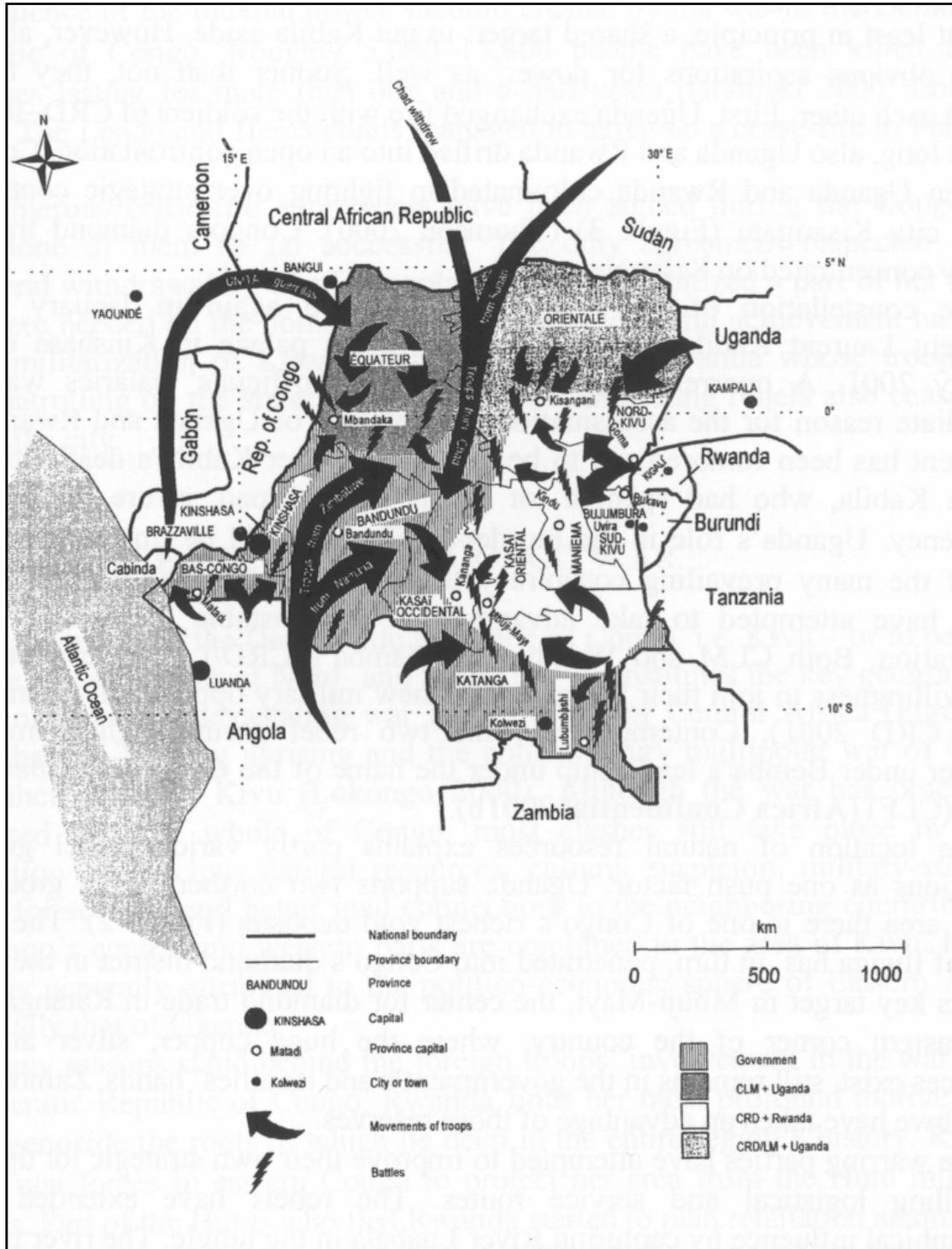
CRD never succeeded in winning the local population's trust (Ludden, 1998). The movement raised more fear than enthusiasm among the civilian population. CRD's advancement was sluggish especially due to military resistance by Kabila's foreign allies. Rwanda and Uganda backed CRD in the east, possibly together with Burundi (Blunt 2001; Phythian 1998b). Antigovernment UNITA rebels from Angola were reported to combat both in the rebel army and as individual fighters against Kabila in southwestern and northwestern Congo (Figure 3) (Phythian 1998a).

Kabila's army was, in turn, allied with Angolan, Zimbabwean, Namibian, Chadian and possibly also with Sudanese soldiers as well as with Rwandan Hutu extremists. Sudan's share has probably been the most insignificant. Chad, in turn, withdrew from the Congo war after nine months of fighting in May 1999.

The war in the Democratic Republic of Congo turned into a more dramatic direction at the turn of 1998/99. CRD of Wamba dia Wamba got a rival: the *Congolese Liberation Movement* (CLM) that had gained rapid success in Orientale and Équateur provinces (Figure 3). CLM was formally run by rich businessman Jean-Pierre Bemba. At the onset of the war, Uganda and Rwanda supported jointly CRD. CLM, notwithstanding, gained quickly strength at the expense of the authoritarian and violent CRD. Uganda decided to turn her support to CLM in the north.

The rebel situation became even more complicated in the spring of 1999. CRD's puppet leader Ernest Wamba dia Wamba was ousted and replaced by Bizima Karaha who had managed the Rally's external relations. Nonetheless, the movement's former leader decided not to resign. Wamba dia Wamba gathered his remaining loyal men from CRD and continued to head his own fraction of the coalition. Rwanda approved of Karaha as the new leader who, however, left his seat for long-term political activist Emile Ilunga. Uganda, in turn, decided to

Figure 3. *The war profile of the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1998–2000.* Figure's movements of troops and controlled areas have been drawn on the basis of various news services' supply. The key sources have been **ABCNews.com**, **Helsingin Sanomat** and **Yahoo! News**. Due to the impossibility of assessing the precise war dynamics as served by the news, Figure may contain errors.



cooperate with Wamba dia Wamba. (Kayigamba, 1999.) Currently, his torso is called the *Congolese Rally for Democracy/Liberation Movement* (CRD/LM). Thus, three distinct guerrilla groups are in the active search of ousting Kabila in emocratic Republic of Congo. Rwanda supports CRD of Ilunga whereas Uganda's protégés are CLM of Bemba and the CRD/LM fraction of Wamba dia Wamba.

In the beginning, these three rebel armies were “merely” rival revolutionaries with, at least in principle, a shared target: to put Kabila aside. However, all they shared obvious aspirations for power, as well. Sooner than not, they turned against each other. First, Uganda exchanged fire with the soldiers of CRD–Ilunga. Before long, also Uganda and Rwanda drifted into an open confrontation. Conflict between Uganda and Rwanda culminated in fighting over strategic control of jungle city Kisangani (Figure 3) (Thomson 2000). Congo's diamond trade is heavily concentrated on Kisangani.

The constellation of the Congo war changed again in January 2001. President Laurent Kabila was assassinated in his palace in Kinshasa on 16 January 2001. A quarrel over the Congo army officials' salaries was the immediate reason for the assassination, but the role of Uganda and Rwanda in the event has been rumored not to be negligible. After Kabila's death, his son Joseph Kabila, who had spent a lot of his time abroad, swore the oath of Presidency. Uganda's role in the murder of Kabila could be imaginable — as one of the many prevailing conspiracy theories — since the Uganda-backed rebels have attempted to take advantage of the unstable situation through cooperation. Both CLM and Wamba dia Wamba's CRD/LM have expressed their willingness to join their forces into a “new military opposition” (Campbell 2001; CRD 2001). Contemporarily, the two rebel groups fight nominally together under Bemba's leadership under the name of the *Congolese Liberation Front* (CLF) (**Africa Confidential** 2001b).

The location of natural resources explains partly various rebel groups' aspirations as one push factor. Uganda supports two northern rebel groups in whose area there is one of Congo's richest gold deposits (Figure 2). The CRD wing of Ilunga has, in turn, penetrated into Congo's diamond district in the south with its key target in Mbuji-Mayi, the center for diamond trade in Katanga. The southeastern corner of the country, where the huge copper, silver and tin resources exist, still remains in the government's and its allies' hands. Zambia and Zimbabwe have taken an advantage of those reserves.

The warring parties have attempted to improve their own strategic lot through controlling logistical and service routes. The rebels have extended their geographical influence by capturing River Luabala in the jungle. The river port of Kisangani plays also an important role here. River Congo, confluent with its largest tributaries Luabala and Ubangi, is predominantly under the government's control. Kabila's forces and the rebels were also fighting fiercely over the strategically important hydropower station of Inga, which produces energy for i.a.

the capital Kinshasa, at the dawn of the war. The power station remained in Kabila's control.

Bloody clashes have been witnessed also outside the actual theater of war. In the northeastern section of Congo, close to the Ugandan border, the Lendus and the Hemas have been clashing over fertile land since June 1999. The Lendus demand the Hema tea and coffee plantations. Partly, this conflict is also a consequence of the internal power vacuum created by the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Roughly 5,000–11,000 people have been killed in the atrocities lasting for more than one and a half years (Hranjski 2000; Lokongo 2000). The Lendu and Hema chiefs managed to agree on a cease-fire in February 2001.

Numerous cease-fire agreements have been signed during the Congo war with none of them so far successful. The only agreement respected is the unilateral withdrawal by Chad. Angola has also demobilized a part of her troops that were needed on the home front. The latest successful achievement has been the demilitarization of Kisangani by Uganda and Rwanda whose troops had been patrolling on the streets of the city. The conflicting rebels also ceased the fire in the city.

3.1 KIVU: THE FOCUS OF THE CONGO WAR

The eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, i.e. Kivu – or to be more precise, the provinces of Nord- and Sud-Kivu – constitutes the key geographical focus of the most devastating war in the whole of Central Africa (Figure 3). Both the anti-Mobutu uprising and the contemporary multipolar war of Congo have their roots in Kivu (Lokongo 2000). Although the war has practically escalated into the whole of Congo, most clashes still take place in Kivu. Attraction by precious natural resources, cultural suspicion, military-strategic needs for security and better road connections to the neighboring countries than to Congo's central and western parts are combined in the area of Kivu. Hence, Kivu is generally attributed to the politico-economic sphere of Eastern Africa, especially that of Uganda.

Many reasons stand behind the foreign troops' involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Rwanda finds her most profound motive in the 1994 genocide the roots of which lie deep in the entire region's history. Rwanda sent Tutsi forces in eastern Congo to protect her area from the Hutu militants' attacks. Part of the Hutus who fled Rwanda started to plan retaliation against their former home country. Nor could the local Tutsi subpopulation live undisturbed either. The new Tutsi government of Rwanda wanted to destroy the Hutus in eastern Congo for which Kabila and the Banyamulenges offered a usable means. Kabila's stand toward the Banyamulenge–Rwandan-Tutsi collaboration was, however, suspicious. Hence, he expelled them both from the country. Rwanda felt her security threatened and sent troops in Congo to protect her strategic interests

of security. Rwanda also accused Kabila of offering military training and arms for the Hutus. In reciprocity, the Rwandan Hutu extremists have been reported to fight in line with Kabila.

Uganda has a similar security problem to that of Rwanda: a Ugandan rebel movement, the *Allied Democratic Forces* (ADF), has been active against Uganda from the territory belonging to Congo. Uganda seeks to destroy the ADF bases beyond the border. The Congo war offers Uganda a feasible opportunity to control areas beyond her own national borders in the name of security. Both Rwanda and Uganda find, thus, security an important pull factor.

Uganda has traditionally constituted the power center in Central Africa. In addition to Kivu's cultural and geographical bonds with Uganda, President Yoweri Museveni has occasionally used strong words to protect Uganda's influence in the region. Collaboration between the two Ugandan-backed rebel armies in Congo adds to the Ugandan political leadership's aspiration for restoring the country's geopolitical influence in the Great Lakes region.

Burundi's ethnic pattern is similar to that of Rwanda. Political and economic inequality between the Tutsis and Hutus is prevalent also in Burundi. Genocide, which was carried out within a good month in Rwanda, continues already for several years in Burundi. The Burundian war escalated in 1993 when a group of Tutsi soldiers assassinated the country's Hutu Prime Minister, Melchior Ndadaye. More fuel was thrown in the fire next year when President Cyprien Ntaryamira died in the same airplane as the President of Rwanda (Gombya, 2000). The two rebel groups of the Hutus, the *National Liberation Front* (NLF) and the *Forces for the Defense of the Democracy* (FDD), have been fighting underground against Burundi's Tutsi-dominated regime ever since (Fisher 2000). Albeit Burundi has managed to avoid a complete breakdown, the death toll amounts to some 200,000 already. Burundi's possible involvement in the Congo war, notwithstanding, remains unclear (see e.g. Blunt 2001; Phythian 1998b asserting that Burundi supports Kabila militarily).

The intervention by these two or three eastern neighbors can also be partly explained by the natural resources in eastern Congo. The provinces of Orientale, Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu and Maniema have rich gold, manganese, tungsten and tin deposits in the ground (Figure 2) acting as pull factors to the crisis. In conflict circumstances, an opportunistic neighbor can well take the advantage of the chaotic situation and attempt to smuggle resources across the border. An illuminating fact is that the capital of Rwanda, Kigali, houses a company that exports diamonds to the West although Rwanda produces no diamonds at all. The other countries are facing similar accusations, as well: gold is constantly being exported to Uganda, and even Zambia that has officially not intervened in the war accumulates her copper supplies from mines in southeastern Katanga (Misser 1999: 32; Vesely 1997: 13).

The fresh President Joseph Kabila of Congo has opened his term of office with energetic peace negotiations. The warring parties have actually signed a cease-fire agreement. The key question remains, however, about the cease-fire conditions for the parties involved. The neighbors' security gaps or lucrative

robbery of Congo's natural resources will not vanish solely thanks to an agreement paper. Furthermore, Uganda controls the whole of northern Congo either alone or with the help of the rebel movements. Uganda will withdraw only on the condition that the SADC countries allied with Kabila will withdraw from the country, as well. As long as the external warring parties do not achieve unanimity on how to end the Congo war, hope for peace remains thin.

3.2 REGIONAL GEOPOLITICAL HEGEMONY

War in the Democratic Republic of Congo bears significant connections with the larger geopolitical sphere of Eastern and Southern Africa. Economic and military political factors tear wealthy Kivu in the two directions of east and south. In terms of road connections and cultural inheritance, Kivu forms an integral part of Eastern Africa, but Southern African leaders are also allured by natural resources and the province's strategically important location.

Zimbabwe and Namibia of the warring countries belong to the *Southern Africa Development Community* (SADC). When the war broke out, the Democratic Republic of Congo has just entered SADC. In July 1997, SADC made a decision to support Kabila's administration against the coup d'etat by the Rwandan and Ugandan armies and the Congolese rebel groups (Niinivaara 2000: C1). Congo's eastern neighbors found this extremely unsatisfactory fearing SADC's increased military presence in Central and Eastern Africa. Particularly Uganda, which has used strong political power in the Great Lakes region, was concerned of Congo's drifting into the Southern African influence.

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe was a friend to and loyal ally with late Kabila. Personal relationships were actually an important push factor. Congo also owes Zimbabwe hundreds of millions of dollars (Misser & Rake 1998: 14). Zimbabwe was anxious to secure her assets by controlling Congo's southern natural richness, which constitutes a pull factor to the war. The Congolese political elite had, in effect, promised mining licenses for Zimbabwean corporations in exchange of military assistance.

Zimbabwe's own society was also on the edge of chaos. The economy had been shrinking for several years, political opposition faces constant suppression and the people's patience is under severe pressure (**New African** 1999: 19). Recent land ownership controversy added up to Mugabe's personal burden both at home and abroad. Mugabe assessed that a military expedition would have been an excellent means to turn the populace's attention away from Zimbabwe's own accumulated economic and political problems. As an indication, Mugabe estimated the Congo war short-term with far less significant economic sacrifices than it actually demanded. Misery is, hence, a powerful push factor. Contrary to Mugabe's predictions, the war was unpopular in Zimbabwe since the outset.

Mugabe is also eager to enhance Zimbabwe's political weight to parallel with the Republic of South Africa. South Africa, which is the economic

superpower in the Southern African setting, gained international glory thanks to her former President Nelson Mandela. When the SADC meeting made the decision to intervene militarily in the Congo war in the absence of South Africa, Zimbabwe saw an opportunity to raise her geopolitical influence in Southern Africa.

Namibia also used to support politically Kabila. Namibia sent troops into the Democratic Republic of Congo slightly after Angola and Zimbabwe. Outside the SADC cooperation, however, Namibia's interests are far less visible than the others'. The country faces no security problem whatsoever due to the Congo war — in effect; Namibia and Congo do not even share a common border. The only security concern is the fact that UNITA's battles have occasionally been extended from Angola onto the Namibian ground. Not even ethnicity seems to an appropriate starting point. The serious explanations are, hence, friendship and alliance between Kabila and President Sam Nujoma of Namibia, and the new deal of Congo's immense natural resources. The Namibian involvement can, therefore, be explained by both push and pull factors.

3.3 THE WESTERN CONNECTION

Angola dispatched tanks to support Kabila on the western front as early as at the onset of the war. UNITA (*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*) rebel movement, which is fighting a paralyzing civil war against the Angolan government for already the third decade, has had military bases in northern Angola and Bas-Congo (Kunene 1997: 10; Vesely 1997: 12–13). Mobutu allowed, in his time, the presence of UNITA in the area of then-Zaire. Despite Kabila's official prohibition of UNITA to settle within the Congo borders, controlling proved too demanding for the country itself in crisis.

Both the governing MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*) and UNITA finance the Angolan civil war by selling the country's raw materials. The Angolan government receives funding from oil drilled in the Atlantic Ocean, far away from the war zones. Oil production has continued undisturbed. UNITA has, in turn, penetrated into Angola's diamond areas from where it smuggles diamonds abroad and imports arms to Angola. The Angolan government is anxious to intervene in this chain. By backing Kabila, the Angolan government endeavors to ruin UNITA's guerrilla activities. Angola has, in turn, received diamonds from Katanga of Congo as a payment of military services (Vesely 1997: 13). Some UNITA fragments were initially combating with CRD and the Rwandans for the control of the Inga hydropower station in Bas-Congo, but they had to withdraw. After the internal dissolution of the rebel Coalition, UNITA's support was directed rather to CLM in northern Congo (Mutond 1999).

Angola's vital oil drilling area, Cabinda, is an exclave from Angola, on the northwestern side of Bas-Congo, on the Atlantic coast. UNITA or Cabinda's possible own separatist aspirations could easily disrupt the Angolan connection to

oil and devastate the country's already ailing economy (Misser & Rake 1997: 12). This strategic threat may have also pushed the Angolan government to enter her neighbor's internal war. Both the Angolan government's and UNITA's activities can, hence, be explained by natural resources and security pull factors.

4. THE WAR IN SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone became independent in 1961 from the rule of Great Britain. The fresh years of independence were filled with great hopes in this small West African nation. Enthusiasm was crystallized in smooth infrastructural development and construction of schools and clinics. The 1967 elections, however, ruined promising progress. After the failed elections, a military regime was established in the country. Democracy and dictatorship have been playing a fierce tug-of-war ever since.

The Sierra Leonean economy has experienced a steep downslide as of the 1980s. Mounting external debt, accelerated inflation, continuous depreciation of the currency, yawning budget deficits, widespread corruption and ailing foreign trade resulted in stubborn energy and food crises. Serious unemployment drove young men to Freetown's dilapidated shantytowns and diamond mines in the countryside. (Pratt 1999.) Societal decay created fertile soil for the radicalization of the marginalized people.

Noteworthy is also ethnic bifurcation in Sierra Leone. The northern and western ethnic group, Temne, and the southern and eastern population, Mende, are occasionally thought of as constituting a bipolar ethnic division in multicultural Sierra Leone. This has indeed been relatively clearly manifested in the few elections organized in the country. (Bangura 2000.) Nevertheless, as widely recognized as the bifurcated voting pattern, RUF has not really received any support from its occupied areas or from any ethnic entity either.

4.1 THE CONTEMPORARY MASSACRE IN SIERRA LEONE

The civil war broke out in 1991 in Sierra Leone. In that time, the *Revolutionary United Front* (RUF) rebel movement and former army soldiers invaded the eastern border village of Bomaru from Liberia. Formally, the Front took up arms to combat the country's corrupted government and insisted on multiparty democracy. The years to come were filled with chaos and misery; during the past ten years, Sierra Leone has had eight different governments and five heads of state.

President of that time Joseph Momoh had to step aside in 1992. Captain Valentine Strassner, who overthrew Momoh, ruled for nearly four years. In the 1996 palace coup, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, in turn, endorsed power to the winner of the rapidly organized elections, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. The elections

were held for “relatively free and fair” despite multiple riggings. For instance, ghost voting proved prominent in the war-torn southern and eastern parts of the country. Both in the parliamentary and presidential elections, voting distinctly reflected ethnic affiliations. (Bangura 2000.)

The *Armed Forces Revolutionary Council* (AFRC) military government, which was formed by the government soldiers, drove Tejan Kabbah in exile jointly with RUF in the next year. Major Johnny Paul Koroma assumed the post of the Head of State. During the RUF/AFRC coadministration, Sierra Leone drifted dramatically close to anarchy. The *Economic Community of the West African States* (ECOWAS) and UN imposed economic sanctions on Sierra Leone in late 1997 that they hoped to draw the warring parties around the same table. The wish remained unmet albeit the country’s GDP nosedived by even 20% in that year. In early 1998, the military division of ECOWAS, called ECOMOG (*ECOWAS Monitoring Group*), intervened in the conflict in the name of restoring peace. The Nigerian-led ECOMOG managed to turn the RUF/AFRC military junta away from the capital Freetown. Ousted President Tejan Kabbah returned to occupy his office.

Peace seemed to be very close. In July 1998, UN dispatched military observers into Sierra Leone to prepare for a cease-fire. The peace agreement, which had raised great hopes —already the third in order —, was finally signed in Lomé, the capital of Togo, in 7 July 1999.

The cease-fire was, nonetheless, broken in spring 2000. The already negotiated peace agreement would have guaranteed four ministerial posts and four deputy ones for RUF and Vice-Presidency for the hated leader of the rebel movement, former army corporal and photographer, Foday Sankoh, responsible solely to the President. Moreover, the agreement paper included a promise not to accuse RUF of any wartime cruelties, which truly upset human rights organizations. (Masland & Bartholet 2000.) This was not, however, enough for Sankoh. RUF took up arms again.

The international community supports West-minded President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. The international UNAMSIL (*United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone*) and West African ECOMOG peacekeeping forces are striving together so as to restore peace in devastated Sierra Leone. The peacekeeping troops have, in fact, found themselves in tricky situations every now and then. In May 2000, RUF kept some 500 peacekeepers as hostages for several weeks. In June 2000, in turn, 235 UN soldiers were blocked on the eastern border of Sierra Leone. Particularly the United States and Great Britain of the key Western countries have expressed their sympathy for the contemporary political leadership. Great Britain has even dispatched paratroops in Sierra Leone although their mission has officially read as “evacuation of Western people” (Johnson 2000). At home, the Sierra Leoneans have lost patience with his failure to settle the war with RUF (**Africa Confidential** 2001a).

Tejan Kabbah’s forces have enjoyed military assistance from a former opponent; the 15,000–35,000-strong Kamajor militia group led by Johnny Paul Koroma is actively fighting in Tejan Kabbah’s lines (Pratt 1999). Kamajor,

known also as the *Civil Defense Force* (CDF), was first created as a people's militia movement to provide for security in the pressured countryside. Currently, CDF forms an integral part of the institutionalized military force. (Bangura 2000.) CDF is formally headed by deputy minister for defense Samuel Hinga Norman. A good number of independent armed miniarmies are also active in Sierra Leone; however, their contribution to the constellation of the war likely remains negligible. One of the best known could be the *West Side Boys* that kidnapped 11 British soldiers for two weeks in August–September 2000.

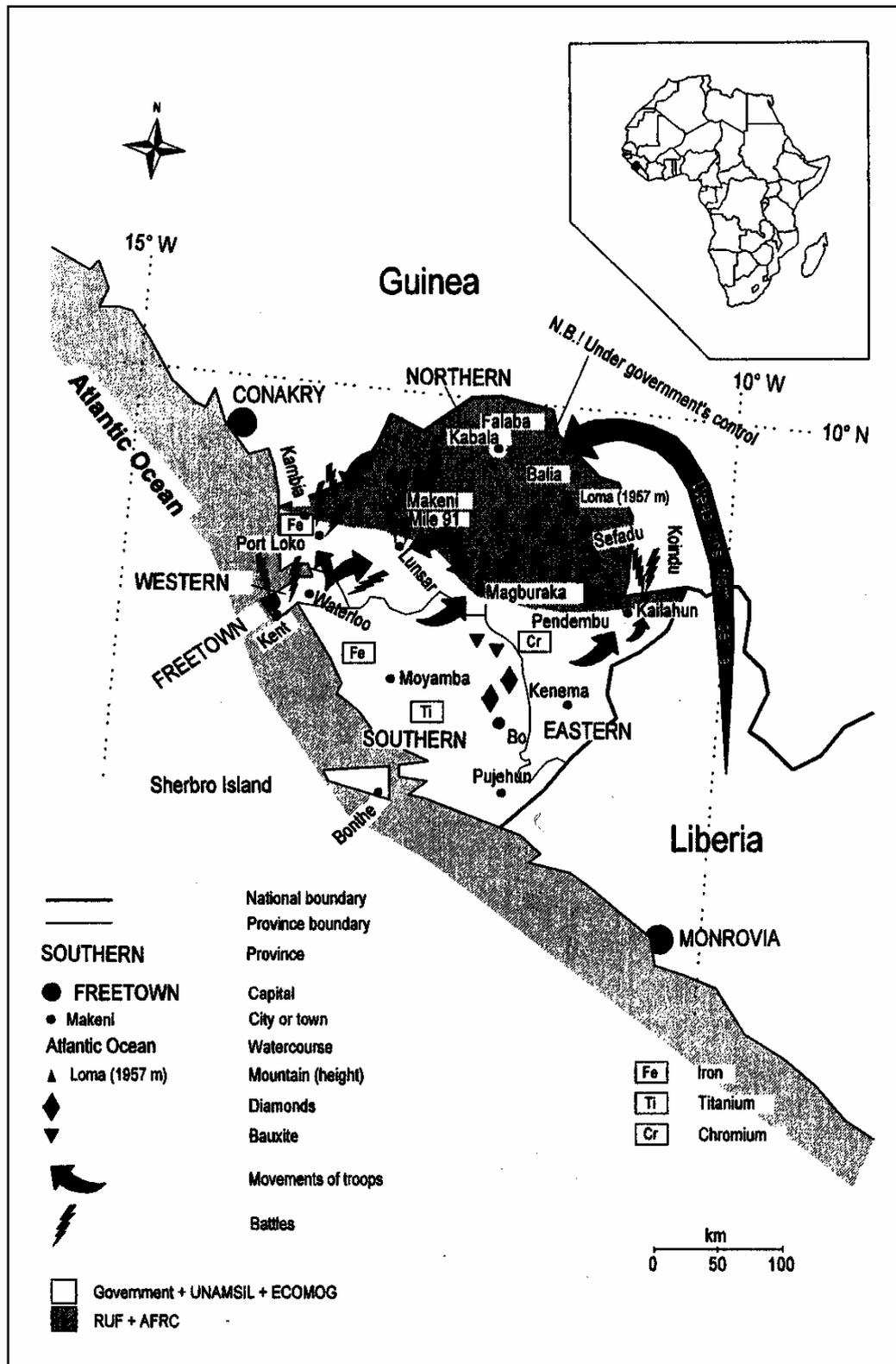
4.2 FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT

RUF controls diamond mines in the northern and eastern parts of Sierra Leone (Figure 4). By the same token, the crucially important center for diamond trade, Koindu, near the eastern border, is rebel held. The southern diamond areas, on the eastern border of Southern province, remain under the Tejan Kabbah rule for the time being. The government has troops also in the north indicating an incomplete spatial stretch by RUF. The key target is the city of Kabala. Various estimates have stated that RUF will by no means give up the country's diamond fortunes since no political, ideological or ethnic controversies seem to explain the rebels' stubborn eagerness to wage war. RUF has managed to export diamonds to the West and, thereby, finance its military adventure with the help of neighboring Liberia. As an indirect but reliable indication, the Liberian diamond exports amount to 40-fold in comparison with Liberia's own diamond production. Liberia has, in turn, delivered arms to Sierra Leone. President Charles Taylor of Liberia, who is a very close friend of Sankoh's, has seen to the continuation of diamond smuggling profitable for Liberia. (Torstevin 2000.)

Sierra Leone's war deviates, nonetheless, from the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo in one crucial respect; in Congo, fighting has remained within the country's national borders whereas the Sierra Leonean battles have escalated also onto the Liberian and Guinean ground. In addition to the RUF–Liberia axis, the Liberian guerrillas campaigning against Taylor's regime have attacked Liberian targets from the Sierra Leonean side (Lederer 2001). As an indication, the recent reoutbreak of Liberia's crisis has its roots in the northwestern section of the country.

Guinea has been recently pulled into this West African nightmare, as well. According to Taylor's accusations, the Liberian antigovernment forces — the *United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia–K* (ULIMO–K) under Alhaji G. V. Kromah's leadership — have marched also to Guinea. The Liberian rebels as well as RUF have been recruiting members among the Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in the camps in southeastern Guinea. The rumored hosting of the ULIMO–K fighters by Guinea has badly upset Taylor. Various

Figure 4. Natural resources in and the war profile of Sierra Leone. The locations of the natural resources are from sources **Oxford economic atlas of the world** (1972: 40–50) and **Oxford regional economic atlas: Africa** (1970: 25–41). Figure's movements of troops and controlled areas have been drawn on the basis of various news services' supply. The key sources have been **Helsingin Sanomat**, **Time.com Europe** and **Yahoo! News**. Due to the impossibility of assessing the precise war dynamics as served by the news, Figure may contain errors.



armed squads of Guinean gunmen opposing President Lansana Conté's administration have also been active in the same area, also on the neighboring Sierra Leonean soil (**Africa Confidential** 2001a). The identities of the Guinean attackers have largely remained unrevealed although an unheard-of rebel movement — *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée* (MFDG) — has occasionally been mentioned. According to the UNHCR report, the atrocities in the southeastern corner of Guinea have triggered the world's worst refugee crisis. (**Africa Confidential** 2001c.) In addition, Guinea's diamond, gold, bauxite and iron deposits in the proximity of the Guinean–Liberian border have attracted multinational rebels as a pull factor. (Vehnämäki 2001.)

Burkina Faso has also been accused of selling weapons to RUF (**Africa Confidential** 2001c; Pratt 1999; Shaw 2000). President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso is considered one of Sankoh's key allies in West Africa. Loyal friendship between Sankoh, Taylor and Compaoré has acted as a push factor in the Sierra Leone war.

Diamonds constitute the stone foundation of Sierra Leone's economy. Simultaneously, this natural richness is a lucrative pull factor for Liberia. The ground hides also other natural resources, but their importance falls far short of that of diamonds. The iron deposits close to the coast, as well as the titan quarry located on the southeastern side of Moyamba and the bauxite and chromium findings in the surroundings of the diamond areas still lie beyond the rebels' hands.

The ten-year war totals 50,000–75,000 deaths and hundreds of thousands of refugees. According to the UNHCR, some 450,000 Sierra Leoneans have left their country for Guinea, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia and Nigeria (UNHCR 2000). In addition, roughly 700,000 people have been forced to leave their homes (Pratt 1999). During the ten years of war, Sierra Leone has degenerated into the lowest human development performer in the world — as long as the living conditions in a war country can reliably be assessed.

The feared RUF has spread terror among the civilian population. Its brutality is well indicative of its characteristic amputation of limbs. Especially, the children have had to bear the heaviest burden of the war. The rebels have not spared even young girls by forcing them as sex slaves, and even eight-year-old boys have been reported armed in rebel lines. The international human rights organizations claim that the absolute majority of human rights violations can be attributed to RUF albeit Tejan Kabbah's forces and the ECOMOG troops cannot be declared totally innocent either (Yuhan 1999).

Despite the fact that all peace negotiations have so far failed, the constellation of the war can change even dramatically any time. Namely, in May 2000, the British paratroops arrested Foday Sankoh. RUF appointed General Issa Sesay as its new commander in August. If RUF wants to have its message heard in national politics, it may be more successful without Sankoh. If RUF is, notwithstanding, more interested in diamond smuggling, Sankoh's arrest and change of commander will probably ring hollow. Ordinary Sierra Leoneans, who feel to be

as little on the government's as, especially, on RUF's side, are truly tired of the ever-lasting war and perpetual fear.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This article offers a model of the dynamics of an internal war. The model is based on various geographical sub-disciplines' views on military crises in developing countries. Hereby, it offers a synthesis of the produce of the geography of war and conflict studies. The model describes several possible push and pull factors of war. It endeavors, by no means, to conclude discussion; rather, it aims at constituting a new footstep for theorizing the dynamics of an internal war. Factors are surely numerous, both at the general level and in specific cases, not having all of them been elaborated here. Some factors can even simultaneously both push and pull countries into war. As the first elaboration of its kind, the model is hoped to paint a general picture on the dynamics of an internal war.

The war in the Democratic Republic of Congo is a multidimensional conflict. The root causes include the internal problems in Congo as well as the neighboring countries' will to expand their spatial sphere of influence. Political and economic hardships, accompanied decades-long inequality, aspirations for power by different political movements, control over vast natural wealth and all-embracing ethnic prejudices count as the most important internal reasons for the outbreak of the Congo war. Enormous societal hardships in the intervening foreign nations, personal relationships, loyalties and regional geopolitical hegemony can be observed as the interfering countries' key push factors. Lack of external security, improvement of strategic status and ownership of natural resources read, in turn, as the foreign participants' pull factors in Congo.

In all its complexity, the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo seems to be nearly impossible to end in the short term. None of the warring parties is able to mobilize such an amount of military power as would be required to win the war. Neither of them is, equally unlikely, able to mobilize such financial resources as would be required to essentially accentuate military power. Firstly, the military-diplomatic tug-of-war between Uganda of Eastern Africa and Zimbabwe of Southern Africa over regional geopolitical hegemony in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa seems to be in the key position to determine the trajectory of the war. If either party desisted from fighting, peace in the region would be much closer. Secondly, the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide is still heavily present both in Rwanda and in Kivu of Congo. As for Rwanda, Congolese peace would presuppose reconciliation between the Rwandan Hutus and Tutsis as well as national integration. In addition, the unscrupulous looting of Congo's natural richness should end. All these options seem very unlikely.

In Sierra Leone, the country's own internal problems have contributed to the escalation of conflict, but ethnicity is seldom represented as the chief reason for

the war. Neither are politics, ideology or the neighboring countries' security gaps among the satisfactory explanations of the Sierra Leonean crisis. Spatially, the southern half of Sierra Leone is more developed than the northern counterpart, but the role of this dichotomy has probably been merely marginal in creating the conflict. It does indeed reflect the country's bipolar ethnic structure in the multicultural society. Nevertheless, the warring parties can very unlikely be equated with ethnic entities. The Sierra Leonean war has, however, spread into neighboring Liberia and Guinea, which enhances the nature of an international war, as well. Especially, RUF seems to be the key actor also in Guinea. The war over Sierra Leone's — and currently Guinea's — diamond assets can, hence, be best characterized by sheer voracity, cooperation between rebel groups and interpresidential loyalties.

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