

**Political Instability as Root of Armed Conflict in the Democratic
Republic of Congo**

Abstract

The oppressive policies of military regimes occasioned political instability in the Democratic

Republic of Congo (DRC). This oppression led to the formation of armed groups leading to

persistent armed conflict. This study was based on understanding the role of political instability

in armed warfare in DRC. The aims of the study included: investigating the origin of political

instability in the DRC, examining how political instability is a colonial legacy, determining how

rebel groups perpetuated armed conflict, and investigating how political instability is the root of

armed conflict in DRC. A qualitative research methodology based on a narrative review was

used to examine published literature on armed conflict in the DRC. The study found that

persistent political oppression led to the formation of rebel movements that perpetuated armed

conflict. The study recommends developing a string politically stable system in DRC as an

antidote to future armed warfare.

Keywords: Political Instability, armed groups, Democratic Republic of Congo, unrest, refugees, humanitarian rights.

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Introduction

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has witnessed persistent armed conflict for a long period of time. Throughout the country's post-independence history, the armed conflict has been prevalent. This has led to many studies examining the root causes of armed conflict in the DRC. A possible cause under examination is the colonial history of the DRC, which perpetuated institutional and social vulnerabilities leading to the emergence of armed groups (Hoffmann et al., 2020). There are many armed groups operating in the DRC, and they are the major factors in the persistent armed conflict in the country. Several areas in DRC have continually experienced turmoil for over two decades. The unending unrest is caused by the armed conflicts mainly established in the early 1990s after thousands of Rwandese refugees migrated to the DRC in search of safety (Dagne, 2011). As the refugees migrated to the DRC, there was increased strife between the locals and refugees. Different armed groups arose from the migration, leading to several rebel movements (Dagne, 2011). The rebel groups were first formed during military strikes to topple the military government. Since the toppling of the military government, the DRC has continually experienced armed conflicts caused by internal and external political instabilities.

Problem Statement

Armed conflict has become prevalent in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The political instability and formation of armed groups in the modern DRC started during the military government's era. However, the Belgian government established an oppressive culture, which segregated specific communities from the onset. After the economic depression of 1991, the DRC was disengaged from the global situations encompassing the political environment. Political instabilities characterized the military government's regime because of the oppressive policies he borrowed from the colonial masters. Various rebel groups helped the president to

fight the bad governance established during the military government's rule. After the president ascended to power, he continued with the same oppressions from the previous regime. Historically, the Kivus initiated most of the violence because of the periodic instability in DRC. The eastern DRC was neglected despite being part of the country for several years. The governmental benefits were selective as some communities were considered foreigners from colonial segregation. As a result, these communities formed armed groups to fight for their space within the country. Therefore, there is a link between political instability and armed conflict in the DRC. This link is based on the oppressive policies of the military regime that led to the

formation of armed or rebel groups which have perpetuated armed conflict in the DRC. As a

result, the DRC is a case study of how political instability causes armed conflict. Although

various studies have been done on the role of political instability in causing persistent war, little

focus has been on the DRC situation. Investigations on the DRC conflicts have ignored the

colonial legacy of military oppression and its perpetuation by post-independent military regimes.

There is a need for a comprehensive study examining how political instability in the DRC is the

leading cause of armed conflict. This study examines political instability as the fountain of

armed conflict in the DRC.

Aims/Purposes/Objectives

This study examines political instability as the origin of armed conflict in DRC.

Therefore the study evaluates how political instability has fermented armed conflict in the DRC.

The study will take a historical perspective by examining how political instability emerged from

the colonial legacy and subsequent isolation. The study will further evaluate how political

instability created an environment for the emergence of armed or rebel groups that perpetuated

armed conflict. The research objectives include:

- To investigate the origin of political instability in the DRC
- To examine how political instability is a colonial legacy
- To evaluate how the colonial legacy influenced future military regimes
- To investigate how military regimes perpetuated oppression leading to the formation of rebel groups
- To determine how rebel groups perpetuated armed conflict
- To investigate how political instability is the root of armed conflict in DRC

Research Questions

- What is the origin of political instability in the DRC?
- How is political instability a colonial legacy?
- How did the colonial legacy influence future military regimes?
- How did military regimes perpetuate oppression leading to the formation of rebel groups?
- How did rebel groups perpetuate armed conflict?
- How did political instability originate from armed conflict in DRC ?

Limitations

The study is limited by subject, time, country, and scope. The study investigates political

instability as the root cause of armed conflict in DRC. This is based on the history of armed

conflict in modern DRC and how this is linked to political instability. Therefore, the study will

be limited by country of focus since it concentrates on the DRC. All materials and analysis will

concentrate on the DRC and not any other country. The subject also limits the study since it

investigates political instability as a cause of armed conflict. Therefore, it will not investigate any

other subject apart from political instability and its role in causing armed conflict. The

study is

also limited by time since the investigation must be completed within the stipulated period.

Significance

This study is significant to scholars, the DRC government, leaders, policymakers, and historians. The study covers an important subject and provides enhanced insight into development in this topic. Armed conflict is a common phenomenon across the world that is caused by many factors. Efforts toward addressing armed conflict are based on theories governing conflicts and the factors causing these conflicts. This study investigates the role of political instability in causing armed conflict. Therefore, it offers a better understanding of armed conflict and its causes. Governments, particularly the DRC government, will benefit from this study by understanding the root causes of armed conflict. This will influence the development of mechanisms to address the spiraling conflicts in the country. Scholars will benefit from this studying by extending discourse on the causes of armed conflict. Although the study applies to the DRC, its findings apply to other parts of the world. Leaders and policymakers will use this study to develop better laws, policies, and enhancing to address political instability as an antidote to armed conflict. Leaders will use the findings to enhance people through political instability. Historians will use this study to learn about the colonial legacy in DRC's political instability and how these factors cause armed conflict.

Overview

This chapter entails a comprehensive review of literature on armed conflict in DRC as an

offshoot of political instability. Through a review of the literature, this chapter evaluated a series

of published material on the subject to understand it deeper. The review is based on a sound

theoretical framework underpinning the role of political instability in armed conflict. Several

sources have been selected since they apply to the topic at hand and will be reviewed to help

uncover the role of political instability in armed conflict in DRC.

Theoretical Framework

The monopoly on violence is a theory attributed to Max Weber, a sociologist. The theory

explains the role of violence and how the state has the right to apply force or violence (Weber,

2015). Therefore, the theory states that the state has a monopoly on violence. This theory can be

interpreted in many ways to justify the use of force by the state, and the modern state

characterizes it. However, the authoritarian regime often applied this monopoly to the detriment

of human rights and equality. This implies using violence to extend rule and subjugate

opponents. Weber affirmed the state's right to use violence, force, and intimidation for specific

purposes. However, such use of force must be based on legitimization. The use of force is

imperative in authoritarian regimes, and it creates political instability when legitimization is not

involved. The theory applies to the DRC case since the country has a long history of military

regimes using oppression as a principle of governance. The DRC inherited Belgium's autocratic

rule since the postcolonial military regime used oppression to rule and ensure government

survival. However, unlike Weber's affirmation of legitimation, the military regime applied force

illegally to target opponents of its rule. Therefore the state monopoly of violence in the DRC led

to the exclusion of specific segments and parts of the country, which gave rise to armed rebel

movements. The monopoly of violence by oppressive military regimes led to political instability

since governments were unpopular, and there was no legitimate political process guaranteeing

government power. The instability was a fertile ground for the emergence of armed groups that

marked the beginning and continuing military conflict. To date, political instability is rife in the

DRC, which is the main reason for armed conflict. The segregation of certain parts of the country

created room for rebel groups now fighting with the government.

Review of Published Literature

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has experienced dwindling humanitarian rights and a severe security crisis. The security condition in the DRC was worsened by the 1994 Rwandan genocide when the country experienced a massive refugee spillover (Autesserre, 2006). After the genocide, Rwandan Hutu moved to the eastern DRC, where various armed groups were formed. Several rebel groups arose from the movement, indicating the result of political action from the country of origin. From the security crisis, 4.5 million have already been displaced from their homes (Hoffmann et al., 2020). About 2.2 million children are on the brink of starvation, and millions of refugees have moved to neighboring countries like Uganda, Tanzania, and Angola (Hoffmann et al., 2020). The displacement experienced in DRC is more than in any other country on the African continent.

After the 1997 war, the president fell out with his allies. The Rwandan and Ugandan military groups that pushed him to power became a piece of baggage he needed to offload. As a result, an armed confrontation ensued. Uganda and Rwanda became the president's fiercest enemies, an encounter that saw the president lose serious military battles (Dagne, 2011). President sought a new partnership with Namibia, Angola, and Zimbabwe by allowing their troops to occupy DRC to contain the armed rebels. The new grouping led to the breaking out of the regional war that saw more than 3 million people die between 1998 and 2003 (Autesserre, 2006). Although the clashing armed groups caused the deaths, political instability played a significant role. President needed to protect his territory, but he died by assassination by his bodyguard.

Between 1998 and 2003, the DRC government fought several rebel groups. The operations were supported by neighboring countries such as Angola, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. However, most of the rebel groups had support from Uganda and Rwanda in an encounter called the Second Congo War (Autesserre, 2006). The rebel groups had support from different states, making the war highly political. The battle continued even after DRC made a peace deal in 2002. After the formation of a transitional government in 2003, certain rebel groups still targeted civilians (Autesserre, 2006). Armed groups attacked innocent civilians because of poor governance and security operations. With the growth of weak institutions within the country, the rebel groups took advantage of corrupt officials to disrupt peace and stability. The stability of Kinshasa is significant for DRC's political and economic progression since it is the concentration of legitimate power. From the eastern side, the Kivus (rebellion group from the military government) have continually targeted Kinshasa (Shamamba et al., 2021). When the capital is unstable, it symbolizes the nation's condition.

The political differences between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo worsened the situation of armed conflict. For instance, among the most prominent armed groups in DRC is the March 23 Movement (M23), primarily composed of the Tutsis (Shamamba et al., 2021). The Tutsis originated from Rwanda, and their goal of creating instability was politically instigated. The rebel group had the full support of the Rwandan government, which enjoyed relative peace and instability during the 2009 period. Specifically, the rebellion by the M23 group was caused by the Congolese government renegeing on the 2009 peace deal (Dagne, 2011). In response, the Congolese government marshaled its soldiers with the support of the United Nations to contain the armed groups causing instability in the country. In 2013, the group was defeated, but others emerged to create continuity of the country's instability.

The Pretoria Agreement, signed on December 16, 2002, had substantial proposals to lead the country in a better direction. The agreement detailed how the DRC would establish a negotiated framework that enabled the country to develop a transitional government to cater to different interests (Muraya & Ahere, 2014). The political environment had become so heated that its internal mechanisms were insufficient to contain the problem. It was agreed that DRC would move forward with the international community's help in managing provincial and national elections. Specifically, the agreement moved to ensure all the warring parties resolve their differences and the use of armed military minimized. However, the eastern side of DRC's capital Kinshasa still experienced dissensions (Muraya & Ahere, 2014). Political might and the desire to control the country fractured the desire for consolidation resulting in further political instability.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has massive untapped wealth estimated at more than \$24 trillion. The country's wealth has been a source of political instability resulting in the current insecurity from armed groups witnessed in the country. All governmental operations are dependent on minerals as the major economic activity. The rebel groups also use the minerals as their source of funds that support their operations, such as purchasing firearms. In 2010, the United States passed a law requiring a reduction in purchasing certain conflict minerals to avoid funding militia groups (Muraya & Ahere, 2014). However, the DRC has a complex supply chain system that makes it hard to control the purchase of such minerals. The government is in a constant tussle with the militia groups over the control of resources. Such activities are caused by political instability resulting in armed conflict in the country.

Since the 1960s, Eastern DRC has been marred with armed conflicts influenced by political instability. The fulness of conflicts was encountered when the desire to control Bukavu. Bukavu is one of the capitals of Kivu province bordering Rwanda. Two generals, Prosper

Nyabiolwa and Colonel Jules Mutebutsi, marshaled their loyal soldiers to fight for the capital's control. Colonel Mutebutsi was supported by General Laurent Nkunda, a Tutsi leader of a rebel group controlling part of Kivu. The region experienced instability because of the individual need for control. For several decades, the eastern DRC failed to recognize Kinshasa as its capital. Although most rebel generals were incorporated into the legitimate government, continued political instability creates some hope for ease of control. Various factions capitalize on political instability to strengthen their armed groups for conflicts.

From the eastern DRC, the conflicts have become complex because of the combination of genuine grievances among the players and their responsibility for gross human rights violations. In the entire country, the eastern DRC has the highest population of armed groups with rising insecurity rates (Ekyamba, 2022). For instance, several Congolese armed groups combined forces with Rwandese and Ugandan troops to cause regional instability. The vulnerability of the eastern region is the primary cause for the success of the various armed groups (Muraya & Ahere, 2014). Most groups have patrimonial lines, and community directions based on the support received in past activities.

Historically, political instability was caused by communal differences and the need to control the population. Armed groups formed alliances to fight for their space within the country, especially the control of the most strategic areas in the DRC (Hoffmann et al., 2020). Several wars were won because of these alliances, creating unwritten pacts between the different communities. With different regimes, the reorganization of various armed groups occurred. Armed groups establish their allegiances from communal or historical support as different political issues arise, thus promoting reorganization (Muraya & Ahere, 2014). For instance, groups that received support from Rwanda before are more likely to form an alliance or pledge

allegiance with them. Specifically, the M23 group reemerged in 2003 with the support of Rwanda through military tactics, weapons, and more personnel to resist the new DRC regime (Autesserre, 2006). Slight provocations would lead to major wars, hence the contribution of political instability to armed groups.

Between 2003 and 2006, there was relative peace in the DRC because of the formed political settlements. Although there were political formations, the intense need and struggle for power remained (Autesserre, 2006). However, the armed groups formed political parties to bargain for their fair share of the government. DRC experienced a period of relative peace when the rebel groups were included in governmental operations. The political temperatures reduced for the first time in a decade, and the country received relative stability (Autesserre, 2006). With the increasing political stability, the actions of various armed groups were stopped. The fight for control and power was no longer on the battlefield but through policies fronted by the political parties (Autesserre, 2006). The years between 2003 and 2006 confirmed that political stability reduced the armed group actions as the grounds for wars were eliminated.

For the 70 years under the Belgian government, DRC did not build sufficient capacity for power and self-governance. The Congolese were exploited economically, socially, and politically, making them unprepared for independence since they lacked the needed infrastructure to run a functional government (Hoffmann et al., 2020). The country was left in confusion as anarchy became the order of operation. During the colonial period, the Belgian government failed to prioritize proper leadership among the African elite to enable them to manage the political challenges that came with independence. The Congolese elites proved incapable of handling the rising political issues within the country, creating anarchy through military, political, racial, and ethnic instabilities that proved hard to handle. The first coup attempt by

military officers was primarily composed of university graduates who were susceptible to influence (Muraya & Ahere, 2014). After the military officer's fall, civil service was marred with political interests ensuing dissensions from various factions and communities. Political leaders appointed people close to them while ignoring the other communities. As a result, diverse ethnic communities resorted to armed conflicts to air their grievances, thus the impact of political instability.

In Kivu, governance was a contentious issue as the locals questioned Kinshasa's authority within the region. Historically, Kivu has always wanted to be an independent state and expected its governance to be decentralized. Since the Second Congo War, Kivu's rebellion has always been on their identity. The issue of centralized political and military action became an issue of concern, especially with Kinshasa's continued desire to influence the region (Muraya & Ahere, 2014). At the same time, Kinshasa views itself as the source of DRC's legitimate government, and its influence should be felt in all spheres of the country (Hoffmann et al., 2020). For example, the attempted redeployment of Bosco Ntaganda, a Kivu from the eastern DRC, contributed to the M23 rebellion. Further redeployment of officers from Tutsi confirmed Kinshasa's desire to centralize its power and control eastern politics. Such authorities led to disagreements that caused the development of armed conflicts within the region.

One significant political issue is the imposition of artificial borders that ignored the placement patterns that were useful for people in the country. The colonial systems established civic and ethnic governments (Shamamba et al., 2021). The governments had different purposes, as the central state oversaw the operations of civic law while local authorities were responsible for ethnic requirements. Ideally, all citizens should have equal governmental rights, land ownership, and resource distribution, but these have been reserved for loyalists (Ekyamba,

2022). However, some communities living in North Kivu, the eastern part of DRC, were ignored despite living in the area for over three centuries (Hoffmann et al., 2020). The communities had no land rights since they were excluded from ethnic citizenship. These communities were also accused of lacking native authority and hence no customary access. The artificial borders created political instabilities as the native communities from the eastern DRC felt undervalued, leading to the development of armed groups in retaliation.

With the dual legal system, ethnic divides became worse, especially for people living within the region. After the end of colonialism, such discriminatory patterns were not solved in subsequent governments. The military government failed to include Tutsis in DRC's dual citizenship (Shamamba et al., 2021). In addition, the leader excluded the eastern community from economic empowerment programs and security that denied them the opportunity to obtain their needed stability. The Tutsis were also denied access to national identification documents despite being granted citizenship through the statutory framework established in 1972 (Dagne, 2011). The acknowledgment was only on paper, as the community did not enjoy the benefits of being DRC citizens. Because of this exclusion, the community felt the need to fight for their space within the government. Armed groups were formed to resist perceived oppressive governmental policies that denied them a chance to equitable resource distribution and land access.

Besides, the Rwandan genocide created a permanent mistrust between the Hutus and Tutsis despite the latter moving to the neighboring DRC. Because of the mistrust, the Tutsis believed they could be attacked anytime, increasing their alarm (Ekyamba, 2022). Specifically, the community lived under a pre-emptive engagement that saw them form various armed groups as a prevention mechanism. The armed groups attacked its neighboring communities as a defense

mechanism to create fear among the locals (Ekyamba, 2022). The Tutsis sought alliances with other groups to protect their interests within the country. Various armed groups took control of North Kivu's cities to counter the central leadership influence. In response, the president sought the support of Mai-Mai groups to counter the rising influence of eastern armed communities (Muraya & Ahere, 2014). Instead of fighting the community influence, the DRC leader established them for his gain. The increasing political instability became the basis for strengthening the armed groups, thus promoting their influence in different parts of the country.

As the desire to suppress the Tutsi population in the eastern DRC grew, the government saw the formation of separate armed groups to perform its role. Through the advice and support of the president, local authorities at Kivu formed the Mai-Mai comprising the Nyanga, Hunde, and Nande militia groups (Muraya & Ahere, 2014). The armed group was designed to contain the increasing Tutsi influence and dominance in Kivu. The political instability created by the fear of toppling governmental operations led to the formation of further armed groups within the country. Mai-Mai groups countered the influence of Rwandan troops that supported and sympathized with the Tutsis living in eastern DRC. Such formations became the basis for creating new armed groups that caused further regional insecurity.

From the duration of the military government regime, kleptocracy and massive corruption were the order of government. The president used his powers to divert public resources for personal gain as he fraudulently enriched himself. Governmental operations and benefits were reserved for the few individuals surrounding the president while storing their plunder in offshore accounts (Shamamba et al., 2021). Police officers and subordinate governmental staff extorted the public as they amassed public resources. Massive corruption was the primary reason for the 1980s to 1990s DRC economic collapse (Muraya & Ahere, 2014). Millions of common citizens

wallowed in poverty as the minority grew richer through public resources. There was a sharp distinction between the rich and poor individuals within the country. The segregation was worse for the eastern DRC as they did not enjoy any slight benefits from the plunders. Through massive corruption, political instability ensued. The eastern DRC formed armed groups to resist the oppressive political regime and governmental policies.

Lastly, political regimes are more concerned about rewarding loyalists than seeking the country's stability. Since the political era, the opponents have been oppressed, and communities perceived as opposition do not enjoy governmental support. In fact, throughout that era, the governments created armed groups to counter their influence (Shamamba et al., 2021). Genuine concerns were converted to political competitions and propaganda that most plights were not addressed. Areas with mixed communities, such as Goma and Uvira, experienced cultural tussles as some groups were deemed foreigners that did not deserve a fair share of the national resources (Muraya & Ahere, 2014). Each government was characterized by alienation, prejudice, and preferences that led to the establishment of armed groups to oppose their operations. However, the first democratic elections in 2018 created new hope for different rival groups with promising political stability.

Thus, the Democratic Republic of Congo has experienced oppressive political regimes that undermine specific communities through economic and military suppressions. From the historical establishment, the Belgian colonial government caused confusion as it failed to set an effective plan for the elites to take over the country's operations. Politically, certain eastern communities, such as the Tutsis, were not viewed as legitimate DRC citizens, a confusion that originated from the colonial era. As a result, the oppressed communities formed armed groups to resist oppression and segregation. The sitting governments also formed an armed group to

contain the increasing resistance from various communities, especially from eastern DRC. With the open corruption witnessed among multiple governments, certain communities fought for fair resource distribution through their armed groups. The rising political instability is caused by military, economic, and ethnic suppression, which prompts various communities to fight for their space through armed groups.

Summary

The literature review indicates the various epochs of DRC history where political instability has fueled armed conflicts. The literature starts with the oppressive military rule that created political instability leading to the emergence and formation of armed rebel groups. These armed rebel groups started fighting the government to break away or take control of the state. The state responded with more violence to annihilate the armed rebels. However, such a response only exacerbated the situation since more rebel groups emerged with external funding. This made things hard, leading to prolonged military conflict between rebel groups and the government. Even in cases where the government won against rebel groups, new groups emerged in other areas making these efforts futile. Therefore, the literature links political instability in DRC and armed conflict. This is based on the theory of the monopoly of violence, where the state has a right to use force and violence. However, since the state used violence without legitimization, it became extreme, leading to the emergence of armed groups that exacerbated the armed conflict.

Methodology

Research Design

The study utilizes a narrative review of current knowledge on political instability as a

root of armed conflict in DRC. Therefore, the study involved the qualitative research

methodology through a narrative review of the subject. A narrative review was conducted

explaining the existing knowledge on political instability as the root of armed conflict in DRC

based on all the available published research.

A case study research design was utilized in this research. The entire research was a case

study of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) regarding political instability as the root of

armed conflict. Therefore, all information and analysis referred to DRC, and the evaluation

aimed to indicate how political instability has led to armed conflict in the DRC.

Ethical Issues

Ethical issues in the study involved accessing published literature and recognizing

sources of information through citation. The study utilized authorized methods of accessing

libraries and other databases. Approvals were sought from relevant authorities before accessing

published materials. This helped avoid unauthorized access and use of published materials.

Information from published sources was recognized through citations and references. The cited

acknowledge information from different sources by citing them in this report. This helped avoid

plagiarism which includes presenting somebody's information as your own. The investigator

acknowledged information borrowed from different sources.

Results and Analysis

Findings	Analysis

Political instability is the root cause of armed conflict in DRC	The endless war in DRC was caused by political instability.
Political instability emanated from state violence.	State violence by an oppressive military regime created political instability in DRC.

<p>Oppressive regimes perpetuated injustices.</p>	<p>Postcolonial military regimes perpetuated oppression and injustices against civilians.</p>
<p>Political instability and violence in DRC is a colonial legacy</p>	<p>This history of colonialism haunts DRC reading political violence. The Belgian colonial government used oppressive means</p>
<p>Post-colonial military regime perpetuated political oppression</p>	<p>to subjugate the black majority Political oppression did not end with the colonial government since independent military regimes also used violence and</p>
<p>Political oppression led to the emergence of armed rebel conflicts</p>	<p>oppression. The emergence of armed rebel groups in DRC was caused by extreme political violence. This implies that political instability</p>
<p>The government responded with more violence to crash armed groups</p>	<p>led to the use of excessive force by the state, culminating in rebel movements.</p>
<p>The activities of armed groups increased through foreign funding</p>	<p>The government response was aimed at annihilating political revolt by crashing rebel movements that had sprouted across DRC.</p>
<p>The activities of armed groups increased through foreign funding</p>	<p>The rising activities of armed rebel groups were based on international funding. Many entities and individuals outside DRC</p>

funded

the operations of rebel groups.

Oppressive regimes created political instability in DRC	Political instability in DRC emanated from oppressive military regimes that failed to nurture democratic institutions and governance.
Political instability in DRC increased armed conflict	The political instability in DRC created a fertile ground for armed conflict through the emergence of political revolt spearheaded by

Discussion

Political instability is the leading cause of armed conflict in DRC. The country has undergone a series of military, oppressive, and unstable governments, creating an unsustainable environment. Political instability in DRC emanated from state violence. Extreme state violence created a politically unstable state due to weak democratic institutions. Persistent oppressive regimes in DRC perpetuated injustices, and this was the epitome of political instability. A stable nation builds political systems based on tolerance and peace (Dagne, 2011). However, DRC regimes were insecure and perpetuated violence to maintain their authority. Political stability is a function of peace and tolerance, implying that without these two dimensions, stability is elusive. DRC has never had a cohesive national society since the peace, and political tolerance has been absent. Previous successive regimes have perpetuated the political marginalization of certain sections and people. Such a situation has created

intolerance

which breeds political violence. For instance, the emergence of armed rebel groups is directly

proportional to the lack of stability and tolerance. Successive governments have marginalized

certain sections, communities, and regions. This created a viable ground for developing rebel

movements targeting state power. The continuous marginalization of communities, regions, and

people will spell doom for DRC's future. The mineral-rich country has not found a formula for

equitable resource sharing, and power is for the few elites who use it to plunder national

resources. This explains the emergence of armed groups in areas with rich mineral deposits.

Building political stability in DRC will only succeed when issues of resource sharing are

addressed through equality and non-marginalization.

The colonial period substantially impacted the political system and environment in DRC.

Political instability and violence in DRC is a colonial legacy (Autesserre, 2006). The country

borrowed political oppression and violence from the Belgian oppressive regimes. DRC lacked

democratic and stable governments after its independence. Post-colonial military regimes

perpetuated political oppression. Successive regimes were unwilling to integrate and uphold the

social contract in nurturing democracy (Simpson & Pellegrini, 2022). DRC was ruled by military

regimes that used violence and oppression as a power tool. The legacy of military rule created an

environment without political tolerance. State power was used as a tool of division and

prevalence, implying that a few elites benefited from access to amenities while the rest were

excluded. One of the most significant signs of political instability is the lack of national cohesion

and political inclusivity. This puts citizens at the mercy of the rulers and the state.

Excluding

certain parts led to political rebellion, culminating in armed conflict. This explains why political

instability is the leading cause of armed conflict in DRC. As a result, any efforts to address the

DRC issue must be based on addressing political instability.

Political oppression culminated in the emergence of armed rebel groups. The lack of

stability created an environment that supported the emergence of rebel groups. Government

oppression and political instability are significant causes of war (Coccia, 2019). Therefore,

political instability played a significant role in enhancing DRC's armed conflicts. The

government's response to the emergence of rebel groups was a significant turning point in DRC's

conflicts. Corruption by police is an example of the adverse effects of political instability in DRC

(Alexandre, 2018). The government responded by perpetuating more violence to crash armed

groups. However, it was not possible to eliminate the armed groups. Political oppression is an

epitome of political instability since state use oppression to perpetuate their rule. The DRC has

faced political oppression during military regimes that undermined democratic institutions and

violated people's human rights. Building a culture of participation, tolerance, and institutionalism

will eliminate political instability in DRC. Such developments will secure the country's future

from armed conflict.

The role of international actors was visible in DRC's armed conflicts. The activities of

armed groups increased through foreign funding. The role of external parties like troops and

other players was counterproductive in ending war hostilities in DRC (Tamm, 2022). The

funding and support made it difficult for the government to eliminate rebel activities. Subsequent

oppressive regimes created political instability in DRC through violence. Instability creates an

environment where people and groups are willing to fight for their rights (Autesserre, 2006).

DRC is a case study of how political instability fuels war, considering that political

instability in

DRC increased armed conflict. Peacekeeping missions were aimed at countering insurgency and

helping create political stability (Namakula, 2022). However, DRC governments were unwilling

to accommodate rebel leaders' divergent views.

Conclusion

This paper examined whether political instability is the root cause of armed conflict in

DRC. The study was motivated by the premise that persistent political instability in DRC is the

leading cause of military conflict. Since DRC faces persistent political instability, it is believed

that it has led to military conflict. The study involved a narrative review of published literature.

A thorough literature review was conducted based on a sound theoretical framework. Max

Weber's theory of the monopoly of violence was the anchor of this study since it supported the

premise that the state has the legal right to use force. The study's findings were affirmative that

political instability is the root cause of armed conflict in the DRC. Therefore, the best way to end

ongoing war is to build robust democratic political systems that erase the instability bedeviling

the region. Therefore, DRC and the regional and international community must pool efforts to

build a strong, politically stable nation. This study has diverse implications on the prevalence of

armed conflict worldwide, specifically in Africa and DRC. This is based on the role of political

instability in causing widespread military conflict in countries without democratic political

systems. It also implies that the emphasis on the rule of law is based on the liberal ideas of

political tolerance and participation. The prevalence of political instability breeds armed conflict

since it is no free democratic space, and dissidence is not tolerated. DRC is a case study of how

the failure to build democratic systems based on the rule of law leads to anarchy. It is incumbent

upon authorities to nurture social cohesions through political freedom and participation.

Governments must be based on the social contract through universal suffrage. The failure of

DRC to build political stability, tolerance, and democracy has encouraged the prevalence of

military warfare. Armed conflict costs are severe since the country cannot make political, social,

and economic progress. The emergence of the armed rebel movement is directly based on

prevailing political instability. Efforts should be developed to cultivate political stability to

prevent the escalation of armed conflict. National, regional, and international stakeholders should

collaborate to build strong political institutions in the DRC to eliminate the root causes of armed

conflicts. Armed warfare will remain part of the DRC legacy without a lasting political solution.

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