Conflict and Development in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A Review of Related Literature

Mbangu Anicet Muyingi

Postdoc fellow, Vaal University of Technology
Faculty of Human Sciences, Vanderbijlpark, 1900
Email: anicetmbangu@gmail.com or mbangum@vut.ac.za

Abstract

Remarkably little research has been conducted on the potential of conflict resolution, a challenge to development in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Underpinned by participatory development and conflict resolution theories, the paper conceptualises conflict resolution as a collective effort by Congolese to resolve their conflict in a peaceful manner to achieve better quality of life for the country, through making it a better place for development activities. A contribution is made by the article in the provision of a comprehensive historical account of the events, personalities and environment that formed the policy for conflict that is affecting development goals in the DRC. This historical account is analysed through institutional frameworks to explain the antecedents that have resulted in conflict resolution policy outcomes, which presently exist in the country. The reason for considering conflict and development is that the development impasse of Africa generally, and the DRC in particular, can be attributed to the internal and external conflict since its independence. While development theory, and discourse from modernisation theory to global neo-liberalism, have dominated development strategies on the continent and the DRC, and produced a bereft of development, conflict has systematically undermined the development.This article seeks to identify and discuss the major cause of conflict that challenges the implementation of conflict resolution, which is affecting political and socio-economic development in the DRC. The research shows that discrimination is the main cause of conflict in the country. The article explores the period of economic growth in the DRC, as well as its economic decline, as brought about by conflict. Certain reasons for this economic decline are suggested, of which the most important are the economic policies of Zairianisation and radicalisation, which have introduced discrimination within the country. The results show that development can occur in the DRC if only an atmosphere of peace, justice, security and stability is attainable for the country. The outcome of conflict resolutions, or all agreements signed in Lusaka (Zambia) and Sun City (South Africa), in 1999 and 2002 respectively, showed that not all the parties involved in the conflict were at the signing of the agreement. The result of this is that conflict continues unhindered in the DRC and, in turn, affects the development goals of the country. The findings indicate that there were a number of challenges facing the implementation of conflict resolution. Key to these are weak institutions, lack of confidence in each member of the government, sustainability problems, poor intergovernmental relations, land ownership, bad governance, high levels of poverty and inequality. The article makes some recommendations to the government and concludes that political and socio-economic discrimination should be avoided in order for development to occur. Only an environment of peace, security, justice, equality and unity will allow the promotion of development goals in the DRC, and conflict resolution should be implemented, in a peaceful way, for DRC to be a better place for development.

Keywords: *Conflict, Development; Democratic Republic of Congo; Literature Review; Conflict Resolution*

1. Introduction

Conflict resolutions have been among the most serious and formidable challenges facing sub-Saharan African countries, as they contemplate their place in the 21st century; DRC being no exception. Burdened with the problems of underdevelopment, poverty, debts, the lack of security and stability, many African countries are unable to contemplate the future with any sense of confidence, let alone optimism. It is now generally acknowledged, within and outside Africa that conflicts are the major impediments to development of many African countries and (conflicts) have gobbled up scarce resources, and undermined the ability of numerous African countries to address the many causes compelling of African people. (Organization of African Union (OAU)) Ahmed Mohiddin, (2000).

1.1 Problem statement

Conflict constitutes a very topical issue in debates and discussions in the DRC. Its impact on development is complex

and dynamic. This is evident from the reality that development is impeded where conflict exists. Conflict in the DRC is an obstacle to development (Mpangala, 2002:20). Unfortunately, while many countries around the world have developed ways to cooperate peacefully to avoid violent conflict and promote development, other countries (especially in Africa) find it difficult to manage conflict, which consequently affects the development of such states. Although intervention by the international community in conflict resolution has succeeded in some African countries, similar interventions have failed in other countries, like the DRC. This failure reflects a lack of proper conflict resolution mechanisms, and suggests there are more factors that need addressing in conflict resolution (Azar, 1994:30). For example, there is need to consider how the nature of the African state, power struggles and/or unequal access to natural resources affects the overall prospect of conflict resolution in Africa, and specifically the DRC, in promoting development. The negative effect of conflict on development in the DRC is enormous. The lingering conflict in this country has resulted in a great number of deaths, and displaced more people than is evident in any other country in the continent, in recent decades. This challenges the achievement of its development goals, which are to promote change in some core areas that would help reduce political and socio-economic discrimination, and improve the well-being of the people (Mwajiru, 2001:56)**.** Frank (2000:45-47) argues that most African conflicts are caused by the combination of inequality and a weak state, which have had a devastating impact on Africa's development. This article concentrates specifically on the issue of conflict and its effects on development as a challenge in the DRC, with emphasis on political and socio-economic discrimination as the cause of the lingering failure in development within the DRC.

1.2   Research questions

Based on the above assertions, this article seeks to provide possible answers to the following research questions:
1. What are the dynamics of the conflict in the DRC?
2. To what extent has this conflict impacted on the development of the DRC?
3. What could be done to effectively resolve the DRC conflict and enhance development?
4. What systems are in place for the DRC to implement a conflict resolution policy in order to promote development?

1.3   Objectives of the study

In answering the above questions, the article endeavours to examine the ongoing search for new possibilities of conflict resolution towards development in Africa, with specific reference to the DRC. The primary focus shall be to uncover the hidden causes of developmental failure in the DRC, where it is apparent that political and socio-economic discrimination negatively impact on conflict resolution, which in turn affects development. The article endeavours to explore conflict resolution as a challenge to development, from an often-neglected perspective. The objectives of this article are:
1. To investigate the impact of conflict on development in the DRC
2. To develop conflict resolution tools that support peace and enhance development in the DRC
3. To assess whether there is an adequate system in place for the DRC to implement conflict resolution to promote development
4. To proffer a practicable solution to the development challenges in the country.

Theoretical Framework

This section provides a comprehensive review of the theoretical framework used in this article; conflict and development theories will be useful in this article, as well as institutional theory**.** The section commences with a discussion on the evolution of institutional theory and its primary characteristics. It also discusses conflict and development theory, the methodological tools typically associated with each of them, and their strengths and weaknesses. A detailed analysis of the framework of historical institutionalism, as used in this article, follows with the provision of an outline of its features, benefits and limitations.

The term 'theory', has several potential meanings. Those suggested by Gernon and Olusegun Wallace (1995:57) include an explanatory system in which propositions are set forth, a taxonomy or classificatory scheme, or a conceptual framework which provides for the orderly arrangement and examination of data. Carnegie and Napier (1996:13) argue that the choice of theoretical perspective in historical research is not prescriptive. They write that, "if a researcher believes that a particular theory helps to explain the phenomena under discussion, then there appears to be no priori reason for

excluding that theory from being applied."

For the purpose of this article, reference to the theoretical framework relates to a conceptual framework that facilitates the analysis of significant historic similarities and differences found in relation to the DRC conflict resolution, as a challenge to development. A number of factors have been considered in the selection of the theoretical framework for this article. A variety of theoretical frameworks has the potential to provide insight into the DRC as a case study of the challenges posed to conflict resolution and development. These approaches include the main theoretical concepts, such as the general theories of conflict and development, which entails infra-theories such as modernisation, dependency, liberalism, neo-liberalism, structuralism, human needs theory, and psycho-cultural theories, among others. These place significant emphasis on development failure or crisis in Africa and on the importance of solving conflict in a peaceful manner to promote development. This way of understanding the theories has punctuated development thinking in the context of the DRC, dating back to the period after 1945 and the Second World War, which marked the beginning of a new phase in development, upheld as the guiding pillar to the future of nations. The period following the war was a time for reflection, re-evaluation and reconstruction. It generated a new awareness that conflict must not be a permanent feature of societies; especially not to the extent, that it affects development goals.

While each of these approaches has strengths and limitations, institutional theory is believed to offer the greatest potential for the analysis of the challenge of conflict to development goals. This argument stems from the belief that any political theory of conflict must consider the policy process and policy makers, *inter alia* politicians and bureaucrats (Hansen 1983:25). Furthermore, Steinmo (1993:10) claims that political leadership and the structure of national political institutions are key factors in the change of a country's policy. Accordingly, institutional theory, which originated in the field of political science, has been utilised as the theoretical framework for the analysis undertaken in this article. Institutional theory is used to study the structure and operation of political and social institutions in the DRC, and to assess the influence of institutional factors on policy formation in the country.

Research Design

The methodology adopted to investigate conflict resolution as a challenge to development in the DRC, in this article, is historical methodology. Parker (1997:8) argues that historical study is potentially the most important of all. This claim results from the ability of a country to improve its own processes by observing how other countries have responded to similar problems. The DRC is well placed for historical study; it is situated at the heart (central part) of Africa, with an area of 2,345,000 m sq/km. The DRC is a giant of sub-Saharan Africa, bordering nine other countries. It is also a member of the SADC sub-region organisation. The country was colonised by Belgium and was formerly called Congo Free State, Belgian Congo, Congo-Leopoldville, Congo-Kinshasa and Zaire. Currently, it is named the Democratic Republic of Congo. The country is highly centralised, with executive powers lying with the president. It has a large population of approximately 71,000,000 inhabitants and about 450 ethnic languages. Furthermore, the DRC has a close trade relationship in world and includes the greater part of the Congo basin, which covers an area of 1 million square kilometers. The historical approach is used in tracing the background of the DRC in terms of the impact of conflict on development. Features of the historical approach are also evident in that the study covers a period of more than one decade. The analytical approach is also used to help in uncovering the underlying causes of conflict, because a better understanding of the causes of such conflicts would increase the possibility of preventing further conflict in service of the promotion of development.

1.4   Historical Research Method

The article contains elements of political, economic and social history. Political history is evident in relation to the conflict that affects the development goals introduced by the DRC's government, economic history is relevant to the investigation of the background from which policies are structured and social history is necessary in order to contextualise the issue of development failure.

Various perspectives and definitions of historical research exist. Jenkins (1991:6) claims that history is a series of discourses about the world, which do not create the world; instead they give meaning to it. Carr (1961:81) posits that, "the study of history is a study of causes." Other researchers suggest that history is an enquiry into the past (Jenkins 1991:6) or that history is the study of the elusive concept of time (Lee 1990:3). To a greater or lesser extent, this article encompasses all these dimensions. The article takes the form of a narrative, examining the historical causes of conflict and its constraints and influences, over a 52 years period, in an attempt to outline what has led to the current policy

approach for development failure in the DRC.

As historical research focuses on the question of how events came to occur, it is the appropriate method by which historical antecedents to current situations in the DRC are best analysed. Fleischman and Tyson (1997:93) argue that past and present events are inexorably linked. Typically, the study of history is credited with the ability to help us understand the past, provide an appreciation of how current practices are developed, and help put these practices into perspective (Goldberg 1974:410; Fleischman and Radcliffe 2003:19). The path dependency claims of institutional theory provide the frameworks from within which these claims of historic influence on future events are analysed.

The primary objectives of conducting historical research are the development of perspectives about current problems (Previts and Bricker 1994:626) and providing information to assist in explaining the present day situation (Avi-Yonah 2003:4). The focus of this article is on explaining the historical events that resulted in the current situation of conflict, which is affecting development goals in the DRC, rather than producing widely generalisable research.

1.5 Culture

Researchers have noted the importance of culture (together with political, economic and social influences) in shaping the context in which policy operates (Carnegie and Napier 2002; Eddie 1991; Fechner and Kilgore 1994; Gray 1988; Ricoeur 1965). Culture is a variable that has complicated international research. Culture has been defined in many ways, although it is typically considered the "collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or society from those of another" (Hofstede 1984:82). Culture can be considered to reflect the way that people look at the world, and their role in it.

The most frequent mode of political structure has been the nation-state, hence the emergence of the concept of a national culture. The use of the DRC as a case study, in this article, corresponds to both the nation-state definition and the country or State definition, as defined by territorial boundaries.

Bloch (1953:496) writes that two conditions must be fulfilled in order to have an historical approach; a certain similarity between observed phenomena, and a certain dissimilarity between the environments in which they occur. The claim of similar events in the DRC stems from research undertaken by Hofstede (1984:20) and Gray (cited in Fechner and Kilgore 1994:28). These studies found that the DRC has significant similarities in most of the variables investigated amongst other countries in conflict in Africa. Further research on conflict affecting development policy, undertaken by Peters (1991:15), grouped African countries into four clusters based on politics, culture, economics and social structure parameters. This article places the DRC in the same groups, with similar characteristics of conflict affecting development goals.

1.6 Research method

The article consists of qualitative research. Qualitative research is an activity that locates the observer in the world, consisting of interpretive practices that make the world visible in their natural environment (Denzin and Lincoln 2005:3). The visibility here is achieved through primary source representations, including archival records. The potential for a country to produce complex relationships, which may limit the discovery of meaningful causal relations, is acknowledged. The difficulty lies in isolation of a factor, or a number of factors, that appear to produce (or are strongly associated with) changes in the dependent variable (Peters 1998:29). In this case, the dependent variable is the different causes of conflict that are affecting development goals in the DRC that need addressing in conflict resolution mechanisms. Accordingly, a primary concern of this research design is to exclude, to every possible extent, the confounding factors in the relationship between variables in the conflict resolution mechanism that are not major causes of conflict. Peters (1998:29) claims that this may be alleviated using theory, to identify the most likely source of confounding variance. Thus, the adoption of a theoretical framework of historical institutionalism is intended to mitigate, as much as possible, the potential for confounding variables by providing a framework for analysis.

1.7 Narrative method

The article adopts a narrative approach. The narrative approach is the traditional method of historians (Funnell 1998:146). Typically, a narrative approach identifies a person, idea or event and traces this concept over a number of years. Narrative enquiry establishes or describes items of fact, with the aim of conveying understanding of the various intents or beliefs that reflect the reality to those involved in the event. It is claimed that narrative has been accepted as the

unavoidable, natural means to write history (Funnell 1998:142). However, there are differing views about the merits of narrative enquiry; for example, Lister (1983:50) writes that the account of an event must be suggestive, and must point toward generalisation, if it is to be more than trivial. Accordingly, while not suggesting the possibility of generalisation due to the complex interactions observed in the case study, the article provides more than a simple chronological ordering of past events. As with historical research, the key criticism of a narrative approach is the potential to privilege certain perspectives through the elimination of selected information. While this potential for particular information to be privileged or excluded undoubtedly exists, awareness of this possibility and triangulation in the research design is intended to assist with the management of this potentiality.

1.8 Archival research

Archived records are the product of, "the chance survival of some documents and the corresponding chance loss or deliberate destruction of others" (Evans 1997:87). However, documents are not archived randomly or arbitrarily. Generally, archived documents are those required to be retained in the DRC, by legislation, under the Archives Act 1957, the Local Government Act 1974, or the more recently passed Public Records Act 2005 in the DRC.

Documents from the DRC were predominantly located in the DRC National Library. Due to the period under investigation, it was not possible to access some archival material in the DRC, as this material is too recent. This is not considered problematic, as the primary documents that were not cited were government documents such as cabinet papers, briefings, and internal government discussion documents. In the DRC, significant commentary occurred in the public domain on the various changes to policy, in relation to conflict affecting development goals, which provides an alternative source of information. Documents such as submissions to select committees in the DRC were made available, and these formed an important part of the analysis.

Newspapers and journals were used to supplement the analysis, as were articles and commentary on the debates of the time. Some archival documents from United Nations (UN) reports, NGO reports, and gazettes were also used for analytical purposes.

1.9 Periodisation

One of the key analytical tools used in historical research is that of periodisation. Periodisation allows sense to be made of historical events over an extended time-frame, by separating the chronology into specified time divisions. Research has shown (Pierson 1996:126) that attempts to illustrate social processes at a single point in time produce a snapshot view that may be distorted in important areas. Accordingly, it is necessary to investigate the temporal aspects of conflicts that affect development.

The article focuses on key periods in the DRC's history, when significant changes were made to either the conflict of liberation from colonialism, or conflict of liberation from dictatorship or conflict of discrimination and inequality. Dong (undated) elaborate by giving the following historical development:

1960 June – Congo gains independence and Patrice Lumumba becomes Prime Minister, with Joseph Kasavubu as president (www.raceandhistory.com).

1960 July – Moise Tshombe declares Katanga province independent and Congolese army mutinies; Belgian troops sent in, ostensibly to protect Belgian citizens and mining interests; UN Security Council votes to send in troops to help establish order, but the troops are not allowed to intervene in internal affairs (www.raceandhistory.com).

1960 September – Kasavubu sacks Lumumba from office as prime minister.

1960 December – Lumumba is arrested.

1961 February – Lumumba is murdered, reportedly with foreign complicity.

1961 August – UN troops begin disarming Katangese soldiers.

1963 – Tshombe agrees to end Katanga's secession.

1964 – President Kasavubu nominates Tshombe as prime minister.

1965 – During this period,changes are made when Joseph Mobutu ousts Kasavubu and Tshombe in a *coup d'etat*.

1971 – Joseph Mobutu renames the country Zaire and himself Mobutu Sese Seko; Katanga becomes Shaba and the river Congo becomes the river Zaire.

1973-74 – Mobutu nationalises many foreign companies, and forces European investors to leave the country.

1977 – Mobutu calls back the foreign investors, without much success; French, Belgian and Moroccan troops help repulse attack on Katanga by Angolan-based rebels.

1989 – Zaire refuses to pay the loans from Belgium, resulting in a cancellation of development programmes and increased deterioration of the economy (www.us-uk-interventions.org/congo.html).

1990 – Mobutu agrees to end the ban on multiparty politics and appoints a transitional government, but retains substantial powers.

1991 – Following riots in Kinshasa by unpaid soldiers, Mobutu agrees to a coalition government with opposition leaders, but retains control of the security apparatus and important ministries.

1993 – Rival pro- and anti-Mobutu governments created.

1994 – Mobutu agrees to the appointment of Kengo Wa Dondo, an advocate of austerity and free-market reforms, as prime minister.

1996-97 – DRC Tutsi rebels capture much of eastern Zaire while Mobutu is abroad for medical treatment.

1997 May – Congolese national Tutsi and other anti-Mobutu rebels, who were helped principally by Rwanda, capture the capital Kinshasa; Zaire is renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo; Laurent-Desire Kabila installed as president.

1998 August – Rebels backed by Rwanda and Uganda rise up against Kabila and advance on Kinshasa. Zimbabwe and Namibia send troops to repel them. Angolan troops also side with Kabila. The rebels take control of much of the east of DRC after being beaten by Kabila and his allies in the south-western area of the Congo.

1999 – A division emerges between the rebel of Congolese Liberation Movement (MLC) supported by Uganda and Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) rebels backed by Rwanda.

1.9.1 Lusaka peace accord signed

1999 July – All six African countries, which were involved in the war, sign a ceasefire accord in Lusaka (Zambia). One month after the MLC and RCD rebel groups sign the accord.

2000 – 5,500-strong UN force authorised by the UN Security Council to monitor the ceasefire in the DRC, but fighting continues between rebels and government forces, and between Rwandan and Ugandan forces.

2001 January – President Laurent Kabila is shot dead. His son, Joseph Kabila succeeds him. 2001 February – Joseph Kabila meets with Rwandan President Paul Kagame in Washington. Rwanda, Uganda and the rebels agree to a UN pullout plan. Uganda and Rwanda begin withdrawing troops from the frontline.

1.9.2 Search for peace

2002 April – Organisation of peace talks in South Africa: Kinshasa signs a power-sharing deal with Ugandan-backed rebels, under which the MLC leader would be premier. Rwandan-backed RCD rebels reject the deal.

2002 July – The presidents of the DRC and Rwanda sign a peace deal under which Rwanda will withdraw troops from the east and the DRC will disarm and arrest Rwandan Hutu gunmen blamed for the killing of the Tutsi minority in Rwanda's 1994 genocide.

2002 September – Presidents of the DRC and Uganda sign a peace accord under which Ugandan troops are to leave the DRC.

2002 September/October – Uganda and Rwanda state they have withdrawn most of their forces from the east. The UN sponsors power-sharing talks, which begin in South Africa.

2002 December – A peace deal is signed between the Kinshasa government and main rebel groups, in South Africa. Under this deal, rebels and opposition members are to be given portfolios in an interim government.

1.9.3 Interim government

2003 April – President Joseph Kabila signs a transitional constitution.

2003 May – The last Ugandan troops depart from eastern DRC.

2003 June – French soldiers arrive in Bunia to lead an UN-mandated rapid reaction force. President Kabila nominates a transitional government to lead until elections in two years time. Leaders of the main former rebel groups sworn in as vice-presidents in July.

2003 August – An interim parliament is inaugurated.

2004 December – Fighting start in the east of Congo between the Congolese army and renegade soldiers from a former pro-Rwanda rebel group; Rwanda denies being behind the mutiny.

1.9.4   New constitution

2005 May – A new constitution, with text agreed by former warring factions, is adopted by parliament.

2005 September – Uganda warns that its troops may re-enter the DRC after a group of the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army rebels enter via Sudan.

2005 November – A first wave of soldiers from the former Zairian army return after almost eight years of exile in the neighbouring Republic of Congo.

2005 December – Voters back the new constitution, already parliament-approved, paving the way for the 2006 elections. The International Court of Justice rules that Uganda must compensate the DRC for the abuse of rights and the plundering of resources in the five years up to 2003.

2006 February – The new constitution comes into force and a new national flag is adopted.

2006 March – Warlord Thomas Lubanga becomes the first war-crimes suspect to face charges at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. He is accused of forcing children into active combat.

2006 May – Thousands are displaced in the northeast as the army and UN peacekeepers step up their drive to disarm irregular forces ahead of the elections.

2006 June – Official electoral campaigns start in the DRC.

2006 June – The European Union approves the deployment of around 2,000 troops in the DRC ahead of the 30 July polls.

List of dates and events above justify the impediment of development goals because of conflict.

The justification of the use of a 52-year period stems from the frequently slow movement of conflict resolution mechanisms in providing a good programme for development in the DRC. The use of the 52-year period provides the contextual background, which is an important historical influence, contributing to the directions adopted in the DRC. Accordingly, it is necessary to investigate several decades in order to capture sufficient detail to assess appropriately influential factors in the policy development process.

1.10   Triangulation and analysis

Triangulation is the process of using multiple information sources to clarify meaning (Stake 2000:443). Triangulation can assist with reducing the likelihood of misinterpretation and accordingly, enhances research credibility. The collection of data from primary source documents assists with the clarification of potential subjectivity within particular data sources.

Triangulation also assists with the external validity of the research, through the mix of various measures. Documents alone may be argued to be an obtrusive measure that produces distorted results, due to the writer's awareness of their participation. However, archival research and secondary source documents provide greater validation of the research results. To provide greater assurance, the research highlights the ideas of the time-periods under investigation and the many potential influences, which impacted upon the outcomes.

The qualitative data computer programme NVIVO[1] was used for analytical purposes. All primary and secondary source documents were coded in NVIVO, to assist with increasing the validity of the research output using an accepted research tool for categorization.

Main Findings

The findings on the main questions of the study are summarised in the following paragraphs.

1.11   Implications for stability and development in the DRC

The finding of the study shows that, nearly all parties in conflict in the DRC breakout along the line of ethnic identities, thereby deepening discrimination in the country. This is why conflict resolution becomes problematic and development goals are impeded. It was observed that the attitude of the Congolese state, especially towards her responsibility to mediate between interest groups, leaves much to be desired. The study revealed that because economic resources are not equitably distributed and the reward system tends to favour only those who are in control of the state's political apparatus, conflict is inevitable. Therefore, the government of the DRC must play her role in a way that promotes justice, security, equity and good governance in the country to accomplish development goals.

---

[1] *NVIVO: is a qualitative data analysis (QDA) software, qualitative research, interpret qualitative data.*

The research indicated that natural resources are not the basis for conflict, but are there to fuel it. There are deliberate manipulation of ethnic groups to create and exacerbate division and discrimination among Congolese.

1.12 Achieving stability for Development

This article argues that to achieve stability for development in the DRC, a conflict resolution policy should be implemented without discrimination, along the line of ethnicity in the country, and a development policy should be designed to be participatory. The main goal of conflict resolution should be to bring to the table all the parties in conflict without exclusion, and resolve the main cause(s) of conflict, for a sustainable development. The study supports that all the agreements signed, and the constitution, including other legal and policy documents, should oblige the government at all levels to carry out her activities in such a manner that people-driven development is realised. The result of the study showed that the policies of conflict resolution should put development goals as a core issue during their formulation and implementation, by government at all levels.

In order to achieve some measure of stability, development, and to consolidate the peace process in the DRC, the priority should be to introduce reconstruction actions aimed at addressing the worst effects of conflict at the national level. This would achieve a measure of stability based on common effort, thereby facilitating a base for broader socio-economic development. Reconstruction and developmental actions of the communities should be conducted within the wider context of socio-economic development. The article argues that in order to effectively eradicate violent conflict in the country, mechanisms need to be created, which should on one hand deal with the investigation of incidents and the causes of conflict, and on the other hand actively combat the recurrence of conflict.

The article also suggests that the management and resolution of conflict in the country should represent a crucial phase in the process of restoring peace, sustainable development and prosperity to all Congolese. It advises that the leadership of the country must show adequate and prompt concern over the plight of all disadvantaged persons and groups. It also argues that a situation where some people are above others, flaunt their unfairly or corruptly acquired wealth with impunity, and show brazen contempt for the feelings of other people, is not only unacceptable, but also provocative and will perpetuate conflict. The study advocated the need to provide ethnic groups the opportunity to renegotiate their co-existence in a federal system of government, if stability and development must be achieved.

1.13 Nation building

The study highlighted that the challenge Congolese people are facing now is that of nation building. How should they create their nation? What should the basis be, on which to build the nation to avoid conflict? After conducting an overview of the current situation in the DRC, the researcher has come to believe that the following elements are important, if not crucial, in serving as a basis for nation-building or for the DRC development, justice and patriotism. The study found that it is easy to develop a country through justice and patriotism.

1.14 Addressing the land problem

According to the study, the challenge posed by land needs to be addressed with a sense of urgency; conflict resolution without intervention in this aspect will amount to a waste of effort and resources. The government should ensure that, in terms of policy, there is a smooth process of redistributing land to avoid conflict among citizens. Postponing this move may not only delay effective conflict resolution implementation, but will also delay the achievement of development goals. The growing impatience with the land process especially in the eastern Congo may open the issue into some opportunistic and dangerous politics that may threaten national stability of the country, possibly leading to her balkanisation.

In terms of policy, the government should prioritise land allocation for interventions that will directly benefit the wider community, rather than individual gains. Viable community projects, be it tourism or agriculture, should not be hindered by land ownership. Amicable ways of addressing land ownership should be explored with some urgency to reduce huge inequalities in the communities that have resulted in conflict and disaster in the country. The issue of land should be resolved in a way that brings peace, justice and sustainable development in the DRC.

1.15 African solidarity and territorial integrity

The study reveals that without unity and solidarity with other African countries, development in the DRC is impossible. It would be difficult to build up and develop the nation without solidarity and unity. In order to develop the Congolese nation, the finding of the study shows that the people of the DRC should stand as one people and one nation. East-west schisms should be eliminated. Job positions should be distributed, not according to ethnic or clan considerations, but rather on the basis of qualifications. The study believes that it is time for the Congolese people to hold hands to resolve their conflict in a peaceful way by including everybody for rebuilding and developing their country in unity. In so doing, the country will be developed and uplifted, and the fight against the common enemy, discrimination and poverty, will be feasible.

1.16   The facilitation of socio-economic reconstruction and development in the DRC

The discovery in the study is that reconstruction and development projects in the DRC must actively involve the affected or discriminated communities through a process of inclusive negotiations involving recipients, experts and donors; the community must be able to conceive, implement and take responsibility for projects in a coordinated way, as close to the grassroots as possible.

The study supports that the projects, at a national level, should require the co-operation of all Congolese, irrespective of their political or ethnic affiliations. The people within local communities must see local organisations working together on ground level, with common purpose. Parties with constituency support in an area must commit themselves to facilitating such approach to development projects.

The study suggests the implementation of national reconstruction projects at ground level. This requires a combined effort by all political organisations and affected or discriminated parties to raise the required level of capital and human resources for development. Public and private funds will have to be mobilised for this purpose. Achieving sustainable development requires the assistance and encouragement of all individuals to accept responsibility for their socio-economic well-being. Each role player must define and accept his/her role, and there must be an acceptance of responsibility for, and co-determination of, socio-economic development. This development initiative should in no way abrogate the right and duty of governments to continue their normal development activity, except that in doing so they should be sensitive to the spirit and content of any agreement that may be reached.

Recommendations

Based on the collected data and the reviewed literature, the recommendations of the study are presented as follows:

The DRC seems to be regarded as a country that is ineffectively governed because of the culture of impunity. The government of the DRC should eradicate this culture and avoid any interference in judicial matters. It should leave prosecutors to do their work independently and peacefully. The government of the DRC should promote democracy and avoid arbitrary arrests and the violation of human rights, in all its forms. It should be reminded that no one is above the law and that government officials are also subject to prosecution whenever they transgress the law.

As part of a programme to eradicate poverty, the government of the DRC should develop programmes that deal with the welfare of its people, such as housing, transportation, food and so forth. The government of the DRC should make sure that its poverty reduction strategy is implemented and bears fruit; reports on any improvement regarding the situation of poverty in the country should be made available and published in the media to ensure transparency. The government of the DRC should provide the necessary means for the functioning of institutions such as the Court of Auditors, the General Inspectorate of Finance, and the Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission. These institutions and strategies should operate independently from the office of the president or government, and their reports should be submitted to Parliament. These institutions and strategies should not be intimidated by the office of the president or by the government.

Concerning the issue of conflict, the general guideline on issues to be dealt with is to move from immediate issues related to violent conflict and the peace process, toward the pre-emption of violence and then toward integrating into the overall need for socio-economic development. A sub-committee should be created. That sub-committee should identify areas, at community level, where they could begin facilitating the co-ordination of the following issues: reconstruction of damaged property; reintegration of displaced persons into the community; expansion of infrastructure to assist in consolidating the peace process; and community involvement in the maintenance and improvement of existing community facilities and the environment. The sub-committees should facilitate crisis assistance that will be linked to socio-economic development in the following areas: dealing with the immediate effects of violent conflict and its resultant social effects, displaced persons and homelessness; and instances in which infrastructure is itself a spark to violence,

inter alia water, electricity transportation and schools.

In addressing the above issues, attention will have to be paid to the equitable allocation of state resources, including state-funded development agencies (physical and financial) for both public and community-based initiatives; mobilisation of additional resources both public and private; the cumbersome nature of governmental structures in the provision of resources and services; the position of poor and marginalised groups; land, its accessibility and use; basic housing; the provision of basic services; education; health and welfare; job creation and unemployment; and the availability of land for housing and basic services. The sub-committees should identify potential flash points and co-ordinate socio-economic development that will defuse tension, for example squatter settlements: squatter settlement-township interfaces; hostels: hostel-township interfaces, provision and maintenance of basic services and rural resource constraints. The sub-committees should identify areas of socio-economic development that would prevent violent conflict. The sub-committee would attempt to ensure that overall socio-economic development is cognisant of the need to reinforce the peace process and defuse the potential for violent conflict.

Government officials in the country should be patriotic and act in the interests of the Congolese people, rather than in their own. The government of the DRC should set an example of transparency; declarations regarding assets should be made by all members of the executive, in compliance with Article 99 of the Constitution, and be published. The constitutional court, which receives declarations, should be afforded the rights and resources to check and monitor them. The government of the DRC should make sure that all Congolese people benefit, in one way or another, from the wealth in the country. Distributive justice should be at the top of its priority list.

The DRC government must define a national vision for peace building, which its 71 million people articulate and own, and which reflects an understanding of the root causes of the country's conflict. The Congolese government should prioritise peace-building activities, as part of a societal transformation that alters relationships between the state and its citizens positively, and facilitates power sharing that is more equitable. The government must also establish a regular budget with adequate controls to reinforce state authority, properly manage resources, and combat widespread corruption; the UN Peace-building Commission, in collaboration with the African Union, (AU) and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), should help the Congolese government to build effective institutions, which would manage its immense natural resources. The Commission should also seek to strengthen partnerships between the UN, the European Union (EU), and other external role players, in order to prevent the destabilising regional and international exploitation of the DRC's natural resources.

The UN Security Council should maintain a peacekeeping presence in the DRC. This presence should possess a credible deterrent capability, and the capacity to oversee security, especially in the provinces of Orientale, North and South Kivu; SADC, the AU, the UN. In addition, the EU must establish an effective division of labour to support peace-building efforts in the DRC. The AU and SADC must provide political, technical, and financial assistance for peacekeeping and peace-building activities in the DRC. They should also develop and coordinate a joint strategy that allows the Congolese to identify their priority peace-building issues and take ownership of the process; the evolving strategic partnership between South Africa and Angola should be deployed to strengthen SADC's peace-building role in the DRC. While South Africa's bilateral engagement with the DRC should continue to be strengthened for the benefit of the region, this role should not be allowed to undermine the relevance and legitimacy of SADC's multilateral engagement with the country; the Congolese government must demonstrate the political will and commitment to plan and implement comprehensive strategies for disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform. These strategies should take into account local contexts and needs and include tailor-made DDR programmes to meet the special needs of groups such as women, children, and the disabled. Lessons can usefully be learned from DDR and SSR efforts in fellow SADC countries, such as Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, and South Africa.

Peace building in the DRC must address gender disparities, mainstream gender, and strategically focus on gender-oriented activities. In engendering peace-building, the DRC government needs to strengthen and implement coherent, coordinated, and consistent approaches that address the root causes of conflict, and build a culture of peace, justice, security and equality whilst realigning regional and international support for peace-building efforts, in order to promote development in the country. Support from the African Union's Gender Desk and the UN Development Fund for Women should be provided to the DRC's Ministry of Women's Affairs in order to combat impunity for perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence; the establishment of a vibrant civil society and effective political opposition must be supported to rebuild the DRC and develop it. Congolese civil society role players should work with local communities and institutions to create and secure the policy space necessary to promote a more accountable and responsible state, as well as the rule of law. The Congolese government must strengthen partnerships with civil society role players in order to develop and implement a comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction plan. Moreover, the government of the DRC must

formulate a comprehensive strategy for rebuilding its national criminal justice system. Kinshasa should open strategic discussions with the International Criminal Court and the international community, on managing crimes that fall outside the jurisdiction of the ICC. In this respect, the government must define and strengthen its post-conflict local alternative justice systems, which will require the drafting and implementation of more effective national laws to enhance the Congolese judicial system. Regional and international donors should also provide support in building the operational capacity of the DRC's judicial and legal institutions. Meanwhile, transitional justice mechanisms in the Congo must address the challenges of judicial and institutional reform. These mechanisms should reinforce the voices of the poor and marginalised, as well as address the country's structural, socio-economic, and political inequalities. Finally, the DRC must build an effective and professional electoral commission that can promote democratic, inclusive, and competent electoral systems for development to occur. SADC, the AU, the UN, the EU, and other donors should support the Congolese government's commitment to elections by helping to prepare the country's political parties to accept the outcomes of polls. In addition, the DRC can learn useful lessons from the electoral process of the best practices and successful examples of democracy within political parties in other SADC countries.

This article strongly recommends that, in general, a definite focus be placed upon the satisfaction of basic human needs in the DRC. This will provide a non-ideological or neutral focus for policy instruments, through which to address some of the ills of the current Congolese situation. Specifically:

- The recommendation that a stronger emphasis be placed on reconciliatory rhetoric on the part of political leadership. Leadership often comes across as excessively partisan to intolerance, and the ethnisation of group, and is not explicitly reconciliatory.
- An examination of the economic development policy, that goes further to satisfy human needs.
- An urgent addressing of the issue of reparations for those who bore the brunt of violent conflict. Such reparations should be financial and material, where appropriate, but must also put forward the notion that reparation can also be symbolic. In this spirit, simple triumphalism should also be avoided, in favour of an approach that addresses the identity and needs for belonging of all Congolese people. Monuments to democracy and peace would be more appropriate than those erected to political heroes.
- A greater emphasis should be placed on conflict resolution in the country as a whole; but particularly in the educational system. It is in education that conflict management and resolution skills must be given a prominent position in life-skills training, and where a conflict resolution approach is taken to the teaching of history, for instance.
- The overwhelming need for the development of conflict analysis and handling skills in local government must be met by extensive skills training programmes. This should address the tendency for tensions in the area of state delivery to be contained and, ultimately, resolved within a constructive, basic human needs framework.
- Centres for the study and peaceful resolution of conflict, peace studies and related issues should be established with government funding. These could be built around concepts similar to that of the United States Institute for Peace, or the UN Peace University campuses in various countries.
- Academic programmes and courses on conflict and its resolution, alternatives to violence, and non-violent communications should be offered in the DRC, far more extensively than they currently are.
- Finally, and perhaps most importantly, conflict management should be built into society through the establishment of a network of peace centres, or dispute resolution centres, staffed by volunteers, but with professional support. Such a conflict management system would more than cover its costs, by facilitating efficient and durable decision-making processes, and avoiding many of the deadlocks that currently delay the delivery of government services to communities throughout the country. The architecture of the DRC National Peace Agreement might provide a model for such a conflict management system. Perhaps, when all is said and done, we need to accept that there are limits to the management of social conflict. To finally resolve conflict would be impossible, futile and of questionable value. To institutionalise conflict management to the extreme would be to stifle development. It would be to limit change, sustain conditions of discrimination or inequality and oppression, and so forth. It is a truism of most social theory that conflict never truly ends. Perhaps that is after all the greatest weakness of the notion of conflict resolution. Conflict can be managed, but certain tensions will always remain. These will continue to give life to the social processes in the new DRC.

Conclusion

Conflict resolution and development are serious concerns for the present and future of the DRC. Commitment to the

resolution of conflict, for the promotion of development, is more than just a policy in the DRC. There has to be a concomitant change in the mindset of leaders of the DRC towards the perception that conflict should be managed and resolved in a peaceful manner, which allows for development to occur in the country. The study is convinced that, without a peaceful resolution of conflict and the implementation of its agreements, any programme for socio-economic development, the eradication of poverty or fight against corruption and discrimination, will be ineffective.

The people of the DRC do not deserve the threat that has been imposed on them. The resources available in the country, good quality leadership, and a little political will, should be sufficient for the country to flourish.

Conflict resolution should take into account the main cause of conflict, which is discrimination. Natural resources are there to fuel conflict, but are not the real cause of conflict in the DRC. The Congolese government should work to make the DRC an environment of peace, security, justice and equality to all the Congolese so that the development goals will be achieved in the country. Without these factors, it is impossible to discuss development in the country.

References

Avi-Yonah R S, (2003). Tax stories and tax histories: is there a role for history in shaping tax law? *Michigan Law Review*, 101 (6): 2227.

Azar (1994) Conflict resolution and ethnicity. Praeger, London.

Bloch M, (1953). *Towards a comparative history of European societies.* London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

Burrell G and Morgan G, (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis: elements of the sociology of corporate life.* London, Heinemann Educational Books.

Carnegie G D, and Napier C J, (2002). Exploring international accounting history. *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal,*15 (5): 689.

Denzin N K and Lincoln Y.S, (2005). The discipline and practice of 300 qualitative research. *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Eddie I A, (1991). Asia Pacific cultural values and accounting systems. *Asia Pacific International Management Forum*, 16 (3): 22.

Evans R J, (1997). *In Defence of History.* London, Granta Books.

Frank H, (2000). Primordialism, evolutionary theory and ethnic violence in the Balkans: opportunities and constraints for theory and policy: *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 33 (1): 40. March.

Fleischman R K and Tyson T N, (1997). Archival researchers: an endangered species? *The Accounting Historians Journal*, 24 (2): 91.

Fleischman R K and Radcliffe V S, (2003). Divergent streams of accounting history: a review and call for confluence. *Doing accounting history: contributions to the development of accounting thought.* Amsterdam, JAI Elsevier Science.

Fleischman R K and Tyson T N, (2003). *Archival research 303 methodology. Doing accounting history: contributions to the development of accounting thought.* Amsterdam, JAI Elsevier Science.

Fechner H H E and Kilgore A, (1994). The influence of cultural factors on accounting practice. *International Journal of Accounting,* (29): 265.

Funnell W, (1998). The narrative and its place in the new accounting history: the rise of the counter narrative. *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal*, 11 (2): 142.

Gernon, H., and Olusegun Wallace, R.S. (1995). International Accounting Research: A Review of its ecology, contending theories and methodologies. Journal of Accounting Literature, 14:54.

Goldberg L, (1974). The future of the past in accounting". *The Accountant's Magazine*, 73 (820): 405.

Gray S J, (1988). Towards a theory of cultural influence on the development of accounting systems internationally. *Abacus*, 24 (1): 1.

Hansen S B, (1983). *The politics of taxation: revenue without representation.* New York, Praeger Publications.

Hofstede G, (1984). Cultural dimensions in management and planning". *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 1 (2): 81.

Jenkins K, (1991). *Re-thinking History.* London, Routledge.

Lee T A, (1990). *Accounting history and thought.* New York, Garland Publishing Inc.

Lister R J, (1983). Accounting as history. *International Journal of Accounting*, 18 (2): 49.

Merino B D and Mayper A G, (1993). Accounting history and empirical research. *The Accounting Historians Journal*, 20 (2): 237.

Merino B D, (1998). Critical theory and accounting history: challenges and opportunities. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 9: 603.

Mohiddin A, (2004). *Innovations in governance and public administration for poverty reduction: overview of concepts, issues and practical implications: in United Nations (2004). Searching for Innovations in governance and public administration for poverty reduction: concepts, experience and lessons for the future*.

Mpangala G P, (2002). *Conflict in Africa.* Vub University Press, Dar-es-Salaam.

Mwajiru M, (2001). *Conflict management in Africa*. Nairobi, Centre for conflict resolution research.

Napier C J, (1989). Research directions in accounting history. *Accounting Review*, 21(3): 237.

Parker L D, (1997). Informing historical research in accounting and management: traditions, philosophies and opportunities. *The Accounting Historians Journal*, 24 (2): 111.

Peters B G, (1991). *The politics of taxation: a comparative perspective.* Cambridge, Blackwell.

Pierson P, (1996). The path to European integration: a historical institutionalist analysis. *Comparative Political Studies*, 29 (2): 123.

Previts G J and Bricker R, (1994). Fact and theory in accounting history: presentmindedness and capital market research. *Contemporary Accounting Research*, 10 (2): 625.

Przeworski A and Teune H, (1970). *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry.* New York, John Wiley and Sons.

Ragin C C, Berg-Schlosser D and de Meur G, (1996). *Political methodology: qualitative methods. A handbook of political science*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Ricoeur P, (1965). *History and truth.* Evanston, Northwestern University Press.

Steinmo S, (1993). *Taxation and Democracy: Swedish, British and American approaches to financing the modern state.* New Haven, Yale University Press.

Stanford M, (1986). *The nature of historical knowledge.* Oxford, Basil Blackwell Inc.

Stake R E, (2000). *Case studies.* Handbook of Qualitative Research. 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.