



# [675] Paper

## The Congo war and the prospects of state formation

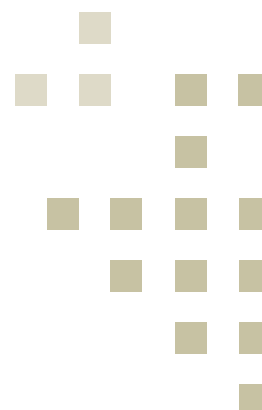
Rwanda and Uganda compared

Stein Sundstøl Eriksen

No. 675 – 2005

Norwegian Institute  
of International  
Affairs

Norsk  
Utenrikspolitisk  
Institutt



Utgiver: NUPI  
Copyright: © Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt 2005  
ISSN: 0800 - 0018

Alle synspunkter står for forfatterens regning. De må ikke tolkes som uttrykk for oppfatninger som kan tillegges Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt. Artiklene kan ikke reproduseres - helt eller delvis - ved trykking, fotokopiering eller på annen måte uten tillatelse fra forfatterne.

Any views expressed in this publication are those of the author. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. The text may not be printed in part or in full without the permission of the author.

Besøksadresse: C.J. Hambros plass 2d  
Adresse: Postboks 8159 Dep.  
0033 Oslo  
Internett: [www.nupi.no](http://www.nupi.no)  
E-post: [pub@nupi.no](mailto:pub@nupi.no)  
Fax: [+ 47] 22 36 21 82  
Tel: [+ 47] 22 99 40 00

# The Congo war and the prospects of state formation

Rwanda and Uganda compared

Stein Sundstøl Eriksen

**[Summary]** This paper analyses the effect of the Congo war on state power in Rwanda and Uganda. Drawing on theories of European state formation, it asks whether the Congo war has led to a strengthening of the state in the two countries. It is argued that this has not been the case. Neither the Rwandan nor the Ugandan state has been strengthened as a result of the war. I argue that this must be explained by changes in the state system, which have altered the links between war and state formation. The «war makes states» connection presupposes a positive relationship between regime maintenance and state formation. In contemporary Africa, there is no link. On the one hand, state survival is guaranteed anyway, no matter how weak the state is. On the other hand, regime survival does not depend on mobilisation of resources through taxation, since resources are available from elsewhere (aid, crime, plunder, globalisation, warlord politics).

# The Congo war and the prospects of state formation: Rwanda and Uganda compared

## *Introduction*

Several states in Africa have experienced outbreak of armed conflicts in recent years. Three parts of Africa have been particularly affected: West Africa (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Ivory Coast), the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea) and the Great Lakes region (the two Congos, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola).

In the wake of widespread state collapse and civil war, it is not surprising that theories of war and state formation have been applied in order to understand wars in Africa. Tilly's writings in particular have become a standard reference in writings about African conflicts. The questions which are raised in the light of the European experience, is whether recent conflicts signal the onset of geopolitical competition in Africa, and if so, whether this could compel rulers of bureaucratically weak, patronage-based states to consolidate their power. Seen in this light, the emergence of warfare and inter-state military competition could be a step towards consolidation of state power. Titles such as "Give war a chance (Luttwak, 1999), "Keep out of Africa" (Ottaway, 1999) and "Let them fail" (Herbst, 2004) indicate the thrust of such arguments.

Arguments both for and against this thesis could be made on theoretical grounds. On the one hand, one could argue, as Herbst and Luttwak, among others, do, that inter-state war (in contrast to civil war) can lead to a strengthening of states, by forcing participant states to strengthen their power in order to survive. On the other hand, it can be argued that states or the state system have changed, and that war is unlikely to have such effects in contemporary conditions.

This article takes the discussion of the links between war and state formation as its starting point. It focuses on the conflict in the Great Lakes region, and asks whether this conflict has led to a strengthening of the state in Rwanda and Uganda. Of all the

states involved, these two states appear as the most likely candidates for state strengthening. First, they faced the most severe security threats of the states involved in the Congo war. Second, unlike Congo, their institutions have not collapsed, and they have not suffered from widespread fighting, destruction and plunder inside their own countries.

The war in Congo went on for more than four years. Soon after the troops led by Laurent Kabila overturned the Mobutu regime in 1997, new fighting broke out between government troops and rebels. The rebels were backed by Rwanda and Uganda, and the Kabila government started receiving backing from Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Thus, five foreign countries were involved in the conflict. Soon Rwanda and Uganda combined controlled roughly half of Congo's territory. A deadlock emerged, in which no party was able to win a decisive victory.

This remained the case until 2002, when a peace treaty was signed in Pretoria. The treaty meant that all foreign troops were to leave Congo. In 2003, a government of national unity was installed, and elections are now scheduled to take place in 2005. However, the peace remains fragile, and there have been regular clashes between government forces and various militias. At one point, one of the main parties in the government of national unity, the RCD-Goma, withdrew from the government, in protest against the massacre of Congolese refugees in Burundi, believed to be carried out by hutu militants. They returned to the government after about a week, but according to the latest reports, strong elements within the RCD are considering abandoning the peace process.

### *War and state formation*

It has been well documented by writers such as Michael Mann (1993), Charles Tilly (1985, 1990), Thomas Ertman (1997) and others that state formation in Europe has been intimately linked to warfare. Thus, Charles Tilly argues that war played a major role in centralising kingly authority. By offering protection in return for payoffs for loyal followers, would-be states were able to centralise control over local strongmen.

According to Mann, 1993, and Tilly, 1990, there were two main ways in which inter-state war (or threats of it) contributed to state building, which can be classified as geopolitical, and economic, respectively.<sup>1</sup> *First*, geopolitical competition ensured that only those states that were able to defend themselves militarily were able to survive. Others were simply conquered, and incorporated into other states. In this system, weak states, seen in relations to their neighbours, would simply cease to exist.

In parts of Africa, such as the Great Lakes Region, there may now be something like geopolitical pressure, at least in the sense that states invade each other's territory. However, these wars differ from conventional wars, since they are not about territory. The invaders do not seek to change existing borders, or to question the territorial sovereignty of the states they invade. Thus, none of the states that were involved in fighting on Congolese territory made any territorial claims. In itself, however, this does not mean that geopolitical competition could not have the effect of strengthening states. Even if the existence of the state as such is not under threat, it is possible that the presence of security threats could compel leaders to strengthen the state in order to protect themselves from insurgents operating in neighbouring countries. The question, therefore, is whether the regimes involved in the war in the Congo have been under such a compulsion in recent years. Of the states involved, Uganda and Rwanda would appear as the most likely candidates for a strengthening of the state, since these states have experienced a genuine security threat in connection with the war.<sup>2</sup>

*Second*, in order to survive in this competitive environment, states were compelled to improve their own financial basis. Warfare is expensive, and in order to cover the costs of war, governments were forced to increase revenue collection. This in turn forced them to improve their administrative capacity, in order to be able to tax their

---

<sup>1</sup> In addition, Mann points out that involvement in wars can increase the population's support for and identification with the state, and its willingness to comply with state regulations, including tax regulations. Thus, warfare can increase the legitimacy of states by strengthening nationalism, and citizens' identification with the state. I will not deal explicitly with this dimension here.

<sup>2</sup> As for Congo itself, it also seems clear that the war has not in any way led to a strengthening of the state. This is not because the war did not represent a security threat. It obviously did. However, the position of the regime in Kinshasa has been so fragile and the state apparatus, most particularly the army, so weak and fragmented that it has been totally unable to use the war as an opportunity to strengthen its power. Moreover, the fact that Congo has been the battleground of the war as well as the victim of plundering by other states has further undermined the state's ability to centralise power. For Zimbabwe, by contrast, the war in the Congo did not represent a security threat. The country does not border Congo, and there are no armed groups from the country operating in the Congo.

population. In some cases, war may also give those states that are successful access to substantial resources from outside its own territory, either through plundering of other states' resources or through aid. These resources can then be used to strengthen the state and its control over and support in society.

A common feature of all these links between war and state formation is that they depend on the mutually reinforcing relationship between (or at least compatibility of) regime survival and state formation. In early modern Europe, ruling regimes found themselves in a situation where strengthening the state was an imperative for political survival. In other words, strengthening the state was in the interest of the ruling regime, since its very survival depended on it. If we assume that regime survival will be a, if not the, the primary concern of rulers, it follows that the positive relationship between war and state formation found in Europe applies in the contemporary world if and only if it is still the case that regime survival depends on (or at least is compatible with) strengthening the state.

In the case of the Congo war, therefore, what we need to examine is whether the war created such a situation. In other words, we must ask whether the war compelled state leaders to strengthen the state, and whether regime survival and strengthening of the state are compatible goals. This paper is an attempt at such an examination for the cases of Uganda and Rwanda.

First, however, a few remarks on the concept of state strength, as it is used in this paper. The concept of state strength mainly refers to the state's administrative and economic resources and the degree of central political control over the state apparatus. Factors such as the size and strength of the army and the degree of central control over it are important here, as well as the ability of the state to extract revenue from society to fund its operations. Thus, in this article, state strength will be assessed in terms of:

- a) military power and the ability to maintain a monopoly of violence;
- b) degree of centralisation of political power, including control over the military forces;

c) extractive capacity.<sup>3</sup>

In the following, I will examine recent development in Rwanda and Uganda, to assess whether there are any indications of a strengthening of the state in the period since the first Congo war began in 1996. Since the main objective is to assess effects of the war, the focus will be on changes over the time period since the war began.

### *Rwanda*

For Rwanda, the situation in Congo around 1996 represented a very real security threat. It is a fact that a large number of hutu-militants have used and continue to use Congolese territory to launch attacks at Rwanda. Given the experience of the 1994 genocide, it is clear that seen from the RPF-regime in Rwanda, the situation in the Congo appeared as a serious threat. The existence of this threat was used as the justification for Rwanda's decision to send troops to Congo in support of the rebellion led by Laurent Kabila in 1996. In 1997, Rwanda turned against Kabila, and supported the new rebellion, together with Uganda. Together with their local allies in eastern DRC, the RCD-Goma, Rwanda soon took control over almost one third of Congo's territory.<sup>4</sup>

Has the Congo war led to a strengthening of the state in Rwanda? In terms of military capability, the Congo war revealed that Rwanda is a significant regional military power. Thus, Laurent Kabila would not have been able to overthrow Mubutu without Rwandan support. Moreover, the fact that a tiny country with a total population of

---

<sup>3</sup> Thus, the issue of administrative capacity, which is so strongly emphasized in debates about the developmental state, is not included in this analysis. In a vast literature, see, for instance, Evans, 1996, Hobson and Weiss, 1995, Leftwich, 1998. Although there is no doubt about the importance of administrative capacity for economic development, the development of such capacity should not be seen as a part of state formation per se. In fact, the process of state formation analysed by Tilly, Mann and others took place long before the development of the kind of weberian bureaucracies that have become essential for economic development.

<sup>4</sup> There were two main reasons for Rwanda's withdrawal of support for Kabila. First, Kabila proved to be unwilling or unable to disarm the hutu militias, and Rwanda once again argued that it needed to intervene directly to protect itself. Second, the presence of a large number of Rwandan troops in the Congo had become a political liability for Kabila, and threatened to undermine his own power. In response, he demanded that all foreign troops should leave Congo (For more details, see Lemarchand, 2003).



about 8 million was able to control a third of a country as large as Congo is an indication of substantial military strength.

The war also showed Rwanda's strength in terms of fighting capacity. During the war against the Mobutu regime, the ramshackle Zairean army was routed by Rwanda. Moreover, during the so-called second war, when Rwanda and Uganda clashed in a battle for control over the central city of Kisangani, Rwanda was able to beat the Ugandan forces and chase them away from the city.

Rwanda's military strength is also revealed by expenditure data. According to the SIPRI yearbook, official expenditure as percentage of GDP has stood between 4 and 5,5% over the last ten years. In comparison with other African countries, this puts Rwanda in third place, after Angola and Eritrea. Moreover, SIPRI consider real expenditures to be significantly higher – perhaps as high as twice the official figures. Notably, there has been no significant increase in official defence expenditure after the outbreak of the war. However, it is likely that the gap between official and real expenditure has increased, as a result of profits generated from exploitation of minerals in Congo. Most likely, at least parts of the income generated in Congo have been used to fund the campaign. Thus, President Kagame himself has described the war as self-financing.

In spite of the security threat represented by the Interhamwe militias, the Rwandan state has been able to maintain a monopoly of violence internally - at least after 1998, when the rebellion in the north-western part of the country subsided (Longman, 2004). However, this does not indicate that the war or the existence of a security threat has led to the strengthening of the state, as was the case in Europe (at least according to Tilly and others). In fact, the Rwandan state was remarkably strong before the onset on the war:

A mere two years after the extreme human and material destruction of 1994, the Rwandan state had been rebuilt. Rwanda was again administered from top to bottom, territorial, military and security structures were in place, the judicial system was re-established, tax revenues were collected and spent. The regime was able in a short time to establish total control over state and society. .... While many other African countries tend towards state collapse, the Rwandan state has reaffirmed itself vigorously (Reyntjens, 2004, 209)

Thus, the strength of the Rwandan army was established before the war, and not as a result of the war. This means that Rwanda's military strength must be explained by developments prior to the war. I will not go into detail here about the historical origins of state strength in Rwanda, but one possible explanation of the military strength of the Rwandan state is RPA's origins and the experiences of the 1994 genocide, which has created a cohesive army with a strong sense of common purpose and an acute sense of insecurity. Another important factor is that Rwanda, unlike most African countries, has a strong state tradition, which goes as far back as to pre-colonial times.

In economic terms, the picture is somewhat different. Rwanda soon developed strong economic interests in the parts of Congo areas under their control. It has been clearly documented that Rwanda (like Uganda) have made large profits from illegal business activities in the Congo (United Nations, 2002, Cuvelier and Marysse, 2003, Jackson, 2002). The best known example is the production and trade of coltan, which became a major source of income for both the RCD and Rwanda. In addition to coltan, Rwanda also controlled trading networks and export of other commodities, such as gold, diamonds and timber. What is most notable about Rwandan exploitation of minerals in Congo is that Rwanda has been able to maintain central control and prevent large scale private profiteering by officers (Vlassenroot and Romkema, 2002). Instead, the profits generated through mining, trade and smuggling in Congo have by and large benefited the state. This has been possible because of the highly disciplined nature of Rwandan forces and the economic agencies associated with it.

The prospects of such profits may or may not have been the motive for their initial involvement, but it is quite clear that once troops were in the Congo, they took advantage of the opportunities that were found. Gold, diamonds, timber and coltan are some of the main goods that they were able to profit from. It is also clear that at least some of the profit generated from these activities was channelled into the official state budget. Thus, export of gold, diamonds and coltan from the country increased manifold during the army's stay in Congo, even though there was no increase in domestic production of these goods.

Under the supervision of the Congo desk at the Ministry of Defence in Kigali, a sophisticated structure has been established, which ensures that profits from Congo are channelled to the government in Kigali (Tull, 2003, Reyntjens, 2004, Vlassenroot and Romkena, 2002). This is partly done through direct control at the site of extraction, and partly through handpicked intermediaries. Rwanda has even developed its own system of tax collection inside the Congo. Rwanda therefore, has avoided a fragmentation of the state, in which central control over the armed forces has been undermined by the army's economic activities in the Congo. In this way, the war in the Congo has become a source of income for the state, without at the same time leading to a weakening of central control.

Although it seems likely, it is hard to assess whether the income thus generated exceeded the cost of the war. For Rwanda, Willum estimates the net profit from the war in the Congo in 1999 at USD 250 million (Willum, 2001). If, from this figure, one deducts the entire official defence budget of 81 million, the war would still have generated a profit of 170 million for this year alone. Even if we acknowledge that the real costs of the war may be higher than official figures, we must also take into consideration that the military budget is not all spent in Congo, and that most of this expenditure would continue even in the absence of war. Thus, it should not be considered a war expense per se.

It has also been reported that the government has used the war to expand its internal revenue base. Thus, according to Human Rights Watch, both peasants and schoolteachers were forced to pay a special war tax, to help fund the war in Congo. This could indicate that the Rwandan government, like early modern European states, used the war to develop its administration and its revenue base, thereby strengthening state power internally. On the other hand, IMF data on government revenue show that while tax revenue (excluding income from exports) has increased significantly in recent years, this trend started prior to the onset of war. While the war may have reinforced this trend, it was underway before the war began.

In so far as the Rwandan regime has become dependent on income from Congo, a withdrawal may be a threat to its interests. Whether Rwanda has been able to maintain its sources of income and its control over economic activities in Congo after the

withdrawal of troops in 2002 is not entirely clear. Since the RCD is still in control of the areas formerly controlled directly by Rwanda, it seems likely that would be able to maintain at least some degree of control and therefore to reap some profits even after the withdrawal of troops.

It should be added, however, that the strength and central control referred to here concerns the armed forces, and does not necessarily apply to other parts of the Rwandan state. It is also important that such central control as that found in the Rwandan army has become possible by extremely authoritarian means, and through a policy that has reserved state power and resources for a small section of the tutsi elite, mainly drawn from the group which led the coup after the 1994 genocide. In particular, the inner core of the regime, the so-called Akazu, consisting mainly tutsis exiled in Uganda before RPF took over power, have been “accumulating material resources, jobs and privileges” (Reyntjens, 2004, 190). Thus, “the instruments of power and enrichment are concentrated in small networks based on a shared past in certain refugee camps in Uganda, belonging to the same school and kinship links” (Reyntjens, 2004, 188-189). So, while the government has maintained control over the army, it has also, in classic patrimonial fashion, used the resources to reward its clients. It is an open question whether this system, in which a relatively small minority monopolises power, and the majority is excluded on an ethnic basis, is sustainable.

This means that the Rwandan state is characterised by a combination of strong military capacity, strict central control over the armed forces and maintenance of regime power through patrimonial practices. While the war might have strengthened the degree of central control, there are no indications that it has made the state less patrimonial. However, and this is the key point here, the logic of regime survival has not undermined central control. The relatively strong state in Rwanda may not be an effect of the war, but at least the war has not undermined it.

Thus, the Rwandan state is clearly strong in the sense of having a large and effective army, and a high degree of central control over the armed forces (and over other parts of the state). It has also increased its capacity of resource extraction at home as well as from abroad in recent years, including the period of war. However, this strength is

not primarily an effect of the war in the Congo, but of processes prior to the war, even if the war may have reinforced it.

So even if one cannot say that the strength of the state in Rwanda is a direct result of the war, one might tentatively conclude that at least the war has not weakened the state, and that it might have improved the state's financial basis. Thus, in the Rwandan case, there is no contradiction between the imperative of regime survival and that of state building.

A puzzling fact about Rwanda, however, is that this strength, in terms of military power and central political control, co-exists with widespread patrimonialism. Given the virtual consensus about the detrimental effects of patrimonialism on state capacity, the existence of an apparently strong patrimonial state is something of an anomaly. However, the fact that power, and thereby control over resources used for patrimonial purposes, has been centrally controlled in Rwanda, may have limited the damage of patrimonialism for state capacity. Centralised corruption of the kind seen in Rwanda is likely to be less detrimental for state power than decentralized corruption.<sup>5</sup>

### *Uganda*

Like Rwanda, the government of Uganda is also faced with armed resistance. According to the government's own Amnesty Commission Report, there are no less than 22 armed rebel groups, with a total of about 40,000 armed rebels fighting against the government in the country (The Monitor, 23 December 2003). Although most of these represent no serious security threat, some, such as the Lord's Resistance Army in the north and the Allied Democratic Forces in the west are strong enough for the state to launch large-scale military operations in attempts to defeat them.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> This argument – that patrimonialism may be less damaging for state power when it is centralised than when it is decentralised – has some affinity with arguments from the literature on corruption, where the point has been made that decentralised corruption is more damaging for economic growth than centralised corruption (Shleifer and Vishny, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> It may or may not have been the existence of the ADF rebel group that motivated Uganda to intervene militarily in the DRC. John F. Clark has argued that the main motive was a wish to support Rwanda, rather than a perceived threat to Uganda's own security (Clark, 2003). What matters here, however, is not the motives of Ugandan leaders, but the effect of the intervention in terms of state power in Uganda.

Uganda justified its intervention in the Congo conflict with the presence of Ugandan rebels using Congolese territory to launch attacks on Uganda (Clark, 2003). Ugandan officials argued that since the Congolese government was unable to control this area, Uganda had the right to defend itself by using force to attack the rebels inside the Congo. This justification was by no means baseless. The Alliance of Democratic Forces, an armed rebel group based in the western part of Uganda, but operating from bases inside the Congo, had on several occasions attacked towns on the Ugandan side of the border. The ADF, which received economic and military support from the government of Sudan, first attacked Uganda from their Zairean base in November 1996 and continues operating from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Prunier, 2004).

This kind of security threat could in principle compel the Ugandan regime to strengthen the state, in order to protect its territory more effectively. However, given the form that Uganda's involvement in the Congo has taken, it appears to have had the opposite effect. On the one hand, the intervention in the DRC has not eliminated the ADF, which, although it has been weakened, continues to operate (Clark, 2003, 160). In fact, the majority of Ugandan forces were placed in areas far away from where the ADF operated (Clark, 2003, 149). Thus, although the invasion of DRC has weakened the ADF, it has not eliminated it.

On the other hand, as documented by William Reno, the war soon became a source of profit for the Ugandan armed forces, as many of its members became involved in the trade of minerals from the Congo (Reno, 2002). As a consequence, ruling regime's control over the armed forces was weakened by the country's involvement in the Congo war. Thus, the official exports of gold and diamonds from Uganda increased manifold after the country's involvement in the Congo (United Nations, 2002), in spite of the fact that there was no evidence of any increase in domestic mineral production.

In the case of Uganda, the UN panel describes in some detail the organisation of economic activities in the parts of Congo controlled by Uganda. Ugandans were mainly involved in the exploitation of gold, coltan and diamonds. However, Ugandan

activities in Congo were less centralized and less controlled by the state than what was the case in Rwanda-controlled areas. According to the report, the network consisted in a core group of high-ranking officials, private businessmen and selected rebel leaders. The key figures mentioned were Museveni's brother, Salim Saleh and Major General James Kazini. The network generated revenue from four types of activities: export of minerals, import of consumer goods, tax collection and simple theft. Some of the exported minerals were even included in national export statistics. Thus, Uganda's gold export increased eightfold between 1995 and 1997, although there were no indications of a significant increase in domestic production (Reno, 2002). Similarly, export earnings from diamonds increased from zero in 1996 to 1.7 million per year between 1997 and 2000 (United Nations, 2002, addendum, 11; Global Witness, 2004). Thus, it appears as if the war in Congo has strengthened the revenue base of the Ugandan state as well.

At the same time, the fact that the state has less central control over army operations in Congo than Rwanda makes it likely that a larger proportion of the assets obtained in Congo ends up in pockets of officials. While such a pattern may strengthen the army's support for the ruling regime, it also undermines the cohesion of the state. If the government seeks to reign in such predatory elements, and take control over the resources they have access to, it runs the risk of alienating the groups on whose support its power rests. The regime, therefore, becomes dependent on a policy that contributes to further fragmentation of the state administration in general and of the army in particular.

But although this involvement benefited the Ugandan state to some extent, it is likely that a significant proportion of the profit from minerals in the Congo was pocketed by officers. In the UN-report on illegal exploitation of minerals in the Congo, a number of Ugandan officers were named, including President Museveni's brother. The consequence is that officers developed private economic interests, which run counter to the interests of the state. "UPDF involvement in the Congo war ... [institutionalises] .. the private interests of officers within the military" (Reno, 2002). This in turn further weakens political control over the armed forces, contributing to a weakening of central state power. By tolerating private profiteering by officers, the government also runs the risk of alienating parts of the military that do not benefit

from it. That this is a real risk became clear during the 2001 election campaign, when many officers supported the opposition candidate, Kizza Besigye. Moreover, in June 2001, fifty officers defected from the army, and vowed to launch a guerrilla war against Museveni. This has not (at least not yet) created a major threat to the regime, but such developments nevertheless show that the regime has been weakened and that its strategy is a risky one.

It is also notable that in contrast to Rwanda, the Ugandan state has not been able to significantly increase its domestic tax collection. According to the IMF, income tax collection, a good indicator of state capacity, only rose from 1,3% of GDP in 1996 to 1,9% in 2000. And while the Rwandan state has increased the proportion of tax revenue to GDP from 6,4% in 1997-98 to 10,5% in 2001-2002, the Ugandan state has only increased collection from 10,5% to 12,5% over the same period (calculated from IMF Country Reports, 2002 (Rwanda) and 2003 (Uganda)).

However, this contrast should not be overdrawn. Both countries remain well below the African average (16,2%) in terms of revenue collection as a proportion of GDP. Moreover, both also remain extremely donor dependent, with the proportion of grants of total government revenue at 36,5% in 2001-2002 (Uganda) and 42,3% in 2001 (Rwanda) respectively (calculated from IMF Country Reports, 2002 (Rwanda) and 2003 (Uganda)).

It is important to note, however, that the two states' involvement in the war has not lead to any reduction in aid. In fact, as argued by Reno (2002), the war may have improved relations with donors, since export earnings increased as a result of the exploitation of minerals in Congo. The improvements in export earnings and balance of trade made it possible for the two countries to appear as economic success stories, which therefore deserved continued aid and credit.<sup>7</sup> Thus, regimes and states are maintained through external funding, and do not depend on improving their own capacity for revenue collection.

---

<sup>7</sup> Willum, (2001) makes the same point for Rwanda.



The conflict in Congo also revealed some striking differences between the armies of Rwanda and Uganda. First, it became clear when the two armies clashed in Kisangani in 2000, that the Rwandan army was far superior to Uganda in terms of fighting power. Second, as has been described in the UN report and elsewhere, the government of Rwanda was able to exert far stronger central control over its forces in the Congo than Uganda. This became evident by the way the exploitation of minerals was organised. Thus, in contrast to Rwanda, which had a strong and centrally controlled army prior to the war, and was able to maintain central control during the occupation of Congo, Uganda's regime was less able to control the activities of officials during the war.

Thus, the security threat faced by Uganda in the conflict was not of a kind that compelled or enabled the Ugandan regime to strengthen the state. Instead, because the regime is politically dependent on support from the army, it has been unable or unwilling to control the behaviour of its armed forces in Congo, and to prevent this kind of private profiteering. In contrast to Rwanda, therefore, corruption and plunder was not centrally controlled.

In the Ugandan case, therefore, both state and regime have been weakened by the war. Because there was weaker central control over the army, the regime was unable to prevent large scale profiteering by officers. This in turn, meant that officers developed private economic interests that ran counter to the interests of the state. In such a situation, the regime may strengthen its support among officers, since they get access to resources through war, but the long-term result is likely to be a weakening of the state, even if some of the gains from plunder ends up in state coffers. The reason for this is that the coherence of the state is undermined when officials use their position to further their own economic interests. Moreover, such a system, in which loyalty depends on access to economic gain, may in the long run undermine the position of the regime as well. If the regime depends on the loyalty of the army, while this loyalty depends on officials' continued economic gain, any development, which undermines officers' opportunities for economic gain represents a risk for the regime, since it may cost it the support of the army.

Thus the Ugandan state does not control its own territory or have a monopoly of violence within it, since rebel groups continue to operate in several parts of the country. Furthermore, central control over the military has been weakened, the capacity to collect revenue has not improved and the position of the ruling regime within the country is weaker than before the war:

Whatever ideological goals Museveni may have had in the Congo intervention, they have certainly not been realized by his adventure there. Rather, the levels of repression and corruption in his government have escalated, while Ugandan citizens have a diminished sense of the president's respect for the rule of law. Even the putative goal of improving the country's security situation has not been realized. .... [Ugandan] officers have seemed more bent on profit and exploitation than military achievement ... Museveni has alienated himself from his staunchest external allies and fallen into conflict with his closest regional supporter (Clark, 2003, 161).

#### *Why not? Warfare, state formation and the politics of regime survival*

We must conclude, therefore, that the Congo war has not led to a strengthening of the state in Rwanda and Uganda. The war has not compelled states to centralize power and strengthen their control over society, or dismantle existing patronage networks. Thus, contrary to what was the case in early modern Europe, it appears that war, in contemporary African conditions, is not associated with a strengthening of the state. This, in turn, is linked to key features of the current international system. The international system, within which war and state formation takes place, has changed in several important ways, profoundly changing the effects of war on state formation.

#### *Geopolitical differences*

Relations between European states were strongly competitive, to the extent that those states that were unable to compete in military terms simply disappeared. By contrast, relations between African states in the period since independence have been peaceful (Herbst, 2000). In spite of the 'artificiality' of colonial borders, one of the first acts of the Organisation of African Unity was 'to pledge member states to respect the frontiers existing on their achievement of national independence' (Herbst, 2000, Reno, 2000). Thus, there were no inter-state wars in Africa until the late 1990s. Although there were several armed conflicts, these were civil wars rather than

interstate wars. As such, the conflicts were either about control over the existing state or about failed separatist attempts.<sup>8</sup> Changes in existing borders are extremely rare, and even states that have invaded other states' territory do not call for such changes. While Uganda and Rwanda both controlled large parts of Congo for several years, they did not seek to incorporate these areas into their own state, or even the secession of these areas from Congo. Instead, they recognised existing borders and the formal sovereignty of the Congolese state. War was officially waged to protect the invading states from insurgents operating from another state. Thus, the continued existence of the Congolese state has been affirmed by all parties involved, including Western powers and those, like Uganda and Rwanda, who have invaded its territory.

In Rwanda's case, the state's aim was to protect Rwanda from attacks by Hutu militants operating from bases in Congo, where they had taken refuge after the 1994 genocide. Uganda made similar claims, claiming to be fighting insurgents operating from across the border. Thus, while security threats could still in principle compel leaders to strengthen state institutions, interstate war does not necessarily represent such a threat today. The Congo war did not represent a threat of extinction for Rwanda and Uganda, since their continued existence has been guaranteed by the international system. International recognition and participation in the system of states has guaranteed the continued existence of states, no matter how weak they are and how limited their actual control over their territory has been.

This commitment reflects the broader international status of the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention. It has meant that in contrast to early modern Europe, weak states in Africa have not been threatened by extinction, or by invaders seeking to annex parts of its territory. International recognition and participation in the system of states has enabled states to survive, in spite of limited real control and at times extreme weakness. During the cold war, Jackson and Rosberg argued that external recognition was the only reason Africa's weak states continued to exist at all, in spite of limited real control and at times extreme weakness (Jackson and Rosberg, 1983).

---

<sup>8</sup> In a sense, one can say that politics in Africa are the exact opposite of traditional political science models, both domestically and internationally. In contrast to 'realist' models of international relations, politics between states have been peaceful and well-ordered. On the other hand, domestic politics have been unstable, fragmented and without the kind of order presupposed in traditional models.

The principle of non-intervention has been somewhat weakened since the end of the cold war. At the global level, this is seen in the increased popularity of so-called humanitarian interventions. In Africa, it can be seen in the increased tendency to intervene in conflicts in neighbouring countries, as was seen during the Congo war. The unwillingness of donors to impose sanctions or reduce aid to Rwanda and Uganda in reaction to their invasion of Congo may be seen as an expression of the same trend. Paradoxically, therefore, the weakening of the norm of non-intervention has made it possible for Uganda and Rwanda to engage in war without state survival being at risk.

#### *Externalisation of funding*

In contrast to early modern Europe, African states do not depend on the internal mobilisation of resources to fund the state. Instead, a large proportion of the state's income is derived from external sources. First, states defined as poor gain access to substantial economic resources from outside (Bayart, 1993, Boone, 1994 and Clapham, 1996). We have shown that in the cases of Rwanda and Uganda, between one third and half of the state's income comes from foreign aid.

Second, the structure of the contemporary world economy is such that state leaders can take advantage of global markets to secure income even in the absence of a strong capacity for domestic revenue collection. This is particularly evident for countries with significant mineral resources. In these sectors, it may be possible to profit from a chaotic situation, as long as minimum security can be provided at the sites of extraction. Such security can easily be provided by private security firms, private armies or mercenaries, as has been the case in Angola, Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone. As a consequence, strong vested interests have developed, which include Western companies as well as state officials and local warlords.

The availability of such resources gives the state access to easy income, and removes the incentive for creating strong institutions for the purpose of taxation. Uganda and Rwanda took advantage of the situation in neighbouring countries to increase the state's income. It is also possible to link up with networks of international crime and get involved in activities like drug smuggling, money laundering, arms trade etc. In all

cases, the result is that states get access to revenue through links with the outside world. This is what has been described as warlord politics (Reno), or the criminalisation of the state (Bayart et.a.) Economic globalisation has created opportunities for state leaders, which absolve them from the need to create strong and efficient state institutions at home. Thus, in addition to obtaining funds through formal channels (aid, military assistance) state funding is also achieved through crime (smuggling) and warlord politics, in which the state, often in collaboration with international capital and private security firms, secures rents that provide funding for patronage to reproduce regimes, but in ways that do not strengthen the state.

The fact that the Congo war has been at least self-financing has meant that the states involved have not been compelled to strengthen internal revenue base to fund the war. Instead, they have been able to use resources obtained in Congo to buy support at home. In Rwanda's case, this has not weakened the regime, since the government has, by and large, maintained control over troop activities in the Congo. Uganda, by contrast, has been unable to do this, and the position of the regime has been weakened.

In the short run, the availability of funds from outside the country (whether through aid or through plunder or crime) may strengthen the state in relation to society and improve its chances of political survival. In the long run, however, it prevents the state from developing its administrative capacity and ability to raise revenue.<sup>9</sup>

It also affects the linkage between war and state formation. According to Tilly and others, one of the main links between the two is that wars compel states to improve their capacity for revenue collection. But if funds are available from elsewhere, and these funds continue to be forthcoming even if the state is involved in war, there is no such compulsion. In this situation, the fact that Rwandan and the Ugandan states have access to external funding in the form of aid, has meant that they have not been compelled to improve their own capacity for revenue collection.

---

<sup>9</sup> Moreover, since access to external funds is tied to specific conditions, it makes the state accountable to external donors rather than to its own population.

## Conclusion

To sum up: While both Rwanda and Uganda faced real security threats in Congo, these threats were of a different kind than those faced by European states during the period of state formation. They were not faced by the threat of extinction, since their recognition as states within existing borders was not under threat. Instead, they were faced with insurgents operating from Congolese territory. But since the existence of the state itself was guaranteed, the insurgents represented a threat to the regime rather than to the state. Both states chose to face this threat by military intervention. This strategy seems to have strengthened the position of the regime in Rwanda, which has been able to maintain strict control over the activities of its army in Congo, and to benefit economically from the war. In Uganda, army support for the regime was preserved during the war, but the government was unable to control the army's activities in Congo. As a result, the war contributed to a further fragmentation of the state, and increased the regime's reliance on strongmen that it was unable to control.

In the absence of geopolitical pressures, which threaten the survival of the state, state leaders in both countries have chosen to use these profits to secure their own position through the use of patronage, instead of seeking to build strong state institutions. In a situation where neither state survival nor regime survival depends on strong institutions, this is an easier option. In addition, it is one, which can be hugely profitable for state leaders themselves.

The main reason why war has not compelled regimes to strengthen the state is that *regime survival has not depended on it*. In the Ugandan case, both state and regime seems to have been weakened as a result of the war, because of its inability to exert central control over officers involved in private business activities in Congo. The regime relies on the political support of an army it does not fully control. Thus, it cannot act decisively to centralise its control of the army. The Rwandan regime, by contrast, has maintained much stricter central control over its armed forces, and has been able to channel resources obtained in Congo to the state. Thus, it has avoided the centrifugal tendencies experienced by Uganda. As argued above, the ability of the Rwandan state to maintain central control must be linked to the extreme experience of the 1994 genocide and to a long tradition of political centralisation in the country,

going back to pre-colonial times. However, the Rwandan state has not been strengthened by the war and patrimonialism remains prevalent.

While the “war makes states” connection presupposes a positive relationship between regime maintenance and state formation, contemporary Africa are characterised by the absence of such a link. At one level, this is the result of changes in the state system, which have cut the links between war and state formation found in early modern Europe (fixity of borders, externalisation of funding). On the one hand, state survival is guaranteed anyway, no matter how weak the state is. On the other hand, regime survival does not depend on mobilisation of resources through taxation, since resources are available from elsewhere (aid, crime, plunder, globalisation, warlord politics). Control over the state remains attractive, since it gives access to resources. However, regimes are under no compulsion to obtain resources in ways that strengthen the state. As a consequence, war no longer forces regimes to strengthen state power in order to ensure their own survival.

Thus, the crucial links between war, regime and state formation have been cut. In the Ugandan case, the Congo war has led to a weakening of both state and regime. In Rwanda, neither state nor regime has been significantly strengthened by the war. This does not mean that there are no circumstances where war, even today, could force regimes to strengthen the state. However, it seems clear that in the case of Uganda’s and Rwanda’s involvement in the Congo war, this was not the case.

## References

- Bayart, Jean Francois (1993) *The State in Africa*, London, Orient Longman.
- Bayart, Jean Francois, Stephen Ellis and Beatrice Hibou, (1999) *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*, London, James Currey
- Boone, Catherine (1994) 'States and Ruling Classes in Post-Colonial Africa: The Enduring Contradictions of Power', in Joel Migdal, Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue (eds.) *State Power and Social Forces*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Clapham, Christopher, (1996), *Africa and the International System*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, John F. (2002) 'Museveni's Adventure in the Congo War: Uganda's Vietnam?', in John F. Clark (ed.) *The African Stakes of the Congo War*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan.
- Cuvelier, Jeroen and Stefaan Marysse, (2003), *Rwandan Economic Involvement in the Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, Discussion Paper, Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp.
- Ertman, Thomas, (1997), *The Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Evans, Peter (1996) *Embedded Autonomy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Global Witness (2004) *Same Old Story: A Background Study on Natural Resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, Washington DC, Global Witness Publishing
- Herbst, Jeffrey, (2000), *States and Power in Africa*, Princeton, Princeton University Press
- Herbst, Jeffrey, (2004) 'Let Them Fail', in Robert Rotberg (ed.) *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, Princeton, Princeton University Press,
- Hobson, John and Linda Weiss, (1995) *States and Economic Development*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Human Rights Watch, (2000) *Rwanda: The Search for Security and Human Rights Abuses*, Country Report Africa vol 12, no 1, April 2000, <http://hrw.org/reports/2000/Rwanda>
- IMF, (2002) *IMF Country Report no 02/187, Rwanda: Statistical Annex*, Washington DC, International Monetary Fund.
- IMF, (2003) *IMF Country Report no 03/84 Uganda: Statistical Appendix*, Washington DC, International Monetary Fund.
- Jackson, Robert and Carl Rosberg, (1983) 'Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood', in *World Politics*, no. 3.
- Jackson, Stephen, (2002), 'Making a Killing: Criminality and Coping in the Kivu War Economy', *Review of African Political Economy*, no 93/94, 517-536
- Leftwich, Adrian, (2000) *States of Development: On the Primacy of Politics, in Development*, Cambridge, Polity Press.



- Lemarchand, Rene (2001) 'The Democratic Republic of Congo: From Collapse to Potential Reconstruction', in Robert Rotberg, (ed.) *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, Washington DC., Brookings Institution Press, 2003.
- Longman, Timothy, (2002) 'The Complex Reasons for Rwanda's Engagement in Congo' in John F. Clark (ed.) *The African Stakes of the Congo War*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan.
- Longman, Timothy, (2004) 'Obstacles to Peace Building in Rwanda', in Taisier Ali and Robert O. Matthews, *Durable Peace: Challenges for Peace Building in Africa*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2004.
- Luttwak, Edward (1999) 'Give War a Chance', *Foreign Affairs* 78 (4) 36-44.
- Mann, Michael, (1993), *Sources of Social Power*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Ottaway, Marina, (1999) 'Keep out of Africa', *Financial Times*, 25 February.
- Prunier, Gerard, (2004) 'Rebel Movements and Proxy Warfare: Uganda, Sudan and the Congo', *African Affairs*, 103, 359-383.
- Reno, William, (2002), 'Uganda's Politics of War and Debt Relief', *Review of International Political Economy* no 3, 415-435
- Reno William, (1999) *Warlord Politics and African States*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner.
- Reyntjens Filip, (2004), 'Rwanda, ten years on: From genocide to dictatorship', *African Affairs*, 103 (411): 177-210
- Shleifer, Andrei and Robert Vishny, (1998) *The Grabbing Hand: Government Pathologies and Their Cures*, Cambridge Mass., Harvard University Press.
- SIPRI Yearbook (2003) Stockholm International Peace Institute, Stockholm.
- The Monitor, Kampala, 23 December 2003.
- Tilly Charles, (1985) 'War Making and State Making as Organised Crime', in Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol (eds.) *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Tull, Denis M. (2003), 'A Reconfiguration of Political Order? The State of the State in North Kivu (DR Congo)', *African Affairs*, 102, 429-446.
- United Nations, Security Council, (2002), *Final Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, S/2002/1146
- Vlassenroot, Koen and Hans Romkema, (2002) 'The Emergence of a New Order? Resources and War in Eastern Congo', *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, <http://www.jha.ac/articles/a111.htm>
- Willum, Bjørn, (2001) *Foreign Aid to Rwanda: Purely Beneficial or Contributing to War?* Dissertation, Institute of Political Science, University of Copenhagen.



## Notater | Papers | 2004 – 2005

2004		
Nr. 658	Arne Melchior	EFTAs frihandelsavtaler: Betydning for Norge
No. 659	Pernille Rieker	EU Security Policy: Contrasting Rationalism and Social Constructivism
Nr. 660	Per Botolf Maurseth	Tollnedtrapping for industrivarer i WTO – Virkninger for Norge
No. 661	Bård Harstad	Uniform or Different Policies
No. 662	Bård Harstad	Majority Rules and Incentives. International voting affects domestic policies
No. 663	Eskil Goldeng Leo A. Grünfeld Gabriel R.G. Benito	The Inferior Performance of State Owned Enterprises: Is it due to Ownership or Market Structure?
No. 664	Morten B. Mærli	Crude Nukes on the Loose? Preventing Nuclear Terrorism by Means of Optimum Nuclear Husbandry, Transparency, and Non-Intrusive Fissile Material Verification
No. 665	Jens Chr. Andvig	The Challenge of Poor Governance and Corruption
No. 666	Arne Melchior	North-South Trade and Wages with Complete Specialisation: Modifying the Stolper-Samuelson Relationship
Nr. 667	Christian-Marius Stryken	Norsk petro-power og terrorisme: Brennbart og brukbart redskap i norsk sikkerhetspolitikk?
No. 668	Leo A. Grünfeld Ulf Sverdrup	Economic Voting and Support for EU Membership in Norway. A Time Series Analysis
No. 669	Leo A. Grünfeld	EUs forslag til nytt tjenestedirektiv: Samfunns- og næringsøkonomiske konsekvenser for Norge
No. 670	Axel Borchgrevink Torild Skard	Norway's Fredskorpset Youth Program: Study of selected exchange projects
No. 671	Axel Borchgrevink	Indigenous to Indigenous Cooperation. Review of the Saami Council Projects in Africa
No. 672	Pernille Rieker	Power, Principles and Procedures. Reinterpreting French foreign policy towards the USA (2001–2003)
2005		
Nr. 673	Signe Astrup Arnesen Tore Bjørge Morten Bremer Mærli	Hva gjør Norge utsatt for terrorisme? Trusselscenarier og norsk sårbarhetsforvaltning
No. 674	Björn Frank Per Botolf Maurseth	The German ICT industry. Spatial employment and innovation patterns
No. 675	Stein S. Eriksen	The Congo war and the prospects of state formation



## Publikasjoner fra **Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt**

### **Internasjonal politikk** Nr. 4- 2004

Skillet mellom hva som utgjør nasjonal og internasjonal politikk, er i stor grad i ferd med å bli visket ut. IP ønsker å være helt i front med å utforske denne dynamikken. 4 nummer i året.

**Forord: Stat og konflikt i Afrika** *Birgitte Kjos Fonn* · **Den afrikanske staten: idé og virkelighet** *Stein Sundstøl Eriksen* · **Sentral-Afrika: en vev av kriger** *Ståle Ulriksen* · **Krig og statssammenbrudd i Kongo** *Stein Sundstøl Eriksen* · **Afrikas horn: et lappeteppe av kriger** *Axel Borchgrevink* · **Vest-Afrika – regionale og nasjonale konflikter: Liberia, Sierra Leone og Elfenbenskysten** *Morten Bøås* · *Bokspalte* · *Summaries* · *Årgangen 2004*

**Abonnementspriser** kr 330 [Norge/Norden] kr 450 [utenfor Norden]  
**Enkelthefter** kr 95 pr. hefte + porto/eksp.

### **Forum for Development Studies** No. 1 - 2004

Forum bringer artikler (på engelsk) om bistandspolitikk, Nord-Sør-forhold og den tredje verden. To nummer i året.

**Introduction · Integration or Exclusion? Locating Indigenous Peoples in the Development Process of Kerala, South India** *Darley Jose Kjosavik and N. Shanmugaratnam* · **Dalit Politics in India and New Meaning of Caste** *Anne Waldrop* · **The Embedded Recipient and the Disembedded Donor: Private-Sector Development Aid in Ghana** *Peter Kragelund* · **Debates: Electoral Politics in Highly Segmented Societies: An Interpretation of Indian Experiences** *Pamela Price* · **Norwegian Support for Education for Olav Kjørven** · **Education – Job Number 1: What Education and for Whom?** *Birgit Brock-Utne* · **Comments on 'Norwegian Support for Education for All'** *Jon Lauglo* · **Rejoinder to Brock-Utne on 'Education – Job Number 1: What Education and for Whom?'** *Olav Kjørven*

**Abonnementspriser** NOK 220 [i Norden] NOK 300 [utenfor Norden]  
**Enkelthefter** NOK 120 + porto/eksp.

### **Nordisk Øst-forum** Nr. 4- 2004

Nordisk Østforum er et kvartalstidsskrift som vektlegger politisk, økonomisk og kulturell utvikling i Øst-Europa og Sovjet unionens etterfølgerstater.

**Forord · Revolutionær tid – røde mærkedage, nepreryvka og sjestidnevka** *Rikke Haue* · **Elitkontinuitet i Rysslands regioner** *Peter J. Söderlund* · **Russisk byråkrati – en casestudie fra Murmansk** *Tord Willumsen* · **Årsaker til korrupsjonsvekst i det postsovjetiske Europa – et antropologisk perspektiv** *Agnese C. Barstad* · **Agrarpartiene i det nye Sentral- og Øst-Europa: Avkollektiveringsmodellen og fremveksten av agrarpartier i Polen, Ungarn og Estland etter 1989** *Svenn Arne Lie* · **De nye hjältarnas frammarsch. Historieoppfatning och bilden av «oss» och «dem» i en serbisk roman** *Jasenka Trtak* · *Velkommen til Internett* · *Bokomtaler* · *Nye bøker i Norden* · *Årgangen 2004*

**Abonnementspriser** kr. 265 [studenter] kr. 330 [privatpersoner] kr. 450 [institusjoner]  
**Enkelthefter** kr 115 pr. hefte + porto/eksp.

### **Hvor Hender Det?**

Hvor Hender Det? (HHD) er et ukentlig nyhetsbrev som gir deg bakgrunn om internasjonale spørsmål i konsentrert og forenklet form. HHD er det du trenger for øyeblikkelig oppdatering, som en hjelp til å forklare inntrykk og se dem i sammenheng. I mange fag og sammenhenger har vi behov for kortfattet framstilling av konflikter og samarbeid, prosesser, utfordringer og utviklingstrekk i det internasjonale samfunnet. HHD ligger også på Internett. Godt over 100 artikler fra tidligere årganger innenfor en rekke emner er lagt ut i fulltekst. [www.nupi.no/pub/hhd/hhdliste.htm](http://www.nupi.no/pub/hhd/hhdliste.htm).

**Abonnementspriser** kr. 260 pr skoleår [2002/2003] kr. 360 pr skoleår [utenfor Norge]  
**Klasseabonnement** kr. 75 pr. ab. [min. 10 eks]