



Conflict, state failure and urban transformation in the Eastern Congolese periphery.

The case of Goma.

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Dutch summary

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt de wederzijdse beïnvloeding van enerzijds processen van staatsverzwakking en gewapend conflict en anderzijds stedelijke transformaties in de oostelijke periferie van de Democratische Republiek Congo. De casestudie is de stad Goma (in Noord Kivu, aan de Congolese-Rwandese grens) en de vorm is een politiek antropologische stedelijke etnografie vertrekkende van de stad Goma zoals ze zich op de dag van vandaag manifesteert.

De centrale doelstelling van dit doctoraat is een stedelijke perspectief te bieden op de Congolese crisis door aan de ene kant de effecten van gewapend conflict op bijzondere stedelijke evoluties bloot te leggen, en aan de andere kant te kijken hoe deze evoluties van hun kant politieke processen beïnvloeden. De nieuwe vormen van stedelijkheid en verstedelijking in een context van staatsverzwakking en gewapend conflict, vormen aldus de centrale focus van dit onderzoek. Ik start van de hypothese dat dynamieken van gewapend conflict in samenspel met een historisch proces van staatsverval nieuwe, alternatieve vormen van stedelijkheid hebben teweeggebracht die zich vertalen in processen van politieke, economische, sociale en ruimtelijke transformaties.

Deze studie is een originele bijdrage aan academische onderzoek naar processen van verstedelijking en stedelijkheid in de Democratische Republiek Congo en bij uitbreiding in Afrika. In het licht van de extreem snelle verstedelijking in het Afrikaanse continent, kende het begin van het nieuwe millennium een sterke toename van academisch onderzoek naar stedelijke dynamieken in Congo. Wat betreft de politieke en antropologische bijdrage in deze studies noteren we twee belangrijke hiaten. Enerzijds is de literatuur over stedelijkheid in Congo beperkt tot de grote, 'primaire' steden zoals Kinshasa en Lubumbashi. Anderzijds schenkt deze literatuur geen specifieke aandacht aan conflict regio's. Deze studie poogt deze hiaten op te vullen. Ze schenkt specifiek aandacht aan stedelijkheid die ontstaat in secundaire, perifere steden, gelegen aan de grenzen van de natiestaat en buiten de directe invloed van de centrale overheid. Ze behandelt daarenboven als casestudie een stad die een centrale positie inneemt in het regionaal conflict in Oost Congo.

Op die manier vormt dit doctoraat dus eveneens een originele bijdrage aan de academische microniveau analyse van gewapend conflict in Oost Congo, doordat ze vertrekt van een specifiek stedelijk perspectief. Stedelijke thema's komen zelden aan bod in de huidige politieke en antropologische literatuur over conflict dynamieken in de Democratische Republiek Congo. Het is echter vanzelfsprekend dat steden een belangrijke rol spelen in processen van gewapend conflict, daar ze belangrijke politieke en administratieve centra vormen, knooppunten van economische transacties, zones waarin militaire macht zich concentreert, aantrekkingspolen van vluchtelingenstromen en platformen van internationale humanitaire acties.

Om de politieke, socio-economische en ruimtelijke transformaties te onderzoeken die het gevolg zijn van een situatie van staatsverzwakking en gewapend conflict, heb ik een conceptueel kader opgebouwd rond vier hoofdconcepten: 'beleid' (*governance*),

‘navigatie’ (*navigation*), ‘identiteit’ en ‘landschap’. Ze worden doorheen de thesis gebruikt als vaste parameters om de veranderende stedelijkheid in Goma te beschrijven.

Voor de politiek antropologische stedelijke monografie werd beroep gedaan op de etnografische onderzoeksmethode. De analyse is gebaseerd op data, gedestilleerd uit voornamelijk interviews, focus-groep discussies en enkele enquêtes, die werden verzameld tijdens 12 maanden veldwerk, verspreid over zeven veldwerkverblijven in Goma.

In dit onderzoek tracht ik een zo volledig mogelijke monografie te presenteren, door een integraal beeld van de stad te schetsen zoals ze zich op de dag van vandaag voordoet. Na een theoretische inleiding die een literatuuranalyse inhoudt alsook het conceptueel kader uitgebreid behandelt, wordt er overgegaan op een historisch hoofdstuk, waarin de evolutie van de stad wordt geschetst van de prekoloniale periode tot de dag van vandaag. Een volgend hoofdstuk presenteert een gedetailleerd ‘stadsrapport’, waarin het algemene demografische, economische en administratieve profiel van de stad wordt voorgesteld. In de volgende 5 hoofdstukken, wordt de analyse gemaakt van de wederzijdse impact tussen urbanisering, en dynamieken van gewapend conflict en staatsverval. Elke van deze vijf hoofdstukken is opgebouwd rond een centraal thema. Elk thema belicht een bepaald aspect van de huidige stedelijke configuratie van Goma, zoals dit wordt gepercipieerd door haar inwoners.

Het eerste van deze vijf hoofdstukken vertrekt van de hoedanigheid van de stad als een centrum van opportuniteit, en analyseert de paradoxale evolutie van de stad in een dynamisch en aantrekkelijk centrum van economische en politieke expansie. Een volgend hoofdstuk is opgebouwd rond het beeld van de stad als een zone van politieke en socio-economische contestatie. Hierin wordt onderzocht hoe geweld en staatsverzwakking lokale politieke en sociale breuklijnen binnen de stedelijke samenleving hebben versterkt. Vervolgens wordt de stad gepresenteerd als een centrum van rebellie, een status die de stad kreeg toebedeeld toen ze het hoofdkwartier werd van de rebellenbeweging tussen 1998 en 2003. In dit hoofdstuk zoomen we in op de stedelijke impact van processen van langdurig geweld, militarisering, en de dominante rol van gewapende actoren in het stedelijke beleid en de socio-economische controle over de stad. Het volgende hoofdstuk stelt de stad voor als een toevluchtsoord voor interne vluchtelingen, die het geweld in de rurale omliggende gebieden moeten ontvluchten en bescherming zoeken in de stad. In dit hoofdstuk onderzoeken we hoe deze ‘nieuwkomers’ zich integreren in de stad, en hoe ze hun stedelijke overlevingsstrategieën uitbouwen. Een laatste hoofdstuk belicht de hoedanigheid van de stad als grensgebied, en analyseert de rol van grensdynamieken (grensoverschrijdende handel, socio-economische transacties) in een context van gewapende conflict en staatsverzwakking.

Ik heb in dit onderzoek aangetoond dat processen van staatsverzwakking en gewapend conflict aan de ene kant hebben geleid tot een dynamische transformatie van stedelijk beleid, lokale overlevingsstrategieën, landschappen en identiteiten, en aan de andere kant de rol en de functie van steden op politieke en socio-economische processen op regionaal en nationaal vlak hebben veranderd. Doorheen een turbulente geschiedenis van geleidelijke staatsverzwakking en een opeenvolging van gewapende conflicten, heeft de stad Goma zich ontwikkeld van een marginale, onbelangrijke grenspost tot een dynamisch

regionaal centrum. Ik stel de stad Goma voor als een 'laboratorium van verandering' (*laboratory of change*), waarin in de context van oorlog en staatsverzwakking nieuwe vormen van stedelijkheid worden geproduceerd.

Deze nieuwe vormen van stedelijkheid worden gekarakteriseerd door een diepgaande informalisering, hybride vormen van stedelijk beleid, patronen van hevige politiek-economische competitie en conflict, en stedelijke overlevingsstrategieën (*livelihoods*) met een onstabiel, tijdelijk en onzeker karakter. Deze stedelijkheid is het resultaat van dynamische processen die van binnenuit ontstaan in plaats van van bovenaf gestuurd. Het is de uitkomst van de dagelijkse overlevingsstrategieën van de stedelijke inwoners zelf, eerder dan van een gecentraliseerd en gecoördineerd stedelijk beleid. De Congolese staat blijkt een eerder beperkte rol te spelen in processen van verstedelijking en stedelijke ontwikkeling. Geleidelijke staatsverzwakking heeft ervoor gezorgd dat verschillende niet-stedelijke actoren (variërende van gewapende groepen tot economische elites en internationale humanitaire organisaties) de rol van de staat hebben overgenomen op verschillende vlakken in het stedelijk beleid. Dit heeft zich geuit in een gefragmenteerde, ongelijke en conflictueuze verstedelijking, waaruit bepaalde groepen van de stedelijke bevolking aanzien voordeel putten terwijl andere groepen worden geconfronteerd met politieke, economische en sociale exclusie.

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List of abbreviations

AFDL	Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération
ASVETEL	Association des Vendeurs et Acheteurs des Téléphones
B.E.I.	Bureau d'Economie et Industrie
C.I.	Cité Indgène
C.U.	Circonscription urbaine
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEPLG	Communauté Economique des Pays des Grands Lacs
CIM	Commerce-Industrie et Mines
CIMNOKI	Compagnie Immobilière du Nord du Kivu
CNDP	Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple
CNKI	Comité National du Kivu
CNS	National Sovereign Conference
DCF/COFEDEC	Démocratie chrétienne fédéraliste-Convention des fédéralistes pour la démocratie chrétienne
DCMP	Daring club Motema Pembe
DGM	Direction Générale de Migration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAC	East African Community
EU	European Union
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
CDF	Franc Congolais
FDLR	Forces Démocratiques de Liberation du Rwanda
FEC	Fédération des Entreprises du Congo
RWF	Rwandan Franc
GDP	gross domestic product
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDP	Internally displaced people
IPME	Industrie, Petites et Moyennes Entreprises
LDF	Local Defence Forces
MAGREVI	Mutuelle des Agriculteurs et Eleveurs de Virunga
MBC	Mining and Business Commodities
MIB	Mission d'Immigration Banyaruandaïse
MLC	Mouvement de Libération du Congo
MONUC	Mission des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MPC	Mouvement des Patriotes Congolais
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OTRACO	Office des transports au Congo
OVD	Office des Voiries et Drainage

PARECO	Patriotes Résistants Congolais
PM	Police Militaire
PME	Petits et moyens entreprises
PNC	Police Nationale Congolaise
PNUD	Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement
PPRD	People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie
RCD-Goma	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie - Goma
RCD-ML	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie - Mouvement de Liberation
REGIDESO	Régie de distribution d'eau
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RRA	Rwanda Revenue Authority
RVA	Régie des Voies Aériennes
SADC	South African Development Community
SIMAK	Société Immobilière au Kivu
SNEL	Société Nationale de l'Electricité
SOMKIVU	Société Minière du Kivu
TMK	Société de Transports et Messageries au Kivu
TPD	Tout pour la Paix et le Développement
UDPS	Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social
ULPGL	Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHABITAT	United Nations HABITAT
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIGOM	Université de Goma
UNOCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UPC	Union des Patriotes Congolais
USD	US Dollar

Acknowledgements

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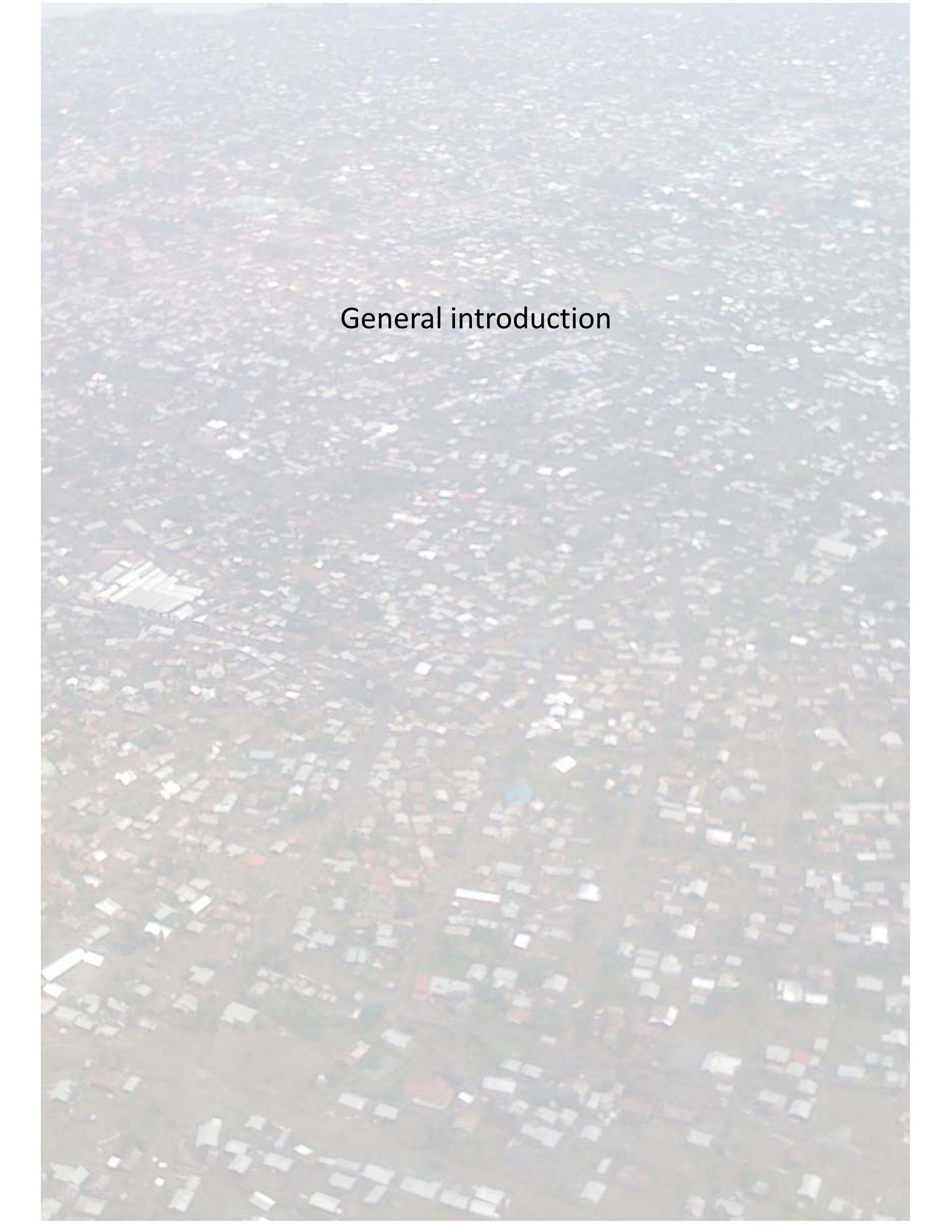
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An aerial photograph of a densely populated urban area, likely a slum or informal settlement. The image shows a vast expanse of small, closely packed buildings with flat roofs, interspersed with patches of bare earth and some larger, more prominent structures. The overall color palette is dominated by earthy tones like brown, tan, and grey, with some muted colors from the buildings' roofs. The perspective is from a high angle, looking down on the city.

General introduction

This dissertation analyses the impact of protracted violent conflict and state failure on dynamics of urban transformation in the eastern periphery of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The study object is the city of Goma (at the Congolese-Rwandan border, North Kivu), and the form is a political-anthropological urban ethnography that starts from the city such as it is today. The central aim of this study is to offer an urban perspective on the Congolese crisis, by at the one hand revealing the particular urban outcomes of conflict dynamics, and at the other hand demonstrating how these particular urban dynamics again produce and influence political processes. The emerging forms of urbanisation and urbanism¹ in a conflict and crisis setting is thus the central focus of this dissertation.

The last ten years have brought a resurgence of interest in urban Africa. This resulted in several important historical surveys of urbanisation in Africa, along with intensive and often multidisciplinary studies on individual African cities (Bauder 2001; Beall et al. 2010; Bekker & Leildé 2006; Bryceson & Pots 2006; Demissie 2007; Enwezor et al. 2000; Freund 2007; Locatelli & Nugent 2009; Murray & Myers 2006; Myers 2011; Pieterse 2010; Salm & Falola 2005; Simone 2001a; Simone 2002b; Simone 2004; Simone 2005). In general, this fascinating production of literature on the African city covers two -contrasting- trends. The first one centralises its analysis around 'crisis', underlining the problematic political, economic, social and environmental challenges of rapid urbanisation through the continent. From this angle, the African city is represented as a rather gloomy site of failure, experiencing "serious spatial entropy, a decline of infrastructure, the unravelling of traditional institutional and social networks, the erosion of state capacity (...) posing serious challenges to urban stability and sustainability and contributing to alarming reductions in quality of life for the average urban resident" (Enwezor et al. 2000: 14). The second one, to the contrary, focuses on the functionality instead of dysfunctionality of these cities, pointing at their creativity and inventivity to cope with these challenges. From this perspective, the African city is presented as a laboratory of experimental creations (De Boeck & Plissart 2004; Robinson 2006; Simone 2004; Trefon 2004). As such, this recent academic production on urbanism in Africa is sometimes susceptible to either 'Afro-pessimism' or 'Afro-romanticism', that in its extremes can result in a picture where "urban Africans are either bravely en route to empowering themselves to attain sustainable livelihoods or the debased perpetrators of the most unimaginable acts of misanthropy" (Pieterse & Edjabe 2009: iii). Nevertheless, it has offered extremely rich and valuable

¹ In contrast to the term urbanisation, which refers to the practices of urban becoming, making, growth and development, urbanism or urbanity refers to the particular way of life unique to habitation in a city. According to Beall, "generally speaking, urbanism refers to the unique social, cultural, economic and political dynamics that arise in densely populated human settlement" (Beall & Fox 2009: 7). For her definition, Beall builds on Lewis Wirth, who in 1938 with his essay 'urbanism as way of life' elaborated the idea that there is something distinct about urban living (Wirth 1938). Wirth defined the city as a relative large, dense, and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals and argued that these factors create a distinctly 'urban way of life'. An alternative term for urbanism or urbanity is that of cityness. Saskia Sassen has promoted this term over that of urbanism to describe 'a different, non-western' kind of urbanity (Sassen 2010). As it is not our central aim to describe urban dynamics in Goma as 'non-western', and as I see no harm to the use of the truly universal notions of urbanism and urbanity, I will, in the remainder of this dissertation, stick to these notions.

material to better understand the 'centrality of cityness' (Pieterse 2010) in a continent for a long time subject to an almost exclusively 'rural' academic approach.

However, as Garth Myers has correctly noticed in the fascinating book that he just published on African urban theory and practice (Myers 2011), what these various contemporary studies have in common, is their perception of African cities as an essential 'other' city, with particular African dynamics, different in many respects from other cities over the globe. These studies have focussed on the ways in which urban dwellers in Africa develop their 'own mechanisms of production and create their own urban forms and development norms' (Locatelli & Nugent 2009).

This area-based approach has been indispensable to formulate 'other scripts of cityness', and to go beyond the analysis of African cities as 'no real cities', 'not quiet cities', 'failed cities' and so on, when analysing their dynamics against the background of Western urban development. In this respect, the approach of the African city and that of the African state run in parallel lines, as a similar trend can be observed with regards to the political and anthropological analysis of the nature of the African state over the past twenty years. The simple fact that the large part of current academic research on urban dynamics in Africa is the work of Africanists rather than urbanists or geographers (that go beyond speaking only about and for African cities), demonstrates that the real challenge remains the integration of 'African' insights into global contemporary urban theory. Abdoumalik Simone has been amongst the very few scholars who explicitly attempts to connect processes in African cities with those elsewhere, and more or less succeeds in a broader reading of African cities and contributing to urban theory. I underscribe the engagement of scholars such as Myers, "to point to the multifaceted urbanity in African contexts as of a great value to global understanding of urbanism, for scholars, researchers, and practioners whose focus may not be on Africa" (Myers 2011: 7)

In line with Simone and Myers, this dissertation also attempts to think out of the 'Africa' box, that is to say out of a discipline that is restricted by its intra-perspectives, by presenting the finding of this research in a way in which they can serve as a basis for more global understandings of 'peripheral'- 'border'- or 'conflict-urbanity'. As such, this research does not only aim at contributing to urban theory, but also to the better understanding of local dynamics of violent conflict.

The general evolution of African urban studies as described above, we see clearly reflected in urban research on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With the start of the new millennium, one could observe a renewed attention to urban issues, whereas previously these have been rather limited. With the exception of the comprehensive work of de Saint Moulin (de Saint Moulin 1974; de Saint Moulin 1993; de Saint Moulin 2010), research on urban Zaire has been restricted to some occasional case studies. Most of these studies focused on Kinshasa, the fascinating metropolis which back then already could draw the particular attention of social, anthropological, political and economic scientists (see for example: Biaya 1997; de Herdt & Marijsse 1997; Devisch 1995; Devisch 1996; Gondola 1997; Omasombo 2005; Yoka 1999). The renewed urban focus from 2000 onwards partly needs to be understood in the light of the growing attention of development organisations for the challenges of rapid urbanisation on the African continent. Increasing research from different academic disciplines has underlined that the urban realm is at the

heart of current political and socio-economic processes in the DRC. In line with the general trend as noted above, urban studies on the Congo are subject to both 'fatalism' and 'glorification', on the one hand depicting Congolese urban dynamics against a dismal background of chaos and crisis, and on the other hand presenting them in terms of magnificent and powerful creative bottom-up undertakings. More important are the two main gaps in this research that I will further address in this introduction: its restriction to large, 'primary' cities, and the absence of urban studies of Congo's conflict areas. This dissertation forms a modest contribution to fill these gaps.

Building on former research experience in Kinshasa, the choice of an urban focus for my research was the very starting point of the outline of my doctoral research. To determine the precise research focus, my supervisors and I departed from the observation of the remarkable expansion of most urban centres in the Eastern Congolese borderland. Most of the academic attention goes to urbanisation processes in the large cities such as Kinshasa and (to a lesser extent) Lubumbashi. While all eyes are focused on the astonishing developments of the mega city that is Kinshasa, the emergence of dynamic peripheral centres in Eastern Congo largely passes unnoticed. The urban dynamics in the Kivu region seemed all the more surprising, since the setting of on-going armed conflict. Starting from these observations, the motivation behind this research was twofold: on the one hand to shed light on secondary, peripheral cities in the DRC, and on the other hand to add an urban perspective to the research carried out on conflict dynamics in Eastern Congo. The relationship between urban development and violent conflict thus runs as a central line through my analysis. I will argue that the fact that these peripheral border cities are related in a different way to national and regional political and economic dynamics, generates particular forms of urbanity that significantly differ from Congo's 'core' cities. Their 'peripheral' position will be interpreted in both socio-political as well as geographic sense; the notion of the 'border town' or 'urban borderland' will be integrated with this regard, to further analyses of the particularities of a 'peripheral urbanity'. This urbanity, that emerges in the general Congolese context of a weak state, is marked by strong processes of autonomisation, informalisation, contestation and glocalisation. I will further argue that, rather than being the simple outcome of conflict dynamics, these local processes have been strengthened by violence and war, which has redefined existing patterns of urbanism and urbanisation. Goma, being a booming peripheral secondary city, located in the borderland and at the centre of on-going violent conflict in North Kivu, forms an ideal case to analyse these dynamics of conflict urbanism.

By elaborating on i) the socio-political setting of the state failure and violent conflict, ii) the emerging centrality of peripheral Congolese cities and iii) the different analytical tools to investigate dynamics of urban transformation, I will further highlight the main objectives and research questions of this study below.

1.1. Socio-political setting: the urban dimension of crisis and conflict

1.1.1. Investigating the urban impact of local conflict dynamics

The title of this PhD reads as follows "*Conflict, state failure and urban transformation in the Eastern Congolese periphery*". Let us start with zooming in on the first part of this title.

The general socio-political context of this research is one of violent conflict. Over the past decade, there has been written multiple reports, analyses and articles on the Congo war. The immense complexity of the on-going violence in the Eastern provinces has challenged many political scientist and conflict scholars in their analysis. It is out of the scope of this dissertation to give a comprehensive overview of the various theoretical interpretation models that have been applied over the last ten years by these scholars. In contrast to 'traditional' perspectives that have explained the Congolese conflict in terms of dynamics set in motion 'from above', this dissertation links up with the micro-level analysis of the conflict, that starts from local dynamics at the very grass-roots level of Congolese society. It inscribes itself in the political-anthropological research that has been realised on the impact of violent conflict on local social and economic processes (Vlassenroot 2006a; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a). In line with this research, this study offers a contribution to the micro-level ethnography of local conflict dynamics. Looking beyond the mere devastating impact of fifteen years of war, the focus will be on the transformative force of violent conflict, highlighting the ways in which war has reshaped local socio-economic and political structures and has generated shifts in authority, regulation, governance, space and identity. War will not be presented as an irrational, abnormal event or as a breakdown, but as a complex of dynamics that is an expression of the inner logic of the existing local social and political order (Vlassenroot 2006b).

The innovative element that I want to offer with my research, is to observe this local-level impact of war and these generated social transformations through an urban lens. Although some studies have been integrating the urban scale in the analysing of conflict dynamics in Eastern Congo (see for example the work of Raeymaekers 2007; Tull 2005), there have been no particular micro-analyses realised on the interplay between conflict dynamics and processes of urbanisation in this region². The originality of this PhD thus lies in its form, its approach as well as its aim: to offer an urban insight of conflict dynamics, in the form of an urban 'monography' that analyses urban dynamics from a local perspective.

It is true that high intensity violence in Eastern Congo during recent years mainly took place outside the urban centres. Protected by a high presence of local and international security forces, cities have largely been saved from heavy fighting³. However, without being the theatre of violent clashes between different fighting parties, these urban centres have experienced a significant socio-economic impact of protracted conflict. As Jo Beall has argued, the focus on cities in war zones is however major, as they directly and indirectly absorb much of the impact and fallout from contemporary conflict and war (Beall 2008). The centrality of cities in Eastern Congo's conflict is obvious, as they constitute important political and administrative centres, points of economic accumulation, concentrations of military power and the focal points of human conflict displacement.

² With the exception of Omasombo (2005); Tull (2005); Verhoeve (2004).

³ Exceptions are the 'six day war' in Kisangani in 2000, the heavy interethnic clashes in Bunia in 1999 and 2002, and the outbreak of violence in Bukavu in 2004, when the dissident general Laurent Nkunda temporarily took control over the city.

Literature on the urban impact of processes of violent conflict is scarce, and it is only very recently that from an African perspective, urban studies have been focusing on cities in a war context. This research has been restricted to some case-studies (for the cases of Monrovia, Freetown and Mogadishu for example, see: Hoffman 2007; Menkhaus 2007; Pérouse de Montclos 2001; Sommers 2003). Cities in a war context are often being portrayed as becoming 'ungovernable spaces', 'anarchic sites of violence' or 'zones of degradation and collapse' (Beall et al. 2011). This image only partly corresponds to the reality of some Congolese urban centres that experienced a dramatic impact of state failure and violent conflict. The city of Kisangani, for example, is being described as "standing as the symbol of the collapse of the whole of Congo" (Omasombo 2005: 97), a city where "traces of modernity are disappearing" (Enwezor et al. 2000: 415). However, cities such as Butembo or Goma are revealing a completely different picture: that of dynamic, expanding and attractive economic boomtowns. This indicates that the impact of war on urbanisation in this region is diverse. On the one hand, most cities in the region faced a profound degradation of urban infrastructure and 'traditional' institutional and social networks. On the other hand these cities witnessed new urban processes which are developing simultaneously. All of them experienced dynamics of urban transformation and important socio-economic shifts through this complex war. These transformations will be the focus of interest in my research. The particular context of this research is one of a protracted violent conflict, where different state- and non-state armed groups struggle for political and socio-economic dominance, and where violence has become a crucial means in urban strategies of governance as well as survival on different levels of the urban society. The situation of protracted conflict has created a context in which violence is no longer a temporary suspension of the 'normal' functioning of the city. It has come to determine the contemporary manifestation of urban politics, economics, governance and livelihoods, and has become a condition of everyday life.

Although starting from the micro-level by analysing the impact of violent conflict on local governance and urban livelihoods, this urban ethnography of course also links to the macro-level and investigates the impact of conflict and crisis on the national and regional role, position and function of the city.

The situation of protracted conflict has created a context in which violence is no longer a temporary suspension of the 'normal' functioning of the city. War has come to determine the contemporary manifestation of urban politics, economics, governance and livelihoods, and has become a condition of everyday life.

In trying to understand the particular forms of urbanity this situation of protracted conflict generates, it is however important to avoid falling into the trap of what Jonathan Goodhand has called the 'conflict fetish', by which violence and war become the only point of reference or the only lens through which we look at processes that present themselves (Goodhand 2000). Much of the urban developments that I will describe in this dissertation are clearly not only the result of violent conflict, but were already set in motion by the overall economic and political crisis and the decline of the Congolese state. Processes of state decline and violent conflict have reinforced each other in the transformative impact of the urban space, reason why they appear connected in the title of this dissertation. Finally, these urban dynamics can of course not be explained from an

exclusive angle of state failure and conflict, as they were partly inscribed in much larger regional dynamics and global trends.

1.1.2. 'Non-state' urban development?

In the DRC, as everywhere else, if one wants to investigate the city, one also has to investigate the state. Because of their demographic, economic, political and social significance, cities play a crucial role in processes of state formation and state failure. As spatial and physical entities, cities can tell us a lot about state capacity (Beall 2008). The city is generally considered as the locus of state authority and representation, even as sites of the production of the state, as they form the core of administrative and political state performance. It is in cities that the state is usually most visible. However, when observing urban development in Goma and other cities in the region, the impact of the state seems to be rather limited. In Goma we encounter a paradoxical situation where the state is physically very present (in the form of large military and police units and taxation services for example), but at the same time it is almost absent in that sense that it these services do not operate according to what we understand as a state in classical terms. The weak implication of the state in urban development is reflected in the first place through the informal character of the organisation of the urban infrastructure, the urban economy and processes of urban governance. Simone observed for African cities in general that "while government at both national and municipal levels may have legal authority to operate as the overarching power, in practice this is often not the case" (Simone 2010 :8).

The state of the state in the DRC has been the topic of much debate. In the political literature on state fragility, state failure, and state collapse, the Congo has repeatedly been presented as an outstanding example (Cliffe & Luckham 1999; Lemarchand 2001; Mathews & Solomon 2001; Reno 2006; Young & Turner 1985; Zartman 1995). The concepts of the 'failed' or 'collapsed' state that entered the academic debate in the early 1990s (in the light of the imploding regimes in countries such as Somalia) and that entered the policy agenda's in the aftermath of 9/11, have increasingly become the topic of critical discussion. In particular, the normative approach taking the idealised Weberian state as a starting point and considering state collapse as the end stage of a degenerative process has increasingly been criticised. For example, Tomothy Raeymaekers argued that the "analytical opposition between 'normal' states and 'pathological' state collapse is sustaining a dangerous metaphor, which increasingly obstructs our analysis of political order in the absence of an overarching state framework" (Raeymaekers 2005: 2). And so the primary critique that has been formulated with regards to the state collapse approach, is that it fails to grasp 'what is actually happening on the ground' (Hagmann & Hoehne 2009; Hill 2005; Migdal & Schlichte 2005). Particularly with regards to Africa, it is frequently argued that it has failed to provide appropriate analytical tools for a better understanding of contemporary African statehood (Hagmann & Hoehne 2009). I join the opinion that we have to look beyond the state and apply a more differentiated approach

to statehood “that renders intelligible variegated trajectories of political authority within and beyond the nation-state” (Hagmann & Hoehne 2009: 43)⁴.

In my PhD, I refer to the Congolese state as a weak state. I use the term state failure to stress the process of state weakness, not to refer to the state as being ‘failed’. Even in certain situations of extreme political institutional crisis, of informalisation of administrative apparatuses, or criminalisation of the economy, the state does not disappear completely (Blundo & Le Meur 2009). In describing Goma’s reality, I found Pierre Engleberts idea of the Congolese state as ‘endlessly failing but never quite fully failed state’ particularly suitable (see Englebert 2002). In my analysis, I will perceive Goma as an urban ‘zone of limited statehood’ (Risse & Lehmkuhl 2006), where through dynamics such as urban regulation and governance the state may not be collapsed or be absent, but it is definitely weak. Its weakness lies in the incapacities to uphold law and order and to deliver basic public services and is due to both its critical impoverishment and a lack of means, as to the fact that its authority and power is increasingly challenged by several non-state actors (such as armed groups, international companies or powerful economic elites). In Africa, a strong state, which is characterised by a monopoly on regulatory authority and violence for example, however hardly existed in the past. Rather the opposite is true: from a historical perspective there is nothing particular about ‘state weakness’ in Africa. Power was rarely absolute and the state was weakly institutionalised from the beginning (Engel & Olsen 2005). This was also true for Congo. The process of the dwindling role of formal government institutions in the DRC has however especially been analysed in the light of the evolution of the post-colonial state, a process that involved the instrumentalisation of political disorder to the advantage of more privatised patron-client relationships (Bayart 1996; Bayart et al. 1999; Chabal & Daloz 1999; Reno 2004). As a response to this process, alternative actors have come to perform many of the core functions that the state is no longer able to fulfil. The engagement of these non-state actors has eventually further weakened the state, as by taking over the state’s responsibilities, they have increasingly affected the state’s authority and legitimacy. Since the 1980s, state sovereignty in Congo has undergone a gradual process of ‘informal privatisation’ resulting in an increased competition between the state and several non-state actors to fill the gaps (Vlassenroot 2008). These dynamics provoked a radical transformation of the political and economic structure of the Congolese society, “to build a house, open a business or pick up a driver’s license, people do not to address themselves anymore to the malfunctioning or abandoned state administration, but instead try their worth through the different parallel institutions that ensure their access to valuable public resources” (Raeymaekers 2005: 4).

The recognition of new forms of order, regulation and governance situated beyond the state, further challenges the vision rooted in the state collapse approach that the

⁴ This approach thus goes way beyond ideas such as of the institutionalisation of ‘disorder’ (formulated by Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz in their renowned work ‘Africa Works’ (Chabal & Daloz 1999)), which, by stressing that the ineffectiveness of the post-colonial African states has worked out well for the involved elites, states that the state in Africa works, as it fulfils an important function that however may not be in accordance with widely held ideal notions of statehood (Chabal & Daloz 1999).

institutional breakdown of the formal state institutions automatically results in a breakdown of society. A situation of a weak state does not automatically ends in anarchy. Instead of generating chaos or anomy, these non-state actors provide security, governance and regulation. For the case of Goma, I will demonstrate that the 'order' in urban organisation and development is emerging from an interplay between different forces in urban society that try to control political, economic and social domains. I will apply the 'state-in-society' approach of Joe Migdal to describe the actual implication of the state in urbanisation and urbanism and its relationship to other involved actors (Migdal 2001). Thus, to avoid misunderstandings, the reference to the state in the title does *not* imply a special focus on state functions or state performance in urbanisation or urbanism in general. Instead, I will pay special attention to the new political and socio-economic 'constellations' that have emerged simultaneously to processes of deterioration of state capacities and the generalised erosion of the formal governmental framework. The crucial role of non-state actors that immediately comes to the fore when analysing urban dynamics in Goma, forces us to zoom in on different 'non-state' forms of urban regulation and governance, and 'non-state' urbanisation and development. As we will observe through this study, processes of violent conflict have clearly reinforced the role of non-state actors (grass-roots organisations, armed actors and various 'elites' at the local, national or regional level) in urban development.

Central to these dynamics of non-state urbanism is the notion of informality, that deserves some special attention while situating the socio-political context of 'crisis'.

1.1.3. Informality

Since the 1970s, the local process of state failure and the emergence of non-state regulatory actors in the African urban context has extensively been analysed in terms of a general 'informalisation' of the socio-economic and political urban scene. The informal sector in urban Africa has been the topic of numerous academic writings, initially most of them focusing on the informal economy (see for example: de Herdt & Marijsse 1997; De Villers et al. 2002; Hart 1973; Meagher 1995; Rogerson 1996), although over time other domains were included such as informal housing and land occupation (see for example: Abbott & Fouglaas 2003; Grant 1998; Huchzermeyer 2004); infrastructure and services (see: Konings & Foeken 2006; Tukahirwa et al. 2010; Verhoef 2001) and security (see: Bénit-Gbaffou 2009; Von Benda-Beckmann & Kirsch 1999).

Initially, by the 'founders' of the informal sector concept, informal activities were usually defined as taking place outside state regulation or written legal system (Castels & Portes 1989; Tokman, 1992). But through the years, this concept and its definition have become subject of much debate and discussion. First of all, there are several dimensions of state regulation (registration, taxation), and actors may comply with some and evade others, making it difficult to empirically draw the line between what is and is not regulated by the state (Lourenço-Lindell 2002: 20). Secondly, perceiving the informal sector as completely non-state or in opposition to the state is misleading. Informal actors may benefit from close links with the state, and vice versa. The reality of informal forms of urban organisation having become so pervasive and so deeply intertwined with formal structures, has seriously questioned the formal-informal dichotomy or dualistic approach (Alter Chen 2007; Meagher 2010; Tranberg Hansen & Vaa 2004). The dynamic interlinkage

between formal and informal structures and the reality of a constant 'straddling' between the two spheres, has forced academics to step away from this rigid notion of the informal sector. In a context of state failure where state responsibilities have been taken over by non-state actors, in some African cities 'everything seems to become informal'. So-called informal networks operate with well-established hierarchies and are fully integrated in social life, and although they are extra-legal, they are not necessarily perceived as illegitimate by the actors concerned (Alter Chen 2007; Tranberg Hansen & Vaa 2004). Faced with this reality, the analysis of contemporary urbanisation seek for alternative approaches in concepts such as the 'real economy' or shifted its focus towards studies on social networks (Lourenço-Lindell 2002; Lourenço-Lindell 2010; Meagher 2010; Simone 2010).

However, as Kate Meagher correctly observed, this does not mean that informality has become irrelevant in the analysis of contemporary African urban dynamics; to the contrary, "far from eroding the relevance of the informality concept, economic reforms, faltering states, and the flourishing of non-state forms of organisation have put the informal economy at the heart of contemporary issues of economic governance and restructuring" (Meagher 2010: 15). Unlike for example Bayart et al. (1999), I will, in line with Myers (2011) and Lourenço-Lindell (2010) argue against the vision that the concept of informality has become irrelevant or useless.

As recent studies aiming at 'revising' or 'reconsidering' informality have demonstrated, the key is not the boundary between the formal and informal or official and unofficial spheres, but the distinctive organisational dynamics and power relations that characterised non-formal forms of order. Informalisation has to be perceived as a process, to understand how on the one hand urban economies, social organisation and even politics develop outside the official regulatory framework, and on the other hand how state agencies and other formal institutions act informally or act to produce informality (Myers 2011: 73). This process of informalisation is strongly determining contemporary urban dynamics at different levels (the urban landscape, everyday social life, livelihood strategies, political governance, etc.). Apart from a great diversity of informal activities, there is a great variety of actors engaged in it. Urban inhabitants of all social layers are involved, and informal sectors are traversed by multiple axes of power, positions and agendas, along lines of income, gender, age, race, ethnicity.

Acting on a given political situation and rooted in a deeply historical dimension, the category of informality is interpreted as simultaneously spatial, political and socio-economic (Abdoul 2002). This historical dimension may not be forgotten. Many African urban areas grew informally from the beginning. Parts of the roots of Africa's informal urbanity (especially concerning the informal use of urban space) lies in the colonial legacy, and was already visible during the rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation in the immediate aftermath of independence (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1991)⁵. As such, the production of informality in African cities is the outcome of particular intersections between external forces and historically informed local responses (Lourenço-Lindell 2002).

⁵ Evidently, informalisation was not absent during colonial urbanisation, neither. The uncontrolled proliferation of spontaneous settlements, for example, was a constant thorn in the side of the European urban planners.

Thus, I will retain informality as a 'pertinent category' (Simone 2005) by which I will examine Goma's transformation in the context of crisis and conflict, all the more because it is a category that is widely used amongst the city's inhabitants to describe their lived realities and experiences. I will demonstrate that informality is crucial to understand Goma's remarkable evolution into a zone of opportunity.

From other cases, it has been demonstrated that informality lies at the heart of the ways in which urban populations have adapted to the general situation of conflict and crisis. Classic urban infrastructure that came to a total decay has been replaced by a 'parallel urban fabric' that produces a new kind of urbanism. However, the process of informalisation may not be perceived as a mere answer to state failure⁶, as in African cities today, informality acts as a platform for the creation of a very different kind of urban configuration.

Again, it is important to keep in mind that this configuration emerges from a constant interaction of the informal logic with the remnants of the formal logic. The functioning of politics, the occupation of space and the flow of economic activity are determined according to the interaction between the informal and normative logic of the state (symbolised by municipal authorities). "It is in the convergence, divergence and strategies of regulation on these two levels that the specificities of African urban contexts are constructed. Their relationships are the engines of production of the city and the levers of change" (Abdoul 2002: 357). This hybrid nature of urban dynamics, straddling between formal and informal, official and non-official will be of central importance in the further analysis of urban transformations in Goma.

The recognition that informalisation has pronounced itself as the thriving force on which cities develop in a context of crisis, can also be read from recent studies on cities in the DRC, that intensively elaborated on informal urban survival strategies (De Boeck & Plissart 2004; De Villers 2002; De Villers et al. 2002; MacGaffey 1991; Trefon et al. 2002; Trefon 2004; Trefon 2008). Informality seems to have become the basis on which current Congolese urbanism is evolving, a key organising logic behind infrastructure, services, politics and economics. Once more, the tension highlighted above between 'afro-optimism' and '-pessimism' re-enters the scene here, as a final debate on urban informalisation in Congo (and elsewhere) has evolved around its significance as a result of 'creativity' and inventivity from below' or as a bare means of survival. Some have pictured informal activities in African cities as generating the potential for employment and growth, others have pointed at the exploitative conditions and insecurity linked to it. Although it seems tempting to describe informality in the Congolese urban context as the ultimate translation of inventive mechanisms overcoming a context of crisis⁷, the question

⁶ The idea that informality in urban Africa is an alternative and a popular response to a weak economy that is unable to provide enough employment opportunities, and to an urban government unable to provide shelter and services to secure livelihoods, was extensively developed by Kate Meagher, for example (Meagher 1995). Some scholars have further expanded this reasoning perceiving the informal economy in Congo as an 'active disengagement from the state' (Lemarchand 2001; MacGaffey 1991; Raeymaekers 2009b).

⁷ There are scholars who consider informality to be not only a 'ingenious mode of getting by' or a response to the 'wrath of global markets' (Roitman 2005), but also as a democratic alternative to

remains whether these mechanisms, 'via the simple reframing of harsh reality into survivability, are anything more than tools for barely surviving' (Myers 2011: 80-81). For the case of Goma, we will observe that dynamics of informal urbanisation have created many opportunities and benefits for some, while for others, the situation of a dwindling role of the state in urban governance and economic regulation has left them in extremely precarious conditions.

1.2. Politico-geographic location: the central role of the periphery

1.2.1. Centrality of the margins: a changing urban order?

As I already noted, contemporary urban research on the DRC and on Africa in general, is focused on mega-cities, the large metropolises. Medium-sized and secondary cities often remain out of sight. Yet, these cities are surely not less important (they host half of the urban population) or less interesting: these are the urban centres that are currently witnessing the fastest urban growth and they often display spectacular transformations over a very short time (Bertrand & Dubresson 1997; Hilgers 2009). Bertrand and Dubresson were amongst the very first to re-centre small and medium-sized towns in the debates on urbanisation in Africa. Stating that "*les échelons inférieurs de l'urbanisation, encore mal connus, offrent des laboratoires pertinents de remise en question des paradigmes dominants*", they further argued that "*les placer au cœur de l'analyse, a permis de révéler le poids d'acteurs et de processus antérieurement négligés, voire totalement méconnus*" (Bertrand & Dubresson 1997: 10).

These secondary cities seem to develop an urbanity that significantly differs from the 'primary', capital cities. Instead of being relatively isolated towns with a limited reach into their local rural hinterlands, these secondary cities play a much larger role regionally and (trans-) nationally (Bertrand & Dubresson 1997; De Boeck et al. 2010). "*Paradoxalement, la marginalisation économique d'une région et de son chef lieu confère à ce dernier de nouvelles fonctions de place centrale, dans un marché largement informel où les logiques de survie n'excluent pas des processus d'accumulation*" (Bertrand & Dubresson 1997: 31). In this respect, De Boeck, Cassiman and Vanwolputte argue that these towns often 'work better' than the metropolis, as there is more room for improvisation. This is especially the case when these secondary cities are located in the margins or the periphery (and many of them actually are), removed from the political centre of the nation, often situated literally on the borderlines (thus in the margins of the state and the territory). The element 'periphery' in the title of this study thus refers to both the socio-political as well as the geographical location of the city.

From its peripheral location, the city is strongly connected to transborder networks and develops a more regional than national centrality. In her recent research design for studying cities in fragile states, Jo Beall distinguishes between 'city states' (by which she refers to the capital cities) and 'regional cities' (secondary cities). These first ones are

formal frameworks of state-controlled economies. Bayat (1997) for example, describes it as the 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary', referring to the determination on the part of disadvantaged groups to contest and reform such exclusionary frameworks. This kind of 'epic' of informal urbanity implies a certain level of self-extrication and entrepreneurial innovation.

often largely disconnected from their hinterland, but intensely connected to international political, economic and social networks. The regional cities, by contrast, are linked to regional economic networks that transcend national political borders (Beall 2008). The fact that these cities are often leading centres in global networks, grants them an increasing economic and political significance. Further, these cities seem to play an increasingly important role in shaping the particular forms through which processes of globalisation are unfolding within Africa. This often is a globalisation that no longer finds its starting point in the former colonial metropolises but rather originates in new world powers such as China or India (De Boeck et al. 2010).

This is also true for the case of Congo, where these peripheral cities increasingly attract national and regional attention. These peripheral cities constitute the most rapidly changing poles of growth and economic activities in the DRC today. As such, we may argue that one is observing a changing urban order, or *“une remise en cause des hiérarchies urbaines ou une recomposition spatiale de l'ordre urbain”* (Piermay 1997), where these secondary cities, in the periphery of the centre yet at the centre of the periphery, are becoming the new leading urban poles. They do not only become the new zones of entrepreneurial development, they also more generally strongly contribute to a redefinition of the political, economic and socio-cultural urban order.

The emerging importance of these cities located at Congo's margins, is strongly reinforced by the context of state failure as mentioned above. From their peripheral position and by their transnational connections, these cities can exercise a particular influence on state processes (Beall 2008). In its search for power and authority, the state is challenged by these peripheral urban dynamics, as precisely the control over this peripheral regions forms an important factor in state-making. For a country like the Congo, with a size of 2.300.000 km², a complete territorial sovereignty is no sinecure. Since the colonial period, the effective control by the centre over the periphery has never been realised. The context of crisis has further contributed to the disintegration of the nation-state. The further one is removed from the capital, the weaker the influence of the state (Smis & Vanhoyweghen 2002; Trefon et al. 2002; Young & Turner 1985). Additionally, years of war have further challenged the relations between the centre and the periphery, and for Eastern Congo this has resulted in a further disconnection of these cities from the political centre.

The state's absence in dynamics of urbanisation in Congo thus become even more pronounced in this particular cases of peripheral cities. In a context of state weakness, political and socio-economic dynamics in these secondary cities obtain a particular status and dimension. Developing largely outside the direct control of the central state, these cities emerge as semi-autonomous, informal centres. By their connection to regional networks, these cities increasingly operate in an independent way. This processes of semi-autonomous development will be stressed at several occasions through this dissertation, as they have a deep impact, not only on the economic city profile, but also on local social organisation, urban livelihoods and identity.

1.2.2. The urban borderland-angle

That border towns produce specific forms of urbanism, and that border studies can offer innovative insights in urban theory, has been acknowledged by recent academic research on border areas in Africa, and elsewhere (Bertrand & Dubresson 1997; Dobler 2009; Nugent 2011; Taverne & Wagenaar 2005). I will subscribe to the relevance of the borderlens through which one has to study peripheral urban dynamics by dedicating a special chapter on the significance of the city of Goma as an urban borderland, treating this borderland as a distinct geographical, social, economic and political territory. A more detailed overview of the relevant literature and theoretic concepts will be found in this particular chapter, for the moment I just want to stress the central importance of border dynamics in the politico-geographic contextualisation of my research.

The border location makes the city a particular socio-geographic space, at the intersection of the local, regional and national geographic 'scales'. Although in human geography sometimes over-theorised, 'scale' remains a very useful concept to analyse the importance of space and location in socio-political urban processes, or in other words, the relationship between human action and space (Moore 2008). These openings to the transnational and global scale generates various opportunities in border urbanisation and urbanity. The border location largely determines the cities' evolution towards influential regional economic centres (Bennafla 2002; Bertrand & Dubresson 1997). Border dynamics not only lie at the basis of the autonomous development and the regional pronunciation of these peripheral zones, they also determine to a large extent the 'transformations' generated by a context of crisis and conflict. The central significance of the city as a laboratory of change and a creative space of transformation is inextricably connected by the quality of the city as a borderland. The development of specific forms of governance, particular definitions of urban citizenship and identity and new modes of political-economic regulation that I will describe in detail for the case of Goma, are inherently transborder in nature. Over the past decade, several academic studies on borderlands have demonstrated how new political orders can emerge, how autonomous institutional arrangements and regulatory regimes can be created and how they lead to new forms of governance (Goodhand 2003; Goodhand 2009; Nugent 2002; Raeymaekers 2009a; Roitman 2004). As such, I will argue that the reconfigurations of the socio-spatial, economic and political cityscape, can partly be interpreted as the result of the nature of the borderland.

Finally, border dynamics also determine the complex relationship between the peripheral city and the state. As I will demonstrate, the state is rather absent in these remote areas, but at the same time, it is somehow being reinforced and reproduced at the border (Anderson & O'Dowd 1999; Donnan & Wilson 1994). As I already stated, with regards to the relationship between the city and the state, this study seeks in the first place to understand the impact of state failure on urban developments. In the second place, I will also reflect on the impact of peripheral urban developments on 'state' processes of stability, sovereignty, etc. The border perspective is very useful in this respect, through which we can 'rethink' these relationship between the city and the state, the centre and the periphery, the formal and the informal.

1.3. Urban processes of transformation: a conceptual framework

Finally, we have arrived at the last part of the title. Emphasising on processes of transformation logically implies an emphasis on change, shift, from a particular state or situation to another. To recapitulate, I start from the hypothesis that dynamics of violent conflict in a context of a weak state have generated a reconfiguration of the city and a redefinition of urbanity in general. This reconfiguration is translated through complex processes of political, economic, social, cultural and spatial transformations, where power, order, authority, governance, space and identity are reshaped or 'renegotiated' (Menkhaus 2006; Raeymaekers et al. 2008). These changes have been set in motion by a process of general political and economic crisis, and have been reinforced by dynamics of war.

The transformative power of violent conflict in Eastern Congo has already been highlighted by the research on conflict livelihoods (see: Tull 2005; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a). As Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers have argued, notwithstanding the humanitarian consequences and loss of assets, the Congo war has also generated a number of important shifts in the socio-economic sphere. What is of crucial importance, is that these shifts should not be explained as temporary effects of a context of violence and war but as elements of a general transformation of local society. These processes of transformation play out in a particular way in urban centres, on the one hand altering the position, role and impact of the city on the national and regional scale, and on the other hand redefining local urban livelihoods.

Many urban scholars have elaborated on the complex concept of transformation. Cities are centres of transformative dynamics on societies all over the globe. They constitute poles of innovation and form the ultimate 'laboratories of change' (Simone 2005), constantly producing and reproducing society and turning it to contemporary purpose (Robinson 2006). Beall stated that "cities have historically played an important role as drivers of social, political and economic transformations, they are social melting pots, nodes of regional and international communication and transportation, engines of economic growth, seats of political power and iconic cultural spaces" (Beall & Fox 2009: 2). In her noted article on urban 'inventions and interventions', Jenny Robinson very explicitly emphasises transformation as a generalised condition of contemporary city life, 'part of the basic circumstance of urban existence' (Robinson 2006). She argues that the potential for transformation lies on the one hand in the particular spatiality of the city (the physical 'fabric'), and on the other hand in its openness to external influences. So both their internal complexity and their external connections make cities vectors of invention, newness and change. When comparing to the rural setting, it is in the first place the multiplicity of connections to elsewhere, that make cities loci of change, through the interactions and intersections they enable (Robinson 2006).

Urban studies on the DRC have demonstrated that informal and 'non-state' urbanity is all about this kind of transformation, by some referred to as 'reinventing order' (Trefon 2004), and by others interpreted as the city reinventing itself away from the universalistic views on urbanism (De Boeck & Plissart 2004). A long history of crisis and conflict has drastically reshaped society and has created 'new' political, cultural and social urban realities. In the absence of long-term investments, by the dwindling role of the state and

the transformation from formal into informal economy, urbanism in Congo has an increasingly 'provisionary' and 'temporal' character. Socio-economic and spatial transformations have led to a new urban landscape, as "out of these transformations, many of which are improvisatory, new types of relations and exchanges, development and subsistence, forms of solidarity and resistance are produced" (Enwezor et al. 2000: 19). The development of Congolese cities towards sites of 'alternative modernity' has not only been described in postcolonial- but also in post-structuralistic terms (Myers 2011). De Boeck refers to 'post-urbanism' when describing the reality of Kinshasa, a city that, unhindered by any kind of formal industrialisation or economic development, has bypassed, redefined or smashed the (neo) colonial logics that were stamped onto its surface (De Boeck & Plissart 2004: 34). The 'new' urban landscape that emerges remains however difficult to read, as standard vocabularies seem inadequate to describe what is actually going on on the ground.

In order to fully understand the processes of urban transformation in Goma, I've chosen a number of core concepts which I will use as analytical tools to investigate the impact of crisis and conflict on urbanisation and urbanity. These parameters are: **governance, navigation, identity and landscape**. They will serve as parameters to frame and structure the global 'story' of this dissertation, they will reappear as a red line through the five central chapters of this dissertation (cf. infra), and they will thus serve to analyse Goma's significance as a borderland, a zone of opportunity, a centre of contest, a city of rebellion or a shelter of refuge. The motivation to choose these particular concepts is based on the fact that firstly, they very well reflect different levels of both political and social consequences of crisis and war in Goma, and secondly that yet they are broad notions that are not tied to the particular case study or 'African' context and thus can be applicable to comparative research. Although all of these notions certainly represent central elements of contemporary urbanism, they may not cover the whole complex reality in the field. I am aware of the possibility that in case I would have chosen to centre my analysis around the notions of 'development' or 'networks', for example, this would have shed another light on the transformative impact of crisis and conflict. Thus, these parameters certainly constitute a particular angle from which I will observe these processes of urban transformation that form the main research topic of this dissertation. In what follows, I will briefly introduce these analytical concepts, and address the more specific research questions related to them.

1.3.1. Governance

The concept of governance has proven to be a good parameter to understand the changing nature of power relations and regulatory practices and the establishment of authority in a context of state failure and conflict (Menkhaus 2006; Raeymaekers et al. 2008; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2008). Using it as a concept to capture the specific political and socio-economic realities in Goma, it is important to apply it in a non-normative way (Engel & Olsen 2005)⁸. I will not speak in terms of 'good' or 'bad'

⁸ In its origins, it is used as a normative concept, based on a functionalist and instrumentalist understanding of the state. From the outset the concept was linked to the actual exercise of proper management standards and later to the practice of 'good governance' at large (Engel & Olsen 2005: 7).

governance⁹ but instead perceive it as a set of regulations emerging out of interaction between multiple actors and institutions. In line with Blundo and Le Meur (2009), I opt for Nikolas Rose's definition of governance, as this definition immediately stresses the fact that governance is more than the relationship between the state and its citizens, and that in terms of performance it is not limited to formal state administration. Rose describes governance as "an emergent pattern or order of a social system, arising out of complex negotiations and exchanges, between 'intermediate' social actors, groups, forces, organisations, public and semi-public institutions, in which state organisations are only one – and not necessarily the most significant – amongst many others seeking to steer or manage these relations" (Rose 1999, cited in (Blundo & Le Meur 2009: 6-7). In urban studies, the concept of governance is most commonly understood as a term for getting at the shifting power dynamics of decision-making in an era when the roles of states are in flux (Myers 2011).

Processes of governance in a context of a weak state have been described in several ways: as 'ad hoc governance' (Menkhaus 2006), as 'non state political order' (Klute & von Trotha 2004), as 'real governance' (Blundo & Le Meur 2009), 'twilight institutions' (Lund 2006) and 'pirate governance' (Simone 2002a), etc.

In this dissertation, when I use the term urban governance to describe Goma's realities, this term comes close to the idea of 'hybrid governance', as proposed by Boege et al. (2009). The concept of hybrid governance or hybrid institutions enables us to take into account the straddling between the formal and informal sphere that I discussed earlier. It is contrasting with the mainstream use of the concept 'governance' which is firmly embedded in notions of stateness (which are derived from the experience of the west) (Engel & Olsen 2005). Stressing the hybrid nature of urban governance is thus in line with our moving beyond state-centrist accounts to analyse political and socio-economic regulations of a city in a context of a weak state that is organised along neo-patrimonial relations. The institutionalised interlinkage between formal and informal politics and institutions is an inherent part of the nature of the neopatrimonial state (Bayart 1996; Bratton & Van de Walle 1997; Hibou 2004). The relationship between the two logics of neopatrimonialism, the 'formal' and the 'informal' can thus be conceptualised as a mutual reinforcing one, as a mutually constitutive cycle of reproduction (Engel & Olsen 2005).

In governing the city, the state has no privileged monopolistic position as the only agency providing security, welfare and representation; it has to share authority, legitimacy, and capacity with other institutions (Boege et al. 2009)). The hybrid nature of urban governance in Goma encompasses a variety on non-state forms of order and governance, and it affirms that the formal and informal sphere do not exist in isolation from each other, but permeate each other and "give rise to different and genuine political orders that are characterised by the closely interwoven texture of their separate sources of origin" (Boege et al. 2009: 17). We will observe that domains such as security, political representation and urban planning in Goma, are being produced through different institutional arrangements.

⁹ Blundo and Le Meur have correctly stated that the disembedding of governance from its normative straitjacket is however not an easy task (Blundo & Le Meur 2009: 14).

Violent conflict in sub-Saharan Africa has produced new forms of governance beyond the state (Engel & Olsen 2005; Menkhaus 2006; Raeymaekers 2007; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2008). Dynamics of war have introduced a variety of new actors (such as armed groups, security entrepreneurs and self-defence groups) to practices of local governance. Urban governance, in this dissertation, looks at the multiple sites where practices of governance are exercised and contested, various and entangled layers of relations and a broad range of practices of governance that may involve various modes of power, as well as different scales (Lourenço-Lindell 2007). By analysing the ‘pluralism of forms of action’ in urban governance (de Sardan 2008), I will not merely focus on the delivery of public services and goods. My aim is to understand how dynamics of war have impacted on the ways in which power is diffused in the city, urban political and economic networks are regulated, and authority and control is established over the city. Next to an identification of the different actors involved, I will investigate the ways in which urban governance is produced and performed.

In the chapter dealing with Goma’s transformation into an attractive city of opportunity, the concept of urban governance will be used to understand how new emerging power groups in a context of state failure and war claim authority and control over the city. In the chapter that investigates urban dynamics of political and socio-economic contest, I will focus on the fragmented nature of urban governance in Goma. In the analysis of Goma as a centre of rebellion, I will look more specifically to the role of armed actors in processes of urban governance.

Specific research questions with regards to urban governance are: How has violent conflict enforced particular stakeholders engaged in urban governance over others? How has violent conflict impacted on local power struggles? How is urban governance exercised in a context of violent conflict? What is the internal relationship between political-economic and civil-society-actors in exercising ‘real governance’? How has conflict impacted on these relationships? If the context of crisis and war generated new forms of urban leadership and new modes of urban governance, how can we interpret them?

1.3.2. Navigation

It was the interesting outcome of a panel on ‘*navigating the urban space*’ organised by Mats Utas and Henrik Vigh on the 3rd ECAS conference in Leipzig 2009, that inspired me to use the concept of navigation to look at daily living and coping mechanisms of the urban population in a context of crisis and war. It very well captures the tactics and strategies that urban inhabitants deploy and apply to get by and build lives in a highly uncertain and unstable urban space. The concept is used here in a broad sense and implies geographic, social and economic navigation. Living and surviving in the city is about navigating places, but also situations, networks and identities. The concept very well brings to the fore the central importance of agency in my analysis. Urbanity is in the first place about people and especially in a context where institutions are weak. Simone has argued that “urbanisation, at its very core, concerns the multiplication of relationships that can exist among people and things and the way in which value can be created by enhancing the circulation of people, ideas, materials, and practices” (Simone 2010: 5). As I already mentioned, state collapse in the Congo did not at all result in a collapse of society, and the notion of navigation beautifully points at the astonishing dynamics of this local society. Despite a

context of civil war and humanitarian disaster, for several groups of the urban society, these dynamics go far beyond mere survival. Urban residents have demonstrated a remarkable inventiveness in making cities into something that, despite the prevailing conditions and odds, could work for them, could support a wide range of aspirations beyond putting food on the table (Simone 2010).

The engagement of people with their urban environment is an essential topic in my study. Through analysis of everyday practices on the very local level, I will perceive how the urban reality is shaped and reshaped from below. In dealing with the multiple challenges of urban life, navigation stands for calculating, combining, risking, failing and overcoming. Its interpretation is also closely linked to what Bilakila has described for the case of Kinshasa as the continuous ‘bargain’ of urban life (Bilakila 2004), but then applied to a conflict-setting. By navigation, crisis can be turned into opportunity.

The livelihoods analysis can offer some useful inputs to analyse coping strategies of local societies to a conflict setting on a micro-level. Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers have done the exercise for the Congolese case in their book on war and social transformation (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a).

It is however clear that the livelihoods framework, having their roots in rural studies is not well adapted to the urban context. This dissertation will occasionally refer to some of the useful elements of this framework; the concepts of social, political and economic capital for example are of interest for the analysis of daily urban living and survival strategies. We will observe that urbanisation in a conflict setting often results in ‘improvise’ or ‘make-shift’ urbanity, and generates urban livelihoods that are often provisional, unstable and extremely flexible. The conflict-setting requires a multiplication of livelihood strategies.

As Roitman has argued, disorder may be a basis for productivity, and crisis a moment of opportunity (Roitman 2001; Roitman 2004). Crisis, by definition, involves conditions in which people -including state agents- must improvise with the elements of their social and political technologies and cope with a variety of unexpected disruptions and opportunities (Greenhouse et al. 2002). The notion of navigation points at this flexibility in managing the rapidly changing urban space, and at the high levels of movement and mobility that this managing requires. Of course, these livelihoods are also marked by high levels of informality, on all different levels. In the particular context of the Congolese crisis, one has often referred to the famous ‘*article 15*’, or ‘*système D*’¹⁰, standing as the guiding principle in the daily informal survival strategies ‘to compensate for the overwhelming failures of the post-colonial state’ (Trefon 2004) in a situation where one can no longer count on the formal government. ‘*Débrouillez vous!*’ became understood as an injunction to get by without the state, to engage in ‘self-development’ through constructing not only ‘parallel’ economic livelihoods but even parallel infrastructural and welfare support mechanisms (Streiffeler 1994, cited in: (Jackson 2002: 522). In sum, *Système D* has been seen as a space of new politic-cultural as well as economic possibility, one in which people are taking matters into their own hands (MacGaffey 1991).

¹⁰ Referring to the satirical fifteenth article of Mobutu’s constitution, also ‘*débouillardise*’, assigning the population to ‘fend for themselves’.

While emphasizing on agency, we have to be cautious not to overemphasise this agency. By applying navigation as an analytical tool to look at processes of urban transformation, the extreme contrasts and discrepancies that are inherent to contemporary urbanism in the Congo, will come to the surface. We will observe that in a situation of violent conflict and humanitarian crisis, the space to navigate can under certain circumstances be very limited. As such, in these urban livelihoods, 'remarkable forces of dynamism and transformation' mix with 'remarkable blockages and resistance' (Myers 2011: 13). Urban development in a context of conflict and crisis has created numerous new opportunities but also enforced urban fault lines and created new contrasts. Opportunities are not equally open to everyone, as many urban inhabitants remain stuck in extremely vulnerable, precarious and temporary livelihoods. While informal 'improvisatory' activities provide an important underpinning of individual livelihood for the majority of urban residents, they can also facilitate the very highly privatised and increasingly substantial accumulation of the few (Simone 2002a: 52).

Not only in my analysis of Goma as a city of opportunity, the concept of navigation will be key. It will also serve to understand local strategies of 'managing' a contested urban political and socio-economic space. In the chapter on the transformation of Goma into a centre of refuge, the concept will again come to the forefront while analysing the urban survival strategies of displaced persons. Finally, in the chapter that deals with urban border dynamics, it will be demonstrated how navigating the borderland is an important feature of particular groups of Goma's inhabitants.

To find out how people at the micro-level of urban society cope with a situation of crisis and protracted war, the following research questions have been formulated: How has the changing socio-political and economic city profile (as a result of crisis) impacted on the 'manoeuvre-space' of social and economic navigation? Has the context of war created opportunities and socio-economic empowerment, and if yes, to whom? Or has it created powerlessness and exclusion? How have urban inhabitants adapted their income-strategies to a context of war? How has a protracted situation of war impacted on the societal fabric of the city? How did war increase or decrease urban inhabitants' social and economic capital? How is the city's border position used in urban livelihoods and socio-economic navigation? What is the role of transborder interaction and how have crisis and conflict influenced this interaction? Are there emerging forms of 'conflict-entrepreneurialism' to be observed in the city?

1.3.3. Identity

Considering processes of urban transformation, I will dedicate special attention to the formation, use and mobilisation of identity in the city. Identity forms a crucial element in local social production of the urban space, and the focus on identity can offer us original insights on the consequences of war on the local society. In social-anthropological research on African cities, it has been pointed out that identities are multiple, hybrid and flexible (De Boeck et al. 2010; Murray & Myers 2006; Myers 2011; Simone 1998; Simone 2004; Simone 2005). The openness and complexity of the urban scene and the quality of the city as a '*carrefour*' of people, cultures and things, offers a variety of identities compared to the rural setting. In the city, plural and 'patchwork' identities are the norm (Murray & Myers 2006). The dynamic character of identity as a process (Brubaker &

Cooper 2000) and as a practice (Barth 1969; Giddens 1991) deserves special attention. As a process, identity is emergent, never complete or fixed, but rather always in the making; as a practice, it is something we 'do' rather than something we 'are' (Bekker & Leildé 2006). I will observe that identities and identity formation in Congo's peripheral urban centres are the outcome of local dynamics as well as broader regional changes. The use and significance of identities is constantly redefined (Doom & Gorus 2000), and they are always the result of both self-perception and perception by others (Malkki 1992). They are thus partly a matter of choice by an individual or a group (Martin 1995) but in this respect they are also a means of labelling by outsiders. In current literature about identity processes in Eastern Congo, emphasis is most often put on the politics of identity, where, from an instrumentalistic viewpoint, identities are seen as a tool for political mobilisation 'from above', by the political or military leadership (Jackson 2006b; Van Hoyweghen & Vlassenroot 2000). Although recognizing the manipulation of identities by political actors, this dissertation additionally aims to look at identity processes from a more 'grass-roots' perspective. Mobilisation is a central notion in understanding the role of identity in a conflict setting. But as we will observe, this mobilisation does not always have to be political in its aim and can also be part of daily socio-economic actions, urban livelihoods and 'navigation' as described above. The strategic use of identities is well described by Mbembe: 'the postcolonial 'subject' mobilises not just a single 'identity' but several fluid identities which, by their very nature, must be constantly 'revised' in order to achieve maximum instrumentality and efficacy, as and when required' (Mbembe 1992, cited in (Werbner & Ranger 1996: 25).

Further, in this dissertation I will not hold on to 'classical' identity categories such as ethnicity and nationality, I will analyse urban social identity processes in all their complexity. Urban identities in Goma contain different layers, and besides their identification with a common ethnic or linguistic background, urban inhabitants may also position themselves in urban society by constructing identities derived from their connection to various other socio-geographic 'scales' (from the very local, neighbourhood-level to the national and regional level). To make a living in Goma, social networks and group participation or collaboration are crucial, as they serve to improve income, to mobilise support and to facilitate participation and access to all kinds of socio-economic and economic resources available (Lourenço-Lindell 2002; Simone 2010). Identity plays an important role in these social networks and it is applied to maximise opportunities and resources (Meagher 2005; Meagher 2010). For example, a Hutu trader in Goma may 'exploit' his ethnic identity to ensure the necessary social support to secure himself and his household, at the same time he may use his Banyarwanda identity to assure political representation at an urban and provincial level, to avoid intimidation or suspicion he may stress his national, Congolese identity, while in his transborder activities it may be more advantageous use the regional or transborder nature of his identity. Finally, he may identify with the urban setting to stress his belonging to a modern/cosmopolitan environment (in contrast to the urban areas).

Going beyond the narrow focus of ethnicity, does not mean that I will deny the central significance of ethnic identity in social relations and processes of identification of the self and the other amongst the urban society. In a context of far-reaching crisis, ethnic solidarity becomes an essential element in informal urban livelihoods. State failure and

political disintegration have created a situation in which ethnicity not only constitutes a crucial social frame, but also often forms the only remaining form of protection. This is one of the main reasons why ethnic identity has a very high mobilisation potential, especially in times of violent conflict. There has been much debate on the relationship between war and ethnicity in the DRC, and the role of ethnic identity in processes of mobilisation, contestation and violence. I join the idea that rather than being a cause of violence, the reference to ethnic identity constitutes for both actors and victims of war a part of strategies to cope with a complex situation of crisis, competition and violence (Lemarchand 2009; Vlassenroot 2006a). It will be demonstrated that violence has influenced both processes of mobilisation of identities, both 'from above' and 'from below'. I will investigate how dynamics of violence have reshaped urban identities, their use and significance, and how war has impacted on the ways urban inhabitants identify themselves and others. For example, in the chapter on Goma as a city of contest, it will be demonstrated that in the context of the intense competition over economic, political and social urban space created by war, identity often becomes a matter of rights, of 'citizenship' and 'belonging'. This will also become clear when dealing with the integration of internally displaced people in the city when we will see how identity is connected to dynamics of political and socio-economic inclusion and exclusion. I will also pay special attention to 'discourse' and 'narratives', and to the way identity is referred to through interaction and political mobilisation, by the use of historical narratives. The chapter on border dynamics offers an original perspective on urban identities, as in the particular geographic, political and socio-economic setting of the borderland, the different 'scales' of identity come together in an interesting way.

More specific research questions have defined my analysis of urban identities: How are different dimensions of identity (ethnic, urban, regional, national) used in daily survival strategies by the urban inhabitants? How are identities 'applied' in order to achieve access to political, economic and social advantages or opportunities? What have been the repercussions of protracted conflict on the redefinitions of social relations and boundaries based on identity? Does war lead to the emphasis of particular dimensions of identity over others? How are dynamics of conflict and contest socially translated through urban identity? How does regional violence along ethnic identity lines impact the local urban society? How does war impact on processes of political and socio-economic exclusion along ethnic lines or other 'scales' of identity? How does conflict create new categories of identification of oneself and others? What is the significance of the city's border situation on identity processes? How does national and regional identity play out in the urban 'margins'? How does the presence of the geographical border impact on mental borders amongst the local population and how has violent conflict impacted?

1.3.4. Landscape

The last level on which I will analyse processes of urban transformation is that of the geographic urban space. Spatial processes are at the core of urbanisation, and although not having any background in geography, I estimated it inevitable to include it in my study. The spatial translation of political and socio-economic dynamics appeared extremely fascinating to assess the impact of crisis and conflict on urban development. I preferred the term 'landscape' over that of 'space' because more than just integrating the research

in (time and) space, I wanted to emphasise the geographic notion of spatiality. The relationship between the physical landscape and social, economic and political dynamics come about in a fascinating way on the urban level. Many inspiring works on human (political, social, cultural) geography has been produced on cities (Amin & Thrift 2002; Knox & Pinch 2000; Lefebvre 1991; Lindner 2006; Taylor 2007; Werbner & Ranger 1996). The relation between social and spatial processes is of course complex. On the one hand, it is evident that the geographical space is partly defined by social structures and practices. On the other hand, the social is also spatially constructed¹¹. People shape the places around them, just as much as places themselves influence social behaviour and actual practice (Ben Arrous & Ki-Zerbo 2009). Through the different chapters, I will thus investigate the interaction between urban inhabitants and their physical environment, looking at urban dynamics of “the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes” (Soja 1989: 136). The urban landscape (referred to in urban geography as ‘cityscape’ or ‘townscape’) both produces and is the product of dynamics of social and political transformation (Beall 2008). The physical urban morphology can give us interesting insights in the urban transformation that is our main study object. Dynamics of crisis and conflict on the urban level will thus also be read through their spatial effects.

By our focus on the urban geographies of conflict and crisis I will look at different aspects. One of them is the territorialisation of power, which will for example be developed in my analysis of the spatial outcomes of power strategies of the urban elites. Other aspects are, the spatial translation of local patterns of contest and conflict, the use and function of the urban landscape in local livelihoods, the spatial impacts of informalisation and the impact of violence on the reorganisation of the cityscape. Since the relation between urban inhabitants and space is central in this focus on the urban landscape, the notion of mobility is key. I will thus also look at dynamics of territorialisation and de-territorialisation (emplacement and displacement) of the urban population in a context of violent conflict. These dynamics will be central in our analysis of Goma as a centre of refuge, but they will also return when investigating urban transborder dynamics. For the specific case of the Congolese conflict, the territoriality or geography of war has only been analysed focussing on the issue of conflicts over (rural) land. It has been broadly acknowledged that land issues (access to land and land tenure) are at the core of the Congolese conflict. In this dissertation I will extend this focus to the urban level, by paying special attention to dynamics of conflict over the access to and control over the urban land. This will be developed more particularly in the analysis of Goma as a zone of contest. Also in the urban setting, land is an important asset in livelihoods and an important element in social and economic capital. Specific research questions related to this concept of landscape are: How is the physical cityscape used in strategies of power and control by the leading urban elites (state- and non-state actors)? What is the role of space and physical landscape in dynamics of urban ‘real’ governance? How are spatial projects used by urban elites to shape urban order? How are local dynamics of conflict and contest translated in geographic terms in the city? How has a situation of violence and war impacted on the use, occupation and organisation of urban space? What has been the

¹¹ “Social reality is not just coincidentally spatial, existing in space; it is presuppositionally and ontologically spatial. There is no unspatialised social reality. There are no aspatial social processes” (Soja 1996: 46).

impact of widespread insecurity on people's investment in the urban space? What has been the geographic translation of urban dynamics of economic informalisation? What has been the outcome of the informal allocation and use of urban land? How do processes of socio-spatial differentiation come about in an urban conflict-context?

1.4. Outline of the thesis

The remainder of this dissertation is structured as follows.

Chapter 2 will deal with the choice of the case-study, with the methodology used for this research and with the different challenges and difficulties related to ethnographic fieldwork in a conflict setting.

Chapter 3 and 4 will provide a detailed contextualisation of the case-study. Chapter 3 presents Goma's historical evolution from the early colonial period until present. Further, it situates the city's evolution in the wider context of urban development in the eastern periphery of the DRC in general. Chapter 4 gives a detailed overview of Goma's current socio-economic, political and spatial profile.

Chapter 5 to 9 are built up around 5 central themes (one theme per chapter). Each theme represents a different 'face' of the city, or a different aspect of the city's current identity, as it is perceived by its inhabitants. The choice of this five themes/chapters, which I have called my '*cinq chantiers*', alluding to the famous national reconstruction projects of president Joseph Kabila, was based on the ways in which current political and socio-economic trends of Goma were identified by the urban inhabitants. They presented Goma as a city of opportunity, a city of contest, a city of rebellion, a city of refuge and a transborder space. I have used these 5 themes as umbrella's under which I organised the findings of my research. Each of these chapters will start with a short reference to the related academic debates, and will be structured around the analytical concepts of governance, navigation, identity and landscape.

Chapter 5 discusses the image of the city of Goma as a zone of opportunity. It departs from the paradoxical evolution of Goma into a dynamic, attractive, promising 'city of newness and development' in a general context of war, humanitarian disaster and political crisis. The main argument that I make in this chapter is that the political and economic autonomisation and self-regulation in a general situation of disorder and violence created new socio-economic openings, opportunities and forms of agency and legitimacy. I will investigate how crisis is turned into possibility, and will therefore focus on coping strategies of the ruling power groups as well as the ordinary urban citizens.

In chapter 6, I will then argue that apart from a zone of opportunity, the city is also a theatre of fierce political and socio-economic contest, and that these patterns of contestation are reinforced by the situation of violent conflict. Additionally, war and violence have sharpened fault lines amongst the urban population. This chapter will demonstrate that in the absence of a central authority, the city becomes a highly fragmented space, where conflicting forces are competing for power and control over the economic, social and political urban space.

Chapter 7, 'city of rebellion', will present the city as the urban centre of war, insurgency and violence. I will investigate the impact of the protracted violence, militarisation and the

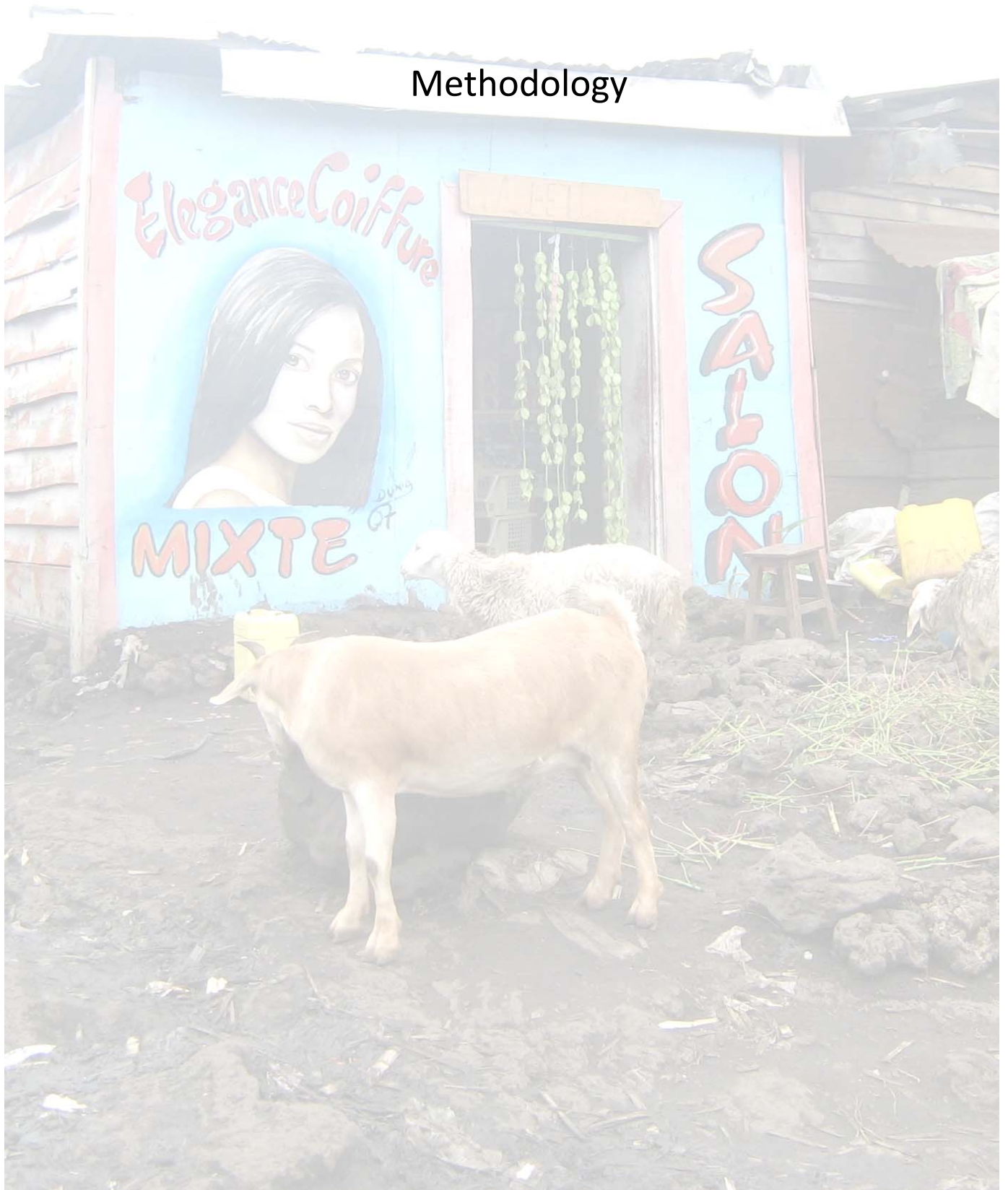
growing authority and autonomy of armed actors in urban governance and local practices of political and socio-economic regulation. I argue that a situation of protracted conflict and state weakness has turned armed actors into key urban power figures and has reinforced the function of coercion and violence in strategies of power, access and control, on both governance as well as grass-roots level.

Chapter 8, 'city of refuge', focuses on the significance of the city of Goma as a safe haven and a zone of security and hospitality. This chapter highlight a particular dimension of violent conflict that has had a huge impact on urban development: that of forced internal displacement. I will investigate the local urban demographic, socio-economic and spatial impact of dynamics of conflict migration, and will analyse how these dynamics have created a profound reconfiguration of the urban space.

Chapter 9 centralises the significance of the city as an urban borderland, and analyses the role of transborder dynamics in a context of a weak state and violence. The city's border location and its proximity with the neighbouring country Rwanda is of such a determining importance in its political, socio-economic and spatial evolution, that I decided to dedicate a special chapter to it. More specifically I will focus on the impact of conflict on urban border-dynamics (transborder trade, social and economic interaction and exchange) and on the changing role and functions of the border for the urban inhabitants. The significance of the border in all its complexities will be analysed (the border as a resource, as a frontier, as a demarcation line and a point of separation as well as interaction).

In the final chapter, some general conclusions will be formulated as well as suggestions for further research.

Methodology



2.1. Choice of the case-study

When my supervisors and me wrote the research proposal for this dissertation, the original plan was to perform a comparative study of two cities located in Eastern Congo. We choose to take Goma and Kisangani as my two case-studies for several reasons. Firstly, both cities are situated in areas that since the start of the armed conflict had been affected by violence and war. Secondly, they are both peripheral cities, remote from the political centre, marked by semi-autonomous urban development. The fact that one of them is located on the border and the other is not, offered an interesting opportunity to compare different dynamics and notions of peripheral urbanity 'in the margins'. Further, the comparison between Goma and Kisangani promised to be particularly challenging as it seemed that these two cities had experienced a rather opposite evolution. Kisangani, a flourishing economic trading centre during colonial times, underwent a strong regression. Its decline went along with the process of state collapse. The dynamics of war further destroyed the city and turned it into a ghost town. Goma shows us a very contrasting dynamic picture, as this city knew a spectacular growth and development during the last fifteen years, and has transformed into a 'new' attractive economic hub.

Since in Goma no in-depth urban research had been carried out before¹², it was in this city that I started my research. After a first stay of three months in the field, it became however obvious that the security conditions (in the context of the rapidly changing politico-military situation at that time) were more challenging than expected. Additionally, unfortunate loss of all the data collected during this first fieldwork period caused a considerable delay in the planning. After a second and third mission to Goma and the observation that the circumstances required much more time to get to a profound understanding of local socio-political transformations, I decided, in agreement with my supervisors, to abandon the comparative aspect of my study and instead to stick to one case. This decision of course meant a serious re-orientation of my research design. It also meant a loss of 'scope', as I am well aware that the comparative focus would have put much of my findings in a broader perspective. But at the same time, the decision opened the opportunity to bring the ethnographic analysis to a deeper level and to unravel local processes in more detail. Until present, I do not regret this decision, as it has enabled me to perform a truly in-depth analysis that would never have been possible if I were in a situation in which I had to divide the time spent between two different research locations. I still hope, however, that one day my research can be extended and 'lifted-up' to a comparative stage, by myself or by others.

During the four years of my doctoral studies, Goma was regularly on the news. The armed rebellion of Laurent Nkunda between 2007 and 2009 drew many journalists to this town and brought the city again at the centre of the armed conflict in the Kivu region. These dynamics confirmed the present-day relevance of our choice for this particular case-study. Despite the increasing political economic and military importance of, Goma, until today no

¹² With the exception of Verhoeve (2003; 2004). The city of Kisangani had been object to a little bit more academic attention (MacGaffey 1992; MacGaffey 1982; Omasombo 2005; Verhaegen & Ngalula 1984).

profound social or politico-anthropological ethnographic research has been carried out on this city.

2.2. An urban 'monography' as method

The choice for one case-study determined the form of my analysis as an urban 'monography' or a political-anthropological¹³ ethnography of one particular city to reveal the relationship between dynamics of violent conflict and dynamics of urbanisation and urbanity in the Eastern Congolese periphery. By taking the city as my analytical unit -which implies both an ethnography *in* the city as well as an ethnography *of* the city-, I aimed at an approach that was as integral as possible, covering both local and regional processes. The city, as it unfolds itself in all its complexity, is the outcome of internal dynamics and external influences; *"la ville est, en partie, déterminée par l'extérieur mais l'apport externe et les transformations qu'il engendre sont toujours réappropriés, reconfigurés, réinvestis localement en fonction des logiques qui leurs préexistent"* (Hilgers 2009: 50). An urban 'monography' provides the possibility to demonstrate the full contribution of internal, localised dynamics that generate socio-political transformations.

The starting point of my analysis was the city of Goma as it is today, its current identity as perceived from inside and outside, and its political and economic national and regional function. From this perspective, this ethnography devotes special attention to the local perceptions of the urban inhabitants, in order to 'read the city from below' (Simone 2005) and to understand the city through the eyes of those who are part of it (Bertrand & Dubresson 1997). But as my study focuses on dynamics of transformation, an important part of the research thus demands the reconstruction of local history, through narratives. My approach considers the everyday production and reproduction of the urban space as a process of urbanisation from above as well as from below, the outcome of state-regulated planning and regulation, as well as local grass-roots initiatives. When I zoom in on the local impact of dynamics of crisis and conflict, I will thus treat its effects on these different levels. Given the context (as I described it earlier) of a weak state and of a semi-autonomous and highly informal development, it is particularly interesting to take as an analytical starting point the everyday urban life and living strategies of ordinary people. Yet these micro-level findings always have to be mirrored against the broader political and economic framework.

The spatial and temporal scope of this urban monography is defined as follows. Despite the importance of the urban-rural relationship and the connection of the city to its rural hinterlands, my research remains rather restricted in this respect. All the fieldwork periods took place inside the urban agglomeration, and apart from a few occasional 'trips' to

¹³ It took me some time to get this political-anthropological balance right where I wanted it. After a Masters in African Languages and Cultures, I initially felt a little bit an outlier at the Faculty of Political and Social Science. Despite several optional courses during my Masters and an additional Masters in Conflict and Development studies, I remained strongly attracted to a (rather narrow) social-anthropological reasoning. Through the years, however, an intense and comprehensive study of political theory on state processes and violent conflict, has enriched my academic horizon and has made that today, I can (proudly) call myself a political anthropologist. This -personal- evolution was reflected through the evolution of the focus of my research. Apart from social and political anthropology, this urban ethnography also integrates notions of political and human geography.

Goma's rural surroundings, I did not spend much time out of town. The main reason was the general security situation which made these trips not only complex and time-consuming but also very risky undertakings. In town, I tried to cover as much as different districts and neighbourhoods as possible in my research. I met with all the different *chefs de quartier*, and divided my time and encounters over different places. Inevitably, however, I spent much more time in particular places than others, often because of very practical reasons (these places including my residential area, or the areas where the universities were located). With regard to the temporal limitations of my research, as my study investigates the local impact of violent conflict, I concentrate on the period starting from the early 1990s until today. The announcement of the multi-party system in 1990 and the mobilisation of ethnicity that resulted from it, laid the basis for internal tensions and conflicts that would later on be regionalised through the different Congolese wars. The crucial character of this particular moment in Goma's history of violence and conflict will be further demonstrated in the following chapters. Of course, since my study investigates processes of transformation, it has to include a picture of what the 'pre-war' situation of Goma was like. Current dynamics thus have to be framed in their proper historical context. The core of my analysis, however, deals with the contemporary dynamics.

In this dissertation, I tried to provide an urban ethnography that is as 'complete' as possible, presenting a comprehensive and integral picture of the city of Goma as it is today. As Hilgers noted, aiming at an integrative approach does not mean that the ethnography includes all possible features, processes and dynamics, as this would be way too ambitious and simply unrealistic; "*l'ethnographie est totale, non pas parce qu'elle est exhaustive, mais parce qu'elle rejoint le projet d'une ethnographie intégrative visant à rendre compte des principes au cœur d'un système général de représentations et d'actions*" (Hilgers 2009: 57). I estimated that by elaborating my investigations along my '5 chantiers', I could cover the essence of urban transformation in a situation of crisis and conflict. However, the choice of these 5 themes remains a personal choice, that inevitable implies other themes I did not choose to focus on. For instance, I was repeatedly asked why I did not elaborate more on 'hot' topics such as sexual violence or natural resources. Besides the fact that I did not want to be 'yet another' researcher travelling to Goma to investigate rape and 'blood-cell phones', time constraints forced me to make a choice. Issues such as the role of associational life and urban social networks, I have touched upon but did not elaborate, these are extremely interesting topics, but merit a PhD on their own. As already mentioned, my Congolese informants and friends in Goma helped me to make my choices, as they identified what they saw as the most qualifying and determining dynamics characterising their contemporary city.

2.3. Ethnographic research methods

2.3.1. Long-term stays in 'the field'

Given the focus on micro-level dynamics of crisis and conflict, long-term fieldwork in Goma was an indispensable cornerstone of my research. I am strongly convinced that several long research stays in the field are necessary to elaborate an in-depth study on local urban dynamics in Eastern Congo and as Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers have argued,

are essential to gain deeper insights into how local societies understand their changing political, social, cultural and economic environment and how they try to deal with it (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a). An essential 'technique' of doing ethnographic fieldwork in Goma, was my residing and living in the city. The integration in the local setting as a (temporary yet regular and dedicated) resident, enabled me to grasp particularities of the local reality which would otherwise have remained unapproachable. Living and dwelling in the city and being confronted with everyday issues and challenges as experienced by urban inhabitants, has certainly been a crucial way to achieve a better, locally informed understanding of what Goma is today.

2.3.2. Fieldwork techniques

Although on some occasions quantitative methods were used (surveys conducted that consisted of closed questions) for the main part of my fieldwork I applied techniques of qualitative research to collect the necessary information. These included structured and semi-structured or open-ended interviews, focus group discussions and (participatory) observation. Interviews were held with a whole range of different actors, and very much varied in style, quality and time. Sometimes I simply got very short answers, sometimes the informant would just start to talk, ignoring part of my questions, sometimes the interview evolved into lengthy conversations or even animated discussions. Time varied from 20 minutes to three hours. Some of the interviews were recorded, others were not. In both cases I took notes. Being used to record all interviews (as I did during former research in Kinshasa), I had to adapt my way of taking notes, when I quickly realised that in the different context of Goma, people were not in the same way at ease with their interviews being recorded. The presence of the tape recorder could drastically change the setting of the interview. It created more distance, and obviously it discouraged people to talk more openly about politically sensitive issues. Further, it introduced a strong sense of formality, which determined the nature of the encounter as well as the kind of discourse that was produced (to the standards of this 'formal setting', people would for example try to leave out details estimated not relevant, while they often contained much useful information). When we did record the interviews on tape, this was mainly the case with second- third occasion interviews (most of the informants were interviewed more than once), when sufficient confidence had been created¹⁴. Part of the interviews took place in French, others in Swahili, with the help of a translator. When I literally quote from interviews, I will stick to the original citations in French. Some quotes do however appear in English; this is the case when during the interview in Swahili I had been taking notes simultaneously in Dutch, which I afterwards completed with the translators' help. As these notes thus appear in Dutch in my notebooks, while quoting in my text, I preferred to translate them directly to English. Before starting the interviews, I always provided my informants with as much information as possible on my research. At all times I carried a hand-out of my research (in French and Swahili) with me and always left my contact details. I recognise that despite my efforts, it would be naïve to believe that all the informants had an exact idea of the full scope of my research in the same way I did. After

¹⁴ Respondants distrusted the recording of their talks, as in their eyes it challenges the confidentiality of the exchanged information.

the interviews, informants were explicitly asked if their interview could be quoted and, if yes, under what reference they wished to be quoted.

I used observation as an additional method. I do not enter the discussion whether or not this observation could be called 'participatory' when you are just a foreigner that only stays around for a couple of months. Observation could especially add some additional insights to daily informal activities. For example the many hours I spent in the *boutiques* and *dépôts* in the commercial district of *Birere*, enabled me to gather information that could not have been extracted from interviews. During these observations I took field notes, to which I will repeatedly refer in this text (mentioning most often 'informal conversations').

Focus group discussions, where different actors from a stakeholder group interacted on a number of specific questions, generated much useful information. These discussions interestingly revealed patterns of division and contest within a group, and further offered the opportunity to observe the formation of collective discourses. Finally, they enabled the participants to evaluate and re-evaluate their own perceptions. Of course, not all discussions worked out smoothly, and some focus group discussions were more successful than others. These focus group discussions may not be confused with the workshops I organised at several occasions, at which actors (so called 'representatives') were invited to discuss particular aspects of my research. A total of 122 interviews¹⁵, 16 focus group discussions and 6 workshops were conducted.

Finally, some other techniques were used in a sporadic and additional manner. I already mentioned a survey. This concerned a questionnaire on the socio-economic situation of households that was conducted in different neighbourhoods, to get some general information on the socio-economic characteristics of these neighbourhoods and to reveal parallels and contrasts between the central and peripheral urban districts. I also sporadically used the technique of 'mental mapping', where inhabitants of several districts were asked to draw a visual representation of their environment (for example by indicating the main spaces of economic, political and socio-cultural action and significance in their district). These maps gave me additional information on the use of the urban space, and on spatial dynamics such as for example gentrification, insecurity, etc.

Further, I consulted much secondary literature in Goma. The annual reports that are produced on a local level by the district chiefs, provided a treasure of information on the evolution of very local political, socio-economic, and spatial dynamics. Including population censuses, overviews of local economic activities, inventories of conflicts, and often extremely detailed information on the local security situation, these reports were very valuable resources to reconstruct the city's recent social history. I also consulted numerous bachelor- and master theses produced by local students of several universities and colleges in Goma. Their quality and academic value varied significantly. Reading these papers proved however very instructive, not only because of the topics they addressed¹⁶ but the choice of their topics as such indicated very well the relevancy of particular

¹⁵ This number does not include the many informal 'conversations' of which I did take notes. It includes the interviews that were more or less planned and prepared.

¹⁶ In these papers, the city of Goma very often functioned as the specific case-study of their analysis.

problems and dynamics in Goma at a given moment in time. Finally, I also used the local media channels (newspapers and websites) to stay informed about the on-going events.

In this dissertation, each of the chapters will provide a short overview of the different stakeholder groups and actors that have been interviewed, as well as the additional sources that have been consulted to provide the data used for that particular chapter.

2.3.3. Stakeholder groups and local partners

During my fieldwork, I engaged with a wide range of groups of urban stakeholders, aiming at getting insight from different actors that, more or less could be representative for the 'urban society' as a whole. Actors from the political, economic and social urban scene were selected, at different 'levels' (ranging from the institutional level to the very local household level). To sum up the different actors I have worked with: local government authorities from the provincial and municipal level, district chiefs, staff of urban state services (urbanisation, planning, habitation, cadastre), security actors (formal security forces, private security companies, informal self-defence groups), local and international non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, government- and non-government research institutions, churches, informal 'pressure groups', international development institutions, MONUSCO, university students, economic entrepreneurs, small traders, smugglers, vendors, transporters, displaced persons.

The identification of stakeholder groups was made during the first two fieldwork periods, in cooperation with my local supervisor, my research assistant and a group of students I worked with, but some informants were also identified through a 'snow-ball' sampling approach (when respondents refer the researcher to other respondents).

Through the years, an intensive collaboration has been developed with several state and non-state institutions. The independent regional research centre POLE INSTITUTE (with whom our department in Ghent has a long standing contact) has to be mentioned explicitly as our local partner. One of the directors of this institute, Onesphore Sematumba, acted as my local supervisor. Further, I worked together with a research assistant, a just graduated university student from the Faculty of Political Science. The help of this assistant was indispensable for translating, for being introduced to stakeholder groups that were difficult to access, and for very practical issues such as transport, hosting, ... and recreation. Furthermore, a group of ten students has been selected from the two main universities of Goma, *Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs* (ULPGL) and *Université de Goma* (UNIGOM) to assist me in different aspects of my research (identifying informants, constituting focus groups, carrying out surveys). These students were enrolled at the faculties of Political and Economic Science and all had rather good experience in qualitative and quantitative research methods. During a few additional 'training' sessions, the selected group of students was further prepared to cooperate in my research.

2.3.4. A brief overview of the fieldwork periods

The 12 months I spent in 'the field' were spread over seven research stays in Goma. These stays varied from two weeks to three months. At two occasions, my stay was interrupted for safety reasons.

My first stay (July-September 2007) was an 'explorative' one, to familiarise myself with the area, to refine the research framework, the objectives and the research questions, to introduce myself in the local research- and other networks and to gather relevant local documentation. The main part of the results of this first field stay (interviews, notes, documentation) got lost during a robbery.

The second field trip was a short stay of two weeks (January-February 2008) during which I collected data to reconstruct a general political, socio-economic and spatial city profile. During this period I also consulted the local archives of the provincial and municipal government.

During the third research stay (September–November 2008), I focused on two particular aspects of my study. On the one hand I analysed the impact of the presence of the international 'humanitarian sector' (NGOs, humanitarian organisations, MONUC, international development institutions etc.) on the spatial, economic and socio-political transformation of the city. On the other hand, I concentrated my research on the popular commercial district of Birere as a particular case-study to investigate local dynamics of informal urban livelihoods.

This case-study was further elaborated during the fourth research period (April-May 2009), and it was extended to investigate the broader significance of border dynamics on Goma's socio-economic development. Two other objectives of this fieldwork period were the identification of the commercial urban elite, and a comparative study on the general socio-economic conditions in the central and peripheral urban districts.

The fifth fieldwork stay from October until December 2009 had as first objective to analyse the dynamics of non-state urban governance in Goma, by investigating the networks of interlinked urban political, economic, social and military elites, and their strategies of mobilisation and redistribution of political and economic resources and power. The second objective was to understand and describe the socio-spatial and economic impact of forced displacement on the city of Goma and its inhabitants.

During the last long stay in Goma, (April – July 2010) I focused on the role of armed actors in urban governance and the impact of militarisation on the use and significance of violence in the city, as well as on local patterns of conflict and contestation between different urban elites.

Finally, a field visit was conducted during August-September 2011 to present the results of my research to the local partners in Goma.

During the four years of my study, the socio-political situation in Goma changed significantly. The politico-military events of the past four years dramatically changed the city in many aspects. This rapidly changing situation posed a serious challenge to framing, planning and implementation of my research. Dynamics that I studied in 2007, for instance, could have changed to such an extent, that in 2010, they required a profound reinvestigation. But obviously it also provided the opportunity to put these dynamics in a broader perspective and to capture these dynamics of transformation from nearby, as I had been directly observing and to a certain extent experiencing these transformations myself.

Of course, as is the case for any scholar who is engaged in long-term fieldwork, a continuous redefinition of the framework and objectives of the study was a natural part of the evolution of the research process, and much flexibility, adaptability and improvisation had to be displayed during this evolution. New insights arising from the field were integrated in the research framework, which carried me along many side tracks and unforeseen pathways. More than the rapidly changing context, it undoubtedly was the instability and unpredictability -which is an intrinsic feature of a conflict-affected area- that formed the biggest difficulty to deal with while carrying out the ethnographic research in the field.

2.4. Interaction between the researcher and the research 'subject'

I will not dwell too long on the subject of ethnography in all its complexities and challenges. I will just say a few words about a particular aspect which I believe is of key importance and which laid on the basis of a continuous self-reflection during my study: the relationship between the researcher and its research subject. Rather than a universal truth, the result of my research, just like all research in general, is a personal interpretation of the world I studied. This world was interpreted according to the theoretical frameworks I used, and my personal political, social cultural background, vision, perception, questions, prejudices etc. (in other words, according to the personality of the researcher without which the information would be meaningless (Cerwonka & alkki 2007). As most of the data I used in my analysis were obtained through interviews with local stakeholders, the relationship between myself and my research 'subjects' was definitely one of active interaction instead of passive observation. As such, it was important to constantly remind myself of the fact that I was not just observing or describing social realities, I took an active part in constructing these realities. These interactions with the research field were thus clearly productive processes and were created through a relationship of strong mutual influence. It was obvious that the research subjects had their own perception of what I did, and why and how I did it, and of course this perception affected their responses. The influencing thus occurred from both sides, which made our exchanges a dialectic process and conscious social performance, with each one aware of the others presence and intentionally orientating to one another (Cicourel 1964; May 2002; Seidman 1998). As I will explain further on in this chapter, it was extremely important to try to understand how I was perceived, understood and 'categorised' as a researcher, in the particular social context of Goma.

Maybe even more important than being aware that the research subjects are active participants in the research process, is being aware of the power relations that take part in the interaction between the researcher and the research subject. Once I had a discussion with one of my local supervisors. We were in Pretoria, on an international meeting on the security sector reform in the DRC. After a whole day of presentations and discussions, this supervisor started to explain to me the way he (as a Congolese) felt about this kind of international meetings, where people from all over the world gather in a fancy hotel for a couple of days to discuss about the problems of his country. At a certain moment he called the Congo a 'field' cultivated by all kinds of curious anthropologists, political analysts, economists etc., and he sarcastically reminded me of the fact that, like all the others present in the room, he and I owed our job to the problems in his country. More than the

fact of being part of this club of people cultivating the field of Congolese problems or even building my career on these problems, I was worried about the unequal power relations in which this cultivation took place. Uncountable are the moments during my study, that I felt terribly uneasy about the distorted power balance in which my encounters with the study field took place. I vividly remember the times that unpleasant feelings took possession of me being involved in a kind of research process that remained quite post-colonial in a sense. I could not help but feel like a spoiled, wealthy anthropologist, free to travel all over the world, free to choose to end up in a war-torn city in the midst of a humanitarian crisis, being able to do this great work I like, being able to disappear when I wanted, gaining my monthly salary while writing articles on Congo's problems that, I feared, almost no one would consider to read. I often wondered if it would have been easier to stay in peace with my conscience if I would have chosen to study plants or bacteria, instead of social processes, thus involving people. I also wondered, if one day I met a Congolese PhD student investigating the local impacts of state failure in Brussels, this would help me to frame my research in some kind of 'decolonised' sense. However, I guess a conditional element to attain something like a decolonisation of (social) science, lies in the continuous self-reflexion of the researcher on its position within these power relations and not to overestimate his or her own power, of course. Indeed, although we decide in our offices on the production of knowledge on the DRC and its 'problems', the moment we are in the field, we are completely handed over to our informants, who have the power to tell or not tell us what we want, to fool us, to decide whether we succeed or fail.

Obviously, this interaction between the researcher and research 'subject' evokes some other, crucial ethical questions. With my colleagues in Ghent, we often discussed what to do with the local expectations towards the researcher. In the interaction with our respondents, we are often confronted with their high expectations with regards to the 'improvement of their often difficult situation'. This was very pertinent while interviewing for example displaced people in Goma living in extremely poor and precarious conditions. The question 'what can you eventually do for us (in return)' was a difficult and frustrating one to deal with. I was always honest: in my current position I could undertake almost nothing that would have a direct impact on the improvement of their conditions or that could result in immediate support. Stressing that a better understanding of current evolutions of their setting would in the long term hopefully lead to better governance strategies and policy implementations often seemed, in this particular context, a far too thin and abstract objective. In other contexts, however, these expectations could be dealt with in a slightly more fulfilling way. For example, while working with local students or civil society groups, the question for feed-back of the results of our collaboration was often expressed. I answered this question by organising a regular reporting of my research-results during meetings and workshops, on which I presented for example a short working-paper that came out of the research they had been participating in. This paper and the outcomes of the following discussions were used as a basis which all participants could use for their own purposes. This proved to be a very welcome initiative, instructive and useful for all of us. This reporting of the results to the local 'partners' became a leading ethical principle during the 4 years of my research.

2.5. Challenges of doing fieldwork in a conflict zone

Carrying out ethnographic research in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is challenging in many ways.

First of all, there are the day-to-day practical issues one has to deal with, such as the terrible state of transport infrastructure, the absence of basic facilities such as electricity, water (not to speak of an internet connection) and the impossibility to stick to any form of time-schedule (because in Congo 'we do not manage time, time just manages us'). Meanwhile, for researchers working in Congo or similar contexts, these issues may already have become so self-evident, that we don't mention them anymore. However, we may not underestimate effects these day-to-day practical worries have on the organisation and implementation of our research. No matter how hard we try to adapt to these often uncomfortable living conditions, we may not fool ourselves: to live and work in bad hygienic circumstances or having no direct access to good health care for example, clearly affect the ways in which we can (or sometimes can't) perform our work. More important are the practical problems caused by the actual organisation of the Congolese state institutions and 'research spaces' such as universities or research centres, that could provide necessary research information. Obtaining for example valuable statistical data or quantitative reports in the DRC is clearly a very difficult job.

But clearly, the most difficult challenge to deal with is the political instability. In their book dealing with a broad range of questions on doing ethnographic research in the Congo, Theodore Trefon and Pierre Petit demonstrate that this instable place of socio-political crisis, uncertainty and apparent chaos, asks for a flexible and reflexive anthropology, characterised by a constant negotiation, reflection and repositioning (Trefon & Petit 2006). Ethnographic research in such places requires to reassess and expand the conventional limits of ethnographic practice (Greenhouse et al. 2002; Lee 1995). The situation of violent conflict logically brings some additional challenges, and strongly influences issues such as security, access, ethical dilemmas etc. My naive belief that by my previous research experience in Kinshasa I was 'prepared for the job', proved to be way too optimistic, and when I now compare my study in Goma with that in Kinshasa, I clearly recognise the inevitable changes a situation of war brings about in the practice of ethnographic research. Being part of the 'Conflict Research Group', fortunately offered the possibility to discuss different issues related to conducting fieldwork in conflict areas with my colleagues.

The context of on-going war and violence made my research area what Kovats-Bernat has called a 'dangerous field', a site 'where social relationships and cultural realities are critically modified by the pervasion of fear, threat of force or (ir)regular application of violence and where the customary approaches, methods and ethics of anthropological fieldwork are at times insufficient, irrelevant, inapplicable, imprudent or simply naive (Kovats-Bernat 2002: 208-209). This 'dangerous field' is characterised by the 'certainty of uncertainty' (Hoffman 2005), where in an urban life 'under siege', violence has become a dimension of people's existence, not something external to society and culture that "happens" to people (Nordstrom & Robben 1995). As Koen Vlassenroot has argued for the case of Eastern Congo, the risks inherent in investigating conflict areas can be negotiated and much depends on the researchers' abilities to adapt to the conflict environment

(Vlassenroot 2006b). A central element in this 'adaptation strategy' lies in the flexibility of the researcher and his or her methodological tools. To a certain extent, in this context the research methods "should not be defined as a rigid of fixed framework, but rather as an elastic, incorporative, integrative and malleable practice. It should be informed by the shifting social complexities unique to unstable field sites and should depend on a level of investigative flexibility on the part of the ethnographer, who cannot always be expected to work in safety and security" (Kovats-Bernat 2002: 210).

Without wanting to tell the whole 'story behind the findings', in what follows I want to elaborate on some specific issues and problems I encountered during my fieldwork.

2.5.1. On (in) securing myself, others (and my data)

At the moment my supervisors and I wrote my research proposal, we could not foresee the worsened security conditions in Goma (and its surroundings) from 2007 onwards. During the different fieldwork stays, I experienced different intensities of violence and insecurity. The levels of insecurity in town were rather low when compared to the rural hinterlands when in the city, the only direct visible signs of the on-going war were the heavy militarisation and the arrival of displaced persons in town. It was only at moments when I was in the urban outskirts and when the wind brought the sounds of heavy artillery into the city, that I was fully aware of the scope of the fighting that was going on so closely to where I was. The calmness in the city then seemed misleading. What I found a most stressing factor during these moments of active war, was the difficulty to get correct information of what actually was going on. Strangely, if I could not access internet or BBC or France 24 broadcasting, it was very difficult to stay up to date about the situation. On the spot, it was hard to differentiate facts from rumours. This feeling of not having any clue (let alone control) of what was exactly happening, was disturbing. In such a situation, I found it particularly difficult to make valuable estimations and evaluations of the level of risk and danger of the actions I undertook. The investment in a large network of local contacts proved crucial to this point. The people around me helped me to make informed security decisions, as they had a far more developed sense of the involved risks and violence. The very difficult question of 'Should I stay or should I go?'¹⁷ that I had to ask myself more than once, was answered by the behaviour of my good friends. But eventually, the situation could be unpredictable for anyone in town. The ever heard expression in Goma '*ici, on ne sait jamais*' very well corresponded to the reality I experienced. And although I had much faith in the security assessment skills of my research assistant, it was clear that events could catch us by surprise as on the day that he took me out for some interviews in Birere and we ended up hidden somewhere under a plastic table with gunfire all over the place, not knowing whether to stay or to leave, to laugh or to panic. Furthermore, my local colleagues' developed expertise and a situation where instability and violence had become the norm, also implied an adaptation to levels of violence I was not used to at all. I vividly remember one of my friends who came to 'comfort' me after being treated violently during an armed robbery, saying to the others: "It looks as if she's a bit traumatised. But that must be normal, because it's her first time".

¹⁷ Silke Oldenburg, who stayed in Goma performing fieldwork at the same moment I was there as well, refers to this dilemma in her article published in *Afrika Spectrum* (Oldenburg 2010).

I remember at that very moment asking myself : what the hell am I doing here? Why am I doing this job?

Luca Jourdan also refers to this difficult issue of adaptation to 'everyday' violence: "*Les difficultés d'adaptation à un contexte comme celui du Congo n'étaient pas simplement liées à la situation de guerre et à toutes ses horreurs mais aussi à la présence d'une violence beaucoup plus sournoise qui ne semblait plus être perçue comme telle et qui était devenue ordinaire*" (Jourdan 2006: 183).

The feeling of a constant risk and the idea that I had to watch out and be alert all day and night long, was exhausting, at moments. This 'stress' was increased by the constant warnings and 'orders' from the 'home front' to be careful. But I learned that despite all caution, you can always end up at the wrong place on the wrong moment; dangers are never totally manageable, and researchers, like anyone, can just be unlucky (Greenhouse et al. 2002; Sluka 1990). What turned out even more stressful than putting myself in danger, was the idea of putting others in danger. After some of my friends argued that I might have 'attracted' the criminals who attacked us at home by my mere presence as a foreigner, I got increasingly worried about my presence generating insecurity and endangering others. Luckily, when it became clear that these criminals were not particularly looking for my research information, the scope of this 'worry' was reduced to the practical question of finding residence on my own, yet being well protected. Despite my obsession to secure my data, my computer was stolen twice.

2.5.2. Navigating a highly contested space

Violent conflict has turned the city into a highly contested space, and it turned out to be quite a task to manoeuvre along the different fault lines and fractures, and to include all groups or 'parties' involved in local conflict, in the research. While working in such a polarised setting, the question of neutrality constantly preoccupies the researcher. To be - and especially to be perceived by the local community as- a neutral researcher, not implicitly attached to or defending the interests of one or the other group, was an extremely different task. As I saw it as an ethical obligation to be fully honest towards my informants, I was always clear about the fact that I needed to talk to all different 'groups', which in case of a conflict, made one group often suspicious about my motives wanting to interview the other. Where social relations are highly conflictual, there may be no precedent or place for the neutral role (Gimmore, 1991 cited in Lee 1995: 23). Evolving too much in one particular group or network could get me excluded from another. In a city where no single square meter is neutral terrain, it took me a lot of caution, calculations and acrobatics not to step into these kind of pitfalls. Moreover, I always had to be aware of the fact that one or another group could try to 'claim' me, or could 'blackmail' me by stating that in case I would 'engage' with the other party (and this could be just having a coffee in some place allegedly linked to that other group), they would no longer talk to me. This actually happened more than once¹⁸.

¹⁸ Vlassenroot has warned in this respect to the danger of becoming yourself 'used' by your informants, becoming an object in their strategies of power and manipulation (Vlassenroot 2006b).

Although some researchers have argued that partial self-representation (by obscuring parts of one's identities and motives, or even by lying about one's identity) is sometimes a 'necessary evil' to gain access to all desired information (see for example Keith 1992), to my opinion these practices come close to manipulation or even betrayal of the confidence of those who provide us with information. I always continued to represent myself in a fully open and honest way, as I believe that this is the only way to be accepted by all groups. However, as much as I stressed my impartiality and neutrality, it proved to be impossible to control the perception of my informants about me. Finally, neutrality sometimes also led to the contrary, as Lee has argued, 'instead of being universally trusted, the researcher ends up being suspected by all concerned' (Lee 1995: 23). A very last comment I want to make here is the fact that I understood that the choice of my research assistant was an important strategic element in this 'navigation' between different conflicting groups. With one side of his family originating from the Equatorial Province, not only his perception but also his own position was marked by a certain neutrality regarding Goma's ethnic tensions. This proved to be an enormous advantage. I must however add here that much of the 'ease' with which my assistant knew to move among the different communities in Goma had also much to do with his open and jovial character.

2.5.3. Access

When comparing to other places in this war-torn area, I guess the question of access was not too problematic for the case of Goma, in that sense that there almost were no places or people of my interests that were totally inaccessible. For me, the first step in getting access was to get a research permit, authorised and signed by the city mayor, who would then 'recommend' me further to the considered district chiefs. To get this permission was often just a matter of patience; I never encountered a denial or any kind of problem.

As I acted as an independent researcher and choose not to operate in explicit collaboration with any NGO or civil society organisation, my access to certain places or stakeholder groups could not be facilitated by any 'logistic' or other support from their side. Sometimes, this certainly posed restrictions, as was for example the case when I wanted to interview internally displaced people hosted in the IDP camps. Although collaborating with an NGO sometimes thus seemed tempting, it has been proved strategically the best decision not to link myself to one or another organisation. NGOs are locally not always perceived as acting in a neutral and impartial way, and they are sometimes accused of creating more problems than solutions. So, maybe some doors have remained close to me because of the lack of an NGOs facilitation, but it is beyond doubt that to be identified as connected to a certain NGO would have closed others.

In an urban setting with significant academic activities, many of Goma's inhabitants are more or less familiar with students doing scientific surveys in the different urban districts. This does not mean that people are not suspicious. I have never met more distrust anywhere else than in Goma, maybe with the exception of Rwanda. The issue of trust is known to be the prime condition of successful research and is one of the most difficult parts of the research strategy. Gaining this trust took a very long time in Goma, and thus undoubtedly required lengthy and repeated stays.

Access to places and people again has to do with the researcher's presentation and representation. Before approaching new informants, my assistant and I always carefully consulting the ways in which we could best address him, her or them. Most often, my assistant would briefly introduce me before I took the floor. In some exceptional occasions, access had to be facilitated by a third party. Again, the choice of my assistant was key to this issue. I seldom met other *Goméen* students that were to the same extend '*bien branché*', or 'connected' to different kind of political, economic and social networks, and that could in the same way negotiate access. Often, in case we suspected someone would be difficult to approach (as was the case for some of the influent businessmen), my assistant would start his 'preparing procedure' well in advance, in order to arrange access. And miraculously, he almost always succeeded. This once again underlines that without this kind of local contacts, I would have been much more limited, as so many people and information would have stayed completely out of my reach. I however have to admit that this strong 'dependence' on others to negotiate and arrange your access, also leads to the absolute need of these people to be available every time you need them, which in my case was not always obvious.

2.5.4. Being 'la petite muzunguette' or 'la Monique'

Many people have asked me how it was to be a 'young, white, female' researcher in Goma. Although the fact that I was a woman may have had an impact on the way people addressed, perceived or treated me, I did not experience this to be a restricting element in carrying out my research. The fact that I was a young white or '*une petite muzunguette*'¹⁹, or simply '*kazungu*'²⁰, caused me much more worries. First of all, the simple fact of being white made me very 'visible', and it was impossible to pass unnoticed in the streets of Goma. For example, during the first field visits I was more than once surprised by the fact that, during a very first encounter with people, these people already seemed to 'know' about me, as they had 'noticed me passing in the streets' (knowing me would then include knowing where I lived, where I ate, the places I visited, the people I talked to, etc.). This not only pointed to the fact that I was extremely visible and easy to 'track', it also meant that people talked about me. And in a small city where rumours 'pass everywhere just like dust', this made me very conscious about how and when I visited which places and to which people I talked to, as every detail could be 'registered' and influence the image people in Goma would have about me.

I was certainly not the only 'muzungu' in town! The proliferation of international NGOs in Goma has brought many foreign expat staff to the city. This could be seen as an advantage, although in this particular context, it also worked out as a disadvantage. From my experience I can confirm what Trefon and Petit have argued: "*La profusion des ONGs internationales dans l'ensemble du Congo a fortement marquée la profil et les pratiques des chercheurs*" (Trefon & Petit 2006: 14). It always took me an effort to make clear that I was not a member of an international NGO nor that I was working for MONUSCO. The perception people had of me as a humanitarian worker or a development agent, strongly affected the way they would address me. The identification as '*une Monique*'²¹, or a

¹⁹ Muzungu: Swahili for 'white person'.

²⁰ The prefix ka- indicates "little".

²¹ Referring to 'MONUC', the former appellation of MONUSCO.

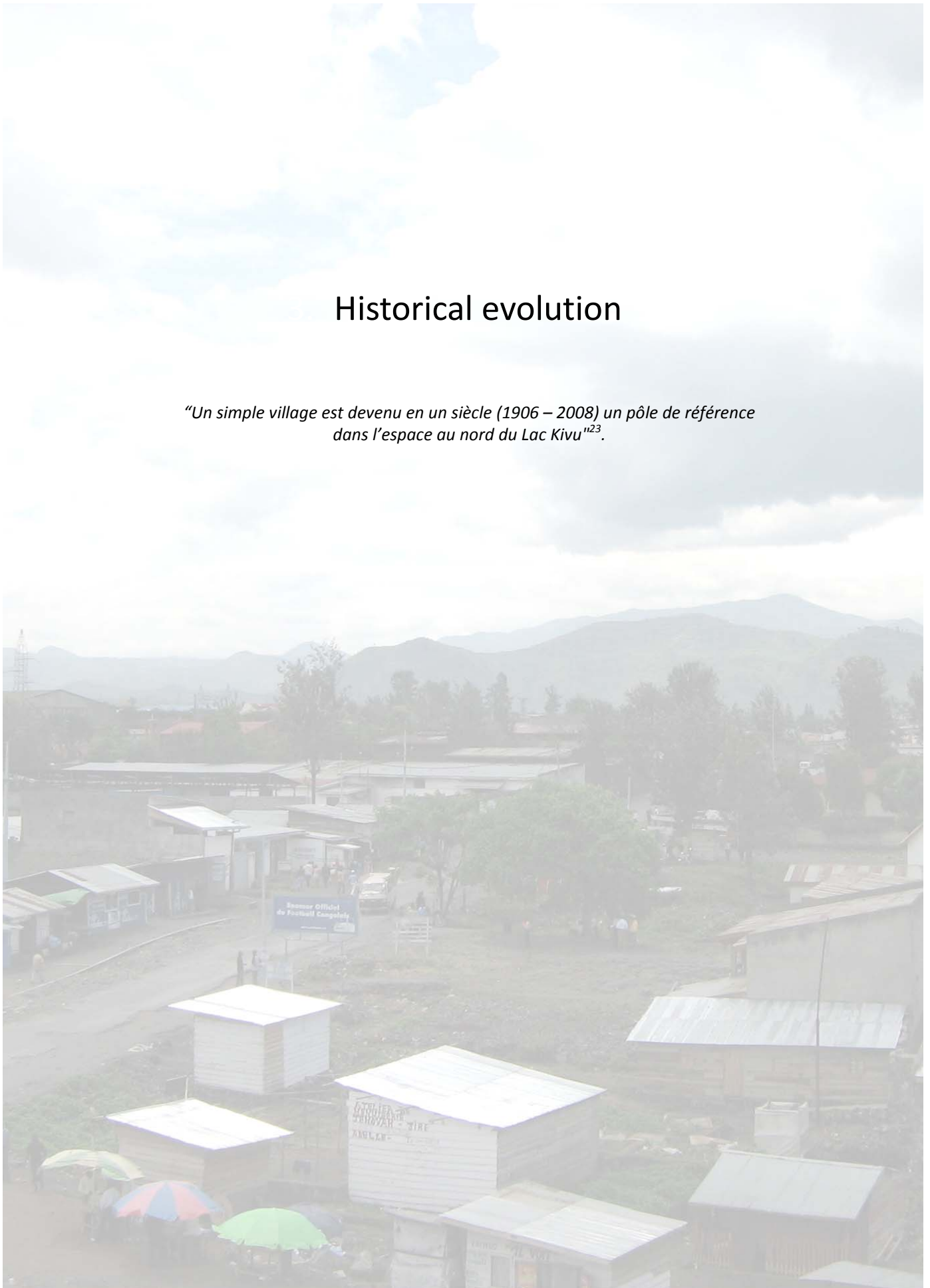
member of MONUSCO became particularly problematic when the negative attitude amongst Goma's inhabitants towards this international peace-keeping mission increased. At certain moments, members of MONUSCO were explicitly targeted during attacks, robberies and other acts of urban crime. During these moments, even my best friends did not feel at ease with '*la Monique*' sitting next to them in the car.

However, I consider my young age, and especially my status as a single woman without children, as the most problematic part of my identity. My authority status seriously suffered from the fact that I was not married. I noticed this long before while doing research in Kinshasa, but it became even more obvious the moment my married colleague and friend Gillian joined me to Goma to do research. When I introduced her to some of my informants, it once again was remarkable how different these people treated a married woman responsible for two children, compared to me who would then be reduced to the status of '*une petite fille*'. I had no other choice than to 'prove' myself a little more to be taken seriously and respectfully²².

²² As ridiculous as this may sound, there are however many ways to 'improve' one's authority status in Goma (and in Congo in general), by very practical means such as the way we dress and the way we travel (by foot, motorbike or car). Many of my Congolese friends pointed me to these issues that are of great importance in a society where social stratification is strongly linked to material appearance. Playing with these 'rules of the game' effectively produced the desired results.

Historical evolution

“Un simple village est devenu en un siècle (1906 – 2008) un pôle de référence dans l’espace au nord du Lac Kivu”²³.



3.1. Introduction

In this chapter I will give a historic overview of the evolution of Goma, in which I will follow the city's development from a small colonial military post into a booming economic centre and a zone of political contest. This historical perspective is essential to understand the contemporary city profile and for the further analysis of dynamics of change that have been generated by the more recent developments of violent conflict. Different issues run as a red line through this chapter. A first issue is that of urban demographics. Through the different stages of Goma's historical evolution, I will pay special attention to dynamics of migration and the ethnic demographic composition of the city. A good understanding of Goma's changing ethnic profile will be crucial to analyse dynamics of socio-political and economic conflict and contest, which are some of the key themes in this dissertation. Secondly, I will focus on dynamics of urbanisation, in the form of both centralised projects as well as spontaneous initiatives of spatial organisation and development of the city. A historical analysis of the changing forms and norms of urbanisation will serve to a good understanding of the current role of both state and non-state actors in urban development. A third issue is the evolution of urban elites. By analysing the changing structures of local power and authority and the emergence of influential political and economic actors controlling the urban space, we will get a better insight in the contemporary transformations of urban governance. Finally, the economic angle cannot be absent in this historic overview. To investigate Goma's evolution towards a regional economic hub, it is important to go back to the historical roots of the urban economic profile. This chapter starts by briefly situating the pre-colonial development of the site which would later become Goma town. I will reveal that current debates on contested 'autochthony' and urban citizenship can be traced back to this early period. I then run through the different phases of Goma's colonial history. While the early European developments shaped Goma's importance as a border town, the later colonial urbanisation projects turned the city into a touristic attraction. The turbulent post-independence days immediately brought to the surface the ethnic tensions that would dominate the city's political governance. During the 1970s and the 1980s, Mobutu's economic and political reforms left a profound impact on the city and dramatically changed local power relations. The post-Mobutu period was marked by a profound socio-economic crisis, on which the city responded with a steady 'informalisation' of its economy, and by a spread of violence in the light of the succession of armed conflicts. By running through the different phases of these conflicts, a necessary basis is created for a further understanding of the changing function and position of Goma in the context of crisis and war and its evolution towards a city of rebellion as well as of refuge. A final part of this chapter then situates the evolution of Goma in the wider context of urban development in the eastern periphery of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in general.

²³ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "*Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe*", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

Data for this chapter is provided by local as well as international academic publications on the city's history, by the annual reports produced by Goma's urban administration and by interviews with local stakeholders and observers.

3.2. Village Ngoma at the eve of colonial occupation

Retracing the origins of Goma is not an easy task because of the scarcity of sources.

At the end of the 19th century, the shore on which Goma is nowadays located, was almost entirely devoid of inhabitants. People (referred to as 'Bakumu', cf. infra) were settled in small settlements such as "Byahi" (in the area where at present the international airport of Goma is located)²⁴. According to Birhawa (1974) the location of this village was chosen strategically. From this site lake Kivu could be overseen, a necessary precaution because of the possibility of attacks by the Bahavu. The inhabitants of this and other villages in the area were frequently displaced due to regular volcanic eruptions (Kabwika Bamenyire 2002). These displacements would have dispersed its inhabitants and incited them to create the settlements of Sake and Munigi²⁵. Later on, Byahi was allegedly split into two separate settlements, Byahi and Ngoma²⁶ (from which the name of the current city would be derived). The territory around what is nowadays Goma was part of the Bugoyi province, of which Gisenyi was the 'capital' (Birhawa 1974). Although its semi-independent organisation and its 'grumbling and turbulent attitude towards the Rwandan monarch'²⁷, there was no real political independence from the Rwandan kingdom, as for example taxes were paid to the Rwandan Mwami (Birhawa 1974; Turner 2007).

There is disagreement as to what populations exactly inhabited, in pre-colonial times, the area and site on which Goma was later founded. Historical sources are not entirely conclusive and the issue has become politically sensitive in present days (Bucyalimwe Mararo 2002). This is a critical issue in understanding contemporary dynamics of contest and conflict over the urban space. Over time, different groups have claimed the status of 'autochthonous' inhabitants, through a politicised and selective use of history and through the destruction of parts of the colonial archives (Pole Institute 2004)²⁸.

According to Mararo, this lack of clarity creates a situation where all of the ethnic groups present in Goma today can claim themselves the original inhabitants; *"Certaines gens prétendent que la ville de Goma n'a pas de populations autochtones. Tout juste pour dire*

²⁴ This part of the city is still named Byahi, and "Byahi" is also the name of a district across the border in Gisenyi.

²⁵ Miburo Mzee Bara "Si Goma m'était conté" (Jonction 12/06/2010 p. 17-18).

²⁶ Meaning "drum". What exactly is referred to here is unclear, as different sources offer different explanations. According to some, it refers to the sound of the volcanic eruptions (Mairie de Goma 2002), according to others it would have been the sound of the water splashing in the caves beneath the *Mont Ngoma* (Birhawa 1974), others claim the sound of the communications by drums from the top of *Mont Ngoma*, *"où les communications au moyen d'un tambour au sommet de cette colline pouvaient être entendu par tous"* (Barigora Rwamera 2008).

²⁷ Turner (2007) Citing M. Pauwels, 'Le Bushiru et son Muhinza', *Annale Lateranensi*, XXXI (1967): 220.

²⁸ Bucyalimwe Mararo: *"Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe"*, <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

*que tous les groupes ethniques qui sont venus s'y installer au fil des années peuvent se prévaloir soit d'autochtones soit d'étrangers à la ville*²⁹.

Much of the locally produced documentation and historiography on Goma (official administrative reports, university publications etc.), generally refers to 'Bakumu' as the very first inhabitants of Goma. These Bakumu have become accepted as the autochthonous population of Goma. However, there are strong indications that the emergence of Bakumu ethnicity is an 'invention of tradition' linked to the creation of the Kumu chefferie under 'grand chef' Kahembe³⁰. The collectivity of Bukumu was created by the Belgians in the 1920, after the foundation of a chieftaincy by Kahembe (a Kumu from what is today the Oriental province) with the approval of the Belgian colonial administration (Tull 2005: 148)³¹. Before that date, Kumu were an inexistent ethnic group in North Kivu, consequently the markers 'Bakumu' and 'Bukumu' is clearly an anachronism when referring to the 19th century³². The people inhabiting the region around Goma at the advent of colonialism were most probable Banyarwanda.

Mararo argues that besides Banyarwanda, also Hunde have to be included in Goma's "autochthones" population. He derives this from the local language spoken in this area, a mix between Kihunde and Kinyarwanda. However, according to others, Hunde only installed around the old settlement of Ngoma afterwards (although it remains unclear when exactly they arrived in the area (Turner 2007)). Nevertheless the first European presence heralded the influx of other ethnic groups on the site on which the city of Goma would be erected. These included Havu, Tembo, Nande and Nyanga, according to the ethnic composition of the region (see **Map 1**)

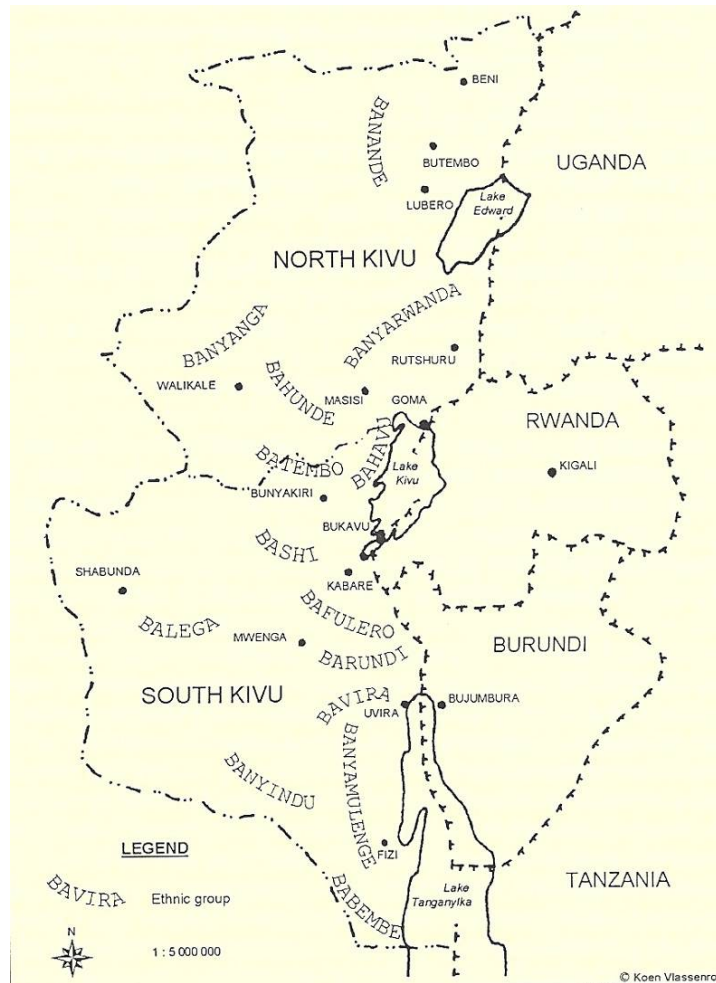
Rwandans, attracted by the commercial and other activities the occupation set in motion also began to settle around the Belgian post. The historical process of the installation of Banyarwanda in Goma is a determining element in the city's socio-political evolution. As we will observe through this dissertation, it lies at the basis of contemporary urban politics, conflicts, social relations as well as identities.

²⁹ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

³⁰ Gillian Mathys, personal communication.

³¹ Kahembe could work one's way up to be a traditional chief because of his linguistic skills: because he spoke Shwahili he was able to act as an intermediary for the Belgian colonizers (Tull 2005); Gillian Mathys, personal communication.

³² Gillian Mathys, personal communication.



Map 1: Ethnic communities of the Kivu provinces (Vlassenroot 2002b: 106)

3.3. The emergence of a colonial border post

"Le problème de la frontière a fini par faire sortir le nom de Goma si peu cité avant"
(Birhahwa 1974: 51).

The most eastern parts of Congo were for a long time neglected by the colonial administration, as these frontier zones were of no particular economic interest and were barely accessible. On June 16 1894, the German officer Comte Adolphe Von Götzen arrived in Gisenyi, after having 'discovered' Lake Kivu. After him, several other expeditions were held in the Kivu region (in 1897 by another German, Kandt, and in 1900 by Moore) (Birhahwa 1974). The effective colonial presence at the northern shores of the lake Kivu was in the first place the outcome of the disputes over the demarcation of the border between the Belgian and German colonial powers. The mapping of the border between Congo and Rwanda took place during the 1884-85 Berlin conferences, thus before any European had ever seen Lake Kivu (Mathys and Büscher, forthcoming). The final fixation of the border markings took place at the European Convention of Brussels in 1910, when the frontiers of Belgian Congo, British Uganda and German East Africa were drafted.

Before 1900, it had been impossible for the Congo Free State to effectively occupy this area, not only because of its difficult accessibility but also because of the Batetela uprisings. The erection of the first European post in what would later become Goma town, was the outcome of military and diplomatic tensions between Belgium and Germany (1895 – 1911). The region of Lake Kivu and its eastern and western shores was called *zone contestée* or *streitiges Gebiet*, as it was the subject of much debates and discussions³³ (Mathys and Büscher, forthcoming). Founded in 1906, this Belgian post appeared on the map of the Congo Free State as a military post. Its location was strategically inspired, facing the German post in Kissenyi (Gisenyi, Rwanda), founded one year earlier.

The Goma post was erected at the shores of lake Kivu (where the lava was not as hard thus permitting construction, and where direct access to water was assured) at the foot of the Mont Goma³⁴ (an extinct volcano) nowadays towering over the city. At that time, it included a small military group commanded by one European officer (Birhahwa 1974: 39). Until 1910, the situation on the border was rather tense. From 1911 onwards, with the installation of a '*bureau d'impôts*', the post began to develop administratively and economically³⁵. Not only military and politically, but also economically Goma occupied a strategic position (Barigora Rwamera 2008). Although trade from the interior of the Congo to the eastern coast predates the "discovery" of lake Kivu, alternative routes sprout from the opening up of the Kivu. However, Goma's economic activities were at that time rather

³³ This territorial disputes would last until 1911 when the eastern border of the Belgian colony was fixed.

³⁴ "Cette colline est l'ancêtre du Centre. Les soldats belges s'y retranchaient pour surveiller les mouvements des Allemands d'en face à Gisenyi" (Birhahwa 1974: 5).

³⁵ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "*Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe*", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

limited when compared to Gisenyi, that started to evolve as a commercial node for trade in the Kivu hinterland, especially as a result of the activities of Indian and Greek merchants (Bindseil, 1994 [Hans Meyer, 1910]: p. 128 in: Mathys and Büscher: forthcoming)

The first years of the Belgian administration of what was called C.U. "*circonscription urbaine*"³⁶ before World War I (1911-1914) were characterised by a gradual but slowly increasing commercial activity, and the (spontaneous) arrival of local labour force from Rutshuru, Masisi, Kalehe, Gisenyi and of course Bukumu. The C.U. increasingly became an economic focal point in the Kivu region; "*sans être au milieu, semble être le point central du Nord Kivu, Goma 'semblait convenir aussi à l'établissement d'un centre commercial'*" (Birhahwa 1974: 44)³⁷. The fact that from 1912 onwards Goma's local population was assigned to pay taxes that were considerably higher than was the case in the '*chefferie*', confirmed the centre's growing importance. Commercial activities were in the first place controlled by Arab, Indian and Greek traders engaged in the rubber and ivory trade. The Belgian presence was very limited. In fact, between 1908 and 1913, all administrative tasks were exercised by one single person (Mr. Sindfort) who was replaced by Mr. Van Ghinste in 1941.

*"L'administrateur territorial, M. René Van de Ghinste, y occupait la seule maison en matériaux durs de l'endroit. Elle avait été construite en blocs de lave et chaulée au moyen de coquilles de mollusques pêchés au bord du lac, et qui avaient ensuite été calcinées. Cette maison carrée ne comprenait qu'une seule pièce d'environ 4 mètres sur 4. La seule autre habitation, en pisé celle-là, était à cette époque, celle de deux factoriens Grecs nommés Angepoulos et Papazoglakis, et qui étaient la providence des Blancs de la région. On désignait le second sous le surnom de "Papa-sauve-la-Caisse". Tous deux étaient cependant très raisonnables dans leurs prix et ne manquaient jamais de sucre, indispensable pour sucrer les fraises qui, alors, abondaient dans la région entre le 15 janvier et le 15 juin"*³⁸.

These earliest economic and administrative developments came to an abrupt end with the start of the first World War. The European battlefields were extended to the colonial possessions of the European powers, leading to intense military battles around Goma and Gisenyi. Nowadays, the only thing that reminds us of the war between Germany and Belgium in Goma is the small cemetery of Kibati, partly covered by lava. The military front stretched along the border from Rutshuru in the North to lake Tanganyika in the south. During the battles, the border was heavily defended against enemy attacks and became deeply entrenched (Chaudoir, 1919, cited in: Mathys and Büscher, forthcoming). Attacks between Goma and Gisenyi resulted in an almost complete destruction of the urban post. Belgian attacks on Gisenyi were answered by violent revenges by the Mwami's militias, supported by the '*askaris*'. In April 1915, the Germans destroyed most of the Goma post,

³⁶ Goma gained the status of C.U. in 1912, in 1920 it was abolished, to be restored again in 1931 (Mairie de Goma 2001b). This status implied a detachment from the '*régime coutumier*'.

³⁷ Birhiwa cites: "*Situation économique du Kivu*", in B.C. 1911, Annexe, p. 394. However, at that moment (in 1912), 'North Kivu' did not exist as a separate administrative entity.

³⁸ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

"les militaires belges ont pris la fuite devant la force allemande qui contrôle désormais tout le lac"³⁹. Finally, in 1916 the Belgians invaded and took over Rwanda.

The small urban centre of Goma was left in ruins, and the local population in and around Goma massively fled westwards. In his historic analysis of Goma, Birhawa describes this as the definitive 'depopulation' of the Bukumu territory; "*Le Bukumu aura définitivement perdu ses forces vives et ne vivra plus que par les étrangers*" (Birhawa 1974: 50). These 'étrangers' were labourers from Rwanda and the Masisi and Rutshuru territory, attracted by the reconstruction of the urban centre that started soon after the end of the war.

3.4. 1918-1950: The colonial urbanisation project

After the war, more Belgian colonizers came to settle in Goma⁴⁰. Amongst them were ex-soldiers who had been fighting in this region returned to Goma, as they had been pleased by the overwhelming natural beauty and the pleasant climate. Further, a few well known Belgian noble families invested in houses in Goma (for example family of prince Eugène de Ligne, family Lippens, Alled, Boel de Meulemeester, etc.) (Verhoeve 2003)⁴¹.

This was the start of the first real 'metamorphose' of Goma into a colonial urban centre. Firstly, in 1923, in the light of the administrative reforms aiming at a better control of the local populations, Goma gained the distinct status of 'urban district'⁴². The main importance of the urban centre was its function as transit point. The introduction of large-scale plantations on the hills of the very fertile region of Masisi turned Goma into a strategic location on the eastern north-south axis connecting Bunia to Rutshuru, Goma, Bukavu, Uvira and Kalemie (an important Belgian colony trade route). After the war, "*ce petit centre deviendra le carrefour des communications au Nord Kivu*" (Birhawa 1974). These developments lead to the construction of a port on the northern bank of Lake Kivu, which further consolidated the economic importance of Goma (Verhoeve 2004: 105)⁴³. Further, the colonial administration aimed at a transformation of Goma towards a 'sedentary commercial centre for Europeans'⁴⁴. In Belgium, there was also growing

³⁹ Miburo Mzee Bara "*Si Goma m'était conté*" (Jonction 12/06/2010 p. 17-18).

⁴⁰ Further, many *colons* deployed in Rutshuru and Masisi had their 'holiday homes' in the C.U., where they could spend their weekends (Birhawa 1974: 65).

⁴¹ Cited: De Meulder, B. *Reformisme thuis en overzee. Geschiedenis van de Belgische planning in een kolonie (1880-1960)* p. 664.

⁴² "*Il s'agissait d'une agglomération urbaine détachée de l'administration du district ou de l'administration dite indigène par le Gouverneur Général du Congo Belge et érigée en circonscription administrative spéciale; c'était donc une nouvelle entité pour non-indigènes dirigée par un fonctionnaire de la colonie (commissaire de district urbain) nommé par ce dernier*" Bucyalimwe Mararo: "Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

⁴³ The 'Keshero' port was later on relocated closer to the border, a position from which it formed an ideal point of transshipment between transport over water (Bukavu-Goma) and over land (Goma-Rutshuru-Bunia) (Verhoeve 2003: 18-19).

⁴⁴ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

interest in the development of the mining sector in the Kivu area, caused by speculations on the presence of gold and other minerals. These colonial economic 'orientations' of the city laid the basis for Goma's post-colonial expansion as a regional transit point of agricultural products and natural resources.

Colonial urbanisation projects gradually started to take shape in Goma. In 1928, the *Comité National du Kivu* (CNKI) was installed to develop the Kivu province. Its first task was to elaborate several research activities (for example geological, agricultural and forest prospection). Further, it had to develop an economic basic infrastructure by the construction of roads, harbours, etc.). Finally, it had the assignment to invest in social developments such as the construction of hospitals and schools. The vision of CNKI included the development of a number of urban centres. The foundation of CNKI is seen as a milestone in Goma's development (Verhoeve 2003). Urbanisation was outsourced to the '*Société Immobilière au Kivu*' (SIMAK) and the '*Compagnie Immobilière du Nord du Kivu*' (CIMNOKI) (de Saint Moulin 1993). The administrative headquarters of CIMNOKI were based in Goma and Brussels, and this enterprise developed the first public urban services (public lighting, water distribution, transport and housing infrastructure etc.). Further, other enterprises such as the CIM (*Commerce-Industrie et Mines*) were installed, showing the increasing economic importance of the centre.

In 1930, the first urban plans were designed by architect Ernest Jasper, in order of a major industrialist baron Empain, who wanted to make of Goma a luxurious tourist attraction. In 1931 an embryonic centre was constructed, but the further realisation of the city was slowed down by the economic crisis of the 1930s and by the effects of WWII in Europe⁴⁵. At the end of the 1930s, the start of the construction of the airstrip brought a new boost to the urban developments (Verhoeve 2004).

These developments and especially the construction works provoked a significant demographic expansion, with an increase from 1200 inhabitants in 1934 to 8000 in 1947 (Barigora Rwamera 2008: 49). This expansion was remarkable given the fact that the colonial government was running a campaign against the migration from the rural areas to the city by imposing a system of '*permis de séjour*'. This residence permit was only attributed to permanent urban inhabitants with an employment contract. But this regulation could not stop a migration from the rural hinterland to the city. Migration from the rural to the urban centres can further be explained by the enormous contrast between the infrastructural expansion of the city and the lack of investment in rural infrastructure during the colonial period (Verhoeve 2004: 106). In 1946, the habitation outline of the C.U. was adjusted and these new 'black' inhabitants were installed in a distinct '*cit  indig ne*' (C.I.). As such, Goma expanded along the classical colonial urban model, with a clear segregation between '*ville blanche*' and '*ville noire*'. This segregational and racial spatial organisation was a principal way of representation of the colonial ideology. Of course Goma was not an exceptional case, the separation between the *cit  indig ne* and *la ville europ enne* was produced in all Congolese as well as other African colonial cities (Lagae & Boonen 2010; Toullier et al. 2010). As we will observe further in this dissertation,

⁴⁵ The second World War did not have the same direct impact on the city's development as was the case for World War I. The most important consequence was the delay in construction works (Barigora Rwamera 2008).

this segregationist urbanisation did not end with colonisation, and was pursued in the postcolonial period. It was for example reproduced through the spatial impact of increasing settlements of international expats in the city.

The influx of newcomers into Goma also increased the local commercial activities and led to a proliferation of small-scale commerce. This was a serious worry to the big European traders, who -to no avail- tried to discourage the ambulant vendors and '*boutiquiers*' by imposing high taxes (Birhahwa 1974).

An important element in Goma's development during this period was an additional influx of Banyarwanda in the city. This is not surprising in the context of the labour migration from Rwanda to the Kivu region, conducted by colonial administration. Since the 1930s, this migration was facilitated by the 'Banyarwanda transplantation and settlement scheme', designed by the MIB⁴⁶ to solve the labour shortage in the plantation economy in the Kivu region (particularly Masisi)⁴⁷. Apart from the 'registered' immigration of Banyarwanda into Goma, there was a huge 'unregistered' immigration, causing high numbers of '*chômeurs rwandais*' in the urban centre. These effects of this colonial migration scheme and the 'transplantation' of Banyarwanda communities in the Kivu's were far-reaching. Especially in Masisi, this historical event laid the basis for an intense competition and conflict over access to and rights over land, between these Banyarwanda and 'autochthonous' populations.

3.5. 1950-1960: Accelerated urbanisation, Goma as a tourist attraction.

"Jamais la modeste chefferie Bukumu ne serait devenue centre extra-coutumier si Goma n'avait, en peu d'années, crû en importance. L'Otraco, les industries de transformation des produits agricoles qui s'y installèrent, amenèrent une demande de main-d'œuvre et provoquèrent ainsi un accroissement-éclair de la population. Celle-ci s'élevait en 1934 à 70 habitants! Elle en a aujourd'hui près de 9 mille et doit, suivant les prévisions passer le cap des 20 mille vers 1962!"⁴⁸.

The most outspoken development and expansion of Goma has to be situated in the last decade before independence. During this period, the development of administrative functions, urban infrastructure and economic activities were considerably accelerated. The presence of Belgians in the centre increased significantly. In 1953, Goma becomes the administrative centre for the *chefferie* of Bukumu, the in 1951 created District of North

⁴⁶ *Mission d'Immigration Banyaruandaïse.*

⁴⁷ More than 25,000 Rwandans were settled in Masisi between 1937 and 1945, and another 60 000 in a second wave between 1949 and 1955 (Turner 2007).

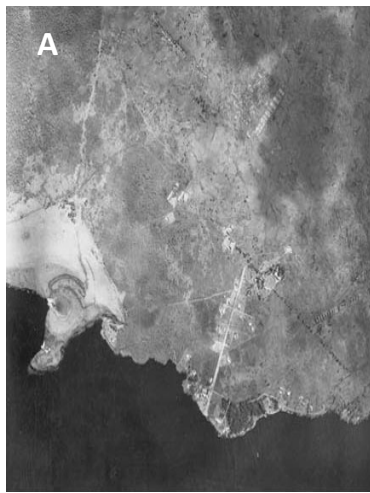
⁴⁸ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "*Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe*", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

Kivu, and Goma Territory which was created in 1952⁴⁹. It is only in 1958 that Goma becomes '*centre extra-coutumier*'.

The city's economic activities were given a new impulse with the installation of some factories⁵⁰ and enterprises, banks, commercial- and transport companies, schools, a hospital, police station, prison, and tribunals. Serious investments were made in urban infrastructure (roads, water and electricity networks). A new urban plan was developed, that yet would never be fully executed, including the creation of a commercial zone, an industrial area and a larger airport (de Saint Moulin 2010). All these developments were directly linked to the intensification of the economic valorisation of Goma's hinterland. The year 1957 clearly marked a peak in this accelerated urban development and economic expansion of Goma, after which a slight regression was to be observed (Birhahwa 1974). A fast demographic expansion went along with a spatial extension. The aerial photographs hereafter beautifully show the development of Goma's city centre from 1947 till 1955 (**Picture 1**).

⁴⁹ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "*Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe*", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

⁵⁰ The industrial development of Goma was restricted to the treatment of agricultural products (mainly coffee and tea) and of pyrethrum.



Picture 1: Aerial photographs of Goma in 1947 (A), 1952 (B) and 1955 (C). (Institut Géographique du Congo Belge. In: Verhoeve 2003: 22,23,24)



An important element in Goma's colonial evolution, is the city's touristic significance. Goma and its twin-city Gisenyi became an important tourist attraction where Belgians from all over the colonies came to spend a relaxing holiday. A tourist guide of the '*Belgisch-Congo en Ruanda-Urundi*' published in 1958 illustrates:

"Goma en Kisenyi, die omzeggens slechts één agglomeratie vormen vullen mekaar prachtig aan. Ze zijn voorbestemd om uit te groeien tot een zeer belangrijk toeristisch centrum en een gewaardeerd vakantie- en rustoord. Goma is op de lava gebouwd en de straten zijn er voor een groot deel voorzien van een betonnen wegdek. Aan de andere kant is Kisenyi begiftigd met een prachtig strand in een decor van groen en gebladerte. (...) Niet één plaats in Midden-Afrika kan op toeristisch gebied met Goma en Kisenyi wedijveren; ze zijn rijk aan natuurschoon: enig mooi meer, prachtig strand te Kisenyi, een van de meest merkwaardige vulkaanstreken ter wereld, (...) nabij Nationale Parken, met een overvloedige, rijk geschakeerde fauna, ideaal klimaat, gevarieerde ontspanning" (INFOR CONGO 1958: 645).

From Goma, tourists could visit the islands on the lake Kivu, the *Parc National Albert* and the volcanoes. At the end of the colonial period, when the Belgian presence was at its highest, investments were made in touristic infrastructure (which would be further expanded in the 1970s and 1980s). Before independence, Goma housed six travel agencies and two hotels (many tourists stayed in the beach hotels of Gisenyi) (INFOR CONGO 1958). The impressive '*Hotel des Grands Lacs*' reminds us of these colonial touristic high days, the building is still present and used as a hotel, in some rooms one can even find some of the original 'colonial' bathtubs...). This touristic importance of Goma is a very important element in

the city's history, and until today, it is referred to by its inhabitants as a main feature of its identity. Falling back on this particular status of Goma is a way to celebrate its pre-war image as a zone of calmness and beauty.

In terms of the physical urban landscape, little is left of colonial architectural patrimony. Apart from a very few colonial villa's and the old post office, not much remains of colonial buildings. The volcanic eruption in 2002 destroyed large parts of the former colonial centre, and when it was rebuilt, the colonial villas were replaced by Dubai-style houses and apartments.

Parallel to the increasing urbanisation of Goma's city centre, was the uncontrolled development of the 'shantytown' of Birere, the neighbourhoods where 'native' inhabitants lived in precarious conditions. As the main centre of informal economic activities and small-scale transborder trade, this neighbourhood is still of particular importance in Goma today. Already during that period the Birere neighbourhood was very densely populated and space was occupied '*dans le désordre*' (Birhahwa 1974). A plan that was designed to demolish these shantytowns and relocate its inhabitants was never executed, due to the country's sudden independence (Birhahwa 1974). We will observe further in this dissertation that the 'chaotic' and informal nature of this district has always been a major challenge for urbanisation initiatives in Goma, until present day.

In general, Goma's infrastructure was inadequate to meet the fast demographic growth. The large construction works again attracted massive arrivals of labourers. By the lack of social and economic equipment, living conditions of these labourers were far from ideal and unemployment caused serious problems (and generated for example much 'banditry') (Birhahwa 1974). The population growth was exceptionally high during the 1950s, with a rate of 19,5%! When compared with other centres in the Kivu region, Goma had the highest growth rate (Birhahwa 1974; de Saint Moulin 2010). With this influx from the rural hinterlands, Goma became increasingly 'cosmopolite'⁵¹. In 1960, Marc Van Trimont noted in Goma: "*In het gewest Goma bestonden uiteraard ook dergelijke gewoonterechtelijke structuren, maar in het centre extracoutumier dit is het buitengewoonterechtelijk centrum of het zwarte stadsdeel lag dat helemaal anders. Daar waren ze zo goed als onbestaande want de bevolking was een mengelmoes van mensen van uiteenlopende origines en van verschillende bantoe-subculturen en clans, om dan nog te zwijgen over Rwandese en uieraard ook gearabiseerde invloeden. Dit alles maakt het samenleven en vanzelfsprekend ook het bestuur niet steeds gemakkelijk*"⁵².

The 1950s and early 1960s were marked by different 'waves' of arrival of Banyarwanda in Goma. Famine, political turmoil and social unrest drove them across the border to Congo. Again, next to the registered entries, much of this transborder mobility and the installation in and around Goma occurred unregistered. It was impossible to distinguish an 'insider' from an 'outsider, as "*la langue commune du Bwisha, du Bukumu et du Rwanda*

⁵¹ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "*Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe*", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

⁵² Bucyalimwe Mararo: "*Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe*", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

qui permettait à plusieurs personnes de se faire passer pour des habitants de Bukumu ou des citoyens" (Birhahwa 1974: 97). In 1957 and particularly 1959 (the aftermath of the end of the Rwandan monarchy), many Tutsi refugees fled into Goma (and Bukavu), further increasing the urban population. Among them were many affluent and well-educated Tutsi, who would become an important part of the Goma elite (International Crisis Group 2007). Apart from its demographic impact, these events had important political consequences, "conférer à la politique du Nord-Kivu une dimension régionale tout au long des cinq décennies qui ont suivi"⁵³.

3.6. Independence and the struggles for political authority

"Et nous arrivons au 30 juin. La veille, chaque tribu résidant au Nord-Kivu tenait à être celle qui allait hisser le drapeau congolais comme signe de son autochtonie. Une grande réunion s'est tenue toute la nuit. Hutu, Tutsi, Nande, Kusu ou Rega chacun tenait mordicus à prouver par ce geste qu'il était celui qui a accueilli les autres. Au petit matin un consensus s'est dégagé que ce serait au vieux Kahembe Ka Bugunda que reviendrait cet honneur parce que Goma est érigée sur le sol des Bakumu, sa tribu. Dans la journée, un véhicule est allé le chercher. Il est venu soutenu par son fils le député Alphonse Nzabonimpa, avec en mains un ficus. Pendant qu'Ernest Mahamba, le chef de cité, descendait le drapeau belge, le Mwami Kahembe hissait le drapeau congolais. Ensuite, il a planté le ficus à côté du mat. Vous me croirez si vous voulez mais, par la suite, chaque fois qu'on élaguait ce ficus le chef de cité en fonction recevait une mutation ou une révocation. Ça n'a pas raté jusqu'à ce que le volcan l'emporte" (Nyiringabo 2010): 199).

As was the case all over the country, independence and the transfer of the administrative and political authority immediately resulted in a fierce struggle between different local communities for political dominance. For the case of Goma, the ethnic tensions expressed right after independence have never disappeared since then, and are still reflected in current dynamics of political competition. With the departure of the Belgians, the local political administration came under the control of a Nande-Hutu majority. This changed the ethnic power balance, as previously Nande were not largely represented in Goma⁵⁴. Their dominance in the northern parts of North Kivu (or '*le grand Nord*') was related to Butembo's economic expansion and the political engagement of the Nande leading businessmen. After the legislative elections, these Nande deputies from *le grand Nord* were 'transferred' to '*le petit Nord*' and came to install themselves in Goma, as did the elected deputies from all six territories of North Kivu⁵⁵; "*Goma devint le centre du bouillonnement politique et le point de relais de la politique du gouvernement central dans*

⁵³ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "*Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe*", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

⁵⁴ Interview Goma's city mayor (Goma, April 19, 2009).

⁵⁵ Goma, Rutshuru, Lubero, Beni, Masisi and Walikale.

*le Nord-Kivu*⁵⁶. In 1962, Goma became the headquarters of the North Kivu province. The creation itself of this new province was strongly contested, as it was the outcome of political pressure by the 'autochthonous' deputies from Masisi, Walikale, Benu and Lubero. The deputies of Goma and Rutshuru felt side-lined, and the political leadership of this new province thus got deeply divided. Initially, the headquarters of this province were not installed in Goma but in Sake (at 23 km), because Goma en Rutshuru were perceived 'contested zones' and put under an 'exceptional regime' (Nyiringabo 2010).

Thus we observe that as early as this immediate post-colonial period, tensions over political authority in Goma came to the surface. These tensions were further stimulated by the chaos and violence instigated by the Mulele rebellion and ethnic violence during the '*Guerre Kanyarwanda*'. This Kanyarwanda war, which lasted for two years (1964-1966), was the first step of a spiral of unending local violence between ethnic communities competing for land access and control. Shortly after independence, disputes between Banyarwanda and Hunde in Masisi followed the legislation change, when Hutu administrators that had been nominated by the Belgians had lost their position to the advantage of Hunde. Their attempts to reclaim their rights resulted in a sanguinary ethnic conflict between these Banyarwanda and Hunde in Masisi (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a: 86). The arrival of Mobutu and his administrative political reform eventually put an end to the conflict, but could not extinguish interethnic tensions.

Goma was affected as it faced high insecurity levels, many political elements were killed; "*l'insécurité et les tueries massives, voire sélectives furent fréquentes (...) et beaucoup de cadavres jetés dans le lac Vert*"⁵⁷. In the context of this instability, the urban developments that were set in motion in the 1950s were interrupted. Urbanisation programmes came to a standstill, and large infrastructural works were blocked all of a sudden. However, the city continued to expand dramatically, due to different reasons. Firstly, there was the abolition of the residence permit which had been a condition for taking up residence in the city and which was initially intended to stem migration from the rural areas to the city during the colonial period. Secondly, the increasing levels of insecurity in Kivu's countryside caused a rural exodus towards the city. Thirdly, political instability in Rwanda resulted in a considerable flow of refugees heading for Eastern Zaire. Between 1958 and 1970, Goma knew an average annual growth of 14%. **Table 1** demonstrates that this growth was rather exceptional compared to other urban centres in the Congo at that time.

⁵⁶ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "*Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe*", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

⁵⁷ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "*Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe*", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

Centres urbains à development									
Emballé	Rapide		Soutenu		Lent		En recul		
12% et plus	De 8 à 11%		De 5 à 7%		Moins de 5%				
Kikwit	19	Kinshasa	11	Libenge	7	Basoko	4	Lubudi	-1
Bandundu	15	Isoro	11	Mbandaka	7	Kipushi	4		
Mbuji-Mayi	14	Bumba	11	Businga	7	Niangara	4		
Goma	14	Lisala	10	Mangai	7	Ngandajika	4		
Kambove	14	Kamina	10	Dibaya-Lubwe	6	Kolwezi	4		
Luebo	13	Boende	10	Ilebo	6	Manono	3		
Inongo	12	Mushie	10	Kindu	6	Ubundu	3		
kasongo	12	Kananga	10	Kisangani	6	Yangambi	2		
Mbanza-Ngungu	12	Gemena	9	Likasi	6	Aketi	1		
Watsa	12	Kabinda	9	Boma	6	Bolobo	1		
		Bukavu	9	Kutu	6	Lusambo	0.8		
		Basankusu	8	Dibaya	6	Kongolo	0.7		
		Bunia	8	Buta	5	Mweka	0.5		
		Butembo	8	Matadi	5				
		Kabalo	8	Kalemie	5				
				Lubumbashi	5				
				Mwene Ditu	5				

Table 1: Annual growth of cities in Zaire between 1958 and 1970 (de Saint Moulin 2010: 143)

What followed was an unstructured extension of the city to the north, and peripheral districts that were planned for industrial development, were parcelled out, becoming urban quarters lacking any urban infrastructure (Verhoeve 2004).

The informal and uncontrolled use of space as we can observe it today in Goma, is to a large extent the legacy of a 'hastened' decolonisation. After independence, the new administrative elite continued to rely on the same institutions, systems and development models that came to view during the colonial period. Nowhere is this more apparent than in policies and systems relation to the urban planning and management of urban areas. City planning approaches inherited from the colonial area proved to be totally inappropriate for the new urban condition and failed in its principle task of maintaining spatial order within towns.

After independence, the Congolese state initially tried to keep up the image of the excellent holiday resort, but lack of investments, economic crisis and primarily regional insecurity, led to a general degradation and breakdown of the tourist infrastructure.

When in 1965, *Maréchal* Mubutu realised his coup d'état, the political and economic significance of Goma would take a new direction. In 1966, the North Kivu province was abolished and brought back to the status of 'district' within the larger Kivu province (with Bukavu as its capital). This implied that until the end of the 1980s, local politics were conducted from Kinshasa and Bukavu (de Saint Moulin 2010). As was the case for all provinces in Zaire at that time, the fact that Goma was governed by politicians originating from other provinces had a profound impact on the political and economic urban governance. As Mararo explains: *"Ce qui a certainement joué dans la manière de gérer la ville de Goma et les problèmes locaux: l'enrichissement passait avant tout le reste. D'où leur implication dans des dossiers fonciers, économiques et politiques dont les effets se ressentent aujourd'hui dans la province du Nord-Kivu et la ville de Goma"*⁵⁸. In what follows I will further analyse how the Mobutu regime left enormous political, economic and spatial imprints on the city.

3.7. Goma during the 1970s and 1980s: Mobutu's heritage

Many of the contemporary political and socio-economic dynamics find their origins in this decisive episode of the history of the Congolese state and society.

The centralisation of the state under the dictatorship of Mobutu and the institutionalisation of the neopatrimonial rule of governance through patronage-relationships strongly determined the political and economic urban development. It is from the nature of this post-colonial political regime that the very complex relationships would emerge between political and economic elites, that would come to determine the exercise of local power and authority over the city.

The *Zairianisation*, or the nationalisation of the economy that was implemented in 1973, signified the radicalisation of Mubutu's regime. This Zairianisation included the transfer of all foreign-owned firms to the directorship of Zairians and lead to the personal enrichment of a restricted elite, a class of state- appointed entrepreneurs. These dynamics lead to what has been called the 'criminalisation of the state' (Bayart et al. 1999), in which Zaire's' political system became a kleptocratic one, characterised by an effective accumulation and exercise of patrimonial control within the framework of a centralised state-bureaucracy (Reno (1997); Young & Turner (1985) in: Vlassenroot (2002b: 47)). The disastrous economic impact of the Mobutu regime would further lay the basis for the gradual informalisation of urban development. Let us briefly sketch the main consequences for the evolution of Goma.

On the political level, the most important consequence of Mobutu's neo-patrimonial rule was the reinforcement of the power position of a small Banyarwanda (mainly Tutsi) elite occupying main political and economic posts. To consolidate his power, Mobutu promoted the enforcement of a political marginalised ethnic group, which he could easily manipulate to assert his rule over the province (International Crisis Group 2007; Tull 2005; Turner 2007). Due to their insecure political and legal status, these Banyarwanda were not

⁵⁸ Bucyalimwe Mararo: *"Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe"*, <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

expected to pose a political threat to the regime (Tull 2005: 83⁵⁹). Mobutu privileged this Tutsi elite with access to the state's resources, but since this new dominant class lacked an economic base, they were forced to establish one (Vlassenroot 2002b: 49). They were granted high positions in parastatal enterprises and the state administration and became key figures in Mobutu's commercial and political baronies (Tull 2005: 83). The figurehead of this group was Barthélémy Bisengimana who served as Mobutu's Director of the Presidential Office from 1968-77.

As a consequence, a small group of Banyarwanda came to control most of the important economic activities in Goma and they became the major beneficiaries of the new distribution process of land and economic property rights, as a political reward. For example, Mobutu left many of the former Belgian properties and plantations in the Masisi and Rutshuru area to Banyarwanda officials⁶⁰. The promotion of these Tutsi elites into Mobutu's commercial and political baronies, lead to increasing tensions in Goma, which continue until present day. 'Autochthonous' ethnic groups could hardly digest a minority dominating and 'behave as if they completely owned this town'⁶¹. As I will explain further on in this dissertation when we will analyse Goma's development into a 'city of contest', local tensions reached fever pitch during the democratisation process from 1990 onwards, when political and economic competition was translated in a fierce struggle and open conflict between autochthonous and Banyarwanda communities.

The Mobutu period also left its imprints on the physical landscape of Goma. A second element of Mobutu's policy was the attempt to industrialise the country's economy. This reform required serious infrastructural investments. During the 1970s, large infrastructure works were carried out in Goma. These were mainly the result of Mobutu's special connection with the city, in which he regularly resided for a considerable period (Verhoeve 2003). The outcomes of these investments are still visible in Goma's current architectural landscape; the presidential residency (referred to as '*le musée*', today occupied by the provincial government) is the most notable example. Large dwellings were erected for the president himself and his family. Further, Mobutu actively incited his ministers to invest in land and property in the city. This resulted in the construction of a series of prestigious residences along the lake and an urban expansion in western direction⁶² (Verhoeve 2003). During this period, the local landing strip was converted into an international airport and the '*Communauté Economique des Pays des Grands Lacs*' established itself in Goma. More than simply contributing to the exceptional status of the city, the extension of the airport into the international airport of Eastern Congo, also gave the regional city more political importance. **Map 2** demonstrates the important position of Goma in the national air transport system in the 1980s.

⁵⁹ Reforms regarding the citizenship law and the law on land tenure further favoured their political and economic power.

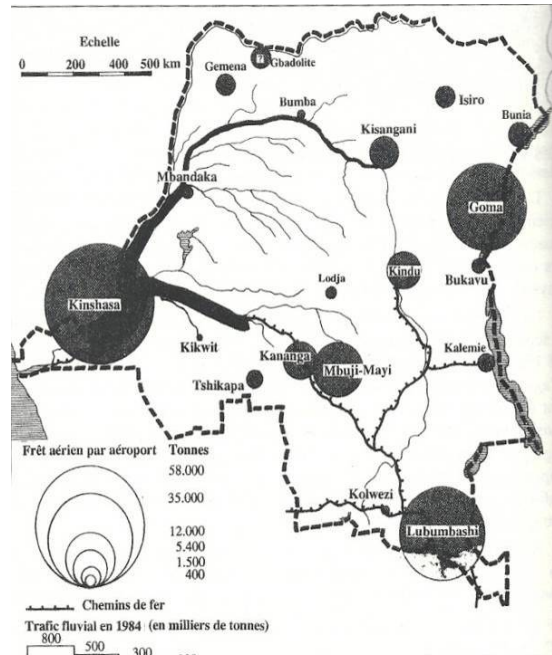
⁶⁰ It is estimated that after 1973 about 90% of the land of the CNKI came under the control of Banyarwanda, that became the new class of 'rural capitalists' (Vlassenroot 2002b).

⁶¹ Interview officer Studies Department of the Provincial Government (Goma 22 August 2007).

⁶² The development of *Keshero* en *Himbi* have been part of this dynamic. These districts are commonly called '*Zones des bourgeois*' because of the important presence of officials, economic actors and '*expats*'.

Urban investments were also linked to the administrative reforms of 1988, by which Goma again became the capital of the restored North Kivu province. Several central districts were connected to the electricity and water supply network, public lighting was installed, and road reconstruction works took place. In 1989 the first university opened its doors in Goma, and from that moment onwards the city steadily developed into an important educational centre, attracting students from all over the province and from Rwanda.

The political and economic dynamics provoked by this reform also strongly impacted on the demographic expansion of the city, which experienced a significant increase of the urban population, reinforcing Goma's development into a 'particularly dynamic centre' during the 1970s (de Saint Moulin 2010: 110). Besides the usual rural exodus towards the city, Goma saw a particular influx of people from Bukavu with a higher education background that came to settle in Goma. The creation of new administrative departments further attracted an increasing number of economic entrepreneurs and private companies. The proximity of the rural production areas of Masisi and Rutshuru also ensured that food prices in the city were kept relatively low, which added to the city's appeal for immigrants from neighbouring provinces. For people migrating from Bukavu to Goma, for example, life seemed much cheaper and employment opportunities were higher (we see this trend continuing until present day). In the second half of the 1970s, the demographic growth slowed down, mainly due to the volcanic eruptions in '74 and '77 which discouraged new migrants to settle in Goma. Additionally, this was due to a new policy adopted by the administrative power to curb the rural exodus and the uncontrolled expansion of the urban centre (Barigora Rwamera 2008). Finally, the relative stability in Rwanda resulted in a drop of refugee numbers. Despite this slow down, the urban population grew steadily (**Table 2**).



Map 2: Aerial and river transportation in Zaire (de Saint Moulin 2010): 114

Year	1960	1965	1970	1973	1978	1980	1982	1985	1988
Population		25,091	48,643	58,402	69,752	79,380	85,231	91,523	97,602
Surface in km ²	27,5	27,5	50	50	50	50	50	50	66

Table 2: Population and surface of Goma from 1960 to 1988 (Barigora Rwamera 2008: 53)

The demographic growth resulted in an important spatial extension, integrating parts of the surrounding rural territories in the urban perimeter. This led to the creation of new urban districts in westward direction (direction Sake). Urbanisation and urban extension were however not the result of a deliberate urban planning or policy. Because of the lack of vision, capacity and financial means of the local administration, the city's expansion occurred without the necessary infrastructural investments (Verhoeve 2004). Until 1988, Goma did not dispose its own urbanisation office, the city depended on the services that were centralised in Bukavu. Without any good knowledge of the field and without the elaboration of preparatory prospection, new districts were parcelled out. And in case a planning was designed, it was often hardly respected. Although the ingredients of informal or extra-legal urbanisation thus were already present during this period, the profound informalisation of dynamics of urbanisation (the occupation of land without legal permission, the private operation of state officials responsible for urbanisation services etc.) has to be situated from the 1990s onwards. The general breakdown of state institutions, the failure of government capacities in providing urban services, and an increased resort to informal survival strategies of both the civil urban population as well as state agents themselves, further enforced these processes.

Finally, some words on the economic evolution of Goma under Mobutu's regime. The Zairianisation project did not achieve at transforming the economy into an industrialised economic centre. Apart from a couple of transformation factories of agricultural products, the industrial sector never really developed in Goma. The primary sector in the fertile hinterlands remained the main basis of economic incomes. During the 1970s, this sector was partly transformed by an increased investment in cattle breeding. Major cattle ranching projects were established between 1973 and 1975⁶³. These ranches in Masisi were owned by a small group of Tutsi entrepreneurs, as a result of Mobutu's deliberate patronage to privilege them with political and economic resources⁶⁴. These entrepreneurs all resided in Goma, were they had taken possession of all the luxurious villa's on the shores of Lake Kivu. Some of the individuals of this powerful urban elite still possess many real estate in Goma (see for example Kasuku or Ngezayo), but as we will observe later on in this dissertation, they have been increasingly marginalised to the advantage of other emerging urban elites.

The intensification of cattle breeding in the city's hinterland had a positive effect on Goma, as it reinforced the commercial activities between Goma and the capital city

⁶³ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008). See also Tull (2005).

⁶⁴ This elite obtained 90% of all former colonial plantations in Masisi and Rutshuru (Tull 2005).

Kinshasa but also Kisangani, Lubumbashi, Bukavu and Rwanda. Goma became a central storage and transit point, not only for agricultural products but for dairy products and meat as well, and related business activities started to develop⁶⁵.

Another important economic dynamics in the 1970s and the 1980s was the increase in illegal transborder trade and the expansion of the informal economy (informal activities outside the official legal framework). Informal transborder trade (that was already well developed during the colonial period), consolidated its orientation towards East Africa and the Great Lakes region during the Mobutu period. In her study on this informal trade, Janet MacGaffey states, for example, that in the 1970s, 40% of the total coffee harvest was clandestinely exported (MacGaffey 1987: 148). However, the Zairian state officials were strongly involved in this illicit transactions⁶⁶. In Goma, customs officials and police on the border or at the airport for example, often actively participated in cross border smuggling (Vwakyankazi 1991). Also in the mining sector (particularly the exploitation of the gold mines), a large part of the export occurred in an illegal way⁶⁷. These illicit trade on the one hand strengthened the same political-economic elite in place in Goma and on the other hand it reinforced the city's eastwards orientation. It was during this period that Goma evolved from a peripheral city into a major political and economic pole within the Great Lakes Region "*durant la période de 1978 à 1988, la ville de Goma est devenue le centre des courants des capitaux qui circulaient dans la sous-région dont elle est le centre économique*"⁶⁸. Goma also became a crucial link in a network of cities in Eastern Zaire. Its regional integration was further reinforced when the Mobutu regime gradually collapsed and Goma took an increasingly autonomous position and oriented more and more to neighbouring countries for its economic expansion. Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire established the *Communauté Economique des Pays des Grands Lacs* (CEPGL), for which most of the meetings took place in Goma.

The Zairianisation project and the neo-patrimonial nature of the state had a disastrous impact on the national economy, already in 1972 the economy started deteriorating. Although the informal transborder economy offered opportunities to particular entrepreneurial elites, the average Zairian citizen could not profit at all. The enrichment of the 'assimilated elite' sharply contrasted with the general deterioration of the socio-economic situation of the local population. In need for much and fast financial resources to maintain clientelistic networks, political economic principles were focused on rapid access to capital instead of long term investments (Trefon et al. 2002). Further, structural adjustment programs forced the government to address budget deficits by reducing expenditures in 'non-productive' sectors such as health and education. This, together with

⁶⁵ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "*Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe*", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

⁶⁶ This political economy was partly based on the control over this informal markets by the distribution or withholding access to resources within the framework of state patronage (Tull 2005).

⁶⁷ In that period, the mining sector was not yet developed as it would at the end of the 1990s.

⁶⁸ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "*Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe*", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

the drop of external financial support in the post-cold war period lead to a complete collapse of Zaire's social infrastructure and caused dramatic social crisis.

Impoverishment in the rural areas forced many peasants to search for an income in the mining sites, or to move to the urban centres. In Goma, increased prices, inflation and the monopolisation of economic markets by Mobutu's elite left the population to fend for themselves. They increasingly withdrew in the informal economy, which developed from the end of the 1980s onward as a response to the deteriorating urban infrastructure and service delivery. The emergence of the *cambistes* (informal, ambulant money-changers) and all sorts of '*petit commerce*' has to be situated in this period. Mobutu's neo-patrimonial rule did not only resulted in an economic disaster and a social crisis, it eventually undermined the state in itself (Trefon et al. 2002). The deepening of the economic crisis and state 'failure' in the sense of a gradual erosion of the formal state apparatus in the 1990s further resulted in the profound informalisation of all levels of Zairian society in Goma and elsewhere.

3.8. Goma during the 1990s: The urban epicentre of crisis and conflict

On top of the economic crisis, the political changes of the 1990s enforced the process of state failure and worsened the socio-economic conditions in the Kivu region, as they laid the basis for a long period of conflict and violence in the region. The political developments of the 1990s strongly impacted Goma's further development, and determined the city's transformation towards a centre of ethnic contest, rebellion and refuge.

In Goma, the announcement of a multi-party system in 1990 and the organisation of the Sovereign National Conference (1991-1992) was characterised by chaos, conflict and violence. Like was the case in other provinces, Goma also fell prey to lootings by Mobutu's military. The dynamics of politisation of the nationality question and the mobilisation of ethnicity created severe tensions between the different communities of North Kivu province, creating the basis for violent conflict that would persist until today. Ever since, the city of Goma has become the centre of intense struggle between political figures, ethnic communities and armed groups (Bucyalimwe Mararo 2002).

The introduction of geo-politics (according to which national institutions were to be created on the basis of regional quotas, all positions of authority could only be awarded to those who were indigenous to the region concerned), tended to seriously shift the political power balance in Goma. The Tutsi elites that were given increasing political power under Mobutu's patronage-politics, lost their position to the advantage of 'autochthonous' groups. In an effort to counter Hutu (who consisted the ethnic majority), Hunde, Nyanga, Tembo and Nande allied. By the logic of electoral power according to ethnic numerical majority, the local Tutsi community feared marginalisation and increasingly abandoned politics in favour of armed struggle. To ensure that Banyarwanda were excluded from politics, autochthonous political leaders claimed the rejection of these Banyarwanda's citizenship and encouraged ethnic census to identify the 'nationals'. This created additional tension and increased local conflicts all over the province.

Violence directed against Banyarwanda escalated in march 1993 in Masisi, Walikale and Rutshuru, causing the death of approximately 100,000 people. This conflict had a strong impact on Goma, in the first place by the massive human displacement caused by the violence. Many of the thousands of internally displaced persons installed in Sake and Goma. The annual report of 1993 published by the municipal authorities explains how these '*rescapées*' received a 'temporal residence permit', of three months (extendible) but the 1994 report notes that many of them installed more permanently in the city, resulting in a spatial expansion (République du Zaïre 1994; République du Zaïre 1995). The parcelling of the new districts created many conflicts between the 'original' and 'new' inhabitants (Mairie de Goma 1994).

The Masisi conflict also set in motion the increasing militarisation of the city and the province as a whole (Bucyalimwe Mararo 2002). The national army increased its deployment, but the region also witnessed the emergence of armed militias. Additionally, the RPF⁶⁹ intensively recruited in Goma and its hinterlands for its war in Rwanda. Local authorities repeatedly expressed their concerns about the degrading security conditions in town (Mairie de Goma 1994)⁷⁰. This violence and instability strongly slowed down the economic development of Goma. The city got disconnected from its fertile hinterlands and lost most of its economic dynamics in favour of its 'rival' Butembo (Bucyalimwe Mararo 2002; Turner 2007).

This war was a decisive turning point in the escalation of violence in the region. In July 1994, when the conflict got calmed down, it was inflamed again by the catastrophic refugee crisis that resulted from the Rwandan genocide (April-July 1994). This refugee crisis reinforced internal crisis in Zaïre and brought the local conflicts to a more regional level, putting North Kivu at the heart of the national and regional geopolitical struggle (Turner 2007).

An estimated one million Rwandan refugees (mainly Hutu) poured into North and South Kivu. The largest part settled in the refugee camps situated in Goma's periphery. These camps were the scene of a profound humanitarian disaster and the source of heavy militarisation, violence and political crisis. These events completely destabilised the entire city for several months. Local authorities tried to cope with the chaos and security- and health threat the refugee crisis brought into the city. In the conclusion of the annual report of the year 1994 we read: "*l'enterrement des corps des Tutsi jetés dans le lac (...) et plus tard les cadavres des victimes des épidémies et assurer la santé pour la population de Goma et l'encadrement pour une cohabitation pacifique avec les Zaïrois, ont constitué une des plus grands préoccupations du Commissaire de Zone jusqu'en octobre 1994*" (Mairie de Goma 1995: 12). This crisis had an enormous impact on the spatial, social, economic and political development of Goma, which I will describe in more detail in chapter 8. A particular consequence that would be decisive for the further regional economic and political positioning of Goma was the installation of international humanitarian and development agencies in the city.

⁶⁹ *Rwandan Patriotic Front.*

⁷⁰ The annual report notes for example "*des pillages et des tracasseries de la population par les militaires et les éléments de la garde civil*".

For many *Goméens*, the 1994 crisis lies at the origin of the on-going war, the problematic transborder relations and the conflicts between the different ethnic communities.

After the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took over power in Kigali, the refugee camps in Goma increasingly became the target of violent attacks by the Rwandan army. Logically, this seriously impacted on the local security situation in town⁷¹. Further, the city witnessed an influx of displaced people (mainly Hunde), fleeing interethnic violence in Masisi and Walikale (Mairie de Goma 1996), reinforcing the general situation of chaos and crisis in town.

When internal conflicts were linked to the security problems caused by the refugee camps to Zaire's neighbouring countries Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda, the logics of the first Congolese war were formed (Clark 2002; Turner 2007). In October 1996, the *Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération* (AFDL), led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila and backed by Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda, started its campaign to overthrow the Mobutu regime. They succeeded in doing so seven months later; Kabila became the new president of the country, which he re-baptised 'Democratic Republic of the Congo'. During the AFDL's campaign, Goma became one of the leading military centres. The city was 'liberated' on the first of November; Ryckmans wrote about the chaos following this event: "*Goma a vécu une bataille meurtrière. Ses habitants ont souffert des exactions des soldats Zairois. Avant leur fuite, ils ont pillé, violé, tué, sans défendre la ville*" (Ryckmans 1998: 124). Tension and violence was boosted by the continuing elimination of the militias present in the refugee camps around Goma⁷². And on top of that, the war provoked an economic crisis, and a considerable inflation of food prices⁷³.

However, AFDL's military was well received in Goma, as its inhabitants were eager to see Mobutu leaving; "*Le 1^{er} Novembre 1996, la date à laquelle la Zone Urbaine de Goma a été libérée, a été un soulagement pour la population*" (Mairie de Goma 1997a: 86). *Goméens* massively encouraged Kabila, and many youngsters voluntarily presented themselves to take up arms and participate in the 'march to Kinshasa'⁷⁴. The atmosphere was tense, but also very promising (Kivikwamo Kimbulmbuli J.M. Baudouin 2000)⁷⁵.

With regards to the political level, the first Congolese war changed power relations in the city, again reinforcing Banyarwanda's power position and more particularly Tutsi. After AFDL installed itself in the city, it established a provincial government and new political authorities were named, altering the political balance within the province as a whole. This

⁷¹ "En mai 1995, début des explosions des mines sur tout l'étendue de la ville de Goma piégées par les sujets Tutsi. Celle-ci ont déjà causés plusieurs dégâts matériels et quelques pertes de vie humaine" (Mairie de Goma 1996: 4).

⁷² Interview officer Studies Department of the Provincial Government (Goma, August 22 2007). See also Braeckman et al. (1998).

⁷³ "La population a été vraiment déstabilisée de la hausse très sensible des prix. Elle ne pouvait plus y comprendre quelques chose" (Mairie de Goma 1997a: 86).

⁷⁴ Interview Maman Kathy, secondary school teacher (Goma, August 19 2007). A considerable number of *Kadogo's* recruited in Kabila's army originated from Goma and its surroundings. Of course recruitment was not always a matter of volunteering.

⁷⁵ See also interview officer Studies Department of the Provincial Government (Goma, August 22 2007).

new 'order', further reinforced by the direct influence of Rwanda in Goma, would be maintained during the second Congolese war.

From August 1998 till July 2003, this second war ('*guerre de rectification*') was fought out between President Kabila and the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD), largely supported by Congolese Tutsi populations and backed by Rwanda and Uganda. In contrast to the first war, the RCD military campaign was received far less enthusiastically in Goma. From the start, RCD was locally perceived as a 'foreign-dominated' movement, and beside the local Tutsi community, inhabitants could hardly identify with their course. The general perception of this war was that of an undesired 'occupation' (Kivikwamo Kimbulmbuli J.M. Baudouin 2000)⁷⁶.

The second Congolese war is also referred to as the 'Great War of Africa' as it involved many African nations, and developed into the largest war of modern African history. From its early start, Goma was in the midst of it. The RCD emerged soon after a mutiny of Banyamulenge in Goma in August 1998, assisted by Rwandan support. After having installed itself in Goma, this movement soon took control over Bukavu and Uvira. Their allies were Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, while Kabila, from his side, received the support of several members of the SADC⁷⁷ community: Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Libya and Chad. For a good overview of this complex and multi-sided war, see (Reyntjens 1999; Smis & Vanhoyweghen 2002; Turner 2007).

Soon after its start, this rebellion set in motion a process of politico-military fragmentation that divided the Eastern Congolese provinces into a multitude of zones of control and led to the formation of numerous armed groups. Internal contradictions and frictions amongst RCD's allies Rwanda and Uganda, led to the division of the rebel movement. This resulted in its turn in the increasing division of the North Kivu. Goma became the headquarters of the RCD-Goma controlled 'petit Nord', while Butembo was the centre of the RCD-ML controlled 'grand-Nord'. In Goma, the administration set in place by AFDL was largely consolidated⁷⁸.

Much has been written on the 'foreign occupation' of the Kivu region during this second war. The impact of Rwandan involvement in this region has been profound, and has marked the region's future political, economic and social development. Claiming substantial parts of Eastern Congo as "historically Rwandan", during this war the regional aspirations of the Rwandan regime were clearly expressed. In the chapter on the significance of Goma as a centre of rebellion, I will further elaborate on how this external influence has shaped the city's identity and that of its inhabitants. The involvement of Rwanda of course also strongly determined the evolution of local transborder social relations. This will be further analysed in the chapter on border dynamics.

The installation of the rebel's headquarters in Goma, had a profound impact on the city's general political and economic profile, and strongly influenced its national and regional position and significance. The RCD period (1998-2003) is an important chapter in the city's

⁷⁶ See also Tull (2005) and interview Maman Kathy, secondary school teacher (Goma, August 19 2007).

⁷⁷ Southern African Development Community.

⁷⁸ See Tull (2005) for a detailed and inclusive analysis of the RCD's 'rebel rule' in North Kivu.

transformation into a 'city of rebellion'. In chapter 7 I will analyse this local impact in further detail, and it will be demonstrated that this 'rebel rule' and the total political and economical disconnection from the Congolese capital of Kinshasa reinforced the city's autonomous status.

At the same time, the RCD occupation was also of central importance in the city's evolution towards a centre of opportunity. During this period, the city witnessed an incredible economic 'boost', created in the first place through the rising importance of the natural resource trade in the region. Goma became a regional transit point in the dynamics of the political economy of war, dynamics that attracted all sorts of 'investors' to the city.

An important outcome of these evolutions was the reinforcement of the Banyarwanda political and economic elite in Goma. Controlling all main administrative posts and key economic sectors, this elite could largely extend its power position. Part of Goma's '*ancien elite*' under Mobutu's rule as described earlier in this chapter was recycled. The Tutsi-administration installed by the AFDL and reinforced by the RCD would be replaced by Hutu from 2002 onwards (as part of a co-optation strategy of Congolese Hutu leaders). Under the '*rwandaphonie*'- rule of governor Serufuli, the city's mayor Nzambara Matsetsa and the *Bourgemestre* Gachaba, Hutu were installed on all levels of local administration in Goma. The establishment of this Hutu elite around the personality of governor Serufuli and his power structures LDF and TPD⁷⁹ (well documented in Jourdan 2005; Tull 2005) was of crucial importance for the future political development of the city and the transformation of urban governance in the context of violent conflict. I will at several occasions refer back to it when discussing the transformation of urban elites, the dynamics of ethnic contestation and the impact of rebel governance in Goma.

This influent Banyarwanda elite made many and visible investments in the city (real estate, businesses). Their political power base would only be altered by the elections in 2006, and economically by the increasing emergence of Nande businessmen in Goma.

3.9. 17 January 2002: Goma under volcanic ashes

On the morning of January 17th of 2002⁸⁰, after 24 relative 'quiet' years, the Nyiragongo volcano erupted again. What initially seemed a rather small eruption compared of that of 1977, would later on that day turn out to be a humanitarian catastrophe. The lava streams that left a trace of destruction through the city, did not flow directly out of the main crater, but instead welled up through the multiple fissures located all over town. It was only the day after that the full scope of the dramatic impact became clear. Lava streams covered about 13% of the city and destroyed 80% of the city's economic infrastructure, the administrative centre, more than 13 km of asphalted roads and 1 km of the airstrip, which drastically reduced the capacity of the airport (République Démocratique du Congo 2003). About 17,500 households became homeless and the districts that were not

⁷⁹ *Local Defence Forces* and *Tout pour la Paix et le Développement*, a private militia and NGO directed by the Governor himself.

⁸⁰ This was exactly one year after the assassination of president 'Mzee' Laurent Désiré Kabila'. Ever since, January 17 is registered in *Goméens'* minds as an absolute cursed date.

affected by the lava became densely populated because of the building of emergency dwellings (**Map 3**).

During the eruption, large parts of Goma's inhabitants fled across the border into Gisenyi, where refugee camps were installed. However, many already returned after a couple of days, still traumatised by their bad memories on the 1994 refugee camps.

The aftermath of this tragic event, revealed the deep crisis Goma got into (and the country in general), after years of state decline, economic crisis and violent conflict. The complete absence of any central planning in this urgency left the urban population in harrowing conditions. The reaction of both Goma and Kinshasa governments were rather clumsy. Right before the eruption, the RCD had not taken seriously the warnings made by the volcanologists and had refused to invest in additional research. In the days following the eruption, the RCD did not in any way present itself as a responsible government (regarding communication, evacuation, organisation of assistance etc.) (Verhoeve 2003). From Kinshasa, an official communication announced the provision of emergency assistance to the victims, which was refused by the RCD who suspected Kinshasa from using this assistance as a strategy to regain its influence and control in the region. Hereupon, all national assistance failed, leaving the local populations depending on the interventions of the international community.



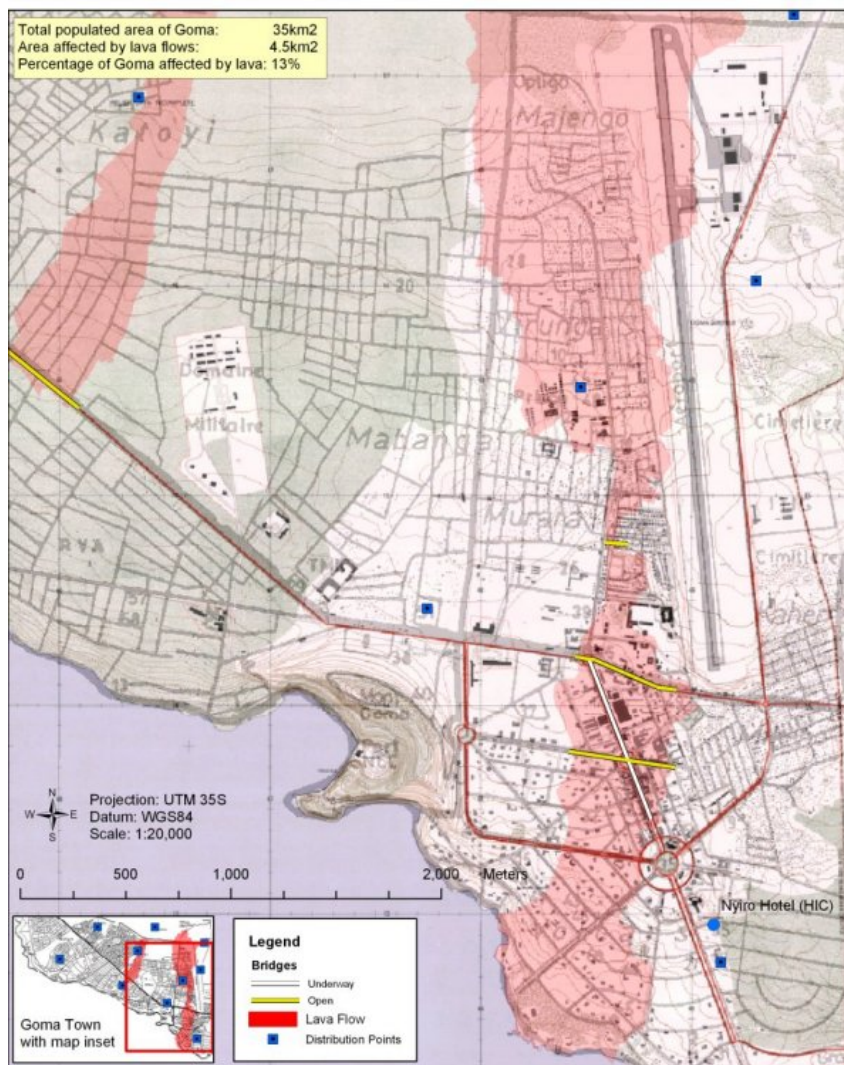
Picture 2: Crater of the Nyiragongo © Karen Büscher 2008

The city was rebuilt relatively quickly. But because of the non-implication of urban plans, this happened in a largely 'informal' or 'unstructured' way. *Goméens* immediately tried to reconstruct their houses on the lava rocks. Clark observed how the city at that time appeared as 'an equatorial Atlantis', half-submerged in hardened lava. "The population

lives and works above the lava-line, in the upper stories of buildings damaged by the volcano and new buildings constructed on the surface” (Clark 2007: 29). Initiatives to relocate the city centre to a more ‘safer’ area and investments in urban districts located more to the west, were at no avail. The city centre was rebuilt at its original location.

GOMA: Town Centre

27 Jan 2002



Lava data derived from GPS ground survey and thermal imagery.
 Background: composite of ADRG 1:7,500 map and town plan of unknown scale
 Published by OCHA Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC), Goma, DRC - 27 January 2002



Map 3: Lava stream that entered the centre of Goma
(<http://reliefweb.int/node/150> (last access date 31/10/2011)).

The economic impact of the eruption was significant, but the events could not temper the city's dynamic growth and development. In the following years, Goma would remain an important economic pole of attraction.

Yet, the psychological impact of this event was enormous. From one day to another, many *Goméens* lost everything they had. Many people watched the lava destroying their houses, their savings and all their possessions in just a couple of minutes time. Many *Goméens* will refer to the presence of the volcano as the main disadvantage to live in Goma, as this constant threat somehow discourages people to invest⁸¹. Further, the volcano has become the metaphor for the unpredictable and volatile character of the city. *Goméens* refer to their city as '*la ville volcanique*' to illustrate the permanence of fear and insecurity. Today, a warning system is installed, in which alert flags (green, yellow or red according to the degree of volcanic activity) should keep the local population vigilant.

3.10. Elections and the reconfiguration of the local power balance

After the signing of the final peace agreements in April 2003, a transitional process was started, which again integrated the eastern parts of the DRC into the national administrative framework⁸². This transitional period was ended by the democratic election in 2006 of Joseph Kabila as president, a national parliament and provincial assembly. In 2006, 33 political parties have been officially registered in Goma, including PPRD, DCF/COFEDEC, UDPS, RCD and MLC⁸³. During the run-up to the elections the situation was tense in Goma. The registration process again provoked the mobilisation of discourses of autochthony and at several occasions chaos and small-scale violence broke out in town as self-styled autochthones attempted to prevent the process (Turner 2007).

During the second round of the presidential elections, Goma massively voted for Kabila⁸⁴. As stated by Jason Stears, people in Goma did not per se voted *for* Kabila, they voted in the first place *against* the RCD⁸⁵. In spite of its multiple manoeuvres to retain control during the transitional period, the RCD lost most of its political influence during the 2006 elections (and only gained 15 seats in the national parliament). In the past years, anti-

⁸¹ Results questionnaire '*Perceptions de la situation socio-économique dans la ville de Goma*' (Goma, August 2007). However, only a couple of years after the eruption, one could observe luxurious villa's constructed at exactly the same location where the lava stream destroyed entire neighborhoods. When interrogating investors on the possible risks they were taking, they would answer that real estate has become this lucrative, that even in case the volcano would erupt and destroy again within two years, the investments would already been largely regained.

⁸² However, the East-West divide of the country remained very strong, and was clearly reflected through the electoral campaigns of Kabila and Bemba during the second round of the presidential elections.

⁸³ For the full list, see: Mairie de Goma (2007: 3-4).

⁸⁴ In North Kivu Kabila passed in the first round with 77,7% and in the second round with more than 90%, mainly because he was believed to be the main facilitator of the peace agreements.

⁸⁵ Interview Jason Stearns, (Brussels, June 9, 2011).

Banyarwanda protest had gained voice in the city⁸⁶, and local interethnic relations had increasingly been crystallised in a binary opposition between 'autochthones' and Banyarwanda (locally also referred to as the G7 and the G2⁸⁷). In the run-up to the elections, political balance shifted from Rwandan backed RCD and Rwandophones to once marginalised Nande, Hunde and Nyanga communities allied to Kabila. As such, the elections led to an important reconfiguration of local politics and power relations, as the established elite was side-lined by a Nande-Hutu majority. The organisation of the provincial elections⁸⁸ at the end of October 2006 sharpened ethnic divisions in the city. The local outcome of the elections interestingly reflected not only the 'marginal' position of Tutsi in Goma, but also confirmed the strong historic power basis of Nande in town. After his election, the provincial governor Paluku (Nande) faced strong mistrust, translated into ethnic discourse, as he was regarded as mainly serving the interests of the Nande community. The power contest between Nande and Hutu communities at the urban level will be analysed in further detail in chapter 6.

The 2006 elections were a source of great optimism. Firstly, the electoral process was expected to result in an enhancement of the political and governance context at all levels of society. With the provincial assembly being elected in October 2006, it was assumed that more transparency and accountability could be claimed from the provincial authorities. So far, however, the governance context has hardly improved and continues to be conditioned by the dominance of mechanisms of self-enrichment to the benefit of state representatives. The functioning of the provincial assembly in North Kivu (as elsewhere in the country) is hindered by limited experience, extreme political fragmentation, local tensions, corruption and the absence of leadership. Provincial authorities suffer from a lack of management skills but also have to govern with limited financial resources as little progress has been made in the implementation of the decentralisation process stipulated in the constitution. Secondly, the main expectation of Goma's inhabitants towards Kabila, was the installation of peace. '*Fatigués de la guerre*', they insisted on the ending of violence in their province. In a meeting held by Kabila on June 26 of 2006 in Goma, the president promised *Goméens* to bring peace and to arrest Laurent Nkunda, the dissident Tutsi general who had created a new rebel movement which was increasingly extending its control over certain parts of the province. Yet, only four months later and a few days before Kabila announced his victory, on 26 November 2006, this same Laurent Nkunda organised its first 'march to Goma' and was stopped at the last minute in Sake by MONUC's⁸⁹ helicopters and infantry. Elections could thus not

⁸⁶ On December 9, 2004, an unauthorised 'Rwandophone' protest march organised by *bourgemestre* Gachaba, (demanding Kinshasa to reverse its decision to send 100 000 troops to the east) was answered with a counter-demonstration and the situation denigrated into violence in which two demonstrators were killed and a number wounded (Turner 2007).

⁸⁷ Respectively representing on the one hand the seven 'autochthonous' ethnic groups (Hunde, Nyanga, Tembo, Nande, Kanu, Kumu, Twa) and on the other hand Hutu and Tutsi.

⁸⁸ The new constitution elected by the referendum of November 2005, provided increasing power to the provincial level, and the governor should be elected by the members of the provincial assembly, who on their turn are directly elected by the people.

⁸⁹ *Mission des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo* which in 2010 became MONUSCO (*Mission des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en République Démocratique du Congo*).

bring stability to the region. To the contrary, in the following years, the North Kivu province plunged into large scale violence that caused massive human displacement.

3.11. Intensification of violence

The on-going war still largely revolves around the not-resolved issues of citizenship and land access. Clashes between the Congolese army, the CNDP⁹⁰, FDLR⁹¹, PARECO⁹² and Mayi-Mayi militias⁹³ profoundly destabilised the North Kivu region, with a peak of violence between October 2007 and November 2008⁹⁴. Especially the spectacular emergence of Laurent Nkunda's rebel movement CNDP and its military strength painfully pointed at the impotence of president Kabila and the weakness of his army. After the 2003 peace agreement and the loss of power by the former dominant rebel movement RCD, Nkunda and other Tutsi officers who feared marginalisation established a network of dissidents. Goma formed the principle base for all RCD dissidents who allied with Nkunda (International Crisis Group 2007). In May 2004, they attacked Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu, and temporarily took over control before finally being dispersed by MONUC and the Congolese army. After this attack, Laurent Nkunda retreated to Masisi and Rutshuru and created his own movement CNDP that rejected the conditions of the peace process and aimed at the protection of the Tutsi-population.

Although the main part of Nkunda's combatants were recruited outside the urban centres (in particular in the refugee camps in Rwanda), CNDP could mobilise many Tutsi members in Goma. Both 'marginalised' as well as well-educated youngsters supported the movement. Further, Tutsi businessmen in Goma felt increasingly isolated and supported Nkunda to secure their economic assets.

The violence during the immediate post-electoral period forced Kabila to broker a deal with Nkunda, and an agreement was made to integrate Nkunda's brigade in the FARDC. However, this integration (or '*mixage*' process) failed, and instead of new negotiations, Kabila choose for a large scale military offensive at the end of 2007. But this offensive could not destabilise CNDP. Between 2007 and 2009, the rebel movement controlled large parts of Masisi and Rutshuru.

In January 2008, a peace conference was organised in Goma⁹⁵. In an attempt to achieve an inclusive peace agreement, all armed groups were invited, together with the government representatives, civil society actors and international observers. The aim was to pacify the Kivu-provinces by dealing with the root causes of local dynamics of conflict.

This conference resulted in the signing of the '*actes d'engagement*', and the start of the Amani (Swahili for 'peace') programme which included further demobilisation or

⁹⁰ *Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple.*

⁹¹ *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda.*

⁹² *Coalition des Patriotes Résistants Congolais*, a local self-defense force, constituted of Mayi-Mayi and FARDC - FDLR 'mixed' elements opposed to CNDP.

⁹³ Local self-defense militia, divided in many fractions.

⁹⁴ The increasing levels of sexual violence in this region has been given a lot of attention in the international press over the last two years.

⁹⁵ *Conférence sur la paix, la sécurité et le développement dans les provinces de Nord-Kivu et du Sud-Kivu*, January 6-23, 2008.

integration in the Congolese army. Only very limited progress was made in this Amani programme, and security conditions hardly improved. To the contrary, in the second half of 2008, fighting increased. In October 2008, Nkunda again threatened to take over Goma, causing much tension and urban crime when arriving at the doorsteps of the city. Goma seemed to be the centre of the military contest between the CNDP and the Congolese forces, backed by the presence of MONUC, which eventually could stop the rebels.

When an estimated 4,000 Rwandan troops entered Eastern Congo, in January 2009, it took many by surprise (International Crisis Group 2007). In November 2008, an agreement was concluded in Nairobi between Kinshasa and Kigali on a joint military operation to eliminate the FDLR. The outcomes of this agreement, the Umoja Wetu operation ('our unity' in Swahili) were symbolic for the improved relationships between Congo and Rwanda and drastically reshaped the local and political military landscape (International Crisis Group 2007). When in January 2009 CNDP Chief of staff Bosco Ntaganda announced that he had replaced Laurent Nkunda⁹⁶, the situation suddenly changed rapidly. Nkunda was arrested in Rwanda on January 22, and CNDP moved on to an accelerated integration of its units into the Congolese army. Other armed groups such as PARECO and some Mayi-Mayi militias soon followed. Although indeed bringing a relative stability to the region, the outcomes of the joint Rwandan-Congolese military operation with regards to the general security situation were less positive than expected. FDLR continues to control large parts of the rural areas, and the ones that suffered the most from the operation were the local civil populations, who fled the violence and extortion used by the different warring parties, not the least the Congolese army.

Today, the situation remains volatile. Sporadic clashes between the different armed groups keeps tens of thousands of civilians regularly displaced. Hunted FDLR increasingly use violence against the local populations. At the eve of the presidential elections, ethnic tensions are far from dwindling.

These recent years of intense fighting in Goma's surroundings had a series of consequences that profoundly influenced the city, although the city has never been the theatre of violence in itself as it is heavily protected by the international MONUSCO forces. The most visible impact was the massive arrival of internally displaced people. In October 2007, the number of IDPs in North Kivu was estimated at more than 500,000. In February 2008, this figure rose to more than 800,000⁹⁷. Many of them in search for security round the urban centres. The influx of IDPs partly explains the redoubling of Goma's population over the past ten years, with 320,000 inhabitants in 1999 and an estimated 700,000 in 2009. Obviously, this fast demographic growth caused a strong spatial urban extension (6 km² in 1957, 14 km² in 1970 and 75 km² in 2007) (de Saint

⁹⁶ According to ICG and others, it had been a deliberate strategy by Kigali to shift the power configuration of the CNDP and to sideline Laurent Nkunda who, for the Rwandan regime, had become too autonomous and thus 'uncontrollable'.

⁹⁷ [http://www.internaldisplacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/\(httpEnvelopes\)/92D400C4F58A16B8C12572C10053F](http://www.internaldisplacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/92D400C4F58A16B8C12572C10053F) (last access date 20/03/2008); <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/RMOI-7C4NRN?OpenDocument> (last access date 20/03/2008).

Moulin 1974; Mairie de Goma 2007). In chapter 8 the impact of displacement dynamics on Goma's development and socio-economic city profile is described in further detail.

Another consequence of this rural exodus was the significant rise of food prices, as war disturbed agricultural production and forced local communities to abandon their fields. Further, transport from the hinterland to the city was hampered by the multiple barriers erected on the transport axes by the different armed groups (de Saint Moulin 1974; Mairie de Goma 2008b). During the increased fighting in the second half of 2008, a drastic inflation of prices of several basic food products was to be observed (for example the price of wheat flour increased with 97%, potatoes with 99%, bananas with 69%, beef meat with 114%, chicken with 264% (Mairie de Goma 2008a).

A next very particular consequence of the war in North Kivu was the installation of a new wave of international non-governmental organisations, which went along with the extension of the international peace keeping force MONUSCO. Present in North Kivu since 2002, its dimensions increased tremendously since the uprising of violence in 2007. Goma became the largest MONUC base in the region and the city turned into one of the main military UN headquarters. In the following chapters it will be demonstrated that the presence of these international actors have dramatically impacted on urban socio-economic and spatial transformations and on local dynamics of urban governance.

3.12. Goma and the regional integration of Eastern Congolese urban periphery

The present network of urban centres of the Democratic Republic of the Congo finds its origins in the colonial past. However, as de Saint Moulin has argued, the urban phenomenon -as "the organisation of large centres of polarised space of information and production"-, is not a mere European creation (de Saint Moulin 2010). Colonial urban centres often were installed at existing centres of exchanges and crossings of migration. The institutional organisation of space for commercial and political purpose, was a reality that preceded colonisation, and was used by colonisation; *"Sans nier que certains centres doivent leur développement à des créations récentes, principalement aux chemins de fer, il est certain que le réseau de pénétration européen correspond aux voies naturelles déjà largement utilisées antérieurement et que de nombreux points choisis pour contrôler l'espace au temps colonial avaient déjà une valeur stratégique perçue et exploitée à l'époque précédente"* (de Saint Moulin 2010: 31). By the development of transport systems and industries, colonisation has brought forward a new mode of urbanisation that laid the basis for the current dynamics of the present agglomerations in Congo.

Through history, the significance and role of urban centres in Congo in general and in North Kivu more specifically underwent significant changes. While during the pre-colonial period these centres mainly played the role of central markets from which a certain political control was executed, during the colonial period, cities became the headquarters of the new political power and socio-economic order (de Saint Moulin 2010). After independence, cities became extremely attractive spaces and the urbanisation rate in the country was very high (about 10%); *"ces rythmes sont exceptionnels, même en Afrique"* (de Saint Moulin 2010: 86). Over the past fifty years (1960-2010), the total population of the

country has been multiplied by almost 5, and the urban population by almost 15. The increase was the highest in North Kivu (see **Table 3**)

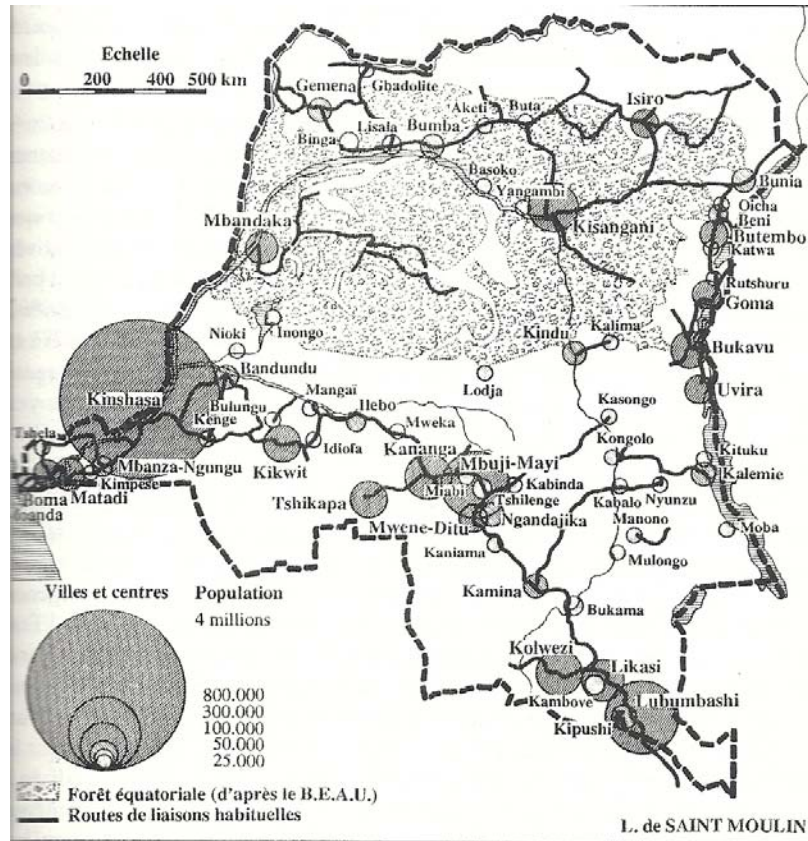
A. Urban population	1958- 1970	1971- 1975	1976- 1984	1985- 2010
Kinshasa	9.53	8.64	5.03	5.10
Bas-Congo	7.49	10.62	1.11	2.87
Bandundu	14.09	8.60	2.54	3.14
Equateur	8.60	7.09	4.00	2.84
Province Orientale	6.60	2.26	4.92	3.37
Nord-Kivu	13.93	5.59	12.38	3.80
Sud-Kivu	9.97	5.66	3.73	4.72
Maniema	8.15	6.14	1.30	2.66
Katanga	6.26	6.80	4.10	3.39
Kasai Oriental	10.23	3.57	8.93	3.99
Kasai Occidental	7.51	-2.35	5.01	3.67
Total RDC	8.41	6.19	4.80	4.04

B. Total population	1958- 1970	1971- 1975	1976- 1984	1985- 2010
Kinshasa	9.59	8.50	5.00	5.10
Bas-Congo	3.09	2.50	2.66	2.50
Bandundu	2.71	3.37	2.31	2.55
Equateur	1.79	2.27	3.51	2.75
Province Orientale	1.53	2.10	2.43	2.31
Nord-Kivu	4.11	3.21	4.32	3.59
Sud-Kivu	2.59	3.21	4.32	3.50
Maniema	2.33	3.21	2.04	2.20
Katanga	3.49	3.40	3.34	3.30
Kasai Oriental	3.66	4.62	3.86	3.50
Kasai Occidental	2.17	2.45	2.77	2.65
Total RDC	2.88	3.31	3.28	3.16

Table 3: Annual growth rate (in %) of the urban (A) and the total (B) population of major cities in DRC (de Saint Moulin 2010: 143).

It is striking that contrary to other parts of the country, in Eastern DRC the development of one dominant urban centre remained absent. Several urban centres (Goma, Beni, Butembo, Bunia, Uvira, Bukavu) have experienced a rapid growth during the 1990s, both in demographic and spatial terms but none of them became the leading centre of the region. Each of these cities has witnessed an autonomous expansion which was mainly the result of the development of a lucrative transborder trade that through informal economic activities connected each of these cities to neighbouring markets in Uganda, Rwanda or

Burundi⁹⁸. These cities are internally weakly connected and all occupy their particular functions within this eastern urban network (See **Map 4**).



Map 4: Cities and centres of Zaïre in 1992 (de Saint Moulin 2010: 117)

The development of Butembo and Beni for example, was to a large extent the result of the competitive entrepreneurialism of the Nande traders, which not only made of these cities dynamic economic hubs, they also independently invested in urban infrastructure. Nowadays, the city of Butembo has become the symbol of the economic and political power of this class of 'commerçants' and of the integration of urban North Kivu in the economic markets of the Middle- and Far East. Bukavu, to the contrary, which for decades was the dominating capital for the whole Kivu region, occupies until today a principally administrative function. Geographically and also politico-economically, Goma is situated in between, playing at the same time an important economic and political-administrative role. Through recent developments of violent conflict, the regional significance of the city has largely been characterised by its military and strategic importance.

⁹⁸ Goma was connected with Gisenyi, Uvira with Bujumbura, Bukavu with Cyangugu etc.

The impact of violent conflict since the 1990s was often strongly context bounded and very diverse among different urban centres. In some cases, the town knew a destructive downfall, in other cases the conflict generated a new urban 'boost' that put the city economically and politically on the map. Goma clearly is an example of this latter case, in contrast to Kisangani, for example, that witnessed a dramatic implosion during the war and shifted from a flourishing economic centre to a ruined ghost town.⁹⁹ Other small urban centres in the region (such as Kamituga and Kitchanga, for example), have experienced an enormous population-boom since the start of the Congolese war.

In 2004, the DRC's Research Department for Planning and Urbanism (*le Bureau d'Etudes d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme*) described the DRC as being "torn" into three main "socio-economic and cultural zones"¹⁰⁰: a western zone facing towards the Atlantic whose transport networks converge on Kinshasa and the port of Matadi, a southern zone focused on the DRC's copper basin and its hinterland, oriented towards Southern Africa, and finally an eastern zone with no dominant city, but centred on the highlands, having almost no links to the capital Kinshasa and oriented towards the Indian Ocean.

As a result of the lack of infrastructure, Kivu's urban centres are badly integrated in the national economy. Economic exchange with the western parts of the country heavily relies on air transport. The busy axis between Maniema, North Kivu and the Oriental Province for example is dominated by heavy air traffic: light aircraft and massive Antonovs carry minerals or palm oil between the main cities of this three provinces. Goma's international airport occupies a central position in this axis, that is further extended by roads leading to Rwanda, Uganda and Southern Sudan (Musila 2009).

Levels of economic activity along the 2,000 km long axis between Kivu and Kinshasa are nowhere near those of the pre-war period, when it was a busy lifeline supplying the capital with vegetables and meat from the large farms in North and South Kivu (Musila 2009).

The lack of secure and drivable roads means that traffic between this eastern cities and their hinterland is negligible. However, their transborder integration in the Eastern African economy is remarkable. Kivu's string of urban centres on the border has increasingly oriented itself to the eastern neighbouring countries. Uvira, Beni, Bukavu and Goma are "twinning" with Burundian, Ugandan and Rwandan towns on the other side of the frontier – they are at one end of mini cross border corridors, and are fully integrated with the infrastructure of the three countries (Musila 2009: 15). Along the whole length of the Eastern Congolese border, a very intense socio-economic interaction has historically been established, not only along the official border posts, but also along the hundreds of unofficial crossing points. The daily exchanges between Goma and Gisenyi (Rwanda), on which I will focus elaborately in chapter 9, are a clear example. For the Eastern Congolese urban centres, this transborder connection constitutes not only an integration in the Eastern African economy, but in extension to the Asian market around the triad Dubai-

⁹⁹ For an analysis of Kisangani, see Omasombo (2005).

¹⁰⁰ RDC 2004, cited in Musila (2009: 9).

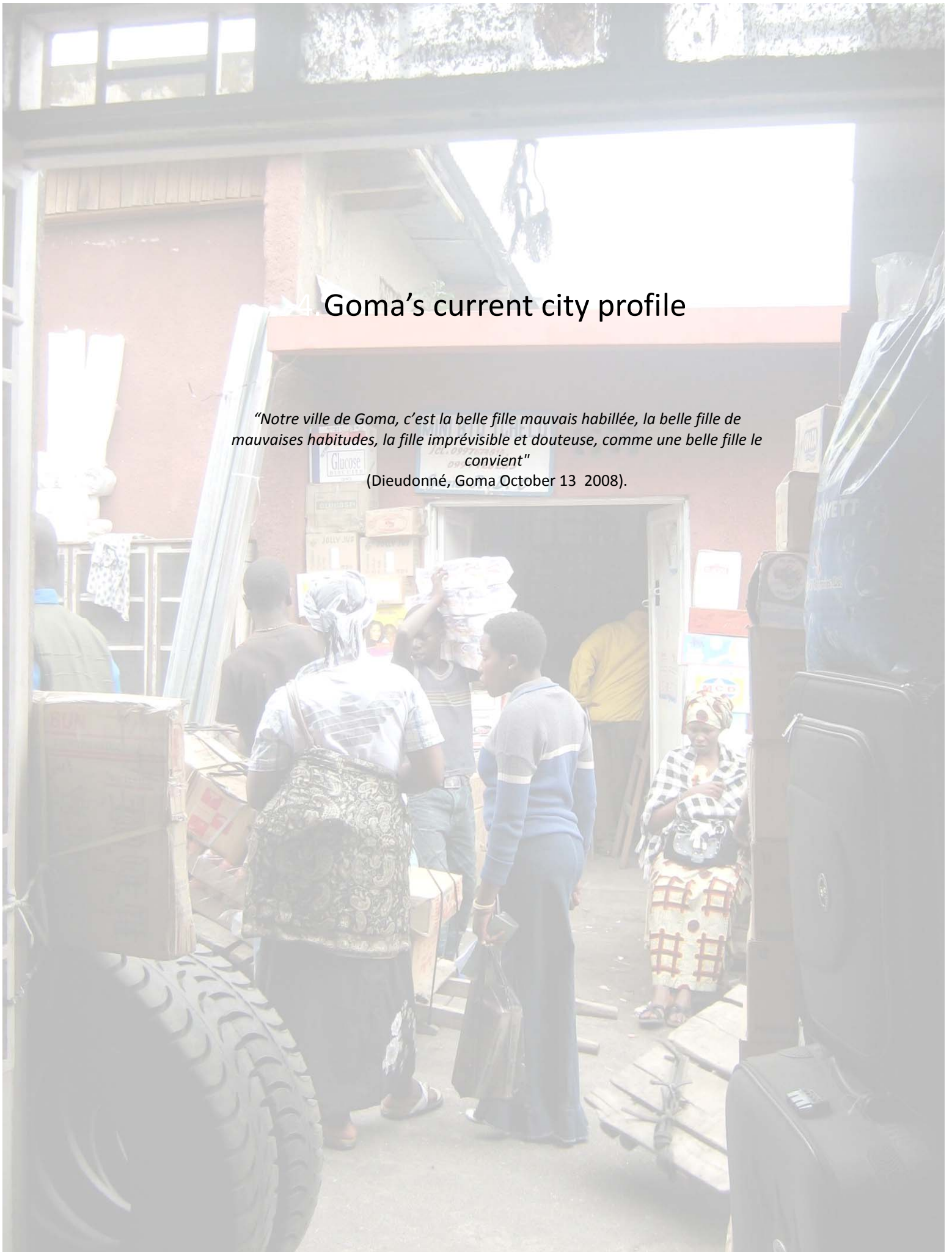
Mumbai-Guangzhou. The increased 'eastern' orientation of Goma and other border cities in the Kivu's has had a profound impact on the local urban economies¹⁰¹.

¹⁰¹ Although the visible signs of this changed orientation appeared only recently, the beginning of the change dates back to the end of the 1980s (Musila 2009).

4. Goma's current city profile

"Notre ville de Goma, c'est la belle fille mauvais habillée, la belle fille de mauvaises habitudes, la fille imprévisible et douteuse, comme une belle fille le convient"

(Dieudonné, Goma October 13 2008).



4.1. Introduction

While strolling around in Goma one is confronted with very contrasting impressions. On the one hand, while overlooking the stunning view over the Lake Kivu and the beautiful surrounding landscapes at the city's background (the volcano's, the Masisi hills...) it is easy to imagine the picturesque tourist attraction Goma once used to be. On the other hand, several elements are strongly indicating the volatility and the insecurity of this place. Not only do the lava streams, the yellow 'alert' flags and the remaining skeletons of buildings destroyed by the volcanic eruption remind us of the permanent risk the city is exposed to, also the heavy military presence all over town reinforces the feeling of proceeding in a highly 'unpredictable' terrain.



Picture 3: Satellite picture of Goma surrounded by lake Kivu, the volcano Nyiragongo and Rwanda
(<http://wikimapia.org/#lat=-1.6739752&lon=29.2318726&z=14&l=0&m=s> (May 22 2009, own marks))

Another contrast is astonishing. At the same time one is impressed by the dynamic local entrepreneurialism, translated for example in the rhythm by which new buildings and business are erected, one is also stuck by the miserable living conditions and gloomy atmosphere that dominates the reality in the city's slums or the desolate sights of the city's peripheral districts inhabited by internally displaced people. Although this cityscape of contrast and discrepancies is more or less a general characteristic of Congolese urban centres all over the country, Goma's historic development in the midst of a conflict-ridden region has strongly enhanced this reality. Through decades of crisis and conflict, Goma evolved into both a regional centre of rebellion, and an attractive zone of opportunity.

Goma constitutes the administrative capital of the North Kivu province and is the political and economic centre of what one locally calls '*le petit Nord*' the southern part of the North Kivu province¹⁰². The city is located at the foot of the very active Nyiragongo Volcano, at an altitude of around 1,500 m. From the airplane one can beautifully observe how the city stretches itself along the shores of the Kivu lake, in the east limited by the



Picture 4: Satellite picture of Goma town (<http://wikimapia.org/#lat=-1.6739752&lon=29.2318726&z=14&l=0&m=s> (last access date 22/05/2009).

Rwandan border and in the north by the Virunga park. In the western direction there is no clear 'border'.

Inhabitants of Goma are generally referred to as '*Gomatracien*', which is an old, colonial term. Amongst them, especially the educated youngsters in Goma, this term is however increasingly being contested. They will interpret it as rather artificial and strained, even 'mistaken', as the suffix *-tracien* has a scientific connotation that refers to animal species (specifically amphibians). They prefer the term '*Goméén*', which has a more human connotation¹⁰³. Both terms are used in Goma. In this dissertation I have chosen to use the term *Goméén*.

¹⁰² The northern part is referred to as '*le Grand Nord*', of which Butembo is perceived as the economic centre.

¹⁰³ Results questionnaire '*perceptions de la situation socio-économique dans la ville de Goma*' (Goma, August 2007); Focus group students UNIGOM (Goma, August 16 2007), interview officer Studies Department of the Provincial Government (Goma 22 August 2007); Interview local observer (Goma, October 10 2008); see also several bachelor- and master dissertations UNIGOM & ULPGL.

In this chapter, I will give a detailed overview of Goma's current city profile. The main aim of this overview is to provide the reader with recent data on the organisation of the local administration, on urban service delivery, on economic activities and on the socio-spatial state of affairs. Before moving on to the analysis of dynamics of urban transformation in the context of state failure and violent conflict, this chapter offers insights into the contemporary situation in which these dynamics have to be contextualised.

I start with a brief sketch of the current demographic and socio-spatial state of affairs, which informs the reader on how the city is currently developing and expanding. Secondly, I will present the structure and organisation of the local administration apparatus. This is important if we seek to understand the role and the functioning of the state in processes of urbanisation and urban governance. Further, I will give a general overview of the economic profile of Goma, in which I will focus on the main sectors determining the city's local economy. This will contextualise issues that will be developed further in this dissertation such as the city's significance as a commercial transit point, the function of the informal economy and the role of economic actors in urban governance. I will continue by presenting a range of different urban services that traditionally fall under the responsibility of the urban government. This will help us to understand the presence or absence of the state in urbanisation and development. Some services are given particular attention as they relate to the broader themes of this dissertation, such as those particularly dealing with urban land and housing issues, and the provision of security and justice, for example. This city profile is however not exhaustive or complete. Some sectors are not included, as they were of no direct relevance to my further analysis of the city, or because of a lack of reliable data.

Data mainly stem from interviews carried out with stakeholders of different urban state services, NGOs and observers¹⁰⁴, completed by information extracted from the lecture of several bachelor and master dissertations of the UNIGOM and ULPGL.

4.2. Demographic profile: exceptional growth

Because of weak performances of the local '*services d'urbanisation et habitat*' it is very difficult to estimate the actual number urban inhabitants. Today (April 2011), informants speak of around 800,000 inhabitants (Mairie de Goma 2011)¹⁰⁵. Again, this is an estimation, and cannot be verified by exact data. Given the absence of censuses for the last two years in combination with waves of migration due to increased violence, the urban authorities admit that the real number of inhabitants far exceeds the official data they present¹⁰⁶. According to other sources, the actual population may approach one

¹⁰⁴ Most of them carried out in 2008, aiming at the production of an extensive 'city report' in the light of the 'Cities in Fragile States' project led by Crisis States Research Centre of the London School of Economic and Political Science.

¹⁰⁵ Interview Maire Adjoint (Goma, September 12 2011).

¹⁰⁶ The annual report of 2010 presents an official number of 660,000 inhabitants, with the following remarks: "*Au vue de masse sur le terrain dans la ville de Goma, ce chiffre est inférieur pour des raisons à savoir: 1) la non-motivation des recenseurs des quartiers, 2) manque des outils de travail*" (Mairie de Goma 2011: 46).

million, which, according to Lange and Kimanuka does not seem impossible given the new waves of migration that occurred recently (Lange & Kimanuka 2010: 10).

Goma's demographic expansion was indeed accelerated by dynamics of war, yet we already observed in the former chapter that the city has for a long time witnessed an exceptional demographic growth, when compared to other urban centres in this region (**Figure 1**). Already in 1974, Birhahwa stated that: "*Plus d'un chercheur en démographie sera étonné du taux exceptionnel d'accroissement de la population de Goma*" (Birhahwa 1974: 90).

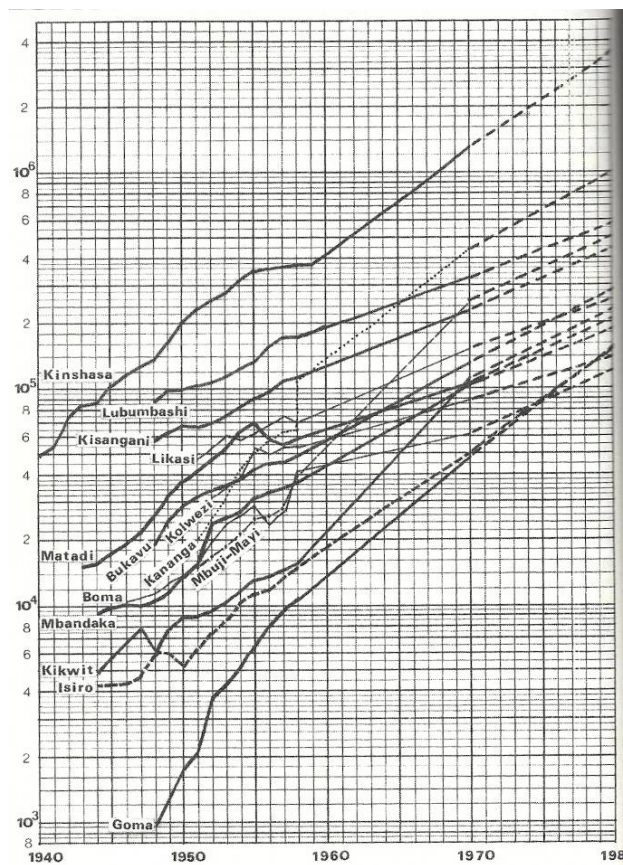


Figure 1: Evolution of the population of major cities in Zaïre
(de Saint Moulin 2010: 44)

The **figure 2**, based on **table 7** (at the end of this chapter), clearly illustrates the exceptional demographic evolution of the city. In 1958, a census revealed a population of 10,353 inhabitants, and at that time the city covered an area of 6 km². In 1993, the number of Goma residents reached 172,573 with over 38 km², and in 2010 this number was estimated to be approximately 800,000 with the city covering an area of 75.72 km² (Mairie de Goma 2011; République Démocratique du Congo 2003).

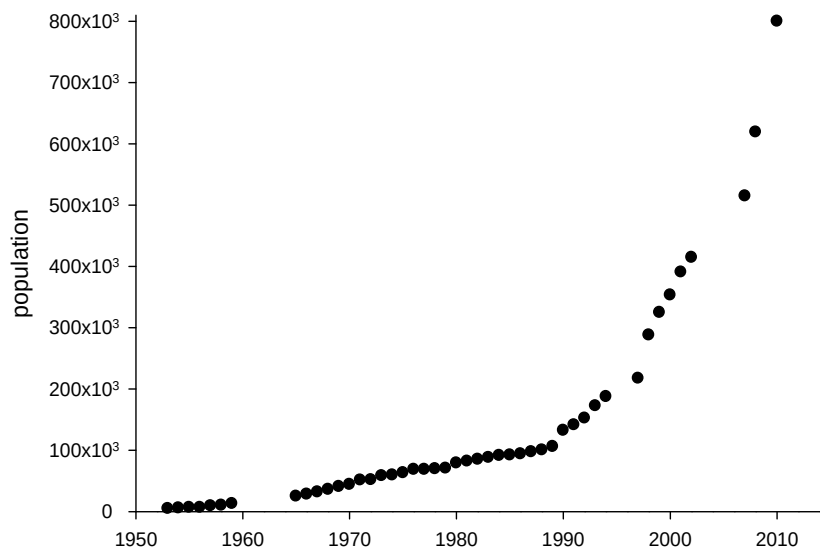
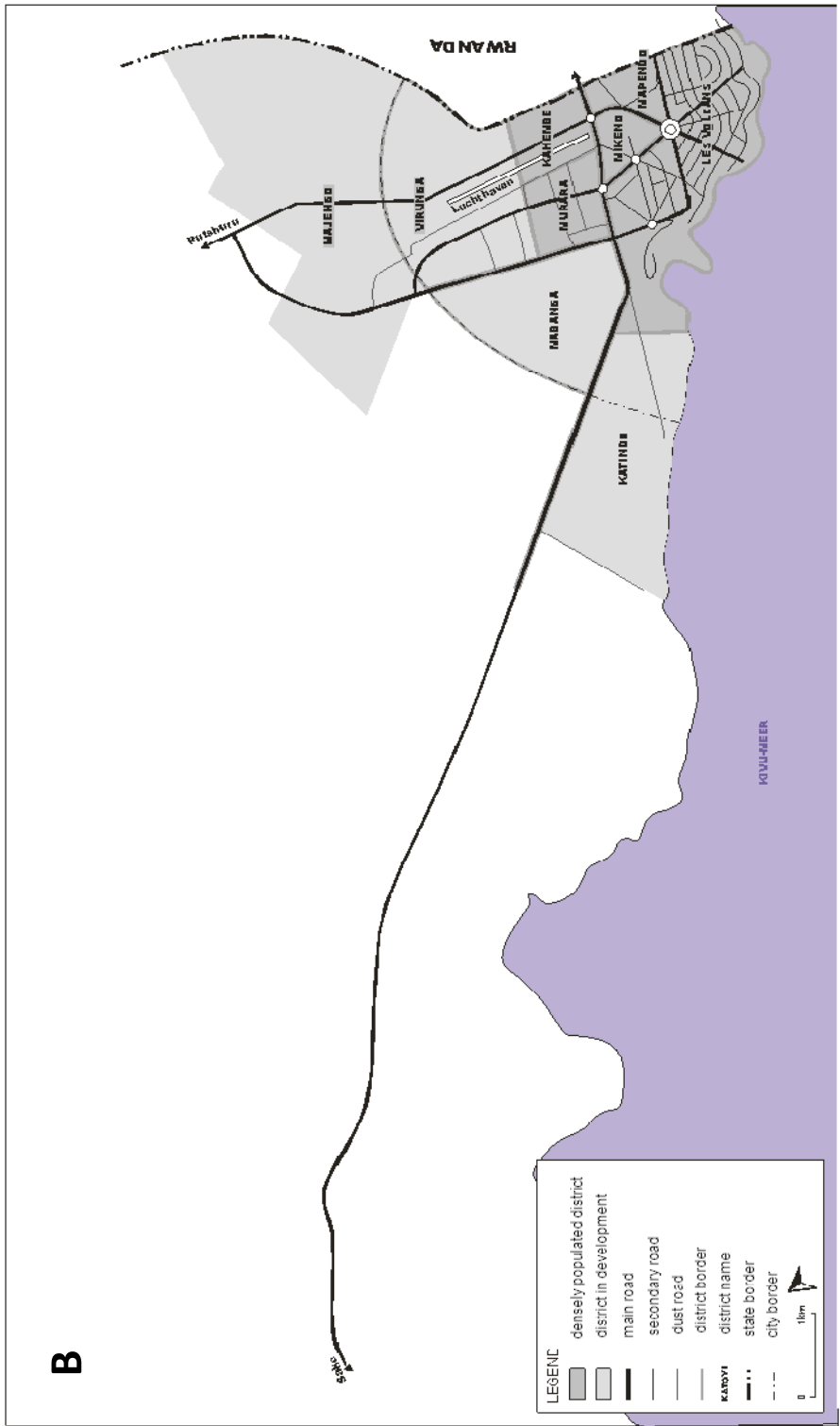
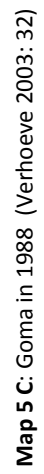


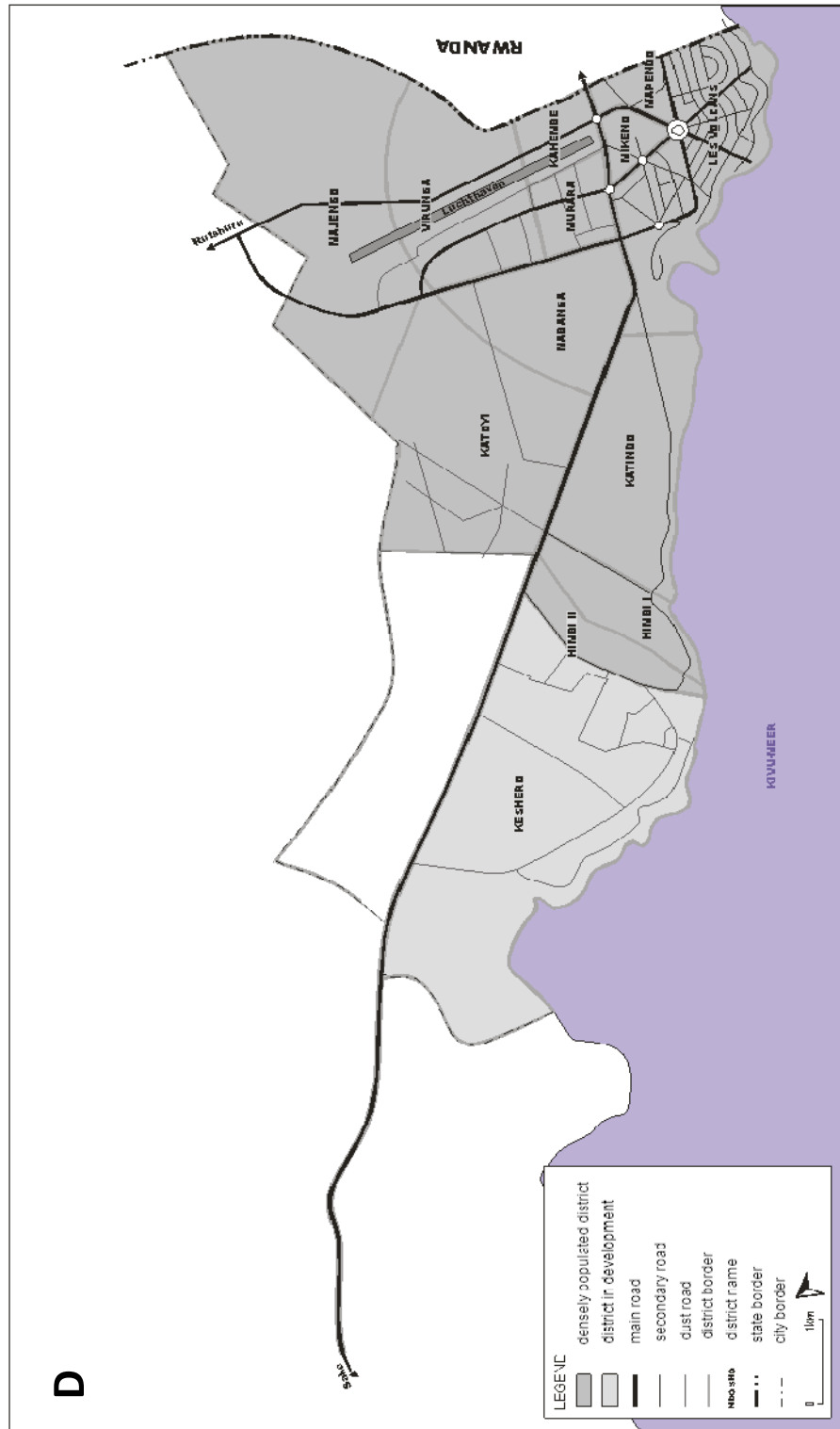
Figure 2: Population growth of Goma from 1953 till 2010

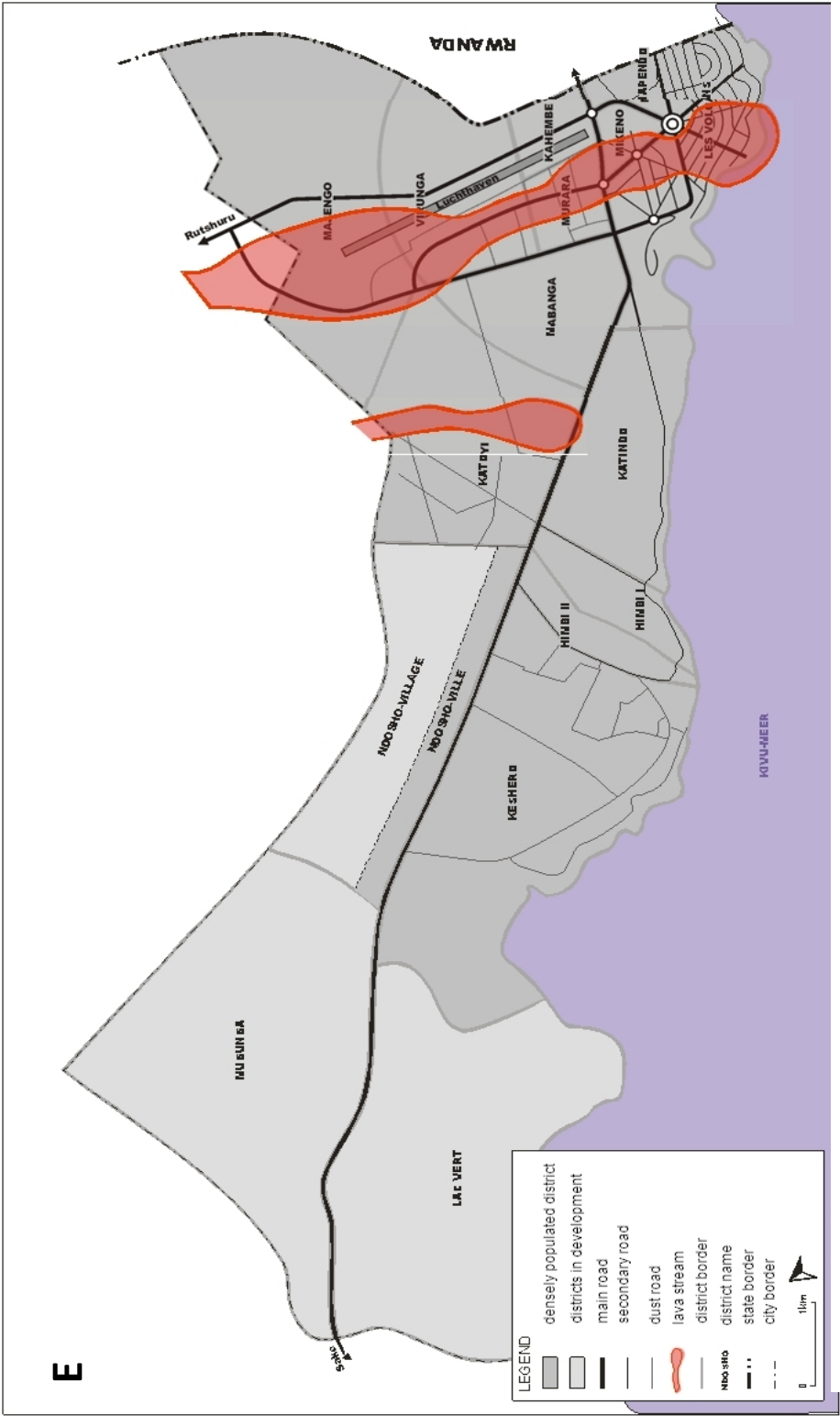
The **Maps 5A till 5E** on the following pages give a beautiful overview of the city's geographic expansion from 1960 to 2003. In this fast demographic growth, migration for economic and security reasons went hand in hand.











Goma's population constitutes 2.7% of the total population of the DRC. In line with the general national trend, the urban population is very young: 50% of all *Goméens* is younger than 15, and nearly 5% is older than 65 (Mairie de Goma 2008a). Households are generally large sized, with an average of 7 persons per household (République Démocratique du Congo 2003).

As we could read from the historic overview, ethnically speaking, migration history has turned Goma into a highly heterogeneous city when compared to other urban centres in the North Kivu region. Apart from the 13 ethnic groups that 'officially' represent the North Kivu province¹⁰⁷, other ethnic groups, mainly from South Kivu have increasingly installed in the city, as a result of economic migration¹⁰⁸. Hutu represent an ethnic majority in Goma. Through the long history of armed conflict, their presence have strongly been reinforced (in 2008, 80% of the IDPs in the camps in and around Goma were Hutu)¹⁰⁹. Local official demographic overviews usually differentiate between Congolese and 'foreigners' (refugees and non-refugees), among whom Rwandans form the largest group in the city of Goma (Mairie de Goma 2007; Mairie de Goma 2008a). Because of Goma's nature as a border town, because of intense transborder mobility between Goma and Gisenyi and the permanent confusion between Rwandans and Congolese Banyarwanda, it is however hardly possible to estimate their exact number. Further, a significant number of Lebanese and Indian traders are residing in Goma, and a large expat community from very diverse (mostly European) nationalities which is active in the international humanitarian and development sector.

As we will observe later in this dissertation, dynamics of violent conflict have strongly influenced the inter-ethnic relationships between Goma's inhabitants. In particular, Rwandan involvement in the Congolese wars and the Tutsi-identity of the different rebellions in Goma has created increased tension in transborder relations and has incited a strong anti-Tutsi discourse. In contrast to other cities in Eastern Congo, ethnic tensions have not (yet) been translated in spatial segregation such as is the case for example in Bunia. Ethnically homogeneous districts are non-existent, however in recent years several districts have increasingly become identified with their dominant ethnic group. It is for example generally assumed that Himbi and Katindo houses a primarily Bashi population, Katoyi primarily Nande, Mugunga primarily Hutu and Hunde, etc. In short, *Goméens* will declare that their city is subject to tribalism as is the case in all urban centres in the region (with regards to employment for example) but they will at the same time stress the fact that this tribalism is however less pronounced compared to for example the city of Butembo, where one major ethnic group dominates the spatial as well as political and socio-economic urban space by excluding others¹¹⁰; "*Goma est une ville où les gens continuent à ce forcer d'être tolérant malgré les différences et les conflits*"¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Hunde, Hutu, Kano, Kumu, Kusu, Mbuba, Mbute, Nande, Nyanga, Pere, Talinga, Tembo and Tutsi.

¹⁰⁸ Shi, Havu, Rega, etc.

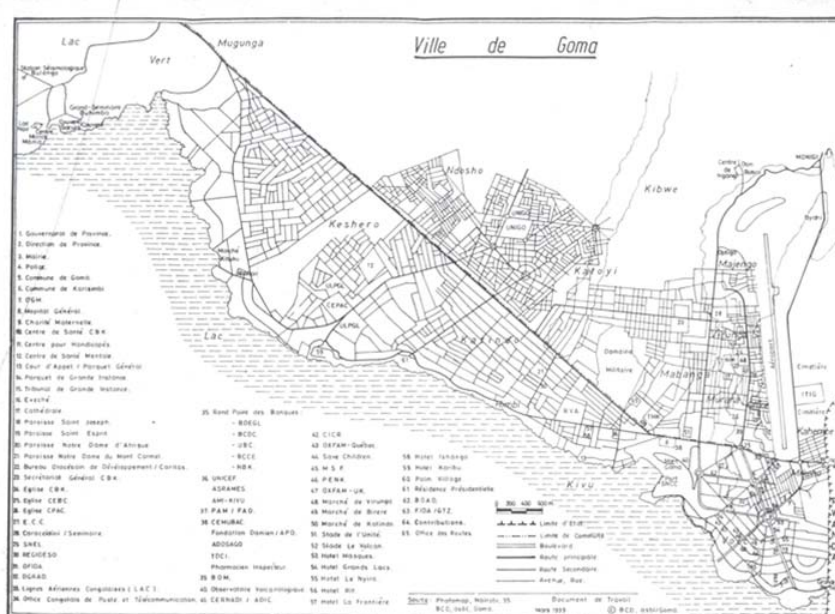
¹⁰⁹ Interview staff member UNDP (Goma, June 16 2010), interview staff member UN OCHA (Goma, October 10 2008).

¹¹⁰ Results questionnaire '*Perceptions de la situation socio-économique dans la ville de Goma*' (Goma, August 2007).

¹¹¹ Interview ULPGL student (Goma, February 3 2008).

4.2.1. Geographic and socio-spatial profile: social segregation and informal urbanisation

Today, Goma's surface area expands over 75 km². Because of its geographic position (in the East limited by the Rwandan border, in the North by the volcano and in the South by the Kivu lake) the city's expansion has occurred in western direction, as it stretched itself in the form of an elongated strip along the shores of the lake. Given this development, the oldest urban districts are located near the Rwandan border, and the more recently created urban districts are located in the direction of Sake. Until today, the urban administrative and economic centre is located in the 'old' part of the city, which demonstrates a reproduction of colonial spatial legacy. The eastern parts of the city house the main administrative offices, most of the commercial activities and most of the international NGOs. The district called today the '*quartier des Volcans*' has from the early beginning been the administrative heart of the city. In this district the Belgian colonisers



Map 6: Map of the city of Goma, made by a local cartographer in 2007

(and their families) were installed. What is today known as *Birere* (the whole of the districts *Mapendo*, *Kahembe* and *Mikeno*, **Map 6**) historically functioned as economic heart of the city and partly as the residential area of the Congolese labourers.

Although every neighbourhood has its particular socio-economic characteristics, in general the city tends to be divided into the 'centre' and the 'periphery'. Because the spatial extension occurred without urban planning and without the necessary investments, these new districts in the 'periphery' are largely lacking basic infrastructure (water, electricity, roads...). In the early 1990s, before the war broke out, only the city centre and the popular neighbourhoods located near the border were provided with a water and electricity

network. During the past twenty years, these networks have almost not being further developed, although in this same period the city knew a tremendous growth. These peripheral districts do not only lack basic infrastructure, they are also largely deprived from commercial activities. In general, these districts are perceived as 'poor' neighbourhoods, and they are only attractive by their cheap house prices. The population density in this districts is much lower than in the central districts (**Table 4**).

District	Surface in km ²	Population	Population per km ²
Volcanc	3.197500	8,181	2,559
Mikeno	0.807555	37,622	46,588
Mapendo	0.614400	41,562	67,646
Katindo	2.457610	28,578	11,628
Himbi	2.252800	34,742	15,422
Keshero	10.567500	41,516	3,929
Lac Vert	13.501875	4,805	356
Total	33.07943	196,770	5,948

Table 4: Surface, population and population density of the districts of Goma in 2008 (according to Barigora Rwamera 2008)

They are characterised by 'rural' economic activities such as small-sale agriculture and stock breeding (Mairie de Goma 2009e). Because of these 'rural' characteristics of these neighbourhoods, *Goméens* themselves tend to refer to them as '*village*' in contrast to '*la ville*', the city centre.

As we already noted, right after the volcano eruption in 2002, local initiatives were undertaken to install a new urban centre in *Ndosho*, located at the northwest of the city at 5 km from the city centre, at that time still unexploited territory. New schools, houses and even a cathedral were built and small businesses installed (Verhoeve 2003). This shift of the urban centre to the periphery was encouraged by the local government and the international organisations present in Goma at that time, visioning the displacement of the city away from the 'danger zones', exposed to future lava streams. The creating of a new urban centre seemed particularly logic regarding the evolution of westward urban expansion. For the peripheral urban population (of the districts of *Ndosho* but also *Mugunga*, *Lac Vert* and even *Keshero*) this change meant a promising improvement of their livelihoods. It would release them from the long distances they daily had to cover by foot to the economic centre and main markets located at the border with Rwanda. However, at the same time the original city centre was quickly rebuilt from the ashes by inhabitants itself, by local initiatives and private investments¹¹². The new market of *Ndosho* soon lost its importance and gradually the original urban economic city centre was restored.

¹¹² Initiatives to relocate homeless victims of the volcano eruptions to the peripheral districts, were also not accepted by the local population, who feared to end up far away from the markets and the commercial centres (Bintu Bya Busha 2002).

Thus, the remarkable one-direction urban expansion was not followed by spatial shifts in economic activities, which kept the inhabitants of these new western neighbourhoods largely marginalised until present day. The level of education is generally lower than in some of the central districts, but the discrepancies become much more obvious when comparing average incomes. For example, the average monthly income in Ndosho is estimated 65 USD, whereas in Murara this is 119 USD¹¹³. As we will describe further in chapter 8, the fact that a large part of the inhabitants of the peripheral districts are internally displaced people fleeing war in the rural hinterlands, creates particular socio-economic conditions. Finally, the contrast between the central and the peripheral areas can also be read from their physical 'morphology': whereas in the city centre many houses are constructed in bricks, this is not the case in the urban periphery, where houses are being built with lava stones, wood or clay¹¹⁴.

This spatial segregation, rooted in the city's colonial past, has further been reproduced in the context of the increased concentration of international organisations in the eastern parts of the city. With a huge administrative base, a large military camp and numerous residential plots for humanitarian staff, UN organisations installed massively in this part of the city, accompanied by numerous other international humanitarian organisations, NGOs and donor agencies. This provoked increased economic activity¹¹⁵ in these districts, and large investments, resulting in a further upgrading, and far better security conditions (because of the higher presence of MONUC patrols and private security companies). These districts (mainly *Volcans* and *Himbi*) are considered the 'richest' areas of the city and host the largest concentration of public administration departments, NGOs, banks, hotels, etc.

As I already mentioned, the spatial extension and urbanisation occurred in an uncontrolled way, largely without any central planning. With the gradual deterioration of the Congolese state, the city's expansion developed increasingly in an informal or 'illegal' manner. Since the 1990s, one can speak of a semi '*anarchical*' growth, lacking any form of central urbanisation. Newcomers settled without following the legal procedures, wherever they found a free plot of land. This is due to a bad functioning of the responsible services, but also to a weak knowledge of the legislation amongst the urban inhabitants (Ndelema 2000). In this context, *Goméens* often speak of an '*urbanisation sauvage*', '*anarchique*' or '*spontanée*', to describe the urbanisation process of their city¹¹⁶. As we will reveal in chapter 6, this urbanisation without planning is not only on the basis of many infrastructural problems, it is also the source of numerous conflicts. Further, we will observe in the following chapters that this 'auto-development' of the city also generated a particular socio-spatial landscape.

¹¹³ Results survey '*Enquête sur la situation socio-économique du ménage*' (Goma, April 2009).

¹¹⁴ Results survey '*Enquête sur la situation socio-économique du ménage*' (Goma, April 2009).

¹¹⁵ As we will observe later on, the development of the 'humanitarian industry' in Goma was an important element in the city's evolution towards a zone of opportunity, not only by possible employment in international organisations, but also by the development of a whole range of 'niche'-economic sectors that emerged.

¹¹⁶ The districts of Birere, Katoji and Majengo are clear examples of this 'anarchical' urbanisation.

4.2.2. Administrative organisation

The city of Goma is governed through three principal levels: the city level, the level of the *commune* and the level of the *quartier* (Figure 3).

The city is directed by the Mayor, assisted by the *Maire-adjoint*. The urban administration is directed by the *Chef de Division Unique*. The Mayor reports to the Provincial Governor.

Each *commune* is directed by a burgomaster (also assisted by their *adjoint*). Their *chef de*

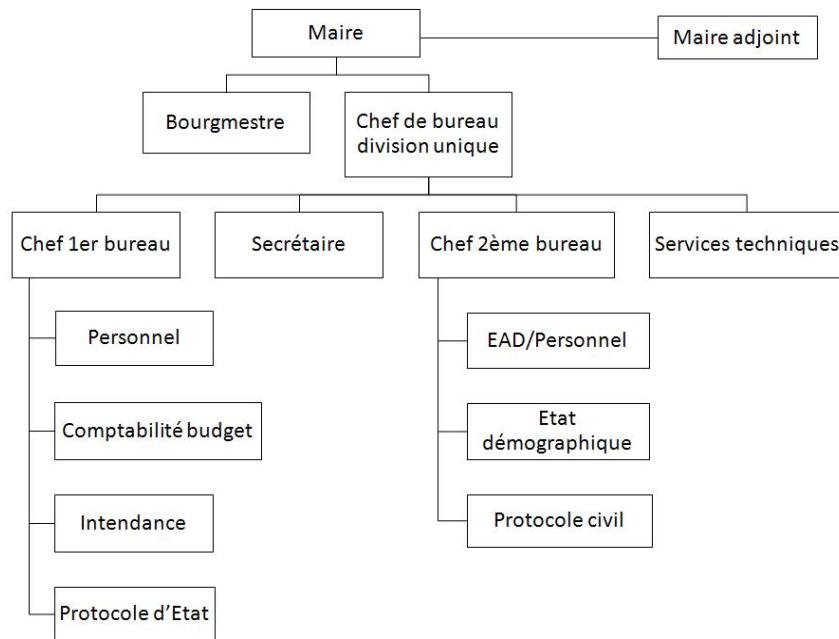


Figure 3: Administrative subdivision of the city of Goma

bureau centralises all official messages of every district, and they report to the city Mayor after examination. Each district is directed by a *chef de quartier* (Figure 4). Goma is divided into two *communes* (Goma and Karisimbi) and 18 districts (*quartiers*). The last time this number was modified was in 1998, when RCD split several *quartiers* to aim at the better administrative regulation and control. Each *quartier* is subdivided in '*cellules*' (a total of 62 for the whole city), each composed by a number of *avenues* (total of 334). The '*cellules*' and '*avenues*' are almost similar entities, their chiefs collect all information of their entities, and they pass it to their hierarchies after analysis. These levels are very close to the population, and they are usually very well informed about the situation and activities of their districts. At the lowest level of the hierarchical structure we find the Nyumba Kumi, or 'chief of 10 houses'. Their role is to control the socio-economic and security situation of the 10 households that are under his/her control. He reports to the *chef d'avenue*. When something suspicious happens, it is the Nymba Kumi who gives instructions to the technical services (Pole Institute 2009b).

The current government hierarchy structure (which was the result of the national and

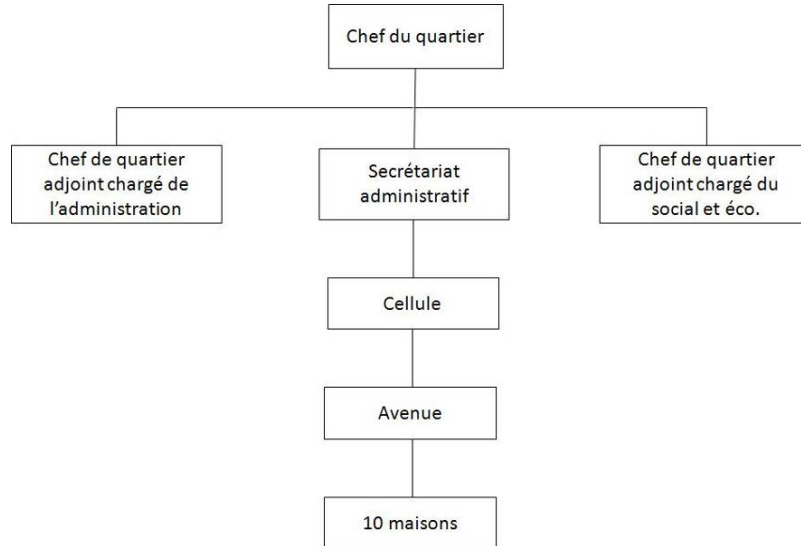


Figure 4: Administrative organisation of Goma on district level

provincial elections in 2006) consists of a provincial assembly (democratically elected in October 2006) and a provincial government of North Kivu that is seated in Goma (with 42 members, including a provincial governor who is elected by the assembly and provincial ministers who are appointed by the governor) (République Démocratique du Congo 1997; République Démocratique du Congo 2007a; République Démocratique du Congo 2007b). Other governance structures were supposed to be elected in the same democratic way, as foreseen by the electoral law of 2006¹¹⁷. However, they have been appointed by the decree N°08/058 of September 24, 2008 (a decision by the President motivated by 'an urgent need for a functioning administration', which thus is contradictory to the electoral law) (Kadogo Muchengere 2009). This is the case for the city Mayor or '*Maire*' and the '*Maire adjoint*', the burgomasters of the *communes* and the *Chefs du Quartier*, are then appointed by the Mayor.

Even though the city is governed through a clear hierarchical administrative structure, the various institutions have insufficient resources at their disposal to effectively assume any actual responsibility¹¹⁸.

As the new constitution is currently only partially implemented, there is much confusion concerning the responsibilities of the various government levels in the city of Goma (a '*confusion des compétences*').¹¹⁹ A first issue of concern is the financing of the provinces, which has caused contention between the national and provincial governments. According

¹¹⁷The result should be urban, municipal and local elections, putting in place a city council, an executive and a municipal council.

¹¹⁸ Interview Maire adjoint, (Goma, February 7 2008).

¹¹⁹ Interview staff member of the bureau d'études du Gouvernorat (Goma, August 15 2007).

to article 175 of the constitution, the provinces are to manage 40% of national tax revenue, with taxes being deducted at the source. This has not been realised, which has led to growing frustrations at the provincial level. It is expected that no solution will be provided before the coming elections in November 2011.

A second problem is the effect of the partial decentralisation on the administration of the city of Goma. As far as the responsibilities of the public state departments are concerned (planning, infrastructure, transport, etc.), ministers have been elected at provincial level, but at city level these departments still fall under direct national control, turning city governance into an extremely difficult issue (Kadogo Muchengere 2009). For example, a provincial minister for infrastructure, public works and reconstruction has been appointed, but housing (*habitation*) and urban planning (*urbanisation*) are still the direct responsibility of the national Ministry of National Affairs. As we already mentioned, as the Congolese government does not respond to the basic needs of its citizens, it has been replaced by international institutions, NGOs and private enterprises. Non-state agents, such as MONUC or UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) that sometimes undertake small-scale interventions, and cooperatives and the private sector that are active in certain public sectors, are rarely involved in the development and implementation of city affairs even though these agents often perform parallel work without any mutual coordination and thus can be regarded as 'competitors' of official administrations. In addition, social services, such as education and healthcare, are extensively privatised and local NGOs have a tendency to collaborate more with international donors than with local authorities. The limited capacity of the city authority was extremely noticeable during the volcanic eruption in 2002, when the local administration was largely incapable of intervening in the reconstruction and was itself completely dependent upon initiatives developed by international donors.

Before passing on to the organisation of public services in Goma, let me make some more general comments of the functioning (and dysfunctioning) of public administration in Goma. As I already stated in the introduction of this dissertation, the state may be weak in urban regulation and governance, it is certainly not absent. Despite the dynamics of state failure, the state persists obstinately and is clearly represented in Goma. As Trefon has argued: state agents "clearly have their *raison d'être* throughout society, for elites and ordinary citizens alike. However, state crisis has significantly transformed the original mandates of these services. The administration is a powerful machine that contributes to the perpetuation and reproduction of the state as a sovereign political and territorial entity" (Trefon 2009b: 10).

For all kinds of exchanges and arrangements, *Goméens* have to deal with state representatives. Escaping the formal administrative machine is impossible. However, as these state agents are often in the same desperate position in terms of livelihoods as are the citizens they have to deal with, there is much room left for negotiation. For street vendors, *motards*, students and businessmen, negotiation with state agents has almost become a daily routine. To obtain an official authorisation from the municipality for example, or to declare goods on the border crossing, citizens would start bargaining with these state officials, until an agreement has been reached that is advantageous for all parties involved. As such, in Goma, just as elsewhere in the DRC, we can observe an

“administrative space in which state agents and citizens have reached a complex but workable form of accommodation” (Trefon 2009b: 10). The persistence of the administrative machine is largely related to the need for personal survival by its staff. By privatising state service provision, state agents exploit the advantages associated with their authority status. They will operate in an increasingly independent way, and these ‘private cooperations’ are advantageous for the citizens they deal with, as well. To obtain legal land titles or construction authorisation from the *service de cadastre*, for example, *Goméens* prefer to make a private deal with a responsible agent and accept that he would ‘eat’ their money, instead of entering the predatory administrative machine. As these agents can barely feed their families, they will rather choose for personal survival than for respecting the law. Related to this, is the deterioration of the image of the Congolese civil servant, that went along with the gradual process of state failure. Considered as social parasites, they embody pettiness and misery (Trefon 2009b: 17).

4.2.3. Economic profile: regional trading post and the expansion of the ‘informal’ economy

The following chapters of this dissertation will examine in greater detail the evolution of the economic importance of Goma and the impact of the war on the broader economic structure of the city¹²⁰. I will limit myself here to the general urban economic tendencies and I will briefly sketch the impact of the war and the extensive informalisation of the economy on the survival strategies of the local population. I will use the notion of informality here in accordance to how I conceptualised it in the introduction of this dissertation, namely as these activities and exchanges that develop outside the official regulatory framework, but nevertheless in interaction with the formal (state) institutions and its agents. The general informal nature and logic of contemporary urbanity in Goma is extremely visible in the urban economy, as for example the main part of economic transactions are not formally taxed or licensed.

In Goma 5.3% of the population is officially active in the primary sector (République Démocratique du Congo 2003: 152). For the province of North Kivu, it is estimated that the primary sector (agriculture, cattle raising, fishery, mining, ...) represents about 50% of the GDP (République Démocratique du Congo 2005). More than 80% of the population depends on this sector for its own survival, in the form of subsistence activities. Processes of nationalisation during the 1970s and conflict during the 1990s have reduced the output of the formal primary sector considerably. Plantations and agro-industrial farms, which used to be the backbone of the economy in Masisi, are no longer operating. The North Kivu province is no longer the ‘food basket of the Congo’, as it used to be. However, at the same time, similar to other cities in the DRC, a process of ‘rurbanisation’ can also be observed in Goma, which refers to the practice of rural activities of survival in an urban context (as I have noted, mainly developed in the peripheral districts). Official figures show that there is virtually no agricultural activity in *Katindo* but in *Lac Vert* it represents approximately 40% of the entire economic activity (Mairie de Goma 2009e; République Démocratique du Congo 2003) Goma does not have a strong industrial sector, even

¹²⁰ It has to be noted that recent and reliable statistics on economic activities in the DR Congo are hardly available.

though the city has historically been a 'focal point' for agricultural-industrial activity based on agricultural production from Masisi and Rutshuru (a large proportion of this industrial infrastructure was destroyed during the volcanic eruption in 2002). A few examples of current industrial activity in the city are an industrial bakery, a coffee processing factory, a plastics factory (plastic shoes, bags), a tobacco factory, water bottling, and mills (corn, manioc, coffee, etc.). This secondary sector has the most been hit by the war (Kambale Mukwemulire-Kihulo 2000; Kasay Kambere 2008; Mulonda Lumesa 2008). The fabrication of building bricks and cement are remaining small-scale industrial sectors, because of the flourishing real estate market (Mairie de Goma 2008b).

Of greater importance is the tertiary sector, which in Goma represents the main and the most thriving economic sector. The hotel industry forms an important source of income to a small class of businesspeople. Even though the main tourist sites are out of operation due to a context of protracted conflict, the strong presence of international donors and aid organisations since 1994 has given new impetus to this hotel industry (see the spectacular increase in the number of hotels). Key figures in the local economy have therefore increasingly focused on hotel operations as an additional economic activity. One even speaks of a 'humanitarian tourism' these days in Goma, where 'normal' tourists, frightened by the persisting insecurity, have been replaced by the international humanitarian staff, attracted by the persisting insecurity. It is remarkable how *Goméens* continue to identify their city with this remnants of past glory, invariably describing their city in the first place as '*une ville touristique*'. The humanitarian sector's share in the local labour market has grown excessively. However, jobs in this sector are mainly reserved for most educated people. This employment opportunity has especially persuaded highly skilled people to emigrate from Bukavu to Goma.

Goma is in the first place known as a trading centre, '*une ville de commerce*'. The location of the city on the border with Rwanda has facilitated Goma's position in regional trading networks. During the second Congolese war, which split the country into various zones of military control, all direct communication between Goma and the west of DRC ceased. Goma has turned more and more to Eastern Africa, a trend which was already present at the beginning of the 1990s. The presence of a port and international airport has facilitated the development of trading relations with neighbouring countries and explains why Goma has become an important market and a point of access to Eastern DRC for manufactured goods. Various basic products, such as soap and salt are imported from Kenya, whilst manufactured goods are imported from Dubai, Indonesia, China etc. This trade is mainly controlled by a limited number of large importers of Nande origin that come from Butembo. The most important export products are food products (which are mainly exported to Rwanda, even though a slight improvement in the trade with Kinshasa since the peace process and territorial unification of the country can be observed) and natural resources, which enter the world market via Rwanda but also Uganda.

There are no reliable official statistics available concerning this trans-border trade, but most observers agree that a majority of goods enter or leave the country without the payment of official taxes. This does not mean that there is no taxation at all. To the contrary, traders and state agents come to private agreements after negotiations and bargaining. As I already mentioned, these agreements will most of the time have

advantageous outcomes for both parties, traders don't need to pay the full amount of taxes, whilst custom officers can pocket most of the collected money. This is a clear example of the informalisation of economic transactions, in which both state and non-state actors (co)-operate.

During the war, a negotiation process was developed in Eastern Congo's border regions between rebel leaderships and economic agents operating in the 'informal' trans-border trade. In Goma, as elsewhere in Eastern DRC, preferential agreements were concluded between economic operators close to the RCD rebels and the rebel administration that had to facilitate trans-border trade. These preferential agreements, that were based on pre-war practices, are no longer in place today. Traders now try to negotiate with government officials who are officially and unofficially involved in trade control, in order to avoid payment of regular taxes¹²¹.

Since the war, it is mainly the trade in natural resources that has strengthened Goma's economic importance. Traditional trade routes between Goma and the border post Kasindi located to the north of Goma, during the war were no longer utilisable because of worsened security conditions, which explains why the border post between Goma and Gisenyi has gained in importance. The exploitation of natural resources in Masisi and Walikale has also transformed Goma into a major trading centre from the end of the 1990s. Whereas in 2000-2001 local trade traffic was primarily dominated by coltan, over the past 5 years cassiterite has been the main export product (this export rose from 71 tons in 1999 to 2,904 tons in 2006) (Tegera & Johnson 2007). As I will describe in chapter 5, this trade has been used by certain urban economic elites to position themselves in Goma. Incomes of the coltan trade were re-invested in lucrative businesses in Goma by these elites. The hotel industry and real estate market are the most outstanding examples.

In September 2010, President Kabila announced a temporary ban on mining operations in the Eastern Provinces (Maniema, North and South Kivu), motivated by the "necessity of safeguarding state sovereignty and re-establishing the authority of the state over the soils and sub-soil of the provinces concerned" (Pole Institute 2011). This suspension lasted for six months and was lifted in March 2011. Not only the local populations active in the artisanal mining sector suffered enormously, the provincial government of North Kivu saw its incomes drastically reduced. The provincial members of parliament and thus in extension the city Mayor of Goma and the municipal administrative staff did not get properly paid during these months (Pole Institute 2011)¹²². The resuming of the mining operations was only a short relief for the economic operators, as it was quickly followed by a coming into force of the 'Dodd-Franck Act, Session 502' (known as the 'Obama Law'), which would lay down drastic regulatory conditions for the importing of minerals from the DRC and neighbouring countries no later than 1st April 2011 (which has eventually been postponed to the January 2012). From April 2011 onwards, there has been a *de facto* boycott from the mining industry (for example companies such as Apple), strongly diminishing the leeway for action of the mining operators in Kivu.

¹²¹ For a good overview of the functioning of these state agencies, see Tegera & Johnson (2007).

¹²² Assistant Economics ULPL (personal communication, May 6 2011).

The mining sector attracted several international companies to install their seats in Goma. Other sectors in which international companies are active are the telecom operators, aviation and banks.

Another booming economic sector is that of the import of oil products. During the war, this sector was controlled by businesspeople who had close ties with the RCD rebel leadership. Today, the same group is still in control over this sector and mainly obtains its supplies from Nairobi and sells the oil and fuel to the different aerial transport companies and through petrol stations in the city. Between 2005 and 2010, the number of petrol stations in Goma has almost tripled (from 13 to 31) (Mairie de Goma 2006; Mairie de Goma 2011)

Another sector that deserves special attention is that of banks. Although I cannot provide sufficient data on this sector as it was not part of my direct point of interest, I will just present some general trends here. The evolution of Goma into a commercial hub as well as the increasing presence of international organisations (dynamics that I will further describe in the following chapter) has created an intense circulation of cash in Goma. A rather small percentage (around 9% according to informants, although I cannot provide precise numbers) (République Démocratique du Congo 2006)¹²³ of the local urban populations has a bank account in Goma. Not only it is relatively expensive to open a bank account in the main Congolese banks present in Goma, the monetary instability has decreased people's confidence in the banking sector. Many *Goméens* used to keep their savings at home, although the recent increase of robberies and especially the tragic event of the volcano eruption in 2002 when so many people lost their homes and savings overnight, has caused a renewed rapprochement to financial institutions. These institutions are not the large, Congolese banks, however. The crisis of the public finance sector had some specific outcomes in Goma.

On the one hand, one can observe a proliferation of micro-finance or micro-credit institutions. This is an urban phenomenon that can be observed in all urban centres in DRC, as almost all small entrepreneurs rely on these institutions for small and short term loans (De Villers et al. 2002; Trefon 2004). As many *Goméens* engage in small self-sufficient businesses, the role of these institutions may not be underestimated. **Table 5** gives an overview of the different financial institutions in Goma:

The first category in this table 'la banque' refers to the larger, national and regional banks such as BCC, BCDC, CB, BIC, BIAC and BPC¹²⁴. The last category refers to transfer offices such as Western Union, Soficom, Money Trans etc. This last category has strongly increased over the last five years, with an increase of 9% between 2008 and 2010¹²⁵. The decreasing confidence in public financial institutions was also expressed through the proliferation of the phenomenon of the '*cambistes*', private money changers operating in the streets. Originally operating under the authority of public banks, they increasingly

¹²³ Interview staff member *bureau d'économie et industrie* (Goma, February 4 2008).

¹²⁴ *Banque Centrale du Congo; Banque Commerciale du Congo; Banque Congolaise; Banque Internationale de Credit; Banque Internationale Africaine de Crédit; Banque Privée du Congo.*

¹²⁵ Interview staff member *bureau d'économie et industrie* (Goma, September 12 2011).

started to operate in a private and informal way¹²⁶. On the other hand, mainly for security reasons, an increasing number of wealthy *Goméens* confide their money to international banks in Rwanda, on the other side of the border.

Secteur d'activités	Nombre agences
La banque	6
Institution d'état d'épargne	1
Coopérative et autres institutions d'épargne et de crédit	44
Entreprises privée de micro finance	18
Organisation d'appui financière aux PME ¹²⁷	4
Bailleurs officiels de fonds	10
Messagerie financière	7

Table 5: Financial institutions in Goma in 2010 (Mairie de Goma 2011: 104).

Another related dynamics is the dollarisation of the local economy, on which I will come back later in this dissertation. Already present well before in the context of the hyper inflations in the 1990s, the influx of international organisations and their staff in the city reinforced this dollarisation. Today, one is willing to get a lower salary, if he or she will be paid in dollars instead of in Congolese francs. The presence of the international staff obviously also contributed to the recent installation of some international banks in Goma, where one can use credit cards for example.

Finally, let me say a few more words on what is referred to as the 'informal' or 'parallel' economic sector, which is of crucial importance when analysing Goma's economic profile. To define this informal economy I would use the general definition offered by De Villers: *"Les activités informelles sont des activités échappant au cadre institutionnel et réglementaire officiel de l'économie (inspection de travail, chambre de commerce, circuit bancaire, etc.), qui sont dès lors non contrôlées et non enregistrées et, à des degrés divers, en dépit du fait qu'elles sont le plus souvent pratiquées au grand jour, non légales (ne se conformant pas à la réglementation officielle, par exemple en matière de taxes)"* (De Villers et al. 2002: 11).

The vast majority of the urban population generates its income through small scale, self-sufficient activities without earning a regular salary (primarily services and retail), a trend which already developed during the 1980s and 1990s and further consolidated during the war¹²⁸. There are no detailed figures available concerning informal employment, but various sources estimate that more than 90% of Goma inhabitants are formally unemployed (Kambale Mukwemulire-Kihulo 2000; Mairie de Goma 2008b; Mulonda

¹²⁶ The evolution of this phenomenon is well described by de Herdt and Marysse (de Herdt & Marysse 2002).

¹²⁷ "Petits et moyens entreprises"

¹²⁸ In local literature in Goma, this sector is referred to as the 'tertiary sector of misery' ('secteur tertiaire de la misère'): *"Ce secteur implique la prolifération de petits emplois, et ses fonctions constituent en fait qu'un chômage déguisé (...) ces petits marchands ou manœuvres sans emploi régulier demeurent un secteur tertiaire improductif. La majorité de la population vit ainsi d'expédients pour tenter d'assurer sa survie"* (Kasereka Matabishi 2006).

Lumesa 2008; Musaka Ikoby 2008; République Démocratique du Congo 2003). Some local economic analysts estimate the actual fraction of the active population to be officially employed to be less than 5%¹²⁹. Official employment primarily is to be situated in the following sectors: public administration, public healthcare, education, semi-official services and registered private enterprises¹³⁰.

The importance of the informal economy can hardly be overestimated. In 2006, in Goma only 7 butchers, 6 motor garages, 2 sewing workshops and 12 wood workshops were officially registered (République Démocratique du Congo 2006). The *quincaillerie* (esp. tooling and building materials) represents one of the most popular informal activities, in 2004 there were 95 of these *quincailleries* in town, in 2005 141, and in 2008 even 325! (the majority of them are not registered) (Mairie de Goma 2002; Mairie de Goma 2006). In addition, there are also the '*Kadhaffis*'; young people who sell petrol, usually in yellow oil-cans, on the corner of the street, and the motorcycle taxis or *taxi-motos*, which form the main means of transport for the local population. The area called *Birere* (which corresponds to the districts of Kahembe, Mikenko and Mapendo), is the outstanding centre of informal activities in Goma. I will analyse the particular dynamics of this districts in chapter 9.

Further, Goma counts numerous informal markets, also referred to as 'pirate markets', which small traders have set up themselves illegally or on 'prohibited' sites. These markets have a rather 'mobile' nature, as they often change location. They are often located along the main roads and operate under the protection of the *chef d'avenue* and the *Nyumba-Kumi*. Already since the early 1990s, the local government put in a great effort to control these pirate markets (Mairie de Goma 1991; Mairie de Goma 1994; Mairie de Goma 1995). Apart from these informal markets, there are two other types of markets to be identified in Goma. There are the two main 'official markets' of *Virunga* and *Mikeno-Kibabi* and its annexes Kahembe, Bujovu, managed by the city administration (*Mairie de Goma*), of which *Virunga* is the most important one. The proliferation of micro-credit systems have led to a sharp rise in the number of small retailers of manufactured goods on these markets (clothing, cheap jewellery, shoes, etc.). Then finally there are the 'secondary markets' managed by the 'communes' (*Kahembe, Katoyi, Kamigoba, Ndosho, Mugunga* and *TMK*). These markets are characterised by a lower degree of economic activity than the central markets and sometimes even experience periods of complete inactivity. At these markets, primarily food products are being sold.

Goma's identity of a dynamic economic centre has attracted many economic migrants to the city, not only from its hinterlands but also from Bukavu (and to a lesser extend from Butembo) and Rwanda. Goma is regionally perceived as a booming commercial town, where 'life' (food, transport) is cheaper (although prices have increased sharply during the last years) and where the local economy offers much more opportunities to gain a

¹²⁹ Interview staff member *bureau d'économie et industrie* (Goma, February 4 2008).

¹³⁰ Employment rates in the public sector only reveal part of the reality, as public services hardly function and wages are extremely low (if paid at all). In February 2008 e.g., a *chef de division* of the local administration earned 130,000 CDF (24 USD). These low wages force administrators to develop additional activities in the informal sector or to exploit their position for private gains (Interview Maire adjoint, Goma, February 7, 2008).

(minimal) living. There are no up-to date figures on the average income of *Goméens*, I can only refer to figures of 2003 which reveal that approximately 40% of *Goméens* have an income of less than 10 USD per month, 27% has an income of less than 30 USD, 12% less than 50 USD, 13.7% less than 100 USD, 4.9% less than 250 USD and 0.1% more than 250 USD (République Démocratique du Congo 2003). The average monthly income also differs from district to district. A comparative study from 2003 states that for the *Volcans* district the average monthly income per household is 140 USD, whereas in *Lac Vert* this is 67 USD¹³¹

4.2.4. Urbanisation and housing services

Firstly, let us briefly take a look at the local system of urban planning and the allocation of land in Goma. The main administrative body responsible for the planning of land use is the provincial *division de l'urbanisme*. In principle, this division deals with the city's urban planning process and decides which plot of land is to be used for which purpose. This administrative body has only been present in Goma since the administrative reform of 1988, which divided the Kivu province into three provinces (North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema). However, as I stated earlier, due to dynamics of state decline, this administration has hardly operated, and high level of corruption further hinders any valuable urban planning process.

The administration in charge of the allocation and distribution of individual plots of land is the *Division de Cadastre*, which operates under the authority of the *Ministère des Affaires Foncières*. Given the fact that according to Congolese legislation all land remains property of the state, plots of land can never be owned as private property and in principle people can only lease land on the basis of a lease contract¹³². However, there is a serious lack of clarity regarding the exact dividing line between *propriété publique* and *propriété privée*. According to official sources, 30% of the total city area is in public hands and 70% is in

¹³¹ Results survey '*Enquête sur la situation socio-économique du ménage*' (Goma, April 2009).

¹³² The legal procedure is as follows: Anyone who wishes to obtain land, must first submit an application to the land registry department or *bureau de cadastre* by means of a '*manifestation d'intention*' (the legal application). One then completes a standard form with information about the type of claimed land. Personal information must also be provided, such as the monthly income, for example. According to the head of the division it is strictly forbidden to allocate land to someone of a low social class next to land belonging to someone of a higher social class (there is therefore a certain level of social segregation as far as access to land is concerned). The land registry subsequently studies the application and will allocate a plot of land if the demand is approved. In first instance, the land will be parceled out. When the plot of land or *parcelle* has been marked out, the land registry will only perform a site description and thus will not check whether the land is suitable for the building plans submitted by the applicant). If permission is granted, a lease contract will be drawn up for a standard period of 3 years. Within this time the lessee must have developed the land. Within 19 months the lessee must have started to implement the building plans, otherwise the land registry is entitled to seize the land again. This can also be the case if the land has not been developed after 3 years, as stipulated in the contract. If the applicant does comply with the terms of the contract, the land registry will perform an inspection after 3 years and issue a positive notification, and the lessee thus obtains a perpetual concession certificate (*concession perpétuelle*) (Interview Jean Mwanda, Chef *Division de Cadastre* (Goma, February 7'08).

private use¹³³. In reality, by the privatised governance of this state services by which responsible agents operate according to their personal interests, public space in town has drastically decreased over the past twenty years, leaving almost nothing left (Kuyena Mawazo 2008). The most striking example is the building on the shores of the Lake Kivu¹³⁴. Not only is there no 'green' space left in the city, also a large proportion of the buildings that are intended for public administration, are today leased from 'private owners'. A local source describes this problem as follows: "*Ceux qui sont habilités à protéger les sites, les espaces verts, les immeubles du domaine privé de l'Etat se sont transformés en spoliateurs et constructeurs anarchiques. Ce sont pour la plupart les fonctionnaires de l'Etat (officiers militaires et cadres de la fonction publique), les politiciens qui sont en province et à Kinshasa et les opérateurs économiques qui utilisent leurs moyens financiers pour fragiliser les services étatiques*" (Kambale Latsipa 2008).

There is no close collaboration between the *division de l'urbanisme* and the *division de cadastre*. It is not uncommon for the *cadastre* to sign contracts and to lease out land without first consulting the *division de l'urbanisme*. As a consequence, land unsuitable for building purposes is often built upon. Furthermore, the service provided by the *cadastre* is to a great extent 'informalised'; officials have turned their administration into kind of a private enterprise and sign 'fake' contracts of land as a strategy to gain access to public resources. In addition, land is often purchased or sold illegally, without involving the *cadastre*. This 'informalisation' of land distribution explains the numerous conflicts concerning land in Goma¹³⁵. These conflicts are of a varied nature and involve, for example, the *cadastre* reclaiming plots of land for specific reasons, illegal purchasing and selling of land, loss of land due to illegal construction by third parties, bribing of officials in order to deprive rightful owners of their land, etc. An addi[Type a quote from the document or the summary of an interesting



Picture 5: Delapidated office of urbanisation
©Karen Büscher 2007

¹³³ Interview Chief of the *division Cadastre* (Goma, February 7 2008).

¹³⁴ According to official urban plans it is prohibited to construct along a strip of ten meters from the lake, and between the parcels, the lake should be accessible through public 'beaches'. Obviously, none of these instructions has been respected.

¹³⁵ Most court cases in Goma are about land issues.

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tional source of conflict emerges with the spatial extension of the city into the surrounding '*territoires*', causing legislative conflicts between the urban and the rural legislation ('*loi coutumière*' and '*loi extra-coutumière*').

Even though there is a separate administrative department (*division de l'habitat*, which has merged with the *division de l'urbanisme*) whose responsibility it is to organise habitat, Goma lacks an operational housing policy. Housing standards have been instituted ('*haut*', '*moyen*' and '*bas*' standing). These must be complied with depending on the location of the land, but these are often ignored¹³⁶. Further, as far as housing is concerned, the situation varies greatly from district to district (the popular, overpopulated districts or the less populated outlying districts, see **Table 6**). The average size of a plot of land in 2003 was 780 m², with each plot housing an average of 3 households or on average 6.5 members per plot (République Démocratique du Congo 2003). The *Birere*, *Murara* and *Mabanga* districts suffer from the highest concentration of housing and population. The smallest plots were noted in *Birere* (on average 232 m²) with the largest concentration of households per plot of land (République Démocratique du Congo 2003).

District	Average dimension in m ²
Centre Ville (Q. des Volcans)	1,318
Himbi	1,152
Katindo	1,077
Lac Vert	885
Murara	556
Mabanga	546
Birere	232

Table 6: Average dimension of plots in some districts of the city of Goma in 2008 (Barigora Rwamera 2008)

Land prices can only be changed by law, which stipulates the 'lease price'. However, the state can no longer control the price, and even the *cadastre* imposes an extra (illegal) fee in addition to the official lease price. Following the volcanic eruption of 2002, there was a short-lived drop in the price of land, which has seen a sharp rise since 2003. The price for a plot of land has virtually quadrupled between 2002 and 2008¹³⁷. House prices depend on the location (in the vicinity of the lake, a road, markets, etc.) and form the subject of private negotiations. The strong presence of international donors and MONUC has had a large impact on house prices as it has created a considerable increase in the demand for

¹³⁶ Interview engineer of the Division de l'Urbanisme et Habitat (Goma, February 8 2008).

¹³⁷ In 2002, the price of a plot of 200 m² was about 5,000 USD, after the volcanic eruption it decreased to 3,000 USD but in 2008 the price increased to about 20,000 USD (Interview engineer of *division de l'Urbanisme et Habitat* (Goma, February 8 2008).

housing, which has caused enormous inflation in rents. Furthermore, MONUC has also taken over large areas of land to install its camps and administration.

4.2.5. Other urban services & infrastructure: transport, water, electricity, health, education

Years of declining state capacities and conflict have had a detrimental impact on the city's infrastructure. The effects of lack of investment, bad leadership and a shortage of resources have been further aggravated by the Nyiragongo volcanic eruption.

The large majority of public services currently fall under the control of the Congolese government; in contrast to its neighbouring country Rwanda, no moves have been made towards partial privatisation or liberalisation of general utility services. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that government control over services such as *SNEL* (for electricity) and *REGIDESO* (for water) is very limited; local offices of these services operate in a rather decentralised and virtually autonomous fashion, and income is used for private purposes. Further, international organisations have increasingly taken over the state's responsibilities in the organising of urban infrastructure¹³⁸.

With regard to the transport sector, we can note that the city of Goma has very few tarmac roads and most roads are in very poor condition. In 2002, prior to the volcanic eruption, Goma had a total of 15 km of tarmac roads, 3.6 km of concreted roads and 46 km of unpaved roads (République Démocratique du Congo 2003). The volcanic eruption caused a total of 32 km of the road network to be buried under the lava, of which a large proportion is again in use today. As is the case elsewhere in the country, there is a total lack of maintenance and repair works. MONUC sporadically carries out maintenance activities as do some international NGOs. Elsewhere small groups of volunteers regularly try to carry out repairs, in exchange for payment by by-passers. Most non-tarmac roads are often difficult to negotiate by ordinary vehicles because of the hard volcanic sub-structure, which also explains the success of the motorcycle taxi or *taxi-moto* as the main means of transport. In the light of the '*Cinq Chantiers*' (Kabila's rehabilitation projects), there has been made some improvements, although far from spectacular. There are a few independent organisations and non-government organisations (e.g. SODERU, OXFAM) that have developed initiatives to further enhance the city infrastructure, but the impact of such interventions remains limited.

The port of Goma is of high economic importance, given that it forms an important link in the trade between North and South Kivu, but it also manages the bulk of passenger traffic between Goma and Bukavu. Products from Masisi, Rutshuru and Rwanda (milk, meat and corn and manioc flour, beans, etc.) are transported to Bukavu, where they can be sold at a much higher price compared to Goma. A large part of manufactured products are primarily imported via Bukavu. Transport by water is cheaper, safer (during the war, security conditions along the road between Goma and Bukavu were very critical due to the presence of FDLR and Mayi-Mayi groups) and faster than transport by road, even though traders in the ports of Goma and Bukavu face excessive taxation.

¹³⁸ Examples of these organizations active in Goma are PNUD, GEAD, World Vision, la Croix-Rouge, l'UNICEF, OXFAM, EU.

Goma airport is a major centre for passenger traffic, and both internal flights (e.g. to Beni, Butembo, Rutshuru, Kinshasa, Kisangani, Lubumbasi, etc.) and international flights to Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda depart from Goma. The airport is also extremely important to the economy and is a vital hub for the export of natural resources¹³⁹. This explains the strong presence of small airline companies and '*agences*', which provide small Antonov cargo airplanes for transporting minerals from Masisi and Walikale and goods to these mining centres as well as to other remote places in Kivu's interior. Due to the bad condition of the road network connecting Goma to the interior, a large proportion of food supplies and manufactured products is handled via the airport. For international aid organisations the airport is also of crucial importance.

The electricity supply in Goma is managed entirely by SNEL (*Société Nationale d'Electricité*). In the province of North Kivu only 8% of the population is supplied with electricity. More than 80% of the electricity generated is destined for Goma (PNUD 2007b). Nevertheless, this energy supply is largely insufficient. Only 10% of *Goméens* have direct access to electricity (PNUD 2007b). According to a UN study, Goma requires a constant supply of 40 MW, whereas at present only 3 MW of power is produced. The electricity supply is very unreliable and power cuts or '*coupures the courant*' are part of daily realities. Only a few districts benefit from an electricity network, but these districts are overpopulated and the networks are heavily overloaded. The peripheral districts on the western side of the city are not supplied with electricity at all. In order to improve this situation, there is a general hope to exploit the methane gas reserves in the Kivu Lake, but research in this regard is still on-going.

The water supply is managed by the government-run service *REGIDESO* (*Régie de distribution d'eau*). Due to low service capacity, the water supply is also insufficient to meet the needs of the population. The number of households that have direct access to potable water is therefore very low. In 2005, 17% of the population in the province of North Kivu was supplied with running water, and in Goma this was 15% (République Démocratique du Congo 2005). In Goma, less than 1% of households have a water tap at home, approximately 2% has a tap on their plot of land or *parcelle* and 2.7% of the population collects water from neighbours in the immediate environment. Approximately 12% is dependent upon a water pump or water well in the district (République Démocratique du Congo 2005). The remaining population does not have any access to drinking water and has to rely on water from Lake Kivu. In the city the only central location where people have free access to the lake is the *plage publique* in the district of *Himbi*. This '*plage*' has been equipped with a station where people can purify water by adding a chlorine tablet (against payment). This has led to an extensive informal trade in clean water, which is usually sold by bicycle in the surrounding city districts.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ During the refugee crisis between 1994 and 1996 and the Congolese wars, Goma airport was also an important entry-point for military equipment and humanitarian assistance.

¹⁴⁰ MONUC has developed its own system of water provision for its staff, but part of this water is being sold in the city through informal networks of petty traders.

Water drainage in Goma is managed by the *OVD (Office des Voiries et Drainage)*. Adequate water drainage infrastructure is limited to the city centre. Goma currently has no waste disposal department. However, at a certain moment a system of *salongo* has been introduced (which refers back to the period of community work imposed upon the



Picture 6: Goma's inhabitants getting water from Lake Kivu © Karen Büscher 2007

population by Mobutu) and, in principle, streets and public areas in the city are being cleaned every saturday morning from 7-11 am¹⁴¹. However, since the escalation of violence in the region, this system has known a breakdown.

As far as social infrastructure is concerned (schools and hospitals), it was observed that in general, these cannot keep up with the city's fast growth and expansion. In addition, since the beginning of the 1990s, this infrastructure is becoming increasingly privatised. Where government can no longer provide the population with education and healthcare, this void is being filled by local or international private initiatives which generally provide better although more expensive services. At present, Goma only has 2 public and 5 private hospitals, 12 public- and 15 private health centres (Mairie de Goma 2010). Concerning education, since the 1990s the city has witnessed a proliferation of private colleges (higher education), which attract many students from the hinterlands to settle in town.

¹⁴¹ During *salongo* activities, everyone is supposed to clean its own '*parcelle*' and get rid of the garbage, while in principle it is prohibited to use cars or motorcycles in order to keep all roads open for activities related to this *salongo*.

4.2.6. Security and Justice

As we will further learn through chapter 2, security conditions in town have seriously deteriorated through recent years, and urban violence and crime levels have significantly increased. The existing security system (army and local police) is not only insufficiently equipped to tackle these rising crime levels but also indirectly and directly contributes to this criminality. Regular soldiers and members of the police force constantly render themselves guilty of extortion, violence and criminal acts.

The police force is controlled nationally by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (at present there is no decentralised structure available at provincial or municipal level). During the war, the PNC (*Police Nationale Congolaise*) has become increasingly marginalised, especially in the eastern parts of the country. Although no comprehensive police census has been carried out so far, the number of PNC throughout the country is estimated at about 100,000, with about 300 in the city of Goma. Even if since 2003 several initiatives have been launched to improve the efficiency and conduct of the PNC, the majority of the members have not received formal training, while the salaries are low and the living and working conditions are extremely poor. The police force is subdivided into various specialised branches, such as *Police Foncière*, *Groupes Mobiles d'Intervention*, *Police d'Investigation Criminelle*, *Police Spéciale des Routes*, *Police des Mines*, *Police pour la Protection de l'Enfant*, *Police des Frontières*, ...¹⁴². In addition, there are various additional police forces, such as La Direction Générale de Migration (DGM), *La Police Judiciaire des Parquets*, *La Police de la Régie des Voies Aériennes*, *La Police de la Régie des Voies Fluviales*, *La Police de l'Office Nationale des Transports*, *La Police de la Générale des Carrières et des Mines*. There is only one police camp in the city (*Camp de Munzenze*), which is far too small and which is currently largely occupied by the military¹⁴³. In principle, the police is expected to be present in each district of the city by means of a local police station or '*sous-commissariat*'. In reality, this is not the case, especially not in peripheral city districts. Moreover, such a *sous-commissariat* is often nothing more than a wooden hut manned by one or two members of the police. Furthermore, these stations are only manned during the day, whereas crime primarily takes place at night. This *sous-commissariat* reports to the commission of the *commune*, which on its turn reports to the municipal commander, who transfers the final analysis to the provincial inspection of the PNC (Pole Institute 2009b).

As far as maintaining public order is concerned, there is also increased competition between the police forces and the army. Given that Goma is still considered to be a '*zone opérationnelle*', the army has a large presence and is highly visible in the city. However, there is often a lack of clarity regarding the precise responsibilities and the duties of the army, and it is not uncommon for the army to take on more responsibility than is legally permitted. In 2008, a special police unit PM *Police Militaire* was deployed in Goma, which task was to control the behaviour of military units in town, as these latter increasingly harassed the population. This measure, together with the organisation of 'mixed patrols'

¹⁴² Interview Captain of the PNC (Goma, February 5 2008), (Pole Institute 2009b).

¹⁴³ It has to be acknowledged that the military camp of Katindo is also lodging police forces, so there is some general mixing of security forces in these camps.

consisting of police, military, MONUSCO unites, succeeded at slightly pushing back urban crime.

Another important actor in maintaining public order are the private security companies, which have played an increasingly prominent role since the end of the 1990s in the protection of houses, companies, hotels, banks etc. In 2008, four major private security companies are operating in Goma: *KK Security* (the staff is primarily of Rwandan origin but the company is of South-African origin) was the first company to become active in Goma and is still the largest, *Delta Protections*, *Graben Security* (Congolese, new) and *Intersec* (the newest company, Rwandan). Guards working for such private companies are generally unarmed but they have good communication equipment. The clientele of this private sector mainly consists of the international staff in Goma (MONUSCO, NGOs, international organisations), whilst important businesspeople, politicians, banks, hotels, also call upon their services. These companies are mainly concentrated in the more important city districts. A cheaper alternative for these companies is to hire members of the police force, who are increasingly operating as private guards, in most cases with the full compliance of their chiefs.

Finally, in response to rising levels of insecurity, the local population is increasingly taking protection into their own hands, by organising informal self-defence groups in which youngsters volunteer to secure the districts and their inhabitants.

Congo's justice system is in total disarray due to years of mismanagement, corruption, political interference and lack of resources. These conditions have turned the Congolese judicial system into an important source of insecurity to the population. The larger process of state failure and the collapse of state structures during the war have further limited the capacities of the judicial system. This system is no longer able to guarantee equal justice and to protect and advance the rights of each individual Congolese. Even more, the weak state context and the general lack of capacity at all levels of the judicial system have facilitated the development of new mechanisms of protection based on clientelistic relations, corruption, intimidation and violence.

There is only one central prison in Goma, '*Prison centrale de Munzenze*' in Karisimbi, built in 1953 with a capacity of 150 prisoners. Correct information as far as crime statistics and legal procedures are concerned is hard to find and usually unreliable. According to some official sources though, in February 2007 the number of prisoners was claimed to be 453, including 15 women (PNUD 2007b). The central prison of *Munzenze* is in poor condition. It houses three times as many prisoners than the maximum capacity, and living conditions there are very grim. There are also various city courts: 1 *tribunal de ville*, 1 *tribunal de la commune de Goma*, 2 *tribunaux de la commune de Karisimbi* (+ 1 *tribunal de la police* and 1 *tribunal militaire*)(Mairie de Goma 2010; PNUD 2007b) - and there is a customary legal system in place which operates in parallel with the public system, although this system is not legally recognised (PNUD 2007b).

Deficient accessibility and absence of fair trial have resulted in a generalised lack of confidence in the judiciary's administration. For Goma, there is no reliable information on the number of cases but it is generally recognised that only a very limited part of disputes are brought to courts. Alternative mechanisms of justice and reconciliation increasingly try

to fill this gap. In Goma, several civil society organisations and human rights groups, such as Roman Catholic Peace & Justice Commission of the Goma Diocese, have recently introduced a number of initiatives aimed at regulating local disputes and promoting local dynamics of reconciliation and at providing legal assistance to vulnerable groups. Of course, these mechanisms will not be able to reverse the ruling conditions of impunity, despite some incidental successes.

As I will demonstrate further on in this dissertation, the dynamics of violent conflict (and especially the political disconnection from Kinshasa during the second war) have further increased this eastern orientation and the autonomous development of the city of Goma.

Year	Population	Annual growth	Year	Population	Annual growth
1953	4912		1982	85231	2978
1954	5812	900	1983	88316	3085
1955	6812	1000	1984	91523	3207
1956	6822	10	1985	92152	629
1957	9366	2544	1986	94146	1994
1958	10353	987	1987	97602	3456
1959	13191	2838	1988	100460	2858
1960-1964	*		1989	106167	5707
1965	25091	25091	1990	132449	26282
1966	28352	3261	1991	141479	9030
1967	32038	3686	1992	152441	10962
1968	36203	4165	1993	172573	20132
1969	40939	4736	1994	187527	14954
1970	44412	3473	1995-1996	*	
1971	51553	7141	1997	217526	
1972	51979	426	1998	288045	70519
1973	58402	6423	1999	324892	36847
1974	59612	1210	2000	353181	28289
1975	63321	3709	2001	390815	37634
1976	68743	5422	2002	414536	23721
1977	68959	216	2003-2006	*	
1978	69752	793	2007	514699	
1979	70635	883	2008	619288	104589
1980	79380	8745	2009		
1981	82253	2873	2010	±800000	

Table 7: Population and annual growth of the city of Goma from 1953 till 2010¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Data for this table are derived from different sources: archives from the *État Civil de Goma* (de Saint Moulin 2010; Kapita 1994; Mairie de Goma 2008a; Mairie de Goma 2009a; Mairie de Goma 2010; PNUD 2007a; République Démocratique du Congo 2003). The table reveals several phases of urban expansion since 1953 and clearly shows the correspondence between moments of increased growth and moments of intensified violence and insecurity

Goma: City of opportunity

"La ville de Goma,... Personne ne sait suivre la vitesse avec laquelle Goma grandisse. Ni les habitants, ni les autorités de l'Etat. Bientôt nous serons à un million d'habitants, et les constructions, les maisons, poussent comme jamais avant. (...) Le volcan, même la guerre était peut-être un mal nécessaire. Notre sol ici est très fertile, ainsi que pour des rébellions que pour des dollars"
(Interview Kennedy, student of the ULPGL, Goma May 28 2010).



5.1. Introduction

The words of this Congolese student of Goma clearly express the current image of this city as a modern, dynamic, and rapidly growing and developing urban centre of opportunities. This image is the result of the evolution of Goma over the past fifteen years, through which it developed from a small, dormant town into an influential regional military and economic centre.

It is remarkable that a general context of state decline, violent conflict, volcanic eruptions, humanitarian crisis and massive human displacement has provoked not only a fast spatial and demographic urban growth but additionally has brought about considerable local (although unequally distributed) economic development. Despite high poverty levels, decline of urban infrastructure, complete lack of urban planning, increasing urban violence and high security risks, Goma is perceived as a regional zone of opportunity, the 'new' city of possibilities and promises. As Kennedy explains, it seems as if crisis and conflict were the 'necessary evil' to put the city politically and economically on the map.

Goma showed a remarkable ability to adapt to the often harsh political, economic and social circumstances in the relative absence of the state. The city not only resisted and succeeded to adapt to the dynamics of state failure and violent conflict, moreover, these dynamics also generated an enormous boost of particular economic markets in which a number of types of entrepreneurs could succeed. During war some existing economic activities came under threat, but simultaneously many new opportunities arose. Through an informal and semi-autonomous urbanisation and development, multiple and varied new economic markets emerged, considerable cash flows were attracted and a strong, influential 'urban elite' of economic entrepreneurs was established.

In this chapter, I will focus on two aspects in these 'emerging urban opportunities' in a context of war and a weak state. On the one hand I will zoom in on new forms of wealth creation and accumulation, on the other hand I will investigate emerging power alliances and their role in urban governance. The accumulation of wealth and the accumulation of power are inextricably connected. We will observe that economic opportunities that arise from a context of state decline combined with violent conflict, are strongly linked to political opportunities. State failure not only created openings for economic benefit by different groups of non-state actors, it also left a void with regards to political power. The transformation of Goma towards a flourishing economic centre, highly attractive because of its many possibilities for investment and enrichment, offered opportunities and benefits for both economic as well as political wealth and empowerment. Non-state actors that established themselves by filling the gaps left by state decline and war (such as economic entrepreneurs, international companies or non-governmental institutions) increasingly came to dominate the city, playing an increasing role in urban governance.

The contradictory idea that a context of conflict and crisis also creates development instead of preventing it, has increasingly been debated in recent political and economic anthropological studies, arguing that the local impact of a protracted context of state decline and armed conflict in Africa may not only contain development in reverse but may instead result in new openings, possibilities and opportunities. These opportunities have

produced a particular urban development. On the one hand this development is marked by a strong expansion and creativity of new systems of profit. But on the other hand it is uneven and producing big discrepancies. The urban development that is generated, has largely to be situated beyond state control and regulation. Dynamics of informality and informalisation are of central importance here. As I mentioned earlier in the introduction, I will use the concept of informality to investigate the distinctive urban organisational dynamics and power relations that are increasingly taking place beyond state regulation. On the one hand, state decline in itself has generated opportunities for the development of new urban economic sectors, new modes of accumulation and the emergence of new power groups. On the other hand, these developments have on their turn further contributed to the dwindling authority of the state and have reinforced the process of informalisation. Obviously the context of violent conflict has further strengthened this. So instead of considering informal urban dynamics only as a compensation for the lack of successful state-led urbanisation, I will consider informality as a thriving force behind Goma's urbanisation, and as a platform for the creating of a different kind of urban configuration (Simone 2005).

As already mentioned, the relationship between state decline and urban development in the DRC has for more than ten years been documented extensively in the literature on the informal economy and informal urban livelihoods. In this literature, informality has often been wrongly perceived as a 'thing of the urban poor'. However, as Ilda Lindell has argued in a recent publication, we not only have to consider the highly differentiated nature of non-formal urban economies, we also have to consider the involvement of a great diversity of organised actors, of positions, agendas and identities (Lourenço-Lindell 2010). The informal economy in Goma encompasses a great variety of groups operating in widely varying levels of income and capacity.

The relationship between violence/armed conflict and development on the other hand, is a topic that is still somewhat contradictory. Although the work of Duffield (2001), (Keen 1998) and (Cramer 2006), amongst others, has pointed out the transformative power of violence, most literature on Eastern Congo dealing with the impact of war on local urban development has focused on the dramatic effects of war economy and militarisation of modes of production and of accumulation, and on the destruction of economic markets, reduced livelihoods, economic exclusion, etc... (Dimcevska et al. 2007; Jackson 2003a; Orogun 2003; Pole Institute & CREDAP 2001; Samest 2002). It cannot be denied that a long history of war had disastrous impacts on the livelihoods of parts of the local populations in and around Goma. Figures relating to human displacements and poverty are alarming. However, while closely observing Goma's urban development, there is striking evidence of a more dynamic interrelationship between war and development. Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers have demonstrated how war has created opportunities for some while taking them away from others, and have pointed to new forms of accumulation and distribution that have emerged during the war in Eastern Congo (Vlassenroot 2006a; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a). Generated opportunities are open to a whole range of actors. In contrast to what is emphasised in literature about war economy and especially 'grievance' theories (see for example Collier 1999), violent conflict not only served to benefit warlords, entrepreneurs of violence or criminal profiteers

(Jackson 2003a), it became a principle of creativity, offering openings through which different urban actors could find new methods of exchange, investment and accumulation.

Concerning the second component of my analysis, that of power structures and governance, I aim at understanding how these 'new' systems of profit and accumulation are translated in 'new' systems of urban governance. I thus investigate how the transformation of Goma's economic markets have lead to a transformation of local power relations in the city. I especially look at the formation of local power alliances and urban elites, to analyse who has increased his power and who has lost his power in regulation, authority and control over the urban space.

In this chapter, we have to interpret opportunity as those benefits available by a situation that occurs in the context of state failure and violent conflict. This situation is one of a weak state capacity and an urban development that is to a certain extent 'uncontrolled' in the sense that it is weakly regulated by a formal coordination. This situation leaves openings for different non-state actors to access economic and political resources, to enrich themselves, to strengthen their local power and authority and to emerge as influent actors competing with the state in urban governance. So, opportunity transcends the daily survival strategies in local level urban livelihoods, they include the created chances for a 'commercialisation of crisis' by local and international entrepreneurs, created job opportunities by crisis and war, the enrichment of economic elites by exploiting the 'unregulated' markets, etc. The actors taking advantage, benefiting or seeking profits from a context of crisis are diverse. They include traders, political elites, business companies, NGOs and international humanitarian- and development organisations. We will observe that these opportunities are however not equally available to everyone. Many of Goma's inhabitants are excluded from the benefits generated by crisis.

A first section of this chapter starts from the local perceptions of Goma's inhabitants on the development of their city towards a zone of opportunity, and further elaborates on the development of some of the new urban boosting economic sectors: that of the trade in natural resources, the transborder trade with Asia and linked commercial activities.

Secondly, I will analyse how a context of humanitarian crisis paradoxically led to the emergence of a particular kind of urban development and job opportunities. I argue that in Goma a somewhat perverse reality of what is called a 'commercialisation of crisis' has gradually been developed, that had a very direct and profound impact on the urban socio-economic and even political profile. To illustrate these dynamics, I describe the development of the 'humanitarian sector' in Goma as a direct consequence of violence and war, and more specifically how the presence of humanitarian organisations strongly contributed to the image of Goma as an attractive zone of opportunities.

Finally, to identify who has benefited from opportunities created in a context of disorder and war, I will focus on the emergence of new urban 'economic elites' in Goma. Commercial opportunities in largely non-state urban development as well as in violent conflict are controlled by a small group of '*grands barons*' or 'big men', who became very

influential in the present socio-economic urban scene. In describing the transformation of Goma's urban elite I want to demonstrate how the control over networks of economic opportunity generates a broader control over the urban political and social space.

Data for this chapter were collected through the different phases of my fieldwork in Goma. Information was extracted from interviews with different local observers, and stake-holder groups. For the first part of this chapter, interviews were held with civil society members, traders, state representatives and students. For the section on the coltan/cassiterite trade I relied on research carried out by others on this specific subject (the work of Nicholas Garret, Dominique Johnson, Aloys Tegera, Koen Vlassenroot and Stephen Jackson). I completed this information with interviews with local observers.

Most data for the second part of the chapter, dealing with the impact of the 'humanitarian sector' in Goma, were collected during 2008 and 2009. Interviews were held with civil society members, state agents of different services (municipality, urbanism, habitat, economic enterprise, etc...), local observers and representatives of UNOCHA and UNDP. Where possible, these results have been compared with and completed by data provided by these coordinating humanitarian organisations in Goma itself, although in general these bodies were rather hesitant to share it. Finally, some data were also provided by the annual reports of the urban municipality. For the last part of this chapter I want to mention that I cannot directly refer to my encounters with some of the 'grand barons' of Goma, as these encounters were taking place in a rather 'informal' way and we explicitly agreed that their information would not be quoted.

5.2. 'L'opportunité dans le désordre': the benefits of a non-formal urban development

After having spent a couple of months back in Belgium, each time when I arrive in Goma's city centre, I am surprised by the fast rate at which new constructions have been built, the increasing number of cars circulating, the ever expanding market of bars, restaurants and night clubs. One of the first things I do is meet one of my friends to '*faire un tour de la ville*', in order to discover all '*nouveautés de Goma*'. And every time, I am stunned by the circulation of large amounts of USD in this town. Of course, continuing our 'city tour' in the urban outskirts such as Ndosho or Mugunga, there was not too much of *nouveauté* to be discovered. Inhabitants living in poorly equipped wooden houses, deprived of water, electricity, health and education infrastructure, exercising their daily activities such as crushing stones or transporting goods to and from the city centre, undoubtedly confirmed that these large amounts of dollars only circulated between certain groups of urban inhabitants, living 'up there' in the city centre. While for some, Goma clearly is a zone of opportunities and instant wealth, for others it is just a safe haven where life is still not much more than a daily struggle to go home at the end of the day with something to eat. In the informal development of Goma there are winners, but many losers as well.

In spite of these discrepancies, the image of Goma as a city of *nouveauté* is omnipresent. The sense of local dynamic and vitality is often emphasised when pointing at Goma's 'success', in contrast to other urban centres, of adapting to harsh conditions of crisis and war. As one *Goméen* explained it quite frankly:

"Chaque fois qu'on rentre à Goma, on va constater que les bâtiments ont poussé partout. Par contre, si tu rentres à Bukavu, c'est le contraire! Tu verras les bâtiments auront disparu. Après une grande pluie, tu risques même de ne plus retrouver ta propre parcelle" (Interview local observer, Goma, April 16 2009).

The dynamics of prosperity linked to Goma's urbanity are strongly reflected in local discourse on the city's image. *Goméens* will for example describe their city in terms of *'une ville qui prospère'*; *'une ville où chacun peut se tailler sa place avec ses propres forces'*, *'une ville où il y a la possibilité de manger chaque jour'*¹⁴⁵. *Goméens* tend to explain the 'resilience' and 'success' of Goma by referring to its particular position and its 'cosmopolitan' character.

"La ville de Goma a une position avantageuse, elle occupe une position centrale dans la région et a des portes ouvertes vers l'Est. Toute marchandise qui vient de l'intérieure passe ici en transit. (...). Goma c'est une ville carrefour, c'est-à-dire, non seulement tu trouveras toutes sortes de marchandises ici mais aussi toutes sortes de gens. Les gens de Bukavu, Butembo, Rutshuru, le Rwanda etc. Goma est une ville, je dirai cosmopolite (...) L'amalgame des tribus fait que cette ville est plus multiculturelle qu'ailleurs" (Interview Pasteur Joelle, Goma, November 24 2009).

To praise the city of Goma for its cosmopolitanism may seem exaggerated, when considering the ever-present autochthony discourse and patterns of ethnic contest. But, the fact that it is emphasised to such an extent in explaining Goma's 'success' can be explained when compared to the neighbouring urban centres Bukavu and Butembo, where political and economic networks are subject to a much higher degree of tribalisation¹⁴⁶.

"À Butembo le tribalisme est étouffant pour les non originaires qui veulent faire des affaires. Ici, chacun qui a l'esprit du business peut trouver une façon de gagner sa vie. L'amalgame des tribus a des effets positives sur le développement économique. Il y a une compétition positive, personne ne veut rester derrière" (Interview Pasteur Joelle, Goma, November 24 2009).

Another explanation often heard in Goma is that of the famous 'working spirit'¹⁴⁷ of *Goméens* and *Kivutiens* in general. In contrast to Kinshasa, it is claimed locally that in

¹⁴⁵ Focus group students UNIGOM (Goma, August 16 2007)

¹⁴⁶ Just like the Nande in Butembo, in Bukavu the members of the Bashi-community (and more particular the sub-clan of Kaziba, the *Bazibaziba*) occupy a central position in the local commerce and are one of the most dynamic actors of the parallel economy. Just like the Nande, this commerce almost entirely controlled by this capitalist class (Vlassenroot 2002b).

¹⁴⁷ Strikingly, this same working spirit is also evoked in Butembo to explain the 'success' of their city. As we will observe, it is thus not so much this attitude but rather Goma's 'comparative advantages' that we will describe further in this chapter (such as its transborder opening, the presence of international humanitarian actors and the dynamics of the natural resource trade that serve as an explication to Goma's particular evolution).

Goma people prefer working instead of drinking, making money instead of spending it, waking up early instead of staying up late.

"Les Kivutiens sont les courageux des courageux. La guerre les a forcé à se débrouiller indépendamment. A Goma vous avez déjà constaté que les gens n'attendent pas l'état, ils ne comptent plus sur l'état pour le développement. Ici, c'est 'l'auto-développement' (...) Les Gomatraciens s'intéressent seulement à l'argent. Les jeunes de Goma sont en avance par rapport aux Kinois. Tu connais des jeunes à KiN qui ne sont pas le fils d'un ministre et qui sont eux mêmes le propriétaire de leur propre maison ? Nos jeunes à Goma ont compris que la vie, c'est travailler" (Interview Maire Adjoint Katindi, Goma, February 2 2007).

These self-reliant attitudes of courage and inventiveness and the 'fend for themselves' strategies that are practiced by the thousands of *mamans légumes*¹⁴⁸, *transporteurs*, *kambistes*¹⁴⁹, *khadafi's*¹⁵⁰ and *motards*¹⁵¹ are not at all a unique phenomenon for Goma. They are the constant variable of urban life everywhere else in the DRC. The fact that Goma's youngsters are capable of constructing their own houses may not be attributable to a strong working spirit, but can rather be explained by the specific circumstances in which economic 'auto-development' manifests itself in Goma. More than a mere response to the weakness or the absence of the state, informal modes of accumulation and redistribution are an opportunity born out of statelessness. As a local merchant explained:

"A Goma il n'y pas un État qui tue le commerce avec les impôts exagérés. C'est pourquoi tout ces gens de l'autre côté viennent ici à Birere pour faire le business. Ici il y a moyen d'éviter le contrôle et les taxes. Surtout, il y a moyen de négocier" (Interview vendor Mamy, Goma, May 3 2009).

Another Rwandese trader adds:

"Ce qui nous amène à faire des affaires à Goma, c'est l'opportunité dans le désordre, si je peux dire. Ici t'es en mesure de faire des choses qui ne seront jamais possible à l'autre côté. Pour faire de l'argent, il vaut mieux Goma. Ici il y a plus de possibilités, et surtout on ne paie pas trop d'impôts. Le business rend mieux ici, et avec un peu d'argent tu peux commencer tout sortes de business ici (...). Ici c'est le désordre, mais pour les affaires, c'est bien au fait. Il faut seulement les connections et le courage. (...) Tout est à négocier ici, ce qui n'est pas le cas à l'autre côté" (Interview Rwandese trader, Goma November 21 2009).

These statements clearly point at what Chabal and Daloz have called the 'instrumentalisation of disorder' (Chabal & Daloz 1999) and the nature of disorder as a resource of opportunities. For the quoted traders, 'disorder' is in the first place defined by

¹⁴⁸ Female ambulant vendors selling vegetables in small quantities in the streets.

¹⁴⁹ Informal, ambulant money-changers.

¹⁵⁰ Informal traders selling small quantities of fuel.

¹⁵¹ Motorcycle drivers. Motorcycles or 'taxi-moto's' are the main public transport system in Goma.

the weakness of the state to control and survey economic transactions and the possibility to corrupt. Goma, as a 'deregulated zone' thus appears as a space of vibrant profiteering (Comaroff & Comaroff 2006: 6). This reality of disorder or deregulation is also linked to the border position of the city (as I will further argue in chapter 9) and is strongly reinforced by dynamics of war.

Deregulation not only stimulated economic innovation in Goma, it also led to a profound transformation of the economic city profile, boosting alternative sectors of profit and commercial activities in which, when having the right connections, large amounts of money could be made rapidly. As such, these parallel economic networks generated an innovative use of urban resources and they became the "modes of constructing and reproducing the city" (Mohamadou 2002 in: (Enwezor et al. 2000: 340). This makes disorder and deregulation a pertinent category through which to examine urban transformations and the boom of economic activities such as real estate and the importation of luxury cars for example.

5.2.1. Urbanisation through crisis and informalisation

"Informality and urbanisation go hand in hand. The concept [of informality] is one and the same with the process of urbanisation. It is the lever by which the city is made" (Mohamadou 2002 in (Enwezor et al. 2000: 339). Occurring along with a spectacular geographic and demographic expansion of the city, Goma's economic transformation confirmed its urban character in different ways.

First of all, the informal economic reconfiguration gave advantage to inherent urban sectors over rural ones. Over the past fifteen years, the city underwent a shift from being the 'food basket of the Congo'¹⁵² and the transit point of mainly rural products, to a regional focal point of (largely transborder) commercial activities. Because of war and insecurity, agricultural and cattle breeding activities experienced a strong relapse, strongly affecting agricultural industry and export commerce in Goma. Further, war caused a total disappearance of the trading route between Goma and Kinshasa. The orientation of Goma towards Eastern markets, reinforced by dynamics of war, led to profound shifts in the city's urban export-import patterns. By its fertile surroundings, Goma is strategically exceptionally well located for the development of an agro-industry, however this industry is left hardly unexploited. While Goma's urban elite in the '90s was particularly represented by powerful land owners whose capital consisted of farms and as such generating their power and fortunes from the hinterland, today Goma's 'big men' are commercial entrepreneurs who profited from the urban economic opportunities offered by a context of crisis and conflict and the increasing (informal) regional and global trading

¹⁵² As we have observed through the historical chapter, from the colonial period onwards, Goma was an important trading centre in the North Kivu province that was given the reputation of 'the nations' granary'. Its exceptionally fertile arable territory, coupled with a higher population density than that of other fertile regions of the DRC, has caused it to become a major producer of beans, potatoes, vegetables and beef. Until today, on the markets of Kisangani, Lubumbashi and Kinshasa its products often command premium prices as they have to be brought in by air (Tegera & Johnson 2007: 4)

connections¹⁵³. Of course, the enormous capital injection caused by the mineral trade is another crucial element in this transformation, which I will elaborate further on in this chapter.

These dynamics generated important shifts in the relationship between Goma and its hinterland, between the urban and the rural socio-economic and political space. In the light of the changing urban economic patterns, one observes at the same time a reconnection between Goma and the hinterland through the trade in natural resources, but in a whole different dimension, on a much more global scale. As we will observe, the war economy of natural resources has put Goma economically on the map and generated multiple other economic side-sectors that are inherently urban. One last factor to consider in this respect, is the profound dollarisation of the local economy. Already apparent in the early '90s as a result of inflation (and consequently the decreasing confidence in the local currency), economic crisis and political instability, dollarisation was further reinforced by the dynamics of war economy and the arrival of international humanitarian organisations from 1994 onwards. Nowadays, in Goma, savings, credits, rents, taxes and all kinds of merchandise are counted and paid in USD instead of *Franc Congolais*. This general dollarisation further strengthened the economic disconnection between Goma and its hinterland (Polepole Mwarabu Okolonga 2004).

It would be wrong to judge Goma's evolution as unique in the region. The city of Butembo experienced a quite similar evolution from food basket to transnational hub, from western- to eastern oriented markets, a strong dollarisation, from an export- to an import economy etc. As we will observe further in this chapter and along the course of this dissertation, the particularity of Goma's development to a flourishing centre of opportunities partly laid in its 'cosmopolitan' (at a certain moment even almost foreign-dominated) economy and ditto urbanity. Further, it is also strongly determined by the city's position in the regional trade of natural resources.

5.2.2. Urban impacts of the political economy of war. Goma and the coltan/cassiterite trade

From the end of the '90s, the exploitation of natural resources in Goma's hinterland of Masisi and Walikale spectacularly strengthened the city's economic importance and transformed it into a major trading centre. Rising global demand for coltan (colombo tantalite) occurred during the first Congolese war, followed by the 'coltan boom' during the second war with a spectacular increase of global consumption, rising prices and accelerated local exploitation from 1999. However, this coltan-fever was only of a very short term, with a crash one year later and again at the end of 2001, price levels were the

¹⁵³ This shift and the decreasing importance of agricultural activities in Goma's local economy can remarkably be read in the commentaries on Goma's economic development in the annual reports delivered by the local authorities. Whereas reports of 1997 still in detail elaborate on the topic '*agriculture, élevage, pêche et développement rural*' (with detailed diagrams and statistics of production, exportation, prices), the annual report of 2008 hardly dedicates 3 pages on this topic and instead gives a detailed overview of the development of 'booming' sectors such as the hotel industry and the fuel trade (Mairie de Goma 1998; Mairie de Goma 2009a).

same as before 1999. After the coltan boom, cassiterite took over as the main export product, with a dramatic rise in exports from 71 tons in 1999 to 2904 tons in 2006 and an estimated value of 115 million USD on the world market in 2007 (Garrett 2008)¹⁵⁴. Taking place in a context of intense violent conflict and a Congolese state at its weakest, this trade in natural resources became a key feature in the economy and strategies of different local and foreign armed movements to finance their war efforts. At the height of the boom, RCD rebel authorities in Goma were earning 1 million USD per month in taxes on coltan exports alone. The war economy of natural resources was based on existing local informal trading networks, with rebel movements trying to control these networks by replacing local actors in the chain of transaction by their own intermediaries. In the logic of this war economy, economic and military power became strongly intertwined and the coltan business consolidated the interconnection of economic activities and violence (Vlassenroot & Romkema 2002b: 11).

As a transformative process (Jackson 2003a: 13), the political economy of violent conflict had a profound impact on the local socio-economic order, generating new power structures, new forms of social and economic organisation, new opportunities as well as new conflicts. The benefits extracted from this economy were creating an incentive structure involving an extended chain of actors that made violent conflict a source for economic and political opportunity. On different locations and levels of the trading chain, different types of actors engaged in this economy according to different motivations and along different strategies. It is clear that not only rebel leaders, warlords, foreign businesses and big local businessmen could benefit. From the very local to the transnational level, from the mines to the global markets, different actors extracted their livelihoods from this trade: the *creuseurs* in the mines, local traders, brokers, *comptoirs*, state officials, etc. Thus, more than just being a 'mafia-economy', even on the very local level the natural resource trade became for many Congolese an important feature of their livelihood strategies, an alternative source of income and a way to escape poverty and marginalisation (Vlassenroot & Romkema 2002b). There is no room in this dissertation PhD to elaborate in detail on the different types of actors involved, and to analyse their relationships, strategies and motivations. In general, these networks that emerged from a context of war and state failure generated a redistribution of resources, which created livelihood strategies from a very local level and lead to the empowerment of an elite emerging from institutional arrangements between economic, military and state actors.

Many studies have been performed on the local socio-economic impact of the trade in natural resources in Eastern Congo. Most of them focus particularly on the rural context, elaborating on livelihood strategies of the grass-roots population and highlighting topics such as the consequences of migration towards the mining sites and of the abandoning of the agricultural production, etc. (Jackson 2003a; Johnson & Tegera 2005; Mantz 2008; Pole Institute & CREDAP 2001).

In this section, however, I will briefly mention the urban impact of the coltan and cassiterite trade in order to analyse the role of the natural resource trade in the

¹⁵⁴ According to Garrett (2008), the cassiterite deposits in Walikale, North Kivu, contribute an estimated 70% of cassiterite exported through Goma.

transformation of the urban economic space and the evolution of the city of Goma towards a zone of opportunity. New networks of accumulation drastically changed the economic profile and “the commercial opportunities that are offered by the present state of disorder have not only produced a further militarisation of the local commercial activities, but in the end are also leading to a total change in the organisation of the economic space” (Vlassenroot & Romkema 2002b: 9).

Being the headquarters of the RCD rebel movement, during the ‘coltan-boom’ the city of Goma was at the heart of the exportation of this valuable ore. The first and most profound consequence was the changing position of the city in regional trading networks and the increasing connection to global markets. The rising importance of natural resources during the Congolese wars turned the city into a flourishing centre of economic transaction and accumulation, connecting Kivu’s artisanal mining centres to the international resource market and strengthening its position as regional trading centre for imported and manufactured goods. As a consequence, the city shifted from a peripheral urban centre to a vibrant economic hub. The international airport was more frequented than ever before and large amounts of dollars were brought into town, resulting in a further dollarisation of the local economy.

The proliferation of the ‘comptoir economy’ was a very visible effect of the coltan trade on the local urban economy. These ‘*comptoirs*’ were already present long before the war, as an important link in the gold exploitation and trading, but they knew a spectacular growth with the coltan boom. It is at the ‘*comptoir*’ that the ore is treated and packed for transport, after being bought from the intermediaries. It forms the final link in the coltan chain between the mines and the global market. The comptoir economy included a whole range of private initiatives that generated local job opportunities and attracted rural populations to Goma (and other urban centres), to form a link in this global and promising trading chain. In that sense, there is an important relationship between the comptoir-economy and urbanisation, and as De Boeck argues, this trade has strongly contributed to the frontier urbanisation in the DRC; “these local sites have become, in certain ways, globalised spaces, the economic and cultural dynamics of which are linked to many other different places on the globe” (De Boeck 2000).

Further, the comptoir-economy was an important element in the strengthening of a new urban group of influent businessmen, closely linked to the RCD rebel movement and the political power in Kigali. Although during the coltan boom almost all *comptoirs* were of foreign origin (German, American, Egyptian, Lebanese for example), all of them were directly or indirectly connected to Rwanda (Jackson 2002; Vlassenroot & Romkema 2002b). Later on, the cassiterite trade -which replaced that of coltan- was controlled by a group of Banyarwandan traders. These traders had ethnic and commercial links with Rwanda and in the two rebellions (1996 and 1998) they spearheaded the rebel army supported by Rwanda (Tegera & Johnson 2007). The cassiterite export trade centred around Goma towards Rwanda and Uganda was the backbone of the business operations of this Banyarwanda trading elite. Their connections with the rebel groups (AFDL and later on RCD) made it possible to claim for example exploitation rights in the mining sites and evade taxes. The emergence of this small but powerful group of Rwandophone

businessmen meant an important change in economic as well as the political landscape of Goma. As one local observer explained:

"Avec le trafic des minerais, Goma a connu la naissance d'une nouvelle bourgeoisie, ceux qui arrivaient à s'enrichir personnellement par l'état de guerre. C'était une nouvelle élite des riches, venant de nulle part, c'est-à-dire, ces gens ne signifiaient rien avant. Alors, avec le RCD qui contrôlait ET la politique ET l'économie, cette nouvelle bourgeoisie avait sans doute des liens proches avec les seigneurs de guerre" (Interview local observer, Goma, December 7 2009).

Control over the resource trade became part of larger power strategies between Nande and Banyarwanda elites, which clearly underlines the political importance of the exploitation of natural resources. Through the control over the coltan and cassiterite exportation, the Banyarwanda elite aimed to achieve a degree of economic independence from the Nande traders from Butembo (who tended to dominate the import of manufactured goods) and to reduce their commercial, and consequent political, dominance. This rivalry partly explains the division of North Kivu during the war between the Banyarwanda-backed RCD and the Nande-supported RCD-K-ML movements. The increased importance of the Goma-Gisenyi border post results partly from Banyarwanda's attempts to generate local income through control over trade routes and trade incomes, as well as by the closure (due to security considerations) of the traditional trade route connecting the city to the border post of Kasindi (which during the war was controlled by the RCD-K-ML). Since the peace process started, roads between both zones of control have reopened and the DRC has been administratively reunited. This has caused renewed animosity among Banyarwanda elites in Goma, who according to Tegera and Johnson: "fear that Nande traders using the Kasindi/Uganda link would take advantage of the newly opened roads to inundate Goma with cut-price imports and undercut current Goma prices, while Banyarwanda traders are still not accepted in the Grand Nord" (Tegera & Johnson 2007: 19). These differences in price are explained by the introduction of preferential trade agreements ('*système forfaitaire*' or pre-financing system) that during the war were concluded between Nande-traders and the RCD-K-ML rebel leadership (in the RCD zones of control, the official method of declaration, or '*système déclaratif*', remained in place). Even if the reunification of the country put an end to this plurality of rules, in practice Nande traders were largely able to safeguard their trading advantages.

As the import of manufactured goods in Eastern DRC is traditionally dominated by Nande traders, Banyarwanda elites have increasingly tried to get control over the resource exploitation and trade in order to reduce the Nande commercial, and consequent political, dominance. In the next chapter, we will further elaborate on the power contest between Nande and Banyarwanda elites.

The impact of this natural resource trade on the city of Goma went well beyond political and economic issues. Goma's shifting politico-economic importance strongly redefined the city's urban image. For example, its position as a regional trading centre caused a considerable spatial expansion; personal benefits made in the coltan trade were, if invested at all, mainly invested in the city, by the construction of houses and hotels.

During the coltan boom, numerous new constructions drastically changed the cityscape. The beautiful villas at Himbi and Ndosho are still referred to as the 'coltan houses'.

"En période de pleine guerre, on voyait des quartiers entiers s'élever, on voyait des gens venant de Masisi s'installer ici à Himbi avec beaucoup d'argent, sauf que beaucoup entre eux sont aujourd'hui encore des pauvres. Mais dans ce temps là, on était vraiment dans ce rêve de bénéfices du coltan, le rêve de devenir riche d'un jour à l'autre, c'était tellement prometteuse..." (Interview Maire Adjoint Katindi, Goma, 2 February 2007).

Quartier Himbi, for example, underwent an intense process of urban 'upgrading' when it also became the residential area of the RCD leadership. The spatial impacts of the natural resource trade were also visible on the other side of the border. Many of the beneficiaries of this trade being Banyarwanda, real estate and other investments were also made in Gisenyi. The district named '*quartier RCD*' in the border area of Gisenyi still remains from that period.

Goma's role in the mineral trade and its evolution into a centre of opportunity has to also be understood in the light of its geographical border location. Due to its nature as a border city, Goma could develop its connections in transborder regional trading networks. During the war and through the natural resource trade, Goma demonstrated how a territorial periphery evolved into a 'central margin' (Raeymaekers 2009a). In chapter 9, I will further elaborate on the relation between the Goma's peripheral position and the city's evolution towards a dynamic regional centre of opportunity as well as contest.

5.2.3. Informality and the 'worlding' of the city: '*les Dubai*'

The local impact of the trade in natural resources in Goma is a clear example of urban transformation in state weakness and violent conflict. The city's position in the global coltan and cassiterite trade turned it into an attractive town of opportunities and generated an increasing 'autonomous' urban development. Its increasing transborder connections reinforced the city's regional economic position and redefined its relationship with the central state. Dynamics of war disconnected the city from the interior parts of the country, and besides the breakdown of trading relations with Kinshasa the wars also resulted in an administrative and political rupture. Goma evolved through a growing economic and political autonomy *vis-à-vis* Kinshasa, and developed largely out of the scope of the central state. Its position in the political economy of war reinforced its economic and political importance as a border town and as a regional trading hub.

In this section, I want to focus on another element in Goma's development that has been crucial in its transformation into a zone of opportunity and that has reinforced the city's orientation to the Near and Far Eastern markets for the importation of manufactured goods. Import trade with Asia was already developed in the region before the war. The first local traders of Goma to explore the Eastern markets were Nande from Butembo, where this trade was already introduced since the late 1980s when a group of Nande traders started commercial relations with Dubai and Hong Kong (Raeymaekers 2007). When this proved to be a very lucrative commerce, it quickly was expanded to Goma.

With an urban economy without any local production of manufactured goods, all kinds of merchandise from Dubai and China found their way to the local markets. This commerce experienced a strong boost with a rapid demographic expansion and the arrival of many international NGOs and UN staff in the city. Increasing demands of this trade made it a highly attractive economic activity and a key sector in Goma's economy. Some of the flourishing markets included cars, motorcycles, constructing materials, household equipment and clothes.

With this commerce expanding incredibly rapidly, Nande were no longer the only ones travelling to Dubai and were soon accompanied by other groups of traders. Many Bashi from South Kivu joined the commerce as well as many traders from Goma. Called '*les Dubai*', entrepreneurs of this commerce in Goma today constitute an amalgam of small and big traders from all kinds of ethnic and social backgrounds. This trade became a new source of opportunities resulting in the articulation of the city of Goma as a '*ville de commerce*' and the emergence of a new class of local entrepreneurs. What made this trade so particular in this regard was that anyone with a sufficient starting capital could succeed, without the conditions of inherited power, educational degrees or belonging to a specific ethnic group. The cost of a trip to Dubai is relatively cheap and a visa is very easy to obtain. In order to reduce the cost of shipment and customs taxes, Goma's youngsters often informally associate to share the rents of containers and trucks to get their merchandise in Goma. Successful businessmen in this sector became known locally as '*les nouveaux riches*' and became very influential economic actors in Goma.

Opportunities in this transborder trade are plural, as the fast growing city of Goma generates a growing demand with many markets still unexploited. As a local merchant explained:

"A Goma il y a toujours des nouveaux marchés à exploiter. Hier c'étaient des frigos, aujourd'hui des téléphones, demain encore autre chose. La demande est là. Surtout avec les ONGs, la MONUC et tout, ces gens ont toujours besoin des nouveautés" (Interview Didier, Goma, October 7 2008).

In the context of a general informalisation of the urban economic profile, networks of opportunity in this sector once again led to privatised, personal patterns of enrichment without resulting in any form of broader, integral development. For established businessmen, necessary connections are easily made to negotiate with government officials who are officially and unofficially involved in trade control, in order to escape heavy taxes on their imported goods. A staff member of the FEC (*Fédération des Entreprises du Congo*) confirms the central importance of informality in these new networks of opportunity by stating:

"Ici aussi c'est pareil, c'est la même histoire. Dans ce commerce c'est la fraude toujours. On ne paie pas des taxes conformément et en cas où des taxes sont payées à la douane, c'est une question de 'coop', d'avantages partagés. Les commerçants s'enrichissent dans la fraude, grâce à la faiblesse de l'Etat Congolais. Et par l'extension de leurs activités, ils contribuent de leur tour à cette faiblesse. L'informel gagne toujours, et l'Etat perd" (Interview FEC staff member, Goma, June 16 2010).

The Eastern orientation of Goma's commercial activities not only impacted on the city's economic profile, it also strongly influenced local urban culture. As Raeymaekers (2007) observed for the case of Butembo, this transborder trade introduced several 'global' elements in the local urban scene, to be found in fashion, music, etc., resulting in a 'glocalisation'¹⁵⁵ of the socio-economic space. As Myers and Simone have rightly argued, the impact of globalisation (including its political, socio-cultural dynamics alongside the economic ones) has largely been underestimated in urban studies on Africa. If African cities do appear in urban studies on globalisation, it is typically as marginal, third- or fourth-tier cities in a world cities hierarchy, or 'black holes' in the hierarchy (Myers 2011: 165). It is obvious that the absence of the Congolese state and the semi-autonomous development of Goma (in combination with the specific geographic and historical context of the city) offered the opportunity for some groups of urban actors to connect in an almost uncontrolled, informal way to the globalised economy. Through a variety of individual or collective strategies of generating revenue, informality serves as an important mechanism linking the local to the global (Abdoul 2002: 538). Different actors in Goma are operating in this 'informal' global markets, the Dubai traders are acting in a private and independent way. We could state that the city of Goma underwent a process of informal globalisation 'from below', providing the possibility for urban actors to operate outside the regulatory system and at the same time to be connected to the transnational economy. Globalisation in this way does not occur through a gradual local installation of multinational enterprises or through developed strategies to link the local economy to the global markets. According to Simone, with regards to African cities in general, informality places urban processes in a global dimension, resulting in what he calls the 'worlding' of cities from below (Simone 2001a). Goma's informal globalisation by the private initiatives of local traders led to a particular urban economic development, creating new forms of entrepreneurship and new forms of redistribution.

The 'worlding' of Goma is clearly reflected through the city's current housing architecture. Buildings corresponding to the norms of modernity in Goma, are copies of Dubai-style architecture, with several floors, a profusion of frills and bombastic decoration, colour-glass windows etc. Further, it can also be read in fashion style, men wearing a *dishdasha* (Arabic traditional white dress) completed with a matching traditional, headscarf certainly command one's respect in Goma. Even in the local vocabulary, many Arabic words and expressions have been introduced. All this to stress that Goma's connection to Dubai and the Far East has contributed to the city as a place of newness, modernity, globalism.

"À Goma on est toujours branché, toujours à temps (...) L'avenir ne se trouve pas en Europe, mais en Chine! Donc nous qui sommes tout près de Dubai et Ghouanzou, nous ne cédon's rien à nos frères à Kin" (Interview Anne-Marie, ULPGL, Goma, Mai 28 2010)

¹⁵⁵ 'Glocalisation' refers to the twin process whereby, firstly, institutional/regulatory arrangements shift from the national scale both upwards to supra-national or global scales and downwards to the scale of the individual body or to local, urban or regional configurations and, secondly, economic activities and inter-firm networks are becoming simultaneously more localised/regionalised and transnational (Swyngedouw 2004: 25).

Translated in the socio-economic city profile, as well as in its spatial configuration and in urban culture, these transnational urban connections are an important element in processes of urban transformation in a context of state decline and conflict. As I will demonstrate in the following section, it is further reinforced by the influence of the present international humanitarian sector.

5.3. *'Commercialisation de la crise': Opportunities in armed conflict*¹⁵⁶

As a direct consequence of the dynamics of protracted war, the increasing presence of international humanitarian organisations in Goma and their local socio-economic and political integration, is another important element in the transformative impact of dynamics of crisis and conflict on the local urban scene. The impact of the international humanitarian sector on urban dynamics has been far reaching and forms a critical element in explaining the city's evolution towards an attractive and regional zone of opportunity. Goma is a clear example of a regional 'NGO-pole'; at present the city is housing the logistic headquarters of vast numbers of international humanitarian organisations that operate in war-affected zones in North and South Kivu. Perceived from the inside as well as from the outside, the concentration of international humanitarian organisations and their expat staff today has become part of Goma's image, status and identity. Contributing to processes of economic, political and spatial transformation, its impact on the recent shaping and reshaping of the city's landscape is significant and therefore demanding for closer inspection.

5.3.1. Goma as a humanitarian space

The war in Eastern Congo is generally described as the most severe humanitarian crisis since the end of the Cold War, causing immense suffering (Coghlan et al. 2009), loss of physical and financial belongings, the destruction of economic and social infrastructures and massive displacement that also did not leave this city unaffected. Large numbers of displaced people and refugees settled in Goma's poor neighbourhoods and produced an additional pressure on the remaining urban infrastructure. But this humanitarian crisis also had a more indirect consequence: from 1993 onwards, it attracted an increasing number of humanitarian agencies to the city that became an intrinsic part of Goma's urban landscape. Through their search for local staff, these organisations became the main providers of labour opportunities, while their presence in the city offered additional possibilities and promoted the development of alternative urban economic activities. For example, real estate in Goma acquired a new impulse and a new 'touristic infrastructure' (luxurious hotels, restaurants, supermarkets, etc) emerged, almost exclusively oriented towards this humanitarian clientele. As such, "*le secteur humanitaire*" (for Goma's population including NGOs, UN and other donor agencies), became the city's main new source of economic opportunity, affecting economic, social as well as spatial structures of Goma.

¹⁵⁶ This section is based on an article Koen Vlassenroot and I published in 2010 in *Disasters* (Büscher & Vlassenroot 2010).

The arrival of these humanitarian actors occurred in several 'waves', in conjunction with significant episodes of armed conflict in Eastern DRC. The first international humanitarian agencies arrived in Goma in 1993 in response to inter-ethnic violence in Walikale en Masisi that had displaced vast numbers of rural populations. More important, though, is the number of agencies that started operating from Goma in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Soon after an estimated one million weakened and malnourished Rwandan Hutu-refugees had crossed the border to Zaire and had settled in refugee camps in and around Goma (in Mugunga, Kibumba, Katale ...) a cholera epidemic broke out, "making it one of the largest-ever concentrations of human misery" (Cooley & Ron 2002: 25). A huge relief operation by the international community invested over one billion dollars in relief related contracts. Within two months, almost 150 humanitarian organisations arrived in Goma (Cooley & Ron 2002; Stockton 1998), from where their activities were coordinated and further dispatched. Even if most interventions included short-term activities including food distribution, medical and sanitation services, transportation as well as niche activities such as public-health education, community development, psychological counselling and child protection, many humanitarian agencies tried to get a foothold for future work and for further expansion of their capacities and activities to other provinces. The humanitarian relief effort was soon complicated by the increasing militarisation of the refugee camps by former Hutu-militias. Consequently humanitarian agencies came to be internationally criticised and accused of "feeding the killers" (Chaulia 2002). A lack of capacity to control and re-establish order in the refugee camps was one of the reasons why the French section of *Médecins Sans Frontières* was the first to withdraw from the camps¹⁵⁷. Other agencies were more pragmatic and chose to stay, which lead some to the conclusion that aid was one of the crucial elements that helped sustain the refugee camps as military bases from where cross-border attacks could be prepared (Terry 2002). Relief aid had some additional effects. Massive humanitarian aid reinforced the 'dollarisation' of the local economy (Mamdani 2001; Vlassenroot 2002a) and to the creation of a so-called 'HCR economy', which referred to "the artificially buoyant period for urbanites when the major international agencies were still responding to the enormous refugee crisis precipitated in the Kivus as a result of the 1994 Rwandan genocide" (Jackson 2003a: 24). It also offered new opportunities to local politico-economic elites that could extract benefits from this humanitarian assistance through their alliance with refugee leaderships. In turn, this alliance made it possible for the refugee leaderships to expand their business activities. More worrisome was the unintended impact of aid on local conflict dynamics: "although the former Rwandan regime and army fled to Zaire with considerable financial and material assets, it was the humanitarian sanctuary that permitted their continued survival as an entity until late 1996" (Terry 2002: 260).

During the military campaign of Laurent-Désiré Kabila's AFDL (1996-1997), the number of humanitarian organisations in Goma did not increase considerably, mainly because most agencies had opened offices already during the refugee crisis (Sesnan 2004). In addition, after the controversial relief experience in 1994, humanitarian actors had started

¹⁵⁷ followed by several other organisations including the International Rescue Committee, Oxfam, Save the Children and Care (Chaulia 2002).

outsourcing part of their action programs to local NGO's. The major newcomers on the humanitarian scene after 1996 were UN-agencies, which mainly focused on longer-term development interventions¹⁵⁸. When Goma became the RCD rebels' headquarters during the second Congolese war, this led to some important challenges for the international organisations, which constantly had to negotiate access to the most vulnerable parts of the population, particularly when located in areas that were not under control of the rebels¹⁵⁹. In contrast to the rural areas, the RCD tried to keep the level of repression in the city centres relatively low (Tull 2005), even if also in Goma and Bukavu several grave human rights violations have been recorded during its rule. The position towards international aid agencies was much more judicious, as the rebels soon discovered the advantages of a large presence of international donor agencies. As the rebel movement hardly made an attempt to keep social services operational, international aid agencies became the single most important deliverer of these services. Health services and other social sectors were entirely outsourced to aid agencies yet the rebel leadership portrayed these agencies' interventions as "a benefit of their own making" (Tull 2005: 212). In addition, their presence provided revenues to the rebel administration from the taxation of imported goods. Most humanitarians were aware of this position, and tried to develop a strategy of accommodation in order to secure the continuity of their interventions and to prevent expulsion.

In January 2002, after the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano, Goma again experienced a massive arrival of humanitarian organisations. It was the international humanitarian sector that took the lead in relief, aid and reconstruction. From their side, there was a quick and well-coordinated aid response, both by the UN agencies and NGOs. Numerous new agencies joined the existing organisations (Sesnan 2004)¹⁶⁰.

The last and most important expansion of the 'humanitarian sector' in Goma occurred after the intensification, in August 2007, of the conflict in Nord Kivu that opposed the Laurent Nkunda led CNDP to the FDLR (Rwandan Hutu rebels operating in Eastern DRC), several other smaller rebel groups and the Congolese military forces FARDC. In this phase of the conflict, between the end of 2006 and October 2008, the number of permanently present international NGOs in Goma doubled¹⁶¹. Newcomers' programmes not only focused on the assistance of IDPs, but increasingly engaged in longer term development programmes. Two related dynamics have to be noted in this perspective. Firstly, the humanitarian extension gave impetus to a next and spectacular 'mushrooming' of local NGOs (cf infra)¹⁶². Secondly, it went along with the intensified presence of the UN international peace-keeping force MONUSCO, which strongly increased both its

¹⁵⁸ Interview representative of OCHA (Goma, October 10 2008).

¹⁵⁹ Interviews with representatives of humanitarian organisations, Bukavu, May 1999 (data provided by Koen Vlassenroot).

¹⁶⁰ see also <http://www.alertnet.org/thefacts/reliefresources/427629.htm> (last access date 22/06/2009).

¹⁶¹ Interview representative of OCHA (Goma, October 10 2008); internal lists OCHA "Who What Where, Expanded Contact Report"; "Contact list Goma".

¹⁶² One of the main new focuses of the programmes of both local and international NGOs was that of sexual violence.

humanitarian and military staff in Goma, turning the city into one of the main military UN headquarters of the country.

In summary, the recent history of Goma can be presented as one of successive humanitarian crises. These crises gave the city its image of '*ville d'asile*', '*zone rouge*', '*terrain glissant*', but also of '*ville du tourisme humanitaire*'. International aid and development organisations steadily increased in numbers over the past fifteen years, turning the city into a regional NGO-pole. Because of its advantageous position (e.g. the presence of the provincial government, an international airport, urban infrastructure and located at the border with Rwanda), Goma became the preferred hub of many humanitarian agencies to develop and coordinate their interventions elsewhere in the region.



Picture 7: MONUSCO soldiers © B Muniyi 2010

5.3.2. The 'humanitarian industry' and new economic opportunities

The massive arrival of international aid agencies attracted new migrants to the city, as it offered new opportunities of employment and also provided traders and landlords with a new consumer group with considerable purchasing power in search of houses and compounds. Humanitarian agencies not only had a strong impact on the local urban economy, they became an inherent part of it.

The most direct and obvious impact was on the local job market. The expansion of the humanitarian sector was associated with a growing demand for trained personnel, guards, cooks, drivers etc. Given the context of state failure and lack of employment opportunities, from their first massive arrival in 1993-1994, humanitarian agencies took a considerable share in the local labour market¹⁶³. Neither local authorities nor coordinating humanitarian departments in Goma have estimated the exact dimension of their share in the urban job market, leaving it open for bare estimations. Nonetheless, based on interviews with local observers, with a state bureaucracy in decline and hardly any productive private sector remaining in the city, it is estimated that UN agencies and humanitarian actors provide most of the official labour positions in Goma at present. Given the particular need for people with specific qualifications and expertise, the humanitarian presence has mainly offered an alternative to unemployment to a small class of young, well-educated people that previously migrated to neighbouring countries

¹⁶³ Interview UNDP officer (Goma, January 29 2008); interview local observer (Goma, May 26 2009).

in search of a job. Predominantly, people from Bukavu have a tendency to apply for these positions. Bukavu is considered as the '*berceau des ONGs au Sud Kivu*'¹⁶⁴ and offers a specific training in development-work at the *Institut Supérieur de Développement Rural*, which explains the large presence of '*Bukaviens*' in the humanitarian sector. As having a connection to the international NGO network has become an important asset in local urban survival strategies, practices of preferential treatment or 'ethnic patronage' have developed in line with the expansion of the humanitarian sector. In this hypercompetitive new labour market, the search for local staff has created strong tensions and conflicts¹⁶⁵. Expat staff, often entirely unaware of the ethnic composition of their local staff, leave recruitment to their Congolese employees, which in some cases result in an unintentional ethnic image or characterisation of the organisation in question¹⁶⁶.

Another important element is the booming of local NGOs. These organisations have become vital components of the survival strategies of urban inhabitants and have replaced the state in many areas of public life (Giovannoni et al. 2004). In search for opportunities, *Goméens* increasingly see the creation of NGO's as a means to have access to international funding. As Giovannoni and Trefon describe it in the larger context of the DRC: "in a society where people are forced to multiply their chances of opportunity (to find food, work, psychological sustenance), the NGO is just one more card to play" (Giovannoni et al. 2004: 100). In his work, Trefon speaks of a real 'NGOization of society', which in an urban context has shifted to a new form of social organisation (Trefon 2004). This development is only partly caused by the international humanitarian presence; already at the end of the 1980s, urban centres in the Kivu provinces witnessed an upsurge of independent development associations and initiatives. The void left by the weakened Zairian state, was filled by a multitude of new, independent development-oriented associations. From the start of the humanitarian crisis in 1993-1994, these associations offered a unique opportunity for a small class of educated urban elites to gain access to additional external financial resources. In a context of contestation over the socio-political and economic urban space, during the war these local NGOs in Goma also in a complex way became related to leading political and economic actors. Rebel leaderships started initiating their own development associations or tried to integrate existing initiatives into their networks of patronage, with the aim of getting access to the vast international donor community in the city yet at the same time to increase their visibility and power position in their regions of origin (Tull 2005; Vlassenroot 2002b). The association *Tout pour la Paix et le Développement*, which was instituted by the Provincial Governor Eugène Serufuli to facilitate the return of refugees but was a crucial vehicle of his power structure, is but one example of this trend.

Further, as a huge group of '*consommateurs du premier ordre*' (Grünewald et al. 2004: 267), their specific demands for housing, equipment, consumption and recreation, as well

¹⁶⁴ Interview local observer (Goma, May 26 2009).

¹⁶⁵ Interview Maire Adjoint Katindi (Goma, February 7 2008; interview local observer, Goma, May 26 2009); interview UNDP office (Goma, September 2 2007).

¹⁶⁶ Interviews with NGO officers (Goma, December 2005 and June 2006, and Bukavu, February 2009), data provided by Koen Vlassenroot.

as their strong purchasing power bringing new cash flows into the city, proved to create a strong stimulus to the local urban economy but also led to a dollarisation of local economic transactions. A growing policy to 'buy locally', caused an increased local demand for several products. For the provisioning of humanitarian agencies, agreements were made with local traders, often again on the basis of personal or family connections¹⁶⁷. As such, for local *commerçants*, it was key to have connections to these 'humanitarian networks of patronage'. Small vendors in the commercial centre of Goma often complain that the 'big contracts' (for the provision of petrol, basic food and other products, such as rice or paper for example), can only be obtained by the established importers (often traders that are closely connected to the politico-military leaderships, as well as Indian trade companies)¹⁶⁸. One strategy to deal with this is to adapt their merchandise to the demand of the international staff. Also the emergence of large-scale and expensive supermarkets is an example of the humanitarian presence stimulating related economic sectors. With imported European and Asian products, these supermarkets are almost uniquely directed to expat clients.

Another sector that flourished with the expansion of the humanitarian sector is real estate. The concentration of international staff residing in a restricted number of areas in the city resulted in an increased demand of specific housing infrastructure in those districts. In Goma, real estate became a booming business, attracting many established businessmen to invest in this sector (often funded by the benefits from natural resource trading activities) and buying or constructing houses and apartments that could be rented to NGO or UN staff for extremely high prices¹⁶⁹. This occurred together with the expansion of a related 'touristic infrastructure'. What *Goméens* used to call '*le tourisme humanitaire*', is probably the most visible impact of the international staff presence in Goma. Luxurious hotels, bars, restaurants and night-clubs mushroomed over the past ten years, many of these again almost exclusively oriented towards an international clientele. The humanitarian



Picture 8: Hotel Ihusi © Karen Büscher 2011

¹⁶⁷ Informal talks with humanitarian agents (Goma, April 2009), and with a trader from Birere (Goma, October 2008).

¹⁶⁸ Interview trader from Birere (Goma, October 9 2008).

¹⁶⁹ Interview Officer of B.E.I. (Goma, September 2007); interview President of the FEC (Goma, October 3 2008), Interview UNDP officer (Goma, September 30 2008).

community perceive the city as a place to rest, to relax and to sleep¹⁷⁰. Expats used to call Goma '*la ville phare*', referring to its varied nightlife. I already mentioned how these dynamics reconnect the city to its pre-war image of a tourist attraction, where the remaining tour-operators now offer boat trips or water-skiing on the Kivu lake or picnics on the small islands to Goma's permanent expat staff. Of course, this industry has in its turn stimulated the development of several related and more obscure sectors, including prostitution and a flourishing local trade in cocaine¹⁷¹.

In short, the development of a 'humanitarian industry' has brought significant changes to Goma's economic space. Apart from job opportunities for a group of well-educated Congolese development workers, the main benefits made out of the several side-sectors of this industry are mainly concentrated within a small group of established businessmen, excluding most parts of the urban population. Displeased with what is locally called the '*commercialisation de la crise*¹⁷²', *Goméens* often cynically joke while imitating the Indian UN forces who would say "*No Nkunda no job*". This is in reference to the period when those forces were in charge to protect the city against Nkunda's rebels and to the general perception of the humanitarian presence as a money making enterprise, profiting from conflict and human suffering, and serving the international donor community in the first place.

5.3.3. Reordering urban space

The growing significance of Goma as a 'humanitarian space' also had an important impact on the spatial development of the city, since it generated important socio-geographic changes and left a visible imprint on the urban landscape. In the context of an informal process of urbanisation in the quasi absence of state authorities, the presence and interference of humanitarian agencies only further strengthened the shift towards privatised urban planning and development.

Their concentration in the central districts, provided by a minimum of urban infrastructure (roads, water, electricity), inevitably caused a process of gentrification. With its numerous NGO establishments, UN compounds, luxurious residential areas, hotels, bars and rebel headquarters, these central districts gained importance and transformed into a new urban landscape, perceived as centres of power and modernity, representing global culture and new lifestyles. This transformation was particularly visible in the districts Volcans and Himbi, where most of the humanitarian community settled and installed their headquarters, usually in former residential buildings. Specific demands concerning housing and working infrastructure as well as economic demands increased the socio-economic significance of Himbi and Volcans and improvements of the overall urban infrastructure turned them into the real '*quartiers riches*' (Kasereka Sivyendera 2009).

¹⁷⁰ Informal talks NGO officer (Goma, April 2009); Interview MONUC officer (Goma, September 2007).

¹⁷¹ Interview UNDP officer (Goma, September 30 2008); Interview officer of '*Bureau du Tourisme*' (Goma, January 29 2008 & October 7 2008).

¹⁷² Interview President of the FEC (Goma, October 3 2008).

These developments not only reinforced the discrepancy between centre and periphery, but also confirmed the spatial divide between urban rich and poor. With a quadrupling of prices between 2003 and 2008¹⁷³ and with monthly rents of 2,000 or 3,000 USD, a strong gentrification took place in the residential areas and the surrounding neighbourhoods (Kasereka Sivyendera 2009), leading to profound changes in the urban socio-geographic morphology. Two important trends could be observed: while for the surrounding districts former inhabitants were forced to move to cheaper, peripheral districts at the outskirts of Goma, in the central districts this led to a gradual replacement of the established local elite by international expat staff, where the former (amongst them many Banyarwanda businessmen) in many cases moved out to Gisenyi (in Rwanda) after having hired their properties to the latter. For many ordinary *Goméens*, living in the eastern central parts of the city has become almost impossible because of this gentrification. One can thus clearly observe an evolution towards the formation of 'gated communities', where basic urban infrastructure but also public services and security are reserved for those who can afford. As Toullier, Lagae and Gemoets have observed for the case of Kinshasa, "*en effet, les colonisateurs d'antan sont remplacés pour une nouvelle élite émergente, qui, elle aussi, cherche à s'assurer le contrôle de l'espace et à se créer un environnement préservé*" (Toullier et al. 2010: 11). For security reasons, inhabitants lock themselves and their families up behind high walls, security gates and grated windows, a phenomenon that is locally referred to as the phenomenon of "*la bunkerisation*".

In sharp contrast to the main objectives of their interventions, the presence of humanitarian actors in Goma on the one hand contributes considerably to processes of gentrification, and on the other hand to the increasing marginalisation and exclusion of the urban periphery, and to the confirmation of a '*ville duale*' (Grünwald et al. 2004: 337), where, as perceived by many, old colonial structures of inequality and social and spatial segregation are being reconfirmed.

As such, by influencing urban dynamics of economic and spatial occupation, humanitarian agencies have created new opportunities as well as new patterns of conflict and competition over the urban space. Because of their dominant position in the planning and execution of local services and infrastructure, they contribute to an active shaping of the city, sometimes with the unintentional effect of unequal urban development. With particular groups being privileged and others neglected, spatial and social urban faultiness are confirmed.

5.3.4. Non-state urban governance

The dwindling role of the state in many domains and the increasing 'informal' operation of state agents gave increasing power to international non-governmental institutions in Goma. And on their turn, their presence and interventions have reinforced the process of state withdrawal from public services. Due to corruption and mismanagement and a lack of means, motivation and vision, state services have constantly been hollowed out and have increasingly been replaced by coalitions of local and international development actors. As such, this has instigated a transfer of power and legitimacy to the advantage of

¹⁷³ Interview officer of the Bureau du Cadastre (Goma, February 7 2008).

these latter actors. Besides offering new economic opportunities, international actors started to gain influence on local urban governance. Today, urban politics have become an important space of engagement of local as well as international NGOs. As a local observer explained:

"Ils [international organisations] se mêlent dans beaucoup de choses. C'est normal au fait, vue leur rôle et l'ampleur de leurs activités dans cette ville. Avec le temps, ils sont de plus en plus devenus 'brutales' si je peux dire, dans le sens où ils osent s'opposer aux décisions prises par le gouvernement local (...). L'état est mis hors-jeu, et il se met lui-même à coté pour regarder ce jeu. Seulement là où il croit pouvoir gagner quelque chose, il va encore jouer lui-même» (Interview local observer, Goma, May 26 2009).

From their side, local state authorities continuously complain about the fact that they feel 'sidelined' by these organisations and misunderstood in their authority and expertise. Furthermore, they warn for 'parallel' patterns of decision-making, by which the state is often simply 'ignored'¹⁷⁴. In the annual report of 2007 it was stated explicitly that *"la plupart des associations et/ou ONGs internationales exercent leurs fonctions dans la Ville de Goma sans autorisation préalable du Maire. Elles passent les Divisions du Plan; des Affaires Sociales où de l'autorité provinciale"* (Mairie de Goma 2008a: 37). A public servant employed at the city hall further argued:

"La politique des ONG ne cadre pas avec celle du gouvernement Congolais. Elles opèrent dans les domaines de leur choix elles ne s'inspirent pas des besoins réels de la population où du programme de l'État" (interview chef de bureau d'appui au développement, division de IPME, Goma, September 30 2008).

As already mentioned, social services including health and education, but also sectors such as the rehabilitation of road infrastructure have largely been taken over by external actors. As such these organisations increasingly 'behave' as a dominant actor in urban governance.

"Les ONGs commencent à se comporter comme le Ministère du Plan. A Katindo ils construisent des égouts par exemple. Développer la ville de Goma c'est une bonne chose. Mais tu sais, les ONGs ne seront pas là pour l'éternité. Donc au lieu d'investir l'argent dans des ONGs, il faut mieux l'investir dans la bonne gouvernance du Ministère du Plan, par exemple (Interview Student UNIGOM, Goma, Juni 19 2010).

By performing gap-filling functions in delivery of basic services and addressing material needs, these actors, just as other non-state groups, "regulate access to resources, establish rules of conduct and become sites of governance in their own right" (Lourenço-Lindell 2007: 1884).

During the second Congolese war, the growing power and impact of humanitarian organisations has also been the effect of a deliberate strategy of the RCD rebel movement

¹⁷⁴ Interview staff member Division d'Urbanisation & Habitat (Goma, October 2 2008); interview Maire adjoint (Goma, October 11 2008).

to outsource several governance sectors, which had to mask their total absence of a development project. As a consequence, international aid agencies today have not only replaced the state in several key sectors, they are playing a decisive role in urban development and political governance (Büscher & Vlassenroot 2010). They are contesting the state's authority and sovereignty on different levels, and their dominant role in local decision-making processes has severely reduced the bargaining position of the new state administrations that today have no capacity at all to impose conditions to international agencies' interventions and are continuously forced in a position of negotiation. As the words of a local observer in Goma illustrate,

“Le jour où les Nations Unies ont construit un terrain de basket à côté de l’université au centre, toutes les autorités locales étaient présentes. Elles étaient en train de se féliciter, fières de voir leur ville se développer. Tandis que cette université, qui est un établissement de l’état, manque même des toilettes! Comment, dans ces circonstances, l’état Congolaise pourrait un jour récupérer sa responsabilité dans cette ville?” (Interview local observer, Goma, May 26 2009).

5.4. Les grands barons de Goma: the transformation of urban elites

From the analysis above, it has become clear that the evolution of Goma towards a centre of opportunities has drastically changed the socio-economic and political cityscape. The trade in natural resources, the eastern orientation of the local economy and the development of a humanitarian industry resulted in a profound re-articulation of the economic profile, but also in the redefinition of local, urban power structures. The control over networks of economic opportunity also generated control over processes of urban decision-making and governance. I already demonstrated how this gave rise to new powerful coalitions and a shift of local urban elites¹⁷⁵. These coalitions are highly variable and constantly changing. The success of accessing networks of opportunity seems to lie in the flexibility to adapt to the fast changing political, economic and military situation and to engage in complex alliances with different state and non-state actors.

5.4.1. The emergence of ‘les nouveaux riches’

The changing economic city profile and new economic markets generated through dynamics of state withdrawal and war, created opportunities for particular urban groups in Goma to benefit and gain influence and power. In this process of transformation, old elites were replaced by new, *anciens riches* were pushed aside by *nouveaux riches*. There are two general trends to be observed in this transformation: the shift from political to economic power and the increasing interdependence between economic and military actors.

“Goma c’est une ville économique. Pour avoir un poids réel sur la ville de Goma, il faut le chercher dans l’économie, pas dans la politique. Ce sont les opérateurs économiques

¹⁷⁵ By ‘elites’ I refer to a group of urban stakeholders that derive significant political and economic power from their authority in urban governance (economic regulation, organisation, political decision-making).

qui tiennent le pouvoir, avec la complicité des acteurs cachés, bien sûr" (Interview R. Malinga, Gouvernorat, Goma, October 18 2008).

Present urban 'big men' are a small group of influential businessmen of different ethnic and social backgrounds, who are in control of today's main urban economic markets. As the statement of R. Malinga underlines, power lies in money, and money is not to be found in politics, but in '*des affaires*'. The increasing economic articulation of Goma as a regional transborder trading centre has contributed to this. Some of Goma's 'big men' are new players in the urban economic (and indirectly political-) scene, who were of no importance in the pre-war period, when urban power structures were mainly concentrated in a Hutu-Nande political coalition. Others are descendents of those elites that were favoured under the Mobutu reign. Wealthy as a result of their possessions in real estate, tourist industry and land titles, they managed to retain their influence during the periods of war, by strategic political alliances with the new Rwandophone power structures.

So over the last fifteen years, the composition, role and strength of the urban elites changed considerably. The growing importance and power of economic actors was strongly enforced by Goma's manifestation as the headquarters of the rebel movement and the heart of the political economy of transborder trade controlled¹⁷⁶ by AFDL, later on by the RCD and partly by the CNDP. On the one hand, this resulted -as already mentioned- in the political dominance of Banyarwanda elites and their growing control over the key economic sectors (such as natural resources, aviation, petrol). Further institutionalised through the provincial and municipal and power structures¹⁷⁷, the influence of Banyarwanda was perpetuated in a strong urban economic-political-military power coalition.

A good example is that of Modeste Makabuza, a much-discussed personality in Goma and still one of the city's '*grands barons*' (Tutsi from Masisi). He is the CEO of the mineral company SOMKIVU since 2004 and the cassiterite *comptoir* SODEEM, and the largest importer of petroleum products in Goma (he is the owner of the companies '*Société Saphir*', '*Jambo Safari*' and numerous petrol stations). He started to emerge as a wealthy businessman from 1996 onwards, when Tutsi in Goma obtained the monopoly over the fuel trade. He is also the co-owner of "*Air Navette*", an aviation company exporting minerals. His brother, Alexis Makabuza, is the head of the mining company MBC¹⁷⁸, one of the mayor buyers from the cassiterite mine of Bisie in Walikale. During the 'reign' of Serufuli, Makabuza could secure his position by becoming one of his large financial backers. Makabuza has more than once been cited by the UN reports of the panel of

¹⁷⁶ Of course, this control is never absolute. Just as states, rebels are rather concerned by extracting benefits from these trade flows.

¹⁷⁷ An important personage in this process is ex-governor Eugène Serufuli, Hutu but brought into power to form a power block in alliance with Tutsi elite to counter the anti-Banyarwanda movements (Bucyalimwe Mararo 2002). He installed a strong political-economic elite -favouring Banyarwanda- and was himself directly and indirectly engaged in different economic activities (he owned for example some petrol stations in Goma).

¹⁷⁸ Mining and Business Commodities

experts, for his supposed participation in arms traffic, illegal mineral export, and his financial support to the CNDP rebel movement. Today, although his influence declined, he is still one of Goma's wealthiest businessmen, and the owner of many real estate, for example.

Makabuza evolved in a close relationship with the elder Tutsi 'elite' of Goma (the Ngezayo and Kasuku family, for example), which was favoured during the Mobutu period and that owns large properties in town. In that sense, the emergence of businessmen like Makabuza during the war, did not mean an immediate rupture with former power structures.

On the other hand, however, at the same time Goma saw the emergence of some local entrepreneurs that succeeded economically due to the benefits of additional opportunities offered by the context of disorder and war. By the investment in booming niche-activities (such as real estate, cars, import of manufactured goods), these groups enriched themselves and worked their way up becoming important urban entrepreneurs. Whereas the Banyarwanda elites in place during the RCD-period are now largely marginalised (with a few exceptions)¹⁷⁹, and their politico-economic monopoly broken, this new class of local businessmen is still in place today. Referred to as '*les nouveaux riches*', they constitute a very rich and influential group of entrepreneurs, by some praised for their courage and perseverance as '*enfants de Goma*', by others distrusted for their 'suspicious' success during difficult war times and their alleged collaboration with '*des acteurs cachés*'.

"Leurs richesses c'est le fruit du travail, mais aussi le fruit de la guerre et le désordre"
(Interview Pasteur Joël, Goma, November 24 2009).

They control the main flourishing economic markets, and the profits made in one sector are reinvested in another. As such, the benefits of networks of urban economic opportunities are circulated within a small group of influential businessmen. For example, Goma's 'number one' today, the richest men in town and very popular, is a Hunde trader who held a monopoly on the transport of Bralima products between Goma-Beni-Butembo during the RCD period. Afterwards, he invested his money in real estate and commerce with Dubai, and today he owns the newest high-standard hotel in Goma (the second biggest in town), a ferry service between Goma-Bukavu, several petrol stations, warehouses and stores. Besides, he is the president of Goma's first soccer club and was recently appointed the president of Kinshasa's DCMP football team. Goma's 'number two' is a Shi commerçant, originally from Bukavu, who started from zero by selling cigarettes in the streets of Birere. He became rich by importing constructing material and cement during the war, and eventually built his own hotel, today's highest ranked hotel in Goma. As a 'non originaire', he is far less popular than his Hunde colleague. But the main reason for his unpopularity is not due to his parental roots, rather the questionable roots of his

¹⁷⁹ See for example the remaining influence of some powerful Tutsi entrepreneurs like Modeste Makabuza, remaining active in the resource trade, but simultaneously investing in other sectors like real estate, petrol business, tourist industry.

fortune. Little is known about the source of capital enabling him to construct his mega-hotel, and as a local observer put it:

“En cas d’enrichissement suspect, les rumeurs de Birere font leur tour”¹⁸⁰ (Interview local observer, Goma, December 7 2009).

However, although these *‘nouveaux riches’* may be gaining power and influence, they still have to compete with the older elites (we will further elaborate this competition in the next chapter).

5.4.2. Military-economic alliances and the question of protection

One of the reasons of the success of Goma’s *‘grands barons’* in quite a difficult and uncertain context of political and economic instability is their willingness and capacity to negotiate with other powerful state and non-state actors. This resulted in complex relations of interdependence between political, economic, social and military actors. In the first place, it was the direct or indirect collaboration between armed actors and economic entrepreneurs or *‘mercantilist elites’* (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a) that seemed to be the key condition for those latter to continue their activities and transaction and in addition, to profit from the extra benefits offered by the war economy.

For Eastern Congo in general, dynamics of armed conflict and war economy strengthened the interconnections between economic, political and military power strategies (Raeymaekers 2007; Raeymaekers et al. 2008; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a; Vlassenroot & Romkema 2002b). The collaboration between rebel forces and economic actors created a situation of mutual benefits where opportunities were shared: *‘Both militias and opportunistic businessmen (such as traders, middlemen or outright criminals) have increasingly profited from the low-intensity nature of the Congolese conflict because they can use the subsequent distortion of commodity and resource markets to monopolize local resource exploitation trade’* (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a: 22). These kinds of military-commercial alliances or *‘elite networks’* were embodiments of this war economy. In a situation where rebel movements were in need of financial means and of local traders that were in need of protection, arrangements were made and protection was *‘bought’*, resulting in military-commercial patronships of interdependence.

“Les opérateurs économiques sont forts par leur richesses, leur pouvoir est dans leur argent. Mais les opérateurs de guerres sont forts puisqu’ils contrôlent l’ordre et le désordre. Leur pouvoir est dans leurs armes. Si ces deux là se mettent ensemble, ils deviennent un vrai bastion de pouvoir. Jusqu’aujourd’hui, les commerçants et les colonels en brousse sont des amis” (Interview local observer, Goma, October 10 2008)

Raeymaekers has described in detail the strategies of beneficial alliances between local Nande traders and the RCD-ML rebel movement in Butembo (Raeymaekers 2007). With a

¹⁸⁰ Many *Goméens* are convinced of the fact that the hotel has Rwandese shareholders, and one of the stories locally circulating that it has been built by money from Colonel Masasu (one of the leading figures of the AFDL but arrested and executed in 2000), with whom the entrepreneurs’ wife would have had good connections.

commercial elite that was far less homogenous and without any strong internal organisation, the situation was of a different character in Goma, however some similar processes could be observed. Although traders did not have the same capacity to force the RCD rebel leadership into negotiation, the privileged relationship between Banyarwanda business elites and the rebels engendered several processes of economic control and eventually redefined the local economic space. For these Banyarwanda elites, the city increasingly became the centre of power and the place where its strategies to gain economic and political control over the rural areas were designed.

For non-Banyarwanda traders who could not profit from a 'preferential treatment' with regards to taxes for example, the question of protection became a very pertinent one. Opening up to negotiations with the rebel forces was the only way to secure the continuation of their business. As a local observer has put it:

"Ici il ne faut pas être boxeur de karaté: il faut ouvrir ta main, et l'espace s'ouvrira".

Besides offering protection, rebel actors also became important clients, purchasing different goods. Goma's business elite knew very well how to gear their activities strategically to the rebels' needs. The petrol business is the most obvious example.

In chapter 6, I will come back to these alliances to describe them as part of the armed actors' strategies to exercise political and economic control over the city.

5.4.3. Governance strategies and socio-spatial integration

Goma's economic elite was not able to impose itself on the political scene to become 'legitimated regulatory authorities' or 'makers of the law itself' to the same degree as could the Nande traders on the Congo-Uganda border, described by Raeymaekers (2007). However, Goma's urban entrepreneurs did gain increasing influence and control over the socio-political scene and became important actors in processes of urban (informal) governance. In the redefinition of patterns of urban power structures through processes of state withdrawal and conflict, economic 'big men' became important players in the 'urban management' (*'gestion urbaine'*) with a strong voice in economic, social, spatial and even political organisation of the city. The links between economic entrepreneurs and the political elites in Goma are obvious. As for the latter, being connected to the former constitutes a major resource. As is the case for the whole of the DRC and many other African countries, their relationship is characterised by patronage and clientelism. As in all other Congolese urban centres, the role of the FEC is of strong importance in this process. This Federation has evolved into a powerful player in urban governance that can impose itself in urban decision-making and sometimes even 'dictates' state authorities¹⁸¹. Although very few economic actors are actively involved in politics, many of them have indirect connections to the political elite. As one local observer put it, local politicians have become the beggars of Goma's rich entrepreneurs. For example, in the context of the upcoming elections, if a politician wants to launch a successful campaign and to reach a large electoral basis, he will strategically try to link up with one of these wealthy

¹⁸¹ Interview local observer, Goma, April 16 2009.

businessmen. When one of the political parties is campaigning in the streets of Goma with great ostentation, people would immediately speculate on which of Goma's 'big men' would be his *'parrain'*. The relationship with these businessmen can be exploited for the necessary financial needs, but also for the necessary 'popularity', as these men have a high status in the city, that by far exceeds that of the political elites. In this way, without being directly and visibly engaged in politics, they indirectly influence political governance. In the same way, these businessmen provide the municipal authorities (such as the mayor) with financial means, and in return get 'free play' (escaping taxes, constructing or confiscating urban land wherever they want, put rivals at a disadvantage, etc.). Of course this situation is not in the least unique to Goma, as it is part of the neo-patrimonial politics in Goma, marked by these kinds of 'assimilation of elites' (Bayart 1996). In the next chapter, I will further elaborate on these elites' relationships.

Apart from their political embeddedness, Goma's business elite also deploys different strategies aiming at a 'social integration' in the city, by investing in 'social capital' amongst the urban population. This social acceptance and integration is extremely important in a situation of uncertainty, rivalry and conflict (see next chapter). To enforce their control over the political and socio-economic urban regulation, to strengthen their personal power position and to guarantee their personal security in Goma, these businessmen aim at gaining the population's trust and confidence¹⁸². To achieve a social embeddedness that preferably transcends the ethnic scale, these businessmen for example engage in different branches of the associational life, helping the poor, collaborate with churches and non-governmental organisations, etc. A certain degree of redistribution is a crucial element in these strategies. All of the influential 'barons' in Goma are, for example, supporting street children, disabled or other marginalised groups of urban society in one way or another.

These ways of 'buying' popularity is at the same time an important strategy of the 'barons' to bond with different urban 'pressure groups' (like the *Khaddafi's*, students and *motards* for example) in order to guarantee their security in town and to cover themselves to become 'untouchable'. In a very fragile and unstable situation where things can change overnight, it is of crucial importance to be '*bien branché*' in town.

"Il faut de tout prix éviter des conflits ici à Goma. Il faut être bien avec les gens, car on a vu ce qui peut se passer en cas de conflits; des enlèvements, des empoisonnements, des meurtres, on a tout vu ici, vraiment" (Interview staff member of Bureau de l'Economie et Industrie, Goma, February 4 2008)

Also other state and non-state urban elites invest in these ways in social capital in the city. Local political actors, for example, engage in the 'support' of different social groups in Goma. In chapter 7, we will observe how this can lead to a 'capturing' of these social groups by urban elites, and how dynamics of political contest are as such downscaled to the grass-roots level.

Another important element in the elites' governance strategies is their manipulation of the urban physical landscape. Their engagement with the urban landscape by for example

¹⁸² Interview staff member FEC, Goma, June 16 2010.

participating in infrastructural or development projects in the city, is an important way to visualise their power and authority. By investing in the city's architecture, these elites leave their stamp on the urban landscape, signing the landscape in their name.

When Goma's second richest man asphalted a street in the city centre and gave it his name, this was a clear affirmation of the man's status and power in Goma. This event could be interpreted as an example of what is locally referred to as the phenomenon of '*kuonyesha*', in French '*se montrer*', (to show himself, to be seen). To be respected, one has to impose himself by making himself and his fortunes to be noticed by others.

"Il faut qu'on voit que vous êtes fort. La visibilité du pouvoir par l'occupation de l'espace c'est un phénomène important. L'investissement de ces gens dans l'urbanisation, ce n'est pas innocent. Il y a des stratégies derrière tout ça" (Interview staff member Caritas, Goma June, 1 2010).

To impose their name, but also to express their 'devotion' to the city and its inhabitants (as a strategy of 'social integration', cf supra), Goma's 'big men' make further investments in urbanisation. The physical impact of the powerful elites on the urban landscape is also translated in their engagement in the state's rehabilitation projects in the context of the famous '*5 chantiers*'. Nowadays, the observation that this ambitious national development project in all urban centres in Congo has merely become a matter of some occasional visible spatial interventions, is no different for Goma's case. Every hole sealed in the shabby roads is perceived as a progress of the *5 chantiers*. However, the main achievements in the visible progress of rehabilitation projects of the urban infrastructure in Goma are not realised by the formal authorities, it is rather the result of investment of non-state actors, non-governmental organisations and private businessmen as the two most important ones. A good example are the statues that have been erected recently at the different roundabouts in town, 'donations' of Goma's businessmen to the city. The huge golden monument of the '*tshukudu*', representing 'brave working spirit' of Goma's inhabitants, is realised by the same businessmen that asphalted the street. The whole surrounding district now carries his name. By their financial incapacities, the provincial



Picture 9: Goma's businessmen "signing" the cityscape © Karen Büscher 2010

governor and the city's mayor direct themselves to Goma's economic 'big men' to realize their urban projects. As such, these 'big men' gained themselves an important place in urban power structures and become increasingly engaged in urban governance.

5.5. Concluding remarks

The emergence of this powerful economic urban elite and its increasing role in urban regulation and governance illustrates how 'new' informal networks of opportunities as described in this chapter have turned into 'new' urban power structures. It also illustrates how informality has an eminently political function; "it is in relation to power that, through actors and structures, informality brings together registers and resources that provide individual or collective opportunities to give direction to lives" (Simone 2005: 229).

In this chapter I have analysed the evolution of the city of Goma towards an attractive city of opportunity. It has been clear that the political and economic autonomisation and self-regulation in a general situation of disorder and violence led to a profound reshaping of the general city profile and created alternative forms of accumulation and new forms of governance. Opportunities that arose in a context of state withdrawal, disorder and war, have generated multiple benefits and new ways of enrichment and accumulation. This led to a transformation of the economic urban profile (stimulating specific sectors over others) and provoked significant changes in the socio-political organisation of the city. Because of their informal nature, the real benefits of these new forms of enrichment and accumulation are difficult to measure, although very visibly manifested in the present cityscape of Goma. No one can ignore the spectacular expansion of private security companies, real estate, aviation companies or fuel stations for example.

However, we have to be careful in analysing the forms of urban development, urban governance and urban culture that we perceive today as constituting a complete 'break' with the previous state of affairs. Although dynamics of war and state failure have reinforced new power groups, and although old monopolies are replaced by new emerging elites, parts of the original hierarchic structures are reproduced. The current economic profile of the city thus has to be carefully analysed in its historic legacies. What is clear, however, is that processes of informal urbanisation and a context of war have opened the local markets up to new economic specialisations. Rising economic opportunities seem to be increasingly connected to dynamics of globalisation. The growing influence of international humanitarian organisations, the related dynamics of the 'commercialisation of crisis' and the local impact of Goma's significance in transborder trade and especially the trade in natural resources are all pointing to this. Globalisation has provided a vast new range of opportunities for different urban stakeholder groups to operate outside the laws and regulatory systems. Goma's openness, connectedness and 'cosmopolitanism' that is so often underlined by its inhabitants, is indeed central to the city's extraordinary boom and forms a cornerstone in its contemporary urbanity.

Finally, this urbanity, and the forms of urban 'development' that I have described in this chapter, remain characterised by strong discrepancies. Urban governance that is exercised by non-state urban actors such as the international organisations or the wealthy

businessmen, is an individual, fragmented governance. In the following chapter I will further investigate the local effects of this fragmented governance. In this chapter we observed that opportunities generated by a context of crisis have in no way been serving the urban population in general or have never been reinvested in a way that they could lead to an integral urban development. Benefits were circulated within the hands of a very small group, and although Goma's 'barons' today are engaged in urbanisation and urban development, this development is extremely fragmented and unequal. Investments and regulations occur according to this elite's dispersed, personal and temporary visions, objectives and expectations. This becomes for example very visible in the physical urban landscape that develops without any central long-term vision or plan, according to the personal, short-term projects of wealthy economic and political elites and NGOs.

The outcome results in urban 'progression' that lacks any global, integrated vision and that leaves large parts of the urban population in precarious conditions. In this respect, one local observer speaks of a 'suspect urban development', where the alleged 'boom' of Goma is hiding deep urban discrepancies and poverty.

"Est ce que c'est le développement? Je ne sais pas... De toute façon, à mon avis, c'est un développement suspect. (...) Il y a plein des grosses voitures dans cette ville, mais il n'y a pas de routes. Il n'y pas un état! Ce développement c'est le symptôme d'une situation où l'Etat est très faible où presque inexistante. Les riches deviennent encore plus riche sans payer les taxes, et l'Etat devient alors encore plus pauvre. Aussi longtemps que ce développement restera dans l'informel, les avantages ne seront jamais pour l'ensemble de la population" (Interview local observer, Goma, May 26 2009).

6 Goma: City of contest

*"Il y a la guerre au village, mais au même temps, il y a une autre guerre ici en ville.
La guerre entre certaines personnalités qui veulent se voir le plus influent de Goma,
et qui ne supportent pas voir l'autre avancer plus vite que lui. Mais cette guerre
peut aussi être moche, très moche même"*

(Interview staff member Caritas, Goma June 1, 2010).



6.1. Introduction

Goma is a fragmented city. In the absence of a central authority, power and control over the city is strongly contested between different state- and non-state actors, all seeking to dominate the political and socio-economic urban space. The image of Goma as '*ville de contestation*' was emphasised during a focus-group discussion with a group of students, when debating about urban governance. It referred to competition and struggle over economic markets, over particular physical urban spaces and over political power in the city. Later, the same term was used during an interview with a local advocate, when he was explaining about conflicts and rivalries amongst different urban 'elites', and about the disrupted nature of the urban society resulting in local ethnic conflicts.

For this chapter, I will use this image to analyse on the one hand a dispersed urban governance, and on the other hand patterns of (ethnic) fragmentation and conflict in urban society.

The starting point is the emergence of parallel power- and regulatory networks in the absence of a state monopoly, and the proliferation of non-state actors in urban governance. Fragmented power groups all lay competing claims on political, economic and social control over the city, resulting in an urban society that is "disjointed and split by deep antagonisms, where key actors continuously challenge each others' legitimacy to 'govern' the urban space" (Lourenço-Lindell 2007).

I argue that the political, socio-economic and spatial transformation of the urban space generated by dynamics of state failure and violent conflict, not only turned the city into an attractive zone of opportunity, but also in an 'arena of continuous struggle'¹⁸³.

The contested nature of local political power in Goma and in the DRC in general has a clear historical legacy. Competition and fragmentation have been used by Mobutu as a deliberated strategy of 'divide and rule'. The existing patterns of fragmentation in urban governance and ethnic rivalries amongst the urban society thus have their roots in Mobutu's political exploitation of local competition and the instrumentalisation of existing ethnic antagonisms. Dynamics of war, violence and militarisation have obviously intensified local power struggles and have created a context where contest of power and authority can easily result in open (violent) conflict. Regional violent contestation over all resources of power (military, political, economic and social/ideological) have been downscaled to the urban level. The city becomes a micro-scene of the intense struggle between state- and non-state actors to wrest control over each of these sources of power. These struggles further divide urban elites as well as the grass-roots level of urban society.

In this respect, the city can be perceived as a 'field of power' where multiple sets of rules struggle for predominance, corresponding to the way in which Joel S. Migdal¹⁸⁴ has

¹⁸³ Bucyalimwe Mararo: "*Goma (Nord Kivu, RD Congo). Point de mire et de paradoxe*", <http://www.gomafocus.org/index.php?page=pages/histoiredukivu.html> (Last access date 12/09/2008).

¹⁸⁴ In his state-in-society theory, Migdal argues for an alternative vision on the state and its relations with society, by presenting the state as one of multiple other social forces that are in a constant

presented society as a contested arena where dispersed social forces make competing claims over socio-political control. Contestation and negotiation on scarce resources and power are integral elements of everyday urban life in Africa (Simone 2001a). Dispersed and multi-layered governance is a general characteristic of current urban dynamics all over the globe; as cities have become the sites of intense struggles between disparate interests and multiple stakeholders, whose ideas, influences and actions together ultimately shape today's urban realities (Bayat & Biecart 2009: 823). These realities become very clear in the light of neo-liberal urban development, where the dwindling role of state institutions in favour of private initiatives has resulted in a 'multiplex' governance (Amin & Graham 1997) or 'hybrid' governance as I defined in the introduction chapter of this dissertation. For the case of Goma and many other cities in Congo, it is state withdrawal as a result of deep political crisis and violent conflict, instead of the result of neo-liberal urbanisation that has created this hybrid governance situation. In her work on informal urban governance in African cities, Ilda Lourenço-Lindell brings Migdal's idea of a contested society to the urban level. In line with her observations, I argue that for the case of Goma, extensive informalisation has facilitated the development of urban governance that is very unstable and fragmented, encompassing multiple *sites* of power where practices of governance are exercised and contested. In each site, various actors will be involved in creating and contesting localised rules of governance.

In this struggle for social control, no single group will arrive at monopolising power over the urban space, and they are often impelled by conflicting interests, pulling in different directions. I will demonstrate that the Congolese state in Goma is just one force among others trying to impose its dominance. Further, the state is itself internally highly fragmented, so 'the state' in these patterns of contestation can be represented by different, conflictual actors. The seeming preponderance and autonomy of non-state actors does not necessarily imply an irrevocable vanishing of the state. The state remains one among many players in the social and political arena competing over rules, interests and resources (Tull 2003 :431). Regulatory authority over the city of Goma, and control over its political and socio-economic resources, is contested between the Mayor, the provincial governor, businessmen, colonels, civil society groups, international NGOs and multinational enterprises.

This situation inevitably creates a fertile ground for conflict, as attempts to dominate are invariably met with opposition from others also seeking dominance or from those trying to avoid domination (Migdal 2001: 108). I argue in this (and the following) chapter that the specific context of violent conflict has enforced these patterns of contest and has sharpened (ethnic) fault lines in urban society. The two Congolese wars, the CNDP rebellion, the ongoing regional instability have intensified violent struggles over local urban space and resources. As different actors have used war as a means to renegotiate their political and economic power positions, war stimulated fragmentation but also rendered it more violent. It sharpened struggles over who is to determine the legitimate

struggle for power, authority and dominance. Society is presented as a web (instead of a hierarchic structure) where different rule-making loci are trying to exercise their power and control (Migdal 2001).

rule over communities and populations, who appropriates economic surplus, who has access to which recourses and by what 'rules of the game' political and economic competition is to occur in an increasingly globalised context (Raeymaekers et al. 2008: 12). The total fragmentation of the politico-military landscape in North Kivu resulted in a deep social fragmentation on the local level as well, as the cohesion between and within different communities has strongly been affected (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a : 56).

In a first part of this chapter, I describe in more detail the current situation of dispersed urban governance, that not only displays contest between state- and non-state levels but also strong internal fragmentation. I further demonstrate how political and social contest amongst urban elites is affecting the local grass-roots level and is reproduced on the very local level of urban society, by these elites' strategies of social and political mobilisation. We will observe how ethnicity plays a crucial role in this mobilisation strategies and how dynamics of war have impacted on this.

In a second part, I will then highlight two domains in which socio-political contest becomes most outspoken: the local struggles over national, ethnic and urban identity/citizenship and space/land in Goma. On the one hand, socio-political and economic competition along ethnic lines has increasingly been expressed in a struggle between 'allochthones' and 'autochthones', and the questions of citizenship and belonging have become a very sensitive issue. On the other hand, struggle for political and socio-economic dominance over the city has been translated in conflicts over the urban land/space. Focusing on the spatial translation of the significance of Goma as a zone of contest, I will demonstrate that space and the control over the urban landscape has become an important economic and political resource in local power struggles between different involved actors. A situation of uncontrolled and informal urbanisation has further created the possibility for these struggles to result in open conflict.

The final part of this chapter will present a specific case-study to illustrate the described dynamics. I will zoom in on a conflict between two influential families in Goma that got out of hand. Through this conflict, which started as a dispute over land, we can clearly read the different described aspects of economic, socio-political and even military contest over the city.

Data used for this chapter were collected during different fieldwork periods. Information was obtained through interviews with local observers, members of the municipality (*la Mairie*), members of the provincial *Bureau d'Études*, members of the UNDP office and representatives of civil society organisations. On the grass-roots level, I conducted several focus-group discussions (1 with *motards*, 2 with student associations, 1 with market vendors) and did several in depth interviews with some of their 'leaders'. Specific data on land conflicts were gathered at the UNHABITAT and CARITAS offices in Goma, through documentation and several interviews with their staff members. Further, interviews were conducted with the city Mayor, the chefs of the divisions of cadastre and habitat and two independent lawyers. Additional information was found in local newspapers and in master dissertations of local students from both UNIGOM and ULPGL universities.

6.2. Fragmented urban governance

In the former chapter, I demonstrated the increasing role of economic entrepreneurs and international NGOs in political and economic urban governance. The weakness of the bureaucratic state institutions has enabled the development of different locations of local power and authority. '*De jure*' governance has been replaced by '*de facto*' governance, based on negotiated settlements between powerful elites (Jenkins 2009: 104). But often, this governance in Goma seems to be more about contestation than about negotiation. Both the city Mayor, as well as an influential businessman, as well as a high ranked colonel, can all claim their authority when decisions have to be made where or not to construct in the city or which truck to tax or not at the border. Further, the state is losing its legitimacy by the increasing engagement of international non-governmental organisations in urban development initiatives. As such, urban governance is extremely dispersed, encompassing multiple *sites* of power where a broad range of governance practices, that may involve various modes of power, are exercised (Lourenço-Lindell 2002: 1880).

In this context, it is difficult to observe any hierarchical structure in the urban society, but it will be clear that the state is continuously trying to dominate other power structures. The Congolese state remains an important *site* of power in these constellations. However, just as society is fragmented, the institutions that represent the state in Goma, operate themselves in a highly dispersed manner.

6.2.1. A fragmented state

In the 'cacophony' of different social forces engaged in urban governance pulling in different directions, the Congolese state does not form a united 'site' of power. Control over the political urban scene is thus not only contested between state- and non-state actors, it is also contested amongst different power levels within the state itself. In Goma we observe a strong internal competition over political, economical and social urban networks. This competition and contest is especially visible between the provincial and the municipal authorities in Goma. These are the two main levels of the state that are crucial in the implementation of urban policy. Both the city Mayor and the provincial governor are influential personalities in Goma, that are in a continuous struggle for political dominance in the city. Let me give a short example.

Since 2001, Goma has an 'informal' "*marché des téléphones*" where (mostly second-hand) mobile phones are bought and sold. At the head of this market stands the ASVETEL (*Association des Vendeurs et Acheteurs des Téléphones*). Former *cambistes*¹⁸⁵, the leaders of this association decided to switch from the monetary to the telecom sector, convinced by increasing inflation and a booming cell-phone market¹⁸⁶. Since its existence, the market has been 'removed' several times by the municipal authorities who claimed that the

¹⁸⁵ Term referring to 'informal' mobile money changers operating in the streets.

¹⁸⁶ At that time in 2001, many inhabitants of Goma had lost their house and savings during the devastating volcano eruption. In quick need for cash, people came to propose to the *kambistes* to change their phone for a small amount of money, which enabled these latter to re-sell it with profit (group interview market vendors, Goma, June 17 2010).

market occupied the public space 'illegally'. In 2009, it was moved to the old colonial post-office building at the very heart of the city centre. But only a couple of months later, the city Mayor Rachidi ordered ASVETEL to leave this place. The ASVETEL leaders refused, arguing that they had been paying monthly taxes to the municipality. One day the Mayor showed up, accompanied by the police forces to 'chase off' the association and their vendors, and confiscated much of their merchandise. After several days of heavy protest by the association, both in the streets and through the local media, the leaders were received in audience by the provincial governor Paluku. There, the governor assured them that he was 'on their side', by immediately ordering the Mayor to allow the re-establishment of the market, at the same place in the city centre. At first, the Mayor did not accept, arguing he had the authority over this kind of decision-making because of his responsibility in 'urban planning' and especially in the operation '*Goma ville propre*'. But as it was a direct order from the governor himself, he finally could not but obey. The Governor openly expressed his personal support to the market vendors, in the newspapers and on the radio. He argued that not only the association was in possession of all necessary legal documents, it was also 'serving the nation' by engaging for example jobless youngsters. Since that day, the vendors of the market are called the 'friends of Paluku'. One of the ASVETEL members explained about this 'friendship' and the problematic relation with the city Mayor.

"Les autorités municipales et surtout le Maire de la ville nous prend comme des voyous. Il voit notre travail comme une structure illégale. Mais on a tous les papiers qu'il faut, depuis 2005. En plus, c'est lui-même qui nous a donné la permission de construire notre marché ici! (...) Mais maintenant avec ses démolitions, il vise vraiment tout le monde. Mais on est bien reconnu par le gouverneur, qui nous prend au sérieux. Il voit l'ASVETEL comme une sorte de paraétatique. Maintenant qu'il est derrière nous, on est obligé d'avoir toutes les choses en ordre, c'est une obligation envers lui." (Interview vice-president ASVETEL, Goma, June 2010).

By his personal link with the association and his engagement to assist them, the governor tries to gain the support of the urban population. Paluku has never been that popular in Goma as his predecessor Serufuli (Hutu from Rutshuru), and his main base is still Beni instead of Goma. Just as the operation "*Goma ville propre*" is a personal 'prestige initiative' by the city Mayor, the governor thus has his own strategies to get the *Goméens* behind him. By his stroke of expressing his personal support to the association, he is sidelining and muzzling the Mayor.

"Le Maire ne peut dire plus rien. Paluku, c'est Kabila, tu vois. Le Maire n'à donc rien à dire". (Interview member ASVETEL Goma, June 17 2010).

As such, the members of the association will completely deny the Mayor's authority over the city and that of the municipal governance level in general. As one of the leaders further explained:

"Le Maire nous cherche en disant : 'Goma ville propre'. Mais ce n'est pas nous qui créons la saleté dans les rues de Goma. Par contre : c'est nous qui nettoignons! Et

normalement, est ce que ça ne devrait pas être le travail de la Mairie elle-même ? Que ces gens là prennent d'abord leur responsabilité avant de déranger les autres" (Interview vice-président ASVETEL, Goma, June 18 2010).

As 'friends of the governor', in exchange for his support, the association will be loyal to the governor. Concretely this means that during political or other manifestations for example, the ASVETEL will be behind his back, demonstrating in his name or operating as his private '*agents de sécurité*'. Thus, the association becomes another of those numerous 'pressure groups' in civil society, that are being mobilised in political power strategies.

This story is only a small example of the many cases in which the political authority over the urban governance is fought over between the municipal and the provincial level. Decisions from one level are constantly contested by the other and on many occasions, they operate in a parallel matter. The fragmentation of urban governance that results from the engagement of multiple non-state actors, is thus reinforced by the disintegrated manner in which the state itself operates.

6.2.2. Fragmented society

The example of this informal cell phone markets also reveals another dynamic that I want to discuss in this chapter: the mobilisation of the urban grass-roots level in the elites' power strategies in Goma.

The example of the ASVETEL association demonstrated how the political elite to a certain extend 'captures' these grass-roots organisations and uses this connections in its strategies of political dominance over the city. This strategy is not only used at the state level, non-state power groups 'link' themselves to societal groups in the same way. As we have already observed, strategies of authority, control and dominance over the urban scene are always about the access and distribution of political power and economic (read 'patronage'-) resources. In the former chapter, I already pointed out how Goma's '*grand barons*' support social actors in urban society to strengthen their local power basis and enlarge their 'grass-roots' support. In the next chapter, we will observe the same behavior with regards to influent armed actors. In that sense, the urban grass-roots society serves not only as a source of social capital, but of political capital as well. This "capturing" becomes "one of 'modes of power' used by different actors to retain some influence in society and to stay in power (Lourenço-Lindell 2007 :1892).

It clearly creates a situation where social actors in a complex way become connected to politics and as such become inherent parts of a contested governance as described above. Struggles amongst the urban elites are subsequently 'downscaled' to the local level, and dynamics of fragmentation and contestation are being transferred to the urban society. By the mobilisation of social actors in political (and military) competition and power strategies, socio-political and even military conflicts are 'localised', resulting in a dispersed urban social space and a deeply divided society, becoming a zone of contest on its own.

The mobilisation of the social space in local power struggles becomes particularly clear through the instrumentalisation of so-called urban 'pressure groups'. These are formally or informally organised groups that are 'feared' by the authorities for creating disorder

("causer des dégats") in town. Some examples are the student associations, *motards*, *khaddafi's*, 'démob' (demobilised soldiers)¹⁸⁷ and *kajorités* (war veterans or disabled ex-soldiers)¹⁸⁸. They are perceived as potentially threatening forces to the stability in town. So elites have all interest to keep them quiet. The Swahili proverb '*kinywa yenye inakula aisemake* (literally: "the mouth that eats does not speak") clearly illustrates the way in which this takes place.

"Les groupes sociaux comme les associations de femmes, d' étudiants, les motards et les handicapés, ils sont manipulés ouvertement par ceux qui sont au pouvoir à Goma. Ils sont mobilisés par la redistribution forcée. Ces groupes sont vulnérables par leur pauvreté, ils répètent tout simplement le discours de celui qui leur donne de l'argent. (...) Dernièrement, avec les démonstrations, partout on voyait des banderoles 'amis de Mashaluo', 'les jeunes amis de Paluku'. C'est exactement comme dans le temps de Mobutu! Ils dansent pour le chef et lui, il leur donne quelque chose de retour. Ces groupes sociaux sont instrumentalisés ouvertement" (Interview local observer, Goma, April 16 2009).

This quote however illustrates that on the other hand, the mouth DOES speak, and that it says whatever you want it to say. The mobilisation of different grass-roots organisations can lead to deep divisions amongst the urban society. Elites can instrumentalise existing fault lines, and political and economic contest can result in open conflict on the grass-roots level, where different social groups are being 'played out' against each other.

The 'politisation' of organisation of the local student associations at Goma's universities, is a good example of the extent to which dynamics of political contest are dividing urban society and can sometimes result in true conflict. Both Goma's two main universities UNIGOM and ULPGL have well organised associations of student representatives, with a clear hierarchical structure, elected every year. It is no secret that these associations are strongly politicised and that the elections of the students' representatives are a clear political event¹⁸⁹. In such a politicised context, "*la plupart des étudiants deviennent des éminences grises des hommes politiques*"¹⁹⁰. Students are very open about this issue:

"La politique de Nord Kivu commence dans nos universités. C'est ici que les ministres ont tous leurs 'petits' pour influencer la base Goma. Les étudiants sont la porte parole de la politique. (...). Les étudiants sont ainsi dirigés politiquement par leur 'parrains'. Il

¹⁸⁷ Refers to a group of (mostly under aged) former units from the rebel armies that voluntarily demobilised in the campaigns organised by the national- and executed by the provincial government. Initially, these 'démobilisés' were taken care of by the state by appropriated centres, but assistance and follow-up was badly organised, leaving many of them to fend for themselves. The 'démob' often operate in groups or 'unions', harassing the population in order to survive.

¹⁸⁸ Term that stems from the English *casualty* (Lange & Kimanuka 2010: 36)

¹⁸⁹ Several times, political authorities intervened openly during these events. For example in 2002 when "les élections estudiantines, une affaire purement académique, ont interpellé l'intervention des autorités politiques (comité exécutif et Président du RCD) pour apporter une solution à la crise" (Ndibu 2002: 23)

¹⁹⁰ Jonction 02/12/2009 p. 8.

y toujours la main invisible derrière..." (Prince, focus group students UNIGOM, Goma, November 13 2009).

It is no coincidence that students are aimed at in political mobilisation. They constitute one of the most important social pressure groups in Goma's society. Student protests are very common and are often strongly mediated. The leaders of the student associations are very influent, also outside the university, and many of them end up in politics.

Further, university students are not only mobilised by politicians, they can be mobilised as well by armed groups. As such, students do not only get caught in dynamics of political contest, but military contest as well.

"La mobilisation politique de la société se passe partout, dans toutes les universités du pays. Mais à Goma, c'est dans l'extrême. Nous vivons dans une ville de conflits. Goma est une ville militarisée. Ici il peut se passer des choses qui ne se passent pas ailleurs. Les rebelles viennent recruter leur gens chez nous, par exemple, parmi les étudiants" (Eddy, focus group students UNIGOM, Goma, November 13 2009).

Universities become contested spaces in itself, as they are politicised, militarised, and as we will observe in a minute, 'ethnitisised'; *"avec l'influence permanente des leaders politique et tribales, l'université devient une société extrêmement conflictuelle"* (Kasonia Kirarahumu 2002).

In the specific situation of Goma, the context of protracted armed conflict has given this mobilisation strategies a particular dimension. The 'downscaling' of politico-military struggle to the urban level, has resulted in complex relations between political, social, economic and armed forces. The alliances between armed actors and economic entrepreneurs as I described in the former chapter (and on which I will further elaborate in the following chapter) further complicates the situation. When a particular group of students, a traders association or a church in Goma becomes 'friends' with this or that politician or businessmen, it indirectly becomes 'friends' with this or that armed movement, for example. Contestation and conflict enter the grass-roots level, are reproduced on a very local level and result in further fragmentation and division of the urban society.

This fragmentation is most visible along ethnic lines. Contest over political and economic resources in the city is translated in ethnic conflicts. The significance of ethnicity in processes of political mobilisation, contestation and violence in the DRC have been the subject of much debate¹⁹¹. The role of ethnicity in local power struggles and strategies of political mobilisation was institutionalised during the Mobutu-period, yet was enforced by dynamics of war, when ethnicity also became a crucial element in the use of violence. When analysing the local impact of political and socio-economic contest in the city of Goma in a context of violent conflict, the role and significance of ethnicity should thus deserve particular attention.

¹⁹¹ See for example: Clark (2008); Doom & Gorus (2000); Lemarchand (2009); Van Hoyweghen & Vlassenroot (2000); Vlassenroot (2002a)

6.2.3. The power of ethnicity

In recent years, the phenomenon of 'contested cities', as cities characterised by strong ethno-national and religious divisions, has increasingly attracted attention of academics. A prominent author in this research, Scott A. Bollens, has defined 'contested cities' in this sense as spaces "where the very legitimacy of their political structures and their rules of decision-making and governance are strongly contested by ethnic groups who either seek an equal or proportionate share of power or demand group-based autonomy or independence. Socioeconomic cleavages and urban questions become bound with strong political claims; socially 'divided' cities at this juncture become 'polarised' cities" (Bollens 1998: 2). Of course, although political and socio-economic contest sometimes have had quite violent outcomes, Goma cannot be compared to the 'divided' and territorially 'polarised' cities such as Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Belfast or Sarajevo (cases that often serve as illustration in this academic discourse on contested cities)¹⁹². In Goma, internal struggles over the urban space have not to that extent resulted in a violent 'clash' between polarised ethnic or religious competing groups. In Goma, there is no ethnic spatial segregation to that extent. Ethnic rivalry is however a pertinent reality on different levels of urban society in Goma. In this section I will zoom in on the ethnic translation of dynamics of struggle and contest. I am recognising the fact that it is an extremely sensible issue to write about, but at the same time I am however convinced that I can not but integrate it here in this chapter. Ethnicity is and has always been a pertinent feature of Goma's socio-economic and political development.

Political and economic competition is fought out over ethnic lines. This is most clearly visualised in local struggles between the so called 'autochthonous' and 'original' urban inhabitants. Fights between two groups of traders over a specific market place, disputes among politicians of the provincial council or conflicts over the appropriation of urban land are often translated in local discourse (radio, press, 'radio *trottoir*') as conflicts between 'original *Gomatraciens*' and 'non-originals', and subsequently interpreted as such.

Local ethnic struggles are perceived as the most visible translation of the significance of their city as a zone of contest. It is through ethnic fragmentation that the local impact of dynamics of political and socio-economic contestation in a context of armed conflict is clearly revealed.

Both this fragmentation of urban society as well as the fragmented nature of urban governance, are to a certain extent to be traced back to Mobutu's politics of differentiation. I will not go into detail on these politics, that have been well described by many different scholars¹⁹³. A particular moment on which the local impact of Mobutu's divide-and-rule-strategy became clearly visible in Goma was during the democratisation campaign in 1990, as I have mentioned in the historical chapter. The run-up to the National Sovereign Conference (CNS) resulted in the total fragmentation of political

¹⁹² See Bollens (2007).

¹⁹³ See: Bayart (1996); Chabal & Daloz (1999); Doom & Gorus (2000); Reno (1997); Reno (2004); Vlassenroot (2002b); Young & Turner (1985), amongst others.

leadership in Goma and the Kivu's in general. Stanislas Bucyalimwe Mararo has very well described the local impact of the CNS on Goma, and how it "*bousculait et transformait la lutte politique pour la démocratie à Goma en une cacophonie indescriptible*" (Mararo 2002: 157). Through the dynamics of the installed 'geopolitics', ethnic differences were further mobilised and existing patterns of fragmentation and contest were instrumentalised. As is the case with any well organised occupation force, its strength originates not only from the use of violence and co-optation strategies but also from the societal divisions it creates or reinforces. During the second Congolese war, when Goma functioned as the seat of the rebel movement, the RCD leadership has proved to be an adept disciple of president Mobutu and his dividing strategies (Tull 2003: 44). The rebel movement made masterful use of the existing ethnic divisions through their reinforcement.

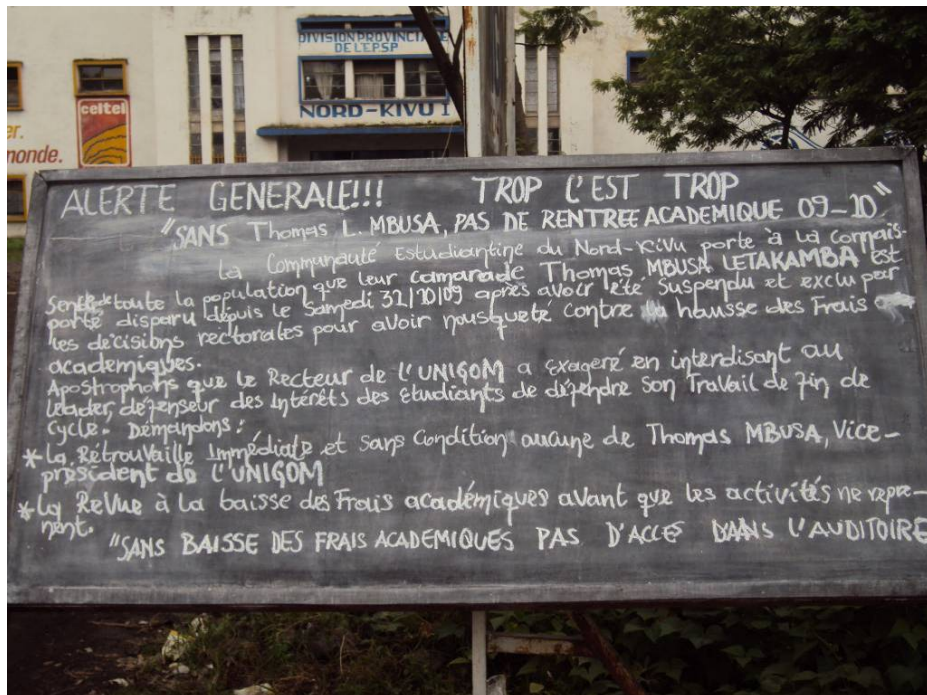
Elections are outstanding moments of the expression of local dynamics of contestation; "*d'une certaine manière, le climat électoral tend à renforcer ou à rendre plus visible les clivages latents ou réels existants entre groupes claniques ou ethniques à Goma*" (République Démocratique du Congo & PNUD 2008: 13). During the democratic elections of 2006, ethnic fragmentation in Goma came again to the surface. Especially the division between Banyarwanda and 'autochthonous' ethnic groups was clearly revealed.

Let us come back to the rivalry between Nande- and Banyarwanda elites to illustrate the ethnic translation of dynamics of political and economic contest in Goma. The competition for power between these two communities is very outspoken on different levels within the urban society, from the provincial and municipal government to economic networks and civil society. Under Mobutu's rule, Rwandophone elites were given increasing political power, but, in the light of the National Sovereign Conference in 1991, were replaced by 'autochthonous' groups. For some parts of these elites, their power was restored during the first and especially the second rebellion. Under the RCD, an almost 'ethnic politics' was pursued, where local politics was increasingly dominated by Hutu, who at a given moment in 2002 occupied almost 70% of the administrative posts in Goma (while Nande and Shi formed a majority in commercial institutions and networks) (Kasonia Kirarahumu 2002). In the historical chapter I already mentioned the link between this 'Hutu-tendency' and the personal political policy of former governor Eugène Serufuli, who held a very strong power position in Goma. He managed to increasingly gain control over political, military and economic urban networks. For the *Rwandophone* elites, the city increasingly became the centre of power and the place where its strategies to gain economic and political control over the rural areas were designed. During that period, Nande were completely excluded from politics (Kasonia Kirarahumu 2002; Mararo 2004)¹⁹⁴. However, since the start of the peace process in July 2003, growing division between Hutu and Tutsi Banyarwanda, attempts from the political centre to expand its authority and local competition from other networks again drastically modified this local power balance. The provincial elections of 2007 further changed the political ethnic representation, as they strongly

¹⁹⁴ At the time of the RCD division, it was perceived as if Hutu held '*le Petit Nord*' and Nande 'their proper province le grand Nord' (Kasonia Kirarahumu 2002).

reduced the political impact of Banyarwanda leaders to the advantage of Nande representatives¹⁹⁵.

This struggle between Nande and Banyarwanda communities, which is a struggle between political and economic elites, we see 'downscaled' to the local urban society by strategies of mobilisation of the grass-roots level as described above. When we retake the example of the student associations, we observe that the transformation of the universities into places of contest, in the first place manifests itself in ethnic terms (République Démocratique du Congo & PNUD 2008). The outcome is an extremely fragmented educational scene, where students are clearly divided in opposed camps, along ethnic lines (Ndibu 2002). Concretely, it is an opposition of the ethnic majority (Hutu for UNIGOM and Nande for ULPGL) against the others. This contest sometimes leads to open conflict. In November 2009, the city of Goma was startled by the disappearance of the UNIGOM student's vice-president Mbusa Letakamba. He disappeared on October the 31th. Since the start of the academic year, Mbusa (Nande) had been contesting the decision taken by the ministry of higher education to raise the inscription fees from 100 USD to 250 USD.



Picture 10: Announcement disappearance of student representative UNIGOM © Karen Büscher 2009

¹⁹⁵ However, ethnic political contestation persists until today. In 2009, when the governor Paluku was suspected of having embezzled the provincial funds, immediately strong voices raised to replace the governor by a Hutu, according to the local political 'tradition' (Jonction No 61, 07/11/2009, p.4).

After having addressed an official letter to the national minister and having organised several protest actions at the university, he was suspended from the university by the UNIGOM rector Gakuru (Hutu from Rutshuru) for '*avoir troublé l'ordre public en portant une tenue militaire*'¹⁹⁶. When Mbusa disappeared a couple of days later, heavy protests paralysed all activities at UNIGOM for over one week. The national police forces were deployed in an attempt to control the ongoing chaos. Rumours quickly circulated suggesting that Mbusa had been kidnapped¹⁹⁷. The first to be suspected was the president of the Student Association Fiston (Hutu) and the story has quickly been interpreted in terms on yet another political struggle between Hutu and Nande, where the Hutu authorities would do anything to eliminate a growing Nande power at the university. Although Mbusa 'reappeared' three weeks later at the MONUSCO base of Goma¹⁹⁸, this events deeply concerned Goma's inhabitants and continued to resonate for a long time.

Another illustration of the mobilising force of ethnicity in local power struggles in the city of Goma is that of the significance of what are called '*mutuelles/mutualités tribales/ethniques*'. These *mutuelles* appeared in the 1990's as an urban phenomenon, when they were the only allowed form of socio-political organisation besides Mobutu's one-party system. Originally, these associations offered social assistance to their members and guaranteed the cultural reproduction of the ethnic community (Vlassenroot 2002b: 146). But during the democratisation process they evolved into important politico-economic mobilisation networks, operating as an alternative for political parties and serving as the popularity basis for local politicians. In this context, ethnicity became the criterion for political participation and gave patronage networks an increased ethnic character. In 1993, these *mutuelles* were directly involved in processes of ethnic mobilisation against the Banyarwanda, who were perceived as a threat to the political and economic position of the 'autochthonous' communities. During the second Congolese war, these associations were reinforced by the installation of the *Barza intercommunautaire* (1998), a platform that aimed at preventing and resolving local inter-ethnic conflicts. The platform eventually collapsed in 2004, at the one hand as the result of the marginalisation of the RCD after the reunification of the country¹⁹⁹, at the other hand because it had not been able to overcome ethnic cleavages in Goma (Clark 2008; Pole Institute 2007).

Today, as political association on an ethnic basis is forbidden, these *mutuelles* continue to operate in Goma under the denominator of cultural associations. The social solidarity amongst their members is reinforced and, to a certain extend, expressed in a strong distrust in the other ethnic communities. The most 'notorious' organisations in Goma are

¹⁹⁶ Polé Institute: "*Disparition d'un étudiant à Goma*" (<http://www.pole-institute.org/site%20web/echos/echo122.htm>, last access date 12/12/2009)

¹⁹⁷ It would not have been the first time for a student representative to be kidnapped. Two years earlier in 2007, Floribert Bwanachui (Hutu from Ruthuru with a very influent position at UNIGOM) had been kidnapped and retrieved tortured and murdered soon after having been employed at the OCC (l'Office Congolais du Contrôle).

¹⁹⁸ He refused to talk about his 'kidnapping', which fuelled the suspicion that the whole story was set up, to put some pressure on the academic authorities.

¹⁹⁹ The Barza tended to ally itself closely with the RCD rebel leadership, fuelling even the perception by some that it was little more than a mouthpiece of the rebel movement (Clark 2008).

Kyaghandanda (Nande), *Bushenge* (Hunde) and *Umugyango* (Hutu). Until present, it is no secret in Goma that they have an important political function. They are often perceived as 'underground' platforms of informal networks of protection and redistribution (Kamate 1998; République Démocratique du Congo & PNUD 2008).

"Derrière la prolifération des mutuelles ethniques à Goma, il y a clairement une logique politique. À partir de ces mutuelles les groupes ethniques organisent l'accès au pouvoir politique. Elles deviennent des parties politiques, avec des contacts dans les diaspora. Ce sont des vrais forces stratégiques qui dirigent la communauté (...) et qui jouent un rôle que les structures politiques ne peuvent pas jouer. Ce que les gens ne trouvent pas dans la politique, ils vont le chercher dans cette 'famille élargie'" (Interview UNDP officer, Goma, 18 April 2009).

It is at the level of these organisations that the different ethnic communities in Goma still 'vote' their 'representatives', that will guarantee their representation in the different political parties or that will operate on the 'sidelines' by financing different political campaigns.

Dynamics of war and the introduction of violence as a main feature in local governance strategies enforced the mobilizing potential of ethnicity, as ethnicity became a crucial basis of local strategies of protection and survival. Fifteen years of armed conflict have drawn upon, manipulated and magnified ethnic tensions within communities (International Refugee Rights & SSRIC 2010) and have consolidated ethnicity as a rigid frame of reference and as a dominant fault line in Goma's urban society. In the local perception of Goma's inhabitants, '*des conflits interethniques*' are a major consequence of violent conflict. It is hard to overestimate the impact of fifteen years of violent conflict on interethnic relationships in Goma. Rather than being the cause or origin of violence, reference to ethnic identity constitutes for both actors of violence and their victims an important element in their survival strategies to cope with the complex context of crisis, contest and violence. Rifts within and between communities have been underscored by the way in which warring parties have manipulated ethnic allegiance (International Refugee Rights & SSRIC 2010: 22). Not only did both FDLR and CNDP openly use ethnicity as a basis for mobilisation, almost every ethnic group of Goma has been represented in one or another of the proliferating militia's. As such:

"Pas seulement les groupes armés représentent les groupes ethniques, mais les différentes ethnies à Goma commencent de plus en plus à représenter des groupes armés. Les Tutsis sont vue comme des CNDP, les Hutus sont tous des FDLR, les Nandes on les prend tous comme des Mayi-Mayi..." (Interview UNDP officer, Goma, April 18 2009).

6.2.4. Navigating the fragmented city

The case of the *mutuelles* is another example of how political and economic contest amongst urban elites is downscaled to the local level of urban society. It is important to note that these associations are not only mobilised by politicians, but also by economic 'big' men and armed groups. For the former, they are an important basis for social capital

and their social integration in town (as described in the former chapter). For the latter, they form an important basis of ideological support and even for recruitment, as will be further explained in the next chapter.

But again, the mobilizing potential of these social associations in political, economic and military contestation lies in the significance of ethnicity in local urban survival strategies. In a context of state failure and political disintegration, ethnically defined association such as the *mutuelles* (but also ethnic militias, for example), have become important social frameworks and the only remaining form of protection. Further, they remain of great importance in the access to informal economic networks and many *Goméens* rely on these type of associations to 'arrange' a job, or to expand their commercial clientele, for example. On the local scale, ethnicity in Goma is an important element in social and economic interaction and in defining someone's position in urban society. But in a context of state weakness, ethnic solidarity is often the most viable option in search for survival and protection; "*ethnicité est une réalité et un processus dynamique et mouvant et offre des espèces de niches écologiques de sécurité et de survie au sein d'entités étatiques fortement affaiblies*" (Pole Institute 2004: 11). The representation of one's ethnic group in town is thus of great importance.

"Par exemple, quand on observe que l'État n'est pas en mesure de protéger les habitants, c'est normale que les Shi vont se mettre ensemble avec leur frères. Les Barega vont faire la même chose, les Hutu aussi, etc. etc. C'est une façon de se protéger face à l'insécurité" (Interview R. Malinga, Goma, August 15 2007).

As such, it is important to bear in mind that besides ethnic manipulation 'from above', there is also an increasing ethnic mobilisation from below, in which ethnicity becomes a crucial part of informal socio-political networks. Ethnic associations thus form a basis of mobilisation for the urban elites, as for the urban inhabitants they form a basis of material advantages. This brings me to a last point that I want to make here, namely that the urban population at the grass-roots level are not merely passive subjects of mobilisation in the elites' power strategies. This population also uses their connections to these elites in their own strategies of survival. For the student associations, market vendors and *motards* for example, their links with the urban political and economic strongmen, are an important asset in their urban livelihoods. As one motor-taxi driver explained:

"On est souvent sollicité pour faire des manifestations en ville. Quand c'est nous qui font du bruit, c'est toute la ville qui doit écouter. Mais on ne fait pas du bruit pour tout le monde! La condition c'est que celui-là sait bien protéger nos intérêts. (...) On n'est pas automatiquement à la disponibilité de quiconque pour le bon. Non, on peut aussi changer du 'camp' selon nos propres intérêts" (Interview Kambale, Goma, May 20 2010).

So these neo-patrimonial relationships of redistribution of resources become a mode of urban governance for the elites, and a coping strategy for the urban inhabitants. These grass-roots organisations have learned how to navigate this informal, dispersed urban governance. They will strategically use these connections to secure and improve their livelihoods. While they are mobilised, they can to a certain extent negotiate these collaboration according to their own benefits. But although



Picture 11: Motor taxi drivers © B. Muniyi 2010

students, motorcycle drivers and market vendors become as such a kind of ‘power brokers’, they do not become fully powerful actors in urban governance on their own.

6.3. Contested identities and contested space

6.3.1. Autochthony and contested citizenship

The ‘ethnitisiation’ of local dynamics of contestation in Goma, has become particularly visible in the question of autochthony and the problematic issue of citizenship. The local struggles over ‘*congoleseness*’ in Goma do not only point at the practical translations of dynamics of contestation and fragmented governance, they also demonstrate how violent conflict has reinforced social urban fault lines.

Since the early 1990’s²⁰⁰, patterns of ethnic contest over socio-political and economic resources as described above, have increasingly been crystallised into a binary opposition between Goma’s ‘autochthonous’ and non-autochthonous’ groups. The discussion on autochthony and ‘indigenusness’ makes judgments about who is a true Congolese (or ‘*originaire*’) and who is a ‘foreigner’ (or ‘*non-originaire*’)²⁰¹ on the basis of first arrival on the Congolese territory. In reality, the definition of “autochthony²⁰²” is however directly linked to ethnic identity, and the division is made in the first place in linguistic terms, opposing all *Rwandophones* (Hutu and Tutsi) against the autochthonous population, which

²⁰⁰ During the National Sovereign Conference, the discourse of autochthony and anti-Rwandan sentiment was sharpened in the context of ‘politics of geographic origins’ (Jackson 2007:487).

²⁰¹ More common terms in English would be ‘native’ and ‘stranger’ (Myers 2011).

²⁰² Literally “from the soil”.

includes all other ethnic groups represented in Goma²⁰³. Discourses on autochthony in Goma -or in a more specific sense 'belonging' to a particular territory- almost always express a clear anti-Banyarwanda sentiment.

Goma is of course not a unique case with regards to this opposition between 'autochthones' and 'foreigners'. In South Kivu, for instance, one could observe a similar crystallisation of the opposition between the 'original inhabitants' (such as the Bavira, Babembe and Bafularo) and the Banyamulenge (Vlassenroot 2002a). Autochthony is an issue that is politically mobilised in the whole of the DRC, Africa, but also Europe, for example. The power of the autochthony claims stems from their supposed 'naturalness' of the relation between people and their 'soil', but in practice they are always contested, ultimately leading to an obsession with denouncing traitors within the group and tensions that all too easily lead to violence (Geschiere & Jackson 2006). Autochthony is a crucial mode of mobilisation to include or exclude people from rights and access, and because it is less specific and more vague than ethnicity, it is even more advantageous and easier to manipulate (Bayart et al. 2001). Pieter Geschiere states that claims on autochthony are characterised by a dubious historic basis, a pliability of the notion and a strong emotional appeal. Autochthony discourses will always make the basic distinction between autochthons and others appear to be obvious. But, in practice any attempt to define the autochthonous community in more concrete terms will give rise to fierce disagreements (Geschiere & Jackson 2006: 27). Geschiere concludes that autochthony turns out to be quite an empty notion in practice, as it eventually only expresses the claim to 'have come first'. It is precisely this emptiness that makes the notion so pliable: autochthonly's "other" can be constantly redefined (Geschiere & Jackson 2006: 28).

Some observers relate the crystallisation between '*originaires*' and '*non originaires*' in Goma to the collapse of the *Barza intercommunautaire* in 2004 on the one hand, -when the 'intercultural mosaic' was reduced to this opposed duality, and on the other hand to the tense politico-military situation; "*Un double tropisme s'observa en son sein, selon que l'on se sentait proche de Kinshasa ou de Kigali, les deux capitales étant perçues comme "faiseurs de rois" à Goma. Cette lutte fondamentalement politique sera malheureusement travestie en dualité ethnique*"²⁰⁴. The two groups of '*originaires*' and '*non-originaires*' are locally referred to as respectively the G7 (Hunde, Nyanga, Tembo, Nande, Kanu, Kumu, Twa) and G2 (Hutu, Tutsi). For the G2 (as well as for the G7) it is impossible to speak of a hegemonic bloc. The relationship between Hutu and Tutsi in Goma has always been a complex one, and periods of 'unity', were often to be interpreted as part of a counter-strategy against the other ethnic groups²⁰⁵. This was for example the case during the RCD period when Goma was under the control of Serufuli, who cultivated the concept of '*Rwandophonie*' as a sense of Rwandan 'togetherness' among Hutu and Tutsi. '*Rwandophonie*' claimed the need of Banyarwanda to defend themselves, because 'facing

²⁰³ The term is sometimes also mobilised and instrumentalised in strategies of exclusion regarding other ethnic groups. In this manner, Barega and Bashi are in some circumstances also perceived as '*non originaires*'.

²⁰⁴ Pole Institute: "*Faux binômes et vraies fractures: premières leçons tirées des élections en RDC*" (<http://www.pole-institute.org/site%20web/echos/echo30.htm>) (Last access date 20/02/2011).

²⁰⁵ Interview staff member Caritas (Goma, June 1 2010); Clark (2008).

exclusion and discrimination'. Anticipating national elections, RCD leaders, many of them Tutsi, used *Rwandophonie* as a political clarion to Hutu, who greatly outnumbered Tutsi in Nord Kivu, to widen their electoral base (Clark 2008 :5). Kigali used this '*Rwandophonie*' as a mobilizing force to maintain control over the province through the mediation of the Banyarwanda elite. The strengthening of the Hutu community (by empowering Serufuli) was part of Kigali's strategy to keep the Banyarwanda united, and to prevent Hutu from joining the Hutu rebels (Jourdan 2005)²⁰⁶. After the RCD's poor electoral results, the Hutu-Tutsi alliance fell apart. Hutu allied with the Kabila's Presidential Majority, and Tutsi who increasingly found themselves in a political insecure situation, allied with Nkunda's CNDP. The issue of citizenship has also led a division amongst the Banyarwanda community. During the Mobutu period, many local Hutu strongly opposed against the promotion of Tutsi as the political and economic elite. Further, through the debates on Congolese nationality law, these Hutu were of the opinion that Tutsi should not be given any nationality rights at all (Vlassenroot 2002b). Until today, the fragmentation of the Banyarwanda community in Goma is a fact, and although obvious on several levels, it is often not recognised by outsiders analysing ethnic relations in this region. Many Hutu in Goma tend to perceive themselves as 'more original' and 'more Congolese' than Tutsi, and thus claim to have more political rights. Also by other inhabitants of Goma, Hutu are perceived as being more Congolese than Tutsi²⁰⁷. The recent ethnic tensions that arise from the 'return' of thousands of Tutsi refugees (cf infra), further put the internal Banyarwanda relationships under pressure. In contrast to Tutsi, Hutu leaders have in Goma have always searched for strategic 'compromise' with regards to their own position between Rwandophone and autochthonous groups. By the local Tutsi population in Goma, they are perceived as being used by both Kinshasa and Kigali's power strategies²⁰⁸.

The ethnic fragmentation of society along 'autochtony' discourses, is nowhere as visible as in the contest over Congolese citizenship. In many countries in Africa, the question of autochthony is directly linked to citizenship issues, dynamics that -especially since the wave of 'democratisation' through the continent- has regularly resulted in ethnic tensions and conflicts (Bayart et al. 2001). Debates over nationality and citizenship of Banyarwanda in Kivu are extremely sensitive and are an important issue in dynamics of political struggle and violent conflict (Doom & Gorus 2000; Jackson 2006b; Mwaka Bwenge 2003; Turner 2007). The legal definition of national identity has been problematic since early independence, and until today remains a source of confusion and conflict. That the search for a definition of national citizenship occurred through the exclusion of specific ethnicities is particularly obvious in North Kivu (Turner 2007). As neither the colonial administration nor the Zairian state were able to determine their legal status, Banyarwanda in Eastern Congo were faced with permanent insecurity as to their political rights (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a: 45). Further, Banyarwanda have repeatedly

²⁰⁶ A double strategy was adopted by Kigali and its local allies: besides offering Hutu favoured administrative positions, many young Banyarwanda, mostly Hutu, were mobilised and enrolled in local militias (Local Defences Forces)(Jourdan 2005: 5).

²⁰⁷ This is of course linked to the echos of the Hamitic hypothesis, which underlines the 'racial difference' between Hutu and Tutsi.

²⁰⁸ Informal talks students UNGOM (Goma, September 2009).

faced allegations of having fraudulently attained Congolese citizenship and have been targets of generalised resentment and xenophobia (Jackson 2006b).

Discussions of the legitimacy of claims on Congolese 'belonging' revolve around ascertaining the date of 'arrival' of *Rwandophones*. Since independence, along different laws that have been passed on the issue of nationality²⁰⁹, the citizenship of Banyarwanda has been "switched on and off as expediency dictated, a key element in the divide-and-rule strategies of political elites" (Jackson 2007: 481). The most recent moment in history when the citizenship issue has been manipulated for political ends was during the national and provincial elections in Goma. In the electoral 'behavior' of Goma's inhabitants one could clearly observe the division between the G2 and G7 camps. This division was even translated in spatial terms, as the western districts (Ndosho, Mugunga, Katindo) mainly voted for the RCD candidate Gacaba, and in the north-eastern parts of the city (Majengo, Mabanga, Birere) votes went to a radical anti-Banyarwanda activist Valérien Kenda Kenda²¹⁰.

Further, it has always played a central role in the violent conflict. Defining who is, and who decides who is legitimately Congolese remains at the heart of the ongoing violence (International Refugee Rights & SSRIC 2010: 12).

In the city of Goma, these issues of autochthony and contested nationality determine the access to economic networks, administrative posts, jobs, membership of the church or school etc. It reflects the hardening of ethnic lines into a binary opposition, a situation in which *Goméens* feel the constant need to stress their *Congolité* by referring to their 'autochthonous' identity. Notions of identity have become in the first place a matter of exclusion, where inhabitants tend to express their 'belonging' in contrast to 'outsiders'. As I will demonstrate further in this dissertation, the need to distinguish between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' is also strongly linked to the border position of the city and the constant transborder mobility between Congo and Rwanda. In Goma, one perceives both Hutu and Tutsi as being 'transborder' ethnic groups, which makes it difficult to distinguish a Congolese from a Rwandan. Anti-Rwandan sentiments in Goma have been fostered by violent conflict and Rwandan implication in supporting the rebel movements. For example, Banyarwanda in Goma are not only perceived by others as '*faux Congolais*', but also as 'spies', 'infiltrators', 'betrayers' etc. This has deepened the separation between Banyarwanda and '*originaires*' at different levels of urban society. Mistrust is reciprocal and omnipresent, fuelled by censuses that have been carried out by local administrators on different occasions, to identify 'real' from 'false' Congolese in Goma and in order to identify 'infiltrators'.

²⁰⁹ The nationality law was adjusted several times since independence, shifting the required 'date of arrival in Congolese territory'. According to Stephen Jackson, "shifting of the cut-off date served as a political mechanism either for enlarging or constricting the pool of those who could avail of nationality" (Jackson 2007: 486).

²¹⁰ Onesphore Sematumba, *Election des députés provinciaux au Nord-Kivu: Encore une occasion ratée?*, <http://www.pole-institute.org/site%20web/echos/echo39.htm> (last access date 20/03/08).

Finally, on an even more local level, we observe patterns of contest over urban citizenship²¹¹. As is the case on the national level, citizenship on the urban level is determined by the relation between identity, space, and access to power (Imrie et al. 1996; McCann 2002). As we have mentioned in the historical chapter, as the issue of 'first arrival' in Goma is not unclear. In this '*ville carrefour*' where people from different directions have settled and the relationship between place and ethnic identity is unclear, several ethnic groups claim the 'dominance' over town, in economic, administrative and political terms. Both Goma's 'major' ethnic communities (Nande and Hutu) on the one hand claim the city 'to be theirs', and on the other hand accuse the other group from being '*non originaire*'. However, urban citizenship is more than a matter of 'origins', it has also to do with a lived sense of belonging. Urban citizenship implies many different aspects of the relationship between the city and its inhabitants. In the following chapters I will elaborate further on this relationship and on the ways in which people shape their identity within the city and by extension the identities of the city itself. I will demonstrate for example how dynamics of conflict, transborder migration and forced displacement have impacted on the formation, transformation and contestation of urban identities.

In Goma -and in Nord Kivu in general-, the two domains in which patterns of socio-political and military contest are the most articulated, are identity and land (Kasonia Kirarahumu 2002). Having discussed the first one, we will now pass on to the second to see what are its implications on the urban level.

6.3.2. Landscapes of socio-political power: conflicts over the urban space

Contest over political, military and economic power is often translated in conflicts over land. This is the case in Goma as it is for Eastern Congo in general. The particular urban context of fast and uncontrolled informal urbanisation creates new struggles for survival as well as new patterns of competition over resources and control of space (Locatelli & Nugent 2009). Further, the massive influx of displaced people that arrived in Goma fleeing the violence and fighting in their villages, has strongly enforced conflicts and contested claims over the urban space.

Many studies have been carried out to analyse the mutual relationships between violent conflict and contested claims on land in Eastern Congo (Clark 2007; Clark 2008; Van Acker 2005; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a). "*Conflits fonciers*" and the issue of access to land are at the heart of the ongoing violence in the Kivu provinces. Although most often interpreted as a rural phenomenon, it is of crucial importance in the city of Goma as well. When in the rural context the emphasis is on land, in the city this will be on 'space', and as I will demonstrate, just as rural land, urban space is an important resource of socio-political and economic power. Currently there is a spectacular increase of conflicts over private and public space in Goma, yet it does not have received much attention of the

²¹¹ The city is often regarded as an important scale of citizenship; "if one is not a citizen of the local city, where is it that one will exercise one's local but also national and possible multinational, international if not global rights? (Bouillon 2002).

national and international research- and development organisations based in the city²¹². At the city's tribunal, '*conflits fonciers*' steadily occupy the first place on the list of juridical cases. There are different reasons lying at the basis of these conflicts. One is the ambiguous nature²¹³ and the poor local knowledge of the law on land property; "*la loi n'a jamais été systématiquement vulgarisée par le pouvoir public. C'est notamment à cause de son ignorance par bien de citoyens et même par certaines autorités administratives et coutumières que des conflits fonciers aux conséquences multiples et déplorables naissent et se développent*" (CARITAS Goma 2010: 1). Another, crucial basis of urban land conflicts is the fragmentation and the malfunctioning of the public services regulating the access and use of urban land (namely the services of *cadastre, plan, et habitat*). Processes of state weakness and informalisation have resulted in a situation where these services increasingly operate as private enterprises and where there is no coherence at all between them. This has created a situation where cadastre can grant a buyer the ownership of a plot that has already another legal owner. This illegal speculation and resale is very common in Goma²¹⁴. When both owners dispose legal papers, they will go to court. And with a juridical system that is deeply corrupt, those who have more money to bribe the court, will win the case.

"On écouterait celui qui a de l'argent, pas celui qui est en droit. Ici il n'y a pas la force de la loi. C'est la loi de la force. Le problème c'est la soif de l'argent de la part des autorités. Le cadastre et l'habitat sont devenu les concurrents, dans la recherche malhonnête de l'argent" (Interview staff member CARITAS, Goma, June 1 2010).

Because of this situation of '*la loi de la force*', urban land conflicts are often social conflicts between the powerful and the less powerful.

"A cause du trafic d'influence, le pauvre perd toujours. Un autre problème c'est que ce pauvre là n'est souvent pas bien au courant de ce que la loi dit. Il peut ne pas disposer de tous les papiers qu'il faut. Il arrive même qu'il ne sait pas lire ces papiers! Là c'est clair qu'il n'aura pas la moindre chance devant le tribunal" (Interview staff member CARITAS, Goma, June 1 2010).

²¹² For example, of all international organisations working on '*conflits fonciers*' in Goma in 2010, not a single one had integrated an urban dimension in its programs.

²¹³ Referring to the law of 1973 who foresees the 'cohabitation' of two legal systems; one based on the juridical principals, the other on traditional practices ('*pratiques coutumières ancestrales*'). On the one hand, the Mwami is the tenant of communal land, on which he has the authority to distribute it to the population. On the other hand, the law assigns all power to the administrative authorities that can confiscate the land, being property of the state.

²¹⁴ In order to prevent the 'double' selling of their property, land owners in Goma announce the message "*cette parcelle n'est pas à vendre*" on their plot on which they have not yet constructed. Or they diffuse it on the radio or in churches. Because they know that if their terrain has been sold to someone rich or influent, they will have no chance to win the trial. Even public terrains can become the subject of speculation and illegal sale, as was the case for a sports terrain in Keshero (Désiré Bigega "*Nord-Kivu: des pancartes pour dissuader les spéculations foncières*"; Syfia Grands Lacs, 08/04/2011).

The increasing conflicts over the urban space also have to be contextualised in a situation of a fast urban growth and the informal procedures of land allocation. In Goma's peripheral districts, where the city by its expansion 'incorporates' rural territory, one observes specific cases of land conflicts. In this 'rurban' areas, there is often a conflict of laws, as it is in this areas that '*ville*' and '*chefferie*', and thus '*la loi civile/officialle*' and '*la loi coutumier*' come together. For example, where the city borders with the '*Bukumu*' *chefferie*, this 'border' is very unclear. Parts of the inhabitants are registered at the bureau of the local *chef du quartier*, others at the *bureau de chefferie*. In this situation of a 'double administration', we thus observe a contest between the so-called 'official' or 'modern' state institutions and the 'traditional' systems of regulation, which we can also observe on different other levels in urban society. Relationships between Goma's municipal authorities and the '*chef coutumiers*' of the surrounding areas are very tense, as the state often 're-appropriates' large plots of land without compensation²¹⁵. These cases of dual territorial legitimacy and hybrid institutions is not unique for Goma and is, according to some, a phenomenon that increasingly creates local urban conflicts (Abdoul 2002; Jenkins 2009). As Theodore Trefon also observed for the case of Kinshasa: "The potential for conflict in peri-urban areas results from this hybrid political system, which is further exacerbated by the ambiguity that surrounds procedures" (Trefon 2009a: 22).

It has become clear that conflicts over land and property in Goma often go far beyond a mere conflict of papers.

"Avant c'était surtout un conflit de textes. Mais aujourd'hui c'est devenu un conflit réel, des fois même violent. Et au lieu de condamner l'Etat, on va condamner l'autre. A cause de l'ignorance de la population, l'Etat s'en sort toujours et crée au même temps des conflits entres les gens, entres les familles" (Interview local observer, Goma, May 12 2010).

Instead of addressing the state as the main responsible for this kind of property issues, the conflict becomes a personal issue.

In Goma, occupation and possession of space/land has an important psychological and social value and is a crucial element in one's identity, esteem and position in society. Authority, prosperity and regards of someone is reflected in the possession of land, (or, in the urban context, real estate).

"Avoir un chez soi, être propriétaire de sa propre maison, c'est très important ici à Goma. C'est notre mentalité, ça fait partie de notre identité. C'est plus que une question de possession. C'est l'identification avec la terre" (Interview engineer of the Division de l'Urbanisme et Habitat, Goma, February 8 2008).

²¹⁵ And even though in Goma, as a '*centre extra-coutumier*' these 'traditional chiefs' (Bami) have no legal authority, in a situation of fast and uncontrolled urban expansion, they still claim their political power. This is especially the case where the city is incorporating land of the Bukumu *chefferie* (Muhindo Sibamwenda 2008).

However, the urge to possess one's own space or house in town is a rather recent phenomenon, that is directly linked to the recent evolution of the city.

"C'est venu aussi avec lehaussement des prix des parcelles. Aujourd'hui on veut à tout prix avoir un chez soi. Dès le moment qu'on peut dire 'hapa ni kwangu', c'est l'aspect du respect, et de l'honneur. Mais au fait ce n'est pas logique, si les gens étaient réalistes, ils sauraient que la ville de Goma n'est pas un endroit idéal pour investir, avec le volcan, avec la guerre, il y a beaucoup de risques. C'est une ville où personne est sûr du lendemain. Mais c'est devenu une logique : comment est-ce qu'on peut par exemple avoir une voiture si on n'a pas sa propre maison?" (Interview local observer, Goma, May 12, 2010).

We already mentioned how the possession of real estate in Goma has become a significant economic market and an important means of enrichment. In the light of rapid demographic growth and high demands for accommodation, prices for plots and houses have shoot up in the past five years, and real estate has become big business in Goma.

I want to say some more words on the ways in which dispersed claims on urban governance and control and power over the city (as described above) are translated in contested claims on urban space²¹⁶. In other words, I want to zoom in a little bit on the 'territorialisation' of fragmented claims made by different state and non-state groups.

First of all, let us recall the occupation of the urban space as a power strategy by influent groups of urban society. I described the engagement of the '*grand barons de Goma*' in urbanisation and their manipulation of urban infrastructure to confirm their status and wealth. If one circulates through the city, *Goméens* can tell you exactly which buildings belong to which colonel, or which *quartiers* belongs to which big men etc. In the logic of the 'geographies of power', the urban space has become a source of power, control and domination. It is precisely in this light that the contest between different 'loci of power' that represent the fragmented urban scene is being spatially translated. So struggles over the urban space as mentioned above are not only a matter of social conflict between Goma's rich and poor or between the '*gros propriétaires*' and the '*petits propriétaires*', they are also a matter of conflict between different power groups. In a context of a highly fragmented urban scene where different actors strive for dominance and control, "the focus is not so much on how place is brought under the singular control of a particular force, but how place is linked to a plurality of allegiances and opportunities" (Simone 2002b: 36). The increasing power of non-state actors over the public authorities in the city is clearly reflected in the occupation of space. This has not only resulted in the reduction of the public space; in the absence of formal urban planning, the urban space has been appropriated anarchically by both elites and urban inhabitants on the grass-roots level, and has become increasingly privatised.

²¹⁶ Importance of space in citizenship. Citizenship: about rights & place. Place: sites through which identity politics, citizenship, and alternative political agendas are articulated and disputed (Mitchell, 1995, cited in McCann (2002: 77). "the right to the city [involves] the right to claim presence in the city, to wrest the use of the city from privileged new masters and democratize its spaces" (Isin, 2000, p. 14; Lefebvre, 1996a, Ch. 15; 1996b, pp. 194–196).

Here, 'appropriation' appears in the sense of 'use', rather than ownership. Although falling outside the scope of this study, it is important to refer to the ways in which different groups in Goma (such as informal vendors, churches, gangs, prostitutes, etc.) developed strategies of occupying space as part of a process of 'territorialisation' of their livelihoods. At different occasions, the state has tried to impose its power and restore its authority by reclaiming the urban space that had been 'illegally' occupied by both the population and influential non-state elites (businessmen, former leaderships of the RCD, high ranked officers of the army, etc). Since April 2010, the city Mayor Roger Rachidi has started the operation "*Goma ville propre*" that aims at the demolition of '*des constructions anarchiques*' in town, especially those occupying public spaces²¹⁷. He tends to define this operation as follows:

"On veut remettre l'ordre dans cette ville. On va mettre fin à l'occupation illégale et anarchique, par démolir toute construction qui n'est pas conforme aux normes urbanistiques, par libérer les abords du Lac Kivu et par récupérer la propriété de l'Etat" (Interview city Mayor, Goma, June 14 2010).

This can be read as a 'comeback' of the state in the re-initiating of an organised urban planning and an attempt by the state to regain its responsibilities and to re-establish its authority over the urban space. However, the Mayor has met fierce resistance and opposition to his actions. Not only from the hundreds of people whose houses have been demolished without compensation (many of them actually possessing legal papers!), but also from



Picture 12: *Goma ville propre* in action © B. Muniyi 2010

within the provincial government. Again, the different levels of state power clearly operate as conflicting autonomous institutions. Although the Mayor himself refers to the implementation of decentralisation to justify his authority, by the provincial government, the Mayor is blamed for acting in a personal manner, by taking this opportunity to enforce his personal authority and to enrich himself with the bribes paid by owners to prevent their house being slashed down. Besides, *Goméens* start to wonder about what are the 'ultimate goals' behind this operation? The fact that some groups are more targeted than others by the demolitions, fuels the suspicion amongst the population of a 'hidden

²¹⁷ The operation is for example linked to a program of retracing and enlarging the main roads in the city, preparing them for the planned 'restoration' of 180 km of roads that will be carried out by the European Commission.

agenda'. Although he has always denied any form of 'preferable agreement'²¹⁸, it was clear from the beginning that those who had the means and power could easily manipulate the Mayor (as was the case for different '*grands barons*')²¹⁹. Some read in his actions a strategy to marginalise the 'old' urban elites (at the one hand Banyarwanda favored during the Mobutu period when they were allocated huge domains in Goma, and on the other hand the former RCD leadership who occupied large plots on the shores of the Lake Kivu). During an interview, the Mayor himself stated:

"Ce sont ceux qui avaient le pouvoir avant, qui ont créé et qui créent toujours le désordre à Goma. Les Banyarwanda comme X et X pouvaient faire ce qu'ils voulaient pour s'imposer. Aujourd'hui, les situations pareilles ça doit stopper" (Interview city Mayor, Goma, June 14 2010).

In the particular context of Goma it may be no surprise that people will interpret the Mayor's action in terms of 'ethnic preference' or arrangements, or in terms of a struggle between '*anciens*' and '*nouveaux riches*', especially since this latter appear to be his 'friends'²²⁰. Either way, what becomes evident, is that in the control over urban space, the state tries, but fails to impose its domination, neither in social and political, nor in geographic terms. This failure is not only due to the power of influent non-state actors, but also to the disintegration of the state infrastructure. In acting in an extremely fragmented way, the state is not able to impose itself, as illustrated by the following quote:

"Les gens qui aujourd'hui voient leurs maisons détruites, ont obtenu les papiers chez la division de Cadastre. Imagines toi, un jour l'Etat te donne la permission de construire, l'autre jour une autre forme de l'Etat vient dire que cette construction est illégale. Si le maire aujourd'hui te donne l'autorisation de construire de nouveau dans un autre quartier, par exemple, comment être sûr que demain il ne viendra pas encore un autre forme de l'Etat pour démolir de nouveau ?" (Interview staff member CARITAS, June 1, 2010).

In this way, the manner in which the state operates to regain control over the city as a contested space, does not seem to strengthen the image of the state²²¹. Further, similar

²¹⁸ To prove his 'impartiality' he even demolished the house of his own father, and a number of municipal government offices.

²¹⁹ The owners of a famous restaurant in the city center explained to me that after the Mayor imposed the demolishment of part of their establishment, they called a familiar influent colonel and went to intimidate the Mayor, until he accepted the withdrawal of his orders after they bribed him.

²²⁰ In an interview, the Mayor declared that Goma's three main '*grand barons*' were assisting him in the 'cinq chantiers de l'Etat', and he referred to them as '*mes enfants*' (interview city Mayor, June 14, 2010)

²²¹ Another element that was strongly undermining the credibility of the state in this operation was the 'informal' way in which the Mayor made himself visible in town. While at 'work', he was steadily accompanied by a group of 'antigang', an informal 'self-defense' group, armed with sticks and clubs. *"Ce sont des voyous, qui n'ont aucune légalité. Pour cette occasion, si le Maire voudrait réellement montrer l'autorité de l'État, il devrait être accompagné par la police nationale au lieu de s'entourer*

state interventions will not stop or prevent conflicts over urban land. On the contrary, they will instead create new conflicts. This will become clear in the following case study.

6.4. The Ngezayo case

In the afternoon of March 13, 2008, Albert Prigogine Ngezayo was killed near his house with several bullets, fired from a 4x4 jeep. This happened at the city centre of Goma, in what used to be one of the most 'secured' areas in town -referred to as '*le triangle de sécurité*'-, between the governor's private residence, the *Parquet de la République* and the *Bureau des Renseignements Militaires*. A witness of the murder was also killed on the spot. Albert Prigogine, locally called '*le sheriff de Goma*', was a wealthy, respected and well known personality in Goma, son of a Congolese mother (Tutsi) and a Belgian father. He was the owner of a hotel in town and a tour operator, but was mainly known for his activism in nature conservation. Quickly after the murder, the Ngezayo family, disillusioned by the slack reactions of the local justice, decided to conduct their own investigation, directed by a Belgian lawyer. One year and a couple of months later, in July 2009, the Ngezayo family organised a press conference in Kinshasa and Goma, where the recorded testimony of '*témoign clé Alex*' (an anonymous ex CNDP officer of the Congolese army) was diffused. In this testimony, which was contested a couple of months later when turned out that the witness was unable to recognise one of the suspects he had pointed himself, three principal actors were indicated as the suspected 'brain' behind the murder. The first one is Goma's 'number one' businessman in town, the second one a colonel of the Congolese army and also brother-in-law of the former, and thirdly the provincial governor Paluku. Particularly the accusation of the first one, Goma's well known *homme d'affaires*, caused a shockwave amongst the public opinion of Goma, as he enjoys great popularity amongst Goma's inhabitants.

However, his name did not appear as a complete surprise in this case. For several years, the Ngezayo family had been in juridical conflict with this businessman, about a plot of land along the shores of the Kivu lake, on which the latter had constructed a luxurious hotel. Just before he was murdered, Prigogine Ngezayo had won the trial that recognised him as the authorised owner of this plot. It was no surprise then, that the murder had mainly been interpreted in terms of a *conflit foncier* that ran out of control²²². Prigogine Ngezayo (and the Ngezayo family in general) is one of the big landlords and real estate owners in Goma. Since the '70, under the name of their tour operator *Safari Lodge*, the Ngezayo family is considering itself the legal owner of 13 hectares of land, stretching along the shores of the lake. But this land, "*où le mètre carré de terrain à bâtir vaut 100 dollars*"²²³, is literally highly contested ground. At the time of the murder, and until

par les antigang. Le Maire se dit mettre fin à l'anarchie, mais ainsi, il opère lui-même dans l'anarchie" (Interview local observer, Goma, June 26 2010).

²²² Radio Okapi "Goma: conflit foncier, 300 familles s'opposent à l'Hôtel Karibu" (10/07/2009) <http://radiookapi.net/sans-categorie/2009/07/10/goma-conflit-foncier-300-familles-sopposent-a%20a0-lhotel-karibu/>. Colette Braeckman "Congo: un mobil foncier derrière le meurtre de Ngezayo", *Le soir* (12/10/2009).

²²³ Colette Braeckman "Congo: un mobil foncier derrière le meurtre de Ngezayo", *Le soir* (12/10/2009).

present, the Ngezayo family is engaged in numerous juridical cases of that kind, and lives in continuous conflict with segments of the local population²²⁴. Firstly, parts of the concerned land are contested between the Ngezayo family and the local population of the district, claiming to be the 'autochthonous' population and the authorised owners of this land. These '*autochthones de Keshero*', have been illegally squatting the land for over a long time, claiming it to be '*propriété coutumière*'. For over ten years now, the Ngezayo family lives in juridical conflict with this population about their request for compensation²²⁵. Secondly, the land at the borders of the lake is contested between the Ngezayo family and a group of wealthy businessman, who are eager to invest in this real estate goldmine. Thirdly, the land is also contested between the Ngezayo family and the Congolese state. On the one hand the state is trying to re-claim part of the land in the context of the operation '*Goma ville propre*', on the other hand, the Ngezayo family is re-claiming a large strip of 'their land' that has been occupied by the state service RVA (*Régie des Voies Aériennes*).

The Ngezayo case clearly illustrates the different patterns of contest that I have highlighted in this chapter. It is an example of an intense struggle on the very local level over socio-spatial domination in Goma, that reflects i) the contested notion of autochthony, ii), the contest between old and new elites, iii) the struggle between the state and influent non-state actors.

6.4.1. Contested autochthony

Although their long-standing presence in the city, the Ngezayo family, just like other families with a (Congolese or not-) Tutsi background, is for some parts of Goma's population perceived as a *non-originaire* family. The aspect of '*métissage*', amplifies this perception. However, the family has always firmly claimed their 'Congoleseness'. Albert Prigogine's brother, Victor Ngezayo, had even adopted a Nande name *Kambale*. In Beni and Butembo, where he had several factories, people often did not even know that he was Tutsi²²⁶. Right after the murder, there was confusion over whether it would have been him, instead of his brother, that was targeted to be killed. Victor Ngezayo Kambale is, besides businessman, also engaged in local politics. He created the *Mouvement des Patriotes Congolais* (MPC)²²⁷ and was candidate-governor of Nord-Kivu during the elections. During the military campaign of the CNDP, Victor Ngezayo (just like all other wealthy members of the Tutsi-community in town) was accused of 'financing' Nkunda's rebellion. After his brother was murdered, Victor Ngezayo and his family settled in Gisenyi (Rwanda), for security reasons. For those suspecting the Ngezayo family of their 'dubious loyalty', this 'relocation' confirmed of course their beliefs. In the light of the land dispute the Ngezayo family is involved in, this 'autochthony' issue is obviously playing against

²²⁴ Some of these conflicts date back from quite some time ago; even an report of 1993 refers to the Ngezayo family in the case of a conflit parcellaire (Mairie de Goma 1994: 57).

²²⁵ Interview member of the Ngezayo Family (Goma, July 20 2007).

²²⁶ Informal talks Birere commerçants (Goma, November 29 2009).

²²⁷ A political party, supported by the Congolese Tutsi population, opposing the RCD by denouncing the latter being the mere puppet of Kigali. Yet, his conflict with the RCD was not only of a political nature, as Ngezayo was also in conflict with them over mining businesses (Turner 2007).

them. The simple fact that they are Tutsi, make them very 'unpopular' amongst the urban population, who perceives them as the 'dominating minority wanting to impose themselves on the locals'. The fact that *Goméens* are easily mobilised by this kind of discourse became clear when the 'autochthonous' population of Keshero was stirred up against Ngezayo (who wanted to chase their illegal settlements from his land) by some local politicians who would have suggested that 'those Tutsi had illegally obtained that land'²²⁸.

6.4.2. Struggles between 'old' and 'new' urban elites

The Ngezayo family belongs to what is perceived in Goma as the '*anciens riches*', an elite that acquired its wealth during the Mobutu period. Before the war, the Ngezayo's were one of Goma's richest families in Goma, "with a business empire spanning real estate, coffee plantations, hotels and mining"²²⁹. The family has always been very open about the good and even familiar relationship between Mobutu and their 'parents'. After Mobutu left in 1997, he would have left large parts of his property to the Ngezayo's, leaving the inhabitants of Goma with the belief that they, -just like the other *anciens riches*- have inherited most of their land. In contrast, the 'new elites' ('*nouveaux riches*') of Goma, as I described them in the former chapter, are locally believed to all have 'started from zero' to built up their wealth, without having inherited anything. This local perception among Goma's inhabitants is very strong, as many *Goméens* tend to identify more with the latter group, whom they perceive as '*vrais enfants de l'Est*'.

As we already mentioned, the contest between the 'old' and 'new' elites in Goma is reflected on different levels (economic sectors, occupation of space, popularity strategies etc.), and one can observe how the '*anciens riches*' are increasingly losing their power and status in favor of the others.

The Ngezayo family is a clear example of the old elite that is increasingly being marginalised and is rapidly losing its support and respect by the local population. In this sense, the murder of Albert Prigogine Ngezayo, and the accusation of Goma's number one businessman (as an important frontman of those '*nouveaux riches*'), has not only locally been interpreted as a property dispute between two 'grands barons', but also as a attempt by the 'new elites', to take 'revenge', and to 'take over the city'. The struggle between these two groups is visibly translated in the occupation and manipulation of urban landscape. In the competition between the two concerned families, they both invested in luxurious hotels near the lake, they both constructed a private harbour, etc. But their strategies of '*kuonyesha*' are also visible on many other levels, and it looks as if

²²⁸ Interview member of the Ngezayo family, (Goma, July 20, 2007); Radio Okapi "Goma : conflit foncier, 300 familles s'opposent à l'Hôtel Karibu" (10/07/2009) <http://radiookapi.net/sans-categorie/2009/07/10/goma-conflit-foncier-300-familles-sopposent-a%c2%a0lhotel-karibu/> (last access date 01/11/2011).

²²⁹ Jason Stears, 'Goma murder History' (22/10/2009) <http://congosiasa.blogspot.com/2009/10/goma-murder-mystery.html> (last access date 01/11/2011)

members of both families (being practically direct neighbours), are in constant competition²³⁰.

The contest between the Ngezayo family and different groups of the population over urban land has recently flared up due to the '*operation Goma ville propre*'. Tensions have raised, especially since the events of March 2011, when thirteen families have been chased out of their homes in the middle of the night by ex-CNDP soldiers, who were instructed and paid by the Ngezayo's. These families were occupying a terrain in the city referred to as '*camp Dumez*', which 'ownership' is contested between the *Régie des Voies Aériennes de Goma* (RVA/Goma) and *Safari Lodge* (the tourist company owned by the Ngezayo family), both parties are claiming their property rights, both disposing of the conditional legal papers. The events have created much stress and chaos in the streets of Goma. The RVA went on strike, causing major problems for the air traffic at Goma airport. Tension amongst urban inhabitants raised²³¹. People were shocked about the fact that one is able to hire soldiers to chase people from their homes by force during a nocturnal operation, while the governor is looking the other way. People did not expect that these kinds of events could take place in the city. Further, people were astonished by the inertia of the local authorities. It was by the order of the president Kabila himself on March 25, 2011 that the military withdrew from the site. The lack of action by the provincial government is locally explained in several ways: firstly, the government is too divided on the issue to act in an effective way; secondly, as governor Paluku was suspected himself of conspiracy in the murder on Albert Prigogine, he does not want to have more trouble with the Ngezayo family; thirdly, rumours are circulating in Goma that the governor has been bribed by the Ngezayo family. The events were also interpreted as an 'answer' of the Ngezayo family to the 'intimidations' of the city Mayor, who is reclaiming the 'state's property' and who wants to make an end to the "tolerated disorder installed by *these anciens riches*" by re-confiscating parts of their lands²³².

These events reveal how state authority is not only internally fragmented but also challenged by non-state actors, especially in case the influential big men act in 'collaboration' with armed actors. The Ngezayo family has never invested in 'social capital' and strategies of social integration in the city as the other businessman, who is incredibly popular in Goma. When this latter was accused of complicity in the murder, not only did many *Goméens* not at all believe the man could effectively be guilty, his popularity in town seemed to put him in an almost 'untouchable' position, as people wondered which judge

²³⁰ This results in a quite odd situation where the two families (and especially the eldest sons of both sides) are continuously competing and showing off against each other, showing up in the city center in their most luxurious cars, or crossing each other on the Lake Kivu, cruising in their latest models of speed boats.

²³¹ "Aujourd'hui cette histoire devient un problème très dangereux pour la cohésion pour une population fragilisée par des conflits inter ethnique" (Alain Wandimoyi: «La ville de Goma victime d'une cacophonie judiciaire, attention danger» 06/04/2011 <http://alainwandimoyi.blogspot.com/2011/04/la-ville-de-goma-victime-dune-cacophonie-judiciaire-attention-danger.html> (last access date 01/11/2011))

²³² Interview city Mayor (Goma, June 14 2010).

in town would dare to declare this man guilty²³³. The Ngezayo family tried to ruin the popularity of this man and to convince Goma's inhabitants of his guilt by using the local media²³⁴. After having organised the 'famous' press conference, the Ngezayo family claimed that the present journalist would have been put under pressure to not publish any information that had been diffused. However, as the news was already published the same day and appeared on every local radio station and in every newspaper, many assumed that those journalists had instead been bribed by the Ngezayo family to cite the name of the popular businessman.

Further, the case also demonstrates how dynamics of violence and militarisation have impacted on local dynamics of contestation. The intervention of the ex-CNDP soldiers by the order of the Ngezayo family, for many confirmed the close connection between this family and the rebel movement of Bosco Ntaganda. The 'connection' or 'collaboration' between CNDP and the wealthy Congolese Tutsi in Goma is locally accepted as a mere fact. The relations between CNDP and the Ngezayo family became more thigh after the murder of Albert Prigogine. The family members circulate in town under the personal protection of armed (CNDP) guards and the contacts with high ranked CNDP colonels are no secret. As such, instead of investing in local popularity to strengthen their power basis, this family has increasingly been investing in '*alliances de forces*', which obviously in the end further reduced their popularity in Goma. According to some, the link with CNDP was their only option left, as they were increasingly being marginalised and the dysfunctional juridical system left them no other choice than to opt for force to reclaim their rights and property²³⁵. Their choice turned out to be a very effective one to impose their power. From the moment the CNDP is involved, local authorities prefer to look the other way and no one seems eager to become involved in the case. Even president Kabila, who tends to have very good relationships with the other, popular businessman²³⁶, has today chosen the 'side' of the Ngezayo family. With the presidential elections at the horizon, he has no other choice than to keep the CNDP quiet, and to chose for stability and peace.

6.5. Concluding remarks

In this chapter we started from the image of Goma as a contested space to highlight how the city's evolution in a context of a weak state and violent conflict has not only generated emerging socio-economic opportunities, but has also resulted in an increased social fragmentation. This fragmentation is present on different levels of the urban society: it divides different state levels, it determines the discordant relationship between different state- and non state actors, and draws social fractures between the urban inhabitants. By the elite's mobilisation of grass-roots association or other urban social groups and in their power strategies, and by their social embeddedness along ethnic lines, socio-political

²³³ Informal talks Birere commerçants (Goma, November 29 2009).

²³⁴ As part of their strategy, the Ngezayo family realised a documentary on the murder « *Meurtre à Goma; Contre-enquête du non-dit* », including explicit accusations, that was diffused on the Belgian broadcasting channels La Une and RTBF.

²³⁵ Interview anonymous student UNIGOM (Goma, June 18 2010).

²³⁶ By several visits to Kinshasa, both 'parties' in the conflict have tried to get the president on their side (own observations).

conflicts are being reproduced on the local level, further dividing the population along existing fault lines. The role of ethnicity as a mobilising force, as well as an element of daily navigating social mobility in the city, has been stressed.

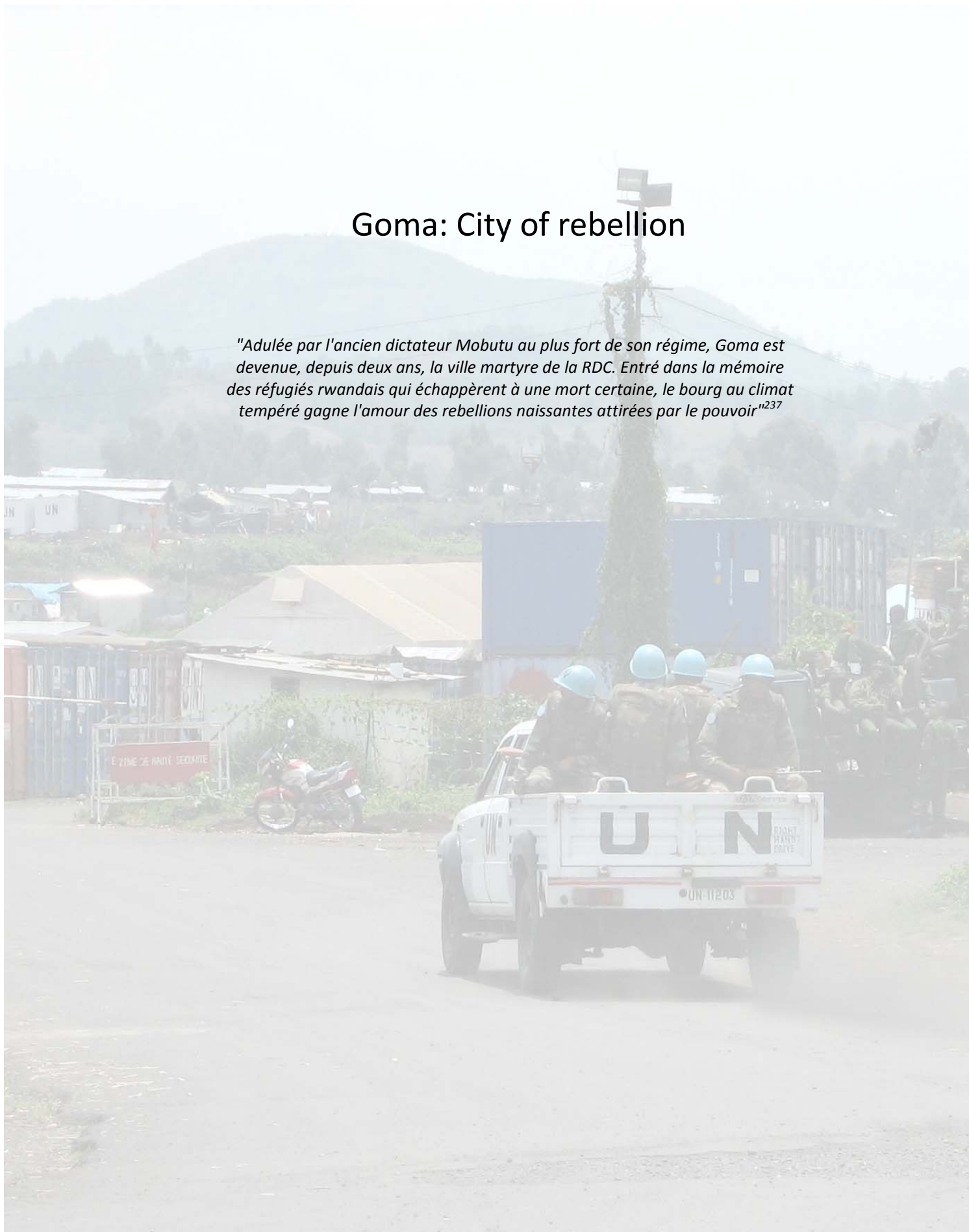
The local impacts of these dynamics of contestation in urban governance and the increased fragmentation of urban society, are clearly reflected in the intense struggles over urban identity and space. Conflicts over which identities have legitimate access to and rights over specific places and resources refer to contested notions of urban citizenship (Simone 2002b: 34), that revolve around questions on who belongs to the city of Goma and to whom the city belongs.

Through this as well as the former chapter, it has become clear how the 'reconfiguration of political order' generated through dynamics of crisis and war (Tull 2003; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2008) has created the necessity for governmental institutions in Goma to "increasingly negotiate, forge alliance and compete with alternative sources of authority" (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2008: 2). These alliances in a 'negotiated' urban governance are increasingly blurring the distinctions between political, economic, social and military power levels. Businessman X can at the same time be the sponsor of a football team, an ethnic association, a political party, and an armed group. Yet, by focusing here on patterns of contestation, it seems that this reconfiguration is certainly as much about competition than it is about negotiation. Further, it is through these alliances that broader patterns of economic, political and military contest are introduced to the urban society and resulting in local conflict. A dispute over a plot of land can become in extension a conflict between two ethnic communities, between a 'real' and a 'false' Goméen, etc. Thus, this transformation of modes and practices of urban governance have turned the city into an arena of intense struggle over power and authority over political- and economic resources, identity and space. This fragmented "real" urban governance is characterised by great uncertainty, unpredictability and high risk for conflicts.

Through the reproduction of neo-patrimonial modes of governance and the instrumentalisation of fragmentation in local power strategies, we can read a clear historical legacy. Yet we also observe how on the one hand the disintegration of the state and the proliferation of non-state actors has strongly reinforced this fragmentation and contestation, and how on the other hand recent dynamics of war and militarisation have brought local struggles to another, more violent level. This was not only the result of the fuelled ethnic tensions, but also by the increasing involvement of armed actors in urban governance. This last element will be one of the main points of interest in the following chapter.

Goma: City of rebellion

"Adulée par l'ancien dictateur Mobutu au plus fort de son régime, Goma est devenue, depuis deux ans, la ville martyre de la RDC. Entré dans la mémoire des réfugiés rwandais qui échappèrent à une mort certaine, le bourg au climat tempéré gagne l'amour des rebellions naissantes attirées par le pouvoir"²³⁷



7.1. Introduction

Through recent history, the city of Goma has increasingly been perceived from within and from outside as a zone of war, a centre of insurgency, a city of chaos, violence, and insecurity. Situated at the foot of the volcano, the city is also believed to be volcanic in another sense (Mpisi 2008); as it refers to the city as a 'powder keg', at the heart of what one calls "*le ventre mou de la sécurité en République Démocratique du Congo*"²³⁷. Its central position in the different wars that have been afflicting Eastern Congo, has made of Goma the urban spotlight of rebellion.²³⁹

This evolution was already set in motion during the AFDL campaign, when Goma was one of the main military bases and 'recruitment reservoir' from where '*kadogos*' have been recruited to fight for the liberation of the country. Its significance as the city of rebellion was given a very literal interpretation when Goma became the headquarters of the RCD rebels in 1998, which turned into a highly militarised 'city state'. But after the peace agreements, the reunification of the country and the democratic elections, Goma did not get rid of its sinister reputation. In 2008, the city became a military 'target' of Laurent Nkunda's troops, that, by threatening to take over the city, tried to force Kabila to negotiations.

At present, the picture of Goma as a rebel city has a very layered significance and contains many different nuances. Nowadays it points at the visible militarisation of the city, the prominent presence and circulation of arms, the dominant behaviour of armed actors, the increasing urban violence and the 'insurgency' identity of the inhabitants. In this chapter, I will start from this popular image to further analyse the manifestations of armed conflict in an urban context. With 'rebellion' I will refer to: i) the city's *status* (a semi-autonomous 'city state', a military hot-spot), ii) urban *practices* ('rebel' governance, 'violent' modes of regulation and survival) as well as iii) urban identity ('insurgent' counterculture). By using the concept of 'rebellion' as a practice, an identity and a form of urbanity, I will further examine the local impact of war and violence on dynamics of urban political regulation and on everyday urban livelihoods.

The relation between violent conflict and the urban level is complex and can take multiple forms: the city can be a battleground, a location of refuge and protection or a front of attack. Cities can be a micro cosmos of broader conflicts or can simply act as terrains upon which competing national or regional interests and coalitions of power and influence vie for resources and wage their wars (Pérouse de Montclos 2002). Regarding the current academic research on the complex relation between civil conflicts and urban areas in

²³⁷ Africa Information And Publishing Service Washington: "*Goma, avant, sous la botte de l'AFDL et, maintenant, sous celle du RCD*" (10.12.98) <http://www.inshuti.org/goma4.htm> (last access date 22/03/2011).

²³⁸ Pole Institute: "*Nord Kivu : le triomphe de la politique du pire?*", (16/10/07) <http://www.pole-institute.org/site%20web/echos/echo64.htm> (last access date 02/02/2011).

²³⁹ Africa Information And Publishing Service Washington : "*Goma, avant, sous la botte de l'AFDL et, maintenant, sous celle du RCD*" (10.12.98) <http://www.inshuti.org/goma4.htm> (last access date 22/03/2011).

Africa, Goma significantly differs from those often cited 'conflict cities' such as Brazzaville, Mogadishu, Monrovia, Freetown, Ndjamena or more recently Misrata or Abidjan, cities that have become an urban war zone and the battlefield of different warring parties. Myers has called these cities 'wounded cities', urban theatres of violence and collapse that produce particular forms of urbanism and urbanity (Myers 2011).

The case of Goma has to be framed in a situation where the 'real' battleground is located in the city's hinterlands, but where the city occupies an important position in the rebels' power strategies (Beall et al. 2011). During the RCD period, Goma was a good example of a 'rebellion residence', that functioned as the administrative headquarters of the insurgency movement. And although the RCD did not carry out profound changes to the local administration as they largely relayed on the existing structures (Tull 2005), the consequences of the 'rebel rule' were apparent on different levels of urban society. For example, as I have already demonstrated, it resulted in the enforcement of a particular close relationship between the economic urban elite and the politico-military rebel leadership. Today, the city is no longer governed by rebel forces, at least, not in a direct way. In a more indirect way, the influence of non-state armed forces on the city remains strong, through their connection with local political, economic and civil society networks.

The increasing influence and authority of armed actors on the urban scene is a mayor consequence of the city's central position in civil war. As a result of violent conflict, state power has been challenged by 'new' types of actors, including armed groups (rebel movements, ethnic militias and economic and military entrepreneurs) (Vlassenroot 2008: 2). And these actors became increasingly involved in the organisation of public space and in local processes of political and socio-economic regulation. It is interesting to start from the insights of studies that have been conducted on the role of armed actors in new power complexes and new forms of regulatory authority that are shaped by a situation of protracted conflict and a fragmented Congolese state. For example, research done by Dennis Tull, Koen Vlassenroot, Timothy Raeymaekers, Frank van Acker and others²⁴⁰ has pointed at the growing significance of armed actors and strategies of violence in the conflict-related power reconfigurations of Eastern Congo.

However, much of this research has focused on the village level²⁴¹ and on the role of local militia's and rebel groups or rural economies and societies. This is also the case with regards to the theory on 'warlordism' (Debiel & Lambach 2007; Reno 1998; Clapham 2002) or the research on armed actors in a situation of 'multiple sovereignties' (Duffield 1998). This chapter wants to approach these observations from an urban perspective, taking the city as the particular level of analysis. In the particular context of institutional

²⁴⁰ Raeymaekers, Menkhaus, and Vlassenroot (Raeymaekers et al. 2008); Tull (1999 ; 2005); Van Acker (2005); Vlassenroot and Van Acker (2001); Vlassenroot and Romkema 2002; (Vlassenroot & Romkema 2002b); Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2004a); Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2004b); Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2008).

²⁴¹ With exception Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers' *"Conflict and Social Transformation in Eastern DR Congo"* including one chapter specifically dealing with the urban impact of violent conflict (Verhoeve 2004).

complexity, economic concentration and demographic composition that the city represents, the local power strategies of armed actors will occur in specific ways.

I argue that a situation of protracted conflict and state weakness has turned armed actors into key figures of power in the city, and has reinforced the function of coercion and violence in urban strategies of power, access and control, on both governance as well as grass-roots level. A crucial element of 'conflict urbanity' such as I have been describing through this dissertation, is the role of armed actors in new coalitions, structures and networks that come to determine the organisation of public order in town (in which violence has become a leading principle). These transformations occur in a far more complex way in cities than in the rural hinterlands, as armed actors engage in close interaction with multiple other power groups and as the 'urban terrain' contains very different challenges for these violent actors to exercise their power.

I will start this chapter by elaborating on the more figurative significance of Goma's 'rebel' status, as a reflection of the turbulent relationship between the city and the central state and of the city's evolution towards an autonomous city state. Where in general, cities in the DR Congo are perceived as a symbol of state power (places where state authority is consolidated), the city of Goma seemed to be perceived as a symbol of state resistance. In this sense, Goma's significance as a rebel city also reflects the idea of the city as a 'centre of counterforce', and refers to the so-called 'insurgency character' of the city and its inhabitants. For example, in Kinshasa one often pictures Goma as a zone promoting the dreaded 'federalism' or worse, the 'balkanisation', -and as such threatening the national unity and sovereignty of the country. In this first part I will pay special attention to the local impact of these dynamics on the city's identity and that of its inhabitants.

In a second part, I will take a closer look at the more literal significance of Goma as a city of rebellion, while focusing on the urban power strategies of armed actors. As the headquarters of the RCD rebel movement, Goma became an attractive location for the expansion of politico-military ambition. The 'rebel rule' that has been introduced has instigated a transformation of urban governance, that is characterised by close links between armed actors on the one hand and political and economic elites on the other hand. Armed actors have become a crucial pillar of emerging power coalitions that exercise socio-political and economic control over the city. I will demonstrate how the city, by its extended social, economic and political infrastructure, remains until today an important zone of power and control for different armed actors. I will focus on their various urban strategies of power, authority and mobilisation and look at the armed actors' integration in political, economic and civil society networks. I will refer to the work of Denis Tull which covers the period between 1998 and 2003 and analyses the insurgence strategies of the RCD. However, as in my analysis I start from Goma's current dynamics, I took the CNDP-rebel movement and rebellion as the case-study here to investigate the rebels' relation with Goma.

In a final part, I will analyse how this increasing implication of armed actors on the urban scene has impacted the significance and function of armed force and violence at different levels of urban society. The increasing militarisation of the city and the reconfiguration of urban governance where control and domination is achieved by violence and threat, has

introduced violence as a crucial means in urban strategies of not only governance but also survival. The state lost its monopoly on violence, and private actors increasingly use violence for their own purpose. Violence has increasingly been legitimised as a means of collective and individual assertion (Jourdan 2005) and has entered urban livelihoods. I will focus on different outcomes of these dynamics, discussing dynamics of militarisation, the articulation of urban violence and crime and local mechanisms of adaptation and protection.

The ethnographic data that form the basis for this chapter were collected during different fieldwork stays between 2007 and 2010. For the first part of this chapter I not only refer to my interviews with several local actors and observers, but I also sometimes use local 'narratives' and rumours that are constructed and continuously circulating in Goma. Being aware of their problematic 'objective value', I use these narratives with necessary caution. Although not always distinguishing facts and fiction, they are useful to integrate in the analysis, as they are strongly determining local perceptions and the shaping and reshaping of the city's identity and that of its inhabitants. Further, they are powerful means by which urban inhabitants 'order' their complex setting of war. These narratives are recorded from both conversations (interviews, informal talks, focus group discussions) and local media (newspaper, television and radio). As I discuss the city's popular image both from inside and outside, for the latter sections a few interviews have been carried out in the capital city Kinshasa. Regarding the second part of this chapter, I faced difficulties to refer to formal interviews, as much of the information stems from informal talks that often took place in an unstructured and fragmented way. In that case I directly refer to my field notes. The situation prevailing at that moment did not allow me to openly discuss many of the rather sensitive subjects during in-depth interviews, as people were not too eager to exchange on them. For the last part of the chapter, I used the information derived from interviews conducted with observers of different local non-governmental institutions, members of the National Police, state officials, and from informal conversations with traders and youngsters that were part of a local self-defence group. Further, I completed the data by referring to reports from Pole Institute and from the UN Security Council (Panel of Experts), and in order to integrate the local perspective I consulted several master student's theses from both UNIGOM and ULPGL and discussed many topics with the local students themselves.

7.2. City of counterforce

7.2.1. Capital of "insurgent" Eastern Congo

The evolution of Goma towards a city of rebellion is directly linked to the general regional political history. The North Kivu province in particular progressively escaped dominance and effective control of the central government and has been at the heart of many violent conflicts (Lemarchand 2009; Prunier 2009; Tull 2003). As an important military centre in these different wars, Goma is often viewed from the outside as the centre of insurgency. As a friend once pointed out:

"Goma est une ville des rumeurs de guerre où quiconque voudra créer une rébellion s'y installe facilement" (Neneth, Kinshasa, August 29 2007).

Just like other border cities in the region, Goma's development in the margins of the state has both a geographic as well as political dimension. The idea of this 'marginality' is strongly reflected in the way *Goméens* perceive their relationship with the capital city of Kinshasa. I already mentioned how the city's increasing 'autonomous' urban development was directly linked to its peripheral location. The significance of their city as a centre of opposition is often linked to this 'historical position of marginalisation': "*L'esprit émergent des gens de l'Est de la RDC longtemps marginalisés par les colonialistes au profit des seuls ressortissants de l'Ouest, facilite un accueil à toute politique d'opposition*" (Bondele 2001: 22). As I already stated earlier, the 'insurrectionary' tradition of the Kivu provinces has a long history, in which Goma developed as a centre of contest and resistance against the continuous attempts by the Zairian/Congolese state to impose its authority (Tull 2005). These dynamics and the image of Goma as "*le foyer des opposants politiques*" (Bondele 2001) were reinforced when the city became the administrative headquarters of the RCD rebel movement in 1998.

From this 'space of resistance', the central political authority has continuously been challenged. This was already the case during the colonial period, as people in this peripheral region were escaping imposed attempts to control for example population movement or taxation (Mathys 2010). The political authorities appointed by Kinshasa that took over political control after independence, had very little connection to the local communities in Goma. The state was perceived as a secondary and superimposed structure of power with little relevance to everyday life; a distant 'capital state' who's limited presence and power made itself only superficially felt by way of a roving or itinerant administration (Tull 2005: 78). Dennis Tull gives a detailed account on the autonomous behaviour of traditional authorities in North Kivu *vis-à-vis* the central state. With his neo-patrimonial politics, Mobutu however achieved a strong institutionalising of state power in the region. However, when this political system declined and war broke out, the state again lost its grip over this turbulent province and city.

The occasion on which the 'insurgent' character of Goma was most obvious, was that of the RCD occupation during the second Congolese war. The RCD and the central government in Kinshasa were opposed to one another as two competing centres of political control. The disconnection during the second war resulted in a clear 'East-West division' of the country. Goma became the capital city of another, separated Congo, and its inhabitants needed to travel via Nairobi to reach Kinshasa. As I described in chapter 4, the eastward orientation of the city was further reinforced by the rising significance of transborder economic interaction during the war, and the flourishing trading relations with Eastern African and Asian markets²⁴². The rupture with Kinshasa, has never completely been restored. It became again very apparent during the presidential elections, personalised in the power competition between Jean Pierre Bemba and Joseph

²⁴² Goma is not unique in this 'outward orientation', Stephen Jackson compares the RDC as 'a vast doughnut with populations and productive resources clustered around its edges and borders and looking outwards while the middle of the territory is covered with dense rainforest (Jackson 2006a: 432).

Kabila²⁴³. Today, the dissociation from Kinshasa is an important element of Goma's identity. With approximately 2,000 km of land between them, for *Goméens* Kinshasa is a 'distant' city, in many aspects. Very few have the chance to visit their capital city (that one can only reach by airplane) because transport costs are high (a return ticket costs around 450 USD). By its border position, the city maintains much closer connections to other regional cities such as Kigali, Bujumbura, Kampala etc. We will come back to this in chapter 8.

Without introducing a true parallel administration, the RDC 'rebel rule' however increased the articulation of Goma's development as a 'city state', or a 'state within a state'. Tull speaks of a 'para-state' or a 'proto state' when describing the RCD's sovereign ambitions, expressed in distinct flags, ministries and bureaucratic procedures (Tull 2005)²⁴⁴. Until today this image is still very present.

"Goma c'est un état dans un état. La ville fonctionne indépendamment de Kinshasa. L'Etat ne sera jamais capable de contrôler cette ville. Elle est toujours contrôlée par d'autres forces, notamment les forces armées. Même dix conférences de Goma ne pourront pas changer cela; cette attitude incontrôlable et indépendante" (Focus group students ULPGL, Goma, October 20 2008).

Finally, the city's huge military presence (with the deployment of both national and international armed forces) and its extended network of international humanitarian and development agencies, reinforces the city's image as a 'state within a state'. Given its great political and military significance and weight in the region, Goma is evolving into what some may call a 'second capital city'.

"Goma has remained a city state, with a significant influence on the regional and national level. This city is the 'quartier général' of MONUC, of the army, police forces, and also NGOs. In that particular sense, Goma is like a second capital city (Interview staff member UNHCR, Goma, December 2 2009).

7.2.2. Entry point of foreign influence

"Goma est une ville qui obéisse facilement à l'autorité des pays voisins. Celui qui contrôle Goma contrôle une bonne partie de l'Est du Congo, raison pour laquelle les étrangers aiment envahir cette ville" (Interview chef de quartier Katoyi, Goma, November 23 2009).

²⁴³ David Lewis "Congo election shows worrying East-West divide", Reuters (04/08/2006).

²⁴⁴ Similar ambitions could also be observed for the CNDP rebellion, although this time it was not Goma that formed the centre of this para-state. The UN panel of experts stated that: *"Le CNDP est une organisation complexe qui s'est dotée d'un appareil comparable à celui d'un État avec des administrateurs, une fiscalité, un drapeau..."* (United Nations Security Council 2008: 6). In July 2009 Henri Boshoff stated that Laurent Nkunda was aiming at the creation of an alternative or shadow state as 'he may be preparing himself as the new shadow governor of North Kivu' (Henri Boshoff: "Laurent Nkunda – A new "governor" for North Kivu?" (09/07/2009), <http://www.iss.co.za/pgcontent.php?UID=6967> (Last access date 31/04/2011).

The 'rebel status' of the city as a centre of counterforce is also reflected in local narratives that present the city as a 'stronghold' of foreign powers, from which these latter exercise their influence over the Congolese territory. An often heard statement is that Goma is the entry point of 'foreign aggressors'.

The role of Kigali during the two Congolese wars and the Rwandan connection of both FARDC and CNDP rebel groups, has fostered the local idea that all insurgencies in Eastern Congo are the result of Rwanda's attempts to control the Kivu provinces²⁴⁵. The city's border position and its strategic function during the war, has enforced the image of Goma as the centre of Rwandan politics in the Kivu's. In 2002, Bucyalimwe Mararo wrote: *"Tout à Goma et dans l'ensemble de la zone d'occupation rwandaise est coordonné à partir de Kigali où Kagame (...) et les membres de son clan (les alliés au sommet du FPR) trônent à la tête du gouvernement, de l'armée et des entreprises commerciales qui tirent le plus de profits de la guerre minière en RDC"* (Bucyalimwe Mararo 2002: 181²⁴⁶).

This picture of Goma as the base of Kigali's hegemonic and 'imperialistic' force *"qui à fait d'une grande partie de la province de Nord-Kivu une sorte de province rwandaise ou l'appendice territorial du Rwanda"* (Bucyalimwe Mararo 2002) is persisting until today.

"Goma reste sans doute une zone d'occupation Rwandaise, quoi qu'on dise. Depuis l'époque de l'AFDL jusqu'à nos jours, c'est Kigali qui dirige, ce n'est pas Kinshasa" (Interview member of the Division d'Urbanisme et Habitat, Goma, 27 January 2008).

Directly linked to this, are the narratives in which Goma is presented as the focus of 'balkanisation'²⁴⁷, a most threatening scenario where the Kivu provinces would be appropriated by Rwanda by their *'ambitions expansionnistes, annexionnistes et sécessionnistes'* (Bondele 2001), to form a new state or the *'République des Volcans'*.

These narratives sprout from conspiracy theories that certain groups would be 'selling' the Congolese soil to Rwanda, with the support of certain *'puissances mondiales'*. They circulate locally via the *'radio troittoir'* and internationally on the internet, but they are also reproduced by the national media. Doevenspeck argues in this regards that Kinshasa uses these narratives to reinforce its own power: "The doubtful role played by Rwanda in Eastern Congo for the last fifteen years is undisputed. However, it seems that the Congolese government needs these myths in order to gain legitimacy and to exercise power over a population that increasingly criticises it for being corrupt and incapable of providing basic services such as security (Doevenspeck 2011: 9)". At the same time, in Goma people are blaming Kinshasa for its passivity or allegedly 'conspiracy' with Kigali's agenda, that is locally been read from the non-engagement of Kinshasa in the east.

²⁴⁵ In line with the RCD rebellion, the CNDP rebellion was seen by certain groups in Goma as a Rwandan proxy, a Tutsi dominated 'occupation', founded on the security interests of Rwanda (Interview local observer Goma, June 26 2010; Focus group UNIGOM students, Goma, June 19 2010).

²⁴⁶ Regarding his personal background, Mararo's statements have to be perceived as part of the local narrative of the region's 'autochthones' on Rwandan so-called expansionist ambitions.

²⁴⁷ See also Oldenburg (2010) and Doevenspeck (2011) on this topic.

On the one hand, the inhabitants of Goma, and the Kivu's in general, are being victimised in these narratives, becoming '*les victimes des multiples agressions des pays voisins*'²⁴⁸ in a violent conflict that never seems to end. On the other hand, they are being 'accused' in two ways: firstly the 'Banyarwanda' (especially Tutsi) for their collaboration with the enemy and for 'selling the Congolese land and soul', and secondly the so-called 'autochthonous' population for their passivity, betrayal, etc.

"A Kinshasa, on considère les habitants de Goma comme des gens qui ne sont pas assez patriotiques. Ils les considèrent comme les gens qui se laissent faire et qui se laissent influencer par les Rwandais" (Interview UNDP officer, Goma, September 2 2007)²⁴⁹.

The notion of hypocrisy appears very strong here. *Goméens* or *Gomatraciens* would be difficult to 'calculate' and to trust, as 'you never know on which side they really are'²⁵⁰. Further, not only in Kinshasa, but even in Goma's neighbouring city Butembo, parts of Goma's inhabitants are perceived as being 'no real Congolese', alluding to the so-called doubtful nationality of *Rwandophones* in Goma.

Finally, the mistrust towards inhabitants of Goma is strengthened by the circulation of stories about '*empoisonnement*', in which is argued that *Goméens* would be experts in using natural poison (referred to as '*karuho*') to eliminate their enemies. It may be not surprising that this 'tradition' is attributed to the 'exposition' of the local population to the '*attitudes neutrières des Rwandais*'²⁵¹.

7.2.3. Rebellion as a state of mind

The 'rebel' status of Goma has not only influenced the way in which the city and its inhabitants are being considered by outsiders, it has also impacted on the way local inhabitants perceive themselves.

It is remarkable how Goma's inhabitants, when identifying themselves in a 'collective' sense, tend to do this in opposition to Kinshasa and *Kinois*, of whom they think in often very opposite terms. A general ignorance is resulting in mutual stereotypes. While *Goméens* praise themselves for their working spirit and their sense for entrepreneurialism, they blame *Kinois* for their laziness; "*Les gens de l'Est se lèvent tôt le matin pour gagner de l'argent, tandis que les Kinois se couchent tard pour gaspiller leur argent*"²⁵². More important is the strong emphasis that *Goméens* put on their independence from Kinshasa.

"Kinshasa n'a jamais fait quelque chose pour nous. Le gouvernement ne se soucie pas de nous. On s'est habitué, jusqu'au point de prendre nous même en charge. Dans cette ville, dans cette province, c'est l'auto-prise en charge!" (Interview chef de quartier Mapendo, Goma, October 20 2008).

²⁴⁸ Focus group discussion students UNIGOM (Goma, August 16 2007).

²⁴⁹ This has been confirmed through plenty of informal talks with *Kinois*.

²⁵⁰ Focus group discussion students UNIGOM (Goma, August 16 2007).

²⁵¹ Focus group discussion students UNIGOM (Goma, August 16 2007).

²⁵² Focus group discussion students UNIGOM (Goma, August 16 2007).

"On n'a pas besoin de Kinshasa. On produit plus que là-bas. Et le reste est facilement importé par la frontière" (Interview Pasteur Joelle, Goma, 24 November 2009).

Goma's autonomous development is reflected in a kind of 'counter-identity' against Kinshasa. During the second Congolese war, outsiders used to refer to inhabitants from the Kivu provinces and from Goma in particular as '*banyarebelles*'. This term incorporates not only a vision of the city as the heart of conflict and rebellion, but also the perception of *Goméens* as people generating instability and acting against the state. As a participant in a focus group discussion mentioned:

"Pendant la guerre, nous étions les 'banyarebelles', tout le monde se méfiait de nous (...) Et cette image négative nous suit jusqu'aujourd'hui! Les gens de l'Ouest continuent à nous regarder comme des rebelles, les gens qui ne sont là que pour créer des problèmes..." (Focus group students UNIGOM, Goma, August 16 2007).

Nowadays, however, this nickname is also adopted by certain groups of people in Goma as a form of urban identity. For them, being '*munyarebelle*' implies a certain sense of 'turning away' from and even resisting the central state and its capital Kinshasa. This remarkable identification of youngsters with their 'city of rebellion' illustrates how people experience this particular socio-economic and political environment. As I will highlight in the next chapter, this 'insurrectionary tradition' is an important feature of borderlands (Scott 1976), that operate in a semi-autonomous way and largely beyond the direct control of the state – and that can be places of resistance against the 'centre' or other exogenous attempts to control them (Raeymaekers 2009b). Through such forms of urban counterculture expressed through new forms of identification, Goma's inhabitants turn the rather negative force of rebellion into the positive force of autonomy and independence, pointing at their ability to render chaos into development, disorder into order²⁵³.

7.3. Armed forces' urban playground. The case of CNDP

7.3.1. Urban 'rebel governance'

Often, cities are places where the underlying dynamics of civil conflict are translated into processes of both state building and state weakening (Beall et al. 2011). As a locus of population concentration, administrative infrastructure and political power, the urban realm is essential in the armed groups' strategies of 'territorialisation' and consolidation of authority and control. These strategies imply various efforts to 'integrate' in political, economic and civil society networks. Rebel groups, it is held, depend on civilian populations for their survival. For this reason, rebel groups often build governing structures that mobilise political support from non-combatants and enable extraction from key resources (Weinstein 2007: 163). Armed groups will try to 'manage' civilians as good as they can, as these latter are strategic actors, and as such they have the capacity to provide or withhold their participation and support. Often, in managing their relationships

²⁵³ This significance of 'rebellion' as acting against the state is of course also expressed through very local everyday urban practice such as the 'illegal' occupation of the urban space, smuggling, etc.

with civilians, rebel groups have to a certain extent to 'bargain' with civilians in order to survive.

The outcome is an increasing influence of armed actors in local processes of urban governance. Violent conflict has made of armed actors mayor new power figures in the complex governance coalitions as described in the former chapters. The strong link between political, economic and armed actors in the formation of urban elites is a key element in the significance of Goma as a city of rebellion. Although the case-study I will provide is that of CNDP, I will quickly return to the RCD period to have a better understanding of armed actors' involvement in urban governance in Goma. During the RCD rebellion, these links between political, military and economic elites were institutionalised on different levels by the installation of a direct politico-military rule. The RCD-G leadership that was installed in Goma (supported from Kigali) was dominated by a group of influential Banyarwanda, some of them former AFDL members (Tutsi from North and South Kivu). Some of the influential figures of this elite were Bizima Karaha, Mbusa Nyamwisi, Moise Nyarugabo and Azarias Ruberwa. They formed the 'urban insurgency elite' (Tull 2005), installed in Goma in their luxurious coltan-houses near Lake Kivu, largely disconnected from the local population. The RCD para-state extracted its economic resources by its direct involvement in the mining business; the RCD elite held large shares in the mining companies (United Nations Security Council 2002). Further, RCD imposed an export monopoly on coltan and, as I already mentioned, involved in informal transborder trade. The urban elite benefited by spectacular personal enrichment.

To control the political governance over the 'capital of insurgency', the RCD acted through patronage power networks. This patronage 'rebel governance' in Goma culminated in the emergence of the RCD strongman Eugène Serufuli, who was appointed governor of North Kivu by the RCD-G in 2002. The appointment of a Hutu from Rutshuru was part of Kigali's strategy to keep the Banyarwanda united. It was Serufuli who pursued the policy of '*Rwandophonie*' and who replaced all local administrative authorities by Hutu. His power and authority were exercised through two private institutions: a private militia LDF (*Local Defence Forces*) and a private NGO TPD (*Tout pour la Paix et le Développement*). On the one hand, through these two institutions, Serufuli was able to control the political, military and economic activities of North Kivu. On the other hand, through these institutions, Kigali was exercising its strategies of indirect rule (Jourdan 2005). TPD was founded in 1998 by a group of big Banyarwanda landowners and former leaders of MAGREVI²⁵⁴ (the Banyarwanda political organisation founded in the early 1990's, of which Serufuli was a representative). Officially, the goal of the TPD was to promote interethnic peace and solidarity in the region through the implementation of rural development projects. In Goma, this NGO engaged in different urban projects, from the rehabilitation of road infrastructure, schools and hospitals to the reconstruction works after the volcanic eruption (when much of the international donor-money was channelled through this NGO).

The private militia called LDF which in 2004 counted between 15,000 and 20,000 soldiers (Jourdan 2005), recruited amongst the Banyarwanda communities in North Kivu and

²⁵⁴ *Mutuelle des Agriculteurs et Eleveurs de Virunga.*

obliged them to make financial contributions. The LDF was used by Kigali as a strategy to prevent Hutu youngsters of joining the FDLR rebel groups. These two institutions are not clearly separated; TPD soon transformed into a political-military instrument and its involvement in recruitment strategies for the governor's para-military forces revealed the determining influence of the armed pillar of local power networks. These dynamics were a clear expression of the general tendency of militarisation, of the increasing political dominance of armed actors and of hybrid forms of urban governance.

Serufuli, although no longer governor, is still amongst the very influent politicians in Goma and he is very popular among the Hutu ethnic community. In the run-up to the elections of November 2011, he created his own political party: *L'Union des Congolais pour le Progrès* and it is predicted to have a large support from the city of Goma²⁵⁵

Since the start of the peace process, not one of the armed groups that operate in the surrounding areas has again been able to 'occupy' the city in a similar direct way. So we can no longer speak of a 'rebel governance' in that strict sense. However, the alternative forms of governance that were installed beyond the centralised state authority and a monopoly on violence²⁵⁶, had become installed as the new logic of political and socio-economic organisation. This governance is in the first place characterised by a hybridism and overlap between the military, political, economic and social spheres. The engagement of armed actors in urban processes of regulation and governance has resulted in a blurring between the responsibilities of state- and non-state-, and between civil and military actors. As one woman in Goma stated:

"Dans cette ville, les politiciens d'aujourd'hui sont les anciens seigneurs de guerre, les policiers sont les rebelles de hier, les fonctionnaires de l'OFIDA coopèrent avec des rebelles, les colonels sont au même temps des hommes d'affaires" (Interview staff member Collectif Alpha Ujuzi, Goma, November 12 2009).

In the second place, this 'rebel' governance is characterised by the functional role of violence to achieve legitimacy, authority, social order and access to resources. Directly linked to this is the prominent role of armed actors as emerging figures of regulatory authority. The interference of armed actors into urban economics, politics and public life, is directly related to the shift in authority to the advantage of armed groupings, provoked by these dynamics of state failure, war and the proliferation of armed groups (Vlassenroot & Van Acker 2001). As a student in Goma has put it very simple but honestly: *"La rebellion a cultivé et favorisé le mythe de la suprématie du militaire sur le civil"* (Butwali Mabingo 2008: 32). Several studies on the DRC have demonstrated how a situation of protracted violent conflict in the context of an increased privatised state, has strengthened the position of armed non-state actors in political and economic networks in the DRC

²⁵⁵ Interview local observer (Goma, September 12 2011).

²⁵⁶ Some have interpreted these alternative forms of governance using the concept 'warlordism' (Debiel & Lambach 2007). Although much of the dynamics I will describe correspond to the ways in which Duffield and Reno for example described warlordism and warlord politics, I will stick to the term 'rebel governance' (as described for example by (Weinstein 2007), to analyse the role of violence and armed actors in urban governance.

(Raeymaekers 2008; Tull 1999; Vlassenroot 2008; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004a; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004b; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2008; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2009). State failure and violent conflict resulted in the decline of state monopoly over coercion and violence (Tull 2005). In a situation where different armed groups can claim authority and even sovereignty over some parts of the territory, warlords, rebel movements, militias and other armed groups have increasingly come to determine the local order. To impose their authority, armed actors in Goma use different strategies. Of course, much of their power is based on threat and intimidation. When a general or a colonel can impose himself in Goma, it is because he is feared among the urban population for his weapons. Carrying a gun can open up space to bargain in all kinds of situations. For example, as colonels can easily refuse to pay taxes, many businessmen in Goma 'cooperate' with them to regulate transborder transactions. If these armed actors have become influent and to a certain extent 'respected' agents in the city, it is in the first place because of their position of domination by intimidation. They are well aware of their position.

"Quand tu portes des armes, tout le monde fait gaffe à sa bouche. Un homme armé ne paie pas les taxes, il laisse sa facture au bar et il ne payera jamais ces dettes".

Further, we will observe that in Goma, armed actors have come to play a crucial role in the provision of security, and that for the urban elites, connections with these groups are part of their survival strategies. In this sense, the dominance of armed actors is pointing out the weakness of the state, that leaves room for these actors to exercise their influence on different levels; "the challenge they pose to the state is not only in the arena of monopoly on violence but also in the case of resource wealth as a competitor for economic resources and local or indeed regional, political influence" (Beswick 2009: 338).

While during the occupation of the RCD this was rather straightforward the case with the establishment of a parallel rebel government, this has again been demonstrated during the CNDP rebellion of 2007-2009 in more subtle ways. The rebellion of Laurent Nkunda undermined the state authority and the legitimacy of its president, and Laurent Nkunda became the symbol of Kabila's impotence, 'a fact that he was acutely aware of' (Scott 2008: 225). Like other insurgencies, Nkunda's rebellion defined itself primarily in relation to the perceived failures of the central state (Beswick 2009)²⁵⁷ and the role that CNDP has played in the city of Goma has clearly become the symbol of failure from the part of the government institutions. We can see the weakness of the state reproduced here in different ways. First of all we can read it from the problematic behaviour of the formal armed actors such as the army and the national police forces in Goma. They are weakly organised, lacking any confidence of the local population, and are to such a degree underpaid that they are easily bribed. In October 2008, when police officers in Goma themselves admitted that they had been bribed by CNDP, it became clear to everyone that they were no longer controlling the city. Secondly, the weakness of the state is thus reflected through the increasing dominance of non-state armed actors. When ex-CNDP

²⁵⁷ See also Pole Institute: "Nord Kivu: la triomphe de la politique du pire?" (16/10/2007) <http://www.pole-institute.org/site%20web/echos/echo64.htm> (last access date 24/05/2011).

soldiers occupied the RVA district in Goma in March 2011 by order of the Ngezayos, it was again painfully demonstrated how, by the threat of violence, these armed actors could still exercise their influence in the city. And although *Goméens* knew these kind of events happening regularly in the rural areas, they could not imagine them taking place in the city. CNDP proved able to take action in its own hands in Goma whenever wanted, without government institutions and security forces stopping them. For many *Goméens*, these events were a clear manifestation of the indirect but ongoing 'occupation' of CNDP, "*comme on le sait, le vrai commandant au Nord Kivu est Bosco Ntaganda*"²⁵⁸. During the RCD period, the person that embodied the rebel governance over Goma was clearly Eugène Serufuli. Until present, in Goma, his personality is referring to these 'high days' of direct rebel governance. Today, this urban rebel governance (now exercised in other ways than was the case from 1998-2003) is largely embodied in the personality of Bosco Ntaganda.

Unlike Laurent Nkunda, Ntaganda is a very powerful but also visible personality in Goma, known for his 'open' lifestyle. Tutsi from Masisi, Ntaganda fought with the RPF in the early 1990s, and afterwards joined the UPC (Union de Patriotes Congolais), of which he became chief of military operations. Also known as 'the Terminator', in the period between 2000 and 2006 he was involved in serious human right abuses, for which he is currently wanted by the ICC in The Hague. In 2006, Ntaganda joined the CNDP and became Nkunda's main military commander. It was with the negotiated peace deal, the arrest of Nkunda and the integration of CNDP in the national army, that Ntaganda gained its personal strength. He was awarded the rank of army general in the Congolese army and occupied a leading function in the Kimia I and II operations (cf infra). After having chased the FDLR troops from the mines, the integrated ex-CNDP fractions took over control over these sites. By controlling the mine in Bisie (Walikale) for example, Ntaganda would have been engaged in large-scale illegal exploitation for personal enrichment (United Nations Security Council 2009). Ntaganda is not really being subtle in this personal enrichments. In February 2011 he was caught in an illegal gold deal, involving several international partners. Goma's inhabitants (as well as international observers) were shocked by the openness of Ntaganda's behaviour, the airplane in question was blocked at the international airport of Goma, practically under the nose of MONUSCO. In Goma, Bosco Ntaganda has become the personification of state failure and of the dominance of 'actors of war'. Although there is an international warrant out for his arrest; he is circulating freely in town, wining and dining in the same bars and restaurants where Goma's expat staff goes out. He is very close to the urban Tutsi-elite in Goma (Ngezayo, Makabuza) and is often seen in their company²⁵⁹.

In the following sections, I will further elaborate on the ways in which armed actors today directly and indirectly engage in urban governance. For the case of CNDP, we will observe

²⁵⁸ "Le gouverneur du Nord Kivu est-il en fuite de Goma?" (15/03/2011), http://www.benilubero.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2464:le-gouverneur-du-nord-kivu-est-il-en-fuite-de-goma-&catid=16:vie-nationale&Itemid=99 (last access date 24/05/2011).

²⁵⁹ Own observations; informal talk students UNIGOM; interview local observer.

that in order to have influence over and to control the city of Goma, they deploy different strategies of economic, social and political integration. To extend their power, they cooperate with the urban political and economic elites, but they also invest in a 'social embeddedness' amongst the urban population.

7.3.2. Economic integration

The central position of Goma's economic elites in urban power networks has been demonstrated through the former chapters, and I already described the installed system of 'protection for sale'. For the armed actors, to exercise effective influence over the urban scene, it is obvious that their connection with Goma's economic 'big men' is a good strategic move to indirectly control the urban economy.

"Quand on observe bien les relations de pouvoir local, il est clair que les hommes d'affaires crient plus fort que les politiciens. Si les gens armés veulent s'imposer à Goma, ils est clair à qui ils vont s'adresser pour les 'coops', car le niveau économique domine le niveau politique dans cette ville" (Interview local observer, Goma, May 26 2009).

It is no secret that some of Goma's big businessmen co-operate directly with the ex-CNDP movement and its leaders. Initially, from 2005 onwards, CNDP had entered the existing 'relationships of protection' that were installed by the RCD rebel movement and was connected with the same 'club' of Banyarwanda businessmen. But when in 2005 the power networks of Serufuli fell apart, these relationships disintegrated. However, this existing 'club' continued to be connected with CNDP in different ways (as they relied for example on them for protection during their transborder trade).

Goma's Banyarwanda elites who are increasingly being marginalised appeal to CNDP for their personal protection in town. The Ngezayo case has clearly shown this. Another example is the cooperation between CNDP and the petrol, mining and real estate 'baron' Makabuza. Together with other Goma-based businessmen engaged in the natural resource trade, his alliance with CNDP is strategic, as they control much of the mining-areas. In exchange for financial protection, CNDP thus provides physical protection. As we have seen, this protection is often quite straightforward. In the summer of 2011, Makabuza hired a group of ex-CNDP soldiers to reclaim a plot of land in Birere that allegedly belonged to him. The situation got out of hand and 2 people died on the spot.

For these Banyarwanda elites, their position of physical, political and increasingly economic insecurity has forced them to make deals with CNDP. Just as was the case during the RCD period, for many businessman this collaboration was mainly a question of continuing their activities during times of crisis and instability. As such, CNDP became to protect their specific economic interests, in the first place of those whose activities or properties were partly located in the CNDP controlled areas²⁶⁰. While in the rural areas these big men offered cattle to the rebels, in the city they would offer cars, or houses, for

²⁶⁰ Informal conversation UNDP officer (field notes, October 20 2008); see also Spittaels and Hilgert (2008).

example²⁶¹. Several wealthy Banyarwanda in Goma were suspected by the local population of being 'the rebels' friends' in that sense. The murder on Albert Prigogine for example was initially also interpreted as a '*règlement de comptes*' in revenge for his collaboration with the rebels.

For CNDP, apart from financial benefits, this collaboration also enforced its control over the local urban markets. Many of these 'barons' are important members of the FEC, for example, which has a strong voice in urban politics and economic regulation. In this central transit centre which is Goma, there were different trading networks in which the rebel movement attempted to integrate. The best way to achieve this was to impose financial contributions on Goma's economic entrepreneurs. Several reports have confirmed the statements made by different anonymous informants in Goma in 2008 on the financial contribution to the CNDP rebel movement by some of Goma's big businessman (Scott 2008; Spittaels & Hilgert 2008; United Nations Security Council 2008). A system of regular 'contributions' or '*cotisations*' had been set up by CNDP, organised by a system of 'pools'²⁶², along which also social support and recruitment was organised (cf infra). Initially, only the wealthy *hommes d'affaires* from the Banyarwanda-dominated sectors in Goma (such as minerals, aviation, petrol, etc.) were addressed for financial taxes. But by extension, also other wealthy 'big men' from very different economic sectors entered or were 'forced' to enter²⁶³. These *hommes d'affaires* were well informed about each others 'engagement', and for example agreed among themselves on the amounts of contribution²⁶⁴. This all happened during informal meetings on a regular basis, where the money would be collected and transferred to an intermediary. This system of '*cotisation*' that had been installed during Nkunda's rebellion of 2007-2008, was of a very different order than the 'pact' of 'protection for sale'²⁶⁵ during the second Congolese war. CNDP left far less room for 'negotiation' to Goma's economic entrepreneurs. However, in the remaining situation where the state was not able to claim its monopoly on violence, the rebel movement could once again manipulate the issue of protection to 'force' the local urban elites to this kind of 'collaboration'.

In chapter 5, I pointed at the opportunities that were offered to the businessmen by these strategic alliances. But for the case of the CNDP rebellion, this relation was much more complex, and it was difficult to estimate the exact motivations and to understand to what extend these *hommes d'affaires* had their own interest in these 'collaboration', beyond mere protection. For the Tutsi businessmen, their 'cooperation' with CNDP can more or less logically been understood, but this is very different for the case of other, non-Banyarwanda businessmen. For these latter, it was more a matter of harassment, and

²⁶¹ Focus group students ULPGL (Goma, May 28 2010); informal conversation Birere trader (field notes, December 8 2009).

²⁶² This system was inspired by a similar system of '*umuryango*' (Kinyarwanda word for 'family'), a network set up by RPF to finance its rebellion (Stearns 2008).

²⁶³ Informal conversation fuel trader (field notes, December 8 2009); Informal conversation ex-CNDP colonel (field notes, December 3 2009).

²⁶⁴ Informal conversation fuel trader (field notes, December 8 2009).

²⁶⁵ See Raeymaekers (2007).

their 'cooperation' was motivated by fear²⁶⁶. CNDP threatened these businessmen with 'revenge' in case they would refuse the deal, and like everyone in town, these men knew very well the CNDP's strength and their means of violence. Fearing lootings or other 'insecurity', these businessmen were left no option²⁶⁷. Probably the answer to the businessmen's motivations lies in the middle, as these deals for some businessman were a way to stand high in CNDP's favours, for others it was pure opportunism, and for others it was mere survival, as they were simply the victims of extortion.

In 2007 and 2008, it was not uncommon to hear people in Goma discussing about which fuel station, which gallery, *depôt*, shop or *comptoir* was linked to or 'cooperating with' CNDP. However, CNDP's economic infiltration in Goma was easily overestimated in the people's minds, given the context of tension and fear during those days, when *Goméens* saw the extended influence of CNDP almost everywhere and in everything. Yet, the influence of CNDP on the urban economy may not be underestimated as well. Personalities such as Bosco Ntaganda are key players in the natural resource trade, for example, and he is in command of many of the military units controlling border trade.

By its integration into the Congolese army, CNDP took an important risk with regards to its financial connection to the business elites²⁶⁸. Now that Laurent Nkunda has been arrested and CNDP officially has been dissolved as insurgency movement by its integration in the army and the political scene, these systems of *cotisation* in Goma have to a certain extent been cut down. However, given the remaining influence of CNDP in Goma, it is important to maintain good relationships with them. By threat and intimidation, security remains under their control. Until today, those who are 'loyal' to CNDP, are those who can 'manage' the city of Goma best²⁶⁹. Further, we already observed that in exchange for this 'surrender', CNDP (and especially its new leader Ntaganda), achieved more freedom of exploitation of economic resources. The fact that Ntaganda could get away with the gold scandal is a good example of how CNDP's illegal enrichment is generally tolerated²⁷⁰. The peace deal created a situation in which CNDP could further extend its networks elsewhere (in Bukavu for example), and in which several Rwandan linked businessmen active in the mining sector could reinforce their power position²⁷¹.

Apart from CNDP, other armed groups (FDLR, Mayi-Mayi, PARECO) have in a similar way become connected to urban economic networks. FDLR for example invested in real estate and motorbike- and other transport companies in Goma²⁷². The dynamics of urban military entrepreneurialism as described in chapter 5, not only included the rebel movements, it involved all armed actors, including the regular army. But this urban

²⁶⁶ Interview Jason Stearns (Brussels, June 9 2011).

²⁶⁷ Informal conversation fuel trader (field notes, December 8 2009); informal conversation Birere trader (field notes, December 8 2009).

²⁶⁸ Interview Jason Stearns (Brussels, June 9 2011).

²⁶⁹ Informal conversation ex-MONUSCO staff member (April 12 2011). Interview Jason Stearns, (Brussels, June 9 2011).

²⁷⁰ Informal conversation ex-MONUSCO staff member (April 12 2011).

²⁷¹ Interview Jason Stearns (Brussels, June 9 2011).

²⁷² Interview local observer (Goma, June 26 2010).

military entrepreneurialism has also worked the other way round, as we observe the installation of different armed actors in the city as new economic agents. When the woman of the local NGO cited above states that “colonels have become businessmen”, she is certainly not exaggerating. Numerous high ranked officials of the army have engaged in business in town: colonel Wilson has his own fuel station, colonel Yave is the head of a coltan company, *Tango Fort* is engaged in the aviation business and in mineral trade, and so on. Further, these men heavily invested their incomes in Goma, being a safe environment²⁷³. Their investments in business and real estate are for many *Goméens* an expression of the power of these ‘warlord type’ of authority structures. In line with the strategies of territorialisation of authority as we have observed for other power groups in Goma, these armed actors leave their stamps on the urban infrastructure. Where people used to refer to the so-called ‘coltan houses’ when speaking about ‘rebel architecture’, they now refer to the houses that Bosco Ntaganda has recently been constructing in Goma and Gisenyi.

7.3.3. Political integration: Urban ‘rebel’ politics

The connection between political and military elites of power is a trend that has been installed in the DRC over the long term -the political history of the country has strongly been characterised by military force- and has been reinforced by dynamics of war²⁷⁴. This politico-military nexus was installed in its full scope in Goma by the RCD movement and persisted during the peace process, around political figures such as governor Serufuli. The connection to armed groups became indispensable for the urban elites to exercise political power.

The peace process paradoxically has further reinforced the voice of armed actors in local politics. During the transition process, rebel parties (such as the RCD) were integrated in the 4+1 government system, turning ‘warlords’ into ‘peacelords’ (de Goede 2007; Tull & Mehler 2005). As such, rebel politics and military rule have to a certain extent further been confirmed and legitimised. For North Kivu, Tull & Mehler have observed a situation of ‘recycled elites’, where former political actors (under Mobutu or Kabila’s rule) have joined rebellion, to afterwards reintegrate themselves again in the political system. They “possess the connections and resources to organise a rebellion as a means to enforce their (re-)inclusion into a political system which they have few incentives to transform” (Tull & Mehler 2005: 378).

In Goma, one refers to these dynamics as ‘*la politique de la rebellion*’.

“La politique de la rébellion veut dire qu’un général à Goma est automatiquement un acteur politique. Car il dirige tout simplement les développements politiques. La politique de la rébellion donc veut dire qu’un poste militaire fait accéder à la gestion politique” (Interview local observer, Goma, May 12 2010).

²⁷³ Interview local observer (Goma, May 12 2010).

²⁷⁴ Bayart et al (1999) have been describing these dynamics for different African states as part of the ‘criminalisation of the state’.

That rebellion has become a mode of political production and that military power is a means of political power in Goma, has recently been reconfirmed again during the *Amani* process (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2009). This became extremely visible during the Goma conference (January 5-23, 2008), on which all the 22 armed groups of the Kivu provinces were invited to participate in the peace talks (Mpisi 2008). A perverse effect of the Goma conference was a renewed proliferation of armed groups, instigated by the advantages that were offered for participating. As such, instead of weakening the armed groups, the Goma conference reinforced the reproduction of insurgency violence, as it was providing armed groups with a share in state power²⁷⁵. The conference offered the possibilities for armed groups to improve their bargaining strength and their possibility of appropriation of state sovereignty and political, commercial and social networks.

Locally, the conference was perceived as a political strengthening of the different rebel movements. One *Goméen* explained:

"Les seigneurs de guerre ont été reçus comme des excellences à Goma. Et pendant cette conférence ils ont fait l'exercice de se convertir à la politique. Mais c'est une politique d'intimidation! Si par exemple demain la CNDP dit qu'elle va quitter l'armée pour rentrer dans la brousse pour faire la guerre, le gouverneur doit les écouter" (Interview member Commission Justice et Paix, Goma, May 2 2009).

Threatening to overthrow the city had proved to be an effective strategy to obtain a world-wide attention, to prove its capacities and strength, and to enforce the national government into negotiations. By holding Goma in its grip, CNDP demonstrated its strong position, *"sa marche sur Goma l'ait auréole une reconnaissance de sa force de frappe"* (Scott 2008: 191). Further, it painfully uncovered the weakness of the national army and the awkward position of the international security forces, which enabled CNDP to further enforce its position in power negotiations.

The current political elite in Goma is constantly being 'blackmailed' in this sense by the integrated ex-CNDP elements. And as long as their demands have not completely been complied, they will continue to use violence and the threat of insurgency to put the national and local government under pressure. Because their achievements as armed rebellions were their tickets to political power, their political power position is secured by their military power (de Goede 2007). The peace process thus reinforced the structural power of CNDP, and in this more indirect way, rebellion remains a powerful means of political governance.

The Paluku government in Goma has constantly been put under pressure by ex-CNDP elements to meet their requirements, Paluku's acrobatic attempts to retain the confidence of all parties and to prevent at all times the outbreak of a new rebellion almost cost him his head. The relationship between CNDP and the provincial and municipal authorities is rather bad, as Tutsi are weakly represented. Not only does CNDP continuously threat to resign from the national army to restart war, the Paluku

²⁷⁵ This confirms what Mehler and Tull have stated years earlier that these armed actors have good reasons to conceptualise the organisation of violence as a viable path to occupying at least parcels of state power (Tull & Mehler 2005).

government in Goma constantly receives threatening letters from FDLR in which they assert their claims and threaten to create '*la désordre*' in case they will not be fulfilled. As such, armed actors manage to hold the local government in their grip.

"Les autorités locales sont forcées à conclure des alliances avec les groupes armés. Ils n'ont pas de choix, dans un bastion des rebelles comme la ville de Goma, les politiciens sont soumis aux seigneurs de guerre" (Focus group students UNIGOM, Goma, June 19 2010).

"Pour pouvoir bien gérer la ville de Goma, il faut être ami aux groupes rebelles. Regarde le pauvre Paluku et son gouvernement. Il essaie de soigner les rebelles ci et là, mais entretemps il risque sa tête car on lui impose la bonne gouvernance" (Interview staff member UNDP, Goma, June 16 2010).

Bosco Ntaganda is simply too powerful and too important in the peace process, that even an international arrest by the ICC can not prevent him from establishing himself politically, economically and militarily.

Finally, armed groups also directly influence local politics by their connection to urban ethnic mutualities. As I have discussed in the former chapter, these mutualities have transformed into influent political platforms in Goma. Just as their connection with political parties, their connection with armed groups is generally 'known' but left unsaid (as is the case for the relation between Kyaghandu²⁷⁶ and the Mayi-Mayi militias for example). Armed groups may also integrate in urban pressure groups such as the student organisations, for example, as an indirect strategy of influencing local urban governance. A march that was recently organised in Goma (in June 2011) against the Paluku government, in which different groups participated (students, petrol traders) would have been sponsored by CNDP²⁷⁷.

7.3.4. Strategies of social integration and mobilisation

In their strategies to exercise control over urban networks of power and control in Goma, armed actors also tend to extend their connections with the broader urban populations. Through this connection the rebel movement searches for a certain 'backing' of the urban population, and for consolidating its authority and legitimacy.

A broad ideological backing from the urban population is difficult to attain, as the city contains an ethnically highly heterogeneous population, whilst none of the different armed groups succeeds at a large mobilisation outside the 'own' ethnic group. For the case of CNDP, strategies of 'integration' in the local urban society differed significantly from those in 'occupied' rural areas. Initially (in 2004 and 2005) CNDP invested heavily in ideological training and recruitment, and attempted to mobilise large groups of urban youth to attain the trainings abroad. Amongst them were students as well as uneducated urban poor (motorcycle guys, unemployed) (Scott 2008). But when military activity

²⁷⁶ Nande ethnic association.

²⁷⁷ Interview Journalist of Radio Okapi (Goma, September 5 2011).

increased, CNDP's mobilisation strategies changed and focused much more on direct (often forced) recruitment in the urgent need for soldiers²⁷⁸.

Ideological support among *Goméens* has always been rather low. Although some parts of the urban population did clearly stand behind the CNDP's logic, many others did not, perceiving this 'Tutsi rebellion' as yet another Rwandan-dominated movement. Since the AFDL campaigns in Goma in 1996, when youngsters have been massively recruited (the main motives however being opportunistic instead of ideological), *Goméens* never again really believed in the liberating purposes of the different armed struggles. That the RCD could not count on much popularity amongst the population has been pointed out by Denis Tull's analysis, and equally speaks from the local perceptions on the '*administration rebelle*'. As a student wrote in 2001: "*L'infiltration présumée des personnes dites de 'nationalité douteuse' au sein de l'administration rebelle du RCD a rendu l'œuvre mobilisatrice et propagandiste difficile*" (Kakule 2001: 60). The links with Rwanda gave the movement a 'foreign' image, and many people saw it as "*une organisation formée essentiellement par des marionnettes et dont le tireur de ficelle était le Rwanda*" (Kabwika Bamenyire 2002: 59). The election results in 2006 further demonstrated that ten years of Rwandan-backed government had failed to inspire a large popular support, even amongst the local Banyarwanda population.

A survey conducted in 2008 by Stewart Andrew Scott among different ethnic communities in Goma clearly demonstrates that the majority of the urban population had a very negative image of CNDP (with the exception of the Tutsi community) (Scott 2008). Because of the explicit ethnic pronouncement of the CNDP's objectives²⁷⁹, local support mainly stems from the urban Tutsi community. Public rallies spreading the movement's ideology as they were held in smaller towns in Masisi and Rutshuru could not be held in Goma, but many Tutsi students of Goma attended these meetings, receiving small amounts of money for doing so²⁸⁰. Different informants also mentioned clandestine meetings in Goma (in particular churches for example), but these were of a much more 'secret' character compared to the rallies outside the city, as there was a strong fear for repercussions. Finally, CNDP had its 'confidants' installed in the universities, and the movement deployed sophisticated media strategies (including several websites²⁸¹ and a proper radio station), to reach the urban population (Stearns 2008; United Nations Security Council 2008)²⁸².

²⁷⁸ Interview Jason Stearns (Brussels, June 9 2011).

²⁷⁹ Although initially CNDP presented itself as a movement with national ambitions and denounced tribal politics, its discourse became increasingly 'ethnitisised'. The movement's leadership was strongly Tutsi-dominated and its main objectives (to dismantle the FDLR and to allow the Congolese Tutsi refugees to return home) clearly represented the interests of the local Tutsi community.

²⁸⁰ Informal conversation UNIGOM students (field notes, April 28 2009) see also Stearns (2008).

²⁸¹ See www.kivupeace.org; www.cndp-congo.org; www.virunganews.com.

²⁸² It is important to note that compared to other sites, Goma did not form the main basis of support. A crucial recruitment base were for example the Congolese refugee camps in Rwanda and Burundi, as during that period a significant percentage of North Kivu's Tutsi population was still residing in these camps.

More important than an ideological backing is achieving financial support, as the local population in town is often in a financially better position than those in the occupied areas. In the controlled areas, CNDP set up a parallel administrative structure from which the rebels were receiving direct incomes from transborder traffic²⁸³, road taxes²⁸⁴, mining, land concession and charcoal trade (Scott 2008; Spittaels & Hilgert 2008; United Nations Security Council 2008). According to Spittaels and Hilgert, in September 2007 close to 1 million people were paying taxes to CNDP (Spittaels & Hilgert 2008: 7)²⁸⁵. This system of 'pools' as I described it earlier, formed the basis of CNDP's strategies of integration amongst the local population. Sensibilisation and recruitment was channelled through the same structures. People had to attract colleagues or family members to form 'teams' of support to CNDP, which functioned as some sort of social solidarity structure in which CNDP could intervene in case of difficulties (when a member's family had been attacked or displaced by the fighting for example) (Scott 2008; Stearns 2008). This system was also largely installed in Goma (and Bukavu), although in a more 'hidden' way, to escape stigmatisation²⁸⁶. Several anonymous informants explained how Tutsi families in Goma 'donated' parts of their earnings to CNDP. That the local authorities were well aware of these developments was stated by informants and confirmed by the UN report stating that "*les autorités de Goma ont reconnu hésiter à s'attaquer au problème par crainte de répercussions dans le domaine de la sécurité*" (United Nations Security Council 2008: 8)²⁸⁷.

For the rebel movement, this local support systems also served to stay 'well informed' about the developments in town²⁸⁸. To further extend their influence and control over the city, CNDP had installed an extensive network of 'informants' (Scott 2008). At a certain moment, stories of CNDP 'spies' were heard at every street corner in town. Stearns claims that a 'network of intelligence agents' had infiltrated NGOs and even MONUC (Stearns 2008: 257) Just like CNDP, other armed groups 'infiltrated' in this way in the city²⁸⁹.

²⁸³ CNDP controlled the Congolese-Ugandan border post of Bunangana, and taxes on transborder trade were a main source of revenue. Between September 2007 and September 2008, at least 700,000 USD would have been extracted by the rebel movement (United Nations Security Council 2008: 10).

²⁸⁴ Taxes collected on the circulation along the main axes under CNDP control.

²⁸⁵ A particular way of 'support' by the local community was the 'donation' of cattle in exchange for protection and other 'services'. This cattle formed a sort of 'saving' to the rebels, who could sell them in case of an urgent need for cash (Scott 2008).

²⁸⁶ Informal conversations ex-CNDP colonel (field notes, December 3 2009).

²⁸⁷ However the most influent pools in terms of finances were to be situated in the diaspora. Much of the rebels' financial backing stems from opposition politicians and wealthy businessmen residing in exile (Scott 2008)²⁸⁷. So these pools formed an extensive network; "*Selon de nombreuses sources proches du CNDP, les membres de ce réseau se réunissent périodiquement à Kigali, Goma, Gisenyi, Kampala, Johannesburg et Arusha ainsi que dans autres villes d'Afrique, d'Europe et d'Amérique du Nord, où des particuliers versent des contributions volontaires*" (United Nations Security Council 2008: 8)

²⁸⁸ Informal conversation ex-CNDP colonel, Goma (field notes, December 3 2009).

²⁸⁹ For example FDLR would 'bribe' several NGOs in Goma to provide them information, further many stories circulate in Goma on FDLR spies that circulate in town as motor-cycle drivers.

These direct and indirect ways of the rebels' 'presence' in town, fostered the local belief that Laurent Nkunda actually 'hold the city in his grip'. At the end of October 2008, Laurent Nkunda's troops had surrounded Goma and warned the government and MONUC that nothing would stop them to take over the city. After tens of thousands of displaced people had poured in and government troops had fled out, leaving a complete chaos, the rebel forces halted at the city's entry points. Nkunda declared a ceasefire, 'in order to prevent more panic'. But panic was bound to follow, many shops and houses were looted and several women raped. Although it did not happen, many people in Goma expected an 'easy entry' of the rebels, as they would have been 'well preparing' it.

"Ils [CNDP] connaissent bien le terrain. Ils ont bien préparé ce terrain. On va les laisser entrer gratuitement, tous ces gens ici qui ont leur carte de membre. Et les autres, ils vont se taire car eux aussi craignent les pillages" (Interview ULPGL student, Goma, October 12 2008).

In the weeks before the October events, people in the street were talking about the city becoming the meeting point of rebels and 'associated partners', informants, etc., and stated that they could feel the 'growing influence of Nkunda in town'.

"Ils [CNDP soldiers] ne doivent même pas venir jusqu'ici, de toute façon ils tiennent déjà la ville" (Field notes, October 19 2008)

Also churches, trade unions and other civil society platforms in Goma were pointed at as related to the rebel movement. Although the relation was not as straightforward as was for example the case with TPD during the RCD-rule in Goma, it is however generally known that several civil-society organisations (including local NGOs) most of the time directed by the local Tutsi community, had (and still have) close ties with CNDP²⁹⁰.

It is important to note that the financial support by the urban population had more to do with protection than with ideology. As I have already discussed earlier, in a context of war and state failure, the ethnic community becomes the main framework of social, economic and political mobility and the often only remaining network of security. The elections had resulted in a significant loss of political power by the Banyarwanda-elites in favour of an 'autochthonous' provincial leadership. On the economic level as well, Banyarwanda '*hommes d'affaires*' lost much of their influence. Especially local Tutsi elites that feared discrimination and marginalisation were easily influenced by Nkunda's discourse about the persisting historic violence against Tutsi.

Just like CNDP, other rebel groups deployed their urban mobilisation, recruitment and support systems along ethnic lines. As I already pointed out, armed conflict and the proliferation of armed groups has deepened ethnic fault lines, and as a consequence armed struggle and rebellion have become an important element of ethnic identification; organisation and protection. In the rebel's social integration strategies along ethnic solidarity networks, ethnic mutualities again play a crucial role.

²⁹⁰ Interview journalist Radio Okapi (Goma, September 5 2011).

7.4. The urban logic of violence

A few minutes strolling around in town serve to capture the omnipresence of weaponry in Goma. The massive deployment of national and international armed forces that has started in 1994 in the context of the Rwandan refugee crisis, has resulted in a real 'militarisation' of the cityscape (Muliro 2000). Apart from the overwhelming numbers of soldiers and weaponry circulation in the city, this militarisation is also to be read more generally from urban infrastructure, architecture etc. The prominent presence of armed actors in the city has certainly impacted on the 'geographies of' power and control. Barriers, military camps and 'rebel houses' are the spatialities of this militarised urbanism, that are in the first place to be observed through the changing use of space. For example, different public spaces (sports terrains, touristic camping sites etc) have been turned into barracks²⁹¹, and in 1999 a university student noted how in Goma the airport had turned into a military basis, bars into rebels' meeting rooms, churches into conspiracy platforms and hotels into peace conference centres (Theza 1999)²⁹².

However, more important than these spatial manifestation of militarisation or the circulation of weaponry is the impact of this militarisation on urban public life, livelihoods, local culture etc. The most profound outcome, we already touched upon: the integration of violence as the main means of achieving order, control, and access to resources. It did not only form a key asset in the power strategies of the economic or political elites, violence was used by all kinds of actors, on different levels of urban society, in legal and illegal ways. State decline resulted in a privatisation of violence: on the one hand, 'legal' violent actors (police officers, soldiers) increasingly operated in a private, autonomous manner; on the other hand, non-state, private actors increasingly fell back on violent modes of control and appropriation. Goma became "*une ville où certains individus disputent le monopole de la violence à l'Etat du fait qu'ils ont à leur disposition des militaires où des policiers*"²⁹³. In Goma, any private individual can hire a police officer 'for private use' (to secure one's property, as personal bodyguard etc) and any private individual can buy himself a weapon.

Different armed actors are operating at the same time in Goma, in parallel ways. National police forces, 'demobilised' soldiers, well placed military officers, UN forces, local 'anti-gang', etc are all claiming to be reliable security providers. This situation, where different armed actors compete without any single one being able to monopolise violence completely, has been described by Mehler as an 'oglipoly of violence' (Mehler 2004). In this 'heterogeneity' of armed actors there clearly exist unequal relationships²⁹⁴, and

²⁹¹ For example camp Israel in Katindo, camp CETA in Birere, camp CSCS in Volcans, camp Munzenze in Virunga etc.

²⁹² It would be interesting to further investigate the visual integration of symbolic elements of city's 'rebel status' in the popular urban 'semantics', see for example the proliferation of popular Nganda's, resto's and boutiques in Goma who carry the name 'Sun City'.

²⁹³ Pole Institute, "*Pour une réponse citoyenne au déficit sécuritaire à Goma. Expérience des patrouilles populaires nocturnes dans le quartier Himbi II de Goma*" (12/10/2007) <http://www.pole-institute.org/site%20web/echos/echo65.htm> (last access date 02/07/2011).

²⁹⁴ For example, the PNC (*Police Nationale Congolaises*) has become increasingly marginalised.

sometimes we observe a situation of collaboration (see for example the '*patrouilles mixtes*' in town) and at other occasions a situation of fierce competition (as is often the case between the police and military²⁹⁵). This creates a hybrid system of security in town, where state-and non state actors have negotiated alternative security systems (cf infra).

In this last section of this chapter, I will demonstrate that the increasing role and influence of armed actors in this 'rebel city' has introduced violence as a crucial means of urban strategies of survival, for both urban elites as well as grass-roots populations. Violence came to design the city and urban livelihoods. It became a determining mode of political regulation, access to economic resources and social navigation strategies. In this way, violence is not only reproduced in different ways, in the city new forms of violence are also produced (Beall et al. 2011; Pérouse de Montclos 2002).

7.4.1. Violence, urban crime and local strategies of protection

Violence became integrated in urban livelihood strategies in different ways. On the one hand, livelihoods were adapted and adjusted to a quasi permanent setting of violence and war in and around the city, and the subsequent situation of insecurity. Urban inhabitants in Goma face serious levels of political, social, economic and physical insecurity. This insecurity is generated by the context of armed conflict (militarisation, circulation of arms, failed reintegration projects), but also by a context of state failure, where public authorities fail to maintain law and order.

On the other hand, violence itself became part of coping strategies for the urban inhabitants, as a means of protection, survival or social mobility and access to resources. Different types of actors in Goma use violence in their survival and coping strategies: from the influent businessmen, to the local trader, to the city Mayor.

The increased use of violence as means of survival is reflected through the rising crime levels in Goma. Part of the city's status of a 'zone rouge', presented as a volatile and insecure place, is reinforced by the increasing crime levels. Urban crime is one of the most pernicious forms of insecurity experienced by those living in urban areas (Beall & Fox 2009). Urban violence can emerge in very different forms, and violence can be politically or economically motivated. Manifestations of this urban violence can also be very diverse, from isolated crimes to outright warfare (Beall & Fox 2009: 175). With urban crime in Goma, in this section I refer to those manifestations of violence committed against urban citizens that effects their human security (ranging from armed robbery to rape, to kidnapping, to murder). Official numbers of crime rates in Goma are not reliable, as many cases of urban crime remain unreported, due to impunity and the inhabitant's lack of confidence in the juridical system. Most of the time, urban crime is committed by individual criminals, or state security forces acting independently, and is usually economically motivated. But as we will observe, this urban crime is responded to with

²⁹⁵ There is a lack of clarity regarding the precise responsibilities and the duties of on the one hand the PNC and on the other hand the FARDC in Goma. It is not uncommon for the army to take on more responsibilities than is legally permitted (Interview Captain of the PNC, Goma, February 5 2008).

private security initiatives that can generate themselves new sorts of urban violence and insecurity.

In the first place, criminal activities and urban violence proliferate in Goma in the absence of an adequate public security system. But the process of failure of this public security sector is continued and reinforced through a vicious circle: as the state does not take its responsibilities, there is a privatisation of security provision. In the wealthy urban areas, people will rely on private security companies, and reduce their demands of the state to provide security. In poor urban areas, people will fall back on informal defence groups and vigilantes that fill the security vacuum. The increasing influence, power and control of these groups further weakens the state (Beall & Fox 2009).

Secondly, the context of poverty and social exclusion is another underlying factor explaining urban crime in Goma. The relation between increasing social inequalities and gentrification, and the increase of urban crime has been exhaustively analysed for urban areas all over the globe. The rise in urban crime committed against international humanitarian expat is a clear example of these dynamics. The humanitarian staff in Goma was increasingly targeted from 2007 onwards (Marie de Goma 2009)²⁹⁶.

Thirdly, the war context is an important factor in understanding urban violence and insecurity in Goma. The impact of dynamics of violent conflict on urban security is very complex. War can lead to a militarisation of local urban conflicts, to the proliferation of urban violence and the transformation of civil conflicts into urban civic conflicts (Beall et al. 2011; Pérouse de Montclos 2002). Apart from the sometimes dominant and violent behaviour of rebel groups as we described earlier in this chapter, the context of war resulted in the proliferation of arms as well as all sorts of armed actors in Goma. The difficult process of demobilisation and 'reintegration' left many armed actors to survive on their own, and they often fall back on violence for generating livelihoods. Violence involves the exercise of power, and the use of his weapon will provide the ex-combatant with the social and economic power he is seeking to reconstruct his life in urban society.

The levels of violence and insecurity in Goma have strongly been fluctuating in the past twenty years, but an intensification was to be noticed from the start of the peace process (Butwali Mabingo 2008; Pérouse de Montclos 2002; Pole Institute 2009b). The intensity of urban crime in Goma seems to be depending on the dynamics of war in the city's surroundings²⁹⁷. At moments of intensified tension and violent conflict in the hinterlands, levels of insecurity in town tend to increase²⁹⁸. This could clearly be observed once again during Nkunda's march towards Goma. Dynamics of war and directly linked processes such as the militarisation of the city, the proliferation of armed groups, the circulation of small arms etc. strongly impacted on the nature of urban insecurity. The peace proces did not end urban crime, to the contrary, it had a deteriorating impact on the security

²⁹⁶ Interview Romain Gitenet (Paris, June 20 2011); own observations.

²⁹⁷ Although the numbers presented are a strong underestimation of the real numbers (due to non-reportation), we can see this trend confirmed by the overviews of the '*cas de criminalités: vols, vols, meutre...*' in the annual reports published by the municipality (Mairie de Goma 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010).

²⁹⁸ Interview local observer (Goma, June 16 2010), own observations.

situation in Goma. For example, demobilisation campaigns have resulted in groups of ex-rebels transforming into independently operating gangs that are causing an enormous rise in the number of armed robberies and murders. One 'notorious' example is the '*bande de Gisenyi*', an armed gang consisting of former '*kadogo*' that operate in Goma, executing lootings, intimidations and even murders for the account of certain 'big men'²⁹⁹.

In the wake of the provincial elections, after the newly elected institutions were installed, the situation got worse. From 2007 onwards, the city witnessed a spectacular rise of crime in the form of robberies, rapes, and murders (Marie de Goma, 2008, 2009). Between January 2007 and April 2008, a total of 82 murders were registered in town (Pole Institute 2009b). At the end of 2007, the situation was critical, every morning people gathered in the streets to report and catch up about 'events' of the past night, about who had been receiving 'armed visits', in which district³⁰⁰, how many had been killed. Although the security situation in town today has slightly improved since the second half of 2009 (after the deployment of special units of the *Police Militaire*, the organisation of mixed patrols with MONUSCO and the re-establishment of the public street lightning infrastructure), violence and insecurity remain a constant reality in Goma³⁰¹. Another crucial underlying reason for the persisting urban violence is the absence of any effective jurisdiction, that has led to an almost total impunity and the further proliferation of violence (Butwali Mabingo 2008; Kaboyi Bahati 2006; Muliro 2000). A last element that is locally pointed out as a mobilising factor in urban violence is the circulation of arms and the ease with which anyone can obtain them (Butwali Mabingo 2008; Kaboyi Bahati 2006; République Démocratique du Congo & PNUD 2008)³⁰². This is perceived as being a direct consequence of the city's history as a 'rebel city'; "*Ce comportement d'acquérir illégalement une arme, serait en fronde partie une conséquence néfaste des diverses rebellions qu'a connues cette partie Est de la République Démocratique du Congo*" (Kaboyi Bahati 2006: 2).

In spite of several initiatives to disarm the city³⁰³, weapons are still extremely easy and cheap to buy or to rent (République Démocratique du Congo & PNUD 2008).

Victims of this kind of urban crime can be anyone: politicians, businessmen, students, ordinary people from all different ethnic and social backgrounds. One could be killed

²⁹⁹ Informal conversations Birere trader (field notes, May 1 2009); informal conversations UNIGOM students (field notes, April 28 2009).

³⁰⁰ Especially the districts where MONUSCO was absent (Birere, Keshero, Mabanga) were the theatre of urban violence. Results of an exercise of 'mental mapping', executed among different groups of the urban population in 2009, further demonstrated that those urban districts that are perceived as most secure, are those districts housing the most international NGOs.

³⁰¹ Goma is of course not an isolated case. Similar dynamics could for example be observed in Butembo, where crime levels in 2010 were at the same level as that of Goma during 2007-2008 with remarkable resemblances with regards to the nature and patterns of the urban violence.

³⁰² Interview Captain of the PNC (Goma, February 5 2008).

³⁰³ Since 2007, a system of regular '*bouclages*' was organised to confiscate weapons and munition (see Mairie de Goma (2008a). See for example the operations '*armes contre tôles*' and '*armes contre 50 dollars*', launched by the provincial government of North Kivu in collaboration with the NGOs PAREC and ACPD (*Action pour un Congo pacifié en Développement*). During this last operation in March 2010, almost 1000 arms were collected in Goma during one day.

because he or she refused to hand over his or her mobile phone and money while robbed, or because he or she was caught in a personal '*règlement des comptes*', or just because he or she was at the wrong place at the wrong time. Perpetrators as well, are very diverse. In case of the most common form of urban crime, armed robbery, the perpetrators are most of the time described as '*des hommes armés non autrement identifiés*'. These 'armed men' could be *démob*, but most of them were members of the formal security forces. The existing security system (army and local police) proved not only to be insufficiently equipped to tackle these rising crime levels, but also contributed to this criminality.

Regular soldiers and members of the police force constantly rendered themselves guilty of extortion, violence and other criminal acts. This is of course not a new phenomenon, already during the Mobutu period, soldiers regularly ransacked the civilian population. However, the nature of this kinds of 'pillage' drastically changed in the context of war, and the levels of violence strongly increased. Mobutu's soldiers who 'survived' by robbing the urban inhabitants, were almost 'kindly' ordering to '*pesa na esprit ya bien*' (to "give with a good spirit"); today, *Goméens* say that this rather has become a matter of "giving your life with a good spirit" ('*pesa vie na esprit ya bien*')³⁰⁴. As is the case for the whole of the DRC, the national and local governments are incapable of forming a responsible army, police force and other specialised security services in order to protect its population. Even if since 2003 several initiatives have been launched (in Goma as elsewhere) to improve the efficiency and conduct of the PNC, the majority of the members have not received formal training, while the salaries are low and the living and working conditions are extremely poor³⁰⁵. This poverty and of course the fact of legal 'possession' of a weapon have made of these 'security forces' the main actors of insecurity in Goma, turning them into '*des éléments armés incontrôlés*' (Butwali Mabingo 2008).

Actors using violence in Goma to their own private means are very diverse, and urban violence as described above has become an 'easy' and effective way for several sorts of actors to 'survive', by robbing one's money, by kidnapping the child of a wealthy businessmen or simply by eliminating a rival.

Inhabitants try to adapt to this situation of permanent insecurity, threat and fear in different ways. In response to urban violence, the local population is increasingly taking protection in their own hands. Since November 2007, this has lead to the creation of an 'informal' auto-defence system which can be described as a local form of 'vigilantes'. Urban youngsters volunteer their services to perform patrols (especially at night) and to set up barriers to 'secure' the districts. This system was historically inspired: in the annual

³⁰⁴ Focus group students UNIGOM (Goma, August 16 2007).

³⁰⁵ In 2008, a newly deployed police battalion (coming from the Equatorial province) was causing major insecurity in Goma. Pole Institute described how "*ces policiers sans logis, sans nourriture pourtant armés jusqu'aux dents errant ci et là dans la ville de Goma*" Pole Institute: "*Goma devient-il un abattoir public?*" (<http://www.pole-institute.org/site%20web/echos/echo77.htm>, last access date: 05/10/2011).

reports of 1996 and 1997 for example, we already read about '*l'organisation des nouvelles unités auto-défense*' (Mairie de Goma 1997b; Mairie de Goma 1998)³⁰⁶.

By groups of 7 to 10 people they erect 'observation posts', at the entry- and exit roads of a particular district where they exercise 'security controls' on everyone passing by³⁰⁷. They are generally unarmed and unpaid. However, they often do visit residents in the districts under their 'protection' and ask for a 'financial contribution' for services rendered (Mirimo Myatsi 2008)³⁰⁸. In case of a robbery, and if the police cannot attend the incident in time, these youngsters usually act themselves and impose their own concepts of justice. Several cases have been reported where these youngsters kill a bandit on the spot if they manage to capture him. However, in most cases these youngsters are not armed to the same extend the bandits are, as such they can also easily be wounded or killed during their interventions³⁰⁹. These 'informal' groups are generally tolerated by the PNC, and at a certain moment (end of 2008) part of these local initiatives have been integrated in the 'mixed patrol' system (mixing them with units of MONUSCO, FARDC, PM and local administrative authorities).

Another example of informal urban self-defence initiatives are the 'anti-gang', which I already described in the previous chapter. These 'gangs' find their origins in the protection of the vendors' stalls at the Virunga market place against *maybobo* and other small thieves. As we observed, they operate as informal private security networks. There are several other informal groups that operate in Goma more or less in the same way, gangs such as the '*Chinois*', and '*Rastas*' are engaged in the effective securing of markets, neighbourhoods, roads etc.

These informal groups are used by both state-and non state actors for personal security. Some of Goma's 'big men' such like Makabuza like to surround themselves by these groups. But also the city Mayor is usually in company of such an 'informal' security guard. It is clear that the urban population, both elites and grass-roots populations have far more confidence in these kind of informal security systems than in the formal ones³¹⁰.

The decrease of confidence in police and the juridical system has made many seeking security outside the formal security system. To cope with high levels of violence and crime, these informal networks of protection have proliferated in Goma as dynamic responses to the need of security. For all those that cannot afford a private security company, these vigilantes become a viable option. Besides this, they are also dynamic responses to the need for a job, an income, a livelihood. Most of the actors engaged in these informal urban 'vigilantes' in Goma are young, unemployed men, with a different

³⁰⁶ "Après la guerre de libération de notre Province, conformément aux nouvelles instructions de nouveau Pouvoir, le Gouverneur de Province a procédé à l'installation des comités d'Auto-Défense Populaire au niveau des Avnues en Décembre 1996" (Mairie de Goma 1997b).

³⁰⁷ Interview member 'patrouille populaire' (Goma, February 4 2008).

³⁰⁸ Own observations; Interview Captain of the PNC (Goma, February 5 2008).

³⁰⁹ Pole Institute: "*Pour une réponse citoyenne au déficit sécuritaire à Goma*" (12/10/2007) <http://www.pole-institute.org/site%20web/echos/echo65.htm> (last access date 02/05/2011).

³¹⁰ The results of the survey *Enquête sur la Situation Socio-économique du Ménage*' (Goma, April 2009) confirm this.

ethnic background. Self-defence groups that emerge around markets, for example, or at the district level, are ethnically heterogeneous. Other groups, that form for example the private security guard of political or economic elites, can be dominated by a particular urban group³¹¹. These groups are very 'flux' and variable in character, continuously adapting to the contextual realities. This makes them more easy to 'adjust' to the particular needs than for example a private security company.

We not only observe the emergence of non-state security agents, we also observe a renegotiation of security between the formal and informal sphere. By taking the law in their own hands and to take over policy and justice functions of formal police force, for example, they act in a complex relation with the state. As we have observed, there are various occasions and levels of interaction between the two. They will cooperate in a way that will serve all parties best. This renegotiation of security thus results in hybrid forms of protection mechanisms. As they sometimes have more legitimacy and confidence from the local population, these informal mechanisms are not only tolerated, the urban municipal authorities increasingly count on them for providing security in Goma (this is especially the case with regards to their participation in the '*patrouilles mixtes*').

Although in some cases this hybrid forms of protection have proven to be effective in generating an increased urban security, in other cases they can generate new sorts of violence. In collaboration with the local *chefs du quartier*, the involvement of self-defence groups to control urban crime at the district level has generated far better results than the involvement of public security forces alone. In other cases, however, the openings created for the proliferation of urban vigilantes can also contribute to urban insecurity. These local level institutions can easily be mobilised by elites and manipulated according to their eventual 'bad' motivations. The violent behaviour of the private protection gangs that often accompany the city Mayor has much physical and economic insecurity for many *Goméens* (such as is the case for example during violent evictions). Further, as all other armed actors, they can operate in complete impunity in Goma.

7.4.2. War, rebellion and violence as a '*mode de vie*'

"Dans cette ville on est dans l'insécurité permanente. On va se coucher avec la possibilité en tête que demain il y aura encore la guerre. Chaque nuit on risque d'être visité par les bandits. Cette incertitude tue l'esprit d'entreprendre pour ceux qui ne peuvent pas se permettre de prendre des risques. Ça tue le développement de la ville. Mais on n'a pas de choix, on essaie de vivre avec (Interview staff member *Bureau d'Economie et Industrie*, Goma, February 4 2008).

The protracted situation of insecurity and uncertainty has become the social condition of urban everyday life. Urban inhabitants have tried to adapt to this rapidly shifting, volatile, turbulent environment, to which they refer to as '*l'insécurité*'. In her analysis of everyday coping strategies of urban youngsters in Goma, Silke Oldenburg has observed a process of 'routinisation': a conscious tactic to counter the situation of insecurity, a situation to

³¹¹ Interview petrol trader (Goma, October 28, 2008); interview member *Commission Justice et Paix* (Goma, May 2 2009); interview local observer (Goma, December 7 2009).

which she refers as the 'non-declared state of exception'³¹² (Oldenburg 2010). So the exceptionality has almost become normality, as *Goméens* continuously manage to establish order in this setting of insecurity.

"Si demain on me parle d'une nouvelle rébellion, je ne serai même pas surprise! Ca, ce n'est plus une nouvelle. Si on me parle d'une nouvelle guerre, j'irai toujours au travail, tu sais. Ca changera quoi ? Mes enfants devront manger" (Interview Birere vendor, Goma, September 3 2007).

It involves a good risk-management in daily livelihood strategies to adapt to this situation. Especially the unpredictable and unstable nature of life in Goma, is often put forward as the greatest challenge. Again, the metaphoric image of the volcano appears:

"Goma est la ville volcanique! Ce volcan peut cracher du feu à chaque moment, on ne sait pas le prévoir. La même chose pour la guerre, elle peut commencer à chaque moment, on ne sait pas la prévoir. Ici c'est l'alerte jaune³¹³ chaque jour!" (Interview member Commission Justice et Paix, Goma, May 2 2009).

Further, as we have already observed, for certain urban groups the protracted war situation can be turned into opportunities, and war can open new possibilities for livelihood strategies. As such, "the integration of long-persisting conflict structures into a dynamic social life becomes a possibility and can be seen as a form of continuous negotiation over established order" (Oldenburg 2010: 76-77). The adaptation to a violent context implies the integration of violence as a main social 'rationale', and there is a direct link between "*l'incertitude de la vie urbaine*" and "*la certitude de la violence*" (Pedrazzini 2005).

Violence also becomes increasingly perceived as the most valid solution for many problems, until the point that, according to many, violence must be answered by violence. We read for example in the annual report published by the local authorities of one of the urban districts: "*Que le gouvernement puisse mettre fin au phénomène Nkunda en écrasant complètement ce dernier, ennemi de tout Congolais qui aime son pays; les actions militaires pourront terminer son orgueil et non les négociations*" (Mairie de Goma 2009d).

It is however the overall destructive impact of a permanent setting of war and violence that tends to be pointed out the most by Goma's inhabitants themselves. In daily life in this city of rebellion, violence, war, death and fear have become the sad environment where urban youth grows up, which obviously poses enormous psychological challenges. As one woman explained:

"La guerre devient une routine. Avec la facilité avec laquelle les hommes tuent en s'entretuent, la mort aussi devient routine. Le viol devient routine. C'est difficile à échapper cette routine si on grandit dans cet endroit. Pour nos jeunes c'est catastrophique, bien sûr" (Interview staff member Collectif Alpha Ujuvi, Goma, November 12 2009).

³¹² In reference to the work of Giorgio Agamben (Agamben 2004).

³¹³ In reference to the yellow flags indicating an 'alert' phase with regards to the volcanic activity.

Obviously, the proliferation of violence and insecurity in town has also affected the local social cohesion. People will become increasingly suspicious, losing confidence in each other. The fear that installed in Goma has made people turn more on themselves, suspecting anyone that might be jealous or in a competitive position. Finally, this fear is also clearly reflected in spatial and geographical terms. The phenomenon of 'bunkerisation'³¹⁴ or the creation of fortified spaces is striking in Goma. Most of the time, expats or local elite have withdrawn in these ultra secured compounds. The socio-economic inequalities they express, in return attract more violence against these 'wealthy' class.

7.5. Concluding Remarks

"La ville de Goma, à l'époque le fameux grenier agricole de la RCD, est devenu aujourd'hui le grenier des rébellions" (Focus group students ULPGL, Goma, October 20 2008).

Despite the increasing urban crime levels, it is quite surprising that through a long history of armed conflict in the region, Goma itself has never been the theatre of violent clashes between different armed groups³¹⁵. The image of Goma as a 'rebel town' is a very strong expression of the city's recent development as the urban locus of violent conflict. It is a powerful reflection of the socio-political and economic urban transformations that this context of violent conflict has brought about. In this chapter, I used the concept of rebellion (as an identity and a practice) to continue our analysis of the relation between state failure, violent conflict and urbanisation.

Urban development in the midst of the Congolese wars has resulted in a profound militarisation of the urban society and the installation of a 'rebel governance'. Although in Goma today this rebel governance is less explicitly at work as it was the case during the RCD rule (Tull 2005) and despite the formal end of the parallel rebel administration in the city, armed actors remain powerful actors that keep exercising considerable influence and control over the urban space. Through their connection with the urban elites and their integration in local socio-economic networks, they indirectly impose their voice on local governance.

The role of armed actors as regulators and new figures of power -often acting in competition with the state-, is part of what Duffield has called the 'changing architecture of the nation-state' (Duffield 1998). On the local level, these actors are part of the 'new' logic of urban governance that emerged in the light of the violent conflict. By their capacities to control the urban space, they became a crucial pillar in the local urban coalitions of power. The example of CNDP's strategies of mobilisation and domination, has clearly demonstrated the remaining power of 'rebel rule' in Goma.

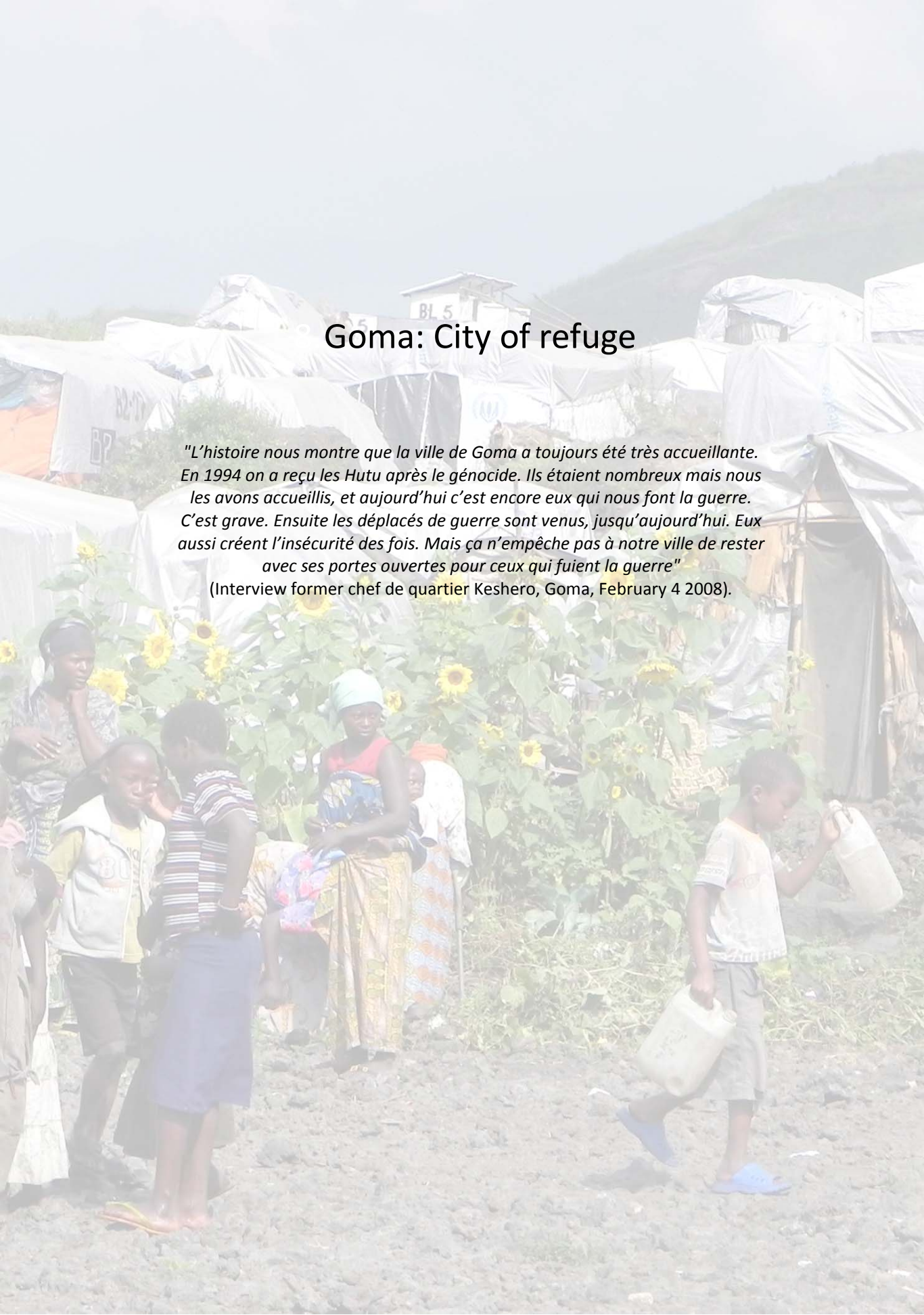
³¹⁴ In other contexts, these phenomena have been described as the 'geographies of fear' (Lemanski 2004; Low 2011).

³¹⁵ This in contrast to other cities, such as Bukavu (South Kivu), for example, when General Nkunda and Colonel Mutebusi took over the city in June 2004 followed by violent clashes with the Congolese Armed Forces.

Presenting Goma as a city of rebellion points again at the city's 'informal' and 'uncontrolled' development. Its 'rebel' status is part of dynamics of urbanisation that are largely escaping state control. It further made us reflect again on the profound deterioration of the Congolese state. At several occasions, Bosco Ntgananda has proven to outstrip the regulatory power of the state, as he is able to stand down the national police, the army and even the presidential guard in Goma.

Finally, the analysis in this chapter has revealed how an urban development in the scope of war has introduced violence as a mode of governance and livelihoods. The emerging urbanity in this situation of conflict is a clear demonstration of the functional use of intimidation, coercion and violence as a legitimate base of rule, used through and by all levels of urban society.

Analysing contemporary transformations in Goma starting from its 'rebel' image has offered original insights in both dynamics of urbanism and local dynamics of violent conflict. Slowly, we increasingly start to get a picture of the full scope of the political, economic, social and spatial significance of this complex 'conflict urbanity'.



Goma: City of refuge

"L'histoire nous montre que la ville de Goma a toujours été très accueillante. En 1994 on a reçu les Hutu après le génocide. Ils étaient nombreux mais nous les avons accueillis, et aujourd'hui c'est encore eux qui nous font la guerre. C'est grave. Ensuite les déplacés de guerre sont venus, jusqu'aujourd'hui. Eux aussi créent l'insécurité des fois. Mais ça n'empêche pas à notre ville de rester avec ses portes ouvertes pour ceux qui fuient la guerre"

(Interview former chef de quartier Keshero, Goma, February 4 2008).

8.1. Introduction

For some, Goma is a promising place of opportunity. For others, it is a risky place of danger and violence. For many Congolese fleeing the war in the rural hinterlands, Goma forms a safe haven and a zone of security and peace. This ambiguous status of Goma was expressed very straightforwardly by Ben Wisner, who in 2002, right after the eruption of the Nyiragingo Volcano, wondered if Goma was “a life boat for people in a sea of economic and security threats, or a death trap?”³¹⁶ In contrast to the city's insecure hinterlands, in the absence of armed groups' harassment, plundering, killing and rape, in Goma at least one is able to find a sufficient level of physical security. Although in the former chapter I mentioned that the urban scene as well has increasingly become a space of insecurity by its mounting crime rates, for those who were forced to flee fighting in the hinterlands, the city has become a safe shelter and a secure place to hide. This gave the city its image as a '*ville de refuge*' or '*ville d'asile*', which is -as expressed by the former *chef de quartier*- a status that expresses both hospitality and suffering.

To contextualise: through more than fifteen years of violent conflict in the surrounding areas, Goma witnessed several waves of massive influx of displaced people in and around town. The most dramatic event in this sad history -that is still fresh in many *Goméens'* minds- is the arrival of almost one million Rwandan refugees into Goma in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide. They installed in refugee camps in the outskirts of the city in horrible conditions. Soon after their arrival, a cholera epidemic broke out killing within one month (July-August 1994) more than 50.000 people (Cooley & Ron 2002). One still vividly remembers this humanitarian disaster in Goma, which turned the city into a hell of human misery, and left a profound psychological trauma amongst its inhabitants. Thereupon, from the second half of the 1990's onwards, protracted violent conflict lead to massive internal displacements in Eastern Congo. Being the provincial siege of the UN troops and hosting many international NGOs, the city of Goma became a regional centre of refuge.

The coming and going of hundreds of thousands of displaced people and the installation of IDP camps became a constant phenomenon in Goma's periphery. Besides those who installed in these camps, there were many others who settled outside the camp structures, in the urban districts. Hosted by relatives or members of the same ethnic group, clan or village, they found temporary refuge. These forced migration flows into Goma have put the city under a serious social, economic and environmental pressure, contributing to the uncontrolled spatial and demographic expansion of the city and creating new patterns of conflict and contestation. The development of Goma towards a city of refuge has provoked important urban reconfigurations, and this local spatial, demographic, socio-economic and political impact of forced migration into the city of Goma will be the topic of this chapter.

³¹⁶ B. Wisner, 2002. 'Goma, Congo: A city at risk' (<http://www.peaceworkmagazine.org/pwork/0203/020319.htm>, last access date 03/04/2011).

To link up with related research: over twenty years, social, political and anthropological scientists have become increasingly engaged in studies of forced migration. However, much literature on conflict displacement in Africa is still dominated by publications written by non-academic organisations. Despite providing detailed, up to date information concerning the needs, risks and challenges of the displaced, some important dimensions of the dynamics of conflict displacement are being ignored (Colson 2003). Especially regarding to the urban context of conflict displacement, academic research is still very new. Long time perceived as an overall rural phenomenon, attention to urban dimensions of war displacement is limited. Even though forced migration, and in particular war displacement, has clearly impacted on urbanisation and urban transformation, it has long been overlooked and unobserved in the relevant literature (Lyytinen 2009: 12).

However, migration and displacement are crucial factors in the rapid urbanisation in sub-Saharan Africa. Cities like Mogadishu, Kampala, Kabul, Khartoum and Bogota undergo important urban transformations due to the massive influx of displaced people. The reality that approximately half of the global IDPs and refugees are today living in cities, recently has made humanitarian agencies aware of the fact that they have to focus more on urban issues (Lyytinen 2009: 1). Thus, humanitarian agencies started to develop or release policies and guidelines that take into account the specificity of the urban context for their work, and urban IDPs and refugees have begun to surface in the literature on forced migration and urbanisation only in recent years (Tibaijuka 2010).

Gradually, the relationship between forced migration/displacement and urbanisation is gaining academic attention. In the first place, this resulted in a series of interesting studies on urban refugees (see for example: Campbell 2006; de Geoffroy 2006; Evans 2007; Fabós & Kibreab 2007; Fielden 2008; Hovill 2007; Lammers 2007; Lyytinen 2009). However, similar studies dealing more specifically with internally displaced people, are rare. And although there are in fact many similarities, there are also important differences between urban (international) refugees and urban internally displaced people (for example regarding integration capacities, livelihoods, citizenship, etc.). This makes more specific research on internally displaced people within an urban context necessary. Internal displacement and urbanisation are tightly interconnected, yet the link between them is seldom analysed (Lyytinen 2009: 2). Despite their long-standing presence in the world's cities, there are surprisingly few studies focusing exclusively on IDPs' experiences in and effects on the urban environment (Landau 2004: 2).

A challenge in the research on urban IDPs is the fact that most of them are 'invisible'. For example, besides those registered in the camps, the thousands of 'self-settled' IDPs install themselves in urban districts without any registration, making it extremely difficult to distinguish them from other urban dwellers. More than half of the world's displaced people now reside in non-camp settings, including urban areas (Tibaijuka 2010: 22). This is not different in the city of Goma, where self-settled IDPs remain largely 'invisible', for example in humanitarian reports. Humanitarian organisations active in aid provision for IDPs provide detailed reports on the evolution, situation and occupation of the different IDP camps. However, only very few in-depth humanitarian studies were performed on

self-settled IDPs in North Kivu³¹⁷. Although humanitarian organisations are aware of the large number of displaced people settling individually in the urban areas, no serious interventions were undertaken to register them or to provide assistance. As such, very little is known about the local urban impact of the presence and integration of IDPs in Goma. Yet local inhabitants are well aware of the fact that the installation of displaced people has brought significant changes to their city.

Only very recently, ethnographers began to explore how the arrival of large numbers of IDPs and refugees has affected the 'host' populations (Colson 2003: 2). Forced migration into urban areas in Africa has evoked social change and profound economic, political and cultural transformation, and has substantially changed the nature of 'host' cities (Alix-Garcia et al. 2010; Simone 2003). Castles argued that forced migration is a social process in which human agency is of central importance (Castells 2000). This will be the point of view from which this chapter will investigate the impact of forced human displacement on the development of the city of Goma into what it is today.

In this chapter, I will use the topic of displacement to elaborate on the local, everyday construction of urbanity in Goma from below. In the former chapters, it became clear that for the case of Goma, urbanisation was a process that mainly emerged bottom-up. In this chapter, I will zoom in on this process, on urbanity as the result of local agency. The case of conflict displacement into the city offers a good angle to study these processes of place making and social organisation in the urban environment. The strategies of these 'newcomers' to order their lives, secure their livelihoods and integrate in socio-economic networks, reveals interesting insights in the production of urban locality and the day-to-day creation of the city. Viewing the city as a zone of refuge not only offers an original lens to study urbanisation from below, but also to analyse dialectics between urbanisation and violent conflict (with human displacement as one of the main consequences of this conflict).

To describe the urbanity that emerges from the integration of internally displaced people in Goma, I will use the concept of 'accidental urbanity'³¹⁸. I prefer to interpret urbanity in a context of displacement as being 'accidental' in nature, rather than 'provisional'. 'Provisional' would put too much emphasis on the temporality of peoples' engagement with the urban environment. A context of protracted conflict has created a situation of protracted displacement situations. Although the urban life and livelihoods of these newcomers is initially meant to be temporal, it often takes the characteristics of permanent settlement and integration. In this sense, the city is more than a place to wait or a zone of transit; and "what was supposed to be an exception becomes a routine and rule within an organisation of space that tends to become permanent" (Mbembe, 2000 in: Jansen 2011: 4). However, we will observe that different challenges encountered while

³¹⁷ At the time of writing there were only two publications available dealing with this topic, see McDowell (2008) and some contributions in the Forced Migration Special issue on the DRC (2010).

³¹⁸ This concept has been used to describe processes of urbanisation in a context of long-term emplacement in refugee-camps (see for example (Agier 2001; Bauman 2002; Jansen 2011; Pérouse de Montclos & Kagwanja 2000).

making sense of this life 'betwixt and between' makes it sometimes often to transcend this temporality.

This chapter starts with a short historic, geographic and demographic picture of forced displacement and migration in and around Goma that will provide some basic evidence to understand the general context. We will observe patterns of displacement, settlement and return and the significance of Goma as a 'safe city'.

The following part focuses on internally displaced people in Goma and analyses the mutual interaction between these IDPs and their urban context. By focusing on the ways in which IDPs engage with and in the urban space, I will analyse emerging forms of urbanity. This urbanity is analysed by investigation of urban livelihoods, social structures, identities and landscape. Navigation will again be a central issue here. We will observe that the emerging urbanity is characterised by uncertainty, in which urban life and livelihoods are balanced between displacement and emplacement, temporality and permanency, security and insecurity. I will demonstrate that the initial provisional ways of organising space, economic networks and social interaction, result in political and economic competition, socio-spatial reconfiguration and changing identities.

Data used for this chapter were obtained through interaction with internally displaced people, local authorities, humanitarian agencies and local research institutes. Focus group discussions were performed with both IDPs and 'original' inhabitants of different urban districts. Interviews were conducted with IDPs, *chefs du quartiers*, the city mayor, staff of UNHCR and UNDP, local observers and staff of local non-governmental organisations.

While this chapter treats both internally displaced people as well as (foreign) migrants when analysing dynamics of forced migration and war displacement, the main focus is on the former³¹⁹. This choice is motivated by the gap in academic interest, as mentioned above. Besides, when regarding the recent development of Goma in the context of violent conflict, it is the IDPs' presence that mostly impacted on urban socio-economic dynamics. While writing about IDPs, I will mainly consider those people displaced for security reasons caused by armed conflict. Most of them have a rural background, coming from the surrounding hinterlands, representing different ethnic groups. In the second part, the main focus is on 'self settled IDPs'. This choice is motivated by the fact that i) today they represent the majority of displaced people in the region; ii) during the time of performing the fieldwork, research in the camps was very difficult to realise without being integrated in the structure of a humanitarian organisation³²⁰; and iii) their interaction with and impact on the city is much more obvious than for those settled in the IDP camps. Self-settled IDPs are to a much larger extent 'part of' the city than those who stay in the camps and who are largely disconnected from the city. Focusing on these self-settled IDPs

³¹⁹ Definition of IDP (Internally Displaced Person): "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border (UNCHR 1998 in: Fielden (2008: 3).

³²⁰ As an independent researcher, it was almost impossible to have access and the only time I got there the situation was so chaotic that I felt more like a disaster tourist.

thus offers a more interesting perspective to investigate human agency in urbanisation processes. Investigating their livelihood strategies, for example, can learn us more about emerging forms of urbanisation and urbanity in a conflict-situation. The groups of self-settled IDPs with whom I worked, were identified with the help of 'my' group of students. We tried to assemble a representative mix with regards to gender and age.

8.2. Goma's evolution into a zone of refuge

8.2.1. Chronology of violent conflict and forced displacement

The Kivu provinces have a long history of migration and internal displacement, dating from the pre-colonial times. We could read earlier in the city's historical overview, that population movements were of different kinds and the reasons for displacement were very diverse, motivated by a search for political protection, economic opportunities or physical security. Often, dynamics of migration and displacement in this region were of an economic nature, being for example a matter of diversifying sources of income. But on other occasions, these dynamics were violently forced. From the early 1990s onwards, forced displacement was given a new dimension, in the light of the inter-ethnic confrontations in the Great Lakes region. In 1993, violence in Masisi caused displacement along ethnic lines; more than 200.000 Banyarwanda were forced to leave their homes and fled to the surrounding areas (parts of them installed in Walikale, other returned to Masisi (Refugee Study Centre 2011). As these conflicts became regionalised in the context of the Rwandan genocide, 1994 has also been a key moment in the history of war displacement and migration of North Kivu, and more specifically for the city of Goma as well. The consequences of the post-genocide events on the city were of crucial significance in its evolution towards a zone of refuge. The situation of Goma during the refugee crisis in the summer of 1994 has been described in detail (Chaulia 2002; Mamdani 2001; Ransdell & Gilmore 1994; Stockton 1998).

For many *Goméens*, it was their first time to experience a humanitarian drama of this scope. Until today, one vividly remembers the horror this brought to the city.

"Il y avait des cadavres partout. Les nouveaux arrivés étaient comme des fantômes, comme des morts vivants. Et après quelques jours le choléra les attrapait et c'était fini pour eux (...) Nos enfants voyait les cadavres dans le rues. (...) Même dans le lac on les voyait" (Fatu, Focus group quartier Murara, Goma, May 2, 2009).

Ever since, *Goméens* keep a very negative image of refugee camps, which they associate with humanitarian disaster and insecurity³²¹. These camps have had a profound impact on processes of urbanisation. Large plots of lands surrounding the city were deforested and cultivated and several urban infrastructural works were executed, not only serving the IDPs but the urban inhabitants in general (for example construction of roads, wells, sewage drains) (Verhoeve 2003). They also heavily impacted on the local economy.

³²¹ During the 1994 refugee crisis, these camps turned into centres of arms traffic, and centres of militarisation and recruitment.

Wlalready mentioned the local impact of the aid-economy, an additional element was that many Rwandan refugees offered a large new 'pool' of cheap labour.

After 1994, it was however *internal* rather than transnational war displacement that has had an enormous impact on the regional and local political and socio-economic situation. The story of the Congolese wars is one of massive human displacement. Over the past fifteen years internal war displacement assumed vast proportions, and until today it remains a sad reality.

By April 2010, 1.8 million people were displaced, the fourth largest internal displacement in the world (Human Rights Watch 2010: 5). Inhabitants of North and South Kivu and in the Eastern Province have been moved from their homes several times throughout the years. Without providing a detailed overview of displacement movements over the past 15 years, some figures give an idea of the scope of the problem.

By mid 1994 there were about 500,000 IDPs in Eastern Congo. That figure dropped to around 100,000 by the end of 1997. However, the number of IDPs only reached an all-time high of around 3.4 million in 2003, following five years of war (Human Rights Watch 2010: 19). From August 2007 onwards, fighting between the Congolese army and the CNDP, FDLR, Mayi-Mayi and several other armed groups led again to new waves of human displacement in North Kivu. At the end of 2008, IDCM estimated a total of around one million IDPs in North Kivu (IDCM & NRC 2010). During 2009, following the peace and integration agreement between the government and armed groups, an estimated 700,000 people in North Kivu returned 'home' from the camps around Goma (Holmes 2010; IDCM & NRC 2010). But at the same time, the frequent armed confrontations in the context of the military operations *Kimia* I and II provoked new displacements resulting in a sad balance of 990,000 IDPs in North Kivu³²² and 690,000 in South Kivu, the highest number since 2004 (IDCM & NRC 2010; International Refugee Rights & SSRC 2010: 11). After the start of the Operation *Amani Leo* in January 2010, OCHA estimated that by April 2010 more than 1.1 million IDPs had returned -or tried to return- to their homes between January 2009 and March 2010 but that despite these attempts, over 1.4 million people remained displaced in North and South Kivu provinces (Human Rights Watch 2010: 20). In 2009, the number of IDPs in Goma was estimated around 120,000 (Pole Institute 2009a).

8.2.2. The safe city

"A la fin de l'année dernière, la ville de Goma, chef-lieu du Nord Kivu, constituait un immense ghetto de près d'un million d'âmes apeurées. Une ville cernée par des camps des déplacés ayant recueilli celles et ceux que la ville ne pouvait accueillir, avec à l'horizon très proche les canons des rebelles du Congrès National pour la Défense des Peuples, le CNDP de Laurent Nkunda" (Pole Institute 2010: 3)

The main locations for refuge in the Kivu's are Goma, Kiwanja, Minova and Kitchanga, all being administrative centres and expected to offer physical security, whether through the

³²² Holmes speaks of a number of 875,000 IDPs in November 2010 (Holmes 2010: 4).

presence of MONUSCO, FARDC or CNDP³²³. Many displaced persons perceive urban areas as more secure than rural ones and in general the city is viewed as a safe place and a centre for protection³²⁴. This relationship between urbanity and security is not a unilateral one and may not be generalised, since the situation is continuously changing. Moreover, as we could learn from the previous chapter, in recent years urban centres in North Kivu have experienced new forms of urban crime, which again disrupt the connection urbanity – security. Yet, although city life contains many daily social, political and economic insecurities (especially for those who arrive as ‘newcomers’), at least the physical security displaced people are searching for is provided here. As a local student puts it:

"La ville est une île de paix, par rapport aux violences qui se déroulent à l'intérieur. Dans les villages il n'y a plus moyen de se cacher pour des rebelles" (Interview Cynthia, UNIGOM, Goma, September 2 2007).

IDPs arriving in the city of Goma and its surroundings are mainly coming from both Masisi and Rutshuru territory's, arriving in the city via the two main entry roads via Sake and via Ramangabo. In 2001, the city of Goma hosted approximately 40,000 IDPs, and in January 2009 the number was estimated to be around 120,000 (Pole Institute 2009a). Because the majority of IDPs installed themselves in Goma outside the formal camp structures (with relatives, friends and sometimes strangers), and since these self-settled IDPs are not registered, it is impossible to provide exact numbers.



Picture 13: IDP camp near Goma © B. Muniyi 2010

Goma's significance as a safe haven is embodied in different elements. There is the logical fact that in Goma, being the provincial administrative capital, a minimum level of security is provided by the Congolese state. The presence of the different provincial institutions and the hosting of many political authorities resulted in an increased presence of security forces when comparing to other urban centres in the region. Secondly, an important element is the impressive presence of the UN humanitarian and armed forces in Goma.

³²³ Interview David, UNHCR (Goma, December 2 2009).

³²⁴ Interviews IDPs (Goma, November 17-18 2009); Focus group inhabitants Mugunga district (Goma, November 15 2009).

With a total of more than 17,000 troops³²⁵, MONUSCO is the largest UN military presence worldwide. One third of these troops is stationed in and around the city of Goma. Through the constant patrolling of white UN jeeps and helicopters, their presence is very visible in town and is emanating a certain feeling of safety to its inhabitants. In the urban context of Goma, trust in national police and army is generally higher than in the hinterland, because of a higher level of social and political control, which decreases the possibilities for abuse or misbehaviour³²⁶. Furthermore, there is the presence of the humanitarian organisations in the city. Although their focus is largely located outside the city and their actions mainly oriented towards the hinterland, their presence ensures a certain degree of physical security provided in the city. The increasing presence of vast numbers of international staff coincides with the increasing development of private security companies. Finally, and interestingly, the 'cosmopolitan' character of the city is also mentioned as a decisive matter in its significance as a safe place. Comparing the urban conditions with their situation in the villages, IDPs stress a certain degree of ethnic heterogeneity in town as providing more physical security. As one man explained:

"Ici on n'a pas les mêmes soucis que chez nous. Surtout ici il y a moins de tribalisme. Le tribalisme est toujours là, oui, mais c'est différent. Chez nous, être de tel ou tel groupe ethnique peut à un certain moment déjà signifier un danger. C'est la guerre qui a semé la haine entre nous (...). Ici c'est un mix. Il n'y a pas que deux ou trois groupes qui doivent partager les choses, il y en a au moins dix" (Interview Pasteur Eugène, Goma, November 24 2009).

In the city, belonging to one or another ethnic group does not carry the same risk for suspicion of belonging to one or another armed group, as is the case for example during armed clashes between different rebel groups in the rural areas. Although it may not be overestimated and although ethnic tensions in the city can also be fierce at certain moments, it is however important to underline this sense of ethnic 'cosmopolitanism' – experienced by IDPs as an 'urban' feature, as contributing to their security. It is especially remarkable that this 'cosmopolitanism' becomes a social reference or basis in a context where ethnic relations are highly important in social, political and economic security.

The concept of security thus seems to be quite multi-layered, here. As we will see, the city forms a safe environment in terms of physical security, but on the other hand, in their urban livelihoods, IDPs are exposed to many other levels of social and economic insecurity. Their urban life is a constant navigation between these different levels of security and risks.

8.2.3. Patterns of displacement, settlement and return³²⁷

Both the causes of displacement and the movement of people themselves are diverse and characterised by mixed flows, multifarious motivations and multiple labels (Talviste 2010:

³²⁵ <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/bnote.htm> (last access date 24/11/2010).

³²⁶ Focus group discussion students UNIGOM (Goma, June 19 2010); Focus group discussion inhabitants Keshero District (Goma, December 7 2009).

³²⁷ This section treats patterns of internal (and not transnational) displacement.

43). The constant changing nature of the conflict strongly influenced patterns of internal displacement in North Kivu. However, some general tendencies can be observed.

Talviste distinguishes four main types of internal displacement for the DRC in general: i) 'reactive' displacement (in response to an actual attack or specific event; ii) 'preventive' displacement (in anticipation or fear of an attack or abuses); iii) 'pendulum' displacement (when people return to their home areas either in the daytime or intermittently); and iv) 'itinerant' displacement (when displaced people move continually from one place to another, sometimes in search of humanitarian assistance) (Talviste 2010: 42). While displaced, most IDPs prefer to remain as close as possible to their home areas, so that they can continue to work the land, gather food, and reassert ownership of their property if the situation improves (Human Rights Watch 2010: 6). The connection with their 'home villages' is of crucial importance as one woman explained:

"We have to keep posted about the situation at home. Sometimes it is important to send someone or to go by yourself to 'arrange' certain things. Besides our mobile phones, there are the motards and tshukudus who function like mobile newspapers" (Interview anonymous IDP Goma, November 18 2009)³²⁸.

However, shifting frontlines in the Kivu's have forced many to flee greater distances (Zeender & Rothing 2010: 10). Some IDPs are constantly moving back and forth between their home and displacement sites, some installed more permanently in the city, some installed in a camp or an informal displacement site.

There is not only a vast difference between camp refugees and self-settled refugees in terms of recognition and protection, but also with regard to freedom of movement, access to humanitarian aid, access to work, etc. (Brees 2009: 6). As most of the displaced prefer to stay with friends or relatives, the decision to enter a camp is often motivated by the absence of another option. In 2009, aid agencies generally estimated that 70% of IDPs in the Kivu's lived with 'host families', 20% lived in spontaneous sites, and 10% lived in official camps (Human Rights Watch 2010: 5).

While IDPs staying in formal camps are registered and receive assistance by several aid organisations, those staying in spontaneous or informal camps only receive sporadic or no assistance at all. This means that the latter camps (in urban areas often installed in dilapidated buildings) rely on the surrounding community and thus can be considered as a form of communal 'hosting' and a transient, informal '*neighbourhood*' within a community (McDowell 2008). These spontaneous camps or 'ad hoc settlements' developed due to the inability of the IDPs to be installed with relatives (Raeymaekers 2011) and due to the fact that when displaced as a group, this group may prefer to stay together (McDowell 2008) 24). Thus, these informal settlements often shelter people from the same ethnic group³²⁹.

³²⁸ Interviews and focus group discussions with displaced persons in the Ndosho and Mugunga districts were held in Swahili with the help of a translator. The reason that some quotes are presented in English is that during several of these interviews, understanding a notion of Swahili I simultaneously took notes in Dutch, which I afterwards completed with the translators' notes.

³²⁹ Interview David, UNHCR (Goma, December 2 2009).

Patterns of displacement have undergone some important changes since 2007, with the flaring up of violence in the North Kivu region. Increasing intensity of violence resulted in longer periods of displacement and affected the decisions in refugee seeking by the IDPs. The threats to civil populations were more severe, more frequent and more widespread. Previously, IDPs also displaced on multiple occasions but for a shorter time, being able to return to their homes after hiding for a few days or at most after being hosted by a family for 2 or 3 months. Since 2007, intervals of insecurity occurred too frequently, discouraging people from returning to their homes. In 2008, the average period of displacement in North Kivu was six months (McDowell 2008).

Prior to 2007, almost all IDPs lived with host families and a small minority sought refuge in 'spontaneous' sites (churches, mosques, schools, or open fields near towns, villages, or MONUSCO bases) (Human Rights Watch 2010: 5)³³⁰. Entering camps was often not considered.

But when displacement increased, the pressure on the hosting community became too high and people were not able to shelter such large numbers of IDPs anymore for a long period of time. More and more IDPs ended up in spontaneous camps around the main administrative centres of Goma, Kitchanga, Minova and Kiwanja. In the case of Goma, this led to the creation of numerous spontaneous camps around the city. At the end of 2007, UNHCR integrated several of these spontaneous camps within its Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) strategy, turning them in official IDP camps.

According to OCHA, the percentage of IDPs living in camps in North Kivu increased from 5% in 2005 to 35% in 2008 (Zeender & Rothing 2010: 10). At the end of 2008, there were six formal, registered IDP camps at the outskirts of the city: Buhimba, Bulengo, Mugunga I, II and III, and Kibati (UNHCR 2009). These camp structures were rather dynamic and changing in function, capacity and ethnic character³³¹. They form a very specific environment, characterised by a mix of rural and urban features. Meant to be a temporary site, these camps can be perceived as 'ad hoc cities', emerging from makeshift architecture they demonstrate some kind of 'emergency urbanism' (Agier 2001; Lewis 2008).

As mentioned before, the main focus here will not be on this kind of 'controlled' settlements of displaced people, but rather on IDPs that installed themselves outside the camp structures in the urban areas. These 'self-settled' IDPs constitute a particular, largely 'invisible' group of displaced people, often perceived as very vulnerable as they have no access to humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian organisations have no specific assistance strategies towards this huge group of IDPs³³². As a member of UNHCR-Goma stated:

"Of those IDPs staying in the city, we have no information. We don't know where they are and how they survive. They don't have any access to assistance, it's a major

³³⁰ The first spontaneous camp in North Kivu was only established in June 2006 (McDowell 2008: 12).

³³¹ Interview David, UNHCR (Goma, December 2 2009)

³³² Humanitarian organisations are not providing support to self-settled IDPs because they assume that if they were not capable of taking care of themselves, they would stay in the camps where aid is distributed.

problem (...) We really don't have any idea, just like we cannot estimate how many families here in Goma are taking care of those IDPs" (Interview David, UNHCR Goma, December 2 2009).

Although some IDPs are being hosted by strangers³³³, most of the hosting-relationships rely on family or friendship connections, locally referred to as their '*parrain*'. There is much debate over the term 'host' in the context of urban migrants and displaced people. In the context of forced displacement, just like the term IDP, 'host' is a term introduced by a humanitarian discourse. 'Host' as a category has received limited attention in forced migration studies and policies and is taken for granted as a category that comes into existence when IDPs or refugees arrive (Brun 2010). According to Catherine Brun, these 'created' categories on their turn create a particular power relationship, that is marked by inequalities. As we will observe further on in this chapter, in Goma, this relationship becomes problematical through local issues of rights, ownership, citizenship and autochthony.

Patterns of self-settlement in Goma often occur against an ethnic background. The fear of being exposed to an insecure environment, but also for discrimination, made most of the IDPs decide to stay with members of the same ethnic community. Ethnicity is an important factor in choosing a place of refuge, whether with a host or in a camp.

"C'est clair que nous souhaitons rester avec les nôtres. Si un Hutu de Masisi arrive ici, bien sûr qu'il va d'abord chercher à se retrouver avec d'autres gens de chez lui. On cherche tout simplement les gens qui seront prêt à nous aider car nous avons beaucoup de besoins" (Interview Pasteur Eugène, Goma, November 24 2009).

Much has already been said about the role of ethnicity in local livelihoods, social capital and navigation strategies in Goma. In this particular situation of uncertainty and vulnerability, the significance of identity is again stressed. Ethnicity is strongly influencing IDPs decisions about where and how to live. In a situation of forced displacement where family ties are disrupted, ethnicity becomes a crucial factor in the remaining social capital (El Zain 2006). Furthermore, ethnicity is a crucial feature in the IDPs notion of security (McDowell 2008: 14) and it provides at the same time a basis through which people can manipulate economic advantages (Tesema 1998: 99).

Finally, patterns of displacement are strongly interwoven with patterns of return. Like most of the internally displaced people all over the world that were forced to flee war and violence, the majority of Goma's IDPs have the strong wish to return. They wait for weeks or months, to go back to their homes "as soon as there is just enough peace for them to sleep in their houses and not have to hide in the surrounding bush at night" (International Refugee Rights & SSRC 2010: 4).

³³³ One fifth of the IDPs interviewed in the study carried out by UNICEF & Care were staying with previously unknown persons. They met by literally knocking on doors, being introduced through a church, or through the host family themselves offering them refuge (McDowell 2008: 6).

In 2009, there was a sudden and brusque closure of five of the six IDP camps around Goma, after UNHCR announced that all but a few of the IDPs had decided to return home. At the time of writing, only the Mugunga III camp remains open. We already mentioned that from January 2009 onwards, there was a general initiative amongst IDPs to regain their home areas. However, the closure of the Goma camps is a controversial issue and subject to serious criticism in a recently published report by Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch 2010). First of all, the closure occurred almost overnight and it was the quickest camp exodus ever seen by humanitarian workers (Human Rights Watch 2010: 52). By December 2009, UNHCR staff spoke of a 'quick, smooth, spontaneous return, however, the 'voluntariness' of the return has highly been questioned, as people were actually left no other choice but to leave. The HRW report noted that "armed police came in, shots were fired, and some IDPs were injured. There was complete lawlessness. The local population came in and ripped down all the assets installed in the camps. It became very anarchic, certainly not a place where people could stay without fear" (Human Rights Watch 2010: 58). There proved to be different political agendas behind this forced 'return'³³⁴. No monitoring was organised to follow the return of the IDPs, but it became clear that of the tens of thousands of IDPs leaving the camps, only a few of them returned home. Because insecurity remained in many of their home villages and because many of the returnees found their lands occupied, many were re-displaced. The most vulnerable could stay in the remaining Mugunga III camp, others went to informal camps and many installed in hosting families in Goma or Sake. This resulted in a new wave of IDPs that installed themselves in the city.

The situation of 'protracted displacement' due to ongoing instability and insecurity makes the permanent return of IDPs to their home extremely difficult. Many IDPs have been forced to move several times. For thousands of IDPs displaced in Goma, it is not their first time to stay there. Many of the people interviewed in 2009 that stayed in host families told they have fled to Goma several times since 2007, sometimes staying in a camp for a period of time, sometimes staying with family or friends. This resulted in a situation of continuous, 'cyclical' mobility, where people often going back and forth between the city and their village, according to the safety conditions. Due to intensified fighting around

³³⁴ According to a Goma based humanitarian aid worker, landowners in Goma's periphery put pressure on the governor to retrieve their land that was being occupied by the camps. Further, the closure of the camps had a crucial symbolic meaning and was politically manipulated (Fergus 2010). Since 2008 there were persistent rumours circulating in the city about the camps being a buffer to prevent the CNDP rebels from entering the city. As such, the provisional government would have a great interest to maintain them (Human Rights Watch 2010). But when the CNDP joined the government in 2009, the newly integrated political executives started to encourage IDPs to return to their villages. Another important factor was that the visits of many international diplomats to the camps (see for example the visit of Hilary Clinton in August 2009) became too embarrassing for the Congolese President, who did everything to show that he had managed to bring peace to the Kivu's through the joint operations with the Rwandan Army. For the provincial government, the closure of the IDP camps was used to enforce its legitimacy by proving the 'success' of the political integration processes and the resulting stability and peace.

Goma, IDPs would flee to the city temporarily, as happened several times in 2008 when Sake was attacked.

8.3. Accidental urbanity: the city as a second home or a place of transition?

8.3.1. Between displacement and emplacement

In a context of protracted displacement and a cyclical mobility where people are continuously switching between the city and their area of origin, urban IDPs in Goma are experiencing what one has called in the forced displacement literature a situation of 'living in limbo' (Abdi 2005; Mountz et al. 2002; Vrečer 2010). It is initially an 'in between' life, between 'home' and the city, between rural and urban. The 'accidental' urbanity that is produced in this context is constantly balancing between safety and contingency, and is emerging around the tension between displacement and emplacement, temporality and permanency³³⁵.

On the one hand, it is clear that many IDPs in Goma perceive their urban life as a sort of temporary 'transitory' life. For those people, the city is not their 'home', it is just a place to wait and pass the time, where the main occupation in the meantime is surviving.

"Goma is not my home, this city is foreign to me, there are a lot of things down there [in the city centre] that I don't know and that I don't understand" (Interview Marcus, Goma, November 17 2009).

The feeling of 'not understanding the city' is very common among displaced people in Goma and expresses their experiences as 'foreigners' or 'strangers' in a complex urban reality. In this sense, IDPs are just 'in the city' rather than 'of the city' and the city might be seen as the locus rather than the focus (Tesema 1998: 9). The 'temporariness' as a determining feature of this urban life in limbo is also described for other cases; Adam Branch observed for the case of Gulu town in Uganda that "town life is only a temporary time of testing and hardship which will be abandoned as soon as possible for their real lives back in the village. The urban displaced simply do not have an interest in trying to make things better for themselves in town through the major effort and risk that organisation would entail; instead, they look forward to the return home as the time that their conditions will permanently improve" (Branch 2008: 6). For the case of Goma, the situation is somewhat different in the sense that displacement has a more long term and sometimes permanent character, and that many people do try to make things better for themselves in town. But evidently, this initial 'temporariness' can prevent their urban engagement, integration and investments to result into valuable wage employment or access to social networks, for example. In this respect, Goma seems to be a place of transition instead of a place of destination, where urban integration can only evolve to a certain degree. However, Goma can also be a zone of opportunity, and long term displacement may lead to long-term engagements with the city, which creates permanent outcomes of urbanisation. Yet, these urbanisation and urbanity are clearly characterised

³³⁵ Jacobson & Landau (2003).

by high degrees of instability. Displaced persons in Goma's periphery clearly argue that the urban life is an 'uncertain', 'unstable' and 'incomplete' life, while stability and 'a life/living as it should' is often projected in their original (often rural) 'home' area³³⁶.

In his recent analysis on forced displacement and youth employment in the city of Butembo, Timothy Raeymaekers observes a similar reality, where "the material instability of internally displaced youngsters seems to express itself more accurately as a pending social situation characterised by a series of partial attachment to both the urban and the rural environment, but none of which exactly figures as a stable "home" (Raeymaekers 2011: 15). Displaced people in Goma often feel literally 'out of place', or 'without a place'.

"Si tu me demandes comme ça, je dirai que je suis ici à Goma, oui, affirmative. Mais non, je ne suis pas DE Goma. Je suis de Busurungi, là où ma famille à sa maison. (...) Ici j'ai bien un chez moi, mais au fait il n'y a rien qui m'appartient" (Interview anonymous IDP Goma, December 8 2009).

We already pointed out that the connection to land is an important feature of identity in Goma and in the region in general, in the sense that 'someone with no land is no one'³³⁷. The processes of identity construction amongst displaced people are a very interesting topic, frequently elaborated in refugee studies³³⁸. The sense of 'dislocation' is reinforcing the already negative self-image of IDPs in Goma. The contents of 'IDP' as a category created in the humanitarian discourse, are determining displaced people's self-perception. Being a '*déplacé(e) de guerre*' is strongly implying features such as disruption, loss, marginalisation, vulnerability, victimisation, etc.

However, for many IDPs that stayed for a long time in Goma, the urban setting at the end offered new options to construct a 'new' identity and to identify with a 'new' life. The city, with its extended educational facilities, healthcare, infrastructure, transport, markets, cultures and arts, can become a new appealing environment to broaden one's horizons. Especially amongst youngsters, the city and urban culture became new points of reference in their self-perception. Just as Raeymaekers observed for youngsters in Butembo, the city can become a second home. Because, in order to make a living, they have no other choice than to engage in one or another way in urban life, they become –temporary yet long-term- urban inhabitants, rather than just visitors. And obviously, in the end no one will be a complete 'stranger' in Goma. In this city that is a crossroads of cultures, languages, histories and traditions, one will always recognise certain patterns as a point of departure to make an urban life³³⁹. And although being initially an 'in the meantime' life, it is a life where the city inevitably becomes more than a place to wait. As for every other urban dweller, the city becomes a place of invention, interaction, struggle and expectation.

In contrast to those IDPs staying in camp structures, where people rely on humanitarian assistance, urban IDPs staying in the city cannot but rely on other, urban inhabitants. So,

³³⁶ Focus group discussion IDPs Ndosho (Goma, December 8 2009).

³³⁷ Interview local observer (Goma, December 7 2009).

³³⁸ See for example Coker (2004); Malkki (1992); Clark (2007).

³³⁹ Interview Pasteur Joelle (Goma, November 24 2009).

while those in the camps can survive in almost 'isolation' from the surrounding space and community, those in the city are forced to interact with their urban setting. However the temporariness of their urban survival may be the same (Landau 2004). As one displaced woman in Ndosho explained:

"Last year, I stayed in the Mugunga camp. They gave us food there, but it was not enough. After some time my son found out that we could stay here [Ndosho] in the family of my brother in law. It is better to stay with people you know. But to have food every day, it is difficult because my brother in law has to feed many people already. So we try our best to find something by ourselves. (...) sometimes I wash cloths for my neighbours. But it is hard" (Interview Janette, Goma, November 17 2009).

Almost all IDPs in Goma have their home in rural areas. For them, urbanity in itself forms a first important challenge in adaption and survival. Arriving in the city, one is confronted with a world one does not know how to understand, how to manage it and how to navigate through it. After having found shelter and security, one is often confronted with new, unfamiliar urban problems.

"Before, when we lived in the village, some of us worked very hard to be able to come to live in the city one day. But now that they are here, they see that it is different from what they had expected. The ground we live on is too hard to cultivate (...) For the smallest thing that we need, we need to have money to buy it. The people in our neighbourhood are not rich, they are poor like us" (Interview Marcus, Goma, November 17 2009).

Arriving in the city, IDPs often have lost their possessions, homes, land and livelihoods, as well as family, friends and associated economic and social capital. But while establishing themselves in an urban setting, IDPs don't only have to deal with these material challenges, they will also be confronted with new meanings and values, that differ remarkably from those in their rural setting. Branch has described in detail this ambivalence of the 'urban life', where urban features such as 'modernity', 'globalism' and 'freedom' can be perceived by some as a gain, but as a loss by others. Urban life thus forms many challenges in different ways and not knowing how to deal with them can retain displaced persons in a marginal position. However, they are well aware of the fact that their safety and wellbeing depend on their accurate reading and careful negotiation of the urban area (Tibaijuka 2010). Their ways of pursuing urban livelihoods differ from that of other urban inhabitants, as they are of a more 'provisional' status. While organising their urban life and livelihoods, displaced people develop various forms of socio-economic interaction. These will be described in the following sections, as well as the ways in which this 'accidental' urban life-making in Goma has lead to economic, social and spatial reconfigurations.

More than just being a state of wasted human capacity, deprivations of human dignity and breaking down of self-worthiness (Abdi 2005)³⁴⁰, the urban 'accidental' life is a result of

³⁴⁰ Abdi further describes this state of life 'in limbo' as a state 'where men have to be freed from' (Abdi 2005: 7).

everyday efforts in constructing a meaningful life in a highly unpredictable and unstable environment. However, this 'agency' or the active engagement of displaced persons as enterprising agents 'creating their own meanings in the world in which they have been cast' (McSpadden and Moussa, 1993 in: Coker (2004: 402) may not be overestimated. Without being rather passive 'victims', they remain however marginalised, excluded and the subject of political manipulation.

8.3.2. Negotiating urban economies. Patch-work livelihoods.

Staying with families that most of the time is hardly capable to take care of them, displaced persons in Goma are forced to find themselves an income-generating activity. Arriving in the city, they often can no longer rely on their original economic activity of agriculture, so they are forced to integrate in the local urban economy. In their search for a decent livelihood, displaced people in Goma face many obstacles. One of the main challenges in urban survival strategies is the need for cash. More than in the rural areas, to meet basic needs, one needs to have cash money. One specific feature of the urban coping economy is its almost complete immersion in the cash economy and the reliance on urban labour markets. Subsistence production is scarce, and housing, food, health care and transport require ready amounts of currency (Schütte 2004: 12, cited in: Brees 2009).

Like urban displaced people elsewhere, those IDPs in Goma who manage to find a small 'job' end up in the informal market as a petty trader, transporter or shoemaker, performing often physically very intensive labour, generating a very small and irregular income (Musimbi Kyalondawa 2008). As such, they often don't get further than this margins of the urban labour market, which continues to be delimited by sharp social divisions (Raeymaekers 2011). But in Goma, these activities constitute the cornerstone of the local economy and 90% of the urban population has to rely on it. This means that IDPs have to compete with many other, very poor urban inhabitants to find some earning in this informal job market. They are the weakest in this competition, because they are often not well integrated in social or ethnic networks of recruiting, or because they often do not have any experience in this urban survival economy. Just like the majority of *Goméens*, they need to combine all sorts of informal activities to be able to survive.



Picture 14: IDPs earning their living with transport of goods © B. Muniyi 2010

"Sometimes I work as a transporter at Kituku. Sometimes I crush stones here in the district. I receive very little money. Much of my time I work for the man who is hosting me and my family, so for that labour I don't receive any money" (Interview anonymous IDP Goma, November 18 2009).

The engagement in this kind of urban 'patchwork economy' is a very uncertain and unpredictable way of survival. Their constant mobility between the city and their village, is often cited by them as a reason why they cannot engage properly in an urban income generating activity. On the other hand, *Goméens* are not likely to invest in the employment of IDPs that would return to their villages as soon as they can. But the difficulties of having access to work are framed in a larger problem of mistrust towards displaced persons. Although, as elsewhere in the region, economic networks in Goma are often organised along ethnic lines, there is no explicit ethnic discrimination or exclusion in urban labour markets³⁴¹. However, *Goméens* often openly admit their distrust towards displaced people in their district that prevents them to work together for example. As one woman explained:

"Les déplacés de guerre sont nombreux dans ce quartier. En générale les relations avec les voisins sont bonnes. Sauf que souvent les gens ont peur qu'ils vont prendre notre travail (...) En plus, on ne sait jamais ce sont qui exactement, ces gens. Des fois il peut y avoir des démobilisées. Ou même des espionnes. C'est pourquoi on les évite des fois, c'est pourquoi elles trouvent difficilement des clients" (Focus group discussion inhabitants Ndosho District, Goma, November 30 2009).

In order to 'regulate' employment of urban IDPs, local authorities of several urban districts introduced a system of '*jetons*', distributed by the local *chef du quartier* to those who are 'registered' by the *Nyumba 10* as displaced persons. These Local authorities, responsible for the basic security in their neighbourhood, hand out these *jetons* to control the local employment, but also to differentiate between 'locals' and IDPs, and between IDPs and '*infiltrés*' for example³⁴². In parallel with the *jeton* system in exchange for food and assistance in the IDP camps, only those who receive such a *jeton* for employment are able to have access to small, irregular and underpaid jobs. The displaced themselves see this system as a strategy by the local inhabitants to secure their own job market and feel discriminated. This system tend to reinforce -and even almost institutionalises- the temporality of IDPs urban livelihoods which keeps them stuck in an uncertain, unstable kind of 'meantime' urban life. This system of *jetons* is used by the local authorities to 'manage' security and the general course of events of their district. But it is also widespread in other sectors and on other levels of urban governance. On the one hand, these small pieces of cardboard offer a certain 'power' and 'legitimacy' to the ones who distribute them, on the other hand they 'legalise' or confirm the status of the person who

³⁴¹ With the exception of the case of Bambuti pygmies (IRIN, 1 September 2010 DRC: "Displacement and discrimination – the lot of the Bambuti Pygmies": <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportID=90354>, last access date 01/11/2011)

³⁴² Personal correspondence with local observer (Goma, February 5 2011).

owes it. As such, this system serves to reinforce the regulating role of local authorities and their control over people's mobility, integration, etc. (as these authorities can assign for example to IDPs a place to stay, as well as a land to cultivate etc.) (Zeender & Rothing 2010). Because of their position of dependency, IDPs are easily 'controlled' in this way by others (Stedman & Tanner 2003). While in IDP camps the displaced fall under the control of the humanitarian agencies, in the urban districts this responsibility has been taken over by the local authorities. With the increasing presence of IDPs outside the camp structures, these latter have been given an important responsibility in 'managing' local problems related to the IDPs' urban settlement (ethnic tensions, competition over land and labour, insecurity etc.).

In their search for livelihoods, IDPs thus often experience being subjected to arbitrary, uncertain, and unpredictable forms of governance. For example, IDPs form one of the urban social groups that by its vulnerability is easily being manipulated to serve the 'elites' interests. By organising activities of 'social assistance' to help this 'population vulnerable' (as is also the case for widows and street children) by distributing for example cloths and food, IDPs are approached by different groups of urban elites. Further, their presence seems also to be the legitimacy the international humanitarian organisations in Goma. Finally, they also form an important group for political mobilisation and military recruitment³⁴³.

To live and to survive, IDPs look for all possible occupations. This resulted in the emergence of a new niche in the employment market, where heavy and underpaid labour is being outsourced to IDPs.

"Les gens parlent souvent de "engager quelques déplacés" quand ils cherchent une main d'œuvre moins chers par exemple dans la construction, un déménagement, des trucs pareils. Mais souvent des petit jobs uniques quoi, jamais à long terme" (Interview Rosy, student ULPGL, Goma, February 3 2008).

Where possible IDPs fall back on small-scale agriculture, in order to survive. This has led to an increasing 'rurbanisation' of the urban periphery, a phenomenon referring to the practice of rural activities of survival in an urban environment (Baker 1997; Trefon 2003; Trefon 2009a). As a result, districts like Mugunga and Lac Vert are becoming spaces of peri-urban cultivation, where urban and rural features are mingled and where sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between being in the city or in the village. It is interesting to see how displaced persons installing in an urban setting such as Goma are mainly concerned with the continuation of their rural activities, instead of the need to engage in the urban economy.

³⁴³ I did not further investigate these last issues. The fact that the IDP camps in and around Goma are a ready ground for mobilisation and recruitment of armed actors has been proven on several occasions. Since the refugee crisis in 1994, when these camps proved to be fertile ground for mobilisation and recruitment, the presence and activities of political parties in these camps was prohibited. It has been generally assumed that between 2007 and 2008, CNDP recruited Hutu from the IDP camps surrounding Goma (Interview David, UNHCR, Goma December 2 2009; Interview UNOCHA staff member (Goma, October 12 2008).

"Me, I am lucky to have a small piece of land at the other side of the road that is of good quality to cultivate. For the time we have to stay here in town I can rent it from the owner. In exchange I give him parts of the crops and I work for him as his 'domestique'. Cultivating only helps me to feed my children" (Interview Maman Thomas, Goma, November 17 2009).

Self-supporting cultivation is theoretically possible in the urban periphery because of vast open spaces. However, these spaces are almost always someone's property and IDPs often illegally occupy another man's land to cultivate. This creates additional tensions between the IDPs and the hosting community³⁴⁴. Besides this 'rurbanisation' as an important consequence of the IDPs' integration in the urban economic space, another important impact is directly linked to this phenomenon. While investing in small scale urban survival agriculture, displaced people have massively abandoned their lands, resulting in a huge decrease of agricultural production in the hinterland, directly affecting the city. This decrease in production and the increase of demand by the growing urban population has led to a spectacular increase in prices of several basic products in Goma (Musika Ikobyia 2006) (Pole Institute 2009b)³⁴⁵.

This fact is often mentioned by *Goméens* while expressing their worries about the integration of IDPs in their city. According to many, their presence has an overall negative impact; IDPs would contribute little or nothing to the local economy and would instead only cause more urban unemployment and poverty³⁴⁶. The arrival and integration of thousands of IDPs has caused a considerably social, economic and spatial pressure on the city and its inhabitants. It is obvious that the city of Goma is unable to cope with the uncontrolled influx of displaced persons and to properly host them in a context where the majority of the population lives in poverty. This resulted in an increased competition for limited urban resources and an increased vulnerability of the urban inhabitants in general. According to many *Goméens*, war displacement into the city has resulted in a general 'degradation' of social life and they make a direct link between urban crime and the presence of IDPs in Goma. Phenomena such as '*maybobo*' (street children), prostitution, sexual abuse, '*vagabondage*', '*banditisme*', are cited as direct consequences of the presence of IDPs in the city³⁴⁷. By doing this, inhabitants stress the tragic side of the city's evolution towards a zone of refuge. The fact that the presence of IDPs might sometimes be seen as a threat, is further enforced by rumours that the influx of IDPs brings 'bad elements' into the city.

³⁴⁴ Interview David, UNHRC (Goma, December 2 2009).

³⁴⁵ In 2009 Pole Institute reported tripled prices of beans, tomatoes and charcoal, and quadrupled prices of bananas and manioc leaves between 2005 and 2009. Besides rural exodus, increasing prices are also due to a strong monetary devaluation and a general economic and financial crisis (Pole Institute 2009b).

³⁴⁶ Focus group discussion inhabitants Ndosho District (Goma, November 30 2009).

³⁴⁷ Results of focus group discussions inhabitants Ndosho district (Goma, November 30 2009); inhabitants Mugunga district (Goma, November 15 2009); inhabitants Keshero District (Goma, December 7 2009). See also Kasay Kambere (2008) and Musika Ikobyia (2006).

"Entre ces gens il y a des démobilisés. Tu ne les reconnais pas comme tel, et ils se promènent en ville, mais avec quelle morale maintenant ! Ils reprennent les armes quand ils ont faim ou besoin de quelque chose" (Focus group discussion inhabitants Keshero district, Goma, December 7 2009).

"They can be spies, as well, 'antennas' for one or another rebel group. How can we know..." (Focus group discussion inhabitants Ndosho district, Goma, November 30 2009)³⁴⁸.

"These people arrive with many frustrations, or hate. They can bring their tribal problems from their villages to the city" (Focus group discussion inhabitants Ndosho district, Goma, November 30 2009)³⁴⁹.

But despite these negative impacts and new patterns of conflict and competition, the installation of IDPs in the city also had some 'positive' side-effects for some, indirectly creating some unexpected opportunities in the urban economy. I already described in detail the impact of the establishment of the humanitarian sector in Goma. The development of this sector is strongly linked to dynamics of war displacement in North Kivu. One particularly important aspect here is the opportunity offered by the 'camp-economy' of aid distribution. Although nowadays it is much more rigorously controlled, for a long time this camp economy has been manipulated by many urban inhabitants, who incorporated aid into their coping strategies. This manipulation was already the case in the refugee camps of 1994, but was repeated in the IDP camps between 2007 and 2008³⁵⁰. By registering in camps one had access to aid. IDP families often divided themselves inside and outside the camp structures, to broaden their opportunities. Camp residents near Goma, for instance, have found work in urban areas while maintaining part of the family to access food rations (Zeender & Rothing 2010: 10). There were also many non-IDPs of the host community residents who registered and received aid and *jetons*, to sell or to use themselves (McDowell 2008: 8). The selling of 'assistance - products' is often cited as a 'new' economic market originating from the presence of IDPs in and around Goma³⁵¹. A local observer has described this market as *"la vente des produits natifs des dons apportés par les humanitaires, tel que des casseroles, des bâches, des blankets et aussi d'autre kits issues de l'assistance alimentaire"* (personal communication local observer, Goma, January 23 2011).

Compared to other urban inhabitants in Goma, IDPs urban livelihoods are characterised by high mobility. To earn their living, these people literally move all over the city, many of

³⁴⁸ Focus group discussions with inhabitants of the Ndosho, Keshero and Mugunga districts were held in Swahili with the help of a translator.

³⁴⁹ This is in line with the observations of Deng (1993) that IDPs carry with them a microcosm of the conflict, thereby transporting the potential for further violence.

<http://www.ciaonet.org/access/maynard/maynard03.html> (last access date 07/09/2020)

³⁵⁰ Interview David, UNHCR (Goma, December 2 2009).

³⁵¹ Another economic activity that would have increased with the installation of IDP's in town is ambulant trade.

them go even further quite a distance out of the city (to Kituku, Masisi, Kiwanja for example) to work.³⁵² This strong interconnection between urban and rural spaces and livelihoods is a crucial feature in this kind of 'displacement' economies. But rather than a 'perverted mirror of rural life in the margins of existence' these displacement economies are creative, producing new forms of exchange³⁵³.

8.4. Reconfiguring space, culture and identity

It has already been mentioned that the influx of displaced persons over the last fifteen years has strongly contributed to the fast and uncontrolled spatial and demographic expansion of the city of Goma. The IDPs' informal installation outside the camps in the urban area has exerted immense pressure upon the city's infrastructure. There are two main dynamics to be noted.

Firstly, the influx of IDPs resulted in the overpopulation of the popular districts located at the city centre (Murara, Kahembe, Mapendo, Mabanga, etc.). The increasing demographic pressure and the absence of any formal urbanisation intervention resulted in the overloading and degradation of this infrastructure. A continuous division of the existing *parcelles* has sharply reduced the living space and these districts witness the smallest plots and the largest concentration of households per plot for the whole city (République Démocratique du Congo 2003). Further, as hosting capacities of these districts are by far exceeded, there is a serious lack of medical and educational services. In sum, the situation in these districts is dramatic.

"Ces quartiers se sont développés dans des zones non proprement aménagées. Comme partout, leur extension se passe non planifiée, en désordre. Des constructions anarchiques ne respectent aucune règle urbanistique, ce qui crée beaucoup de dangers pour les habitants. (...) Dans ces quartiers, on trouve beaucoup de pauvres, des déplacés de guerre, des enfants de la rue et des prostitués. Il y a trop de saleté et les gens aussi sont sales" (Interview Stanny, Division de l'Urbanisme et Habitat, Goma, February 8 2008).

Secondly, many displaced persons installed themselves in the peripheral urban districts of Ndoshu, Mugunga, Lac Vert and Bujovu. As I already stated, these districts suffer from a total lack of infrastructure: there is no water or electricity supply, no roads, no markets, etc. Due to the ignorance of the population and the weakness and malfunctioning of government departments responsible for the allocation of plots, newcomers have started building in these districts 'in disorder', (sometimes in the middle of the road, on land allocated to public open space, etc.) (Barigora Rwamera 2008; Kasay Kambere 2008).

³⁵² Results survey 'Enquête sur la Situation Socio-économique' du Ménage' (Goma, April 2009).

³⁵³ During the 4th ECAS Conference in Uppsala, a panel was organised by Jesper Bjarnesen, aiming at defining a useful concept of 'displacement economies' to describe emerging forms of socio-economic and political production and reproduction in a displacement context. The tension between the picture of displacement economies as situations of non-productive accumulation and survival or creative and producing spaces was central to this discussion.

"Ce sont ce qu'on appelle 'les zones à habitat semi-rurale'. Ces zones ne sont faiblement peuplées par rapport aux quartiers frontaliers. Dans ces quartiers il y a aussi beaucoup de conflits fonciers. (...) Par exemple, les gens de Rutshuru arrivent, ils commencent à construire leur petite hutte sans demander la permission, ils construisent leurs villages pêle-mêle" (Interview Stanny, Division de l'Urbanisme et Habitat, Goma, February 8 2008).

The IDPs' use and occupation of the urban landscape in these peripheral districts is a clear reflection of the relationship between violent conflict and processes of urbanisation. The link between rural-urban war displacement and spatial transformation is in some cases very straightforward: one of these districts, *quartier Mugunga*, for example, initially was an IDP camp, where permanent structures were subsequently created. During interviews with the local *chefs de quartier* in these parts of the city, some stated that almost half of the inhabitants of their district were IDPs.

"Ils sont nombreux ici. Dans notre quartier il y a encore de l'espace vide et on peut faire un peu d'élevage, chercher du bois etc. (...). La plupart viennent de Masisi en Rutshuru (...) Les Bahutu de Masisi sont majoritaires. Les premiers sont venus en 1993. Ils sont ici depuis. D'autres sont venus seulement il y a deux ans. Aujourd'hui je peux vous informer que 60% des habitants de notre quartier sont des déplacés" (Interview Chef du Quartier Ndosho, Goma, October 3 2008).

The development of these districts demonstrates the spatial reconfiguration of Goma as a city of refuge. The changing use and function of the urban landscape is characterised by the 'accidental' character of IDPs' interaction with the urban space, expressing the uneasy straddling between 'making place' and settling down (Jansen 2011). The districts of Mugunga and Lac Vert are examples of an initially provisional make-shift urbanity, where people rent or construct illegally and can be removed from their 'homes' any time. The fact that, after having resided almost twenty years in a district, one is still perceived as 'displaced', points at the inability of these people to claim this urban space as being theirs. Being 'emplaced' in Goma is often a question of rights, land titles, and their temporary leasing contracts or informal arrangements do not provide them with any legal rights.

All this should be further contextualised in the general tendencies of socio-spatial gentrification and the contrasts between the city and the periphery as described in the former chapters. IDPs themselves perceive the city in contrast to their rural home areas and its characteristics (of war, exclusion, marginalisation). However, arrived in Goma's periphery, their idealised ideas of the city soon become projected to what is referred to as the city centre. Moreover, by their massive installation in the city's periphery, the border between the city and the village and the contrast between what is urban and what is rural, become increasingly blurred.

The settlement of IDPs and dynamics of 'rurbanisation', strongly confirmed the rural character, the *'caractère villageois'* of these peripheral parts of the city. Whereas the central districts are seen as urbanised, developed, *'évolués'*, and modern, the periphery is much more a place of the contrary, of backwardness, poverty, ignorance, etc. These

districts are thus not only geographies of spatial but also psychological transition. As Trefon has beautifully stated: these areas at the edge of the city form “fascinating spaces of imbalance, where ordinary people have imagined new constructions of space and time” (Trefon 2009a). Staying in these parts of the city that are described as a ‘*pseudo-village*’ (Barigora Rwamera 2008), displaced persons are often perceived as ‘*villageois*’ even if they have been living in the city over a long period of time. In this manner, the physical dual urbanity is also reflected in processes of symbolic socio-spatial categorisation and identification. When identity is constructed around urbanity, the level of one’s urbanity is often spatially confirmed. Therefore, most IDPs remain stuck in their provisional urban ‘in between’ or ‘in limbo’ lives and identities, which are neither urban nor rural.

However, as already mentioned, sometimes the urban space forms the basis for the construction of new identities. Self-perception as ‘urban’ is strongly connected to notions of modernity and globalism and is set against a possible outside in the form of a lack thereof (Jansen 2011). As such this identification of urbanity is a way to counter the perception by others.

Especially younger displaced people in Goma emphasise their ‘urban’ identity (often contrasting themselves against the ‘older generations’). Their aspirations of an ‘urban lifestyle’ are expressed through a rejection of ‘traditional’ rural life and through the appropriation of ‘modern’ urban culture (language, music, fashion...). This joins the observations of Raeymaekers in the city of Butembo, where “contrary to common belief, most displaced youngsters prefer not to return to their parental homes or agricultural backgrounds once security permits it but favour a future life in the city” (Raeymaekers 2010: 22). Thus, in some cases ‘displaced’ identities imply more than a sense of loss and can to certain extent transcend the state of fragmentation and disruption.

Finally, the socio-spatial urban transformation linked to processes of forced migration into Goma also has an ethnic character. Obviously, these processes had a strong impact on the ethnic composition of the city. Displacement waves in the context of the violent conflict in recent years resulted in a massive influx of Hutu, primarily from Masisi and Rutshuru. In 2008, more than 75% of the IDPs in the Goma camps were Hutu, the ethnic composition of IDPs settled in host families is more difficult to estimate, although in Goma one generally supposes that the majority are Hutu as well³⁵⁴. In contrast to other cities, in Goma one cannot speak of a true ethnic-spatial segregation or ethnically homogeneous districts. There is however a tendency of ‘*regroupement ethnique*’ in certain neighbourhoods³⁵⁵. A locally published report described this phenomenon as follows: “*Les services étatiques des titres fonciers distribuent les parcelles sans a priori ethno-partisanisme manifeste. Diverses relations sociales entrent en jeu pour faire que tel groupe ethnique ou tel ensemble de groupes ethniques devienne majoritaire dans tel quartier ou tel ensemble de quartiers. (...) ethno-préférentiel des parcelles, qui tendent à privilégier*

³⁵⁴ Interview David, UNHRC (Goma, December 2 2009), Interview Maire Adjoint Katindi (Goma, February 7 2008); see also Fact sheets BUHIMBA, BULENGO, KIBATI, MUGUNGA I, II and III (UNHCR & NRC, August 2009).

³⁵⁵ It is for example generally assumed that Himbi and Katindo houses a primarily Bashi population, Katoyi primarily Nande, Mugunga primarily Hutu and Hunde, etc.

l'accueil ou le séjour des "frères ethniques" dans le même quartier" (République Démocratique du Congo & PNUD 2008: 13).

The increasing ethnic pronunciation of the cityscape obviously has a strong impact on inter-community relations, social cohesion etc., and according to some local observers, it is an underestimated source of future urban conflicts³⁵⁶. These are additional tensions on top of the competition over the urban space and labour market that has been reinforced by the influx of displaced persons into the city. The recent commotion about the return of 'refugees' to the Kivus has strongly sharpened these issues. Of course, the urban impact of war displacement, rural-urban migration and ethno-demographic transformation also has visible cultural manifestations, to be read in linguistic patterns, in influences on traditional values, etc..

8.5. Concluding remarks

It is obvious that violence and conflict have accelerated the uncontrolled urbanisation process. In a previous chapter I interpreted migration towards this attractive centre in the context of the city's evolution towards a zone of opportunity. In this chapter, a more tragic side of the city's attractiveness was revealed, that of the city's status as a place of rescue, constantly receiving newcomers in search for protection and safety.

Dynamics of war displacement is a key aspect of contemporary urbanisation in Eastern Congo. All urban centres in the region have witnessed the increasing influx of IDPs. The city of Goma, because of its central position in the war-torn area and its particular evolution towards a zone of concentrated international humanitarian presence, is an outstanding case in this respect. Rural exodus in a context of war has had a profound impact on socio-economic, spatial and even political dynamics of urbanisation.

Focusing on the urban impact of dynamics of war displacement has proved to offer an interesting angle to study the relationship between violent conflict and urbanisation. The processes of socio-economic and spatial integration of displaced people in the city offer a useful starting point to study the transformation of urban economies, politics, landscapes and identities in a context of war and violence. Human displacement is a direct consequence of war. But besides focusing on how this displacement is produced, I have focused on what war displacement in itself produces with regards to the urban space and urbanity in general. The historical, social and economic factors of the particular urban locality strongly influence the situation and integration of IDPs. But from their side, they are to a certain extent also creating and recreating the city. By their engagement in urban social and economic networks and manipulation of urban landscape, they continuously reshape the city. Displacement forms thus an important part of the urban reconfigurations that I tried to capture in this dissertation.

Dynamics of war displacement in Goma turned out to produce new forms of livelihoods, new spatial and economic patterns, and as such contribute to the production of the new kinds of urbanity emerging from a conflict setting. As such, this chapter has stressed again

³⁵⁶ Interview local observer (Goma, May 12 2010); Interview R. Malinga, *Bureau d'études du Gouvernorat* (Goma, August 15 2007).

the significance of the city as a laboratory of change. Once more, the kind of urbanity that is produced has turned out to be characterised by instability and uncertainty. The particular livelihoods and identities produced in the context of displacement have magnified the 'temporal' and 'accidental' nature of urban life in Goma.

The image of Goma as a city of refuge represents a double-sided picture of the city as a safe haven offering safety and stability, while on the other hand producing new forms of insecurity and instability, uncertainty. In the provisional trajectories of displaced livelihoods, this temporality as a practice has been magnified. Further, these trajectories again have pointed to the crucial role of mobility in navigating the urban space. Social and economic navigation in this particular context is again directly linked to the role of ethnicity. The geographies of this navigation have revealed in an interesting way how the relationship between the rural and the urban space is impacted by dynamics of war. Through 'displacement' livelihoods we observe a complex interaction between urbanity and 'rurality', and this hybridism is strongly reflected in the production of local economies, spaces and identities. Regarding these particular livelihoods, that are built around the dialectics of displacement and emplacement, dispossession and accumulation, the pertinent question remains whether this constant 'coping' should be perceived as creativity or fundamental surviving.

A last element this chapter has touched upon, is the reappearance of the sense of 'cosmopolitanism' as a determining feature of contemporary urban constellations in Goma. Dynamics of war and displacement has strengthened the city's significance as a regional point of interaction and exchange, a zone of economic, cultural and ethnic crossing. Obviously, this creates both opportunities and constraints, openings and conflicts. This is one of the subjects that will be further elaborated in the next chapter



Goma: The city as an urban borderland

"La frontière est une réalité complexe pour Goma et ses habitants. C'est quelque chose qui nous apporte souvent des problèmes, des émotions, des frustrations même. Mais de l'autre côté, à mon avis beaucoup de ces gens ici ne sauraient pas survivre si la frontière n'était pas là"
(Interview Pasteur Joël, Goma November 24, 2009).

Introduction

The remarkable evolution of Goma towards an attractive centre of opportunity as well as a zone of conflict and contest, is inextricably linked with the city's position on the Congolese-Rwandan border and its significance as a border city. The proximity of Rwanda and the intensive transborder mobility and exchange have always been extremely important elements in the city's political and socio-economic development. Since the early colonial period, the presence of the border itself lies at the origin of its initial urbanisation processes. Today, large parts of the administrative and economic heart of the city follow the border line. The border is an inherent feature of everyday urban life in Goma and is determining local urban interactions, livelihoods, imaginations and identities. When analysing the current socio-economic and political dynamics of this city, one inevitably has to refer to transborder mobility, transborder trade and transborder culture. The proximity of Rwanda generates a constant interaction with 'the other side', with a different political, economic and social reality. Since its early creation, this border has fulfilled many functions and meanings. Its characteristics and significance varied over time, according to the regional political and economic context and dynamics of conflict and instability. The border has different meanings to different actors. Through the numerous discussions with *Goméens*, the border with Rwanda was referred to in its multiple and varying appearances; sometimes as a gate, sometimes as a barrier, sometimes as a source of opportunities, sometimes as a danger. The proximity of Rwanda is mentioned by Goma's inhabitants while referring to both the city's progress as well as its problems.

Lately, border studies have been mushrooming in all kinds of academic disciplines. Anthropologists, political scientists, geographers and sociologists all have increasingly been interested in border regions, border economies, border people and cultures all over the globe. With regards to Africa, research on borders and borderlands has served the analysis of state practices (e.g. governance, regulation, sovereignty)³⁵⁷; economic networks (e.g. accumulation, formal and informal trade)³⁵⁸ and identity formation (e.g. nationalism, transnationalism, ethnicity)³⁵⁹. Concerning the specific context of conflict and war, the border element has increasingly been integrated in conflict studies, mainly focusing on the topics of transborder migration and the role of transborder trade in war economies.

Further, studies on borders have also served analyses on processes of state decline and state formation. The notion of the 'frontier' has been exploited in particular to this regard. The dynamic and contested character of Africa's frontier zones and borderlands has gained renewed attention since the publication of Kopytoff's internal frontier theory at the end of the 1980s, which tries to offer a model for the historical understanding of frontiers and their relationships to metropolises in sub-Saharan Africa. A frontier is not

³⁵⁷ See for example: Das & Poole (1991); Raeymaekers (2009a; 2009b); Roitman (2004; 2005); Van Schendel (2005).

³⁵⁸ See for example: Jackson (2006a); Nugent & Asiwaju (1996); Roitman (2004; 2005); Titeca & de Herdt (2010); Van Schendel (2005)

³⁵⁹ See for example: Donnan & Wilson (1998; 1999); Flynn (1997); Muzvidziwa (2001).

necessarily a boundary between states, but it generally refers to these areas situated in the margins of the nation state. The idea of the frontier presents the borderland as a highly contested place, in which both exogenous and endogenous forces try to gain social control, reduce mobility and impose their authority. Kopytoff talks about 'the frontier as an institutional vacuum' as 'the metropole defined and area in its periphery as open to legitimate intrusion' (Kopytoff 1987: 16). Although the concept thus finds its origins in the analysis of pre-colonial African societies, it has become an analytical tool to study contemporary post-colonial political dynamics in borderlands.

Borderland studies may be booming, they cannot remain without critique. The main criticism that has been launched at border theory is that it tends to analyse the studied dynamics as all to easily being 'border specific'. Because borderlands have a large number of distinctive features it is assumed that dynamics of political governance, economic regulation and social identification in those places must also be radically different from those in other parts of the country. By lack of good comparative analyses contrasting these border 'findings' with similar dynamics in non-border areas, these studies often remain limited in their analytical scope. However, although not clear whether or not they will evolve into a new pioneering discipline in its own, these borderland studies do have offered an original and insightful tool to analyse socio-political and political dynamics in peripheral areas in Africa and elsewhere.

Next to acknowledging the central role of borderlands in the political economy of contemporary Africa, the specific urban articulation of border dynamics has gained increasing academic attention. Today, 'border city' and 'border town' have become common and popular concepts in border research. According to Nugent, not in the least because the majority of the world's population is nowadays urban, border studies will increasingly concentrate on urban issues (Nugent 2011). As sites of important demographic, economic and political influence where the agendas of state- and non-state actors meet, border cities can provide a different viewpoint on debates about contemporary African urbanism (Zeller 2009). Urban dynamics at the border often reveal interesting patterns of regulation, governance and identity. In this respect, African border cities can appear as active sites of innovation that produce specific forms of urban practices, governance and culture.

To better understand dynamics of semi-autonomous and informal urbanisation in the city of Goma, in this chapter I will take the borderland³⁶⁰ as our entry point, as it highlights, in an interesting way, the complex relation between city and state, centre and periphery, formality and informality. In the context of a general breakdown of political authority, where the political centre is gradually losing control over its border regions, state-society relations are being re-shaped. New socio-political and economic constellations emerge from complex negotiation processes between national and local, state- and non-state actors. I argue that the particular forms of urban development, urbanisation and urbanity

³⁶⁰ I consider the borderland as 'a region in one nation that is significantly affected by an international border' (Baud & Van Schendel 1997: 215) and as a scene of intense interaction in which people from both sides work out everyday accommodations' (Baud & Van Schendel 1997: 216).

that are produced in this context are not only the result of dynamics of state-failure and violent conflict, but are also the result of border-specific dynamics, which I will describe in the further course of this chapter.

In Goma, the development of new forms of authority, political-economic regulation and governance are increasingly 'transborder' in nature (Vlassenroot & Büscher 2009). Over the past decade, several academic studies on borderlands presented the border as a 'site of experiment', demonstrating how political orders can emerge, how autonomous institutional arrangements and regulatory regimes can be created and how they lead to new forms of governance (Goodhand 2003; Goodhand 2009; Nugent 2002; Raeymaekers 2009b).

I mentioned the urban impact of broader economic and political transborder networks in earlier chapters. In this chapter I will instead focus on the meaning and significance of the border in daily urban life and livelihoods, on a very local level. While perceiving Goma as an urban borderland, I will start from ordinary, everyday border 'practice' and border 'experience', to better understand how the border is shaping local urban socio-economic, political and cultural dynamics. In line with Donnan and Wilson (1994; 1998; 1999), I consider the border as important meaning-making and meaning-carrying entities that make them powerful in their own respect. The borderland perspective, that perceives urban development as 'development from the margins', will serve to grasp the articulation of urban livelihoods, socio-spatial configurations, power relations and identities in this city.

Urbanisation and urbanity on the border is reflecting the bridging of two separated economic, political and social worlds, and the constant navigating of this 'asymmetric' character of the borderland. This is most apparent in the relationship between Goma and its Rwandan 'twin city'³⁶¹ of Gisenyi. Goma and Gisenyi evolved along a strong economic interconnection and interdependence. They share a long history of urbanisation and today these two towns have almost merged into one single urban space. However, the relation between these 'twin cities' is one of asymmetry and inequality (Doevenspeck & Morisho 2011). According to Paul Nugent, border towns often impersonate different kinds of unequal relationships (Nugent 2011). Whilst for African border towns the asymmetries of power and wealth may not be as extreme as in the case of the Mexico-US border for example, the regional inequalities are more striking (Nugent 2011b). For the case of Goma-Gisenyi, these inequalities are characterised by the different political regimes and regulatory systems, and in different levels of state capacity and security. Furthermore, these two cities have different dimensions, functions, as well as a profoundly different political and economic significance on the national and regional level. Finally, the contrast in building environment is striking (**Picture 4**).

³⁶¹ Term used in the social and geographic urban literature to point at particular relationships between two cities merely separated by an international border which has largely lost its 'barrier' function. See (Heddebaut 2001; Pick et al. 2001). Although separated by a border and different state systems, regulations and laws, these twin cities' form a shared social and economic space.



Picture 15: Asymmetrical building environments Goma – Gisenyi (Lamarque 2011: 20)

In contrast to Goma, Gisenyi is a small, clean, well-organised and safe town with approximately 70,000 inhabitants, well equipped with infrastructure (Doevenspeck & Morisho 2011) and where the state is strongly and visibly present on all levels.

We will observe that it is precisely this asymmetric situation, and the existence of two separated sets of regulations and political and economic organisations, that have been a thriving force behind Goma's development towards a vibrant regional centre. The possibilities in bridging the 'two sides' create multiple opportunities that can turn border cities into 'boom towns' (Dobler 2009).

A second element that is of crucial importance to understand the significance of border dynamics in Goma's urban development, is the paradoxical nature of the border as a source of both opportunity and danger.

As a transit point between two different business spheres, two different regimes of control and taxation, Goma largely depends on transborder trade, being it 'legal' import- and exportations, or 'illegal' smuggling. Many 'borderlanders' of Goma (and Gisenyi as well) directly or indirectly depend on the border in their daily survival activities. As is also the case for many other African borderlands, the border in Goma has been a site for private gain and survival. However, as Das and Poole have argued, pointing at opportunities which are brought about by this 'exceptional' state of affairs does not ignore the dangers that are related to living in this margin (Das & Poole 1991: 19). The presence of the border and the proximity of Rwanda is often experienced by *Goméens* as an advantage as both the permeability of the border and the connection with Gisenyi are essential prerequisites in a wide range of economic transactions. However, this connectedness is in some instances also conceived as disadvantageous or threatening. The local narratives on the 'open' nature of the border generating insecurity by creating the possibility for infiltration of arms and bandits or other 'negative actors', forms a clear illustration. This 'border paradox' is a feature of many borderlands. Risks in borderlands may lead to profit for some, whilst others will loose (Bennafla 2002: 348). As the introductory quote of Pasteur Joël illustrates very well, the evolution of the urban

borderland of Goma and more specifically its border district Birere, is strongly characterised by this dual nature of the border, that has been reinforced by processes of state failure and violent conflict.

Further, I will argue that the situation of protracted conflict and the sometimes tedious relationships with Rwanda have magnified this border paradox. The weakness of the state has contributed to the permeability of borders, and transborder traffic between Goma and Gisenyi remained very intensive during periods of war. Various studies have demonstrated that the involvement of armed actors even increased transborder trade (Jackson 2002; Jackson 2003b; Johnson & Tegera 2005; Mantz 2008; Vlassenroot & Van Acker 2001). The economic boom of Goma during this period largely depended on this trade (Vlassenroot & Büscher 2009). But at the same time, at another level, the protracted conflict has led to the re-articulation of mental borders, translated in anti-Rwandan sentiments and discrimination. At the border, dynamics of contact and contrast, connection and rejection, opportunity and danger are two sides of the same coin. According to the general political context, one or the other sense of the border will be emphasised. Finally, this ambiguous character is easily being mobilised and politicised by political and military actors.

In the first part of this chapter, I will concentrate on the role of the border and impact of transborder mobility on the city's general socio-spatial and economic development. Starting from a historic perspective, I will demonstrate how the development of this urban borderland emerged through an intense transborder interaction. By focusing on Goma's border district Birere, I will illustrate how local activities, livelihoods and identities evolve around the connection between two distinct and asymmetric political, economic and cultural worlds.

Secondly, I will then show how these asymmetries are generating multiple opportunities, in the sense that the border itself becomes a resource to exploit by Goma's inhabitants. In this context, the porous nature of the border, generated by a weak state, is perceived as an advantage. By starting from an observation of the livelihood strategies of different actors involved in transborder activities, I demonstrate how borderlanders in Goma are strategically instrumentalising these asymmetries, combining opportunities from both sides of the border. Navigating between different spaces, economic regimes and identities, has become a key element in urban livelihoods in Goma.

Finally, I will analyse how the context of violent conflict has impacted on the role and significance of the border on a very local level, mainly focusing on the lived experience of the border, in economic activities and social relations. I start from a very specific period of 'border tension' and conflict, namely October 2008 when the CNDP rebel movement of Laurent Nkunda was threatening to enter the city of Goma. I will demonstrate that during moments of political and military tension, the meaning of the border can rapidly change to Goma's inhabitants, as its porosity is no longer seen as a source of opportunities but as a source of danger and chaos. This is strongly impacting on urban social relations. During these moments, *Goméens* project their longing for protection on the presence of a strong state, and severe controlled border, clearly dividing insider from outsider.

This chapter is based on data collected through the total of fieldwork stays. Much of the chapter focuses on the border district *Birere*, and on daily border 'practice' or border 'activities' in this district. Most of the research in Birere was carried out between 2007 and 2009. A particular moment of this research was October 2008, when Nkunda's troops were at the doorsteps of Goma. Spending much of my time in the urban border districts during this period enabled me to grasp the very local impact of the ongoing conflict on daily urban 'border' livelihoods. Interviews were conducted with local administrative authorities, traders, shop owners, transporters and smugglers. Although the interviews included actors of both sides of the border, they all took place on the Congolese side of the border. Visa restrictions prevented me from 'border crossing' with my informants. As such, my findings mainly concern the city of Goma, rather than the ensemble of the Goma-Gisenyi borderland. Because of the fact that I did not participate myself in the literal geographic 'navigation' of the borderland, I will not consider my study as a 'border' research in its full sense. The historical data used in the first part of the chapter are collected by my colleague and friend Gillian Mathys, and are part of a joined article on local livelihood strategies on the Congolese-Rwandan border³⁶².

9.1. The urban borderland

9.1.1. Goma – Gisenyi: a shared urban history

Some scholars argue that to speak of a border city, it should not only be located physically in the proximity of a border, but it should also be dependent on the border for its existence (Ehlers et al. 2001). For the case of Goma, this is true in a very literal sense. As already mentioned, its history of urbanisation is inextricably linked with its twin city Gisenyi at the Rwandan side of the border.

I already mentioned that between the relatively late "discovery" of Lake Kivu by Count von Götzen in 1895 and 1910,³⁶³ lake Kivu and its eastern and western shores were the subject of many debates and discussions between Germany and the Congo Free State (Belgium from 1908). The region which was contested was called *zone contestée* or *streitiges Gebiet*. The borders in the *zone contestée* were mapped during the 1884-85 Berlin conferences, thus before any European had ever seen Lake Kivu (Büscher and Mathys, forthcoming). As such the conflict was the result of the truly arbitrarily mapping of political boundaries in unexplored territory. The conflict over the mapping of the region had direct consequences for the way colonial space was appropriated. In the *zone contestée*, the relationship between territory and power was pretty straightforward: occupation was linked directly to control over territory. This resulted in a jostle for posts: both German and Congolese troops tried to establish posts in the area where the boundary was disputed (Büscher and Mathys, forthcoming).

As there could be no real solution to the boundary dispute between Germany and the Congo Freestate as long as the region was not mapped scientifically, Hecq (official of the

³⁶² See Büscher and Mathys 2011, forthcoming.

³⁶³ In 1910 the border was demarcated formally and on paper. In 1911 the 'contested zones' were transferred to either the Germans or the Belgians, according to the 1910 Protocol.

Congo Free State) and Bethe (German commander) drew an agreement stipulating the terms of behaviour in this disputed region. German and Congolese authorities had the right to create posts of equal numbers and force (Marchal & Delathuy 1996: 53). However, neither the German nor the Congolese authorities were allowed to interfere in political questions and the foundation of posts did not imply a formal occupation, but rather an attestation of rights over territory. It was agreed upon by the metropolitan governments that this agreement was accepted until the exact position of the border could be decided (Marchal & Delathuy 1996).

The determination of the exact location of the border was to be the task of several border commissions. The occupation of the Kivu region proceeding, Gisenyi was founded in 1905. The Hecq-Bethe agreement explains why posts often mirrored each other. When one post was established, the other colonising power had to establish a post on the other side of the border, with an equal military force, in order to secure claims. Consequently Goma (1906) was erected as a reaction to the foundation of the German post of Gisenyi.

I will not enter into detail on the impact of the colonial presence on pre-colonial commercial flows. It is difficult to point out how the local population was affected by the newly emerging spatial constellations. Explorers such as Czekanowski document that "*A l'évidence, la frontière de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo n'est qu'une ligne sur la carte dont la population ne tient aucun compte.*" (Czekanowski 2001). The impact on the regional trade north of lake Kivu, rooted in localised practices of material transfer, circulating hoes and bracelets (*ubutega*) from the west for livestock coming from the east (Rwanda) (Newbury, 1980), seemed to be negligible³⁶⁴. Traces if this commerce could still be found in the 1930's (Mathys 2010).

In 1910 the border that still is in place nowadays was delineated in an agreement between the Belgian, German and British colonising powers. The physical trace of the border has changed very little since then, except that from 1916 onwards Rwanda was *de facto* no longer governed by the Germans, but ruled by Belgium as part of a mandated territory (Ruanda-Urundi), relegating the once 'national' border to an internal one. Belgium and Ruanda-Urundi formed a customary unit and shared the same currency. That the border was 'internal' to Belgian colonial space meant that the border remained relatively 'open'.

Congo gained its independence before Rwanda, creating tensions along the border. Belgians in Rwanda feared that anti-European sentiments in Congo might spill over into Rwanda, that was at that time under rule of exception (Lefèvre & Lefèvre 2006). The developments in Goma were closely monitored by the intelligence forces. Small fights did take place between Goma and Gisenyi, e.g. between 12 and 14 January 1960.

³⁶⁴ According to Czekanowski this commerce was tolerated in order to placate the local population: "[...] les autorités qui répriment impitoyablement la contrebande organisée en réseaux étendues jusqu'à l'océan Indien, tolèrent le commerce ancestral des indigènes qui exportent vers le Ruanda le sel et les houes en fer, fabriquées dans les villages que nous avons traversés en allant à Rutshuru. Ces deux articles sont payés surtout en chèvres. On ferme les yeux sur ce commerce, pourtant illégal du point de vue juridique, pour ne pas irriter les autochtones" (Czekanowski 2001 [1907-08]: 74-75).

In post-independence years, during the '70 and the '80s, political transborder relationships were characterised by a general stability, directly linked to the close relationship between Mobutu and the Rwandan president Habyarimana. This close relationship was also reflected in rather lax border controls (Doevenspeck 2011). During this same period, informal transborder trade increased tremendously, generated by the porous character of the border, and by the implosion of the formal economy. This informal trade between Zaire and Eastern Africa had a longstanding history (MacGaffey 1991), but became more pronounced during Mobutu's Second Republic (Tull 2005: 88). Vwakyankazi relates the expansion of the informal economy between the seventies and eighties to the proximity of the border. According to him, the amount of smuggled goods was considerable: e.g. up to 60% of coffee produced in 1985-86 would have been marketed outside the formal economy (Vwakyankazi 1991: 50). These trading networks were controlled by some of Kivu's politicians and Rwandan immigrant elites, with the complicity of custom officials and police at several -including Goma's- border posts (Tull 2005; Vwakyankazi 1991).

The first important rupture in the border regime occurred in 1994 during the Rwandan refugee crisis in and around Goma. When the Mobutu regime proved to be unwilling to secure the border, the Rwandan army invaded and started the first Congolese war. During the second Congolese war, and the *de facto* occupation of Eastern Congo by Rwanda from 1998 to 2002, there were virtually no border controls (Doevenspeck 2011). Transborder trade flourished in the light of the expanding market of coltan and cassiterite, connecting Kivu's artisanal mining centres to the international resource market, via Kigali.

With the political decline of the RCD-Goma and the Congolese elections of 2006, the degree of Congolese state control over the Congolese-Rwandan border increased (Doevenspeck 2011b). From August 2007 until the end of 2008, the insurgency of Laurent Nkunda meant a new period of tension on the Goma-Gisenyi border. With Nkunda threatening to take over the city of Goma and with circulating rumours of Rwandan involvement, a general atmosphere of distrust and fear strongly influenced transborder interaction in this urban borderland. The situation stabilised after Nkunda's arrest in 2009 and the political rapprochement between the Kinshasa and Kigali regime. An important result was the '*ouverture 24/24*'; or the day-and-night opening of the main border post between Goma and Gisenyi.

9.1.2. A 'transboundary space' or a 'fragmented borderland'?

Regardless of tense episodes in transborder relations, the border between the two 'twin' cities has always kept its open character, as a zone of intense contact and interaction between Congo and Rwanda. Today, between Goma and Gisenyi there is a constant mobility in two directions for very different reasons. Congolese teachers go to Rwanda because of higher salaries, while Rwandan students often go to Congolese schools because of lower costs (Tegera & Johnson 2007). Even for ordinary activities such as checking one's bank account or searching for a good internet connection or even a good party, crossing the border is engrained in daily life. Many Congolese *Goméens* have moved to Gisenyi in the last three years, because insecurity and because of inflation of house prices as a result of the increasing presence of humanitarian organisations and UN staff in

Goma³⁶⁵. For Rwandans, Goma (where taxes are not lower but are most of the times not entirely paid) offers other economic opportunities than in Rwanda, and attracts many of them to daily transit to the city in search for a job or to do business (Tegera et al. 2007).

Through this constant coming and going of people and goods, through this reality of contact and exchange, the border sometimes seems to become invisible, or at least irrelevant in some sense.

A very particular element in the history of this urban borderland is the occupation of the 'zone neutre' or 'zone tampon', in theory an unoccupied stretch of no-man's land dividing Congo from Rwanda in the absence of a natural boundary. 'Illegal' settlement in the neutral zone already took place in the early 1960s. Official documents mention 'Congolese', who had settled beyond the line of border pillars, *de facto* on Rwanda territory. According to these documents, the *zone neutre* became a "place where fraudulent and even subversive activities increased that were difficult to control"³⁶⁶.

Constructing activities in the neutral zone intensified from the 1980s on, when border control was rather lax³⁶⁷. During the period of the RCD-rule, occupation of the neutral zone from both Congolese as well as Rwandan side increased due to the poor level of control³⁶⁸. Even RCD officers and politicians installed themselves in this zone. This has translated itself in the urban toponymy and until today, a part of the border district from the Rwandan side is referred to as '*quartier RCD*'. Attempts from the Congolese state to gain control over this borderland have known a long history. Probably from the 1970s onwards, attempts were undertaken to 'normalise' the neutral zone. In collaboration with the Rwandan authorities, mixed 'border commissions' had to map the problem and re-materialise the border. Such commissions, assessing the situation at the border, drawing up reports on the problem of squatting in the neutral zone and of habitations '*à cheval*' and formulating recommendations, were undertaken several times since the 1980s³⁶⁹ all

³⁶⁵ This is also the case in other urban borderlands in Eastern Congo. In Bukavu, for example, more and more youngsters decide to install themselves in Kamembe (Rwandan side of the border) because of lower rents and living costs (SYFIA Grands Lacs, Décembre 2009: "*Travailler à Bukavu et vivre au Rwanda*").

³⁶⁶ Division Provinciale de l'Urbanisme et Habitat du Nord-Kivu, "*Procès-verbal de la réunion de la sous-commission technique mixte chargée de la matérialisation de la ligne frontières des bornes entres le Zaïre et le Rwanda tenue à Gisenyi du 24 au 25 janvier 1994*", referring to '*Convention Goma-Kisenyi du 25 Mars 1961 par les autorités Civiles et Militaires des Villes de Goma et Kisenyi sous la supervision de l'ONU*'.

³⁶⁷ Interview Chef de Division d'Urbanisme (Goma, November 2009).

³⁶⁸ Interview Chef de Division de l'Urbanisme (Goma, November 21 2009); Interview local observer (Goma, December 9 2009).

³⁶⁹ See: Goma, Division Provinciale de l'Urbanisme et Habitat du Nord-Kivu, "*Procès-verbal de la réunion de la sous-commission technique mixte chargée de la matérialisation de la ligne frontières des bornes entres le Zaïre et le Rwanda tenue à Gisenyi du 24 au 25 janvier 1994*", "*Procès-verbal de la descente sur terrain par la commission technique chargée de la matérialisation de la frontière entre le Congo (Zaïre) et le Rwanda effectuée en date du 5.08.1999*", "*Rapport de la sous-commission technique mixte chargée de la matérialisation de la ligne frontière des bornes entre la préfecture de Gisenyi et la ville de Goma, travaux effectués du 26 au 30 novembre 2001*".

apparently to no avail. Not even the genuine institutions safeguarding the border were sacrosanct: in 1993 it was established that the extension of the Congolese customs post of *Poid Lourds* (Birere) was situated on Rwandan territory³⁷⁰. Nowadays, illegal settlements at the Rwandan side have been removed, but on the Congolese side illegal houses and shacks are still littering the neutral zone.

The occupation of the *zone neutre* is a very straightforward expression of the development of Goma as an urban borderland, where different socio-economic and cultural worlds connect. It clearly demonstrates how Goma and Gisenyi have at certain points 'practically merged into a single urban agglomeration, with houses in some places built right up the border and private doors in garden walls constituting entry and exit posts beyond public control' (Tegera and Johnson, 2007: 19). In this respect, one could argue that the city has become a 'transboundary space' (Baud & Van Schendel 1997), where borders in certain circumstances can become completely irrelevant.

It is obvious that the Goma-Gisenyi border divides two very different political, social and economic worlds. The evolution of Congo and Rwanda has occurred in quite different ways and nowadays the two nations are often portrayed as being one another's opposite, with regards to order, development, regulation and security. However, it is precisely this difference and the existence of two separated sets of regulation and political and economic organisation that creates possibilities and opportunities in border crossings and that as such brings the two cities together in a joined dependence on transborder exchange.

An in-depth study of daily actions, interactions and discourses in Goma's border district *Birere* will demonstrate the significance of Goma as an urban borderland, in the sense that it is a distinct socio-economic space where particular border activities, livelihoods and identities are articulated that significantly differ from the two 'parent' societies (Dürschmidt 2006: 246). Borderlanders of Birere constantly navigate between different spaces, economic regimes and identities. Or to put it in the words of a local observer:

"Comme les corps qui sont enterrés au cimetière dans la bande neutre, la tête se trouve au Congo, les pieds au Rwanda. Quelque part c'est ça la réalité des habitants de Birere" (Interview local observer, Goma, December 7 2009).

With one foot in Rwanda and the other in Congo, the borderlanders of Birere live and act in intertwined worlds.

Before I go on, it is important to note, however, that not all socio-economic dynamics in Goma are border-specific. I will come back to this at the end of this chapter. Not the entire city of Goma and its inhabitants are directly involved in transborder trade or other 'border' activities. I have chosen the case of Birere as in this particular area transborder dynamics are magnified, but they may be of far less relevance in the peripheral outskirts of the city. Although it is clear that the significance of Goma as a border town has a

³⁷⁰ Division Provinciale de l'Urbanisme et Habitat du Nord-Kivu, "*Mémoire préparé par le conseil préfectoral de sécurité de Gisenyi en vue de sa rencontre avec le comité de sécurité de Goma prévue le 23 décembre 1993 à Gisenyi*".

determining impact on the general political and socio-economic city-profile, the daily livelihoods of 'borderlanders' in Birere obviously will be much more interconnected with border dynamics than those of the inhabitants of Mugunga, for example.

9.1.3. Birere: the heart of transborder dynamics

"Voici Birere, c'est ici où ça bouge, c'est ici où on fait des affaires, nuit et jour. Tu veux des marchandises à bon prix, viens ici. C'est à cause du trafic avec l'autre côté, tu peux tout trouver ici. (...) Tu vois la petite barrière là-bas, où il y a toujours une foule de monde qui traverse, c'est là où ça se passe, tu vois. Même plus loin sur la frontière, par les ouvertures bien cachées tu ne peux même pas t'imaginer quelles sortes de marchandises passent là-bas. (...) N'importe si t'es Rwandais ou Congolais, il y a toujours une façon de trouver un dollar ici, et de faire de ce dollar deux dollars à la fin de la journée" (Interview Congolese trader, Goma, February 8 2008).



Picture 16: Goma city with Birere district (in rectangle)

<http://wikimapia.org/#lat=-1.6705434&lon=29.2309284&z=14&l=0&m=s&search=goma>

Birere is a very crowded, lively and chaotic district on the Congolese side of the border, and the centre of informal economic activities. It stretches along the border from the airport to the city centre (**Picture 5**). It is partly occupying the *zone neutre*. Birere contains three administrative districts: Kahembe, Mapendo and Miken. Because of their shared economic, demographic and morphologic characteristics, they are often treated as one district. Ethnologically, 'Birere' means 'dried banana leaf' in Kinande (Kasereka Matabishi 2006), referring to the original roof covering of the first settlements in this district. The first Belgian settlement later evolved in what was called the '*quartier indigène*' according to the colonial urban morphology (Barigora Rwamera 2008). Nowadays, with an estimated number of 130,000 inhabitants (Mairie de Goma 2009b; Mairie de Goma 2009c; Mairie de Goma 2009d), Birere is the most densely populated neighbourhood in Goma, with the smallest plots (with an average of 20 m²) and the highest concentration of households in one plot (with an average of 5) (Kasereka Matabishi 2006; République Démocratique du Congo 2003). The most represented ethnic groups among its inhabitants are Hutu, Hunde, Havu, Nande and Shi (République Démocratique du Congo 2009b; République Démocratique du Congo 2009c; République Démocratique du Congo 2009a)³⁷¹.

Because rent prices are high, many newcomers start occupying or constructing illegally. As is the case for the whole of the city of Goma, the fast demographic expansion did not go hand in hand with an adequate urban planning. Today, Birere is the most explicit example of what is locally called a 'spontaneous district' ('*quartier spontané*') or 'anarchic settlement' ('*occupation anarchique*')³⁷². Compared to other urban districts in Goma, Birere is relatively well provided with water and electricity, because its infrastructure dates back to colonial times. However, the existing infrastructure is oversaturated and run-down, and there is an enormous lack of basic education and health services. Most of the people doing business in Birere live in other districts. Besides poverty, this district is also characterised by insecurity and high crime rates. Inhabitants of Goma and Gisenyi often perceive Birere as a 'red zone', a filthy, risky place, where going from the city centre to Birere is like 'going down from the US to Mexico'³⁷³. Also referred to as '*Tchetchen*', Birere is a '*quartier des bandits, prostituées, souldards, vagabonds, brigands*' (Kasereka Matabishi 2006).

³⁷¹ Interview chef de quartier MAPENDO (Goma, October 20 2008); Informal conversation chef de quartier KAHEMBE (field notes, Goma, October 14 2008); Interview chef de quartier MIKENO (Goma, October 14 2008).

³⁷² Martin Doevenspeck is right when he stated that caution is needed with the use of these local 'narratives' on informal processes of urbanisation, as they neglect the remaining logic behind these social-geographic processes.

³⁷³ Informal conversation local observer (field notes, Goma, February 8 2008). The municipal authorities in 1993 described this districts in the following words: «*une bidonville non urbanisée avec un entassement des maisonnettes construites anarchiquement sans formes et sans style faisant la honte même de la beauté de la ville de Goma* (Mairie de Goma 1995: 61).



Picture 17: Birere stores © Karen Büscher 2009

At the same time, Birere is unarguably a zone of opportunities and the heart of economic activity, housing numerous stores, warehouses, restaurants and popular clubs or '*ngandas*'. With regards to these commercial activities its location is ideal, along the border, near the international airport and close to the administrative centre. Thousands of people walk long distances every day from the peripheral districts to this popular centre to do some *affaires* and to buy or sell goods for the best price. In Birere, people from all kinds of directions, status and ethnic origin come together and interact in all kinds of money making activities. It is in this part of the city that important business deals are being concluded, yet at the same time where people balance all sorts of survival strategies in order to have something to eat at the end of the day (Vlassenroot and Büscher 2009: 9).

The social, economic and spatial development of this district has evolved around the central position and significance of the border. In the following part of this chapter I will focus on how urban 'border' livelihoods are constructed around the notion of transborder mobility and 'navigation'.

9.2. Border opportunities and mobile urban livelihoods

9.2.1. 'Resourcing the border' through small scale transborder trade

Birere is considered by Congolese and Rwandans as a place where everyone can profit, whether you are rich or poor, where impressions of 'newness' and rapid change tempt people to continue their search for prosperity. As a connection and transit point, the border forms in many ways a resource that can be exploited. Borderlanders of Birere have

adopted several strategies to extract different types of benefits from the border. All kinds of actors are directly or indirectly involved in the exploitation of the border as a source of income. On different levels of the urban society, formal and informal, state and non-state actors operate in a complex web of interaction and complicity where negotiation is the essential condition to gain access to 'border opportunities'. Hoehne and Feyissa have called these dynamics the 'resourcing' of the border, where, through local agency the border is appropriated to generate economic, social and political opportunities (Hoehne & Feyissa 2011).

Chapter five already demonstrated how transborder trade in Goma, and more specifically the trade in natural resources during the second war, played a significant role in the emergence of a new urban elite. It also mentioned the importance of transnational connections in the power strategies of the city's small group of 'big men', the influential entrepreneurs that gained an increasing political voice in the urban governance.

The main focus of this chapter will however be on the border as an economic resource, on a very local level. The most explicit example of how people in Goma's borderland are 'making use' of the border is by small scale transborder trade³⁷⁴. "It is not so much the spectacular smuggling of minerals to Rwanda, or the petroleum import fraud that gives meaning to the border for the people who live with it, but their mundane effort to make a living out of it by changing sides with undeclared goods" (Doevenspeck 2011b: 13). This trade occurs through formal as well as informal networks, but as it concerns small amounts of goods, it is often not officially declared and most of the time, taxes that are paid are rather 'bribes' or the outcome of personal negotiation between traders and state agents. It is therefore difficult to make a distinction between 'official' and 'unofficial' when analysing transborder trade in Birere³⁷⁵. Traders themselves speak of 'fraud' when goods do not pass across the official border posts.

Small scale transborder trade, stimulated by different tax systems, is the key source of income for thousands of Congolese and Rwandans in Birere. Besides the economic differences, the higher degree of state control in Rwanda is also key. Ambulant vending for example, often performed by female vendors, is forbidden in Rwanda, pushing them across the border to gain a living³⁷⁶. As such, for many Rwandan women, the border is a welcome opportunity to escape the economic restrictions of the authorities in Rwanda (Doevenspeck and Morisho 2011: 9).

All day long, until its closure at 6 pm, the *petite barrière* in Birere (the border opening for pedestrians) is crowded with Congolese and Rwandan vendors, traders and transporters, crossing in both directions. The main part of the transborder traders are women, who

³⁷⁴ In line with International Alert, this trade is defined as commercial activity generating daily transactional revenues of less than 100 USD by trader (Lange & Kimanuka 2010: 4).

³⁷⁵ This is an old discussion, already introduced by Mc Gaffey and Roitman, amongst others. Titeca and de Herdt have used de Sardan's exploratory concept of 'practical norms' to analyse the particular modes of regulation of transborder trade (Titeca & de Herdt 2010).

³⁷⁶ Interview ambulant vendor (field notes Gillian Mathys, Goma, May 2010).

often buy goods in bulk and sell them further in small portions (Banza Bakajika 2008)³⁷⁷. While over the *grande barrière* minerals, petrol, cars and constructing materials are imported or exported, the *petite barrière* is the gate for 'portable' goods. Many of these products are foodstuff; from the Congolese side, maize, beans, manioc, palm oil, dried fish, and peanuts are sold on Rwandan markets. From the Rwandan side, meat, bread, milk, tomatoes and fruits are brought to Goma (Lange and Kimanuka 2010). But also other consumer products such as alcohol and cosmetics for example are traded and smuggled over the border.

Taxation systems on both sides of the border considerably differ. In Rwanda, there is only one official service (the RRA³⁷⁸) that collects revenues and combats fraud. While export is not taxed, import taxes are rather high, especially since 2009, when Rwanda applied the common tariffs of the East African Community (EAC). This increase in taxes has pushed more and more small traders into fraud (Lange and Kimanuka 2010). On the Congolese side, there exists numerous custom services active in collecting taxes. Besides the formally recognised services, there are multiple other, informal tax collecting agents present at the *grand* and *petit barrière*. In a study carried out by Pole Institute, 30 different agencies involved in 'tax control' were identified at the Goma-Gisenyi border in 2007, of which only 4 have the legal authority to do so (Tegera & Johnson 2007). The study by International Alert showed that 90% of all traders at the border crossing from Goma to Gisenyi paid tariffs (predominantly informal ones) to different state actors on the Congolese side. Of all of them, only 5% (11 traders out of 206) paid formal tariffs, accompanied by a receipt (Lange and Kimanuka 2010: 21). Most of the taxes paid in Goma do not correspond to fixed tariffs, they are instead individually negotiated. As a result of this asymmetry in taxation, several manufactured goods are to be found cheaper in Goma, and are again smuggled into Gisenyi, from where they were initially imported!³⁷⁹

Before I will elaborate in more detail on the 'border livelihoods' of Birere's traders and smugglers, it is worth taking a look at the livelihood-opportunity this trade has offered to other actors involved.

While traders negotiate their 'affaires' on the border, they have to deal with a 'jungle' of state and non-state agents, formal and informal associations, public and private actors. This brings us back to the ambivalence between legal state authorities and 'actual' authorities (the various non-state actors) on different levels of urban economy and society that I have discussed comprehensively in the previous chapters. There is a true complicity between formal and non-formal services involved in the regulation of transborder trade, where not only taxes, but also security, for example, has to be negotiated. Peter Andreas

³⁷⁷ According to a recently published study on small scale transborder trade, 86% of transborder traders are women; 91% of the transborder traders only have finished their primary education and the average age is 27 years (Lange and Kimanuka 2010).

³⁷⁸ Rwanda Revenue Authority.

³⁷⁹ This explains differences in price. A local study demonstrated that the average difference was of 28% (for example, the price of 50kg of rice in Goma was 20,660 CDF (16 EURO) while 24,500 RWF (29,4 EURO) in Gisenyi. One box with tins of sardines cost 3,500 FC (2,3 EURO) in Congo and 4,750 CDF (5 EURO) in Gisenyi (Banza Bakajika 2008).

referred to this practice of ongoing negotiation as 'border games' (Andreas 2000). There are multiple players involved in these games.

For migration and custom officers that operate at the crossing posts and for the soldiers patrolling the borderline, complicity in fraudulent transborder trade is the main source of their daily income. Often acting as private agents, state officers negotiate with economic agents for personal benefits. As I mentioned, the number of these state officials who are actually involved in, or turn a blind eye on the illicit activities at the border is quite high, especially on the Congolese side. Whereas Congolese border officials seem to be easy to bribe, the Rwandan border guards seem to be generally open for negotiations but also much more aware of observation by their superiors (Doevenspeck 2011b: 14).

Next to the state officials; there are the units of the national army and police that patrol on the border on an individual basis, as a survival strategy. Specific cases are the '*démob*' and the '*Kajorités*', who can be found at all times hanging around the borderline. Besides, there are numerous informal '*associations*', '*unions*', '*cooperatives*', that directly or indirectly engage in the 'regulation' of this transborder trade. One example is the '*Bas-Peuple Comité*', a cooperative that was created in 1993 by a group of unemployed young men of Mikenso that acted as 'middlemen' between customers, traders and warehouses. They were supported by the former Governor Serufuli. Today, this structure functions as a clearing house and has its own offices, near the mosque of Birere. In the first place, they associate the '*mamans légumes*' and other traders of agricultural products. Members pay small fees to the association, and get a 'privileged treatment' at the custom control³⁸⁰. The Committee also has a branch of '*antigang*', that operates to 'secure' the associated traders by protecting them from the *maybobo*, or other bandits. But like similar '*antigang*' groups in other niches of urban society, they have become themselves the source of insecurity, as they often harass non-associated members. Traders often perceive them very negatively, and consider them as another group of '*derangeurs*' just like the *Rasta's* and the *maybobo*³⁸¹.

This committee is an example of the 'gate-keeper livelihoods' (Raeymaekers 2008; Goodhand: forthcoming) that are locally created around networks of transborder trade. They are part of the fluid institutional landscape, where private actors are governing public space. As is also the case for other levels of urban governance, agents can easily change roles, as state agents can for example be smugglers at the same time (Banza Bakajika 2008).

³⁸⁰ The committee has its own '*déclarants*', but they collaborate with state services. When, for example, an associated member will be controlled by the OFIDA, he or she will pass '*à bon prix*' (Interview local observer, Goma, May 26 2009).

³⁸¹ It is not surprising that the International Alert report speaks of a 'criminal cartel' (Lange and Kimanuka 2010: 20).

9.2.2. Makoro: navigating along different geographic and economic spaces

"Si tu veux faire de l'argent, tu viens ici à Birere, tu construits une maison avec deux portes, une qui ouvre au côté Congolais et une autre qui ouvre au côté Rwandais" (Interview Birere commerçant, Goma, October 9 2009).

Small scale transborder trade in Birere can be interpreted as what Anderson and O'Dowd have called 'arbitrage economies', or economic activities for which the border is the *raison d'être* (Anderson and O'Dowd 1999). Arbitrage economy is the exploitation of these 'border' differences, and Birere traders master it very well. The ways in which they 'make money' out of the border, are multiple. In his extensive research on the Goma-Gisenyi border, through varied border narratives, Doevenspeck identified the strong perception of the border as a field to cultivate. Negotiating contraband is a crucial feature of this 'cultivation' (Doevenspeck 2011b). The fraudulent traffic of various small goods is facilitated by the porous nature of the border. Transborder traffic takes place via the *petite barrière*, but also along unofficial 'hidden' openings (through private houses and gardens), and through the labyrinth of small pathways in the neutral zone crossing private yards, locally referred to as the *makoro*. By using these loopholes to bring their merchandise to the other side of the border, smugglers avoid the multiple taxes but also the time-consuming procedures at the official border posts (Doevenspeck 2011b). Birere smugglers have developed trading networks appropriating these little tracks, through informal agreements with local inhabitants and border patrols. It is a highly lucrative business. One trader explained how he exported second hand car tires from Goma to Rwanda. During the day, he stocked his merchandise in a friends' house built in the neutral zone right on the border. After having made informal arrangements with Congolese and Rwandan patrols (which he knew from previous operations), he transported them to the other side of the border, during the night. In this nocturnal operation, many of his 'friends' were involved as the job needed to be finished as quickly as possible. They all received a small part of the profit. Profits were significant. By smuggling 800 tires, he made a profit of 3,000 USD by not declaring them at the customs. After selling them on the Kigali market, he made another profit of 4,500 USD³⁸².

Consequently, the ambiguous nature of the border and the uncontrolled housing in the border strip creates a context in which 'members of an ethnic group, or even a single family, may choose to live on either side of a border line in order to exploit the benefits of both spheres' (Nugent & Asiwaju 1996). Apparently, in Birere living literally *on* the border provides the best possibilities to benefit from these spheres. These smuggling networks along the *makoro* are in a way embodying the central significance of transborder mobility in the daily practices of Birere. Surviving and making money out of the border is all about the capacity and knowledge of navigating between different countries, cities, tax systems and currencies.

³⁸² Informal conversations Rwandan trader (field notes, Goma, October 2008).

One example of how local actors exploit the border in their urban livelihoods is the phenomenon of '*chora chora*'³⁸³. This concept refers to various forms of small scale smuggling between Goma and Gisenyi. On a more specific level it refers to Rwandan (most often female) smugglers who illegally transport small quantities of goods (such as sugar, rice and cosmetic products). They have become specialists in smuggling their products in sometimes very inventive ways, using the official border posts, the *makoro* and even lake Kivu. If possible, they hide the goods in their cloths, or in the schoolbags of their children³⁸⁴. Another possibility is to take a bag made of thick plastic, put the goods inside, wait till dark and then swim across with the floating bag³⁸⁵. If impossible to hide their goods, they will enter in negotiation with the border patrols or they can stock their goods in a 'friends' house somewhere at the *zone neutre* and wait until night to smuggle it to the other side. One female smuggler explained:

"On nous donne la commande à partir de la boutique à Gisenyi. Par exemple on nous demande d'amener du sucre, où de l'huile. On peut traverser trois où quatre fois par jour. On vient avec du lait. (...). Quand on a trop de marchandise, on passe par la douane [petite barrière]. Mais les petites canettes on les cache facilement. (...) ce derniers temps il y a beaucoup plus de patrouilles, mais on sait comment les traiter" (Translated interview anonymous smuggler, Goma, April 24 2009).

Through their experience these smugglers have established a well-developed system of connections and collaborations on both sides of the border. A Birere shop owner explained:

"Les chora chora, c'est une spécialité. Elles sont des spécialistes. Ce n'est pas tout le monde qui le fait. Souvent, ce sont plusieurs membres de leur famille qui font ces activités, depuis longtemps. Ils habitent à coté de la frontière et ils connaissent mieux le milieu. C'est un métier particulier" (Interview Birere shop owner, Goma, April 24 2009).

In their transborder activities, these traders and smugglers not only have to enter bargaining with border patrols and taxation services in Goma. They also have to negotiate with different informal groups such as the *maybobo* and the *Rastas*, who often function as 'brokers' in the 'authorisation' of street selling.

Another particular example of how local inhabitants exploit the border in their urban life-making, are the numerous disabled traders that are active across the Goma-Gisenyi

³⁸³ This Swahili word has multiple meanings. According to some, it is the literal translation of the traces of mucus, left by the snail on its way (Informal conversations Birere traders, field notes, Goma, May 2009). According to others it means 'to flee', 'to avoid/bypass' or 'to hide' (Doevenspeck and Morisho 2011).

³⁸⁴ These women often use small children in their fraudulent activities (Banza Bakajika 2008).

³⁸⁵ The principal of the plastic bag was demonstrated to Gillian Mathys by a smuggler in Goma, April 2009.

border³⁸⁶. This remarkable group of local traders earn their daily income by the transportation of small commodities (such as flower, charcoal, cloths or soap) from one town to the other, on their wheel chairs. On both sides they work for different *commerçants* for whom they deliver goods to depots indicated by the traders.

Because on the Congolese side, the disabled are almost exempt from taxes, Congolese as well as Rwandese businessmen use these traders for the undeclared traffic of their goods. Prices are negotiated according to the nature and quantity of merchandise, and are always cheaper than if goods were to be declared. One trader explains:

"J'habite à Katindo. Je fais ce travail depuis 8 ans. Ça me permet d'entretenir ma famille. Je fais le transport des marchandises et je les délivre dans les dépôts. Je travaille avec 25 différents commerçants, la plupart sont des Rwandais. (...) Aujourd'hui j'ai fait le transport des habilles d'enfant et la farine (...). Je ne traverse pas totalement gratuit, on doit toujours payer ici par là mais en tout cas c'est moins cher. Par exemple, pour un sac, le commerçant me donne 2,5 USD, moi je paie 800 CDF à la barrière. Je garde le reste. J'ai une capacité de 13 sacs. Il y a des jours où je gagne 30 USD Mais il y a des jours où je n'ai pas de travail. Je dépends des coups d'appels des commerçants" (Interview Bissimwa, Goma, October 4 2008).

Some of these *handicapés de Birere* have become themselves well-known businessmen and respected agents in the district. They engage and pay 'helpers' which accompany them in their work.

United through some sort of syndicate, they operate in a well organised way and form an important economic pressure group in case of for example contested intervention by the authorities on transborder activities. As another disabled trader declared:

"Nous sommes devenus des acteurs incontournables ici. Malgré la discrimination et d'autres difficultés, nous sommes là, et nous sommes unis, ça nous permet d'avoir quand-même une voix. Et on se pose!" (Interview disabled trader, Goma, October 4 2008).

In a way, '*les handicapés de Birere*', are borderlanders that 'realise that their very marginality – their borderland advantage in the interstice – gives them the opportunity to exploit the ambiguous values of powerful crossborder movements' (Flynn 1997: 35).

9.2.3. 'Arbitrage identities'? Navigating different socio-cultural worlds.

The strategic combining of benefits from both sides is not only a matter of navigating between geographic places and different tax systems. It is at the same time also a matter of navigating between two cultural worlds, languages and identities.

Within the anthropology of frontiers and borders, there has been a growing interest in processes of identity formation (Alvarez Jr 1999; Donnan & Wilson 1994; Donnan & Wilson 1998; Donnan & Wilson 1999; Kaiser & Nikiforova 2006; Kasereka Matabishi 2006;

³⁸⁶ This phenomenon is not unique for Goma, at other border location in the DRC one observes similar situations. See for example Raeymaekers (2009).

Muzvidziwa 2001; République Démocratique du Congo 2003). These studies consider the borderland as a social construction, engendering it through daily experiences, activities and discourses. An anthropology of borders focuses on the negotiation of identities where it is expected that identity is problematic (Donnan 1999: 11). The geographic dimension of identity plays an important role in a context where mobility across a national border is high. Navigating between different geographies, borderlanders are related in a very specific way to place(s). In borderlands, place and identity are made and unmade across a multiplicity of geographical scales (Kaiser & Nikiforova 2006). Some anthropologists have argued that in a context of intense mobility, crossing and overlap, there is a general 'dislocation' of people, no longer 'fixed' in specific places. This dislocated experience leads to a 'deterritorialisation' of identities (Gupta & Ferguson 1992).

Instead of a 'deterritorialisation' of this kind, in Birere the experience of mobility and crossing leads to a connection with *several* spaces, in which place plays an important role. In Birere there is a continuing significance of place and space in practices, and a strong 'emplacement' (Englund 2002) of people's actions and activities. Identity is an important element in this emplacement. For Birere traders, vendors, smugglers etc., identity is an important asset in their daily livelihoods and survival strategies.

In the first place, identity is socially constructed through actions and practices, of which language is a key feature. The *lingua franca* in Birere is Kiswahili, although many Congolese and Rwandans³⁸⁷ in Birere are fluent in both Kiswahili and Kinyarwanda. In a context of intense contact and overlap, in Birere it is very difficult to distinguish if one has Rwandan or Congolese origins. Through a long history of pre-colonial migration, and colonial and post-colonial transborder migration, many families in both Goma and Gisenyi have mixed Congolese-Rwandan ancestries.

However, language is not the only marker of identity. Although prohibited by Congolese law, some of the Birere transborder traders have double nationalities. In Birere, double nationality is managed in a strategic way. Identifying yourself as being 'Congolese' or 'Rwandan' and as such being connected or 'placed' at both sides of the border, Birere's actors acquire a privileged position in different ways. It is important to note here, that these Birere traders do not form a homogeneous group of actors. For particular ethnic groups (Tutsi, Hutu, Havu, and Shi, for example, historically perceived as '*population flottante*' with a presence on both sides of the border), transborder identification and emplacement on both sides of the border is more obvious than for others.

To avoid heavy taxes, Birere traders show their Congolese national election card while discussing with municipal tax collectors. It is locally believed that these state agents especially target Rwandan traders or shop owners, distrusting them because of their so-called 'dubious loyalty' (for exploiting benefits on both sides of the border, but only investing on their own side). On other occasions, while e.g. negotiating agreements with the *chora chora* smugglers or shop suppliers from Gisenyi, it will be more advantageous to identify yourself as a Rwandan citizen. Many Congolese *commerçants* try to obtain a

³⁸⁷ With 'Rwandans' I refer Rwandan citizens (in contrast to *Rwandophones*: Kinyarwanda-speakers).

Rwandan passport to use for their business travels (to China or Dubai for example), since to obtain a Congolese passport, they have to travel all the way to Kinshasa.

Identities thus can function as a resource, an asset in the exploitation of the border by combining benefits from both sides. The statement that identity can be used as a strategy is not new, nor is it unique for this particular case. Mbembe e.g. has pointed at the mobilisation of identities by the 'postcolonial subject' in order to achieve maximum instrumentality and efficacy (Mbembe 1992) and Trefon has described the opportunistic use of identity in Kinshasa to gain a broader access to social networks (Trefon 2004). However, these dynamics are given a very particular interpretation in the context of this transborder setting. Here, they have become part of the strategic use of the border and the exploitation of its ambiguity. Muzvidziwa analysed similar dynamics, in his study on the pragmatic use of multiple identities by female traders on the Zimbabwe-South African border (Muzvidziwa 2001). He describes how their 'identity strategies' enable them to survive and to cope with the difficult economic and political local conditions of this borderland. In Birere, a similar dynamic can be observed, and the capacity to navigate different geographical and identity scales, determines inhabitants' level of transborder mobility and access to economic opportunities. Just as Muzvidziwa observed in his case, borderlanders in Birere 'developed a capacity to make strategic decisions and to deploy their identities in an advantageous manner' (Muzvidziwa 2001: 74). In this sense, we could argue that in line with Anderson & O'Dowd's argument on 'arbitrage' border economies, we could also speak of 'arbitrage' identities in this borderland.

In navigating the borderland, the connection to both sides of the border is crucial. But there is another level of emplacement that is of importance -also directly linked to processes of identification-, namely people's connection and identification with the border and the borderland itself. In his analysis of identity processes in the Shabe borderland between Bénin and Nigeria, Flynn describes how border residents of both sides have forged a strong sense of a shared 'border identity', based on perceived rights to border crossing (and the benefits of transborder trade) (Flynn 1997). This collective transnational border identity reflects a strong territorial claim to the border; by explaining that 'they *are* the border', border people of Shabe are *embodying* the border. For Birere, we can partly observe a similar reality.

A remarkable way to identify with the border and transborder reality is the identification as '*enfant de Birere*', ('children of Birere'). Local traders, vendors and shop owners in Birere are labelling themselves this way and are referred to as such by others³⁸⁸. To be a child of Birere means different things. First of all, it implies a certain spatial or geographic connection to the Birere district for example by renting a small shop in one of the malls. At the same time, it implies a connection to the border by the engagement in mobile economic and social transborder networks. Being *enfant de Birere* means being active in exploiting the opportunities that lie within the proximity of the border and border crossing itself. But calling oneself an *enfant de Birere* is also a clear matter of self-perception (*image de soi*) of being able to navigate the border. As a Birere trader explains:

³⁸⁸ Again: this refers to a particular group of 'borderlanders' in Birere that are actively engaged 'border livelihoods'.

"Moi je me débrouille bien ici. Pour faire du business ici [Birere] c'est comme un jeu, tu vois. Il suffit de connaître les règles, le système, quoi. Nous sommes des vrais enfants de Birere. Nous savons comment faire de l'argent ici et à l'autre côté [Rwanda]. Et les événements [fighting, war] ne nous font pas peur, on est habitué à toutes conditions" (Interview local trader Birere, Goma, October 24 2008).

Thus being a child of Birere means being part of 'border life' and using the border as a resource. It also requires spatial knowledge and social cross-border contacts. Local traders will stress the fact that only the 'real children of Birere' know how to use the *makoro* by navigating through the labyrinth of informal crossborder pathways and by arranging agreements with local inhabitants and border patrols to get their goods cheaply to the other side of the border. As such, in line with Flynn's argument, the common border experience results in a sense of 'deep placement' in the border and in Birere as a space of opportunity. Children of Birere can have both Congolese and Rwandan origins and this common border identity is expressed through their shared dependence on the border and their claims on the border for maximum profit.

9.3. Border generating 'risks' and dangers

9.3.1. Violent conflict and the reappearance of the boundary

Because of the regional character of the Congolese Wars, border regions were often at the centre of violent conflict and at the heart of instability. According to Stephen Jackson, to better understand regionally intertwined conflicts -such as those in the DRC-, one has to understand the borderland, as the borderland is often 'where the action is' (Jackson 2006a: 426). A border analysis can reveal specific translations of conflict and violence (Doevenspeck & Morisho 2011). It has become clear through the previous chapters, that the local impact of violent conflict in Goma is closely connected to 'transborder' dynamics. This became most explicit through the local dynamics of war economy during the RCD rebellion, which created new power structures through economic-military alliances. The opportunities generated by transborder trade in a context of a weak state were reinforced by insecurity and rebellion, creating fundamental socio-economic and political changes.

While analysing the impact of violent conflict on border dynamics in Goma, this chapter will however highlight some other, micro-level aspects. Here, I will demonstrate how violence and insecurity has impacted on the daily border livelihoods, on transborder relations and on the significance and role of the border for Goma's inhabitants. I will illustrate this by starting from a very specific episode of the recent history of insecurity in North Kivu.

In October 2008, Laurent Nkunda's rebel movement CNDP had surrounded Goma and threatened to throw over the city. It was the first time in years that inhabitants of Goma felt directly threatened by the ongoing violence in its hinterlands. At the city's periphery, flashes of red light proved the proximity of the fighting. UN tanks and heavily armed trucks from the national army nervously circulated through town. There was the constant rattling noise of UN helicopters above people's head. The atmosphere in town was very tense. While daily activities in the popular districts seemingly continued, in the city centre, for a

couple of days, shops closed and streets were empty. There was very little information and a lot of rumours circulating³⁸⁹.

At the Congolese-Rwandan border on the '*grande barrière*', people lined up to leave Goma. Those people were in the first place international expat staff, followed by other 'non locals' (e.g. people from Kinshasa) and many *Rwandophones*, fearing violence and 'revenge'³⁹⁰.

A tense atmosphere of fear and nervousness was very tangible in the border district Birere. The day that the MONUC base in front of the airport was 'attacked' by the population who accused the UN soldiers of 'conspiracy with the enemy', a wave of panic immediately reached Birere. Police and military nervously started shooting in the air. Afraid for lootings, shop owners closed their shops. Everywhere people were speculating on the remaining time before Nkunda would enter the city. As Tegera and Johnson argued, in times of tension, minor incidents on the border between Goma and Gisenyi serve as a political barometer for the population (Tegera & Johnson, 2007: 21).

The geopolitical context of conflict, the tense relationship between Congo and Rwanda and the increased militarisation of the border had a considerable impact on local urban socio-economic dynamics and the daily interaction across and along the border. These events strongly influenced the way borderlanders were using and conceptualising the border. During times like these, the double and contradictory nature of the state becomes very clear. This 'border paradox' is being magnified by dynamics of violence and conflict. According to the general political context, the one or the other sense of the border will be emphasised. The significance of the border in the city of Goma is continuously changing and sensible to regional tension. It can suddenly shift from a zone of opportunity to a zone of danger, from a point of interaction to a point of exclusion. It is striking how fast things can change, and turn back to 'normal' again.

It is rather surprising that in spite of more than fifteen years of armed regional conflict, the border between Goma and Gisenyi has almost always remained relatively open. However, during moments of conflict and military contest, one can notice a renewed attention to the borderline as a means of division and separation. This has to be interpreted in the general tendency -I described earlier- of mobilisation of (ethnic) differences as a power strategy in armed conflict, sharpening existing fault lines amongst the urban inhabitants. As Pasteur Joël explained:

"La guerre a eu des répercussions énormes sur la population de Goma et ses relations avec les voisins. C'est avec la guerre que les gens ont redécouvert la frontière. C'est avec ce climat de méfiance qui est créé par l'ordre politique, d'ailleurs" (Interview Pasteur Joël, Goma, November 25 2009).

Even if the border remains geographically rather 'invisible' through daily interactions, it reappears on another, less apparent level. The border re-emerges through border

³⁸⁹ For an interesting study of these rumours, see Oldenburg (2010).

³⁹⁰ Own observations but see also Oldenburg (2010).

discourses, narratives and rumours, as a clear-cut boundary between Congo and Rwanda, 'la population' and 'l'ennemi'.

9.3.2. Spies and infiltrators on the border

"La zone tampon est un endroit idéal pour les espions pour se rencontrer. On les a vu se réunir pour se parler, les gens du CNDP, les businessmen et les Rwandais" (Focus group discussion Birere traders, Goma, October 19 2008).

In the general climate of tension, rumours on 'infiltration' were omnipresent in Birere, expressing a strong distrust and suspicion towards 'Rwandans,' ('*Rwandophones*', '*Banyarwanda*'). We observed how, through the history of violent conflict in the region, discrimination of and violence against those who are identified as '*Rwandophones*' in North (as well as South) Kivu increased at moments of intensified political competition. Rumours of direct and indirect involvement of Rwanda in Nkunda's rebellion circulated rapidly in Birere and fed discourses on autochthony that have proven to be easily manipulated as a mobilising force in this district. This resulted in small scale anti-Rwandan aggression, where vendors and traders identified as '*Rwandophones*', were mocked and jeered on the streets. Several shops and galleries in Birere, allegedly linked to the rebel movement, were attacked during small-scale lootings. On another occasion, fuel stations were vandalised during a demonstration for peace in the region. Their owners were perceived as 'sponsors of Laurent Nkunda' and 'antennas of the aggressors from the other side [Rwanda]'³⁹¹.

Transborder commercial activities between Goma and Gisenyi continued, but the tensions and feelings of fear were strongly felt on different levels. Suddenly everyone had heard of infiltrators or spies spotted on the border and in the neutral zone, smuggling weapons or transferring orders from Rwanda into Goma. These rumours fuelled feelings of fear that were easily capitalised upon by local power brokers. At that same moment in October 2008, the local '*chefs du quartier*' of Birere organised several 'surveys' in Birere, in order to identify *infiltrés* (non-Congolese with no valid residence permit). These surveys were conducted in a very efficient manner in collaboration with other local urban authorities. These initiatives, although supported by at least part of the inhabitants, nevertheless created considerable tensions in the district. Many '*Rwandophones*' working and residing for years in Birere suddenly decided to spent the night on the other side of the border in Gisenyi, for 'security reasons'. One Rwandan trader who runs a boutique in Birere with his Congolese cousin, explained that he had rented a room in Gisenyi just for a few days, until the situation would return to normal. His cousin agreed, as she admitted feeling 'uncomfortable' with his presence in her shop, as this would 'attract troubles'³⁹².

These events consequently had an important impact on identity strategies of Birere inhabitants and traders, as described earlier in this chapter. During those moments of tension and panic, it is extremely important how one identifies oneself and how one is perceived by others in Birere. Identification strategies become a risky issue that can have

³⁹¹ Interview student (Goma, October 2 2008).

³⁹² Informal talks Birere traders (field notes, October 23 2008).

important consequences. We already observed how 'autochthony' is a pliable concept, which creates a permanent uncertainty of who is 'in' and who is 'out'. People's obsessions with 'traitors' and 'spies' as well as local fears of being unmasked as a 'fake' Congolese have to be perceived in this context.

While in 'normal' circumstances in Birere, distinctions between Rwandan and Congolese are of lesser importance, they are emphasised in times of geopolitical tension. In these instances, *Rwandophones* that are commonly perceived as 'children of Birere' just like their Congolese colleagues, are reframed as '*rebels*' or '*Nkunda's*'. Where the shared border experience of the 'children of Birere' *seems* to suggest that the geographical and social border becomes irrelevant, this is not the case. Regional dynamics of exclusionary politics and violent conflict have partly interrupted the emergence of a veritable 'transnational' identity to which Flynn refers (Flynn 1997). Further, the possession of a double nationality –which is already a sensitive issue in Goma- becomes even more problematic. The issue of double nationality is often hailed as the 'proof' of the 'Janus-faced' *Rwandophone* population. Identity becomes a marker for distinguishing one from another, an 'insider' from an 'outsider', the 'good' from the 'bad'. These mental borders reflect the significance of the material borders that become "territories to be patrolled against those whom they construct as outsiders, aliens, the Others; forms of demarcation where the very act of prohibition inscribes transgression; zones where fear of the Other is the fear of the self; places where claims to ownership – claims to 'mine', 'yours' and 'theirs' – are at stake, contested, defended, and fought over" (Kaiser 2006: 936).

It seems that Nkunda's attack, and his assumed association with Rwanda strengthened mental ties between the urban inhabitants of Birere and the Congolese nation-state. This confirms Sahlins' assertions that conflicts in borderlands can enforce identification with the state (Sahlins, 1991). As we have observed through our analysis of the relationship between violent conflict and increasing discourse of autochthony and belonging, this can have direct repercussions on the way local (urban) citizenship is defined.

However, it needs to be said that these perceptions and discourses linked to the significance of the border as a source of danger may pop up at certain circumstances, but can also suddenly ebb away when the situation stabilises. As such, these reactions still reflect an 'abnormal' situation of a rather temporal character. Obviously, they are partly the result of a sharp instrumentalisation and mobilisation of feelings of fear and tension by political actors. Or as the following quote explains:

"Malgré tout, les gens vivent bien ensemble. Et on a pas de choix, car on a besoin des autres. Mais les gens sont bien ensembles, ça a toujours été le cas. C'est la politique qui gâche tout" (Interview assistant UNIGOM, Goma, 2 September 2007)

This once again demonstrates how the status and meaning of the border is always temporal, ever changing according to the given circumstances.

9.3.3. 'We want a Berlin wall': the dangers of a weak state

"L'histoire nous a montré que la frontière telle qu'elle est ne peut pas nous protéger. Seulement un mur de Berlin peut arrêter des histoires pareilles ici" (Interview chef de Division d'Urbanisme et Habitat, Goma, November 21 2009).

During the Nkunda-rebellion, as during earlier conflicts, the main trait of the border that was locally stressed was not its potential for economic or social gains, but rather that of a source of insecurity. In many cases, the result of such a discursive shift is an increasing rigidity of the border.

Where inhabitants largely depend on the free interaction between Goma and Gisenyi for their daily livelihoods, they also desperately long for a clear and visible border to feel safe and protected³⁹³. In a situation of danger, inhabitants of Birere project their longing for protection on a severe controlled, clear cut border, clearly dividing here and there, us and them. The 'vagueness' of the border that becomes problematic during moments of political and military tension between the DRC and Rwanda, is blamed on the weakness of the Congolese state. The incapability of the Congolese state to control its borders is an issue that knows a long history. Not even during the colonial period, the state has been able to fully extend its control over the margins. We already mentioned the efforts undertaken by the authorities to 're-materialise' the border between Goma and Gisenyi. But these problems arise at different points of Congo's international borders. One professor of Kinshasa noticed that "the state doesn't even know where its boundary markers are located, they have to go to Tervuren to find out"³⁹⁴. After the arrest of Laurent Nkunda and the rapprochement between Congo and Rwanda, new initiatives were undertaken by the authorities to better 'control' the border. In August 2009, new attempts were undertaken to demolish the 'illegal' constructions in the neutral zone in order to build a 12 meter large highway on the border strip³⁹⁵. In November of the same year, a new police unit '*police des frontières*' was deployed on the border, in order to "*faire face à tous les problèmes des frontières. A surveiller celles-ci pour qu'aucun ennemi ne s'hasarde à approcher notre frontière, à la violer et à agresser même le pays*"³⁹⁶.

It should be clear that the effective realisation of the Goma-Gisenyi border as a fortified 'Berlin wall' would have a disastrous impact on the livelihoods of inhabitants from both

³⁹³ Doeverspeck has elaborated on local narratives on the border as a 'gateway for aggressors' (Doeverspeck 2011b).

³⁹⁴ Professor Arsène Mwaka, on the colloquium 'Repenser l'indépendance: la RD Congo 50 ans plus tard' (Goma, 29/06 – 03/07 2010).

³⁹⁵ Radio Okapi 26/08/2009 «*RDC-Rwanda : une autoroute entre Goma et Gisenyi pour délimiter les deux villes*» (<http://radiookapi.net/politique/2009/08/26/rdc-rwanda-une-autoroute-entre-goma-et-gisenyi-pour-delimiter-les-deux-villes/>) (last access date 28/02/2011).

³⁹⁶ General René Abindi on Radio Okapi 01/11/2009 «*Goma: une unité de police des frontières désormais opérationnelle*» (<http://radiookapi.net/sans-categorie/2009/11/01/goma-une-unite-de-police-des-frontieres-desormais-operationnelle/>) (last access date 28/02/2011). However, it did not take long before they too, lost their credibility (JONCTION 30/11/2009 "*Panique à la Grande barrière : Un officier de la police des frontières bloque un véhicule dans la zone neutre pour trouver son compte*").

Goma and Gisenyi. The only moment of effective closure of the border occurred in June 2004, following the take-over of the city of Bukavu by Laurent Nkunda's rebels, when Rwanda decided to close the border from its side, and caused major hardship for those people in both countries depending on cross-border activities (Pole Institute 2007). This initiative brought forth both deep astonishment and frustration; *"Au matin du dimanche 6 juin, les habitants de Goma et de Gisenyi se réveillèrent séparés par une vraie frontière à l'européenne, n'en croyant ni leurs yeux, ni leurs oreilles, échangeant des messages par-dessus des poteaux métalliques"* (Tegera et al. 2007: 9). After heavy protest from both sides (initiated for example by local *commerçants* and the disabled transborder traders), this temporary closure of the border turned out to be untenable and was called off after one month.

In their longing for a 'Berlin wall' to protect their city, Goméens express their longing for a strong state. However, the 'uncontrolled' character of the border and the borderland in general, is not only a matter of the weakness of the state. Firm border control between Goma and Gisenyi simply cannot be achieved in a context where many people, -even those who are responsible to control, secure and regulate it- depend themselves on this 'uncontrolled' character of the border. The state therefore plays an ambiguous role in both 'control' and 'exploitation' of transborder trade.

During moments of tension and conflict, not only the permeability of the border, but the proximity of the border itself and the peripheral position of the city of Goma is seen as a source of danger. As a student explains:

".. les frontières n'arrêtent pas les gens qui ont les mauvaises intentions ici. Tu sais, à mon avis, Goma devrait être placée au milieu de la province, pour que les agresseurs ne puissent pas prendre la ville de Goma dans un rien de temps!" (Interview student, Goma, February 5 2008).

This reminds us of the image of Goma as a city of rebellion, and its significance of a gate for infiltration and violence. Violent conflict thus not only reinforces the character of the border as a source of danger, but also the nature of the margins as a zone that escapes direct state control, a zone where state authority, sovereignty and legitimacy can be threatened.

9.4. Concluding remarks

Researching local urban economies, governance and identities from a borderland perspective, has demonstrated that observations made in the former chapters on urban transformations and reconfigurations of the socio-spatial, economic and political cityscape, can partly be interpreted as the result of the nature of the margins, and more specific of the African borderland. As we observed, this nature is characterised by the tension between opportunities and danger, inclusion and exclusion. This does not mean that the earlier studied dynamics of for example informal urbanisation, the role of non-state actors in urban governance etc., are all *specific* for border cities, but that border dynamics can reinforce certain of these.

I started from the significance of the city of Goma as an urban borderland, where the border is not only a physical demarcation line but also a social, political and discursive construction (Paasi 1996). By focusing on daily actions, interactions, livelihoods and identities on the border, we observed that they strongly reflect notions of mobility and navigation between two distinct political, economic and cultural worlds. For certain groups of the urban population in Goma, the border and border crossing are clearly integrated in their daily livelihoods, and these 'borderlanders' have become experts in using the border to profit from benefits 'on both sides'. In the everyday exploitation of the border as a 'lucrative field', this urban borderland becomes a social laboratory, "creatively exploited by situational shifts and innovative combinations, putting its resources together in new, ways, experimenting" (Hannerz 1997: 12). The reality of the city of Goma as a zone of creativity, productivity and opportunity can thus also be explained by its meaning as a borderland. Dividing and at the same time reconnecting these two different worlds, the city is a laboratory of social change (Hortsmann & Wadley 2006).

So without claiming the 'border specificity' of Goma's socio-economic and political transformations, we can observe the articulation of particular livelihoods, networks and identities that likewise are to be found in other border towns in this region. Dynamics of urbanisation and urbanity in the margins seem to be following distinctive patterns that significantly differ from the core areas. The analysis in this chapter could suggest that emerging urbanity in Goma can be interpreted as a kind of 'border urbanity'. It is an urbanity of 'arbitrage', or even '*bricolage*'³⁹⁷, combining all resources available (whether in the form of socio-economic or political position, geographical location or identity) to exploit the opportunities which this borderland offers.

The case-study of the border district Birere clearly illustrates the articulation of this border urbanity in everyday life. Border urbanity is an urbanity that is emerging not only through navigation between two distinct worlds, but also through a constant balancing between dynamics of contact and contrast, and opportunity and danger. This results in specific forms of economic strategies, particular definitions of urban citizenship and new forms of urban governance. Issues that I treated earlier in this dissertation on changing power and authority structures and governance in general, can thus be understood in the light of the reinterpretation of local economic and political regulatory practices as a characteristic of the borderland (Raeymaekers 2009a; Raeymaekers 2009b; Roitman 2004; Titeca & de Herdt 2010). As we observed, different groups of state- and non-state actors engage in 'border practice' and create their livelihoods around transborder trade. Their organisation reflects new forms of governance and institutional arrangements.

Border urbanity occurs in a largely 'uncontrolled' way, beyond the grasp of the central state and authority. It seems as such to confirm the 'uncontrollable', and 'autonomous' status of the city that we remember from the image of Goma as a zone of opportunity as well as rebellion. The failed attempts by official authorities to define, control and secure the border, point at the inability to 'capture' the borderland. This 'uncontrolled' nature is

³⁹⁷ See Cleaver (2002) who, deriving this concept from Levi Strauss, describes 'institutional *bricolage*', a process by which people consciously and unconsciously draw on existing social and cultural arrangements to shape institutions in response to changing situations.

in the first place illustrated by the informal development of the border district Birere and in particular by the illegal occupation of the *zone neutre*. But also in a broader sense, the state's power, authority and legitimacy seems to be challenged from the margins. The city of Goma can be perceived as an urban frontier, an area over which political control by the regional metropolises is absent or uncertain (Kopytoff 1987: 170). As spaces of contest and resistance against exogenous attempts to control/define, these zones are often destabilising and upending "the established meanings and limits of place and identity" (Kaiser & Nikiforova 2006: 936). Further, this urban frontier represents a political space with specific characteristics of disorder and violence. Dynamics of transborder migration, the interaction between different ethnic cultures, the meeting of nationally defined territories, the territorial strategies by which metropolises regulate their hinterlands, and the resistance of local populations to these and other trends reproduce violence and political disorder (Hagmann & Korf 2009). The situation of protracted war and regional violence has enforced this.

From their peripheral position, from where they have a more regional rather than national meaning, border cities relate in a very specific way to the state. We have observed that urbanisation at the border evolves through complex relations between the city, the region, and the state. From their marginal position, borderlands exercise an important influence on processes of stability and instability. Authority and control over border regions is a crucial element in state-making. However, more than being a challenge to the state, borderlands also engage in processes of state-making, in a very particular way. While political scientists and historians have paid a lot of attention to how states have tried to deal with borderlands, far less attention has been given to how these borderlands deal with states (Van Schendel 2005). Border regions can be at the heart of the 'meaning of the nation' (Jones 2009), in the sense that it is often on the border that the nation-state is reproduced. It is through border crossing and transborder exchange between two different nations that these nations, as two separate political, socio-economic and imagined entities, are strongly reproduced in all its differences. The border between Goma and Gisenyi is a place where the conceptualisation of Congo and Rwanda is negotiated. As stated by Sahlins: border societies may be just as important in the creation of nations and states as their so-called core or capital areas" (Sahlins, cited in: Donnan and Wilson, 1998) Goma's evolution along the ambiguous synchronicity of centrality and marginality has given rise to alternative forms of governance, in which state practices are locally redefined.

While there is a general situation of a weak state, we observe that on the borderline, the Congolese state is quite present. I mentioned the presence of the multitude of different agencies involved in tax 'control' on the border. However, as in other levels of the urban economic and political scene, the state is just one actor or 'player' amongst many others. The ambiguous role of state agents in both 'control' and 'exploitation' of transborder trade is well documented in other cases. In analysing transborder traffic on the Congolese-Ugandan border, Timothy Raeymaekers states for example that "so-called fraudulent imports and exports in the Semliki valley actually occur in complicity with a parallel system of regulation that reproduces itself through repeated collaboration between the state and the non-state, formal and informal economic agents" (Raeymaekers 2008). Further, the

state is also produced on another level, through enforcement of national identity. The border between Goma and Gisenyi is a place where the conceptualisation of Congo and Rwanda is negotiated. As stated by Sahlins: "border societies may be just as important in the creation of nations and states as their so-called core or capital areas" (Sahlins, cited in: Donnan and Wilson 1998).

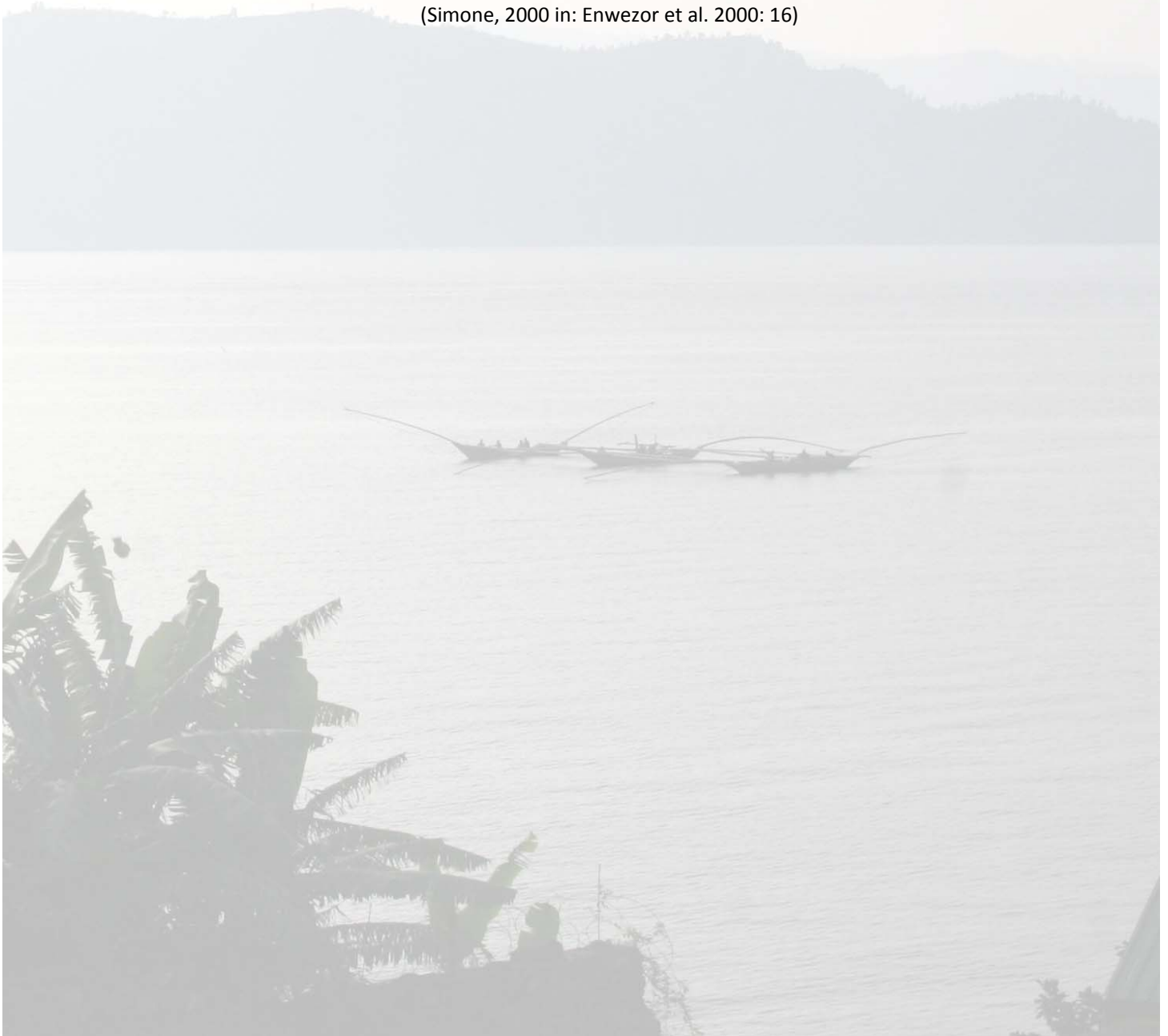
The significance of the border as a political resource lies in the potential of the borderland to redefine power relations and authority structures. The work of Roitman and Raeymaekers for example has demonstrated how transborder trade served strategies of power and control for different state and non-state actors. Through negotiation between these actors, new forms of regulatory arrangements can emerge (Raeymaekers 2009b; Roitman 2001). Thus, instead of being an institutional vacuum or an 'uncontrolled space', the borderland remains regulated and as Meager has argued, "instead of looking at what is absent, we should be looking not at the 'absence' of formal regulation, but at alternative forms of regulation operating below and beyond the framework of the state" (Meagher 1995; Raeymaekers 2009b):

As such, the 'new' forms of urban governance that we have observed along this dissertation, where, among new alliances and power structures the state is in constant negotiation, can be interpreted as the 'margins colonising the state', in the sense that "margins are spaces of exceptions and sites of practice on which law and other state practices are colonised by other forms of regulation" (Das & Poole 1991: 8). Our present ethnography of the urban borderland has enabled us to better grasp the local outcomes of these processes.

General conclusion

“The African city is the site for the challenge to the political and at the same time the location for negotiations and agreements where new organizations and services, freedoms and autonomous spaces are emerging and developing”

(Simone, 2000 in: Enwezor et al. 2000: 16)



This ethnographic study has been concerned with urban transformation in Goma, DRC, by analysing the relationship between urbanisation and dynamics of state failure and violent conflict. As was explained in the general introduction of this study, this analysis involved two main interrelated questions: How conflict and state weakening have impacted on dynamics of urbanisation and urbanity, and how these urban dynamics on their turn have impacted on political processes and the role of the state. I have argued that processes of state failure and war on the one hand have led to a dynamic transformation of urban governance, livelihoods, spaces and identities, and on the other hand have altered the role and function of the city in regional and national political and socio-economic constellations. Through a turbulent history of gradual state decline and a succession of violent conflicts, Goma developed from a marginal border post into a dynamic regional centre. Over the past twenty years, Goma turned into an attractive pole of opportunity as well as refuge, a headquarters of rebellion and a zone of fierce political and socio-economic competition. This study is an original contribution to the micro-level analysis of violent conflict in Eastern Congo, by starting from a particular urban perspective. Within research on conflict dynamics in the DRC, the urban focus has remained largely underdeveloped. The centrality of cities in conflict dynamics is however obvious, as they constitute important political and administrative centres, points of economic exchanges, zones of concentrated military power, the focal points of human conflict displacement and of humanitarian response.

With the start of the new millennium came a renewed academic interest in urban issues in the DRC and in Africa in general, resulting in a whole range of political, economic, geographic and anthropological studies. Only very few amongst them focus on conflict areas, and if they do, they largely fail to analyse the dynamic relationship between conflict and urbanisation. One approach in these studies is that of a top-down analysis of the effects of violence and conflict on the existing infrastructure and socio-political and economic city profile. The conclusions of this kind of studies present the urban outcomes of conflict dynamics in terms of decline, destruction, chaos and a breakdown of the existing logic and order. In his analysis of the city of Kisangani, Jean Omasombo systematically refers to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* to describe the urban impact of conflict in Eastern Congo in terms of a 'martyr town', a 'ghost town', a 'symbol of the collapse of Congo as a whole', where 'traces of modernism are being obliterated' and 'life seems to have come to a standstill' (Omasombo 2005). This approach clearly passes by the emerging forms of order, urbanisation and livelihoods in this context of crisis and war and fails to understand emerging, alternative modes of urbanisation in response to this breakdown. Although this rather pessimistic view has been countered by other urban scholars (Théodore Trefon and Filip de Boeck, for example) stressing the inventive, creative and dynamic responses to crisis and decline in Congo, these studies only marginally deal with conflict settings.

Other approaches dealing with urban issues in Eastern Congo, that do take into account the transformative power of violence, war and state decline, limit their focus to the urban 'accommodation' of emerging political and economic order. Dennis Tull's work on the reconfiguration of political order in North Kivu and Timothy Raeymaekers' study on the

emergence of an urban elite in Butembo, present the city as a central node in the political economy of war and the home and playground of political and economic elites. Although these authors analyse the crucial role of urban centres in conflict dynamics, they do not pay attention to dynamics of urbanisation in itself and analyse conflict dynamics *in* the city rather than *from* the city.

To analyse the complex relationship between conflict and urban transformations in the DRC, I therefore decided to start from a local-level urban perspective and from current dynamics of urbanisation and urbanity as these emerge from a conflict setting. This approach offers a critical alternative to study both processes of state failure and war as well as processes of urbanisation in Eastern Congo's periphery. The objectives of this study were to understand what the transformations of power, space, governance and identity created by conflict and state decline have produced in terms of urbanisation and urbanity, and how this affects the urban realm of conflict dynamics and state processes.

It was not the objective of this study to construct a new general theory on urbanisation nor on violent conflict; the aim was rather to demonstrate that war and state decline have to be approached as a means by which specific types of urbanity are being created. To fully understand these emerging forms of urbanisation and urbanity, I started from an inside perspective, analysing urban dynamics as they appear in daily urban livelihoods and as they are locally perceived. The current political, socio-economic and spatial configuration of a particular case-study was the point of departure for this study, and although I focused on the recent history of violent conflict, I integrated an historical perspective to prevent ignoring long-term dynamics. This urban monography intended to present a multi-sided picture of Goma's recent evolutions and to reveal the different complex expressions of this urbanity. I used a set of universal concepts in my study that served as an analytical framework to investigate urbanisation and urbanity: governance, identity, landscape and navigation.

Having performed this research, it can be concluded that the interplay of urbanisation and conflict in Eastern Congo has reinforced the significance of the city as a laboratory of change. The transformative power of conflict is intensified in the urban context as cities constitute sites of invention and innovation, "constantly producing and reproducing society and turning it into a contemporary purpose" (Robinson 2006). Dynamics of state failure and war have undermined centralised, coherent and sustainable long term urbanisation (by the decline of the public infrastructure, the dismantling of administration and the deterioration of security conditions for example), but have also created openings for alternative modes of governance, accumulation and development. I have demonstrated that the potential for transformation is determined by internal as well as external factors. It is first of all the outcome of the city's particular geographic setting, its political history of local, regional and national integration, and is internal social composition. But it is also the outcome of the city's external connections, its transborder connections, its links to the global markets and its function as a humanitarian space. The transformations that were generated in this 'laboratory of change' that the city represents, imply a series of political, economic, social and spatial reconfigurations that are translated through a renegotiation of power, order, authority, governance, space and

identity. I argue that the urbanity that emerges from these transformations is characterised by i) hybrid forms of governance, ii) unstable, provisional or 'patchwork' livelihoods, iii) patterns of intense conflict and contestation, and iv) increasing autonomy and central significance of the periphery.

Hybrid and contested urban configurations

The historical long-term disintegration of the Congolese state has left its marks on the political, socio-economic and even spatial evolution of Goma. In this thesis, I perceived the city as a zone of limited statehood. The state plays an important role in urban governance and urbanisation, but it does not operate in the way it is 'supposed' to work in conventional terms, and is increasingly being challenged by other non-state actors with whom it is in constant competition. Civil servants, administrative officials, police officers and border patrollers are all taking part in urban development and governance. Civil servants are omnipresent in Goma to control papers, collect taxes, register all kinds of exchanges. But they act in complete disintegration and in an increasingly privatised way. One official working in the cadastre department explained to me that all of the division staff members had become competitors. As soon as they know a plot of land will be parcelled out somewhere in town, they will all get involved first; granting property contracts has become a lucrative 'cooperation' or '*coop*', an important asset in their livelihoods. This fragmented and informal behaviour of the state is not only further undermining the state as a central authority and a coordinating frame of urbanisation, it is also producing an urbanisation without any integrated vision.

Governance, power, authority and decision-making in Goma have become a matter in which multiple other and powerful players are engaged. These players are often in competition but also in compliance with the state or its representatives. The particular nature of these groups can be partly traced back to the city's pre-war history. The powerful role of Banyarwanda businessmen in the political economy, for example, has to be traced back to Mobutu's patronage-politics. The political dominance of Hutu and Nande has to be understood in the migratory history of the region from the colonial period. However, violent conflict has further impacted significantly on the nature of non-state actors involved. The role of armed actors (rebel groups, but also armed vigilantes) is the most outstanding example. Goma's crucial position and role in the recent history of war in Eastern Congo has introduced armed actors as powerful and sometimes dominant players in the urban socio-political scene. Goma has evolved into a city of rebellion, where the presence of armed groups has become a key feature in the new logics of urbanisation, sometimes in a direct, sometimes in a more indirect manner. War created a situation of physical, political and economic insecurity, in which the need for protection has become an incentive for armed actors to reinforce their power position. Goma's businessmen have no choice but to cooperate with rebel groups to continue their business. Moreover, this cooperation has in some cases led to a lucrative win-win situation, as was the case during the RCD period when, through military-economic alliances, some urban groups could enrich themselves considerably. Also today, in particular sectors such as mineral or fuel trade, these alliances are a leading principle in doing business in Goma. Further, the militarisation of Goma as a direct consequence of its transformation into a rebel city, has given increasing power to all those in a possession of a weapon. Armed violence is not

reserved to rebel groups, violence has become an integrated part of urban society and urban livelihoods of all kinds of actors and the proliferation of arms in towns has contributed to a wide access to and use of violent domination. In the emerging logics of urban governance, violent actors have become crucial pillars of urban power networks, competing the state in its strategies of control and authority.

Another group of non-state actors that has become part of these new logics consists of the multiple international humanitarian organisations, development agencies and the international peace keeping force MONUSCO. Their presence did not only affect the local economy and spatial developments, it also had a manifest impact on local urban governance. MONUSCO and UN organisations increasingly engage in public service delivery (education, infrastructure) and other domains that normally should be placed under the state's responsibility. The consequences are not to be underestimated; the state is not only too often sidelined by these initiatives, it sees its authority and legitimacy diminished towards its citizens.

Compared to these other players, the Congolese state has become quite a weak player. In several domains of urban service delivery, the state today even seems absent. Also geographically, the state has gradually lost a lot of its significance to other, non-state actors. Over the years, the whole of Goma's public urban space has dramatically been reduced and almost the entire urban space has come in private hands. Today, several state services have to rent their offices from private owners. Almost all public open spaces are divided up and sold for private use³⁹⁸.

With all these different actors involved in urban governance, we observe an increasing lyblurring line between state and non-state, formal and informal. In line with the observation of Vlassenroot and Raeymakers (Vlassenroot et al. 2002; 2008), the context of state failure, reinforced by dynamics of war, have created alternative spaces for social, economic and political practice in Eastern Congo and have produced regulatory practices based on hybrid relationships between state and non-state actors. For local governmental institutions and state services, this creates the constant necessity to forge alliances with alternative sources of authority. This is also the case in Goma. Here, the city Mayor needs to have the financial support of the economic entrepreneurs, these entrepreneurs on their turn need to rely on armed actors, and both these businessmen, as well as the provincial governor, continuously need to invest in the 'local support' of the urban population to consolidate their power base. This not only blurs distinctions between formal and informal, but also between political, economic, social and military levels. Goma has become what Migdal has described as an arena where dispersed social forces make competing claims over socio-political control, "rarely can any social force achieve its goal without finding allies, creating coalitions, and accepting accommodations" (Migdal 2001: 108). But with these authority groups competing over the urban space that is no longer dominated by a coordinating state structure, this hybrid governance, is often translated in the form of a strongly contested governance rather than a mere 'negotiated' governance.

³⁹⁸ For example of the whole length of the shores of the Kivu lake in Goma, only one small piece remains entirely state property: the '*plage du peuple*', where people have access to the lake to provide themselves of water.

The city becomes a zone of contest, in which political and economic power end control over the urban space is intensely fought over amongst these different players.

Contested urban governance is of course not a unique phenomenon for Goma. Contestation and negotiation on scarce resources and power are integral elements of everyday urban life in Africa (Simone 2001). Political and economic struggle over the local urban space and resources are an inherited feature of the city' history, dating back from the colonial times. But as I demonstrated in this study, the fragmentation of governance in a violent conflict setting reinforced these struggles in a dramatic way, through ethnic lines, through autochthony discourses and sometimes with violent outcomes.

Hybrid governance in Goma in a context of violent conflict and a gradual informalisation of politics and economics, has created a situation where urban services are provided by hybrid institutions, represented by both state as well as non-state actors. Justice, security, land allocation, water provision etc. are all 'arranged' by these hybrid institutions. In their daily urban livelihood strategies, *Goméens* constantly encounter these complex institutions to get the right stamp on the right paper, to do any business, to build a house, to get a diploma, to secure their properties etc. According to some, this emergence of alternative or hybrid forms of governance is a positive evolution as it may help to fill in some of the gaps created by the malfunctioning or absence of formal state institutions (see for example Crook et al. 2011; Logan 2009; Menkhaus 2006). It has become clear from analysing Goma's recent evolution that it has undoubtedly created much room for innovation and opportunities. The proliferation of small-scale transborder trade is one example. Here, informal trade has become a lucrative business for all actors involved. The emergence of a wealthy business class out of the cassiterite and coltan trade is another example of the benefits resulting from these hybrid governance arrangements. I however also demonstrated that these opportunities lie in the manoeuvre space one has at his disposal (depending on one's ethnic background, social class, relations with elites) to negotiate an arrangement. As Doornbos has argued, "in today's realities, the deliberate negation of crucial stakeholder interests by those in power in a number of countries may leave little room for any 'negotiation' about reconfiguring statehood to begin with" (Doornbos 2001: 761). Hybrid institutional arrangements are flexible, fluid and unstable, and this unpredictability generates a general context of insecurity and vulnerability of those depending on them and not having the power of directly influencing them. A real estate agent that may one day find his property occupied by a second owner will be powerless when he finds out that his cousin who was the head of the cadastre office had been fired. This highly unstable and fluid governance context is juxtaposed with a pervasive informalisation of urbanisation that is underlined by great economic and social uncertainty. This uncertainty is largely depening on shifting loyalties and collaborations to access opportunities and to survive in the city (Lourengo-Lindell 2007: 1898)

Patchwork urbanity

This dispersed and unpredictable nature of urban governance is also reflected in local urban livelihood strategies. We observed that the unstable urbanity this governance has generated, requires flexible navigation skills to survive in this fragmented and contested urban space. Hybrid urban governance in Goma is not only characterised by a so-called

'institutional *bricolage*'³⁹⁹, it is also characterised by *bricolage* economies, *bricolage* livelihoods and *bricolage* identities. State failure can open windows for opportunity, but in the unstable environment of Goma, these windows can close any time. Changing power coalitions amongst the urban elites or violence flaring up in the hinterlands can suddenly cause a breakdown of people's livelihoods and cut off their access to resources. A conflict setting thus requires a multiplication of livelihood strategies. In a context of informalisation, where people can not fall back on any granted long-term social, economic and political security, urban livelihoods evolve around the continuous combining of all kinds of assets and opportunities occurring at any given moment. The integration-strategies of internally displaced people in Goma have provided a good example to demonstrate these 'patchwork' strategies. As they are new urban inhabitants, they have to carefully navigate urban economies, landscapes and social networks carefully in order to survive in this new urban context. But also other more 'stable' or 'emplaced' urban inhabitants have to constantly struggle to overcome insecurity, instability and crisis.

In these *bricolage* survival strategies, identity is an important asset. Dynamics of conflict, contest and exclusion have been translated along ethnic lines. Ethnic relations between Goma's inhabitants have been tense at different moments in history, from pre-colonial times onwards. The question of autochthony and contested citizenship already arose in the early colonial period, but has been strongly reinforced by Mobutu's geo-politics in the 1990s. Since the outbreak of ethnic translated violence in the region in 1993, dynamics of violent conflict have further deteriorated inter-ethnic relations. Economic competition, political power, conflicts over urban land etc. often appear as ethnic conflicts. War has impacted on social cohesion as it created a sphere of suspicion in the city, where people seem to be obsessed with 'spies', 'infiltrators', 'false Congolese' etc. This is most outspoken with regards to the Rwandan presence in the city. However, despite the historically tense border relations between Congo and Rwanda, I have observed that on a very local level, this has not prevented cross-border interaction from both sides. Even more, the war has affected transborder interactions in an entirely different way, as it created new incentives for lucrative border trade. I will come back to this later.

Goma is an ethnically heterogeneous city, , where people from different surrounding regions and ethnic backgrounds come together. In general, this urban feature is locally perceived as one of the most positive aspects of urban life, as it opens up cultural space and creates economic competition. Apart from ethnic and national identity layers or scales, there are multiple urban identities that structure social urban life. The complex interaction between local, regional, national and global scales which is an outcome of Goma's evolution towards a zone of opportunity and refuge, have introduced different 'new' identity scales in the city. This has opened room for navigating different identities, by which one can appropriate different layers of identity at the same time. To respond to certain circumstances, an array of multiple and overlapping identities can be exploited in organising localities and interactions (Jansen 2011). Goméens apply patchwork identities

³⁹⁹ That is, "a process by which people consciously and unconsciously draw on existing social and cultural arrangements to shape institutions in response to changing situations" (Cleaver 2002: 26).

to navigate economic, social and political urban spaces. That identities are a crucial asset in urban livelihoods has been demonstrated at different occasion in this dissertation.

Patchwork urbanity is also expressed in the urban landscape. The outcome of historical processes of urbanisation in a context of state failure, informalisation and short-term visions in urban planning has been described by Johan Lagae in terms of an urban 'palimpsest', a concept he derived from Malaquais who introduced it to grasp the hybrid composition of geographic and architectural urban spaces. Out of these emerges "*un panorama se lisant comme une archéologie de formes architecturales, où structures et paysages s'interpénètrent pour donner naissance à un espace hybride, le tout tenant d'un palimpseste, dont chacun des éléments constitutifs serait égal et contemporain à tous les autres*" (Malaquais 2005, in: Toullier et al. 2010: 9). Since the earliest colonial processes of urbanisation, the city of Goma has been shaped by the hands of and according to the visions of a varied group of state and non-state actors. Through the process of gradual state decline, the Congolese state has become a marginal actor in the performance of urban planning though. As we already mentioned, in case the state does engage, it is in a privatised and fragmented way. This has created openings for other actors to shape the urban landscape to their own objectives. Urban political and economic elites have 'signed' the urban landscape with roads, prestigious statues and districts carrying their names. The power of Goma's '*grands barons*' can be read from the cityscape. But in the very first place, the patchwork nature of this cityscape is the outcome of the day-to day make-shift practices of life-making and space making by the local urban inhabitants themselves. In an unpredictable urban environment such as Goma, the outcomes are marked by provisional and instable constructions. This instability is of course strengthened by the constant risk of volcanic eruptions. A context of political and physical instability and the constant threat of violence and destruction clearly prevent long-term investments.

Urbanisation in Goma is a process that thus occurs largely from below; the urban space is produced locally and eventually impacts state processes, not the other way around. The planning initiatives initiated by the urban municipal authorities for example, always occur as a forced and desperate attempt to restructure the urban space, to impose order and to regain control over the fast and informalised spatial expansion. Those attempts seems to be in vain, as they do not achieve at implementing long-term structures to guide further urbanisation. This is of course due to the weakness of the state and its subordinate position *vis-à-vis* other powerful groups. But it is also due to the fact that these initiatives and actions are guided by personal interest and engagement and the projects are never integrated in larger state-led policies. In August 2011, the city Mayor Tumbula was arrested, discharged from his function and put in jail. It was the provincial governor that took this decision after the Mayor was accused of a whole range of scandals, related to his notorious initiative '*Goma ville propre*'. He would have been bribed by different wealthy inhabitants for preventing him to demolish their properties, and he would have been 'stealing' and embezzling the body of a civilian that had been killed during one of the violent evictions as part of the Mayor's operations. With the Mayor 'disappeared' from the political scene, the whole urbanisation project was called off.

By analysing urbanisation and urbanity as it emerges 'from below', from the day-to-day patchwork livelihood strategies of its inhabitants, emphasis is put on local agency. Although it is beyond dispute that Goma's current development is largely the outcome of its inhabitants' continuous efforts to structure their daily lives, this local efforts and local agency may not be romanticised nor overemphasised. The urbanity that is created by this agency and that lacks any centralised coordination, is characterised by extreme contrasts and discrepancies. Goma's current urbanisation obviously creates extreme vulnerabilities and social exclusion for many. Urbanity emerging from individual and scattered initiatives not geared to one another reflects strong inequalities and leaves large parts of the urban population remaining stuck in extremely precarious situations. And of course, Goma's inhabitants will constantly assure you that they do not embrace this agency they required from state failure, at all. They long for the state, to take up its responsibilities. It should also be noted here that when Goma's inhabitants are mobilising all resources available to survive, they can themselves become mobilised as a resource for elite's political strategies of power and control.

The central margins

In this dissertation, I have argued that the urbanity emerging in Goma from a context of violent conflict and state failure is influenced by the city's peripheral border position. Its evolution as a secondary city and a border town located in the geographic and political margins of the nation state has brought about particular dynamics of urbanisation that follow distinctive different patterns compared to 'primary' or 'core' cities that historically developed as an embedded part of national economic and political networks and aspirations. Located far away from the political centre, cities like Goma developed largely outside the direct control of the central state. Since colonial times, it has proven to be no sinecure to realise an effective control from the centre over Congo's peripheral areas including Goma. Historical processes of state decline and dynamics of violent conflict have reinforced this and have resulted in an increasingly autonomous urban development.

As I stated at the beginning of these general conclusions, the nature of the city as a laboratory of change has been strengthened by dynamics of state decline and conflict. According to some scholars, this urban feature becomes even more pronounced in the case of these peripheral border cities (De Boeck et al. 2010), as there would be 'more room for improvisation' (in terms of local commerce, smuggling, dynamics of 'glocalisation', cultural exchange...). Goma's transborder connections and regional trading relations have turned it into a dynamic zone of entrepreneurial development. Informalised urbanisation in a conflict setting has opened the local markets to new economic specialisations and has made of Goma a central node of transborder trade with a largely informal basis yet strongly connected to global economic networks. Dynamics of informal globalisation that we have observed in Goma clearly demonstrate that these peripheral cities seem to play an increasingly important role in shaping the particular forms through which processes of glocalisation are unfolding in the DRC. This 'glocalisation' has had a profound impact on Goma's emerging urbanity, reflected in the city's spatial landscape, urban identities and practices of urban governance.

In the periphery of the state yet at the centre of the periphery, Goma evolved into a new leading urban pole in the DRC. Instead of an isolated town cut off from its hinterland, it turned into a booming regional centre. Goma's urban evolution confirms the general observation -made by some urban scholars⁴⁰⁰- of a changing urban order in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where fast expanding urban centres in the periphery gain increasing political and economic importance. Located at the margins of the nation state yet at the centre of regional and transnational dynamics, border towns like Butembo, Kasindi and Uvira often seem to be more successful in connecting to global networks than the established, 'colonial' or primary cities. In this changing order, the relations between the centre and the periphery are being redefined.

Conflict urbanity?

An important question remains to what extent the urban transformations as we have observed in the form of a reconfiguration of the urban landscape, livelihoods, identities and political order, are the outcome of dynamics of violent conflict. The transformative power of violent conflict on local dynamics in Eastern Congo has extensively been demonstrated (Tull 2003; Vlassenroot et al. 2004; 2008). These processes of transformation act in a particular way in urban centres, on the one hand altering the position, role and impact of the city on national and regional scale, and on the other hand redefining local urban livelihoods.

Analysing the dialectic relationship between violent conflict and urbanisation, I have argued that dynamics of war have generated a number of important shifts in the local political, spatial and socio-economic urban configuration. I also argued that we should not explain these changes as temporary effects of a context of violence and conflict but as elements of a general transformation of local society. The situation of protracted conflict has created a context in which violence is no longer a temporary suspension of the normal function of the city. War has come to determine the contemporary manifestation of urban politics, economics, governance and livelihoods and has become a condition of everyday life. But violence and conflict may not be the only lens through which we analyse local dynamics. My own research covered only a short period of Goma's historical developments. The current dynamics of urbanisation that formed the starting point for my analysis are of course part of larger, long-term political and economic processes. The strong informalisation of urban politics, economies and spatial developments are clearly not the direct result of conflict, and were already in place as a result of more general processes of political crisis and the gradual decline of the Congolese state. As stated in the introduction of this dissertation, in dynamics of urbanisation in Goma, conflict and state failure went hand in hand, mutually reinforcing each other in their transformative impact on the urban space. By linking my own research up to earlier research carried out by Dennis Tull, for example, I argue that on the one hand, dynamics of violent conflict have reinforced new power groups in urban governance and that local urban livelihoods have been adapted to the situation of protracted conflict. On the other hand, although this situation has introduced new, influential political and economic players in urban governance that have strongly redefined Goma's city profile and its national and regional role and

⁴⁰⁰ See for example De Boeck, F. et al. (2010); de Saint Moulin (2010); Piermay (1997)

influence, these players have never completely replaced original political and hierarchic urban structures. To the contrary, they have been partly reproduced. The recycling of formal government practices introduced during the Mobutu era, the resistance of the urban elites installed during Mobutu's neo-patrimonial rule, the reappearance of ethnic patterns of political and economic contestation that were already present right after Congo's independence, point at strong continuities with the past. New local actors got engaged in the production of new forms of local order, new configurations of urban spaces, identities and economies, but these remained largely embedded in older, existing structures.

The impact of dynamics of violent conflict on Goma's current identity has however been profound. I would describe urbanity emerging from a protracted war combined with a gradual decline of the formal state in terms of 'conflict urbanity'. Indeed, the shifts and reconfigurations that have transformed the, clearly determined the long-term dynamics of urbanisation. The integration of Goma in transborder economic networks and its semi-autonomous and informalised urban development are to be stipulated the city's future relations with the central state in Kinshasa and will have a significant impact on the planned process of political decentralisation. Post-war reconstruction may result in the integration of violent actors in the long term, but their impact on dynamics of urban governance may remain, as they continue to influence local politics in a more indirect way. MONUSCO may retreat from the region and humanitarian projects in Goma may come to an end, but international development organisations and institutions will stay, forming a serious challenge for the future reconstruction of the state's legitimacy and authority. War displacement in Goma's hinterlands may come to an end, but many of the IDPs have integrated in the city, have a significant impact on the city's ethnic composition and the relation between the city and its urban hinterlands, and will never return home. *Grands barons* that emerged from the context of violent conflict will adapt their survival strategies to integrate in post-war power networks, what is actually happening already. Dynamics of violence and war have impacted urbanity in Goma to an extent that they have affected the basis for the city's future urbanisation.

Some notes for further academic research

With this urban ethnography I aimed at presenting a comprehensive picture of the city that was as integral as possible, covering both local and regional processes that interplay with dynamics of urbanisation. However, I have to acknowledge that the ethnography I presented could never be conclusive for the city in its entirety, and that it rather highlights a number of fascinating phenomena that occur in it. The five domains that I have captured and 'identities' of Goma that I have presented - city of opportunity, contest, rebellion, refuge and the city as an urban borderland - represent in my view the most characteristic scenes of interplay between on the one hand processes of state failure and violent conflict, and on the other hand dynamics of urbanisation. There remain however, still many other stories to be told that emerge from the complex urban reconfiguration resulting from violent conflict.

With regards to urban livelihoods, for example, it would have been interesting to learn more about social networks, how they unfold, how they structure civil society and how

they interact with dynamics of violent conflict. We touched upon the role of ethnic 'mutuality' associations, but did not elaborate that much on unions, and the role of churches, for example.

With regards to the transformation of Goma towards a humanitarian space, I concentrated my research on the impact of the long-term presence of international humanitarian and development organisations in the urban space. It would have been interesting to elaborate more on the particular role that plays MONUSCO in urban governance, regulation and spatial urbanisation.

Further, with regards to the city's evolution towards an attractive zone of opportunity, and more particularly concerning dynamics of informal globalisation, the presence and role of international companies such as foreign mining businesses for example would offer an extremely interesting case to be further elaborated. It would reveal the relational networks that link-up local traders to global markets and would shed more light on local dynamics of 'glocalisation'.

Although I stay convinced that the choice for studying one case-study and for presenting the results as an urban monography was the best frame to offer an in-depth study of local dynamics, I am aware that further comparative research is needed to valorise my findings in a broader perspective. To estimate the true value of the concepts of conflict urbanity, border urbanity, patchwork urbanity etc., the research needs to be lifted up to a comparative state, relating dynamics of urbanisation in conflict areas with those in non-conflict areas, for example. Also with regards to the relationship between borderlands and cities in conflict areas, the mutual impact of border dynamics and dynamics of urbanisation can only be truly valorised by extensive comparative research.

Finally, I would again underscore the need for ethnographic research on secondary and peripheral cities in particular, to better grasp the global processes of urbanisation and emerging forms of urbanity in Congo, and elsewhere.

Some notes for policy implementation

Let me end with some suggestions with regards to future urban planning by local as well as international actors involved.

We have observed that, through dynamics of state failure and violent conflict, the state has never disappeared in urbanisation and urban planning policy. Non-state actors that operate in the voids left by state decline, seem partially to replace the state in several domains. But by doing so, they to a large extent adopt or 'copy' the main 'format' which the state was representing, by creating 'pseudo' state-structures. As it is in the first place the merit of these non-state initiatives, that the city of Goma did not collapse and continued to develop in an extremely challenging context, it would seem appealing to reinforce these non-state initiatives as the basis for further urban development, at least in a short-term perspective. However, it may be clear that these different private, fragmented initiatives are not concerned with achieving long term, sustainable urban planning. They are not only driven by private initiatives and agenda's lacking any coherence, they are also driven by conflicting power groups. Urbanisation that is generated in this context is characterised by contest, reinforced inequalities, contrasts and

exclusion. Together with many Goma's inhabitants, I stay convinced that the only possible way to achieve an integrated long term urbanisation development is by the reconstruction of the formal administrative services, as there is the definite need for a strong state providing the coordinative format for future urban planning.

At this moment, formal state-led urban policy and top-down urban planning stands in sharp contrast with dynamics of bottom-up urbanisation as I described it in this dissertation. In a context of profound informalisation of political, economic, social as well as spatial urban dynamics, to shape the city from a top-down perspective seems an enormous challenge. Urbanisation that is emerging from hybrid forms of governance, structured by hybrid institutions is an extremely difficult context to start with to produce long-term inclusive urban planning. But to my view it is not impossible. The perspectives of the planned administrative decentralisation can offer hopeful perspectives, as these would reinforce the responsibilities and capacities of the provincial and municipal governments to take the lead in urban governance. Attempts to formalise dynamics of urbanisation will encounter several limits. A main lesson to be learned is that urban planning and urbanisation policy in this context should not be dealt with as a pure technical issue, as we have demonstrated that it is a highly political issue.

Finally, with regards to the involvement of external humanitarian and development interventions to local urban planning, it has been demonstrated that their approach is far too fragmented and of a short-term perspective. They clearly fail to integrate long-term perspectives of conflict urbanity in their approach. They engage in urbanisation and urban planning initiatives although these are often not even part of their initial job responsibilities. It is clear that if they continue operating without a profound knowledge of the actual urban socio-political dynamics on the ground, they run the risk to produce new conflicts and vulnerabilities instead of preventing them. Moreover, if they continue operating in competition instead of in collaboration with the Congolese state, they will further undermine the existing structure and frame of urbanisation that should form the basis for sustainable future urban development.



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