Identity politics of the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict:

Does instrumentalism offer a compelling framework for analysis?

Sincère Duhabwanayo

Massey University,
December, 2020

Abstract

From 1960, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has experienced enduring civil wars. The First Congo War (1996-7) and the Second Congo War (1998-2003) were the most prominent events in the DRC's continuing instability. This research paper critically evaluates four perspectives to explain ethnic conflict: namely, primordialism; instrumentalism; institutionalism; and constructivism. It asks: to what extent were ethnic identities leading causes of the conflict; and, how has their role changed or persisted throughout the conflict? This research paper seeks to redress existing gaps in our understanding of these wars and provide new insights into the grounds of the DRC conflict. In particular, it examines how identity politics are discussed in primary sources, including those processed by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, International Criminal Court, International Crisis Group, International Red Cross, UN Peacekeeping Commissions, UN Security Council, UN Secretary-General, and the UN Stabilization Missions. To explain how ethnic identities are discussed, the research examines findings from my analysis of primary sources and pre-existing secondary literature. My research report argues that although institutionalism can (to some degree) explain the causes and conduct of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, instrumentalism provides stronger explanatory because leaders of various militia groups have persistently incited violence primarily for political or economic objectives. Results of my analysis reveal that during the First and Second Congo Wars, and also in recent violence, leaders of various militia groups politicised ethnic identities of certain groups and prompted them into violence inherently for political and/or economic motivations. These findings are practically useful as they provide the basis for policymakers and, specifically, people that work within the United Nations Peacebuilding and Peacekeeping Commissions to better navigate conflict resolutions.

Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to my supervisor Dr Damien Rogers, for sharing his wisdom. I want to thank Dr Rogers for his words of encouragement, support and guidance throughout the research report. I am particularly grateful to him for sharing his expertise and experience in international relations, and more importantly, for encouraging me to explore first-hand information from sources that I had not thought of.

Many thanks to my family and friends, for their guidance and support. I would particularly like to appreciate my mother, for her unconditional encouragement, love and patience throughout my studies. Despite this year's challenges and uncertainties together with her ongoing medical challenges, her self-sacrificing support cannot go without notice, she went above and beyond to ensure that my siblings and I were equipped with all necessities. Simply put, this study would not have been possible without my mother's generosity.

Lastly, I want to honour a special friend who is no longer with us, for her selfless support and motivation. For accompanying me to public and university libraries and regularly checking up on me, not just to know how my research report was progressing but also how I was emotionally felling, I will forever be grateful.

Abbreviations

AFDL: Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo, founded in 1996.

ANC: Armée Nationale Congolaise (Army of the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Goma)

APC: Armée du Peuple Congolais (army of the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-ML).

DRC: The Democratic Republic of Congo, or DR Congo, previously known as Congo, Free State, Zaire.

FNI: Front des Nationalistes Intégrationnistes (Nationalist and Integrationist Front), allied with the Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri (Force de Résistance Patriotique d'Ituri, or FRPI).

MLC: Mouvement de Libération du Congo, created in September 1998, led by Jean-Pierre Bemba and backed by the Ugandan military.

RCD-Goma: Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie, established in August 1998, led by Adolphe Onusumba and backed by Rwanda.

RCD-ML: Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Mouvement de Libération, created in 1999 (by breaking off from RCD-Goma), led by Mbusa Nyamwissi and backed by the Ugandan military.

RCD-N: Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-National, created in 2000 (by breaking off from RCD-Goma), led by Roger Lumbala and backed by the Ugandan military.

UPC-RP: Union des Datriotes Congolais-reconciliation et paix, created in August 2002 (dissident group of RCD-ML), led by Thomas Lubanga, supported at the beginning by the Ugandan military; currently maintaining relations with RCD-Goma and Rwanda.

UPDF: Uganda People's Defence Forces.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa and the second largest country. The country is also home to more than 250 ethnic tribes. Despite its mineral rich resources and diverse cultures, it is commonly known for its conflicts and reoccurring tensions. From the late 1880s, DRC has experienced enduring political and social instabilities. The King Leopold regime, followed by the official Belgium administration, established institutions that inflicted long-lasting grievances and coproduced internal strife. Even though Congo gained political independence in 1960, international events (the Cold War), American interests and Belgium's desire to retain economic influence, regional tensions, together with political radicalisation and internal division, made the possibility of a united and sovereign country uncertain. Immediately after 1960, the country faced various insecurities, reoccurring rebellions and unstable government institutions. The several instabilities that DRC has experienced since 1960 include the Katanga and South Kasia secessions, political disintegration, pro-independence Prime Minster Lumumba's assassination, the 1961 crisis, Kwilu and Simba rebellions, and Mobutu's second and successful coup d'ètat. The most notable events include the First Congo War (commonly recognised as one of the most world's catastrophe since the Cold war) that erupted in November 1996, and which was shortly followed by the Second Congo War (1998-2003). Although transitional government agreement were signed in 2003, violent tensions persisted, especially in 2007 and again in 2013, as well as the 2017-19 violence in Ituri and Mai-Ndombe provinces.

Academics from varying disciplines have examined Congo's never-ending instabilities, and insecurities but have not yet agreed on one concrete cause. They have, instead, suggested numerous underlying issues provoked this series of wars and tensions. Given that DRC has one of the "world's largest and richest deposits of cobalt, coltan, diamonds, gold, and other mineral resources", individuals and armed groups have been fighting to control mineral resources (Nest et al, 2006, p.167). Hochschild (1998), Autesserre (2010), and Delbert (2013) suggest that the conflicts were caused by enduring grievances that date back to the colonial period and oppressive authoritarian regime, that both governments substantially disregarded Congolese people's liberties, and their management of natural mineral resources only

benefited inner-circle elites and thereby economically depriving ordinary individuals. Other scholars have voiced other explanations of civil wars, and geopolitical strategic interests of neighbouring African (especially Rwanda and Uganda), international countries and companies meddling in DRC's affairs (Dunn, 2003; Huening; 2013; Turner, 2007). Generally speaking, on numerus occasions, tensions were singlehandedly or collectively deteriorated on the grounds of "land disputes, poverty, corruption, local political and social antagonisms, and hostile relationships between state officials, including security forces, and the general population" (Autesserre, 2010, p.205). Evidently, there have been substantial research on various factors explaining the origins of the DRC conflict; although existing research on civil war and internal strife briefly discusses hostilities relating to identities, there is an inadequate comprehension that specifically examines the centrality of ethnic identities in the DRC conflict. The DRC conflict has not yet been adequately analysed through ethnic and identity analytical frameworks, focusing on questions such as: do people fight over ethnicity and identity; how important is the identity connection; is ethnonational violence a spontaneous mob or is there some purpose and coordination? Analysis that thoroughly answers those questions are non-existent in the current literature explaining the DRC conflict.

The purpose of this research report is to present new insights explaining the prolonged conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, offering new ways of comprehending the conflict through ethnic conflict frameworks. To examine the role of ethnic identities, this research employs four conceptual frameworks: primordialism (ethnic identities are powerful and deep-seated, encouraging people to resort to conflict in order to preserve their identity); instrumentalism (ethnic identity is strategic, they are politicised or manipulated by goal driven elites); institutionalism (poorly-managed government institutions prompts ethnic tensions); and constructivism (identities are created not given, they are socially constructions influenced by external factors such as religion, culture and economy) (Williams, 2015). My research paper seeks to evaluate the usefulness of four common explanatory frameworks. To do this, I examine a range of reports produced by actors involved, directly or indirectly, in the DRC conflict, and demonstrate how they each deal with the role of identity in this conflict. I test those reports' respective treatment of identity politics against a general understanding of the conflict found in the relevant secondary literature.

This research paper draws on pre-existing literature and primary sources, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Criminal Court, the International Crisis Group, the International Red Cross, the United Nations Stabilization Missions, the UN Secretary-General and Security Council reports. The research primarily focuses on crucial events of the conflict: namely, the First Congo War (1995-6); the Second Congo War (1997-2003); and the 2017-19 inter-communal violence. The research report uses both primary and secondary sources to analyse how identity politics was discussed during those three crucial events of the conflict. It argues that although institutionalism can (to some degree) explain the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, instrumentalism provides a stronger foundation because leaders of various militia groups have persistently incited violence primarily for political or economic purposes. The findings signify urgency to promote and implement ethnic-based war preventive policies to prevent future ethnic conflicts.

Research questions

The ensuing research report seeks to address the following questions:

1) To what extent were ethnic identities central causes of the DRC conflict?

2) How has their centrality changed or persisted throughout the DRC conflict?

The primary objectives of my report are:

- To test whether or not ethnicities were a central and independent factor (in which the enemy is perceived as an ever-increasing existential threat); or if they were manipulated by political or military leaders for their economic and/or political motivations; or whether they were a complex, interlinked, and multi-faceted grievances (systemically-led violence, in which government institutions lubricate inequality, exclusion and marginalisation of certain ethnic groups); and if ethnic ties were a product of concrete historical processes; and

- To understand the evolutions (if any) of how ethnic identities were central to the conflict.

My intention is to funnel the research findings back to policy makers, at the community, local, national and government levels. I aim to provide action-oriented recommendations that ensures all different institutions are informed, better prepared and equipped to tackle ethnic conflict and have mechanisms in place to prevent possible future occurrences.

Literature Review

This section describes previous studies on the causes of the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict. It is important to note that scholarly work on the conflict is limited due to various factors, including insufficient of high-quality resources and language barriers. Also, the ongoing instabilities within and around the country present safety concerns for researchers to conduct research projects. Having said that, various scholars have successfully managed to produce meaningful useful work on this topic. Academics have explained the origins of the DRC conflict as a result of catastrophes of the colonial rule, nativism sentiments; economic competition; complex and other interlocking issues. Although the literature provides reasonable justifications, they either inadequate or completely do not comprehend ways in which ethnic antagonism has triggered (or at least aggravated) the conflict.

Tragedies of a colonial rule

Tragedies of the colonial is was among the first examinations of the DRC conflict. Prior to the official rule of Belgian, DRC was a victim of American and European imperialists' scramble for Africa, in which the process of invasion, occupation, colonization and annexation terrorised Congolese people and caused catastrophic human rights abuses (and human lives). Hochschild notes that Leopold II appropriated DRC and other central African countries as a personal fiefdom for his profit and status, a process characterised by atrocities in which any resistance from the Congolese people was met with extermination. Congolese leaders who attempted to resist the occupier's domination were annihilated, including Kadolo and Mulume Niama (Hochschild, 1998). The brutality of Congo Free State legacies that exploited and extracted Congolese people, and arbitrarily divided the country into fifteen states, caused Congo's chronic difficulties including the irrationalities of internal borders and the formation of monolithic state that demolished Congolese native polities (McCalphin, 2002). In this era, native identities were not only manipulated, but were also discouraged and actively prohibited from economic development, and amalgamated political culture was non-existent. Although official Belgium rule pledged not to reproduce brutalities of Leopoldian era, it nevertheless maintained the exploitation and committed atrocity like of the previous administration. The new Belgium administration did not only continue extracting Congolese

natural wealth, it also imposed cruel punishments on native chiefs that attempted to reaffirm their power (McCalphin, 2002). Congo conflict is not a neat and linear process, but rather a historical development of colonialism that makes enduring instabilities inevitable (McCalphin, 2002). Although examining historical destructions and traumas of colonial legacies in relation to past recent violent tensions portray a reasonable account, the explanation does not sufficiently consider various interlocking factors, outsiders influence and the politicization of ethnic identities as the leading role of the DRC conflict.

Nativism sentiments

A reoccurring cause of the DRC conflict, which is found in the literature, is the issue of nativism, specifically, the Banyamulenge. The Banyamulenge were originally Tutsi Rwandese who settled in eastern regions of DRC before the Leopoldian era. They become natives in parts of the area. Despite their native status, on various occasion, they were historically denied citizenship rights, stripped of their lands and labelled as foreigners. During the colonial rule, the introduction of cattle was a signature for economic wealth that privileged Tutsi pastoralists over Congolese natives. Because of their economic dominance and their unwillingness to integrate, they were excluded from local population. Therefore, vying social identities and incompatible lifestyles ultimately meant that the possibility of violence was somewhat unavoidable. According to Vlassenroot, “the lack of peaceful coexistence between Banyamulenge and their Bavira, Babembe and Bafulero neighbours” would eventually turn into violent tensions (2002, p.502). Following independence, nativism sentiments increased through the 1964 Simba rebellion as Banyamulenge were attacked and forced out of Kivu by local natives (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1994; Dunn, 2007). From 1964 to 1996, armed groups of Bafulero, Babembe and Bavira origins violently forced Banyamulenge out of the eastern regions, particularly the Haut Plateau, where most of Banyamulenge were concentrated.

Following the end of the rebellion, resentment and hostility continued throughout the 1990s. In the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, tens of thousands Tutsi fled into eastern regions of Congo, some of them quickly participated in the massacring of Hutus on Congo soil. The occurrences amplified nativism sentiments and fears of being outnumbered and dominated were validated by the raising numbers of Rwandese Tutsi in Congo. These

simultaneous and complex events were seen by other Congolese ethnicities as Banyamulenge attempting to violently assert autochthon identity and take over South Kivu, in which, from November 1996 to May 1997, some Congolese natives retaliated by claiming that they were defending themselves from invaders (Banyamulenge) (Vlassenroot, 2002). In addition, other scholars have categorised the conflict as a series of civil wars instead of anti-immigrant violence, stating that the conflict was ethnopolitical in which greed and grievances prompted various tribes to participate in vicious confrontations (Dunn, 2007). While the explanation of nativism sentiments and civil war discusses underlying issues of ethnic identities, especially concerning historical resentment between native Congolese and Banyamulenge, it offers a plausible explanation given that issues regarding ethnicity was central to the Banyamulenge rebellion and Congo First War. However, it lacks a critical examination of antagonisms between different Congolese native and other external constituents that influenced particular ethnic groups to participate in violence (politicians or businessmen manipulating identities of certain ethnic groups). The account merely looks at hostilities among natives and non-natives as the key driver of the conflict, and thereby lacks comprehensive consideration of historical and external determinants that came into play.

Economic vying

The most vocalised explanation of the conflict in the literature is economic competition. The Democratic Republic of Congo has one of the world's largest and richest deposits of cobalt, coltan, diamonds, gold, and other mineral resources, and yet these resources were (are) not equally distributed among Congolese people. From this, individuals and armed groups engaged in violent confrontations (Nest et al, 2006). Economic greed and grievances are very fundamental for these scholars who refer to the conflict as an 'economic war', 'conflict minerals', or 'the blood minerals' (Nest et al, 2006; Turner, 2007). To say the least, the economic aspects of the DRC's conflict are complex, extensive, and interlocking. Illegal exploitation of natural minerals was constructed in acquisitive system of elites, including but not limited to army and government leaders, neighbouring countries (specifically Rwanda and Uganda), and multinational companies involving numerous Asian and European countries, and the United States (Nest et al, 2006). Mineral resources were held and controlled either by rebels or government while ordinary Congolese worked in dangerous

and harsh conditions, risking their lives for jobs that were economically unproductive (Turner, 2007). For many Congolese people (who were unemployed), the potential profit overshadowed the costs of the conflict (Nest et al, 2006). Illegal extracting and mining of Congolese natural minerals prompted aggression among Congolese people, participating in violence to repossess and control their wealth.

Apart from the illegal mining of DRC's natural minerals, economic competition was also fuelled by the mismanagement of economic resources at the hands of government officials. The extensive corruption, and the diversion of public resources for personal gain during the Mobutu era, thwarted economic growth (Koyame and Clark, 2002, p.203). Additionally, instead of permitting Congolese businessmen to be in charge of their destiny, "Mobutu transferred assets to incompetent and parasitical political elites" and the mismanagement consequently plummeted agricultural exports (Turner, 2007, p.151). In spite of their vast mineral wealth, Congolese people were deprived of their natural resources. Their living standard became increasingly dire; accordingly, the possibility of an economic-led violence erupting became increasingly likely. The economic explanation provides a probable account of the conflict, especially because the vast majority of Congo's natural minerals are either mismanaged by government officials or controlled by rebel militias. Consequently, ordinary people are disproportionately disadvantaged from the distribution of minerals wealth. Generally, economic justification refers to participants, as rebels, searching for wealth opportunities. In doing so, their identities are diminished and the insufficient or absence of government systems to enforce order is not critically assessed. This account principally focuses on the economic motivations and does not only downplay people's ethnic identities and significantly underestimates the importance of groupthink and identity conforming during tensions. It also de-emphasises historical injustices. In addition, it fails to grasp potential politicisation of ethnic identities for economic objectives.

Complex and multi-layered factors

The most recent and possibly more persuasive explanation of the cause and conduct of the DRC conflict is the examination of the conflict as a result of complex and interlocking issues. This includes factors, such as "grassroots antagonisms over land and power, and the

continuance of corruption at all levels of the political and economic systems" (Autesserre, 2010, p.203). Key features of the DRC conflict, especially the First Congo and the Second Congo wars, which were caused by various factors that include enduring historical grievances that date back to the Leopoldian era, and the three decades of brutal and corruptions during the Mobutu regime that plummeted government's spending on public services form 35 percent to 19 percent and poured tax revenues into military expenditures (Koyame et al, 2002). This holistic account of the conflict also considers socio-economic conditions in which more than 33 percent of Congolese people were vulnerable to diseases and malnutrition, and 75 percent of the children were malnourished. On top of this, people were stripped of their natural minerals (Koyame et al, 2002). Thus, the complex and multi-layered framework not only considers illegal mining of natural minerals and economy mismanagement that resulted into the decline in gross domestic product, but also examines cultural and social dimensions that simultaneously induced people to resort to violent confrontations. In other words, the causes of DRC conflict are a variety of elements, including hostile relationships between state officials (security forces and the general population), corruption, poverty, land conflict, local and social antagonisms that collectively erupted into violence (Autesserre, 2010). Despite the fact that the recent explanation is more critical in its approach to considering wide-ranging and intertwined factors, the analyses inadequately discusses the role of ethnic identities in prompting the conflict. By focusing on how various aspects of the war provide an integrated account, this assessment essentially dismisses (or at least subverts) the importance role identity politics plays in engendering conflicts. Neither of the pre-existing analytical frameworks situate ethnic identities at the center of the conflict to comprehensively evaluate the extent of their importance.

In light of the existing literature, my research paper aims to redress the gaps in knowledge of the DRC's conflict by placing identity politics at the center and analysing economic, historic, political, and social dimensions of the conflict as secondary. The following section deals with my methodology. It outlines four ethnic conflict approaches and shows that my paper uses those frameworks to shed light on ways of exploring the conflict through identity politics lenses.

Methodological Approach

This section explores four perspectives of comprehending and explaining ethnic conflicts. Ethnic conflict is generally defined as war in which fundamental issues at stake are ethnic markers (ethnic status, language and religion). It is characterised by armed confrontation between two or more belligerent sides and more than 1, 000 individuals are killed (Kaufman, 2001). Presently, there are four predominate ethnic conflict theories, each with a varying explanation of what drives and sustains ethnic conflict. The section discusses ways in which ethnic conflict can be categorised as either primordialism; instrumentalism; institutionalism; or constructivism. These perspectives will then be employed to scrutinise the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict.

Primordialism

Primordialism, generally, defines ethnic conflict as a war of competing ethnicities. Ethnic identities, as given and enduring, are deep-seated, powerful and frequently overrule material interests. This, in turn, explains why people engage in brutal and passionate conflicts. Primordialism conceptualises ethnic identity as a birth-given factor. That it is “unchangeable, fixed and entrenched” (Isaacs, 1975, p.31). Ethnic identities are assigned at birth, inherent in human nature, and passed on genealogically from generation to generation (Esteban et al, 2012). Therefore, because people are related by blood and identities are unchangeable, ancient ethnic animosity can cause infinite conflicts. Within primordialism, ethnic differences are ancestral, deep, and irreconcilable. Ethnic conflicts arise inevitably from ancient hatreds between ethnic groups and ‘mutual fear’ of domination, expulsion or even extinction (Geertz, 1963). Ethnic differences are the primary source of inter-ethnic animosity, terror and violence. Primordialists propose that countries that are ethnically heterogeneous cannot escape ethnic conflicts (Vanhanen, 1999, p.58). In addition, ethnic warfare is perceived as inherently natural and expected. This perception rationalises the idea that people have strong spiritual attachments to land, sea and forest. When these spiritual attachments are questioned or disrespected by other ethnic groups, violent confrontation are justified because their disrespect is an ever-increasing existential threat to their identity. Contentions

over land are vicious and almost impossible to resolve because land is attached to ethnic identity it is not simply perceived as an economic resource, but as a sense of belonging.

Other primordialists emphasise that identities are a socially-given attachments, including kinship, language, location and religion that ethnic groups are born into (Geertz, 1973; Toft, 2003; Varshney, 2001). The perception conceptualises the notion that ethnic ties are inherent in human beings in that they are deeply-rooted and natural associations that connect some people and naturally prompts separations with others, and grounded on language, location, race and religion. The rationale of primordialism is that ethnicity itself has an instrumental value. Even though primordialism contain some elements of philosophical insights, its standing point as an analytical tool is widely questionable. It is typically disregarded due to its oversimplification of complex and interlocking context (such as political, historical, economic and socio-economic factors), and its proposal of ethnic conflict being natural is greatly debateable. Although "people may think of these divisions as natural, we known that they are culturally and socially moulded, as well as being grounded in place, language and shared historic experience" (Fenton, 2003:81). Primordialism does not recognise that identities are constantly evolving to the changing nature of political, socio-economic and societal environment. Also, its conceptualisation does not provide an explanation to why ethnically diverse societies exist for hundreds of years without conflict, then suddenly violence occurs.

Instrumentalism

Instrumentalism perceives ethnic conflicts as a strategic goal in which conflicts are goal-driven. The concept has two elements: first, the notion that people seeking power or control use ethnic identities to achieve political or economic goals (Cohen, 1974). Brass states that "elites exploit ethnic identities in their quest for power, it is them who 'construct ethnic conflict'' (1997, p.26). In that sense, ethnic conflicts are a result of a deliberate manipulation of identities by political leaders in accordance to their rational judgement to promote or incite ethnic conflict. Fenton recalls that "if behaviour in terms of ethnic attachments could be seen to be serving some individual or collective political, then the ethnic action could be reinterpreted as instrumental" (2003, p.76). Politicians with strategically calculated goals can

prompt violence through mobilising the spread of mobs. Such occurrences are most plausible during political instabilities or states are becoming less liberal, or in a semi-authoritarian institution. Second, instrumentalists emphasise that ethnic identities are "manipulated through politicisation to legitimise competition over resources" (Brass, 1985, 1996, 1997; Horowitz, 1998; Kasfir, 1979; Vail 1991, p.11). The pursuit of economic gain is typically recognised as 'greed and grievances' from Paul Collier's study.

Collier's concept of greed conceptualises the notion that people engage in conflict-escalating activities primarily for commodities, and that militias fighting for justice and political representation are merely rhetoric (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). This idea of greed is operationalised within a feasible opportunity, that is, during a mass population of unemployed men that take advantage of weak government with inefficient security forces to carry out mob violence. Collier's second idea, grievance, explains historical exclusion, inequality and/or marginalisation can account for conflict escalation. People engage in violence as a method of redressing political and structural subjugation. This grievance-based argument combines the lack of political power and structural disparities in which the past and existing inequalities are politicised on the notion of collective ethnic identity (Cederman et al, 2017). Therefore, instrumentalism conceptualises that people collectively engage in violent actions from falsified or manipulated perceptions that the pre-existing conditions (exclusions, inequalities and/or marginalisation) are perpetrated by specific ethnic groups (Ellingsen, 2000). People are fully committed when the opposition are dehumanised, and when the attacker sees an ethnic group at fault not as human beings. It makes the process of annihilating them easier and without moral remorse. Unlike primordialism, instrumentalism provides a more plausible account for ethnic conflict, by focusing on political and socio-economic structural dynamics. Moreover, instrumentalists reveal how elite manipulation and politicization of identities are the underlying cause of grievances that induce violence. However, instrumentalism nonetheless lacks a comprehensive explanation accounting for individuals' decisions to effectually, easily and cooperatively mobilise on ethnic lines.

Institutionalism

Institutionalism identifies poorly-led government institutions as the cause for ethnic conflict. This includes systemically-led violence in which government departments facilitate elimination and marginalisation of "ethnic group from political membership and representation, and resource allocation" (Crawford, 1998, p.517). Institutionalists emphasise that issues, such as government transparency, economic management (the capability of allocating of resources to all ethnic groups), representation, and corruption, are the leading factors for ethnic violence. When these elements are present, people mistrust and question the government capabilities to function appropriately and effectively. Consequently, people think in terms of family and ethnic ties. Institutionalism is interrelated with Johan Galtung's theory of structural violence, that refers to systematic methods in which structural structures perpetuate inequities, thereby inflicting preventable suffering. It is subtle, and often invisible, and has no specified individual who can be held accountable (Galtung, 1969). Structural systems include, healthcare and legal, political and economic, and inflict marginalisation of certain groups, for example, ableism, racism, sexism, homophobia (Galtung, 1969). Disparities in economic and healthcare systems can lead lower life expectancy for certain individuals or groups.

In addition, institutionalists theorise the notion that those structural disparities are the primary driver of ethnic conflicts, and when disparities between different ethnic groups are clearly evident, ethnic groups associate themselves as a collective entity. In communities with competing ethnic identities, the exploitation of resources, scarcity of jobs, and environment degradation increasingly make people frustrated and the possibility of violence encounters is somewhat unavoidable. Furthermore, in circumstances where a government's authority is declining, such occurrence constitutes a security dilemma that encourages various ethnic groups to initiate spiral of defensive measures and possibly war strategies. Once a war is underway, working class people from marginalised ethnicities are likely to participate in rioting because they cannot depend on government agencies to safeguard them, and it is their responsibility to protect and retain their material wealth. The lack of state protection within a hostile society forces people to take security measures into their hands not only for economic preservation, but also for the purpose of identity safeguarding. Therefore, inequalities perpetrated by a state agency, together with a declining government, produces substantial fear and insecurities that lead marginalised ethnic individuals to incite violence.

Constructivism

Constructivism emphasises that ethnic identities are historically created, hence, ethnic conflicts are an amalgamation of cultural, economic, and political elements (Chandra, 2012). Ethnic identities are not only socially constructed, they are also a fluid entity that is established through numerous mechanisms including colonization, conquest and immigration (Wimmer, 2008). Identities are acknowledged as social formations with recognisable "origins and histories of amalgamation, contraction, division and expansion" (Posner, 2004, p.1). Constructivists argue that because ethnic identities are socially constructed and fluid, throughout history, they are expected to evolve. At a given time, identities are recognised through social category of membership, characteristics or behaviour in specified environments (Fearon and Laitin, 2003, p.84). These social categories are not inevitable, natural or static because it is not genetic factors. Instead, it is the internal logic of social discourses that drives identity construction and condition individual's identities with particular groups (Ferejohn, 1991). Constructivists prioritise historical construction and preservation of exclusive identities by political elites for social and political control. Ethnicity is, therefore, fluid, subjective and modifies with interethnic socialising and its function is to demonstrate and perpetuate social variations for particular ambitions.

In this sense, ethnic conflict is perceived as the "product of concrete processes" (Green et al, 2003, p.521). Processes, such as culture, history, language and symbols, have influenced that impact associations of different ethnic groups, instigating and/or triggering hostility between them (Kaufman, 2001). Hence, this justifies the politicalising of ethnic identities caused by a variety of determinants, evolving over time and creating a conducive environment for violence (Weir, 2012). For instance, if two ethnic groups have previously been at war concerning a territory, then they are expected to have a specific image (grounded in hatred) of each other. In contrast to primordialists and instrumentalists that enduringly emphasise "strategic calculations, and emotions, constructivists focus on external processes to explain the politicisation of ethnic identities" (Green et al, 2003, p.521). However, although constructivism provides a more inclusive explanation of ethnic conflict, it nevertheless overlooks the significance of primordial claims to territory possession that produces historic legitimacy grounded on ancestral tenure of a specific ethnic group, and therefore dismisses

the important purpose that distrust and hatred plays in constructing and upholding ethnic conflicts. In other words, constructivists underscore the affiliation of ethnic identities during tensions that quickly and easily prompts people to join conflicts. Thus, while the perception draws on multiple dimensions, reflecting on underlying causes of ethnic conflict, historical processes and structural features that simultaneously provoke ethnic violence, constructivists have not explained the timing of the conflict. More specifically, constructivism has yet to comprehend why ethnic conflicts erupt at a precise time in these historical processes, and it does not grasp circumstances at the grassroot level to account for the underlying animosity.

Altogether, the theoretical frameworks generate different explanations of ethnic conflict. It is crucial to acknowledge that the research seeks to discuss a potential explanation, and in doing so, may reduce some complexities of the conflict to the simplest elements. Similar to other theories, there is no single conceptualisation that is absolute. Thus, the four explanations can be conceptually in contention, promoting ideas may not comprehensively grasp the complexities, interlocking and wide-ranging of ethnic identities. Knowing that the theoretical frameworks are potentially limited in providing a rigorous explanation, my research will carefully avoid presenting conclusive results. From this, the later section of the research report analyses which of the explanations thorough account for the conflict in DRC.

Empirical Case

The purpose of this section is to explore how varying primary sources discuss ethnic identities during the foremost events of the DRC conflict. It first begins with brief summaries of the key phases of the conflict, then articulates ways in which primary sources discuss identity politics. Primary information is collected from reports published by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, International Criminal Court, International Crisis Group, the United Nations Peacekeeping Commission, the United Nations Security Council, United Nations Secretary-General, and the United Nations Stabilization Missions. The sources articulate identity politics of the DRC conflict.

The First Congo War (typically known as Africa's First War) officially started in November 1996 and ended in May 1997. Before the war began, DRC was experiencing economic deterioration and internal strife in which numerous ethnic communities were in tension. On top of this, Congolese people were still under the brutal Mobutu regime. Also, one consequence of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, was approximately two million Rwandan Hutus, otherwise known as génocidaires Interahamwe, that fled to eastern regions of DRC and assumed authority over Hutu refugee camps (Barrera, 2015). The subsequent influx of Hutu refugees stimulated ethnic terrors that compelled Congolese people to actively acknowledge their tribal and linguistic affiliations (Delbert, 2013). All these circumstances resulted in the rebellion officially known as the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of DRC (AFDL) led by Laurent Kabila, with the primary objectives of overthrowing Mobutu and dismantling the Interahamwe military bases in the country (Delbert, 2013). Mobutu's regime attempted to terminate Kabila's resistance, however it collapsed in a matter of months (Barrera, 2015). Although the war lasted for a short duration, as it ended in May 1997, it caused nationwide destruction and substantial ethnic violence in which fighting was accompanied by the annihilation of hundreds of thousands of varying ethnic groups (Barrera, 2015).

Following the Congo first war, the new Kabila-led government renamed Zaire to Democratic Republic of Congo. However, the concerns regarding the operationalisation of democracy was the least of the government's challenges. The government did not commit to major

improvements from Mobutu's regime (Delbert, 2013). Corruption increased and the economy increasingly disrepair and deteriorated. The government did minimal change to institute a true functioning democracy that tackles political and social instabilities in order to unify the deeply divided society (Longman, 2002). Shortly after assuming office, Kabila was domestically perceived as an instrument of foreign governments, specifically Rwanda and Uganda regimes. In response to this criticism, Kabila expelled all Rwandese and Ugandan advisers and rebels from DRC to avert a potential coup (Englebert, 2006). A particular instance was when Kabila dismissed his Rwandan Chief of Staff, James Kabarebe, triggering the invasion of DRC by the rebel group Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD). The events that followed the expulsion, together with the existing phycological shockwaves from the Rwandan genocide throughout the eastern regions of DRC, were the most prominent underlying occurrences that sparked the Second Congo War (Barrera, 2015). Broadly speaking, the war featured two main opposing sides, the Kinshasa government was one (together with its allies from neighbouring countries such as Angola, Namibian, and Zimbabwean, as well as numerous paramilitary forces. The second side included various rebel groups, most notably, the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) supported by Rwandan forces, and the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) backed by Ugandan forces.

First Congo War 1996-7

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

A United Nation Security Council report, published in 1998, describes the identity politics of the First Congo War by laying out ongoing influx of Rwandese refugees in DRC and ineffective government institutions. From July 1994 to October 1996, a proportion of the Rwandan Hutus sought refuge in North Kivu and occupied in camps within the Goma city. They committed countless crimes, including slaughtering members of the local population. The homicides occurred on an extensive scale partly due to the lack of "law enforcement (that) had broken down, and no effective action was taken to identify and prosecute the perpetrators" (UNSC, 1998, p.23). In North and South Kivu, from mid-October to mid-November 1996, camps established by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were systematically bombarded by military forces. The attacks were deliberate, and the

majority of the victims were unarmed populations of which women and children were the most common targets. The following description of the massacre paints a gruesome picture:

> In Mugunga camp, hundreds of unarmed persons were captured and executed. AFDL troops played the leading role in attacks on the camps. The attacks on these camps caused hundreds of thousands of Rwandan Hutus to return to Rwanda, and hundreds of thousands to flee into the interior of Zaire. Many of those who fled were hunted down and deliberately killed by AFDL forces and Mai-Mai militia. In one case, AFDL troops killed a number of wounded Rwandan Hutus in the hospital (UNSC, 1998).

From late 1996 to early 1997, in the process of capturing Goma city, AFDL soldiers deliberately killed civilians. When these massacres were taking place, Congolese Hutus that sympathised or assisted fleeing Rwandan Hutus were also massacred. Members of the AFDL were deliberately killing defenceless Hutus, but also men suspected of being deserters from the Zairian Army (FAZ), and Former Rwandan Army (FAR) soldiers and Interahamwe militia attempting to flee attacks (UNSC, 1998). In 1997, from February to April, several camps were established to shelter those fleeing attacks in North and South Kivu. Some of those camps were set up in Obilo, Kasese, and Tingi-Tingi. They were immediately attacked by AFDL militias. The massacre against Rwandan and Congolese Hutus by ADFL and Mai-Mar militias continued well after April in other regions. UNSC reports that "in May 1997, Rwandan Hutus were massacred in Mbandaka and the neighbouring village of Wendji. The victims were unarmed and numbered in the hundreds. The massacre was committed by AFDL troops, apparently under effective Rwandan Army (RPA) command" (1998, p.24).

The UNSC describes the October and November attacks on Rwandese in North Kivu as Congolese rebels seeking to force Rwandan refugees back to Rwanda. Some refugees were somewhat given a warning to leave voluntary. Those that did not leave were exterminated. This report suggested that the motivation of physical elimination of the Rwandan Hutus that opted to linger in DRC rather than returning to Rwanda justifies the manner of the attacks in camps of south Kisangani, that were mostly referred to as 'mopping up operations'. In other incidents, refugees were forced to flee to camps in westward regions of DRC. The intent was not to coerce them to return home but rather to eliminate them. UNSC stresses that the

intent was “clear in the massacre at Wendji and Mbandaka, when a large number of Rwandan Hutus at the border of a third country the Republic of Congo were systematically killed just as many of them were trying to flee” (1998, p.25).

UN High Commissioner on Human Rights (1997)

The 1997 United Nation Commissioner on Human Rights report discusses the identity politics of the First Congo War by laying out historical marginalisation and disenfranchisement that the Banyamulenge have experienced. Historically, Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda (both Bahutu and Batutsi) who settled in DRC never gained nationality privileges. Their status changed when the 1971 and 1972 legislations declared that those who inhabited Congo before 1960 were now Congolese by virtue of nationality of origin and not by naturalization. However, their nationality rights were challenged a decade later. Law No. 002 of 29 June 1981 erroneously assumed that the Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda were considered as aliens. The law abolished previously granted rights. UNHCR report states that “it was adopted and voted in a context of pressure resulting from the fact that in Northern Kivu the ‘original’ ethnic groups were in a minority. The Bahunde totalled 15 per cent and could be left with no political representation…the great majority were the Banyarwanda” (1997, p.26). In addition, Mobutu’s government eliminated civil rights, rights to opinion, association, assembly, liberty, physical integrity, as well as supporting the rights of political participation, except for a party which identifies itself with the State. Generally, the regime had no systemic measures to institute the enjoyment of economic, cultural and social freedoms (UNHCR, 1997).

The report details sudden political decisions that served as the catalyst for the 1996 events. Leading to the major occurrences that took place in 1996, there were various prominent incidents that reinforced political marginalisation, among them the political nature of the nationality issue in which the Supreme Council of the Republic - Transitional Parliament (Haute Conseil de la Republique - Parlement de Transition) dismissed four parliamentarians from their posts on the grounds that were Rwandans nationals or collaborators. The autocracies of the action were expressed by the HCR-PT Judicial Committee. Christian Badibangi (an Opposition parliamentarian) opposed the dismissal and was consequently,

dismissed from his post. While in exile, he became a French national by marrying a French citizen and thus losing his Congolese status. The dismissed parliamentarians included:

> Cyprien Rwakabuba Shinga (a Zairian Tutsi who had served as regional adviser for Rutshuru since 1959, provincial minister, Senator, political commissioner in 1975, member of the Central Committee and the State MPR party Disciplinary Committee and, since 1994, National Adviser); Mutiri Muyengo (Hutu) and Rémy Kalegamire (a Havu, and therefore a member of an "original" ethnic group, who had served as municipal and regional adviser in 1958 under the Belgians, MPR parliamentarian and member of the Vangu Commission, from which he was dismissed because of his opinions) (UNHCR, 1997, p.28).

With the diverseness of DRC's ethnic groups, comes an unequal distribution of freedoms. Arbitrary political discrimination was present, for instance, when single ethnic group part of the minority that had significant authority because Marshal Mobutu and over 50 percent of the nation's generals belong to it. Other ethnic groups were deprived of economic, cultural, civil and political, as well as social rights. Apart from Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda, who were by far the main targets of multi-layered discrimination, other ethnic groups were also victims. UNHCR shines light on the situation of "the Batwa or pygmies; from a strictly historical point of view, it is they who – at least in the east of Zaire – constitute the only genuinely 'original' ethnic group, despite the statements made by other groups which claim that distinction as justification for discriminating against those considered to be of Rwandan origin" (UNHCR, 1997, pp.31-2). Moreover, the additional 1.2 million Rwanda refugees that resided in DRC camps heightened pre-existing resentments. Because some the refugees were perpetrators of the genocide, it did not take long before security concerns were raised. Some were former FAR members and Interahamwe, upon arriving in DRC camps they were involved in activities of intimidating other refugees, inflicting serious damage on properties and environment, and committing heinous crimes against local inhabitants and Batutsi with the objective of creating a 'Hutuland'. The Mobutu regime's response to such occurrences were either minimal or utterly unproductive:

> The Government pressured refugees to return by threatening to close the camps and to order the "administrative closing" of those located in Kibumba and Nyangesi, which were temporarily surrounded by the military in February; by prohibiting religious, political, commercial and educational activities – even UNICEF was forbidden to carry out educational programmes for children; by imposing cutbacks in humanitarian activities, etc. All attempts failed, and only a few refugees returned (UNHCR, 1997, p.32).

The Banyamulenge in Congo's Southern regions have been historically denied Congolese nationality and terrorised with expulsion together with Rwandan refugees. The report provides several reasons accounting for the ethnic conflict, with colonial heritage the main cause as "frontiers were drawn between various colonies regardless of the borders recognized by the "original" ethnic groups, and this situation was aggravated by the transplantation of populations" (1997, p.34). Colonial heritage was followed by authoritarian institution that together with other indigenous ethnic groups deprived their nationality (UNHCR, 1997). Other reasons included the unresolved external factors that prompted spiralling resentment concerning exploitation, environmental damage, and the international protection that safeguarded those responsible of genocide (UNHCR, 1997). On the ground, Bahutu, Bahunde together with their FAZ alliance, attacked Banyarwanda (making no distinction between Bahutu and Batutsi). As a result, the "situation, together with the provocative statements made by the Commissioner of the Uvira rural region, Shweka Mutabazi II, led the Batutsi in the South to defend themselves in order to avoid experiencing similar events" (UNHCR, 1997, p.35).

Before the conflict was officially underway, the AFDL was gradually taking control of Uvira on 23 October, Bukavu on 29 October, Goma 3 November, Butembo on 14 November, then Beni, Bunia and Walikale by the end of 1996. In early 1997, Kisangani and finally Kinshasa has fallen under AFDL influence. The conflict featured two stages, the first led by Muller Ruhimbika and can be justified by the nationality problems. From mid-October 1996 the second stage was under the command of Laurent Kabila, who avowed that his intention was to expel the illegitimate government of Mobutu. The emergence of Kabila's rebels is discussed as the following:

The Democratic Alliance of the Banyamulenge People became merely one of several aggressors which, together with other equally groups (such as the National Council of Resistance for Democracy and the People's Congo Liberation Movement) and the long-established Kabila People's Revolution Party (PRP), formed AFDL, which believes that armed conflict is the 'only way' of putting an end to the dictatorship (UNHCR, 1997, p.37).

Second Congo War 1998-2003

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

The 2002 United Nations Security Council report describes the identity politics of the RCD-G rebel group. During the 2002 Kisangani violence, there was a meeting between the Special Rapporteur and the representatives of the leadership of Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie-Goma (RCD-G) – also known as Rally for Congolese Democracy. During their discussion, the RCD-G expressed their opinion of killing 'Rwandan' people, the term Rwandan was not limited to Rwandese nationals, but also Congolese Tutsi and Banyamulenge (UNSC, 2002). Such a view raised valid concerns, particularly because the idea was explicitly broadcasted on RTNC radio station. The radio broadcast did incite the population to violence and killings targeting 'Rwandans'. The authorities allegedly emphasised that the local language, Lingala, does not distinguish the difference between Congolese Tutsi and Rwandans. As a result, mobs killed non-Rwandese people in the process. Kisangani is an ethnic complex region. During a meeting with Kisangani authorities, commander Laurent Nkunda "expressed his distress over the ethnically based incitement to kill by the rebels. He explained that his bodyguard, a Tutsi Congolese, was in the detention cell with another non-Tutsi soldier. The crowd signalled out his bodyguard and killed him" (UNSC, 2002, p.5). Using eyewitnesses accounts, the report documents the massacre of 14 and 15 May 2002, in which RCD-G loyalist troops used excessive, indiscriminate and deliberate lethal force against unarmed civilians in the municipality of Mangobo, especially in the areas of Matete, Walengola, Walendu, Bambole, Baboa, and Babali (UNSC, 2002).

International Crisis Group (ICG)

In 2003, the International Crisis Group published a report that details varying components of identity politics of the Second Congo War. In the district of Bunia, ethnic strife concerning communal access to land, mineral resources and political power has been a historically reoccurring feature. Hema and Lendu communities were both the primary actors and victims of the tragedy. Hema and Lendu businessmen and politicians who turned warlords found willing Rwandan and Ugandan supporters to aid them in their destructive activities (ICG, 2003). The Hema and Lendu communities reside mainly in the Djugu and Irumu territories of Ituri province. Both communities occupy the most fertile and resource-rich highlands of the district. Prior to the official beginning of Hema-Lendu conflict in 1999, these ethnic groups have a history of grievances and greed. The Belgian colonial administration heavily exploited Djugu and Irumu, as the plantation-based economy run by the colonisers displaced natives and alienated their lands. The administration operated according to divide-and-rule tactics, enforcing ethnic stereotypes that largely benefited the Hema communities. Governments that followed after the colonial rule did little to nothing to institute fairness and stability among ethnic groups within Djugu and Irumu territories (ICG, 2003). Thus, land-based communal grievances and individual greed for power and resources were a colonial and post-colonial inheritance. After 1960, “the Hema were not only more favourably positioned to take over the plantations left by the Belgian settlers, but also has the intellectual, political, and financial resources to manipulate Mobutu’s state to their advantage and increase their economic domination over the two territories” (ICG, 2003, pp.2-3). Small-scale land-motivated conflicts periodically emerged in 1966, 1973, 1990 and 1997 between Hema landholders and Lendu communities who felt disadvantaged and marginalised (ICG, 2003).

The 1999-2002 Ituri conflict first unleashed from Djugu to Irumu, then rapidly spread to all territories, including Mahagi, Aru and Mambasa. Other ethnic communities were forced to either form their own militias or join the Hema or Lendu militias (2003: 3). In Ituri, the Kinshasa government, Uganda and Rwanda were waging their own proxy war. The Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), was a break-away militia from the RCD-ML. It was engineered by Uganda, but after its creation it turned to Rwanda for support. The first wave of violence was from June 1999 to April 2000. Nineteen attacks carried out by the Lendu militias targeted

Hema communities in which over 7,000 people died and nearly 150, 000 were internally displaced. Following this, Hema rebel groups or affiliated militias engaged in retaliation attacks. During four years of conflict, an enduring element was Uganda's and Rwanda's divide-and-rule tactics with their Congolese rebel proxies. Every Congolese rebel group that controlled sections of the district was enthroned and replaced by an entity appointed by Uganda. ICG summarises leaders of RCD-ML, starting with "Wamba dia Wamba, Mbusa Nyamwisi, John Tibasiima, Jean-Pierre Bemba, Thomas Lubanga, Chief Kahwa, and others all briefly ruled Ituri as protegés of one or another Ugandan generals" (2003, p.3). By September 1999, Bunia fell under the power-base of the embattled Professor Wamba dia Wamba who lost the leadership of the RCD four months prior and relocated to Kisangani and to Kampala after the UPDF lost its control the town. Wamba formed the RCD- Mouvement de Libération (RCD-ML) from Kampala and commissioned two men – Mbusa Nyamwisi, a Nande businessman in Beni, and John Tibasiima, a Hema politician, former chief executive of the gold producing OKIMO, in Bunia – to administer the North-Kivu and Orientale Province territories under Uganda's influence" (ICG, 2003, pp.4-5). Quickly after their appointment, Nyamwisi and Tibasiima sought to control North Kivu and Ituri without Wamba. In fact, in 2000, through three attempts, they tried to overthrow Wamba from RCD-ML leadership. The competition generated permanent combat within their respective militias in Bunia. Both Nyamwisi and Tibasiima recruited young men to establish their armed groups. ICG documents that "Nyamwisi had the UPDF train Lendu fighters together with his own Nande in Nyaleke, close to Beni, while Tibasiima did the same with young Hema in Rampwara, close to Bunia" (2003, p.5). In January 2001, Uganda was unable to retain control of all rebels' groups, due to fear of Hema domination returning. Lendu militias attacked towns and attempted to demolish a Ugandan helicopter gunship. Those acts started the second wave of Ituri large-scale violence with pre-emptive and reprisal attacks by both Hema and Lendu communities.

The RCD-ML's reign in Ituri was short-lived. Nyamwisi was quickly accused by his minister for defence, Thomas Lubanga, of selling out Ituri's interests to Kinshasa, giving Bunia to his Nande tribesmen and siding with the Lendu (ICG, 2003). Lubanga (a Hema Gegere) was largely supported by Uganda's Kazini, whose commercial and financial interests were endangered by Nyamwisi. In February 2002, Lubanga was relegated from RCD-ML Minister for Defence, Nyamwisi appointed Jean-Pierre Molondo from Kasai as the new governor for

Ituri. In April 2002, Nyamwisi fired the Hema bishop of Bunia's Catholic church and replaced him with a Nande, altogether these ethnic shifts and proceedings amplified ethnic violence. Through "the first half of 2002, a protracted war unfolded between Nyamwisi's Armée Populaire Congolaise (APC) and the Hema militias controlled by Lubanga and supported by UPDF officers, who participated in the killings of Lendu civilians" (ICG, 2003, p.5). In June 2002, Lubanga and his tribesmen deserted the RCD-ML to create the Union des Patriotes Congolais (UPC), originally stationed at Mandro south of Bunia. Throughout June and July, the UPC mobilised Hema youth and carried out attacked targeting the RCD-ML positions, with support from UPDF, UPC captured Bunia town on the 9th of August 2002 (ICG, 2003). The UPC takeover was commemorated with the ethnic cleansing of Nande but mostly Lendu/Ngiti communities in the town of Songolo. The APC and Lendu militias responded with one of the worst massacres of the conflict, roughly 1, 000 Hema civilians were slaughtered on 5th September at Nyakunde. In addition, dehumanisation of the enemy provides the justification for annihilation:

> The ethnic-based cultural and self-help associations – LORI for the Lendu and ENTE for the Hema – that had spread in the Congo in the early 1990s to compensate for the total collapse of state welfare institutions, provided an intellectual vehicle for mobilising and justifying violence (ICG, 2003, p.6).

From 1999 to March 2003, Ugandan (and Rwandan) presence in Ituri manipulated local politics, arming and training all ethnically-based militias and helping them launch attacks. Ugandan influence in the region only increased political confusion and created insecurity, such climate was further spawned local businessmen and/or politicians that took advantage of the ongoing ethnic tensions and absence of a strong government forces to pursue their interests (2003, p.7). An Amnesty International report on the lack of state police stresses that "the proliferation of ethnic and community-based armed groups in Ituri is the result of the vacuum created by the collapse of state authority in the region since the beginning of the war" (Amnesty International, 2007, p.41). From late 2002 and early 2003, the two over-arching sides of the Ituri conflict were "the Hema-dominated Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), and the Lendu-dominated Front for National Integration (FNI)" (Human Rights Watch, 2006).

International Criminal Court (ICC)

Several transcripts from various trials of the International Criminal Court describes identity politics of the Second Congo War through victims' and witnesses' statements. Bosco Ntaganda is a Rwandese Tutsi with a military history in the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a convicted war criminal, and the former military chief of staff of the National Congress for the Defense of the People, an armed militia stationed in the North Kivu province. During his 2017 trial at the International Criminal Court, concerning the events that took place in 2002 and 2003, a victim narrates that the Hema and Lendu communities were fighting, and Ntaganda's soldiers arrested him because he is a Lendu: "I don't know what fault I had committed…the reason was that I was Lendu, and the Hema were carrying out war against the Lendu. They just arrested me because I was Lendu" (ICC, 2017, p.9). The victim was abducted and tortured, taken to Nizi and subjected to forced labour. While in captivity, he quotes Ntaganda's soldiers saying ". It's because you are a Lendu. We are the people who are the masters of the Lendu" (ICC, 2017, p.10). In another trial, a witness (one of Ntaganda's commander), emphasises that their military operations were not limited to a specific ethnic group. He recalls that while in the town of Mongbwalu (a small town in the Djugu Territory of the Ituri Province), "when I met the Defence team, I told them that there was a group of Hema traders or businessmen who were doing trading in Bunia, Nyangarai…they were maltreated, their belongings were confiscated, and at that time I was in Bunia" (ICC, 2017, p.74).

Thomas Lubanga Dyilo is a convicted of war crimes, and is the founder and leader of the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), the militia group was a significant player in the Ituri conflict. During Lubanga's 2010 trial, a victim depicts the violence that occurred in Katoto, the UPC were killing the Lendus or forcing them out of their communities. While in hiding, the victim states that "my little brother was afraid, and he went out - he was looking for another hiding place - and the Lendus saw him and they killed him" (ICC, 2010, p.10). The UPC soldiers were repelling the Lendu, Bosco Ntaganda was the commander responsible for operations (ICC, 2010). Moreover, Germain Katanga is partly a Ngiti ethnic group, in 2014 he was found guilty of one count of crime against humanity and four counts of war crimes

committed on the 24th of February 2003 in Ituri. From 1999 to 2003, Katanga (a rebel leader) joined forces with FNI (led by Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui), crimes committed predominantly targeted Hema communities in the village of Bogoro. During his 2011 trial, a witness (soldier) described the security situation in Ituri, "it started in 1999, in June, in the Walendu-Pitshi collectivity. And the reason, well, it was because of a land concession. The property of Mr. Uguaro, who is an Alur person" (ICC, 2011). The witness goes on to explain that the conflict started in Uguaro with tension between Lendu and Savu families, then moved to the Bira and the Ngiti, and finally to the Nyali and the Hema.

Recent inter-communal violence

Reports from the ICG and UNHCR discuss the identity politics of this recent spiral of violence, both accounting for the violence to land and resources disputes and inter-communal reprisals attacks. In Ituri, re-occurring inter-ethnic tensions between Hema and Lendu communities in territories of Djugu and Mahagi resurfaced between December 2017 and late 2019. From September 2018, Lendu militias progressively became more structured in executing attacks against the Hema and Alur ethnic groups. Their core objectives included taking control of land and resources held by Hema communities (UNCHR, 2020). Hema communities engaged in acts of reprisal including attacking Lendu and burning their villages. Throughout the period, government forces and army deployed to institute order, but did not only fail to end the violence; they also committed crimes such as arbitrary arrests and detention, extrajudicial executions and sexual violence (UNCHR, 2020). The International Crisis Group reports that from June 2019, following an alleged killing of four Lendu individuals in a Hema dominated community, Lendu militias launched large-scale reprisals attacks against Hema communities, systematically burning down villages and slaughtering inhabitants. For the most part, the violence spreading from Djugu territory is attributable to Lendu militiamen, some of whom came of age as part of the Nationalist and Integrationist Front (FNI) (ICG, 2020). The current sitting president, Felix Tshisekedi, referred to the interethnic bloodshed in Ituri province as "an attempted genocide" (Africannews, 2019). Moreover, a Secretary-General report documents the security situation, stating:

> In Ituri Province, southern Irumu territory remained affected by persistent looting and violence by the Patriotic Resistance Front of Ituri (FRPI), while in Djugu territory, conflict between the Hema and Lendu communities and between Lendu militias and FARDC flared up again (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission, 2019, pp.4-5).

The period was also marked by the continuation or recurrence of intercommunal violence in Yumbi town (within the territory of Mai-Ndombe). In December 2018, intercommunal violence between Banunu and Batende communities peaked, mainly Bongende and Nkolo villages, nearly a thousand were killed and thousands forced to flee. UNCHR reports that "attacks were triggered by a dispute over the burial of a Banunu customary chief, followed strikingly similar patterns and were characterized by extreme violence and speed, leaving little time for people to escape…they were led by Batende villagers equipped with firearms, targeting Banunu villagers" (2019, n.p). The report also documents that during the attacks, people were asked if they were Banunu before killing them. Some chiefs of Batende-majority villages were involved in planning the attacks. Violence was facilitated by the absence of state action to avert it. Despite numerous signs of tensions and resentment among the communities, and potential reprisal attacks, the government failed to appropriately assign policing authorities in those communities to maintain peace (UNCHR, 2019). In addition, while preparing for the national and regional elections, from November to December 2018 instances of political intolerance and violence occurred across the country, particularly North and South Kivu.

Conclusion

These primary sources portray various ways identity politics are discussed during the three identified stages of the conflict. The depictions are similar and varying in nature, demonstrating different and persisting elements of the elements of the conflict. It is important to note that all the primary sources are slightly questioned when it comes to weighing their reliability and trustworthy. The UN Security Council, the UN Peacekeeping Commission, the UN Stabilization Missions and the UN Secretary-General are highly cautious on explicitly depicting certain ethnic groups as the perpetrators due to concerns of instigating

favouritism that can consequently result into serious human rights lawsuits. The International Criminal Court is subjected to reliability issues because among its main purpose is to collect incriminating data to prosecute potential perpetrators of heinous war crimes. Also, although the International Crisis Group is an independent and non-partisan organisation, its reliance of governmental funding can influence its ability to independently work on peace building policies. The following section illustrates ways in which identity politics are discussed on both primary and secondary sources.

Findings

This section compares discussions of ethnic identities from primary data with the secondary literature. Its purpose is to illustrate how different, or alike, both sources are. By exploring ways in which identity politics are discussed from differing sources, the method provides a thorough process of critically assessing how DRC conflict can be categorised through ethnic identities.

The First Congo War

The overwhelming majority of the primary sources discuss incidents of the First Congo War through the lenses of institutionalism. In both Kivus and Ituri (regions that the conflict was most active and/or originated), the lack of a functional provincial government led to the ethnic violence. In regard to the conflict in Southern Kivu, a United Nations Commission on Human Rights report states that the disenfranchisement and exclusion of the Mobutu regime was the leading cause to the violence. The UNCHR reports that the "regime had eliminated the civil rights to life, liberty, and physical integrity, the rights of political participation have been suspended, except for a party which identifies itself with the State" (1997, p.48). The government prompted people to ethnically organise themselves and retaliate the oppressive regime. The perpetual alienation of the Banyamulenge from political and social organizations meant that engaging in violent acts was their last resort. Similarly, Human Right Watch reports that the marginalisation of Tutsi communities in North and South Kivu resulted into their militarisation: "the rapid rise of Tutsi to national political prominence in the 1990s followed by a sharp decline in their power, as well as the anti-Tutsi hostilities accompanying the process, form the essential context of the current political and military crisis in eastern Congo" (Human Rights Watch, 2007, n.p). Although the UN Security Council report describes elements of instrumentalism during the 1996-7 violence in North and South Kivu in which the Kabila-led forces were mobilising ethnically-allied militias into carrying out its quest for power (UNSC, 1998).

In addition, focussing on the Ituri conflict, a Human Right Watch report depicts a constructivist image that explores that long-standing rivalry between Hema and Lendu over

the control of land and access to fishing privileges as well as the Kinshasa government that struggled to proportionally control the region's mineral wealth, and a lack of stability due to enduring present of rebel groups (HRW, 2002). From those circumstances, people from Hema and Lendu communities engaged in self-defence measures to protect themselves and their land possessions. The International Crisis Group states that the increasing tensions between the Hema and Lendu communities in Djugu and Irumu was overwhelmingly due to the lack of Kinshasa and local governments' inability to constructively institute stability measures that principally addresses long-standing antagonisms between the two groups. The ICG further emphasise that the "ethnic-based cultural and self-help associations – LORI for the Lendu and ENTE for the Hema – that had spread in the Congo in the early 1990s to compensate for the total collapse of state welfare institutions, provided an intellectual vehicle for mobilising and justifying violence and became the prime propagators of hate" (2003, p.6). Those dehumanising descriptions of the other ethnic group communicates the severity of their relations in which each side perceives the other as an ever-increasingly existential threat.

In contrast to the primary sources, the majority of the secondary literature depicts the First Congo War as a product of concrete processes. The political and social oppression of the Mobutu regime, the continuing ethnoregional sentiments, and the subsequent aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide meant that the 1996-7 conflict was somewhat inevitable. On top of the marginalisation and exclusion of various ethnic groups and, "in spite of the country's vast natural resource potential, the widespread corruption, economic controls, and the diversion of public resources for personal gain during the Mobutu era thwarted economic growth" (Koyame et al, 2002, p.203). Likewise, Turner points out that Mobutu and his allies consumed revenue extracted from the country's wealth. In fact, government spending on public services from 1972 to 1992 collapsed from 17% to 0%. During the same period, government spending on Mobutu rose from 28% to 95% (Turner, 2007). Although resentments between Hema and Lendu people, the Banyamulenge and various native tribes started in the late 19th century, the unproductiveness of the government to tackle them aggravated marginalised communities. Ineffective administrations worsened ethnic antagonisms because access to land is not only essential for majority of rural livelihoods but also identity and power (Huggins, 2010). Because of the strong structural link of land possession and claims to

political autonomy, people who were landless also lacked local representation, thus causing inter-community rivalries. In some regions, land vying was "achieved through discourses utilising the concepts of 'indigenous' and 'immigrant' groups…for some communities, notably Hutu and Tutsi, the issue of immigrant status is linked to an uncertain or contested right to citizenship" (Huggins, 2010, p.5).

Following the Rwandan Genocide, approximately two million Rwandan Hutus, fled to eastern regions of DRC and assumed authority over Hutu refugee camps. They launched attacks against the new Tutsi regime in Rwanda and Congolese Tutsi. According to Barrera, "the arrival of the Hutu refugees in Eastern Zaire further aggravated the fragile situation in the area, where ethnic tensions existed between dozens of communities" (2015, p.2). The subsequent influx of Hutu refugees stimulated ethnic terrors that compelled Congolese people to actively acknowledge their tribal and linguistic affiliations. Linking these occurrences to Rwanda's national interest, the newly Tutsi-led government feared that the former Rwandan army (Interahamwe) based in the Congolese refugee camps was planning on invading Rwanda. RPA spokesman Claude Dusaidi claimed the government had gained information regarding a reasonable threat (Longman, 2002). Ultimately, Rwanda's invasion of DRC through the Kabila-led AFDL is recognised as the catalyst of the First Congo War in November 1996 (Delbert, 2013; Stravers et al, 2016). In eastern regions of DRC (mainly North and South Kivu), "growing tension between the Banyamulenge and their neighbours, the further collapse of Mobutu's political regime, and the effects of regional dynamics, created the necessary conditions for the outbreak of the First Congo War" (Delbert, 2013, p.129; Vlassenroot, 2013, p.54). Therefore, unlike like the primary sources that focuses on particular impacts of government institutions, academics argue that the war was caused by progressing occurrences including the effects of Mobutu's regime, inter-ethnic strife, economic deterioration, and Rwanda invading eastern Congo.

The Second Congo War

The majority of the primary sources centralise the Second Congo War in Ituri province, however, identity politics of the conflict are discussed differently. Victims' statements from Bosco Ntaganda and Thomas Lubanga trials at the International Criminal Court signify that

victims were targeted purely because of their ethnic identities. In Ntaganda's trial, a victim stated that he was "arrested because he is Lendu". Similarly, during Lubanga's trial, a victim describes that, while in hiding, his brother (a Hema) was killed by the Lendus (ICC, 2017). While the International Criminal Court was trying to prosecute Ntaganda for war crimes and crimes against humanity, mainly attacking the Lendu communities, a witness (one of his commanders) emphasised that their military activities were not restricted to specific ethnic groups. He recalled that "when I met the Defence team, I told them that there was a group of Hema traders or businessmen who were doing trading in Bunia, Nyangarai. They were maltreated, their belongings were confiscated and at that time I was in Bunia" (ICC, 2017, p.74). Information from the ICC indicates that the 1999-2003 Ituri conflict featured elements of primordialism and instrumentalism. Human Rights Watch also discusses the instrumentalism aspect of the conflict. It first acknowledges the long-lasting enmity between the Hema and the Lendu concerning the control of land and access to other resources. The report also says that ethnic tensions were exacerbated by neighbouring countries and national rebel groups. Similarly, HRW reports that "Uganda and Rwanda – fuelled the growth of armed political groups based on ethnic loyalties – Chief among these were the Hema-dominated Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), the Lendu-dominated Front for National Integration (FNI)" (2006).

The International Crisis Group further details the instrumental depiction of the Ituri conflict. It stresses that although the Hema and Lendu have a long-standing rivalry, both communities are actors and victims of individuals competing for mineral resources and power. ICG documents that "Hema and Lendu politicians and businessmen turned warlords have, since 1999, found willing Ugandan and then Rwandan supporters to carry on with their destructive activities" (2003, p.1). During the following four years, one key and constant cause of the violence was the Congolese rebel militias (otherwise recognised as Rwanda's and Ugandan's proxies). The report also reinforces the foundations of institutionalism, emphasizing that grievances and greed origins of the Hema and Lendu conflicts date back to the exploitation of the Belgian colonial administration. Both communities occupied rich-mineral districts, however, due to the settler's plantation-based system, local populations were not only alienated from the economic benefits, they were also displaced. ICG emphasise that "land-motivated local conflicts periodically emerged between Hema landholders and Lendu

communities that felt disadvantaged and marginalised" (2003, p.2). On a contrary, Amnesty International (AI) points to the malfunctioning or lack of government as the catalyst of the Ituri ethnic violence. AI states that "the proliferation of ethnic and community-based armed groups in Ituri is the result of the vacuum created by the collapse of state authority in the region since the beginning of the war" (AI, 2007, p.41). Although most first-hand sources concentrate on Ituri province as the centre of the Second Congo War, they all discuss ethnic identities differently, thus pinpointing the heterogeneous nature of the conflict.

In correlation with primary data, pre-existing literature centralize the Second Congo War in the Great Lakes region and place emphasis on various and interlocking dimensions of identity politics. The war is elucidated as results of political instabilities, civil war and genocide, neighbouring countries, ethnic and pastoral hostilities. Fundamental issues that caused the First Congo War were not resolved. Kabila's government did minimal change to institute a functional and representative democracy that tackles political and social instabilities to unify deeply divided society. Kabila's presidency systematically worked to endanger and victimise the Congolese Tutsi population. In early August 1998, Hutu-Tutsi relations greatly intensified, leading to government launching a hate campaign against all Tutsis within DRC (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002, p.229). The campaign heighten as fear among the Tutsis communities as the constant depiction of them as non-citizens and land or resource thieves established mass fear of extinction that led to the formation (or some cases the mobilization or legitimization of) rebellious uprising. Banyamulenge ethnically organised themselves to dismantle the Kabila's regime and fight for their freedom (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002). Kabila deteriorated the internal ethnic strife by attempting to suppress the uprising, committing mass killing and torture, and imprisoning thousands of Banyamulenge. The August massacre was the catalyst for Rwandan and Ugandan increased influence in Great Lakes regions, shifted from military advising and training to personnel across the border to topple Kabila's government. It is important to note here that, because the citizenship of the Banyamulenge is still questionable, some secondary sources recognise Kabila's actions as xenophobia and thus shift focus away from internal ethnic strife.

The new government did minimal change to institute a true functioning democracy that tackles political and social instabilities in order to unify the deeply divided society. Shortly

after assuming office, Kabila was domestically perceived as an instrument of foreign governments, specifically Rwanda and Uganda regimes. In response to that criticism, Kabila expelled all Rwandese and Ugandan advisers and rebels from DRC to avert a potential coup. A particular instance was when Kabila dismissed his Rwandan Chief of Staff, James Kabarebe, triggering the invasion of DRC by the rebel group Rally for Congolese Democracy – RCD (Ndayewl 2008; Van Reybrouck 2008). Xenophobic mobilization fuelled large-scale security dilemma when the Kabila's troops invasion of Eastern DRC significantly questioned the survival of Tutsis (mostly Banyamulenge) ethnic groups. Simultaneously, "the diminished control of the state over its resources and borders had favoured the informalization, criminalization, and internationalization of the exploitation of Congo's massive natural wealth", all of which worsened the possibility of Congolese people forming a coherent society (Englebert, 2006, p.120). The events that followed the expulsion, together with the existing phycological shockwaves from the Rwandan genocide throughout the eastern regions of DRC, were underlying occurrences that ignited the Second Congo War. In addition, other scholars point to a constructivism approach, taking into account the various reasons that deteriorated the war, including the grassroots antagonisms over land and power, the persistence of corruption, incendiary actions by leaders, poverty, and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, and sexual abuse against women and girls (Autesserre, 2010). It is important to note that while the approach has vital insights, it undermines the importance of ethnic affiliations and does not explain how those causes fuelled ethnic antagonisms.

2017-9 violence

The identity politics of the 2017-19 violence in both Ituri and Mai-Ndombe provinces were a mixture of all frameworks, but mainly instrumentalism. UN Stabilization Missions and UN Peacekeeping Commission reports signify that, although violence in Ituri can be classified as primordialism (long-standing hostilities between the Hema and Lendu), the violence was fuelled by ethnic allied rebels that attacked opposing ethnic communities for land and resources objective. Unlike the 1999-2003 conflict in which ethnic militias were loosely affiliated to ethnic groups, the recent violence includes particular Lendu and Hema rebels that not completely supported by the community (ICG, 2020). Likewise, in Yumbi town, assailants from the Banunu and Batende group engaged in violent attacks concerning dispute

over land. Contrarily, the Yumbi violence can also be explained through an institutionalism lense, despite clear signs of heighten tensions the national and provincial governments failed to implement violence preventative actions and therefore facilitating the violence (UNHCR, 2019). Moreover, the death of Father Florent Dhunji (a Lendu priest) while he was staying at the presbytery of the Bahema abbots at Drodro on 5 June 2017 sparked primordialism sentiments. The decision of the Catholic Church to remain vague in relation to his death permitted the proliferation of rumours, Lendu accused the Hema of planning to annihilate their leaders (ICG, 2020). These occurrences led to the resurgence of hate speech that reignited fresh memories from the Second war, and thus resulting into open fire. Unlike the First and Second Congo Wars, the recent occurrences have not yet been analysed by an academic.

Discussion

The chapter has three purposes; first, it articulates how and why the politicisation of ethnic identities was the leading role of the DRC conflict. Following this, it reflects on the potential limitation of instrumentalism, within the context of DRC conflict. Finally, it concludes with a close examination of the four theoretical explanations of ethnic conflict, with the ultimate objective of illustrating their shortcomings and calling for a comprehensive analytical framework.

Politicisation and/or manipulation of ethnic identities

The First Congo War

Of the four frameworks of ethnic conflict, instrumentalism can singlehandedly and adequately explain the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict. From the First Congo War to recent violence, a predominate reoccurring theme is the struggle for power among militia rebel leaders, in which they attempt to achieve by manipulating ethnic identities of Congolese people in regions they sought violence to influence. The assessment begins with the discussion of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of DRC (AFDL), a prominent rebel group during 1996 and 1997. The emergence of the AFDL came into existence on the 7 October 1996, following claims of the vice-governor of Bukavu town in Kivu that declared the Banyamulenge must be expelled from Congo. In response, the Banyamulenge started a rebellion against the local government. Within its early stages, it was led by Muller Ruhimbika, on a relatively small-scale, the AFDL was fighting the Zairian Armed Forces; however, after it gained military support from Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda, it gained substantial momentum. During the raising of AFDL, in a remarkably short period of time Laurent-Désiré Kabila assumed the leadership. Previously, Kabila was a political figures, serving under the leadership of Moïse Tshombe in 1962. From 1963 to 1965, he was a member of Katanga provincial assembly and served as chief of cabinet for Minister of Information Ferdinand Tumba. Prior to the awakening of the 1996 war, he was primarily recognised as a transnational businessman, selling gold in Tanzania.

Once Kabila was the head of the new the AFDL, he pledged that its primary objective is to overthrow the Mobutu regime and dismantle the Interahamwe military bases within eastern Congo. Within a matter of months, from November 1996 to May 1997, the Kabila-led AFDL rebellion successfully toppled Mobutu and declared himself the new president of DRC. Aside from the military assistance from neighbouring countries, how did manage to achieve it in a time concisely manner? Kabila was able to effectively remove Mobutu regime in a short duration by taking advantage of the Banyamulenge people who were historically marginalised from all forms of structural and social systems and were growing active resistance from political oppression. By taking advantage of the Banyamulenge is powerless circumstances and historical grievances, he appealed to them, painting a promising future of political representation and justice. At first glance, Kabila seemed to have acted upon his promise of emancipating Banyamulenge by giving them full access to military and political positions of control. “Once the AFDL had liberated Uvira, Bukavu and Goma and consolidated its military control, it inaugurated a new administration. On that occasion, several Banyamulenge were assigned to influential positions within the provincial administration of South Kivu” (Vlassenroot, 2002: 509). However, and more importantly, after Kabila assumed office, his authentic objective was to obtain power. This was only possible through the manipulation of identities of a vulnerable group. The strengthening of the Banyamulenge by the Kabila-led AFDL was nothing but a calculated strategic action, and once in power he did little to nothing to improve their citizenship rights. In fact, by February 1998, the Banyamulenge were politically powerless (Vlassenroot, 2002).

In addition, instead of drafting an official document recognising their citizenship, he removed high-ranking Tutsis (both Banyamulenge and Congolese Tutsi) who were appointed to government positions under his leadership, and appointed Hutus (Longman, 2002). Kabila’s exclusion of the Banyamulenge was not limited to government participation, but also from the country. He launched hate campaigns against Tutsis, claiming that they “extremely dangerous and wanted to take over the DRC”, referencing the indiscriminate violence in Rwanda to incite fear and insecurities among Congolese people (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002: 250). The emergence of Kabila leadership highlights the extreme measures a person with a political motive is willing to undergo to accomplish it. He strategically calculated the

mobilisation of the Banyamulenge – manipulating them into widespread violence – actions that ultimately served his goal. The oppressive nature of Mobutu's regime (and its weak presence in some regions), together with the instability between the Banyamulenge and provincial government, gave Kabila and his rebels the opportunity and means to manipulate and influence the Banyamulenge people into the conflict that only served to meet Kabila's power yearn. The politicisation of their identities and grievances is clear through the dismissal of Tutsi government officials without legitimate misconducts, underpinning that the Banyamulenge were nothing but means for his quest for power.

The Second Congo War

This quest for power was apparent throughout the Second Congo War; the journey of finding influence can be demonstrated through the creation of sub-rebel groups, from the RCD to APC and UPC. The Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (Congolese Rally for Democracy) was a political party founded in August 1998 by Ernest Wamba dia Wamba (a prominent academic and political theorist). It was led by Adolphe Onusumba and backed by Rwanda. In September 1998, Bunia (the capital of Ituri province), became a power-base. Congolese leaders engaged in divide-and-rule campaigns. Prof. Wamba dia Wamba lost the leadership of RCD and relocated to Kisangani, and he was subsequently forced to migrate to Kampala after the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) lost control of the town and could not guarantee his protection. Following this, "Wamba created the RCD-Mouvement de Libération (RCD-ML) from Kampala and appointed two of his men (Mbusa Nyamwisi, a Nande businessman in Beni, and John Tibasiima, a Hema politician, former chief executive of the gold-producing OKIMO, in Bunia) to administer the North-Kivu and Orientale Province territories under Uganda's influence" (International Crisis Group, 2003: 4). Shortly after the creation of RCD-ML, Nyamwisi and Tibasiima decided to independently administer North Kivu and Ituri without consulting with Wamba. In-fighting was a constantly reoccurring feature, in 2000, on numerous occasions Nyamwisi and Tibasiima attempted to dethrone Wamba from the leadership of the RCD-ML. Both rebel leaders generated enduring combat among their respective militias. Nyamwisi had the UPDF train young Lendu fighters together with his own Nande in Nyaleke, in contrast, Tibasiima militarily trained and equipped young Hema in Rampwara (close to Bunia).

The RCD-ML's reign in Ituri was short-lived. Mbusa was rapidly accused by his Minister for Defence (Thomas Lubanga) of selling Ituri's interests to Kinshasa, siding with the Lendu and selling Bunia to his Nande tribesmen. Lubanga was supported by Uganda's Kazini. Kazini's commercial and financial interests were greatly endangered by Nyamwisi. Consequently, throughout the first half of 2002, prolonging war unfolded among the Nyamwisi's Armée Populaire Congolaise (APC), and "the Hema militias controlled by Lubanga and supported by UPDF officers, who participated in the killings of Lendu civilians" (International Crisis Group, 2003: 5). By early February 2002, Lubanga was downgraded from the RCD-ML Minister for Defence. Nyamwisi assigned Jean-Pierre Molondo (originally from Kasai province) as the new governor for Ituri, this action further intensified RCD-ML's internal fighting as Molondo assumed full control of Lubanga's military. In April, Nyamwisi was forced to a Hema bishop of Bunia's Catholic diocese to resign and appointed a Nande bishop, following this decision was the multiplication of kidnappings and massacres by Nyamwisi's men in Bunia town targeting Hema villages. In retaliation, Hema and Ngiti militias led by Lubanga attacked Lendu villages. Evidently, from 1999, the escalation of violence in Ituri was essentially high-ranking members of RCD-G fighting (by recruiting and training young men from different ethnic groups) for the control of the province.

Moreover, in June 2002, Lubanga (together with his tribesmen) disaffiliated from the RCD-ML, and formed the Union des Patriotes Congolais (UPC), initially based in Mandro (South Bunia). A central commander of the UPC was Bosco Ntaganda, a Rwandese Tutsi with military history in the Rwandan Patriotic Front. He was responsible for implementing most of the attacks. While visiting Kampala in July 2002, Lubanga was arrested by the Ugandan authorities who disapproved Kazini's manipulations and was transferred to Kinshasa's authorities where he remained in confinement. He was released in August after Chief Kahwa, a leader of the Southern Hema supporting the UPC kidnapped Ntumba Luaba (the DRC Minister for Human Rights) while on a peace mission to Ituri and traded him for Lubanga. From June to early August, the UPC (together with the assistance of UPDF) mobilised Hema youth to attack the RCD-ML positions, and Lendu civilians, and competed with the Front des Nationalistes Intégrationnistes (a Lendu militia group) for the control of Ituri province). The FNI allied with the Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri (Force de Résistance Patriotique

d'Ituri, or FRPI). It was based in Bunia, led by Germain Katanga (a Ngiti – south Lendu ethnicity), he predominately trained and armed Lendu youth, and largely targeted Hema communities. The UPC and FNI engaged in ferocious battles, the UPC militias were deliberately killing Lendu, Nande, and Bira civilians and destroying their properties while the FNI militias were primarily targeting Hema. In the end, Bunia fell under UPC's control on the 9th of August, this was celebrated with the ethnic cleansing of Lendu, Nande and Bira in various towns, in Songolo on 21 August, in Mongbwalu, and in Kilo on 6 December 2002 (Human Rights Watch, 2006).

How does the breaking-off of the RCD-Goma into smaller factions explain the politicisation of ethnic identities as a leading role of the Second Congo War? The 1999-2003 Ituri conflict was a very significant phase of the war, comprising large-scale violence with pre-emptive and reprisal attacks committed by both Hema and Lendu militias on each other is communities, using violence that was orchestrated by rebel leaders in accordance to their power quest. From Wamba to Nyamwisi and Tibasiima, and finally to Lubanga, their internal conflict within RCD-ML illustrates the struggle for power and control. They manipulated the Hema and Lendu young men to engage in violence for their political and/or economic gains. For Lubanga, certainly, gaining control of Bunia (and other neighbouring towns) gave him economic advantages, including the management of Ituri's natural mineral wealth. Instabilities between various ethnic groups were politicised by rebel leaders purely for this economic gain, training or siding with an ethnic-led militia group was nothing but a means to an elite's goal. To highlight loose affiliation to ethnic groups, during the trial of Bosco Ntaganda a witness (one of Ntaganda's commander), emphasises that their military operations were not limited to a specific ethnic group. He recalls that while in the town of Mongbwalu (a small town in the Djugu Territory of the Ituri Province), "when I met the Defence team, I told them that there was a group of Hema traders or businessmen who were trading in Bunia, Nyangarai…they were maltreated, their belongings were confiscated" (ICC, 2017: 74). Ultimately, leaders within both UPC and FNI were competing for the primary goal of controlling Ituri province, manipulating the Hema and Lendu communities in the process.

Additionally, suppose one was to explore the Second Congo War from a general conceptualisation. In that case, it could be argued that the manipulation of identity politics

was minimal or non-existent by categorising the war into a battle between Congolese rebels and Kabila's government (with his neighbouring allies). However, although different rebel groups were fighting the government's paramilitary, they were viciously contending for the control of eastern regions, and they were able to do so by taking advantage of ethnic tensions and the lack of state police.

Recent violence

In 2004, Germain Katanga was arrested and Baudouin Adirodo assumed the leadership of FRPI, as Gen. Mbadu Adirodu became his right-hand commander. Adirodo and Adirodu, together with some Lendu militias, were responsible for the 2016-2019 inter-ethnic violence in Ituri. The FRPI militias were systematically targeting the Hema and Alur people in the territories of Djugu, Irumu and Mahagi. Their core objectives included taking control of land and resources held by Hema communities (UNHCR, 2020). The violence claimed nearly 1, 000 civilians, and forced tens of thousands to flee into neighbouring regions or countries. President Felix Tshisekedi stated that the inter-ethnic bloodshed in Ituri province was an attempted genocide. On the 28th of February 2020, after two decades of violence, leaders of FRPI signed a peace agreement with the Congolese government. FRPI agreed to completely cease their military functions and, in return, it was given formal recognition as a political party. MONUSCO documents that "signatories included self-proclaimed militia leader Gen. Mbadu Adirodu, Governor of Ituri Jean Bamanisa and Congolese Defense Minister Aime Ngoy Mukena" (2020, n.p). The FRPI shows the manipulation of ethnic groups undergoing inter-communal tensions to serve its pursuit of power. It is important to note here that neither FRPI and/or FNI never established authority over the Lendu fighters in Ituri. Instead, when inter-ethnic tensions were high, FRPI recruited loosely-allied militias to join their military campaigns of controlling Ituri province. Because the agreement gave the FRPI leaders the opportunity to transform into an official political organisation and therefore answering their quest for power, Lendu militias essentially became irrelevant.

Although discussions of identity politics of the DRC conflict were consistent, there was a particular source that changed its depictions. The 1998 United Nations Security Council report begins by accounting the 1993 and 1995 fighting and massacre in Kivus regions to the

broke down of law enforcement and government's ineffective actions to detect and prosecute perpetrators. However, from the second half of the report, concerning the November 1996 events, the UNSC softens on the government's policing ineffectiveness and instead points to AFDL, Interahamwe and Mai-Mar militias annihilating ethnic groups for the underlying rationale of material. The reasons behind the shift could include political motivations, that is, avoiding strong statements that may prompt miscalculated and/or groundless military intervention by the International community. Besides, the change respects the international norms and laws of State sovereignty codified in the United Nations Charter (1945), UNSC maintains neutrality by upholding DRC's sovereignty and therefore preventing potential criticism of encouraging actions that disregards and/or disrupts independence and dominion of DRC.

Potential limitations to instrumentalism explanation

Although instrumentalism offers a reasonable account of the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict, it does not comprehensively address all the various dimensions influencing the key participants. It demonstrates how elite manipulation and politicization of identities are the underlying cause of grievances that induce violence, however, it lacks a thorough explanation accounting for individuals' decisions to effectively, easily and cooperatively mobilise on ethnic lines. By focusing on the instrumentalist's goals, the explanation minimises and delegitimises political and socio-economic structural dynamics that prompt people to engage in militia activities. Classifying ethnic identity as strategic and ethnic conflict as goal-driven disregards persons' overarching self-concept and identification and, more importantly, subverts historical and persisting structural grievances that ethnic groups may attempt to address. For instance, during the First Congo War the Kabila-led rebellion successfully minimised the Banyamulenge's historical injustices, including the lack of political rights (citizenship) and representation, exclusion from socio-economic structures, and the immediate danger from other Congolese natives and Rwandan Hutus. The Banyamulenge formed a rebellion to address those issues. However, the rise of the AFDL (especially under the leadership of Kabila) took advantage of their vulnerability and under false hope promised them transformational change. An institutionalism explanation would grasp histories of structural marginalisation of the Banyamulenge. The Banyamulenge (originally Rwandan

pastoralists) first settled in South Kivu in the late 19th century, upon their arrival, the local kingdoms prohibited them from creating their customary system of land influence, and they could only access grazing lands if they accept and submit to the existing traditional order (Vlassenroot, 2013). They became subjects of the local traditional authorities; their arrival meant an additional source of wealth for the Kings.

The introduction of Belgian rule created further exploitation. Its administration drastically altered territorial organisation and established new conducts to use the existing economic space. Both Leopoldian and official Belgian administrations restructured rural society. In an attempt to control local population, they created the system of 'Native Authority' by which native Congolese were entitled to some authority and non-natives were powerless. Non-native populations, the Banyamulenge, were constitutionally and socially powerless, and by the end of the colonial rule, they forced to migrate to different regions (Fizi, Mwenga and Uvira). In April 1964, the Mulele rebellion excised their political awakening of forcing the Banyamulenge out of Congo territories. The rebellion started in western Congo, by 1966 it had spread to eastern regions (in the Ruzizi Plain and Uvira), during these two years, the government did little to nothing to address the Banyamulenge's' status and safety. Following the rebellion, the Banyamulenge started to demand access to the political realm, acquired national education and called equal representation. In 1971 the Banyamulenge reached a political milestone. The 1971 and 1972 laws stated those that inhabited Congo before 1960 were now Congolese by virtue of nationality of origin. However, the achievement was short-lived, in June 1981 law No.002 erroneously assumed that the Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda were considered as aliens, and thereby their nationality privileges were deprived (UNCHR, 1997). Additionally, leading to the First Congo War, lack of emancipation and representation were heightened by the sudden and unjustified dismissal of four Rwandan parliamentarians by the Supreme Council of the Republic - Transitional Parliament (UNCHR, 1997). Thus, unlike the instrumental explanation that primarily focuses on Kabila's politicisation of the Banyamulenge's grievances for political motivations, an institutional account convincingly details historical disenfranchisements perpetrated by government institutions that consequently prompts marginalised ethnic groups to fight poorly-led institutions.

Likewise, during the Second Congo War, instrumentalism does not grasp historical frustrations that encourage particular ethnic groups to engage in military campaigns. Focusing on an instrumental explanation of the RCD-ML and FNI/FRPI significantly undermines the long-standing grievances between the Hema and Lendu that dates to the pre-colonial era. In Ituri, Hema and Lendu occupied the most fertile and resource-rich highlands, such as Djugu and Irumu, of which were heavily exploited by the Belgian rule. The colonisers established a plant-based economic system that resulted in the alienation of land and grazing privileges, and displacement of local populations (ICG, 2003). The Belgian colonial administrators coproduced ethnic animosities by preferring the pastoralist Hema, and this resulted in education and wealth inequalities among the two groups. Hostilities regarding land issues erupted in three previous occasions; 1972, 1985 and 1996, land laws that allowed wealthy Hema to purchase inhabited properties increased animosity between the two groups (Barrera, 2015). Also, the Mobutu regime did not constructively attempt to resolve existing antagonisms between the Hema and Lendu or at least institute a proportional representative body to deal with inter-communal issues. Instead, it was concerned about enriching itself by further exploiting ethnic groups. As stated by Turner, "rather than allowing Congolese businessmen to take control of their destiny, Mobutu transferred assets to incompetent and parasitical political elites" (2007: 151). The Lendu ethnic group was not only deprived of economic wealth from land possession but also identity formation and association because identities and the sense of belonging of some Congolese people is conditioned to particular geographies (Hoffmann, 2019). Hence, the long-standing histories of poorly-led governments that not only ineffectively controlled the state affairs but also inflicted disempowerment and alienation that ignited resentments among the Lendu communities, present a plausible explanation for the 1999-2003 violence.

Besides the longstanding structural disparities that correlate to the institutional framework, instrumentalism inadequately comprehends how a primordialist society can influence the intensity of a conflict. Only in an ethnically heterogeneous society experiencing animosity can a motivated instrumentalist be successful. This is because the interconnection of ethnic identity and frustration makes the likelihood of ethnic group cohesion and ethnic conflict somewhat inevitable. Throughout both wars, rebels' leaders were victorious in recruiting fighters because numerous ethnic groups in eastern regions of DRC were experiencing deep-

seated animosity. In towns where social/ethnic unity and harmony was non-existent meant that the feasibility of creating or joining rebel militia groups was increasingly probable. Moreover, an instrumental justification does not recognise ways in which identities are socially constructed and fluid, and the notion that identities and interests are mutually constitutive. Ethnic identities are not only socially constructed, they are also a fluid entity that is established through numerous mechanisms, including colonization, conquest and immigration. The enduring tragedies of Belgian colonial rule, the brutality of Mobutu's regime, geostrategic interests of neighbouring countries, and the influx of Rwandan refugees in DRC have extensively influenced the conflict. Yet, an instrumental analytical framework inadequately discusses their significance. For example, in South Kivu, the 1996 violence led by Kabila forces was due to overlying processes, including provincial and national power, regional dynamics, elite manipulation, and economic or land competition. Therefore, an instrumental explanation does not thoroughly encompass the wide-ranging and inter-locking factors that produced the DRC conflict.

Lastly, unlike instrumentalism, constructivist explanations thoroughly link wide-ranging histories that influence the escalation of ethnic conflicts. By focusing on concrete historical processes, a constructivism perception draws attention to the historical construction and preservation of exclusive identities by colonial and post-colonial administrations for political and social control. Such historical processes affect relations between ethnic groups instigating antagonism among them and therefore justifying the politicisation of ethnic identities triggered by a variety of factors, evolving and producing a conducive environment for violence. During the First and Second Congo Wars, the escalation of the Congolese Tutsi and the Banyamulenge, and the Hema and Lendu, attribute to constructivist framework. All those ethnic groups experienced substantial impacts of the colonial rule, and ruling elites that governed after the 1960s either maintained colonial legacies or constituted little to zero improvements, consequently causing hostilities between ethnic groups. For the Banyamulenge, other historical processes included the 1964-6 Mulele rebellion in which in an attempt to emphasise their autochthon Zairian identity, three native ethnic groups violently tried to expel them out of DRC. The 1993 conflict (mostly known as Masisi war) that the new nationality questions, for six months, autochthon militias attacked Rwandan-speaking individuals (disproportionally affecting the Banyamulenge). Likewise, the Hema and Lendu

engaged in moderate conflicts concerning control of land, first in 1972 then 1985 and 1996, all of which illustrates the formation of image of an each other grounded in hatred. Those external developments are central to instigating and sustaining ethnic rivalry. Although historical processes explain the politicization of ethnic identities, they do not explain genuine ethnic affiliations, nor does it comprehensively explain the timing of the conflict. Constructivism definition of ethnicity as flexible, subjective and evolves depending on interethnic interactions significantly subverts shared frustrations and grievances, and the tendency to think of one's self in relation to ethnic associations which subsequently strengthens violence escalation.

Close examination of the theoretical perspectives

The four theoretical explanations emphasize different conceptualisations of exploring ethnic conflicts, however, their relevance as a single-handedly analytical tool is in question. Primordialism stresses that because ethnic identities are natural, inherent and deep-rooted associations, ethnic conflicts are not only expected but also natural since animosity between two different people is ancient. Primordialism cannot thoroughly explain ethnic conflict because it over-simplifies complicated and intertwining factors that influenced animosity between ethnic groups. The framework does not recognise that identities are constantly evolving to the changing nature of the political, socio-economic and societal environment. Also, its conceptualisation does not provide an explanation to why ethnically diverse societies manage to coexist in peace for thousand or hundred years, then suddenly violence occurs. As mentioned above, unlike primordialism, instrumentalism offers an account that illustrates how people are mobilised on ethnic lines to participate in violence. However, an instrumental framework nevertheless lacks thorough justification that encompasses persons' decisions easily, effectively and cooperatively mobilise on ethnic lines. Institutionalism provides a valid account that perceives ethnic conflict as disparities perpetrated by the state agencies and a declining government, all of which cooperatively produces substantial fear and insecurities that lead excluded and marginalised ethnic groups to incite violence to seek justice. Although institutionalism focuses on poorly-led institutions that generate inequalities, it does not compellingly comprehend other factors including hostilities among ethnic group and

individuals that manipulate identities people in tensions to serve their political or economic goals.

Furthermore, constructivism emphasises that ethnic violence is the results of linking multiple determinants, such as historical, cultural and structural elements. Despite that fact that constructivism offers a more inclusive explanation of ethnic conflict, it nevertheless overlooks the importance of primordial claims to territory possession that produces historic legitimacy grounded on the ancestral tenure of a specific ethnic group and therefore dismissing the important purpose that distrust and hatred play in constructing and upholding ethnic conflicts. Phrased differently, a constructivist explanation underscores ethnic affiliation during tensions that prompt people to quickly and easily participate in the violence. From these/those deficiencies, we can see that neither of the theoretical frameworks can autonomously and confidently account for ethnic conflicts satisfactorily. Therefore, demonstrating the need for an extensive framework that thoroughly conceptualises all components of ethnic conflict, - a framework that thoroughly comprehends factors, such as elite politics, ethnic geography, grievances and greed, historical processes, weak governments, socio-political dynamics, breakdown of security and unequal economic distribution systems, leads to conflicts. In order to provide a more credible and thorough explanation of ethnic conflicts, one must illustrate integration of the various determinants. For instance, while primordialism focuses on mere differences in ethnic identities, and instrumentalism stresses ethnic injustices arising from the politicisation of ethnic identity, and instrumentalist with motivations can only take place within a primordialist society in tensions. In an ethnically heterogeneous society experiencing animosity, goal-driven instrumentalists can be successful because the interconnection of ethnic identity and frustration makes the likelihood of ethnic group cohesion and ethnic conflict somewhat inevitable. Also, the supplement of historical exclusion and marginalisation, weak government institutions, together with lack of police authority, makes the possibility of ethnic violence within a primordialist society to some degree unavoidable.

Conclusion

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo is among the most complicated and continuous in the world. Due to its complexity, extensive and interlocking nature, it can be analysed in various different ways. This research has examined it through the lenses of ethnic conflict approaches. To answer its key research questions, the manipulation of ethnic identities by political or military elites for their economic and/or political motivations was a reoccurring theme throughout the conflict.

Although institutionalism can explain some elements of the conflict, an instrumental framework offers a more adequate and all-compassing justification. Throughout the conflict, it demonstrates how different rebel leaders manipulated or politicised ethnic identities for political objectives and/or resources control. During the first war, Kabila's leadership emerged from a strategically calculated mobilisation of the Banyamulenge, manipulating them into widespread violence, in actions that fundamentally served his political goal. The 1998-2003 conflict was a fierce competition between leaders of UPC, APC and FNI to control Ituri province. Elites used rebel groups and opposing ethnic youth to engage in proxy wars. From Wamba to Nyamwisi and Tibasiima, and finally to Lubanga, their internal conflict within RCD-ML highlights the struggle for power and control. They manipulated the Hema and Lendu young men to engage in violence for their political and/or economic gains. The 2017-19 reoccurring violence in Ituri province are a continuous illustration of power struggle. After Baudouin Adirodo took over Germain Katanga leadership of FRPI, under the military command of Gen. Mbadu Adirodu, the FRPI militias manipulated inter-communal tensions in Djugu, Irumu and Mahagi territories to serve its pursuit of power quest. The group only agreed to peaceful transition after the national and provincial governments officially recognised it as a formal political party, reinforcing its long-standing quest for political influence. Moreover, although instrumentalism provides a more plausible account, it is essential to point out that the explanation did not comprehensively grasp various different facets that influence identity politics.

My research results may face potential biases and limitations. By attempting to comprehend and explain the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict through the lenses of ethnic conflict

theories, there is an underlying assumption that perceives ethnicity as a war-generating dimension. Given that the DRC conflict is relatively recent event and the country is still experiencing instabilities, this research may prompt or stimulate vivid emotions and experiences of the conflict and revisiting the conflict can cause dishearten survivors. At worst, the research may unintentionally prompt anger and hatred that could potentially ignite revenge-seeking actions. Also, some readers may see this research as insensitive since most (if not all) Congolese people are still in the process of recovery from trauma. Although it discuss matters that are close to the heart of Congolese people, its intentions are far from respecting the dignity of DRC's multi-ethnic society. It must rely on censored sources that depict or exaggerate representation of Congolese ethnic groups, and any misleading and prejudice ideas. The principal objective of the research was not to insult Congolese people or portray them as irrational human beings. Instead, it assessed a potential correlation in the process of providing new understandings. Additionally, another potential ethical dilemma is the fact that the research attempts to understand and explain the conflict through ethnic conflict explanations without including primary voices of Congolese people themselves. Although the research does not include verbatim from people that were directly affected by the conflict, it nevertheless draws upon written texts, letters from influential figures and documentaries, all of which provided adequate information. Lastly, and possibly most important, the research eliminated (or minimised) the importance of geopolitical strategic interests of neighbouring and transnational countries, various and interlocking dimensions of the conflict that cannot be adequately explained by ethnic conflict frameworks.

Therefore, due to its potential limit, future research should focus on forming a rigorously enhanced analytical framework that comprehensively combines different elements of ethnic conflict. Using all four theoretical approaches and constructively interacting with ethnic groups at the center of the conflict, to produce thorough peace building policies. For now, the research has demonstrated that of the four explanations, instrumentalism offers a reasonable account of ways in which identity politics were a leading role of the conflict. The First and Second Congo Wars, and recent reoccurring violence were, carefully cultivated and coordinated by various militia elites primarily for political ambitions. They did so by manipulating ethnic identities of certain groups and prompting them into violence.

Recommendations

Implement grassroots strategies.

It is not entirely unpredictable or unexcepted for a heterogeneous ethnic society to experience primordialism hostilities, and such occurrences are deeply embedded in entrenched tribal norms, therefore, grassroots methods should be emphasised for constructive peaceful pathways.

- For instance, ethnic hatred (Hema and Lendu, Hutu and Tutsi, Banunu and Batende) that have historically existed for century or decades, should be addressed through bottom-up participation deliberations.
- People from communities discussing and proposing community-led solutions that tackles underlying issues.
- To ensure the discussions are effectively conducted, there must be an external impartial mediator at the table.
- Given that language plays an essential role in influencing cultural and social attitudes and norms, communities, local and national government must employ ethnic-inclusive and appropriate language to promote inclusivity and eliminate ethnic prejudices.

General principles of peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

Because peace agreements invariably fail, and intervention only permit militia parties to regroup, provincial and national governments must establish select committees to ensure the following:

- Address divisible issues.
- Utilize peace capabilities.
- Establish democratic norms and institutions.
- Tailor agreements to each conflict.

- International organisations such as Interpeace, Peace Direct, African Union, Peacebuilding Commission, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Search for Common Ground, and the United Nations Peacekeeping should promote and assist DRC peace initiates.

As the journey of reforming society begins, the government should enact and follow through on key policy objectives such as:

- Amelioration of root causes.
- Demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of combatant.
- Repatriation of internally displaced persons and refugees.
- Economic (the mining and distribution of mineral wealth) reconstruction.
- Security sector reform.
- Government capacity building: inaugurate human rights institutions and rule of law.

Electoral engineering.

In order to establish effective and long-lasting peace agreements that tackle with long-lasting structural grievances and disparities, the government must be conducted in a consociationalism manner.

- Ensure representation of running candidate from different communities are met;
- Give veto powers to minorities to ensure balance of power, so that ethnic minorities are not excluded from relevant issues by dominant groups.
- Regularly include former combatants (AFDL, RCD and FNI/FRPI) in decision making.
- Inaugurate mixed ethnic cabinet and proportional representation.
- Establish the Executive and the Judiciary branches of government to guarantee balance of power and hold the president accountable.

Media should uphold their essential role of broadcasting and promoting peace agreements.

Traditional news media as a private enterprise (independent from government influence) have responsibilities in advocating peace agreements. Generally speaking, media should uphold their responsibility of promoting peaceful initiatives by:

- Dispelling rumours, ethnic stereotypes and hate messages.
- Hold political elites accountable and redefine meanings of 'heroes' and 'traitors'.
- Publicly call on leaders to stand against the fuelling of cycles of violence.
- Disallow airing any statements that prompt blame and hate messages.

Congolese and international media coverage of conflicts and peacebuilding must abide by Galtung and Fischer (2013), and Wolfsfeld (2004):

- Breaking the tendency to conform to the surrounding norms, this can the cultural and political norms and beliefs, and the unconscious biases.
- Show empathy to all victims or potential victims, expose the true human cost of the conflict, highlight all sides of the conflict and humanise the 'other'.
- Question ethnic, religious, cultural, historic and structural factors.
- Critically assess the historical and immediate causes of the violence, including justice/injustice, sovereignty, land, legitimacy and representation.
- To ensure peace processes are effective, media should engage in process-oriented and behind closed doors, process with little drama, accommodate all parts, and long and complex negotiations.
- Media should operate as a 'high-road' by focusing on conflict transformation, seeing conflict as a challenge and opportunity for human development.

Reference

Africannews. (2019). 'DRC president decries 'attempted genocide' in Ituri province'. Retrieved from: https://www.africanews.com/2019/07/03/drc-president-decries-attempted-genocide-in-ituri-province//

Amnesty International (AI), 2007. 'DR Congo: Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and the reform of the army'. Retrieved from: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/0EEB57C439D22EF94925726B000738E9-Full_Report.pdf

Autesserre, S. (2010). The Trouble with Congo. Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding. New York: Cambridge University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000124

Barrera, A. (2015). The Congo Trap: MONUSCO Islands of Stability in the Sea of Instability. Stability: International Journal of Security and Development, 4(1): 52, 1-16. DOI: http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.gn

Brass, Paul R. (1985). Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Brass, Paul R. (1996). Riots and Pogroms. London: Macmillan.

Brass, Paul R. (1997). Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bucyalimwe, M. (1997). 'Land, power, and ethnic conflict in Masisi (Congo-Kinshasa), 1940s-1994'. The International Journal of African Historical Studies, 30(3): 503-538.

Cederman, L-E., Hug, S., Schubiger, I. L., & Villamil, F. (2017). Civilian victimization and ethnic civil war". American Political Science Association, 1-41.

Cohen, A. (1974). Introduction: The Lesson of Ethnicity, in Cohen, Abner (ed.), Urban Ethnicity. London: Tavistock Publications.

Collier, S., & Hoefflery, A. (2004). 'Greed and grievance in civil war'. Oxford Economic Papers, 56: 563–595.

Crawford, B. (1998). 'The Causes of Cultural Conflict: Assessing the Evidence', in Crawford, Beverley; Lipschutz, Ronnie D. (eds.), The Myth of Ethnic Conflict: Politics, Economics and Cultural Violence, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ellingsen, T. (2000). 'Colourful Community or Ethnic Witches' Brew? Multiethnicity and Domestic Conflict During and After the Cold War'. Journal of Conflict Resolution, 44 (2): 228–249.

Englebert, P (2006). 'Why Congo persists: sovereignty, globalisation and the violent reproduction of a weak state', in Globalization, Violent Conflict and Self-Determination, FitzGerald, V., Steward, F., & Venugopal, R (eds). London; Palgrave Macmillan.

Esteban, J., Mayoral, L., & Ray, D. (2012). 'Ethnicity and conflict: an empirical study'. American Economic Review, 102 (4): 1310-1342.

Delbert M (2013). The Democratic Republic of Congo: between hope and despair. London: Zed Books.

Dunn, C. K (2003). Imagining the Congo, the international relations of identity. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fearon, J., and Laitin, D. (2003). 'Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War'. American Political Science Review, 97(1): 75–90.

Fenton, S. (2003). Ethnicity. Cambridge; Malden. Polity Press.

Ferejohn, J. (1991). 'Rationality and Interpretation: Parliamentary Elections in Early Stuart England' in K. Renwick Monroe (ed.) The Economic Approach to Politics: A Critical Reassessment of the Theory of Rational Action New York: Harper Collins pp 279-305.

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. Journal of Peace Research, 6(3), 167–191. https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336900600301

Galtung J., Fischer D. (2013). 'High Road, Low Road: Charting the Course for Peace Journalism'. In: Johan Galtung. SpringerBriefs on Pioneers in Science and Practice, vol 5. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-32481-9_8

Geertz, C. (1963). 'The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Politics in the New States'. In Clifford Geertz, ed. Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa. London: London Free Press, 255–310.

Geertz, C. (1973). The Interpretation of Cultures; selected essays. New York: Basic Books.

Gobbers, E. (2019). 'Territorial Découpage and Issues of 'Autochthony' in Former Katanga Province, the Democratic Republic of Congo: The Role of Urban Ethnic Associations'. Ethnopolitics, 1-21. DOI: 10.1080/17449057.2019.1676523.

Green, DP., and Seher, Rl. (2003). 'What roles does prejudice play in ethnic conflict?', Annual Review of Political Science, 6 :509-531.

Hochschild, A (1998). King Leopold's ghost a story of greed terror in heroism in colonial Africa. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Hoffmann, K. (2019). 'Ethnogovernmentality: The making of ethnic territories and subjects in Eastern DR Congo'. Science Direct Journals, 1(1): 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2019.10.002

Horowitz, D. (1998). 'Structure and strategy in ethnic conflict'. Paper prepared for the Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics. Retrieved from: http://web.ceu.hu/cps/bluebird/eve/statebuilding/horowitz.pdf

Huening, L-C (2013). 'Making use of the past: the Rwandophone question and the 'Balkanisation of the Congo', Review of African Political Economy, 40:135, 13-31, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2012.761603

Huggins, C. (2010). 'Land, Power and Identity Roots of violent conflict in Eastern DRC. International Alert. Available at: Retrieved from: https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/DRC_LandPowerIdentity_EN_2010.pdf

Human Rights Watch (2006). 'DRC: UPC crimes in Ituri (2002 – 2003)'. Retrieved from: https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/drc-upc-crimes-ituri-2002-2003

Human Rights Watch (2007). 'Democratic Republic of Congo: Renewed Crisis in North Kivu'. Retrieved from: https://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/drc1007/

International Committee of the Red Cross (2018). 'Stricken by communal violence and malnutrition in Tanganyika, Democratic Republic of the Congo'. Retrieved from: https://www.icrc.org/en/document/democratic-republic-congo-communal-violence-malnutrition-tanganyika

International Criminal Court (2010). Trial Chamber I - Courtroom 2. 5 Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo - 6 ICC-01/04-01/06. 7 In the case of The Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo. Retrieved from: https://www.icc-cpi.int/Transcripts/CR2012_04278.PDF

International Criminal Court (2011). Trial Chamber II - Courtroom I. Situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo - ICC-01/04-01/07. In the case of the Prosecutor versus

Germain Katanga. Retrieved from: https://www.icc-cpi.int/Transcripts/CR2012_00971.PDF

International Criminal Court (2017). Trial Chamber VI. Situation: Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the case of The Prosecutor v. Bosco Ntaganda - ICC-01/04-02/06. Trial Hearing. VICTIM: a/0056/13. Retrieved from: https://www.icc-cpi.int/Transcripts/CR2017_02273.PDF

International Criminal Court (2017). Trial Chamber VI. Situation: Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the case of The Prosecutor v. Bosco Ntaganda - ICC-01/04-02/06. Retrieved from: https://www.icc-cpi.int/Transcripts/CR2020_01377.PDF

International Crisis Group. (2003). 'Congo crisis: military intervention in Ituri'. ICG Africa Report N°64. Retrieved from: https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/64-congo-crisis-military-intervention-in-ituri.pdf

International Crisis Group. (2020). 'DR Congo: ending the cycle of violence in Ituri'. Africa Report N°292. Retrieved from: https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/292-drc-ending-violence-in-ituri%20(1).pdf

Kasfir, N. (1979). 'Explaining Ethnic Political Participation'. World Politics 31(3): 365-88.

Kaufman, Stuart J. (2001) Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kaufman, S. (2001). Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War. Ithaca: Cornell UP.

Koyame, M., & Clark, F. J (2002). The economic impact of the Congo war, in The African stakes of the Congo war, J. F. Clark (eds). New York; Palgrave Macmillan.

Longman, T. (2002). 'The complex reasons for Rwanda's engagement in Congo', in in The African stakes of the Congo war, J. F. Clark (eds). New York; Palgrave Macmillan.

Mararo, B. (1997). Land, Power, and Ethnic Conflict in Masisi (Congo-Kinshasa), 1940s-1994. The International Journal of African Historical Studies, 30(3), 503-538. Doi:10.2307/220574

McCalphin, J. O (2002). "Historicity of a Crisis." The African Stakes of the Congo War. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 33-50.

Nest, W. M., Grignon, F., and Kisangani, F. E (2006). The Democratic Republic of Congo: economic dimensions of war and peace. Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

Nzongola-Ntalaja, G (1994). 'Violation of Democratic Rights in Zaire'. Issue: A Journal of Opinion, 22(2): 9-11.

Posner, Daniel N. (2004). 'The implications of constructivism for studying the relationship between ethnic diversity and economic growth'. Constructivism, Diversity of Economic Growth. Retrieved from: http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/anticorrupt/PoliticalEconomy/Daniel%20Posner%20Background%20Paper.pdf

Rogier, E (2006). Democratic Republic of Congo: problems with the peacekeeping process, in Ending Africa's wars: progressing to peace, Roy May and Oliver Furley (eds). Taylor & Francis Group.

Sarkin, J. (2001). Politics of Identity and Exclusion in Africa: From Violent Confrontation to Peaceful Cooperation. "Towards Finding a Solution for the Problems Created by the Politics of Identity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): Designing a Constitutional Framework for Peaceful Cooperation." Seton Hall.

Stravers, A., Chaudhry, R., Wahabzada, T., & Findley, M. (2016). 'Natural resources and violent conflict in central Africa'. Innovations for Peace and Development Department of Defense Minerva Initiative, University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from:

http://www.ipdutexas.org/uploads/2/0/4/5/20455799/natural_resources_and_violent_conflict_in_central_africa___1_.pdf

Toft, M. (2003). The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identities, Interests, and the Invisibility of Territory. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Turner, T (2007). The Congo wars: conflict, myths and reality. London; New York: Zed Books Ltd; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. DRC: inter-ethnic violence in Ituri may constitute "crimes against humanity" – UN report, 2020. Retrieved from: https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25460

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. 'UN report details horrors of western DRC violence, urges action to prosecute those responsible and prevent further bloodshed'. Retrieved from: https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24307

United Nations Security Council. Report of the Secretary-General's Investigative Team charged with investigating serious violations of Human Rights and International Humanitarian law in the Democratic Republic of the Congo'. S/1998/581. Retrieved from: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Civilians%20S1998581.pdf

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Report on the situation of human rights in Zaire, prepared by the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Roberto Garreton, in accordance with Commission resolution 1996/77. E/CN.4/1997/6, available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/report-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-zaire [accessed 14 August 2020]

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Report on the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (former Zaire) / submitted by the

Special Rapporteur, Roberto Garreton, in accordance with Commission resolution 1997/58, 30 January 1998, E/CN.4/1998/65, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b0ad4.html [accessed 14 August 2020]

Vail, Leroy, ed. (1989). The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Vanhanen, T. (1999). 'Domestic Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic Nepotism: A Comparative Analysis'. Journal of Peace Research, 36 (1): 55–7.

Varshney, A (2001). 'Ethnic Conflicts and Ancient hatreds in Smelser, n. et all. (eds), International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences. Oxford: Pergamon.

Vlassenroot, K (2000). 'The promise of ethnic conflict: militarisation and enclave-formation in South Kivu'. In: D. Goyvaerts, ed. Conflict and ethnicity in central Africa. Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 59-105.

Vlassenroot, K. (2002). Citizenship, identity formation & conflict in South Kivu: the case of the Banyamulenge. Review of African Political Economy, 29 (93/94), 499–516.

Vlassenroot, K. (2013). 'South Kivu: identity, territory, and power in the eastern Congo. Usalama Project Report: Understanding Congolese Armed Groups'. Rift Valley Institute, London, UK. ISBN 9781907431258.

Weir, N. (2012). 'Primordialism, Constructivism, Instrumentalism in Rwanda'. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/1526597/Primordialism_Constructivism_Instrumentalism_and_Rwanda

Williams, D. (2015). 'How Useful are the Main Existing Theories of Ethnic Conflict?' Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 4 (1): 147–152.

Wimmer, A. (2008). 'The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multi-level Process Theory'. American Journal of Sociology, 113(4): 970-1022.

Wolfsfeld, G. (2004). Media and the path to peace. New York: Cambridge University Press.