

Mountain City in the Congo

UVU Presentation

On Mountain Day!

Kabwika, Baraketse and Kabamba

Les Nande en RDC



Map of DRC



Humanitarian consequences of the wars in DRC

From a humanitarian point of view, the Congolese conflict has caused levels of suffering unparalleled in any recent war:

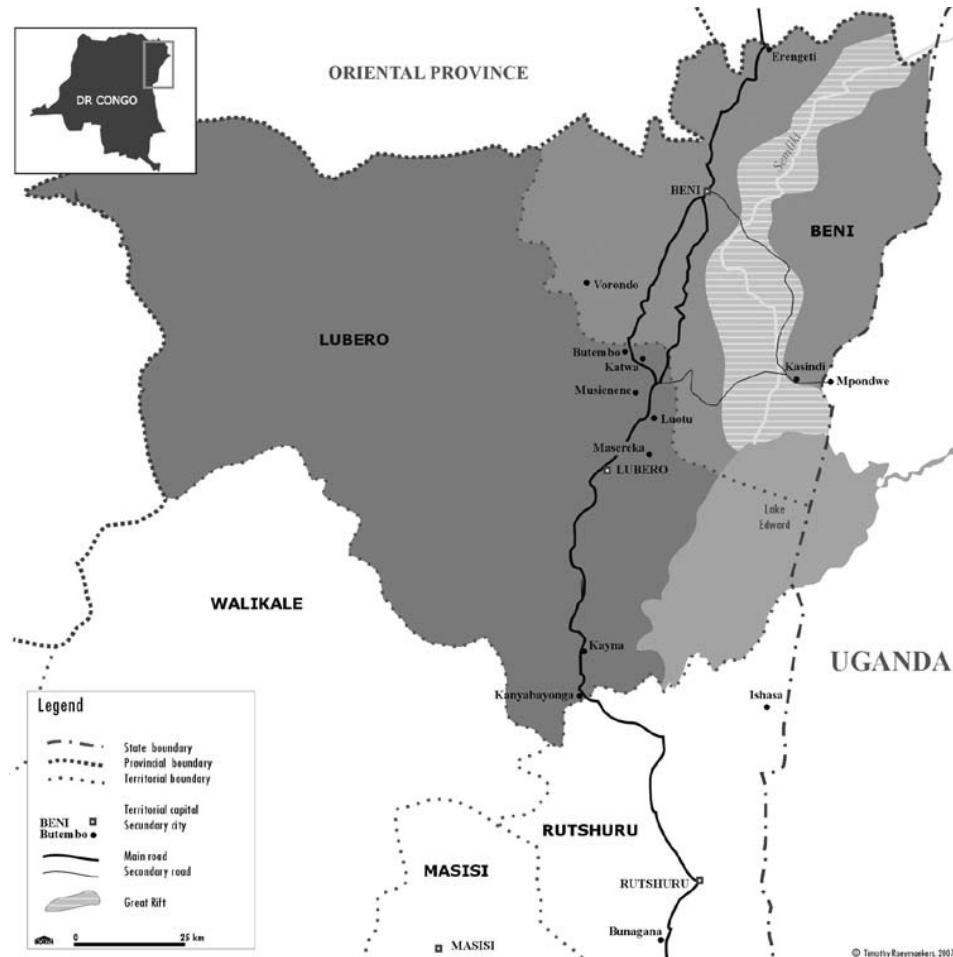
- as of 2006, out of a population of 58 million Congolese, as many as 4 million had died,
- 7 million suffered from malnutrition,
- 3 million were HIV positive,
- at least 40,000 had been victims of sexual violence,
- 2.4 million were internally displaced,
- 880,000 had become refugees, and
- 3 million children were orphans. [Coleman S., 2005)

Fragmentation of the coercive power

From 1998 the country's territory was` controlled by:

- 3 main Congolese rebel groups,
- a dozen Congolese militias,
- rebel groups from Uganda, Burundi and Sudan,
- the Interhamwe, Rwandan militia responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and
- the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)

The map of North Kivu



Research question

- How in the absence of effective state sovereignty and national government and in the presence of numerous armed contenders for power, traders have managed to build and protect self-sustaining, prosperous, transnational economic enterprises in eastern Congo?

Mountain



Mountain Gorilla



Origins and Reproduction of G8

- The G8 includes a dozen import-export traders who are millionaires in US Dollar amounts and who have gradually captured the social and economic surplus within the Nande society

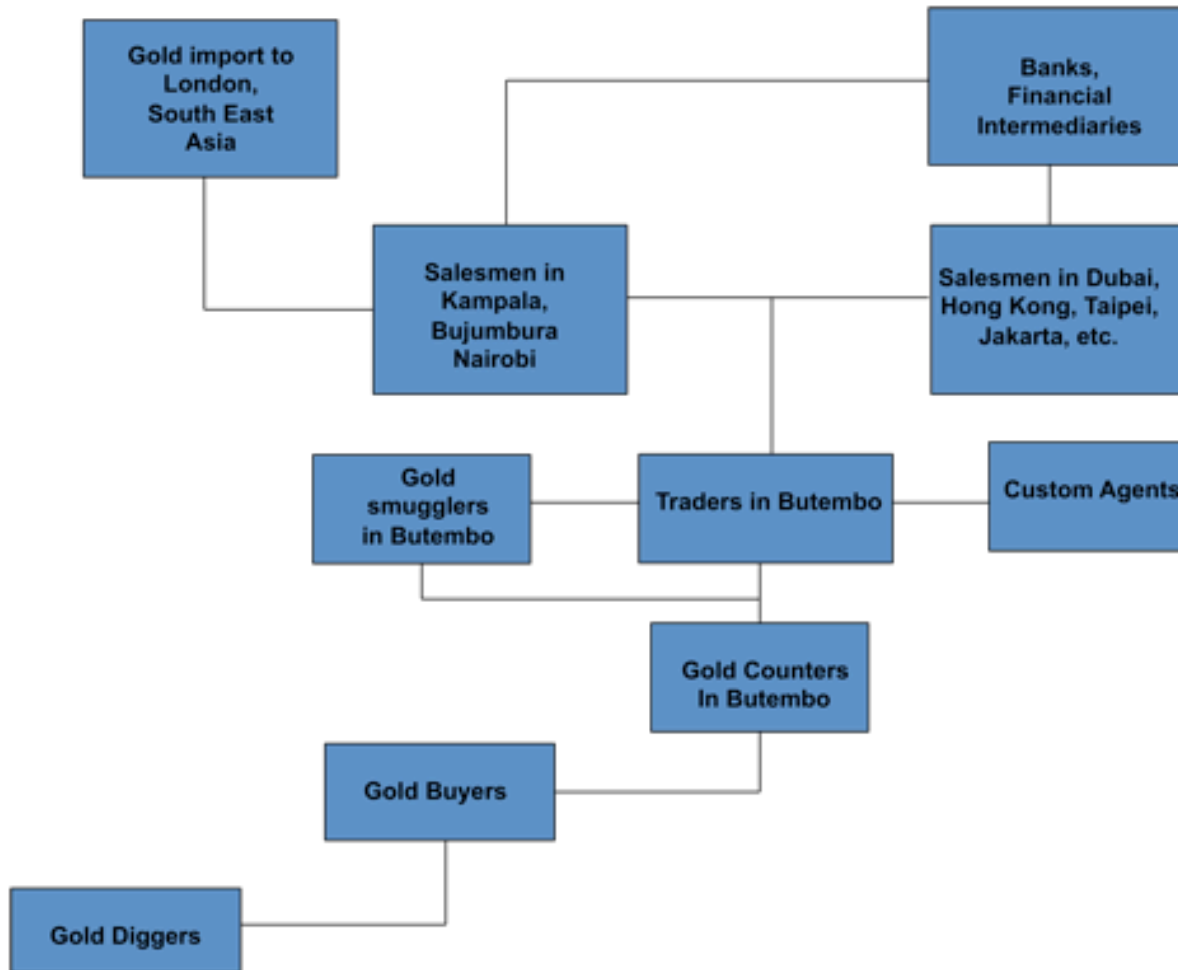
Imports

- They import containers of goods ranging from textiles, motorbikes, and automobiles to spare engines, medicine and other goods from East Africa, the Persian Gulf, Southeast Asia and China.

Exports

- They export agricultural products ranging from coffee, potatoes, and beans to papaya latex and other vegetables, in addition to minerals such as gold, *coltan*, wolfram, and “*cassiterites*”. The group demonstrates a great level of internal cohesion and trust between its members.

Commodity chain of gold



Pre-Colonial Trade

- Butembo already played an important role in the salt trade; at the time, the village called Lusambo, which is now part of Butembo, was a stopover for caravans coming from Katwe on expeditions for salt (Kambalume 1972).
- From the salt trade Nande people learned the dangers and the benefits of long-distance commercial activities including confrontation with dangerous animals and creating friendships through distribution of salt.

Colonial Trade

- In terms of incentives to trading activities, the work ethic taught by Baptist missionaries was very important during the colonial area. Even today Nande traders attribute their success partly to the lessons learned in the Protestant mission.

3 Protestant values

Kamungele, one of the most prominent traders in Butembo today summarized the legacy of the Katwa missionary in three points:

- first, a dedication to hard, honest work (e.g., working hard even when the boss was absent);
- second, a demand not to waste earnings on alcohol and prostitutes; and
- finally, the importance of learning to delay gratification.

Post-colonial traders: Road responsibility

- Today, each of the Nande traders is responsible for 50 kilometers of road to mend. A tollgate is generally organized and the money collected is used to repair and mend the road. When there is a part of the road which is not mended the traders will not hesitate to question their colleague in charge of this road.
- There is a sort of internal control and accountability.
- Nande region is the only one in the country which has good road networks, except in Katanga which is the center of mineral exploitation

Catholic Institutions

- The Catholic University of Butembo, with its three schools of Law, Civil Engineering, and Medicine, has continued to function since its establishment ten years ago by the Roman Catholic bishop of Butembo, Monsignor Kataliko.
- Hospital Matanda

Coercive power of Militia and Traders

- As long as the traders don't try to impose themselves too much on the militias' spheres of brutal extraction in the peripheries of the Nande centre, and
- as long as the militias steer clear of that centre and do not disrupt the Nande capitalists' prosperous sphere of control and stability,
- then there is a correspondence between the traders social and economic power, and the militia's various reigns of terror in a kind of multiplicity of somewhat overlapping and intersecting spaces.

Junior Partners

- Seen economically, the militias then look like junior partners to the trader capitalists who ultimately have real production (not merely trade) as their base of accumulation, and the only economic resource the militias have is the sheer piracy of their arms.

Militia and the Catholic Church

- Many of militias are former choir members and alter boys.
- The bishop is respected by the militias

Traders, the Catholic Church and the militia

- There seem to be a very clear social and political hegemony of the Nande "bourgeoisie," legitimated through the Church officialdom, premised upon not one but several relatively mobile formations of violence that supply the ultimate resources of coercion and thus social order.

Two spaces: dependence and engagement

- Traders try to balance the space of dependence (local space where they produce and invest) and the space of engagement (transnational space where they do transactions outside of some aspects of family impeding structures)

INTER AND INTRA ETHNIC DYNAMICS

- Intra-ethnic relations are very competitive: rat-race!
- Inter-ethnic relations are rather peaceful.
- One is the consequence of the other.

Elites Struggle and Traditional values

- It is fascinating to see ambitious traders, not really yet capitalists in the sense of either Weber or Marx, beginning to forge a vision to turn themselves into producing capitalists.
- the 'natural' elite of the Congo, those created by years of sitting behind desks at formal educational institutions marked largely by the quality of their French, their articulate manipulation of language and their knowledge of selected consumer products for display.
- the chiefs, the 'traditional' who regulated day to day life in rural areas in colonial time and, in other situations in Africa, have made something of a comeback.

In the Territory of Beni-Lubero: Butembo



Picture of a shop in Butembo

