

Relationships Matter:
Persistent Armed Conflict – A Case of Negotiated Authority and Survival

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Supervisor: Dr. Paul Robinson

Co-Supervisor: Dr. Rita Abrahamsen

Student: Richard A. Bright (6043658)

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The University of Ottawa

Graduate School of Public and International Affairs

Abstract

Many of the armed conflicts that have taken place over the past 25 years have been explained as a means by which greedy rebels and elites profit from natural resource rents. Accordingly, much of the research conducted in the field of armed conflict persistence points to greed, as both a cause and effect of this persistence. This has led to the development of generalized policy solutions that fail to consider how various actors are affected by, and how they respond to, the presence of armed conflict. Moreover, few scholars have considered how interconnected economic and political networks contribute to, and sustain, armed conflict. Consequently, this research illustrates how embedded socio-economic relations between civilians, armed groups, and the state, contributes to armed conflict persistence. This paper demonstrates how through daily relationships with armed groups and the state's military forces; civilians are engaged in struggles for public authority, survival and security. This ultimately shapes and reinforces existing socio-economic networks, which are in many respects intrinsically linked to violence. To illustrate this concept, this paper utilizes the armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, specifically the Kivu provinces.

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Chapter 1: An Introduction to Intrastate Armed Conflict

1.1 Introduction to Armed Conflict

Wars have been occurring for several years and have traditionally been inter-state conflicts, (conflicts between nation-states); however, more recently armed conflicts have been taking place at the intrastate level (von Einsiedel, Bosetti, Cockayne, Salih & Wan, 2017), meaning that they're occurring between a state and a non-government party or rebel group (UCDP, 2018). Although instances of civil war and the associated battle-related deaths declined between 1990 and the early 2000s, since 2014 the number of armed conflicts has slightly increased (von Einsiedel, Bosetti, Cockayne, Salih & Wan, 2017). Moreover, their intensity and persistence continues to rise (Merz, 2012; von Einsiedel, Bosetti, Cockayne, Salih & Wan, 2017). For this paper, armed conflict is defined as, “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year” (UDCP, 2018). Armed conflict occurs internally for numerous reasons and often follows a script of violence such as, but not limited to: ethnic tension, economic incentives, state fragility, lootable natural resources, prolonged grievances, horizontal inequalities and systemic discrimination (Lake & Rothchild, 1996).

It is widely accepted that without a firm understanding of the factors that contribute to the persistence of armed conflict, policies designed to ensure and maintain peace will have minimal lasting effect. Consequently, the present-day debate between “greed and grievance” is incomplete insofar as that it obscures the relationship between combatants, civilians and political institutions. Moreover, the prevailing, “resource wars thesis” is highly reductionist, overemphasizing the role of mineral resource extraction and glossing over the ways in which

locals engage in, navigate, survive, and reproduce conflict (Laudati, 2013). Although much research has been conducted on causal factors that augment the risk for civil war, little research has endeavoured to determine the role played by civilians during situations of armed conflict. Moreover, few authors aside from Laudati, Vlassenroot, and Hoffmann have considered how the very fabric and nature of the socio-economic networks, which link civilians, armed groups and the state together might influence and perpetuate armed conflict. Accordingly, this research aims to contribute to the existing literature on armed conflict by answering the following research question: How does the embeddedness of socio-economic relations between civilians, armed groups, and the state contribute to the persistence of armed conflict? To answer this question, the paper will focus primarily on the broader political economy and informal structures of governance and authority present in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), specifically, the Eastern provinces of North and South Kivu.

1.2 Core Argument

It is argued that the factors that influence the persistence of armed conflict cannot be explained by any singular logic, but result from complex, multilayered and interlinking actions carried out by multiple actors engaged in several economic, social, and political activities. In other words, several actors (state institutions, rebels, civilians, civil society organizations) negotiate alternative forms of governance and authority during times of armed conflict and through armed conflict itself. Thus, through daily interactions with armed groups, and state forces, civilians are engaged in struggles over public authority, survival, and security, which ultimately act to shape and reinforce existing socio-economic networks that perpetuate armed conflict.

For the purposes of this research civilians are defined as “all persons who are not members of state armed forces or organized armed groups of a party to the conflict...and therefore, entitled to protection against direct attack unless and for such time as they take a direct part in hostilities (Melzer, 2009: 16). In addition, informal structures of governance will refer “to unwritten (and often vaguely specified) rules, shared expectations, and norms that are not enshrined in formally constituted organizations which modify or substitute legally binding rules. It includes informal practices within formal IGOs, informal institutions, and a broad array of networks constituted by state and non-state actors” (Westerwinter, 2016: 4).

1.3 Methodology

This research relies heavily on qualitative data contained within peer-reviewed sources. Qualitative methods are useful when the research focuses on socially observable phenomenon such as in this case where we are observing the everyday socio-economic activities of civilians, armed groups, the state, and their relation to the persistence of armed conflict. As many of the roles and activities performed by civilians and armed groups stem from a variety of psychological perspectives, they are somewhat subjective and therefore cannot be solely examined by numeric approaches. To effectively answer the proposed research question, scholarly journal articles have been rigorously analyzed to illustrate commonalities among the research previously done, as well as to highlight how civilians, armed groups and state institutions are deeply embedded in broader socio-economic relations. The literature that forms the basis of this research was found by exploring high quality journal publications using the following search terms: (Armed Conflict), (Armed Conflict Persistence), (Civilians in Armed Conflict), (Armed Conflict Duration), (Armed Conflict in the DRC), (Rebel Governance), and

(Political Economies of Armed Conflict). In addition, to supplement the results, the reference lists of the articles selected were also reviewed for additional sources.

Chapter 2: Literature Review – Persistent Intrastate Armed Conflict

2.1 Setting the Scope of the Literature Review

In the past 25 years, scholars have published a wide variety of literature pertaining to causes of civil war and the factors that contribute to the persistence of armed conflict. Much of the research conducted, however, has not examined how the embeddedness of socio-economic relations between civilians, armed groups, and the state can be a factor that contributes to armed conflict persistence. Instead, the literature has consistently pointed to six other factors: grievances, ethnicity, greed, natural resources, foreign involvement and state fragility. Only recently have scholars sought to include other potential factors that sustain armed conflict, namely: horizontal inequalities, and failed state-building policy. In this paper, for clarity, certain causal factors will be grouped together and the literature reviewed will be split into four sections. The first section will encompass grievances, ethnicity and horizontal inequalities. The second section looks at greed and the availability of natural resources. While the third and fourth sections explore state fragility and ungoverned spaces, and foreign involvement in conflict and failed policy interventions, respectively.

2.2 Unaddressed Grievances, Ethnic Tension and Horizontal Inequalities

Upon analyzing the vast array of literature written on grievances as a causal mechanism that sustains and prolongs armed conflict, there is a consensus between scholars that grievances are associated with protracted armed conflict. However, there are different ways in which authors interpret and distinguish these grievances. Some view grievances as inequalities, while others understand grievances as forms of relative deprivation. Authors like Gurr and

Bueno de Mesquita posit that grievances are produced by relative deprivation and are a significant causal mechanism in igniting and sustaining violent internal conflict (Gurr, 1970, 2000; Bueno de Mesquita, 1985). These authors assert that the inability of citizens to attain their financial, social, and political goals due to perceived injustices acts as a catalyst for violent outbursts (Gurr, 1970, 2000; Bueno de Mesquita, 1985). Bueno de Mesquita even so boldly declares that those who have minimal wealth risk violent conflict because they feel they have nothing to lose (Bueno de Mesquita, 1985). Similarly, Murshed and Tadjoeddin underscore economic deprivation between collectives as the most common grievance causing civil war (Murshed & Tadjoeddin, 2009).

Likewise, Regan and Norton agree that grievances are a precursor to violent conflict. However, they argue that there is a profound difference between inequalities and the theory of relative deprivation (Regan & Norton, 2005). They conclude that relative deprivation is a psychological process where one compares one's current social and economic circumstances with one's own expectation of what those circumstances should resemble. Inequality functions completely differently, in that inequalities are judged by individuals in relation to others within their society and are not a comparison of the individual to their perceived self (Regan & Norton, 2005).

When examining the literature further, it is evident that there has been a movement away from the relative deprivation theory in favour of theories pertaining to horizontal inequalities, which are multi-dimensional political, economic and social inequalities within a constructed group (Stewart, 2002). Authors, including Muller, Seligson and Stewart, posit that structural and political inequalities are the main grievances when examining causes of internal conflict. They argue that structural inequalities at the highest governmental levels are

inextricably linked to mass violence and possible revolutions (Muller & Seligson, 1987; Stewart 2008). Muller and Seligson further proclaim that economic inequalities and unequal distribution of land translate into the most salient grievances (Muller & Seligson, 1987).

In contrast to the arguments postulating the causality of grievances and perceived or real inequalities, Tarrow and Tilly do not believe that relative deprivation or inequality alone, at any level, are enough to motivate individuals to participate in armed conflict; they find varying levels of inequality present in every society, not just those in violent conflict (Tarrow, 1994; Tilly, 1978). They argue that grievances themselves do not provide the ability or capacity for the mobilization of organized groups, nor are grievances alone sufficient to prolong fighting. While these authors accept that grievances exist and agree that they can be a causal mechanism of conflict, they claim that grievances by themselves do not cause the onset or protraction of armed conflict (Tarrow, 1994; Tilly, 1978). Similarly, Fearon and Laitin indicate that grievances are only a small factor in civil war and armed conflict. However, these authors do acknowledge that insurgents use and mobilize these grievances to aid their political or economic agenda (Fearon & Laitin, 2003).

While there is, disagreement surrounding the impact of grievances on armed conflict, it is widely maintained that the social conception of identity at both the individual and collective levels are at the core of any civil or ethnic conflict. Akerlof and Kranton reaffirm this notion of identity by demonstrating that collective identity is a necessity for mobilizing groups to engage in combat (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000). In fact, per Ostby, Murshed, Gates and Stewart, pre-existing ethnic and cultural identities are often associated with inequalities that may increase group cohesion, thus facilitating mobilization for conflict (Ostby, 2008; Murshed & Gates, 2005; Stewart, 2002, 2008). Moreover, several scholars maintain the view that ethnic conflicts

often become protracted and persist over long stretches of time due to the highly rigid nature of ethnic identities and group membership (Kaufman, 2006; Horowitz, 1985). However, others dispute the perceived fixed nature of ethnic identities, arguing that ethnicity and ethnic identity are malleable, socially constructed, and can change over time. From this perspective, ethnicity is often utilized by rebels, politicians, and insurgent groups to provide a cover story for ulterior motives, such as wealth generation and private political interests (Kalyvas, 2006). More recently, Wucherpfennig, Metternich, Cederman, and Skrede have argued that the duration of armed conflict is not directly affected by ethnicity, but instead is dependent upon the relationship between ethnic groups and state institutions (Wucherpfennig, Metternich, Cederman & Skrede, 2012). Moreover, these authors insist that both rebel actors and government officials capitalize on the ascriptive nature of ethnicity for political and/or economic gain (Wucherpfennig, Metternich, Cederman & Skrede, 2012).

2.3 Greed and Natural Resources

The review of numerous scholarly sources relating to civil war and armed conflict indicates that much of the literature released after 1990 tends to postulate greed and the availability of natural resources as the main mechanism responsible for inciting and prolonging armed conflict. The greed versus grievance debate first described by Collier and Hoeffler rejects many of the arguments made by relative deprivation theorists, who hold collective social and political deprivation as drivers of rebellion. However, their more recent research does acknowledge that grievances play a role in conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004, 2009). Collier, Hoeffler and Gagnon argue that collective grievances provide opportunity for rebel leadership to seek more power (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004, 2009; Gagnon, 2004). Using a largely econometric model, Collier, Hoeffler, and Vinci conclude that economic incentives,

although highly prevalent in countries with large natural resource endowments, do not necessarily indicate that civil wars are caused by economic deficiencies (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004, 2009; Vinci, 2006). Rather, it is argued that the conflict will be sustained and its duration prolonged based on the quantity of economic incentive provided and the saliency of greed. Additionally, it is rebel leaders who use these popular discourses about grievances to mobilize soldiers and civilians to extract resources, to justify their violent action, and to profit from the conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004, 2009; Vinci, 2006). While grievances provide a reason or motive to mobilize, the greed for material riches provides incentive and opportunity to wage war (Stearns, 2014). Yet, the greed for material wealth is only salient when wealth-generating activities are easily accessible. Lootable natural resources are one of the most profitable and economically viable ways to enrich oneself and to pay rebels.

Accordingly, Collier, Hoeffler and Ross argue that dependency, extractability and exportation of resources are highly correlated to civil war, as they make it possible for rebels to finance themselves. They find that lootable mineral resources provide incentives for rebel groups to use violent coercive tactics when establishing territorial control over diamond and gold mines (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002, 2004, 2009; Ross, 2004). In addition, authors like Lujala, Rod and Thieme agree that for some rebel leaders greed may be incentive enough to loot and extract valuable resources, but since rebel groups are largely disorganized some of the rebel combatants may be fighting to address an uneven distribution of wealth rather than simply using conflict to enrich themselves (Lujala, Rod & Thieme, 2007). In other words, the opportunity for rebellion is not created by material greed but rather sustained by it (Ballentine & Nitzschke, 2003).

2.4 State Fragility and Ungoverned Spaces

State fragility, failed states, and the notion of ungoverned spaces are regarded as cause and effect mechanisms in much of the literature written on armed conflict, civil war, and terrorism (Menkhaus, 2003; Iqbal & Starr, 2008; Atzili, 2010). Much of literature defines state failure in a similar way to Baylis, Smith and Owens, who define failed states as, “a state that has collapsed and cannot provide for its citizens without substantial external support and where the government of the state has ceased to exist inside the territorial borders of the state” (Baylis, Smith & Owens, 2011: 564). For the most part, definitions of failed statehood in the literature assume the inability of the state to govern all regions within its borders, which creates opportunities for armed violence. Thus, the lack of centralized state control allows for ungoverned spaces or governance voids that are often filled by non-state actors (Atzili, 2010). Put differently, these spaces are not necessarily ungoverned, but governed by alternative, non-state authorities (Atzili, 2010). While not all non-state actors are involved in violent conflict, recent research indicates that ungoverned spaces often provide powerful economic incentives and the necessary conditions for terrorists, armed rebel groups and insurgent forces to operate (Atzili, 2010). This view is consistent with the Weberian notion of statehood, in which the state is required to possess a monopoly over the legitimate use of force within its borders and is regarded as the only legitimate provider of governance and public services (Kocher, 2010). Clunan and Trinkunas, however, disagree with the notion that ungoverned spaces are areas in which governance and the state do not exist. From their perspective, the reason several scholars and policymakers express concern about ungoverned spaces and failed states stems from the highly entrenched western view of territorial state sovereignty, which constitutes, delineates, and produces the current world order (Clunan & Trinkunas, 2010). Instead, they

posit that ungoverned spaces are better viewed as ‘differently’ governed. While the state may not have a large visible presence in these spaces, there is not necessarily a lack of governance or security per se (Clunan & Trinkunas, 2010). Additionally, these spaces are not void of social and economic life, but governed by alternative sources of authority, which are not always inherently violent or predacious (Branović & Chojnacki, 2011; Clunan & Trinkunas, 2010). Thus, actors other than the state can provide security and enforce rules (Branović & Chojnacki, 2011), however, these arrangements are rarely whole-heartedly accepted by sovereign states.

Regardless of how one defines failed states, armed conflict is both a cause and an effect of collapsing state institutions. This is because failed and fragile states have been statistically linked to a wide range of political, economic, and social issues that often create pervasive grievances that can be a source of mobilization of collective action (Gates, Nygard & Trappeniers, 2016; Stewart & Brown, 2009; Patrick, 2011). Moreover, failed and fragile states have been linked to environmental degradation, economic collapse, ethnic discrimination and widespread inequalities, which exacerbate existing grievances (Gates, Nygard & Trappeniers, 2016; Stewart & Brown, 2009; Patrick, 2011). There is a correlation between the erosion of state institutions and effective governance, thus making the weakened state more prone to uprisings and rebellion, thereby creating a perpetual cycle of state fragility and protracted armed conflict (Gates, Nygard & Trappeniers, 2016). While there are clearly divergent views on failed statehood and its correlation to the onset and prolonging of armed conflict, it is evident that the institutional capabilities of the state are, at the very least, indirectly linked to the causes and effects of persistent armed conflict.

2.5 Foreign Involvement and External Intervention

Research regarding armed conflict persistence has begun to focus on external actors and foreign interventions. Most authors concur that foreign actors can play several roles in armed conflict, from providing peacekeeping forces and mediating negotiations, to funding (at times both sides of the conflict), as well as deploying military forces into the conflict zone (Cunningham, 2010). Authors like David Cunningham purport that one of the major reasons foreign involvement tends to augment the duration of conflict stems from the fact the many external actors, specifically states, often become involved in armed conflict to pursue interests of their own and not to resolve conflict (Cunningham, 2010). Cunningham argues that when states intervene to pursue their own agendas rather than establishing peace they render armed conflict more difficult to resolve. Evidence indicates that the greater the number of actors involved in the conflict, the less likely the possibility of achieving a ceasefire or lasting peace agreement (Cunningham, 2010). Moreover, studies indicate that external states have less incentive to negotiate in good faith when compared to domestic actors because it is often more beneficial for them to prolong fighting to increase the probability of greater returns (Cunningham, 2010). Similarly, Dashwood and Humphreys postulate that greedy outsiders may be a factor influencing the onset and recurrence of violent resource contestation (Dashwood, 2000; Humphreys, 2005). Involvement of outside forces in the pursuit of other countries' natural resources often leads to an escalation of conflict and contributes to the prolonging of war. It is evident that outside intervention in conflict plays a significant role in conflict duration. As well, it should be noted that this interpretation is highly state-centric and operates within an internal/external dichotomy (Rioux, 2003), which ignores, as well as obscures, the reality of confounding variables such as the presence of non-state entities.

By the same token, Regan investigated whether armed conflicts with outside intervention last longer than those in which no outside intervention took place (Regan, 2000, 2002). The evidence from Regan's initial inquiry indicates that protracted conflicts tended to have more external involvement of foreign actors such as militaries, governments and non-governmental organizations. Moreover, Regan concluded that conflicts without direct third-party interventions are more likely to terminate within the first few months following the onset of armed conflict (Regan, 2000, 2002). Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) utilized a microeconomic maximization model to determine whether external support from a foreign entity played a role in conflict duration. Their research concluded that financial and material support from external third-parties affects the costs of continuing armed conflict (Elbadawi & Sambanis, 2000). However, other research conducted by Sambanis indicated that the effect of foreign involvement on conflict persistence is dependent upon the type of intervention (Doyle & Sambanis, 2000). This position is further articulated by Regan and Aydin, who upon examining several forms of armed conflict intervention concluded that interventions that involve military forces, prolong conflict, whereas interventions that occur through diplomatic channels tend to decrease the duration of violence (Regan & Aydin, 2006).

2.6 *What is missing from the Literature?*

From the literature reviewed, it is evident that many of the factors believed to influence the persistence of armed conflict are not unidirectional but in fact have characteristics of both cause and effect. The standard explanations stem from a highly state-centric view of conflict and ignore how civilians, rebels, and other non-state entities interact in broader socio-economic networks that influence, reinforce and sustain conflict. Moreover, from a greed perspective, the persistence of armed conflict is fundamentally linked with the resource curse

thesis that posits that the profitability of mineral resources is the primary motive for armed conflict (Laudati, 2013). In other words, competition over a country's vast mineral wealth renders it a battleground in which state institutions and authorities erode and are thus replaced by rebel groups and warlord profiteers. However, the greed perspective does little to explain how alternative and informal socio-economic networks come to be, or how civilians, rebel groups, and other states and non-state entities interact and operate within these networks. Consequently, the failure to consider broader political economies in conflict analysis has led to ineffective state-centric peace-building initiatives that disregard the roles played by grassroots actors (Laudati, 2013; Perazzone, 2017). To bridge this gap, this paper aims to illustrate how the embeddedness of socio-economic relations between civilians, armed groups, and the state is a factor that contributes to the persistence of armed conflict.

Chapter 3: Case Study: Democratic Republic of the Congo

3.1 Introducing the Case Study

The persistence of armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is perhaps one of the most intriguing instances of protracted armed conflict in the post-Cold War era. Likewise, the situation in the DRC is arguably the epitome of a complex conflict, with a multitude of actors negotiating, often violently, for public authority, power, resources, security, and in some cases, peace (Hoffmann, Vlassenroot & Marchais, 2016). These actors range from civilians, non-governmental organizations, civil society groups, foreign militaries, rebel groups, and the Congolese state government. At any given time, more than 50 armed groups are said to be active in the Eastern DRC alone (Stearns, 2014). The Kivu region is a resource abundant area located in the Eastern DRC. The region extends into Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi, and is sometimes referred to as the Great Lakes Region given its proximity to Lake

Kivu and Lake Tanganyika (Boas & Dunn, 2014). Within the DRC, the Kivu region consists of two provinces: South Kivu and North Kivu. In terms of violence, the Kivu region has been at the heart of armed conflict in the DRC since the start of the First Congo War (1996-97) (Vlassenroot, 2013). Furthermore, following the culmination of the Second Congo War (1998-2003), armed conflict has persisted and in some cases multiplied (Vlassenroot, 2013; Boas & Dunn, 2014). Unsurprisingly, most researchers have attributed the persistence of armed conflict in the DRC to one, or a combination of, the causal factors described in the literature review. While not disregarding the importance of these factors, the research of this paper points to the embeddedness of socio-economic relations between civilians, armed groups and the state, as a key contributing factor to the persistence of armed conflict in the Kivus.

3.2 Historical Background

Understanding the role played by civilians during situations of armed conflict in the DRC and how their embeddedness in socio-economic relations with rebel groups and the state affects the persistence of armed conflict requires a concrete knowledge of the complex socio-economic networks that have evolved historically over time. Accordingly, the subsequent section provides an historical overview of the DRC, beginning with a brief description of the pre-colonial era and ending with an overview of recent armed conflict in the Kivu regions.

Pre- Colonization

Prior to colonialism, what later became the DRC saw several different forms of political organization. In South and North Kivu, political society was organized into chiefdoms; in more densely populated areas there were tributary arrangements, whereas in smaller communities, arrangements were more decentralized (Vlassenroot, 2013). The most centralized political arrangement in the Kivu region was the Shi chiefdom, led by the Mwami

(King). Central to the King's authority was his control over highly fertile and agriculturally productive land. Access to arable land was regulated through several social and political relationships largely centering on identity and the payment of tribute to the King (Vlassenroot, 2013). This sort of land tenure system functioned to create a network of interdependent relationships, which served to territorialize identity and reinforce the King's power. Thus, tribute and territorial loyalty was exchanged for land rights and basic security (Vlassenroot, 2013). However, it was not until Belgian administrators attempted to restructure existing customary arrangements by transposing more European administrative structures that identity and ethnicity became reified and politicized (Vlassenroot, 2013; Boas & Dunn, 2014).

Colonization

Belgian colonizers first arrived in the Congo at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1885, the Congo became known as the, "Congo Free State" and officially fell under the private rule of Belgium's King Leopold II (Hesselbein, 2007). In 1908, the Belgian state inherited the "Congo Free State" from King Leopold, at which time the country's name was changed to the Belgian Congo (Young & Turner, 1985). In the beginning, the colonial economy centered on the exportation of primary commodities, mostly made up of raw materials and rubber. The colonial labour structure leveraged violence to incentivize productivity (Young & Turner, 1985). The extent of this violence was unmatched in colonial Africa (Aldwin, 2010). Psychological terror tactics such as rape, torture, and mutilation were routinely used by colonial forces to ensure rubber quotas were consistently met (Aldwin, 2010). When civilians were unable to meet the quotas, colonial expeditionary forces were deployed to punish the offenders by burning crops and entire villages (Aldwin, 2010). In other words, forced labour was the engine that ensured export commodities were extracted and transported for European

markets, at little cost to the Belgian crown (Hesselbein, 2007). While colonial economic practices had some impact on integrating a broader economy, this integration remained very limited (Young & Turner, 1985). Accordingly, informal economies largely disconnected from the centre existed in parallel to the colonial economy. Most natural resource and mineral extraction was taking place in the Eastern region of the Belgian Congo, which was sparsely populated (Young & Turner, 1985). Consequently, Belgian administrators implemented measures to bring a considerable number of Rwandans across the border (Hesselbein, 2007). Prior to colonization several ethnic groups had called North and South Kivu home. Moreover, many Hutu and Tutsi people had also migrated from Rwanda to North Kivu long before colonizers arrived in the region. However, during the colonial period many more Hutu and Tutsi left Rwanda for the Eastern Congo (Boas & Dunn, 2014). Additionally, it is worth mentioning that prior to colonial rule, distinctions between the Hutu and Tutsi were largely politically and economically insignificant.

Regardless, ethnicity and identity were the primary mechanisms used by colonizers to consolidate the power of chiefdoms, while at the same time reinforcing colonial control. Belgian colonizers restructured existing chiefdoms to make them more hierarchical (Vlassenroot, 2013). Furthermore, this process of identity restructuring was not done uniformly. Rather than imposing uniform administrative and societal structures, colonial administrators created different laws for each ethnic group. Thus, ethnicity became the main legal source to claim rights and security, while at the same time solidifying ethnicity as the primary organizing principle in both North and South Kivu (Vlassenroot, 2013). The colonial organizing policy created large divisions between communities. For example, in both North and South Kivu, colonizers attempted to merge smaller chiefdoms into larger ones, to create

more administratively efficient structures (Vlassenroot, 2013). However, in so doing, many Tutsi farmers were left without their own administrative entities and effectively became subjects of Bembe chiefs (an ethnic group native to North-Eastern Congo). This was done in part because the colonial administrators did not recognize the territorial claims of the Tutsi (Banyamulenge – Tutsi Congolese) as legitimate, and thus they were not considered to have ‘Native Authority’ (Vlassenroot, 2013). Consequently, many leaders of the newly amalgamated chiefdoms actively sought to exclude Banyamulenge populations from the political sphere (Vlassenroot, 2013). The result was a complex relationship in which Belgian colonial administrators, “presided over ‘citizens’, while at the same time, ‘traditional authorities’ ruled over subjects” (Hesselbein, 2007: 18).

Overall, the Belgian government did not provide the Belgian Congo with any significant investment in infrastructure, health, or education (Hesselbein, 2007). Many of the core public services were left to missionaries and European companies (Hesselbein, 2007). This is not surprising when one considers that one of the particularities of the Belgian colonial system was the deliberate effort to ensure local workers were poorly-trained and ill-educated (Hesselbein, 2007). Put differently, colonial administrators actively sought to ensure that civilian participation in political, social and economic spheres was limited. Provisions within the 1908 Charte Coloniale, a constitution-like document developed for the Belgian state, expressly prohibited colonial subjects from participating in political activity of any kind (Young & Turner, 1985). On the other hand, colonial subjects were permitted, and at times encouraged, to organize across religious, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic lines. Consequently, colonial decisions to restrict political participation rendered the political realm of the Belgian Congo disorganized and fragmented (Hesselbein, 2007). Even towards the end of Belgian

colonial rule no real nationwide anti-colonial movement ever took place. Although several smaller political movements eventually did emerge, they were primarily grassroots initiatives that centered on various territorial issues largely pertaining to ethnicity and inclusion (Hesselbein, 2007). Thus, these highly territorialized political movements lacked a shared vision of what a post-colonial Congo was to look like. However, despite the fragmented reality of the political sphere, leaders of the various movements and their organizations would come to be the future elite stakeholders in the Congo's state-building project (Hesselbein, 2007).

Initial Independence

On June 30, 1960, the Belgian Congo officially achieved independence and assumed the name, République du Congo (Republic of the Congo) also known as Congo-Léopoldville. Following elections, Patrice Lumumba, the leader of the Mouvement National Congolais (MNC), became the first elected Prime Minister while Joseph Kasavubu leader of the Alliance of Bakongo (ABAKO) became President (De Witte, 2017). Celebrations, however, did not last long, as the Congolese military mutinied almost immediately causing much unrest throughout the country (De Witte, 2017). Congolese soldiers would no longer accept gross underpayment and direction from Belgian foreigners (De Witte, 2017). Consequently, the unrest forced more than 10,000 Belgian military and administrative personnel to leave the country. In the weeks that followed, many of country's richest provinces, namely Shaba (Katanga), South Kasai, and Kivu, declared plans to secede from the Republic (Young & Turner, 1985). In response to the Katanga secession led by Moïse Tshombe, both the Prime Minister and the President requested assistance from the United Nations (UN). However, the UN was hesitant to intervene (Hesselbein, 2007). Following weeks of inaction, on September 14, 1960, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, at the time the Chief of Staff of the Army, successfully

executed his first coup d'état. Shortly thereafter, Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba was assassinated leaving the central government without an elected Prime Minister (De Witte, 2017).

Provincial and territorial fragmentation continued to inspire secessionist movements and ultimately led to direct contestation of central government authority in the next few years (Hesselbein, 2007). By 1963, Moïse Tshombe had abandoned his secessionist aspirations, instead choosing to focus on attaining control of the central government (Young & Turner, 1985). In 1964, with assistance from the United States and Belgium, Tshombe and his Katangan soldiers overthrew the government and he installed himself as Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo (De Witte, 2017). Not long after that, in 1964, a provisional constitution came into force (Young & Turner, 1985). This caused the existing provincial units to split into smaller areas, thus creating an opportunity for a multitude of new political parties to vie for control over provincial parliaments (Young & Turner, 1985). On November 24, 1964, Mobutu, along with several high-ranking army officials, seized power and immediately installed Mobutu as the chief of state (De Witte, 2017). From the onset of independence, the Congolese state as a territorial entity was highly contested by several parties with various affiliations and agendas (Hesselbein, 2007). This fragmentation was a direct consequence of the colonial policies designed to ensure that civilian participation in political, social and economic spheres remained limited (Hesselbein, 2007). The use of extreme violence by the Belgians created a highly regionalised labour system predicated on exploitation and resource extraction. The failure of Belgian colonizers to effectively integrate Congolese citizens into existing social and political institutions left the state and its people ill-prepared for independence (Young &

Turner, 1985). Consequently, the newly independent state was characterized by a lack of coherent central authority and an inability to effectively govern on the national level.

Mobutu Years (1965-1997)

Upon successfully overthrowing the previous leadership, Mobutu began undertaking measures to augment the coercive powers of the government. This entailed repositioning the government as a centralized and authoritarian force (Young & Turner, 1985). The purpose of strengthening the central power of the state was to ensure the government could contain the ambitions of other powerful elites. Moreover, it would enable Mobutu and the central government to destroy contesting political factions with physical force and when feasible, buy their loyalty with money and patronage (Young & Turner, 1985; Reno, 2006). Leveraging support from the United States and Belgium, Mobutu set about neutralizing opposing factions scattered throughout the provinces (Young & Turner, 1985). The result was a slow pacification of contesting elites. To ensure control over the newly centralized state, he appointed trusted civilians to various state leadership positions, ensuring their continued loyalty through patronage (Reno, 2006). Mobutu's broader state-building vision was to position the Congo (which he renamed as Zaire) as a robust unified nation-state capable of harnessing its economic potential. Subordination of all remaining political opposition came to fruition in 1967 through the creation of the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (MPR), a political party with Mobutu at the helm (Young & Turner, 1985). Over time, the party's sphere of control expanded to include civil society groups, unions, and student organizations (Young & Turner, 1985). By 1970, the MPR was the only legal political party in the country. To further centralize state authority, Mobutu passed legislation reducing the number of provinces from twenty-one to eight, excluding Kinshasa, the capital (Hesselbein, 2007). The result was a

massive reduction of provincial autonomy as virtually all political, economic and social policy decisions were now run through the President. Furthermore, previously autonomous provincial administrators were replaced with regional commissioners who reported directly to the state government in Kinshasa (Young & Turner, 1985).

From the onset of his tenure as President, Mobutu began nationalizing foreign-owned companies in several key economic and social sectors (Renton, Seddon & Zeilig, 2007). In the late 1960s, the Congo benefitted from significant economic growth, primarily the result of high copper prices (Young & Turner, 1985). To complete the process, Mobutu nationalized many of the remaining Belgian mining and mineral companies. This gave Mobutu control over all of Zaire's vast mineral resources (Venugopalan, 2016). However, by the mid-1970s, the price of copper and several other mineral commodities was in rapid decline (Young & Turner, 1985). To fill the economic void that resulted, Mobutu turned to the bilateral financial assistance offered by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (Venugopalan, 2016). To do so, Mobutu leveraged his position as a strategic ally of the West in the fight against communism (UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2015). However, only a small fraction of the funds, which were intended for economic revitalization and infrastructure renewal, reached their destination (Reno, 2006). Most funds were diverted to support Mobutu's patronage networks spread across Zaire (Rainer, 2013; Renton, Seddon & Zeilig, 2007; Reno, 2006). Over time, Zaire accumulated massive debt because of the IMF and World Bank loans (Venugopalan, 2016; UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2015). Interestingly, failing state institutions rendered those who had benefited from Mobutu's patronage even more useful to local civilians as they became the only means of attaining economic sustenance (Reno, 2006).

By 1972, Mobutu had enacted legislation on citizenship and land reform to alleviate

long-standing tensions between Rwandan immigrants (Banyarwanda) and Congolese citizens. This legislation granted citizenship to all those who had immigrated to Zaire before 1960 (Stearns, 2012). Traditionally, Rwandan immigrants were excluded from access to customary land due to their lack of native authority; however, the newly enacted citizenship policy provided many affluent Congolese-Rwandans with the opportunity to purchase valuable land in North Kivu (UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2015). In 1981, following pressure from Congolese citizens claiming native authority, the policy was reformulated. This time, only those who could trace their roots to the Congo prior to 1885 were granted access land and citizenship rights (Stearns, 2012; UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2015). Thus, more than half a million Banyarwanda living in North Kivu witnessed their legal rights come under fire. To avoid losing their rights and recently acquired land, many Congolese Tutsi communities began referring to themselves as Banyamulenge to differentiate themselves from immigrants and reaffirm their indigenous status (Stearns, 2012). Nevertheless, tensions between Rwandan immigrants and those who saw themselves as indigenous Congolese citizens would continue to increase over the coming years (Stearns, 2012).

By the 1990s, critical issues centering on economic stagnation, state decay, land access, legal rights, and citizenship proved to be catalysts for violent conflict (UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2015). By 1991, Mobutu could no longer pacify contesting political forces in the Kivus. With pressure from the international aid donor community, and following a series of student and civilian protests to which the government responded with aggression, killing several protestors, the government in Kinshasa began efforts to initiate a process of democratization (Hoffmann & Vlassenroot, 2014). The government declared that to organize proper elections, however, they would first have to undertake a process of identifying nationals

(Stearns, 2012). Moreover, government authorities proclaimed that it would not recognize the children of immigrants as Zairian citizens (Stearns, 2012). In response, several Banyarwanda gangs attacked and burned regional administrative offices (Stearns, 2012). In 1991, Mobutu's government took another approach and adopted a policy under the name 'la géopolitique', which effectively ended the appointment of outsiders to high-level provincial posts.

Accordingly, several officials from the Nande, Hunde and Nyanga communities were appointed to fill the posts (Stearns, 2012). By 1993, Nande, Hunde and Nyanga leaders would urge security forces to combat the influence of Hutu armed groups (Stearns, 2012), which resulted in 500 people being killed in Ntoto on March 20, 1993 (Stearns, 2012). This provoked violence that soon spread through several communities in surrounding regions. After three months, it is estimated that approximately 6,000 – 15,000 people were killed, with another 250,000 internally displaced (Stearns, 2012). Fighting would continue until Mobutu deployed his presidential guard to end the conflict. Of course, this did not last, with armed conflict reigniting in 1994. Following this, more than 1,000,000 refugees from Rwanda fled the genocide and relocated to the Eastern Zaire (Prunier, 2009). Not all Rwandans fleeing the genocide were desperate refugees however; many were former Rwandan government officials and members of armed militias who had themselves, actively participated in the Rwandan genocide (Prunier, 2009).

Congo War I (1996-1997)

The mass influx of refugees following the Rwandan genocide, coupled with pre-existing micro-rivalries at the local level with regards to land, resources, and power, acted to reinforce existing ethnic cleavages in the Kivus (Autesserre, 2009). Even before the first Congo War officially began, many pre-existing local cleavages had undergone a process of

transformation (Autesserre, 2009). The result was the formation of alliances between Rwandan Hutus and Congolese Mayi-Mayi groups against the Banyamulenge. Mobutu, acted in support of Rwandan Hutus (Williams, 2013) and adopted legislation that stripped all Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge of their Congolese citizenship (Venugopalan, 2016). Furthermore, sensing impending ethnic cleaning, in September 1996, members of the Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge communities pre-emptively launched coordinated attacks against the Zairian army and Hutus living in refugee camps along the Rwandan border (Diercks, 2011). The Rwandan government, intent on weeding out the Hutu officers and militia-men responsible for the genocide, provided the Banyamulenge in the Kivus with the necessary training, funding and support to undertake this objective (Diercks, 2011). Moreover, Rwanda openly encouraged the Banyamulenge to mobilize against the Mobutu regime for its role in providing Hutu rebels with sanctuary (Williams, 2013). In support, the Rwandan government led by the Rwandan Patriotic Front deployed its military forces to support the Banyamulenge in their war against the Hutus. The Rwandan invasion of Zaire in the fall of 1996 ignited the First Congo War. To legitimize their invasion, Rwanda and its ensemble of supporters backed and financed the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo (AFDL) (Diercks, 2011). The AFDL was a group comprised of former Congolese revolutionary parties that had been repressed by the Mobutu regime (Tull, 2009; Williams, 2013). The AFDL, led by Laurent-Desire Kabila, were welcomed by many Congolese citizens who had grown tired of Mobutu's kleptocratic rule (Williams, 2013; UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2015). By May of 1997, Kabila's AFDL had successfully advanced nearly 1000 miles from Eastern Zaire to Kinshasa and overthrown Mobutu's government (Williams, 2013; UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2015).

Congo War II (1998-2003)

The Second Congo War can in some ways be viewed as a continuation of the First Congo War, but under different circumstances (Huening, 2009). More than a dozen African nations were involved in the conflict, many participating directly in hostilities. Over the course of nearly five years, approximately 5,000,000 people died from war related causes, including direct combat, collateral damage, malnutrition and disease (Huening, 2009). It is evident that prior to Rwandan support, Kabila's AFDL lacked the political and military force necessary to overthrow the Mobutu regime. However, upon successfully ousting Mobutu, Kabila was faced with the difficult task of liberating the AFDL from Rwandan influence. Over time, the presence of Rwandan forces in Zaire (now renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC]) was perceived as the de facto Rwandan rule of the Congo state (Reyntjens, 1999). Rumours of Kabila's potential assassination by Rwandan military forces quickly spread throughout the capital and created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity in Kinshasa (Weiss, 2001). By July 27, 1998, cooperation between the government of Rwanda and Kabila had effectively ended, with the Rwanda military being formally asked to leave (Weiss, 2001). Over the next 20 days, armed conflict would engulf the country, prompting many analysts to refer to the situation as the First African Continental War (Weiss, 2001).

In North and South Kivu escalating ethnic tensions and citizenship issues once again proved to be catalysts for armed conflict (Diercks, 2011). However, this time conflict was between the Tutsi Congolese Banyarwanda and those Congolese who considered themselves to be indigenous to the region (Diercks, 2011). Indigenous Congolese civilians underwent a process of mobilizing armed militias intent on protecting themselves from a full-scale Tutsi takeover (Diercks, 2011). In contrast to the First Congo War in which Rwanda and Uganda

provided support, armament, and soldiers to Kabila, this time Rwanda and Uganda backed armed proxies to overthrow their former ally (Huening, 2009). In 1998, working in tandem with the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD), Rwanda and Uganda invaded the Eastern DRC (Diercks, 2011). Shortly after, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe and several other African states intervened in defense of the DRC (Diercks, 2011). Whereas nations such as Burundi got involved to protect themselves from spillover of armed conflict (Prunier, 2009), Sudan established a presence in the region by providing several of the rebel groups, namely the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), with military equipment and financial backing (Prunier, 2009). Uganda also began to install a new rebel movement under the name, Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC), which directly rivaled the RCD in terms of power and support (Tull, 2007). Besides the numerous international state armies involved in the conflict, a growing number of rebel and militia groups began to contribute to the fighting. The DRC had little in the way of a functional state military, and the government was largely forced to rely on other armed actors (Prunier, 2009). Those aiding Kabila were militia defence groups known as the Mayi-Mayi. Many of these groups were already fighting the RCD insurgency without any form of financial compensation. Additionally, most Mayi-Mayi militias were poorly trained but extremely violent (Prunier, 2009). Not surprisingly, several of the Mayi-Mayi targeted both RCD fighters and Banyamulenge populations. Their attacks, however, only served to expand the conflict, which negatively affected many of the civilian populations they intended to protect (Prunier, 2009).

By 1999, Kabila was locked in a stalemate with Rwanda, Uganda and various splinter groups. To end hostilities several governments supporting armed groups and/or directly participating in combat agreed to sign a ceasefire agreement at a peace meeting in Lusaka,

Zambia (Diercks, 2011; Stearns, 2012). Although, the ceasefire agreement provided a temporary decrease in violence across the country, armed conflict continued to consume the Eastern provinces. Peacekeeping forces, part of the operation run by the UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC), were ill-equipped to handle the complexities of the conflict, even though more than 20,000 peacekeepers were present in the country (Diercks, 2011). As Autesserre notes, UN forces were almost exclusively preoccupied with halting violence through a top-down approach that for the most part ignored the local and regional dimensions of armed conflict in the Kivus (Autesserre, 2008). At the same time, President Kabila was assassinated, leaving his son Joseph Kabila in control of the government (Prunier, 2009; Stearns, 2012). Nevertheless, by 2002 several of the warring parties were prepared to withdraw from conflict. The two main factions, the RCD and the MLC, agreed to sign the Sun City peace accord that included a power-sharing agreement for the two parties, effectively distancing themselves from their former backers (Diercks, 2011). The power-sharing agreement entailed the establishment of four new vice-president positions that would be occupied by a member of the RCD, MLC, civil society, and the governing party (Stearns, 2012). It is estimated that between 1996 and 2003 more than 3.3 million civilians died in the Eastern DRC (Autesserre, 2009).

3.3 Renewed conflict (2002-2013)

Armed conflict has persisted in the DRC following the culmination of the Congo Wars. The successive civil wars had the effect of altering the dynamics surrounding the formation and nature of armed groups. Previously, local militias mobilized in response to perceived grievances and in defence of their ethnic communities. However, over time, locally rooted militias integrated into economic and political networks led by powerful elites and

businessmen (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013). Of course, these networks are both a cause and effect of the war economies that had developed over the previous 20 years. Informal economies at both the local and regional levels became the primary means through which citizens could secure their livelihoods (Rainer, 2013). In the new millennium, the economic networks comprising of militias, strongmen, and elites fostered the enrichment of a few well-positioned individuals largely at the expense of civilians who depended on the networks for survival (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013).

The power-sharing agreement (Global and Inclusive Agreement) signed in 2002, while initially beneficial for the DRC, introduced new dynamics which resulted in the further mobilization and proliferation of armed groups in the Kivus (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013). Part of the peace agreement entailed the integration of former belligerents into the newly created national army - Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC). The purpose of integration was to demobilize former combatants and bring them under control of the government (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013). The integration, however, created malcontents within the FARDC as not all former combatants were given positions of leadership. Consequently, the power-sharing logic that emerged was one that encouraged malcontents to mobilize new insurgencies in order to bargain with the government for better paying positions (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013). Indeed, the power-sharing agreement incentivized violence as tool to access political power. For example, in 2003, General Nkunda along with several ex-RCD Tutsi officers refused to integrate into the FARDC and instead formed the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) (Stearns, 2012, 2014). Even though between the years of 2003 and 2006 internal displacement as result of violent

conflict decreased from 2.5 million to approximately 1.2 million people, violence escalated dramatically towards the end of 2006. (Stearns, 2014).

In fact, in 2006, the DRC held its first election in more than 40 years, which produced several winners and losers. Some of the losers resorted to violence to regain influence. One of the most obvious losers was the RCD (Stearns, 2012). Following the election, the RCD went from occupying one third of the National Assembly seats to just three percent (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013; Stearns, 2012). Consequently, many Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda communities felt particularly marginalized by these electoral results because they had become quite influential in Congolese national politics through their ties with the RCD (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013). This led to more armed conflict, and by 2006 the CNDP had become one of the most militarily powerful groups in the DRC, in part due to Rwandan backing (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013). At the same time, many Mayi-Mayi groups that had demobilized and since integrated into the FARDC promptly began to mobilize once again. Not surprisingly, many Mayi-Mayi leaders were extremely dissatisfied with their leadership roles within the FARDC. Due to poor education and little political influence, most Mayi-Mayi had not attained any real position of authority (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013). Thus, they were excluded from political power and did not benefit from the economic networks that had come to exist. The government did little to respond to the mass defection that was taking place within the FARDC, in part because the newly formed government did not want to provoke another Congo War. However, by late 2006, the FARDC undertook a series of offensives against the CNDP to counter its growing influence in the Kivus (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013). This precipitated the emergence of several local and regional armed groups that also mobilized to counteract the CNDP's insurrection. Several of the groups that emerged in

response to the CNDP's growing influence were created and financed by the Congo government (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013). The logic behind the support of armed militias was to dilute the CNDP's power, thereby reducing the group's bargaining strength. However, once again, the result was a system of perverse incentives that effectively spurred greater armed mobilization, as armed groups became the main tool for economic enrichment and survival (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013).

By January 2008, armed conflict further escalated prompting the government to initiate a second peace process. Accordingly, the Goma Conference of 2008 was developed to end hostilities and create peace (Stearns, 2012). The result was the 2009 deal between the CNDP and the DRC government, which yet again entailed a process of integrating former CNDP soldiers in the national army (Stearns, 2014). This time, however, the integration process mandated that former CNDP soldiers be deployed to battalions stationed away from the Kivu region (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013; Stearns, 2012). Increasing international scrutiny of Rwanda due to its involvement with the CNDP paved the way for renewed collaboration between Kabila and Rwandan officials (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013; Stearns, 2012). Consequently, in 2009, with Rwanda's assistance, General Nkunda was arrested attempting to cross the border from North Kivu into Rwanda (Stearns, 2012). In exchange for Rwanda's assistance in defeating the CNDP and arresting Nkunda, Kabila allowed Rwanda to deploy military forces in the Kivus to launch operations against the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), who had taken refuge in the Kivus following the Rwandan genocide (Stearns, 2012). Immediately, the operations against the FDLR weakened the group's stability. However, the operations were extremely detrimental to civilians and the local economies, as thousands were killed and/or displaced (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013).

Like the 2006 election, the 2011 election resulted in several politicians mobilizing armed groups to obtain electoral support. Following the elections, the 2009 CNDP integration deal broke down as a faction of ex-CNDP members led by General Bosco Ntanga mutinied against the government (Stearns, 2012). The mutiny soon morphed into the armed group, the M23, which then spread throughout North Kivu (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013; Stearns, 2014). In response, the government deployed FARDC soldiers to combat the now mobilized M23. The violence that ensued reverberated through the Kivus, sparking the formation of new armed groups and defence militias in the area. However, many of groups that emerged were small and locally oriented (Stearns, 2014). Following a year (2012-2013) of fighting, the FARDC launched a successful large-scale offensive against the group and consequently, in 2013, the M23 dismantled. However, several armed groups remain scattered throughout the Kivus today (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013).

Chapter 4: Establishing the Connection between Entrenched Socio-Economic Networks and the Persistence of Armed Conflict

4.1 Taxation and Predation

In mainstream policy discourse the DRC has effectively been labeled as a victim of the resource curse (Laudati, 2013). However, when taking a more holistic view of armed conflict in the DRC, specifically the Eastern provinces, it is evident that contestation over resources is not the primary source of persistent armed conflict, but is rather a part of a larger economic and political network (Laudati, 2013). From this perspective, through daily interactions with armed groups and state forces, civilians are engaged in struggles over public authority, and survival and security, which ultimately act to shape and reinforce existing socio-economic networks that are intrinsically linked to violent conflict. One of the ways in which citizens engage with both armed groups and state forces is through various forms of taxation

(Hoffmann, Vlassenroot & Marchais, 2016). Not surprisingly, both state forces and rebel groups have diverse income sources, many tied to taxation and control over strategic land resources and trade routes (Laudati, 2013). Hence, as armed groups started proliferating during the Congo Wars, new classes of political and military rulers fought to establish public authority over socio-economic networks needed to ensure the control of territory and populations (Hoffmann & Vlassenroot, 2014). In so doing, complex relationships were formed between local authorities, state authorities, business interests and civilians that continue to exist today (Hoffmann, Vlassenroot & Marchais, 2016). These relationships are built on systems of power and compensation for protection (Hoffmann, Vlassenroot & Marchais, 2016). In other words, different forms of taxation are deployed and exchanged for security and protection. Taxation in this case, is broadly defined as the “obligation to contribute resources (money, goods, or labour) to a public authority in return for the provision of goods and services” (Hoffmann, Vlassenroot & Marchais, 2016: 1435). It is worth noting that systems of taxation in exchange for protection are not unique to the DRC. Similar payment for protection schemes played an integral role in the early formation of European states (Tilly, 1985). Taxation is more than just an income generating activity for seemingly greedy rebels and underpaid government forces. Taxation and violence are, at their core, a tangible means of producing and reinforcing claims on public authority, and by extension, legitimacy (Hoffmann, Vlassenroot & Marchais, 2016). Although, “greed and grievance” literature tends to characterize most taxation schemes as inherently predatory, in the DRC social and economic relations surrounding taxation are far more complex, negotiated, and reciprocal, than the “greed” literature suggests (Hoffmann, Vlassenroot & Marchais, 2016). Taxes not only produce revenue for those with the power to levy them, but they also produce and reproduce symbolic and tangible sources of authority and

state-ness (Hoffmann, Vlassenroot & Marchais, 2016). Put another way, taxation acts as a binding agent, enmeshing civilians, armed groups and state forces into relationships built upon mutual obligation and reciprocity. Over time, these relationships become social contracts between citizens and those able to exercise authority (Hoffmann, Vlassenroot & Marchais, 2016).

Roadblock taxes and control over important trading routes have been instrumental in providing several armed groups with the financing necessary to carry out their activities (Laudati, 2013). For many groups, the funds generated through roadblock taxation schemes in the DRC vastly exceed revenues generated by mineral extraction and sales (Laudati, 2013; Garrett, 2008). In comparison to looting mineral deposits, roadblock taxes are a relatively dependable source of income. Roadblock taxation schemes are not simply a pursuit limited to wartime, nor are they a funding mechanism implemented solely by armed belligerents. In North and South Kivu, both rebel groups and the FARDC have extensively collected taxes at roadblock checkpoints (Laudati, 2013). The CNDP was well known for its use of taxation as a means of income generation. In addition to taxing travelers, traders, and people wishing to pass through roadblocks, the CNDP imposed property taxes on civilians living in CNDP controlled territory (Laudati, 2013). The property tax was comprised of a tax on the home, which varied depending on size and quality of structure. In addition to property taxes, the CNDP also imposed a security tax on trade, which saw taxes imposed on merchandise and other goods (Laudati, 2013). The CNDP were not the lone rebel faction to implement organized taxation schemes, as the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) also used taxes to fund armed violence. In South Kivu, the FDLR routinely imposed a tax on civilians in which

the funds collected contributed directly to the war effort. Thus, taxation in this sense can be interpreted as part of the logic of war (Hoffmann, Vlassenroot & Marchais, 2016).

Interestingly, not all taxes are monetary. As violence persists in the region, and civilian incomes are low, civilians often pay taxes in the form of livestock, timber, and food products (Vlassenroot & Huggins, 2005). In many respects, taxation payments in the form of food and livestock are often more beneficial than monetary payment for both government and rebel forces (Vlassenroot & Huggins, 2005). This is because they provide a source of sustenance that ensures soldiers are fed, and are therefore less likely to defect. Moreover, rank and file soldiers in the FARDC are grossly underpaid, and at times not paid at all (Verweijen, 2013). Accordingly, it is commonplace for many FARDC soldiers to be directly involved in the soliciting of contributions from civilians. In many regions reclaimed by FARDC forces, civilians are coerced into providing food products for soldiers (Laudati, 2013). For example, cattle ranchers in South Kivu are forced to give a substantial portion of the milk they produce to FARDC soldiers stationed in the region. In other instances, FARDC forces have elected to forgo the milk and have instead collected goats for themselves (Laudati, 2013). For the most part this form of taxation is tolerated, but systemic exploitation often creates and/or leads to the entrenchment of grievances related to one's socio-economic position. Thus, civilians throughout the Kivus have endeavoured to resist extortion when acquiescence becomes unfeasible (Laudati, 2013).

In the same vein, land, livestock and other livestock associated commodities have historically been of high value (Vlassenroot & Huggins, 2005). The same cannot be said for minerals. Minerals have only recently become attractive to armed groups because they are more easily accessible following decades of armed conflict (Vlassenroot & Huggins, 2005). In

North and South Kivu, cattle are an extremely valuable commodity often sought by armed groups and government forces. For example, at several FARDC controlled checkpoints the tax levied on cattle is often double the rate for individuals. Similarly, cows are routinely stolen and traded for financial compensation (Vlassenroot & Huggins, 2005). For many civilians, land ownership and possession of livestock is both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, land ownership and livestock provide nutrition, sustenance, and a source of livelihood. However, on the other hand, they represent a source of insecurity, whereby their economic and social value paints the civilian as a target for both pillaging and exploitation. Conversely, ownership of smaller forms of livestock is often said to be a tool used by civilians to protect themselves from direct violence; the belief being that if one has something of moderate value that could potentially be stolen, the armed belligerents may be less likely to commit a more heinous crime against their owner. (Laudati, 2013). On the other hand, the relationship between FARDC soldiers and civilians is not exclusively predatory (Verweijen, 2013). Many FARDC soldiers provide services to civilians in exchange for compensation. Some examples include: property protection, dispute resolution, debt collecting, influence trafficking, protection from law enforcement, and smuggling (Verweijen, 2013). In the Kivus, services provided by the FARDC often resemble extortion, but in many cases civilians actively engage FARDC soldiers for the provision of these services (Verweijen, 2013).

Even though armed groups and state forces sustain their activities through taxation and pillaging of locally owned resources, this does not mean Congolese civilians passively accept these arrangements (Suarez, 2017). In fact, Congolese civilians benefit from, and in many cases are dependent on, these seemingly predatory economic networks. Put differently, Congolese civilians are not simply bystanders caught in a seemingly never ending armed

conflict, but rather are active participants engaged in parallel networks of protection, taxation, and capital accumulation, which both directly and indirectly contribute to armed conflict (Hoffmann, Vlassenroot & Marchais, 2016; Laudati, 2013).

4.2 Business – Illegal but Legitimate

In the DRC, business is often more easily and effectively conducted illegally. This is in large part due that fact that the official Congolese state trading system encompasses too many state actors. In other words, too many Congolese officials are involved in the trading process, which renders the process inefficient and expensive (Tegera & Johnson, 2007). Accordingly, it is more economically beneficial for businesses to bypass the state. For example, the legal timber trade flows through several state departments and offices, each requiring payment for services rendered, however minimal the service provided. To illustrate, exporting timber legally requires, at a minimum, engaging with the four government offices: “Office des Douanes et Accises (Customs Office); the Office Congolais de Contrôle (Office of Law Enforcement); the Direction Générale des Migration (Migration Office), and the Department of Hygiene” (Laudati, 2013: 43). After each department has been paid, there is virtually no profit to be made from trade. Consequently, many businesses and traders are forced to rely on informal and often illegal networks of export to survive. The result is a trading system built upon a network of criminality (Jackson, 2005). Illegal taxation, trade, and exporting, however, do not necessarily finance nefarious pursuits. For example, the illegal export of commodities by traders in the Eastern Congo, are often used to fund infrastructure improvement projects. Similarly, roadblocks established by civil society groups have been used to directly fund road construction and rehabilitation projects in the Kivus (Laudati, 2013). Therefore, in many respects informal and illegal means of capital accumulation do more to benefit the local

community welfare than the government sanctioned infrastructure projects (Laudati, 2013). Thus, informal and illegal practices are not only survival strategies exercised by various actors during situations of armed conflict, but rather constitute legitimate economic networks that exist within the wider state economic structure (Laudati, 2013). That said, while these alternative means of doing business do not in themselves perpetuate armed conflict, they do reinforce existing systems of capital accumulation and social relations that are intrinsically tied to wider economies of criminality and violence (Jackson, 2005).

4.3 Congo's Mineral Négociants and Intermediaries

Not surprisingly, many of the day-to-day interactions between civilians and the state are brokered through intermediaries (McGee, 2014). These intermediaries are often from the communities in which they reside. However, some intermediaries have a larger reach and can be found linking local economies and communities to larger socio-economic networks in the DRC (Vogel & Musamba, 2017). Regardless, these intermediaries, whether traditional (chiefs) or commercial (businessmen and elites), are often better connected to local, regional, and national socio-economic power structures than the average civilian (McGee, 2014). Although most analysis of armed conflict persistence emphasizes the illicit nature of mining activities in the DRC, mineral markets fulfill crucial socio-economic functions for local populations (Vogel & Musamba, 2017). Accordingly, while minerals most certainly do finance armed conflict, the exploitation of mineral resources in the DRC is one of the few sources of income for civilians living in the Kivus (Vogel & Musamba, 2017). Following the Congo Wars, minerals and artisanal mining have become one of the only tangible survival strategies in the country (Jackson, 2002). In the mineral sectors these intermediaries are officially known as *négociants*. *Négociants* are traders who purchase minerals from mines and re-sell them for a profit at urban

community markets (Vogel & Musamba, 2017). Hence, négociants are the main brokers between mineral production and trade.

For négociants to purchase and sell minerals, it is necessary for them to maintain access to networks and institutions that are involved in the production and purchase of minerals. Per the 2002 DRC mining laws, to be a négociant one must first register with the government and seek permission (Vogel & Musamba, 2017). Involvement with mineral resources in the DRC however, is a highly contested economic pursuit. Consequently, several actors outside of formal state sources negotiate and often compete violently for authority to extract, produce and sell minerals. Within the mineral sector many kinship networks still exist and authority is often oligopolized by ‘big men’ and elites vying for control to establish and maintain political power (Utas, 2012). In other words, négociants operate within a wider environment of power and poverty. Due to the socio-economic landscape surrounding mining in the DRC, négociants are exposed to great physical and material insecurity (Vogel & Musamba, 2017). As négociants consistently deal in this manner and operate in this milieu, they must often collude with armed groups like the FARDC to earn a living for themselves and provide sustenance for Congolese citizens (Vogel & Musamba, 2017). Accordingly, négociants navigate extremely dangerous socio-economic networks comprised of multiple systems of authority. In doing so, négociants reinforce and legitimize the authority of the groups involved in the mineral trade, which indirectly sustains networks of violence and capital accumulation (Vogel & Musamba, 2017). Thus, négociants are as much brokers of power as they are brokers of minerals. Consequently, négociants in this role contribute to the augmenting of ‘big men networks’, which characterize informal economies in the DRC (Vogel & Musamba, 2017). Because négociants operate in highly volatile and dangerous spaces, their very existence is a source of personal insecurity

(Vogel & Musamba, 2017). Like civilians who collaborate with armed rebel groups and FARDC brigades for protection, négociants often engage these actors for similar purposes. The result is that collaboration and co-dependence with armed actors becomes a common-sense practice that is embedded into the socio-economic and political fabric of society (Verweijen, 2013).

4.4 Civilians and Armed Groups

Armed groups play an important role in the informal governance and economic networks that have emerged in the DRC following years of state decay and violence. These actors are not entirely autonomous entities, nor are they simply local phenomena (Hoffman & Vlassenroot, 2014). While armed rebel groups are crucial parties involved in much of the violent conflict taking place, these groups cannot be viewed as simply local community actors as they have since spread out and acquired new territory (Vlassenroot, 2013). They have integrated themselves into the everyday process of life within the communities they occupy (Vlassenroot, 2013). Although it must be pointed out that the extent to which these rebel groups have embedded themselves into the community differs from group to group, and region to region, it can be said that in many regards rebel groups mediate state authority (Hoffman & Vlassenroot, 2014). Conversely, in some cases armed groups have effectively positioned themselves as the dominant authority in regions they control. In doing so, armed groups represent an attractive alternative for businesses, civilians, and politicians seeking to ensure their economic well-being. Thus, armed actors, be they rebels or foreign backed proxies, have become intimately linked to larger political and economic struggles taking place in the DRC (Hoffman & Vlassenroot, 2014). Regardless, armed groups mirror, and in certain instances have replaced, certain functions of the state. This has the effect of, at times, challenging the

legitimacy of the state (McGee, 2014), specifically in regions where the state has little formal influence, leaving room for other actors to fill the governance void. Moreover, it is evident that the social existence of armed groups within the DRC has shifted from a self-defense oriented approach, concerned with the protection of members and community, to an organized military and political apparatus containing numerous political and economic agendas (Stearns, 2014). In other words, today's armed groups operate more as states than as traditional rebel groups.

Although armed conflict may be fought over the control of resources, this is but one aspect of a larger economic network that has developed over time. Explaining why and how certain civilians choose to participate in combat while others do not is a difficult and complex task. Nevertheless, participation in all its forms should be viewed as a tactical choice exercised by capable civilians (McGee, 2014). It is important to understand that civilians before, during, and after conflict have a variety of ways of responding to, and coping with, armed groups (Mampilly, 2007; Hedlund, 2017). Hence, civilians can play a variety of roles during a situation of armed conflict. When dealing with the presence of armed groups, civilians can choose to fully support the group, or to participate in a limited fashion, to participate upon being coerced, to flee the area of control, and/or to reject the group by forming local militias/defence groups (Mampilly, 2007). The civilian population in the DRC is integral to the longevity of armed rebel groups. Civilians themselves are not unaware of this reality, and therefore should not be viewed as passive and easily manipulated actors; indeed, civilians often manipulate armed groups and state forces to settle their own disputes and ameliorate their situations (Mampilly, 2007). Moreover, civilians often articulate explicit demands upon rebel leadership that are usually consistent with the concerns of the local population. Consequently, depending on the type of demand and the feasibility of meeting the demand, well-structured

rebel groups such as the RCD typically made a demonstrable effort to at least entertain the demands (Mampilly, 2007). This is because, fundamentally, rebel groups challenging the political authority of the state are deeply concerned about their relationship with at least some segments of the civilian population. Correspondingly, rebel groups must make at least two important considerations when deciding how to interact with civilians (Mampilly, 2007). Firstly, if the goal of the group is to cause a major change in government leadership or policy, the group must possess the means to convince significant segments of the civilian population that there is a need for violent action (Mampilly, 2007). Secondly, the rebel leadership must successfully articulate that what they offer is superior to what is currently available through other means, namely the state (Mampilly, 2007). In the DRC, this often manifests itself through the delivery of social programs and the provision of public services. In this way, civilians play a direct role in the development of the governance structures of rebel groups (Mampilly, 2007). Alternatively, rebel groups often resort to unrestrained violence when they possess little authority and legitimacy, and thus few means of sustaining themselves except through looting resources and forced recruitment (Mampilly, 2007).

At the same time, the state does not disappear in the face of the proliferation of armed groups, but rather competes with these groups to win over the support of the civilian population (Mampilly, 2007), thus providing civilians a degree of power and authority to articulate visions of their own. Although armed conflict may be fought over the control of territory, natural resources, and human capital, armed conflict is itself, a resource through which individuals can improve their social and economic status and preserve their livelihoods (Laudati, 2013). Violent armed conflict becomes the means through which marginalized individuals can exploit opportunities created by the chaos of war to renegotiate social,

economic, and political realities of the everyday (Suarez, 2017). Accordingly, in the absence of traditional Weberian state institutions several other actors have emerged and negotiated alternative forms of public space and governance. Implicit in these alternative governance structures are criminalized networks of violence, coercion, and capital accumulation (Laudati, 2013). This is not meant to demonize participation in parallel economies, but rather to illustrate that their very existence is a reality and a necessity that must be navigated by Congolese citizens.

4.5 Security Provision: The Case of the 85th Brigade

Marginalized civilians in the Eastern DRC rarely interact directly with state institutions, except in cases when FARDC soldiers are stationed in their communities (Garrett, Sergiou & Vlassenroot, 2009). Thus, for the most part, civilians in Eastern DRC have tended to interact directly with the state forces in violent contexts. Accordingly, civilians have a somewhat one-dimensional and militaristic view of the DRC state. Not surprisingly, the DRC state is blamed for poor infrastructure and an inability to govern, and is painted as inept when it comes to protecting civilian interests. However, in certain instances, state forces have a direct relationship with civilians that is neither wholly predatory, nor altruistic, but is in some ways mutually beneficial (Garrett, Sergiou & Vlassenroot, 2009; Verweijen, 2013). The FARDC's 85th Brigade is a good illustration of the embedded socio-economic relations between civilians, the state, and armed groups. The 85th is a non-integrated brigade that was situated in the Walikale territory in North Kivu until 2009. The Walikale territory is one of the most resource rich areas in Eastern DRC (Garrett, Sergiou & Vlassenroot, 2009). The brigade is comprised of former Mayi-Mayi militia under the FARDC banner. Although the brigade is technically part of the FARDC, it operates independently from formal FARDC command structures (Garrett,

Sergiou & Vlassenroot, 2009). Nevertheless, the 85th is a formal state actor. This provides it with both legitimacy and authority, which it leverages to maintain its sphere of influence in the region.

The brigade sustained its operations through a series of mining activities, taxation schemes, and security provisions. Due to its proximity to several main trading points, the 85th levied taxes on various shipments passing through the region and until 2009 it controlled the Bisie cassiterite mine (Global Witness, 2009). The mine employed several civilian miners who earned between \$1-5 USD per day (Garrett, Sergiou & Vlassenroot, 2009). To profit on the minerals extracted, the brigade relied on well-positioned 'big men,' or elite businessmen, to ensure the minerals reach a variety of markets. The revenues gained were used to sustain parallel control and governance structures (Garrett, Sergiou & Vlassenroot, 2009). Part of their governance structure entailed the provision of security services. Security provision was both a necessity to defend itself from other armed groups in the area, as well as an intentional attempt to provide a more secure environment for the populations under its control (Garrett, Sergiou & Vlassenroot, 2009). The security provided by the 85th had two effects: Firstly, by limiting the number of civilian casualties the brigade's business interests could more easily be concealed from public view. Secondly, its effectiveness as a security actor facilitated its evasion of state control by limiting the government's ability to forcefully demand complete integration into the FARDC. Moreover, the 85th also cooperated with several local and foreign owned businesses to ensure cassiterite was marketed effectively (Garrett, Sergiou & Vlassenroot, 2009). Additionally, its position as a security provider allowed the brigade to exploit its relationship with the ownership group of the Bisie mine. In 2008, the owners of the Bisie mine were engaged in an ownership dispute over rights to the mine. The dispute allowed the 85th brigade

to leverage its position as the legitimate security authority in the region and to therefore determine which group would win the dispute (Garrett, Sergiou & Vlassenroot, 2009). This cemented the brigade's ability to continue to profit from informal cassiterite trading networks. As such, the brigade's ability to act as the sole credible security provider in the region was translated into additional profit from cassiterite trade. Hence, the 85th was better positioned to distribute profits to a variety of actors, which made it easier for them to access economic markets to sustain their practices (Garrett, Sergiou & Vlassenroot, 2009). Thus, more efficient mineral extraction translated into more substantive market integration, which enabled the purchase of weapons thus rendering the brigade's authority concrete and their threat of violence more credible (Garrett, Sergiou & Vlassenroot, 2009).

4.6 Community Security Provision

In certain cases, civilians opt to forgo dealing with the state forces and armed groups and choose instead to rely on each other for several public services (McGee, 2014). Thus, in the DRC there exist many interfaces of governance in which the relationship is not between citizen and government, but instead citizen and local community (McGee, 2014). This relationship dynamic is most evident in the Kivus, specifically in the domain of security provision and protective services. At the local level, traditional and community security providers are seen by civilian residents as more effective and efficient than those of the state (Mushi, 2013). Moreover, in many cases, community-led security providers are deemed to be more legitimate and less predatory than state officials (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016). This is partly because procedures enforced by the state do not necessarily reflect the norms and customs of the community in which they operate (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016). Additionally, as state officials are extremely underpaid, they often resort to the

extortion of residents to fulfill their basic needs (Verweijen, 2013). Consequently, traditional and civilian authorities in the Kivus tend to deliver security services that are more congruent with the historical legacies of the region. For example, in North and South Kivu, community and local policing bodies provide security and mediation services to community residents (Mushi, 2013). Furthermore, due to the vast number of ethnic groups living in the region, traditional chiefs represent a mode of dispute resolution that is in tune with community needs and realities (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016). In fact, they better understand the local dimensions of disputes and are thus more often effectively positioned to provide services (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016). Community and civilian-based security providers, however, are not necessarily neutral. Some traditional authorities, civilian movements and defence groups such as the Mayi-Mayi, are often involved in the creation of disorder and the mobilization of violence, while at the same time building peace and security (Hoffmann & Vlassenroot, 2014). Furthermore, the relationship between civilians and security providers (traditional, community, and state-based) is not static and therefore can be altered, reformulated and negotiated. Moreover, community-based protection services are not immune from external influences and political pressures (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016). Thus, they do not operate in a vacuum, but rather as part of greater political economies. Accordingly, they are both influenced and shaped by existing state structures. In short, community and traditional forms of security provision are by no means always more efficient and less predatory than state providers, nor do they always deliver the services they claim to provide (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016).

In the Kivus, much like elsewhere in Africa, traditional and civilian-based mechanisms of dispute resolution are significantly influenced by local elites (Mushi, 2013). Many elite

networks that took root during Mobutu's reign are still present in many of the Eastern Provinces (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016). As result, economic and political elements infiltrate and detract from impartial and equitable dispute resolution. Not surprisingly, instances in which this is the case often result in outcomes and judgements that reinforce socio-economic inequalities (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016). Moreover, judgements in which local elites are implicated tend to be discriminatory, especially when the dispute centres on land rights (Mushi, 2013). Unfortunately, these discriminatory judgments frequently enhance existing grievances held by minorities (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016). Thus, in some cases community-based security services make up for deficient state security services, while in other instances they further undermine peace and stability (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016). In the DRC, central political authorities have at times contracted paramilitary and ethnic militias to provide security, while at the same time instigating disorder to profit from resources made more easily lootable following the Congo Wars (Stearns, Verweijen & Baaz, 2013). In sum, although community-based security provision continues to be an instrument of protection used in the Kivus and elsewhere in the DRC, its effectiveness and legitimacy is not universal. In other words, while community-based security services can supplement state deficiencies, they can also contribute to growing insecurity in the very communities they intend to protect (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016). At the same time, ironically, civilian-led protection services can operate in opposition to the state, but also in tandem with it. Thus, the contentious relationship between state institutions and civilian/traditional institutions is a factor that explains why, in some cases, interactions between the two leads to violence and in other instances, peaceful co-existence (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016).

4.7 Civil Society – The Provision of Public Education

In the absence of traditional Weberian state authority, negotiated systems of governance and public service provision have emerged (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011). Accordingly, in the DRC the negotiated nature of statehood has had a profound impact on systems of governance and authority throughout the country (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011). In some cases, the provision of services by non-state sources undermines the authority and legitimacy of the state. In other instances, there is complementarity between the two (Buscher, 2012). The provision of education in the DRC is an example of the latter. With respect to the education policy in the DRC, the relationship between the state, civil society, and the Catholic Church can be seen to reinforce the authority of local and community groups, while at the same time enhancing the authority and legitimacy of the state institutions (Bagayoko, Hutchful & Luckham, 2016). The negotiation between the state, civilians and civil society actors, however, does not occur uniformly. Thus, the outcomes of negotiated arrangements surrounding public service provision inherently depend upon the local configurations of power and the circumstances under which they are negotiated (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011).

Non-state actors, specifically the Catholic and Protestant Churches, have been present in the education sector since the colonial era. In 1974, Mobutu attempted to nationalize all religious schools, however, what resulted was the near complete collapse of the entire education system. Consequently, the government re-commissioned the Catholic Church to collaborate on the nation's education policy (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011). This resulted in the 1977 'Convention', which is an agreement stipulating joint management of all national schools by the state and the Churches (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011). In 1992, when the Congolese teachers went on strike because the state was no longer paying them wages, the Catholic

Church teamed together with parents in the local communities to raise money to boost the teachers' salaries (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011). Similarly, when it comes to the building of new schools, government education administrators typically collaborate with Church representatives to engage parents for contributions. This system, however, does not always work effectively (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011). For example, in some cases, government inspectors and regional administrators have sought contributions from parents for the construction of new schools without having to engage with the Catholic Church representatives. Still, as the Catholic Church school network is often the largest education provider in most provinces, government administrators usually require their financial and institutional support (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011). In the above-mentioned instance, because the administrators did not consult with the Church network prior to its solicitation of contributions, the Catholic network refused to contribute to the project. Consequently, without their network funding, the new school could not be constructed, despite it not being legally required to take Catholic education network representatives into the decision-making process. (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011). The power of the state is more symbolic than tangible. Thus, it is the idea of the state and its authority to preside over matters of education that ensures collaboration is maintained. Although the state lacks both the financial capacity to pay inspectors to visit schools, and the coercive means to implement projects effectively, this not mean that the state is powerless in the relationship; its authority is negotiated and not absolute (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011). Consequently, the state is not the de facto central power of authority when it comes to education. In addition, the state cannot claim to be the ultimate decision-making body regarding education policy, because its authorities over all matters relating to education are constantly being negotiated (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011). Hence, without the consent of powerful

non-state civil society actors, the state cannot implement its decisions. Although the Catholic Church does not directly challenge the state's authority to make decisions regarding education policy and provision, it does however, challenge the way in which the government implements its policy decisions (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011). Accordingly, there is a danger that a civil-society run service provision has become so deeply entrenched in the communities that it renders it difficult for the state to effectively offer provisions of its own.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Upon examining the conflict in the Eastern DRC, it is evident that the persistence of armed conflict cannot be explained by any singular determinant. It results from complex, multilayered and interlinking actions carried out by various actors engaged in several economic, social and political activities. From the tumultuous history of the DRC, it is obvious that many factors formed the basis of the unrest in the country. Beginning in the colonial period, grievances, ethnicity, natural resources, state fragility and foreign involvement have all played a role in igniting and sustaining armed conflict in the country. The purpose of this research is not to minimize this complex reality, but rather to highlight another important yet often discounted dynamic, namely, how entrenched socio-economic relations between civilians, armed groups, and the state also contribute to the persistence of armed conflict.

This paper illustrates that in the absence of traditional Weberian state institutions, several other actors, including civil society and armed groups, can emerge to negotiate alternative forms of public space and governance. In the DRC, armed groups, civil society organizations and state forces have effectively positioned themselves as dominant sources of authority in regions in which they are present (Hoffman & Vlassenroot, 2014). They provide security, employment and education to civilians under their rule. In some cases, this provision

undermines the authority and the legitimacy of the state; in other instances, there is complementarity between the two (Buscher, 2012). Regardless, the viability of negotiated governance arrangements depends upon the local configurations of power and the circumstances under which they are negotiated (Titeca & De Herdt, 2011).

In the DRC, armed groups, civil society and intermediaries have established themselves as attractive alternatives for businesses, civilians and politicians seeking to expand their socio-economic horizons. They are intimately linked to larger and often violent political and economic struggles (Hoffman & Vlassenroot, 2014). Not surprisingly, mineral resources in the DRC have become one of the few sources of income for civilians living in the Kivus (Vogel & Musamba, 2017). In many respects, mineral extraction and artisanal mining have become the only tangible survival strategies in the country (Jackson, 2002). Many businesses and traders are forced to rely on informal and often illegal networks of export to survive; however, as this paper has demonstrated, illegal taxation does not necessarily finance nefarious pursuits. In certain instances, civil society and community groups have successfully utilized taxes to deliver public services and infrastructure projects. Thus, while armed conflict may be viewed as a fight over the control of resources, this is but one aspect of a larger economic network that has developed surprisingly well (Laudati, 2013).

Using the DRC example, this paper demonstrates that civilians navigate extremely dangerous socio-economic networks comprised of multiple systems of authority. In doing so, they reinforce and legitimize the authority of the groups involved, which indirectly sustains networks of violence and capital accumulation (Vogel & Musamba, 2017). The examples of the 85th Brigade's security provision and the Catholic Church's education services, demonstrate how in many cases civilians are dependent upon the existing socio-economic

relationships that have emerged. Although the FARDC, Mayi-Mayi, and local elites sustain their activities through taxation and the pillaging of natural resources, civilians are not powerless in their relationship with these entities (Suarez, 2017). This paper illustrates that civilians have a variety of ways of responding to, and coping with, armed groups and state predation (Mampilly, 2007), and that civilians are integral to the longevity of all rebel groups.

While this paper has illustrated that the entrenchment of socio-economic relations between civilians, armed groups, and the state is a factor that contributes to the persistence of armed conflict, it is important to note that only one case study was conducted. This is too small of a sample size on which to base broad conclusions. The subject would benefit from further research and additional case studies of other armed conflicts, such as the civil war in South Sudan (Spears & Wight, 2015), and the ongoing insurgency in Somalia led by the Ogaden National Liberation Front (Menkhaus, 2003).

It is also worth reflecting on what this research means for the notion of a failed state and its reconstruction. The normative assumption that the state is the ultimate provider of political, social and economic order is well entrenched in contemporary state-building policy (Mampilly, 2007). On the other hand, this paper demonstrates that multiple sovereigns can and do produce order and systems of governance within a given territory. Policy-makers are understandably hesitant to engage with armed, non-state actors when seeking to establish peace and security in conflict affected areas; however, as this research indicates, not all armed groups are inherently predatory and many do in fact possess a great deal of legitimacy and authority over the regions they govern. Thus, structuring peace-building initiatives solely around states, specifically in contexts where the state lacks legitimacy, may be counter-productive. Policy solutions that incorporate legitimate non-state, armed actors as partners in state reconstruction

may serve to better secure the protection of civilians and the development of robust social services than more traditional approaches.

In sum, this paper examined the complex set of relationships formed between armed groups, state authorities, business interests and civilians that have evolved into social contracts between citizens and those able to exercise and navigate authority (Hoffmann, Vlassenroot & Marchais, 2016). Viewed through such a lens, armed conflict is itself a resource through which individuals can improve their social and economic status and preserve their livelihoods (Laudati, 2013), depending on which actors they support and when. This supports the notion that through daily interactions with armed groups and state forces, civilians are also actively engaged in struggles over public authority, survival and security. This ultimately acts to shape and reinforce existing socio-economic networks that perpetuate armed conflict.

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