Addressing the Causes and Consequences of Conflict:
The Promise of Peacebuilding Actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Abstract

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been plagued with conflict as a result of an extensive history of political instability. As a result, many actors have attempted to respond to the conflict by engaging in various peacebuilding efforts. These actors have included the state, the international community, and local civil society. Understanding how these actors have attempted to build peace requires a thorough analysis of the areas in which they can address conflict. For the purposes of analysis, these areas can be placed in two categories: the causes and consequences of conflict. The causes of conflict include actors and perpetuators such as ethnic tension, the state, rebel groups, and neighbouring countries. The consequences of conflict include the displacement of people, child exploitation, and gender-based violence. In order to offer an analysis of the capacity of peacebuilding actors to address the causes and consequences of conflict, I will explore the ability or inability of each actor. This includes how actors can restrict the ability of others, as well as how they may limit their own ability. Doing this will expose the promise that each actor has to contribute to peacebuilding. In the case of this essay, the actor that has the most promise for peacebuilding is civil society.

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Section 1: Introduction

Conflict in developing countries tends to hinder the development process and can be viewed as "reverse development" (Call & Cousens, 2008, p. 2). The concept of reverse development attempts to describe not only how internal conflict prevents development, but how it erases any form of development that the country had achieved prior to conflict. Therefore, actors involved in development are constantly looking for ways to build peace within the state in conflict.

The discourse in development tends to focus on a "bottom-up" approach. This approach assumes that development is the most legitimate when placed in the hands of local actors. The bottom-up approach can be applied to the discourse of conflict and development in order to understand how conflict resolution can occur at a micro-level. The source of this conflict resolution, I will argue, can happen through local civil society.

Understanding the role of civil society in peacebuilding requires a well-rounded knowledge of both conflict and peacebuilding and the actors involved. However, the complexity of both concepts need to be dissected and divided in order to expose the realities of the situation. To do this, I will analyze the causes of conflict as well as the consequences of conflict and apply this analysis to the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Addressing both of these concepts is important because they have been dominant in the discourse on peacebuilding.

My research is guided by the following question: in analyzing the causes and consequences of conflict, which actors in the DRC hold the most promise for peacebuilding? To answer this question, I draw from literature that discusses conflict, development, and peacebuilding and I apply it to secondary data on the DRC. The data I will analyze is both qualitative and quantitative and will be gathered through reports from

civil society organizations, international organizations and private research groups who focus on the DRC.

I structure my thesis by firstly describing what the literature has stated about the causes and consequences of conflict. The causes of conflict include actors and perpetuators that could cause or protract violence, including ethnic tension, rebel groups, the state, and neighbouring countries. Following this, I explain the consequences of conflict that can emerge, including the displacement of persons, child exploitation and gender-based violence. Lastly, I describe how certain actors involved in peacebuilding, notably those that are associated with civil society, can or cannot contribute to addressing both the causes and consequences of conflict.

My empirical analysis follows the same analytical schema as the literature review. Taking this approach allows me to analyze how the discourse on peacebuilding can or cannot be applied to reality, and exposes some of the flaws that exist in the peacebuilding discourse. As well, it can expose which actors are limited in their ability to build peace and whether or not they have potential to contribute to addressing the causes or the consequences of conflict.

Throughout my research, I tend to put special emphasis on local civil society. I do this for two reasons: firstly, there is a lack of attention in the peacebuilding literature on civil society in terms of analyzing their role in addressing the causes and consequences of conflict, therefore this essay seeks to fill this gap by placing extra emphasis on the role played by local civil society actors. My main argument in this thesis will be that, when analyzing the actors involved in addressing the causes and consequences of conflict, local civil society holds the most promise for peacebuilding.

Section 2: Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding

The following section will explore some of the literature on conflict and peacebuilding. As indicated previously, I will be dividing my review of this literature into an examination of the causes and consequences of conflict. The causes of conflict will focus on the actors and perpetuators that can commence or prolong violence. This will be followed by a section that will analyze the consequences of conflict through several examples and will highlight some of the approaches that explain why they occur. Finally, the essay will examine the concept of peacebuilding and explore how actors, including the state, the international community, and local civil society, can be limited in their ability to build peace.

The Causes and Consequences of Conflict

For the purpose of this essay, I divide conflict into the causes and consequences of conflict. I do this for two reasons. Firstly, I attempt to follow the analytical trend many scholars follow that traditionally either address the causes of conflict or the consequences of conflict. Additionally, I do this because when considering how peacebuilding can address the causes and consequences of conflict, often the actors involved in peacebuilding are more effective in addressing one aspect more than the other. Therefore, this approach can more effectively contribute to responding to my research question.

Causes: Actors and Perpetuators

Actors and perpetuators in a state in conflict can often cause or prolong conflict. I purposely divide them into the actors that cause conflict or the actors that perpetuate conflict because while an actor may not be the direct actor that has caused violence, often

actors can prolong conflict, thus perpetuating the causes. I discuss several actors and

perpetuators including ethnic tension, rebel groups, the state and neighbouring countries.

These actors and perpetuators can increase the complexity of conflict, creating more

challenges in peacebuilding initiatives.

When highlighting the causes of conflict, there is a certain cause I purposely leave

out. Colonialism is considered to be a main cause of conflict by many scholars. Sandra

Marker (2003) states that the territorial boundaries, oppression of specific groups, and

unequal distribution of wealth that colonial powers inflicted on certain regions have cause

existing tensions that perpetuated violence and conflict (para. 1). While colonialism has

undoubtedly affected and influenced the political dynamics of conflict states, I purposely

exclude it as a cause of conflict because while peacebuilders can address the outcomes

that have emerged out of colonialism, peacebuilders cannot address colonialism itself.

Therefore, I purposely exclude it from my analysis.

Conflict in a developing country can often erupt from political division that is

asserted through ethno-nationalism. Ethno-nationalism is defined as tension or conflict

that erupts due to "competing identity and sovereignty claims" (McGrattan, 2010, p. 181).

The identities within this definition of ethno-nationalism can be divided in forms of

ethnic differences. The goal of ethno-nationalism is argued to be the assertion of political,

social, and cultural dominance in a given area based on the values of the ethnic or social

group. Out of this can emerge rebel groups that often perpetuate violence through

genocide, ethnic cleansing or the political oppression of other groups (Moore, 2015, p.

95).

Another important outcome of ethno-nationalism that contributes to further

conflict is the control of territory and resources. A concept used to describe this

phenomenon is ethno-territoriality. The concept of ethno-territoriality describes the actions that are attributed to ethno-nationalist regimes and their goals to gain territorial sovereignty (Moore, 2016). The goal of ethno-territoriality, Adam Moore argues, is to further separate different ethnic groups to create unity within a given ethnic group and to advance this group's own political agenda.

The political agenda of armed groups participating in ethno-territoriality is often blurred by an abundance of motives. Morten Boas and Kevin Dunn (2014) propose the concept of "autochthony" (p. 142) to describe the attempted claim a group of individuals have over territory due to their ethnic roots. This word translates as "emerging from the soil" (p. 142) to demonstrate how a group of people can make a claim to a right to land when they see themselves as the original inhabitants. Boas and Dunn argue that this results in conflict due to the conflicting arguments about who has supreme rights over a territory.

Another motive to gain territorial control that could mix within other motives is economic benefits. Gaining territorial control allows for the control of economically valuable resources, which in turn can generate revenue through the imposition of border taxation (Laudati, 2013, p. 33). Ann Laudati (2013) states that natural resources are a "prize" (p. 34) for gaining territory by an ethnic or rebel group. While not all control of natural resources is ethnically motivated, creating ethnic claims to resources could be motivated by economic gain.

The consequences of ethno-territoriality further impede the peacebuilding process. As a result of political instability, armed groups often have territorial or economic control which provides them with more power. Jason K. Sterns and Christoph Vogel (2015) argue that this increase in power can lead rebel groups to be heavily supported by

civilians and even politicians (Congo Research Group, 2016; Sterns & Vogel, 2015, p. 7). This makes it more difficult for rebel groups to be eliminated. As well, Marta Iniguez de Heredia (2012) argues that not only do groups often receive support from civilians, over time it can be difficult to distinguish between local rebel groups and civilians (p. 82). Therefore, simply eliminating rebel groups through the use of force that are causing conflict through territorial control may not be feasible for conflict resolution.

Ethnic tension can often result in the formulation of rebel groups that challenge state structures to advance a political agenda (Hoffman & Vlassenroot, 2014, p. 205). Kasper Hoffman and Koen Vlassenroot provide the argument that rebel groups have used the instruments of state power in order to reinforce their authority (p. 203). The multitude of actors within the DRC constantly compete for authority with the government, thus weakening the capacity of the state itself (p. 205). As result, the emergence of new networks of power that have evolved over time have gained authority through violence and they have continued to constantly compete for power (p. 206-207), thus making conflict resolution more difficult to achieve.

The complexity that can emerge out of protracted conflict is that rebel groups often formulate new and more complicated agendas than their original formulation. Hoffman and Vlassenroot (2014) argue this by stating while the original political agenda of a rebel group during conflict is only to protect themselves during violence, their agenda can actually evolve and demand more political and economic power overtime (p. 208). Their political and economic demands, Hoffman and Vlassenroot argue, actually reinforces their legitimacy and their power over civilians or territory (p. 218), thus complicating the political process even further.

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While the motives and identities of rebel groups evolve overtime, Boas and Dunn (2014) argue that the presence of international intervention, whether it be from neighbouring countries or further abroad, rebel groups have a tendency to resist foreigners in order to uphold and reinforce their traditions and their established power relations (p. 152). Therefore, the constant influence of external actors only reinforces certain group's identities and resistance. As a result, many rebel groups resist the idea of compromise and negotiation, thus risking a further prolongation of violence (p. 154). The reinforcement of their identity and motives adds to the complexity of political negotiations.

The state's reaction to conflict can be complex and this complexity can increase as conflict continues. A government's response may only further aggravate the situation and can result in a negative response from civilians. Iniguez de Heredia (2012) argues that, in some cases, the government may send corrupt law enforcement officials that only further violate human rights and may create even more violence (p. 83). It is difficult for a country in conflict that is already plagued with corruption to resolve and calm the situation.

This leads to issues surrounding the military. The role of the military within a country is to prevent or resolve conflict, whether it be from external threats or internal friction. An abundance of literature has provided arguments that domestic military may be a contributing factor rather than a solution to conflict. It is likely in a state of conflict that the military has played a role in initiating conflict and may also continue to support an oppressive government that could itself be contributing to sustaining conflict (Von Billerbeck, 2015, p. 206). As well, divisions within the nation-state that contributes to

conflict may be an avenue for military elites to gain political power (Mac Ginty, 2014, p. 555).

An understanding of conflict within a state should also take into account the role played by the international interventions of neighbouring states and how they contribute to the lack of peace. Séverine Autesserre (2011) argues this by stating that peace could be achieved were it not for the intervention of neighbouring countries (p. 60). Neighbouring countries may have an interest in countries that are experiencing conflict, especially if rebel groups are working along and across their borders (p. 62). This further creates tensions between countries which limits or hinders the possibility for cooperation and negotiation.

This section has highlighted the actors and perpetuators of conflict in order to outline the complexity that can be embedded in a conflict state. The purpose of highlighting this complexity is to discover how actors in peacebuilding face challenges in addressing the causes of conflict. Though evaluating the challenges peacebuilding actors face as a result of the causes of conflict can thus expose the potential and promise certain peacebuilding actors may have, including local civil society.

Consequences

The outcomes of conflict have a huge impact on the well-being of civilians. To truly capture conflict and development, the consequences of conflict must be addressed. Three main consequences of conflict include the displacement of people, child oppression, and gender-based violence. While I recognize that there are other consequences of conflict, the consequences of conflict are numerous and it would be difficult to outline every outcome of conflict. With this in mind, the main consequences I

evaluate exemplify the main contextual characteristics of a conflict ridden area and will be sufficient for the analysis developed in this essay.

Conflict is one of the main drivers that displaces people within their own country. An internally displaced person is an individual who had to flee their home as a result of political instability, but continue to reside in the country marked by conflict (UNHCR, 2017). As a result, individuals in these situations often lack basic services and housing (Derderian & Schockaert, 2010, p. 17). Countries in conflict not only cause displacement, but also lack sufficient resources in order to respond efficiently to forced displacement (Zeender & Rothing, 2010, p. 10).

Ethno-territoriality can also contribute to the displacement of people in conflict areas. In order to gain power and resources, rebel groups may force groups of people from their homes. As well, there is greater insecurity for those who are displaced within their own country, furthering their vulnerability to violence or exploitation. Exploitation includes recruitment by rebel groups or the possibility of sexual assault (Zeender & Rothing, 2010, p. 11).

Child exploitation can also be widespread in areas that are in conflict. Child soldiering is extremely common in conflict situations and is widely considered amongst scholars as a negative consequence of conflict. Child Soldiers International[1] defines child soldiers to be children under the age of eighteen who have been recruited or kidnapped for military purpose and have served as positive benefits for armed groups (2016), whether that be at the hands of the state's military forces or rebel groups. Because children are especially vulnerable during conflict, they often lack security, both

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[1]Child Soldiers International is an independent human rights organization that works with governments to end child soldering.

physically and financially. Therefore, this lack of security can make children more vulnerable to exploitation.

The benefits of using child soldiers I speak of can be economic or political and often outweigh the benefits of recruiting adults. Bernd Beber and Christopher Blattman (2011) outlined the idea that adult recruits were more likely to seek and respond to economic incentives. Alternatively, children were more likely to respond to cognitive reinforcement from armed group leaders. Certain reinforcements included brain-washing them to crave "honour… a sense of purpose or protection" (p. 4). The economic benefits of child recruits created enough incentive for armed groups to prefer children over adult recruits.

The costs of child soldiering are not only in the obvious insecurity and danger of battle, but also in the challenges they face in terms of psychological recovery and reintegration into the community. Ex-child soldiers are often faced with psychological trauma and are stigmatized when they return to their local communities. They also continue to be deprived of economic resources such as education and employment opportunities (Jordans et al., 2012, p. 1). The negative outcomes of child soldiering only further perpetuates the negative outcomes of conflict.

According to a report by Free the Slaves[2], armed conflict has also increased child marriage (2013, p. 7). Erin Baines (2014) examines how young girls are used by rebel groups as part of "nation-building" through forced child marriages. The marriages create a family unit that eventually creates loyalty and interdependence within the group, which

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[2] Free the Slaves is an organization that seeks to end modern slavery through advocacy and providing information regarding modern slavery.

can further support the goals of the rebel group (p. 9). Therefore, conflict can directly influence the number of child marriages.

Women are impacted negatively as a direct result of conflict because they can often be target as a result of their gender. The use of rape as a weapon is meant to further gain dominance and control by armed groups. It is a tactic to humiliate and degrade civilians within an ethnic group or community in order to reinforce dominance and further their political agendas (Maedl, 2011, p. 130). The use of rape as a weapon, Anna Maedl argues, can be perpetuated by rebel groups and state forces alike (p. 131).

Gender-based violence is also related to the use of child soldiers. Jeannie Annan, Christopher Blattman, Dyan Mazurana, and Khristopher Carlson (2009) argue that the return of female child soldiers into their communities see more barriers of reintegration than male child soldiers. This especially occurs for girls who have been sexually abused and became pregnant, because their possibility of marrying consensually in the future is less likely (p. 881). As well, girls are less likely to return to school than boys and even more unlikely to do so if they became pregnant (p. 892).

I highlighted above the consequences of conflict in order to exemplify the context of a state in conflict. The result of conflict can negatively impact the lives of civilians and deteriorate the social fabric of society, which is important for the local population's well-being. I outline the consequences of conflict because addressing the consequences, including displaced persons, child exploitation, and gender-based violence, is an important aspect of peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding: Addressing the Causes and Consequences of Conflict

Peacebuilding is defined as the "actions aimed at creating, strengthening, and solidifying peace" (Autesserre, 2017, p. 2) within a conflict scenario. The actors who enable and prevent peacebuilding include the state, the international community, and local civil society. The effectiveness of peacebuilding that each actor brings to conflict scenarios is often debated, and how it should be carried out is even more so controversial.

As previously discussed, the response to conflict can be put into two categories: addressing the causes of conflict and addressing the negative consequences of conflict. To understand the peacebuilding process, it is important to understand how actors contribute to these two fundamental dimensions to conflict, and whether or not they contribute to one aspect more than another.

Many scholars argue that the causes of conflict and political instability in a country are often tightly related. When I outlined the causes of conflict, I included the actors and contributors that are involved in the instability. Therefore, one can argue that the goal of peacebuilding efforts in addressing the causes of conflict ideally require negotiations between all actors. As a result, peacebuilding can become heavily politicized and often requires cooperation amongst the stakeholders of conflict.

Another approach to explain the appropriate technique in addressing the causes of conflict is local ownership. The concept of local ownership is dominant in literature when referring to peacebuilding in conflict states. Local ownership occurs when the control of political processes implemented to ensure peace is in the hands of domestic actors (Donais, 2009). Local ownership is generally considered important because it takes the authority away from external actors. It supports the idea that domestic actors can control

and implement peace more efficiently and is more legitimate than peace implemented by external forces alone (Von Billerbeck, 2015).

The concept of local ownership is not, however without limitations. Using local ownership as a term more broadly does not prevent elitist results. Therefore, local ownership must be divided into two categories: liberal ownership and elite ownership. Liberal ownership refers to the groups that are selected by the UN that align with their democratic values which include civil society and underrepresented groups. Elite ownership refers to the political, military or social elites within the country (Von Billerbeck, 2015, p. 305).

The peacebuilding literature tends to place emphasis on addressing the causes of conflict, yet have a habit of neglecting peacebuilding as a tool to address the consequences of conflict. However, several scholars would argue that addressing the consequences can also contribute to the solidification (Auttesserre, 2017, p. 2) of peace. Because conflict disrupts basic needs, Autesserre, for instance, argues that peacebuilding requires the reversal of the effects of inequality and discrimination through rehabilitation (p. 213).

Katharine Derderian and Liesbeth Schockaert (2010) also connects humanitarian projects to peacebuilding. They discuss the connection between humanitarian and development objectives. Development objectives, as they describe, include addressing the causes of conflict (p. 17). They argue that focusing on development objectives rather than humanitarian objectives has limited the success of peacebuilding, because it neglects the need for emergency responses, especially in cases of conflict. They argue that peacebuilding requires a linkage between the objectives of humanitarian assistance and development in order to complement each other and prolong sustainable peace (p. 21).

In the previous section, I described the state to be a cause of conflict. Though I repeat the state to also be an actor involved in peacebuilding because the assumption is that the government has a responsibility to address the causes and consequences of conflict. The result of the state being both a cause of conflict as a well as a potential actor in peacebuilding shows how the government can actually act as a spoiler in the peacebuilding process. Therefore, I will explain how the state has the potential to obstruct peacebuilding in a conflict state.

While the state is an important actor in peacebuilding because it is a stakeholder, using the state as a way to address the causes of conflict can, at times, be considered counterproductive. As previously stated, the government itself is capable of committing human rights abuses or perpetuating violence (Iniguez de Heredia, 2012, p. 83). Therefore, in such scenarios using the state as a catalyst to promote peacebuilding is more difficult. As well, the government has more power to block the participation of stakeholders if they do not align with its political agenda, which can actually contribute to strengthening elite ownership.

The idea that the country's government could contribute to consequential peacebuilding also brings up issues. In addition to the ongoing corruption and potential human rights abuses that can be caused by state actors, the state can also participate in the use of child soldiers and gender-based violence (Iniguez de Heredia, 2013, p. 83). Even with the will to build peace, a sufficient amount of resources, both material and human, are required for efficient peacebuilding. Human resources are a prerequisite to implement peace in a conflict zone because projects require experts to provide legitimate advice (Richmond, 2004). Therefore, if the state is incapable or unwilling to provide resources, the state can spoil its potential to build peace.

The international community, governmental or non-governmental, is thought to be comprised of important actors in peacebuilding, though the role of these actors in addressing the causes of conflict face many issues. One of the common requirements in the mandates on UN interventions in the form of peacekeeping missions is the need for consent from the state in conflict. Receiving consent from the state requires cooperation with the government, making the peacebuilding initiatives self-consciously partial to the side of the recognized government. However, taking the side of the recognized government may be difficult because government forces may be committing human rights abuses themselves (Bellamy & Hunt, 2015). Therefore, the UN's attempt to take part in negotiations can be limited due to the demands of consent.

Autesserre (2011) highlights another issue with international intervention. She argues that the perspective international actors have of peacebuilding tends to be broad, and limits the capabilities of grass-roots peacebuilding. The micro-levels of violence and tensions between local groups are often ignored by actors like the UN. Therefore, their "evidence deficit" (Call & Cousens, 2008, p. 19) often jeopardizes the macro-level peace initiatives. As well, gathering sufficient evidence may be difficult due to the lack of official documents that could support an analysis (UN Report, Jan. 12th, 2015).

This argument about the international community is also applicable when addressing the consequences of conflict. The idea of international actors coming into a developing country and telling local officials how to respond to conflict is often seen by scholars as problematic both from a principled and practical perspective. Some argue that the UN uses peacebuilding as an avenue to implement their liberal democratic views within the state marked by conflict. As well, they ignore the fact that implementing

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similar democratic structures in a developing country does not produce the same results as they would in a developed country (Richmond, 2004).

Following from the above, the international responses to displaced persons can also be very limited. Derderian and Schockaert (2010) discuss how international aid for displaced persons, which is funneled into countries experiencing conflict is often limited and short term. They argue that international aid workers are limited by their own insecurity (p. 19). As a result, this can further provoke the vulnerability of displaced persons and prolong efforts to restore their livelihoods.

Gender-based violence and its prevalence in countries in conflict can be very difficult for the international community to address, thus creating more obstacles in the peacebuilding process. The particular use of rape as weapon has been useful to armed groups because of the notion of "plausible deniability" (Maedl, 2011, p. 132). The international community's attempt to end sexual violence is difficult because its use can be denied by actors involved in gender-based violence. As well, cooperation with the government is usually required for the international community to intervene in domestic affairs (Bellamy & Hunt, 2015). This makes it especially difficult for international organizations to intervene in gender-based violence if the violence is being committed by the state itself. Therefore, when sexual violence is committed by the local state forces, putting an end to the violence is even more difficult.

The obstacles that the international community face in their attempt to address the causes and consequences of conflict is often a result of their top-down approach to peacebuilding. To help understand the alternative to the international community's dominant approach, Timothy Donais (2009) provides two types of peacebuilding to consider when discussing the drivers of efforts to build peace: liberal peacebuilding and

communitarian peacebuilding. Liberal peacebuilding tends to reflect the top-down approach that the international community attempts to impose on countries in conflict. Communitarian peacebuilding, on the other hand, understands how peacebuilding at a local level is important because with such an approach peace will be embedded in the "social and traditional context" (p. 6), of the society in question, thus legitimizing and reaffirming peace.

Actors that could contribute to communitarian peacebuilding are those that are associated with the concept of local civil society. Civil society is defined as groups who represent citizens that share similar objectives and interests while working separately from the government and profit-sectors (White, 2017). While it could be argued that civil society could be grouped in with rebel groups, Jan Aart Scholte (2002) argues that a "pure" civil society does not seek to gain political power or commercial gain (p. 283). Following this ideal view of civil society and placing it in the context of peacebuilding, Autesserre (2017) argues that locals have the most knowledge and capability to effectively carryout peacebuilding (p. 13).

Local civil society can have two roles in peacebuilding, namely addressing the causes of conflict and consequences of conflict. Scholte (2002) argues that the testimonies from civil society actors can be beneficial for macro-scale conferences and negotiations (p. 293) which can benefit the peacebuilding process. Testimonies from civil society organizations can be considered legitimate because they have witnessed the causes and consequences of conflict, therefore can provide evidence in support of peacebuilding efforts. Scholte argues that it provides agency to civil society members, thus empowering civilians themselves and reinforcing local ownership. This can benefit

and embed certain democratic principles in the process leading to transition from conflict

to post-conflict society.

It is also worth noting that the extent civil society contributes to peacebuilding

could be limited by the political agenda of the group involved. The ethnic divisions that

have often plagued conflict areas can infringe on the potential peace promotion of their

political agenda. As a result, civil society itself is often ethnically and ideologically

divided in war-torn societies, which can lead to groups advocating against the

participation of another group. As well, peacebuilders may prioritize certain civil

societies over others (Donais, 2015, p. 14), thus excluding important stakeholders.

Conversely, Civicus[3] maintains that theorizing a bottom-up approach, which

focuses on the role of civil society, should place at centre stage the development of

'political culture' at the local level. Political culture at a local level is argued to integrate

civilians into the political process, thus reinforcing democracy (p. 104). Drawing from the

work of Robert Putnam, Civicus considers that the development of political culture helps

to generate democratic ideals such as civic engagement. They highlight Putnam's theory

that civic engagement creates an overall quality of life (p. 239).

In addition to addressing the causes of conflict, civil society is necessary to carry

development initiatives to help restore the social fabric of local communities (Pallas,

2016, p. 105). As Hanna Lenardsson and Gustav Rudd (2015) argue, civil society actors

at a local level often have the socio-cultural tools to recover after post-conflict situations

because civil society organizations themselves are made up of local civilians (p. 826-

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[3]Civicus (2008) is a non-profit organization that networks civil society organizations in order to strengthen civilian participation in the international community.

827). The socio-cultural tools that local civil society may have include various knowledge of local culture and customs, which can contribute to the restoration of the social fabric.

As effective local civil society may be in addressing the consequences of conflict, they can also experience limitations by a lack of financial and physical resources (Neethling, 2011, p. 31). Theo Neethling advances the idea that civil society can be unstable as a result of their inconsistent flow of income. Therefore, civil society organizations are often heavily dependent on the international community's financial aid.

Throughout the literature review, I have highlighted the causes of conflict, the consequences of conflict, and peacebuilding. Understanding the complexity of the causes of conflict can help understand the challenges involved when peacebuilders seek to address these causes. Additionally, understanding the consequences of conflict and how the dynamics in a conflict state can influence the outcomes can provide an understanding of limitations peacebuilders face in addressing these consequences. Finally, understanding how specific actors in peacebuilding are limited in their ability to address both the causes and consequences of conflict can expose which actors have the most promise for peacebuilding.

<u>**Section 3: The Eastern-Democratic Republic of the Congo**</u>

The analysis of the causes and consequences of conflict along with the overview of the limitations of peacebuilding that was summarized in the previous section resonates with the history of conflict that has marked the DRC. The DRC has been exposed to conflict for over 20 years and has gone through two civil wars. The majority of violence has taken place in the East, including the territories of North Kivu, South Kivu and surrounding regions. The conflict is embedded in its colonial history and continues to plague the region due to political instability.

In the empirical section, I use the same analytical schema as I did in the literature review. I will first highlight the actors and perpetrators in the DRC involved in causing conflict. I will then discuss the consequences that have emerged as a result of conflict in the DRC. Lastly, I will outline the peacebuilding efforts that have been attempted in the DRC, with an emphasis on some of the actors that have attempted to address these causes and consequences.

Causes and Consequences of Conflict in the DRC

Causes in the DRC: Actors and Perpetuators

According to the Congo Research Group[4], there are 70 different groups currently in the DRC. The larger groups include the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a predominantly Christian fundamentalist group; the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), which is primarily made up of Hutu rebels who fled to the DRC after the Rwandan genocide; and Mai-Mai groups, which are a collection of community-

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[4] The Congo Research Group (CRG) (2015) is an independent non-profit research organization that seeks to investigate conflict in the DRC.

based armed groups (CRG, 2015, p. 5). Each group may have a different political objective, but their search for political, territorial, or economic control has fuelled violence in the DRC.

Ethnic tension, one of the key causes of conflict explored previously, is applicable to the situation in the DRC. Mai-Mai groups have been reportedly gaining territorial control of mining areas in Shabunda territory in South Kivu in order to financially sustain themselves. Not only is this supporting the armed groups, but it is creating violence in this territory as a result. As well, in Fizi Territory, the potential encounters between *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) troops and the FDLR threatens the safety of civilian bystanders (UN Security Report, Oct. 4th, 2016, p. 8). This is reflective of the ethno-territoriality that occurs in conflict states.

Ethnic division has been fuelling conflict in the Eastern-DRC as a result of fighting for resources and territory (UN, Oct. 4th, 2016, p. 7). Further complicating the process is the support that civilians have for certain rebel groups, depending on their ethnicity. CRG (2016) conducted a poll between May and October 2016 and discovered that the support of rebel leadership depended greatly on where they were from, leading to a regional political divide between civilians (p. 7) based on factors that can be associated to ethno-nationalism and ethno- territoriality.

An example of tension in the political sphere is in a town called Pinga, which is located in North Kivu. The *Search for Common Ground* (SFCG)[5] reported that as a result of occupation of ethnically divided rebel groups within the town, the different

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[5]Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is a non-governmental organization that seeks to resolve conflict. The organization is made up mostly of locals within the country they work in.

communities felt mutual distrust. The tension limited the possibility of peace and further fuelled the violence within the region (SFCG, 2016).

Rebel groups pose a constant threat against civilians. Rebel groups have a tendency to specifically attack or taunt civilians in order to establish their control. The LRA was purposely targeting civilians in the regions of Niangara and Dangu (UN Report, Oct. 3, 2016, p. 8). As well, members of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been targeted to be kidnapped by different armed groups. The FDLR and the Mai-Mai groups have been suspected of kidnapping members in North Kivu. The kidnappings were used in order to receive ransoms for the groups to gain another source of income to sustain their movements (UN Report, June 28th, 2016, p. 11).

As previously stated, some civilians do support rebel groups regardless of their human rights violations. The Congo Research Group found that refugees in camps in Eastern-DRC have been sheltering members of the FDLR as a result of ethnic identity. As well, recruitment of the FDLR has been heavily seen in the Mwenga, Uvira, and Fizi territories, many of which have a Hutu identity. (CRG, 2016, p. 29) Reports also indicate that the smaller armed groups that reside in Eastern-DRC recruit based on ethnic identity (CRG, 2015, p. 5).

The government in the DRC has a role in addressing, and sometimes contributing, to the causes of conflict. The large number of armed groups have made it difficult for the *Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) to reestablish peace by being a main target of these armed groups. On April 23rd, 2016, five soldiers from the FARDC were killed by members of the LRA in the Garamba National Park (UN Security Report, June 23, 2016, p. 7). The pressures of establishing peace in DRC and the ambushes against them creates challenges for the FARDC.

The support for the FARDC is divided amongst civilians. The CRG (2016) reported a forty-seven percent support rate for the FARDC to end violence in the DRC (p. 21). This is a result of the failure of the FARDC to protect civilians in certain areas. The FARDC's aim was to neutralize armed groups such as the FDLR. The forces still failed to prevent civilian attacks in Beni that occurred later that year in August (p. 21). Therefore, the state's inability to resolve conflict has contributed to its perpetuation.

The recent history of the DRC includes their relationship with neighbouring countries. In 1998, the Rwandan and Ugandan governments supported the rebel movement in Eastern-DRC against the Kabila Government (MONUSCO Background, 2016). The complexity of the politics since then has yet to resolve the tensions with the DRC's neighbours. Rwanda continues to meddle in DRC affairs, only further perpetuating the violence.

Additionally, many refugees currently reside in the DRC. As of 2015, 122,000 refugees from the countries including Rwanda, The Central African Republic, and Burundi were living in the DRC. After the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, many refugees flew to the DRC along with members of the Hutu Rebel group who initiated the genocide. As a result, Rwandan and Ugandan Forces invaded DRC territory in order to annihilate the initiators of the genocide (Eastern Congo Initiative, 2017). This created additional difficulties for the DRC government because it required the provision of additional security (UN, March 10th, 2015).

Consequences in the DRC

There are currently 1.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in the DRC, and ninety percent of them are a result of violence and insecurity. North Kivu is the

most affected province, hosting 744,000 of the IDPs (OCHA, 2015). Greta Zeender and Jacob Rothing (2010) have reported that the expulsion of ethnic groups by rebel groups in order to capture land has been dominant in the Kivus (p. 10). This has particularly affected farmers, which in turn has dramatically influenced and perpetuated malnutrition in the Eastern-DRC (p. 11). As well, displaced persons are particularly vulnerable to recruitment by rebel groups and to acts of sexual violence.

The assumption is that it is the state's responsibility to aid IDPs in the DRC. Though Zeender and Rothling reported in the Forced Migration Review (2010) that the government currently has no strategy to protect individuals from displacement or prevent displacement. As well, the government has been taxing imports of humanitarian supplies that aid IDPs, further restricting the possibility for recovery. While the international community has been contributing to aid for IDPs, they are limited by a lack of local staff and security restraints, which is an additional constraint on the effectiveness of international assistance (p. 12).

Child exploitation has been very dominant in the DRC. The UN has reported almost 1000 accounts of child soldier recruits, primarily in North Kivu province (UN News Centre, Oct. 24th, 2013). While many of the children were forced to work for rebel groups, many of them believed it was a way to ensure their protection and prosperity (Free the Slaves Report[6], 2011, p. 21). They reported, when interviewing child respondents, that forty-five percent of children recruited by rebel groups in the DRC joined voluntarily. Rebel groups have exploited children as a result of conflict because they have no other economic or livelihood opportunities.

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[6]Free the Slaves is an NGO dedicated to end modern day slavery through the provision of information.

In addition to the problems of child soldiers, child marriage has been very common in the DRC. Thirty-nine percent of Congolese girls will be married before they are eighteen-years-old. This has been a direct result of conflict, because rebel groups have been known to forcibly recruit girls as wives (Free the Slaves Report, 2011, p. 19). While the report claimed that some sixty-seven percent stated that they had a choice to leave, Eighty-three percent claimed they could not because they feared for their well-being and their children's well-being, if they had any (p. 20).

Many women in the DRC have been subject to sexual assault as a result of the conflict. It is estimated that between 1.80 and 1.96 million women have been sexually assaulted (Peterman et al., 2011, para. 3). However, these numbers may not be accurate, because there is stigmatization against women who have been assaulted, which in turn leads to under-reporting. The European Parliament[7] provides the observation that violence against women is further perpetuated by the deep gender inequality embedded in DRC society. Therefore, women have less access to healthcare and education (Latek, 2014, p. 1).

It is difficult for the state to intervene on the issue of gender based violence because state actors are often the main perpetrators of sexual violence. There have been reports of FARDC troops committing violence against civilians. The Institute for Security Studies (ISS)[8] reported high numbers of women being sexually assaulted in FARDC camps by the troops themselves (ISS, 2016, p. 7). Others report that fifty percent of sexual violence is carried out by state forces (EuroParl, 2014, p. 2).

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[7] EuroParl, or the European Parliament, provides global reports in order to reinforce human rights and democracy.

[8] The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) is a non-profit research organization aimed at providing training and assistance to governments and civil society in African countries.

Peacebuilding: Addressing the Causes and Consequences of Conflict in the DRC

Peacebuilding efforts in the DRC have been extensive in their attempts to address both the causes of conflict and the consequences of conflict. As stated in the literature review, peacebuilding efforts by actors can be limited by their own actions or the actions of others. These actors that can either act as builders of peace or spoilers of peace, or a hybrid of both. The central actors involved in the peacebuilding process are most often identified as the state, the international community, and local civil society.

The state's role in peacebuilding in the DRC is limited. The DRC government has historically restricted its ability to work cooperatively with other actors in peacebuilding, including the international community and local civil society. The end of the first peacekeeping mission, United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), President Kabila was eager to convince peacekeepers to leave by showing the government was not dependent on the mission (Charbonneau, 2009).

The relationship that the Laurent Kabila government (1998-2001) had with stakeholders including civil society was initially adversarial because several organizations were critical of his leadership. However, after the second Civil War commenced in 1998, he realized that he required the full cooperation of all sectors of the population. Full cooperation, he understood, was the key to ending the Civil War and establishing peace in the DRC. The negotiations from this realization forward would attempt to include many stakeholders (Koko, 2016, para. 21).

Following Laurent Kabila, President Joseph Kabila had a different approach to negotiations. The DRC government has a history of restricting the ability of stakeholders that may oppose him by resisting their participation in negotiations. The UN reported that the FARDC committed many human rights violations including keeping political

prisoners. There is much evidence that the FARDC would target civil society groups in these scenarios (UN Report, Oct. 3rd, p. 19). For example, this took place in August 2016 when 2,000 protestors from civil society marched in protest against the FARDC for not preventing violence. Both protestors and the police force incited violence, which resulted in the arrest of approximately 100 protestors. As a result, more retaliation occurred and fuelled more violence (UN Report, Oct. 3rd, 2016, p. 7).

Another obstacle for the state to contribute to peacebuilding is how the government may actually benefit from the conflict. There is evidence that the economic activity that has emerged as a consequence of conflict has actually economically benefited the government in the DRC. The exploitation of resources and human capital that has emerged out of conflict has resulted in a growing war economy. For example, the UN reported that FARDC officers have been providing arms to rebels (Valdmanis & Roddy, 2012), thus fuelling the consequences of conflict rather than addressing them. Additionally, as mentioned before, the FARDC is responsible for an abundance of gender-based violence (EuroParl, 2014, p. 2). Therefore, the ability of the state to address the consequences of conflict may suffer from problems such as these.

The international community is considered to have a dominant role in addressing the causes of conflict in the DRC. The international community includes international governmental organizations (IGOs) as well as NGOs. The AU has attempted to address the causes of conflict by commencing negotiations in order to build peace within the DRC. The AU led an agreement to commence polls in the DRC by April, 2018. The

Africa Centre for Strategic Studies[9] reported that while many local stakeholders were involved in the process, many were excluded due to their political affiliations (Siegle & Bekoe, 2016, para. 11).

The UN has been present in the DRC since 1999 through the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). This is the most funded peacekeeping mission in the world (Peacekeeping Fact Sheet, 2017). The role of MONUSCO was to provide "development, rule of law, good governance and local ownership" (Neethling, 2011, p. 27) in order to reform security and build peace. They have also played a huge role in collecting data that can contribute to the logistical contribution to addressing the causes and consequences of conflict. They collect data from government officials, military officials, and ex-combatants of armed groups.

The contribution of the UN's research to support the peace building process in the DRC has several shortcomings. The UN gathers their data by collecting written documents and information. The challenge is that many documents that could help counter the trade of arms, or disclose the locations of armed groups, and potential recruitment sources are not available, especially for UN officials. As well, the UN usually gathers testimonies from government and military officials (UN Report, Jan. 12th, 2015, p. 4). The source of their testimonies can be perceived as legitimate, but the officials may filter information and not include the testimonies of civilians.

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[9] The Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2016) discusses civil society's role in the peacebuilding process in the DRC. They also discuss how other actors involved in the peacebuilding process can neglect civil society's participation in the process.

Autesserre (2017) provides a similar account when discussing international NGOs

and donors. Through interviews and observations, she finds that the assumptions

international contributors make about local peacebuilding initiatives limits their capability

to conduct peacebuilding (p. 1). As well, she finds that Congolese activists themselves

highlight that international actors should not contribute at all, either in the form of

peacekeeping or by providing humanitarian services, because such efforts are seen as

interfering with the peacebuilding process (p. 11).

Even with the criticisms and flaws of the international community's ability to

build peace, it can be considered irresponsible to resist their full participation in the DRC.

I have found that many local civil society organizations require the funding from the

international community in order to address the consequences of conflict. Such

organizations include *Action D'Espoir,* Children's Voice, and the Panzi Hospital. Each of

these organizations have positively addressed the consequences of conflict, but each

organization requires the funding of the international community in order to operate

(*Action D'Espoir*, 2013, p. 13; Children's Voice *Accueil*, 2017; Panzi Foundation, 2017).

The DRC has been notably affected by civil society since the 1990s as a result of

the country's democratization (Koko, 2016, para. 3). During the Mobutu Regime, civil

society, in the form of NGOs, often provided social services to populations in order to

respond to the absence of such services from the government. Therefore, civilian support

increased substantially for civil society organizations. As a result, civil society

organizations have gained political power and legitimacy in the DRC (Siegle & Bekoe,

2016, para. 2).

Regardless of their potential to influence peacebuilding, civil society's

participation in addressing the causes of conflict is limited as a result of larger and more

powerful state actors. As previously stated, the government has restricted the ability of certain local actors to participate in peacebuilding in cases where these actors oppose them. This is evident when the government-led agreement in association with the African Union (AU) had limited the participation with specific local civil society organizations as a result of their political affiliations with certain parties in the DRC (Siegle & Bekoe, 2016, para. 11).

The international community also has a role in restricting the participation of civil society. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported the "Joint Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo" and described the participation of civil society. The evaluations that have occurred since 2004 included the larger international donor organizations. They attempted to highlight potential initiatives and exchanged information to ensure peacebuilding in the DRC. Though when asked whether their participation was included, civil society representatives declared it was limited (Labda, 2011, p. 86).

Regardless of their potential to address the causes of conflict, civil society has historically stifled peacebuilding by being uncooperative with important actors in conflict. For example, Sadiki Koko (2016) reported that civil society organizations have historically resisted cooperation in negotiations with rebel groups because of their record of human rights violations. Because civil society organizations have experienced firsthand the consequences of conflict committed by rebel groups, they have limited their ability to address rebel groups as a cause of conflict (para. 51).

Civil society has still seen success at more micro-levels of peacebuilding. Previously mentioned was the local community in the small town of Pinga. A new

development commenced in 2014 with the aid of the Panzi Hospital and the Search for

Common Ground who relied on the funding of the 8iem CEPAC Church and international

NGOs. This initiative aimed to join communities to promote peacebuilding. Eventually,

local leaders joined together to discuss forgiveness and cooperation. The project that is

controlled by local actors, including the Panzi Hospital, is on-going (SFCG, "Investing

Peace in Pinga", 2016).

Regardless of their limited participation in addressing the causes of conflict, civil

society has played a dominant role in addressing the consequences of conflict. As

previously mentioned, many civil society organizations require the funding of the

international community in order to be sustained. However, their effectiveness in

addressing the consequences can be exemplified through examples of civil society

organizations and their work. The particular civil society organizations I exemplify were

chosen because they address the particular consequences outlined in the literature review.

While I recognize there are many more civil society organizations, these organizations

provided thorough reports that have been evaluated by multiple other sources, thus

legitimizing their data.

The displacement of people, as previously stated, have left individuals more

vulnerable to insecurity and lack basic needs such as food and shelter. *Action D'Espoir* is

a civil society organization in North Kivu that has particularly aided displaced persons in

these areas. While *Action D'Espoir* does receive financial support from international

organizations such as Oxfam and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid

Operations (ECHO), the organization remains autonomous in its logistics and operations

(*Action D'Espoir*, 2013, p. 13).

In 2013, the town of Uvira in South Kivu experienced a number of attacks by rebel groups. Uvira already hosted a number of displaced persons who were being housed by host families. As a result, displaced persons living in the area and their host families lacked a sustainable amount of resources. *Action D'Espoir* commenced a project that provided 2,450 households with food, water, clothing, and agricultural utensils. This effectively improved the livelihoods of displaced persons (*Action D'Espoir*, 2013, p. 11).

Children's Voice is a civil society organization that was founded in 2002. The organization is funded by the United States government, World Vision, the UN, and the Eastern Congo Initiative (Global Giving, 2017). Its mission is to provide social services to children who have been affected by conflict, including those affected by child marriage and soldiering. They provide education at primary and secondary levels and have four different facilities to take care of more than 1,500 children (Children's Voice *Accueil*, 2017).

Children's Voice has also done community outreach to end child marriage. In 2015, they initiated a project to provide a workshop to educate community leaders on child marriage. They have trained 873 individuals, including men, women and girls on how to end child marriage in North Kivu. Initiatives such as this may correlate with the fact provided by the World Bank that child marriage has diminished in the past few years (Malé & Wodon, 2016).

To provide new sources of income for children and youth, Children's Voice initiated a project for vocational training. In 2014, forty-five girls and boys received training in order to create job opportunities (Musaidizi, 2014). This is beneficial because it has provided youths with new sources of income. For the youth involved, this may

avoid resorting to violence as a means of generating income such as that provided by child soldiering and it may provide alternatives to marriage for young girls.

Civil society organizations in the DRC have heavily contributed to the rehabilitation and inclusion of women. The Congolese Union of Women in Media (UCOFEM) is an organization run by Anna Mayimona Ngemba to ensure the inclusion and testimonies of women in the media. The organization managed to provide media outlets access to women who were eager to share their testimonies. As well, they conducted training that incorporated women's engagement in the media (Internews, 2014; Europa, 2015).

As a result of the conflict, women have been victims of sexual assault. Civil society organizations have been created in order to aid the health and rehabilitation of these women. The Panzi Hospital was established in 1999 by Dr. Denis Mukwege in the Eastern-DRC. It is managed by the Communauté des Eglises de Pentecote en Afrique Centrale (CEPAC), a civil society group that works in the DRC. The Hospital is funded by international NGOs through the Panzi Foundation which is located in the United States, but they are completely separate legal entities in order to ensure the autonomy of the hospital. Their goal is to treat sexual assault survivors who may have experienced extreme gynecological issues. As well, they focus on the psychological recovery of the woman.

The Panzi Hospital also helps the social recovery of sexual assault victims. It is common that women are rejected by their communities as a result of rape stigmas or external injuries. They supply housing as well as a twelve-month training program to improve their skills. Additionally, the organization has provided sexual assault victims with the legal resources to pursue the perpetrator of sexual assault. As well, they organize

micro-loans and grants in order to reintegrate them into the economy to help recovery

(Panzi Foundation, 2017).

The 2013 Panzi Hospital Report highlights key statistics that exemplify the work

of the organization. The hospital has admitted 15,594 patients as of 2013 (Mukwege,

2013, p. 7). They have diagnosed 341 patients with HIV and supplied medicine and

treatment to these individuals. They have diagnosed malnutrition in children and have

educated parents in nutrition to ensure the health of their children (Mukwege, 2013, p.

11). From this work, one can see how the Panzi Hospital has played in role in responding

to the consequences of conflict in order to commence recovery.

<p style="text-align:center"><u>**Section 4: Discussion**</u></p>

Through the empirical section, we have been able to apply the approaches that analyze peacebuilding and conflict to the DRC. Applying scholars' approaches to explain conflict and peacebuilding to the reality in the DRC can aid answering the research question: in analyzing the causes and consequences of conflict, which actors in the DRC hold the most promise for peacebuilding? Throughout the discussion, I will use the same analytical schema and discuss the link, or lack thereof, between approaches in peacebuilding and development and the DRC in order to bring to light which actor holds the most promise to contribute to peacebuilding.

Addressing the Causes: Actors and Perpetuators Analyzed

The approaches highlighted in the literature review can be applied to the context of conflict within the DRC. Ethno-territoriality (Moore, 2016) has definitely been present in the DRC because of the consistent tensions between ethnic groups that can fuel local violence. As well, autochtonial rights has definitely opened "Pandora's box" (Boas & Dunn, 2015, p. 145) because the negotiations of land rights have been endless. Ethnic tension has become extremely localized as a result of conflict, making it more difficult to address.

The localization of this cause of conflict then requires emphasis on local ownership as a tool for peacebuilding. The state's role in addressing ethnic tension as a result of conflict is difficult in this sense because they have limited local actors' ability to build peace or participate in negotiations. The international community is limited as well because they do not have the socio-cultural tools or even the language skills that are

<p style="text-align:center">35</p>

required in order to resolve local tensions. Therefore, these two actors involvement in peacebuilding is extremely limited.

Civil society has promise when addressing ethnic tension as a cause of conflict. This is evident during the case study in Pinga when civil society organizations came together and relieved tensions that occurred as a result of conflict. The reason for their success can be explained by how local civil society has the socio-cultural information that can address causes of conflict at a local level. Therefore, this cause of conflict could be addressed by local civil society.

The approaches that outline the power dynamics of rebel groups can be applied to the DRC. The politics between rebel groups and the state has caused the negative consequences of conflict to persist, especially in the Eastern regions where rebel groups have been controlling land and terrorizing civilians. As well, regardless of their human rights violations, rebel groups have gained support of civilians (CRG, 2016, p. 29), which supports the approach previously discussed that was provided by Sterns and Vogel (2015) outlines how rebel groups can gain political power through the support of civilians. As a result, simply enforcing counterinsurgency by the state or peacekeepers is problematic because it runs the risk of alienating civilians supportive of these groups.

The peacebuilding approach in this case requires negotiations between rebel groups and stakeholders. The actors involved in peacebuilding that addresses the causes through cooperation can be limited. Firstly, the state's involvement in the economy that has evolved out of conflict has limited their political will to negotiate or resolve conflict amongst rebel groups. The international community's involvement in negotiating with rebel groups can be limited because of their lack of information and resources within the state. As well, the fact that civil society organizations do not want to negotiate with rebel

groups limits their own participation in addressing the causes of conflict. This is reflective of Donais' (2015) argument that civil society can be ideologically divided in war torn societies, which can lead to scenarios where certain groups advocate against the participation of competing groups (p. 14).

The state as a cause of conflict can protract conflict as a result of a lack of political will to deter violence. As well, the involvement of state officials in the economy that has emerged out of conflict can further perpetuates the violence that occurs. Military leaders, for instance, have definitely taken the conflict as an opportunity to gain more economic benefits. Therefore, the state can be considered a cause of conflict when analyzing their role in conflict the DRC.

Addressing this cause of conflict is difficult for the actors involved in peacebuilding. Of course, it is difficult for the state to confront or fix itself as a result of the corruption embedded in the political process. The international community can have difficulties addressing the state as a cause of conflict because international actors often require consent from the government in order to influence domestic affairs. Therefore, if organizations such as the UN attempt to confront the government for corruption, government officials will often be less likely to cooperate. Civil society's ability to address the state as a cause of conflict is especially restricted because civil society organizations are heavily dependent on the state to include them in negotiations. Therefore, if the state excludes their participation, they cannot contribute to this aspect of peacebuilding.

Autesserre's (2011) argument that peace cannot be achieved with the constant meddling of neighbouring countries (p. 60) is definitely applicable in the DRC. Historically, many countries have contributed to the violence within the DRC. The special

interests that neighbouring countries hold are driving factors in explaining why they are present on the DRC's territory. As well, their historical support of rebel groups has only enhanced the ability of rebel groups to gain more power, thus destabilizing the country further. Therefore, neighbouring countries as a cause of conflict must be taken into account in peacebuilding efforts.

Addressing the Consequences: Analyzed

The displacement of people is a negative consequence of conflict and the literature has managed to outline the approaches that explain the dynamics that create this situation. The ethno-territoriality that has occurred in the DRC has forced individuals to leave their homes. Displaced people face additional challenges after they are forced from their homes because they are often vulnerable to exploitation by rebel groups. This is due to the fact that displaced persons often face very precarious economic conditions and must therefore resort to income generating activities that often lead to greater exploitation (Zeender and Rothing, 2010, p. 11). The outcomes described by these scholars are applicable to the DRC.

The state's ability to address this consequence of conflict is limited often because they are incapable of providing basic services to displaced people, only further perpetuating the issue, according to Zeender and Rothling (2010, p. 10). The international community also experiences limitations because they lack the proper information or socio-cultural tools to address the consequences. Additionally, international aid workers are often limited by the security issues involved in conflict (Derderian & Schockaert, 2010). Therefore, the state's and the international community's ability to counter the displacement of people is limited.

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Local civil society has definitely managed to address this consequence of conflict. Civil society organizations have managed to supplement the needs of displaced persons where the state and international organizations could not. This was represented in the empirical section that described the work of *Action D'Espoir* which managed to sustain the basic needs of 2,450 households. However, it is important to note where the funding of this organization has come from. This organization has relied heavily on the funding from the international community. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that the international community, in this area, has contributed to peacebuilding.

Beber and Blattman (201) would argue that the result of conflict often includes the use of child soldiers for the economic benefit that this use can generate. As a result, child soldiers lack mental health recovery, integration into communities, and educational opportunities (Jordans et al., 2012, p. 1). Additionally, incidences of child marriages increase during times of conflict (Baines, 2014). The findings of these scholars are reflected in the DRC, and represent the child exploitation that occurs as a result of conflict. In conflict environments, children do not have access to economic prosperity, therefore are easily exploited.

The state's ability to address child exploitation can be limited by not only their lack of resources to counter the negative outcomes of child soldiering and marriage, but because they are often profiting from the economy of conflict that often exploits children. As previously stated, the state forces have sold weapons to rebel groups that could perpetuate the use of child soldiers. Additionally, the international community, as I have repeated, do not have the political power to prevent child soldiering or child marriage, or the socio-cultural tools to counter the negative effects of child exploitation.

In order to counter the effects of child exploitation, civil society organizations such as *Children's Voice* have provided economic and educational opportunities for children. Educational training not only includes conventional educational programs, but vocational training that can eventually provide a sustainable source of income for children. This has provided many children with an alternative to child marriage or child soldiering. Additionally, the organization has trained community members to combat child marriage within their local communities.

In the literature review, I described the use of gender-based violence and why it is dominant in areas of conflict. Maedl (2011) has described the concept of rape as a weapon for armed groups, both rebel and state alike (p. 130). The attempt of the international community to counter these effects is difficult due to "plausible deniability" (p. 132) that actors have when committing sexual violence. These findings are applicable in the DRC because women often lack the legal resources or healthcare facilities to counter this consequence of conflict.

The state's ability to address gender-based violence is at times deficient because the state itself has caused it. As stated in my empirical section, state forces have committed sexual violence against women. Additionally, their lack of economic or legal resources to aid women who have been victims of sexual violence is another limitation of the state's influence in addressing gender-based violence. The international community's role in resolving this problem is also limited because international actors lack the information they need to prevent armed groups from committing sexual assault. This is reflective in Maedl's (2011) argument that armed groups have "plausible deniability" (p. 132), therefore it is more difficult for the international community to confront these actors.

To counter gender-based violence, several civil society organizations have stepped in. Civil society organizations such as the Panzi Hospital have created legal opportunities for women who have experienced sexual violence. Additionally, the Panzi Hospital has provided healthcare to women in these situations. While the Panzi Hospital is funded by the Panzi Foundation located in the United States, they are separate legal entities in order to reassure their autonomy, thus legitimizing the bottom-up approach to peacebuilding.

Section 5: Conclusion

Throughout my essay, I have attempted to answer the following question: in analyzing the causes and consequences of conflict, which actors in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) hold the most promise for peacebuilding? Dividing conflict into the causes and the consequences has aided me in effectively outlining the impediments to peacebuilding that emerge from conflict. This was important because analyzing each aspect of both the causes and consequences has aided my analysis of peacebuilding, specifically within the DRC.

Understand the difficulties that each peacebuilding actor faces in addressing the causes and consequences of conflict has helped me answer my research question. While the state itself is problematic in addressing the causes and consequences of conflict, the international community's attempt has also been limited as a result of the lack of information and the habit international actors have of excluding local actors in the peacebuilding process. This has eliminated each of these actors as legitimate actors in the peacebuilding process.

While I have emphasized the potential for local civil society in the peacebuilding process, the issue civil society actors often face is how other peacebuilding actors can restrict their meaningful participation. Their effectiveness in addressing the causes of conflict is often overpowered by these actors, which makes it difficult to address the causes of conflict on a larger scale. While they have been successful on a local scale, their potential to build peace is limited by other actors.

The ability of local civil society to address the consequences of conflict has been exemplified. Through addressing some of the consequences of conflict such as displaced persons, child exploitation, and gender-based violence civil society actors can help restore

the social fabric in the DRC, which is an important peacebuilding contribution. Though once again, civil society can be limited by external actors because they are heavily dependent on funding from the international community. Therefore, civil society's potential to build peace is heavily dependent on the actions of other peacebuilding actors.

Regardless of the obstacles faced by civil society actors, they do not lose their legitimacy in the peacebuilding process. Civil society organizations have the appropriate socio-cultural tools to promote local ownership and to reverse the outcomes that have emerged out of conflict. Their legitimacy cannot and should not be neglected by the state and the international community, because, I argue that when analyzing the actors involved in addressing the causes and consequences of conflict, local civil society holds the most promise for peacebuilding.

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