

Impact of Armed Conflict on Socio-economic Development in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Strategies for Sustainable Economic Development

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Abstract

The present study is an analysis of the complex causes of recent and past conflicts in the DRC and their multiple effects on socio-economic development. It examines the impact of conflict on the macroeconomic, sectoral sectors, natural resources and finally on social and human development. The goal is to take on the root causes of conflict in order to establish a solid foundation for sustainable economic development. As a method, the study takes a historical perspective to identify common factors of past and present conflicts. It analyzes quantitatively and qualitatively the root causes of conflicts in the DRC to detect their impact on various aspects of economic and social development at national and regional level and to propose strategies to restore subsistence sustainable supports, economic and social development in the DRC. In addition to the introduction, the study presents four main points: the geography of the DRC, the causes of conflict, the impact of conflict and strategies for sustainable economic and human development.

Keywords: Armed conflicts ; socio-economic's development ; human and development strategies in RDC

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

Over the last two decades, Africa has had a remarkable record of economic growth, as well as steady progress in political stability. This period was marked by the end of conflicts in some countries and the consolidation of the democratic process in a large number of States the continent. In his 1998 report on "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", the Secretary-General of the United Nations stated, "Africa [...] has begun to make significant progress in the economic and political fields. However, in many areas, the existence of conflicts makes progress difficult, if not impossible" (United Nations General Assembly, 1998: 3). The report pointed out that in 1996 in only 14 out of the 53 African countries had experienced armed conflicts. The Democratic Republic of Congo was then one of those countries affected by conflicts, with the rebellion led by Kabila, which will culminate in May 1997 in the fall of Mobutu after 32 years of rule. In 2004, the Secretary-General of the United Nations reported that the "sad picture" observed in 1998 had "improved considerably", that only six African countries were in conflicts and "traversed by serious political crises", and that the most African countries were living in a "relatively stable political situation" (United Nations General Assembly,

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2004). The Democratic Republic of the Congo was, however, not one of the countries whose situation had "improved considerably". The country was still in deep instability despite the peace agreement that officially ended the war that year. Today, the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains deeply insecure and is still suffering the consequences of what has been described as the "continental wars" and the deadliest conflicts in the world since the Second World War (Coghlan et al., 2004, Prunier 2009, Roberts and Muganda 2008). In 2013 year's report of the UN Secretary-General, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was cited as one of three African countries that experienced a decline in stability and conflicts resolution (UN General Assembly , 2013). The situation continues to this day. In his report last year, the UN secretary general said, "The humanitarian situation has deteriorated as a result of the intensification of intercommunal violence in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. 2,2 million people had been forcibly displaced during 2016, 451,956 refugees and asylum-seekers in the country, mainly from Burundi, Central African Republic, Rwanda and South Sudan during the same year. The downward macroeconomic trend, largely attributable to the fall in world commodity prices, has continued. The Congolese franc has depreciated by more than 30% since January 2016. The deterioration of the socio-economic situation has fueled popular frustration in a tense political environment (United Nations General Assembly, 1998: 3 Report of the UN Secretary- General on the United Nations Organization Mission of Stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2017, pp: 9-10). Conflicts and wars are an important feature of past and present Congolese history.

The inability of various cease-fires and peace agreements to end wars and consolidate peace is indicative of deep-seated unresolved issues that perpetuate antagonism between groups, lack of trust of the population and communities with regard to the State, and the conflictual relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the different neighboring countries. Most of these problems have antecedents that stem from the colonial era. Among other things, the colonial administration established a state-backed system of mineral exploitation for the personal enrichment of leaders. This practice continued from the reign of King Leopold II and the Belgian colonial administration to the post-independence regimes (Kisangani, 2012, Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002). Thus, nowadays, the wars raging in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain associated with the insufficiently regulated exploitation of the natural resources sector, which has become the arena of competition between local and foreign governmental and non-governmental actors seeking to take advantage of the legal vacuum and insecurity.

1.2 Objectives

The recurring cycle of wars and violence in the past and present history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo requires an approach not only to end the violence, but also to address the root causes of conflict to lay the groundwork sustainable economic development. The major impacts of conflict on the development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and their strategic importance call for greater consideration of these conflicts within the continent and on a global scale. In this context, it is essential to deepen understanding of the root causes of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and their development implications for the country

and region, through analytical work and stimulating debates around the issue. The lessons learned from the analytical work will shed light on the nature of conflict and its impact on economic and human development, thus helping to shape informed policy decisions at the national, regional and international levels. The purpose of this study is to contribute to this understanding and to guide discussions on strategies to achieve a lasting solution to the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and accelerated economic and social development in the Great Lakes region.

1.3 Methodology and Data

This study provides a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the root causes of conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as their impact on different aspects of economic and social development at the national and regional levels. It takes a historical perspective to identify factors common to past and present wars, which can help pinpoint the root causes of conflicts. This is essential for developing appropriate policies for conflict resolution. Indeed, the "persistent" factors of conflicts are at the root of the cycle of violence, and peace can only be achieved and consolidated if these are resolved. This study draws on data from reports and databases of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, neighboring countries and international institutions. This includes data from household surveys, particularly in the Kasaian area, which are used to analyze the social consequences of wars on poverty, education and health in particular.

1.4 Structure of the Study

After the introduction, the rest of the work is divided into three points: the first analyzes the root causes of the conflict, the second presents the impact of the conflicts on human, social and economic development in the DRC and in the region, and the last one serves as a conclusion containing some strategic recommendations.

2. Geography of the DRC

The Democratic Republic of Congo is, in the true sense of the word, a geographic and (potentially) economic giant within the African continent. It is a very large country, the second continent with 2.26 million square kilometers, almost the equivalent of Algeria (2.38 million square kilometers) .6 But it is also a sparsely populated country, with about 28 inhabitants per square kilometer, which corresponds to the 20th lowest density of the continent. It has a vast and dense forest due to its geographical situation just at the level of the equator. This situation offers many benefits, including high fertility and plenty of water. But it also involves major drawbacks, in particular the difficulty of linking the different parts of the country with transport infrastructure because of the large spaces and the harsh tropical climate.

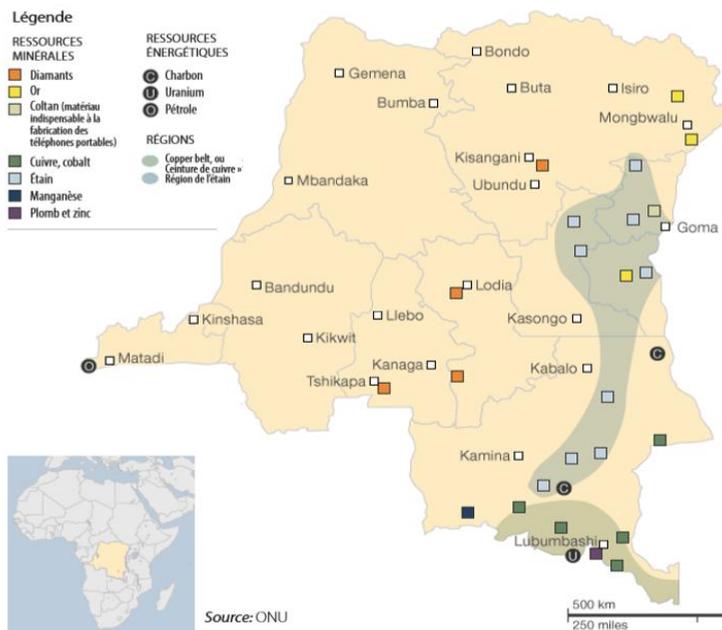
The country is rich in natural resources, including minerals, oil, water, forests and farmland. The Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the largest producers of copper and cobalt in the world. It also produces large quantities of coltan (colombo-tantalite), silver, and oil.⁷ Table 2.1 provides data on the quantity and production value of major mineral resources and petroleum. While the focus is often drawn on minerals and oil,

other resources are equally important. In particular, the Democratic Republic of Congo has significant water reserves, which are a valuable asset for transportation and energy production. The country has potential to generate electricity to power the entire Great Lakes region and beyond. This is a potential incentive and pillar for regional integration, as well as a source of economic growth and diversification within the country and the region. The Democratic Republic of the Congo also has vast fertile lands, thanks to abundant rains that water the entire territory and volcanic soils in the eastern and northern parts of the country. In addition to providing a stable basis for food security, agriculture is a potential springboard for industrialization, as appropriate investments are made in support of infrastructure and technological innovation as part of a coherent national strategy for industrialization and growth.

Table 1: Natural Resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Production (Quantity and Value)

raw material	1990		2000		2011	
	quantity (metric tons)	Value (millions of dollars)	quantity (metric tons)	Value (millions of dollars)	quantity (metric tons)	Value (millions of dollars)
cobalt,	19000	345,8	10000	297,0	60 000	2 166,0
copper,	339000	918,7	21000	40,0	540 000	4 833,0
Gold	9	115,3	7,2	64,9	3,5	176,8
Silver	84	13,0	0	0,0	10,1	11,4
diamonds	4	27,7	3,2	6,8	3,9	4,0
Oil	10600	260,0	8500	258,2	8 558	812,0

Source : <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/africa.html#cg>.



Map1: Regional distribution of mineral reserves in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Democratic Republic of Congo shares borders with nine states, the largest number on the continent. As a result, economic development and economic stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have direct implications for the Great Lakes region and on a larger scale. One of the main advantages of such a strategic situation is that it offers many opportunities for trade and transforms the country into an anchor for economic integration within the subregion. Naturally, having many neighboring countries also has disadvantages. The main one is that the country has to deal with the negative externalities of the consequences of instability in a large number of countries. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has served and continues to serve as a base for rebel movements in Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi (Kisangani 2012, Prunier 2004, 2009). This destabilizes the Democratic Republic of Congo, while weakening its relations with the governments of neighboring countries.

3. Causes of Conflicts in the DRC

3.1 Retrospective of Conflicts

The origins of the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo date back to the occupation by King Leopold II and the era of colonial regimes. The Belgian regimes have planted the seeds and entrenched the tradition of unlimited personal power, the use of national resources for personal enrichment, the brutal repression of the people's demands for political freedom, and the social divisions in which they live. ethnic and regional orientations (Kisangani, 2012, Lemarchand, 1964, Young, 1965, Young and Turner, 1985). As a result of this tragic history, the Democratic Republic of Congo faced, in the 1960s, a difficult and unstable post-independence period marked by rebellions and civil wars (Coquery-Vidrovitch et al., 1987; Kisangani, 2012, Lemarchand, 1964, Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002, Young, 1965, Young and Turner, 1985).

Table 2: Main features of wars and rebellions in the DRC

Name and duration	Leading manager	Ideology and political objectives	Ethical basis	Size and controlled area	Funding sources	Foreign support		Number of deaths
						Rebel support	Government support	
Katanga secession 7/1960 – 1/1963	Moise Tshombe	Federalist alleged secessionist practice	LundaYeke; Luba; Ètremba	Katanga area	Mineral Resources; Belgium	Belgium; South Africa	UN forces	80 000 to 110 000
Katanga secession 8/1960 – 2/1962	Albert Kalonji	Anti Lumumba	LubaKasaï; Kuba	Kasaï area	Diamond agricultural resources	None	None	2000 to 5000
Kwilu rebellion 1/1964 – 12/1965	Pierre Mulele (Mumbunda); Louis Kafungu (Mumbunda)	Marxist Pro; against imperialism and foreign control of the economy	Bambunda et Bapenda	Kwuilu area	Totally supported by the villagers Own production of grenades and mines; smuggling of minerals	None	None	3000 to 6500

Oriental rebellion 4/1964- 7/1966	Gaston Soumialot; Christophe Gbenye; Nicholas Olenga; Laurent Kabila (commandant de section)	Against the Belgian-American military invasion and economic exploitation	Various ethnicities predominantly Bakusu and Batetela	South-Kivu and North-Katanga Army=Simba	Own production of grenades and mines; smuggling of minerals Mineral Resources;	Burundi (rebel command center); Algérie, Soudan, Égypte	USA ; Belgium	200 white More than 46,000 Nationals
Shaba I: 3 / 1977- 5/1977	FNLC	Anti Mobutu; Anti-impérialist	LundaYeke; Luba; Bemba	Shaba area	mineral Resources;	Angola	Morocco, France	850 t0 1200
Shaba II : 7/1978- 6/1978	FLNC	Anti MOBUTU, anti Imperialism	Lunda Yeke; Luba ; Bemba	Shaba area	Mineral resources	Angola	France Belgique E.U.d'Amérique	1 000 à 3 500
Anti-Mobutu Rebellion: 10/1996- 5/1997	Laurent KABILA (AFDL)	Opposition to the Mobutu regime	Banyamulenge ; MaiMai	Big army; conquest of the country	Mineral Resources; Rwanda, Ouganda	Rwanda, Ouganda, Angola	Aucun	234 000 à 237 000 *
Anti-Kabila Rebellion: 8/1998	E.W.D. Wunmba ; J.P. Ondekane ; J.P. Bemba	Anti Kabila	Several groups	Kivu, Equateur, Katanga, Kasai	Agricultural and mineral resources	Rwanda, Ouganda	Angola Namibi, Zimbabwe	450 000 à 700 000

The wars and rebellions in the DRC are characterized by the ideological antagonisms of the political leaders namely the total independence vis-à-vis the colonizers defended by Lumumba, the pro-socialist antagonism defended by Lumumba and pro-capitalist defended by Tshombe, disputes over the constitutional orientation: federalism, unitarianism and secessionism, disputes over the control of natural resources, ethnic character, the context of an economy weakened by the "the Mobutu' zarianization ", the external debt of the 80s , a growing national opposition to the Mobutu regime calling for democratic change, Mobutu's violent crackdown on political dissidents, the Lubumbashi massacre of students in 1990 (Kisangani, 2012), the disengagement of former Western political allies of Mobutu at the end of the cold war, the influx of more than one million Rwandan Hutu refugees in eastern Congo in June 1994 following the genocide and the victory of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), the marginalization of Banyamulenge, associated with Rwandan Tutsi ethnic group (Kisangani, 2012, Prunier, 2009, Willame, 1997, 1999), rebellion Kabila in August 1998, which led to the involvement of the forces of Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, making this conflict a real regional conflict and an "African war" (Prunier 2009), the assassination of Kabila and the coronation of Joseph Kabila, his son did not dispel conflicts ... With regard to the above, we can conclude that since its independence, the history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been

marked by wars and conflicts with common features in terms of structural features of the economy and the society. The cyclical nature of the conflicts suggests that these factors have not been adequately addressed. The deterioration of the political and economic system has created an environment conducive to the formation of rebellions and armed conflicts that continue to destabilize the DRC.

3.2 Economic Factors of Conflicts

Some economic factors have predisposed the Democratic Republic of the Congo to conflict by playing a triggering role. The 1996-1997 conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo occurred in the context of a severely weakened economy and a declining macroeconomic environment. The economy of the country collapsed from the mid-1970s, following the process of Zairianization (foreign companies are seized and redistributed to national citizens in order to consolidate the national economy and economic independence). Starting in 1974, domestic production began a long period of decline.

The fall in the international price of copper, the country's main export: between 1974 and 1975, the price of copper fell from US \$ 0.64 per kilogram to US \$ 0.24 between 1974 and 1975, a drop of the price index of 113 to 68 (base 2,000 = 100) (Figure 2.2). This price again fell sharply in 1980 and 1989, accentuating the country's economic contraction. When the war broke out in 1996, real per capita income was less than one third of its value in 1974 (from \$ 489 to \$ 163). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, macroeconomic balances continued to deteriorate, in line with the decline in output. Inflation has risen uncontrollably due to both supply and demand factors. On the demand side, inflation has been intensified by irresponsible fiscal and monetary expansion policies aimed at financing the excessive lifestyle of the state. On the supply side, the collapse of economic activity in the public and private sectors, the devaluation of the national currency and bottlenecks in the production sector (such as lack of infrastructure), have contributed to chronic shortage of major commodities, leading to escalating prices. The loss of credibility of monetary and fiscal policies has also helped to maintain expectations of high inflation, leading to predictions. The combination of falling commodity prices and mismanagement of public sector enterprises has resulted in lower government revenues, exacerbating budget deficits. On the external front, the trade balance deteriorated due to a high import bill (especially for oil) and poor export performance. In the early 1990s, the country was almost insolvent. Its foreign exchange reserve had declined from an average of 12.7 percent of external debt in the 1970s to only 1.3 percent in the run-up to the first Kabila war.

It is important to note that while the macroeconomic factors analyzed in this section have increased the risk of conflicts, they are not the direct cause of conflicts. Their links to the conflicts were indirect and exercised through multiple channels. In particular, the deterioration of the economy weakened the capacity of the state to provide basic services, thus degrading its relations with the population. The weak economy has also undermined the ability of the state to fund national security, undermining the morale and readiness of the military and security forces. Important economic and political dimensions also link the deterioration of the economy to conflicts. In particular, the protracted economic crisis led to increased economic inequality as the majority of the

population struggled to maintain a decent standard of living while the political and economic elite continued to accumulate wealth. With a growing economic alienation of the population, especially young unemployed, including those with some education, the environment has become increasingly conducive to the formation of rebellions against the state. The prolonged economic crisis also severed ties with foreign countries on which the various Mobutu regimes could count for military and political support. The situation is therefore conducive to a protest in the form of rebellion against the current regime. The difficult economic situation also explains the regime's inability to resist the various rebellions and armed conflicts. The abundance of natural resources or, to be more precise, the dependence on these resources has been identified as a factor and a significant feature of conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. From this point of view, the country has faced the most serious case of what is known as the "resource curse". Indeed, the latter has not only suffered from the weakening of other sectors, but resources have also motivated, fueled and prolonged conflicts [see Katunga Murhula (2006); Laudati (2013)]. Thus, it can be argued that the Democratic Republic of the Congo provides a perfect example of resource-based conflict (see Collier and Hoeffler, 2012). Natural resources are conflict-related in many ways: luring of profit and secessionism, rebellion financing, erosion of government responsibility, endowment and dependency...

Five factors make it possible to establish the link between conflicts and natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The first is the unequal distribution of natural resource revenues, which provides a basis for discontent for resource-rich regions. These regions then see the central state as a mechanism to exploit their wealth, without any measurable benefits being felt at the local level. The second major feature of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is ethnicity, which plays a mobilizing role in the context of conflicts, including secessionist movements. The strong ethnic concentration within the regions implies that the regional distribution of natural resources corresponds in fact to a distribution of resources between the different ethnic groups. The third factor is the high value of mineral resources, which makes secession claims credible. In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the rise in copper and cobalt prices in the 1970s fueled the secession movement. Similarly, rising commodity prices and the discovery of high-value commodities, such as coltan, in the context of a global economic boom have helped fuel resource nationalism in resource-rich regions, including the eastern provinces, Katanga and the Kasai regions (Kisangani 2012, Ndikumana and Kisangani 2005). The fourth factor in the link between natural resources and conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the presence of a weak state, unable to suppress secessionist rebellions and maintain a strong government security apparatus to fight rebellion. Furthermore, a weak state unable to provide public services cannot rely on the loyalty of its population, including its security services. Finally, the combination of a weak state and the abundance of natural resources allows external agents to take advantage of the power vacuum to exploit natural resources. Insecurity emerges then, and continues when the various actors fight for the control of the natural resources and take part in the internal conflicts.

Financial and economic interests, in the current situation of the DRC, have become the main engine of international geopolitics. Powerful multinational corporations operating

in the natural resources sector and supported by influential politicians dominate the country's economic sector and continue to be a critical factor fueling the most devastating conflicts in the country's history, termed "continental wars". Mining codes and different regulatory frameworks have failed to address the key issues in the mining sector, namely lack of transparency in the management of mining contracts and tax evasion of multinational mining companies.

4. Impact of Armed Conflict in the DRC

Conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo demonstrate a degree of complexity in the nature, scope and extent of their causes. They had a significant impact on the socio-economic situation of the DRC. The deterioration of the economic fabric of the DRC is the result of the three main categories of factors that played a key role, as underlying causes or triggers of conflicts. The first category includes factors related to poor economic policies, and the poor record of development that results from them. Successive postcolonial governments have failed to use the country's immense economic potential to meet the needs of the Congolese people and transform the country into a real driver of economic integration within the Great Lakes region. Instead, the country's natural resources have been used to finance wars, with disastrous consequences for the people and the region as a whole. Poor economic performance is closely linked to the drivers of conflicts. It has weakened the capacity of the state to provide basic public services and put in place an adequate security system, able to guarantee public order at the national level and protect the country's borders. Destitution has created an environment conducive to the mobilization of rebellions, reducing the opportunity cost of engaging in rebellions for poor youth and reducing the government's ability to counter attacks by rebel groups.

The second category of factors includes poor governance and systemic institutional incapacity. The state has failed to fulfill its core functions of providing services, guaranteeing public order and defending the interests of the country at the regional and global levels. It has failed to establish and maintain institutions at the national and local levels that are able to manage conflicts between different ethnic groups. On the other hand, it has adopted regulations and laws that have jeopardized peaceful coexistence between ethnic groups. The state has also failed to put in place an institutional environment for appropriate regulation of economic activity. Instead, it has favored a system gnawed by corrupt practices, kleptocracy and rent-seeking, which have alienated the population from the state, while opening the way for chaotic exploitation of resources by governments, national and foreign actors. The third category of factors includes geopolitical interests at the regional and global levels. In this area, it seems that the history of the country is repeated. From the mercantilist model of King Leopold II during his conquest of the colony, at the time of the Cold War marked by a deterministic approach to global security and during which the Democratic Republic of Congo served as a basis for the fight against terrorism, communism, the country has now come to a time when the two forces are merging. On the one hand, the recent conflicts took place at a time of collision between public and private mercantilist interests, in a resource-rich state that is particularly fragile at the institutional level. This period is further

characterized by the resurgence of determinism in global security against the growing threat of terrorism, while at the regional level, the relations of the Democratic Republic of Congo are affected by serious national threats and cross-border towards the security of its neighbors. Thus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is today, as in the past, in a situation where the control of its own economic and political destiny is considerably threatened by global forces beyond its control.

5. Strategies for Sustainable Development in the DRC

The analysis of strategies for conflicts resolution and the establishment of a solid foundation for lasting peace must take into account these important lessons from the country's history. As a first step, attention must be given to developing strategies for addressing national problems, and not just focusing on conflicts in the eastern region. Second, strategies must include a new economic policy framework to 1) address the serious problem of unequal resource allocation, 2) limit the alienation of the population from the state through greater efficiency in the provision of public services at the regional and local levels, 3) managing the natural resources sector to maximize public revenue and job creation in an environmentally sustainable manner, and 4) implementing the country on the path of economic development.

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