Exiles and Arms: The territorial practices of state making and war diffusion in post-Cold War Africa

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Abstract  
The end of the Cold War resulted in a wave of political change among post-colonial states in Africa. Following these political transformations was nearly two decades of war in central Africa (the so-called ‘Africa's World War’). Building on a notion of effective sovereignty regimes, or the relationships between central state authority and state territoriality, this paper examines the territorial strategies and practices associated with the transitions to multi-party politics that enabled the space/time spread of war in the region. The attempts of existing regimes to create polities capable of returning them to power through elections gave rise to territorial practices focused on supporting exile and refugee groups that actively undermined the sovereignty of neighboring states. These territorial practices, with their roots in the democratization of single-party states, directly contributed to nearly two decades of war and human suffering in the region, while ending the wars required altogether new territorial forms of cooperation between states. This example illustrates the diverse territorial practices of states and extends the idea of sovereignty regimes by showing the implications involved in the attempts to change the forms of effective sovereignty in certain geopolitical contexts.

Keywords: war, Africa, territoriality, sovereignty, democracy, networks, alliances

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Introduction

In mid-November 2012, forces of the rebellious March 23rd Movement (M23) advanced into the city of Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) after months of skirmishes with the DRC’s armed forces. UN peacekeepers stationed in Goma watched as yet another armed uprising played out. DRC representatives claimed foreign sponsorship for M23 and warned of the resumption of a wider war (HOGG, 2012). Under diplomatic pressure from regional governments and the UN, M23’s forces eventually withdrew from Goma and agreed to enter still-ongoing negotiations with the DRC. This recent episode marked the resumption of the well-established pattern of political crises repeated nearly annually in the DRC since the 1994 arrival of around a million refugees and various armed groups in the east following the genocide and civil war in Rwanda. Eighteen years later, the people of the eastern DRC remain victimized by a low-level war seemingly without end and the region remains on the edge of yet another wider conflict; these contemporary everyday experiences can only be understood as a process of territorializaton rooted in an earlier phase of the conflict.

The last two decades of internationalized wars centered on the eastern DRC have been described collectively as the most deadly and destructive armed conflict in the international system since World War II (COGHLAN et al., 2007). However, the processes by which events escalated from a political crisis over control of the Zairian state to a still ongoing series of so-called ‘Congo wars’ (PRUNIER, 2009) remain poorly understood. Although many scholars have a persistent engagement with geographical issues related to the production of political violence (e.g., FLINT, 2005; GREGORY and
the particulars of the DRC’s ongoing political catastrophe have received scant attention.

While the role of resource exploitation in prolonging conflict in so-called ‘weak states’ (RENO, 1998; WATTS, 2004; LE BILLON, 2008) remains an important entry point to understand the duration of some conflicts, resource exploitation remains but part of the story in the DRC. We explore intra- and interstate war in and around the DRC by focusing on efforts to theorize the modern state territorially (KUUS and AGNEW, 2008). We use the intertwined notions of territoriality and sovereignty to consider how post-Cold War demands for democratization from both within and beyond the region, led to subsequent political relations that contributed to the creation, maintenance, and at times, expansion of the conflict. We do this by theorizing security-based cooperative relations between and among states and sub-state groups as a key territorial response to the processes of democratization and one that was deeply implicated in the diffusion of war.

Building on the notion of sovereignty regimes (AGNEW, 2005), we identify security alliances as both a key territorial practice of states and a possible driver of the expansion of the wars described above. Security alliances, or formal security-based cooperative arrangements, have been the subject of consistent focus in the literature on armed conflict for decades as a potential source of war in the international system. However, there remains little consensus on the overall relationship between alliances and war (GIBLER, 2000). Rather than treat security alliances as a direct cause of war or of peace, we argue these relations are a territorialized strategy of state consolidation and, that when considered within a particular historical-geographic context, helped create the conditions that led to a still-ongoing political catastrophe.
To address the question of the role of alliances to the escalation of the Congo wars, we extend the idea of security-based cooperation to actors other than states and examine the patterns of alliance relationships between states and sub-state groups. We argue that these relations are strategies aimed at a reterritorialization of the power of the state related to democratization. Using relational data on the patterns of alliances within the region from 1990 through 2003, we find that while alliances between and among states had little to no role in the initiation or escalation of conflict, alliances between states and sub-state groups may have been a significant driver of war expansion. As these state-to-sub-state relations were part of larger efforts by existing regimes to maintain power during democratic transitions, the process of democratization may have had the side effect of also producing a wider regional war. Additionally, we find that the dominant form of alliance in the region at the beginning of the study is between states and sub-state groups, while at the end of the study it is between states themselves. We interpret this finding as evidence for dynamism in the processes of reterritorialization after the democratic transition was underway and as states attempted to respond to the persistent challenges presented by sub-state groups.

Our analysis shows that sovereignty is produced by the interaction of state and non-state actors through the formation of alliances. Hence state sovereignty is formed by a practice requiring extra-territorial actions. Practices of war and democratization are intertwined in the construction of sovereignty regimes. Furthermore, the forms of interaction, and its contingent outcomes, are exceptionally fluid. In sum, territory and sovereignty are strategies forever in the making, and in the case of central Africa were
manifest in wars that had roots in post-colonial settings and, ironically, a context of democratization.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. First, we present a historical overview of the wars in the region followed by a discussion of the literature on security alliances and the sovereignty-territoriality nexus. We then present the study parameters and methodologies before summarizing our findings. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the shifting patterns of the reterritorialization of state power as part of the process of moving from one type of sovereignty regime to another.

The Congo wars

This paper focuses on the Great Lakes region of central/east Africa, particularly on the conflicts involving the DRC (formerly Zaire; see Figure 1). In mid-1996, the Ugandan and Rwandan governments supported a rebel movement in Zaire that sought to overthrow the Zairian government led by Mobutu Sese Seko. This rebel movement successfully captured the Zairian/Congolese state in 1997. Less than a year later, another externally supported rebel movement emerged and a new war was underway. Within a month of the war’s onset, nine states in the region along with a variety of other armed groups were drawn into a protracted conflict that did not begin to end until mid-2003.

Taken together, the twin wars for control over the DRC are often referred to as the ‘Congo wars’ and placed the DRC as the epicenter of armed conflict in Africa for well over a decade. While unique as an instance of interstate war, the Congo wars also reflected a broader larger regional trend toward intrastate war after the end of the Cold War. As shown in Table 1, several major armed intrastate conflicts took place in the...
region from 1990 through 2003, including civil wars involving nearly all of the states neighboring the DRC. In the last two decades, these series of wars are estimated to have directly and indirectly resulted in between 7 and 8 million deaths and have directly affected the life chances of millions more (COGHLAN et al., 2007; TURNER, 2007).

Figure 1: The DRC and neighboring states during the time period of this study (map by authors).

The recent wars in the region are important for geographic inquiry for three reasons. First, armed conflict has been a semi-persistent feature in the politics of several post-colonial states in Africa (HERBST, 2000). Many of these states share similar features: patronage politics and the use of state authority to enrich rulers and produce
networks of political support (e.g., CLAPHAM, 1993; RENO, 1998), the salience of ethnicity identity to political support or opposition (e.g., BRATTON and VAN DER WALLE, 1997; MOZAFFAR et al., 2003), and the uneven control of territory by ruling regimes within states (e.g., HERBST, 2000; BOONE, 2003). Some commentators have suggested that the regional geopolitical context in which these wars are situated was a critical factor in the expansion of the twin Congo wars into major interstate wars (e.g., PRUNIER, 2009; REYNTJENS, 2009). However, it is the conflicts in the DRC that boiled over into widespread interstate war.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Civil War?</th>
<th>Interstate War?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zaire/DRC</td>
<td>Yes; 1st Congo war; 2nd Congo war</td>
<td>Yes; 1st Congo war; 2nd Congo war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Yes; Angola civil war; War against Cabinda separatists (FLEC); Congo civil war; 1st Congo war; 2nd Congo war</td>
<td>Yes; 1st Congo war; 2nd Congo war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Yes; Burundi civil war; 2nd Congo War</td>
<td>Yes; 2nd Congo War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Yes; Rwanda civil war; 1st Congo war; 2nd Congo war</td>
<td>Yes; 1st Congo war; 2nd Congo war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Yes; Wars against various Ugandan rebel groups; Sudan civil war; 1st Congo war; 2nd Congo war</td>
<td>Yes; 1st Congo war; 2nd Congo war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Yes; Sudan civil wars (South Sudan, Darfur); Uganda conflicts; Ethiopia conflicts; Eritrea conflicts; 2nd Congo war</td>
<td>Yes; 2nd Congo war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>Yes; Central African Republic civil war</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo Republic</td>
<td>Yes; Congo Republic civil war</td>
<td>No</td>
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Table 1: Participation in war (civil or interstate) by DRC and neighboring states, 1990 through 2003.

Second, and related to the first issue, the entire region has been linked to the so-called “third wave” of the diffusion of democracy (HUNTINGTON, 1991). Efforts by a diverse set of agents aimed at political reform within many African states gained
significant traction with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War (LUMUMBA-KASONGO, 1998). As a result, several states in post-colonial Africa began attempts to move from single-party to multi-party political systems. For instance, 31 states in Africa held competitive elections between 1990 and 1994 on the heels of state-wide constitutional and legal reforms (BRATTON, 1995; see also O’LOUGHLIN et al., 1998). The source of such rapid change was at least partially external to the region as donor states and their associated financial institutions, such as the World Bank, threatened to cut off development aid in the absence of political reforms (OLUKOSHI and LAAKSO, 1996; LUMUMBA-KASONGO, 1998).

Third, the processes of democratization in the region are also tied to the interplay of the territorial logics of pre-colonial and post-colonial political practices. For instance, HERBST (2000: 41) argues that pre-colonial political societies in Africa often tolerated a great deal of ambiguity in territorial control as “there were few imperatives to developing [the] zero-sum understanding of demarcating authority” that is present in the territorial logics of European-style states. Pre-colonial territorial practices may have also impacted the willingness of opposition groups go into exile and of states to tolerate their presence as there was a long established history of groups fleeing rulers rather than fighting them for territorial control (HERBST, 2000). The processes of democratization, with the related imperative of representation for all ethnic and other social identities within African states, gave a new role to political groups who had been exiled (e.g., JOSEPH, 1999). Groups that had fled rather than fought received new attention as key players in the practice and discourse of democratization.
Violence related to the politics involved in these transformations emerged in the 1990’s with the wide-spread introduction of multi-party elections and has since persisted. For example, sixty percent of African elections between 1990 and 2008 saw some levels of election-related intimidation and violence (STRAUS, 2012). Without wishing to reinforce the myth of Africa as particularly conflict prone, we also recognize a need for more research into the connection between democratic processes and violence in particular historical-geographic contexts. We also suggest that the processes of violence and democratization cannot be seen as contained or compartmentalized within states, but should be instead seen as a feature of territorial practices both within and across state boundaries.

Taken together, these issues suggest widespread and shared regional contexts that may have contributed to the production of two major interstate wars and dozens of smaller conflicts. However, what investigation there has been into the wars have largely consisted of historical descriptions focused on the contingencies that led up to the wars (e.g. CLARK, 2002a; PRUNIER, 2009; REYNTJENS, 2009). In our view, these early histories have rightly highlighted the importance of the link between the Rwandan genocide and the larger regional wars (1996-1997 and 1998-2003). However, questions remain that require systematic inquiry. The continuation of the Rwandan civil war beyond 1994 by the remnants of the former Hutu government and associated militias was made possible by the now well-documented systematic support of the exiles by the Mobutu regime in Zaire (REYNTJENS, 2009). Why did Mobutu Sese Seko’s government ally with an exiled sub-state group based within Zaire and support them with arms to continue their struggle? Could this political choice have been linked to the
pressures of democratization in the region? Our interpretation of Mobutu’s support for anti-Tutsi forces within Zaire is that it was part of an attempt to create a larger sense of national unity before being forced to implement long-delayed political reforms by scapegoating a minority population (Congolese Tutsi) within an area where the state’s central authority and territorial control were notoriously absent (CLARK, 2002a). Issues of security and democratization may have become intertwined and a partial source of war.

If security-based cooperation between states and sub-state groups were a key territorial response to the pressures of democratization as suggested by this example, a systematic analysis of the patterns of cooperation in the region would advance not just collective knowledge about the role of such relationships in a particular historical/geographic context but also expand our understandings of how political power is reterritorialized to reproduce states in the international system. To address this question, we consider the patterns of cooperation both within the period of democratic reforms (1990–1996) immediately preceding the Congo wars and during the wars themselves (1997–2003). If security alliances were important reterritorializations related to the consolidation of authority by state, we expect there should be relatively little cooperation between states themselves and relatively more support for sub-state groups during the democratization period. Conversely, after the reform process, we expect there would be little incentive for states to continue to cooperate with sub-state groups and we expect to find increasing state-to-state cooperation and decreasing support for sub-state groups.
Security Alliances and Territoriality

Security alliances are cooperative relationships, often formalized, between political actors, usually states, that are grounded in attempts to manage, preserve, or improve their own security (FLINT et al., 2009). Security alliances usually commit participants to take specific actions in the face of an armed conflict involving one of the signatories, including intervening in a conflict, remaining neutral in a conflict, or consulting with other states if conflict occurs (GIBLER and SARKEES, 2004). Although alliances are widely understood as political structures aimed at preventing the initiation of war by signaling a common security preference among a group of states (GIBLER, 2000), alliances have also been linked to the expansion of war as state’s fulfill obligations (SIVERSON and STARR, 1991). Debates about the importance of alliances have also been informed by the constructivist approach (DELANEY, 2005; KUUS and AGNEW, 2008), in which the interests of states are “a highly malleable product of specific historical processes” (WALT, 1998, p. 40). The implication for alliances is that whatever impacts these relations may have will be highly context dependent.

This constructivist turn has created new opportunities to engage important political relations like alliances from a geographic perspective. Territoriality, or the ways in which territory is socially constructed, reconstructed, used, and understood (SACK, DELANEY, 2005; see also KAHLER, 2006), is one such way to interpret the impacts of alliances on conflict. For instance, ELDEN’s (2009) argument that territory is both the condition for and outcome of power relations suggests that the ways in which issues of security are addressed by the state remain part of the story of continual reterritorialization. Alliances may then be a crucial territorial strategy used by states to
manage their security by helping to create a collective understanding of who is (and who is not) a threat to the state. Such understandings may be seen as part of a process of continually recreating a state-based identity for individuals or groups within the state.

Alliances can also be interpreted as a key practice in modifying the sovereignty of the state, or the right of the state to have the final say over political decisions within its territory, from its idealized form. For instance, AGNEW (1994, p. 54) noted that the “territoriality [of the state] has been ‘unbundled’ by all kinds of formal agreements” and that states enter into a variety of agreements that impinge upon, modify, or diminish its claims of sovereignty. The imagined fusion of sovereignty with a delimited areal extent is a now well explored theme in contemporary political geography (e.g., MURPHY, 1996; ELDEN, 2009) but the key point here is that the territoriality of states is dynamic and that the imagined principle of the state as absolutely sovereign over some delimited territory is one seldom found in practice. The difference between the beliefs of sovereignty and the actual practices of sovereignty has been labeled effective sovereignty (MURPHY, 1996). AGNEW (2005) has advanced the notion of sovereignty regimes, or archetypes of the territorial practices of states associated with sovereignty. Based on a two-dimensional framework that simultaneously considers how centralized a state’s authority is and territorialized a state’s activities are, AGNEW argues for four different archetypes; Classic, Imperialist, Globalist, and Integrative. Of interest to this paper are the Classic and Imperialist regimes.¹

Classic states are those with the high levels of centralized authority (‘despotic power’), with “direct territorial control” (AGNEW 2005, p. 445) over all the spaces of the state, and where the activities of the state are completely bounded by the territory of
the state (‘infrastructural power’). In contrast, Imperialist states are those with low levels of centralized authority and where territorial control is incomplete and highly uneven. Imperialist regime states are likely to be highly dependent on local elites within places and, as such, AGNEW (2005, p. 445) describes these states as utilizing a “networked reach over space” rather than direct territorial control. Though AGNEW identifies the important role of external relations of dependency, we further explore the relational geography of imperialist states through an analysis of how states that share a general dependent relationship within the world interact with each other. The Imperialist archetype is exemplified by post-colonial states, highlighting a distinct territorial strategy of state regimes without significant despotic or infrastructural power. The interrogation of the sovereignty regimes is generally applicable to all forms of political-economic relations, and not just AGNEW’s (2005) example of financial relations. By studying conflict we develop an understanding of the complex interaction between what AGNEW (2005: 442) identified as “spaces” and “territory” through the diffusion of war across a number of contiguous Imperialist regimes.

While AGNEW’s (2005) Imperialist concept refers in main to the relations between a colonial state and its former colonies, rescaling the concept to consider relations within states themselves reflects important themes in the African politics literature regarding the territoriality of democratizing post-colonial states. For instance, BOONE (2003) describes the importance of relationships between state authorities and village leaders or other important families in establishing political support for the regime beyond major cities in Senegal. Similarly, PRUNIER (2009) documents how Mobutu’s relations with the so-called ‘Banyamulenge’ ethnic minority in the South Kivu province
served as an important check against the Lumumbaist Simba rebels in the mid-1960s. Both examples demonstrate that relations with local elites or important groups in certain areas of the state are a key way for Imperialist regimes to achieve some type of territorial presence and influence in the absence of direct territorial control.

While this framework is helpful in theorizing the interrelated nature of territorial practices with state sovereignty, it says little about the dynamism of these practices and the implications when ruling regimes and state elites begin to shift from a networked approach to territorial control to more direct territorial control. We analyze the reterritorializations (ELDEN, 2009) involved when an Imperialist regime tries to move to a Classic regime. To consolidate central state authority, Imperialist regimes would have to consolidate control by tending to all spaces within the state; moving from a networked reach over “spaces” to direct territorial control. In the wake of the Cold War, most post-colonial Imperialist regimes in Africa were faced with just such a project – how to open up political participation while simultaneously avoiding the territorial fracture of the state. Although opening up political participation was often framed as necessary for regime survival in the face of the growing internal and external demands for multi-party electoral politics (OLUKOSHI and LAAKSO, 1996), it also involved attempts to reterritorialize the authority of the state into areas previously disregarded or controlled indirectly through networked relations to help produce a shared state-based identity (e.g., WALT, 1998).

We explore the role of alliances in this process of reterritorialization and how demands for democracy led to territorial practices that, in turn, maintained the conflict by considering two issues. First, alliances should be seen as a territorial practice related to
effective sovereignty. For instance, the commitment by one state to aid another in the case of an attack is a clear example of a reterritorialization of sovereignty (ELDEN, 2009) as it reconfirms not just the right of the state to decide how its own territory is used but also the circumstances under which others must defend that right as well. In this way, alliances represent a scalar reterritorialization as these commitments extend the responsibility for the defense of the state beyond its own boundaries and to the territory of other states. More plainly, alliances reshape the spatiality of the state when it comes to the use of force into a new form that extends beyond the state’s territorial boundaries. (e.g. FLINT et al., 2009).

Thinking about alliances as actors in sovereignty regimes also demands considering non-state actors. The Zairian example discussed earlier clearly demonstrates that security-based cooperation is not limited to states working only with other states, but the alliance literature privileges states to such a degree that agreements and cooperation over issues of security between states and non-state entities are not considered as important elements to the initiation or expansion of war. However, efforts to understand the role of sub-state processes and local actors has gone some way toward exposing the intrastate dynamics of war (BUHAUG and GATES, 2002; RALEIGH et al., 2010) while others have highlighted the importance of a variety of actors to the efforts of states during war, such as private contractors (e.g., BRYDEN and CAPARINI, 2006). Our contribution builds on these recognitions and considers sub-state actors within a network of state and non-state alliances relations and to illustrate how states manage threats to their security, real and imagined, through territorial collaborations with many types of actors in addition to other states.
Including non-state actors is critically important to understanding the political crises in the region (e.g., NORDSTROM, 2004). The presence of politically-motivated sub-state groups operating as quasi-opposition parties to single party state control is well-established (e.g., PRUNIER, 2009). Such groups, often armed and opposed to the actions or existence of established state regimes, have also often had sponsorship from other states. Such sponsorships can be seen as a type of alliance between a state and a sub-state group and one that is often territorialized in practice. For example, the use of a state’s territory to provide a for a sub-state group, such as the arrangement between the Sudanese government and the Lord’s Resistance Army in the mid- to late-1990s (DOOM and VLASSENROOT, 1999).

These observations have implications for the systematic study of contemporary war in the region as dozens of sub-state militias and rebel groups played central roles in both Congo wars. For instance, the movements to overthrow the Mobutu regime in the first Congo war and the Laurent Kabila regime in the second Congo war were led by sub-state rebel groups (the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération, or AFDL, and the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie, or RCD, respectively) (PRUNIER, 2009). Further, the presence of these and other sub-state armed groups operating within the territory of Zaire/Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were used as justifications by regional government leaders for participating in the wars at various times, particularly by leaders of Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda (CLARK, 2002b; TURNER, 2007). One simply cannot hope to understand the processes of war in this regional context without also considering sub-state groups. On this basis, we have opened the alliance concept to include sub-state groups.
Relational Data and Analysis

To understand the relational power of state and sub-state actors requires an analytic framework that can accommodate entire sets of relationships without losing the importance of individual relations (HOFF and WARD, 2004). Social network analysis provides such a framework as it simultaneously emphasizes pair-level relations and entire networks of relations between a defined set of actors (WASSERMAN and FAUST, 1994). The possibilities of social network analysis to investigate the processes of conflict have made some recent inroads (e.g., HAMMARSTRÖM and HELDT, 2002; HAFNER-BURTON and MONTGOMERY, 2006; FLINT et al., 2009), but the analytical possibilities have yet to be fully explored (HAFNER-BURTON et al., 2009).

The political geographic environment of conflict can be theorized and empirically expressed as patterns or regularities in networks of relationships among interacting units that provide opportunities or constraints on action. These network patterns can be conceptualized as part of the overall socio-spatial political structure and used to generate information for analysis (e.g., RADIL et al., 2010). This technique is also suited to the operationalization of power as a relational effect (FLINT et al., 2009; HAFNER-BURTON et al., 2009) and facilitates an analytical approach that investigates whether connections between and amongst sub-state and state actors influence the diffusion of war in a regional setting. For these reasons, we have used a social network-based methodology to investigate the role of alliances in the region.

The use of network concepts and techniques is grounded in our theorizations of the importance of security-based relations to the shifting territorial practices of state
regimes in the region. This also reflects a relational ontology that permeates social network analysis and our efforts here: we emphasize relationships between agents as producing observed outcomes rather than seeking explanation in the characteristics of the agents themselves (EMIRBAYER and GOODWIN, 1994). This approach marks our efforts as different from most quantitative research into war diffusion which privileges agent characteristics over relations even when seeking to explain a relational outcome (RADIL et al., forthcoming). Typical examples are the numerous ‘regime type’ variables common to the democratic peace literature that attempt to rate how democratic a given regime is as a partial explanation for war (e.g., RUMMEL, 1997). Rather than focus on agent characteristics, we consider the role of relationships between agents.

This choice is also partly grounded in the practical reality of data on the non-state groups we strove to include in our analysis. While there is a growing recognition of the need to shift the unit of analysis beyond the state for studies of conflict (RALEIGH et al., 2010), little systematic or longitudinal data is available about the characteristics of these groups themselves. By contrast, data on states or on the parties or regimes in control of the state are well developed, including data on alliance relations. Although detailed case studies of some prominent non-state groups in the region and/or their leaders do exist (e.g., BØÅS and DUNN, 2007), in depth knowledge on many of these groups is highly uneven. This state of affairs largely rules out monadic hypotheses which dominate the war literature. In other words, we have opted for a fully relational investigation due to both our theory of the processes involved and the state of the available data. We return to this issue and reflect on its consequences for our findings and future research in our conclusion.
We tracked alliances between a two types of actors (states and sub-state groups) by year beginning in 1990, the year often associated with the beginning of the ‘third wave’ of democratization, and ending in 2003, which is the year that the 2nd Congo war ended through the creation of a transitional government in the DRC that included many of the warring parties. This resulted in 14 years of relational data between an actor set that varied from year to year as states entered the international system, as regimes changed within states, or as sub-state groups were created or disbanded. The range of actors varied from a low of 51 (1990) to a high of 71 (2002). Included in the actor set was the ruling regime or government of 35 different states, many within the region, some outside of it. State regimes were included by focusing first on Zaire/DRC and all nine of the states it shared boundaries with (Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo Republic, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia – see Figure 1). To avoid selection bias on the basis of geographic proximity, we also included an additional 15 state regimes in Africa that either shared boundaries with the nine states neighboring the DRC (second-order neighbors to the DRC, which are Botswana, Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea², Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Libya, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe) or had histories of political interventions within the region (Nigeria and South Africa). Further, we included an additional 10 state regimes from outside the region based on historical patterns of interaction within the region: former colonial powers (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom), Cold War rivals (United States and Soviet Union/Russian Federation), and one with a history of direct military involvement in the region (Cuba). When we refer to ‘state
actors’ throughout our discussion, we are specifically referring to the governments and regimes in control of the state at any given moment in time.

Sub-state groups were included if they were observed through the histories, literatures, and political reports on the region. Beyond a presence in historical literature, the basic criterion for inclusion was a material capacity to engage in armed conflict to achieve a political goal. The types of groups that met this criteria were typically either 1) political parties with an armed wing (such as the CNDD-FDD, a political party (CNDD) with a separate armed militia (FDD) operating in Burundi), 2) revolutionary armies with a political wing (such as the original Rally for Congolese Democracy operating in the DRC), or 3) armies/militias with a clearly articulated political agenda (such as overthrowing a state government) but with no obviously political wing or presence (such as the Lord’s Resistance Army operating in Uganda). A few other kinds of quasi-political entities were included in this study included mutinous armies where the political goals aspired to more than just improved conditions for soldiers (examples include mutinies in the Central African Republic and the Congo Republic) and groups that had previously employed armed force (and had the capability to continue) but had renounced force as a political strategy (such as the FROLINA political party and associated militias in Burundi). See Table 2 for a list of all sub-state actors in this study.

Alliance data were drawn from COW (GIBLER and SARKEES 2004) and the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) data (LEEDS et al., 2002). Each dataset records the presence of formal security-based commitments between states. The COW data only extends through 2000 and ATOP was used to supplement this through 2003. Using this data, we coded the presence or absence (1 or 0) of an alliance between
a given pair of states each year. There is no extant data on security-based cooperation between states and sub-state groups. We developed and coded this data using a series of reports published by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). Since 1986, The EIU has published quarterly reports on the political and economic activity of each country in the world. We surveyed the political section of the reports of the African states in our study and recorded every instance of security-based cooperation between a state and a sub-state group. Examples of cooperation ranged from formal treaties, such as the agreements between the government of the Central African Republic and the leadership of the Mouvement pour la Liberation du Congo rebel group in the DRC to less formalized but persistent patterns of material support for sub-groups by states, such as the support for the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement/Army by the Ugandan government. Over the 14 year time period of the study, the EIU reports generated 1,391 examples of security-based cooperation between the sub-state groups and states included in the study. These data were also supplemented with historical accounts of the conflicts as well as through reports from the United Nations. The presence and absence of cooperation was coded dyadically for each year in the study using a (0,1) coding scheme.

The dyadic coding described above facilitated the use of social network analysis (SNA) methods. In keeping with a relational stand on power (ALLEN 2003) and following efforts in geography to develop a SNA-based framework to investigate issues of territoriality in geography (FLINT et al., 2009; RADIL et al., 2010), SNA methods were used to formalize the dyadic patterns of alliance relations as entire networks for analysis. As is common in SNA, the networks were organized as a series of $n \times n$ matrices, where $n =$ the number of actors in a given year, using the UCINET network
analysis software package (BORGATTI, 2005). This resulted in a single network of alliance relationships for a given year and this set of 14 networks were compared over time using a standardized measure of network density which accommodated the differently sized networks (in terms of numbers of actors).

### Table 2: Sub-state actors included in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary State Operating Within</th>
<th>Group (Years Included)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>Renamo (1990-1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>RPF (1990-1994)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Density is an important network property and one of the principle indicators of the overall structure of a network (SCOTT, 2000). Density reflects the average number of relationships per actor or node in a network. Density is also a measure of the amount of activity or interaction within a given actor set. When standardized, density is also a
property that can be used to compare networks, including how networks may be changing over time. Hence, density is an appropriate measure for our study and allows us to observe how security-based interactions at the level of the entire network may have changed by year over the duration of our study. Density has also figured prominently in network-based approaches to interstate alliance formation (e.g., MAOZ, 2011). For these reasons, we used a standardized density calculation to evaluate cooperation among our actor set. For each year of our study, the density calculation was \( g/n \times (n-1) \), where \( g \) was the total number of relationship links present and \( n \) was the total number of actors in the network. This produced a measure that ranged from 0 to 1, where 0 was the total absence of cooperation among the actors in a given year and 1 was the presence of every possible cooperative relationship.

**Alliance trends: State-to-state alliances**

The overall trends in alliance relations in the period of democratization demonstrate an overall lack of cooperation between states. As shown in Figures 2 and 3, security-based cooperation within the region was infrequent at the beginning of the study and declined over time. There were some examples of intraregional cooperation (e.g., Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi) but most of these ended by 1995 as did examples of cooperation with states outside the region (e.g., Angola and Russia). The standardized measures of network density by year also reveal this decline in cooperation during the initial time period (see Table 3). Network density declined from a high of 0.045 in 1990 to a low of 0.029 in 1995.
Figure 2: Within region state-to-state alliances in 1990 and 2003. Each circle represents a state regime in the study and each line indicates the presence of an alliance relationship (map by authors).

Figure 3: State-to-state and state-to-sub-state alliance network densities from 1990 through 2003.
However, from 1996 to 2003, the patterns changed dramatically. The density measures of cooperation increased every year from 1997 until 2003 when the density measure was 0.220, nearly 10 times as large as in 1996 (see Table 3). In other words, during the reform period, cooperation on issues of security eroded only to dramatically intensify in the later years of the war. The shared regional context of reterritorializing authority within states during democratic reforms resulted in ending what cooperation was present in 1990. However, once reforms were enacted, the new regional context was not democratization but a protracted war. During this period, cooperation reemerged and alliances began to tie states together in a complex web of agreements that also made each at least partially responsible for security within the territory of individual states (see Figures 2 and 3).

*Alliance trends: State-to-Sub-state alliances*

Though the overall trend during democratization was one marked by low levels of cooperation between states in the region, by considering whether states are cooperating with sub-state groups, a new trend was observed. Network density measures of cooperation between state and sub-state groups were higher than those for state-to-state cooperation in every year except 1991 during the democratization period (Table 3). As war emerged in late 1996, cooperation with sub-state groups nearly doubled in 1997 and remained relatively high with density scores from 1998 through 2002 higher than any in the initial time period. Taken in isolation, the high level of cooperation with sub-state groups during the wars partly reflect a territorial strategy of the prosecution of the wars by states. But the high levels of cooperation before the outbreak of war suggest that these
relationships were not just part of how states prosecuted the wars. The relationships were also part of how states prosecuted democratic reforms before the wars began.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State-to-state</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>0.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-to-sub-state</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>0.049</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
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<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State-to-state</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>0.126</td>
<td>0.126</td>
<td>0.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-to-sub-state</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
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Table 3: Network density measures by year (actual alliances/total possible).

Discussion

The empirics of security-based cooperation in the region are clear on three points. First, existing low levels of cooperation between states steadily declined during the process of democratization in the region while states simultaneously cultivated cooperative relationships with sub-state groups. Second, these processes were largely reversed near the end of the wars as states ended their support for sub-state groups and instead entered into cooperative security-based agreements with other states within the region. Lastly, just as the demands for democratization were regional in scope, so to were the processes of cooperation. These finding are interpretable through an understanding of the reterritorialization of state power within states required to meet the challenges of democratization. The shifting patterns of alliances and cooperation were part of a larger task that states were confronted with by the demand for democratic reforms: To move from an Imperialist sovereignty regime to a Classic sovereignty regime.
States in Africa had faced the need to reterritorialize state power before the period of democratization discussed here, notably immediately following independence in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. The conflicts that were present in the region in the early 1990s are interpretable as legacies directly tied to the initial strategies for state-building and control over these newly formed states. The history of the independence of the DRC gives some insight into this process (see PRUNIER, 2009). Multiparty elections were held in the DRC (then still the Belgian Congo) in May 1960 to create a new post-independent government. A government was formed and, after receiving independence from Belgium in June 1960, the political leadership of the new state of the Republic of the Congo found itself confronted with the problem of holding together a vast area of territory and a diverse potential polity with little loyalty to the idea of a single unified state formed from the colonial entity created by Belgium. Within two weeks of formal independence, the new Congolese state began to splinter territorially, often following the geography of ethnicity within the state, with secessions in the Katanga, and later, Kasai provinces. The new state functioned as an Imperialist regime, characterized by a lack of centralized authority and territorial control.

A protracted series of secessions, mutinies, and international interventions ensued which ultimately led to a military takeover and the territorial reunification of the state by force in 1965. Mobutu, with US backing, now had control of the Congolese state and promptly outlawed other political parties as a means of creating a new single polity aimed at overcoming the divisions made manifest since independence. The central strategy in the attempt to move from an Imperialist regime to a Classic regime was to consolidate political authority in a single party. While the specifics of the crises that engulfed the
newly-independent Congolese state were unique in many ways, this response was not. The single-party state became the regional norm as a strategy for state-building and for unifying ethically and culturally diverse polities around the idea of state that paid little regard to the geographies of identities and political control that preceded European control.

Despite this pattern of single party political control, opposition groups persisted across the region. But most opposition groups were compelled to operate either clandestinely or, more often, to adopt an extra-territorial strategy to continue to resist the agendas of the new states by going into exile (leaving the territory of their home state). Examples are plenty, including the movement of tens of thousands of Rwandan Tutsis into exile in Uganda from late 1959 through 1961. The Rwandan exile communities in Uganda immediately engaged in political and military action, which ultimately resulted in the creation of the Rwandan Patriotic Front that invaded Rwanda in October 1990 (PRUNIER, 1995). The efforts to create new identities and loyalties for polities emerging from colonialism underpinned the regional patterns of driving political opposition out of a state’s territory as well as setting the stage for both patterns of cooperation seen in the early part of the study. Largely for reasons of mobility, opposition groups in exile crossed into the territory of a neighboring state. Staying with the example of Rwanda, Tutsi refugees walked to Uganda in the 1950s and 60s and Hutu refugees walked to Zaire in 1994, settling in camps and established towns relatively close to their former state (PRUNIER, 1995). At times, individual leadership of opposition movements found more distant asylum (typically in the territory of the former colonizer), but in large measure the active rank and file of such exiled opposition groups remain quite near the territory of
their former state. Put another way, the process of reterritorializing state power and
authority after independence gave way to a new de facto regional territorial geography
where each new state often hosted exiles that were marginalized by and opposed to the
regimes taking root in their former home states.

This practice may be seen as a classic interpretation of the state as the spatial
extent of sovereignty if one only considers the expelling state but is more complicated by
also considering the receiving state. The typical practice by a receiving state became to
offer not just a territorial base for such exiled opposition but other kinds of active
support, such as access to arms, diplomatic recognition, or passports for travel. Again,
there is no shortage of regional examples of active support by a state for the exiled restive
groups from other states, including Cameroon’s support for the Chadian National
Committee for Recovery group, Sudan’s support for the Chadian Patriotic Salvation
Movement or the Ugandan Lord’s Resistance Army, Ethiopia’s support for the Sudanese
National Democratic Alliance, Uganda’s support for the Rwandan RPF, Tanzania’s
support for the Burundian National Council for the Defense of Democracy–Forces for the
Defense of Democracy, Zaire’s support for the Ugandan Allied Defense Forces and the
Angolan National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Such support
was often seen as the most prudent way to remove exiled populations and/or to redirect
the potential for similar political activity within the state.

Under such practices, a territorial paradox took shape, where only by actively
destabilizing the governments of home states could the receiving states hope to create
conditions suitable for exiles to return. This was also a form of cooperation that, much
like an alliance with another state, unbundled sovereignty territorially. States that entered
into these forms of cooperation with exile sub-state groups ceded some say on political issues within their territory, such as in refugee camps or other areas dominated by exile populations. The classic example here is found in the Rwandan refugee camps in eastern Zaire in late 1994 and 1995, where Mobutu’s regime had little say over the activities by the Rwandan Hutu exiles (REYNTJENS, 2009). The territoriality of the Mobutist Zairian state had decayed back into an Imperialist regime, with little direct territorial control and highly dependent of the cooperation of local elites and authorities. To reclaim the territorial authority of the state, Mobutu chose to actively support the exiles, using their political agenda to create a shared sense of threat from Tutsis both within and beyond Zaire (PRUNIER, 2009). Despite the persistence of exile groups within the region, the spatial imagination of ruling parties seemed to be that such territorial compromises were only temporary and that full sovereignty would be restored once conditions were put in place in neighboring states that would allow the exiles to return. Although nearly all states in the region were stuck in Imperialist territorial-sovereignty regimes, they all continued to harbor ambitions for the Classic regime ideal. The quickest way to achieve that ideal was to undermine the sovereignty of neighboring states to create the conditions that would enable exiles to return their ‘home’ territory. In the previous example, this meant that Zairian/Congolese policy toward Rwandan refugees after 1994 was to creating conditions to would allow them to return to Rwanda – i.e., to destabilize the new Rwandan regime. Indeed the persistent pattern of cooperation and support by Mobutu and both Kabilas for Rwandan opposition groups (PRUNIER, 2009) clearly fits this paradoxical territorial principle.
Although this territorial practice of cooperation with sub-state groups predated 1990, it also flourished as the Cold War receded. In 1990, the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union immediately put pressure on states in the region to dismantle one-party regimes and to embrace multi-party politics. States were faced with the territorial conundrum of resisting multiparty politics at home but supporting them for their neighbors as a policy to return exiles. The pressure came not just from the exiled opposition parties and states themselves, but from also from western donor states who threatened to cut off development aid in the absence of political reform. Territoriality was connected to the process of democratic reforms to satisfy donor demands (GIBBON et al., 1992; BRATTON, 1995; OLUKOSHI and LAAKSO, 1996).

This regional pattern of support for sub-state groups was also critically important to the production of interstate war in the region as the patterns of support for exiled groups by a host state had the side effect of creating persistent patterns of rivalries between states. For example, Zairian territorial support for anti-Ugandan Alliance of Democratic Forces movement was used as a direct justification for the invasion of Zaire by Ugandan forces in 1996 by the Museveni government (REYNTJENS, 2009). States intensified their territorial support for and cooperation with sub-state groups as the pressure for multiparty politics grew after 1990. The often-stalled ambitions to create Classic regime states became amplified under the looming prospect of competitive elections. The reterritorialization of political power became a zero-sum issue where full sovereignty was necessary for parties in power to remain in charge after competitive elections. Accordingly, the hostility between regimes in the region grew as well, a prime driver for the interstate wars that followed.
The increased state-to-state cooperation beginning in 1998 cooperation reflects part of the peace process in the region as states began to commit themselves to non-aggression, first through a series of temporary cease-fires, then through treaties that strove to permanently end the wars. However, this process of unbundling and reterritorializing security obligations beyond the territory of a given state only took place once the regional democratic reform process was well established and underway. For instance, of the nine states surrounding the DRC, all but Rwanda had multiparty elections by 1995. These regional transitions were delayed by the events of the civil wars in the DRC, Rwanda, Angola, and Burundi, but were largely entrenched policies in all states in the region by the start of the peace negotiations in 1999. State authority had been reterritorialized to the extent that sub-state groups were no longer seen as useful. Instead they were understood as dangers to the newly transitioned states, to be either abolished or incorporated into state multiparty politics.

This shifting understanding can be seen in the peace treaties that emerged in the late 1990s as states committed to ending their long-standing support for opposition groups. This pattern is found in all the new alliances during this time period, including the 1998 treaty between the DRC, Angola, and the Congo Republic that aims to decrease support for UNITA, the 1999 Lusaka accords that aims to end the 2nd Congo War and that commit all parties to end support for sub-state groups, and the 2002 Pretoria agreement between the DRC and Rwanda that calls for both states to end support for the other’s opposition groups. These treaties recast and reterritorialized security as a regional issue to be managed jointly by states but saw no further role for sub-state groups once the process of regional democratization was well underway.
None of this is to claim that democracy itself directly led to war in this particular context or that democratic states are intrinsically war prone. But the demands for political reform within the region at the end of the Cold War represented a challenge to create a sharper sense of state-based identity and for the state to become territorially visible again where it had long been absent. The response to the challenge of political reform was what really mattered and part of that response included using relationships with sub-state groups to consolidate the power and authority of the state and move from an Imperialist territorial-sovereignty archetype toward a Classic archetype. The Zairian examples presented in this paper certainly reflect particular historical contingencies that contributed to the creation and spread of the Congo wars, the consolidation of state power and authority in other contexts may also perhaps be linked to large internationalized conflicts. Nonetheless, it may be plausible to broadly consider the reterritorialization of state authority as an important causal factor for war. Given that such reterritorializations were driven by democratic reforms in the Great Lakes region, the regional transitions to democracy, long associated with peace in conflict literatures (e.g., SMALL and SINGER, 1976) instead became part of the path to a wide-spread and, to date, enduring war.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1 The Global archetype reflects the extra-territoriality of hegemonic states and the Integrative archetype is meant to capture the nuances of new political-territorial entities, such as the EU.

2 Eritrea is not formally independent of Ethiopia until 1993. Therefore, we included Eritrea as a separate state actor/regime only after 1992.

3 The most significant difference between COW and ATOP alliance data is that COW generally excludes treaties that treat security issues as secondary whereas ATOP does not (see LEEDS at al., 2002). For example, treaties that establish regional trading blocks or common markets that also include provisions about mutual defense, such as the 1999 treaty that established the East African Community (EAC), are typically excluded from COW. We have adopted the ATOP approach and included treaties that serve multiple purposes.

4 The main historical accounts of the conflicts in the region published in English are PRUNIER (1995, 2009), THOMAS (2007), and REYNTJENS (2009).
Exiles and arms

References


