

David Jordhus-Lier  
Ellen Veia Rosnes  
Berit Aasen

# **Church networks, peacebuilding and women's participation in Eastern DRC and the Great Lakes region – a mapping study**



Church networks,  
peacebuilding and women's  
participation in Eastern DRC  
and the Great Lakes Region  
– a mapping study



David Jordhus-Lier  
Ellen Veia Rosnes  
Berit Aasen

Church networks,  
peacebuilding and women's  
participation in Eastern DRC  
and the Great Lakes Region  
– a mapping study

Samarbeidsrapport  
NIBR/SIK 2015

Title: **Church networks, peacebuilding and women's participation in Eastern DRC and the Great Lakes Region – a mapping study**

Author: David Jordhus-Lier, Ellen Vea Rosnes and Berit Aasen

Joint Report: NIBR/SIK 2015

ISBN: 978-82-8309-061-1 (trykt)

Project number: 2929

Project name:: Religious civil society networks in the Great Lakes region as partners in peace-building processes and in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

Financial report: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Abstract: This report (i) map the religious civil society networks, (ii) assess their role in local and regional peace processes and (iii) address the organisation of women and the promotion of issues of women, peace and security within these networks. The focus in this report is on the linkages between provincial centres and churches at village level in the vast rural areas of the Kivus where civilians continue to suffer from war crimes. The legitimacy of the church in peacebuilding at local and national levels hinges on the assumption that (i) the church leadership has a mandate based in their constituency on the ground, and that (ii) church coordinating structures in the province or at the national level have the capacity to coordinate church activities at lower levels of the church hierarchy.

Summary: Norwegian and English

Keywords: DR Congo, peacebuilding, churches, women's rights, gender

Date: May 2015

Pages: 123

Price: 250,-

Publisher: Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research  
Gaustadalléen 21  
N-0349 OSLO

Telephon (+47) 22 95 88 00

Telefax (+47) 22 60 77 74

E-mail: [nibr@nibr.no](mailto:nibr@nibr.no)

<http://www.nibr.no>

Printed: X-idé.

Org. nr. NO 970205284 MVA

© NIBR 2015

# Preface

During the period 2009 to 2014 the Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) together with Centre for Intercultural Communication (SIK) have been doing research on church networks, gender rights and peacebuilding in Eastern DR Congo. The research has been funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Norway. This report is the result of the first phase of this research, when a mapping study which was carried out in 2009.

The report is based on interviews with key partners in the church networks in North and South Kivu and on secondary sources. A Bukavu based research team with staff and students from Universite Evangelique en Afrique (UEA), and Universite Officielle de Bukavu (UOB) carried out four village field studies in South Kivu as part of the mapping.

The mapping study was followed up with more in-depth field work and analysis of the church networks in Eastern DR Congo. A second report, articles and policy briefs will be published during 2015.

We thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their support to the research project. Special thanks go to the Bukavu team who carried out the village field work, and the people of these four villages that received the Bukavu research team.

Oslo, May 2015

Geir Heierstad  
Research Director

# Table of Contents

Preface.....	1
Abbreviations.....	4
Summary.....	6
Sammendrag.....	10
1 Introduction.....	13
2 Regional and local conflicts affecting South Kivu 1996-2010.....	15
2.1.1 The aftermath of the 1994 Rwanda genocide.....	16
2.1.2 Local antagonisms in North and South Kivu.....	18
2.1.3 Congolese civil society and its role in the national peace process.....	23
2.2 Nordic missionaries and church building in Eastern DR Congo.....	25
2.3 Networks of churches and development agencies.....	26
3 Analytical framework.....	30
3.1 Methodology and fieldwork.....	30
3.2 A scalar approach to the church networks.....	31
3.2.1 Spaces of dependence and engagement.....	32
3.2.2 Applying a scalar perspective to the politics of Congolese churches.....	34
3.2.3 Multiscalar peace-building initiatives.....	37
3.3 Women, peace and security and the implementation of UNSCR 1325.....	41
3.3.1 Relevance of UNSCR 1325 for religious civil society organisations.....	41
3.3.2 Women as victims of war.....	42
3.3.3 Women as agents for peace.....	44
3.3.4 Perspectives on women's roles in religious organisations: A gender paradox?.....	46

3.3.5	Participation, mobilisation and representation: A framework for analysis .....	51
4	The role of church networks in local and regional peace initiatives .....	56
4.1	Coordination and advocacy at a provincial level: North and South Kivu .....	56
4.2	Health, education and media .....	62
4.3	Village dynamics.....	64
4.4	National political dynamics.....	67
4.5	Cross-border civil society dynamics (I): Transnational ecumenical dialogue and advocacy.....	69
4.6	Cross-border civil society dynamics (II): Repatriation activities .....	75
5	Women and peace-building: Practices and activities in the church networks .....	77
5.1	National and cross-border initiatives .....	79
5.2	Participation of women in churches of North and South Kivu .....	87
5.3	Mobilisation by women members of churches in North and South Kivu .....	90
5.4	Representation of women in decision-making bodies of churches in North and South Kivu .....	91
5.5	Conclusion .....	94
	References.....	99
	Appendix I: Village case studies, methodology and background.....	105
	Appendix II: Village case studies, data protocol.....	111
	Appendix III: Village case studies, interview guide.....	115



## Abbreviations

AACC	All African Council of Churches
ACEAC	Association des Conférences Episcopales de l'Afrique Centrale
CADC	Churches known as 'Assemblies of God'
CAMPS	Centre d'Assistance Medico Psycho-Social
CARITAS	Confederation of Catholic relief and development and social service organisations
CBCA	Communauté Baptiste au Centre de l'Afrique
CELPA	Communauté des Eglises Libres de Pentecôte en Afrique
CEPAC	Communauté des Eglises de Pentecôte en Afrique Centrale
CIPAGO	A forum of Protestant church leaders in Goma
CJP	Commission Justice et Paix
CNDP	Congrès national pour la défense du peuple
CNS	Conférence nationale souveraine - Sovereign National Conference
CPR	Le Conseil Protestant du Rwanda
CRN	Christian Relief Network
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DFP	Département des Femmes et Familles
DRC	The Democratic Republic of Congo
ECC	Eglise du Christ au Congo - Church of Christ in Congo
ECC N-K	ECC Nord-Kivu
ECC S-K	ECC Sud-Kivu
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo -

---

	the Armed Forces of the DR Congo
FDLR	Forces Democratiques de Liberation du Rwanda
FECCLAHA	The Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa
FFP	La Fédération des femmes protestantes
GBV	gender-based violence
GLEF	Great Lakes Ecumenical Forum
GLR	Great Lakes region
HiA	Hope in Action
ICGLR	International Conference of the Great Lakes Region
INGO	International NGO
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MONUC	Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo - United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NCKK	National Council of Churches in Kenya
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NIBR	Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research
PYM	The Pentecostal Foreign Mission of Norway
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie
SFVS	Synergie des femmes pour les victims de violence sexuelles
SIK	Centre for Intercultural Communication
UCB	Université Catholique de Bukavu
UEA	Université Evangélique en Afrique
UJCC	Ugandan Joint Church Council
ULPGL	Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs
UNFPA	The United Nations Population Fund
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

# Summary

*David Jordhus-Lier, Ellen Vea Rosnes and Berit Aasen*

## **Church networks, peacebuilding and women's participation in Eastern DRC and the Great Lakes Region – a mapping study**

Joint Report NIBR/SIK 2015

### *Background*

This report (i) map the religious civil society networks, (ii) assess their role in local and regional peace processes and (iii) address the organisation of women and the promotion of issues of women, peace and security within these networks. The objective is to gain a better understanding of the constituency, networks and political strategies of church networks at a local, national and regional scale.

### *Regional networks*

The realisation of the potential ascribed to the church networks at a regional political level is fairly limited. Regional and cross-border initiatives which bring church representatives from different national churches and church councils together have traditionally been divided along the Protestant/Catholic distinction. The Catholic Church has a regional Episcopal conference (bishops' meeting) known as Association des Conférences Episcopales de l'Afrique Centrale (ACEAC), bringing together bishops from DR Congo, Rwanda and Burundi.

On the Protestant side, the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), comprise of Burundian, Congolese, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Kenyan, Rwandese, Sudanese, Tanzanian and Ugandan churches.

A result of the FECCLAHA network has been that church leaders of the Great Lakes countries have been engaged in diplomatic efforts targeting political and military leaders. FECCLAHA and

---

other initiatives during the last ten years provides evidence that church leaders in different countries in the region have managed to overcome some of the differences between them, and between their respective states, to meet and talk.

But the extent to which this regional dialogue has led to any tangible results, in the form of cooperation through concrete activities, remains unclear. One of the most interesting examples in this respect is the repatriation project of ex-combatants to Rwanda, which includes churches on both sides of the Rwandese-Congolese border.

#### *Church networks and vertical linkages*

The way these local churches engage in wider church networks within and beyond their own organisation, differs between the churches. The local Catholic churches report to either the Uvira or the Bukavu diocese, whereas the Pentecostal churches (CELPA, CEPAC) report directly to Bukavu. Some of the smaller churches report directly to Kinshasa, if their church councils do not have regional offices in the East. Likewise, some newly established revivalist churches report to Bujumbura, Nairobi or Dar es Salaam.

Messages and orders from the national and provincial church leadership are transmitted through the church hierarchies from Kinshasa, via Bukavu and/or Uvira down to the local level. The capacity of the church networks to accommodate dynamic information flows from the leadership level down to the local village church is more difficult to assess. The potential for harnessing these church networks have been related to projects involving churches as early warning systems for conflict and humanitarian emergencies.

The churches and their leaders are not directly involved in political or administrative affairs, but churches in all of these villages are seen as representatives of civil society, and in this capacity church leaders are consulted by local authorities about particular issues on a regular basis. Importantly, church leaders are therefore recognised as consulting partners, but not decision-makers in the villages. These roles can often be blurred, however, and there are occasions when church leaders do get involved in local political issues.

*Women's participation and rights*

Religious civil society organisations are often male-dominated. In this research project we separate between the concepts participation, mobilisation and representation when analysing women's roles within church and religious organisation structures.

Women are not represented in political structures in the village, nor are they in general represented in church decision-making structures. With few exceptions, no women are allowed in the clergy in the churches. The main spaces for women representation are in the local development associations and in the women's groups of the churches.

The Catholic Church, as well as Protestant churches, has women groups at the local level. In the Catholic Church, there is a women organisation in every congregation, and in larger cities there are structures that coordinate women-related activities in the wider region.

Both the Federation of Protestant Churches (ECC) and each member church has a women's wing and programmes for women.

Women, who have been responsible for different projects within church structures, looked upon the church as a good space for women to meet and discuss problems of everyday life and to engage themselves outside the household. Women were described by church authorities as the most active members, peaceful and trustworthy; however their representation in decision making bodies is very limited. When women are represented as Directors or project managers, it is often within areas related to women, such as the Women and Family Departments.

While a patriarchal cultural discourse no doubt lies at the base of this social exclusion of women, note should also be made at the link between a low educational level for women in these villages and the lack of representation in religious and political institutions. Education is an entry point to representation and legitimate leadership in Eastern DRC regardless of gender.

Local churches are relying on locally raised funding. Not only do women constitute the majority of their members, but they are also vital for the local financial base of these networks. In addition,

foreign donors were also pointed out as an important source of funding for church activities.

Women that are elected seem to promote women issues and campaign for issues such as changing church attitudes towards victims of GBV. However this changing of attitude may also due to the agenda of international and western donors, so it is difficult to say to what degree the women themselves promoted this issue.

In all of the villages, there are a significant number of local and international civil society organisations (CSOs) present, and some are affiliated to church networks. Their projects engage in agricultural, infrastructural and social development issues in the villages. Many of them focus on victims of sexual violence. The level of coordination between the local churches and these CSOs are described as informal and weak.

# Sammendrag

*David Jordbus-Lier, Ellen Vea Rosnes og Berit Aasen*

## **Kirkenettverk, fredsbygging og kvinners deltagelse i Øst-Kongo og Great Lakes regionen – en kartleggingsstudie.**

Samarbeidsrapport: NIBR/SIK 2015

### *Bakgrunn*

Denne rapporten er en (i) kartlegging av kirkenettverk og deres sivilsamfunn, (ii) en vurdering av deres rolle i lokal og regionale fredsprosesser, og (iii) en diskusjon av hvordan arbeidet med organisering av kvinner og arbeidet med kvinner, fred og sikkerhet foregår innenfor disse nettverkene. Formålet er å få en bedre forståelse av kirkenes organisatoriske strukturer og strategiske prosesser på lokalt, provins, og regionalt nivå.

### *Regionale nettverk*

Realiseringen av kirkenettverkene som regionale aktører har vært begrenset. Regionale og grenseoverskridende initiativ har historisk vært organisert langs separat for den Katolske Kirke og protestantiske kirker. Den Katolske Kirke har en regional biskopkonferanse, Association des Conférences Episcopales de l'Afrique Centrale (ACEAC), som samler biskoper fra DR Kongo, Rwanda og Burundi. De protestantiske kirkene har organisasjonen Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), som omfatter kirker i Burundi, DR Kongo, Eritrea, Etiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania og Uganda.

Et resultat av FECCLAHA er at kirkeledere i Great Lakes regionen har engasjert seg i diplomatiske prosesser med politiske og militære ledere i regionen. Kirkeledere i regionen har klart å møtes og samtale på tvers av de motsetninger som har vært

mellom dem. Men om denne aktiviteten har ledet til konkrete resultater i form av konkrete aktiviteter er vanskeligere å få bekreftet. Et av de mest interessante initiativene er repatrieringsprosjektet av ex-soldater fra DR Kongo til Rwanda, hvor kirkeledere på begge sider av grensen har vært involvert.

#### *Kirkenettverk og vertikale relasjoner*

Måten de lokale krikene arbeider innenfor sine egne organisasjon og med andre kirker varierer fra kirke til kirke. De lokale katolske kirkene i Sør-Kivu rapporterer til erkebiskopsetene i Bukavu eller Uvira, mens pinsekirkene (CELPA og CEPAC) rapporterer direkte til kirkens hovedkontor på provinsnivå. Noen av de mindre karismatiske kirkene rapporterer direkte til Kinshasa, og andre igjen til Bujumbura, Dar es Salaam, eller Nairobi.

Budskap fra kirkeledere på nasjonalt og provins nivå blir formidlet i vertikale nettverk via Bukavu og Uvira ned til den enkelte menighet. Det er vanskelig å vurdere krikenes kapasitet til å formidle budskap nedover og ta imot informasjon og nyheter fra lokale menigheter oppover i systemene. Mange har lagt vekt på at det ligger et viktig potensiale for tidlig varslingsystemer for vold og overgrep i disse vertikale nettverkene.

Kirkene og deres ledere er ikke direkte involvert i politiske og administrative prosesser. Kirkene er likevel ofte sett på som representanter for det sivile samfunn, og på grunn av dette blir rådfører lokale myndigheter seg ofte med kirkeledere om viktige saker. Kirkeledere er derfor sett på som viktige partnere å konsultere men ikke som beslutningsfattere i landsbyene. Men grenselinjene mellom de ulike rollene kan være vanskelig av og til, og det skjer at kirkeledere blir involvert i lokal politikk.

#### *Kvinnens deltagelse og rettigheter*

Religiøse organisasjoner er ofte mannsdominerte. I dette forskningsprosjektet har vi skilt mellom begrepene, deltagelse, mobilisering og representasjon, når vi har analysert kvinner rolle i kirkestrukturer og religiøse organisasjoner.

Kvinner er ikke representert i lokale politiske strukturer i landsbyene, de er heller ikke representert i krikens lederstrukturer og beslutningsfora. Med noen få unntak kan ikke kvinner utøve prestegjerning i krikene. Den viktigste arenaen for kvinners



representasjon er derfor i lokale utviklingsforeninger og i kvinnegrupper i kirkene.

Både den Katolske Kirke og protestantiske kirker har kvinnegrupper i menighetene. I den katolske kirke er det egne kvinnegrupper i den enkelte menighet og i de større byene egne koordineringsmekanismer. Føderasjonen for protestantiske kirke (EEC) og hver enkelt medlemskirke har egne avdelinger for kvinner og familiespørsmål, og egne programmer for kvinner.

Kvinner som deltar i disse nettverkene sier at de ser på disse arenaene som et godt sted å møtes å diskutere utfordringer i kvinners hverdag, og engasjere seg i samfunnsforhold utenfor sin egen familie. Kirkelederne selv fremhevet at kvinner var de mest aktive medlemmene, at de var de som man i høg grad kunne stole på. Men kvinner er lite tilstede der beslutninger tas. Når kvinner får ansvar eller lederposisjoner er det ofte i Kvinne- og familieavdelingene i kirken.

Bakgrunnen for kvinners ekskludering fra beslutningsfora er både grunnet i patriarkalske holdninger og strukturer, men også i kvinners lave utdanningsnivå i Øst Kongo. Utdanning er en nøkkel til representasjon og lederskap uavhengig av kjønn i DR Kongo.

Den enkelte menighet avhenger av ressurser som er mobilisert lokalt. Ikke bare er de fleste kirkemedlemmene kvinner, det er også disse som sikrer kirkenes økonomiske grunnlag, i tillegg til støtte man får fra utenlandske givere.

De kvinner som blir valgt til lokale leder ser ut til å fremme kvinners synspunkter og interesser, bl.a. har de arbeidet med å endre kirkens holdninger til kvinner som har vært utsatt for overgrep og vold. Men skie holdningsendringer kan også være påvirket av internasjonale prosjekter i området, det er derfor vanskelig å vurdere hvor stor innflytelse kvinnene i kirkenettverkene har hatt i denne saken.

I all landsbyene ser vi en rekke sivilsamfunnsorganisasjoner, både lokale og internasjonale organisasjoner, og flere av disse er knyttet til kirkene. Mange av disse arbeider med kvinner som har vært utsatt for seksualisert vold. Koordinering mellom kirkene og sivilsamfunnsorganisasjonene er i mange tilfelle uformell og svak.

---

# 1 Introduction

Churches and church network are some of the few institutions that has a presence and practice in (Eastern) Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Not only are they present in all communities at the local level through the parish structure where people meet regularly in their congregations and auxiliary groups, but they are also linked to horizontal and vertical church networks, and recipient of international donors funding and initiatives.

The ongoing humanitarian and political crisis in the Great Lakes region transcends national borders both in the sense of its underlying causes and of its political solutions. While diplomatic efforts to bring state authorities and military leaders to the negotiating table are ongoing, it has been acknowledged by the Norwegian government that peace-building initiatives by local civil society actors are important to establish immediate and long-term peace and security in the region.

Two issues seem to be important in this context. The first issue is the role of religious civil society networks. There are apparently no other social forces that combine, on the one hand, an organised presence among ordinary men and women in conflict zones with, on the other, a large potential to influence war-makers and decision-makers.

The second issue is the severe and disproportionate way in which women are on the suffering end of this conflict, both as victims of sexual violence and in terms of poverty and marginalisation.

The diverse organisational landscape represented by Congolese churches remains the strongest civil society network in East Congo, and an important partner to Norwegian NGOs engaging in development cooperation and peace-building activities in the area. Congolese churches play an important role in treating victims of sexual violence and initiating local demobilisation programmes.

Religious civil society do not merely represent temporary relief, but try to exert political influence through engaging in national and regional civil society networks and peace initiatives.

This report is based on research carried out in the research project *Religious civil society networks in the Great Lakes region as partners in peace-building processes and in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*. The research has been carried out in a collaborative effort by Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) and the Center for Intercultural Communication (SIK) in collaboration with the Evangelic University of Africa (UEA) and Official University of Bukavu (UOB), both based in Bukavu, South Kivu.

The project has sought to gain a better understanding of the constituency, networks and political strategies of local church networks in North and South Kivu, and the relationship between these organisations civil society networks at a local, national and regional scale. By focusing on, in turn, (i) mapping the religious civil society networks, (ii) assessing their role in local and regional peace processes and (iii) addressing the organisation of women and the promotion of issues of women, peace and security within these networks, this research project has been guided by the following research questions:

- How are the main church networks in East Congo organised?
- What is the relationship between Congolese churches and national and transnational civil society networks in the Great Lakes region?
- How do Congolese church networks organise women, and how do they promote women's issues and assist the implementation of UNSCR 1325?

The report starts with a general background to the conflict and the church networks in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 provides an analytical framework where the relevant methodology and theoretical literature is presented. The role of the church networks in local, provincial and regional peace-building initiatives is analysed in Chapter 4, while Chapter 5 examines the participation, mobilisation and representation of women in East Congolese churches.

---

## 2 Regional and local conflicts affecting South Kivu 1996-2010

“[I]t is clear that the reconciliation process in one country is strongly linked to that in the others. Any durable solution to the issue of insecurity in the region must have a regional character.” (Katshung 2007)

”The regional dimension is fundamental: The building blocks for a new regional security architecture and cross-border civil society networks are within reach. [...]Civil society requires attention before it may actually engage and produce substantial peace-building initiatives.” (DAC 2004)

The conflict in the Eastern DR Congo has strong regional character. It is impossible to understand war and violence in East Congo without analysing the role of extra-national actors, with a particular reference to Rwandese, Ugandan and Burundian interests. The Kivu regions have been subject to foreign invasion and occupation, and provided the seedbed for two military mobilisations leading to the so-called First and Second Congo Wars. But while these external factors are instrumental in explaining the state of war which has lasted for more than a decade, it is nevertheless also important to recognise that the regional nature of the crisis in the Great Lakes region has been “directly correlated to a number of local dynamics of conflict” in North and South Kivu (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2004).

In this chapter, we will give a multi-scalar account for the conflict providing the backdrop for the subject matter, the role of religious civil society organisations in peace-building. Particular attention

will therefore be given throughout this chapter to the position of churches and civil society organisations in the political landscape and in the developments taking the region through more than a decade of genocide and war.

### 2.1.1 The aftermath of the 1994 Rwanda genocide

The events of 1994 have been written about in countless academic works, reports by international NGOs and the UN system and by international media. It will not be the task of this report to give an account of the civil war in Rwanda which lasted from 1990-1994, and the following genocide of perhaps as many as 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu by the hands of the *interahamwe* and other armed groups aligned to the extremist Hutu government in the summer of 1994. The pivotal development in the wake of the genocide, which must be accounted for to explain the politics of the Kivus in the aftermath of this tragic event, is the movement of more than 2 million Hutu refugees out of Rwanda to neighbouring countries. Most of these, and most of the political and military leadership of the Hutu extremists, fled to North Kivu and, to a lesser extent, to South Kivu and Tanzania.

Hutu refugees were partly fleeing from the RPF forces, partly being used as human shields and shepherded into Zaire by the Hutu political and military leadership and their armed forces. In late 1994, 850,000 refugees had settled in camps around Goma in North Kivu, whereas 650,000 were living in camps around Bukavu in South Kivu. Many of the camps were controlled by political and military leaders, forcing the humanitarian agencies into several dilemmas concerning their food assistance to the camps and leading many of them to withdraw their support on ethical grounds. While the majority of the refugees had returned to Kagame's Rwanda by 1997, most of the military elements had settled in the forests of the Kivus, first known as *Armée pour la Libération du Rwanda* and then, from 2001, as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR).

The FDLR militia, with strong ties to exiled leaders in Europe, Africa and North America, has been instrumental in destabilising the Kivu region since the genocide, and their presence in these provinces created an arena where the Hutu-Tutsi conflict could play out outside the formal borders of post-genocide Rwanda. The

---

use of sexual violence which became a tactic during the genocide also spread to the Kivus, leading to an extremely destructive pattern of using sexual violence and the targeting of civilians as an active weapon of war throughout the 2000s, practices not restricted to the FDLR, but also including other local militias and the national army (FARDC).

The refugee crisis took place in the run-up to the first of two large scale wars, both involving a threat to the political leadership of the Zairean/Congolese national state and both involved political and military involvement by foreign powers (with Rwanda and Uganda leading the quest for state power in both cases). The First Congo War started in the Kivu region in September 1996, and saw a coalition of Rwandan- and Ugandan-backed forces fight down the Zairean forces all the way to Kinshasa by the spring of 1997. Laurent-Desiré Kabila and his *Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire* (ADFL) brought Mobutu Sese Seko's reign to an end, and Kabila became the first president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on 17 May 1997. The First Congo War was characterised as a de facto invasion of Zaire by Rwanda and Uganda, in pursuit of a regime which would become an ally in combating what especially Rwanda perceived as an acute security threat to its territory by the former Rwandan regime and its *genocidaires*.

However, Rwanda and Uganda soon decided that Kabila did not represent a robust ally, and the formation of a new military movement in the Kivus under the name *Congolese Rally for Democracy* (RCD) was by many seen as a proxy for a new foreign invasion. This time around the quest for state power did not run as smooth, even though RCD soon had their forces occupying areas outside Kinshasa and other strategic locations around the country. The main reason why the Second Congo War lasted much longer, from 1998-2003, was because it evolved into a full-scale continental war where Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia backed the new Kabila government with a substantial military effort.

A UN mission to the DRC (MONUC) has been in the country since 1999 and totalled approximately 17,500 in 2009. A long stalemate was destabilised by the assassination of Kabila in 2001, and the succession of his son, Joseph Kabila. Many efforts to broker peace failed in this period, but it was a South African-led

dialogue throughout 2002 which eventually led to the Sun City Agreement of April 2002, the Luanda Agreement of September 2002. The Inter-Congolese Dialogue ended in the *Global and All-Inclusive Agreement* signed on 17 December 2002. A new Transitional Government was established under Joseph Kabila in January 2003. A national election followed in 2006, which gave Joseph Kabila legitimacy as the state of head in spite of a tight contest with his main opponent, Jean-Pierre Bemba.

The Kivu provinces, which were one of Kabila's strongholds, have continued to experience violence and a war-like state even after the war. Out of the ashes of the fragmented RCD movement rose Laurent Nkunda's *National Congress for the Defence of the People* (CNDP) which has shifted from being the most articulated threat to the FARDC to be incorporated into the FARDC (and operate more or less autonomously from national military command). In response to attacks from FDLR, CNDP and the national army, local militias have sprung up across the Kivus, known as Mai-Mai.

All of these military groups have a record of violence, attacks on civilians, widespread use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, and have been implicated in illegal tax collection and mineral extraction. In sum, the Kivus continue to be extremely unstable, and the population living in these provinces are vulnerable not only to the violence carried out by armed groups, but due to the insecurity following forced displacement, collapsed social and physical infrastructure and an extremely high mortality rate following years of conflict.

### 2.1.2 Local antagonisms in North and South Kivu

When Rwandese refugees and armed groups entered the Kivu regions in the wake of the 1994 genocide, they entered an already conflict-ridden terrain, meaning that "local antagonisms between autochthonous and allochthonous populations for land control and political representation were replaced by new, more regional antagonisms." (Vlassenroot 2004) The explosive potential of the Kivus rests, according to Vlassenroot (2004), on three unsolved problems.

The first of these is the legacy of Mobutuism which created local antagonisms between different ethnic, tribal and socio-economic groups. The Mobutu era also left a local and national state

apparatus which was based on corruption and patron-client relationships and without the sufficient capacity to govern or deliver services to its vulnerable population. Secondly, issues of land control and ownership have created bitter conflict in the Kivus for many decades. The lines of conflict is to some extent based on tribal loyalties, and to some extent based on a discourse of autochthonous [indigenous] versus immigrant people.

Land has always been the basis for livelihoods amongst the agricultural communities in the Kivus. But with the spread of large-scale farming, land ownership took a new dimension. Vlassenroot argues that discriminatory land law in the Mobutu era has aggravated tensions over land in the region since 1973, with “a coalition comprising of elements from the state bourgeoisie, traditional authorities, national and local administrators, and churches increasingly turned to agriculture as a source of capital accumulation” (2004). Thirdly, and related to the above, was the question of citizenship. While Rwandophone people in the Kivus benefited from land laws and citizenship rights granted to them in the early 1970s, Mobutu started growing hostile to his former allies. Their status was very much unresolved at the beginning of the 1990s as the country become more instable and eventually collapsed.

### **North Kivu**

North Kivu has been the region where the local conflict dynamics have been most clearly manifested, and also where the level of violence has been highest throughout the conflict. The most important autochthonous ethnic groups are the Bahunde, Banyanga and Banande. Hunde chiefs have represented a level of tradition leadership alongside the Mobutu state (Vlassenroot 2004). But migration from Rwanda has been a part of the Kivutian demographics for a long time. Banyarwanda immigrants arrived in great numbers in the 1800s; and in the 1930s and onwards through the colonial *Mission Immigration Banyarwanda*; an inflow of Tutsis after the Rwandan revolution in 1959 and the Hutu refugees following the 1994 genocide (Lemarchand 2009).

Banyarwanda in North Kivu are hence of both Tutsi and Hutu origin, and tension between them – but also between both these groups and Congolese communities – have shaped the landscape of conflict. Tensions between Banyarwanda and autochthonous



groups have been particularly prevalent in Masisi and Walikale, with the most burning issues being those of land ownership and recognition of traditional authorities (e.g. Hunde chiefs). Political recognition and citizenship rights have manifested these local tensions at the scale of national politics, both in the Mobutu period and after. In 1993, before the genocide and refugee crisis, violent conflict erupted in North Kivu between autochthonous groups and Banyarwanda in Masisi (and soon beyond Masisi). Between 6-10,000 people were killed and 250,000 displaced. This was the context against which the refugee crisis following the Rwandan genocide and the establishment of the enormous Hutu refugee camps in the province must be understood. From then on, the Hutu-Tutsi ethnic divide dominated the conflict logic in the North Kivu region. This dynamic also led to strategic alliances between local Hutu Banyarwanda and Rwandese Hutu refugees and their political leadership in North Kivu.

### **South Kivu**

South Kivu is less populated than the area north of Lake Kivu, with a lesser pressure on land (Prunier 2009). While war and violence have claimed more lives in North Kivu, the province has been central to many of the developments leading to the two Congo Wars. The tension around the Banyamulenge group and the emergence of the AFDL rebellion in 1996 have in particular put South Kivu on the map.

The province is multi-ethnic, with the most important groups being Bashi, Barega, Bafuliru, Bavira, Babembe, Babuyu, Banyamulenge and Barundi. Although there have been recent tension around the Burundi chieftaincy on the Ruzizi plain near the border (Life & Peace Institute 2010), there have been less problems between autochthonous groups and Burundese communities than with the many conflicts between local Mai-Mai and Banyamulenge.

The Banyamulenge have, despite being Rwandophone, had a long history in South Kivu. Still their presence on the high plateaus near Uvira have been source of conflict, both in the form of local conflicts between cattle-herding Banyamulenge and local farming interests and as a nationally politicised issue framed as local versus Rwandese interests (Prunier 2009; Life & Peace Institute 2010). The Banyamulenge were involved in local rebellions, and the

---

armed struggle against these, in the 1960s, which earned them favours with the Mobutu regime. Mobutu turned against them in the 1980s, however, and Banyamulenge leaders were discredited from taking up positions in national forums on grounds of their ‘dubious citizenship’, a position which fuelled tension. Conflict between Banyamulenge and so-called autochthonous groups, and in particular the Bafuliru and Babembe, have therefore history in South Kivu which predates the developments in the 1990s (Turner 2007).

The latent conflict between Banyamulenge was brought back to life by the Rwandese refugees’ entry into the Bukavu area in 1994. With Mobutu representing an ally for the militarised Hutu refugee camps, the new regime in Kigali built ties with the Banyamulenge of South Kivu which the Rwandese Tutsi felt kinship with. René Lemarchand argues that the Banyamulenge were instrumentalised by Kagame, and also armed to perform a key role in the Rwanda-sponsored rebel movement ADFL led by Laurent Desiré Kabila.<sup>1</sup>

In response to the militarisation of the Banyamulenge, local leaders in Bukavu to stir anti-Banyamulenge sentiment among the population and, in September 1996, the vice-governor of South Kivu announced that the Banyamulenge were no longer allowed residence in the province and were to be guided to Rwanda via a human security corridor. The response was a Banyamulenge rebellion and a pretext for the Rwandese Patriotic Army to enter Congolese soil, signalling the beginning of the First Congo War. The connections between Rwanda, the rebellion and later regime of Laurent-Desiré Kabila, and the Banyamulenge community in South Kivu are complex and surrounded by myth and speculations. While a Munyamulenge served in the first DRC government as foreign minister, there were also Banyamulenge leaders in the new rebel movement, Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) which emerged in 1998 as an armed, foreign-backed opposition against the Kabila government (Turner 2007).

The relationship between Banyamulenge and other ethnic communities in South Kivu remains fractious to this date. Observers have expressed grave concerns about the security of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Speech entitled “The Great Lakes of Central Africa: random thoughts on an endless crisis” given at Fafo seminar, May 11th 2010.

approximately 80,000 Banyamulenge in the region, and the possibility of ethnic cleansing if the political situation turns more unstable.<sup>2</sup> In the spring of 2004, after the formal end of the Second Congo War, violence again erupted in South Kivu with CNDP warlord Laurent Nkunda temporarily occupying Bukavu. Fighting between Banyamulenge soldiers and Babembe and Barega was central to the conflict, and Rwandan and Burundian involvement was suspected. A key moment which threatened to destabilise the entire Congolese situation was the Gatumba massacre in August, where Burundian Hutu militia and Congolese armed groups massacred 152 Banyamulenge refugees in a camp in Burundi (Prunier 2009).

The church networks have not steered clear of ethnic tensions in South Kivu. While the omnipresence and massive infrastructural capacity of the Catholic Church means that this church networks encompass most social and ethnic groups, Rukundwa (2006) explains that there was a division of territory between the different Scandinavian and British Protestant missions.

International mission societies usually selected to work with particular ethnic groups and in separate territories, the Scandinavian Pentecostal missions were no different when they arrived in East Congo in the 1920s. Norwegian Pentecostal missionaries and the church they assisted in establishing *Communauté des Eglises Libres de Pentecôte en Afrique* (CELPA) had its base in the Bashi areas and, to a lesser extent Barega, Babembe and Banyamulenge communities. Swedish missionaries, and the *Communauté des Eglises de Pentecote en Afrique Centrale* (CEPAC) on the other hand, settled in the Bafuliru community<sup>3</sup>.

Various European mission organisations, Methodist and Pentecostal, as well as the Catholic Church, have been tangled up in the politics encircling the Banyamulenge in South Kivu. Rukundwa's account of the churches' role in the history of Banyamulenge tells of an early tie with the Swedish Pentecostals and the *Communauté des Eglises de Pentecote en Afrique Centrale* (CEPAC), which later was severed as Banyamulenge pastors split and established Assemblies of God (CADC) churches. This

---

<sup>2</sup> A point made by René Lemarchand at Fafu seminar, May 11th 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Former PYM staff (pers. comm. 20.04.2010)

---

‘church schism’ explains the animosity between CEPAC and the Banyamulenge (Rukundwa 2006).<sup>4</sup>

The Catholic Church also had a presence in the Banyamulenge community, and in 1985 a Munyamulenge became Bishop of the Uvira Diocese.<sup>5</sup>

There are also other local lines of antagonism in South Kivu, and many of these intersect with translocal interests, confirming the interlocked and regional nature of the conflict. Even within ethnic groups, intra-household networks and clans create a polarisation at a village level. Ethnic and clan-based conflicts are also amplified by the inflow of arms. Ties binding together traditional leaders and local militias (known as Mai-Mai) have created a strong opposition in South Kivu against the Banyamulenge, locally, and the interventions of Rwanda-aligned CNDP forces from Goma and beyond (Life & Peace Institute 2010).

The CNDP merged with the national army, FARDC, and made local opposition in South Kivu also an opposition against Kinshasa. Many local Mai-Mai have also formed local alliances with FDLR groups. The militarisation of local power geometries have also been aided by an illegal economy, Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2004) explain that networks of artisan mining and minerals trade have supplanting the neo-patrimonial class of the Mobutu era with parasitical military actors.

### 2.1.3 Congolese civil society and its role in the national peace process

Civil society in Mobutu’s Zaire is often portrayed as fragmented, weak and unable to exert concerted pressure independently from the party of the president. In the post-Mobutu context, the same can be said about the relation between civil society and armed groups and/or ethnic or territorial interests (e.g. Prunier 2009). In 1990, Mobutu had been pressured by its long-time ally the US government to accept some reforms of political liberalisation.

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Bishop Gapangwa’s Munyamulenge identity created frictions in the increasingly divided South Kivu, however, and he was, according to Rukundwa (2006), removed from by the Vatican the leadership of the Uvira diocese in 1992.

One such move was the establishment of the Sovereign National Conference (CNS) which encompassed more than 2000 delegates from civil society and political parties, led by a Catholic archbishop. But the CNS became one of many examples of Mobutu's divide-and-conquer tactics with respect to political opposition, and the result was a more disjointed civil society leading into the post-Mobutu era. The CNS also re-energised local antagonisms such as the above-mentioned Banyamulenge tension in South Kivu, because this ethnic group was not "represented" in the forum.

The role of churches in peace-building relates to the wider discussion of the role of civil society in the peace-building efforts which accompanied the periods of war since the mid-1990s. It cannot, however, be taken for granted that the concept of civil society is understood in the same way in different contexts. Daley (2006) argues that not only is civil society as such poorly organised in the Great Lakes region, but that the concept itself is relatively new.

The church networks encompass roles and functions in Eastern Congolese society which overlaps and transcends that which is traditionally consigned to civil society organisations. Through the health clinics and schools, and even in their regulatory functions, the Catholic Church and other church networks take on the role of the state (Tull 2003). The budgets and infrastructural capacity allowing churches to perform this role is to a large extent based on donor funding through international church networks, developmental organisations and charities.

In addition, they also perform religious rituals and functions in church buildings and on burial grounds. But through their activist role in political forums and peace processes, some churches and church representatives also take on an advocacy role reminiscent of NGOs. Certain church leaders have, as mentioned above, been trusted with important positions in civil society forums, truth and reconciliation commissions and other national-political positions. This multi-faceted character describes the church networks in East Congo, but there are significant differences between churches and church congregations – depending on the organisational history and capacity of each network.

In the formal peace initiatives at the end of the 1990s and throughout the 2000s, church organisations are understood as a part of civil society. When reading through a key document in the peace process of DRC, namely the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement<sup>6</sup>, one encounters the term *forces vives* which is defined as “all the stakeholders representatives of the civil society such as the churches, Trade Unions etc.”<sup>7</sup>. Daley (2006) argues that peace agreements in the Great Lakes region have been orchestrated by liberal international institutions to follow a standard path from cease fire – via demilitarisation, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) – to constitution-writing and elections. Little attention has been paid to local dynamics and customs in the last two decades, to the effect that local civil society has been overlooked and excluded in these processes. This has further alienated the process of peace-building from local concerns.

Rogier (2004), on the other hand, argues that the role of civil society in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue from 2001 was problematic to the extent that civil society actors bear some of the responsibility of the failure of the peace talks. While he grants them an important part in initiating substantial resolutions, he also blames them for taking sides with the different military and political fractions, hence giving up the peace-building role they were expected to play (Rogier 2004). Daley (2006) also notes that while civil society’s engagement potentially could open up for the involvement of women, there is a risk that this only includes women elites and elite women in the Congolese peace process.

## 2.2 Nordic missionaries and church building in Eastern DR Congo

The history of the two Pentecostal churches, CEPAL and CEPAC, goes back to the early 1920s, when Norwegian and Swedish Pentecostal missionaries arrived in Eastern Congo. A joint Swedish/Norwegian team of missionaries arrived in Western Congo in 1921. The missionaries gradually found their way

---

<sup>6</sup> “The Cease-Fire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of Congo”, signed in Lusaka 10 July 1999.

<sup>7</sup> “Annex A to the Cease-Fire Agreement: Modalities for the Implementation of the Cease-Fire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of Congo”, Chapter 5.

through collaborating with other Missions in the region to Kivu in 1922. Arriving in Bukavu, Kivu, which already was a church centre with other missions present, Norwegian and Swedish missionaries agreed to split in two district missions, and on a division of territories, and ethnic groups to works with (Til jordens ende, 1960).

Pentecostal churches do not have an organisation that recruits, train and pay missionaries, similar to other formal mission organisations. Initially, from 1910 to 1932 there existed an organised missionary society linked to the Pentecostal congregations of Norway. In 1932 this was abandoned, and the each missionary was sent by a Pentecostal congregation, which was also responsible for funding the missionary and his or her work. However a separate Office of Foreign Pentecostal Mission was established and placed in the largest congregation, Filadelfia, Oslo. This office was formally registered as The Pentecostal Foreign Mission of Norway (PYM) in 1988, and has the role of coordinating the foreign mission work, and also to act as an agency that can manage funds that was collected or from state funding systems in Norway. PYM has received funding for their health and education work from Norad since the 1970ies under the scheme of support to NGOs.

Norwegian missionaries have been in Kivu since 1922, with the exceptions of the period just after independence, and the period of the first Congo war, when missionaries left the country. They have provided important technical competencies in the form of health and education personnel.

CELPA and CEPAC are nationwide churches today, while Kivu remain their main centre of their activities. They are both members and central to the leadership of Eglise du Christ au Congo - Church of Christ in Congo, a network of protestant churches in DRC. Networks of churches and development agencies

### 2.3 Networks of churches and development agencies

The Norwegian and Swedish Pentecostal Foreign Missions, PYM and PMU, increased their support to their sister churches, CELPA and CEPAC, in 1970s, partly with funding from Norad. Except for

the Pentecostal missions, the DRC was not an important country of work for Norwegian NGOs until the genocide in Rwanda which created a huge refugee problem in DRC, and a regional conflict in the Great Lake area.

From 1994 the Norwegian humanitarian support to DRC increased rapidly, partly through the UN, and partly through Norwegian NGOs. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) established office and programmes, in Goma/North-Kivu, where they do direct implementation of programmes among refugees and internally displaced peoples (IDPs).

The Norwegian Church Aid and PYM established a joint emergency programme in 1994-96 in Kivu in collaboration with organisations on the ground, including CELPA and CEPAC. After 1996 both NCA and PYM continued their separate programme work in Eastern Congo. In one area they made an attempt to form a joint and complimentary programme in the repatriation of FDLR soldiers from Eastern Congo to Rwanda. The idea was that PYM, through their partner ECC, that were in contact with the rebel FDLR militants and commanders would be responsible for the recruitment of soldiers that were to be repatriated to Rwanda, while NCA would work with the Rwanda Church Council for their reintegration in society in Rwanda. The project has been delayed and the context may have changed as more and more FDLR militias want to resettle in DRC, and since DRC consider allowing temporary settlement in the region.

PYM has currently one programme with ECC on peace building and repatriation. Their two other South Kivu projects, one on reintegration of child soldiers with particular emphasis on girl soldiers, and one on health services and assistance to sexual violence victims (CAMPS) have shifted local partners from CELPA to Hope in Action (HiA).

Norwegian Church Aid has a large portfolio in the great lakes region, and with their main office in Rwanda. NCA has local offices managing projects on emergency, water and sanitation in Goma, and peace building and gender in Bukavu. The programmes cover women affected by sexual violence, emergency aid, IDPs and water and sanitation, church leadership, and democratic governance and election support. NCA has recently, 2010-2014 received a large three year programme from MFA for



Nort and South Kivu covering many of these programme areas. NCA work with the churches and a number of faith based organisations (FBOs).

The Norwegian NGO, Christian Relief Network (CRN) was established in 1993, and the first activities were in Northern Uganda. Peace building efforts have been complemented by projects activities on demobilisation and re-integration, child soldiers, conflict mediation, health and sexual violence. Much of their work is today done through their intermediaries, the Congo based NGO, Hope in Action (HiA), and with CEPAC as local partner. CRN has since 1998 provided funding for the rehabilitated 70 clinics in DRC, and has recently received a large programme for rehabilitation of a hospital in North Kivu.

CRN/CEPAC started their work with female victims of gender based violence (GBV) in 2004. CRN's project on female victims of sexual violence takes place in North and South Kivu, with CEPAC as partner. The work is also governed by the North Kivu Sexual Violence Commission (NKSVC), which have members from local government, NGOs, local churches, police and military, and UN agencies, (40 organisations).

Both CELPA and CEPAC have health large programmes and a number of hospitals and health centres (Seay 2009) . Due not least to the importance of good health services in periods of conflict and sexual violence, the two churches and their health networks and hospitals have received considerable funding from the international donors community, both religious and secular organisations, bilateral donors and UN. The support from Norwegian NGOs constitutes a limited part of the support the churches receive today.

Norwegian support to the Catholic Church in DRC has mainly been given through Caritas, which have received funding from MFA since mid 1990s to work on IDPs and emergencies, but also to their work on peace building, combatting sexual violence and reintegration of child soldiers. Caritas Norway work with the national chapter of Caritas in Kinshasa, and local Caritas-organisations such as Caritas Goma and Caritas Butembo-Beni. Caritas Norway does not work in South Kivu.

Also other denominations receive funding from MFA for work in DRC, such as the Methodist, and the Friends Society (Kvekerne) who has a regional peace building programme in the Great Lakes region.

## 3 Analytical framework

Analysing church networks in a conflict-ridden region is a challenging task, both because it is a difficult field within which to conduct research and due to the relative lack of academic research that could have served as secondary data to back up findings and explanations. In this chapter we will account for the methods used for collecting data in this project, and the literature, theoretical discussions and analytical frameworks which we have found helpful in analysing these data. Studying church networks *as* civil society actors does not represent a clearly defined terrain in social sciences. Therefore, we have drawn inspiration from various academic strands, including political geography and the sociology of religion.

### 3.1 Methodology and fieldwork

The methodological approach of this research project is qualitative. Data has been collected through interviews, documentation and observation. The team has conducted elite interviews with representatives from the church networks, their partners and donors and other relevant actors in society. Interviews have taken place in Bukavu, Goma, Oslo, Nairobi and Kigali. Fieldwork consisted of one shorter trip to the Regional Ecumenical Forum of the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA) in Nairobi 15-19 September 2009, and a two-week field trip to North and South Kivu in October-November 2009.

Data has also been collected through four village case studies, conducted by a team of researchers at the Department for Peace

---

and Development, *Université Évangélique en Afrique* (UEA), Bukavu.<sup>8</sup> The motivation for conducting these village case studies was to get a better understanding of dynamics *at local and sublocal scales* in South Kivu, to the extent to which these villages can illustrate something general about local church practices and politics.

### 3.2 A scalar approach to the church networks

Using a conceptual framework from political geography can be helpful when approaching the church networks in the Great Lakes region. Clearly, the social conflict in this region is in many ways a struggle for space. Space can, on the one hand, refer to *territory*, i.e. the attempts by fighting groups to command certain geographical areas; the negotiation over national borders; and the institutionalisation of these territories and borders through claims to sovereignty and citizenship. But space can also be understood in scalar terms, i.e. as a set of *political scales* which link different political actors to certain networks and hierarchies.

While the notion of political scale is often seen in relation to the nation-state, the situation in the Great Lakes region is characterised by state failure, regional crisis and the presence of international institutions such as the UN. This creates very complex scalar arrangements with overlapping spheres of influence, e.g. the Congolese, Rwandan and Ugandan national state apparatuses, international peace-building diplomatic initiatives, regional ecumenical church bodies, provincial government institutions and local political structures. Civil society-initiated regional peace-building initiatives in the Great Lakes region face these ‘politics of scale’ in their peace-building activities (see van Leeuwen 2008). In what follows, an analytical framework for understanding these dynamics as a ‘politics of scale’ will be presented.

‘Politics of scale’ has become a lens through which to think about the ability of political actors to control space, and their attempts to do so through seeking influence and support with other actors at different levels of governance. The concept of *scale* contributes to an analytical framework by asking how social space is ordered, and

---

<sup>8</sup> See Annex for a detailed account of the methodology and background of the village case studies.

how this order is contested. Cox' notion of the duality 'spaces of dependence'/'spaces of engagement' has been a useful conception in this regard.

Cox (1998) argues that the ways in which different actors engage politically in the production of space is determined by how they are connected to place. All social actors depend on certain locally embedded social relations for material well-being and social reproduction. Cox calls these relations the *spaces of dependence* – “upon which we depend for the realization of essential interests and for which there are no substitutes elsewhere” (Cox 1998:2). His focus was first and foremost on the spatial circulation of capital, both in terms of how the “micro-geography of value flows” produced particular attachments for individual homeowners in a property market, or between workers and their jobs, and in terms of how utility companies are bound to a certain infrastructure and a territorially defined set of customers/users.

These spaces of dependence motivates individual, collective and corporate actors to act politically, but when they do so – Cox observes – they often direct their efforts towards different spaces than the ones on which they depend for their essential interest. Social actors also construct networks “to engage with other centers of social power” (Cox 1998:2). This process can involve an upwards movement of 'jumping scales' to a higher level of governance or influence – for example by seeking influence in the national public sphere, such as with government agencies and the mass media. Political power can also be sought at a local level, such as when utility companies create local associations to attract investment to localities within their territorial boundaries in which their presence (or profit) is low. Cox labels these political targets of influence and support the *spaces of engagement*.

### 3.2.1 Spaces of dependence and engagement

Cox' conceptualisation of the politics of scale was conceived based on case studies which included land use conflicts and local development associations in the UK and the US, as well as a study of forced township relocations in apartheid South Africa. In all of them, there is a strong and hierarchically organised state bureaucracy that regulates fairly stable housing and labour markets. The concept of scale has since been criticised in the geography

---

discipline, in part for portraying social phenomena as overly hierarchical with local events being subordinate to national and global scales. Networked and flat ontologies are suggested as substitutes for scale thinking (e.g. Marston, Jones III et al. 2005).

But scale, in Cox' dependence/engagement conception, is indeed portrayed as a networked phenomenon, which allows us to grapple with actors whose control over particular scales are territorially uneven and reliant upon formal and informal social networks. We would argue that the duality Cox finds in the political strategies of different actors can be used as a sensitising tool to understand the politics of quite different organisations in very different socio-political contexts.

The hierarchical organisation of most modern states is an important reason why scale has been a well-used concept in contemporary social science. Most political actors – trade unions, political parties, civil society organisations and corporate lobbies – must customise and diversify their strategies according to the scalar construction of the state. Whereas some goals can only be achieved through political mobilisation at a national level (e.g. through centralised collective bargaining or parliamentary elections), others require organisation at other political scales (regional development projects or international peace treaties).

The Great Lakes region, and the East Congolese church networks at the centre of this analysis, represents a complex web of political scales. Any political actor seeking to influence political developments in this region needs to coordinate its efforts on several scales. Whereas politics in the UK need to link up with authorities at local, provincial, national and (possibly) EU level, this scalar hierarchy represents a certain level of predictability and stability in the constitution and division of labour between different levels of governance – even in times of rapid globalisation and 'local developmentalism'.

Political actors in the Kivu provinces, on the other hand, are faced with political challenges in an area where national borders criss-cross a region which otherwise is tightly integrated through economic relations and trade, migration and refugee flows and overlapping linguistic and ethnic communities. Moreover, deeply strained relations between the states on each side of these national borders – international and *intra*-national military conflicts – and

very different levels of state legitimacy and cohesion, pose serious problems for political actors trying to influence decision-making at any scale.

### 3.2.2 Applying a scalar perspective to the politics of Congolese churches

Cox' notion of scale is focused on the relationship between different actors and their attachments to flows of value – i.e. the economic aspects of 'spaces of dependence' – and the multi-scalar politics which these attachments produce. When analysing the politics of the various organisations and individuals of church networks in the region, it is obvious that these politics are intimately related to local and translocal flows of value.

At a village level, the church is often in a key position with regards to property ownership and other commercial activities such as trade activities. In villages where there is little formal economic activity, questions such as who owns land, who can offer employment opportunities, who has access to a car and fuel, who has rooms for rental, and who possesses means of communication (such as radio or telephone) are of immense importance (Prunier 2001).

When the churches and their leaders occupy these positions, different forms of social control overlap: moral guidance, religious leadership, economic ownership and political administration. In East Congo, where the Congolese state lacks legitimacy and has a weak presence at the local level, the Catholic Church and other church networks also engage in educational and health services and can function as a regulatory body for various social and economic activities, at a village level and beyond.

In addition, church networks and actors are important in relation to other aspects of social life – personal faith, collective identities and moral guidance – which not necessarily conforms to the "realization of essential interests" in Cox' definition of 'spaces of dependence' but which nevertheless are fundamental to the daily routines of people and places. The strong position of churches in the Kivus can be ascribed to this strong embeddedness in village life, which puts them in special role vis-à-vis the fractured state and other, primarily urban-based, civil society organisations. But

interestingly, churches' 'spaces of dependence' are not restricted to extracting revenue from local economic activities.

Throughout the colonial period, and as a result of years of missionary activity in East Congo, local churches became part of international networks which have allowed significant flows of money to enter Congolese society via structures such as the Catholic Church various other missionary church networks. Most of the churches activities are likely to be dependent of international donors. Hence, from an analytical point of view, one should understand the 'spaces of dependence' of Congolese churches as both locally embedded and international in their scope.

This unique position allows churches and church leaders to play an influential role in political life at various scales in the region. At a village level, the churches' role in health, education and religious life puts local priests and pastors in positions of authority. In province centres such as Bukavu and Goma, church leaders have proven a capacity for social mobilisation through protests and strikes, accompanied by several official statements addressed to political authorities. They have raised their voice in relation to issues such as violence, military actions and illegal mineral extraction and trade.

At the same time, some church leaders have been caught up in local politics, ethnic tension and even been accused of hate speech during the waves of violence and war which has plagued the Kivus in recent years (referanse). In order to maintain this key role in village life and translocal politics, church organisations and individual authorities seek political influence in various arenas within and beyond East Congo.

Church leaders from the Kivus have become senators in Kinshasa and been key to important processes such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Finally, the 'spaces of engagement' for churches in East Congo include an increasing engagement across national borders, and the active role of the protestant council *Eglise du Christ au Congo* (ECC) in regional ecumenical meetings and initiatives in the Great Lakes region and beyond is a prime example of the international scope of their politics.



In sum, I will therefore argue that the duality found in Cox' notion of spaces of dependence/engagement is a useful sensitising tool to understanding the complex role of church networks in the Great Lakes region of Africa. It is a premise of a relational and constructivist understanding of political scale that no level of governance or influence can be analysed in isolation.

In other words, what takes place at a village level in the Kivu provinces is intimately bound up with translocal processes: cross-border trade relations, migration and refugee flows, military or diplomatic strategies, or imagined communities such as "the Great Lakes region" or ethnic identities and tribal loyalties<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, processes articulated at the level of the province or the national state are often manifested in highly localised events in Goma, Bukavu or even at the level of the diocese and smaller centres. The figure below illustrates the complex, interrelated politics of East Congolese churches from a scalar perspective.

---

<sup>9</sup> Sometimes framed as autochthonous groups versus Banyarwanda, at other times between specific tribal identities such as Hunde, Nande, Banyamulenge and others.

A scalar perspective on church politics in East Congo (DRC) and in the Great Lakes region	
Spaces of dependence	Spaces of engagement
International	<p>Dependence on international donors, e.g. Catholic Church and various European and North American Protestant churches (incl. The Norwegian Pentecostal Mission (PYM) or Quaker Service); In addition, these networks have been able to access humanitarian aid, state and NGO-run development cooperation (e.g. through MFA to Norwegian Church Aid, PYM or CRN).</p> <p>Church leaders have, through the ecumenical forums and church councils, been represented in diplomatic efforts between state and military leaders.</p>
Cross-border	<p>Both the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches in the Kivu region takes part in various regional, international initiatives, including FECCLAHA (Protestant) and AMACEA (Catholic).</p>
National	<p>Catholic and Protestant churches have national structures and umbrella organisations; East Congolese church leaders have been actively involved in national political forums and processes (Senate, Truth and Reconciliation Commission).</p>
Province	<p>Coordination of churches and church councils in regional centres (e.g. Goma, Bukavu); Church leaders possess a "capacity of social mobilisation" in urban centres, including strikes and protests; Church organisations involved in some coordinating structures at a province-level related to humanitarian efforts, with international NGOs.</p>
Sub-province	<p>Many churches, in particular the Catholic Church, have a strong presence at the village level in economic and political life; This includes running schools and health centres, often performing state-like functions in the regulation of these activities.</p> <p>The presence of churches in village life and local politics; Links between churches and local (internationally funded) humanitarian projects.</p>

→ *Flows of value, political influence, social control/coordination*

### 3.2.3 Multiscalar peace-building initiatives

Church networks and church leaders have been involved in a series of peace-building efforts in the Kivu provinces, and at national and international level. Church representatives get involved for a variety of reasons. It is an important premise of this analysis that “the church” cannot be analysed as a monolithic actor in this context. Firstly, as described above, church networks in DRC take on religious functions (mass, ceremonies, rituals), civil society functions (organising women, youth and engaging in humanitarian projects), state functions (e.g. through health and education). While this project focuses on the civil society role of churches in

the region, this cannot be analysed in isolation from other activities coordinated by the churches.

Secondly, “the church” is by no means a unified organisational structure. The Catholic Church, which is the dominant organisation, encompasses all the roles mentioned above, and can perform many of these roles without relying on funding outside the Catholic Church network. Other churches also operate relatively independently from each other, even though a certain level of coordination of Protestant churches at a provincial and national level by the Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC).

Thirdly, one must also assume that church activities at provincial and national levels are only in part driven by mandates from local constituencies. Personal political agendas and career opportunities also influence the actions of church representatives, as well as conditions and signals from international donors and other sources of influence.

Given that the churches are structures which have a presence stretching from village life to national political forums and international sources of funding, it is a basic premise of this analysis that the church both represent a *structure of opportunity and constraint* which is used by a wide variety of actors to further different agendas and that particular organisations and representatives of the church, in given contexts and at specific points in time, can act as *proactive agents in political forums and peace-building processes*. This analysis aims at analysing this tension between the church as a structure and the church representatives as actors, with particular attention to peace-building and the role of women in this process.

By foreign donors (including PYM and NCA), and by the church networks themselves, the churches of East Congo are being championed as the most viable force in civil society and a protagonist in the peace-building initiatives which have taken place during the last decade. This research attempts to differentiate this peace-building potential according to the scalar approach outlined above. What can church actors achieve at the village level, as opposed to how they can influence political matters in the provincial centres, or even at the level of international shuttle diplomacy? Sensitivity to the very different roles ascribed to the church in the villages and across national borders is not always

visible in donor policies. But by looking at different projects and initiatives in which churches have been involved, very different logics appear. In some cases, the churches are assumed to have a great potential at the local level to *raise awareness and change attitudes* concerning gender relations or ethnic tension.<sup>10</sup> Other initiatives seem to base church involvement on the *legitimacy and assumed political neutrality of church leaders* in facilitating national reconciliation and even overcoming Congolese-Rwandan diplomatic tensions.<sup>11</sup>

While the takes on a multiscalar approach, we have chosen to take the provincial level as our point of entry. The relationship between church leaders in Goma (North Kivu) and, in particular, Bukavu (South Kivu) and other scales is therefore important. One key aspect here is the linkages between provincial centres and churches at *village level* in the vast rural areas of the Kivus where civilians continue to suffer from war crimes.

Importantly, the legitimacy of the church in both local and translocal matters hinges on the assumption that (i) the church leadership has a mandate based in their constituency on the ground, and that (ii) church coordinating structures in the province or at the national level have the capacity to coordinate church activities at lower levels of the church hierarchy. Analysing the reporting channels, organisational mandates and forms of representation within the different church networks is therefore an important part of this project. The important question here is: how are these linkages between local and provincial church organisations used in the peace-building initiatives of the church?

Another focus is on the linkages between provincial church representatives and national politics in Kinshasa, and international politics in the Great Lakes region and beyond. As van Leeuwen (2008) argues, the concept of regional approaches to peace-building within civil society is relatively new. Still, initiatives from both the Catholic and Protestant church networks have taken place between Congolese, Rwandese and Burundian churches. Van

---

<sup>10</sup> An example in this regard is the NCA-funded and FECCLAHA-initiated *Tamar Campaign*, see for example: Nyabera, F. and T. Montgomery (eds) (2007). "Campagne Tamar: Etude biblique contextuelle Manuel sur la lutte contre la Violence Liée au Genre", FECCLAHA, Nairobi, pp. 1-66.

<sup>11</sup> A good example in this regard is the Great Lakes Ecumenical Forum (GLEF), also initiated by FECCLAHA.

Leeuwen (2008) has analysed the Catholic cross-border civil society initiatives with a particular focus on the regional bishops' meeting *Association des Conférences Episcopales de l'Afrique Centrale* (ACEAC). He observed that the most common mode of regional cooperation had been regional meetings, exchange visits and to a certain extent programme cooperation.

However, most initiatives where local civil society representatives meet across borders are the results of international donor programmes. While these meeting places have the potential of creating a 'politics of regional imagination' which brings together local actors to reach a shared understanding of the regional causes of the conflict – land disputes and shortage, citizenship issues, mineral extraction and (illegal) export, refugee flows, militias and foreign armies – the regional meetings under the Catholic umbrella have shown local actors to have fundamental problems in analysing the regional character of the conflict (van Leeuwen 2008). This has led the church initiatives to focus on the effects of conflict on the local population (and how to address this suffering), rather than on the causes of the conflict with the intent of formulating a joint response to the political actors.

Moreover, representatives from the different Great Lakes countries have very different relationships to their respective state authorities, ranging from the weak Congolese state to Rwanda, where an authoritarian state controls civil society. While church leaders from all countries were seen as failing to distance themselves from government discourse, van Leeuwen (2008) still argues that the biggest *potential* of these church actors lies in bringing about political reform in their respective countries.

In other words, the potential ascribed to the church networks at a regional political level is portrayed as fairly limited. Similar initiatives have taken from the Protestant networks, particularly within the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA). Based on fieldwork and secondary sources, this project will address some of the same questions as asked by van Leeuwen in the Protestant context.

The Catholic and Protestant churches have also shown capacity to influence national political matters in recent years, both through representation in national political forums and peace processes. In

---

sum, the scalar analytical approach of this project will attempt to see activities and political processes at these different levels in relation to each other. Particular attention will be paid to the dynamic between those scales where the church finds its ‘spaces of dependence’ – notably through its position in local socio-economic life and through their links to international church and development donors – and those scales where church actors seek to established their ‘spaces of engagement with political arenas in the provincial centres, at the national level and across the national borders which pierce the political landscape of the Great Lakes region. In the following sections, we will analyse these dynamics based on our own findings at each of these scales of coordination.

### 3.3 Women, peace and security and the implementation of UNSCR 1325

This chapter concentrates on peace building by religious civil organisations in relation to women and security, and on the role played by women in religious organisations contributing to peace and reconciliation in the Great Lakes Region. First the relevance of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security for religious organisations will be discussed followed by a discussion about women as victims of war and agents for peace. Before presenting data from our fieldwork, some important policy debates and theoretical perspectives on women’s roles in religious organisations will be presented.

#### 3.3.1 Relevance of UNSCR 1325 for religious civil society organisations

The serious and disproportionate effects of conflicts on women were acknowledged in the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The resolution reaffirms the role of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building and demands women’s equal participation to promote peace and security. Commitment to the principles of UNSCR 1325 in relation to the conflict in East Congo has been made explicitly clear in subsequent resolutions by the Security Council, e.g. in the UNSRC 1794 on the extension of the mandate UN’s Mission in the Republic of the Congo (MONUC). The Norwegian government launched an Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325

which stepped up the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' commitment to these issues (Utenriksdepartementet 2006). Here, it was acknowledged that the failure to stop the abuse and exploitation of women and girls in DRC undermined the legitimacy of MONUC's involvement in the region. Importantly, the Action Plan states that the Norwegian government sees international and national NGOs as important partners in promoting gender issues and women's participation in peace-building processes.

How can religious civil society organisations assist in the implementation of the UNSCR 1325? An important step would be for religious organisation themselves to pursue gender mainstreaming in their own organisational make-up; through the representation and participation of women at all decision-making levels of religious institutions, and by incorporating the gender perspective in identifying women's special needs, supporting women's peace initiatives, ensuring the protection and respect for human rights of women and girls and employ special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence (GBV).

But church networks can potentially also contribute to these goals in society at large, insofar as they engage in women's empowerment and play an advocacy role vis-à-vis other institutions and power structures. Do churches in DRC promote women issues and give services to women who have been implicated and affected by conflict? Do women participate in promoting women issues and do they contribute in peace building processes at different levels?

### 3.3.2 Women as victims of war

Women in the Great Lakes region have been and still are seriously affected by the regional conflict. They represent a great number of the estimated millions of people that have died as a result of the conflict. Women have been killed, died of hunger, recruited/captured as soldiers, raped and taken as sexual slaves by armed militant groups. Moreover, thousands of wives have become widows, and mothers have seen their children disappear. In this chapter the focus will be on women as victims of sexual violence in the Kivu regions and how the religious organisations involve themselves in this issue on different levels.

---

According to Solhjell (2009) sexual violence is used on an individual level grounded in soldiers frustration and anger towards their superiors and their life situation, on a group level as a weapon of war used by different militant groups to express power and control over people and territories, and on a macro level military groups that commit sexual violence might get a place around negotiation tables due to them consisting a threat to security.

The missing state structures including legal authority and consequently impunity is a factor that allows the high frequency of sexual violence. There is no exact number of how many women that have experienced sexual violence, however there are estimations indicating that tens of thousands of women have been raped by militant forces in Eastern DRC (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2010).

The rapes conducted by militant groups have been described as very brutal (Amnesty International 2008, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2010, Human Rights Watch 2002, Kimaathi & Waruhiu. 2009, Baaz & Stern 2010). GBV must be understood as a part of an even wider context of violence and human insecurity during conflict. Victims of GBV include all kinds of women, regardless of age, ethnicity and social status. The violence by combatants include gang rapes, forced rape between victims, sexual slavery, rape of pregnant women, rape in the presence of family members, the use of foreign objects and genital mutilation.

Very often sexual violence is only one of several traumatising acts that happen to the victim such as the killing of husbands, children and the theft and destruction of belongings. Fear of pregnancies and sexual transmittable diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, adds to the consequences of the rapes. Often the traumatising event follows by neglect and even abandonment of family, husband and the community in general due to the shame related to these kinds of atrocities. The physical, psychological and even socioeconomic consequences of sexual violence on the victims are severe.

Women and men's roles have an impact on the extent of sexual violence during a conflict (Solhjell 2008). Cultural perception exists in the Kivus reducing women to private property which make them even more vulnerable to sexual violence. Attacks on a woman means also attacking her husband (or her male proprietor), which makes sexual violence an effective tool to humiliate the



enemy. Political instrumentalisation of identity/ethnicity contributes to enable atrocities to happen as the victims are perceived as the “other” and the enemy.

Given the amount and the characteristics of sexual violence in DRC, especially it being used as a weapon with the aim to destroy the whole society through terrorising the population and inducing shame and humiliation to both women and men, it has an immediate impact on the whole society and concerns everyone. The report *Now, The World Is Without Me* advance a concern about a kind of “normalisation” of sexual violence in the Congolese society due to the widespread rape during the conflict (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2010).<sup>12</sup>

To stop these atrocities by implementing human rights and international law is of course of huge importance. However there is also a pressing need to care for the victims, both physically and psychologically, and to sensitise the general population to avoid that these women also become victims of stigmatisation and left to themselves. Religious organisations in the Kivus are presented at all levels of society and also in remote areas where insecurity is especially present. Local church leaders often have authority in the villages, with the capacity to contribute to promote and search for solutions to village-related issues. How these churches and organisations are implicated in the issue of sexual violence and the role played by women within these structures is the main interest in Chapter 5.

### 3.3.3 Women as agents for peace

Women are victims of war and also, even though to a much lesser degree than men, active in the conflict, but are women active agents for peace? Puechguirbal (2004) argues that women are often seen as “naturally” more peaceful and cooperative than men due to their maternal capacity. This essentialist view might be an argument to include women in peace building activities, but also has the consequence that one can exclude women from spheres

---

<sup>12</sup> The conclusions of this report have been subject to debate, however. This point was made by Norwegian researchers and NGOs during the visit of Margot Wallström to PRIO, Oslo in March 2010.

where they do not have any “natural” belonging, as some will argue is the case for instance with formal peace negotiations.

Whitman (2005) argues that the self-empowerment of women in DRC has rarely been highlighted because usually the focus is on them being victimised. She describes women’s participation, mobilisation and challenges related to the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in a paper that was presented at the Southern African Universities Social Sciences Conference in Gaborone in December 2005. Both Whitman and Puechguirbal (2004) argue that a main obstacle for women to be taken seriously as active in peace-building and formal negotiations is that they are looked upon basically as care-givers and victims of war.

Ngongo (2009) describes how women in Bukavu in South Kivu have contributed to peace building.<sup>15</sup> Women are not passive, but very active faced with the war, even though their contributions often are seen in informal settings, such as in the local community, the family and in the corridors of official negotiations. Women associations were created in search for peace, women were marching in the streets, days without women and praying days were organised, meetings between women, women and men and between women and the aggressors were also organised and letters were written to those who had authority to do something about the situation.

Women from different organisations and churches worked together. There were also women organisations working with women in Burundi and Rwanda (*le Conseil des Organisations des Femmes Agissant en Synergie* – COFAS), even though many disliked the fact that they were dialoguing with women in the country looked upon as the main source of trouble. Ngongo argues that even though women were acting mostly in the periphery of the Inter-Congolese dialogue in Sun City, they manage to capture an important space and influence as representatives from the civil society. Ngongo argues that one of the most important contributions of women has been to promote the issue of sexual violence in the community and in peace negotiations.

Puechguirbal (2004) describe different strategies used by women to get to the peace negotiation table in Burundi, DRC, Liberia and

---

<sup>15</sup> Bukavu had a female mayor, Ms. Nzita Kavungirwa (2009).

Sierra Leone. Women have had some influence on peace negotiations and their contributions have been important. In line with Ngongo (2009), Puechguirbal argues that women were able to break the silence around the issue of GBV. However, women's contributions often take place in the corridors and it is difficult for them to be visible in the public sphere as equal negotiators around the table due to the fact that they are trapped in their traditional roles. This is according to Puechguirbal (2004:60) a vicious circle:

As we have seen in the cases of Burundi, DRC, Liberia and Sierra Leone, this is a vicious circle. Without a political platform, women will not have access to the national, regional and international institutions that could help them transform social attitudes and cultural norms. And without a change in attitudes, women continue to be ostracized on behalf of traditions and culture, which is a major obstacle for them to get exposed to the public domain, and to gain access to leadership positions. It is crucial to make space available for women to attend all kinds of skills training, taking into consideration their timetable and the load of domestic chores.

One of the questions raised in this chapter is if religious organisations contribute with spaces for women to attain skills training in order for them to actively contribute to peace-building.

### 3.3.4 Perspectives on women's roles in religious organisations: A gender paradox?<sup>14</sup>

Given that religious civil society organisations often are male-dominated and patriarchal, presenting theoretical perspectives on women's role and participation within these structures is of interest before analysing women's contribution to peace-building processes within religious organisations in the Great Lakes Region. Both feminists and their critics have been instrumental in providing explanations of the relationship between religion and women as organisational subjects.

---

<sup>14</sup> See also Rosnes et al. (2007).

---

The first and second wave of feminism had a tendency to overlook women as actors with their own strategies (Woodhead 2001). The first wave did this in the way that its preoccupation was a claim to equality on the expenses of an understanding of gender differences.

The second wave, at its peak from 1960-1980, was preoccupied with women as oppressed by male domination and patriarchy on the expense of studying the women and their strategies within these male-dominated structures.

The third wave of feminism, which entered the field in the 90s, focuses on gender differences and also on the internal differences between women. Women of the south are not one group of women as they often have been portrayed especially by Western feminist (Mohanty, Rosso & Torres 1991).

Women are in a common situation in the way that they are women, but their reality and their life is also very much formed by their ethnicity, class, level of education etc. Consequently, we need to see women as active subjects, each within their own specific situation, not only as passive objects in a male-dominated society. Women are, as men, acting as human beings with strategies who make choices. However their choices might be more or less informed, and in certain situations their voices are not heard due to their subordinated position.

There has been some research on women's reactions, strategies and choices within religious contexts. Birgitta Larsson (1991) focuses on how women choose to convert to Christianity during colonisation in Tanzania due to personal conviction but also to economical and personal reasons as a strategy to survive. Ruth Marshall (1993) describe how Pentecostal women in Nigeria use religious institutions in order to articulate new life strategies.

Even though women are not represented in the administration of the Pentecostal movement and even though they are subordinated in many ways, the movement put women in a better situation when it comes to marriage, family and sexuality due to the movements focus on equality, reciprocity and social security. Women are more personally engaged than men in the movement because, as Marshall argues, they have more interests in seeking a new situation and new strategies.

”Women are often packet out of their marital homes on whims, beaten, treat as servants or baby machines, subjected to torment by husbands or mother-in-laws because of barrenness, pressured into marriages they do not want by family members, or sexual intercourse to gain and keep the favour of a prospective husband, boss, or lecturer. They find in these communities an opportunity to construct a space in which they can move with relative freedom and dignity, to gain a measure of control over their sexual and family lives, and from there use their positions to gain more influence in the sphere of labour outside the home.”  
(Marshall 1993:233)

Involving oneself in organisational life is one strategy chosen by many women to engage themselves in society, as the formal institutions often are male dominated. Aili Mari Tripp`s (1994) article *Rethinking Civil Society: Gender Implications in Contemporary Tanzania* discusses this issue. The exclusion of women in the formal space makes the organisational space important for women:

Exclusion from formal institutions may mean that women seek alternative strategies to shape and control their lives. It might limit them to informal associations or to smaller groups rather than larger ones (Tripp 1994:151).

Organisations permit women to think of themselves as collective groups who can meet new challenges. Organisations might create new channels to fight for human rights. However Tripp underlines that organisations need to engages in these issues and develop relations to the state in order to get more influence, not only engage themselves in issues closely connected to the role of women in the home (health, education, caring etc.).

The organisational structure is important for the level of women participation. Peter VonDoepp (2002) shows in his article *Liberal visions and actual power in grassroots civil society: local churches and women`s empowerment in rural Malawi* how organisational structure has an implication on the extent of women participation. It is not necessarily the most democratically organisational structures that enable participation according VonDoepp. He presents a case of how the Presbyterian and the Catholic Church in Malawi have

involved women in different ways due to their organisational structure.

The Catholic Church was more effective in involving women than the Presbyterian even though the latest is looked at as more democratic. The Catholic Church has organisations on different village levels (*mipakati*) where religion and also themes about every day life are discussed. These organisations gave women a better opportunity to engage in religious life and women could speak, which was not really accepted in the culture in general. All women could participate, and differences due to age and gender was less apparent due to the basic religious attitude that all humans are equal, except for the pastor who has a higher position. *Mipakati* created a good atmosphere for dialogues where also women took leading positions. The organisations let women learn new things and gave them unique formal roles.

”As the Catholic women emphasised through the *mipakati*, the local Catholic church provided an organisational space where some women could obtain important skills, develop confidence and witness unique models of female authority and voice.”  
(VonDoepp 2002:293)

The Presbyterian Church is, in opposition to the catholic, decentralised and has a democratic institutional structure. Traditional patriarchal practises were brought into the church in the way that women got secondary and separate roles. This strengthened the existing power relations in society. Most of the ‘eldest’ and deacons were males and played more important roles than women. Women participation was restricted. The Presbyterian Church had organisations, but only a small portion of women were represented in these organisations and men and women did not participate in the same organisations. Women’s role was to support the male dominated institution according to VonDoepp. He argues that the Presbyterian Church had a tendency to reproduce already existing gender differences in the society as a whole:

The institutional structure of the Presbyterian church also affects the practises of religious organisations at the grassroots. Specifically, the decentralised nature of the Presbyterian system - offering highly localised

forms of control – allowed certain patriarchal tendencies in Malawian society to inform the operation of local churches. As a result, practices within the Presbyterian organisations in the research area tended to reproduce and exacerbate the gender inequalities that were evident in the larger social setting (VonDoepp 2002:295-296).

According to VonDoepp the democracy and decentralisation of the Presbyterian Church was the reason why women were not empowered. Catholic women were more active in political parties than the Presbyterian and many had gained their experience which they used in political life from the church. He underlines the fact that hierarchical organisations not necessarily empower women in better ways than others; all depend on the policies and programmes implemented by the leaders.

Bernice Martin (2001) argues in his article *The Pentecostal Gender Paradox: a Cautionary Tale for the Sociology of Religion* the Pentecostal contribution to women's situation, which he means have been overlooked by many researchers. He argues that the Pentecostal movement has given women the opportunity to change the focus in a society dominated by men to the best of the whole family instead of to the best of men. Traditional cultures which are male dominated normally coexist without great problems with religious structures. However, the Pentecostal doctrine with regard to *salvation for all*, based on the holy spirits gifts to women as well as men, bring in something radically new regarding equality, according to Martin (2001:55):

Nonetheless, it appears to suit both the men and the women in the Pentecost populations facing and accelerated transition to modernity that the gender-paradox be sustained rather than resolved. The practical effect has been to give a new start to gender and family relationships through a transformation of the moral order which legitimates and sustains them.

What lies behind the Pentecostal 'gender paradox' is that it develops gender equality without destroying gender integrity, understood as the possibility of experiencing the gendered self as a "good woman" or a "good man" (Cucchiari 1990). Martin (2001)

argues that the Pentecostal movement has had a huge impact on the women's movement in the developing world:

“All of this suggests that, if there is a ‘women’s movement’ among the poor of the developing world, Pentecostalism has a good claim to the title. Despite the existence of a discourse of strict gender equality promoted internationally by Western aid agencies, mainstream church organisations, development agencies and the like, it is not Western feminism, even in its Christian variant, which has transformed for the better the lives of millions of poor women in developing societies.

They have been “empowered” by a “regressive”, “fundamentalist” Christian movement whose theological rawness and lack of intellectual sophistication causes problems and embarrassment to enlightened Westerners observers, including those in the mainline denominations of the developing world whose young are defecting in droves to this do-it-yourself movement of the vibrant margins or are ‘pentecostalising’ parts of those established institutions themselves.” (Martin 2001:56-57)

Martin criticises the feminist research tradition which, with its focus on family and religion as sources of abuses against women, has missed the fact that religious organisations might also in fact empower women.

### 3.3.5 Participation, mobilisation and representation: A framework for analysis

Often when discussing gender equality, indicators referring to representation of women in decision-making bodies are a main focus. Women representation in patriarchal institution is of course of interest. However women strategies, appearing through participation and mobilisation on different levels, are also essential in order to grasp how women to different degrees and often informally engage themselves in promoting women issues and peace related activities within established male dominated structures. The intention is to show opportunities offered by these structures despite their patriarchal traditions and how women actively make use of those opportunities.

While participation is used more widely in relation to UNSCR 1325, in this research project we separate between the concepts



participation, mobilisation and representation when analyzing women's roles within church and religious organisation structures. When using the concept *participation* we mean in this report all kinds of formal and informal women participation that does not involve a representative role, such as membership in women groups, social work, attendance in meetings etc.

With *mobilisation* we mean strategies that women intentionally use to get more access to formal spaces closer to decision-making bodies, where they can act on the basis of more power and have more formal influence on the characteristics and the activities of the church/ organisation. With *representation* we mean formal representation of women in decision-making bodies which are integrated in the church structure, in boards as well as in job positions.

Schlozman et al. (1994) argues that alternative modes of participation such as organisational, protest, and grassroots community activities where women always have taken part have often been underestimated in studies of political participation. In their quantitative survey of political participation in an American context, they included questions about voluntary activity outside of politics, for instance attendance, educational, charitable and social activities within churches. They claim that systematic data on participation in these domains are very rare and that studies comparing political participation with voluntary activities are nonexistent.

Participation in voluntary activities can develop skills that are transferable to politics even though the activities are not political in themselves. Members in churches become part of a network through which participation in politics are mediated and they are also exposed to political messages through meetings. Among the findings it is interesting for our research question to note, even though this is a study of quite another context than ours, that women were more active than men in religious institutions:

What is striking, however, is that the arena in which women are clearly more active than men is one that is rarely mentioned in discussions of gender differences in participation – religious institutions. Not only are women more likely than men to go to services regularly, they are also more likely to give time to

education, charitable, or social activities associated with their church or synagogue and to contribute money to their religion. The differences are statistically significant and fairly substantial. Only when it comes to serving on the board or holding an official position in a religious institutions are men about as active as women (Schlozman et al. 1994:970).

Schlozman et al. (1994) further look into the resources that facilitate political involvement: time, money and civic skills. They state that women have more opportunities to exercise civil skills in the religious domain than men, contrarily to the working domain due to the fact that women are more active in religious institution and less likely to be working than men and to hold high skilled jobs. We are now into our concept mobilisation which we understand from theories within resource mobilisation. These theories are concerned with how social movements arise and how social movements are conditioned by existing resources (Stokke 1999:120). Three concepts are central to this literature:

- *Mobilisation structures*: organisational structures (or vehicles) through which collective action emerges, including organisations, informal networks and institutions;
- *Political opportunity structures*: the wider institutional and political context in which collective action takes place, with a particular focus on the constraints and opportunities found in power relations and national political culture.
- *Cultural framing processes*: shared meanings and ways to legitimise action which promote collective mobilisation are resources taken into account (McAdam, McCarthy et al. 1996).

Each of these concepts are useful for understanding how women mobilise through (and beyond) the church networks. The local churches and parishes have women's groups, which can facilitate some forms of mobilisation by women. Through church networks, development projects and regional initiatives, some women are also offered other mobilising resources for their agendas – also at higher political scales and in more influential positions. However, mobilisation of church women is also subject to a complex set of political constraints, by religious norms, local cultural practices and institutional principles. It is therefore important to understand

mobilisation of women in light of the *lack* of political opportunity structures in DR Congo. Importantly, mobilising also hinges on whether the church networks allows for ways to frame women's mobilisation and participation as meaningful and consistent with cultural and religious norms. But we should be careful not to treat the women mobilisation as a homogeneous group. In villages where ethnicity, class or clan systems create barriers to interaction, 'women' might not be a general category around which women organise.

Pitkin's (1967) distinction between *descriptive* and *substantive* representation is, despite its age, still used to create more sophisticated conceptualisations of how groups and individuals are represented in positions of power.<sup>15</sup> Descriptive representation refers to when an individual is *standing for* a group in her/his capacity as women, person of colour, geographical origin or another social category – and was criticised by Pitkin herself for leading to token identity politics if not backed by forms of substantive or active representation.

The latter term refers to individuals who represent the interests and issues of the group in question, and from a position which has the effective authority to influence decision-making around these issues (see also Weldon 2002). Weldon (2002) argues that this idea is based on a belief that individual members of marginalised groups can stand for a whole group, which is problematic. The perspective of one individual with a specific experience is different from a group perspective which is a result of a collective, intra-group understanding. She asks how one person can stand for a whole group.

It is important to bear in mind the group diversity and not assume a false homogeneity. As mentioned earlier, women are also affected among others by their class, ethnicity and age in addition to the fact that they are women, and therefore have different priorities and challenges. Weldon argues that by participating in group activities, one can gain a better understanding of issues and challenges regarding members of a specific group. In other words, there is no guarantee that women issues are promoted due to a

---

<sup>15</sup> Pitkin's definition also includes concepts such as *symbolic* and *formalistic* representation, but for the purpose of this paper the above-mentioned terms are sufficient.

woman being represented in a decision-making body. All depends on how this individual is linked with groups of women where women's issues are expressed. Weldon argues that women's policy agencies can more effectively promote women issues because that is their task. Women's movements are a source of articulation of women's issues, but this is most effective when the movement is autonomous and not related to a body where women's issues are not a main concern.

## 4 The role of church networks in local and regional peace initiatives

### 4.1 Coordination and advocacy at a provincial level: North and South Kivu

The coordination of political activities and international aid and development projects in East Congo are concentrated in the two main urban centres, Goma and Bukavu. These two cities – which are the provincial capitals of North and South Kivu, respectively – have undergone political, demographic and economic change related to conflict dynamics, migration and refugee flows, illegal mineral trade and the influx of organisations and capital from the international community. The result has been a peculiar form of urbanisation (Verhoeve 2004; Vlassenroot and Büscher 2009). Goma and Bukavu, in particular the latter, have also been historical centres of religious life in the region. Church leadership in these provincial centres has therefore been caught in the midst of violent conflict and international aid, and has been forced to deal directly with militia leaders, the remnants of the Congolese state and the emergence of a myriad of UN organisations and other international organisations with a base in the Kivus. In addition to the traditional church networks – and in particular the Catholic Church, the Protestant and Baptist churches – Verhoeve (2004) argues that Goma has seen an explosion of new religious groups and sects in the urban landscape, and it could be argued that both Goma and Bukavu are becoming increasingly complex religious landscapes in themselves.



Map of Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Source: [http://riftvalley.net/map/eastern-drc#.VTAX5vmsX\\_E](http://riftvalley.net/map/eastern-drc#.VTAX5vmsX_E) Rift Valley Institute homepage.

By talking to representatives of the various church networks it becomes evident that these provincial centres represent the pivotal political scale of church politics, forming *coordinating nodes* where the internal relations within particular church networks as well as

relations between the church and the state, the international community and local civil society are being formed. A traditional organisational architecture can be seen in both the Catholic and Protestant networks. In the Catholic Church, Goma form a diocese – a region which stretches far beyond the cities, but which does not overlap with the provincial administrative regions. The diocese of Goma, together with Uvira, Butembo-Beni, Kasongo and Kindu, are in turn under the auspices of the ecclesiastical province (archdiocese) of Bukavu.

The Protestant church council ECC, on the other hand, uses the provinces North and South Kivu to demarcate their jurisdiction. When asked about the links between the provincial centres and local churches and parishes, church leaders describe this communication as a mixture of hierarchical structures with formalised modes of reporting and regular meetings and flexible communication lines which allows for instant responses in case of emergencies.<sup>16</sup> In the Catholic Church, local communication links are channelled through the (relevant) committees.<sup>17</sup>

Both the Catholic and Protestant church networks coordinate their own peace programmes in the provinces of North and South Kivu through their own organisational structures. Coordination of Catholic activities is facilitated by the institutional capacity and hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, and many of the activities related to peace-building is coordinated by the *Commission Paix et Justice* (CPJ), whose presence stretches from parishes throughout the Kivus, at diocese and archdiocese level, as well as on a national and global level in the Catholic Church hierarchy.<sup>18</sup>

Representatives of this commission in Goma explained that in this diocese, the CJP is organised under CARITAS as one of four *bureaus*; the other being Health, Humanitarian and Development. The national CARITAS organisations of different Western countries are partners in different projects. The portfolio of

---

<sup>16</sup> Pierre Bulambo, Vicaire general, Archevéche Bukavu (pers. comm. 30.10.09); Bukemdwa Chibeye, Representant Legal, CELPA Nord-Kivu, Goma (pers. comm. 03.11.09) ; Reverend Jean Miruho Ngombera, CEPAC Goma (05.11.09).

<sup>17</sup> Pierre Bulambo, Vicaire general, Archevéche Bukavu (pers. comm. 30.10.09).

<sup>18</sup> Félicien Nzitatira, Coordinateur Commission Paix et Justice, Goma (pers. comm. 06.11.09).

---

CARITAS in North Kivu is quite substantial really quite huge, with a formidable administration overseeing activities.<sup>19</sup>

The Protestant churches lack a unitary organisation, but has through the church council ECC a coordinating body which has been particularly proactive on social issues of peace-building, women's rights and democracy. While ECC is a national council, the ECC S-K and has been a dominant node in the organisation, not the least with respect to peace-building initiatives and cross-border civil society dialogue. ECC S-K has 21 members, and each of these churches is a juridical person in its own right. CEPAC and CELPA are the driving forces in the ECC network in the Kivus, and representatives from these two churches have occupied leading positions in both provincial and national ECC structures.

In the 1990s, a group of protagonists within the ECC network started pushing a peace and democracy advocacy agenda which was supported by Norwegian donors.<sup>20</sup> ECC S-K representatives illustrate this peace engagement by referring to the emerging conflict around the Banyamulenge group, which climaxed in the late 1990s when they were involved in the uprisings in South Kivu.

As this group was also members of the ECC network, this placed a great strain on intra-church dynamics. A reconciliation seminar, which the ECC network arranged in 2000, was instrumental in healing the relationship between this group and other constituencies.

A representative from ECC N-K explains that there is also an organisational infrastructure geared towards peace-building in Goma. ECC N-K has a Commission for Peace and Justice with a programme portfolio including i) civic education (good governance, leadership, women's rights, children and minorities), ii) peace (reconstruction, reconciliation and peaceful cohabitation) and iii) justice (directed at politicians, civil administrators). This commission has also organised seminars and Training of Trainers

---

<sup>19</sup> One representative of an international aid organisation commented on the lack of coordination between CARITAS activities and other aid efforts: Ulrich Wagner, Deputy Director, Merlin, Goma (pers.comm. 04.11.09).

<sup>20</sup> Mgr. Dr. Jean-Luc Kuye-Ndondo wa Mulemera and Mgr. Josué Bulambo Lembelembe have been particularly important in developing this agenda: Jørgen Hardang, former project consultant, PYM, Oslo (pers. comm. 02.04.10).



projects with deputies, local leaders and women leaders. They claim to have held seminars all over the province. They also summon military and political leaders to talk about peace and good governance, and the bishop holds regular meetings with the governor.<sup>21</sup> A representative from CELPA in Goma also referred to an initiative known as CIPAGO, which was a meeting between the pastors of the different ECC churches. CIPAGO aimed to lobby and “change the minds of the politicians”.<sup>22</sup> According to CELPA, this initiative modelled on the Catholic Church.

Goma and Bukavu have also been described as cities with a tradition for civil society organisation. Representatives of churches in DRC depict the ‘civil society’ of Goma and Bukavu in ways which might differ from traditional definitions. For example, in contrast to understanding civil society as an open sphere between the state, the market and the family – where a diverse and uncoordinated associational life takes place – civil society in the Eastern Congo cities is described as a formal structure with a president. Moreover, organisations which typically are important in shaping the agenda of civil society, such as trade unions, are described as peripheral in Goma and Bukavu (Lemarchand 2009).

Ethnic organisations, on the other hand, have a real constituency but are fragmented. As a result, the role of the churches in coordinating civil society is significant, a point which has also been pointed out by Prunier (2001). Representatives of ECC in North Kivu argues that they the church has used its influence to call ‘stay-aways’ where people have been urged to pray instead of going to work.<sup>23</sup> Women of the church have also marched in the streets, dressed in black, to protest against violence. ECC representatives of South Kivu also claimed that the churches “controlled civil society” when they mobilised strikes during the occupations in the late 1990s, to protest against the occupation of Rwandan-backed forces.<sup>24</sup> Such popular protests were also directed against what was

---

<sup>21</sup> Coordinateur du Programme d’Education à la Démocratie, ECC Nord-Kivu, Goma (pers. comm. 04.11.09).

<sup>22</sup> President District, CELPA Nord-Kivu, Goma (pers. comm. 03.11.09).

<sup>23</sup> Coordinateur du Programme d’Education à la Démocratie, ECC Nord-Kivu, Goma (pers. comm. 04.11.09).

<sup>24</sup> Vice-president ECC Sud-Kivu and *juriste* for ECC Sud-Kivu, Bukavu (pers. comm. 30.10.09)

perceived as unfair taxation, such as registration plate fees on cars. Our Catholic representatives did not refer to such incidents, but Prunier (2001) documents a general strike in 2000 where the Catholic Church was involved.

According to Longman (2001), the Catholic Church leadership in Goma and Bukavu have followed different trajectories from 1996 to 2001, with the bishop of Bukavu having been more faithful to a 'prophetic role' of denouncing violence and mobilising civil society in a call for peace. There are some anecdotal evidence and narrative accounts of the role of individual church leaders during the war period in the late 1990s and early 2000s, but suffice to say in this report that the ethnic identities of church leaders might be as contested as those of state representatives.<sup>25</sup>

In general, however, many Catholic and Protestant church leaders in South Kivu has been relatively outspoken in their opposition to Rwandese presence and influence in the province. The way in which this stance has been balanced against an acceptance of the Banyamulenge ethnic group has also been subject to debate. There is in general a lack of literature on the links between church networks, 'formal civil society' and other associational life in these cities, suggesting a need for further research if we are to understand the relationship between religious and civil society.

When asking church leaders whether they play an active advocacy role versus provincial government, representatives from both Catholic, Protestant and Baptist churches claim that the voice of the church leaders is being heard denouncing violence and encouraging reconciliation. Catholic Church representatives support Prunier's (2001) observation that there is an ongoing dialogue around political issues between church leaders and state authorities. A representative from ECC N-K argues that they have summoned military and political leaders to talk about good governance and peace issues.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, ECC S-K refers to written letters and declarations as a main tool for exerting pressure on provincial and national authorities in relation to human rights

---

<sup>25</sup> Project manager, Goma (pers. comm. 01.11.09); see also Prunier (2009) and Lemarchand (2009).

<sup>26</sup> Coordinateur du Programme d'Education à la Démocratie, ECC Nord-Kivu, Goma (pers. comm. 04.11.09).

issues, corruption and war.<sup>27</sup> This being said, it is difficult to establish a clear picture of the content and extent of church-state communication at a provincial level through elite interviews.

While representatives of both the UN and international aid organisations state that their cooperation with the church networks are indirect<sup>28</sup> or non-existent<sup>29</sup>, development organisations and projects with a strong link to the church networks – such as Catholic CARITAS or the Protestant-affiliated organisation *Centre d'Assistance Medico Psycho-Social* (CAMPS) – do take part in the coordination and implementation of efforts related to women's security, health and development activities in Goma and Bukavu.<sup>30,31</sup> The extent to which church leaders and/or constituencies can influence these policies and processes, however, is likely to be limited but difficult to ascertain.

## 4.2 Health, education and media

As has been noted in the introduction of this report, a central premise of this project has been the assumption that the church networks represent organisational structures with a unique presence at the local level and in remote villages. This sets them apart from other civil society organisations in East Congo. The churches' presence in local communities and local governance structures are also linked through their engagement in education and health provision. Against the backdrop of a weak state, churches with external funding have a long tradition for providing health services in East Congo. According to Tull (2003), only six of 19 health zones in North Kivu were operated by the state in 2002, the rest were run by the churches. Representatives from the Catholic Church in North Kivu told us that this church alone runs

---

<sup>27</sup> Vice-president ECC Sud-Kivu (pers. comm. 30.10.09)

<sup>28</sup> Political Affairs Section, UN Mission in DRC, Bukavu (email corr., 07.04.10).

<sup>29</sup> Deputy Director, Merlin, Goma (pers.comm. 04.11.09).

<sup>30</sup> Director CARITAS, Goma (pers.comm. 05.11.09).

<sup>31</sup> According to a CAMPS representative, a commission to fight sexual violence has been set up, which includes organisations such as OCHA, MONUC, UNFPA, UNICEF and CAMPS. They have four focus areas: 1) psycho-social, 2) medical, 3) reintegration, 4) juridical. CAMPS forms the focal point of the psycho-social focus area (Justin Kabanga, Coordinator CAMPS, Bukavu (pers.comm. 31.10.09)).

5 out of 9 health zones in North Kivu. In addition, they have 11 hospitals and 48 health centres, as well as nursing schools in Goma and Mwego. A representative from an international aid organisation, Merlin, with activities in the rural areas of North Kivu, noted that there was a tendency of health centres being taken over by church networks and being reclassified from 'secular' to 'confessional'.<sup>32</sup>

The position of the church networks in main cities is also strengthened by their links to social institutions such as the Panzi Hospital and the universities. Bukavu is an important hub in the educational infrastructure of the region, with an Evangelical and a Catholic university based here - *Université Evangelique en Afrique* (UEA) and *Université Catholique de Bukavu* (UCB), respectively.<sup>33</sup> In Goma, *Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs* (ULPGL) has strong links to the Protestant and Baptist church networks.

The discourse of peace-building and conflict transformation is also visible in the Christian universities, though courses on related issues and, in the case of UEA, a newly established Department for Peace and Development (UEA). This department has a course in conflict resolution, not just for students but also for church leaders from ECC denominations.<sup>34</sup> ULPGL was also the site of a peace summit between CNDP and other rebel leaders and the government in January 2008<sup>35</sup>. Church leaders were present at this summit, while they did not act as partners in the negotiation.

According to representatives of the Catholic Church in North Kivu, this church has a long tradition for social engagement<sup>36</sup> in the region. The effects of the war, however, forced the church to realise that a spiritual approach to their social engagement is not sufficient. Therefore, they have attempted to initiate developmental project in relation to their social engagement. Getting a local community to build a road in their area, the representative told us, has both a social and a material dimension.

<sup>32</sup> Directeur Adjoint Nord-Kivu, Merlin, Goma (pers. comm. 04.11.09).

<sup>33</sup> Bukavu also has a secular university: *Université Officielle de Bukavu* (UOB).

<sup>34</sup> Recteur, Université Evangelique en Afrique, Bukavu (pers. comm. 01.11.09).

<sup>35</sup> The date of this summit is unclear, as one ULPGL representative dated this event to 2007. (Secrétaire General Académique, Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs (ULPGL), Goma (pers. comm. 03.11.09))

<sup>36</sup> French: *social pastorale*.

Thus CARITAS, which is funded by international donors, works closely with the local churches in carrying out their developmental tasks. The war has made this work difficult, however, as the local churches have been looted, priests have been killed and their infrastructure destroyed.

The potential for using local church structures and the legitimacy of the church in local communities to create more sustainable awareness-raising campaigns have been help up as an important potential for the peace-building initiatives of the churches in the Kivus and beyond. Using local radio can be an effective tool for reaching out to people, also in remote areas, with the message of reconciliation. This has been acknowledged by international donors working with the church networks<sup>37</sup>, as well as church representatives<sup>38</sup> themselves.

We visited a local Christian radio station, *Radio Saoti Ya Injili*, which broadcasted gospel music and religious messages to the Kivu provinces from Goma. The director of this radio station said that both various church leaders and international NGOs had used the radio to broadcast messages, but that the Pentecostal churches recently had started their own station, *Radio Alpha Omega FM*. In Bukavu, the radio station *Maendeleo* is used by church-affiliated projects to broadcast messages and to sensitise the population.

### 4.3 Village dynamics<sup>39</sup>

While the role of churches in local villages remains a ‘black box’ both for academic research and for many of the development organisations based in Goma and Bukavu, the village case studies conducted for this research project provides an interesting glimpse into these dynamics. While each of the villages visited have a particular social composition and political history<sup>40</sup>, they have like

---

<sup>37</sup> Norwegian Church Aid representatives in the region stressed this point in communication with the team.

<sup>38</sup> Coordinateur du Programme d’Education à la Démocratie, ECC Nord-Kivu, Goma (pers. comm. 04.11.09); Vice-president ECC Sud-Kivu (pers. comm. 30.10.09).

<sup>39</sup> This section is based on the data protocols from the village case studies (See Appendix).

<sup>40</sup> See Appendix for village profiles.

all settlements in South Kivu experienced violence and conflict during the last 15 years. The role the churches play in these war-torn societies share some important commonalities, which will be discussed in what follows. At the village level, local conflicts around land and leadership have been exacerbated by the armed rebellions and the presence of military groups in South Kivu. Some of the village case studies report of conflicts between local authorities and returning refugees around claims of illegal property sales. The social composition of the villages is multi-ethnic, but the main conflict lines seem to be *clan-based*, rather than ethnic.<sup>41</sup>

All of the villages have an impressive array of religious congregations. The Catholic Church is the most dominant church organisation in terms of numbers, with two Pentecostal churches – CEPAC and CELPA – also having a significant membership. In addition, a myriad of Christian churches are represented in these villages (ranging from 10,000 to 60,000 inhabitants), including Jehova’s Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Methodists, Kimbanguists, Baptists, the Orthodox church, Apostolic churches, Assemblies of God and various revival churches. Muslims<sup>42</sup> and the faith of Baha’i are also present.

The churches and their leaders are not directly involved in political or administrative affairs, according to our informants. However, churches are in all of these villages seen as representatives of civil society, and in this capacity church leaders are consulted by local authorities about particular issues on a regular basis. Importantly, church leaders are therefore recognised as consulting partners but not decision-makers in the villages. These roles can often be blurred, however, and there are occasions when church leaders do get involved in local political issues.

The way these local churches engage in wider church networks within and beyond their own organisation, differs between the churches. The local Catholic churches report to either the Uvira or the Bukavu diocese, whereas the Pentecostal churches (CELPA, CEPAC) report directly to Bukavu. Some of the smaller churches report directly to Kinshasa, if their church councils do not have

---

<sup>41</sup> One village reports of tensions between village residents and Banyamulenge living in the surrounding areas.

<sup>42</sup> The presence of Muslim MONUC soldiers have also led to the establishment of new mosques in South Kivu.

regional offices in the East. Likewise, some newly established revivalist churches report to Bujumbura, Nairobi or Dar es Salaam. Interestingly, this church growth illustrates how Eastern DR Congo is connected to East Africa also through cultural and religious networks.

Like local reporting procedures, orders from the national and provincial church leadership are transmitted through the church hierarchies from Kinshasa, via Bukavu and/or Uvira to be executed at the local level. Whereas organisational roles in the Catholic Church are appointed from the top, local church representatives in the Pentecostal churches participate in the election of their own legal representatives.

Women are not represented in political structures in the village, nor are they represented in church decision-making structures. With some very few exceptions, no women are allowed in the clergy in the churches. The main spaces for women representation are in the local development associations and in the women's groups of the churches. While a patriarchal cultural discourse no doubt lies at the base of this social exclusion of women, note should also be made at the link between a low educational level for women in these villages and the lack of representation in religious and political institutions.

Local churches are relying on locally raised funding. In one of the villages, particular emphasis was put on the role women have in creating income-generating activities for the church (up to 2000 women engaging in these activities for a local Pentecostal church). This shows how the spaces of dependence for the Congolese churches are deeply gendered: not only do women constitute the majority of their members, but they are also vital for the local financial base of these networks. In addition, financed by foreign donors were also pointed out as an important source of funding for church activities. In the case of the Catholic Church, there were in at least one village also some funding channelled through the diocese-level CARITAS system to the local church.

In all of the villages, there are a significant number of NGOs present. These NGOs are both local and foreign, and some are affiliated to church networks. The projects engage in agricultural, infrastructural and social development issues in the villages. Many of them focus on victims of sexual violence. The level of

coordination between the local churches and these NGOs are described as weak. In general, coordination between the local churches and other actors in these local societies seem to be informal and/or weak. Several of the village cases report of the churches being used by the local state and by NGOs to communicate information and sensitising messages to the local population.

One of the key claims made by the church leaders interviewed in the provincial centres and in the regional ecumenical forums, is that the churches presence at a village level enables these networks to act as peace-makers locally by spreading the ‘message of peace’. Interestingly, however, the village case studies show some important obstacles the local churches are facing in playing such a role. In two of the villages, clan-based conflicts and disputes over succession to positions of power have divided the local communities – and the churches have not been able to transcend this divide.

On the contrary, different church congregations have ended up supporting different sides in the conflict. The Catholic/Protestant divide was evident in one case, but in another case even churches belonging to the same theological direct were split according to local political fractions.

Communication between Congolese churches and churches in neighbouring countries does not only take place at the level of regional ecumenical dialogue. Several local churches in the village case studies also reported of contact between Catholics, Pentecostals and Methodists in DRC, Rwanda and Burundi.<sup>43</sup> Cross-border contact was not evident in the villages which were located far away from the national border but, naturally, was higher in the villages close to the border and Lake Tanganyika.

#### 4.4 National political dynamics

Because the team did not carry out fieldwork in Kinshasa, or Kigali, it has not been possible to create an in-depth analysis of the links between the provincial church networks and the capital. Both the Catholic and Protestant churches have national

---

<sup>43</sup> Episcopal ordinations, sacerdotal events and the consecration of pastors.



organisations/councils based in Kinshasa. Prunier (2001) argues that while the Catholic Church, who had enjoyed a close relationship to colonial authorities, was marginalised during the Mobutu era, their position was revitalised through their active involvement in the opposition.

Representatives from the Catholic Church told us that Congolese Catholic bishops had annual Episcopal conferences, where they also discuss social issues and publish declarations condemning corruption, impunity and illegal mineral extraction.<sup>44</sup> Among the notable Catholic church leaders who have taken up positions in the national political system is Abbé Apollinaire Malu-Malu, who was appointed leader of the independent electoral commission in 2004.

According to one expert<sup>45</sup>, the politics of Protestant churches must also be understood against its historical backdrop. The continent-wide church council, AACC, was established in 1958, and hence preceded the wave of independence. African Protestant church leaders are educated in mission schools and firmly based in European-Christian intellectual and political traditions, but they have also developed close links to nationalist political leaders. These inter-personal bonds have shaped the strategies of the Protestant churches. This can in part explain the relative loyalty between leaders of the church and (increasingly) despotic African leaders – i.e. Mobutu Sese Seko, Paul Kagame and Yoweri Museveni. But towards the end of the 1990s, many leading church leaders started opposing African despots. The relatively proactive advocacy role of the regional church conference, FECCLAHA, must therefore also be seen in this light.

Protestant church dynamics at the national scale in DR Congo revolves around the umbrella organisation ECC. The ECC organises 66 church denominations nation-wide, but the Kivu provinces have exerted considerable influence over the church council. In the case of ECC, the church council also has its own church in the capital – in contrast to the Kivu provinces, where the ECC only act as an umbrella organisation for its member churches.

---

<sup>44</sup> Vicaire general, Archevêche Bukavu (pers. comm. 30.10.09); Director CARITAS, Goma (pers.comm. 05.11.09).

<sup>45</sup> Mennonite, and a long-time supporter and observer of Protestant ecumenism in Central Africa (pers. comm. 17.09.09).

When the war entered a phase of national consolidation and elections, the Protestant churches in Kivu felt a strong need to participate in political dynamics at the national scale. Their response was therefore to “send” a prominent church leader, Mgr. Dr. Jean-Luc Kuye-Ndondo wa Mulemera, to Kinshasa as a representative in the Senate.<sup>46</sup>

Dr. Kuye was a pastor in the Pentecostal church CEPAC, and held the presidency of the Protestant church council ECC in South Kivu. To what extent Dr. Kuye “represents” these churches (or other local constituencies) in the Senate, however, is hard to ascertain. Even more significantly, Dr. Kuye was also chairing the the 2003-2007 Truth and Reconciliation Commission in DR Congo. Similar connections between church leadership and national politics are also visible in the Baptist churches. For example, a representative from *Communauté Baptiste au Centre de l’Afrique* (CBCA) explained that their *representant legal*, Dr. Kakule Molo, a member of the national parliament. Representatives of church-affiliated donor organisations confirmed the impression that these church leaders do exert political influence at a national scale, and that they are protagonists in issues of peace and good governance.<sup>47</sup>

#### 4.5 Cross-border civil society dynamics (I): Transnational ecumenical dialogue and advocacy

Given the porous national borders in the Great Lakes region, there are many links (personal relations, trade, migration) which brings churches in the different countries in contact with each other. The main focus of this section, however, is the emergence of regional and cross-border initiatives which brings church representatives from different national churches and church councils together. Traditionally, such initiatives have been divided along the Protestant/Catholic distinction. The Catholic Church has a regional Episcopal conference (bishops’ meeting) known as *Association des Conférences Episcopales de l’Afrique Centrale* (ACEAC),

---

<sup>46</sup> Vice-president ECC Sud-Kivu, Bukavu (pers. comm. 30.10.09).

<sup>47</sup> Programme coordinator, NCA, Bukavu (pers. comm. 31.10.09).

bringing together bishops from DR Congo, Rwanda and Burundi. ACEAC's attempts to engage in advocacy, peace-building and diplomacy have been described elsewhere (van Leeuwen 2008).

On the Protestant side, a wider regional network has been more influential; the *Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa* (FECCLAHA). FECCLAHA members comprise Burundian, Congolese, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Kenyan, Rwandese, Sudanese, Tanzanian and Ugandan churches. It was established in 1999, and is one of several regional ecumenical bodies of African Protestant churches, with ties to the continental body *All African Conference of Churches* (AACC).

It differs slightly from the other regional bodies in that its main objective is centred on peace-building, conflict transformation and governance issues – reflecting the particular challenges of the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa. It is regarded as a relatively potent organisation, with a professionalised core consisting of a secretariat and an executive committee. Donors such as Norwegian and German church organisations have been instrumental in maintaining an organisational infrastructure, and also been advocating a social advocacy path for FECCLAHA – recognising its potential role in regional civil society dialogue and peace-building.

National church councils constitute FECCLAHA's general assembly, and national representatives participate in these meetings based on their concerns over the impact war and violence has on its members, although their analysis of the situation is deeply rooted in a national outlook and conflict perspective.<sup>48</sup> The FECCLAHA's secretariat acts as a facilitator in this process, trying to balance the concerns of their general assembly with a pressure from donors to play a visible in transnational civil society dialogue and peace-building. But the FECCLAHA secretariat as also developed an agenda on their own, and served as a platform for some individuals to raise the advocacy profile of the churches, increase their involvement in international diplomacy and stronger women and youth representation in regional forums.

---

<sup>48</sup> A similar observation was made by van Leeuwen (2008) with regards to Catholic church leaders.

An initiative emerging out of FECCLAHA which has even more relevance for peace-building in the Great Lakes region is the *Great Lakes Ecumenical Forum* (GLEF), which was described as “an instrument” for FECCLAHA to directly engage with the Rwanda-DRC situation.<sup>4950</sup> Political leaders and lobby organisations have also been represented during the GLEF meetings. In other words, FECCLAHA and GLEF have an important role to play as an arena for exchanging information and experiences – and for church leaders to receive an update on the political situation in the region. Before 1999, FECCLAHA staff said that church leaders had little knowledge of the situation outside their own country. GLEF and FECCLAHA are also visible as partners to other regional NGOs.

One organisation which works closely with the FECCLAHA secretariat is the Amani Forum – *The Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum for Peace*<sup>51</sup>. Amani Forum is also based in Nairobi, and has adopted an explicitly religious approach to mediation and peace dialogue with political leaders. They are focusing on bringing politicians (often together with clergy) to the negotiation table. FECCLAHA also holds observer status at the International Conference of the Great Lakes (ICGLR). The ICGLR is a regional institution with African member states from the Great Lakes region and beyond. It has its base in Bujumbura, Burundi, and has a mandate to co-ordinate, facilitate, monitor and ensure the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region<sup>52</sup> (Bøås, Lotsberg et al. 2009).

By observing some of FECCLAHA’s meeting activity and perusing their publications, it becomes evident that this has become an arena where some very important issues with relevance to peace and security are brought to the table, and where religious leaders are encouraged to reflect on and debate such issues: small arms proliferation, sexual violence, illegal mining, good governance and ethnic stereotypes, to name some of the themes. The role of churches in national politics – exemplified above through the

---

<sup>49</sup> Executive Director, FECCLAHA, Nairobi (pers. comm. 16.09.09).

<sup>50</sup> GLEF has members from DR Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya.

<sup>51</sup> See also [www.amaniforum.org](http://www.amaniforum.org).

<sup>52</sup> Signed 15 December 2006 in Nairobi.

representation of church leaders from the North and South Kivu in the Congolese Senate and Parliament – provides a good case in point. Most of the church councils in the FECCLAHA network argue for clear cut distinction between clergy and political leadership. Both in Kenya and in DRC, however, clergy have been directly involved in national politics – and church leaders have done so without ‘stepping down’ from their positions as bishops or pastors. This was an issue of principle that was debated in one FECCLAHA meeting the team was invited to.<sup>53</sup>

Congolese church leaders explained that this was a temporary measure in fragile transitional phase of the country’s history, which is why the churches decided to get directly involved in politics.<sup>5455</sup> But Congolese representatives also acknowledged, when challenged by other FECCLAHA members, that as soon as the situation was stabilised, they would have to revert to the practice favoured by most other FECCLAHA members: namely that any members of the clergy would have to step down (and even go through a quarantine period) before running for political office of any kind.

The issue of *representation* and *report* is not clear cut when analysing ecumenical church forums. The forms of representation are not similar to that of democratic state, where each delegate is elected through representative democratic processes. At FECCLAHA meetings, each of the national churches are represented with their top level leaders (Bishops and Archbishops), women and youth delegates. Still, it was not clear to what extent they came to the regional meetings with a mandate from their councils or from other clearly demarcated constituencies. While churches are not democratic organisations as such, they do have councils and committees all the way down to each individual church – hence, theoretically, they could have had a process of consultation with their grassroots before this meeting. The same question related to whether the delegates reported back to their churches in a structured way. Perhaps it could be argued that FECCLAHA as a

---

<sup>53</sup> FECCLAHA General Assembly, Regional Ecumenical Forum and 10th Anniversary, AACC Conference Centre, Nairobi, 15-19 September 2009.

<sup>54</sup> In addition to Bishop Kuye, another Protestant Bishop (Murení) has also been holding the joint position of Senator and Bishop.

<sup>55</sup> FECCLAHA Chairperson, Nairobi (pers. comm. 16.09.09).

forum balances between two functions: on the one hand, it is this a forum for church leaders to discuss and strategise, and, on the other hand, it attempts to be a meeting of representatives with mandates from national councils and local constituencies.

The capacity of the church networks to accommodate dynamic information flows from the leadership level down to the local village church is difficult to assess in practice. The potential for harnessing these church networks have been acknowledged by the continent-wide church council, AACC, who has initiated a project idea based on the churches as *early warning systems* for conflict and humanitarian emergencies.<sup>56</sup> This was an attempt to establish a reporting and communication network between different churches at all levels, with the objective of reporting about local developments concerning violence, armed conflict and governance failures.

While the FECCLAHA representatives only received a short brief on this initiative it could, if implemented, really test the church's ability to respond as a civil society organisation and establish internal reporting and communication procedures. At the time of research, AACC and FECCLAHA have established four focal points in the Great Lakes region in preparation for implementing this initiative.

Another result of the FECCLAHA network has been that church leaders of the Great Lakes countries have been engaged in diplomatic efforts targeting political and military leaders. Following a GLEF summit in 2008, 12 church leaders from DR Congo, Rwanda and Burundi decided to send a delegation to the heads of state in Rwanda and DR Congo, as well as to the rebel leader Laurent Nkunda. Nkunda was at the time leading an uprising in the Kivus under the CNDP banner. Representatives from each of the three countries, as well as from the AACC, took part in a *shuttle diplomacy* effort where Kabila, Kagame and Nkunda were confronted with a joint delegation of churches bringing "the message of peace".<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Eminent Persons' Ecumenical Peace Program for Africa (EPEPPA).

<sup>57</sup> Newspaper article downloaded from [www.ecclesia.co.uk](http://www.ecclesia.co.uk), "Church leaders urge peace action in Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo", Christian Weekly 12 November 2008, by agency reporter.

The FECCLAHA network is, as mentioned above, an *ecumenical* forum dominated by Protestant churches. Some of the councils participating in FECCLAHA, however, have experiences of broader church alliances and inter-faith coalitions from their own countries. The Ugandan Joint Church Council, for example, sends both Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic church leaders to the FECCLAHA meetings.

The Ugandan Joint Council of Churches (UJCC) is, together with the Sudanese Council of Churches, the only national council which brings together Catholic and Protestant churches. Moreover, the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative in Northern Uganda and some recent peace initiatives in Kenya (following the post-election violence) are both *inter-faith* – in the sense that also Muslim leaders take part. A Kenyan NCCCK delegate noted that for a national church council to cooperate with a Muslim or other religious organisation was easier than to cooperate with secular NGOs or other non-religious civil society groups – because it was more likely that the latter would have different values from the church. This approach has not yet been elaborated in East Congo.<sup>58</sup>

Delegates and FECCLAHA staff explained that the earliest meetings of the FECCLAHA network, during the days of the Second Congolese War, was characterised by deep mistrust and hostility between national council representatives. While the climate between the Congolese and Rwandan state has become more amicable since, there are still some latent tensions.

In particular, this relates to the repatriation of the FLDR. CPR representatives are, according to some FECCLAHA staff, cautious about the idea of an unconditional reintegration of the FDLR into Rwandese society – in their opinion, many of these are *genocidaires* without a trial. The ECC tend to be more conciliatory in their approach towards the FLDR (partly because they see this as the only way of securing their repatriation), and is also open to discuss the principle of amnesty. FECCLAHA and the UJCC in North Uganda have supported amnesty for the majority of LRA members, which they see as the most productive way of conflict

---

<sup>58</sup> A delegation of Norwegian MFA representatives visiting Bukavu in 2010 did meet representatives from all churches, as well as Muslim leaders.

resolution.<sup>59</sup> This logic also applies to the FDLR in East Congo, where it is now widely recognised<sup>60</sup> that many of the FDLR militants are either too young to have been *genocidaires* or have joined their ranks after 1994.

One interesting point was that while a central tenet of FECCLAHA initiative is that because the conflict is regional in its nature, the churches' efforts must be articulated at a regional level. But during the policy discussion at the Regional Ecumenical Forum in September 2009, delegates were grouped according to their nationality and assigned to come up with *national action plans*. At the Regional Ecumenical Forum, however, delegates were grouped in regional forums, and asked to create *regional action plans*. According to observes, the 2007 approach was very

#### 4.6 Cross-border civil society dynamics (II): Repatriation activities

FECCLAHA, GLEF and other initiatives during the last ten years provides ample evidence that church leaders in different countries in the regional have managed to overcome some of the differences between them, and between their respective states, to meet and talk. But the extent to which this regional dialogue has led to any tangible results, in the form of cooperation through concrete activities, remains unclear. One of the most interesting examples in this respect is the repatriation project of ex-combatants to Rwanda, which includes churches on both sides of the Rwandese-Congolese border.

It is widely acknowledged that a crucial element in the long-term peace-building process following the 1994 genocide and the Congo wars is the repatriation and reintegration of FDLR combatants to Rwanda. This is a very contentious issue, particularly since many of the FDLR leaders played an active part in the Rwandese genocide.

---

<sup>59</sup> According to NCA representatives who have followed the FECCLAHA initiative, the Ugandan churches have repeatedly urged the Great Lakes representatives not to “repeat our mistakes” in not entering dialogue with rebel movements (in particular the LRA in Northern Uganda and the FDLR in East Congo). NCA, Oslo (pers. comm. 11.06.10).

<sup>60</sup> See various reports from the International Crisis Group and René Lemarchand (seminar at Fafo, May 2010).



Therefore, the Rwandese state and churches have been very reluctant to accept repatriation of these soldiers without holding those responsible for acts of genocide and bring them to justice.

On the Congolese side, however, there is a strong demand from civil society to start the demobilisation and repatriation of FDLR combatants. Church actors such as the *Eglise du Christ au Congo* (ECC) have been proactive in trying to facilitate repatriation, supported by Norwegian partners (PYM). ECC churches have had direct contact with FDLR elements, both through interaction with local churches in villages and through concerted efforts at dialogue with ECC leaders.

NCA, on the other hand, have an established relationship with ECC's Protestant counterpart in Rwanda, *Conseil Protestant de Rwanda* (CPR), which has opened up for a repatriation project with church involvement on both sides. In addition to the CPR, the Rwandese state was also involved in this project through their national reintegration camp of the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Program. Pastors from CPR are involved in the repatriation activities at this camp, and local churches could potentially also play an important role in reintegrating people into their local communities once the ex-combatants move to from the camp to rural villages.

This repatriation project only received funding for a six month period. The project has so far only achieved modest results (less than two hundred ex-combatants successfully reintegrated). Some people involved in the project cite the Congolese-Rwandan military operation Kimia II in DRC as the main stumbling block, as it made contact and trust between the church leaders and the FDLR very difficult to sustain. An in-depth analysis of this project, and of the churches involvement in repatriation activities, could potentially be very useful – acting as 'litmus test' of the political will and capacity for cooperation of churches across national borders. However, we have not been able to carry out such a fieldwork within the scope of this project.

---

## 5 Women and peace-building: Practices and activities in the church networks

This paragraph gives a presentation of women-related peace-building activities by churches and religious organisations in the Kivus. It is outside of the scope of this report to give a complete mapping of all women-related activities by religious institutions in the Kivus. The paragraph rather gives examples of the areas where churches are visible and a particular attention will be given to the Catholic Church and Protestant churches.

Ngongo (2009), referring to an informant, argues that Congolese churches - and in particular the Catholic Church - have inspired many civil society activities related to peace-building. The Human Rights Watch report (2002:76) *The war within the war. Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in Eastern Congo* recognises the churches' role among other civil society actors in giving material, emotional and medical support to women victims of sexual violence and to push for the protection of women's rights:

The scale and horror of sexual violence against women and girls in eastern Congo have prompted churches, human rights associations, women's rights groups and other NGOs to assist the victims and to push for the protection of women's rights.

At a Great Lakes Pastoral Conference in Bujumbura, November 2008 with the theme *The Responsibility to Protect` is Equally Valid for Churches and Communities* involving delegates representing the Churches and Councils of Churches from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Norway and Rwanda, religious leaders committed themselves to a theological reflection around the churches'

responsibility to protect women and children against sexual violence, engage in advocacy, and more transnational cooperation between National Councils (Kimaathi & Waruhiu 2009).

We met different opinions about the role of the church during our field work. According to the coordinator of *Synergie des femmes pour les victimes de violence sexuelles* (SFVS), which is a platform of 35 organisations in Goma helping women victims of sexual violence, the churches have a huge power which cannot be neglected. For women involved in local NGO activities around GBV, it is difficult to create changes without allying with the church<sup>61</sup>.

At the village level, SFVS establishes community networks in which also churches are represented. The coordinator told us that when she comes to a village she meets the most influential person, which often is the pastor, and has to convince him first of the importance of the issue of sexual violence. According to her, local churches are often the opening doors, despite their patriarchal structure and the fact that women are submitted in church, it is easy to pass the message through the church. The churches were also seen as representing a huge network by NCA employees in Goma, however they experienced mechanisms in the churches that were blocking action<sup>62 63</sup>.

The Deputy Director of the organisation Merlin in Goma also recognised the power of the churches. He meets with women through their local organisations, but he gets in touch with these groups through other channels than via local church leaders.<sup>64</sup> According to a local authority in the village of Kibumba, which is situated north of Goma, the local churches were trying to do something, but were not very important actors as they did not have any external funding or enough support from their mother churches<sup>65</sup>. He added that the churches were not efficient enough to have an important contribution in peace building and he didn't think that churches could play a very important role. However, during our conversation, other men around us were mentioning

---

<sup>61</sup>, Coordinatrice SFVS, Goma (pers.comm. 03.11.09).

<sup>62</sup> cf. 'political opportunity structures'.

<sup>63</sup> Field Coordinator NCA, Goma (pers.comm. 03.11.09).

<sup>64</sup> Deputy Director, Merlin, Goma (pers.comm. 04.11.09).

<sup>65</sup> Territorial Administrator, Kibumba (pers.comm. 04.11.09).

---

passive cohabitation as an activity that the churches took seriously in the village.

## 5.1 National and cross-border initiatives

On a political level churches have advocated to put GBV on the agenda. According to the CEPAC Representative, the churches have directly challenged President Kabila in issues of women as victims of war, because he is seen as the key actor which can end the culture of impunity.<sup>66</sup> ECC Women and Family Department has engaged across the borders in lobbying concerning women victims of sexual violence<sup>67</sup>.

The head of this department in South Kivu represents women of an area touched by sexual violence in FECCLAHA. She has had the opportunity to meet women leaders from neighbouring countries like Rwanda and Burundi through FECCLAHA. She said that if it wasn't for FECCLAHA they had never had the opportunity to meet, to ask for forgiveness and to reconcile. She argued that the conflict is political and although women didn't create the war, they are suffering the consequences and therefore they should take part in peace and reconciliation work. If women reconcile it is good for the countries as women have the capacity to mobilise and to convince.

It is worth noting that the first executive director of FECCLAHA was a Kenyan women, a former staff member of AACC. She was instrumental in focusing on the representation of women and youth in the regional church meetings. While none of the delegates in the first meeting were women, FECCLAHA now emphasises gender equality in all the delegations, as well as a youth contingent which contributes to the discussion.

There is now a clear initiative from both the FECCLAHA secretariat and the AACC representatives to encourage the representation of women in the regional forum. In this sense, we can talk about gender mainstreaming "from above". According to an AACC representative, most of the national churches now have

---

<sup>66</sup> Representative CEPAC, Bukavu (pers.comm. 30.10.09).

<sup>67</sup> Head of ECC Women and family department, Bukavu (pers.comm. 31.10.09).

*women's desks*, which represent a network for the communication of women's issues in the ecumenical network.<sup>68</sup>

Through FECCLAHA, church representative have also framed the repatriation problem as a gender issue. In a FECCLAHA meeting in Uganda in 2007, discussions resulted in a recommendation to Rwandan women leaders to engage themselves for an inter-ethnic dialogue in their country<sup>69</sup>. The ambition was to further this work in the next regional meeting, and there was a hope to encourage Rwandan women leaders to arrange a meeting with the Rwandan President through his wife.

The representative of CELPA argued that rape survivors sometimes seek refuge in the churches when rejected in their families<sup>70</sup>. ECC is addressing the stigmatisation of victims of sexual violence through family counselling, creating awareness in the churches and in communities, working with children conceived as a result of rape (Kimaathi & Waruhiu 2009).

With support from NCA, FECCLAHA introduced the *Tamar campaign* in Kenya in 2005 which acknowledges the churches' role in prevention of sexual violence in the region and in giving support to the victims (Nyabera & Montgomery 2007). The Tamar campaign makes use of a methodology called contextual bible study in the fight against sexual violence, which is taken from the Ujamaa centre in South Africa. The methodology is participatory and uses texts in the bible as a starting point for discussions about sexual violence.

The texts are read together in groups and are interpreted in light of the group members' own context. The Tamar campaign is in the process of being introduced by the ECC network in the Kivus, and could potentially be an appropriate tool to help pastors raise the issue of sexual violence in their congregations. The ECC's Women and Family Department had already started some preliminary

---

<sup>68</sup> Peace, Healing and Reconciliation Desk, AACC, Nairobi (pers. comm. Sept. 09).

<sup>69</sup> Head of ECC Women and family department, Bukavu (pers.comm. 31.10.09).

<sup>70</sup> Representative CELPA, Bukavu (pers.comm. 30.10.09).

training in October 2009, but NCA was awaiting a strategy for the implementation of the program with a special focus on GBV<sup>71</sup>.

The Women and Family Department in ECC Goma focused on advocacy, lobbying, demonstrations and seminars about passive cohabitation and conflict resolution when asked about their contributions in peace building<sup>72</sup>. The head of the Department told that women came to them with their problems and sometimes they had the opportunity, although not often due to lack of financial resources, to visit the villages and listen to women's problems.

They helped women promoting women issues in local congregations. It was this kind of visit that we assisted when visiting the village of Kibumba. In collaboration with NCA in Goma the women from the Women and Family Department and the Federation of Protestant Women got the opportunity to visit the village and listen to the problems faced by women and men reconstructing their lives in a village that was attacked on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 2008 by CNDP soldiers who took everything, raped women and killed a lot of men.

In an open meeting in the village Methodist church attended by villagers from all denominations, older women told about lack of shelter and no children who could take care of them. Many of them had children that were raped during the attack, many lost their husbands and children and their houses were burnt. A group of young girls told that they were raped and among them some got a child as a result of the rape. The men told that they lost everything during the attack and that their children no longer went to school.

In every project, e.g. in churches and schools, there should be a focus on cohabitation according to the CEPAC representative<sup>73</sup>. CEPAC is also working with women victims of sexual violence through medical care and prevention/support where these women are rejected by the community. Discussions in villages with doctors, psychologists and pastors have been arranged and

---

<sup>71</sup> Joseph Kahayira, Programme Coordinator NCA, Bukavu (pers.comm. 31.10.09).

<sup>72</sup> Shomberwa Ntamwenge Marina, ECC N-K and President of protestant women, Goma (pers.comm. 04.11.09).

<sup>73</sup> Bulere Banyene, CEPAC Representative, Bukavu (pers.comm. 30.10.09).

according to the CEPAC representative these women, who before were rejected even in church, are now accepted due to sensitisation. A lot of these activities are managed by the General Referral Hospital (GRHP - Panzi hospital) that was established in 1999 due to sufferings after the 1996 war (Kimaathi & Waruhiu 2009).

The mission of the hospital is, according to Kimaathi & Waruhiu (2009), to improve the quality of medical care for the population, reduce maternal and infant death rate, provide treatment of the survivor of sexual violence and surgical repair for women suffering from fistulas of the urogenital tract, serve as a referral centre for other health centres and preach the gospel to the population receiving services at the centre. The Panzi hospital is well known for its focus on medical assistance and support given to women victims of sexual violence and the report *Now, The World Is Without Me* is based on data collected from patients at the hospital (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2010).

The hospital is cooperating with churches and with NGOs to find and bring women to the hospital<sup>74</sup>. There are assistants at the hospital who talk with the victims and give consultations in addition to arranging activities such as alphabetisation. One assistant that we met described the difficult situation of the women and how important it was to assist the women when they were returning back to their families. She told the story about when she convinced a husband to take his wife back after she had been tested for HIV at the hospital.

In 1997, Hope in Action (HiA) in Goma was created after CRN had contacted CEPAC about how to support social work<sup>75</sup>. HiA has a project for women victims of sexual violence and for child soldiers. CEPAC is everywhere and that is an advantage when it comes to getting in touch with the victims, according to the coordinator. The churches are in the field and according to the coordinator they know the problems. The challenges with the churches are mostly related to administrative problems.

Hope in Action (HiA) is working with the whole village and has initiated several community coaching teams with an elected leader

---

<sup>74</sup>Social assistant at PANZI hospital, Bukavu (pers.comm. 01.11.09).

<sup>75</sup> Coordinator HiA, Goma (pers.comm. 05.11.09).

in the Masisi area. The teams have megaphones to be able to transmit messages. They also have seminars where they talk about the problem of sexual violence and what to do if something happens to you or one in the family.

The coordinator informed us that they meet with others working in the same area through UNFPA coordination meetings. CEPAC also have counselling centers at the hospital in Goma and in several other places. The disarmament project started in January 2009. The project provide roof to those who deliver their arms. The children stay at a transit center in 3-6 months and are provided with a kit when they are reintegrated.

According to Women who have worked on projects within CELPA, the projects focused on helping women build peace by starting to have peace with themselves and mutual respect with others in society<sup>76</sup>. They organised conferences and seminars on peace and reconciliation. Awareness rising on women's rights was also mentioned as a tool for women to get out of marginalisation.

They had different activities to learn young women skills - including informal education, sewing, alphabetisation, computer - to get a living which could help them to accept themselves and fulfil their roles as mothers and women. The women also worked with victims of sexual violence through the projects by taking care of them and help them to understand that even though the rape happened, their value as women didn't change and that their contribution was needed in society. Reconciliation with families and husbands was also necessary as many of the victims of sexual violence were rejected.

Connected to CELPA there is the project known as CAMPS, which gives medical and psycho-social support to victims of sexual violence<sup>77</sup> (Kimaathi & Waruhiu 2009). CAMPS has a network of antennas through the church in order to reach the victims in the rural areas and fight stigmatisation. CAMPS have been able to establish a presence on the ground through setting of 17 network communities<sup>78</sup> in villages in the Kivus and Maniema. Given the presence of patriarchal church structures and lack of technical

---

<sup>76</sup> Female employees in CELPA church projects.

<sup>77</sup> Coordinator CAMPS, Bukavu (pers.comm. 31.10.09).

<sup>78</sup> Reseau communauté



skills, churches still have a long way to go in effectively providing psycho-social care for rape victims, according to the CAMPS coordinator.

However, through pastoral dialogue and training many pastors in the region have become aware of the issue and its implications. Pastors and other members of the church became able to offer some psycho-social assistance to communities who had suffered sexual violence. According to NCA in Goma, raped women and the poor were told to sit in the back of the church only 5-6 years ago.<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, the pastors were more reluctant to talk with women before, but there was a recognition that they had to change in order to take this problem seriously. Some pastors understand very well and could have contributed a lot, but was kept from doing so by an acute lack of resources, according to NCA in Goma.

CAMPS have also engaged with the Catholic Church, and have trained priests 32 from the diocese of Bukavu.<sup>80</sup>

CAMPS is the focal point of the psycho-social part of a commission to fight sexual violence that have been set up by UN agencies and different organisations. The Commission has four focus areas of assistance to the victims: psycho-social, medical, reintegration, juridical. CAMPS has also together with Search for Common Ground and ECC assisted women victims of sexual violence to get access to justice and accompanied the women in court (Kimaathi & Waruhiu 2009). The low level of guilty verdicts and the long time it takes to go to court, result in many women choosing not to go to court.

CELPA is also engaged in the work with reintegration of child soldiers. The children have experienced a harsh life in the forest, girls often as sex slaves<sup>81</sup>. CELPA has a decentralised approach meaning that the aim is to reinsert the children in their families, often through long mediation and reconciliation processes. The stories about children attacking their own villages show how difficult the situation is and why a community approach is necessary, according to the coordinator. They don't have centres

---

<sup>79</sup> Field Coordinator NCA, Goma(pers.comm. 03.11.09).

<sup>80</sup> Coordinator CAMPS, Bukavu (pers.comm. 31.10.09).

<sup>81</sup> Coordinator of CELPA child soldier project, Bukavu (pers.comm. 02.11.09).

that regroup the children for several months and then send them back to their families. The CELPA project believes in the importance of accompanying the children through the whole process and especially when coming back to their families. The advantage of CELPA, as with other churches, is that it is a church that is represented in many villages. They have the opportunity to reach children where they are and results shows that they manage to find more girl child soldiers than other organisations, according to the coordinator of the project.

The Committee on Justice and Peace (CJP)<sup>82</sup> does work with women victims of sexual violence<sup>83</sup> within Caritas. Their main priority is the reconstruction of peace as the enduring conflict has destroyed relations in the society<sup>84</sup>. Women are one of their target groups in peace education in addition to youth, teachers and animators. Caritas is also involved in demobilisation activities, which include vulnerable youths. The coordinator of CJP in Goma promoted women`s rights and impunity as a major problem in the area. Widows lose not only their husbands, but also their land entitlements and their property. Formally recognised marriage is required to have rights as widows. Rape is considered a shame on the family, and the woman is seen as the one who brought that shame. Men can also abuse the situation to get rid of a wife, according to the coordinator.

In 3 of our village cases CJP and in 2 of the cases CAMPS was mentioned, in addition to other NGOs, to offer counselling and assistance to women victims of GBV on a local level. The severe cases where in all the villages sent to the Panzi hospital in Bukavu. Religious leaders in the villages claimed to be talking about the importance of reintegration of rape victims during sermons. This was said to minimize the effect of stigmatisation.

In one of the villages CJP has with support from CRS put in place a counselling centre with the aim to take care of women victims of GBV through counselling, psychosocial, juridical and medical care. However, it is stated that the majority of the victims do not receive medical and psychosocial support except for the worst cases which

---

<sup>82</sup> Commission Justice et Paix

<sup>83</sup> Vicaire generale in the Catholic Church, Bukavu (pers.comm. 30.10.09).

<sup>84</sup> Director CARITAS and Coordinator CJP, Goma (pers.comm. 05.11.09).

are transported to Bukavu by local NGOs. It is also said that there is no specific forum for these women as many of them are reluctant to tell their stories, but some women meet and express themselves through NGOs. According to one local authority of a village, the work of CJP and other NGOs, have helped to minimize the exclusion of victims of GBV.

In another village children born as a result of rape (and kidnapping) are mentioned as an important issue of concern. Many women take advantage of their stay in the Panzi hospital in Bukavu to escape due to stigmatisation and juridical issues concerning the fatherhood of those children. In one village it was said that traditionally rapes were solved by demanding the aggressor to marry the victim to ensure that the victim got married and thereby ensuring her future.

Due to the scope of rapes and war situation, these issues can no longer be settled traditionally. Concerning the rape of married women it was stated in several villages that in many cases the reason for husbands not taking back their wives was mainly because of fear of sexually transmittable diseases.

Even though churches do and could do even more when it comes to support women victims of sexual violence, it seems like there is little coordination. ECC has the mandate to work on behalf of all the member organisations and churches but is often limited by lack of support from their members, according to the head of ECC Women and Family Department in Bukavu<sup>85</sup>. She argued that many of the member churches do not contribute enough because they are preoccupied with their own churches and projects.

The coordinator of SFVS said that the churches was involved in this platform with the aim to help women victims of sexual violence in the beginning but pulled themselves out<sup>86</sup>. Also the Deputy Director of Merlin stated that the humanitarian work of the churches is often quick to respond to needs, but often implemented in a uncoordinated way, placing them at odds with the general protocols of aid work<sup>87</sup>. All the representatives of different churches stated that their social services were available to

---

<sup>85</sup> Head of ECC Women and family department, Bukavu (pers.comm. 31.10.09).

<sup>86</sup> Coordinatrice SFVS, Goma (pers.comm. 03.11.09).

<sup>87</sup> Deputy Director, Merlin, Goma (pers.comm. 04.11.09).

all, regardless of religion. However, during a discussion about how the village of Kibumba dealt with orphans, we were told that some orphans were taken care of by families and CARITAS was mentioned as a contributor although it was underlined that they only helped children members of their own church<sup>88</sup>.

## 5.2 Participation of women in churches of North and South Kivu

During our interviews women were described as the source of peace in the household and as good mediators for peace in the village. Women play an active role in finding local solutions to solve local problems<sup>89</sup>. The official administrator in Kibumba argued that women were important actors of peace building in the home sphere through convincing their husbands for instance not to go to war<sup>90</sup>.

However he believed that they could play a more important role. Women were also described as the most trusted to receive humanitarian aid and distributions. According to women who have worked within church structures, women can speak in church, but they tend to be more cautious<sup>91</sup>. Women were described as the most active church members who do most of the work in the church<sup>92</sup>.

The Catholic Church, as well as Protestant (including revival movements) churches, has women groups at the local level (Ngongo 2009). In the Catholic Church, there is a women organisation in every congregation, and in larger cities there are structures that coordinate women-related activities in the wider region.

The Catholic Church has local committees for youth, women and men who have weekly meetings, and every month they meet in a

---

<sup>88</sup> Kibumba village meeting (04.11.09).

<sup>89</sup> Director CARITAS, Bukavu (pers.comm. 30.10.09).

<sup>90</sup> Territorial Administrator, Kibumba (pers.comm. 04.11.09).

<sup>91</sup> Female employees in church projects.

<sup>92</sup> CEPAC Representative, Bukavu and Director CARITAS, Bukavu (pers.comm. 30.10.09).

plenary.<sup>93</sup> In the village cases, these were called *shirika*<sup>94</sup>, described as small cells regrouping church members according to geographical location. The *shirikas* enables women, men, youth and children to meet separately and discuss issues concerning them. In one of the village cases women make up 75 percent of the members and have an important impact on these local cells whereas in other churches, women have their committees with a president which is taking care of sick and widows without too much influence because of their absence in decision making bodies of the local religious community. It is also stated in another village case that the *shirika* provide a space for men to meet and discuss issues concerning them, which does not exist in protestants churches.

In ECC every church has their programmes for women (Ngongo 2009). In South Kivu and North Kivu there are two structures, the Women and Family Department (DFF) and the Federation of Protestant Women (FFP). According to the head of DFF in South Kivu, who was at the same time the president of FFP, the church has allowed women to participate through project related activities<sup>95</sup>. She argues that women that are not church members are even more marginalised, if they don't have an NGO that they are involved in, because they do not have any meeting space where they can meet other women and discuss their problems.

In all the village cases, women had spaces to meet and discuss issues concerning them through the Catholic and protestant churches. In one of the local cases the Women Department of CELPA was especially cited as giving a space for married women to meet for biblical studies and issue concerning living in a household. In another village case it was stated that women meet for activities such as pair education, support to the church's micro projects, evangelisation, support to widows, alphabetization through the Women and Family Department of the Methodist church and CEPAC and in the *shirika* of the Catholic Church. Literate as well as non-literate, married as well as single women, normally above the age of 15, participate.

---

<sup>93</sup> Director CARTAS, Bukavu (pers.comm. 30.10.09).

<sup>94</sup> Shirika is Swahili for organisation

<sup>95</sup> Head of ECC Women and family department, Bukavu (pers.comm. 31.10.09).

Women, who have been responsible for different projects within church structures, looked upon the church as a good space for women to meet and discuss problems of everyday life and to engage themselves outside the household<sup>96</sup>.

However it was mentioned that also women meetings were controlled by male authorities who see these meetings as evangelisation meetings. They underlined that the church should teach women about their rights in order for them to be able to fight for their rights. One important issue that was mentioned, that the church avoids talking about, is family planning and the use of contraception. This is however different from church to church.

One female member from a church called Church of God in Kibumba said they were discussing problems in the household, passive cohabitation and family planning during women meetings<sup>97</sup>. She also said that women help and comfort each other and express themselves through churches. According to the Coordinator and one of the employees in HiA<sup>98</sup>, the first victims of sexual violence expressed themselves through the women organisations. The first women were not believed by the pastors, but the women associations advocated for their issue.

NCA is working with religious and non-religious women organisations. According to them women organisations are important for women participation, but seem to be structured beside the official church structure with little to say in church administration and decision making<sup>99</sup>. In some churches women have resources, in others they do not. The Methodist churches let women participate more, but only in specific roles. It was also stated that churches are often bureaucratic, and even though many of the responsible persons in organisations are religious, they prefer to work outside the church structure in order to avoid the hierarchies of the church. According to the Representative of CEPAC, religious women create associations which have an

---

<sup>96</sup> Female employees in church projects.

<sup>97</sup> Woman met in the village of Kibumba (04.11.09).

<sup>98</sup> Employee in HiA and former President of Protestant women in North Kivu and Coordinator HiA, Goma (pers.comm. 05.11.09).

<sup>99</sup> Field Coordinator NCA, Goma (pers.comm. 03.11.09).and Programme Coordinator NCA, Bukavu (pers.comm. 31.10.09).

important contribution in society<sup>100</sup>. Through churches women have often learned to train others and to express themselves. In one of the village cases it was said that women are allowed to contribute at different levels in churches, but that the churches do not give clear priorities to enforce women participation. This particularly concerns the representation of women in decision-making bodies. It should also be mentioned that women in the villages are organised in other local development organisations regardless of their religious affiliation, where they also gain important skills.

### 5.3 Mobilisation by women members of churches in North and South Kivu

Even though women are the most active church members and do most of the work in church, they are only represented up to a certain level according to women who have worked within church structures<sup>101</sup>. However, these women experienced that there was a change and women are more and more represented on different levels.

The vision of ECC Women and Family Department and The Federation of Protestant Women is the promotion of women<sup>102</sup>. ECC saw a need to mobilise the representation of women at all levels to avoid always passing through the pastors to be able to work with women issues. The objective of the mobilisation was to enable participation of women at decision-making levels.

Awareness raising, mobilisation, lobbying, capacity building of women leaders and vulgarisation of UNSCR 1325 are their main activities. Though sensitising legal representatives in the administration councils of different churches, who again sensitised their respective pastors, they manage to open up for a formal representation of women at all levels. However, there is still a lot of work to do as women and men are not yet equally represented in decision-making bodies.

---

<sup>100</sup> CEPAC Representative, Bukavu (pers.comm. 30.10.09)..

<sup>101</sup> Female employees in church projects.

<sup>102</sup> Head of ECC Women and family department, Bukavu (pers.comm. 31.10.09).

An important challenge in the mobilisation work was to sensitise the women themselves as many were reluctant to take important positions and work in men dominated areas.<sup>103</sup> However, the awareness raising has succeeded as many women are now eager to participate on a formal level and one can see women today in many positions, according to the head of ECC Women and Family Department, Bukavu.

There were no specific mobilisation activities for women representation in decision-making bodies in the local village cases. Several reasons were given for this; one of them was that women already have spaces to meet in women groups where they discuss issues that are important to them. The fact that women and men have separated spaces to discuss important issues reduces the need for mobilisation of women representation in decision making bodies, which are then looked upon as a space for men.

Another reason for the lack of mobilisation, both in churches and in politics in general, was that women on a general basis are less educated than men. In one village case it was said that some of the educated women, even though they were few, actually contribute a lot in discussions in gender mixed forums of the churches.

#### 5.4 Representation of women in decision-making bodies of churches in North and South Kivu

According to a representative of CELPA, women are represented at all levels of the church hierarchy, but are not allowed to act as pastors.<sup>104</sup> Women have been responsible and worked in different departments of the church: Peace and Democracy, Women Services, Women Activity Promotion Centre and the Development Office. Since this is a conflict area, there is a security problem for women in some projects, according to the coordinator of the child

---

<sup>103</sup> Head of ECC Women and family department, Bukavu. (pers.comm. 31.10.09).

<sup>104</sup> Representative CELPA, Bukavu (pers.comm. 30.10.09).



soldier project in CELPA.<sup>105</sup> It is for instance more difficult for women to travel on a motor bike alone in remote areas.

According to the Representative of CEPAC, women start to be represented in decision making structures, but still to a small degree<sup>106</sup>. Two years ago the administrative council was changed in order to include at least one woman. Directors of social work and Women/ Family Departments are often women and there are also some women who are project managers within CEPAC.

Women do not have too many leadership positions neither in the Catholic Church nor in politics according to the Director of CARITAS in Bukavu<sup>107</sup>. Women can get positions according to the Director of CARITAS in Goma, however he stated that because of illiteracy particularly in remote areas, they lack the competency<sup>108</sup>. The CJP animators at the local level are elected by the local communities and they are mobilising to get more women representation as some tasks require women, according to the coordinator of CJP in Goma<sup>109</sup>.

The Baptist churches in Goma (CBCA) seem more liberal when it comes to gender mainstreaming than other churches. The church has female evangelists, preachers, and Ph.D./MA candidates. There are yet no female pastors, but according to the administration assistant of the Bishop “this was only a question of time”.<sup>110</sup>

According to women who have been working in church projects, women are seldom represented in decision-making bodies. According to them, men are the bosses who coordinate, and they have monopoly of the speech in church. One woman also mentioned that men like to control financial aspects and was reluctant to give women colleague’s freedom to use economical resources.

---

<sup>105</sup> Coordinator of CELPA child soldier project, Bukavu (pers.comm. 02.11.09).

<sup>106</sup> CEPAC Representative, Bukavu (pers.comm. 30.10.09).

<sup>107</sup> Director CARITAS, Bukavu (pers.comm. 30.10.09).

<sup>108</sup> Director CARITAS, Goma (pers.comm. 05.11.09).

<sup>109</sup> Coordinator CJP, Goma (pers.comm. 05.11.09).

<sup>110</sup> Administration Assistant of the Bishop, CBCA, Goma (pers.comm. 03.11.09).

The representation of women in decision-making bodies of the church needs necessarily to be seen in relation to the representation of women in politics in the area. In all the village cases it was stated that women are neither represented in local political structures nor in decision making bodies of the church, even though they make up the majority of the church members and often contribute a lot in church activities, also income generating activities. Contrarily, they often take up important roles, also as leaders, in NGOs.

Formal women representation was clearly visible within the Federation of Protestant Women. The federation is funded by the grass-root level through contribution from women at the local level<sup>111</sup>. The Federation consists of one elected woman in each congregation, one representative at the provincial level and one on a national level. In ECC S-K the President of the Federation represents 21 communities. ECC N-K represents 17 communities<sup>112</sup>.

The president is elected by 2 representative from all these communities and 2 representatives from 7 territories. These women are recognised as representatives for women by church authorities<sup>113</sup>. The heads of the Women and Family Departments of ECC in both North and South Kivu were at the same time heads of the Departments and elected representatives in the Federation. Banyere Jeanne who now works with HiA to fight sexual violence, had been engaged in the Federation of women for a very long time.<sup>114</sup>

From 1992 to 2008, she was the President in the Nord Kivu province, now she is representing women in the Masisi area. She stated that the fact that she was elected by many women from different congregations, gave her confidence in advocacy work within the church. She also argued that the federation of women gives women a place in church.

---

<sup>111</sup> Head of ECC Women and family department, Bukavu (pers.comm. 31.10.09)..

<sup>112</sup> ECC N-K and President of protestant women, Goma (pers.comm. 04.11.09).

<sup>113</sup> President of the District CELPA, Goma (pers.comm. 03.11.09).

<sup>114</sup> Employee in HiA, Goma (pers.comm. 05.11.09).

## 5.5 Conclusion

The question put forth in this chapter concerns the role played by churches and religious organisations in the Kivus, and the role of women within these institutions, to promote women issues and give services to women who have been implicated and affected by conflict.

First, we need to be aware of different forms and levels of participation. Even though counting women represented in decision making bodies within churches/religious organisations can shed light on women's position, this does not alone give a profound account of women's real contribution to peace and reconciliation in the area. With the 'gender paradox' in mind, it is perhaps timely to adding to (or even challenge) some of the traditional views within Western feminism by analysing the way in which women are active and experience themselves as empowered and contributors to peace building.

The focus in this chapter has been the churches and religious organisations' involvement in GBV. Churches offer medical and psychological care to victims of sexual violence in the region, such as the activities of the Catholic Church's CJP, the Panzi hospital and CAMPS projects of the Protestant churches. As we have seen from the local cases these projects have antennas and cooperation with local churches and associations. These antennas are important in bringing patients to the hospital in Bukavu for medical care. However it seems like it is only the most severe cases that receive medical treatment as it is not easily available to people living in the rural area.

Fighting the stigmatisation of victims of sexual violence is an area where the churches could play an even more important role due to their omnipresence in the region. Without a specific approach, information, the participation of women and a strong institutional commitment to this issue, the churches and religious organisations are contrarily risking to contribute to aggravate the situation of the victims.

The churches have done some work in this area the last few years and with the current introduction of the Tamar campaign based on contextual bible study, which churches in other African countries

already have experience with, a tool is offered to promote the issue in a proper manner. Breen (2009) discusses the processes that 11 women from South Africa went through by attending group discussions based on contextual bible study at the Ujamaa Centre. She concludes that the impact of the methodology has a transformational and liberating nature, even though she acknowledges that it is difficult to scientifically measure the impact, nature and degree of awareness and empowerment taking place in the women's lives and personalities.

Concluding remarks concerning the issue of *participation* of women in churches and religious organisations in the Kivus are related to the existence and control of spaces for women participation within these structures and the skills women gain through participation in church related activities. Using our definition of the concept participation, we have seen in this chapter that women actually participate to a large degree in religious institutions. The different church authorities that we spoke to underlined the fact that women counts for the majority of the members and are the active ones.

The Catholic Church and Protestant churches offer spaces where women can meet through women organisations. Through these organisations women issues like GBA are promoted. Visiting the village of Kibumba with NCA and the Federation of Women/ECC Women and Family Department in Goma, shed light on how this networks of women across churches and congregations serve as a channel to articulate needs and to promote issues important to women, and also men. Women organisations permit women to think of themselves as a collective group, but the areas within which they engage themselves are often restricted.

With reference to Tripp (1994) we should underline the importance of the type of issues that women actually engage in. Do they only discuss issues relating to the role of women at home; like health, education and caring for husbands and children, or do they actually promote women rights also related to women's position in society in general? An important question in this regard is the control of these spaces, if women themselves are in charge of the content of women meetings, or if the priest and authorities of the church also are the ones to decide how these spaces should

be used. It seems like the different forms of organization structure, the *Shirika* in the Catholic Church and the women groups in the protestant churches might have an impact in this regard, as shown by VonDoepp (2002) in rural Malawi.

Skills that women develop through participation in church activities are important to mention as a contribution to the promotion of women's engagement in peace related activities. It seems like through women associations, women develop skills, such as advocacy and speaking in a meeting, which can also be transferred to other areas. An important question in this regard is which type of women develops these skills.

Do women participate regardless of class, ethnicity and age, or is it only a few elite women, who already have developed certain skills, that take/ are given responsibilities? Another question is if both men and women are present in discussions, which give different environments for the development of self esteem and participation. It was stated that a lot of women develop skills through church work, in addition to work with associations in general, that they use in organisational life outside the church.

Concluding remarks regarding *mobilisation* of women within churches in the Kivus relate to mobilisation structures, political opportunity structures and cultural framing processes. Churches in DRC represent a great mobilisation structure at all levels of society which is enabling for mobilisation of many issues. This resource for mobilisation is also available to women who have a collective identity as women from the start and whose identity as women has been reinforced by the atrocities and fears experienced by women during the conflict.

The cultural framing process is legitimised by the fact that women find themselves in a common situation. Even if they are not a homogenous group, they are affected by the conflict and experience all the fear and insecurity in their everyday life. In the local cases specific activities of women mobilisation within church structures were not found. On a provincial level, the Federation of Protestant women is an example of how the church network can be used for a women agenda.

However, the political structures for mobilisation are somehow restricted due to the Federation's link with patriarchal structures.

They might be seen as a structure beside the church, but at the same time they are restricted by decisions made by church authorities. Women seem to meet blockages at a certain level and choose to draw themselves out of the patriarchal bureaucratic structure if they really want to do something. In order to contribute more to the implementation of the UNSCR 1325, lifting these blockages is an important step in order to support women's peace initiatives.

Concluding remarks regarding women *representation* within churches in the Kivus relate to the scope and the characteristics of this representation. Women were described by church authorities as the most active members, peaceful and trustworthy; however their representation in decision making bodies is very limited. Women start to be represented, but only to a low degree. Western donors seem to have contributed to the development in this area, by putting forth conditions and also by supporting women mobilising for more influence.

The different representatives from the churches argued in line with western gender discourses, even though the scope of real representation of women in decision-making bodies is an indicator of the actual importance given to gender mainstreaming. It should be stated that when women are represented as Directors or project managers, it is often within areas related to women, such as the Women and Family Departments.

The Federation of Protestant women is an example of a formal organisation of women which enables women to develop leaders who have the authority to call themselves women representatives. Given the social and cultural diversities in the area, we need to ask in line with Weldon (2002) whether these women are able to represent women of different classes, ethnicity and ages or if the federation is used as a power structure available for elite women to take up important positions.

Given that the representation is based on a huge network of different churches and organisations on different levels and the fact that there are elections at all levels, it is clear that these women representatives are linked with groups of women where women issues are expressed. There is no doubt that these women associations have contributed to promote the issue of GBV, which

is an important group priority of women living in the region, within the church structures.

Women that are elected seems to perform what Pitkin (1967) refers to as substantive representation, since they promote women issues and have an impact, as we for instance see in the changing of the churches` attitudes towards victims of GBV. However this changing of attitude is also due to the agenda of international and western donors, so it is difficult to say to what degree the women themselves promoted this issue. Another question is about how effective the work of the Federation is, as it is not an autonomous body but has to relate to the patriarchal structure of the churches that it is connected to. However, the fact that their aim is to promote women representation makes it easier for the Federation to have a focus and a priority in this respect.

## References

- Amnesty International (2008): *Document - Democratic Republic of Congo: North Kivu: No end to war on women and children* (accessed April 2010 26.). Available from: <http://www.amnesty.org/>
- Baaz, Maria E. & Maria Stern (2010): *The Complexity of Violence. A critical analysis of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*. Sweden: Sida in cooperation with Nordiska Afrikainsitutet. (accessed May 2010 27). Available from:
- Bøås, M., R. Lotsberg and Jean-Luc Ndizeye (2009): *The International Conference on the Great Lakes region (ICGLR) - review of Norwegian support to the secretariat*. Oslo: Norad: 1-44. (Norad Report 17/2009 Discussion)
- Breen, Marit (2009): *Transformation Journey towards liberation. Contextual bible Study in South Africa: A Contribution to Liberation and Transformation? An investigation of the Study of the Bible among Poor and Marginalized Women in the Communities of Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, with Particular Focus on Its Implications for Individual and Social Change*. Stavanger: School of Mission and Theology, Master.
- Cox, K. (1998): "Spaces of dependence, spaces of engagement and the politics of scale, or: Looking for local politics". *Political Geography* 17(1): 1-23.
- Cucchiari, Salvatore (1990): "Between Shame and Sanctification: Patriarchy and Its Transformation in Sicilian Pentecostalism". *American Ethnologist* 17 (4): 687-707.
- DAC (2004): *DAC experts meeting on peace building and development in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo in the context of the region of Central Africa*. Geneva: OECD/DAC: 1-10.



- Daley, P. (2006): "Challenges to peace: Conflict resolution in the great lakes region of Africa". *Third World Quarterly* 27(2): 303-319.
- Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. (2010): *Now, the world is without me. An investigation of sexual violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo* (accessed April 2010 23). Available from: [www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)
- Human Rights Watch (2002): *The war within the war. Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in Eastern Congo* (accessed Mai 2010 03). Available from: <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2002/06/20/war-within-war>
- Katshung, J. Y. (2007): "Greasing the wheels of reconciliation in the Great Lakes region". *African Security Review* 16(3): 117-122.
- Kimaathi, Ruth & Judy Waruhiu (2009): *Bukavu assessment* (accessed Mai 2010 05). Available from: [http://www.kairoscanada.org/fileadmin/fe/files/PDF/HRTrade/Congo/Report\\_Bukavu-sexualCrimes\\_June09.pdf](http://www.kairoscanada.org/fileadmin/fe/files/PDF/HRTrade/Congo/Report_Bukavu-sexualCrimes_June09.pdf)
- Larsson, Birgitta (1991): *Conversion to Greater freedom? Women, Church and Social Change in North-Western Tanzania under Colonial Rule*. Uppsala: Textgruppen i Uppsala AB. (Studia historica Upsaliensia 162)
- Lemarchand, R. (2009): *The dynamics of violence in Central Africa*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Life & Peace Institute (2010): "Southern South Kivu: A conflict-ridden corner of a vast country". *New Routes* 2010(1): 7-11.
- Longman, T. (2001): "Congo: A tale of two churches". *America: The National Catholic Weekly* (2 April 2001).
- Marshall, Ruth (1993): "'Power in the Name of Jesus': social Transformation and Pentecostalism in Western Nigeria 'Revisited'", in Ranger, Terence & Olufemi Vaughan (eds.), *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth Century Africa*. London: Macmillan: 213-246.
- Marston, S., J. P. Jones III and K. Woodward (2005): "Human geography without scale". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30: 416-433.

- Martin, Bernice (2001): "The Pentecostal Gender-Paradox", in Fenn, Richard K. (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*. Oxford: Blackwell: 52-66.
- McAdam, D., J. D. McCarthy and M. N. Zald (1996): *Comparative perspectives on social movements: political opportunities, mobilizing structures & cultural framing*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mohanty, C. Talpade, Ann Russo & Lourdes Torres (eds.) (1991): *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Ngongo, Kilongo Fatuma (2009): *Femme et paix dans la ville de Bukavu de 1996 à 2006. Réflexion théologique*. Kinshasa/RDC: Editions de l'Université Protestante au Congo (EDUPC).
- Nyabera, Fred & Taryn Montgomery (eds.) (2007): *Campagne Tamar. Etude biblique contextuelle. Manuel sur la lutte contre la violence liée au genre. Nairobi, Communautés des Eglises et des Conseils Chrétiens de la Région des Grands Lacs et de la Corne de l'Afrique (FECCLAHA)*.
- Pitkin, H. (1967): *The concept of representation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Prunier, G. (2001): "The Catholic Church and the Kivu Conflict". *Journal of Religion in Africa* 31(2): 139-162.
- Prunier, G. (2009): *From Genocide to Continental War: The "Congolese" Conflict and the Crisis of Contemporary Africa*. London: C Hurst & Co.
- Puechguirbal, Nadine (2004): "Involving women in peace processes: Lessons from four African countries (Burundi, DRC, Liberia and Sierra Leone)", in Karamé, Kari (ed.) *Gender and Peace-building in Africa*, Oslo: Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt: 47-66.
- Rogier, E. (2004): "The Inter-Congolese Dialogue: A critical overview", in Malan, M. and J. G. Porto (eds.) *Challenges of peace implementation. The UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies: 25-42.
- Rosnes, Ellen Veia, Øystein Lund Johannessen, Marianne Skjortnes, Anne Karin Kristensen, Ragnhild Mestad and Leif Hadland (2007): *Religionskifte og utvikling i et kjønnsperspektiv*.

*rapport fra et utredningsoppdrag til Det Norske Misjonsselskap.*  
Stavanger: Senter for interkulturell kommunikasjon (SIK  
Report 2007:1)

- Rukundwa, L. S. (2006): *Justice and righteousness in Matthean theology and its relevance to the Banyamulenge community: A postcolonial reading* Pretoria: Faculty of Theology. University of Pretoria. PhD.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Nancy Burns & Sidney Verba (1994): "Gender and the Pathways to Participation: The Role of Resources". *The Journal of Politics* 56 (4): 963-990. Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Southern Political Science Association.
- Seay, L. (2009): *Authority at Twilight: Civil Society, Social Services, and the State in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo*. Austin: The University of Texas at Austin. PhD thesis.
- Solhjell, Randi (2008): *Sexual violence in war. Motives for sexual violence in war and possible approaches in a comparative perspective to alternative solutions*. Oslo: University of Oslo. Master.
- Solhjell, Randi (2009): "Seksualisert vold i Kongo". *Sosiologi i dag* 39(2): 5-22.
- Stokke, Kristian (1999): *Politisk geografi*. Tano Aschehoug.
- Tripp, Aili Mari (1994): "Rethinking Civil Society: Gender Implications in Contemporary Tanzania", in Harbeson, John W., Donald Rothchild, and Naomi Chazan (eds.), *Civil Society and the State in Africa*. London: Lynne Rienner: 149-68.
- Tull, D. M. (2003): "A reconfiguration of political power? The state of the state in North Kivu (DR Congo)." *African Affairs* 102: 429-446.
- Turner, T. (2007): *The Congo Wars: Conflict, reality and myths*. New York: Zed Books.
- Utenriksdepartementet (2006): *Handlingsplan Mars 2006. Regjeringens handlingsplan for gjennomføring av FN's Sikkerhetsråds resolusjon 1325 (2000) om kvinner, fred og sikkerhet*. Oslo.
- van Leeuwen, M. (2008): "Imagining the Great Lakes Region: discourses and practices of civil society approaches for

peacebuilding in Rwanda, Burundi and DR Congo". *Journal of Modern African Studies* 46(3): 393-426.

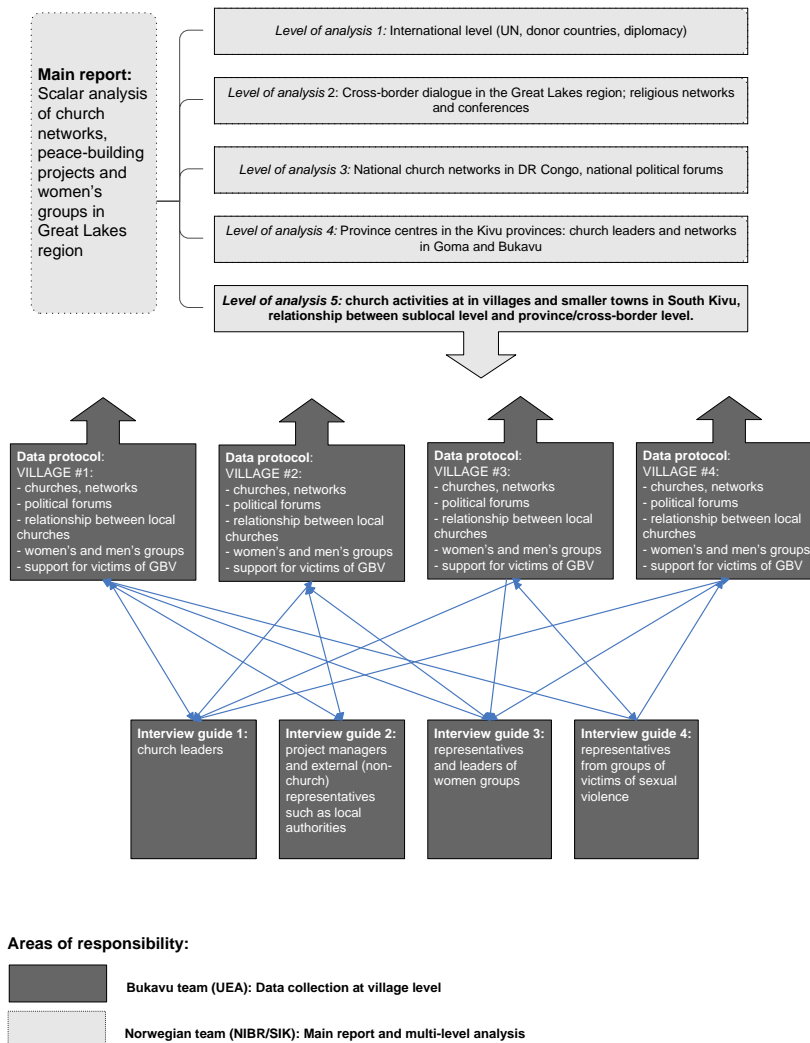
- Verhoeve, A. (2004): "Conflict and the urban space: The socio-economic impact of the conflict on the city of Goma", in Vlassenroot, K. and T. Raeymaekers (eds.) *Conflict and social transformation in Eastern DR Congo*. Gent: Academia Press: 103-122.
- Vlassenroot, K. (2004): "Land and conflict: The case of Masisi", in Vlassenroot, K. and T. Raeymaekers (eds.) *Conflict and social transformation in Eastern DR Congo*. Gent: Academia Press: 81-102.
- Vlassenroot, K. and K. Büscher (2009): "The city as frontier: Urban development and identity processes in Goma.". London, London School of Economics and Political Science. (Crisis States Research Centre working papers series 2, 61: 1-20).
- Vlassenroot, K. and T. Raeymaekers (2004): "Conflict and artisan mining in Kamituga (South Kivu)", in Vlassenroot, K. and T. Raeymaekers.. *Conflict and social transformation in Eastern DR Congo*. Gent: Academia Press: 123-156.
- VonDoepp, Peter (2002): "Liberal Visions and actual power in grassroots civil society: local churches and women's empowerment in rural Malawi". *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40 (2): 273-301.
- Weldon, S. Laurel (2002): "Beyond Bodies: Institutional Sources of Representation for Women in Democratic Policymaking". *The Journal of Politics* 64 (4):1153-1174.
- Whitman, Shelly (2005): *Women and Peace-building in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: An assessment of their role in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue*. Paper presented at the Southern African Universities Social Sciences Conference (SAUSSC) in Gaborone.
- Woodhead, Linda (2001): "Feminism and the Sociology of Religion: From Gender-blindness to Gendered Difference" in Richard K Fenn (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*. Oxford: Blackwell: 67-80.



---

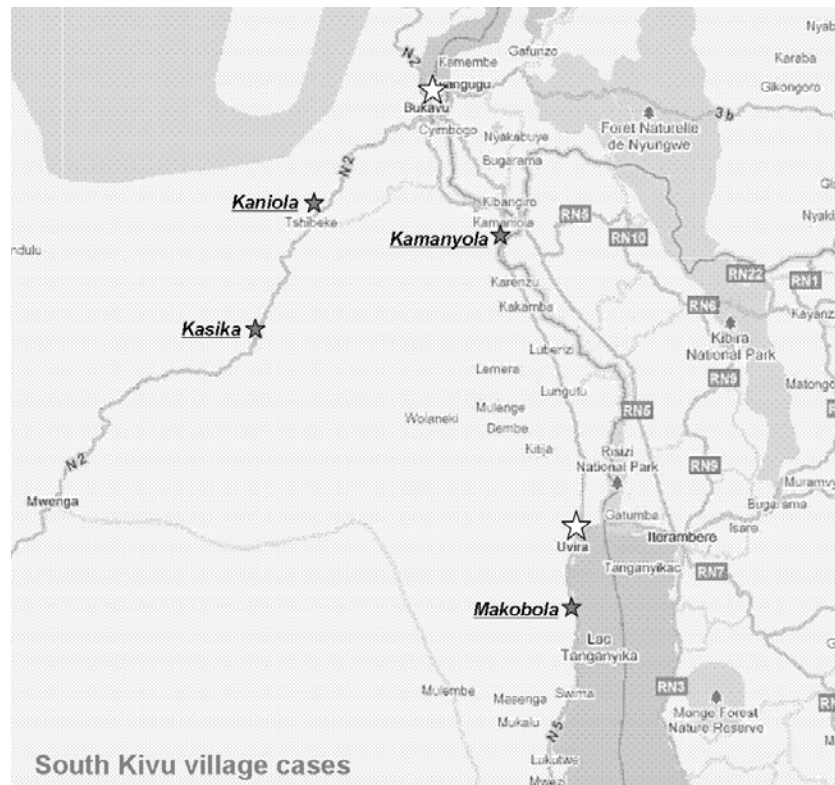
## Appendix I: Village case studies, methodology and background

DR Congo is divided into provinces, which are subdivided into territories, the territories into chiefdoms or sectors, the sectors into groups, and these last into villages. To get an in-depth understanding of how church networks operated at a sublocal level, this project included case studies of villages. Importantly, this research project does not seek to analyse the specific experiences of these four villages, and will therefore not refer to villages or individuals by name in the analysis. The village case studies were conducted by a team at the *Université Évangélique en Afrique* (UEA), led by Rev. Prof. Dr. Abekyamwale Ebuella Abi. The UEA team conducted interviews with church leaders, project managers and women's groups in relation to issues such as the organisation of church networks, local peace-building initiatives, women's representation and sexual violence in the villages. Based on these interviews, the local team generated interview transcripts and systematised their findings in a data protocol for each village, which provided the basis for analysis.



Researchers from NIBR, SIK and UEA identified four villages which would serve as local level case studies in South Kivu. The four villages were (see also map):

- Kamanyola
- Kaniola
- Kasika
- Makobola



Villages were selected based on their role in the conflict, their problems with sexual violence, and the presence of different church networks (Catholic, Protestant and others). The UEA team has prepared ‘conflict profiles’ of each of these villages, presented here in a translated and edited version:

### **KAMANYOLA**

Kamanyola is the administrative centre of the Kashenyi group in the chiefdom of Ngweshe in Walungu territory. The village is situated on the Ruzizi plain, bordered on the north by the Ngomo escarpments, on the south Katogota, on the east by Rwanda and Burundi, and on the west by the collectivity of Kalunga. With a land area of 7 km<sup>2</sup>, Kamanyola has a population of more than 45 000 inhabitants. This village is well-known in the DR Congo because of the historic victory of the Congolese army led by Colonel Mobutu over the Jean Schramm mercenaries around 1967. Since 1990 the village has the mass arrival of Rwandan refugees in 1994 fleeing genocide in Rwanda; the AFDL war in 1996 led by Laurent Désiré Kabila; the second war of liberation by RCD in



1998 and subsequent military incursions; and the war of Colonel Jules Mutebusi in 2005. On the last occasion 80 % of the population of Kamanyola sought refuge in Burundi and the rest retreated to Lubarika, south-west of the village. Upon their return, several national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) established aid and developmental assistance to the victims of Kamanyola and the entire Ruzizi Plain. These wars were characterized by massacres (in Katogota), pillaging, and rapes, which have left the various tribes of Kamanyola with multi-faceted conflicts. Hatred and indifference continue to characterize the clans who no longer trust one another. New conflicts have been created as a consequence of acts of sexual violence, to the extent that the families of the victims and those of the known perpetrators of sexual abuses consider themselves to be mutual enemies.

Political and armed conflicts have reignited fundamental conflicts within the village due to the fact that, on the one hand, the displaced Congolese, having fled the wars by crossing the border (Burundi) and seeking refuge in neighbouring communities, returned to find their fields occupied by other persons, and on the other hand, the Rwandan refugees having acquired lands in the Congo, returned to Kamanyola to resell their land, only to find that they were already sold by the local authorities. In addition, traditional power struggles in terms of village governance between the northern clans from Rubumba and the southern clans from the Kashenyi group have persisted throughout this period.

### **KANIOLA**

Kaniola is one of 16 villages that comprise the chiefdom of Ngweshe in Walunga territory. It is bordered on the north by the chiefdom of Nindja in Kabare Territory and by the chiefdom of Kalonge in Kalehe Territory, on the west by the Luhago group in Kabare Territory; to the south by the groups of Mulamba and Burhale (still in Walunga Territory), and to the east by the Walunga Centre group in Walunga Territory. Kaniola has a population of 56 282 inhabitants.

Since the year 2000 and up until 2008, the inhabitants of Kaniola have been the victims of repeated attacks by the FDLR militia, specifically by the group called RASTA. Moreover, rogue elements of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

have attacked the village. Both groups have committed mass slaughter, the destruction of livestock, the burning down of massacred households, grand-scale raping of women and children as well as kidnapping. All of these facts were instrumental in the displacement of the local population to the Walungu town, and even to Bukavu, for those who had the means. Allegedly, the elements of the FDLR operated in close contact with some inhabitants. In addition to the problem of militia attacks, the village has seen the persistence of local conflicts associated with traditional power sharing.

### **KASIKA**

The village of Kasika is the administrative centre of the chiefdom of Lwindi in Mwenga Territory. Kasika is located in the Mukangala group, of which it is also the administrative centre. The village is located 103 km to the south-west of Bukavu, on National Road No. 2 connecting the city of Bukavu to Maniema Province. Kasika is bordered on the north by the Ihangala group, on the south by the Kashaka collectivity, on the east by the Iyanga group, and to the west by the chiefdom of the Basile. Kasika has a land area of 7 km<sup>2</sup> and comprises the Nyindu and Lega tribes. The chiefdom of Lwindi was created in 1910 but was not officially recognized as a chiefdom until 1929.

In 1998, during the rebellion of the RCD, a grand-scale massacre was perpetrated in Kasika, during which the traditional leader and his family were killed; the priest, nuns and members of the Catholic Church were brutally murdered in the temple while attending mass. This also fuelled the traditional power struggle between two sons of the royal family, concerning succession following the assassination of the chieftain. The power struggle between RCD and Mai-Mai fuelled this local conflict. Other spheres of society, including the church networks, are also split due to this conflict.

### **MAKOBOLA**

Makobola II is the administrative centre of one of the villages in the Babungwe North Group in the Territory of Fizi. With a land area of 7 km<sup>2</sup>, it has a population of 11 592 inhabitants as of the first trimester 2010. Its northernmost village is Akamba Makabola I in the territory of Uvira and is bordered on the east by Lake

Tanganyika, on the west by the community of Auna and to the south by the Bakeci village.

Makobola II has witnessed repeated wars that have had several consequences for the daily lives of the civilian population: the 1996 AFDL war and the 1998 RCD rebellion, as well as subsequent attacks. Mass rapes of girls and women, recurrent massacres, hostage taking and ransom extortion have accompanied these incursions. There has also been contact between the village inhabitants and the Banyamulenge population, both through visits to the village markets and Banyamulenge children living in the village during their education. Some argue that the Banyamulenge have been responsible for massacres in the village.

Traditional power conflicts pertain to the relationship between the village and its political administration and to disputes between two clans over the succession to the throne. Village inhabitants have experienced the burning down of houses and land and property-related conflicts. Also, returning refugees from Tanzania have found on arrival that their fields and properties have been sold by the local authorities. Succession conflicts have also occurred in the local churches.

---

## Appendix II: Village case studies, data protocol

The data protocol is the main instrument with which the Bukavu team communicates findings and their own analytical reflections to the Norwegian team, which is in charge of incorporating these into the main report and analysis. The data protocol consists of three components:

- Section 1: Background variables describing each village, based on general information available;
- Sections 2-5: Data protocol compiling the relevant data from the interviews as they relate to the different research questions of the project;
- Sections 6-7: Critical discussions where the Bukavu team answers some questions of a critical nature given their experiences and reflections from the particular village case.

The data protocol includes many questions, and it might not be possible to address all questions in each village! It is meant as a guiding tool for the local team, and might be changed or adapted to suit the particular field studies. The critical reflections are very important and invites the Bukavu team to share their independent and critical reflections on whether the church are fulfilling their potential in promoting peace and women's empowerment locally. To both of these issues, three questions are raised: 1) which *positive actions* the churches in the village engage in, 2) which actions they could engage in, but which they *do not prioritise* and 3) whether there are actions done by churches or church leaders which are *negative or counter-productive* in peace-building and women's empowerment. It is important that they Bukavu team consider each of these questions and include this analysis in the data protocol.

Thematic sections	Research questions
<b>1 Background variables and village characteristics</b>	<p><i>Size and location; demographics; position in the administrative structure of the state;</i></p> <p><i>History and particularly relevant events/ dynamics since early 1990s; impact of the war period and armed conflict; local conflicts (land use, ethnic tension, citizenship, representation, voter rights);</i></p> <p><i>Dates of fieldwork; list of persons/ organisations interviewed</i></p>
<b>2 Church organisation</b>	<p><i>Which churches and religious organisations are represented in the village?</i></p> <p><i>Their names and affiliations; description of their constituency; their history in the village; how many members?</i></p> <p><i>Are there important differences in how the different churches are organised?</i></p> <p><i>Are churches or church leaders represented in political forums, civil society or local government?</i></p> <p><i>Where does funding come from in facilitating the projects and activities of the church?</i></p> <p><i>What is the relationship between the local church leaders and church leaders in Uvira, Bukavu and Kinsbasa? How do they report between the different levels of the church hierarchy?</i></p> <p><i>Are the provincial leaders giving orders to the local level, and how are these followed up on? Do local church leaders have an influence over provincial and national levels?</i></p> <p><i>Do local church representatives have contact with local church leaders in Burundi, Rwanda or in other countries? How do they maintain contact? Where do they meet?</i></p>
<b>3 Peace-building activities</b>	<p><i>Describe the peace-building activities in the village; how are the churches involved? Any specific locally organised initiatives?</i></p> <p><i>Which international and national aid/ development organisations are active in peace building activities in the village? What kinds of activities? Which local partners do they use?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any coordination between international humanitarian organisations and the churches?</i></p>

	<p><i>Are there any particular demobilisation or reintegration activities in the village?</i></p> <p><i>Are the churches involved?</i></p> <p><i>Describe the funding mechanisms of the different project activities..</i></p> <p><i>Are activities harmonized - coordinated? How?</i></p>
<p><b>4 Women's organisation</b></p>	<p><i>Are women represented in political forums in the village? Are there women leaders in the village - and within which organisations do they do their work? What are the most important issues concerning women in the village?</i></p> <p><i>Are there women's networks and groups in the churches? What kind of activities take place in these groups? What is being discussed? Do men also have their own groups where they discuss men's issues?</i></p> <p><i>Is there any women representation in decision-making bodies of the church? How long have they been represented? How did they get a representation? If not, is there any mobilization for women representation? If they are, are they expressing themselves freely? All the different forms of participation by women in different groups and activities. Which kind of women participate (age, ethnicity, class?)</i></p>
<p><b>5 Challenges in combating sexual violence</b></p>	<p><i>Do rape victims receive medical and psycho-social care? Are they transported to Bukavu for this kind of treatment? Is there any follow-up in the villages for this kind of treatment?</i></p> <p><i>Are there forums where victims can meet and discuss experiences and challenges?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any concrete activities being initiated to combat the problem of exclusion of rape victims by families and local communities? Here, both official women leaders and ordinary village women of different ages should be consulted about this question.</i></p> <p><i>Are there particular local customs which make the reintegration of rape victims problematic?</i></p> <p><i>How are the churches involved in these activities?</i></p> <p><i>Are international organizations involved?</i></p> <p><i>Direct involvement in/ dialogue with families with rape victims, activities in church, groups, psycho-social therapy.</i></p>

	<p><i>Do the projects use other strategies like local radio?</i></p> <p><i>Do the churches talk about these issues in their mass or in other forums in the church?</i></p>
<b>6 Critical reflection 1: Peace-building</b>	<p><i>Which activities, practices and messages are church leaders or other representatives of the church involved in which promote peace-building locally?</i></p> <p><i>Are there activities, practices or messages which church leaders or other representatives of the church could engage in to promote peace-building, but which they are presently not prioritizing in their work?</i></p> <p><i>Are there activities, practices or messages which church leaders or other representatives of the church engage in which are creating conflict in the village?</i></p>
<b>7 Critical reflection 2: Women's empowerment</b>	<p><i>Which activities, practices and messages are church leaders or other representatives of the church involved in which promote the representation of women and women's concerns locally?</i></p> <p><i>Are there activities, practices or messages which church leaders or other representatives of the church could engage in to promote the representation of women and women's concerns, but which they are presently not prioritizing in their work?</i></p> <p><i>Are there activities, practices or messages which church leaders or other representatives of the church engage in which are not constructive in the empowerment of women locally?</i></p>

---

## Appendix III: Village case studies, interview guide

Four separate interview guides were prepared for the village case studies, targeting the four main groups of informants: church leaders, project managers, women's group representatives and (if existing) groups for victims of sexual violence:

### **Interview guide – church leaders**

- How do church leaders engage in political matters outside the church?
  - In the village?
  - In relation to local state authorities?
  - In dialogue with militias?
- Are there any particular conflicts in the village?
  - What kind of conflicts? Related to ethnicity?
  - How do they impact on women?
- How can local church representatives play a role in the peace process?
  - Describe the peace-building activities of the churches in the village.
  - Do women participate in these activities?
- If there are there any particular demobilisation or reintegration activities in the village, can you describe them?
  - Are the churches involved?



- Are there any coordination/ cooperation in peace building activities between national/ international organisations and the churches?
  - In case there is, how does it function?
- Do you have external funding for your projects?
  - In case you have, where does funding come from?
- Are there any international and national aid/development organisations that are active in peace building activities in the village?
- How are women organised in the church?
  - Are there any women's networks and groups in the church? If yes, can you describe the role and function of them?
  - Are women represented in the decision-making bodies of the church?
  - If so, what role do they play?
  - Do they have perspectives which are different from men?
  - Are they listened to?
- Is sexual violence a problem in the area? If yes:
  - Are there any projects in the village aimed at reaching victims of sexual violence? Which projects?
  - Is exclusion/ stigmatization of rape victims a problem in the village? In case it is, in what way?
  - Do the churches have concrete activities to combat this problem? Which activities?
  - Are there particular local customs which make the reintegration of rape victims problematic? Which?
  - Are there local customs that facilitate reintegration of rape victims? Which?

- What is the relationship between the local church leaders and church leaders in Uvira, Bukavu and Kinshasa?
  - How do you communicate?
  - Do you receive instructions from provincial and national leadership?
  - How do you report about the situation in your village?
- Do local church representatives have contact with local church leaders in Burundi, Rwanda or in other countries?
  - If so, describe the contact and relationships across the border.

**Interview guide – project managers and external (non-church) representatives such as local authorities**

- Describe the churches and religious organisations are represented in the village?
- Are churches or church leaders represented in political forums outside the church where important matters concerning the village are discussed?
  - Where and how?
- In your opinion, do local church representatives play a role in the peace process?
  - If they do, please describe the peace-building activities of the churches in the village.
  - Do women participate in these activities?
- Are there any particular demobilisation or reintegration activities in the village?
  - If there are, can you describe them?
  - Are the churches involved?
- Are there any particular conflicts in the village?
  - If so, what kind of conflicts is most frequent (ethnic, political, gender, land conflicts?)?
  - How do these affect women?
- What are the most important issues concerning women in the village?
- Is sexual violence a problem in the area? If yes:
  - Are there any projects in the village aimed at reaching victims of sexual violence? Which projects?
  - Is exclusion/ stigmatization of rape victims a problem in the village? In case it is, in what way?

- 
- Do the churches have concrete activities to combat this problem? Which activities?
  - Are there particular local customs which make the reintegration of rape victims problematic? Which?
  - Are there local customs that facilitate reintegration of rape victims? Which?

*For project leaders in faith-based organisations only:*

- Is your project activity connected to the church? How?
- Does your project have relationships to churches outside of the village, and/or international church networks?
  - If so, how does this relationship function – funding, dialogue, policy-making...
- Is there any coordination or cooperation in peace building activities between national and international organisations and the churches?
  - In case there is, how does it function?

### **Interview guide – representatives and leaders of women groups**

- Describe the role of women in the village
  - Are there women leaders in the village? If there are, in which institutions/organisations are women leaders represented?
  - Is there any women representation in decision-making bodies of the church? If there is, how do they participate in these bodies (are they listened to? Do they have other perspectives than men)
  - Is there any mobilization for greater women representation in decision-making bodies within the church and in the village in general?
- Are there women's networks and groups in the churches? In case there are...
  - How do they function?
  - What is done/ discussed during the women meetings?
  - Which kind of women participate in the meetings (age, class, ethnicity...)
- What are the most important issues concerning women in the village?
  - Do women have an influence in these matters? How?
  - Do women have an influence in matters that affect them in the church? How?
  - If women don't have any influence, why is that?
- Are there any particular conflicts in the village?
  - If so, what kind of conflicts is most frequent (ethnic, political, gender, land conflicts...)?
  - How do these affect women?

- In your opinion, do local church representatives play a role in the peace process?
  - If they do, please describe the peace-building activities of the churches in the village.
  - Do women participate in these activities?
- Is sexual violence a problem in the area? If yes:
  - Are there any projects in the village aimed at reaching victims of sexual violence? Which projects?
  - Is exclusion/ stigmatization of rape victims a problem in the village? In case it is, in what way?
  - Do the churches have concrete activities to combat this problem? Which activities?
  - Are there particular local customs which make the reintegration of rape victims problematic? Which?
  - Are there local customs that facilitate reintegration of rape victims? Which?

**Interview guide – representatives from groups of victims of sexual violence**

- Have you been in contact with any institution/organisation after you experienced sexual violence?
  - In case you have, what kind of support did you get?
- Have you been in contact with or supported by the church after you experienced sexual violence?
  - If yes, How?
  - Do you think the church should be involved in supporting women that have experienced sexual violence? How?
- Have you had problems of exclusion or rejection after you experienced sexual violence?
  - By your family?
  - By the village?
  - By the church?
  - Did your tasks and role in the family, village and church change after you were victim to sexual violence? If so, why do you think it changed?
- Has the church addressed the problem of sexual violence, exclusion and rejection in mass and in their preaching?
  - In case it has, how?
  - In case it has not, do you think the church should address this issue?
- Are there groups where women who have experienced sexual violence can talk and find support?
  - In case there are, how do they function?
  - Are there any in church?

- Are there particular local customs which make the reintegration of rape victims problematic? Which?
- Are there local customs that facilitate reintegration of rape victims? Which?



**Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR)** is an independent social science research centre whose mission is to develop and publish research-based insights for the benefit of decision-makers in public and private institutions as well as for the general public.

**NIBR** offers action-oriented, decision support research and analyses for clients in the public and private sectors and competes for research contracts in Norway and abroad. The institute aims to be a competitive contributor to research programmes under the auspices of the Research Council of Norway as well as to international research programmes, e.g. the EU framework programmes. NIBR is an independent foundation. The achievement of the institute's research objectives requires that its operations be financially profitable. All profits are reinvested into NIBR's operations and used in accordance with the institute's objectives.

**NIBR's** core competence is in urban and regional research. This is a wide inter- and multidisciplinary field of social science research, encompassing i.a.: analyses of social conditions and societal changes in urban and rural areas, and across regions, sectors and levels; analyses of regional development and innovation, area and housing planning, management, and the development of democracy and welfare within and across local communities; territorial analyses of society, coupled with studies of sustainable development.

Urban and regional research is an international field of study. NIBR is actively involved in international research in the Institute's target areas.

**NIBR** has sixtyfive researchers who are qualified in the fields of sociology, political science, economy, demography, architecture, and civil engineering.

#### **Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR)**

Gaustadalléen 21  
N-0349 OSLO  
Telephone: +47 22 95 88 00  
Telefax: +47 22 60 77 74  
E-mail [nibr@nibr.no](mailto:nibr@nibr.no)  
[www.nibr.no](http://www.nibr.no)

#### **NIBR is a part of CIENS.**

CIENS is a strategic research collaboration between independent research institutes and the University of Oslo. CIENS is a national and international centre for multidisciplinary research on the environment and society. The centre is based on joint strategic analysis and research programmes and co-operation regarding consultancy.

This report (i) map the religious civil society networks, (ii) assess their role in local and regional peace processes and (iii) address the organisation of women and the promotion of issues of women, peace and security within these networks. The focus in this report is on the linkages between provincial centres and churches at village level in the vast rural areas of the Kivus where civilians continue to suffer from war crimes. The legitimacy of the church in peacebuilding at local and national levels hinges on the assumption that (i) the church leadership has a mandate based in their constituency on the ground, and that (ii) church coordinating structures in the province or at the national level have the capacity to coordinate church activities at lower levels of the church hierarchy.